



Paramos vaikams centras
Children Support Centre

ACTIVITY REPORT

2021



Big Brothers Big Sisters
Lietuvoje

**VAIKYSTĖ
BE SMURTO**



**POZITYVI
TĖVYSTĖ**

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VŠĮ CHILDREN SUPPORT CENTRE

A non-governmental organization operating since 1995



Founded by psychologists Aušra Kurienė and Erna Petkutė.

OUR MISSION IS TO ENSURE THE MENTAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN BY PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

OBJECTIVES:

- Child abuse prevention and intervention;
- Support for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties, who are going through a mental health crisis;
- Implementation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Vilnius, and its expansion in Lithuania;
- Implementation and expansion of the Second Step program in Lithuania;
- Spreading the philosophy of Positive Parenting, preparing and implementing parent education programs;
- Maintenance of a training centre for volunteer and specialist work with children, youth and families;
- Provision of mental health services for organisations and the wider population;
- Ensuring the stable and continuous functioning of the Centre.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE:



Big Brothers Big Sisters
Lietuvoje

(BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS)

VAIKYSTĖ
BE SMURTO

(CHILDHOOD
WITHOUT ABUSE)



(SECOND STEP)

POZITYVI
TĖVYSTĖ

(POSITIVE PARENTING)

ACTION PLAN FOR 2022:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters.** Organizing long-term collaboration between children with emotional issues and trained grown-up volunteers in order to support the children emotionally and help them to overcome difficulties.
- **Childhood Without Abuse.** Provision of multidisciplinary (i.e. psychological, legal, and social) support for child victims of abuse and their families; preparation and provision of child abuse prevention and intervention programs tailored to specialists from different fields; organising seminars, conferences, and social campaigns; creation of written material and guidelines; providing consultations for specialists.
- **Positive Parenthood.** The spread of positive parenting philosophy by way of re-evaluation and systematisation of current parental skill training programs, preparation and implementation of social and educational projects. Also, organising parental phone consulting services via the Parent Line under the auspices of the project *Multidisciplinary Service Provision For Families in Vilnius City*; providing support for children, adolescents, and adults, and consulting families in time of familial conflict and mental health crisis.
- **Second Step.** Development and implementation of emotional and social competence training programs for teachers, preschoolers and pupils; implementation of the program in primary schools and preschool education institutions throughout Lithuania.
- **Training centre.** Training of specialists and volunteers to work with children, youth and families.

THE MAIN EFFORT WAS DIRECTED TOWARDS HELPING CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND PROFESSIONALS TO OVERCOME THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC

In 2021, during the second year of an ongoing pandemic and quarantine, the need for psychological and emotional support for children, parents, and families increased several times. The need for consultations for specialists working with families increased as well.

In order to help adults and children overcome psychological issues and crises, the Children Support Centre provided even more individual and group sessions and organized training courses.

Public lectures, conferences, recommendations (videos, publications, memos) were provided for the general public, with the main focus on helping parents maintain emotional balance in the family during quarantine, learn effective methods of conflict resolution, appropriate expression of feelings, and other principles of positive parenting.

Specialists from different fields strengthened their skills in working with families during practical seminars, lectures, and consultations, organized to help them to better understand children during quarantine and provide recommendations on how to support them in overcoming difficulties and successfully returning to school.

Experts from the Children Support Centre joined the initiative of a group of NGO organizations calling for creating the necessary conditions for children to return to school during the second quarantine. The Centre prepared appeals to the Ombudsman for Children of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas and several ministries. The Centre cooperated with governmental and non-governmental organizations in public events aimed at discussing the emotional state of parents and children during quarantine.

7,603 children, parents and specialists received individual and family counselling with psychologists and psychotherapists, mediation, training, group support, and telephone counselling.

5,400 hours of individual counselling of children, adolescents and adults.

1,498 phone consultations via the Parent Line.

77 volunteers in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program provided emotional support to 77 children and adolescents.

Under the Childhood without Abuse program, 182 children who have suffered abuse and 196 relatives received support.

379 schools participated in the Second Step program.



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS



*Big Brothers Big Sisters
Lietuvoje*

It is a volunteer-based mentorship program that is carried out by carefully selected and well-trained volunteers; it is intended for children and adolescents undergoing emotional difficulties and crises, who lack social, communication, and conflict resolution skills.

Volunteers interact with the 7-14 year old children/adolescents that are assigned to them; they see each other once a week for at least a year. Together they do sports, go to cinema or theatre, meet for a cup of tea, enjoy crafts, cooking, and other activities. By engaging in activities that the child enjoys, the volunteer talks to the child, hears him/her out, expresses support and encouragement. This helps the children and adolescents to deal better with their life challenges and light mental health issues through receiving support and having a positive example in an adult (the volunteer).

- 154 children and volunteers took part in the program. 77 children and adolescents received emotional support from 77 volunteers.
- Volunteers dedicated 3,149 hours to support the children.
- Program coordinators conducted 78 hours of training and supervision sessions for Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers and 134 hours of training for employees of other organizations, as well as volunteers working with children and families.
- 5 events and 1 camp organized for Big Brothers Big Sisters children and volunteers.

**154 children and volunteers
took part in the program.**

**212 hours of training and
supervising.**

WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER IN THE BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS PROGRAM?

“*Simona, 35, works in the finance industry: ‘I wanted to bring more meaning and positive action into my life, to do good and see some change in the world. I wanted to give without expecting anything in return, but several months into the program I could already see how much I was actually getting out of it – so much inspiration and courage to try out new things, so much joy, happiness, and the ability to enjoy the little pleasures of life. I’m learning to be a better listener and be more patient.’*”

“*Vadimas, 30, Lawyer’s Assistant: ‘I must have wanted to do something good without getting anything in return. Or maybe my life lacked some long-term activity that requires patience and where positive results are slow to come. Also, I probably wanted to leave my comfort zone and improve myself.’*”

“*Vaida, 31: ‘When you realize that you just want to give without getting something for it, when you do something kind without stopping to think about what you might receive in return, when the idea of spending time with those who need an example, a friend or someone to talk to makes you calm and happy, it means it’s time to do some volunteering.’*”

Main sponsors:

Vilnius City Council,
donation website Aukok.lt,
Dentsu Lithuania



CHILDHOOD WITHOUT ABUSE

Comprehensive support for child victims of violence and their families. Our specialists provide professional mental health, social, and legal support. Also, they organize training sessions and provide counselling to specialists, develop and implement child abuse prevention programs and advocate for children's rights.

- 182 children who have suffered abuse and 196 relatives received support.
- 3,020 hours allocated to mental health support.
- Current projects:
 - Together We can Protect and Help is intended to promote early identification of children affected by violence to ensure their protection, taking into account the specific needs of children during the criminal process and providing them with comprehensive support.
 - Empowered Children and Families: A Model for Violence Prevention and Intervention Services aims at creating and implementing a preventive program in Lithuania and expanding the availability of specialized services for children and families who have experienced violence.
 - PEARLS for Children: Professionals' Empowerment through Assisted Resilience Learning and Support is aimed at protecting children from maltreatment in Lithuania, Poland and Italy.
 - Prevention of Violence Against Children – the goal is to protect children from violence, especially sexual abuse.
 - Comprehensive Support for Children Affected by Violence, Witnesses of Violence and Their Families aims at providing mental health support to children and families who have experienced violence.
 - Safe Youth – Strong Region is a project for prevention of sexual abuse.

- 164 hours of training and counselling for specialists in different fields (judges, prosecutors, police officers, psychologists, child rights protection specialists, social workers, etc.) on topics of violence prevention and support for the victims. Attended by 225 specialists.
- 6 focus groups (children, parents, specialists) discussed violence prevention (with 74 participants) and 6 interdepartmental round table discussions (with 46 participants) were organized.
- Preventive classes for children/adolescents (with 70 participants), a lecture for parents (with 30 participants) and 2 conferences organized: *Protecting a Child from Violence: Options for Legal Process and Psychological Support, and Empowered Children and Families: How to Protect Children from Violence*.
- Training material and publications:
 - Preventive film Greta and training manual;
 - Publication What Parents and Specialists are Saying about Prevention of Violence Against Children: Focus Group Results (<https://bit.ly/3c7uuvj>);
 - Analysis of training the needs of specialists working with children (https://pearlsforchildren.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FINAL_REPORT-RIRES.pdf);
 - Publication Pathway for Victims of CM in Vilnius: Analysis of the Implementation of Children's Rights Protection and Services for Children who have Suffered Abuse (https://pearlsforchildren.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Pathway-of-Victims-of-CM-in-Vilnius_summary_EN_full_text_lt_2021.03.24.pdf).
- A distance learning platform for the prevention of sexual abuse: www.pvcmokymai.lt
- The Centre's experts participated in the initiative group of NGO organizations which called for creating conditions for children to return to school during the second quarantine. Appeals submitted to the Ombudsman for Children of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas and ministries. (<https://e-etika.lt/odemsoob/2021/04/Organizaciju-kreipimasis-Vaiko-teisiu-apsaugos-kontrolierei.pdf>; <https://e-etika.lt/odemsoob/2021/04/Viesas-kreipimasis-del-vaiku-ir-jaunimo-sveikatos-susijusios-su-technologiju-naudojimu-pasirasyta.pdf>).

The Centre cooperated with governmental and non-governmental organizations in public events aimed at discussing the emotional state of parents and children during quarantine.

182 children who have suffered abuse and 196 relatives received support.

6 projects implemented.

Training for specialists in various fields, preventive classes for children, and a lecture for parents.

CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND SPECIALISTS ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION:

“ Safety is when you want to raise a brave child, you shouldn't just tell him what to watch out for, instead, you should stress the actions he should take once he faces the danger. It's when you're not afraid, it's when you return home without fear, when you are present and calm. ”

“ Safety is when you're not afraid, it's when you return home without fear, when you are present and calm. ”

“ Children who took part in preventive programs apply the knowledge they've acquired, they willingly join in the activities and share their problems. ”

Main sponsors:

The European Commission, the Active Citizens Fund, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, BICE, the Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Lithuania, the OAK Foundation

Partners:

Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, Utena Education Centre, the Lithuanian Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Voksne for Barn (Norway), the Dardedze Centre (Latvia), the Empowering Children Foundation (Poland), CESVI (Italy), The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan (Italy).

POSITIVE PARENTING

Multidisciplinary support for children experiencing emotional distress and other difficulties, for parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, and other carers who experience difficulties in raising children or are facing mental health issues, also, for families facing relationship difficulties and other crises. Organisation of events such as training sessions, seminars, and public talks for parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, and professionals working with families. Implementation of projects such as Multidisciplinary Service Provision for Families in Vilnius and Competent Foster Parents/Adoptive Parents – Successful Fostering/Adoption. Telephone counselling for parents and guardians via the Parent Line.

- 7 603 people received:
 - individual consultations with a family psychologist or psychotherapist
 - mediation
 - training
 - group support sessions
 - telephone counselling
- 5,400 hours were dedicated to individual consultations for children, adolescents and adults.
- 1,383 hours were allocated to counselling of families, children's relatives and specialists working with families, as well as mediation.



TRAINING FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

- 71 continuous training courses, seminars, and lectures on positive parenting skills, including a conference Parents in a Changed World: How not to lose Yourself and Understand the Children. 5,063 parents, adoptive parents and foster parents took part. 326 hours of training sessions and talks.

SPECIALIST TRAINING

- Group supervision sessions for psychologists – 10 groups with 130 psychologists from educational mental health services and educational institutions from different cities and regions in Lithuania. 40 remote supervision sessions (in total, 160 hours) for discussing difficult cases (when working with children, parents, teachers, and educational institution communities) and other professional challenges.
- 26 lectures and training sessions for professionals.

PARENT LINE

Anonymous, free of charge phone counselling service. It provides psychological knowledge and advice for parents, grandparents, guardians, and other carers who are raising children or adolescents.

- The line received 2,939 calls, 1,668 (57 percent) of which were answered.
- 1,498 consultations provided, totalling 602 on-call hours.

COMMENTS BY PARENTS WHO RECEIVED PHONE COUNSELLING:

“ I've made a few calls, and each time I felt better after the conversation, because I receive a lot of help and support.

“ It took me a long time to call the Parent Line, but now, having used the opportunity (talking to a psychologist for free), I will do it again and again. “

“ This line is the best, I always get great advice. “

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL ON POSITIVE PARENTING

- A series of recommendations (Mis)understood Messages (27 topics) helps to understand the “messages” that children send to their parents and vice versa; it gives advice on how to replace common phrases with better ones to strengthen mutual understanding in the family and prevent conflicts
- A publication *Children and Adolescents in a Changed World: Why There are More Difficulties* discusses the most pressing questions parents have about the behaviour and well-being of children and adolescents during the pandemic.

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COMMENTS BY PARENTS, ADOPTIVE PARENTS, AND GUARDIANS WHO COMPLETED THE TRAINING:

“ I received a lot of useful information about managing conflicts and why it's important to name one's feelings and talk openly with children about uncomfortable topics. But most importantly, I realized that the change should start with me. ”

“ Now I know it's important to talk to my child as an equal. ”

“ I learnt to hear my child out, to mirror her feelings, to name hers and my own emotions, to apologize openly and discuss important topics. Now I know why it's crucial to present more choices, not just the one that I find acceptable. ”

Sponsor:

Ministry of Social Security and Labour

SECOND STEP



It is a socio-emotional skill development and abuse prevention program that helps reduce aggressive behaviour in children, teaches them appropriate expression of feelings, conflict resolution, and understanding the consequences of their actions. The Centre's specialists coordinate the implementation of the program in Lithuanian schools, train primary school teachers to apply the program and provide the necessary information, training guidelines and continuous consultation. The program has been expanded to include preschool education institutions.

- 379 schools with 1,557 teachers and 29,583 pupils took part in the program.
- 37,369 lessons on socio-emotional skills were given.
- 5 training courses for educators were conducted where they learnt to apply the Second Step program in their schools. 103 teachers attended. 120 hours spent on training.
- 3 remote supervision sessions for teachers who apply the Second Step program. 42 teachers participated.
- The Second Step material was adapted to kindergartens and provided to kindergarten teachers who work with preschoolers of 3 to 4 years of age. 8 teachers were trained to test the program in the 2021/2022 school year.

379 schools participated in the program.

The Second Step for Kindergartens program was implemented.

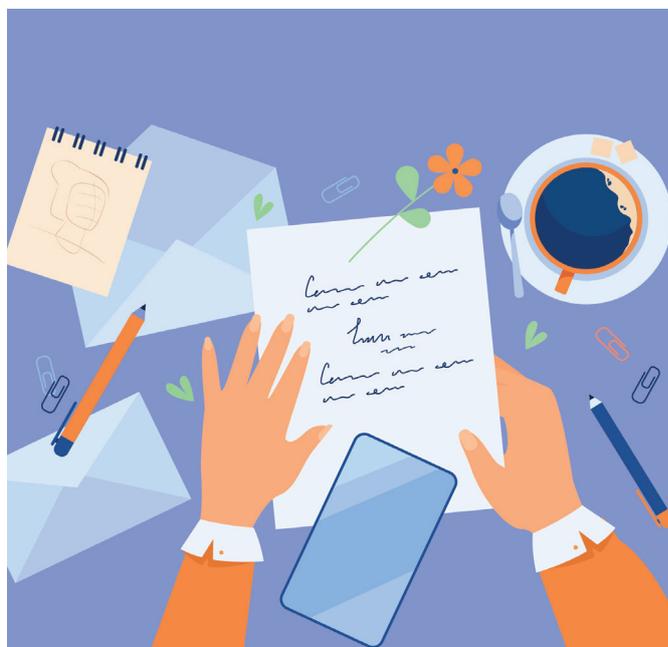
103 educators completed the training.

COMMENTS BY TEACHERS AFTER THE SECOND STEP TRAINING:

“ After the seminar I realized that emotional skills are very important, so I am eager to begin implementing the program and helping the children to better understand themselves and others. I believe I will also improve my own skills, because it's never too late to work on them. “

“ I truly enjoyed the training, the material was presented in a very clear, coherent, and detailed manner. What a pity it's not yet Autumn! I would love to dive right in and try it all out. “

“ I am very happy to have participated in the training, and I want to thank the trainers, because next year I will be teaching a new class. I don't yet know the pupils, but I'm sure we'll do the activities and play the games, it will be right on time and will help me to learn about my pupils and them to get to know each other. “



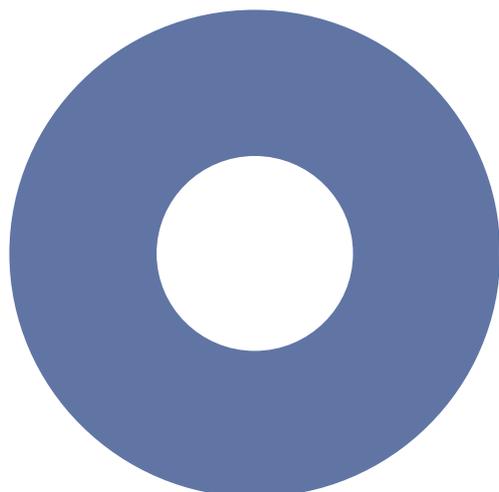
Main sponsors:

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania,
the National Agency for Education

FINANCIAL REPORT

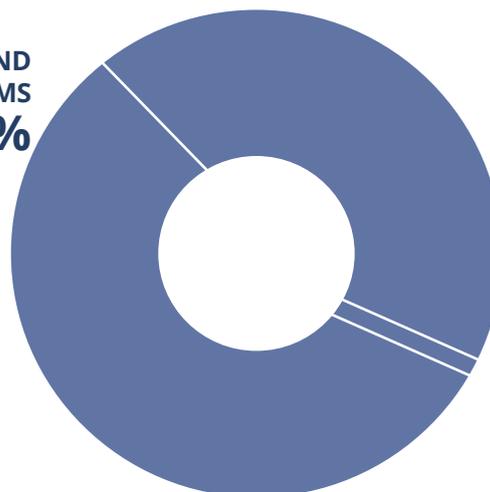
TOTAL INCOME – 827 236 EUR

**INCOME FROM ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY –
185 695 EUR**



**SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS
RECEIVED – 641 541 EUR:**

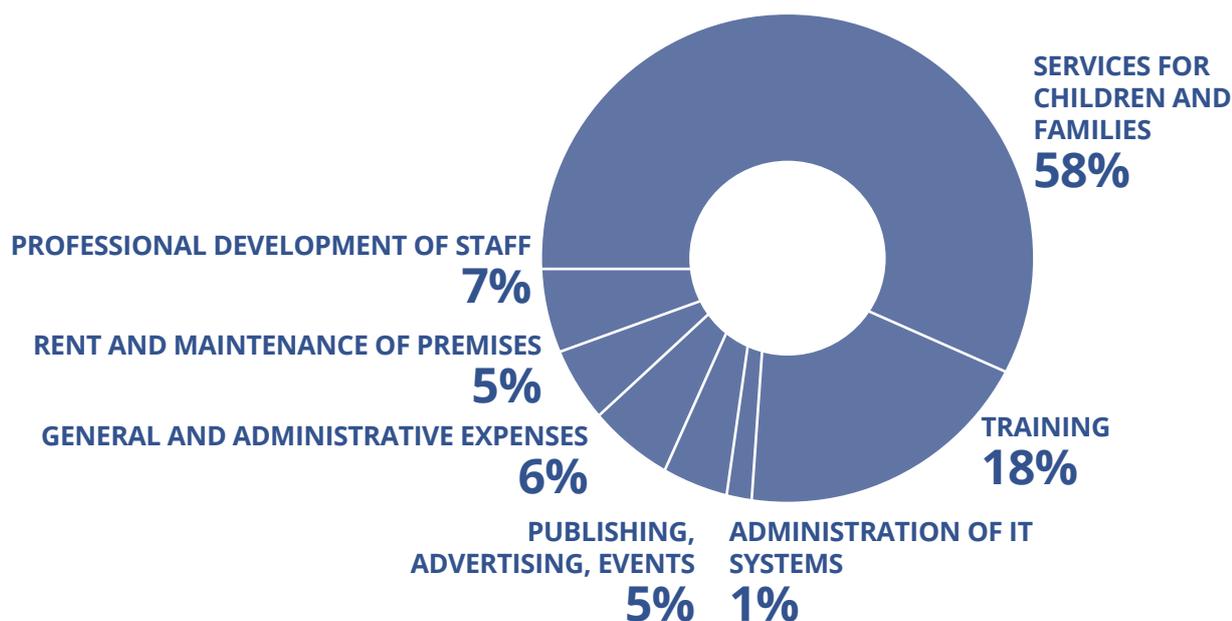
**FUNDS AND
PROGRAMS
56%**



**NATIONAL
AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING
42%**

**DONATIONS
(INDIVIDUALS
AND LEGAL
ENTITIES)
2%**

EXPENSES – 791 462 EUR



**SERVICES FOR
CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES
58%**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF
7%**

**RENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES
5%**

**GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES
6%**

**PUBLISHING,
ADVERTISING, EVENTS
5%**

**ADMINISTRATION OF IT
SYSTEMS
1%**

**TRAINING
18%**

The sole co-owner of the Centre – Aušra Kurienė. Co-owner's contribution – 0.

THE BOARD AND THE TEAM

THE BOARD:

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GRAŽINA ŠEIBOKIENĖ – Head of the Education Support Division at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

EMPLOYEES:

AUŠRA KURIENĖ – Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Founder and Head of the VšĮ Children Support Centre

ERNA PETKUTĖ – Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Co-founder of the public company Children Support Centre, Head of the Positive Parenthood program

JŪRATĖ BALTUŠKIENĖ – Psychologist, Head of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, Head of the Parent Line

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VILIJA MOZERĖ – Psychologist, Friendships Coordinator of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program

LAIMA NAUSĖDAITĖ – Social Worker, Supervisor

IRINA NIKONČUKIENĖ – Psychologist, Eating Disorders Consultant

INGA NORKUTĖ-MUECK – Psychologist, Project Coordinator

RENATA PASLAIČIENĖ – Office Manager, Coordinator of the Second Step program

AUŠRA SKALIŠIUTĖ – Psychologist, Psychotherapist

AKVILINA JURKŠAITĖ – Psychologist

VAIDA STOŠKUVIENĖ – Communication Specialist

VILTĖ STRIŪKIENĖ – Psychologist

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Thank you for your support and friendship!

VŠĮ CHILDREN SUPPORT CENTRE

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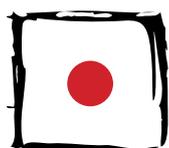
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