

Overcoming Barriers to Early Childhood Intervention in Novi Sad

A Rights-Based Framework for Early Childhood Intervention from Policy to Practice

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Background

Timely identification and prompt intervention (ED/EI) are essential for ensuring the health and developmental rights of children with delays or disabilities.

Methods

- Mixed-methods design
- 26 parents
- 32 service providers
- Health sector
- Education sector
- Social welfare & NGOs

Recommendation

1. Integrated referral pathways
2. Workforce training
3. Reduced financial barriers
4. Stronger community support

Key Findings

1 DETECTION GAPS

65.38% of parents were the first to notice their child's developmental delays, while only **7.69%** were identified by pediatricians, pointing to a lack of routine, standardized screening in primary health check-ups



- Parents were the first to notice the delay **65.38%**
- Identified by pediatricians **7.69%**
- Others / later identification **26.92%**

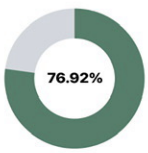
2 SYSTEMIC & MODEL BARRIERS

Service delivery remains predominantly medicalized and fragmented, lacking an integrated, transdisciplinary, and family-centered model.

- Medicalized approach
- Fragmented services
- Lack of integrated, transdisciplinary model
- Not Family-centered

3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

76.92% of parents reported high financial stress due to lengthy, inefficient assessment processes. Families bear significant out-of-pocket costs for therapies and specialized services.

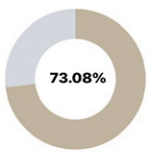


- High financial stress due to lengthy, inefficient assessment processes **76.92%**
- No / lower financial stress **23.08%**

Families also bear significant out-of-pocket costs for therapies and specialized services

4 ENVIRONMENT & ACCESS

73.08% of parents rated the community support landscape as "bad," citing limited access to inclusive, natural learning environments (such as mainstream preschools and playgrounds) and insufficient intervention hours.



- Rated community support landscape as "bad" **73.08%**
- Rated as "good" or "fair" **26.92%**

Key concerns

- Limited access to inclusive, natural learning environments (e.g., mainstream preschools, playgrounds)
- Insufficient intervention hours

Conclusion

Current frameworks do not fully ensure equitable developmental rights and require coordinated policy and practice reforms.

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