

Kinderland

Strategy for Daycare Center and Family Support

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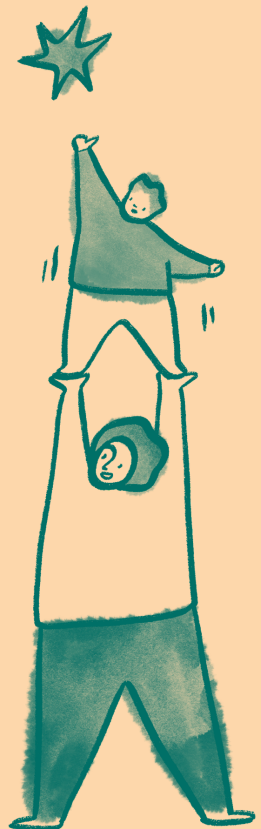


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SUMMARY

Founded in 2020, the nonprofit association KINDERLAND Moldova has set itself the goal of organizing prevention and protection services for children from families at increased risk of neglect and abandonment. The services offered by the organization are aimed at children, adolescents, and adults from several villages in the Dubăsari district.

This center for at-risk children is the first program the association has implemented since 2025. It provides specialized social day care for at-risk children. The goal is to prevent their social exclusion and marginalization, promote their personal development, and facilitate their integration into the community. In 2026, a program will be implemented to strengthen the parenting skills of vulnerable families in order to ensure better support for the children. Some of the children are also cared for at the day center, which already provides support to their families. The children from these families should be given the opportunity to seize better opportunities and contribute to society in the future as valued, independent, and self-reliant members. Parents and the children's extended social circles should be able to adequately support this development.

Between May and August 2025, analyses were conducted to guide and inform the development of this strategy. The goal was to identify the needs of children and families in the region, as well as to assess existing services and the challenges involved in adapting them to those identified needs. The strategy was developed based on the conclusions and recommendations of these analyses.

In the Dubăsari district, approximately one in four children faces various forms of risk, including deviant behavior, neglect, and domestic violence. This reflects the national trend of rising youth crime, poverty, and child abuse. There is an urgent need for educational, psychological, and speech therapy support, as well as access to extracurricular activities and digital learning resources. The families of these children face structural problems such as financial instability, homelessness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. They therefore require integrated support in the form of counseling, emergency assistance, and parenting and vocational training. Existing social services in the region are inadequate and fragmented. There is a shortage of qualified staff, and funding is unstable. In this context, the support offered to children and families in the region through the center's activities includes educational and recreational activities, counseling, access to nutritious food and hygiene services, and family support.

For Kinderland Moldova's day center and family strengthening program, the years 2025 through 2028 mark the initial phase of implementing and consolidating models for social support services for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. These models are adapted to the social, educational, economic, and cultural context of the villages in Dubăsari District. In addition to optimizing the quality of interaction with the children, the current strategy creates favorable conditions for establishing cooperative relationships with regional and local authorities, with nongovernmental organizations working in similar fields, and with families in emergency situations.

Some of the strategic priorities contained in this document should be viewed as preparatory steps for the development of potential future programs, such as a program to promote education and vocational training for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds or a foster parent network.

SUMMARY

- The programs pursue these four common strategic goals:
- Through the day center and family strengthening programs, a safe and stimulating environment is created in which children can learn and develop.
- Parents, members of the extended family, and their social networks are equipped with the skills to support the children in their development.
- A team of motivated professionals with complementary skills works purposefully with the children, their families, and relevant institutions and organizations.
- The program is sustainable, integrated into the community, and adapts to the changing needs of children and families.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH KINDERLAND MOLDOVA OPERATES

To inform the development of this strategy, a series of analyses were conducted between May and August 2025:

- A study of needs and services in the villages of Coșnița, Pîrîta, Dorotcaia, and Vadul lui Vodă.
- Observations by the center's team following two weeks of the summer program
- Analysis of the 25 satisfaction questionnaires completed by children participating in the summer program between July and August 2025.
- Analysis of the legal and administrative context in which the day center operates.
- Experiences gained through work at the day center between July 2025 and March 2026.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILDREN FROM THE DUBĂSARI DISTRICT (4 VILLAGES)

- 3,400 children (2024)
- 827 children (24.3%) are in a vulnerable situation
- The number of children exhibiting problematic behavior (violence, drug use, mental health issues) and children exposed to neglect and domestic violence is rising

The national analysis highlights several issues that are also relevant to the national strategy: 1. Juvenile crime is on the rise. 2. The child poverty rate stands at 33%, an increase from previous years. There are significant differences between rural areas (46.6%) and urban areas (18.6%). 3. 31,000 children live apart from their parents. For 27,000 of these children, the parents are in another country or outside the children's place of residence. 4. Child abuse is a growing problem. Neglect is the most common form, followed by psychological, physical, economic, sexual, and spiritual abuse.

Challenges identified by parents and professionals:

- The low attendance of vulnerable children in educational institutions (e.g., due to a lack of parental responsibility and involvement) as well as malnutrition or hunger (children come to school, kindergarten, or the center without food) are problems we face.
- Parents (especially mothers) ignore their children's needs for support and treatment (they wait too long to see a doctor or psychologist) or have themselves been in a high-risk situation.
- Increased violence (due to a lack of role models for nonviolent responses and a lack of parental attention).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH KINDERLAND MOLDOVA OPERATES

Challenges in Working with Families:

- Guardians ignore or neglect children's nutritional, educational, and health needs
- Low levels of personal involvement and lack of educational background among guardians
- Economic instability and limited resources among families
- Families' negative experiences in communicating with government agencies and service providers (poor communication, lack of mutual trust)

Needs:

- Psychological counseling and psychosocial support
- Coordination of support services and emergency assistance; these must be tailored to the actual needs of the families (integrated and personalized services)
- Parenting training (single mothers, nonviolent communication, daily routines)
- Career counseling for parents
- Support for children's educational opportunities
- Support in finding and securing adequate housing
- Regular visits from a social worker

An ideal support package for families requires the involvement of the family, an understanding of their specific needs, and the establishment of a communicative relationship based on trust and respect. It may include the following services: ad hoc and ongoing material and financial support (firewood, furniture, seasonal clothing and shoes, etc.), information about existing community services (psychosocial counseling, participation in parenting classes, specialized services for parents of children with special needs, career counseling), as well as assistance in finding and maintaining suitable housing. Such a package should be accessible, free of red tape, and available in the family's immediate vicinity.

INFORMATION ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE REGION

The information in this section is based on focus groups with 22 members of local multidisciplinary teams, including a mayor, a deputy mayor, a social worker, a child protection officer, a school principal, a preschool director, and medical staff.

Positive aspects:

The region has social, cultural, and medical services provided by both public and private providers.

- A particularly positive aspect is the availability of services for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially near schools.
- The clubs for extracurricular activities, free access to a hot meal and school supplies, and the community police's outreach efforts are highly valued.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH KINDERLAND MOLDOVA OPERATES

Key Challenges:

- Lack of qualified staff
- Lack of, or overly bureaucratic, therapeutic services for children with disabilities
- Closure of the children's home in Coșnița, which was intended for abused children
- Lack of professional foster parents
- Lack of free counseling services
- Low participation of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Lack of motivation among unemployed adults to work for low wages (200–300 euros)
- Insufficient coordination among organizations in the region
- Withdrawal of some NGOs and the resulting threat to the services they support
- Significant difference in quality between free and paid services

Needs:

- Coordination of existing services
- Multifunctional centers offering training and psycho-emotional support for parents
- Training of specialized staff
- Involvement of parents (communication barriers, “they feel judged”)

According to the directory of national services, there are 29 different types of services. The family support service is the most frequently used. Funding for this service has been unstable in recent years, as it depended on the level of revenue from the Population Support Fund.

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE DAY CENTER AND THE FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

The following proposals summarize the recommendations derived from the analyses used for strategic planning.

Services for Children:

- Educational, recreational, and sports activities; educational field trips and summer camps;
- psychological counseling and speech therapy;
- access to various educational and learning resources, including media resources and safe internet access,
- individual support as well as participation in group activities,
- a safe place for age-appropriate recreational and learning activities.

Services for families:

- Support from multidisciplinary teams and individualized assistance,
- assistance in accessing services and benefits from government agencies and other organizations,
- emergency assistance in the form of food, shelter, hygiene supplies, clothing, and shoes,
- psychological counseling,
- support in finding and maintaining adequate housing,
- support in establishing a regular income to provide for the family,
- parenting education (including in the native language and for functionally illiterate individuals).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH KINDERLAND MOLDOVA OPERATES

Challenges:

- Shortage of qualified personnel (psychologists, educators, speech therapists)
- Lack of or overly bureaucratic therapy services for children with disabilities
- Closure of the children's home in Coșnița, which was intended for abused children
- Lack of or reluctance on the part of professional foster parents to take in children
- Lack of free counseling services (which are particularly useful for mothers)
- Low participation of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Lack of motivation among unemployed adults to work for low wages (200–300 euros)
- Insufficient coordination among organizations in the region
- Withdrawal of some NGOs and the resulting threat to the services they support
- Significant difference in quality between free and paid services

Needs:

- Coordination of existing services
- Multifunctional centers offering training and psycho-emotional support for parents
- Training of professionals
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- parenting education (including in the native language and for functionally illiterate individuals).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH KINDERLAND MOLDOVA OPERATES

Impact on services at the Kinderland Center:

- Strengthening the day center and expanding the number of children served
- Establishing a multidisciplinary team for family strengthening
- Close coordination between staff at the day center and the family strengthening program
- Regular visits to the families of children attending the center
- Development of a parent support program and/or a parent self-help group
- Supportive measures by local authorities:
 - Monitoring the children's situation,
 - Coordinating measures with other service providers,
 - Supporting staff training

Possible further involvement by Kinderland Moldova:

- Development of specialized services for children with disabilities
- Establishment of vocational guidance and career counseling services
- Development of family-like care services (family homes and foster parents)

PREAMBLE TO THE PROGRAMS OF KINDERLAND MOLDOVA

Kinderland Moldova is committed to ensuring an environment in which children feel safe, connected, and have real opportunities for the future. To achieve this, children and adolescents in Moldova are supported through programs developed by Kinderland. These programs are characterized by authentic relationships, as well as respect and trust.

All of Kinderland Moldova's activities are based on:

- the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:
 - promoting the best interests of the child,
 - guaranteeing the right to life and development,
 - non-discrimination, and
 - child participation), as well as
- the laws and guidelines of the Republic of Moldova
- pedagogical and social work principles, in particular
 - the promotion of educational inclusion,
 - protection against all forms of neglect and abuse,
 - continuity, sustainability, multidisciplinary, and partnership in the provision of services in a safe and child-friendly environment).
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¹2025 wurde eine vorläufige Strategie der Kindertagesstätte, die vollständig mit den nationalen Kinderschutzgesetzen und Betriebsstandards in Einklang steht, in die erforderlichen Unterlagen für die Erstakkreditierung der Kindertagesstätte aufgenommen. Von Juni bis August 2025 wurden weitere Informationen über die Situation der Kinder, Familien, Sozialdienste und deren konkreten Unterstützungsbedarf gesammelt. Diese weiterentwickelte Version der Strategie der Kindertagesstätte und des Familienstärkungsprogrammes wurde auf der Grundlage der vorläufigen Strategie entwickelt und berücksichtigt die Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen der zusätzlichen Analysen. Während alle Ziele der ursprünglichen strategischen Ziele enthalten sind, enthält diese Strategie zusätzliche Details qualitativ höhere Anforderungen, die über die gesetzlichen Anforderungen hinausgehen und bei der Erreichung der strategischen Ziele der Kindertagesstätte und des Familienstärkungsprogrammes zu berücksichtigen sind.

OUR PROGRAMS AND THEIR STRATEGIC GOALS

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of all the analyses conducted, the legal framework of the Republic of Moldova, Kinderland's vision and mission, the organization's resources, and discussions with staff members, the following four strategic goals were established for the period from January 2026 to December 2028. The day center and the family strengthening program contribute to the achievement of these objectives through their specific services and, in many cases, complement each other to achieve the desired results.

Objective 1: Provide children with a safe and stimulating environment in which they can learn and develop.

DAYCARE CENTER

According to current findings, children in at-risk situations are offered support in various areas of development. The overarching goal is to ensure that they have equitable opportunities to participate in the development of society in the future. This is carried out in cooperation with various stakeholders from the community and government agencies.

The success of the center's activities is measured primarily by their impact on the participating children and adolescents. A positive impact manifests itself in various ways. These include a well-groomed appearance, social integration, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, awareness of and appreciation for personal talents, processing traumatic experiences through psychotherapeutic treatment, academic success commensurate with individual abilities, continued education and vocational training, a sense of belonging, security within the family and the community, and knowledge of and exercise of their rights.

Education is considered an essential prerequisite for development. Therefore, special emphasis is placed on opening up future opportunities for the children that were often denied to their parents.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

In an ideal world, the family ensures that the child experiences an environment that supports their development at home, at school, and during other activities.

If, for various reasons, the family is unable to provide adequate opportunities for development, the goal is to strengthen the existing opportunities and support the family in identifying and taking advantage of additional opportunities.

OUR PROGRAMS AND THEIR STRATEGIC GOALS

DAYCARE CENTER

To achieve this goal, the following measures are planned:

- Careful planning and implementation of a program that takes into account the children's needs and modern approaches to social-educational and psycho-emotional support.
- Providing opportunities for development in key areas of their personality, with a focus on education.
- Access to prevention, protection, and support measures in cases of neglect and abuse.
- Taking children's opinions into account in the center's activities.
- Additional measures as needed.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Measures to achieve the goal:
See Goal 2.

Performance Metrics

- ✓ 100% of the children have an individualized plan and progress report that are updated annually
- ✓ >70% of the children show improvement in their academic performance and are able to maintain it.
- ✓ >80% of the children are satisfied or very satisfied with the center's activities.

Goal 2: Parents, extended family members, and those in their social circle have the ability to support their children's development

It has been demonstrated that the impact of the center's activities on children's development is reinforced by positive changes in their families

Therefore, the program aims to support families in coping with the various difficult situations they face and to strengthen their capacity to protect and promote their children's development. This goal is primarily pursued through the "Family Strengthening Program."

DAYCARE CENTER

Measures to achieve the goal:

- Involving and consulting with parents when planning the day center's activities.
- Working closely with the children's schools or training institutions to ensure their educational success as much as possible.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Measures to achieve the goal:

- Parents are educated about their role and the available resources to support them in caring for their children.
- A family support plan is developed and agreed upon with the parents/guardians.
- Parents are involved in training sessions on best practices in parenting.
- Parents are supported in overcoming adversity in their lives so that they can better support their children (counseling, access to social services, etc.).
- In individual cases, material support is provided to the family if it is necessary for the child's well-being and cannot be provided by the parents in any way.
- Additional measures as needed

Performance Metrics

✓ > 80% of the children's parents or guardians are satisfied or very satisfied with the center's activities.

- ✓ 100% of the children's families receive home visits at least once a month.
- ✓ 100% of the families have agreed to a family support plan
- ✓ >70% of the families show improvement in supporting their children and are able to maintain this progress.

OUR PROGRAMS AND THEIR STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 3: A team of motivated professionals works purposefully with the children, their families, and relevant institutions and organizations

DAYCARE CENTER & FAMILY SUPPORT

The effectiveness of the day center and the family strengthening program is based on the work of a multidisciplinary team that has adequate professional training as well as in-depth knowledge of the families and communities from which the children and families of the program participants come.

The team is characterized by effective collaboration and a balanced mix of professional expertise across the program areas.

The diverse challenges faced by the children and their families require continuous adaptation and alignment with current professional insights.

Investing in the team's professional and emotional capacities is a priority for the organization.

Measures to achieve this goal include:

- Systematic support for staff members in improving their current competencies and acquiring new knowledge and skills through needs-based training and exchange with other organizations and operators of similar programs,
- Maintaining the strong motivation necessary for learning new skills and upholding high quality standards,
- Providing opportunities for supervision to enable staff to respond professionally to the various challenges at the center.
- Supervision is a professionally guided reflection process in which staff members in the fields of education and social work analyze, understand, and further develop their professional practices together with a qualified external supervisor.
- Additional measures as needed

Performance Metrics

- ✓ 100% of staff members conduct their staff orientation meetings in accordance with the organization's guidelines.
- ✓ At least two relevant training sessions per year per employee
- ✓ Once a year, the quality of teamwork is jointly assessed during a team retreat, and improvement measures are agreed upon as needed.

OUR PROGRAMS AND THEIR STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 4: The day center and family support program are designed as a sustainable, community-integrated program that is highly adaptable to the changing needs of children and families.

DAYCARE CENTER & FAMILY SUPPORT

The support needs of children and families, as well as the challenges they face, are constantly evolving. The activities of our programs aim to respond appropriately to the most significant of these challenges. The Center's staff demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity to the need for change and adaptation. They consult with the children and their family members when developing new intervention models. Some of these models may become new programs for the organization, such as programs for the prevention of child abuse or models to support young people who are pursuing vocational training or participating in on-the-job vocational training programs.

The success of the Kinderland programs is significantly influenced and supported by partnerships with the relevant local and regional authorities, as well as a number of NGOs in the region. The ongoing search for qualified partners and suitable partnership models aims to provide support services that offer greater scope, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability. This allows us to allocate our resources even more effectively toward what hardly anyone else can or is willing to do.

It is explicitly noted that transparent and ongoing communication regarding the full range of achievements and the challenges we face must be ensured. This text aims to contribute to learning within the sector and to strengthen our role as a reliable partner in the community.

DAYCARE CENTER & FAMILY SUPPORT

Measures to achieve the goal:

- The annual satisfaction survey of children and families, as well as other formats, asks for ideas for future activities to improve the program. These ideas serve as input for new areas of intervention.
- New areas of intervention are being tested to meet the needs of our target group. Representatives of the target group are involved in the development of these interventions.
- New partnerships are established with relevant private and public organizations to support the implementation of the current strategy.
- We develop communication and interaction with the community, government agencies, other organizations, and supporters regarding the success stories and challenges of our programs and the implementation of the current strategy.
- Additional measures as needed.

Performance Metrics:

- ✓ At least one new pilot activity per year
- ✓ At least two new partnerships per year are tested and evaluated for their relevance to our program
- ✓ An annual report containing statistical data and success/impact stories is presented to key stakeholders in an appropriate format

EXPECTED RESULTS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS

The combination of goals, measures, and indicators helps us work toward our respective goals in a focused manner.

Measures can be supplemented based on insights gained.

In consultation with the management team, indicators can be adapted if there are valid practical reasons to do so.

The director of the center and the Family Strengthening Program is responsible for continuously monitoring progress toward the goals and collecting information on the selected indicators.

To ensure that the goals remain in focus, a regular mid-year review process is organized. This regular review must be coordinated with the day center and family strengthening teams and incorporated into the annual work plan.

The results of the regular review and evaluation, as well as proposed adjustments, are summarized in a report on the review and evaluation of the strategy. This report is prepared by the center director for the president of the organization Kinderland Moldova and the team at the partner organization Kinderland Austria. This report is one of the sources for the annual report of Kinderland Moldova and is presented at the General Assembly the following year.

The strategy is evaluated annually and adjusted as needed. In the summer of 2028, the strategy will undergo a final evaluation process, which will lead to the establishment of a follow-up strategy.



Donation Account
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