



## Supporting nurturing care through routine health care in Europe and Central Asia

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**01** The regional context

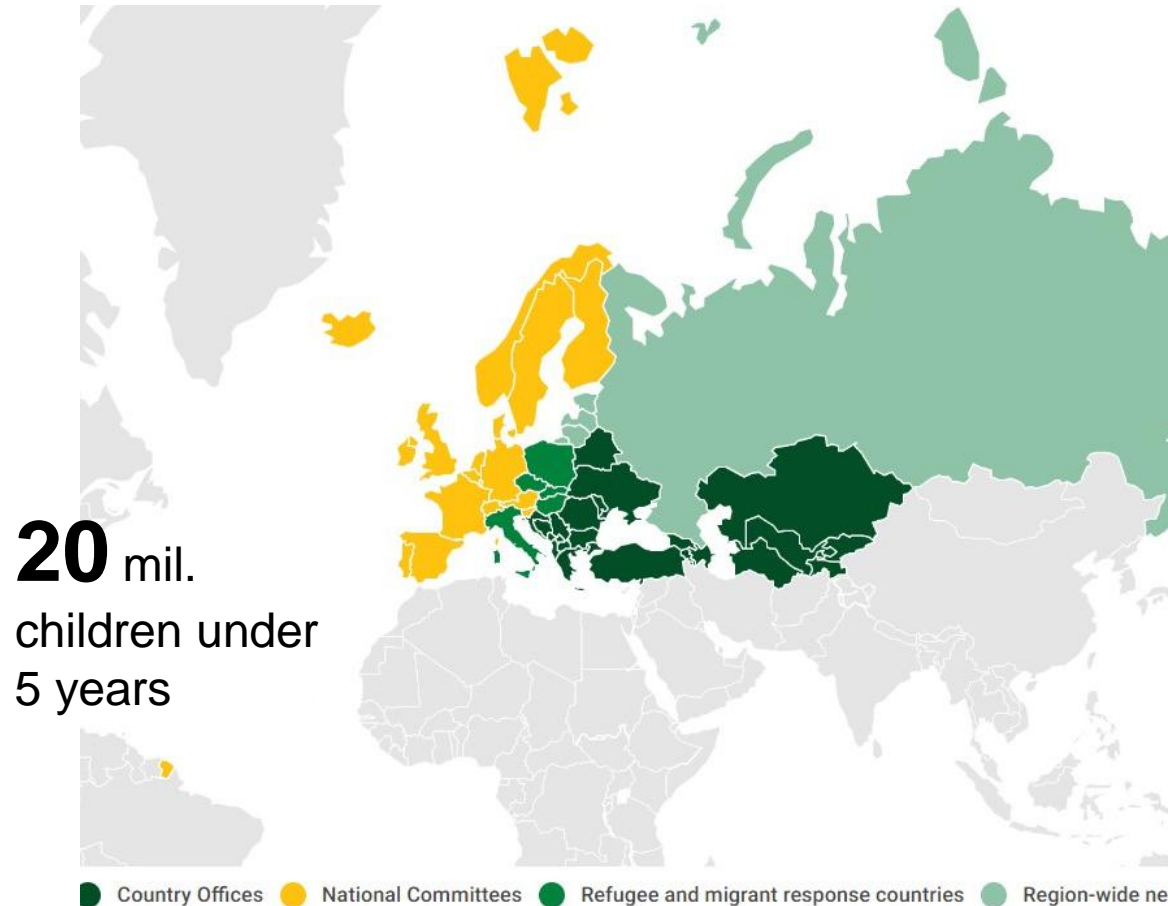
**02** Key pillars for supporting best start in life for children in the region

**03** Strengthening nurturing care through routine health care

**04** Key priorities

**05** Discussion

# Regional context – closing equity gaps and ensuring the best start of life of every child



- Immense progress in reducing infant and child mortality
- Growing share of developmental difficulties in paediatric morbidity (1 in 6 children)
- Considerable equity gaps in developmental outcomes and opportunities – 1 in 4 children not on track in development

# Opportunities and key paradigm shifts for strengthening nurturing care through health systems in ECA region

## Health systems strengths

- **Established public systems with essential infrastructure**
- **Development is integral to health**
- **Routine health care reaches all children in the first years of life**
- **Essential health care packages delivered to children, including support for development and nurturing care**
- **Frequent contacts with children and families**
- **Trusted and qualified professionals**
- **Outreached services (home visiting)**

## A way forward

- A holistic model of care focused on young child thriving – including child health, wellbeing and optimal development.
- Embracing a family-centered approach.
- Moving away from sectoral services to greater collaboration with other sectors
- Moving from universal services to universal + progressively targeted support that meets the various and more complex needs of vulnerable children and their families.

# UNICEF Vision



UNICEF, in partnership with governments, donors, and civil society, envisions a region where every child, from conception to primary school entry, and her family, is supported to thrive and have the best possible start to life

GOALS

## Goal 1: Advance a Multi-Sectoral and Multi-Ministerial Agenda:

Leverage UNICEF's unique ability to bring sectors and programs together, building synergies across health, education, social protection, and other systems to create a coherent and holistic response for the best start in life.

## Goal 2: Advance a Universal-Progressive Approach to Services and Support:

Ensure every young child and caregiver receives the support they need, recognizing that while all families benefit from some level of assistance, the most vulnerable need comprehensive, tailored support to thrive.

OBJECTIVES



### 1. HEALTH

Transform the health sector to optimize delivery of comprehensive support for early childhood health, nutrition, and development through all available health service points, especially primary health and community health



### 2. EDUCATION

Strengthen the education sector to prioritize and deliver on universal, inclusive and quality ECEC across the 0-6 years spectrum and support effective transitions between homes, nurseries, preschools & schools.



### 3. SOCIAL WELFARE

Strengthen the social welfare sector and services, enabling it to deliver comprehensive and coordinated support to families with young children, especially the most vulnerable ones.

ACCELERATORS



**4. PARENTING SUPPORT** - Support development of a national multi-sectoral parenting support system ensuring universal-progressive approach in meeting the needs of every caregiver and family



**5. EARLY IDENTIFICATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION** - Support development of national systems for early identification and family centered early childhood intervention for children at risk and with developmental difficulties through coordinated efforts of health, education and social welfare sectors.

**6. INTER-MINISTERIAL COORDINATION** - Strengthen inter-ministerial policy and program coordination at national and local levels and support prioritization of the early years in policies, budgets and action plans



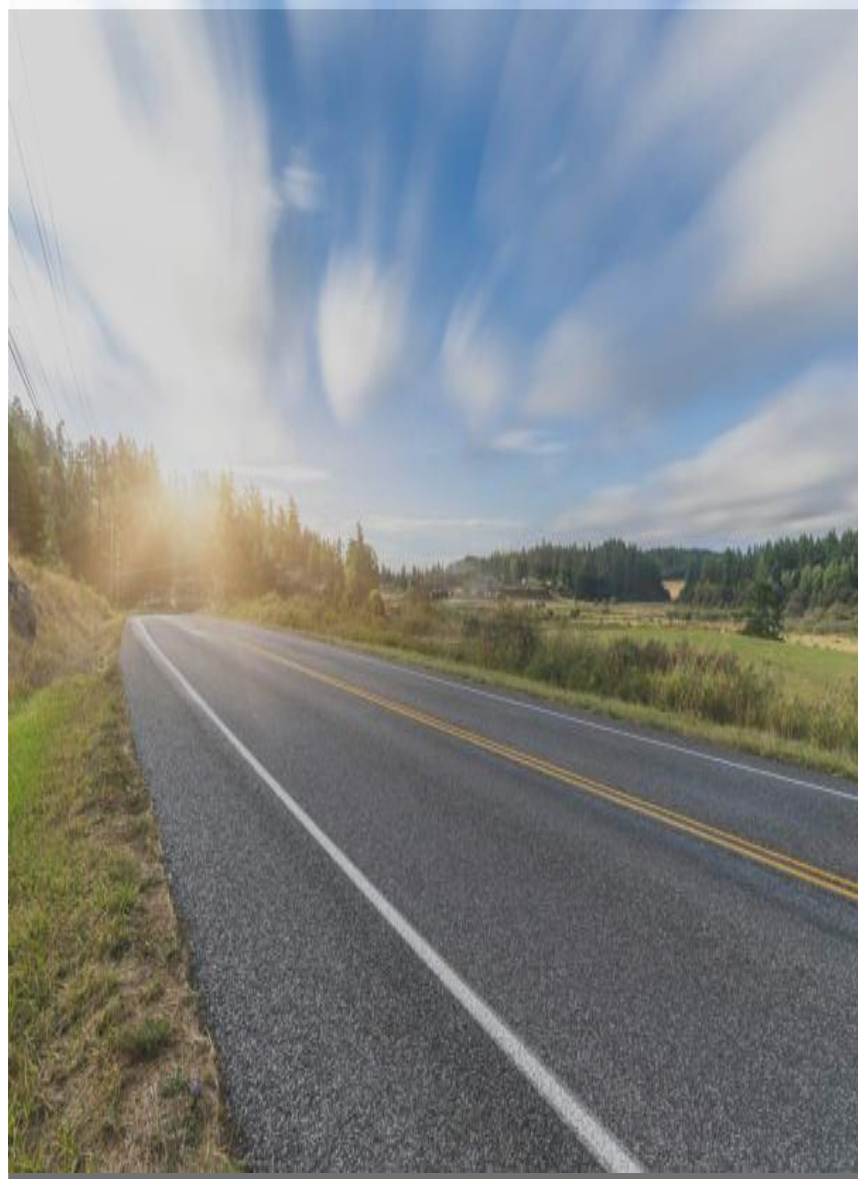
# Key priorities to support transformation of health care

Quality perinatal care

Support for optimal nutrition

Complete and timely  
immunisation

Addressing environmental  
health risks



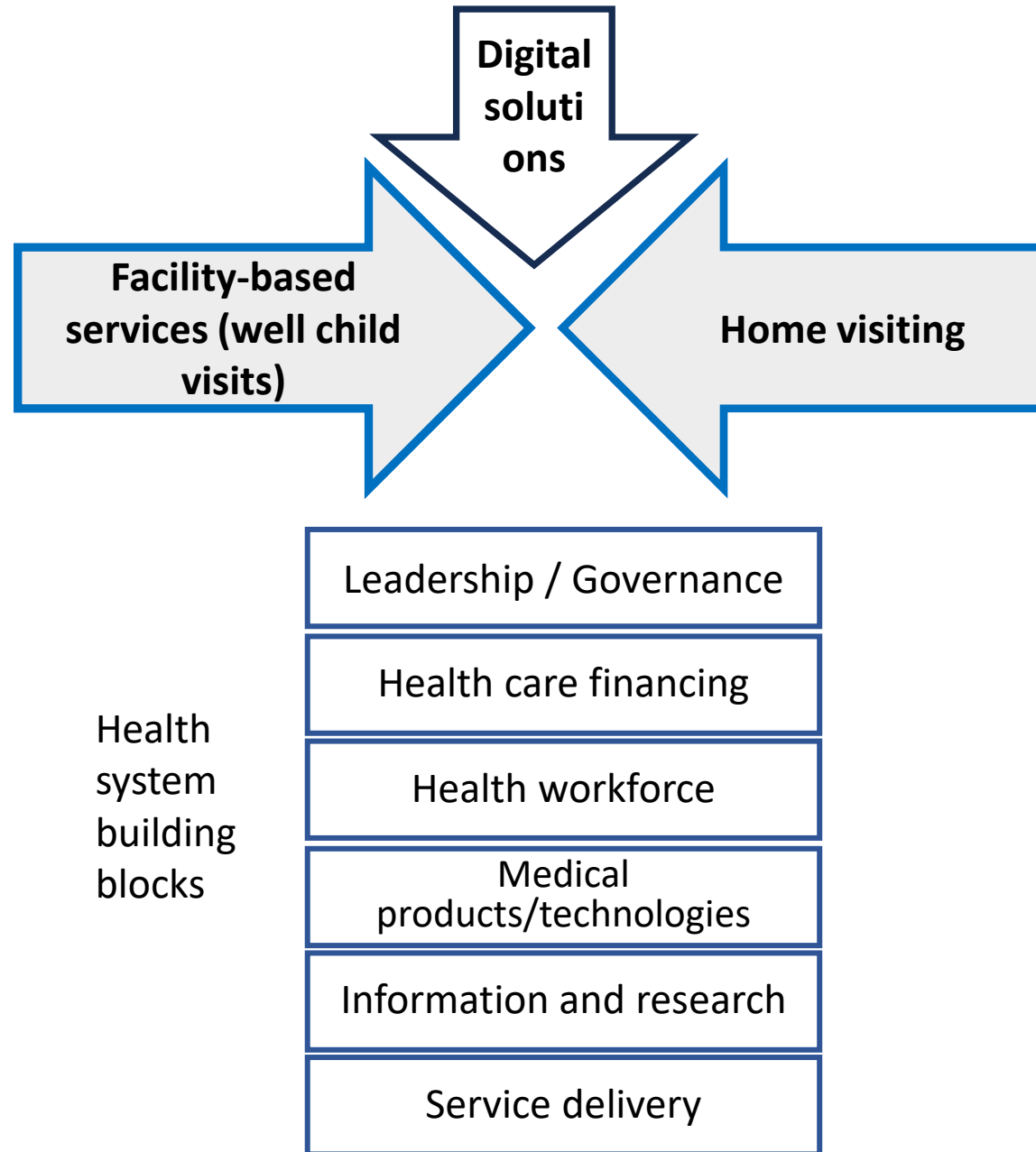
Universal developmental monitoring

Early childhood intervention

Parental counselling and  
support

Support for parental mental  
health

# Key delivery platforms



# Universal developmental monitoring (DM)

## MONITORING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

*Directions for policy and practice*



### Key priorities to strengthen DM in the health care sector:

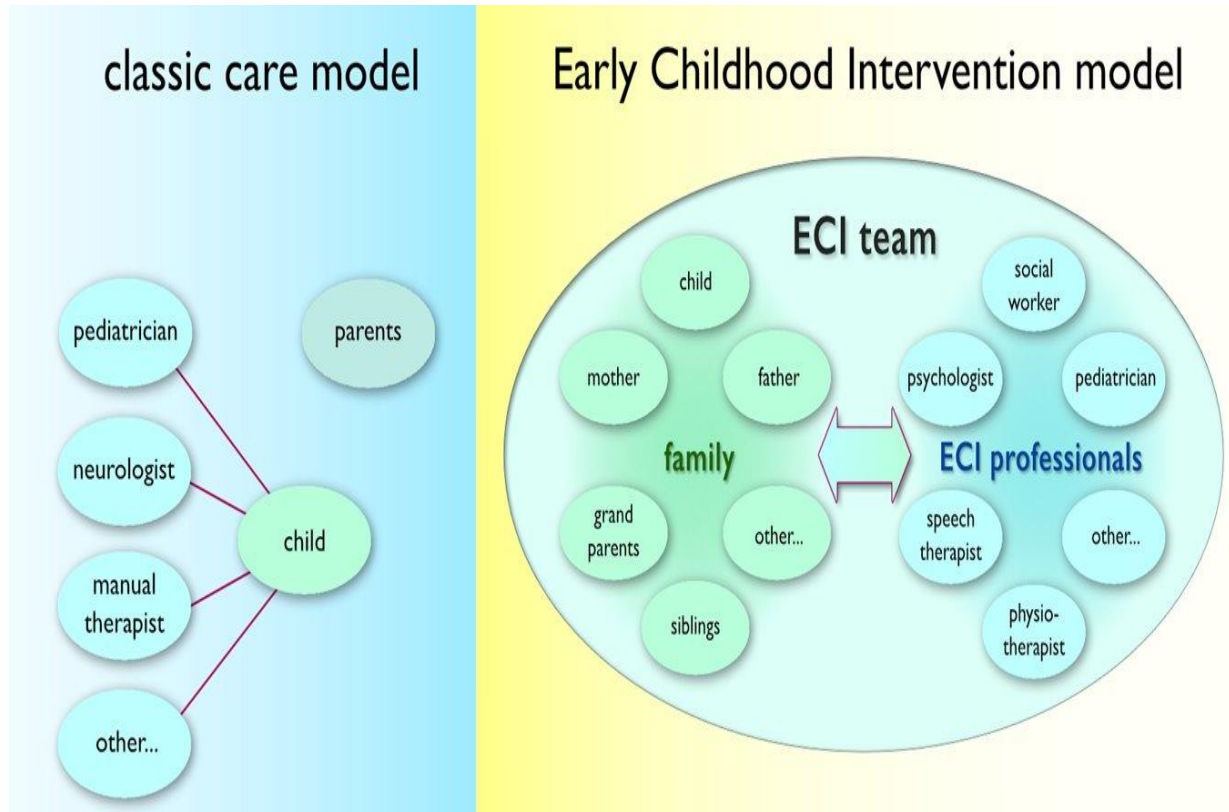
- **Mandating developmental monitoring** as a standard practice in primary healthcare and other pediatric settings
- **Improving the capacity of health workforce** to implement developmental monitoring in a family centered manner and using validated tools to provide anticipatory guidance and individualized recommendations on **nurturing care and child development**
- Ensuring that children at risk or with developmental delays and disabilities receive **additional support** including skill building for caregivers on how to support their children, and are linked to appropriate services, such as **early childhood intervention** programs or specialized care

DM aims to keep track of, and support, each child's development. It differs from screening which has a predetermined timeframe, and which aims to detect any aberrations. DM enables the child's functioning to be interpreted by looking at factors such as expressive communication, receptive communication, gross motor and fine motor skills, relating, play and self-help



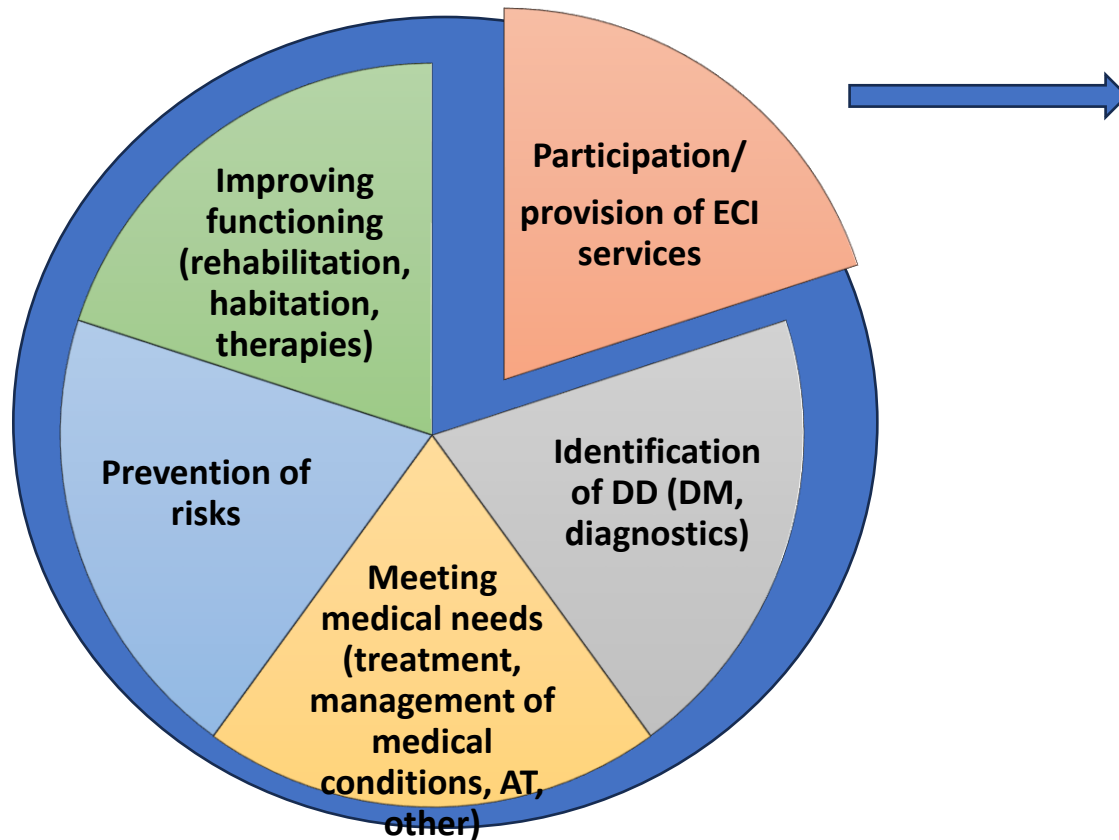
# Early childhood intervention – a paradigm shift

## Toward a new approach



- **Integrated Social Model:** focus on comprehensive and holistic development of the family and the child.
- **Family-centred:** contextual and consultant-based delivery of supports and services to the family
- **Individualised:** focus on the strengths, needs and challenges of each individual child within the family context.
- **Interdisciplinary, integrated and team-based -** integrated across health, education and social welfare sectors and professional disciplines.
- **Delivered in the child's natural environments**
- Integrates support for **child development, parenting support and expanding access to community based support** in a single intervention.

# Identifying and responding to developmental risks, delays and disabilities – the role of the health care sector



## ECI services in the region – context specific

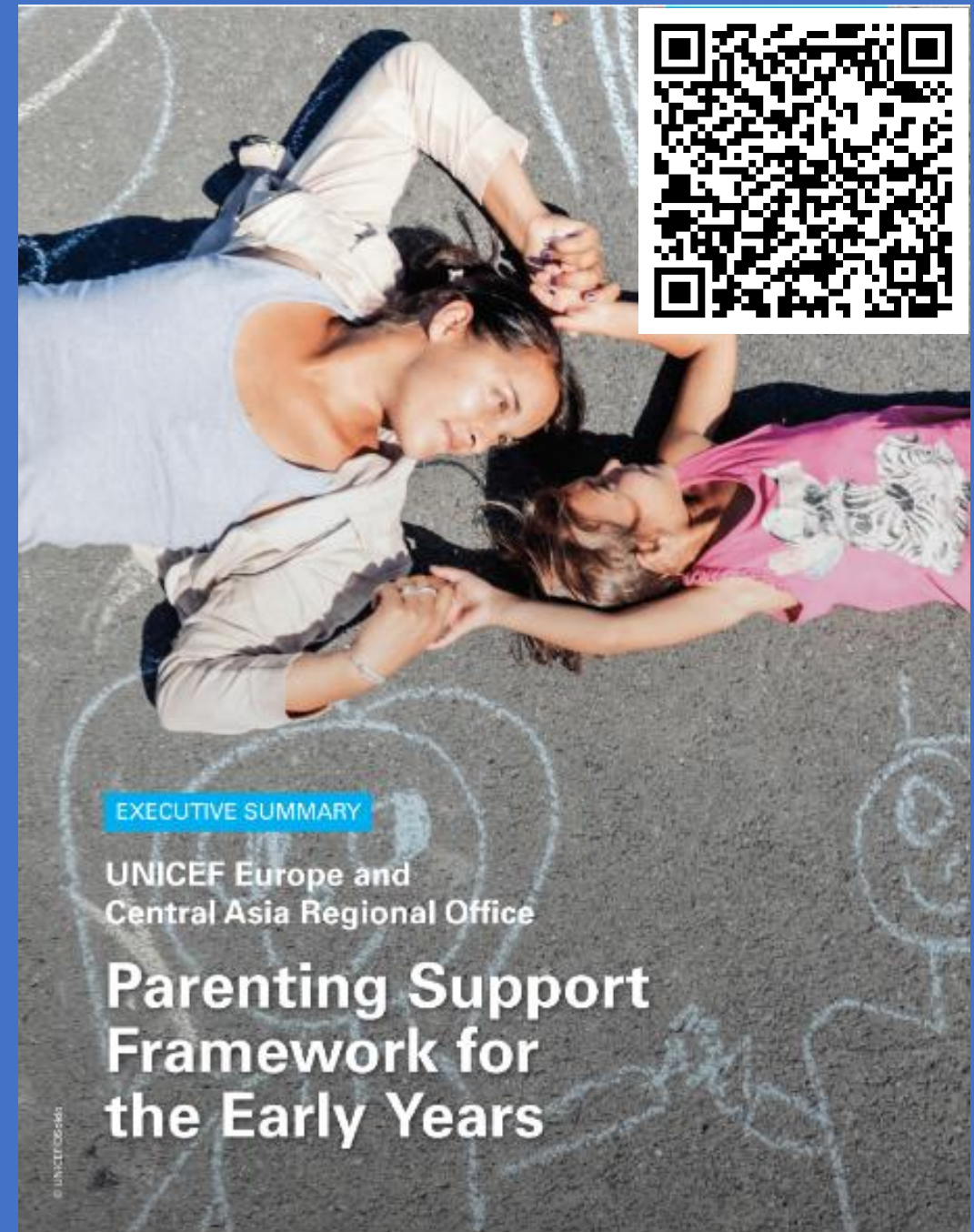
- Services fully embedded in the health system (Belarus, Turkmenistan, Moldova)
- Health sectors provides professionals or coordinates with ECI service providers in the social service sector (education), including NGOs/NGSS (Croatia, Georgia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic)
- ECI provided through a multisectoral collaboration model (Serbia, Portugal) at community level



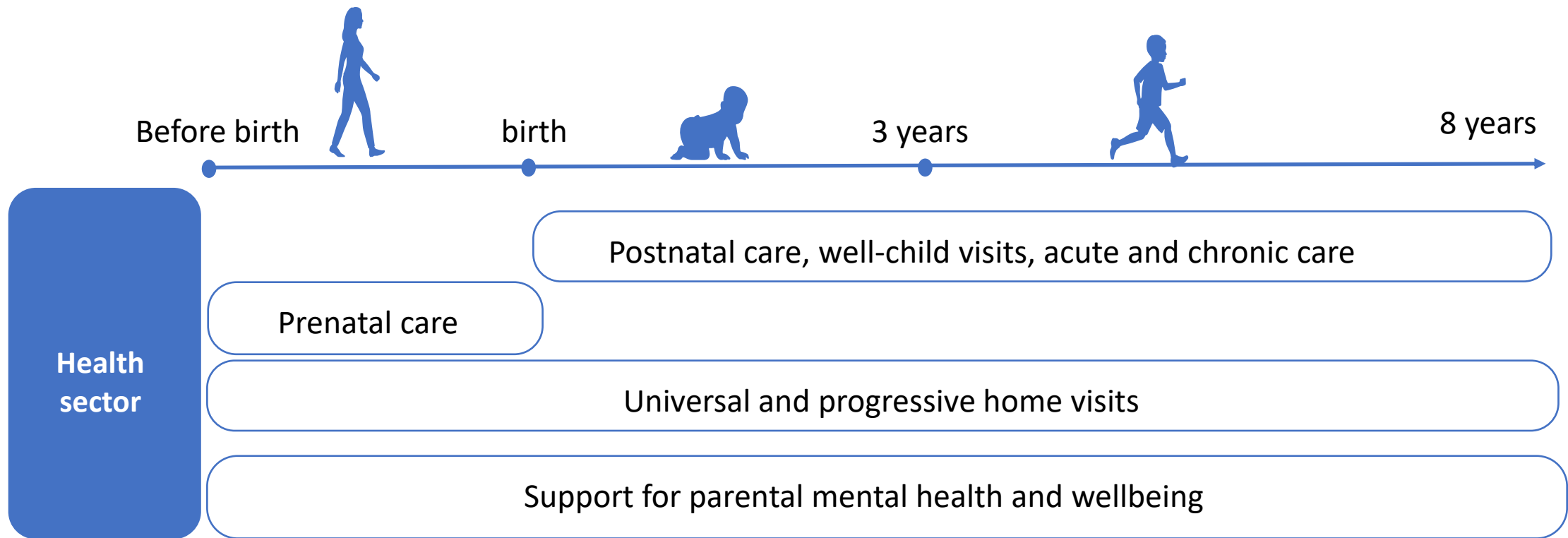


# Enhancing parenting support for nurturing care in the health system

<https://bit.ly/eca-psf>

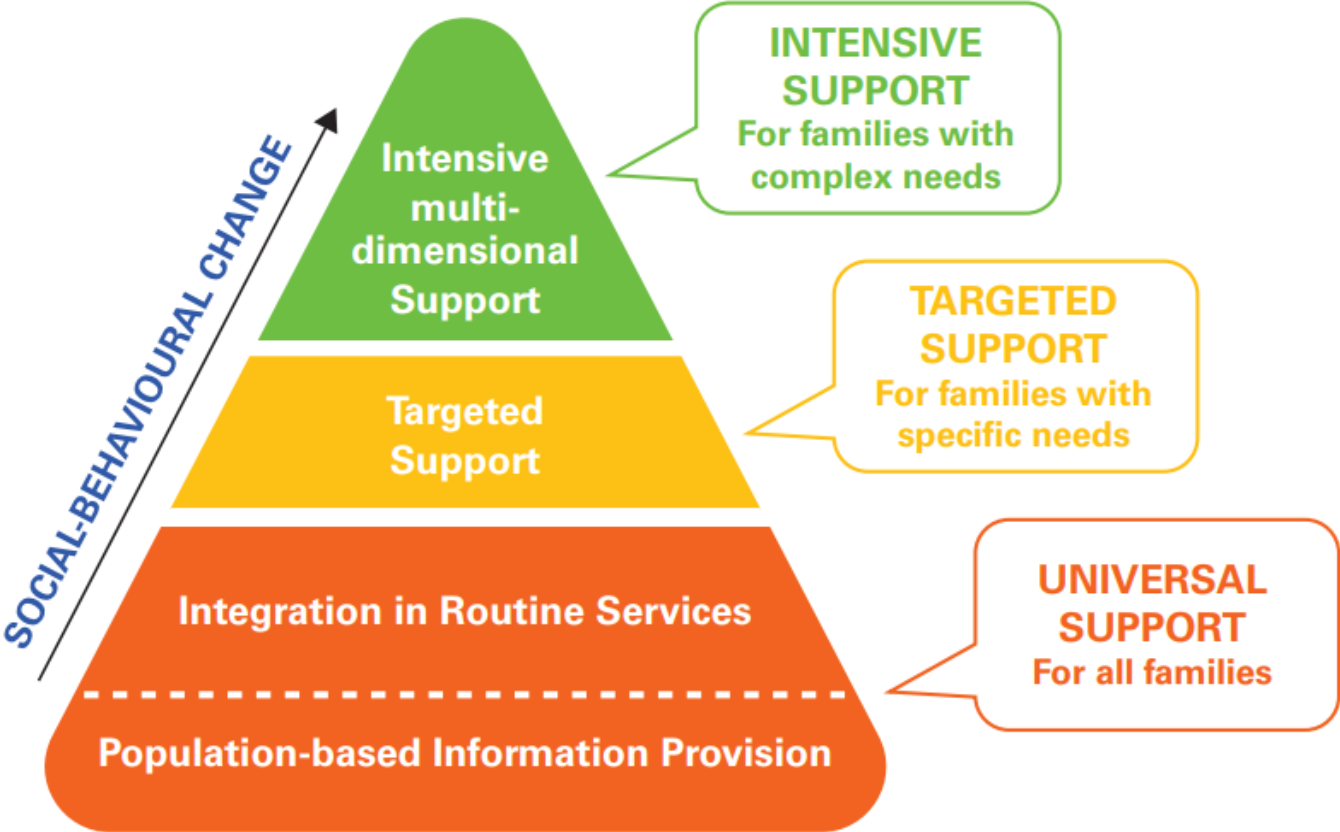
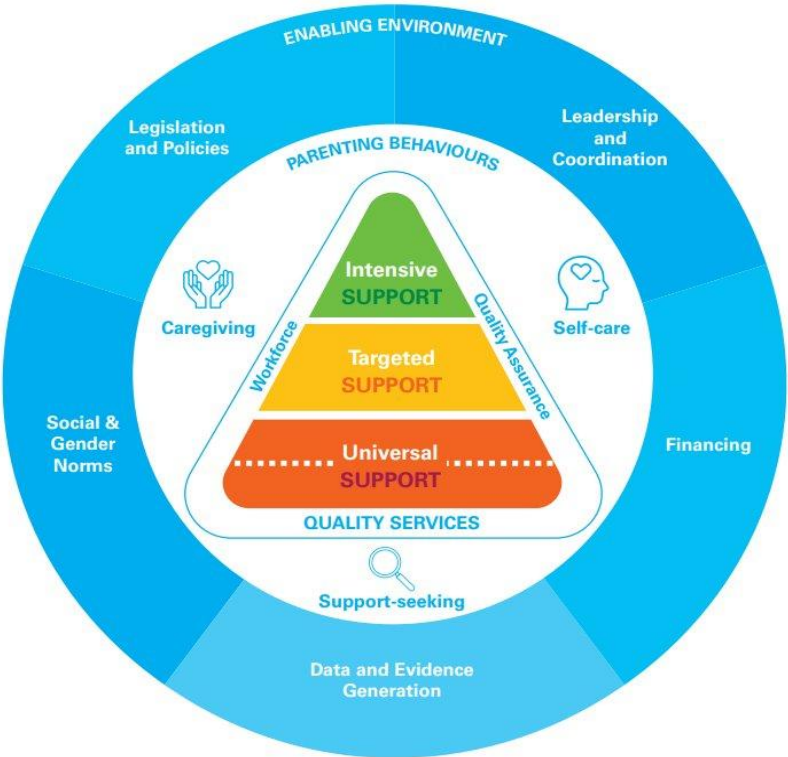


# 'Touch Points' in the health sector as opportunities for parenting support & parental counseling





# Parenting Support Framework for early years



**PARENTING SUPPORT**

# An example from our region – Serbia

- Developmental monitoring integrated in home visiting and the primary health care provided by pediatricians (well-child visits)
- Parental counselling and support for parental mental health provided as part of routine home visiting
- Family-centred ECI services established at primary health care level in coordination with local social and education services
- Digital tools, like Bebbo and Halo Bebba effectively support parental counselling and nurturing care



# Bebbo parenting app – a tool for parents and health professionals



## Interactive Tools

- Monitor and support child's development
- Monitor and support optimal growth
- Track and record health visits & immunization schedules



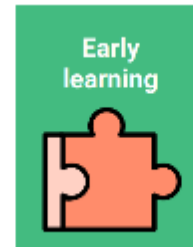
## Games/Activities (300+)

- Relevant games/activities which support learning and development for parents, specific to age and needs of their child.



## Advice (900+)

- Rich library of high-quality well-researched articles and videos grouped into different themes covering all domains of nurturing care
- Based on the child's profile, the content and guidance are filtered to offer tailored recommendations.

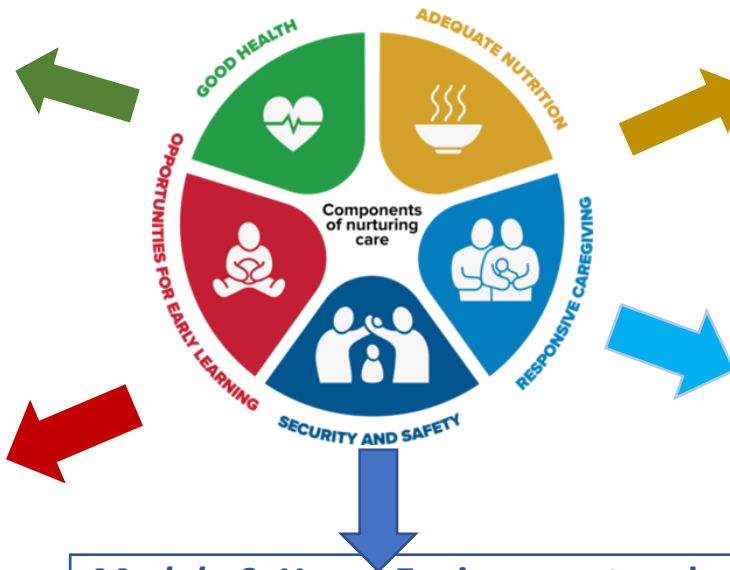


# Home visiting Resource Modules for Nurturing Care

## IMCI\*

**Module 20:** Healthy weight physical activity and sedentary time  
**Module 21:** The Care of Small and Sick Newborns  
**Module 22:** Protecting young children from vaccine preventable diseases

**Module 6:** The Art of Parenting - Love, Talk, Play, Read  
**Module 19:** Early Childhood Education



## IYCF\*

## BFHI\*

**Module 16:** Responsive Feeding

## Thinking Healthy\*

## Care for Child Development\*

**Module 4:** Falling in Love - Promoting Parent-Child Attachment  
**Module 5:** Engaging Fathers

**Module 8:** Common Parenting Concerns

**Module 9:** Home Environment and Safety  
**Module 14:** Keeping Young Children Free from Violence, Abuse and Neglect

### Additional Knowledge Modules

**Module 1:** The Early Childhood Years - a Time of Endless Opportunities  
**Module 7:** Parental Wellbeing  
**Module 11:** Working against Stigma and Discrimination - Promoting Equity, Inclusion and Respect for Diversity  
**Module 12:** Children Who Develop Differently - Children with Disabilities or Developmental Difficulties  
**Module 18:** Gender Socialisation and Gender Dynamics in Families - the Role of the Home Visitor

### Additional Skills Modules

**Module 2:** The New Role of the Home Visitor  
**Module 10:** Caring and Empowering - Enhancing Communication Skills for Home Visitors  
**Module 13:** Developmental Monitoring and Screening  
**Module 15:** Working with Other Services  
**Module 17:** Supervision - Supporting Professionals and Enhancing Service Quality



# Regional initiatives – Health systems for ECD



YouTube

[Home](#) [About the initiative](#) [Health Systems for ECD](#) [Knowledge Hub](#) [Share & Learn](#) [Contact](#)



< Just under 5 million young children (around 1 in 5) are at risk of not meeting developmental milestones. >

The new perspective on the role of health care in **child development**

Link to the platform: [home page | Health Systems for Early Child Development](#)



## E-learning platform - LearnECD



UNICEF Regional e-learning platform to support pre-service and continuous professional development of home visitors and other ECD practitioners working with young children and their families

- A **digital learning platform** based on the Microsoft Learning passport
- **Evidence-based content in multiple languages**
- Enables **cost effective, flexible and self-paced learning** of practitioners **from different geographical locations and different professional disciplines**
- Can respond to the training needs of specific groups of practitioners.
- A **highly flexible and scalable digital platform** with a unique suite of online and offline functions.
- Can be **accessed** as
  - Web application (any browser)
  - Mobile app (Android)

# Useful regional resources



Early Childhood Development  
country situation analysis  
Assessment tool and methodological  
guidance

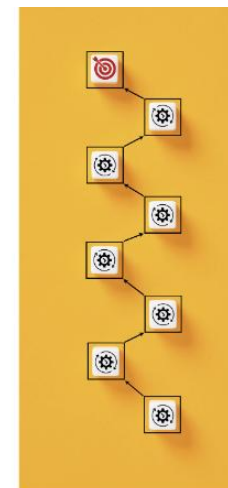


- Parenting support framework for early years: [Link to the document](#)
- Monitoring children's development through primary health care in Europe and Central Asia: [Link to the document](#)
- Early childhood development country situation analysis. Assessment tool and methodological guidance: [Link to the document](#)

## Resources in Early Childhood Intervention



## Quality Standards for Early Childhood Intervention Service Provision



## 10 steps to the development of an Early Childhood Intervention System

Roadmap



## Competency Framework for Early Childhood Intervention Practitioners

Professional development



## Building a sustainable and inclusive Early Childhood Intervention system

Policy Brief



- [Guide for national situational analysis on ECI](#)
- [Roadmap for building national ECI systems](#)
- [Policy brief](#)
- [Quality standards for ECI services](#)
- [Competency framework for ECI practitioners](#)
- Foundational course on ECI available on [LearnECD](#)

# Thank you!

*(detailed country and RO achievements  
in the video link available [here](#)).*

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for every child

