

# Every Child Safe Forever (ECSF project) – The Development of Relentless Family Case Management and the End of Parole and Other Court Orders

Submitted by the Youth Protection Amsterdam Region

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## Youth Protection Amsterdam Region

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### Size of organisation

500-5000;  
people involved: >15

### Type of sector

Public health and social welfare/affairs

### Key words or the project

Youth care and welfare, social return on investment, Functional Family Parole (FFP), cost effectiveness, large scale social impact, intensive family case management, radical innovators

Youth Protection Amsterdam Region is a certified institution responsible for providing specialised care to families whose children face severe safety threats. The organisation aims to guarantee children's permanent security, and a safe upbringing. This requires services that stabilise their living environment and provide them with perspectives to reach adulthood as full participants of society. Thus, the organisation's objectives are firmly anchored in its mission statement: 'Every child safe forever'.

Youth Protection Amsterdam Region is called upon when children (0-18, or even up to 23 years) are under threat of becoming victims of mental, sexual and physical abuse or neglect. This concerns children in families that have problems in the areas of work, income, debt, housing, education, socio-physiological issues, addiction, (domestic) violence or criminality, but also children who are affected by problematic divorce. Finally, youths who have committed a felony may end up with the agency by order of the juvenile court. Within all these cases, top priority is given to breaking the transgenerational cycle.

Youth Protection Amsterdam Region operates within a chain of public and private social services, youth care and education, of which the majority is dependent on municipal funding. So-called 'neighbourhood teams' that are enacted by the municipality may request for its services when their basic forms of family-assistance cannot guarantee the children's safety. Moreover, the agency participates in network discussions with all regional and (inter)national stakeholders to stimulate the sharing of knowledge, influence on policies and provide professional training programmes.

The approach includes the effective elements of the Delta method, family group conferences, the multi-problem family approach and Functional Family Parole Services (FFPS), of which the latter is the most crucial.

Practices and training programmes are combined with and modified through research programmes that the social workers develop, test and implement themselves. The professionals combine the frameworks of youth protection and youth rehabilitation following the principle: 'one family, one plan, one worker'. At its core, they co-develop a tailor-made family improvement plan with the families, and all required service providers. This plan forms the basis for a multi-staged programme of approximately 6-9 months that the family has to complete entirely. In the final weeks of the guidance the family and the worker will make agreements for the future together. In the final stage the family practices all that has been learned in the former steps, as part of a relapse prevention plan they construct with the worker. Six months after case closure, the social worker pays a visit to the families to see how they are doing and to repeat the risk assessment.

Youth Protection Amsterdam Region constantly tries to stay away from court measures. Although legal enforcement like custody measures, visitation regulations, or juvenile rehabilitation measures are still an unavoidable part of daily work, they have managed to reduce both the number of families under custody and forced out of home placements by respectively 50-60% since 2011. These results indicate that some crucial organisational and professional reforms have shown real potential to dramatically improve the quality of the agency's services for both, the children and their families. And since keeping every child permanently safe is the organisation's mission, it constantly seeks for ways to achieve this.