Temporal aspects in DME
An application in Swiss child protection

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Temporal aspects of the DME
Negative developments

Certain children keep staying in the CP system ...

- Repeated referrals to CP
- Repeated removals and placements
- Variety of ongoing services

Changes in DME of CP workers repeatedly confronted with the same child
Prozessverläufe bei abnehmender Kontrollierbarkeit

A General Model for Assessing the Situation and **Deciding what to do about it** – *Dalgleish*

Assessment Dimension:
- e.g. Risk or ‘Level of Concern’

**Factors Influencing Assessment.**
- Information from *Current Situation being Judged*

**Threshold**

If the **Assessment** is **ABOVE** the **Threshold**, the **ACTION** is taken.

If the **Assessment** is **BELOW** the **Threshold**, then NO **ACTION** is taken.
CP in Switzerland

- No mandatory reporting
- Differential response
- Institutional division between CP authorities and CP services
- Legal assistants to the child
- Fixed periodical reviews
Method: Analysis of dossiers

Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language / Type of authority</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional / Judicial</td>
<td>„Stadt“</td>
<td>„Ville“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay people / Administrative</td>
<td>„Land“</td>
<td>„Campagne“</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

164 cases in four different Settings, stratified by legal base
Analysis of Dossiers
Sample: Demographics

- 89 boys and 75 girls
- Mean age of 7 years for enactment of first child protection order
- 46% of children with one or both parents foreign nationals
- At the time of referral 26% of children lived with both parents, 62% with a single parent and 12% (already) out-of-home
Analysis of dossiers
Results: Situations of endangerment

- Neglect: 15%
- Physical abuse: 6%
- Sexual abuse: 3%
- Conflicts of autonomy: 5%
- Parental conflicts / IPV: 71%

weighted data
Analysis of dossiers
Numbers of professionals involved

A total of 3,089 professionals are mentioned in the dossiers on the 164 cases ($M_d = 15$ professionals).

The number of professionals is correlated with:
- intrusiveness of child protection order
- number of caregiver risks mentioned
- number of victim's behavioural difficulties
- the setting
Measure: Intensity of services

- Number of contacts between professionals
- Number of contacts’ pages
Analysis of dossiers

Results: Growing up protected?

Days after institution of measure

0.00 0.25 0.50 0.75 1.00

0 500 1000 1500 2000

Educational Assistance
CC 308

Withdrawal of Custody
CC 310

TCP, dossiers
Analysis of dossiers
Results: Growing up protected?

TCP, dossiers
Analysis of dossiers

Results: The work of removing a measure

TCP, weighted data, CC 308 and 310 only
Resultate zu Hypothese 4

H4 - Split 90; alle Professionellen

Verbesserte Fallverläufe
Fallverläufe ohne Veränderung
Resultate zu Hypothese 4

H4 - Split 90; alle Professionellen
Verbesserte Fallverläufe
Fallverläufe ohne Veränderung
Conclusions

1. Professionals on different positions evaluate the same risk differently ...
2. ... according to the risk *they* run.
3. Talking about risk evaluation in child protection implies talking about the evaluator.
4. Decisions occur everywhere – they are as important at the end as they are at the beginning!
Practice implications

1. Adequate experience for authority members should be guaranteed to reduce decision bias.
2. The coordination of the various professionals involved in child protection could be improved via case management.
3. The opportunities of fixed periodical reviews should be expanded to control duration of the child within the child protection system.
4. A unification of assessment and mandated services improves continuation of services and – not least – helps to preserve scarce resources.
The risk of removing a measure

“The only thing you can be held responsible for [at the end], is not having continued”

Authority, legal assistant of the board