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1.1 Information

STANDARD 1: Ensure unaccompanied children receive relevant information.

Indicator 1.1: Information has to be provided within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after the application for international protection has been lodged, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating to reception conditions.

- ***Additional remarks****: Information is provided in an age-appropriate form as written text, leaflets, pictures, videos. Oral information should be the main form of providing information to unaccompanied children*.

Indicator 1.2: Information should be provided free of charge.

Indicator 1.3: The information provided should address the questions of unaccompanied children or their representative.

Indicator 1.4: Information covers all aspects of reception conditions concerning unaccompanied children, and as a minimum the right to reception, the form of provision of material reception conditions (housing, food, clothing and daily expenses allowances), access to healthcare, education, leisure activities, and specific arrangements for applicants for international protection with special needs, if relevant.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Information should be clearly communicated to the unaccompanied children in a child-friendly manner and should also include the availability of additional psychosocial support, social norms in the MS, advice on daily life, including conflict management.*

Indicator 1.5: Information is provided according to the special needs and individual circumstances of unaccompanied children.

Indicator 1.6: Information covers the roles of staff working with unaccompanied children.

Indicator 1.7: Information should explain the obligation of appointing a representative in order to assist unaccompanied children on procedural issues and in their everyday life.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Unaccompanied children should be informed about the roles of the appointed representative, the staff members and in particular the social workers, who will give them full support during their stay in the reception facility.*

Indicator 1.8: Information covers the main aspects of the procedure for international protection, including access to asylum procedure, available legal assistance and how to access it, possibilities for family tracing, family reunification, voluntary return and to appeal procedures that are relevant to their case.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Information is provided mainly by the representative and by the reception authorities. However, other actors are often involved in the provision of material and non-material reception conditions, including for example regional or local services, intergovernmental organisations or NGOs.*

- *Information provision may also include aspects related to gender-based violence (GBV), risks of trafficking and smuggling, age assessment procedure, sexual orientation and gender identity issues, if they are relevant to the identified special needs.*

STANDARD 2: Ensure that unaccompanied children understand the relevant information.

Indicator 2.1: The information is provided in a child-friendly, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Child-friendly information is understood as including any method of communication that is adapted to the age and maturity of unaccompanied children, given in a language that they can understand and which is gender- and culture-sensitive.*

- *Child-friendly information may be communicated by those working with unaccompanied children (e.g. reception staff, social workers, representatives as well as other stakeholders) through a range of methods and formats, including oral communication, visual materials, multimedia electronic guide, etc.*

- *The use of child-friendly materials or materials adjusted to the specific needs of unaccompanied children may be of assistance in helping unaccompanied children to understand the process and to handle communication difficulties such as illiteracy. However, in practice, the skills and empathic and supportive attitude of the person providing the information are of utmost importance for a successful outcome.*

Indicator 2.2: Information must be provided systematically during the process and evidence of this information provision should be documented (when it was provided, by whom, etc.)

- ***Additional remarks:*** *Those providing information check that unaccompanied children have effectively understood the information given. Information related to asylum procedure, family tracing, family reunification, voluntary return and identified special needs is repeated at a later stage and on several occasions.*

Indicator 2.3: Interpreters and/or language mediators need to be available in reception facilities to allow communication with unaccompanied children in their native language.

- ***Additional remarks**: Trained interpreters are available for important conversations on asylum related topics or when there is a need expressed by unaccompanied children.*

Good practice on information provision

It is considered good practice to:

- provide for child-friendly and age appropriate information materials in the form of information booklets, pocket-sized leaflets, colouring books and/or digital information tools to inform unaccompanied children on the asylum procedure, reception, integration and voluntary return;
- provide oral information and conduct dialogues with unaccompanied children to identify their needs for additional information through cultural mediators, under supervision;
- conduct group and one-to-one information sessions to provide social and legal assistance to applicants for international protection (e.g. on asylum procedure and their rights and obligations).

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