



Positive Parenting

The Official Guide Series On Maternal, Child & Family Care By The Malaysian Paediatric Association

Malaysia

The Power of a
Support Network
for Parents and
Children

From Pandemic to Endemic

5 Ways to **Soothe Your Crying Baby**

Scurvy! Vitamin C Deficiency

FREE

Positive Parenting Guide!

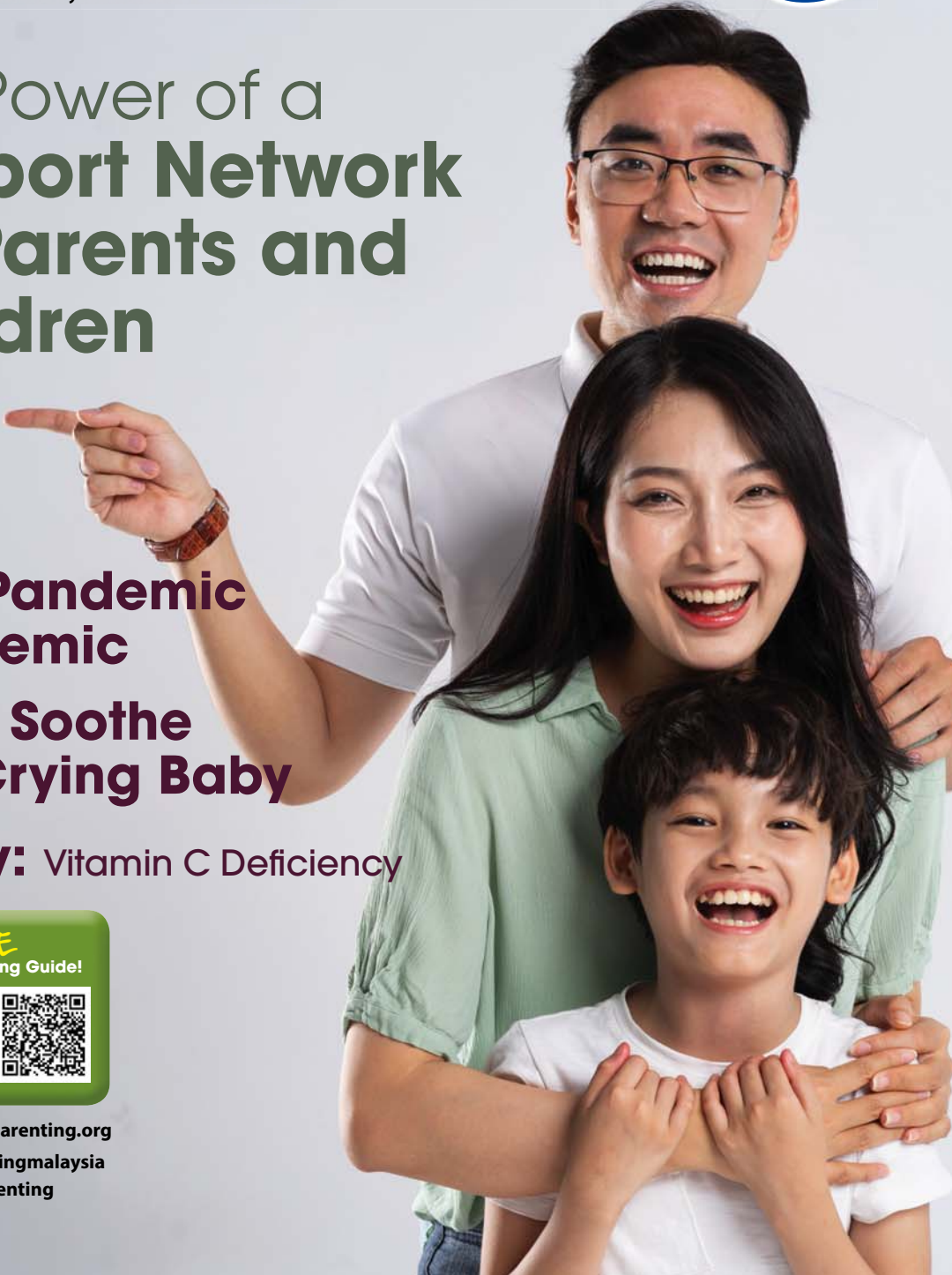
Scan the QR code & fill in your details for free subscription!



www.mypositiveparenting.org

 [positiveparentingmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/positiveparentingmalaysia)

 [mypositiveparenting](https://www.instagram.com/mypositiveparenting)





Positive Parenting Malaysia

expert collaborators & management committee

Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail

Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee and Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist



Malaysian Paediatric Association
mpaedc.my

“Parental awareness and education is vital in raising healthy children.”



Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin
Honorary Treasurer, MPA and Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist



Dr Mary Joseph Marret
Consultant Paediatrician



Dr Rajini Sarvananthan
Consultant Developmental Paediatrician



Nutrition Society of Malaysia
www.nutrivb.org.my

“Healthy eating habits and active living habits must be inculcated from young.”



Dr Tee E Siong
Nutritionist and President, NSM



Dr Roseline Yap
Nutritionist and Hon. Treasurer, NSM



Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia
www.ogsm.org.my

“A healthy pregnancy gives your baby a good start in life.”



Dato' Dr H Krishna Kumar
Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and Past President, OGSM



Malaysian Psychiatric Association
www.psychiatry-malaysia.org

“Mental health is a key component in every child's total health and well-being.”



Dr Yen Teck Hoe
Consultant Psychiatrist



Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology
www.msclp.my

“If a child cannot learn in the way we teach, we must teach in a way the child can learn.”



Dr Serena In
Clinical Psychologist and EXCO Member, MSCP



National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia
www.lppkn.gov.my

“Strong families are central to raising children with values and principles.”



En Hairil Fadzy Md. Akir
Deputy Director-General (Policy), LPPKN



Malaysian Mental Health Association
mmha.org.my

“Mental health and resilience starts with the family.”



Dato' Dr Andrew Mohanraj
Consultant Psychiatrist & President, MMHA



Malaysian Association of Paediatric Dentistry
mapd.my

“Ensuring bright smiles for our children begins with early dental care and positive oral health habits.”



Dr Nabihah Dzairuddin
Paediatric Dental Specialist & Secretary, MAPD



Malaysia Association of Registered Early Child Care and Development (MYECCD)
ppbm.org

“Early childhood care and development helps children grow and discover their potential.”



Pn Anisa Ahmad
President, PPBM



Malaysian Association of Kindergartens

“A quality preschool education prepares children for formal schooling and lifelong learning.”



Ms Eveleen Ling
Chairman, PTM



Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia
https://www.afpm.org.my/

“A happy healthy family leads to a happy healthy society.”



Dr Norsiah Ali
President, AFPM



Early Childhood Care & Education Council
https://ecceccouncil.org/

“When your child is having a problem, stop, listen, then respond to the need, not the behaviour.”



Datin Prof Dr Mariani Md Nor
President, ECCE Council

Malaysian Paediatric Association

Executive Committee
2023/2025

President

Assoc Prof Dr Mohamad Ikram Ilias

Immediate Past President

Dr Selva Kumar Sivapunniam

Vice President

Dr Intan Juliana Abd Hamid

Honorary Secretary

Prof Dr Tang Swee Fong

Assistant Secretary

Dr Rakhee Yadav

Honorary Treasurer

Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin

Committee members

Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail

Assoc Prof Datuk Dr Soo Thian Lian

Dr Thyagar Nadarajaw

Dr Ong Eng-Joe

Prof Dr Kew Seih Teck

Assoc Prof Dr Erwin Khoo Jiayuan

**Positive Parenting**
Malaysia

DATUK DR ZULKIFLI ISMAIL

Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee
Secretary-General, Asia Pacific Pediatric Association (APPA)



It Takes A Village to Raise A Child

Raising a child is not an easy feat, as many parents would agree. A strong support network comprising not just close family members, but also extended relatives, family friends, neighbours, community, as well as the wider society is important to ensure that every child grows in a nurturing environment.

This is why we are honoured to receive valuable insights from the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, as well as respected experts in the field on the important role played by a parenting support network in our Feature article in this issue. We also have an extra section in this issue, featuring an interview with Datin Nora Abu Hassan, a social activist and author. Other topics relevant to parents were also discussed, such as an explainer on epidemiological terms, an introduction to scurvy, and tips to soothe crying babies.

We sincerely hope that you will benefit from these articles and your parenting journey will be facilitated with the new knowledge. You can also read other topics on our website (www.mypositiveparenting.org). And don't forget to follow us on Facebook (@positiveparentingmalaysia), Instagram (@mypositiveparenting), YouTube (ParentFlix) and Spotify (ParentFlix) for more digital content, as well as latest updates on the Positive Parenting programme.

The articles contained in this magazine are not in any way intended as substitutes for medical attention. When in doubt, consult your doctor. Malaysian Paediatric Association, the experts and their respective organisations do not endorse any brands and are not responsible or liable for any advertisement or advertorial by sponsors.

Positive Parenting guide is published by VersaComm Sdn Bhd, Secretariat of the Positive Parenting programme initiated by the Malaysian Paediatric Association. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the Positive Parenting Secretariat.

contents

Feature

4 The Power of a Support Network for Parents and Children

Interview

9 Embracing Challenges and Inspiring Change

Child Health

16 From Pandemic to Endemic

19 What Should I Know If My Child is Hospitalised
Due to Pneumonia?

21 Children of the Digital Era: The Effects of Screen Light
on Children's Health

23 Scurvy: Vitamin C Deficiency

Nutrition & Healthy Living

25 Balancing Convenience and Nutrition in Your Family's Diet

Child Development

27 5 Ways to Soothe Your Crying Baby

My Positive Teen

29 Social and Emotional Development in Adolescence

Positive Parenting Programme is supported by
an educational grant from:

Co-sponsors

Kao
Kirei—Making Life Beautiful

Pfizer

pharmaniaga

Published by:

Malaysian Paediatric Association

Unit 16-07, 16th Floor, Menara Arina Unit1, 97,

Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, 50300 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel: 03-2202 7099 Fax: 03-2602 0997

Email: mpaeds@gmail.com Website: <https://mpaeds.my>

Printer: Percetakan Osacar Sdn Bhd,
Lot 37659, No. 11, Jalan 4/37A, Taman Bukit Maluri
Industrial Area, 52100 Kepong, Kuala Lumpur

For enquiries, please contact:

Positive Parenting Secretariat

VERSA COMM 1993 0100 9036 (263773-W)

12-A Jalan PJS 8/4, Mentari Plaza, Bandar Sunway,
46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Tel: (03) 5632 3301

Email: parentcare@mypositiveparenting.org

[positiveparentingmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/positiveparentingmalaysia) [mypositiveparenting](https://www.instagram.com/mypositiveparenting)

www.mypositiveparenting.org



With **YB Dato' Seri Hajah Nancy Shukri**, Minister of Women, Family, and Community Development,
Dr Serena In, Clinical Psychologist & Committee Member, Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology (MSCP),
Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Chairman, Positive Parenting Programme

The Power of a Support Network for Parents and Children

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, the adage "It takes a village to raise a child" is more relevant than ever. Navigating the complexities of modern parenting can be overwhelming, making the value of a strong support network – comprising family, friends and community – indispensable. A robust network offers essential guidance to parents and plays a crucial role in the overall development and well-being of children.

Role of community support



Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Chairman of the Positive Parenting Programme, underscores the profound impact that community support has on children's physical and emotional health. "Children thrive when they grow up in a supportive environment," he

explains. "A robust network provides diverse role models, emotional security and a sense of belonging."

Dr Zulkifli emphasises that parents with a dependable support system are better equipped to handle the challenges of raising children. "Parenting can be overwhelming without adequate help. Support networks – whether they include family, friends, or community groups – offer practical assistance and emotional backing. This reduces parental stress, which directly

affects children's well-being. Less stressed parents are more patient, attentive and nurturing."

The health benefits for children within a well-supported community are significant. "Communities often exchange valuable information about nutrition, childcare and health practices, leading to better-informed decisions and healthier lifestyles for children. The collective wisdom of a supportive network can significantly enhance the overall well-being of a child."

Emotional and social development



Clinical psychologist **Dr. Serena In** echoes Dr. Zulkifli's sentiments, highlighting that

a child's social and emotional development is deeply influenced by the presence of a strong support network. "Children learn social skills and emotional regulation through interactions with various adults and peers in their community," she says.



In Malaysia, the family unit remains a cornerstone of society, providing children with a nurturing environment through extended family support. "This environment can offer additional resources during times of need, preventing feelings of isolation," Dr. In notes.

Research has shown that children who maintain a close connection with their parents throughout their formative years tend to be more resilient and experience healthier overall development. These children are more likely to learn from their mistakes, seek help when needed, regulate their emotions effectively, and perform better academically compared to those who lack supervision.

Dr. In also points out that when children observe their parents receiving support and validation from others, it reinforces their own sense of security and self-worth. "A child who sees their parents surrounded by a caring network understands that they are

part of a larger, supportive community. This not only boosts their self-esteem but also helps them develop a strong sense of identity."

Support networks are invaluable during tough times. Dr. In emphasises: "No family is immune to challenges, whether they are financial difficulties, health issues, or personal crises. A strong support network can provide resources, advice and emotional support during tough times. This collective resilience helps children feel safe and secure despite the difficulties."

Navigating difficult times

The presence of a support network can make all the difference when facing difficult circumstances. Dr. In explains: "When you have a support network, you don't feel so alone going through difficult times." Even amidst hardships, practical support from an extended network can be invaluable.



For example, during times of chronic illness, the loss of a spouse, or other life-changing events, a strong support system can help ease the pain and stress. Caregiving support, providing meals, or helping with tasks like house cleaning can significantly impact someone going through a challenging experience. By sharing responsibilities, the burden becomes lighter.

Financial support from a network can also be a lifeline, providing access to essential resources such as professional help, medical needs, or educational activities. Socially, having additional positive role models in an extended support network can fill gaps within the family. For instance, an only child might benefit from the guidance of older peers they trust, helping them make wise personal choices.

Spiritually, being part of a group that believes in positivity and a higher power can also provide a sense of unity and purpose. Dr In notes that such groups often come together in prayer, offering collective support during times of need.

Government initiatives

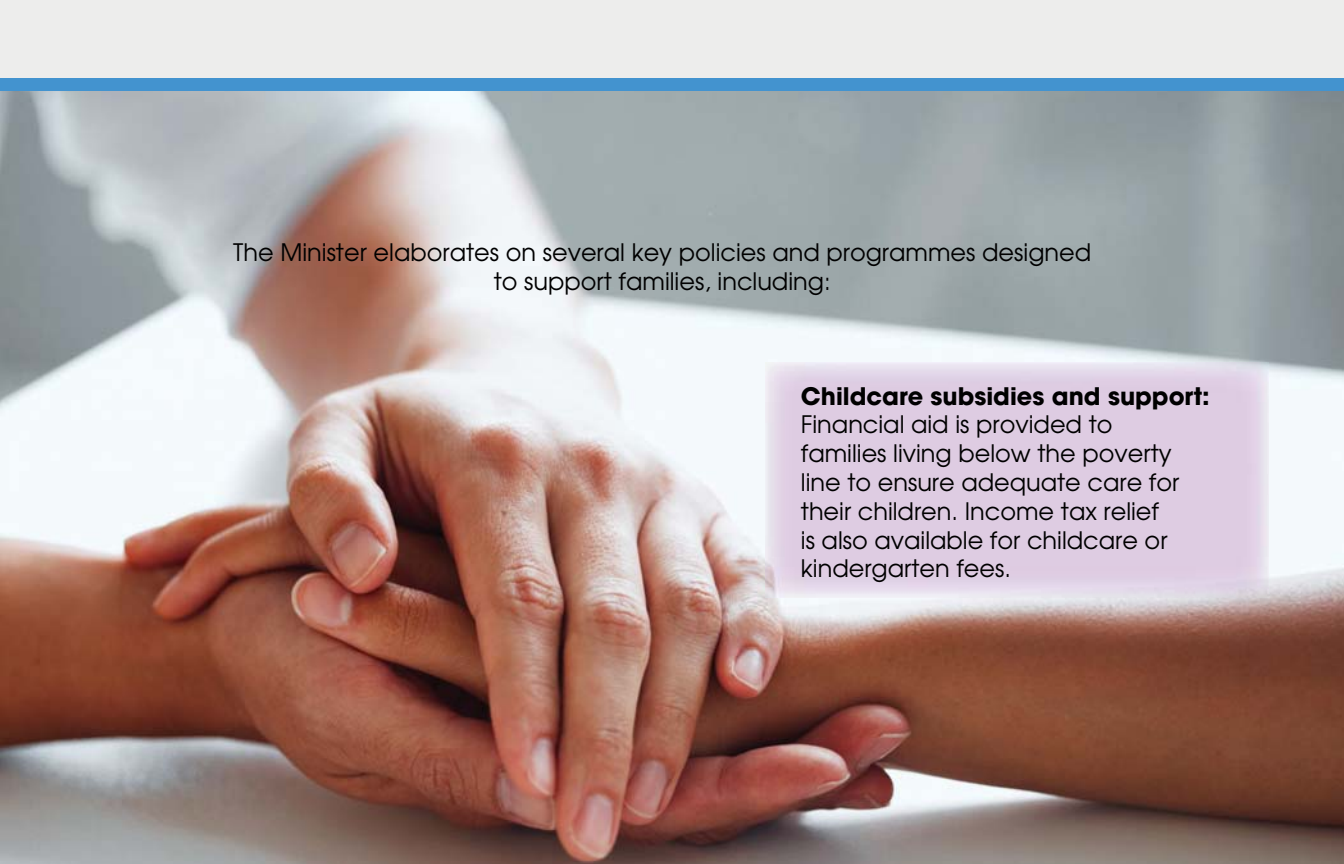


The importance of support networks extends beyond individual families to the broader society. **YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri**, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, explains, "A support network is important because it provides parents with the emotional, social and practical support they need to navigate the challenges of raising a family. It helps reduce stress, fosters a sense of community, and allows parents to share knowledge and resources. Moreover, a strong support network can significantly improve the well-being of both parents and children, contributing to stronger, more resilient families."

The Minister encourages parents to build their networks by actively participating in community activities. "Joining parent support groups, volunteering at your child's school Parent-Teacher Association (PIBG), or engaging with community centres are great ways to connect with others," she advises. Leveraging online platforms and social media can also help parents share experiences and support each other.

The government plays a crucial role in creating an environment where families can thrive. "This involves implementing policies that ensure access to affordable childcare, parental leave, and healthcare services," says Dato' Sri Nancy. "We also focus on fostering an inclusive community by supporting initiatives that promote work-life balance, family-friendly workplace policies, and educational programmes that emphasise the importance of family values. Our goal is to empower parents with the resources and knowledge they need to raise healthy, happy children in a supportive community."





The Minister elaborates on several key policies and programmes designed to support families, including:

Childcare subsidies and support:

Financial aid is provided to families living below the poverty line to ensure adequate care for their children. Income tax relief is also available for childcare or kindergarten fees.

Parental leave: From 1 January 2023, women in the private sector have been entitled to 98 days of maternity leave, and paternity leave has been extended from three days to seven days.

Family counselling services:

Various agencies offer counselling and support for families facing challenges, including marital issues, parenting difficulties and mental health concerns.

Women's empowerment programmes:

Through the Women's Development Department (JPW), initiatives are run to support women's participation in the workforce, helping them balance career and family life.

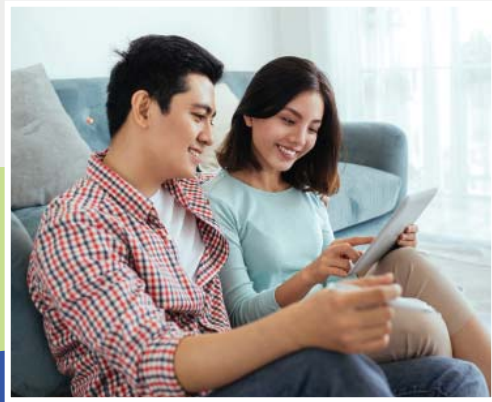
Community outreach programmes:

Pusat Sokongan Sosial Setempat (PSSS) by the National Welfare Foundation of Malaysia (YKN) provides platforms for parents and children to share experiences, access resources and seek support.

Dato' Sri Nancy acknowledges that reaching families in rural and remote areas remains a significant challenge. "There is also a need to address cultural and societal norms that may discourage parents from seeking help or using available resources," she adds. "In many cases, there is still a stigma associated with asking for help or admitting there is a problem, especially through counselling."

A strong support network is invaluable for both parents and children. For parents, it alleviates stress, provides practical help, and enhances overall well-being. For children, it offers a rich environment for social and emotional development, a sense of security, and resilience against adversity. The collective effort of a community is vital in nurturing the next generation. By investing in and fostering these networks, we are investing in a healthier, happier future for all.

Creating a cohesive family environment



Dr Serena In offers some practical tips for parents on how to effectively communicate with extended family members and friends to create a cohesive and supportive environment for their children:

Decide together: As a couple, start by discussing and agreeing on the kind of environment you want for your family. Consider which side of the family to involve and to what extent, as this might vary depending on your backgrounds.

Set boundaries: It's important to establish healthy boundaries about the type of support and help you need from others. Clear boundaries prevent misunderstandings and help maintain harmony.

Share your values: Make sure to communicate your family's values and priorities to extended family members and friends. Encourage them to ask questions if they're unsure, rather than making assumptions. Keeping communication open helps everyone feel comfortable discussing difficult or sensitive topics like parenting challenges, losses, or relationship issues.

Lead by example: Show others how you'd like to communicate with your children, and gently encourage them to do the same, if possible. However, understand that you can't control everything that happens around your children. After spending time with extended family, it can be helpful to have a debrief with your kids to clarify any confusion and ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to understanding and accepting differences. PP





The author and her book, *Born to Smile*



Nora and her dad

Embracing Challenges and Inspiring Change

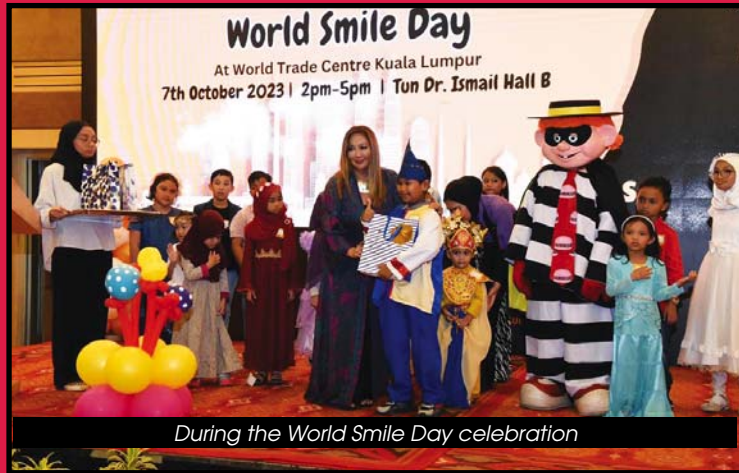
With **Datin Nora Abu Hassan**, Author & Social Activist

*Bullying is a persistent issue in many societies, affecting individuals who are perceived as different. For **Datin Nora Abu Hassan**, her journey with a cleft lip and palate (CLP) not only exposed her to the harsh realities of bullying but also inspired her to become a beacon of hope and resilience for others. Today, she is a motivational speaker, book author and social activist, dedicated to creating awareness about CLP and advocating for self-acceptance and anti-bullying.*

Nora's life has been a testament to perseverance. Born with a unilateral complete cleft lip and palate, she underwent eight to 10 surgeries from the tender age of three months until her 30s. These surgeries were part of a transformative process consisting of two parts: repair and refinement.

"My childhood was not easy," Nora shares with *Positive Parenting*. "People may not know that there are a lot of variations of cleft lip and palate." She explains the four main variations: cleft lip, cleft palate, unilateral cleft lip and palate (a single opening from the lip to the palate), and bilateral cleft lip and palate (openings on both sides from the lip to the palate).

Growing up with CLP, Nora faced numerous challenges, including difficulties with feeding, speech and ear infections. However, the social challenges were perhaps even more daunting. "Going to school, looking different was not easy for me," she reflects. "There were always children bullying, calling me names, mocking, teasing... 'Oh senget, sengau, sumbing'. It was a very difficult childhood."



During the World Smile Day celebration

The bullying persisted throughout her childhood. Nora recalls: “The unpleasantness of bullying and name-calling started right from when I was in Standard One up to 17. Only after I went for my first rhinoplasty did the name-calling stop.”

Path to healing

Nora’s journey to self-acceptance was gradual. The mother of three describes her transformation in three phases. The first phase, before her reconstructive surgeries, was marked by low self-esteem and anger. In the second phase, despite having undergone several surgeries, she still struggled with internal emotional turmoil. It was only in the third phase, beginning around 2000, that Nora embarked on a journey of healing. Writing her book, *Born to Smile*, was a significant part of this phase. “I wrote the book to share my experiences,” Nora explains. Released in October 2019, just before the pandemic, the book has been instrumental in raising awareness about CLP and providing a platform for others to share their stories here in Malaysia. “Because of my own journey, I wanted to motivate and inspire adults with CLP and mothers of CLP children. When they read the book, I hope they will realise that when they embrace their differences, they can become all that they want to be and fulfil their destiny,” she says.

“Until the book came out, I hadn’t really talked to anyone about my experiences. I only spoke to my mother when I was younger, at about

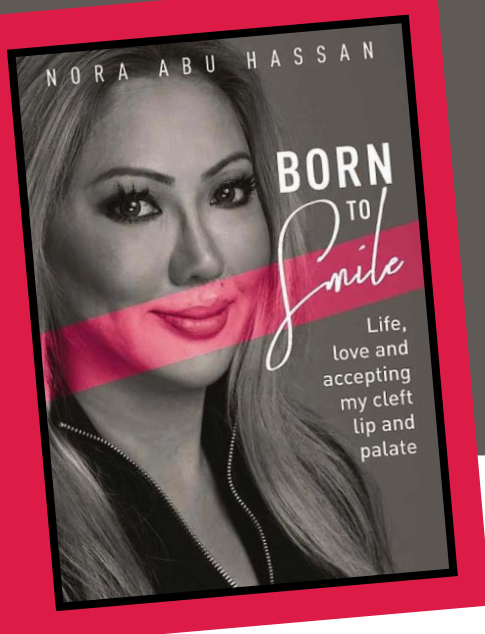
seven or eight, when I couldn’t stand the bullying anymore; I didn’t want to go to school. My mother would go and speak to the *cikgu* or headmistress,” Nora reveals, admitting that apart from this, she never really had a heart to heart talk with her parents about what she was going through.

“Emotionally, I felt I was on my own. My father was a very busy person and I was the eldest child. With all due respect to my mother and father, parenting in those days was very different. These days, I would tell parents that you need to do better. When you see your child looking sad, or downtrodden, you need to talk to them – and not just those with cleft issues, but any issues whether it is differently coloured skin or differently shaped bodies – there are all kinds of bullies out there. Bullying is rampant. As parents, we need to be alert and aware of what our kids may be facing at school.”

Traumatized by the constant bullying and in so much pain, Nora had no option but to rewire her mind and visualise herself in a better place, in a happier person. “Whenever I felt hurt and upset, I would think positive thoughts to ‘transport’ myself to a happy place so that I wouldn’t feel so bad,” she says. “Later, when I became an adult and embarked on my journey of healing, I realised that I had been inadvertently harnessing the power of my subconscious mind... I had already been practising self-healing techniques before I knew anything about them!”



At the Ronald McDonald House



Message of hope

During the pandemic, Nora adapted to the new normal by taking her advocacy online. "I saw people having programmes, interviews, and online talk shows, reaching out to people. So, I decided to start my own show, *Smile With Nora*, on Facebook Live," she says. The fortnightly show features guests from the cleft community, including mothers, children, plastic surgeons, ENT specialists, and speech therapists. You can tune in to Nora's shows by following her on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/nora.hassan.9250>).

She has also been involved with Ronald McDonald House Charities Malaysia (RMHC) as a project partner in their CSR project 'Gift of Smile', aimed at helping CLP children who come from underprivileged families by sponsoring their treatments (speech, dental care, orthodontics, bone grafts, and corrective surgeries).

Nora emphasises the importance of creating awareness about CLP and providing support for affected families. "If your child is born with cleft, it's okay. Just go for the corrective surgeries, and if you are not okay about it, that's okay too! It takes time for one to accept their condition or the condition of their loved one."

Nora's story is not just about living with a facial difference; it's about overcoming adversity and finding strength in vulnerability. She urges parents and society to be more understanding and supportive.

"I was very fortunate as my parents always stood by me, and took me for surgery right from the start; my mother was there with me throughout all my surgeries, every single one of them. It is a big job for the parents to reach out and get help, so we as a society should give them a bit of understanding. Be mindful with your words because that person can spiral downward if you are careless with how you speak to them."

Through her work, Nora continues to inspire and empower others, proving that resilience and a positive mindset can transform lives. Her journey is a powerful reminder that acceptance and love, both from within one's own family and from the wider community, are the keys to overcoming the challenges posed by differences. PP

Scan the QR code to buy the e-book version of *Born to Smile*:



Advertisement

Bioré GUARD

Kao
Kirei—Making Life Beautiful



MOSQUITOES NEVER LANDING*

Janji 'protect' untuk keluarga dari nyamuk dengan
Anti-Landing Tech



*Evenly apply the enough amount of our product onto skin. **Berdasarkan Uji Laboratorium

KaO

Kirei—Making Life Beautiful

Your Partner in Modern Household Efficiency



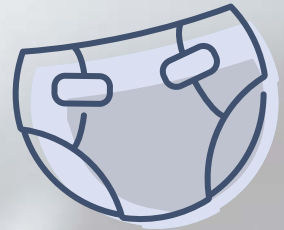
In today's fast-paced world, modern parenting comes with its own set of challenges. Balancing a busy lifestyle with the needs of your family requires efficient solutions that make life easier and stress-free. Parents need to make the best use of their time, ensuring that every moment counts.

Finding the right products to help manage household tasks and maintain a healthy environment can often be challenging. That's why having a trusted brand name like Kao is invaluable. Kao's vision is to offer products that seamlessly integrate into everyday life. By

choosing Kao, parents can trust that they are supported by a brand committed to enhancing their daily lives and helping them create a safe, nurturing, and joyful home environment. With a range of products designed to simplify household chores, Kao enables parents to focus on what truly matters – their family.

Efficient cleaning products

Keeping the home clean is crucial for children as it protects their health, ensures safety, promotes mental well-being, fosters good habits and creates a comfortable, nurturing environment for their growth and development. Kao's household cleaning products are crafted to streamline your cleaning routine and ensure a hygienic environment. With *Magiclean*, for instance, you can effortlessly tackle every corner of your home. From wipes to kitchen cleaners, bathroom and toilet cleaners, and multipurpose disinfectants, *Magiclean* provides powerful cleaning solutions that save you time and energy. This means you can enjoy more quality moments with your children in a spotless and safe home.



Laundry days also no longer have to be a daunting task with *Attack* laundry detergents. Specially formulated to combat tough stains while being gentle on fabrics, these detergents make laundry less of a hassle. Their powerful yet gentle action ensures clothes come out clean and fresh, preserving their quality. Modern parents can now manage their laundry with ease, freeing up time to engage in fun and meaningful activities with their kids.

Excellent personal care

Good diapers are important for babies as they ensure comfort, prevent leaks, protect sensitive skin, and provide long-lasting dryness, contributing to the baby's overall well-being and happiness. Parents of babies and toddlers need diapers that offer both comfort and reliability, and Merries Ultra Gentle Super Premium Baby Diapers deliver just that. With easy-to-use tabs, superior leak protection, and long-lasting dryness, these diapers provide peace of mind for parents and comfort for babies.



Finding the right personal care products is especially important for modern families where both parents are working, as it ensures efficient, reliable hygiene solutions that save time and support the health and well-being of all family members. Kao's *Biore Guard* offers a range of personal care items, including all-in-one body foam and shampoo, hand sanitiser, hand wash, and mosquito repellent, making it easy to maintain hygiene and protect your family from germs and diseases. Since the pandemic, personal hygiene has become even more crucial for staying healthy. With *Biore Guard*'s reliable and convenient solutions, keeping everyone clean and safe is effortless – perfect for busy parents who prioritise their family's well-being.

Kao understands that modern parents need efficient and effective solutions to manage their household tasks. With products like *Magiclean*, *Attack*, *Merries* and *Biore Guard*, you can ensure a clean, safe and nurturing environment for your children. By integrating Kao products into your routine, you can spend less time on chores and more time creating beautiful memories with your family.

Kao

Kirei—Making Life Beautiful



Bioré GUARD



Together Always, Embracing Each Milestone.

Visit Kao Malaysia Facebook or
Website For More Information!



Facebook



Website



From Pandemic to Endemic

By **Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin**, Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist
and **Dr Husna Musa**, Paediatrician

For many of us, the year 2020 might be the first time we were introduced to these epidemiological terms, such as "pandemic", "epidemic", and even "endemic", as COVID-19 began to spread its devastating effect around the world. You may vaguely understand that these terms refer to infectious illnesses but what do they really mean and what differentiate these terms?

Pandemic, epidemic, or endemic?

"Pandemics", "epidemics", and "endemic diseases" are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) based on the rate of disease spread. What makes an epidemic and a pandemic different is not the severity of the disease, but the scale of its spread. Hence, a pandemic is not necessarily worse than an epidemic or an endemic disease. Pandemics do have the largest potential to cause worldwide disruption, but this depends on the specific disease and how we manage it collectively.

Here are the definitions of these terms:

Endemic: An endemic disease is consistently present in a specific region or population with a fairly stable prevalence. This makes the spread of the disease predictable. Examples are:

- **Malaria** is endemic to some parts of Africa due to the higher temperature
- **Dengue fever** is endemic to tropical and subtropical regions like Malaysia
- **Hepatitis B** is endemic worldwide, with higher endemicity in Africa and Asia

Epidemic: An epidemic is a sudden and rapid increase in the number of disease cases above what is normally expected in a specific region or population. It can happen when a new disease appears in the population or when an endemic disease becomes more prevalent. An epidemic disease is not necessarily contagious and may refer to other diseases or health issues with a prevalence higher than the projected occurrence in a population. Examples are:

- **Zika virus epidemic** in Brazil (2015-2016)
- **Ebola virus epidemic** in West Africa (2014-2016)
- **Opioid epidemic** in the US due to the increasing use of opioids and overdose cases in the past decades

Has COVID-19 become endemic?

This is a question that has been asked many times since the world started reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic. To answer this, we need to understand what it means for COVID-19 to be endemic. When COVID-19 has reached the endemic phase, it will continue to be present at a certain predictable level or trend in the population. The closest example is influenza, which is typically present at an expected level throughout the year in Malaysia.

Yet, being endemic is not necessarily a good thing since the disease can still have severe effects on patients. Plus, it is possible for an endemic disease to turn into a pandemic again. COVID-19 is no longer categorised as a pandemic and predicted to be endemic sooner or later. But experts are split when determining whether COVID-19 is already endemic since there is still a lot of unpredictability with SARS-CoV-2.

Regardless, continued surveillance and vigilance are necessary to prevent another pandemic from happening. Other than practising personal hygiene, taking COVID-19 booster doses is also part of preventive measures recommended to everyone, especially high-risk groups such as the elderly and people with underlying conditions or weakened immune systems. Whether it's endemic, epidemic or pandemic, let's continue to prioritise our health and safety! PP



Pandemic: A pandemic happens when a disease spreads across multiple countries or continents, impacting a large number of people. A disease may be declared as a pandemic if it spreads at a very fast rate, with more new cases reported every day. An ongoing epidemic may turn into a pandemic if it spreads beyond the originating region or population. Properties of the pathogen, population immunity, or severity of the disease do not play a role in determining whether a disease is a pandemic. Examples are:

- **COVID-19 pandemic** caused by SARS-CoV-2 (2020-2022)
- **Swine flu pandemic** caused by H1N1 influenza virus (2009)
- **Great Influenza pandemic** (also known as Spanish flu) caused by H1N1 influenza virus (1918-1920)

Other key terms

Other terms may be used to describe the spread of disease in a population:

- **Sporadic:** When a disease happens rarely or occasionally. This includes tetanus that tends to happen only in unvaccinated individuals or foodborne illnesses such Salmonella or E. coli infections.
- **Hyperendemic:** When there is a persistent presence of a disease at a higher level in a population compared to other populations. For example, in parts of Africa, as many as one in five adults has HIV, hence the disease is considered hyperendemic in those places.
- **Cluster:** When a disease occurs at a higher rate in a population, while the exact cause or the actual number of cases may be uncertain. For example, the cluster of cancer cases that arises after a chemical contamination event or a nuclear plant accident.
- **Outbreak:** Has the same meaning as an epidemic but is typically used to describe a disease spread that is more limited geographically.

An educational contribution by



PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE: IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK?



Pneumococcal Disease is caused by a bacteria that can result in serious complications especially in children



CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE

ARE AMONG THOSE AT HIGH RISK



DO YOU
KNOW?



- 1 Invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) occurs in 3.8 per 100 000 children in Malaysia¹
- 2 Pneumonia is the third leading cause of death and morbidity in children below five years old in Malaysia¹
- 3 6 common strains in Malaysia for causing pneumococcal diseases: 14, 6B, 19A, 6A, 19F, 23F²

YOU CAN
PROTECT YOUR
CHILD FROM
PNEUMOCOCCAL
DISEASE⁴



MENINGITIS

Infection of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord



PNEUMONIA

Infection of lung



SEPSIS

Infection of bloodstream



OTITIS MEDIA

Infection of middle ear

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE IS PREVENTABLE

ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ABOUT THE
PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE TODAY

References:

1. Estimating the population health and economic impacts of introducing a pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in Malaysia- an economic evaluation Aarul Akmal Shafie,^{*} Norazah Ahmad,^{*} Jerusha Naidoo,^{*} Chee Young Foo,^{*} Callix Wong,^{*} Sarah Pugh,^{*} and Kah Kee Tan^{*}
2. Pneumococcal serotype distribution and antibiotic susceptibility in Malaysia: A four-year study (2014–2017) on invasive paediatric isolates Revathy Arushothy^{*}, Norazah Ahmad, Fairuz Amran, Rohaidah Hashim, Nazrah Samsiah, Che Roslina Che Azih
3. Pneumococcal Disease, CDC (2019): <https://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal>
4. Pneumococcal Disease is Serious... Make sure your child is protected! : <https://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4318.pdf>

What Should I Know If My Child is Hospitalised Due to Pneumonia?

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**,
Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

Witnessing your child being admitted to the hospital can be a traumatic experience. One disease that is commonly associated with hospitalisation is pneumonia, which has a prevalence rate of 28% to 39% among children under 5 years old in Malaysia. No parent wants to be in the dark about their child's wellbeing, more so in a life-threatening condition such as this; therefore, there are a few things you should know if your child is hospitalised due to pneumonia.



What is pneumonia, and how is it diagnosed?

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs by viruses, bacteria, or fungi. Our lungs are made up of millions of tiny air sacs called alveoli, and in cases of pneumonia, these alveoli are filled with fluid and pus from inflammation. As a result, individuals affected by this disease will become breathless from reduced oxygen uptake.

A child with pneumonia may present with anything from a mild fever and cough to vomiting and trouble breathing. During consultation, most physicians will come to a diagnosis after a full history and physical examination. Parents can assist by providing information on any changes they notice in their child and when they started. Sometimes, investigations like chest X-rays, blood tests, and sputum cultures are requested for confirmation. Your child's physician will gather all the findings and form a diagnosis before planning the treatment.

Will my child be admitted?

Once a case of pneumonia is confirmed, the paediatrician will decide if your child requires urgent intervention in the hospital or if treatment can commence at home. Generally, admission is reserved for children who have rapid breathing, respiratory difficulty, low oxygen saturation, dehydration, poor feeding, constant vomiting, and any comorbidities like asthma, anaemia, or immunodeficiency disorders. The same goes for children who present with life-threatening complications. Hospitalisation ensures medications and procedures are initiated in a timely manner for these patients.

How will my child be treated?

In the ward, healthcare providers (HCPs) will manage your child's pneumonia based on the symptoms and causative agent. Common treatments include oral or intravenous fluid to restore hydration, antipyretics such as paracetamol to bring down the body temperature, and supplemental oxygen to improve oxygen distribution to all body parts. Antibiotics may be given if there is a suspicion of bacterial infection. HCPs will monitor your child's temperature, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, and fluid intake to chart their progress.

Most pneumonia cases are caused by viruses, so antibiotics will only be administered if the physician is certain the infection is bacterial in origin. An antibiotic course needs to be completed to prevent the development of resistance. Hence, the duration of hospitalisation depends on the treatment types and how well your child responds to them. A typical length of stay is within three to seven days.

How might my child and I be affected?

Although it cannot be denied that inpatient treatment is life-saving, most children and their families loathe being in a hospital. Hospital stays can turn your cheerful child tearful and gloomy. Unfamiliar places and routines are stressful for your little one, as they do not have control over what is happening to them. For school-age children, hospitalisation also means missing out on school and peer interaction, which eventually will disrupt their learning.

As for parents, their child's hospitalisation comes with a major schedule adjustment, especially relating to work. Parents need to apply for leave to focus on their child's recovery. This can be challenging for parents who are earning on a day-to-day basis or for single parents who have other children at home to look after. Moreover,

agonising over their child's health and prognosis puts a lot of emotional burden on parents throughout the admission period.

How can I prevent my child from getting pneumonia?



The inconveniences that come with hospital admission can be prevented by taking a few early measures. First, parents must ensure their child's vaccination status is up-to-date. Vaccines against infections that predispose a child to pneumonia like pneumococcus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, and pertussis are available as part of the National Immunisation Programme (NIP).

Complications of pneumonia

Some children with pneumonia are prone to developing complications, especially those who are immunocompromised or receive late treatments. Such complications include:

- **Pleural effusion:** excessive fluid accumulation in the pleural cavity, the space between the lungs and chest wall
- **Empyema:** collection of pus in the pleural cavity due to infection that spreads from the lungs
- **Lung abscess:** formation of pus-filled cavities in the lungs
- **Necrotising pneumonia:** the death of lung tissue followed by cavity formation
- **Sepsis:** a life-threatening condition when the immune response goes overboard and damages the child's vital organs

Pneumococcal vaccination is also available at private healthcare facilities for those who are ineligible for the NIP. Influenza vaccination will help to reduce the risk further. Additionally, teaching your child to avoid close contact with sick individuals and to wash their hands regularly will also protect them from infection.

Understanding the reasons behind clinical decisions can reduce the anxiety parents have for their hospitalised child. Pneumonia comes with diverse clinical manifestations and treatment approaches, so parents are encouraged to consult the HCPs for updates on their child's progress. Adopting the "prevention is better than cure" mindset by making sure that children get their vaccines on schedule can save parents lots of trouble that comes with hospitalisation. PP

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



Children of the Digital Era: The Effects of Screen Light on Children's Health

By **Dr Yong Junina Fadzil**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

Children of today are a different breed, literally. Unlike their parents, these children were born in an era when connectivity is the norm and information is readily available at their fingertips.

According to a study by Tanisha N et al, about **95.9% of pre-school children use digital device in Malaysia with a mean age of exposure at 3.9 years.**¹ The same study looked at parental perception of risks over the use of screens amongst their children. 90% of parents felt that there was a risk of damaging the eyesight, while 81.3% were concerned about exposure to radiation and 71.9% felt there was a risk of inactive lifestyle. The risk of device addiction was a concern amongst 86.3% of parents while 74% and 71% of parents agreed that there was a risk of undesirable content and overdependence respectively. Some parents felt that exposure to gadgets had positive effects, particularly in the intellectual domain, where 62.6% of parents agreed that

devices promote creative and interactive learning.

Staring at the screen for long hours, however, is bound to have adverse effects. This is in part related to the artificial blue light emitted by these devices. While not enough to cause retinal damage, exposure to blue light from screens of devices has been shown to affect the circadian rhythm, delay the onset of sleep, decrease sleep quality, impair alertness the following day, reduce duration of REM sleep, and suppress melatonin.² Extended use may also cause dry eyes, blurred vision, and headaches.³ It is also associated with daytime tiredness.⁴ This will in turn affect their ability to pay attention and absorb what is being taught in class, leading to



poor school performance and psychological problems.^{5,6}

While the effects are seen in all age groups, melatonin suppression is more profound in children, whose pupil diameters are also significantly larger than adults, both in dim and bright conditions.⁷ Exposure to gadgets at 24 months is associated with lower reading at 36 months, which in turn results in greater screen exposure at 60 months and increases the risk of obesity.^{8,9}

Addressing the elephant in the room: perceived advantages of gadgets versus documented harm

Children, particularly those under the age of two, need real life examples and interactions to be able to learn something and apply it. For example, a child may learn his alphabets, words, and numbers from apps on the phone or tablet. However, he is unable to use them in real life settings. Basically, this child will just parrot what he learned. These apps are also unable to teach higher order thinking skills, emotional regulation, task persistence, impulse control, and creative, flexible thinking. Most of the so-called educational apps have no proven benefits and were developed without the input from a developmental paediatrician or educator.

A child who learns from people around him, on the other hand, will be able to use these words to effectively communicate his needs and demands. Through direct interaction, he will learn the boundaries, and consequences, of his actions. Through trial and error, he will develop creative and flexible thinking, which is best taught through unstructured physical play and parent-child interaction.

Sleep deprivation and poor sleep quality have a huge impact on a child's ability to perform, as well as growth and development. Blue light from the screen has been shown to suppress melatonin, a hormone that induces sleepiness, and interfere with rapid-eye-movement (REM) phase of sleep. To ensure a restful night's sleep, **do not allow your child to use any gadgets one hour before bedtime.**

Screen exposure is associated with an increased risk of obesity, partly because the child is not

aware that he is full, as his eyes are glued on the screen. **Do not allow screen time during meals.** Ironically, many parents introduce gadgets during meal times for this very reason – so that they can feed their child with minimum fuss. However, this is a short-term solution, and will bring about greater long-term problems.

Children's eyes tire easily. Pay close attention to the signs of tired eyes, namely watery eyes, frequent rubbing, or squinting. Remove gadgets from them after one hour and get them to partake in other activities that do not require them to focus too much. This can be outdoor play, cycling, swimming, or painting, to name a few. While there are many visual aids in the market to reduce the glare and blue light exposure, these are more geared towards people who have to spend long hours looking at the screen. These devices do not and will not aid the social and mental development of the child. The solution is not in the blue light glasses, but rather the device itself. **Children between two to five years should only be exposed to the screen for one hour per day.**

Finally, the most important point. Children learn through observation. As parents, we should not be glued to our devices as it limits our interaction with our child. Keep the phones away during mealtimes and when playing with children. Only then will they benefit from two-way interactions.

In the 21st century, when information is readily available at our fingertips, it is important that the source of information does not harm us or our children.

It is also important that we monitor and vet through the contents of what our children are watching. Remember when we were little? How our parents would walk alongside us trying to ride a bicycle or rollerblades? We need to do the same for our children. Not just with the physical activities, but also online. Be there for them and guide them so they can develop in a balanced manner and grow up capable of making the correct decisions. PP

References

1. Tanusha N, Leelavathi M, Azimah NM. Parent's perception of digital device use among their preschool children and its associated factors in Kota Setar, Kedah. *Med J Malaysia.* 2023 Nov;78(6):763-767. PMID: 38031218.
2. Chang AM, Aeschbach D, Duffy JF, Czeisler CA. Evening use of light-emitting eReaders negatively affects sleep, circadian timing, and next-morning alertness. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 2015;112:1232-7.
3. Klammm J, Tarnow KG. Computer Vision Syndrome: A Review of Literature. *Medsurg Nurs* 2015;24:89-93.
4. Hale L, Guan S. Screen time and sleep among school-aged children and adolescents: a systematic literature review. *Sleep Med Rev.* 2015;21:50-58 (PubMed)
5. Beebe DW. Cognitive, behavioral, and functional consequences of inadequate sleep in children and adolescents. *Pediatr Clin North Am.* 2011;58(3):649-665 (PubMed)
6. Falbe J, Davison KK, Franckle RL, et al. Sleep duration, restfulness, and screens in the sleep environment. *Pediatrics.* 2015;135(2). Available at: www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/135/2/e367 (PubMed)
7. Higuchi S, Nagafuchi Y, Lee SI, Harada T. Influence of light at night on melatonin suppression in children. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 2014;99(9):3298-3303 (PubMed)
8. Longitudinal Associations Between Screen Use and Reading in Preschool-Aged Children. Brae Anne McArthur, PhD; Dillon Browne, PhD; Sheila McDonald, PhD; Suzanne Tough, PhD; Sheri Madigan, PhD Paediatrics volume 147 issue 6 June 2021
9. Cox R, Skouteris H, Rutherford L, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz M, Dell' Aquila D, Hardy LL. Television viewing, television content, food intake, physical activity and body mass index: a cross-sectional study of preschool children aged 2-6 years. *Health Promot J Austr.* 2012;23(1):58-62 (PubMed)

An educational contribution by



Scurvy: Vitamin C Deficiency

By **Dr La Reina Sangaran**, Paediatric Rheumatologist



In the 1730s, there was a son of a rich merchant in Edinburgh called James Lind. He was a medical trainee who later joined the British Royal Navy as a surgeon assistant. While he was at sea, he observed that many sailors suffered a strange disease.

The earliest sign among the sailors was fatigue. Then they started feeling pain at their joints, and their hands and legs became swollen. Their skins were bruised, their gums were bleeding, and their teeth were becoming loose. Old wounds reopened and were more difficult to heal. Many sailors later died due to bleeding in their heart or brain.

In 1747, while sailing on the HMS Salisbury ship, James Lind ran the first controlled clinical trial recorded in the history of medical science. 12 crew members with similar symptoms were divided into six pairs. Every pair received a different treatment. The treatments given were garlic, mustard seeds, vinegar, seawater, oranges, and lemons. Within only a week, the pairs treated with citrus fruits were healed from their symptoms.

The administrators of the British Royal Navy then ordered the distribution of lemon juice to all sailors. Since then, scurvy was never seen again among the British Royal Navy.



What is Scurvy?

Scurvy is a disease caused by the lack of vitamin C. Without vitamin C in our food, the symptoms of scurvy will appear in merely a month.

Balancing Convenience and Nutrition in Your Family's Diet

By **Dr Lee Siew Siew**, Nutritionist and Honorary Auditor, Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM)



In today's fast-paced world, it's common for families to prioritise convenience when it comes to meals. With busy schedules and endless to-do lists, frozen foods, fast foods, take-aways, and deliveries often become the go-to choices. While these convenience foods can save time, they may not always be the healthiest option. However, eating healthy doesn't have to be time-consuming. With a few smart strategies, you can balance convenience with nutrition and ensure your family's diet stays on track.

Tips for healthy, convenient eating

1. Focus on the basics

When planning meals, it's essential to focus on **Balance, Moderation, and Variety (BMV)**. A balanced meal includes a proper mix of food groups – vegetables, fruits, grains and cereals, lean or plant proteins, dairy – to ensure adequate intake of energy, vitamins and minerals for overall health. Moderation is key to ensuring you don't overconsume. Even with healthy foods, controlling the amount and serving size of food keeps your diet in check.

Incorporating variety into your meals is crucial as it ensures you obtain a wide range of nutrients while keeping your meals enjoyable. By consuming a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins and grains within and across food groups throughout the week, you can prevent nutritional gaps and food fatigue. Refer to the **Malaysian Food Pyramid** and **Malaysian Healthy Plate** as guidelines to help you achieve BMV.

2. Easy home cooking

Not all meals need to be made from scratch but combining take-away and home-cooked elements can make a big difference. For example, you can purchase a variety of pre-cooked dishes from a mixed rice stall but cook the rice at home and serve fresh fruits for dessert. Simple, one-pot meals are another great option – just toss everything into a single pot, let it cook, and dinner is ready in no time.

Modern kitchen gadgets like pressure cookers, slow cookers and air fryers can drastically

reduce cooking time while allowing you to prepare healthy meals. These tools are perfect for busy families who want to cook nutritious dishes efficiently without spending hours in the kitchen.

Planning is crucial to balancing convenience with nutrition. Set aside some time on the weekend to prepare ingredients or even entire meals in advance. Create a weekly grocery list focused on healthy options, and stock up on vegetables and lean proteins for quick meals.



Remember to keep food safety in mind – freeze meals if you don't plan to eat them within a few days.

3. Making the most of take-away food

Sometimes, take-away or ready-to-eat options are the most practical choice. When you do opt for these, there are ways to make them healthier:

- **Choose carefully:** Look for grilled, steamed or baked dishes instead of fried ones. If you're ordering fast food, consider healthier snacks or sides, such as a side salad or steamed vegetables, to balance your meal.
- **Practice portion control:** Many restaurant portions are oversized, so try ordering less portion or sharing dishes with others. This can help you avoid overeating and reduce the intake of excess calories. You can also pack extra portions as takeaways to manage the portion size and reduce food waste but be sure to store leftovers properly.
- **Compare food labels:** If you're picking up ready-to-eat foods from the store, take a moment to read the labels. Compare the nutritional content of different options and go for those with lower levels of salt, oil and sugar (SOS).



At the end of the day, it's the nutritional value and composition of foods that matter most, not whether they're home-cooked or store-bought. By paying attention to what you eat and making smart choices, you can enjoy the convenience of modern life without sacrificing your family's health. Healthy eating is always within reach – you just need to know where to look and how to make it work for you. PP

An educational collaboration with





5 Ways to Soothe Your Crying Baby

By **Dr Norazlin Kamal Nor**, Consultant Developmental Paediatrician

Crying is the way babies communicate. It signals parents to rush to their baby's side and console them. Even so, being unsure of the reason they cry can further upset your little one, and this can be frustrating for the whole household. In addition, parents may start to doubt their parenting skills if they repeatedly fail to soothe their crying baby.

Reasons for babies to cry

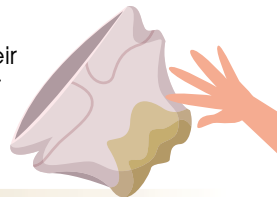
Parents cannot afford to be by their baby's side at all times to cuddle them, so it is okay to let your baby call for your help on their own. A few reasons babies might cry include:

- **Hunger**

With their rapid growth spurts and small stomach size, it is normal for your baby to demand food often. When they do so, their cry will be low-pitched and repetitive.

- **Dirty nappy**

Wet and soiled diapers can irritate their thin, sensitive skin. If left for too long or if the area is not well cleaned, your baby could develop nappy rash, which causes discomfort.



- **Tiredness**

Babies need up to 18 hours of sleep per day. Being repeatedly stimulated by sound, touch, and light can lead to lack of sleep, and inadequate rest can make them cranky.

• Discomfort

Inconveniently placed clothes or bedding tags, or the coarse threads from their own clothing, could rub on their skin constantly and cause annoyance, as could clothes that fit too tightly.

• Illness

Babies often cry when they are sick, and very sick babies may have a high-pitched cry. Look out for other signs of illness, such as fever, vomiting, rash, weakness, poor feeding, restless sleep, and not being active as usual.



• Colic

This term refers to excessive and inconsolable crying in a healthy and well-fed baby, which is common in the first three months of life. Infantile colic generally resolves on its own as babies grow older.

The rule of 3's in recognising infantile colic

Crying for:

- more than 3 hours a day
- more than 3 days a week
- more than 3 weeks

5 ways to soothe crying babies

Once the reason for crying has been ascertained, the next step is to come to your baby's aid. Comforting your baby will not only strengthen the bond between you and your child but also foster a sense of trust and make your little one cry less frequently over time. Here are five tips to practice:

1. Address the cause

Most of the time, the solutions are straightforward. Removing the cause of their distress by feeding, changing the diapers, or rocking them to sleep will easily soothe and quieten your baby.

2. Provide a comfortable environment

Since babies spend most of their time lying down, their clothes should be made of soft and breathable material like cotton, not fit too tightly nor too loosely, while the room they sleep in should not be too cold, too warm, or overly bright.



3. Bond with your baby

Holding and massaging your baby can sometimes stop the crying. Skin-to-skin contact has been proven to help babies and parents relax. One of the techniques to improve bonding between parent and child is Kangaroo Mother Care, which is done by holding your baby on your chest to let both of your skins touch.



4. Use the 5S's strategy

Shushing, swaddling, swinging, sucking on a thumb or breast, and being held on their **side or stomach** remind babies of their time in the womb and provide them with a sense of calm.



5. Seek help

When all of the above fails, parents should consult physicians immediately, especially when their baby cries for far too long and has poor feeding or other visible symptoms. If the baby is not physically unwell and you are feeling overly stressed or tired by your baby's crying, you can ask someone to take over the care temporarily. Having a break is important to maintain both the baby's and parents' health and safety.

Parents will be more adept at handling their crying baby as their experience grows. Knowing the various reasons why your little one might cry and applying the right techniques to calm them can save you a lot of trouble and bolster your confidence as parents. PP

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

Social and Emotional Development in Adolescence

By **Dr Thiyagar Nadarajaw**, Consultant Paediatrician & Adolescent Medicine Specialist



Adolescence is a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. Many parents dread this period, as it is when their once cheerful and energetic child may turn into a moody and unpredictable teenager. Hence, understanding how their social and emotional development progresses at this stage will make parents able to relate to their adolescent's struggles and give valuable insights.

What drives these changes?

Adolescents undergo rapid psychosocial development, which affects the way they think and make decisions. This is driven by the surge of sex hormones at the time of puberty. The fluctuation of oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone is responsible for regulating their moods, besides bringing about physical changes and secondary sexual characteristics. These transformations, coupled with peer and societal pressures, influence their body image and self-esteem.

What are the common changes?

Every adolescent is unique and has different ways of adapting to their new body and environment. Some familiar social and emotional changes they showcase may include:



- Developing a new taste for fashion, personal appearance, music, and other subcultures. A few will turn to celebrities as their role models and imitate their styles.
- Forming stronger friendships with their peers and getting involved in romantic relationships. These may cause them to spend less time with their family and become more private with their personal lives.
- Having intense and unpredictable moods that

make them easily irritable, sad, and frustrated. Extreme mood swings, however, can point to mood disorders, which are quite common among adolescents.

- Seeking autonomy and responsibility as part of their search for identity. They have a strong need to make their own choices, but without supervision, this can lead to some risk-taking behaviours.

How can parents be supportive?

It is not easy for parents to get accustomed to these changes. Even so, they cannot afford to let their adolescent go astray without proper guidance; therefore, these few approaches should be put into use:

- **Be a role model:** Adolescents observe the way their parents interact and solve conflicts. If you want your teenager to behave in a way that reflects positive values, like being kind and responsible, you should model these values in yourself.
- **Communicate effectively:** Encourage your adolescent to open up about the challenges they face by providing a safe space. Avoid being judgmental about their personal choices and show interest in what and who they spend their time with.
- **Educate:** Adolescents are often embarrassed to ask their parents certain questions. This way, they might look for answers from unreliable sources, so always take the initiative to discuss their studies, hobbies, relationships, and troubles in life and share your thoughts whenever possible.



- **Stay vigilant:** Their quest for autonomy might lead them to make poor choices and practise high-risk behaviours like cigarette smoking, substance use, playing truant, and aggression. Always keep an eye on their behaviours, and also ask for feedback from their teachers and peers.
- **Interfere when needed:** If you sense something is wrong with the way your adolescent is behaving, step in calmly. Try to work out the problems and solutions by communicating with them in a respectful way, and seek professional help if the problems are beyond your capabilities.

As parents, watching your child mature into an adolescent is definitely a sombre experience. Nevertheless, this is the perfect time to lay the foundations for a healthy and meaningful adult life by making impactful changes in your teenager's social and emotional development. So, parents should always do their best to guide their adolescent throughout this period. PP

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



LET'S CONTINUE TO DO OUR PART AND PROTECT OURSELVES, OUR FAMILY, AND OUR COMMUNITY FROM COVID-19.

SCAN ME



Please scan the QR code to find out if you and your family are eligible for a booster vaccine and where you can get one.

A community message by



Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd 197801003134 (40131-T)
Level 10 & 11, Wisma Averis (Tower 2),
Bangsar South, No. 8, Jalan Kerinchi,
59200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: 603-2281 6000 Fax: 603-2281 6388
PP-CMR-MYS-0037-09MARCH2023

Image used is for illustration purposes only



Positive Parenting

Malaysia



Initiated in the year 2000 by the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA), the Positive Parenting programme offers expert advice and guidance by key healthcare professionals from various Professional Bodies in the field of maternal health, family wellness, child health, growth and development, nutrition and teen issues.

We understand the challenges parents face in raising a child, and it is our vision to bridge the gap between the healthcare professionals and parents to empower you with unbiased, accurate and practical information. Together, we can give our children the best start in life to ensure a brighter future.

Key Activities

Positive Parenting Guide



Published quarterly, it is distributed through healthcare professionals in private and government clinics and hospitals, selected kindergartens and confinement centres nationwide, and designated retail partners in Klang Valley.

Website



Our one-stop digital portal with hundreds of articles, infographics, recipes and our E-Guide version.

Social Media

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to gain access to the latest parenting tips, videos, infographics and updates.



ParentFlix

We are now on YouTube and Spotify as ParentFlix! Watch our educational videos and tune in to our informative podcasts on these two platforms.



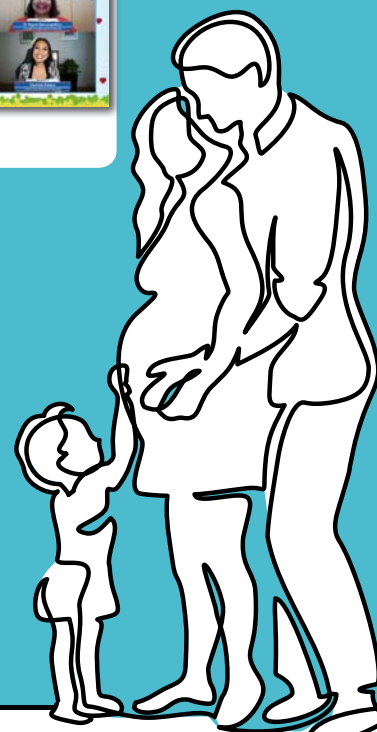
Joy of Parenting

Participate in our forums, dialogues and seminars – whether online or face-to-face. And don't miss out on our contests and giveaways – awesome prizes are up for grabs!



Educational Press Articles

Look out for our Positive Parenting columns every fortnight and monthly in Malaysia's leading English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese newspapers.



~ Our Collaborating Expert Partners ~



Positive Parenting is a non-profit community education initiative. Companies wishing to support us or wish to collaborate with the programme are welcome to contact the Programme Secretariat.

Tel: 03 56323301 E-mail: parentcare@mypositiveparenting.org Website: www.mypositiveparenting.org

[f positiveparentingmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/positiveparentingmalaysia) [i mypositiveparenting](https://www.instagram.com/mypositiveparenting) [y parentflix](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) [s ParentFlix Podcast](https://www.spotify.com/artist/parentflix)