



LAUNCH OF THE HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Background: Health care systems are well-trusted and far-reaching. Their access to young children and their families in the most critical years for optimal brain development provides a unique opportunity to support caregivers for nurturing care, which includes care for the child's health, safety and security, responsive Interactions, learning and stimulation, and identification of and support for children at risk of developmental difficulties to develop to their full potential.

In 2021 [UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia](#), [WHO Europe](#), and [the International Step by Step Association \(ISSA\)](#) joined efforts through the Health Systems for Early Child Development initiative. With the support of experts and professionals, the initiative aims to strengthen focus and support for holistic child development in routine health care for all children.

On **6 December 2022**, the initiative will officially launch its website, offering a one-stop-shop for curated contemporary, evidence-based guidance, resources, and expertise on developmentally oriented health systems in Europe and Central Asia.

Program:

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| 10.00- 10.15 | Welcoming panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ms. Afshan Khan, Regional Director, UNICEF Office for Europe and Central Asia (video)● Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Europe Regional Director (video)● Ms. Liana Ghent, Executive Director of the International Step by Step Association |
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| 10.15 – 10.25 | <p>The relevance of the Initiative from a government and policy perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Dragoslav Sćekić, Minister of Health, Montenegro |
| 10.25 – 10.40 | <p>Health systems in support for early childhood development – the vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Dr. Ilgi Ertem, University of Ankara, Founding member and member of the Executive Board of the International Developmental Pediatrics Association |
| 10.40 – 10.45 | <p>The relevance of the initiative from the perspective of the pediatric community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Stefano del Torso, Executive Director of the European Academy of Pediatrics |
| 10.45 – 10.55 | <p>Overview of the Initiative Health Systems for Early Child Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Ivelina Borisova, UNICEF Regional Advisor for Early Childhood Development |
| 10.55 – 11.10 | <p>Panel: The perspective of practitioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Giorgio Tamburlini, pediatrician, Director of the Centre for Child Health and Development, Italy • Dr. Kiril Soleski, Family physician, Senior Program Director of the Macedonian Medical Association, North Macedonia • Ms. Kristina Nedeljkovic, Head of the Home Visiting Nurse Service, Health Center of Novi Sad, Serbia |
| 11.10 | <p>Closing remarks from UNICEF, WHO and ISSA</p> |