

Being a Champion for Dads

Supporting Fathers to be Involved

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Fatherhood Institute

The Fatherhood Institute

- Compiling the evidence base
- Making the evidence available
- Producing policy analysis
- Campaigning for change
- Training and audit services

The Domestic Revolution

British fathers' direct engagement with infants and young children rose 800% between 1975 and 1997 (from 15 minutes to two hours, on average, on a working day)

British fathers in two-parent families now carry out an average of 25% of the family's childcare related activities during the week, and one-third at weekends

68% of men and women (this includes older people) believe the traditional male breadwinner/female homemaker model is a thing of the past - ICM poll (EOC, 2007)

The Costs and Benefits of Active Fatherhood



Evidence and insights to inform the development of policy and practice

A paper prepared by Fathers Direct to inform the DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

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www.fathersdirect.com



Sponsored by:



Outcomes for Children

- better peer relationships
- fewer behaviour problems
- lower criminality and substance abuse
- higher educational / occupational mobility relative to parents'
- more satisfying adult sexual partnerships
- higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction

(Sarkadi, 2008; Flouri, 2005; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004)

Fathers influence mothers....

- Smoking (Bottorff et al, 2006);
- Breastfeeding (Scott et al, 2001),
- Birth experiences (Gibbins & Thomson (2001);
- Mental health (Fisher et al, 2006);
- Quality of relationships with their children (Eiden & Leonard, 1996);

High levels of father involvement are strongly linked with both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with their relationship and with family life (Craig & Sawriker, 2006; Kalmun, 1999);

Supporting these changes

Fatherhood Institute/ICM Poll June 2009

Amongst younger fathers...

Less than half (49%) are happy with their involvement with health visitors -

Only 41% are happy with their involvement with schools

74% think that information provided by services is more geared towards mum than dads

Supporting these changes

Fatherhood Institute/ICM Poll June 2009

Amongst all-age fathers...

77% want to see longer opening hours so they can play a greater role in their child's welfare

Three quarters (75%) want information provided that is relevant to dads and not just mums.

82% want to see staff employed that recognise the role of fathers in children's lives,

5 stages of father inclusiveness

Evaluation of Head Start success in supporting fathers...

Fathers were almost three times as likely to engage with parenting support/education when the service was “mature” in terms of engaging with them.

Raikes, H.H., Summers, J.A., & Roggman, L.A. (2005). Father involvement in Early Head Start programs. *Fathering*, 3(1), 29-58.

5 stages of father inclusiveness

Stage 1: There is nearly exclusive focus on the mother-child dyad. Staff engage with a few fathers and talk about the father if the mother raises the topic.

Stage 2: Importance of fathers' impact on children beginning to be recognised. Father-involvement occurs primarily through male-only activities

Raikes, H.H., Summers, J.A., & Roggman, L.A. (2005). Father involvement in Early Head Start programs. *Fathering*, 3(1), 29-58.

5 stages of father inclusiveness

Stage 3: Conscious policy to include the whole family developed: father enrolled at same time as mother/child, if at all possible; attempts made to inform fathers about the service and encourage their involvement. Men's activities continue with a clearer focus on support for fathering.

Raikes, H.H., Summers, J.A., & Roggman, L.A. (2005). Father involvement in Early Head Start programs. *Fathering*, 3(1), 29-58.

5 stages of father inclusiveness

Stage 5: Fathers are consistently viewed as co-parents, and staff reflect, and help the mothers and fathers to reflect, on how each father contributes to his child's health and development. Special father / male activities might still exist, but are no longer regarded as *the* vehicle for father-involvement. Instead, there is a wide array of programme efforts to include fathers.

Raikes, H.H., Summers, J.A., & Roggman, L.A. (2005). Father involvement in Early Head Start programs. *Fathering*, 3(1), 29-58.

The Dad Test



Self Assessment for father inclusiveness

Aimed at children and family services but can be adapted

Areas for discussion:

- Leadership

- Team

- Environment

- Marketing and communications

- Recruiting Fathers

- Monitoring and evaluation

Dad's Champions



Support the objectives of the Think Fathers campaign

Commit to doing the Dad Test and taking practical steps to become father-inclusive

Encourage and support (other) service providers to do the Dad Test

Spread the word about the importance of 'thinking fathers'

Tell the Fatherhood Institute about the results of your Dad Test

Tell the Fatherhood Institute about your best practice (and others)

Dad's Champions



A regular FREE e-briefing about policy, research and practice

Discounted places at regional events

Free membership of one of our new regional networks

Priority invitation to events aimed at influencing our work and Government policy

Contribute to the Institute's new Annual Fatherhood Report

Public online listing of your agency as a Think Fathers Champion, with optional listing of your contact details and description of your services

www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

