



Dear friends and supporters of GFCNI,

This edition brings together three topics that reflect how neonatal care continues to evolve toward greater family involvement, stronger support in the earliest days, and a longer view of children's development.

Developed jointly by the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation, the FCC Taskforce, healthcare professionals, researchers, and family partners, the new toolkit on parental presence in the NICU makes a clear case for keeping families close and recognizing parents as active members of the care team. This same principle lies at the heart of Kangaroo Mother Care, which supports breastfeeding, strengthens the bond between parent and newborn, and can improve outcomes for preterm, sick, and low-birthweight babies.

Yet our responsibility does not end when a child leaves the hospital. New research on educational outcomes after preterm birth reminds us to look beyond survival and consider the support children may need throughout school and into adulthood. Medical factors matter, but family circumstances, social conditions, and access to timely support can shape a child's path just as strongly.

Together, these articles show how closely early care, family participation, and long-term development are connected. I hope they provide useful perspectives on supporting children and families in the NICU, at home, and throughout the years that follow.

Warm regards,

Silke Mader and the GFCNI team



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PROTECT AND PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING FOR THE BEST START IN LIFE

World Breastfeeding Week 2026: Strengthening Breastfeeding Through Kangaroo Mother Care

Breastfeeding provides preterm and sick newborns with the best possible nutritional foundation, yet many families require additional support to establish and sustain breastfeeding. This World Breastfeeding Week, GFCNI is highlighting the essential role of Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) in protecting and promoting breastfeeding. Early, continuous, and prolonged skin-to-skin contact improves feeding readiness, promotes lactation, strengthens the parent-newborn bond, and contributes to improved health outcomes for preterm, sick, and low-birthweight newborns. Join us from August 1-7 as we explore how Kangaroo Mother Care can help promote successful breastfeeding and ensure that every baby receives the best possible start in life.

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WORLD PREMATURETY DAY 2026 IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND

Join Our “Starker Start für kleine Wunder” Campaign 2026 and Register Now!

We warmly invite neonatal intensive care units across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to register for our 2026 campaign “Starker Start für kleine Wunder” (“Strong Start for Little Miracles”). Participating NICUs will receive a campaign package for World Prematurity Day filled with materials for awareness, information and decoration, along with special gift sets for parents. As a highlight, GFCNI will recognize and celebrate outstanding engagement and creative contributions from participating units. Together, we aim to raise awareness for preterm birth and show our support for the smallest babies and their families. Follow the link to learn more and register your NICU today. Please note: The campaign is conducted in German.

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THANK YOU

Turning a Webinar into Meaningful Support for Newborn Health

GFCNI extends its sincere thanks to Elgan Pharma for its generous donation of €3,000 and to Professor Nicholas Embleton, a long-standing friend of the foundation, whose generosity made the contribution possible. After leading a webinar for the company, Professor Embleton asked Elgan Pharma to donate his speaker fee to GFCNI instead of paying it to him directly. Elgan Pharma is a late-stage biotechnology company focused on developing safe, noninvasive therapies for preterm infants with high unmet medical needs. We are deeply grateful to Professor Embleton and Elgan Pharma for their trust, generosity, and support of better care for newborn infants and their families.

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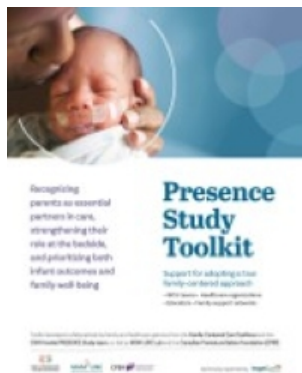
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CAFFEINE IN NEONATAL CARE

A Coffee with Purpose: Slovakia's Brew for Preterm Infants

Caffeine is not only part of a morning coffee, but in neonatal care, it plays a critical role for preterm infants. It is commonly used to treat apnea of prematurity by stimulating breathing and reducing pauses caused by immature respiratory control. This connection inspired our partner parent organization malíček's annual Slovak campaign "Kávička na malíčka - Coffee Toast to a Preemie." Throughout October, cafés, businesses, schools, healthcare teams, and community groups raise awareness and collect donations for hospital equipment, rehabilitation, education, and family support. In 2025, more than 110 venues participated and raised over €18,000. Now entering its fifth year, the campaign encourages parent organizations worldwide to adapt the idea and connect International Coffee Day on October 1 with World Prematurity Day on November 15.

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FAMILY-INTEGRATED CARE

Parental Presence in the NICU: Keeping Families Together

Parental presence in the NICU is essential and can positively influence bonding, emotional wellbeing, and health outcomes for both babies and parents. The Canadian Premature Babies Foundation (CPBF) advocates for parents to be recognized as their baby's primary caregivers and as equal, integral members of the care team. To support NICUs in putting these principles into practice, CPBF, together with the FCC Taskforce, healthcare professionals, researchers, and family partners, helped develop the "Presence Study Toolkit." This practical resource provides strategies and tools to support the implementation of 13 evidence-based recommendations that protect and strengthen parental presence and promote family-integrated care.

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EARLY READING MATTERS

Join the 2026 Little Readers Read-a-thon

Our partner parent organization Life's Little Treasures Foundation and NIDCAP invite neonatal units across Australia to take part in the 2026 Little Readers Read-a-thon. Hospitals abroad and families at home can also join the activities. The organizers explicitly encourage health professionals to support families in their units and welcome neonatal intensive care units, special care nurseries and pediatric intensive care units to participate. Reading every day matters, even to the smallest babies. When parents read aloud, their voices support development and strengthen the bond between parent and baby during an intense and stressful time. Reading can also improve language and literacy skills later in childhood, so it is never too early to start. Hospitals can register online and compete for prizes based on the number of books and minutes read. Join the Little Readers Read-a-thon and make reading part of every baby's journey.

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LOOKING BEYOND THE INFECTION

How Severe RSV Infection Can Affect Families

When an infant is hospitalized with RSV, the effects often extend beyond the infection itself. Understanding how disease severity influences parents' well-being is an important part of providing family-centered care. In this new Research News, we present findings from GFCNI's ResQ Family study showing that more severe RSV infections were associated with lower parental health-related quality of life during the acute phase of illness. The article also discusses why psychosocial support for families deserves further attention and what these findings may mean for parents of preterm infants and healthcare professionals.

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NURSING CARE

When Nurse Workload Shapes the Care Infants Receive

Reliable neonatal nursing care depends on nurses having enough time, attention, and support for every infant. In a prospective observational study across 10 neonatal intensive care units in the United States, researchers examined how nurse workload affected missed care during individual shifts. Nurses who reported higher workload were more likely to miss essential care activities, while assignments of more than two infants per nurse also increased the likelihood of missed care. The findings suggest that staffing ratios matter, but that nurses' own assessment of workload may offer important insight into when additional support is needed to maintain consistent, high-quality neonatal care.

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LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Why School Outcomes After Preterm Birth Need a Longer View

Children born preterm may face learning challenges that extend well beyond early childhood, yet educational outcomes also depend strongly on family and social

circumstances. In a large case-control study from Quebec, Canada, researchers compared nearly 300,000 individuals born preterm with matched peers born full term. Individuals born preterm were less likely to complete high school or obtain a university degree, with lower gestational age linked to greater risk. However, maternal education, neighborhood socioeconomic status, male sex, and migration-related factors showed even stronger associations with educational outcomes, highlighting the need for long-term developmental, educational, and social support.

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European Standards of Care for Newborn Health



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CARE QUALITY

When End-of-Life Care Needs a Shared Path

End-of-life care in neonatal intensive care units requires both clinical clarity and deep sensitivity, yet practices can vary widely between teams and settings. A quality improvement study from a level IV neonatal intensive care unit in the United States explored whether standardized guidance, staff education, electronic health record changes, and practical tools could support more consistent care for infants with life-limiting conditions. After implementation, symptom management improved, and staff reported greater confidence, comfort, preparedness, and awareness. The findings suggest that multidisciplinary work, shared guidance, and structured communication can strengthen neonatal end-of-life care for infants, families, and healthcare teams.

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