

# Listen to the children 's voice

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# Content of the presentation

- Short description of the situation in Czech
- Children's participation rights as an expression of basic needs
- How to involve children in decision-making on the transition process
- How to individually support children by the transition process
- How to help children accept changes in the system of out of home care
- Tools and recommendations for individual and group work with children in the transition process

# Situation in the Czech republic

- Population: 10 million inhabitants
- Child population: 2 million children
- Children in out of home care: 21 953 children in 2015
  - i.e. 12,9 children per 1.000; Canada 8,5 children per 1.000
- Children in orphanages: 6.878 (29%)
  - Children in foster families: 15.075 (71%)
    - Foster family: 10.380 children
    - Nonfostering individual care: 4.152 children
    - Professional foster care: 543

# Children's rights as an expression of their needs

## Children's rights

- The child's right to know their own identity
- The child's right to know their parents to keep in touch with them
- The child's right to information
- The child's right to participate in solutions that relate to his/her life
- The right of a child living outside the family to live in an environment most similar to the family

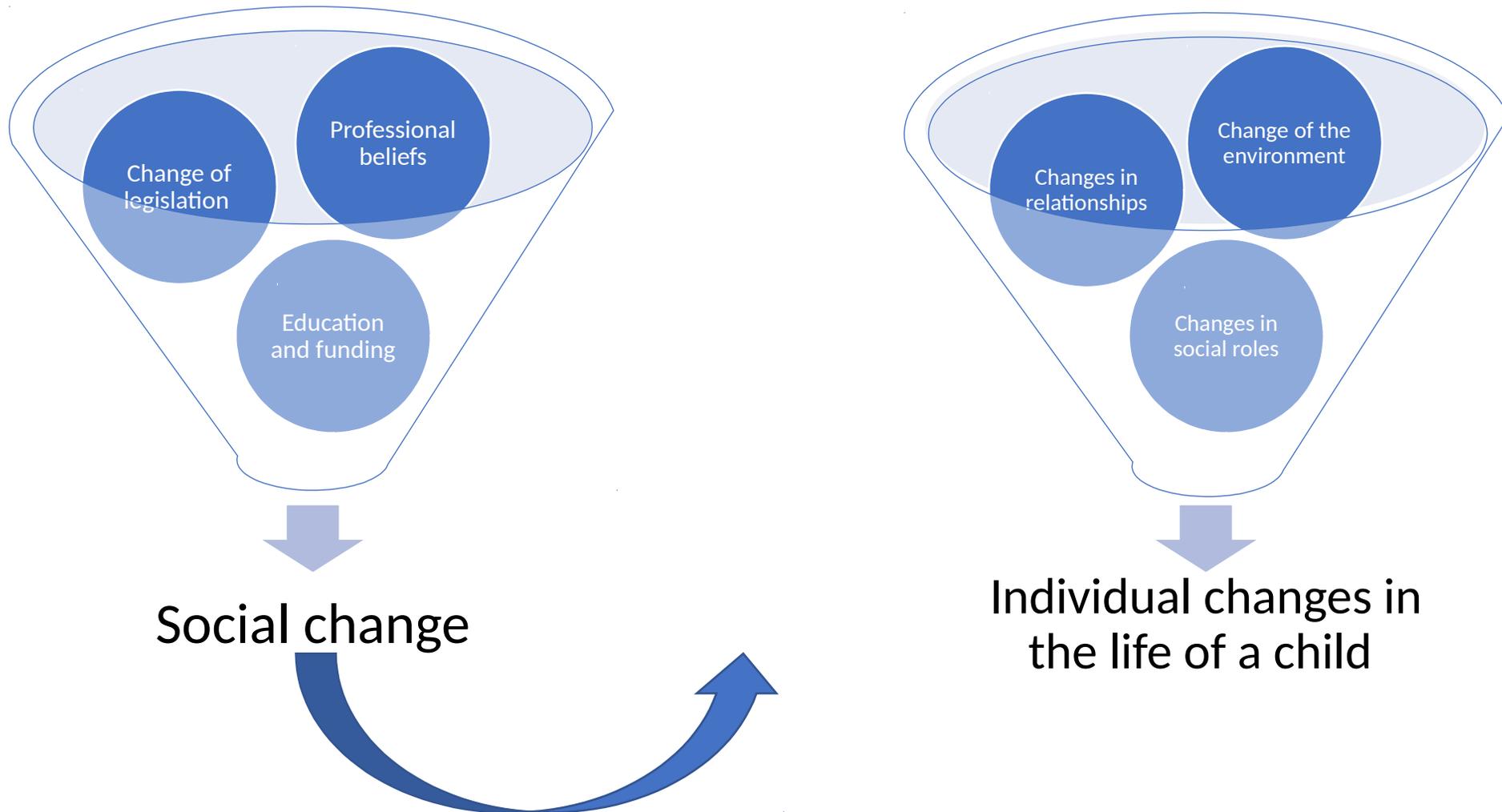
## Children's needs

- The need of a child to know his/her own identity
- The need of a child to know their parents to keep in touch with them
- The child's need for information
- The need of a child to participate in solutions that relate to his/her life
- The need of a child living outside the family to live in an environment most similar to the family

# The process of deinstitutionalization and an individual child

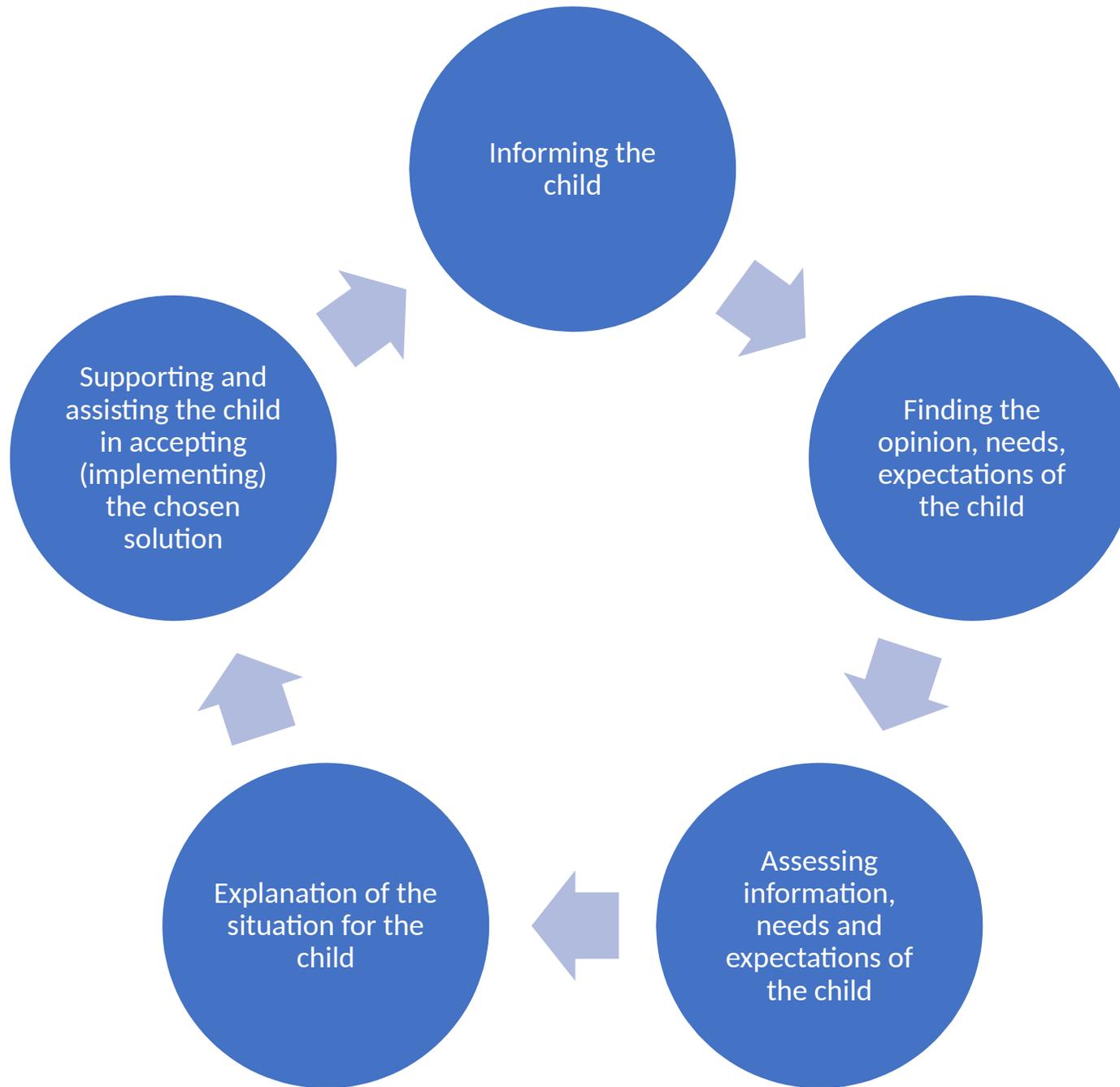
- Deinstitutionalization of the care of children at risk
  - Professional beliefs
  - Legislative changes
  - Building of expert and economic support (conditions for foster care and the original family)
  - Expert support for individual children during the transition process
- Individual changes in the child's life
  - Changes of the environment (new placement)
  - Changes in relationships (new people)
  - Changes in social roles (new situation)

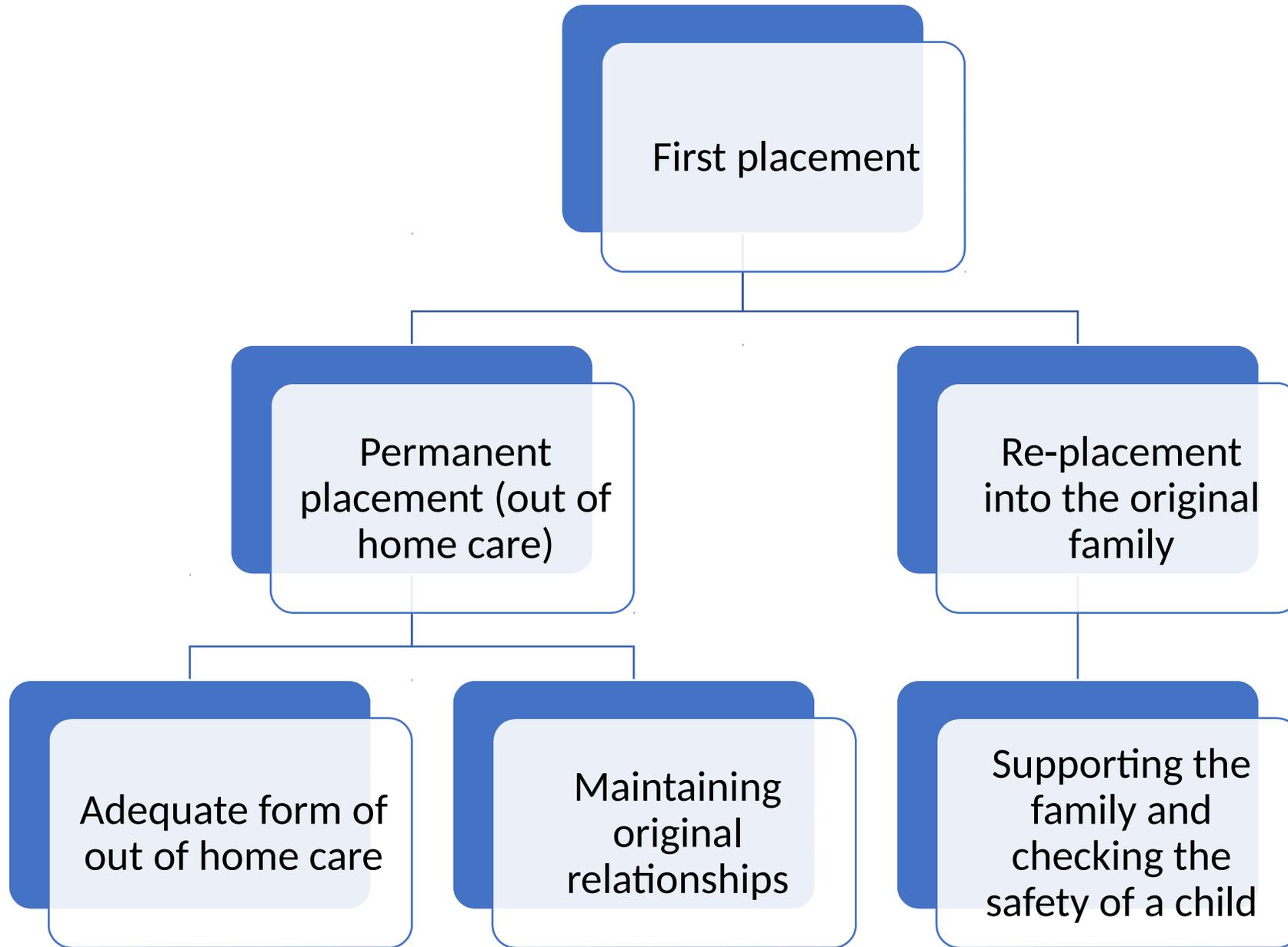
# The process of deinstitutionalization and an individual child



# Transition plan – general recommendations

- Openness and support for children during the transition process is difficult but helps them to understand what is happening and what will happen
- “Listen, Listen, Listen to the child’s expression of their needs.”
- There are universal messages that need to be addressed at each point in the continuum (always frame questions age appropriately):
  - What do you want?
  - What do you need?
  - How to keep contact with people with whom you want to maintain connections?
  - Who are the important people in your life?
  - Will I be safe?
  - You’re not in trouble, it’s not your fault





# First placement

	Working directly with the child	Work with the child's situation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where am I and why?</li><li>• When will I see parents, siblings, grandparents, friends?</li><li>• How can I contact them?</li><li>• How does it work here - what are the rules at the place where the child was placed, how the child can influence what is happening (for example, whether there is a day regimen or whether the child can "negotiate")</li><li>• What's going to happen next</li></ul> <p><b>Who will provide?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will the child's future situation be addressed?</li><li>• Who and how will work with the original family</li><li>• Is it possible for the child to return to the original family (under what conditions)</li><li>• How to keep in touch with the original family (friends)</li><li>• How to involve the child in making decisions, how to find out what they want and what they need</li></ul> <p><b>Who will provide?</b></p>

# Re-placement into the original family

- What is different that makes it safe for me to live with my parents now when it wasn't safe before?
- Do my parents live in my old house?
- Does my mother still live with X (boyfriend)?
- Are my brothers/sisters going home, too? Or, are my brothers/sisters still living there?
- How does my mother /father feel about having me come home?
- How do my foster parents feel about me leaving? Will I still see them?
- Will I go to my old school and how will they react to me?
- Will I get [burned, hit, etc.] again? If I tell about abuse again, what happens?
- Who do I talk to if it happens again?
- Who will continue to help me? Will I have someone with whom I can talk about my situation?

# Adequate form of out of home care

- What kind of out of home care is best for the child
- How to maintain a child's relationship with family members and other close persons (such as those in the institution)
- What a child thinks, what he/she wants

	Working directly with the child	Work with the child's situation
↓	- Adaptation to the new situation (foster family, school, etc.) <b>Who will provide?</b>	- Working with foster family <b>Who will provide?</b>
	- Keeping in touch with the original family (if children were for a long time in an orphanage, these relationships are also important to them) <b>Who will provide?</b>	- Working with birth family <b>Who will provide?</b>

# CHANGE OF PLACEMENTS/FAMILIES

- Why am I moving (describe problems, discuss unmet needs which the child may have and how those might be met in the new family, new placement, etc).
- Whose decision was this?
- Who will help me move?
- Will I be able to see my “other families”?
- What’s going to happen to my stuff?

# DECISION TO CHANGE PLAN FROM “RETURN HOME” TO “ADOPTION” OR „FOSTER CARE“

- Why can't I go home?
- Where will I live?
- What does it mean to be adopted, what is fostering or other form of out of home care?
- Will there be other children in the foster family?
- Is it O.K. to still love my birth family?

# Preparing for fostering

- RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

- What would you like your family to be like?
- What would you like people to know about you?

- INTRODUCTION TO SELECTED FAMILY

- What would you like to say to the family?
- What would you like them to tell you?
- What would you like to do on your first visit?
- Are you comfortable staying overnight?
- Do I move in right away?

- WHEN A SELECTED FAMILY RETURNS A CHILD

- Is it my fault?
- Why did this happen?
- Where will I live?
- Can you think of special people in your life who you would like to live with?
- What would you like in a family?

# Transition

- **PRE-PLACEMENT VISITS**

- Considerable contact between foster parents before the move (7-10 days)
- After some initial visits, ask the child: Is it going to be easy or hard to do things with the foster parents?
- Easy or hard to follow the rules? How about giving and receiving affection, how will that be?
- Give child permission to talk about birth parents and foster parents

- **MOVE DATE**

- Can I go back to my foster family?
- Can I go back to my birth family?
- Can I bring my things?
- Are you feeling scared, angry, etc.?
- Will my birth family know who my adoptive (foster) family is?
- Will I ever see my birth family?

- **FINALIZATION DATE – ADOPTION (FOSTERING) CEREMONY**

- How do you feel today?
- Do you wonder about contact with birthparent or foster parent?
- Will my name change? Will I need to move out when I'm 18?

# Children's rights in the out of home care

- You could be separated from parents or other relatives just by a court decision
- You have the right to stay in contact with your parents or other relatives, although it may be a telephone, written or assisted contact
- You have the right to know what is happening now and why
- You have the right to know what will happen and why
- You have the right to express yourself about everything that is happening in your life
- You have the right to evaluate the environment in which you live and to express yourself with what services are provided to you
- You have a right to your guardian who will represent your interests and communicate your views
- You have the right to directly contact the court that will decide on you, the social worker or other persons and institutions that decide about your situation
- You have the right to support and services if you need them
- You have the right not to apply your rights



# Voice of children in out of home care

- <http://www.naseprava.cz/cilove-skupiny/pro-deti/prakticky-pruvodce/videospoty/>

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# Thank you for your attention!

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