

IAAP-UK Celebrates the International Day of Families in the United Kingdom

Oliver Davies
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London, United Kingdom - In its annual celebration of International Day of Families, UPF held a panel on parenting and child development.

The online event took place on May 15, 2021. The moderators were Robin Marsh and Margaret Ali, the secretary general and the director of UPF-UK, respectively.

The four guest speakers gave their insights into the essential role of parents, raising children, and early child development.

Educator and researcher Dr. Carole Ulanowsky ([video link](#)) spoke of sustaining the family through challenging times. She has a PhD in the intergenerational study of motherhood and is a coordinator for the science and research group What About the Children.



Dr. Ulanowsky offered some insights from the vast quantity of research she has accessed. "The nature/nurture debate has been settled. It's both," she said, explaining that children are predisposed to react to certain developmental environments and stress situations and that these early stimuli leave lasting epigenetic changes in the child.

"Loving and stable relationships with familiar carers, especially in the first 30 months, is the single most important factor for a strong foundation," Dr. Ulanowsky said. She emphasized the positive effect that strong families have on society and how critical it is for parents to understand how essential their role is.

Frederick Clarke ([video link](#)), the founder of the NGO Mighty Men of Valor, spoke about why fathers matter. His group addresses the often-overlooked role of fathers and has launched campaigns to educate

and empower men to take strong, responsible roles in the family,.

Men play a crucial role in tackling issues like domestic violence, pornography, absenteeism and education, Mr. Clarke said. Challenging the negative stereotypes of men in the UK, he said, "We notice that, if men care about their children, their partners and their community, it can change their behavior."

Dr. Nicola Bailey ([video link](#)), a specialist in parenting and family support, started her presentation by asking the parents in the audience about the challenges that they have faced as parents. She addressed the transition into parenthood and the importance and urgent need to support new parents.

Dr. Bailey noted that one of the major things that new mothers experience is the sudden restriction of choice and freedoms. While we appreciate the changes that one goes through during adolescence, we often overlook the even more drastic changes that a mother will experience. Dr. Bailey noted that when we meet an expectant mother, we tend to ask about the baby, but she advised us to ask about the parents too, so they feel seen and heard. "Only when they love and value themselves, will they be ready to be a positive parent," she said.

Teuta Avdyli ([video link](#)) is a best-selling author of the books *Born to Stand Out, Not to Fit In* and *Family Legacy of Love*. From her experience of bringing up two children, she advocates for a strong, confident, and resilient approach with a clear, loving structure, traditional notion, and high parental expectation.

Citing several notable sources, Ms. Avdyli showed the enormous impact that a mother has on her children as well as the strong drive of mothers to love their children. She offered practical and simple steps for raising children, reporting on the effect these steps have on the child - as well as on the parent.

"Let us hold hands together and become one. Let us be alert, encourage, and help our children to flourish and reach their full potential to become the future of tomorrow." She ended by asking the audience, "What would you like your children to remember you by?"

After question and answers, Dr. Oliver Davies ([video link](#)) of UPF closed the session by highlighting the importance of a family-centered society in which the ideal of healthy, happy families is a priority for all. He warned against the normalization of incomplete families. Although some children grow up without two parents and some parents must raise children unsupported, this should not be considered acceptable for the sake of inclusivity, he said.

Dr. Davies thanked the speakers for their amazing contributions not just to parents but also to society - "building society, teaching people about relationships, what it means to be human."



Backgrounder:

The Universal Peace Federation's co-founders, Father and Mother Moon, promote the family as a sacred institution in which people first learn what it means to love. Families provide children and parents the experience of living for the sake of others, loving different types of character and the art of compromise and negotiation.

It is natural for such love within the family to be extended to wider relatives, which in turn extend to the community, society, and nations.