

# Just Call Me Dad: Health and Social Benefits to Fathers and their Children

Joseph Fleming,<sup>1</sup> Andrew King<sup>2</sup> and Tara Hunt<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Deakin University

<sup>2</sup>Groupwork Solutions

<sup>3</sup>University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia

In the past 20 years, social change and expectations for both maternal and paternal responsibilities have highlighted the need for services for families to better understand the role of a father in family relationships. In Australia, as well as internationally, there have been many contested understandings about what constitutes 'good fathering' in research, social media and in the political sphere. More specifically, there has also been an emerging trend to understand the challenging task of recruiting and maintaining men's involvement in child and family services programmes, particularly those fathers who are deemed a risk to children and mothers, violent or have been separated from their children. That many child and family/welfare services have exercised dedicated effort to work with fathers is still a relatively recent phenomenon, and has only emerged following criticism that services have been too geared towards working only with mothers. Despite this increasing interest, there is still ongoing need for more research to be undertaken in Australia. An important area of focus is the views of professionals about their perception and engagement of fathers, particularly the views of fathers who are described as being absent from family-based services. The purpose of this article is to report briefly on a study undertaken to examine how child and family welfare workers engage fathers in their work. First, this paper will describe some of the social and health benefits to fathers and their children, focusing on the key role of attachment through play. Research into effective service delivery involving fathers will then be presented, concluding with key practice factors necessary for fathers to be involved in family life.

■ **Keywords:** fathers, parenting, family support services, children

## Introduction

The traditional role of men in society has created a gap in parenting for all fathers, especially those who become divorced or separated. Fathers, more than ever, need to seek out support in order for them to develop their parenting skills and learn ways to nurture and healthily attach to their children. Most importantly, providing a safe environment to learn these skills is necessary to help men achieve their role as an involved father.

Leading researchers, and studies in Australia and internationally, have identified that being an involved father brings with it many health and social benefits to fathers and children (Fagan & Palm, 2004; Fletcher, 2011; King, 2000). When fathers build a strong relationship with their children and others in the family, they are more likely to receive support and caring in return. Healthy family relationships provide the strongest and most important support network a person can have, whether that person is a child or an adult. Research shows that the father's early involve-

ment in a child's life is positively related to early educational achievement, positive peer and familial relationships in adolescence, and protection against mental health problems in the event of parental separation (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2007; Robinson, 2001). The specific health and social benefits of fathers being involved with their children are many and varied.

Not only does involvement in family members' lives improve outcomes for children, but also contributes to the wellbeing of fathers. Research indicates that benefits for fathers include developing secure attachment relationships, resilience in stressful situations and everyday hassles, occupational confidence in job and parenting skills, and social relationships (Burgess, 2009; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004).

---

ADDRESSES FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Dr Joseph Fleming, Deakin University, Princes Highway, Warrnambool, Victoria 3280, Australia. E-mail: Joseph.fleming@deakin.edu.au

While all men will respond to stressors differently, due to a variety of different factors such as family structure and cultural diversity, the benefits of having a father involved in raising his children has become more evident over the past few decades.

## The Important Role that Attachment Plays for Fathers and Children

Sir Richard Bowlby argues that attachment theory now recognises that dual attachment roles are often demonstrated in families with each parent usually providing different proportions of attachment relationship (cited in Newland & Coyl, 2010). According to attachment theory, a secure relationship is essential to healthy development (Bowlby, 1988). In the past, studies of the development of children focused almost exclusively on a child's relationship with their mother. While not a new phenomenon, the role fathers play in a child's development is better understood today than it was 20 years ago (Berk, 2006). Healthy child development relies on the role of both mother and father, whether they be together or apart.

Most importantly, research has shown that the early years of bonding and attachment are crucial to the developing child's brain which sets the blueprint for the rest of their lives. Over the past couple of decades the emphasis has moved from father involvement to father sensitivity. That is, rather than quantity, quality of time spent with a child is the important factor. As children grow and develop, fathers take on added roles of guiding their child's intellectual and social development. Even when a father is 'just playing' with his children, he is nurturing their development. Research suggests that mothers and fathers interact with their children in different ways; fathers tend to play more physically and induce more excitement from their children than do mothers (Fletcher, 2011). Fathers also can instil a sense of confidence to explore within relationships (Ferguson & Gates, 2013). Bowlby states: 'in families where there are two people raising the children, one parent is the highest ranking attachment figure for providing a secure base and haven in times of distress, and the other parent is the highest ranking attachment figure for providing risk and exploration and excitement when times are favourable – different roles but equally significant' (cited in Newland & Coyl, 2010, p. 27). The roles may be influenced by gender, but are not gender specific.

Studies on attachment have shown that there are no differences between fathers' and mothers' potential abilities to develop an attachment to their children (Newland & Coyl, 2010). It has been shown that fathers and mothers in a representative population are equally able to form a secure base for their children (Pruett, 1987). In the first years of a child's life, the mother often holds a child for the purposes of care taking and nurturing, whereas a father holds the child for the purposes of playing (Lamb, 1977). The fathers' interactions are often more active, stimulating, exciting, teasing,

challenging and may even, at times, scare or arouse anxiety in the infant. These experiences serve as an important purpose in children's lives, not just for their immediate care but also for their longer-term development.

Traditionally, attachment theory has emphasised the significance of safety, comfort and security as key factors in a child's development. 'Risk and exploration' are equally important factors and are often undervalued.

Figure 1 highlights that the child's experience of the play and challenge experiences with their father support the development of independence, risk taking and the skills required for development throughout childhood into the larger social world (Paquette, 2004). A key focus in understanding this today is the experience of 'rough and tumble play'.

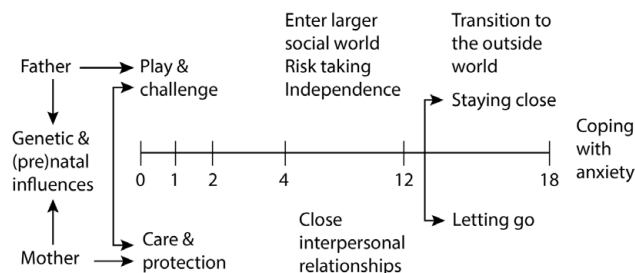
Rough and tumble play is not equivalent to fighting between children. All mammals on the planet, especially the juveniles, have some form of rough and tumble play. In experiments, when rats are deprived of rough and tumble play, they are much more anxious and likely to be socially isolated (Fletcher, 2011). Rough and tumble play:

- may involve wrestling, grappling, kicking and tumbling;
- has few rules;
- can be clearly distinguished as different to fighting;
- involves enjoyment, not anger, as the key emotion;
- involves dominance swapping (different people take turns in 'winning');
- can involve the fathers teaching the skill of winning/losing with effort;
- is connected with the development of emotional self-regulation in children.

Fathers' play with their children seems to promote an active, competitive, autonomous and curious attitude in children that is beneficial to the child's cognitive and social development. It also buffers early separation, stranger and social anxiety (Bogels & Phares, 2008).

While the involvement of fathers has been associated with the rearing of boys, it is equally important for girls. However, while dads may be seen to have natural tendency to play with their children, they need to be more conscious of the important opportunity they have and actively develop more quality play experiences with their children. This suggests there is a key role for health professionals who work with families.

For researchers and other professionals to work effectively with families, it needs to be recognised that fathers can be engaged in a caring and healthy relationships with their children. This is referred to as 'non-deficit perspectives' to fathering, where men take an active role in family life and the care of children (King, 2005). However, some factors exist which can limit fathers' involvement in their child's early years, impairing their ability to be involved in healthy attachments to their children.



**FIGURE 1**  
Different roles of fathers and mothers in their child’s development (from Bogels & Phares, 2008, with permission).

Situations which impair early childhood involvement can include external factors, such as employment (e.g. fly-in-fly-out, Defence Force commitments or professional sport), as well as internal factors, such as mental illness. It is important to recognise that these fathers may need more support and may need to be assessed for their suitability for engagement in intervention. Disengagement and leaving them out of the intervention can increase risk over safety (Scourfield, 2003).

In summary, the evidence from cross-sectional and longitudinal research into infancy, childhood and adolescence suggests that the father has an important and unique role in child development. In general terms, the father’s role can be described as one in which it is undertaken through play, challenge, risk-taking, encouraging independence and, later in development, by helping the child make the transition to the outside world (Paquette, 2004). It is therefore important to encourage fathers to develop strong attachments with their children as it will benefit not only the child but also the father, their relationship and society in general.

### Effective Service Delivery: What Have we Learnt?

There are lots of different kinds of fathers. They may be in a two-parent family, in a step-family, be a full-time, single parent, or have their children with them for some of the time. While parenting can be done by either parent, children have unique experiences with both their fathers and their mothers.

Fathers sometimes only become active caregivers of their children by default or when necessity demands it; such as when the mother is unavailable or through change in employment status (Walmsley, Strega, Brown, Dominelli, & Callahan, 2009). In addition, fathers may genuinely feel unsure about what is expected of them, which is due, in part, to the changing nature and role of fathers and mothers in today’s society (Collier & Sheldon, 2008). The major difference between men’s and women’s experiences in managing these changes is that women more often articulate the changes they face as mothers, while fathers articulate less. This, ultimately, has an impact on their confidence and flexibility.

Family services need to focus on the family’s individual needs to work out the best blend of roles played by the mother and father. Services can be responsive to the needs of fathers by asking them what they already do with their children, and what kinds of assistance they may require from staff and services. It is likely that men will be more suspicious about trusting a large organisation, as they are more likely to prefer a stronger connection to an individual worker whom they respect. It is also important to begin working with those fathers already in contact with the service, as they may be able to assist in recruiting others. Where possible, work in partnership with other services or practitioners who may be already engaged with fathers specifically (Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), 2009).

Group work with fathers has also been shown to have a more positive impact than one-to-one counselling sessions or generic parenting programmes, such as Triple P, on a father’s wellbeing, particularly during times of stress and change in the family structure (King, 2000). Also, there is evidence that there is greater benefit for working in combination with couples than solely with fathers (Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009).

Beyond group-work approaches there are a wide variety of methods that family services and practitioners can do to involve fathers. Table 1 provides a useful overview of engagement strategies, but the list is by no means comprehensive.

Often services are comfortable recruiting fathers, but have trouble understanding how to maximise service impact. Burgess (2009) found that fathers are likely to find parenting interventions more rewarding when workers:

- set out clearly the goals and expectations of any parenting course;
- consult with fathers about their goals for participation in the intervention, and tailor the programme accordingly;
- allow fathers and mothers to own the process for change, rather than the focus being on completing the programme;
- adopt a strengths-based approach which supports the father’s capabilities rather than treating him as a resource;

**TABLE 1**

Engagement strategies.

Context	Strategy	Reflection on the outcome
Safe environments	Where possible, go to where fathers are located on their 'turf'. These could be sporting clubs, gyms, workplaces and other venues even pubs!	Fathering programs are best delivered when they look 'normal' and 'normal' men attend them.
	Organise an event to attract fathers using fliers or other media. Events could be barbecues, family fun days, trips and sporting events. You could use local celebrities with male-friendly themes to attract them to your event.	On your advertising, use logos of local businesses that support your programme. This is a useful strategy especially when the men identify with the location as a culturally safe and appropriate place for them to meet. This is critical especially when working with Aboriginal fathers.
Obtain feedback	Involve the fathers in your services as partners or mentors in your organisation's overall strategic planning.	This is a critical strategy as 70% of fathers will access your programme due to word-of-mouth recommendation. The start-up of new programmes is always a challenge as not many people will be recommending them yet.
	Encourage and support the fathers you are already working with and seek their feedback on the services you are providing.	Road test your plans with a few fathers whom you know from the local community. Always begin the discussion with the statement 'your honest feedback is valued . . .!'
	The mother's ambivalence or resistance is taken seriously.	If your programme mostly works with the primary parent at home during the day (often the mother), ensure that she consents to the contact that you having with the father. Any issues can be discussed in greater detail and her ambivalence or resistance is taken seriously.
Creating relevance	Invite and encourage the children to take part in engaging the fathers.	One of the best ways to promote fathering programmes is through an invitation that the child creates and gives to their dad. Programmes that adopt this approach routinely have a high attendance rate. Children who don't have a father can invite another important male role model in their life. The invitation process needs to be authentic.
	Invite and encourage the mothers to take part in engaging the fathers.	Routinely men report that their first attendance at a fathering programme is due to the mother saying 'you need to go to this!' The involvement of the mothers can be useful as long as there is no conflict in the relationship. This approach can be adversely affected by the parent's prior relationship issues and expectations.
	Mothers (and other fathers) are encouraged to think about the fathers' importance and help to recruit them.	This approach is more likely to be successful as the mothers are not just relaying a message, but are involved in learning about the significant role fathers' play. This approach is likely to invest in whole-of-family changes that will impact on healthy relationships in the long term.
Strong engagement	The father's engagement is requested from the start as expected and important and included in the home visiting.	It is very important to establish clear expectations about what their involvement requires and also what it does not require.
	If the father is not present at a home visit, regularly call them on their mobile to provide feedback and report any rapport-building observations you have made regarding their children.	If they are not present when a home visit occurs, phone them to introduce yourself or provide an update on your last visit (see below). These discussions occur best when the focus is centred on the children and the father clearly understands he is viewed as a resource.
	Workers talk directly to individual fathers before seeking commitment to a parenting course.	It is very important to initiate the development of a strong relationship with new male clients before the programme commences. This initial introduction builds trust, respect and rapport.
	Fathers who don't attend are followed up with a phone call.	This strategy needs to be tailored to the individual situation. It is useful to maintain strong lines of communication so you can regularly ask for feedback about the usefulness of the programme or to follow fathers up if they are not seen for a while.
Adopt a child-centred approach	The benefit to their child is repeatedly emphasized.	This is essential when working with fathers. When the focus is directly on the fathers, the discussion can be more difficult. When the discussion is on their children, men are often more free in sharing their opinions and reflections. This strategy is less likely to work if they view their children in a very dismissive way and cannot recognise that they have needs.
Use a whole-of-programme approach	The whole team seeks to (and is trained to) engage with fathers and build relationships with them (as they should do with mothers).	All of these strategies are vital for the involvement of dads to become a mainstream part of a programme's service delivery. The recognition that dads have a role to play in family life is central for their engagement. Otherwise they can be seen only as a problem. This often minimises resources for change for everyone.

**TABLE 1**  
Continued.

Context	Strategy	Reflection on the outcome
Emphasise inclusion	The team regards the programme as being as much for dads as for mums.	When a programme is commencing, keep your target group as broad as possible to ensure adequate numbers. At some stage it may be essential to have programmes that target specific contexts due to the specific issues the fathers experience. A good definition for many family services is 'our programme supports mums, dads and other important caregivers in children's lives aged 0–8 years'.
	The involvement of fathers is recognised in strategic plans and reported on in funding reports and annual reports.	
	A broad definition of fathers is used that includes uncles, grandfathers, stepfathers, etc., even though different events/programmes may target different cohorts of fathers.	
	Non-traditional fathers, such as gay or bisexual couples, are included as standard practice.	
	Non-resident fathers are engaged with whenever possible.	Within funding constraints, provide a wide range of times in early evening, and weekend timeslots, to see which are best for your community.
	Sessions are provided at flexible times and in appropriate environments.	

- help fathers create a baseline checklist of their involvement activities with their children, so they can see how they are progressing; seek out feedback about the difference it makes within their family.
- remind fathers of upcoming sessions (e.g. using text messaging) and follow up non-attenders;
- introduce 'active' course elements (e.g. video playback, father–child activities) and ability to discuss things in smaller groups, and move around the room;
- create changes of mood/pace within the intervention (e.g. formal/informal; structured/unstructured; discussion/activity);
- include information on fathers' roles in their child's development;
- create opportunities for fathers (and mothers) to reflect on their understandings of gender, masculinity and care, in relation to their own fathers and other influences;
- address couple-relationship issues and gender roles, including the importance of uncles, stepfathers and grandfathers.

This is not meant to be exhaustive list but offers some things that have been learned in practice about involving fathers. In the past decade, many health and welfare services have realised that they can make a big difference to families when they systematically welcome and support fathers.

Services and practitioners can involve fathers effectively, and this has been achieved by a number of agencies in Australia, as well as internationally. A simple change in a service can result in significant numbers of fathers being involved in programmes. One such example in Australia is the Fathers And Schools Together (FAST), which is a literacy programme that focuses on helping schools to bring fathers

more into their children's literacy learning (Fletcher & Silberberg, 2006).

There are significant differences among fathers in their willingness to engage with health practitioners and, being a diverse group, 'one size' does not fit all fathers, so a local approach needs to be part of an effective model of service delivery. Effective service delivery with fathers will only work if the fathers are genuinely involved and report that they feel connected to the service. The ideas listed are suggestions and should be used where appropriate. The emphasis is on having and promoting a hands-on responsibility for fathers.

### Importance of Having a 'Hands-on' Responsibility

Fathers can not only influence their children through the quantity, type and quality of the father–child interactions, but also through the emotional and physical support they can provide to the mother or partner, including economic support and domestic labour (for example, childcare). We refer to this as 'hands-on' responsibility.

For fathers to achieve a 'hands-on' responsibility for their child's development requires effective engagement strategies to not only invite fathers into services, but also keep them there in the long term. Relationships between parents and professionals of all kinds play a more prominent role during the period of early childhood development than at any other time in a child's life (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). The availability of both private and public services that are external to the home environment provides an opportunity to engage with parents. Creating a culture of father involvement in service delivery can be a long-term process, but also one which is beneficial.

Some of the service-related barriers identified in a recent research project on fathers' involvement in services and programmes (Fleming, 2010) include:

- operating times of the agency or service (usually 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.);
- practitioners' lack of knowledge or skills of how to involve fathers, especially with vulnerable families;
- fathers who did not show up for appointments perceived by practitioners as disinterested; and
- working with the mothers and the children seen as core business, fathers as a parent adjunct or 'third wheel' (see Cosson & Graham, 2012).

Fleming (2010) also identified that while practitioners were grappling with the practice issue on how to involve fathers, they were also very keen to work with fathers in their service. Practice research suggests that fathering is influenced by a variety of factors (Robson, 2006); and if practitioners are aware of these factors, they are in a better position to identify some of the barriers, or likely problems, fathers experience when they encounter a particular service or services.

The transition to parenthood is a major life event that affects all aspects of psychosocial functioning (see King, 2012). Only recently has it been acknowledged that this transition for men into the role of a father has its own challenges as well as rewards. For example, researchers have identified that their partner's pregnancy is the most stressful time for men undergoing the transition to parenting (Condon, Boyce, & Corkindale, 2004). Professionals are crucial for meeting the needs of fathers during this transition and also the parenting journey.

### **Personal Beliefs Impact on Practitioners' Engagement of Fathers**

Having an involved father has obvious benefits to children. Recent media coverage on fathers identified the clear benefits of fathers being involved in a child's life, particularly in the early stages of development, by providing love, support and comfort (Roberts, 2012). We can probably also agree that fathers are important because they help to teach children values and lessons in solving life's challenges and problems. Fathers also serve as role models in their child's life, which can affect how well their children relate to peers and adults outside the home (Allen & Daly, 2007).

Research has demonstrated that fathers have assumed more childcare responsibilities, and hours spent with children are converging for both men and women (Pruett, 2000). Despite this reality, professionals can still find it difficult to involve fathers. This is primarily because of the, often false, assumption by some practitioners that 'they know how to include fathers'.

Some of the personal factors that may prevent the inclusion of fathers include:

- The practitioner's own family of origin can subtly frame personal attitudes and beliefs about fathers (memory of their father being physically or emotionally absent).
- Traditional professional education and curriculum has tended to omit content about the significance of fathers and how to work with them in practice (Walmsley et al., 2009).
- Identification with fathers is potentially more difficult because frontline health and human service occupations are female-dominated professions (Garfield & Issaco, 2006).

Despite these factors, many services are taking a proactive stance and providing staff training in how to include fathers in their work. This has mainly been driven by the growth and development in research, education and training available for professionals to develop their skills with fathers, including nationally funded studies on fathering, self-help websites for fathers and recent literature by parenting experts directed at fathers (Ferguson & Gates, 2013).

Although the research on fathers in the professional literature is still relatively sparse in comparison to that concerning mothers, there does exist innovative and helpful material for both beginning and seasoned practitioners. In order to support involved fathering, we must first acknowledge some key assumptions on father inclusion. These are:

- most fathers want to be effective parents;
- parenting experience for either mother or father is a highly complex and challenging role;
- by including fathers it conveys a message that we have positive expectations of them and they, in turn, respond by being involved and aspire to being the best fathers they can be; and
- fathers will require support from the wider environment, external to the family (Tiedje & Darling-Fisher, 2003).

Furthermore, some researchers have even argued that fathering and fatherhood are greatly influenced by family and community factors in addition to the mother (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). A practitioners awareness of their own interactions with fathers is the first step towards supporting involved fathering.

The following questions are meant to be a guide to self-assessment as a practitioner on interactions with fathers:

- How do you acknowledge the presence of a father on your first interaction and do you include fathers in the conversation when both caregivers are present?
- What is your body language saying that will indicate inclusion?
- Do you have eye contact with the father or is it directed at the mother/other caregiver?

- Do you include fathers in discussions about their children or respond to questions about their child by the father?
- What are your own beliefs about fathers and their ability to engage in child care tasks?

Most importantly, fathers need clear information. Research shows that often they do not see a defined role for themselves in plans and will assume that 'parent' actually means 'mother' (Daniel & Taylor, 2001).

## Conclusion

In summary, there can be no doubt that there has been a dramatic shift in expectations for both mothers and fathers over the past two decades, which has resulted in services being in 'catch-up mode' to include fathers. These shifts have been brought about by rapid, unprecedented changes to society in which we live and work. Research into the family system indicates that to enact change, services need to engage with men, women and children independently, but also as a whole.

At its foundation, parenting is a process involving both men and women, but for the most part there has existed a gap in the practice theory about how this can be achieved. Although most agencies and services will have father inclusiveness in their policy and procedures or strategic planning, these intentions are not always followed through.

The most effective method of supporting fathers begins with the professional. For some professionals they may already be achieving the goal of involving fathers, for others more reflection may be required. What we have learned so far about working with fathers is simply the importance of keeping the dialogue active and robust. This paper has provided some emerging trends from the available research on including fathers.

Although it is not meant to be prescriptive, this paper has sought to highlight some key issues in relation to how this work can be achieved. It acknowledges that there are still issues that need to be addressed further, such as the need to develop better ways to engage and work with vulnerable groups, and cultural and sexual diversity. This work needs to build upon the current knowledge base about fathers and father-inclusive practices, primarily through ongoing dialogue with professionals, fathers and mothers alike.

## References

- Allen, S., & Daly, K. (2007). *The effects of father involvement: An updated research*. Ontario, Canada: Centre for Families, Work, and Wellbeing, University of Guelph.
- Berk, L. E. (2006). Emotional development. In L. Berk (ed.) *Child development* (7th ed., pp. 428–429). Boston: Pearson Publishing.
- Bogels, S., & Phares, V. (2008). Fathers' role in the etiology, prevention and treatment of child anxiety: A review and new model. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 28(4), 539–558.

- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory*. London: Routledge.
- Burgess, A. (2009). *Fathers and parenting interventions: What works? Preliminary research findings and their application*. London: The Fatherhood Institute.
- Collier, S., & Sheldon, S. (2008). *Fragmenting fatherhood: A socio-legal study*. Oxford: Hart.
- Condon, J., Boyce, P., & Corkindale, C. (2004). The first-time fathers study: A prospective study of mental health and wellbeing of men during the transition to parenthood. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 38(1–2), 56–64.
- Cosson, B., & Graham, E. (2012). 'I felt like a third wheel': Fathers' stories of exclusion from the 'parenting team'. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(2), 121–129.
- Cowan, P., Cowan, C., Pruett, M., Pruett, K., & Wong, J. (2009). Promoting fathers' engagement with children: Preventive interventions for low-income families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 71, 663–679.
- Daniel, B., & Taylor, J. (2001). *Engaging with fathers: Practice issues for health and social care*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2007). *Every parent matters*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FaHCSIA]. (2009). *Father inclusive practice guide*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from [http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/father\\_inclusive\\_practice.pdf](http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/father_inclusive_practice.pdf)
- Doherty, W., Kouneski, E., & Erickson, M. (1998). Responsible fathering: An overview and conceptual framework. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(2), 277–293.
- Fagan, J., & Palm, G. (2004). *Fathers and early childhood programmes*. Clifton Park, New York: Thomson (Delmar Learning).
- Ferguson, H., & Gates, P. (2013). Early intervention and holistic, relationship-based practice with fathers: Evidence from the work of the Family Nurse Partnership. *Child and Family Social Work Journal*, 1–10 (published online). DOI: 10.1111/cfs.12059.
- Fleming, J. (2010). The absence of fathers in child and family welfare practice. PhD Thesis, Monash University, Victoria, Australia. Retrieved from <http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/523136>
- Fletcher, R. (2011). *The dad factor: How the father–baby bond helps a child for life*. Warriewood, New South Wales: Finch Publishing.
- Fletcher, R., & Silberberg, S. (2006). Involvement of fathers in primary school activities. *Australian Journal of Education*, 50, 29–39.
- Garfield, C., & Issaco, A. (2006). Fathers and the child well visit. *Pediatrics*, 117(4), 637–645.
- King, A. (2000). Working with fathers: The non-deficit perspective. *Children Australia*, 25(3), 23–27.
- King, A. (2005). The quiet revolution amongst men: Developing the practice of working with men in family relationships. *Children Australia*, 30(2), 33–37.

- King, L. (2012). Hiding in the pub to cutting the cord? Warwick Knowledge Centre. Retrieved from <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/knowledge/culture/fatherhood>.
- Lamb, M. E. (1977). Father–infant and mother–infant interaction in the first year of life. *Child Development*, 48, 167–181.
- Lamb, M., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. (2004). The role of the father. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (4th ed., pp. 222–271). Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.
- Newland, L., & Coyl, D. (2010). Fathers' role as attachment figures: An interview with Sir Richard Bowlby. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gecd20>
- Paquette, D. (2004). Theorizing the father–child relationship: Mechanisms and developmental outcomes. *Human Development*, 47, 193–219.
- Pleck, J., & Masciadrelli, B. (2004). Paternal involvement by U.S. residential fathers: Levels, sources and consequences. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (4th ed., pp. 222–271). Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.
- Pruett, K. (1987). *The nurturing father*. New York: Warner Books.
- Pruett, K. (2000). *Father-need*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Roberts, E. (2012). Fathers play such an important role. Let's not keep mum about dads. *The Observer*, 23 December. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/23/fathers-important-role>
- Robinson, B. (2001). *Fathering from the fast lane: Practical ideas for busy dads*. Australia: Finch.
- Robson, S. (2006). Parent perspectives on services and relationships in two English early years centres. *Early Child Development and Care*, 176(5), 443–460.
- Scourfield, J. (2003). *Gender and child protection*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Tiedje, L., & Darling-Fisher, C. (2003). Promoting father-friendly healthcare. *The American Journal of Maternal /Child Nursing*, 28(6), 350–357.
- Walmsley, C., Strega, S., Brown, L., Dominelli, L., & Callahan, M. (2009). More than a playmate, less than a co-parent: Fathers in the Canadian BSW Curriculum. *Canadian Social Work Review / Revue canadienne de service social* 26(1), 73–96.

