



# PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

**PROMOTING POSITIVE PARENTING**

**DATE:  
15TH SEPTEMBER  
2023**

**LOCATION:  
ROYAL SWISS HOTEL  
LAHORE**



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## **Acronyms**

<b>PAFEC</b>	<b>Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood</b>
<b>PPA</b>	<b>Pakistan Paediatric Association</b>
<b>PAHCHAAN</b>	<b>Protection and Help of Children Against Abuse and Neglect</b>
<b>KFCPs</b>	<b>Key Family Care Practices</b>
<b>ACEs</b>	<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences</b>
<b>ECD</b>	<b>Early Childhood Development</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Government Organization</b>
<b>INGO</b>	<b>International Non-Government Organization</b>
<b>ACEs</b>	<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences</b>
<b>VAC</b>	<b>Violence against Children</b>
<b>DEAR</b>	<b>Drop everything and Read</b>
<b>NCRC</b>	<b>National Commission for Rights of the Child</b>

## Introduction

Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC) in collaboration with the Pakistan Paediatric Association (PPA), Protection and Help of Children Against Abuse and Neglect (PAHCHAAN) has been organizing pre-conference workshops since 2021. The 3rd workshop in this series was held under the title of **'Positive Parenting - Introduction of Nurturing Care Framework'** on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Royal Swiss Hotel Lahore. UNICEF Provincial Office, Punjab extended technical and financial support to organise the workshop. This event was part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the Pakistan Paediatric Association and the 13<sup>th</sup> National Child Rights Conference. The workshop aimed at fostering discussion among key partners about positive parenting and child development, exploring the significance of positive parenting practices versus Adverse Childhood Experiences. Moreover, it provided an opportunity for the participants to understand the UNICEF-developed **'Parenting Package - Key Family Care Practices'** and to identify avenues to integrate key messages of this parenting package into governmental and non-governmental sectors.

**Date:** September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Location/Venue:** Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore

**Objectives:** Specific objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- To initiate discussions among various stakeholders regarding positive parenting and its impact on child development
- To delve into the significance of positive parenting practices in contrast to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in ensuring child protection
- To comprehend Key Family Care Practices (KFCPs) and to identify strategies for incorporating key messages from this parenting package into both governmental and non-governmental sectors.

Renowned experts in the field of ECD, developmental pediatricians, child psychologists, parenting and child rights experts delivered enlightening and latest research-based talks covering a range of topics including Infant and Young Child Feeding – Adverse/sub-optimal feeding practices and possible solutions to address them, responsive feeding and care, the impact of playful parenting and fathers engagement on the psychosocial and emotional development of children, capacity building and mental health of parents and caregivers, long-term effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences, the impact of screen time on brain development and child safeguarding and creating a joyful environment at home, etc. Over 120 participants representing different sectors and professions such as health, nutrition, education, ECD practitioners, parenting coaches, and child wellbeing and child protection attended the workshop.

The below section presents the proceedings of the workshop in detail.

## Pre Conference Workshop Proceedings

The pre-conference workshop commenced on September 15th, 2023. The session began with a recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by an opening address by Dr. Tufail Muhammad.

### Dr. Tufail Muhammad



The chairperson of the Child Rights Group within the Pakistan Paediatric Association warmly welcomed the participants to the workshop and underscored the pivotal role of parenting in early childhood development. He emphasized that the Child Rights Group, a specialized segment of the Pakistan Paediatric Association, focuses on coordinating activities related to child rights and protection. Their strategies primarily involve research aimed at building a robust knowledge base concerning child abuse and neglect issues in Pakistan. Additionally, the group conducts capacity-building initiatives for its members and other professionals engaged in managing child abuse and neglect.

Furthermore, Dr. Tufail explained that their efforts extend to awareness raising, advocacy, and lobbying with the government to influence legislation related to child abuse and neglect. He introduced the concept of positive parenting, a relatively new focus for the Pakistan Paediatric Association, initiated approximately three years

ago. This initiative gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic when online awareness programmes were launched for parents nationwide, recognizing the challenges families faced during the lockdown.

In the context of the workshop, Dr. Muhammad highlighted the significance of parenting, a lifelong responsibility for which parents are seldom formally prepared. He stressed the importance of effective and successful parenting and expressed his confidence that the discussions in this workshop would be immensely beneficial. He thanked the partners, particularly PAHCHAAN, UNICEF, and PAFEC for their collaboration in organizing the workshop. Dr. Muhammad concluded his remarks by thanking the participants and expressing his best wishes for a productive and enlightening workshop session.

### Mr. Muhammad Rafique Tahir



The Senior Advisor from Allama Iqbal Open University and a member of the Board of Directors of PAFEC took the stage to share insights into the objectives and background of the workshop. In his address, he expressed gratitude for the ongoing efforts in organizing workshops promoting positive parenting, citing the absence of formal parent training programmes in Pakistan. He emphasized

the pivotal role parents play in child development, underscoring the workshop's significance. He outlined the workshop's background, outlining three key elements: knowledge and experience sharing, stakeholder engagement, and policy advocacy, as well as capacity and institutional arrangements.

Collaborating organizations—CRG, PAHCHAAN, PPA, and UNICEF—actively promoted positive parenting through various means like conferences, seminars, and training activities. He highlighted the objectives of the workshop: raising awareness about parental roles in child development, guiding parents from conception, promoting positive social norms for child protection, sharing research-based solutions, fostering discussions on positive parenting, exploring the impact of positive practices versus adverse childhood experiences, understanding key family care practices, and making policy recommendations for diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts in Pakistan.

He explained that the workshop will follow a structured format, including introductory remarks, keynote talks, presentations, panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and concluding recommendations.

Following the objectives and background,

### **Ms. Khadija Khan**



began the keynote session by welcoming Professor Junaid.

### **Professor Junaid,**



The distinguished Professor of Paediatric Medicine, and Registrar at the University of Child Health Sciences in Lahore, spoke on Infant and Child Feeding, including adverse and sub-optimal feeding practices and potential solutions as well as the importance of responsive feeding and caregiving at the Pre-Conference Workshop on Positive Parenting on 15th September 2023 as the first keynote speaker. His expertise in the field of infant and child feeding was evident as he delved into the critical issues surrounding feeding practices and their impact on child health.

Addressing the audience, he emphasized the gravity of the topic, recognizing that the experiences he was about to share were likely familiar to many in the room. He highlighted the need to collectively examine the prevailing infant and child feeding practices in society and collaborate to find effective solutions.

Professor Junaid introduced key terminologies such as dietary diversity and meal frequency as he progressed, underscoring their significance in child nutrition. He presented data from the National Nutritional Survey, revealing alarming statistics about the inadequacy of proper feeding practices among children in Pakistan. The numbers painted a stark picture: a mere fraction of children received the right combination of dietary diversity and meal frequency, leading to widespread issues such as stunting, wasting, and malnutrition.

The professor's presentation delved into the concept of the triple burden of malnutrition,

addressing not only undernutrition but also the rising concerns of obesity and micronutrient deficiencies in Pakistan. He emphasized the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, stressing the importance of interventions at various stages, from maternal health to adolescent nutrition.

With a deep sense of concern, Professor Junaid discussed the sub-optimal feeding practices prevalent in society. He passionately advocated for exclusive breastfeeding, shedding light on the unparalleled benefits of mother's milk, both in terms of nutritional content and its role in developing a child's brain and immune system. He lamented the challenges posed by formula feeding, leading to a cascade of issues including poor weight gain, malnutrition, and compromised immunity.

Throughout his presentation, Professor Junaid called for a paradigm shift in societal attitudes toward infant and child feeding. He passionately advocated for empowering mothers with the knowledge and confidence to provide the best nutrition for their children.

Ms. Khadija then called the second keynote speaker of the session,

#### **Dr. Uzma Bukhari,**



Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF Provincial Office, Punjab. Dr. Uzma discussed the crucial topic of early childhood development and its connection with Key Family Care Practices. Emphasizing the comprehensive nature of early childhood development, she stressed that it encompasses not only health and nutrition but also various other

sectors such as early childhood learning, water & sanitation services, child protection, and child rights services.

Dr. Uzma outlined the stages of early childhood development, emphasizing the importance of the period from conception to 8 years. She highlighted specific interventions needed during the first 1000 days, underlining the significance of infant and young child feeding and early initiation. She emphasized the critical role of nurturing care, encompassing responsive caregiving, early stimulation, and bonding with caregivers, especially parents.

Discussing the science behind early childhood development, Dr. Uzma explained that the first 1000 days of a child's life are crucial for brain development, with over one million neural connections being formed per second. She emphasized the importance of environmental factors, responsive caregiving, adequate nutrition, and stimulation in shaping a child's brain and cognitive abilities. Stressing the interconnected nature of interventions, she emphasized the need for integrated efforts in child development.

Dr. Uzma presented alarming statistics about child development in Pakistan, pointing out that a significant portion of children in the country are at risk of malnutrition, diseases, and developmental delays. She stressed that investing in young children's development is vital, as the early years provide a critical window of opportunity to shape a child's brain. Presenting the key statistics, she said that as per the National Nutrition Survey 2018, 40.2% children are stunted and 17.5% children are wasted, child mortality is 74 per 1000 live births and infant mortality is 62 per 1000 live births, only 66% young children are immunized, child marriages is 18%, and birth registration is 43% only. All these indicators pose a serious concern for children's development, safety and wellbeing, she added. Talking about the learning poverty among

young children, Dr. Uzma said that Pakistan having 75% children with learning deficits is the second country with a staggering number of children with learning poverty after Afghanistan where 93% of children face learning deficits.

In conclusion, Dr. Uzma emphasized the importance of the nurturing care framework, which includes adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety, security, and opportunities for early learning. She outlined the continuum of care from conception to 8 years, highlighting the different key platforms at each stage. Dr. Uzma's presentation shed light on the complexities of early childhood development and underscored the urgency of integrated and multi-sectoral efforts to provide coordinated services for the holistic development of children with the involvement of parents particularly mothers and communities at large.

The third keynote speaker, **Mr. Raqib Rahim**



commenced his presentation by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to present on Playful Parenting & Play-based Learning - Impact on Psychosocial & Emotional Development of Children. He acknowledged the foundational work done by previous speakers, particularly referring to Dr. Uzma's presentation highlighting the importance involvement of fathers in their children's upbringing.

As the CEO of Mellow Parenting in Scotland, Mr. Raqib shared his passion for this topic, emphasizing that the conversation around parenting often focuses solely on mothers, neglecting the essential

role fathers play. He stressed that a positive father-child relationship significantly influences a child's development, leading to better externalizing behaviours, improved academic performance, and enhanced social skills.

He highlighted the cultural challenges in Pakistan where traditional gender roles often limit fathers' involvement in parenting. Mr. Raqib encouraged the audience to reflect on their own practices, questioning whether they include fathers and challenging societal norms. He shared personal experiences, including instances where he felt excluded during his wife's pregnancy appointments, underlining the need for a cultural shift in recognizing fathers' emotions and involvement.

Mr. Raqib discussed various barriers to father engagement, such as cultural expectations, traditional gender roles, work commitments, and societal attitudes. He emphasized the importance of quality over quantity, stating that even 15 minutes of meaningful interaction with a child daily can yield positive results.

He also addressed the power of imagery, showcasing examples from Scotland where posters and policies depicted fathers as equal partners in parenting. He urged the audience to create inclusive environments in their workplaces, making fathers feel welcomed and valued.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Raqib encouraged the audience to introspect and commit to making their practices and organizations more father-friendly. He provided a practical framework, asking attendees to consider short-term and long-term goals for enhancing father inclusivity in their workplaces. He emphasized that these small changes, when multiplied across society, can lead to significant cultural shifts, echoing the progress seen in Scotland where fathers are now integral to parenting policies and practices.



Mr. Raqib ended his presentation by reminding everyone that the conversation around parenting needs to include fathers, emphasizing that father-friendly policies and practices are not only beneficial for children but also for families and society.

**A panel discussion started after the end of the keynote speeches. Below are the details of the panel discussion.**

**Dr. Rameeza Kaleem,**



Head of the Department of Preventive Pediatrics, Fatima Jinnah Medical University/Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, the moderator of the panel session, welcomed everyone to the second session of the positive parenting workshop. Dr. Rameeza expressed her gratitude for the participants' presence. She emphasized that this session would be interactive and light-hearted, encouraging active engagement from the audience.

Dr. Rameeza requested all distinguished guests to take their seats and invited the presenters to join her on the stage. After explaining the rules for the panel discussion, Dr. Rameeza invited Dr. Hina Azhar to talk about her topic.

**Dr. Hina Azhar**



began her presentation on "Identifying Developmental Delays – Capacity Building of Parents and Caregivers" by emphasizing the significance of capacity building in parents for recognizing developmental delays in children.

She elaborated on the concept of normal child development, encompassing physical, psychological, emotional, and behavioral changes from birth to adolescence. Key developmental milestones were outlined across five stages: newborn, infant, toddler, preschool, and school age. Dr. Hina emphasized crucial domains of development, including locomotion and posture, vision and manipulation, social behavior and skills, and hearing and speech.

She highlighted the importance of red flags in development, which act as indicators for further evaluation. These red flags serve as absolute markers that prompt developmental screening and are specific to different domains and age ranges. Dr. Hina stressed the need for parents to recognize these red flags, as they signify potential issues and facilitate early intervention.

To empower parents in identifying these delays, Dr. Hina discussed methods for capacity building. She emphasized the role of healthcare professionals, particularly pediatricians and general physicians, in educating parents. In rural areas, lady health visitors could play a crucial role in training parents. Various media channels, including print, screen, and social media, were identified as tools to disseminate awareness messages. Workshops and symposiums were suggested to enhance the skills of health professionals, enabling them to effectively educate parents.

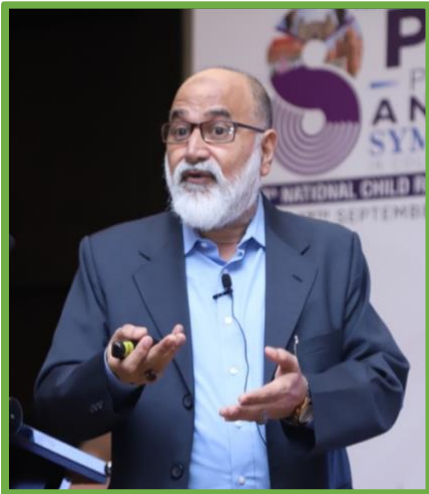
Dr. Hina introduced the Shamaq Development Screening Tool, a practical instrument for daily clinical use. This tool is being used to quickly assessing children's developmental progress,

assisting both parents and healthcare providers in identifying delays.

Furthermore, she underscored that capacity building was not merely about awareness; parents needed to be informed about available solutions and resources. Dr. Hina emphasized the importance of parental awareness regarding where to seek help and support. She concluded by urging a shift in societal attitudes. She informed the audience that parents could seek assistance from the University of Child Health Sciences' developmental department for further evaluation and support.

Following Dr. Hina's presentation, the focus shifted to the long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences. Dr. Asif Hashmi was invited to discuss how both positive and negative childhood experiences could profoundly impact a child's development and well-being.

#### **Dr. Asif Hashmi,**



A physician, neurologist, and consultant medical educationist, served as the third speaker for the event. Dr. Asif aimed to address the effects of positive parenting compared to adverse childhood experiences, encompassing neglect, violence, early and forced marriages, child labour, and displacement.

The speaker highlighted the importance of positive parenting, as defined by UNICEF, emphasizing a respectful relationship devoid of violence or shame. Positive parenting involves clear communication of expectations, rules, and limits, guiding children with positive encouragement, care, and attention, ultimately fostering optimal development. The desired long-term outcomes include physical health, literacy, emotional stability, social adaptability, spiritual guidance, economic viability, independence, and responsibility toward family and society.

Drawing an analogy, Dr. Asif likened the role of parents in providing effective parenting to that of a "baghban" (gardener), emphasizing the need for optimal nutrition, water, shelter, and social determinants of health for optimal child development. However, he cautioned that adverse childhood experiences, characterized by traumatic events, could lead to chronic health issues affecting physical, neurological, and behavioural parameters.

He delved into the impact of adverse childhood events on stress and immune regulatory mechanisms, resulting in toxic stress and disruption of crucial neural connections in the brain. These effects extend beyond childhood, affecting multiple systems and diminishing quality of life.

Dr. Asif discussed the significance of adverse childhood experiences, citing evidence that a higher number of insults or adverse experiences correlates with greater developmental delays in children. The presentation detailed how early maltreatment influences the development of sensory pathways, language, object permanence, and joint attention in the first two years of life. He further underscored the early and pervasive impact of maltreatment, whether physical, biological, or behavioural, on biological, neurodevelopmental, and immune mechanisms.

These disruptions, in turn, lead to long-term physical limitations, behavioural impairments, and diseases. He further said that beyond physical and health impacts, adverse childhood experiences were noted to have economic and social repercussions, with the annual impact estimated at \$480 billion in the United States alone, according to the CDC.

**In the Q&A session**, a participant raised concerns about addressing these issues in rural areas with high poverty, illiteracy, and large families. Dr. Asif acknowledged the challenges and emphasized the importance of applying the knowledge gained to one's own self, family, and community, with the hope of creating a positive ripple effect. However, he acknowledged the lack of comprehensive solutions, particularly in the context of poverty alleviation and literacy programmes in certain countries. The discussion concluded with a call for those present to share and apply the knowledge within their spheres of influence.

The third panelist was **Professor Ayesha Mehnaz**



who talked about the critical issue of child abuse and neglect. Highlighting the importance of addressing this issue, she underlined the necessity of equipping parents with the knowledge to safeguard their children effectively.

Diving deeper into the subject, Professor Mehnaz drew a comparison between past and present parenting practices. She emphasized that the

strategies parents used in the olden days are now obsolete in the face of today's challenges. To illustrate this point, she referenced a saying by Hazrat Ali urging parents to recognize that their children are born into a time different from their own, necessitating a shift in parenting approaches.

Furthermore, Professor Mehnaz explored the distinction between education and parenting, advocating for a more holistic approach known as 'tarbiyah'. This concept goes beyond imparting factual knowledge, encompassing the development of ethics, moral values, and manners, depending on one's faith, and religious teachings. She argued that without embracing this comprehensive view of parenting, society risks raising a generation lacking in essential ethical and moral values.

However, she also made it clear that becoming a skilled parent doesn't happen automatically. Parenting is a learned skill that requires dedication and understanding. Professor Mehnaz stressed the importance of communication between parents and children, pointing out that a healthy, open dialogue is crucial for developing trust and preventing misunderstandings. In terms of child protection, Professor Mehnaz highlighted the significance of effective steps taken even before the child is born. She discussed the impact of decisions such as family planning and prenatal care on a child's future health and well-being. By advocating for thoughtful consideration about the timing and spacing of children, she underscored the role of parental responsibility in child protection.

As the discussion progressed, Professor Mehnaz offered advice tailored to children at different developmental stages. She emphasized the importance of breastfeeding and immunization in infancy, the need for teaching personal safety to toddlers, and the development of healthy social skills in school-aged children. Each stage, she

noted, requires a unique approach to ensure children are protected and nurtured properly.

Moreover, when addressing the challenges of adolescence, Professor Mehnaz urged parents to strike a balance between authority and openness. She highlighted the importance of respecting adolescents as they form their identities while also providing them with guidance and support.

In conclusion, Professor Mehnaz reminded the audience that parenting is a lifelong journey. She encouraged parents to continue their involvement in their children's lives well into adulthood, highlighting the enduring nature of the parent-child relationship.

The session concluded with Professor Mehnaz's call to action, inspiring parents to reflect on their approaches and strive for continuous improvement. Her presentation not only shed light on the complexities of modern parenting but also sparked a lively discussion among attendees, eager to apply these insights to their own families.

The fourth panelist was **Professor Ayesha Rashid**,



who is a renowned expert in psychiatry at Fatimah Jinnah Medical University, Lahore. She talked about the critical importance of the influence of parental mental health on children's well-being.

She further discussed the acute sense of awareness children have, even in utero, to their mother's emotional state. She provided poignant examples

of mothers with severe depression contemplating suicide, seeing no worth in bringing a child into a world filled with hardships—a mindset that can have fatal consequences both for the expectant mother and the child.

Post-natal depression was identified as a common and dangerous condition, putting both the mother and the child at risk. Prof. Rashid recounted harrowing instances of mothers who, in the grip of depression, deemed the world too cruel for their children and resorted to tragic measures.

Turning to the effects of a mother's relationship with her partner, Prof. Rashid outlined how marital strife during pregnancy can lead to extreme behaviours such as self-harm, with the unborn child becoming an unwitting victim of the mother's emotional turmoil. She further elaborated on the concept of child neglect, not just in the context of depression, but because of poor relationships and emotional instability.

Prof. Rashid argued that emotional regulation and stress management are critical for both mothers and fathers, regardless of socio-economic status, as love and emotional support are universal needs. She dispelled the notion that only the elite require such knowledge, stressing that these are fundamental aspects of parenting across all classes.

Regarding fathers, Prof. Rashid noted the special bond that often exists between daughters and their fathers, highlighting the positive influence a father's mere smile can have on his children. Conversely, she cautioned against the adverse effects of a father's anger and emotional dysregulation, which can inadvertently teach children to replicate such behaviors.

In conclusion, Prof. Rashid advocated for open discussions about anxiety and active stress management strategies within the family. She suggested that parents should model for their

children how to handle emotions constructively, rather than succumbing to cries or outbursts, thus fostering healthier emotional development in their offspring.

The next panelist was **Ms. Mehak Naeem**



who talked about the stark contrast between positive disciplining and the harsh parenting practices that are sadly prevalent. She shared startling statistics revealing that around 80% of children across various regions in Pakistan are subject to severe discipline, which can escalate to physical abuse, including the extreme use of iron rods.

Highlighting the findings from a study conducted in Peshawar, Karachi, and Lahore during COVID-19, Ms. Mehak noted that many parents confessed to adopting harsh disciplinary measures out of frustration or a lack of knowledge of alternative methods.

Furthermore, she explored the roots of such stringent parenting, pointing to socio-economic pressures like overpopulation, poverty, and poor health infrastructure as significant stress contributors for parents, especially mothers. The absence of mental health support for new mothers, she emphasized, only worsens the situation, leading to an increased likelihood of harsh parenting behaviors.

The discussion then focused on cultural norms and expectations, which often disproportionately assign the responsibility of child-rearing to mothers, overlooking the critical role fathers should play. Ms. Mehak lamented the scarcity of parenting programmes in Pakistan, which leaves parents, particularly mothers, ill-equipped to face parenting challenges.

An audience member brought up the vital role of fathers and the barriers they encounter in adopting a more active role in parenting, challenging traditional norms. Ms. Mehak acknowledged this, underscoring that while societal norms tend to prioritize mothers as the primary caregivers, fathers play an indispensable role in fostering a positive parenting environment.

Ms. Mehak also shed light on the plight of working mothers, who navigate the dual pressures of professional and domestic obligations, often leading to frustration that inadvertently affects their children. She called for a deeper understanding and acknowledgment of the cultural dynamics that unfairly burden mothers without offering necessary support systems.

Addressing societal views on non-physical disciplining, Ms. Mehak pointed out the stigma and pressure faced by parents, particularly from more informed society segments, who opt for positive disciplining methods. She advocated for building support networks among families and friends to encourage and sustain positive disciplining practices.

In conclusion, Ms. Mehak offered a series of recommendations aimed at curbing harsh parenting practices. She urged for heightened awareness among healthcare providers who interact with mothers, the importance of advocacy for parenting support, and the creation of comprehensive parenting programmes tailored for both mothers and fathers. These steps, she argued,

are crucial in breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and fostering a more nurturing and supportive parenting culture.

**Dr. Kishwar Inam,**



From the Aga Khan University shared her insights on the impact of screen time on children's development. She initiated her discussion by defining "screen time" as the period children spend in front of electronic devices like televisions, smartphones, computers, and video games. She acknowledged our current era, rich in information and technology, noting that while moderate and well-regulated screen time can be beneficial for children's learning and social skills, her main concern was its excessive use and potential harm.

Emphasizing the critical nature of this issue, Dr. Inam pointed out that excessive screen time could negatively affect the brain's white matter—key for intelligence, learning, and language—which is especially concerning in the first two years of a child's life when brain development is most crucial. She stressed the importance of human interaction during this period, as infants learn significantly from the non-verbal cues and emotional responses of their caregivers.

Moreover, Dr. Inam highlighted the risks of introducing mobile devices to infants as young as 8 months, which could diminish their attention spans and impede their social and emotional skill

development. She also addressed the broader health issues associated with too much screen time, such as sleep disruption, obesity, and an increase in mental health problems, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic's confinement.

Additionally, Dr. Inam warned of the online dangers that excessive screen time poses, including exposure to inappropriate content and cyberbullying, underscoring the need for parental vigilance.

Transitioning to solutions, Dr. Inam recommended guidelines for age-appropriate screen time: none for those under 18 months, limited for ages 18 to 24 months, and not more than an hour a day for children aged 2 to 5. For older children, she advocated for a personalized media plan that balances screen time with physical activity and sleep.

Furthermore, she advised parents to act as role models, involve their children in creating media plans, establish screen-free zones at home, and utilize parental controls. Dr. Inam particularly encouraged co-viewing, engaging with children during screen time to enhance learning for those over two years old.

Concluding her talk, Dr. Inam called on parents to ensure ample face-to-face interaction time for their children's optimal growth and to remain attuned to their mental health needs. Her message was a passionate appeal to prioritize human connections over technology in our children's lives, reminding us of the profound influence parents have in shaping their children's relationship with screen media.

At the conclusion of the session, the floor was given to **Ms. Nadia Jamil**, a social activist and actor to share her insights on parenting prospective parents. After greeting the attendees, she expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to

participate and to absorb the wisdom shared at the forum.



Ms. Nadia emphasized the concept of 'self-parenting' and its critical role in personal development and, by extension, effective parenting. She reflected on her own experiences as a mother and acknowledged the mistakes she made along her journey, underscoring that even as adults, we are prone to child-like reactive behaviours, such as impulsivity and lack of emotional regulation.

She pointed out a commonly neglected aspect of adulthood, which is managing one's mental health and emotional responses. Ms. Nadia argued that societal discussions around mental health is often limited to extreme cases of depression or suicide, overlooking the everyday maintenance of mental well-being. She shared her personal battle with depression, which led her to learn the golden rule of caring for her inner child — the part of oneself that retains past traumas and reactions.

Ms. Nadia advocated for active listening, a skill that she observed was lacking even among the attendees and called for individuals to listen to both their children and their internal selves. She stressed the importance of understanding one's own reactions and responses, which is essential before one can guide or nurture another.

She also touched upon the societal expectations placed upon individuals, particularly women, and how external factors like infidelity should not dictate one's happiness or self-worth. Taking

ownership of one's emotions and responses is key to self-parenting.

Ms. Nadia's message was clear: to nurture and be responsible for oneself is the first step towards being a capable and positive parent. It involves listening, self-awareness, and managing one's emotional health through tools such as therapy, meditation, or prayer.

### Event Reflections: Questions and Answers Session

**Dr Naeem Zafar** concluded the workshop by acknowledging that positive parenting and parenting skills are relatively new concepts that require cultural adaptation and awareness. It was concluded that the development of children relies not just on nutritional needs but also on nurturing during sensitive periods of their growth. The workshop highlighted the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life and the need for prospective parents to understand the responsibilities that come with parenthood.

## Participants and Panelists

### Panelists

**1. Presenter 1: Prof. Junaid Rasheed, Prof Pediatric Medicine and Registrar University of Child Health Sciences, Lahore**

**Topic:** Infant and Young Child Feeding – What are adverse/sub-optimal feeding practices and the possible solutions to address them? How to ensure responsive feeding and care.

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**Presenter 2. Dr. Saba Shuja, ECD Manager, UNICEF**

**Topic:** Understanding of Key Family Care Practices – Parenting Package & Nurturing Care Framework

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**Presenter 3: Mr. Raqib Ibrahim, CEO, Mellow Parenting**

**Topic:** Playful Parenting & Play-based Learning - Impact on Psychosocial & Emotional Development of Children

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### PANEL DISCUSSION

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**Presenter 1: Dr. Hina Azhar, Assistant Professor, University of Child Health Sciences Lahore**

**Topic:** Identifying Developmental Delays – Capacity Building of Parents and Caregivers

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**Presenter 2: Professor Ayesha Rafique**

**Topic:** Long-Term Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (neglect, violence, early & forced marriages, child labor and displacement)

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**Presenter 3: Dr. Asif Hashmi, Consultant, Educationist & Neurologist**

**Topic:** Long-Term Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (neglect, violence, early & forced marriages, child labor and displacement)

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**Presenter 4: Prof Ayesha Mehnaz,**

**Topic:** Parental Responsibility in Child Protection & Safeguarding



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**Presenter 5: Ms. Mehek Naeem**, Director Program Office PAHCHAAN and PhD Scholar Special Education

**Topic:** Creating a Positive Discipline Environment in Your Home

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**Presenter 6: Dr. Kishwar Enam**, Pediatrician, Agha Khan University.

Topic: Impact of Screen Time on Child Development

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# Pictures



# Attendance



**Pre-Conference Workshop**  
**"Positive Parenting – Introduction to Nurturing Care Framework"**  
 Friday, September 15, 2023 – 09:00 am to 01:00 pm  
 at Royal Swiss Hotel, Lahore

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41		Yameen Amir	Student				Yameen
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43		M. Mohid	Student				Mohid
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



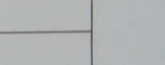
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