

## PROPOSALS FOR ACTION



The **Primeiros Anos a Nossa Prioridade** campaign brings together partners with different sensibilities, knowledge, practices and experiences, but who share knowledge and the Vision that a healthy and sustainable society depends on a critical focus on early years.

The partners of the **Primeiros Anos a Nossa Prioridade** campaign defend **the importance of promoting integrated policies for early childhood that:**

- value the first 1,000 days of life and the importance of the family (and the surrounding community), in the development of the child, focusing on, and respecting, the child, his/her identity, with attention and care centred on positive relationships and stable and secure bonds;
- guarantee timely access to quality health care, with periodic screening, early detection and intervention, for all children;
- assume Early Childhood Education and Care as the fundamental foundation of a society, thus valuing the capacities of children from 0 to 6 years old and the educational action of its professionals;
- create effective conditions so that children disintegrated from their birth families can grow up in family-based alternative care arrangements.

**And they propose the adoption of a Global and Integrated Policy for 0-6 years old children, that envisages namely:**

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- 1st.** the development of national statistics with monitoring indicators for early childhood (0-3 years), as well as research dedicated to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policies and practices (new or existing) regarding the promotion of childhood development;
- 2nd.** The strengthening of work-life balance measures:
  - a.** extending the duration of paid parental leave in order to improve affective and quality care in the first 2 years of life;
  - b.** greater flexibility in parents' working hours during the first years of their children's lives in order to reduce the daily time spent by children in crèches;
- 3rd.** The development of integrated responses at community level to promote physical and mental health in early childhood:
  - a.** training of Primary Health Care nursing teams for the assessment of child development (identification of deviations) and appropriate referral;
  - b.** developing the skills of these teams to enable them to intervene in supporting parenting with families;
  - c.** strengthening and valorising (with the consequent increase in coverage) the National System for Early Childhood Intervention;
- 4th.** The creation of a “highway” that guarantees access to specialized health care to all children who need it, so that the opportunity for timely intervention is not wasted;
- 5th.** The recognition of the educational intentionality and continuity between crèches (0-3 years old) and pre-schools (3-6 years old), with the unification of their pedagogical tutelage in the Ministry of Education;
- 6th.** Increasing the coverage of crèche structures and other qualified educational services accessible to all families;
- 7th.** The guarantee of access for all children (3 - 6 years old) to pre-school education and the development of support materials for the quality of pedagogical practices;
- 8th.** The development of programmes to promote parental skills in the pre and post-natal periods and in the first years of life;

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- 9th.** The development of new models of care and protection for children at risk/peril, based on scientific knowledge, which privilege the child's life project in a natural life context; but also the accelerated enlargement of the national network of Foster Families, for the cases where it is not possible to keep the child in its birth family;
- 10th.** The development of campaigns on the importance of the first years of life, in order to transfer the existing scientific knowledge to society in general:
- a.** raising the awareness of parents, educators and caregivers about how children understand the world and position themselves towards others;
  - b.** valuing play as a primordial form of knowledge and discovery for the child;
  - c.** sensitizing parents, educators and caregivers to the warning signs of behaviours and possible physical and emotional health problems of the child;
  - d.** raising awareness among vulnerable families about the benefits of attending early childhood education and care and the involvement and participation of parents in their children's educational process;
  - e.** promoting cooperation between families and day-care centres/kindergartens, transforming these institutions into a more comprehensive service that functions as a family support network;
  - f.** sensitizing companies to adopt family-and future-friendly policies;
- 11th.** The prioritisation of children in the National Strategy Against Poverty;
- 12th.** The valorisation of the role that, alongside the State, non-governmental organisations play in the materialisation of rights of access to education and health, in the preparation for parenthood and in supporting families.

September 2021

