

Towards integrated family support: Parenting Support Framework for the Early Years

Dr. Ivelina Borisova, Regional Advisor for Early Childhood Development / UNICEF

25 Sept 2025

When a child is born, parents are born too

Parents are the primary, most important and most consistent agents of child's development, well-being and learning.



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair and a mustache, seen in profile, kissing a young child on the cheek. The child is smiling broadly, showing their teeth, and has their hand near their mouth. The woman's hand is visible, gently holding the child's face. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is framed by a solid blue border at the top and bottom.

42M

**Parents of young children
living in Europe and
Central Asia**

Parenting and Holistic Child Development

Why cross-sectoral collaboration is different from siloed approaches?

No single sector can meet the complex needs of young children and families

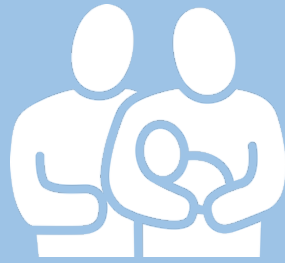
Nurturing Care Framework

Parents are at the centre of nurturing care. They support their children's development across all five nurturing care components. The framework also recognizes the power of communities and service providers in supporting and empowering parents and emphasizes family-centred approaches, bringing families to the forefront of policies and services.



Developed by WHO, UNICEF and World Bank Group

RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING



Refers to the ability of the caregiver to notice, understand, and respond to their child's signals in a timely and appropriate manner. Considered the foundational component because responsive caregivers are better able to support the other four components.





1 in 2

children under 5
are being regularly
violently disciplined
by their caregivers

1 in 2

young children
do not have access
to early childhood
education

1 in 4

**children under
5** do not receive
adequate early
stimulation and
responsive care

1 in 5

children under 5
are not meeting
their developmental
milestones



3/4

of parents need
parenting support but
only half have been
able to access it*

**2024 Bebbio Parenting Survey*

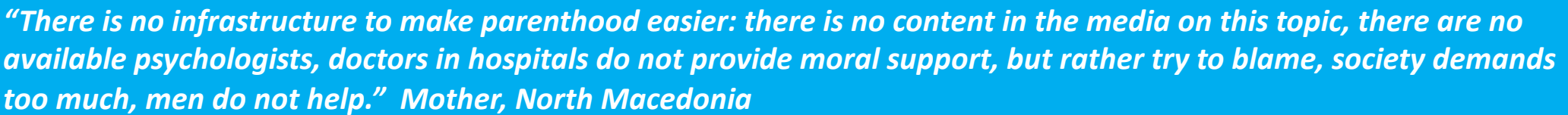
Parenting Support

Information, Services, Programmes and Resources

available to parents to help them in their parenting role and to promote the well-being of **both** parents and children

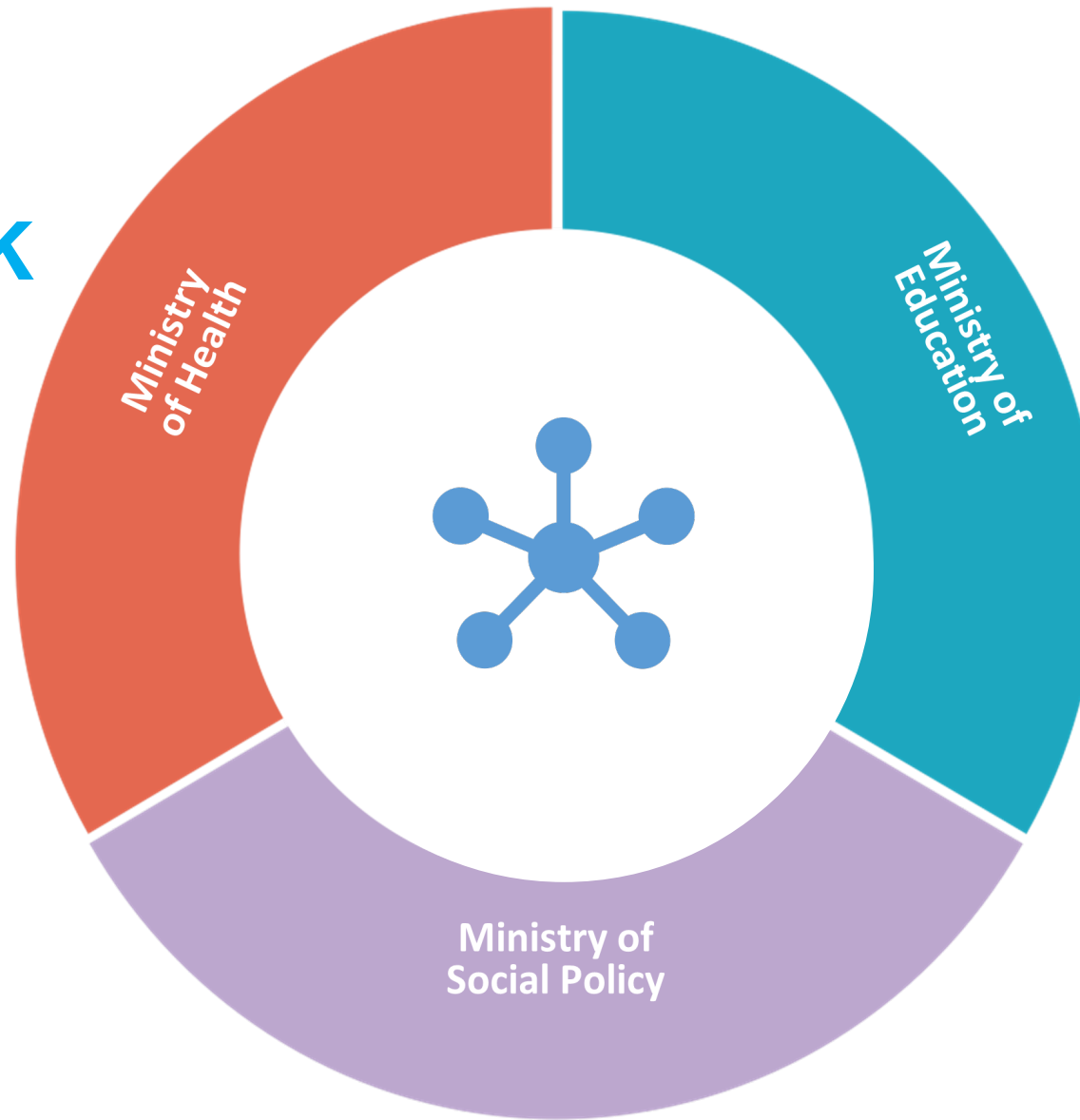


“We need to be understood and supported in difficult moments”. Mother, Moldova



PARENTING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

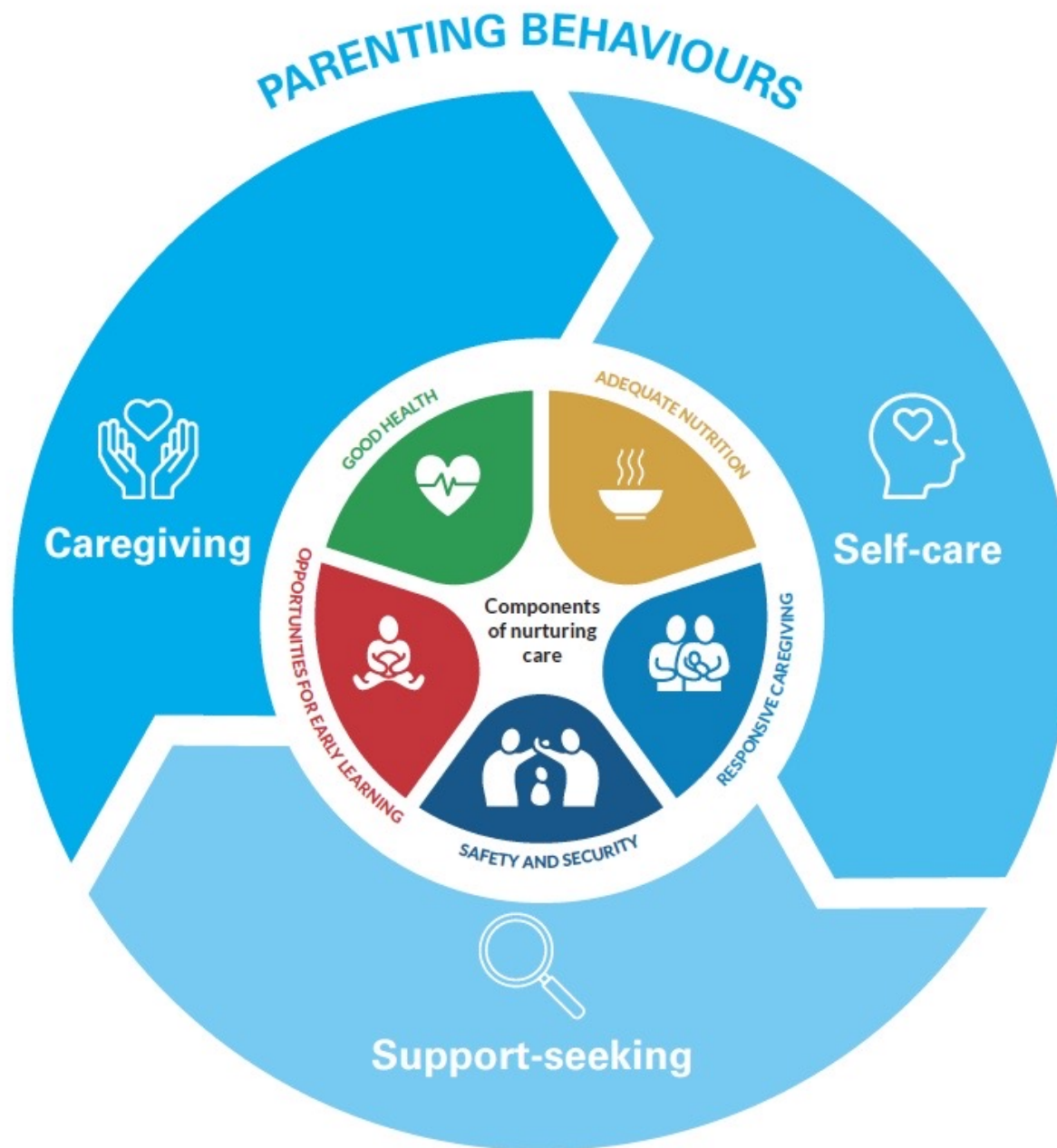
**Unified
Multisectoral
Approach to
Parenting
Support**



Collaboration is both **preventive** (reducing risks early) and **efficiency-enhancing** (avoiding duplication, pooling resources). **System strengthening approach!**

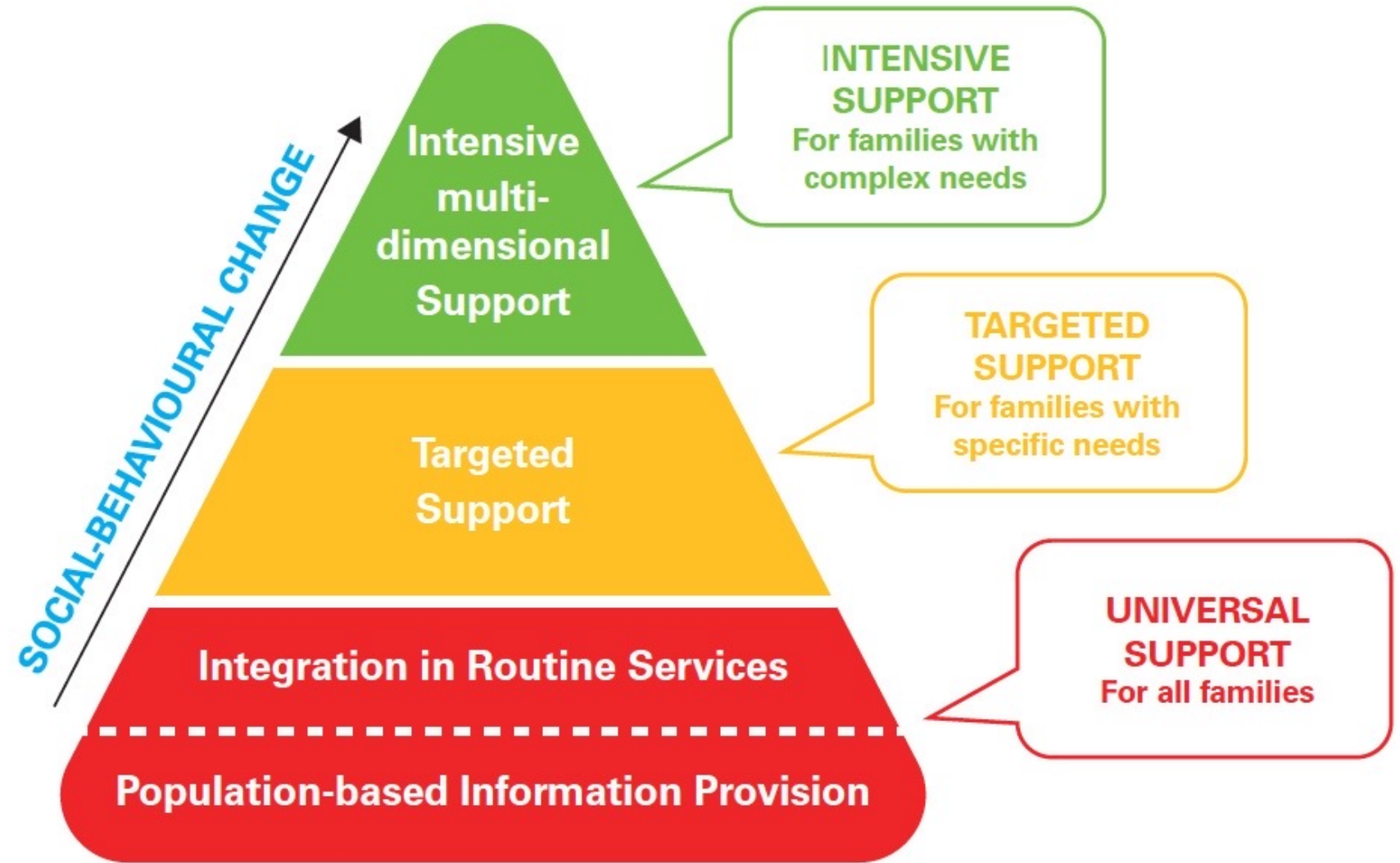
PARENTING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

Parenting Behaviours



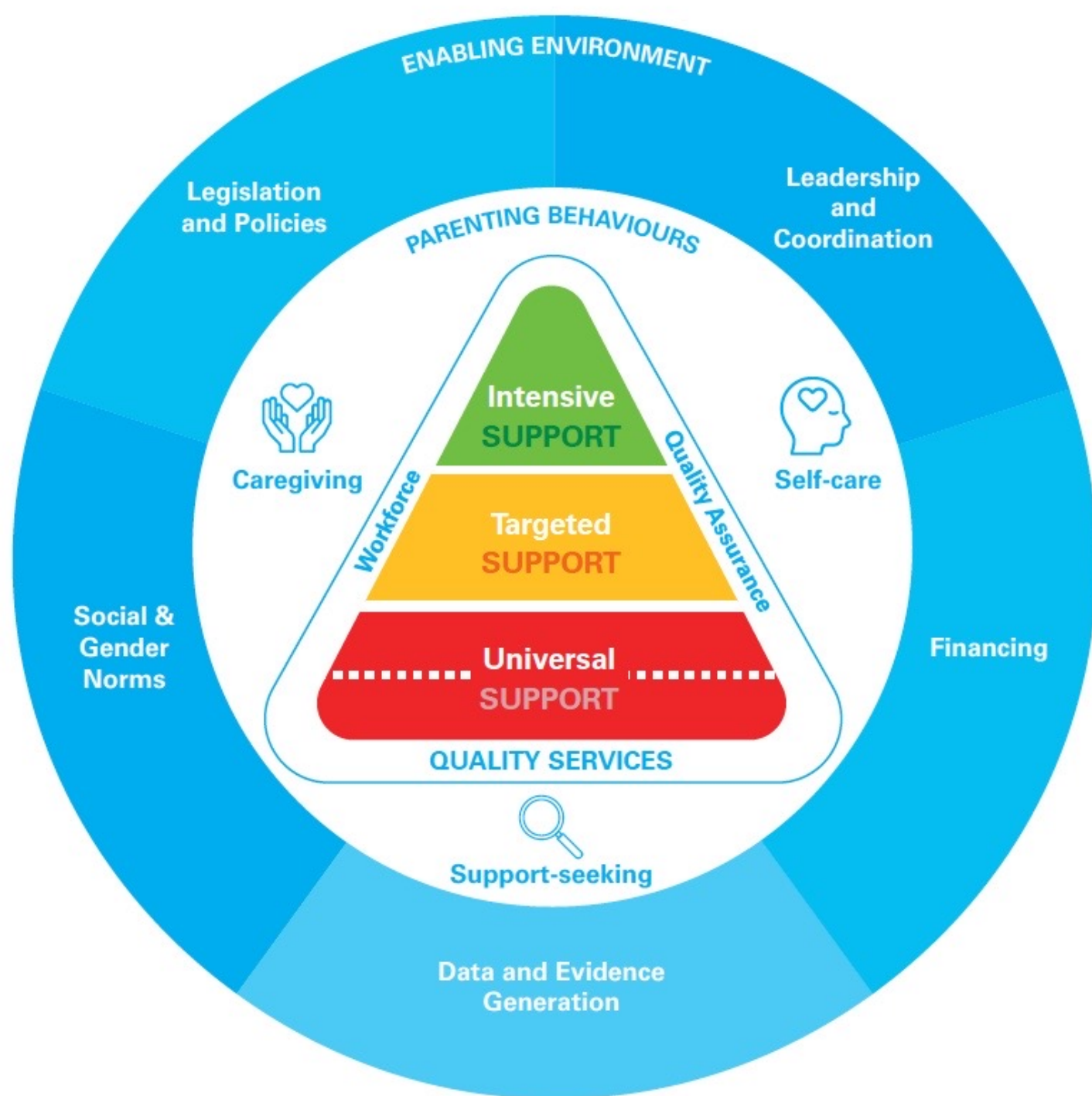
PARENTING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

Parenting Support Pyramid



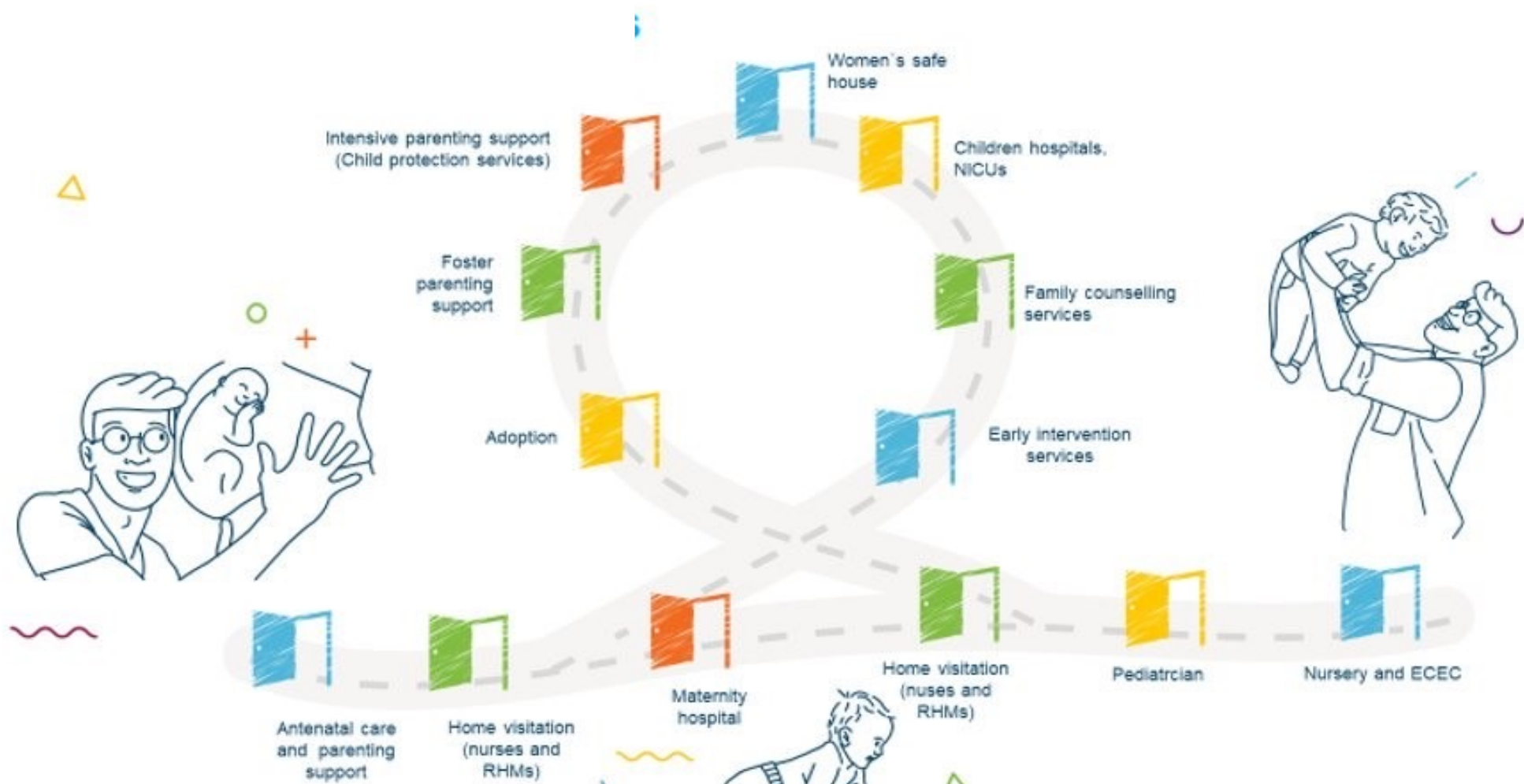
PARENTING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

Enabling
Environment
and Quality
Services



Parenting Support Framework for Early Years

Opening the Doors of the Universal-Progressive Journey of Support



Barriers and Preconditions

- Funding, governance, and partnerships.
- Workforce capacity (skills to work across disciplines)
- Data sharing and monitoring (to ensure accountability and measure outcomes)
- Trust-building among sectors and with families.
- Explicit outreach to most vulnerable families- prevention role in reducing inequalities



“Support parents with kind words. With encouraging words.” Mother, Kyrgyzstan

Towards Integrated Family Support

Different models across Europe

Family centers or hubs in Europe exemplify **integrated service models**, providing a range of prenatal, paediatric, education and/or social services, either through collaboration or unified entities, tailored to local policy frameworks.

What does it take to scale these local networks sustainably across countries?

Some examples of different models:

1. **Italy** Villaggi per Crescere, First 1000 days hubs, P.I.P.P.I. programme networks
2. **France** First 1000 Days Homes
3. **United Kingdom** Family Hubs
4. **Finnish** Integrated Family Center
5. **Flemish** Huis Van Het Kind Model
6. **German** Kita+ Model, Frühe Hilfen, Präventionsketten networks

TOWARDS GREATER
FAMILY POLICY
INTEGRATION
ACROSS EUROPE



“Sometimes, a smile is enough”
Mother, Serbia

