

# Features of organizing an effective Parents' Club in an Early Childhood Intervention Service in an emergency situation

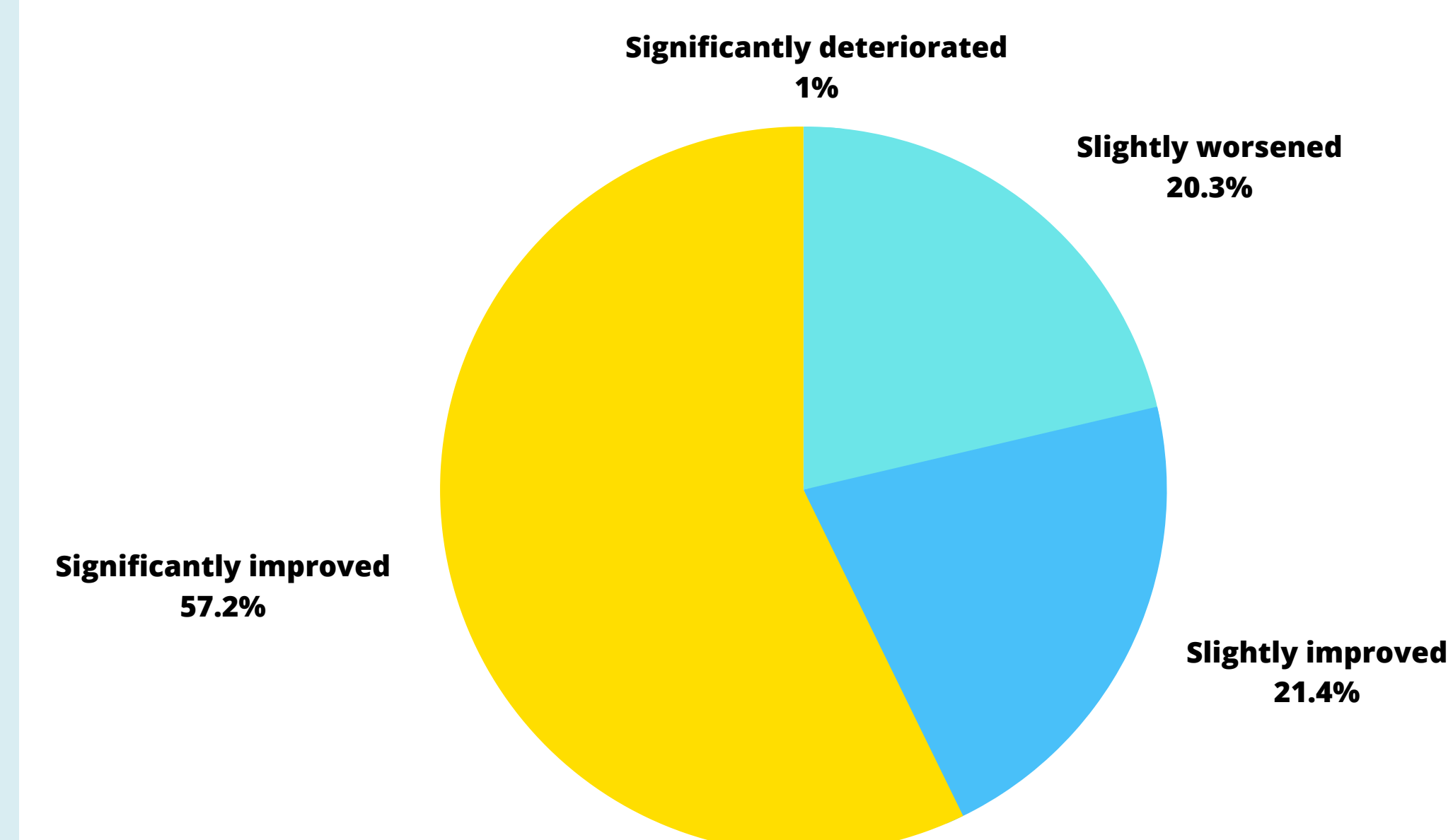
The study presents the result of the effectiveness of the organization of the work of the Parent Club for families in the Service of Early Childhood Intervention. For 5 years, we have been involving parents of children from 0 to 4 years old with psychophysical developmental disorders or the risk of their occurrence. The Parents' Club helps to solve issues of social integration of families from Early Childhood Intervention, consider highly specialized issues of Early Childhood Development, correction of developmental disorders, and organize family routines.

## New challenges and transformation

Since **February 24, 2022**, Ukraine has been subjected to new tests. In our country, **the war** has been going on for more than a year, and families from early intervention are experiencing tremendous and prolonged stress, which affects all areas of life and has a negative impact on the psychological and emotional state. Many families have been forced to leave their homes and continue to experience great stress in relatively safe environments. This is what prompted us to a new transformation of the services provided by the parent club. Almost from the very beginning of the war, the club resumed its activities and the most popular direction was the psychological support of families.

## Results The effectiveness of visiting the Parents' Club

The diagram shows indicators of the emotional state of parents after visiting the parents' club from the beginning of hostilities to the present time.



## Difficulties

Many parents need psychological support during difficult periods in their lives. For example, when making a medical diagnosis of a child or the risks of violations, with the complexity of communication between the family and the outside world. The global Pandemic turned out to be a strong acting stress factor (from March 2020 to the present day), families experienced a severe lack of communication, which significantly affected intra-family relationships and negatively affected the development of young children.

### The most affected were:

- the communicative,
- emotional,
- personal spheres of development.

This further exacerbated the stressful effect on the psyche of parents and increased the importance of psychological support for them.

## New areas of work of the Parent Club

Most of the requests from parents were about the topic of:

- fear of losing a loved one,
- home,
- work,
- and getting on with the daily routine.

As time passed, the situation of establishing daily routines worsened as unforeseen difficulties arose with the supply of electricity, and families were forced to adapt again.

For the effective functioning of the club, we again transformed the types of assistance and switched to a mixed mode of holding meetings: **online and offline**.

Taking into account the needs of families, we have created new areas of work for the parent club.

## Parents' statements

*The most important thing is support. A lot of valuable and important information, support from specialists and parents. A place where you can share your thoughts and get new experiences, where you can ask about what you don't know and get a lot of answers. I am very grateful for every meeting of the parent club for every information provided, and stories that everyone is able to share and be heard.*

*These meetings helped me, I realized that I am not alone and not only I have problems and that everyone can help each other by uniting. I really appreciate and love these meetings.*

*Found friends, companions. I was able to leave the child to the nanny! I believed in my own strength.*

*I get a lot of information about the upbringing and care of the baby. We have pleasant relationships with mothers of children with Down syndrome, we exchange experiences. It's great that you do art therapy and we were on a free photo shoot, it's incredibly nice.*

## Transformation of the form of work of the Parent Club

Given these factors, it was during this period that we were forced to transform and adapt the types of work of the Parent Club. The Club began to function **online** and found a great response among families in the Early Childhood Intervention Service. Due to the sharp increase in the need for consulting by specialists - professionals, our team has attracted leading international experts from other countries. This increased the level of interest and competence in the topics addressed, as well as increased general awareness of Early Childhood Development.



## Conclusions

To demonstrate the effectiveness of holding a Parent Club during periods of complex emergencies. We conducted a survey among the parents of children from the Early Childhood Intervention Service, the results of which confirm the importance of this kind of psychological support.

Given the research data, we can conclude that the Parent Club is effective in Early Childhood Intervention during emergency situations. The Parents' Club complements individual meetings of families with specialists and helps parents become more competent and self-confident. With the help of various organized events and meetings, the psycho-emotional state of parents is significantly improved, which also has a positive effect on the child.