

Child Development, Disability and The Sustainable Development Goals

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Long Walk to Freedom?

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- “It is when we all share the conviction that ‘all who live, must live to thrive’ can we really resolve today’s moral dilemma and have a clearer picture of the state of the world’s children beyond the survival agenda.” Olusanya [2005](#), Archives of Disease in Childhood.
- “..., the downward trend in child mortality in low-income countries presents a heightened awareness in addressing the quality of life for the survivors, especially those at risk of long-term developmental disadvantage. Current ECD approaches need to be adapted to recognize interventions that are time bound for optimal outcomes.” Olusanya [2011](#), Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics.
- “The lack of clear pathways for optimising early childhood development and learning for the growing population of children with developmental disabilities in predominantly resource-constrained settings invokes an ethical and moral burden on the global health community.” Olusanya et al [2018](#), Lancet Child and Adolescent Health.

Main Objective

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The Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) recently launched by WHO/UNICEF/World Bank conceptually addresses early childhood development for all children from pregnancy to age 3 years, particularly those at-risk of sub-optimal development due to stunting and extreme poverty.

This presentation will primarily focus on:

Early childhood development for children under 5 years with developmental disabilities within the context of the sustainable development goals.

Context

- Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promise to leave no child behind including children with disabilities and those in vulnerable circumstances.
- SDG 1 (for poverty reduction), SDG 2 (for food security and improved nutrition) & SDG 3 (for ensuring healthy lives and well being) adequately address the risks of sub-optimal development due to stunting and poverty.
- SDG 4: Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.
 - SDG 4.2.1 mandates “access to quality early childhood development” and the monitoring of children under five years who are “developmentally on track” in *health, learning* and *psychosocial well-being* .

Children with Developmental Disabilities

- Who are these children?
- How many are they?
- Where are they located?
- What services do they require to prepare them for inclusive learning and education?

Children with Developmental Disabilities: Who?

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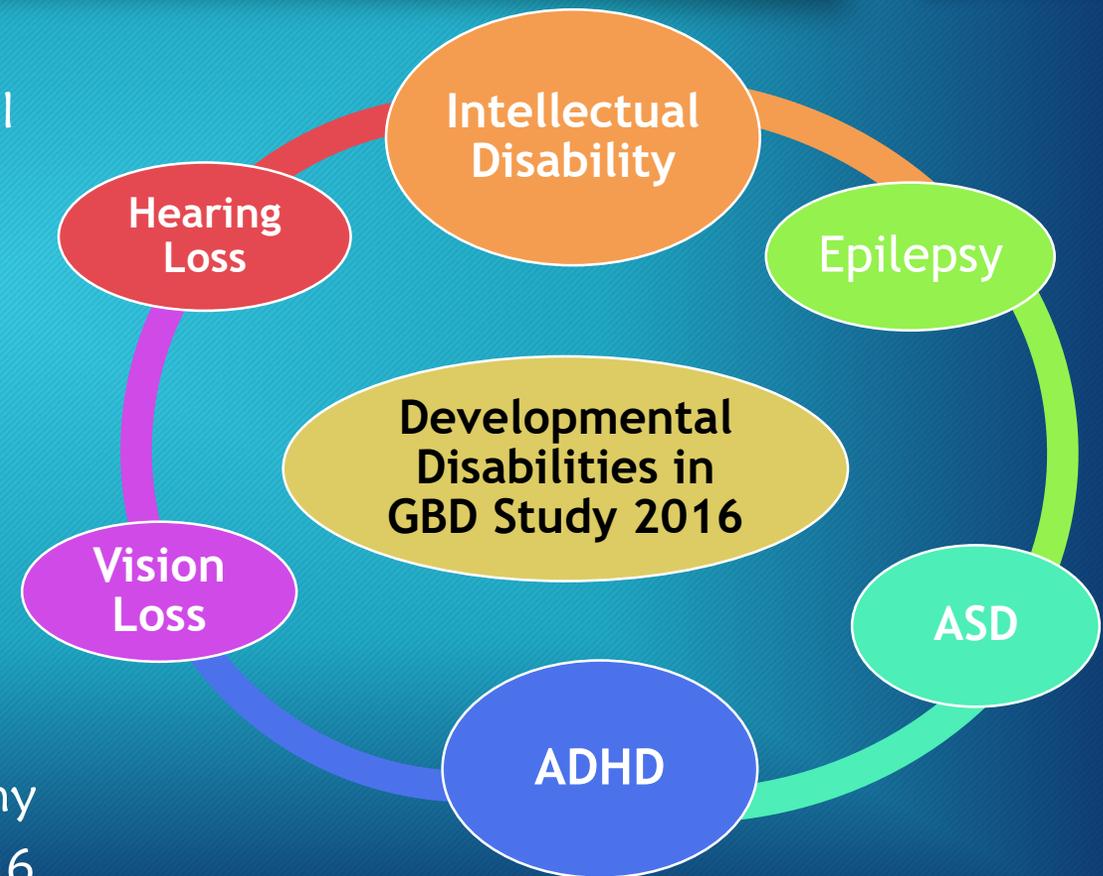
Typically include children with:

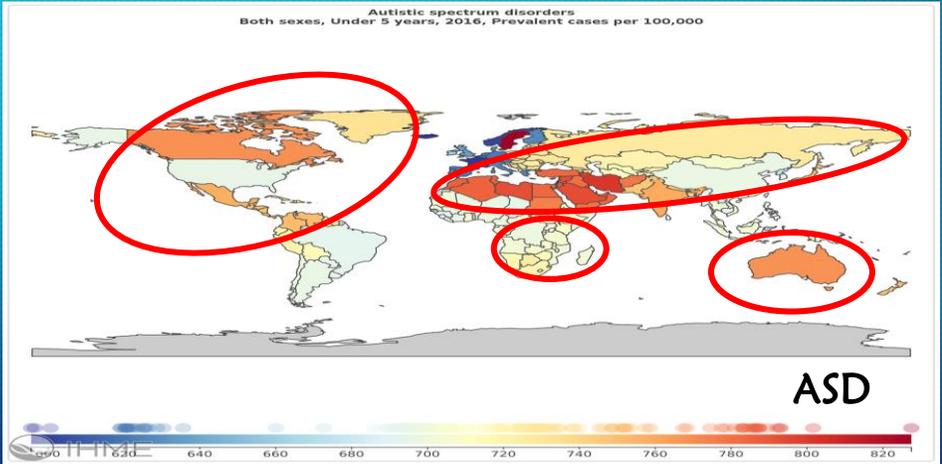
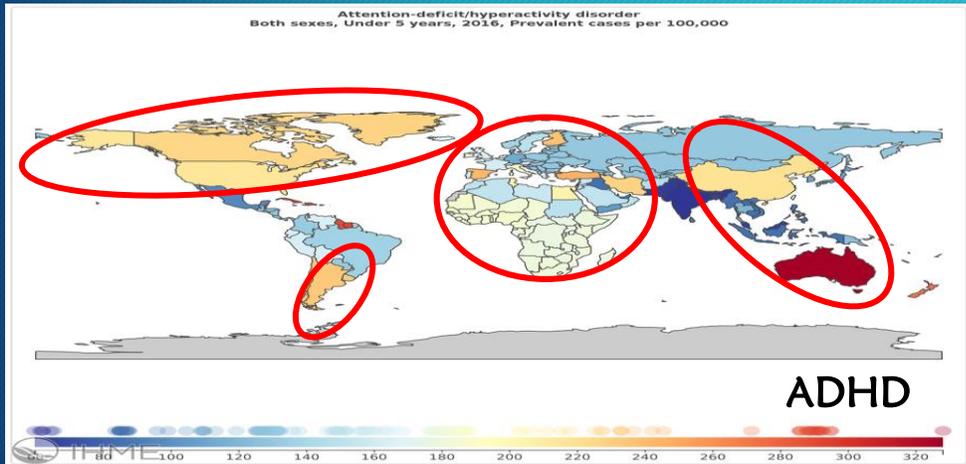
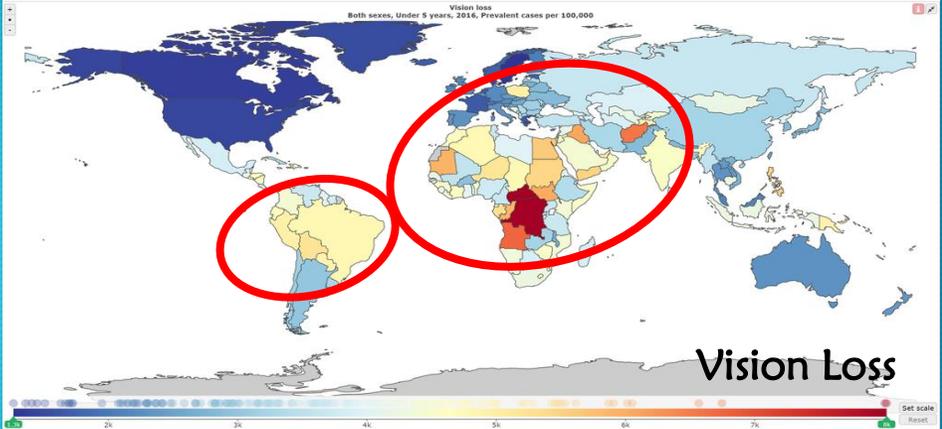
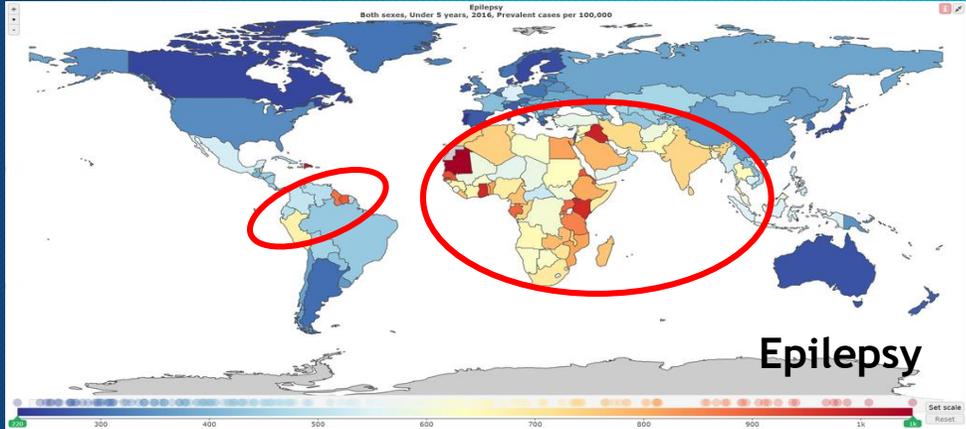
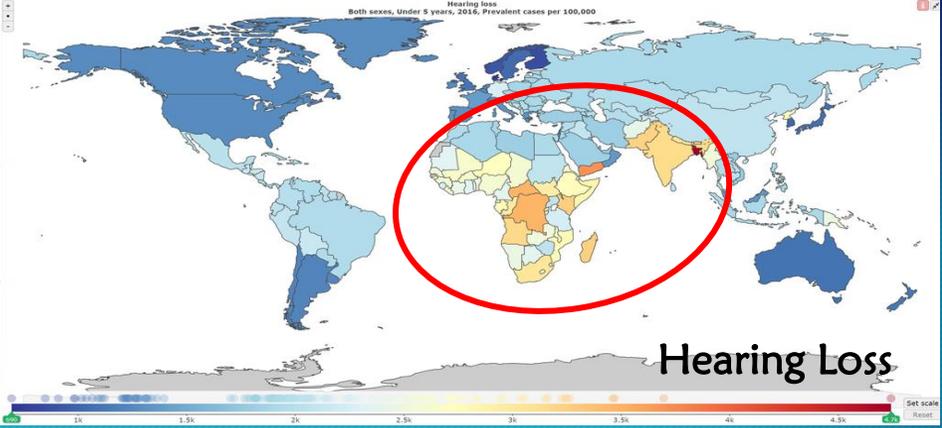
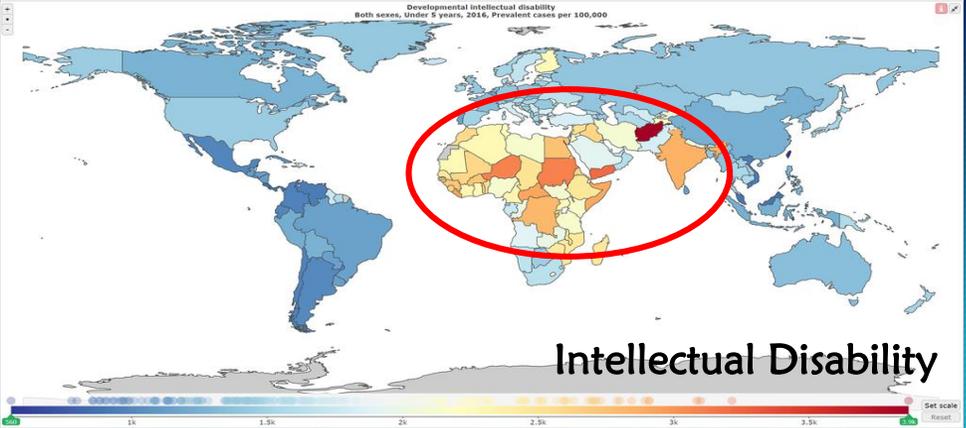
- sensory impairments (hearing and vision loss)
- epilepsy or seizures
- cerebral palsy
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- intellectual disability
- specific learning disorders
- 'other' developmental disabilities

Children with Disabilities. How Many & Where?

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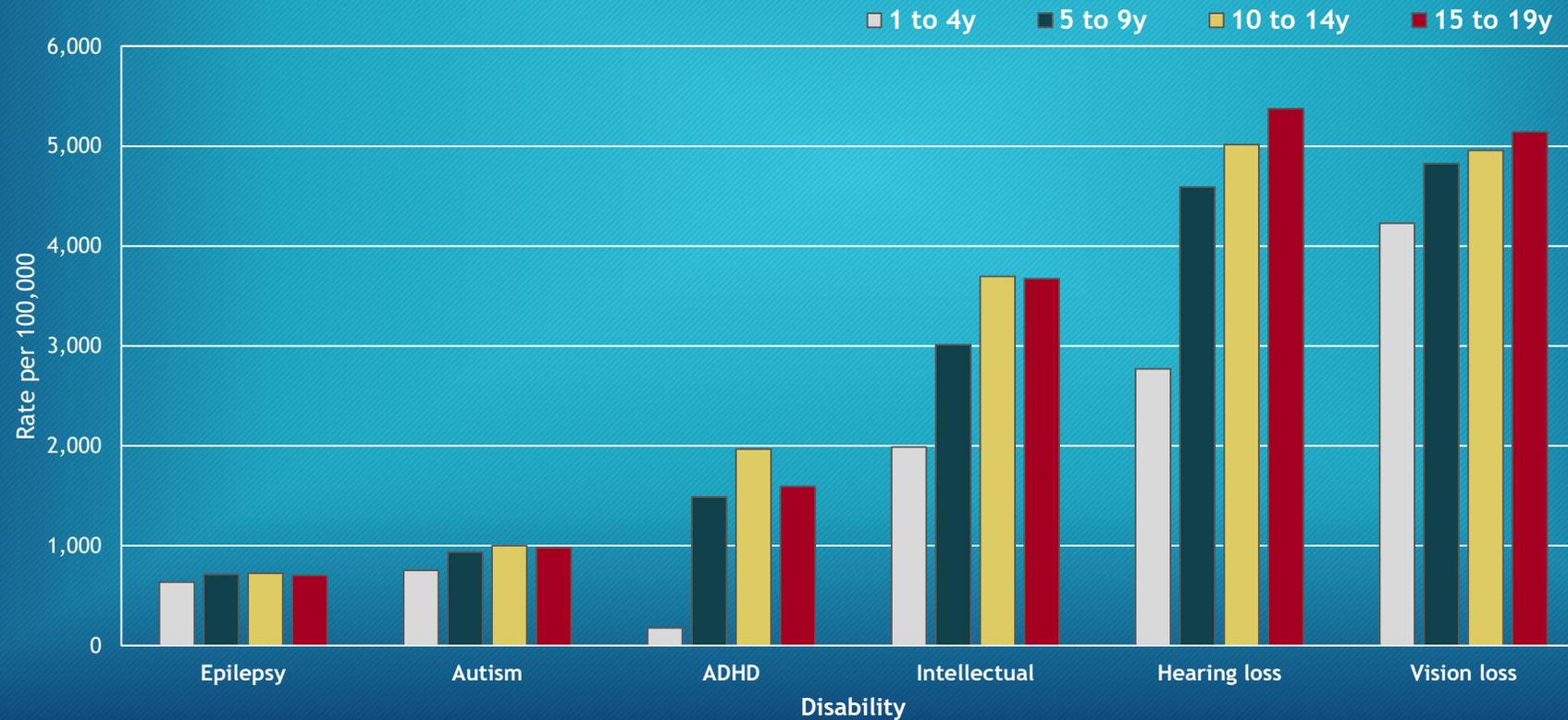
- Limited data exists for children with developmental disabilities particularly in the LMICs
 - Available epidemiological data are commonly produced by special interest groups with risk of bias
- The Global Burden of Disease Study now provides **INDEPENDENT** global data for six disabilities: Epilepsy, Intellectual Disability, ADHD, ASD, Hearing Loss & Vision Loss in 195 countries and territories.
- About 53 million children are estimated to have any of the six developmental disabilities globally in 2016.





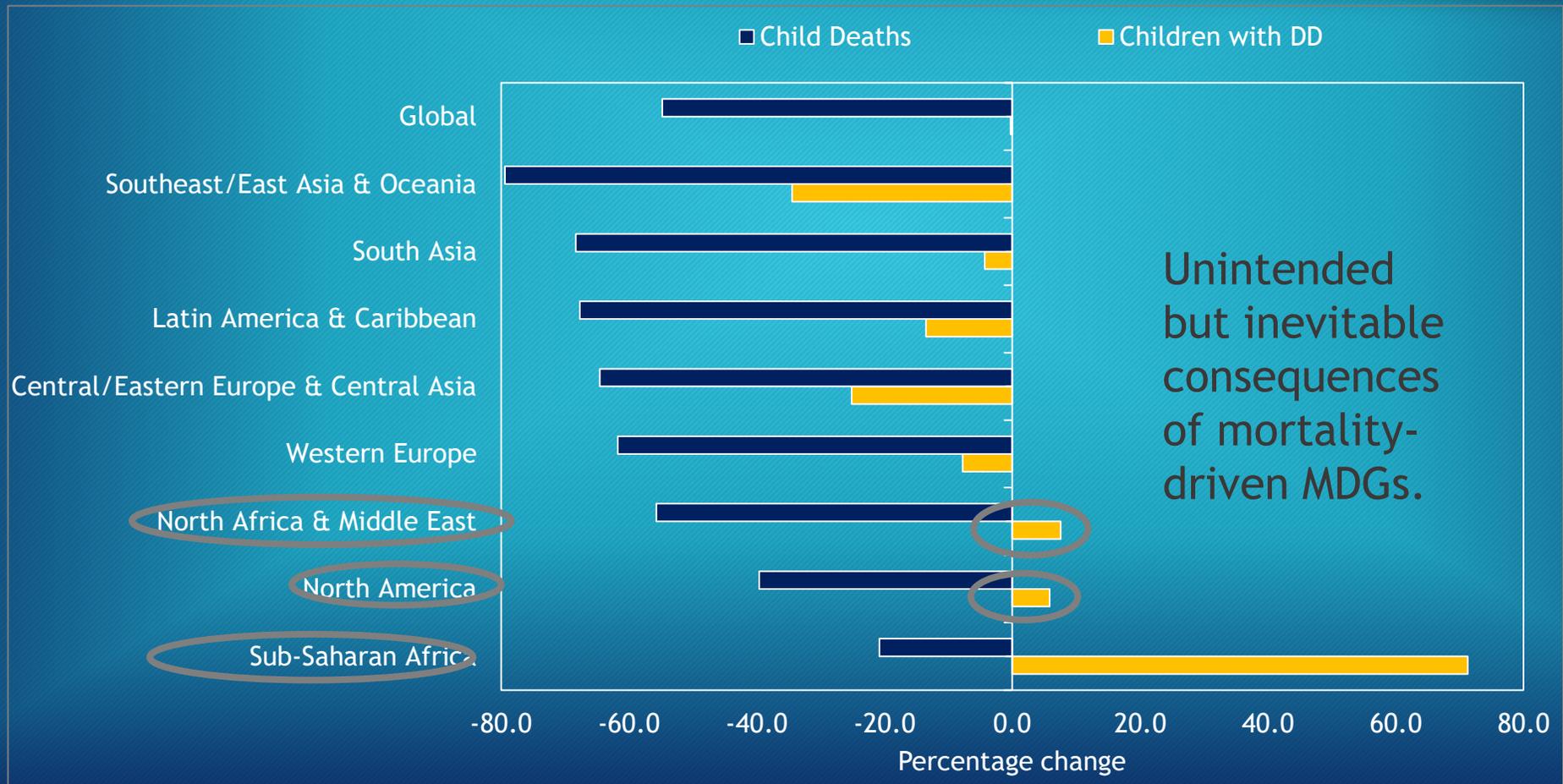
Disability Prevalence from Age 1 to 19 years

Prevalence 2016



Mortality and disability in children <5 years between 1990 and 2016

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Unintended but inevitable consequences of mortality-driven MDGs.

Early Detection towards Preparatory Services for Inclusive Education

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Newborns

Neonatal Screening Programmes for birth defects and congenital disorders including sensory impairments

- Hospital & Community-based
- Targeted or Universal coverage

Infants

Developmental Screening and Monitoring of milestones at 9-12 months

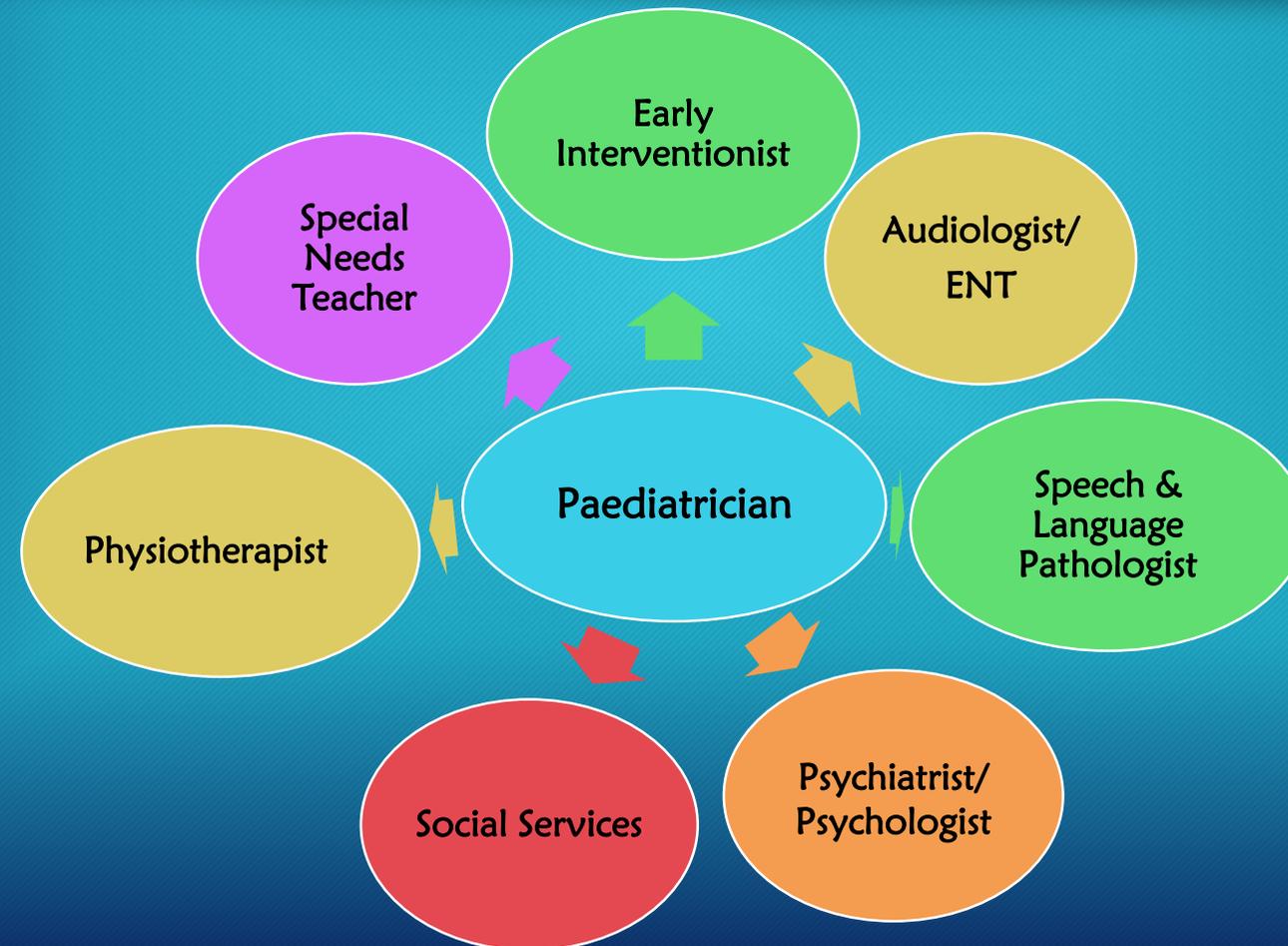
Children 1-4y

Developmental Screening and Monitoring of milestones at 18-24 & 36-48 months

Services should be culturally-sensitive and ensure active parental participation at every stage

Multi-disciplinary and Family-oriented Preparatory Services towards Inclusive Education

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Way Forward...

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- Urgent need for a more unified and inclusive coalition of stakeholders and child advocacy groups
- Need for relevant and effective global programmes to facilitate capacity building in high burden but resource-limited countries
- Need for quantifiable targets for reducing the population of children with developmental disabilities globally.
- Investment in population-based data for developmental disabilities
- Need for more transparent and representative engagement between ECD policymakers and relevant stakeholders in child disability

Closing Charge

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“Just because we cannot see clearly the end of the road, that is no reason for not embarking on an essential journey”. JFK

Acknowledgements

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- Global Research on Developmental Disabilities Collaborators (GRDDC) analysed the data.