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A collage of images in the background, including a man holding a baby and reading a book, a boy wearing a face mask looking at a smartphone, two other children in masks also looking at phones, a woman looking through a magnifying glass, and a group of people in a meeting.

ERICA project

Module 7: Protective factors



What this module is about.....



UNDERSTANDING FACTORS THAT HELP
TO PREVENT MALTREATMENT AND
MITIGATE ITS EFFECTS



UNDERSTANDING HOW THESE
POSITIVE FACTORS LINK UP ACROSS
CHILDHOOD AND THE LIFE COURSE



THINK ABOUT HOW WE AS
PRACTITIONERS CAN HELP THESE
POSITIVE FACTORS TO DEVELOP



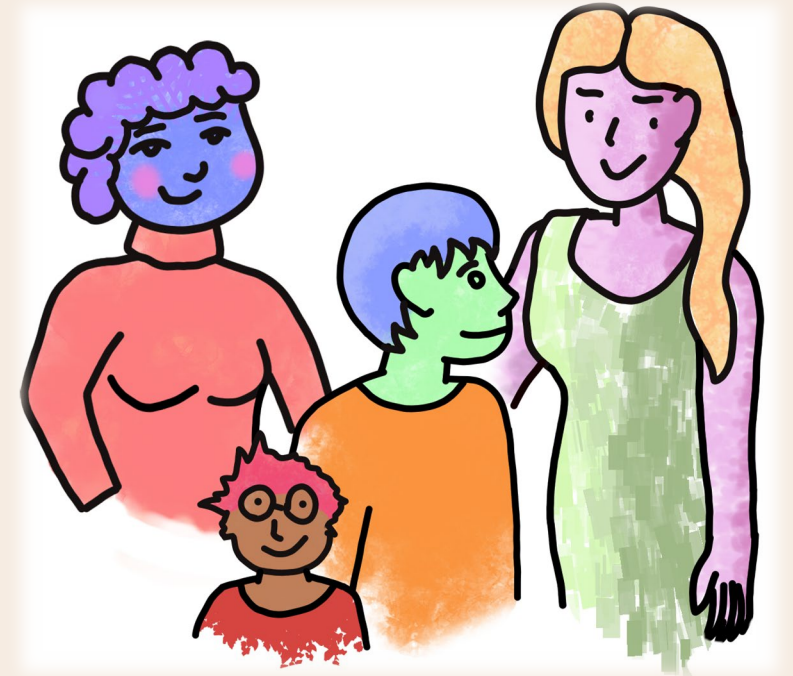
Understanding the role of preventative and protective factors

- Just as there are factors that increase the risk of child maltreatment, there are factors which act to prevent or protect from risk.
- Preventative and protective factors work on areas of individual, family, community and wider society.
- Although they might vary across a child's life, they can help to increase the health, happiness and wellbeing of children and families.



Preventative vs protective factors

- Preventative factors prevent the maltreatment from happening in the first place.
- Protective factors may act as a buffer and mitigate the harm from child maltreatment.
- In practice, many factors fall into both categories, such as positive parenting.





Risk and protective factors often cluster together in families and individuals

- Risk and protective factors never occur in isolation and are best understood in terms of their wider social context.
- For instance, socio-economic inequality and racial bias often overlap leading to poor experiences with child protection services.
- However, protective factors, such as sense of community and cultural values, when present together provide a buffer against adverse experiences.



Impacts of protective factors: ACEs Example

- In the case of **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** - such as household abuse, violence and neglect - risk factors cluster together and may accumulate and lead to negative health and psychological effects later on in their life.
- Research has shown that multiple protective factors can mitigate the effects of risk factors and ACEs, making negative outcomes less likely.
- *“If there are the right protective factors around that child, they will have a better chance”* Pattie Santelices, strategy officer, City of Edinburgh Council (ref nr., page 36)



Protective factors at different scales

Child-level protective factors

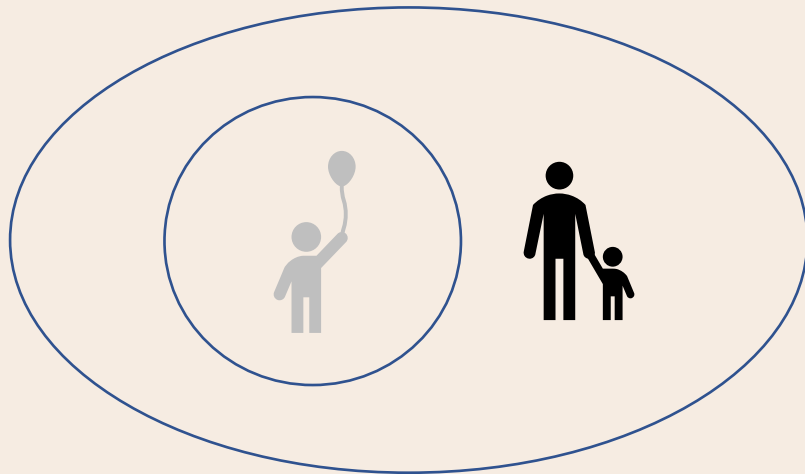


These include:

- Close, supportive relationships with mothers, fathers and other caregivers
- Personal resilience, including coping skills and self-esteem
- Knowledge of violence and where to seek help
- Knowledge of healthy relationships and sexuality



Parent and family–level protective factors

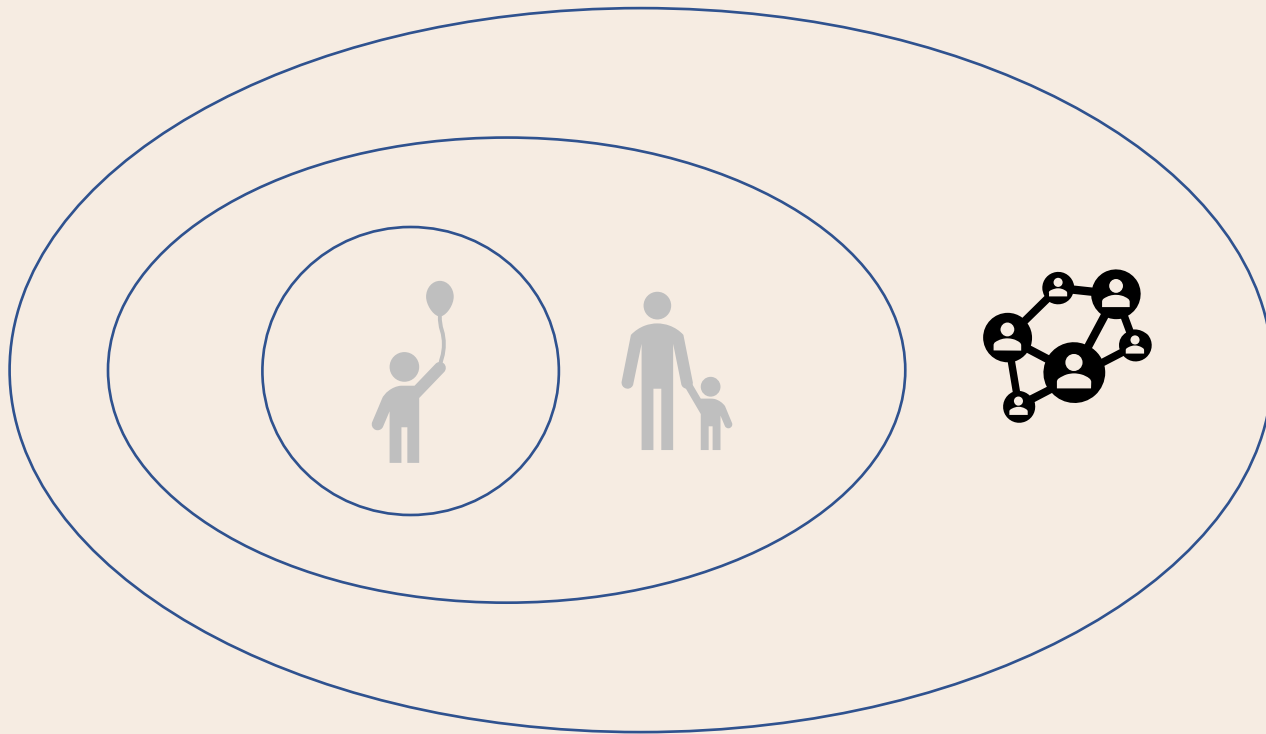


These include:

- A supportive family environment
- Nurturing parenting skills
- Stable family relationships
- Household rules and child monitoring
- Parental resilience and coping mechanisms



Community –level protective factors

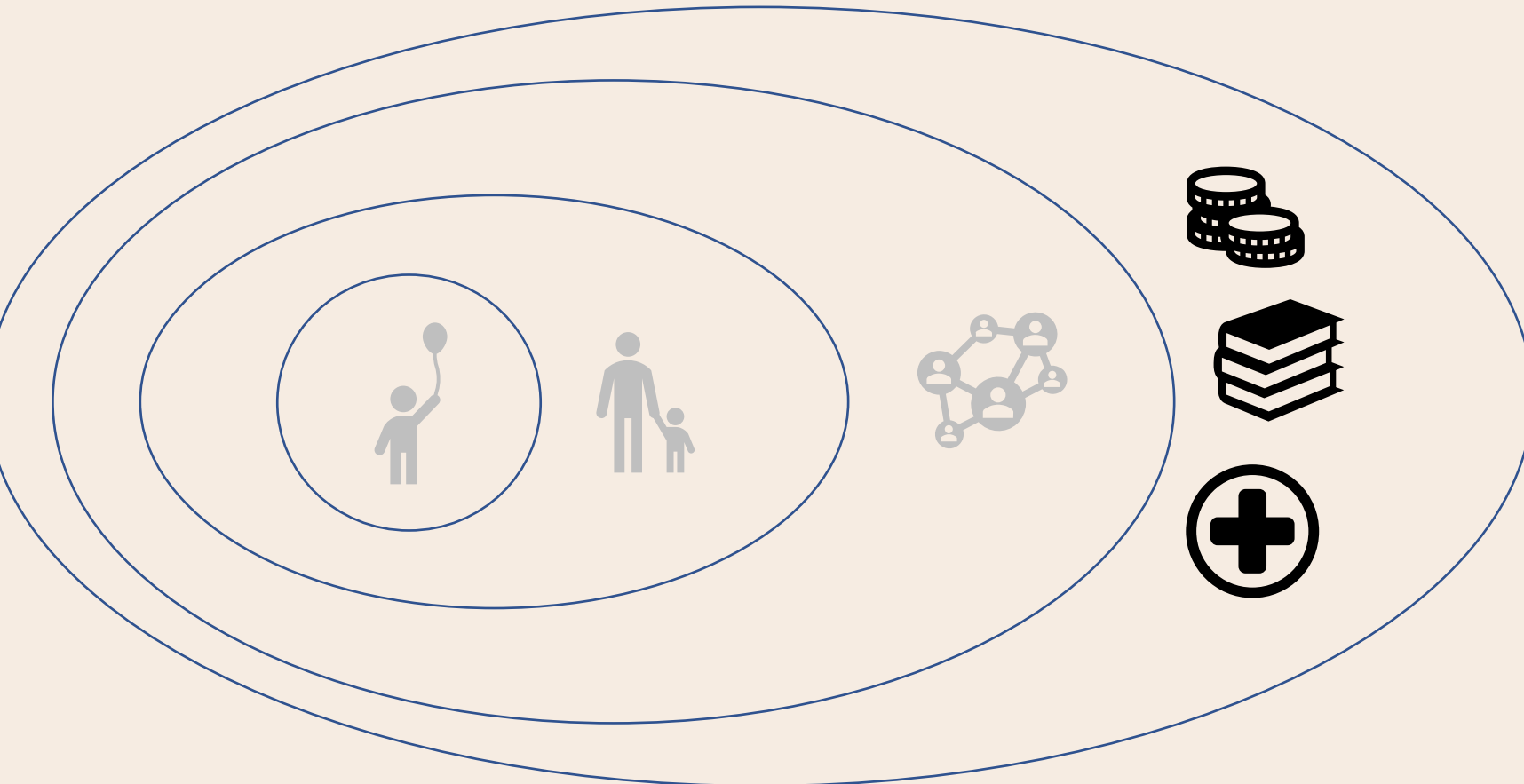


These include:

- Supportive relationships outside of the immediate family
- Community engagement in protecting children from maltreatment and supporting parents
- Community access to legal protection, education, healthcare and social welfare
- Social inclusion



Social and environmental protective factors



These include:

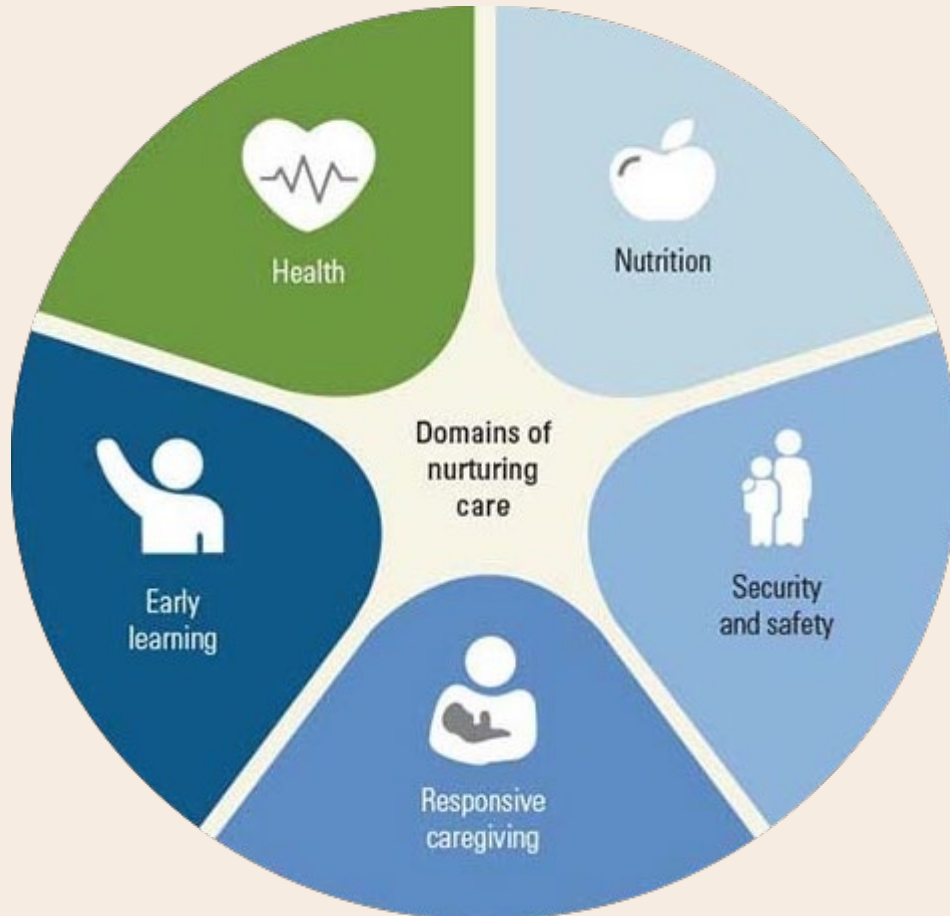
- Effective policy frameworks that protect children's rights
- Accessible healthcare, education and social welfare system
- Multi-sectoral commitment and action to tackle child maltreatment
- Societal and institutional capability to address inequality along the lines of race, gender, ability, class etc.

Protective factors also operate across different domains

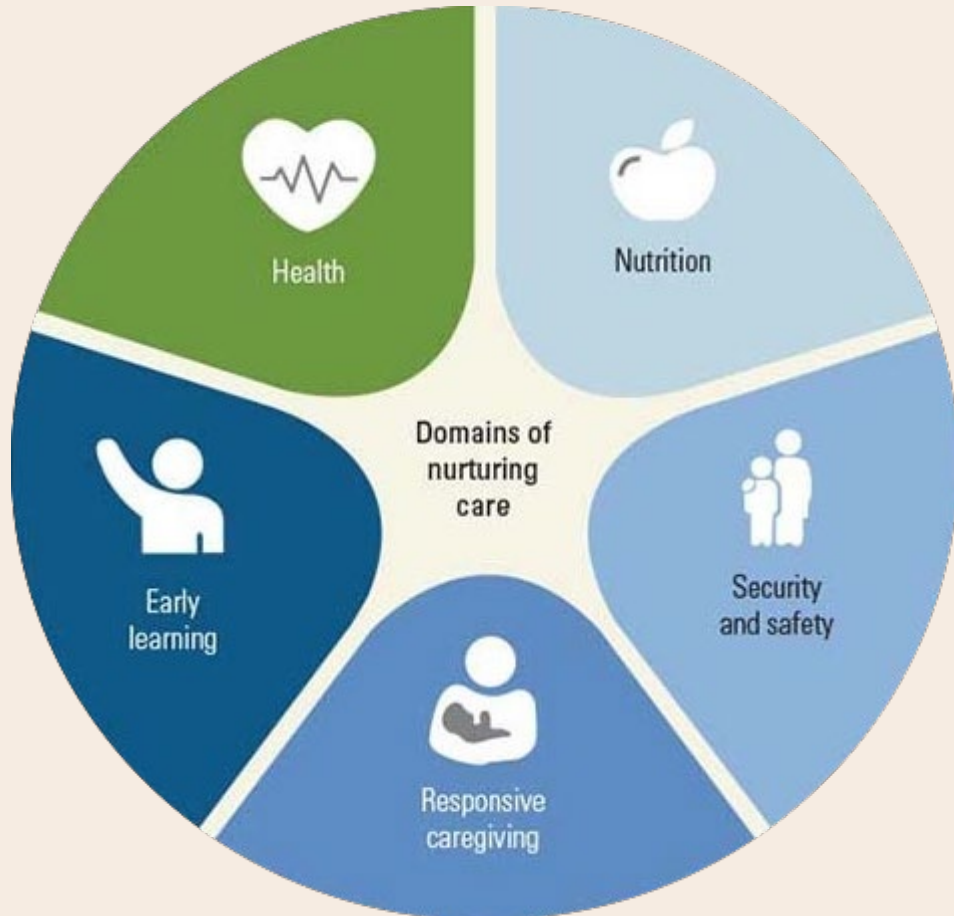
The Nurturing Care framework (WHO)

➤ Five key domains of the enabling environment, which are indispensable for development of each child:

- ❖ **Health**
- ❖ **Nutrition**
- ❖ **Responsive caregiving**
- ❖ **Security and safety**
- ❖ **Early learning**



Nurturing care framework



❖ Health

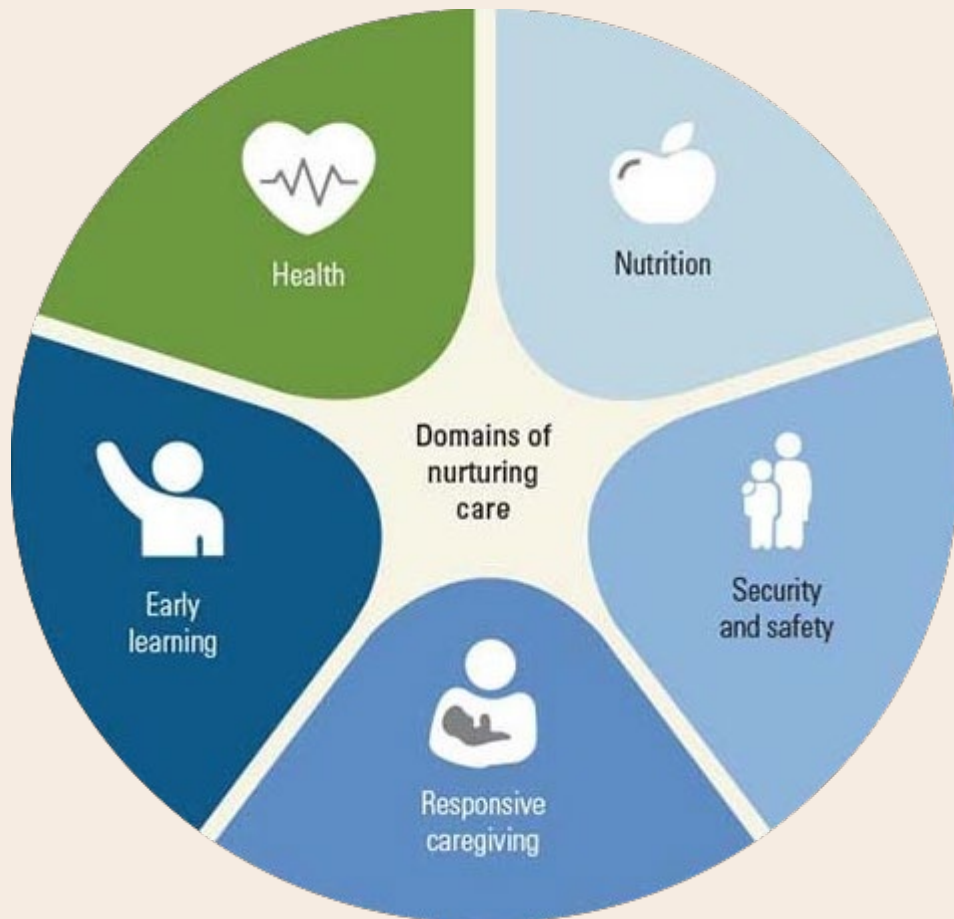
Immunization, disease treatment and prevention, safe water, improved sanitation and good hygiene.

❖ Nutrition

Diet that supports optimal growth and development, including early initiation and continuation of exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months, dietary diversity and frequent feeding.



Nurturing care framework



❖ **Responsive caregiving**

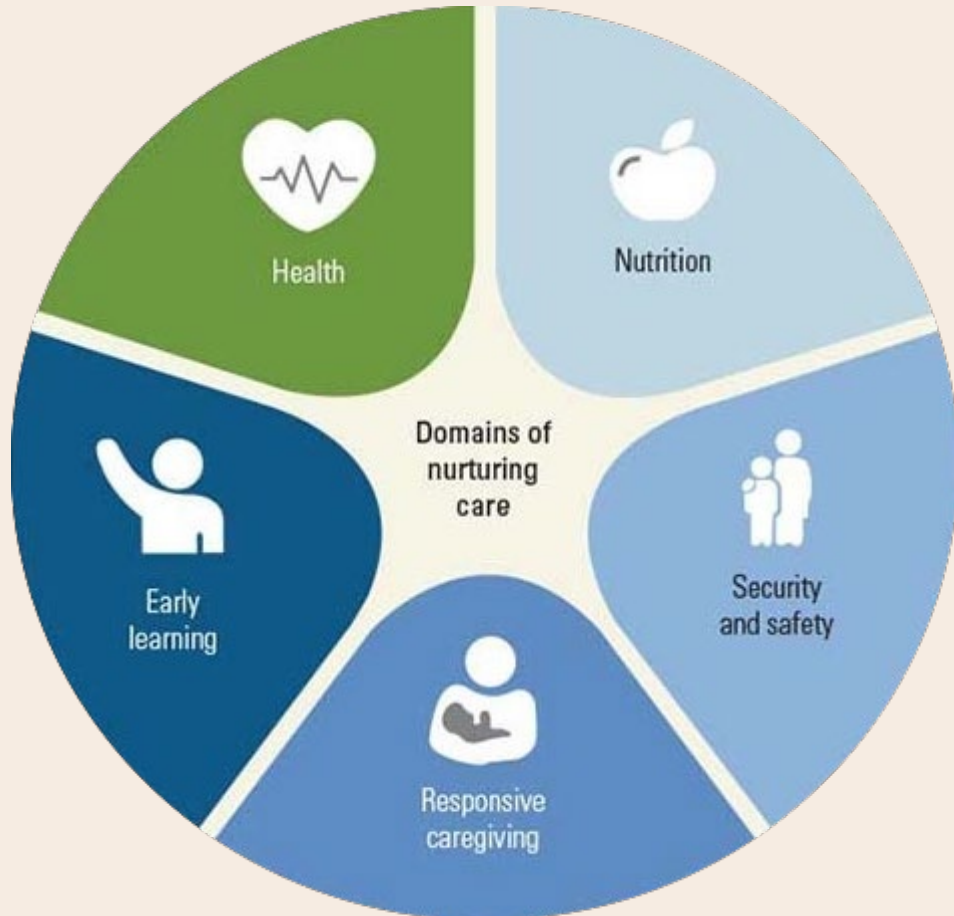
Engagement with a parent or caregiver that includes responsive care and provision of safe and nurturing environment.

❖ **Security and safety**

Protection from violence, abuse, neglect, accumulated effects of poverty, environmental hazards including air pollution, and prolonged exposure from other adversities (abuse and neglect, violence).



Nurturing care framework



❖ **Early learning**

Access to preschool and other early learning opportunities, a home environment supporting exploration and learning, availability of items at home that support learning (books, toys, and play materials).

❖ **Others?**

Can you think of any other examples from your own work along these lines?



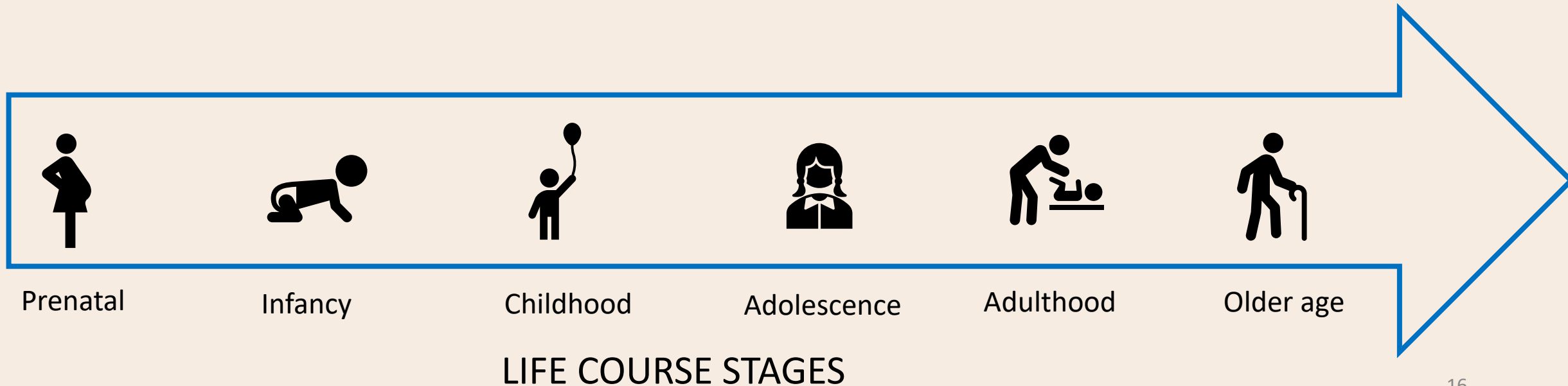
Intersecting scales and domains

- The domains of nurturing care *intersect* with scales, e.g. health factors can operate at the level of the individual child, parents or wider community
- Building protective factors across scales and domains helps to create an *enabling environment* for child development.
- Importantly, child development affects the entire life course



Nurturing children during childhood affects their entire life course

- Healthy pregnancy, safe birth
- Healthy growth and development
- School readiness

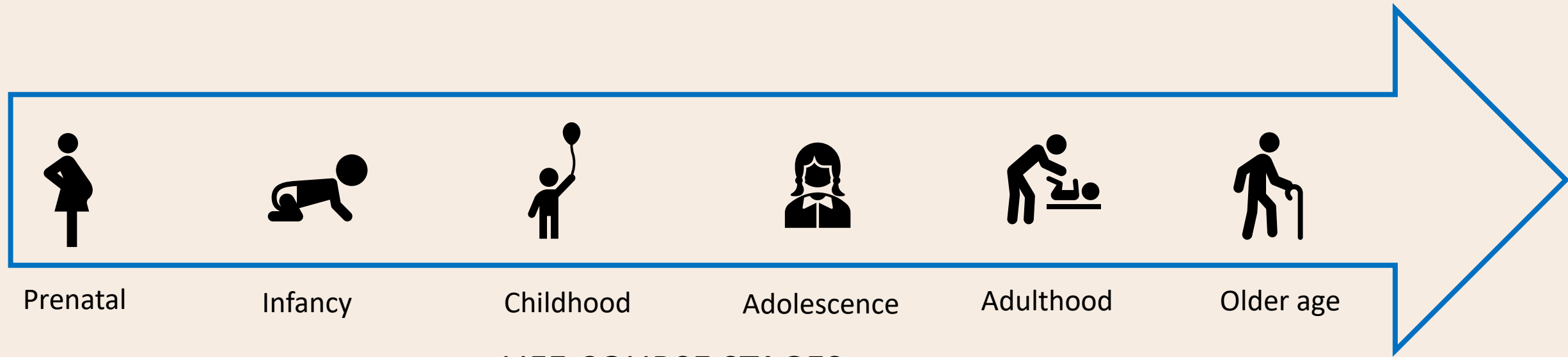




Nurturing children during childhood affects their entire life course

- Healthy pregnancy, safe birth
- Healthy growth and development
- School readiness

- School achievement
- Thriving adolescence



Prenatal

Infancy

Childhood

Adolescence

Adulthood

Older age

LIFE COURSE STAGES

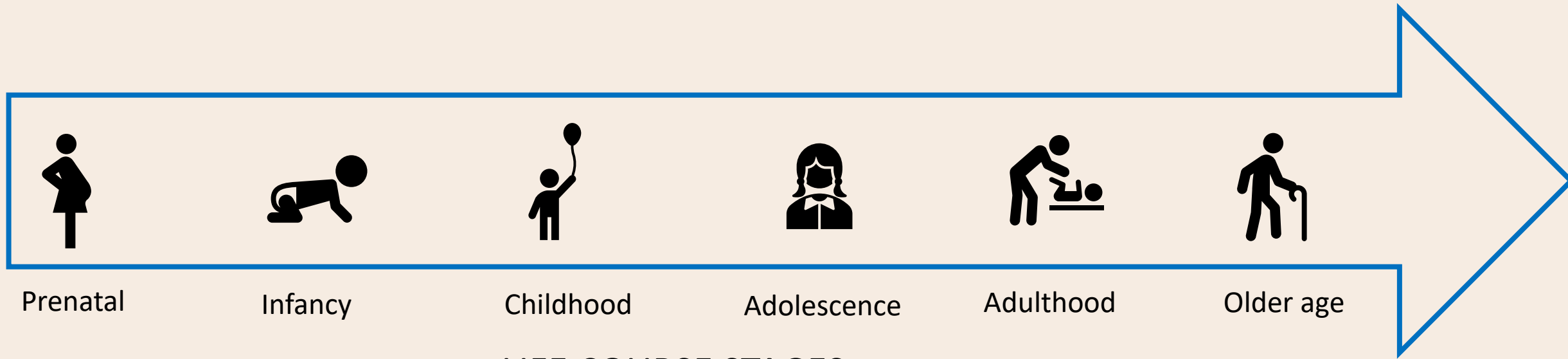


Nurturing children during childhood affects their entire life course

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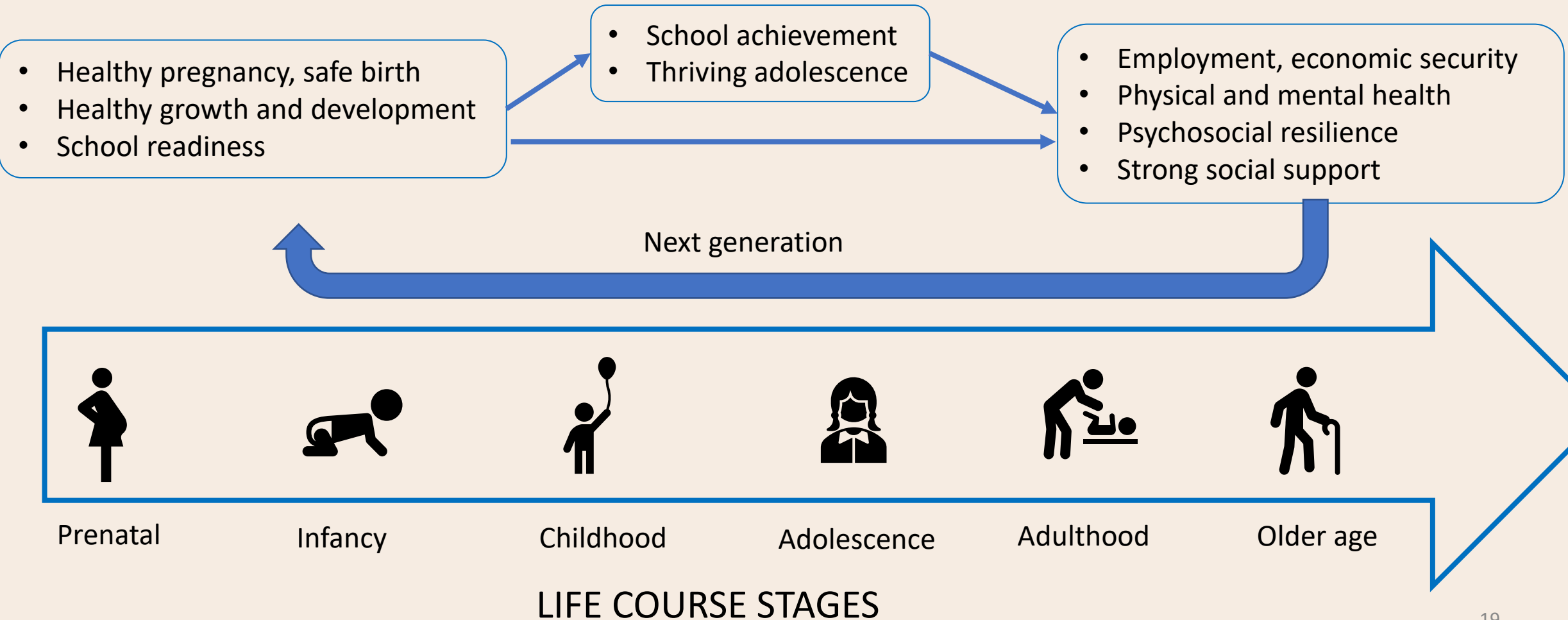
- Employment, economic security
- Physical and mental health
- Psychosocial resilience
- Strong social support

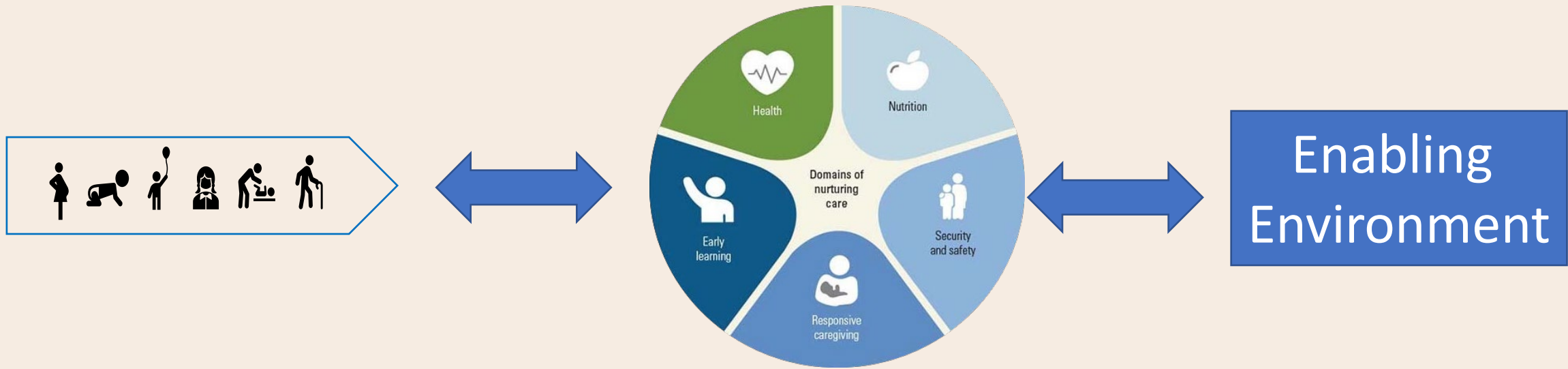


LIFE COURSE STAGES



And over time, can affect the life courses of the next generation





❖ Providing an enabling environment for caregivers, family, and community at all stages of the life course

This can be done in so many ways: parental education, parental mental or physical health support, providing access and support to mothers during pregnancy, access to health services allowing safe childbirth, ensuring a safe and supportive neighbourhood without place for stigma and prejudice.....to name but a few



Increasing protective factors and strengthening the enabling environment works better when each part of the system operates as a whole.



- The idea comes from a ‘systems approach’ to child protection
- This argues that protective factors at different scales and domains are more effective if they work together
- E.g. progress can be hindered if gaps exist in child protection systems and/or there is a lack of communication between school/health service/social workers



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Animation: *Protecting Against Isolation*

- Let's watch a short animation that looks at isolation as a risk factor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZU3E2CWi6Y>



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Animation: *Protecting Against Isolation*

- What were your thoughts on the video?
- Was anything missing?
- What would you have done as a professional if working with parents, children or families in that scenario?



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Developing ways to nurture these positive principles: Individual and group exercises



1. Individually, spend 5 minutes thinking and making notes about:

- Think about your professional role and how you interact with children, and about all of the preventative factors we've discussed.
- What do you think are the most important preventive factors *you* can help encourage, and facilitate through your work?
- What are the strategies you use to develop these *right now*?
- *How could you change your practice* to do more to develop these factors, for example in your interactions with children and their parents?
- How can you better *adapt* your practice in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- In doing the above, what challenges will you face and how can you overcome them?



THEN (after 5 mins working individually)

2. Spend 10 minutes in pairs, or small groups, share these notes with each other and discuss them.
3. 5 minutes: Again by yourself, develop a short 'action plan,' or 'mantra' of principles that will guide your practice in nurturing these protective factors.
4. At the end of this, perhaps the trainer and some of the class may volunteer to share their mantras and have some further discussion.



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Summary

- Protective factors are vital to prevent and mitigate the impact of child maltreatment over the life span and across generations
- These operate at various scales and may differ by culture or context
- **All practitioners play a role** in developing and nurturing these in individuals, families and community
- **We all** play a vital role in the enabling environment which enables these positive factors to blossom



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