



Men in the Early Years Conference

Tuesday 18th July - Bradford



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Delivered in partnership with:



With thanks for hospitality:





Jonathan Douglas
(Director- National Literacy Trust)



The impact of fathers – MITEY

July 2017

Shahid Islam

Research Fellow – Better Start
Bradford Innovation Hub



Dads and DNA

- Diana Anderson, Professor of Biomedical Science and Established Chair at the University of Bradford



- Blood was taken from father, mother and baby to examine DNA damage.
- Smoking dads were found to pass on more DNA damage to their children than Mums.
- Recommendation: Hopeful dads should allow three months to pass without smoking before conception to allow the damaged DNA to be eliminated from their reproductive system.

Effects of father engagement:
a systematic review

Across 22 of 24 studies

Increased engagement associated with a range
of positive outcomes in boys and girls:

- Fewer behavioural problems
- Fewer psychological problems
- Enhanced cognitive development

Sarkadi et al, 2008 *Arch. Disease Child.*

Psychology

Men's attitude to fatherhood influences child behaviour, says study

Preteen behavioural problems less likely in children with confident fathers who embrace parenthood, suggest researchers



This article is 7 months old

4009 784

Nicola Davis

@NicolaKSDavis

Tuesday 22 November 2016 23:30 GMT



Researchers found that men's attitudes towards fatherhood are more important to child development than their involvement in childcare and chores. Photograph: akurtz/Getty Images

Children of confident fathers who embrace parenthood are less likely to show behavioural problems before their teenage years, researchers have found.

A new study suggests that a man's attitudes towards fatherhood soon after his

Most popular



Trump taps former justice department official Christopher Wray to lead FBI



Former Farage aide gave US information in plea deal, court files show



BORN IN BRADFORD'S BETTER START



Our target:

- 5,000 babies and their mums and mums' partners, over 5 years.

Our progress:

Started 1st of January 2016

- 1075 mums
- 113 dads
- more than 835 babies

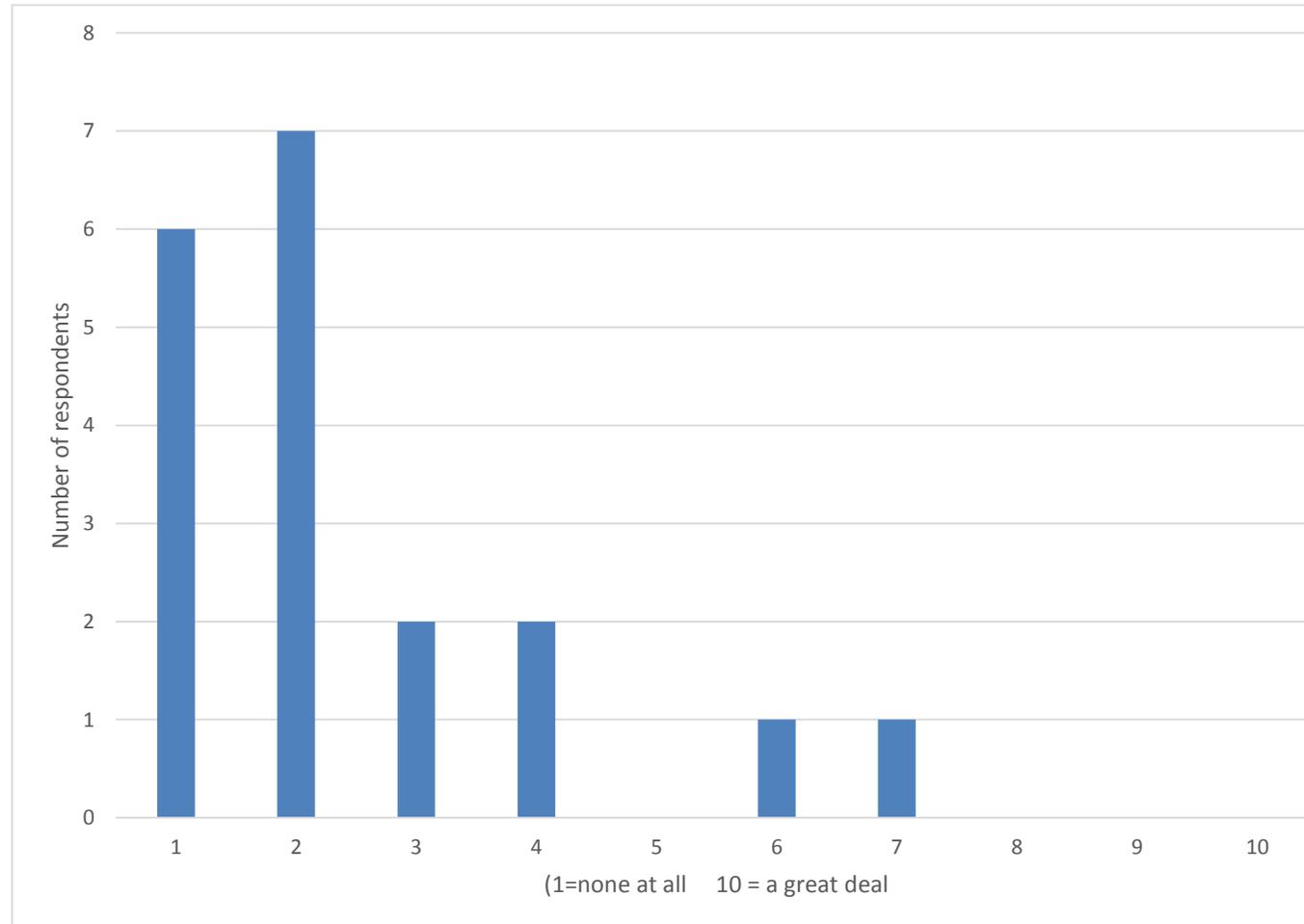


Dads consultation



Encouraging dads to be involved?

- N=19



Dads want to get involved – they want to do something practical with their kids

Dads like more hands on stuff. Practical work. Not sitting down and talking about it.

Fathers engage with their children differently from mothers:

Of the time they spend with their children, a higher proportion is spent in play

More stimulating play

(Lamb, 1977; Lewis and Lamb, 2003)

Dads' workshops

Dads are vital to children's development, right from the start

If you're a dad in our area with a child under four, come to our interactive workshops, to help you be the best dad you can.



Two workshops will cover different topics – come to either or both.

You will:

- Discuss with other local dads and experts the role of dads in getting children off to the best start, and what can be done to support dads in the area.
- Get top tips on bonding, communicating, and being a great role model for your child.

Topics: bonding, health, sports

Tuesday 29 November
5.30-7.30pm

Park Lane Centre, Park Lane BD5 0LN
(crèche provided)

Topics: communication, literacy, faith

Saturday 28 January 2017
2-4pm

Laisterdyke Library, Manse Street BD3 8RP
(we hope to have crèche facilities)

To book your free place,
or for more info, go to:

www.betterstartbradford.co.uk
or call Abida on 01274 723146.

Hosted in partnership with Innovation Hub, Bradford Trident, Bradford Council, National Literacy Trust and Laisterdyke Library.



Play & Sports workshop



Literacy Workshop





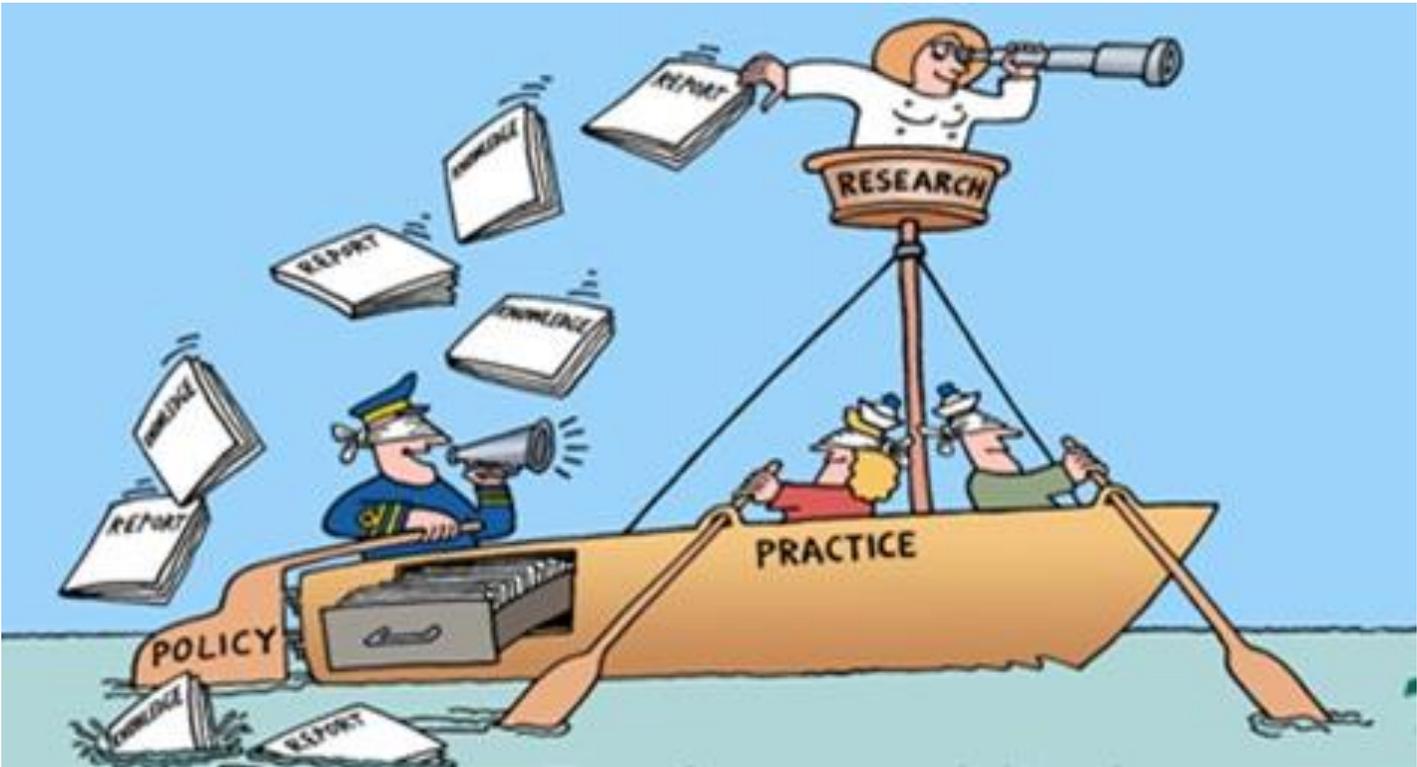
Pictures from today's
Paediatric training course
Thanks to
@betterstartbfd and
@bjb

Practitioner Review: Engaging fathers – recommendations for a game change in parenting interventions based on a systematic review of the global evidence

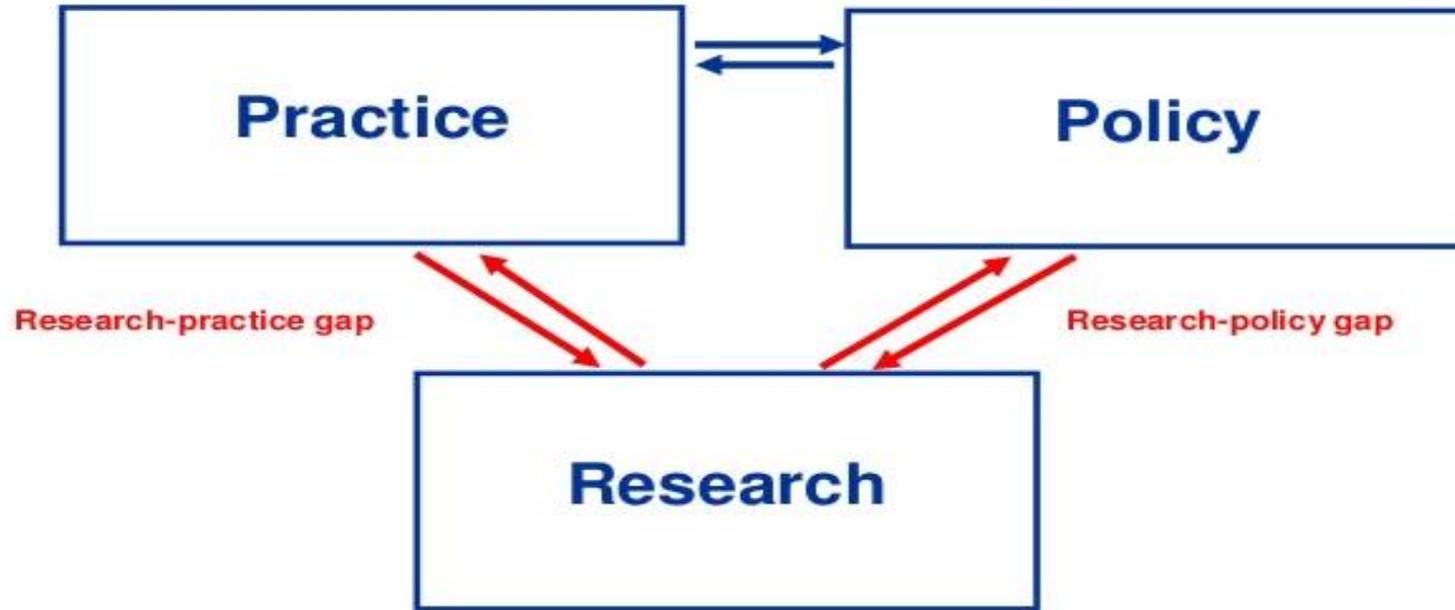
**Catherine Panter-Brick,¹ Adrienne Burgess,² Mark Eggerman,³ Fiona McAllister,²
Kyle Pruett,⁴ and James F. Leckman⁴**

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Making it happen!



Source: Davies, Nutley & Smith (2000b); Lomas, 2000b; Pyra (2003.); Shorkoff (2000).

STAY IN TOUCH



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Born in Bradford's Better Start





Dr Jo Warin and Yuwei Xu

The gender flexible Early Years Practitioner



The Gender Flexible Early Years Practitioner

Men in the Early Years (MITEY) National Conference

Jo Warin, Lancaster University

Yuwei Xu, University of Portsmouth

Aims of this talk

- To consider how the presence of male practitioners in the Early Years can help society to move beyond the gender binary
- To exemplify possible good practices in the Early Years settings that will challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender diversity
- To understand the gender dynamics of teacher-child interactions cross-culturally

Case study of Acorn nursery

- 5 male practitioners
- How far are practices and relationships changed in a setting with a 'critical mass 'of male practitioners?'
- Gender complementary practices
- Gender flexible practices

Gender complementary practices?



Gender flexible practices



Achieved by: **staff modelling of alternative forms of masculinities and femininities.** “Early childhood educators, both men and women, can model a flexible approach to the performance of gender which disrupts prescriptions for men to model masculinities and women to model femininities” (Warin and Adriany, 2015 p6)

Gender flexible practices

“we got all these fabrics out and I started dressing up like a pirate. And then I put a flower in my hair as well and all the children said “Pirates don’t have flowers” and I said, “Well this one does”. “Boys aren’t allowed to wear flowers”. “Well this one does” . ..or the other day I was Rapunzel and the all plaited the back of my hair.... They just think it’s funny because **they’re seeing the both sides of what everyone can do**” (male worker in Acorn nursery, with 2-3 age group)

Maximising opportunities

Gender blindness

“The Mummies on the bus go chatter chatter chatter”

Gender sensitivity

Male teacher to 4 year old boy in doll play “Now let’s put on her nappy . Lets be very gentle with her”

Gender sensitivity training

A cross-cultural study of gender and teacher-child interactions in Scotland, Hong Kong, and Mainland China

- Whether or not teacher-child interactions can be gendered in the Early Years?
- Practitioners' and children's perceptions of gender and their interactions?
- Cultural impacts?

Multiple Gender Subjectivities

- *'If it is like lifting heavy things, that's something we all do. [...] If one of us is struggling with lifting big bricks, well, why not ask one of your friends to help you and you can do this together. "Yeah, we can do it together.' So I suppose it's the kind of thing we would show the children we can do that.'*

(John, Male, Crewkerne Primary School Nursery Class, Edinburgh)

- *Men and women are different, so they offer different things to the children. For instance, I suppose, I do like to adopt a bit of a [...] disciplinary role. [...] The males and females always have had different roles.*

(Philip, Male, Big Lips Nursery, Edinburgh)

- *I can play a very 'feminine' character in the classroom if needed under certain scenarios, I don't mind. I can do that, and have no problem with it. I am a teacher after all, and I need to do as much as I can to cater for my teaching activities. I can't say that I won't do it because it's embarrassing.*

(Mr Chiu, Male, Yau Oi Kindergarten, Hong Kong)

- *I would treat boys and girls differently. [...] I wish girls to be less strong and more delicate, girls should have girls' traits. [...] Girls will depend on men in the future, so it will not do good to her if she is too strong. [...] And I think I should influence girls in this regard. [...] For boys, if they make any mistakes, I will not let them go and will definitely blame them hard. [...]*

(Mr Hu, Male, Xiwang youeryuan, Tianjin)



The gendered child

- *Men will look 'manly' when they play football. Women just do housework, and don't play football. [...] My mom told me about these things.*
- *Boys do sports a lot. Girls are girls and boys are boys. Girls often do housework. Boys need to work, so they don't need to do housework. [Who told you these?] Myself.*
- *I play games with games with Mr Fok because he is a boy. [...] I chat with Ms Choi.*

The (gender) flexible child

Sometimes I will be close friend with Mr Tang, sometimes I will prefer Miss Tai. It's all changeable, and can be either teacher.

Researcher: What if this is one of the teachers?

Girl: It's either you or Mr Niu. [...] Because I think it looks like a boy. [...]

Researcher: But you just said it looks like a mother as she is wearing high heels?

Girl: Yes. I can change all the time.

Girl: It is Mr Xu [the researchers] carrying Mr Cheung [the man teacher].

Researcher: Really?

Girl: [Laughing] Ha, I am joking. I know it is a mother holding a baby.

The interactive dynamics

I like Mr Hu most. He is not as fierce as other teachers, and he doesn't really beat us - he just says so. [......] Miss He is more fierce and she often tells us off. **(Girl)**

I don't like Mr Hu, so I don't do ANYTHING with him. [Why?] I am vengeful to him. [...] Because he is often angry with me, because I do not listen to him. [You can tell him not to be angry, and promise that you will listen?] No, I will never surrender. I am very grumpy. [I don't think you are grumpy.] I am the grumpiest one in our kindergarten. [...] **(Boy)**

Opportunities for challenge/reproduction through practices

We had a joke to say would that skirt fit Mr Hill? It's really fun because they say Mr Hill can. 'They could have a pink top...'. [...] And make up, no boys wear make-up, but Halloween. 'Well, yeah, he sometimes may.' It's just time to make them more open to different kind of things. I think a good way doing that it's actually dressing up. The dressing up corner. It's actually really funny because a lot of times when the dresses are around, the boys wear them. It's really nice [...] It's just exploring, it's just dressing up, it's like being superman or spider man.

(Mrs Amy Smith, Female, Crewkerne Primary School Nursery Class, Edinburgh)

Sometimes children will draw pictures of their teachers. Usually I am wearing a skirt in their pictures. When Mr Chiu first came to work with them, he is also portrayed to be wearing a skirt. It might be because children get used to drawing a teacher with skirts. We will then correct the children, and they will realize Mr Chiu is a boy: 'Yeah, Mr Chiu is a boy [and should not be wearing a skirt].'

(Miss Tso, Female, Yau Oi Kindergarten, Hong Kong)

Our conclusions

- The numbers of men/women practitioners matter less, their gender subjectivities matter **MORE**;
- Children have their own agency in dealing with gender, either reproducing gendered structures or challenging them;
- There are opportunities for both practitioners and children to challenge gender stereotypes through interactions and open discussions.
- As such, there is an expectation that Early Years practitioners need to be **GENDER FLEXIBLE** in their dynamic interactions with children.



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Anne-Marie Merrifield

Conference context and work in Bradford



Professor Steven Robertson

Working with young fathers and sustainability



Anette Hellmen

The ambivalence of caring masculinities



The ambivalence of caring masculinities

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GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

- Two interview studies
- Swedish fathers (Johansson, Lindgren & Hellman, 2013) and men studying to become ECE teachers (Heikkilä & Hellman, 2015).
- The argument forward is that we need to reflect on the way concepts of care operates within educational practices and I suggest the concept of *reflective educational care* to frame this discussion (Hellman, 2016).



Contemporary strong discourses



- Individuality
- The competent child
- Gender equality: in policy documents and laws, such as 18 months parental leave available to both parents and obligations for teachers in Early Childhood Education (ECE) to counteract gender stereotypes (Skolverket, 2016).

Caring masculinities and fatherhood

- A shift from ‘breadwinner’ towards an ‘active, caring, present and competent father’.
- Parental leave and class



Caring masculinities and professionalism

- About 90 % of Swedish children in ECE
- Number of male preschoolteachers about 3-4%
- Ideal position as pre-schoolteacher, professional (work according to the curriculum).
- EDUCARE: To be professional is to perform care.
- Gender neutral (problematic concept).

Johan:

I don't think about myself as a male teacher, but rather as a preschool teacher, I take great pride in to be seen as professional. Maybe because it was not a coincident for me to become a preschool teacher; I have had other jobs before this, more traditional male jobs like working in factories and stuff. But I wanted to work with young children and my mother encouraged me, you have always been great with children, she said. She is herself a preschool teacher, so she might have seen some qualities there (laugh).

I know that others, like some teachers or some parents, might expect me to be a certain kind of man – especially to the boys, to play physical games with them like football, as well as to be strict towards out-acting boys. But it's not in line with my obligation to work like that. I want to be a gender equal. At least I have that intention, but some day's it's hard to be so visible, especially if you are seen as some specific kind of preschool teacher as a man. I mean, we are all preschool teachers, right? We shall all, both men and women, work according to the same curriculum.

- Professionalism relates to competence, status and power (Kuisma & Sandberg, 2008) . To be able to interpret the national curriculum in practice, status filled position, maybe even more important to gain as a man and a minority in early childhood education.
- Johan's discuss his active choice to become a preschool teacher, a common theme for many male teachers.
- Active choices contributed to the way that professionalism, rather than gender, are put in the forefront?

Gender neutrality - visibility

- At the same time, male teachers described themselves as very visible as a minority.
- Some referred to this as being positioned as 'the other' in a context supposed to be neutral.
- To teach often means to put oneself in front of the gaze of different audiences, such as parents, children or colleagues (Warin, 2015),
- Johan: *male role model*. Particularly important: notions about absent fathers.
- Particularly in relation to notions about single mothers.

Un-reflected practices of care and masculinity

- The notion of EDUCARE in Sweden
- At the university trainers learn how care and education are interrelated and the importance to act in a caring way in order to create a learning environment (Johansson, 2011).
- A clash between theory and practice for male trainers, particular in terms of men, masculinity and care.



- It was when I was working in a group of younger 1-3 years old children. I was then advised by my female colleague, to leave the 'caring parts' of the job to her, like helping children to get dressed. She was my supervisor and she had just had a conversation with one of the parents who thought that it was a little bit strange with men taking care of young children. My supervisor told the parents that all teachers have an obligation to fulfil the goals of the curriculum. Care is a central part of our obligation and something both men and women are supposed to perform and teach. But afterwards, she also told me to play it cool and leave caring activities among the children to female teachers, since some parents had opinions about me as a man doing them. It was not that the parent accused me of sexual activities with the children; it was just that some parents thought that care was an odd thing to do as a man.

- In the past decade, dominant global discourses about individuality and competence have become evident in pedagogy policy and practice (Corsaro, 2005; Davies & Kasama, 2004; Kampmann, 2004; Moss, 2014; Son, 2014).
- Although traditional ways of understanding learning and care (educare) as being equally important and inseparable may still exist, some western countries have seen a shift towards a more performative culture, in which the concept of learning tends to be related to traditional school subjects – such as the learning of language or mathematics (Noddings, 2005; Pramling Samuelsson, Williams, Sheridan & Hellman, 2015).

- While learning is seen as reflected upon and discussed 'on its own' as well as together with care, care is defined in Swedish policy documents and in practice more vaguely or in 'combination' with learning.
- In response to these discourses researchers have stressed the need to pay far more attention to practices of care and to the way the concept of care operates in early childhood settings (Halldén, 2015).
- If care becomes an un-reflected practice, teachers actions in these practices might pass without critical analyze and hereby are at risk of being understood through gender stereotype norms about gender, rather than in line with teachers' gender equal obligations.
- REFLECTIVE CARE (Hellman, 2016).

To break norms 'downhill'

- To break the gender order “downhill” also means that there is a possibility to be ridiculed in different ways. This was a real risk for the informants in both Japan and Sweden and could mean that your choice of occupation became questioned in different ways, for instance linked to lack of ambition.
- The Swedish male trainers and teachers also discussed the possibility of a sexual gaze on their caring actions, a gaze not directed towards their female colleagues.



- C: The worst thing that could happen is if I take care of a child, say take a child on my knee, and then are accused of sexual harassments by a parent who thinks that caring for children is unnatural for men to do, like, I must have some other intentions... It's so horrible even to think about that, so I must admit that I sometimes keep a certain distance towards children in order to be more safe or at least I make sure that my colleagues is close to me with some 'extra eyes' of safety to protect me from possible accusations so to speak.
- S: Yeah, that's so sad; I never have to think like that as a female teacher. I do these things all the time without thinking about it, that is how it should be for all teachers, I mean children need us to care for them despite our gender. If anything we need a man who shows girls as well as boys that care is just as natural for men to do as for women.

The possibility to break norms; collegial solidarity, safety, fairness and reflection

- Male teachers describe themselves as 'breakers' towards a new masculinity and the way to create a space where that becomes possible
- Collegial solidarity
- Safety and fairness in order to be able to break norms (Mc Naughton, 2002).
- Reflection, genderanalyses, awariness

Summary

- Ideal of caring masculinities - as fathers
- ECE: Professionalism (to perform care) and gender neutrality
- Clash: professional caring masculinities
- Sweden: Educare - unreflected care
- To transgress gendered borders: Collegial solidarity, safety, fairness, teachers self-reflection, analyze and action.

Thank you!





*facilitating prosperity
for single mums*

*“a platform for single
mothers and their children to
enable them **to grow**
independently and better their
lives”*

NEESIE

MEN IN EARLY YEARS

National Science and Media Museum

Noreen Khan

18th July 2017



REASSURANCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS



*facilitating prosperity
for single mums*

*“a platform for single
mothers and their children to
enable them **to grow**
independently and better their
lives”*

What do we want NEESIE to achieve?

Vision

to care for those whose **physical**
and **emotional** resources are
absent and provide opportunities
and a platform for prosperity

Mission

a **platform** for single mothers
to **grow independently** and
better their lives.

Objective

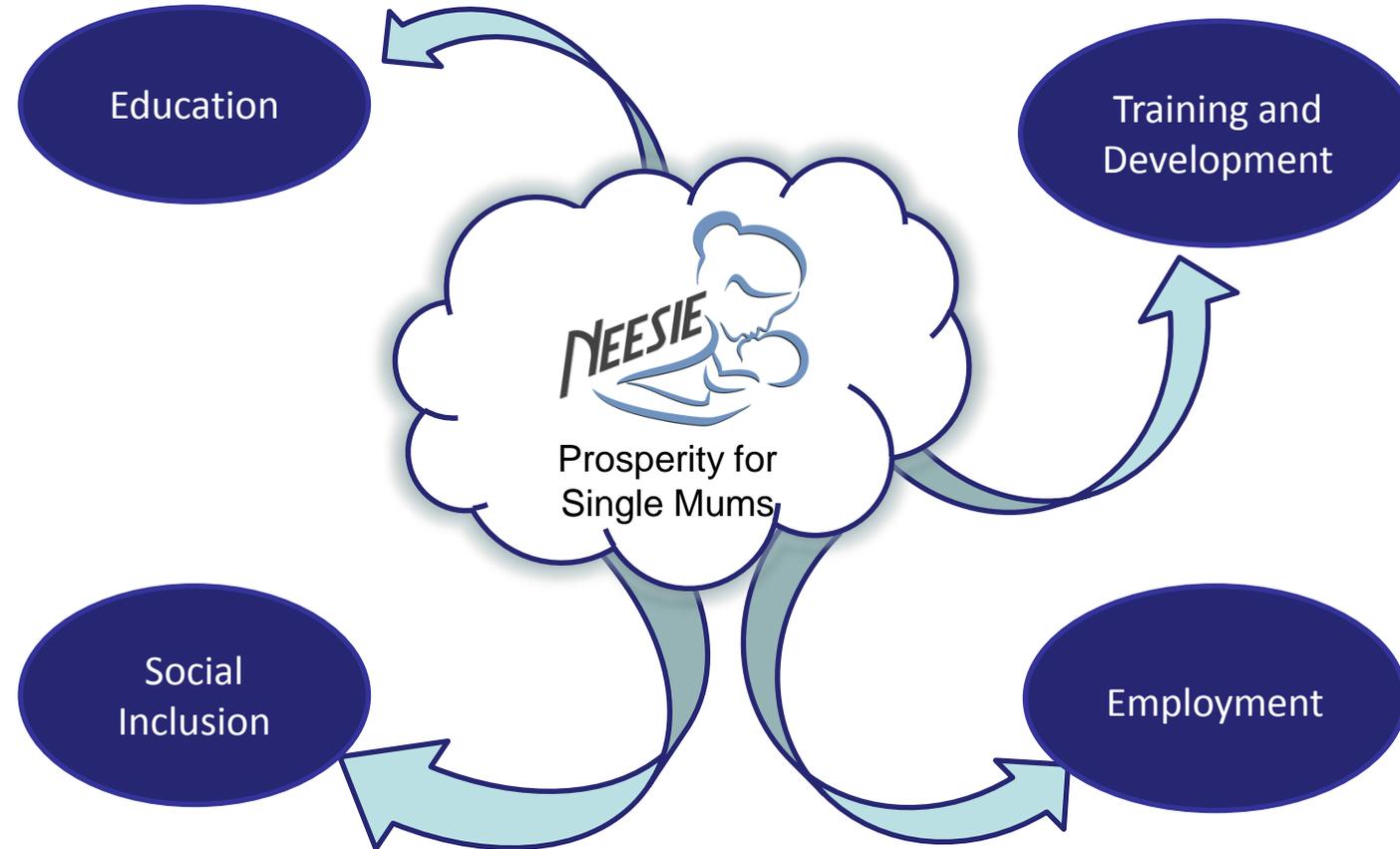
to provides single mothers the
hopes and skills necessary to
build an **economically** and
emotionally stable home and
flourish in society.



*facilitating prosperity
for single mums*

*“a platform for single
mothers and their children to
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Our priorities



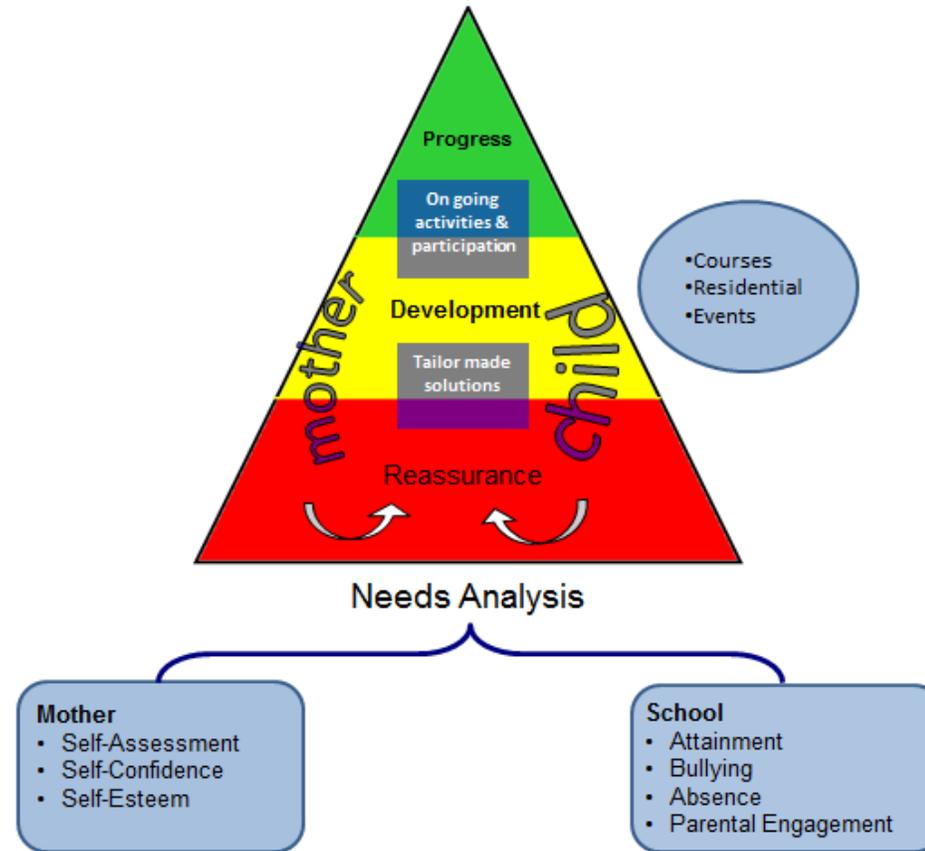
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Process Pyramid



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OFSTED recognition

Whole School approach

- Parental engagement Strategy
- Child(ren) Improvement
- Support Activities
- School based family support



Triangulation

Parents

- Clear information
- Parental engagement strategy
- Knowledge of School Mission/Values

Staff

- Targeted CPD
- Engage staff with parents
- Training and Coaching
- Understand background of parents

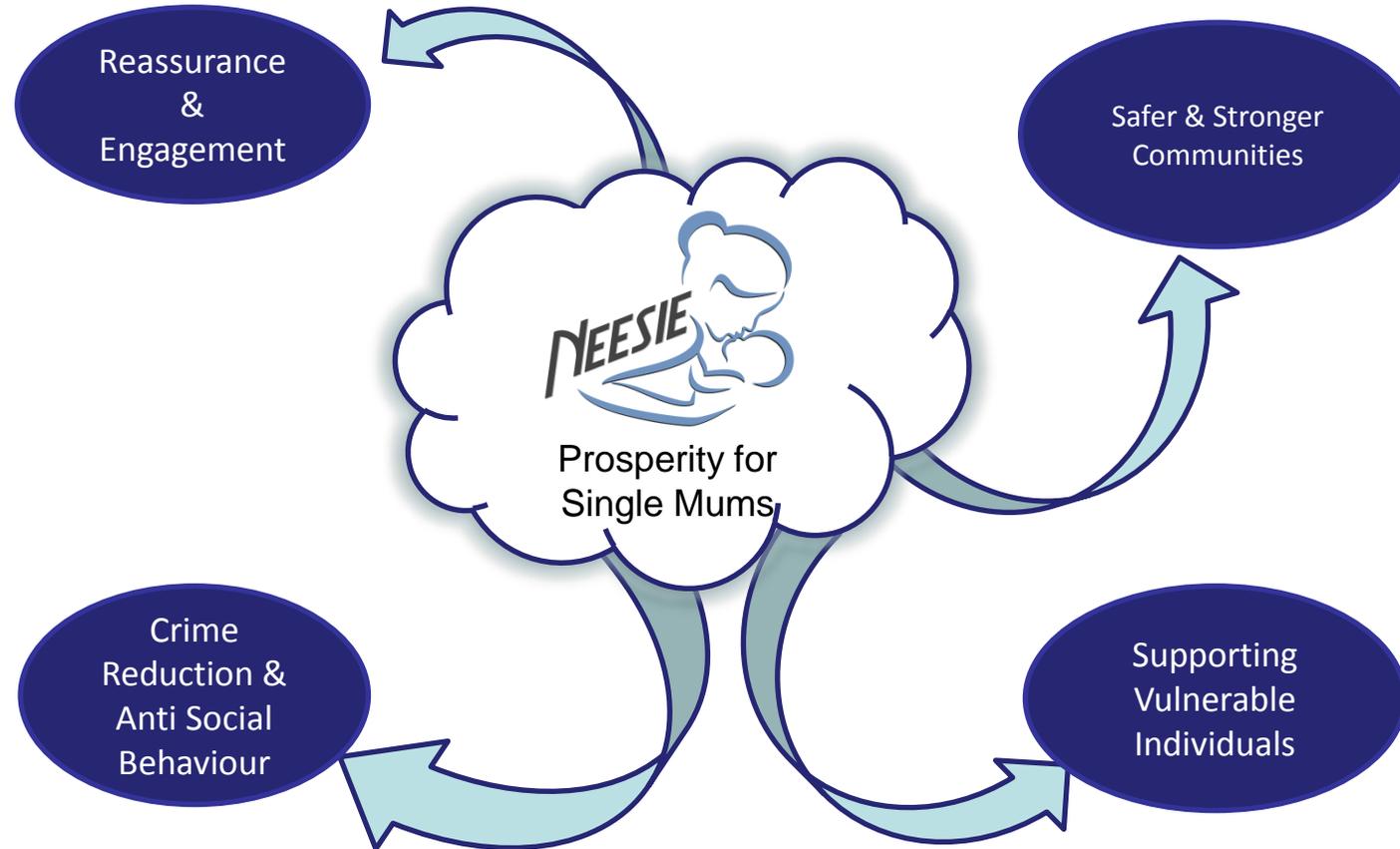
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Challenges within our Communities



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Our Commitment

NEESIE fulfils its commitment in **Neighbourhoods** by focusing on the economic and social strength of single parent families; through **Engagement** and providing opportunities for collaboration; through **Empathy** and giving voice to the voiceless; **Supporting** partnerships with agencies; creating **Integrity** and ethical community relations; whilst maintaining relations of **Excellence** and loyalty to our mission.



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**Thank You
Noreen Khan
Director**