

Fatherhood

Research Bulletin

Australian Fatherhood Research Network Bulletin 36 October 2016

Father of the year 2016



The Bulletin is produced by A/Prof Richard Fletcher (editor), Dr Elaine Bennett, Dr Elisabeth Duursma, Dr Jacqui McDonald, Dr Jennifer StGeorge & Associate Prof Campbell Paul, (Editorial Board) and Jaime Wroe. We acknowledge the support of The Family Action Centre, Faculty of Health and Medicine, The University of Newcastle



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NEWS

SMS4dads moves into a new phase

SMS4dads will continue into 2017. Fathers-to-be or new dads can enrol at any time before the birth and after the birth until the baby is 3 months old. Just go to www.sms4dads.com and sign up for the messages. Once enrolled dads receive text messages until their baby is 12 months. The results of the feasibility study are now being analysed but here is one comment that a dad posted after completing SMS4dads.

"The best SMS's were the ones asking how I was going. At one stage I was really struggling and received a call-back from PANDA [Perinatal Anxiety and Distress Australia] which basically saved my relationship with my wife and child, as I was getting severely depressed, anxious and stressed. I've since found help and am now back on track. Without getting the push from SMS4dads to get help I don't like to think of where I could have ended up. Thank you for this fantastic program."

FOR MUMS TOO

SMS4dads is expanding to send parallel messages to mothers in two projects, one in regional Queensland and one in the Hunter valley, NSW.

Queensland:

With funding from the National Perinatal Depression Initiative and *beyondblue*, the Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and the University of Newcastle Family Action Centre are examining the feasibility of using smart phone text messages (SMS) to deliver mental health promotion and prevention messages, for women diagnosed with perinatal mental illness, and their partners. The project will be based at Townsville and Darling Downs Hospitals. The messages will address:

- the parent-infant relationship
- the co-parenting relationship
- self-care for parents

For further information contact: Catherine.Rawlinson@health.qld.gov.au

Hunter Valley NSW:

SMS4dads&mums will enrol fathers and mothers in the Hunter Valley after the birth to receive SMS messages especially focused on build-ing the parenting team in the early years. The project, which is funded by *beyondblue*, is developing a suite of multi-media resources to support the texts. For further information contact Chief Investigator Dr Chris May:

chris.may@newcastle.edu.au

PUBLICATIONS

Fletcher, R., May, C., Lambkin, F-K, Gemmill, A., Cann, W., Nicholson, J.M., Rawlinson, C., Milgrom, J., Hight, N., Foureur, M., Bennett, E., & Skinner, G. (2016). **SMS4dads: Providing information and support to new fathers through mobile phones – a pilot study.** *Advances in Mental Health.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/18387357.2016.1245586>

O'Brien, A. P., McNeil, K. A., Fletcher, R., Conrad, A., Wilson, A. J., Jones, D., & Chan, S. W. (2016). **New Fathers' Perinatal Depression and Anxiety-Treatment Options: An Integrative Review.** *American Journal of Men's Health.* doi:10.1177/1557988316669047 <http://jmh.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/10/06/1557988316669047>

Professionals interested in helping publicise SMS4dads are encouraged to contact the Chief Investigator Dr Richard Fletcher:
Richard.Fletcher@newcastle.edu.au

ON THE WEB

Father of the year

You might wonder why we have such an award (yes there is one for mothers) and what it tells us about how fathering is going in Australia. Here are some of the awards for 2016.



The Governor of New South Wales, The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), is the **2016 Australian Father of the Year**. "The Governor has certainly excelled as a father and in his career, and has played an exceptionally important role in our nation's defence forces. This Award recognises him as an exceptional male role model to so many people across Australia."

Go to: <http://bit.ly/2dXxUno>



Terry Mitropoulos was named **Victorian Father of the Year 2016** after he was nominated by his son Jonah, 12. The 41-year-old husband and father was diagnosed with brain tumours and told by doctors to fear the worst. He has had 13 major operations to his brain and spine.

Go to: <https://fathersdaycouncil.org.au/>



Community Father of the Year Mr Halder is a father to two adult sons, Nathan, 35, and Mark, 33. He has also been a fatherly figure to thousands of children through his charity work in Bangladesh. He established H.E.L.P Bangladesh in 1990 to provide children with food, accommodation, education and medical care.

Go to: <http://bit.ly/2eS3XUw>



Queensland father of the Year Gary Prior has seven children of his own and he has fostered four nephews and nieces. Aside from his parenting duties Mr Prior volunteers to teach Indigenous culture in schools, helps to run a juvenile detention mentoring program, and works to protect sea turtles from introduced species.

Go to: <http://ab.co/2csC8IF>

Scheme to help dads re-build relationships with children affected by domestic abuse



A scheme on Anglesey (UK) which helps fathers re-build relationships with their children that've been affected by domestic abuse is now being extended across into other parts of North Wales.

The Caring Dads programme claims it has stopped a number of children going into care.

The scheme is expanding to help dads in Gwynedd develop healthy father-child relationships, so their children can continue to live safely at home within the family.

"So far, dozens of children have been removed from the Child Protection Register and have not needed to be placed in local authority care. Families stay together.". And "The dads come from across the spectrum. Participants have included a homeless man and a university-educated, professionally qualified father".

- Paul Jones, programme leader and therapeutic social worker

PROGRAMS AND FATHER INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Professional opportunity to work with fathers

The Walking with Dads (WWD) trial program is a specific response to fathers or father figures who are known to Child Safety and who also perpetrate domestic and family violence. The program has elements of both 'father inclusion' and 'perpetrator accountability' for fathers (or father figures) where domestic and family violence exists. Engagement with men who use violence in their personal relationships is undertaken with the aim of keeping women and children safe.

This regional program role offers the chance to directly support and build capacity of Service Centres and the local community through:

- Promoting a domestic violence informed approach to child protection practice;
- Improving the inclusion and quality of work with fathers in child protection work; and
- Achieving safety, well-being and connection for families and children to increase the opportunity for children to

Title:	Program Officer (Walking with Dads)
Classification:	AO5
Business unit:	<i>Caboolture and Gympie/Sunshine Coast CSSCs</i>
Service area:	North Coast Child Safety
Location:	<i>Caboolture and Gympie/Sunshine Coast</i>
Salary per annum:	\$76,478 - \$83,126 (excludes annual leave loading and employer superannuation contribution)
Employment type:	<i>Full-time</i>
Job duration:	<i>Temporary 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017</i>

CONFERENCES

The Future of Fatherhood: What's next in fathering practice and research?



The Centre for Research on Men and Masculinities (University of Wollongong) is hosting a two-day conference titled The Future of Fatherhood: What's next in fathering practice and research? This conference will bring together researchers, practitioners, and those interested in fathering to explore fathering practice and research. What will the future of father research look like? What impact do fathers have? How can fathers be engaged in children's lives? How do particular groups of men negotiate and experience parenting? How does fathering intersect with masculinity? How is fathering shaped by political, cultural, or institutional forces?

The conference will be held on November 7-8, 2016 on the campus of the University of Wollongong. Abstracts close on September 9.

For more information, go to <http://www.uowblogs.com/cromm/conference/>.

RESEARCH

Incidence of and interventions for paternal perinatal depression

*FRB Comment: Although there is increasing recognition that fathers can experience depression during the perinatal period, little attention has been given to developing father-specific interventions that address their particular needs. A recent meta-analysis has confirmed that the transition to fatherhood places men at greater risk of developing depression, while other research has highlighted the need for interventions for fathers to be developed and evaluated. **Cameron and colleagues'** meta-analysis of 74 studies estimates that 8.4% of men experience depression in the pre and postnatal periods. This rate is almost twice the rate of depression in the adult male population, and is likely to be underestimated as the study excluded articles that recruited men only after their partner had been diagnosed with depression. **O'Brien and colleagues** conducted an integrative review of the literature finding that very few interventions address the specific needs of fathers who are experiencing perinatal depression. However, the literature on the treatment of men's depression does suggest that interventions need to incorporate father-inclusive and father-specific models of care that encourage men to seek help, offer flexible delivery alternatives that accommodate men's work schedules, and that provide an informal environment for men to network and share their concerns. **Takehara and colleagues** describe a study protocol for a randomised controlled trial in which fathers in the intervention group will receive a booklet written for men covering topics ranging from childbirth, parent communication, paternal depression and tips on combining childcare and work. Outcome measures will include fathers' and mothers' postnatal depression at 1 and 3 months after childbirth, quality of life for both parents and fathers' parenting stress.*



Prevalence of paternal depression in pregnancy and the postpartum: An updated meta-analysis

Research in paternal prenatal and postpartum depression has nearly doubled since prevalence rates were last meta-estimated in October 2009. An updated meta-analysis allows additional questions to be answered about moderators that influence risk. Studies reporting paternal depression between the first trimester and one-year postpartum were obtained for the period from January 1980 to November 2015. In total 74 studies with 41,480 participants were included, and data was extracted independently by two authors. Moderator analyses included measurement method, timing of assessment, study location, publication year, age, education, parity, history of depression, and maternal depression. The meta-estimate for paternal depression was 8.4% (95% confidence interval [CI], 7.2–9.6%) with significant heterogeneity observed among prevalence rates. Prevalence significantly varied based on publication year, study location, measurement method, and maternal depression. Prevalence was not conditional on paternal age, education, parity, history of paternal depression, and timing of assessment. Analyses were limited by variability in assessment measures, countries from which studies were available, extant data for the first trimester and 6- to 9-month postpartum, and method of reporting sociodemographic information. Paternal depression was present in 8% of men in the included studies. Future screening policies and interventions should consider moderating risk factors for depression throughout the transition to parenthood.

Cameron, Emily E., Ivan D. Sedov, and Lianne M. Tomfohr-Madsen. "Prevalence of paternal depression in pregnancy and the postpartum: An updated meta-analysis." *Journal of Affective Disorders* 206 (2016): 189-203.



New Fathers' Perinatal Depression and Anxiety—Treatment Options: An Integrative Review

Abstract: More than 10% of fathers experience depression and anxiety during the perinatal period, but paternal perinatal depression (PPND) and anxiety have received less attention than maternal perinatal mental health problems. Few mainstream treatment options are available for men with PPND and anxiety. The aim of this literature review was to summarize the current understanding of PPND and the treatment programs specifically designed for fathers with perinatal depression. Eight electronic databases were searched using a predefined strategy, and reference lists were also hand searched. PPND and anxiety were identified to have a negative impact on family relationships, as well as the health of mothers and children. Evidence suggests a lack of support and tailored treatment options for men having trouble adjusting to the transition to fatherhood. Of the limited options available, cognitive behavioral therapy, group work, and blended delivery programs, including e-support approaches appear to be most effective in helping fathers with perinatal depression and anxiety. The review findings have important implications for the understanding of PPND and anxiety. Future research is needed to address the adoption of father-inclusive and father-specific models of care to encourage fathers' help-seeking behavior. Inclusion of male-specific requirements into support and treatment options can improve the ability of services to engage new fathers. Psychotherapeutic intervention could assist to address the cognitive differences and dissonance for men adjusting to the role of father, including male identity and role expectations.

O'Brien, Anthony P., Karen A. McNeil, Richard Fletcher, Agatha Conrad, Amanda J. Wilson, Donovan Jones, and Sally W. Chan. "New Fathers' Perinatal Depression and Anxiety—Treatment Options An Integrative Review." *American Journal of Men's Health* (2016): 1557988316669047.



Study protocol for a randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of providing information on childbirth and postnatal period to partners of pregnant women

The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of the distribution of a booklet providing information to fathers during their partners' pregnancies on fathers' and mothers' postpartum mental health and quality of life (QOL), as well as on fathers' childcare participation and living situations. This randomised controlled trial will comprise 554 couples consisting of pregnant women due to give birth at an obstetric institution in Aichi Prefecture, Japan and their partners. Participants will be recruited during prenatal check-ups in the third trimester, and those who provide written consent will be allocated randomly to an intervention and a control group. The pregnant women's partners allocated to the intervention group will be given a booklet written for men containing information on childbirth and postnatal period. Its content will include matters such as what preparations the partner should make before birth and tips for housework and childcare as well as how to prevent unintentional injury to the baby. The control group will not receive any intervention. A baseline survey in the third trimester and follow-up surveys at 1 and 3 months post partum will be carried out using self-administered questionnaires. The primary outcome is the proportion of new mothers' partners at risk for paternal depression (Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale score ≥ 8). Secondary outcomes include the risk of postnatal depression in new mothers, QOL of new mothers and their partners, partners' knowledge of and engagement in housework and childcare, marital relations and parenting stress on the part of new mothers. This study has been approved by the Ethical Committee at the National Center for Child Health and Development, Tokyo, Japan. The results of the study will be widely disseminated as peer-reviewed papers and at international conferences, with the aim of improving public health services in Japan.

Takehara, Kenji, Makoto Okamura, Naomi Sugiura, Maiko Suto, Hatoko Sasaki, and Rintaro Mori. "Study protocol for a randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of providing information on childbirth and postnatal period to partners of pregnant women." *BMJ open* 6, no. 7 (2016): e011919.

Paternity intentions

*FRB comment: Men's future intentions about having children are important for multiple reasons. They signal readiness for fatherhood; the development of a paternal identity; the chances of early or late fatherhood; and, decisions within a family about ongoing procreation. These intentions are relevant to relationship functioning and family planning but as **Cha et al.** note, they also impact on partner and offspring health. In a longitudinal, cohort study, they found men to be highly influential in the likelihood of Rapid Repeat Pregnancies (≤ 24 months post resolved pregnancy). Young fathers' pregnancy intentions are also linked to whether infants are breastfed and for how long (**Wallenborn et al.**, 2016). **Daugherty** also explored paternity intentions but canvassed the views of disadvantaged men without children about their sexual prowess, desire to have children, involvement in contraception and future responsibilities. Young men's incongruence between desire to be a father and a sense of responsibility is posited to increase risk for unintended pregnancies.*

Discordant pregnancy intentions in couples and rapid repeat pregnancy



Background: Rapid repeat pregnancy (RRP) is a major problem in the United States. Few studies have explored the influence of partner agreement on pregnancy intention and RRP.

Objective: We sought to examine the association between couple pregnancy intentions and RRP among women in the United States.

Study Design: Data came from the 2006 through 2010 National Survey of Family Growth. Multiparous women who cohabited with 1 husband/partner before conception of second pregnancy were included (N = 3463). The outcome, RRP, was categorized as experiencing a second pregnancy within 24 months of the first pregnancy resolution, or ≥ 24 months from the first pregnancy resolution. Maternal and paternal pregnancy intentions were categorized into 4 dyads: both intended (M+P+); maternal intended and paternal unintended (M+P-); maternal unintended and paternal intended (M-P+); and both unintended (M-P-). Multiple logistic regression was conducted to determine the association between couple pregnancy intentions and RRP.

Results: Nearly half (49.4%) of women had RRP. Approximately 15% of respondents reported discordant couple pregnancy intentions and 22%, maternal and paternal unintendedness. Compared to couples who both intended their pregnancy (M+P+), the odds of RRP was higher when fathers intended pregnancy but not mothers (adjusted odds ratio, 2.51; 95% confidence interval, 1.45–4.35) and lower if fathers did not intend pregnancy but mothers did (adjusted odds ratio, 0.77; 95% confidence interval, 0.70–0.85). No difference was observed between concordant couple pregnancy intentions (M-P- vs M+P+).

Conclusion: Findings highlight the important role of paternal intention in reproductive decisions. Study results suggest that RRP is strongly influenced by paternal rather than maternal pregnancy intentions. Clinicians and public health workers should involve partners in family planning discussions and counseling on optimal birth spacing.

Cha, Susan, Derek A. Chapman, Wen Wan, Candace W. Burton, and Saba W. Masho. "Discordant pregnancy intentions in couples and rapid repeat pregnancy." *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology* 214, no. 4 (2016): 494-e1.



Paternal pregnancy intention and breastfeeding duration: findings from the National Survey of Family Growth

Objectives: Despite the benefits of breastfeeding, less than a fifth of American mothers breastfeed for the recommended duration. Paternal support plays a major role in maternal and child health outcomes; however, the influence of paternal pregnancy intention on breastfeeding duration is under investigated. This study examines the relationship between fathers' pregnancy intention and breastfeeding duration.

Methods: Data from the 2011–2013 National Survey of Family Growth were analyzed using cross-sectional methodology. Women who were pregnant, never received medical help to become pregnant, whose partner was aged 18–49 years, and who responded to questions related to paternal pregnancy intention and breastfeeding were included in the analysis (N = 2089). Multinomial logistic regression, odds ratios and 95 % confidence intervals were calculated. There was a statistically significant interaction between father's age and father's pregnancy intention ($P = 0.0385$) and all models were stratified by paternal age.

Results: Fathers aged 18–24 years with a mistimed pregnancy were 2.3 times more likely to have a child who was never breastfed, (AOR 2.27, 95 % CI 1.39–3.70) and 1.7 times more likely to have a child who was breastfed 6 months or less (AOR 1.69, 95 % CI 1.28–2.23) compared to fathers with an intended pregnancy. No statistically significant association was observed among fathers aged 25–49 years.

Conclusion: Findings from this study show a relationship between mistimed pregnancies and breastfeeding duration among younger fathers. Healthcare professionals should develop breastfeeding interventions targeting fathers and young families.

Wallenborn, Jordyn T., Saba W. Masho, and Scott Ratliff. "Paternal Pregnancy Intention and Breastfeeding Duration: Findings from the National Survey of Family Growth." *Maternal and Child Health Journal* (2016): 1-8.



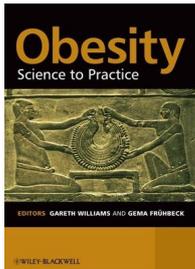
How Young Men at High Risk of Fathering an Unintended Birth Talk About Their Procreative Identities

Half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended. The risk is particularly high for certain demographic groups, including those making up lower socioeconomic status and minority groups. Few studies on unintended pregnancy have incorporated the fertility preferences of men, despite the knowledge that they do influence reproductive decisions. I explore how men who are at a relatively high risk for fathering an unintended pregnancy talk about their procreative identities in everyday life. I analyze the transcripts of focus groups conducted with young, socioeconomically disadvantaged African American and Puerto Rican men to examine how they talk about procreative consciousness, procreative responsibility, and pregnancy planning. Analyses demonstrate that men often have a very active sense of procreative consciousness and a lagging sense of procreative responsibility. However, men consider fatherhood to be an important role and look forward to parenting children. These factors may contribute to their relatively higher risk for fathering an unintended pregnancy.

Daugherty, J. (2014). How Young Men at High Risk of Fathering an Unintended Birth Talk About Their Procreative Identities. *Journal of Family Issues*, 0192513X14551176.

Pre-pregnancy paternal influence on offspring weight

*FRB comment: Prospective longitudinal, intergenerational studies provide rare insights into the effects of pre-pregnancy and early life parental health on offspring. Findings from the Western Australian **Rath** study show children of men who were classified as overweight, prior to pregnancy, have almost triple the risk of obesity at age 14 years. When fathers are obese pre-pregnancy, the risk of offspring obesity at 14 and 22 years is almost four times that of fathers not overweight. Similarly, a Mater-University of Queensland study reports pre-pregnancy paternal overweight status, both independently and combined with maternal overweight status, increases offspring risk of overweight BMI and waist circumference (Zalbarhah, 2016).*



Parental pre-pregnancy BMI is a dominant early-life risk factor influencing BMI of offspring in adulthood

We examined parental and early-life variables in order to identify risk factors for adult-hood overweight and obesity in offspring. We report here on the longitudinal prevalence of overweight and obesity in Australian children born between 1989 and 1991 and followed from birth to age 22. Data were analysed on 1355 participants from the Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort (Raine) Study, with anthropometry collected during pregnancy, at birth, one year and at three yearly intervals thereafter.

Multivariate analyses and cross-sectional logistic regression quantified the timing and contribution of early-life risk factors for overweight and obesity in young-adulthood. At five years of age 12.6% of children were overweight and 5.2% were obese. By early adulthood, the prevalence of obesity had increased to 12.8%, whilst overweight remained relatively stable at 14.2% (range from early childhood to adulthood 11–16%). Parental pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI) was the strongest determinant of adult offspring BMI. Although rapid first year weight gain was associated with increased offspring BMI, the impact of first year weight-gain diminished over childhood, whilst the impact of parental BMI increased over time. Parental pre-pregnancy BMI and rapid early-life weight gain predispose offspring to obesity in adulthood.

Rath, S. R., J. A. Marsh, J. P. Newnham, K. Zhu, H. C. Atkinson, J. Mountain, W. H. Oddy et al. "Parental pre-pregnancy BMI is a dominant early-life risk factor influencing BMI of offspring in adulthood." *Obesity Science & Practice* (2016).



Parental pre-pregnancy BMI influences on offspring BMI and waist circumference at 21 years

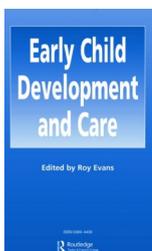
To investigate the prospective association between parental pre-pregnancy BMI and adult male and female offspring BMI and waist circumference (WC). Sub-sample of 2,229 parent-offspring pairs with parental pre-pregnancy BMI and offspring BMI and WC at 21 years were used from the MUSP (Mater-University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy cohort). Multivariable results were adjusted for maternal factors around pregnancy (e.g. gestational weight and smoking during pregnancy) and offspring factors in early life (e.g. birth weight) and at 14 years (e.g. sports participation and mealtime with family). After adjustments for confounders, each unit increase in paternal and maternal BMI, the BMI of young adult offspring increased by 0.33kg/m² and 0.35kg/m², and the WC increased by 0.76 cm and 0.62 cm, respectively. In the combination of parents' weight status, offspring at 21 years were six times the risk being overweight/obese (OW/OB) when both parents were OW/OB, compared to offspring of healthy weight parents. Prenatal parental BMI are independently related to adult offspring BMI and WC. Both prenatal paternal-maternal weight status are important determinants of offspring weight status in long-term. Further studies are warranted to investigate the underlying mechanisms.

Zalbahar, Nurzalinda, Jake Najman, Harold D. McIntrye, and Abdullah Mamun. "Parental pre-pregnancy BMI influences on offspring BMI and waist circumference at 21 years." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (2016).

The important contribution of fathers in child development

*FRB comment: The interest in fathers' contribution to child development is increasing and this is also evident in the research literature. Several researchers have looked specifically at fathers' linguistic contributions to children's development. **Fagan** and colleagues found that when fathers read frequently to their children, this had a positive effect on their children's language one year later. Similar findings were reported by **Baker et al. (2015)** who found that fathers' mean length of utterance during shared bookreading predicted children's receptive vocabulary and applied problems scores one year later, at age 5. **Duursma (2016)** reported on differences and similarities in talk during bookreading between fathers and mothers. Fathers used more abstract language which could be related to creating a 'broader experience' of bookreading while mothers focused more on the here and now.*

*It is not just fathers' language use that makes a difference in children's development: **Meuwissen and Carlson (2015)** found that fathers also contributed to children's executive functioning at child age three. Finally, a meta-analysis of 52 studies by **Hill (2015)** reported that the relation between fathers' involvement in education and children's achievement (from Kindergarten-12th grade) is not only positive, but just as strong as mothers involvement.*



Associations among head start fathers' involvement with their pre-schoolers and child language skills

This study examined the associations among child language competence during father-child play interactions, fathers' time spent volunteering in their preschool-age child's Head Start classroom over the course of one school year, amount of father play and reading to the child at home, and fathers' positive control during play. The sample of 68 primarily African-American and Hispanic low-income fathers were videotaped interacting normally with their children during two equal length activities: a free play situation with farm toys and a more 'academic-like' situation with wordless picture books and puzzles. These videotaped language samples were obtained at the beginning and end of the school year. The findings showed a significant positive association between child language competence at the end of the school year and fathers' reading to the child. Fathers' positive control behaviour during play was negatively associated with child language.

Fagan, Jay, Aquiles Iglesias, and Rebecca Kaufman. "Associations among Head Start fathers' involvement with their preschoolers and child language skills." *Early Child Development and Care* (2015): 1-15.



Fathers' language input during shared book activities: Links to children's kindergarten achievement

The present study used data from the Family Life Project (FLP) to examine predictive relations between fathers' and mothers' language input during a wordless picture book task in the home just before kindergarten entry and children's letter-word identification, picture vocabulary, and applied problems scores at the end of kindergarten. Fathers' and mothers' language input was defined as the number of different words and mean length of utterance and was measured using Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT). Hierarchical regression analyses with demographic controls revealed that mothers' mean length of utterance predicted children's applied problems scores. More importantly, fathers' mean length of utterance predicted children's vocabulary and applied problems scores above and beyond mothers' language. Findings highlight the unique contribution of fathers to children's early academic achievement. Implications for future research, practice, and policy are discussed.

Baker, Claire E., Lynne Vernon-Feagans, and Family Life Project Investigators. "Fathers' language input during shared book activities: Links to children's kindergarten achievement." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 36 (2015): 53-59.

Who does the reading, who the talking? Low-income fathers and mothers in the US interacting with their young children around a picture book



Book reading is known to benefit young children's language and literacy development. However, research has demonstrated that how adults interact around a book with a child is probably even more important than reading the complete text. Dialogic or interactive reading strategies can promote children's language development more specifically. Little is known about how fathers engage in bookreading with their children. This study examined the differences and similarities in interaction style during bookreading among low-income fathers and mothers in the US at child ages two and three, in particular focusing on immediate and non-immediate talk. Results demonstrated that fathers used more non-immediate talk, or talk not directly related to the book, than mothers did, at both child ages. Fathers also used more engagement strategies than mothers did.

Duursma, Elisabeth. "Who does the reading, who the talking? Low-income fathers and mothers in the US interacting with their young children around a picture book." *First Language* (2016): 0142723716648849.



Fathers matter: The role of father parenting in preschoolers' executive function development

Although previous work has shown that mothers' parenting influences the development of child executive function (EF; important self-control skills developed during the preschool years), the role of fathers' parenting has not been thoroughly investigated. We observed fathers' autonomy support and control in dyadic play with their 3-year-old children (N pairs = 110) and measured father and child EF independently with laboratory tasks. We found that fathers' controlling parenting was significantly inversely related to the child EF composite, above and beyond family income and child verbal ability. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that fathers are important for the development of EF in their children and suggest that fathers should be included in both research and parenting interventions.

Meuwissen, Alyssa S., and Stephanie M. Carlson. "Fathers matter: The role of father parenting in preschoolers' executive function development." *Journal of experimental child psychology* 140 (2015): 1-15.



Including Fathers in the Picture: A Meta-Analysis of Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement

Extant research on parental involvement in education has been conducted largely without respect to which parent is involved. The implicit assumption is that family-school relationship frameworks function similarly for fathers and mothers. Although there is a growing body of research examining fathers' involvement in education, this assumption has not been tested. In this meta-analysis, we examined the relative strength of the association between educational involvement of fathers versus mothers and achievement of school-age children (kindergarten to 12th grade). The association of involvement with achievement over time (i.e., longitudinal studies) was stronger than for cross-sectional studies. Parental involvement in education was positively associated with student achievement and the relation between involvement and achievement was equally strong for fathers and mothers, although mothers' mean levels of involvement were higher than fathers'. Moderator analyses across the different types of involvement suggested that school-based involvement and intellectual enrichment at home was more strongly related to achievement for mothers than for fathers, although there were no differences in mean levels of involvement.

Hill, Nancy E. "Including fathers in the picture: A meta-analysis of parental involvement and students' academic achievement." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 107, no. 4 (2015): 919.



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Or contact Richard Fletcher:
richard.fletcher@newcastle.edu.au

