

# **MATANEL FOUNDATION**

## **ACTIVITY REPORT**

**Cultural Safety Informed Consulting and Treatment Center for High-risk Children, Children with Special Needs and the Asylum Seekers Community's Caregivers and Educators**

### **2024 Annual Activity Report**

**Name of the Program:** Cultural Safety Informed Consulting and Treatment Center

**Year of activity:** 2024

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**Number of active participants in the program:** 1,310

**Estimated number of impacted participants:** 3,000

#### **Give the actually state of the program**

Our project aims to improve the quality of life for children of asylum seekers and their families by operating a Cultural Safety-Informed Consulting and Treatment Center for High-Risk Children, Children with Special Needs, and their Parents and Caregivers (the Parent-Child Center). The center provides therapeutic solutions that help asylum-seeking families feel secure in their identity. It facilitates expanded therapeutic and educational support for children and their families, and offers guidance and counseling to both formal and informal educational staff, as well as professionals from various disciplines working with these communities. Additionally, the center's staff specialize in the early identification of at-risk children and those with special needs within community educational settings, ensuring they receive appropriate treatment.

#### **The main achievements during the last year of activity**

We mark the center's second year of operation, during which we achieved the following outcomes:

##### **1. Enhanced Professional Development for Caregivers**

- We provided weekly individual on-the-job pedagogical guidance to 4 of the 20 babysitters settings in South Tel Aviv, working with **8** caregivers and **103** babies and toddlers. The guidance focused on various topics, such as early childhood interactions and development, educational routines, language interactions, appropriate nutrition, safety, music, movement, play, and more.
- Four volunteers tutored 30 children within the supported babysitters settings.
- A comprehensive mapping of the babysitters settings in South Tel Aviv was completed.
- Reports on life-threatening settings were submitted to relevant authorities.

##### **2. Early Identification of At-Risk Children and Children with Special Needs**

- **26** at-risk children and children with special needs were identified at the babysitters settings and referred for further treatment at Mesila.
- 26 diagnoses were conducted for children to facilitate their integration into settings tailored to their needs within the special education system.
- A psychiatrist voluntarily provided 9 diagnoses as part of the Center's activities.

### 3. Empowerment through Parental Guidance Workshops

- **4** parental guidance groups were held by our pedagogical guides, with **44** participants, including a group for parents involved in an authoritative process due to reports of domestic violence. The content delivered in the groups was adjusted based on feedback from parents who participated in previous sessions, and additional topics were introduced, such as communication with children and teenagers about healthy, protected sexuality and the prevention of sexual violence.
- **2** additional parental guidance groups were active: one, a parent leadership group aimed at reducing the phenomenon of children wandering the streets, and the other, a group for parents involved in domestic violence (Procedures for Exemption from Reporting). **20** parents participated in both groups.
- **16** parents received individual parental guidance.

### 4. Comprehensive Paramedical Treatments

- 10 therapists provided treatments in emotional therapy, occupational therapy, art therapy, speech therapy, physiotherapy, parental guidance, and dyadic therapy.
- 6 occupational therapy students, 3 emotional therapy students and 30 art therapy students are providing treatments as part of the Center's activities.
- **122** children received individual paramedical treatments.
- **269** children received group paramedical treatments at Mesila, Keshet School, 3 municipal kindergartens and in the guided babysitter settings.
- **94** adults received individual and group paramedical treatments.
- **7** mothers and their **8** children received dyadic treatments.
- Two volunteers provided emotional support to both children and adults.

### 5. Therapeutic Support for Diverse Needs

- The therapeutic playroom is open in the mornings for two groups: the Postpartum Mothers' Support Group and for mothers/fathers with toddlers who are at home following the conclusion of maternity leave, for various reasons. The playroom provides an open area with diverse play zones, developmental consultations, and an inclusive environment for parents. A light meal is provided during both morning programs. An occupational therapist, students, and a pedagogical guide facilitate the program, with a focus on the early detection of developmental delays in children. **52** women and **52** babies and toddlers participated in the sessions.

### 6. Governmental-Municipal Daycare Model for Early Childhood

- There are 19-daycare classes in Neve Sha'anani and Hatikva neighborhoods, serving **480** babies and toddlers aged 0-3 from undocumented communities.
- Mesila successfully completed the extensive project of equipping the daycare centers that have relocated to municipal buildings.
- Three daycare classrooms that operated at the central bus station were moved to alternative locations in order to provide children with more suitable environments.
- Mesila submitted, on behalf of the Tel Aviv municipality, a Government Call for Municipalities that operate educational settings for infants and toddlers without civil status to the Ministry of Welfare, in order to ensure that the daycare centers operated by Unitaf will receive appropriate funding. These daycare centers provide the most appropriate educational response for the community children aged 0-3
- **The Or Program** – Training sessions were conducted for 14 instructors of the Or Program, which focuses on enriching the linguistic skills of preschool children. The program is implemented in several municipal kindergartens and toddler classes within

the municipal-governmental daycare centers. **110** children of asylum seekers or without civil status in Tel Aviv participate in the program within their educational frameworks. Or Program instructors meet with the children twice a week for individual sessions and connect with their parents several times a year.

7. Operating a Unique Knowledge Platform - Orientation and knowledge sharing with educational staff and professionals who work with children from the community –

- The center's staff offers professional development and culturally sensitive guidance to educators, counsellors, school staff, and welfare professionals working with asylum-seeker families.
- The center's staff also collaborate with municipal officials, family care centers, and other Parent-Child Centers to improve early childhood care for children without legal status in Israel.

**Evaluation**

Each activity is followed by feedback collection to assess satisfaction, content relevance, and treatment effectiveness. This feedback helps refine the program to meet evolving needs.

- 90% of caregivers reported the guidance was highly beneficial.
- 85% of parents found the parental guidance helpful.
- Therapists noted significant improvements in the quality of life for recipients of the center's services.

**Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:**

Over the past year and a half, we have operated under the instability caused by the ongoing war in Israel. In response, the Parent-Child Center has developed educational tools to help parents support their children through these security-related events. Emotional support has also been provided to families directly affected by the crisis.

The complex situation in Israel, brought about by the war, has also led to a significant decrease in donations to the project, which funds the purchase of paramedical treatments.

Despite these challenges, the Center continues to play a vital role in offering culturally sensitive support to the asylum-seeking community. This work is particularly crucial given the significant barriers community members face in accessing services at other municipal centers. These challenges are intensified by ongoing developments such as:

- **New Health Regulations (Effective July 2024):** These regulations exclude undocumented minors—whose parents are asylum seekers under temporary protection, asylum seekers from countries not eligible for group protection, children of migrant workers who have lost their visas, children of victims of human trafficking, and children residing in Israel under humanitarian procedures—from receiving health coverage. As a result, many children are left uninsured. This underscores the urgent need for early identification and diagnosis by the Center's staff. Additionally, a sharp increase in health insurance premiums for eligible children further restricts access to diagnostic and treatment services.
- **Uncertain Future of Municipal-Governmental Daycare Settings:** Without sufficient funding, there is growing concern that daycare activities may be reduced. This would significantly limit access to quality early childhood education and risk a return to conditions dominated by inadequate and neglectful babysitting arrangements.

Amid these formidable challenges, the project's success lies in the adaptability of its dedicated team. By remaining creative, responsive, and collaborative, the team has forged meaningful partnerships that promote the well-being of asylum-seeking families—especially their youngest members.

In light of these ongoing difficulties, we look to the future with deep concern.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the **Matanel Foundation** for its continued support and partnership over the years.

Best Regards,  
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Please join the Evaluation Report – attached

Financial Report - attached

List of the participants to the program - Not applicable due to confidentiality

Please join photos – as **JPG files** – attached