

## 10 TOP TIPS FOR FATHER-INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

### 1) LOOK AT THE WORLD FROM THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

All staff will then HAVE to engage with biological fathers because they'll recognise **how much they matter to children** – including to children who rarely or never see them.

### 2) RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT FATHER-FIGURES

**These guys have huge impact**, but hardly anyone helps them think about their difficult role. You don't have to choose between them and the biological dad. Support them both!

### 3) HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF FATHERS

Don't assume: **investigate**. Value the positive. Challenge the negative – and **be intolerant of fathers' slipping out of children's lives**.

### 4) CARRY OUT A MALE INVOLVEMENT AUDIT

**Audit the dads and men** who use, are touched by, and work in your service(s). Also **audit staff attitudes and practice** in engaging (or not engaging) with dads. Only when you know where you are, can you see where you need to get to.

### 5) REVIEW YOUR CHILD/FAMILY REGISTRATION FORMS

Routine collection of fathers' and father-figures' details – and contacting them systematically - is our **TOP TIP**. Sometimes, when asking mothers for this information, you may need to explore why this is important, and address concerns.

### 6) INVITE DADS PERSONALLY TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

. . . especially **EDUCATIONAL** activities – and follow up regularly if the dads don't show: **write, phone, text**. Include non-resident fathers and ensure **your service is inviting** (are there positive pictures of dads around?) **and accessible** (is it offered at times working dads can make?).

### 7) LIMIT YOUR USE OF THE 'P' WORD!

P is for Parent, and most fathers **don't feel included** when it is used. Whenever possible, say (and write) 'mums and dads' or 'fathers and mothers'.

### 8) TELL DADS HOW THEIR INVOLVEMENT BENEFITS THEIR KIDS

Fathers are most likely to come to your service(s) if they understand why their presence **benefits their children**. (And if you don't know why yourself, find out from <http://www.fathersdirect.com>).

## 9) LEAD FROM THE TOP

This ensures a 'whole team' approach (work with fathers should never be the responsibility of just one staff member) and only succeeds when senior management's expectations are robust, and staff understand **WHY it's important** and the basics of **HOW it's done**. Fathers Direct's Fatherhood Quality Mark (FQM) and training and consultancy can help you achieve this.

## 10) BE INTOLERANT OF FAILURE TO ENGAGE WITH DADS

Take the stance that men have to be involved in assessments and family interventions for the sake of their children; **refuse to accept a referral without reference to the biological father and to any key father-figures**.

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*Fathers Direct is proud to announce its re-launch as the **Fatherhood Institute**. We remain a registered charity (reg. no. 1075104) and continue to:*

- collate and publish international research on fathers, fatherhood and different approaches to engaging with fathers by public services and employers*
- help shape national and local policies to ensure a father-inclusive approach to family policy*
- inject research evidence on fathers and fatherhood into national debates about parenting and parental roles*
- lobby for changes in law, policy and practice to dismantle barriers to fathers' care of infants and children*
- remain one of the UK's leading providers of training, consultancy and publications on father-inclusive practice, for public and third sector agencies and employers.*