

EAP/ECPCP/ISSOP CHILD ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP STATEMENT ON TRAINING IN ADVOCACY

Advocacy is an essential element of practicing paediatrics and caring for children. (1) Advocacy means speaking out for the disempowered. Actions taken seeking to change policies, positions and programmes, are especially necessary in paediatrics, as children are usually unable to speak out for themselves. (2)

The European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP), Paediatric Section of UEMS (Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes), basically wants that all infants, children's, adolescents and young adults who live in Europe, regardless of race, creed, social condition or environmental circumstances, attain their optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being; all this by making sure that there is an adequate workforce of appropriately trained physicians who are capable of administering the best possible care to children. (3)

The EAP Child Advocacy Working Group main objectives are to promote Advocacy as an essential part of the paediatric practice, to contribute to research in the field and to boost training in Advocacy as part of the paediatric curriculum. The strategy requires a systemic approach across all levels of paediatric care and inter sectorial cooperation (social services, education and child care agencies), with internal (other EAP Working Groups) and external partners (other paediatric associations, NGOs). The Advocacy WG has established a partnership with the ECPCP (European Confederation of Primary Care Paediatricians) and ISSOP (International Society of Social Paediatrics), so that the Advocacy WG functions as a shared WG of the three societies.

EAP, ECPCP AND ISSOP want to emphasize the relevance of an appropriate training in Advocacy for paediatric trainees and any physicians involved in the care of children and adolescents.

Advocacy should be a fundamental part of the paediatric curriculum.

The Global Paediatric Education Consortium (GPEC) is an initiative of leaders from medical education, training and accreditation organizations throughout the world, to help increase the quality and quantity of trained competent paediatricians and paediatric sub-specialists worldwide. GPEC has developed the Global Paediatric Curriculum (GPC) as an exhaustive outline of Skills, Procedures and Patient Care Knowledge that can be used to create local training materials worldwide. The GPC is built upon a competency-based framework of 12 core competences deemed necessary by the global education community.

Health Advocacy and Children's Rights, recognized in the GPC as one of the 12 core competences, comprises the ability of the resident to respond to individual patient health needs and issues as part of patient care, and to understand how to provide effective health care in local communities. Among others, abilities to be mastered during training include identifying opportunities for advocacy, health promotion and disease prevention, and the unique vulnerability of the child to social, resource and environmental disruptions and stress. The resident must be able to recognize the determinants of health of children, including barriers to access to care and resources, and to identify vulnerable or marginalized populations and respond appropriately. (4)

EAP, ECPCP and ISSOP advise that the administrations involved in developing and running of paediatric training programs in the European countries, include abilities and competences related to Child Advocacy as an essential part of paediatric medical education at all levels: residency, accreditation/certification and professional continuous development programs.