

PROGRAM

Improving Outcomes

Biennial Meeting of the AEPC
Neurodevelopmental and Psycho-
social Care Working Group

Auditorium B, University Children's Hospital Zurich
15th – 17th of April 2026

UNIVERSITY
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
ZURICH



ASSOCIATION FOR EUROPEAN
PAEDIATRIC AND CONGENITAL
CARDIOLOGY

Improving Outcomes

Biennial Meeting of the AEPC Neurodevelopmental
and Psychosocial Care Working Group

August-Forel-Strasse 51, 8008 Zürich

Auditorium B

15th – 17th of April 2026

**Join us to explore innovative interventions supporting
children with congenital heart disease.**

Children with congenital heart disease (CHD) are at increased risk for neurodevelopmental issues, particularly in executive functioning—critical for academic success and overall well-being. Despite growing recognition of these difficulties, effective, targeted interventions remain limited.

This conference will explore promising strategies to support neurodevelopmental, behavioral and mental health outcomes—we will examine interventions being implemented in the population of children with CHD but also those that have been successfully implemented in other populations, covering a wide range of ages and approaches.

Sessions will cover both conceptual frameworks and practical approaches to complex interventions, with insights from researchers, clinicians, and stakeholders.

Learn. Connect. Translate.

Programm

Wednesday April 15th

Preconference workshop

Place and Time: Research building Course rooms: 14.00-17.00

- 1) **From Concept to Care: Developing and Testing an Intervention for Children with CHD:**

Alenka Schmid and team

 [registration](#)

- 2) **Nursing intervention: family centered care for cardiac patients:**

Chantal Etter and team

 [registration](#)

- 3) **Prenatal mental health screening:**

Johanna Calderon and Julie Deninotti

 [registration](#)

- 4) **Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement:**

ECHDO (European congenital heart disease organization) and Cornelia Hagmann

 [registration](#)

Thursday April 16th

Early life: opportunities and challenges

08.30	Registration	13.30	Poster Pitches
09.00	Opening and welcome Bea Latal & Oliver Kretschmar	14.00	Needs and wishes of parents during the first year of life Parent perspective, Zurich
09.10	Welcome from AEPC Working group Katya de Groote	14.30	Posttraumatic stress in parents: outcomes and interventions Markus Landolt, Zurich
09.15	Introduction Bea Latal, Zurich	15.00	Family -centered care in the NICU Irmgard Müller-Gorman, Zurich
09.30	Brain development and windows for modulation Marie Brossard-Racine, Montreal	15.30	Coffee break
10.00	Neurodevelopmental follow-up in Europe: Recommendations and current best practice Johanna Calderon, Paris		Novel interventions in early childhood
10.30	Coffee break	16.00	Music intervention: The BOND study Cornelia Hagmann, Zurich
11.00	Barriers and facilitators in the prenatal care of a family with a child with CHD Emanuela Valsangiacomo, Zurich	16.20	Motor intervention: the PRONE project Beatrice Desnous, Marseille
11.30	Prenatal Intervention Strategies for the brain in CHD Shabnam Peyvandi, UCSF	16.40	Strong-CHiLD: Parent-child interaction as a key mechanism for the long-term positive development of children with CHD Raphael Oberhuber, Linz
12.00	Partnering with parents and patients ECHDO and Herznetz		
12.30	Lunch		

Friday April 17th

School age and adolescents: Windows of opportunities

09.00	The Zurich palliative care concept for complex heart disease Eva Bergsträsser, Zürich	11.40	E-Fit Heart: How to improve motivational strategies during coaching Alenka Schmid, Zurich
09.30	Cardiopsychiatric and -psychological care of the child with congenital heart disease and its family: a lifespan approach. Phaedra Lehmann, Zurich	12.00	Poster Pitches
10.00	My journey as an adolescent heart patient Niki Zehnder, Schwyz	12.30	Lunch
10.30	Coffee break	14.00	Psychosocial interventions during transition Phillip Moons, Leuven
Novel interventions for school-age children		14.30	Effective interventions for adults with CHD Edward Callus, Milan
11.00	Yoga for Little Hearts: a parent-child yoga intervention targeting attention in CHD Anne Gallagher, St. Justine Montreal	14.45	Neurodevelopmental Follow-up Survey for AEPC Centers Adam James, Crumlin
11.20	European Multi-center Randomised Controlled Trial QUALI NEUROREHAB Johanna Calderon, Paris	15.00	Discussion and Outlook Frank Casey/Oliver Kretschmar, Zurich
		15.30	Get together Apero/Heart choir



Speakers

Eva Bergsträsser MD PhD

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Marie Brossard-Racine OT, PhD

Canada Research Chair in Brain and
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Biennial Meeting of the AEPC neurodevelopmental and psychosocial care working group: Improving outcomes

Location:

Research building
University Children's Hospital Zurich,
Lenggstrasse 30, 8008 Zurich

Date:

- April 15-17th 2026
- 15.4.26: pre-conference workshop

Duration:

- 16. and 17.4. 2026:
2- day conference
- Preconference workshop
15.4.2026 2-5 pm

Registration fees:

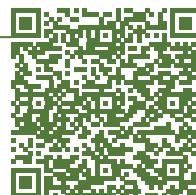
- CHF 300
- CHF 150 for families and patients
- Preconference workshop: CHF 50

Abstract submission:

Please submit a structured abstract (250 maximal word count) via this email: AEPC_Zurich@kispi.uzh.ch
Abstract deadline: Sunday, February 22nd 2026, 5 CET (Swiss local time).

Target Audience:

AEPC and CNOC members,
healthcare professionals working
with pediatric populations, patients
and parents.

Registration**Accommodation:**

Please find below a selection of hotels you can book for the congress:

- Hotel St. Josef
<https://www.st-josef.ch/>
Code: Kongress 2026
- Hotel Opera
<https://www.operahotel.ch/>
By Mail: AEPC Zurich