

Listen to the children's voice

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Czech republic

Content of presentation

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

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 for a child to know 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 for a child to participate in solutions that relate to his or her life
- The need for a child living outside the family to live in an environment most similar to the family

Situation in Czech republic

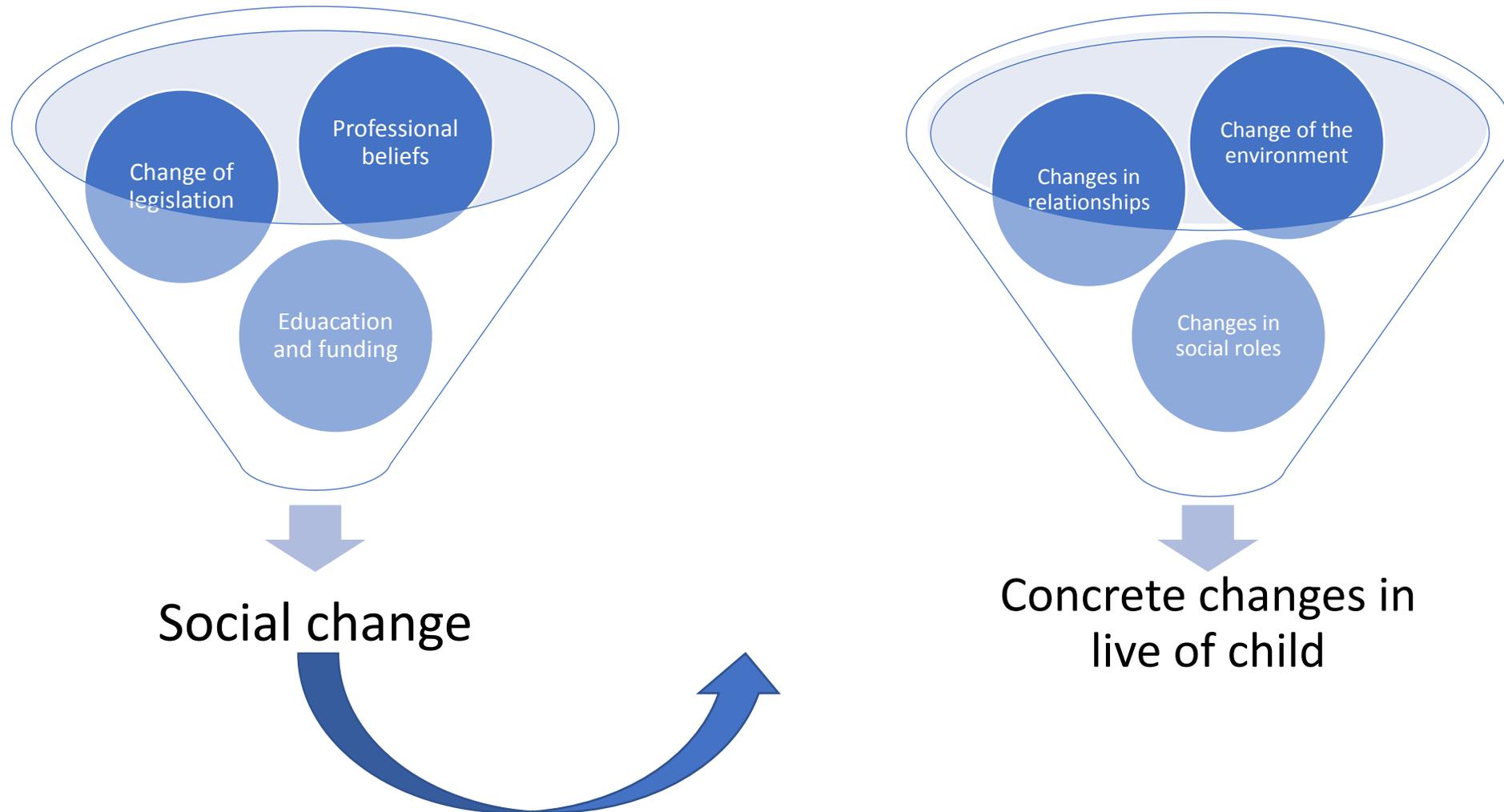
- Population size: 10 million inhabitants
- Child population: 2 million children
- Children in out of home care: 21 953 children in 2015 (i.e. 12,9 children per 1.000; Canada 8,5 children per 1.000)
- Children in orphanages: 6.878 children (29%)
 - Children in foster families: 15.075 children (71%)
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

Children's rights in out of home care

- You could be separated from parents or other relatives just by 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 your situation
- You have the right to support and services if you need them
- You have the right not to apply your rights

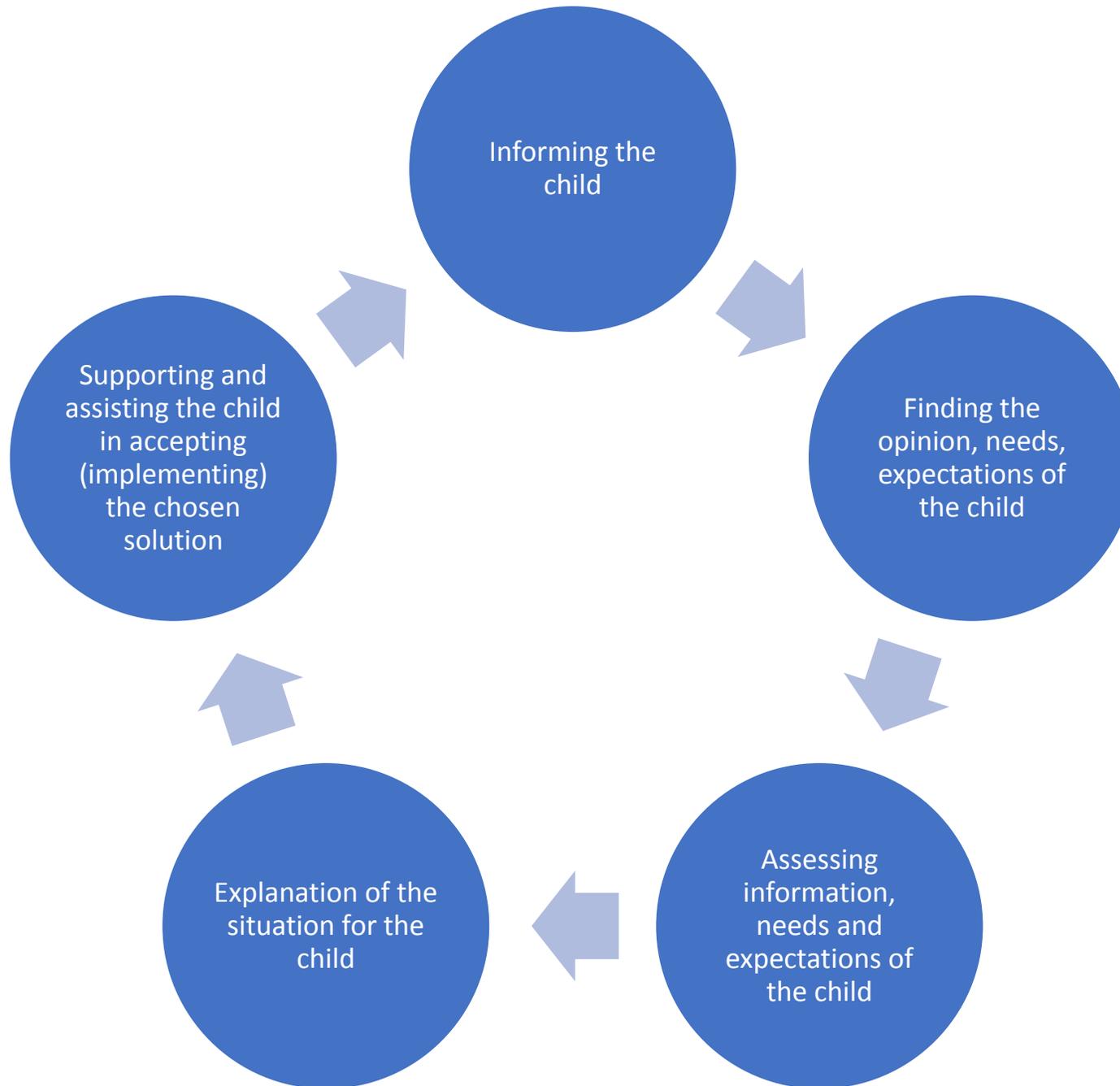
Pemova, Ptacek: The Voice of Children in Out of Home Care. Kruh rodiny. Praha 2015. ISBN:987-80-87066-05-8

Process of deinstitutionalization and concrete child



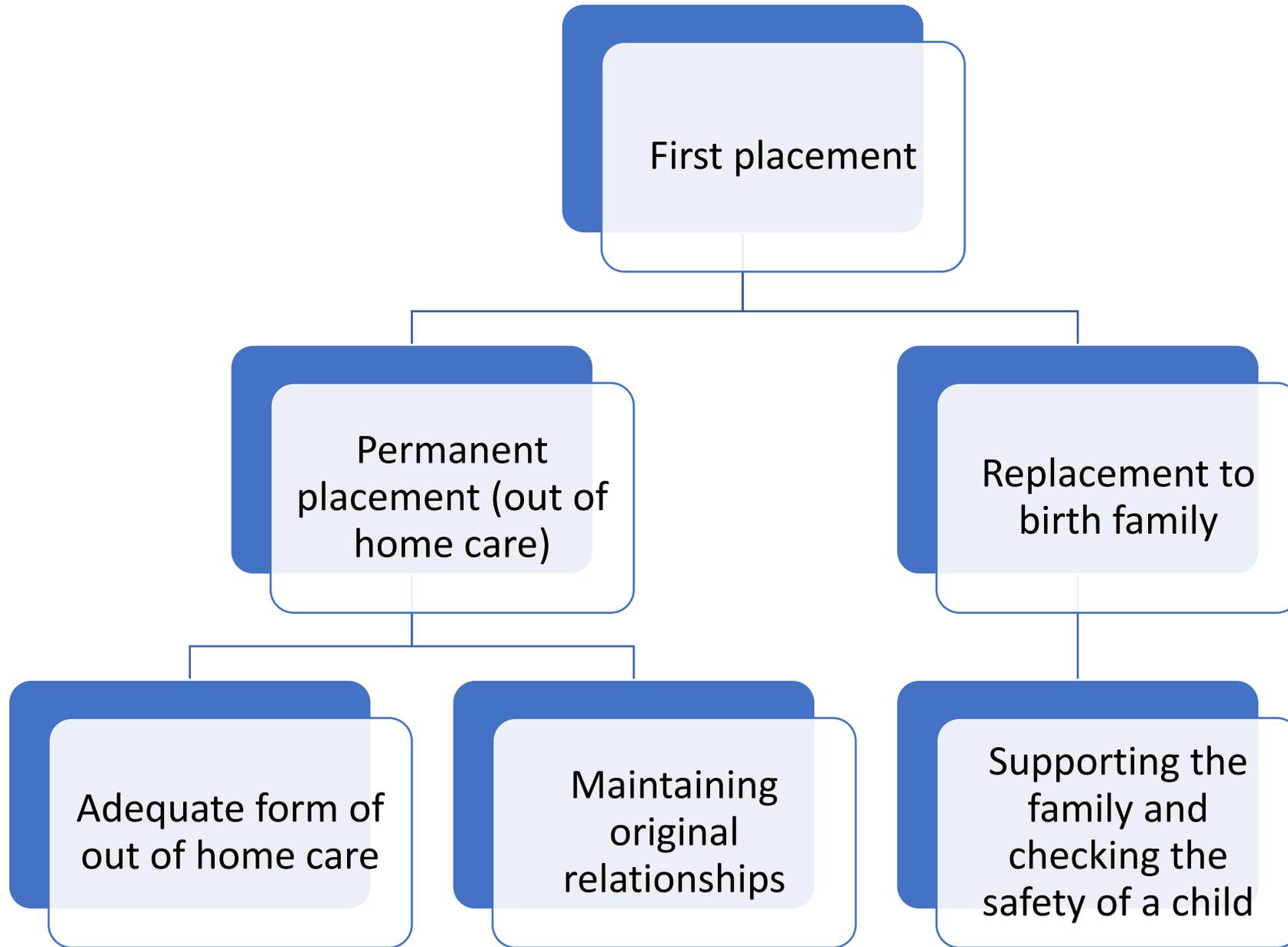
Process of deinstitutionalization and concrete child

- Deinstitutionalization of the care of children at risk
 - Professional believes
 - Legislative changes
 - Building of expert and economic support (conditions for foster care)
 - Expert support for concrete children during 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)



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?
 - Will I be safe?
 - You’re not in trouble, it’s not your fault
 - How to keep contact with people with whom you want to maintain connections?
 - Who are the important people in your live



First placement

	Working directly with the child	Work with the child's situation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where am I and why?• When will I see parents, siblings, grandparents, friends?• How can I contact them?• 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")• What's going to happen next <p>Who will provide?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will the child's future situation be addressed?• Who and how will work with the original family• It is possible for the child to return to the original family (under what conditions)• How to keep in touch with the original family (friends)• How to involve the child in making decisions, how to find out what they want and what they need <p>Who will provide?</p>

Replacement to birth family

- What is different that makes it safe for children 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 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, what he/she wants

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

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, 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 FROM “RETURN HOME” PLAN TO “ADOPTION” OR „FOSTER CARE“

- Why can't I go home?
- Where will I live?
- What does it mean to be adopted, fostering or other form of out of home care?
- There will 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 BACKS OUT OF THE FO PLAN

- 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 move (7-10 days)
- After some initial visits, ask 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 & 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 family is?
- Will I ever see my birth family?

- **FINALIZATION DATE – ADOPTION CEREMONY**

- How do you feel today?
- Do you wonder about contact with birthparent or foster parent?
- Do I need to live with this family for six months before I become adopted?
- Will my name change? Will I need to move out when I'm 18?



Voice of children in out of home care

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

Thank you for your attention!

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