

The Bulletin is produced by Richard Fletcher on behalf of the AFRN Steering Group: Prof. Trevor Cairney, University of New South Wales; Dr Richard Fletcher, University of Newcastle; Prof Ilan Katz, University of New South Wales; Samantha Page, Early Childhood Australia; Prof Bruce Maycock, Curtin University of Technology; A/Prof Campbell Paul, Royal Children's Hospital, Vic.



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Contact

Richard.fletcher@newcastle.edu.au



Fatherhood Research Bulletin

Bulletin 31

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The coparenting edition

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NEWS from the Australian Fatherhood Research Network

In this edition...

This special edition of the bulletin is focused on coparenting relationships. Coparenting refers to the relationship that adults (usually parents) share in the raising of children and you will see this described as the parenting partnership in some parts of this bulletin. Coparenting researchers have developed multifactorial models – comprised of factors associated with parenting such as cooperation, coordination, joint involvement, support and undermining – to characterise and explore the quality of parenting partnerships. There is now a substantial body of evidence linking coparenting quality to children’s social and emotional development, the well-being of parents, their satisfaction with parenting, and with the quality of parent’s romantic relationships.

SMS4dads

SMS4dads aims to support fathers in their relationships with their partners, their children and with themselves. Feedback from the pilot study (N=40) indicates that the relatively minimalist intervention of this arm of the study – compared to the much more extensive intervention that will occur in the main study being launched at the end of November – is very encouraging.

Here is some of the feedback from parents about how SMS4dads may be helping in their developing parenting relationship between these new mums and dads.

“it definitely helps put you in the right mindset and you end up doing or saying the right things at the right time. The cliché saying ‘happy wife happy life’ is so true.”

“It was good, the little tips like “tell her she’s doing a good job” I’d tell her and she knew it was the messages and we’d have a bit of a giggle about it but I never would have said that without the messages.”

“I think the messages were really useful for him, succinct, being a guy he liked that, short and sweet. It was good him getting them. He’d say “Hey did you know this?” and I’d think ‘cool he knows about that’.”

These fathers received only a small number of messages over 6 weeks. In the main study, due to launch on the 28 of October, fathers can enrol anytime from 12 weeks gestation to 12 weeks postnatal and they will receive messages, targeted to their place on this timeline, for up to 12 months. Go to www.SMS4dads.com



ON THE WEB

Fathers and Families Research Program (F&FRP) Website



The Fathers and Families Research Program (F&FRP) is a unique Australian research team exploring paternal functions, roles and relationships. As part of the Family Action Centre in the Faculty of Health and Medicine at the University of Newcastle the F&FRP links practice, education and research to strengthen families, improve professional practice and increase the capacity of communities to work with family systems. The F&FRP pursues national and international partnerships in the ongoing development of the research program.

Go to: <http://fathersandfamiliesresearch.com/>

Stayin' on Track

The website features highly engaging films of local young men from Aboriginal communities telling the excitement, the awesome responsibility and the scary parts of becoming a father.

Go to: <https://www.stayinontrack.com/>



CONFERENCES

Future of families: Preparing for change

Event Date: 10th Nov 15 to 12th Nov 15

Venue: Brisbane Convention Centre, Brisbane QLD

Organisational member Family Relationship Services Australia is holding its national conference on Future of families: Preparing for change.

With a focus on empowering the membership and the sector as a whole, FRSA will bring together leaders, innovators, practitioners and academics that are engaged in policy, governance, research and service delivery to discuss emerging issues.

The conference will explore the following topics:

How do we future-proof families?

How do we adapt services to meet future needs?

How do we future-proof family and community safety?

How do we address emerging issues and practice in Family Law?

Go to: <http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/node/51647>

Rights of the Child Consumer

Event Date: 20th Nov 15

Time: 9.00am–4.30pm

Venue: Telstra Customer Insight Centre, 400 George Street, Sydney NSW

Jointly presented by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Council on Children and the Media and Flinders University Law School, this conference aims to start a national conversation on issues related to children as consumers.

The conference will reflect on questions such as:

What are the rights issues for children when they interact with businesses?

How can we help ensure that children are informed and empowered as consumers?

What are some examples of business good practice in addressing children's rights and needs?

Principal speakers are:

Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner

Elizabeth Handsley, Professor of Law, Flinders University and President, ACCM

Sarah Court, Commissioner, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Go to: <http://wellbeingaustralia.com.au/wba/rights-of-the-child-consumer-conference-20-nov-2015-sydney/>

WORKSHOP



A Family Action Centre
Event



Professor Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan
presents

**Coparenting before, during, and after birth:
Influencing Parenting Partnerships to build
stronger families & children.**

Followed by afternoon tea

Professor Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan is a highly regarded and engaging Developmental Psychologist from Ohio State University. Sarah has a longstanding and influential interest in the determinants and importance of father involvement, coparenting behaviours, maternal gatekeeping, and other factors associated with the transition to parenthood.

Schoppe-Sullivan has recently been named a Fellow of the National Council on Family Relations (USA) for outstanding scholarly contribution and service to the field of family science. Her work has also attracted popular attention through reports in the New York Times, Time Magazine.

While visiting Australia, as an invited speaker to the Australian Infant Mental Health Conference, Sarah has kindly agreed to visit The University of Newcastle.

For further information see - <https://u.osu.edu/schoppe-sullivan.1/>

Venue: Family Action Centre Training Room,
University of Newcastle, Callaghan

When: Wednesday 4th November

Time: 2pm to 4pm

To express interest in attending or make enquiries contact:

Chris May
49217224
Chris.May@newcastle.edu.au

www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/fac/about-us

RESEARCH

Current coparenting research

FRB Comment

Previous issues of the FRB have drawn our attention to the evidence that almost 80% of Australian children will still be living with their biological mother and father by the age of 15. We also know that many other children will be living in a variety of parenting partnerships such as those that exist between parents and grandparents, parents and their friends or even parent and their neighbours. As we find out more about the importance of the coparenting relationship for fathers, mothers and children across a range of circumstances and cultures it is becoming more apparent that we need to find efficient, effective and highly scalable ways to support and enhance parenting partnerships. This edition of the bulletin presents examples of where research is revealing more about the importance of coparenting quality for mothers who are breastfeeding, for children's social and emotional development, for the children of step-parents, for adoptive parents, for parents of children with special needs (Autism), and for the romantic relationships of parents across cultures.

Coparenting Breastfeeding Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding: A Randomized Controlled Trial

To evaluate the effectiveness of a coparenting intervention on exclusive breastfeeding among primiparous mothers and fathers. A randomized controlled trial was conducted in a large teaching hospital in Toronto, Canada. Couples were randomized to receive either usual care (n = 107) or a coparenting breastfeeding support intervention (n = 107). Follow-up of exclusive breastfeeding and diverse secondary outcomes was conducted at 6 and 12 weeks postpartum. Significantly more mothers in the intervention group than in the control group continued to breastfeed at 12 weeks postpartum (96.2% vs 87.6%, $P = .02$). Although proportionately more mothers in the intervention group were exclusively breastfeeding at 6 and 12 weeks, these differences were not significant. Fathers in the intervention group had a significantly greater increase in breastfeeding self-efficacy scores from baseline to 6 weeks postpartum compared with fathers in the control group ($P = .03$). In addition, significantly more mothers in the intervention group than in the control group reported that their partners provided them with breastfeeding help in the first 6 weeks (71% vs 52%, $P = .02$) and that they were satisfied with their partners' involvement with breastfeeding (89% vs 78.1%, $P = .04$). Mothers in the intervention group were also more satisfied with the breastfeeding information they received (81% vs 62.5%, $P < .001$). The significant improvements in breastfeeding duration, paternal breastfeeding self-efficacy, and maternal perceptions of paternal involvement and assistance with breastfeeding suggest that a coparenting intervention involving fathers warrants additional investigation.

Abbass-Dick, J., Stern, S. B., Nelson, L. E., Watson, W., & Dennis, C. L. (2015). Coparenting breastfeeding support and exclusive breastfeeding: a randomized controlled trial. *Pediatrics*, 135(1), 102-110.

Associations Between Prenatal Coparenting Behavior and Observed Coparenting Behavior at 9-Months Postpartum

Coparenting, or the ways partners relate to each other in their roles as parents, is important to child and family functioning. However, it remains unclear whether coparenting begins at or prior to a child's birth. This study tested whether expectant parents' behavior in the Prenatal Lausanne Trilogue Play procedure (PLTP), an assessment designed in Switzerland for examining prebirth coparenting behavior, forecasted postnatal observations of coparenting behavior in a sample of first-time parents in the United States. Participants were 182 dual-earner couples expecting their first child. Couples completed the PLTP in the third trimester of pregnancy and observations of coparenting behavior at 9-months postpartum. Structural equation modeling analyses indicated significant continuity between expectant parents' prenatal coparenting behavior and their observed postpartum coparenting behavior 1 year later. In particular, couples who engaged in higher quality prenatal coparenting behavior demonstrated more supportive and less undermining coparenting behavior at 9-months postpartum, even after controlling for observed prenatal couple behavior and self-reported couple relationship functioning. Thus, this study demonstrated the validity and utility of the PLTP as a window into the development of coparenting, and supported the notion that the coparenting relationship develops prior to the child's birth and is already distinct from the couple relationship.



Altenburger, L. E., Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Lang, S. N., Bower, D. J., & Kamp Dush, C. M. (2014). Associations between prenatal coparenting behavior and observed coparenting behavior at 9-months postpartum. *Journal of Family Psychology, 28*(4), 495.

Parenting Responses and Parenting Goals of Mothers and Fathers of Adolescents

We extended on previous work by examining the contextual nature of parenting goals in mothers and fathers of adolescents. We also examined dyadic parenting similarity in parenting responses and parenting goals. Participants were 285 primarily professional (48.6%), White (82.7%) parents of adolescents aged 14 to 17 years old (mothers $n=213$, fathers $n=68$, dyads $n=43$). Results of a $2 \times 2 \times 6$ MANCOVA indicated that parenting goals were influenced by characteristics of the situation but not by parent or adolescent gender. There was dyadic parenting similarity for parenting responses and dyadic similarity for parenting goals. The implications of these findings for parenting interventions and future parenting research using within family comparisons are discussed.

Horvath, C. A., & Lee, C. M. (2015). Parenting Responses and Parenting Goals of Mothers and Fathers of Adolescents. *Marriage & Family Review, (ahead-of-print)*, 1-19.

Parenting Stress: The Roles of Attachment States of Mind and Parenting Alliance in the Context of Adoption

Objective: To examine whether parent's attachment states of mind and parenting alliance contribute to parental stress in the potentially demanding context of adoption.

Design: Fifty mother–father pairs ($n = 100$) completed the Adult Attachment Interview within six months of adoption to investigate attachment states of mind. The Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI/SF) and the Parenting Alliance Measure questionnaires were administered two years after adoption to evaluate stress and the parenting alliance.

Results: Multivariate regression models showed that unresolved attachment predicted stress to a greater extent than insecure attachment and, together with low parenting alliance, significantly contributed to explaining levels of stress perceived by parents. In mothers, but not in fathers, parenting alliance moderated the effect of an unresolved state of mind on parenting stress. **Conclusion:** Unresolved attachment states of mind and the parenting alliance singly, and even more so jointly, influence stress experienced by parents. Understanding of the family's adjustment to adoption may benefit from an in-depth analysis of the role of individual and dyadic variables involved in childrearing.

Lionetti, F., Pastore, M., & Barone, L. (2015). Parenting Stress: The Roles of Attachment States of Mind and Parenting Alliance in the Context of Adoption. *Parenting, 15*(2), 75-91.

The Spillover Effect of Parenting on Marital Satisfaction Among Chinese Mothers

Abstract Marital satisfaction is crucial to mothers' wellbeing, as well as parent–child relationship and family functioning. Existing literature has shown the impact of marital relationship on parenting. Yet, there are few studies to examine the impact of parenting on marital satisfaction. Family systems theory postulates that there is a reciprocal association between functioning in the parental and spousal subsystems. This study thus aims to examine the associations of various parenting correlates, including parenting self-efficacy, parenting stress, co-parenting alliance, satisfaction with father involvement, and marital satisfaction of mothers. A cross-sectional survey was conducted and a sample of 1,140 mothers was recruited in this study using convenience sampling from 20 nurseries. After controlling for mothers' age, education level, and household income, hierarchical regression analyses showed that greater co-parenting alliance, higher satisfaction with father involvement, and lower parenting stress were associated with higher maternal marital satisfaction. Findings support the "spillover" hypothesis in the family systems theory, indicating that positive factors in the parental subsystem are significantly associated with higher marital satisfaction in the spousal subsystem. Measures that cultivate father involvement, alleviate mothers' parenting stress, and improve co-parenting alliance may be adopted to increase mothers' marital satisfaction and maintain marital relationship.

Kwok, S. Y., Cheng, L., Chow, B. W., & Ling, C. C. (2013). The spillover effect of parenting on marital satisfaction among Chinese mothers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24*(3), 772-783.

Modeling Relations among Coparenting Quality, Autism-Specific Parenting Self-Efficacy, and Parenting Stress in Mothers and Fathers of Children with ASD

Objective: Coparenting quality has been linked to both parenting stress and parenting self-efficacy in families of typically developing children, but little is known about relations between these factors in families where there is a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This study employed structural equation modeling to explore relations among coparenting quality, autism-specific parenting self-efficacy, and parenting stress in mothers and fathers of children with an ASD.

Design: A cohort of biological mothers ($n = 80$) and fathers ($n = 72$) who were caring for their young child (age < 13) with a diagnosed ASD self-completed validated surveys assessing parenting stress, coparenting quality, and autism-specific parenting self-efficacy.

Results: Both mothers and fathers reported high and similar levels of parenting stress which shared predictive relations with both coparenting quality and autism-specific parenting self-efficacy. Structural equation modelling demonstrated that the relations between perceptions of autism-specific parenting self-efficacy and parenting stress were mediated by coparenting quality. **Conclusion:** Coparenting quality shares an important relation with parenting stress in both mothers and fathers of children with an ASD, and enhanced perceptions of autism-specific parenting self-efficacy are unlikely to influence parenting stress when parents experience poor quality coparenting.

May, C., Fletcher, R., Dempsey, I., & Newman, L. (2015). Modeling Relations among Coparenting Quality, Autism-Specific Parenting Self-Efficacy, and Parenting Stress in Mothers and Fathers of Children with ASD. *Parenting, 15*(2), 119-133.

Coparenting and Children's Temperament Predict Firstborns' Cooperation in the Care of an Infant Sibling

This study examined how coparenting and firstborn children's temperament predicted children's cooperative behavior in response to maternal requests for assistance in the care of a 1-month-old infant sibling. Children's cooperative responding was observed during a diaper change session for 216 firstborns (ages 13 to 70 months; $M = 32$). Parents also completed questionnaires assessing coparenting and children's temperament. Results suggested that coparenting quality moderated the association between children's temperament (i.e., soothability) and children's cooperation as revealed in a Temperament X Cooperative Coparenting X Undermining Coparenting interaction. Specifically, low soothability predicted low levels of children's cooperation in families with high undermining and low cooperative coparenting, over and above the effects of child age, gender, and mothers' education. Findings further our understanding of how temperamental characteristics and coparenting quality conjointly predict individual differences in firstborn children's positive adjustment across the transition to siblinghood.

Song, J. H., & Volling, B. L. (2015). Coparenting and children's temperament predict firstborns' cooperation in the care of an infant sibling. *Journal of Family Psychology, 29*(1), 130.

The Influence of Parental and Offspring Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Symptoms on Family Climate

There is a lack of knowledge of the influence of parental and offspring autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms on the quality of family climate. The number of affected children may play an important moderating role. 103 Families were recruited with at least one child with an ASD(+ADHD) diagnosis, one or more biological affected or unaffected siblings, and two participating biological parents. Parents and children were carefully screened for the presence of ASD and ADHD symptoms. Family climate (relationship and structure) was measured with the Dutch Family Environment Scale (FES). No overall differences were found between ASD, ASD + ADHD families and a norm group for family relationship and family structure. However, families with one affected child reported higher family relationship scores than the norm, whereas fathers and mothers of families with two or three affected children reported similar scores as the norm. Regarding the family structure index, fathers and mothers of families with one, two or three affected children reported similar scores as the norm data of the FES. As reported by both fathers and mothers, paternal and maternal ASD symptoms and paternal ADHD symptoms had a negative effect on family relationships, whereas predominately maternal ADHD had a negative impact on family structure. However, families with two or more affected children and families in which parents have increased ASD/ADHD symptoms may have more difficulties in maintaining a positive family climate.

van Steijn, D. J., Oerlemans, A. M., van Aken, M. A., Buitelaar, J. K., & Rommelse, N. N. (2014). The influence of parental and offspring Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms on family climate. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-10.

Income, Relationship Quality, and Parenting: Associations With Child Development in Two-Parent Families

Prior research suggests considerable heterogeneity in the advantages of living in a 2-parent family. Specifically, children living with married biological parents exhibit more favourable outcomes than children living with cohabiting biological parents and with married and cohabiting stepparents. To explain these differences, researchers have focused almost exclusively on differences in the levels of factors such as income, parental relationship quality, and parenting quality across family types. In this study the authors examined whether differences in the benefits associated with these factors might also account for some of the variation in children's cognition and social-emotional development. Focusing on children at the time they enter kindergarten, they found only weak evidence of differences in benefits across family types. Instead, they found that children living in stepfather families experienced above-average levels of parental relationship quality and parenting quality, which in turn played a protective role vis-à-vis their cognitive and social-emotional development.

Berger, L. M., & McLanahan, S. S. (2015). Income, Relationship Quality, and Parenting: Associations With Child Development in Two-Parent Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 996–1015.

DOI:10.1111/jomf.12197

Coparenting in Stepfamilies: Maternal Promotion of Family Cohesiveness with Partner and with Father

Coparenting refers to the support parents bring to each other when rearing a child. Supportive coparenting ensures cohesiveness of the family, which is linked with child outcomes. Little is known, however, about the coparental relationship in stepfamilies between the custodial parent, usually the mother, and the new partner, and how it compares to coparenting with the father. This study addressed mother-reported coparenting in stepfamilies and also compared it with that in first-marriage families. Three dimensions of coparenting were considered: family integrity, disparagement, and conflict. Mothers (N = 300) completed questionnaires on their coparenting relationship with the father and with the partner, marital satisfaction, and attachment. Half the mothers were living in a stepfamily with a child between 5 and 13 years old from a previous marriage, and half in a first-marriage family. The main results show that (a) mothers promote family integrity in stepfamilies either with the partner, or with the father, but not with both; (b) the older the child, the less the mothers reported integrity with the father in both families, and the more they reported disparagement against the partner and conflict with the partner in stepfamilies; and (c) maternal marital satisfaction is linked with all dimensions of coparenting with the father in first-marriage families, but only with disparagement against the partner and conflict with the partner in stepfamilies. Overall, coparenting has similar characteristics in both types of families, but also presents differences that should be considered when working with parents who are committed to a new relationship.

Favez, N., Widmer, E. D., Doan, M. T., & Tissot, H. (2015). Coparenting in Stepfamilies: Maternal Promotion of Family Cohesiveness with Partner and with Father. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-11.

Developing coparenting research

FRB Comment

In this Australian study Maycock et al are planning compare the influence that paternal antenatal interventions have on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. The paper describes the methodology that will be used in a randomised control trial (The PIFI Study) to compare outcomes in 1600 fathers who receive the usual care vs fathers in either a medium or high intensity intervention aimed at enhancing their ability to support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. We can look forward to this study not only for the influence that interventions may have on breastfeeding but also for evidence concerning the influence of paternal antenatal intervention.

Continued on next page

A study to prolong breastfeeding duration: Design and rationale of the Parent Infant Feeding Initiative (PIFI) randomised controlled trial

Background: Very few Australian infants are exclusively breastfed to 6 months as recommended by the World Health Organization. There is strong empirical evidence that fathers have a major impact on their partner's decision to breastfeed and continuation of breastfeeding. Fathers want to participate in the breastfeeding decision making process and to know how they can support their partner to achieve their breastfeeding goals. The aim of the Parent Infant Feeding Initiative (PIFI) is to evaluate the effect on duration of any and exclusive breastfeeding of three breastfeeding promotion interventions of differing intensity and duration, targeted at couples but channelled through the male partner. The study will also undertake a cost-effectiveness evaluation of the interventions.

Methods/design: The PIFI study is a factorial randomised controlled trial. Participants will be mothers and their male partners attending antenatal classes at selected public and private hospitals with maternity departments in Perth, Western Australia. Fathers will be randomly allocated to either the usual care control group (CG), one of two medium intensity (MI1 and MI2) interventions, or a high intensity (HI) intervention. MI1 will include a specialised antenatal breastfeeding education session for fathers with supporting print materials. MI2 will involve the delivery of an antenatal and postnatal social support intervention delivered via a smartphone application and HI will include both the specialised antenatal class and the social support intervention. Outcome data will be collected from couples at baseline and at six and 26 weeks postnatally. A total of 1600 couples will be recruited. This takes into account a 25 % attrition rate, and will detect at least a 10 % difference in the proportion of mothers breastfeeding between any two of the groups at 26 weeks at 80 % power and 5 % level of significance, using a Log-rank survival test. Multivariable survival and logistic regression analyses will be used to assess the effect of the treatment groups on the outcomes after adjusting for covariates.

Discussion: The PIFI study will be the first Australian study to provide Level II evidence of the impact on breastfeeding duration of a comprehensive, multi-level, male-partner-focused breastfeeding intervention. Unique features of the intervention include its large sample size, delivery of two of the interventions by mobile device technology, a rigorous assessment of intervention fidelity and a cost-effectiveness evaluation.

Maycock, B. R., Scott, J. A., Hauck, Y. L., Burns, S. K., Robinson, S., Giglia, R., ... & Binns, C. W. (2015). A study to prolong breastfeeding duration: design and rationale of the Parent Infant Feeding Initiative (PIFI) randomised controlled trial. *BMC pregnancy and childbirth*, 15(1), 159.

ONGOING RESEARCH

SMS4dads

The second (main) phase of SMS4dads is due to launch on 28th October following a highly successful pilot study.

The results of the pilot study have given a real confidence in the value of the texts and the potential benefits to the family. The relationship focus in the texts has been supported by the feedback from the brief interviews post messages. Fathers and mothers are indicating that the messages (which were only for 6 weeks) boosted their coparenting relationship, encouraged more discussion of parenting, improved father-infant care, increased fathers support for the mother and supported fathers mental health.

In the brief interviews we are discovering further possible outcomes of the texts:

- A dad sees the SMS to tell the mother that she's doing a great job; they both know he wouldn't normally say something like this so when he offers the comment they both giggle. He acknowledges that he wouldn't have thought to say this but the effect is positive for their relationship.
- Another dad forwards the messages on to his mates who are having babies and they talk about the content as a result.
- Another (anxious) dad keeps the messages on his phone and scrolls through them when his baby is asleep.
- Mothers we interviewed are pleased that the dads are getting this info without them having to pass it on.

In the next (main) phase of the study fathers from 12 weeks pregnant to 26 weeks after the baby's birth will receive messages for as long as 52 weeks. These messages are targeted to the father's timeline on the transition to parenthood and many of the messages contain links to online information.

Check out www.sms4dads.com



Father and Child Play project

We are developing an exciting new research project that explores how fathers' play with children contributes to child development and what things can affect these connections. Play with fathers may provide a particularly rich and safe environment for children to develop essential social, emotional and communication skills.

Participation involves two short sessions: 1) A dad and child play session and 2) a developmental assessment at either Callaghan or Ourimbah campus.

If you are a parent of a child aged 18 – 24 months living in the NSW Hunter or Central Coast region and would like to register or for more information please visit www.fathersandfamiliesresearch.com or call Jennifer on 4921 6690.

FAMILY ACTION CENTRE NEWS

Emerging priorities for research on fathers and fathering



In July 2015, Alan Hayes AM was appointed as the inaugural Distinguished Professor of Family Studies at the University of Newcastle. Here he offers a commentary on the direction of father-related research

Relative to the extensive literature on mothers and their influences on child development, health and wellbeing, research on fathers remains a rather neglected area. But what should be the priority areas for research on fathers? While we now know more about father-child attachment and parenting, there is much more to learn about their mental health, wellbeing and help-seeking behaviours. Given that we recognise the impacts of dads' difficulties on other family members, more work is needed to identify and understand the factors that impede the engagement of fathers with services and supports; this information is of prime importance to practitioners who struggle to engage and maintain father involvement in their programs. Within that broad focus, an increasing priority for research involves the development and evaluation of innovative support systems, including technological platforms (such as phone based support) to deliver health and wellbeing information and to provide appropriate clinical support. Contextual and cultural differences can make it especially difficult to engage dads. An area of considerable clinical and community need and research priority is to better understand the impacts of post traumatic stress among specific groups of fathers including defence force personnel, police officers and "first responders, as well as Indigenous fathers and humanitarian migrants.

Gain specialist knowledge in *Men and Fathers* - enrol now for 2016 Professional Development, Graduate Certificate or Master of Family Studies - <http://gradschool.edu.au/programs/overview/master-family-studies-12277#overview>



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Or contact Richard Fletcher:

richard.fletcher@newcastle.edu.au

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