

The National Inter-ministerial Program for Children and Youth at Risk: An Update

May 2017

Israel's 360° National Program for Children and Youth at Risk is an internationally recognized model of inter-ministerial cooperation to address the needs of children at risk and their parents through community-based solutions.

In 2006, a national committee proposed the creation of an integrated inter-ministerial program to address the full range of needs of children at risk and their parents.

The committee had been established against the backdrop of high rates of institutionalization for children at risk, and a policy shift from out-of-home care to community-based care. As well, a fragmented service system lacked a shared definition of what it meant to be “at risk” and had limited knowledge about the children and program outcomes.

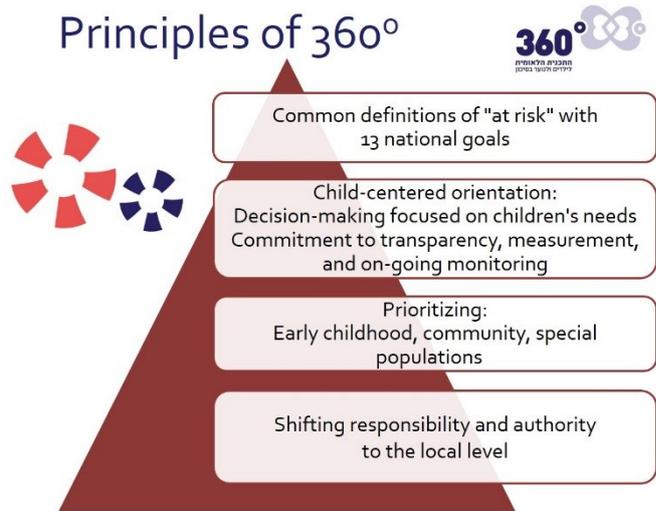
In 2008, the government took a revolutionary step forward by establishing the National Program that created a partnership among the ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Health, Immigrant Absorption, and Public Security.

Shared Definition of Children and Youth at Risk

A key contribution of 360° is the development of a shared measurable definition of children and youth at risk.

According to the shared definition, children and youth at risk **live in situations that endanger them within their families and environment in one or more of seven areas, or domains** (shown at right).

Principles of 360°



7 Areas of Risk for Children and Youth



What the National Program Has Made Possible

- Local collaborative decision making and multi-year plans
- Planning on the basis of data and knowledge of the extent and risk profiles of all children at risk in the community by age and population group
- Creating new collaborations in service delivery
- Monitoring outcomes
- Shifting decision making from the national to the local level
- Concentrated funding into a single allocation to be used most effectively at the local level

360° Today

- Over 260,000 children and youth have been identified as being at risk
- 184 communities with low socio-economic levels now participate in 360°
- A national and local database tracks the progress of children participating in 360° programs

The Role of the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

MJB has played a crucial role in the decision to establish 360°, its planning, and ongoing development

- In the late 1990s, MJB produced the first national estimates of the extent and risk profiles of Israel's children at risk, thus raising national awareness of the problems and needs of this population. The research showed that Israel had one of the highest rates of out-of-home care, with very limited community services to keep children and their parents together.
- Subsequently, the Institute was instrumental in evaluating pilot initiatives to reduce out-of-home care and to better serve the children in the community. Many of these were done in collaboration with JDC-Ashalim. The findings demonstrated that it was possible to reduce out-of-home care and to serve the children in the community with positive outcomes.
- These data were instrumental in the decision to establish a committee to develop the National Program for Children and Youth at Risk, with MJB as a primary consultant.
- After the National Program was launched, the Institute led the development of the national and local database system on children at risk and an ongoing reporting system that included the outcomes for the children who participated.

Today, MJB's Engelberg Center for Children and Youth continues to play a significant role in 360°:

1. Strategic planning for ongoing program development
2. Training of local professionals in the use of data for planning and ongoing learning
3. Monitoring and reporting on program development and outcomes for children

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Founded in 1974, the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is Israel's leading center for applied research on social policy and services, serving Israel, the Jewish world, and the international community. MJB is an independent, non-profit partnership between the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Government of Israel, and the David and Inez Myers Foundation of Cleveland. The Institute's Board of Directors is composed of senior government officials from the ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Health, and Finance, and Israel's Social Security Administration, along with international experts, and major international Jewish lay leaders. To learn more about MJB, visit www.jdc.org.il/brookdale or www.facebook.com/MJBInstitute.