

*European Expert Meeting
on Families and Mental Health*

Work-Life Balance Strategies in Family Policy

Session 2:
1000 days of Parenthood and the Mental Load

Martino Serapioni
COFACE Families Europe

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EUROPEAN
OBSERVATORY

2023 REPORT

FAMILY POLICY FIELD

Fragmented in service siloes

SERVICE COORDINATION

Multiple initiatives at national/
sub-national level

TOWARDS GREATER
FAMILY POLICY
INTEGRATION
ACROSS EUROPE



BRIDGING THE CHILDCARE GAP



The Childcare Gap in the European Union (2022)



Source: Own elaboration based on 19th International Review on Leave Policies and Related Research (2023); Eurydice Country Profile Reports.

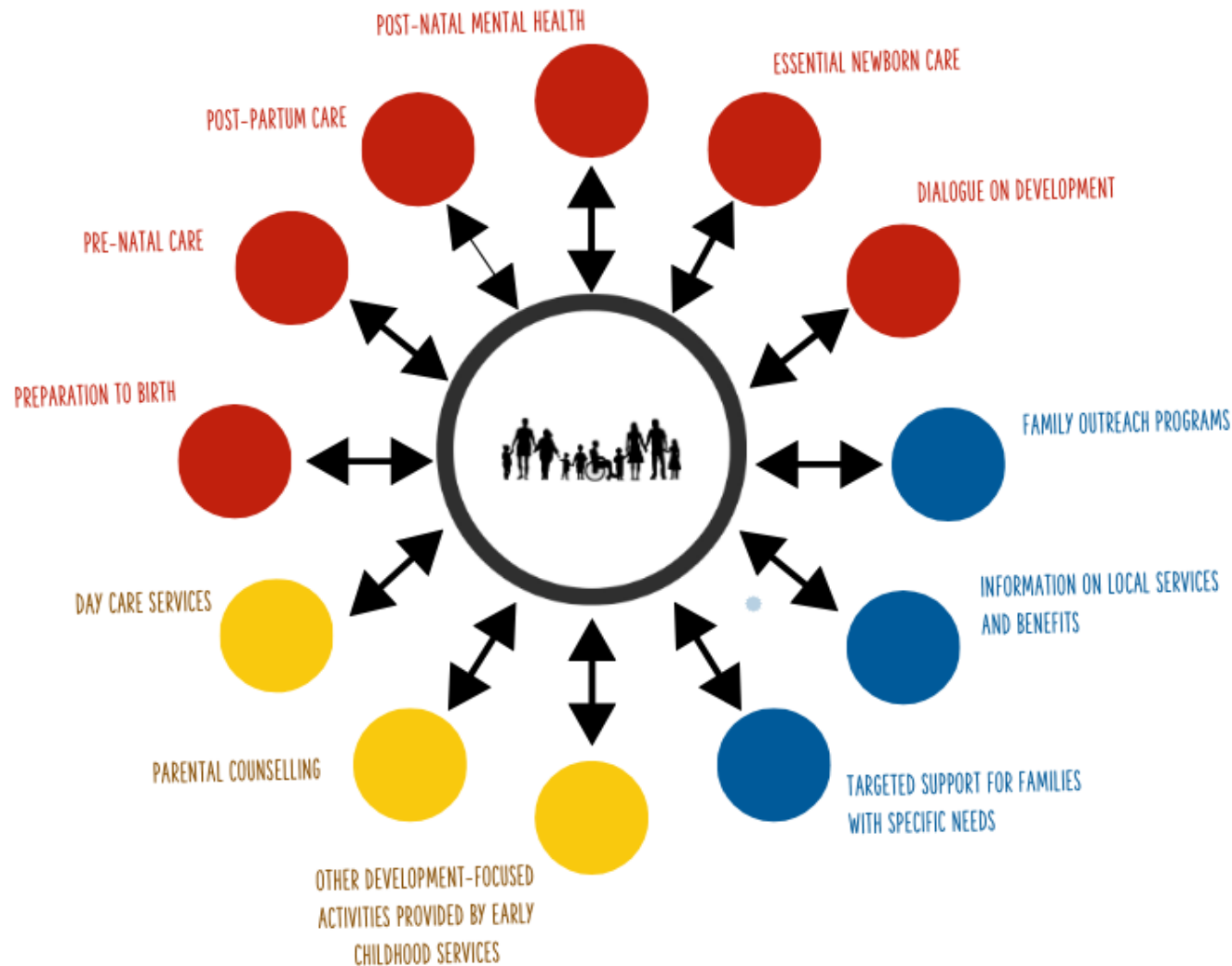
Childcare gap problem:

the period, normally seen in the first years after the birth of a child, during which families are unable to avail themselves of well-compensated parental leave or secure a state-supported full-time place in early childhood education and care

Policy solutions:

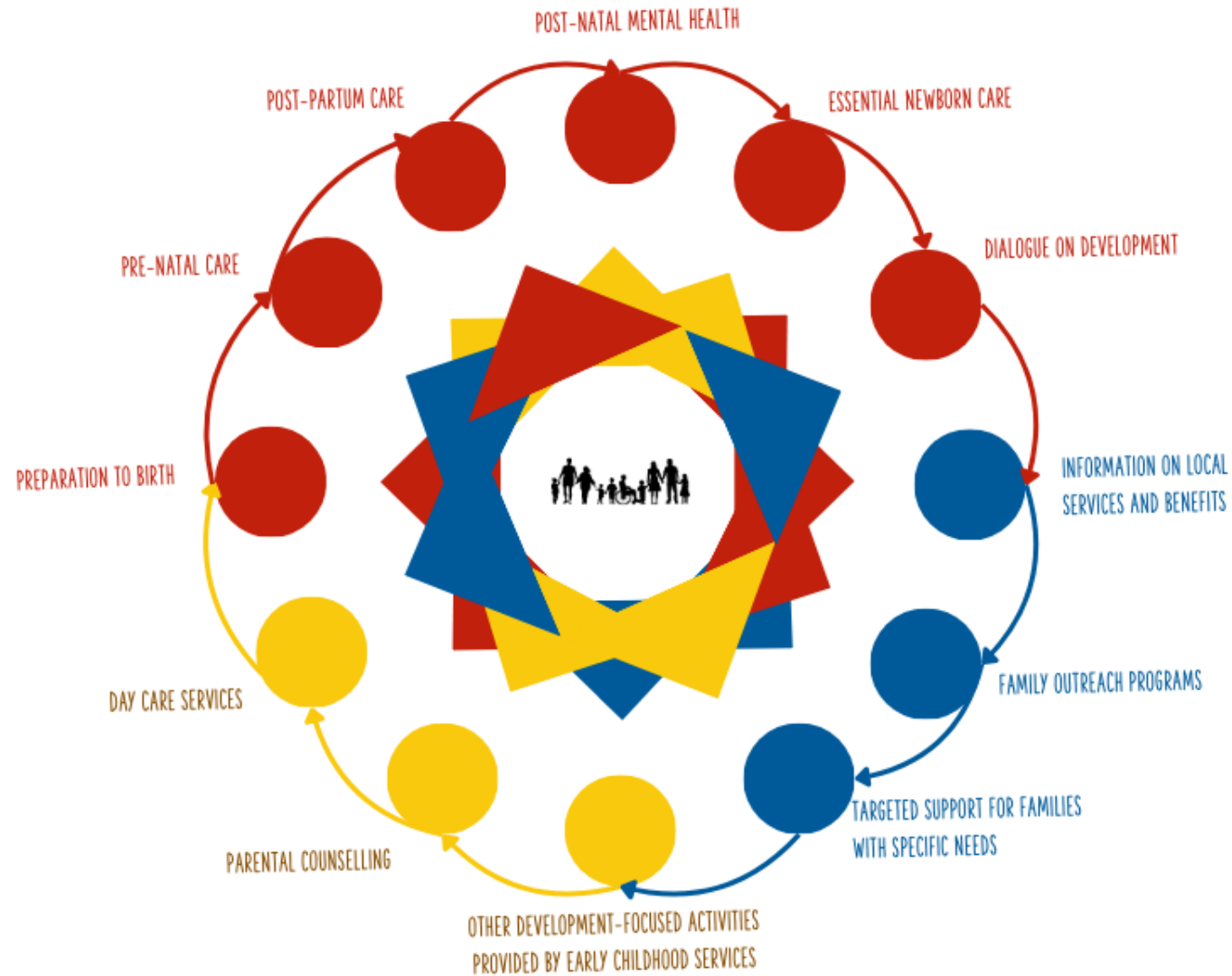
- Extension paternity/parental leave duration
- Enhanced Workplace Flexibility
- Increase in ECEC coverage
- Development and reorganisation of existing child benefit system

FRAGMENTATION BETWEEN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES



- **Fragmented service delivery**
Coordinating perinatal health, social, and educational services is challenging due to fragmented structures.
- **Divided services**
Perinatal services split into universal (health) and targeted (vulnerable populations), complicating prioritization.
- **Policy integration challenge**
Policymakers struggle to integrate health, social, and educational services while addressing both universal and vulnerable needs.

COORDINATION BETWEEN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES



- **Comprehensive approach**
Integration of physical, psychological, social, and empowerment aspects is crucial for effective perinatal care.
- **Proportionate universalism**
A universal approach with a scale and intensity proportionate to the needs/disadvantage of different families.
- **Family hubs as models**
Family centers/hubs in Europe exemplify successful integration of perinatal services through collaboration or unified service provision.

FINNISH INTEGRATED FAMILY CENTER MODEL



- **Comprehensive and Integrated Services:**

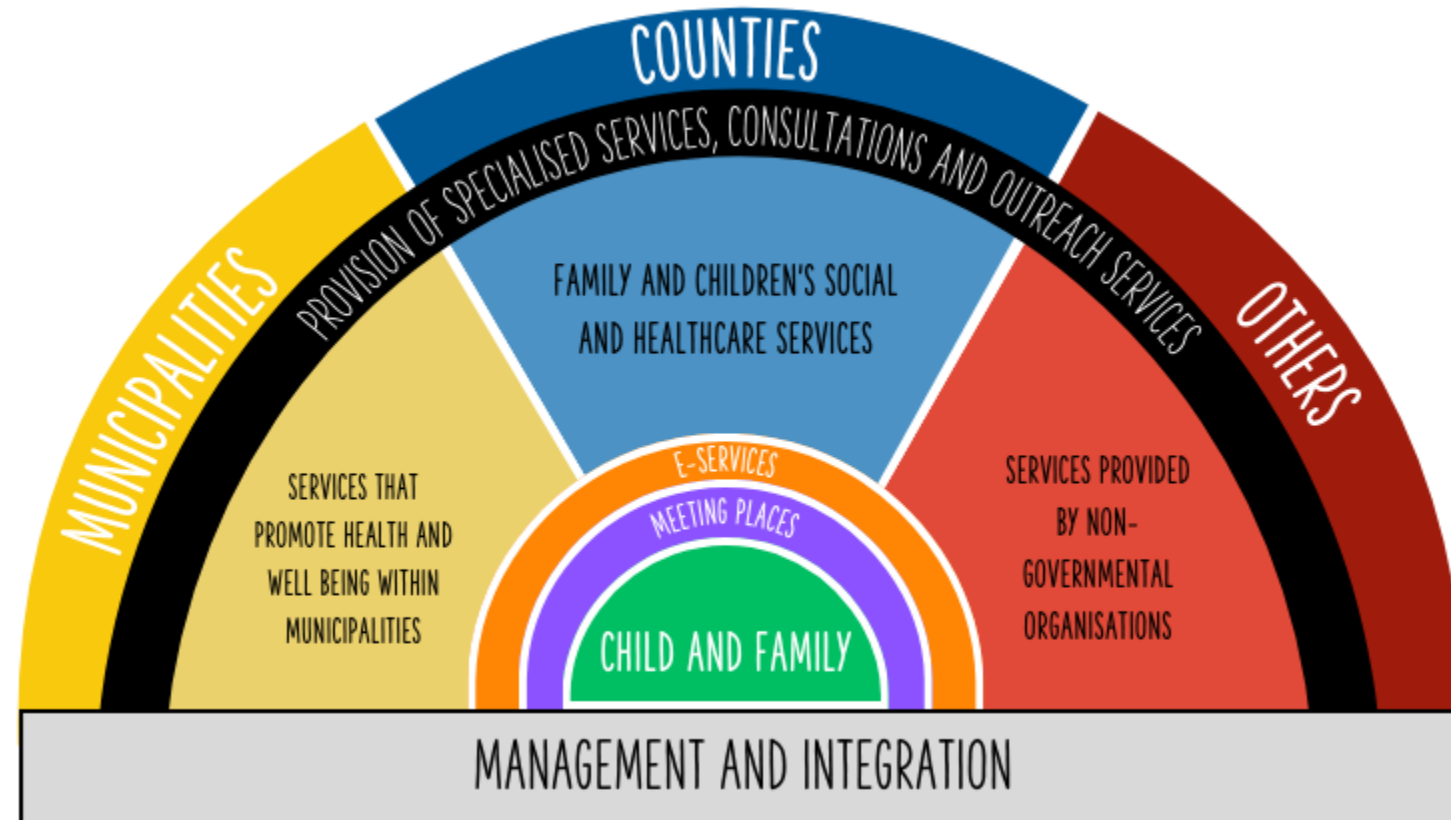
Finland's Family Centres provide a wide range of services for children, young people, and parents, including health care, mental health support, legal assistance, and social services, delivered through physical facilities, networks, and digital platforms.

- **History and Development:**

The integration of health and social care services began in 2005, influenced by Sweden's Leksand model, with the Finnish government further reforming child and family services through the LAPE programme in 2016 to emphasize multidisciplinary approaches.

- **Community and Preventative Focus:**

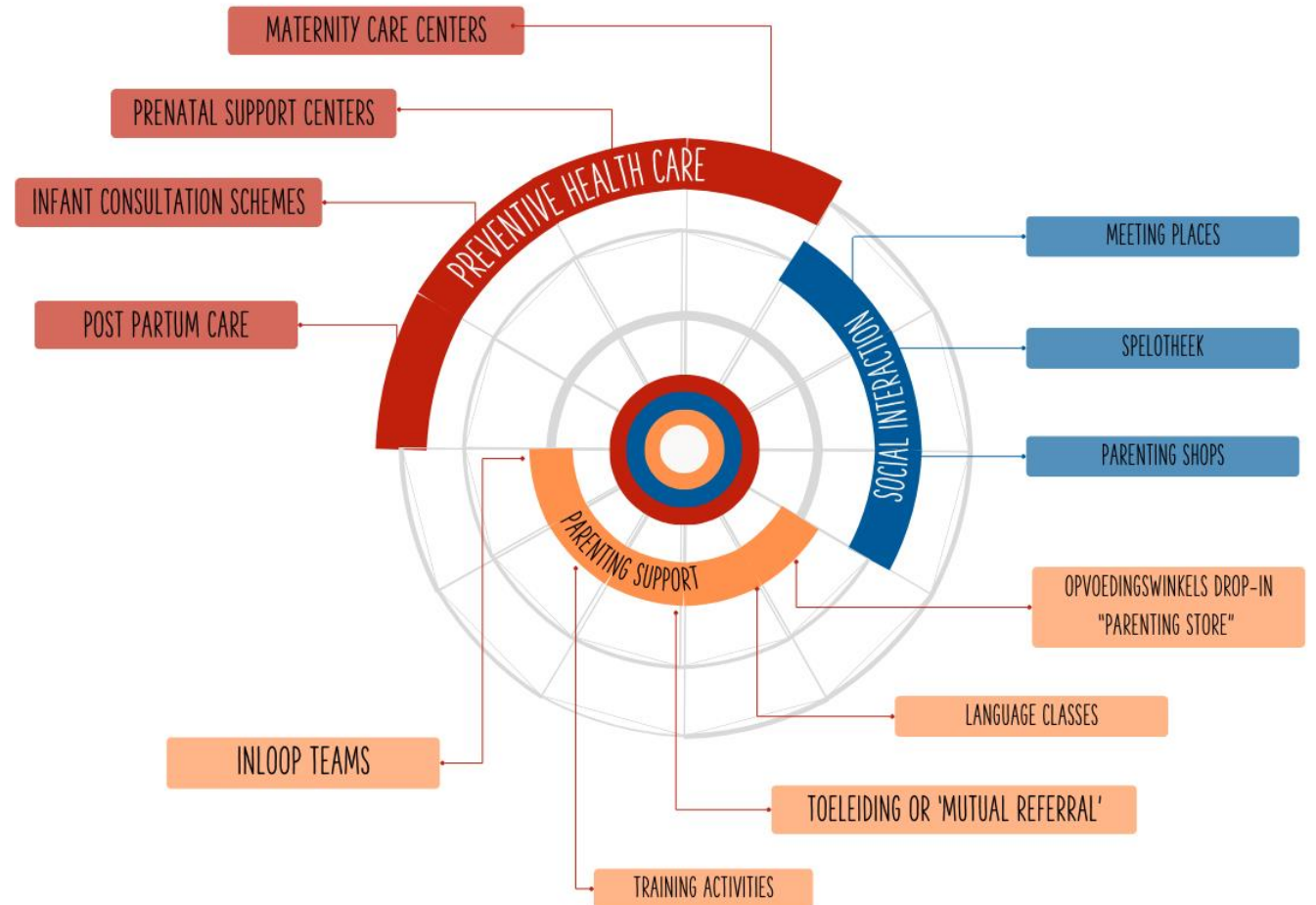
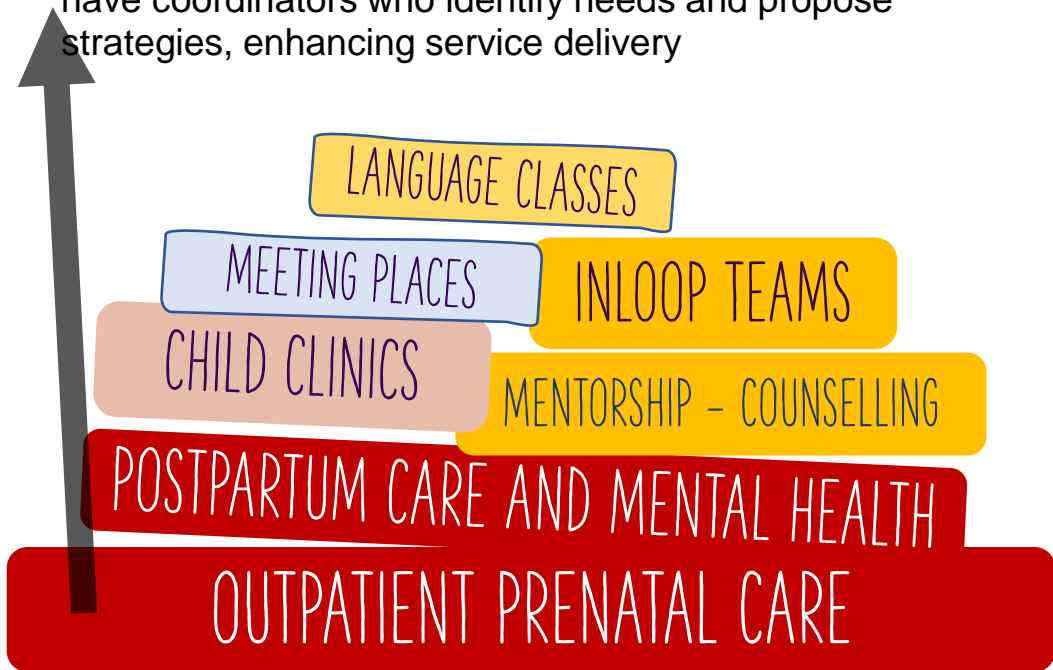
Family Centres aim to support well-being, promote positive parenting, and prevent issues by offering personalized, diverse services, including open meeting places ('kohtaamispaikka') and access to NGO and digital services.



FLEMISH HUIS VAN HET KIND MODEL



- **Collaborative Networks:** between various civil society organizations and local authorities, offering services based on three pillars: **preventive healthcare, parenting support, and social interaction.**
- **Proportionate Universalism:** Nearly all municipalities in Flanders are involved, focusing on families with young children, particularly aged 0-3 or 0-6 years.
- **Coordination and Accessibility:** Most Children's Houses have coordinators who identify needs and propose strategies, enhancing service delivery



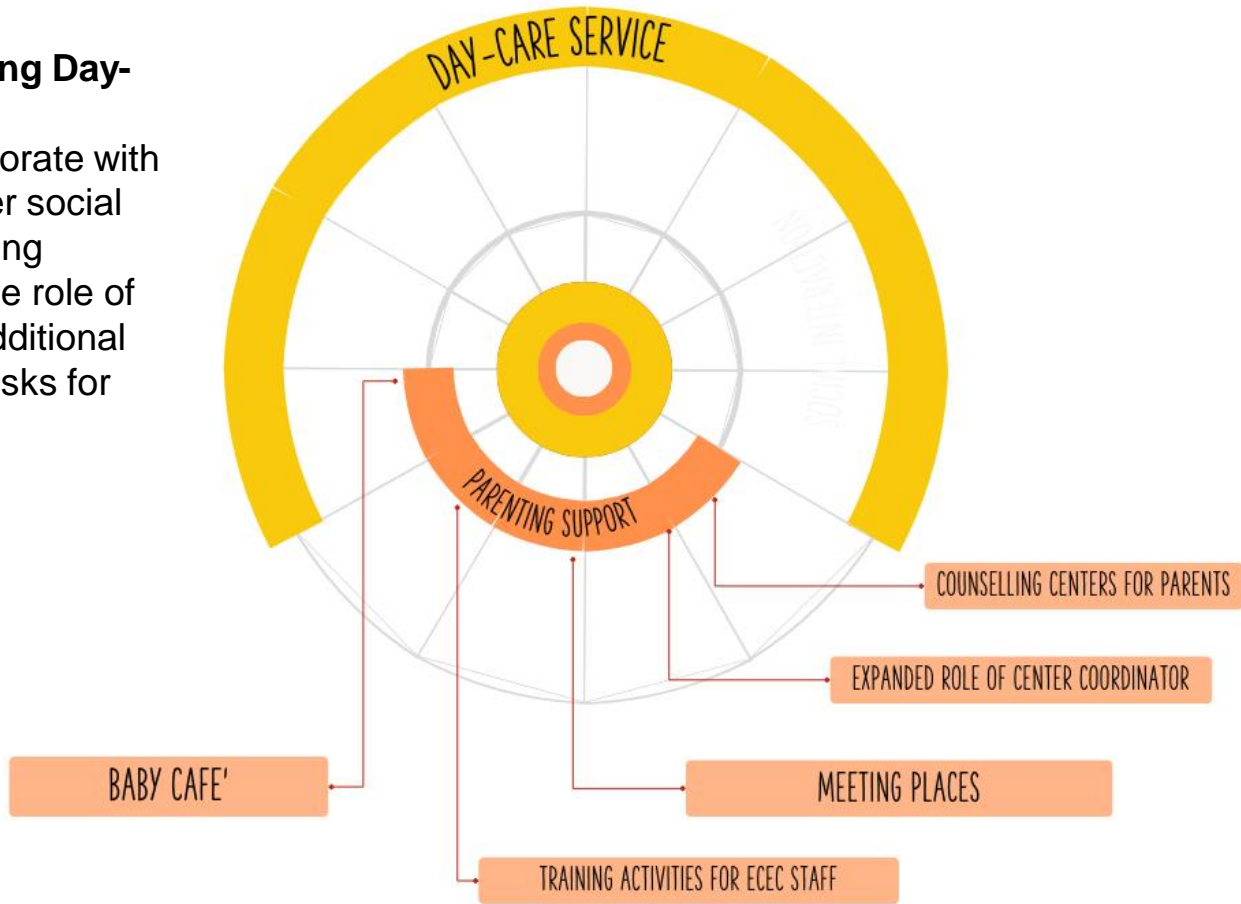
GERMAN KITA+ MODEL



REPORT OF THE
EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY
ON FAMILY POLICY



- **Integrated Family Support Services**
Family centres in Germany emerged to provide multi-disciplinary, child-centred, and parent-supportive services, addressing modern challenges
- **Collaboration with Existing Day-care and Social Services**
These centres often collaborate with day-care facilities and other social services to create a nurturing environment, expanding the role of day-care staff to include additional support and educational tasks for families.
- **Varied Implementation Approaches**
While some regions have adopted a systematic, state-supported model with funding and certification standards, others rely on local initiatives



ITALIAN POLI PER L'INFANZIA



NURSERY 0-3

PRESCHOOL 3-6



NURSERY 0-3

INTEGRATED 0-6 SERVICES

PRESCHOOL 3-6

- Italy's 2015 "La Buona Scuola" reform created an integrated education system for children aged 0-6 under the Ministry of Education, replacing the previous dual structure.
- The reform introduced unitary ECEC settings ('**Poli per l'infanzia**'), which have the potential to become integrated reference points for local family support, particularly in education and social services.
- Local authorities play a key role in the reform's success through cross-institutional coordination and the creation of combined day-care and preschool services.





ECONOMIC



DEVELOPMENTAL



EQUITY



RIGHTS

CONCLUSIONS

- **Integrated family support services** provide significant developmental benefits for very young children, enhancing early childhood outcomes.
- **Supporting both parents and children** recognizes their shared right to receive adequate assistance, improving family well-being.
- **Targeted support for at-risk families**, particularly vulnerable families with young children, has the greatest impact and yields a significant return on investment.
- **Interagency collaboration** reduces service fragmentation, improving access and utilization of family services and strengthening overall family support.

Thank you for the attention.

