



Evaluating the Helping Children with Autism Package

Lessons from a three-year journey

PsychDD Annual Conference 2012

Level 4, 352 Kent St, Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box 1167, Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230
Tel 02 9373 9900 **Fax** 02 9373 9998



ARTD CONSULTANTS
strategy & evaluation

Outline

1. The Package
2. The evaluation
3. Registrations for the Package
4. Access to early intervention services
5. The Package as part of the service system
6. Outcomes for children and families



**The Commonwealth Government
introduced the HCWA Package in 2008**

The aim: to improve access to best practice early intervention, education & support for families of children diagnosed with autism

Outcomes

Early
Intervention

Autism Advisors

Early Days

PlayConnect

Raising Children
Network



Early
Intervention

Autism Advisors

Early Days

PlayConnect

Raising Children
Network

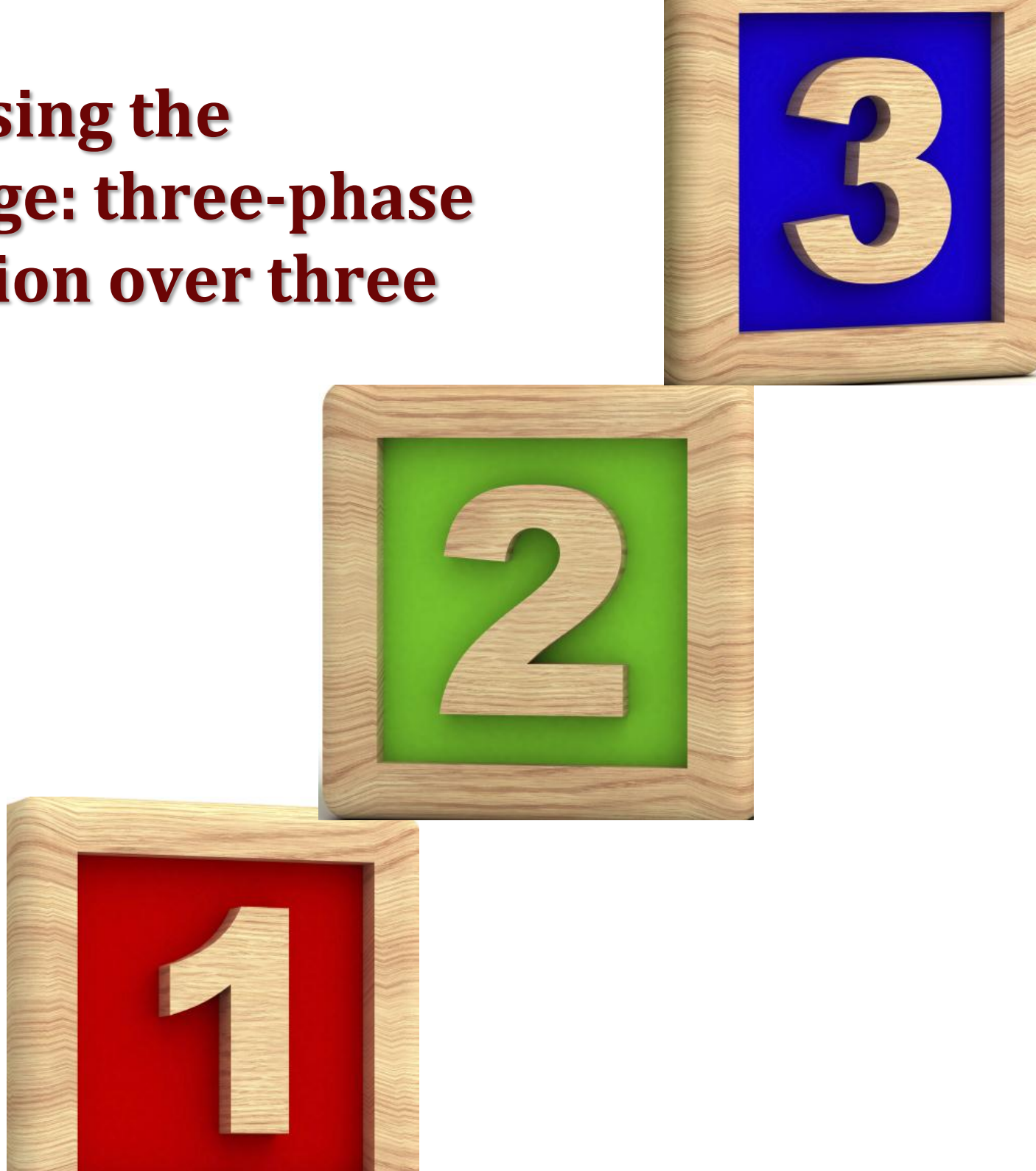


**Our job:
to see if it
worked,
focusing
on access**

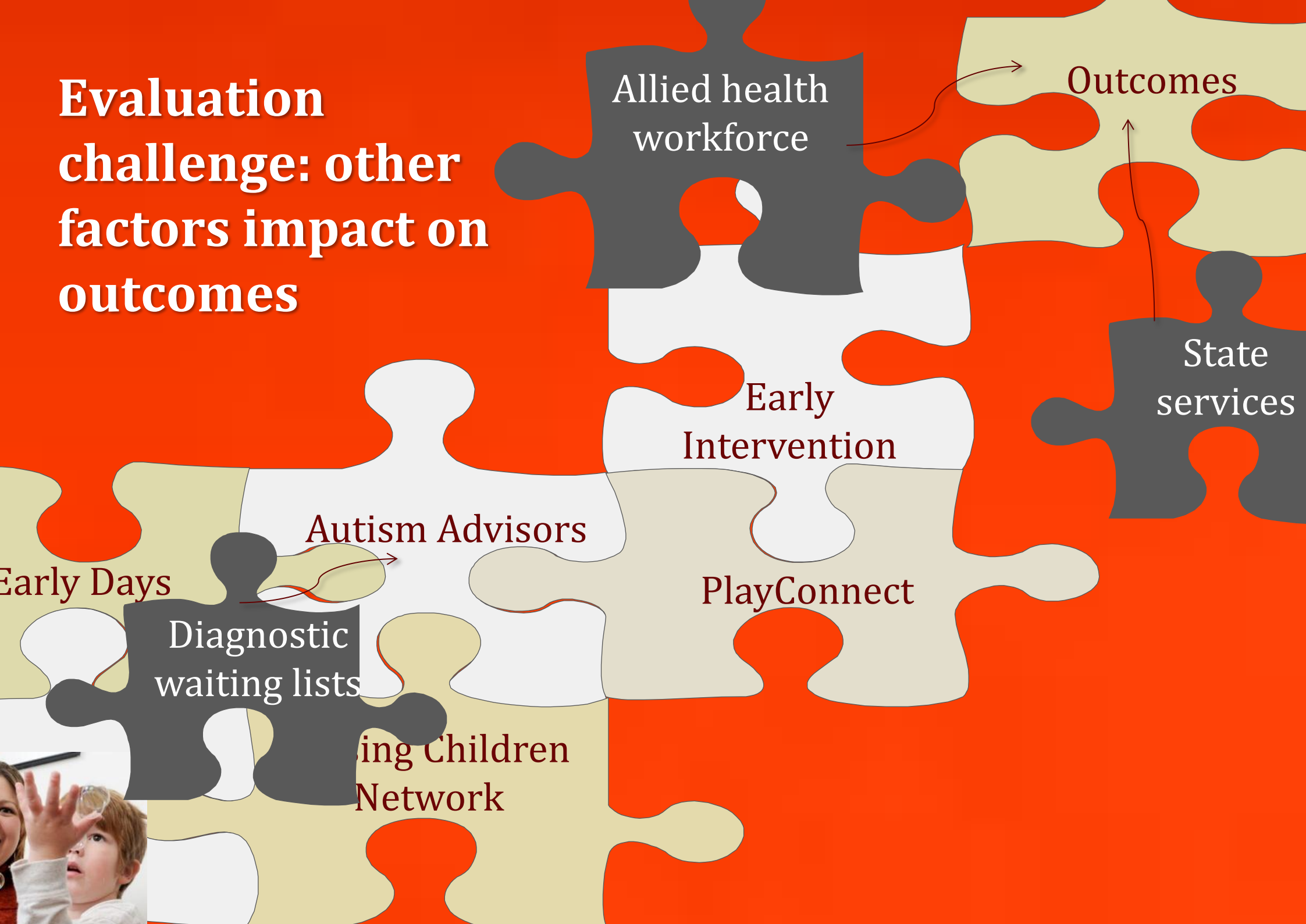


**Evaluation challenge: a
new program model,
evolving to meet
family needs**

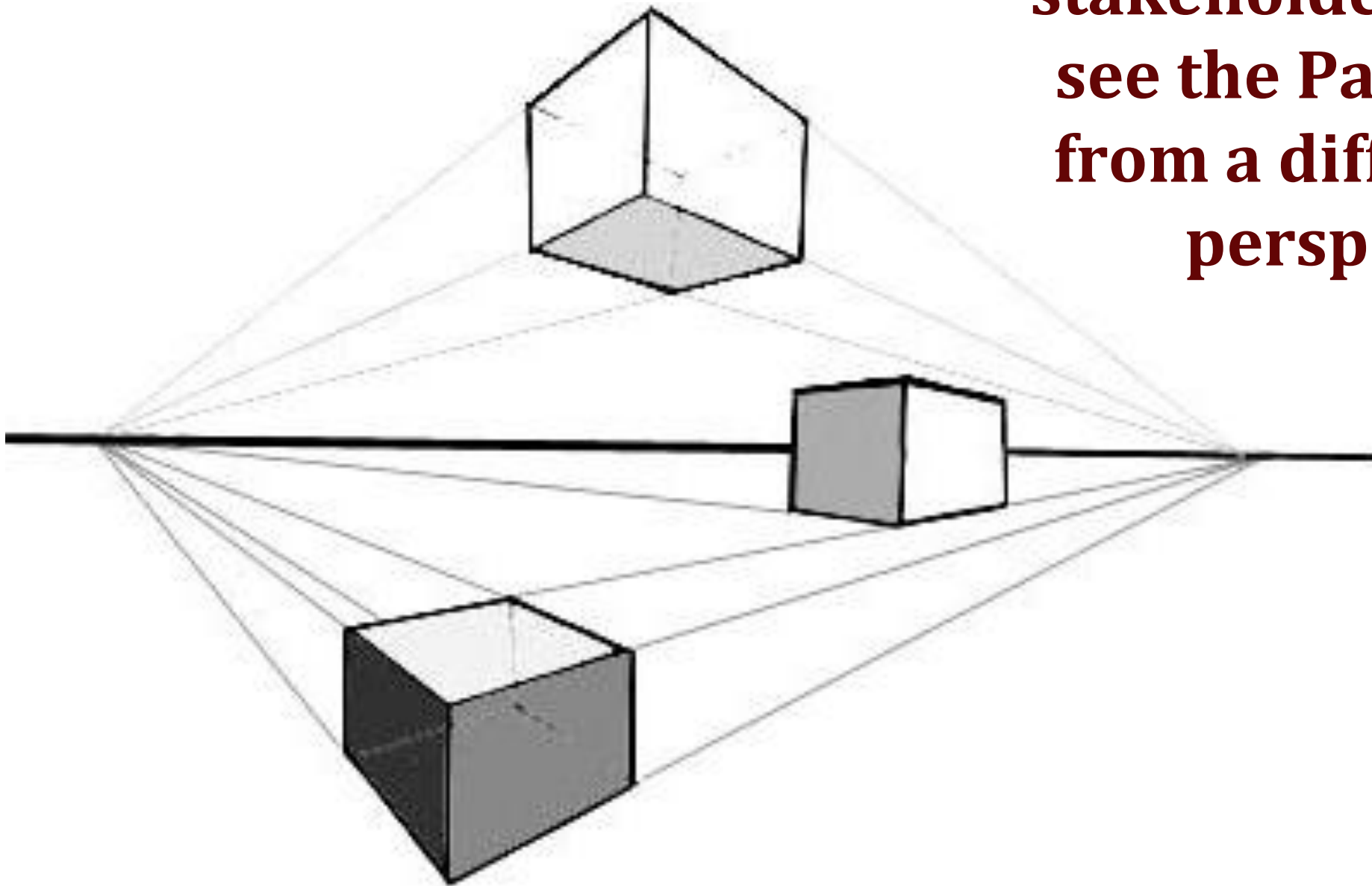
Addressing the challenge: three-phase evaluation over three years

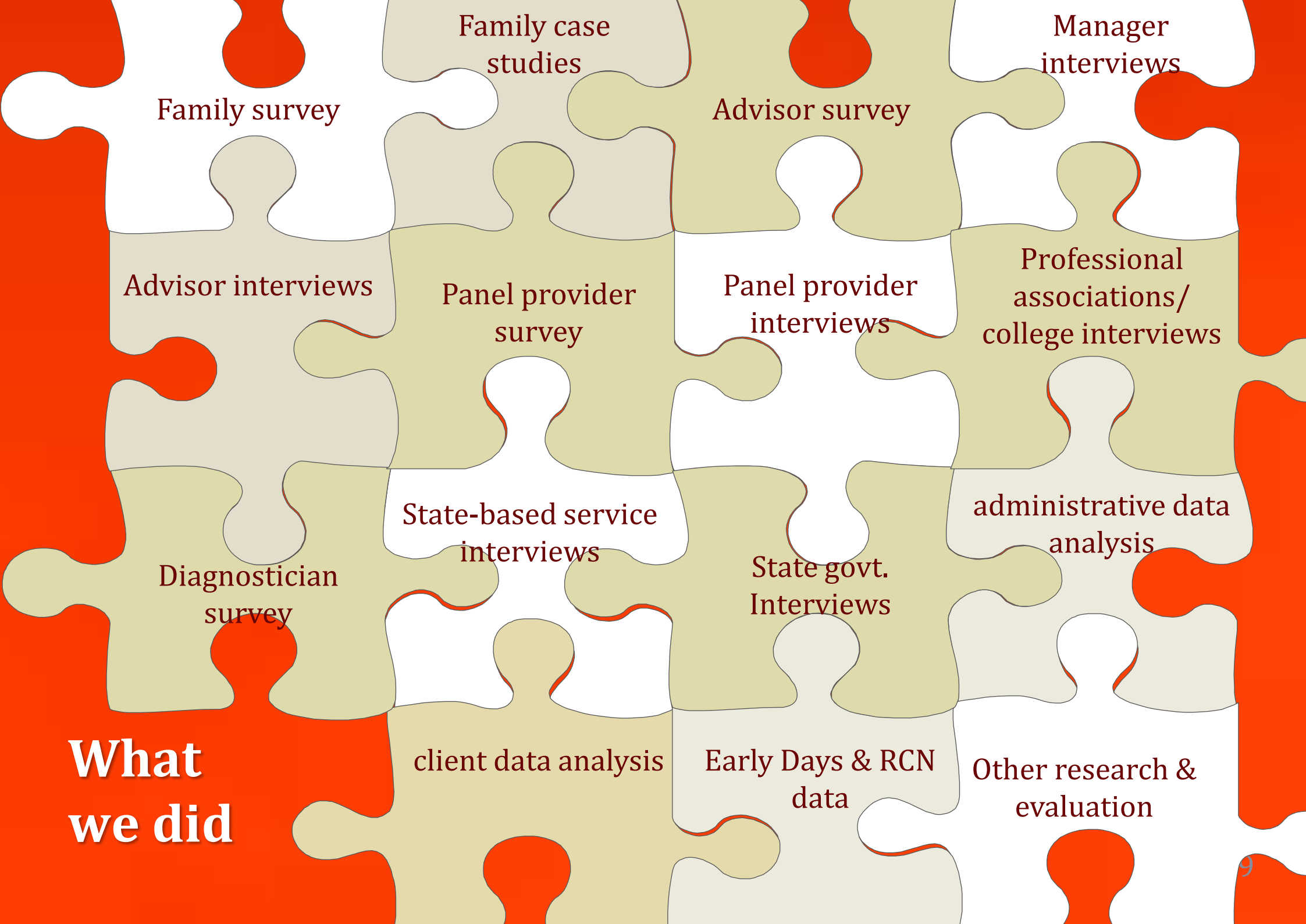


Evaluation challenge: other factors impact on outcomes



Evaluation challenge: many stakeholders, all see the Package from a different perspective





Family case studies

Manager interviews

Family survey

Advisor survey

Advisor interviews

Panel provider survey

Panel provider interviews

Professional associations/
college interviews

Diagnostician survey

State-based service interviews

State govt. Interviews

administrative data analysis

**What
we did**

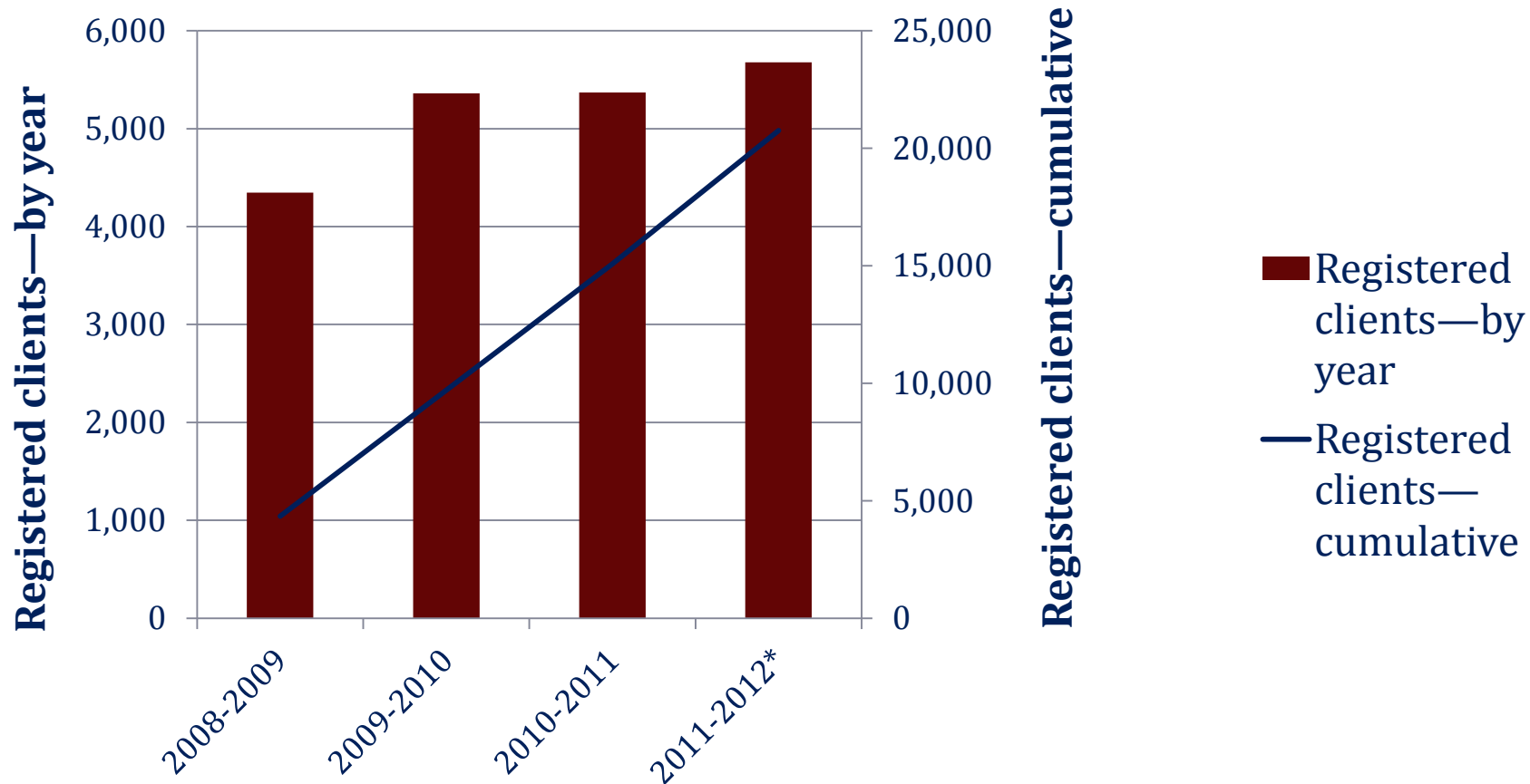
client data analysis

Early Days & RCN data

Other research & evaluation

Families are registering their child

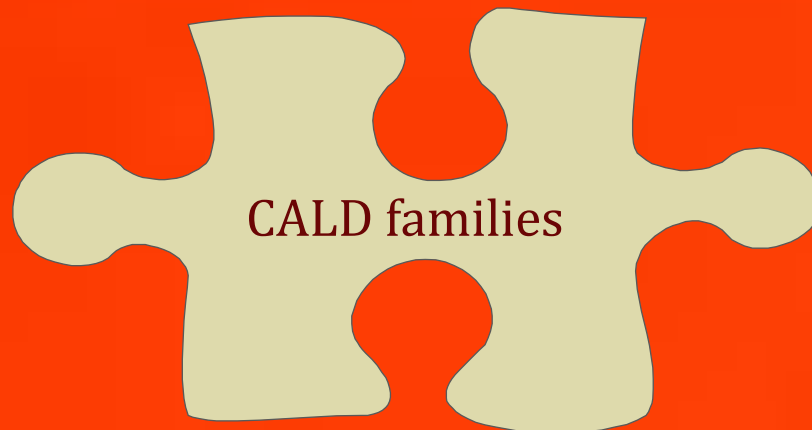
HCWA Package registrations 2008–2012



Source: FOFMS data July 1 2008–November 3 2011

*To estimate the number of registered clients for 2011–2012 we extrapolated based on the data available for the first four months.

**But some families are not
registering their child at
the expected rate**





**Overall most families were happy with
the support from Autism Advisors**

**But some perceived a need for
additional supports**



Package is helping families to access early intervention for their children



Access

More affordable

More frequent

Early intervention

But, like registrations, some families are not accessing services at the same rate

Early intervention

Regional families

CALD families

Indigenous families

**Some families
lack the services
they need locally**



**Timeliness of
service access
has improved,
but some families
remain concerned**





Some stakeholders concerned about service fees and administrative fees

Quality

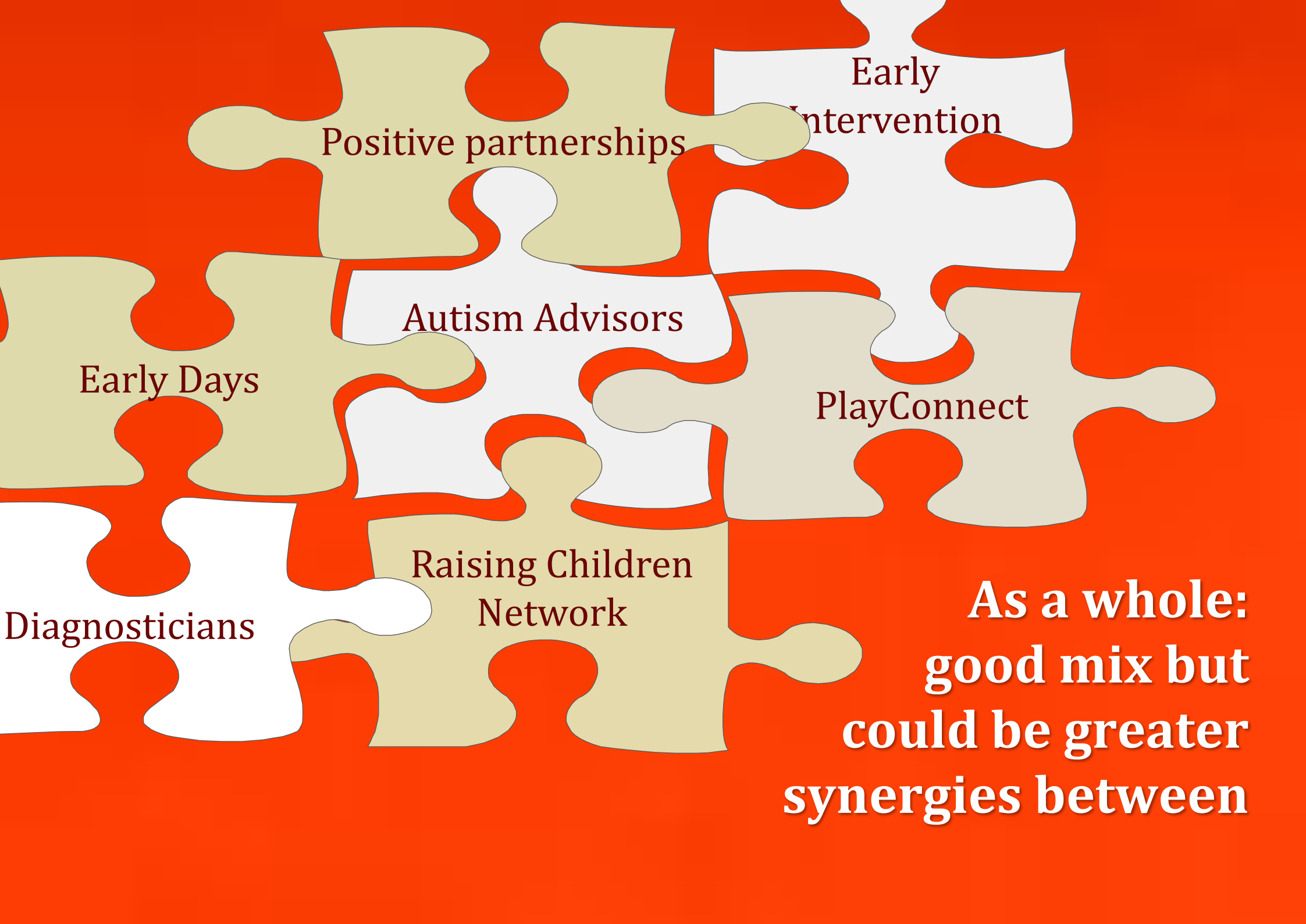
- Evidence suggests most Panel providers offer a quality service
- FaHCSIA follows up and addresses complaints
- But there may be a need for a broader quality monitoring system



Best Practice

- Individualised planning, programming and review
- Strategies to promote the generalisation of skills
- Address need for predictability and routine
- Family centred practice
- Multidisciplinary practice





Early
Intervention

Positive partnerships

Autism Advisors

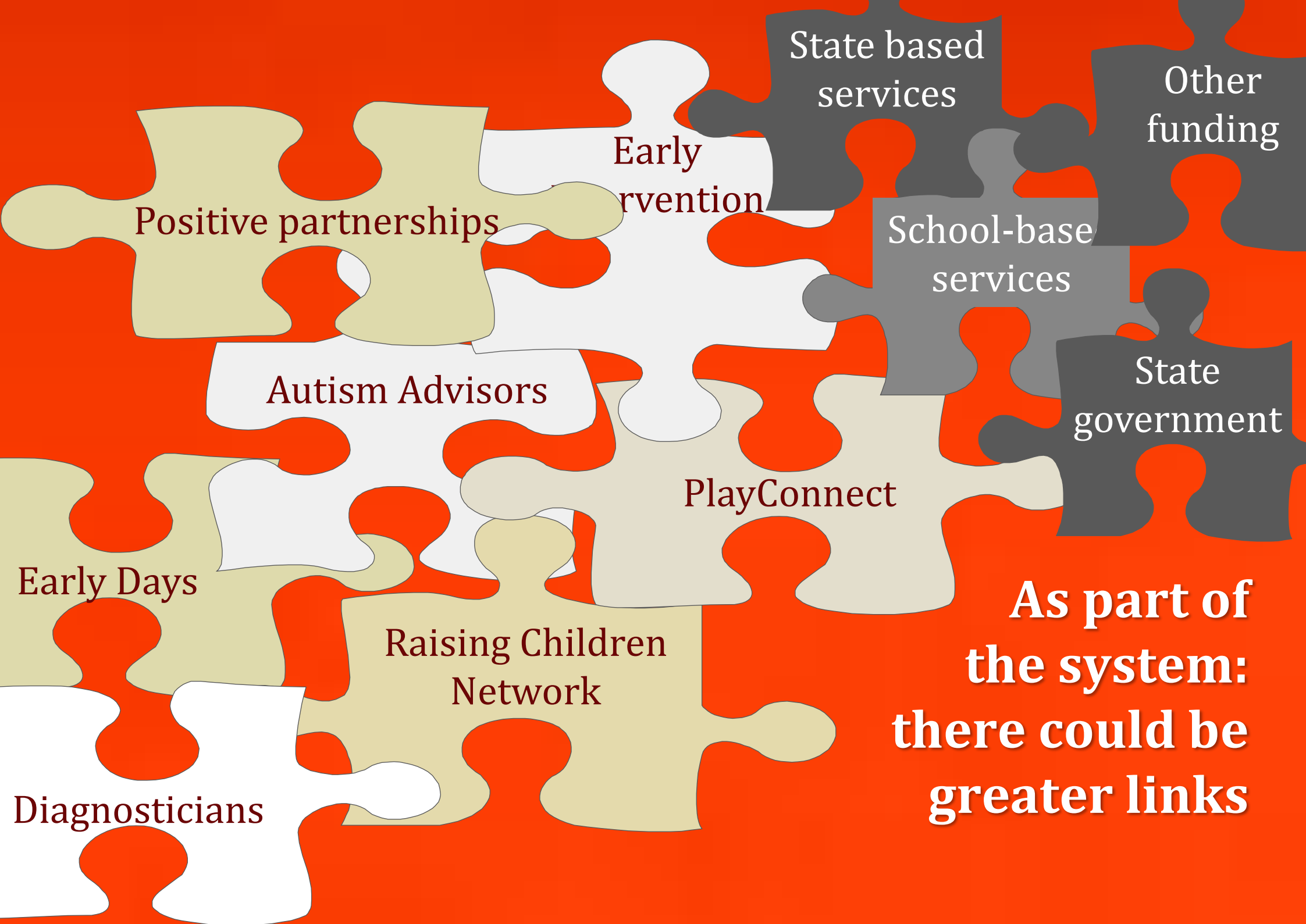
Early Days

PlayConnect

Raising Children
Network

Diagnosticians

**As a whole:
good mix but
could be greater
synergies between**



Positive partnerships

Autism Advisors

Early
intervention

State based
services

Other
funding

School-base
services

State
government

PlayConnect

Raising Children
Network

**As part of
the system:
there could be
greater links**

Early Days

Diagnosticians



**Package is having positive outcomes for
children and families**



The Package has reached a mature stage

Suggested refinements

- Improving information & referral pathways**
- Improving access for families in regional & remote areas, CALD & Aboriginal families**
- Providing some follow-up support for families**
- Monitoring quality**
- Exploring alternative mechanisms for facilitating multidisciplinary practice**
- Creating greater synergies between Package components & with state system**

