



# Strengthening local governments' capacity to ensure quality, equitable and comprehensive services for young children and their families

ECD Toolbox for local governments

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## A few words before reading this Toolbox ...



There is notable diversity among cities and municipalities within and across countries, from demographics to resources, from size to geographies, from priorities to capacities. At the same time, one feature that may be common to many local governments is their **strong commitment to improve the lives of all young children and their families who live in those municipalities.**

A child's development is impacted upon by the quality of the environments in which they live, from the home to the neighbourhood, and various public spaces to early childhood settings. Everything matters in a child's life for their healthy growth and development.

Local governments can make an important difference for young children in their municipalities, by looking through their eyes and prioritizing their needs in the places in which they live, grow and learn.

This Early Childhood Development Toolbox is intended to inspire the representatives of local governments – mayors, vice mayors, local council members, mayor office employees – alongside local partners and stakeholders, and support and assist them in their efforts to strategically plan and coordinate the policies, services and programmes that target young children and their families in their municipalities.

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Introduction: Rationale and overview of the Early Childhood Development Toolbox for local governments

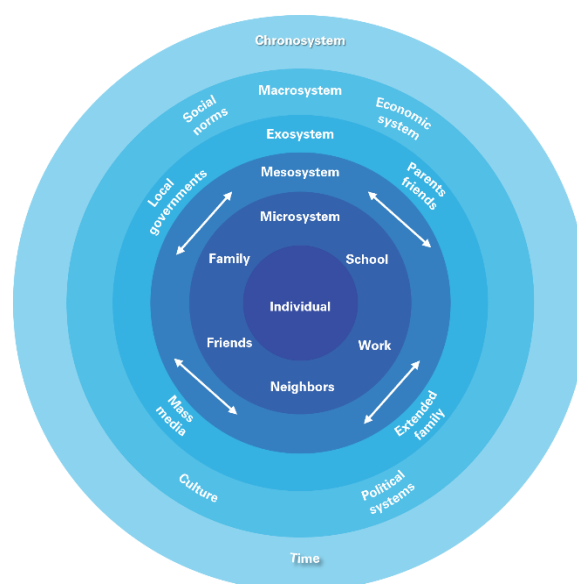
## The importance of early years and supporting children's development

The healthy and rounded development of children in their early years lays the critical foundations for their well-being and success later in life. It requires concerted and competent support in all the environments in which they grow and develop – the home, the community, and as the focus of early childhood services. Across countries, the responsibility for ensuring that children are provided with the necessary support where they live lies with their parents/caregivers. Equally, local and national authorities have a responsibility through the policies, funding, and services they provide in order to meet the needs of children and families.

There are many services which target young children and their families: health, education and care, early intervention, social protection, and so on. There are also public spaces such as playgrounds, libraries, and other cultural services. All these play an important role in ensuring that the different and complex developmental needs of each child during their early childhood are met so that they can thrive. However, within each country, access to and the availability of quality services across communities/cities and regions is uneven. Therefore, many children lack opportunities they need to develop healthy and safely, or to reach their full, unique potential.

## The local early childhood system – a whole municipality approach

In the past two decades, societies have changed at an unprecedented pace, and continue to significantly impact the daily lives of families and children in European countries and across the globe. There are many (often intertwined) factors that increasingly shape the country contexts in which priorities are set and decisions are made. These include: rapid and growing urbanization, fast-changing job markets, present and future insecurity, the risks of poverty and social polarization, disruptive crises, hyper digitalization, climate change, etc. All of these factors are highly relevant when making decisions about protecting and ensuring young children's well-being.



Source: [symplpsychology.org](http://symplpsychology.org)



Why is there a need for a comprehensive local early childhood system?

The first years of life are crucial for laying the solid foundations for a child's healthy and well-rounded development. There is already compelling evidence for the short-, medium-, and long-term benefits of investing in material and non-material resources in order to create appropriate and nurturing environments for children.

At the same time, as Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory indicates, the context in which a child develops is complex and multidimensional. It starts from what is in the child's immediate proximity (family, neighbourhood, city/municipality) and extends to a chain of political, cultural, economic, social, and societal factors at national/societal level. Over time, these all exert their influence and determine changes in how children live.

Today, the complexity of challenges encountered by families with young children has grown to the extent that no single policy, measure, or service is able to address every challenge. A comprehensive view of the system of factors, policies and services that may contribute to improving the lives of young children and their families is becoming a key condition for effective policy making and implementation.

Cities and municipalities are a vital environment, if young children and their families are to thrive. A city's child- and family-centred perspective can be easily noticed in a city/municipality, from the way public spaces take into consideration their presence in communities and their well-being (from playgrounds and public transportation to easy and safe ways to explore the community, etc.), to the way in which early childhood services are made accessible, available, affordable and are delivered considering people's varied needs.

A city/municipality that value its young children (from the time of birth) and their families should prioritize and plan for policies, measures and funding that benefits young children and their families.

## The role of local governments in ensuring quality early childhood services

Local governments hold a decision-making role in setting local priorities and addressing them properly for people living in their city/municipality. These authorities are well-positioned to make a difference for young children and their families by ensuring the following.



### 1. Visionary leadership

It requires a well-informed and visionary leadership to map the state of local early childhood systems (types of services, capacity, shortages, gaps, etc.), learn what to prioritize (for children, families and services), and to mobilize capacities and resources for better access to and quality of services. Setting a vision for the city/municipality, in which young children are seen as a priority for local development, is proof of commitment to strategic local investment. However, acting towards that vision demands sustained local leadership, which local governments are best positioned to provide.

### 2. Coordination across sectors, services and stakeholders

Local governments have a mandate to ensure the strategic and sustainable development of their communities. This requires systemic, forward-looking thinking and a high-level of coordination in managing complex contexts and resources. The diverse policies, services and programmes that address the varied needs of young children and their families are more impactful and cost-effective when they are well-coordinated. Through structures and mechanisms for coordination, local governments can create a cohesive local policy environment. They can then shape cohesive networks of services around children and families, monitoring, ensuring and improving the quality of service provision.

### 3. Decision-making

While there are national policies that guide the functioning of the early childhood system at country level, their implementation is determined by local contexts and managed by local governments. Local governments are responsible for making decisions that meet the specific needs of the children and families in the communities they govern. Such decisions are more effective when informed by data collected through the participation of various stakeholders (including families and children), when local

coordination bodies representing various sectors, services and professionals meet. They should discuss and jointly prioritize measures that need to be taken and taken and solutions for improving the access to and quality of services for all young children and their families.

#### 4. Resource mobilization and allocation

There is great variation of resources among municipalities and their allocation is often challenging. Through a well-coordinated and thoroughly well-informed local strategy, local governments can map material resources (funds, goods, partnerships, etc.) and non-material resources (local expertise, local capacity among public and private actors, etc.). They should avoid ineffective resource allocation and close gaps where identified, pacing the resource allocation in line with set priorities.

#### 5. Continuous improvement of services informed by data (monitoring, assessments, needs analysis, etc.)

Local governments' commitment to improving the lives and well-being of young children is a commitment to ongoing learning about the current and emerging needs, not only of the youngest citizens, but also of those working in the early childhood services, and about the outcomes of service provision. Constant monitoring and creating quality assurance mechanisms and tools are key duties of local governments; they inform relevant and responsive actions towards improving the quality of services.

## The interplay of national and local governance in early childhood systems and the need for coordination

In many countries with a decentralized administration, local governments provide the funding and are responsible for the management of early childhood services (i.e., early childhood education and care (ECEC)). At the central level, policies and regulations are put into place and, in some cases, public funds are allocated for different aspects of service provision. The level of local autonomy might differ from country to country, but in all places, local administrations have a clearer understanding of **local needs and can prioritize the use of resources to improve services in their communities.**

Historically, those services which target young children (health, education, social protection) have been part of national systems that target the entire population across age groups. However, they have a history of working in isolation, by sector. Families with young children are encountering increasingly complex and intertwined challenges in today's societies. Therefore, closer collaboration and coordination across sectors and services is becoming a priority which, in turn, asks for a systemic approach to the constellation of policies and services that children and families should have access to and benefit from in the places where they live. **Local authorities are best-positioned to ensure that children and family's needs are met through the services that are provided.**

In the past decade, there has been a growing narrative about the integration of early childhood services across sectors and how integration can be achieved. There has also been a growing interest from local authorities to find better ways to invest, allocate resources and lead changes towards higher quality services. The European Child Guarantee (2021) is an indicative example of a policy initiative that asks for an effective interplay between national and local governance and for increased coordination across different sectors, to address the complex issue of child poverty.

## Local authorities' expertise and capacity

A lot of attention has been paid to improving early childhood policies and services, particularly with regards to early learning and care (ECEC). However, at the national level, limited efforts have been put into building the capacity and the expertise of local governments to work towards improving local early childhood systems.

In every country, early childhood services are delivered in municipalities which differ across various dimensions: size, demography, geography, resources, capacity, etc. Implicitly, the challenges that each municipality encounters when improving their local early childhood system may differ or require different approaches or solutions.

The following two key aspects may significantly contribute to ensuring that local governments are well prepared to make informed decisions and guide the implementation of measures aimed at improving the environments where children can grow, learn and develop:

- the **knowledge and capacity infrastructure of local governments to lead, own and sustain the local coordination of policies and services** addressing the various needs of children and families in their communities;
- how much **expertise local authorities have in mobilizing early childhood knowledge and local solutions for the local challenges they encounter when providing quality early childhood services for the children and families in their communities** (e.g. what issues should be addressed, what early childhood measures should be taken, what early childhood services there should be and how they should be improved).



## Brief overview of the ECD Toolbox

### Purpose of the Toolbox

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Toolbox is aimed at supporting local governments in their efforts to improve the coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of the local early childhood system in their cities/municipalities.

Through its structure and content, the Toolbox intends to contribute to the shared understanding of the important role that local governments can play in ensuring a strategic vision, a well-informed and highly coordinated strategy to address the needs that young children and families have and the challenges they encounter.

The main purpose of the Toolbox is to strengthen local governments' capacity to mobilize and convene local expertise and resources, and to take informed decisions for providing access to quality environments for all young children and their families.

### Structure and content of the Toolbox

The Toolbox brings together and builds on knowledge from previous publications by various international organizations. The publications focus on supporting strategic and impactful work at the local and national levels which is aimed at better outcomes for young children and their families/caregivers. To increase their effectiveness, the content of the Toolbox is organized around four building blocks which serve specific purposes.

**Building Block 1:** Guiding tools for strengthening local governments' capacity and infrastructure for coordinated plans and measures regarding young children.

**Building Block 2:** Guiding tools for improving access to and the quality of health/home visiting, parenting support, ECEC, social protection services for young children.

**Building Block 3:** Guiding tools for addressing issues related to vulnerable or groups at risk of exclusion (children in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children on the move, children from ethnic minorities, refugee children, etc.).

**Building Block 4:** Guiding tools for developing a comprehensive local early childhood strategy.

Under each building block, a brief overview of the main purpose, tools and the links between them introduces the section. Each building block contains different numbers and types of tools serving various purposes, and the expected outcome of their usage. A brief overview of the tool, as well as brief guidance in how to use it, accompany each one.

While the tools in Building Block 1 concern processes aimed at setting up cross-sector coordination infrastructure to function at the level of the local government, they are quite closely related to each other. In contrast, the tools in the Building Block 2 can be used independently, as they focus on specific sub-sector interventions (i.e., early education, parental support, home-visiting services, etc.). The tools in Building Block 3 may leverage learnings or outcomes from the usage of the tools in the previous blocks, as it focuses on specific vulnerable or at-risk groups of children and families. Last but not least, Building Block 4 brings together the thinking and learning from the previous building blocks to create an articulated local strategy, leveraging cross-sector coordination led by the local government, the sub-sector priorities, as well as having a focus on the most vulnerable children, to ensure that all young children are considered in the planned and implemented measures.

### **Guidelines for using the Toolbox**

The Toolbox proposes a rich collection of tools for a “pick-and-mix” approach based on their relevance for respective local governments, depending on their size, existing capacity, expertise, needs and priorities. However, it is recommended that before deciding which tools to use, a brief review of all the categories of tools and their purposes should be carried out.

All the tools are meant to propose pathways towards achieving a specific outcome or meeting a specific need that a local government has in addressing issues related to young children and early childhood services in their municipality. The effectiveness of the tools depends greatly on using and adapting them to the specific context and size of the municipality.



## The Toolbox

## Overall map of the Tools

### BUILDING BLOCK 1: Guiding tools for strengthening the capacity infrastructure of local governments for coordinated measures

**Tool 1** A Framework for supporting integration in early childhood systems: Values and Principles, Key Factors and Quality Practice

**Tool 2** Shared understanding at the local government level of the image of the child, families, professionals and services

**Tool 3** Shared vision about early childhood services for young children and families

**Tool 4** Example of a vision-informed whole-government early childhood strategy

**Tool 5** Governance infrastructure for high-level coordination

**Tool 6** Assessment of the readiness for change and of the readiness for implementation at the level of municipality

**Tool 7** Policy Readiness Tool

**Tool 8** Map of partners/stakeholders and their role in the process

**Tool 9** Map of responsibilities and resources

**Tool 10** Assigning responsibilities

**Tool 11** Action plan for improving coordination in the local early childhood system

**Tool 12** Quality practices in integrated local early childhood systems

**Tool 13** The information-sharing flowchart

**Tool 14** Defining different levels of communication and information sharing.

### BUILDING BLOCK 2: Improving access to and quality of services for young children

**Tool 1** Improving the home visiting services at the local/national level

**Tool 2** Improving the parenting support services at local/national level

**Tool 3** Improving access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)

### BUILDING BLOCK 3: Addressing complex issues related to various groups of vulnerable children or at risk of exclusion

**Tool 1** Drivers of change in urban space: equity and inclusion, urbanization and planning, and adaptive complex systems children

**Tool 2** Assessing the Inclusivity of ECEC Centres

**Tool 3** Leveraging Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to support children and families with higher vulnerabilities and limited access to services

**Tool 4** REYN Evidence Tool – Approaching holistically the needs of Roma young children and their caregivers

**Tool 5** How accessible is our municipality for children with disability and their parents?

**Tool 6** Six-point agenda for action for local governments to support internally displaced or refugee

**Tool 7** Approaching holistically the needs of refugee children and their caregivers

### BUILDING BLOCK 4: Moving towards a whole-local government early childhood strategy

**Tool 1** Situation analysis of the local early childhood system

**Tool 2** Local map of early childhood services- Systems Classification of Interventions (SysClass)

**Tool 3** Managing Complex Change – planning the improvement of the local early childhood system

**Tool 4** Assessing the whole-local government capacity for improving the local early childhood systems

**Tool 5** Developing and early childhood development strategy at the level of the municipality/city

**Tool 6** Action Plan for improving early childhood services

**Tool 7** Financial Chart- developing budget and financial planning





Building Block 1: Guiding tools for strengthening the capacity infrastructure of local governments for coordinated measures

## Overview of the tools in Building Block 1

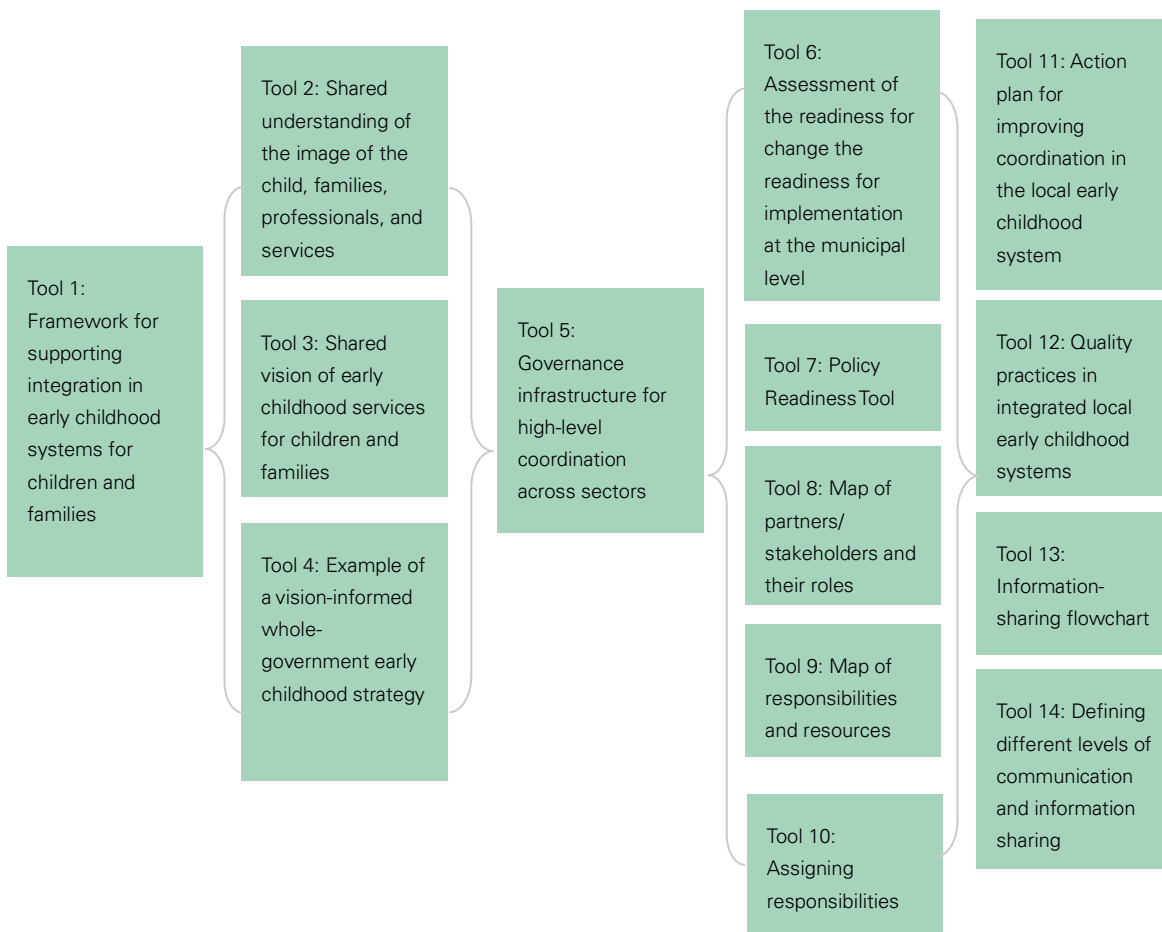
### Main purpose

Establishing high-level coordination infrastructure at the city/municipality level, with a shared vision and purpose regarding young children's and their families' well-being, a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders at the local level, and a shared commitment to better outcomes for children through sectoral and cross-sectoral plans.

### List of tools

- Tool 1: A framework for supporting integration in early childhood systems: Values and Principles, Key Factors and Quality Practice
- Tool 2: Shared understanding at the local government level of the image of the child, families, professionals and services
- Tool 3: Shared vision of early childhood services for young children and families
- Tool 4: Example of a vision-informed whole-government early childhood strategy
- Tool 5: Governance infrastructure for high-level coordination
- Tool 6: Assessment of the readiness for change and readiness for implementation at the municipal level
- Tool 7: Policy Readiness Tool
- Tool 8: Map of partners/stakeholders and their role in the process
- Tool 9: Map of responsibilities and resources
- Tool 10: Assigning responsibilities (Matrix)
- Tool 11: Action plan for improving coordination in the local early childhood system
- Tool 12: Quality practices in integrated local early childhood systems
- Tool 13: Information-sharing flowchart
- Tool 14: Defining different levels of communication and information sharing

### Map of the tools



**PURPOSE 1:** Ensuring a shared understanding in the local governance on the importance of working in a highly coordinated manner with a common vision and values regarding children's and families' well-being

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### **Tool 1: Framework for supporting integration in early childhood systems: Values and Principles, Key Factors and Quality Practice**

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**Expected outcome:** A shared understanding among local decision-makers and key stakeholders concerning the values and principles informing the management and improvement of early childhood local systems, the factors that contribute to effective coordination and the practices that support a collaborative infrastructure among decision-makers and professionals

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities, and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

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### **Brief overview of the Tool**

The *Reference Framework for Integration in early childhood systems: Values and Principles, Key Factors and Quality Practices*<sup>1</sup> was developed based on a literature review and the mapping of various experiences in Europe and beyond (e.g. Australia, North America).

The Framework includes three sets of **key elements** that impact high-level coordination across early childhood sectors and services (health, education, social protection/assistance) as a result of the literature review. See table and chart on next page.

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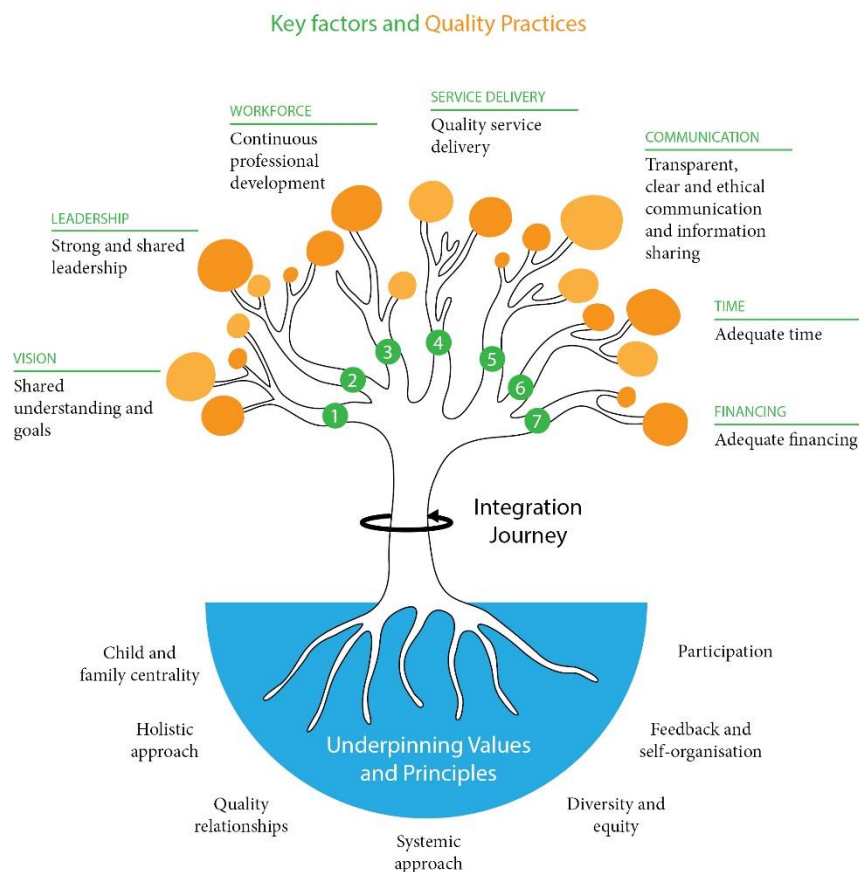
<sup>1</sup> *The Reference Framework for Integration in early childhood systems: Values and Principles, Key Factors and Quality Practices* was developed under the project INTESYS – Supporting vulnerable children through integrated services (2016–2018) funded through the Erasmus+ Programme. The Framework was included in the Toolkit – *Towards Integrated Early Childhood Systems. Building the Foundations*. More information can be found here: [INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – Building the Foundations](#)



### Key elements that impact high-level coordination across early childhood services and sectors

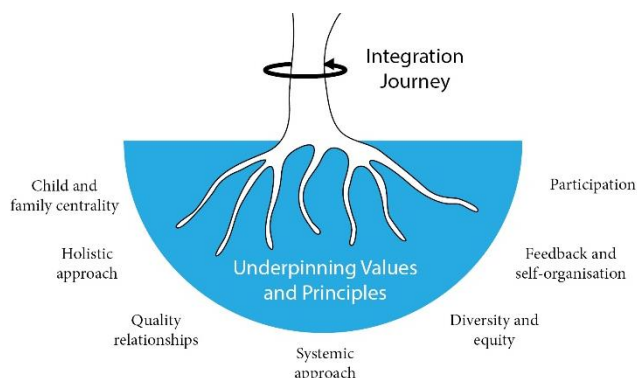
<p>Underpinning values and principles for a shared vision around early childhood policies and services</p>	<p>The <b>underpinning principles and values</b> represent the foundation for a shared vision and a shared understanding among the stakeholders driving the process of integration.</p>
<p><b>Key factors supporting high-level coordination</b></p>	<p>The <b>key factors</b> represent the conditions that have a strong influence on integration. They may enable or block integration depending on how they are planned and managed.</p>
<p><b>Quality practices for high-level coordination</b></p>	<p>The <b>quality practices</b> serve as a guide for translating values and principles into practices, while considering the key factors of high-level coordination.</p>

## INTESYS framework



## Underpinning values and principles

Early childhood systems are dynamic systems that are created and are continuously changing based on the interplay between old-new values, past-present knowledge, understandings of contexts and their diversity,



actions and evidence. As in any living system, all individuals (the interactions between them, groups and interactions between groups, processes and actions) matter as they create multiple dynamics in the systems. Seeing the unique potential of each actor and each group of actors emphasizes the importance of nurturing human relationships as the foundation and driver for creating functional and just systems.

The main role of early childhood services is to ensure that each individual child’s rights are fulfilled and that they are provided with the best conditions and support to reach their unique potential, regardless of their background, social economic status, religion, gender, race or world view, and also regardless of the type of service. Sharing the same values and principles may contribute to a **shared purpose** across services and professionals and seamless coordination.

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### Underpinning values and principles

<p>Child and family centrality</p>	<p>Integration recognizes the central purpose of bringing better outcomes for children and their families when designing, planning, delivering and assessing early childhood services. Therefore, <u>all decisions have to start and be made by collectively acknowledging and ensuring that the demands of children and their families are met, seeing them as actors and partners in the process.</u></p>
<p>Holistic approach</p>	<p>Approaching the child, the family, the practitioner, the service and community in a holistic manner ensures that the <u>diversity of their needs and strengths are taken into account</u> and the actions that impact them are aligned and synergetic. It also implies that both processes and outcomes consider the intellectual, socio-emotional, physical and spiritual</p>

	<p>dimensions of those involved. All these dimensions have to be taken into account when engaging with actors.</p>
Quality relationships	<p>Quality, generative relationships among individuals and teams, among agencies, among professionals and beneficiaries, and various levels of governance, are crucial. They need to be based on trust, mutual respect, shared responsibilities, mutual agreement and joint commitment.</p>
Systemic approach	<p>All elements in the system impact upon each other vertically and horizontally, affecting the transitions across age, sector, services, but also from service delivery to policy. Therefore, changes need to be seen through the complexity of their impact inside a system. A change initiated in one part of the system will influence other parts. Therefore, the changes need to be seen in a systemic way</p>
Feedback and self-organization	<p>Each actor in the process, individual or organization, has assets that can be mobilized and constantly seeks a sense of coherence. There is no recipe; each process is unique and contextualized. Therefore, <u>each process needs continuous adjustments through participatory mechanisms</u>. These adjustments should consider the specific conditions, preserving the autonomy of beneficiaries and promoting strength-based approaches.</p>
Diversity and equity	<p>Diversity and social and cultural diversity represent foundational ingredients in working jointly for designing, planning and delivering services for children and families. Each actor is valued; each action is sensitive to ensuring equal opportunities for those who are in most need. Representatives of vulnerable groups are included; they have a voice, they are seen, their opinion is respected and they have an influence on the decision-making process.</p>
Participation	<p>Listening to the voices of multiple actors (including children and their families) in creating responsive, flexible, useful and efficient services is pivotal, from the planning phase to service delivery and evaluation for improvement. Collaboration is grounded in shared values, common goals and articulated actions, but also in a common sense of ownership. Moreover, services are created to best serve children and families.</p>

Therefore, children and families participate in decision-making, and in co-creating the services that are relevant to them.

## Key factors and areas of practice to support coordination and integration across sectors

Based on the literature review and a survey which analysed integration experiences in selected countries in Europe, the factors indicated in the figure below have been identified as being the most critical for

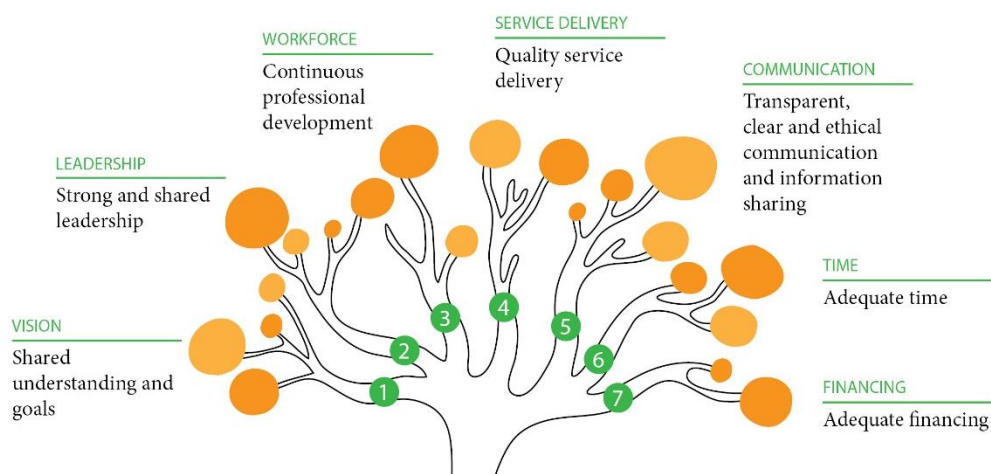
creating an enabling environment for high-level coordination and integration.

The literature provides valuable insights into successful pathways

which demonstrate consistent values and practices at various levels. In connection to the key factors, several areas of practice have been identified as crucial to creating the foundations for integration within early childhood systems.

The key factors may support or hinder high-level coordination and integration, depending on the values and principles that guide them, and the type of practices that are nurtured among individuals: at the service level, among services/institutions and among different levels of governance at the local level.

Below, you will find a brief description of each of the seven key factors. In close relation with each one, the quality value-based practices are highlighted which make the factor an enabler of integration.



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## Key factors    Quality practices

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**KEY FACTOR 1: VISION** Vision is a fundamental driver in providing quality and equitable services in early years and to communities. The way we see and value children, families and communities greatly determines the desires we have for them. Persistent, purposeful and highly engaging actions that bring about change are always animated by a clear vision.

### Quality practices

Countries with already-developed integrated services have experienced that when **developing a shared vision among various stakeholders**, they had to overcome the challenge of having sector-based service and professional cultures, differences in professional requirements and discourses, different views on parents and children, as well as a sector-based funding scheme and scattered political responsibilities. Investing in **continuous dialogue at many different levels** is an essential initial step. For **bridging various discourses** towards shared understandings and goals, **dialogical places and spaces** need to be created for policy makers, decision-makers, professionals, parents and communities.

**KEY FACTOR 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE** To a certain extent, services are the workforce. The quality of services is also very much about the quality of the workforce: the better prepared and supported it is, the better the services. The workforce is key to quality provision, from the managing role to direct interactions with professional peers, with families, with communities and, last but not least, with children.

### Quality practices

Highly coordinated work requires professional competences related to the specific task. It also requires a certain attitude pertaining to willingness to cooperate, trusting partner organizations, open-mindedness towards shared learning, awareness of (and knowing how to avoid) the risk of stigmatization. Working in an integrated low-threshold way, especially for and with hard-to-reach families requires **specific attitudes and values from professionals and a holistic approach**. Parents and children should receive the services they actually need, not what professionals think they need. That would make services more accessible and would motivate people to work together. For this, it is necessary to **continuously offer guidance and training** to all staff members and, to **bring various sectors together in joint events**. Reflective practice, peer mentoring, learning communities and group activities can **keep all workers connected, motivated and committed to their cooperation**.

Different professional roles should be combined in **a multidisciplinary team**, and the division of roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined.

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**KEY FACTOR 3: LEADERSHIP** No successful plan can be accomplished without leadership in place. The more complex and challenging the issues to be addressed, the stronger the need for leadership. Leadership means strategic thinking, managing resources, taking responsibility, making decisions, driving the processes, assuming risks, searching for answers and solutions, being accountable, but also building and nurturing a collective culture, catalysing energies, engaging and working with people, enabling and managing changes. Leadership enacts the vision and steers a strategic approach to working jointly.

<p><b>Quality practices</b></p>	<p>Strong leadership in integrated services is <b>less about strict hierarchies</b>, but rather about being able to connect, to motivate and empower staff, to develop and implement <b>a clear vision</b> in a participatory way (including families and communities), <b>to stay on track, to communicate well and to support staff</b> in their development towards more collaboration. Leadership in this context is about <b>creating a culture of collaboration</b>, facilitating and shaping <b>values of cooperative work, mutual respect and solidarity, democratic decision-making</b>, organizing <b>common practice and professional development</b> and mediating between the different actors. This type of leadership requires ‘leaders’ not only to be competent and committed, but also to be familiar with the different services and professionals and to <b>be highly credible</b>.</p>
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**KEY FACTOR 4: SERVICE DELIVERY** The way services are delivered reflects the way in which their role is perceived by those in charge of managing and providing them. The accessibility, availability, affordability, usability, and comprehensiveness of the services indicate the extent to which they represent an answer to a real demand coming from families and the communities in which they operate. The services may be delivered in ‘silos’ or by creating a ‘net’ of collaboration.

<p><b>Quality practices</b></p>	<p>Overall, services should be accessible to all, affordable, useful, available, and comprehensive. Provisions should be free of charge, welcoming and relevant to all (not only to specific ‘target’ groups). Outreach work has to be considered in order to reach all families, especially those seen or labelled as ‘hard to reach’. <b>Services should be co-constructed with the families</b>, which in turn requires a flexible-model and ongoing strategy, near to where families live, work, or meet.</p> <p>Many examples indicate the <b>minimum of services within highly coordinated provision</b>: early education and care, parental support, (preventive) health and social work. But integration can also be developed between childcare and preschool or between schools and the library, etc. What is important is that <b>the network of services should contain sufficient mainstream, low threshold, and universal services</b>, that they should be welcoming, and offer <b>meeting places</b> where families</p>
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can connect with each other. **Quality integrated service delivery is deeply rooted in the community**, responsive to those communities. It is also very flexible, as the community is constantly changing.

**KEY FACTOR 5: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING** Joint planning and working depends on smooth and efficient communication, and on access to and sharing of information. Efficient and secure information systems and clear protocols for communication create a solid platform for strong collaboration. Trust is a key component in the communication and information-sharing processes and in the parent-service relationship.

**Quality practices**

For vulnerable families, barriers to access are often linked to a lack of information. Families need to know clearly what is being offered, and what the conditions and possible consequences are.

**Clear strategies** on communication, information and **deontological codes** need to be in place. These inform how family information is used and shared: **what information** is gathered, **by whom and why**; the **communication channels** between professionals and services; **who has access to what information**; the **rules on disclosure of sensitive information**; how people are informed about these rules and how can they object. These are some of the critical aspects to be considered when setting up a **communication- and information-sharing system at the local level**. An **electronic system for communication and information sharing** is a useful tool, as long as it ensures **data protection, access protocols, data-uploading protocols**, and accurate and complete information.

For functional integration, equally important are **communication and information sharing at the professional level** (among professionals in the same service or in different services), at the **institutional level** (among professionals and managers), at the **managerial level** (among managers of different services and local decision-makers) and at the **community level** (among various community representatives and services). Agreed and efficient channels responding to specific contexts should be in place. Communication strategies and **protocols** are needed for clarifying roles, responsibilities and procedures.

**KEY FACTOR 6: TIME** Creating the conditions for successful integration requires time: time for building partnerships and community engagement; time for creating a culture of collaboration (norms and practices) among professionals; time for joint planning across sectors; time for meaningful participation in decision-making; and reflective adjustments along the process. Factoring in an appropriate amount of time in processes of change is crucial. The greater the change, the longer is needed.

<p><b>Quality practices</b></p>	<p>Making a shift towards more collaboration takes time. Depending on the context, existing traditions and culture in services and sectors may support or be resistant to change. The required trust among each other, the commitment to the concept of integrated working needs sufficient time in which to grow, develop and deepen. It is important to <b>allow processes to develop at the speed of the concerned partners</b>. Also, it will take a while for parents to understand how some known services are changing, in connection with other services. They, too, will need to become familiar with and accustomed to the changing service delivery.</p> <p>Equally important for working in an integrated way is to <b>provide time for dialogue among stakeholders</b> (partners, community representatives, families, professionals, etc.). This is essential for <b>attuning approaches and actions</b>, for <b>planning together</b>, for <b>calibrating joint work</b>, for <b>benefiting the joint continuous professional development</b> activities, as well as <b>reflecting on subsequent adjustments</b> needed for a better-functioning integration.</p>
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**KEY FACTOR 7: FINANCING** Highly coordinated services require a change in terms of how finances are allocated, planned and used. Cost-efficiency is mentioned as an attribute of coordinated provision of services.

<p><b>Quality practices</b></p>	<p>High coordination and integration of services requires a solid understanding of how budgets are designed and allocated. The main rationale for promoting integration is to better enable each child and family to meet their specific needs, reducing any gaps in access and outcomes. This means identifying the areas where <b>overlapping costs</b> exist among different sectors and finding ways to reduce them, and also the areas in which <b>additional funds are needed</b> and finding various sources of funding. There are a variety of sources, from local to national, from public to private.</p> <p>The literature review has shown that significant funding investments are required to support the process of high coordination. Investments should be made in the following: training; data collection and management; technical support; policy development; joint planning; infrastructure, etc. In many cases, the costs could exceed the costs of fragmented services, but only at the beginning. From a long-term perspective, an integrated system should offer a good return on investment by reducing redundancies, improving the delivery of services, and providing more efficient interventions.</p> <p>In funding options, it is important to step beyond the traditional approach of problem/issue-based funding streams (i.e. focusing on early education) and move towards supporting and creating multidimensional solutions (i.e. focusing on</p>
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preventing early school dropout, which would consider a family's situation, health, nutrition, etc.). This can be approached in different ways (which are usually country-specific).

- 'Service co-location', which represents a one-time capital investment to premises or a group of service-providers in a 'one-stop shop' model, in which services are delivered in a single location.
- Revisiting and redefining ways of combining local, regional and central funding.
- Introducing the 'per capita' funding approach, in which funds are not allocated to specific institutions/services, but follow children, and are given to those services which deal with children.

## Guidance in using the Tool

Convene one or a series of meetings in which the tools in this Building Block may be used. Decide the order in which they should be used and allocate time for each one.

In using the Reference Framework tool, after introducing the framework, consider initiating discussions around the values, principles and key factors which would enable a smooth coordination across sectors in delivering effective early childhood services.

### Exploring the values and principles

Divide participants in the discussion into small groups, preferably by sector, and ask them to define the key principles and values that represent the foundation for a shared vision and a shared understanding among the stakeholders driving the journey of integration. When the small groups finish their work, let them report back. Facilitators should write down their answers and cluster them according to the underpinning values and principles from the toolkit.

Introduce the set of principles and values in the Reference Framework to your stakeholders and

### Exploring key enabling factors for integration

Introduce the key factors to the audience using the materials below. Before you provide the full explanation to participants, discuss the meaning of the factors and why each one is important.

Post each of the key enabling factors on the wall or a flipchart and ask each participant to add a green mark (with a marker or a sticker) on the factors that already exist in services in their community, a blue one on factors that are missing and a red mark on those they feel are most critical in enabling integration in services in their community. Tell them that it is not a

provide them with short explanations of each one, if needed. Facilitate a conversation, starting from the questions for reflection below. As a facilitator, you should use the organization, representation, and facilitation of the meetings to illustrate all the key values and principles of integration.

### Questions for reflection

1. What do you think of these values and principles? Are they in tune with what you have discussed in your groups? What did you mention and what did you not mention (values and principles)? Is there something on your list that we did not mention?
2. How would you explain the importance of specific values and principles from the perspective of your sector/service?
3. As representatives of different sectors/services and levels of the system, do you think that these values and principles would be understandable for your colleagues and others you are working with? Are they equally relevant to all of you? Why?
4. What about parents? How do you see these values and principles? Is it important to promote them? Is it understandable that if they are in place, the quality of services will be improved, and that children will benefit?
5. How can these principles and values be promoted in all aspects of the services (front-line, management, professional training, etc.)?

problem if different colours are added to the same factors.

Divide participants into seven groups, by factors, and let them discuss how many green, red, and blue marks have been chosen for each factor.

As a group, facilitate a discussion using these questions for reflection.

### Questions for reflection

1. What is missing and why?
2. What is the most challenging to provide? Why?
3. What is needed to put all the factors in place?
4. What is the role of the employees in the process? How can they contribute?
5. What are the roles of the leadership and managers in the process? How can they contribute?
6. What is the role of the policy makers? How can they contribute?
7. How can children, parents and community members have a say, too?



## Useful tips



- As preparation for the meeting, you can send participants the Framework in advance. This can also result in questions that participants will bring to the meeting.
- You may consider enriching this activity by asking participants to rank values and principles from the perspective of their service and sector. Let them compare how they ranked them and open a discussion about similarities and differences. It is essential to stress that the ranking is not so important, if critical values and principles are in place.
- In some cases, it is necessary to provide participants with more information on different values and principles. If participants in the meeting are experts on some of the issues, they can help their peers gain more knowledge and understanding.

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### **Tool 2: Shared understanding of the image of the child, families, professionals, and services at the local government level**

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**Expected outcome:** An aligned image of the child, families, professionals and services among key decision-makers and stakeholders

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities, and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

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### **Guidance in the process**

The tool can be used as the continuation of efforts to establish a shared understanding of coordinated governance and local early childhood systems, and a shared vision for young children and early childhood services in the city/municipality.

The tool should be used with stakeholders that play an important role in the local early childhood system (representatives of departments at mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services – education, health, social protection) and may become part of a coordination body/structure that may lead the decision-making and implementation of measures at the level of the city/municipality. It can be used as part of an event that intentionally wants to bring attention and focus to improving services for the youngest children and their caregivers.

For large cities that have sub-municipal structures, the meeting can be held with representatives from the districts/sectors representing different services targeting young children and their caregivers. For small and medium-sized municipalities, representatives of different types of early childhood services should be included, alongside representatives of different departments at the mayor's office.

Ask participants how they view children, parents, and early childhood professionals and services. The discussion should

*I see children as \_\_\_\_\_*

*I see parents as \_\_\_\_\_*

*I see professionals working in early childhood services as \_\_\_\_\_*

*I see early childhood services as \_\_\_\_\_*

explore the differences in perception that participants hold, and explore concepts like children's rights, children's holistic development and agency, parental roles, family participation, and the roles of professionals and services in the community. An aligned view contributes to a shared goal of improving local early childhood systems and improving the quality of services.

Cut out and distribute the sentences in the box above. Ask them to complete the sentences quickly, with the first association that comes to their mind. When completed, lead a discussion using the questions for reflection.

### Questions for reflection

1. Analyse the different views and discuss the differences and similarities in the way you see them. How do these impact the way services are organized and provided? How do these impact the way the local early childhood system is perceived and managed and the way service providers are communicating and collaborating?

2. If the image of the child, families, professionals, and services changes over time, how would the services be delivered? What would be different? What changes in the local system would be required?

## Useful tips



Establishing a shared understanding of the image of child, families, professionals and services among many types of stakeholders (especially in large cities) requires time. One meeting will not succeed in achieving this objective.

Use all available opportunities to start discussions on this topic. In this way, you will bring attention to the importance of having a dialogue around it, as well as finding a shared understanding. This allows for closer cooperation and coordination.

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### **Tool 3: Shared vision of early childhood services for young children and families**

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**Expected outcome:** Agreement on a shared vision regarding the local early childhood system among key stakeholders representing early childhood sectors and services

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities, at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

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## Guidance in the process

This tool can be used after having analysed and discussed the Reference Framework. Initiate a discussion around **a shared vision for young children and their families** (in a community, a municipality, a region, or even at the national level) and how early childhood services may contribute to achieving better outcomes for children and families, especially for the most vulnerable.

Convene several meetings, if needed, with managers of services, representatives of local authorities and parent representatives to discuss shared goals for early childhood services in the community. Consider bringing together stakeholders that have few (or no) opportunities to meet.

Developing a shared vision creates a solid foundation for a shared purpose and coordinated measures across sectors and services.

Develop or find a few vision statements that may describe a common vision for early childhood services for young children and families in the community (municipality) and introduce them to the participants. You may ask each participant to write a letter from the future, in which they tell someone of importance how things would be if the highest potential of the services had been achieved.

Share each vision statement with participants and highlight or add elements based on the discussions. Ensure that all voices are heard and that a common language provokes discussion.

### Example of a vision

*We have early-childhood services provisions that are accessible, available, and affordable to all children and families and meet their diverse needs. All decisions regarding the policies, planning and delivery of services are taken by firstly considering the children's and families' needs. The services are of high quality and make efficient use of resources (financial, human, material, time).*

Analyse all suggestions and decide together on an agreed vision statement. This will serve as a foundation for future steps.

## Useful tips



- Vision statements are formulated as 'future realities', as if they were describing a picture of a moment in 10 to 20 years' time. They should be written in a positive way.
- Each representative should be able to identify their purpose, in terms of what they should do in order to contribute to the common vision.

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## Tool 4: Example of a vision-informed whole-government early childhood strategy

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**Expected outcome:** Build readiness for developing a comprehensive and visionary local early childhood strategy

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities, and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

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### Guidance in the process

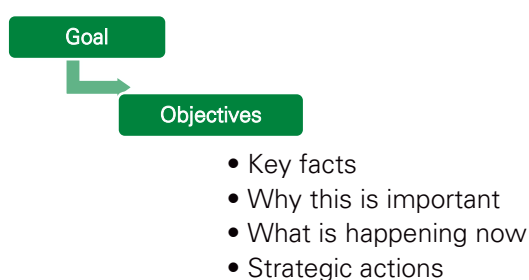
- Share *First 5 – A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019–2028*, developed by the government of Ireland with the aim of setting up a well-coordinated and integrated early childhood system.
- Use the structure of the document to initiate discussions about the phased process of developing a local early childhood strategy, informed by an agreed vision regarding children's development and well-being in your municipality.

#### Vision from the *First 5* strategy in Ireland

*The early years of all babies and young children will be valued as a critical and distinct period which should be enjoyed. Families will be assisted and enabled to nurture babies and young children and support their development, with additional support for those who need it. Those providing services for babies, young children and their families will be equipped to contribute to their learning, development, health, and well-being. Community contexts will help babies and young children make the most of their early years and fulfil their potential.*

### Structure of the strategy document

#### Goals and objectives





**Goal A: Strong and supportive families and communities**

- Objective 1: A balance between working and caring
- Objective 2: Information, services and support for parents
- Objective 3: Practical and material resources

**Goal B: Optimum physical and mental health**

- Objective 4: Positive health behaviours
- Objective 5: High-quality health services
- Objective 6: Positive mental health

**Goal C: Positive play-based early learning**

- Objective 7: A positive home-learning environment
- Objective 8: Affordable, high-quality Early Learning and Care
- Objective 9: Supported transition

**Goal D: An effective early childhood system**

- Building Block 1: Leadership, governance, collaboration
- Building Block 2: Regulation, inspection, quality assurance
- Building Block 3: A skilled and sustainable workforce
- Building Block 4: Research, data, monitoring and evaluation
- Building Block 5: Strategic investment

**First 5 AT A GLANCE**

Goals	Objectives	Strategic Actions			
<b>A</b> Strong and supportive families and communities	1. Balance working and caring	1.1 Parental care for children particularly during the first year 1.2 Family-friendly flexible working			
	2. Information, services and supports for parents	2.1 Information and resources for parents 2.2 Tiered model of parenting support			
	3. Practical and material resources	3.1 Measures to address family income and early childhood poverty 3.2 Suitable accommodation for families with children 3.3 Child-friendly communities			
<b>B</b> Optimum physical and mental health	4. Positive health behaviours	4.1 Positive health behaviours in families 4.2 Health behaviour supports in child-serving settings and communities 4.3 Child safety and injury prevention			
	5. High-quality health services	5.1 Develop National Healthy Childhood Programme 5.2 Therapeutic and medical care for babies and children			
	6. Positive mental health	6.1 Early identification of mental health issues 6.2 Access to mental health supports			
<b>C</b> Positive play-based early learning	7. Positive home learning environment	7.1 Playful home learning environments 7.2 Parental engagement in children's early learning 7.3 Participation in out-of-home learning			
	8. Affordable, high-quality Early Learning and Care	8.1 Affordable high-quality ELC 8.2 Availability of subsidised high-quality ELC 8.3 ELC that promotes participation, social inclusion and diversity			
	9. Supported transitions	9.1 Information exchange to support transitions 9.2 Continuity between ELC and primary settings 9.3 Supports to sustain learning during transitions			
<b>D</b> An effective early childhood system	<b>1</b> Building Block 1: Leadership, governance, collaboration				
	<b>2</b> Building Block 2: Regulation, inspection, quality assurance				
	<b>3</b> Building Block 3: Skilled and sustainable workforce				
	<b>4</b> Building Block 4: Research, data, monitoring and evaluation				
	<b>5</b> Building Block 5: Strategic investment				
<b>Strategic Actions</b>		<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>
1.A Implementation and governance 1.B Early childhood system leadership 1.C Collaborative projects		2.A Develop, enhance, implement standards 2.B Reform regulation and inspection		3.A Identify and address staff requirements 3.B Improve initial training and CPD for all early childhood staff 3.C Professionalise ELC; support employers to attract and retain high-quality workforce	
		4.A Support early childhood research 4.B Develop administrative and outcomes data 4.C Robust monitoring		5.A Public funding 5.B Strategic investment 5.C Tracking progress	

## PURPOSE 2: Ensuring leadership and structures and mechanisms for coordination at the local level

### Tool 5: Governance infrastructure for high-level coordination

**Expected outcome:** Agreed governance infrastructure for ensuring high-level coordination in the local early childhood system

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities, and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

### Brief overview of the Tool

#### Cooperation-collaboration-integration of services in local early childhood systems<sup>2</sup>

There are different **levels of co-action** among early childhood services, indicating different levels of coordination. Such coordination is required for effective and collective outcomes for children and their families. Each local system might situate itself at a different level of coordination. Local governments can play a crucial role in ensuring high levels of coordination among policies, measures, and service provision across sectors for young children and their families.

#### The continuum from fragmentation to high-level coordination in the local early childhood system

In the case of **fragmented programmes/services**, each programme/service has its own goals, vision, and values. Funding is provided from separate sources and the communication between them, and other services/programmes does not exist. The consequence is that many children and families fall out of the system and do not receive the services they need. In this case, cooperation among services is anecdotal and isolated.

<sup>2</sup> See Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., & Pinto, L. M. (2019) 'INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Systems – Building the Foundations' (p.13)

In the case of **cooperation**, some joint planning takes place, and some goals for service/programme delivery are shared. This can happen within an informal network of services or an established formal network. However, they do not plan together. Funding is separated, and services do not jointly address the needs of communities, children or families. Although access to services is slightly increased, many families with young children do not receive the services they need and fall out of the system.

In the case of **collaboration**, different services and programmes do share values and vision; they do joint planning, but the joint service delivery is missing. This happens often in both informal and formal networks. Their focus is more on how they work together than on how that kind of work benefits children, families, and communities. Although access to services is improved and the needs of children, families and communities are considered, some children and families are still unable to reach the services they need and reaching them requires a good understanding of the system and navigation skills which most disadvantaged families lack.

In the case of **coordination**, a shared vision is to connect different services and programmes, as well as joint planning and a common culture. There is an open dialogue between themselves, and with families and communities. The services are delivered jointly and supported by shared funding. Children and families benefit from coordination of services, and higher numbers of them receive the services they need. This often happens in formal networks which have agreed on some kind of governance and decision-making processes, which helps steer the coordination of decisions and actions.

In the case of **integration**, shared vision, values, and culture are agreed upon in a formal way. The shared outcomes for children and families are jointly defined and the focus is on achieving them. There is one agency coordinating and leading the programmes/services and there is pooled funding. Children and families benefit from integrated services because they are easy to access; professionals form teams around the child, and less time and fewer funds are needed to address the needs of children and families. This is a higher level of coordination within a network of services, with a governance structure that is led by one organization. This form of integration also can be witnessed in single centres delivering multiple services: the so-called integrated services under one roof.

	Institutional independence	Consistent/ Shared goals	Joint planning	Joint service delivery	Lead partner	One leading Agency
Cooperation between services	•	•				
Collaboration in a network of services	•	•	•			
Coordination within the network	•	•	•	•	•	
High-level coordination and integration of service provision		•	•	•	•	•

**Leadership and functional coordination infrastructure** have been identified as key factors in ensuring cohesive, strategic and effective management of the local early childhood system. The coordination body ensures that local measures are well informed by data and local needs, that the measures are prioritized based on consultation and agreements across sectors, and that measures contribute towards improving the accessibility and quality of early childhood services with cost-effective resource allocation.

Depending on the size of the municipality, the complexity of the local contexts, the level of development of the early childhood system, and the local governance architecture, the **local coordination infrastructure** can take different shapes. This enables a high level of coordination with relevant and effective measures, aligned with local capacity. It can vary from specifically setting up a local governance body having a leadership role, to having a lead organization from one sector taking the leading role in ensuring coordination across sectors/services, or a local advisory group that may be convened as often as specific issues require attention from the local government.

#### Main responsibilities of the coordination infrastructure

- ensuring the **collection of relevant data and needs** to inform local development plans – mapping the situation
- setting up **data-informed local priorities** for early childhood services, across sectors.
- developing a **local early childhood strategy** addressing priorities for the short, medium and long term
- developing and agreeing on **actions plans** for strategy implementation (measures, actions, responsibilities, resources, timelines, etc.)
- ensuring **quality and coordinated implementation** of the action plans

- **monitoring and assessing outcomes** to inform new priorities

The coordination infrastructure chosen is meant to create the conditions for smooth coordination among various services and ensure efficient leadership in the coordination process. Depending on the context of each municipality, each coordination structure option may present the pros and cons of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness.

## Guidance in the process

- Discuss and assess the level of collaboration that exists among stakeholders responsible for the early childhood service provision, among professionals working in services.
- Identify the reason for the limited or fragmented coordination across sectors/services and discuss the advantages of ensuring better coordination between the services (see more about the networks of services and their governance below).
- Invite participants to advance proposals of coordination structures which would best reflect the local early childhood system architecture and analyse the proposals in terms of their pros and cons.
- The decision about the coordination infrastructure has to be made following a process of consultation with all relevant stakeholders, bearing in mind that such changes need to be largely endorsed in order to be successful.

## Useful tips



The experience of the ISSA network in implementing the **Primokiz** approach in many municipalities across different countries has highlighted a few lessons regarding local coordination infrastructure.

- The coordination structure at the municipal level must bring different together types of stakeholders representing various early childhood services and sectors. Their perspective and contribution to the work is essential as they bring specific their data and expertise, experience from the field, and insights regarding current strengths and challenges of the local system, all highly relevant for discussing, planning, and proposing solutions that are mindful of the context and the situation of young children and their families.
- The functionality of a local coordination team depends greatly on how well the processes are steered and structured, how efficiently team members' time is used and how each member is encouraged/empowered to participate in the collective processes. In this case, the leadership of the team is key. Having a local coordinator that can dedicate time to steering the team (planning meetings, the agenda, issues to be discussed. etc.) is crucial.



### Useful reading: findings from a literature review regarding the advantages of cross-sector working<sup>3</sup>

It is well known that poverty is a multi-layered, 'wicked' issue which calls for joined-up working that requires attention to be paid to non-material needs (parental support, education) as well as material needs (nutrition, housing).<sup>4</sup>

- **Working cross-sectorally strengthens sustainability.** A good example for such infrastructure is *Präventionsketten* in Germany (chains of prevention). In this form of infrastructure, public-support services from various work lines cooperate to provide long-term or even lifetime support (i.e. from pregnancy through to entering the labour market) to combat poverty and social exclusion. This type of local structure can be scaled up with the help of public and private initiatives.
- Findings from an extensive research project conducted under the UK Sure Start programme by Barnardo's Children's Centres showed that the **most significant factor in terms of outreach for hard-to-reach families is cooperation with local agencies**. It was also emphasized that partnering with health-sector professionals (trusted figures such as midwives or general practitioners) is crucial to encouraging families to benefit from the services in the centre. Moreover, home visits with a health practitioner were helpful in reaching out to reluctant families.<sup>5</sup> However, although **health services are often the first contact point in many countries, ECEC can also be the first 'touch point' for families**, especially for the social integration of mothers into society, and particularly when the mother is pregnant or when the child is born. Vesely (2013) suggests that ECEC can embody partnerships with community organizations such as language courses and employment services, as well as collaboration with other organizations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z. & Alayli, A. (2022) 'Effective outreach to young children and families at risk of poverty and exclusion'. Literature Review – Summary of findings (manuscript). ISSA

<sup>4</sup> Scholz, A., Erhard, K., Hahn, S., & Haring, D. (2019) 'Inequalities in access to early childhood education and care in Germany'. International Centre Early Childhood Education and Care, Working Paper, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cleveland, A., (2012). 'Reaching the "Hard-to-Reach" families. Investigating Research Findings in Communities across the Globe.' Report, CATCH

<sup>6</sup> Archambault, J., Côté, D. & Raynault, M. F. (2020) 'Early Childhood Education and Care Access for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: Using a Framework to Guide Intervention'. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 48, 345–352 (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01002-x>)

- A recent systematic review has summarized the **barriers and facilitators of interagency collaboration** to support children and young people's well-being.<sup>7</sup> One of the most frequently identified factors by both professionals and parents is good **communication across professionals or services**. This includes the **quantity and quality of communication, along with a willingness to communicate**. The other factor most frequently identified is **joint training**, notably development or training activities in which professionals from different disciplines come together. **Training ECEC practitioners, but also practitioners from other sectors** who work with families and young children, is seen as a key factor to enabling increased communication with, and transfer of correct information to, vulnerable and hard-to-reach families.<sup>8</sup>
- Het Huis van Het Kind, in Belgium, is a good example of the proportionate universalist policy and practice and indicates the advantages of working cross-sectorally when the **local municipality plays a leading role and, in the same location, hosts multiple services that address a set of needs of families** with young children. The **social mix, the diverse, warm, easy-to-reach, open and language-accessible services** that connect around the family represent the key ingredients for successful cross-sectoral collaboration.<sup>9</sup>
- Collaboration between organizations, service providers and sectors enable the strategies designed to reach out to the most vulnerable children and families to be effectively enacted. The findings of an analysis of access strategies implemented by organizations funded under the Australian Government's Family Support Programme (FSP) has illustrated the **successful outcomes of well-organized collaboration**.
  - Collaborative initiatives enabled the provision of services that were not currently available and tailoring activities that correspond to the needs of vulnerable families and children.
  - It provided soft-entry points and warm environments for families.
  - Effective outreach activities could be organized mainly through collaboration with local organizations/networks, to meet families where they felt most comfortable.
  - Geographical accessibility and food support could be realized (e.g. the provision of transport to access play groups).

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<sup>7</sup> Cooper, M., Evans, Y., & Pybis, J. (2016) 'Interagency collaboration in children and young people's mental health: a systematic review of outcomes, facilitating factors and inhibiting factors'. *Child: Care, Health and Development* 42(3): 325–42. doi: 10.1111/cch.12322. Epub 2016 Feb 10. PMID: 26860960

<sup>8</sup> Acquah, D. & Thévenon, O., (2020) 'Delivering evidence-based services for all vulnerable families'. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 243, OECD Publishing, Paris ( <https://doi.org/10.1787/1bb808f2-e>)

<sup>9</sup> Pauwels, I., (2021) 'Huis van het Kind is er voor iedereen, met extra aandacht voor meest kwetsbare gezinnen' (<https://sociaal.net/achtergrond/huis-van-het-kind-proportioneel-universalisme>)

- Technology could be used to reach and engage remote and rural communities (e.g. collaboration with Aboriginal media networks).
- Integrated services ensured that the needs of families were 'seen' and that their needs were the main drivers for service provision.
- Strong relationships and collaboration increased flexibility, sensitivity and empowerment for users. Adaptation of programmes to suit the needs of families who could not adhere to the general service provision conditions or timetables were made possible.
- Collaborative access strategies enabled the recruitment of staff from hard-to-reach communities, and established professional pathways for them and existing staff.<sup>10</sup>

### **Useful reading: main findings from a literature review regarding the barriers to working across sectors**

- The most frequently cited barrier to inter-agency collaboration, by both professionals and parents, was **inadequate resources**. This contributed to professionals having insufficient **time** to carry out inter-agency activities such as meetings, insufficient **funding** and inadequate **training** in collaborative practices. **Poor communication across professionals or services** was also a commonly cited barrier.
- **The lack of an ability to establish productive and working relationships and poor cohesiveness between services** has been mentioned by a study in Australia. For example, representatives of partner organizations might be overworked, or the responsibility of facilitation of partnerships might solely be taken on by local partners, exceeding their capacity. Ensuring cohesiveness is **time-consuming** because the relationships between new services and existing providers are fragile.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>The Australian Government's Family Support Programme (FSP) required service providers funded by the programme to establish their Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access strategies.

<sup>11</sup> Cortis, N, Katz, I., & Patulny, A. (2009) 'Occasional Paper No 26: Engaging hard-to-reach families and children'. Australian Government, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

- Cumulative findings also highlighted **factors that create barriers against multi-agency collaboration**: lack of leadership, top-down decision-making, lack of support from senior management, different or conflicting professional ideologies and/or agency cultures and a lack of competent staff. In the absence of local leadership, partnerships cannot maintain strong connections. Moreover, building communication and trust takes time. Given the aforementioned factors, collaboratively developing coherent action plans becomes difficult. Even in the case of established partnerships, there is a need for new governance structures to ensure sustainability.<sup>12</sup>

### Useful reading: horizontal integration and network governance<sup>13</sup>

- Network governance has recently been introduced and studied as a possible integration mechanism for networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Kenis & Provan, 2009). Provan and Kenis (2008) identified three different forms of network governance: lead-organization governance; network administrative organization (NAO); and shared participant governance. This typology has been widely used as a conceptual framework to study inter-organizational service networks.
- In a shared participant-governed network, the network participants themselves govern the network. This means that decision-making is shared, the network depends on the involvement and commitment of all and acts collectively. This also means that the network participants have the final responsibility for the network activities, and they have to manage the internal and external relations of the network (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The power in these networks is supposed to be symmetrical, even when there are differences in organizational size, available resources, and performance. These types of networks act collectively, and the members all represent the network together as a whole (Provan & Kenis, 2008).

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<sup>12</sup> Moore, T., & Skinner, A., (2010) 'An integrated approach to early childhood development'. Background Paper. Benevolent Society. ([https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/TM\\_BenSoc\\_Project\\_09.pdf](https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/TM_BenSoc_Project_09.pdf))

<sup>13</sup> Based on Vermeiren, C., Dorien Van Haute, Nicolas Jacquet, Charlotte Noël, Peter Raeymaeckers, Griet Roets, Michel Vandenbroeck, Laurent Nisen, & Danielle Dierckx. (2018) 'Integrated networks to combat child poverty: a mixed methods research on network governance and perspectives of policy makers, social workers and families in poverty. Final Report'. Brussels: Belgian Science Policy Office, p.104 (BRAIN-be (Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks))

- In the literature, researchers most often describe or investigate cases with a centralized type of network governance such as lead organization-governed networks and network administrative organizations (Span, et al., 2012; Provan & Milward, 1995; Graddy & Chen, 2006; Human & Provan, 2000; Provan & Sebastian, 1998; Lemieux-Charles, et al., 2005). The basic idea of the Network Administrative Organization-model is that a 'separate administrative entity is set up specifically to govern the network and its activities' (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 236). An NAO is not a network member that provides services to a target group. Instead, the NAO is established with the exclusive purpose of network governance. This NAO can consist of only one individual, or it can be an organization that consists of a director, staff, etc. (Provan & Kenis, 2008). This type of coordination is highly centralized and brokered and it can have considerable influence in the decision-making process, or it can focus solely on the administrative functioning of the network.
- Thirdly, in a lead organization-governed network, as the term clearly indicates, there is a member organization that governs the network. This organization provides services to the target group, but also has the responsibility to govern the collaboration in the network. All activities and key decisions are coordinated through and by this lead organization. The lead organization is occupied with the administration of the network and/or facilitates the activities of member organizations in the network to achieve network goals. This type of governance is also highly centralized and brokered (Provan & Kenis, 2008).
- For this research, we zoom in on this last governance form, as networks that are installed by the government to deal with 'wicked' societal issues such as poverty, social exclusion, etc., are often lead organization networks. In the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels network reality, the local government receives funding for installing local networks to combat child poverty, which makes them the leading organization. The networks in our study consist of local public and non-profit organizations that provide services to people in their community. The public centre for social welfare (OCMW/CPAS) often acts as the lead organization and is responsible for the network's governance.

- An important task of network governance is to establish a certain level of network integration among the differentiation of network actors (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Raeymaeckers & Kenis, 2016). Networks need the expertise of a large differentiation of service agencies to deal with the complex problems of their vulnerable target groups. At the same time, integration among this differentiated set of network actors is indispensable in order to fulfill the collective goals of the network. In lead organization networks, the lead organization typically appoints a network coordinator to assist with the governance of the network. An important challenge for this coordinator is to integrate the joint efforts of a variety of service organizations (Rosenheck et al., 1998; Provan and Milward, 1995; author's own, 2016) and to create a unity in effort (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Buck, et al., 2011). Hence, the coordinator is considered an important governing actor in these networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Edelenbos, Buuren & Klijn, 2013). In the next paragraph, we focus on different types of governance roles that leading organizations and coordinators can adopt to govern a network.
- The research of Span, et al. (2012) is the first translation of this finding into a framework of three different governance roles that can be placed on this continuum: the commissioner, the co-producer, and the facilitator.
- At the top-down end of the continuum, the network coordinator adopts the role of commissioner. The coordination of the network is clearly located within the power of the network coordinator. The network coordinator makes unilateral decisions, which limits the input opportunities of the partners. Also, the network coordinator has the main responsibility and has to account for the actions of the network.
- At the other end of the continuum, the network coordinator can adopt the role of facilitator. His or her main goal is to facilitate collaboration between the different network partners without intervening in the decision-making process. Here, the network coordinator's main job is to set up meetings and support collaboration, while the final decisions are made by the network partners. These partners also have the main responsibility and take account for the actions of the network.
- Situated between the top-down and bottom-up extremes, is the role of co-producer. Here, the network coordinator and the network partners strive for a balanced collaboration, in which the network coordinator is seen as an equal partner alongside the other partners in the network. The decisions are made collectively, taking all actors into account (the network coordinator included). Consequently, the ultimate responsibility rests with all network partners and the network coordinator, who all have to take account for the actions of the network.

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## **Tool 6: Assessment of the readiness for change and readiness for implementation at the municipal level<sup>14</sup>**

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### **Expected outcomes:**

- Assessing the municipality's readiness for change and its implementation, because it will play a pivotal role. Municipality leadership and staff must be willing and able to implement and sustain the envisioned change or intervention.
- Identifying the strengths, key challenges, areas for further development, and priority areas that need to be addressed by municipality representatives, their main stakeholders and allies at the beginning of the process.
- Agreeing on the most suitable strategies for addressing key challenges and increasing the municipality's readiness to introduce and manage complex changes and innovations.

**Leading role:** Mayor's office representative

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality, and the local early childhood coordination team

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### **Brief overview of the tool**

For introducing and implementing a whole municipality approach to improve the lives of all the young children and their families who live in those municipalities, two types of readiness must be (self) assessed at the municipality level.

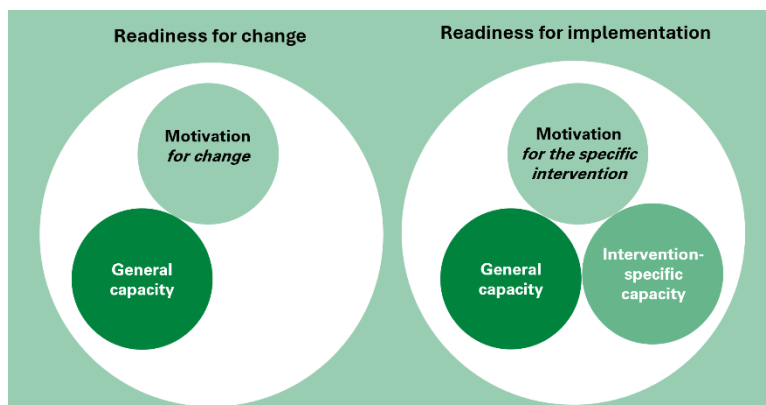
- **Readiness for change:** is the municipality ready to introduce and sustain the change or innovation?
- **Readiness for implementation:** is the municipality motivated and capable of supporting the implementation of the change or innovation?

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<sup>14</sup> Adapted from: Capacity Building Center for States (2018) 'Change and implementation in practice: Readiness'. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media\\_pdf/ci-briefs-b-cp-00026.pdf](https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/ci-briefs-b-cp-00026.pdf))



In general, the main components of the readiness for change include motivation for change (the willingness of individuals in an organization to change and embrace the intervention, their level of commitment, and their belief that the change is needed and meaningful) and the general capacity of the organization (leadership, staff competencies, well-defined structures being in place).



For the implementation of specific interventions, additional readiness components have to be in place, such as intervention-specific capacity (the specific knowledge, skills, structures, and supports needed for a specific intervention).

### Guidance in using the tool

At the beginning, introduce the problem you want to address and plans you have, and explain that with this tool you want to assess the readiness of the municipality on all levels to implement the desired change.

Assessment can be done through:

- key informant interviews (e.g., leadership, experts);
- surveying municipality staff;
- conducting a focus group session with municipality staff, including those involved in the development of new approaches and documents (ECD strategy, etc.). These focus groups or team meetings can be organized by departments;
- analysing existing documents, data, needs expressed by municipality inhabitants.

## Main questions to be addressed

<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we (you) believe that the change/innovation is meaningful and necessary?</li> <li>• Do we believe that the expected outcomes are perceived as positive and tangible and bring substantial benefits? What are the envisaged benefits? Are there any political gains?</li> <li>• Do we (you) believe we can deliver our promises?</li> </ul>
<b>General capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the leadership have a long-standing vision and commitment?</li> <li>• Are we, as a municipality, open to change and are we flexible enough to adapt to new tasks and ways of functioning?</li> <li>• In our municipality, what kind of organizational culture and climate do we have? Do we share beliefs and attitudes regarding early child development and integration of ECD services?</li> <li>• Do we have sufficient and adequate material, financial, and human resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Intervention-specific capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In specific departments addressing the well-being of children and families, do we have leaders and champions for managing and promoting early child development and integration of ECD services?</li> <li>• Do we have staff with intervention-specific knowledge and skills?</li> </ul>

After assessment has been conducted, develop and present the report with its main findings. The readiness findings should serve as a springboard for developing strategies to build capacity and foster successful change and implementation processes. Invite colleagues to offer their feedback and suggestions.

## Useful tips



- For an effective and sustained implementation of a new practice, policy or approach, the readiness of the leading agency (in this case, the respective municipality) plays a determinant role. If the readiness is at low levels, change and implementation efforts are more likely to fail and vice versa (Dymnicki, et al., 2014).
- Involve all levels and departments of the municipality in the process. It is crucial to address all levels of governance in the municipality.
- For the implementation of specific interventions, additional readiness components have to be in place, such as intervention-specific capacities (the specific knowledge, skills, structures, and supports needed for the specific intervention).
- Lower levels of readiness do not mean that the intervention should not be implemented. Still, they indicate that specific approaches and actions should be taken to increase and maintain a high level of readiness during the process.

You can invite external experts, NGOs and citizens to assess your readiness and give suggestions for improvement.

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### Tool 7: Policy Readiness Tool<sup>15</sup>

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**Expected outcome:** Better preparedness for implementing comprehensive early childhood policy changes at the local level

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of departments at the mayor's office, representatives of different types of early childhood services at the municipal level (for medium and small-sized municipalities), or at the sub-municipal level (e.g. sectors/districts) for large municipalities

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<sup>15</sup> Nykiforuk, C. I. J., Atkey, K. M., Nieuwendyk, L. M., Raine, K. D., Reed, S., & Kyle, K. (2014) 'Policy Readiness Tool: Understanding Readiness for Policy Change and Strategies for Taking Action' Edmonton, AB: School of Public Health, University of Alberta ([PolicyReadinessTool-April2016FINAL.pdf](#))

## Brief overview of the Tool

The Policy Readiness Tool is a self-administered questionnaire that can be used to assess a community or organization's readiness for policy change. Included with the questionnaire is a series of strategies for working with groups at different stages of readiness for policy change and links to resources for additional information. The purpose of the Tool is to help advocates and policy developers encourage the adoption of public policy within communities or organizations.

Leaders in the mayor's office or those leading a coordination body at the level of the municipality may use the Policy Readiness Tool to learn about their organization's characteristics when engaging with policy changes.

Improving the local early childhood system might require local policy changes which are expected to have an impact leading to improved outcomes for young children and their caregivers. Knowing in advance about what type of organization you are leading will inform the ways in which new policies will be received, understood, and implemented, or if your organization can be a leader of innovation.

The Tool was developed using Diffusion of Innovation Theory developed by E. M. Rogers and distinguishes between **Innovator**, **Majority type** or **Late Adopter** organizations or communities.

Innovators	The Majority type	Late Adopters
<p><b>Innovators</b> are described as 'adventurous' and often serve as role models within their social networks. They are attracted by high-reward initiatives (e.g., policy or bylaws) and have a greater tendency to take risks. Innovators have the ability to cope with elevated levels of uncertainty associated with the innovation. They are typically willing to cope with initial problems that may accompany innovations and are able to identify solutions to these problems.</p>	<p><b>The Majority</b> are described as 'deliberate' because they require time to determine whether to adopt a new initiative. This group seldom leads the pack when it comes to adopting a new initiative and is of the philosophy that it is better to change as a group than to be one of the first to change. Considering this, the Majority tend to adopt innovations at about the same time as the average adopter.</p>	<p><b>Late Adopters</b> are described as 'traditional' and are often sceptical of new ideas and eager to maintain the status quo. They usually wait until the majority of others have adopted an innovation before implementing it themselves. Late Adopters may need to be pressured into adoption. They may also never adopt the innovation unless required to.</p>

## Questionnaire for assessing policy readiness

A	B	C	Response (A, B or C?)
The community or organization is comfortable being among the first to try new policies and initiatives	The community or organization usually goes along with other groups' recommendations about trying new policies and initiatives	The community or organization is uncomfortable trying new policies and initiatives	
The community or organization enjoys being the first in the province to try something new	The community or organization prefers to try new things after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization prefers to use things it is currently using	
The community or organization likes to try things that are seen on TV or read about	The community or organization prefers to try things that are seen on TV or read about only after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization prefers not to try things that are seen on TV or read about until they have been thoroughly tested	
The community or organization is always looking for something new to benefit its members	The community or organization sometimes looks for new things to try to benefit its members	The community or organization likes using more traditional things to benefit its members	
If the community or organization does not know what to do, it asks other groups for advice	If the community or organization does not know what to do, it sometimes asks other groups for advice	The community or organization does not know what to do, it tries to figure it out itself	
Incentives would motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	Incentives might motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	Incentives would not motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	
It is very important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	It is somewhat important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	It is not important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	
The community or organization likes to be the first to try new programmes	The community or organization prefers to wait until other groups use a programme before trying it	The community or organization likes to wait until a programme is thoroughly tested before trying it	
The community or organization likes to be the first in the province to try new materials	The community or organization prefers to try new materials after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization is uncomfortable trying new materials	
The community or organization prefers to be one of the first in the province to try new policies or initiatives	The community or organization prefers to wait until a policy or initiative has been implemented by other groups before adopting it	The community or organization prefers to wait for the province to adopt policies or initiatives to create a level-playing field for all communities or organizations	

A	B	C	Response (A, B or C?)
As one of the first groups in the province to try new policies or initiatives, the community or organization encourages other groups to follow suit	Encouragement from other groups is the only reason the community or organization would adopt a new policy or initiative	Encouragement from the province is the only reason the community or organization would adopt a new policy or initiative	
<b>Total As:</b>	<b>Total Bs:</b>	<b>Total Cs:</b>	

## Guidance in using the Tool

The questions used are a good starting point for thinking about the characteristics of the organization you are leading and approaching the issue from a perspective that works for the organization. In other words, the Tool is not meant to provide you with a definitive category for the organization, rather it is a starting point for engaging in the policy process.

Discuss and choose the response that best describes the local body responsible for the coordination of early childhood services (it can be a local action team, a local coordination committee, a specific department, etc.). Once you have completed the questionnaire, tally up the total number of As, Bs and Cs.

- If the organization received mostly As, the group is an **Innovator** type.
- If the organization received mostly Bs, the group is a **Majority** type.
- If the organization with received mostly Cs, the group is a **Late Adopter** type.

Knowing what type of organization the coordination body is, you may consider adopting different approaches to discussing challenges, priorities and solutions for improving the local early childhood system.

The tool might be used after a local strategy has been developed when new policies and measures may require shifting changes, or as a starting point for assessing the readiness to approach changes in the community to better provide services to young children and their caregivers, particularly the most vulnerable ones.

The strategies below are very useful in planning communication and advocacy tactics when aiming for ambitious, visionary plans and outcomes.

Strategies to use with Innovators	Strategies to use with Majority types	Strategies to use with Late Adopters
<p><b>Provide supportive evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize the positive outcomes that will result from policy adoption.</li> <li>• Outline the pros and cons of adopting the policy.</li> <li>• Illustrate how the benefits outweigh the risks. One possible way to do this is through a cost/benefit analysis.</li> <li>• Less concrete evidence is usually required to make a case for the policy, as Innovators tend to be more accepting of risks and unknowns.</li> <li>• Give examples of others who have undergone similar policy changes and illustrate how and why they have been successful.</li> <li>• Provide instances of others who are considering the adoption of a similar policy.</li> <li>• Present evidence by using experts in the field.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide evidence and outline public opinion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide concrete evidence about the potential benefits of the proposed policy.</li> <li>• Provide evidence which outlines how a similar policy has worked for others in similar contexts. The more examples, the better.</li> <li>• Evidence presented should be condensed, summarized, and easy to read. Present evidence to show constituent (e.g., community member) support for an issue.</li> <li>• Elected officials in the Majority category tend to pay close attention to the needs of their constituents and will be more willing to support policy change if there is evidence of public support for the issue. One way to present this evidence is through public opinion polls and surveys. Another way to demonstrate public support is to have community members telephone, email, or send postcards to the decision-makers. Letters to editors of local newspapers are also evidence of public support.</li> <li>• Provide information through formal avenues of communication.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Educate decision-makers about the issue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain commitments from key decision-makers to learn more about the issue. Late Adopters tend to be wary of new ideas and seek to maintain the status quo. Educating decision-makers about an issue is the first step towards breaking misconceptions and changing mindsets.</li> <li>• Keep decision-makers ‘in the loop’ by providing them with up-to-date information about new evidence, the actions and experiences of other jurisdictions, and changes in the provincial landscape that could influence the issue and policy adoption. Try to stay on the policy agenda, while not aggravating the decision-makers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Frame the issue to appeal as part of the innovative spirit of the community or organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position the issue to align it with the vision and mission of the community or organization.</li> <li>• Present information in a way that enhances the community or organization’s credibility or reputation as an Innovator (or leader).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Frame the issue from the ‘Majority’ perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight the number of places that have undergone similar policy changes. Invite individuals from other places to share their experiences.</li> <li>• Emphasize that they do not want to be left behind other communities or organizations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide evidence to illustrate that the benefits of policy change outweigh the costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence to illustrate the scientific and public support that exists in favour of policy adoption.</li> </ul>



Strategies to use with Innovators	Strategies to use with Majority types	Strategies to use with Late Adopters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference others who are exploring similar ideas and, if possible, link Innovators with other Innovators.</li> <li>• Frame the message in terms of what can be gained from adopting the policy.</li> <li>• Position the issue in a population perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach multiple groups to take action on an issue together. When community or organizational groups work together, it limits the perceived risk that they must manage on their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrate how communities or organizations with similar characteristics have successfully adopted and implemented the proposed policy.</li> <li>• Emphasize the risks and the detrimental impact of maintaining the status quo (i.e., not adopting the policy).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build relationships with champions from the community or organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harness the support of individuals who are receptive to policy change.</li> <li>• Identify and work with champions and key stakeholders to generate support for an issue.</li> <li>• A champion is typically an individual who is respected by the community and is willing to passionately advocate for change.</li> <li>• Build relationships and foster dialogue with champions in a community or organization. Different issues may have different champions. To build relationships with potential champions, provide them with evidence, help them understand the process of policy change and offer them continued support.</li> <li>• Work with people who have an in-depth knowledge of the community. This can make it easier to develop meaningful relationships and leverage support from existing organizations, coalitions, and programmes within the community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Engage and mobilize the community to take action on the Issue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to: (1) understand the needs and characteristics of the community that you are working with; and (2) determine how knowledgeable community members are about the proposed policy.</li> <li>• Educate community members on the proposed policy, based on the existing level of community knowledge.</li> <li>• Focus on raising awareness about the issue and on educating the public about the need for the policy and its possible benefits.</li> <li>• Mobilize the community to show their support for the issue (media advocacy or the creation of community-based coalitions).</li> <li>• Launch a letter-writing campaign and encourage community champions, other stakeholders and concerned citizens to participate.</li> <li>• Encourage local constituents to set up meetings with decision-makers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build strategic relationships with key community members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use opportunities such as elections to develop and strengthen relationships with elected officials.</li> <li>• Develop relationships with key stakeholders and respected members of the community. Remember that this process may be more time-intensive than with Innovator and Majority communities or organizations, so plan accordingly.</li> </ul>

Strategies to use with Innovators	Strategies to use with Majority types	Strategies to use with Late Adopters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop relationships with individuals who understand barriers to policy adoption and who understand best practices for encouraging policy change within the community or organization.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Generate decision-maker support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with different levels of the community or organization to create group support among those interested in the issue.</li> <li>Find out who may pose as a barrier to policy adoption and work with them to understand the issue from different points of view.</li> <li>Invite key decision-makers to participate in meaningful, high-energy discussion about the proposed policy. Use the outcomes of this dialogue to further develop your advocacy plans.</li> <li>Engage decision-makers in a one-on-one fashion. Request a meeting with elected officials. This will provide an opportunity for a more in-depth conversation with each decision-maker. It will also create a powerful opportunity to start building a working relationship for future initiatives or actions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide tools and incentives for policy adoption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tools and incentives can be used to encourage policy adoption by making the proposed policy easier to implement and by increasing the benefit to the community or organization.</li> <li>Provide communities and organizations with support to help them define goals, set targets, and make policy adoption easier. Match the organization with an agency or local non-government organization that has a stake in the issue and can provide the community or organization with ongoing support as it moves through the process of policy change.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understand the unique needs and address underlying barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the community or organization to develop an approach to fit their specific needs as well as to create buy-in and understanding for the issue early on. Acknowledging this is especially important when dealing with Late Adopters because they have reservations about adopting particular policies. Late Adopters tend to require more evidence and community-based information to inform action. For this reason, it may be beneficial to conduct a situational assessment. Recognize barriers to policy change and identify how they can be addressed.</li> <li>Debunk myths (about the impact of adopting the policy) and increase the legitimacy of evidence about the issue.</li> <li>Be prepared to counter the arguments of the opposition.</li> <li>Identify and mention resources (e.g., money, in-kind time, materials) to overcome barriers (if available).</li> </ul>

Strategies to use with Innovators	Strategies to use with Majority types	Strategies to use with Late Adopters
<p><b>Raise public awareness by educating community members about the issue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to launching an information or education campaign about a policy issue, make an effort to understand the needs and characteristics of the community that you are working with.</li> <li>• Educate community members on the proposed policy based on the existing level of community knowledge.</li> <li>• Education and awareness can help shift readiness for policy change. For example, some groups may be encouraged to move beyond simply recognizing a problem and considering the need to take action, to taking personal steps to reduce resistance to change within their community (e.g., contacting their municipal representative, writing letters to the editors of local newspapers, etc.).</li> <li>• In Innovator-type communities or organizations, the decision-makers, staff, and community members tend to be knowledgeable about the issue in question. For this reason, it is likely that they will not need to be educated about the proposed policy to the same degree as Majority and Late Adopter communities or organizations.</li> <li>• Use innovative forms of communication to educate the community, connect with its members and raise awareness.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Mobilize the community to take action and move the issue forward.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower receptive members of the public to take action on the issue.</li> <li>• Work to gain public support, and then use this support to engage decision-makers.</li> <li>• Connect to the public using evidence and examples of success.</li> </ul>

## Tool 8: Map of partners/stakeholders and their role in the process

### Expected outcomes:

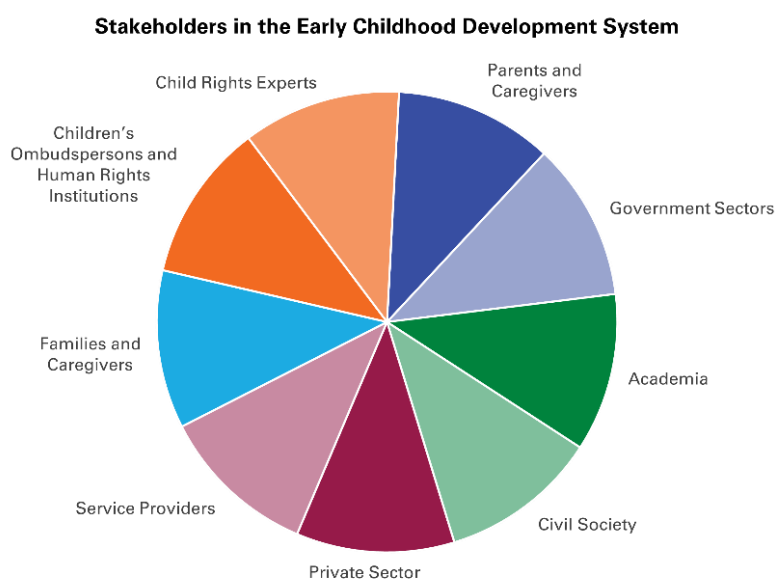
- Identify organizations and individuals to be further engaged in the process of consultation on, development and implementation of, a local strategy aimed at improving the local early childhood system.
- Increase the level of potential interest in improving the status and well-being of young children and their families and the degree of influence that partners can have in the process of creation and adoption of new measures/decisions.

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** The local coordination team, bringing together representatives from diverse levels of governance in the municipality and from different early childhood sectors (education, health, social protection, etc.)

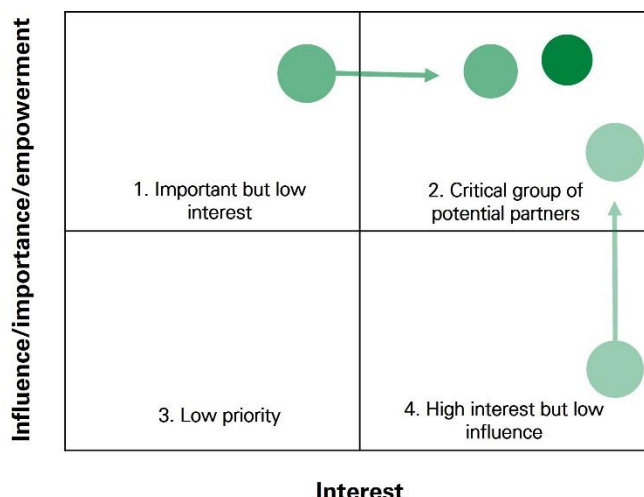
### Brief overview of the Tool

For creating momentum and ensuring support and shared ownership for the successful introduction of a whole municipality approach to support ECD, it is crucial to involve all relevant stakeholders from the beginning of the process.



There are many categories of stakeholders who play or may plan an important role in advancing the goals of the local early childhood system. They may contribute with different intensities and resources and may hold different responsibilities in the local ecosystem. The above image provides an insight into the wide diversity of categories of stakeholders, while not being an exhaustive one.

This tool should help the process of identifying stakeholders/partners who are interested in improving the status and well-being of young children and creating better coordinated and higher-quality early childhood services. It should also help in defining the roles they could play. Additionally, the selection of the type and profile of stakeholders can define the direction and the content of intervention (for more information, look at the tips).



Source: Boston Square

### Guidance in using the Tool

Three steps are recommended in this process.

1. **The initial sweep** will be done by listing all potential partners, from ministries to council members, representatives of NGOs, parent associations, representatives of different sectors (e.g., health, education, social protection), local businesses, the media, etc. You can develop one chart for all potential partners/stakeholders or separate ones for each group they represent. Different potential partners' characteristics will be assessed using a scale (1–4, with 4 being the highest score). The following chart can be used.

Partners/ stakeholders	1 Can influence the process	2 Affected by the process	3 Can provide resources (financial, influence, expertise)	4 Having control over creation and implementation
1.				
2.				
3.				

## 2. Assessing interest and influence

Potential partners/stakeholders with the highest scores across all 4 columns (but especially in columns 1 and 2) will be further assessed using the Boston Square. The Boston Square<sup>16</sup> is a tool that helps to assess potential partners based on their level of influence on the process of implementing new approaches **and their level of interest in the process, by placing them in one of the four squares (see Boston Square graphic in the previous page).**

After applying the Boston square, the coordination team will identify:

- the 'ideal' partners (high influence/high interest);
- potential partners with whom additional awareness-raising work is needed (high influence/low interest);
- potential partners who need more empowerment and visibility (high interest/low influence).

## 3. In this step, you will focus on approaching partners/stakeholders and including them in the process. It would be good to know which role they could play in the process. Roles might be different, but the most relevant are:

- active partner contributing to the process with their knowledge and resources;
- influencer/champion – somebody who can promote the idea;
- funder – usually a representative of local businesses.

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### Tool 9: Map of responsibilities and resources

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**Expected outcomes:** Appraisal of available services in terms of their role (resources/responsibilities) and engagement (actual/potential) in supporting and/or delivering early childhood services; opportunities for high level coordination

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality (coordinators of departments, members of local councils, etc.); and representatives of different types

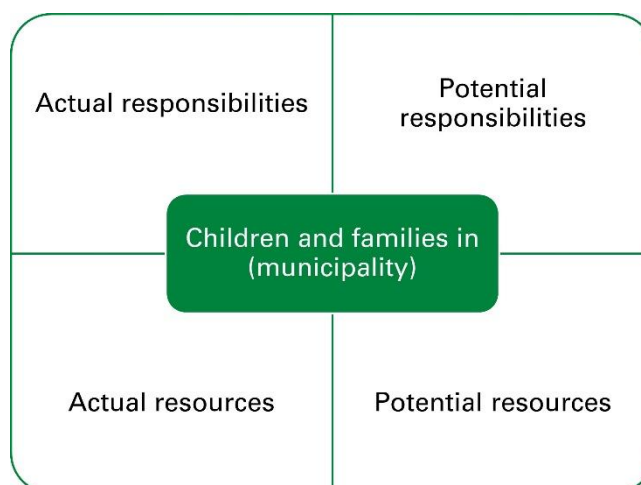
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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Stakeholder-mapping.pdf>

of services/organizations who can contribute to improving the outcomes for young children and families in the municipality

## Guidance in using the Tool

The map describes the role of each partner, organized around a specific target group (at the centre of the quadrant). Partners can share 'responsibilities' (i.e., being involved at the strategic level) and/or 'resources' (i.e., contributing to the provision of services). They can be 'actual' (available now) or 'potential' (possibly available in the near future).



In dialogue with your stakeholders, place the services you have scouted (potentially using the SysClass tool) in the agreed part of the quadrant. This is an opportunity to clarify perceptions in terms of the involvement of services in contributing to the target group.

A possible integration strategy may imply moving mapped services from 'Potential' to 'Actual', becoming available for the community in question, and from 'Resources' to 'Responsibilities', becoming more centrally involved in the definition of collective strategies. The same tool can be used in assessment, to evaluate changes in service involvement/integration.

## Useful tips



- Always include people who can represent different levels within the system and across sectors so that you include different perspectives.
- The profile of stakeholders involved can influence the priorities, plans, actions and results. Urban planners, architects and representatives of cultural institutions can bring innovations in approaching services for young children and their families, as well as environments where children live. The Bernard Van Leer Foundation implemented the *Urban95 – Creating healthy, safe and vibrant cities where babies, toddlers and their families thrive* initiative, showcasing how changes in urban planning triggered changes in understanding the needs of children and adapting outdoor and indoor spaces in whole cities and specific services.



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## Tool 10: Assigning responsibilities

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**Expected outcome:** Agreed responsibilities in the local coordination structure

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** Local coordination team for early childhood services and local partners and stakeholders

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### Brief overview of the Tool

A method for articulating stakeholder responsibilities in highly coordinated plans is to use

**Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed** statuses to create a RACI chart. The chart is presented as a matrix showing activities or deliverables in the left column, while roles are indicated for each partner across the top of the chart. Ideally, when developing the RACI chart, the leader of the processes that are aimed at better local coordination involve the mapped stakeholders/local partners in discussing and negotiating their responsibilities to encourage ownership.

The RACI definitions are as follows.

- **Responsible:** those who do the work to achieve the tasks or deliverable.
- **Accountable:** also known as the Approver – the one ultimately accountable for the correct and thorough completion of the deliverable or task – the one who signs it off. There is only one Accountable role or group for each task or deliverable.
- **Consulted:** those whose opinions are sought and with whom there is two-way communication.
- **Informed:** those who are kept updated on progress, often on completion of the task or deliverable, and with whom there is only one-way communication.

The power in developing a visual representation of responsibilities lies in its participative development to encourage commitment from stakeholders. The other benefit is the clarification, to those inside and outside the coordination process, that activities have been planned and are being taken care of.

Activity	Partner A	Partner B	Partner C	Partner D
Partnership vision and agreement	A	C	R	I
Stakeholder meetings: agenda and presentation	C	C	A	R
Monitoring outcomes	I	I	A	R
Action Plan development	C	C	A	R
Community outreaching	I	A	R	I
Communication and information sharing	I	A	R	I
Allocation of resources	R	A	A	A

## Guidance in using the Tool

The tool can be used by the local coordination team during meetings with local partners and stakeholders, focusing on ensuring the better coordination of decisions and actions for improving the outcomes for children and caregivers in the communities.

The left column in the chart includes key activities that are to be carried out by the local coordination team together with local partners. They can be expanded upon or be made more detailed to reflect the agreed plans aimed at increased coordination among partners/services.

Individually, each partner can fill in the chart to indicate where they see their role. Consequently, when all charts are consolidated, discussions about sharing roles for each agreed activity are carried out.

The final objective is not to have a filled-in chart, but to have clarity on the role each partner is playing, and how everyone can contribute to ensuring that the agreed-upon plans are achieved.

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## Tool 11: Action plan for improving coordination in the local early childhood system

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**Expected outcome:** Aligned expectations regarding the action needed to ensure efficient coordination infrastructure and mechanisms at the local level, across sectors and services, involving different levels of governance and local partners

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities and at sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** A local coordination team for early childhood services, representatives of diverse levels of governance in the municipality and representatives of different sectors (education, social protection and welfare, health, culture, etc.)

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### Brief overview of the Tool

Ensuring a functional, effective, and efficient coordination of the local early childhood system is a process that requires clearly focused and planned measures, of different types, which involve different stakeholders – from local decision-makers to managers of services and practitioners. Making the coordination of both decision-making and service provision a goal in itself is key for ensuring improved outcomes for children and their caregivers, the most disadvantaged ones in particular.

The tool provides a useful framework for developing an action plan focused on enhancing coordination in the governance and service provision of early childhood services.

The tool proposes an example of an action plan with key action areas that aim to enhance:

- the shared rationale for coordination;
- the enabling policy environment conducive to coordination;
- the capacity to act in a coordinated manner;
- communication among stakeholders;
- the cost-effective allocation of resource;

All areas contribute equally to the creation of a collaborative culture, joint decisions, and high-level coordination. For each area, specific activities can be planned to achieve specific outcomes. For example, for action area 3 (*Capacity building for introducing new coordination practices*), workshops with different categories of professionals, from different sectors and services, can be carried out, where they can propose and agree on ways in which they can better coordinate their work with children and families in their communities. For action area 4 (*Leadership and governance structures and processes for high level coordination*), meetings can be organized with different

stakeholders/partners representing sectors/services in order to analyse, discuss, agree upon and establish a coordination structure and protocols for coordination. Such a structure and protocols should ensure collaborative work and a shared responsibility for developing and implementing a local strategy on early childhood system, thus avoiding gaps, overlaps and inefficiencies across services and resources.

The tool emphasizes the importance of having an articulated plan that all relevant stakeholders should contribute to in order to support and sustain processes that ensure high-level coordination. At the same time, the plan consolidates those areas of action that have been put forward as key enabling factors in the *Reference Framework for Integration* related to early childhood systems.

### **Example: General Action Plan for strengthened coordination at the municipal level**

#### **Goals**

*Note: Mark in the Action Plan the **milestones** for each of the seven areas of action. Each area of action might need a more detailed plan, but the General Action Plan should reflect the convergence of actions towards achieving the agreed goals.*

Areas of action	Planned activities	Who is responsible?	Who is involved?	When will it take place?	What resources are required?	Expected outcome
1 Shared vision and community engagement through dialogue						
2 Policies and regulations adjustments to enable coordination						
3 Capacity building for introducing new coordination practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>						
4 Leadership and governance structures and processes for high-level coordination						
5 High-level coordination in service delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint planning</li> <li>• Joint delivery</li> <li>• Joint monitoring and assessment</li> </ul>						
6 Communication and information sharing among stakeholders						
7 Allocation of resources (time, human, material, financial)						
8 Monitoring and evaluating outcomes for children and families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline evaluation</li> <li>- Monitoring</li> <li>- Final evaluation</li> </ul>						

## Tool 12: Quality practices in integrated local early childhood systems<sup>17</sup>

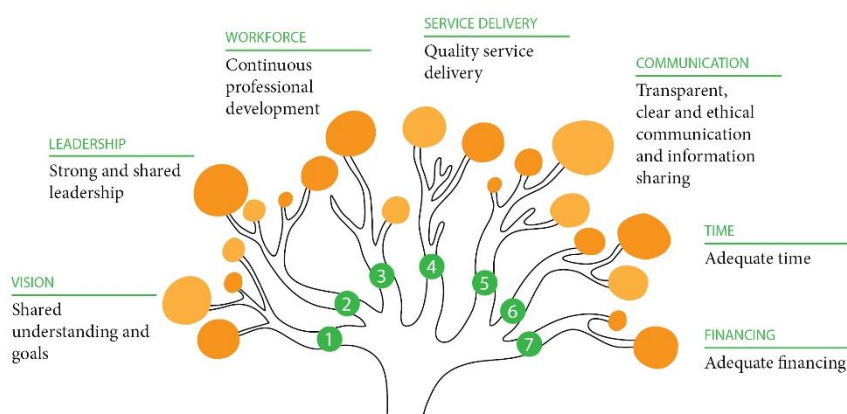
**Expected outcome:** Increased capacity to assess and plan for practices that sustain high-level coordination across early childhood professionals, services, sectors and governance positions

**Leading role:** Mayor's office (at the municipal level for medium and small-sized municipalities and at the sub-municipal level for large municipalities with sub-municipal governance)

**Participants in the process:** In small and medium-sized municipalities, representatives of the different sectors/services; in large municipalities, at the municipal level, representatives of districts responsible for early childhood services; at the district level, representatives of the different sectors/services

### Brief overview of the Tool

The *Reference Framework for Integration in early childhood systems* (see the Tool under Purpose 1) includes three key components: values and principles, key factors, and quality practices.



The chart below indicates the close **relationship**

**between the values and principles, the key factors, and the areas of quality practice.** While the values and principles are THE COMPASS in making decisions about directions, strategies and actions, the key factors help define **which practices will coherently ensure the factors' positive influence on processes and outcomes.** Each factor is enabled by practices. **If of quality, practices can maximize the chances that the factors will forge effective coordination.**

The checklist below may support local governments in learning about the types of practices related to the abovementioned key factors to be put in place at the level of governance, policy development and implementation.

<sup>17</sup> Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., Pinto, & Luis, M. (2019) '[INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – Building the Foundations](#)' (p.157)

## Quality practices supporting high-level coordination and integration

AREAS	Quality practices	Not in place	Emerging	In place
VISION	In all early childhood services, the values, practices and relationships are guided by the principle of child and family centrality in daily decisions and work.			
	The inner diversity of each professional and the diversity within and among children and families are seen as intrinsic values to quality provision.			
	Positive and trustful relationships among professionals, managers, parents and community members are established.			
	The leadership culture recognizes the child and family centrality in the service design and delivery and in joint planning and delivery.			
	The policy and regulations of various institutions working with young children and their families are aligned around the principle of child and family centrality in service delivery.			
	The protocols for collaboration among services are grounded in collectively meeting the specific needs of each child and family.			
LEADERSHIP	The leadership culture is built on values of cooperation, participation, mutual respect, respect for diversity and solidarity in service design and delivery.			
	The leadership has initiatives that contribute to building a culture of collaboration among staff, services, families, communities, decision-makers and policy makers.			
	The governance structures encourage shared leadership among professionals, managers of services, families and communities.			
	The governance structures encourage the co-creation of tailored community/family-rooted solutions.			
	The governing practices motivate all staff, create the conditions for cooperation among staff, and empower the participation of staff, families and communities in decision-making and monitoring processes aimed at quality improvement and higher efficiency.			
	Staff, parents and community members feel empowered to contribute to positive change in their communities.			



AREAS	Quality practices	Not in place	Emerging	In place
	The leadership practices encourage and support team/joint planning, team/joint service delivery and team/joint monitoring.			
	The management regulations create the conditions for clear and transparent communication among the leadership and the staff team.			
WORKFORCE	There are professional development activities organized at the level of the service aimed at expanding the portfolio of competences of the staff to better address the needs of children, families, and the community.			
	Peer-assessment, peer-learning, mutual support, and cooperation are supported and practised by staff and leadership.			
	Common professional development activities among staff from various institutions/services are provided on a regular basis for enhancing the competencies of partnering organizations and encouraging group-reflection and learning.			
SERVICE DELIVERY	All staff members in the service/s (regardless of the professional profile and role) share the belief that each individual child and each individual family stays at the centre of all decisions. The entire staff proceeds on this basis.			
	Regardless of the sector, service, or age group of the children targetted, professionals experience relationships that are trustful, empowering, and respectful and demonstrate the same in their work with children and families.			
	The service delivery provides diverse tailored community/family-rooted solutions co-created with families and communities.			
	The local governance structures encourage shared leadership among services, families, and communities.			
	Interactions among professionals from different services are non-hierarchical and encourage a reflexive and research-focused attitude towards addressing each child and family situation.			
	Through inter-institutional work, tailored joint services are created for outreaching the most vulnerable groups and ensuring universal provision.			

AREAS	Quality practices	Not in place	Emerging	In place
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING	Communication and information sharing among professionals within a service and among services respect deontological codes and act upon the best interests of children and families.			
	There are clear, transparent, accessible, and agreed-upon channels of communication among services for properly addressing the specific situations and needs of each child and family.			
	A safely protected electronic system of information accessible to all services, providing accurate and complete information about each child and family is in place, after gaining family-consented data access and use.			
	Communication and information sharing among services is based on clear and transparent protocols for data protection, data uploads, and data access, ensuring children's and families' rights to privacy and safety.			
	Communication and information-sharing procedures support collaboration within and among services.			
TIME	There is no-contact paid time allocated for team meetings among (para)professionals among the staff for analysing and planning individualized pathways for addressing each child and family based on on-going documentation, self and group reflection.			
	There is no-contact paid time allocated for cross-sectorial professional development activities at the level of the service.			
	Within teams and among services, there is specifically allocated time for joint planning and assessment.			
FINANCING	Funds are specifically allocated for cross-sectorial coordination (joint mapping, joint data collection, joint planning, joint implementation of measures, etc.).			
	Coordination among services ensures that funding is aligned and areas of overlapping gaps are identified and minimized.			

## Guidance in using the Tool

The Tool above can be used:

- to assess the **current level of coordination** in the local early childhood system in order to look for improvement;
- to assess the level of coordination among early childhood services at the local level **as a consequence of implementing a plan of action** aimed at strengthening the coordination among services and professionals working with young children and their families.

The chart can be converted into instruments to collect data – surveys or focus groups targeting different stakeholders in decision-making positions or in service delivery across services and sectors. The results will indicate (according to the key factors) which targeted actions should be planned in order to increase the shared purpose and high-level coordination across managers of early childhood services and the varied categories of professionals working in services (nurses, paediatricians, midwives, social workers, mediators, educators, teaching assistants, psychologists, speech therapists, caring personnel, etc.).

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### Tool 13: Information-sharing flowchart<sup>18</sup>

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**Expected outcomes:** Better understanding of the importance of protecting a child's and a family's privacy and the development of the rules and procedures of ethical information sharing and documents to regulate it

**Leading role:** Representative of the mayor's office leading the local coordination team

**Participants in the process:** Local coordination team with representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality, and relevant sectors

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### Brief overview of the Tool

The information-sharing flowchart is a tool aiming to support ethical and meaningful information sharing, primarily about children and families. It supports and develops key questions about information sharing:

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<sup>18</sup> Adapted from Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., Pinto, & Luis, M. (2019) '[INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – Building the Foundations](#)' (pp. 141–143)

- when to share information on children and families or in some cases about the services (Timing);
- what to share (Content);
- who to share with (Receiver of information);
- how to share (Process).

## Guidance in using the Tool

Communication and information sharing is one of the key factor areas in high-level coordination. In the Reference Framework, quality practices are mentioned around this area, as can be seen in the Tool above. The Tool can be helpful in initiating the discussion about quality practices that need to be in place for sustaining high-level, effective coordination at the municipality level across sectors and services.

The *Information-sharing flowchart* is a tool that helps partners focus on when, what, who and how the information regarding young children and their families should be shared among them and with other parties. Privacy and confidentiality is highly important and relevant policies should be observed in putting various practices in place.

Start by giving participants in the meeting the following flowchart and ask them to focus on what works and what needs to be improved. Refer to policies relevant to the respective municipality.

When to share information on children and families (Timing) →	Share information when you are worried about the well-being of child and family	Share information when it is purposeful and in the best interests of the child and family	Share information when the child/family needs integrated care, referrals or additional support
What to share (Content) →	Only share information which is relevant, accurate, necessary, updated and legitimate	Share only information which is required — reduce or remove unnecessary data	Share accurate data, and not your interpretation of data
Who to share with (Receiver of information) →	Share information only when it is really needed and with those who really need information	Share information with your management-level and colleagues working with children and families	Only with named and authorized person(s)
How to share (Process) →	Share data efficiently and effectively and keep a record of information shared	Share information verbally, face to face, or in a written form	Share information in a safe, protected way

Depending on the number of participants in the meeting, you can work with the whole group (if the number is lower) or divide participants into small groups and ask them to discuss and suggest answers to the four questions. The most important thing is to ask them to use precise language and operationalize very broad and general categories mentioned in the chart by asking them specific questions. (i.e., When would they like to share information and what does it mean to be 'worried about the child'? Who are the people they will share information with, or in which form will they share information?).

After the Tool implementation results are integrated, a chart with concrete outputs can be built. This will support the development of procedures, agreements, and if needed, memoranda of understanding among the various early childhood services. The same flowchart can be used for planning other areas and levels of information sharing.

The Tool can be used multiple times, during different meetings. The key questions (What, When, Who and How) can be addressed from the perspective of different sectors (e.g., What do we need as information in social protection sector? What information we are not ready to share and why?). Additionally, the Tool can explore the type of personnel who can share information (who has right to share information) or different ways of sharing various types of information.

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### **Tool 14: Defining different levels of communication and information sharing<sup>19</sup>**

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**Expected outcomes:** Increased understanding of different levels of communication and information sharing and their impact on different levels of integration

**Leading role:** Representative of the mayor's office leading the local coordination team

**Participants in the process:** Local coordination team with representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality, and relevant sectors

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### **Brief overview of the Tool**

The Tool has been developed to trigger discussion and reflection on the levels of communication and information sharing between, and within, different sectors. It can also serve as a Tool for assessing

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<sup>19</sup>Source: Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., Pinto, Luis, M. (2019) '[INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – Building the Foundations](#)' pp. 143–144

the level of communication and cooperation between different services and departments in the local government.



Levels of communication and information sharing

### Guidance in using the Tool

Use the Tool to develop a discussion on the different levels of communication and information sharing.

With participants, discuss the level of communication and information sharing they have with different, but relevant, services for the work they are doing, and how this helps or hinders their efforts to meet the needs of children and families.

Explore and define what needs to be done to reach the partnering level and preserve it. At the same time, explore the level of communication and information sharing they want to have with other services, institutions and agencies in their municipality (i.e., Is it sufficient to have the level 'informing each other' with the various services in the municipality or between different departments in the local government?).



Building Block 2: Guiding tools for improving access to and quality of services for young children



## Overview of the tools in Building Block 2

### Main purpose

This building block will focus on tools that can support local governments in analysing and **addressing specific sectoral issues** related to early childhood services, identified through analysing the local situation: health/home visiting, parental support, early childhood education and care, social protection. These tools are not assessment tools but are reflective and participative, meaning that they are implemented in a very interactive way and include different perspectives and voices.

The main objectives of the tools are to:

- review/analyse/reflect on the status of programmes and the workforce;
- identify programme and workforce gaps and issues;
- improve knowledge exchange across diverse sectors and actors;
- prioritize areas for local or national government attention.

The tools provide guidance on **assessing, discussing, planning and implementing measures that address key challenges** in providing quality early childhood services related to:

- workforce expectations;
- workforce preparation and training;
- working conditions;
- programme curricula;
- program design;
- leadership, governance and finance/enabling environment/funding;
- monitoring and quality assurance.

All the tools have been developed through an in-depth process and were piloted before being finalized.

### List of tools

Tool 1: Improving home-visiting services at the local/national level

Tool 2: Improving parental support services at the local/national level

Tool 3: Improving access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)

### Links between the tools

The Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool and the Parent Support Workforce Needs Assessment Tool were inspired by UNICEF's Pre-primary Analysis Tool. Their concept and structure are similar, as well as the process that enables the users of the tools to build dialogue around the main issues, challenges and direction of actions informed by data collected from different stakeholders, from practitioners to decision-makers at different levels of governance.



## PURPOSE 1: Improving home-visiting services at the local/national level

### Tool 1: Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool<sup>20</sup>

**Expected outcome:** Short-, mid-, and long-term plans for addressing the highest priorities related to improving the quality of home-visiting services

**Leading role:** Local health authority

**Participants in the process:** Representatives from across programmes (e.g. programme managers, supervisors, programme leaders, frontline workers), relevant sectors (e.g. nutrition, education, health, social and child protection), and levels of government (e.g. sub-national, national)

### Brief overview of the Tool

The [Home visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool](#) supports policymakers responsible for policy planning and personnel management of ECD programmes around the early childhood workforce, focusing mainly on personnel supporting home-visiting programmes delivered across sectors for pregnant mothers and caregivers with children under the age of three.

This is a **reflection and participative tool** designed to facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders representing different levels of the health system and other sectors.

The Tool aims to help policymakers:

- understand current workforce development policies and practices;
- identify areas of strength and gaps;
- prioritize areas for local/national government attention;
- have increased communication and knowledge exchange across stakeholders and sectors.

<sup>20</sup>The Tool has been developed under the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative: [Home visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool and is available in](#) Arabic, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Serbian.

The scope includes home visitors who work directly with young children and their families, as well as supervisors and trainers. Drawing on a literature review and feedback from early childhood researchers and practitioners, the key areas of focus for the Tool are summarized in the figure below.

Considering their influence on the role of the home visitor, the Tool reflects the overall environment in which the home-visiting programme operates, as well as how it is designed and executed. Additionally, the tool addresses the support that home visitors receive, since it impacts the way in which they carry out their tasks on a day-to-day basis and ultimately influences their relationship with families.

The needs-assessment tool includes **7 areas** corresponding to the following categories of focus.

**Area 1:** Workforce expectations

**Area 2:** Curricula, Materials and Resources

**Area 3:** Training, Supervision, and Career Development

**Area 4:** Workforce Conditions and Well-being

**Area 5:** Programme Design

**Area 6:** Enabling Environment

**Area 7:** Monitoring and Quality Assurance



Source: Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

The first four areas (yellow) have a direct impact on daily work, while areas 5, 6, and 7 have a defining system-level influence.

Each area is organized around a series of goals and measures which are followed by guiding questions for reflection.

It is envisioned that key stakeholders within participating countries come together in a workshop format to reflect on these guiding questions in order to prioritize areas for attention related to supporting and strengthening the home-visiting workforce. Although the point of departure is the home-visiting workforce, the Tool leads to identifying challenges related to different components of this health service.

Each area of the Tool includes goals, specific measures to achieve the goals, and evaluative/reflective questions guiding the development of a strategic plan.

### Areas of the ECWI Needs Assessment Tool



Source: Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

## Guidance in using the Tool

The tool is accompanied by the [User's Guide](#). Its main purpose is to:

- promote an understanding of the Tool and enable users to apply it independently;
- share guidance on how to mobilize relevant stakeholders to engage in dialogue and reflections on the home-visiting workforce, to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement and participate in the workshop;
- share ideas for using the Tool to enhance communication and coordination across stakeholders within a service/system;
- provide guidance on how the information collected during the process can be used to strengthen the home-visiting system – moving from reflection to action.

The User's Guide is organized into the following sections.:

### Section 1: Overview of the Tool and the User's Guide

- Provides an overall understanding of the content of the Tool and the Guide and orients the reader in using them

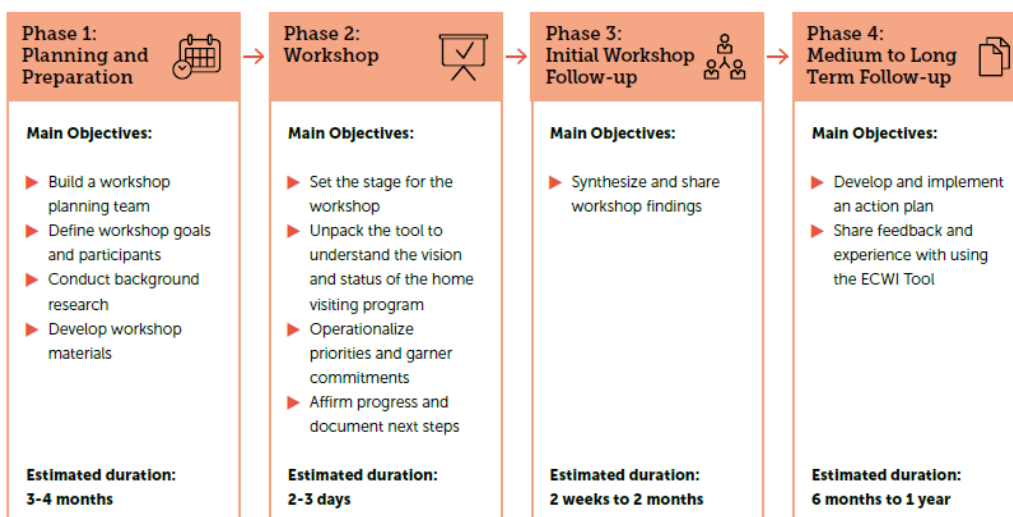
Section 2: Guidance for Using the Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

- Offers an in-depth look at how to use the Tool
- Guides readers through the four-phases of Tool implementation (Planning and Preparation; Workshop; Initial Workshop Follow-up; Medium to Long Term Follow-up)

Section 3: Annexes

- Provide detailed workshop agendas, materials, handouts and templates to implement the Tool (such as reflection grids, a matrix for organizing workshop findings, action plan frameworks)

While the Tool can be used in different ways, as mentioned above, it is envisioned that key stakeholders will come together in a participatory workshop to reflect on the current situation of their home-visiting programme, identify gaps in the system, and prioritize areas for attention related to supporting and strengthening the home-visiting workforce.



Source: Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

## Useful tips



- The Tool should be adapted to the context in which it is applied. It must be relevant to the existing home-visiting system, sector and workforce providing services to families with children aged up to three.
- The implementation of the Tool cannot and must not finish with the workshop. The Tool should be used for short-term, mid-term and long-term planning and for monitoring achieved results.
- Data collection and desk research of key documents on an existing system is very important. It can help narrow the focus of the workshop and provide a common background for stakeholders working across the system. It should include information on:
  - ECD programmes and services (e.g. key policy developments, challenges related to scaling and quality);
  - the home-visiting programme (e.g. key actors, primary objectives, evaluation results);
  - and the home-visiting workforce (e.g. recruitment, the typical profile of home-visiting personnel, working conditions, training).
- The democratic and participatory nature of the workshop and the whole process of using the Tool can strengthen the ownership of the process and results, build bridges between different actors across sectors and levels of the system and provide opportunities for building a shared understanding among stakeholders, while also supporting the identification of solutions for policy and practice.
- When planning the workshop, be sure to invite representatives from across the programmes (e.g. programme managers, supervisors, programme leaders, frontline workers), relevant sectors (e.g. nutrition, education, health, social and child protection), and levels of government (e.g. sub-national, national).
- Participants in the piloting of the Tool (beyond health sector) have stressed that the tool can be easily adapted to assess the needs of any workforce/ cadre in any ECD sector (health, nutrition, ECEC, social welfare, etc.).
- The added value of the tool is that it is modulated, and one can use one module at a time depending on the need.
- It can serve as an inspiration for developing different tools (e.g., a list of indicators of the quality of a programme).

## PURPOSE 2: Improving parent-support services at the local/national level

### Tool 2: Parent Support Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

**Expected outcome:** Short-, mid-, and long-term plans for addressing the highest priorities related to improving the quality of parental support services

**Leading role:** Primarily the health sector, but other sectors and agencies can take a leading role depending on their involvement in providing parental-support programmes

**Participants in the process:** Representatives from across programmes (e.g. program managers, supervisors, programme leaders, frontline workers), relevant sectors (e.g. nutrition, education, health, social and child protection), and levels of government (e.g. sub-national, national)

#### Brief overview of the Tool

The [Parent Support Workforce Needs Assessment Tool](#)<sup>21</sup> is inspired by Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool and aims to help officials within ministries and local and national government agencies reflect on the ways in which they can support personnel delivering parent-support programmes for pregnant mothers and caregivers of children aged under three.

These programmes are usually delivered across a range of sectors and in various modalities including in facilities (e.g., health clinics) and community settings (e.g., early childhood centres, schools, community meeting places), as well as through in-person and remote means. The workforce includes informal workers or paraprofessionals (community health volunteers, community health workers, home visitors, and child development agents).

The Tool is primarily designed to support national and local government agencies interested in stocktaking or identifying new priorities/plans which address the parent support workforce. While the Tool can be used in different ways, it is envisioned that key stakeholders will come together in a participatory workshop to reflect on the current situation of their parent-support programme(s), identify gaps in the system, and prioritize areas for attention related to supporting and strengthening the workforce.

<sup>21</sup>The tool was developed under the [Early Childhood Workforce Initiative](#). Detailed information regarding the tool can be found here: [Parent Support Workforce Needs Assessment Tool](#).

This tool aims to help policy and decision-makers at the local and national levels to:

- understand current workforce development policies and practices;
- identify areas of strength and gaps;
- prioritize areas for government attention.;
- increase communication and knowledge exchange across stakeholders and sectors.

The scope of this Tool includes parent-support facilitators, community health workers, nurses, social workers, and other frontline providers who work directly with young children and their families, as well as supervisors and trainers, working to deliver programmes primarily in community settings and/or in health clinics. As with the previous Tool, this one has the same **Areas of Focus** summarized in the figure above.



Source: Parent Support Workforce Needs Assessment Tool

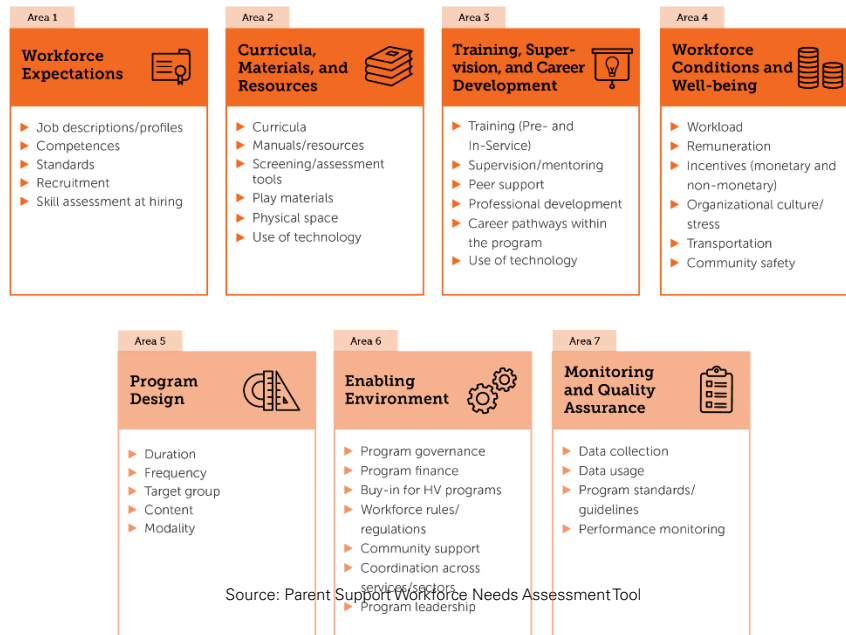
- Area 1:** Workforce expectations
- Area 2:** Curricula, Materials and Resources
- Area 3:** Training, Supervision, and Career Development
- Area 4:** Workforce Conditions and Well-being
- Area 5:** Programme Design
- Area 6:** Enabling Environment
- Area 7:** Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Considering their influence on the role of frontline workers, the tool reflects the overall environment in which the parent-support programme operates, as well as how it is designed and executed. Additionally, the tool addresses the support that frontline personnel receive, since it impacts the way in which they carry out their tasks on a day-to-day basis and ultimately influences their relationship with families.

The main topics covered in each of these areas are included in the figure below.

## Guidance in using the Tool

The Tool includes a recommended process for its usage.



Each area of the Tool (provided below) is organized around a series of goals and measures followed by guiding questions. It is envisioned that key stakeholders will come together in a workshop format to reflect on these guiding questions to prioritize areas for attention related to supporting and strengthening the parent-support workforce.

The recommendations indicate the steps needed to:

- prepare to apply the Tool,
- organize and facilitate a workshop with stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels;
- take action on findings generated from the workshop.

The User's Guide developed for the Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool can be used for implementing this Tool.



## PURPOSE 3: Improving access to quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)

### Tool 3: Pre-primary Analysis Tool

**Expected outcome:** In-depth examination of the ECEC subsector through a systems approach in order to identify strengths, gaps, underlying challenges, and emerging opportunities

**Leading role:** Representatives of the education sector at the mayor's office

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the local coordination body, representatives of national bodies, ECEC supervisors, managers

### Brief overview of the Tool

The [Pre-primary Analysis Tool](#)<sup>22</sup> supports the development of comprehensive strategies and action plans to address key subsector challenges. It also enhances understanding of the key components of an effective ECEC/pre-primary subsector and how the components interconnect in coherent, powerful ways. It outlines a guiding framework that highlights three fundamental building blocks for an effective pre-primary subsector: (1) five core functions; (2) a supportive or enabling environment; and (3) a set of guiding principles.

The analysis tool has **six modules**, one for each of the five core functions, plus a module on the enabling environment (See figure on next page):

Module 1: Planning and budgeting

Module 2: Curriculum development and implementation

Module 3: Workforce development

Module 4: Family and community engagement

Module 5: Quality assurance

Module 6: Enabling environment

<sup>22</sup>The tool was developed by UNICEF as a companion to [Build to Last: A framework in support of universal quality pre-primary education](#).

All the modules begin with a brief description of the purpose and focus (the core function or key factor in the enabling environment), followed by content on these topics.

- **Goals:** The pre-primary subsector should be prioritized in order to build a stronger system and achieve results for children.
- **Measurements of progress** for each goal. These are intended to encourage self-assessment and reflection, and to support the monitoring of the pre-primary subsector's performance.
- **Questions** to accompany each measurement. These questions do not cover every possible topic, and they may not all be relevant to your country's context. They are intended to jump-start dialogue on some of the issues to consider in achieving the measurements of progress.



Building Blocks of an effective pre-primary subsector

### Key considerations when using the Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool

#### *Flexibility and adaptability*

- The Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool is an **adaptable resource**. It is encouraged to adjust the goals, measurements and questions to specific contexts and circumstances.

#### *Consultative workshop*

- The work of analysing the ECE subsector using the Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool is most effectively advanced through a **focused, well-planned hands-on consultative workshop experience that can encourage active, participatory reflection and the exchange of ideas**.

#### *Deep dive into subsector challenges:*

- Each module of the Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool consists of detailed questions that prompt reflection (in a systematic and granular manner) on how well the particular core function or enabling environment factor is functioning.
- This helps shed light on the strengths (what works well) as well as the underlying challenges (what is not working at all or is working, but not as intended).

- The underlying challenges that emerge from the 'deep-dive' analysis can and should be reflected in a report and form the basis for developing relevant and coherent ECE strategies.

## Guidance in using the Tool

The Tool helps structure discussions and consultations with stakeholders holding responsibilities for improving the local early childhood education subsector for children under school age. The fundamental purpose of the Tool is to facilitate reflection and self-assessment on where your country stands regarding each core function and the enabling environment. This tool is not intended to be used for 'benchmarking' countries or for giving marks on practices. The aim is to raise awareness about key issues, identify any gaps, and to improve areas and processes that can be changed to increase access and deliver high-quality pre-primary programmes.

The goals, measures and questions for reflections proposed in the Tool contribute to getting an in-depth understanding of the needs and challenges of the early childhood education subsector across all aspects, across the city/municipality and to planning relevant measures for improved outcomes.

The consultative workshop format will depend on the objectives and scope of the analysis – and on the availability of venues, participants, time and resources. Options to consider include:

- a workshop, often four or five days long, with skilled facilitation and broad stakeholder participation (this format allows time for an in-depth analysis of all five core functions and the key factors in the enabling environment);
- a series of one-day workshops spread out over several weeks or months (one possibility is to focus on a single module in the analysis tool during each workshop, making cross-module connections towards the conclusion of the series);
- a smaller working group gathering in one multi-day workshop, or in a series of one-day meetings over several months (in this format, the content is similar to the previous options, but the number and composition of participants is different – the small group may use some of their time to plan follow-up meetings with a broader cross-section of stakeholders);
- separate meetings scheduled by a core leadership team (or an individual who oversees the analysis work) with different groups of stakeholders, such as personnel in several ministries and from non-governmental organizations (this format lacks the benefits from providing a platform for sharing expertise and experience, but it could be necessary in some contexts).

For conducting a consultative workshop, enabling resources are provided. See: [Supporting resources for consultative workshop | ECE Accelerator \(ece-accelerator.org\)](#)



Building Block 3: Guiding tools for addressing complex issues related to various groups of vulnerable children or those at risk of exclusion

## Overview of the tools in Building Block 3

### **Main purpose**

This building block features tools that can support local governments to address (in a coordinated manner) specific issues related to one or multiple categories of vulnerable groups.

### **List of tools**

- Tool 1: Drivers of change in the urban space: equity and inclusion, urbanization and planning, and adaptive complex systems
- Tool 2: Assessing the Inclusivity of ECEC Centres
- Tool 3: Leveraging Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to support children and families with higher levels of vulnerability and limited access to services
- Tool 4: REYN Evidence Tool – holistically approaching the needs of Roma young children and their caregivers
- Tool 5: How accessible is our municipality for children with disabilities and their parents?
- Tool 6: A six-point agenda for action for local governments to support internally displaced or refugee children
- Tool 7: Holistically approaching the needs of refugee children and their caregivers

### Map of the tools

Tools for inclusive policies/services for all categories of vulnerable children

Tool 1: Drivers of change in urban space: equity and inclusion, urbanization and planning, and adaptive complex systems

Tool 2: Assessing the Inclusivity of Early Childhood Education and Care Centres

Tool 3: Leveraging Early Childhood Education and Care to support children and families with higher vulnerabilities and limited access to services



Tools focusing on specific categories of vulnerable children

Tool 4: REYN Evidence Tool- Approaching holistically the needs of Roma young children

Tool 5: How accessible is our Municipality for children with disability and their parents?

Tool 6: Six-point agenda for action for local governments to support internally

Tool 7: Approaching holistically the needs of refugee children and their caregivers



## Supporting all children, including the most vulnerable – the progressive universalism policy approach through which all children are provided with the support they need

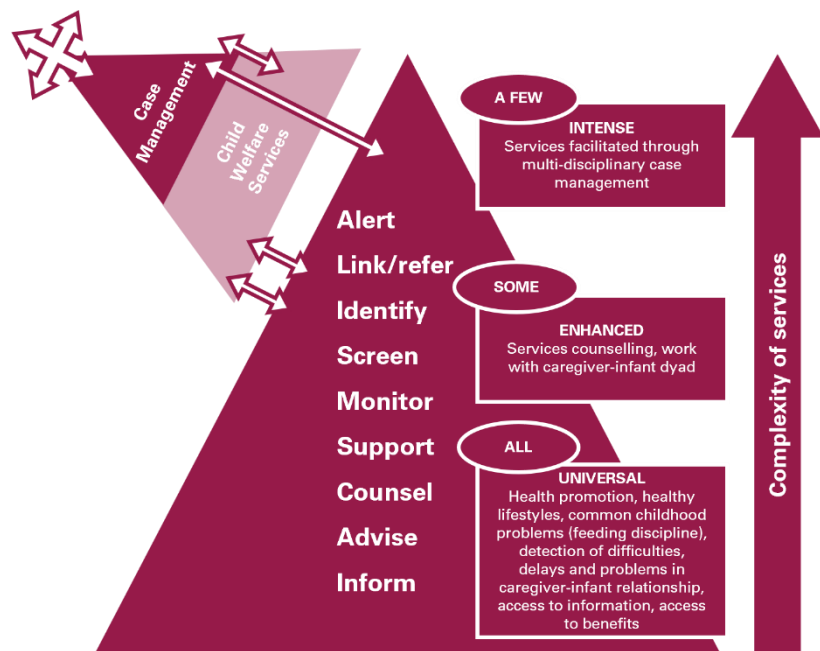
To provide every child with the best start in life and opportunities to thrive requires a comprehensive path balancing targeted and universal services to address children's diverse needs and promote their holistic development.

Targeted and universal services are essential in a comprehensive and equitable early childhood system where no child is left behind.

However, both universal and targeted approaches and services may have positive effects as well as negative ones.

Universal services contribute to the reduction of disparities and promote equitable access to services to all children and their families. At the same time, given their universality (one size fits all), they might not be able to meet all the varied needs of vulnerable groups. Targeted services provide better-tailored and specific support to children and families experiencing adverse or vulnerable situations. However, although they may be instrumental in supporting children and families to overcome challenges, the targeted services may also deepen discrimination and exclusion of these groups from the mainstream society.

An effective policy strategy is to **combine the targeted and universal services in a tiered system of services** (universal-enhanced-intense support), paying attention to the very specific needs of children and their families. A certain set of services is to be provided universally to all children. For specific categories of children and families who require more enhanced support, additional services may be provided within the mainstream services, on top of the universal ones (e.g., free transportation, reduced fees, speech therapy, cultural mediation). For the very specific and highly intense types of



Three-tiered system to address equitably the diversity of needs of ALL young children (framework from the UNICEF-ISSA resource package for Strengthening Capacity of Home Visitors)

support that some children and families may need (children with severe developmental problems, children with parents in prison, etc.), highly targeted services requiring multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral coordination is to be provided.

As illustrated in the Figure above, a universal progressive model was developed in Europe and Central Asia for home-visiting services, which demonstrates how services should be organized depending on the needs of children and families with specific responsibilities.

The key elements in the progressive universalism policy are:

- a basic services package for all;
- a continuum of care for each child throughout early childhood;
- enhanced and intense services and inter-sectorial coordination for children and families identified as having special needs.

**PURPOSE 1: Ensure a systemic approach to providing equitable access to quality services at the city level**

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### **Tool 1: Drivers of change in the urban space: equity and inclusion, urbanization and planning, and adaptive complex systems**

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**Expected outcome:** Shared understanding of key drivers of change that can mobilize local developments towards more equitable access to quality services

**Leading role:** Mayor's office, representatives of the local council

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of various early childhood sectors, businesses, media, faith-based organizations, community representatives, political parties, parents

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## Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool proposes **three drivers of change in the urban space** (equity and inclusion, urbanization and planning, adaptive governance systems) which local governments could use to ensure sustainable and equitable development in their municipalities, attentive to improving the lives and outcomes for children and their families.

Adaptive urban governance is a key driver of and manager of the dynamics of urban change.

However, there is no single, universally applicable model of urban governance, as the institutions and decision-making models are relevant to local context and history. Cities are characterized by complex governance structures that include national, regional and municipal levels to varying degrees across sectors, often with overlapping jurisdictions. Effective urban governance involves numerous factors, including the city-national interface, municipal capacity, the role of the private sector, political systems and institutions, the political agency of the urban poor, opportunities for collective action, service-delivery dynamics, the prevalence of conflict and violence, and the experience of vulnerable groups.

With a big push for decentralization in countries across the world, urban governments are increasingly accountable for the delivery of services to children and families. Capacities – technical, human and financial – can vary widely between cities and prevent urban governments from reaching every child, especially those most vulnerable to poverty and exclusion. The private sector increasingly provides services within cities, but often with issues of equity and quality. The urban poor often face barriers to political influence and participation, and migrants and displaced populations face additional barriers. Children’s participation in planning and design is an emerging area of practice in cities, but for the most part, children have little say in city decisions.

The Tool introduces three drivers of change with their different dimensions. Each dimension is described to enable a good understanding of the types of intervention/actions that can be taken to activate that specific dimension of the specific driver. Altogether, the drivers and their dimensions map key issues and elements that can guide local governments in identifying potential avenues for action that can lead to making municipalities safer, more equitable and more inclusive for children and families.

Drivers of change	Dimensions
<b>Equity and inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on different experiences and needs of vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Disparate access to quality service</li> <li>• Tenure security/housing</li> <li>• Poverty and employment</li> </ul>

Drivers of change	Dimensions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence</li> </ul>
<b>Urbanization and planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privatized planning and splintered urbanisms</li> <li>• Rapid urban growth and widespread informality</li> <li>• Urban safety</li> <li>• Environmental risks and urban resilience</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptive governance systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban governance</li> <li>• Public financing for children in urban settings</li> <li>• Participation for inclusive development</li> <li>• Multiplicity of actors</li> </ul>

### Guidance in using the Tool

The tool can be used to mobilize commitment for improving the condition of young children and their families in the municipality. It is particularly relevant for large municipalities, which are confronted with challenges related to increasing poverty, increasing migration, violence, lack of safety, limited housing, etc, as they impact the environments in which young children live.

Use working meetings with mayor office representatives to map areas of possible actions that can be supported by the local council and be taken into consideration for the local development strategy. The chart will help explore possible risks and solutions for each dimension, as various stakeholders, local partners are considered to be involved in developing and implementing potential actions and solutions.

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
<b>EQUITY AND INCLUSION</b>	Data/different experiences and needs of vulnerable groups	A first step toward reducing urban inequality is identifying the patterns of poverty and exclusion. National and urban averages tend to mask the experiences of urban children and families and fail to capture inter and intra-urban disparities. National household surveys are not well adapted to urban contexts, with inadequate sampling within urban areas, particularly in slums and informal settlements. Moreover, the temporal interval of national surveys is often not conducive for programme planning and monitoring, especially in cities experiencing rapid growth. Strengthening the measurement of intra- and inter-urban disparities, insisting on administrative data as much as possible (with a focus on informal areas and vulnerable populations) and investing in research for capturing the different experiences of urban vulnerable groups are all needed.			
	Disparate access to quality service	A core driver of change in cities is reducing inequalities in access to social services. For middle-income countries, the focus is often on reducing urban marginalization, reaching children and families who have faced exclusion and reducing barriers to access, or improving equity in spending and service quality across urban areas. Marginalization in cities is also prevalent in high-income countries, but to a lesser extent, and typically for specific populations such as refugees, new immigrants and ethnic minorities such as the Roma. However, for lower-income countries, or countries experiencing prolonged urban crises, mass exclusion from public services is the norm. This requires investment at scale in expanding services.			

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
	Tenure security/ housing	Insecure tenure leads to evictions and prevents families from investing in improved living conditions and also from accessing services. Poor housing conditions are a major driver of adverse health for children and family stress. Urban programming needs to promote secure and legal tenure to help families living in cities and towns to escape poverty and improve living conditions through child-sensitive slum upgrading. This is a key driver for attaining better outcomes for poor children living in urban areas.			
	Poverty and employment	The experience of poverty in urban areas is distinct from that in rural areas. All basic needs have to be paid for, often at a high cost – factors not often captured in poverty measurements. Social-protection systems are not effectively designed for urban areas and coverage of the lowest income quintiles is higher in rural areas, by 7 to 24 percentage points. Poverty measurement and social protection need to address the higher cost of living and barriers to social protection access in urban areas. Urban programming needs to provide training on employment preparedness for adolescents and youth, aiming to remove structural barriers to employment opportunities.			
	Violence	Structural inequality is a primary determinant of urban violence. Violence in the public realm of the city disproportionately affects adolescent boys and is concentrated in neighbourhoods with overlapping disparities. However, sexual violence in urban private and public spaces disproportionately affects adolescent girls. Tackling urban violence requires a coordinated approach that tackles ‘economic, spatial and social exclusion’ and improves			

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
		social cohesion, providing young people with access to jobs and life-skills.			
<b>URBANIZATION AND PLANNING</b>	Privatized planning and splintered urbanisms	Neo-liberal restructuring in the 1990s led to a retreat of the state from the urban planning function in many countries, relegating the task to market forces and ignoring wider issues of equity. Exclusionary and privatized planning produce splintered urbanisms that exclude the urban poor and new migrants from formally planned city spaces and leaving them with little option but to find housing in slums and informal settlements. Services and infrastructure have been privatized and splintered between affluent and poorer areas, and there is an absence of connective flows within the city. Investment is required into inclusive and child-responsive planning that address the connections and flows across cities, specifically tackling the socio-spatial exclusion of marginalized children in high-density informal areas and in rapidly urbanizing peripheries of cities which lack adequate infrastructure.			
	Rapid urban growth and widespread informality	1.4 million people move into urban areas each week, with many ending up in slums or informal settlements. Consequently, the slum population continues to increase in actual numbers and in proportion to the overall urban population. Between 20 to 60% of the urban population in low- and middle-income countries live in informal areas, requiring large-scale investment in infrastructure and services. Two key factors that contribute to widespread informality are: 1) the reluctance of governments to address the needs of the urban poor and their right to the city; and 2) deeply insufficient financial resources (public and private) for basic urban			

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
		<p>infrastructure. When the poor are left out of formal planning processes, the growth of slums in cities is inevitable. This, in turn, contributes to widespread informality in unequal cities.</p> <p>Strengthening the upgrading of slums from a child-sensitive perspective can drive positive outcomes for urban poor children. However, it is more cost efficient to plan for growth, and development partners can work in newly-urbanizing areas to encourage planning for public spaces, water and sanitation and resilience.</p>			
	Urban safety	<p>The United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements promote a participatory and inclusive vision through integrated policy approaches to urban safety and security that include good urban governance, planning and management. Beyond a focus on crime and violence, safe cities should address issues of unplanned urban expansion with a deficit of streets and safe public spaces and a rise in road traffic accidents. Programming requires coordinated approaches across planning, urban investment and enforcement.</p>			
	Environmental risks and urban resilience	<p>Informality raises exposure to environmental risks, compounded by climate change, pollution and inadequate waste management. Overcrowding and a lack of WASH facilities contributes to the creation of epidemic/pandemic hotspots in slums and informal settlements, as the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in cities around the developing world has shown. Green cities and urban resilience initiatives driving urban change receive substantial attention and can provide an opening and a platform for addressing the environmental risks that children face in urban settings and the</p>			

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
		climate and disaster hotspots within them. Urban disaster preparedness can help lay the groundwork for humanitarian responses.			
<b>ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS</b>	Urban governance	Cities are characterized by complex governance structures that include national, regional and municipal levels to varying degrees across sectors, often with overlapping jurisdictions. With a big push for decentralization in countries across the world, local governments and its service-delivery partners need adequate revenues as well as the authority to make decisions about children's services. Urban programming needs to address issues related to multiple layers of governance, disparate patterns of decentralization and the devolution of decision-making power and should strengthen the adaptive capacities of local and higher tiers of government to work for children in urban settings.			
	Public financing for children in urban settings	The major problem confronting most local authorities in developing countries is the widening gap between the availability of financial resources and municipal spending needs in rapidly urbanizing contexts, which creates an ever-increasing demand for public services and infrastructure. Budgets for social services for children and the implementation of local plans for children in different countries rely on both local and central revenues, but there is not enough tracking of these budgets for them to be utilized in urban programming for children in urban settings. Engagement with public financial management at the local level can track and strengthen the budgets of local plans for children,			

Driver	Dimension	Description and programme options	Potential actions	Risks	Possible solutions
		using local government revenues as well as central government transfers.			
	Participation for inclusive development	Fostering community participation in cities is more complicated than in rural areas, as the idea of 'community' is often a forced one without common roots. Marginalized groups can face barriers to participation from a lack of social capital and cohesion, and the urban poor typically have limited time and resources to invest in participatory processes. Yet there are more available venues and organizations to support participatory process in cities. Strengthening participation in urban programming needs to address the issues of urban complexity and inclusion, and to build partnerships with civil society organizations to support child and community participation			
	Multiplicity of actors	Cities are inherently more complex, with more actors involved in delivering infrastructure, utilities and services. At the same time, they compete for attention and resources: from the public sector, private sector, communities of practice, patronage systems, resident collectives and social groups. Mapping the roles of different actors will inform strategic partnerships for urban programming.			



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## Tool 2: Assessing the Inclusivity of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

### Centres

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**Expected outcomes:** Identifying the critical characteristics of diversity-inclusive ECEC, the groups of children and families who are often excluded or discriminated against, and actions that can be taken to make ECEC more inclusive

**Leading role:** ECEC leaders and managers and representatives of the ECEC department in municipalities responsible for service quality

**Participants in the process:** ECEC leaders and managers, representatives of the ECEC department, workforce, parents and children

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### Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool for assessing inclusivity and sensitivity for diversity, **Diversity+ Footprint Assessment Tool**, is based on the [Diversity Inclusion in ECEC – Diversity+ Charter](#). The Diversity+ Charter represents a minimum requirement that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services and institutions have to meet in order to accommodate different types of diversity and be classed as inclusive and diversity positive (Diversity+). It is based on the European Council Recommendations on High Quality ECEC<sup>23</sup> and is organized around its five key themes: **access, workforce, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and governance**. It also includes the transversal issues fundamental to the development and maintenance of high-quality ECEC: the **image and voice of the child, partnerships, a shared understanding of a quality and competent system, and reference to ten EU ECEC Quality Framework statements**.

The Charter is available in English, Italian, Slovak, Czech, Bulgarian and Dutch.

The [Diversity+ Footprint Assessment Tool](#) is a digital online self-assessment questionnaire specifically designed for formal ECEC services. However, it can also be used by non-formal ECEC provision and/or ECEC programmes. The Tool has five key interconnected areas aligned with the European Quality Framework for ECEC (Access; Workforce; Curriculum; Monitoring and evaluation; Governance for diversity inclusion), and each area contains a set of questions.

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<sup>23</sup> [eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CONSIL:ST\\_9014\\_2019\\_INIT&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CONSIL:ST_9014_2019_INIT&from=EN)

The Tool:

- facilitates individual or group reflections on diversity inclusion practice of the ECEC setting, rather than individual practices;
- motivates and supports ECEC organizations and staff to take a journey towards reaching the desired quality of practice (additional resources, etc.);

The Tool is available in English, Bulgarian, Italian and Czech.

### Guidance on using the Tool

Before you start using the Tool, aim to do the following.

- Think about the specific ECEC setting as a whole, not about individual practices!
- Reflect on your motivation for using the Tool:
  - What do you want to learn and achieve?
  - What are you going to do with the results?
  - Are we ready to take on any needed steps to become more diversity-inclusive?
- Bear in mind that this is a self-assessment tool to encourage critical reflection on ECEC, its inclusiveness, and actions that can transform setting into a safe and inspiring environment for all children, families, and staff.

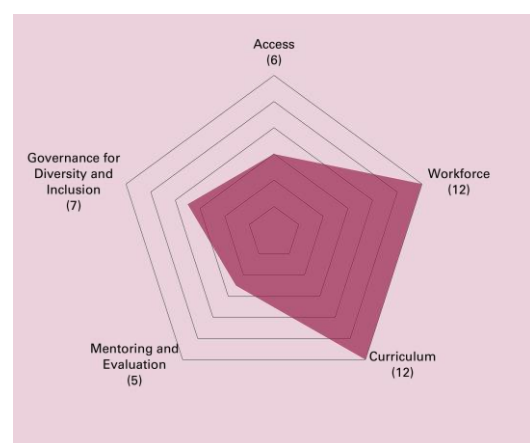
Start filling the questionnaire by visiting the Tool page. It takes 10–15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Managers, staff, and parents can use the Tool individually, but it can also be used by a group of colleagues, with parents and children. Use this opportunity for group reflection and discussions.

When you answer all questions, you will get your result (see the image)

Every response matches your centre's diversity-inclusion footprint level, per area and as a whole. The total footprint level is 100 points. Following the logic of a carbon footprint, please note: the lower the footprint in each area, the lower the overall footprint.

The lower the overall footprint, the more the ECEC service/programme is a place of equality and diversity inclusion. Thus, an overall footprint of 30 points is a better score than a footprint of 50



Source: Diversity+ Footprint Assessment Tool

points. Additionally, you should have a low footprint in each area to be recognized as diversity-inclusive ECEC.

The Tool provides additional readings for improvement of practice.

## Useful tips



- The Tool can be used multiple times to monitor progress and the results of changes that were made.
- Results can be used to engage in discussion with other stakeholders, and to create plans for further development.

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### **Tool 3: Leveraging Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to support children and families with higher vulnerabilities and limited access to services**

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**Expected outcome:** Empowering ECEC services to become a hub for providing family-centred, quality services in an integrated manner

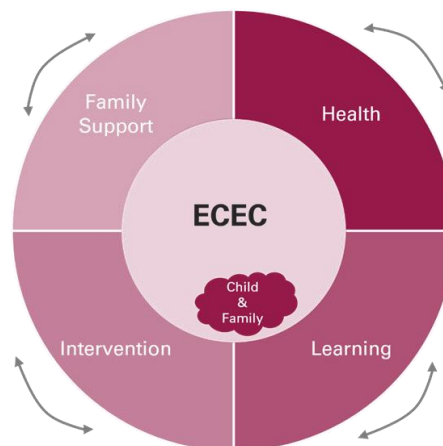
**Leading role:** ECEC leaders and managers, key workers

**Participants in the process:** ECEC leaders and managers, representatives of ECEC departments in municipalities, educators, parents and children

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## Brief overview of the Tool

This Tool is based on the **Functional Practice Framework**<sup>24</sup> (Neilsen-Hewett, et al., 2023). This framework is unique as it places Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services at the core of integration efforts. It acknowledges that additional services such as health, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), and family support can be interconnected in various ways, though access to these services may not be uniform.



The framework leverages ECEC as a platform, emphasizing the strengths and capabilities inherent in the ECEC environment. It is a model driven by capacity and quality practices, designed to be sustainable, ensuring that the competencies needed to comprehend the needs of children, assist families, and connect them with services are ingrained in the expectations of exceptional ECEC. Furthermore, the model highlights the vital role educators play in helping children and families navigate the array of services available, even though they do not make decisions or provide these services themselves. This is especially relevant when families have limited or no access to health and ECI services at the regional and local community level.

The relationships between educators, families, health and ECI professionals are key to ensuring effective service integration and familial navigation of ECI services. The professionalization of educators and establishment of a key worker model to ensure access, continuity, and connection across both ECI and ECEC services is of critical importance.

High-quality ECEC is crucial for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, especially for those facing challenges or vulnerabilities. Empowering the ECEC workforce by providing them with access to evidence-based practices, and on-site continuous professional development, especially in regions with limited health services, to provide comprehensive support and referrals without relying on additional interventions.

**The key worker model** is introduced to facilitate seamless access and integration of ECI and ECEC services.

However, due to staff shortages in many places, embedding a key worker within ECEC services could be beneficial, with an ECEC staff member taking on the role of navigator for early childhood family

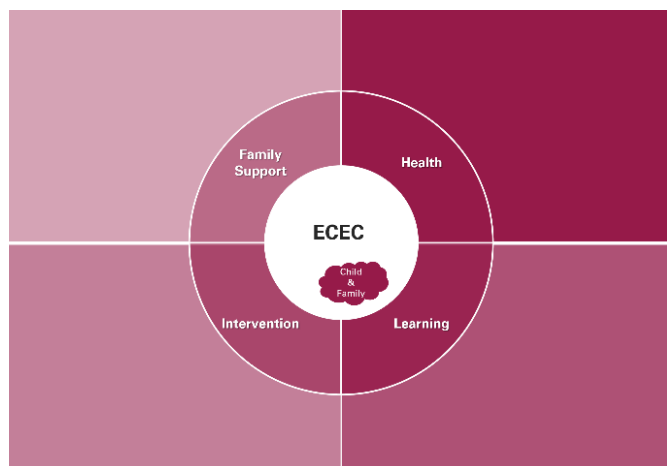
<sup>24</sup> Neilsen-Hewett, et al. (2023). Supporting service integration through early childhood education: challenges and opportunities in regional contexts. *Front. Educ.*, 14 September 2023, Sec. Special Educational Needs, Volume 8 – 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.1220658>

support, health, and intervention. This could enhance connections with health, community, and ECI services, and encourage a team-based approach involving health and intervention professionals, educators, and families.

Essential qualities for an effective ECEC navigator include the ability to form trusting relationships, work in a transdisciplinary manner, and to possess a thorough understanding of available services and how to access them. Adapting this model in ECEC settings could potentially reduce the additional burdens on educators, allowing them to focus on their primary role in education.

### Guidance to using the Tool

1. Start by mapping the types of services that exist in the local community or in the region, and what type of services they provide. Also, by using arrows, try to indicate how different types of services are interconnected in the frame of different areas: Family support, Health, Early intervention and Learning. You can use this template for mapping.



At the end of the mapping process, your map could look like this.<sup>25</sup>

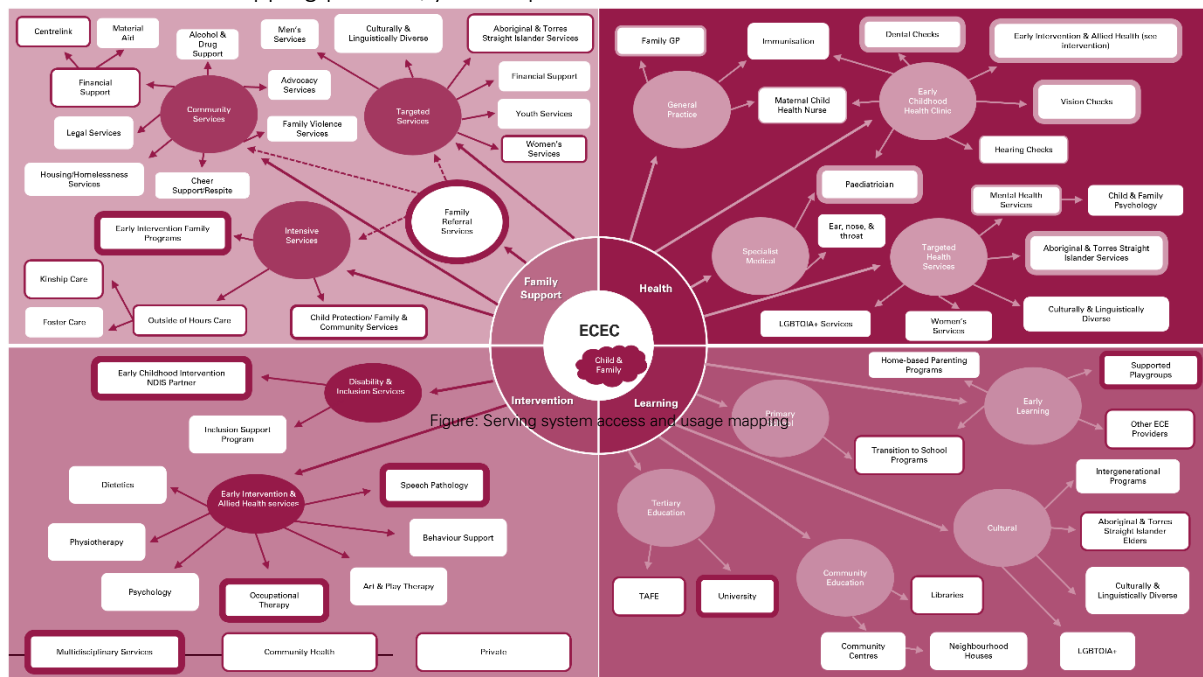


Figure: Serving system access and usage mapping

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 7

2. At ECEC level, reflect on these questions.
  - How well do we know the potential of our community?
  - What connections does our centre have with other services?
  - Why are connections with other services important for us if we want to provide children and families with the best possible education and care?
  - What can be done to improve existing connections? What is needed? Is there a history of working together with other sectors/services? Can we build on this?
3. Identify a key worker in ECEC who can navigate between ECEC and other services.
4. Identify key persons in other services and arrange a joint training session for ECEC staff and representatives from other services focusing on how they can jointly support families and provide them with smooth transitions between sectors.
5. Create a plan about joint working and supporting children and families.

## Useful tips



- The map can be preserved and used later in the process to monitor potential changes in relationships among different agents and services.
- Results of the mapping can be used to engage in discussion with other stakeholders and to develop plans for further development.
- Provide continuous professional development of educators, but do not put too much burden on them. They should have basic knowledge about family support, health and ECI to be able to recognize the needs of families and address these ECEC worker.
- Not only formal, but also non formal ECEC (play groups, play hubs etc.) can be hubs for integration of service.

## **PURPOSE 2: Ensuring a systemic view to supporting young Roma children's development and their families**

### **Tool 4: REYN EvidenceTool – holistically approaching the needs of Roma young children and their caregivers**

**Expected outcome:** A comprehensive understanding of the current status, needs, and barriers faced by young Roma children and their families at municipality levels allowing for informed, targeted and strategic measures

**Leading role:** The leading role should be assigned to a dedicated department within the city administration, such as the Department of Social Services or a similar body with the capability to engage directly with the Roma community. This department would coordinate data collection, analysis, and subsequent strategy development.

**Participants in the process:** Local government officials (education, health, social services); community members, leaders/representatives from the Roma community; practitioners (social workers, educators, teachers, and healthcare providers working with Roma families); NGOs and advocacy groups, activists specializing in Roma rights; (local) researchers specializing in early childhood, Roma studies, and/or social policy

#### **Brief overview of the Tool**

The Tool catalyses proactive engagement with Roma communities, drives meaningful and sustainable improvements, and supports informed policy-making and effective service provision. This comprehensive approach not only addresses immediate needs, but also fosters a conducive environment for the ongoing development and inclusion of young Roma children into broader societal frameworks.

The REYN EvidenceTool is grounded in the Nurturing Care Framework,<sup>26</sup> a comprehensive evidence-based framework developed in 2018 by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and World Bank Group to guide policy and programs for young children aged up to five. The REYN EvidenceTool used the Framework and included the following key dimensions that impact upon the development of Roma young children (see also Figure on the right).

1. Safety and security
2. Family and living environment
3. Health, nutrition and well-being
4. Early learning
5. Responsive parenting
6. Discrimination



Six areas impacting child's development

The Tool also uses the Communicative Methodology,<sup>27</sup> a methodology aimed at achieving social transformation by empowering stakeholders, including often excluded communities such as Roma, to co-lead the research, fostering a deep involvement from planning to execution and analysis. It enables municipalities to gather solid evidence with a 360° view on child development, informing urgent and effective policies and programmes that enable all young Roma children to reach their full potential, to grow and thrive.

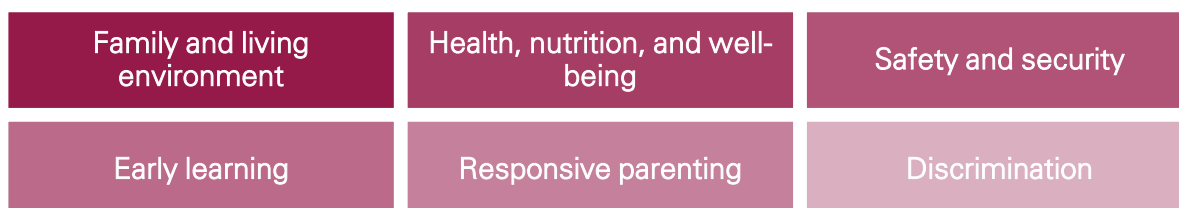
The Tool proposes qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It enables a comprehensive understanding of the multi-layered and intersectional nature of the challenges faced by young Roma children and their families. By incorporating the principles of egalitarian dialogue and the inclusion of community members throughout the research process, the REYN EvidenceTool ensures that the voices and insights of all participants are meaningfully included, treating them as co-researchers and equal partners. This methodology not only enriches the data collected, but also enhances the societal impact of the research, promoting a deeper understanding and potential transformation of the social realities affecting these families.

<sup>26</sup> See: <https://nurturing-care.org/>

<sup>27</sup> Gómez, A., Padrós, M., Ríos, O., Mara, L. C. & Pukepuka, T. (2019) 'Reaching Social Impact Through Communicative Methodology. Researching with Rather than on Vulnerable Populations: The Roma Case,' *Frontiers in Education*, 4(9). doi: 10.3389/feduc.2019.00009 (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2019.00009/full>)



## TheTool focuses on key areas impacting children’s development



By collecting data from all six areas, local governments can get a comprehensive understanding of the contexts, practices and attitudes that impact young Roma children development. Due to its approach, the REYN EvidenceTool is uniquely positioned to address the nuanced needs of Roma children, strengthening the capacity of local governments to take informed decisions regarding required policies and programmes that are both inclusive and effectively tailored to support young Roma children’s holistic development.

## Guidance in using the Tool

TheTool is aimed at collecting comprehensive sets of data from varied sources to inform clear plans at the local level, focusing on improving the conditions and well-being of young Roma children. Below, you will find suggestions regarding the steps and actions to be taken when using theTool.

### 1. Preparation

- Equip data collectors (local researchers, including Roma researchers) on cultural sensitivity and specific challenges/conditions faced by Roma communities.
- Develop and review data-collection instruments, following the six key areas impacting children’s development.

### 2. Data collection

- Documentary review: analysis of existing reports and policy documents to understand the broader context and validate primary data.
- Conduct surveys with families and distribute surveys to ECD service providers.
- Conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including policy makers (or conduct internal mapping if the research is conducted by local authorities), service providers, practitioners, and community leaders.
- Organize focus groups within the community to engage in discussions with Roma families around six key areas impacting upon children’s development. Use this opportunity to bring aspects of ECD science into the discussion.

### 3. Data analysis

- Use statistical software for quantitative data, and content analysis methods for qualitative data.
- Identify key themes and issues, such as barriers to service access or areas of critical need.

### 4. Strategy development

- Based on the analysed data, develop targeted measures, interventions, and local policy solutions and use the data to attract more funds to the local level for responsive and coordinated interventions in improving the situation of the vulnerable groups.
- Engage with the Roma community and other stakeholders in the co-creation of solutions and tailored priorities to ensure the measures/actions are responsive, culturally appropriate, and effectively address the community needs.

### 5. Implementation and monitoring

- Implement the strategies with clear timelines and assigned responsibilities.
- Regularly monitor progress against defined metrics and adjust strategies as needed based on ongoing feedback and new data.
- The process of using the REYN EvidenceTool aims to foster a deeper understanding and proactive engagement with Roma communities, driving meaningful and sustainable improvements in their lives through informed policymaking and service provision.

Below is a brief overview of each key area, pointing out the main aim for collecting data, offering a brief description of the data area and the suggested data set to be collected.

## Family environment

**Aim:** to understand the quality, stability, and adequacy of housing and family support structures available to Roma families with young children

**Description:** This key area explores the living conditions and household environments of young Roma children and their families, as well as their educational level, with a focus on factors affecting Roma families and, consequently, their children, such as: the physical size and layout of homes; the availability of utilities; the presence of potential household and neighbourhood concerns; young children and adult cohabitation; the affordability of certain essentials like home facilities, leisure time and food; and energy availability and affordability.

### Type of data

1. *Number of persons living in the household*
2. *Number of children under six years of age living in the household*
3. *Relationship with the children under six years of age*
4. *Parents of children under six years of age living in the household*
5. *Number of persons living in the Roma household with a different main activity status*
6. *Most important types of work in the household*
7. *Activity status of the people in the household*
8. *Number of persons in the household with different types of employment contract*
9. *Number of persons in the household with different education levels*
10. *Receipt of help or subsidy for household expenses*
11. *Number of people contributing to the household income*
12. *Size of the household (in square metres)*
13. *Number of rooms in the household*
14. *Availability of separate rooms and beds for young children*
15. *Households where adults and young children share sleeping spaces*
16. *Facilities in the household (electric lighting, running water, etc.)*
17. *Household problems (leaks, noise, pollution, etc.)*
18. *Neighbourhood demographics*

## Health, nutrition, and well-being

**Aim:** to assess access to healthcare services and nutritional status of Roma children and their families

**Description:** This key research area focuses on health, nutrition, and well-being, specifically exploring the access to healthcare services and the nutritional status of young Roma children and their families. It assesses a variety of health-related factors, including chronic diseases and disabilities among family members, prenatal and postnatal health practices, and patterns of substance use. It also evaluates how frequently families access healthcare services, including regular medical check-ups, nutritional support, immunization programmes, and the management of children's health issues. Additionally, it investigates the availability and use of mental health support systems within these communities.

### Type of data

1. *Presence of chronic diseases in household members*
2. *Presence of disability in household members*
3. *Maternal consumption of nicotine and alcohol during pregnancy*
4. *Health assistance during pregnancy*
5. *Health assistance after pregnancy*
6. *Childbirth location*
7. *Visits to health centres in the last two months due to health issues*
8. *Inability to visit health centres in the last two months due to health issues*
9. *Availability of selected paediatrician or family GP*
10. *Vaccination status of children under six years old*
11. *Ease of access to doctors when the child is sick*
12. *Frequency of regular check-ups with the child*
13. *Ease of getting information about the child's development and potential developmental problems*
14. *Willingness to seek professional help when feeling down or unhappy*
15. *Experience of going to bed hungry in the previous month*
16. *Frequency of children under six years old going to bed hungry*
17. *Ability to afford nutritious food on a regular basis*
18. *Frequency of consuming healthy food*
19. *Frequency of consuming protein and carbohydrates*
20. *Frequency of consuming less healthy food*
21. *Nutrition care during pregnancy*
22. *Breastfeeding duration*
23. *Child's contentment with the food provided*
24. *Daily feeding and sleeping routines for children*
25. *Eating habits of children*

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## Safety and security

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**Aim:** to evaluate the safety of the environments where Roma children live and play and their exposure to the harmful effects of different sources

**Description:** Concerning the safety, security, and social rights of Roma households with young children, the key aspects that this research area investigates are the accessibility of social security and social assistance, and safety in general. It seeks to understand household conditions regarding access to safe water, and the safety of the neighbourhood for children. Additionally, it looks into issues such as birth registration, advice on positive child behaviour without punishment, and awareness of domestic violence within the settlement.

### Type of data

1. *Access to social security/assistance*
2. *Availability of social assistance*
3. *Child registration at birth*
4. *Access to clean and drinking water*
5. *Perception of the safety of the neighbourhood*
6. *Exposure to or presence of domestic violence in the neighbourhood*
7. *Assessment of safety in the neighbourhood*
8. *Level of exposure to pollution in the neighbourhood*
9. *Frequency of Roma children being segregated in early childhood services*

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## Early learning

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**Aim:** to determine the availability, proximity, affordability, and quality of early learning opportunities for Roma children

### Type of data

1. *Enrolment of Roma children under six years of age in early childhood education*
  2. *Access to public spaces and facilities for children and families*
  3. *Access to quality education and care in crèches/kindergartens or community services*
  4. *Access to other programmes for parents and children*
-

**Description:** This key area focuses on early learning contexts and experiences of Roma children under six years old. It delves into the details of enrolment in early childhood education and care services and the demographics of their educational/learning environments in connection with their experiences of potential discrimination in these settings. Additionally, it assesses the availability of public spaces suitable for young children and families, including playgrounds, city parks, libraries, and similar.

5. *Access to early childhood education services*
6. *Availability of early childhood education services in the neighbourhood*
7. *Affordability of early childhood education services*
8. *Reasons for not enrolling children in a crèche/kindergarten*
9. *Understanding the main language of instruction*
10. *Assessment of the home environment for stimulating the child's learning*
11. *Roma children benefiting from a Roma teaching assistant/mediator*
12. *Classroom demographics (composition of students in classroom – Roma compared to general population)*

## Responsive parenting

**Aim:** to understand the parenting practices and challenges faced by Roma parents in nurturing and supporting their children's development

**Description:** This key area examines parental involvement in child play and communication, emphasizing the importance of understanding a child's needs and being the main caretaker in the family. It explores the frequency and methods of playtime activities with children under two years of age, as well as responses to infant communication and engagement in singing or reading with the child. Additionally, it investigates the involvement of fathers, extended family members, and siblings in the child's upbringing and playtime. Furthermore, it assesses the display of love and affection toward children, an understanding of non-verbal communication, and the level of support from other family members in caring for young children.

### Type of data

1. *Parental involvement in child play and communication*
2. *Parental understanding of a child's needs*
3. *Main caretaker in the family*
4. *Parental involvement in child play and reading activities*
5. *Adults spending the most time with young children*
6. *Playtime activities with children under two years of age*
7. *Frequency of playtime with children under two years of age*
8. *Playtime methods with children under two years of age*
9. *Frequency of playtime with children under two years of age*
10. *Playtime methods with children over two and under six years of age*
11. *Response to infant's communication*
12. *Singing or reading with the child*
13. *Involvement of fathers and extended family members in the child's upbringing*
14. *Involvement of siblings in the child's playtime*
15. *Display of love and affection toward children*

16. *Understanding of non-verbal communication with young children*
17. *Support from other members of the family in taking care of young children*

## Discrimination

**Aim:** to identify the prevalence and impact of discrimination on the access to services and overall well-being of Roma families with young children

**Description:** The key area focusing on discrimination examines interpersonal discrimination experienced by children within various contexts, ranging from educational institutions to community interactions. It investigates the harmful effects of discriminatory behaviour on the psychological and emotional well-being of young Roma children, as well as its implications for their social integration. It explores barriers encountered in accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and social assistance due to systemic biases.

### Type of data

1. *Families experiencing institutional discrimination in various situations and settings*
2. *Children experiencing institutional discrimination in various situations and settings*
3. *Children experiencing interpersonal discrimination in various situations and settings*

## Useful tips for evidence-driven responsive actions



- Develop or enhance social housing programs tailored to the needs of Roma families.
- Support family services programmes that strengthen familial ties and community support.
- Implement targeted health outreach programmes ensuring Roma families are aware and able to access healthcare services.
- Enhance community safety measures in Roma neighbourhoods.
- Expand access to high-quality early childhood services and programmes.
- Create family resource centres that offer support and resources to parents.
- Implement anti-discrimination campaigns and legal support services to tackle prejudice and social exclusion.



### **PURPOSE 3:** Ensuring accessibility to quality services for children with disabilities or developmental delays

#### **Tool 5:** How accessible is our municipality for children with disabilities and their parents?

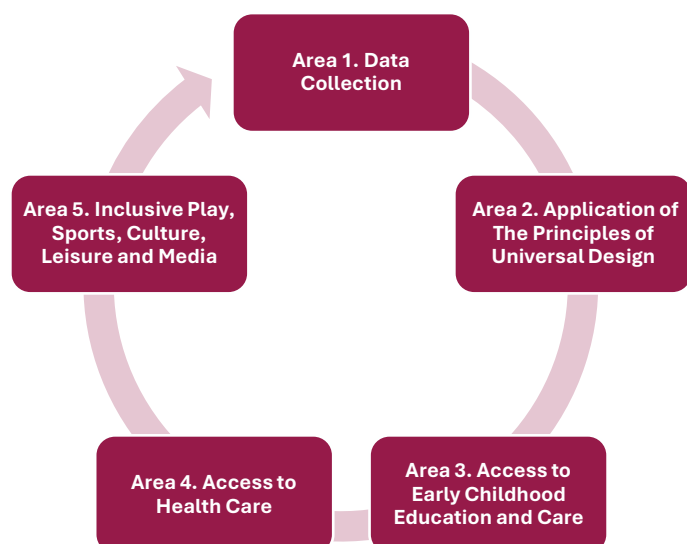
**Expected outcome:** In-depth understanding of accessibility of the municipality, what is in place and what should be done

**Leading role:** Mayor's office representative

**Participants in the process:** Members of the coordination team, and representatives of parents of children with disability associations

#### **Brief overview of the Tool**

This Tool is developed to support self and group assessment of inclusivity of the municipality/city. It has **five areas**<sup>28</sup> with different measures/indicators/questions for reflection. This will help representatives of the Municipality, members of LAT and representatives of parents and associations of parents with children with disabilities to better identify areas of strength and gaps and prioritize areas for improvement.



<sup>28</sup> Areas are adapted from Trpevska, M., Misik E., Djajkovska B. & Joshevska, M. (2019) '[Disability-Friendly Inclusive Municipality Model From Concept to Reality](#)'. Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives, Step by Step Macedonia

Additionally, it will facilitate and increase communication and knowledge exchange across stakeholders and sectors.

The Tool has two parts:

- areas with measures/indicators;
- a reflection Grid.

## AREA 1: DATA COLLECTION

### Measures/indicators

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1.1. | The municipality has a locally relevant data-collection plan with clearly defined objectives and indicators.                                |
| 1.2. | The municipality collects demographic data and statistics at regular intervals from multiple sources (census, Statistical Office, surveys). |
| 1.3. | Locally relevant data are regularly posted on the municipality's website.   |
| 1.4. | The municipality uses collected data to identify socially excluded/disadvantaged groups.  |
| 1.5. | The municipality consults with civil society at regular intervals to ensure the reliability of findings.                                    |
| 1.6. | The municipality consults stakeholders/families at regular intervals to ensure the reliability of data                                      |

## AREA 2: APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN<sup>29</sup>

### Measures/indicators

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2.1. | The municipality has strategies, action plans and other documents setting goals for improving accessibility.  |
| 2.2. | <b>Equitable use.</b> The municipality is providing identical programs, services or facilities where possible and where this is not possible, ensuring equivalent access. This avoids highlighting people's impairment and assists with safety for all users. |
| 2.3. | <b>Flexible use.</b> The municipality is providing users with a choice in how they would like to use the programme, service or facility and ensure that the design can adapt to different levels of accuracy and pace.  |
| 2.4. | <b>Simple and intuitive to use.</b> The municipality is reducing complexity and supporting the use of intuition to accommodate varying literacy and language skills.  |
| 2.5. | <b>Perceptible information.</b> Information is communicated effectively, regardless of where it is or the user's sensory abilities (using auditory signs, lights, texture, etc.).   |

<sup>29</sup> '7 Principles of Universal Design,' Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (undated), available at: <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2.6. | <b>Tolerance for error.</b> Organization of space and programmes to encourage designs that minimize hazards and poor outcomes or accidental or unintended actions.             |
| 2.7. | <b>Low physical effort.</b> Design does not require undue effort and can be used efficiently. Minimal barriers are present.  |
| 2.8. | <b>Size and space for approach and use.</b> Requires a clear line of sight to important elements for people standing and seated and enough space for any assistive technology. |

### AREA 3: ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

#### Measures/indicators

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.1. | All early childhood education and care institutions in the municipality apply the procedures for identifying children with special educational needs (SEN) and provide them with adequate support.                       |
| 3.2. | Municipality engages special educators and personal assistants to children.  |
| 3.3. | The municipality has regular and obligatory inter-sectoral cooperation between educational, healthcare, social-sector institutions regarding educational support for SEN learners.                                       |
| 3.4. | The municipality has established and encourages cooperation between the formal and non-formal early childhood education and care system (including training providers, civil society organizations, public and private). |
| 3.5. | The municipality understands and applies the causticity standards of early childhood education and care institutions (parking, access, doors, lavatories, lifts).  |
| 3.6. | The municipality knows precisely the number of young children with developmental delays or challenges.   |
| 3.7. | The municipality knows precisely the specifics/type and degree of children's disability, their needs and abilities.  |
| 3.8. | The municipality knows precisely how many children with disabilities and developmental delays are included in ECEC.  |

### AREA 4: ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

#### Measures/indicators

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 4.1. | All children in the municipality have easy access to quality medical services when they require a check-up or a medical intervention.  |
| 4.2. | All children can access appropriate preventive health programmes   |
| 4.3. | Public and private providers of health services in the municipality ensure full physical accessibility of their buildings and facilities.  |
| 4.4. | Public and private health providers of health services in the municipality provide health-related information in an accessible format, using easy-to-understand/plain language, videos, and large print. |
| 4.5. | The municipality has a strategy for improving the health of children.  |

4.6. The municipality conducts surveys to establish the level of satisfaction of children with disabilities and their families regarding accessibility and/or inclusiveness of health services.

**AREA 5: INCLUSIVE PLAY, SPORTS, CULTURE, LEISURE AND MEDIA**

**Measures/indicators**

- 5.1. The municipality has a dedicated culture/sports/leisure/recreation department with a special focus on young children and their families.
- 5.2. The municipality has developed an operational or action plan for culture/sports/recreation for young children and their families.
- 5.3. The municipality initiates cultural and leisure activities that include children with disabilities or developmental delays.
- 5.4. The municipality conducts surveys to gauge the level of satisfaction of its citizens regarding the accessibility and/or inclusive of cultural, leisure, sports and recreational events and activities.
- 5.5. The municipality has built/adapted spaces (facilities, playgrounds, parks) for children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- 5.6. The municipality has a plan to build/adapt spaces (facilities, playgrounds, parks) for children with disabilities and developmental delays in future.
- 5.7. The municipality strives to make public and private sports and recreational spaces physically accessible and financially affordable to families with children with disabilities and developmental delays in future.

**REFLECTION GRID**

Area number and name: .....		STATUS Stage of Implementation			FEASIBILITY Level of difficulty to implement
Low Weak implementation or not initiated	Medium Implementation initiated but not complete	High Implementation complete or well established			
			High Difficult		
			Medium Feasible with effort		
			Low Easy to do		

## Guidance on using the Tool

Depending on the number of workshop participants, you can use this Tool in small groups or in one group. You can also decide to address all the areas or to address area by area.

If you decide to work with small groups, start by dividing participants into five groups and give each one an area to discuss. Let them reflect upon measures/indicators/questions within their respective Tool area.

Give each group one large Reflection Grid<sup>30</sup> and pre-cut strips of each numbered Indicator/ Measure

Ask participants to discuss each measure and consider these questions.

- Has this measure been implemented (e.g. Status)?
- How easily could the measure be implemented (e.g. Feasibility)? What steps might be required to implement this measure?

Area number and name: .....	STATUS Stage of Implementation			FEASIBILITY Level of difficulty to implement
	Low Weak implementation or not initiated	Medium Implementation initiated but not complete	High Implementation complete or well established	
1.1. The municipality has a locally relevant data-collection plan with clearly defined objectives and indicators.				High Difficult
2.7. <i>Low physical effort.</i> Design does not require undue effort and can be used efficiently. Minimal barriers are present.		5.5. The municipality has built/adapted spaces (facilities, playgrounds, parks) for children with disabilities and developmental delays.		Medium Feasible with effort
				Low Easy to do

<sup>30</sup> Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., Bonsu, D., Hatipoglu, K., Neuman, M. & Putcha, V. (2020) 'Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool 2020 A User's Guide.' Early Childhood Workforce Initiative ([https://www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Home-Visiting-Workforce-Needs-Assessment-Tool-Users-Guide\\_0.pdf](https://www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Home-Visiting-Workforce-Needs-Assessment-Tool-Users-Guide_0.pdf))

After discussion, ask participants to place the measures/indicators on the grid (See Figure above). The Reflection Grid contains these same questions along the X and Y axes. Affix each Measure strip to the Reflection grid according to its status and feasibility of implementation (use tape, sticky dots, etc.). Encourage participants to walk around the room and note how other groups have plotted their measures.

Based on the results, ask participants to see what can be done easily and how important these things are. Encourage them to start from doable things and slowly move to more complex and challenging measures.

## Useful tip



Participants can add some measures/indicators which are more appropriate to their context.

## PURPOSE 4: Ensuring the safe inclusion of internally displaced or refugee children and their families

### Tool 6: A six-point agenda for action for local governments to support internally displaced or refugee children

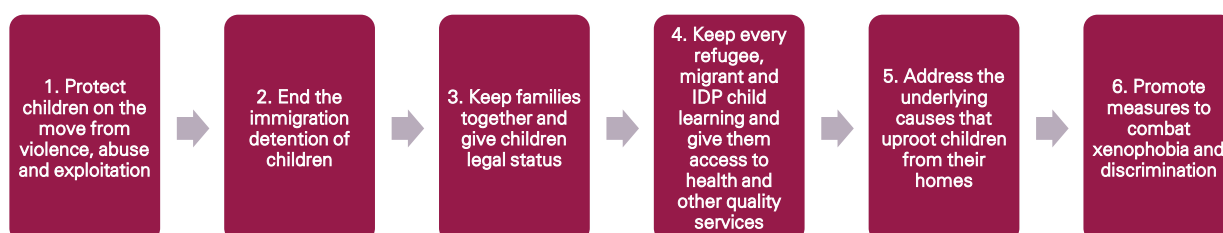
**Expected outcome:** In-depth understanding of the priorities, actions, existing measures and potential of local governments to support internally displaced, migrant and refugee children and their families

**Leading role:** Municipality representatives

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of businesses, media, faith-based organizations, community representatives, political parties, parents, children and young people

#### Brief overview of the Tool

This Tool is based on the UNICEF publication, '[Children Uprooted: What Local Governments Can Do](#)', which focuses on children on the move, refugees or those with IDP status. It contains six action points for local governments.



The description of each action point is accompanied by a grid for assessing its level of priority, level of implementation, level of difficulty of implementation, and plans for implementation of each guiding measure. For assessment, use the colour code offered in the grids to help you develop plans.

## Action 1: Protect children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation

- Ensure that minimum reception and care standards and child safeguarding policies exist, are well known and are met in all reception and accommodation centres under the city's jurisdiction, paying particular attention to children with specific protection needs and in situations of vulnerability (e.g. trafficking, gender-based violence).
- Train municipal social workers, police, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, guardians, teachers and local civil society organizations in child rights, child protection case management, Best Interest Assessment and Determination processes and child-friendly procedures (e.g. interview techniques, referral mechanisms). Local law enforcement and other frontline workers should have the capacity to detect cases of trafficking, exploitation, abuse or violence, as well as other situations where children may need specific support, referring them immediately to child protection authorities.
- Establish cross-sectoral working groups where all local actors in contact with migrant and displaced children come together, share information, and collaborate on a regular basis.
- Reach out to refugee, migrant and IDP children and their families, providing them with information, counselling, and assistance (including about potential risks, their own situation and the management of their cases). This can happen through 'one-stop shops' where social and other services are easily available in the same place (usually where children are living), as well as through partnerships with local NGOs, law firms, lawyers' associations, etc. Work on the ground by social workers to identify and reach out to vulnerable children who are excluded from services is essential, as well as child-friendly mechanisms for children to seek and get support.
- Create networks of collaboration with other municipalities to share information about refugee, migrant and IDP children, following them as they move from one community to another and ensuring their safety through a continuum of care and protection.
- Advocate with national authorities for more safe and legal channels for children to migrate and seek refuge, including family reunification, resettlement, and student and trainee visas.
- Advocate with national authorities for increased financial resources, so local governments can meet the additional costs of providing protection, care and services to migrant and displaced children and their families.



Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 1: Protect children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation	Minimum reception and care standards and child safeguarding policies are in place in all reception and accommodation centres				
	Social workers, police, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, guardians, teachers and local civil society organizations are trained in child rights, child protection and case management				
	Cross-sectoral working groups for information exchange are established				
	Migrant and IDP children and their families are provided with information, counselling and assistance through reach-out activities and services				
	Networks of collaboration with other municipalities established aiming to follow children and protect them.				
	Advocacy with national authorities for more safe and legal channels for children to migrate and seek refuge				
	Advocacy with national authorities for increased financial resources to local governments				

## Action 2: End the immigration detention of children

- Within the limits of local competences, **establish and advocate for adequate funding for effective and accessible alternatives to detention** for all migrant and displaced children in the city, including those travelling with their families. Alternatives should respect children's right to liberty and family life (e.g. open family units) and prioritize community- and family-based solutions in the case of unaccompanied or separated children (e.g. group homes, foster care, and guardianship systems). This can be done through partnerships with local civil society and faith-based organizations providing such alternatives. Proximity and accessibility to local services is also key, not only to ensure that children can access schools, playgrounds, parks and recreational spaces, but also to foster interaction between newly arrived and local children.
- **Make available alternative care options** for unaccompanied and separated children, including by appointing, training, and monitoring qualified guardians.
- **Train local social and child protection services** and engage them in immigration proceedings, as they can provide relevant information to lawyers and judges about the specific circumstances of each child and support children and their families throughout the process. Training sessions should include identification of specific protection needs and situations of vulnerability (e.g. trafficking, gender-based violence). Municipal child-protection actors should have immediate access to children, assisting them from the moment they are placed in detention, identifying any specific needs, and providing psychosocial support.
- **Partner with law firms and professional associations** to provide legal assistance to children and families in detention facilities, informing them about existing alternatives to detention at the city level.
- Within the limits of municipal competences, **regularly monitor detention centres located within the city** (if they exist) through relevant independent organizations, ensuring that human rights and child protection standards are met, and that referral and complaint mechanisms are available and function properly, raising any issues identified in these centres with national authorities.
- Advocate with national authorities wherever relevant for the implementation of alternatives to detention and for legislation prohibiting the immigration detention of children. This can include facilitating or encouraging the gathering of new data and evidence showing the impact of immigration detention on children and the effectiveness of alternatives to detention. Being able to showcase good practices at the local level (e.g. a functioning pilot project) can influence national policy and contribute to raising national standards.

Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 2: End the immigration detention of children	Adequate funding for effective and accessible alternatives to detention are ensured				
	Alternative care options for unaccompanied and separated children are available				
	Staff from local social and child-protection services trained and engaged in immigration proceedings				
	Partnerships with law firms and professional associations established to provide legal assistance to children and families in detention facilities				
	Regular monitoring of detention centres located within the city/municipality (if they exist), through relevant independent organizations in place ensuring that human rights and child-protection standards are met				
	Advocacy with national authorities for alternatives to detention and for legislation prohibiting the immigration detention of children				

## Action 3: Keep families together and give children legal status

- Train municipal actors who welcome children and their families in child rights, and make all local processes and interactions related to family reunification child friendly.
- Provide information and assistance to migrants and displaced people who want to apply for family reunification, accompanying them throughout the process.
- Within the limits of local competences, facilitate that every child born in the city obtains a birth certificate, regardless of status.
- Whenever possible, facilitate effective access to official registration as city residents or to proof of residency for all refugee, migrant and IDP children and their parents regardless of status (e.g. through municipal ID cards, firewalls, information campaigns) to ensure access to basic local services and benefits.
- Advocate with national authorities wherever relevant to remove or ease restrictions to birth registration and to family reunification in law and practice (e.g. financial thresholds, age limits, definition of family), and to prioritize and accelerate applications made by children.
- Advocate with national authorities wherever relevant for more opportunities for families at all skill levels to seek refuge or migrate together, for instance by gathering evidence about better integration outcomes of families arriving together to the city.

Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 3: Keep families together and give children legal status	Municipal actors welcoming children and their families trained in child rights, and all local processes and interactions related to family reunification are child friendly				
	Migrants and displaced people have sufficient information and support for family reunification				
	Every child born in the city obtains a birth certificate regardless of status				
	Granting effective access to official registration as city residents or to proof of residency for all refugee, migrant and IDP children and their parents				
	Advocacy with national authorities to remove or ease restrictions to birth registration and to family reunification in law and practice				
	Gathering evidence about better integration outcomes of families arriving together to the city and using it for advocacy				

## Action 4: Keep every refugee, migrant and IDP child learning and give them access to health and other quality services

- Ensure immediate and effective access to quality early childhood development services (encompassing health, nutrition, protection and early learning) for all refugee, migrant and IDP children residing in the city.
- Ensure immediate and effective access to local health services for all children and families residing in the city regardless of status, including primary and preventive healthcare (immunization, prenatal care, nutrition and hygiene), as well as reproductive and psychosocial services. Proactive outreach through mobile teams of health and child protection professionals should be used where needed.
- Whenever possible, establish or support firewalls between local service providers and immigration authorities or law enforcement agencies, so undocumented children and their parents do not feel discouraged from using local services for fear of being detected, detained and returned. Municipal service cards or 'city passes' can be effective in allowing free access to a wide range of local services and benefits for children regardless of status (e.g. education, healthcare, immunization, public transport, cultural and sports facilities).
- Fund initiatives, develop capacity and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships to make local services responsive to the specific needs of refugee, migrant and IDP children and their parents, so they can overcome the barriers preventing them from accessing local services in practice. This can involve:
  - ensuring the transferability and recognition of education credits, skills and qualifications (including through on-site validation of academic credentials without original documents);
  - providing language support, mentoring programs and preparatory, reception, life-skills and catch-up classes;
  - employing sufficient qualified interpreters and intercultural mediators in local schools and health centres;
  - raising awareness of non-discrimination and introducing accountability mechanisms among service providers;
  - providing information to migrant and displaced children and their families about their rights and available services;
  - redesigning local social protection programs to include children from the moment they arrive to the city and regardless of status (e.g. housing vouchers, feeding programs, education grants, scholarships). This can also be achieved by providing strategic support to local community organizations to lead on these programs.

Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 4: Keep every refugee, migrant and IDP child learning and give them access to health and other quality services	Immediate and effective access to quality early childhood development (ECD) services ensured				
	Immediate and effective access to local health services for all children and families ensured				
	Undocumented children and their parents do not feel discouraged from using local services by immigration authorities or law enforcement agencies				
	The transferability and recognition of education credits, skills and qualifications ensured				
	Language support, mentoring programs and preparatory, reception, life-skills and catch-up classes provided				
	Sufficient qualified interpreters and intercultural mediators employed in local ECEC, schools and health centres				
	Local social protection programmes adapted to include children from the moment they arrive to the city and regardless of status				
	Local community organizations supported to implement different programs				

## Action 5: Address the underlying causes that uproot children from their homes

- Cities of departure can establish mechanisms for child participation in local governance, in order to better understand and be able to address child-specific migration drivers (e.g. gang violence). This can also include exchanging knowledge and collaborating with other cities, including those where local children tend to move.
- Cities of departure can support services for vulnerable children in an effort to prevent unsafe migration (e.g. recreational activities, bridging programs for out-of-school children, psychosocial support services).
- Cities of arrival can partner with and galvanize investments in cities of departure, providing funding and technical support to strengthen child protection systems and basic services (focusing in particular on early childhood and adolescence) and to realize children's rights.
- Cities of arrival can strengthen transnational links between local diasporas and their cities of departure, developing formal and informal networks and promoting investments and transfers of financial and social remittances.
- All communities can inform and raise awareness among residents about what drives children and families from their homes.
- All municipalities can advocate with their national governments to direct international cooperation and aid to address child-specific drivers of migration, including investing in strengthening child protection and other systems.



Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 5: Address the underlying causes that uproot children from their homes (applies only to cities of departure and arrival)	Mechanisms for child participation in local governance in place, and IDP and other children on the move are involved in cities of departure				
	Services for vulnerable children provided in an effort to prevent unsafe migration in cities of departure				
	Cities of arrival partner with and galvanize investments in cities of departure, providing funding and technical support to strengthen child-protection systems and basic services				
	Cities of arrival are strengthening transnational links between local diasporas and cities of departure, by developing formal and informal networks and promoting investments and transfers of financial and social remittances				
	Information shared and awareness raised about what drives children and families from their homes				

## Action 6: Promote measures to combat xenophobia and discrimination (1/2)

- End any discrimination in local legal and policy frameworks on the basis of migration, asylum, nationality or residence status, as well as all practices that criminalize undocumented stays in the city.
- Treat migrant and displaced children and their families as citizens from the moment they arrive to prevent stigmatization and isolation, approaching them as one vulnerable group of children among others, and creating opportunities for two-way communication and personal interaction that allow long-time residents to get to know those who have just arrived (e.g. who they are, where they live, what they do). Local actors (e.g. businesses, sports clubs, cultural institutions, faith-based and civil-society organizations) are necessary partners in these efforts – their welcoming activities can be presented not as an exception, but as the norm, serving as inspiration to other citizens.
- Promote social solidarity, mutual trust and understanding, and daily exchanges between refugee, migrant and IDP children and young people and their local peers, giving them a voice through participation and engagement, and empowering them as agents of change and potential bridges, mediators, or connectors across their respective communities. Identifying and making visible common values and aspirations is key.
- Create spaces where refugee, migrant and IDP children can participate in a meaningful way – together with local children and other local stakeholders – in municipal governance and decision-making processes, developing their capacity to mobilize, network and hold district and city authorities accountable for protecting and realizing their rights. This can include supporting place-making processes to create or adapt public spaces, playgrounds, and other social infrastructure for and with children and youth, as well as involving them in other participatory and area-based interventions.
- Support entrepreneurship and access to the labour market among refugee, migrant and IDP young people, including through training, peer-to-peer and mentoring schemes. Leveraging partnerships with local businesses can be a game-changer in this area of work.
- Use neighbourhood planning to avoid social exclusion of refugee, migrant and IDP communities and other disadvantaged populations (e.g. neighbourhood development programmes, public spaces, transportation, connectivity). Local development planning should always anticipate the physical expansion of fast-growing municipalities, including the availability of affordable housing and accessible services for new arrivals. Furthermore, the needs of refugee, migrant and IDP children should be mainstreamed within existing development plans, particularly capital investment plans and medium-term expenditure frameworks.

## Action 6: Promote measures to combat xenophobia and discrimination (2/2)

- Adapt land-use planning and building regulations (e.g. through temporary waivers) to provide adapted housing development schemes for refugees, migrants and IDPs. This can involve new or existing infrastructure (e.g. vacant lots and buildings, former office spaces, public facilities).
- Provide incentives and technical advice to encourage local communities, private and public housing developers, and individual homeowners to develop innovative housing schemes to accommodate refugee, migrant and IDP children and their families (e.g. hosting them at home, renting adequate housing in the neighbourhood through crowdsourcing, integrating new arrivals in daily community activities through support groups and neighbourhood schemes). Gather, analyse, and make available quality disaggregated data about the situation of local migrant and displaced children in order to monitor, evaluate and adjust relevant initiatives. Partnerships with service providers can be key in achieving this, especially with regard to data about undocumented populations.
- Adequately fund and develop the local capacity to address the specific needs of refugee, migrant and IDP children and their parents, and to overcome the barriers that prevent them from accessing local services through targeted programmes and interventions (see above under priority 4). This should include not only municipal government staff, but community organizations as well, and could also be achieved by mainstreaming issues related to migration and displacement into existing local training programmes. The aim is to empower and equip local government actors and key implementing partners to identify innovative initiatives, learn from them, and scale them up.
- Empower, equip, engage and partner with local leaders, stakeholders and influencers across the board (e.g. businesses, media, faith-based organizations, community representatives, political parties, children and young people) to design and implement initiatives that promote positive and welcoming attitudes towards refugees, migrants and IDPs, as well as their economic, social, cultural and political inclusion and participation, based on their own knowledge of the needs and assets of their respective communities (e.g. sharing stories of positive inclusion).

Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
Action 6: Promote measures to combat xenophobia and discrimination	Local legal and policy frameworks are bias-free				
	Migrant and displaced children and their families are treated as citizens from the moment they arrive				
	Social solidarity, mutual trust, understanding and interactions between refugee, migrant and IDP children and young people and their local peers are promoted and supported				
	Spaces where refugee, migrant and IDP children can participate in a meaningful way are created				
	Entrepreneurship and access to the labour market among refugee, migrant and IDPs are supported				
	Neighbourhood planning is used to avoid social exclusion of refugee, migrant and IDP communities and other disadvantaged populations				
	Land-use planning and building regulations are adapted				
	Incentives and technical advice to encourage local communities, private and public housing developers, and individual homeowners to develop innovative housing schemes				
	Quality disaggregated data about the situation of local migrant and displaced children are gathered, analyzed and made available				

Guiding measures		Level of priority	Level of implementation	Level of difficulty implementation	Plans for implementation
		High/ Medium/ Low	Implemented/ In process / Not implemented	Low/ Medium/ Difficult/ Not feasible	Yes / No
	Local capacity to address the specific needs of refugee, migrant and IDP children and their parents are developed and adequately funded				
	Local leaders, stakeholders and influencers across the board are empowered, equipped, and engaged to design and implement initiatives that promote positive and welcoming attitudes towards refugees, migrants and IDPs				

## Guidance in using the Tool

The implementation of the Tool can be organized in at least two different ways.

- Address all six actions and respective guiding measures. These are suggested steps.

Start with Action one, read the explanatory text and, based on it, assess each guiding measure by using the grid.

Repeat the same process with the remaining five actions.

Discuss the results, agree on the priorities, plans and steps that should be taken.

- Focus on priority actions.

Read the explanatory texts for all actions and focus only on those that you find relevant for your context.

Assess selected actions by using the correlative grids.

Discuss the results, agreeing on the priorities, plans and steps that should be taken.

## Useful tips



- The process of assessment should be democratic and participatory. This would benefit the assessment by bringing together different perspectives.
- Dialogue during the assessment will help build and strengthen connections between different stakeholders across sectors and system levels.
- It is very important to pace the work on assessment; in many cases only one or a maximum of two actions can be addressed during one meeting.
- Assessment should result in the development or strengthening of existing plans.
- Some of guiding measures or actions will not be applicable for every local government, so the adaptation of the Tool is recommended.

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### **Tool 7: Holistically approaching the needs of refugee children and their caregivers<sup>31</sup>**

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**Expected outcome:** Services are accessible and responsive to the needs of young refugee children, holistically addressing their safety, mental health and development

**Leading role:** Mayor's office

**Participants in the process:** Members of the early childhood local coordination team, representatives of various types of service across sectors (social protection and welfare, education, health)

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<sup>31</sup> Adapted from [Ukraine refugee response in neighbouring countries: Guidance for Local Authorities \(unicef.org\)](#)

## Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool builds on five key recommendations that have been developed based on the findings from the refugee response due to the war in Ukraine in the neighbouring countries. The main recommendations regarding the measures to be taken by local governments to ensure a smooth reception and integration of young refugee and their families are as follows.

- Ensure accurate identification and registration systems for children and caregivers to protect them and allow them access to basic services.
- Ensure the provision of emergency protection and mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS).
- Ensure that the local response meets the needs of the refugee population and hosting communities, by strengthening or setting up regular feedback mechanisms, and improving participation in local decision-making.
- Promote child and youth participation and empowerment.
- Ensure that key local services for children are available and adapted to refugee children.

In the tool, each recommendation is accompanied by guiding measures to be taken in line with the recommendation.

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
Ensure accurate identification and registration systems for children and caregivers to protect and allow them access to basic services	Facilitate and support the identification and registration of refugee families and children into national child-protection systems, using a child-friendly process. Particular attention should be paid to unaccompanied and separated children, including those evacuated from residential care arrangements.		
	Distribute specific, clear and child-friendly information about the registration process and access to services available, in formats accessible for children with specific needs, such as children with disabilities. Local authorities' communication channels could be used to send clear messages in a language the affected population understands, stressing the need to register children and vulnerable groups.		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	<p><b>Ensure that registration of children and women is linked to access to health services</b>, by offering benefits linked to financial mechanisms covering medical costs, and enrolment in health programmes promoting vaccination and access to primary healthcare services, especially for mothers and children. Use registration as an opportunity to share materials in Ukrainian, illustrating where, when, and how health services can be accessed, and where translation services are available.</p>		
	<p><b>Create safe spaces for children and caregivers at border crossings and other strategic sites</b> in collaboration with national authorities, international organizations and partners to provide practical support and information to children, women and caregivers in their onward journeys. Safe spaces should be linked with national child-protection systems and provide specialist support for those in need of protection, such as children on their own, adolescents, women with young children, persons with disabilities or survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Child-friendly spaces should offer a welcoming space for children to rest, play and be a child.</p>		
	<p>Introduce or strengthen, in coordination with national authorities, <b>mechanisms to train volunteers and volunteer organizations that can respond to emergencies</b>, requiring them to undergo official vetting and registration procedures. This is critical for all volunteers and volunteer organizations working at border-crossing points, other transit points and reception facilities. Monitor and intervene to coordinate, manage/regulate, or eventually take over parallel initiatives led by the private sector, volunteers and individuals, which might involve risks for refugees. This work should systematically monitor online and offline risks, such as</p>		



Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	platforms where information is shared on housing and employment, daycare and educational opportunities.		
	<p><b>Ensure safe, accessible, sensitive and child-friendly reception and housing arrangements</b> for children, caregivers and women. If private accommodation is not an option, and if children are to be housed in collective or shared accommodation centres, this accommodation must be designed to meet the needs of children and women – including their specific needs based on gender, age and disability – and to meet minimum child-protection and safeguarding standards to prevent child sexual exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). Appropriate care includes foster care and small-scale, high-quality, integrated residential care. Large institutional care, and prolonged care in shelters, should be avoided. Community sponsorship schemes are not appropriate for children deprived of family-based care.</p>		
	Collect disaggregated data on the sex, age and disability of refugees. Data are key to informing strategic directions, policies and programmes aiming to welcome and facilitate the social inclusion of children and caregivers.		
<p><b>Ensure the provision of emergency protection and mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS)</b></p>	<p>Strengthen the capacities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>frontline workers</b> (such as facilitators, educators, health professionals and local police) on critical child protection issues, including gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, to ensure adequate care and a safe environment for every child. It is important to develop and strengthen</li> </ul>		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	<p>Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), protocols and coordinated response mechanisms on child safeguarding (for example, how to respond to the disclosure of cases of violence or sexual abuse across sectors and service providers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>municipal stakeholders</b> (such as lawyers, legal guardians, teachers and local civil society organizations) on child rights and other critical child protection and GBV services.</li> </ul>		
	<p>Establish and promote <b>clear identification, referral and response pathways and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for women and children</b>, particularly children with disabilities who face heightened risks and vulnerabilities, such as GBV and human trafficking.</p>		
	<p>Introduce or <b>strengthen child rights monitoring and referral mechanisms</b>, as well as <b>child-protection information and case management</b> to promote evidence-based and needs-informed child protection interventions (such as multi-stakeholder identification and referral mechanisms for children who are the victims of violence, abuse or exploitation).</p>		
	<p>Ensure that children and their caregivers <b>have access to essential mental health and psychosocial care (MHPSS)</b>, including in <b>daycare centres, non-formal play and learning hubs, and schools</b>. Additional support should be available for those with more severe needs, including support for parenting and caregiving. MHPSS services should be prioritized across all services put in place for children and their caregivers, such as health, protection and</p>		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	education. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that mental health services are accessible to refugees and that Ukrainian-speaking counsellors are available as needed.		
<p data-bbox="204 913 411 1189"><b>Ensure that the local response meets the needs of the refugee population and hosting communities, by strengthening or setting up regular feedback mechanisms, and improving participation in local decision-making</b></p>	Create safe spaces where refugees, children and youth from hosting communities and other stakeholders can participate in a sensitive, inclusive and meaningful way in municipal governance and decision-making processes. These spaces should help them develop their capacity to mobilize, network and hold district and city authorities to account for protecting and realizing their rights. The process can include 'place-making' to create or adapt public spaces, playgrounds, and other social infrastructure for and with children and youth, and the involvement of those with disabilities and particular needs related to gender.		
	Set up or strengthen social listening mechanisms to understand what refugees and host communities feel, need and are worried about, to guide timely and evidence-based actions (through periodical assessments, surveys and social media monitoring). Mechanisms must be inclusive and sensitive to the needs of different configurations of families and caregivers (e.g., single mothers, grandparents as caregivers) in the context.		
	Promote and enhance safe and confidential feedback and complaint mechanisms. These mechanisms should be inclusive, child- and disability-friendly and accessible, and should build on existing community structures. They should use feedback to adjust the response where needed.		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
<p><b>Promote child and youth participation and empowerment</b></p>	<p>Build mechanisms for dialogue and youth participation in local decision-making, and create opportunities for inclusive dialogue with adolescent boys and girls. This could include organizing townhall meetings, ‘meet the mayor’ conversations, regular online consultations (including through U-Report Europe Connecting Ukrainians, exchanges in local social media, and the mobilization of young influencers and bloggers. Regardless of the engagement type, provide a safe and respectful space in which adolescents can participate, ensuring a readiness to listen to and take their views seriously. Youth are also crucial actors in strengthening peace and security. They are positive and constructive social agents who play an essential role in building a sustainable peace.</p>		
	<p>Create innovative solutions for promoting social cohesion through creative expression and participation in local events and initiatives for both girls and boys. These could include activities related to sports, arts, outings in nature, cultural and language exchanges, as well as initiatives around climate action. Local authorities could also support the development of ‘buddy programmes’ to link local and refugee youth and adolescents. Those activities will directly contribute to building resilience and solidarity among peers.</p>		
<p><b>Ensure that key local services for children are available for and adapted to refugee children</b></p>	<p>Accelerate reforms and plans to expand ECEC services for all young children and ensure access and integration of young refugee children in ECEC, with a focus on provision of diverse and flexible modalities of early learning. This means delivering flexible, holistic formal and non-formal programmes that are linked to the needs of refugee children and their families. Rapid ECEC expansion can take on multiple</p>		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	<p>modalities, including refurbishing existing spaces, setting up modular kindergartens or non-formal play and learning hubs where children have opportunities to play, learn and interact and minimize disruptions to learning and development caused by conflict and displacement.</p> <p>Ensure a clear link between non-formal and formal ECEC programmes to facilitate mainstreaming and enrolment of children into formal learning systems. This can support refugee children's integration into formal systems and host communities. For instance, in Slovakia, UNICEF and partners have established non-formal play and learning hubs targeting children and their families as forms of alternative ECEC, with municipalities engaged from the outset in providing the public spaces and planning professional development activities for ECEC staff.</p>		
	<p>Capitalize on existing resources to meet the additional demand for ECEC services. This should include physical resources to provide the spaces and materials for quality early-learning experiences, and human resources to meet an increased need for ECEC educators. This can include leveraging existing infrastructure, such as public libraries, playgrounds, or other community spaces. In terms of expanding the qualified teaching workforce to meet the additional demand for ECEC, this could be done by: 1) rapidly employing more educators from the host and refugee communities; 2) providing professional development opportunities for new and existing educators; and 3) ensuring positive working conditions for the ECEC workforce.</p>		
	<p>Engage refugee caregivers in order to support them in navigating the local ECEC system and to increase their</p>		

Recommendation	Guiding measures	In place/ in progress/ not in place	High/medium/low priority
	<p>knowledge of ways to provide early-learning experiences for their children at home, which is especially essential in the absence of a sufficient number of ECEC services. Caregivers impact their child's development, socioemotional well-being, learning and home environment, and their engagement is crucial. They can be engaged directly through formal and non-formal ECEC centres. For example, PrimoHUB (a play, learning and parenting hub implemented in Romania with the support of UNICEF, Romania's Ministry of Education and the Step by Step Centre for Education and Professional Development) has engaged caregivers of children aged up to six to increase their parenting skills.</p>		





Building Block 4: Moving towards a whole-local government early childhood strategy

## Overview of the tools in the Building Block 4

### Main purpose

The tools in this building block are aimed at supporting local governments in developing a local early childhood strategy that is informed by data analysis regarding the local context, needs, priorities and resources. They build on the outcomes of the usage of the tools in the previous building blocks.

### List of tools

Tool 1: Situation analysis of the local early childhood system

Tool 2: Local map of early childhood services: Systems Classification of Interventions (SysClass)

Tool 3: Situation analysis regarding Early Childhood Development (SITAN)

Tool 4: Managing complex change – planning the improvement of the local early childhood system

Tool 5: Assessing the whole-local government capacity for improving the local early childhood systems

Tool 6: Developing an early childhood development strategy at the municipal/city level

Tool 7: Action plan for improving early childhood services

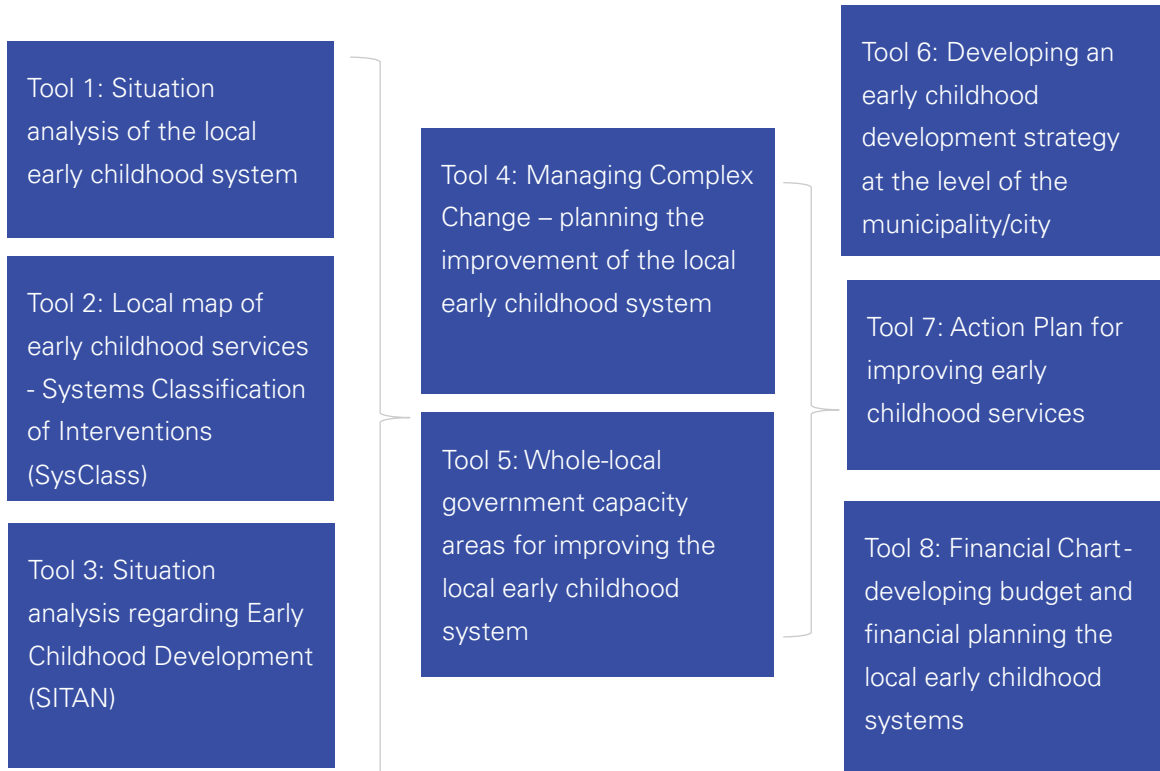
Tool 8: Financial chart – developing a budget and financial planning

### Links between the tools

The tools provide different contributions to the process of early childhood strategy development. They can be used independently, depending on the previous experiences that local governments had in developing such strategies. While it is not mandatory to use all the tools, some of them are guiding processes that are required for a data-informed strategy that reflects the needs and priorities related to the local early childhood system and its services.



**Map of the tools:**



**PURPOSE 1:** Conducting data collection, mapping, and analysis on the local early childhood system to inform priorities and the development of local strategies

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### **Tool 1: Situation analysis of the local early childhood system**

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**Expected outcome:** The collection of data related to local early childhood policy, local actors and capacity context

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the diverse early childhood services, and local actors

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#### **Brief overview of the Tool<sup>32</sup>**

- The Tool offers guidance on the type of questions that would lead to the collection of relevant data regarding the local early childhood system's governance capacity, and the capacity of local actors/governments to mobilize and address critical issues related to young children and their families across geographies and demographics within a local territory. The Tool focuses on key aspects such as:
  - national and local data/policy context and governance;
  - mapping local actors/services;
  - the existing capacity at the local level to address various early childhood system issues, to collect and process data, to make decisions and coordinate solutions – material and non-material resources;
  - the local system's geographic coverage and a map of capacities across the local territory.

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<sup>32</sup>The tool is adapted from UNICEF's ['New generation situation analysis'](#) (2019)

## PREPARATION PHASE OF THE SUBNATIONAL/LOCAL SITUATION ANALYSIS

1. What is the desired scope and depth of the situation analysis? Should the situation analysis focus on specific region(s), district(s), city(ies) or neighbourhood(s) (e.g., urban slums)?
2. What kind of data and analyses pertaining to young children up to the age of entering primary school is available? How granular/geographically disaggregated is this data?
3. What national and subnational laws, policies and regulations can provide information on key local actors and institutions, their roles and responsibilities as well as influential local processes (e.g., local budgeting)?
4. What kind of data/analysis is available about subnational resource allocation, subnational budgets and subnational public financial management?
5. Have any subnational capacity assessments, political economy analyses or power analyses been conducted that can inform the subnational/local situation analysis?
6. What alternative means of data collection could complement existing data or fill in data gaps (e.g., key informant interviews or focus group discussions with local stakeholders, associations, civil society or academia)?

## ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL SITUATION ANALYSIS

1. In which geographic locations are shortages in addressing children's and families' needs concentrated?
2. What are the main risks (e.g., conflict, disaster, climate change, rapid urbanization) and deprivations that children and families face in these geographic locations?
3. How do formal local and national laws, policies and regulations, including in regard to decentralization, influence risk and deprivations in specific geographic locations?
4. Which actors or institutions have (formal/informal) roles and responsibilities in addressing the risks and deprivations in these geographic locations (e.g., local and regional government, subnational ministry departments, private sector)? Are their roles and responsibilities clear, or do they have overlapping mandates? Are there any gaps in their roles and responsibilities?
5. What resources and capacities can these actors and institutions use to address the risks and deprivations in these geographic locations? This includes: the availability of data and evidence on risks and deprivations; capacity for evidence-based plans/budgets and availability of financial resources to address identified risks and deprivations; effective participatory and accountability mechanisms; vertical/horizontal coordination, management capacity (e.g., human resources/procurement/contracting and regulation); and technical know-how pertaining to service delivery.

## ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL SITUATION ANALYSIS

6. Are there any political and/or economic factors that influence the capacity, resources and/or willingness of actors and institutions to address risks and deprivations in these geographic locations (e.g., informality; historic exclusion of certain geographic areas or groups; political relationships between levels of government or between subnational actors; patronage systems; influential elites)?
7. What capacities and resources do communities have to address risks and deprivations in these geographic locations? This includes: knowledge; available (financial) resources; social cohesion; access to information and participatory mechanisms; and capacity to act collectively and participate in and influence local decision-making.
8. Is there any significant variation across geographic locations in regard to any of the above questions? For instance, are there any variations in terms of actors/institutions; formal/informal roles and responsibilities of actors/institutions; resources and capacity; political economy factors; community capacity, etc.? Do these variations have any programming implications or for the scaling of approaches?
9. What are government and other development partners doing to address risks and deprivations in these geographic locations and/or their underlying causes? What are their priorities? What are the gaps in these efforts, particularly from a child's perspective?

## VALIDATION OF THE LOCAL SITUATION ANALYSIS

1. Have national and subnational counterparts, development partners, child-rights stakeholders and communities contributed to or reviewed the situation analysis?

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## **Tool 2: Local map of early childhood services: Systems Classification of Interventions (SysClass)<sup>33</sup>**

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**Expected outcome:** Map of existing services in community, categorized by sector and target group and a shared understanding of the current situation

**Leading role:** Mayor's office representative

**Participants in the process:** Representatives responsible for the different early childhood sectors and services

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### **Brief overview of the Tool**

The SysClassTool is a categorized inventory of early childhood services across different sectors available in the community at a certain date. The chart can help local governments map the range of services that exist in the communities and their geographical coverage.

Note: The Tool proposes certain types of service within the education, social and health sectors. You may consider expanding the Tool by including other sectors and other types of services that do contribute formally, non-formally or informally to young children's development and well-being (e.g. libraries, museums, etc.)

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<sup>33</sup>Tool retrieved from '[INTESYS Toolkit: Towards Integrated Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – Building the Foundations](#)' (p. 18), adapted from Bezze, M., Faenzi, G., Lippl, A., Paganelli, L., Pompei, A., e Vecchiato, T., 'La classificazione dei servizi e degli interventi sociali' [The classification of social services and interventions], in *Studi Zancan* 2, (2005); Ezell, M., Spath, R., Zeira, A., Canali, C., Fernandez, E., Thoburn, J., Vecchiato, T., 'An international classification system for child welfare programs', in *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 10, (2011), pp. 1847–1854; Bezze, M., Canali, C., Geron, D., Innocenti, E., Vecchiato, T. (2014), 'Orientarsi nei servizi per l'infanzia' [Finding the way in childhood services], *Quaderno TFIEY* n.3; TFIEY-Italia (2016), 'Investire nell'infanzia è coltivare la vita. Il futuro è nelle nostre mani' [Investing in childhood is nurturing life. The future is in our hands], Il Mulino, Bologna.

		Ownership			Target		
		Public	Private	Private no profit	Specific	General	Parents
					0–6	0–18	
<b>Home-based service</b>	<i>Home care</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Cash benefits</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Other home interventions</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Health home visiting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Paediatrician (at home)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Daycare services</b>	<i>Daycare centre (0–3 years)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Pre-school/kindergarten (3–6 years)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Centre for children and families</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Play centre</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Library</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Cultural mediation service</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Foster care (daily)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Social assistance/support/care</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Service for parents</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Other socialization activity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Paediatrician (ambulatory)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Birth pathways</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Vaccination programme</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ambulatory rehabilitation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Residential care</b>	<i>Foster family care</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Residential setting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Therapeutic Residential setting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Rehabilitation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Hospital</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Emergency</b>	<i>Social emergency</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Health emergency</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Educational sector

Social sector

Health sector



## Guidance in using the Tool

Gather information from key sector stakeholders about all the early childhood services available (or potentially available) to young children and their families in the community and consolidate it in a database.

### Useful tips



- This Tool can be enriched by adding services which are relevant to your context.
- This Tool can be very useful if you want to know what services are available and also if you want to learn how much the members of your Local Action Teams know about the services.
- You can also share this Tool in advance with your stakeholders and ask them to complete it with peers in their service and also with parents and children. They can fill it in prior to the meeting and then, during the meeting, you can compare the results and create a comprehensive map of services by integrating all the results.

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### Tool 3: Situation Analysis regarding Early Childhood Development<sup>34</sup>

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**Expected outcome:** structured approach to assess current ECD provisions and identify areas for improvement

**Leading role:** Mayor's office representative

**Participants in the process:** Representatives responsible for the different early childhood sectors and services

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#### Brief overview of the Tool

The **Early Childhood Development Country Situation Analysis (SITAN)** Assessment tool was developed by WHO Europe and UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia to support countries in achieving optimal development of all children. The purpose of this tool is to map and analyse country provisions in support of ECD. Such an analysis can be used as a starting point for future planning and development of ECD policies and programmes or to assess progress that has already been made. The tool is designed as a questionnaire that is informed by the guiding principles and action points of the European Framework, while also reflecting the complexity of issues concerning ECD. The tool is comprehensive and can be used either to prepare a baseline assessment of the national regulatory framework and available ECD services or to assess progress in all or some of the areas supporting optimal ECD.

It serves as an inspiration for local governments in conducting a situation analysis at the local level.

#### Detailed Tool Components

##### 1. Introduction

**Purpose and Scope:** This tool aims to help local governments conduct a thorough analysis of their current early childhood development policies, services, and programs. The assessment will identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement to inform policy decisions and strategic planning.

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<sup>34</sup>The Tool was developed based on the **Early Childhood Development country situation analysis. Assessment tool and methodological Guidance**, developed by WHO Europe and UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia published in June 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/early-childhood-development-country-situation-analysis>



Importance of ECD: Early Childhood Development is critical for the overall well-being, health, and future potential of children. Effective ECD policies can significantly reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## 2. Priority Areas, Goals, and Measures

### Health and Nutrition:

- Goal: Ensure all children have access to essential health services and proper nutrition.
- Measures:
  - Availability of prenatal and postnatal care services
  - Immunization coverage rates
  - Access to nutritional programs for children and mothers

### Child Protection and Safety:

- Goal: Safeguard children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Measures:
  - Existence of child protection policies
  - Availability of support services for vulnerable children
  - Training programs for caregivers on child safety

### Early Learning and Education:

- Goal: Provide inclusive and high-quality early learning opportunities.
- Measures:
  - Enrollment rates in pre-primary education
  - Availability of early learning programs
  - Quality of early childhood education centers

### Parenting and Family Support:

- Goal: Strengthen the capacities of parents and caregivers.
- Measures:
  - Availability of parenting programs and resources
  - Access to family counseling services
  - Community support networks for families

## Guidance in using the Tool

### Step 1: Define Assessment Purpose and Stakeholders

- Identify the specific objectives of the assessment.
- Determine key stakeholders, including government departments, NGOs, community leaders, parents, and service providers.

### Step 2: Conduct a Desk Review

- Review existing policies, reports, and data on ECD.
- Compile information on current ECD services and programs.

### Step 3: Conduct Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

- Engage with stakeholders through interviews and focus groups to gather qualitative data.
- Explore experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement from various perspectives.

### Step 4: Validate Findings and Develop the Assessment Report

- Analyze the data collected and validate findings with stakeholders.

- Prepare a comprehensive report outlining the current state of ECD, gaps, and recommendations.

#### Step 5: Utilize the Assessment Findings

- Use the assessment report to inform policy decisions and strategic planning.
- Prioritize actions based on identified needs and available resources.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of improvements.

## Implementation Guide for Local Governments

### 1. Initial Planning:

- Form an ECD assessment task force.
- Define the scope and objectives of the assessment.
- Identify funding and resources required.

### 2. Data Collection:

- Use surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather data.
- Ensure diverse representation from all community segments.

### 3. Analysis and Reporting:

- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data.
- Prepare a report with clear findings and actionable recommendations.

### 4. Action Plan Development:

- Develop a strategic action plan based on the assessment findings.
- Set measurable goals and timelines for implementation.

### 5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish mechanisms to monitor progress.
- Conduct periodic evaluations to assess impact and make necessary adjustments.

The Local Government ECD Assessment Tool provides a structured framework for evaluating and enhancing early childhood development services. By following the steps outlined, local governments can ensure that all children receive the support they need to thrive, contributing to healthier, more equitable communities.

This tool can be customized to fit the specific context and needs of each local government, ensuring relevance and effectiveness in improving early childhood development outcomes.

### Useful reading: findings from a literature review<sup>35</sup> on effective coordination across sectors/institutions

- A quasi-experimental study in England showed that the **integration of services, including daycare and health services, as well as services for parents** (i.e. employment, housing) in Sure Start Children's Homes (SSCHs), has proven to have a substantial impact on both children's outcomes and poverty.<sup>36</sup> The model has also been implemented in Hungary for disadvantaged children (including Roma), funded by the ESF and the Norwegian Fund. Despite the important structural and governance challenges of the project, it has confirmed the positive outcomes (on enrolment, children's social skills, parental competences and parent-staff communication).<sup>37</sup>
- Vulnerable families may have intersectional needs and demands (e.g. based on ethnicity, gender or disability, even simultaneously). Provisions that do not foresee multiple and changing needs and the demands of vulnerable or hard-to-reach families might lack sustainability in the long term. It may be necessary to **network closely with other welfare organizations, housing organizations, employment offices and other public or NGO-run services** that address the needs of families in poverty, including material needs. It may also require **networking with specialized staff** (such as speech and other therapists, or specialists in post-traumatic stress) to provide institutional support and capacity development.<sup>38</sup>
- One of the **main principles of the EU Child Union** is that ECEC **must positively interact with expanded social protection and labour policies to tackle structural inequalities** as risk factors for children's development. These include a universal basic income for children or income transfer schemes that benefit children, active labour market policies to stimulate employment (particularly female employment), a statutory minimum wage, adequate parental leave (for both mothers and fathers) and housing.<sup>39</sup>
- In Germany, local **networks of social services** can provide support for single parents who struggle with daily challenges. Members of these networks can be educational institutions, local authorities, social security agencies, local alliances or self-help groups. The networks aim

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<sup>35</sup> Ionescu, M., Trikić, Z., Alayli, A. (2022) 'Effective outreach to young children and families at risk of poverty and exclusion'. Literature Review – Summary of findings (Unpublished manuscript), ISSA

<sup>36</sup> Melhuish, et al. (2008) Effects of the home learning environment and preschool center experience upon literacy and numeracy development in early primary school. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64 (1), 95-114

<sup>37</sup> Scholz, A., Erhard, K., Hahn, S., & Harring, D. (2019) 'Inequalities in access to early childhood education and care in Germany,' *International Centre Early Childhood Education and Care, Working Paper, 2*

<sup>38</sup> Idem, p. 66.

<sup>39</sup> Morabito, C., & Vandenbroeck, M. (2020) 'Towards a child union! Reducing inequalities in the EU through investments in children's early years.'

to integrate existing services, improve their coordination and make them known to single parents.<sup>40</sup>

- In Scotland, the NHS Health Scotland's tool aims to stimulate and encourage action to reduce child poverty by applying **an evidence-based approach to work collaboratively at the local level in reaching out to the most vulnerable**. This tool emphasizes the importance of local needs in terms of the level of need for services, the gap between need, supply and the patterns of services and their effectiveness. Assessments are suggested to focus on six priority groups: **single parents, households where a member has a disability, three or more children in the household, ethnic minorities, households where the youngest child is under one year of age and mothers aged younger than 25**. Based on this first step, the mapping of existing practices and how effective they are should be examined. This Tool employs a holistic approach. It focuses on the cost of living, maximizing income and social security income and benefits instead of only reducing childcare fees. It aims to ensure access to childcare by overall income maximization.<sup>41</sup>
- In Australia, the Australian Government's Family Support Programme (FSP) requires service providers funded by the programme to establish a Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access strategy. The essential criterion for this strategy **is collaboration between governments, services and community sectors (health, local networks, family law and child welfare)**. It is accepted that collaboration is crucial in terms of the timely **connection of vulnerable families to the appropriate services and support programmes, providing correct information about a wide range of services to all families and providing well-coordinated support to families and children at risk as early as possible**. This collaborative approach is adopted in terms of its significant benefits regarding the best response to addressing the needs of vulnerable families in comparison to single disciplinary approaches. For successful and sustainable collaboration, organizations also need to set out in detail the levels of collaboration concerning:
  - **networking**: establishing a shared understanding;
  - **coordination**: building strong relationships, with *champions* leading the action;
  - **service integration**: this requires the highest level of collaboration, in which service systems are brought together and families and community leaders are involved in the design.

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<sup>40</sup> Jordan, V., Stewart, K. & Janta, B. (2019) 'Mechanisms supporting single parents across the European Union, European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC).' Retrieved from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3ade5c22-b4d7-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>41</sup> Mcadams, R. (2018) 'A sample outcomes planning tool for local action to tackle child poverty,' NHS Health Scotland

As cross-cutting criteria in addition to levels of collaboration, the following aspects were also considered:

- organizations had to provide evidence that children and families were **at the centre of collaboration**;
- **authorization of collaboration at all levels** with governance support through communication and shared planning mechanisms;
- **shared practices** and actively linking families and children to the services.<sup>42</sup>

## PURPOSE 2: Developing and jointly making decisions on a local early childhood strategy

### Tool 4: Managing complex change – planning the improvement of the local early childhood system

**Expected outcome:** Shared understanding of the key elements of a plan to manage complex change

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality

#### Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool provides a good starting point in approaching the process of developing a local early childhood strategy. The early childhood system is complex and based on the data collected, specific priorities will have been chosen which might require complex actions.

The Managing complex change Tool brings attention to the close interconnectedness between key elements of a successful plan and the potential risks that might occur if key elements in a complex change are not considered.

The key elements that are included are as follows.

<sup>42</sup> Robinson, E., Scott, D., Meredith, V., Nair, L., & Higgins, D. (2012) 'Good and innovative practice in service delivery to vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children,' *Child Family Community Australia Information Exchange*, (9)

- **Vision:** the driver of the change
- **Skills:** the capacity to create change
- **Incentives:** sustain motivation to bring about the change
- **Resources:** providing appropriate and sufficient resources
- **Goals:** having clear goals for the proposed vision
- **Action plan:** articulate appropriate and coordinated activities, with clear responsibilities among different categories of actors/stakeholders, with a feasible timeline
- **Assessment:** ensure that progress/results are measured against the set priorities and goals and inform improvements

### Guidance in using the Tool

- Convene a meeting with stakeholders representing the services and the community, who are key to the process of ensuring higher coordination in, and improved, local early childhood system. Present the 'managing complex change' chart below (Table 1).
- Ask for spontaneous comments on what can be seen, and what is being represented. Go through each of the components and clarify its elements (Table 2).
- Lead discussions using the questions for reflection. Depending on the degree of integration in the system, any endeavour to move towards greater integration may require complex changes. The model below can help understand the critical elements of any process of change that might create confusion, anxiety, resistance to change, frustration or a failure from the very start, if all are not taken into account from the beginning of the process.
- When discussing the changes needed, use the model below<sup>43</sup> to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the process of planning and implementing integration, and reflect on how the weaknesses can be addressed to advance from confusion to success.

### Questions for reflection

- What are the elements of a good VISION? How can it support the rights of children and families and meet their needs? Do we have a vision? If not, how can we create one that inspires our services?

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<sup>43</sup> Adapted from Knoster, T. (1991), presentation at the TASH Conference. Washington, D.C. Adapted by Knoster from Enterprise Group, Ltd.

- What SKILLS are needed for integration to function? What kind of workforce is needed? Professional development and support? What kind of leadership?
- What INCENTIVES are needed? What can we gain, individually and collectively, by engaging in a process of better integration of services?
- What kinds of RESOURCES are needed? How can we find the financial resources, training, or other materials needed to initiate and sustain the process of change?
- How shall we formulate GOALS? What is the baseline and how will you know that you have made progress in achieving the outcomes?
- How will we decide on ACTIVITIES? What are the timelines? Are roles and responsibilities defined? What are the benchmarks?
- Looking at all the critical components of change, where do you feel we are stronger and weaker? What measures could be set in place to build on our strengths, and minimize our weaknesses?

## Useful tips



- This tool might be useful for empowering your stakeholders and helping them understand why some of their plans and ideas are not working.
- This tool should not discourage them – it needs to give them a comprehensive picture of the complexity of the process they are going through and what they have to take care of throughout the journey.

Table 1

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Assessment	=	Success
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Missing	=	Unreliability
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Missing	Assessment	=	False starts
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Missing	Action Plan	Assessment	=	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Missing	Resources	Action Plan	Assessment	=	Resistance
Vision	Missing	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Assessment	=	Anxiety
Missing	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Assessment	=	Confusion

Table 2

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing shared vision and integration goals</li> <li>Cultivating a culture of cooperation and coordination</li> <li>Clarifying purpose for all elements in the system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping competences</li> <li>Engaging in mutually supportive relationships</li> <li>Ensuring leadership capacities</li> <li>Building capacity for nurturing collaboration and achieving outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding arguments (making the case for change)</li> <li>Create ways to sustain motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping and allocating human, material, time and financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifying goals</li> <li>Defining an action plan with concrete steps and shared responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing needs and challenges</li> <li>Baseline evaluation</li> <li>Monitoring progress</li> <li>Evaluating the outcomes</li> <li>Reflecting on results</li> </ul>



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## Tool 5: Assessing the whole-local government capacity for improving the local early childhood systems<sup>44</sup>

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**Expected outcome:** Local government representatives will improve their understanding of the capacity areas of the local authority body that require strengthening, and will ensure they are able to identify and address the various issues related to local early childhood services

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of diverse levels of governance in the municipality

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### Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool has been developed based on UNICEF's guidance on working with local governments to achieve multisectoral results for the benefit of young children and their caregivers.

The guidance refers to four key areas of capacities which are required to be in place at the local government level to achieve results for children and their families.



- **Action Area 1:** Generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence.
- **Action Area 2:** Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilization.

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<sup>44</sup>Tool adapted from UNICEF Social Policy Section, Programme Division (2019), ['A local governance approach to programming. Guidance for achieving multisectoral results through working with local governments'](#).

- **Action Area 3:** Empower communities and provide them with the tools and mechanisms to influence local decision-making and monitor local service provision.
- **Action Area 4:** Implementation, coordination and oversight of local service-delivery arrangements.

The four areas refer to aspects that have been included in other sections of the toolbox.

- Data collection/situation analysis which ensures that the strategies are tailored to the local context, trends, and needs and gives attention to various categories of children/population.
- Involvement of representatives of various services and members of the community in consultations regarding local needs and priorities, and measures for addressing them (such as the setting up of local coordination bodies, with regular activity, activating consultation processes with various categories of stakeholders). See Building Block 1 (mapping partners, mapping roles and responsibilities, RACI Matrix, etc., with various stakeholders).
- Local planning and budgeting, and resource mobilization (referring to the capacity of local governments to develop and execute budgets that are tailored to local needs and priorities).
- A focus on ensuring quality service provision for all children and for specific categories of children who might require additional support.

	Key activities	Already achieved	In progress	Not achieved
<b>Action Area 1: Generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence</b>	Improve routine administrative data systems with a focus on data and evidence pertaining to young children and their families.			
	Integrate emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local planning and budgeting systems.			
	Strengthen local child and community-based needs assessments, including through district or neighbourhood 'profiles' or risk maps.			
<b>Action Area 2: Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and</b>	Preparation of evidence-based plans that address the needs of young children and their families.			
	Integrate emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local planning and budgeting systems.			

	Key activities	Already achieved	In progress	Not achieved
support resource mobilization	Develop and execute efficient, effective and equitable local budgets.			
	Mobilize resources and work with ministries of finance to strengthen the design and execution of intergovernmental fiscal transfers.			
<b>Action Area 3: Empower communities and provide them with the tools and mechanisms needed to influence local decision-making and monitor local service provision</b>	Facilitate participation and systematically involve children and their families in local decision-making			
	Partner with local civil society organizations and build the capacity of communities to participate in local decision-making.			
	Support civil society organizations and communities in the monitoring and oversight of local service delivery through social accountability mechanisms.			
	Institutionalize local participatory and accountability mechanisms for children and their families through legal frameworks.			
<b>Action Area 4: Implementation, coordination and oversight of local service-delivery arrangements</b>	Design, cost and implement child-focused local service packages, including through contracting private providers.			
	Coordinate service-delivery stakeholders by strengthening existing horizontal and vertical coordination structures and mechanisms.			
	Design, implement and enforce child-sensitive regulations and standards (e.g., service-quality standards, building codes, land-use planning).			
	Increase clarity about local roles and responsibilities.			

## Brief guidance in using the Tool

The Tool can be used to map out which areas/activities have been already considered by the local government in their efforts to drive and implement comprehensive strategies aimed at improving the local early childhood system for better outcomes for children and their families.

The self-reflection process related to all four action areas can be carried out with the members of the local coordination team. By looking at each area with its subsequent activities, the coordination team can assess which of the areas/activities are already achieved, are in process, or have not been achieved (and are therefore, to be prioritized). Such an assessment can highly inform local government plans to improve their own capacity to lead relevant and contextualized changes.

## PURPOSE 3: Developing and agreeing on a local strategy and local action plan

### Tool 6: Developing an early childhood development strategy at the municipal/city level

**Expected outcome:** The directions and shared understanding are defined and shared, efforts are prioritized, resources are allocated properly, stakeholders are aligned and have clear roles

**Leading role:** Local action team and leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of diverse early childhood services and local actors

#### Brief overview of the Tool<sup>45</sup>

In the context of early childhood systems, complex initiatives refer to interventions that target multiple groups or organizational levels and require a significant number and level of difficulty of behaviours for delivery and reception. These initiatives may involve introducing transformational solutions and changes to improve child development outcomes on a large scale in an equitable and sustainable manner.

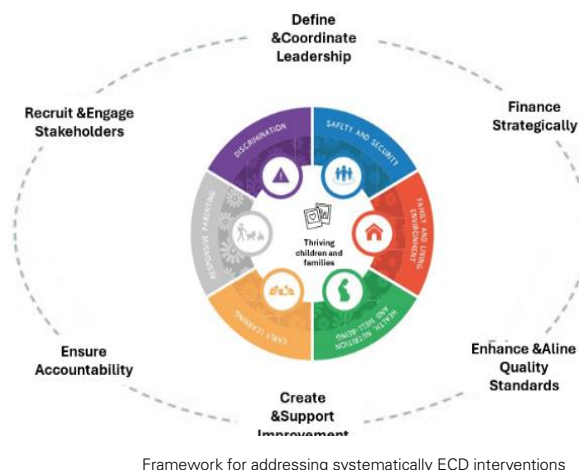
These interventions are often embedded within the existing early childhood system and comprise multiple components and stakeholders. The effective implementation of complex interventions in early childhood systems necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the system's interdependent parts and the interrelationships among them. Additionally, careful consideration of the context and needs of the target population is essential.

Specifically, an early childhood systems intervention might focus on one or more of the following five areas.

1. **Context:** Improving the political context that surrounds the system, ensuring that it produces the policy and funding changes needed to create and sustain it.

<sup>45</sup>The tool is adapted from UNICEF's ['New generation situation analysis'](#) (2019)

2. **Components:** Establishing high-performance programmes and services that produce results for children and families.
3. **Connections:** Creating strong links across system components to further improve results for children and families.
4. **Infrastructure:** Developing the support systems needed for effective and quality functioning.
5. **Scale:** Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many people as possible.



In other words, a key element of the early childhood system is the strategy. Given the complexity, you may consider these eight blocks<sup>46</sup> to ensure that it is data- and needs-informed, covers all sectors in close coordination, is flexible, relevant and well resourced.

<b>Evidence-based planning</b>	Enables the consolidation of information relating to ECD services, including demand for ECD services, and helps to establish a better picture of actual service deficits from which priorities can be determined.
<b>Consensus on optimised ECD approach</b>	Can be used to develop consensus on a practical and developmental approach, that moves beyond regulation and compliance, and which facilitates improved and expanded service provision and population coverage.
<b>Defining roles &amp; responsibilities</b>	Helps to build understanding and consensus from key role players as to their integrated roles and responsibilities, and obligations including the municipality, national departments as well as the NGO and private sectors.
<b>Coordinated strategies &amp; approach</b>	Can ensure that practical strategies and plans (over a 5-year period) are developed with multi-stakeholder buy-in.
<b>Budget allocation, coordination &amp; optimisation</b>	Sector plans ensure that budgets from various sources are optimally allocated, against planned objectives, over a three-year MTREF period.
<b>Coordination of ECD infrastructure planning</b>	Can enable more integrated and coordinated ECD infrastructure planning between local, district and metropolitan municipalities, and provincial educational departments.
<b>Data &amp; information sharing</b>	A common ECD services database can be established through this process for the district/metro which can be shared with provincial departments and support NGOs.
<b>Regulatory flexibility</b>	To develop practical solutions for more statutory and regulatory flexibility and fit for purpose can best be achieved (e.g. relating to tenure, zoning, building plans) in order to scale up ECD infrastructure improvements and new builds.

<sup>46</sup> 'Enhancing the delivery of early childhood development (ECD) in local government. ECD discussion document #5: programmatic approach to early childhood development.' Retrieved from: [DISCUSSION-DOCUMENT-5-Programmatic-approach-to-ECD.pdf](https://www.nelsonmandela.org/Content/related/20170628-discussion-document-5-programmatic-approach-to-ECD.pdf) ([nelsonmandela.org](https://www.nelsonmandela.org/))

## Elements of the strategic plan<sup>47</sup>

Sections	Guidance
<b>Executive summary</b>	A brief presentation of key points from the strategy
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present justifications for investment in the integrated approach to ECD. (The holistic vision of child survival and development is presented as a primary reason for using an integrated approach.)</li> <li>• Explain importance of meeting the needs of each age range: prenatal; 0–36 months; 3–6 years; and 6–8 years.</li> <li>• Provide a statement on early childhood sectors: education, health, nutrition, sanitation, juridical protection and rights for pregnant women, young children, mothers, and the importance of meeting age-range needs.</li> <li>• Motivation of the municipality to focus on ECD.</li> <li>• A brief description of the process of strategy development.</li> </ul>
<b>ECD situation analysis and population-based planning approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Status of Children and Families</li> <li>• Analysis of current services and resources devoted to children and families (including types of services by age stages and by sector, geographic and demographic coverage, budgets and human resources currently in place), gaps, etc.</li> <li>• Review and analysis of policies, plans, regulations and laws (what is in place and what is missing).</li> <li>• Cross-sectoral policies, practices and plans (what is in place and what is missing).</li> </ul>
<b>ECD vision</b>	Present the municipality/city ECD vision for children and provide a brief justification for this vision.
<b>Strategic goals and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List all primary goals, and under each one, its objectives.</li> <li>• Provide arguments about how each goal is linked to ECD situation analysis and to the results of consultations at the community level.</li> </ul>

<sup>47</sup> Adapted from Vargas Baron, E., (2015). 'Planning Policies for Early Childhood Development: Guidelines for Action,' UNICEF, UNESCO, ADEA, pp75–78. Retrieved from: [https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/publications/PDF/developpementenfance\\_02\\_en.pdf](https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/publications/PDF/developpementenfance_02_en.pdf)

Sections	Guidance
<b>Principles</b>	<p>List guiding principles, such as the following.</p> <p>a) The needs and the rights of children are central to all services and provisions.</p> <p>b) Equitable services should ensure that the most disadvantaged and those with the fewest resources have the same opportunities as all other children.</p> <p>c) All stakeholders and partners must be accountable for achieving the objectives and outcomes of this strategy and sector plan.</p>
<b>Programme areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Outline major programmatic approaches to be developed for each policy goal and its objectives and strategies. They can be grouped in various ways. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- existing programmes to be expanded to cover more geographic areas or populations;</li> <li>- new sectoral programmes;</li> <li>- new integrated programmes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Describe each programme area briefly, including objectives, activities, populations to be served (i.e., ethnic groups, gender emphases, income levels, high-risk groups) and geographical areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Indicators, measures and targets</b>	<p>List and briefly describe each strategy, indicators, measures and targets for policy monitoring and evaluation.</p>
<b>Cross-sectoral organizational structure for implementing ECD Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide information on all sectors involved and their roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>● Stress the role of the Local Coordination Team.</li> </ul>
<b>ECD training programme</b>	<p>Describe the coordinated training programme for areas such as parent education, and community service providers that can help build greater programme coordination and integration at local levels. Sectoral training for preschool teachers, home healthcare workers, protective services specialists, and other ECD personnel, can be enriched through adding components from other sectors. Involve pre- and in-service training providers.</p>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation, reporting and follow-up for coordination, supervision and revision of ECD policy and/or Annual Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe briefly the assessments, surveys and other data-gathering mechanisms to be used.</li> <li>● Describe methods for reporting and on-going feedback through regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities with communities, districts to provinces/regions and the national level.</li> </ul>



Sections	Guidance
<b>Advocacy and social Communications Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an Advocacy Plan to build continuous support on the part of citizens and key decision-makers for ECD Policy and Annual ECD Action Plans.</li> <li>• Focus on a Social Communications Plan on sensitizing citizens to key messages for achieving policy goals and programme objectives.</li> <li>• Provide a list of institutions to be involved, including public relations organizations, private sector groups, and media organizations as well as ECD institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment plan</b>	Provide general information about resource requirements to implement the strategy.
<b>Donor and partnership coordination plan</b>	Outline a plan for national donor coordination.
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirm the vision, goals, objectives, strategies and results to be achieved.</li> <li>• Provide final comments.</li> </ul>
<b>Annexes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists of persons and groups consulted.</li> <li>• Charts and statistical information.</li> <li>• Charts related to Training Plan, Policy Advocacy and Social Communications Plan, etc.</li> </ul>

## Guidance in using the Tool

Based on the data collected and the consultation process with key stakeholders and municipality representatives, a multi-year strategy may be developed accompanied by annual activity plans to support a common vision, goals and targets, and coordinated actions.

The elements of the strategy provided above provide a useful structure. Each element of the plan should be a result of discussions based on data review and analysis (situation analysis) carried out by the early childhood coordination team (or the body agreed to be responsible for the development of the strategy). The participatory process in the development of the strategy is essential in ensuring the endorsement and ownership from local stakeholders. The process of developing the strategy might therefore take a few months, allowing time for consultation meetings, discussions and a decision to be taken in line with agreed priorities, with the capacities and resources that can be mobilized among local partners and stakeholders and national stakeholders.

The tools proposed in the previous Building Blocks could be useful to provide input into the development of various sections of the strategy (e.g., the vision for the local early childhood system, the situation analysis, the map of partners, their roles and responsibilities, the priorities to be addressed for all children and/or for specific categories of children, etc.).

## Thrive – the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds 2019–2022

### (Example of a municipal strategy focusing on child poverty)

The strategy was developed in response to the growing challenge of increased poverty among children, young people and families, with a worrying long-term impact for their development and well-being. The strategy reflects a joint commitment and articulates the rationale, vision, approaches and allies needed to achieve the goals.

The strategy is built around the following questions.

- How do we define poverty?
- Who experiences poverty?
- What are the statistics?
- What are the impacts of poverty?
- Why is poverty ‘everyone’s business?’
- Why is child poverty different to adult poverty?
- How does poverty relate to the rights of a child?
- What do we want?
- What is needed to make a difference?
- Who is needed to make a difference?
- What are our ambitions?
- What is the Leeds approach?
- What does this look like?
- How will we know we are making a difference?
- What’s next?
- How can you get involved?

‘There are two parts to this work: The Child Poverty Impact Board, which is a city-wide governance board that will apply robust measures and targets to reduce the negative impact of child poverty, and six Impact Workstreams. The workstreams will focus on improving a specific area of young people’s lives that is affected by poverty. Each workstream will have between one and three projects to be implemented over a two-year period. The workstreams will report to the Child Poverty Impact Board, with project plans and impact assessments.’

Here is an overview of the **six workstreams** on which the strategy is focusing.

### Projects Overview



## Tool 7: Action Plan for improving early childhood services

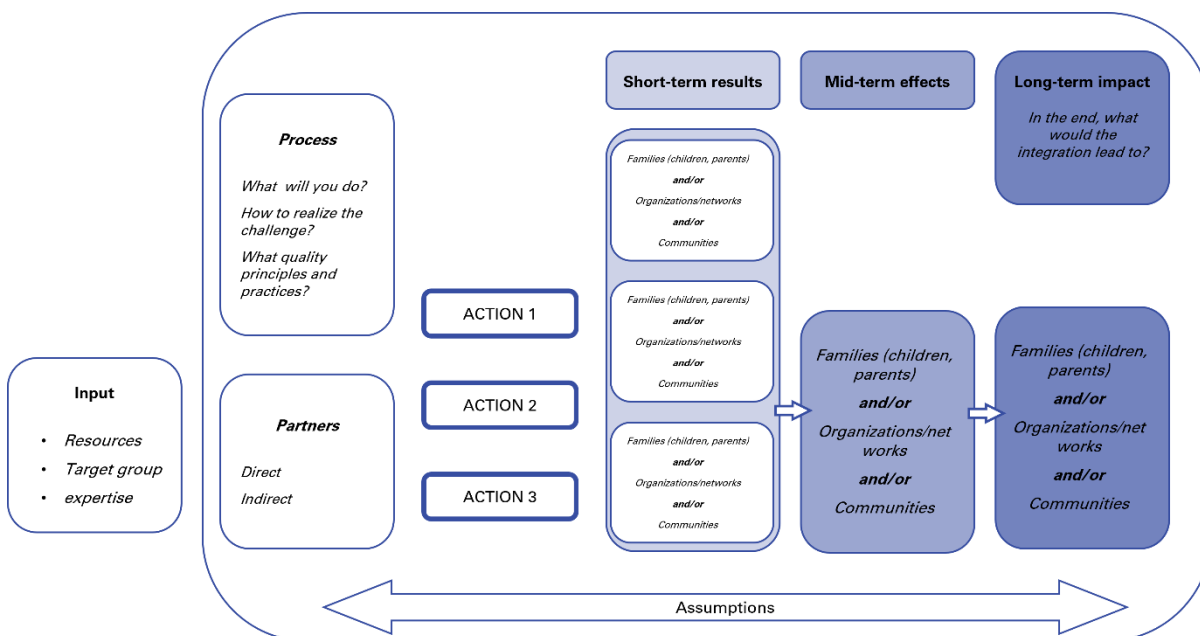
**Expected outcome:** Agreed local action plan endorsed by local stakeholders reflecting local priorities and needs, and responsive to the local context, aimed at achieving the goals of the local strategy

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of the diverse levels of governance in the municipality – the local coordination team

### Brief overview of the Tool

The Tool can serve as a support in developing concrete plans for achieving specific goals formulated in the early childhood strategy. The plan provides concrete guidance in what is to be used as resources (input), what will be the processes (principles to be followed, approaches), who will be the partners involved, what concrete actions are to be taken, with what expected results in the short, mid and long term.



The Tools that have been used in Building Block 1 (focusing on mapping partners, roles, responsibilities as well as the one focusing on the change that the municipality wants to see) will have been quite useful for providing input into the action plan.

### Simple action plan for concrete actions

<b>Outcome</b> The change you want to see	<b>Approach</b> Effective ways to get there	<b>Resources / Support</b> Types of resources of support that you envisage are needed	<b>Deadline</b> By when it should be accomplished	<b>Responsible person/partner</b> Lead person/partner for this action

### Guidance in using the Tool

The Tool can be used after having defined the strategic goals related to young children and their families in the local strategy, when moving towards developing a concrete action plan. The implementation of the strategy will require smooth coordination across various streams of actions, each having concrete plans. When developing the action plan, consider the following suggestions.

#### Reflect on the strategic goals

- Check the ambitions of your local system and its goals as defined in the local strategy. Take the following reflection questions into account.
  - Who is your target audience?
  - Are the goals concrete enough? Are they achievable?
  - What is already happening and what is the current way of working? What works and what doesn't? What change is needed? What strategies do you suggest? Why have you chosen this path?

#### Reflect on the possible actions

- Which actions will you undertake to realize the goals? Take these aspects into account.
  - Process: which steps will be undertaken?
  - Results: what are the expected results? Define them in a SMART way.
  - Timeline: when will each step be done?
  - Task division: who will do what?
  - Budget: which resources (infrastructure, materials, staff) will you use?

### Think about indicators for evaluation

- It is useful when developing the plan to define possible indicators. Consider the following aspects.
  - Which criteria are important?
  - What might the effects be?
  - Are there any possible unintended effects?

Convene several planning meetings with the coordination team to work on the development of the action plans. Use the questions above to guide the discussion and use post-it notes, which can easily be changed in terms of order and colour. A scheme such as the one below might be helpful in designing the general plan. It can be used when having discussions with partners.

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### Tool 8: Financial Chart- developing budget and financial planning the local early childhood systems<sup>48</sup>

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**Expected outcome:** General budget, which includes major type of expenditure, will help to guide municipality in budgetary planning and estimate a 'range of potential costs' in order to justify and explain budgets for children

**Leading role:** Leadership of the municipality

**Participants in the process:** Representatives of finance department/s, representative of diverse levels of governance in the municipality – the local coordination team

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### Brief overview of the Tool

A well-developed and justified budget could be of crucial importance towards building a long-term commitment to ECD. The plan/strategy for the integration of ECD services must include an **Investment Plan** that outlines tactics to achieve the defined goals and targets. The Investment Plan

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<sup>48</sup> Approach and tool adapted from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000139545/PDF/139545eng.pdf.multi>

should outline a municipality **budgetary process** that specify the roles and responsibilities of institutions from different sectors at the local level.

### How the budget can be built

- The Department of Finance/or local development establishes an annual contribution (percentage or amount) from each participating sector in a local government.
- A tax can be imposed (3–10%) on monthly payrolls (not individual salaries) of international enterprises and/or national businesses.
- A special budget can be added for planning, funding, coordinating, managing, and evaluating integrated ECD programmes.
- Bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, businesses, corporations, professional associations, religious groups, municipal associations, Chambers of Commerce, mayors' associations, Rotary and others can contribute to the budget.

### Guidance in using the Tool

To prepare realistic budgets for each major strategy, it is advisable to project potential costs for maintaining current programmes, planned service expansions, new components, and new programmes including human, material and financial resources.

- Start from the targets defined in strategy for integration of services by sector/programme area and make estimation/calculations of the costs while keeping in mind diversity among the population of children and geographic areas.
- Present the total budget in a synthesized manner by sector. The grid below can help in this process.

Sector or institution responsible	Personnel & related costs (benefits, training, professional development)		Infrastructure equipment, materials		Other recurrent costs (rent, utilities, subscription services insurance, etc.)		Total annual budget	Current and potential budgetary sources		
	Number by type	Budget	Types	Budget	Budget	Local Govt.		Civil sector and community	International donors	

## Useful tips

- This Tool will provide an assessment of a range of potential costs and not an exact amount of funds, or a picture of resource needs.
- While developing a budget, you should also include essential costs related to planning, management, coordination, networking, evaluation, monitoring and reporting.
- When presenting a synthesized budget, always attach calculations and projections per sector as annexes.
- An estimated budget will change over time, or even during the process, while new information is being collected.



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As a membership association, the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) is an international learning community powered by the leading early childhood experts in Europe and Central Asia. We unite and support professionals and partners to deliver high-quality early years services equitably. We challenge existing knowledge and practice and co-construct new approaches and models.



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