



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**” are services provided 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 effective methods of child discipline could help prevent family conflicts. As another example, training sessions on how to care for children with disabilities could help ensure that such children get the care that they need.

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

Identifying children who are at risk, and targeting those families for early intervention, could help prevent child abuse and neglect. For example, if there are families where some adult family members abuse alcohol or drugs, helping them with these problems would help protect the child. Early intervention services could also help prevent the child from developing emotional or behavioural problems in the future.

There are a number of aims and objectives that can be achieved through prevention and early intervention services:



Please turn the page to find out how to contribute your opinions to the public debate on this issue.

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, preparation-for-school programmes, substance abuse programmes or interventions which combine different elements. Some services are suitable for all families, whilst others are designed to target particular situations or problems. It will be important to have good planning, monitoring and evaluation of these services to ensure that they are effective.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- ⑨ What problems affecting children in Namibia could be addressed by prevention and early intervention services?
- ⑨ What preventative and early intervention services are already in place?
- ⑨ What additional services are most important? Who could provide them (social workers, churches, NGOs, community volunteers)?
- ⑨ How can children and families in need of such services be identified and targeted?
- ⑨ Would there be any stigma attached to receiving help from early intervention services which do not target the entire community?
- ⑨ Should courts be able to order families to take part in specific programmes and services as an alternative to removing a child from the family (in cases where there is no immediate danger to the child)?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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For more information on the draft Child Care and Protection Act, contact Monalisa Zatjirua (061-2833116) or Celeste Feris (061-2833179) at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, or Rachel Coomer at the Legal Assistance Centre (061-223356).