

Skills for Family Support Workforce: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Contemporary societies are facing a noticeable shift in family realities, urging to need for the development of new policies, service, and practice orientation that has application across different sectors who serves families with children across the world. A challenge for the field of family support is diversity in conceptual assumptions and epistemological frameworks. Since many disciplines and professionals are working in the family support field, there is a need to map and gain a deeper insight into the skills for the workforce in this field. Under the umbrella of the COST action 'The Pan-European Family Support Research Network: A bottom-up, evidence-based and multidisciplinary approach', a review of the current state of knowledge published from the European studies on family support workforce skills standards is performed. Contributing to the aim of mapping and catalogization of skills standards, key stages of literature review were identified in order to extract and systematize the data. We have considered inclusion and exclusion criteria for this literature review. Inclusion criteria were: a) families living with their children and families using family support services; different methodological approaches were included: qualitative, quantitative, mix method, literature review and theoretical reflections various topic appeared in journals like working with families that are facing difficulties or culturally sensitive practice and relationship-based approaches; b) the dates ranged from 1995 to February 2020. Articles published prior to 1995 were excluded due to modernization of family support services across world; c) the sources and languages included peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals in English. Six databases were searched and once we have extracted all the relevant papers (n=29), we searched the list of reference in each and we found 11 additional papers. In total 40 papers have been extracted from six data basis. Findings could be summarized in: 1) only five countries emerged with production in the specific topic, that is, workforce skills to family support (UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and Spain), 2) studies revealed that diverse skills support family topics were investigated, namely the professional support skills to help families of neglected/abused children or in care; the professional support skills to help families with children who suffer from behavioral problems and families with children with disabilities; and the professional support skills to help minority ethnic parents, 3) social workers were the main targeted professionals' studies albeit other child protection workers were studied too, 4) the workforce skills to family support were grouped in three topics: the qualities of the professionals (attitudes and attributes); technical skills, and specific knowledge. The framework of analyses, literature strategy and findings with study limitations will be further discussed. As an implication, this study contributes and advocates for the structuring of a common base for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary qualification standards for the family support workforce.

Keywords : family support, skill standards, systemic review, workforce

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