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SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN:

NEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR THEIR PROVISION

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The research was based on 2023 data and was conducted at the request of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, with the financial and expert support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to identify gaps in the system of providing state assistance for families with children to find possible ways to meet their needs.

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KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, we outlined the following key conclusions:

1. **The existing system of support for families with children has no direct connection to their real needs.** A significant portion of state funding is allocated to birth-related payments, while meeting needs for childcare, nutrition, socialization and inclusive education of children is more urgent. Payments and compensations are an important support instrument, but developed infrastructure and availability of services in communities are more critical for supporting an adequate standard of living and development of families with children.
2. **Social support for families with children primarily focuses on the needs of children, leaving the needs of their parents out of focus.** Not accounting for parents' needs can affect their desire to give birth, adopt or raise children, and also negatively impacts the living standards of the children themselves. Another obstacle is placing additional responsibilities on women during childcare and child-rearing. This manifests in disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work and the necessity to take childcare leave, which hinders professional development and career growth. Due to the full-scale war and mobilization of men, many women are forced to raise children independently.
3. **The state provides limited opportunities for care of children with disabilities.** The presence of preschool/school educational institutions partially solves the childcare problem, as children spend a significant part of the day under the supervision of educators/teachers. At the same time, for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, this option is less accessible. A child with disability requires adapted infrastructure of educational institutions and appropriate care skills from educators and teachers. Children from vulnerable groups have a number of critically important needs that go beyond basic care, but do not receive proper attention from the state. Among them are socialization, inclusive education, medical provision and rehabilitation.
4. **The state provides child's needs for clothing and hygiene products only for newborns.** The “Baby Box” is an example of an instrument that more effectively meets needs through a basic set of goods necessary for the child. However, subsequently parents have no support from the state in ensuring material needs, which is especially important when preparing a child for school (textbooks, clothing, school supplies, art and sports clubs, etc.). Low-income families face additional difficulties in ensuring children's needs due to economic vulnerability. The needs of children from low-income families do not significantly differ from the needs of other families with children, but the disproportionate level of family income relative to expenses may make meeting them impossible.
5. **The state is transforming the school nutrition system. It is a positive step considering the significant impact of quality nutrition on child development.** Nutrition is a basic need for every child, regardless of age, health status, or family

composition. Therefore, special attention should be paid to nutrition during the formation and implementation of family support policy with children.

In order to improve the level of support for families with children, we developed the following key recommendations:

1. **Review existing instruments for material support of families with children.** The positive experience of providing one-time in-kind assistance through the "Baby Box" should be extended to providing children with necessary school supplies. It is also necessary to review the amount of monetary compensation for in-kind assistance so that it corresponds to the real cost of necessary goods, as the current funding volume is insufficient.
2. **Develop and implement measures to support parents.** Such measures should include introducing practices to encourage both parents to take childcare leave on equal terms. This will primarily have a positive impact on women who lose opportunities for professional and career development due to childcare. Attention should be paid to socialization of parents and guardians, such as interest clubs where parents can come together with children, communicate and exchange experience with others. This will promote the spread of knowledge and skills in child-rearing, particularly children with disabilities, and also support the exchange of children's items and clothing, which is especially important for low-income families.
3. **Increase funding for mechanisms to meet children's basic needs for quality nutrition.** Review the necessity of financing nutrition for children affected by the Chornobyl disaster, leaving free meals only for children who have health problems. It is also worth ensuring nutrition for children from low-income families and continuing the practice of increasing school nutrition funding that was initiated in 2024.
4. **Develop measures to compensate childcare expenses.** It is necessary to partially or fully (for low-income families) compensate fees for nurseries and kindergartens, educational and sports institutions that provide childcare or child development. Corresponding compensations should be provided from both state and local budgets. This will positively impact parents' ability to combine professional and family responsibilities.
5. **Establish a comprehensive financial support system that would ensure the well-being of families with children at all stages of childhood and youth.** These payments should be designed based on objective criteria, including the number of children in the household, parental status, family income level, and the child's health condition.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the full-scale war, millions of Ukrainian children are growing up with risks of death, injury, and loss of opportunities for education and development. The exact number of children affected by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation is unknown. According to UNICEF, on average two children become victims daily. These are figures verified by the UN. The true number is probably much higher[1]. The Council of Europe Assembly emphasizes that, despite the fact that no child in Ukraine has escaped the impact of war, all Ukrainian children have the right to enjoy the rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights documents, and the best interests of the child should prevail in making all decisions concerning them[2].

Poverty, lack of access to education, rehabilitation problems, forced migration are just some of the challenges faced by families with children. In 2023, every fifth child in Ukraine suffered from three forms of poverty - monetary, deprivation, and based on the household's self-assessment of its consumption capacity[3]. A separate vulnerable group is children with disabilities, who are not provided with an adequate volume of rehabilitation services due to the absence of specialists in physiotherapy and therapeutic physical culture[4]. Another consequence of war is the destruction or damage of infrastructure whose users included children. According to KSE Institute, the total assessment of infrastructure damage in education amounts to $6.8 billion USD, in healthcare - $3.1 billion USD, in the social sphere - $0.2 billion USD[5]. These and other factors are the reason for migration of families with children abroad. It is not known for certain how many children have currently left Ukraine, but the educational ombudsman estimates their number at over 2 million people[6].

The needs of families with children are a priority for all countries with high levels of socio-economic development. Society's well-being depends on the desire of men and women to give birth to or adopt children, opportunities to combine professional and family responsibilities, and ensuring conditions for social, psychological, and worldview development for the child. In the absence of corresponding opportunities, risks are created not only for individual families, but for the state as a whole - through declining birth rates, increasing cases of domestic violence, growing poverty, and strengthening internal and external migration of families in search of better living conditions. This study was prepared at the request of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (hereinafter - Ministry of Social Policy) with financial support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to identify gaps in the state assistance system for families with children and search for possible ways to meet their needs.

[1] UNICEF statement from May 13, 2024, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-2000-children-killed-or-injured-escalation-war-ukraine

[2] Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2529 (2024) https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33348/html

[3] Report "SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATE OF HOUSEHOLDS OF UKRAINE", UNICEF Kyiv 2024 https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/media/46041/file/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%96%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8%CC%86%20%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%2025.07.24%20(1).pdf.pdf

[4] Annual report on the state of observance and protection of human and citizen rights and freedoms in Ukraine in 2023 https://ombudsman.gov.ua/report-2023/rozdil-4-prava-dytyny

[5] Evaluation of KSE Institute as of January 2024 https://kse.ua/ua/about-the-school/news/zagalna-suma-zbitkiv-zavdana-infrastrukturi-ukrayini-zrosla-do-mayzhe-155-mlrd-otsinka-kse-institute-stanom-na-sichen-2024-roku/

[6] According to the information provided on the website of the Educational Ombudsman https://eo.gov.ua/ponad-milyon-ukrainskykh-doshkilniat-ta-milyon-shkoliariv-perebuvaiut-za-kordonom-yak-zberehty-zv-iazok-z-ukrainoiu /2023/12/26/

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study "Support for families with children: needs and instruments for their provision" was conducted as a desk study in 2024 and covers the period of 2023. In the process of preparation, regulatory and legal acts of Ukraine, budget programs of the Ministry of Social Policy, analytical reports of national and international experts covering the issues of supporting families with children were analysed. Within the framework of comparative analysis, international experience of supporting families with children was studied, especially in the sphere of childcare, which is a priority problem for most families. The research was formatted in text with the use of charts and figures.

To analyze the international experience of providing social support to families with children, countries with advanced social support systems were selected, such as Canada, Germany, France and Sweden. These countries have diverse programs for supporting families with children that may be useful for improving the social support and protection system in Ukraine. Information about ways of supporting families with children in the mentioned countries was obtained from official websites of government bodies and national insurance institutions.

The research hypothesis is that the existing support system for families with children does not have a clear connection with the real needs of families with children. Due to the absence of a unified child support system with identified problems, the state focuses on ensuring the implementation of individual instruments. Moreover, the psychological and emotional state of parents remains outside attention, as well as how child-rearing and childcare affects them. This may have long-term consequences for child development.

The purpose of the study is to establish the connection between children's needs, their parents' needs and available support instruments in the state, as well as to form recommendations for central government authorities on improving policies targeted at supporting families with children. To achieve this objective, we identified basic children's needs and distributed them into priority and non-priority ones depending on age. Based on the results, we formed different family models and analyzed the current level of their support from the state. Differences in family income level, presence of a child with disability, and guardians who assume parental functions were taken into account. Based on research results, the research team formed conclusions, reflected in recommendations for improving the mechanism of providing support to families with children.

To achieve the research objective, a number of tasks were defined. The completion of each can be considered as research stages:

- identifying basic needs of families with children and factors that influence them;
- identifying common practices in Ukraine and abroad that satisfy corresponding needs;
- analysing national approaches to ensuring needs for childcare, education, meeting household needs of families with children, socialization and psychological support;
- analysing international experience in ensuring needs of families with children;
- modelling the support system for specific families with children taking into account various factors;

- analysing Ministry of Social Policy expenditures directed at supporting families with children in 2023

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative method involved collecting and analysing information from normative legal acts. As a result, it was identified how the state defines low-income families and the list of instruments for their support. The quantitative method included collecting information regarding the volume of budget fund distribution between different assistance instruments.

Conclusions and recommendations are based on a comparative analysis of domestic and international experience in implementing social support programs for families with children. Recommendations contain selected models and approaches from other countries that could be adapted in Ukraine. They are aimed at improving effectiveness and ensuring a higher level of meeting the needs of families with children.

CHAPTER 1. NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND AVAILABLE SOCIAL INSTRUMENTS TO ADDRESS THEM

1.1. Identification and list of needs of families with children

The category "families with children" can encompass different groups of state support recipients depending on composition. There is no universal type of family. It is variable and can change depending on a number of factors: number of children, their age, health status, presence of a single father/mother, belonging to a certain vulnerable group or group with special status (children from among internally displaced persons, children of military personnel). According to these factors, family faces certain needs that it cannot always satisfy independently. Each family with a child is unique, and therefore the needs of each family will differ.

Basic needs are usually defined as the minimum set of elements necessary for a person to live and ensure a dignified life[7]. The list of basic needs includes food, clothing, shelter, health and safety, and education. In fact, these are needs that cover the first two basic levels of Maslow's hierarchy – physiological needs and safety[8]. Other levels of needs, such as the need for esteem and self-actualization, are desirable but not classified as basic. Due to the war, Ukrainian children's needs for safety have become extremely urgent, which is connected not only to physical but also psychological well-being. Survey results demonstrate that 62% of mothers report that their children witnessed or experienced "war-related events." Also, almost half of children fear loud sounds (48%), and they show irritability (37%)[9]. Beyond the direct impact of warfare, family separation poses another destructive factor affecting psychosocial well-being. According to the UNICEF report, more than 4 out of 5 Ukrainian children consider separation from their family to be the greatest threat to them[10].

Children have specific developmental needs that vary depending on age and stage of development and require targeted interventions. For example, for babies it is important to ensure proper nutrition and medical care, while older children may need more educational and social integration, psychological support, which are interconnected with growing up and changing their own social roles (Table 1). Children need a stable environment that ensures their long-term development.

[7] Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_150#:~:text=Definition,and%20achieve%20a%20decent%20life

[8] https://www.thoughtco.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4582571#:~:text=Updated%20on%20May%2014%2C%202024,esteem%2C%20and%20self%2Dactualization .

[9] Survey. Problems of Ukrainian children during the war: II wave (October 29 - November 2, 2023) https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_ucap_children_112023_ua.pdf

[10] Goldman, P., & Stuer, F. (2024). Integrated Social Protection in Ukraine Cash Benefits For Children Within Ukraine's Better Care Initiative. *Maestral International*.

Table 1: Children and their families' needs depending on child's age

Basic child needs			
0-3 Years	**3-6 Years**	**6-14 Years**	**14-18 Years**
Nutrition (including Infant formula)	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition
Healthcare	Healthcare	Healthcare	Healthcare
Clothing and other items	Clothing and other items	Clothing and other items	Clothing and other items
Childcare	Childcare	Childcare	Childcare (e.g., for children with disabilities)
Parental socialization	Sports and cultural activities	Sports and cultural activities	Sports and cultural activities
Mental and psychological support for parents	Preschool education	Education	Education
	Transportation	Transportation	Transportation
	Social and psychological support (including for children who experienced violence)	Social and psychological support (including for children who experienced violence)	Social and psychological support (including for children who experienced violence)
	Adaptation for children with disabilities	Adaptation for children with disabilities	Adaptation for children with disabilities
	Rest and health improvement	Rest and health improvement	Rest and health improvement

Source: developed by the authors

When assessing the needs of families with children in Ukraine, attention is focused mainly on children and their needs, while parents' needs remain outside the focus. For example, at birth, the child's basic needs are primarily satisfied – "Baby Box", initial vaccinations, child patronage by a nurse, etc. At the same time, the needs of mothers, and especially fathers, remain outside attention. These include having stable work, medical protection, parenting skills, childcare support and socialization. Meeting parents' needs is critically important for the welfare of children and the family as a whole, as these needs are interconnected, although not identical.

The state uses a number of individual instruments to cover the needs of families with children Among such instruments, one can identify those that cover the need for *care, nutrition, clothing and hygiene, treatment, social and psychological support, education, health improvement and recreation*. Their practical implementation consists of payments, compensations, services (social, medical, educational).

None of the laws regulating social protection currently contains a definition and list of needs of families with children. The Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of Childhood" dated April 26, 2001, No. 2402-III is the primary legal act governing social relations in the sphere of child protection. The corresponding law does not provide a definition and list of child needs, but defines the rights and freedoms of the child, including life and health protection, name and citizenship, adequate standard of living, free expression of opinions and receiving information, protection from all forms of violence[11]. Regarding rights to a sufficient standard of living, Article 8 of the law provides that every

[11] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2402-14#top

child has the right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, intellectual, moral, cultural, spiritual, and social development[12]. The relevant components can be considered as basic to meet child needs. The list of criteria for assessing the needs of families with children is contained in the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy No. 1005 dated July 13, 2018, "On approval of forms for recording social work with families/persons in difficult life circumstances"[13]. It is used for certain categories of families with children who are already in difficult living conditions or are at risk of such a condition. The corresponding list is used to assess the child's physical condition, psychological state, and risks to the well-being. Regarding material needs, the Methodology for determining the subsistence minimum provides a list and cost of a set of food products, non-food products and services[14]. As a result, the corresponding normative legal acts provide understanding of factors that influence determining the level of social vulnerability of a child, but do not establish a general matrix of child needs and interests depending on their age, health status, social status and other characteristics.

The cost of covering the necessary minimum needs of children should correspond to the actual subsistence minimum size for different age groups. As of December 2023, the actual subsistence minimum was 5,830 UAH for children under six and 7,327 UAH for children aged 6–18[15]. The corresponding amount of funds can be considered as the minimum sum when assessing the costs of maintaining one child in 2023. Every family, regardless of its financial status, spends money on maintaining and raising children. Therefore, some economically developed countries provide financial support for families with children without family income restrictions. In Germany, financial support is provided in the amount of 250 euros per month for each child under 18 years old with the possibility of extending payments until 25 years old if the child is studying or has a disability[16]. In Sweden, assistance is provided until the age of 16 if the child attends school and parents pay insurance contributions[17]. Establishing a connection between payment and the child's education motivates parents to be officially employed and pay insurance contributions and also guarantees that children attend educational institutions. For Ukraine, this problem is relevant, as currently almost 1 million children study online: approximately 600 thousand in Ukraine and 400 thousand abroad[18].

Adopting new approaches to meeting the needs of families with children can have a positive effect to stop the trend of decreasing numbers of children in Ukraine. The number of children in Ukraine is decreasing due to hostilities, occupation of some territories, and forced migration. However, negative demographic trends existed even before the full-scale invasion. In the 2019/2020 academic year, 1.23 million people were in preschool education institutions, while in 2022/2023 there were already 934 thousand people. If conditions are created in Ukraine to stimulate childbirth, this will partially neutralize the consequences of negative trends from previous years.

[12] Law of Ukraine "On Childhood Protection" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2402-14#Text

[13] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0943-18#n23

[14] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0281-17#Text

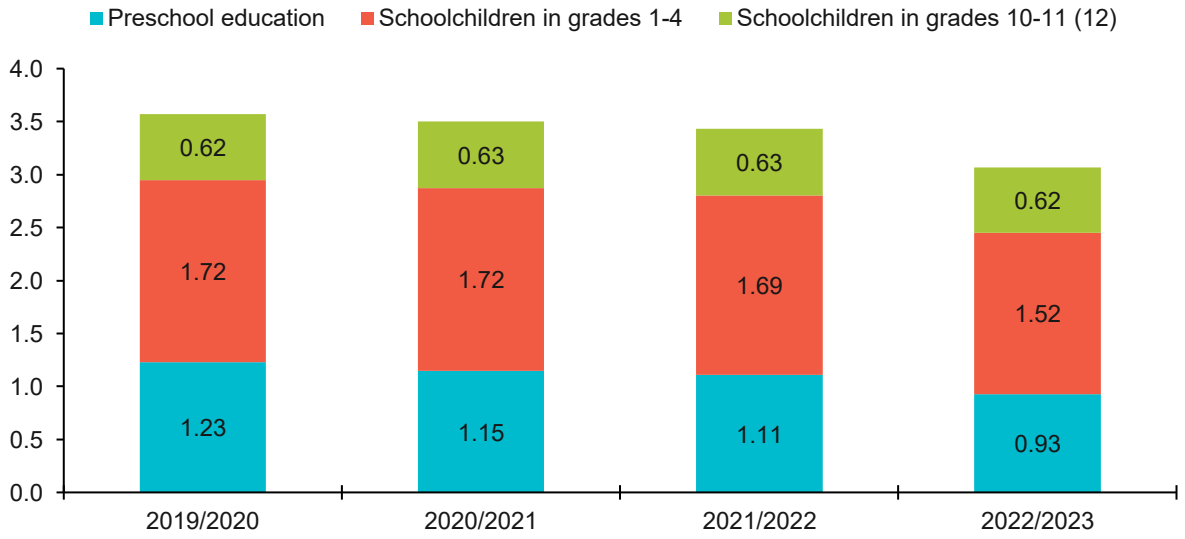
[15] https://dostup.org.ua/request/122353/response/394126/attach/28/12.2023.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

[16] https://familienportal.de/familienportal/familienleistungen/kindergeld/faq/was-ist-kindergeld--124914

[17] https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatperson/foralder/barnbidrag-och-flerbarnstillagg

[18] https://mon.gov.ua/news/shkola-oflain-iak-derzhava-planuie-povernuty-300-tysiach-ditei-do-ochnoho-navchannia

Figure 1. Ratio of the number of children among preschoolers and schoolchildren in grades 1-12, million people



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine

1.2. Features of addressing childcare needs

Parental leave for both parents is an incentive for more intensive return of women to the labour market after giving childbirth. After the end of leave due to pregnancy and childbirth, at the request of the child's mother or father, one of them is granted leave to take care of the child until he/she reaches the age of three. An enterprise, institution, or organization can provide one of the child's parents with partially paid leave and unpaid leave to take care of the child for a longer period of time. Also, during childcare leave, a person may work part-time or from home[19]. A three-year break from work can negatively affect career building. This problem is currently more relevant for women. For example, in 2023, 10,279 civil servants in Ukraine were on childcare leave. Among them, there were only 140 men, or 1.4% of all civil servants who used the right to such leave[20]. One of the reasons for the imbalance in taking leave is the gender pay gap, which amounts to 18.6% in favour of men[21]. This may be one of the reasons why women more often take childcare leave, as this has less negative impact on the family budget than when a man takes such leave. Childcare is also one of the reasons for the imbalance in the ratio of unpaid domestic work duration between women and men. In Ukraine, women spend 2 times more time on unpaid domestic work than men: women - 274 minutes per day, and men - 129 minutes[22]. In households with three or more people, women spend 3.5 times more time for childcare than men. Due to war and mobilization of men, women have to spend more time on childcare and upbringing, as well as providing psychological support to children due to the absence of the father.

International experience highlights practices where childcare leave or corresponding payment is mandatory for both parents. In Sweden, measures are purposefully taken to involve men in childcare. Childcare leave in Sweden lasts 480 days, of which 90 are reserved for one of the

[19] Article 18. Law "About vacations" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/504/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#n202

[20] https://nads.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/5/DIYALNIST/KSDS/infografika4kv23-1.pdf

[21] Order of the CMU dated September 15, 2023. No. 815-r "On the approval of the National strategy for overcoming the gender pay gap for the period until 2030 and the approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation for 2023-2025" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/815- 2023-%D1%80#top

[22] https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/csr_prezent/2020/ukr/st_rozv/publ/SDGs%20Ukraine%202021%20Monitoring%20Report%20ukr.pdf

parents and cannot be transferred to another family member[23]. If in 2016, mothers accounted for 75% of all paid leave days and men for 25%, then in 2022 the mothers' share decreased to 70%, while the men's share increased to 30%[24]. In Canada, after the birth of a child, parents can receive childcare benefits, which must be divided between both parents. Payments can be standard or extended. Standard benefits are paid for up to 40 weeks and can be split between parents, but one parent cannot receive more than 35 weeks of standard benefits. Extended benefits are paid for up to 69 weeks, and one parent cannot receive more than 61 weeks of benefits[25]. Implementing the experience of mandatory involvement of men in childcare can have a positive impact both on involving mothers in the labor market and on increasing the father's role in child-rearing.

The state satisfies the need for care through payments for the care of children with disabilities and the "municipal nanny" service for certain categories. Social payments that cover the need for childcare also include the payment of state social assistance to children with disabilities with a care allowance. The amount of assistance depends on the disability group and age and accordingly varied in 2023 from 2,678 UAH to 6,901 UAH[26]. The "municipal nanny" service provides compensation to parents, which can be directed to the nanny service provided by an individual or a legal entity-entrepreneur. In 2023, 1.5 thousand people used this service monthly, with an average monthly reimbursement of 5,350 UAH [27]. Eligibility for compensation for the "municipal nanny" service is granted to: "citizens of Ukraine, foreign nationals or stateless persons who are parents or guardians of a child who needs additional care, or a child under three years old, and who are persons with disabilities group I or II. These individuals must legally reside in the territory of Ukraine and have a contract with a municipal nanny[28]. "

After the changes in 2024, the service can be used by parents or guardians of a child who care for:

- *a child with disabilities under the age of six, a child under the age of six suffering from severe illness; a child under the age of six, if one of the parents or guardians is a person with disability of group I or II;*
- *a child under the age of three, if one of the parents or guardians is an internally displaced person;*
- *a child under the age of six who, together with his parents or guardians, lives in the territory of an administrative-territorial unit, where it is impossible to ensure, in accordance with the decisions of military administrations and local self-government bodies, the functioning of preschool education institutions, necessary for the implementation of state guarantees of ensuring a safe educational process in conditions of martial law, emergency situation or state of emergency (special period)[29].*

Care support beneficiaries are not only children, but also their parents. If a father or mother takes on care services, they limit themselves not only in the opportunity to build a career, but also to

[23] https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatperson/foralder/foraldrapenning

[24] https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatperson/foralder/det-som-ar-bra-delar-man-lika-pa

[25] https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html

[26] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of citizens who find themselves in difficult life circumstances" for 2023

[27] According to the report on the implementation of the of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023

[28] Resolution of the CMU dated January 30, 2019. No. 68 "Some issues of providing care services for children up to three years old "Municipal Nanny" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/68-2019-%D0%BF#Text

[29] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/664-2024-%D0%BF#Text

earn income, which affects the level of financial security of the family. To avoid economic vulnerability of the family, France provides childcare assistance. The amount of assistance can be provided to one parent or both. The corresponding assistance is provided if the mother/father completely stopped working or were forced to switch to part-time employment. Payment is provided for caring for children under three years old, but it can be extended if the family has at least two children as dependents and there are no places in nurseries or other childcare facilities[30]. In addition to direct payments that replace income and allow for self-care activities, international experience has other practices. In Canada, reimbursements are provided for childcare-related expenses, such as payments to caregivers, nursery and kindergarten fees, and fees for educational and sports institutions offering childcare services[31]. In Germany, services for low-income families can cover the costs of preschool educational institutions[32]. The listed instruments are primarily aimed at parents and the need for their reintegration into the labour market after childbirth.

Insurance payments are a universal type of support for parents who care for sick children. The insurance system in Ukraine guarantees payments in case of: caregiving for a sick child; caregiving for a child under the age of 14 or a child with a disability under the age of 18 for the entire period of rehabilitation assistance, if there is a medical certificate confirming the need for external care; caregiving for pregnancy and childbirth[33]. This practice is an international standard; however differences may concern the amount of payments and the number of days covered by insurance. For example, in Ukraine, assistance due to temporary incapacity for caring for a sick child under 14 years old is paid to the insured person from the first day for the period during which the child, according to the doctor's conclusion, needs care, but not more than 14 calendar days[34]. In Sweden, payments for caregiving of a sick child can cover up to 120 days per year for each child. If multiple caregivers are involved, these days are divided among them—for example, each may take 60 days[35]. Implementing equal distribution of insurance payments between both parents is also a necessary condition that will ensure the sustainability of women's participation in the labour market and their professional development.

At the local level, social services are aimed at providing care for children with disabilities and orphaned children. Social care services cover the needs of children with disabilities from 3 to 18 years of age. A separate service is also provided for temporary respite for parents of children with disabilities. For orphaned children and children deprived of parental care, a social service is provided for organizing living conditions close to family conditions. At the same time, it should be noted that the quality of providing the above-mentioned services may differ in individual regions, which may result in differences in evaluating the effectiveness of one service or another.

Care for children with special educational needs is also provided in preschool education institutions. As of the end of 2023, there were 1,426 institutions in Ukraine that have special groups for children with hearing, speech, vision, intellectual impairments, musculoskeletal disorders, or mental developmental delays. These institutions operated at 85% capacity. Total of 52,302 available places were attended by 44,272 children[36].

[30] https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F32485

[31] https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/tax-return/completing-a-tax-return/deductions-credits-expenses/ line-21400-child-care-expenses/expenses-claim.html

[32] https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/3266257619163?localize=false

[33] Art. 13 of the Law of Ukraine "On Mandatory State Social Insurance" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1105-14#top

[34] p. 3 Art. 15 Law "On mandatory state social insurance" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1105-14#Text

[35] https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatperson/foralder/vard-av-barn-vab

[36] https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/english/x.bmp

Another significant problem in the sphere of childcare may be the reduction of preschool education institutions. From 2019 to 2023, the number of preschool education institutions decreased from 14,813 to 13,452 institutions[37]. The reduction occurred not only at the expense of the areas that were occupied and where hostilities are taking place. The corresponding trend occurs in most oblasts. In contrast, regions such as Kyiv, Lviv, and Chernivtsi have seen an increase in preschool institutions. This may be due to migration of families with children from areas affected by the war in the East and South of Ukraine. This has created a greater demand for new kindergartens.

- *Social service "Care at home" is a set of measures for children with disabilities (from 3 to 18 years old), which are held at the place of residence (at home) of the social services recipient during the working day of the social services provider and consists in providing assistance in self-care to persons who partially or completely lost / did not acquire the ability to self-care[38].*

- *Social service "Day care for children with disabilities" is a set of measures for children (aged 3 to 18 years old), including social rehabilitation; social and labour adaptation and organization of leisure time; participation of recipients of social services and members of their families, their relatives in solving specific social problems; care; training of the legal representatives of the social service recipient, which are conducted during the working day of the social service provider, but not less than 4 hours a day, without providing a place of residence[39].*

- *Social service "Respite care for parents or guardians, who provide care for children with disabilities" is a set of measures to provide temporary care and upbringing of a child with disabilities, for a period of no more than 30 calendar days per year, who needs permanent outside care, at the place of residence or stay, in an institution/facility that provides social services, for the period of absence of parents or guardians, who take care of a child with a disability, for the purpose of alleviating their physical, psychological and emotional burden associated with providing long-term care for a child with a disability[40]*

- *The social service "Care and upbringing of children in family-like condition" is a comprehensive social service aimed at creating living conditions similar to those of s family. It includes fostering and supporting self-care and household management skills necessary for independent living; nurturing and developing individual abilities; facilitating access to educational, medical, rehabilitation, and social services. Family-like conditions involve organizing life and household activities for the service recipient in a family-like environment, enabling participation in household tasks, fulfilling individual needs, and exercising their rights and interests in an atmosphere of safety, trust, mutual respect, care, and compassion. The service also aims to facilitate the child's return to their biological family, placement in family-based care, preparation for independent living, and social integration into society [41].*

[37] https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2023/osv/osv_rik/dosh_osv_Ukr_2023.xls

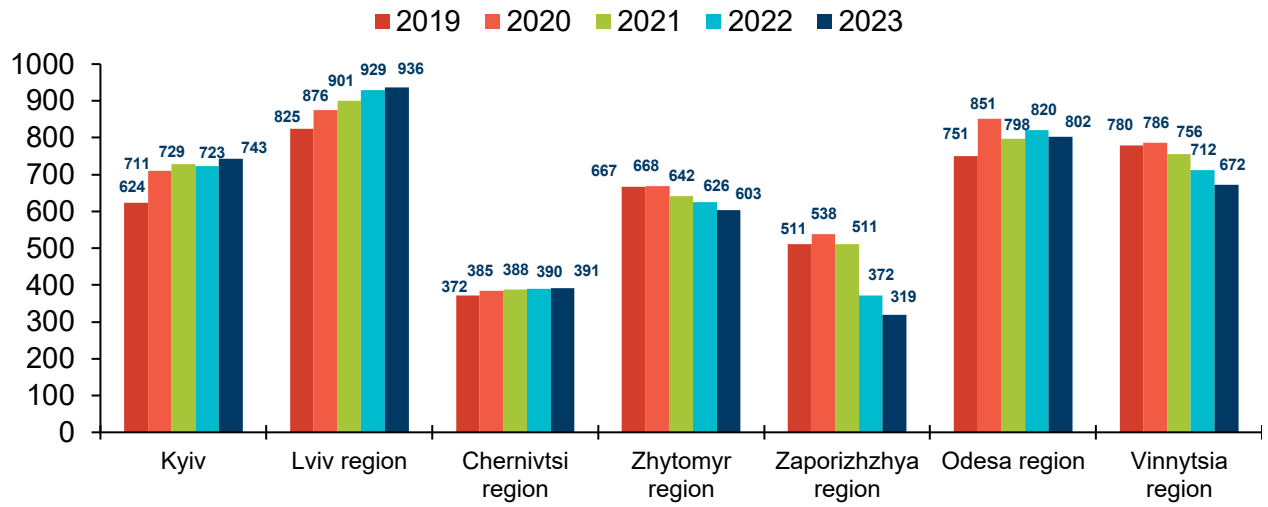
[38] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of November 13, 2013, No. 760 On Approval of the State Standard of Home Care https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1990-13#Text

[39] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy dated April 5/2023, No. 119-H "On approval of the State Standard of Social Day Care Services for Children with Disabilities" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0898-23#Text

[40] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of January 19, 2021, No. 13 “On the approval of the State Standard of Social Services for Respite Care for Parents or Guardians Caring for Children with Disabilities” https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0534 -21#Text

[41] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of March 9, 2021, No. 115 “On the approval of the State Standard of Social Services for the Care and Education of Children in Family-like Conditions” https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0856-21#Text

Figure 2. Number of educational preschool institutions by region



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine

In Ukraine, predominantly state and municipal out-of-school education institutions operate. Private extracurricular institutions are 24 times fewer. As of the end of 2023, Ukraine had 12,911 out-of-school education institutions of state and municipal ownership and 541 of private and corporate ownership. Kyiv city contains 30% of private and corporate ownership institutions (161 institutions). Considering the number of places and the number of children in the corresponding institutions, it can be concluded that state and municipal out-of-school education institutions are 86% filled, while private ones are 70% filled[42]. This may indicate a lower level of parental interest in sending children to private institutions due to their cost, or the possible absence of difference in the quality of educational services compared to state institutions.

1.3. Features of addressing household needs of families with children

The state provides the child's needs for clothing and hygiene products only for newborns. The "Baby Box" service is provided at the expense of the state budget. This is a one-time in-kind aid from the state to families with newborn child, or monetary compensation equivalent to its value[43]. The "Baby Box" contains over 90 items, including diapers, swaddling cloths, blankets, a mattress, a towel, hygiene products, toys, etc.[44]. In 2023, the average cost of the one-time in-kind assistance "Baby Box" or the average size of monetary compensation for its value was 6,731.5 UAH, and the number of recipients was 198,800 persons[45]. The “Baby Box” is an example of an instrument that more effectively meets needs by providing necessary items, while monetary compensation does not cover their actual cost. In 2021, auditors of the Accounting Chamber emphasized that the size of monetary compensation for the "baby box” value (5,000 UAH) is insufficient for parents to independently purchase the complete list of goods included in the "baby box". When purchasing similar items at retail, its cost actually increases from 5,000 UAH to 9,000 UAH[46].

[42] https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2023/osv/osv_rik/dosh_osv_Ukr_2023.xls

[43] Resolution of the CMU dated November 25, 2020. No. 1180 Some issues of providing one-time in-kind assistance at the birth of a child "Baby Box". https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1180-2020-%D0%BF?find=1&text=%D0%BA%D0 %BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%B5%D0%BD#top

[44] Information provided by the Ministry of Social Policy in Ukraine https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/23353.html?PrintVersion

[45] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023

[46] Information from web site of the Accounting Chamber https://rp.gov.ua/PressCenter/News/?id=1116

A separate problem is the lack of targeted instruments that would help families with children of preschool and school age in providing clothes and hygiene. The only identified instrument is the social service "In-kind assistance," which provides food products, personal hygiene items and products, sanitary-hygienic products and care products, clothing, footwear and other essential items. Recipients of this service can be low-income persons[47]. Also, social assistance to low-income families should respond to the corresponding needs of children. After all, when assigning social assistance, the subsistence minimum for children is taken into account, which is formed, in particular, by non-food goods. The corresponding norms for children of different ages are established by the government[48]. In 2023, the average monthly assistance amount per one low-income family was 5,498.7 UAH[49]. However, according to KSE Institute, the legally established subsistence minimum, from which the assistance amount is calculated, does not correspond to the level of the actual subsistence minimum[50]. Therefore, the size of social assistance cannot cover the needs of families with children.

The state centrally covers nutritional needs in educational institutions only for children affected by the Chernobyl disaster. Meeting the needs of children from other vulnerable groups is the responsibility of local authorities. Free meals are provided for orphaned children; children deprived of parental care; children with special educational needs who study in special and inclusive classes (groups); children from families receiving assistance under the Law of Ukraine "On State Social Assistance to Low-income Families"; students of educational institutions under the Law of Ukraine "On the Status and Social Protection of Citizens Affected by the Chernobyl Disaster"; children from among internally displaced persons; children who have the status of a child affected by military actions and armed conflicts; children from families of deceased war veterans, persons of other categories defined by legislation and/or decision of the local self-government body[51]. However, the Ministry of Social Policy budget only finances nutrition costs for children affected by the Chornobyl disaster. In 2023, the average expenditure for providing free meals to one affected child was 63 UAH per day[52]. If a child affected by the Chornobyl disaster does not eat at an educational institution, monetary compensation is paid[53]. Compensation is also provided to affected children who do not eat at secondary general schools, vocational-technical educational institutions, as well as students at colleges and technical schools (vocational schools) located in territories of radioactive contamination, children with disabilities caused by the Chornobyl disaster. This compensation is granted for all days they do not attend these institutions until they reach adulthood. The compensation amount is fixed and comprises 360 UAH per month for children aged 6–10 years, 370 UAH per month for children aged 11–14 years, 380 UAH per month for children aged 15–18 years proportionally to school days when children did not eat[54]. Since there is no direct correlation between the needs of children and the Chernobyl disaster, and considering the time elapsed since the tragedy (38 years ago), the relevance and mechanism of assigning such payments need to be reviewed.

[47] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of March 25, 2021, No. 147 "On the Approval of the State Standard of Social Services of In-kind Assistance" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0589-21#Text

[48] Resolution of the CMU dated October 11, 2016, No. 780 "On approval of sets of food products, sets of non-food products and sets of services for the main social and demographic groups of the population" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/780-2016-%D0%BF#Text

[49] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Support of low-income families" for 2023

[50] KSE Institute, Analytical note: Increasing the effectiveness of the use of the subsistence minimum as a tool for poverty alleviation in Ukraine https://kse.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Prozhitkoviy-minimum_TSentr-analizu-publichnih-finansiv_Analitichna-zapiska_22-lyutogo_compressed-1.pdf

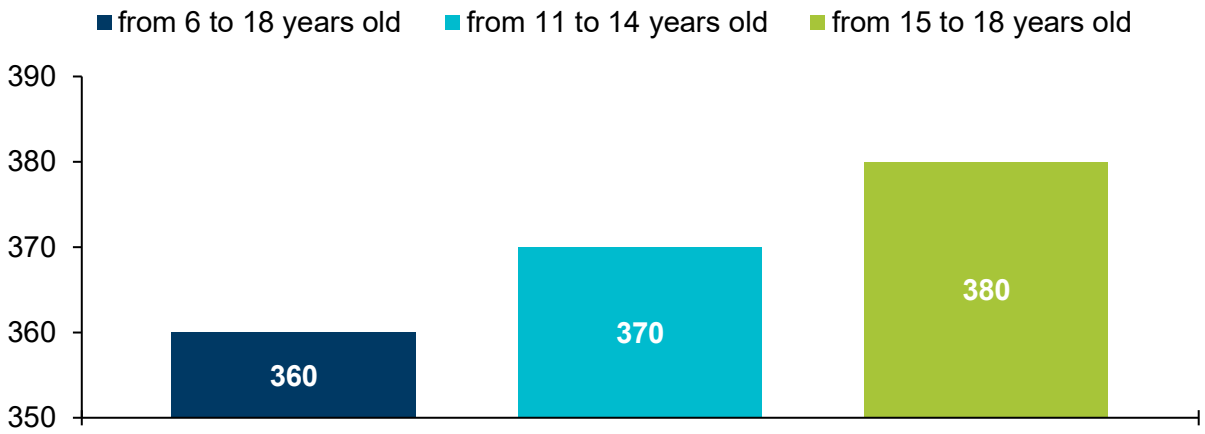
[51] Resolution of the CMU dated March 24, 2021, No. 305 "On the approval of norms and the procedure for the organization of meals in educational institutions and children's health and recreation institutions" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/305-2021-%D0%BF#Text

[52] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of citizens who find themselves in difficult life circumstances" for 2023.

[53] Clause 11 of Article 30 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Status and Social Protection of Citizens Affected by the Chernobyl Disaster" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/796-12#Text

[54] Resolution of the CMU dated February 8, 1997, No. 155 "On the procedure and amounts of compensation payments to children who suffered as a result of the Chernobyl disaster" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/155-97-%D0%BF#Text

Figure 3. Compensation amount for children who do not eat in secondary general education schools, vocational-technical educational institutions, as well as students of colleges and technical schools (vocational schools) located in the areas of radioactive contamination, and children with disabilities as a result of the Chornobyl disaster



Source: Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 08.02.1997 No. 155 "On the Procedure and Amount of Compensation Payments to Children Affected by the Chornobyl Disaster"

Free meals were introduced for primary schoolchildren in 2024. For this purpose, 2 billion UAH was allocated from the state budget and transferred to local communities in the form of a subvention[55]. Currently, only 100 million UAH for free meals is planned in the state budget for 2025. At the same time, expenditures should be increased to about 2.9 billion UAH from funds that will be received by the state budget after adjusting the provisions of the Agreement between Ukraine and the European Commission "Supporting the Rapid Recovery of Ukraine."

1.4. Features of addressing socialization and medical support needs

Social services for children include adaptation and psychological support, however they are primarily focused on addressing existing problems rather than preventing their occurrence. Regulations provide for a range of social services aimed at psychological rehabilitation and adaptation of children from vulnerable groups[56]. Additionally, through a network of specialized support services, assistance is provided to children affected by domestic violence. However, these measures are mainly focused on overcoming existing psychological problems and socialization difficulties. Instead, there are no effective instruments aimed at prevention and elimination of root causes that can lead to such negative condition.

- *Social service "Social support for families raising orphans and children deprived of parental care" is a set of measures that provides assistance in creating and maintaining a positive social and psychological climate in the family, adaptation of the child in new conditions, creation of appropriate conditions for ensuring the individual needs of every orphan and child deprived of parental care in development and education, protection of property, housing and other rights of the child, promotion of education and development of the child, assistance in strengthening/restoring family and socially beneficial ties, in creating and ensuring the conditions for the child's priority right to adoption, preparing the child for leaving the family, including*

[55] https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/v-ukraini-zaprovadyly-bezoplatne-kharchuvannia-dlia-uchniv-pochatkovykh-klasiv-na-2024-rik

[56] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of June 23, 2020, No. 429 "On the Approval of the Classifier of Social Services" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0643-20#Text

independent life[57].

- *Social service "Social adaptation" is a set of measures carried out during the period necessary for the process of active harmonious adaptation of persons who are in difficult life circumstances, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons who have been in specialized or residential institutions, persons who have served a sentence of restricted liberty or imprisonment for a certain period, to the changed conditions of the social environment, aimed at the elimination/adjustment of life restrictions to support social independence, preservation and continuation of their social activity*[58].
- *Social service "Social and psychological rehabilitation" consists of providing short-term accommodation, psychological counselling and psychological-pedagogical correction, development, formation and maintenance of social skills, return of the child to the biological family. Direct beneficiaries are orphans and children deprived of parental care; persons from among orphans and children deprived of parental care; children with behavioural disorders due to parental divorce; abused children and adults; children and adults who have suffered abuse or domestic violence, and those currently or formerly in specialized or residential institutions or recovering from prolonged medical treatment. The service is provided either on-site or semi-residentially at the premises of the service provider.*

Treatment is provided through payments to seriously ill children, and vouchers are provided for children from vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Social Policy budget allocates monetary assistance to seriously ill children who have not been declared disabled. In 2023, the average monthly assistance for one child under six years old was 4,575.5 UAH, and for one child aged 6 to 18 years - 5,633.2 UAH[59]. Health improvement and recreation are provided through the purchase of vouchers to the children's centre "Artek." In 2023, the cost of such a voucher for 21 days was 18,864.3 UAH. A total of 4,445 vouchers were issued[60]. The recipient of budget funds is one of the parents (person replacing him/her) of a child whose place of residence is declared/registered in the territory of Dnipro, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson and Chernihiv oblasts, who is raised in a low-income family and belongs to such categories as a child with disability (capable of self-care) or a child from a large family[61].

1.5. Features of addressing educational and learning needs of children

Children's educational needs are covered though social services and scholarships for students. Social services are aimed at ensuring the rights of children with disabilities in realizing the right to education by providing support in mobility, communication, and socialization.

- *Social service "Care and upbringing of children in family-like conditions" is a comprehensive social service that, among other things, facilitates access to educational services. It is provided stationary in the premises of the social services provider*[62].
- *Social service "Support during inclusive education" is a complex of measures aimed at ensuring full and effective participation of the social service recipient in the educational process by providing support and assistance in mobility, self-care, communication, nutrition, spatial orientation, as well as ensuring safety in the premises, on the territory of preschool education institutions, educational institutions for obtaining*

[57] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy dated August 11, 2017, No. 1307 "On the approval of the State Standard of Social Support for Families Raising Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1089-17#Text

[58] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of May 18, 2015, No. 514 "On the Approval of the State Standard of Social Adaptation" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0665-15#top

[59] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023

[60] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Rehabilitation and recreation of children in need of special attention and support, in children's health camps of the "Artek" Medical Center, "Young Guard" Children's Center and in higher category children's institutions contained in the State Register of Property Objects health and recreation of children and located in the Carpathian region" for 2023.

[61] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/462-2023-%D0%BF/ed20230509#Text

[62] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of March 9, 2021, No. 115 "On the approval of the State Standard of Social Services for the Care and Education of Children in Family-like Conditions" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0856-21#top

complete general secondary education, in other territories during excursions, educational trips, other activities provided by the educational process. Provided throughout the academic year in the premises, on the territory of the educational institution, in other territories during events within the educational process[63].

- *Social Service "Personal Assistant" is provided for children with disabilities who have vivid and significant degrees of life activity limitation and consists of facilitating the provision of educational rights.*

The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine covers educational needs through the provision of social scholarships. The right to social scholarships is available to students (or cadets) who study under state order, have no academic debts, are not on academic leave, and belong to one of 14 categories. These categories include orphaned children, children with disabilities, children registered as internally displaced persons (until completion of studies at such institutions, but no later than until they reach the age of 23)[64]. The size of social scholarships varies depending on the child's age and status. The smallest social scholarship in 2023 was 890 UAH (for students (cadets) of pre-higher vocational education institutions), and the largest was 6,375 UAH (*scholarships of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to students of pre-higher and higher education institutions from among orphaned children, children deprived of parental care in 2023*)[65]. Since the right to receive payment based on student (cadet) status, without considering the real need for payment or support, it is proposed to provide such assistance only after assessing the financial and property status of the family.

Indirect education costs (textbooks, clothing, supplies, cultural and sports sections) are usually not supported in Ukraine. Costs related to children's education are an additional financial obligation for families. The Education Package (BuT) in Germany provides financial assistance to low-income families to cover the costs of education and participation in cultural activities for children. Assistance is available to families who receive social benefits or have a low income. The size of the aid covers the costs of school supplies, excursions, clubs, sports activities and school meals. The program is administered by local social protection authorities, and funding is provided through federal and local budgets[66].

Children with special educational needs have an increased risk of being excluded from an educational process tailored to their individual needs. As of the end of 2023, out of 60,607 children with special educational needs, only 13,281 children or 22% study in inclusive groups. The largest number of such children live in Dnipro region (9,353 people) and in Kyiv (6,227 people). However, only 706 children (8%) in Dnipro region and 755 (12%) in Kyiv study in inclusive groups. In Kyiv region, the corresponding share of children is larger and amounts to 31%: out of 4,794 children, 1,483 study in inclusive groups. At the same time, in Ivano-Frankivsk region, out of 1,019 children, 673 children or 66% study in inclusive classes[67]. The corresponding imbalance affects the vulnerability and development of children, depending on the region where they live.

1.6. Other auxiliary payments for families with children

The state also provides a number of monetary assistance payments to families with children,

[63] Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of December 23, 2021, No. 718 "On the approval of the State Standard of Social Support Services during inclusive education" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0072-22#top

[64] Resolution of the CMU dated December 28, 2016. No. 1045 "Some issues of payment of social scholarships to students (cadets) of institutions of professional pre-higher and higher education" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1045-2016-%D0%BF#top

[65] According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of citizens who find themselves in difficult life circumstances" for 2023.

[66] https://familienportal.de/familienportal/familienleistungen/bildung-und-teilhabe

[67] https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/english/x.bmp

which can be used at their discretion to address their needs. The corresponding payments are linked to the child's status and have no restrictions on the use of funds. According to legislation, the state provides the following types of assistance for families with children (see Chapter 3):

- assistance for pregnancy and childbirth;
- assistance at the birth of a child, one-time in-kind assistance “baby box”;
- assistance upon child adoption;
- assistance for children under guardianship or care;
- temporary state assistance payment to children whose parents evade paying alimony, cannot support the child, or whose place of residence is unknown;
- assistance for children raised in large families;
- assistance for maintaining a child in a foster care family;
- assistance for children of single mothers;
- assistance for seriously ill children[68];
- assistance for low-income families.

The right to receive childbirth assistance applies to one parent, guardian (adoptive parent) who resides with the child and takes childcare leave until the child reaches the age of three years old. The childbirth assistance amounts to 41,280 UAH. Part of it is paid once in the amount of 10,320 UAH, the rest – over 36 months at 860 UAH per month[69].

Payments to support families with children can also include the payment of temporary state assistance to children whose parents evade alimony payments, cannot support the child, or whose place of residence is unknown. In 2023, the average monthly amount of such assistance was 1,789 UAH for children under 6 years old, and from 6 to 18 years old – 2,162.7 UAH[70].

Regarding the payment of social assistance for maintaining a child in a foster care family, in 2023 the average monthly amount of such assistance per child (including a child with disability) was 7,759.5 UAH[71].

The state also provides assistance for children raised in large families. Potential assistance recipients are families raising three or more children. Assistance is assigned for the third and each subsequent child until reaching 6 years of age. The monthly assistance amount for children raised in large families is 2,153.4 UAH[72].

In addition to the absence of standardized requirements for using funds for children's needs, such payments as assistance for children of single mothers and large families are assigned based on status (single, large families), without determining the real need for payment or support.

[68]Law of Ukraine "On State Assistance to Families with Children" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2811-12#top

[69]Law of Ukraine "On State Assistance to Families with Children" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2811-12#Text

[70]According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023.

[71]According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023.

[72]According to the report on the implementation of the budget program passport "Social protection of children and families" for 2023.

CHAPTER 2. MODELLING THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SPECIFIC FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Within the framework of the study, basic needs of children (families with children) were classified according to four criteria – age, spheres of life activity, priority for the child and level of coverage (satisfaction). This approach is designed to ensure a systematic analysis and satisfaction of children's needs, considering their age-specific characteristics, specificity of different spheres of life, urgency of needs, and it allows identifying and eliminating gaps in their satisfaction.

Basic needs by age groups: 0-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-14 years, 14-18 years. Classification of needs by age groups takes into account the peculiarities of children's development at different stages of their lives. This allows selecting the most optimal support tools to ensure the child's interests, harmonious development and adaptation in society. Children's needs change depending on their age and stage of development. For example, in the youngest age group (0-3 years), the main needs are proper nutrition, medical care, childcare, etc., which ensure the child's physical development and survival. In the age group 6-14 years, priorities, in addition to physiological ones, become education, socialization and access to cultural and sports activities that shape the child's personality and social skills. For children aged 14-18 years, psychological assistance and socialization, education, sports and culture become important.

***Basic needs by spheres*:** nutrition, healthcare, childcare, education, social and psychological support, clothing and other essentials, sports and culture, transportation, recreation and health improvement. Classification of needs by spheres allows detailed examination of different aspects of life of families with children, dividing them into specific categories. This approach promotes targeted intervention in different spheres and provides the opportunity to address specific problems and improve the overall well-being of children. For example, educational area includes needs for quality education, access to learning resources, extracurricular education, online learning, etc., while the healthcare area covers access to medical services, disease prevention, medication, and vaccinations. Categorizing needs by spheres facilitates the development of comprehensive child support programs, addressing all aspects of their lives.

Basic needs by priority: priority and non-priority. Some needs are more urgent than others. For example, ensuring nutrition and access to quality healthcare are priority for survival, while needs in education, sports and culture can be attributed to the category of desirable and long-term priorities. Such classification allows more effective planning of resources and support measures. In addition, this approach allows concentrating attention on the most necessary in crisis situations and planning comprehensive support under normal conditions. The state must ensure satisfaction of the child's basic needs that are critical for their development and survival, as it acts as a guarantor of rights and freedoms, well-being of all children in Ukraine. Non-priority needs can be satisfied by local self-government bodies or at the expense of families' own funds. However, it is important to distinguish between ensuring access to needs and ensuring their satisfaction. Children must be provided with access to the entire spectrum of necessary services and support, but their practical satisfaction can be assigned to different subjects: priority needs should be covered by the state, less priority ones – by other institutions or private individuals.

Basic needs by coverage: covered and uncovered. Classifying needs by coverage helps identify gaps in meeting the needs of children and families with children. This is important for assessing the current state of support and determining areas that require additional resources or attention. For example, if a certain sphere has many uncovered needs, this indicates the necessity of developing new or adjusting both individual existing assistance programs and the entire policy in general. Such classification promotes optimization of resource distribution and improvement of the children's support system, focusing efforts on the most vulnerable aspects of their lives.

Categorization of basic needs of children by age groups, spheres, priority and level of coverage provided a foundation for analysing family support programs with children. Using this classification, we conducted modelling of situations (cases). It allows more detailed study of the specific needs of families with children in different life circumstances. Such cases help to identify gaps in the support coverage, evaluate the effectiveness of existing instruments and develop recommendations for improving social protection policy. Additionally, this approach facilitates the adaptation of state and local programs to specific circumstances, creating prerequisites for targeted assistance and ensuring harmonious development of children.

Through analysis of support instruments for families with children, we managed to identify certain groups that receive disproportionately more assistance. Such groups include children under guardianship and care, children with disabilities, and children from low-income families. In view of this, we outlined models of existing and necessary support instruments for such types of families (Appendix 2):

- ***Case 1.*** A child under the guardianship of an adult sister (not low-income, but the guardian lives alone and has an 8-hour working day).
- ***Case 2.*** A child with disability living with parents.
- ***Case 3.*** A child from a low-income family.

In the conducted case modelling, we analysed needs and their provision for children of different age categories: up to 3 years, from 3 to 6 years, from 6 to 14 years, and from 14 to 18 years. This report outlines the most common needs for families in each case, recognizing that some needs may overlap across age groups.

Case 1. A child under the guardianship of an adult sister (not low-income, but the guardian lives alone and works an 8-hour day).

Raising a child by a person who is not a biological father or mother may be accompanied by additional difficulties, since the role of guardian is not always a conscious and prepared choice. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of the war in Ukraine, where many children have been orphaned due to military actions and shelling of civilian infrastructure. According to the National Social Service of Ukraine, as of July 2024, 11,700 children became orphans due to the war. The need for support in raising a child is provided by the social service supporting families raising orphaned children and children deprived of parental care. The provision of this service includes: counselling of adoptive parents, foster parents, guardians, caregivers regarding their role in helping the child overcome the feeling of loss; psychological support for adoptive parents, foster

parents, guardians, caregivers regarding child development and upbringing by involving them in participation in trainings, lectures, support groups, and other activities[73].

Guardians raising children under the age of 3 primarily need support in ensuring proper nutrition for children. Guardians should be provided with unimpeded access to formula and milk kitchens. Currently, there is no systematic access to milk kitchens. Such facilities operate only in select cities, including Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, and Kherson.

For parents/guardians of children under 6 years old, there is a need for their own socialization and childcare support before formal school enrollment. There are no facilities or events for parents to socialize, where they can come with their children and share their parenting experience or relax. This is not a critical need that should be provided at the expense of budget funds, but the possibility of its implementation must be available, even at their own expense. A more pressing need requiring state intervention is ensuring childcare support for children before they start school. This need is only partially addressed through the "Municipal Nanny" service and the social service for care and upbringing of children in family-like conditions.

Case study 1 shows that guardians raising children without support from other relatives face a number of systemic challenges, including limited access to basic nutrition and insufficient support in developing parenting skills. Despite the existence of social services, such as support for families with orphaned children and the "municipal nanny" service, their availability and effectiveness remain limited. This indicates the need to improve support programs, particularly creating accessible solutions for childcare and organizing space for guardian socialization, which will promote their adaptation and improve quality of life.

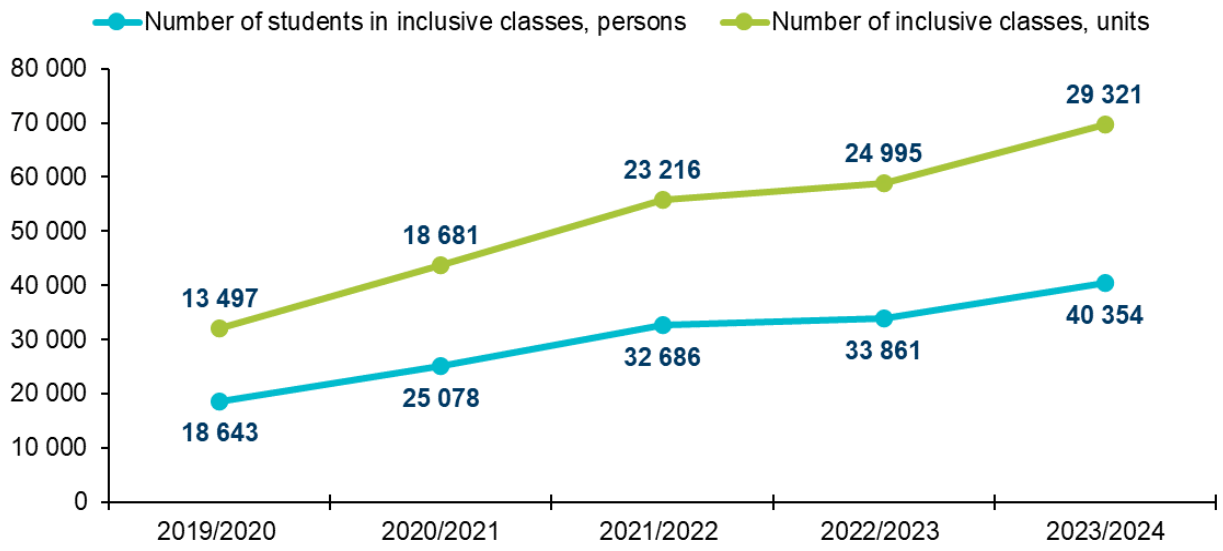
Case 2. A child with disability living with parents.

Providing care and upbringing of children with disabilities is a critical problem, especially for children under 6 years old. The availability of preschool/school educational institutions partially solves the problem of care, as children spend most of the day under the supervision of educators/teachers. At the same time, for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, such care is a less accessible option. Although each year the number of children with special educational needs who are provided with appropriate services grows thanks to the expansion of the inclusive classroom network, significant gaps still remain in creating proper conditions for them. In 2023, only 21% of surveyed directors (heads) reported that their preschool education institutions (subdivisions) have fully created conditions for children with special educational needs. General secondary education institutions remain infrastructurally unadapted, as 77.6% of institutions provide barrier-free access to the first floor, and only 0.8% – to the second. Also, almost 20% of educators and 13.7% of directors reported the need for an assistant for the child. About 30% of educational institution heads emphasized the purchase of corrective equipment for children with special educational needs who receive preschool education in inclusive groups. However, twice as many, 62% of directors (heads), noted that they need to purchase such equipment[74].

[73] State standard on social support of families raising orphans and children deprived of parental care https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1089-17#top

[74] https://mon.gov.ua/osvita-2/inklyuzivne-navchannya/statistichni-dani

Figure 4. Number of students in inclusive classes compared to the number of inclusive classes in Ukraine



Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine[75]

Case 2 analysis demonstrates that services for care and upbringing of children with disabilities are a critical problem, as most schools do not have proper infrastructure to support them, and the number of inclusive classes is still insufficient. Despite the increase in the number of inclusive groups, many educational institutions are not equipped with corrective equipment, and there is also a need for assistants for children.

Case 3. A child from a low-income family.

Low-income families face additional barriers to meet the needs of children due to economic vulnerability. The needs of children from low-income families do not significantly differ from the needs of other families with children, but the disproportionate level of family income and necessary expenses can become an obstacle to meeting some children's needs. That is why support for such families should be provided at the state and local levels. Children from families receiving assistance under the Law of Ukraine "On State Social Assistance to Low-Income Families" are entitled to free meals[76]. Additionally, certain categories of children from low-income families are eligible for recreation and health improvement programs[77]. Other needs, theoretically, can be met at the expense of state social assistance for low-income families. However, the size of corresponding payments will not be able to cover needs for clothing, access to sports, cultural and artistic clubs, psychological assistance when necessary, and others. The average monthly assistance amount per 1 low-income family in 2023 was 5,498.7 UAH. At the same time, the actual subsistence minimum per 1 person in 2023 reached 5,795 UAH (taking into account the minimum set of food products, non-food goods, housing and communal services, transport, communication and culture services), which is 5% more. Considering that the average household size in Ukraine in 2023 is 2.3 people, these funds are insufficient to meet basic needs.

The results of the analysis of case 3 showed that low-income families face difficulties in meeting

[75] https://mon.gov.ua/osvita-2/inklyuzivne-navchannya/statistichni-dani
[76] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/305-2021-%D0%BF#Text
[77] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/462-2023-%D0%BF#top

basic needs of children due to insufficient income. State assistance only partially covers these needs, therefore it is important to develop alternative forms of support. To meet clothing needs, humanitarian collection (exchange) centres should function, where clothing, footwear, toys, hygiene products (diapers, wipes) will be available.

In the three described cases, secondary education institutions (hereinafter - schools) serve as a central element of the child's daily life system, approximately from ages 6 to 16, and is associated with addressing many needs. Schools partially fulfil childcare needs, primarily during school hours, but can also provide care during extracurricular activities and school holidays. The school can provide nutrition needs for certain categories of children from vulnerable groups free of charge, or partially/fully at the expense of parents for other categories of children. In addition to classical education, the school can also satisfy needs for sports and cultural development, enlightenment. At the same time, attending educational institutions can also cause additional needs, for example, in transportation. It is determined that students who live more than 2 km from school should be provided with transportation to the educational institution[78]. However, in practice, the implementation of this requirement is questioned and requires additional research.

The conducted case analysis indicates that meeting the needs of children from vulnerable categories (low-income families, children with disabilities, children under guardianship) requires a comprehensive approach and targeted solutions. Existing support mechanisms partially satisfy basic needs, but significant gaps remain, the elimination of which requires additional resources and improvement of support tools. For more effective assistance, it is worth improving access to educational, social and humanitarian services, ensuring inclusive infrastructure and implementing alternative support models. Such an approach will contribute to improving children's well-being, reducing social inequalities and increasing the effectiveness of social policy.

[78] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1111-20#Text

CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURES BY THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL POLICY ON SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

The needs of families with children intersect across various areas of society's life activity, and therefore their support is covered by the policies of many ministries. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine defines prospects and priority directions of development, ensures conditions for obtaining preschool and school education[79]. The Ministry of Health shapes and implements state health policies, including those addressing children's needs, and establishes nutrition standards for children in preschool education institutions[80]. The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine ensures socio-economic and legal protection of service personnel families and promotes military-patriotic education[81]. State authorities and local self-government bodies are also involved in implementing measures aimed at supporting families with children. In 2023, 27.3 billion UAH was directed to social protection of families, children and youth, with 24,3 billion UAH coming from the state budget and 3.0 billion UAH from local budgets[82].

The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine is the central body responsible for supporting families with children. The ministry ensures the formation and implementation of state policy that covers issues of family and children, children's health improvement and recreation, adoption and protection of children's rights, prevention and counteraction to domestic violence, observance of children's rights[83]. The Ministry of Social Policy primarily focuses on vulnerable population groups, but its family support policies also cover families without special status. This approach requires effective coordination with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health.

Social services provide a wide range of support for families with children; however, assessment of their effectiveness is currently not feasible. The study identified 17 social services specifically aimed at children or families with children (Appendix 3). However, due to insufficient centralised monitoring of their quality and effectiveness, it is difficult to determine the scale of services, the recipients, or how well they meet users' needs[84]. Another significant problem is the impossibility to trace the cost of services and therefore determine how much money is directed to support families with children through social services.

The Ministry of Social Policy finances expenditures for providing support to families with children through various budget programs. In 2023, expenditures for children were covered by 5 out of 14 budget programs of the ministry. In addition to the core budget program "Social protection

[79] Resolution of the CMU dated October 16, 2014. No. 630 "On approval of the Regulation on the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/630-2014-%D0%BF#top

[80] Resolution of the CMU dated March 25, 2015. No. 267 "On approval of the Regulation on the Ministry of Health of Ukraine" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/267-2015-%D0%BF#Text

[81] Resolution of the CMU dated November 26, 2014. No. 671 "On approval of the Regulation on the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/671-2014-%D0%BF#top

[82] https://openbudget.gov.ua/national-budget/expenses?class=functional&view=table

[83] Resolution of the CMU dated June 17, 2015, No. 423 https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/423-2015-%D0%BF#Text

[84] https://www.ioc.gov.ua/analytics

for children and families", children's needs are also financed by other budget programs[85]. Four non-specialized budget programs provided funding for:

- health improvement and recreation of children;
- payment of state social assistance for children with disabilities;
- free meals for children affected by the Chernobyl disaster;
- payment of social scholarships to students (cadets) of professional pre-higher and higher education institutions;
- provision of assistive devices for rehabilitation (technical and other means of rehabilitation) to persons with disabilities, children with disabilities.

The core budget program "Social protection for children and families" is aimed primarily at providing support through payments. Out of the total amount of expenditures planned for 2023 to support families with children, 93% (24.8 billion UAH out of 26.7 billion UAH) falls on payments. Out of 17 directions of this budget program, only three are not direct payments, including: provision of one-time in-kind assistance "Baby Box"/monetary compensation for its value; reimbursement of the “Municipal Nanny” service for childcare for children up to three years of age; payment for child patronage service and implementation of expenditures.

In-kind assistance “Baby Box” covers the vast majority of material needs of newborns. This assistance has been introduced in Ukraine since 2018. This is non-refundable targeted social assistance to families in which a live-born child was born. In case of absence of both parents, assistance is provided to relatives who take the child from the healthcare institution in the established order, adopters, guardians, foster parents, parent-educators or patronage educators of the newborn child[86]. The “Baby Box” contains over 50 essential items for newborn care, including clothing, hygiene products, toys, and diapers[87]. In 2023, the number of recipients of the one-time in-kind benefit decreased by 4% compared to 2022 and by 26.6%compared to 2021 (Figure 5). The decline reflects the decreasing birth rate in Ukraine. Similar situation was happening even before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. However, according to the United Nations, the war has significantly accelerated this decline. As of October 2024, the fertility rate in Ukraine is approximately one child per woman, which is one of the lowest indicators globally. To maintain population stability, a fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman is required[88].

The recipient can choose to decline the "Baby Box" and opt for monetary compensation for the cost of this one-time in-kind assistance. It is provided in accordance with the Procedure and conditions for the implementation of the pilot project "Monetization of the one-time in-kind assistance "Baby Box" in 2020-2024[89]. The amount of monetary compensation in 2023 was 6,731.5 UAH (in 2022 – 5,700 UAH, or 15% less than the 2023 indicator, and in 2021 – 5,076 UAH, or 25% less than

[85] Budget programs: "Rehabilitation and health improvement for children who need special attention and support, in children's rehabilitation and recreation facilities of the highest category, which are included in the State register of property objects of rehabilitation and recreation for children and are located in the Carpathian region"; "Rehabilitation and health improvement for children who need special attention and support in the children's recreation camps of the Artek Medical Center, the Moloda Gvardiya Center, and in the higher category children's institutions included in the State Register of property facilities for the rehabilitation and recreation of children and located in the Carpathian region"; "Social protection of citizens who find themselves in difficult life circumstances"; "Social protection of persons with disabilities".

[86] Resolution of the CMU dated January 30, 2019. No. 68 "Some issues of the provision of "municipal nanny" services for the care of a child under the age of three", https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/68-2019-%D0%BF#n13

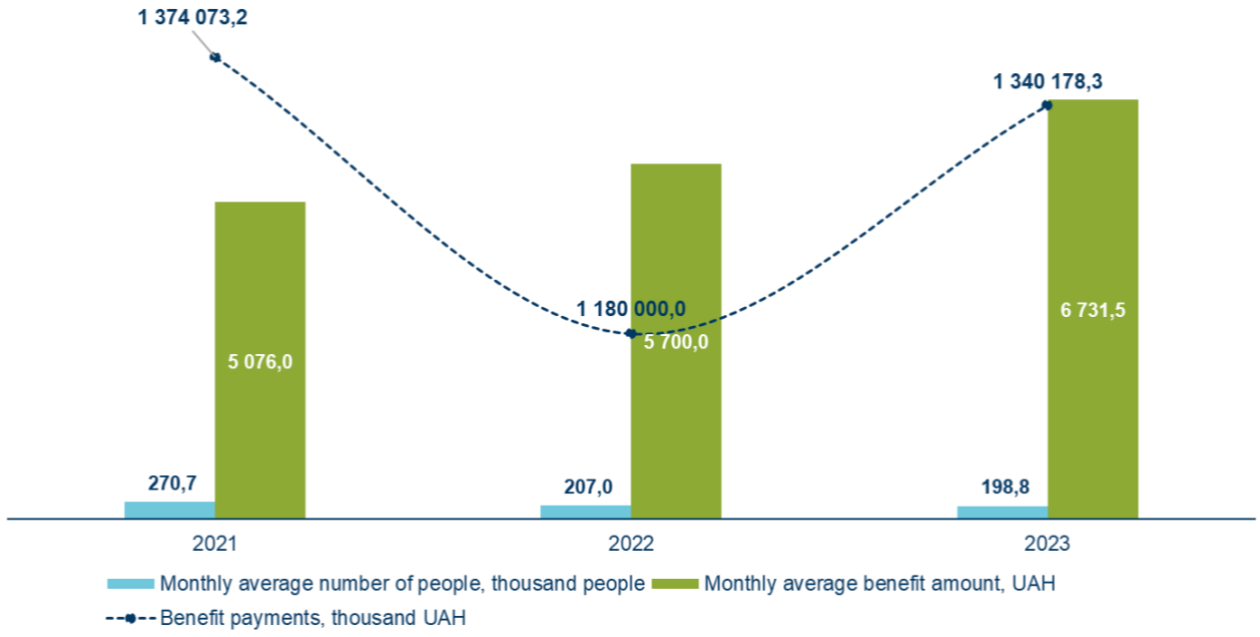
[87] https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/pakunok-maliuka-shcho-tse-ta-iak-otrymaty

[88] Geneva press conference, Florence Bauer, head of Eastern Europe at the UN Population Fund, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-population-has-fallen-by-10-million-since-russias-invasion- un-says-2024-10-22/

[89] About the procedure and conditions for the implementation of the pilot project "Monetization of one-time in-kind assistance "baby box" in 2020-2024, Resolution of the CMU dated July 29, 2020. No. 744 https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/744-2020-%D0%BF#n24

in 2023). Reports on the implementation of budget program passports for families and children in 2023[90], 2022 and 2021 respectively do not differentiate the indicator of providing one-time in-kind assistance “Baby Box” from the indicator of monetary compensation payment. As a result, it is difficult to track which option recipients prefer or how the funds are utilized. However, data from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) shows that in 2024, approximately 36,000 families received the "Baby Box," while 126,000 families opted for monetary compensation, totalling 974 million UAH[91]. This indicates that monetary compensation is chosen 3.5 times more frequently than the in-kind benefit. The amount of monetary compensation does not cover the actual value of the 50 items included in the "Baby Box," and there is no mechanism for monitoring how the compensation is spent. This creates potential risks regarding whether the funds adequately address the child’s needs. In 2020, according to CMU Resolution No. 1180[92] dated November 25, 2020, the government decided to introduce an alternative to in-kind assistance in the form of cash compensation. Thus, parents were given the right to choose between receiving a ‘Baby Box’ or a cash payment. Prior to that, all families received in-kind assistance only.

Figure 5. Dynamics of providing one-time in-kind assistance “baby box”/payment of monetary compensation for its value in 2021-2023



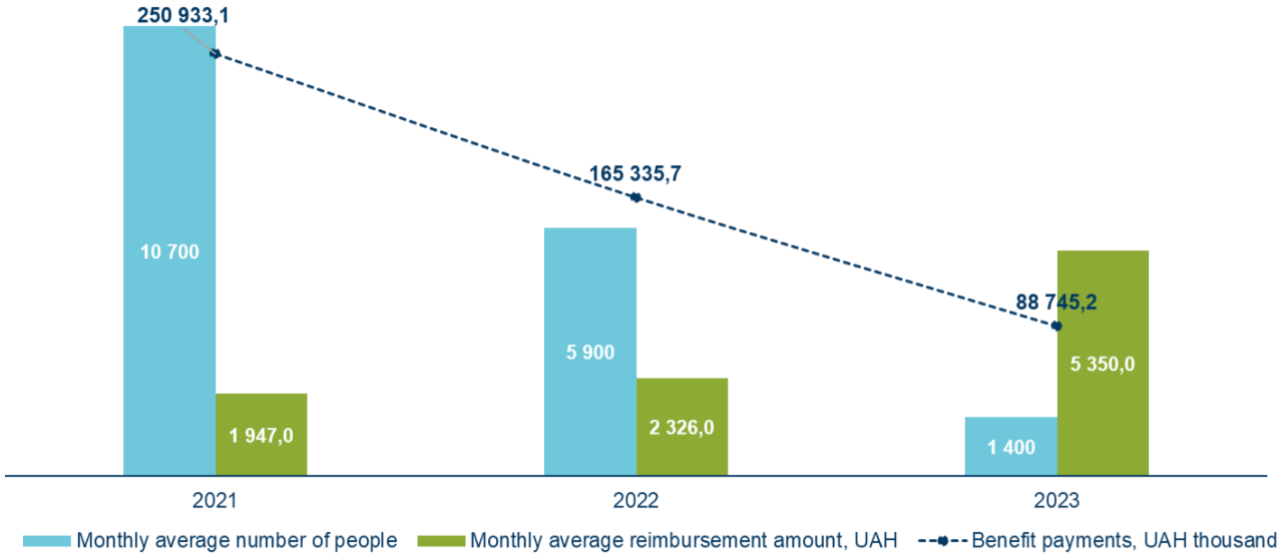
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

[90] Ministry of Social Policy, Reports on the implementation of budget program passports 2501400 "Social protection for families and children" for 2021-2023, https://www.msp.gov.ua/timeline/Derzhbyudzhet.html

[91] https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/kompleksnyi-paket-zymovoi-pidtrymky-vkliuchaie-dopomohu-ta-pidtrymku-ditei-premier-ministr

[92] Procedure for the use of funds provided for in the state budget for the provision of one-time in-kind assistance at the birth of a child ‘baby package’, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 25 November 2020, No. 1180,https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1180-2020-%D0%BF#n90

Figure. 6. Dynamics of reimbursement for the municipal nanny childcare service for children under three in 2021-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

In Ukraine, the "Municipal Nanny" service for providing childcare for children under three years old was introduced from January 1, 2019. In 2023, reimbursement for the "Municipal Nanny" service is provided directly and monthly to one of the parents (or guardians) for a child under three years old who needs additional care, or if one of the parents (guardians) has Disability of Group I-II. Prior to 2023, the state paid families (guardians or adoptive parents) using municipal nanny services 2,100 UAH (equivalent to the subsistence minimum for children under six years of age, as of December 1, 2021). Starting from January 2023, this amount tripled and amounts to 6,700 UAH (Figure 6, the chart illustrates the average monthly reimbursement amount in 2021–2023, based on reports from the budget program passports 2501400 "Social Protection for Families and Children" for 2021-2023). The significant reduction in recipients of compensation payment (by 1.8 times) in 2022 compared to 2021 was caused by changes from December 15, 2021, to the Procedure for Reimbursement of the Cost of the "Municipal Nanny" Service for children under the age of three[93]. These changes stipulated that the service should be provided primarily to population groups most in need of childcare assistance, such as families with children with disabilities. This adjustment aimed to ensure the efficient use of limited financial resources.

One-third of all expenditures under the "Social protection for children and families" budget program is allocated to childbirth assistance payments. Planned expenditures for payment of assistance upon the birth of a child in 2023 amounted to 9.7 billion UAH (36.5% of total expenditures programme). In 2024, expenditures on childbirth payments amounted to 9.6 billion UAH (34.8% of the programme). However, actual expenditures for payment upon the birth of a child were 200 million UAH less and amounted to 9.5 billion UAH (Fig. 7). Other largest expenditure categories included:

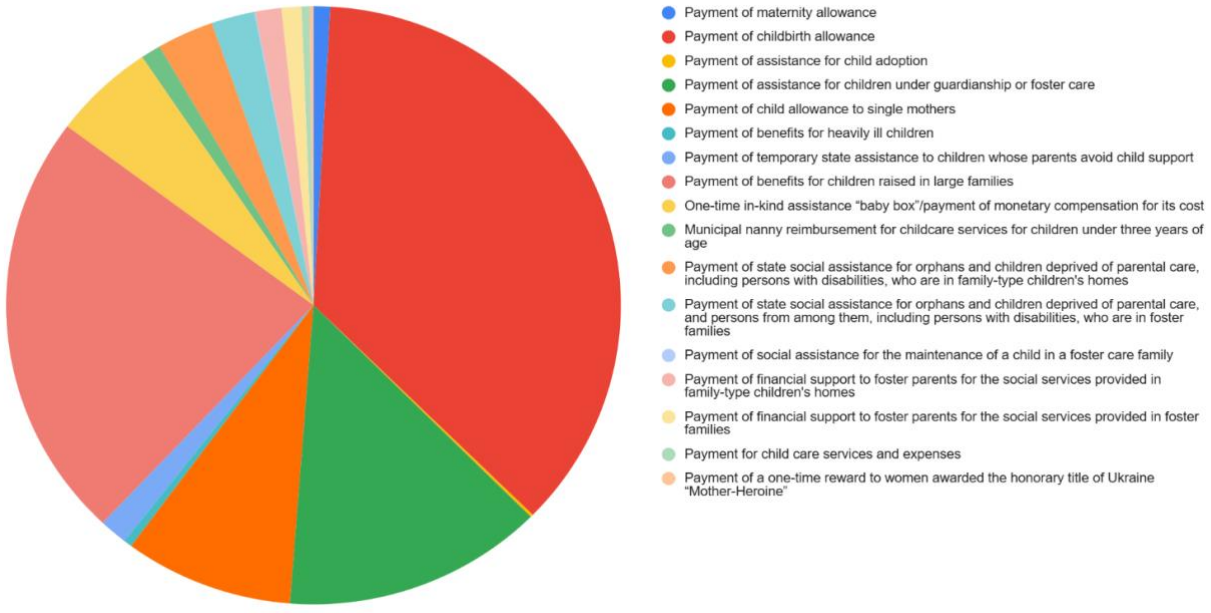
- payment of assistance for children raised in large families: in 2023 – 6.2 billion UAH or 23% (actual expenditures amounted to 5.6 billion UAH (Fig. 9), in 2024 – 6.5 billion UAH (24% of the program volume);
- payment of assistance for children under guardianship or care: in 2023 – 3.7 billion UAH or

[93] Resolution of the CMU dated December 15, 2021, No. 1323 "On Amendments to the Procedure for Reimbursement of the Cost of the "Municipal Nanny" Childcare Service for a Child Under Three Years" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1323-2021 -%D0%BF#Text

14% of all expenditures (Fig. 7), in 2024 – 4.6 billion UAH or 16.7% of the total program volume.

In Ukraine, families have the right to assistance upon the birth of a child. Assistance upon the birth of a child is assigned in the amount of 41,280 UAH since July 2014. The assistance payment is made once in the amount of 10,320 UAH. The rest of the assistance amount is paid over the next 36 months (3 years) in equal parts (860 monthly) according to the procedure established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine[94]. The amount of the allowance has not been reviewed and remains unchanged for more than 10 years. The assistance is provided to one of the parents or the guardian who permanently resides with the child. To qualify, the application for assistance must be submitted no later than 12 months after the child's birth. Expenditures on childbirth assistance payments in 2023 decreased by 3.2 billion UAH or 25% compared to 2021. This reduction corresponds to a significant drop in the birth rate by 106.1 thousand people or 35% compared to 2021 (newborns) and by 204,000 people or by 22% compared to the indicator of 2021 (children up to 3 years old). This decline is likely influenced by the outmigration of mothers with children abroad. At the same time, families whose children were born while temporarily residing outside Ukraine are also eligible to receive this assistance. However, the amount of childbirth assistance remained unchanged between 2021 and 2023. Given the annual inflation rates reported by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, average annual inflation in 2023 (January-December to January-December) was 12.9%, in 2022 – 20.2%, and in 2021 – 9.4%[95]. This significantly reduces real purchasing power of the assistance. Therefore, the amount of childbirth allowance needs to be revised. However, this type of assistance is critical for many families, and accordingly – a good practice of universal approach to supporting all families with children.

Figure 7. Distribution of expenditures in 2023 by support instruments in the budget program "Social Protection of Children and Families", billion UAH

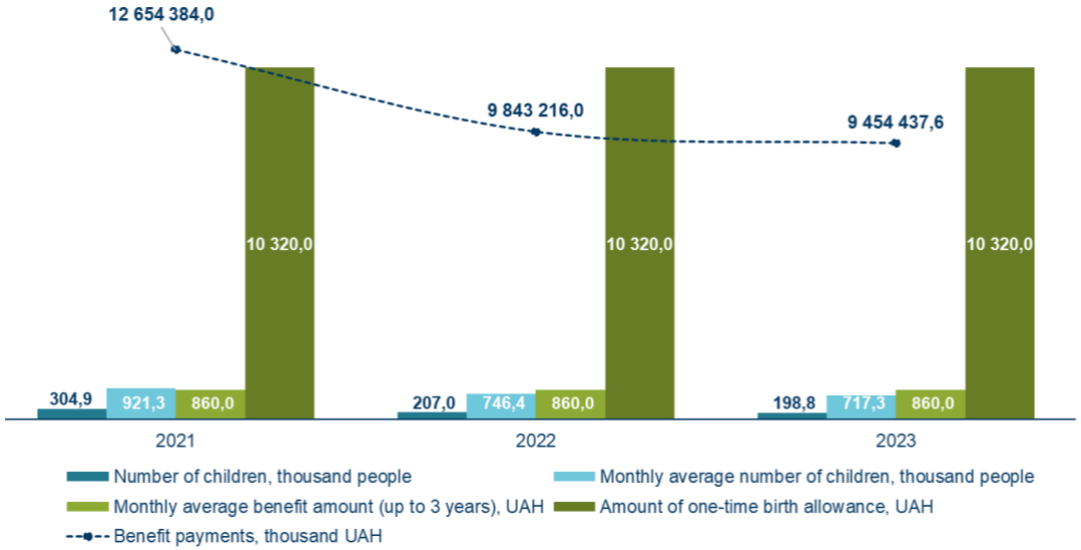


Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

[94] Resolution of the CMU dated December 27, 2001, No. 1751 "On approval of the Procedure for the appointment and payment of state assistance to families with children, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1751-2001-%D0%BF#Text

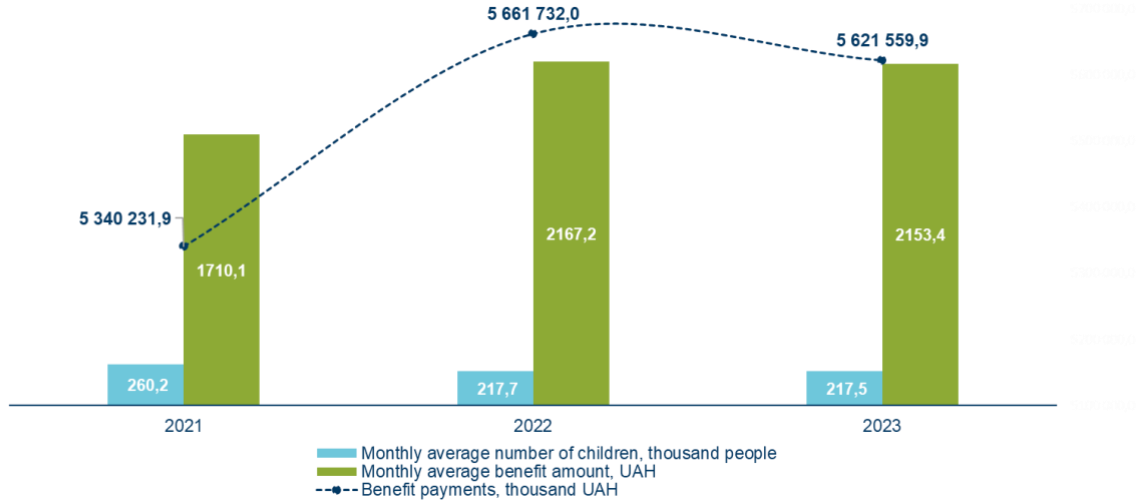
[95] Express release of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/express/expr2024/01/01.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2rI3oHMuBkXAiCaqi0nkUASu_8yGYrS0h4nhzwzp6GSPChjQhcQLASmYg

Figure 8. Dynamics of childbirth allowance payments in 2021-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

Figure 9. Dynamics of assistance payments for children raised in large families in 2021-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

According to the Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of Childhood"[96], a large family is defined as a man and woman in a registered marriage, living together and raising three or more children. It can also be a father or mother who live with three or more children and independently raise them. It is important to note that state assistance is not provided to every child in a large family but is granted for the third and each subsequent child starting from the month in which the application with all required documents was submitted. Payments are made monthly until the child reaches six years of age inclusive. In cases where two or more children are born simultaneously in a family, as a result of which the family acquired the status of a large family, assistance payment is made for each such child[97]. The assistance is assigned in the amount of 2,100 UAH which is 8% lower or 172 UAH less than the subsistence minimum for children under six years old as of 2023. This amount is

[96] Law of Ukraine dated April 26, 2001, No. 2402-III "On the Protection of Childhood", https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2402-14#Text

[97] Resolution of the CMU dated March 13, 2019. No. 250 "Some issues of providing social support to large families", https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/250-2019-%D0%BF#Text

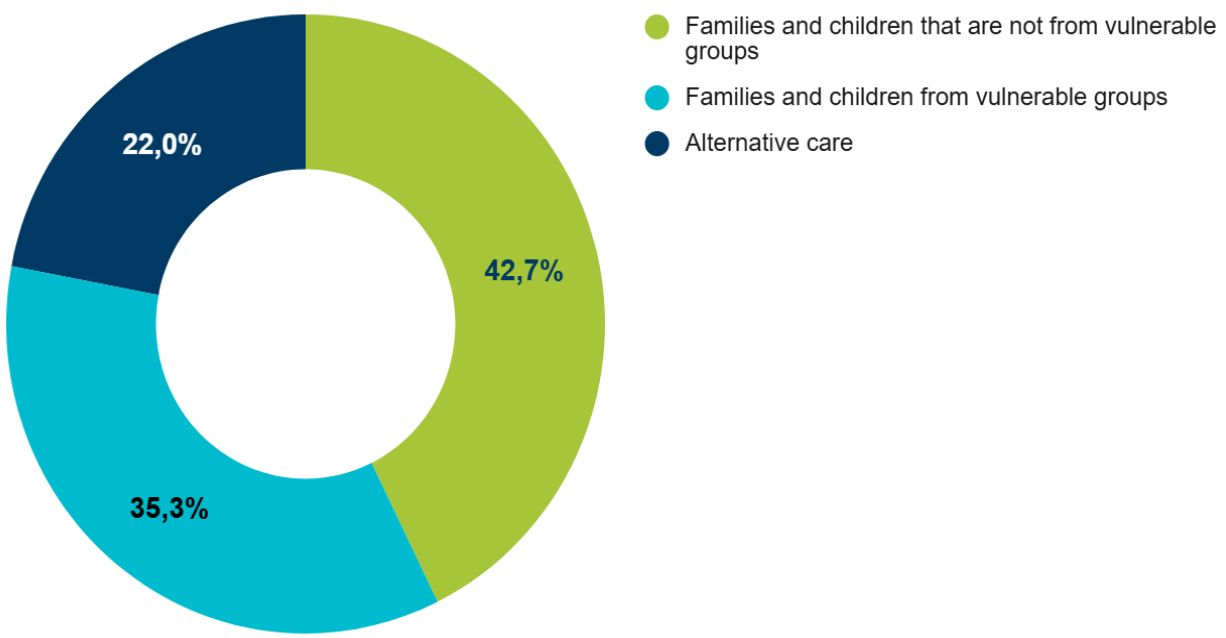
insufficient to cover the basic needs of a child in the respective age group.

The largest share of expenditures in 2023 was allocated for financing the needs of families with children who do not belong to vulnerable groups. 17 expenditure categories of the Ministry of Social Policy can be classified by the following groups:

- directed to support families and children who do not belong to vulnerable groups (42.7%);
- directed to support families and children classified as vulnerable groups (35.3%);
- alternative care - adopted children, children in orphanages, orphaned children under patronage care, and foster families[98] (22%) (Figure 10).

The largest number of assistance programs (eight) is provided for forms of alternative care, which covers 22.0% of all planned expenditures for 2023. By volume, the largest share of funds goes to three benefits covering families and children who do not belong to vulnerable groups - 42.7% (childbirth assistance payment[99], pregnancy and maternity assistance payment, provision of the one-time in-kind benefits "baby box" or payment of monetary compensation for its value). The smallest share covers families and children who are classified as vulnerable groups, namely six types of assistance, covering 35.3% of all planned expenditures in 2023 (Appendix 4).

Figure 10. Distribution of expenditures in 2023 by budget directions in the budget program "Social Protection of Children and Families"



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

In 2023, expenditures on pregnancy and maternity assistance significantly decreased compared to 2021 levels (Fig. 11), with a reduction of 88.3 million UAH, or 25%. This decline correlates with a 1.6-fold reduction in recipients. One of the reasons may be the impact of a full-scale war (men being

98 Alternative care – care for children who, under various circumstances, were left without parental care. "Legislative frameworks for family forms of alternative child care in some European countries. Review of international experience", UNICEF 2023 https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/media/35826/file/family-based-alternative-child-care-legislation.pdf
99 The corresponding payment is provided to all families

mobilized for military service, women left the country, or couples consciously postpone pregnancy until the end of the war). This in turn contributes to the strengthening of the demographic crisis in Ukraine.

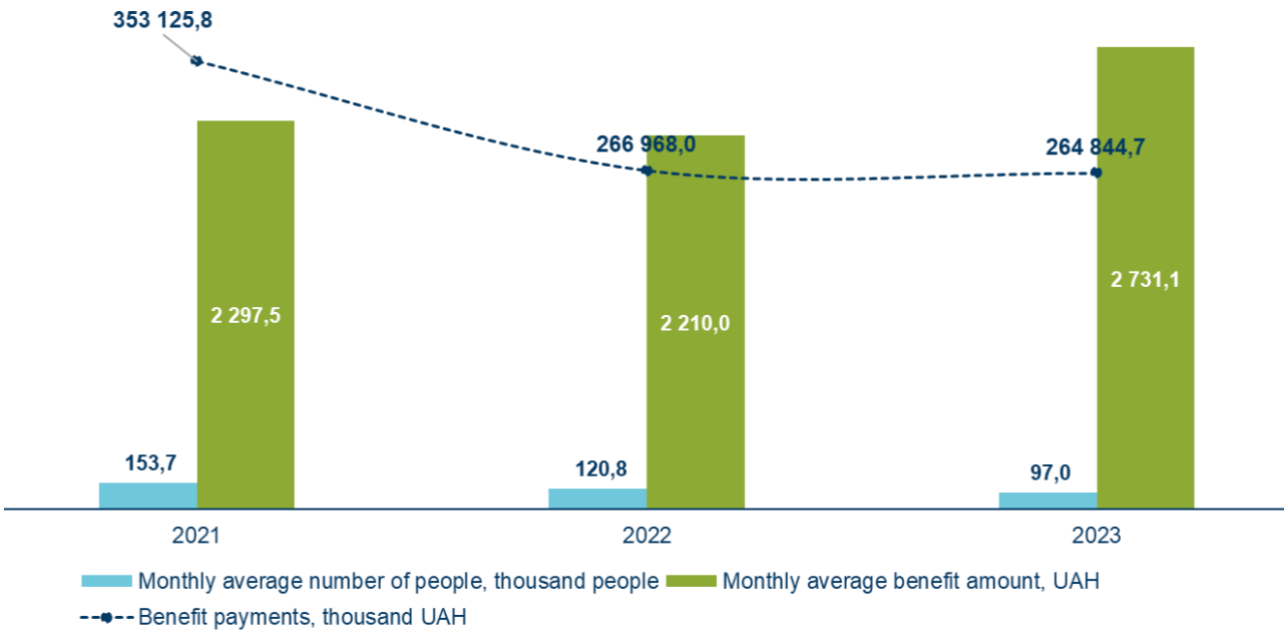
Assistance for severely ill children who have not been assigned disability status is targeted at families and children classified as vulnerable groups. In 2021 and 2022, these payments were included in the structure of expenditures of the budget programme 2501030, titled "Payments of Certain Types of Assistance, Compensation, Financial Support, and Payment for Services for Specific Population Categories"[100]. In 2021, the indicator of the average monthly number of sick children was not distributed by age, and total expenditures amounted to 29.3 million UAH (1.3 thousand recipients), in 2022 - 107 million UAH (1.6 thousand recipients), in 2023 - 125 million UAH (2 thousand recipients). At the same time, the average monthly amount of assistance per child in 2021 was 1,878.6 UAH. In 2022, the average monthly amount of assistance per child under the age of 6 was 4,615.2 UAH, the average monthly amount of assistance per child aged 6 to 18 was 5,702.4 UAH. In 2023, the average monthly allowance for one child under 6 years of age decreased by 40 UAH (4,575.5 UAH), and the average monthly benefit per child aged 6 to 18 was reduced by 70 UAH (5,702.4 UAH).

Another assistance for supporting vulnerable families and children is payment of assistance for children to single mothers. The right to monetary assistance for child support belongs to a single mother or father who is not married. As well as a single adopter, if the child's birth certificate lacks a record about the father or mother[101]. Assistance for children to single mothers/fathers is provided in the amount equal to the difference between 100 percent of the subsistence minimum for a child of the corresponding age and the average monthly total family income per person for the previous six months. The average monthly assistance amount to a single mother by child's age and in dynamics for 2021-2023 is presented in Figure 13. Comparing the average monthly assistance amount in 2023 for children up to 6 years with the legally established and actual subsistence minimum in 2023, one can make the following conclusions: the assistance amount to a single mother/father is 1,296.1 UAH, which is 1.8 times less than the legally established subsistence minimum (2,272 UAH) and 4.1 times less than the actual subsistence minimum for a child up to 6 years (5,288 UAH). Regarding the average monthly assistance amount in 2023 for children aged from 6 to 18 years, which is 1,413.5 UAH, it is less than the legally established subsistence minimum for 2023 for a child aged from 6 to 18 years by 2 times (2,833 UAH) and the actual subsistence minimum for a child from 6 to 18 years by 4.7 times (6,663 UAH). This indicates the insufficiency of the assistance amount for children to single mothers to cover the child's basic needs.

[100] Ministry of Social Policy, Reports on the implementation of budget programs passports in 2021-2023, https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/22019.html

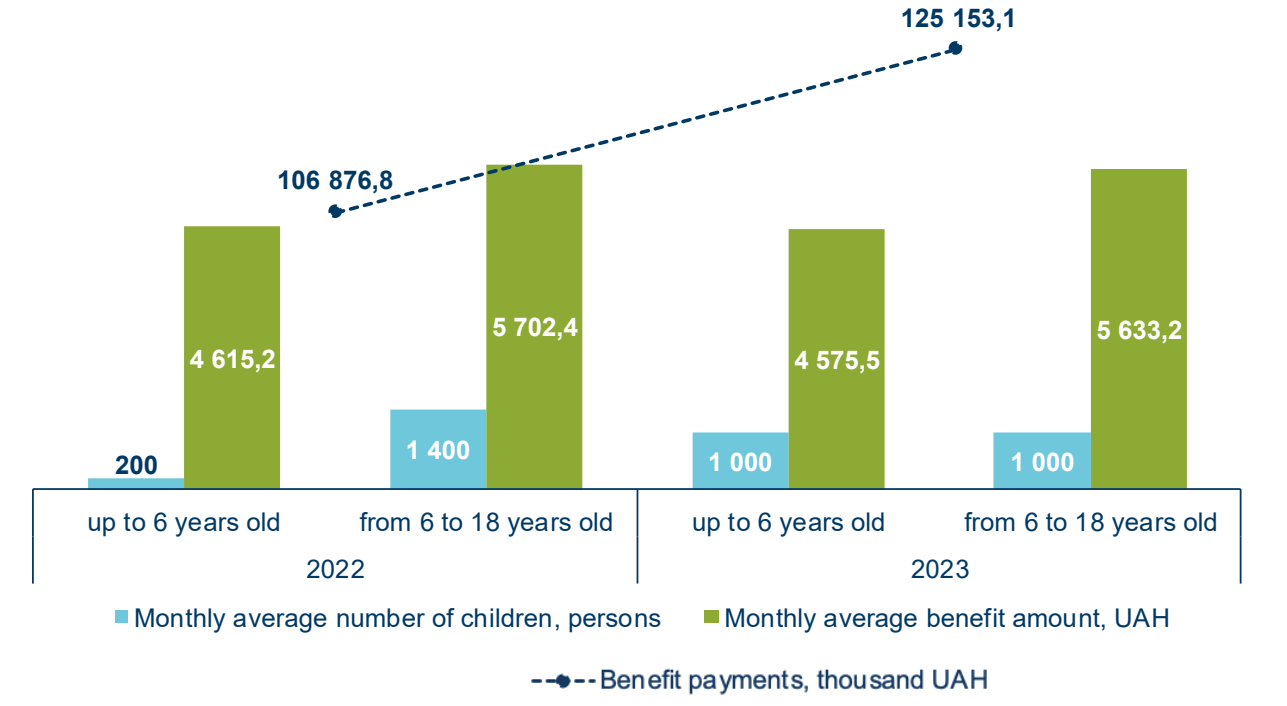
101 Law of Ukraine "On state assistance to families with children" of 21.11.1992 No. 2811-XII, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2811-12#Text

Figure 11. Dynamics of assistance payments in connection with pregnancy and childbirth in 2021-2023



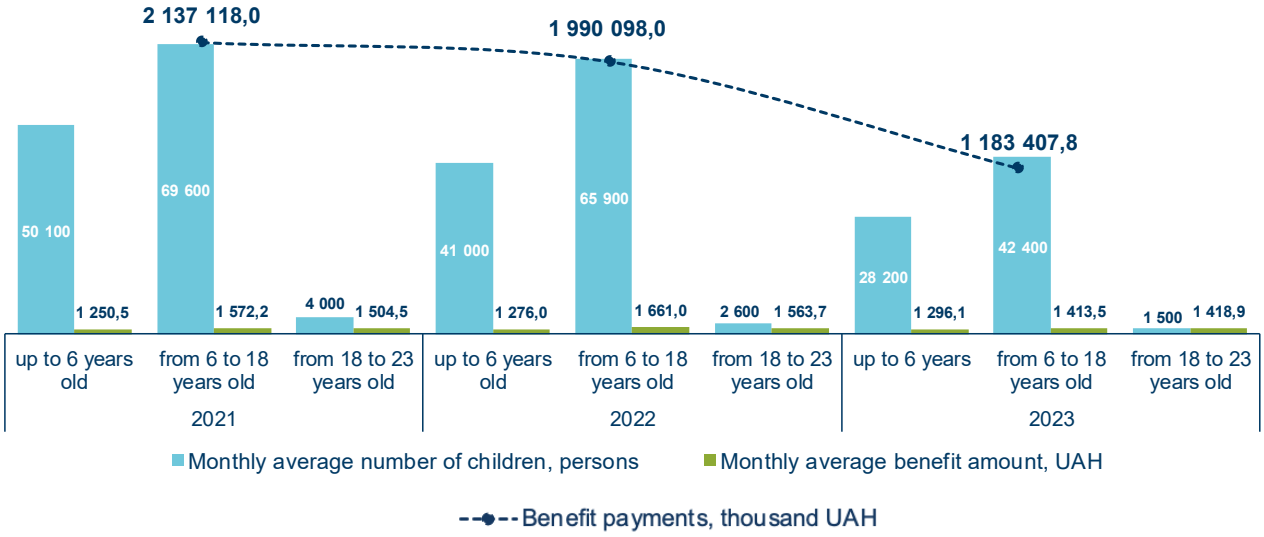
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

Figure 12. Dynamics of assistance payments for severely ill children who have not been assigned disability satus in 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

Figure 13. Dynamics of assistance payments for children to single mothers in 2021-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy

The "Social protection for children and families" budget program characteristics partially align with the requirements of the program-target method. The existing performance indicators ensure the principle of targeted use of budget funds. For example, from the budget program passport, one can track how many individuals receive specific assistance and how much it costs to the state. However, there are no indicators showing the number of people who need help but do not receive it. There are also available indicators disaggregated by age, for example: average monthly number of children under 6 years old/from 6 to 18 years old/from 18 to 23 years old, who received assistance to single mothers was provided. According to these indicators, one can analyse how much money is allocated to the relevant age groups according to the norms established by legislation. As for the shortcomings, the budget program does not contain gender-disaggregated indicators, making it impossible to trace whether there are gaps in the service provision according to gender. Although the quality indicators do not fully reflect the impact of budget spending across all tools, they do highlight differences in the conditions of various groups of public service recipients. The indicators demonstrate, as follows: percentage increase in the volume of payments for children; percentage of reduction in the number of children in institutional care and upbringing facilities; increase in the number of children raised in family-based or family-like care arrangements, from among orphaned children and children deprived of parental care; increase in the number of children placed with patronage caregivers. In 2023, Ukraine reorganised the budget programmes of the Ministry of Social Policy. In particular, the programme ‘Social Protection of Children and Families’ was separated[102]. This decision is aimed at improving the effectiveness of social support for children and families, especially under martial law conditions.

[102] Budget-2023: 442.3 billion UAH is allocated for pension provision and social protection. - Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, https://www.mof.gov.ua/uk/news/biudzhet-2023_na_pensiine_zabezpechennia_ta_sotsialnii_zakhist_peredbacheno_4423_mlrd_grn-3814

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, we outlined the following conclusions:

1. **There is no universal approach that would satisfy the needs of families with children.** Factors that affect the welfare of one child may differ from factors that encompass the needs of another child. This can be influenced by the absence of one/both parents, their financial stability, urban or rural residency, health status and many other aspects depending on the situation. War increases the risks that existing instruments for meeting the needs of families with children may prove insufficient to solve their problems, due to migration needs, infrastructure destruction, risks of injury or death. The Ukrainian social protection system currently lacks a normative definition of basic needs and needs of families with children. This complicates the development of comprehensive support policy that would take into account the interests and needs of all family members.

2. **When solving problems of families with children, the main focus is primarily on supporting children, while the needs of parents are mostly ignored.** As the needs of children evolve with age and circumstances, the needs of their parents also change. These may include acquiring parenting skills, balancing family and professional responsibilities, childcare, breaks from caregiving, social adaptation, and psychological support. Ignoring parents' needs can affect their desire to give birth, adopt or raise children, contribute to the deterioration of children's living standards.

3. **Women in Ukraine face additional barriers when raising children.** Women have an additional burden of childcare and upbringing, often reflected in unpaid housework, the need to take extended childcare leave, which, in turn, limits their opportunities for professional and career development. Due to the war and mobilization, many women are forced to raise children on their independently, which increases additional pressure on them.

4. **Support for families from vulnerable groups focuses primarily on care for children with special educational needs.** Care is one of the basic needs of a child. If a child has a disability, this requires special skills to provide proper care. Therefore, the state provides a number of social care services and payments that should ensure payment for alternative instruments. Children from vulnerable groups also have other important needs to which the state pays less attention. These include socialization, inclusive education, medical care and rehabilitation.

5. **Ensuring care and upbringing of children with disabilities is a critical problem, especially for children under 6 years of age.** The availability of inclusive preschool/school educational institutions partially solves the care problem, as children spend most of the day under the supervision of educators/teachers. At the same time, care and development for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs remain less accessible options. And although access to education for children with special educational needs expands every year due to an increase in the number of inclusive classes, gaps still remain regarding ensuring appropriate proper conditions.

6. **The state provides the child's needs for clothing and hygiene products only for newborns.** The "Baby Box" is an example of an instrument that more effectively covers needs through a set of goods rather than monetary compensation. Monetary compensation does not cover the cost of the proposed items. Indirect education costs (textbooks, clothing, equipment, cultural and sports sections) are usually outside state support in Ukraine. Costs related to children's education are an additional financial obligation for families.

7. **Low-income families have additional barriers to meet the needs of children due to economic vulnerability.** The needs of children from low-income families do not significantly differ from the needs of other families with children, however, the disproportionate level of family income and necessary expenses can become an obstacle to meeting part of children's needs. That is why support for relevant families should be provided at the state and local levels.

8. **Nutrition is one of the child's basic needs but requires significant state resources to ensure its provision.** The Ministry of Social Policy budget funds nutrition only for children affected by the Chornobyl disaster, while other categories are supported through local budgets. In 2024, the state allocated a 2 billion UAH subsidy to finance meals for all schoolchildren in grades 1–4 from October to December. However, due to the limited financial capabilities of the state, there is a risk to the sustainability of this initiative.

9. **Schools are central element of the child's life system from approximately 6 to 16 years old and is related to meeting many needs.** In addition to education, school partially covers needs for care, nutrition, socialization, cultural and sports development of children. However, school can also cause additional needs, for example regarding transportation, which is a challenge for both children from rural areas and children with disabilities.

10. **In 2023, 43% of expenditures of the specialized budget program of the Ministry of Social Policy were directed to newborn children.** The corresponding distribution of funds indicates that the state's priority is stimulating childbirth through payments. However, further support is provided only for certain vulnerable groups. The effect of such fund distribution is questionable, as even the Strategy for Demographic Development of Ukraine for the period until 2040 states that financial incentives often provide a positive impact on birth rates, but their long-term effect is small and affects mainly groups with low education levels and low incomes[103].

Based on the results of the study, we have developed the following recommendations:

1. **Develop and implement mechanisms to encourage the participation of both parents in childcare, particularly by stimulating the use of childcare leave by each parent.** Currently in Ukraine, childcare leave is taken mainly by mothers, which negatively affects their career growth and creates the need to reintegrate into the labour market after the leave ends. More active involvement of men will positively affect women's career opportunities and child-rearing thanks to the growing role of the father.

2. **Promote socialization of parents and guardians**. Local self-government authorities, public organizations and international technical assistance projects should take a leading position in developing measures for socialization of parents and guardians in the regions. This will

[103] Strategy of demographic development of Ukraine for the period until 2040 https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/uploads/public/66f/c43/106/66fc4310689bb131307545.pdf

contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and skills in child-rearing, especially regarding children with disabilities, as well as the exchange of things and children's clothing, which is especially relevant for low-income families.

3. **Review the approach to providing monetary compensation for the "Baby Box" program, as its amount does not correspond to the real cost of necessary goods.** As a result, the basic needs of newborns remain partially unmet, and budget funds are used ineffectively. It is necessary to increase the amount of funds directed to forming the "baby package" or its monetary compensation.

4. **Introduce a "School Starter Kit" instrument that will reduce the financial burden on families.** Similar to the "Baby Box", it is necessary to implement measures to provide schoolchildren with essential supplies and items for the school year. Since preparation for school is a significant financial burden, the corresponding package should be provided for all families. The Ministry of Social Policy can restore the program of providing one-time monetary assistance to children from large low-income families for preparation for the school year. In 2021, 2,000 UAH was allocated for the needs of each child from the corresponding family. This amount can be revised according to inflation rate[104].

5. **Review the funding mechanisms for nutrition of children affected by the Chernobyl disaster.** The corresponding instrument is outdated and does not meet the requirements and problems of modern times, as there is no direct relationship between the current needs of children and the Chernobyl disaster that occurred almost 40 years ago. It is necessary to leave free meals only to children with health problems.

6. **Develop measures to compensate for childcare costs.** It is necessary to partially or fully (for low-income families) compensate fees for nurseries and kindergartens, educational and sports institutions that provide childcare. It is recommended to increase funding for state childcare institutions and extend the "Municipal Nanny" program to all families, regardless of status. If corresponding programs will be financed from local budget funds, they will require state support.

7. **Prioritize funding for adequate educational conditions for children with disabilities.** To ensure proper education and socialization of children, it is necessary to develop a network of educational institutions with adapted infrastructure, ensure the availability of correctional equipment, have teachers and caregivers skilled for barrier - free communication with such children. This will promote inclusiveness of the educational process and ensure equal opportunities in obtaining education. It is also recommended to involve parents in seminars on caring for children with special educational needs to promote shared responsibility for the learning process.

8. **To establish a comprehensive system of financial support that ensures the welfare of families with children at all stages of childhood and youth. J**ne-time assistance upon the birth of a child provides initial support, however, a structured system of targeted payments should be introduced to meet needs at key stages of child development. These payments should be developed based on objective criteria, including the number of children in the household, parental status, family income level and the child's health status. A predictable

[104] Resolution of the CMU from August 4, 2021 No. 803 Some issues of social support for low-income families with many children https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/803-2021-%D0%BF#n3

and sustainable financial support mechanism will contribute to reducing the level of child poverty, ensuring equal opportunities and strengthening family stability.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Classification of the needs of families with children into priority and non-priority needs

Children under 3 years old	
Priority needs	**Non-priority needs**
Childcare: • Municipal nannies only for some categories; partially available crèches, financial mechanism 'Money Follows the Child' (Kyiv, Lviv) • Childcare and parenting services in close-to-family conditions • Social support service for families/individuals in difficult life circumstances • Temporary respite service for parents or individuals replacing them who care for children with disabilities • Payment of care allowance Nutrition: • Food packages for non-breastfeeding mothers, 'Milk Kitchen' in some cities only Healthcare provision: • Medical support for certain vulnerable groups and children with a specific list of diseases • Compulsory vaccination with available categories of vaccines	Clothing and hygiene: • Social service 'In-kind assistance' Socialization of parents/guardians: • Special interest clubs at the local level (dad hub) Mental and psychological support: • Support and guidance on proper parenting (provided for certain vulnerable groups) • Support in overcoming postnatal depression of the mother Support to cover the need of personal choice: • Baby package' or financial compensation • One-time part of the birth/adoption allowance • Monthly assistance at birth and adoption • Payments for children from vulnerable groups
Children aged 3 to 6 years	
Priority needs	**Non-priority needs**
Childcare and socialization: • Preschool educational institutions • Municipal nanny for certain categories only • Compensation for payment for preschool educational institutions (financial mechanism 'Money Follows the Child') • Childcare and parenting services in family-like conditions (vulnerable groups) • Social support service for families/individuals in difficult life circumstances • Temporary respite services for parents or individuals replacing them who care for children with disabilities • Payment of state social assistance to persons with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities Nutrition: • Meals in preschool educational institutions • Free meals for certain categories of children at the local level	Transportation: • Free transportation for children under 6 years of age • Social service for transportation of children with disabilities Support to cover the need of personal choice: • Financial support for families (for children in large families, orphans, children in foster care, etc.) Clothing and hygiene: • Social service 'In-kind assistance' Socialization of parents/guardians: • Special interest clubs at the local level Mental and psychological support: • Specialized support service for

Healthcare provision: • Medical support for certain vulnerable groups and children with specific diseases • Compulsory vaccination with available categories of vaccines	victims of violence
Children aged 6 to 14 years	
Priority needs	**Non-priority needs**
Childcare • Childcare and parenting services in conditions close to family life (vulnerable groups) • Social support service for families/individuals in difficult life circumstances • Temporary respite services for parents or persons in loco parentis caring for children with disabilities • Payment of state social assistance to persons with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities Nutrition: • Lunch is available at schools, free meals at the local level for some categories of children Healthcare provision: • Health improvement and recreation for children in need of special social attention and support Education: • Support during inclusive education	Clothing and hygiene: • Social service 'In-kind assistance' Transportation: • Subsidized public transport for schoolchildren during their studies • Social service for transporting children with disabilities Socialization of parents/guardians: • No tool that meets the need Mental and psychological support: • Specialized support service for victims of violence • School psychologist Support to cover the need of personal choice: • Financial support for families (for children in large families, orphans, children in foster care, etc.)
Children aged 14 to 18 years	
Priority needs	**Non-priority needs**
Childcare • Childcare and parenting services in close-to-family conditions (vulnerable groups) • Social support service for families of persons in difficult life circumstances • Temporary respite services for parents or individuals replacing them who care for children with disabilities • Payment of state social assistance to persons with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities Nutrition: • School meals, provided free of charge for certain categories at the local level Healthcare provision: • Health improvement vouchers for certain categories Education: • Support during inclusive education • Payments and scholarships for children from vulnerable groups	Clothing and hygiene: • Social service 'In-kind assistance' Transportation: • Subsidized transportation for schoolchildren/students by public transport during their studies • Social service for transportation of children with disabilities Socialization of parents/guardians: • No tool that meets the need Mental and psychological support: • Specialized support service for victims of violence • School psychologist Support to cover the need of personal choice: • Financial support for families (for children in large families, orphans, children in foster care, etc.)

Annex 2. Distribution of child needs according to different family models

Case 1. A child under guardianship of an adult sister

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Socialization of parents/ guardians	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents.	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Psychological support for parents	Providing psychological assistance to parents/guardians	Parental support and guidance on proper child-raising	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Healthcare provision	Vaccination (vaccines from the EU are free of charge)	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Childcare	Nannies providing home care. Provide all municipal institutions with crèches	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis.	In the social sphere Is a priority Available in the State
Nutrition	Food packages (access to formula for non-breastfeeding mothers); 'Milk Kitchen'	Ensuring that the child has a full diet throughout the day.	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Seven main types of needs were identified for the 3–6-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Bus for children	Ensuring safe transportation of children to preschool education institutions	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Preschool Education	Preparation for school	Stimulating comprehensive development in kindergartens	Partially available in the State
Socialization of the care	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Psychological support	Providing psychological support to a child who has lost parents	Supporting the child's moral and psychological well-being	Is a priority Not available in the State
Healthcare provision	Additional vaccinations outside the specified list (chickenpox, flu, etc.). Vaccination (vaccines from the EU - free of charge)	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Not available in the State
Childcare	Nanny: hourly at home; Library nurse;	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Nutrition	Partial or full funding of childcare costs in institutions that can provide round-the-clock childcare.	Ensuring a full diet for the child during the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Available in the State

Six main types of needs were identified for the 6–14-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	School buses	Ensuring safe transportation of children to educational institutions	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Sports and Culture	Availability and access to sports clubs and music/creative schools	Developing and encouraging children's sports and cultural abilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Education	'Ukrainian School Online' - unified state online learning to bridge the knowledge gap (supplement to basic education)	Improving the general educational level of children	Partially available in the State
Healthcare provision	Free access to hygiene facilities	General improvement of the level of medical care for children	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Childcare	After-school care groups; Day care centres for children aged 6 to 14. Summer school camps	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Nutrition	Full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner)	Ensuring a full diet for the child during the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Four main types of needs were identified for the 14–18-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Sports and Culture	Availability of sports clubs and music/art schools	Developing and encouraging children's sports and cultural abilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Education	Access to relevant out-of-school education. Prevention and awareness-raising on deviant behaviour, sexuality education	Improving the general educational level of children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Healthcare provision	Free access to sanitary and hygiene products, contraceptives (anonymous)	General improvement of the level of medical care for children	Is a priority Not available in the State
Nutrition	Full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner) for all categories of children	Ensuring that children have a nutritious diet throughout the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Case 2. A child with disability living with parents

Four main types of needs were identified for the under-3-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Socialization of parents/ guardians	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents. Exchange of experience in raising a child with a disability	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Psychological support for parents	Psychological assistance for parents/guardians	Assistance to parents in accepting a child with a disability, guidance on the proper upbringing of children with disabilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Healthcare provision	Vaccinations (EU vaccines are free of charge): mandatory and recommended. Medical examinations	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Childcare	Nannies providing home-based care or nannies in municipal institutions with skills in caring for children with disabilities	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their child on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Available the State

Six main types of needs were identified for the 3–6-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Buses and other public transport adapted to the needs of children with disabilities	Ensuring safe transportation of children to educational institutions, with adaptation to the needs of children with disabilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Preschool Education	Preparing for school	Stimulation of general development in kindergartens, the presence of separate groups of children with disabilities, or their integration	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Socialization of parents/ guardians	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents. Exchange of experience in raising a child with a disability	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Healthcare provision	Vouchers for health improvement. Additional vaccinations outside the list (chickenpox, flu, etc.).	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Partially available in the State
Childcare	Vaccinations (vaccines from the EU are free of charge), medical examinations	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their child on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Nutrition	Availability of nannies or kindergartens that accept children with disabilities	Ensuring that the child has a nutritious diet throughout the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Six main types of needs were identified for the 6–14-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Buses and other public transport adapted to the needs of children with disabilities	Ensuring safe transportation of children to educational institutions, with adaptation to the needs of children with disabilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Sports and Culture	Availability of sports clubs adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities	Development and promotion of sports and cultural abilities of children with disabilities	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Education	'Ukrainian School Online' - unified state online education to bridge the knowledge gap (supplement to basic education)	Improving the general educational level of children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Healthcare provision	Funds for the purchase of medicines/provision of medicines and healthcare, free access to sanitary facilities, medical examinations	General improvement of the level of medical care for children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Childcare	Summer camps and day-care centres that accommodate children with disabilities; nannies to care for children with disabilities	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Nutrition	Full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner) for all categories of children	Ensuring that children have a nutritious diet throughout the day.	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Five main types of needs were identified for the 14-18-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Buses and other public transport adapted to the needs of children with disabilities	Ensuring safe transportation of children to educational institutions, with adaptation to the needs of children with disabilities	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Sports and Culture	Sports activities adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities	Development and promotion of sports and cultural abilities of children with disabilities	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Social and psychological support	Prevention and awareness-raising on deviant behaviour, sexuality education, socialization assistance	Improving the moral and psychological state of children and encouraging socialization	In the social sphere Is a priority Available the State
Healthcare provision	Free access to sanitary and hygiene products, funds to buy medicines/provide medicines, medical examinations, vouchers for health improvement	General improvement of the level of medical care for children	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Nutrition	Full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner)	Ensuring that the child has a nutritious diet throughout the day.	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Case 3. A child from a low-income family

Four main types of needs were identified for the under-3-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Socialization of parents/ guardians	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents.	Not available in the State In the social sphere
Healthcare provision	Vaccination (EU vaccines are free of charge): mandatory and recommended	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Not available in the State
Clothing	Humanitarian collection (exchange) centres: clothes, shoes, toys, children's hygiene	Providing children with quality clothes without additional financial burden on the family	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Childcare	Babysitting: hourly at home, library	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially in the State

Seven main types of needs were identified for the 3–6-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Free children's bus for transportation of children to preschool education institutions	Ensuring safe movement of children to educational institutions	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Preschool Education	Preparation for school	Stimulating the overall development in kindergartens	Is a priority Partially available in the State
Socialization of parents/ guardians	Special interest clubs	Creating a community where you can come with your child, have fun for free and socialize with other parents	In the social sphere Not available in the State
Healthcare provision	Vouchers for health improvement; Additional vaccination outside the specified list (chickenpox, flu, etc.); Vaccination (vaccines from the EU - free of charge)	Improving the overall level of medical care for children	Partially available in the State
Clothing	Humanitarian collection (exchange) centres: clothes, shoes, toys, children's hygiene	Providing children with quality clothes, without additional financial burden on the family	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Childcare	Nanny: hourly at home; places for hourly nannies in state municipal institutions, librarian; Partial or full funding of childcare costs in institutions that can provide round-the-clock childcare	Provision of childcare for families who are unable to care for their children on a regular basis	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Nutrition	Free full meals in preschool educational institutions (breakfast, lunch, dinner)	Providing free nutritious meals for children throughout the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Six main types of needs were identified for the 6-14-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Free school buses for everyone, not just in rural and far-flung areas	Ensuring free and safe transportation of children to educational institutions	In the social sphere Is a priority Not available in the State
Sports and Culture	Partial funding (or vouchers) for participation in sports clubs and music schools	Developing and encouraging children's sports and cultural abilities	Is a priority Not available in the State
Education	'Ukrainian School Online' - unified state online learning to bridge knowledge gaps (complementary to basic education)	Improving the general educational level of children	Not available in the State
Healthcare provision	Funds to buy medicines/provide medicines and healthcare, free access to sanitary and hygiene products, vouchers for healthcare	General improvement of the level of medical care for children	Is a priority Not available in the State
Clothing and Material Support	Humanitarian collection (exchange) centres: clothes, shoes, toys, baby hygiene (nappies, wipes) (parents can exchange for free); 'Targeted money for clothing' card - to prepare a child for school (school uniform, backpack, stationery, etc.), laptop (tablet)	Providing children with quality clothing without additional financial burden on the family	Is a priority Not available in the State In the social sphere
Nutrition	Free full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner)	Providing free nutritious meals for children throughout the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially in the State

Six main types of needs were identified for the 14-18-year-old age group:

Needs	Support Tools	Justification	Indicators
Transportation	Free transportation	Ensuring free and safe transportation of children	Not available in the State In the social sphere
Sports and Culture	Partial funding (or vouchers) for participation in sports clubs and music schools; Access to relevant extracurricular education	Developing and encouraging children's sports and cultural abilities	Not available in the State Is a priority
Education	A savings account from the state (funds for education), courses to improve educational competences and enter higher education institutions	Improving the general educational level of children	Not available in the State
Social and psychological support	Access to free psychological services, prevention and awareness-raising on deviant behaviour, sexuality education	Improving the moral and psychological state of children and encouraging socialization	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State
Healthcare	Free access to sanitary and hygiene products,	General improvement of the level of medical care for	Not available in the State

provision	contraceptives (anonymous), funds for the purchase of medicines/provision of medicines and health improvement	children	Is a priority
Nutrition	Free full meals at school (breakfast, lunch, dinner)	Provision of free nutritious meals for children throughout the day	In the social sphere Is a priority Partially available in the State

Annex 3. List of social services aimed at addressing the needs of children and families with children

1. Short-term accommodation
2. Social prevention
3. Care and foster care of children in conditions close to family life
4. Transitional supported accommodation / study social apartment (house)
5. Social support for families/individuals in difficult life circumstances
6. Social support for families with orphans and children deprived of parental care
7. Social adaptation
8. Social adaptation of war veterans and their families
9. Social integration and reintegration
10. Home care
11. Residential care
12. Day care for children with disabilities
13. Personal assistant
14. Social and psychological rehabilitation
15. Temporary rest for parents or individuals replacing them who care for children with disabilities
16. Support during inclusive education
17. Transport services

Annex 4. Assistance allocation by recipient groups

Families and children that are not from vulnerable groups (42.7% of total planned expenditures and 2023):

1. Childbirth allowance payment
2. Maternity allowance in case of pregnancy and childbirth
3. Provision of one-time in-kind assistance ‘baby box’/payment of monetary compensation for its cost.

Families and children from vulnerable groups (35.3% of total planned expenditures and 2023):

1. Allowance for severely ill children
2. Temporary state assistance to children whose parents evade child support
3. Children's allowance for single mothers
4. One-time remuneration to women who have been awarded the honorary title of Ukraine ‘Mother-heroine’
5. Allowance for children raised in large families
6. Reimbursement of the cost of childcare services for children under three years of age ‘municipal nanny’

Alternative care (22.0% of total planned expenditures and 2023):

1. Allowance for the adoption of a child
2. Allowance for children under guardianship or custody
3. State social assistance payments for orphans and children deprived of parental care, persons from among them, including persons with disabilities, who are in family-type children's homes
4. State social assistance payments for orphans and children deprived of parental care, and persons from among them, including persons with disabilities, who are in foster families
5. Social assistance for the maintenance of a child in the family of a foster care
6. Financial support to foster parents for the provision of social services in family-type children's homes
7. Payment of financial support to foster parents for the provision of social services in foster families
8. Payment for childcare services and expenses