Getting daddy ready for school:
A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of pre-school children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools

Scott Hickman
Community Development Worker (lead for the inclusion of fathers/family men)
Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush Children’s Centre

May 2006
Abstract

I conducted the following piece of action research as part my Foundation Degree in Early Years Care and Education. I chose to conduct this enquiry as my work for Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush Children’s Centre (Southampton) involves developing father friendly practices across multi-agency services.

I intended to work in partnership with a local school to develop a strategy for including fathers in their children’s learning within the Foundation Stage of education and future participation in school based activities. Although the sample is very small and I haven’t been able to explore some points in as much detail as I would have liked (due to University parameters for word counts etc) I have evaluated the strategy and my own learning in order to make recommendations for future practice. I hope this will give the reader a starting point for developing their own father friendly practices or encourage further research.

I would like to thank The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Reception Class Teacher from Mansel Infant School, The Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush team, Joy Chalke and Helga Stittrich – Lyons from the University of Portsmouth and the children, dads and family men that took part for their commitment to this project.
Getting daddy ready for school: A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of preschool children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools

Contents

Literature Review: Pages 4 – 8.

Description and Rationale of Activities: Pages 9 – 13.

Reflective account of learning: Pages 14 – 17.

Appendix A, Ethics Guidelines for Foundation degrees within the School of Education and Continuing Studies: Pages 18 – 19.


Appendix D, Information for dads for week one: Page 23.


Appendix F, Information for dads for week three: Page 25.


Appendix H, Interview of dad B: Pages 30 – 33.

Appendix I, Interview of dad C: Pages 34 – 37.

References: Pages 38 – 41.
Getting daddy ready for school: A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of pre-school children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools

Literature Review

This literature review will look at the benefits to children’s outcomes if fathers’ are involved in their pre-school years and subsequent schooling. It will discuss the cultural context which may affect fathers’ involvement and the barriers to fathers’ becoming involved in their children’s school. It will review the enablers that can overcome the barriers, and discuss where fathers’ attitudes fit in to these. It will examine the opportunities for engaging fathers’ in their children’s pre-school years; leading to continued involvement once their children reach school age.

Benefits

Research shows many benefits for children when parents are involved in their schooling and learning (DfES. 2003, P. 1, Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 1). This is an area that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) encourages providers of the Foundation Stage of education (FS) to develop (QCA. 2000, P. 9).

Most research has focused on maternal influences (Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1, Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 1) but there is evidence that shows fathers have a positive, long term affect on children’s outcomes (DfES. 2004, P. 5, Kahn. 2005, P. 2). These include better exam results, behaviour, attendance, attitude and progress at school, interest in books and intellectual and mathematical development (DfES. 2004, P. 5, Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1, Dunn et al. 2000 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1, ContinYou, 2005, P. 7, Literacy Trust, 2005, P. 1 - 2). During the time pre-school children are experiencing the FS, father involvement can benefit children’s social development (Fathers Direct et al. 2003, P. 6) and preparedness for school (Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1). These benefits are independent of the positive impact mothers can have on children (DfES. 2004, P. 5, Dunn et al. 2000 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1).
OFSTED talks of the lack of presence of men in family learning (Goldman. 2005, P. 2) but this is dependent on the definition of family learning. Fathers are more likely to be involved at weekends, organise trips and interact with their children in ways that have benefits to their children’s development and learning such as their development of social skills prior to attending pre-school settings (Fathers Direct et al. 2003, P. 6). Their involvement in these types of activities are often more frequent than that of mothers (Literacy Trust, 2005, P1). Fathers’ focus on play and fun (Goldman. 2005, P. 6, Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 2, Fathers Direct et al. 2003, P. 6) means that they are providing learning opportunities that share an ethos with Early Years experts and theorists such as Tina Bruce and Friedrich Froebel, who champion learning through play (Bruce. 1997, P. 22). This also helps promote children’s positive dispositions to learning (Roberts. 2002, P. 97 - 98 & 124 - 128).

Culture

Research over the past 40 years has shown fathers have always been involved with their children across the board (Fathers Direct et al. 2003, P. 1). However, fathers are spending more time with their children than their fathers did with them (EOC. 2005, P. 2). Modern fathers take on 1 third of the childcare responsibilities (EOC. 2005, P. 2) and it is a cultural expectation in Britain for fathers to be involved in their children’s lives (O’Brien. 2004, P. P6).

89% of British fathers are in employment and work longer hours than fathers in any other country in Europe (EOC. 2005, P. 1). Research has highlighted this as one reason why fathers don’t get involved in school settings as much (Goldman. 2005, P. 13); because they’re unavailable when schooling is taking place. Although the government has introduced measures to make it easier to balance work and family life, such as flexible working (O’Brien. 2004, P. 10), this is unlikely to be used in traditionally male dominated jobs (EOC. 2005, P. 1).

Barriers

Policy makers support the inclusion of fathers (DfES. 2004, P. 2, Goldman. 2005, P. 2, Sure Start. 2005, P. 53 - 55) but despite this there is still a lack of fathers’ presence

Scott Hickman 5 Fda Early Years Care & Education
in schools (DfES. 2004, P. 3). Though fathers drop off and pick up children from
school and significant amounts attend parent’s evenings (Goldman. 2005, P. 8), the
numbers that participate in their children’s school are still considerably lower than
that of mums (DfES. 2004, P. 2). This isn’t to say that they don’t participate in
children’s out of school learning though. Some fathers may spend time with their
children doing non-academic activities, which have academic benefits (Literacy Trust.
2005, P. 1 - 2), that service providers are just not aware of (Speak et al. 1997 in
Burgess. 2006, P. 1).

Non resident fathers, although more likely to be involved than 30 years ago
(Hetherington et al. 2002 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1), are less likely to be involved than
resident fathers (Goldman. 2005, P. 8). Further to this, low income parents are less
likely to stay together and this makes these fathers even less likely to be involved
(Burgess. 2006, P. 1). Fathers are also less likely to be involved with activities that
happen in the week daytime and are dominated by mothers (Goldman. 2005, P. 9).
This creates many barriers as most father involvement with children takes place at
weekends, especially for non resident fathers (Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 2).

Other reasons cited for lack of father involvement in schools include fathers’ lack of
confidence in their own literacy ability or bad experiences of school (Gadsden et al.
2003, P. 1, Burgess. 2006, P. 1), especially as established institutions, such as schools,
are less likely to attract fathers to their settings (ContinYou, 2005, P. 9).

Enablers

Although fathers in one study suggested that their reluctance to get involved was the
main reason for their lack of presence in settings (Kahn. 2005, P. 2), the attitude of
fathers seems to be less of a barrier than work, environment and timings. Fathers love
and aspirations for their children is a motivator for becoming involved (Hawkins et al.
1997 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1). Fathers have the same educational expectations of their
children as mothers and are motivated by wanting their children to do better at school
than they did (Goldman. 2005, P. 8, Fletcher. 1997, in Burgess. 2006, P. 1). Fathers’
negative attitudes have also been shown to contradict their actual, positive, practices
(Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1).
Successful strategies for engaging fathers include leadership from head teacher/deputy level and direct invitations from children (Goldman. 2005, P. 18, DfES. 2004, P. 9 - 10). Giving fathers hands on examples of learning at school and emphasising how important fathers are to their children’s development by using more physical or practical activities can encourage father involvement (DfES. 2004, P. 17, Goldman. 2005, P. 6, Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 4, Kahn. 2005, P. 5). Services that have a strategy for involving fathers have also been shown to be more successful in engaging fathers (Stallard. 2005, P. 12). Consulting with fathers when setting up activities (DfES. 2004, P. 6) and providing them at a time when fathers can attend (Kahn. 2005, P. 5) can also be an enabler to father involvement.

Pre-school involvement

Early years workers are in a good position to recruit dads (Burgess. 2006, P. 1, Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 2). Fathers are more likely to be involved in the pre-school years (Burgess. 2006, P. 1), especially when attending non-institutional settings, at weekends or evenings and when they can see the benefit to their children (ContinYou, 2005, P. 9, Burgess. 2006, P. 1, Kahn. 2005, P. 5 – 6). Moreover, where fathers are involved early in their child’s life they are more likely to stay involved through out their child’s life (Goldman. 2005, P. 10, Burgess. 2006, P. 1).

Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush, as an example, is nationally recognised for it’s successful record of engaging with fathers and their children, aged between birth and 5 years old, through a differentiated, whole team approach (Fisher. 2005a, P. 1, Hughes. 2005, P. 9, Daycare Trust. 2004, P. 1). This includes strategies, activities and publicity specifically aimed at fathers (Fisher. 2005b, P. 4 - 5, Ogden. 2005, P. 18 – 19). These measures are recognised as good practice for effectively engaging fathers in services including pre-school groups and schools (Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1 – 2, Kahn. 2005, P. 5 – 6, DfES. 2004, P. 6).
Conclusion

The links between father’s involvement in their children’s pre-school years and the potential for their continued involvement through their children’s school years is evident in this literature review. By using these links, and the associated enablers to promote fathers involvement, this enquiry will explore the benefits of designing and implementing a strategy to exploit these findings.
Getting daddy ready for school: A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of pre-school children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools

Description and Rationale of Activities

The purpose of this activity was to link Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush Children’s Centre (MRM) and Mansel Infant School (MIS) to create a joint strategy for engaging fathers in their children’s school learning in the Foundation Stage of education (FS). I will describe how I made a link with the school, the strategy we developed and how we implemented the strategy, including the rationale for taking each step in relation to the literature review. This will include a description of the recruitment of fathers, the children’s activities that took place at the Daddy Cool Breakfast (DCB), and the information given to the fathers that took part in the enquiry. I will also describe the method used for evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy.

The aim of the strategy was to explore if engaging with fathers in their children’s pre-school years, using the enablers suggested by research can:

1. Raise fathers’ knowledge of the FS and how to support their children’s learning in this area;
2. Encourage fathers’ to take part in activities that will support children’s learning in the FS and;
3. Encourage fathers’ intentions to attend activities held within the school setting once their children attend the school.

The type of research I chose to use was Action Research as I was aiming to change the policy and practice of two settings and carry out the research at the same time (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 44 - 45). It was carried out in the interpretative tradition as I acknowledge that I hold subjective views due to my links with the work and the validity of my findings will be specific to the location and context that the research is set in (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 38 – 40). As this type of research will involve the fathers it is democratic and inclusive (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 45).
Description of MRM and MIS

MRM is a Children’s Centre that provides family support in a targeted geographic area through a multi-agency team (Sure Start. n.d. P. 1), and MIS, is located within the MRM area.

MRM has a successful record of engaging fathers and their pre-school children in family services, which include the DCB father and child breakfast group, held on a Saturday morning (Fisher. 2005b, P. 4-5, Sure Start. n.d. P. 1). My position at MRM is Community Development Worker, with a lead for engaging fathers, and I am responsible for this work so this was my motivation for choosing to research this area (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 27 – 28).

As MRM is a service which engages with families of children aged between zero and five years old, not only does it engage with children experiencing the FS before and at the beginning of their schooling (QCA. 2000, P. 6), but it predominantly engages with families of pre-school children (Sure Start. n.d. P. 1). The literature review shows that Early Years workers are in a good position to recruit fathers and this is the time fathers are most likely to be involved with their children (Burgess. 2006, P. 1, Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 2). When fathers are involved at this time they support children’s preparedness for school (Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1) and are more likely to stay involved throughout the child’s life (Goldman. 2005, P. 10, Burgess. 2006, P. 1). This may include taking part in activities that take place within the school setting.

Therefore, I approached the school to explore if we could link the reception class curriculum and the activities taking place at the DCB to encourage fathers inclusion in their children’s learning. Furthermore, MRM and MIS share targets for improving children’s educational outcomes at the end of the FS through the Children Act 2004 (DfES. 2005, P.1).

Devising a strategy

As it is likely that school programmes that aim to engage with fathers will be more successful if they have a strategy and leadership from head or deputy level (Stallard. 2005, P. 12, DfES. 2004, P. 9 - 10), I arranged to meet with the MIS Head Teacher.
(HT) and Deputy Head Teacher (DHT). As the FS concerns the reception class within the school, the Reception Class Teacher (RCT) also attended meetings. Together we devised a strategy for engaging fathers in their children’s learning that would provide them with opportunities to receive information and support their children’s development within the FS. This is because fathers are motivated by wanting their children to do better at school than they did (Goldman. 2005, P. 8, Fletcher. 1997, in Burgess. 2006, P. 1), and their involvement can benefit their children in this area (DfES. 2004, P. 5, Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1, Dunn et al. 2000 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1, ContinYou, 2005, P. 7, Literacy Trust, 2005, P. 1 - 2).

The strategy

The strategy was to recruit fathers and their children to attend the DCB (discussed below). I then provided children’s activities at the DCB that were linked to the term plans for the reception class children, as the weekend is the time when fathers are likely to be spending time with their children (Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 2). They were also more likely to come into a MRM building then a school building (ContinYou, 2005, P. 9).

Recruitment

The DHT and I, members of the MRM team and dads from MIS approached parents in the school playground at drop off and pick up times to encourage fathers to attend, as large numbers of fathers have been shown to be present at these times (Goldman. 2005, P. 8). Mothers who were present at the time were given information to pass onto any men that they felt it was appropriate to.

Adverts (Appendix C, P. 18) were given to all the children in the reception class as direct invitations from children have been shown to encourage fathers to attend settings (Goldman. 2005, P. 18, DfES. 2004, P. 9 - 10).

No fathers were recruited to DCB from either of these strategies so I approached three regular attendees of DCB, as all three had children that would or might attend MIS. All three agreed to take part in the enquiry.
The children’s activities

The RCT showed me her term plans and together we planned activates to take place at
the DCB that supported children’s learning in the classroom. The term plans were
designed to benefit children’s development in line with the Curriculum Guidance for
the Foundation Stage (QCA. 2000). The activities were based around a theme of
traditional stories and took place on the following weeks:

- Saturday 25th February – Cooking Gingerbread Men and Find the Gingerbread
  Man Treasure Hunt;
- Saturday 4th March – What’s the Time Mr Wolf Game;
- Saturday 11th March – Textured Billy Goats.

The first three activities were designed to be hands-on, physical activities as fathers
have been shown to be more inclined to join in with this sort of activity (DfES. 2004,
activity was a sticking/texture activity that took place around a table to see if the
fathers’ involvement and enjoyment of this activity differed from the more physical
activities. The differences in responses from research focused on more specific groups
of fathers such as African American fathers (Gadsden, V et al. 2003, P. 1) shows that
fathers don’t all act in the same way. Other research argues that it is important to
remember that fathers are a diverse group and what works for one father might not
work for the next (Kahn. 2005, P. 3, DfES. 2004, P. 14). Therefore, the fourth activity
was included to see if the fathers in this enquiry followed the previous research norm
of enjoying more physical activities (DfES. 2004, P. 17, Goldman. 2005, P. 6,

To support the fathers knowledge of what was happening at DCB and MIS they were
given written and verbal information to explain what their children were learning at
MIS and how they could support this for each of the weeks they attended the DCB
(Appendix D, E and F. P. 19 -21).
I interviewed the fathers who participated in the enquiry two weeks after the last activity had taken place at DCB. This was to ascertain if they had engaged in the activities and if their knowledge of children’s learning, in and out of school, and their attitude towards attending school settings had changed. I will reflect on the findings of these interviews in my reflective account of learning.
Getting daddy ready for school: A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of pre-school children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools

Reflective account of learning

This reflection of learning will evaluate the learning of the fathers in regards to their knowledge of the Foundation Stage of education (FS). It will look at how successful the strategy was at involving fathers in activities that will support their children’s learning, which activities were most popular with the fathers and if the fathers’ intentions to attend school based activities have changed as a result of the strategy.

As the Literature review shows the benefits to children’s development when fathers are involved in their learning (DfES. 2004, P. 5, Gadsden et al. 2003, P. 1, Dunn et al. 2000 in Burgess. 2006, P. 1, ContinYou, 2005, P. 7, Literacy Trust, 2005, P. 1 - 2) and the description of activities demonstrates the link to the FS, I will not focus on the children’s learning. However, I will reflect on my own learning and the validity and benefits of the findings in the context of the research method I used before making recommendations for practice.

Fathers’ involvement at the Daddy Cool Breakfast (DCB), Mansel Infant School (MIS) and their knowledge of FS

Appendix G, H and I (P. 22 - 33) show the results of the interviews with the fathers. All three fathers have a child that will or maybe going to MIS. One father also has a child that attends the school and another is the school Site Manager (SM).

Out of the 12 opportunities the fathers had to get involved in an activity with their children only 3 were taken up. The main reasons for this were that fathers were not present on the day of the activity or their children didn’t want them to take part. However, when the numbers of opportunities, when the fathers did not attend DCB, are removed, the fathers took part in 3 out of 9 opportunities and their children took part in 5 out of 9. 4 out of the 6 times the fathers didn’t take part, they indicated that this was because the children didn’t want them to or because the children weren’t taking part. This suggests that the fathers are supporting the children by letting them
lead their learning from their own interests. Early Years specialists (Bruce. 1997, P. 40-43) recognise this as a positive way to support children’s learning.

The fathers rated all the activities that they took part in as being enjoyable for both themselves and their children. They also indicated that they thought that the activities they didn’t take part in would have all been enjoyable. However, the Billy Goats activity was rated slightly lower than the more physically involved activities. They also rated the amount that they thought the children had learned from the activities as high, apart from the Billy Goats activity which was rated in the middle of the scale. This suggests that the fathers enjoy more physical activities as the literature review suggests (DfES. 2004, P. 17, Goldman. 2005, P. 6, Literacy Trust. 2005, P. 4, Kahn. 2005, P. 5) and may believe that this type of activity has more benefits for the child.

Apart from the SM, the fathers indicated their knowledge of reception class activities, which was originally low, had improved considerably after taking part in this enquiry. However, they all stated that their knowledge of how to support their children’s learning at home had not. This would suggest that the fathers do not consider school and out of school learning to be connected. This, though, is contradicted when they all answered yes when asked if they would be more likely to read information from the school now and if they had more ideas of what to do with their children. They all indicated their reason for answering yes to the first question was because they wanted to understand and provide support for what their children are learning. This suggests that although the fathers didn’t link school and out of school learning before the strategy was implemented, they do now that they have taken part. The fathers again demonstrated an ethos for supporting their children’s learning similar to that of Early Years theorist (Bruce. 1997, P. 92-93) as they saw the benefits of the strategy as being the building of children’s self esteem and development of skills.

**Fathers’ involvement in school based activities**

The most common reasons cited by the fathers for potentially not taking part in school activities were time and work commitments. This would support the notion of work being a barrier to fathers’ involvement (Goldman. 2005, P. 13). Time to be with the children encouraged involvement, as did the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Deputy
Head Teacher (DHT). One dad also said that he would stop taking part if there wasn’t a father and child group. These findings support the evidence that fathers are more likely to be involved when they are consulted on when to hold activities (DfES. 2004, P. 6), in an environment that is not dominated by mothers and when there is leadership from DHT level (Goldman. 2005, P. 9, DfES. 2004, P. 9 - 10).

Two fathers already took part in activities at the school which made it difficult to conclude if the strategy had made them more likely to attend with their children in the future. However, question 22 (Appendix G. P. 24) was added, to see if the fathers attitudes had changed after taking part in this enquiry. Both fathers said they were more likely to attend after this enquiry. This shows that their attitude towards attending is further reinforced. This supports the idea that fathers are more likely to be involved if they have had hands on experience of children’s school learning (DfES. 2004, P. 17). However, the other father also said he would have attended before taking part in this enquiry. This means the findings are inconclusive as all three would have attended to some degree anyway.

**My learning**

I have a responsibility at Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush (MRM) to influence development of good practice regarding fathers in other team members’ areas of work. Using Action Research was a way to reach this goal as it allowed me the opportunity to pilot a strategy for including fathers in my work (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 44 - 45). As this style of research includes the participants (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 45), it allowed me the opportunity to consult with fathers on the kind of practices that would encourage their participation. This is good practice for involving fathers (DfES. 2004, P. 6). The findings were likely to be small and specific to the local area (Roberts-Holmes. 2005, P. 45). However, it is part of my job to influence change on a local level so this style of research is relevant.

**Recommendations**

As a result of this enquiry I would suggest that more ways of sharing information with fathers about what children are learning in the reception class are explored. This is an
area where the strategy has been a success and I recommend that the link between DCB and MIS is continued. I also recommend that the importance of the connection of school and out of school learning and the benefits to children’s learning and development are emphasised to fathers as this is a motivator for their involvement.

**Conclusion**

Although this enquiry is inconclusive when exploring if fathers are more likely to take part in school based activities due to this strategy, it does show that some elements are more likely to encourage fathers involvement in their children’s learning, such as providing opportunities at accessible times and having strategic support from a senior level within schools. It demonstrates that fathers want to support their children’s learning and do positively by responding to their children’s needs. It also shows that this strategy can develop fathers’ knowledge of the FS and how to support their children’s learning out of school. As this is the time when fathers are most likely to be involved with their children this can have benefits to children’s development.
Ethics Guidelines for Foundation degrees within the School of Education and Continuing Studies.

- All proposals for research will be considered by the course team/course tutors before commencement.
- It acknowledged that within the FdAs there are different levels of research:
  - Small investigative tasks linked to a specific learning outcome for example observation of a lesson, speaking to parents and colleagues on specific education related issues
  - Larger scale practitioner based enquiry which may involve using data collection methods such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. Data may be collected over time and would involve human subjects.
- Following discussion of ethical considerations, all small and larger scale enquiries will adhere to the following:
  a) Permission will be sought from the line manager. In the instance of larger scale enquiries this may need to be done formally (in writing).
  b) Where appropriate, permission should be sought from the participants. It will be necessary to consider the extent to which the participants are able to give informed consent. (e.g. working with babies (0-3 year olds) or young people with significant mental impairment.)
  c) Where the enquiry is part of the normal daily practice permission from the line manager would in most cases be considered sufficient. This will need to be confirmed with the tutor.
  d) The degree of confidentiality which can be offered must be made clear to participants from the outset. It will however be standard practice to remove all identifying names or features. It will need to be recognised that anonymity may not be able to be guaranteed given that the enquiry is work based.
  e) All data generated will be for the purpose of the enquiry only and subject to University of Portsmouth guidelines and national legislation regarding data protection.
  f) For the larger scale enquiries a statement of intent must be submitted to the tutor. This will give a brief outline and indicate any ethical considerations.
FdA Statement of intent for Practitioner Based Enquiries.
*(To be discussed with course tutors prior to commencement of project)*

**Title:** Getting daddy ready for school: A strategy for the early engagement of fathers of pre-school children in order to encourage fathers’ involvement in infant schools.

**Aims and Objectives of the PBE:**
- To assess fathers’ of pre-school children’s knowledge of the Foundation Stage of Education and Reception Class activities within a local school.
- To measure changes in attitude and knowledge after a specific, planned intervention.
- To determine if fathers are more likely to access a local school after a specific, planned intervention than before the intervention.

**Ethical considerations:**
- To be planned and carried out in accordance with Sure Start MRM and Mansel First School data protection agreements and monitoring and evaluation policies.
- Signed permission to be sought by Sure Start MRM line manager, Mansel School Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and the fathers involved in the enquiry.
- Degree of confidentiality to be explained to all parties as Sure Start MRM and Mansel School will be named in the study and the study will be released to the Sure Start national website and Fathers Direct website.
- Individual participants will not be named, but will be assigned a coding to protect their identities.

**Do you see any particular problems arising from this PBE?**

No.

**Student name:** Scott Hickman

**Project agreed.................................................................................................**
*(Tutor’s signature)*

**Date: ...............................................................................................................**
Appendix B

Consent form

Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush,
Pickles Coppice Centre,
65 Windermere Avenue,
Millbrook,
Southampton.
SO16 9QX

023 8087 8395

Dear

I am undertaking a practitioner based enquiry for my Fda Degree in Early Years Care and Education. For this enquiry I aim to explore the relationship between fathers’ involvement with their pre-school children and their future involvement in their children’s schooling.

I am inviting you to take part in this enquiry. All participants identities will be kept confidential and each child and adult will be given a letter instead of a name in the research. However, Sure Start MRM and Mansel Infant School will be named in the text and the research may be published to a national audience.

If you agree to take part in this enquiry please can you sign and date two copies of this form. Please keep one copy and I will keep the other.

You may withdraw from this project at any time.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Scott Hickman
Community Development Worker (fathers/male carers)

I …………………………………………………………….. (print name) agree to take part in this enquiry. I have had the purpose of this project explained to me and I understand I can withdrawal at any time by contacting Scott Hickman at the above address/number.

Signed……………………………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………………………
Bring Daddy to play*

At the Daddy Cool Breakfast
(free – cooked breakfast included)

Every Saturday (9am – 12pm)
Sure Start MRM
Pickles Coppice Centre
65 Windermere Ave (next to Newlands School)
*023 8087 8387*
Dear Daddy*,

Please take me to the Daddy Cool Breakfast…

(Draw a picture of you and someone special playing here)

...Lots of love from

(write your name here)

*Dads, step-dads, male carers, granddads, uncles, cousins, male family friends are all welcome.

*Open day for mum’s too on Saturday 25th March to celebrate Mother’s Day
Appendix D: Information for dads for week one.

Dads and family men

What are the 4 year old children learning at Mansel School this week?

: The story of the Gingerbread Man :

How can I help my child to learn at home and more in school?

- Play chase and tag games with them
- Read or tell the Gingerbread Man story or your favourite story
- Cook Gingerbread Men
- Ask them what they have been doing at school today (or this week if you see them at weekends)
- Count things and add 1 or 2 (stairs, buttons, potatoes at dinner etc)
Dads and family men

What are the 4 year old children learning at Mansel School this week?

: The story of Red Riding Hood :

How can I help my child to learn at home and more in school?

Play “What’s the Time Mr Wolf”

Read or tell the story of Red Riding Hood or your favourite story

Go for a walk in the woods or park and collect leaves and twigs etc to make a picture

Ask them what they have been doing at school today (or this week if you see them at weekends)

Comparing where grandma lives to where you live or go on holiday
Appendix F: Information for dads for week three.

Dads and family men

What are the 4 year old children learning at Mansel School this week?

The story of Billy Goats Gruff:

How can I help my child to learn at home and more in school?

Find lot’s of different textures and talk about how they feel (e.g. wool = soft Billy Goat beard)

Read or tell the story of Billy Goats Gruff or your favourite story

Play Billy Goats Gruff in the park. Children can climb on different equipment and pretend it’s the bridge. You can be the Troll!

Why not visit the local farm? (Down to Earth Farm is next to Millbrook School)

Hide lots of things under a tea towel and see how many things the children can remember

25 Fda Early Years Care & Education
Appendix G: Interview of dad A.

1. Do you have a child that will or maybe going to Mansel School? Do you have a child that already attends Mansel?

   Yes. 2. 1 attending and 1 will attend.

2. Do you currently take part in any father/child activities at the school?

   Yes. Mad dads father and child group.

3. Are you likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School?

   Yes.

4. What would stop you taking part?

   If the school was not there.
   If the school stopped having a dads group.

5. What would encourage you to take part?

   Quality time with my children
   20 minutes of us just together doing stuff.
   Computer activities, picnics, outings (museums, Southampton football club tour)

6. Do you attend the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

   Yes

7. How many times did you attend DCB between the dates of Sat 25th Feb and Sat 11th March?

   3

8. Which of the following activities did you take part in during those weeks? Why didn’t you take part?

   • Making Gingerbread men – No – My children didn’t want me to help
   • Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – No – Children weren’t playing it
   • Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – No – Children weren’t playing it
   • Textured Billy Goats – No – We were playing with other things

9. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, the activities you took part in?

   • Making Gingerbread men
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?”
• Textured Billy Goats

10. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think you would have enjoyed the activities had you joined in?

• Making Gingerbread men - 1
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - 1
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” - 1
• Textured Billy Goats – 1

11. Which of the following activities did your child take part in during those weeks?

• Making Gingerbread men - Yes
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - No
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” - No
• Textured Billy Goat - No

12. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think your child enjoyed the activities they took part in?

• Making Gingerbread men - 1
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - N/A
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – N/A
• Textured Billy Goats – N/A

13. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you think your child learned from taking part in the activities they took part in?

• Making Gingerbread men - 1
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – N/A
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – N/A
• Textured Billy Goats – N/A

14. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much did you know about what children in reception class at Mansel school did before taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

5

15. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you now know about what children in reception class at Mansel school do after taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

Scott Hickman 27  Fda Early Years Care & Education
16. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much did you know about how to support your child’s learning at home before taking part in this project?

1

17. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much do you know about how to support your child’s learning at home after taking part in this project?

1

18. Are you more likely to read information from your child’s school after taking part in this project?

Yes

19. If yes. Why?

To see what they’re up to. What they are doing in the school and pre-school.
To know what they’re learning.

20. Are you more likely to attend a parents evening after taking part in this project?

No – same, we always go anyway

21. If yes. Why?


22. Are you more likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School after taking part in this project?

Yes

Why?

Because I won’t to spend more time with my children to help them with their education

23. What would stop you taking part?

If the school closed.
If the children decided they didn’t want me to be there any more.

24. What would encourage you to take part?
Seeing the look on their faces.
Children wanting you to go.

25. Would you like the Daddy Cool Breakfast to continue providing activities linked to the Mansel school curriculum?

Yes

26. Why?

It helps me to know what they’re up to at school and it means they can do it at DCB as well because they enjoy doing stuff at DCB so it’s even better to help them learn.

27. Would you continue to take part?

Yes.

28. What would stop you taking part?

If DCB didn’t do the activities

29. What would encourage you to take part?

Don’t know….to have fun with my children.

30. Has taking part in this project given you more ideas of what to do with your children?

Yes

Thank you for taking part
Appendix H: Interview of dad B.

1. Do you have a child that will or maybe going to Mansel School? Do you have a child that already attends Mansel?

   1 child going

2. Do you currently take part in any father/child activities at the school?

   Yes

3. Are you likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School?

   Definitely

4. What would stop you taking part?

   School closing! I like to think nothing. I will try to fit it in. I would take over a group if it wasn’t going well.

5. What would encourage you to take part?

   I work here as the site manager so it’s easier because I’m on site. The Deputy Head is so enthusiastic about the dads group so it encourages you. More encouraged by a specific dads group even though I get on with lots of the parents at the school. Having a child that has been to the school.

6. Do you attend the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

   Yes.

7. How many times did you attend DCB between the dates of Sat 25th Feb and Sat 11th March?

   Twice

8. Which of the following activities did you take part in during those weeks? Why didn’t you take part?

   - Making Gingerbread men – No –Wasn’t there
   - Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – No –Wasn’t there
   - Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – Yes
   - Textured Billy Goats – No –busy chatting to other dads

9. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, the activities you took part in?
• Making Gingerbread men - N/A
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – N/A
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – 2. It was good watching the kids
• Textured Billy Goats – N/A

10. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think you would have enjoyed the activities had you joined in?

• Making Gingerbread men - 1
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - 1
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – N/A
• Textured Billy Goats - 2

11. Which of the following activities did your child take part in during those weeks?

• Making Gingerbread men – No
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - No
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” - Yes
• Textured Billy Goat - Yes

12. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think your child enjoyed the activities they took part in?

• Making Gingerbread men – N/A
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – N/A
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – 2
• Textured Billy Goats - 2

13. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you think your child learned from taking part in the activities they took part in?

• Making Gingerbread men – N/A
• Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – N/A
• Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – 2
• Textured Billy Goats – 3

14. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much did you know about what children in reception class at Mansel school did before taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

2
15. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you now know about what children in reception class at Mansel school do after taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

2

16. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much did you know about how to support your child’s learning at home before taking part in this project?

3

17. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much do you know about how to support your child’s learning at home after taking part in this project?

3

18. Are you more likely to read information from your child’s school after taking part in this project?

Yes

19. If yes. Why?

Because I don’t remember getting any information during the project and potentially I’m letting my child down by not giving her a chance to do something. You need as many chances as you can get as a child.

20. Are you more likely to attend a parents evening after taking part in this project?

Yes. I will make sure I am definitely available.

21. If yes. Why?

It’s important to know how we can help them develop.

22. Are you more likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School after taking part in this project?

Yes, because Daddy Cool and Mansel are both putting so much effort in.

Why?

I’m sad I missed out on the opportunity to make Gingerbread Men as she would have liked that

23. What would stop you taking part?
24. What would encourage you to take part?

   If she is released from class to do it with me. If I had more free time.

25. Would you like the Daddy Cool Breakfast to continue providing activities linked to the Mansel school curriculum?

   Yes

26. Why?

   She will be confident in what she is doing. It will raise her self esteem. Once she has done it at one place she will find it easier a second time.

27. Would you continue to take part?

   Yes

28. What would stop you taking part?

   Work issues, if I had to work at that time

29. What would encourage you to take part?

   Verbal encouragement by the staff/play worker, i.e. “come on dad b, get involved. She needs your help”

30. Has taking part in this project given you more ideas of what to do with your children?

   Yes

Thank you for taking part
Appendix I: Interview of dad C.

1. Do you have a child that will or maybe going to Mansel School? Do you have a child that already attends Mansel?
   
   Yes

2. Do you currently take part in any father/child activities at the school?
   
   N/A

3. Are you likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School?
   
   Yes

4. What would stop you taking part?
   
   Not be allowed to.
   Work commitments/timings

5. What would encourage you to take part?
   
   The fact that my child is there

6. Do you attend the Daddy Cool Breakfast?
   
   Yes

7. How many times did you attend DCB between the dates of Sat 25th Feb and Sat 11th March?
   
   2

8. Which of the following activities did you take part in during those weeks? Why didn’t you take part?
   
   - Making Gingerbread men - Yes
   - Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - Yes
   - Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – no –Didn’t realise it was happening
   - Textured Billy Goats – no –Wasn’t at DCB

9. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, the activities you took part in?
   
   - Making Gingerbread men - 1
   - Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - 1
   - Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – N/A
   - Textured Billy Goats – N/A
10. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think you would have enjoyed the activities had you joined in?

- Making Gingerbread men – N/A
- Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – N/A
- Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – 1 because anything with Child is enjoyable
- Textured Billy Goats – 1 – as above

11. Which of the following activities did your child take part in during those weeks?

- Making Gingerbread men - Yes
- Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – Yes
- Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” - No
- Textured Billy Goat - No

12. Please rate on a scale of 1 – 5, with one 1 being “really enjoyed” and 5 being “didn’t enjoy”, how much you think your child enjoyed the activities they took part in?

- Making Gingerbread men - 1
- Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt - 1
- Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” - N/A
- Textured Billy Goats – N/A

13. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you think your child learned from taking part in the activities they took part in?

- Making Gingerbread men - 2
- Playing Gingerbread men treasure hunt – 2
- Playing “What’s the time Mr Wolf?” – N/A
- Textured Billy Goats – N/A

14. On scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much did you know about what children in reception class at Mansel school did before taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

5

15. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none”, how much do you now know about what children in reception class at Mansel school do after taking part in the activities at the Daddy Cool Breakfast?

1
16. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much did you know about how to support your child’s learning at home before taking part in this project?

3

17. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being “lots” and 5 being “none, how much do you know about how to support your child’s learning at home after taking part in this project?

3

18. Are you more likely to read information from your child’s school after taking part in this project?

Yes

19. If yes. Why?

Because I’ve had involvement with the activities. You understand what is involved and what they’re doing.

20. Are you more likely to attend a parents evening after taking part in this project?

No

21. If yes. Why?

22. Are you more likely to take part in father/child activities when/if your child goes to Mansel School after taking part in this project?

No

Why?

I would have anyway.

23. What would stop you taking part?

Time, doesn’t matter what type of activity it is.

24. What would encourage you to take part?

Conscientious of children’s learning.

Scott Hickman 36  Fda Early Years Care & Education
25. Would you like the Daddy Cool Breakfast to continue providing activities linked to the Mansel school curriculum?

Yes.

26. Why?

Because it gives fathers an opportunity to learn about children’s learning. Mum’s get to know as they pick up from school and the child is too tired to tell you what they’ve been doing once you get in from work.

27. Would you continue to take part?

Yes.

28. What would stop you taking part?

If I wasn’t finding it beneficial to her learning.

29. What would encourage you to take part?

I don’t need encouraging, just her being there and learning.

30. Has taking part in this project given you more ideas of what to do with your children?

Yes.

Thank you for taking part
References


Fisher, D. (2005a). *Children’s Centres and Fathers: Speech at the Daycare Trust conference.* Retrieved, 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 2006, from, the Fathers Direct Website:
http://www.fathersdirect.com/index.php?id=0&cID=174


