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**A System for Planning Interventions,
Monitoring Implementation, and
Measuring Outcomes in Residential
Care Facilities for Children and
Youth at Risk:
Summary of Findings from the T-0
and T-1 Measurements**

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This document was commissioned by the Senior Division for Out-of-Home Care, Family, Children and Youth, and Special Placements at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and was funded with its assistance.

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Jerusalem | January 2026

Abstract

Background

In recent years, residential care facilities supervised by the Children and Youth Division of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs have undergone substantial changes, including policy reforms, organizational restructuring, and shifts in treatment approaches. In response, the Senior Division for Out-of-Home Care, Family, Children and Youth, and Special Placements initiated the development of a computerized system designed to support intervention planning, monitor implementation, and measure outcomes. The system aims to improve intervention management and to enable the systematic assessment of the children's characteristics and needs of children and youth in residential facilities (hereinafter: the children), the suitability of the services provided, and their effectiveness.

Objectives

As part of the system's development and validation process, this initiative sought to collect baseline information on the characteristics and needs of the children in residential care facilities, significant life events they had experienced, prior interventions, their strengths, and the extent to which desired outcomes were achieved.

Methods

1. Two structured questionnaires were developed: one for initial assessment and formulation of the personal intervention plan (T-0), and another for monitoring implementation (outputs) and measuring outcomes (T-1).
2. The T-0 pilot was conducted in December 2022, with 3,441 questionnaires completed (response rate: 53%). The T-1 pilot was conducted in November 2023, with 3,065 questionnaires completed (response rate: 47%).

Findings

Findings from the first measurement (T-0) were published in February 2024.

Results from the second measurement (T-1) indicate that the most common intervention outputs in residential care facilities include maintaining and strengthening contact with the children's families (e.g., family and sibling meetings, ongoing communication, shared decision-making, and home visits), individual emotional therapy, development of basic life skills (e.g., hygiene and daily routines), academic enrichment or learning support, and periodic follow-up conversations with the children.

Across all seven life domains (emotional/mental, behavioral, academic, social, physical health, family, and exposure to violence or exploitation outside the family) a significant increase was observed in the types and levels of needs reported. This trend is consistent with findings from other studies of children and adolescents in Israel in 2023–2024 and can largely be attributed to the Israel-Hamas war, which occurred between the two measurement points and affected the children directly, as well as indirectly through its impact on parents, the out-of-home care system, and residential care staff.

At the same time, strategies and intervention approaches were identified that mitigated the increase in reported needs across the various life domains. In the emotional/mental domain, these included the use of an authoritative approach (setting boundaries and prohibitions to prevent exposure to danger and ensure the children's protection), regulation of home leave, psychiatric follow-up, and dental treatments. In the behavioral domain, mitigating strategies included acquisition of basic life skills, use of an authoritative approach, and follow-up by a dietitian. In the academic domain, effective strategies included academic enrichment lessons and learning support. In the health domain, mitigating strategies included maintaining and strengthening contact with the child's family, individual emotional therapy, periodic follow-up conversations with the child, follow-up by a nurse, and follow-up by a dietitian. In the domain of exposure to violence or exploitation outside the family, mitigating strategies included periodic follow-up conversations with the child and use of an authoritative approach.

Key Recommendations

- Strengthen emotional and mental health responses during periods of emergency.
- Expand the use of intervention strategies found to be more effective in moderating increases in children's needs.
- Pay particular attention to especially vulnerable populations, as identified by the children's background characteristics.
- Promote partnership-oriented interventions with the children and their parents.
- Continue assessing the alignment between the children's needs and the services provided, while accounting for individual background characteristics (e.g., age, gender, population group).
- Continue to implement and reinforce a strengths-based approach among professionals.