Ensuring appropriate care and protection for children on the move in Northern Central America, Mexico and the US in the context of COVID-19

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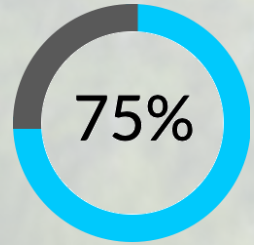
Agenda

Overview

Priority Interventions

- Child protection systems
- Family and community-based care alternatives
- Mental health and psychosocial support
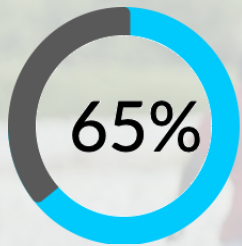
Panelist Interviews

Questions and answers

75% of the migrant population crossing into Mexico are migrants traveling with at least one child.

65% of the people apprehended at the US southern border in fiscal year 2019 were families and unaccompanied children.

This is a children's crisis.

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Ongoing risks for migrant and refugee children

In Transit and Destination

- Targets for trafficking, abuse and exploitation and conscription.
- Immigration detention
- Reduced access to safety, protection and family reunification

In Countries of Origin

- Gang-related violence, extortion and forced recruitment
- Gender-based violence
- Extreme poverty
- Limited education, social services and livelihood options
- Family separation

Upon Return

- Community stigmatization and social exclusion
- Exacerbated violence
- Internal displacement
- Exacerbated poverty

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Exacerbated risks in the context of COVID-19

In Transit and Destination

- Closed shelters
- Immigration detention with heightened COVID risks
- Even more reduced access to safety, international protection and opportunities for family reunification
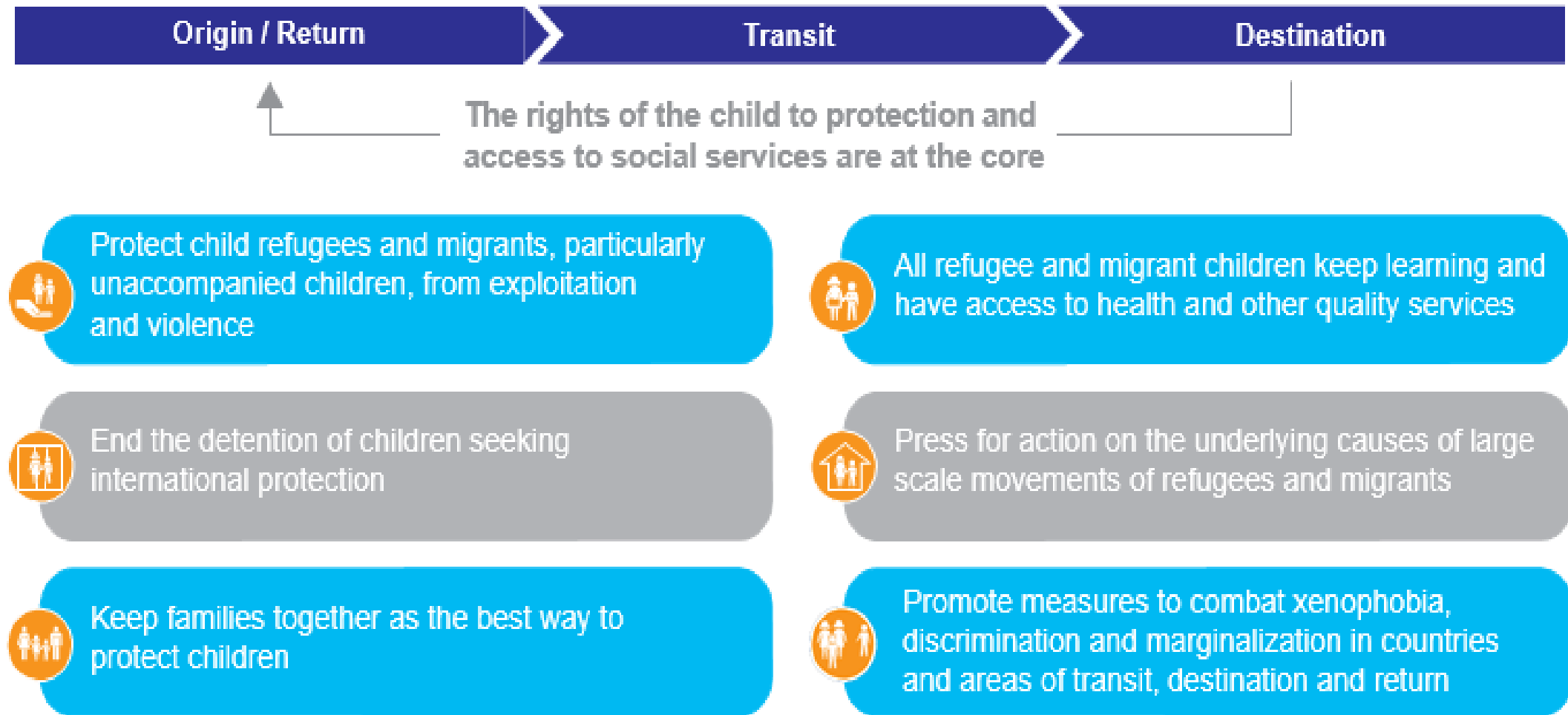- Returns without adequate protection or health screenings

In Countries of Origin

- Increased domestic and gender-based violence
- Decreased remittances and worsened poverty
- Overstretched/ compromised child protection systems
- Extended family separation

Upon Return

- Limited quarantine space without adequate child-safeguarding
- Ground transportation halted, limiting family reunification
- Heightened community stigmatization and social exclusion
- Exacerbated violence
- Exacerbated Internal displacement
- Exacerbated poverty

UNICEF's Agenda for Action along the Migratory Route

Origin / Return	Transit	Destination

The rights of the child to protection and access to social services are at the core

Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence

All refugee and migrant children keep learning and have access to health and other quality services

End the detention of children seeking international protection

Press for action on the underlying causes of large scale movements of refugees and migrants

Keep families together as the best way to protect children

Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries and areas of transit, destination and return

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Child Protection Priorities

Strengthening child protection systems

Family and community-based care alternatives to detention

Mental health and psychosocial support

1) Strengthening Child Protection Systems

a) Child Protection Systems

National, community-based and municipal child protection committees identify protection gaps, develop action plans to:

- Prevent violence

- Improve access to quality of education, skills development and livelihood opportunities

- Create/promote children and youth participation platforms – as agents of change

- Target social protection programs

- In most violent communities – public health "Cure Violence" approach to interrupt violence, GBV, homicide and femicide

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1) Strengthening Child Protection Systems

b) Targeted Case Management

At reception:
- Immediate humanitarian relief
- Best Interest Determination
- Counselling, mental health and health care
- Temporary shelter

In communities of return
- Home visits & individualized reintegration plan
- Linkage with local services
- Community-based mental health and psychosocial support services
- Alternative care arrangements

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Deep Dive:
Honduras' reintegration model

Health and Mental Health Evaluations

3 Atención en Salud y Psicología

Legal Service Referrals

2 Entrega Formal de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes

Belén Center for Returned Migrant Children

Social Protection Programs

4 Oferta Institucional Social

1 Orientación General

Consular Reception, Food and Children's Safe Spaces

5 Bolsa Solidaria

Cash Transfers & Emergency Assistance

Case Management for Reintegration

Community-based Violence Interruption

Educational Bridges

Community-Based MHPSS

Social Protection Programs

Implementation of alternatives to detention to ensure better care, access to services, and to facilitate longer term integration through:

- Support in program implementation
- Direct support (co-sponsoring staff and operation costs)
- Capacity building
- Coalition building and peer learning platforms

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Deep Dive:
Mexico's alternative care model

Reception

Reception center

Longer-term care

Family-based options

Foster family (kin)

Foster family

Residential options

Community care center

Group home

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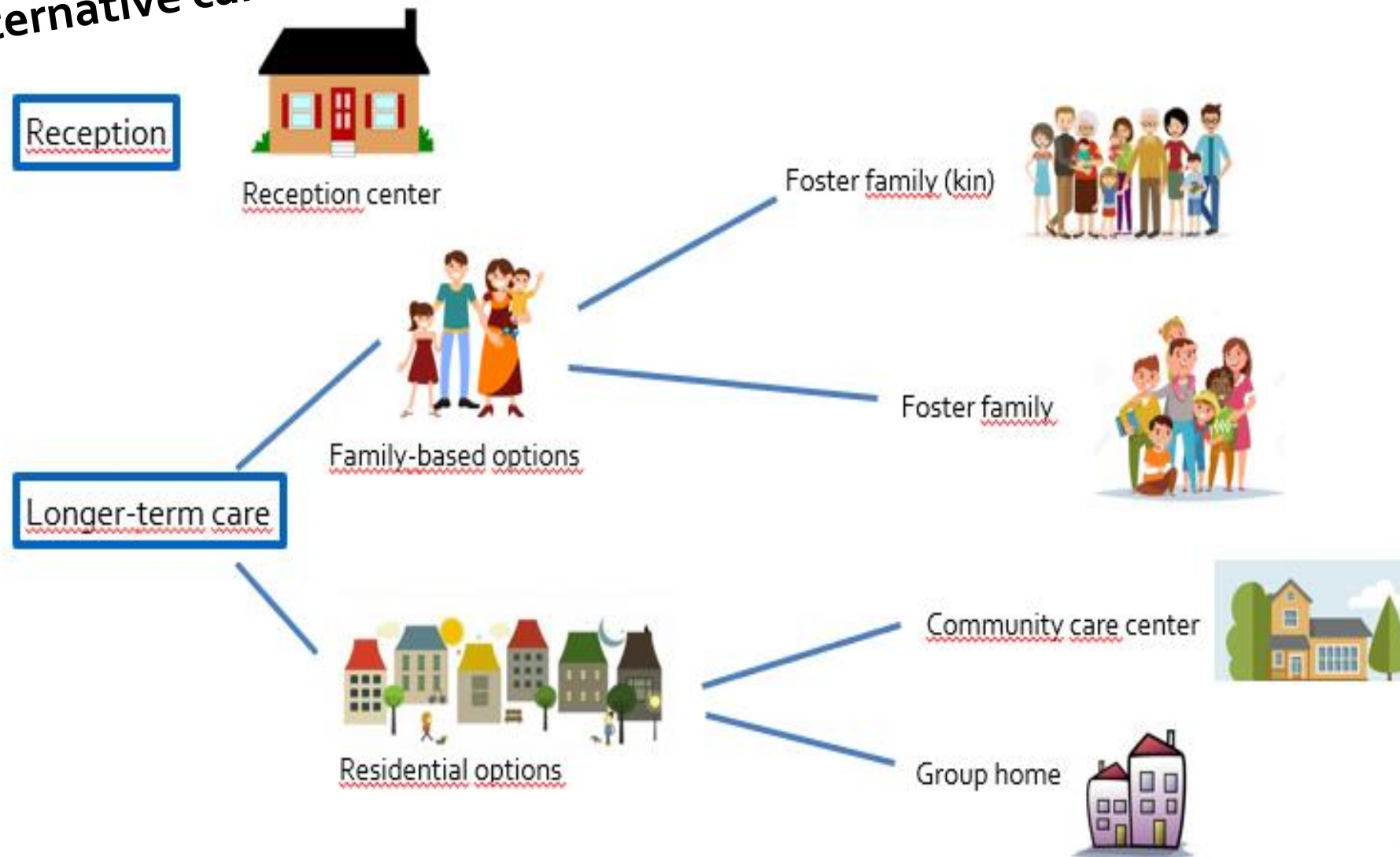
3) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Direct mental health and psychosocial support at pivotal points along the migratory route:

- Municipalities with the highest rates of violence
- Border shelters
- Consular offices
- Detention centers
- Return centers
- Communities where children reunify with parents.

Capacity building and technical support with organizational staff such as:

- Transit shelters
- Guatemala's consular offices

3) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Mental Health & Psychosocial Support
for Families at the US-Mexico Border

A Field Guide
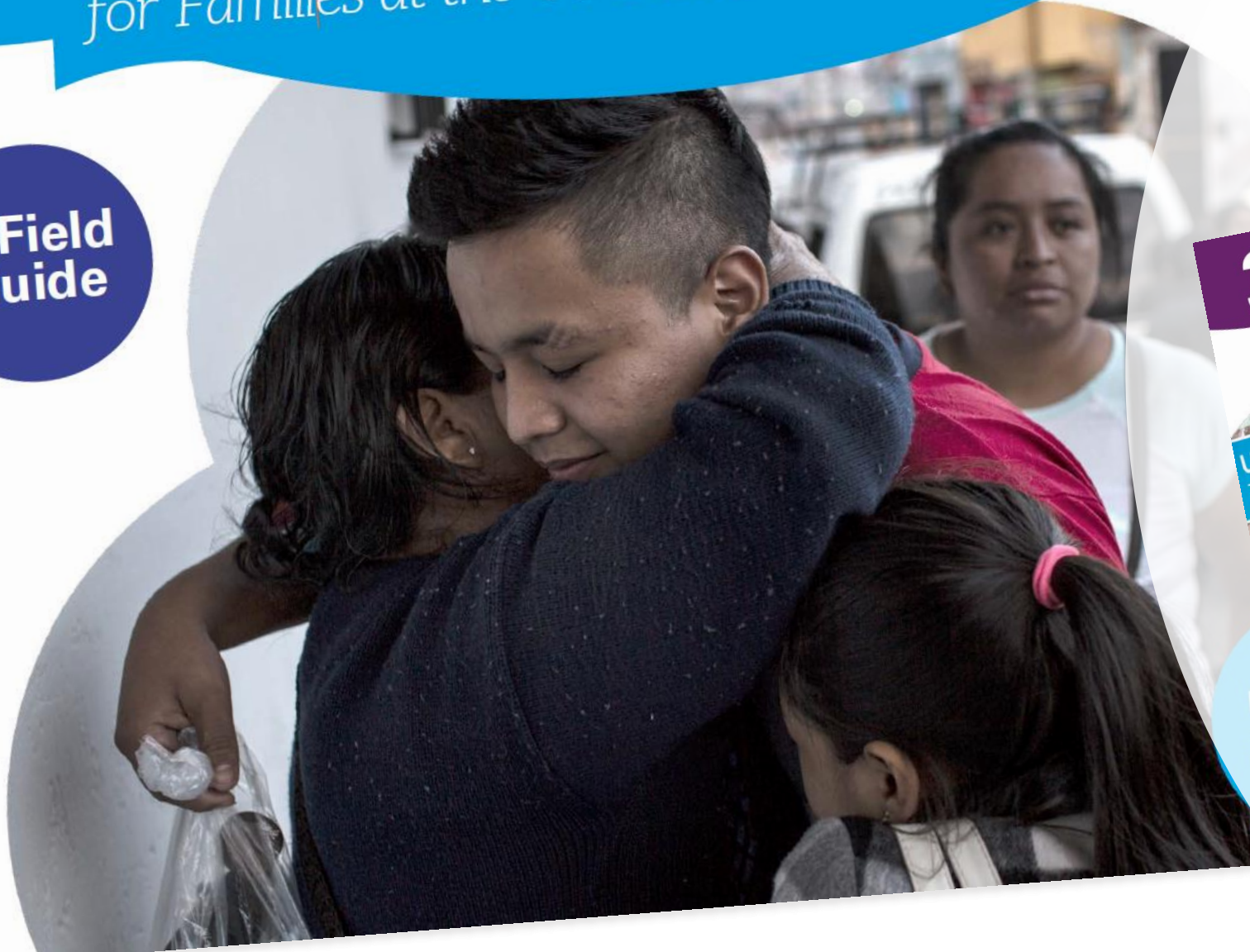
1 Mental Health & Psychosocial Support
Brief Guidance & Resource Summary

2 Best Practices for Organizational Leaders
Staff Care and Support

3 Best Practices for
Volunteers and Staff

Staff care refe...
organizatio...

Volunteering can be a very rewarding experie...
However, it is important to reflect on the way...
volunteering can affect you and those you a...
Helping and working with others can have ...
effect on your overall psychological well-be...
better or for worse. Fortunately, the negati...
are sometimes associated with helping ot...
inevitable, and they can often be mitigate...
yourself for this experience, you'll be in ...
to reap the positive rewards and to bette...
around you.

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES AND W...

Best practices refer to tried and tested approac...
to deliver positive results without causing any...
those we're trying to help. Best practice repres...
wisdom of local communities, professional pr...
and academics. It's based on evidence, rather...
focuses on ethical and safe behaviors.

TH...

Each year, thousands of children and fami...
and communities to set off on a perilous ...
United States. The difficult decision to lea...
of many factors, including the threat of v...
a lack of educational and economic opp...
corruption and criminal impunity, and t...
family. These conditions pose many ris...
health of children and adolescents eve...
journeys.

Children and families may travel by ...
routes often controlled by criminal n...
U.S. border. Migrating children and ...
high temperatures in the desert, ex...
potential separation from their gro...
or injury of others by dehydration ...
criminal actors. Those that board ...
"La Bestia" may fall off, causing s...

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para cada niño

unicef
for

Questions
&
Answers