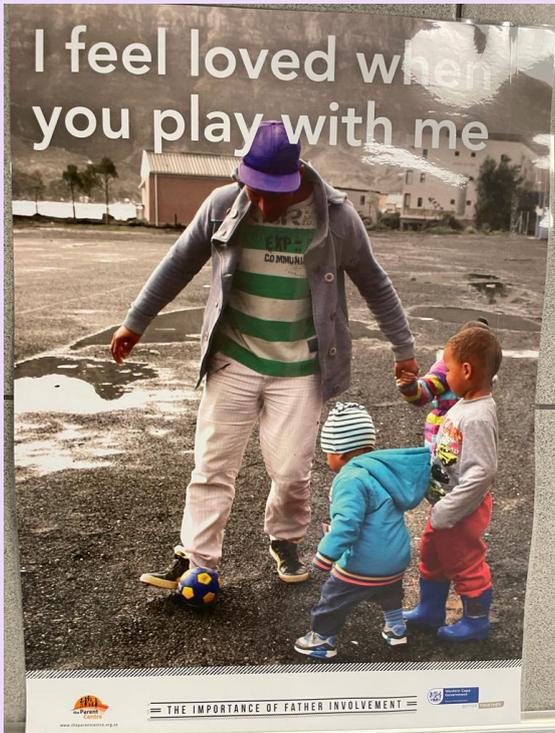




## WCAIMH March Newsletter

With the Covid pandemic entering its third year and increased international conflict and tension, we recently marked the International Parental Mental Health Awareness week. In this month's newsletter, we revisit the WAIMH position paper on Infant's rights in wartime and provide more information about the Parental Mental Health Awareness week.

At our first meeting of the year, Mush Perrins presented her research findings on the use of play in the promotion of health in the African context. This meeting brought about much stimulating discussion about the use of play with young children in the context of therapeutic work, as well as a broader discussion on the unique way in which play is used and understood in South Africa. Members who were unable to attend, but who would like to view a recording of the talk are welcome to email us, and we will send you the download link.



Contact us on [wcaimhza@gmail.com](mailto:wcaimhza@gmail.com)  
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## March speaker

We are thrilled to host Prof. Linda Richter at our next meeting. Her talk, titled “Inside the Nurturing Care Framework”, will trace the origins of the framework in basic developmental science and its evolution to becoming a global framework for children and adolescents.

Linda Richter (PhD) is a Distinguished Professor in the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. She has previously been employed at the Human Sciences Research Council, the University of Natal, and the Medical Research Council. She has been a Visiting Researcher at the University of Melbourne, a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University (USA) and a Research Associate in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford (UK). From 2010-2012 she served as Advisor on Vulnerable Children at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva. Linda is one of the original investigators and currently the co-Principal Investigator of the South African birth cohort study, Birth to Thirty (Bt30), and she is a collaborator in the Consortium of Health Oriented Research in Transitioning Societies (COHORTS). She led the 2016 Lancet Series Advancing Early Child Development: From Science to Scale, and currently leads the ECD Countdown to 2030 and the UKRI-funded project Harnessing Global Data to Advance Young Children’s Learning and Development.



**Date: 17 March 2022**

**Time: 7pm**

**Platform: Zoom invitation**

The talk is **free** for members: Please **confirm** via email to receive the link

**Non-members are welcome to join at a cost of R60.**

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Please use your name and surname as a reference and email proof of payment to [wcaimhza@gmail.com](mailto:wcaimhza@gmail.com)

*We would like to kindly request that you do an EFT, and not a bank deposit. Contact us if you cannot do an EFT and we can make alternative arrangements.*

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## **WAIMH position on current war in Ukraine**

The current war in the Ukraine has brought into sharp focus once again that our world is beset by violence and destruction – from Afghanistan to Myanmar, from Yemen to Sudan, Ethiopia and beyond. There are more infants and family refugees than there have ever been. Of the 26 million refugees worldwide, over half are children under the age of 18 years. The devastating effect this has on people is seen on our screens with stories of loss and pain. Infants, toddlers and young children are however not able to tell their stories, but their trauma is profound.

Three years ago the World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) published a position paper on Infants' rights in wartime. It points out how despite numerous areas of violent conflicts globally, little attention is paid to the enormous price that infants, toddlers, and young children pay. It states that “The needs and rights of all children are the same everywhere: nutritious food, adequate healthcare, a decent education, shelter and a secure and loving family. These are disregarded at times of war.”

The above basic needs are supplied by the adults in the society into which the child is born. A parent or caregiver who is suffering from the psychological effects of trauma may be less able to provide infants, toddlers, and young children with what they need. The effects of war thus reverberate through all the layers of care on which the physical and emotional survival and growth of the young child depends.

We express our solidarity with parents and caregivers of infants, toddlers and young children in all parts of the world affected by violent conflicts.

What we can do: we recommend supporting/donations to UNICEF which could reach young children and families affected by the wars. Donation website:

<https://www.unicef.org/take-action>

To view the WAIMH position paper on the rights of infants during wartime, the following link may be used:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/imhj.21813>

## **Parental mental health awareness**

The week of the 6th to the 12th of March marked International Parental Mental Health Awareness week, with the aim of highlighting the importance of supporting mental health and wellbeing of parents. With the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic ongoing, parents need support now more than ever amidst an ongoing mental health crisis. In a

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survey of parents in the USA, almost half of parents (48%) indicated an increased level of stress in their life compared with before the pandemic.

Three out of four parents reported that they could have used more emotional support than they received – of which 82% were fathers and 68% were mothers. However, only a third received treatment from a mental health professional. With this in mind, it is important to do mental health screenings for parents and to take note of the wellbeing of fathers in particular.

The Centre for Disease Control published an interesting article on the connection between the mental health of parents and how it relates to the mental health of their children. For more information, please follow this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/mental-health-children-and-parents.html>

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## WCAIMH surveys

Our previous newsletter contained two surveys that we invited WCAIMH members and interested parties to complete. If you have not yet done so, please consider sending us your feedback about your interest in attending a networking coffee opportunity here: <https://forms.gle/GSbHCY5yuWbsKhWs8> and any feedback you have about the functioning of WCAIMH at present by following this link: <https://forms.gle/n52FCuibi4ucRhiJ8>

## Membership 2022

We have maintained the annual WCAIMH membership fee at **R375**, with an early bird rate of **R325**, which is payable before 31 March 2022. Membership allows you access to all 10 talks throughout the year. The talks take place on the third Thursday of the month and 1 CPD point is earned for each talk attended. Membership also allows for active engagement with the process of appointing a WCAIMH committee, decisions taken by the association and ultimately an affiliation to the World Association of Infant Mental Health. We are hoping that many of you renew your membership this year and that we gain many new members to allow us to bring you stimulating talks and provide members with new platforms to access resources and information.

To become a member, use your name and surname as a reference and email proof of payment to [wcaimhza@gmail.com](mailto:wcaimhza@gmail.com).

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## Keep in Touch

We welcome any feedback or suggestions. If there are specific topics of interest that you would like us to pursue for a speaker evening, or if you would like to nominate yourself or a colleague for our member highlight section, please also get in touch. Our contact details are:

Email: [wcaimhza@gmail.com](mailto:wcaimhza@gmail.com) Website: [www.infantmentalhealth.co.za](http://www.infantmentalhealth.co.za)

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