

Exploring the State's role ensuring equal start opportunities during the first 1,000 days of a child's life

Ilona Tamutienė, Vytautas Magnus university, ilona.tamutiene@vdu.lt

Vaida Auglytė, Vytautas Magnus university, vaida.auglyte@vdu.lt

Nurturing care of pregnant women and women who raising children under ≤ 2 years of age is extremely important. The first 1,000 days of a child's life are the most important developmental stage in an individual's life and can shape a child's future. During this period, an infant undergoes a unique developmental stage, which is conspicuous by high plasticity, and young infants are known to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of stress and trauma. The early childhood development is actively supported by the international community (World Health Organization, the Group of Twenty, United Nations Children's Fund, European Union), which also emphasises that investment in this field is still insufficient. We conducted a qualitative investigation using semi-structured interviews to explore the difficulties experienced by pregnant women and women who raising under ≤ 2 years of age, as well as how they assess the support provided to them. According to the study's findings, mothers raising children under ≤ 2 years of age face issues with the health care system, housing policies, benefits, safety from violence, etc. Based on the results of this study, we suggest some recommendations to reduce these multiple problems.