

Function, quality and outcomes of residential care – Rapid Evidence Review



Commissioned by:



Since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) over 30 years ago, growing attention has been devoted to the rights and circumstances of children who are without, or at risk of losing, parental care. International guidance, and in particular the 2009 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, clarifies that efforts should focus on preventing the need for family separation and for placement into alternative care. When separation has been determined to be in the best interests of a child, then the best alternative care option should be provided, based on the specific needs, preferences and circumstances of each individual child.

While there is a clear consensus on the need to prevent family separation and phase out all harmful forms of care, notably institutional care, the role of residential care in a continuum of care options is still under dispute in different places around the world.

To unpick these issues, CELCCIS conducted a Rapid Evidence Review on the purpose, function and quality of residential care options. The research provides an overview of literature on residential care carried out between 2015-2019 in English, Spanish, and French. It aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What is the function of residential care as part of a range of care options?
- What facilitates quality in residential care, taking into account of quality in the interactions between children and their carers, and in how residential care is organised?
- What effect does residential care have upon outcomes for children and young people?

In addition to an assessment of the evidence in relation to the key research questions, the report looks at terminology and definitions related to residential care, and how they impact our understanding of the evidence. It also highlights what the evidence reveals to inform policy debates and design, as well as development and improvement of services. Finally, gaps in existing research, and avenues for further investigation are put forward.

[Read the Rapid Evidence Review](#)

[Read the Executive Summary](#)

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Rapid Evidence Review Webinar: Quality Care for Children and Residential Care: Evidence and Practice

In March 2021 a webinar was held to launch the Rapid Evidence Review and facilitate a discussion on the findings, and on enhancing policy and practice.

The webinar offered a review of current scientific evidence on residential care as one of a range of alternative care options, and discussed what researchers have identified in terms of specific challenges and opportunities of its usage, aspects that constitute quality, and outcomes for children.

We welcomed a variety of speakers from around the world, with backgrounds in lived experience, research, policy, practice and promotion of care systems reform:

Valerie Jans (moderator)

Manuela García-Quiroga, Psychologist and academic, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

Robert Porter, CELCIS

Miriana Giraldi, CELCIS

Duc, Care experienced young person, Viet Nam

Chandrika Khatiwada, Director of the Institute for Legal Research and Consultancy, Nepal