

Early Childhood Matters

2023

The wellbeing issue:
What does wellbeing mean for
parents and other caregivers?

We need to reimagine support for caregivers.

This message is at the heart of this edition of [Early Childhood Matters](#) where stories that centre the wellbeing of parents and caregivers — from Kenya to Brazil, from India to Ethiopia, and from New Zealand to the Netherlands — show what is possible when they are supported as humans.

Raising a child today often means handling the pressure to be the perfect parent with little outside support. Daily struggles are even more challenging if parents live in cities, conflict zones or underserved communities.

From expert analysis to personal perspectives, we begin to explore the support parents need to navigate their child's first years of life – a period where their entire life also changes. The 24 articles in this journal offer insight from diverse traditions, policies, programmes and people. Together, they show why we need a person-first approach to caregiving and how we can get there, so that caregivers, children and entire communities flourish.

Sample social media content

Embargo: Please do not post until **30 January 2024 15:00 CET**

Hashtags

**#ECM2023 #EarlyChildhoodMatters
#EarlyYears #PeopleBeforeParents
#ChildDevelopment #ECD**

Important links

[Early Childhood Matters website](#)
[Early Childhood Matters 2023](#)
[Van Leer Foundation website](#)

Social media accounts

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Overall launch: Short sample messages

#ECM2023 is out now!

👤 This edition explores how supporting #parents can transform society.

🚀 From pocket parks to cutting-edge startups, it highlights the global initiatives making a real impact on parents' lives.

Download it now: bit.ly/ECM-2023-online @vanleerfdn

👦 A well-supported parent is the first step to giving a child the best start in life.

That's why #EarlyChildhoodMatters has expert analysis and personal perspectives on how we can take better care of parents.

Download it now: bit.ly/ECM-2023-online

Overall launch: Longer sample message

Early Childhood Matters 2023 is out now!

This edition from @VanLeerFoundation explores what wellbeing means for parents and other caregivers, making the case for the urgent need to reimagine systems of support.

🧑🏻‍🦱 Raising a child today means handling the pressure to be the perfect parent with little outside support. Daily struggles are even more challenging if parents live in cities, conflict zones or low-income communities.

🌱 And since parents have a defining impact on a child's development, building better support structures for them is to bring about meaningful societal change.

📖 Across 24 articles, *Early Childhood Matters* features expert analysis and personal perspectives on why caregiver wellbeing matters. From indigenous traditions to cutting-edge tech start-ups, it spotlights innovative policies, programmes and people worldwide that are having a positive impact on the lives of parents and caregivers.

👉 Read it now: bit.ly/ECM-2023-online

#ECM2023 #EarlyChildhoodMatters #EarlyYears #ChildDevelopment
#ECD #PeopleBeforeParents

Social media messages per article

Article 1: The birth of a parent, Michael Feigelson

🧐 We know we shape our children, but give much less thought to how they reshape us.

📺 Introducing #ECM2023, Van Leer Foundation CEO @mfeigelson1 asks what if we looked at parenthood the same way we looked at early childhood?

👉 bit.ly/ECM2023-1

Article 2: People before parents, Tanmoy Goswami

😞 Parents today face a double dilemma: more work and less support.

In his powerful intro to #ECM2023, @toymango explores why we find it so hard to think of them as people, not just #parents

👉 Read it now: bit.ly/ECM2023-2

Article 3: Becoming a parent changes our brains, Lucy Jones

🧐 Every childbirth brings a new mother into the world. And she needs to be taken care of.

👉 In #ECM2023, @LucyJones explores how one word could help us totally rethink our approach to #maternalhealth.

bit.ly/ECM2023-3

Article 4: “How parenting became a verb”, Andrew Bomback

🧐 Placing your entire focus on your child’s wellbeing without any on yourself is a recipe for disaster.

👉 Discover why perfect parenting is a myth in @asbomback interview with @toymango in #ECM2023

bit.ly/ECM2023-4

Article 5: “Little details that build a bigger story of what it means to be a mama”, Karni Arieli

👁️ Eye Mama, showcasing unfiltered photographs of motherhood, is so much more than a collection of images. It’s a testament to the real-life chaos and beauty of being a mama.

👉 Read an interview with its creator Karni Arieli in #ECM2023

bit.ly/ECM2023-5

Article 6: Parenting through despair with hope for our climate future, Harriet Shugarman and Anya Kamenetz

🌱 Struggling with climate anxiety as a parent? You’re not alone.

#ECM2023 has a 5-step expert guide on how to handle the #climatecrisis as a parent. Step 1: Break the silence.

👉 Read the next 4 steps here: bit.ly/ECM2023-6

Article 7: “Growing inequality is worsening the parenting gap”, Fabrizio Zilibotti

👉 We need to talk about the #ParentingGap. Lower-income parents everywhere from Italy to China struggle to spend time with their kids

💡 Economist @FabrizioZilibo1 has a solution: quality childcare and better parental support. Read more in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-7

Article 8: Supporting women is essential for ECD policies, Raquel Lyra

🌟 @raquellyra, Governor of one of Brazil's most populous states, is rewriting the #ECD playbook. Maternity hospitals and educational centres are just the start

👉 Find out about her ambitious plans for a cash-transfer programme in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-8

Article 9: It's time to sing an Ode to Parents, Eleanne Plaizier

👨👩👧👦 Caring for kids starts with supporting caregivers. The Dutch 'Ode to Parents' campaign @GezondeG celebrates everything #parents already do for their children

👉 In #ECM2023, see how far a small gesture of appreciation can go bit.ly/ECM2023-9

Article 10: “Being a father means opening your soul”, Juanes

🎵👤 Rock star @JUANES finds universal tunes in fatherhood.

In this year’s #ECM2023, he discusses with @mfeigelson1 music’s role in raising children, embracing vulnerability as a man, and why everyone can sing lullabies

👉 bit.ly/ECM2023-10

Article 11: How India is shaping the future by investing in caregiver wellbeing, Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar

🇮🇳 Parents and caregivers are often undervalued. India wants to change that.

👉 In #ECM2023, @DrBharatippawar, India’s Minister for Health and Family Welfare, tells us why and how the country is supporting caregivers. bit.ly/ECM2023-11

@MoHFW_INDIA

Article 12: “My hope is for Addis to be the best city in Africa to raise a child and to be a mother”, Adanech Abiebie

Investing in early childhood is key to breaking the poverty cycle, writes Addis Ababa Mayor @AdanechAbiebie.

🏙️ Her ambitious plan for her city is more than just childcare — it’s a blueprint for long-term societal change.

👉 Read more in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-12

Article 13: Community-based networks matter for mothers' mental health, Rasa Dawson and Vincent Mujune

💡 How can we support mental health in communities where resources are limited?

Ask @MakeStrongMinds. They've treated almost 400,000 in Uganda & Zambia, with 80% overcoming depression.

👉 Discover how in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-13

Article 14: Strong parents, healthy children, Angela Uijtdewilligen

👨👩👧👦 The Netherlands' Solid Start Action Programme focuses on parental wellbeing for a child's best start in life.

🔗 Discover how their integrated approach offers an innovative approach to childhood care. #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-14

Article 15: "A city that acknowledges those who care for us", Diana Rodríguez Franco

👩 Bogotá's Care Blocks are breaking barriers for the city's 1.2M women in unpaid care roles, offering opportunities & the chance to catch their breath

It's more than support. It's changing caregivers' lives

👉 Read more in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-15

Article 16: Giving Kenyan parents the option of quality affordable childcare, Sabrina Habib

.@Kidogo_ECD is revolutionising childcare in Nairobi – and parents are benefitting too.

🌟 Their ambitious goal? Care for 100,000 children daily by 2027. It's much more than childcare. It's about empowering women.

👉 Read more in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-16

Article 17: Singing lullabies soothes stress in parents, Sarah Johnson

👶 Lullabies aren't just for babies!

They're a powerful tool for parent-child bonding and wellbeing, writes @carnegiehall Chief Education Officer Sarah Johnson.

🎵 Read more about Carnegie Hall's Lullaby Project's in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-17

Article 18: "Our role is to help them be the kind of parents they wish to be", War Child

👨👩👧 From stress management to family bonding, @WarChildHolland's Be There programme is making a real difference for people in conflict zones.

How? With an innovative approach that focuses on caregiver wellbeing.

👉 Read more in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-18

Article 19: Hunter-gatherers teach us that supporting mothers has deep roots, Nikhil Chaudhary and Annie Swanepoel

Why are mothers facing unique mental health challenges?

In #ECM2023, Nikhil Chaudhary from @Cambridge_Uni and Annie Swanepoel from @NHSuk offer an eye-opening answer: An evolutionary mismatch in parenting practices and attitudes.

👉 Read more bit.ly/ECM-2023-19

Article 20: Providing holistic care for Māori children and parents, Te Aro Moxon

🏥 Culture matters in healthcare. The system should not add to a patient's stress.

👤 No one knows that better than Te Aro Moxon, the first Māori paediatrician in Waikato, NZ in 30+ years.

👉 Read his insights now in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-20

Article 21: Ancestral drums, dance and rhythms that express community support to parents and children, Rita de Cacia Oenning da Silva

🌱 From the rhythmic beats of Tambor de Crioula to the Guajajara's celebrations, Brazil's indigenous wisdoms hold vital lessons for childcare and community building.

👉 Read more about how it could help us rethink early childhood policies in #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-21

Article 22: Investing in the future of caregiving, Chian Gong and Patrice Martin

As childcare costs soar, blending digital and traditional caregiving could be invaluable for parents.

👉 In #ECM2023, @ChianChirps & @patricemrtn write about the tech startups trying to make parents' lives easier bit.ly/ECM2023-22

Article 23: AI promises to make life easier for parents, but who is in control? Josh Martin

🤖 'Hey Siri, help me raise my child.'

👉 In #ECM2023, @joshbworld, a behavioural science advisor, shares how parents can embrace AI without compromising on personal decision-making.
bit.ly/ECM2023-23

Article 24: What we gain from being in nature with our children, Maria Isabel Amando de Barros

Small spaces, big impact.

🌳 Discover how 'pocket parks' in Brazil could have a huge impact on children and caregivers in this year's #ECM2023 bit.ly/ECM2023-24

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About Early Childhood Matters

Early Childhood Matters is the [Van Leer Foundation's](#) annual round-up of the most important advances, innovations and best practices in early childhood around the world.

It's made for policymakers, practitioners, researchers, funders, activists and anyone else interested in improving the health and wellbeing of young children and their caregivers.

For 25 years, it has been published and distributed free of charge.

Credit: Michelle Mildenberg Lara

