

## Research Briefing N° 21

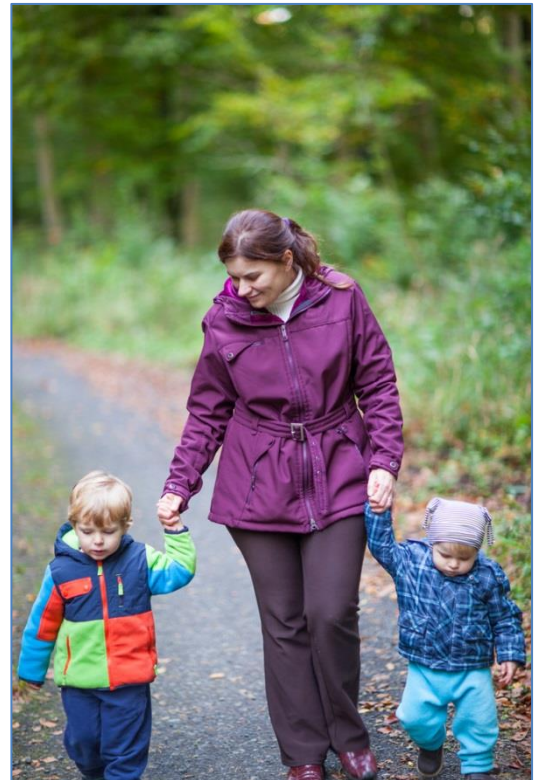
# International perspectives on parenting support: learning from non-English language sources

This research looks at approaches to parenting support in other countries (in particular Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) and possibilities for informing UK policy and practice.

**Key words:** parenting support; international comparison

## Key findings

- Support for parenting was a high priority in all five countries studied (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands). As in England, there was an emphasis on early identification; intervention through universal service frameworks; inter-agency working and partnership with parents.
- Standardised parenting programmes appeared to be most widely used in Germany and the Netherlands. In Denmark, support for parenting was typically embedded in universally used services such as early years settings. This was possible because these services had highly trained workers with the skills to offer such support.
- The research identified four main approaches to delivering parenting support. All countries reported difficulty engaging particular groups of parents, such as fathers and parents from minority ethnic communities, and this was particularly the case with open-access services that parents choose to attend.
- The study suggests that parenting support should be broader than formal parenting programmes. It could also include approaches more common in other European countries, such as counselling-based services and interventions that target couples and/or families as well as parents as individuals.



## What we did

This review was commissioned by the English government in the context of a strong policy emphasis on developing support for parenting. It set out to build on existing English-language knowledge, in particular a 2004 review by Moran and colleagues of 'What Works in Parenting Support?' which identified the need to explore literature from non-English language countries. The study aimed to describe the principles underlying parenting support in other European countries as well as identifying promising models and assessing their relevance for policy and practice in England. The research was carried out in 2008 and early 2009.

## How we did it

The study began with a scoping review of parenting support in 12 non-English speaking

countries within and outside Europe, selected from a 'long list' of 22.

Five countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) were then selected for further exploration based on indications of promising or interesting practice in parenting support and potential translatability to a UK service context. A research partner with expert knowledge was recruited in each country and asked to prepare a knowledge synthesis report according to a detailed structured guide. Joint meetings of the international team were held to ensure common understanding of the study aims and of different approaches to parenting support.

In the final stage of the work, the English team prepared the country reviews in a comparable format, to facilitate cross-country comparison, and analysed the material for messages that could inform policy and practice development in England.

## Further information

Access the full report: [International perspectives on parenting support: non-English language sources](#)

## Contact

June Statham, Emerita Professor, Department of Childhood, Families and Health, Institute of Education, University of London

**Email:** [j.statham@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:j.statham@ioe.ac.uk)

**Phone:** +44 (0)20 7612 6937

**Other team members:** Dr Janet Boddy (Principal Investigator), Professor Marjorie Smith, Dr Valerie Wigfall and Hanan Hauari (Institute of Education); Dr Deborah Ghate; and with important contributions by European research partners.

IOE researchers are based at the IOE's Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU)