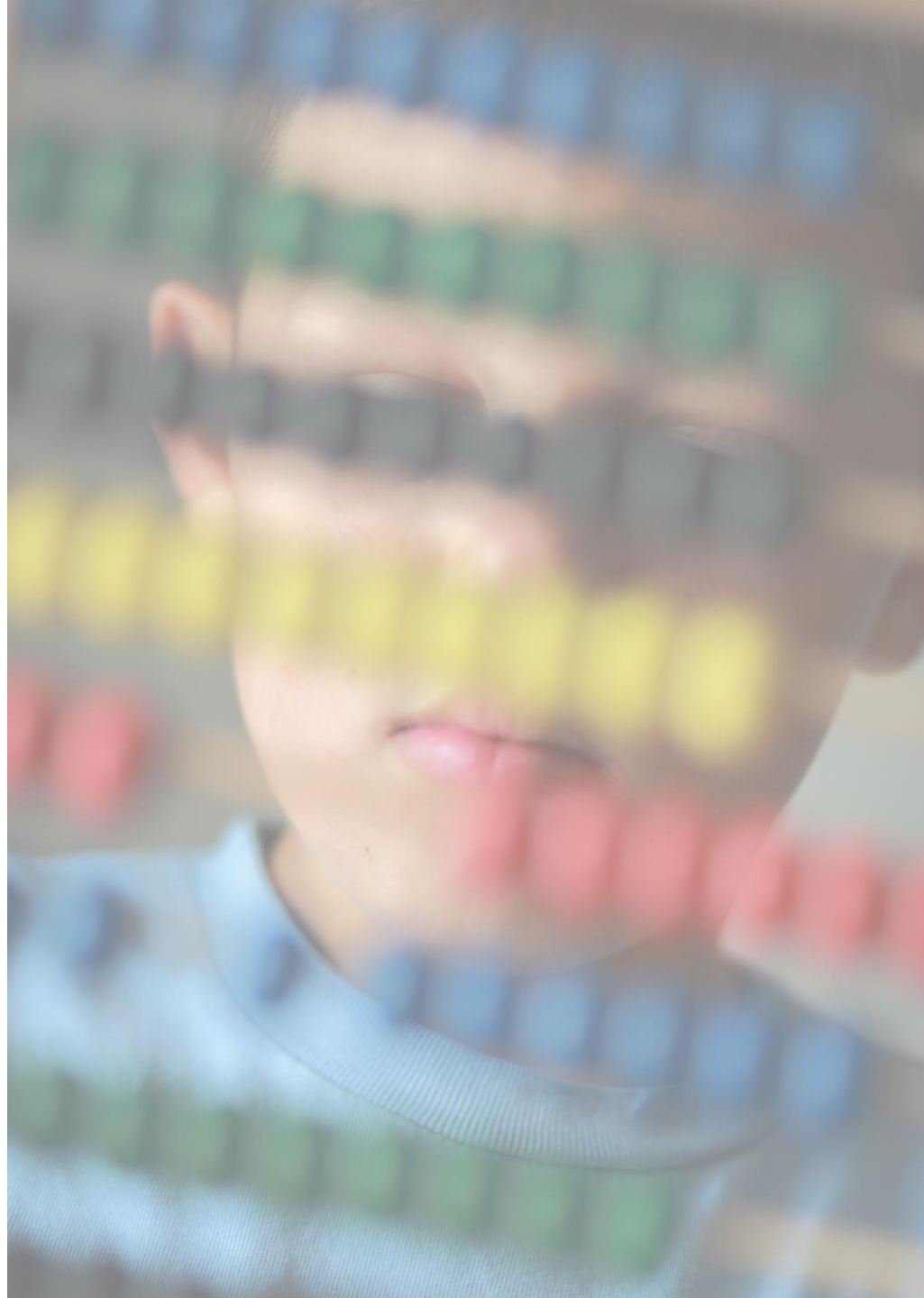




# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Darijo Jurišić, Ombudsman  
for Persons with Disabilities in Croatia



# THE STATE OF CHILDCARE: WHERE WE STAND AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

## As a reminder and introduction

In Croatia there are four Ombudsman offices which take care of the rights of citizens as independent equality bodies.

❖ **Ombudsman** (1990.)



❖ **Ombudsperson for Gender Equality** (2003.)

❖ **Ombudsman for Children** (2003.)



❖ **Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities** (2008.)



According to current statistics data in Croatia today live about **657.000 persons with disabilities**, which is about 17% of the total population of 3,9 million inhabitants.

Disability is also present in children's age, 0-19 years old, **11.1%**

# THE STATE OF CHILDCARE: WHERE WE STAND AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

## Early childhood intervention (ECI)...

- Complaints received by the Ombudsman primarily **refer to the problems of coverage of early intervention of children at risk, to the problems of unavailability of early intervention services**, especially in smaller communities, although it is increasingly emphasized in large cities as well.
- Social welfare system does not even come close to meeting the needs of children at risk, **there are not enough service providers and also there is a problem with the capacities of already existing service providers**, to which a significant number of parents are referred.

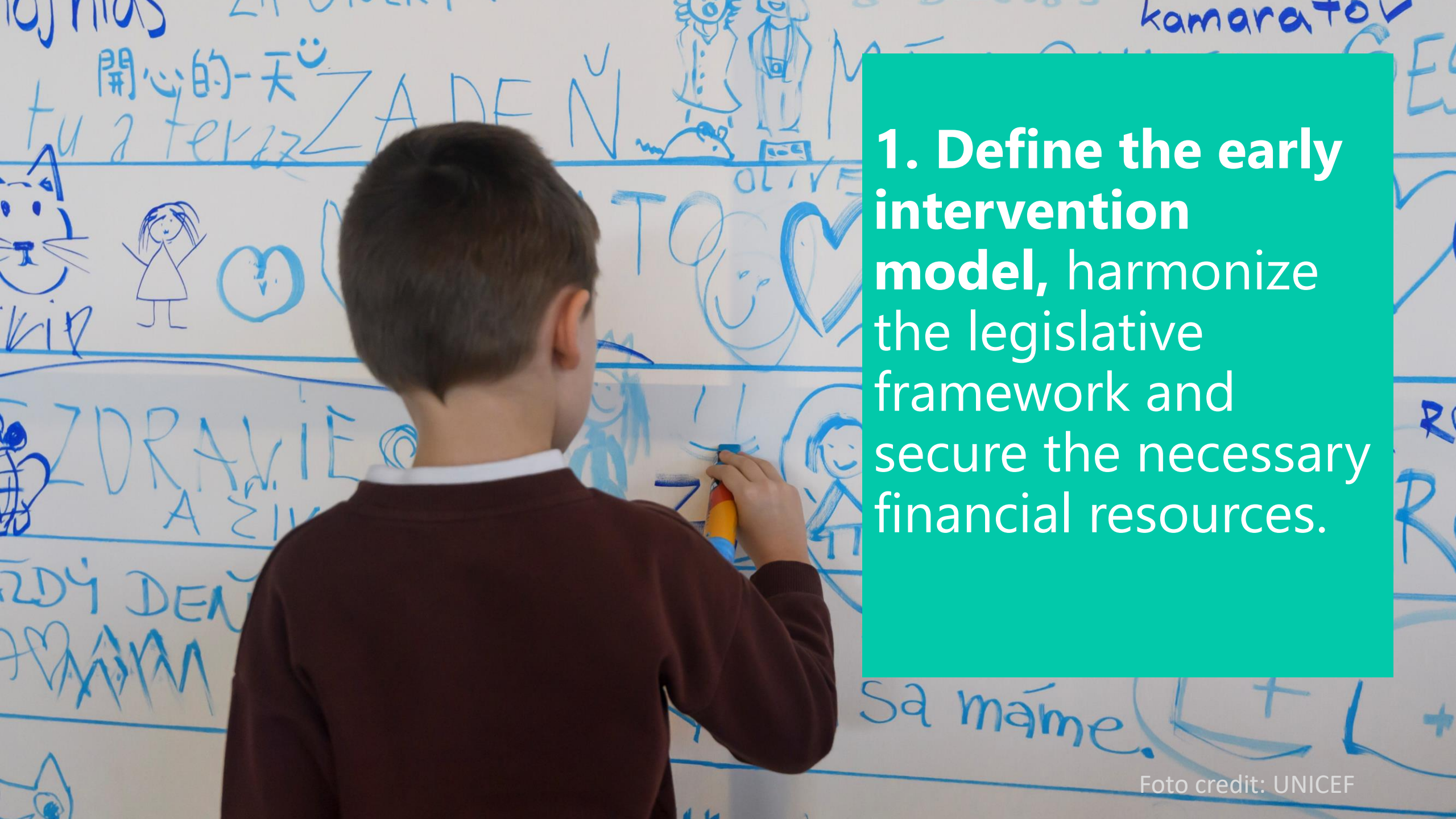
# THE STATE OF CHILDCARE: WHERE WE STAND AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

- The capacity problem is not only in the social welfare system, **received complaints indicate that the health system also has the same problem**, especially with the availability of speech therapy and diagnostics, for which the wait is more than six months.
- There are frequent complaints from parents whose children have had already approved psychosocial support and early intervention services suspended or limited **due to the limited capacity of social service providers but also to health institutions.**
- The social service providers themselves clearly point out that the intensity of the therapy for each child is planned according to the capacity of the provider, **and not according to the real needs of the child.**

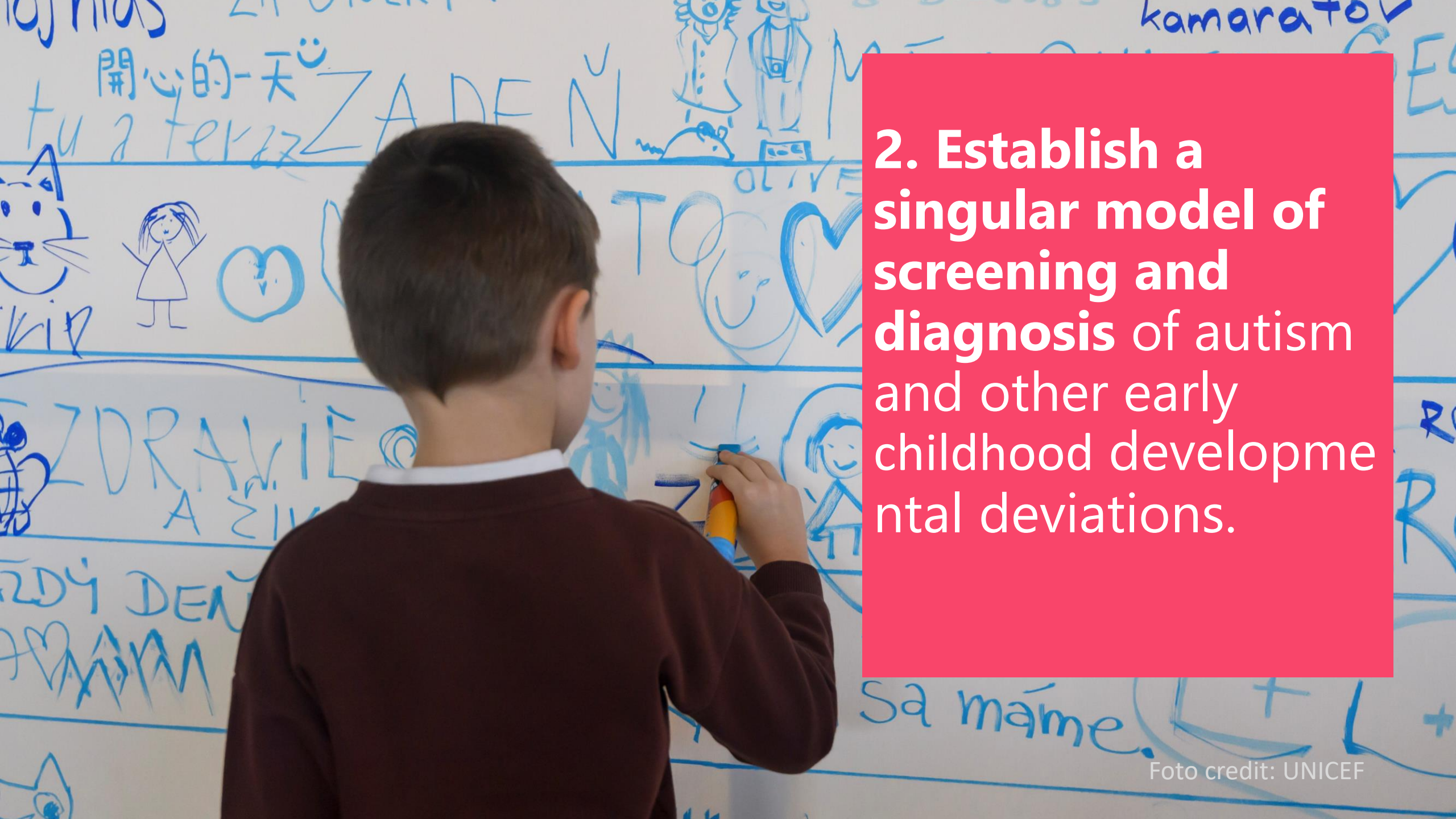
# THE STATE OF CHILDCARE: WHERE WE STAND AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

- It is necessary to work on a quality analysis of the needs for a particular type of service, **as well as on establishing a model cooperation of existing providers in different sectors**, which would open up the possibility of creation a kind of network of providers of ECI and other rehabilitation services using existing resources which may not be used in a meaningful and systematic way.
- Since 2019, when the Government of the Republic of Croatia established the Executive Working Group for the preparation of the National Strategic of the plan for early intervention in childhood, no specific results were recorded in the following years of its work, **only in 2023 the intensity of the working group meetings increased.**



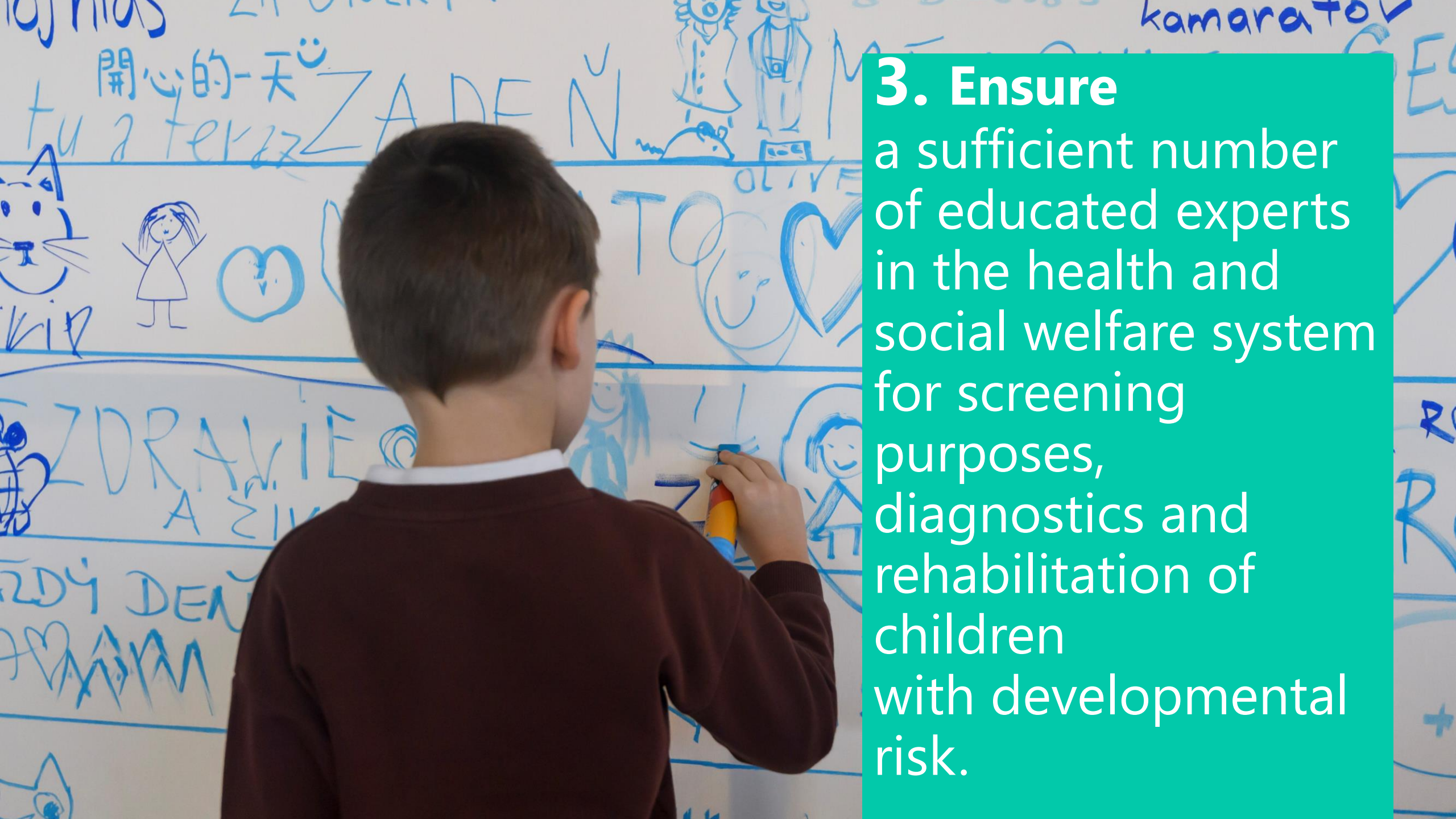


**1. Define the early intervention model, harmonize the legislative framework and secure the necessary financial resources.**



**2. Establish a singular model of screening and diagnosis of autism and other early childhood developmental deviations.**





**3. Ensure**  
a sufficient number  
of educated experts  
in the health and  
social welfare system  
for screening  
purposes,  
diagnostics and  
rehabilitation of  
children  
with developmental  
risk.



**Disability  
is a matter  
of perception.**

*If you can do  
just one thing well,  
you're needed  
by  
someone*

- Martina Navratilova

RaisingFigureSkaters.com



**Thank you for  
your attention**

