



Universala Esperanto-Asocio

## International Day of Families: Families and the New Technologies

The Universal Esperanto Association greets the United Nations on the **International Day of Families, May 25, 2021**. The COVID-19 pandemic has put families and family structures in a central position during a period when in many countries personal physical contact is made difficult, the education of children is interrupted, working conditions have been turned upside-down, and too many families are suffering through illness or the loss of family members.

We extend our sentiments of solidarity to all families who have lost family members or whose family life has suffered because of the present extraordinary circumstances.

The pandemic has shown the importance of digital technologies for work, education and communication, speeding up technological change, for example the widespread use of digital platforms, cloud computing, and the aggregation of data and algorithms. These advances have allowed great flexibility in work and education, but have also produced negative effects such as screen fatigue and digital fraud.

And, meanwhile, the so-called digital divide shuts a large part of humankind out of the advantages that technology offers in this difficult time.

Furthermore, working and learning at home while schools are closed has increased the risk of parental exhaustion, which can in turn have a negative effect on children's well-being. Parental exhaustion can be seen as stress related to children's education where available resources fall short of needs. New technologies might help parents fulfil their parental tasks.

Particularly important is parental education, namely services aimed at improving the interactions, behaviours, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes relating to children's education. Parental education is an important key to the well-being of children and families. However, according to the UN [Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#), the idea of parental education remains widely unrecognised by governments.

New technologies can help parents reach information on childhood education, share experience and find support. Also, where parents use technology to augment their children's communication, help children face new challenges, learn with their children and play alongside their children, parental education can help them understand how best to use these technologies.

Such are the experiences of Esperanto speakers who make widespread use of communication technology to communicate at a distance, to substitute for in-person conferences and meetings, and link children from different countries. Through Esperanto, parents can exchange information, experiences and knowledge about childhood education. A good example of such activities are those of the [Grésillon Esperanto Cultural Centre in France](#), which, among other activities, invited families to share in learning and playing together. Also outstanding is the

work of the [International League of Esperanto-speaking Teachers - ILEI](#) and of the Esperanto education hub [edukado.net](#).

We recommend that everyone use the new technologies to educate children better and to improve family life, and use the International Language Esperanto to maintain solidarity not only within families but across the entire human family, which, not only because of the pandemic, is today under extraordinary pressure. May the International Day of Families especially remind us about those families who are suffering because of wars, because of sickness and hunger, and because of difficulties of communication with their sisters and brothers across the world.