



NURTURING CARE
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A Framework for Helping Children to
SURVIVE and **THRIVE** to **TRANSFORM**
Health and Human Potential



Conference of the International Society for Social Pediatrics and Child Health (ISSOP)

Bonn, Germany
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unicef 
for every child

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Question

What is one of the best ways a country can boost shared prosperity, promote inclusive economic growth, expand equitable opportunity and end extreme poverty?

Answer

The answer is simple: invest in early childhood development.

(Foreword, NURTURING CARE)



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Early Childhood Development

0 – School Entry

P to 3

- Prenatal period
- Infancy/Toddlerhood

3 to SE

- Preschool age
- Transition to Primary School



Multiple Domains of Development

- Growth
- Motor (Gross & Fine)
- Language (Receptive & Expressive)
- Cognition/Problem Solving
- Social-emotional/Emotional regulation
- Executive functioning



What does the research say...(1)

(Health, neuroscience, developmental science, behavioural sciences, nutrition, public health, education, economy, epidemiology, ethics, social protection, etc)

- Young children grow faster and learn more in their early years than in any other period of life
- Optimal development is dependent on good environment - nutrition, good health, nurturing and stimulating parenting, etc
- The early years of a child's life have a critical impact on a range of outcomes through the life course



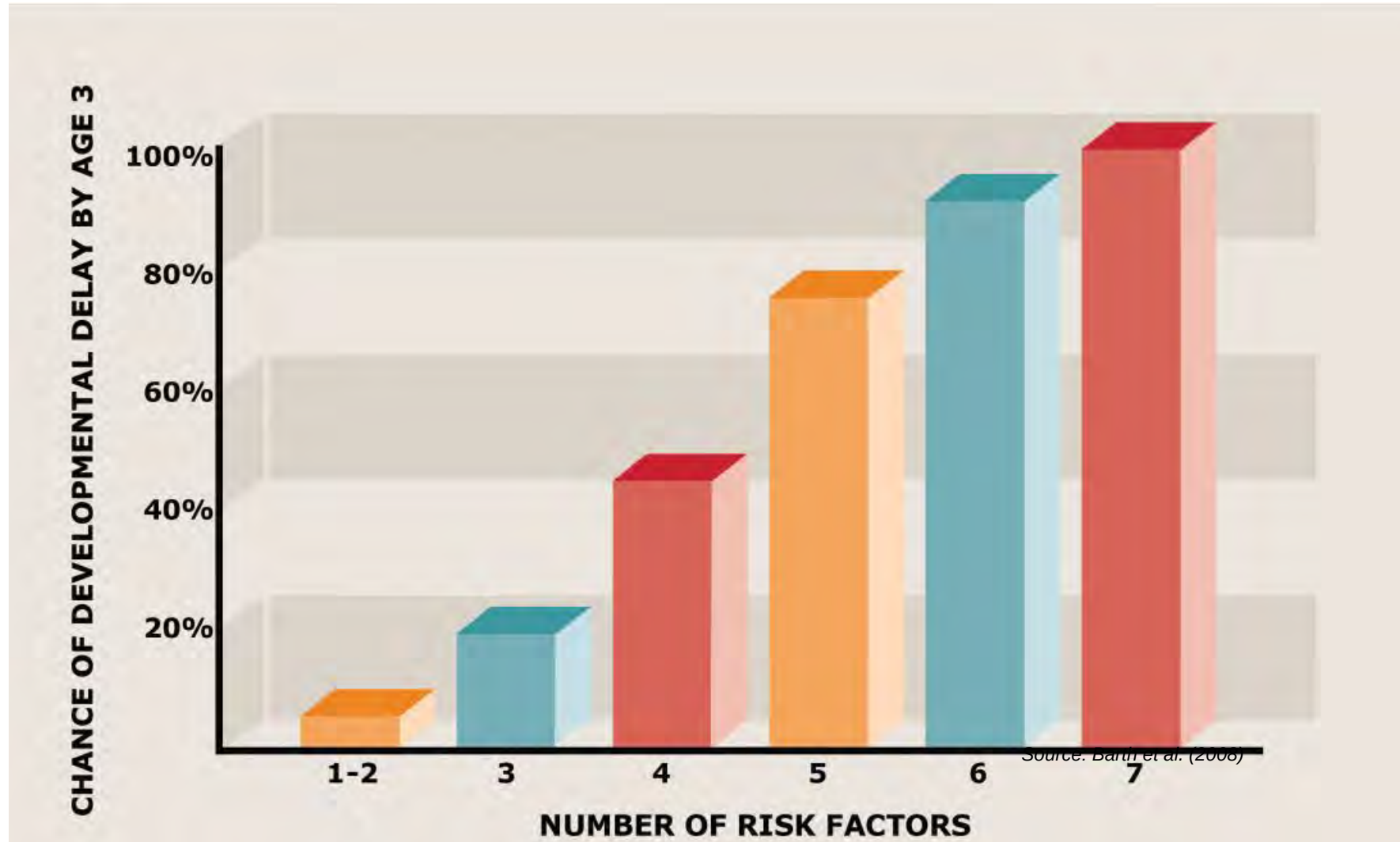
What does the research say...(2)

- The environment - including the relationship with the caregiver - *sculpts* the brain and establishes the trajectory for long term cognitive and social-emotional outcomes
- If we want to improve outcomes in adult life we have to focus on the early years - this has profound implications for public policy
- Investing in early childhood is a sound economic investment ('the best investment society can make')

We cannot do much to change biology - but we can change the environment in which young children grow and develop



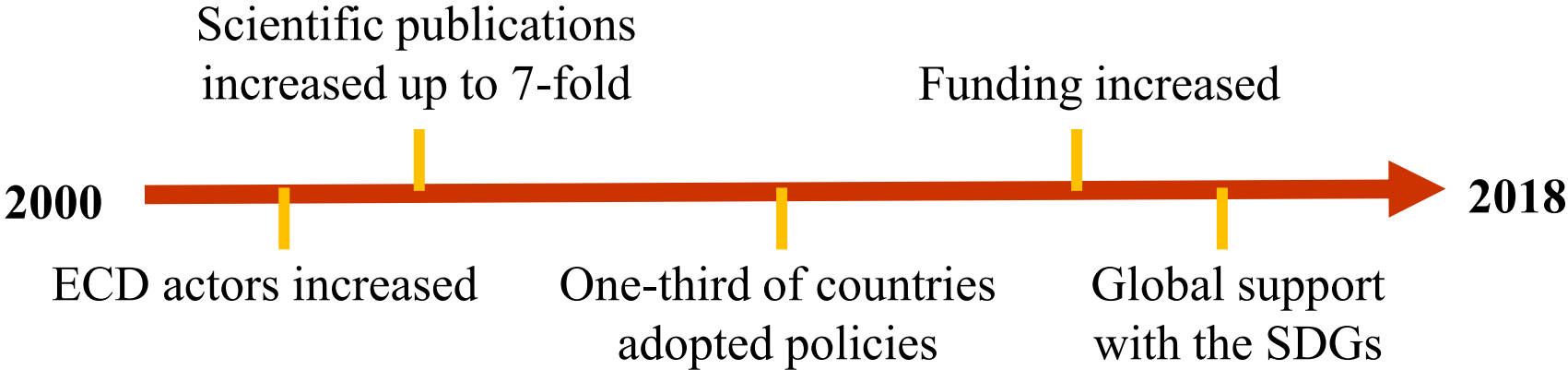
Risk factors such as poverty, caregiver mental illness, child maltreatment, single parent, and low maternal education can have a cumulative impact



Some adult problems with roots in early childhood

- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Substance abuse
- Mental health problems
- Family violence and anti-social behaviour
- Crime
- Poor literacy
- Chronic unemployment and welfare dependency

Momentum for Early Child Development has been growing



ECD on the Global Development Agenda



The Lancet published
3 landmark series on
Child Development
2007, 2011, 2016

THE LANCET

October 2016

www.thelancet.com

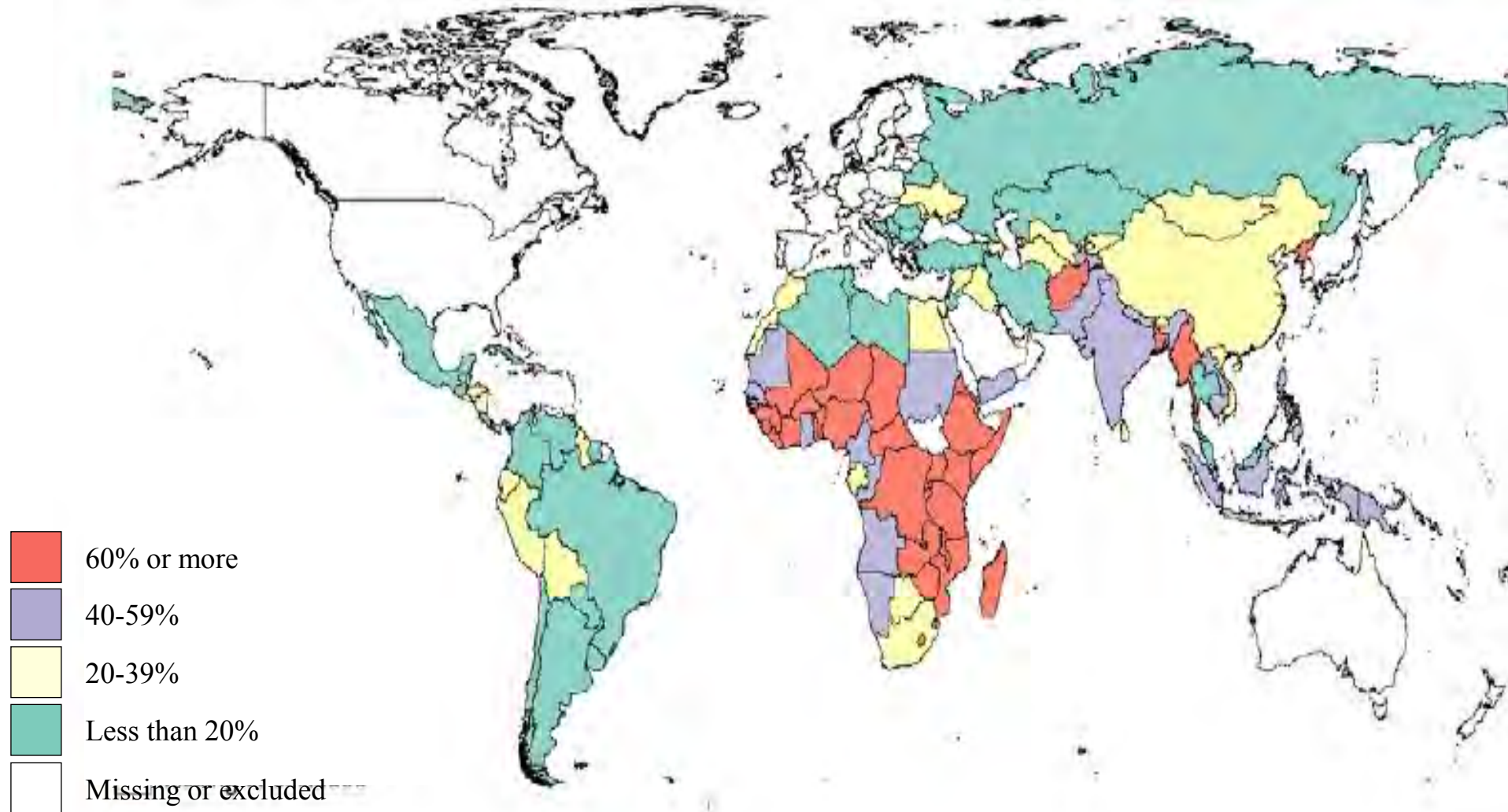
Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale

An Executive Summary for *The Lancet's* Series



"Young children's healthy development depends on nurturing care—care which ensures health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and early learning."

43% (250 Million) children under 5 years of age are at risk of not achieving their developmental potential



**Advancing Early Childhood Development:
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THE LANCET

October 2016

www.thelancet.com

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“Young children’s healthy development depends on nurturing care—care which ensures health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and early learning.”

The 2016 *Lancet* series
introduced the concept of
NURTURING CARE

Lancet 2017 – Key Messages

The burden and cost of inaction is high

- 43% of children <5 (250 m) in LMICs at risk of suboptimal development
- a poor start affects present AND future generations
- individuals suffer loss of 1/4 of average adult income/year
- countries forfeit up to twice their current GDP expenditures on health and education

Young children need nurturing care from the start

- from conception onwards a period of sensitivity to risks
- nurturing care from the start lead to improved health, wellbeing, ability to learn and earn
- families need support – material, financial, parental leave policies and social services

We must deliver multi-sector interventions

- health the starting point for reaching the youngest children
- multiple risks must be targeted through inter-sectoral collaboration
- services should address the child AND the caregiver

We must strengthen government leadership to scale up what works

- government leadership and political prioritization are prerequisites
- services/interventions for ECD essential for individuals to achieve potential
- this is the vision at the core of the SDGs

Nurturing Care on the Global Agenda



unicef **World Health Organization**

Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development: a framework for Action and Results

Engagement and Consultations
August 2017 - May 2018

Supported by

- The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health
- Early Childhood ACTION

May 2018
World Health Assembly 71

"If we change the beginning of the story, we change the whole story"
Raffi Cavoukian, *The Beginning of Life*

What do young children need?

NURTURING CARE

- comprises all essential elements for a child to grow physically, mentally and psycho-socially:

- **Good Health**
- **Adequate Nutrition**
- **Responsive Caregiving**
- **Security and Safety**
- **Opportunities for Early Learning**



NURTURING CARE

1. Health

- Disease prevention and timely treatment
- Immunisation and well child visits
- Water, sanitation and hygiene



NURTURING CARE

2. Nutrition

- Breastfeeding
- Dietary diversity
- Complementary food
- Macronutrients and micronutrients



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3. Security and safety

- Reduce violence, abuse and neglect
- Non-institutional and family (kinship) care for vulnerable children



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4. Responsive caregiving

- Responsive parenting and feeding
- Home visiting for hard to engage and 'at risk' families
- Parenting programs



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5. Early learning

- Continuity to primary school
- Access to quality childcare and preschool
- Home opportunities to explore and learn
- Books, toys and play materials
- Home visits, parenting education





All families need some support

Some families need all the support they can get

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR NURTURING CARE



Scope of the framework

- Builds on state-of-the art evidence
- Focuses on the first 1000 days
- Promotes well-known interventions
- Speaks to all relevant sectors
- Is supported by practical tools and resources



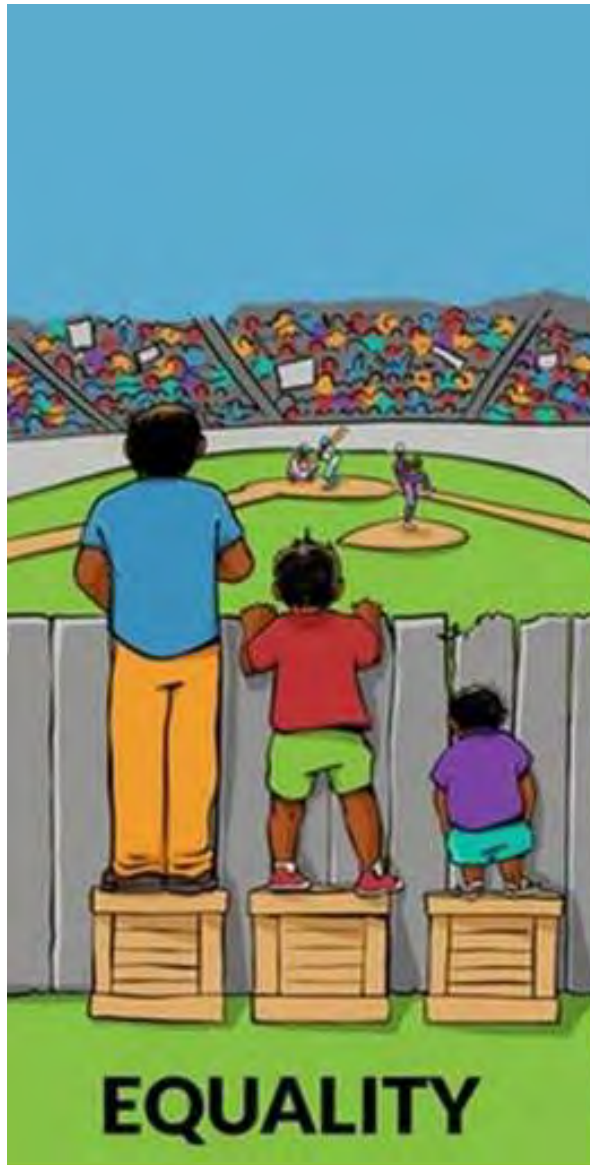
The ambition around the framework

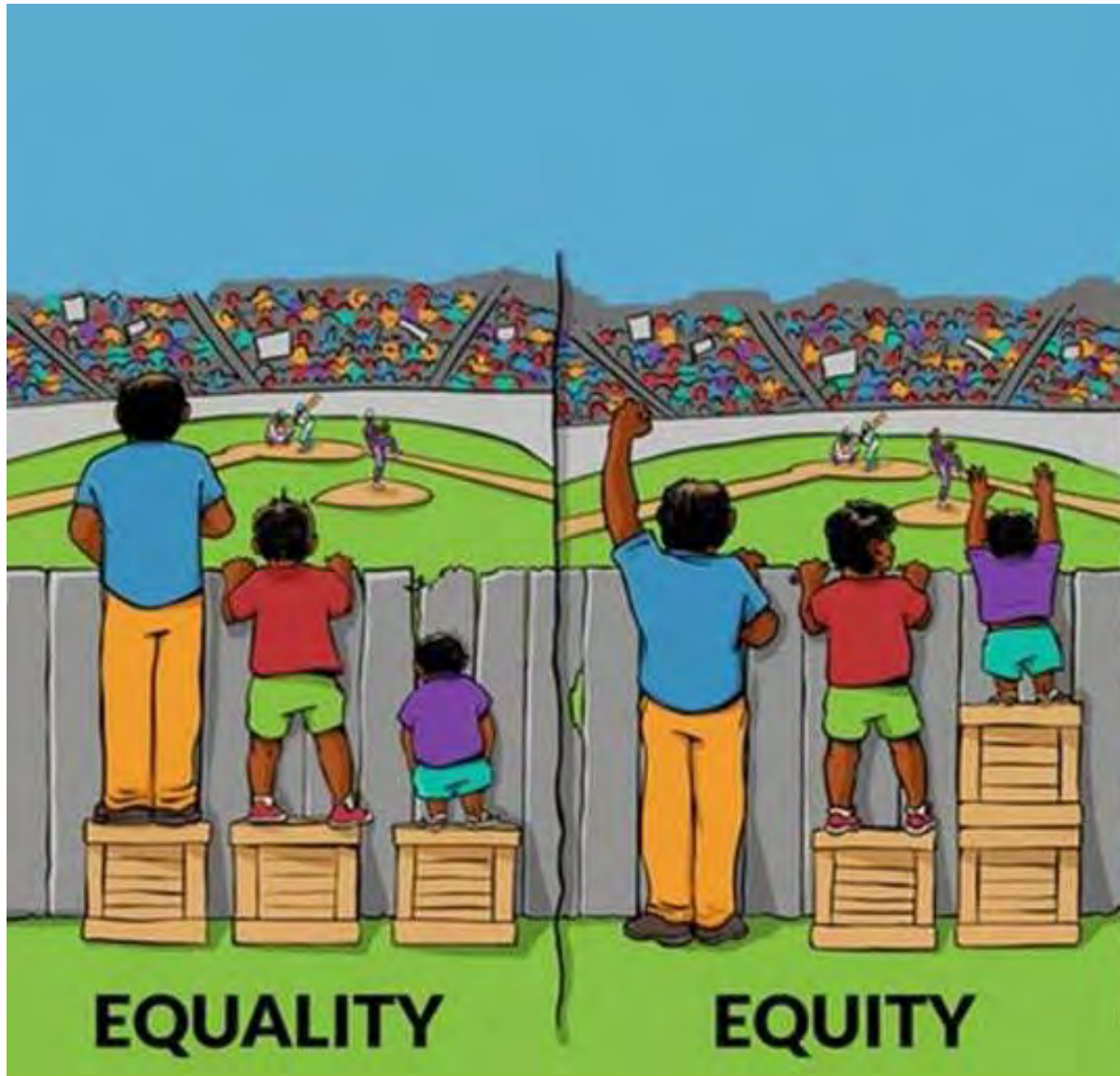
1. Increase political interest, action and investment
2. Engage all relevant sectors in joint actions and strengthen the national response to the SDG Agenda 2030
3. Secure the multiple benefits of optimal early childhood development for life-long health, productivity, and social cohesion
4. Provide a (short) set of effective feasible policy and programme actions to accelerate implementation - relevant and useable!
5. Strengthen the investment case, including through monitoring, research, capacity building, advocacy and innovation
6. Mobilize a global social movement to support all countries reach the vision and goal of the framework

NURTURING CARE AT THE CENTRE OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY AND THE SDGs



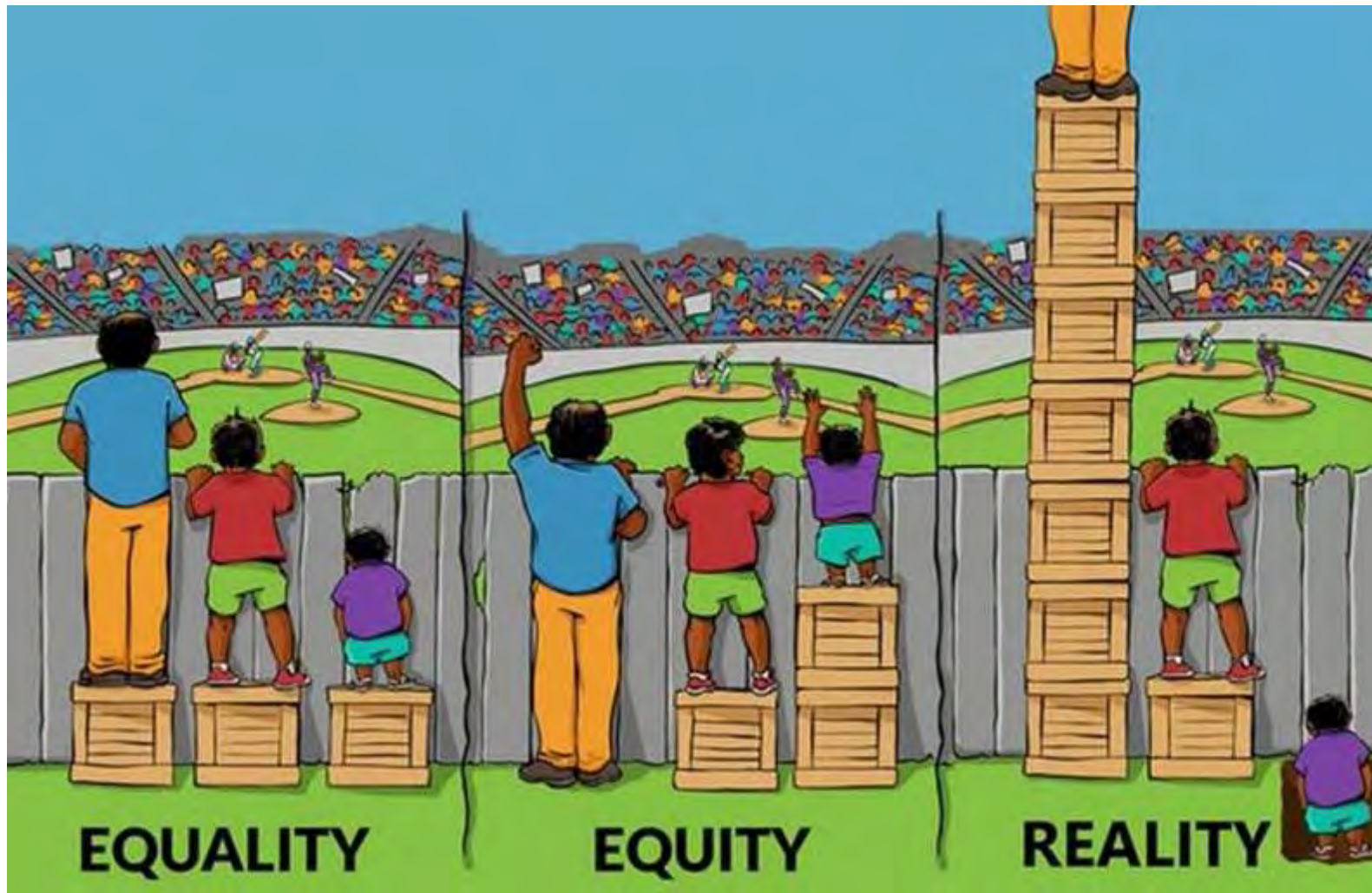
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EQUALITY

EQUITY





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www.nurturing-care.org
www.unicef.org

Thank you!



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Some slides inspired by Frank Oberklaid and Maureen Black