

# CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES DURING THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Sonia Fuertes - Commissioner for Social Action of Barcelona

6th November of 2020

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## STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

1. Childhood and Covid-19: situating the topic
2. Policies of promotion and prevention
3. Policies against child poverty
4. Policies against socioeconomic segregation  
in schools
5. Emotional welfare and the participation of  
children during the pandemic
6. International frameworks and city  
strategies
7. Ideas to debate

# 01

## Defining the context: An overview





## Overview

- Economic, social and emotional impact of the pandemic on children and adolescents
- Placing children as subjects of civil and social rights; give the a voice
- The situation of supposed transmitters and asymptomatic
- Socialisation; school closures and inequality (housing conditions, access technology, etc.) Spaces of relationship between equals



## Social Services during Covid-19

Since the appearance of the Covid-19, on March 16, and until September 30, the city's social services have attended a total of 56,192 people, 30% of whom had never been there before or that had not needed it for more than a year. During these six and a half months, 28,360 extraordinary municipal aids have been granted, more than double the previous year.





## Basic Statistics

### Child Poverty data:

Public investment in childhood is very low (0,8% of GDP in Catalonia and 1,2% of GDP in Spain compared to 2,3% in the EU). Barcelona has 9,7% of Children in Severe Poverty, it would be 25% if it wasn't for the City Councils' social transfers and direct aid policies.

29% of adults that take care of children are poor workers in comparison to the 17,9% of poor workers that don't not have care over children

17,1% of children live in homes with a housing overcost (40%+ income is destined to pay housing). If the cost of housing was included in calculating poverty, moderate child poverty would increase from 30,8% to 43,7% and severe child poverty would increase from 9,7% to 26,3%



## Basic Statistics

### **Mental Health data:**

At least 11.000 children and adolescents could find themselves in a situation of psychological suffering or in risk of having a problem of mental health.

Even though children from families with a lower income have a higher risk of suffering from mental health problems (9,7%), it is a transversal problem since we can also find it in high income families (7,2%) or very high income families (3,6%).

In the last years, children and adolescents attended by the Child and Adolescent Mental health Centres, has doubled.

### **Socio-demographic data:**

There is a downward trend in the birth rate. With a 14,9% of the population that are children and adolescents, it is the smallest age group. 38.5% of the population live with children and adolescents.

# 02

## Policies of promotion and prevention







- **100% Summer” Plan** has a budget of 7.4 million euros, 37% more than last year and offers 387,754 places for activities with registration, facilities open exceptionally in August and different training programs. activities throughout the city
- About 69,000 registrations; a total of 14,911 children and adolescents will receive a **scholarship for summer activities** (a total of 2,940,021€ has been allocated)
- **“Pla de Barris” (Neighborhood Plan)** reinforce activities in by launching free activities in “casals”, sports stays and music stays
- Within the 100% summer campaign, facilities also opened in August (civic centers, etc.)
- **Baobab Project:** Community action, consolidating leisure activities in neighborhoods with a weak network.

# 03

## Policies against child poverty



## Services with attention to families and children that continued open during lockdown

- Social Service Centres
- EAIA - Child and adolescent care teams
- Open Centres: extra-scholar services





## Policies against child poverty

- **Social Emergency Plan** (35€ million) with several relevant measures aimed at children:
- **Social Emergency Fund**, 18€ million. It is a grant of between 200€ and 475€ per month, depending on the income and number of family members. It is distributed through the **Barcelona Solidarity Wallet Card** throughout the second half of 2020. The measure innovates in the provision of aid, eliminates bureaucracy in administrative procedures by simplifying the process, and saves management and gives more autonomy to beneficiary families
- **Concilia Project**: Babysitting service

# 04

## Policies against socioeconomic segregation in schools



## Policies against child poverty

- Actions within the **Emergency Plan Against Segregation**, for equal opportunities and educational success.
- Objectives: to guarantee the detection of students in a serious situation of vulnerability, the balanced redistribution in the educational network and the allocation of compensatory resources to guarantee equal opportunities



## Policies against child poverty

- **Social pricing** in the case of nursery schools, is also an important policy pursued by the city council in the fight against socio-economic segregation.
- **Digital gap:** A new government measure is being worked on to address inequalities on children's' access to internet and computers



## Policies against child poverty

The **adaptation of school environments at an urban level** in order to expand and pacify the areas at the exits of schools and the **reduction of car traffic** in order to make them safer and healthier for children.

4.6€ million will be invested, and the measures will benefit 26,217 students and will mean more space reserved for pedestrians, with **living and play areas**.

317 School centers and their environments have been adapted so that they can meet health requirements and protect the educational community with the resumption of classes



# 05

Emotional welfare and  
the participation of  
children during the  
pandemic



- Previously existing services: **Centre for Families with Adolescents** (working with parenting skills)
- **Municipal Strategy Against Loneliness (2020-2030)**: Face-to-face virtual services and resources that guide and accompany people in solitude, awareness, strengthening accessible spaces and community networks in neighbourhoods, amongst others.



- **Mental Health Plan (2016-2022):** The plan prioritizes prevention in groups of children, adolescents; addressing territorial inequality in the distribution of resources, expanding psychological care and personalised support for people with mental disorder
- **“Konsulta’m” project:** A psychological support service aimed at adolescents and professionals who work with teenagers. Part of the Mental Health Plan
- **“Aquí T’escoltem” Project:** a service for young people, 12 to 20, which provides tools and resources to strengthen their personal and social skills
- **“Estimat Diari” Project:** Children express their feelings and ask questions to the Mayor during Covid-19 pandemic

# 07

## International frameworks and city strategies



## **International Frameworks**

- Convention on the rights of the Child (1989)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 2030 Agenda

## **Barcelona City Council Strategies**

- Focus on Childhood and Citizenship (2017-2020)
- Plan for Gender Justice (2016-2020)
- Strategy for the Inclusion and Reduction of Social Inequalities in Barcelona (2017-2027)
- Mental Health Plan (2016-2022)
- Emergency Plan against Scholar Segregation (2019-2020)

# 07

## Ideas to debate





## Three basic ideas for childhood policies

- Public Policies centred around civil and social rights
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Intergenerational transmission of Poverty



“There are three possible options for increasing effectiveness in reducing child poverty: maintaining and increasing the amount of dependent child benefit, raising the household income threshold so that people can access these benefits in order to reach people with more moderate poverty and eventually converting personal income tax deductions for each thread”

**“How to reduce child poverty in Spain? Analysis and Recommendations ” UNICEF**





The deployment of the European Child Guarantee announced by the European Commission is important. It must be a useful tool serves to extend guaranteed income to families suffering from child poverty in all European cities.

## **European Child Guarantee**

The protection of the right to housing by public administrations, especially in all those measures that mitigate the extra cost of housing. The home environment is important for the creation of a healthy family environment and for the material and psychological well-being of children.

## **Right to Housing Policies**

**Thank you for your time!**

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