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OCTOBER Edition | 2026

GFCNI global foundation for the care of newborn infants NEWSLETTER

Dear friends and supporters of GFCNI,

As World Prematurity Day approaches on November 15, we are reminded that improving outcomes for babies born preterm requires more than excellent care in the first weeks of life. It also means supporting children and families long after they leave the NICU. This year's campaign highlights the importance of investing in follow-up care, and we warmly invite you to take part. Our campaign resources are available to help you raise awareness and spread the message.

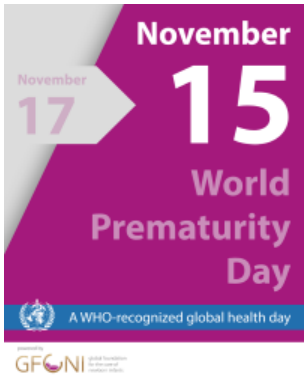
In this edition, we also explore a large Canadian study examining differences in early childhood health between boys and girls born preterm, offering valuable insights for follow-up care. We then turn to the future of neonatal education in Europe in an interview with Professor Sven Wellmann, who discusses how training can better connect scientific evidence, clinical practice, and infant- and family-centered developmental care.

Thank you for your continued dedication to improving care for babies and families around the world.

Warm regards,

Silke Mader and the GFCNI team

GFCNI



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Get Ready to Take Part

Your WPD Campaign Resources Are Ready

World Prematurity Day is just around the corner, and we're excited to see the global community come together again for this annual WHO-supported day of awareness and action. If you're planning activities for November 15, don't forget that our free Social Media Toolkit is available with ready-to-use graphics, suggested messaging, and other resources to help you take part in the campaign. This year's theme, "Small babies, big potential. Invest in follow-up care to protect their future!", puts the spotlight on the importance of continued support after discharge. The conversation will continue on November 17 with a Newborn Toolkit webinar, including the announcement of the 2026 essay competition winners and experiences from the global community around follow-up care. Find the details in the WPD Social Media Toolkit.

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More Languages, More Support

Neopedia Is Now Available in Turkish

Neopedia is growing again! Our global information platform is now available in Turkish. This is another significant step toward helping more families find trusted, easy-to-understand information about neonatal care in their own language. From high-risk pregnancies and the NICU to going home and beyond, Neopedia is there to support parents and caregivers with reliable information along the way. If you have already explored Neopedia in another language, we would love to hear about your experience! Please take a moment to complete our short user survey, available on the Neopedia homepage. Your feedback helps us continue improving the platform for families everywhere.

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Protecting Little Lungs Together

New RSV Resources in Polish

As the colder months arrive in Poland, protecting babies from RSV becomes especially important, particularly for those born too soon/preterm. Together with our valued partner, Koalicja dla Wcześniaka, we are proud to share new Polish-language RSV resources, including easy-to-understand infographics and our practical RSV parent booklet. Our goal is simple: to help families understand RSV, explore prevention options, and make informed decisions to protect their little ones. Every baby deserves the best possible start in life. Explore our Polish RSV campaign resources.

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Network

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Neonatal Education

Strengthening Neonatal Care Through Better Education

GFCNI is pleased to support the European School of Neonatology (ESN), the educational arm of the European Society for Paediatric Research. Together, we share a commitment to strengthening neonatal care through high-quality education, evidence-based practice, and a strong focus on infant- and family-centered developmental care. In our new interview, ESN Chairperson Professor Sven Wellmann reflects on current gaps in neonatal training, the importance of greater harmonization across Europe, and the skills and attitudes the next generation of neonatologists will need to support newborns and their families.

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New Perspectives from the NICU

From Nutrition to Baby Loss – Two New Substacks for the Neonatal Community

Two new Substack publications explore different aspects of neonatal care, encouraging discussion and professional reflection. “Neonatal Nutrition”

covers practical questions and emerging debates, from feeding preterm infants to growth targets and probiotics, while the “Neonatal Butterfly Project” addresses baby loss, lactation after loss, and palliative care. Both draw on the extensive clinical experience of neonatologist Professor Nicholas Embleton, with the latter also highlighting parents’ experiences and perspectives. Substack is an online publishing platform that delivers articles directly to subscribers by email. Both publications are free to subscribe to – simply select the free option if prompted to pay.

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Raising Awareness

Not Every Race Is Seen – Tiny Runners Shines a Light on Preterm Birth

Thousands of runners will take on the Athens Authentic Marathon on November 7-8. But some of life’s most challenging journeys unfold far from cheering crowds. With its “Tiny Runners” initiative, our Greek partner parent organization Ilitominon draws attention to the experiences of babies born preterm and their families. The campaign uses the marathon as a metaphor to advocate for greater awareness and family-centered neonatal care, including unrestricted, round-the-clock parental access to NICUs. Ahead of World Prematurity Day on November 15, its message is clear: every baby deserves expert care, and every family deserves to be there.

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Science

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PREFREE STUDY

Participants Wanted for Nationwide Pre-Eclampsia Study in Germany

The nationwide PreFree study is currently recruiting pregnant women with high blood pressure or an increased risk of pre-eclampsia across Germany. PreFree investigates how digital remote monitoring can support safe care during pregnancy while helping to avoid unnecessary hospital stays. Using the PreFree app, participants can regularly track and

better understand relevant metrics such as blood pressure, weight, and urine at home. This is intended to help detect changes early on and assist healthcare professionals in assessing individual risk. Led by the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), the project brings together partners from across Germany, including GFCNI to contribute the patient perspective. Healthcare professionals and organizations are encouraged to help spread the word to potentially eligible pregnant women.

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Psychosocial Support

Beyond Medical Care – What Parents Value Most When Their Baby Is in the NICU

What makes parents feel supported when their baby is in the NICU? In a qualitative study across six Finnish hospitals, researchers interviewed 15 parents and identified four key areas: parenting, a sense of security, social support, and mental well-being. Parents particularly valued practical guidance, compassionate communication, consistent nursing staff, and opportunities to participate in their infant's care. Many also emphasized the importance of peer support and timely access to psychological services – resources that were not consistently available. The findings highlight the need to assess families' individual needs and make psychosocial support an integral part of neonatal care.

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Early Childhood Health

Beyond the NICU – How Early Childhood Health Outcomes Differ Between Boys and Girls

Do boys and girls face different health challenges in the years after preterm birth? A large Canadian study followed nearly 450,000 children, including more than 42,000 born preterm, from 6 months to age 5. Across all gestational age groups, boys had more hospitalizations and physician visits than girls and were more frequently diagnosed with asthma, bronchiolitis, and growth and developmental disorders. Interestingly, these differences were similar regardless of gestational age. The findings suggest that considering sex alongside gestational

age could help healthcare professionals tailor follow-up care and parental counseling, although the study cannot establish causation.

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European Standards of Care for Newborn Health

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Nursing Continuity

Familiar Faces, Stronger Trust – Nursing Continuity Through Parents' Eyes

For parents of medically fragile infants, trusting the nursing team can make a difficult hospital stay more manageable. A Canadian qualitative study interviewed 18 parents about what builds and undermines that trust. Parents identified ten key elements, including clear communication, attentive care, involvement in decision-making, and consistent nurses who get to know their child. Frequent staff changes and transfers between units made trust harder to establish, while medical errors could damage it. The findings highlight how primary nursing, open communication, and meaningful parental involvement can strengthen relationships and support family-centered care.

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