

Message from MiC Ireland

Our vision is that children would feel that it is normal to be cared for by women and men.

This vision is based on the belief that children benefit from a gender balanced care setting and that it is optimum in terms of the social development of a healthy child.

We also believe that the inclusion of trained male childcare workers could undo a tremendous amount of negative stereotyping about men and their abilities to nurture and care for children. Finally we believe that in an era of equality and the growing awareness in gender equality issues it is perfectly logical for men to aspire to such a vision.



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Why have men in childcare?



Parent's leaflet about men in childcare

By Louise Preston

Why it is important to have men in childcare

'All children can benefit from having a positive male role model in their lives' (*Men in Childcare Ireland, 2011*). In some cases children who are in a full day care service will have no contact with a male role model up to nine hours a day, five days a week. 'The field of early childhood is an overwhelmingly female one', (*Sanders, 2002*) and it is now time to change this. Mothers are now not expected to stay at



home and become a housewife. Men are competent to take on the care role. Society is changing and as this issue has many benefits to a child's development it is time to recognize childcare as a profession for men.

The statistics of men in childcare

Professor Frances Douglas, who is responsible for the development of the Early Childcare Education degree programme in Ireland, outlined statistics in 2008 when he attended the launch of a men in childcare D.V.D. The statistics are as follows; In Ireland there is less than 1% of males in the childcare sector, which is the lowest figure in Europe. Ireland is not the only country which has a low representation of males in the childcare sector.

Australia and New Zealand have 2% of males and with a slightly higher percentage Finland, Norway and Sweden have 10% of males working in the childcare sector.

What are the benefits?

- ⇒ Children are cared for in a mixed—gendered childcare setting
- ⇒ Providing positive male role models for children.
- ⇒ Men can make the childcare setting less intimidating for fathers.
- ⇒ Children will be less likely to be stereotypical of gender roles in the care sector.
- ⇒ Men will show children that manliness can include caring.
- ⇒ 'Males bring more play, active movement, entertainment, and rough and tumble play to the way they interact with their own children and the way they interact with children in a programme'. (*Fagan, 1996; Parke, 1996; Lamb, 2000*)



In recent years the issue of men becoming childcare workers has become a very popular topic among childcare professionals. MiC (Men in Childcare) Ireland was founded in 2004 following the first Men in Childcare Conference which was hosted by Kilkenny County Childcare Committee. It's aim is to support and encourage Irish men who are interested in pursuing a career in childcare. MiC Ireland is part of an International Men in Childcare Network. They have done a huge amount to promote this choice of career to men. One of the activities they engaged in to promote men in childcare was the launch of a D.V.D entitled 'The Face of Men in Irish Childcare'. It featured six men working in the childcare sector across the South and East counties of Ireland.

The D.V.D was aimed at those working in childcare, career guidance teachers and parents. It has been received well and those who have watched the D.V.D feel it is a great contribution to the promotion of men working in childcare.

For more information on the D.V.D please contact Sligo County Childcare Committee by email at Sligochildcare@gmail.com or phone 0719148860.



Personal Note by Louise Preston

As an Early Childhood Care and Education student in my third year of my degree course, I had heard very little about men working in childcare. However, it was an issue I felt that was very important and I wanted to find out more about it. A lot has been done to promote this career for men but there is still a general perception that childcare is a career choice for woman and not for men. 'There is a deep-set prejudice that stops particularly young men from coming into the profession' (*Rawstrone, 2011*).

I feel that if parent's knew more about what was being done by men in childcare and the huge benefit it brings not only to children but also to the working environment in the childcare sector, they would feel more at ease having men caring for their children. The reason for developing this leaflet is to share the information I have gathered in relation to men caring for children, in the hope that parents can feel more at ease with men working in childcare.