



# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

## What are prevention and early intervention services?

Prevention and early intervention services are services that are designed to reduce the risk of violence or other harm within the family environment.

### Prevention services

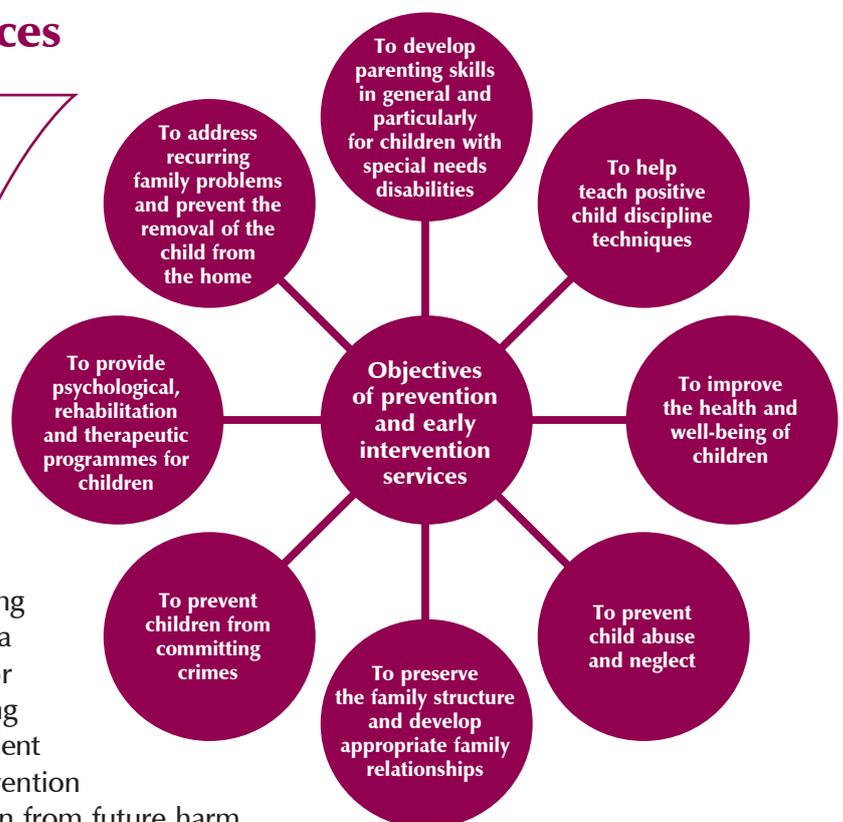
“**Prevention services**” are services provided **generally to families with children** in order to strengthen and build their capacity to address problems that may occur in the family environment.

Prevention services can be targeted at the entire community. For example, a programme for parents on positive methods of child discipline can help prevent family violence. As another example, training sessions on caring for children with disabilities can help ensure that such children are treated properly. Prevention services might also address issues affecting a specific community, such as gender-based violence, nutrition problems, reproductive health issues, child labour, child trafficking or child behaviour problems.

### Early intervention services

“**Early intervention services**” are services provided to **specific families with children** identified as being especially vulnerable or at risk of harm.

Identifying children who are at risk and targeting those families for early intervention can help to prevent child abuse and neglect. For example, early intervention may involve helping family members overcome alcohol or drug abuse or a gambling addiction. It might involve assisting a family where there is a chronically or terminally ill family member, or teaching family members about positive, non-violent ways of resolving disputes. Early intervention services are intended to protect children from future harm. They may also prevent the child from developing emotional or behavioural problems in the future.



## How are these services provided?

There are many different types of prevention and early intervention services. These can include home visits by health workers or social workers, parenting skills programmes, early childhood development programmes, substance abuse programmes or interventions which combine different elements. Some services are suitable for the community in general, while others target particular situations or problems.

Prevention and early intervention programmes must involve families, parents, care-givers and children in identifying and seeking solutions to their problems. These programmes are often cross-cutting – they may involve various government ministries, NGOs and faith-based groups, traditional leaders and the private sector. Protecting children is a task for Namibian society at large.

Participation in most prevention and early intervention programmes is voluntary. But a children’s court may order persons to participate in prevention or early intervention services, to prevent harm to a specific child. In some cases, this may be an alternative to removing the child from the home.

It is important to implement good planning, monitoring and evaluation of prevention and early intervention services to ensure that they are effective.

