

Leeds Parenting Unit workshop

Working with fathers



Children Leeds

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Introduction to Leeds Parenting Unit and Parenting Unit Workshops

In Leeds, we know that the vast majority of parents want the very best for their children; and we know that every parent needs help and support from time to time and that's what we, as practitioners, are here to offer...together!

The Leeds Family Support and Parenting Strategy, published in November 2007 and reviewed in November 2009, sets out how the Children Leeds Partnership will work together, with parents and each other, to make sure that family support and parenting services in Leeds go further to recognise and respond to every parent's needs. The strategy identified the need for a central point of contact to support the coordination, the quality assurance and the development of family support and parenting across the whole of Leeds. In September 2008, Leeds Parenting Unit was born.

In September 2009, Jonny Cohen (Respect Parenting Practitioner) and Lauren Dunstan (Senior Parenting Practitioner) came into post. Their job roles involve supporting the delivery of parenting programmes, engaging with and developing the services of those who work with 'hard to reach families' and those who are resistant to using services.

A consultation exercise took place in September/October 2009 with staff from a number of different organisations: extended services clusters, children's centres and the voluntary sector, to see how the parenting unit could support practitioners. A key theme that came out of this was that practitioners would like to know more about different services and what they offer so that if an issue arises for them in their everyday work, they would know who they could contact to access further support and where to refer on to, if specialist help is required.

Following this consultation it was agreed that Leeds Parenting Unit would stage a number of topic led workshops which would seek to:

- increase practitioners' personal capacity and help them to deal with problematic situations;
- help practitioners to know who to go to for further help on an issue without having to ring round several different people (extremely time-consuming exercise);
- help practitioners to know when to refer on to other specialist services – which will in turn reduce inappropriate referrals;
- share good practice and learn from colleagues in other agencies.

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In addition to the workshops, a series of resource kits will be produced, to give practitioners more information around the chosen subject. These will include hints and tips for good practice, local contacts and provision across the city including referral processes and useful links to find out more information.

Working With Fathers is the first resource kit in what will hopefully become a whole series. If anyone has ideas for future resource kits, please let us know as the aim of them is to assist you in your work with parents.



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Why is working with fathers important?

As professionals working with children and families it is our responsibility to ensure that our intervention produces the best outcomes for children. Often, it is the parent who is deemed the primary carer who is the person most likely to be reached out to, challenged by and generally in contact with the services we offer – and traditionally it is the mother who is usually expected to fill this role. Anecdotally, family support services, such as Children's Centres and support offered through schools, are under-utilised by fathers and the organisations providing family support are staffed mainly by women.

However, there has been a generational shift and expected patterns of parental care no longer hold – for instance, the National Fatherhood Institute reports that British fathers' care of infants and young children rose 800% between 1975 and 1997, from 15 minutes to two hours on the average working day (The Costs and Benefits of Active Fatherhood, 2006). The same report tells us that in the UK, fathers in two parent families carry out an average of 25% of the family's childcare related activities during the week and one third at weekends. And the pace of change is increasing: from 2002 to 2005 the percentage of new fathers in the UK working flexitime to spend more time with their infants rose from 11% to 31%.

We also know that father's involvement in their children's care and development is crucial in helping them reach their potential. For instance, research has shown that low paternal interest in children's education has a stronger negative impact on children's lack of qualifications than

contact with the police, poverty, family type, social class, housing tenure and child's personality. Another study in 2007 showed that 70% of co-resident fathers and 81% of non-resident parents (mainly men) wanted to be more involved in their children's education (Peters et al, 2008.)

So if fathers are playing an increasing role in their children's day-to-day care, and research shows us the benefit of this for their children, what can we do as professionals to ensure that our practice is as father-friendly as possible?

This resource pack is designed to help you in your professional practice to consider some of the questions relating to why fathers are under-represented amongst our service-users. It also looks at how we can make changes to the way we work to ensure that more fathers (and those acting in the father-role) know about what support is available to them and feel more confident in accessing services which will benefit them and their children.

The Fatherhood Institute Ten top tips for father-inclusive practice

The Fatherhood Institute was established in January 2008 as a successor organisation to Fathers Direct (est. 1999) with the aim of promoting good practice in public services and industry, in recognition of the aspiration of fathers to be more involved in their children's lives and in response to the increasing body of research that demonstrates the importance of father-child and mother-father relationships to children. They seek to influence the debate on fatherhood in 4 key ways: by lobbying for changes in the law, by providing training and advice to employers, by providing information directly to fathers (through a separate partly-owned company, DAD) and by seeking to change, the public 'discourse' about motherhood and fatherhood.

The Fatherhood Institute co-delivered the Engaging Fathers Workshop with Leeds Parenting Unit in February 2010 and one of the key messages they delivered were their top ten tips for father inclusive practice.

1. Look at the world from the child's point of view
2. Recognise and support all father-figures
3. Have high expectations of fathers
4. Carry out a male involvement audit
5. Review your child/family registration forms
6. Invite dads personally to specific activities
7. Limit your use of the 'parent' and 'group' words!
8. Tell dads how their involvement benefits their kids
9. Lead from the top
10. Be intolerant of failure to engage with dads

1. Look at the world from the child's point of view

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

Our services are not about us, not even about the parent or parents or carers we're working with – our job is to provide the best outcome for the child.

2. Recognise and support all father-figures

These guys have huge impact, but hardly anyone helps them think about their difficult role. You don't have to choose between the biological father or stepfather, grandfather or older sibling. Support them all!

If dad is not involved, are there other male figures in the family who can be the positive male role model for the child? These people may have an important role to play in your work – they almost certainly play an important role in the child's life – whether they are present or absent.

It is important to acknowledge that family dynamics can be difficult – for instance, stepdad and dad may not get along. We need to work to overcome these barriers in a non-judgmental manner to ensure the best outcome possible for the child.

3. Have high expectations of fathers

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

Sometimes it's easier to work with mum. Dads can be difficult! However, we must remember that it's not about our convenience. Sometimes we have to resist the temptation to take the path of least resistance and do more to help dads become more involved.

Falling back on easy stereotypes of uninvolved or apathetic fathers, stepfathers and father-figures does a disservice to our professional commitment to providing high quality services to children and their families. It is possible that mums underestimate how much dads want to be involved with their children – especially if dads are not living in the same household. Try to establish the information about fathers first-hand.

4. Carry out a male involvement audit

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

Look at the dads who use your service – what part of it do they use? What did you do well in getting them to access your service initially? Can you do this for other dads? What would you like them to access more? How can you help them to overcome barriers?

In social care professions there are more female workers than male. Men may feel comfortable working with a male worker; but this is not always possible – what can we do about this? Be straight with them, tell them. When running groups, try to co-facilitate with a male worker where possible or at least try to get one other dad to attend the group – perhaps you could introduce them prior to the group?

Don't accept 'dads working' as an excuse for their being low numbers of fathers accessing your services. An audit may tell us that we have to change the way we work as a result of audits.

If dad is working through the day, is this his only barrier to access services? If it is, do we need to think about evening/weekend service provision for dads? If your agency does not work weekends is there a partner agency who can assist?

5. Review your child/family registration forms

Routine collection of fathers' and father-figures' details – and contacting them systematically - is our TOP TIP.

As noted above, this means ensuring that information regarding fathers and father figures is requested at the outset and that missing data is chased up.

When asking for information from mothers then sensitivity will be required. If mum is unsure about giving you the information you may need to explore why this is important, and address any concerns raised. If she is not happy to give the information then maybe she could contact dad and ask him to get in touch?

A lot of things happen in families, e.g. there could have been domestic violence issues, custody battles or maybe the parents don't get on. We need to focus on what is best for the child and help mothers as well as fathers to see this also. It is easy to ignore dads when they are not in the room and even easier if they are not in the household, but find out how much of a role they play in the child's life. If they live away do not accept their disappearance from the scene as a fait accompli. Find out how much of a role they play in the child(ren)'s life. Find out how to contact them. Get in touch with them if that would be in the child's best interest.

6. Invite dads personally to specific activities

Fathers generally prefer to know what is going to happen when they attend somewhere and they tend to prefer activities to discussions.

Efforts should especially be made to offer personal invites to fathers regarding educational activities – and follow up regularly if the dads don't show: write, phone, text. Include non-resident fathers and ensure your service is inviting (are there positive pictures of dads around?) and accessible (is it offered at times working dads can make?).

When it comes to fathers attending schools with regard to their children's education, a 2007 UK survey (Peters et al, 2008) found that 70 per cent of co-resident fathers and 81 per cent of

non-resident parents (mainly men) wanted to be more involved in their children's education. Are fathers who are living in separate accommodation from their children overlooked when arranging consultations with parents, is their absence tacitly condoned and not followed up? If there are personal difficulties between mother and father are separate times allocated so that each parent can participate?

All agencies providing services to children and families will work with families with separated parents and step-parents. We need to ensure that fathers and stepfathers get a personal service which demonstrates how important they are to their child and how important they are to us in our service provision.

7. Limit your use of the 'p' and 'g' word!

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

If you are running a group or any other provision for parents of either gender and you use the word 'parents' in your publicity then fathers will assume that only mothers will attend. They will not assume that other fathers will attend and they will not feel that the provision is directed at them. If you use the term 'mums and dads', 'father or mothers' or 'mums, dads and all carers,' then fathers will know that you are talking to them also. They will feel that consideration has been put into the publicity information and this will lead to confidence that the provision itself will be equally well considered.

Vocabulary is important and the right choice of words at the start, during and at the end of any provision can have a significant impact on the number of fathers who make use of the resource and whether their experience is a positive one.

- Try not to invite fathers to a **group; only 3 %** of dads want to join one. Fathers need more than just an 'invitation'.

They generally need face-to-face meetings with the person or people delivering the programme or course or intervention prior to the first session. They may need more visits and information than mothers who attend. They may need more reassurance about what the provision will entail (including whether other dads will be there). They may need to feel that they have a good working relationship with the worker well before the provision starts in order to feel safe about coming.

8. Tell dads how their involvement benefits their kids

Fathers are most likely to come to your service(s) if they understand why their presence **benefits their children**.

Use information from published research and link it directly to their family situation: talk to them about "you and your child", make it personal. If fathers understand how important their involvement is, how much impact that involvement can have on their child(ren) then they are more likely to attend and see and feel the benefit of attending for them, their child(ren) and the family as a whole.

More information on this matter can be found out from <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org>

9. Lead from the top

This ensures a 'whole team' approach (work with fathers should never be the responsibility of just one staff member) and only succeeds when senior management's expectations are robust, and staff understand **why** it's important and the basics of **how** it's done.

If the responsibility for engaging fathers is allocated to one person (a 'dad's champion') then a number of difficulties could occur. That person may become overwhelmed by the task at hand and find that it either interferes with other aspects of their work or is simply too large a task to fit in with their other work tasks. There is also the risk that the message received by other members of the team is that engaging fathers is not their responsibility; someone else has been told to do it for them. However, it is a core part of all of our work and is intrinsic to providing comprehensive family support.

Managers need to understand the importance of engaging fathers and recognise that that the responsibility for making this happen runs from them through all team members, regardless of hierarchy or role. They need to lead by example and include the question of how to engage fathers in all practice discussions.

10. Be intolerant of failure to engage with dads

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

This will mean looking at your referral forms: is there space to put two parents' details? Are the details of both parents' details explicitly requested? Is it clear that step-parents' details are also requested?

It will also mean going back to referrers and asking for any fathers' details which are not included. It is natural to overlook missing data but if we get into the habit of expecting information on fathers at the very start of the referral process then this absence of info will quickly stand out and become less acceptable.

Spotlight on a Worker

Within each theme focussed on with these resource kits, we would like to introduce a worker to you to highlight the role that they take. Hopefully you will get some bright ideas from them, or even just realise that they are out there working in the city with some of the same families you might be engaging with!

What is your name?

John May

Who do you work for and what is your role?

I work for Education Leeds. I have two parts to my role. One is teenage pregnancy prevention work within schools and other agencies, the other is to support school age fathers.

Can you tell us a little bit about your project and the work you do with fathers?

The role was developed from a team that was already working with school age mums. It was identified that there was a need for specialist support for the young men as well. This happened 5 years ago. As an organisation we have worked with over 100 school age fathers. Our aim is to maintain the young man's education as well as his involvement with mother/child.

We work mainly on a 1-1 basis supporting the young man in which ever way he needs. Over the years we have also had a successful peer support group. Another way we support the young men is with parenting skills. We have childcare officers who will deliver a six week programme around parenting. This is delivered wherever the young man feels comfortable receiving it.

What are the main barriers you encounter in getting fathers engaged?

How do you overcome these?

Over the years we have come across several barriers. The first barrier that we came across was identifying the fathers. We tackled this several ways. As we had people already working with the mums it was about them asking the question around the father. I also would attend groups that the mums would attend to build their trust. This helped because they in turn would persuade their partners to see me.

I built good relationships with the teenage pregnancy midwives - they again would ask the question about dad. We would have regular meetings to ensure that I had picked up the young men they had identified.

Other professionals could cause barriers when wanting to engage with the young men. Some professionals would make a decision based on non-factual information(gossip) because of the young man being a 'bad lad'. This barrier can only be removed at the time of incident and we did this by appropriately challenging the relevant professional organisations at the relevant level.

As said previously we had quite a successful peer support group. We initially faced different barriers with that. One of the main barriers was about what to do with these young men within a group setting. We initially thought that we would have to fly them to the moon to get them interested!! What we found was that there was one (obvious!) common theme which all these young men had - their children/ partner's pregnancy! So we based the sessions loosely around things to do with their children and the pregnancy they were experiencing.

Key Outputs from the 2010 Engaging Fathers Workshops in Leeds

Throughout the city, a large number of practitioners attended a series of workshops in early 2010 to share ideas about how they are already engaging fathers, and to discuss how they might better engage fathers in their future work.

There were some key ideas and suggestions generated which you may find useful in shaping your father friendly practice.

Examples of what some practitioners are already doing to specifically engage fathers

- Persistent calls, visits, letters to fathers
- Generic encouragement (not specific to fathers)
- High School – parents evenings and extended services try to reach fathers
- Invite fathers to family days
- Encourage fathers to be present at home visits
- Visit families at weekends/evenings when father is likely to be at home
- Consultation with fathers
- Fathers are attending groups!
- Social care have to work and show they have made all efforts to engage fathers. Unless there are issues such as domestic violence and dad is considered high risk
- Language/terminology
- We don't do enough! We have accepted 'non-dad' involvement and must change it!
- No father groups at the moment but already started consultations with fathers to gain insight into what they want
- Outreach service / building relationships
- Contact both mum and dad with concerns /incidents
- Inclusive leaflets / dads' leaflets / groups
- Networking with other agencies to encourage referrals
- Collecting details (when only meeting mums)
- 1:1 work – family outreach services
- Visits to dads (even when living separately from mums)
- Involving dads in support plans/home visits
- Persistence/asking questions
- Build up relationships
- CAF

What could you do differently in the future to engage fathers? Further feedback and ideas from the 2010 workshops

• Change use of language

- make sure that the language you use is inclusive – fathers can be easily deterred if they think that the provision is aimed more to mums than dads – consult with fathers you work with before you decide on the final wording of any publicity aimed at dads or mums and dads together
- Cut the jargon! If fathers feel unsure about what is being said to them or what services are available they will turn away
- make publicity friendly but clear and concise

• Individual approach

- fathers will be more likely to engage with an agency if they have a personal relationship with someone in that agency – it could be a professional or it could be an already engaged service user
- give fathers good 'lead time' to establish this relationship – it may take some time and effort to get fathers through the door but if that time is invested they will come – and they'll be more likely to stay

• Get information (about fathers and father figures)

- Make it your organisation's policy to ask about fathers and father figures in the families you work with – make sure there is space on your referral forms to record this data

• Make sure that dads are informed

- When information is being sent out address it to dads and mums – if leaflets are being handed out directly make an effort to ensure an equal number are handed to fathers as to mothers
- If fathers are not using your service and you want to get information to them, go to them – they are unlikely to respond if that

information comes to them indirectly, e.g. through their partners or children

- Post information in places that fathers are likely to see it – this may be in doctors surgeries or even pubs and clubs

• Keep records, make sure you have up-to-date contact number for fathers

- Periodically review your records – if a father is living apart from the rest of the family check whether his contact details have altered – it is unlikely that you will find out about this unless you ask directly

• Try different things, don't give up if first approach fails

- Persistence is the key! As noted elsewhere, fathers can be shy, suspicious, uncertain, embarrassed, even hostile to engaging with your service. However, with effort and imagination you may discover just the way to get that dad on board – remember how important this will be for the child(ren) in that family so don't give up!

• Include dads more in looking at the needs of the child and how they can specifically promote and meet these needs

- When discussing child development with the families you work with, make sure dads are involved
- Make sure dads are invited directly to events such as parents evenings at school or family days at Children's Centres
- Let dads know about research into the amazing impact that dads' involvement with their children has on their children's development (for more info go to <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/> and click on the research tab)

- **Involve dads in early intervention/CAFs**

- Let dads know how important they are from the very beginning of your involvement with their family
- Invite dads to all meetings – not just via mums or a letter in their children's school bag – speak to them directly, address letters directly to them

- **Initial consultation with dads**

- Don't just guess what dads want, talk to them
- Be clear about what your agency's remit is and discuss this with the dads whom you consult, see where you can improve and where the dads wishes can fit in with these
- Contact senior parental involvement officer (PIO) at the Parenting Unit for advise and support around consultation - consultation with parents is the key to success and the PIO can help you ensure that your consultation is as effective as possible

Parenting Unit Top Tip! If you would like to find out more about what fathers in your area want by giving fathers a say in shaping services, you can contact Kerry Roling, Senior Parent Involvement Officer at The Parenting Unit, 0113 3957222

- **Let dads know what's happening in your agency – look more into how to get information to dads**

- Ask dads how they would like to receive information and act on this knowledge
- Be proactive – don't accept the status quo – know that the children will benefit if you can get their dads to use your agency's services

- **Encourage children to invite dads specifically**

- Children reflect what is modelled to them by adults around them – if schools or other agencies focus more on mums then children

will have a lower expectation that their dads will get involved but...

- if children receive the message that their dads' involvement is welcomed, encouraged, valued, important then they will expect their dads to be involved

- **Need to look beyond what we are already doing to ensure consistency**

- Find out what colleagues are doing within your own agency and in other agencies too
- Share and promote good practice
- Make sure that all families accessing your agency are receiving the same offer of high quality services – whether it is mothers or fathers

- **Teenage pregnancy**

- Ensure that young father engagement is positive – but take into account mother's wishes and impact on the child
- Take time to build relationships with young fathers
- Young fathers are young people – remember that they want to do the things that other young people do, not just be seen as 'young fathers'
- Young fathers will not come to you for support – you must go to them – go to where they go – youth clubs, schools, doctors surgeries, etc
- Make your services age appropriate
- Use other young fathers as volunteer befrienders

- **Home visits in the run-up AND just before the group starts**

- Dads will be more likely to attend if they have already built up a relationship with the facilitator(s)
- If there is minimal contact between first contact and the group starting then drop-out is much more likely for either parent

- **Open groups with better focus**
 - Dads tend to want to know exactly what they are agreeing to – if the group has fuzzy aims or the aims and contents are not clearly described and explained then this will put dads off from attending
- **Look at what is already set up and change or alter it to suit both parents**
 - Make your services compatible with engaging fathers
 - Look at what is already on offer and implement the changes discussed above and throughout this resource pack to improve fathers' participation – and the outcomes for their children
- **Dads & lads groups**
 - Be imaginative with how you get dads through the door
 - Dads like to come to activities with their children
 - Engage with local agencies and see if there are any partnerships you can establish with organisations with a good track record of engaging fathers
- **Look at after school activities**
 - During the day isn't always easy for many fathers so think about activities later in the day which could involve their children also
 - Remember that dads are more likely to come if they can come with their children
- **Free support from local services**
 - Don't be shy to ask around – some commercial organisations may be happy to offer support for your efforts in getting fathers more involved with their children, these added resources could be used as incentives for fathers who engage with a group, activity, etc
- **Improve resources**
 - We all operate in a world of increasingly limited resources within our agencies but putting a greater share of our resources to the task of engaging fathers is not a luxury – it is imperative to make our services to families as effective as they can possibly be
 - Make sure the issue of engaging fathers is at the forefront of any new commissioning of parenting and family services
- **Do more research about what is on offer**
 - Use the useful links section to keep up to date about what is happening locally and nationally
- **Keep trying!**
 - Dads are hard to reach but the benefit to their children of their dads' increased involvement in the welfare and development is enormous
 - We all want the best for the children of the families we work with and getting fathers involved is a key factor in achieving this – it's not easy so be persistent!

Local Provision for Fathers

Whilst there are some 'dads only' provisions and groups across the city, fathers should be included and encouraged to access all provision for 'parents'. In Leeds there are some groups currently available which are set up with dads in mind. As a practitioner, you may be able to refer fathers to these groups, or you may wish to contact those running the groups to ask them for help and advice with setting up your own groups. Dads groups can also be found through searching the family hub website

www.thefamilyhubleeds.org

East Leeds

Dads Group – Osmondthorpe Childrens Centre,
Thursdays 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Tel: **0113 249 7054**

North West Leeds

Dads Group – Hawksworth Wood Childrens Centre,
Fridays (term time only), 9.15am – 12.00pm

contact Pat Spedding,

Tel: **0113 275 3961**

South

Dads Drop In – New Bewerley Childrens Centre,
Mondays, 8.00am – 11.00am,

Tel: **0113 336 8255**

Men Behaving Dadly Drop In– Two Willows
Childrens Centre, Thursdays 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Tel: **0113 270 6166**

West

Male Carers Group – Castleton Childrens
Centre, Tuesdays 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Tel: **0113 214 3701**

North East

Dads/Male Carers Group, Holy Rosary Church
Community Room, Chapeltown Road.

Starting 27 April 2010, Tuesdays 7pm – 9pm

Open to fathers city wide.

Contact Marjorie Parker Tel: **0113 240 5068**

Useful links and further information

<http://www.thefamilyhubleeds.org>

A directory of resources offering information, advice and support for families and children in the city. This is where you can publicise your own provision for parents and families.

<http://www.leedsinitiative.org/children/page.aspx?id=16964>

An overview of the Parenting Unit which is the central point of contact and co-ordination for family support and parenting provision across the city. This website includes contact details of staff highlighting their roles and responsibilities.

<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org>

Collates and publishes international research on fathers, fatherhood and different approaches to engaging with fathers by public services and employers. Research areas featured include: young fathers, maternity services, early years, school and learning, separated families, the workplace, parenting education, domestic violence, vulnerable families, drugs and alcohol, African Caribbean fathers, Muslim fathers, imprisoned fathers, disability and info re fathering from outside the UK.

<http://www.dad.info>

Provides info for fathers and expectant fathers on a wide range of issues including: ideas of fatherhood, preparing for fatherhood, child development, fatherhood and work, the economic impact of being a parent, education, child health, relationships, social opportunities and more.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/dads>

Advice, support and information on becoming a dad including father's rights and links to info on paternity leave.

<http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk>

Provides freephone, textphone and email support for all parents who have any query relating to parenting. Has specific sections for parents of children of different developmental stages from pre-birth to young adulthood. Also offers advice to parents of children who are bullied and advice to professionals.

<http://www.dadtalk.co.uk>

Provides a forum for fathers to speak to each other and access information about fatherhood. Includes links to websites covering areas of specific interest such as careers, bereavement, gay and lesbian, relationship support, sexual health and many more.

<http://www.superdads.co.uk>

Advice and support for dads with articles and links across a wide range of issues from advice for dads in how to interact with their children to places where you can book child-friendly parties to sports equipment for kids and all the family.

<http://www.fnf.org.uk>

The 'Families Need Fathers' website provides help and support for fathers who are separating/divorced from their families, are worried about not seeing their children or the effect the breakdown of their relationship might have upon them. It provides fact sheets, an e-mail forum where fathers can ask for advice and a helpline.

<http://www.youngfathers.net/forum/index.php>

Young People in Focus young fathers forum. Lots of links to a wide variety of discussion threads re issues relating to young fathers and practical advice regarding establishing projects for this client group.

Useful links and further information

<http://www.fatherstobe.org/index.html>

Info and advice for expectant fathers regarding their relationships with their new baby, their partner, themselves and also with health professionals. Also provides advice and training for professionals on how to work with expectant and new fathers

<http://www.youngpeopleinfocus.org.uk/insideout/>

This site provides information re parenting support for young parents in custody (under 18 year old fathers and mothers) and for their parents, where they are based and the sorts of programmes and interventions being offered. You can also find information here about resources and organisations that may be able to support your work with this client group in a range of ways. A link to a map of the UK tells you what is happening regionally across the country and whom you can contact for more information.

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/publications/?entryid5=32902>

A national survey of fathers who have children with learning disabilities presents the findings from 251 fathers.

http://www.apamil.co.uk/en/summary.asp?chse_id=5&chct_id=2

A quick guide for dads of what to expect during their partner's pregnancy and the first 12 months after the birth of their child.