Jyotsna Pattnaik   *Editor*

Father Involvement in Young Children's Lives

A Global Analysis

Springer

Father Involvement in Young Children's Lives

EDUCATING THE YOUNG CHILD

VOLUME 6

This academic and scholarly book series will focus on the education and development of young children from infancy through eight years of age. The series will provide a synthesis of current theory and research on trends, issues, controversies, and challenges in the early childhood field and examine implications for practice. One hallmark of the series will be comprehensive reviews of research on a variety of topics with particular relevance for early childhood educators worldwide. The mission of the series is to enrich and enlarge early childhood educators' knowledge, enhance their professional development, and reassert the importance of early childhood education to the international community. The audience for the series includes college students, teachers of young children, college and university faculty, and professionals from fields other than education who are unified by their commitment to the care and education of young children. In many ways, the proposed series is an outgrowth of the success of Early Childhood Education Journal which has grown from a quarterly magazine to a respected and international professional journal that is published six times a year.

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Foreword

I have been involved in fatherhood research and practice for more than 20 years now, and during this time I have watched the field of fathering grow in significant ways. One such change is the explosion of research on fathers. Pick up any family, child development, or psychology journal, and you are likely to find at least one or two articles focusing on fathers. Even papers that focus on mothers' influences on children now include fathers and their contribution to children. As with all fields of study, the findings from these many studies are sometimes confusing, contradictory, and inconclusive. Yet, without a doubt, we know a lot more about fathers and their influences on children than we did 20 years ago. Where early studies only examined fathers' effects on children, more recent research includes both father and mother influences on children. Although researchers quickly realized that the factors which influence father involvement are multidimensional (i.e., include personality, family, workplace influences), recent studies have used more sophisticated analytic strategies such as structural equation modeling to examine the pathways of influence. Fathering research has also made good use of qualitative research designs to explore uncharted areas of fathering (e.g., stay-at-home fathers). The present volume, *Father involvement in young children's lives: A global analysis*, clearly illustrates the knowledge that has been gained from this rich body of research. The chapters in this book help to synthesize these studies, and as such are an important contribution to the field.

The second change is the expanded focus on the many ways in which fathers are involved with their children. The early studies viewed fathers as involved or uninvolved, absent or present, visiting or not visiting their children, responsible or not responsible, and providing or not providing financially for children. This bifurcated way of viewing fathers was lacking because it did not represent the realities of many families. Nonresidential fathers who were struggling to spend more time with their children were often portrayed as absent. Divorced fathers were frequently portrayed as men who were looking to avoid their parenting responsibilities. Fathers were not just involved or uninvolved, they were involved to varying degrees with their children, and the quality of their involvement ranged from high to low, just as it does with mothers. The other drawback of early studies was that they missed some of the important ways in which fathers were engaged with their children. Only recently have researchers paid closer attention to fathering behaviors such as reading to children, stimulating children's cognitive development, getting involved in children's schools

and early childhood programs, attending parent conferences, and teaching children life skills. The present book, *Father involvement in young children's lives: A global analysis*, includes chapters that summarize the varied ways that fathers become involved in their children's lives. Specifically, this book includes important chapters on fathers' contributions to children's learning.

The third change is the recognition of the high degree of diversity in fathering behavior among different ethnic and socioeconomic groups. It is interesting to note that the fathering field has developed rapidly at the same time that the internet and other technologies have provided us with access to far more information about peoples throughout the world. Access to the vast body of information worldwide has enabled us to see that in some communities, individuals are concerned about ways to encourage greater father support of children's development (e.g., reading to children), while in other communities, few individuals are literate and fathers' contributions to children's formal schooling are less critical. The major concern in these communities is how to provide for the basic needs of children such as food, shelter, and safety. The chapters in this volume are important because they synthesize research on fathers from many nations, including the United States, Australia, India, South Africa, Japan, Taiwan, and the Caribbean.

The chapters in this book reveal that nations around the world share many of the same concerns about the role of fathers in families, although the degree to which countries are addressing the needs of fathers and families varies widely. It is interesting to try to grasp the growing worldwide interest in fathers from a global perspective. Significant changes have occurred in the world population in the past several decades. The world population has doubled in the last 50 years. Despite the fact that nearly half of the world population lives in poverty and about 20 % of individuals are severely malnourished, there has been a trend among nations to invest in children. Some of the increased investment has occurred as a consequence of lower fertility rates in many countries. As fertility rates decline, parents are able to concentrate more attention to each child because there are fewer children in each family. One metric used to monitor investment in children is the rate of children attending primary school. Recent estimates show that net enrollment rates in primary school are increasing by 0.14 % per year worldwide (Bayou et al. 2005). Another metric frequently used to measure quality of life among children is the infant or under-five mortality rate. The under-five death rate (i.e., deaths per 1,000 births) went from 90 in 1990 to 65 in 2008 worldwide (World Health Organization 2010). Some would say that these trends reflect minor advancements in the quality of children's lives. Given the multiple factors (including barriers) that contribute to availability of education and health resources, these trends generally reflect slow but steady progress toward investment in children.

It has become abundantly clear that fathers worldwide are an important and often times "untapped" resource (see Pruett 1988) that can continue this trend toward investing in children and improving the quality of children's lives. It is clear that fathers can contribute in innumerable ways to their children. However, it is not clear at this time the extent to which fathers are contributing to this increasing worldwide investment. There is a great need for researchers and scholars to document the efforts

that are being made by individuals and by societies to nurture men's roles in families. The many studies that are being conducted and the wide range of policies and programs being implemented call for a synthesis of this work. This volume makes a considerable contribution by bringing together scholars from around the world to begin this process of synthesis. Although much of the value of this book will be found in the individual chapters, readers will glean considerable value from reading the book as a whole. As a whole, this volume provides a glimpse at the worldwide effort to encourage fathers' investment in children.

<div align="right">Jay Fagan</div>

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About the Authors

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Paul Callister's recent research has focused on the changing distribution of paid and unpaid work at the level of both the individual and the household. This has included a focus on the polarization of work across households; fertility and 'family-friendly' policies; the role of fathers within families; as well as the links between changes in the labor market and changes in the form and function of households. Between 2001 and 2002 Paul was a Sloan funded Research Fellow at Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute, Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, Cornell University.

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About the Editor

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Jyotsna Pattnaik

Father Involvement in Young Children's Lives: Common Themes and Diverse Perspectives

Experts identify some important social trends around the world that have altered the sociocultural milieu in which children are raised (Cabrera et al. 2000). These trends include increased labor force participation of mothers and consequent increase in children's participation in formal childcare settings; increased absence of fathers in the lives of their children; increased involvement of fathers in two-parent households; and increased involvement of nonbiological fathers including step fathers, grandfathers, father figures, and adoptive fathers. In the United States, some other emerging trends include the rising number of single fathers raising children as well as stay-home dads. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2011), in the year 2010, there were about 1.8 million lone fathers raising children and there were 154,000 stay-at-home dads caring for 287,000 children, which almost doubled during the period 2003–2010.

As an academic field with immense implications for families, the topic of father involvement has been receiving wide recognition by diverse groups of experts involved in securing the well-being of children and families. Consequently, a growing body of knowledge is gradually emerging on the importance of paternal involvement in children's development (Alio et al. 2010; Sarkadi et al. 2008). Researchers report greater paternal sensitivity and involvement resulting in children's secured attachment with fathers (Brown et al. 2012). Research findings document benefits of secured father-child attachment on child outcomes including fewer behavior problems (Verschueren and Marcoen 1999), higher reciprocated friendships (Veríssimo et al. 2011), and reduced risk for internalizing and externalizing forms of psychopathology (Phares et al. 2010). Other research findings suggest benefits of quality paternal involvement time for children and especially for fathers (Brown et al. 2012) in terms of fathers' job

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skills, parenting skills, and social relationships (Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004); and beneficial roles of nonresident but involved fathers in children's social and academic skills and in fostering a bond that continues until children are in their young adulthood (Peters and Ehrenberg 2008). Lamb (2010) emphasizes multiple roles for fathers (as bread earners, parent, and emotional partners) and the characteristics of the father as a parent rather than as a male.

In addition, effective programs that take account of multicultural differences and use of culturally appropriate curriculum and outreach strategies have been developed to involve fathers in their children's well-being (Fagan and Palm 2003). Research reports positive changes and behaviors for all members in the family unit for programs that involve both parents compared to programs that do not include fathers (Lundahl et al. 2008). It is important to note that important policy recommendations have been forwarded by educational and community organizations, and there have been government directives to schools and community agencies including corporate sectors to institute policies that maximize father involvement in all aspects of children's life. Nongovernmental organizations and universities around the world have been involved in designing and implementing research studies, advocacy activities, and father involvement programs (Long 2008).

Currently, social scientists from a variety of disciplines are exploring questions such as: How do we define father involvement in diverse cultural contexts? How does paternal involvement benefit children and the entire family unit? What factors promote or challenge father involvement in young children's lives? How do cultural contexts shape men's roles in families? How do theoretical and empirical scholarships inform father involvement programs and policies? What programs and strategies will better support father involvement in diverse family, social, and cultural contexts? These questions bear important context-specific significance, especially for a young academic field that has a long journey ahead. Authors of this book have addressed these questions within the unique multicultural contexts in which their chapters are housed.

Purpose of the Book

Father involvement in young children's lives: *A global analysis* brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars, within and outside of the United States, to examine the issues of father involvement within particular cultural and national contexts. While international in scope, the book adherers to its global spirit by highlighting issues, challenges, needs, and possibilities that transcend national borders. Therefore, authors featured in this book have made sincere efforts to preserve the uniqueness of their particular contexts while simultaneously reflecting on common themes such as examining historical and contemporary perspectives; analyzing factors that pose challenges to quality of paternal involvement; reviewing related research studies that extend and/or challenge existing scholarships on the topic; evaluating existing and

emerging policies as well as imagining spaces for future policies; and suggesting feasible ideas for teachers, researchers, and policy-makers. It is important to note here that although the field of father involvement is at various stages of development among countries represented in the book, what binds the chapters in this book is the common passion for strengthening the father-child bond in the early years amid a myriad of challenges.

The editor and authors sincerely hope that the book provides readers with updated information on discussions, debates, trends, policies, programs, and research efforts undertaken around the world and invites collective and contextually appropriate action to remove existing barriers to paternal involvement in young children's lives.

Overview of the Book

With a total of 18 chapters, this book is organized under three major sections.

Section 1: Father Involvement: Broad Strokes

Unlike chapters in the other two sections that focus on particular groups of fathers in the United States or father involvement in particular national contexts, the two chapters in Sect. 1 are not limited to particular groups of fathers, rather they examine benefits of paternal involvement for their children in a more general sense.

Section 2: Father Involvement: Perspectives from the United States

There are seven chapters in this section. This section examines father involvement primarily in the context of the United States, although some chapters integrate international contexts wherever appropriate. Fathers represented in this section come from diverse backgrounds: African-American fathers, Mexican-American fathers, gay fathers, incarcerated fathers, homeless fathers, and fathers of children with disabilities. The section also includes a chapter that examines the needs and challenges of single mothers and controversies related to father involvement in such contexts.

Section 3: Father Involvement: Global Perspectives

This section includes a total of nine chapters. Chapters in this section examine father involvement issues in countries outside of the United States. The countries in this section span across four major regions of the world: North America (Caribbean

Islands and Canada), Asia (India, China, Japan, and Taiwan) and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand), and Africa (Southern Africa). A brief introduction to chapters in these three sections follows.

About the Chapters

Father Involvement: Broad Strokes

The first chapter of the book titled, *Fathers and early literacy*, by Glen Palm highlights international scholarship on father involvement in early literacy with specific reference to important studies that focus on the need for father involvement in children's literacy, characteristics of fathers who are involved in early literacy, and successful programs for father involvement in early literacy in the United States and the United Kingdom. The author also points to the dearth of research on father involvement in early literacy and methodological flaws in existing studies. Keeping in view the importance of early literacy and the long-term benefits of early literacy for children's later academic and personal lives, the chapter sets a tone of urgency for paternal involvement that resonates in other chapters as well.

Paternal caring behavior is the central theme of the chapter titled, *Caring fathers: Empowering children to be loving human beings*, by Kevin Swick. With a myriad of examples of paternal caring behaviors and the responsive and reciprocal returns that accrue from such engagements, the author, in a way, rescues the construct "caring "from its feminine cradle and defines "caring" as a general human trait. With empirical findings and conceptual perspectives, the author suggests that paternal caring behavior has numerous potentials to influence the well-being of children, fathers, and the entire family. The chapter provides many specific societal and educational strategies and policies that support father involvement and guide children's understanding of adult roles through father-centered education.

Father Involvement: Perspectives from the United States

In the chapter titled, *Mexican-American father-child literacy interactions*, Olivia Saracho uses the framework "familism" (as a cultural characteristic where choices, interests, activities, and roles of individual members are embedded within the family network) to contextualize Mexican-American fathers' roles and relationships with their children. Saracho challenges misinterpretations and stereotypes of Mexican-American fathers and identifies outdated theoretical and methodological limitations that guided studies on Mexican-American fathers in past. The author also cites contemporary studies that denounce such stereotypes, portray Mexican-American fathers' diverse and complex roles within the family unit, discuss a host of factors that influence their involvement, and document Mexican-American fathers' positive

perceptions regarding their paternal roles. With a cautionary note, the author reminds researchers to understand fully the prevalent norms, expectations, and beliefs regarding Mexican-American fathers' involvement and the culturally sanctioned forms of father-child relationships so that these understandings accurately inform their study designs.

Drawing from the historical accounts of slavery, religious reform movements, the civil rights movement, and contemporary research, policies, societal realities, and educational practices, the chapter, *Father involvement, African Americans and reducing the achievement gap*, by William Jeynes examines factors that contribute to African-American fathers' involvement (or lack of it). The author discusses research studies that document the positive impact of paternal involvement on African-American children's academic achievement, and identifies successful father involvement programs for black fathers within and outside of the United States.

Embedded in conceptual and empirical groundings, the chapter, *Gay fathers' involvement in their young children's lives*, by Dana Berkowitz and Katherine Kuvalanka, challenges socially constructed cultural narratives that project stereotypical as well as deficit perspectives about gay parenting. The authors also provide a comprehensive discussion on multiple and varied paths to parenthood among gay parents, the rising number of transracial adoptions and the adoption of children with special needs among gay parents, and national and international laws that prohibit adoption by same-sex couples. Furthermore, the authors discuss specific implications for policymakers, teacher education programs, and school personnel that include: preparing teachers to embrace same-sex families, addressing "homophobia" through children's books that portray same-sex families, and involving gay families in school activities, to name but a few.

With the rising rate of incarceration, especially among men from low-income African-American and Hispanic-American communities, the chapter, *Incarcerated fathers: Implications for father involvement*, by Mike Roettger and Raymond Swisher is timely in highlighting the impact of paternal incarceration on children and families; identifying a host of challenges that prevent fathers' involvement during and after the incarceration period such as physical and institutional barriers; discussing the psychological effects of prisonization, the stigma of incarceration, and spousal rejection; and offering feasible suggestions to policy-makers and early childhood programs. The authors also present distinctions between contexts where father involvement needs to be limited because of possible deleterious impacts on children and contexts where father involvement bears a symbiotic effect on both fathers and their children.

The chapter, *Involvement of homeless fathers: Challenges and possibilities*, by Jyotsna Pattnaik and Christina Medeiros is contextualized within two distinct social trends; current national and global concerns over growing family homelessness as well as increasing awareness and recognition of the impacts of paternal involvement on young children's development. The authors provide an overview of theoretical perspectives, issues, and programs relevant to homeless fathers and offer specific and feasible recommendations for practitioners and researchers. The authors rightfully conclude that homeless fathers are not a homogenous group, and the diversity

of their life experiences and needs necessitate diversity in service delivery, policy frameworks, and research designs.

In the chapter, *Fathers of young children with disabilities: Experiences, involvement, and needs*, authors, Hedda Meadan, Howard Parette, and Sharon Doubet, justify the theoretical and legal imperatives for involving fathers in the lives of children with disabilities. The authors also point to the dearth of research on fathers of children with disabilities, describe empirical findings related to fathers' experiences with a child with disabilities, present benefits of fathers' involvement for their children with disabilities as well as the family unit as a whole, make comparison of fathers' versus mothers' involvement in the life of children with disabilities, and highlight limitations of available research on the topic. The authors justifiably reject the existing stereotypes about fathers' lack of interest in getting involved in their special needs child's development.

While acknowledging the need for sustained and responsible partnerships between mothers and fathers in the care, support, and protection of children, in her chapter, *Honoring women who must raise their children alone*, Beatrice Fennimore highlights the demographic reality and the importance and challenges of single motherhood. She argues that the current academic focus on paternal involvement and the legislative and social policy changes to promote father involvement must not lose sight of the need for long-term women-based solutions, which support single-mother households, such as equal opportunities for women in the workplace, and provision of available, affordable, and high-quality childcare for their children.

Father Involvement: Global Perspectives

Grounded in the Caribbean society's cultural, social, and economic landscape, and informed by international scholarship on father involvement, the chapter, *Father-child involvement in English-speaking Caribbean countries: Links to childhood development,* by Jaipaul Roopnarine highlights the positive impact of family cohesion, adaptability, and stable living arrangements as well as the negative effects of harsh parenting on young Caribbean children's cognitive and social development. The chapter also outlines specific implications for future researchers, policy-makers, and early childhood teachers.

Contextualized within a historical context of colonial policies and practices that robbed indigenous children (currently fathers) of a secured childhood and exposure to positive fathering, and drawing from Canada's first study with indigenous fathers, the chapter, *Indigenous fathers in Canada: Multigenerational challenges*, by Jessica Ball, identifies structural, cultural, and sociopolitical constraints on indigenous fathers' involvement with their children; presents action strategies; and offers recommendations for policy reform. The author also highlights the role of institutions that serve children and families, including childcare programs, schools, health clinics, and hospitals in supporting paternal involvement.

Set primarily in the backdrop of Australian society, Andrew Martin's chapter, *Male involvement in children's lives: Roles and relevance to academic and nonacademic outcomes in the Australian context*, highlights the gap between ideal perceptions of father involvement and the actual practices both at home and in school, and the fallacies of the gender-matching hypothesis (exposing gender-based role models to children). While highlighting the empirical findings on the academic and nonacademic benefits of paternal involvement for children, Martin also refutes, with empirical evidence, the claim of "masculinity" as a determining factor in father involvement. Rather, with research findings on both present and absent fathers, Martin draws readers' attention to associated stressors (resulting from father absence) or supports (such as fathers' warmth and closeness in case of involved fathers) that contribute to either negative or positive child outcomes. The vital element in this equation of paternal involvement and positive child outcomes, Martin argues, is fathers' active involvement in parenting duties, not their mere presence. Martin warns against gender-neutral terms, such as "parent involvement," that mask the patterns of gendered involvement and influences that are important for intervention purposes.

Paul Callister and Lindy Fursman's chapter, *Father involvement: New Zealand*, links waves of migration from various parts of the world to diverse images and practices of paternal roles in New Zealand. The authors also chart a host of challenges to fathers' active involvement that include: longer working hours for men compared to women; the impact of long working hours on paternal stress and punitive parenting styles; workplace cultures that prevent balance of work and family life; issues surrounding the current paid parental leave policy in New Zealand; family laws that support mothers over fathers; overrepresentation of men especially Maori fathers in the prison population; discriminations against fathers residing in prison or involved in the criminal justice system; and contradictions between theoretical and practical usage of New Zealand's flexible work arrangement policy for men. The authors provide recommendations for father-friendly policies that may encourage paternal involvement and gradually shift gender norms both within and outside home contexts.

Embedded within personal, family, community, economy, and cultural contexts of Africa, mainly South Africa, the chapter, *Father involvement in young children's care and education in Southern Africa*, by Jeremiah Chikovore, Tawanda Makusha, and Linda Richter, provides an extensive discussion on a multitude of factors that actually drive South African men further away from familial responsibility and engagement with their children. The chapter also highlights the plight of men from rural poor households who are forced to participate in the rising "migrant labor" economy of the country, leaving their childcare responsibilities to kin in "stretched households" and consequently holding to an image of "shadowy heads of households." The chapter recommends policy measures such as facilitating planned parenting, adopting practical measures to enhance men's ability to care for their children, using media to promote alternative and more positive forms of father involvement, extending the length of the current paid paternity leave days, introducing variations in defining households, and promoting acceptance of social fathering in the media as well as school curriculum.

Drawing from Hindu religious dictates of *karma* (the law of cause and effect) and particularly *Grihasthadharma* that lays down roles and rules for the family life, the authors of the chapter, *Fathering in India*, have made attempts to capture the immense challenges faced by some fathers in India while trying to uphold the emerging gender egalitarian ideals within the needs of their unique family contexts, their own aspirations for their children, the demands of time in a booming as well as developing economy, and above all the existing stereotypical gendered perceptions and practices in the society. The authors, Rajalakshmi Sriram and Prachee Navalkar, also discuss recent efforts by community organizations, the national government, UNICEF, and Indian researchers to highlight and support fathers' involvement in various paternal roles, moving beyond the traditional "provider role."

Based on the findings of their own study and that of other researchers, the authors of the chapter, *Fathers' role in Chinese children's education*, highlight the continuing motherhood culture in Chinese children's lives although there are a few dedicated fathers who are involved in the recent home-school movement. The authors, Zhonghe Wu, Song An, and Shuhua An, identified factors such as the current reform/open-up policy and labor market policies that contributed to higher unemployment and a poor salary structure among women workers and forced mothers to continue their traditional childrearing responsibilities and fathers to work more hours to move the family up in the economic ladder and support their only child's engagement in multiple academic and extracurricular activities. The authors also provide a comprehensive historical account of gendered family practices and recommendations for early childhood practitioners.

In their chapter, *The father image in Japan: Traditional roles and emerging realities in conflict*, the authors, Michelle Morrone and Yumi Matsuyama, provide historical accounts of father/male involvement in childcare and education as well as current trends and social policies related to father involvement in Japan. The authors argue that while the grass-root movements and empirical studies show some progress, disengaging Japanese men from the post-World War company-men model and reconstructing a comprehensive image of modern fatherhood for Japanese men is not an easy task; therefore, support from many sectors including educational organizations is necessary to achieve this goal. The authors provide suggestions for schools, the workplace, and governmental agencies that bear the responsibility of bringing desired changes in paternal roles in Japan.

With a historical analysis of gender roles in the Taiwanese society and current evidence from empirical studies, policy-level initiatives, print and nonprint media such as text books and television programs, the chapter, *Father involvement in Taiwan: A progressive perspective*, by Hsiu-Zu Ho, Chu-Ting Ko, Connie Tran, Jessica Phillips, and Wei-Wen Chen, portrays how larger processes of social change, such as the changing mode of economic production and the labor market dynamics, have potential to influence the private domain of families, both in conceptualizations and practices of parenting roles. Although there is a long road ahead to achieving a truly egalitarian model of parental responsibilities, the authors of the chapter are hopeful that these preliminary efforts have the potential to overcome the existing cultural traditionalism in Taiwanese families.

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Section I
Father Involvement: General Perspectives

Chapter 2
Fathers and Early Literacy

Glen Palm

> It is a wonderful way to bond with your child and gives you more ideas and tips on reading.
> It opens a wonderful doorway for the kids (Quote from a father—Dads & Kids Book Club).

This quote from a dad who attended a father–child literacy program captures the dual benefits of strengthening the father–child bond and enhancing literacy development in young children. This chapter will explore current research and understanding about the extent and importance of fathers' involvement in early literacy activities with their children. The first section will address some important assumptions about fathers. The second section will review the research on fathers and early literacy and the role that parents play in promoting literacy skills in young children. The final section will examine literacy programs that have focused on fathers and young children and identify lessons for designing effective programs.

Assumptions About Fathers and Early Literacy

There are a number of important assumptions about the role of fathers in early literacy development that must be considered before examining the current research. First, it is assumed that *fathers can be an important positive influence on the development of early literacy*. The research literature on fathers and literacy development is limited (Duursma et al. 2008; Clark 2009) but there is a great deal of research on parents (mothers) and the roles that they play in promoting early literacy by talking to children to increase their vocabulary (Hart and Risley 1995) to the importance of reading to young children (Lyytinen et al. 1998; Duursma et al. 2008). While early literacy research on parents has generally focused on mothers, involved fathers would likely have a similar impact on literacy development.

A second assumption that is important to consider is that *fathers have both a direct and indirect influence on literacy* (Lloyd 1999; Goldman 2005; Morgan et al. 2009).

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The direct influence in areas such as how parents talk to young children and how often they read to young children are the areas where mothers and fathers are likely to have a similar impact on young children. The indirect influence is more difficult to assess and has not really been the focus of research but is important to consider. Fathers' attitudes towards education and their modeling of reading behaviors will influence or spill over into family life and the home context where early literacy develops (Lloyd 1999; Flouri and Bachanan 2003). For example, the stereotypic image of fathers reading the newspaper conveys an attitude about literacy and presents a powerful message about the importance of reading as an activity. The reading materials fathers bring into the house may be different from mothers (Ortiz et al. 1999) and represent different reasons and motivations for reading.

A third assumption about fathers that is important to recognize is that *male socialization influences fathers' styles of interaction and interests related to early literacy.* The literature on boys and literacy (Karther 2002) suggests that boys learn a different set of attitudes about literacy and often read different materials and are interested in different types of stories. Male socialization about the importance of reading and what is important to read influences both attitudes and behavior that fathers bring to their interactions with young children. Some fathers may assume that mothers have the primary responsibility for early literacy development. They may not be a comfortable reading to their children (Fletcher and Dally 2002).

A final assumption to consider is that *fathers face critical barriers that limit their involvement and influence on early literacy development.* These barriers begin with the amount of time that fathers typically spend with their young children (Pleck and Massiardeli 2004). Male socialization and the expectations that women will be responsible for caring for young children's social emotional and literacy development can limit the amount of time and effort fathers expend in directly and purposefully interacting with young children to promote literacy development. These assumptions set the stage for understanding both the research that has been conducted as well as realizing some specific barriers that must be confronted in promoting greater involvement of fathers in the taking responsibility for directly supporting literacy development in young children.

Review of Research on Fathers and Early Literacy

The research focus on fathers and early literacy has been limited (Clark 2005; Duursma et al. 2008). There are some general findings about the importance of parent behaviors related to early literacy development that may also apply to understanding fathers' influence on early literacy development. There is also research that begins to directly address a number of basic questions around fathers' behaviors that are related to literacy development in young children. This research review will examine: (1) the frequency of fathers reading to children; (2) fathers' characteristics related to reading to children; (3) fathers' reasons or motivations for reading to their children; (4) what materials do fathers read to their children; (5)

barriers to father involvement in literacy activities; (6) mother–father differences related to young children and early literacy; and (7) benefits of father involvement for literacy development. There are a number of limits to the existing research (Clark 2009) including small sample sizes, parent report methodology, and changing and complex family contexts that limit generalizations about fathers. The existing research can be helpful in creating a framework for understanding the relationship between fathers' attitudes and behaviors and child literacy outcomes.

Parent Promotion of Early Literacy

There has been a history of research that focuses on the importance of parenting behaviors that influence early literacy and language development. Hess and Holloway (1984) provide a comprehensive summary of ways that parents directly and indirectly influence child literacy development. Parents influence child literacy by: (1) modeling the importance of literacy by their reading and writing activities; (2) communicating expectations for achieving literacy skills; (3) providing literacy experiences and materials at home; (4) reading to their children; (5) taking time for verbal interactions with their children. Both mothers and fathers influence children's literacy in all of these ways. The research review that follows tends to focus on reading as a primary way that parents promote literacy. The role that parent reading to young children plays on child literacy development has been documented for child language and vocabulary development (Whitehurst et al. 1988) and cognitive skills (Lyytinen et al. 1998). Researchers (Bus et al. 1995; DeBaryshe 1993; Halsall and Green 1995; National Research Council 1998; Neuman and Dickinson 2003) have also documented the long-term positive impact of shared book reading on school success. Since book reading is an observable and quantifiable behavior it has been studied more extensively than other parent behaviors and will be highlighted in this review of research. However both the quality and quantity of verbal interactions between parents and young children have also received some attention (Dodici et al. 2003; Duursma et al. 2008; Hart and Risley 1995), and are also critical factors in the development of early literacy.

Frequency of Fathers Reading to their Children

There have been a number of surveys that have asked about the frequency of fathers reading to their children in both the United States and the United Kingdom during the past 10 years. The National Center for Fathering (1996) reported that 25 % of fathers of children Kindergarten through Grade 12 read to their children every day and 23 % read one to two times a week. This same report also concluded that 40 % of fathers never read to their children. Brown et al. (2001) surveyed US parents of 3–12 year olds and reported that 39 % of resident fathers read at least once a week in comparison to 55 % of mothers.

Fathers Reading to Children at Different Ages
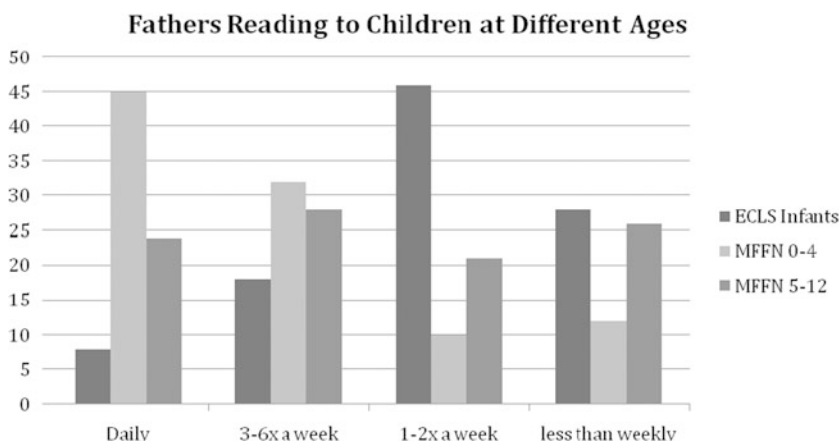
Fig. 2.1 Fathers reading by age of child

In a recent UK study, Flouri and Buchanan (2003) found that 37 % of fathers read to their children age 7 most weeks in comparison to 50 % of mothers. A National Literacy Trust (2003) study found that 50 % of fathers of 5–7 year olds and 25 % of fathers of 7–11 year olds helped with reading at home at least weekly. In comparison, 75 % of mothers of 5–7 year olds and 50 % of 7–11 year olds reported reading at least weekly to their children. These recent studies reflect a similar range of gender differences between fathers and mothers and also support an important difference in frequency of parent reading by age of the child. As children become independent readers around age 7, the amount of time parents read to their children declines.

There are some recent research data in the United States that provide a more detailed view of child age as a factor that impacts father's reading. Figure 2.1 depicts age as a factor by combining data about fathers reading to young children age 0–12 from two different studies. This summary comes from two different sources. One is a 2006 national study on fathers of Infants (Avenilla et al. 2006) and the other is the Minnesota Fathers and Families Network survey (2007) of 575 fathers in Minnesota. The Minnesota study focused on two different age groups, fathers of children 0–4 and fathers of children ages 5–12. The combined data clearly depict a critical period during the preschool years from 1 to 4 when fathers report reading most frequently to their children. This is an important factor to remember in creating programs to support father involvement in early literacy. Reading programs that focus on fathers (parents) that start at kindergarten or later will have a limited impact on the development of a young child's literacy skills since adult reading to children appears to peak between child ages 3–5 and begins to decline after children begin their formal education.

Father Characteristics Related to Reading to Children

A number of studies have begun to examine father characteristics in relation to the frequency that fathers read to their children. Ortiz et al. (1999) found that fathers

who are involved with their children with child care tasks (bathing and feeding) are also more likely to read to their young children. They also note that fathers who are in stable families where mothers work read more frequently to their children. The residence of fathers is also a key factor as might be expected. Martinez et al. (2006) found that 25 % of residential fathers of 0–4 year olds read to their children daily versus only 5 % of nonresidential fathers. Fathers' educational attainment also is an important factor. A 1996 study by the US Department of Education found 58.5 % of parents with less than a high school diploma read to their children at least three times a week versus 96 % of parents with graduate or professional degrees. Duursma et al. (2008) report that fathers with less than a high school education read less frequently to their 2–3 year-old children. The research about fathers' characteristics has been limited but the initial results identify some obvious factors:

1. Fathers' general attitudes/behaviors towards involvement can be extended to literacy activities.
2. Fathers' family context including residence and family roles clearly influence father involvement in reading to their children.
3. Fathers with a higher level of education value shared book reading and may be more comfortable reading to their children, which explains the higher frequency of reading to their children.

Why Fathers Read to Children?

Ortiz (2000) addresses the question about why fathers read to their children. He found that 60 % of fathers of young children in his study emphasized skill building to get children ready for school as the primary reason for reading to children. In addition, 35 % of fathers identified reading as a comfortable and fun activity to share with their child that provided a bonding opportunity. Fathers appear to emphasize the skill building function of early literacy as the more important long-term goal. Recent changes in fathers' perceptions and valuing of their multiple roles appears to be putting greater emphasis on emotional bonding (MFFN 2007). Both outcomes of fathers reading to children, the development of early literacy skills and father–child bonding are important to fathers and not mutually exclusive. While fathers may be moving towards greater emphasis on a close father–child relationship, bonding may still be seen as a by-product of fathers reading to children not the primary focus. Referring back to the quote at the beginning of the chapter reading and other literacy activities can lead to both literacy skill development in children and a stronger bond between father and child. Shared book reading allows fathers time to share ideas and values and provides a setting for both physical and emotional intimacy as children sit with fathers who read to them.

Ortiz (2004) identified some additional reasons that some fathers were involved in literacy activities. He describes the joy of bringing the family together for stories and reading. Some men also like taking part in reading as a fun way to spend time with children. Ortiz also describes fathers' personal reading as more functional than

fun, i.e., job search or reading directions versus reading a novel. Finally he suggests that some fathers of minority children may support literacy skills in their children as a way to overcome the perceived negative effects of racial bias. Ortiz has been one of the few researchers to focus on ethnic minority fathers in the United States and early literacy. He adds to our knowledge of reasons why Mexican-American fathers may engage in literacy activities with their young children despite the barriers they face. The strong motivation of some fathers to read and support literacy development in their children to overcome the effects of racial bias and negative effects of racism and poverty on school success has also appeared in studies of African-American fathers. Fagan and Palm (2004) describe African-American fathers who volunteer in Head Start classrooms because they want to support not only their own child but also other children who may not have a father figure in their lives. These men embrace a sense of community generativity and participate in Head Start programs to help not only their own child but also children from other families who may be fatherless. Ortiz (2004) stresses the joys, fun, and family togetherness that may draw Mexican-American fathers into reading with their children. While the motivation for men to read to and engage in literacy activities with young children focuses on skill development in the short term, these other motivational factors in low-income families should also be recognized and supported. Further research on this topic would provide a deeper understanding of the motivational factors that influence how often and why fathers choose to read to their young children. Understanding fathers' motivation is critical to the design of effective literacy programs for fathers.

Materials that Fathers Read

The types of materials that fathers typically read may be different from mothers. Ortiz et al. (1999) list the types of reading materials that fathers in his study were reading. The list included newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, maps, telephone directory, and manuals. This study suggests that fathers read for a specific purpose and may be seeking information versus reading for pleasure. We do not know what types of books fathers share with their children. It would be helpful to know what kinds of children's literature (picture books for children 0–8) that fathers would most enjoy reading with their children. Future research could ask about different types of books or other materials that fathers currently read to their sons and daughters. What topics do fathers enjoy sharing with their young children? How purposeful are fathers in selecting the types of books they read to their children?

Barriers that Limit Father Involvement in Literacy Activities

There are a number of possible barriers that limit current father involvement in promoting early literacy in their children. The Early Head Start Study (Administration for Children and Families 2004) described four specific barriers that many fathers

face. The focus from the EHS review is on fathers from low income families. The research review identified a number of specific areas that limit fathers' involvement in early literacy. These are similar to the research results on father involvement in general. Time pressures related to full-time work is a factor that has been identified as a barrier to father involvement (Clark 2009). This also shows up in the EHS review as a barrier. Fathers' residency also was identified as a barrier in the EHS study. Martinez et al. (2006) note that resident fathers are five times more likely to read to their children every day versus nonresident fathers. A growing subpopulation of nonresident fathers in the United States includes fathers who are incarcerated (Palm 2004). The lack of literacy and experience reading are major barriers for fathers who have grown up in generational poverty. Many in this group of EHS fathers may have also experienced failure in school. Nichols (2000) reports that fathers in Australia are more likely than mothers to report a history of school failure and that fathers are more likely to dislike reading aloud to their children due to lack of experience and confidence. Nichols also describes fathers as more likely to use strategies to shorten time spent reading. These are important barriers to address in creating programs that would encourage fathers to read to their children. Issues like lack of time, residency and low literacy levels require focused interventions and intensive recruiting.

There is another set of barriers that appear to be related to gender roles and messages about the roles of fathers and mothers and their responsibility for encouraging literacy and reading to their children. Clark (2005) reports that fathers have less experience reading to their children and are less inclined to participate in conventional print-related activities. Bus et al. (1997) describe fathers as less certain about expected reading behaviors. Macleod (2008) in an analysis of literacy programs for parents focuses on some additional barriers to fathers. He notes that most program environments are feminized and employ female staff with limited experience working with men. The physical spaces of early education programs reflect a female influence and the activities are gendered. This type of environment leads to a mismatch of program environment and activities that may not be familiar and comfortable for fathers. He suggests that the challenge is to rewrite the script for father-only groups rather than relying on our current template for family literacy programs that primarily serve mothers.

Macleod (2008) challenges early childhood family literacy programs to examine the larger issues that may keep fathers as a group reluctant to participate in early literacy programs. Ideas related to male identity are deep-seated and the literacy program environment and materials may discourage father involvement (Palm and Fagan 2008). Many fathers not only defer to mothers to take responsibility for early literacy development but also may feel it is "unmanly" to participate in family literacy activities. In recent program evaluation research on parents of children in family literacy programs in Minnesota, less than 3 % of 330 participants were fathers (Palm 2007). Fathers who do participate in these programs often have to find a rationale to explain their participation in a program that serves mothers. The author encountered a father who made it clear that the primary reason that he was participating in the program was a work-related injury. Many men still see their primary family role as bread-winners (Clark 2009).

Mother and Father Differences

Differences between fathers and mothers related to early literacy activities come out in a few studies but this is not an area that has been systematically examined. A recent study in Australia (Nichols 2000) notes some interesting differences between mothers and fathers in relation to early literacy. Mothers were more likely to recognize the importance of early exposure to books. Mothers were also more likely to read at various times throughout the day while fathers were more likely to read only at bedtime. This latter observation may reflect fathers' work hours and availability to interact with their children in the evening after work. Fathers were also more likely to report a dislike of reading aloud and used strategies to shorten the time spent reading to their child. Fathers appear to be less comfortable with shared reading, may have limited skills in reading aloud and may not understand or value the importance of reading to their young children. Changing fathers' attitudes about reading may be a starting place in preparing men to become more involved in shared reading and other literacy-related activities. A focus on increasing shared reading skills and thus comfort with reading aloud should also be incorporated into intervention programs with fathers.

The theme of gender differences has been touched upon including, attitudes about the importance of reading, the amount of time reading, and perhaps style of reading. How widespread are these gender differences? How do they influence and limit fathers' behaviors and influence on their child's development of early literacy skills? These differences may also make fathers' style unique and influence literacy development in different ways. This is another area that could be studied in greater depth to understand if fathers do make a unique contribution based on what they read and their style of reading.

Benefits of Father Involvement in Early Literacy

Two different authors summarize some specific benefits of fathers reading to children. Flouri and Bachanan (2003) write that fathers reading to children "fosters emotional security." It also aids relaxation and is an important means for transmitting shared values. Green (2002) makes the claim that when fathers read to children they are superior readers, they perform better in school and have better relationship skills. These outcomes for children are logical extensions of the more general research findings about fathers and literacy. Specific empirical evidence about father involvement in early literacy development and the connection to specific child outcomes is still limited. It is clear that fathers are a potential resource for early literacy development that could be strengthened and utilized more frequently. Fathers' reading to children can foster both the emotional bond between father and child as well as support literacy and later school success. This double impact of reading with children is what makes it such an important father–child activity.

Summary of the Research Review

While the research on fathers and early literacy is limited, there are some general conclusions that can be used to direct literacy program development for fathers of young children. The following points provide a brief summary of the research findings:

- Fathers are involved in a number of different literacy activities but less than mothers.
- Fathers' involvement is a critical and independent factor in child's learning and school success.
- Fathers tend to be more limited than mothers in their knowledge and skills involved in supporting early literacy.
- Fathers' attitudes and behaviors around literacy are related to their education levels and residence.
- Some fathers may not believe that supporting early literacy development in their children is an important part of their role as fathers.
- Barriers to father involvement are related to male socialization patterns and program designs of typical family literacy program for parents and young children.

Fathers are interested and invested in their children being successful in school and can have a strong influence on their child's motivation to succeed in school. It is clear that interventions to be most effective must focus on fathers' attitudes and skills, while building on fathers' interests and strengths.

Practice Literature and Early Literacy Interventions with Fathers

The practice literature is another source of important information in understanding the connections between fathers' attitudes and behaviors related to early literacy and their impact on literacy development in young children. While numerous programs in the past 10 years have been developed and implemented at a local level through Head Start and Early Head Start in the United States and through the National Literacy Trust in the United Kingdom, published evaluation studies of the programs have been limited. The literature in this section includes descriptions and some tentative evaluation findings as well as a couple of articles that have reviewed program efforts and report some specific strategies for recruiting and designing programs. Intervention programs with fathers that address early literacy as a primary focus have been limited and there are no high quality research studies (random control treatment studies). This is a limitation of this review but there have been some efforts to design programs for fathers and young children and these begin to offer some clear, concrete strategies for program design and implementation that are worth reviewing and integrating with the earlier research results. The literature includes one-time events to more intensive programs (5 months long) for fathers and young children (Saracho 2008).

The section will conclude with some recommendations about strategies that should be considered when designing programs for fathers and young children.

Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) Program

There are a couple of examples of intervention programs for fathers in the practice literature that specifically address early literacy. FRED (Green 2002) is one attempt to get fathers to read to their young children on a daily basis. The program is a simple intervention strategy that encourages fathers to begin reading to their young child 15 minutes a day and then increase it to 30 minutes a day over a 1-month period. The program meets with dads and kids two times with a month between the two 1 ½ to 2 hour sessions. Books are given to children at the first session and program staff model reading with children. Fathers are given information on the importance of fathers and complete a pretest set of questions on reading behaviors. The fathers are then given information about the importance of reading to young children and tips for reading. In addition, each father receives a journal to track his reading behavior for a month. At the end of the month, fathers and children meet again for a celebration and additional books to bring home. The encouragement to form this new habit of reading to their young child appears to be successful with some men. Fathers become more aware of how important father involvement in early literacy is and how reading to their children will help them to be successful in school. The FRED program is designed for fathers and has attracted fathers who are concerned with their child's literacy. It has a unique design that reinforces dads for developing the habit of reading every day to their child. The free books are an important element of this program that is specifically designed for fathers.

The FRED pilot program evaluation results from Green (2002) indicated that: 50.4 % of fathers reported the program "got me reading to my child every day"; 63.4 % reported that the program "increased the time I spent with my child"; 62.2 % said that the program "improved the quality of the time I spent with my child"; 60.2 % said the program "increased my satisfaction level as a parent"; and 63.4 % of fathers reported that the program "improved my relationship with my child" Green (2002). These results are based on an initial sample of about 200 fathers in various early childhood programs in Texas. The questionnaires were completed by 123 fathers who completed the two-session program. The results suggest that this is a simple program design that can be effective in changing fathers' reading behavior.

The Minnesota Humanities Center (2009) promoted FRED events in early childhood programs across Minnesota during 2006. The events were similar to those piloted by Green and met two times with a month in between. The total attendance for 46 FRED events was close to 900 fathers at the initial events and over 600 fathers came to the second events. Fathers reported a high degree of satisfaction, rating the program as excellent (35.5 %) and very good (48.2 %). A majority of fathers (66.7 %) reported that they read more frequently to their children due to their participation in the program.

Green and Cooper (2008) have reported additional findings about the FRED program based on a sample of 209 fathers from ten early childhood and elementary school programs in Texas. They found that fathers (50 % wrote comments and themes were analyzed) reported a number of important benefits from reading to their children. These included five different themes: 55.5 % reported improvement in their child's literacy skills; 48.3 % said that they felt like they were more involved in their child's education; 41.6 % said that reading allowed them to spend more time with their child; and 16.1 % reported improved father–child bonding. Fathers also answered a set of questions about the influence of daily shared reading on father–child interaction and reported a number of areas that were improved including: improvement of quality of time with child (69.9 %), more involvement in child's education (68.9 %), improved my relationship with my child (64.6 %), and increased my satisfaction being a parent (64.6 %). These results continue to support the FRED program as an effective intervention program for fathers. The strengths of this program include: the brevity and simplicity for replication, the broad range of early childhood programs that can adapt and sponsor the program, minimal amount of initial commitment for fathers, it is nonthreatening and fathers see that book reading is an easy and fun way for them to promote their child's learning and school success.

Especially for Dads: Head Start Literacy Program

Another effort to support early literacy was a book-based program in a Head Start program in Vermont where fathers met for three evenings and were given 11 books to take home and read with their child (Rosen 2004). The fathers were introduced to some basic ways to share and enjoy books with children. The emphasis was on *"exploring the book's ideas, having conversations and asking questions- all the necessary ingredients for promoting early language and literacy development."* Especially for Dads is an example of a program that is focused on literacy strategies and teaches fathers new ways to read with their children. The fathers and children met together with dinner included and explored the books that were selected to be father-friendly picture books (e.g., Pablo's Tree, Taxi, Taxi and How Many Stars in the Sky?). The books included positive male role models, ethnic and racial diversity and themes about independence, relationships, and the wide world. The program used "hands-on" activities and provided the fathers with lots of ideas for activities to expand the lessons from the books. The fathers were given the message that fathers play an important role as readers and that they should continue to practice reading the books and using ideas from the program. The take home message was "Reading to your child is important and you can do it!"

Dads & Kids Book Club

The Dads & Kids Book has been offered as a 6-week program for dads of children ages 4–6 through the Early Childhood Family Education Program in St. Cloud,

Minnesota, for a 4-year period (Minnesota Humanities Center 2009). There were six sessions of the book club offered with the typical group of eight–ten families. The fathers and children meet together for 1 ½ –2 hours and focus on a specific picture book that features positive father role models each week (e.g., Night Driving, Owl Moon, Two Old Potatoes). The dads are provided with the book to take home and a set of specific tips for reading the book. The father–child time together included dramatic play, science, art, food preparation, crafts, and literacy activities related to the book. There was also a parent session for dads to discuss book themes and lessons and reading strategies that they had observed while the children continued to work on projects and sing with a male early childhood teacher.

The program focused on two major goals: (1) to strengthen father–child relationships through shared literacy activities and (2) to provide fathers with new ideas for supporting early literacy development in their child. The program is based on some specific strategies that link research on parents/fathers with early literacy development in children (Minnesota Humanities Center 2009).

1. Identify a set of books that feature fathers as positive role models. This type of book provides a familiar and comfortable starting place for fathers.
2. Provide the fathers with a model of interactive reading practices. The program used a male teacher to model different ways of engaging children, helping them to understand the story, and expand their vocabulary.
3. Give specific concrete tips to fathers and connect these to their observation of skills in the teacher who modeled reading the book.
4. Give families a copy of the book to take home so fathers can practice reading tips and develop new skills.
5. Create father–child activities around the book characters and themes to extend the literacy learning through a variety of "hands-on" activities including dramatic play, craft projects, cooking, science, and writing. This models the important message that literacy is promoted through many different activities in addition to book reading.

In the initial evaluation of the book club program, the fathers reported that participating in the program: increased their understanding of children and literacy development (100 %); provided new ideas about reading (100 %); they had more fun reading with their child (100 %); they learned new literacy activities (100 %); and they better understood their role in supporting literacy (90 %). In addition to what the fathers learned through the book club activities, they also reported changes in their children's behavior. Fathers noted that: "she wants me to read to her more"; "he will pay more attention to the story"; "they talk about the books during the week"; "they are interested in stories beyond the words"; and "my children ask more questions about the story." These responses indicate that the children are more engaged in shared book reading and they are enjoying this process. This suggests that improvement in the quality of book reading will lead to improved literacy outcomes for children, including a deeper understanding of the stories.

Literacy Workshop for Dads

The most intensive father–child literacy program for fathers and their kindergarten children (5 year olds) entitled, "*A Literacy Workshop for Dads*" (Saracho 2008). The program lasted for 5 months and met two times a week for 3-hour sessions. The first session was a workshop that focused on specific strategies for promoting literacy. In the next session, the children would accompany the fathers to provide opportunities to practice new skills. The amount of time and level of commitment for fathers went far beyond the other programs that have been described. It was not clear from the results what the typical attendance was but more than 50 % of the available fathers in two kindergarten classes did participate at some level in this intensive program. Teachers who were involved in recruiting dads and went through 5 months extensive training before the program began. This level of training may have been an important factor in the successful recruitment of fathers.

The fathers reported that the workshop was a positive experience and appreciated the quality time spent with their child. Saracho (2008) reported two major findings based on qualitative analysis of the program exit interviews. First, the fathers reported individual differences in their appraisal of literacy strategies. The second finding was that fathers also had different perceptions of the benefit of the program. For example, one father emphasized that it was positive to see that fathers are interested in the program. Another father noted that his daughter progressed in reading. One of the challenges mentioned by the author was keeping the fathers motivated to attend the program. The fathers who did attend learned new literacy strategies that they were able to implement in their home environments. An important issue for practice and program design that emerges is program intensity. A program that requires 6 hours a week plus "practice" at home may be too intensive. The level of program intensity for literacy programs and the related outcomes or changes in fathers' attitudes and behaviors is not yet understood. Fathers' reluctance to commit time to literacy programs may make less intensive programs a better choice to reach more fathers.

Literacy Programs in the United Kingdom

The National Literacy Trust in the United Kingdom (National Literacy Trust 2003) reported a number of specific literacy program that focused on men and boys. The reports were brief and tended to focus on school-aged boys and their fathers. Some of the programs cited were: Reading Support Groups for fathers that offered support to fathers concerned about their sons' reading; the Kick-off program that linked libraries to sports programs to reach male readers; and the Dads & Lads program which used sports activities to recruit dads and promote reading with their sons. A common theme in these programs was the inclusion of sports activities as a way to attract boys and dads into programs that also encouraged and modeled reading and literacy as important areas of learning for fathers to support. While a few of the

initiatives that were described focused on young children, most were for elementary-aged boys. The review of research literature earlier in this chapter would suggest that this focus may be limited in effectiveness in promoting literacy skills due to the age of the children and the decline in shared reading during the early school years. The specific focus on boys in the United Kingdom is unique and expresses a concern about gender related to reading achievement and school success that has not been present in US literacy programs for fathers.

Lessons from Practice

Karther (2002) summarizes some of the emerging lessons from the practice literature about working with fathers. First, early childhood teachers should not exclude or underestimate fathers. Fathers do want to be involved and will participate with a little encouragement. In recruiting fathers, it is important to communicate directly with fathers. Fathers may also be unsure of where to begin with literacy activities. Fletcher and Dally (2002) suggest that programs start with books with traditional male themes and positive male characters. Fathers are more likely to identify with these characters and to enjoy the stories. Another way to increase motivation is to take a broader view of literacies which values fathers' abilities and interests. From a review of Early Head Start program (Booz/Allen/Hamilton 2004), some important factors that relate to successful programming for fathers have been identified. These included literacy-based events (e.g., reading contests), gym activities and reading, "hands-on" activities (e.g., making books, cooking), and outings that involved activities that are familiar and fun for dads (sporting events, fishing, nature hikes). A summary of lessons from the practice literature follows:

- Target programs at early childhood years (ages 3–6) to engage fathers at a stage in the child's development where they have a greater impact.
- Understand the role of male socialization as a source of potential barriers to program participation.
- Father-only programs may be one way to create a "male space" for literacy activities within early childhood programs.
- Communicate directly with dads to recruit them.
- Emphasize the importance of fathers in children's early literacy development and link their role to school success.
- Use sport-related activities to attract and recruit fathers and sons.
- Use books that are father-friendly and reflect male themes/interests.
- Use "hands-on" activities to engage fathers and children to work together.
- Provide free children's books to keep and share at home allowing fathers to practice new ideas and skills.
- Model specific interactive reading strategies for dads to observe.
- Provide activities that fathers can easily implement at home.

Conclusions

The positive role fathers can play in promoting early literacy and language has been established. Fathers can promote language and literacy in direct and indirect ways. A first step in reaching this potential would be to create awareness that this is an important and legitimate role for fathers. This role can be mutually beneficial to fathers as well as children. This review has focused exclusively on impacts of fathers on literacy development in young children. The impacts on fathers should also be considered. Clark (2009) suggests that benefits for fathers have generally been neglected. The research literature has been limited to fathers and programs in the United States and the United Kingdom. There has been little concerted and systematic effort to explore fathers' attitudes and behaviors that influence literacy development in young children. This is an area that would benefit from more systematic research with diverse populations of fathers. Early Head Start programs in the United States have begun to examine the role of fathers in low-income families (Duursma et al. 2008). Intervention programs and practice literature also are limited but suggest that programs can be effective in changing both attitudes (awareness of the importance of fathers' roles) and behaviors (reading more frequently and new ideas for engaging children in stories). While no randomized, control design, empirical studies have been reported in the literature, the influence of fathers on child's enjoyment of shared reading, increased comprehension, and learning new words all concur with previous research on parents (mother) and early literacy. Practice literature does suggest that programs specifically for fathers and young children ages 1–5 should be developed and more carefully evaluated to determine the most important program factors such as intensity, focus, and format as well as successful recruitment strategies.

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Chapter 3
Caring Fathers

Empowering Children to be Loving Human Beings

Kevin J. Swick

The challenges of contemporary society have influenced a change in how fathers are viewed and how fathers view themselves (Cabrera et al. 2000). We have moved toward an understanding that fathers need to play multiple roles within the family and thus have increased opportunities to interact and bond with their children (Flouri 2005). We have also broadened our construct of fathering to include the various caring roles performed by significant care givers in the child's life. It has also become apparent that fathers can play important roles in helping children develop healthy social and emotional lives. They are also important in children's development of intellectual skills as well as work and life skills (Allen and Daly 2007). It is also important to recognize that fathers are positively influenced by their involvement with their children (Lamb 2010). Across cultures and within specific father groups (e.g., teen fathers), fathers of varied contexts report many rewards of their fathering experiences (Rosenberg and Wilcox 2006).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the dynamics of how caring fathers can empower their children to be loving human beings. The key elements of this exploration are: (a) the important aspects of caring, (b) the potential and real dimensions of fathers' caring, (c) how caring fathers influence children, (d) challenges facing fathers in their caring, (e) strategies for promoting caring in fathers, and (f) a look at the context for understanding the importance of father-child relations. This chapter tries to present a mosaic of insights related to the caring power that fathers have for helping young children develop into sensitive and nurturing human beings.

What We Need to Know about Caring?

Caring fathers are in the making throughout their lives. Caring persons do not suddenly appear, they are the result of a life time of nurturing and caring experiences (Swick 2005). Living in caring relations strengthens us in every way. As children are

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exposed to loving adults, they develop caring skills to live positively throughout their lives. We see this in children's earliest development where they mimic the social behaviors of the adults in their lives. As Bronfenbrenner observed in his cross-cultural assessment of how human beings become human, children rely heavily on the adult role models in their lives (Bronfenbrenner 2005).

Caring also functions to help us develop a healthy sense of self (Taylor 2002). Caring helps us to anchor our behavior in loving ways. Our sociocultural contexts greatly influence our formation of caring constructs and behaviors (Taylor 2002). For example, we know that very young children respond to caring others by modeling empathy (Hoffman 2000). They learn in infancy to respond to the needs of others and expand their caring skills through many nurturing experiences during the early years. As Swick (2005) suggests, children look to the rituals and practices that adults involve them with as the patterns of living—and hopefully these are caring experiences.

Caring fathers are greatly influenced by their early childhood experiences. Of utmost importance is that young children experience trusting and warm, safe relations with their parents and other care givers (Caldwell 1989; Swick 2005). It is also important that children have positive, caring adult role models. As Bronfbrennner (2005) notes, children learn a great deal by simply observing how the important adults in their lives treat each other. We tend to follow the examples of caring and empathy we see in the behavior of others. Swick (2005) tells the story of one man who took time from his work to go and help victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida. When he was asked what motivated him to do this service to others he said, "I learned this from my father—helping others is what he was all about."

The caring process helps us to expand and enrich our perspectives about life. It enables us to better understand the needs of others. As Hoffman (2000) suggests, when we care for others we strengthen our own caring. Thus, fathers who develop caring bonds with their children also report developing a broader sense of caring for all children (Allen and Daly 2007). It is important to note that when nonresidential fathers maintain caring relations with their children, both the children and their fathers report very positive outcomes (Palkovitz 1997).

Caring also alters our ways of relating to others. We tend to focus our relations in more sensitive ways—thus seeking to help others feel secure and loved. Some fathers note that as they became more nurturing with their children they spent more time with them and were more emotionally responsive with their children (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2000.

Finally, caring is our way of renewing our sense of purpose in life. Through our development and use of caring father actions, we discover and enrich our perspectives for loving and nurturing all the people in our lives (Wuthnow 1995).

The Dimensions of Caring in Fathers

What are the many dimensions of the caring process as actualized or that are potentially achievable in fathers? While the responses to this question are varied, the author focuses on four dimensions: socioemotional involvement with their children,

modeling caring in daily activities, supporting his spouse or significant other in their caring, and involving children in caring experiences.

Direct socioemotional involvement with children is potentially one of the most powerful things a father can experience. Father-child affective relations lay a foundation for their lifelong personality growth. As noted by Allen and Daly (2007), fathers who are involved in their children's lives are more likely to show greater psychosocial maturity and to be more satisfied with their lives. Fathers, who have positive socioemotional relations with their children also report having less stress, are more able to understand themselves, and have more empathy with others (Eggebean and Knoester 2001; Ozer et al. 1998). It seems clear that fathers who engage in caring relations with their children sharpen their overall empathy for others. Recognizing, validating, and responding to children's social and affective feelings is a powerful way to engage children in learning about caring (Bronfenbrenner 2005). These direct socioemotional interactions with children also seem to create an aura of security for children and fathers; they develop a mental schema of their relationships as energizing their overall life functions (Parke 2000). Through direct affective involvement with each other, father and child craft a dynamic and supportive system of relations with each other and their surrounding ecologies (Bornstein 1995).

Modeling caring in every day activities is another critical element in the fathering process (Bouchard and Lee 2000). Being empathic in our relations with others strengthens our self-esteem and enhances our concept of caring roles (Heretick 2003). Of special significance is fathers' caring and support for their wives. For example, research suggests that father involvement in nurturing their wives in parental roles increases the parental functioning of both husband and wife (Coleman et al. 2004). It is also known that children model the every day actions of fathers. Caring fathers tend to produce caring children (Bronfenbrenner 2005). The modeling process helps everyone in the family develop a mental schema that is rooted in caring (Swick 2005).

Indeed, *showing strong support for one's spouse or important partner in the parenting process* is a key part of being a caring father (Formosa et al. 2007). For example, it has been noted that mothers who feel the care and support of their husbands report being strengthened in all parenting capacities (Bouchard and Lee 2000). Fathers are enhanced when they have mutually supportive relations with their spouses or important partners. They tend to be more involved with their children and their spouse when they feel the support of their partner (Cabrera et al. 2000). Family mutuality promotes a family culture of caring in everyone in the family.

Another dimension of caring in fathers is *their involvement of their children in caring experiences* (Flouri 2006). What we do with our children as fathers seems to send a very strong message about how to live. For example, children report that their strong community service involvement is rooted in the service activities they did with their parents (Swick 2005; Wuthnow 1995). There is also a very positive impact on fathers as they tend to learn more about their caring relationship with their children (Allen and Daly 2007). This is also a very strong way to help children develop an understanding of how to use their environment (through contributing and sharing their talents) to further develop their skills and dispositions (Sheldon 2002).

Teaching children the language of caring is important to their being able to develop mental frameworks for bring caring persons. As fathers help children achieve caring vocabulary, children's potential for developing long-term ideas about caring is enhanced. Likewise, as fathers engage children in acquiring the "tools of caring" such as helping others, responding to the needs of others, and using peaceful venues for problem solving—children become empowered human beings (Swick 2005). The language of caring helps children and fathers enrich their caring relations in all capacities.

It is apparent that caring fathers expand the learning potential of children and themselves through their loving interactions with them, the modeling of caring behaviors, and their engaging children in acquiring the language and social skills for developing lifelong skills for being a caring person.

How Caring Fathers Influence Caring in Children?

Fathers are powerful influences in children's development of caring. This process occurs through many aspects of father-child dynamics including: role modeling, direct interactions, designing learning environments, and their responsiveness and warmth in relating to and with their children (Batten 2007).

The father as an *example of caring* is perhaps one of the most impacting experiences of a child's life (Fagan and Palm 2004). Bronfenbrenner (2005) noted that children are more attentive to what parents do than they are to what parents say. For example, there is evidence that children are positively influenced by the caring that fathers show for their wives and the reverse also holds true. As noted by Belsky (1981) and Amato (1998), when fathers had caring relations with their wives it positively affected everyone in the family. This positive socioemotional impact was also present in cases of divorce—where fathers maintained caring relations with their ex-wives (Ross and Broh 2000). It is also known that children of warm and nurturing fathers exhibit these behaviors in their peer relations (Belsky 1981). Two critical features of the "father modeling" impact are: (1) children acquire images of how to care in concrete ways and (2) children have consistent experiences in observing fathers who are caring and nurturing in their behavior (Amato and Rivera 1999).

Direct father-child interactions provide the dynamic ecology in which children construct a great deal of their ideas about caring (Fagan and Palm 2004). For example, Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006) noted that many fathers develop strong bonds with their infants through play. Fathers are also powerful when they express care and affection in their relations with their children (Lamb 1997). Fathers also help children to set boundaries for their relations with others by the nature of their interactions with their children. For example, fathers who encourage exploratory play in their children, provide them with the needed socioemotional support for the development of healthy self-esteem (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2008). It is very important that fathers use many opportunities to guide their children's development of caring. Fathers enhance children's understanding of caring when they exhibit caring in their

diverse interactions with them such as play, work, social activities, problem solving, and many other venues (Amato 1998).

The way that fathers develop learning environments strongly influences their children's development of caring. Highly involved caring and nurturing fathers seem to promote higher levels of emotional security in children (Ross and Broh 2000). For example, fathers that organize family to include children in emotionally enriching experiences such as sharing a picnic or taking a walk together, foster an increased sense of acceptance and validation in their children (Lamb 1997). Fathers who are engaged in setting up learning activities, library visits, and helping their children develop literacy skills and dispositions greatly strengthen the social and cognition skills of their children (Swick 2005).

How fathers respond to their children's social and emotional needs is very influential in children's development of caring (Batten 2007). As noted by Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006):

> Even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and as they grow older, have better social connections with peers. (p. 12)

Emotionally responsive fathers not only convey their love to their children but also provide them with ways to care for and with others (Flouri 2005). Very importantly, emotionally expressive fathers help children validate their development of self-expression as natural and important processes (Parke 2000).

Challenges to Fathers' Caring Roles

Unfortunately, the important mission of fathers is often challenged by the presence of many social and cultural stressors, often in the form of stereotypes that limit or distort the real roles fathers should and can carry out (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2004).

Perhaps the most powerful challenge exists in our narrow conception about who should take the lead in the caring roles and processes so important to our societal functioning. A cursory viewing of television role models clearly indicates the bias toward women as the primary care givers (Swick 2001). While our cultural values are slowly shifting toward the idea of men as caring and nurturing role models, it still is far short of what it will take to create healthy social and emotional contexts for our children. We still see men contextualized mainly in structural and problem-solving modes, rarely in the nurturing roles. Even when visualized in caring roles, men are typically presented as less than women in terms of competence in the nurturing venue (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2008).

Fathers are also viewed largely within a deficit paradigm, where the gaps and failures of fathering are played up more than the achievements that many caring fathers display in their daily relations with their children (Batten 2007). For example, many media programs depict men as ineffective in the nurturing and affective areas, showing them as unable to fully embrace these roles (Pleck 1997).

Unresponsive and nonsupportive societal values for fathering are also major barriers for fathering (Parke 2000). Beginning with the simplistic and distorted idea that paternity leave is really not needed for fathers and continuing with the rigid concepts of father involvement in their children's lives depict a societal system that devalues fathering in the reality contexts that most men find themselves in the fathering process. Again, while we are seeing a gradual shift toward more sensitive father policies for their relations and involvement in their children's lives, the prevailing view is that mothers (and other female care givers) can best accomplish these roles. Only in the past few decades have we observed more interest in research and applications of bonding and attachment constructs to fathers' relations with their infants and young children (Fagan and Palm 2004).

Poor role models for fathering short circuit efforts to strengthen the role of fathers in all aspects of child and family dynamics (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2008). We tend to adopt the behaviors and attitudes of the people we interact with over long periods of time. When fathers are mostly absent or involved in only cursory ways with children, we cannot expect to see positive improvements in the fathering process.

Ultimately, we need to address these challenges to effective fathering by creating societal values, community systems, and family-school venues that encourage, support, and reward fathers for their positive involvement in children's total development.

Strategies for Promoting Caring in Fathers

Across cultures there are a myriad of strategies for promoting caring in fathers. These strategies can be organized as "informal" and "formal"—thus providing a comprehensive view of the potential for nurturing fathers toward more caring involvement with their children.

Informal Venues

Perhaps one of the most viable strategies is the *social and cultural support* that societies can provide fathers (Pleck 1997). It is known that as fathers sense the caring process at work in their lives, they feel strengthened in carrying out their nurturing roles (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2008). Examples of cross-cultural supports of fathers include: adequate paternity leave, work-family flexibility to promote father involvement, father education programs, father networking, and—of course—high support for total family well-being in areas like health care, basic human needs, and education (Fagan and Palm 2004). Support in various forms conveys the message that a society values caring fathers. Societies that provide plentiful supports and resources for fathering note the positive impact this has on the quality of fathering (Lamb 1997).

An equally important venue is the *societal validation* for fathers as they engage in caring roles (Batten 2007). Lamb (1997) cites the innovative efforts of the Swedish government to encourage men to be more nurturing and involved in child care. As fathers feel valued in caring roles, their motivation to increase their involvement in fathering is likely to increase (Pleck 1997). Two dimensions of this process are the images of fathering we present to our societies, and the rewards or lack thereof that are linked with being caring fathers. When societies validate fathering, fathers experience needed recognition and support.

To fully develop an "ecology for supporting caring fathers" will require the involvement of *business and industry* (Fagan and Palm 2004). Developing policies and practices that encourage fathers to be more closely involved with their families would be an excellent start. Furthermore, sponsoring father-child family events and providing "family time"—would foster the desired culture for nurturing fathers in caring roles (Swick 2001). Fathers who feel strengthened by the support of community resources increase their involvement with their children (Marhsall et al. 2001).

Harmonious marital relations create an indirect but powerful venue for supporting father involvement in caring roles (Pleck 1997). It appears that the sense of well-being that emerges in harmonious relationships energizes fathers and mothers in their interactions with each other and their children. Fathers living in mutually rewarding relationships seem to show more caring in their roles as fathers (Parke 2000). This reality of the need for nurturing marital support in fathers and mothers should be translated into more emphasis on this process in parenting education and family dynamics programs and resources (Fagan and Palm 2004).

An extension and critical element of harmony is the role of support and validation by mothers (Schoppe-Sullivan et al. 2004). There is evidence that suggests that strong support from mothers has a positive influence on father's caring relations with the children (Bouchard and Lee 2000).

Formal Venues

Formalized strategies like "leave time" provide fathers with specific supports to enhance their ability to carry out fathering roles (Fagan and Palm 2004). For example, paternal leave allows fathers to participate more fully in the early development of the family and to establish bonds with their children. This time also encourages fathers to take on more of the child rearing process—thus increasing mothers' opportunities to benefit from such support (Lamb 1997). Leave time seems to nurture stronger marital relations which foster a healthy family climate.

Participation in *parenting education programs* is another formal venue for fathers. Gaining new information and skills can strengthen fathers as they negotiate the different issues of fathering (Palkovitz 1997). For example, one father noted that he gained a much better understanding of his toddler's growth through participation in a *Parents as Teachers* program. Another father indicated that he acquired more self-confidence as a father as a result of being in a father program on parenting. The three

things fathers point to as most beneficial in parent education programs are (Lamb 1997):

1. Increased understanding of their children's development and corresponding needs.
2. A better understanding of how to relate to their children.
3. Improved sense of self-confidence as a father.

Another useful strategy for fathers is to be involved in *networking groups where they join with other fathers* to strengthen each others personal and parental functioning (Fagan and Palm 2004). These socioaffective support groups are especially popular among fathers who have special needs and/or are experiencing unusual stress (e.g., new baby, unemployment. . .) as a father (Batten 2007). For example, one new father noted that he gained a sense of support from other fathers in the church-sponsored fathers' group he joined. He felt more at ease being a new father with the positive feedback he was getting from others. Fathers identify four benefits of the "father network" construct (Fagan and Iglesias 1999):

1. The social and emotional *relations* with other fathers.
2. The *support* gained from networking with other fathers.
3. The *access to new resources* for fathering gained from being in a network.
4. The validation of one's importance as a father that is conveyed by other fathers.

Study groups are an extension of the networking idea—engaging fathers in exploring specific topics through guided study (Bouchard and Lee 2000). For example, fathers who have the common situation of having a special needs child may find a study group to enhance their knowledge and their support of each other in better responding to their common need.

While it is more likely for mothers to be a part of parent-child interaction time at school or in other settings—*father-child interactions* are very powerful ways to enhance the caring roles of fathers (Flouri 2006). It is known, for example, that nurturing father-child play time promotes strong caring bonds in fathers and their children (Lamb 1997).

Ultimately, it is the combination of formal and informal experiences that fathers have in loving and nurturing roles that enhances their caring. We need to foster the many dimensions of fathering with several opportunities and incentives for them to build and sustain their caring relations with their children and spouses.

Creating Communities that Nurture Caring Fathers

In any society, caring fathers are needed to partner with mothers and other caring people to foster caring in children. In a complex global sociocultural context in which our children now live, caring fathers are essential. Caring fathers can provide a secure and nurturing dimension in their child, marital, and family relations. Indeed, some research (Flouri 2005) notes that fathers provide important nurturing and instrumental role modeling for children. This culminating section of the chapter examines why

father-supportive communities are key to having loving fathers. It also discusses how father-caring communities can be fostered. Finally, a focus on creating father-centered education for young children is presented.

Father-Supportive Communities are Key   We draw upon societal and community messages to develop our social constructs about important roles such as fathering (Batten 2007). Unfortunately, many societal schemas present limited and/or negative images of fathering (Batten 2007). Slowly this orientation is being challenged as community, education, and faith-based groups develop programs and practices that support fathering as a caring and nurturing process. For example, many schools now provide special emphases on father involvement to engage and validate fathers through positive and rewarding projects such as "father support groups" and "father reading days"—both of which aim to show support for high father involvement in children's lives. When handled sensitively so, children who do not have fathers are involved in these activities (often with male mentors), these activities offer concrete schema for father involvement and for helping young children see and feel the presence of fathers in their lives. When communities and schools have specific father-supportive practices, a clear message is sent to our children: fathers and other male care givers are very important to the lives of our families and communities (Fagan and Palm 2004). We need to sensitively respond to children without fathers by connecting them with caring male mentors.

Current societal needs also point to a more dynamic role for fathers in both child rearing and family dynamics (Palkovitz 1997). Our economic structure engages mothers and fathers in full-time work and thus requires fathers to be more involved in role sharing in relation to caring for children and other family (Bronfenbrenner 2005). Fathers are also needed in more support roles and thus communities must provide fathers with more flexible contexts so they can carry out these needed roles. The author is reminded of a single parent father who recently was told to keep his sick child at home from child care but had no support in the work place to be able to carry out this logical act. "I felt terrible," the father said—"What was I to do, lose a day's wages (and possibly get fired) or take my sick child to school?" Many parents face this conflicting situation with little sensitivity from our communities.

Fostering Father-Caring Communities   Across social and cultural contexts, caring fathers emerge best within communities that care about having nurturing fathers (Parke 2000). Three broad constructs help to shape the needed community caring that can foster positive and engaged fathers: (1) presenting positive images of men in caring roles; (2) encouraging men and specifically fathers to engage in the fathering and caregiving roles in nurturing and supportive ways (e.g., provide supports that help men carry out these nurturing activities); and (3) developing rituals, practices, and resources that make it doable to be a caring and nurturing father (Cabrera et al. 2000).

Present Positive Images of Men   Male violence toward others (especially women and children) is evident across cultures (Swick 2005). We often ponder why this is the case? Are men just not as caring as women? Do they lack the potential to be

truly caring persons? Yet there is strong evidence that men can and are able to be very nurturing and loving persons. Unfortunately, what children and adults see most prominently is the image of men as physically powerful and aggressive and lacking is nurturing behaviors and perspectives. Ask yourself—how often are men presented in positive and caring ways on daily television? Even the daily news broadcasts include violent images of men that greatly overshadow more caring male activities (Groves 2002). We need to reshape our media- and public-related images of men to provide a more balanced perspective, one that promotes the idea of men and male care givers as caring and nurturing persons (Groves 2002; Hargrave 2003). The newly developed image should show men in caring relations with their spouses, friends, and children as well as their involvement in caring acts in the community (Swick 2005).

Encourage Involvement in Caring Research has noted an interesting and very critical insight: that fathers report a strong increase in their affective development as they engage in more nurturing and loving relations with their children and families (Lamb 1997). The problem seems to be not with fathers per se but more with the cultural and societal contexts in which they become fathers (Pleck 1997). Where do our societies place the most value in terms of what fathers do and do not do; especially in relation to what we really want fathers to spend their time and resources on in terms of their relations with child and family? Our media presentations, financial rewards, honors and recognitions, and societal supports seem to come up way short in terms of concretely encouraging father involvement from conception of the child onward (Palkovitz 1997). The time, resources, and support we offer young fathers is shameful. We need to create a "fathering nest" that begins with adequate paternity leave so fathers can be a part of the bonding process and then move forward with more flexible work expectations and practices—so that fathers can indeed spend significant time in relations with their children and families (Fagan and Palm 2004). For example, business and industry could take the lead with incentives to encourage fathers to be involved in their children's education. Paid leave time once a month for fathers to attend and participate in their child's school would be a superb way to encourage stronger father-child relations (Sheldon 2002).

Develop Father-Supportive Rituals Practically, all pediatricians, child care givers, teachers, counselors, and other family helpers know from experience that caring fathers (fathers who are deeply and wonderfully involved with their children and families) make a powerful difference in the lives of children (Allen and Daly 2007). But they also know that for many fathers they lack the support and resources to craft the caring and nurturing that can make this positive difference in children's lives. We need to create societal rituals that bring fathers and other male care givers into the lives of children more regularly and in more caring ways. For example, it would be a very powerful ritual to create more father involvement in schools—and not just once a year type of activities. We need regular rituals where fathers and other male care givers read to our children weekly, mentor children in many different ways, and engage with them in all kinds of caring roles. We also need to develop community practices such as "father circles"—where fathers meet and share with other fathers on a regular basis. Care givers who are willing to "mentor" children who

lack fathers should be supported with all needed resources and encouraged to develop their mentoring into a regular routine. Programs like Big Brothers of America should be fostered in all communities.

Father-Centered Education for Young Children

To promote long-term changes in fathering societies need to craft and carry out intensive "father-centered" education with young children. Beginning with the early childhood years is when children internalize their understanding of the roles and relationships that comprise our developing selves (Bronfenbrenner 2005). It is during this formative period of development that children (and their parents and care givers) construct their initial ideas about the roles that significant people in their lives play (Heretick 2003). In a very real sense, children and adults coconstruct their schema on the roles that are appropriate for different family members, for example—fathers (Lamb 1997). This process is initiated by the adults who provide the primary role models for children—for fathering, mothering, care giving, and for many other roles.

Thus, we need to be especially attentive to the "fathering education" that children received through the informal environment of the family. The first teachers of fathering in children's lives are their parents, care givers, and other family and significant people. It is what fathers do (or do not do) through their presence (or lack thereof) with their children that comprises the child's first and most powerful "father-centered" education (Taylor 2002). Three particular elements of this father modeling process are critical to how young children begin to construct their schema of fathering: (a) the pattern of relationships that fathers exhibit (caring and nurturing versus harsh and rigid), (b) the time that fathers spend with them as children and with other family—especially their spouse or friend, and (c) the way that fathers engage in helping acts (supporting others in positive ways; Allen and Daly 2007). For it is through what children see and experience with their fathers (or fail to experience) that they come to understand who fathers are in their lives. Thus, for children in father-absent homes, it is crucial that they have access to and experiences with quality and caring male care givers and mentors (Parke 2000).

Ultimately, we need to construct societal supports that encourage fathers and other male care givers to engage with children (and their families) in caring ways. Men need to provide examples of caring as a part of their daily lives, thus encouraging in the children the development of positive and nurturing ideas about fathering.

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Section II
Contexts Within the United States

Chapter 4
Mexican-American Father-Child Literacy Interactions

Olivia N. Saracho

> I want my children to have a better life than me, to succeed in anything they choose to do. To be literate, to be well educated, opens worlds for them and is something no one can take away, no one... I've had to work since I was fourteen and I didn't have certain opportunities, but for my children, things will be different. (Thirty-six year old, Mexican agricultural worker and parent of four elementary school-aged children, as cited in Ortiz and Ordoñez-Jasis 2005, p. 110)

In 1998, Congress acknowledged the value of families' contributions to their children's literacy development and passed the following two legislations:

1. The *Reading Excellence Act* which guarantees that all children are able to read well and independently by the end of third grade.
2. The *Workforce Investment Act* substitutes the *National Adult Literacy Act of 1991* by providing family literacy, adult basic education, and ESL programs.

In addition, the 1998 legislation funded family literacy programs, which provided an incentive for researchers to study the effects of these programs, especially on Mexican-American children.

Young Mexican-American children have frequently been labeled "at-risk," because of their struggle to achieve English language proficiency, which creates problems for their literacy development. The school's traditional language and literacy strategies have served as the source of Mexican-American children's failure (Saracho and Spodek 2002). Researchers and educators confronted this challenge and began to design literacy development approaches that were receptive to the realities of the Mexican-American children and their families. Most of these literacy approaches were examined in children's home and culture where children received family support.

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Family Support System

Young Mexican-American children's personal and academic success relies on the support of significant others such as their family members. Supportive relationships (such as their family's encouragement) influence children's school achievement (Prelow and Loukas 2003), especially Mexican-American immigrant children who are confronted by a new country, new language, and new culture (Sands and Plunkett 2005). These children need to be provided with opportunities that help them both develop and practice language and reading skills within and outside of the family environment. Mexican-American families can promote their children's literacy development in concert with their real-life and real-world experiences (Quezada et al. 2003). For example, Durkin (1966) examined children's home experiences to identify factors that support literacy learning. Durkin's results showed that: (a) reading to children motivated their interest in reading and (b) early readers (reading before first grade) were children who were read to by siblings, parents, and/or another caring adult.

Mexican-American children's home language and culture are different from that of the predominant language and culture of the school (Sands and Plunkett 2005). Studies indicate that Mexican-American children's educational success depends on the family's involvement in school and nonschool learning (Bernal et al. 2000). Family support is the basis for Mexican-American children's personal and academic success (Prelow and Loukas 2003). Family involvement can improve Mexican-American children's language and academic achievement (Quezada et al. 2003). The cultural structures of Mexican-American families support children's positive development (Sands and Plunkett 2005). Steidel and Contreras (2003) identified structures of predominantly Mexican-American families that were comparatively unacculturated. These structures consisted of:

- *Familial support*: Family members support immediate or extended family members in times of need and in everyday life.
- *Familial interconnectedness*: Family members are both physically and emotionally close to each other including those relatives who spend and value their time together.
- *Familial honor*: Family members assume responsibility to protect the family name and defend any attacks against the family's integrity.
- *Subjugation of self for family*: Family members are submissive to and respect the family's rules. (Cited in Saracho 2007a, p. 105).

Steidel and Contreras (2003) characterize this support as part of the construct *familism*, which reflects a core value of the Mexican-American culture (Zinn 1982). Researchers have become interested in examining *familism* because of its predictable consequences, especially among members of this diverse cultural group. Familism is a multidimensional concept that has a minimum of three components: *structural*, *behavioral*, and *attitudinal*. The *structural* component refers to the number of adult relatives who live within driving distance of the family members' homes. For example, Mexican-American families tend to live within a cluster area. They tend to

spend time together and celebrate important days such as birthdays. The nuclear and extended family members' presence or absence defines the spatial and social boundaries. The *behavioral* component communicates behaviors that relate to feelings and attitudes about the family, including talking to family members on telephone or visiting them (Valenzuela and Dornbusch 1994). *Attitudinal familism* is a cultural value that designates the individual's strong identification and attachment to his/her nuclear and extended families, including the individual's strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity with family members (Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez 2002). Burgess et al. (1963) define *attitudinal familism* as:

> The feeling on the part of all members that they belong pre-eminently to the family group and that all other persons are outsiders; 2) complete integration of individual activities for the achievement of family objectives; 3) the assumption that land, money, and other material goods are family property, involving the obligation to support individual members and give them assistance when they are in need; 4) willingness of all members to rally to the support of a member if attacked by outsiders; and 5) concern for the perpetuation of the family as evidenced by helping adult offspring in beginning and continuing an economic activity in line with family expectations and in setting up a new household. (pp. 35–36)

Sociological literature describes familism, family solidarity, family integration, or intergenerational solidarity as family members' standard commitment to the family and to family relationships. Family members' support becomes an important factor in children's personal and academic success (Prelow and Loukas 2003). Therefore, children's educational success depends on the family's support and involvement in their children's school and nonschool learning (Bernal et al. 2000). Presently, educational researchers report that the family's involvement is a critical factor in their children's educational achievement and success. Cornelius-White et al. (2004) found that the Mexican-American family's support improved their children's academic achievement. Zalaquett (2006) showed that family involvement was important to their Spanish-speaking students' education and school success. Mexican-American families, like most families in American society, have a strong belief that education can improve children's opportunities in life. Families are committed to keeping their children in school; however, frequently Mexican-American mothers participate more in their children's child-rearing than the fathers, which may be a result of economic factors. Unfortunately, even when both parents had intended to keep their children in school, many times Mexican-American fathers were not able to participate as much as the Mexican-American mothers in the rearing of their children due to economic factors. Therefore, a large number of Mexican-American children were deprived of the opportunity to enjoy having both parents enthusiastically participate in all facets of their education. Thus, many Mexican-American children do not benefit from both parents' involvement in all aspects of their early childhood education (Bernal et al. 2000).

When fathers' roles in the family are neglected, problems can emerge. Appropriate parental balance is essential in all families. Researchers who want to understand the nature and meaning of fathering in economically challenged and ethnically diverse groups need to include fathers' involvement in their studies. Studies that disregard paternal involvement invite methodological and practical challenges to their design (Cabrera et al. 2004) and create methodological and conceptual debates about

fatherhood in diverse settings (Coltrane et al. 2004), and especially about Mexican-American fathers.

Challenging Theoretical Perspectives

The traditional Mexican-American family was perceived as an authoritarian, patriarchal body with the woman described as quiet, submissive, and subservient in the home. In contrast, Mexican-American fathers were perceived as cold, distant, and authoritarian. Traditional researchers (e.g., Madsen 1973; Rubel 1966) characterized Mexican-American fathers as "fighting roosters" and used labels such as "macho," "borracho" (drunk), and "buen gallo" (fighter). The macho (i.e., male) was believed to be the "lord and master" in the family. The misunderstanding that Mexican-American fathers are dominant, withdrawn, aggressive, and tyrannical rulers in the family has created confusion in accurately recognizing the fathers' family roles (Mirandé 1991; Mayo 1997; Powell 1995) in the family.

In many studies, Mexican-American males have been described using a traditional stereotype label, referred to as "machismo." This label has negative connotations, because it is used to mean "exaggerated masculinity, physical prowess, and male chauvinism" (Baca-Zinn 1994, p. 74). Ramírez (1979) detected that the negative attributes of *machismo* have been emphasized to the degree that it has become tantamount as Mexican-American males and male chauvinism. Patriarchy, machismo, and unnecessary masculine expressions were assumed to reign among Mexican-American families. However, the macho masculinity myth of Mexican-American men lacks support from contemporary research data.

Traditional researchers endorsed Lewis' (1961) representation of Mexican families. Lewis, an American anthropologist described the father, Jesús Sánchez, as an opprobrious womanizer but worked hard to provide his family with financial support. Saracho and Martínez-Hancock (2004) point out that Lewis made false generalizations. He assumed that decomposed and frenzied family structures existed in all Mexican-American families. Lewis believed that families ratified and passed on to their prospective family members "a way of life marked by fatalistic, violent, cynical, and unproductive attitudes and values." Saracho and Martínez-Hancock (2004) advised researchers to recognize the authenticity of Mexican-American families and their prosperous, diverse, and positive lexis. Saracho (2007b) showed that conventional family structures have shifted to the point that Mexican-American fathers have more responsibility within their families. Conversely, Mexican-American families continue their traditional maternal roles, which provide uniformity in encouraging their children's education and maintaining major and extended family ties (Coltrane et al. 2004). For example, Mexican-American children: (a) collaborate (Knight and Kagan 1977; Rotherman-Borus and Phinney 1990); (b) receive interdependence and preparation with their socialization configurations and family customs (Delgado-Gaitan 1994); (c) have respect and honor for their parents and other elders; and (d) preserve family unity as an innermost value (Coltrane et al. 2004).

Studies with Mexican-American fathers have many limitations and can be disputed (Christie et al. 2004). Saracho and Spodek (2008a) categorized these studies into *conflicting cultural perspectives*, *contemporary as opposed to traditional perspectives*, *social stereotyping of the Mexican-American fathers' roles*, *and inconsistent use of the term Mexican-American*:

- *Conflicting cultural perspectives*: Studies have used an Anglo-American perspective and the Euro-American family as a guide to assess the Mexican-American fathers' behaviors. In addition, researchers have used theoretical frameworks from their own backgrounds.
- *Contemporary versus traditional perspectives*: Studies have differentiated between traditional and contemporary perspectives on Mexican-American fathers. These studies show a comparison and contrast between outdated and contemporary portrayals of Mexican-American fathers.
- S*ocial stereotyping of the Mexican-American fathers' roles*: Studies have reported the inappropriate use of traditional perceptions of Mexican-American fathers. The changes in society have led Mexican-American fathers to assume different family roles. Unfortunately, researchers consistently stereotype them in a negative way.
- *Inconsistent use of the term Mexican-American*: Researchers assume that different groups of a Hispanic population are the same. They use a combination of these groups in their studies and attribute their outcomes to Mexican-American fathers.

Methodological Research Conflicts

Researchers study Mexican-American fathers using an Anglo-American perspective and the Euro-American family frame of reference. These researchers ignore the Mexican-American fathers' language background, unique cultural characteristics, beliefs, and the acculturation level. In addition, many of these studies concentrate on middle-class, two-parent families. Positive father-child experiences and interactions have consistently been attributed to children's positive educational outcomes (Lamb 2004; Palkovitz 2002; Shannon et al. 2002), even though researchers do not define the meaning of "positive" in a diverse economic and cultural/ethnic environment (Marsiglio et al. 2000).

Anglo-American researchers frequently depend on theoretical frameworks from their own backgrounds. When they design their studies, they usually neglect to consider the culture of the Mexican-American families (Betancourt and López 1993). According to Roopnarine and Ahmeduzzaman (1993), researchers (e.g., Madsen 1973; Rubel 1966) have frequently been unaware of the cultural prejudices that were usually found in their writings (Mirandé 1988). Such prejudices have compromised the way researchers have studied and described Mexican-American fathers.

Transformation of Mexican-American Fathers' Roles

New images of fatherhood have compelled fathers to revise their family roles and adopt the roles of nurturing caregivers and active teachers of their children (Lamb 2004). Researchers have become sensitive to these changing roles and utilize such information in their studies with Mexican-American fathers. Lately, social scientists have distinguished between traditional and contemporary perspectives on Mexican-American fathers.

Initially, researchers expected that a modification within Mexican-American families would transpire through an acculturation or assimilation development in which families have made the transition from a traditional structure to the more egalitarian structure found in American families (Ortiz 1995). However, several contemporary researchers, who study Mexican-American fathers' roles, continue to use the traditional perception that Mexican-American fathers are cold, distant, and hold a macho figure. Fuller (2001) and Mirandé (1997) dispute many widespread myths and misinterpretations about Mexican-American men. Ramírez (1979) argues that researchers can only acquire an understanding about the Mexican-American culture when they reinterpret the term *machismo* and acknowledge its positive components. *Machismo*'s recent definition has been transformed to include positive cultural characteristics such as respect, honesty, loyalty, fairness, responsibility, and trustworthiness (Coltrane et al. 2004); positive expressions such as "true bravery or valor, courage, generosity, stoicism, heroism, and ferocity" (Mirandé 1997, p. 78); and roles such as provider for the family (Taylor and Behnke 2005). Presently, studies characterize Mexican-American fathers as egalitarian, warm, and caring (Mirandé 1991, 1997). However, negative stereotypes of "machismo" still continue. These social stereotypes serve as instruments for perpetuating discriminations against Mexican-American males (Mayo 1997).

Methodological Research Transformations

Mexican-American men's interchanging sociocultural environments may affect their paternal roles and interactions with their children. Taylor and Behnke (2005) examined the roles, beliefs, and culture of Mexican-American fathers from three different geographic and cultural contexts: Ensenada (urban), Baja California, Mexico (rural); and San Diego (urban), California, United States; and Hyrum (rural), Utah, United States. They found that the fathers of Mexican heritage on both sides of the border had made a commitment to their children. For example, one of the fathers recommended the following:

> We need to be conscious of our responsibility to our children. I generally believe that we are the basis of society, and if we, as fathers of young children, don't instill the best habits that we can, in general, then we will see the decline of children, family, community, and our country. If we want Mexico [or the U.S.] to be great, we have to start with our children. (Taylor and Behnke 2005, p. 116)

Taylor and Behnke (2005) concluded that Mexican-American fathers were passionately committed to their children and could produce a promising future. Taylor and Behnke demonstrated that the traditional patterns of patriarchy were out-of-date and lacked an acceptable representation of the difficulties that Mexican-American fathers encountered when they reported their experiences of fatherhood. Researchers need to focus on the cultural understanding of precise groups of Mexican-American fathers who may have assumed paternal roles that vary from those of Anglo-American fathers (Bernal et al. 2000). Mexican-American fathers may have been forced to modernize, but they continue to be different from Anglo-American families. Mexican-American families may still be attached to the old-fashioned norms (Mirandé 1991).

Mexican-American Fathers

Demographics indicate that the Mexican-American population is the largest and most rapidly increasing ethnic group in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001). By the year 2050, it is estimated that the Hispanic population will make up more than 30 % of the US population. The Mexican-American group is considered the largest subgroup (60 %) of all Hispanics in the United States. The United States consists of a heterogeneous Hispanic population of more than 35 million (Zinn and Wells 2000); approximately two-thirds of this group is of Mexican ancestry. Such population is unequally made of two-parent, working-poor families with unique needs, and families who have few cultural resources (Coltrane et al. 2004). Mexican-Americans have a unique cultural heritage and an exclusive pattern of immigration (Parke et al. 2004).

In comparison to families of European descent, Mexican-American families have low social mobility, and experience little change in family income across generations (Zinn and Wells 2000). In the late 1990s, Mexican-American parents earned low wages, which caused a third of Mexican-American children under the age of 18 to live in poverty (Proctor and Dalaker 2002). Although the Mexican-American population has been regarded as an invisible minority, it is gaining more visibility (Saracho and Spodek 2008b; Taylor and Behnke 2005).

There are several factors, such as the increased number of Mexican-American fathers; their economic marginality; and their disproportionate exposure to different risk factors including dropping out of schools, crime victimization, and teenage pregnancy; that have attracted researchers' interest in conducting studies on Mexican-American fathers (Saracho and Spodek 2008a). For instance, Hofferth (2003) found important differences between White and Hispanic fathers (62 % of the fathers in the sample were Mexican-Americans) in relation to economic circumstances, neighborhood context, and cultural factors to explain ethnic differences in fathering in two-parent families. Hofferth's results indicated that Hispanic fathers monitored their children under age 13 and assumed more responsibility for child-rearing than Caucasian fathers. Economic situations played a significant role in explaining the

differences in father involvement and control between these two groups, and neighborhood factors explained the differences in fathers' warmth and responsibilities. In addition, cultural factors (e.g., intergenerational fathering, attitudes toward gender role) may have contributed to differences between Caucasian and Hispanic fathering experiences (Saracho 2007b). In addition, Mexican-American families have shown traditional strengths, such as positive child-rearing practices and permanent primary and extended family relationships (Coltrane et al. 2004). For example, Mexican-American children: (a) are more cooperative than European American children (Rotherman-Borus and Phinney 1990); (b) have acquired interdependence in their socialization patterns and practice family rituals (Delgado-Gaitan 1994); (c) respect and honor their parents and other elders; and (d) preserve family unity as an innermost value (Coltrane et al. 2004).

Recently, researchers and educators have succeeded in persuading Mexican-American fathers to become more involved in their children's schooling and nonschooling experiences.

Historical Transformations

Over the last 4 decades, social, economic, and political events have motivated researchers to examine fathers' roles in their children's education. Family studies have ignored fathers' contributions to their family environment and generally focused on mother-child interactions, family systems, or the family processes. In addition, Marks and Palkovitz (2004) report that fathers' participation is usually taken for granted, contain negative connotations, or are inefficiently analyzed. Usually, father-child interactions are too often overlooked, because it is inferred that father involvement has no impact on children's development.

Researchers also have had difficulty in examining fathers' contributions to their children's development. As a result, family studies only reported the absence or presence of fathers in the family environment (Saracho and Spodek 2008a). For example, Blankenhorn (1995) found that changes in family structures (such as higher divorce rates, dramatically increased numbers of out-of-wedlock births) caused fathers to be absent from family life. When fathers were at hand as family members, they were usually viewed as being too busy or in a different place to be part of their children's learning. For example, while trying to study fathers' role in their young children's reading achievement, Durkin (1966) was unable to interview fathers as these fathers were busy "being on the road," "working during the day and going to school at night," "spending long hours at the office," and "having two jobs."

Sociodemographic, cultural, economic, and historical developments have modified the family's structural system, prompted families to organize themselves; and motivated fathers to become involved in their children's lives (Cabrera et al. 2004). Therefore, Saracho and Spodek (2008b, p. 823) maintain that:

- Fathers became the forerunners in the establishment of a variety of family structural systems, expectations, and beliefs concerning the roles of fathers and mothers.
- Fathers became the precursor for the diversity in family structures, expectations, and beliefs about the parental roles, suggesting that both mothers and fathers assumed and had overlapping family roles.
- Fathers originated the evolution of father ideals from the colonial father, to the distant breadwinner, to the modern involved father, to the fathers as coparents

Mexican-American Father Involvement Studies

Over the last 4 decades, a number of studies have concentrated on the importance of father involvement. Based on the findings of a limited number of studies on Mexican-American fathers, a series of studies have been conducted on Mexican-American fathers (Saracho 2007b). In studying fathers, researchers have attempted to resolve the issues that have emerged in earlier studies of Mexican-American fathers. They combined their knowledge to modify the concept of Mexican-American fatherhood. Now researchers have a new scheme to conceptualize, collect, and measure data on Mexican-American fathers (Saracho and Spodek 2008a).

Fathers' active involvement can improve Mexican-American children's overall education. It is anticipated that a dialogue can be established between Mexican-American fathers and schools to increase fathers' involvement and ultimately increase their children's educational success (Bernal et al. 2000). During the last 2 decades, studies that focused on the importance of involving fathers in the education of young children have surfaced. Literacy skills are critical factors for academic success. The absence of evidence on the Mexican-American fathers' involvement in their children's literacy development has encouraged researchers to embark on a series of studies on this population.

Literacy Practices

Numerous studies have examined family literacy practices in Mexican-American homes. The majority of these studies have examined maternal contributions (Ordoñez-Jasis and Ortiz 2006). Society has viewed mothers to be the principal caregivers and to be responsible for their young children's learning to read and write (Ortiz 2004). At the end of the 1970s, this perception shifted where both mothers and fathers were considered to be "learners and teachers" of their children; but the literature on the role of fathers in their children's early literacy and language development was limited (Saracho 2007b).

The transformations in the traditional family structures have introduced new roles for Mexican-American fathers. In this new structure (discussed in a previous section),

fathers are shouldering more responsibility for their family. For example, Laosa (1982) reports that although Mexican-American fathers spend less time than mothers in early literacy practices, they repeatedly read to their children. Studies on Mexican-American parental involvement indicate that parents participate in early literacy practices. However, frequently these studies do not segregate findings on the basis of parental gender (Saracho 2007b).

A few studies indicate that Mexican-American fathers' role in their children's literacy development range from fathers who seldom read with their children to those who continuously engage with their children in reading and writing practices (Laosa 1982; Ortiz 2004). Ortiz et al. (1999) found similar results. They described a range of father-child early literacy patterns in multigenerational Mexican-American families that ranged from fathers who continuously read to their children every night to fathers who rarely read to their children. Ortiz (1998) reported three levels of father-child literacy activity that emerged from his studies:

Level I   Adult-child interaction in relation to emerging skills, such as the child "regards face" during the first month and "smiles spontaneously" by the end of the second month. For example:

> Two-month old Hanna was being held by her father while her mother was talking to a friend on the phone. Suddenly, Hanna began staring into her father's eyes. Hanna's father put his face close to Hanna and smiled. He said, "I love you, Hanna — you are Daddy's little angel from Heaven." Hanna returned her Daddy's gaze and smiled spontaneously. (p. 83)

Level II   Informal and spontaneous child initiated activities. These activities can take place at any setting. For example:

> Drew was now four years old and loved traveling by car around town with his dad. As they drove by the mall on this morning. Drew spied the large sign above a department store and said, "Look Daddy, I can read those letters on top of the store, M. . . A. . . C. . . Y. . . S. Those letters spell Sears!" Drew's dad said, "That was great reading—you got all the letters right. Now I'll read the sign—it says Macy's. This is another big store like Sears. You read to me like a big boy when you saw that sign. (pp. 83–84).

The next Level II example is shared by Caira's father.

> We'll be driving down the highway and Caira, who is five, will ask what the words say on a billboard that has a picture of a lobster. I turn to her and tell her, it says "Red Lobster Restaurant." She exclaims, "That's how you spell lobster!" (p. 84)

Level III   Adult-directed activities such as helping young children learn their letters at home as part of a home-school partnership. For example, a father reported:

> When driving to her grandma's house, my daughter will ask what street she (grandmother) lives on. I tell her to look for Pioneer Street and then ask her what letter does the word start with. I also ask that she try and spell the word. She will spell the word so that when we come to the street she recognizes the sign and lets me know we're there. I do this with other signs or places we go. (p. 85)

Level III also includes modeling. For example, a father shares the following account of a literacy activity:

> Because I think that's the most important thing for William is to learn how to read. And I think one of the ways to do it is to read to him, so he learns to like it and pick up a lot of information from reading. I'm a role model. (p. 85)

In an effort to determine a fathers' role in their young children's acquisition of literacy, the outcomes differed in relation to fathers' habits in engaging in literacy practices with their children. Ortiz et al. (1999) conducted a 3-year longitudinal study of 60 Mexican-American fathers from southern New Mexico whose children attended public preschools. The researchers examined the Mexican-American fathers' participation in their 3- to 8-year-old children's literacy activities. The results indicated that the Mexican-American fathers participated in: (a) initiating a head start in reading and writing and (b) developing a bond with their young children. Ortiz (2004) reported several child-based literacy practices implemented by Mexican-American fathers. The results of these studies reported that Mexican-American fathers, as Mexican-American mothers: (a) were responsible for their children, (b) functioned as resources, and (c) served as meaning makers. Ortiz et al. (1999) recommended literacy practices that would enhance quality of father-child interactions. Ortiz identified three major themes that rationalized Mexican-American fathers' involvement in their children's early literacy practices: *curiosity of print*, *personal values and beliefs*, and *marital role functions*. These themes are explained below.

- *Curiosity of print* related to fathers' responses to their children's natural inquisitiveness to reading and writing activities. Fathers who read newspapers, books, and magazines in the presence of their children elicited questions from them about the nature of the activity. Children frequently imitated their fathers' behaviors.
- *Personal values and beliefs* increased fathers' early literacy involvement. Fathers communicated the importance of literacy activities, such as reading and writing, to their children and modeled appropriate reading behaviors to their children. These activities communicated the importance of literacy learning.
- *Marital role functions* affected the degree of democracy in fathers' early literacy involvement. Demographic variables (e.g., generation status, education, and annual income) had little effect on fathers' involvement in early reading and writing events. However, fathers who "shared" child care duties with their spouses (e.g., both parents feeding and bathing their children) seemed to participate in more joint literacy activities than those who "divided" these responsibilities. Apparently, fathers who "shared" the responsibility of all childcare tasks also assumed that reading and writing was one of their responsibilities (cited in Saracho 2007b, p. 274).

Fathers' literacy practices contributed to their children's reading ability, interest level, and reading preferences. Shared reading experiences established a relationship between fathers and their children. Saracho (2008) documented the literacy experiences of 25 fathers and their children who participated in a family literacy program that helped fathers of 5-year-old children to support their children's literacy learning in a family environment. Saracho also found that fathers in the study supported their children's literacy development when they learned literacy strategies and activities in the program. In addition, Saracho (2008) identified and described themes based on

the literacy strategies, interactions, materials, and activities that the fathers used: (1) *stimulating children to explore the written language,* (2) *building on knowledge-base of the community*, and (3) *embedding literacy activities within the community and family life.* These themes are described below:

- *Stimulating children to explore the written language* indicated fathers' responses to their children's natural curiosity to read and write print. Fathers informed their children of the importance of learning to read and write and that reading was for both enjoyment and information.
- *Building on knowledge from the community* indicated that fathers related their family life to the life of the community so that the literacy experiences became meaningful means to address issues faced by their children.
- *Embedding literacy in community and family life* indicated a sense of community and how fathers showed an interest in a multitude of realities that were as diverse and rich as their dynamic community.

These themes suggest that fathers believe in the importance of engaging in literacy experiences with their children.

Literacy Roles

Researchers have made an effort to identify fathers' contributions to their children's early literacy development (e.g., Durkin 1966); but only a limited number of empirical studies have focused exclusively on Mexican-American fathers' literacy roles, which is an important research strand. Knowledge about the Mexican-American fathers' literacy contributions can offer an in-depth understanding of their role in their children's literacy development. The family's personal history, cultural beliefs, cultural values, language, and fathers' literacy involvement determine Mexican-American fathers' roles (Saracho 2007b).

Numerous studies show that there is a relationship between Mexican-American fathers' participation in their children's literacy learning and cultural factors associated with Mexican-American fatherhood. Spanish-speaking fathers and their children share a cultural characteristic that offers them a strong feeling of commitment, obligation, and responsibility toward both their immediate and extended family (Zalaquett 2006). Their familial literacy practices have considerable diversity. Karther (2002) reported that fathers valued literacy learning, monitored the children's progress, engaged in book reading, and enjoyed their children, although fathers may not understand their teaching roles. For example:

> In an attempt to understand his parental role definitions, the researcher asked Mike if he considered himself a teacher of his children. He responded with a shrug and negative nod of the head. He said with hesitation, "Hum, like I say, I try to teach them stuff. I mean I know parents that really sit down and try playing school. . . . I don't believe in pushing it, you know, drilling it into them, but I do want them to get a good education." (Karther 2002, p. 187)

Thus, Mexican-American fathers can assume responsibility in promoting their children's literacy development, which can affect their academic success.

Children's Academic Achievement

Research studies on father involvement have increased during the last 4 decades (Cabrera et al. 2004). These studies indicate that fathers' involvement in their children's lives affected their children's academic achievement. For example, fathers from two-parent families who engaged in school activities at a moderate or high level had children who typically achieved high marks, enjoyed school, and never repeated a grade. Children whose fathers were living outside the home had similar results. Both types of fathers had an equal amount of involvement in school. Fathers were able to assume an important role in improving their children's achievement outcomes. In interviews with a small number of fathers, Durkin (1966) reported that fathers had a positive impact on their children's early reading achievement. Saracho (2008) showed how Mexican-America fathers utilized literacy strategies that related to everyday realities of their children and their families. Fathers and children engaged in many writing experiences. Children experimented with writing or dictated stories about their books, family experiences with dad, and family photographs.

Family support and involvement are important factors in children's educational achievement and success. Two year olds who receive support from their father will have better cognitive results when they reach 5 years of age (Martin et al. 2007). Cornelius-White et al. (2004) found that Mexican-American families' sustained support contributed significantly to their children's academic achievement. Zalaquett (2006) reported that family members' continuous engagement in their Spanish-speaking children's education contributed significantly to these children's school success. Thus, one can infer that Mexican-American families, like most families in the American society, strongly believe that education can improve their children's opportunities in life.

Mexican-American fathers' diligent involvement can improve their children's overall education. These fathers value education and hold high educational goals for their children. For example, in a conversation about his aspirations for his children's future, a Mexican-American father stated:

> I didn't mind being a mechanic... but when you look at your kids you always want better for them than what you are doing. He went on to say earnestly, but if he [his son] is going to take to books, just because I am doing something different don't mean I won't push him, you know, back him in what he is going to do.... If he wants to go to school I definitely, if I had to take four or five jobs to get him through I would.... I hope to see him go to college, both of them. (Karther 2002, p. 188)

A conversation between Mexican-American fathers and school personnel (especially the teacher) can encourage more father involvement that will eventually have an effect on their children's educational success (Bernal et al. 2000).

Contemporary research and policy initiatives motivated studies to concentrate on the relationship between fathers' contributions and their children's educational achievement (Clark 2005). Many studies indicated that fathers significantly affected their children's literacy development and school achievement (Karther 2002). Reese (1992) examined Mexican-American children's reading achievement and reported that children's achievement was based on their fathers' family history of literacy. Reese et al. (1995) reported that children's academic achievement was high on several reading tests when their Mexican-American immigrant fathers provided them with a large quantity of literacy activities. In a follow-up study, Reese et al. (1995) reported that Mexican-American fathers' participation in literacy activities in their home environment affected their children's test scores. Sands and Plunkett (2005) found that Mexican-American fathers in urban Los Angeles who provided support influenced their children's academic success. Therefore, there is a relationship between the Mexican-American fathers' warmth and academic support to their children's academic achievement. The positive academic influence of Mexican-American fathers is extremely important in their children's acquisition of literacy (Ortiz 2004). A significant relationship exists between fathers' participation in their children's education and their achievement, which is higher than that of the mothers' participation. Such a relationship offers partial support for a father involvement paradigm that designs appropriate school activities and advocates the relationship between children's contextual factors and their school achievement (McBride et al. 2005).

Researchers, policymakers, and educators have recognized the importance of Mexican-American fathers' support and participation in their children's school. Cornelius-White et al. (2004) showed that students who had families who supported their personal interests and accepted their school experiences obtained the highest achievement score. The family's involvement improves their children's school achievement, attitude (Walker et al. 2004), attendance, behavior, and goals (Henderson and Berla 1994). When families become involved in their child's school, they acquire a better understanding of teachers' expectations, while teachers acquire an insight into the ways in which families can work with their children, and how to enhance their children's educational experience (McBride et al. 2005).

Research studies document the roles fathers assume in their children's peer relations, cognitive development, and behavioral or emotional regulation as well as the nature, antecedents, and consequences of father involvement with children in low-income families (Cabrera et al. 2004). Studies also show that fathers' relationships with their children, work environment, and cultural surroundings (Taylor and Behnke 2005) influence their social roles (e.g., being a father) and behaviors in their attempt to meet societal expectations (Stryker and Statham 1985). Fathers' involvement helped them to develop a father role identity and begin to understand the meaning of being a father (LaRossa 1997).

Educational History

Mexican-American families have guided and participated in their young children's literacy practices. They have shown interest in their children's reading and writing progress. For example, Reese (1992) found that the educational level of fathers, mothers, siblings, aunts, and uncles influenced young children's reading achievement. Other studies on father involvement support these results. According to Cornelius-White et al. (2004), fathers' education is the best demographic predictor of children's achievement. Laosa (1982) reported that Mexican-American fathers frequently read with their children. He attributed these father-child early literacy practices to Mexican-American fathers' higher formal education. Spanish-speaking fathers with more education engage in their children's literacy development, whereas those fathers with less education neglect to read with their children (Reese et al. 1995).

In Kalman's (1997) study, a Mexican father's participation with his children inspired their education. Kalman's results reject the assumption that intergenerational parents transfer to their sons and daughters a weak and familial literacy legacy. Reading is intensely embedded in the context of the individual's daily lives, and instead of focusing on ambiguous school reading assignments, literacy practices need to concentrate on the need to communicate (Kalman 1997). Evidently, Mexican-American fathers differ in their level of education, which affects their participation in their children's literacy development (Saracho 2007b).

Diverse Literacy Experiences

Mexican-American fathers broaden their literacy functions beyond books or schooling. Fathers can incorporate many literacy experiences in their entertainment, daily living, general information, and religion (Ortiz 2000). For example, a Mexican-American father with a fourth grade education engaged his children in numerous literacy practices during work, recreation, church, home, and school-related activities (Kalman 1997). Ortiz (2000) observed how a sample of Mexican-American fathers shared reading experiences with their children. Mexican-American fathers read with their children for a variety of purposes including education, religion, work-related events, and recreation. Ortiz (2000) acknowledged that fathers:

- Read catalogs and newspapers to teach children reading skills.
- Read religious materials (e.g., missals, pamphlets, and prayer cards) and engaged in nightly prayer time, mealtime grace, and Bible readings.
- Read storybooks to motivate their children's reading interests.
- Read to their children for recreation purposes.
- Engaged in several children's commercial board games (e.g., *Monopoly, Chutes and Ladders,* and *Power Rangers*).
- Read aloud television advertisements and video boxes.

- Read the daily newspaper comic strip section and sports page with their children to help them learn simple words.
- Engaged with their children in reading environmental print in the community to help them recognize familiar words (Saracho 2007b, p. 277).

In spite of existing false beliefs about Mexican-American fathers, studies show that fathers understand the importance of early literacy experiences for their children. In their literacy practices, fathers frequently use a variety of reading materials and writing styles both inside and outside the home environment (Saracho 2008). Contemporary researchers dispute the stereotypes about a lack of paternal contributions by Mexican-American fathers (Saracho and Spodek 2008a) to the conventional, maternal, and child care activities (i.e., reading and writing with children). In addition, studies challenge the perceptions that Mexican-American fathers have little interest in engaging in their children's academic learning (Ordoñez-Jasis and Ortiz 2006; Saracho and Spodek 2008a).

Research and Practical Applications

Family literacy can help develop young children's literacy learning, although many have considered it to be the mother's responsibility (Ortiz 2004). Mexican-American fathers, like Mexican-American mothers, can assume responsibility in promoting their children's literacy development. The aforementioned studies provide sufficient support that Mexican-American fathers: (1) motivate their children to obtain, develop, and employ literacy; (2) learn new roles to develop their children's acquisition of literacy; (3) engage with their children in literacy experiences; and (4) have an impact in their children's literacy learning (Saracho 2007b). Studies support that fathers play many important roles in their children's acquisition of literacy. Within the family environment, fathers have turned out to be important resources and meaning makers. Fathers support their children's literacy development within the family and community environments. They: (a) read appropriate books to their children, (b) discuss with their children books they read, (c) keep a record of the books their children have read, and (d) encourage their children to read more books (Saracho 2008).

Research Implications

Studies on Mexican-American fathers' contributions to their children's literacy development suggest recommendations that researchers can use in their studies of Mexican-American fathers and their literacy practices. It is problematic to neglect fathers' roles in their families. These studies show that Mexican-American fathers play a vital role in their children's literacy development. Unfortunately, these studies

have a number of disparities that need to be avoided in conducting rigorous and systematic research. For instance, it is important to take into account Mexican-American fathers' personal history, cultural beliefs, cultural values, language, and involvement in certain literacy situations (Saracho 2007b).

When researchers design their quantitative or qualitative studies, they need to consider these important factors. In addition, researchers need to consider Mexican-American fathers' multifaceted roles within their family and community contexts. It is important to consider if Mexican-American fathers' contributions affect their children's literacy learning or if their contributions are only an indicator for further family problems, such as coparental relationships, attention, and quantity of interactions (Clark 2005).

Mexican-American fathers' longstanding focus on child-rearing practices and extended family bonds has also attracted researchers' interest. Studies need to consider Mexican-American fathers' involvement in their children's direct care, shared activities, monitoring, housework, and other sustained efforts that benefit their children. Researchers must completely understand the norms, expectations, and beliefs that dominate Mexican-American fathers' involvement and the kinds of father-child undertakings that are recognized as culturally appropriate (Saracho and Spodek 2008a). Otherwise, similar or different expectations across ethnic groups will lead to erroneous measurement and fallacies that challenge research findings. Valid and reliable interpretations need to avoid these assumptions and errors as well as methodological and conceptual threats. Such avoidance will offer an appropriate perception about Mexican-American fathers' understanding of other family members, their contributions, and their expectations of being a good father (Parke et al. 2004).

Researchers need to take into account some methodological dilemmas before making any generalizations. For instance, they need to use appropriate sample sizes and a variety of research procedures rather than merely using self-reports to collect data. Intervention studies need to include more than only increasing the amount of fathers' involvement to achieve significant outcomes (Fagan and Iglesias 1999). It is important to observe authentic transformations in quality of fathers' behaviors. Future studies need to: (a) consider relevant variables (e.g., personal history, cultural beliefs, cultural values, language), (b) be systematic and rigorous, (c) implement multiple research procedures (e.g., questionnaires, observations, interviews), and (d) integrate a variety of research methodologies (both quantitative and qualitative) to gather an in-depth understanding of Mexican-American fathers and their contributions to their family (Saracho 2007b).

Practice Implications

During the last 3 decades, researchers and educators have been encouraging fathers to become more active in their Mexican-American children's school and nonschool learning. Present research and policy initiatives have called attention to the importance of Mexican-American fathers' influence on their children's educational

achievement (Clark 2005). Ortiz (2000, 2004) found that Mexican-American fathers engaged in many of their children's literacy experiences. Ortiz et al. (1999) recommended that Mexican-American fathers use a variety of reading and writing experiences within the family environment to strengthen the quality of father-child relationships. Fathers can learn how to engage in book reading with their children and to monitor their children's progress (Karther 2002).

Mexican-American fathers' involvement will help their families achieve a useful balance in parent involvement (Marks and Palkovitz 2004), which is extremely important for their children. A number of young Mexican-American children live in a home environment where Spanish is the primary language (Buysse et al. 2005). Most teachers assume that the language environment of English language learners becomes a barrier in their literacy acquisition and academic success. Teachers also believe that limited learning takes place in the family environment and whatever children learned is almost of no value in school. Teachers make these judgments based on the frequency of parental involvement in children's school assignments, particularly in reading and writing (Miramontes 1991). Frequently, non-English-speaking families encounter difficulties in becoming involved in their children's literacy learning, Mexican-American fathers need sustained encouragement to become involved in their child's school. Educators need to initiate such encouragement by: (a) supporting teachers' and fathers' preparation to address cultural diversity, (b) welcoming Mexican-American fathers, and (c) showing respect for their cultural values and beliefs (Saracho 2007b). In working with families, Cornelius-White et al. (2004) provide following recommendations that promote Mexican-American fathers' involvement:

- Educate teachers, parents, and other family members on the importance of familial and community support for a variety of stimuli—whether physical, emotional, abstract, creative, or cultural—to encourage their children to broaden their experiences, to pursue their own goals, and to build openness to experience, which can nurture their academic achievement.
- Since studies indicate that fathers' education affects their children's academic achievement, it is important to encourage fathers to pursue their own education. Fathers' education may vary, ranging from obtaining a GED, enrolling in a college course, engaging in continuing education, engaging in community education, or attending professional conferences. Their education may also be informal, such as becoming computer literate, subscribing to quality periodical subscriptions, or increasing the number of books they have read or have available at home (cited in Saracho 2007b, pp. 279–280).

The possibility and assurance that fathers can enthusiastically participate in their children's literacy learning necessitates that educators use the wealth of home-based knowledge in their school-based practices. For example, fathers and children can interview family members to identify influential historical events as a means of discovering their individual family history (Hein and Miller 2004). In this framework, fathers and children can also collect and write down information about their ancestors in terms of exogamy, immigration, language, religion, child-rearing practices, and

other kinds of pertinent information. Both Mexican-American fathers and teachers can use this information to enhance their knowledge about the Mexican-American culture (Saracho 2007b). This process can offer a robust foundation that can pave the road to Mexican-American children's school success (Ortiz and Ordoñez-Jasis 2005).

Conclusions

Cultural factors assume a critical role in determining both the quantity and quality of Mexican-American fathers' involvement. However, little is known concerning the cultural aspects of Mexican-Americans. This is a critical limitation in our knowledge-base given the fact that fathers hold an important position in the family within this particular ethnic group. The Mexican-American father has been perceived as the head of the family, and such a cultural perception extends across generations (Steidel and Contreras 2003). Familism (i.e., the belief that the family is the center of a sociocultural activity) is a striking Mexican-American cultural characteristic that spreads over generations (Vega 1990). Familism also embraces the family's structures and processes including the patriarchal and matricentric nature of traditional Mexican-American families, children's status and functions in the family, differentiations between girls and boys in a sibling sequence, impact of the extended family, and intergenerational processes (Ortiz 2000; Steidel and Contreras 2003). Mexican-American families have traditional strengths in child-rearing practices as well as hold enduring primary and extended family bonds (Coltrane et al. 2004).

In the last several decades, scholarly interest on exploring cross-cultural and intra-cultural variations among families has emerged (Parke and Buriel 1998). Researchers use the Vygotskian theory to highlight the cultural embeddedness of families in general (Rogoff 2003) and more specifically fathering roles and experiences among different cultures. A cross-cultural perspective on fathering has pushed researchers to challenge their own assumptions about the fathers' role (Parke 2004) and to acknowledge diversity in fathering behaviors.

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Chapter 5
Father Involvement, African Americans, and Reducing the Achievement Gap

William H. Jeynes

The achievement gap between white and African American students is probably the most examined topic in education (Roach 2001; Thompson 2007). It is at the forefront of both educational research and public policy (Jeynes 2002b). It has been the primary concern of American presidents for the last four of five decades (Roach 2001). Over this period, leaders in both the public and private sector have propounded potential solutions to the gap and have experienced only limited success. This fact has been a source of frustration among myriad individuals.

A series of recent meta-analyses suggests that father involvement may be a major ingredient necessary in order to bridge the achievement gap (Jeynes 2003a, 2008a). To the extent this is true, it is to be cognizant of what are the best programs and strategies available that can help make this possible. In order to reach the appropriate conclusions, this will be examined in proper historical context with the appropriate consideration given to research, successful programs, and the implications of these practices.

Historical Efforts to Reduce the Gap

There have been efforts to reduce the gap before and after the Revolutionary War which are described here.

Efforts Prior to the Revolutionary War

The desire to reduce the achievement gap between white students on the one hand and African Americans on the other is almost as old as the European settlement of the United States (Bullock 1970; Harrison 1893). From the 1600s, both the Puritans and

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the Quakers initiated substantial efforts to educate African Americans (Cornelius 1991; Schwartz 2000). The Puritans, in fact, founded an organization called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which was designed to establish schools across the colonies to instruct students who otherwise could not afford to attend school (Jeynes 2007a; Urban and Wagoner 2000). It was designed to educate students of all ethnicities and socioeconomic classes and one of its stated goals was to reduce the achievement gap and to involve fathers and mothers to eradicate that gap (Harrison 1893; Jeynes 2007a). The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel grew throughout the 1600s and much of the 1700s until by 1729 it extended to 1,658 schools in the North American colonies and England combined (Bailyn 1960; Cubberley 1920). These schools focused on the teaching of the gospel and the promotion of the literacy. Those who established the schools exhorted numerous African American youth to attend and taught them to read the Bible, poems, and well-known books (Bullock 1970; Harrison 1893).

Parental involvement was one of the greatest emphases of Puritan education and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Eavey 1964; McClellan and Reese 1988). Especially when compared to American society today, the Puritans valued father involvement more than other societies (Eavey 1964; McClellan and Reese 1988; Willison 1966). The Puritans asserted that the home was the central place of education and that it was the key to bridging the achievement gap (McClellan and Reese 1988). They affirmed that if the father and mother were not active in instructing their children, even if a youth attended the best school and the best church the child ultimately would not become intellectually advanced. In fact, the Puritans surmised that the involvement of the father was not only vital for each child's intellectual development, but also for his or her spiritual and emotional well-being (Jeynes 2007a; McClellan and Reese 1988). With African Americans, this emphasis on parental involvement involved more challenges, because most of the parents were freed slaves and not well educated, but the emphasis on involvement was nevertheless present.

During the colonial period, among many religious groups, e.g., the Puritans, many of the settlers emphasized paternal involvement largely based on their religious convictions (McClellan and Reese 1988). Religious people who settled in the future United States were almost always Trinitarian in their Christian faith. That is, they believed that God manifested Himself as the Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Eavey 1964; Willison 1966). Many of the settlers maintained that youth developed an image of the Heavenly Father based on their interactions with their earthly fathers. Consequently, they believed that the fathers had a very unique role in rearing children. The settlers averred that the young could mentally and emotionally fathom God's love and compassion only insofar as they witnessed the same qualities in their earthly fathers. This assertion was especially viewed as applicable in the raising of boys. Boys, they believed, particularly arrived at certain conclusions about what constituted godliness by examining the lives of their fathers (Eavey 1964; McClellan and Reese 1988; Willison 1966). These convictions were present among the Puritans, Quakers, and later on the Presbyterians who settled primarily in New England and the Mid-Atlantic States, and helped establish the area that would serve, until about 1920, as the nation's "Bible belt" (Marsden 1994; Middleton 2004).

The Puritans and the Quakers placed such an emphasis on African American literacy in the 1600s that New England developed the most African American friendly schooling system in the New World and also enabled New England to develop into the center of the antislavery movement (Wilson 1977). This orientation intensified as the Puritans and Quakers came to the conclusion that emancipation would require African American literacy (Cornelius 1991; Schwartz 2000). Early efforts by these colonists to emancipate the slaves without this literacy had failed (Copeland 2000; Vahey 1998; Washington 1969). Washington (1969, p. 114) observes that "pious philanthropist, William Penn, tried in vain to embody his anti-slavery sentiments in the law of the province." Penn's Pennsylvania bill of 1712 "was passed emancipating slaves by law, but was repealed by Queen Anne" (p. 114). The Quakers were so resolute about their opposition to slavery and the importance of literacy for them that in 1724 they organized an effort to ban slavery from America's shores and declared that the seizure of slaves in Africa was an act of war (Copeland 2000; Vahey 1998).

Efforts After the Revolutionary War

The Northeastern religious groups of the pre-Revolutionary War era and into the first half of the nineteenth century believed that for literacy to thrive the entire family needed to be involved in the effort (Eavey 1964; Jeynes 2007a; Woodson 1915). Parents would often hold family times following dinner during which three types of writings would often be read: the Bible, the newspaper, and classics. These groups would encourage African Americans to engage in the same discipline (McClellan and Reese 1988).

The formation and proliferation of charity schools also contributed to the narrowing of the achievement gap in the North (Andrews 1969; Bobbe 1933; Cornog 1998). Although the Puritans initiated the charity school movement over 110 years before, it was during the post-Revolutionary War period that this paradigm surged in popularity, so that it became applied all across the nation Charity schools, or free schools as they were often called, were private schools supported by generous upper-class and middle-upper-class settlers that enabled students to attend school and pay only what they could afford (Andrews 1969; Bobbe 1933; Cornog 1998). For the overwhelming majority of students, this meant that they paid little or nothing (Andrews 1969; Bobbe 1933; Cornog 1998; Rothstein 1994). Few groups benefited from this more than African Americans (Andrews 1969; Woodson 1915). This is because the vast majority of African Americans who attended these schools were from the homes of freed slaves. Both boys and girls benefited from these schools, although in adolescence boys of all races would frequently drop out of school to become employed to help their parents. Therefore, middle school and high school completion rates were considerably higher for girls than they were for boys (Troen 1988).

The orientation of these Northern groups helped the African American literacy rate in the North to surge. By 1850, the overwhelming majority of US Northern

Cities had African American literacy rates of between 63 % and 90 % (Bergman and Bergman 1969). It should be pointed out that although these African American literacy rates were quite high by international standards, they nevertheless fell short of the literacy rates for whites (Jeynes 2007a).

The achievement gap became an issue of profound concern to many of the nation's founders. Speeches such as those made by founders Rush (1773) and Pinkney (1788) helped communicate to Americans that the capabilities of blacks was equal to that of whites. Two other founders and leading Federalist figures, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, likely contributed more money than any other people to African American instruction in New York (Jay 1801). The American concern with the achievement gap goes back hundreds of years and yet remains perhaps the foremost educational issue today. Roach (2001, p. 377) recently asserted that, "in the academic and think tank world, pondering achievement gap remedies takes center stage." For a growing number of social scientists, one of the primary solutions to the achievement gap necessitates a greater involvement of fathers (Jeynes 2010a,b).

The Rise of Father Involvement Research

Federal Policy, Father Involvement, and the Achievement Gap

For most of American history, the federal government did not engage in aggressive educational policies (Logsdon and Launius 2000). Instead, it was left to the private sector to initiate most efforts to promote father involvement. This trend did not change until Dwight Eisenhower and the US Congress responded to the Russian launch of the Sputnik in 1957 (Logsdon and Launius 2000). There were isolated instances of the federal government influencing schooling, as in the case of its calling for algebra to be a required fourth grade class in the 1840s, but these interventions were rare (Jeynes 2007a). The federal government's Head Start program inaugurated in 1965 called for some level of father involvement, but the primary focus of the Head Start program was designed to give poor children and some children of color an early introduction to schooling to help close the scholastic gap that existed between some children of color and white children (Carleton 2002). As originally conceptualized, Head Start's emphasis on father involvement was wholly inadequate (Carleton 2002). In the following year, however, James Coleman and his colleagues released the Coleman Report asserting that family factors were far more prominent in determining scholastic outcomes than school variables (U.S. Center for Education Statistics 1966). Many community and religious leaders embraced the results of the Coleman study, as declaring what most Americans already knew, but the academic and political community had been slow to recognize (Jeynes 2002a). At about the same time, research by Moynihan (1965) confirmed Coleman's findings.

Unfortunately, most academics and educators resisted these calls and instead focused on the role that the schools could play in bridging the gap (Jeynes 2003b).

The Eyes of Academics Are Opened

Two trends, however, would eventually cause more people in the academic and education communities to acknowledge the relationship between family factors and achievement. The first trend is that divorce rates in the United States suddenly began to soar in 1963, ending a slow downtrend that lasted from 1948 to 1962 (Cherlin 1978; Jeynes 2002a). The surge lasted exactly 17 years topping out in exactly 1980 (Jeynes 2002a; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). The second trend is that SAT scores started a persistent 17-year drop in 1963, bottoming out in precisely 1980 (Jeynes 2007a). The fact that the two trends occurred simultaneously over exactly the same 17-year period caused the growth of research that examined family and achievement, shortly before the period reached its conclusion. In 1977, the College Board, the makers of the SAT declared that they believed that the deterioration of the family was a major cause behind the SAT score decline (Wirtz 1977). Although the simultaneous nature of these trends could have been purely correlational rather than causal, an increasing number of academics began to concur with the community, religious, and political leaders who thought otherwise (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998).

As the discipline examining family structure and school outcomes grew in the late 1970s and 1980s, it became ostensible that a causal relationship existed (Jeynes 1999, 2000; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). Although several hypotheses emerged regarding the reasons behind this relationship, one of the most prominent was that divorce and other nontraditional family structures generally caused a lower level of involvement by the parents, particularly meaning the father (Cherlin 1978; Jeynes 1999, 2000; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). This realization contributed to the rise of parental involvement research (Epstein 2001; Jeynes 2010a). Researchers often gave special attention to African American children, in this regard, because as Marks et al. (2010, p. 19) point out in their chapter in the *Myth of the Missing Black Father*, until the 1960s about "75 % of Black families included both husband and wife."

The growth of research on the family gradually changed the nature of the Head Start program so that its parental involvement component became more prominent. There are some who believe that the increased emphasis on parental involvement caused the Head Start program to become more effective (Epstein 2001; Jeynes 2010a). To whatever extent the Head Start program has become more effective, it is difficult to determine whether an increased emphasis on parental involvement was the cause. In addition, while the Head Start programs in the 1980s and beyond focused more on parental involvement than in the past, these programs tended to involve fathers from two-parent families, but often did not involve noncustodial fathers (Hossain and Roopnarine 1993; Jeynes 2010a).

Politicians throughout the 1980s and 1990s continued to be one step ahead of academics in recognizing the inextricable connection between family factors and scholastic outcomes, including the achievement gap. Ronald Reagan lauded the advantages of the two-parent intact family and called on parents to become more

involved in their children's education (Epstein 2001; Jeynes 2010a). The federal report, A Nation at Risk, supported Reagan's assertions (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983). Bill Clinton advocated the growth of father involvement (Epstein 2001; Jeynes 2010a). George W. Bush's No Child Left behind initiative eventually became controversial in many circles. Nevertheless, family science researchers such as Joyce Epstein have praised the initiative for its emphasis on both father and mother involvement (Epstein 2001; Thompson 2007). Many family scientists anticipate that now that academics have more fully comprehended the public's desire for more research-based guidance on parental involvement and have responded with more highly developed research since 2000, government-initiated father and mother involvement programs will become more research-based.

Partially, because of the relatively late development of family research on family structure and father involvement, it has been a relatively recent development that academics have focused on father involvement as a means to reducing the achievement gap (Blankenhorn and Clayton 2003; Brown et al. 2007; Jeynes 2008a; Wilson 2003).

One of the reasons for the slow response by scholars to family and academic realities is because the academic environment, unlike the world of community-, religious-, and political-, is intensely specialized and focused and often lacks a broad perspective (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Jeynes 2002b). What this means is that educators tend to propose educational solutions, psychologists tend to prefer psychological remedies, and family scientists focus on family factors (Jeynes 2005b, 2008a; Litieco 2010). There are very few solutions presented that transcend the disciplinary barriers that are inherent to the world of scholarship. For example, Lightfoot (1978), an educator, generally advocated school-based solutions and Cherlin (1978), a sociologist, advocated societal solutions to these issues. Although these works made important contributions to the field, their recommendations were primarily restricted to those promoted in their discipline.

Another major reason why academic recommendations were limited in their ameliorative impact is because unlike most Americans, scholars were hesitant to assert that certain family structures and parental practices were better for children than others (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). However, based on the examination of several nationwide data sets, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) declared that parental intact families were much better for children in these families than nonintact family structures. In the mid-1980s, Joyce Epstein also made it clear that father involvement was better than noninvolvement. Although these statements made it clear how belated social scientists had been in recognizing what had been obvious for most for decades and even centuries, it was significant because it placed academics in a position in which they could offer advice to the broader community (Epstein 2001).

Factors that Contribute to Successful Father Participation

The existing body of research is yielding certain trends that provide insight into the factors that contribute to successful father participation. The following factors are particularly helpful.

Fathers become more involved when they reside in a two-parent intact family When children reside in single-parent families, the vast majority of time a father represents the noncustodial parent. This is an important distinction to note because this is very distinct from the situation that usually exists with mothers (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). Most single mothers serve as custodial parents. Because most single-parent fathers reside outside the home, they are more likely to feel excluded and in a worst case scenario even ostracized from the child's family circle (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). Consequently, whether a father lives in a two-parent intact family has a greater impact on their level of involvement than is the case with mothers. Research on both children generally and those of color confirms that family structure influences the level of father involvement more than it does mother involvement (Carlson 2006; Henry et al. 2011). These results have been confirmed using data from national data sets and Head Start research (Berger et al. 2008; Downer and Mendez 2005). The findings also indicate that father involvement in single-parent families is associated with lower levels of paternal engagement as measured both quantitatively and qualitatively (Carlson 2006).

Fathers become more involved when they have a strong emotional tie with the child Although this is clearly most likely to occur in the context of living in a two-parent intact family, such an intimate relationship is not limited merely to two biological parent homes (Downer and Mendez 2005). This is particularly true when a father has resided in the home for most of the child's life (Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). When this is the case, over the years a father tends to develop strong, at times indelible, bonds that transcend the forces of time and may last a lifetime (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). If the father has resided in the home for a shorter period of time, this is less likely, but still possible.

Fathers become more involved when they are treated well by the female parent Social scientists are increasingly cognizant of the fact that one cannot treat father involvement in isolation from other relational dynamics (Downer and Mendez 2005). There is no question, for example, that many fathers are not involved because they feel that their spouse or partner despises them and does not want the father to have consistent access to the children (Jordan-Zachery 2009). Once fathers, as is usually the case, leave the home following family dissolution some of the mothers become very possessive of their children (Jordan-Zachery 2009). This propensity becomes especially ostensible once the female spouse remarries. The female parent may also have resentment toward the father and frequently manifests this indignant feeling by either limiting or denying access by the father. In this way, the mother may use the children as a weapon against the father (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Whether this action is unjustified or instead done in response to an act of disloyalty by the father, the result is that it becomes more difficult for fathers to become involved in the lives of children (Jordan-Zachery 2009).

The positive aspect of all this is that if the mother wants the father to be more involved, there is at least one aspect of father engagement that is within the mother's control to influence (Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). There is a sense in which there

is, on average, some degree of positive correlation between the extent to which the mother wants the father's participation in parenting and the extent to which that will be realized.

Challenges and Obstacles to Involve African American Fathers

In order to successfully encourage father involvement among African Americans, it is vital to be cognizant of the challenges that African American fathers face generally specifically (Downer et al. 2008; Mapp et al. 2008).

General Challenges and Obstacles

On the surface, it appears relatively facile to exhort African American fathers to participate more in their children's schooling. However, giving such an exhortation may not produce the immediate effects desired because father participation is highly dependent on family structure (Jeynes 1999, 2000, 2008a, b; Jones and Unger 2001). This is particularly true in the case of childbirth that takes place outside of wedlock, which in the African American community is the case for 72 % of the births (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). At least in terms of father involvement, the first obstacle and probably the one that researchers point to most frequently is that a large percentage of African American children are from nontraditional family structures (Fagan 1998; Jeynes 2005b). Only a small percentage of African American fathers who contribute to the birth, get involved in the resultant child's education (Jones and Unger 2001). What makes the effects of parent family structure on father involvement even more pronounced is that father involvement is also related to income and family structure, which influences the poverty rate more than any other factor (Jeynes 2000, 2002a; Jones and Unger 2001).

The influence of family structure on father involvement produces a two-pronged reality. First, due to the effects of family structure on father involvement, it is likely that this participation is near its lowest level in many decades. Second, because so many African American fathers are unmarried or divorced and outside the home, encouraging paternal participation is probably more difficult than at any time in American history (Jeynes 1999, 2003b, 2007a).

In spite of these obstacles, teachers who are willing to reach out to both custodial and noncustodial parents can make a considerable difference (Coles 2009; Patrikakou and Weissburg 2001). As Patrikakou and Weissburg (2001) share, "The strongest predictor of parental involvement was parents' perceptions of teacher outreach" (p. 101). Social science research indicates that single-parent fathers often feel that teachers speak condescendingly to them and that this reduces their desire to become involved in their children's education (Coles 2009; Pasley and Minton 1997). Some researchers have argued that "social fathers" (Kim 2010, p. 161) play a role in

rearing African American children (Conner and White 2006). And, teachers may be the most available person to serve in this capacity, particularly if they are males like fathers are. Nevertheless, it is vital that one recognizes as Kim does the "relative lack of stability" of the social father and it must not be regarded as anything approaching a replacement for the engagement of a child's biological father (Kim 2010, p. 161).

A second obstacle that African Americans face is that of having relatively low income. Although income rates of African Americans are very high by international standards, they are quite a bit lower than levels attained by Asian Americans and whites. Of course, a great deal of these depressed income levels are due to the large percentage of nonintact family structures among African Americans (Coles 2009; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Approximately, 65–72 % of African Americans are born out of wedlock (Coles 2009; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Some people blame the recent propensity for African Americans to have a larger number of single-parent families on slavery (Allen and Conner 1997). And, indeed myriad African Americans suffered under the injustice and horrors of slavery. Nevertheless, if slavery was the primary cause one would have expected high rates of single-parent families for nearly a century and a half. In reality, however, the elevated rates of African American single-parent families did not arise until the 1960s when most Civil rights legislation was in place (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). Therefore, logically it would appear that other factors are at work.

Specific Challenges and Obstacles

African American fathers also face a number of obstacles that go beyond what African Americans face generally (Fagan 1998; Jeynes 2005b). African American noncustodial fathers feel that myriad Americans stereotype them and are too quick to conclude that they are "dead beat dads" (Pasley and Minton 1997). This is not merely a problem with African American single fathers, but also with single parents of other ethnicities as well (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). Many African American single fathers do support their children in divorced homes and to a lesser extent in never-married homes (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). Many African American noncustodial fathers who provide only little or no money to support their children assert that their lack of financial support is the result of the child's mother or the mothers' parents excluding them from having access to their child. American single fathers complain that on too many occasions single-parent mothers and their parents want the single-parent fathers to fulfill the responsibilities of being a father without receiving the blessings of parenthood (Fagan 1998; Pasley and Minton 1997).

A second obstacle that African American males face specifically is that due to several factors they are sometimes not regarded as integral supports within their own communities (Fagan 1998; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). Part of this is due to the fact that they are considerably less educated on average than their female counterparts, because of the gender gap among African Americans in college, favoring females (Fagan 1998; Jeynes 2005b, 2007a). In addition, African American males have high rates of being on probation, parole, and in prison (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). The

Bureau of Justice Statistics (2009) indicates that one out of eight African American males between the ages of 25 and 29 is either in prison, on parole, or on probation. In addition, about 40 % of the 2.3 million American prison population is African American males (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2009).

Although father engagement is indubitably salient for youth of all ethnicities, it may be very important for African American youth to experience paternal participation even more than students from other racial backgrounds. A recent Michigan study indicates that African American youth look to family members more than professional counselors to help them resolve their episodes of depression (Joe and Niedemeier 2008; Wadley 2010). Other research indicates that youth from other ethnicities may have the same orientation, but social scientists appear to have examined African Americans more than almost any racial group on this particular issue (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Wallerstein and Lewis 1998). The importance of father involvement is patent.

Successful Programs for African American Father Involvement

Parental involvement programs have been around since the founding of the New England colonies (Eavey 1964; Jeynes 2006a). Nevertheless, the emphasis on parental participation receded during the 1960s and 1970s as the divorce rate surged and women entered the workforce in record numbers. Emphasis on school-based programs resurfaced in the 1980s largely in response to the dissemination of family statistics indicating that family dissolution had become a national problem and the burgeoning of theories and research on family involvement (Jeynes 2005a, 2006a, 2007b). The scholarly examination of these programs was particularly important because the efficacy of father involvement as commonly practiced by fathers who do this voluntarily does not guarantee that programs will work that require father involvement that is often involuntary (Jeynes 2005a, 2010b). Fortunately, however, meta-analytic research indicates that father involvement programs are associated with higher levels of educational outcomes. The effect sizes for program-based involvement were smaller than for voluntary involvement, but they were still statistically significant at about one-third of a standard deviation unit (Jeynes 2005a).

President Bill Clinton contributed significantly to the growth of father engagement programs in 1995 when he stated, "The single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of father's from their children's homes, because it contributes to so many other social problems" (in Baskerville 2002, p. 695). President George W. Bush "unveiled a $315 million package for responsible fatherhood" (Baskerville 2002, p. 695). In the mid-1990s, nonprofit organizations led by the Fatherhood Initiative were formed to help fathers teach and support their children's development and learning (Baskerville 2002; Horn 2001). Most of these initiatives were faith-based (D'Agostino 2002; Horn 2001). Concurrently, other faith-based programs, such as Team Focus, led by former football coach and ESPN analyst Mike Gottfried, sought to help African American and other children who suffered from lack of father involvement (Weir 2008). The body of research appears to indicate that the Fatherhood Initiative is associated with higher levels of father engagement (Laws 2009).

Analyses have also been undertaken on other programs that were designed to foster father involvement, including Head Start and Success For All. The results of these analyses have shown somewhat inconsistent results, but suggest that these programs likely have a small to moderate impact on improving father involvement and student achievement (Borman and Hewes 2003; Fagan 1999, Fagan and Stevenson 2002). Britain's Sure Start program appears superior to similar initiatives in the United States such as Head Start. First, they focus more specifically on drawing in fathers into the educational process. Sure Start advocates, given the high rates of single parenthood in the black community in Britain, demand that special consideration be given to noncustodial fathers. Nevertheless, these advocates also assert that fathers in two-parent families need to apprehend their salience in the family. Sure Start is designed to communicate to both single-parent and two-parent fathers how they can help lift the educational outcomes of boys (Potter and Carpenter 2008).

A second way that Sure Start demonstrates a sophisticated approach to encouraging father involvement is that it seeks to combat sexist stereotypes that depict males as not very nurturing. Potter and Carpenter (2008) note that fathers often reported that one reason they tended to eschew school-parent gatherings is because they felt that the women stared at them in a judgmental way. Sure Start attempts to address these concerns by making teachers more aware of these stereotypes and the paternal perceptions of them.

The body of research indicates that one quality more than any other is conducive to encouraging high levels of African American father involvement: providing a loving, accepting, and supportive atmosphere (Mapp et al. 2008). Although there have been countless studies done examining what programs and strategies increase father involvement, the reality is that none of these programs yields the same impact as loving, kind, and supportive atmosphere usually inherent in voluntary father involvement (Mapp et al. 2008).

One seemingly successful program in implementing loving and supportive atmosphere for African American fathers is the Family Center Research Project which reaches out to thousands of African American fathers, as well as other urban parents, especially those of color (Mapp et al. 2008). In this project, it was found that if support existed at the higher levels of the administration, most notably the principal, it tended to emanate through the rest of the school. Before the implementation of the program, most administrators in the participating schools thought that encouragement and support was the job of the teachers, not the administrators. Through the program, however, administrators realized that administrators perhaps even more than teachers set the tone for the entire school. Teachers can be loving, accepting, and kind, but if the members of the administration are rude and arrogant, it will more than neutralize the influence of compassionate teachers. As the Family Center Research Project progressed, virtually every school employee recognized that administrative support was a prerequisite for the project's success (Mapp et al. 2008).

In the Family Center Research Project, the staff and teachers are taught not only to provide love and support to students but also to parents. The advice that family counselors give to couples considering marriage is also applicable to schools seeking to develop a partnership with a family. When one marries, one marries not only a

spouse, but also into a family. Similarly, when a school seeks to educate a child, it is to partner with an entire family, including the father (Fagan 1998). The findings on the efficacy of the Family Center Research Project are in their early stages (Mapp et al. 2008). Based on the initial findings, it would seem that there is clearly a relationship between the practice of the Family Center Research Project and father involvement. However, there has not been research undertaken to see whether this involvement affects student educational outcomes.

Naturally, there are numerous other father involvement programs undertaken at a more localized level that even though they do not earn the publicity of the larger programs nevertheless are considerable in their influence (Jeynes 2008b). Many of them, like the Fatherhood Initiative and other nonprofit programs, are often faith-based in nature (Horn 2001). Many Christian and Jewish schools either actually require parental involvement or highly encourage such participation. Countless social scientists have declared that one of the most ostensible strengths of Christian schools is their emphasis on parental involvement (Jeynes 2008c). The fact that efforts to increase father involvement appear to have some impact is quite encouraging and that fostering such behavior will ultimately yield many benefits.

Implications for Practice: What Schools, Parents, and Society Can Do to Enhance African American Father Involvement?

Research on the effects of father involvement and the programs designed to foster this behavior indicate that there are several actions schools can take to enhance the likelihood of father involvement in their children's lives.

First, it is important for schools and school counselors to provide a loving and supportive environment both for fathers and their children. Fathers are like any other people. They function best when they feel that they are appreciated, loved, and invited by educators to become involved. It is important that teachers do not assume that they know the families' needs (Reglin 1993). Therefore, it is vital that school leaders make efforts to know African American families individually through home visits in the beginning of the school year (Jeynes 2006a) and phone conversations and face-to-face dialog as much as possible (Reglin 1993).

Second, reaching out to single-parent fathers is particularly important because the African American youth who are struggling the most in school are frequently from single-parent families (Reglin 1993). Whether these fathers are single fathers who are raising children or nonresidential fathers of mother-only households, teachers and other community leaders need to do a better job of embracing fathers as integral in the parenting process. And, reaching out in this way is particularly important because as Reglin (1993) notes, "The survival of all our children depends on how well parents educate and support one another" (p. 3).

Third, the results of a series of meta-analyses indicate high expectations of fathers is associated with elevated levels of academic achievement both in elementary and secondary school (Jeynes 2003a, 2005a, 2007b). If schools are to encourage fathers

to have high expectations of their young, educators must have high expectations of the fathers.

Fourth, several of the most successful programs designed to increase father involvement are faith-based. Religious faith can be a source of strength for both fathers and sons, especially because when there has been a dearth of such involvement a determination and strength is needed to rebuild the relationship (Jeynes 1999).

Fifth, in order to encourage father involvement, there must be a relationship between the school leaders and individual fathers (Brown et al. 2007). This is not the easiest relationship to establish. There are a number of reasons for this fact. First, most elementary school teachers are females and they naturally gravitate toward developing relationships with mothers more than they do with fathers (Ogbu 1992, 1993). Second, even in today's society, mothers are generally more accessible in terms of scheduling parent–teacher meetings (Brown et al. 2007). Third, to the extent that in nonintact families fathers are much more likely to be the noncustodial parent, fathers are often out of the circle of school communication. Despite all these factors, teachers need to "go the extra mile" to activate the participation of fathers in their children's education (Brown et al. 2007).

Sixth, an emerging trend in the field of father involvement in recent years is targeting fathers of children in early childhood years, ages 0–8 (Flouri and Buchanan 2004; Jeynes 2005a; Lamb and Lewis 2010; Rowe et al. 2004) by researchers and program developers. And, it may well be that the influence of father involvement in the later years is contingent on paternal engagement in the early years.

Conclusion

The existing body of research indicates that the involvement of fathers and mothers has a major positive impact on the scholastic outcomes of their youth. Beyond this, quantitative analysis suggests that this involvement can be a significant contributing factor to reducing the achievement gap. It is therefore imperative that educators, other family members, and practitioners do what they can to enhance father engagement in their children's lives and in their education specifically. The welfare of African American children is a concern that affects all citizens of the United States. Because few fathers are cognizant of research findings on factors that contribute to successful father involvement, it is critical that teachers and administrators educate themselves and inform fathers on these factors in order to ensure fathers' greater participation in their children's lives (Jeynes 2010b). To the extent that researchers can provide guidance to educators, families, and practitioners about the place of the father in raising the educational outcome of African American youth, the stronger the nation will be.

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Chapter 6
Gay Fathers' Involvement in their Young Children's Lives

Dana Berkowitz and Katherine A. Kuvalanka

Broadening our understanding of fathering requires scholars to explore the diversity of men's experiences involving the care for children. A growing body of research has begun to advance theoretical knowledge on the social matrix of men's intimate relationships with children by answering some critical questions about gay men as fathers. This chapter provides an overview of the scholarship on gay fathers and their involvement with children. We begin by detailing the demographics of gay fathers in the United States and the diversity within gay-father-headed families. Next, we discuss the dominant conceptual lenses that have been used by scholars to theorize about gay fathering. We then review the research studies that focus specifically on gay fathers and their children and consider the current legal issues facing these families. After suggesting implications for policy makers and practitioners, we conclude the chapter with practical resources for educators.

Gay Fathers: Demographics and Diversity

Gay fathers and their families are a heterogeneous population. Many gay fathers are divorced men who had children while in heterosexual unions and much of the early scholarship on gay fathers was based on this particular cohort (Barret and Robinson 2000; Bigner and Jacobsen 1989; Bozett 1985, 1987). However, more recent scholarship has begun to explore a new cohort of gay men who have chosen to undertake fatherhood in contexts that exclude heterosexual marriage. The increase in the number of gay fathers who choose to construct their families outside of heterosexual unions is a result of a combination of factors that include but are not necessarily

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limited to: recent developments in reproductive technology, changing legalities in the adoption system, greater acceptance of lesbians and gay men, and broader changes in the diversity of American families (Goldberg 2010a; Stacey 1996).

United States Census data indicated that approximately 1 in 20 male same-sex couples were raising children in 1990 and by 2000 these numbers rose to 1 in 5 (Gates and Ost 2004). While these data estimate that approximately 22 % of gay male couples are involved in parenting (Cianciotto and Cahill 2003), this is likely a conservative estimate as the 2000 Census did not account for single gay fathers or for those gay men parenting children from previous heterosexual unions (Benson et al. 2005; Bigner and Jacobsen 1989). What is relatively certain is that the number of gay-parent-headed households is on the rise. Moreover, families headed by gay fathers exist in every state and in almost every county in the country (Gates et al. 2007; Gates and Ost 2004).

One result of these increases in gay men pursuing fatherhood outside of heterosexual marriage is that young gay men are now coming of age within a particular sociohistorical moment that allows them to pursue family and children in ways that differentiate them from past cohorts of gay men (Mallon 2004). Thus, more and more young gay men see fathering as a normal part of their life course trajectories (Berkowitz 2007a, b; Rabun and Oswald 2009). Recent data from the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) conducted by the National Center of Health Statistics in 2002 revealed that over half of the gay men in their sample reported that they would like a child in the future (Gates et al. 2007). Furthermore, 67 % of the gay youth in D'Augelli et al.'s study (2008) believed that they would probably become parents in the future.

Paths to Parenthood for Gay Fathers

Outside of heterosexual intercourse there are several paths to parenthood that gay men can consider. Adoption, fostering, and surrogacy arrangements are most common but many men also become fathers through a multiplicity of creative kinship ties. Even though gay men are still the minority of adopters when compared with lesbians or heterosexuals, adoption is becoming a major pathway for parenthood among gay men (Hicks 2006). Although no exact statistics of gay adopters exist, data from the US Census reveal that of the 1.6 million adopted children in the United States; at least 65,000 are currently residing with lesbian or gay parents (Gates et al. 2007). Of the quarter million children living in US households headed by same-sex couples, 4.2 % were either adopted or foster children, a figure that is almost double that of heterosexual couples (Gates and Ost 2004). However, scholars assert that this is likely a conservative estimate (Goldberg et al. 2007).

Although gay adoptive families are diverse, there are some patterns that distinguish them from both heterosexual and lesbian adoptive families. For example, statistics indicate that the adopted children of gay male couples are older than those of their female counterparts; more than one in five children of male couples are aged 13 and

older compared to only one in ten among the children of female couples (Gates et al. 2007). There is also some evidence that same-sex couples as a whole are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to adopt transracially. Among adopted children of gay and lesbian couples, 14 % are foreign-born, a number twice the rate among adopted children by heterosexual couples (Gates et al. 2007). Finally, although it was once thought that both lesbians and gay men were more willing than heterosexuals to adopt children with special needs, recent data indicate that the portion of different-sex and same-sex adoptive families with disabled children is relatively similar (Gates et al. 2007). However, among same-sex couples, gay men are more than three times more likely than their lesbian counterparts to have a child with a disability (Gates et al. 2007).

There are multiple types of adoption that vary widely in terms of cost. Domestic private agency adoptions range from $ 4,000 to $ 40,000, and the cost of independent private adoptions (i.e., through a lawyer) can range from $ 8,000 to $ 40,000. International adoption can cost between $ 7,000 and $ 30,000 and often requires prospective fathers to travel to the parent country (Goldberg 2010a). Gay men who currently choose to adopt internationally are encountering new legal barriers, in that countries like China and Guatemala now require single-parent adopters to sign affidavits of heterosexuality (Goldberg 2010a). The most affordable option is adoption through the US child welfare system, but the financial appeal of this option is often mitigated by legal uncertainties, the potential for emotional or behavioral challenges in the child, prior abuse or neglect, and the low availability of infants (Goldberg 2010a). Furthermore, gay foster parents who wish to formally adopt their foster children face legal uncertainties, as they may have to wait long periods of time for legal rights of the children's biological parents to be terminated (Goldberg 2010a).

Although multiple organizational bodies have endorsed adoption by gays and lesbians (see, for example, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, among others), some states continue to prohibit the recognition of adoption by same-sex parents. Because adoption is primarily a matter of state law and is usually left to the discretion of county family court judges, there is much diversity among how individual states and jurisdictions regulate same-gender adoption (Pawelski et al. 2006). Florida has an explicit statute barring adoption from anyone who is homosexual,[1] Mississippi prohibits adoption by couples of the same gender, and Arkansas[2] and Utah prohibit anyone cohabiting in a nonmarital sexual relationship from adopting (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force [NGLTF] 2008). The legal and interpersonal barriers that gay men face in adopting have been well documented by scholars (Appell 2003; Brodzinsky et al. 2002). Arguably, the most empirical and systematic analysis to date is the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption

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[1] In 2008, a Miami-Dade circuit court judge ruled that this statute was unconstitutional, thus allowing some adoptions by gay individuals to take place in the state of Florida since the ruling; however, the ruling is currently under appeal and the statute remains on the books (Almanzar 2008).

[2] In 2010, a Pulaski County circuit court judge ruled that the statewide adoption ban was unconstitutional; however, the decision has been appealed to the state supreme court, and the ban remains in effect (http://www.hrc.org/issues/parenting/adoptions/953.htm).

Institute's national study of adoption agencies' attitudes, practices, and policies with gay and lesbian adoptive parents (Brodzinsky et al. 2003). Findings of their nationwide analysis revealed that while 65 % of agencies had accepted applications from non-heterosexuals, only 39 % had actually placed a child in the care of a gay or lesbian adopter. Even more, some researchers have documented that gay men are more likely than their lesbian counterparts to encounter resistance from adoption professionals because parenting continues to remain the "natural" domain of women (Johnson and Connor 2002).

Gay men who want to avoid the complexities of the adoption process may opt to pursue surrogacy. Gay men who choose surrogacy are motivated by the higher degree of control they have in the process when compared with adoption, and often feel that the presence of a genetic link to their child is an important factor for the creation of family ties (Lev 2006). Surrogacy involves a pregnancy created by the insemination of one or both of the gay men's sperm into the surrogate mother, causing the child to be the biological offspring of one of the gay fathers and the surrogate mother (except in cases where a gestational surrogate is also hired, wherein the surrogate carries the child to term but has no genetic relationship). Surrogacy tends to be the most expensive route to parenthood for gay men and ranges from $ 115,000 to $ 150,000 (Growing Generations 2009). Thus, the high costs of surrogacy mean that it is only an option for a small number of relatively affluent gay men. Furthermore, some US states ban surrogacy, while only a handful have explicitly approved surrogacy contracts through their courts or legislatures (Goldberg 2010a). Although it is impossible to provide a definitive number of gay men who have become fathers through surrogacy, *Growing Generations,* the oldest and largest agency specializing in surrogacy arrangements for gay men reports on its website that since its inception in 1996, it has since worked with approximately 1,000 clients (Growing Generations 2009).

Although adoption, fostering, and surrogacy tend to be the most popular routes to parenthood for gay men, many gay-headed families have also been constructed through creative kinship ties. For example, some gay fathers have conceived and raised children jointly with a woman or women with whom they were emotionally but not sexually involved, and other gay men have become parents rather accidentally by taking over the childrearing responsibilities of family or friends who are not able to act as primary caregivers.

Theorizing Gay Fathers

Several intersecting and complementary perspectives guide the scholarship on gay fathering, though in this chapter we only detail three: feminist, social constructionism, and queer theory. Much of the knowledge on gay (and lesbian) families has been constructed through feminist theoretical frameworks that challenge "the ideology of the monolithic family and the notion that any one family arrangement is natural, biological, or functional in a timeless way" (Goldberg and Allen 2007, p. 354). In

an effort to balance out the hegemony of "expert knowledge" that often positioned non-heterosexual families as deficient from the normative family ideal, feminist family scholars set out to understand the experiences of gay fathers by privileging their voices, narratives, and meanings (Allen and Demo 1995). Listening closely to the perspectives and experiences of gay fathers and their family members signaled a critical shift in family studies; one triggered by feminist scholars advocating for bringing marginalized voices to the center of analysis. Because of this interpretist/subjectivist shift, social constructionism is a frequently used lens by feminist family scholars and other researchers who seek to explore how gay men and their children subjectively and interpretively create and sustain family bonds (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Goldberg 2007, 2010a; Stacey 2006).

A social constructionist perspective turns the spotlight on the extent to which families, gender, and sexualities are socially and materially constructed (Oswald et al. 2005). When gay fathers engage in mundane family practices like childrearing and household chores that are typically reserved for women, they expose the socially constructed reality behind taken for granted assumptions about gender and family. Moreover, gay fathers actively disentangle heterosexuality from parenthood and in doing so disrupt fundamental notions about family. Gay men who choose to parent challenge normative definitions of family, fatherhood, and even established gender and sexual norms of the mainstream gay subculture. Stereotypical constructions of gay men as being sexually promiscuous, antifamily, and having few financial obligations are gradually being contested as they increasingly traverse the paths to fatherhood (Stacey 2006). Thus, viewing gay fathers' involvement with their children through a social constructionist lens illuminates the fluidity of family, gender, and sexuality.

Some of the recent scholarship on gay fathering has been influenced by the theoretical contributions of queer theory. Queer theory, like social constructionism and feminist theories is sensitive to the emergent meanings of the social world. However, queer theory extends and complicates social constructionist and feminist theories by taking seriously an analysis of heteronormativity, or the taken-for-granted systems of knowledge that underlay the idea that heterosexuality is normative, ahistorical, and revered as the ideal (Ingraham 2005). Heterosexism is "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (Herek 1992, p. 89). Heterosexism and heteronormativity occur at the cultural and individual level and can be observed in institutions and customs (Herek 1990). Heteronormativity fuses together gender ideology, sexual ideology, and family ideology into a singular theoretical composite (Oswald et al. 2005). Following the logic of Foucault (1977), queer theorists argue that social control operates through the production of knowledge shaped by illusory binaries typical to Western ontology (i.e., homosexual/heterosexual, male/female, masculinity/femininity; Oswald et al. 2005). Scholars who integrate queer theory into their studies of gay fathers and their families argue that this perspective allows for "critical analysis of the limitations of existing perspectives and the development of new modes of thinking" (Goldberg 2007, p. 561). Often, scholars will employ the term *queer* as a verb to refer to a conscious and active deconstruction of heteronormativity by

challenging gender, sexuality, and/or family binaries (Goldberg 2007; Oswald et al. 2005). Below, we review the existing literature on gay fathers and their children. We reveal how gay fathers expose the socially constructed reality of gender, sexuality, and family and detail how sometimes gay fathers can "queer" these very categories by unveiling the inherent instability of these ontological binaries (Berkowitz 2009).

What Does the Research Say About Gay Men as Parents?

Many scholars argue that because of their marginalized social location from traditional family life, gay men can potentially challenge cultural norms of masculinity and fathering (Benson et al. 2005; Schacher et al. 2005). Research has documented that gay men can and do resist many of the practices of fathers in heterosexual relationships. For example, many of the gay fathers in Lassiter et al.'s (2006) study expressed that being gay men gave them the freedom to be nurturing fathers. Already liberated from the chains of hegemonic (heterosexual) masculine expectations, these men felt they could freely engage in non-gender-specific parenting. Similarly, in their focus groups with gay fathers, Schacher et al. (2005) observed that "gone was the stereotypically absent, uninvolved, emotionally distant father who provided financially for the family but contributed little to the emotional needs of others" (p. 48). These gay fathers rejected the idea that women were inherently more nurturing and believed that men could be just as nurturing and engage in mothering activities.

According to a recent review by Biblarz and Stacey (2010), the slim body of research on coupled gay fathers indicates that "they do not provide a double dose of 'masculine' parenting," but rather appear to adopt parenting practices more feminine than do heterosexual fathers (p. 12). For the most part, studies indicate that when two gay men coparent, they do so in ways that more closely resemble two lesbian women than a heterosexual man and heterosexual woman. In a small qualitative study, Brinamen (2000) found that six out of the ten gay parents viewed themselves as mothers and were quite comfortable, if not enthusiastic, to embrace the title of *mother*. In fact, some data suggest that there may even be more gay fathers than lesbian mothers who are stay-at-home parents[3] (Bellafante 2004). Even those gay fathers who are not stay-at-home parents have reported that their commitment to work shifted once becoming fathers. Some of the fathers in Mallon's (2004) study discussed making an effort to manage their time at work more efficiently so that they would be able to devote as much time as possible to their children. Biblarz and Stacey (2010) argue that the pattern of gay fathers engaging in what has conventionally been understood as mothering results from the fact that these men are actively seeking out parenthood, and for gay men this journey requires a great deal of motivation and dedication. The authors explain that "gay men who clear this high bar are a

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[3] Perhaps it is not surprising that partnered gay fathers may have more flexibility than lesbian mothers in their decision-making regarding whether one partner will stay at home with the children, given that male same-sex couples have higher household incomes on average than female same-sex couples (Gates 2009).

select group who deviate from conventional hetero-masculinity and from cultural stereotypes about gay male lifestyles as well" (Biblarz and Stacey 2010, p. 12).

That so many gay men are active and involved fathers (or rather, "mothers") challenges socially constructed cultural narratives that assume men are incompetent nurturers and that gay men are antifamily and irresponsible. However, the argument that gay men's marginalized location from traditional family life means that gay fathers always resist and transform traditional notions of gayness, fathering, and family is overly reductionistic (Goldberg 2010a). Such reasoning fails to account for the diversity within these families and the role of contextual variables like institutional support and the broader sociopolitical and legal milieu (Goldberg 2010b). For example, many of the same fathers detailed above in Schacher et al.'s (2005) focus groups reported struggling with sacrificing their role as provider and relinquishing the social value that accompanies the identity of family breadwinner. Furthermore, some of the men in Mallon's (2004) study reported struggling with requesting family leave time from work, an accommodation typically asked by mothers. Thus, though gay fathers do have the potential to pose challenges and even queer the heteropatriarchal status quo, it is critical to be cognizant of the fact that gay men construct their parental roles and identities in a social context wherein gendered roles, meanings, and attributions are pervasive.

Gay Fathers and their Children

The question of whether gay fathers are able to provide adequate gender role models for their children is possibly one of the most deep-seated issues in debates about gay parenting. Many people, especially those who draw from religious or politically conservative rhetoric, assert that children will not develop their gender identity fully if they are without both a mother and a father as gender role models (Clarke 2002; Clarke and Kitzinger 2005). Informed by psychological theories of child development, particularly social learning theory (Bandura 1977), this rhetoric presumes that gay men exhibit non-normative gender identities and are consequently unable to act as suitable gender role models for their children. Expert testimony on the "normal psychological development" of the children of gay (and lesbian) parents has often been a central focus in child custody battles (Hequembourg 2007). As such, much of the developmental research on the children of gay men was initially conducted in response to custody cases that often claimed that children would be harmed by remaining with a non-heterosexual parent (Allen and Burrell 1996). In light of this political context, early empirical findings tended to focus on the similarities that children raised by non-heterosexuals shared with children raised by heterosexuals (Chan et al. 1998; Tasker and Golombok 1997). These studies maintained that children of gay (and lesbian) parents do not seem to differ from children of heterosexual parents in terms of social functioning, psychological development, gender conformity, and sexual orientation (Chan et al. 1998; Green et al. 1986; Tasker and Golombok 1997). However, in a 2001 meta-analysis, Stacey and Biblarz critiqued these

findings, arguing that they were constructed within "a highly defensive conceptual framework" (p. 159) and asserted that when scholars minimize the significance of any findings of differences, they "forfeit a unique opportunity to take advantage of the "natural laboratory" that the advent of lesbigay-parent families provides for exploring the effects and acquisition of gender and sexual identity, ideology, and behavior" (pp. 162–163). Although there is some evidence that children raised by non-heterosexuals might have more expansive and flexible notions of gender and sexuality, the implications of these findings are not yet clear. Moreover, much of the research in this area reflects the developmental experiences of children of lesbian mothers and a very limited body of knowledge exists about children of gay fathers (Goldberg 2010a).

However, studies do suggest that there is a complex interplay of gender and sexuality in families that distinguishes the parenting styles of gay fathers from their heterosexual and lesbian counterparts. McPherson (1993) found that gay men are less inclined than heterosexual couples to promote gender conformity in children but somewhat more so than are lesbians. In her review of the existing scholarship, Patterson documented that gay fathers are more likely than lesbian mothers to encourage children to play with gender-typed toys (2000). Satirical columnist and gay father, Dan Savage, admits a desire for his son to show interest in the masculine-typed toys that he himself never enjoyed (Johnson and Connor 2002). Bigner and Jacobsen (1989) found that in comparison with heterosexual fathers, gay fathers were often stricter and enforced more rules for their children. Yet, they also tended to provide their children with explanations for their rules and include their children's input in family decision-making. Johnson and Connor (2002) reported that gay male parents were less likely to spank their children than both heterosexual couples and even lesbian mothers. Thus, while it is clear that gay fathers' childrearing practices do differ in some ways from both heterosexuals and lesbian mothers, more research is needed that can better tease out the complexities and nuances of these findings.

Negotiating Homophobia and Responding to Mother Absence

Gay fathers express concerns about "how best to navigate the dual challenge of modeling a sense of acceptance and pride in one's family structure while also preparing their children for possible encounters with stigma" (Goldberg 2010a, p. 90). Some of the gay fathers in Schacher et al.'s study (2005) discuss making an active effort to proudly convey their family status in their mundane interactions with others. Many gay fathers report actively seeking out progressive and diverse schools, neighborhoods, communities, and social networks (Mallon 2004). However, these kinds of efforts are contingent on having financial resources that many families lack. As Goldberg (2010a) points out:

> Middle-class and upper middle-class lesbian and gay parents are at an advantage with regards to protecting their children from bullying. That is, education, socioeconomic status, and professional status can serve to mitigate lesbian and gay parents' oppression by enabling

them to choose places to live that are safe from sexual orientation-related discrimination and to send their children to schools at which harassment related to their family structure is unlikely to occur (p. 137).

Many gay fathers express anxiety that their children might be persecuted for their unconventional family structure (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007). Interestingly, while much of the research on gay (and lesbian) parents highlights that while parents express the importance of preparing children for teasing and bullying, they simultaneously underplay its actual occurrence (Clarke et al. 2004). A survey of lesbian and gay parents conducted in New Zealand found that only 33.3 % of parents reported that their children had experienced homophobic teasing, while the remaining 66.7 % denied that their children had encountered any problems (Henrickson 2005). Reporting homophobic bullying puts gay fathers in somewhat of a difficult situation, as acknowledging it often results in blaming gay fathers for putting their children in harms way instead of tackling the larger issues of societal heterosexism and homophobia (Clarke et al. 2004). Cognizant of the public scrutiny of their families and the assumptions that their children are at risk, many gay (and lesbian) parents tend to downplay homophobic taunting, dismissing it as one of many things that children are teased about (Clarke et al. 2004).

Because of ideological assumptions about the functional and moral superiority of the heterosexual nuclear family and related dictums that assert children need to be exposed to both male and female influences, gay fathers must also be prepared to field inquiries regarding the absence of a primary female caregiver (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Johnson and Conner 2002; Mallon 2004). Research suggests that gay fathers respond to such inquiries by emphasizing the availability of women in their extended families and friendship networks (Goldberg 2010a). Berkowitz's (2007) interviews with economically privileged gay fathers reveals how some men rely on hired nannies to provide female role models for their children. Some data denote that gay men who pursue open adoptions may do so with the hopes of maintaining a relationship with the birth mother, thereby securing the presence of a female role model (McPheeters et al. 2008); other gay fathers report viewing their children's birth mothers as symbolic members of their families (Berkowitz and Marsiglio 2007; Ryan and Berkowitz 2009). Further research is needed that examines how gay fathers think about the role of female adults in their children's lives and how they manage societal pressures related to female involvement.

Legal Issues Facing Gay Fathers

The legal landscape in the United States has changed dramatically in the past decade with regard to gay and lesbian couples and parents. The 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* US Supreme Court decision decriminalized oral and anal sexual practices between consenting adults, effectively providing same-sex couples the same privacy as other Americans in regard to sexual behavior (Patterson 2007). Also in 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Court, in *Goodridge v. the Department of Public Health,* declared

the state's practice of denying same-sex couples access to civil marriage unconstitutional (Krause and Meyer 2007). Thus, Massachusetts became the first state in the United States to legally recognize marriages between same-sex partners. At the time of this writing[4], five other U.S. states—Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York—and the District of Columbia also allow same-sex couples to enter into legally recognized marriages (NGLTF 2011), providing these couples the rights and protections civil marriage affords at the state level (e.g., access to employer-based health benefits for partner and children). Eight other states (CA, DE, HI, IL, NJ, NV, OR, and WA) allow same-sex couples to enter into civil unions or domestic partnerships that provide all or nearly all the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage in these jurisdictions (NGLTF 2011). Meanwhile, gay and lesbian parents who have their children in the context of previous heterosexual relationships generally experience a much different climate in family court rooms than they did 10 years ago, as they are now much more likely to be awarded custody and/or visitation rights (Richman 2009). Despite these advances, the legal landscape is still challenging terrain for many gay and lesbian parents, and many obstacles remain.

The legal issues that gay fathers potentially face depend upon various factors—perhaps the most important one being where they live. Same-sex couples living in Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden are able to enter into legally recognized marriages countrywide (Human Rights Campaign 2010a). In addition, at the time of writing, marriage for same-sex couples was recently legalized in Argentina, Iceland, and Portugal (Barrionuevo 2010). In the United States, however, 40 states currently have statutes and/or constitutional amendments which restrict legally recognized marriage to heterosexual couples, while the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) defined marriage as between one man and one woman for federal purposes and declared that no state was required to recognize marriages between same-sex couples performed in other states (Krause Meyer 2007). Thus, partnered gay fathers living in the majority of jurisdictions in the United States are denied the state-level legal and social benefits of civil marriage, and the federal DOMA prohibits all gay couples from accessing many of the more than 1,100 rights, benefits, and protections that marriage affords at the federal level (U.S. General Accounting Office 2004). Furthermore, fewer than half of US states have statewide laws that ban workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation (NGLTF 2012), thus many gay fathers may face employment insecurity simply because of their non-heterosexual identities.

As previously noted in this chapter, adoption laws also vary by US state and jurisdiction. Thus, some individual and partnered gay men may be prohibited from becoming adoptive fathers in the first place either due to state law or the decisions

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[4] The legal landscape concerning partnership recognition for same-sex couples is changing rapidly. At the time of this writing, California's Proposition 8, a measure that effectively banned same-sex couples from entering into legally-recognized civil marriages in that state, was overturned by a U.S. District Court judge in August 2010, and a federal appeals court upheld that judge's ruling in 2012; the courts have put a stay on civil marriages between same-sex couples in California until the appeal process has concluded; in 2012, both Washington State and Maryland legislatures passed laws allowing same-sex couples to marry—however, these laws did not take effect immediately and are being challenged in referendums (The New York Times 2012).

of county-level judges, while some gay men who are already fathers are not able to have legally recognized relationships with their children. Although most states do not expressly prohibit gay and lesbian individuals from adopting, very few states guarantee same-sex couples access to joint or *second-parent adoptions*. Second-parent adoptions allow the partner of a legal/adoptive parent to also adopt the child—thus becoming the second legally recognized parent (Patterson et al. 2002). Second-parent adoptions are critical for the safety and well-being of families in that, for example, both parents have the ability to make emergency medical decisions for their children and are responsible for the financial support of their children even if the parents should separate (Pawelski et al. 2006). Furthermore, gay coparents who were not able to jointly adopt and/or who do not have access to second-parent adoptions—and, thus, are not legally recognized parents—could end up legal strangers to their children, should the partners separate, or should the legal/adoptive parent die (Pawelski et al. 2006). Currently, nine states (and DC) have statutes or appellate court rulings that guarantee gay and lesbian couples access to second-parent adoptions statewide, while perhaps as many as 18 other states have allowed second-parent adoptions by gay or lesbian parents in some jurisdictions (Human Rights Campaign 2010b).

Gay fathers may face issues of custody and visitation negotiation after a divorce or dissolution of a relationship. As previously noted, gay fathers who had their children in the context of a previous heterosexual relationship have a better chance now than a decade ago of receiving or sharing custody or visitation. Since 2000, the sexual orientation of a parent is rarely the only grounds upon which family court judges in the United States base their rulings, although some judges in certain jurisdictions still do base their judgments on this factor (Richman 2009). However, when same-sex couples dissolve their unions, courts very clearly favor a biological or legal parent over a nonbiological/nonlegal coparent in custody and visitation disputes (Buell 2001; Richman 2009). Thus, in states where joint or second-parent adoptions are not available, nonbiological/nonlegal parents are advised to negotiate and sign coparenting agreements, although it is uncertain whether individual judges will uphold such agreements (Buell 2001).

Implications for Practice and Policy

In addition to the legal challenges that gay fathers may face, some gay parents may also worry about acceptance on the part of their children's schools and teachers. These worries are realistic, given that less than a third of the youth with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents in Kosciw and Diaz's (2008) survey reported that school staff intervened frequently when overhearing antigay comments. More disturbingly, 39 % of the youth reported that teachers and other school staff themselves were the perpetrators of antigay remarks. Perhaps more common than teachers' overt homophobia are teachers' and preservice teachers' feelings of discomfort in relation to addressing gay and lesbian family issues, often due to personal values and beliefs and/or lack of knowledge (Maney and Cain, 1997; Ryan and

Martin 2000). Indeed, in one study of preservice elementary school teachers, almost 40 % of respondents said they "strongly disagreed" that gay men should be allowed to adopt; furthermore, more than 30 % said they were "uncertain" how comfortable they would feel teaching about gay and lesbian family issues, while slightly less than one-quarter said they would be "very uncomfortable" asking gay and lesbian parents about their family structures (Maney and Cain 1997). The result of teachers' discomfort is that gay- and lesbian-parent families are often rendered invisible in schools and classrooms (Gillis 1998; Lindsay et al. 2006). That invisibility can range from the absence of any positive or even neutral information about gay- and lesbian-parent families to discouraging children from sharing information about their families or including gay family members in school activities (Kosciw and Diaz 2008). Beyond invisibility, the lack of specific antihomophobic policies, or the failure of school personnel to carry out those policies, can contribute to a generally unwelcome school climate for gay and lesbian parents and their children (Ryan and Martin 2000).

As more gay men become fathers, and as more children with gay fathers enter early childhood programs and schools, changes in current practice and policy are necessary and inevitable. In order for teachers to best meet the needs of all of their students, educators must familiarize themselves with the familial diversity that exists in their classrooms, as well as the issues and challenges that gay fathers may face in our present day society (Wolfe 2006). First and foremost, when interacting with families, it is important that teachers not presume heterosexuality. Gay fathers may not be open with others about their sexual identities for fear that their children will be treated negatively as a result (Goldberg 2010a). Indeed, gay fathers living in states where their partnerships are not legally recognized may feel less safe about being "out" than gay fathers living in states where their familial relationships are recognized by the state (Patterson 2007). Thus, educators and school administrators should make efforts to clearly communicate their openness and acceptance to all forms of family diversity and make necessary institutional-level changes, such as those recommended by Jeltova and Fish (2005). For example, administrative forms, such as permission slips, could have a line for "parent/guardian" instead of "Mother" or "Father," as a way of recognizing various family structures. Information about and acknowledgment of LGBT people and families should also be included in classroom curricula; for example, having and making use of children's books and videos (see next section for suggestions) that depict families with gay parents help all children understand the familial diversity that exists in the world. Moreover, policies could be created that advise teachers and staff on how to recognize and stop the homophobia they witness or perpetrate, in order to promote a safe learning environment for all students.

Teachers could also take steps to ensure that all gay fathers—regardless of biological or legal parenting status—feel respected as genuine and capable parents. Some nonbiological/nonlegal gay fathers, including stepparents, may be made to feel invisible, or their relationships with their children minimized, if not acknowledged as full-fledged parents (Goldberg 2010a). A teacher should be cognizant of not referring to one father as the "real" father, as this implies that the teacher believes the other father is not a true parent. Furthermore, educators should be aware that gay

fathers often face homophobia, as well as sexist stereotypes about men not being as adept at parenting as women (Goldberg 2010a). Thus, educators need to familiarize themselves with the research on gay fathering and should not perpetuate stereotypes but, rather, should make evident their support and acceptance of all types of families.

Practical Resources for Educators

Several resources exist for teachers who are aiming to make their classrooms and schools more welcoming and accommodating to gay and lesbian parents and their children. For educators wanting to increase their own knowledge about gay fathers and issues such as surrogacy, foster care, and adoption, the documentary film *Daddy & Papa: A Story about Gay Fathers in America* (Symons 2002) and the book *Gay Fatherhood: Narratives of Family and Citizenship in America* (Lewin 2009) may be helpful starting points. The Family Equality Council (http://www.familyequality.org), based in Washington, DC, offers a variety of resources for educators, such as: *Opening Doors: LGBT Parents and Schools*, a document that aims to help educators understand what "they need to know to best serve children who are growing up LGBT-headed families," that is equipped with specific suggestions for curricula and questions to ask LGBT parents. The Family Equality Council also provides a model nondiscrimination policy for schools, as well as *The LGBTQ Family Friendly Children's Book List*. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN; http://www.glsen.org), based in New York City, has developed antibullying resources and has issued an annotated bibliography of children's books with gay and lesbian characters. In addition, an academic article by Wolfe (2006) outlines one education professor's experience of including gay issues in early childhood preparation coursework and describes specific resources, such as the film *That's a Family!: A Film for Kids about Family Diversity* (Chasnoff and Cohen 2000).

Organizations based outside of the United States also provide many helpful resources for early childhood educators. For example, the LGBTQ Parenting Network (http://www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca) in Toronto, Canada, offers workshops and trainings to organizations "interested in making their services more accessible and friendly to LGBTQ families." The LGBTQ Parenting Network's website also provides links to training and educational materials, such as *Building Bridges: Queer Families in Early Childhood Education* (Janmohamed and Campbell 2009), a detailed resource guide that offers numerous suggestions for integrating gay family issues into early childhood curriculum. Furthermore, Schools Out (http://www.schools-out.org.uk), an organization based in the United Kingdom, provides advice and lesson plans for schools and educators aiming to create safer learning environments for all students.

Educators may also want to be aware of resources available for gay fathers and their children. Several support groups for gay fathers exist in cities and towns

across the United States. For example, Gay Fathers of Greater Boston (http://www.
gayfathersboston.org); The Pop Luck Club (http://www.popluckclub.org/) in Los
Angeles; and Center Kids, Center Families (http://www.gaycenter.org/families) in
New York City hold regular meetings and offer several other resources and services
for gay-parent families. Gay fathers can find the LGBT parenting groups that are
available in their state through the Family Equality Council's website (cited above).
Several gay fathers' groups also exist in countries outside the United States; for exam-
ple, the 519 Church Street Community Centre (http://www.the519.org/) in Toronto,
Canada, offers a number of queer parenting programs, including *Daddy, Papa, & Me*,
a monthly gathering for gay fathers of young children. Other resources for parents
include the *Rainbow Report Card*, created by the Family Equality Council, which
is an interactive tool that helps parents assess the climate of their children's schools,
and generates custom recommendations regarding steps parents can take to help
their schools become more LGBT-friendly. Furthermore, those who are interested in
reading a comprehensive summary of all research studies on lesbian and gay parents
can be pointed to the recent book: *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children:
Research on the Family Life Cycle* (Goldberg 2010a). Last, children of gay fathers
may be interested in learning about the pen pal program and online communities
offered through COLAGE (http://www.colage.org)—an organization for children,
youth, and adults with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer
parent/s.

Conclusions

This chapter presented an overview of the existing knowledge on gay fathers and
their involvement with their children. Gay fathers are diverse in terms of their paths
to parenthood, their family structures, their geographic locations, socioeconomic
statuses, and the racial/ethnic compositions of their family constellations. Despite the
diversity within these families, some similarities remain. For example, the research
on gay fathers consistently documents that these men are no less equipped to raise
children than are their heterosexual or female counterparts (Patterson 2000; Stacey
and Biblarz 2001). In fact, some scholars have argued that gay fathers have greater
freedom to construct their parenting roles and can encourage greater flexibility in
their children's gender repertoires (Stacey and Biblarz 2001). Yet, gay men pursuing
fatherhood continue to encounter obstacles, and gay fathers and their children face
discrimination on multiple fronts (Goldberg 2010a). As researchers move toward
grasping a deeper and more accurate picture of what life is like for gay fathers
and their children, every effort must be made to ensure that these findings inform
policy, practice, and education. As the contemporary fathering and family landscape
grows increasingly more complex, we urge scholars, lawmakers, and practitioners
to navigate this new terrain with a keen balance of enthusiasm, contentiousness, and
practicality.

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Chapter 7
Incarcerated Fathers
Implications for Father Involvement

Michael E. Roettger and Raymond R. Swisher

Unprecedented growth of the US prison population has led to a large number of incarcerated fathers. In 2007, US state and federal prisons contained 766,000 fathers of 1.55 million children; a 90 % increase since 1991. According to data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, nearly 13 % of young adults report that their biological fathers have ever been incarcerated (Foster and Hagan 2007). Reflecting racial inequalities in rates of incarceration, minority children are particularly at risk. Glaze and Mauschak (2008) estimate that African-American and Hispanic children are over 7 and 2.5 times, respectively, more likely than whites to have an incarcerated father in state or federal prisons. As Western and Wilderman (2009) note, these trends have made father incarceration an increasingly common experience within the life course, particularly for disadvantaged children.

Noting these trends, researchers have increasingly focused on the "collateral consequences" of father's incarceration for families, children, and communities (Braman 2004; Hagan and Dinovitzer 1999; Hagan and Foster 2007). At five to ten times the rate of other developed nations (Mauer 2003; Western and Wildeman 2009) and lacking a criminal justice system focusing on rehabilitation (Gottschalk 2006), issues surrounding father incarceration remain somewhat unique to the United States. Nevertheless, international studies and a growing body of qualitative and quantitative research provide insights into how current and formerly incarcerated fathers interact with their children.

It is important to recognize that father incarceration complicates father-child involvement in a number of ways. Current and formerly incarcerated fathers face a number of personal issues, including recidivism (Langan and Levin 2002), mental health problems and substance abuse (Mumola 2000), and difficulty in finding stable

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employment (Pager 2003, 2007). Contact during incarceration is often limited by distance, onerous and unpleasant visitation rules and regulations, and the stigma of prison itself (Nurse 2004). Given that a large majority of romantic relationships end during incarceration (Western et al. 2004), children may experience issues such as family instability, father-mother tensions, father absence, and male authority figures both during and after father incarceration (Braman 2004; Giordano 2010). In some cases, particularly those involving extreme criminality or domestic violence, father's incarceration may represent a relief of stressors within the family, leading to positive outcomes for children (Braman 2004; Nurse 2002). In these cases, the involvement of fathers would not be desired or advised. But in many cases, incarcerated fathers remain potentially important within the lives of children.

In this chapter, we discuss father-child involvement in the context of incarceration. We begin with an overview of father incarceration in the United States, using several theoretical perspectives to establish how father incarceration influences father-child involvement. We then proceed to discuss the impact of father incarceration on offenders and children. After discussing the impact of father incarceration on parents and children, we discuss implications for social and education policies. In doing so, we highlight some existing programs as examples of how policies and practices may lead to improved father-child relationships.

Overview of Parental Incarceration in the United States

Since 1970, the US jail and prison population has grown from 250,000 to 2.4 million individuals. Among males, the Bureau of Justice Statistics has estimated that one-third of African Americans, 17 % of Hispanics, and 5 % of whites (Bonczar 2003) will spend a year or more in prison during their lives. Less educated black males are particularly at risk, with nearly 60 % of black high school dropouts and 30 % of high school graduates spending a year or more in prison by their mid-30s (Pettit and Western 2004). Consequently, incarceration has become an increasingly common life course event among less educated and minority males.

With nearly 60 % of incarcerated males reporting having at least one biological child, the number of children experiencing incarceration has also grown exponentially. Mumola (2000, 2006) estimates that nearly 1.7 million children have a biological father in state or federal prison, while nearly 7 million children have a parent that is under correctional supervision (i.e., incarcerated or on probation/parole). As in the case of incarceration, minority children are disproportionately affected. Wildeman (2009) estimates that by adolescence 24 % of African-American children have experienced a biological father's incarceration, compared to 4 % of whites.

These demographic trends are disconcerting, given the number of negative children's outcomes associated with father's incarceration. Empirical research has found father's incarceration to associate with homelessness (Hagan and Foster 2007), family instability (Western et al. 2004), child mortality (Wildeman 2010), poor educational outcomes (Murray and Farrington 2008), childhood aggression (Wildeman

in press), adolescent delinquency (Murray et al. 2009), substance abuse (Roettger et al. in press), and mental health issues (Murray and Farrington 2008; Swisher and Roettger 2010). Given these risk factors, children of incarcerated parents are disproportionately likely to experience a number of problems in adolescence and young adulthood, creating heavy social costs. For every child in the United States, Cohen and Piquero (2009) place the future societal costs of dropping out of high school at $ 360,000–$ 540,000, becoming a heavy drug user at $ 865,000–$ 965,000, and becoming a career criminal at $ 2.6–$ 4.6 million. Consequently, the potential social and economic gains from educational and public policies that help to ameliorate these risks are substantial.

Although also on the rise, maternal incarceration remains uncommon in the United States, comprising just 8 % of incarcerated parents and involving 150,000 children (Glaze and Maruschak 2008; Mumola 2000). Nevertheless, using data from national surveys of state and federal prisoners, Glaze and Maruschak report that mother's incarceration can have a much greater effect on family instability; relative to incarcerated fathers, maternal incarceration more often results in children living with grandparents (44 % vs. 12 %) or in foster care (11 % vs. 2 %).

Theoretical Frames for Understanding Father's Incarceration

Several theoretical perspectives offer insights into both the rise of father's incarceration and its effects on father involvement and child outcomes. Recent legal scholars have noted the movement of US society to focus on punishment and overt social control in a number of areas that include education, criminal justice, and welfare reform (Garland 2001; Simon 2008). In this development, Simon emphasizes how families are increasingly governed through the criminal justice system. In child custody and visitation rights, Simon notes courts increasingly use histories of criminal convictions, drug use, and domestic violence to mandate how fathers are able to interact with children. Racial discrimination is invoked by some to explain the increasing punitiveness of American society. Collins (2005) and Wacquant (2007) argue that incarceration of males is a continuing form of societal racial discrimination. Wilson (1987, 1996) argues that poor blacks are often embedded in neighborhoods of concentrated economic and social disadvantage, from which single parenthood, poverty, and violence result. Under such conditions, aberrant cultural and social values may be transmitted from incarcerated fathers to children.

Social control theory suggests that children with an incarcerated father may lack positive social norms and values that serve as social controls, and that lead to prosocial behaviors and outcomes (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 2003; Thornberry 2005; Thornberry et al. 2003). An incarcerated father is also not physically present in the home to informally monitor and control their children's behavior.

Labeling theories emphasize other processes through which father's criminality and incarceration may lead to similar outcomes in children. For example, research by

Hagan and Palloni (1990) suggests that external labeling of parents as criminal leads to subsequent criminality among children through a process of intergenerational exclusion. Foster and Hagan (2007) suggest that the stigma associated with father's incarceration may discourage youth from being involved in school and other community activities. At the same time, such a stigma might make unstructured socializing with peers, particularly delinquent ones, more appealing. Given unstructured socializing is argued to be an important proximal mechanism facilitating delinquency, and drug use (Osgood and Anderson 2004; Osgood et al. 1996), decreased father involvement resulting from incarceration may increase negative peer influences among children.

Using a social learning and symbolic interactionist approach, several researchers (Giordano 2010; Giordano et al. 2006, 2007) reported that early exposure of children to father's drug use and crime leads them to engage in similar behaviors as adolescents and young adults. From this perspective, it is not so much incarceration, but father's preexisting antisocial behavior and negative interactions with children that produce the negative outcomes for their children. In such cases, father's incarceration may represent a relief from the stress of father's antisocial behavior (Giordano 2010).

Taken as a whole, existing theories present a mixed picture regarding the potential consequences of incarcerated fathers on their children, and of the benefits of their involvement. To the extent that father's incarceration is a reflection of the increasing punitiveness of American society or of racial discrimination, many incarcerated fathers may have much to offer their children in terms of positive engagement. On the other hand, in cases of extreme antisocial behavior or domestic violence, the involvement of incarcerated fathers may lead to more negative outcomes for children.

Effects of Father Incarceration on Father Involvement

Due to factors such as lengthy sentences, typically large physical distances of incarceration, patterns of preincarceration involvement, and variations in father-mother relationships, there is a complicated association between father's incarceration and father-child involvement (Braman 2004; Herman-Stahl et al. 2008; Mumola 2000; Phillips et al. 2006). Nevertheless, several common themes emerge from the existing research, which are differentiated according to effects occurring: (1) during father's incarceration and (2) after release of the father from prison.

Issues During the Father's Incarceration

Glaze and Maruschak (2008) and Mumola (2000) report that 80 % of incarcerated fathers have monthly contact with their children and that 40 % are in contact on a weekly basis. However, prison substantially decreases physical contact. Whereas nearly one-half of inmates reported living with their child and 80 % reported sharing the care of children with mothers prior to incarceration, only 30 % had monthly visits with their children while in prison.

For many children, father absence and family instability become major issues resulting from their father's incarceration. When the father's incarceration occurs early in a child's life, attachment to the parent is likely to be disrupted (Boswell and Wedge 2003; Johnston and Gabel 1995). Braman (2004) finds that children whose father is incarcerated complain that their father's absence results in a lack of guidance for handling difficult issues related to school and friends. As mothers form new romantic relationships and struggle with poverty, changes in living arrangements and household composition are also common (Edin et al. 2004; Nurse 2002).

Father incarceration may also lead to diminished psychological well-being and self-esteem issues (Murray and Farrington 2008). Friedman and Esselstyn (1965) found that children whose parents were incarcerated had poorer self-concept than control groups. In one small-scale study, Stanton (1980) observed lower self-esteem among children with incarcerated mothers than a control group of children whose mothers were on probation. This, in turn, may result in negative emotional outcomes, behavioral problems, and academic struggles (Bloom 1995; Johnston and Gabel 1995; Jose-Kampfner 1995; Wildeman in press).

Ethnographic studies suggest that father incarceration may also produce social stigma for children and families. Giordano (2010) finds that even young children know that their father's incarceration is associated with inappropriate and socially marginalized behavior, which may result in children experiencing social stigma and shame (Braman 2004). The stigma of incarceration and the "quasi-incarceration" experienced during prison visits often lead to mothers and families reducing contact between children and incarcerated fathers (Nurse 2004). Incarcerated fathers often must cope as well with mothers who are forming new romantic relationships, as many existing relationships sour during incarceration (Edin et al. 2004; Western et al. 2004). With 88 % of children of incarcerated fathers living with their mothers (Mumola 2000), mothers often act as "gatekeepers" limiting access to and levels of involvement with fathers. Due to the nature of incarceration, this gatekeeper role is greatly heightened relative to the general population (Nesmith and Ruhland 2008).

Father incarceration also creates financial hardships on families, which may lead to diminished father involvement. With most fathers employed and having incomes prior to incarceration, the loss of father income leads to loss of economic resources and child support (Edin et al. 2004; Griswold and Pearson 2003; Hairston 1998). With prison wages typically no more than a few dollars per day, families may incur thousands of dollars in expenses arising from phone calls, visitation, and legal fees. Incarcerated fathers who feel inadequate due to being unable to financially support their families, may pull away from involvement with their children (Braman 2004). With father incarceration heavily concentrated among low socioeconomic status men (Pettit and Western 2004); lost financial earnings, child support, and costs of incarceration may create additional family instability that further reduces father-child involvement.

Issues Following Incarceration

With over 75 % of incarcerated parents reporting a prior conviction and 50 % reporting a prior incarceration (Mumola 2000), the father-child relationship must often cope with multiple spells of incarceration and ongoing involvement of the father with the criminal justice system. While increasingly recognized as important for both reha-bilitation purposes and child welfare (McKay et al. 2009), addressing issues of father involvement remains largely ignored by the criminal justice system and public policy (Hairston 1998; Western and Wildeman 2009). As such, many of the issues that begin during incarceration continue after release, with compounding factors increasing so-cial and legal barriers to father-child involvement. Economically, fathers who leave prison face significant barriers to contributing to their children's well-being. Relative to those with no histories of incarceration, fathers with histories of incarceration face increased unemployment and reduced wages, with blacks and Hispanics most ad-versely effected (Pager 2007; Pager et al. 2009; Western and Pettit 2005). Formerly incarcerated fathers who do not have custody of children are often responsible for child support, and additionally may be responsible for thousands of dollars in legal fines and child support arrears that accrued while incarcerated (Edelman et al. 2006; Griswold and Pearson 2003; Hairston 1998). With most incarcerated fathers having no more than a high school degree and often of minority status (Mumola 2000), an inability to obtain well-paying jobs within the formal economy limits or precludes fathers from providing adequate economic support for their children upon release. The fact that formerly incarcerated fathers also tend to be disproportionately drawn from low socioeconomic status neighborhoods, further strains their ability to find and maintain employment (Clear 2007; Clear et al. 2003; Wilson 1987, 1996).

The inability to find work may also limit formerly incarcerated fathers from seeing their children. Nurse (2004) observes that while most young fathers plan on spending time with their children, mothers may substantially limit involvement with children. In many states, owing child support creates a legal barrier for formerly incarcerated fathers from seeing their children, providing a mechanism through which mothers may limit father-child contact (Phillips et al. 2006). Mothers, who often have new romantic partners and/or extended families that distrust the biological father, may seek to actively prevent the father from being involved with their children (Hairston 1998; Nurse 2004). While this pattern is generally observed among whites, Swisher and Waller (2008) found that black and Hispanic mothers were more likely than white mothers to permit involvement of a previously incarcerated father; they were also more likely to trust the father to take care of their children.

Relationships between formerly incarcerated fathers and mothers are often com-plex. Examining gatekeeping experiences among 40 fathers on early work-release from prison, Roy and Dyson (2005) found that fathers experienced "cycles of hope and mistrust" with mothers while seeking to be involved with their children that they termed "babymama drama."This "babymama drama" is consistent with research on maternal gatekeeping, where mothers control or encourage father involvement through actions such as excluding fathers from childcare, encouraging the role of the

father as breadwinner, and conditioning father-child interaction on fathers meeting high norms or standards (Allen and Hawkins 1999; Fagan and Barnett 2003; Trinder 2008). In approximately one-half of relationships, Roy and Dyson found that fathers reported mothers substantially restricting access to children due to fears of sporadic economic support, drug use, and violence. Three-fourths of fathers also reported that mothers encouraged some form of involvement, with many taking a "wait-and-see" approach that involved a "second chance" or signs of positive change. Roy and Dyson also note that both mothers and fathers struggled with substance abuse, poverty, and relationship/family instability that made father-mother relationships difficult to maintain.

As Giordano (2010) has noted, the return of a formerly incarcerated father to the life of the child can introduce several possible negative events, including illegal father behaviors (criminal activities, drug use), physical or sexual abuse, and father conflict with the mother, current romantic partner, or extended family. One of the most damaging of these is physical or sexual abuse, which can initiate antisocial behavior, intergenerational cycles of violence, drug use, mental health issues, and other adverse developmental outcomes (Ball 2009; Gilbert et al. 2009; Jaffee et al. 2003; Widom 1989). Absent sexual or physical abuse, father criminality may lead young children to be exposed to and participate in illegal behaviors such as theft, selling drugs, or alcohol or substance use (Giordano 2010; Giordano et al. 2006; Thornberry 2009). Under strained relationships, father involvement may also instigate complex family dynamics that expose children to conflicts between fathers and mothers, new stepparent/romantic partners, or the mother's family (Giordano 2010; Nurse 2004).

A major issue that formerly incarcerated fathers must overcome is "prisonization," a set of social psychological effects resulting from institutionalization and forced confinement (Hairston 1998, 2001; Haney 2001; Herman-Stahl et al. 2008). As a total institution which dictates nearly every detail of inmates' lives, over time prison inmates generally become emotionally dependent on others for decision-making, rules and schedules, and external constraints (Haney 2001; Sapsford 1978; Sykes 1971). In addition, due to a constant threat of violence and use of force, prison inmates also generally become hypervigilant, suspicious, and emotionally distant (Haney 2001; McCorkle 1992). For formerly incarcerated fathers, the resulting lack of trust, inability to show warmth or emotion, linkage of following rules to use of physical force, and rigidity can create substantial barriers to fathers forming positive, long-term bonds with their children (Festen et al. 2002; Haney 2001; Herman-Stahl et al. 2008). These mechanisms, in turn, may be responsible for anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems known to be correlated with father incarceration in adulthood (Murray and Farrington 2008; Swisher and Roettger 2010).

Such factors have led to a common view that the involvement of incarcerated fathers might be detrimental to their child's well-being (Hairston 1998). However, while the research literature strongly suggests that father abuse or criminality are associated with increased harm of the child, father involvement in the absence of these issues may, conversely, have positive effects for parents and children. For formerly incarcerated fathers who are nonabusive and not engaging in criminal behavior, father involvement can bring needed economic resources, childcare (both from the

father and the father's family), a more stable home environment, and presence of a father-figure that may benefit the child and mother (Braman 2004; Edin et al. 2004). The involvement of formerly incarcerated fathers may also provide highly effective motivation to desist from crime and engage in more prosocial behaviors (Edin et al. 2004).

Father Incarceration as a Potential Turning Point in the Life Course

The relationship a father has with a child in prison strongly correlates with father-child involvement following release from prison (Festen et al. 2002). Given the difficulty and effort of maintaining relationships during incarceration, the pattern of father-child involvement formed during this period may constitute an important turning point for the father-child relationship, which may improve the lives of both the father and child when successful, or decline as events lead to decreased involvement.

A wide array of issues may lead to father-child involvement deteriorating while the father is incarcerated. For the father, inability to maintain a functional relationship with the mother, issues of recidivism, mounting child support and debt, and continuing antisocial or violent behaviors may create legal or structural barriers preventing the father from interacting with the child. Due to the high rates of recidivism, ending of romantic relationships, family instability and economic issues (both for the father and household the child resides in), incarceration begins a period of decreased father-child involvement for the vast majority of cases.

However, as qualitative studies, such as Edin et al. (2004) find, this is not always the case. While incarceration is generally associated with negative outcomes for parents and children, incarceration may provide opportunities for turning points in the life courses of fathers. Finding almost all incarcerated fathers in their sample believed they would be worse off without their children, Edin et al. report that incarceration provided a means for fathers to take "time out" to reorient themselves; incarceration, combined with involvement with their children, provided motivation for desisting from crime, obtaining counseling or substance abuse treatment, seeking work/educational training, and learning to be a better parent.

Such activities not only provide opportunities for improving the lives of incarcerated fathers, but provide opportunities to increase father-child contact through improving relationships with the mother. Given that mothers typically function as gatekeepers and often feel pressured to limit father-child contact by new romantic partners or family (Braman 2004; Nurse 2002, 2004), incarcerated fathers can form cooperative relationships through demonstrating the benefits to mothers and children. Continued contact with their children is also dependent on the mother, providing ongoing motivation for current and formerly incarcerated fathers to change their behaviors.

Paternal Incarceration and Social Policy

As the above research suggests, the involvement of current or formerly incarcerated fathers with their children has a number of implications for professionals involved in educating and/or caring for young children. In this section, we suggest ways in which these groups may positively influence the welfare of children with fathers who have been incarcerated. Due to the negative outcomes associated with abuse, we separate our suggestions into occasions when father involvement: (1) should be limited due to paternal violence or (2) encouraged to benefit the welfare of children, fathers, and families. In the process, we discuss policies and associated benefits with encouraging father involvement when children are not exposed to violence, abuse, or criminal behavior.

Cases of Limiting Father Involvement

A critical nexus for educators and providers is determining whether to encourage father contact based on the behavior of the father. In cases where a current or formerly incarcerated father may engage in physical or children sexual abuse, expose or involve the child in criminal behaviors, or abandon or neglect the child, father involvement can have substantially negative effects on children (Giordano 2010; Jaffee et al. 2003). Experiences of violence or abuse can cause physical harm to children and result in similar behaviors among children (Widom 1989). Father criminality and drug use can similarly be reproduced in the life course, through children learning or adopting criminal behaviors (Hagan and Palloni 1990), exposure to and subsequent involvement with deviant peers or gangs the father may belong to, and even desires to bond with parents by engaging in deviant acts (Giordano 2010).

In such cases, the best interest of the child may be that the father has no involvement, or only under supervised visitation. For educators and providers, this may involve not extending invitations for opportunities in school or caregiving, while encouraging mothers to exercise a strong "gatekeeper" role limiting contact. As appropriate, referral of children, fathers, and family/caretakers to social services, law enforcement, psychological counseling, or substance abuse treatment may be beneficial.

Encouraging Increased Father Involvement

Outside of cases where children are exposed to violence or criminality, encouraging father-child involvement can enhance the lives of fathers and children. This may be accomplished through structured visits and activities, institutional policies, and support groups that incorporate the promotion of father involvement within larger reintegration programs. To facilitate such forms of involvement, schools/preschools

may facilitate workshops that invite mothers and fathers to learn about the benefits of father involvement to children, fathers, and the entire family. The benefits to children of such an approach may include increased economic resources, childcare and support by the father and his family, presence of a father-figure, and engagement in prosocial behaviors.

As noted above, formerly incarcerated fathers can accrue tens of thousands of dollars in child support, fines, and legal fees. When paired with an inability to find work, this severely limits their ability to economically support their children. However, as research by Braman (2004) and Swisher and Waller (2008) observe, the father can frequently provide some form of limited resources (groceries, clothing, etc.) and childcare (from both father and his extended family). Consequently, educators and other providers can encourage the mother to permit these contributions by the father in exchange for increased access to the child. Doing so can improve the situation of the child, mother, and father, in addition to increasing father-child involvement.

Current and formerly incarcerated fathers often find that a mother's new romantic partner actively seeks to limit the father's involvement, particularly if the father is viewed as a romantic rival (Johnson and Waldfogel 2004; Nurse 2002, 2004; Roy and Dyson 2005). In such cases, educators may alter the mother's gatekeeping behaviors by increasing awareness of the emotional and developmental benefits arising from contact with the father. For fathers who have completed incarceration, encouraging fathers to participate with their children in school-related activities such as helping with homework, attending school sporting events, or involvement in other extracurricular activities may provide opportunities for structured father-child interaction. Given that the father or his extended family may be recruited to care for the child (Roy and Burton 2007), educators may also increase father involvement by encouraging mothers to view the father and kin as potential resources for caregiving.

With incarceration disproportionately impacting less skilled minorities, children of incarcerated fathers disproportionately are born into households where a biological or stepfather is not present. As such, current and formerly incarcerated fathers may be one of a few stable male authority figures in the lives of their children, with substantial influence as role models and in teaching acceptable behaviors and values. Educators may influence this process by encouraging fathers to be more involved and encouraging of prosocial behavior by their children. Encouraging father-child communication and participation in school-related activities can improve father-child involvement. Through actions like encouraging fathers to take parenting classes, discouraging aggressive behaviors, and encouraging the pursuit of work and educational opportunities, educators may also help fathers promote prosocial behaviors that can improve relationships with gatekeeping mothers that take a "wait-and-see "or "second chance" approach (Roy and Dyson 2005). Recognizing the importance of improving fathering, many correctional institutions have begun offering fathering workshops, courses, and degrees in child development. An extensive listing of state and national programs may be found at the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated (NRCCFI), available online at: http://fcnetwork.org/resources/directory.

Father Involvement and Father-Child Development

When encouraging father involvement, it is important for educators and providers to be aware of the developmental consequences for parents and children. The fact that incarceration can be a turning point for fathers is illustrative. During incarceration, fathers should be encouraged to be more involved with children, complete further education and vocational training, and to seek treatment for underlying addiction or mental health issues. Not only will these pursuits likely benefit the child, they are also likely to promote desistance of the father from future deviant behavior.

While father involvement can be highly influential in the development of the child, it is also important to note the "constellation" of difficulties that are associated with father incarceration. These commonly include issues such as family instability, family substance abuse, chronic poverty, lack of educational and social resources, and exposure to neighborhood violence and deviance. Analogous to the neighborhood research literature on "concentrated disadvantage" (Wilson 2003), these concentrated and overlapping issues place children of incarcerated parents at risk for adverse developmental outcomes in later life. Hence, as Giordano (2010) notes, the concept of child "resilience" must be considered within the context of relative life improvements, such as lack of criminal justice involvement, graduating from high school or college, and discontinuing patterns of abuse. While the long-term effects of programs targeting children of incarcerated fathers have not been extensively studied, social programs encouraging parental involvement are well documented as increasing the well-being of children as they age into adulthood. Participation in early preschool programs is associated with substantially reduced criminal involvement, relationship stability and completing high school (Muennig et al. 2009; Schweinhart et al. 1993). Programs that encourage parent-child involvement during incarceration or involve the mentoring of children report decreased recidivism among parents and increased child well-being (Carlson 2001; Hairston et al. 2003; Ichikawa and Selby 2009).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined research on the effects of father's incarceration on father involvement with children. Father's incarceration is a growing phenomenon in the United States, impacting millions of fathers and their children. As an increasingly common life course event, father's incarceration significantly reduces the father's economic, social, and emotional contributions to their child's well-being. The considerable physical, institutional, and social barriers of incarceration reduce contact between the father and child, setting a pattern of involvement that highly correlates with father-child involvement upon release. For educators and service providers to young children with incarcerated fathers, policies and practices, such as enrollment in early child development programs, educational workshops for fathers and mothers noting the benefits of father involvement, and encouraging contact

during incarceration, may lead to improved child welfare and development under difficult conditions.

In most cases, it is important to realize that incarceration is associated with decreased contact and attachment to children both during incarceration and after release. For fathers who are incarcerated, the physical and institutional barriers to contact, the psychological effects of "prisonization," stigma of incarceration, the weakening or ending of relationships with their children's mother, and inability to contribute to their children's economic well-being can have a cumulatively negative effect on children. Upon release, these issues often create additional barriers in father-child involvement. In many cases, lack of father involvement is associated with children being exposed to family instability, deviance, chronic poverty, lack of educational resources, and negative neighborhood-peer influences that lead to adverse developmental outcomes in adolescence and young adulthood (Foster and Hagan 2007; Giordano 2010; Hagan and Palloni 1990; Wilson 2003). In these cases, policies and practices may improve father-child involvement or reduce harms associated with father incarceration.

At the same time, the significance of father-child bonds may serve as a powerful motivating force for fathers to make positive changes in their lives, including increasing involvement with their children, avoiding recidivism, and seeking employment (Braman 2004; Herman-Stahl et al. 2008; Nurse 2002). In turn, increased father involvement in childcare, economic support, and involvement may benefit children and mothers. Through actions such as facilitating workshops on the benefits of father involvement, assisting children to maintain contact with fathers during incarceration, encouraging enrollment of children into mentoring and early education programs, and encouraging mothers to involve formerly incarcerated fathers, professionals involved in early education and child development may substantially improve the lives of children who have a current or formerly incarcerated father.

Additional Resources

Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services

Description   Provides a number of federal reports on issues related to incarcerated parents and children.

Website   http://aspe.hhs.gov/_/topic/subtopic.cfm?subtopic=378.

The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents

Description   Founded by researchers Denise Johnston and Katherine Gabel, this center serves to provide information and education on parental incarceration, while also seeking therapeutic resources and family reunification.

Website   http://e-ccip.org/about_us.html.

The Fatherhood Institute

Description   A think tank on fathering. Centered in the United Kingdom, the Fathering Institute conducts research, provides training and educational materials for fathers and practitioners, and serves as a clearinghouse for information.

Website   http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=6.

National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated

Description   A national association that provides information, training, resources, support, and links to state and local organizations involved in assisting incarcerated parents and their children.

Website   http://fcnetwork.org/.

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Chapter 8
Involvement of Homeless Fathers
Challenges and Possibilities

Jyotsna Pattnaik and Christina Medeiros

As social analysts point out, homelessness is no longer a third-world issue rather it is a social problem confronting the entire world (Toro 2007). Homelessness among families is a growing phenomenon in many countries in the world, and a disproportionate number of homeless families include very young children. For example, from 1995 to 2000, the number of families with young children seeking emergency shelter increased by approximately 50 % in the United States (Nunez 2000). According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, US, (2009), 42 % (roughly 650,000) of homeless children are under 6 years of age. The majority of the homeless families are not visible in the public arena as they may sleep in their cars, in homeless shelters, doubled-up with friends or relatives, or camped in areas not intended for human habitation (Anooshian 2005). Although the majority of homeless families are headed by single mothers, homeless two-parent families are also in rise. There are also single-father-headed homeless households, which are frequently overlooked by the current methods of identification (Bui and Graham 2006; Mcarthur and Zubrzycki 2004).

In the absence of a substantial amount of literature on homeless fathers' involvement in their children's lives, this chapter draws from the field of father involvement, literature on homeless families (nationally and internationally), and families living in extreme poverty. The chapter focuses on existing theories, research, programs, and policies that relate to issues associated with homeless fathers' involvement; in closing, the chapter offers recommendations for researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners.

In this chapter, the term "father" is broadly conceived and embraces both biological and nonbiological fathers who may or may not reside with the child. Alternative terms such as *social fathers* or *father-figures* are also used in the literature to refer

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to nonbiological fathers. While the image of fathers is highly variable and subject to cultural values, Connor and White (2006) offer the description of an ideal father as one who provides a "...significant degree of nurturance, moral and ethical guidance, companionship, emotional support, and financial responsibility in the lives of children" (p. 6). The term father, as used in this chapter, is framed primarily within the context of the United States, although, wherever appropriate, literature from other countries is included as well.

Need for Focusing on Homeless Families and Homeless Fathers

The need for focusing on homeless families, who tend to represent extreme poverty, is important because recently released trends related to poverty and household income present a grim picture; and economic projections are not encouraging as well. Two reports released in September 2010 by the United States Census Bureau revealed that, between 2007 and 2009, 47 states and the District of Columbia experienced increased poverty rates (Filion 2010). Thirty-one states witnessed increases in both the number and percentage of people experiencing poverty between the 2008 and the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) reports (United States Census Bureau 2010). In addition, from 2008 to 2009, the national unemployment rate increased from 5.8 % to 9.3 %, representing a 3.5 % point increase—the largest 1-year increase on record (Shierholz and Gould 2010). Numerous families have been pushed into homelessness in recent years and many more families on the brink of poverty may soon join this trend. The potential for this to happen is especially likely for families from ethnic minorities. In 2008, 34 % of Black children lived in poor families, and the rates of child poverty among Black children ranged from 28 % in California to 48 % in Ohio. Similarly, 29 % of Latino children lived in poor families, and rates of child poverty among Latinos ranged from 19 % in Florida to 34 % in North Carolina (Fass and Cauthen 2008). Such trends are witnessed worldwide as well. In recent years, the negative fiscal effects of multiple financial crises have spread around the world; the World Bank Group (2011) estimated that about 40 million more people became hungry in 2009; and by the end of 2010, 64 million more people were living in extreme poverty. The Homeless Assessment Report, issued by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, estimated that in 2009, the percentage of homeless men among the total US homeless population, numbered 63.7 %. The number of men and father heading homeless families grew from 18 % in 2007 to 20.4 % in 2009 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2010).

A growing body of research has emerged in the last 3 decades documenting the impact of father involvement on children's development. Overwhelmingly, research findings point to the positive cognitive, socioemotional, and academic benefits of paternal involvement for children at all ages (Lamb 2010; Yogman et al. 1995), even after accounting for mothers' involvement (McBride et al. 2005). Researchers also report differential impact of fathers' and mothers' involvement on child outcomes, as well as children's differential perceptions and interpretations of fathering and

mothering behaviors. For example, in Cabrera et al.'s (2000) observational study, sensitive father involvement was reported to be associated more often with children's early positive social and emotional outcomes than positive mother involvement. Goeke-Morey and Cummings (2007) reported that children reacted more negatively to fathers' hostility and anger than to mothers' hostility and anger and they displayed more positive reactions to fathers' constructive conflict resolution strategies than such strategies employed by mothers.

It is important to mention here that while the field of father involvement is gaining increased sophistication in theory and research, homeless fathers have remained invisible to scholars in the field. In addition, researchers report that children in homeless families display a host of problems including disruptive behaviors in school (Yu et al. 2008), poor educational outcomes (Rafferty et al. 2004), mental health problems, and major depression (Buckner et al. 1999). Therefore, there is a need for scholarly focus on this group of fathers, especially for the purposes of informing early childhood policies, programs, and practices that will benefit homeless children and families.

Defining Homelessness

There has been continuing debate among various organizations in the United States over the criteria for defining homelessness. Such debates have been witnessed in other parts of the world as well. Among the challenges to arriving at a common definition of homelessness includes indicators such as:

> . . . the duration of homelessness (should a person homeless for one night be included?), the specific quality of housing (should a person living in grossly substandard housing be included?), and crowding (should someone temporarily "doubled up" with family or friends be included?). (Toro 2007, p. 463)

Toro also points out that many researchers currently use the context of "a continuum of housing," (which refers to "people falling between the stably housed and the literally homeless") to define homelessness and strongly advocates for this approach (Toro 2007).

In the United States, the education subtitle of the *McKinney-Vento Act* includes a comprehensive definition of homelessness (The National Coalition of the Homeless 2009). The *McKinney-Vento Act* sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C. 11435(2) defines the term homeless child and youth as:

> (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. . . and (B) includes: (i) children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; (ii) children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. . . (iii) children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces,

abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, and (iv) migratory children. . . who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). (The National Coalition of the Homeless 2009)

In its broad interpretation of homelessness, the United States National Center on Family Homelessness (2009) includes in this category people staying with others temporarily (termed "doubled-up") and people staying in motels due to lack of adequate alternatives in addition to those who are included in the federal definition of homelessness. Therefore, in its 2009 report on child homelessness, the National Center on Family Homelessness included a range of contexts to appropriately measure this dimension: doubled-up (56 %), shelters (24 %), unknown/other (10 %), hotels/motels (7 %), and unsheltered (3 %). The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (2010) reported that, from 2007 to 2008, 43 % of adults in families entering homeless shelters were living with friends or families the night immediately before they entered the shelter system.

The European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA 2010) has developed a comprehensive typology of homelessness and housing exclusion known as the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) based on a tripartite conceptualization of homelessness; physical, social (being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations), and legal (having a legal title to occupation). FEANTSA (2010) provides 13 operational categories under four major domains: (1) rooflessness (living in streets or public spaces), (2) houselessness (transitional supported accommodation), (3) insecure (temporarily with family/friends, illegal occupation of a dwelling); and (4) inadequate (makeshift shelter, shack or shanty, temporary structure). FEANTSA suggests the need for a European definition of homelessness.

On the other hand, rather than a generic definition, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS, uses a cultural definition of homelessness, which is based on how terms such as adequacy/inadequacy in housing and homelessness are defined within a particular cultural group (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2009). The cultural definition used by ABS was intended to distinguish among primary (people without conventional accommodation), secondary (move in and out of temporary housing/shelters), and tertiary (live in boarding houses for an extended period of time) homelessness on the census night in 2006 (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2009). A review of international literature on homeless points to the fact that there is no single definition of homelessness, and the service providers such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities, governmental departments, as well as researchers employ different definitions for their specific purpose (Constructing Understanding of the Homeless Population, CUHP, n.d.). In addition, an official definition for homelessness does not exist in many countries. However, it is also important to point out that a common definition of homelessness is crucial as services and governmental funding are tied to the definition of homelessness. In addition, the lack of a common definition contributes to undercounting or overcounting of homeless families and individuals by different agencies.

Rising Homelessness Among Families Worldwide

According to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (2005) (as cited in Pittsburgh Human Rights Network 2010), an estimated 100 million people are homeless worldwide. In 2003, there were 78 million homeless people in India alone (Action Aid 2003, as cited in The Homeless World Cup 2010). There are about 3 million homeless people in Europe (*Red de Apoyo a la Integración Sociolaboral*, RAIS, 2010, as cited in The Homeless World Cup 2010). Homelessness among families is also in rise worldwide although it is difficult to have an accurate estimation of homeless families. According to the "white paper" issued by the Australian government, there has been an increase in the numbers of children, families, and older people experiencing homelessness; however, the overall rate of homelessness has been relatively stable over the last 12 years (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). For example, there was a 16 % increase in the number of people living in homeless families (from 16,182 to 26,790) between the census night of 2001 and 2006 in Australia (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2009; Hulse and Kolar 2009). According to the 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), while the total number of homeless persons in the United States declined slightly between 2008 and 2009, the number of homeless families and the total number of persons in homeless families increased for a second consecutive year, from 29.8 % in 2007 to 32.4 % in 2008 (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD 2010).

According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, a 2009 report, *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness*, more than 1.5 million children (1 in 50) were homeless each year between 2005 and 2006; and homeless families comprised roughly 34 % of the total population. This report also maintains that children below the age of 6 years of age represented 42 % of the homeless child population; among the 902,108 school-age children, 77.3 % of the children were in grades K-8; African-American and Native American children were disproportionately represented among the homeless child population.

The increase in the number of homeless families has been dramatic, especially in major cities in the United States (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2009; The United States Conference of Mayors 2008). According to the National Center on Family Homelessness (2010) report card, the numbers of homeless children increased by more than 448,000 from 2007 to 2010—a 38 % jump from 2007; and the top five states that housed the highest number of homeless child population in 2010 were Oregon, Kentucky, Louisiana, Alaska, and California. The report card also maintains that the national total, of more than 1.6 million homeless children in 2010, may be an underestimation,

> . . . because the state of California, which accounts for 25 % or more of the national total of homeless children in the majority of years between 2006 and 2010, changed its procedure for collecting 2010 McKinney-Vento data and reported challenges to implementing its new data collection process. (National Center on Family Homelessness 2010, p. 12)

According to the National Center for Homeless Education (2009), school districts across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Bureau of Indian Education in the United

States reported a 17 % increase (794,617) in homeless student population between the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 academic years. However, this number could be an undercount as approximately 10 % of local educational agencies (LEAs), did not report data on their homeless population. The report also adds that about half of the 50 states in the United States were ranked inadequate in their planning efforts. According to the National Center for Homeless Education (2011), in 2007, South Carolina had 7,413 homeless students enrolled in public schools, and in 2010 the number rose to 10,817; an increase of 46 % within a period of just 3 years.

Internationally, with war, conflict, poverty, and political unrest, nations are experiencing a large influx of homeless families from neighboring nations such as Afghan refugee families in Pakistan, Guatemalan refugee families in Mexican refugee camps, or Palestinian refugee families in Jordan. Separated from their community and homeland, these refugee families and children remain in temporary and substandard living conditions, social isolation, and face a very uncertain life. There are also internally displaced people who live in temporary housing. Australian experts add that homeless families are undercounted as these families are less visible in public places (living in temporary arrangements such as relatives/friends) and are not counted as a family unit unless parents and children have been separated as a result of their homelessness (Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2009). Such observations resonate in other parts of the world as well. In addition, it is possible that many homeless single men have fathered children. Although the majority of homeless families are headed by single mothers, according to the Regional Task Force on the Homeless (2003), in Australia, there has been an increase in the number of homeless male parents seeking shelter for themselves and their children.

Profiles of Homeless Fathers

Meanwell (2012) rightfully points to the lack of uniformity in experiences among the homeless population. Therefore, there is no one way of characterizing homeless fathers. Like fathers in the general population, the profile of homeless fathers is multidimensional. Fathers who are homeless may or may not live with their family, they may be biological or social fathers, or they may be single fathers raising children or shouldering coparenting roles. Homeless fathers may come from any ethnic background, although the urban homeless population in the United States has a darker shade, and aboriginals and islanders dominate the homeless population in Australia. From their survey of homeless families in transitional shelters in the city of New York, the Institute for Children and Poverty (2010) reported that the typical father is a high school graduate, 35 years of age, and is not married. The survey also adds that the majority (89 %) of these fathers are not married to the mother of the child; do not spend time with their child (63 %), and do not provide financial support to their homeless children (67 %). In addition, about 45 % of these men have children from multiple partners. Interestingly, the younger fathers in the survey demonstrated more responsible behavior toward their child, such as spending time with them, providing financial support, and being in touch with their child's mother. Fathers who spent more time with their child were more likely to provide financial support to their

homeless child than fathers who did not spent time with their child. Fathers with children from multiple partners were unable to devote their time to their children who resided in different households (Institute for Children and Poverty 2010).

According to the United States Conference of Mayors' (2007) survey of 25 cities in the nation, the ethnic/race distribution of sheltered homeless families was: 47 % African American, 47 % White, 20 % Hispanic, 4 % Native American, and 2 % Asian. Similar to the total population of the United States, the ethnic makeup of the homeless population varies according to geographic locations. For example, people experiencing homelessness in rural areas are much more likely to be White; homelessness among Native Americans and migrant workers is also largely a rural phenomenon (United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Economic, and Community Development 1996). According to the National Fair Housing Alliance (2004) of the *United States, the Fair Housing Act* (which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin in housing) has not been fully enforced, and segregation and discrimination of minorities in the housing market still prevails.

One of the current social trends identified by social scientists highlights the growing number of fathers-as-caregivers and sometimes sole caregivers (Bui and Graham 2006; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera 1999). With changing family laws, media highlights and research findings on positive fathering, and growing economic hardships; the number of single homeless fathers who care for their children may increase in near future (McArthur et al. 2006). In fact, the number of single-father families has increased significantly in the past 5 years in Australia (Bui and Graham 2006). There are approximately 55,100 single-father-headed families, which make up 11 % of all single-parent families with children less than 15 years of age in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003). News media in the United States highlight stories of homeless single fathers who are turned down from shelters and other services. However, researchers have not paid special attention to single-father-headed families (Zhan and Pandey 2004). It is also appropriate to note that research studies on homeless fathers, who are single-handedly raising children, are almost nonexistent.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this section, we will discuss theoretical perspectives that shed light on pathways to homelessness, impact of stress on homeless fathers, determinants of competent parenting, fathering identity formation, and cultural prescriptions of fatherhood. This section will also provide an overview of issues facing homeless families, homeless fathers, and children from homeless families.

Pathways to Homelessness

Experts maintain that the pathways to homelessness include a complex interplay of structural, social, and individual conditions (Tischler et al. 2007). The two earliest

theories that searched the reasons for homelessness examined either "structural" or "individual" factors (Neale 1997). The structural arguments focused on factors outside of the individual such as changing housing markets and changing employment opportunities, two of many factors which contribute to homelessness. The individual approach focused on the agency of individuals. In other words, the individual approach assigned people to be responsible for their own situation knowingly, as in the case of alcoholism; or unknowingly, as in the case of persons with mental problems.

Neale identifies two strands in the 'individual' approach to homelessness. The "victim-blaming approach" perceives the individual to be responsible for his/her homelessness. This approach has resulted in stereotypical images of homeless people including the images of vagrants, tramps, and alcoholics. Neale also maintains that a very minimal provision for this form of homelessness is offered, such as the provision of basic accommodation. Applied to homeless fathers, this approach would project homeless fathers as being incompetent in caring for their children, and support services would not be available to them. This is true especially for homeless single fathers who are frequently turned down for shelter accommodation. The second strand of individual approach maintains that homelessness may result from factors that are personal in nature, yet beyond the person's control. These homeless individuals are often provided with more comprehensive provisions such as psychiatric treatments and other forms of humanitarian assistance. Homeless fathers with severe mental problems are frequently denied access to their young children.

Giddens (1984) rejects the dichotomy between the structure and the agency explanations and argues that neither structure nor agency can exist independently. In other words, while the social structure influences human behavior, individuals are also capable of bringing about changes in the society. Applying this view to the context of homeless fathers, these fathers are capable of resisting and changing societal perceptions as well as voicing their fatherhood needs and the needs of their children and families. Currently, we witness a rising number of single-homeless-father households in many countries (McArthur and Zubrzycki 2004). Single homeless fathers in McArthur et al.'s (2006) study strongly voiced their need for employment and housing in order to provide a secure childhood for their children.

Stress Theory and Homeless Fathers

Stress is a constant companion for homeless families. Homeless families experience more stress, both acute and chronic, than families in poverty and families in general population (Milburn and D'Ercole 1991). Milburn and D'Ercole conceptualize homelessness as: (a) the outcome of stressful situations such as residential instability and poverty and (b) a stressor, a condition that puts barriers to seek avenues for rehousing. Krohne (2002) categorizes theories of stress under three categories; approaches to systemic stress based on work related to human physiology and psychobiology, such as Selye's (1976) work; approaches to "psychological stress," such as the work of

Lazarus (1991, 1993); and resource-based theories that examine available resources to meet the demands of a stressful situation. Selye examined stress in terms of the general adaptation syndrome (how the body reacts to continued exposure to stress). Milburn and D'Ercole interpret this approach as a response-based definition and maintain that this approach has influenced works of other researchers. For example, Goodman et al. (1991) perceive homelessness as a psychological trauma that triggers a set of responses to emotionally overwhelming and personally uncontrollable life events resulting in a psychological sense of isolation or distrust, depression, social disaffiliation, and learned helplessness. Researchers maintain that contextual stressors have the potential to interfere with the qualities of parenting (Torquati 2002). For example, researchers associate unemployment and economic stress with fathers' administrations of arbitrary and harsh corporal punishment to their children (Elder et al. 1985; McLoyd 1990).

Opposed to this one-sided systemic view where the individual responds to a stressful situation, Lazarus (1991, 1993) offers a transactional view of stress that perceives an intimate relationship between the individual and the environment. There are two processes that serve as mediators in this person-environment transaction: *appraisal*, the individual's evaluation of the situation such as its significance for oneself and anticipated outcomes of an encounter and *coping*, the individual's efforts (both psychological and social) to meet the demands of the situation (Lazarus 1991, 1993). The individual has some sense of control over the situation because, ". . . the individual's perceptions and judgments of external life events determined whether the events were stressors" (Milburn and D'Ercole 1991, p. 1162). Because personal factors (motivational dispositions, goals, values, and generalized expectancies) and situational factors (such as predictability, controllability, and imminence of a potentially stressful situation) influence a person's appraisal of the situation (Krohne 2002), there will be individual differences in how an individual appraises and adapts to or copes with stressful events. In the context of homeless fathers, this approach offers a nongeneralized perception of fathers' involvement and highlights the agency of individual fathers. Homeless fathers who have the abilities to appraise the potential outcomes of homelessness for their family members and make required adjustments to deal with the situation will be able to fulfill their fathering roles and responsibilities.

According to Krohne (2002), "resource theories of stress" examine personal resources (that include coherence, hardiness, self-efficacy, and optimism) and social resources (related to instrumental, informational, appraisal, and emotional support) that enable individuals to maintain their well-being during stressful encounters. The "resource theories of stress" are helpful in guiding and counseling professionals who work with homeless families and children.

Belsky's Competent Parent Model and Homeless Fathers

Belsky's (1984) process model of competent parental functioning identifies three determinants of competent parenting: (1) personal and psychological resources of

parents, (2) characteristics of the child, and (3) contextual sources of stress and support. In this interactive model, parental developmental history influences parental personality and psychological well-being, which in turn influences their parental functioning. Among the three determinants, child characteristic has the lowest impact on parenting. The psychological resources of the parent are more effective in buffering the parent-child relationship from stress than are contextual sources of support such as the marital relationship, social networks, and employment. However, Belsky also maintains that social networks may enhance one's self-esteem, which in turn increases parental patience and sensitivity levels that are required for competent parenting.

Researchers on father involvement also highlight that both groups of men in their samples, men who had highly involved fathers (Sagi 1982) and who did not have highly involved fathers (DeFrain 1979), displayed high involvement with their own children. Belsky (1984) attributes these inconsistent findings to the processes of "identification" (for involved fathers) and "compensation" (for lack of involvement). Keeping in view the recurrent cycle of homelessness and high rate of maternal homelessness, it is possible that many current homeless fathers might or might not have had an involved father. However, based on Belsky's "Competent Parent Model" and research findings of Sagi and DeFrain, homeless fathers could still be involved in their children's lives if psychological and contextual resources are available to them. Therefore, the availability of counseling and other psychological services and social networks are very important in this context.

Identity Theory and Homeless Fathers

Theorists in the field of father involvement ponder over two important questions: (a) what factors contribute to involvement and non-involvement of fathers? (b) why the degrees of involvement vary among fathers? A large body of research has examined the determinants of father involvement. According to Stryker and Serpe's (1994) *Identity theory*, self is organized with multiple identities in a hierarchical order based on the salience of particular identities. The relative salience of identities is a function of commitment to roles to which these identities are attached and predicts the choices that people make among available behavioral options (Stryker and Serpe 1994). McCall and Simons' (1978) concept of *prominence hierarchy* of identities is of particular importance to the topic of father involvement, as the prominence of an identity will ensure its enactment in a particular social situation. The prominence of an identity depends upon: the degree of support for an identity, from self and others; the degree of commitment or investment in that identity; and the degree of extrinsic and intrinsic gratification received by the individual by completing the expectations (Rane and McBride 2000).

Homeless fathers' fathering identity is challenged by social isolation and disintegration of social bonds and networks. In addition, homelessness frequently poses

many psychological, physical, and social barriers for homeless fathers to draw intrinsic gratifications from their fathering identity. However, Stryker and Serpe's (1994) distinctions between status (or position) and role will be helpful to understand fathering identities of homeless fathers. *Status* refers to an "individual's place in a social structure or set of relationships" (Ihinger-Tallman et al. 1995, p. 76) such as employee, husband/wife, father/mother, brother, etc. *Role* refers to expected behavior patterns/obligations attached to a particular social status/position such as nurturer, provider, and companion roles associated with the father position (Ihinger-Tallman et al. 1995). There are also distinctions between role hierarchy and status hierarchy (Ihinger-Tallman et al. 1995). For example, a man may place his status as a father as the highest status and within this particular status identify his role as the "provider" as the highest role.

Homelessness frequently challenges men's traditional role as providers for their family causing guilt and shame and forcing fathers to avoid all family relationships. However, if a homeless father is strongly rooted in other fathering roles such as nurturer, companion, and playmate; or receives professional counseling for identifying himself with these roles, then his fathering identity can be harnessed for his own benefits and benefits of his family members. For example, while some homeless fathers in Schindler and Coley's (2007) qualitative study identified themselves as breadwinners and actively sought work, other homeless fathers broadened their definition of fathering by providing more time and care to their children.

The Scripting Theory

The "Scripting theory" of Simon and Gagnon (1986) that provides a framework for conceptualizing the production of people's behavior in social contexts is applicable to homeless fathers. The theory proposes that scripting occurs at three distinct levels: cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic. At the cultural level, there exists an ideal image of social roles and actors and which provides a prescriptive guide for thinking, feeling, and acting for various social roles (Marsiglio 1999). Any transgression from this ideal also results in stereotypes. These cultural scripts also suggest gender-specific images and roles for men and women. When applied to men as fathers, there exists an image of ideal fatherhood at the cultural level: fathers as providers and breadwinners. In the eyes of the society, homeless fathers have failed in their role as "providers" and are therefore stereotyped as "bad dads." Such cultural perceptions and expectations also influence social policies and practices, such as homeless fathers' loss of custody of their children in case of separation or divorce, lack of access to parent involvement programs initiated by schools/preschools, or lack of access to their family members in homeless family shelters. Fathers' beliefs about and experiences with fathering roles are also impacted by people in their personal lives such as friends, family members, current and former partners, and events that are beyond their control including court orders, shelter rules, work schedules, and workplace policies, etc. At the intrapsychic scripting level, fathers will construct images

of fatherhood for themselves based on their own beliefs, needs, aspirations, self-concerns, and concerns about their role performance (Marsiglio 1995). In summary, it is not appropriate to stereotype homeless fathers as there are wide variations among homeless fathers with regard to their paternal involvement beliefs and practices.

Issues Facing Homeless Families, Fathers, and Children

Homelessness can impact all members of a family and the community in many ways. There are multitude of factors, operating in isolation and in interaction, that contribute to current living conditions of homeless families and the difficulties that they face while making efforts to escape the situation. In this section, we present current research on the impact of homelessness on families, children, and fathers. It is important to point out that while homeless individuals and families face a host of issues, these issues can be addressed successfully. Burt et al. (2001) rightfully state,

> Evaluations of demonstration projects, and the experiences of providers in many communities around the country, also have shown that even the most chronic, most severely mentally ill people can be brought off the streets and can live stable lives, if they are supplied with housing. (p. 5)

Impact on Fathers

Homeless fathers in shelter facilities are faced with the stress of rearing children in a community environment and not in the privacy of their own home (Howard et al. 2009). Attempts to raise children in a shelter can add to parenting difficulties including nonfamily members' attempts to parent the child or criticize the father's parenting style. Being a homeless father is associated with difficulties in finding or maintaining secure employment. This may be due in part to the need for these fathers to have flexible hours that allow them to care for their children. Single homeless fathers do not always have access to reliable childcare while they are looking for a job or after they join a job. Many shelters have strict rules regarding children being under the supervision of their parent at all times (Gorzka 1999b). Compared to men, women have more access to part-time or flex-time jobs which facilitate mothers' availability for caring for their child (McArthur et al. 2006). Just like their children, homeless fathers are victims of social isolation and lack of support systems. This isolation may include limited or no contact with immediate and extended family members, an essential component of parental and familial support network (Lafuente and Lane 1995). This lack of contact with family members can result in depression, increased stress, and difficulties in finding employment for fathers. Some of these issues are discussed in detail below.

Social Isolation

Experts maintain that homelessness is associated with social isolation and rejection (Bassuk and Rosenberg 1990). Social isolation comes from lack of strong social attachments and social interactions. Homelessness leads to the disintegration of social networks and creates a sense of isolation and/or distrust. Some experts perceive social isolation as a leading factor that contributes to homelessness (Bassuk and Rosenberg 1990), whereas others perceive social isolation as an outcome of homelessness (Goodman et al. 1991). For example, experts maintain that the experience of homelessness creates a sense of psychological trauma among homeless people. Researchers report greater severity of social isolation for homeless people as compared to poor families living in homes (Bassuk and Rosenberg 1990). In addition, social isolation may result in chronic exclusion. It is very likely that homeless people with multiple needs "can be viewed as 'hard to help' or just too expensive... homeless people fall between gaps in service or are referred around services with no-one taking responsibility" (Homeless Link 2010, p. 29). As a result, they continue in their homeless condition.

Health Issues

There are two common problems faced by individuals who experience poor economic conditions, namely, chronic health problems and lack of available health care facilities. Homeless fathers are among those who are adversely affected by health-related issues. Homeless adults suffer from multiple illnesses, and frequently the severity of their illnesses is quite high (Read 2008). A multitude of increased health risks such as HIV, hepatitis, respiratory infections, drug use, and malnutrition are among the issues that not only affect the homeless father, but his children as well (Gerberich 2000). As these fathers become chronically ill, it may become increasingly difficult for them to provide for their families or get involved in their children's lives. For the vast majority of these individuals, these health problems will remain untreated as they struggle to gain access to health care (Gerberich 2000). These fathers also face a host of barriers (financial, personal, bureaucratic, and programmatic) in their efforts to address their growing health care needs (Gerberich 2000).

Among the most common health issues faced by homeless fathers is that of mental illness (Richter and Chaw-Kent 2008). Many of the sampled fathers in one study cited mental illness as the primary reason for their homelessness (Liu et al. 2009). One factor that may intensify the impact of mental illness is the added parental stress that homeless fathers experience. The sampled homeless fathers in Gorzka's (1999b) study indicated that their children were a major source of their parental stress. This was due to fathers' perceptions of their child's inability to adapt to the new setting and follow the strict disciplinary rules imposed by the shelter authority. Moreover, homeless fathers' personal health issues, such as mental illness and depression, also prevent them from seeking employment (Ovwigho et al. 2008). Parental mental

health problems may "...disrupt parent-child interactions and inhibit the parent's ability to act as a buffer for the child in the face of stressful life events" (Torquati 2002, p. 466).

Stress

The stress level of homeless parents is very high (Gorzka 1999b). Research also suggests that homelessness is a chronic status for many homeless families suggesting that such families may experience chronic stress. Wheaton (1997) defines chronic stress as "problems and issues that are so regular in the enactment of daily roles and activities or are defined by the nature of daily role enactments or activities, and so behave as if they are continuous for the individual" (p. 53). Experts unanimously agree that the stressors experienced by homeless families are significantly higher than low-income families or families in general (Milburn and D'Ercole 1991; Torquati 2002). Stress may affect homeless fathers' enactment of their fathering roles and responsibilities and may pose barriers for their own pursuits to find employment. In addition, research suggests that parenting is more stressful for a homeless father than it is for a homeless mother (McArthur et al. 2006).

Self-Esteem and Masculinity Issues

The increased difficulty in meeting the societal view of a "good father" can have a devastating impact on a man's sense of self that can be a struggle to reverse. Researchers found that men who were experiencing low self-esteem, which was associated with drug/alcohol abuse, did not experience an increase in self-esteem when provided addiction treatment like other populations normally do (Malcolm 2004). It was actually found that the self-esteem of some homeless men became lower after the addiction treatment, which may be due to the fact that the individual had to face the reality of homelessness in a sober state (Malcolm 2004). While homelessness may lower a man's self-esteem, it may not lower a man's sense of masculinity regardless of whether or not he is living up to the traditional view of the "man as the provider" (Liu et al. 2009). The term "breadwinner" for a homeless man is expanded from simply earning money, to encompass being able to take care of those people who are under his responsibility (Liu et al. 2009). In terms of homeless fathers who care for their children, this can mean providing their children with some form of shelter, food, and protection.

Homeless fathers may also be at risk for being judged under a double standard due to their gender. In Liu et al.'s (2009) study, frustration was expressed by one interviewee who felt that society sympathized with homeless women but not homeless men; as they were expected to be the breadwinners and not the victim. The father's sense of worth may be negatively affected by societal perceptions of homeless men as lazy or worthless. A homeless father in Liu et al.'s study stated that people yelled at him

to get a job from their passing car; they wanted him to become a better member of society but did not want to help him to become one. Many homeless men interviewed in different studies expressed a strong desire to be able to get back to raising their children and providing a home for their family but shared that they were unable to do that (Liu et al. 2009; Schindler and Coley 2007).

Parenting Roles

Homeless shelters can serve as essential programs in promoting the health, safety, and parenting success for homeless fathers. However, homeless fathers are often times the victims of discrimination by shelter personnel as it is common for shelters to have "no admittance" policies for adolescent or adult males, causing separation of families. Schulz (2009) recommends that shelter programs revise current shelter practices and adopt more inclusive policies so that families remain intact. Keeping families together in shelters can reduce further trauma to families that have already been through tough times (Schulz 2009) and will allow fathers to continue their parenting practices.

In addition, parenting in the shelter context has been described as a "double crisis" (Hausman and Hammen 1993). Although researched within the context of homeless mothers, these findings could be applied to the context of homeless families in general who simultaneously deal with the trauma of losing their homes as well as freedom to parenting practices (Molnar et al. 2003). Homeless families are unable to practice their ways of child-rearing, teaching, and disciplining within shelter living (Cosgrove and Flynn 2005). Shelter staff tended to bear a deficit perspective on parenting in their dealings with homeless parents (Jozefowicz-Simbeni and Israel 2006). Under the controlling influence of social service agencies, homeless families often lack the opportunity to develop enjoyable and meaningful relationships (Swick 2005). Paquette and Bassuk (2009) justifiably observe, "Homelessness undercuts parents' ability to protect their children, often leaving mothers and fathers feeling depressed, anxious, guilty, and ashamed" (p. 292).

Child Support

Homeless fathers' ability (or inability) to provide child support plays a crucial role in their involvement in their children's life. Nonresidential fathers who could provide financial support for their children are more likely to have regular contact with their children (Perloff and Buckner 1996). However, nonresidential homeless fathers who live below the poverty line frequently fail to provide financial support for their children. In such cases, the mother serves as a gate-keeper by denying the father access to his child until child support is provided. The inability to pay the legally-sanctioned child-support directly affects homeless fathers' own involvement in the life of their children, the quality of life of their children, and their rights to legally

sanctioned visitations with their children (Perloff and Buckner 1996). As a result, non-residential homeless fathers experience a sense of desperation because of the loss of legal rights to their children and a feeling of embarrassment due to their own financial challenges. In addition, fathers who are homeless are frequently denied custody and contact with their children due to a host of issues including histories of incarceration, substance abuse, and unemployment (Hayes 2010).

Violence

Homeless families are victims, both directly and indirectly, of multiple types of violence including violence at home and street, and/or witnessing violence against someone else. Violence can affect the family's ability to form appropriate bonds that are necessary to provide protective mechanisms (Butler et al. 2008; Swick 2008). As homeless fathers fight to survive, they may turn to more aggressive means of interacting with their children as a direct response to the elevated levels of anxiety caused by violence (Swick 2008). Violence may also be increased when drugs or alcohol are introduced into the situation, resulting in an increased risk to children and the family structure (Lafuente and Lane 1995). Researchers report high substance abuse among homeless adults (Richter and Chaw-Kent 2008).

Homeless fathers are also possible victims of both physical and emotional domestic violence themselves. McArthur et al. (2006) reported that one father in their study described the situation that brought him and his children to the street. He was forced to leave a relative's home after receiving repeated threats from the mother of his children and her boyfriend. He had removed the children from their mother's home after discovering that they too had been victims of abuse. Unfortunately, men who claim domestic violence are not often taken seriously because of the common misperception that a man should be able to defend himself from a woman, hence assistance is usually not provided (Liu et al. 2009).

Impact on Children

Family homelessness impacts young children in multiple ways, some of which are discussed here.

Attachment Issues

Children from homeless families face serious attachment issues with people around them for a host of reasons. According to the report, America's *Homeless Children: New Outcasts* (Better Homes Fund 1999), homeless children are more likely to be placed in foster care, and the likelihood of foster care placement increases with the

child's age: 9 % for infants and toddlers; 19 % for preschoolers (3–6 year olds), and 34 % among school-agers. Homeless parents encounter a variety of barriers to building healthy relationships with their children. The ability to develop secure attachment relationships with caregivers has been associated with the resilience level of children from high-risk groups (Poehlmann 2005). In addition, homeless families and children move constantly, on average three times a year (Nunez 2000), and therefore cannot build sustained bonds with their peers and teachers.

The lack of healthy relationships can create later issues for children, as secure bonds are essential for future healthy patterns (Swick 2008). Children themselves may fall into the same unhealthy cycles that had led their parents to the homeless state, and these cycles may continue into their own adulthood.

Health Issues

Homeless children face a multitude of health issues due to lack of access to heath care services, constant relocation, and other family-related challenges. Health problems in early years threaten children's immediate and future well-being (Nunez 2000). Homeless children are less likely to be fully immunized (Redlener 1999). Most homeless families do not have health insurance, receive fragmented care, and rely on emergency rooms for health care (Committee on Community Health Services 1996). Asthma is one of the primary and severe health problems faced by homeless children. According to the Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network (2000), homeless children's exposure to environmental pollutants and other allergens heightens their risk of developing asthma. According to Nunez (2000), children's emotional health also suffers during the period of homelessness, and roughly half of school-aged children (47 %) and 26 % of children under age 5 exhibit signs of depression, anxiety, or aggressiveness while homeless. Homelessness also increases a child's chance of experiencing hunger and almost "half of the children who eat less after becoming homeless (49 %) show a decline in health—a rate nearly three times that of homeless children who eat the same amount or more" (Nunez 2000, p. 62).

Developmental Issues

Homeless children may also be at risk of developmental delays in the areas of language, cognitive, and socio-emotional development because they are denied the same learning experiences as their non-homeless peers. Homeless parents may themselves be experiencing learning or social disabilities that can make it difficult for them to assist in their child's development (O'Neil-Pirozzi 2009). Homeless children's language development may be delayed with parents who are experiencing depression or drug abuse and, therefore, exercise limited verbal interactions with their children. Many factors contribute to homeless children's socio-emotional issues. As recipients

of physical and sexual abuse at home (Pardeck 2005), homeless children face serious emotional issues. Children whose fathers exhibit negative traits, such as those associated with homelessness (drugs, crime, and violence), may replicate these paternal behavior problems (Perloff and Buckner 1996). Research shows a positive correlation between active father involvement and a decrease in children's behavior problems (Aldous and Mulligan 2002). However, homeless children may have inadequate or no contact with a father-figure in their lives. Additionally, children in homeless families are frequently victims of stigma and stereotypes from their peers in school (Jozefowicz-Simbeni and Israel 2006) and may respond to their peers' attitudes by resorting to extreme aggressive or withdrawal behavior. Children's developmental issues in early childhood years surface in their later life. Researchers report that homeless children have difficult school histories such as low academic performance and behavior problems (Haber and Toro 2004). Experts caution that without proper attention and intervention, such problems may follow these children throughout their life. Researchers also associate childhood adversities including homelessness, violence and abuse, and low-academic performance with adult poverty (Frederick and Goddard 2007).

While most of the literature on the impact of homelessness on children is fraught with negative outcomes, Reed-Victor and Stronge (2002) identified resiliency as a positive attribute among homeless children in their sample. Children included in the sample were found to be outgoing, affectionate, independent, and adapted well to their settings. Researchers also report that while homeless children are at risk for language or other developmental delays, they could benefit from their parents' participation in an intervention program designed to increase parental knowledge of how to facilitate communication (O'Neil-Pirozzi 2009). Parents who participate in such intervention programs are then better equipped to address their children's delays and help them succeed in school. Therefore, intervention programs, for children as well as for the entire family, need to be designed so as to strengthen and sustain homeless children's resiliency.

Programs for Homeless People in the United States

There are few programs in the United States and worldwide that are specifically designed for homeless fathers. However, homeless fathers may also benefit from programs that are designed for homeless families and for fathers in general.

Project Fatherhood

Project Fatherhood is a program for homeless fathers, fathers on parole, and fathers in the "Skid Row" area (with a large population of homeless people) in Los Angeles, California. The program is run by the Weingart Center Association. According to this organization, about half of the men in the Skid Row area are fathers and many of

them have either poor or no relationships with their children (Weingart Center Association n.d.). Therefore, the primary focus of the program is to help fathers reconnect and strengthen their relationships with their children. The program addresses issues related to absenteeism, substance abuse, violence, and trauma and introduces men to their potential and strength as caring and nurturing parents. The program provides supportive group sessions to fathers. In order to promote family reunification, Project Fatherhood also offers group sessions for children of fathers living on Skid Row as well as for persons of significance in children's lives.

Parent Education Programs

Homeless fathers are frequently denied access to programs and resources, as much of the focus of support services is concentrated on homeless mothers. One program that may be available, depending on the local resources, is "parent education" program for homeless parents. These types of programs give parents the information and skills necessary for improving their parenting practices (Swick 2009). Homeless parents are frequently perceived as being ineffective or unskilled parents but are often not given the support needed to help improve their skills. Parent education programs may help empower homeless fathers by providing them with not only information on child development and healthy bonding but also about how to deal with any family violence that may have impacted their relationships with their child (Swick 2009). Parent education programs may also help eliminate abusive behaviors in homeless fathers who may have been abused in their own childhood years (Gorzka 1999a, b). One key component of a successful parent education program for this particular population is to create social supports. When fathers view staff as not being judgmental or threatening, they are more likely to make significant changes to their parenting abilities (Swick 2009).

Student Nurse Training Programs

In some areas, homeless individuals are able to access health care through student nurse training programs. Student nurses visit homeless shelters in order to improve their holistic practices as well as to provide free health care services (Gerberich 2000). With so many homeless individuals at increased risk for severe health problems, programs such as these are important resources for improving the quality of life for homeless fathers and their children.

International Programs for the Homeless

For families experiencing homelessness, the top priority is to gain access to safe accommodations. This may mean seeking out the services of a shelter, assisted housing, work programs, or hostels (Homeless Link 2009; Human Resources and Skills

Development Canada 2010). As the number of individuals living in poverty around the world continues to grow, many private groups are assisting homeless individuals and families in accessing appropriate resources. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) of Canada is a program offered by the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The mission of this program is to reduce the number of homeless people and to prevent future families from suffering the same fate. In order to better serve the homeless population, HPS partners with local communities, including aboriginal tribes, to determine the needs of each community including its homeless people (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2010). In addition, HPS provides a number of funding options to support local communities in addressing gaps in the infrastructure that oftentimes lead to homelessness. Larger communities receiving this support are required to match HPS contributions. However, smaller or rural communities, and those supporting aboriginal tribes, are not required to match HPS contributions.

In order to make services more readably accessible, the United Kingdom has implemented an online website that centralizes access to 480 local organizations that support the homeless population (Homeless Link 2009). Using their search engine, this website offers resource providers and those experiencing homelessness the ability to search all local services as well as specific types of housing assistance. In addition to providing easy access to services, Homeless Link collaborates with resources to support the mental health and overall well-being of homeless families and individuals. While London's hostels and day-centers provide crucial shelter and services to homeless families, these venues frequently offer a stressful and chaotic environment that can affect the mental health of their occupants. In order to minimize this stress, the Homeless Link (2010) targets areas such as providing staff with the skills and training necessary to address the multiple needs of the community, improving the available mental health services, reducing potential conflicts within the different types of services, and creating a more open and welcoming environment in these centers.

International Programs for Fathers

In recent years, there has been an increased awareness of the important role that fathers play in their children's lives. Previous programs that work with families have traditionally been targeted toward mothers, and have ignored the important paternal roles. With increased international awareness, has come an influx of programs to work with fathers from all backgrounds. As many families move away from the more traditional family structure, these programs also focus on those individuals who may not be a child's biological father but who nonetheless fill such a role. The Lone Fathers' Association of Australia (LFAA) is one such organization that helps establish collaboration between multiple organizations with a goal to assist fathers in maintaining strong relationships with their children. The main focus of LFAA

is to advocate for Australian fathers and to assist fathers who have been separated from their children (Lone Fathers Association of Australia n.d.). In its mission to help separated fathers, LFAA works closely with organizations such as the Child Support Services, Human Rights Commission, local courts, and welfare agencies to target all possible factors that affect Australian fathers' relationships with their children. The collaboration approach assists fathers in receiving their full rights, as well as seeks to ensure that children are given the opportunity to have a healthy and lasting relationship with their fathers, regardless of the relationship between their mother and father.

The African Fathers Initiative (AFI) supports fathers through research, policies, media coverage, and projects; AFI advocates for awareness of father-related issues and fathers' rights, and disseminates information throughout Africa on the importance of the father-child relationship. In addition, the AFI provides a wealth of information for both fathers and the public regarding the importance of fathering, and seeks to call attention to the growing problem of African children who do not have a father-figure in their life (African Fathers Initiative n.d.). Through the initiative, information is widely distributed, both in print and through their website, regarding issues that are relatively unique to African fathers. Recent discussions have included: stressors that affect father-child relationships, increases in outbreaks of HIV/AIDS, the rise in rates of extreme poverty, and an overall lack of knowledge regarding the importance of fathers in the health and well-being of all members of the family. To raise awareness about the important contributions of fathers, AFI hosts the "Father of the Year" story contest among African men, to encourage them to take a more active role, and to reconnect with their children (African Fathers Initiative n.d.).

Implications

Early childhood education (ECE) programs and teachers shoulder important responsibilities in their work with homeless families and children. In order to meet the challenges that accompany working with families affected by homelessness, early childhood programs must broaden staff attitudes to perceive homelessness in all its complexity. Head Start has been making a positive impact on homeless children and their families for many years. In addition to its comprehensive service model approach, Head Start implements a range of services such as offering father involvement programs, providing quality preschool programs to children, and partnering with community agencies to place families in stable housing (Institute for Child Poverty and Homelessness 2011; Raikes Bellotti 2006). ECE programs working with local agencies may offer a comprehensive approach that addresses issues of education, job training, employment, mental and physical health, hunger, domestic violence, and physical security.

Implications for Early Childhood Programs

On the basis of various issues that have been highlighted in the chapter, we provide the following suggestions for ECE teachers and programs:

- ECE programs must first understand that children's developmental status cannot be considered separate from the available supports for the family unit as a whole.
- Homeless families and fathers, like families in general, are not a homogenous group. Therefore, services need to be geared toward the needs of the child, the father, and the family as a whole.
- Homeless families are at different stages of homelessness—marginal, recent, or chronic. Families who recently entered the state of homelessness have different needs than families who have been homeless for a sustained period of time. Therefore, services for homeless families must be appropriate to their stage of homelessness (Belcher 1991).
- Many homeless children have limited or no contact with their biological fathers. Therefore, ECE programs must make efforts to communicate with and involve father-figures such as grandfathers, uncles, and the mother's current partner.
- Homeless children suffer from stigma and stereotypes of their peers in preschools/schools. Therefore, ECE programs must implement an anti-bias curriculum to create a respectful and inclusive school environment.
- It is recommended that ECE programs create portfolios, that include the child's work samples, assessment reports that show progress and challenges, and documentation of life experiences so that families can share their child's portfolio with their child's next educational program.
- It is imperative that programs create services that are empowering, not paternalistic. Programs need to respect and support a variety of child-rearing approaches and styles. If an alternative parenting approach is required, program administrators need to foster open and inclusive discussions with parents regarding the importance of the alternative approach, its benefits for the child and the family, and provide specific examples of successful techniques based on research and practice.
- Homeless children may not have appropriate environmental and/or physical support for homework; therefore, homework assistance for these children needs to be provided through after-school programs.
- Homeless families spend much of their day attempting to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, income, and employment. Social interactions with family members and friends, appointments with service providers, and obtaining supplemental support checks also consume large chunks of time (Glasser and Bridgman 1999); thus, homeless parents may not be available to attend parent-teacher conferences or other school programs. Therefore, ECE programs may need to be flexible when communicating with homeless families and make alternate arrangements for parent–teacher conferences and other school-related meetings.

Implications for Father Involvement Programs

Carefully designed father involvement programs will accrue multiple benefits for homeless fathers and their families. Such programs strengthen fathers' attitudes, broaden their knowledge base, and enhance parenting practices, as well as help homeless families gain access to local services. Father involvement programs should avoid deficit perspectives and instead regard homeless fathers as responsible human beings who are capable of successfully raising their children. Research shows that father involvement over an extended period builds stronger parent-child relationships (Dubowitz et al. 2001). Therefore, intervention programs for homeless fathers need to be implemented for a sustained period of time to support fathers' efforts to initiate strong patterns of involvement with their children. Given the high stress levels currently experienced by most families, it is essential that programs involve young homeless families in developing strong bonds with their family members, building a plethora of prosocial skills, and fostering positive and nurturing social networks and relationships (Swick 2005). Programs such as "Daddy and Me," could be designed which would help young homeless fathers practice fathering skills with their children and nurture a positive paternal identity while being part of a network of young fathers in the group environment. Frequently, homeless parents are not aware of *McKinney-Vento Act* and their legal rights to access the support systems for homeless families and children provided by this Act (Jozefowicz-Simbeni and Israel 2006). Therefore, father involvement programs need to inform homeless fathers of their children's rights under this Act.

Implications for Research

It is quite clear from the review of literature that there is a need for more empirical research that focuses on homeless fathers and their families.

- Studies that compare resident and nonresident homeless fathers will add interesting perspectives regarding motives, beliefs, experiences, challenges, and the sense of paternal identity of these two groups of fathers.
- There is also a need for in-depth qualitative studies that compare homeless mothers' and fathers' child-rearing perspectives and experiences.
- Studies with homeless single fathers are also important, as there is a dearth of empirical studies on this group of fathers.
- Experts maintain that children living in homeless families are an invisible group and there is very little research on their experiences and perspectives (DeForge et al. 2001). Therefore, findings from studies that explore homeless children's perspectives on their relationships with their father will help policy-makers and educational institutions to implement programs and services that facilitate the father-child bond.

- Research studies that capture the perspectives and experiences of educational programs and teachers serving homeless families will inform father involvement programs and service provisions.
- Researchers need to share their findings with the media and local community agencies. The more widely such information is shared, it is more likely that the information will be utilized for influencing governmental policies that benefit homeless families.

Conclusion

This chapter is contextualized within current global and national concerns over the growing rate of family homelessness as well as the growing awareness of the importance of involving fathers in the lives of young children. The chapter has provided an overview of theoretical perspectives, issues, and programs relevant to homeless fathers and has offered specific and feasible recommendations to practitioners and researchers. Homeless fathers are not a homogenous group and the diversity of their life experiences and needs necessitates diversity in the delivery of services, development of policy frameworks, and research designs. Amidst the existing deficit perspectives, stigmas, and stereotypes about homeless fathers, we recommend that researchers and service providers take extra measures to dispel such negative attitudes through carefully designed research studies and programs that simultaneously inform policies and practices. By drawing the attention of educators, researchers, and policy-makers to the needs of homeless fathers and their children, we hope to see that the growing field of father involvement leaves no fathers behind.

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Chapter 9
Fathers of Young Children with Disabilities

Experiences, Involvement, and Needs

Hedda Meadan, Howard P. Parette and Sharon Doubet

A key element for achieving high-quality service delivery and positive outcomes in special education is family involvement (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education [PCESE] 2002). Given that families were historically uninvolved or relegated to minor roles in educational decision-making for their children, requirement for their involvement became an underpinning of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA 1990), which was first authorized in 1975 as the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (EAHCA). Emphasis on family involvement is further emphasized in the most recent reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* of 2004 (IDEIA 2004; Coots 2007).

Most of the research related to families of young children with disabilities has focused on mothers (e.g., Bromley et al. 2004), and there is limited information about the experiences and roles of fathers of young children with disabilities. Carpenter and Towers (2008) noted that researchers have described fathers as "hard to reach," "the invisible parent," and the "shadow." Turbiville and Marquis (2001) stated that "fathers [are] frequently left out of the family" (p. 223) and mothers are typically the parents who are primarily involved in decision-making processes related to their children with disabilities.

A review of theoretical perspectives reveals no specific theories relating to father involvement with young children with disabilities. However, various models of parental involvement with their children have been used to guide research in this area. Palkovitz's (1997) framework conceptualizes paternal involvement to include three overlapping domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Within this conceptualization, Palkovitz lists 15 ways to be involved in parenting, including communicating, teaching, monitoring, engaging in thought processes, providing, showing affection, protecting, supporting emotionally, running errands, caregiving,

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engaging in child-related maintenance, sharing interests, being available, planning, and sharing activities.

Pleck (2010) proposed revisions to the Lamb-Pleck's conceptualization of paternal involvement (i.e., engagement, availability, and responsibility) that include three primary components: (a) positive engagement activities; (b) warmth and responsiveness; and (c) control, particularly related to monitoring and decision-making. The revised involvement conceptualization also includes two auxiliary domains: (a) indirect care, activities done for the child that do not entail interaction with the child (e.g., purchasing goods and fostering community connections) and (b) process responsibility, referring to fathers' monitoring that their children's needs for the first four components of involvement are being met. Pleck (2010) emphasized the need to continue research related to the first three components of parental involvement, but also calls for research related to fathers involvement related to the two proposed auxiliary domains (i.e., indirect care and process responsibility).

Admittedly, the involvement of fathers with their children having disabilities and who are served in early childhood settings has increased in recent years. Recognizing the positive influences of fathers on their children's development (Palm and Fagan 2008; Quesenberry et al. 2007), researchers have called for more research on fathers' experiences, involvement, and support needs (e.g., Carpenter and Herbert 1997). Dyer et al. (2009) have argued that "the scarcity of research examining paternal roles in families of children with developmental delays (DD) may have created a 'vacuum' for early intervention personnel about how to provide best practices in family-based and family-centered programming" (p. 266). Given the changing roles of fathers and the reported positive influences of fathers' involvement on children's development, the purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to the experiences, involvement, and support needs of fathers of *young* children with disabilities.

It is important to note that fathers of young children with disabilities are *fathers first* and, therefore, are similar in many ways to fathers of typical children. Palm and Fagan (2008) noted that there are different definitions for fatherhood including biological connections, social connections, legal connections, and psychological presence. Palm and Fagan also observed that the focus of most father research is on biological fathers and those in two-parent families. This description is also true for the identified studies described in this chapter. There is very limited information on nonresident fathers of children with disabilities (Shandra et al. 2008), but no information was found related to nonresident fathers of young children with disabilities. Although fathers of children with disabilities are similar in many ways to fathers of typical children, they may encounter a unique set of challenges and difficulties not confronted by fathers of typically developing children and therefore may have substantively different needs.

The following sections provide descriptions and definitions of young children with disabilities, followed by a brief presentation of important special education legislation that impacts service delivery to families. Next, a comprehensive literature review of the studies related to fathers of young children with disabilities is described. In conclusion, we provide implications and recommendations for future research and practice.

Young Children with Disabilities

Special Education Legislation Impacting Families

There is a relatively short history of providing services and supports for young children with disabilities in the United States. In 1975, the EAHCA (P.L. 94–142) was enacted to ensure the free and appropriate education of all children with disabilities. EAHCA provided funding incentives for states to develop programs to serve preschoolers with disabilities (ages 3–5 years). In 1986, Congress amended EAHCA to include mandated rights to preschoolers and incentives for states to serve infants and toddlers (ages birth to 2 years) who have development delayed or are at risk of development delays (Howard et al. 2005). Currently, the reauthorized IDEIA; P.L. 108–476 ensures services to children with disabilities nationally and mandates how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities (Cook et al. 2004).

Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEIA Part C. Early intervention services were designed to identify and meet children's needs in five developmental areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development, and adaptive development. Early intervention programs serve children with developmental disabilities (DD) and children who are at risk of developing a delay later in childhood. In the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of the birth-2 population receiving early intervention services under Part C increased between 1995 and 2004 by 53.3 % (U.S. Department of Education 2009).

Part B of IDEIA focuses on children and youth with disabilities (ages 3–21) and their families. It has four primary purposes to: (a) ensure that all children with disabilities have free and appropriate public education available to them with special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs; (b) ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their families are protected; (c) assist states and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and (c) assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Disability categories for children and youth served under IDEIA Part B include multiple disabilities, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, visual impairment, autism, deafness/blindness, traumatic brain injury, and DD. The category of "developmental delays" can be used up to age 9. The percentage of preschool children receiving special education and related services (i.e., children ages 3–5 living in the 50 states and the District of Columbia) increased from 4.5 % in 1995 to 5.9 % in 2004 (U.S. Department of Education 2009).

Literature Review

Method of Search

To examine the extant research related to fathers of young children with disabilities, electronic and ancestral searches were identified. Criteria for inclusion of articles in this literature review required that each article was: (a) published between 1995 and 2008; (b) published in a peer-reviewed journal, in English; (c) described a data-based study; and (d) focused on fathers of young children (0–8 years old) with disabilities. Studies that focused only on fathers of children in Head Start were not included. An electronic search was conducted using ERIC and PsychINFO databases. Keywords used in the electronic search included *fathers, young children, disabilities, involvement,* and *early intervention*. Additional articles were identified: (a) in the reference sections of articles retrieved from the databases and of review articles and (b) from book chapters on this topic (i.e., ancestral methods). The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles. Therefore, books, dissertations, and other publications that did not undergo the peer-review process were not included. Table 1 includes information on the identified articles. Three themes emerged from the identified literature, fathers': (a) experiences, stress, and coping, (b) involvement with their young children with disabilities and their early education programs, and (c) identified needs. The following sections are organized around each of these three themes.

Fathers' Experiences, Stress, and Coping

Although most family studies focus on mothers' experiences and needs, a few personal accounts by fathers of children with disabilities (Davis and May 1991; Hornby 1992; Meyer 1995; West 2000) and research articles related to fathers of children with disabilities exist. In summarizing the findings of extant studies related to fathers of children with disabilities, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE 2005) reported an array of themes in the existing father literature from past decades, including: (a) similarity of issues for both fathers of typically developing children and those having children with disabilities; (b) variability in how fathers and mothers respond to children's disability, coping strategies, and perceptions of what is helpful; (c) emotional impact on fathers of a child's disability; (d) fathers' needs for information and supports; (e) fathers' reliance on their partners for emotional support; (f) fathers' needs to discuss their concerns "outside" the family and preferences for all male support groups; (g) tendency of professionals to overlook fathers' needs; and (h) the importance of work for fathers' self-esteem and the accompanying need for employers to be sensitive to fathers' needs to be with their children.

A paucity of studies specifically focusing on young children with disabilities and their fathers is evident from this comprehensive review process. The following

section summarizes the published literature related specifically to fathers of *young* children with disabilities (see Table 1).

Summary of Findings

Parenting a young child with a disability is not necessarily a negative experience and some parents report on the positive impact of having a child with a disability (Hastings et al. 2005; Saloviita et al. 2003). For example, fathers who participated in interviews in the Carpenter and Towers' (2008) study described a close emotional bond with their children with disabilities and the joy they experienced from these relationships. Fathers also indicated that their commitment to their children was stronger because of the children's disabilities. Although positive impact was expressed by the parents, many mothers and fathers of young children with disabilities have reported higher stress levels and more caregiving challenges than parents of typically developing children (Baxter et al. 1995; Dyson 1997; Esdaile and Greenwood 2003; Roach et al. 1999; Sanders and Morgan 1997). For example, Baxter et al. conducted a longitudinal study of parental stress and concluded that the time of diagnosis of a developmental disability was the most stress-inducing period for parents, followed by the time when their children entered school and then when they encountered the transition from school to work.

Many mothers and fathers share parenting roles, but mothers typically assume a larger part of the responsibility of taking care of the day-to-day family needs (Hastings 2003; Moon and Hoffman 2008). Most of the research on stress levels of parents of young children with disabilities has been conducted with mothers, and only limited research is available on fathers of young children with disabilities. Wang et al. (2006) reported that mothers and fathers of young children with disabilities are similar in their perceptions of their family quality of life. Some studies found no *significant* maternal-paternal differences in reported stress (Davis and Carter 2008; Hastings 2003; Hastings et al. 2005); however, other researchers have found that mothers of young children with disabilities report more stress, anxiety, and depression than fathers of young children with disabilities (Herring et al. 2006; Stoneman 2007).

Researchers suggested that although mothers and fathers of young children with disabilities reported similar levels of stress, different variables are predictive of parenting stress for mothers and fathers (Davis and Carter 2008). The data on the variables associated with fathers' stress are mixed. Davis and Carter reported that a consistent predictor of fathers' stress was the delays/deficits in social skills of their young children with autism. In addition, Rodrigue et al. (1992) reported that fathers of 10- and 11-year-old children with disabilities were concerned about the family financial burden associated with raising these children. Paternal stress was found to be associated with mother's depression and stress in a few studies (Hastings et al. 2005; Roach et al. 1999), but not in others (Hastings 2003). Interestingly, Hastings et al. also reported that paternal positive perceptions about their children with disabilities were negatively predicted by maternal depression. In addition, a few researchers

reported that paternal stress was not associated with the children's challenging behaviors (Hastings 2003; Hastings et al. 2005), whereas others have reported that children's externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression, hyperactivity) were found to be associated with stress among fathers (Davis and Carter 2008).

Saloviita et al. (2003) examined parental stress of fathers and mothers of young children with intellectual disabilities. Similar to other researchers, Saloviita et al. found similarities between the stress of fathers and mothers. Among mothers, the most important variable in explaining their stress was their children's challenging behaviors. For fathers, the strongest variable was the perceived social acceptance of their children and the negative attitudes of others. Interestingly, for mothers the most important resource was informal support, whereas for fathers it was spousal support. Support for these findings is reported by Pelchat et al. (2003) who conducted a qualitative study and directly interviewed mothers and fathers of young children with Down syndrome (DS). Pelchat et al. (2003) reported that mothers and fathers differ in how they perceive their situations and the ways in which they cope with their children with disabilities.

In summary, it appears that fathers of young children with disabilities experience *both* positive and negative outcomes. However, the paucity of information on their experiences and the limited knowledge of the predicators for fathers' stress and adjustment clearly indicate the need for more research in this area.

Fathers' Involvement

In the past few decades, the role of fathers has changed dramatically and fathers' involvement in early childhood education has increased (Palm and Fagan 2008; Quesenberry et al. 2007). Researchers do not use one clear and consistent definition for fathers' involvement. Pleck (1997) identified three components for paternal involvement: (a) engagement, (b) accessibility, and (c) responsibility. Palm and Fagan (2008) defined father involvement in early childhood programs as direct and indirect connections that fathers have with their respective programs. However, researchers have used different definitions for fathers' involvement and reported on difficulties of conceptualizing and measuring this construct (Palm and Fagan 2008; Quinn 1999). In addition, only a few researchers differentiate between fathers' involvement with their young children and fathers' involvement with their children in early childhood education programs. Palm and Fagan noted that fathers who are highly involved with their young children are correspondingly more involved in their children's early childhood programs. The following section presents a summary of research findings related to fathers' involvement with their young children with disabilities.

Fathers' Involvement with Their Children

The involvement of fathers in the lives of their children is recognized as an important aspect of the family environment and has been supported by the positive influences

of fathers on their children's development and well-being (Halme et al. 2009). Although researchers have demonstrated the positive influence of fathers' involvement on children's development, most studies focused on typically developing children and not on fathers of children with disabilities.

Though research on involvement of fathers of young children with disabilities has been limited, what information is available provides direction for education professionals. In a recent study, Dyer et al. (2009) used the data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) database to investigate the association between father-child involvement and the developmental status of children with disabilities. The researchers reported more similarities than differences in fathers' involvement with their children with and without DD. There was no evidence that fathers of children with DD were *less* or *more* involved than fathers of typically developing children. In addition, fathers' involvement was similar across gender and social economic status of children with DD.

Although Konstantareas and Homatidis (1992) reported that fathers of children with disabilities (ages 8–9 years) spend less time with their children compared to mothers of children with disabilities and fathers of typically developing children, they noted that fathers' involvement with their children had a positive impact on the children, mothers, and the families. In addition, Turbiville et al. (1995) reported that fathers perceived both personal *and* parenting satisfaction from their involvement and relationships with children with disabilities. Calderon and Low (1998) examined the presence or absence of fathers on the social-emotional, language, and academic development of young children who were deaf and hard of hearing. The researchers reported that children whose fathers were present had significantly better academic and language outcomes than those without a father present.

Simmerman et al. (2001) assessed the involvement of fathers of children with intellectual disabilities (ages 8–14 years) and mother and father satisfaction with fathers' involvement. The results indicated that fathers were involved in child-rearing roles and both mothers and fathers were satisfied with fathers' help and involvement. Both parents perceived fathers to be most involved in the parenting roles of playing, nurturing, discipline, and making decisions regarding services. Fathers were least involved in hygiene, dressing, feeding, teaching, and driving to appointments. Simmerman et al. noted that satisfaction with father involvement contributed to higher marital adjustment and lower child-rearing burden.

Fathers' Involvement in Education Programs

At least conceptually, the involvement of fathers in programs serving their children with disabilities would seem to be important and have an impact on children's responsiveness to educational programming. Fathers of young children with disabilities have perceived involvement in their children's education programs as important (League and Ford 1996) and reported that they are interested in meaningful involvement with their children's early education programs (Hadadian and Merbler, 1995). League and Ford interviewed fathers of children with disabilities (ages 5–16 years;

$M = 9$ years) and reported that fathers identified a few benefits for parent involvement in education programs including: (a) providing encouragement and motivation for the child, (b) decreasing children's challenging behaviors in school, and (c) acting as advocates for the children in the schools.

Gavidia-Payne and Stoneman (1997) examined the predictors of parental involvement in programs for young children with disabilities and developed two models to explain maternal and paternal involvement. Fathers who actively employed coping strategies (e.g., seeking social support; turning to religion), and those who were more educated and more financially secure, became more involved in their children's programs.

Turbiville and Marquis (2001) examined the involvement of 89 fathers of young children with disabilities in their children's education programs. Fathers in this study tended to prefer activities in which *all family members* could be involved. The three most popular activities were those that: (a) included all family members, (b) jointly included men and women in planning for the child's future, and (c) jointly included men and women *and* focused on being a better father or parent.

Fathers as Intervention Agents

Elder et al. (2003) reported that the four fathers in their study expressed frustration from not knowing how to play and communicate with their young children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). They suggested that one way to increase fathers' involvement with their children was to teach them methods to develop and maintain father-child interactions.

In only a few studies reviewed, were fathers of young children with disabilities the primary intervention agents for their children. Russell and Matson (1998) trained fathers of young children with DD to teach their children everyday skills, such as riding a tricycle or brushing their teeth. Fathers were trained to: (a) give instructions, (b) use positive attention, and (c) use appropriate consequences. Fathers were satisfied with the program and changed their parenting behaviors, although the length of training differed depending on the individual needs of the families. In addition, positive changes in children's behavior were observed.

Several investigators have published a series of studies on fathers' training. Elder et al. (2003) investigated the effects of a home training program for fathers of young children with autism. Focusing on developing skills in "imitating with animation" and "expectant waiting," the researchers found that fathers readily learned the former, though the latter was a more difficult skill to be acquired. In a subsequent study, Elder et al. (2005) examined the efficacy of in-home father training on the verbal communicative outcomes of children (ages 4–8 years) with ASD. Fathers learned the target strategies (i.e., initiating, responding, imitating/animating, expectant waiting) resulting in notable increases in their imitating/animating and responding behaviors and a decrease in initiating behaviors when interacting with their children. No difference was found between fathers and mothers in learning skills designed to promote

social reciprocity. The researchers concluded that the fathers' training was both effective and valued by the participants. In a retrospective analysis, Seung et al. (2006) investigated the effectiveness of the previously described home training program for fathers of eight children (ages 4–7 years) with ASD. The investigators noted positive results to the home-based intervention both for the fathers and the children.

In summary, fathers of young children with disabilities express interest in being involved with both their children *and* their children's education programs. However, limited information is available on successful strategies for engaging fathers of young children with disabilities in meaningful experiences for themselves and their children.

Fathers' Identified Needs

As noted by Palm and Fagan (2008), father-friendly early childhood programs require education professionals to understand "the needs of fathers and families in specific community context and designing appropriate and meaningful opportunities for father involvement that are consistent with program goals" (p. 757). Fathers of young children with disabilities reported specific needs that could enhance their involvement with their children and their education programs. Researchers have emphasized that, since mothers' and fathers' needs and interests may be quite different, it is important to gather information from both parents (Flynn-Wilson and Wilson 2004; Hadadian and Merbler 1995).

Carpenter and Towers (2008) concluded that there are two key issues that either facilitated or hindered men's involvement: (a) having the *time* available to be in contact with the service delivery system and (b) the *quality of communication* with the practitioners. Scheduling was important to many fathers who worked outside of the home and wanted to be present in meetings related to their children's education (Carpenter and Towers 2008; Turbiville and Marquis 2001). Fathers have also reported the importance of having good communication between the parent, the school, and education practitioners (League and Ford 1996), given that they have sometimes not received communication from the school and professionals that they desired (Carpenter and Herbert 1997; League and Ford 1996).

Hadadian and Merbler (1995) asked fathers to identify their training and resource needs and reported that fathers indicated their top priority was the need for information about available resources. In a study conducted by Turbiville and Marquis (2001), fathers reported that they preferred to be involved in their children's education through activities that include all family members. Fathers also reported that the activities in which they were least likely to participate were those offered to men only (e.g., men's support group).

In summary, fathers report on different experiences and needs from mothers and therefore *require specific attention* from service providers. Further research is needed in this area in order to improve the quality and quantity of father involvement.

Limitations of the Available Research

Although the literature on fathers of young children with disabilities has been informative and serves as a potential guide for future research, several limitations exist regarding its utility. First, the number of studies identified is very limited as is the number of participants in each study. Since there is limited information on fathers of young children, it is not possible to differentiate between the experiences and involvement of fathers of children with different types of disabilities, even though it is possible that their experiences are different (e.g., Ricci and Hodapp 2003).

Second, the demographic information about the fathers and families in most studies is limited and it seems that many researchers have used convenience and self-selecting sampling procedures. Sampling procedures that do not take into account family demographics (especially cultural contexts) have substantial limitations, thereby minimizing our ability to generalize findings and fully understand the roles and involvement of fathers of these children. In addition, it may limit the ability to draw conclusions about how fathers' roles and involvement might vary across demographic contexts (e.g., single fathers, ethnic minority status, low/high SES).

Third, a substantive number of the fathers in the reviewed studies are biological fathers of children with disabilities who live in two-parent families. This restriction of the definition of fatherhood limits the knowledge related to other fathers (e.g., single fathers, nonresident fathers, step and adoptive fathers, gay fathers).

Fourth, the extant literature reveals issues related to the methodology of the studies reported. Many of the researchers used self-report questionnaires and surveys that provide valuable information; however, the lack of other measures (e.g., direct observation of fathers' behavior) limits triangulation of the data. In addition, only limited researchers used direct interactions with the fathers (e.g., interviews, focus groups) that allow in-depth understanding of fathers' experiences and perspectives.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Research

The limited number of identified studies that focus specifically on fathers of young children with disabilities supports the need for more intensive research in this area. In order to address the particular needs of fathers of these young children and encourage and support their involvement both with their children and their respective education programs, service providers need to have a better understanding of fathers' experiences and needs. Most of the research related to fathers of young children with disabilities includes biological fathers in two-parent families. Fathers' family structure was found to be associated with fathers' involvement (Halme et al. 2009). Researchers should explore the experiences and needs of fathers from diverse backgrounds and contexts (e.g., single fathers and gay fathers) and expand the definition of fathers (e.g., nonresident fathers and stepfathers).

Another area of research need is the influence of cultural background on fathers' experiences and needs. Elder et al. (2003) described four fathers from varying cultural backgrounds, and observed a need to "assess individual differences among fathers (nervousness, shyness) as well as differences that may be attributed to cultural/ethnic background influences" (p. 291). Such cultural differences among children and their families have been articulated (Hanson and Lynch 2003; Lynch and Hanson 2004; Parette et al. 2008), and the importance of culturally sensitive education practices noted (Kalyanpur and Harry 1999; Parette and Brotherson 2004; Parette and Petch-Hogan 2000). However, whether or not differences exist across cultural groups of fathers of young children with disabilities remains a research area of need.

Researchers might want to use various methods to collect dates on fathers of young children (e.g., interviews, observations, and questionnaires) that will allow triangulation of the information and in-depth understanding of fathers' experiences and needs. In addition, longitudinal studies could shed light on the changes of fathers' experiences and their needs at specific times (e.g., the birth of a child with disability, transition from early intervention to school-based services). Finally, researchers should explore both the positive and negative impact of their children and related educational practices on fathers and assess strategies that fathers perceive as helpful to them.

Recommendations for Practice

Researchers have provided recommendations for working with fathers of young children with disabilities and facilitating their involvement based on existing best practices and inferences from the research literature (Flynn-Wilson and Wilson 2004; Quesenberry et al. 2007; Rump 2002; Turbiville et al. 1995). Fathers' involvement with their children with disabilities could have a positive impact on the fathers, the children, the mothers, and/or the families. Special education laws and best practices support and encourage family involvement, but there is a need to address fathers as well as mothers. Professionals who provide services for young children with disabilities and their families should work to ensure that fathers have the opportunity to be included in any family-centered services. This may require discussions with the mother and the father to make appropriate decisions regarding how the father will be included. Service delivery personnel should: (a) be sensitive to fathers' needs and preferences regarding involvement and (b) not predicate fathers' participation on preferences of service providers, their practices, or policies (Turbiville et al. 1995). In addition, employers and services should build flexibility into planning activities and services offered such that fathers can attend meetings and participate in decision-making processes related to their children with disabilities.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) concluded that key elements of father-friendly schools must include: (a) encouraging fathers to be involved in the general life of the school, including informal contact with staff and other parents; (b) enabling fathers to attend and participate fully in meetings concerning their children; and (c)

enabling fathers to have contact with other fathers. Further recommendations for the field come from Rump (2002), who encourages practitioners to focus on three areas when reviewing their program to increase the involvement of fathers who have young children with disabilities. First, programs need to review their policies in areas such as the program intake process, classroom and therapy activities, and encouragement of noncustodial parent participation. The next program area to concentrate on is communication. All forms of communication (e.g., mission statement, documents, handbooks, flyers, phone calls, daily notes, invitations, meeting notices) need to include, be appealing to, and be shared with *both* mothers and fathers. The final program area to review is the development and offering of program activities. Rump's suggestions to "make involvement work" (p. 20) include: (a) involve fathers on committees, boards, and as speakers at workshops; (b) survey fathers to determine their interests and needs; and (c) actively seeking out and hiring male staff members.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter on fathers of young children with disabilities indicates a need for expanded research to help us better understand fathers' roles, responsibilities, preferences, and needs in family-centered service delivery. In the absence of such research, we risk continuing reliance on "status quo thinking" and strategies that have previously been presented in the literature, and which does little to improve the quality of service delivery. The importance of this area of research is well documented, and it remains an obligation to the field to expand representation of fathers of children with disabilities in research.

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Chapter 10
Honoring Women Who Must Raise their Children Alone

A Feminist Critique of the Current Focus on American Father Involvement

Beatrice S. Fennimore

The birth of every child signals a renewal of human hope. For this hope to come to fruition, the child must experience a caring relationship with an adult or adults who are capable of devoted love and consistent responsibility. The new child is created by a unique mother and father who in many cultures are traditionally presumed to play an important role in her or his care and protection. This presumption is complex, however, because it is embedded in permeable cultural values and ever-emergent changes in human adult behavior. Furthermore, assumptions about men and women as parents inevitably reflect many forms of bias, oppression, or inequality related to gender that may be in place in a given society.

Are fathers always necessary in the lives of mothers and children? Is their presence in households or are their enforced child support payments the solution to the greater incidence of poverty in mother-headed families? These are certainly important questions today in the context of the dynamic but unfinished gender revolution of the United States. As women have steadily entered the work force since the end of World War II and have broken many of the barriers to equality that formerly stood in their way, rates of divorce and single parenting have also been part of the changing family landscape (Fagan and Palm 2004). Single mothers, many of whom may still have been socialized to underplay their own personal, academic, or career development in expectation of motherhood with the economic support and protection of men, can unexpectedly encounter a complex maze of social and economic challenges and inequities. This can leave them struggling in the absence of financial support, substantial employment opportunities, adequate and affordable child care, and necessary government supports (Polakow 2007).

This chapter is written to explore information on the lives of single mothers and their children in the context of a renewed interest in father involvement. It draws to a close with an analysis from a feminist perspective of the ways in which a focus on father involvement alone falls short of addressing what can and must

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be done to honor and support the needs of women who must raise their children alone. Furthermore, it ends with recommendations of how men and women can continue work together to complete the ongoing gender revolution in an America with a sustained commitment to constructing a fair economic playing field that offers women and men the substantial and equitable economic opportunities that can sustain viable family life for all citizens.

Seeking the Entry or Re-entry of Fathers

Recognition of the poverty and difficulty experienced by many women raising children alone, and the subsequent social and economic cost to our nation when fathers are absent, has brought about a virtual explosion of renewed interest in the role of fathers in participating in family life and providing economic support. Programs initiated by social or educational services to work with fathers and families have proliferated, and a majority of states have established formal programs or commissions to study and serve low-income fathers and their families. Although these initiatives have focused strongly on low-income fathers, there has also been a growing public awareness of the cost to society when any father who is divorced, separated, never married, or incarcerated abandons his parenting responsibilities. The critical role of men in family life is reflected in the formation of initiatives such as the National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF), the National Father Initiative, The Fatherhood Project, and the National Center on Fathering (Fagan and Palm 2004).

Why Focus on the Fathers?

Traditional views of the family assume that fathers make a unique and essential contribution. This contribution includes protection, economic sustenance, and male role modeling needed by children, especially boys (Perlesz 2004). The concept of father thus extends from a biological or strictly economic role to one which emphasizes socialization and many other kinds of physical and emotional support. While the presence of a man alone does not always constitute a positive situation for women and children, his dependable engagement in warm and close relationships is presumed to enrich family life (Engle 1997). Some would argue that the presence of *maleness* in and of itself is less important at this point in time than the presence of an economically responsible and emotionally connected partner who is actively involved with the mother and children on all levels of family life (Silverstein and Auerbach 2006). Fathers are considered to be truly involved in the lives of their children when they are engaged through consistent direct contact, potentially available on a regular basis for interaction, responsibly ascertaining that care is given, and arranging for necessary available resources (Lamb et al. 1987). The assumption that such involvement is important and necessary appears to be supported by statistics reflecting the economic and lifestyle realities of many women who are raising their children alone.

Looking at the World of Single Mothers

Every unmarried mother is unique—she may have been previously married or not, and she may live with a female or male romantic partner, parents, friends, relatives, or alone with her children. Her living situation may change several times over a number of years. The economic circumstances of unmarried mothers vary widely as well, and may include professional positions with high income, several jobs that keep them above the poverty line, or extreme poverty and homelessness. Important to recognize, however, is the fact that the number of unwed mothers has risen sharply in the United States. This trend, driven by women in their 20s and 30s, is resulting in four out of every ten American births to unmarried women in 2009 (Ventura 2009). While birth rates have increased for all identified ethnic groups, they have remained highest and risen most quickly for Hispanic and black mothers. This far-reaching social trend may reflect the lessening of social stigma associated with unmarried motherhood, an increase in couples delaying or forgoing marriage, and growing numbers of financially independent and older or single women choosing to bear children alone after delaying childbearing (Ventura 2009).

Are Children of Single Mothers in Jeopardy?

Some experts say the trend toward single motherhood represents a positive change for many women as they move away from the days when unmarried mothers were social outcasts, forced to give up their babies for adoption or have abortions. This trend can also help women to fulfill themselves within the greater freedoms that nontraditional family formations may provide, including freedom from the assumption that she alone bears the major responsibility for housework and child care. However, some experts question whether this trend is in the best interest of children (Ventura 2009) because of strong indicators that many children are not faring well in their economic or school lives with single mothers.

Child Poverty and Family Structure

For children younger than 18, the poverty rate increased from 17.4 % in 2006 to 18 % in 2007. This translated into 13.3 million children living in poverty. Furthermore, 8 % of these children were living in deep or extreme poverty (below 50 % of the poverty line) during that year. Racial disparities have persisted, with black and Hispanic children more than twice as likely to live in poverty as non-Hispanic white and Asian children in 2007.

In 2007, children living in households headed by single mothers were more than five times as likely as children living in households headed by married parents to be poor—42.9 % compared with 8.5 %. The tendency of children in single-parent families to be poor is present in all race/ethnic groups: 32.3 % non-Hispanic white

children, 50.2 % of black children, 52.4 % of Hispanic children, and 32 % of Asian children in single-parent households represent a much higher level of poverty than counterparts in married families. These statistics support the assumption that family structure continues to be strongly related to whether or not children experience poverty (Burd-Sharps et al. 2008).

Thus, it would appear that children living in poor single-parent families are far more likely to experience risks of negative outcomes that are connected to the experience of poverty: less success in school, development of social and emotional problems, greater likelihood to be poor in adulthood, greater prevalence of health problems, and an overall increase in the stresses and isolation that poverty can bring to the life of a child and family (Moore et al. 2009). However, although poverty inevitably takes its toll on the lives of many children, deficit-based assumptions about single-parent families or poor families should never be automatically applied to the ability and well-being of children until they are fairly evaluated and provided with a full chance to develop their potential (Fennimore 2000).

It is also important to recognize the many variations in the experiences of families that appear statistically the same. A never-married female parent can be well educated and professionally successful while a formerly married single parent may be disgraced and abandoned by a previously wealthy but currently bankrupt ex-spouse in jail for white-collar crime. Never-married single parents in poverty may have significant funds of knowledge (Gonzalez 2005), extended family support, and strong abilities that support the health and educational success of their children while formerly married parents may be struggling with alcoholism or mental illness. The relatively new study of family resiliency, or the ability of families to develop and maintain healthy family functioning while successfully adapting to life's challenges and risks, supports a strengths-based approach to all families (Vandsburger et al. 2008). Nonetheless, it does appear that the current economic status of single female-headed families is weakened and requires considerable support.

Are State and Federal Father Involvement Policies the Answer?

During his first term in office in 1993, President Bill Clinton directed all federal agencies to ensure that fathers were included in programs and government-initiated family research (Fagan and Palm 2004). The subsequent passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWO) represented a major overhaul of Aid to Families of Dependent Children program, most of whose adult recipients were single mothers. The purported aim was to promote marriage and self-sufficiency in low-income mothers by ending federal entitlements, expanding welfare-to-work programs, creating lifetime limits for welfare, and promoting sexual abstinence and marriage to reduce the rates of unwed motherhood (Reese 2007). However, the law also had a specific provision that more children have paternity and child support orders. The National Directory of New Hires assisted in direct withholding of child support from wages, and tougher new penalties such as revoking drivers and

professional or occupational licenses were a threat to parents who were delinquent in payments. George W. Bush subsequently indicated his determination to make responsible and committed fatherhood a national priority (Fagan and Palm 2004).

By 1997, the federal government had taken an ever-increasing role in funding and regulating child support enforcement. In spite of these efforts, almost one-half of nonresident fathers were reported in 2001 as paying no child support. While many of these fathers had no apparent reason to avoid their financial responsibilities (Fagan and Palm 2004), many others were poor themselves (Sorensen and Turner 1997). Today there is a continued federal and state focus on father resources, child support payment, and the quality of mother-father relations.

Income Disparities, Marriage, and Father Involvement

Income disparities between the rich and the poor are undoubtedly contributing to issues of father involvement as well as the unwillingness of many couples to marry. According to an American human development report released in 2008, the top 1 % of American households reaps 20 % of total family income while the top 10 % reaps just about 45 % of total income and the bottom 60 % only 22.4 % of income. Overall, the top 1 % of households possesses a full third of America's wealth—the top 10 % holds more than 71 % of the wealth, and the lowest 60 % possesses just 4 % of the wealth (Burd-Sharps et al. 2008). What impact do these disparities have on the ability and willingness of less advantaged couples to marry? While the positive economic statistics of married families make it seem on the surface as though marriage is an economic safety net, this can only be true when married partners have reasonable access to jobs that provide adequate income and benefits. In a nation of stark income disparity and increasing levels of poverty and extreme poverty, it is possible that only those who have enough money to make a legal marriage partnership potentially viable are getting married in the first place. If the incidence of single parenting is rising steadily among the large percentage of Americans who have access to a small percentage of total income, it would seem that addressing poverty and income disparity would be a first step in prioritizing marriage as a national goal or policy focus.

Disadvantaged Young Men

Although not always the case, many women who grow up and live in poverty are likely to meet and develop relationships with men who have grown up and live in poverty. While stereotypical assumptions about people who are poor must be avoided, poverty is a distinct experience that can lead to different cultural codes, beliefs, and behaviors. By several recent counts in the mid-2000s, America was home to 2–3 million youth aged 16–24 who were without postsecondary education and disconnected from the

world of school and work. Young people who are idle, or not currently employed, in school, or engaged in custodial parenting, are a significant American policy concern. Edelman et al. (2006) indicate that one out of six young black men and nearly one out of eight young Hispanic men experience long-term idleness without any major childrearing responsibilities. Roughly, a fourth of young black men and roughly half of those aged 25–34 are noncustodial fathers. The incidence of idleness in the white population is lower, but young whites account for a significant percentage of the overall total. It is certain that the labor market downturn between 2001 and 2004, leading to the significant most recent downturn that has been catastrophic for many, has increased the incidence of youth idleness. Also, of significance to statistics of idleness is the stricter enforcement of child support through wage withholding of significant percentages of even low-income wages, leading to an unknown number of young men working in off the books or casual labor. Many of these young men have been assigned child support payments so high that their entire low-wage check might be less than what the government was entitled to take from their monthly pay (Edelman et al. 2006).

Disadvantaged Young Women

Critics of the former welfare programs, particularly Aid for Families of Dependent Children, appealed to racist stereotypes of recipients, most of whom were single mothers and a majority of whom were black and Latino. Single mothers were viewed as lazy, irresponsible, and promiscuous. Unfortunately, the reforms failed to address the structural bases of poverty among female-headed households and its implementation have created hardships for many of them (Reese 2007). Overall, the advantages in education and health that we currently see in American women are being wiped out by lower earnings—American males earn 50 % more than American females (Burd-Sharps et al. 2008). This huge disparity has undoubtedly affected the ability of struggling single mothers to reach the level of self-sufficiency which they desire and toward which they are willing to work, particularly those mothers who are extremely poor. For example, many of the women on public assistance who entered the workforce through welfare reforms in the mid and late 1990s were earning very low wages and still living in poverty—most worked in service or retail industries with high turnover rates and unstable hours (Reese 2007).

Stereotypical assumptions about "promiscuity" that have been present in welfare reform debates lack compassionate and well-informed understanding of the life chances that are present for women who are poor, many of whom may place a much higher priority on having children than women who are more affluent and advantaged. Many poor women would like to be married and hold marriage out as a lifelong ideal—a luxury they seek but can live without with the children they strongly desire if they must. However, even if marriage should become available to them, their marriages can and should not survive the ravages of abuse, chronic infidelity, alcoholism or drug addiction, a living made from crime, or incarceration—problems that exist

across class lines but that are more prevalent for a wide variety of reasons in men in low-income populations (Edin and Kefalas 2005). For some or perhaps many single mothers, marriage to an economically stable partner may be an impossible goal.

Why do women have children when they are poor? Each woman has her own important answer, but the desire for sexuality and reproduction is at the very heart of human life. A caring society must acknowledge and respect the essential nature of powerful human desire and construct itself so all its citizens can include in their pursuit of happiness the fulfillment of their longing for family and permanency of relationships in the context of a social economy that makes such relationships sustainable.

Needed: A Feminist Approach to Father Involvement

I would argue that, while the continued federal and state policies probably serve important roles in a short-term solution to the father abandonment of family responsibility, the long-term answer to challenges faced by women alone with children also requires a number of essential women-based solutions. These would be feminist in nature because they would be focused on the histories, current experiences, desires, biological realities, and experienced oppressions of women (Beetham and Demetriades 2007).

These women-based solutions should not be pursued in isolation—American men face many significant challenges and problems such as that of idleness and high levels of incarceration in disadvantaged young men that need complex social, political, and economic solutions. Men also need to be socialized to see responsible and respectful treatment of women and responsibility for the children they create as part of the strength and power of maleness. Few would argue that the sustained and responsible partnerships of mothers and fathers in the care, support, and protection of children are important goals for the health of every generation. Yet, to avoid the damage of continued paternalism in a society that has experienced a substantial gender shift, we should not pretend that male involvement, male economic support, and encouragement of women to view marriage as the solution of their economic problems is the answer to the current situation of single mothers in America.

A dominant discourse on enhancing the child-father bond must not be allowed to obscure essential examination of biased assumptions regarding gender, race, power, class, sexualization, and the marginalization of many families in America. Rather, legislative and social policy changes to enhance the presence of men and their relationships of children should be balanced with a focus on equal opportunities for women in the workplace (Perlesz 2006) and the support of high-quality, available, and affordable child care that is essential for the revolution in which they have so readily participated to be complete (Polakow 2007).

It Is Time to Catch Up with the Women's Revolution

The nuclear or traditional family with an employed father, an unemployed mother in charge of the home, and children, was long considered the ideal in America. However, the social tide turned when many women entered the job market during World War II aided by war-related child care and a substantial increase in employment opportunities. While a significant return to nuclear family lifestyles across class lines was supported with government programs that enabled home ownership, education for GIs, and family-friendly tax policies after World War II, women continued to steadily enter the job market. As the Civil Rights Movement and the feminist movement challenged widespread discrimination on many American fronts, greater equality of women created the need for stronger involvement of fathers who did their fair share of caring for children and balancing paid employment with responsibilities in the home (Fagan and Palm 2004). Much of the public discussion of father involvement has not adequately addressed the fact that . . . "Lone mothers are at the sharpest of sharp ends of the key dilemma of our time: how to reconcile work and family life" (Albeda et al. 2004, p. 2). American women have made a mighty contribution to the economy as they have increasingly participated in the gender revolution by entering the workforce in an increasing number of professions, many formerly unavailable to them, while also continuing to marry or take responsibility for raising children. While women's gender role has been transformed and empowered through employment, however, men are no longer privileged as the sole family providers who "deserve" domestic entitlements within the home. In many cases, men have resisted the gender role transformation that would lead to adopting more of the formerly female responsibilities to maintain households and balance the demands of child care with employment responsibilities (Silverstein et al. 1999).

Furthermore, the revolution of women has not been supported with the development of a national system of high-quality child care or with changes in the workplace such as flexible hours and fair pay. Thus, without supportive accommodation to the tremendous changes in their lives, women are conflicted and stuck in an uneven and unfinished revolution that harms their relationships and their ability to be successful on all fronts (Hochschild and Machung 2003). While these problems affect women across socioeconomic lines, and may change in nature in different cultural groups, they undoubtedly carry the greatest risk of devastation to women living in poverty.

So, I would argue that the important first step toward a future of father involvement is to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of women through a national discourse that honors female employment, vigorously pursues equity in pay for women and men, recognizes that family work must be assumed by men and women, and fully supports a movement toward the universal provision of high-quality child care that is necessary for the gender equality, protection of children, and the sustained health of family relationships and marriage that is viable across socioeconomic lines in a new era.

Mothers, Fathers, Children, and the American Dream

Disney aside, the days of the princess and her prince are over but for a very few. Even if we as a nation vigorously pursue the social growth and change that will promote greater responsibility of males and their engagement in family life, many women in present time and in considerable time to come are going to be parenting alone. Their valiant efforts must be honored, and their long-awaited entitlements to child care, decent employment, and equal pay should be provided and protected. These women are a very important part of the future of our nation.

And, what will that future be? American boys and girls must see themselves as growing into men and women who will need to work very hard—the goal before them should be the ability to engage in productive work outside the home as well as work within the home that sustains the viability of every family member. Children and young adults with these goals will need to live in an America where families are honored with necessary support and workplace policies that sustain their ability to be partners and parents. They also need to live in an America that is guided by an essential commitment to economic fairness for all citizens. We cannot pretend that the poverty that leads to so much family discord and dissolution is caused by the failings of individuals in a nation where so many citizens are unable to find stable employment that provides a living wage and essential benefits a nation in which an enormous amount of wealth is in the hands of a few while the majority face meager economic rewards for the work that they do. Involved fathers and mothers can and will make a tremendous contribution to their families and to our nation if they have the chance to do so, in a society where liberty and equality are evident in fair opportunities provided for all.

Implications for Practitioners

All children have or have had biological fathers, but each father enters the physical or emotional life of a child in a unique way. Absent or present, known or unknown, the reality of having (or having had) a physical father has an impact on the emotional lives of the children that must be respected in school. For many children who do not have fathers present in their current lives, it is most important for educators to move from viewing their family lives as deficient to supporting and honoring their family realities—which in many cases means honoring the single women who are courageously trying to raise them as well as they possibly can. Thus, the following recommendations are made:

- Educators must transcend overgeneralized and denigrating low expectations for children from "single-parent homes." Rather, they should seek out and respectfully articulate the unique strengths of every family (Neuman 2009).
- Educators must transcend the gender bias that tends to place the blame for poverty solely on women who struggle to raise children alone. Rather, they should fairly

recognize and seek to improve where possible the many negative social and economic forces and inequities that create challenges for single mothers (Garbarino 1999).

- Educators must use fair and ethical language in describing the home situations of children (Fennimore 2000). Families should be described in terms of what they have ("a strong mother who is always working hard to support her children") rather than what they do not have ("it is a fatherless home.")
- Educators must carefully construct all family-related school assignments (i.e., "family trees") to be sensitive to homes headed by women. The strengths of women, and their value to society, should be clearly articulated in family-related discussions and assignments (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006).
- Educators must recognize and support social fathering—the important emotional role played by other connected males in the lives of many children. Step-fathers, male partners and friends, and grandfathers can be of central importance to children. Likewise, teachers, coaches, neighbors, fathers or husbands of family friends, religious leaders, and male personnel in the school can also be helped and encouraged to be supporters and role models for children whose biological fathers are not present in their lives (Pruitt 1997).

In closing, men can and arguably should play central and responsible roles in the lives of the children they help to create. However, when educators are faced with children who do not have supportive men in their lives, it is their responsibility to honor the realities of children and support the women who are taking full responsibility for raising them.

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Section III
International Contexs

Chapter 11
Father-Child Involvement in English-Speaking Caribbean Countries: Links to Childhood Development

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine

Developmental, socialcultural, and economic issues tied to fatherhood and fathering have come to the forefront of several societies around the world. This may be attributed, in part, to changes in the structural and functional dimensions of the traditional nuclear family, greater acknowledgment of the diverse mating/marital systems in different cultural communities in which fatherhood is realized, and the impact of paternal presence on the economic and social well-being of children (see volumes by Grey and Anderson 2010; Lamb 2010; Tamis-LeMonda and McFadden in press). A primary goal herein is to provide an overview of father-child relationship during the early childhood years in the technologically developing countries of the Caribbean. Specifically, emphasis is on the sociocultural contexts of fathering and fatherhood, levels of men's involvement in caring for and engagement in different activities with young children, associations between father involvement and child development outcomes, and policy and practice recommendations that may assist in promoting paternal involvement in Caribbean countries.

A consideration of paternal involvement in Caribbean families provides an opportunity to examine early cognitive and social outcomes within the evolving dynamics of mate-shifting and child-shifting and challenging social and economic circumstances. It is during the early childhood years that attachment relationships to fathers and internal working models about the characteristics and predictability of trusting relationships begin to take shape (Lamb 2010). Yet, it is during this most vulnerable developmental period that a great deal of uncertainty and instability exists about fathers' residential patterns, level of economic support, and degree of psychological involvement with children in Caribbean families (Anderson 2007; Samms-Vaughan 2005). The biosocial perspective, rooted in evolutionary biology, suggests that pair-bond stability, fathers' residential patterns, and economic provisioning for children may reflect investment strategies toward offspring reproductive success (see Draper and Harpending 1987; Grey and Anderson 2010; Marlowe 1999, 2000). Put differently, fathers who invest more in parenting than mating effort increase the

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likelihood of offspring survival and well-being. The discussion that follows focuses on African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean fathers in the English-speaking Caribbean countries.

Sociocultural Contexts of Father-Child Involvement in Caribbean Families

With ancestral ties to Africa, contemporary African-Caribbean families reflect diverse marital/mating patterns and familial arrangements. It is estimated that between 9.42 and 11.77 million Africans were brought as slaves to the Caribbean (Curtin 1975; Deerr 1949–1950). Subsequently, East Indians were brought from India to the Caribbean as indentured servants to supplant the shortage of labor on the sugar plantations after slavery was abolished. A majority were brought to British Guiana (today Guyana; 238,909) and Trinidad and Tobago (143,939; Ramdin 2000; Roopnarine 2006). Historically, scholars of the African and East Indian diasporas have speculated about the role of sociohistorical experiences (e.g., African heritage, slavery, indentureship, colonialism) in defining current familial arrangements, mating unions (e.g., mate-shifting) and parenting practices (e.g., child-shifting) in African- and Indo-Caribbean families (see Barrow 1998; Frazier 1951; Herskovits 1941; Leo-Rhynie 1997).

Two competing frameworks have been proposed to address the issue of sociohistorical experiences in the making of contemporary Caribbean families: retentionist and creolization theses. On the one hand, the retentionist thesis argues that Caribbean families, Indo-Caribbean in particular, have managed to maintain major properties of the ancestral culture in the face of oppression and difficult economic circumstances (see Dabydeen and Samaroo 1994; Roopnarine 2006; Singh 2005). On the other hand, the creolization thesis proposes that while Caribbean family structural arrangements and certain childrearing practices may have been affected by slavery and indentureship, economic ascendancy and cultural contact over extended periods of time may have also exerted their influence on how current families execute their roles and responsibilities in diverse family arrangements (Smith 1996). What appears to be the case is this: elements of translocal practices present in both African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean families appear to have their genesis in and resemble those that are apparent in the ancestral cultures (see Van der Veer and Vertovec 1991). A few of these beliefs and practices are woven into the discussion below on family organizational patterns and manhood and fatherhood.

Family Social-Structural Organization

In many societies around the world, marriage is a basis for establishing fatherhood and residence patterns (e.g., matrilocal, patrilocal). Mating and marriage systems convey community- and society-wide attitudes about reproductive strategies and

may affect inheritance patterns, the sexual division of labor, resource allocation and investment biases in biological and nonbiological children, and the abandonment of children (Grey and Anderson 2010; Low 2005; Sargent and Harris 1992). Typically, in families based on marriage, organization patterns are a mixture of nuclear and extended households. Extendedness may be for life, where three-generational families share living quarters and pool economic resources, or a temporary phase in a young couple's life. Functional extendedness with family members may continue even after married offspring leave their parents' residence. In families based on marriage, often the assumption is that there is one father—the biological father, even when other males are present and are involved in children's lives. Although cultural abstractions of family organization patterns can lead to exaggerations of the "essentialist ideal" (i.e., a married couple living under the same roof), it is well-documented that men become fathers in diverse mating/family patterns in several ethnic and cultural groups, where social fathers and other male figures assume instrumental roles in childrearing (Mcalanahan and Carlson 2004; Tamis-LeMonda and McFadden 2010). Ostensibly, young children are exposed to and begin to acquire conceptions of reproductive strategies (mating patterns) and pair-bond stability in couple/partner relationships that are endorsed by individual cultural communities (see Quinlan and Flinn 2003).

What are the family contexts within which fatherhood is accomplished and fathering occurs in Caribbean societies? Following a life-course developmental process, Anglophone African-Caribbean families engage in mate-shifting where a majority of births occur in nonmarital unions with different "baby mothers" and "baby fathers"—first in visiting and then common-law relationships. Brown et al. (1997) found that among men under age 30 in different communities in the Kingston area of Jamaica, only 9.35 % were married, 41.3 % were in common-law unions, and 44.9 % were in visiting relationships, and Samms-Vaughan (2005) reported in a later study of Jamaican families that 28.3 % of adults were in common-law relationships, 6.1 % were in visiting unions, and 23.7 % were married. Marriage rates seem to increase with higher educational attainment, better socioeconomic conditions, and church membership—14 % of those who had below a secondary education and 33 % of those with a tertiary education were married, and 41.9 % of men who were church members were married, whereas 20.9 % who were not church members were married (Anderson 2007).

In these diverse family mating systems in Jamaica, most children had biological parenting figures, with 45 % having both biological parents present, 35.5 % having the biological mother present only, and 5.4 % having the biological father present only (Samms-Vaughan 2005). Another survey of Jamaican fathers indicated that most lived with their partners, whether they were married or not (Anderson 2007). Obviously, with progressive mating, male responsibility for children may span multiple unions. In her sample of fathers from different communities in Jamaica, Anderson (2007) found that on average 54.3 % of men had one "baby mother," 25.8 % had two "baby mothers," and 11 % had three "baby mothers." These distributions are similar to those obtained for men in the Kingston area of Jamaica a decade earlier (Brown et al. 1997) and raise questions about the complexity of meeting the needs

of children born in prior unions. Indeed, the ability of men to unite children from several unions can prove daunting; a majority (59.5 %) of Jamaican fathers in one survey had children who had grown up separately from them (Anderson 2007). The practice of child-shifting, which is common in Caribbean societies, serves to further alienate children from fathers (Crawford-Brown 1999).

In comparison to their African-Caribbean counterparts, the Indo-Caribbean family is primarily based on marriage and most children are born in two-parent, monogamous, coresident families. Marriage is seen as a life cycle transition into adulthood. Marriage is still arranged by parents, but as parental social control over young adults slackens, increasingly young men and women choose their own marital partners. Patrilocal residence is the norm. In a rural sample of Indo-Caribbean families living in Corentyne, Guyana, 71 % were married, 24 % were in a long-term committed relationship, and 2 % were single parents, and in a sample of Indo-Trinidadians residing in the Debe/Penal region of southern Trinidad, approximately 74 % of families were in two-parent, married relationships (Roopnarine and Krishnakumar 2010). However, among Indo-Caribbean families in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, out of marriage births and female-headed households may be on the increase.

Ethnotheories About Manhood and Fatherhood

A continuing challenge for researchers is to determine to what extent psychological constructions of manhood and fatherhood in the developing societies of the world overlap and whether they are still heavily molded by doctrines and precepts that are traditionally based (see Anderson 2007; Hossain et al. 2008; Roopnarine et al. 2009). Cultural-ecological frameworks (e.g., Super and Harkness 1997) propose that understanding parental psychology or ethnotheories about childrearing, customs, and ecological settings is central to interpreting variability in parent-child relationships across cultures. In particular, fathers' beliefs (considered here as ethnotheories) may provide a fruitful avenue for exploring how men structure their thoughts and actions regarding their investment in the socialization of children (Sigel and McGillicuddy-DeLisi 2002; Super and Harkness 1997). Beliefs represent the psychocultural schemas behind fathers' attempts to govern and shape the lives of their children (Goodnow and Collins 1990) and may reflect a community's endorsement of particular childrearing practices and goals over others. They may be seen as prepackaged, passed down from one generation to the next (e.g., unilateral respect/obedience to father; Shweder 1982), or "constructed" as men continue to revise their views on male investment in family life and childrearing (Anderson 2007; Silverstein et al. 2003).

In both African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean families, beliefs about manhood and fatherhood are still based on and nurtured by very conservative cultural ideologies about male-female roles. Examinations of gendered ideologies and male responsibilities across Caribbean countries have revealed three interrelated components to manhood in African-Caribbean men: virility, providing economic support for family

members, and being the head of the family (see Brown et al. 1997; Williams et al. 2007). Manhood may be realized early in life through heterosexual activity with several partners, serially or concurrently—the eventual proof being the number of offspring a man "fathers" from different women. But men also see themselves as providers and protectors of family members. In rural and urban settings in Guyana, Dominica, Barbados, and Jamaica, low-income men and women primarily see the father in the provider role (Brown et al. 1997; Dann 1987; Roopnarine et al. 1995). Last, manhood is defined in terms of "head of household:" God's plan, inherited from Africa, even though large numbers of African-Caribbean women are the main economic providers of their families (Brown et al. 1997; Williams et al. 2006).

Although a commitment to traditional or "macho" values in terms of virility (would not feel like a man without children), male dominance, and male domestic independence (should not inform spouse/partner about whereabouts) seem to be heavily anchored in the psyche of Jamaican men (Anderson 2007), they are tempered by age, rural-urban residence, and church membership. Older Jamaican fathers scored lower on macho values than younger fathers, those who were church members and attended church also scored lower on macho values than those who were not church members and did not attend church, and rural fathers showed a greater inclination toward macho values than urban fathers. Stronger macho values were associated with being in multiple relationships, but it is not clear how these values influence actual participation in childrearing. There were no significant relationships between macho values and conceptions of fathering. These newer findings suggest that, when compared to male attitudes from prior decades, rigid views regarding male-female relationships among Jamaican men appear to be softening a bit, especially in the area of male dominance and the "right" to have children outside of the union in which they have established a relationship (Anderson 2007).

For Indo-Caribbean families, the structural properties of patriarchal traditions that were brought to the Caribbean during the journey to indentured servitude are still evident in husband-wife relationships and childcare responsibilities. Psychological constructions about an ideal man and husband are articulated in ancient religious texts (e.g., Ramanaya, Upanishads, Mahabharata) and recanted in certain epics (e.g., the devoted son Lord Rama). For example, the Shastras (e.g., Laws of Manu, 200 BC–AD 200) specify the responsibilities of men and women in family life along strongly gender-differentiated lines, supporting the superiority of men and the subordination of women (pativrata; Kakar 1991). Thus, traditionally, Indo-Caribbean manhood has been defined by male dominance and control over family members. Men are seen as the head of their households even when their wives work outside of the home or earn more than them. There are strong ties to patrilineal members (e.g., fathers and brothers) and the eldest son is expected to care for his aging parents and to assume responsibility for sacraments upon their death. During the indentureship and immediate postindentureship period, Indo-Caribbean fathers were invested in teaching their sons farming skills, trade skills, and in the upper castes the acquisition of knowledge (*gyan*) was highly encouraged through systematic grooming for the priesthood, teaching, and other professions.

It has been posited that with the erosion of the caste system, increase in divorce rates, greater choice in marital partners, gift-giving replacing the dowry system, improvements in economic activities, and the increase in nuclear families, noticeable changes are evident in the roles and responsibilities of Indo-Caribbean families (see Deen 1995; Nevadomsky 1980a, b). However, this proposition did not receive much support in a recent study of Indo-Caribbean families who migrated from Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana to the New York City area (Roopnarine et al. 2009). Men and women continue to embrace traditional beliefs about the provider and caregiver roles after a decade of residence in a more egalitarian US society. Related data on Indo-Caribbean men's understanding of what it means to be a father are not available at this time.

In short, these hegemonic models of manhood in African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean men are not unlike those of men in other cultural communities (see Roopnarine 2007). They bring into sharp focus the inherent difficulties (conflicts) fathers may encounter in meeting the intellectual and social needs of children in different mating unions. This is further complicated by the fact that African-Caribbean men find a strong sense of self-definition from biological fatherhood, so much so that paternity certainty becomes an overriding issue (Anderson 2007; Brown et al. 1997), and Indo-Caribbean men rely on conservative Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs and practices to guide different elements of family life (see Roopnarine et al. 2009). It appears that conservative definitions of manhood in Caribbean societies may serve to undermine attempts to define the parameters and goals of men's investment and collective childrearing responsibilities in different mating unions. The levels of symmetry and asymmetry between manhood and fatherhood are not fully delineated, but their strong presence in childrearing has been documented in several Caribbean countries (Anderson 2007; Williams et al. 2006). Can Caribbean men be good fathers despite the ephemeral nature of husbands/partner relationships and conservative beliefs about manhood? Perhaps an adequate answer to this question may be deduced from their levels and quality of involvement with young children.

Levels and Quality of Paternal Involvement in Caribbean Societies

Father involvement is a multifaceted construct with "an array of significant qualitative components—the quality, sensitivity, developmental appropriateness, emotional climate, degree of connection, mutual delight, and meaning" are major tenets (Palkovitz 2002, p. 126). While quantity/quality issues have been debated, of interest here are fathers' levels and quality of involvement in three primary domains of parenting: basic caregiving (e.g., feeding, cleaning) and sensitively attuned interactions, parenting styles, and disciplinary practices. A dominant framework that has guided much of the early work on father involvement contains three major domains: engagement, accessibility, and responsibility (Lamb et al. 1987). This model will be used as a benchmark for discussing paternal involvement across the Caribbean. To be sure, some researchers (e.g., Palkovitz 2002; Pleck 2010) have added other sources of

variability to father involvement (e.g., warmth and responsiveness, control, and process responsibility, child characteristics, and the like) and introduced quantitatively based models that account for moderating and mediating variables that may influence fathering and developmental outcomes in different family constellations (e.g., Cabrera et al. 2007). Nevertheless, solid theories on father involvement are sorely lacking, especially in the cultural and cross-cultural domains.

On the measurement front, researchers have used time diaries, observational methods, surveys, experience sampling methods (wearing pagers), interviews, narratives, and hormonal assays (blood samples, salivary cortisol, urine samples) to assess paternal involvement as separate from maternal involvement and/or as conjoint participation with mothers and other adults (see Day and Lamb 2004; Grey and Anderson 2010). The involvement activities largely mirror what women have traditionally done in families; fathering is largely conceived and measured using maternal behaviors. Broadly speaking, the different methods of assessments have yielded time estimates of paternal engagement in different activities, the relative frequency of different activities with children inside and outside of the home, maternal and paternal distribution of responsibilities in childcare and other related activities, warmth and responsiveness, behavioral control, and hormonal levels and childcare in Caribbean families. What follows is a brief summary of some of this literature, beginning with relative estimates of time spent on global measures of childcare across Caribbean countries.

Caring for and Interacting with Children

Ethnographic accounts on 156 cultures suggest that in only 20 % of them are men's relationships with infants encouraged (Brown and Barker 2003). Among hunter-gatherers, such as the Aka, who practice monogamy, father's direct care of children is high. In technologically developed societies where the marriage system is largely based on monogamy or serial monogamy, father care is somewhat moderate. By contrast, among pastoralists and agriculturists (intensive farming) who practice polygyny, father's direct care of children is usually low (see Hewlett 2004). Where do Caribbean fathers fall along this investment continuum? As stated above, in the mate-shifting societies of the Caribbean, father involvement with children from previous unions may be sporadic or nonexistent, but as will become clear, levels of involvement with children in current unions are similar to those of men in other developing societies.

The difficulties with self-reports notwithstanding, low-income African-Caribbean Jamaican fathers in common-law relationships reported spending 0.94 hours per day feeding infants and 0.52 hours bathing and cleaning infants, Black Carib fathers were present 11 % of the time in the social environments of infants and about 3 % of the time in the social environments of 3- to 9-year olds (Munroe and Munroe 1992), and Trinidadian fathers were observed to engage in care interactions with children about 10.3 % (mothers engaged in 44.2 % of care interactions) of the time (Flinn 1992).

Table 11.1 Fathers' and mothers' time involvement in different activities per day in select cultural/ethnic groups

Cultural group	Age of child (years)	Activity	Mother (hours)	Father (hours)
Taiwanese (Sun and Roopnarine 1996)	1	Caregiving	6.75	3.33
East Indians (India; Suppal and Roopnarine 1999)	3–5	Being with/around children	12.13	5.0
Kadazan (Malaysia; Hossain et al. 2008)	1	Feeding	3.48	1.45
		Cleaning	3.23	1.75
Rural Malay (Malaysia; Hossain et al. 2008)	1	Feeding	3.49	0.76
		Cleaning	3.50	0.63
Brazilian (diverse ethnic groups; Benetti and Roopnarine 2006)	6–11	Ready for school	0.63	0.44
		Homework	0.78	0.48
Jamaican (Roopnarine et al. 1995)	1	Feeding	2.00	1.08
		Cleaning	1.80	0.75
African American (Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine 1992)	3–5	Caregiving	6.7	2.8
Puerto Rican (US mainland) (Roopnarine and Ahmeduzzaman 1993)	3–5	Caregiving	7.3	2.7
African American (Hossain and Roopnarine 1994)	1	Feeding	3.15	1.13
		Cleaning	2.61	0.89
[a] Navajo (Hossain et al. 2008)	8	Care on demand	0.62	0.40
		Academic activities	0.81	0.53

[a]Data were compiled for the entire week. The total was divided by 7 to arrive at a daily rate

These levels of time investment in caregiving are lower in Caribbean fathers when compared to men in Malaysian (Kadazan) and Taiwanese two-parent, married families (Hossain et al. 2005; Sun and Roopnarine 1996) but are in line with those of men in a number of other technologically developing societies around the world (see Table 11.1). In most of the societies studied, fathers' relative time involvement with young children fluctuates between a third and two-fifths of mothers' care engagement (see Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004).

Caribbean fathers' own reports of frequency of involvement in caregiving activities were also on par with those of men in other ethnic/cultural groups. In a mixed ethnic sample of Guyanese families (Indo- and African-Guyanese), 72 % of fathers reported that they fed infants, 70 % prepared food for infants, and 64 % got up at night to attend to infants regularly (Wilson 1989; Wilson and Kposowa 1994; Wilson et al. 1992). Moderate levels of daily investment in tidying, playing, and working with children on school-related activities were recorded in communities in Jamaica, Dominica, Trinidad, and Guyana (Brown et al. 1997; Flinn 1992; Roopnarine et al. 1995). Socioeconomic status did influence levels of paternal involvement in Guyanese families—low-income fathers were more involved with young children than middle-income fathers (Wilson 1989). Fathers seem to interact more with sons than with daughters, and social interactions between fathers and children were

more common in resident father households than nonresident father households and between biological fathers and offspring than between nonbiological fathers and offspring in Trinidadian families. Compared with biological offspring, interactions with nonbiological offspring tended to be more negative (Flinn 1992). However, there was little variation between Trinidadian mothers and fathers in the display of parental warmth to and in their behavioral control of preschool-aged children (Roopnarine and Krishnakumar 2010).

What about time investment in play? Allegedly, one area in which fathers distinguish themselves from mothers is in their role as playmates to children. Until recently, the role of the father as "playmate" was widely accepted. In the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (US, national representative sample), there were no differences in the amount of time mothers and fathers engaged in play and companionship (Yeung et al. 2001). Similarly, among African-Caribbean families, mothers and fathers did not differ in their time investment in play with infants, but fathers did spend more time in playing than caring for infants (Roopnarine et al. 1995). By comparison, in Taiwanese, rural Malay, and Kadazan families in Malaysia, mothers spent more time in playing with children than fathers did (Hossain et al. 2005, 2008; Sun and Roopnarine 1996). These latter findings seem to contradict the characterization of fathers as playmates and mothers as caregivers to children in more traditional cultural communities (see Roopnarine in press).

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles refer to the emotional climate within which parenting behaviors are exhibited (Darling and Steinberg 1993). Using Baumrind's (1967) framework, parenting styles have been explored internationally. The emphasis has been on the consequences of growing up with parents who are authoritarian, authoritative, indifferent, or indulgent (see Sorkhabi 2005 for a review). Focusing on the extreme control and warmth dimensions of parenting styles (Barber 1996), the relationships between behavioral control (maturity demands of children, monitoring, limit setting), psychological control (withdrawal of love, guilt induction) and warmth and internalizing (withdrawal, fearfulness, inhibition, anxiety), and externalizing (anger, frustration, aggression) behavioral problems in children have been determined in some cultures.

African-Caribbean parents adopt an authoritarian parenting style that mirrors a mixture of punitive control and indulgence and protectiveness (Leo-Rhynie 1997), but variations have been detected in different countries. An appreciation for this diversity can be observed in the parenting behaviors and styles in different socioeconomic groups. Jamaican mothers engaged in more indulgence and placed greater emphasis on autonomy (Morrison et al. 1998), and among Jamaican men, 53 % of lower-income fathers, 60 % of lower-middle-income fathers, and 90 % of middle-/upper-middle-income fathers were judged to use an authoritative parenting style, whereas 20 % of lower-income fathers, 15 % of lower-middle-income fathers, and no

middle- and upper-income father was perceived to employ an authoritarian parenting style (Ramkissoon 2002).

Similarly, Barbadian parents in nonmanual occupations indicated greater physical involvement and higher levels of intellectual nurturance and saw restrictive parenting as less appealing than those who were unemployed or in manual jobs (Payne and Furnham 1992). Indo-Caribbean parents also display a mixture of parenting styles punctuated by permissiveness especially during the early childhood years (Roopnarine 2007). On the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ), low-income Indo-Guyanese and middle-to-lower-income Indo-Trinidadian fathers with preschool-aged children scored moderately high on the warmth and affection and control dimensions of parenting and toward the moderately low end on undifferentiated rejection, hostility and aggression, and indifference and neglect dimensions of parenting (Roopnarine and Krishnakumar 2010).

Nature of Disciplinary Practices

Across Caribbean countries, parents believe that physical punishment is a part of good parenting practices and as important for childhood training (see Rohner et al. 1991). They fully embrace the pronouncement "when you love your children, you will punish them" (Gopaul-McNicol 1998). The pervasive use of physical punishment by mothers and fathers in Caribbean societies is documented in several studies. For instance, surveys conducted on Barbadian (Anderson and Payne 1994) and Kittitian children (Rohner et al. 1991) found that adolescent boys and girls approved of physically punishing young children. Barbadian adults echoed these sentiments as well (Handwerker 1996). Beating with a stick or belt was common, as was verbal denigration, and both disciplinary methods occurred in the home and at school (see Anderson and Payne 1994; Payne 1989). Handwerker (1996) reported that 41 % of boys were slapped or hit by their fathers and 69 % by their mothers, and 26 % of girls were slapped or hit by fathers and 53 % by mothers. In a recent study on physical punishment among low-income Indo-Guyanese families, fathers used physical punishment more often with their preschool-aged sons (70 %) than with their daughters (52 %); mothers were equally as likely to physically punish sons (73 %) and daughters (70 %; Pant et al. 2008).

From a relatively small body of studies, Caribbean fathers seem to engage in levels of day-to-day involvement in basic caregiving activities and play that are similar to those of men in several other societies. Moreover, they reported displaying high levels of warmth with young children. This could be signaling that fathers are placing involvement with young children ahead of ideological belief systems about their roles as men/fathers in Caribbean societies. The fact that nonbiological offspring were the recipients of less care interactions and more negative care interactions than biological offspring call further attention to some of the difficulties associated with mate-shifting and child-shifting in Caribbean societies.

Paternal Behaviors and Childhood Outcomes

There are few studies on the associations between paternal involvement in sensitively attuned caregiving and different parenting styles and childhood outcomes in Caribbean families. Although paternal behaviors should not be presumed to have the same influence on children's behaviors across different cultural/ethnic groups, findings from other cultural groups can inform research agendas on the role of parental factors in early behavioral and cognitive development in Caribbean children and simultaneously help untangle the meaning and relevance of specific parenting practices in different cultural groups. Keeping this in mind, there are some consistent findings on the relationships between different aspects of paternal involvement with young children and childhood outcomes across cultural groups.

In Finnish children, high levels of psychological control with high levels of affection were related to increases in both internalizing and externalizing behaviors, while high levels of behavioral control displayed with low levels of psychological control were predictive of decreases in externalizing behaviors as children transitioned from kindergarten to primary school (Anuola and Nurmi 2005). Among Chinese families, physically coercive and psychologically controlling parenting predicted aggressive behaviors in children (Yang et al. 2003). In a similar vein, fathers' authoritarian parenting carried the weight of influence over mothers' parenting in undermining academic and social skills in preschool-aged children born to Caribbean immigrants in the United States. More concretely, the authoritarian parenting style had negative associations with language skills (vocabulary, receptive skills; Roopnarine et al. 2006). A preliminary analysis of data on parenting styles in Trinidadian families revealed that mothers' but not fathers' parenting practices were related to children's social and cognitive skills in preschool (Roopnarine and Krishnakumar 2010).

Turning to disciplinary practices, considerable evidence exists on the associations between physical punishment and psychological difficulties in families in the technologically developed societies. In her meta-analysis, Gershoff (2002) found moderate mean weighted effects sizes for the impact of physical punishment on immediate compliance, moral internalization, aggression, delinquent and antisocial behavior, quality of parent-child relationship, mental health, and being a victim of physical abuse. These associations are particularly troubling given that physical punishment is normative in Caribbean countries and that parents are less inclined to explain the consequences of behavioral transgressions or to display affection to children after they are physically punished (Leo-Rhynie 1997). Remember also that Caribbean parents use denigration and dispense praise sparingly in the process of parenting (Leo-Rhynie 1997; Brown et al. 1997). Does "normativeness" or societal acceptance of physical punishment as a preferred way of shaping children's behaviors at the societal level moderate the effects of harsh disciplinary practices?

A cross-national study of mother-child dyads in China, India, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, and Thailand showed that perceived normativeness of physical discipline had a moderating effect on the relationship between physical discipline and childhood aggression and anxiety, but that more frequent use of discipline was associated with

childhood behavioral difficulties (Lansford et al. 2005). Among Kittitian children, the direct impact of physical punishment on psychological adjustment was mediated via parental rejection. Children's beliefs about the role of physical punishment in childrearing in Kittitian society did not have a significant impact on psychological adjustment (Rohner et al. 1991).

Finally, anthropologists and developmental psychologists argue that paternal instability may lead to early entry into sexual activity in girls and to aggressive activities in boys among other undesirable social outcomes in children (see review by Belsky et al. 1991; Draper and Harpending 1982). Given the complex mating/marital patterns in the Caribbean, there is a good deal of concern about paternal instability in children's lives. In the most extensive study conducted to date on Jamaican families and childhood outcomes, Samms-Vaughan (2005) found that the age of maternal and paternal parenting figures or the presence of biological parents had no significant associations with preschoolers' cognitive functioning as measured by the McCarthy Scales. However, children's cognitive functioning was significantly related to the educational levels of paternal and maternal figures, and better academic outcomes seemed more consistent in married than in other family structural arrangements. Perhaps more compelling is the fact that greater family cohesion and adaptability were associated with better performance by children on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The importance of family functioning was further exemplified when children's social adjustment in different mating unions was examined. Shifting of father figures led to more internalizing behavior problems in children, and those with multiple father figures and who were parented by a biological father and a surrogate mother displayed more withdrawn behavior. In other work on older children, instability in family living arrangements was associated with lower academic performance and social adjustment (Pottinger 2005) and with conduct disorder in Jamaican children (Crawford-Brown 1997, 1999).

Collectively, these findings suggest the primacy of family stability and functioning over family structural factors in influencing early childhood development outcomes in Caribbean families. Arguably, this small group of studies is beginning to outline the positive effects of family cohesion, adaptability, and stable living arrangements, and the negative effects of harsh parenting on young Caribbean children's cognitive and social development.

Directions for Research

In general, research on fathers has been guided by the two-parent dyadic model, with patterns of mother-child involvement and interactions used as the blueprint for examining father-child relationships and childhood outcomes. Within the Caribbean, pair-bond and common residence may be less important for father-child relationships than in European-heritage cultures. Thus, models for studying African-Caribbean fathers, in particular, should consider a possible conceptual separation between father-child relationships and male-female relationships. Studies that focus on the

impact of developmental histories of fathers, quality of partner relationships, quality of neighborhoods, level of social capital in communities, the stability of living arrangements, and other family process variables on childhood outcomes would be very informative. How the links among these factors vary by family composition, childrearing alliances, and economic conditions over time would inform concerns about family stability and adaptability and the developmental trajectories of young children.

Policy and Practice Suggestions

Most would agree that effective social and educational policies hinge on a good understanding of a society's cultural, social, and economic landscape. Nowhere is this more evident than in the technologically developing societies of the world. Often, in these societies, the educational, welfare, and employment systems are underdeveloped. A productive approach to the development of policies, then, may involve a consideration of the intersection of economic conditions, ideological beliefs, health conditions, and family structural arrangements. Drawing on recommendations made at the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the suggestions made at the Fatherhood Summit sponsored by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and the stipulations in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it would be prudent for Caribbean governments, NGOs, religious organizations, international donor agencies, and schools/preschools to focus on:

1. Using home visiting by health workers, early childhood teachers, and religious leaders to educate Indo-Caribbean and African-Caribbean men/fathers about the health and well-being of women by focusing on pregnancy and STDs, paternal involvement in prenatal visits, preparation for the birth of a child, the nutritional needs of pregnant women and the developing fetus, support for breastfeeding, and assistance in getting children immunized. Getting low-income men involved in the pregnancy and in the birthing process has the best chance of sustaining subsequent involvement.
2. Registration of births and the establishment of legal ties of children to fathers in nonlegal, mate-shifting unions. This would increase paternity rights and economic and social support to children and previous "baby mothers."
3. Involving male elders and men in childcare and early childhood education as teachers/caregivers and in policy decision-making in both formal educational and familial settings (e.g., daycare, basic schools, early childhood intervention programs, etc.). This would work to increase paternal involvement in both African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean families, regardless of family structure. Most Caribbean countries poured resources in expanding and improving the quality of early childhood programs as a way of reducing poverty rates and building human capital. It would be cost-effective to piggyback on already existing early childhood systems to engage men in low social capital and harsh ecological niches in early literacy programs.

4. Introducing or strengthening child and family development education that emphasizes the caring dimensions of parenting and their links to childhood outcomes (e.g., appropriate disciplinary practices, parent-child routines and rituals that are growth promoting, developmental milestones). Again, early childhood programs and churches can provide parenting seminars. The parenting arm of the Roving Caregiver Program in Jamaica has achieved some success in improving parenting behaviors (mostly maternal) through home visiting and community seminars on appropriate parenting practices with infants and toddlers (see Roopnarine 2005 for a description of the RCP Program and Spijk et al. 2008 for long-term effects).

5. Address interpartner violence (IPV) within and external to families with an emphasis on how men/fathers can help reduce violence and its pernicious effects on families and the community. At the societal level, this is being done in the Ministries of Social Development, Health, and Education to different scale in Caribbean countries via the use of the media (e.g., Trinidad and Tobago). In Jamaica, community-level fatherhood programs such a Fathers Inc. and Fathers Crisis Centre aim to increase responsible fathering. Women's Media Watch focuses on eliminating messages that may encourage sexism and violence toward women, and the HELP Ministry assists men/fathers with drug abuse (see Anderson 2007).

Conclusion

Fatherhood and fathering in English-speaking countries may be best understood within the sociohistorical experiences of slavery and indenture servitude, harsh economic ecological niches, diverse and progressive mating/marital careers, and conservative attitudes about manhood. Both African-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean fathers seem to display levels of involvement and responsive parenting that are within the range of socialization practices that are comparable to those of men in other developing societies. From a small number of studies, family stability and cohesion appear more important than family structural arrangements in determining social and cognitive outcomes in children. Policies and practices geared toward increasing men's awareness of prenatal and childhood development, providing economic and emotional support for pregnant women and children, addressing IPV, and establishing legal paternity would greatly increase the well-being and mental health of Caribbean families.

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Chapter 12
Indigenous Fathers in Canada

Multigenerational Challenges

Jessica Ball

In Canada, about 70 % of Indigenous[1] mothers and fathers either spent most of their school years living in Indian Residential Schools far from their families, or were raised by parents who grew up in Indian Residential Schools. Research involving non-Indigenous fathers has shown that young fathers are less likely to be living with their children if their own fathers did not live with them during childhood (Furstenberg and Weiss 2001). Currently in Canada, approximately 45 % of Indigenous children live with one parent, most often their mother (Statistics Canada 2006), and Indigenous children are significantly overrepresented in the child welfare system where they are placed temporarily or permanently in foster homes or adoptive homes (Trocme et al. 2006). Adolescent fertility is up to eight times higher among Indigenous youth compared to non-Indigenous youth in Canada, and this too is a multigenerational pattern (Guimond and Robataille 2008). Indigenous families are three times more likely than non-Indigenous Canadians to be living in poverty. The United States Bureau of Census (2003) reports that children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor and these children are likely to start their own families in poverty.

Father absence or negative father involvement may be the result of a variety of circumstances, such as political upheaval, social discrimination, government interventions, family conflict, or attitudes and behaviors learned by children about fathers that are enacted when they become parents. Globally, tremendous numbers of boys are growing up without a father's care and provision. In Canada, as elsewhere,

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[1] The terms *Indigenous* and *Aboriginal* are used almost synonymously in Canada to refer to the population of peoples who identify themselves as descendents of original habitants of the land now called Canada. Some prefer the term Indigenous because it connects to a global advocacy movement of Indigenous peoples who use this term, most notably the Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The colonial government in Canada coined the term "Aboriginal" in the 1800s as a catch-all label, and some people refrain from using this term because of its colonial derivation.

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awareness of the multigenerational patterning of fathers' approaches to parenthood has grown. In the case of Indigenous children in Canada, for nearly a century, the federal government sponsored a nationwide program of forced separations of children from their parents and extended family clans, requiring children as young as 4 years of age to live in Indian Residential Schools far from their home communities (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 2004). As a result of this and other colonial government interventions, Indigenous Peoples[2]— and Indigenous men in particular—are arguably the most socially disenfranchised population in Canada. There are monumental systemic barriers to well-being and little social advocacy. The disruption to intergenerational transmission of fatherhood that colonial interventions caused in Indigenous children's socialization experiences is a legacy that persists in Indigenous family life today.

Traditionally, fathers in Indigenous societies in Canada play crucial roles in families which were the primary unit of economic production (Volo and Volo 2007). Elder men typically led extended families, although women were leaders of Indigenous households and had important decision-making responsibilities as well. Childrearing was shared by men and women, with men being involved in teaching children skills for survival, including hunting, certain crafts, warfare, diplomacy with other families, and spiritual practices. In many societies, there was a distribution of responsibilities towards children among fathers, brothers, uncles, and grandfathers, who each played distinctive roles. Not only were the knowledge and skills passed down by older men to young children lost when the colonial government forced parents to give up their children, but children's opportunities to be directly exposed throughout their childhood to the meanings and functions of adult men in family life were also lost (Anderson and Ball 2011). Indigenous educator Sally Gaikezheyongai explains that the mass removal of children from Indigenous communities was akin to ripping the heart and center out of Indigenous worlds (cited in Wemigwans 2002). Once the heart was taken, everything else began to shatter and fall away, including roles for men, who had no children to teach, protect, and provide for. This created conditions that Indigenous men struggle with today.

Indigenous men's journeys to learn how to engage as fathers are part of the healing movement for Indigenous Peoples as a whole. First Nations Peoples, who comprise one of the Indigenous populations in Canada, often say that: "It took seven generations for the government to bring our families, communities, cultures and languages to the brink of extinction, and it will take seven generations for us to heal and re-build

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[2] The roles of Canadian legislation and policy in contributing to social exclusion of Aboriginal individuals and groups have been extensively documented (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996; Salee 2006). Chief among colonial government intrusions into Indigenous community and family life was the Indian Residential School movement that required Indian and Métis parents to place their children in a government-sponsored school from an early age and throughout their formative years. Most children were transported to schools hundreds of kilometers from their families and many never returned. They were forced to give up their birth names and their mother tongue. A large number were subjected to physical and sexual abuse. As many as one-quarter of all children housed in these schools died as a result of illness, abuse, or poor nutrition (Fournier and Crey 1997; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996).

ourselves to the strength that we once had." Many First Nations adults today declare that "we are the turn-around generation." But what does it take to "turn around" a multigenerational experience that leaves a vacuum in place of positive memories of what it means to be raised by a caring father figure? Many Indigenous men who may be fathers in Canada today are either survivors of an Indian Residential School or "secondary survivors" of parents who were raised in a Residential School and therefore had little knowledge of how to engage in a caring and responsible way with a child. Compounding the struggle to fill a gap in embodied memory of Indigenous fatherhood is the reality that the conditions of life have dramatically changed in the intervening centuries, such that a full return to traditional male roles is neither possible nor relevant to raising children in today's world. There is little theory or research-based insights into the kind of psychological and cultural reconstruction effort required to create a positive image of fathering almost out of thin air, to learn positive fathering behaviors and involvement, and to overcome the negative legacy of childhood experiences of abusive or neglectful men and women who were charged with raising Indigenous children in the context of Indian Residential Schools or foster care.

In view of increasing evidence of the important contributions that fathers can make to children's survival, health, and development (Lamb 2004), what can we learn from exploring Indigenous men's experiences of becoming positively involved fathers? To date, there has been only one Canadian research study about Indigenous fathers' experiences. Conclusions would be premature. However, early findings suggest that while a history of multigenerational trauma has resulted in challenges for Indigenous fathers that are more severe than those faces by fathers from other ethnic groups, the nature of many of these challenges are familiar across groups. This chapter highlights challenges and aspirations of Indigenous fathers, while also identifying commonalities between Indigenous fathers and other populations of fathers studied in Canada and described in the fatherhood literature. Put into this broader perspective, recommendations for actions gleaned from Indigenous fathers' reports may lend support to other populations of fathers as well, especially those for whom there has been disruption in opportunities to transmit meaningful father roles across generations and a vacuum of support at family, community, program, and policy levels.

The Canadian Context: Diversity and Social Inclusion

Over the past decade, there has been more scholarship on father involvement in Canada. Much of this scholarship has been produced by investigators and family-serving programs across the country and in many different disciplines that are loosely joined through a virtual coalition called the Fathers' Involvement Research Alliance (http://www.fira.org). In addition to exploratory studies and descriptive surveys, policy studies are also beginning to focus on how conditions such as family law and provisions for parental leave affect fathers' involvement from before the birth of their

child and over time (Lero et al. 2006). Father-focused practice in community-based programs is also gaining some momentum. Some provincial governments have recently allocated funding for training and employment of part-time father outreach and support workers associated, for example, with community-based family resources centers, child development centers, and community health promotion programs. Thus, while not yet warranting the label of a "movement," there is a growing network of Canadian investigators, policy makers, and practitioners who are beginning to raise the visibility of fathers as important contributors to the quality of children's lives and to family life as a whole. Together, they are calling for more investment in research and services to promote positive father involvement. Two key themes that have emerged as primary foci for research and practice on father involvement in Canada are *diversity* and *social inclusion* .

Diversity

The Canadian research agenda focused on fathers acknowledges and takes as a primary value the need to understand father involvement as diverse, embedded in multifaceted social contexts, and multiply determined. Canada is a nation of immigrants, as well as the original home of over 600 different First Nations, several distinct Inuit populations, and a comparatively large population of Métis people with a variety of Indigenous ancestry. The 2006 census showed that 19.5 % of residents living in Canada today were born in another country, and that approximately 1.1 million immigrants came to Canada between 2001 and 2006 (the top three countries of origin were China, Indian, and the Philippines). Such a culturally diverse population results in a diversity of approaches to family life and to fatherhood: there is no single image, unifying role model, or standard that characterizes "the Canadian father." In addition, the Canadian population is spread across the largest national land mass in the world. Fathers span a wide area: some live in very remote settlements where helping children to learn skills for living on the land or sea is a primary role for fathers, while others live in cosmopolitan centers, where facilitating and regulating children's engagement with the risks and opportunities of urban life are important roles for parents. The limited ways in which father involvement has been measured, promoted, and represented in media imagery does not accurately reflect the heterogeneity among men in their needs, goals, readiness, or satisfaction with their involvement with children as fathers.

Father involvement investigators in Canada are stressing the need to characterize, conceptualize, and respond in more differentiated and culturally responsive ways to diverse fathers' behaviors and experiences as these are embedded within different cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic circumstances. Rather than searching for a universal fatherhood experience or for the "typical" Canadian father, scholars and practitioners are becoming oriented towards understanding the diversity of fathers' experiences, based on their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, rural, remote, or urban locale, whether they are parenting a healthy or typically developing child or a child

with a chronic health condition or atypical development, and other key sources of variability. While fathers share many common experiences in the process of becoming fathers, fathers may have specific challenges, goals, and expectations associated, for example, with their particular culture, religion, socioeconomic circumstances, age, immigration or refugee status, sexual orientation, or relationship with their child's mother—to name a few sources of variation.

Social Inclusion

A related goal of Canadian research on father involvement is to go beyond the dominant portrayals of fathers in "intact," nuclear, heterosexual families, and to expand the focus of research and theory and heighten the visibility of groups of fathers who have tended to be excluded from research, policy decision-making, practitioner education, and program design considerations. Among these populations—with overlaps among all of them—are Indigenous fathers, gay and transgendered fathers, refugee fathers, adolescent fathers, incarcerated fathers, and fathers of children with disabilities or chronic disease. The concept of social inclusion became a focus for investigators and social policy and program developers in the mid-1990s as a way of encapsulating Canadian values such as multiculturalism, protection of minority rights, equity, bilingualism, and religious freedom (Richmond and Saloojee 2005). Advocates and scholars are currently struggling to articulate theory, policy tools, and program models that encompass all fathers, especially historically, culturally, legally, and/or economically disadvantaged fathers. Associated with this goal are efforts to increase positive representations of father involvement in the media, compensating for the prevailing deficit model that presents fathers as incompetent, indifferent, "dead-beat," or destructive. This social reform agenda includes efforts to engage fathers themselves and to strengthen their sense of empowerment and their resources to how to support fathers in making themselves and their contributions more visible in the Canadian social landscape.

A National Study of Diverse Populations of Fathers

In 2003, the first nationally networked study of father involvement in Canada was undertaken by a team of investigators and community-based agencies. The study, led by Daly et al. (2009), investigated seven populations of fathers who had previously been underrepresented in theory, research, policy decisions, media, and community programs. Investigators teamed up with community-based organizations to conduct studies focused on immigrant and refugee fathers, new fathers, young fathers, separated and divorced fathers, fathers of children with special needs, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and transsexual fathers, and Indigenous fathers. All the seven population studies that comprised this first national study of father involvement in Canada all involved fathers in designing, carrying out, and reporting the research. These

"community-based collaborators" worked with university-based teams to choose the guiding questions for the research, design data collection procedures, and plan analysis and dissemination. Questions asked in all the component studies included how best to use policy tools and legislation to reduce barriers to positive fathers involvement, and how to strengthen the capacity of community-based programs to reach out effectively to support men to become positively involved as fathers and to sustain connections with their children over time and changing circumstances.

The First Study of Indigenous Fatherhood in Canada

The first study of Indigenous fathers was conducted in the province of British Columbia, home to about one-third of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. First Nations and Aboriginal Head Start programs in British Columbia had already identified a need to understand Indigenous fathers' needs and goals and to improve their outreach and service to this population. As one program staff said: *It's not so much that we have failed to reach Aboriginal dads. It's more that we have never tried.* An Indigenous team based mainly in communities that partnered in doing the study recruited 80 Indigenous father participants who all had at least one child under 7 years old. The fathers responded to two short questionnaires about their family composition and their experiences and needs in regards to programs, and they completed an interview consisting of open-ended questions and some opportunities to rate their experiences on a 7-point scale. The procedure took about 2 hours and was conducted by an Indigenous member of the research team.

Most fathers had large and complex families. As a group, they ranged from having 1 to 11 children, including children from many different relationships and variously related to them biologically, socially, and in terms of the father's direct involvement as a caregiver. Some fathers were living with their children; some were not coresident with their children but had formal or informal custody for some periods of time, while some had only a little contact with their children. Four fathers had no current contact with their children as a condition of parole. Six of the fathers were lone fathers: their children's mothers were missing, deceased, or had given them full custody. Many fathers were living with one or more adults, including a partner who, in various cases, was the mother of all, some, or none of the children living in the home, as well as relatives, most often their own mother, aunt, or sister. About one-fifth of the fathers in the current study reported that their name was not recorded on their children's birth records. A few fathers did not know if their name was on their child's birth certificate, health records, or school records. All fathers volunteered for the study because they wanted to share their experiences of being a father, and all expressed a desire to be positively involved with their children, regardless of the extent or nature of their current involvement.

Because this was the first study of Indigenous fatherhood in Canada, the goal was to yield a perspective based on fathers' self-reports, and painted only in broad strokes. Nevertheless, there was remarkable agreement among many of the fathers about the

impacts of colonial history on their lack of opportunities to learn fatherhood, their challenges with personal wellness, poverty, and interpersonal relationships, and their strong desire to reconnect with their cultures of origin and to build relationships with their children. Their accounts highlighted historically conditioned experiences and needs that are unique to this population, as well as trends, barriers to appropriate supports, and goals that have been found in studies of non-Indigenous fathers.

Fathers' accounts of their journeys spoke cogently about their challenges in "*facing up to fatherhood*," "*learning to be a father*," and "*becoming a man.*" Nearly all fathers explained their difficulties in terms of the lasting negative impacts of government-sponsored Indian Residential Schools and other colonial government interventions that dispersed and diminished Indigenous families, clans, communities and cultures, and promoted the continued removal of Indigenous children from their families. Virtually all the fathers in the study had either attended one or more of these Indian Residential Schools or had been raised by one or both parents who had survived the schools. Most fathers recounted the inability of their own father to love, care for, and protect them, or missing out on having a father altogether, which left them with little personal experience in positive fathering to draw upon when they became fathers themselves. The vast majority reported problems with substance abuse, psychological distress, and difficulties sustaining relationships with partners and relatives, preventing them from being as involved with their children as they would like. Four fathers described feeling so "low" about themselves that they felt they have nothing positive to offer their children. Three fathers said they did not think they were "worthy" of a relationship with their child.

Fathers who were successfully involved with their children traced a personal journey of healing and coming to terms with their negative experiences in Residential School or as secondary survivors of Residential School effects. They saw healing as a first step on their journey to becoming involved fathers. Most fathers' narratives described a long and winding road to accepting fatherhood, learning what it means to be a father, learning how to communicate, how to play, and stepping up gradually to the responsibilities of fatherhood, often years after the birth of their first child. Here are some comments from participants in the study.

> When I came out of Residential School I was out to prove something. I thought the world was against me. It turns out that I was doing this to myself. I was creating problems. It later affected my kids. It took me years to learn to forgive myself and the world, to take the focus off of myself, and focus on my kids and what they needed.

Many fathers described a vacuum of support from formal institutions, such as primary health clinics and schools, dominated by mother-centrism.

> I went to my daughter's daycare program on the day for vaccinations. I just did not feel comfortable there, walking in and being among all those women. No one even said hello to me, but the women all seemed to know everyone else there. When they called for my daughter's mother to sign the form for her shot, I just did not feel I belonged there. No one thought that her dad might have been the one who brought her—who's raising her.

Although programs and professionals were perceived as being set up for mothers, one-quarter of the fathers described learning about caring for children from their

own mothers, from their female partners, and from other women in their community. Many emphasized the need to show fathers patience and support as they build up their confidence, courage, and capacity to connect with their children and play a fathering role in their lives. Fathers who were involved with their children often credited their partner's receptivity, patience, and guidance in helping them to learn how to care for children.

> In our community it has been the women. For me it was my mom, who raised us, my auntie, who helped my mom, and my wife. With their help, I feel I am finally becoming a man, finally growing strong spiritually, socially, emotionally, and as a father.

Promisingly, the Aboriginal women's movement is focusing some attention on men's roles, helping to create an environment that is conducive to social change among Aboriginal men.

Shifting notions of masculinity and gender roles in some Indigenous families and communities were also identified by some fathers as a factor that had enabled them to assume caregiving roles with their children.

> I was taking my child to a clinic and my wife told me to look to see if there were other fathers there. I walked there and as I walked there, went to the program and walked back, I saw five other fathers with their children and two of them were First Nations.

Most fathers emphasized the reinforcing effects of experiencing a child's love and watching a child learn and grow while feeling important in that child's life.

> It makes me feel great. . . It makes me feel happy. . . It is enlightening to see her smile and to know that she is a part of me, and I am a part of her—-that we are important to who each other is.

While their journey to learning fatherhood almost invariably took a hesitant and circuitous route, all but four of the Indigenous fathers who volunteered for the study currently had contact with at least some of their children. Most reported that they had sustained some degree of positive involvement over time, especially with children born after they had matured and recovered from substance abuse or other personal challenges.

> I changed my life, all for him. Instead of being young and partying all the time, I settled down and decided to raise him. I get a good outcome from him, and that makes me the happiest.

Many fathers emphasized that it will take time for Indigenous families and communities to reconstruct cultural, social, and personal meanings of fatherhood. While some fathers expressed hope for rebuilding Indigenous men's roles as caregivers and providers for the younger generation, others were pessimistic. They pointed to the high rate of substance abuse, suicide, incarceration, and poverty among Aboriginal young men. Through stories from their own lives and those of other men in their communities, they described how being raised without sustained, positive contact with a father compounds the sociohistorical, economic, and emotional challenges for the next generation of young men who will face the birth of a child.

Knowledge Dissemination and Mobilization

The fathers who participated in the study believed that a documentary film would be the most effective way to "*tell our own stories in our own way.*" To communicate the research findings, they also suggested that the team develop plain language guidebooks for fathers and for community programs and they asked for posters to help make positive involvement by Indigenous fathers more visible. As a result, the research team produced a number of practical resources[3] including a documentary DVD, a guidebook for Indigenous men, a guidebook for community programs, a poster showing caring Indigenous fathers, several fact sheets, workshop tips, short reports, and literature reviews. The research team, including some fathers who participated in the research or on the research team, has offered countless workshops and presentations to community-based agencies, provincial and federal policy groups and government agencies serving young children and families, and to academic audiences.

   As well, the study has generated interest and collaborations with academic and practice groups in other countries where Indigenous peoples' recovery from colonial incursions has become, to some extent, a priority, including the United States, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. In Canada and elsewhere, four sectors in particular have shown a keen interest in this focus on Indigenous fathers: criminal justice, reflecting interest in the research implications for preventing family violence; school-based youth workers, reflecting their concerns about teen parents; maternal and child health nurses who see a link between fathers' involvement and maternal well-being; and early childhood educators eager to involve fathers in providing and caring for their young children.

Indigenous Fathers' Experiences in Perspective

The inaugural study of Indigenous fathers' experiences has effectively opened discussion in policy circles, community programs, and practitioner training programs about the multigenerational impacts of colonial interventions that disrupted Indigenous families and resulted in men having few, if any, positive memories and role models of fatherhood to draw upon when they become fathers. No doubt, the *Indian Residential Schools* debacle created extreme challenges for Indigenous fathers. Unique features of Indigenous fathers' experiences were the degree of role loss and struggle they described, the length of time and often halting course of their journeys to becoming involved fathers, and the complexity of their family life in terms of the overall numbers and variety of relatedness among children and adults with whom fathers were involved.

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[3] For more information on the work of the Indigenous fathers' project and for links to publications, presentations, and resources, visit http://www.ecdip.org/fathers.

At the same time, many of the challenges facing Indigenous fathers have also been found in studies of other populations of fathers, including some of the fathers who participated in parallel components of the national study of fatherhood in Canada (Daly et al. 2009; Estes and Tachble 2009). Indigenous fathers' accounts resonated with accounts given by Russian immigrant and Sudanese refugee fathers who participated in another research component of the national study (Estes and Tachble 2009). These newcomer fathers identified multiple stressors, especially poverty, underemployment, lack of social support for parenting, social isolation, and racism. They cited the loss of an extended family support system as well as a mismatch between fathering roles they had learned as children and expectations for fathering roles in their current cultural milieu in Canada.

The lack of readily available models of positive father involvement that Indigenous fathers described was also a theme in the accounts given by immigrant and refugee fathers as well as by gay and transgendered fathers who participated in the national study. Many of these fathers reported that they did not begin their journey as a father with a coherent image or unified model of what fatherhood means or how to act as a father. Instead of drawing upon the memories and images of fatherhood from their childhood, they described piecing together how to be a father by observing other fathers in playgrounds, parenting magazines, television shows, and other sources. In this manner, they constructed an image and set of behaviors that worked for them and their family. This individualized, fresh approach was found in an earlier qualitative study by Daly (1993), in which fathers saw their own fathers as setting an example that was not desirable or not relevant to contemporary life. They described how they tended to base their approach on media representations, their own abilities, and visions of family life cocreated with their partners. There has been abundant theorizing in the father involvement literature about "generativity," whereby fathers are motivated to care for the youngest generation and to ensure the reproduction of father-care in future time (Hawkins and Dollahite 1997; McAdams and de St. Aubin 1998). Yet, fathers today are not in the same contexts, do not embody the same cultural predilections, and cannot automatically apply the lessons they may have learned about fatherhood from their forebears. This raises the question of whether we are overinvested in the almost romantic notion of multigenerational transmission of (positive) father-care.

Indigenous fathers described how they would try out and modify ways of providing care for their child, relying to some extent on guidance and feedback from their partners, mothers, or aunties, as well as from what seemed to work with their child. They also described drawing upon direct teachings from their female partners, their mothers, aunties, and grandmothers, as well as positive memories of being cared for by their mothers. The phenomenon of fathers drawing upon memories of being mothered, and learning from women about how to be a father has been reported in other studies (e.g., Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004), although how female family members effectively role model and teach fathers how to be positively involved in direct care is not well understood.

Discussion

Despite considerable challenges, the study found that most of the Indigenous men who volunteered for the study had successfully assumed positive caregiving roles with their children, including some who were lone parents to children whose mothers were absent. Fathers who were positively involved with their children described the rewards of fathering, but many also identified many challenges that must be overcome in order to connect with and care for their children. Personal challenges often include not having childhood experiences of a positively involved father, ongoing issues with mental health and addictions, relationship difficulties, and lack of knowledge about what to do with a child, including daily care routines, playing, expressing affection, and positive discipline. Social challenges often include negative expectations on the parts of some family members and the broader social community, lack of social support and culturally safe, "father-friendly" parent education programs, lack of information about children's needs and about fathers' rights, and policy gaps. Nearly all the fathers offered ideas about how to address barriers, discussed subsequently.

Time to Learn Fatherhood

The study highlighted the time and ongoing support that Indigenous men need in order to begin to identify with being a father, to "learn fatherhood," and to assume the responsibilities that fatherhood entails. Fathers themselves must take the first step of recognizing and dealing with personal challenges, especially substance abuse, anger management, communication difficulties, and ineffective relationship skills. Beginning a journey of healing from childhood trauma and abuse, and working through personal wellness challenges takes time, and a father may take "two steps forward and one step back" rather than a linear path towards becoming a stable, committed, and effective father.

Negative Media

Media in Canada and in many other countries are replete with images of Indigenous and other marginalized men as subsisting on the edges of society, lacking personal health and relevant skills, and chronically in trouble at school, in the community, and with the law. These images promulgate negative social expectations for boys as they begin to imagine possibilities for themselves in the future as fathers and for men as they begin their journey to learn fatherhood. Many fathers who volunteered for the current study explained that they participated because they wanted to show other Indigenous fathers that they are not predestined to be dead-beat dads but rather that "there's hope—if I can do it, you can do it"!

Mother-Centric Programs

Around the world, fathers receive little programmatic support for gaining the skills that many wish they had in order to be positively and effectively involved with their infants and children as they grow and develop. There is an almost exclusive focus on maternal experiences, needs, and well-being during the prenatal, antenatal, and post natal periods, and an emphasis on mothers' contributions to infant and child development through maternal child health programs and other programs focused on mothers. Mother-centrism in community programs continuously communicates to men that their roles are peripheral or even irrelevant (Ball and Moselle 2007; Strega et al. 2008). In Canada, teachers and family service practitioners also tend to assume that what men need to learn are the attitudes, skills, and forms of responsiveness thought to typify the good mother. This assumption constantly frames men's readiness for parenting—and masculinity itself—as deficient with respect to contributing significantly to children's well-being. Our gendered legacy of having women playing a primary caregiving role has resulted in a tradition of gate keeping activities where mothers are seen to manage and mediate relationships and activities between fathers and their children (Allen and Hawkins 1999).

While not yet having much influence on policy, critical resistance to mother-centrism in discourses, policies, and practices about parenting and father involvement is beginning to dominate scholarly work underway in Canada on fatherhood. For example, Doucet (2006) has addressed maternal gate keeping and elucidated the tensions in father involvement advocacy created by the interplay between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. Many practitioners recognize the deficiencies of the motherhood-first paradigm and the need for its transformation (Rohner and Veneziano 2001).

Another issue that is frequently constructed as a central "problem" at family service conferences and in community-based programs is the reluctance of fathers to seek help and to participate in "father-friendly" or father-focused programs when they are offered. While some programs have emphasized the development of resources targeting fathers, investigators and program developers have made little progress in understanding or breaking through the "problem" that men tend to have low rates of help-seeking behavior (Addis and Mahalik 2003). Most fathering programs are modeled after mothering programs, and therefore it is not surprising that men tend not to participate. Yet, men's purported "failure" to ask for help compounds the "failure" of men to take more responsibility for child care, magnifying the deficit model that dominates discourses about father involvement and how to elicit more involvement from men (Hawkins and Dollahite 1997; Kaufman 1993).

For Indigenous men, the likelihood that they would encounter a parenting education, family support, or child welfare worker that is Indigenous or is male is almost nil in Canada. The most recent survey of family support and child welfare workers, for example, reveals that workers are 94 % white, 80 % female, and 2 % Indigenous (MacLaurin et al. 2003). Finding social service workers and other skilled practitioners, particularly men with fathering experience, to reach out to fathers and to lead father support programs remains a challenge and, again, funding has not been

readily available to offer training in father support. A recent survey (Hodgins and Ball 2009) of all undergraduate courses offered in public postsecondary universities and colleges in social sciences, education, and human services in Canada found not one course that focused specifically on fatherhood, and only one course that focused specifically on fathers and mothers.

Mobility, Transience, and Incarceration

The Indigenous population in Canada is characterized by much greater mobility than the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada 2006). For example, various members of a family may move on and off reserve lands in order to obtain services that are more readily available off reserves or to find housing that is more readily available (though often crowded and low quality) on reserves. In some cases, Indigenous youth and adults are transient due to family discord and/or homelessness. Mobility may also be due to the need to seek education, employment, or services, including Residential School recovery programs and substance abuse treatment programs. Geographic distances put a strain on father-child relationships, especially when combined with lack of funds for phones, computers, or travel that could help to maintain contact between fathers and children.

A population facing monumental challenges to sustaining connections with their children is incarcerated fathers. Although the Indigenous population represents 3.3 % of the Canadian population, they account for 18 % of the federally incarcerated population (Government of Canada 2008). Paternal incarceration can have significant collateral consequences on the family and is a known risk factor for children's negative social adjustment (Farrington 2004). Links with the family can be a protective factor against men reoffending (Withers 2003), which in turn reduces adversity for children. A dearth of theory, research, or programs focused on incarcerated fathers hinders intervention, policy and program development. Withers has called attention to this area for further investigation, given the high stakes in terms of outcomes for all family members, and the increasing incidence of federally incarcerated men not only in Canada but around the world.

Lack of Paternity Identification on Child Records

Analyses of Indian Registry data collected by the Canadian government show that Indigenous children have a much lower rate of paternity designation on their birth certificates (nearly one in five lack paternity designation) and other records compared to non-Aboriginal children (Clatworthy 2004; Mann 2005). This may sometimes be a choice on the part of mothers, perhaps in order to avoid involvement from the father. However, in Canada it is generally acknowledged that paternity registration is not readily accessible to Indigenous men. For example, some fathers in the study

stated that their partner was relocated to a larger town with medical facilities for their child's birth and they were not present for the birth, and they did not know how to go about having their paternity recorded at a later date. Clatworthy found higher rates of unstated paternity in communities that do not have community-based maternity facilities, and where maternity facilities are far from communities and fathers may not be present to sign birth documentation. Also, some Indigenous men may not be literate and some may not grasp all the implications of paternity registration, such as their rights to visitation should a child be apprehended by child welfare authorities or custody if parents separate. Alternatively, some men may aim to avoid child support payments by not registering their paternity.

Strega et al. (in press) have found that many agencies in Canada privilege the identity of mothers over fathers on all kinds of child records. The omission of paternal identity and contact information can contribute to the fact that fathers remain a largely untapped resource for children's survival, health, development, and education. Paternity registration can increase the likelihood of sustaining involvement with a child over changing circumstances. Some research has shown that having a father's name on a child's birth record is correlated with lower infant mortality and morbidity (Gaudino et al. 1999; Mincy et al. 2005), greater likelihood that fathers will provide financial support and be involved with their child even after the parents separate (Argy and Peters 2001; Bergman and Hobson 2002).

Policies that Overlook or Exclude Fathers

A nation's social values, norms, assumptions, laws, and institutional practices are embodied in policies within community programs and provincial government agencies and federal provisions for families. In 2006, a group of investigators associated with the Fathers Involvement Research Alliance in Canada undertook an inventory of policies that may shape Canadians fathers' rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for involvement with their children (Lero et al. 2006). These authors concluded that fathers are all but invisible in government demographic data collection, policies, and programs in Canada, which are often oriented towards understanding and promoting the well-being of mothers and children. They also noted that father involvement policies and programs are informed by normative assumptions and cultural stereotypes about parenting, family life, sexuality, and children's needs that can hinder certain groups/populations of fathers and parents from receiving the support they need to be positively involved in the lives of children (Lero et al. 2006). Policy-focused research on work and family has neglected the relationship between work and care by men (Daly et al. 2008). Of particular relevance for a population such as Indigenous fathers with high rates of poverty, the notion that providing for and financially supporting one's family determines whether one is a "good father" continues to be pervasive in government policy provisions for families and among service providers (Hauari and Hollingworth 2009). Many Indigenous fathers work part-time, seasonally, or are unemployed, and do not have access to parental leave, unemployment, or family health care benefits.

Gender inequity is well-documented in institutional practices, if not official policies, of government service agencies that intervene and mediate in situations involving child protection, foster placement, and adoption (Mann 2005; Walmsley et al. 2006). This inequity particularly affects Indigenous fathers' contact with their children because Indigenous children are up to seven times more likely to be taken into the care of the government compared to non-Indigenous children. Often, only the child's mother's name is recorded on child welfare files, with little or no effort made to identify or meet with fathers, to reunite children with their fathers, or to provide for sustained contact between fathers and children taken into care (Strega et al. 2008). Strega and her colleagues have found that contact of any sort between child welfare workers and fathers is rare; in more than half of the child welfare cases they studied, fathers were seen as irrelevant. Workers rarely pursued the option of declaring a fathers' home a suitable placement for children taken into protective custody, sometimes from a lone mother-headed household. Child protection assessment and intervention focuses on the availability of the mother and her parenting skills, while fathers have been virtually ignored (Sullivan et al. 2000).

Five Key Action Strategies

Clearly, it would be premature to design programs or base policy conclusions on a single study of Indigenous fathers' experiences. However, the foregoing discussion, putting these fathers' experiences into perspective with findings about other populations of fathers suggests that there are at least five general strategies that could improve the social arena within which fathers explore and enact their roles with their children (see Fig. 12.1). For Indigenous fathers, supportive actions at the community, provincial, and national level would be timely, following on the heels of an apology issued by the Canadian Government to Indigenous Peoples for the multi-generational harms resulting from a century of enforced Residential Schooling of Indigenous children (Office of the Prime Minister Canada 2008). And, given that many of the challenges facing Indigenous and non-Indigenous fathers are similar in nature, though often more extreme for Indigenous fathers, the five areas for strategic action discussed in this section could be key elements of a generalized approach to support positive father involvement in Canada and elsewhere.

Patience

The multigenerational perspective that Indigenous fathers in the study brought to their understandings of fathering casts the need for policy reforms and systemic program solutions within a postcolonial, social justice agenda that requires a long-term commitment. Many Indigenous fathers have difficulty sustaining connections with their children across changes in their own mental health, recovery from addictions,
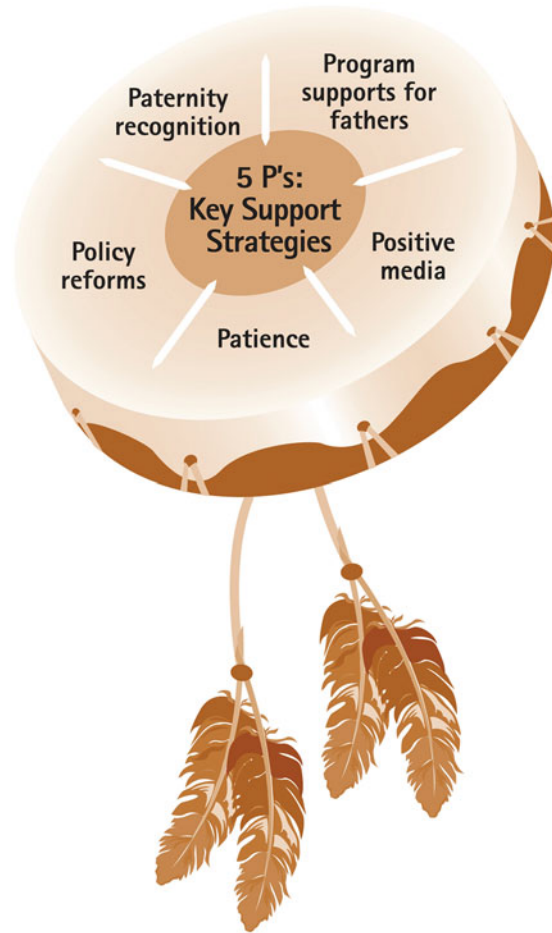
and changing circumstances. Fathers need support in the form of patience and under-
standing from family members and community practitioners, as well as long-term
investments in programs to support healthy lifestyles, address mental health and
addiction issues, and help expectant and new fathers develop the skills needed to
form and sustain healthy family environments. Helping fathers with communication
strategies, such as phone calls or emails, to sustain connections with their children
even as their situations change, is also an important focus of father-focused out-
reach and program initiatives. This may be especially useful for fathers who struggle
with poverty, who move frequently for work, job training, or education, or who
have difficulty sustaining relationships because of substance abuse, incarceration, or
homelessness.

Positive Media Images of Indigenous Fathers

In order to inspire boys and men to construct positive expectations for themselves in caring family relationships as adults, and to counteract social stigma, there is a need for media that show men assuming roles as positively involved fathers, including fathers who take on primary caregiving roles after a mother's departure for the day (stay-at-home fathers) or for extended periods (lone fathers). Initiatives could range from television shows that feature families with positively involved fathers and father figures, talk shows involving fathers discussing how they have developed their confidence and skills as fathers, comic books for youth featuring young men imagining their future families or stepping up to the responsibility of fatherhood, and posters depicting fathers engaged with children of all ages. Fathers who participated in the study envisioned forming a popular theatre group to perform in junior and secondary schools in order to engage adolescents in thinking and talking about what it means to become a father or mother.

Program Supports for Fathers

In the study of Indigenous fathers, many men spoke eloquently about their wish for programs staffed by men, specifically for men or for fathers and their children, including activities that men enjoy and tend to be good at (Ball and Roberge 2007; Manahan and Ball 2008). Policy and program development to enhance Indigenous fathers' involvement needs to occur at the level of communities or community agencies representing the particular needs, goals, and circumstances of particular Indigenous groups. Existing systems of services for Indigenous children and families can be made more transparent, accessible, and father-friendly through appropriate print materials and Indigenous staff who can serve as guides to help fathers navigate the systems such as child welfare, custody mediation, legal aid and law courts, hospital and other health care systems, and their children's schools. Parent support programs, legal consultations, mediation, and family intervention services need to be offered in settings that are accessible and sensitive to the legacy of Residential Schools and other government interventions.

Public investment is needed to enhance preservice and in-service education for child welfare, social service and health practitioners so that they are prepared to work effectively with fathers. Credentialed practitioners need to be offered opportunities to become aware of some of fatherhood's unique challenges and the diversity of fathers' circumstances, experiences, goals, and needs.

On a positive note, anecdotal reports indicate that support for fathers is being provided to some extent through programs that are not primarily targeting father involvement but rather are seeking fathers' help with the delivery of programs primarily targeting children's health and early learning. This indirect approach may in fact work well to reach out to men, and requires only a slight shift in programs that already exist, rather than creating new programs. Canada's orientation to public

health aims—conceptually if not always in practice—to bring sectors together and integrate supports for family members through any one of a number of community-based entry points, such as Aboriginal Head Start, Best Babies, Strong Start, and Community Action Program for Children. Again, the feasibility and sustainability of this integrated approach depends on a sustained government commitment to funding the father involvement component.

Based on a secondary analysis of data obtained from diverse populations of fathers in the national study described earlier, Daly et al. (2009) found that fathers of young children often talk about the importance of children for their own sense of growing maturity, responsibility, and engagement and for learning about their own emotions and how to deal with those emotions in the contexts of their parenting activities. Fathers were also found to express regrets about a lack of time for their own leisure and exercise. The investigators suggest that programs for fathers might be framed as ways for fathers to learn about their *own* emotions and responses to parenting and to share their experiences with other fathers, and that recreation and fitness programs that include fathers and their children may appeal to fathers. There must be resources, such as parenting education and mental health services, delivered in culturally safe, accessible ways by practitioners who are well-versed in the history of colonialism and the heterogeneity of Indigenous fathers and families, in order to support ongoing positive father-child relationships. Advocacy for Canadian government investments in fathering programs should emphasize the salutogenic effects of positive father involvement on fathers' health, as much as on outcomes for children.

Disrupted father-child relationships exacerbate challenges for both Indigenous children and their fathers to elaborate cohesive and positive Indigenous identities, especially for those living off-reserve, away from their cultural and language community. Continuity of father-child relationships means that children are continuously given opportunities to learn and consolidate Indigenous cultural knowledge and identity. Following the diminution of intergenerational cultural learning as a result of Residential Schools, foster care, and adoption, programs are needed to enable Indigenous fathers to restore their cultural roots and reconstitute culturally meaningful roles for fathers, and to involve their children in learning their culture. In Canada, such programs are often delivered through the system of federally funded Friendship Centers. On reserves and in the north, a variety of Indigenous community programs serve this function and need sustained public funding to continue to do so (Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2006).

Paternity Registration

More effort on the part of maternity health personnel, and more information for expectant and new fathers, is needed to encourage father's paternity designation on Indigenous children's birth records. Access to paternity registration needs to be readily provided, in language that ordinary citizens can understand, and without

an onerous fee for late registration. Special efforts need to be made to reach out to fathers in rural and remote areas where maternity facilities are far from home, fathers may be working far from home, and there may be limited ability for fathers to travel to be present at their child's birth. This is a first step in securing a young father's identification with fatherhood and involvement with their baby.

Policy Reforms

Canadian society and its family justice, child welfare, corrections, and education systems should find ways to help fathers overcome structural, cultural, and sociopolitical constraints on their involvement with their children. For Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the issue of paternity registration and policies surrounding housing, education and training, employment, and child protection are extremely complex and directly related to Canada's entrenched colonial approach to assimilating the Indigenous population (Ball 2008; Clatworthy 2004; Mann 2005; Salee et al. 2006). Many of the policy reforms needed to facilitate gender equity, family strengthening, and quality of life that would create conditions for increased father involvement are tied up with the Indian Act. This legislation governs many aspects of Indigenous peoples' lives and has been blamed for high levels of poverty, social exclusion, shame, and vulnerability. There are significant differences in polices affecting different Indigenous populations. In particular, access to resources varies greatly between the largely urban, off-reserve population and the more rural on-reserve population of First Nations men. These variations combine with variability in policies across provinces and territories. Jurisdictional confusion, inconsistencies, and deliberate obfuscations account for the lack of a coherent system of services and supports for Indigenous fathers and families, as well as a persistent sense of unease and uncertainty about one's entitlements under the Act. These issues and their possible resolution have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Ball and George 2006; Quebec Native Women's Association 2000; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996).

Policy reforms in some Canadian provinces are responding to calls by Indigenous leaders to embrace an approach to child welfare that involves the least disruptive interventions, including "kinship care, whereby children requiring protective guardianship are placed in the homes of relatives (Gleeson 1996). Policy reform is needed to provide for equivalent levels of funding and access to support services to mothers, fathers, and children (e.g., counseling, respite, transportation) as are available when children are placed in the care of nonrelatives.

As a general strategy, institutions that serve children and families, including child care programs, schools, health clinics, and hospitals, need to introduce policies for child records to ensure that fathers' names and contact information are obtained and fathers are notified about critical events. There is a need to examine and reform policies governing fathers' opportunities to engage with their newborn child, their access to information about their child, and the conditions of their engagement if their child is taken into protective custody or if their relationship with their child's

mother dissolves. More effort needs to be made to identify, locate, and involve fathers of children who receive social services or are taken into government care. There is a need to provide readily accessible, plain-language information, and access to appropriate legal services through renewed commitment on the part of provincial governments to legal aid, and to ensure that fathers understand their rights as well as their responsibilities regarding paternity designation on children's records, guardianship, custody, and visitation with their children after separation, divorce, or removal of children into government care. There should be no gender bias in decision-making about child care arrangements after separation or divorce.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of developments in understanding and supporting positive father involvement in Canada. While some promising steps forward are being taken, gaps remain. Indigenous fathers' voices have rarely been heard in community programs or research. In order to improve community outreach efforts, practitioners have called for more knowledge about Indigenous fathers' intentions in regards to parenting, their living circumstances, needs, and goals. Community response to this exploratory study, and insights gleaned from fathers' stories, suggest that research about Indigenous fathering can fill a distinct gap in knowledge about fathering, which has primarily characterized the experiences of men of western-European heritage. One father reflected the importance of listening to fathers:

> I think it's really important that Indigenous people are heard in this survey and I'm honoured to be asked to take part in this. The more that we do this, the more that we work on hearing the voices of Indigenous males and other males in Canada, then the government will get a better understanding of what it is they're dealing with . . . instead of telling us what we need to be doing. . . .you know asking for input from us and getting out of what I'm saying and all the other men that you're going to talk to or listen to or read about, put it all together and you're going to get some answers, and programs and services are going to be put together in a way that's going to come from down in the ground here.

There are over 600 culturally distinct Indigenous cultural groups in Canada and many sources of variation among Indigenous people living in rural and urban areas across the country. To avoid an overgeneralized, "pan-Indigenous" interpretation of Indigenous fathers' experiences and the policy and practice implications of this knowledge, future research should explore the constitution of fathering and patterns of fathers' involvement across specific cultural groups and settings with varied historical and current circumstances.

At this stage in the development of father involvement scholarship and practice in Canada, an important goal is to generate public dialogue about the conditions that shape father involvement and to make recommendations for policy reforms that will produce a social environment that is more conducive to fathers' involvement right from conception and sustained over time. Over the past decade, Canada has

built a network of people interested in making more visible the diversity of fathers' experiences and their contributions to children's health and development, and in creating more spaces and supports for fathers to learn fatherhood, to enjoy and benefit from fatherhood, and to contribute to children's quality of life. This is a foundation upon which to build a program of research that can provide direction for expectant and new fathers and families, and for policy decision-makers and practitioners focused on families about how to enhance and make visible the positive contributions that fathers can make to optimal child health and development.

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Chapter 13
Father Involvement: New Zealand

Paul Callister and Lindy Fursman

As in other industrialized countries, the contemporary caregiving behavior of New Zealand fathers is influenced by a wide range of factors. These include the history of the settlement of New Zealand; the changing state of the labor market; changes in family form and function; the availability, cost, and quality of nonparental care; whether paid parental leave is available and, if so, the design of such leave; justice policies, including those related to child custody after separation; and overall changing societal attitudes.

In this chapter, we begin with a brief history of the settlement of New Zealand. Then, beginning primarily in the 1950s, we trace some of the more important shifts in work and family life in New Zealand through to the late twentieth century. We then focus on the changes in broad patterns of paid work and living arrangements for New Zealand men in prime childrearing age groups since the mid-1980s. This is followed by some consideration of barriers to involved fathering in New Zealand, as well as discussion of some of the supports that have been put in place. As three barriers that are especially relevant to the New Zealand situation, we consider the long hours worked by many New Zealand fathers, the design of paid parental leave (PPL), and two of the justice policies that impact on fathers. We conclude by considering changes taking place in education and how this may affect decision-making in childrearing couples in the future.

In this chapter, we take a positive view of fathering rather than the deficit view that is sometimes presented. While accepting that there are fathers who chose to renege on their responsibilities, we consider that most fathers, whether biological or social, wish to do their best for their children.

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A Brief History

New Zealand is a country of immigrants which has experienced many waves of migration. The first wave was by settlers from islands around the Marquesas and Cook Islands, starting perhaps 1,000 years ago. These settlers became New Zealand's indigenous population, the Māori (Howe 2009). The first recorded European visit to New Zealand was in 1642 and, over 100 years later, James Cook arrived in 1769 from Britain. Subsequently, there were numerous waves of migration from the United Kingdom, followed by migrations from the Pacific and Asia, and more recently from Africa and the Middle East. High proportions of migrants not only added to the ethnic diversity of New Zealand but also to a diversity of family traditions, including styles of parenting.

This diverse history means that there is no one historical role for fathers in New Zealand. As a result, fathers have been seen as filling a variety of roles, including as mentors, spiritual guides, and sometimes as an emotionally remote figure or a tyrant in the traditional family (McCann 1999; Pudney 1999). Some fathers, through migration, were separated for many years, if not permanently from their children. An example of this is the early male Chinese migrants who, through a combination of migration laws and traditional family practices, left their families in China (Ip 2009).

Despite this diversity, there is often the view put forward that in much of the twentieth century, fathers were mainly seen as a source of income. Based on interviews of primarily European New Zealand men, Gray (1983) describes what we now often think of as the "traditional" New Zealand father in the early postwar era:

> They took their responsibilities as providers very seriously – with the socialization they had they could hardly do otherwise. But they were trapped, the better they provided, the less they were home. And since they had little training in the intimacies of daily family life and few opportunities to practise, most preferred to opt out of this area altogether and concentrated on what they knew best. Those who did want to stay at home, could not – that is, not unless they were prepared to accept a lower standard of living and face the scepticism of society at large. The odd one or two who dreamed of getting the best of both worlds through a more flexible work structure hesitated when they counted the cost in money, promotion and prestige. (p. 96)

But like all generalizations, there were exceptions, even within the dominant European settler population. Not all fathers were emotionally remote and, in addition, some fathers did provide both "quality" and "quantity" time. Lex Grey was a key figure in the New Zealand Playcentre movement, an early childhood education service, run cooperatively by member families (Callister 1998). In 1948, he and his wife took their daughter to a Wellington "nursery play centre." He said of his local playcentre (Grey 1993):

> . . . I could go and I was welcome, mainly because I could hammer a nail in to the place – more for that reason than any other. But we gradually changed that and I became secretary and they began to realise that men were able to relate to children – that men wanted to relate to children – that the men were just as scared of children as women can be – that men were human and men were people – that we had to take a bit of the sexism out of pre-school and

start thinking in terms of people instead of male and female in what we were doing. (pp. 38–39)

Around this time, other men were also challenging further areas of traditional behavior. For example, in the 1950s, both men and women in the newly formed Parents Centre lobbied to allow fathers involvement in childbirth (Callister 1998).

While some fathers may have felt trapped in the traditional income-provider role, by the late 1960s, many mothers were feeling trapped in the home. In this period, the emergence of the second wave of feminism, assisted by an expanding economy and job market, began to help or, in some cases, force mothers to move back into paid work. From the 1970s, both mothers and fathers in two-parent families increasingly worked outside the home. The 1970s also marked the time in which nonemployment for prime-age men, including fathers, started to rise, especially following the oil shocks of this period. However, the man was still usually the main income earner in full-time paid work, while women generally worked part time when the children were young.

The 1970s was also the period in which sole parenthood and, in particular sole motherhood, started its dramatic growth in New Zealand and other industrialized countries. While in the past, death was a prime reason for sole parenthood, in New Zealand marital breakups became the key reason for sole parenthood in this early growth period. Some of these separations were initiated by women, some were by mutual agreement, and some represented men leaving relationships.

In the 1970s, alongside marital separation was also an increase in repartnering resulting in a rise in the number of stepparents. With changing social norms, a variety of other parenting arrangements also emerged. This included lesbian couples raising children who had "sperm donor" dads, some of whom were involved in various ways in raising their children, In this same period, there was a reduction in fertility, including more men and women remaining childless.

Defining Fatherhood in New Zealand

Diversity in family structures inevitably makes it more difficult to define fatherhood. In New Zealand, legal definitions of both mothers and fathers focus around guardianship, although biology gives biological mothers automatic rights to guardianship at birth (Henaghan and Atkin 2007). If at any time during the period beginning with conception of the child and ending with the birth the father is living with or married to the mother, he will automatically become a guardian. But if not, he will not automatically have a say in his child's life. To become a guardian, he has to have his name on the child's birth certificate, but this requires consent of the mother, or he can apply to the Family Court to become a guardian. There are other laws focussing on adoption and sperm donors.

Recognizing this complexity, in official data collections such as the census, there is no attempt made to differentiate biological from social fathers.

Family and Work Change from the Mid-1980s

Despite longer-term changes in family type and employment, by the mid-1980s, over two-thirds of men in the key family formation and childrearing age group of 30–44 were still in the "traditional" work and family arrangement; that is, more than two-thirds of men in this age group were employed, partnered, and living with a dependent child (Rea and Callister 2009). However, between the mid-1980s and early 1990s there was a major recession in New Zealand leading to significant job loss. While there was employment growth in the late 1990s and the early part of the new century, changes in both employment and family type meant that by 2006 the traditional family arrangement for men in this age group had reduced to half. The changes were even stronger for some groups. For example, only 44 % of Māori men were in this "traditional" employment and family arrangement in 2006.

Men in this age group were in a variety of work and family arrangements by 2006, but the two largest, both at around 17 % were: employed, living with partner but not living with dependent children and: employed, not living with partner and not with dependent children. However, the group who could be considered on the margins of work and family life, that is, those who were not employed, not partnered, and not living with dependent children, rose from 1.5 % to 4.2 %. For Māori men in 2006, 7 % were in this group.

Amongst those who remained partnered and had dependent children, a variety of work arrangements developed. The first pattern was a significant decline in the proportion of couples where the man was the only one in paid work. In contrast, there was steady growth in the proportion of couples where both partners were employed from 1981 to 2006. In terms of a narrower definition of the "work rich" (i.e., both members of the couple in full-time paid work), there has been a steady increase in this group with dependent children: from 23.9 % in 1981, 30.4 % in 1986, 31.4 % in 1991, 32.1 % in 1996; and 34.1 % in 2001 to 36.4 % in 2006.

Just as important has been the growth in "work-poor" couples (neither partner is in paid work). In 2006, just over 4 % of midlife couples were in this situation. This is higher than the proportion of "role reversal" couples, where only the mother was in paid work. Despite some media attention given to "stay-at-home" fathers, only 2.2 % of midlife couples fitted this pattern in 2006, marginally up from 0.4 % in 1981.

As these work and family changes took place, there was some expectation, amongst some commentators, that, in a move to gender equity, there would be a growing trend towards more fathers looking after children full time. Data from the New Zealand Household Labour Force Survey show that the number of men who were not in the labor force and stated that their main activity was looking after children increased from just over 6,000 in 1986, reached a peak of around 18,000 in the early 2000s and, in mid-2008, was around 14,000. Yet, the total number of men not in the labor force also increased over this period, so as a percentage of men not in the labor force, men looking after children rose from only 2.6 % in 1986 to 3.6 % by June 2008 (Fursman and Callister 2009).

As a comparison, the number of women not in the labor force looking after children full time at home declined from 167,000 in March 1986 to 139,000 by September 2008. In March 1986, for every male not in the labor force looking after children, there were 27 females, but by 2008, this had declined to 10 females to each male.

Despite the growth in nonemployment of prime-aged men and the increase in men looking after children, overall, fewer men than might have been expected have left paid work to become full-time caregivers. There are many reasons for this. One is the proportion of fathers who do not live full time with their children. Within the OECD, after the United States, New Zealand has the greatest proportion of children living in "sole parent" families, predominantly headed by mothers (with a small fall from 29 % in 2001 to 28 % in 2006; Stephens and Callister 2008).

The official data series indicate that there is some polarization in employment and family arrangements in the last couple of decades. At one end of the spectrum, there has been a major growth in the number of couples with dependent children where both are employed. In some of these couples, it is a "neotraditional" arrangement, with the male working full time and the female part time (Callister 2005; Moen and Yu 2000). But many couples have both partners working full time, particularly as the youngest child moves into teenage years. However, as indicated, at the other end of the spectrum there has been growth in the number of men not employed, with a small, but significant, number of these men not only no longer in paid work but not living with partners or children.

Barriers to Men's Greater Participation in Care

Barriers to greater participation in care by men are numerous and range from the visible and clearly significant to the hidden and seemingly minor. However, together, these barriers form a formidable system that may discourage many men from engaging in greater levels of care.

The barriers to men's greater participation include:

- Biology (primarily related to pregnancy childbirth and breastfeeding).
- Workplace factors such as working hours, workplace cultures and occupational characteristics, as well as the gender pay gap.
- The impacts of various government policies and laws, such as paid parental leave, laws impacting on separated fathers (including custody decisions and child support), and the impact of the criminal justice system.
- Not residing with children (i.e., nonresident fathers).
- Women's preferences for undertaking care.
- The attitudes and skills of professional services, many of which have not successfully engaged fathers, or which target their services for "parents" solely towards women.
- A lack of support for men in settings such as playgroups.
- Structural barriers to men's care, such as the placing of infant changing facilities in women's rest rooms.

- Culture and ideology, including gendered assumptions, expectations and ideologies about who cares for and nurtures children, and appropriate roles for men and women particularly with regard to work and family care.
- A lack of "official" advocates for men as careers in the policy arena.[1]

Many of these barriers are common to most industrialized countries, but in this chapter, we consider three which are especially relevant to the New Zealand situation. Workplace factors in New Zealand, such as working hours, workplace cultures, and access to flexible working arrangements, are a significant barrier making participation in the care of children difficult for men. Equally, the design of paid parental leave in New Zealand does not facilitate the equal sharing of childcare in the important first months of a child's life. Finally, laws that relate to father absence, such as those in the areas of custody decisions and imprisonment, have an important impact on some groups of fathers.

Long Working Hours

Long hours in paid work are a major barrier inhibiting equality between men and women in parenting as well as labor force participation for women. Long hours of work lessen the availability of men to care for their children, and research indicates that men who work very long hours are less likely to engage in a variety of specific care activities. Gornick and Meyers (2008) argue that the persistence of long weekly hours amongst male workers is "a formidable obstacle to greater involvement in the daily tasks of caring for children" (p. 318), while Kitterod and Pettersen (2006) contend that fathers' long working hours mean that men do not have much time available to undertake unpaid work.

New Zealand's working hours are amongst the longest in the world (Messenger 2004). The vast majority of New Zealand men who are employed work in full-time work, with more than a third working 50 or more hours each week (Fursman 2008). In addition, three-quarters of those who work extended hours in New Zealand are men, indicating that long working hours in New Zealand may affect significant proportions of men with care responsibilities. Certainly, 2001 Census data indicated that many fathers with young children worked long hours. In that year, 37 % of fathers aged 25–34 with a child under five worked 50 or more hours per week. In contrast, 7.9 % of comparable mothers worked these hours (Callister 2003).

New Zealand research indicates that those who work the longest hours, most of whom are men, are less likely to be able to participate in other activities such as spending time with family (Department of Labour 2007). More than a third (38 %) of those working long hours reported that work often made it difficult for them to get home on time, with 20 % of this group reporting that work often had an impact on them spending time with family members.

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[1] A more complete discussion of these issues can be found in Fursman and Callister (2009).

Similarly, the New Zealand Work, Family and Parenting Study, conducted by the Ministry of Social Development (2006), found that those who worked long hours reported missing out of some of the rewarding aspects of being a parent because of work. Parents also reported having family time that was less enjoyable and more pressured, losing their temper, yelling at their children, or increasing their use of physical discipline as a result of work stress (Ministry of Social Development 2006).

A polarization of hours of work is particularly evident amongst Māori. Fursman and Zodgekar (2009) found that Māori men were both more likely to work long hours and more likely to work part time than European men; with working hours data also confounded by income and type of occupation. Research suggests that the working conditions of Māori men are different from those of other ethnicities in New Zealand, with greater proportions of Māori working both week- and weekend days, and greater numbers reporting resistance to requests for flexible work (Fursman and Zodgekar 2009).

These findings highlight the role of workplace culture and its role in mediating access to flexible work. Workplace cultures and values that reinforce the separation of work and family life also have a major impact on whether men are able to participate in unpaid care, and can exacerbate the impact of long work hours. In part, this is because even when family-friendly work arrangements such as reduced working hours are available, workplace cultures may prohibit their use, as to take advantage of these arrangements is interpreted as signaling a lack of commitment to work.

New Zealand research found that the cultures of New Zealand workplaces made it more difficult for respondents to achieve a balance between their home life and work. In the Department of Labour study (2007), 59 % of respondents reported that the attitudes of supervisors, managers, colleagues, and coworkers were an impediment to them in achieving the balance they desired.

Paid Parental Leave

Internationally, policy-level initiatives to support the greater participation of men in unpaid care have often focused on parental leave policies. In part, this is because the birth of a child is a critical juncture where gendered inequalities in the division of paid and unpaid work, including care, become of major importance (O'Brien et al. 2007). There is a premise that, if men spend more time at home when children were young, either through reductions in working hours or leave following the birth of a child, this would result in them being more involved in their care in the future. This is partly supported by the research of Aldous et al. (1998) and in reviews of parental leave (such as Haas and Hwang (2005) and Tanaka and Waldfogel (2007)).

Historically in New Zealand, debates around the introduction of statutory maternity and parental leave have involved specific discussions around women and men's "roles" in childrearing and unpaid work (Callister and Galtry 2006). Parental leave was first introduced in New Zealand in 1948, but it only covered maternity leave within the public service. In late 1979, the government introduced the *Maternity*

Leave and Employment Protection Bill. This gave the right to job protection, but not paid leave, and, as indicated by its name, this legislation only covered mothers. While in the debate about the legislation some members of parliament sought an extension of leave to fathers, the right to take leave was given only to mothers. In late 1986, the government introduced the *Parental Leave and Employment Protection Bill*. The most significant feature of this bill was the expansion of leave provisions to include fathers. But this leave remained unpaid.

In 2001, the Labour-Alliance Government introduced the *Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave) Amendment Bill* to Parliament. In the bill, mothers who were eligible under the job protection criteria were to be entitled to 12 weeks paid leave commencing in July 2002. Eligibility for payment would be linked to eligibility for statutory job protection. In the draft bill, mothers could choose to transfer some or all of the leave to her partner provided the latter was also eligible for job protection in his or her own right.

In the final legislation, the allocation of rights to leave for adoptive parents was no longer determined by sex. This was an indication that for adoptive parents, the care of children, not pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding, was a key concern and it was considered that families themselves, not the government, should determine who took the leave. But for biological parents, the legislation remained the same, i.e., the mother retained the primary entitlement. Ironically, this was supported by some women's groups despite the strength of their earlier arguments for gender-neutral leave (Callister and Galtry 2006). Therefore, from 1 July 2002, biological mothers and a nominated adoptive parent who had been employed by the same employer for at least 10 hours per week over the previous year were eligible for 12 weeks paid parental leave.

Subsequently, the paid parental leave legislation has been reviewed by the government. In these reviews and associated discussions, concerns have centered on both the length of leave and the eligibility criteria. In relation to father's eligibility, a formal complaint was also lodged with the Human Rights Commission on the grounds that the legislation discriminated against biological fathers as they did not have an independent right to take a period of paid leave.[2] These reviews have resulted in the length of leave being first changed to 13 weeks then to 14 weeks, but no change to the eligibility for fathers.

In 2007, two major reports on parental leave were published, one a review of how the scheme had been operating by the Department of Labour and the other an examination of how parental leave could be improved by the New Zealand Families' Commission. A further report by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW), again examining how parental leave could be improved, was published in June 2008 (NACEW 2008).

The 2007 Department of Labour report showed that most fathers (93 %) ranked the health of their spouses/partners as the most important consideration when considering taking leave (Department of Labour 2007). The health of the baby, however, was not

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[2] The history and outcome of this complaint can be found at http://www.fatherandchild.org.nz/submissions.htm.

far behind (90 %). But allowing fathers to take an active role in helping around the house was also important to most fathers (92 %), as was bonding with their baby (91 %), and caring for the baby (89 %). Due to consideration of the mother's and baby's health, including supporting recovery from birth and establishing optimal breastfeeding, most fathers and mothers supported ability of mothers to take the early period of leave.

The survey, however, showed that only 42 % of fathers were aware that it is possible for mothers to transfer some or all of their PPL entitlement to their spouse/partner. The fathers were asked how interested they would be in having leave transferred to them. Just over half said they would be interested. This contrasts with only 28 % of those mothers who took PPL saying they would consider a transfer. The study showed that a small number of mothers did not use the full period of PPL. When these mothers were asked if they forfeited the remainder of the 13 weeks they were entitled to, or whether they transferred it to their spouse/partner, the majority, 75 %, said they forfeited it, most doing so because they returned to work before the end of the leave period. The low rate of transfer could be related to the current length of PPL, which is short in comparison with countries such as Sweden and Norway where sharing of leave is actively promoted.

While overall the data showed that PPL, at its current length, is seen by most mothers and fathers as important for the mothers for biological and recovery reasons, most parents wanted a longer period of paid leave. In addition, differing levels of attachment to the labor market means that some groups of parents were, and still are, not well supported by the current paid parental leave scheme. In particular, parents who are involved in temporary or seasonal work are unlikely to be eligible for paid parental leave. If a parent is made redundant in the eligibility period, they are also not able to claim a period of paid parental leave. While this primarily affects mothers, it has an impact on fathers as well. Overrepresented amongst those marginally attached to the labor market are Māori and Pacific parents.

While there is not overwhelming demand for shared leave by New Zealand fathers, case studies emerge from time to time showing barriers to some fathers sharing leave or being the primary caregiver in the early months of a child's life. Reflecting these concerns, both the Families Commission (2007) and NACEW (2008) reports have recommended that New Zealand's parental leave scheme is altered to allow greater use by fathers.

Other New Zealand Law and Policies That Impact Absent Fathers

There are particular obstacles faced by fathers who do not live in the same household as the mother(s) of their children. While some separating couples negotiate equitable caring arrangements, postseparation custody decisions and other applications of family law such as supervised access may also impact on the ability of men to participate in the care of their children. In addition, the justice system, particularly imprisonment, has a significant impact on men's caregiving activities, both directly

through time away from children and indirectly through the impact of imprisonment on lifetime earnings, reductions of which are correlated with men being less likely to live in couple families raising children.

In New Zealand, most separated or divorced fathers will find themselves in a secondary parenting role. Of the parents liable for child support in New Zealand as on 30 June 2006, about 24,500 were female, compared to 115,500 males. There are over 220,000 children in the child support liable assessment records. However, Inland Revenue Department (IRD) child support data indicate only 7,685 children were in shared custody in February 2008 (Catherall 2008). Under the Child Support Act 1991, shared care is considered as "an arrangement when both parents care for their children substantially equally. This generally means that the paying parent cares for the children for at least 40 per cent of the nights in a year" (IRD 2004). For 1995, Catherall also gave a figure of 7,320 children. This does not suggest much change in the amount of shared care.

Historically, the debate on father involvement has been specified in such a way that it required fathers to justify their parenting by arguing that father absence is harmful. This has had an effect on court deliberation, where a presumption that one parent is sufficient resulted in parents being required to compete, each trying to show the deficiencies of the other. The outcome of such a competition was largely predetermined given the concept of women as "primary caregivers" and gendered patterns of care before judgement.[3] It was made more problematic in that "conflict" was viewed by Judge Patrick Mahony, when Principal Family Court Judge, as harmful to children (Haines 2000). The conflict may be a disagreement between the parents as to whether the father should be an active parent, in which case, the mother could have an effective power of veto by refusing to cooperate. Fathers who had been most involved could justifiably have wanted to continue as active parents. For them, the common alternative weekend arrangement may have seemed most unsatisfactory. However, if they were less willing to accept it, then they were more likely to find themselves in a conflict situation. In other words, the Family Court may have been giving worse treatment to those fathers who had been taking their parenting role more seriously (Hubin 1999).

In New Zealand, as in some other industrialized countries, notably the United States and the United Kingdom, the prison population has been rising. Long-term prison data show that at the turn of the twentieth century through to the late 1960s the New Zealand prison population as a rate per 1,000 population varied between 0.60 and 1.0. However, since this time it has risen steadily to reach a rate of 1.8 by 2007 (Statistics New Zealand 2009). More than three-quarters of OECD countries have prison population rates below New Zealand's, which ranks seventh highest in the OECD, just below Mexico (Statistics New Zealand 2005). While the female prison population has been rising, in 2008 males still formed 94 % of the New Zealand prison population. Imprisonment can have a major impact on men's caregiving activities. This includes active parenting. There are two main routes, one direct, and the other

[3] This position is frequently strengthened due to mothers being awarded interim custody before the issues are addressed in detail. Subsequent delays in resolution merely add to that advantage.

indirect. The direct route is through time away from children through fathers being in prison. The indirect route is through the long-term impact of imprisonment on lifetime earnings.

In New Zealand, Māori men, and to a lesser degree, Pacific men are highly overrepresented within the prison population. Though forming just under 13 % of the overall population aged 15 and over, 42 % of all criminal apprehensions involve a person identifying as Māori, and Māori represent 50 % of the prison population (Department of Corrections 2007).

The potential impact of imprisonment for Māori men is large, both in terms of time away from family and the ongoing implications. Recent Court criminal history data indicate that over 16,000 Māori males currently between the ages of 20 and 29 years, prime childrearing age groups for Māori, have a record of serving one or more sentences administered by the Department of Corrections. The Department of Correction estimates that this is equivalent to more than 30 % of all Māori males in that age band; the corresponding figure for non-Māori is estimated to be around 10 %. As such, a significant proportion of Māori children are likely to have had a father in prison at some point in their childhood.

In a discussion of public policy in relation to fathers in prison in the United States, Hairston (2001) suggests that the parenting roles and responsibilities of incarcerated men have not traditionally been considered an important public concern but that this needs to change. Factors to consider include location of prisons, communication regulations, and the postrelease environment.

In New Zealand, there has been more discussion in relation to mothers in prison. This includes issues of how to manage incarcerated pregnant mothers and what arrangements should take place on the birth of the child (Kingi 2000). In New Zealand, the *Corrections (Mothers with Babies) Amendment Bill* was passed into law in September 2008. The bill sets out provisions for mothers to keep their children with them in prison up to 2 years of age, an arrangement that could be considered to discriminate against fathers, who do not have such provisions available to them. However, while overall there seems to be less attention given to the connection prison fathers have with their children in New Zealand, there have been some small-scale programs with, for example, local-based programs to encourage prison fathers to read to their children (Department of Corrections 2008).

Supports for Men's Greater Participation in Care

In New Zealand, there are two areas which stand out as having the potential for supporting for men's greater participation in the care of their children: initiatives related to working arrangements and leave policies that provide time off to care for children. However, both these areas contain inherent problems which impede their ability to support men in their role as a parent.

In 2007, New Zealand introduced the *Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act*. Similar to the policies enacted in a number of other countries, the policy functions as a right-to-request that supports employees in the

process of requesting alternative ways of structuring work, and places an obligation on employers to consider such requests. In theory, to the extent that it is gender-neutral, the policy could assist men to increase their parenting time and allow them to take a greater role in meeting family care responsibilities. However, labor market segregation (that, in turn, is perpetuated by women self-selecting into occupations where family-friendly working conditions are available) means that men are likely to be in better-paying jobs characterized by work cultures that are unsympathetic to men's care responsibilities, meaning that men may feel less able to use such arrangements even when they are theoretically available. As such, while the policy has the potential to promote fathers' parenting roles, in reality, the availability of flexible work arrangements may undermine attempts to achieve a more equitable division of unpaid care.

A second area with potential to support men in their fathering role is parental leave. In 2008, the NACEW issued a number of recommendations to improve New Zealand's paid parental leave scheme. It did so with a background goal of improving gender equity in both paid and unpaid work. A first recommendation was to lengthen the period of PPL to 1 year with an extension to 6 months as a top priority. The NACEW recognized that this would likely increase the length of time taken by mothers but also give more opportunity for fathers to take leave as well. However, directly in relation to fathers NACEW recommended introducing a new PPL entitlement that was ring-fenced for fathers. In doing so, it drew heavily on the experience of Nordic countries. The NACEW noted the reluctance of many employers to recognize fathers' parental leave aspirations and argued that ring fencing some leave would help change attitudes. NACEW suggested that that, over time, the financial disincentive to men taking PPL would reduce with the narrowing of the gender pay gap. It also believed that social and workplace barriers would reduce as men taking PPL became more common.

Two further recommendations also have the potential to affect father's use of leave. One is to provide for both mother and father on PPL to work for a limited number of days. NACEW argued that enabling parents to work for a limited number of days with their same employer while on PPL would make both the start of leave, and return to work, easier for both employers and employees to plan and manage. NACEW also argued that PPL should provide for flexible leave arrangements in line with the provisions offered by the then *Employment Relations (Flexible Working Hours) Amendment Bill* already discussed.

The Families' Commission also recommended changes to New Zealand's paid parental leave scheme with the recommendations also taking into account goals of gender equality. The Commission suggested three types of leave. First there is maternity leave which they suggested should be a fixed entitlement of 14 weeks taken around the time of the birth and immediately afterwards. They noted this would allow mothers to recover from the birth and establish breastfeeding and bonding.

Fathers/partners should then be provided with 4 weeks paid leave. The Families Commission suggested that paternity/partner leave could be used at the same time as maternity leave, after maternity leave is completed, or in combination with part-time work at any time within the child's first year of life.

The Families Commission then recommended that family leave should be an extended period of paid leave and made more flexible so it can be shared between parents/partners. The Commission believed that the period of paid family leave should be extended in stages over the next few years so that by 2015 families are eligible for 38 weeks leave. They argued that this could make it easier for parents to decide how much time they want to take out of paid work to care for their child and still be able to return to work without any loss to their pay or position. The Commission also argued that consideration could also be given to allowing paid family leave to be taken over a 3-year period in blocks of time, or in combination with part-time paid work.

While the two areas of workplace flexibility and parental leave offer opportunities to support men in their fathering role, there is currently no evidence of any attempt by government to address the problems which currently impede these initiatives' success in doing so. Current economic conditions make additional investment in these areas by government unlikely. However, further support for men in their fathering role may occur as a consequence of significant changes in the gender profile of tertiary education.

Education, Income, and Decision-Making in Childrearing Couples: Looking Forward

Historically, it has been often argued that men have had a comparative advantage in paid work. While some writers have brought biology into these arguments, an important determinant of this advantage has been that men have, in the past, had greater access to education, particularly tertiary education (e.g., Becker 1996). However, since the time that Becker was writing, there has been a major change in educational outcomes in almost all industrialized countries, including New Zealand (Callister et al. 2006). Across almost all broad levels of tertiary education, young women are now better educated than young men. These changes may have an influence on sharing of paid and unpaid work in households in the future, and have the potential to shift norms such as who takes up flexible work to accommodate family responsibilities. They may also influence family form, and more women in the future may have children on their own.

Education is one factor, but so too are the earnings from such education. A key factor seen as determining who might be a primary breadwinner and who might be a main caregiver (or who takes up reduced hours work) is relative wage rates, that is, the pay gap between women and men. However, this gap has been changing over time; and the size of the gap changes quite significantly over a life-cycle. A number of studies indicate that, while many factors influence inequalities in wages, one important determinant of the pay gap is gendered roles adopted after having a child (e.g., Budig and England 2002).

How the changes in education and income earning potential will affect decisions about caregiving will be seen over the next couple of decades, but the changes should

theoretically make it easier for women to be primary income earners in couples and make it easier for men to take a greater role in parenting their children.

Conclusion

New Zealand's diverse population means that there is no one historical or current role for fathers in New Zealand. However, most fathers in New Zealand face a range of barriers to active involved fathering. Some are relatively minor but some are major. While the majority of these barriers are similar to those faced by fathers in many industrialized nations, some are particularly important in New Zealand. Three areas where New Zealand stands out are highlighted in this chapter: workplace factors, including New Zealand's very long working hours and workplace cultures that do not support unpaid care activities; the design of parental leave; and the applications of family law and justice policy that may mean it is difficult for many New Zealand's fathers to take an equal parenting role.

Workplace factors and parental leave represent both a barrier to fathering and an opportunity to support fathers. However, there is little current appetite within government to address the barriers in each of these areas. Current government policies are unlikely to lead to the prison population reducing to the much lower levels seen in some European countries such as the Netherlands. Nevertheless, some important social and demographic drivers may already be in place that seem likely to support fathers. There are now considerably more well-educated young women than men, and this change in qualifications and income earning may provide incentives to enact change, both in the areas of workplace conditions and leave, and beyond that to remove or change the broader barriers that men face in their fathering role.

Strategies to support men as fathers will depend on New Zealand's goals for equity in parenting. It remains unclear whether New Zealand strives for simply supporting equal opportunity for men and women to participate in the care of children or whether there is support for major changes in outcomes. In terms of outcomes change two broad options are possible, (a) no change in the total amount of unpaid care of children but an increase in men's share of this work, or (b) more 'professionalisation' of the care of children but with men and women undertaking an equal amount of both the paid and unpaid care. This latter option could mean women reducing their unpaid care work but men also dramatically increasing participation in paid caring work such as through working in childcare centres. Each of these goals would require different strategies. Achieving equality of outcomes is highly likely to require more aggressive or extreme strategies, such as subsidies or tax breaks for those who undertake paid care with higher rates for women than men, or subsidies/tax breaks for women in paid work, while achieving equality in opportunity may best be achieved by softer-touch social marketing strategies as well as requiring the removal of the barriers detailed in this chapter.

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Chapter 14
Male Involvement in Children's Lives: The Australian Context
Roles and Relevance to Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes in the Australian Context

Andrew J. Martin

With particular focus on the Australian context (but also drawing on relevant international research), this chapter examines current findings, government policy, commissioned reviews and evaluations, successful programs, and future directions relevant to the role of father/male involvement in children's academic and nonacademic lives. Not a great deal is known about father/male participation across diverse cultural contexts (Cabrera et al. 2000) and so the present chapter offers an opportunity to situate recent Australian research, policy, and practice in an international context.

History, Recent Research, and Current Debates

There has been substantial popular commentary articulating the need for more paternal involvement in children's lives. More recently, this has filtered into the academic domain and translated into the espoused need for more male teachers to better develop students academically. In the Australian context, in interviews with teachers as well as key researchers and policy makers, Martin (2002, 2003a, b, 2004) found that participants consistently endorsed the need for more male teachers and male role models in children's (particularly boys) lives. Similarly, work by Fletcher (2008) has found that there is dominant view in Australia that males should be more involved in care-giving (see also West 1996).

It is proposed here that four lines of research are influential drivers of debates on this issue. The first relates to the gender differences on numerous academic and nonacademic outcomes—differences that are often not in favor of boys (summarized below)—prompting questions about the need for more male teachers and more positive male role models. The second is the generally low levels of father/male

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participation in parenting and teaching. For example, across three key dimensions of parenting (engagement, accessibility, responsibility), fathers spend significantly less time than mothers with their children—sometimes to the point of no meaningful involvement whatsoever (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003; see also McBride and Mills 1993; McBride and Rane 1997; Nichols 2009; Pleck and Masciadrelli 2003). Indeed, there are very low levels of fathers' participation in research, in itself a major barrier to understanding the effects of father/male engagement (Martin et al. 2000; Nichols 2009). The third is something of a confluence of the first two that addresses questions about the need for fathers/males in boys' academic and nonacademic lives, and by extension, the role of fathers/males in girls' academic and nonacademic lives. The fourth relates to the potential yields of involved fathers and male caregivers for children's academic and nonacademic outcomes. With particular emphasis on the Australian context but also drawing on foundational and salient international work, each of these four lines of research is reviewed.

Father/Male Involvement and Participation

According to Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), increasingly fathers are more and less involved in child-rearing. That is, there is a growing dichotomy in children's experience of fathering. In terms of greater involvement, there are more single fathers involved in care-giving and there are more fathers involved in childcare as their wives/partners are at work (Pleck 1997). In terms of lesser involvement, there are more children in single-parent homes headed by mothers/female caregivers (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000) and families where the father's primary role is breadwinner (O'Hare 1995). Problematically, studies are consistent in demonstrating significantly less paternal interaction time with children (Pleck 1997). Even when the mother works, fathers assume significantly less responsibility such that though they are proportionally more involved (because the mother then spends less time child-rearing), in terms of absolute time spent with children, fathers are not highly involved (Lamb 1997a; Pleck 1997). Similarly, whilst research indicates that fathers are more involved in play than in "nurturing" activities, mothers still spend more time in play than fathers (Lamb 1997a).

The limited research conducted in Australia generally supports these findings. For example, although increases in paternal time in child-rearing have been found overseas (e.g., United States, Canada, the Netherlands; Pleck and Masciadrelli 2003), such positive shifts are not so marked in Australia. For example, time use studies in 1983 and 1997 found that the time fathers spent with their children had not changed by any substantial measure. Similarly, time use studies by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) between 1992 and 1997 found a small increase in paternal time with children (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006; Russell et al. 1999). Interestingly, this is in stark contrast to what Australian males believe should be the case. Findings from a national sample of 1,000 Australian men showed that the vast majority agreed that mothers and fathers should equally share the responsibilities of child-rearing (Russell

et al. 1999). Similarly, the 2003 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes indicated that the majority of females and males agreed that fathers should be "heavily involved" in child-rearing (Wilson et al. 2005).

There is also agreement amongst Australian service providers that fathers should be more involved in child-rearing duties (Russell et al. 1999). The Fitting Fathers into Families Report surveyed professionals and service providers and found that male and female respondents agreed that fathers and mothers should share responsibility for child-rearing (Russell et al. 1999). However, a sizeable number also believed that fathers were not sufficiently capable of responsible child-rearing.

Other Australian research has examined fathers' involvement in their children's academic life. In a survey of principals from 43 elementary schools, Fletcher and Silberberg (2006) found only one-fifth of school volunteers were male, a finding consistent with prior research (Bittman 1995; Bittman and Pixley 1997). Involvement was highest for outdoor activities such as school watch and working bees (between 50 % and 70 %) and lowest for child-centered activities such as in the classroom (around 7 %). When reporting on attendance at discipline interviews, 87 % of mothers attended discipline interviews compared with 43 % of fathers.

Other Australian research has investigated parental involvement in specific academic areas. For example, in an Australian study of school-parent partnerships, Cairney et al. (1995) reviewed 260 parent language and literacy programs. These researchers found that parent participation was highly gendered with mothers representing the vast majority of program participants. They recommended that Australian research should investigate the role of gender in children's literacy and literacy programs and the specific role of fathers in literacy and children's literacy development (see also Hawkes 2001).

This low level of paternal involvement in child-rearing and school involvement has led some to suggest that gender-neutral terms such as "parent programs" and "school-parent" partnerships is inappropriate and potentially misleading (Nichols 1994). According to David (1993; see also Nichols 1994), gender-neutral terminology such as this risks masking patterns of paternal and maternal influence that are important for optimizing children's academic and nonacademic outcomes.

Differences Between Boys and Girls

A second line of research driving debates around paternal and other male influences relates to differences between boys and girls on numerous academic and nonacademic outcomes. These differences have not only prompted extensive research focusing on boys and girls but have also led to interest in issues relevant to fathers and mothers and their role in shaping some of these differences (Martin et al. 2010). On many counts, academic and nonacademic differences are not in boys' favor. On average, girls outperform boys in a greater number of subjects and there are more girls amongst the higher-achieving students (Collins et al. 2000). In Australia (the focus of the present chapter), 90 % of girls in the early school years attain the minimum national standard

compared with 85 % of boys (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2000). Similarly, girls outperform boys on writing, reading, speaking, and listening measures (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 2000). Boys are also more negative about school, see homework as less useful, are less likely to ask for help, and are more reluctant to do extra work. From teachers' perspectives, they see that boys are less able to concentrate, less determined to solve difficult problems, and less productive (MacDonald et al. 1999; see also Rowe 1997). In terms of problematic behavior in Australia, there are significantly higher rates of school suspension for boys (Ainley and Lonsdale 2000). Marsh (1989a, b) reviewed research into gender differences. Although he found small gender stereotypic differences for math and verbal constructs that were consistent with other research (e.g., Hyde 2005), he also identified a more long-term perspective based on nationally representative samples showing that gender differences favoring girls were becoming larger whereas gender differences favoring males were becoming smaller (also see Martin and Marsh 2005).

Australian-based research has also shown that as early as elementary school, girls score higher than boys in their academic self-efficacy, mastery orientation, valuing of school, persistence, planning, and task management. Results have also shown that girls score lower than boys in failure avoidance, self-handicapping, and disengagement. Thus, girls are generally more motivated and engaged than boys (Marsh et al. 2008; Martin 2003a, b, 2004, 2007; Martin and Marsh 2005). Importantly, however, it is not all going girls' way—they are, for example, higher than boys on anxiety and uncertain control. Also, in the middle years of high school (about 14–15 years old), girls are not significantly different from boys on many of these motivation and engagement factors. Taken together, these gender differences are of sufficient consistency and magnitude for questions to be asked regarding the role of fathers/males (including male teachers) in boys' and girls' academic and nonacademic lives.

Gender-Matched Response

In part a result of these gender differences, a third driver of debates about fathers/males in child development is research into the differential effects of fathers/males on boys' and girls' academic and nonacademic outcomes (Martin et al. 2010). The gender matching (or sex role socialization) hypothesis proposes that academic and nonacademic outcomes are more positive in situations where the gender of child and adult match. This hypothesis tends to assume homogeneous conceptions of boys and girls (Marland 1983) and the conception that males are better equipped to meet the needs of boys and females are better equipped to meet the needs of girls. This has led to the policy and practice of matching boys to men and girls to women (Arnot 1991).

Criticisms of the gender matching hypothesis revolve around the narrow and polarized views of boys and girls and the passive conception of gender (Skelton et al. 2009). In relation to the former, it has been argued that genuinely representative

accounts of gender appropriately account for the diversity of ways to be a boy and a girl (Connell 2002; Skelton et al. 2009). In relation to the latter, the gender matching hypothesis can be criticized for assuming boys and girls are passive recipients of male and female (respectively) modeling (Skelton 2001; Skelton et al. 2009). These criticisms are part of what has been referred to as the gender invariant hypothesis. Put simply, there is no significant effect of matching child and adult gender. Thus, any derived effects are not a function of the gender interaction, but a function of other factors.

The gender matching and gender invariant hypotheses have been tested in various ways. As described in Martin et al. (2010), researchers have examined the effects of male and female teachers on boys' and girls' academic outcomes. Gender matching would predict that boys fare best under male teachers and girls fare best under female teachers. Gender invariance would predict that boys' and girls' academic outcomes are not a function of teacher gender. Also in the academic domain, researchers have examined single-sex schools and coeducational schools. Gender matching would predict advantages to students in single-sex schools compared with students in co-educational schools. Gender invariance would predict any differences between boys and girls are not a function of the gender composition of the school. Moving beyond the academic domain, researchers have examined the role of fathers (and male caregivers) and mothers (and female caregivers) in boys' and girls' academic and nonacademic development. Gender matching would predict that boys evince better academic and nonacademic outcomes through the active involvement of their father (and more than through their mother). Gender invariance would predict that boys' outcomes are not a function of a parent's gender. Evidence pertaining to these predictions is briefly reviewed.

Male Teachers and Male Students

Recently, Martin and colleagues tested Australian school students' motivation across many classrooms in mathematics, science, and English (Marsh et al. 2008; Martin and Marsh 2005). We found no support for the gender matching hypothesis for any of the numerous adaptive and maladaptive motivations assessed. Although there were gender differences (mostly in favor of girls) on some of the motivations, these did not depend on the gender of the teacher. Martin also examined Australian boys' motivation in focus groups and interviews (Martin 2002, 2003a). In that research, he found that some boys preferred male teachers, some preferred female teachers, but most simply wanted a teacher who could teach them well. The conclusion in these studies was that boys are not more motivated by male teachers than female teachers. Rather, they are motivated by male and female teachers who can teach and engage them successfully. Indeed, when asked about their most effective teachers, boys and girls were able to identify key characteristics of quality pedagogy that are also reflected in educational research (e.g., see Hattie 2009; Marzano 2003; Petty 2006).

On the basis of this Australian research involving male teachers (and female teachers), there is not much support for the gender matching hypothesis. Indeed, recent qualitative research by others supports this position. For example, in work by Skelton et al. (2009) it was found that 7–8-year-old students were not particularly interested in or invested in the gender of their teacher. Rather, they were more concerned about: (a) their own gender identities and (b) the quality of the pedagogy they were receiving: "For the pupils, the gender of the teacher was immaterial; rather, it was the professional abilities of their teachers that were of importance" (p. 191). Interestingly, when Skelton et al. (2009) examined teachers' perceptions and practices, there was strong evidence demonstrating that gender was a more salient issue for them. Indeed, Martin (2002, 2004) found a similar profile in Australia, with teachers being more convinced of the need for male teachers than did the students themselves.

Fathers and Sons

In an Australian study by Martin (2003c), the links between student motivation and parent factors were assessed. Data were collected from parents at a series of parent seminars hosted by the school their child attended. Attendance at the seminars was voluntary. Most of the 481 parents in attendance were mothers (72 %)—consistent with prior research into levels of parental involvement (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003; Pleck and Masciadrelli 2003)—however, there were sufficient numbers of fathers (28 %, $N = 134$) to get a sense of their role. Parents were administered the parent-report form of the (student) Motivation and Engagement Scale (Martin 2003c, 2007) in addition to items that assessed their enjoyment of parenting. Thus, the study assessed student-side (motivation and engagement) and parent-side (enjoyment of parenting) factors.

The study showed that student motivation was significantly associated with parent factors—consistent with prior research (e.g., Grolnick and Ryan 1989; Grolnick et al. 1991). It was also found that the pattern of correlations between student motivation and enjoyment of parenting was similar for fathers and mothers (i.e., positive aspects of motivation positively correlated with enjoyment of parenting and negative aspects of motivation negatively correlated with enjoyment). Of particular relevance to this article was the interaction of student gender and parent gender and its effects on student motivation. On the student side, there was no significant student gender-parent gender interaction (at even the least conservative significance level, $p < 0.05$). On the parent side, there was also no significant student gender-parent gender interaction.

Hence, on the student side, boys were no more (or less) motivated and engaged as a function of their father's participation/involvement and girls were no more (or less) motivated and engaged as a function of their mother's participation/involvement. Equally, however, there was no significant yield for sons with mothers and daughters with fathers. On the parent side, fathers were no more (or less) likely to enjoy parenting as a function of participation for their son and mothers were no more

(or less) likely to enjoy parenting as a function of participation for their daughter. Equally, however, there was no significant yield for fathers through participation for daughters and mothers for sons. Thus, on the basis of the research involving fathers (and mothers) and sons (and daughters), there is no support for the gender matching hypothesis—but significant support for the link between student motivation and parenting.

Influence of Fathers and Male Caregivers

The fourth line of research driving debates and issues around fatherhood relates to the influence of fathers and male caregivers in children's development. There is now recognition that fatherhood can involve many functions (Amato and Rivera 1999; Parke 1996). Increasingly, fathers are taking children to the doctor, arranging and providing transport for childcare, monitoring children's safety, and scheduling play with children's friends (Lamb 1997a, b; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). Fathers can also provide emotional support to the mother who has been found to enhance the mother-child relationship and the socioemotional adjustment of the child (Lamb 1997b). The father can also support in household logistics (e.g., housework) to improve general family dynamics (Pleck 1997).

International research has shown that children whose fathers are involved in child-rearing reflect higher levels of academic achievement and socioemotional well-being (Nord et al. 1997; Amato 1998; Brooks 2002; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al. 2004). A recent study of preschoolers found that children of involved fathers had fewer behavior problems and more social skills (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2004). Indeed, father involvement at age 7 has been found to predict educational attainment at age 20 (Flouri and Buchanan 2002). Notwithstanding this, it must also be acknowledged that fathers and male caregivers can also yield a negative influence. For example, Jaffee et al. (2003) found that children demonstrated more conduct problems when their father was involved in antisocial behavior.

Here, various levels of father/male involvement are reviewed (see also Martin et al. 2010).

Absent Fathers

One way to understand the role of fathers is to study the effects of their absence from the child-rearing process. On this count, research indicates that children with absent fathers perform more poorly on school achievement and psychosocial adjustment—and this effect seems most marked for boys (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan 1997). This would suggest that fathers are important for children's academic and nonacademic development. The challenge with this conclusion, however, is that it is difficult

to disentangle father absence from the economic and emotional stress associated with their absence—stress known to negatively impact children. It is also difficult to disentangle the effects of an absent father from the stressors known to exist in single-parent families (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003).

Researchers suspect these stressors are more salient and proximal negative influences than the absence of a male figure. Hence, it is not the absence of a male parent/caregiver that is negatively affecting children as much as the many follow-on difficulties this creates. According to Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda: "In sum, the evidence suggests that father absence may be harmful not necessarily because a sex-role model is absent but because many paternal roles—economic, social, and emotional—go unfulfilled or inappropriately filled in these families" (2003, p. 7). Thus, rather than study the effects of father absence, it seems important to study the effects of fathers' involvement. In studying these effects, numerous researchers have investigated the numerous ways present fathers (in contrast to absent fathers) help in child-rearing and child development including: (a) direct assistance in child-rearing decisions, child-rearing, and childcare, (b) economic assistance and support (Pearson and Thoennes 1990), (c) emotional support (Hetherington et al. 1982), and (d) children's sense of support (Cummings and O'Reilly 1997). These influences are now discussed.

Present Fathers

Early research looking at the effects of fathers' involvement in their children's social development found no significant influence—even on measures relevant to "masculinity" (see Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003 for an overview). Other research has found a modest role for fathers, but not as strong as that of mothers (e.g., Grolnick and Ryan 1989; Grolnick et al. 1991). More recent investigations are moving the research field closer to an understanding of the moderating and mediating factors that may be relevant here. For example, it appears that where fathers have a good relationship with their child, the child is more likely to be influenced by the father. Also, father warmth and closeness positively impact on a child's development (Radin 1981). On the other hand, if there is no positive or significant relationship between father and child, the father is unlikely to affect the child in significant ways (for an overview, see Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003).

Interestingly, although Radin (1981) found a significant impact of emotional quality between father and child, it was also found that father masculinity did not have a significant effect. Similarly, Biller and Kimpton (1997) found that the characteristics of the father as parent were more influential than the characteristics of father as a man. Indeed, in a recent study of 2-year olds it was found that the positive effect of having one supportive parent was not dependent on the sex of the parent: enhanced cognitive outcomes were also present for a supportive father (Martin et al. 2007). On these bases, it has been concluded: "In sum, as far as influences on children are concerned, very little about the gender of the parent seems to be distinctly important.

The characteristics of the father as a parent rather than the characteristics of the father as a man appear to be most significant" (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003, p. 6).

Highly Involved Fathers

Studies of highly involved fathers go beyond the typical focus on father as breadwinner to a focus on fathers who actively share child-rearing responsibilities. Consistent with work demonstrating the yields of good father-child relationships (Videon 2005), this research finds positive effects of involved fathers on academic outcomes, cognitive competence, internal locus of control, and empathy (e.g., Biller and Kimpton 1997; Pleck 1997; Radin 1994). It therefore appears that it is not so much being male or simply being present that is key in child-rearing. Rather, it is the active involvement in parenting duties by fathers that seems to be a vital ingredient.

Three reasons for this have been suggested. First, with two involved parents, there is greater stimulation of diverse skills and attributes in children. That is, two parents are able to develop and stimulate a diversity of attributes, skills, and characteristics in the child to a greater extent than one parent—and this leads to enhanced development on each of these dimensions (reflected as positive outcomes in child-rearing research). Second, with two parents sharing the load, each parent is better able to take responsibility for areas that are rewarding and satisfying for them. This leads to greater enjoyment of parenting (Martin 2003c) and warmer parent-child relationships that are known to benefit child development (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003; Martin and Dowson 2009; Martin et al. 2009, 2007). Third, alongside active sharing of child-rearing duties, fathers offer direct support to the mother that enables her to parent in more effective ways, improve the economic circumstances that reduces household stress and opens up development opportunities for the children, and provide additional perspectives and insights to the children to help them better deal with life-relevant issues (Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda 2003).

Indirect and Marginal Fathering

Although high involvement of fathers and male caregivers is ideal, the reality is that substantial numbers of fathers are only marginally or indirectly involved in child-rearing. As indicated at the outset of this chapter, paternal and male involvement is generally low, fathers' involvement in housework and childcare tends to be lacking (Hochschild 1989; Thompson and Walker 1989; Shelton 1990; Walkerdine and Lucey 1989), and there is a general reluctance of fathers to read to their children (Fletcher and Daly 2002; Solsken 1992) and get involved in their children's schooling (Fletcher and Silberberg 2006). The question, then, is this: can indirect or marginal paternal involvement have positive effects on children's development?

Encouraging findings were derived from a study by Grolnick et al. (1991) suggesting that although fathers were less involved than mothers, this involvement was nonetheless important. Over and above the effect of mothers, father involvement was found to significantly predict children's competence and autonomy and these were significantly predictive of children's academic achievement.

Similarly, Morgan et al. (2009) found that although fathers' involvement in a children's literacy program was not as easily visible as mothers' involvement, in almost all cases fathers were involved through providing literacy opportunities, recognizing their children's achievements, interacting with their child around the material they were reading, and modeling reading themselves. Indeed, involvement in literacy activities with children has been found to strengthen father-child relationships in the process (Ortiz et al. 1999). Although fathers are not so involved in school activities as mothers, Australian research shows they are not avoiding school; rather, they tend to be more involved in gendered activities such as outdoor work, security functions, handiwork duties—and less involved in their child's academic and classroom life (Fletcher and Silberberg 2006). Other work has shown that indirectly assisting infants through support to the mother reduces behavior problems in the children (Chang et al. 2007; Mezulis et al. 2004) and assists the mental health of the mother in cases where the mother may be depressed (Misri et al. 2000).

Taken together, whilst highly involved fathers seem to generate the most adaptive academic and nonacademic outcomes for their children, it is evident that positive and prosocial indirect and marginal support can assist children and mothers as well. This is not to argue in favor of indirect support in lieu of high involvement; rather, it further underscores the significant impact of fathers and male caregivers in children's lives. It also shows that given the realities of diverse family structures that might not heavily feature fathers or male caregivers, children can still benefit from the indirect involvement of fathers/males.

Implications for Fathers in Diverse Family Structures

Based on these arguments, it is evident that it is not so much being male that makes the difference to the lives of children. Instead, the positive effects of males are seen as a result of being an involved parent and an effective teacher. Thus, many of the characteristics of highly involved fathers are not bound up with gender. Rather, they are bound up with the hallmarks of effective parenting and the logistic yields of having two sets of hands in the parenting process. To the extent that this is the case, these arguments are also applicable to nontraditional family structures such as those in same-sex structures (Martin et al. 2010).

Government and Policy Responses

In the past decade, Australian governments have sought to address the gender gap on various academic and nonacademic outcomes (see above). One aspect of their response has centered on the role of male caregivers and male teachers in children's lives. A recent media release by the Australian Attorney General's Department reported, "The Government is extremely concerned about the decreasing number of male teachers and male role models, particularly in primary schools and the possible effect on learning and development of both boys and girls in schools" (Ruddock 2004). An Australian Labor Party policy document leading up to the 2004 federal election stated, "Now, more than ever, young boys need contact with men who can offer positive role models and mentor them in the right direction (p. 1) . . . Labor wants to see many more male teachers teaching and making a difference to the lives of young boys in our schools" (2004, p. 4). There have also been a number of reviews commissioned by government (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002; Lingard et al. 2002; Martin 2002) that have sought to shed light on these issues and debates.

Seeking to directly redress the shortage of male teachers in Australian schools, the Catholic Education Office requested it be exempt from the Sex Discrimination Act to develop ways to get more male teachers into teacher training and into classrooms. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) rejected the application because it felt there was not sufficient evidence to show that boys were disadvantaged due to a lack of male teachers (HREOC 2003). The Commonwealth Government responded by introducing the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Teaching Profession) Bill 2004. A compromise was reached involving teaching scholarships for more males and females (Fletcher 2008).

Australian governments and government departments have also commissioned or sponsored research and reviews into the role of fathers/males in children's lives. A national forum on father-inclusive practices followed a 2005 review sponsored by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (Family Action Centre 2005; Fletcher et al. 2004). The final day of the forum produced a set of principles with practice implications that were broadly similar to those under the Head Start (United States) and Sure Start (United Kingdom) programs (Fletcher 2008).

In part a result of identified deficiencies in counseling responses to male caregivers, the Australian Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CSHISC) has developed competencies for Vocational Graduate Diplomas of Relationship Counseling and of Family Dispute Resolution (CSHISC 2007). Units such as "Work with men," "Engage fathers into family-based programs," and "Working with separated fathers" have been drafted—along with performance indicators, such as assisting fathers to understand the impact they have on their children's lives and the ability to critically reflect on their own interactions in relation to father-inclusive practices (Fletcher 2008).

Notwithstanding this, although numerous early intervention strategies have been funded and evaluated by Australian federal and state governments (e.g., see Linfoot et al. 1997, 2002; Moore et al. 2001), there has been little evaluation of fathers' involvement (Fletcher et al. 2004) and thus relatively little "top-down" direction for successfully engaging fathers and male caregivers in children's academic and nonacademic lives. Importantly, however, a number of Australian and salient overseas programs have identified successful practices involving fathers, providing something of a "bottom-up" perspective on effectively engaging fathers and male caregivers in children's lives. Some of these successful programs and practices are now briefly discussed.

Successful Programs and Practices

The bulk of programs and practices focusing on successful child development tend to be characterized as "parenting programs" but predominantly involve mothers. This is the case in Australia and internationally. Nonetheless, some prominent programs have recognized the need for paternal involvement and have shaped some recommendations around this. For example, in the United States, the Head Start program has yielded positive father outcomes and numerous strategies have been identified to maintain this including suggestions for revamping service provider policies (e.g., that fathers should and will be involved), documentation (e.g., collecting relevant information on fathers), employment practices (e.g., more male staff), physical environment (e.g., displaying positive images of fathers), referral processes (e.g., linking fathers across agencies), and personnel training (e.g., on working with fathers; Raikes et al. 2005).

In the United Kingdom, evaluations of the Sure Start program found variable male involvement in parenting and parenting programs and developed recommendations to assist program providers to increase male involvement. Recommendations were similar to those under the Head Start program in overhauling fathers' involvement, actively seeking fathers' input, adopting "strengths-based" approaches to fathers' attitudes and behaviors, advocating for fathers' involvement across programs, and providing staff training on working with fathers (Lloyd et al. 2003).

Various Australian reviews and research programs have also identified elements of successful practice. In one project, 46 community-based parenting programs were extended to adopt early intervention for fathers. Not only was the extension effective in involving men who were approaching the birth of their first child, it was also successful in reaching fathers typically difficult to reach such as those in rural and regional areas (O'Brien and Rich 2002). Reviews of these involvements indicated that strategies such as male staffing, strengths-based approaches, changes to center policies, and appropriate supervision were key in promoting positive outcomes involving fathers.

In another Australian study seeking to get fathers more involved in their children's school life, Fletcher and Silberberg (2006) identified numerous successful strategies

implemented by schools. These included recognizing and utilizing fathers' preference for hands-on activities at the school, changing meeting times to evenings, celebrating Father's Day, and personal approaches to fathers for assistance with specific tasks.

Australian research looking more specifically at fathers' involvement in children's literacy identified the importance of engaging fathers before the target program commenced (Tranter 2006). Subsequently, other successful strategies involved addressing correspondence specifically to the father if father involvement was being requested, displaying images of fathers in prominent parts of the school, having a designated news board or section of a news board for fathers, and disseminating targeted newsletters to fathers. In terms of children's literacy, successful approaches to engaging fathers involved activity- and purpose-based tasks. For example, activities involving map reading, instructions for games, and comics engaged fathers more than traditional storybook reading. In part a result of these initiatives, Tranter (2006) found that more fathers attended parent interviews, there was an increase in fathers' involvement in homework, and more fathers attended school events.

Future Directions

There are numerous directions and challenges for future research, policy, and practice when seeking to gain greater father/male involvement in children's lives. A first challenge relates to socioeconomic status (SES). Fathers with higher education levels are more likely to be involved in various aspects of their children's development (Fletcher 2008; Fletcher and Silberberg 2006; Goldschieder and Waite 1991; Blair et al. 1994; Nord et al. 1997). Similarly, the extent to which fathers are involved in literacy activities with their preschool children is associated with socioeconomic status. Specifically, fathers on higher incomes are more likely to be involved in literacy activities with their children (Morgan et al. 2009). With differential father/male involvement along SES lines, there is a risk that academic and nonacademic gaps grow and become more entrenched. There is therefore a need to direct future practice, policy, and research to better engage fathers at all SES levels.

There is also a need to explore optimal modes of program delivery to increase fathers' involvement. Morgan et al. (2009) found that flexible home visiting was more successful than center-based meetings. The latter tended to be poorly attended by fathers. How to effectively implement optimal modes of program delivery in countries such as Australia where many families are located in rural, regional, and remote areas is an additional need for future policy, practice, and research.

Another challenge in Australia relates to the sporadic, small-scale, undocumented, and unsustainable nature of fatherhood programs and approaches (Fletcher 2004). As Fletcher notes, with the growing recognition of the importance of fathers/males in children's academic and nonacademic development, there has also been an increase in the number of small-scale approaches to involve fathers/males in health, early education, and welfare services for families in Australia. However, these efforts

are generally sporadic, ad hoc, and undocumented. This poses a barrier to sustainable development and implementation of successful programs and practices—and by implication, a barrier to father/male involvement. Systematic and documented implementation is needed for this barrier to be addressed.

There are also stereotyping challenges to effective father/male involvement. The counseling domain is an illustrative case in point. Counselors reporting greater stereotypical beliefs about men's emotions are more likely to blame the man for relationship conflict—a belief that is likely to reduce practitioners' effectiveness and impair effective dispute resolution (Fletcher 2008; Heesacker and Bradley 1997; Heesacker et al. 1999). According to Fletcher (2004), practitioner skill in developing a constructive relationship with fathers is more likely to effectively engage fathers. As O'Brien and Rich (2002) note from a review of an Australian initiative, staff training will be important in this.

If fathers are to be more involved in their children's lives, it is also important not to underestimate fathers' potential competence. Hand's (2006) research identifying a belief by mothers that fathers lack the patience to deal with the emotional dimensions of parenting young children, suggests attitudinal barriers relating to parenting skill will need to be addressed. Consequently, some fathers perceive they lack support within the family to take a greater parenting role (Lamb 1997b). Indeed, fathers themselves can perceive they lack the skill and competence to raise their children (Lamb 1997b) and this has in part led to a lack of motivation to be more involved (Lamb 1997b). Hence, attitudinal barriers relevant to mothers and fathers require further action.

This chapter has examined the effects of father and male teacher involvement in children's academic and nonacademic lives. However, in the Australian context, little is known about the relationship between fathers and their child's teacher. For example, does a positive connection between the father and the child's teacher increase the father's involvement in the school and the child's academic life (Fletcher and Silberberg 2006)? More needs to be known about the nexus between the child's academic life and the child's father.

There are also institutional barriers to be negotiated. The workplace is one domain that can be targeted to effect greater father/male involvement in children's lives (Haas 1992). Paternity leave and flexible working hours are two areas that hold promise (Pleck 1986). Although this is increasingly recognized by employers and government, at least in Australia there is some way to go. Encouragingly, it has been found that flexitime in the workplace is associated with more time spent with one's children (Lee 1983) and so there is an evidence base to targeting workplace practices and policies in future efforts to increase father/male involvement in children's lives.

Addressing these barriers and challenges is also important for children's development into adolescence. Father/male involvement, early in a child's life, may be important in establishing patterns that are later played out in adolescence—and beyond. For example, it has been found that father-adolescent relationships tend to be distant and less intimate when compared to mother-adolescent relationships that are typically emotionally closer and affectionate (Hosley and Montemayor 1997). Fostering healthy father/male-child relationships and practices early in a child's life

may be an important basis for healthy father- /male-adolescent relationships and practices.

Final Qualifications

Based on the arguments presented herein, it is evident that it is not so much about being male that makes the difference to the lives of children—rather, the positive effects of fathers/males are seen as a result of being a constructively involved parent and an effective teacher. Importantly, however, this does not mean there is not a need for male teachers or male role models. For example, as Martin et al. (2010) argue, an important part of school is to give students exposure to diverse authority styles and adults so they are better equipped to deal with a diverse society after school. Gender is one aspect of this diversity; hence, male teachers are important in this respect. Also, to the extent that school should reflect and educate on many of the interpersonal and other dynamics of the wider world, there is a need for a better gender balance amongst teaching staff. Furthermore, for children to appreciate the notion that learning and teaching are for men, there is also a need for male teachers. Hence, there is a need for male teachers, not because they are better instructors, but because they are part of the rich and diverse fabric of children's lives and address important life-relevant needs (Martin et al. 2010).

It is also important to emphasize that this chapter is not intended to negate or compromise the powerful and central role of the mother and female caregiver and teacher. If anything, this chapter has further underscored the role of maternal/female involvement in child development. This chapter has focused on fathers and their specific roles because—alongside mothers/females—they are the most frequently represented parent/caregiver across the population of households. Thus, whilst recognizing the centrality of the maternal caregiver, this chapter emphasizes fathers because they are relevant—through their absence or presence—to children's academic and nonacademic development (Martin et al. 2010). Emphasis is also given to fathers because of the generally low levels of father/male engagement and responsibility in the parenting and care-giving process (Pleck and Masciadrelli 2003).

Conclusion

Quantitative and qualitative Australian and international evidence shows that fathers and male teachers can have positive impacts in children's academic and nonacademic lives—and that these impacts are greatest when fathers/males are highly and constructively involved. It seems that the positive impact of fathers/males tends not to be a function of being male. Instead, positive impacts are a function of the father as a parent (or male teacher as a quality educator) rather than the father as a man—as evidenced when fathers are adaptively involved in child-rearing (and when

male teachers implement quality pedagogy). However, because of the generally low levels of father/male involvement in children's lives, it is evident that there is further scope for children to be more optimally assisted in their academic and nonacademic lives through greater constructive and prosocial involvement of fathers/males. Australian and international research has suggested ways this can happen and identified some of the challenges and opportunities ahead as practitioners, policy makers, and researchers seek to do this.

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Chapter 15
Father Involvement in Young Children's Care and Education in Southern Africa

Jeremiah Chikovore, Tawanda Makusha and Linda Richter

The importance of the early years of life to future well-being is now well recognized, and the circumstances that influence children in these early stages continue to be explored. While women are traditionally considered to have a natural presence in the lives of their children (Cabrera et al. 2000; Geary and Flinn 2001), there is increasing interest in men's role. Earlier work, however, exhibited a metrocentric and deficit perspective, emphasizing the ways in which men did not conform to mothering as well as the negative effects of father absence as a result of nonmarital childbirth, divorce, and nonresidency (Cabrera et al. 2000).

Research continues to highlight the benefits to children of having an involved or present father (Desmond and Desmond 2006; Engle et al. 2006; Engle and Breaux 1998; Guma and Henda 2004; Jarrett 1994; Lamb et al. 1985; Lindegger 2006; Richter 2006; Swartz and Bhana 2009). These benefits include the fact that two-parent households, in which both men and women are present, tend to be better off than single-parent homes (Jarrett 1994). This is partly because men are better paid than women, they access more resources for their family and children, owing to their socioeconomic status and prestige; and fathers who are coresident tend to spend more money on their children than do those who do not (Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera 1999). Resident fathers help to reduce parenting-related stress on mothers and offer protection for children (Richter 2006). In southern Africa, merely living with one's

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father confers social value on a child (Richter 2006); however, it is nevertheless acknowledged that the father's presence does not always confer benefits on children (Mott 1990). Some men may spend household funds intended for food and education for their children on luxury items for themselves, and they become violent towards both women and children.

A distinction is made between mere physical presence and quality or type of involvement. Some fathers stay involved with their children even if they do not reside with them, and are committed to helping raise their children (Cabrera et al. 2007). Better-quality relationships with children and emotional support from fathers have been reported to predict higher self-esteem and lower depression and anxiety, especially among girls, and lower rates of delinquent behavior in boys (Cabrera et al. 2004). Research also indicates that fathers who engage with their children have a significant effect on the child's cognition and language (Cabrera et al. 2007). Moreover, the mother's supportiveness to the child in the early years has been found to be related to the father's supportiveness (Cabrera et al. 2007).

Conceptualizing father presence or absence in discreet terms masks the fluidity of men's involvement with children. It is necessary, in the case of African contexts, to understand the determinants of male presence or involvement, the nature of benefits that accrue to both, and the circumstances that allow these benefits to fully materialize. This chapter reviews fathers' roles and presence through the early years of children's lives in southern Africa. It draws on the available scholarship on men and masculinity in southern Africa to outline the determinants of male involvement, including the role of social, economic, and historical dynamics in shaping the lives of men and their functioning as fathers.

Influences on Contemporary Fathering Forms in Southern Africa

Conceptualizing Fatherhood

Discussions of fatherhood in Western texts, as opposed to elsewhere, appear to place proportionately greater emphasis on individual factors. For instance, characteristics of fathering identified as important by Hauari and Hollingworth (2009) are the personality, beliefs, and attitudes of the father and the child's age, gender, and temperament. Lamb and Day (2004) point to biological, genetic, and psychological factors as well as the father's skills as being critical to successful fatherhood. At slightly broader levels, the structure of the family, employment status, relationship with the child's mother, and social support, including support in the workplace are acknowledged in both Western and African literature (Hauari and Hollingworth 2009; Lamb and Day 2004; Rabe 2007).

Broader structural changes are also considered to account for fathering behavior in both Western and African settings. The industrial revolution and modernization feature prominently in the literature from the West, while colonialism and urbanization, together with the ensuing modernization and globalization, are stressed within

the African discourse. Similarly, culture's influence on fatherhood is foregrounded in African settings. However, because it can both influence and be subject to forces of modernization, colonialism, and urbanization, culture as used in this sense is sometimes difficult to pin down. Few societies have maintained tightly knit or homogenous cultural identities. Rather, they are now marked by constant flux and what has been called "hybridity" (Fielder 1999), or the mixing of the old and the new generating, in the process, new and ever-evolving aspects of social and cultural life.

One aspect of past social organization that continues to bear on how children are raised in African contexts is the extended family (Aldous 1962). Unlike in the West, African societies define family in extensive terms, including also aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, and cousins in what is considered "close family." Even with urbanization and the disruption of family life over the past century, a large percentage of South African households across the race divide are recognizably of the extended family type. This includes about a third (32.5 %) and close to half (43.3 %) of African households; 32.3 % and 25.4 % of colored families; and 27.6 % and 25.3 % of Asian/Indian in urban and rural areas, respectively, although extended families are less prevalent among whites (8.9 % in urban and 9.1 % in rural areas; Amoateng and Richter 2003). Extended family members may not be located in one place at any particular time, but they still influence each other and even make decisions regarding where and how members live, what families prioritize and put resources to, and how they deal with major life events such as marriage; childbirth and naming, and death. Thus, Roy (2008) notes that,

> In many African communities, whole families – not individuals – were married. Within such cultural values systems, the spirit of communalism (*botho/ubuntu*) is characterized by the connectedness of men and their commitment to the common good, including one's descendants and one's ancestors (p. 99).

Fatherhood therefore occurs within a web of social relationships (Engle and Breaux 1998; Lloyd and Blanc 1996; Roy 2008) where a large proportion of men look after children that are not necessarily their own, and where different men may take on fatherhood responsibilities with respect to the same child (Desmond and Desmond 2006; Rabe 2007). This concept of social fatherhood may be dictated by social position within a family (such as being the oldest son) or emerge in the course of their life in response to migration, employment, marriage and partnering, and related changes in social and residential arrangements (Townsend 1997). Day (1998) writes,

> A man may begin as a biological, in-home father but then have to change that role to out-of-home, distant father, then alter the father role again as he becomes a stepfather while yet maintaining contact with his original birth children (p. 15).

The Provider Role for Men

Manhood and fatherhood are often linked to a provider role within families (Hauari and Hollingworth 2009). This role is a relatively recent phenomenon (Hunter 2006).

In some precolonial societies in Africa, men were not necessarily breadwinners. Rather, their main role was to represent their families in community matters (Epprecht 1998; Silberschmidt 2001). Families essentially supported themselves on the basis of the labor of women and children, and men were involved in hunting and public participation on behalf of their family. Men gained status from nondomestic activities in addition to providing for the family (Engle and Breaux 1998). They enjoyed patriarchal authority and were a symbol of ultimate power and responsibility in the family and the community. This held true whether among the Sotho and Zulu in southern Africa, or among the Nso in Cameroon (Engle and Breaux 1998; Lesejane 2006).

Colonialism and modernization transformed family arrangements and roles and reconfigured identities of both colonial authorities and their subjects (Stoler 1997). Through levying monetary taxes that required people to earn money, colonial powers forced men to migrate to urban farming and mining areas to seek work (van Onselen 1976). Colonialism impoverished rural communities as oppressed people were crammed onto marginal land with shrinking landholding, leading them to discontinue their migratory cultivation and hunting and gathering (Mombeshora 2004). Men, many of whom were migrant workers, therefore took on the role of providing for their families, and their lives and work were molded around the mining and farming industries (van Onselen 1976). As migrant workers, men were separated from their families for long periods of time (van Onselen 1976), and traditional systems of social cooperation and maintenance of social order were disrupted (Mombeshora 2004).

Modern African societies, as is true of societies globally, are undergoing perennial change, including the increased participation of women in paid employment and related shifts in gender roles. Indeed, some men have become net consumers rather than producers in their household economies. A study in Kenya found that 12 % of men did not engage in any productive activities, while their female partners largely provided for all household needs (Chiuri 2008). Women not only have made inroads into formal work in contexts of declining formal employment, they have also moved into informal employment and many now control the purse strings in families. This role switch can have damaging consequences for men's egos. It is hypothesized that some men respond by searching for respect and recognition in their families, communities, and social circles through migrating to seek employment, or by pursuing illegal or underground activities. In turn, this results in absence from families because of work or incarceration.

Moreover, with limited employment opportunities, many men are unable to raise the increasingly exorbitant bride price requested, and therefore cannot marry (Hunter 2006). Young men may also postpone marriage to avoid added responsibilities that they cannot successfully discharge. Evidence from South Africa suggests that income now largely determines being able to live together as partners or to be married (Desmond and Desmond 2006). Men in higher earning categories are several times more likely to be living with their children than men in the lowest income category (Desmond and Desmond 2006).

Young men, who become fathers without planning to do so, or before they feel financially prepared for the role may deny or escape responsibility, also to avoid payment of impregnation "damages" (compensation to the girl and her family). Such reactions are not often challenged in largely anonymous and highly mobile urban environments, where community measures to deal with sexual transgressions are either absent or difficult to enforce. Some men may desert their families and children out of frustration at not being able to satisfactorily look after them (Ramphele 2002).

Stretched Households and Struggles with Migrant Lives

Many men are fathers in households where the children may neither be biologically theirs nor coresident. This scenario arises from various factors, including historical dynamics around *Apartheid* and the volatile resistance to it, as well as the phenomenon of migrant labor.

In South Africa, *Apartheid* controls and later periods of violent resistance disrupted families, including children's residence and schooling. Families were obliged to send children to urban areas to access better-quality schools, or to rural schools that provided safe haven for their children from violent urban protests and school closures (Posel 2003). This implied for the children new families and new "fathers." Consequently, large numbers of South African children live apart from their parents for longer or shorter periods (Kaufman et al. 1998).

Yet, given the scenario of extended family relations, having children living apart from biological fathers does not automatically mean that children are being neglected, or that their fathers are irresponsible. On the contrary, men migrate to find work in order to support their children, while extended families absorb children (Anderson 2005) and also provide support where limited job opportunities are available. Most migrants send remittance payments to families at home and resources are shared between people (Aldous 1962; Eloundou-Enyegue and Shapiro 2004). In close-knit extended families, children live with kin—grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.—as part of social reciprocity and obligation.

What is significant, though, is that dispersion of kin results in "stretched" households, wherein families try to balance the demands of migrant work, the need to secure rural livelihoods, labor, children's education, and responsibilities for care across extended families (Chikovore et al. 2002; Rabe 2007; van der Waal 1996). Rabe (2007) draws attention to the contradiction occurring with negative experiences of divided family structures being intertwined with the benefit of regular income. Exercising the responsibilities of fatherhood is difficult for these men. The pain they feel in leaving their families in order to earn money to support them, in order to assume their responsibilities, is described in interviews Rabe (2007) conducted with South African migrant male mine workers. The men, who live in difficult single-sex hostels, all saw economic support for children as being core to what it meant to be a good father, and stated that they only undertake the dangerous work underground so they can support their children. One mine worker said,

> I found myself bound to work for a contractor although it pays so little because I could not face my children and tell them I had no job, and that is why I could not provide them with clothing and food. (p. 262)

Fatherhood, in this situation, is a role men are forced to accommodate within the constraints of paid employment (Henwood and Procter 2003), resulting in difficulties in being available for their children.

Emasculation, Coping, and Effects on Family Life and Fathering Behavior

Men's experiences of fatherhood are closely aligned to their ability to match gendered expectations of being a man. Difficult socioeconomic conditions have meant that these expectations are increasingly difficult to attain, leading to many men feeling inadequate.

Some of this emasculation can, however, be traced back to colonialism. Where men had enjoyed high social status within their homes and communities, they were frequently referred to as "boys" by white settlers despite their age, marital or circumcision status, or the number of children they had fathered (Epprecht 1998). The ability of authorities to intervene in household matters at will (for example, in dictating where men and women could live), where men all along exercised their power and authority, was considered humiliating even by the women.

Loss of control over domestic processes was exacerbated as men took up migrant labor and left their families for long periods, becoming what has been termed "shadowy" heads of households, who were "symbolically important" but with "little actual importance in children's lives" (Roy 2008, p. 99). Thus, men lost value in their communities, as women learned how to manage household and civic affairs without them. Many men are today unemployed; unemployment among South African people approaches 40 % (Kingdon and Knight 2009). Some female-headed households have essentially become autonomous, and a proportion of independent women even consider men to be fragile, vulnerable, and of limited value, without whom women and children are sometimes better off (Silberschmidt 2005). Men's loss of status and prestige in the home also coincided with loss of value and prestige in their workplaces, where they were humiliated and treated as second-class citizens (Vahed 2005; van Onselen 1976).

Unemployed, incapacitated, and unable to marry or look after their children, deprived of prestige, lacking control over their families, and emasculated in their work settings, men have become the subject of what has been termed a "crisis" of masculinity. Men who fail to attain commonly expected manhood ideals may seek other ways of reasserting their ego (Kaufman 1999), in ways that may actually drive them further away from familial responsibility and engagement with their children (Engle 1997).

Silberschmidt (2005) describes how men in Kenya drink to forget their problems. In the home, men may also attempt to increase control over domestic affairs (Connell

1995), but their perennial absence constrains them. Out of frustration, they may resort to violence resulting in harsher and more punitive parenting (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2008) and general family violence (Hearn 2007). Some men in Zimbabwe describe that they might assault their wives for using, or simply suggesting, or discussing use of contraceptives while they were absent because of migrant labor (Chikovore et al. 2002). Men saw contraceptives as allowing their wives to engage in extramarital sexual activity without being detected, whereas women spoke about using contraceptives to avoid having children by their husbands who did not always send remittances for the children's support.

As modernity becomes entrenched, the demand for status, asset accumulation, and luxury—aspects also associated with ideal concepts of manhood—rise. The fact is, though, few attain these ideals, and pervasive poverty constrains most men and families from achieving them. Still, how fathers seek to achieve these affects their children. Indeed, men's decisions about income distribution do not always benefit children (Ampofo and Boateng 2007; Engle et al. 2006; Richter 2006). There is some suggestion that men sometimes withdraw their children from school, especially girls, choosing to spend money instead on consumerist lifestyles. Observations are that children in comparative households headed by women generally fare better, and women are more likely than men to use household resources to support children (Engle and Breaux 1998; Timaeus and Boler 2007). Studies from South Africa indicate that children living with their mothers, and not with their fathers, are more likely to attend school, although this seems to be influenced also by the socioeconomic status of the mothers (Engle and Breaux 1998). In Zimbabwe, paternal orphans were found to stay longer in school, and to have more completion rates than maternal orphans (Nyamukapa and Gregson 2005).

Reports of suicide dominated news in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 1990s. After selling the season's crop, families used proceeds to purchase clothing, meet essential travel needs, pay school fees, and prepare for the next agricultural season. In a carry-over of landholding policy from colonial times, registration of land in the communal areas was done only in the man's name, in whom marketing rights were also vested. Husbands would acquire the money after the crop was sold, and many would spend it away from home. The women and children, who likely had provided all the labor for the harvest, were left with nothing, and some women committed suicide out of desperation. In another rural region of Zimbabwe, women recounted how their husbands migrated to South Africa apparently to generate money for the "upkeep" of the family, but then stayed away for as long as 5 or 10 years, some having run away from the responsibilities of making a girl pregnant. Many of these men, mostly illegal immigrants, took up jobs with meager and irregular incomes, leaving little to remit home. Women in South Africa reportedly took advantage of the men's illegal status to enter into relationships with them and control their income. The men often returned empty-handed after long periods, and would sell furniture and other wares acquired by the household during their absence, spend the money on beer and women, and disappear again to South Africa (Chikovore et al. 2002). This scenario further illuminates the ways in which stretched households, in the manner described by Rabe (2007), can become progressively dysfunctional.

Unplanned/Unintended Parenting Among Young People

Early parenting may be associated with stress, medical risks, and limited educational and work opportunities (Parke 2002). Premarital sex and pregnancy, also lowering the marriage value of a daughter, lead to children being born outside the protection and security of marriage, and are generally a source of shame for a family.

Nonetheless, parents in southern Africa are generally not supportive of the provision of information and services to unmarried young people, as they perceive this to encourage sexual activity (Chikovore et al. 2003; Makiwane and Udjo 2006; Pattman 2007). At the same time, traditional social structures previously in place to manage the maturation of young people have been dismantled; the responsibility to supervise young people now falls on close family, who may be separated because of labor migration and schooling. This generates a gap in which young people are sexually active but often without adequate information or services, and barely prepared for the consequences of pregnancy and parenthood. Clearly, this leaves room for early, mostly unplanned pregnancies among young people. Half of all women in South Africa give birth to a child by 21 years of age (Coovadia et al. 2009).

The reactions of young people to a pregnancy are even more telling of their circumstances. They may react with shock, and for boys, even violence targeting the girls (Chikovore et al. 2003). Chikovore et al. report how young boys in Zimbabwe spoke of the mental anguish that they endured after making, or being accused of making, a girl pregnant. Some boys said they considered migrating even if this meant living under difficult conditions, to escape from both the pregnancy and the girl's relatives. They expressed fears of facing friends in school, or waking up to the realization that they were a father along with the responsibility that this entailed. Some were concerned about the threat of leaving school, which would leave them facing bleak employment prospects (Chikovore et al. 2003).

Even where the young father himself would like to assume responsibility, he may have little ability—financially, socially, or legally—to press for access to his child. Many will not be living with, or be in a socially recognized relationship with the child's mother at the time of birth, or be capable of any material provision. Thus, the basis for development of a strong relationship may not be laid between father and child in the child's critical formative years. The families of young mothers will often not be supportive of the involvement of men they perceive as "irresponsible" and young fathers' families may also consider them too young and unprepared for such a role (Swartz and Bhana 2009).

Cultural Norms and Fathering Behavior in the Context of Social and Economic Change

Men's fatherhood behavior is subject to norms that specify the permissible nature and extent of father involvement with children. There are different perspectives in

different cultures of what constitutes proper parenting (Howard 2001). Sayings in Shona, one of the indigenous languages in Zimbabwe, for example, specify that adults must avoid *kujaidza mwana,* "overindulging a child." This suggests, in the case of men, maintaining a distance and paying only a minimum levels of attention to their children. Similarly, the concept of *kudyiswa* describes how men who display excessive preoccupation with family, including children and wives, are considered to have been bewitched with a love portion—a potential source of derision and scorn by peers. The stiff, distanced, and fearsome image of the African father, while not universal, is nonetheless well described. At the same time, being distant does not necessarily signify noninvolvement, and it is important to understand the specific ways in which such seemingly distant men contribute to family and children's lives, especially in situations of rapid change.

Moreover, the hybridity referred to earlier, resulting from modernization, the media, education, membership of various groups such as men's advocacy groups, and interventions at policy level among many, has had the effect opening up multiple ways of viewing and enacting fatherhood. These dynamics have huge potential to alter what it means to be a father. Consequently, calls are being made for more research on the simultaneous influence of tradition and modernity, and their interaction, on fathering and early childhood development (Nsamenang 2000; Serpell 2009).

Who Is a Biological Father in South Africa?

While coresidence of fathers with their children is not an accurate measure of father involvement, acknowledgment of children by their biological fathers is crucial as it allows children access to both extended family and other social benefits. Estimating the number of men who are biological fathers is thus important, yet there are few sources of accurate data (Posel and Devey 2006). Many national household surveys, or indeed large prospective studies of children in South Africa, do not identify fathers or which children are theirs. In addition, standard demographic approaches to enumerating households in censuses and surveys exclude nonresident members, many of whom are fathers of children in the household. Surveys seldom capture the contact and types of involvement between children and fathers living elsewhere (Townsend et al. 2006), or information about why the child's father is not present, whether because of abandonment, divorce, death, or work.

Nonetheless, based on measures of biological mothers, as well as marriage and kin relations between household members, it is estimated that between 45 % and 50 % of men 15–54 years of age have fathered a child (Posel and Devey 2006). Half of these fathers do not have daily contact with their children (Richter and Morrell 2008) due to the dual forces of migration—of both adults and children—separation/divorce and death (Desmond and Desmond 2006). As indicated previously, nonresident fathers can, and do, make substantial contributions to children through remittances, social visits, and other forms of contact.

Men Feeling They Are Irrelevant to Children's Lives

In a number of countries—South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, for example, women are able to register the birth of a child without the father. This means that children are assured of citizenship whether or not a biological father acknowledges paternity. A potential consequence is that this may lead men to feel that they are unimportant in the lives of their children and families. Some men who are estranged from the mother may nonetheless wish to be acknowledged as the child's father. The seemingly punitive approach to granting custody and pegging and enforcing child support by fathers (Roy 2008) may affect men's perceptions of their role and their relationship with children. Khunou (2006) found that men who were paying maintenance for their children were eager to have frequent contact with their children and did not see their obligations as ending with the payment of maintenance. However, paying maintenance seemed to be associated with men feeling they were not an integral part of their children's lives (Khunou 2006). Some fathers may even want to pay maintenance but are constrained by joblessness or poverty, resulting in high rates of default. In 2002, 7,000 out of 67,000 people from one township in South Africa who were ordered by the courts to pay maintenance actually did so (Richter and Morrell 2006). Ultimately, financial resources provided in the context of a caring relationship achieve greater benefits for children than financial disbursement alone (Richter 2006).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Influences on fathering behavior in southern Africa are clearly complex. In this section, we make suggestions in some broad policy areas which, given the complexity surrounding fatherhood, should not be considered to be exhaustive or prescriptive.

Facilitating Planned Parenting

More attention needs to be given to ensuring that parenting is planned by men and women. Fathers need to be involved throughout the reproductive process including the conscious decision to have a child, as this opens a critical window for them to take up appropriate fathering behavior prospectively. Father-friendly services at community and facility levels are required (Beardshaw 2006). Information needs to be made available to men about child care, hygiene, disease prevention, recognition and treatment of child illness, nutrition, and access to health services (Richter and Morrell 2008). Services must be tailored to be convenient to men, both in terms of staff attitudes and hours of availability.

Technology for planned parenting is perceived variously in different contexts. As highlighted earlier, some men may view contraceptive use as a strategy married

women use to conceal extramarital sexual activity as the use of birth control also prevents unplanned or unwanted pregnancy (Chikovore et al. 2002). Therefore, rather than merely teaching men about contraceptives or making these widely available, attention must be paid to how decisions around parenting and contraceptive use are made within relationships.

While sexual activity is widespread among young people, policies and practices inhibit or are ambiguous regarding the distribution of condoms and provision of information to youth. In many instances, the emphasis is on abstinence. Services should reach young people so they can become parents when ready, and they can begin early to appreciate the consequences of sex. Life-skills education must be regularly evaluated to ascertain its relevance and effectiveness in addressing the maturation and sexuality issues that young people encounter in their lives (Chikovore et al. 2003).

Enhancing Men's Ability to Care for Their Children

Men should be enabled to cohabit with their families and children. Greater effort should be made in supporting them to secure income and livelihood by finding work, ameliorating the need for migration, and promoting their education, training, and job retention. This also means that young children must be encouraged to stay in school in order to enhance their life chances (Panday et al. 2009). Those who are already fathers can be supported by building on their involvement, and by making them aware of what children need and want from their fathers. Men who also take care of children as single parents, due to divorce, nonmarriage, or mother's death, also need to be supported. At the same time, a review of paternity leave is long overdue (Connell 2003). As part of supporting a child- and family-friendly work-home balance, employers need to compensate adequately overtime hours worked; and when considering advancement opportunities, employers need to take into account existing family commitments. Workplaces could also strengthen their support to families through the provision of direct services and crisis counseling (Connell 2003).

Promoting Norm Changes

A context in which supportive norms exist is important for the success of many of the policy suggestions outlined above. Individuals are reluctant to be seen as nonconforming. Alternative gender practices and expectations need to be supported and encouraged, including through using school curricula and media as entry points. In the absence of norms that appreciate men for staying at home and looking after children, paternity leave, for example, may neither be taken up (Seward and Richter 2008) nor used to benefit the family (Anker 1997; Connell 2003). Relatives, friends, and even women themselves may prevent men who want to be involved in child care

because of norms endorsing male disengagement (Lamb et al. 1985). Men can be encouraged by insights from research in South Africa that love, affection, and father presence is more important to their children than material success or possessions, and that their children empathize with men's challenges in supporting their families (Richter and Smith 2006).

The media, which is considered to have been influential in addressing attitudes around eating and exercise, smoking, safe sex, alcohol, and drunk driving (World Health Organization 2009), also have the potential to contribute to norm changes that promote alternative and more positive forms of father involvement. Sadly, media portrayals and advice literature subjected to content and discourse analyses were found to position fathers as part-time, secondary, less competent parents with fewer parenting responsibilities and greater breadwinning responsibilities than mothers (Sunderland 2006). For instance, in television commercials, men are less likely than women to be shown with children. Those men who do appear with children usually have a woman present, suggesting that men are not expected to take on parenting duties alone. Men are also far more likely than women to appear in commercials for electronics, and are rarely shown in commercials for children's medicine (Kaufman 1999). In food and cleaning product commercials, men are often portrayed as similar to children, with both being portrayed as served by the mother figure or passively watching her cook and clean.

Implications for Young Children's Education

Western notions of the family place primary responsibility for raising children on the mother. Father involvement is measured largely in terms of physical presence and material support, in what Day (1998) describes as the "intactness model" of the family. In African contexts, on the other hand, wider family networks and older siblings are involved in raising and socializing children. There may be no clear delineations of child-rearing responsibilities even between children and parents, with children being groomed into parenting responsibilities as they themselves grow up (Nsamenang 2000). Even in the United States, a decreasing number of children live in a home where there is a father, whether biological or social (Day 1998). School curricula, educational materials, and classroom exercises must take account of cultural variation in the definition of households, and of transforming family patterns, rather than implicitly portray all families as nuclear, in which single and both parents are present on a continuous basis in children's lives. If the definition of family is not broadened, children who come from non-nuclear families—who constitute a sizeable proportion in southern Africa—may be made to feel that they are different and excluded from discussions of families and parenting. Training of teachers ought to emphasize the need for sensitivity to the diverse forms of families from which pupils come.

Government and Civil Society Initiatives to Promote Father Involvement

Helping men to become and stay engaged with their children is a priority of several government policies and programs run in collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs). The South African policy environment acknowledges the need to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and the challenges that young people experience trying to access services (Department of Health 2001a). The Department of Health (2001b) also acknowledges the role men can and do play in childbearing. The South African constitution provides for modest paternity leave and acknowledges the need to increase this in order to facilitate greater involvement of men in children's lives. By law, South African fathers are currently entitled to 3 days paid family responsibility leave. Although similar to days granted in Algeria, this is less in comparison to Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Togo, where fathers are entitled to 10 days paid family responsibility leave. The amount and type of leave varies throughout Africa: Seychelles has 4 days paid leave, Ethiopia has 5 days unpaid leave, and Madagascar has 10 days unpaid leave. Rwanda and Tunisia provide for 2 days paid leave. Hosking (2006) notes that the average number of days allowed for family responsibility leave in Africa lags behind the number granted in most European countries.

South African policy further acknowledges the desirability of including men as fathers. At birth, while a mother can register a child without the biological father, she can only do so with a person who acknowledges that they are the father of the child. Acknowledgment of paternity, while not making it obligatory to use the father's surname, does place a legal obligation on the father to maintain his child. There is also provision for punitive action towards men who do not comply.

Moreover, programs in South Africa are promoting positive images, stories, and news about engaged men and fathers, aiming to create a culture of positive expectations towards men and fatherhood. There are several advocacy groups for men to speak out, take action, and make positive contributions towards the well-being of children, including the context of HIV/AIDS and poverty (see, for example, the *Brothers for Life* campaign www.brothersforlife.org).

Conclusions

Fatherhood is influenced by a host of factors. The analysis presented in this chapter is based on emerging research on fatherhood, most of it from South Africa, as well as work in related areas of gender/masculinity from other parts of the continent. There is clearly a need for a strong fatherhood research agenda that is informed by local social, cultural, and structural dynamics. Germane to this agenda would be, for example, the issue of what dimensions social fatherhood takes, and how it is being influenced by processes of social, economic, and cultural change. Our call for more African-focused research on fatherhood, which echoes previous calls (Serpell 2009), is to suggest neither that comparative perspectives globally are unnecessary, nor that

an entire depth of scholarship from previous and ongoing work in the West is of limited relevance to African settings. Increasing global integration (see Agar 1980) has had a profound effect on ways of looking at which directions and dimensions social research should take; in this context, comparative perspectives are clearly necessary. However, the specific ways in which changes have affected and continue to shape lives across the African landscape call for locally grounded understandings of, and interventions to promote, fatherhood.

In this chapter, we have outlined a set of policy considerations that may enable fathers, both biological and social, to generate positive dividends out of the ways they interact with their children. We remain conscious of challenges that may arise when social change initiatives are driven from a policy perspective. To start with, fatherhood is intricately connected with gender identity and roles, so that policies around fatherhood may evoke disparate reactions from individuals and groups of people, in the manner described by Connell (2003). Thus, in Connell's view, some will seek to maintain the status quo; some experience identity problems about change; some pursue an ideological defense of male superiority, while others consider change to be disadvantaging men and boys. In addition, in African settings, gender issues, as has been the case with women's rights, is sometimes perceived by men as a divisive tool employed by the West to undermine the struggle against racism (Kelly 2008). Some women may also view interventions related to fatherhood as a strategy to destroy "nice women's" homes. These are issues of which policies around fatherhood need to be congnizant.

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Chapter 16
Fathering in India

Understanding Challenges and Opportunities

Rajalakshmi Sriram and Prachee Navalkar

A discourse on fathering in India needs to be constructed against the backdrop of the unique context of family life, which is a complex weave of tradition and modernity, influenced strongly by the global economic and policy frameworks. The fast and unprecedented magnitude and pace of change throws its own challenges to individuals, families, and institutions in every sphere, to which they respond in their own ways. Here, we attempt to illuminate some facets of fathering and suggest actions to make it a mainstream issue that needs attention from researchers, policy-makers, community organizations, practitioners, and families.

A Glimpse into Family Life and Parenting in India

Home to one-sixth of the world's population, it is often remarked that India has diverse subcultures within its fold and yet it is held together by an essential unity. The majority of its population (more than 80 %) follow the Hindu religion followed by Islam (about 12–13 %) and Christianity (about 2.4 %.). It is also the birthplace of other religions such as Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism that are practiced even today. It is a country of 28 states and 7 union territories with linguistic and cultural pluralism. Historically, it has withstood large-scale invasions from the Greeks, the Mughals, and finally the British, all of which has left a lasting impact on its culture and people. However, much of its current traditions and culture can be traced to what has been considered the Vedic age, which historians attribute to the Aryans entering northern India around 1500 BC (Thapar 1966). Some significant concepts that form

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the cultural ethos of the Hindu way of life emerge from the Vedas (four major books on religion and way of life). As a land of one of the most ancient civilizations in the world, the family system and family roles in India also draw their ideals from ancient religious texts.

The family is a much revered institution in India. Its main function since the Vedic Aryan times has been to fulfill responsibilities related to ancestor worship, begetting male children, and passing religious or social traditions to the next generation. The Indian family is organized around gender and age; a common feature of the Indian family is the acceptance of the ideals of the joint/extended family system where members are linked by patrilineal ties (Ahuja 1997; Kakar 1981; Sinha 1993). This pattern of household organization gets reflected in about 45 % of business and professional class in urban areas and land owners in rural and tribal areas. It is generally associated with economic affluence where households can afford dependent members. However, households turn nuclear among poor in most regions (Ommen 1981; Shah 1998; Sriram and Ganapathy 1997). Census data on average household size indicate 5.3 persons per household from 1970s to 2001 thus pointing to the fact that large joint household is not the norm, as believed to be. There are seven types of households including about 10.5 % headed by women with a range of 7.4–23 % households across states (Census of India 2001). Despite these realities, the notion of joint family in spirit is deeply entrenched among all classes and even other religious groups such as Muslims (Ahmed 1977) reflecting functional solidarity and support expected from family members (Chakrabortty 2002). This type of a family system has implications for the nature of parenting in families.

A number of ethnographic studies point to multiple care-giving of infants in joint/extended families even today (Kurtz 1992; Seymour 1999; Sharma 1998). Thus, it is a fact that the infant is physically cared for and held by a number of adults varying from grandmothers, aunts, older siblings, and fathers. Caring for the young is a part of the daily life and includes protecting, supervising, and catering to their physical needs. In fact, childcare and rearing is seamlessly woven in daily life—as is highlighted by this quote contrasting the more purposive child rearing in the West to child rearing in India: "You *bring up your children; we live with ours"* (Kirpal, quoted in Krishna Kumar 1993, p. 69).

Cultural Notions of Manhood, Fatherhood/Fathering

Among the most influential ideas propounded by the Vedas, is the concept of dharma, which is essential to the understanding of the collective psyche of the Indian people. *Dharma* or the right course of action by which a man should live has been psychologically characterized as one of the fundamental means towards the end goal of self-realization or *moksha* (Kakar 1981; Kane 1974). Moreover, it is recognized that each individual has his own unique life plan or life task that he needs to fulfill. In the Hindu Scheme of life, a man was expected to take up the duties as a householder (*Grihastha*, that encompasses parenting) around the age of 20–25 (after a period of

training one's self under a master for sound preparation for adult life) by getting married (*Grihasthadharma*). Begetting offsprings was an important goal of marriage, as a male progeny was believed to relieve the parent from going to hell. Fulfilling basic needs of all dependent members was a vital duty, which continued in the next stage by broadening his horizon of care and promoting the welfare of fellow beings and society followed by the last stage of denouncing the worldly life called *Vanaprastha Ashram* (Chaturvedi 2003; Dubois 1992). Thus, parenting is imbued with a sense of "duty" and in keeping with following one's *dharma*.

While dharma refers to the right course of action, the other important concept related to dharma is that of *karma* or the action itself. Any action or deed whether it is dharmic or otherwise, is thought to bring about consequences in this life or the next life (Thapar 1966). An ordinary person's understanding of *karma* shows that good deeds lead to growth towards enlightenment (self-realization) and an eventual freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth whereas evil deeds may cause one to go through numerous lifetimes where one has to learn and relearn the path towards self-realization. Individuals are thus bound by the consequences of these actions.

This doctrine has been used to explain almost every aspect of life including being born in a particular caste or community (Thapar 1966); death, disability, misfortune, the progeny one gets, and the like. For instance, disability in India is often seen as a result of an individual's past life's karma (Dalal 2002). On the positive side, following the right path (swadharma) diligently in parenting can earn one many virtues and merits. These doctrines of dharma and karma thus find place in almost every aspect of life, and lay foundations for understanding fathering as well.

In traditional patriarchal society, the male head of the household in India was considered the "*karata purush*" literally meaning the "male doer" or the one predominantly responsible for the well-being of the family. In the context of parenting, distinct roles have been thought out for fathers and mothers in the family. Fathers were expected to primarily provide for the family and look after its welfare. They were regarded as the moral overseers of the family, disciplining errant children or other family members under their care (Kapoor 2000; Krishnan 1998). They were often characterized as the "guardians" of the family. Mothers were the primary caregivers and thus formed close bonds with their children. Fathers, though involved, played a limited role in their child's life, at least from the initial years up to entry into formal schools. The father's distinct role came into the forefront when the child grew into a school-age child. At this juncture, fathers often taught their sons many skills, especially the skills of the trade. Sociological and sociopsychological writings show that traditionally (mainly in Hindu families), paternal roles revolved around providing, protecting, disciplining, teaching, and being the overall moral guardian of the family whereas mothers were considered to be the physical caregivers (Krishnan 1998; Saraswathi and Pai 1997). Fathers were also characterized as being affectively distant and the stern "disciplinarian" (Kakar 1981).

Changes in the Family Ethos: Its Implications for Fathering/Fatherhood

There has been a steady pace of industrialization and urbanization since 1950 (Postin-dependence period) accelerated by economic reforms in the early 1990s. This has led to increase in nuclear families, number of working women, large-scale in-country migration (which means much less support for child rearing from other family members). With the proliferation of the electronic media such as the internet and global television, families are being increasingly influenced by global culture inducing a change in practices. Communication devices like mobile telephones enable parents, especially fathers and children to connect better even though they are less likely to spend time in proximity with each other. In addition, other societal factors including the signing of several treaties, such as the "complete elimination of all forms of discrimination against women," CEDAW; the endorsement of human rights, legal reforms and opportunities for higher education; and the feminist movements, advocate equality for women and propagate democratization of family. There is more scope now to observe changes in nuclear households. A comparison of nuclear and extended family households reveals changes in marital relationships with more consideration and closeness between husband and wife (Derne 1995; Kapadia and Shah 1998). Similarly, there are greater child-centered practices especially among the middle class (more so in dual-earner nuclear households). Parents now have clear aspirations and invest a number of financial and other resources in children (Gore 2003; Padma 1995; Kapadia and Shah 1998; Sinha 2003; Sriram 2003). Ironically, with more focus on child centeredness, there is less time available for both parents to spend time with their children as both are working (Ramu 1989). Working women have turned to outside agencies for childcare and support. Roopnarine and Suppal (2003) report how maternal employment brings about changes in ideological beliefs of traditional husband/wife responsibilities, where mothers and fathers have to rely on each other. Drawing from a comprehensive review of research available on the effect of women's employment on their family life and stress levels, Rajadhyaksha and Smita (2004) conclude that though for most part fathers may subscribe to traditional gender roles, there may be some signs of spouses moving towards a coparenting ideal, supporting each other's efforts in child rearing.

Based on her experiences with individual and group counseling sessions, Sriram (2003) offers a typology of different types of parents:

Type 1 Parents who fall within this type include those who are extremely anxious about their children, have high aspirations, and want to implement all that they have learnt to support their children's development to the maximum extent possible.

Type 2 Parents who fall in this category include those who are experiencing conflicts between their several roles, unable to prioritize parenting in the context of other demands and feel extremely hurt, guilty, and frustrated about the situation.

Type 3 Parents who fall in this category are those who show indifference towards their parental role at a particular time due to overinvolvement in some other sphere of life and regret it later.

Type 4 Type 4 parents are those who are irresponsible towards their children due to lack of consciousness and they take their paternal role for granted without attaching any responsibility to their role. In addition, almost all of them reflect confusions that they have undergone. They are tired of outside sources directing their behaviour.

These changes seem to have brought about a newer set of expectations regarding fathers' roles. Such changes are reflected in studies on expectations of ideal fathers. New data collating several studies on middle-class Hindu families in an urban city of Vadodara point to an expectation of a more comprehensive involvement by fathers (data collected from fathers, mothers, and children). This includes a more affectively involved father who is loving and caring, one who guides his children, and is able to maintain a balance between discipline and liberty (Sriram 2008). Similarly, in another study of fathers from the metropolises of Mumbai, Saraff and Shrivastava (2008) reported that in their sample of fathers, the most frequently cited ideal was that of a caretaker where fathers looked into all the different needs of the child. As reflections of the parental typology put forth by Sriram (2003), fathers today often fall in the category of conflicted parents who are struggling to keep up with several role demands. For instance, a study by Saraff (2010) on 350 fathers of children below 10 years in Mumbai city reveals that there is conflict between what fathers perceive and practice, especially in the role of caretaker and playmate. Her research showed that as many as 59 % of fathers perceive themselves as caretakers but only 7 % of them actually perform this role. In contrast, many fathers (51 %) acted as playmates and friends but only 15 % thought that this was an ideal father role.

Nature and Extent of Father Involvement: Evidence from Research

A holistic picture of father involvement needs to be constructed from available research evidence of fathers' involvement at different stages of children's lives; hence this section focuses on fathers roles between the pre- and postnatal periods.

Male/Father Participation in Pregnancy and Postpartum

Research on fatherhood and fathering is still very limited in India. As a result of the recommendation of the International Conference on Population and Development (*Programme of Action of The UN ICPD* 1994), it was recommended that men should be involved in women's reproductive health and assume full responsibility for their roles in the family. Some research and action has been initiated in understanding men's (husband/father) awareness and participation in women's reproductive health (macrolevel research studies by organizations like International Council for Research on Women, ICRW, or Population Council), or engaging men in dialogues about masculinity (Chopra et al. 2000; Raju 2001). Many men, especially in low-income

families and communities become fathers at a young age as there is high pressure on childbearing. It is only in families in higher-income status for whom the first birth is a more conscious decision (Khan and Patel 1997; Sriram 2003; Sriram et al. 2002). The findings of various research studies suggest the necessity of creating awareness in men about antenatal care. While men in some states of India report poor awareness about need for such care as well as the legal status of abortion (e.g., Uttar Pradesh of Northern India; Khan and Patel 1997; Singh et al. 1998), other states like Maharashtra show high levels of awareness about health and hygiene conditions required in the antenatal period and during delivery (e.g., Barua et al. 2004). Fathers' awareness regarding postpartum care is also reportedly low. A study by Sriram et al. (1998) reported that 15–30 % of husbands in their sample offered active support in care during postpartum and 30–50 % made decisions about treatment and care. Only about 10 % of fathers were concerned about decisions related to family planning. Findings from some other research studies indicate that education plays a major role in raising educated middle-class fathers' levels of awareness and responsibility for antenatal care as well as conception (Sriram 2003).

Father Involvement in Infancy and Childhood

Published studies on father involvement with young children are few and far between. Any understanding of fatherhood or fathering has been an offshoot of research from the context of parenting in dual-earner families, women and work, or childcare support needed for women/families. These studies provide enough evidence to indicate that fathers are not equal partners in caring for children or sharing domestic work, especially when it comes to routine childcare tasks (Bharat 2002; Datta and Maheshwari 1997; Ramu 1989; Rajadhyaksha and Smita 2004; Sriram and Ganapathy 1997). However, there is evidence to indicate that fathers are far from being psychologically or practically uninvolved, and do contribute to children' lives in many ways (Roopnaraine and Suppal 2003). This section and the next sections on facilitators and barriers summarize understandings gained from unpublished research.

The unpublished research studies discussed in this section have been conducted between 2000 and 2008 in Vadodara, a medium-sized city in the western part of India, with middle-class families of children without any physical disabilities and in Mumbai with data from families of children with disabilities (locomotor and mental retardation). The results reported here focus on fathers' involvement with young children up to ages 12 years. All studies had small purposive samples (ranging from 13 to 60 families) chosen through schools, daycare centers, referrals using snowball sampling method and represented variations in children's age, gender, women's employment status, and household types. The studies used an "interpretive phenomenological stance" and conceptualized father involvement based on the "generative" framework proposed by Hawkins and Dollahite (1997) and Dollahite (2002). These studies have also used the expanded template of father involvement proposed by Palkovitz (1997) comprising 15 categories of involvement as a guide

to gather data. The studies used a variety of data sources ranging from in-depth interviews, checklist, and self-completed questionnaires. The qualitative data have been recorded verbatim and analyzed in a five-step process including familiarization with data, identifying thematic frameworks, indexing, charting and mapping, and interpretation (Miles and Huberman 1994; Lacey and Luff 2001; Pope et al. 2001; Richie and Spencer 2002). Sampled fathers in these studies reported their awareness, involvement, and support for several childcare activities, especially in nuclear and dual-earning families.

Shukla (1998) in her study of fathers' role in infant care in dual-earning households found that 80 % of fathers in her sample were aware of common diseases and preventive measures, developmental milestones, and needs of infants. Thirty to fifty percent knew about appropriate feeding practices and home remedies and three-fourths believed that fathers can be involved in all activities except breast feeding. About 60–75 % fathers were always involved in food and health care matters, play, interaction, habit formation, and discipline. However, they were less frequently involved in regular routine activities of care such as changing, cleaning, and attending to child at night. They rarely took leave to attend to a sick child. Fifty percent of fathers clearly reported that they never ever told a story or sang a lullaby, and did not feel confident to attend to a sick child. Similar trends were seen in samples of lower-middle-class families with slightly lower percentage of father participation (Sriram et al. 1998). Navalkar (2007) in her study on children with disability found that about 43 % (13 of 30) participated in daily caregiving activities like bathing, cleaning and getting the child ready for school.

Qualitative studies about nature and extent of fathers' involvement in lives of 3–8-year olds by Sriram and Krishna (2000), Sriram et al. (2002), and Mattu (2001) indicate that most fathers (90 % or more) made some changes in their life to be better role models to children by consciously avoiding negative behaviors and responding to their needs. They provided for children's needs and attended to school admissions. Sixty to eighty percent of fathers participated in teaching values, fostering good habits, and maintaining discipline by setting guidelines and rules for behavior. They monitored their child's school progress, routines, company/friends, and conduct by keeping track of the child's activities. Sixty-five to ninety percent of fathers reported engagement in joint play and leisure-time activities with children. However, fathers reported to be less involved in daily tasks such as dropping and picking up their child from school and other places or supervising their child's homework. About 30 % of fathers of children with disabilities participated in such tasks. Though fathers' role as a teacher was limited in case of a child with disability, there were three main areas in which fathers actively engaged in teaching their child: instructions in self-care such as eating, walking, etc. (about 25 %); instructions on how to behave with others (about 20 %); and teaching the child the knowledge about the world (about 10 %). Fathers in a study by Navalkar (2007) reported positive attachment with their child with disability despite limitations, by paying attention to what the child could do. In a study by Sriram et al. (2002), fathers reported experience of positive emotions such as joy (90 %), satisfaction (76 %), and pride (53 %) due to their children's achievements and their own fathering actions. Fathering also resulted in many moments of

anger (62 %), guilt (65 %), frustration (32 %), and tension in fathers (45 %) due to things they could not do or the children's reluctance to comply or fulfill their wishes, indicating affective involvement. In Sriram and Krishna's (2000) study, fathers' exclusive control and decision-making was highest in discipline (73 %), followed by educational matters (40 %), and least in food-related matters (27 %) influencing food choices only indirectly. Sriram and Sandhu's (2010) quantitative analysis of levels of involvement from a sample of 60 fathers from middle-class families with primary school children in the city of Baroda revealed 64 % to be moderately involved as against 71 % reported by a sample children of similar background in the study by Kumari (2008). About 18 % of fathers were reported to be highly involved in both studies. Children rated fewer fathers on low involvement (11 %) as compared to fathers themselves (17.50 %). Fathers were highly involved in guiding and mentoring children (M = 3.20 by fathers, 3.17 by children on a scale of 4) as they desired to protect their children from developing bad habits and help them become good human beings. Fathers also reported that they were most involved in saving and planning for their child's education and future (M = 3.15 on a scale of 4) whereas children were more concerned about everyday needs and wishes though they recognized and reported other aspects. Children's rating of practical and emotional support provided by the father was higher (M = 3.36) than father's own rating (M = 3.17). Fathers stated that their involvement was intended to ease out stress and pressure for their child and to solve everyday problems, whereas children additionally focused on fathers' role in providing them emotional strength. The lowest involvement score (M = 2.55 by both fathers and children) was seen in availability and shared activities, though, about two-thirds attended school events, meetings, and watched some television programs with the child so as to guide the child; but only one in four read to their child and had outdoor time with their child. Children rated fathers lower on communication with a mean score of 2.83 and fathers rated themselves low on teaching and extracurricular activities with a mean score of 2.51. More than a third of fathers desired to be more involved in communication, teaching, availability, and shared activities. Mothers' involvement scores were a little higher than fathers in all domains, except planning and providing for children. There was positive correlation between fathers' and mothers' involvement. Children acknowledged high level of fathers' contribution, especially, in the area of positive emotional responsiveness and providing and planning for meeting their needs and wishes and inspiring them. Shah (2007) reported similar results from her sample where children's reports indicated that fathers were very accepting and adopted child-centered parenting practices. Most fathers in her study showed an authoritative parenting style irrespective of age and gender.

Facilitators and Barriers to Father Involvement: A Closer Look

Several authors have written about what factors enhance or prevent fathers' participation. In order to understand more about how these factors operate in everyday life of fathers and mothers, Sriram (2003, 2008) utilized a four-factor classification developed by her based on the literature review. This classification draws its concepts

from the social relations framework, proposed by Miller and Razavi (1998), which looks at "who does what and why?" as a part of gender analysis. These concepts have been integrated with elements in other frameworks put forth by Doherty et al. (1998), White and Klein (2002), and Lamb and Lewis (2004). The four factors can be delineated as:

1. *Practical considerations*: Both in family and job situations such as lack of time, family role demands, work pressures, etc.
2. *Personal factors*: in the family context such as temperament of the father, skills, interest, knowledge, support, etc.
3. *Gender norms*: Individual, family, and societal notions about what is right for man/father and woman/mother.
4. *Power and bargaining position*: Enables a father to escape from certain tasks at home, or on the contrary, the lack of power forces the father to accept situations against his desire.

Each of these four factors is presumed to operate at three different levels beginning from microunits such as individual and family, the community, and the state or market. The evidence from qualitative data (responses obtained from 155 fathers and 67 mothers of middle-class families through semistructured interviews and vignettes) illustrates these more vividly. Table 16.1 provides a summative overview of facilitators and barriers summarizing from the research studies by Sriram (2003, 2008) and Navalkar (2001, 2007).

Practical Considerations

Paternal participation is highly determined by practical considerations. The father supported everyday care-giving when the mother was not available or needed support, as noted in nuclear dual-earning households. The mother's income was also an added motivation for fathers to make adjustments to their schedule to enable participation. Navalkar's (2001, 2007) data showed that those fathers (of children with disabilities), who participated in physical care-giving such as feeding the child, bathing, dressing up, or putting the child to bed, did so as a response to what the child wanted or as a support to the mother as indicated in Table 16.2. The vulnerabilities of the child and time pressure/inability of the mother are factors that trigger the father's positive involvement. In other aspects, Sriram's (2003) study showed that the child's wishes were accorded priority where father took special interest to cook or buy favorite food items, toys, or clothes for the child or engaged in an outdoor activity with the child. It was also seen that fathers who were from the middle-class background, older, and had secured government employment, had work schedules that provided time for shared activities with children or they could take leave for child-related requirements.

In contrast, as seen in Fig. 16.1, practical constraints emerged as a barrier receiving 30 % of responses from fathers and 35 % from mothers, with lack of time being voiced by the majority of fathers and mothers (Jajwa 2005; Kharkanis 2005; Sriram 2003). This can be attributed to changes in the structure of the current Indian economy

Table 16.1 Facilitators and barriers in father involvement: a summary

Facets of facilitators and barriers	Factors leading to father involvement	Factors hindering father involvement
Practical considerations	*Father-related*: Time availability—optimum utilization of time for sharing parenting. Less demanding work schedule compatible with family needs *Mother-related*: Support to mother when she was busy, ill, or unable to do the task *Child's demands*: child's wishes, needs, and preference for fathers for certain tasks	Father's lack of skill in certain domains of parenting Lack of time due to demands of work and extended family Availability of others support Lack of money and resources
Personal factors of the father	Father's desire to provide the best for child and ensure welfare, giving the first priority to fathering Father's own beliefs, preferences, special skills in certain domains of parenting and desire to utilize skills of both parents optimally for the benefit of child Exposure to a good model Socialization into the fathering role	Child's preference for mother or family member for a task, or child's independence in doing a task Lack of desire or interest Overemphasis on the "provider" role only Lack of socialization for fathering Lack of positive role model—own father not involved
Gender norms	Less traditional gender role orientation/nonacceptance of gender norms Desire to become a trend setter, change maker due to negative personal experiences Mutual understanding and communication between the father and the mother Support from the mother and other family members for the fathering role	Father's perception of tasks as "mother's" or traditional gender role ideology Maternal gate keeping Fear of social ridicule from social network
Power and bargaining position	Power to set one's schedule of work Desire to utilize power and capability to negotiate with others for the child's welfare Mother recognizes father and provides space/encourages involvement Less authoritarian orientation towards wife and children	Lack of power at job for negotiation No demands on father—his lack of involvement accepted Power of the father to escape by delegating tasks to others Use of paternal authority over children
Other environmental factors	Requirement by external agencies like schools or hospitals for father's participation Encouragement and stimulation for fathering role Supportive policies and programs	Nonrecognition of fathering role/lack of family-friendly polices No demand made on fathers by others for involvement in child's life Tasks done by others besides the parents

Table 16.2 Event list matrix showing the patterns of taking on care-giving tasks by fathers either to support the mother or respond to the child's needs. (Adapted from Navalkar 2001, 2007)

Mother's situation	Child's needs/situations	Father's response
The mother is busy in kitchen cooking for family and child	The child has to leave for school and needs support to get ready	The father realizes time pressure on the mother and shares child-care activities
The mother has to get ready for work		
The mother is indisposed, unwell, and cannot carry the child	The child cannot move on his own without support	The father feels a sense of responsibility and thus gets involved
The mother is unable to carry the child as s/he is very heavy		
Fathers perceive mothers' inability to take on tasks with the child after they have initiated it	The child is in pain and in desperate need of adult support	The father is unhappy and feels helpless
		Feelings of attachment towards the child rekindled and father attempts action
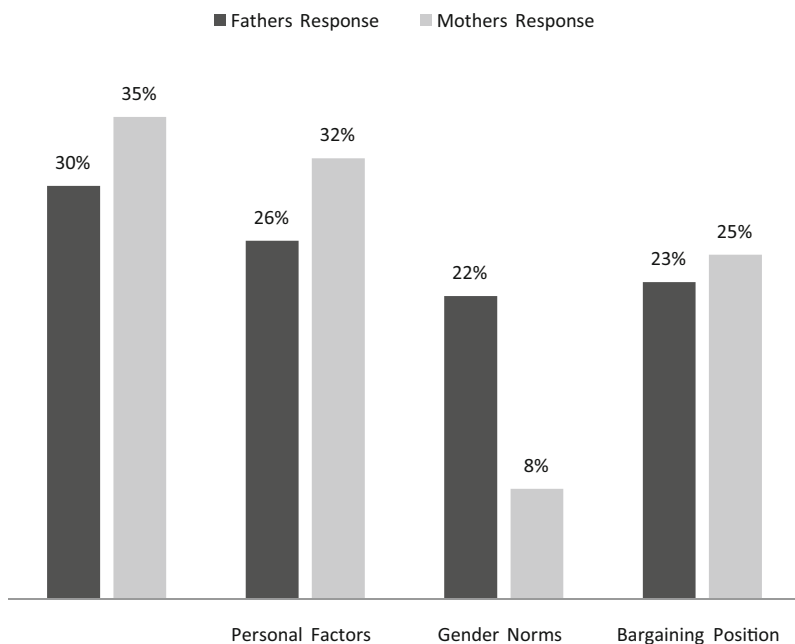
Fig. 16.1 Barriers to father involvement: mother and father perceptions. (Adapted from Jajwa 2005; Kharkanis 2005; Sriram 2003)

that frames a father's life at this time of history. For most fathers, in a privatized global economy, work has become an all-consuming aspect of life as fathers strongly identified with paid work and career success. Fathers did not have flexibility in job time; however, they have desired to augment their earnings to improve the family's financial status and ensure upward mobility of their children. Hence, it reduced their time for active involvement in raising their children. This was also true of fathers who were young, worked in private sectors, or had their own business, or were self-employed professionals. Under such circumstances, fathers tried to keep in touch with children through telephone whenever possible. Most fathers definitely felt guilty and sad for their unavailability, especially when their children were sick or had a special event in school or were unable to devote time to the child on a daily basis. Fathers in joint households stated other family demands such as the need for providing equal attention to all children in the extended family or responding to the needs of extended family members, which prevented them to attend to their own child's needs first (Jajwa 2005; Karkhanis 2005; Sriram 2003; Sriram et al. 2002). In addition, when other family members such as grandparents or relatives were available for support, some fathers tend to be less involved as reported by Sriram and Sandhu (2010).

Personal Factors

Personal factors such as the father's desire, motivation, and identification with his fathering role enable him to dedicate his skills and resources and thus serve as crucial factors for facilitating their involvement. It was found that about one-fifth to a quarter of highly involved fathers accorded first priority to fathering and shaped other aspects of life in tandem with it such as moving to city for their children's education, changing job, or adjusting familial or work demands. Fathers' own socialization and beliefs played a very important role. Some fathers emulated their own fathers who were effective role models and who transferred positive family values to their children. Similarly, fathers' beliefs about the importance of coparenting in bringing success to their child's life motivated them to support their children's education, utilize their skills and awareness about the outside world in order to seek school admissions, and support the child's school activities (Sriram 2003; Sriram et al. 2002).

The role of a provider is deeply entrenched in fathers' minds and they believe that being there for children is a moral duty ("Seva," commitment). Therefore, they displayed high levels of involvement in planning and providing for children, not only for the present but also making provisions for future education through investments. In addition, both fathers and mothers felt that in order to make wise economic choices for their children, fathers must observe and learn financial aspects from their family and social networks (Navalkar 2007; Sriram 2003).

Looking at barriers, Fig. 16.1 indicates that more than a quarter of fathers' and a third of mothers' responses revealed that men did not have certain desired qualities for care and nurture, which acted as a barrier (Jajwa 2005; Karkhanis 2005). Some lacked patience and perseverance, others were unable to commune love and empathy due to lack of training or exposure to role models, which hindered their communications

and came in the way of dealing with children. Fathers acknowledged that their own socialization did not encourage learning many tasks of care-giving and helping in household and childcare activities. Their perceived insensitivity towards child's needs and child's preference for the mother in certain tasks such as feeding, putting to sleep, or compliance deterred fathers involvement; this combined with societal and spousal acceptance of such limitations as natural act as a further barrier to active involvement in daily care-giving and shared activities (Jajwa 2005; Karkhanis 2005; Sriram 2003).

Gender Norms and Bargaining Position

Gender norms specify that certain tasks can be done and are more appropriate only for either the male or the female gender. In India, married men are under pressure to assume domestic roles and participate in childcare because of the shifting gender role ideologies and practices that emerge from within and without the economic advantages of their wives' employment. This finds validation in studies when fathers, mothers, and children express the need for an understanding, nurturing, and friendly father who actively participates in care of children (Sriram and Navalkar 2012; Saraff and Srivastava 2008). Some couples (about 30–35 %) in Sriram's (2003) study stated that their concern for child well-being and their own convenience helped them move beyond traditional gender role ideals. Such a shift was reflected more in aspects of guidance and educational support and in practical care when needed. Fathers displayed responsibility for taking decisions and performing certain outside tasks, which require negotiations with others, due to their own positive bargaining power. Such actions had a positive impact and enhanced father participation when done in agreement with mother and sometimes even involving the child. When there was a conflict between fathers own authoritarian orientation and his belief in open democratic relationship, mothers' and others' support and negotiation with children enhanced his participation in majority of the cases (Jajwa 2005; Karkhanis 2005; Sriram 2003; Sriram et al. 2002) Earlier research has revealed that fathers resist changes because of persistent conventional gender role orientations and working women's overcompensation by taking on more duties (Ramu 1989; Sriram and Ganapathy 1997). One widely held cultural notion is that involvement in childcare makes the father "good for nothing," as childcare is a feminine job and men should not be involved in it. Fathers hold this notion more (22 %) than mothers (only 8 %) as indicated by data given in Fig. 16.1 (Jajwa 2005 and Karkhanis 2005). Some fathers feared social ridicule even if they shouldered paternal tasks out of necessity or desire as reflected in the findings of Sriram and Krishna (2000) and Shukla (1998). Closely related to gender norms is the bargaining position at home and work life that fathers have. Fathers seem to have greater power to delegate work at home in terms of who does what, and escape fathering responsibilities. For example, Sriram and Ganapathy (1997) report that fathers who work with tools and implements felt that keeping the child in vicinity was dangerous, whereas they did not consider presence of fire,

water, and knives in the cooking environment of wives as causing danger to children, and delegated care to the wives. However, about a quarter of fathers and mothers in Studies by Jajwa (2005) and Karkhanis (2005) reported that fathers did not have any power to bargain for any flexibility or delegation at their workplace in order to fulfill their fathering responsibilities. It is clear from this study as well as our common observations that workplace in India does not recognize fathers' responsibilities towards their children and there are no paternity benefits except 15 days paid leave during child birth for government employees and teachers. In addition, researchers report that when fathers use their authority and demand total compliance, the child becomes friendlier with mother and other family members thus reducing fathers' influence and involvement (Sriram et al. 2002). It is also noticed that fathers tend to get involved when the school or hospital or childcare center demands his involvement and presence (Navalkar 2007; Sriram 2004).

The data presented in the last two sections provide substantial evidence to state that Indian middle-class fathers, at least in the two cities that have been covered, can be considered generative with full commitment to children. Fathers are present in the lives of children in most instances (even those who are away due to jobs, maintain contact). They provide material and financial contributions, focus on promoting academic and social competence in children, make efforts to transmit moral values, and participate in cooperative parenting. Fathers display commitment in their thought (cognitive), behaviors (actions and decisions) and at an affective level. They show that they are actively working towards promoting their child's learning, enhancing the child's personal qualities, confidence, and competence. However, their involvement in some areas is still limited. The data also highlighted that children, mothers, and fathers desire higher levels of communication, more daily involvement, shared activities, and even higher inputs in teaching. But fathers are confronted with barriers that prevent them from optimal levels of involvement. The next section therefore delineates ideas for research, policy, and practice which will support fathers to serve as equal partners in parenting.

Approaches to Fatherhood Research, Policy, and Practice in the Indian Context

Fathers are often invisible or overlooked in research, policy, parenting programs, and activities in India as indicated by the lack of attention to this theme across board.

Research

Fatherhood research in India is a fairly recent activity spanning about 15 odd years. So far, research on fathers has primarily focused on middle-class fathers in one or two cities, undertaken mostly by graduate students, except for projects understanding male roles in women's reproductive health. Within this, a number of facets of

fathering have been looked into, such as social construction of fatherhood ideals, sources of such ideologies, and fathering activities. In addition, there is a preliminary understanding about enablers and disablers to fathers' involvement, nature, and style of fathers' parenting. However, research on fathering across social classes or even what happens when fathers shoulder physical care-giving is almost nonexistent. Notions of how manhood is constructed in the Indian context can be another way of understanding the salience of the fatherhood identity in men, which will serve as a crucial element in the development of effective intervention strategy and design. Also, missing are studies on the impact of fathering on the well-being of children, women, and families so as to share success stories. Research on fathering needs to evolve into a concerted effort at understanding such neglected issues in fathering and fatherhood.

Methodologically too, the studies have relied more on qualitative approaches. Understanding of the construct of fathering needs to be validated through quantitative data from different populations. This can further be enhanced by using multiple data sources such as independent reporting by fathers, mothers, and children on fathers' involvement. Given the diversity of the country, multisite studies involving different regions and groups may lead to interesting patterns of common or divergent views.

Policy and Programs

Currently, there seems to be no systematic effort in terms of programs or policies, either governmental or nongovernmental, which address the issues of father involvement. The only positive policy move has been the introduction of 15 days of paternity leave for male central government employees, teachers of private schools, and university employees, as part of the revisions of fifth pay commission in 1997. This leave is with full pay, to be availed at the birth of a child (for two children), can be combined with any other kind of leave, and cannot be refused under normal circumstances (Times of India September, 2009; The Hindu December, 2004; Sharma 2007). Many multinational and local private companies offer 3–15 days leave with full pay for a new father when a child is born (Majmudar, n.d.; Paternity Leave, a Boon for New Dads 2009). How many use it is not known. Extending this to all sectors and encouraging fathers to use the leave is a challenge to be met.

There is some cognizance of the need for involving men and fathers as per the directive of the ICPD, by seeking male partnership to ensure reproductive health, prevent child marriage or violence against women. Organizations such as International Council for Research on Women, Deepak Charitable Trust, and Men Against Violence, OXFAM (Gujarat) have taken some steps in this regard (Personal communications, 2005–2008, Engle 1997). Other initiatives that indirectly focus on fathers include redefining issues of masculinity through films, dialogues (Aakar 2005), or literature such as "*A little book on men*" (Roy et al. 2007), and community involvement efforts in early childhood education programs. Workshops such as "G*ender and the care regime*" organized by the UNICEF and the Indian Social Sciences Trust (2009)

and "*Fathers and families—responsibilities and challenges*" (2008) organized on the International Day of Families at New Delhi in 2008, highlighted responsibilities of fatherhood and the role of men in care as an objective. It is quite evident that services and agencies are often not aware of the importance of fathers or have not been successful in integrating fathers into programs. For a vast country like India, it is nearly impossible to make a blueprint of suggestions. However, here, we offer examples of approaches based on our small-scale intervention experiences that can be built into existing programs and institutions.

Communicating Benefits of Involvement and Recognizing Fathers' Role Beyond that of a Provider   Research and experience indicates that the father's role as a "provider" is overemphasized both in beliefs and behavior and internalized by fathers to such a great extent that it frequently overrules other aspects of involvement. Hence, a mass movement to communicate information about the need and benefits of fathers' involvement not only with their children but for their own development is urgently required. Such messages need to be designed in tandem with the cultural ideals that stress fathers' duties towards children combined with the need for an understanding, friendly, and caring father as demanded by women and children. These could be in the form of posters, video and audio clips, media messages, newspaper articles, case studies, and a variety of folk forms. In order to mandate the movement and offer visibility to the issue, special efforts are needed to involve various partners from local/national news agencies, popular media, government officials involved in policy-making decisions, community groups, and institutions providing education and health services.

Integrating Fathers into Ongoing Programs at National Level to Draw on Their Strengths   Traditionally, most child development and health programs are tailored to reach out to mothers. With an understanding that men are key decision makers in the family and community, there have been efforts in recent years that focus on involving men as partners in promoting women's reproductive health, redefining masculinity, and reducing domestic violence. Similar efforts need to be taken to ensure fathers' coparenting role in families. A good start would be to integrate father involvement activities into the already existing programs such as Integrated Child Development Services, ICDS (a comprehensive service effort that partners with families and other community agencies to ensure growth, health, and preschool education of a child), that reaches every nook and corner of the country. Reaching out to enhance fathers' participation in these types of child development programs require ongoing and coordinated inputs at multiple levels. One of the ways is to build it into the agenda of training the professionals who work in the ICDS programs so that they are sensitized to the issue and include fathers on program monitoring committees of the community. The second is to work with program personnel so that they communicate with fathers about the crucial role they play in their children's lives. Dialogues must be initiated with fathers on how they can contribute their time, skills, and other resources to make life better for their own children and children in their community. Personal experience suggests that themes such as improving safety, repair of buildings, making toys and play materials for children motivates fathers for

participation. The third is to sensitize other stakeholders and program implementers to recognize their role in supporting this agenda.

In the case of families having a child with disability, successful programs like the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs for people with disability need to look at fathers' needs for information about their child's disability and services related to it as important issues that program professionals can address in their community work.

Partnering with Mothers/Grandparents for Promoting Father Involvement   Research indicates that fathers will shoulder many tasks when the mother or others are unable to do the same, for a variety of reasons. It is also quite evident that mothers overcompensate for their absence (due to work) by taking additional roles or stretch themselves willingly or become gatekeepers, all of which deter fathers' involvement. Personal experience of the first author (Sriram) in her own workshops conducted between the years 2006 and 2009 with parents and teachers substantiates this. Mothers in these workshops revealed that when they willingly relinquish certain tasks or demand father participation, fathers tend to get more involved especially in tasks that require their personal expertise. Children's positive response to their fathers' special skills acts as a motivator for further involvement. Therefore, it is imperative that programs address women groups exclusively so that they also act as enablers.

Programs for grandparents, such as the "Retired people's forum" or the "Elders' clubs," can serve as platforms to discover and highlight subtle ways in which gender norms get perpetuated. Grandparents, especially grandfathers, can be encouraged to get involved with children thereby acting as good role models for the future generation. Such interventions implemented by the first author of this chapter have been appreciated by elderly.

Programs Offered by Schools   Schools and teachers enjoy much respect and authority in the Indian society and have a wide clientele of parents. Therefore, they can be effective partners in advancing the cause of father involvement. Out of a variety of strategies tried out by the first author (Sriram), the following seem to work well and hence can be adapted by others.

- Workshops/seminars/panel discussion for parents need to be conducted with the dual objective of understanding fathers' roles, concerns, and barriers to his involvement; suggesting positive ways to promote everyday involvement, and advising how to balance work with fathering. Such workshops must integrate views from research, practice, and positive features from religion and social norms to advocate for paternal involvement.
- Training workshops for teachers and grassroots functionaries must be offered on the theme of father involvement with a special focus on assessing their own programs for father friendliness.
- There must be efforts to involve fathers in parent committees as important stake holders and also seek active participation in everyday school activities of the child. Such activities may include: seeking father's support for a school project, obtaining his signatures on home work/work sheets, sending all communications

addressed specifically to the father. Sending notes, messages on the cell phone regarding the child's progress, arranging special events in which fathers and children can participate together, or inviting fathers as resource persons for special themes in the class room, can also be effective strategies. In addition, recognizing and appreciating fathers' contribution publicly will motivate more fathers to participate in childcare.

- Schools and preschools may implement initiatives that focus on sensitizing children to gender-neutral activities through experiential exercises. Such activities may include boys taking on feminine roles, writing essays about how gender affects everyday lives. Schools may also expose children to a new world view with gender equity in family/social life and parenting through appropriate literature, audiovisual programs, and good role models of involved fathers in everyday experiences.

Conclusion

The present scenario is an opportune moment to address the issue of fathering in India in view of emerging egalitarian ideals and the desire and commitment of parents to provide the best for their children. Indian parents including fathers display high aspirations for their children and majority of urban fathers are moderately involved. They can contribute to the healthy development of their children if support is provided to them. The socialization of fathers to the fathering role is an increasing concern, as is evident from research discussed in this chapter.

Fathers are often caught between the traditional and the modern expectations. On the one hand, they are supposed to be providers and on the other they are also expected to nurture, love, and discipline the child. A father has to constantly juggle between the diametrically opposite roles of a friend and a strict disciplinarian. Added to this are social norms that attribute a set of predetermined duties to the father. The father is supposed the voice of reason in the child's mind. All these presupposed ideas and social pressures sometimes make it difficult for the father to express his feelings openly in front of the child and hence reduce his role to that of a primary provider with little or no acknowledgment of his role of a nurturing caregiver. The challenge to be acknowledged as a caregiver who is capable of loving and caring for the child is, perhaps, faced by every father. It therefore becomes necessary to make fathers aware that fathering entails wholesome participation in the child's growth and to help them overcome the gap between what is expected of them and what they can actually do. Fathers need to be appreciated and guided to increase involvement in the right direction so that they learn to utilize their special skills and talents to support children and also overcome their own inadequacies and fears. It is mandatory to ensure that fathers provide positive emotional and practical support to children to cope with the stress, rather than pressurize them for achievement. Fathers have to be helped to learn the art of balancing work with family and parenting roles in a new economy that is demanding more and more inputs from the father.

The challenge for professionals, therefore, is to find creative means to engage and motivate the father in ways that his power and status within the Indian family become supportive to enhance child development and well-being. Seeking collaborations and partnerships with fathers at community level can go a long way in the creation of democratic families, societies, and nation where children's needs and rights are ensured. Fathering is a role that needs to be played with utmost responsibility as it affects the future of the child. Hence, helping men become responsible fathers is the duty of the society. With the changing norms of the society, that fathers are increasingly becoming aware of their identity as a loving and caring individual is a major factor in the life of a child. However, there is still a need for creating large-scale awareness and making fathers in every part of the country realize their fathering potential.

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Chapter 17
Fathers' Role in Chinese Children's Education

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In recent decades, most research studies on parent involvement devote much of their effort to investigating the roles of both parents' involvement (Deslandes and Bertrand 2005; Yan and Lin 2005), and yet fathers' role in their children's education receives comparatively little attention. In the era of fast-developing economics, technology, and education, the father's role is a major concern of social workers, classroom teachers, policy makers, and researchers, both domestically and internationally. *A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning*, by the U.S. Department of Education 2000, indicates that father's active involvement can have a lasting and positive impact on their children's learning. International studies such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 2006–2007, study also pays attention to this important issue by examining parental involvement in various school activities. Researchers in the field of father involvement have focused on benefits of father involvement on their children's academic, emotional, social, physical, and behavioral development including children's self-esteem, academic achievement, attachment, conduct problems, psychological adjustment, and eating disorders (Cronk et al. 2004; Gadsden and Ray 2003; Harris 2002; Harris et al. 1998; Jennings and Murphy 2000; Miller-Day and Marks 2006; Singer and Weinstein 2000).

Given the growing attention to parental involvement in recent years (Sheldon and Epstein 2005), it is especially important to look at parental involvement in children's education in China. China has been going through huge changes in governmental

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policy, social, and family practices to keep pace with its growing economy and technological changes in the last 30 years. Although the father's role is deeply rooted in cultural tradition in China, the changing family policies and political environment in contemporary China are adding new images of fathers based on fathers' social, educational, and economic backgrounds. Chinese researchers have also examined the father's role in children's education; however, the processes through which fathers engage in children's education remain largely unexamined (Scharfe 2003).

This chapter discusses fathers' involvement in China from a historical perspective followed by father involvement practices in contemporary China based on a number of research studies. A unique feature of this chapter is its comparison of the differences between fathers' and mothers' involvements from their children's perspectives. Research shows that when fathers experience changes in economic support, unemployment, and low educational attainment, multiple barriers to paternal involvement may occur (Dallas and Chen 1998; Stouthamer-Loeber and Wei 1998); and therefore this chapter also analyzes multiple factors such as recent changes in labor market and governmental policies in China that may affect fathers' involvement.

Father Involvement in China: The Influence of Cultural Tradition

According to Lamb (2000, 2010), fatherhood has always been a multifaceted concept. Over time, the dominant motif has shifted from an emphasis on moral guidance, to a focus on breadwinning, and then to sex-role modeling, marital support, and finally nurturance. Just as the concept of fatherhood has changed over time in the United States, so have fathers' roles in different cultural settings around the world.

In Chinese traditional culture, the father has been viewed as a most important moral figure in children's education. In one of the most popular early childhood enlightened reading materials in the 1200s, Yingling Wang described the vital role of the father in a child's education in his *Three Character Classic* (三字经): "子不教，父之过." These six characters clarified that as a father, to give birth to your children and to feed your children is not enough, as it would be a father's fault if he does not also educate his children. An old Chinese saying confirms this role of father "遗子千金不如遗子一经", which means that educating your child on how to learn and live is far better than leaving behind thousands of gold nuggets to them, and thus a father's responsibility is to create educational opportunities for his children (Qian 2009). To evaluate a child's performance, Confucius suggested, "Observe his aspirations when his father is alive, and observe his actions when his father passes away" (Cai 1994, p. 8), which holds fathers responsible for their children's behavior and performance. The figures of father and mother have been upheld as "a stern father and a compassionate (loving) mother" in Chinese

family practice, and is reflected in a famous poem by Meng Jiao (孟郊) in the *Tang Dynasty Poem Collection* (Hong 1995):

> The threads in kind mother's hand,
> Becoming the coat of a traveling son;
> Thick stick sewing at son's departure,
> Meaning mother's fear the delay of son in return;
> Who says a grass having an inch heart?
> Bringing sun shining in spring to mother's love.

This poem describes a son's thoughts on his mother's love and efforts in sewing a heavy coat for him as he was leaving to become a soldier in the military. His mother's love was shown in the lines of each thread of the coat, and the son determined to return his love to the mother as a grass brings sunshine to spring season. Meng Jiao wrote a series of nine poems named *Sentiment of Apricot* for his dead son, where he used the whither up of flowers to express his grief for his son although the mother's love was highlighted. Almost all famous poems and essays written in China demonstrate the mother's role in children's education; the father's involvement was seldom used as raw material for poems and essays (Yi 2009). One of the most famous essays, *Retreating Figure,* written by Ziqing Zhu in 1925, became the standard image of good father in China—a good father only provides the indirect and silent care for his children (Li 2009).

Gender Roles in Children's Stories

Throughout the history of Chinese childrearing practices, fathers have been largely absent in children's education; rather, breadwinning remains a key role of Chinese fathers. The belief that a father should venture out to financially support his family while the mother takes responsibility for life inside the home (男主外、女主内) has influenced the everyday parental practices in China. A review of a series of classic and well-known stories regarding parental roles revealed that primarily these stories focused on maternal influences on children's education, while barely mentioning the father's roles. For example, a famous story, *The Three Moves of Meng Zi's Mother* (孟母三迁), highlights a mother's essential role in Chinese children's education. This story tells the tale of a great mother of the famous philosopher, Meng Zi. She moved home three times to avoid negative influences on her son and to find a healthy environment for Meng Zi. This story addresses the importance of the environment as well as the significance of the maternal role in guaranteeing a conducive environment for her children. Ever since, Meng Zi's mother became a role model for Chinese mothers.

The Father's Role in Contemporary Educational Practices in China

The role of the Chinese mother was further magnified during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s–1970s. Chairman Mao's statement, "women are the half sky," encouraged Chinese mothers to work hard not only inside their home, but also in their work places. With an emphasis on the mother's role in children's development in modern China, the fathers' role in children's education continues to be ignored. Many fathers still think that the "care and education" of children is a woman's business (Do and Wang 2008). However, in recent years, the scholarship on father involvement in western countries has influenced Chinese researchers. Most research studies conducted in China reveal that the father's role in children's education is at the lowest level. For example, in a study of 1,000 parents of Ningbo students, Lu (2005) found that only 25 % of fathers said that they played an important role in their children's education, and many fathers shared that they did not take enough care of their children and had used rude behaviors in taking care of their children. In a 10-year longitude study in Tianjin, Wang (2007) reported that fathers in their sample had low participation in their children's education. Only 30 % of fathers reported that they often attended parents meeting, and 20 % of fathers reported that they often provided school-work-related assistance to their children.

Lamb (2000) indicated that corresponding with the changing conceptualization of the essence of fatherhood, paternal involvement has been viewed in different ways at different times, which makes research on paternal involvement both difficult to conduct and interpret. In addition, how to measure fathers' role in a changing modern world has become a critical issue as well—prompting a shift from researchers focusing on qualitative dimensions of fatherhood to quantifiable dimensions. Many recent surveys conducted by various researchers in several metropolises in China used quantitative measures to examine the father's role in China (Chen 2002; Lu 2005). Various studies have used "the time spent with children" as a measure of the father's role in China. For example, the results of a survey of fathers of 2–5-year-old children in Shanghai showed that about 90 % of fathers in the study spent less than 1 hour every day with their children, and some fathers only spent 2 or 3 hours with their children every week (Chen 2002). The use of quantitative data, such as the use of the time spent with children as a measure of father's role, is too narrow to capture the rich picture of paternal involvement based on various social, cultural, economic, educational, and belief factors. Therefore, it is necessary to study multiple aspects of paternal involvement through a variety of research methods. The TIMSS Study gathered the status of parental involvement in each participating country by: (1) asking the National Research Coordinator of each participating country if their country had a parental involvement national policy and (2) asking principals in participating schools whether their school had involved parents in different school activities such as attending special events, raising funds for the school, volunteering for school projects, ensuring their child completes homework, and serving on school committees. However, it will provide a different perspective

on the role of parent involvement if a study gathers parental involvement from their children.

Comparison of Father's and Mother's Roles in Their Children's Education

To compare the differences in fathers' and mothers' roles in Chinese children's education and to identify factors in these differences, we conducted a study on fathers' role in two cities in northern and southern China in 2009.

Research Questions and Data Collection

The research questions asked in our study were: (1) What are the differences in fathers' and mothers' roles in their children's education in China? (2) What are the factors that cause differences in fathers' and mothers' roles in their children's education in China? The data were collected from a sample of 1,200 individuals that included 600 fathers and 600 children ranging from first grade to the sixth grade (100 children from each grade level), in various types of schools in each city including highly ranked schools, regular schools, and schools with children of migrant laborers from the countryside. This report includes a sample of 304, fathers, mothers, and children, from a large urban city in northern China and focuses only on one research question from the original study.

Instrument

The authors developed a questionnaire that consisted of three parts: (1) parent survey, (2) child survey, and (3) teacher survey. Part I of the questionnaire included 17 open-ended questions and 47 Likert scale questions for fathers and mothers to fill out separately. The 47 five-point Likert scale questions were adapted from an Indian study by Sriram and Sandhu (2008). The questionnaire asked parents to determine the degree of their involvement with their children, including emotional, moral, discipline, academic and nonacademic, and self-help skills. The open-ended questions asked parents to further share and clarify their views and experiences regarding their involvement in their children's education, including the importance of and their own expectations regarding their children's education, successful approaches to learning mathematics, and academic and nonacademic supports that they provide to their children, to name but a few. Part II of the questionnaire included 37 Likert scale questions and 4 open-ended questions for children, focusing on their views of their parents' involvement in their education and their mathematics learning. Part III consisted of a total of 18 questions for classroom teachers including 4 forced-choice items and 14 open-ended questions. The questions focused on

Table 17.1 Percentage of fathers not attending parent meeting

Grade	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Ave	N
Not attended	22	46	30	35	33	13	30	298

Table 17.2 Percentage of support to children's school work from fathers in Beijing

	1st (%)		2nd (%)		3rd (%)		4th (%)		5th (%)		6th (%)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
1. Help	3	40	0	54	2	62	6	46	4	56	10	59
2. Ask help	5	32	0	34	6	53	6	35	2	44	10	51

Note: $n = 304$ children; F = Father, M = Mother.

teachers' views on parents' involvement in their classrooms. Since the questionnaire included emotional, moral, discipline, academic and nonacademic, and self-help skills that are addressed in The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) standards for young children's learning (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE 2002) and are supported by various research studies (Morman and Floyd 2006), the questionnaire used in our study insured content validity. The multiple data sources, parents, children, and teachers, ensured triangulation. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.77 for scaled questions.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data analysis. The qualitative method was used to code and analyze the open-ended questions and the quantitative method was used to analyze the responses to Likert scale questions. This report used descriptive measures (frequency and percent) to compare the degree of parental involvement.

Results of the Study

This report only includes the father's role in their children's education.

Evidence of paternal involvement included two important aspects, availability and responsibility.

Attending Parent Meeting: Responsibility and Availability

The results of the study show a difference across grade levels regarding the attendance of parent meetings by fathers in northern China. Tables 17.1 and 17.2 show the data for fathers not attending school parent meetings in a northern city.

Table 17.1 shows that, on average, about 30 % of fathers did not attend parent meetings. It is interesting to find out from the above table that more fathers attended parent meetings for their first grade and sixth grade children; about 78 % of first graders' fathers and about 83 % of sixth graders' fathers attended parent meetings. In China, elementary school starts at first grade and ends at sixth grade. The higher rate of attendance at parent meetings in the first grade shows that the fathers pay more attention to their children's first year of schooling, while a higher rate of attendance at parent meeting in the sixth grade could reflect fathers' realizations of the importance of sixth graders' preparation for middle school entry examinations.

Direct Interactions: Teaching Children

To evaluate fathers' role, some research studies suggest focusing on how well fathers perform their roles or tasks. Currently, most studies are small-sample studies and are informed by direct observations (Lamb 2000). The striking features of fathers' roles are the diverse array of functions and the vast amount of individual and subcultural variability in defining and investing in these functions (Lamb 1995, 2010). According to Lamb (2000), one of the important functions of fathers is their direct interaction with children. To find the variability in interactions between children and their fathers at different grade levels, we investigated Chinese children's views on their interactions with their fathers in terms of children asking for individual support from their fathers. For this chapter, we present the analyses of two questions to find the patterns of direct interactions between fathers and their children and compared the father's interactions to that of the mother: (1) Does your father or mother help you with your school work? Four answer choices were: (a) father, (b) mother, (c) both, and (d) neither. (2) If you have difficulties in your school work, do you ask help from your father or mother? The same four answer choices were given: (a) father, (b) mother, (c) both, and (d) neither. Table 17.2 shows the results of students' responses to these two questions.

Table 17.2 shows that Chinese fathers barely provided help with their children's school work compared to the mothers; and children thereafter did not ask for their father's help when they have difficulties in their learning. Comparing the results at the other grade levels, fathers seemed to provide more help to their sixth grade children, although the percentage of the father's support is still very small at this grade level compared to that of the mother's support.

Figures 17.1 and 17.2 further visually address the differences between the amount of support that fathers and mothers provide to their children's education. It is very interesting to see that the trend in the degree of the mother's support is consistent with the degree of children seeking help from their mothers. The mother's support is more likely increased from the first to third grade; and it goes down in the fourth grade, and rises up during the fifth and sixth grades (see Fig. 17.1). The graphical representation of the table trend from children's seeking help from their mothers in
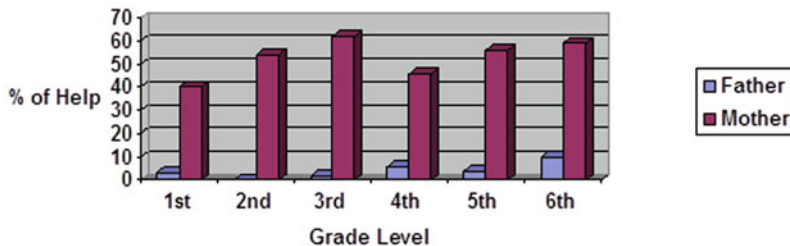
Fig. 17.1 Parents' help to their children's education
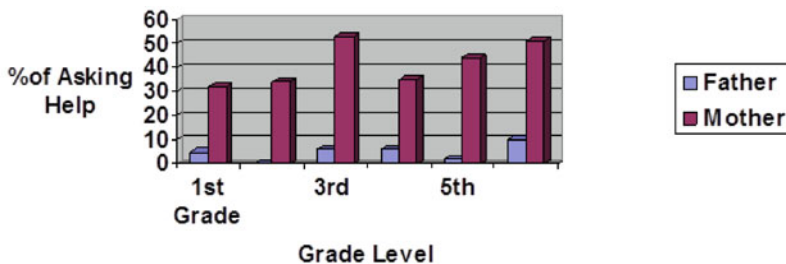
Fig. 17.2 Children seeking help from parents
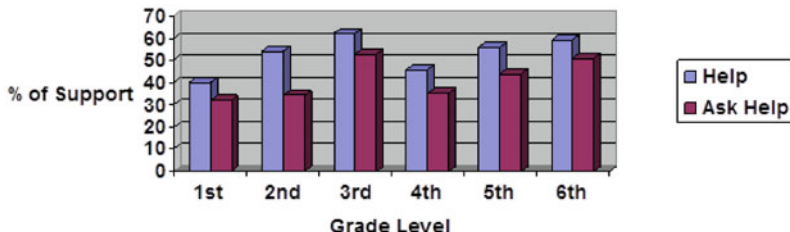
Fig. 17.3 The difference between the mother's support and the child's ask for help

Fig. 17.1 at the third grade level coincides with degree of children's seeking help from their mothers in Fig. 17.2 at the third grade level.

However, Chinese mothers provided more support than their children asked for, which is reflected in Fig. 17.3. In contrast, Chinese fathers did not provide more support than their children asked for at each grade level, except at the fifth grade level (see Fig. 17.4). In comparing Figs. 17.3 and 17.4, it is very interesting to note that Chinese mothers provided the most help at the third grade level, which is the same level at which children asked for the most help from their mothers. At the same time, Chinese fathers provided the most help at the sixth grade level, when their children asked for the most help from their fathers. Possible reasons for these differences could be the increasing levels of difficulty for content areas at the third grade level, the needs for achieving good scores on the middle school exams to get
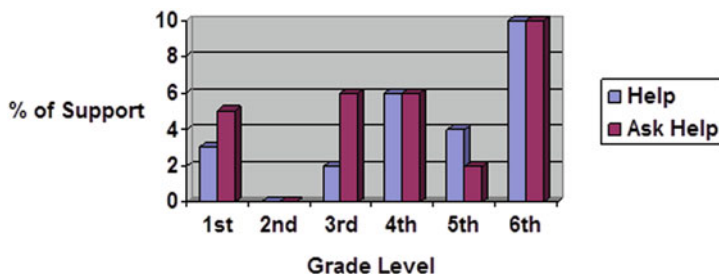
Fig. 17.4 The difference between the father's support and the child's ask for help

into a good school for sixth graders, or fathers' willingness to provide help at this particular grade level.

Our findings from Table 17.2 and Figs. 17.1–17.4 show that there is variability in fathers' and mothers' interactions with their children at different grade levels. Overall, fathers did not actively support their children's education compared to support received from mothers.

Factors that Influence Fathers' Roles in Contemporary China

Scholars in the field of father involvement maintain that "parental involvement" needs to be conceived as a social construction, which is subject to change in response to variations in social conditions (Biddle 1979, 1986; Chrispeels and Rivero 2001; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997). China's rapid development in recent decades has influenced the labor market and governmental policies, which in turn has influenced fathers' role in various ways.

Labor Market

According to the official data from 1978 to 2005, in China, labor employment rates in agriculture fell from 71 % to 45 %, labor employment rates in urban areas increased from 24 % to 36 %, and the urban labor working rate in the state-owned and government sectors fell from 78 % to 24 % (Cai et al. 2005). In the late 1990s, China experienced a painful period of economic restructuring. During this period, the entire country experienced high rates of unemployment and declines in labor force participation. Since 2002, the social economic condition has returned and the unemployment rate has fallen largely to manageable levels. China's industrial and financial policies have supported capital-intensive industry, decreasing the demand for labor, especially low-skilled workers. Evidence shows that many companies are still staffed and general job mobility remains low. A large number of displaced

workers still cannot find a satisfying job and are forced to accept a job with relatively low wages (Cai et al. 2005). Not only has men's fathering role been affected by the decline in low-skilled male labor market in China, the increase in women's entry into the labor market has also affected fathers' role. According to Hu (2003), there have been a variety of ways that women have recently entered China's labor market. The father's role as "provider" has been deeply affected; they have struggled and worked hard to support their family and have high expectations for their children.

However, the market economy creates both opportunities and challenges in China. With the adjustment of social structure, economic system transformation, and market allocation of labor resources, women face some employment and reemployment pressures and difficulties, including age and gender factors. China's overall women's employment rate has been decreasing in recent years. For example, the employment rate of urban women between ages 18 and 64 is 63.7 %, which is 17.9 % lower than that of men. A special survey showed that laid-off women workers from state-owned enterprises generally found difficulties with reemployment; 49.7 % of the sampled women believed that age and sex discrimination would affect their reemployment, which is 18.9 % higher than that of laid-off male workers (Hu 2003). Women's inability to remain employed could be a factor related to increased rates of mother involvement in children's education, thereby decreasing fathers' role in their children's education.

Although women's entry into professional and technical jobs at all levels is higher than that that of men in recent years, women's income in professional and technical jobs is lower than that of men in similar jobs (Hu 2003).

The report from a survey involving 3,633 unemployed women from eight cities conducted by China Women's Development Department (2002) indicates that unemployed women are most often above 40 years old, with 83.3 % having only middle and high school education. However, many of these women attend various vocational training programs in order to get reemployed. Reeducation not only provides opportunities for women's chances of reemployment but it also increases their confidence in getting involved in their children's education. Changes in the labor market have been deeply influencing both fathers' and mothers' role in contemporary Chinese family and society. No matter how it changes parental roles, children's education is still the top priority in the Chinese family.

"Reform and Opening-Up" Policy

The policy, "Reform and Opening-Up," adopted by the Chinese government in the late 1970s has greatly influenced Chinese people's lives, family culture, and fathers' role. This policy, while promoting international trade (Howell 1993), pushed Chinese fathers further away from their children's education.

In 1979, the adoption of the Reform and Opening-Up Policy transformed China from a centralized, planned economy to a market economy; and from a semienclosed

society to an open society. In order to maximally improve the productive force and economy, this broken people policy "铁饭碗" (iron rice bowl)—permanent employment, meant people's employment in both urban and rural areas may no longer be a secure lifelong job. The abandonment of a permanent employment policy, however, created a two-way choice between enterprise and labor—people will get more pay for more work done. One of the side effects of this policy is that parents, especially fathers, have to work more to earn more money in order to support their family, and as a result, their time for communication with their child has been decreased (Short and Zhai 1998).

China's Reform and Opening-Up Policy encouraged men to work hard to increase their family's financial status, reinforcing the breadwinner role of men (Lamb 2000) and the societal stereotype that, "male should handle external matters, while female take care family issues." For example, based on the results of a survey of 2–5-year-old children in Shanghai, Chen (2002) identifies two reasons for fathers' noninvolvement in their children's life: first, fathers' busy work leading to no time with children and second, fathers' belief that the education of children is a mother's responsibility. The results of the survey indicate that a Chinese child's education is surrounded by the motherhood culture and the fathers' role is "smeared out."

One Child Policy

The "One Child Policy" of the Chinese government, adopted in 1979, indirectly contributes to fathers' lack of direct involvement in their children's life; although, their role as "provider" is highly reinforced. Two positive direct results for China's family planning policy are that, first, children receive more attention and care from their parents and grandparents and second, that families have high expectations for their child's future career. One by-product of such high expectations has been a boom in the number of children participating in after-school and weekend enrichment programs. For example, our study found that 50 % of Chinese children in our sample attended the Math Olympics Program on weekends or winter and summer breaks. Children's participation in such programs, especially on weekends, limits their opportunities to spend time with their families, and especially with fathers, whose full-time working activities do not allow much time for interaction with their children on weekdays. In addition, these after-school enrichment programs are very expensive and force men to invest their time and efforts to increase their earnings so as to be able to support their children's participation in such programs.

Current Home-Schooling Movement

Individual father's motivation and involvement in their children's education appears to be determined by men's sociocultural background, their current social circumstances, and their earlier experiences (Lamb 2000). In recent years, as Chinese education continues to practice its traditional exam system of education,

some Chinese fathers look for alternative ways to educate their children, avoiding formal schooling. Some Chinese fathers with high educational backgrounds became actively involved in the home-schooling movement in the country. With these fathers' intense support, their children mastered curricula in a shorter time period than in a regular school. For example, Yuanjie Zheng (郑渊洁), the founder and sole writer of a very popular *children's* magazine known as the—"*King of* Fairy *Tales*," withdrew his son after he graduated from an elementary school and home-schooled him until his son was 18 years old. Now, his son is a founder of the *Pi Pilu* comic magazine (Southern Weekend 2005). Another father with a Ph.D., opened a home-schooling center when his daughter was 5 years old. The goal he set for his daughter was for her to enter a university at age 13. At age 9, Xiaoyi Yuan started helping her father with teaching English lessons for students in her father's home-schooling center. Another example is about a divorced couple fighting for an 8-year-old boy, who has been home-schooled in his father's home since 2004. The father is a doctor of Otolaryngology. After 2 years of home-schooling, he (a 4-year-old boy that time) could fluently read English China Daily, and classic works under his father's teaching. The boy's mother was opposed to have her son in the closed educational practice of home-schooling. She was concerned that it would be very difficult for her son to be a part of the collective society in the future and believed that a sound personality is far more important than that of a lonely genius. In April 2006, his daughter appealed to be granted guardianship of her son in a Beijing court. However, the Beijing First Intermediate People's Court made a final ruling in favor of the father having custody of the boy. Although concerns over the long-term impact of home-schooling programs have been raised, involvement of some educated Chinese fathers in the home-schooling of their children is a very interesting trend.

Implication for Researchers

According to *A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning* by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000), fathers, no matter what their income or cultural background, can play a critical role in their children's education. When fathers are involved in their children's education, children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior. These findings suggest the importance of fathers' involvement in children's education.

This chapter shows that the father's role in China is greatly influenced by its cultural tradition and ongoing changes in the society. Although the role of the father is deeply rooted in family practices, the reality of paternal involvement within China's diverse contexts of fathers' social, educational, and economic backgrounds shows both enduring as well as changing aspects. Despite an increasing attention to the role of fathers; the labor market and governmental policies have been slow to recognize fathers' responsibilities beyond their "breadwinning role" so as paternal

"quality engagement" in children's daily lives. While at the same time, with increasing opportunities in the Chinese society at present, some fathers are highly involved in their children's lives.

To fully understand the father's role, more research studies are needed.

The results of our study point to the need for research on examining paternal involvement in daily lives of children and comparing mothers' and fathers' involvement. Our study also suggests that a father's role ought to be perceived as dynamic—one that meets children's diverse needs in this fast-growing and technologically advancing era. Therefore, researchers may track the changing roles of fathers in fast-growing economies.

Based on our empirical research and observations in this study, we recommend that researchers investigate fathers' roles from Chinese children's views and adopt multiple methods to capture the complexity and changing role of paternal involvement in the Chinese society. To enhance Chinese fathers' involvement in their children's education, invitations for involvement from important others are often key motivators of parental decisions to become involved (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997). These important others include schools, teachers, and their own child. These invitations suggest to parents that participation in their child's learning is valuable and is expected by the school and its members (Anson et al. 1991; Comer and Haynes 1991).

Implication for School and Practitioners

Evidence shows that school-initiated activities can help parents change the home environment, which in turn can have a strong influence on children's school performance (Leler 1983). Because of fathers' work schedules, schools could provide weekend workshops to train fathers on how to facilitate their children's development and learning through play-based academic activities that are both enjoyable and challenging. For example, schools may provide a "dad's night" to bring fathers together to share success stories, challenges and ideas for involvement in their children's lives. Schools could organize a "parent math night" to engage parents in activities that help them understand challenges in their child's mathematics learning and to master strategies to support children as they advance their understanding of mathematical concepts. In addition, schools might consider providing a homework packet that includes take-home materials for parents and children to work together at home. Teachers may post many such activities on the school's website so that parents could access these activities anytime.

Technology might be used as an alternative route for father and schools to communicate with each other. Modern communication tools such as telephones, emails, discussion forums, twitters, blogs, and the free Internet access programs such as Skype can be used to involve fathers in school activities and communication. Avoiding the scheduling limitations of traditional face-to-face communication, modern technological tools allow fathers to receive information quickly and to provide

feedback about their child in a more flexible manner. By taking advantage of modern technologies, fathers can become involved in their children's education anywhere and at any time. For example, if a father is often absent during his child's regular home work time due to work, he might provide his assistance via email, cell phone, or chat over the Internet through the Skype program.

In addition, our findings indicate that schools should pay more attention to the child-father relationship in family education. As we found that students in China tend to seek help from their mothers rather than their fathers, our recommendation is to encourage children to communicate with their fathers. Moreover, school may provide more parental communication opportunities so that teachers can assist parents in identifying their children's needs and help them come up with strategies to provide assistance. Furthermore, the schedule for parent education workshops should be flexible in order to facilitate greater participation by both parents. Epstein et al. (2002) developed a research-based typology of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. These six types of involvement may help guide schools in designing father involvement programs that meet both children's and fathers' needs.

Some ideas for schools/preschools to consider:

- Acknowledge fathers as skilled and important caregivers and recognize fathers' important role in early learning.
- Share research studies on: (a) how fathers can have a positive impact on their children, (b) how it benefits fathers themselves and the entire family, and (c) how fathers and mothers have differential impact on children.
- Realize that each father has unique strengths, needs, and challenges and individualize resources and father involvement programs accordingly.
- Take into account the key aspects of engagement (such as paternal characteristics, maternal characteristics, family characteristics, child characteristics, and societal/environmental factors) while designing father involvement programs.
- Provide fathers with a list of available resources to meet their individual needs.
- Provide a wide range of support services that are comprehensive and long-term.
- Encourage highly involved fathers to serve as role models for other fathers.
- Identify and utilize fathers' unique abilities/expertise (music, sports, and career-related strengths) and utilize these expertise in the curriculum to enhance fathers' involvement.
- Mobilize advocacy groups to advocate for family laws that will support father involvement such as paternity leave and corporate-sponsored childcare facilities so that fathers could visit their children during work hours.

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Chapter 18
The Father Image in Japan

Traditional Roles and Emerging Realities in Conflict

Michelle Henault Morrone and Yumi Matsuyama

"Tradition" rules in Japan. Because of it, in Japanese terms, just as an individual cannot divorce himself or herself completely from the social unit with which he or she is identified, a father is not a free agent, making decisions without consideration for the underlying social expectations. The strains of what George DeVos terms *role narcissism* pushes the individual in Japan not only to meet his personal standards but also to serve the socially defined standards of a particular group (1973). This affects the degree to which a worker, either man or woman, can invest himself or herself in a childrearing role. For Japanese fathers, the mere notion of fatherly involvement suggests divided loyalties and presents a dilemma. Conservatives claim that this is contrary to the "traditional" order in which men dominate the work world and are not much of a presence at home, although in truth this "custom" is relatively modern in Japanese history. Politics aside, contemporary economic and demographic necessities have opened new avenues for participation by Japanese fathers in childrearing. Just as for mothers, by law, all fathers are entitled to take child-leave once a baby is born.In talking to young fathers about their right to participate, however, we found that choices are not made without fear or risk (Morrone and Matsuyama 2010). As has happened in Japanese modern history up to this point, the shifting of parental responsibilities will depend much on how social and economic forces will forge a new, acceptable ideology of fatherhood that can become tradition.

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History of Father/Male Involvement Image in Childcare and Education

Past traditions of father involvement do exist in Japan. Prior to Westernization, Japanese fathers occupied high status within the extended family while still being actively involved in the education of each child. In particular, during the Edo Era, the agrarian/merchant economy utilized apprenticeship-based educational models wherein fathers, visible and active members of the local economy, took on great responsibility for the education of their children. Because women also contributed to this economy, childcare could not be solely the responsibility of the mother, or even of the immediate nuclear family.

The Meiji government's Civil Code of 1898 is characterized by imported ideas. The Code's Confucian-based (Chinese) notions regarding the authority of the family patriarch were further influenced by the more newly imported European patriarchal ideas, creating a household registry system that would solidify the father's legal and guardian status. Inheritance was passed through the older son of the family, who would become head of the, *ie*, or household, while female siblings were married off to other families (Nakane 1970). The Allied Occupation (1945–1952) replaced the Code with new laws, destroyed primogeniture, and encouraged equality and *demokurashi* (democracy) intended to make husbands and wives equal partners, though with separate roles. This new model of family was considered the cornerstone of the country's economic and social success after the war; the image of the all-sacrificing mother at home, overseeing the education of her children while father toiled long hours at the company, became the idealized version of typical middle-class Japanese life (Vogel 1963).

During this time of rebuilding war-afflicted Japan, work in the *kaisha*, or company (as opposed to shop-keeping or farm work) became identified with the moral goodness that would lead to family success. The father's contribution to this effort reinforced a positive identity as a person and a citizen. As he became more connected with work than with home, a father who spent too much time at home would reflect badly on him as a worker and his family would be regarded as unstable. Too much time at home interfered with the wife's role in the domestic realm, making murky, and thus undermining, the lines of authority and sense of gender-based responsibility. "Traditional" duties were reframed to fit modern life. The father's traditional job of bathing with the children, for example, was reserved for weekends when he could return before the kids were asleep. The mother took over the decisions regarding household finances and community activities. The standardization of social life during the postwar era was a welcome contrast to the wartime chaos that had preceded it. Families became more pragmatic—births were spaced evenly and fewer children were born, women and men's roles were clearly split, and an overall demarcation of duties in family and work-life became the accepted model of social organization (Coleman 1983). Yet fathers paid dearly for this arrangement. By the late 1980s, incidents of *karoshi*, death by overwork and stress, had become commonplace stories in the media, and this ushered in a reevaluation of the work ideal and resulted

in corporate efforts to limit work time and work-related legislation (White 2002). It seems the time had come to relax and enjoy life.

Current Discussions, Trends, and Practices

Despite all intentions to relax work-time for fathers through bubble and boom, and the increasing necessity for women participation in the workforce, the strong status image of the Japanese middle-class family has continued to exalt the mother/child bond, securing the wife's reign over the domestic sphere. This ideal is further encouraged by government policies that influence family decisions. For example, a tax deduction is allowed for a dependent spouse (usually wife) who makes less than $ 10,000 per year, urging many married women to remain as part-time/nonbenefit workers with an average hourly wage of approximately $ 10/hour (RECRUIT 2009). This tax law alone may be responsible for the fact that 73 % of female part-time workers are married (The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare 2006, 2007). The message conveyed by the government via the tax system is that it is better for women, even highly educated ones, to limit work so as not to conflict with prioritized roles as home. Research revealing that 70 % of married women say that they depend solely on their husbands for sustenance suggests the degree to which the breadwinner/homemaker division is supported by Japanese society (The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare 2007).

Other policies that directly affect the father's working culture are revealed in the practice of *nenkojoretsu*, or lifetime employment, a government-enforced practice that guarantees steady salary raises and promotions by age, and *shushinkoyou*, a law that protects full-time employees from being fired until retirement age. These customs are designed to keep the breadwinner (usually father) working steadily and consistently throughout a long career until retirement age while the housewife manages the budget and other decisions of the household. Integrated after World War II to ease the war's ill stresses on the family, these policies have had a long-term effect of likening the father to a kind of Drone bee, largely uninvolved in home matters because his responsibility *and his presence* lies at work.

Another accepted practice, not government-related but nevertheless common, is *tanshin-funin* (father transferred and living away from home). This further exemplifies the heroics of a father sacrificing his own interest to be with the family for the sake of that family. These fathers are encouraged to rationalize being away while still *feeling involved* with their children. This is the stereotypical "company life" model, but as with many societies, there are aberrations within its stratified layers. Since the initial postwar model, there have been the more "unusual" couples—those who uphold a dual-career family, gay couples, those who quit the prestigious company rat-race in order to start a business, those who divorce, and in recent years of economic decline, those families with no clear "breadwinner" job.

Perhaps because these jobs are quite rare than they were in the previous genera-
tion, the glamour of *maihomushugi* (my-home-ism) as presented in the media, has
become an even more attractive ideal of successful family life—the nuclear fam-
ily and grandparents clad in fashionable clothes in a clean, contemporary house,
reaping the benefits of the breadwinner-homemaker partnership. That the Japanese
father has been more of an absentee figure in childrearing and an infrequent visitor
at this idealized home is felt to be a regrettable but inescapable sacrifice. Staunchly
devoted and with a historical memory of his role as the respected father of old, the
Japanese company-man father has come to hold a weak position within the home.
Popular TV shows and comics have depicted the lowly salaried worker being doled
out a meager allowance from his pushy wife and laughed at behind his back. Little
boys no longer want to become salarymen, but dream instead of being sports figures
or entrepreneurs—the self-made men. The economic decline of the 1990s not only
changed the image of the "salaryman" worker but also left a window for the worker
to reemerge as a more independent person. With this has also come a greater social
recognition and respect for men to share in household and caretaking responsibilities
when their positions as workers can allow it. There is no great social stigma attached
to a man who picks up a child from daycare because it is more convenient for him
rather than the wife, to do so.

Policies Adopted by the Government to Involve Fathers/Males

As we have noted, the economic downturn and the falling birthrate have been the
main catalysts for change regarding policies that placed emphasis on father involve-
ment in childcare and represents economic justification for taking advantage of policy
changes (Morrone and Matsuyama 2010). Modeled after similar policies in Scan-
dinavian countries, the Japanese policy makes equal a legal right for both parents
to take leave after the birth of a child. It was believed that work-leave for childcare
purposes combined with the increase of dual-career families might, as it was true in
Sweden, energize the economy and bring demographic relief at the same time. So
far, this has not happened. Since the enactment of the Parental Leave Act of 1991, a
number of revisions have taken place, with the latest one in September 2009. With
each revision, slight changes in the percentage of usage of the policy can be noted:

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)
1999	0.42	56.4
2002	0.33	64.0
2004	0.56	70.6
2005	0.50	72.3
2007	1.56	89.7

Source: Shigeki Matsuda (2006). *Dansei no ikujikyugyoshutoku
wa naze susumanaika* "Life Design Report."

As Matsuda points out, the Japanese government proposed in its *Kodomo Kosodate oen Puran*, (encouragment of childrearing) childcare policy plan, a raise in the overall number of parental leave taken with target increase to 80 % for mothers and 10 % for fathers by the year 2014. By 2007, the target number for women was nearly reached but that for men was still nowhere close to the target. What this shows is that in Japan, legal rights have far less influence than social awareness and structural change within the existing social systems. On a more positive note, the changes, though incremental, do indicate a growing desire for young parents to utilize leave rights, suggesting a general relaxing of the work-ethic mood among young parents, a growing understanding among companies, and a reflection of less "true" full-time/permanent employment work.

As can be seen below, the existing law makes it legally easy for either parent to take the leave if they have experienced a full-time position. The enacted parental leave law currently states:

1. *Eligibility*: Caretaker taking leave may be either male or female.
2. *Working status*: Must be employed by the same employer for over 1 year.
3. *Time eligibility*: Must take leave before the child turns 1-year old with the allowance of two exceptions: (a) inability to find adequate day care for child or (b) the main caretaker is incapable of taking care of the child.
4. *Documentation and procedure*: Required request in the form of an official document is submitted to the work place with the following information: name of the child, date of birth, relation with the caretaker, dates of the request, and statement of purpose. The paper must be submitted 1 month prior to the start of parental leave (although this may vary slightly between public and private employees).

Potential for Change: Research-Based Suggestions for Furthering Policy Directions

At present, the authors see three main influences of change from the immediate postwar household model to one of increasing involvement of father/males: (1) the necessity to increase the tax base by increasing dual-income families, (2) the acknowledgment of the increasing age of marriage and its effect on family life, and (3) the acceptance of the changing image of the worker.

Increasing the Tax Base

The once-sensible economic model of family with two children has now wrought a new problem: Japan is in the midst of a demographic disaster that could spell its potential extinction. In response to this, the government created the "Angel Plan" in 1994, which provides government funds to qualifying families with three or more children. When first introduced, the plan created some controversy because it elevated

the private matter of raising children to national/social importance. (The last time the government did this was in the 1930s, as it prepared itself for wartime.) In addition, it raised the unpleasant truth that families existed with more "need" than others. Cultural ramifications revealed that despite traditional notions of an ideal family network welfare system, not all families can afford to take on the welfare of their grandchildren.

Private companies, too, were expected to participate in creating policies that would help to promote greater access to childcare facilities, flexible working hours, and opportunities for childcare leave. Over a decade has passed since plan implementation and demographics do not show significant change. The Japanese birthrate remains one of the lowest in the world with one of the highest death rates (1.37 %) of elderly (The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare 2009). One problem is that currently the policy concentrates funds on programs for the elderly rather than into programs for young families; less than 5 % of funding goes to programs for young families while the remainder is set aside to aid the elderly. If it is to be true to the models suggested by OECD report in 2006, more focus should be put on programs that encourage young family life and the stresses of two working parents (OECD 2006). Families with dual incomes should be encouraged by more lenient tax deductions for them and more options to cover the expenses of additional childcare costs.

Older Couples, Older Grandparents

Marriage has long been considered a stepping-stone to adulthood, proving one a responsible member of society. Traditionally for men, it is the reward for securing a stable social position and promised career advancement and for women, it is the proof that her life is directed. Marrying at the appropriate time is considered as very important. A common saying likened an unmarried woman to a "Christmas Cake," who, like the cake the day after Christmas, is unattractive past the ideal age of marriage of 25. But this saying has long been obsolete. In 1975, the average age for marriage was 25.7 for women; 27 for men, with the average age of a mother giving birth to her first child at 25.7. In 2006, the average age at marriage had increased to 30 for men and 28.2 for women, with the women's age at first childbirth at 29.2 (Cabinet Office, Naikakufu 2007).

In addition, the rate of unmarried men between 30 and 50 has been increasing over the decades. It was 25 % in 1985, 33 % in 1995, and 47 % in 2005 (The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2007). Reasons for men choosing not to get married and have children are directly related to a feeling that they are not capable of being a reliable breadwinner as was true in their own father's generation (Yamada 2004).

For couples that marry at a later age, the onset of childbirth may be delayed or avoided entirely, resulting in fewer children being born and no young grandparent cohort nearby to aid in caring for them. For the young, uneducated mother with no career, there is no adult education program to support her in returning to school or pursuing work in order that she could contribute to the economy. Professionals and

nonprofessionals alike are in need of greater diversity of childcare support during the early years of parenthood.

The Changing Image of the Worker

The present generation was raised on the ideal of fatherhood in which individual sacrifice was made for the sake of the family. The current ideal father is more of an individual; someone who can be casually fashionable, not hiding his own interests, hobbies, and devotion to his family. Because Japanese culture is sensitive to image as part and parcel of one's individual status, the encouragement of further development regarding the positive father/domestic image offers great potential for change. Japanese identity, in Lebra's (1992) terms, is focused greatly on the interaction of both presentational (public/outward) self and the intricacies of the inner self. Since legal opportunities have not reaped the changes sought by initial parental leave legislations, it may take the softer authority of social models—even those assisted by industries such as fashion and technology, to reintroduce more positive status cues related to the good worker who can also be devoted to his or her own family.

Grassroots Movements: Nonofficial Programs of Father/Male Involvement

Japan remains a country where top-down decisions are honored out of respect for the decisions of an elite who have been burdened with the responsibility to make them. Consequently, there are few programs that can survive easily outside of the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Welfare.

Private grassroots movements are not, however, nonexistent and may reveal where cracks in the present system are beginning to affect change. We discovered areas where individual parents organize informal groups to help with sports events or to give an opportunity for fathers to share their ideas about the school and its system. The programs do not get any public funding, and rely solely on volunteer participation, unlike the formal PTA-type programs in schools funded by the public ministries.

In one case, a former PTA president has formed an informal gathering of fathers and mothers with the hope of garnering support for what he believes is a necessary outlet for parents regarding their children's education. Unable to freely discuss such matters in the PTA, this group hopes that the inclusion of more members will have an eventual effect on the concerned school's PTA conservative focus and structure. The group meets at a local Chinese restaurant once every 2 months and the agenda is open-ended. Topics are diverse but tend to end with a focus on getting familiar with the school community and feeling enough trust with one another to air criticisms regarding the school and PTA decisions.

In a recent meeting observed, the former president commented: "The problem is that we need more fathers to get involved enough to know what is going on in the school. If they see that, then parents as two, not just one, can have more power to effect change when it is needed. As it is now, it is far too conservative—and we younger fathers are not happy with the status quo anymore. We want a say-so in our kids' education, too." (Former PTA President, I Elementary School).

Recent Studies: Changing Attitudes, Still Ambivalent

In one study, Tendo found that Japanese men do not suffer from a fear that child-care is associated with emasculation (Tendo 2005). Gender-segregated marital roles, although diminished, still *appear* to dominate in society, although our interviews found that the character of that role has changed. Japanese fathers suggested that they enjoy taking care of children almost to the same degree as their wives. Tendo (2005) also found that they are more likely than mothers to claim that raising children has given them a "renewed excitement about life and a reason for living." If these statements are really true, then why not take parental leave when it is offered?

In our study, fathers and mothers explained that they believed strongly in equality in marriage, home, and childrearing. Starting from elementary school, Japanese boys and girls are taught equally and in the same class, the rudiments of basic cooking, sewing, and life skills. It is not unusual for a father to say that he enjoys cooking. A cartoon, "Cooking Papa," popular when members of the current generation were children, depicted a father, very muscular and masculine, who was also an excellent cook. Still, our interviewees said regretfully, that these are idealized images and do not represent what is truly expected from an individual in the current work culture. Studies also show that Japanese professional women express guilt if they cannot manage to prepare the expected home-made box lunches for their children (Meguro and Yazawa 2003).

Interviewee fathers who worked for large, prestigious, corporations with clearly stated policies for paternal leave often remarked that taking leave for a long period of time could put them "out of touch" with developments at work. If they were too far removed from the team, they could not easily pick up where they left off. They might run the risk of being considered irresponsible or incompetent, or just plain selfish. For fathers in smaller companies (where the majority of people work), this same fear was also compounded by the psychological pressure of knowing that taking off was going to cause coworkers extra burden. Because a company cannot legally fire an employee, incompetence, irresponsibility, or any array of behavior deemed "selfish" can be used to "convince" the employee to volunteer his/her resignation. It goes without saying that in a long economic slump, greater caution is heeded. Even for one interviewee father who debated whether to take a leave because his wife's salary and position was better than his own, he finally did not out of fear of social, albeit vague, reproach that it was "not the right thing to do."

Directions for the Future: Trends and Challenges

An economic situation demanding the energy of both parents in both realms of work and home is on the horizon. As this changing social reality encourages fathers to become more involved in all aspects of their children's lives, their presence in school settings and social events will herald their return to the family, as well as to a social world from which they have been largely absent. Recreating an identity for men that satisfactorily encompass the multitude of roles a father has—as worker, parent, and husband, is an enterprise that takes more than the writing of government policies. Here are some suggestions that, we consider, are key to successful transition:

- The government as the ultimate role model for workplace policies, followed by large companies, should *require* paternal leave and maternal leave to be taken, otherwise individuals will not risk taking advantage of the policy.
- Workplaces should not only offer flextime schedules to full-time fathers but provide staff to assist them with their childcare via on-site daycare facilities when possible.
- Schools should be structured with the expectation that *both parents* should participate equally in school matters and events.
- Schools should take active part in disseminating information, organizing parent information sessions to discuss the benefits of the parental leave policy.
- Schools need to offer parent education programs that highlight the need for father/male involvement, showing the positive impact of fathers' involvement on their children's social, emotional, and academic development as documented by researchers around the world.
- Workers who exhibit a desire to spend time with family, as well as with other outside interests that define them as contributing members of a community, should be seen as role models not as a threat to workplace solidarity.
- Schools, with the support of the Ministry of Education, should ensure gender-neutral curricula, encouraging both girls and boys to imagine a full range of future opportunities for themselves. Teacher training should include pedagogies that encourage the reimaging of the father's role in childrearing, education, and society as a positive, supportive one. Regarding this issue, teachers should be made aware of ways that develop cognitive, emotional, and psychological readiness in children of both genders.
- Schools and companies should have women workers in percentages that better reflect the proportion of women receiving higher education (over 50 %) *and hire and attempt to retain* a higher percentage of female workers at all levels of the business, educational, and governmental hierarchies.
- Restructuring the company system in order to promote better gender equality promises to even out responsibilities that currently prevent men from leaving positions for childcare purposes.

Conclusion

Japanese gender and parental roles are in a state of flux. A balance has yet to be struck between the still prevailing ideal of selfless commitment to one's workplace and the emerging paradigm of the working-couple family model necessitated by economic realities. So long as the Japanese work commitment is seen as taking priority over all other activities and relationships, even familial ones, and marriage is regarded within the labor system primarily as the means by which male employees can be "freed up" for their all-important role as workers, it will be difficult for a social system to emerge that permits a division of childcare responsibilities that transcends traditional gender roles. It is up to workers to assert their right to go home to their families, and it is up to companies to smile on them as they do so. This, too, is important work. With more fathers taking on these responsibilities in schools/preschools, the nature of teaching and learning, too, will change. When the name of the PTA executive meeting is changed to "*hahadai*," (mother-chair meeting), a new era of parenting that perceives fathers as equal partners in childrearing will have arrived, and a new tradition of fatherhood can begin.

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Chapter 19
Father Involvement in Taiwan
A Progressive Perspective

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Father: What makes you so happy today?

Mother: My company has decided to promote me to the position of manager.

Father: Really? That's wonderful!

Mother: Thank you for staying home to take care of the family so that I can be worry-free and be devoted to my profession.

Father: I am pleased that your professional skills are being recognized and appreciated.

Son: Dad and Mom are both great!

The above dialogue can be found in a lesson on gender roles in one of the main third-grade social studies textbooks adopted in Taiwan (Unit 5 on *Family Life*; Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Corporation 2009a, p. 62). The dialogue is embedded in a colorful comic strip depicting a contemporary family at the dinner table. This modern-day family is portrayed with the father carrying a hot bowl from the kitchen, serving dinner to a set of grandparents, a mother, a son, and a daughter. All the family members are happy and proud as the dialogue unfolds. The mother shares her good news regarding her promotion at work and communicates her appreciation to

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the father for staying at home to take care of the household. The lesson reviews the shift over time in parental responsibilities for Taiwanese mothers and fathers. This colorful modern scene is contrasted with two black-and-white photographs of historical pastimes: one depicts a mother preparing a meal in a kitchen with an old-fashioned stove and fireplace hearth, and the other portrays a father behind a water buffalo, plowing a muddy field. The text describes the traditional role of mothers as "staying at home taking care of household chores," and the role of fathers as "working outside of the house, providing for the whole family." Noting the historical shift in time, the accompanying Chinese text translated to English states:

> Along with the era change, the expectations toward males and females have also changed in modern society. Females are able to receive an education, work outside the home, and occupy jobs that were once considered only for males. Males can be considerate and choose to stay at home, raising children and taking care of housework. Consequently, male and female characteristics and behavior can change by changing social expectations (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Corporation 2009a, p. 62).

Although the percentage of "stay-at-home fathers" is relatively low in Taiwanese society, the lesson offers examples to young children of non-stereotypical gender schemas and parenting roles. Given that the cultural media has an influential role on young children (Lan 2007; Roberts and Bachen 1981; Signorielli 1990; Trepanier-Street and Romatowski 1999), such lessons portraying examples of progressive father involvement encourage promising changes for future generations. This chapter provides a review of historical perspectives, government and social policies, research studies, and progressive portrayals in the cultural media as related to Taiwanese paternal involvement.

Historical Perspectives on Gender Roles in Taiwan

Heavily influenced by Confucian philosophy, the traditional Taiwanese kinship system supports a patriarchal ideology where women assume a subordinate role to men. Traditionally, fathers are viewed as family disciplinarians and financial providers, while mothers are perceived as homemakers who take care of the family and raise the children. Stereotypical gender roles are now being challenged, however, as socioeconomic and political transformations in Taiwan have given rise to a gender-conscious middle class, one unwilling to accept the old saying that "men take care of the outside" and "women take care of the inside" (Beckert et al. 2006; Ho et al. 2008, 2010). Taiwan's economic development from an agrarian, labor-intensive system to a robust capitalistic system earned it the title of being one of the four *Asian Tigers* (along with Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea*).* Its political system shifted from authoritarianism to democracy, with its first direct election of a president and vice president in 1996 and its first election of a female vice president in 2000.

Corresponding with various socioeconomic changes in Taiwan, more women are also now joining the workforce (from 39 % in 1979 to 50 % in 2008; Directorate General of Budget 2009) and birth and fertility rates have been dramatically decreasing—birth rates from 25.67 in 1971 to 8.54 in 2008 (Directorate General of

Budget [2010]), and fertility rates from 3.71 in 1971 to 1.05 in 2008 (Department of Household Registration Affairs n.d.). In fact, according to recent annual reports, Taiwan has one of the lowest birthrates in the world (Population Reference Bureau [2008], [2009], [2010]). At the same time, multigenerational households are becoming less common, while the number of dual-income nuclear households is increasing.

In a study comparing gender role attitudes of married women and men in Taiwan and China, Tu and Chang ([2000]) found that in Taiwan, older-aged women held more traditional attitudes about husbands' roles as breadwinners compared to younger women who held more egalitarian beliefs. In addition, women with higher educational levels and fewer children also possessed more egalitarian attitudes toward their role in taking care of the family. Among men, those with higher educational levels or wives employed outside the home also held more democratic perspectives with respect to the division of domestic work. The results of their study suggest that social changes occurring in Taiwan (e.g., women in the workforce and lower fertility rates) are related to more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles. Along with changes in social attitudes and the structures of family households, parenting responsibilities are becoming less gender-bound, and the roles and involvement of parents (particularly those of fathers) in the everyday lives of their children are being redefined. Such social, economic, and political changes in Taiwan have had important influences on national parenting policies and sociocultural reforms.

Government and Corporate Policies/Programs that Promote Father Involvement

Parent Involvement in Schools

Parental participation in schools is still relatively new within Taiwanese culture; traditionally, this involvement was viewed as interference with teachers' authority and expertise. In 2006, however, the Ministry of Education enacted "Regulations for Parental Involvement in Compulsory Education School Affairs," mandating parent involvement programs in elementary and junior high schools (Ministry of Education, Taiwan [2006]). Both federal and local government funding was provided to endorse parent-teacher conferences, to increase volunteering opportunities for parents, and to strengthen communication among school staff and families. To further support parental involvement, Taiwan established 25 family education centers with "parent-child study-together programs" (Ministry of Education, Taiwan [2009]).

Gender Equity in School Curriculum

The Gender Equity Education Act was instituted in 2004 in order "to promote substantive gender equality, eliminate gender discrimination, uphold human dignity,

and improve and establish education resources and environment of gender equality" (Ministry of Education, Taiwan 2004). The Act stipulated that all schools have a gender equity education committee whose tasks include "promoting curricula, teaching, and assessments on gender equity education."

Parental Leaves

Recent changes in employment leaves for new parents also reflect evolving social attitudes toward father involvement. The Gender Equality in Employment Act of 2002 ruled companies must allow employees, both mothers and fathers, up to 2 years of unpaid parental leave per child, until that child reaches the age of 3 (Council of Labor Affairs 2008). However, successful implementation of this policy has proven challenging, and leave policies vary greatly among Taiwanese employers. While some companies offer paid time off, others threaten demotion for employees who use their leaves. For those companies who do not offer paid leaves, the Employment Insurance Act of 2009 was recently instituted to provide partial salaries through subsidy programs (Council of Labor Affairs 2009). Specifically, employees who have paid into Taiwan's basic labor insurance program for at least 1 year can receive 60 % of their salary for up to 6 months; however, the impact of these more recent reforms on father involvement remains to be seen. The next section reviews the research on father involvement in Taiwan.

Research on Father Involvement in Taiwanese Society

Studies that have examined father involvement in Taiwanese society today are limited. In one study, Chern (2005) found that primary school students whose fathers were highly engaged (and who also discussed career development with their children) had high levels of academic achievement. Another study by Huang and Wang (2007) argued that fathers who perceived their own father's involvement as high had increased levels of father involvement and held more equitable gender role beliefs. In addition, fathers with younger children had higher levels of involvement, and fathers who perceived lower expectations from their spouses adopted more traditional gender roles. A report by Ho et al. (2010) on gender differences in parental involvement found a trend for mothers to be more frequently engaged than fathers in activities such as making visits to a library or bookstore. Fathers, however, tended to be more engaged than mothers in discussing their family history and ethnic heritage. Compared to fathers, mothers also more generally held liberal/egalitarian beliefs regarding parental roles. Finally, with respect to parent involvement in schools, a study by Chiang et al. (2005) showed that mothers were more likely to be involved in parent-teacher communications, while fathers were more apt to participate in school policy decisions.

The results of the *New Generation Father Survey*, conducted by *Education, Parenting, Family Lifestyle* (Hsu 2009a), also described contemporary father roles. This survey on 1,023 fathers in Taiwan compared older and newer generations of fathers. Results showed that 75 % of young fathers were willing to ask for parental leave, compared to 50 % of older fathers born in the 1950s. The survey also found that the number one stressor of being a father was maintaining steady financial resources. However, many men (47 %) considered "family happiness" to be most important, whereas only 2 % considered "work achievement" to be most important to their life. This survey additionally showed that over 40 % of fathers and more than 50 % of mothers thought fathers did not spend enough time with their children. The same magazine also reported the results of a survey with 1,572 Taiwanese mothers as part of the *Good Father Index Survey*, where 58 % of mothers in this study perceived their husbands as being ideal "balanced fathers."

While many fathers in Taiwan still embrace traditional notions about paternal involvement, children are becoming more vocal in evaluating the relationships they have with their parents, particularly fathers. A study by *Reader's Digest Asia* found that among eight nations in Asia, teenagers in Taiwan gave their parents the lowest ratings of any country (Tsai 2005). Sons and daughters claimed that their parents were more concerned with their academic achievement than in establishing effective communication or building an overall healthy parent-child relationship. Fathers received especially low ratings, averaging less than 50 out of 100 points. Many parents, on the other hand, believe their most important responsibility is to financially provide for their children. A commonly held assumption is that parents who spend money on after-school programs or academic tutoring for their children are fulfilling their responsibilities as guardians. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimated that Taiwanese laborers in 2003 actually worked the highest number of hours (2,282 per year) compared to any other nation in the world, and Huang and Wang (2007) argue that this high prioritization on careers leaves parents little time for activities with their children. Accordingly, Taiwanese children sometimes report feeling disconnected from their parents.

The Influence of the Cultural Media on Gender Roles

Cultural media in the forms of books, magazines, advertisements, television programs, and commercials not only reflect beliefs about gender-based parenting roles, but may influence current attitudes as well. Wang and Liu (2006) stated that with increasing numbers of nuclear families in China, mass media is becoming an important source of child socialization to this type of family structure. According to Weitzman et al. (1972), children's books are one product of the cultural media that is representative of societal norms and cultural values. Examining the representation of parent and gender roles in this type of media is therefore important, as books can influence children's gender role development (Peterson and Lach 1990). In a 1999 study on US children's perceptions of gender-stereotypical occupations, Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1999) found that after reading non-stereotypical

literature children were more likely to view occupations as appropriate for both men and women. Trepanier-Street and Romatowski further argued that children can learn new gender role schemas by reading such books with non-stereotypical gender portrayals. This theory is supported by Narahara (1998), who states that books teach children the societal norms of feminine and masculine behavior and activities. When children are repeatedly read stories not representative of gender stereotypes, these children decrease in their own stereotypes about sex roles (Barclay 1974).

One Taiwanese study on children's gender stereotypes examined the effects of six counter-stereotype storybooks on 38 Taiwanese preschool and kindergarten children using interview post- and pretests (Lan 2007). All six storybooks used in Lan's study depicted either female or male characters in non-stereotypical roles. Two of these storybooks will be discussed in this chapter—*Piggybook* (*Chu Family Story*) and *Red Rooster*. After reading these storybooks, children's perceptions changed toward gender-appropriate toys and activities, such as dramatic play and doing puzzles, with more children choosing both genders as being appropriate than in the pretest. The results of the intervention also showed a significant increase in the number of children viewing chores, such as mopping the floor and drying clothes, as appropriate for both genders. Lan also found significant differences in perceptions about occupations; for example, more girls perceived a postal worker to be an appropriate occupation for females after receiving the intervention. Thus, if children's books portray nontraditional gender roles and more progressive parenting roles, children are more likely to adopt egalitarian gender role beliefs.

Gender role portrayal in commercial advertisements may also reflect the changing status of men and women in Taiwan (Bresnahan et al. 2001). Bresnahan and colleagues studied four countries' prime-time television commercials: Japan; Malaysia; Taiwan; and the United States. In Taiwan, researchers examined the extent to which changing gender roles were reflected in 251 commercials on three primary networks. A content analysis of the roles of primary characters found 46 % of Taiwanese women in traditional feminine roles (Bresnahan et al. 2001). In addition, in approximately half of the Taiwanese commercials, males and females played non-stereotypical roles. Interestingly, while women in the other Asian nations also engaged in role reversals, the U.S. sample of women did so more frequently (i.e., about a quarter of the women adopted stereotypically masculine roles). The study, however, did not measure the effects of gender role depiction on viewers, warranting further research on this topic.

Examples of Progressive Father Roles in Taiwan's Cultural Media

In this section, we provide several examples from the Taiwanese cultural media that progressively portray fathers, followed by discussions of the themes embedded in these forms of media and their implications for instilling societal change. These types of cultural media include elementary school textbooks, picture books for children, and television commercials.

Textbook Curricula

Elementary school textbooks and curricula are one type of medium with a critical influence on young citizens in terms of gender role socialization. Accordingly, in our review of school curricula for examples of progressive fathers, evidence was found in lessons on gender education, gender roles, and gender equity in the curricular domains of Language Arts, Life Education, Social Studies, and Health and Physical Education. Our first example, provided in the introduction of this chapter, was taken from a unit on *Family Life* in a third-grade Social Studies textbook (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Corporation 2009a). This lesson, titled *Getting Along in Harmony*: *Men and Women*, contrasted traditional and contemporary gender/parental roles. As discussed previously, the modern family in the graphic cartoon portrayed a stay-at-home father taking care of the household and family matters while a mother went to work—a situation not representative of the majority of today's households (Lee 2005). But while the example may not reflect the majority of households, the lesson is nevertheless important in that it encourages young students to recognize various possible models of gender/parent roles, potentially instilling change among future generations of parents.

A second example from a first-grade textbook is also demonstrative of historical change. From 1968 to 1996, a story in a national Language Arts textbook titled *Who Gets Up Early* portrayed mothers rising early every day to complete domestic chores while fathers remained unengaged with their families simply reading the morning newspaper. A protest against the stereotypical nature of this story and its message led to changes in a subsequent textbook (Foundation of Awakening Education 1988, cited in Yen 2005). In the revised version of *Who Gets Up Early*, the mother is found exercising with her son. The father is still sitting with a newspaper at hand, but in the updated version he is visibly engaged with his daughter about a particular news item.

Another lesson from a third-grade Social Studies textbook, *My Family Life: Sharing Responsibilities*, discusses the importance of family members working together in household chores (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Corporation 2009b). In the lesson, one image depicts a father, mother, and daughter working together to prepare dinner. A second image shows a father, mother, grandmother, son, and daughter standing around a kitchen table wrapping dumplings together. It is significant that in these two examples fathers are depicted as taking an equal role in helping to prepare meals and not in a role secondary to the mother. Finally, another example from a first-grade lesson in Life Education entitled *Socializing with Relatives and Friends* begins with the question "When you call your relatives and friends to visit, do you know what you should prepare when they come?" (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing Corporation 2009c). The lesson includes proper etiquette toward guests and portrays family members working together; for example, one image shows the father cutting melons at the kitchen counter with his daughter beside him. Here, the father is depicted as taking an equal part in family responsibilities.

Children's Picture Books

Written by Wang and illustrated by Cher-Ming, *Red Rooster* is a Taiwanese children's picture book (Wang 1993). The story is about a rooster who finds an unhatched egg in a field as he takes a morning walk. Realizing it is too dangerous to leave the egg alone, he decides to care for it himself. All of his animal friends are shocked by the caretaker role he adopts, and the rooster eventually hatches the egg and bonds with the chick after birth. The story portrays the rooster as a hero to the other animals, and shows that a single father is not only capable of caring for a child (both pre- and postnatally), but happy in this fathering role.

Teachers and parents can find *Red Rooster*, along with worksheet exercises, on a number of websites (e.g., http://woa.mlc.edu.tw/index.jsp?unitid=000564, http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jw!rLMuBZqXHAER6ueuHFhdumSe3Pw-/article?mid=42, http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/liu21214/article?mid=468&prev=486&1=f&fid=22, http://blog.ilc.edu.tw/blog/index.php?op=printView&articleId=58022&blogId= 4198). The worksheets elicit students' beliefs about traditional gender roles in parenting and encourage students to reflect on actual parenting roles in their homes. For example, the worksheets for elementary school students ask students to draw a picture of their father doing housework as well as list the types of housework chores they do, and describe how they feel after finishing the chores. Questions include: (1) What are the things that have to be done in the house and who has to do them? (2) Who do you think is responsible for taking care of children and why?, and (3) Why do you think the Red Rooster became the superhero of the hens?

Similar to *Red Rooster*, the *Chu Family Story* can be commonly found in Taiwanese bookstores, as well as educational websites that provide teaching/learning resources. The story is adapted from a British children's book, *Piggybook*, by Browne (1996) with text translated into Mandarin Chinese. In the story, a father and two sons take the mother's work in the family for granted. It is made explicit by the text as well as the illustrations that the father and sons do not engage in any of the housework. As the story progresses, one night the mother does not return home, leaving a note that reads, "You are pigs." Without the mother, the father and sons fail to take care of themselves; the house becomes a mess, and the meals they attempt to make are a disaster. When the mother later appears, the father and sons beg her to come back, realizing the important and difficult roles the mother has in their family. At the end of the story, all family members are engaged in nontraditional gender roles, with the father and sons engaging in housework while the mother is shown performing a task that she enjoys—fixing the car. Using the same website resource as *Red Rooster*, teachers and parents are provided with a worksheet that asks students true/false questions related to the division of housework along with a rationale for their answers. Examples include: (1) When my laundry gets dirty, all I have to do is give it to my mom; (2) The housework, such as cooking, laundry, and vacuuming the carpet is all mom's work; and (3) Fathers can help with the housework. The worksheet challenges students' assumptions that housework is solely the mother's role and teaches students about family members sharing in the responsibilities of all household chores.

Television Commercials

This section provides a few examples of television commercials depicting Taiwanese fathers actively engaged in the everyday lives of their children. As a reflection of ongoing changes from traditional parenting roles to more progressive beliefs, these commercials depict fathers performing household responsibilities traditionally assigned to women, particularly cleaning, cooking, and caring for children. One commercial portrays a father and daughter preparing a meal together, washing and chopping vegetables at the kitchen counter (Sakura Home Products Company). As the father begins to fry the vegetables, he finds a handwritten note on the exhaust hood from his wife that reads, "Honey, you are cool when you cook." While the commercial is meant to sell a kitchen appliance, there is a deeper message that suggests fathers who engage in household responsibilities are attractive role models. Other commercials also suggest that by engaging in activities with sons and daughters, fathers develop a stronger bond with their children. For example, an instant spaghetti commercial shows a father and daughter walking hand in hand in the park (Laurel Enterprises Corporation n.d.). At home, after the father cooks the instant spaghetti in the microwave, he and his daughter are seen happily sitting across from each other at the dining table, their eyes gazing with affection and enjoying their meal. This commercial shows a father not only providing for the basic needs of his child, but also engaging in a recreational activity with his daughter. In addition, the narration suggests that by cooking for his child—traditionally a mother's role—the father has developed a "new relationship" with his child. Another commercial for instant noodles (Uni-President Company) depicts a tired father returning home from working late at night. The father sees his adolescent son in his bedroom studying at his desk, and then prepares a bowl of instant Chinese noodles and brings it to his son's room. The role of preparing a late-evening snack for children as they study is traditionally taken on by the mother; however, in this commercial, the father is engaged in this role. The son expresses appreciation for his father's company as well as for the snack. While the fathers in these ads are usually seen preparing instant foods, and it may be some time before men are depicted cooking more elaborate meals, the message is nonetheless relayed that child-rearing and domestic chores should be shared by both fathers and mothers.

Critical Reflections

Progressive portrayals of fathers can be found in a variety of cultural media sources within Taiwan. Children's storybooks, academic textbooks, and television commercials increasingly support the notion that fathers and mothers should share in housework and child-rearing responsibilities. While many fathers in present-day Taiwan were themselves raised amid traditionally-defined gender roles for men and women, the sociopolitical environment is changing. Parenting roles are becoming less gender-bound, and full-time careers outside of the home for both parents have encouraged teamwork between mothers and fathers in the raising of children.

For some families, this means that fathers continue to be the primary financial provider, yet they engage in more activities with their children and more household responsibilities than in the past. This type of family structure is seen in one of the instant meal commercials. In other families, mothers are now becoming the primary source of income, as depicted in the third-grade social studies textbook with a mother working outside of the home and a father undertaking all household duties. Most families, however, will likely be dual-wage earner households that continue to influence society's ideas about appropriate gender roles. Both mothers and fathers will be expected to share child-rearing responsibilities, while simultaneously holding professional careers outside of the home—not one or the other. Storybooks displaying gender role reversals, as in the aforementioned examples, will not only serve as models for fathers, but also sons and daughters, who witness their parents' resistance to gender stereotypes and thereby learn to challenge such labels themselves. As women continue to gain sociopolitical power in Taiwan, family roles and responsibilities modeled by parents will likely become more flexible and less constricted by gender.

Much growth still needs to be made, however, with truly egalitarian parenting responsibilities among mothers and fathers in Taiwan. While males are now being encouraged to become more involved as fathers, distinct parenting expectations by gender still remain. The most notable examples of this can be seen in the two advertisements of fathers preparing instant "meals" for their children. The intention of such commercials may be to encourage fathers to perform family responsibilities traditionally assigned to women; but there are other messages being transmitted as well, and one might question whether the same advertisements would be differently received if mothers were the food-preparers. While the fathers in these commercials are praised for their "cooking," would mothers who fed their children instant dishes be just as favorably viewed? The expectation for a mother might likely be that she spends time preparing a home-cooked meal for her children; yet because traditional responsibilities assigned to fathers do not include cooking, the father who makes instant noodles for his child is socially applauded. Given that elementary school children in Taiwan spend half of their recreational time watching television (Yeh 2002), commercials are a critical medium for modeling father involvement. Though parenting roles are beginning to loosen in their conformity to gender stereotypes, divisions of parental responsibilities are still far from gender-neutral.

Similarly, children's textbooks play an important role in demonstrating households where parents equally share domestic responsibilities. Illustrations of children (boys as well as girls) helping to clean the house and depictions of stay-at-home fathers serve as positive models of egalitarian households for both families and teachers. Children and adults alike are encouraged to recognize the value of sharing responsibilities, and to disassociate from more traditional ideas of gender-defined family roles. Educators and parents may then choose to build on such textbook lessons with curricular worksheets that allow children to process their assumptions related to gender and parenting roles in Taiwanese society.

Hsu (2009b) notes the importance of support and positive feedback for fathers during such periods of role transitioning. Fathers should also be valued for the unique

contributions they can make to children's development, and not simply viewed as a second mother to children. Lee (2009) maintains that the interpersonal relationships a child shares with her/his father is distinct from the emotional connection with a mother, and accordingly, paternal involvement should begin early (even during the mother's pregnancy) and continue throughout the child's life. This engagement by fathers should not be considered a short-term replacement for responsibilities that still primarily belong to the mother, but rather a permanent change in approaching gender-based parenting roles. Furthermore, fathers' engagement should extend beyond a financial sense and include more communication with children outside of academic matters.

The authors do not intend to claim that the previous media examples represent the majority position in present-day Taiwan. Instead, these cases are meant to illustrate the changes Taiwan is currently experiencing with regard to gender-delineated responsibilities and parenting roles. We did not survey a representative sample of textbooks, storybooks, and television commercials, but rather sought specific portrayals of progressive father involvement. Cultural media that reflect changing family structures, such as *Red Rooster*, are becoming more common, yet, these depictions still vary from the average Taiwanese family. Such representations help in socializing young children to think flexibly about gender roles, but parents, teachers, librarians, and educators must continue to build on these limited resources to promote further discussion about father involvement.

Implications for Practitioners and Researchers

This chapter discussed various issues regarding father roles in contemporary Taiwanese society. Stemming from these discussions are the following recommendations to promote and support father involvement in children's education in Taiwan:

- Development/enforcement of policies by government agencies and corporations that allow fathers to take parental leaves and not be penalized for these leaves in their job positions.
- Establishment of community family education centers focusing on father-child programs that accommodate fathers' interests and work schedules.
- Incorporation of gender equity curricula in schools that model non-stereotypical gender roles/balanced parent roles for students.
- Development of father involvement programs in schools that include topics on academic support, communication, and relationship building.
- Establishment of father-child reading programs that utilize books with characters who model egalitarian gender roles.
- Promotion of positive portrayals of paternal involvement in Taiwan's cultural media (in the forms of magazines, advertisements, and television commercials and programs).

- Examination of the impact of current government, school, and community programs/policies (as well as various cultural media forms) on Taiwanese citizens, young and old.

Conclusion

Due to social, economic, educational, and political transformations in recent decades, Taiwan's shift from a traditional to a more progressive society has led to parenting roles becoming less gender-bound. The roles and involvement of parents in the everyday lives of their children are being redefined, and in some households, fathers are becoming more involved in activities with their children while taking on more household chores. Recent policies allowing for paternal leaves and subsidies, promoting gender equity in school curricula, and encouraging involvement by fathers and mothers in school and community programs may help to significantly increase father involvement. In addition, Taiwan's various forms of cultural media, including textbooks, children's literature, television commercials, and magazines, will likely continue to be influential in redefining gender roles for both adults and children.

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