

Proceedings of the First  
NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit  
and a  
Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking



# CHILDFORUM RESEARCH

Proceedings of the First  
NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit  
and a  
Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

Sarah-Eve Farquhar (editor)

2007

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Proposed logo for discussion by members  
when the men's network is officially formed  
at the next Summit, Feb 2008  
*Design by Lisa Margrain and Ray Margrain*

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## FOREWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If gender wasn't an issue in the early child care and education workforce there would be no need for this publication. The decreasing representation of men working in early child care and education is a problem that needed to be addressed at national level before it got to this point. It's not been good to be negative, to be talking about the problem year after year, and all the time it seemed nothing would change because no one with power to change the situation was willing to risk speaking up over what was perceived to be a men's only issue.

In 1982 I recall discussion of a remit to support and encourage more men into kindergarten teaching at the NZ Kindergarten Teachers' Association Annual Conference in Wanganui. Men were valued and wanted as teachers. It was a good time to be a male teacher. The male teachers I met at this conference and during my student teacher days, like Simon Easton, David Spraggs, Anton Wartmann, and many others, made me realise that early childhood teaching was something that men could do, and very well too! And I was, and still am a strong feminist. But my beliefs about men being important in the lives of children have been well challenged by the male teachers I've met, watched, and talked with.

So if it was good to be a male in early childhood in the 80s, what happened to change this? In the 1990s we saw early childhood teaching becoming much more defined as a 'women's' profession. Tremendous pride in this being so was projected and written about. No longer was it a good time to be a male teacher. Male teachers started to feel more professionally isolated, different, and not always welcome. The Christchurch Civic Childcare Centre and the Wellington hospital childcare centre abuse cases added the element of fear; that teachers who were male would always now be more likely than their female colleagues to be suspect. And to the mix of promotion of women's ownership of the profession and sex abuse allegation fears came greater government influence over the sector and workforce after administrative responsibility for childcare services was passed from the Dept of Social Welfare to the Department of Education, and the Dept of Education became the Ministry of Education. The NZEI (which incorporated the previous the kindergarten and childcare unions along with primary) appeared hesitant to promote men in teaching and the union's perception of the need to tell teachers not to touch children was explained to be regrettable but necessary.

In late 1996, I was contacted by Al Morrison of Radio NZ about research I was doing on men in early childhood teaching. He thought it was an important topic and wanted to do a story. Yet to be written up, I promised him a copy when it was in January 1997. He set up an interview on the Kim Hill nine to noon show. After talking with Kim Hill I got back into my car in Wellington and my mobile phone wouldn't stop ringing. I must have talked to reporters from just about every radio station, major newspaper, and the story was carried as a second lead news item on TVNZ six o'clock news that night. But, early childhood sector leaders and the government were silent. No action resulted.

It's hard continuing to talk about something that's wrong (being negative and not positive) but when Adam Buckingham emailed me about an assignment he was doing on men in early childhood teaching and I read what he wrote, I was motivated into thinking that perhaps it was time to look at what had changed since 1996/7. Adam wrote an article, as did David Butler, Russell Ballantyne and Lance Cablk to include in a report. In May 2006 I contacted Jane Skinner, a reporter with the Sunday Programme at TVNZ, and asked her if she was interested in the topic and our report. Jane got back to me the same day to say yes her producer was interested, and as a field producer now she'd be doing the story. So we held off formally releasing the report until the documentary was made and later aired in Sept 2006.

For the first time a Minister of Education was interviewed as part of the Sunday documentary on national TV about men in early childhood. For the first time, a national early childhood group publicly voiced concern about the situation and called for change (the Early Childhood Council; thank you to Anthony Keesing and Sue Thorne for doing so much to get the ball rolling). For the

first time a group of representatives and leaders got together to begin planning a campaign to get more men into the sector, including teacher education providers, Kindergarten, Montessori, the NZ Childcare Association and the Early Childhood Council. TeachNZ and the Ministry of Education are right behind the call for more male teachers and are keen to open the door for men.

We held a Summit for men in early child care and teaching. Resulting from the Summit, regional support groups have been formed and a national group is to be formalised at the next Men's Summit in 2008. New Zealand men in early child care and teaching now have their own website <http://www.ecmenz.org>. This website has built on the very good one established by male early childhood teachers in Canterbury/Westland who successfully established their regional support network many years ago, doing much to encourage each other to stay in teaching.

So while this publication is about a problem, it is also an historical record that looks back on what has been and on where we are at now. We may not be at this point for much longer. Hopefully male representation will never be allowed to be as low as it has been again. Our attitudes and our acceptance of male under-representation may never be the same. It is therefore also a good news publication.

**Thank you to all the men in early childhood and to everyone (men and women) who have contributed in small and big ways to getting to where we are now.**

The material in this publication provides essential background reading for reflection and idea gathering. It can be used to help inform ways that will be effective in addressing the gender imbalance in the teaching workforce for the benefit of children and the profession.

Happy reading – and thinking!

Sarah Farquhar

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**SECTION A**  
**SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS**

## Programme

### Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit

Christchurch Convention Centre, Kilmore Street  
Meeting Room 6 & 7, Thursday 29 March 2007

#### AIMS

1. To bring together, for the first time, men working in the early childhood sector from across New Zealand.
2. To provide a forum for discussion, learning, networking and support.
3. To discuss what we want to see happening to encourage recruitment and to involve and keep men in early childhood teaching and care work.

#### PRE-PROGRAMME

8.30–9.45am Casual Coffee and Chat at Metro Cafe, cnr Kilmore and Colombo Streets.

#### PROGRAMME

From 9.30am Arrive, meet others and pick up your name tag, printed materials etc (polo-shirt if pre-ordered) from the registration desk at Rooms 6 & 7.

10.00–10.15am Welcome and Opening Remarks from the Chair.  
*Russell Ballantyne (Co-owner of Early Childhood on Stafford in Dunedin)*

10.15–10.30am Opening Address.  
*Sue Thorne (CEO ECC)*

#### SESSION 1: Visibility and Contributions

10.30–11.00am The 'His' story of Men in Playcentre. *Dr Paul Callister (University of Victoria, Wellington)*

11.00–11.30am What it Means to be a Man in the Early Childhood Sector. The Contributions We Make and Our Relationships with Children, Parents and Colleagues. *Craig D'Arcy (Males in Early Childhood Network Group, NSW)*

11.30–12.00pm Men in the NZ Early Childhood Workforce. A Look at the Numbers, Issues and Media Interest (1997–2007). *Dr Sarah Farquhar (Childforum, Early Childhood Research Network)*

12.00–1.30pm Lunch (sponsored by NZ Kindergartens Inc.)

#### SESSION 2: Analysis

1.30–2.00pm Latest Interpretations of Why Males in Teacher-Staffed Services Have Gone From Endangered to Almost Extinct. *Dr Sarah Farquhar (Childforum)*

2.00–2.30pm Gender and Tertiary Education: Similarities to Early Childhood Including Why Policy Makers are Not Worried. *Dr Paul Callister (University of Victoria)*

2.30–2.45pm Group Discussion



SESSION 3: Daily Challenges in Training and Work

2.45-3.30pm Panel: Avoiding the Minefield as a Male in Teacher Training and Employment. Tips and Strategies for Survival.  
*Session Chair: Adam Buckingham with Stu Cottam, Duncan Fisher & Garth Armstrong*

3.30-3.45pm Quick Refreshment Break

SESSION 4: Options for Change

3.45-4.15pm An Overview of Early Childhood Teacher Recruitment Activities and Opportunities (*Jacky Robertson, ECE Co-ordinator, TeachNZ & Karl Le Quesne, Senior Manager – Policy, Ministry of Education*)

4.15-5.15pm Brainstorming on **What We Want to See Happening to Encourage Male Recruitment, and to Involve and Keep More Men in EC Teaching and Care Work** (e.g. Scholarships for ec students who are male? Acceptance of male volunteers in centres? Can we envisage an all-male staffed centre?)  
**And Whose Responsibility is it to Take These Actions?**  
*Session Chair: Richard Harty, (University of East London)*

SESSION 5: Summary of the Day. Follow-up and Plans

5.15-5.45pm Closing Summary and Where-to-Now Discussion led from the Chair  
*Russell Ballantyne*

EVENING SOCIAL

Are you staying over in Christchurch? Why not join up with others from the Summit for drinks at a local bar followed by dinner.

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

Principal Sponsor

☆ Early Childhood Council

Supporters

☆ NZ Kindergartens Incorporated

☆ PORSE In-Home Childcare Network

☆ Napier Kindergarten Association

☆ Father and Child Trust

☆ Early Childhood on Stratford

Organised by Sarah Farquhar

Contact Email: [Sarah@childforum.com](mailto:Sarah@childforum.com)

website: [www.childforum.com](http://www.childforum.com)

## **Flyer**

### **Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit**

#### **“Kiwi Men Can Do Anything”**

The Childforum Research Network warmly invites you to the inaugural national meeting of men in early childhood care and education services. This is a very important event for the sector. Please help by spreading the word and forwarding this notice to people you know who will be interested, and especially male teachers and volunteers.

#### **The Summit is for:**

- Men working and studying in early childhood
- Staff recruiters, student advisers, tertiary educators, service managers/owners, professional development managers/providers, public officials and administrators, and anyone (male and female) who is interested in hearing the voices of men in the sector and discussing the way forward

**Thursday 29 March 2007, 9.30am – 6pm**

**Christchurch Convention Centre, 95 Kilmore Street**

This is your chance to be part of an extraordinary special event. To find out more and for a registration form Email: [Sarah@childforum.com](mailto:Sarah@childforum.com) or go online to [www.childforum.com](http://www.childforum.com)

- \* Local and Overseas Presenters. \* Group Discussions. \* Panel Discussions.
- \* Informal Early Morning Café Coffee and Chat and Night-out-on-the-Town.
- \* Save on travel costs and also attend the Early Childhood Council Conference after the Summit (it's at the same venue on Friday and over the weekend!)

#### **Session Topics**

##### **Men's Visibility and Contributions**

- History of men's involvement
- What it means to be a man in the sector
- A look at the numbers, issues, and media interest

##### **Analysis**

- Latest interpretations of why there are too few men in early childhood
  - Gender and tertiary education: Similarities to early childhood

##### **Daily Challenges in Training and in Work**

- Sharing stories, tips and strategies; gaining strength and inspiration

##### **Forward to the Future: Options for Change**

- An overview of teacher recruitment
- What we want to see happening to encourage and involve more men

## Brief Report

### The First

### Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit

*“Men can do anything”*



On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007 an extraordinary event in education - a Summit on “Men in Early Child Care and Teaching” was held in Christchurch. It was probably the first time that men outnumbered women at an early childhood meeting.



Proceedings of the First NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit and a Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

Did you know that men now represent just less than 1% of the staff in teacher-staffed services? (Including kindergartens, childcare centres and home-based education coordinators). Parent-staffed services, like playcentres and kohanga reo are not so gendered.

The scarcity of males was highlighted by one male teacher from Gisborne who discovered at the Summit that there weren't other males working in centres in his region.

If you are a woman in teaching, remember that kiwi men can nurture and care for young children and encourage the men you know to consider early childhood teaching as a career. Gender diversity is needed in our profession. Unfortunately men only see women working in early childhood services, and think there is no place for men.

Men as well as women should have the wonderful opportunity to work with young children. Children need to have contact with men in their lives, especially in the early years. We can be telling men that:

**“It is cool to be a man in early child care and teaching”.**

Teacher-staffed early childhood services need to catch up with social change. Today more fathers engage in active parenting and almost all traditionally gendered occupations have changed, or are changing, to become more gender inclusive (with the exception of early childhood teaching and midwifery perhaps).

The Childforum Research Network organised Men's Summit served an important political purpose to generate interest in, and support for, getting more men into teaching and to provide a forum for male teachers and students from across the country to meet.

We were thrilled to receive support from Judy Turner M.P. (deputy leader of United Future) who attended. It was great to have Dr. Judy McGregor (Human Rights Commission), Lynley Hood (author), and Nicola Atwool (office of the Children's Commissioner) participate in the Summit along with representatives from the Ministry of Education and TeachNZ, Barnardos, University of Canterbury, University of Victoria in Wellington, Open Polytechnic of NZ, Te Tari Puna ora o Aotearoa, AUT, University of Auckland, ERO, NZEI Te Riu Roa and Vision College.

Planning for the Summit came on the back of a report released last year on *Sexism in Early Childhood Teaching* and a TVNZ Sunday Documentary *A Few Good Men* inspired by the report. The Early Childhood Council issued a media release immediately after the screening of the documentary describing the lack of men in early childhood teaching as “a national disgrace”. The Council decided to make “men in early childhood” the theme of their national conference. Sarah Farquhar discussed with the Council an idea to have a national summit for the men in early childhood work. The Council offered support and the Summit was held the day prior to their conference.

When interviewed by the reporter for the TVNZ Sunday Documentary in 2006 the Minister for Education said that a national recruitment drive for men was being planned and was weeks away from being implemented. As pointed out in the documentary this turned out not to be quite true. But certainly attention from the media seems to have been pivotal in helping to stimulate action at both government and sector group levels.

At the National Men's Summit in March 2007 we got to see TeachNZs' just printed pamphlet *Is there a Place for You in Early Childhood Teaching?* containing the stories of four men working in early childhood. It reads:

Right now there is a place and need for more males in early childhood teaching. While TeachNZ promotes the need for quality teachers first and foremost, we'd welcome and encourage more men into early childhood teaching. Currently 51% of children participating in early childhood education are boys and only 1% of the teaching workforce is male.

Proceedings of the First NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit and a Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

In his opening address at the Early Childhood Council Conference, the Minister, while not giving a personal commitment to change the situation of male under-representation in early childhood teaching, did acknowledge the issue:

It is important that we have a diverse range of people who come from all walks of life to teach our children. It is pleasing to know that there have been steady increases in early childhood teachers from Māori and Pasifika backgrounds.

I know many of you are concerned about the low proportions of men working as early childhood teachers, and that more men in early childhood teaching would improve the balance of educational experience for children. It's a challenge for us all.

Some of you may have read the story about Ray Margrain in the Sunday Star Times on 4 March. Ray enjoyed being a stay-at-home dad so much that he decided the next step was a career in ECE. He'd been an electrical technician for 27 years before he decided ECE was for him. Ray did his diploma in ECE and says he's found his "passion". The article notes too that "a couple of the boys [at his centre] have told me they want to be teachers too – it's great that they see it as an option.

You'll be interested to know that TeachNZ are currently developing promotional material to get more men into ECE teaching. Samples of the work to date will be available at this conference. (Minister of Education, Steve Maharey)

The ECC hosted a top-level meeting during their conference to discuss developing a national strategy for getting more men into the sector.

Those attending the workshop came from the three main parts of the early childhood sector: Government including the Ministry of Education and Chair of Parliament's Education and Science Select Committee Hon Brian Donnelly; senior teacher educators including those from the universities of Auckland and Canterbury; and leaders from service delivery organizations such as the Kindergartens, Kohanga Reo, the New Zealand Childcare Association and the Early Childhood Council. The workshop devised an outline plan for getting more men working in the early childhood education sector and committed to developing a more detailed plan in the coming months. (ECC Council press release)

In conclusion, from the Summit came a commitment from the men in early childhood to form regional groups for support and formally establish a national network. And, there is now a commitment from many of the movers and shakers in the early childhood and political worlds to work towards changing the situation of male under-representation.

Will change happen in the future? Well, the future looks exciting if the momentum is kept going!

## **What We Want to See Happening to Encourage Male Recruitment, and to Involve and Keep More Men in EC Teaching and Care Work**

### **Recruitment**

Gentle, non-threatening introduction

- Encourage dads to be involved and then consider it as a career
- Male high school students given work experience in an early childhood centre
- Centres phone and invite Secondary Schools to send male students to visit

Scholarships for men? Currently scholarships are available for people in Pacific and Maori programmes and low income earners but not men most of whom come into ECE from a well-paying career and are very likely to be the main income earner in their family. It can take a year on low or no income to become eligible to apply for a scholarship.

Male teachers are contracted by recruitment brokers and career advisors, or seconded by their employer to be presenters at career advice days and sessions.

Training provider open days, putting a male face on this career option

### **Advertising**

Have a high profile male promoting it as a career (but not another rugby player)

Show excitement in working in the sector for men – the challenges, the fun, a lot that would attract men

Focus groups to get at community views so advertising has an impact

Early childhood groups need to get into the public eye as providing employment for males. The profession needs to promote itself as an attractive option for males

Job adverts could specify “Men welcome to apply”

### **Training**

Understand that early childhood work mostly attracts second career males, who likely will be giving up a stable income to train. It's not the wage that is turning men off – but the costs of training over three or four years especially when scholarships are not available to them. One year graduate programmes suit best, or shorter programmes that take into account the skills and experience from their parenting and their previous careers.

Support for male students from early childhood staff

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Changes and Thinking

Training providers given professional development component on men in teaching

Put male students together in the same class. Aim to have more than one or two in a class. Support comes from not standing out as an oddity.

Place students with male associate teachers.

Have at least some male lectures or tutors available for male students to talk with

**Retention – We Want to Keep the Men in the Field Who are Already There**

Research to find out why men leave after they have qualified. Do they come back later?

New male teachers are linked up with other male teachers in their region.

Employers to regard regional meetings and attendance at national summit as professional development for male staff

Review working conditions and ensure they are the same for both genders e.g. paid parental leave and incentives to return to work after parental leave.

**Attitude**

Positive

Proactive

Celebrating differences (male – female). Celebration **not** justification of presence of men.

United male voice

Promoting the great things about early childhood work for men e.g. not alone, inside/outside environment, spontaneity, relationships with children/parents/colleagues, life-time influence on children, professional support.

Aim should be for similar representation of males as females – i.e. 50/50.

Summary of Agreements and Discussion by Participants in the Closing Session at the Men in Early Child  
Care and Teaching Summit, Christchurch Convention Centre, NZ, 29 March 2007

## **Where-to-Now? Chaired by Russell Ballantyne**

Priority to be given to forming Satellite or Regional groups to feed into a new National Network for Men in Early Child Care and Teaching. Someone from each regional group will take responsibility for bringing men together in their region. Peter Visser volunteered to coordinate the development of the regional networks. He is to make sure that someone from each group takes responsibility for leading their area. Sarah Farquhar is to email those men who attended the summit and those on the mailing list who couldn't make it and check if they are happy for their email address to go forward for the regional networks. She will pass on contact details to Peter who will continue to identify new members and put people in each region in contact with one another.

The national network is to be formalised at the Second Summit to be held next year. The Summit will be an annual event to keep the momentum going. It will be in the North Island.

Feedback to the Ministry will be very important as the door has been opened. In the interim until the Network is formalised Russell Ballantyne and Adam Buckingham will be the spokesmen in communications with the Ministry.

What everyone in the regions can do:

- We need to get better as males at networking, approaching Colleges and finding out who is in Colleges. If we are not proactive, if we don't ask questions we won't get answers.

To keep the momentum going, keep getting exposure. Aim for regional exposure, stories about local male teachers in regional papers.

### **Towards the Formation of Regional Groups and a National Men's Network**

Regional networks to be coordinated by Peter Visser Email: [P.visser@paradise.net.nz](mailto:P.visser@paradise.net.nz)

Second summit for Males in Early Child Care and Teaching to be arranged next year. Formalisation of National Men's Network to occur then, and election of committee.

The steering group is: **Peter Visser** (Coordinator), **Adam Buckingham and Russell Ballantyne** (providing advice and support to Peter and regional networks as needed; also public liaison and Ministry liaison spokesmen), **David Baxendell** (website development and webmaster), **Lance Cablk** (supporting men in training and providing advice/feedback on men's needs in training), plus anyone in the regional networks who can offer assistance.



Presentation to the Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit, Christchurch Convention Centre, NZ, March, 2007

## **His'tory of Playcentre**

**Paul Callister**

**Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University**

Men's traditional roles of providing muscles, money and mana have been generally welcomed in the Playcentre movement. There have, however, been mixed feelings about getting men more involved in its daily life

Lex Grey

...I could go and I was welcome, mainly because I could hammer a nail in to the place - more for that reason than any other. But we gradually changed that and I became secretary and they began to realise that men were able to relate to children - that men wanted to relate to children - that the men were just as scared of children as women can be - that men were human and men were people - that we had to take a bit of the sexism out of pre-school and start thinking in terms of people instead of male and female in what we were doing - 1948

In 1976 of the 1,362 parents surveyed only six were male, or 0.4%.

In a 1980 article with the title "The future of the Playcentre movement - a personal viewpoint", Bruce McMillan predicted that a major change would be in the responsibility for child-rearing, with much more sharing between couples

At the start of the 1980s this scenario seemed possible. But In 2005 there were 3 men out of a paid staff of 701 (0.4%). In 2005 there were 208 men out of an unpaid staff of 6,364 (3.3%)

'Breaking stereotypes

'It can be quite difficult for a man to come into these things when the stereotyped situation is for mothers to be running them'

A lot of men won't come along to a normal playcentre meeting with all women because they feel out of place' 'I was suddenly surrounded by happy, talking, breastfeeding Playcentre women who generally seemed to assume that I was either on the dole, on a sickness benefit, been made redundant, a solo dad, simply too lazy to work, or just plain weird'

Playcentre is not just about looking after children. It can be about "bonding" with like-minded adults.

Just as traditional male areas of society have resisted women's intrusions, female dominated areas can also be resistant to change.

A variety of views of men

‘It’s not up to Playcentre to change for men. It’s up to men to fit in. Playcentre is oriented towards children, that’s the most important thing. If men feel uncomfortable with women - that’s the men’s problem’

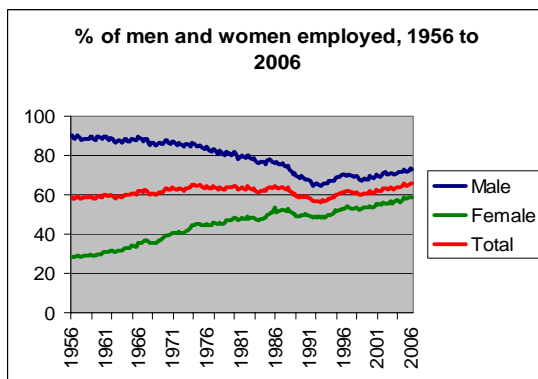
‘In the four years I have been at Playcentre I have seen nothing but equality, happiness and laughter. It has not mattered that I am of a different generation (biologically mature!) and male - one of the girls, really’

‘In my experience, if anyone feels uncomfortable or thinks that maybe Playcentre needs to change to meet their needs, then they should look very hard at themselves first.’

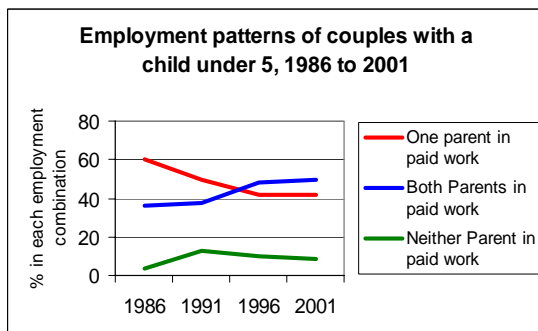
And of women

‘..I know that men now attend Playcentre and that is okay I guess. However, I’m glad no men attended Playcentre in Gisborne. I have wondered why I think this and I don’t really know why. I am in favour of males doing more of the child care and teaching at places like Kindergartens, and doing the hard physical work at Playcentre. I guess the only reason why I wouldn’t have wanted them at Gisborne is that they would have brought a different dynamic to the place and I kind of liked the dynamics we had’

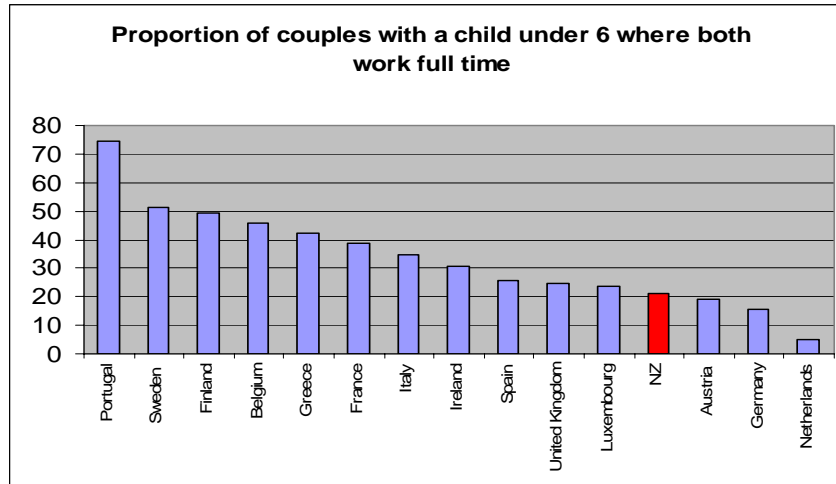
Individuals and Society



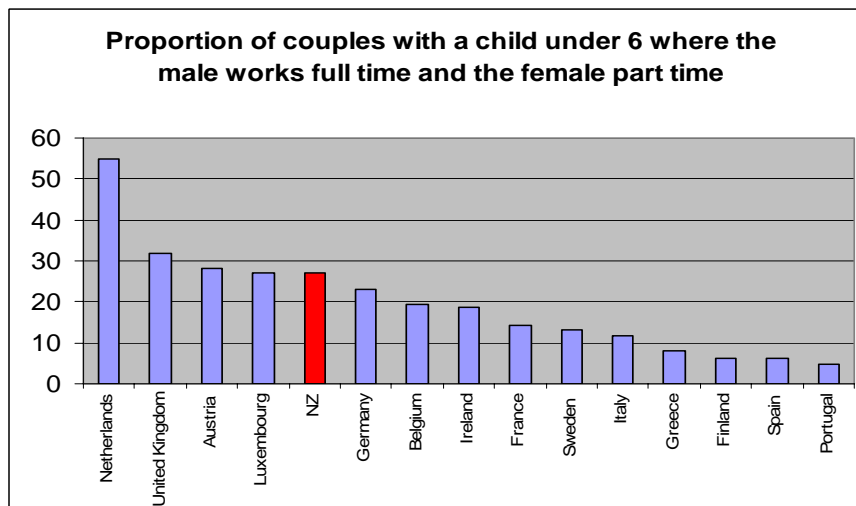
The Disappearing “Traditional” Childrearing Couple



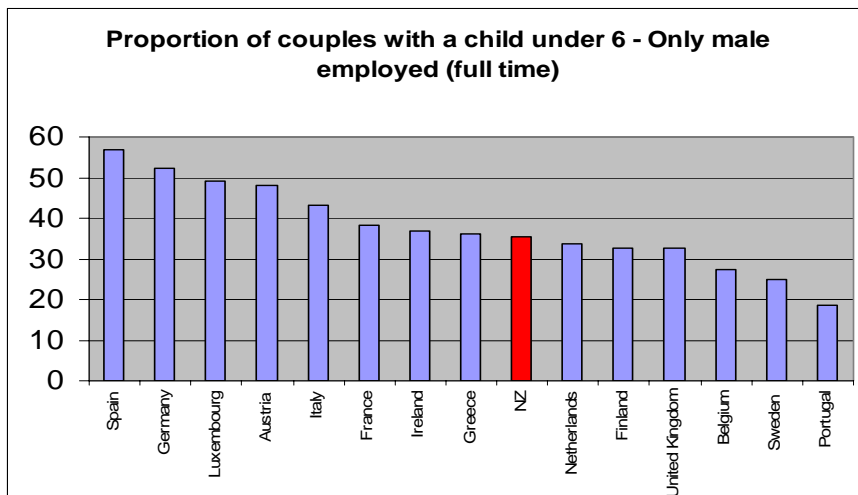
Two Full-time Paid Jobs



One and a Half Paid Jobs



One Paid Job



Some 'bad news' about men

- Prevalence of violence and collective guilt

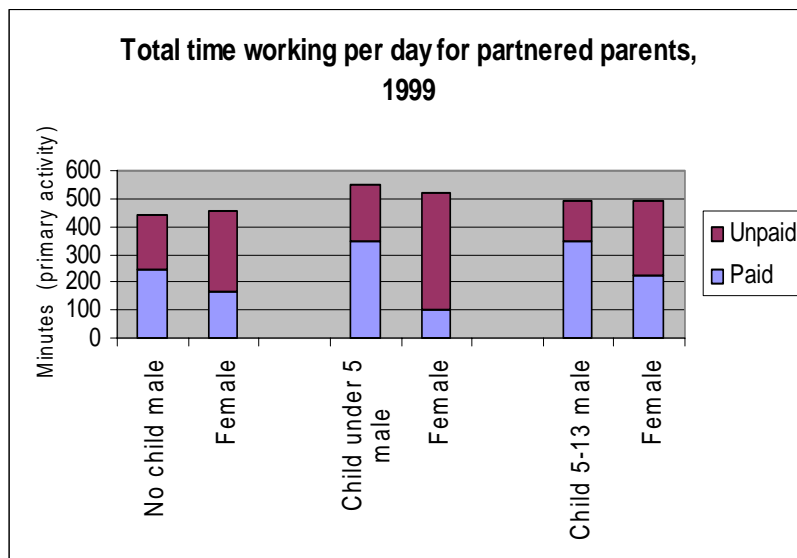
“For instance, two out of three men do not physically abuse their partners. A personal step each of these men can take would be to speak out and make it clear that they do not condone violence or views that suggest women and children should be ‘controlled’. This would help to change our culture of violence” says the Chief Commissioner, Rajen Prasad.

Almost all family violence is carried out by men on women and children. My personal opinion is that men who do not use violence should challenge those who do. As men, we should be the defenders, supporters, lovers and carers – not aggressive, angry bullies. Paul Curry, Families Commission

26.4% of ever partnered women had been a victim of domestic violence over their lifetime versus 18.2% of men. The incidence rate for women in the previous 12 months was 3% and for men 1.8%.

- Peter Ellis: The Christchurch Civic Crèche Case
- Te Ara entry – Sex and gender
- Women (those in high positions; disadvantage in paid and unpaid work)
- Gay men and lesbians
- Prostitution

The ‘Double Burden’: Women undertake all the unpaid work and now are doing paid work as well



#### Fathers' childcare time

In a number of countries fathers' have been increasing their childcare time

But fathers share of childcare cannot increase much unless:

- Fathers reduce their hours of paid work
- Mothers reduce their hours of childcare

#### Who is speaking on behalf of men?

The “Good Man” project

- This involved a female, ex prison officer, going into boy's schools trying to find out the characteristics of “good men” and how to create more of them. The assumption is that they are in very short supply
- Would there be the same level of enthusiasm for the research process, and the results, if a male, ex prison officer, was going into girl's schools trying to determine what makes a “good woman”.

Double standards – Discussing ‘non Maori’ analysing ‘Maori’

“On the other hand, if the debate is meant to be amongst Pakeha, it may be terribly interesting to some academics, journalists, and a general public keen to be outraged, but outsider interpretations rarely provide genuinely useful insight.” Alison Jones( Pakeha) professor in the faculty of education at the University of Auckland

#### Seeking equality

In New Zealand we have a strong commitment to achieving equality in paid work between women and men. But virtually no official attention in ensuring equality in childcare (or other female dominated industries)

“Choices for living, caring and working – The vision” pg 6

- Achieve quality outcomes for children, families, and others who require care
- Achieve greater fairness in opportunities for men and women to participate in high quality work
- Enable people to balance their work and other aspects of their lives
- Increase productivity and economic growth

Fathers and some public policy issues

- Paid parental leave
- Separated fathers
- Changing facilities in many public settings
- Men and flying
- No Ministry of Men’s Affairs
- In New Zealand and Australia it is political parties on the right that have been supporting concepts of shared parenting. In comparison, in the Nordic countries equality between men and women in the home is a concern of the left.

**Recommended References**

Callister, P. (1998) Playcentre ‘His’ Story. In S. Stover (Ed.) *Good clean fun: New Zealand's Playcentre movement* (pp. 77 – 91). Auckland: Playcentre Publications.

Alternative views of domestic violence; a good starting point is Stuart Birks page on this topic  
<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~kbirks/gender/viol/viol.htm>

Also go to Paul’s website: <http://callister.co.nz>

## **Latest Interpretations of Why Males in Teacher-Staffed Services Have Gone From Endangered to Almost Extinct**

**Sarah Farquhar**  
**Childforum Research**

### **The Problem**

Early childhood teaching is a women's profession and it has become even more so over the past decade. During this time the traditional partnership between parents and early childhood services has been replaced by government assuming more control.

Men mainly see women in the profession, and as the proportion of women to men in the profession has increased, the chances of men considering this as a career have decreased.

Today over 99% of the early childhood teacher workforce is female. That a gender imbalance of this size has gone unchallenged when it would not be tolerated if it were the other around (1% women to 99% men) can only point to sexism.

The problem is that gender diversity is not considered to be an issue in the early childhood workforce - because it is a women's occupation. Yet there is considerable concern and focus on getting more women into traditionally male occupations.

#### **Give Girls a Go - Female Modern Apprentices in New Zealand**

Tautokohia te mana wahine. Tauria akonga mahi hou ki Aotearoa mo nga whahine. The Human Rights Commission launched the publication Give Girls a Go! Female Modern Apprentices in New Zealand on 11 September (2006). It is a series of profiles of young female apprentices and their employers, in a bid to attract more young women into non-traditional work. Get your copy through [www.neon.org.nz](http://www.neon.org.nz)

An almost total concentration of women in early childhood teaching is a politically accepted (even valued by the union and by childcare advocates historically) situation, but it is not the best situation for anyone: women, children, men, mothers and fathers, the education profession, the economy, and NZ's development as a forward-thinking inclusive nation.

A lack of men in the NZ early childhood workforce is an issue for six reasons:

1. The changing role of men in society, toward engaging more in children's care in families and wanting children, is not reflected in early childhood education policy and teacher recruitment and employment practices. Society has moved on, men are more actively engaged in caring for their children; yet the early childhood workforce seems stuck in the 1970s family model.
2. During their formative years of early learning and development children (0-5 yrs) are placed for up to 50 hours a week in childcare environments for education that are almost exclusively female. Children's time with adult males and their contact with positive male role models in the family and community is thus reduced.
3. Most early childhood programmes have goals of teaching children to be non-sexist in their attitudes, behaviours, and choices of play activities, yet the composition of the workforce shows that it is not practicing what it teaches.

4. NZ's tight labour market and the recently changed qualification requirement for early childhood staff means that employers are finding it harder to fill positions with people who (a) hold the approved teaching qualification, and (b) who are also personally suitable for the position. Furthermore, they can not take a pragmatic approach to employing the best staff because recruitment and training, and thus who comprises the pool of potential staff available for early childhood work, is influenced by education policy and tertiary education student selection practices. Today women have more career choices and this makes it harder to attract talented women with other career choices into teacher training and to retain them as teachers. Opening up early childhood teaching more as a career choice for men would help to provide employers with more choice in employees, so the best person for the job whether male or female can be appointed.
5. The high concentration of women in any single occupation, including early childhood teaching, is problematic for women's overall economic and career advancement. The clustering of women in a narrow range of traditionally female-intensive lower-paying occupations has been noted to be a problem by government agencies concerned about women's equality and status in paid work. But there is a lack of awareness of the negative consequences of the early childhood profession, in particular, continuing to be a strongly protected woman's one.
6. When viewed in an international context it is an embarrassment to NZ that there has yet to be much in the way of debate about involving men and maintaining male participation in childcare teaching. Also, NZ has probably one of the lowest rates of male participation in childcare teaching. For example, Australia has 4% of men in childcare and 2% in preschools and raising male participation rates is recognised to be an important education goal; England and Wales have 2-3% male childcare teachers and targets have been set at 6%; and Denmark has 8% male childcare teachers.

## **The Main Reasons Commonly Cited for Why Males are Not More Involved in Childcare Teaching Work**

### **First Reason: Childcare (early childhood education) is a women's issue**

But - The continued dominance of women in childcare work is limiting women's capacity in the 21st Century to (a) compete equally with men in the wider labour market and (b) to achieve equal pay. "In NZ, 20 to 40 percent of the gender pay gap has been attributed to occupational segregation, with women clustered in a relatively narrow range of traditionally female-intensive lower-paying occupations"  
(<http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/newsandissues/skillshortagesopendoorsforwomenintradep.php>)

### **Second Reason: This is women's work – that is why men aren't involved**

But - In the private sphere of the home Dads are participating more in childcare and more dads are single parents. The trend towards greater male participation in non-paid childcare work in the family is not being reflected within the early childhood sector.

Further, the predominance of women in early childhood centres and the female context of these settings can constrain father's involvement in their child's formal education and care. ("It's being with a lot of women - not the kids, they're not the problem - it's going into a setting where you're being surrounded by women", quote from a father reported in an article by T. Kahn "Father's Involvement in Early Years Settings: Findings from Research" in the *NZ Research in ECE Journal*, 2006).

### **Third Reason: Women are doing a perfectly good job and teacher gender in any case does not make a difference to children**

But - This justification restricts the pool of potential workers to one half of the adult population. The demand for teacher qualified staff is high in many areas, especially in Auckland. Employers often have little choice as to who they employ and may get only one or no applicants they deem to



be highly suitable. Opening up the occupation to men would increase choice and the pool of talent - thus potentially raising the overall competency level of the early childhood workforce.

Children certainly notice if their teacher is male or female. It's difficult for children to learn non-sexist behaviours and to learn about diversity, if they have little or no contact with men.

The argument reversed - that men are doing a perfectly good job as politicians, as doctors, or in any other occupation so women should not be included in any great number - is not politically or socially acceptable.

**Fourth Reason: The men who want to work with children are probably gay or not real men ("whimps") - so why actively encourage their involvement?**

But - The sexuality of women in childcare teaching does not seem to matter. Lesbian teachers are not viewed as unsuitable candidates for working with young children.

Human Rights legislation in New Zealand states that it is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sexuality.

**Fifth Reason: Men don't want to work in childcare and teaching because it is a low-pay and low-status occupation.**

But - So are some other occupations that men work in. Money and status are important considerations, but when talking about why they got involved in teaching, it is the enjoyment of working with children that has come out in research to be most important for male teachers.

And - Childcare teaching is now more of a financially attractive career choice. From July 2002 pay parity with primary teachers began to be phased in for kindergarten teachers. The government is giving early childhood services that employ qualified staff a significantly higher rate of funding, and so services are able to afford to pay staff more. A shortage of staff with a teaching qualification means that in some geographic areas qualified staff are in a strong position to negotiate their wage and working conditions. The status of childcare teaching has also improved due to the qualification requirement being raised to a 3-year teaching-only diploma or degree. The revised Elley-Irving Socio-Economic Index (Elley & living, 2003) based on the 2001 Census places the occupational status of early childhood teacher at Level 3; some of the other occupations listed at the same level include: counsellor, dairy farmer, mechanical engineer, graphic designer, hotel manager, and fire-fighter. If the Index were revised again after the latest Census early childhood teachers could be placed at a higher level still.

**Sixth Reason: Women are safe to work with young children but men might (will) abuse them.**

But - There is no evidence in support of this reason.

Thirteen years on from the Ellis conviction it is time to see the hysteria and moral panic for what it was - a panic. It is time to move on.

**"Why show men in advertising when this is not reflective of the field?"**

Sexism in the form of apathy and acceptance of the situation is the main stumbling block to increasing the representation of men in teaching. A consensus that there is a problem is the first big step to change. Responsibility for change needs to be accepted by those who have the power to change the situation – the government through the Ministry of Education, teacher education institutions, and finally early childhood organisations who can question and advocate for change.

**"But child care and teaching work isn't something that men want to do!"**

My reply is that "to make choices you must have opportunities".

Proceedings of the First NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit and a Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

The government has a major responsibility - it now has more control of the sector, teacher supply, and staffing requirements than it did pre 1990s when male participation rates were higher.

From this Summit and from the meetings to be held at the Early Childhood Council Conference to follow, a consensus is forming that there is a problem.

If men don't see men in working in child care and teaching then they will continue to consider it as a career closed to them.

We can't blame men for not being in teaching. It is not the individual responsibility of the men who are in the sector to lead change. This is a public issue and a problem for the early childhood profession.

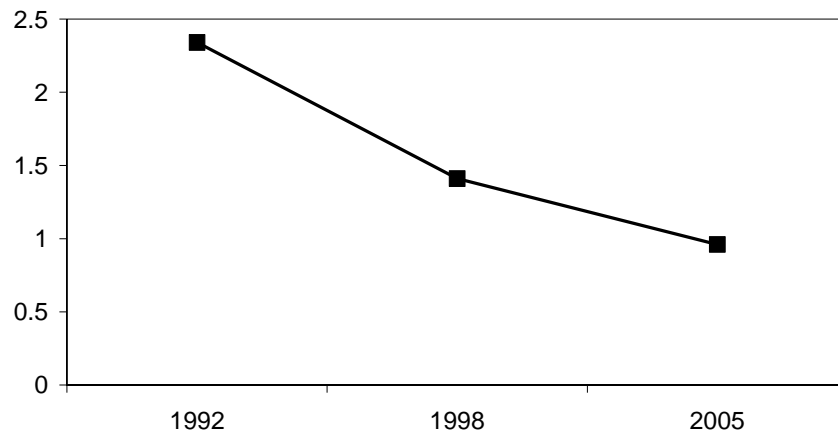
## The Statistics

Today men represent just less than 1% of the staff in kindergartens, childcare centres and home-based childcare/education services. These are the services the government has chosen to provide fee-free childcare in for 20 hours a week for all of New Zealand's 3 and 4 year-olds. During the early 1990s men made up over 2% of the staff in these early childhood services.

### Staffing Numbers By Gender (1992 – 2005)

TYPE OF SERVICE	1992		1998		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Free Kindergartens	12	1,577	20	1,658	26	1,756
Childcare Centres	142	4,703	125	8,178	106	11,529
Homebased Coordinators	0	134	0	280	0	324
TOTAL (head count)	154	6,414	145	10,116	132	13,609
PERCENTAGE	2.34%	97.65%	1.41%	98.59%	0.96%	99.04%

Percentage of Men in Early Childhood Services 1992 - 2005



Playcentre has bucked the trend with the representation of male teachers (fathers) increasing

169 Males to 8,796 Females = 1.92% males in playcentres in 1992

208 Males to 8,523 Females = 2.44% males in playcentres in 1988

Recent figures for Te Kohanga Reo are not available from the Ministry of Education, but Te Kohanga Reo has a significantly better gender balance.

371 Males to 1,110 Females = 33.42% males in kohanga reo in 1992

These services have bucked the trend because to teach in these services, teachers are recruited from parents and within the communities in which families live, and not by government contracted recruitment brokers or tertiary education institutions.

To date policy attention and recruitment efforts have focused on ethnic diversity in staffing. But, ethnic diversity does not actually appear to be a problem according to the statistics. When Ministry of Education July 2005 statistics are reviewed on the gender and ethnic composition of enrolled children and staff in kindergartens, childcare centres and home-based education services it is apparent that these services are already doing reasonably well in employing staff that match the ethnicity of children. The data presented in the Table below indicates that there is a much stronger argument for campaigns and Ministry of Education recruitment brokers to target men (alongside a focus on support in training and retention also).

Percentage of staff to children by gender and ethnicity in early childhood services (kindergartens, childcare centres and homebased education) as at 1 July 2005

	% of Staff	% of children	% difference
NZ Maori	8	15	- 7
Pacific Islands	8	6	2
Asians	6	6	None
Other	2	2	None
European/Pakeha	76	71	5
Male	1	51	-48
Female	99	49	50

(Source: Data Management Unit, Ministry of Education)

## Seven Point Action Plan

We can help to change the current situation by:

1. Including men (along with women) in all early childhood policy and professional literature and advertising.
2. Watching our language and not talking about 'teachers', as this defaults in meaning to 'women teachers'. We should include gender – 'male and female teachers' in early child care and education services.
3. Providing support for female teacher trainees, female teacher educators, and female staff/managers in working with men, understanding and addressing any personal biases.
4. Not expecting male teachers to conform to a particular stereotype of what it is to be male – or to show masculine traits and abilities in front of and with the children.
5. Ensuring that male teacher trainees are placed in the same classes, and not spread thinly in numbers throughout classes. Ensuring male teacher trainees are given teaching experiences in at least some services that have males working in them.
6. Making sure that men are involved in the recruitment. Male teachers at recruitment sessions and at career stands would encourage men to come forward and talk with someone who knows what it is like to be a man in a female profession.
7. Focussing recruitment on men seeking a change in career and those who through their involvement in their child's early education service could more easily be persuaded to take this up as a new career.

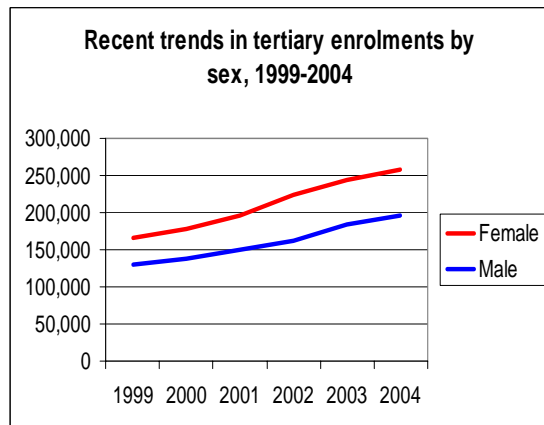
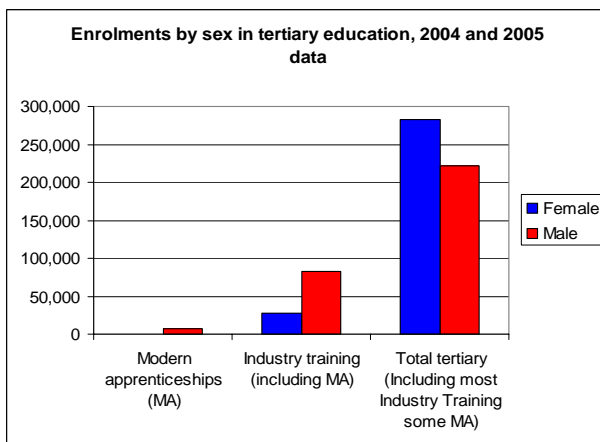
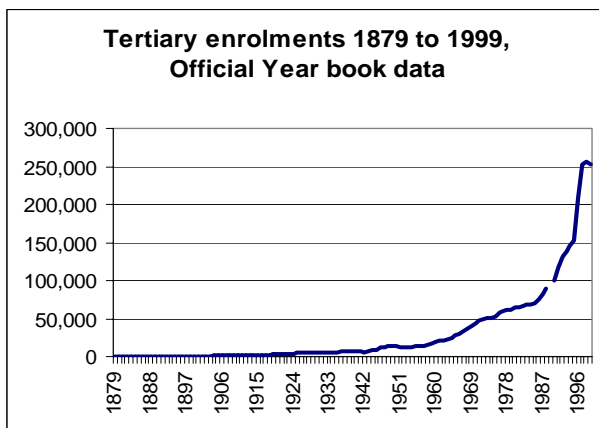
## Note

The data and arguments presented here have been drawn from the following report:

Farquhar, S., Cablk, L., Buckingham, A., Butler, D. & Ballantyne, R. (2006). *Men at Work: Sexism in Early Childhood Education*. Porirua: Childforum Research.

## Gender and Tertiary Education

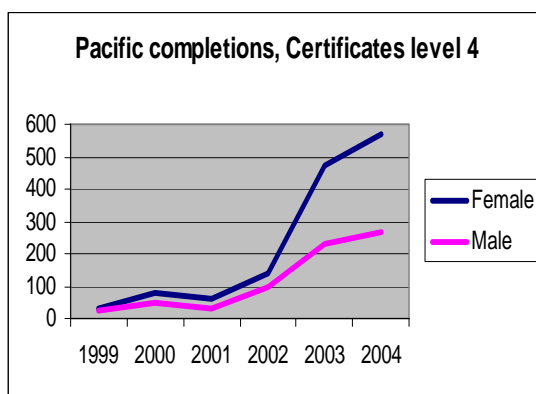
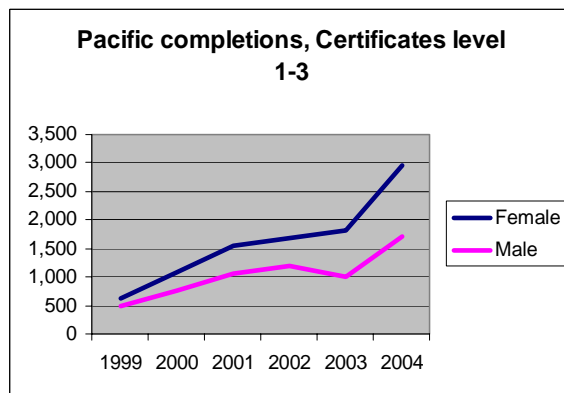
**Paul Callister**  
Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University

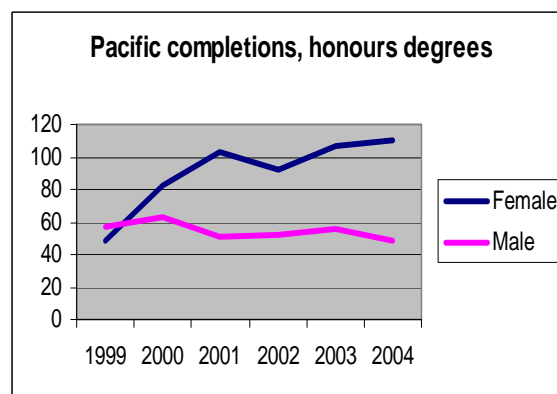
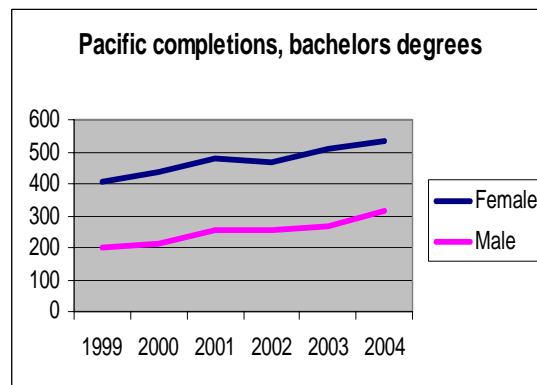
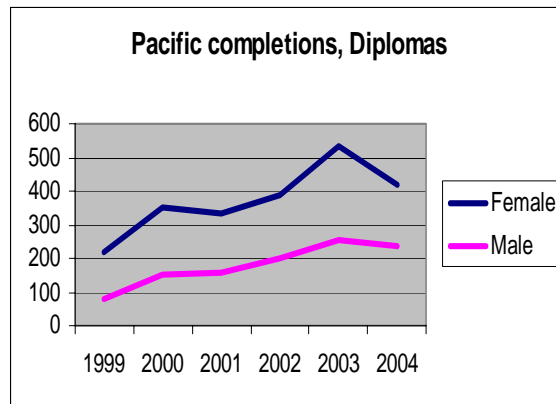


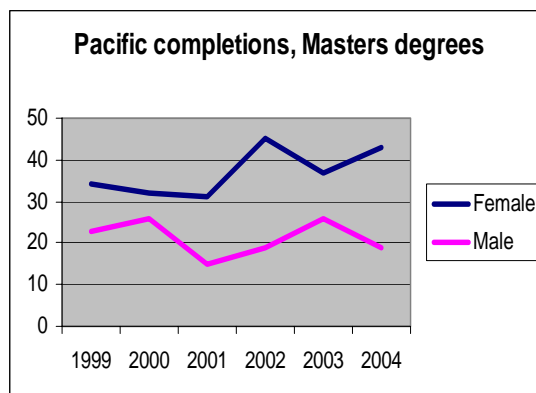
Proceedings of the First NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit and a Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

Percentage of Completions that were Female in 2004 by Age and Level

	Level 1-3 Cert	Level 4 Cert	Level 5-6 Dip	Level 7 Bach	Level 8 Hons	Level 9 Mast	Level 10 Phd
18-24	57	67	55	61	61	55	-
25-39	61	65	62	63	63	53	48
40+	57	62	71	75	72	64	55







#### Female Dominated Courses

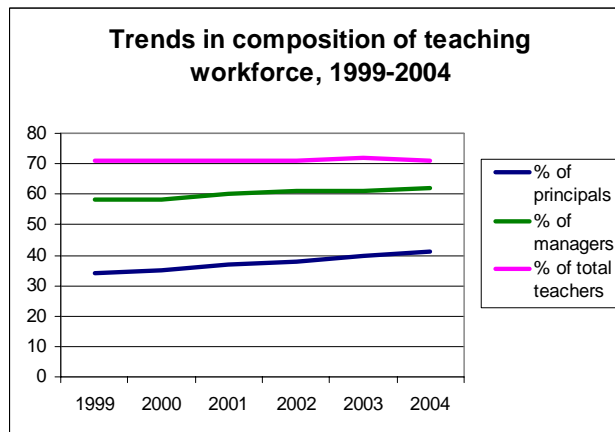
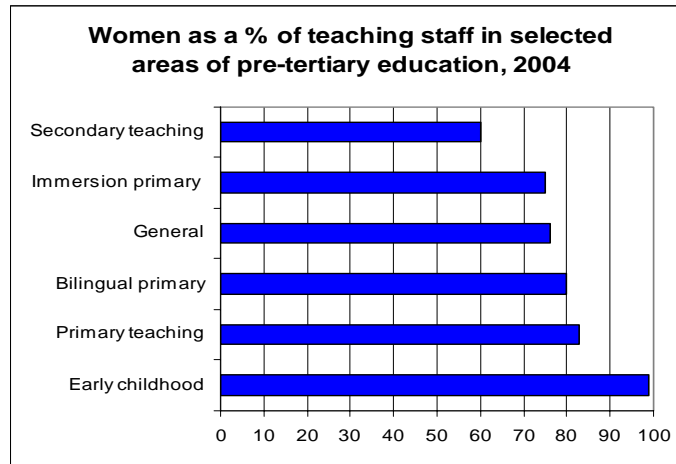
Personal Services	15.06
Nursing	12.31
Librarianship & Curatorial Studies	7.70
Veterinary Studies	6.32
Complementary Therapies	5.54
Human Welfare Studies and Services	5.51
Pharmacy	5.16
Curriculum and Education Studies	4.47
Behavioural Science	4.31
Radiography	3.96
Teacher Education	3.80
Rehabilitation Therapies	3.71
Tourism	3.43
Office Studies	3.36
Other Creative Arts	3.04
Visual Arts and Crafts	2.98
Employment Skills Programmes	2.87
Political Science and Policy Studies	2.43
Studies in Human Society	2.30
Law	2.04
Accountancy	2.03

#### Male Dominated Courses

Justice and Law Enforcement	0.47
Horticulture and Viticulture	0.44
Earth Sciences	0.38
Agriculture	0.37
Aerospace Engineering and Technology	0.27
Other Engineering and Related Technologies	0.27
Maritime Engineering and Technology	0.24
Other Agriculture & Environmental Studies	0.20
Process and Resources Engineering	0.20
Fisheries Studies	0.20
Forestry Studies	0.14
Chemical Sciences	0.13
Geomatic Engineering	0.13
Civil Engineering	0.11
Automotive Engineering and Technology	0.10
Building	0.05
Electrical/Electronic Engineering & Technology	0.05
Mechanical/Industrial Engineering & Technology	0.03



### Gender in Teaching

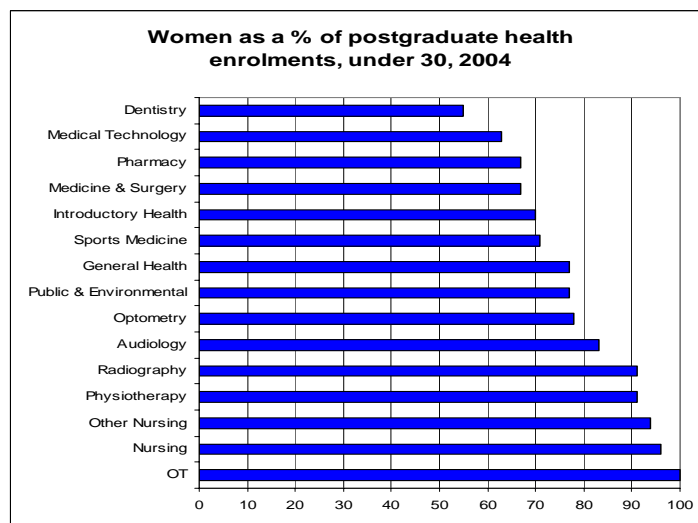
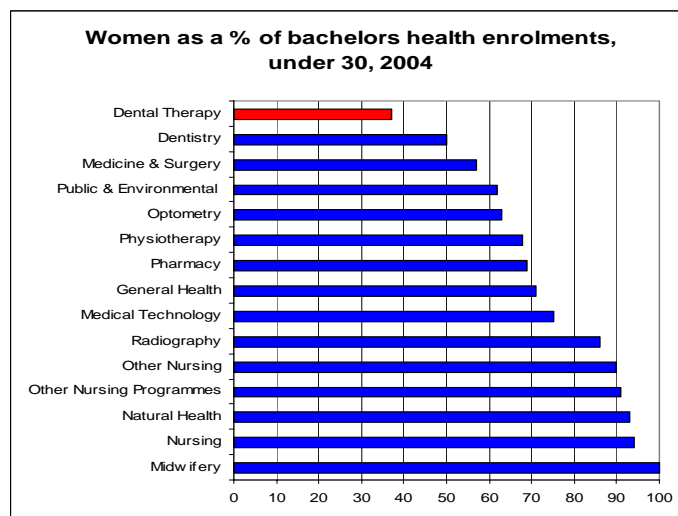


#### Possible implications of gender in teaching

US Longitudinal research suggests that the gender of teacher might matter for both boys and girls (Dee 2006) e.g.

- having a female science teachers is associated with girls doing well in science
- having a male teacher can encourage boys to do well in areas like English

### Changes in the Health Sector



#### Some reactions to the changes

- ‘Divisive and unhelpful zero sum game about gender at work’
- ‘Why is it a girl’s fault if her brother does not do his homework?’
- ‘While there are obvious issues about the education of boys, young girls and women should not feel guilty about progress or success’
- ‘Women are currently enrolling in tertiary institutions in *marginally* higher numbers than men’ (emphasis added)
- ‘Over the last four years the increase has levelled out’
- ‘An increase in women’s participation is not something to be problematised’
- ‘Its important to remember that widespread participation by women in tertiary education is still relatively new’
- If women are disadvantaged (or under-represented) it is the collective fault of society
- If men are disadvantaged (or under-represented) it’s the fault of the individual men

Does it matter if a group of men are falling behind in education?

- Males with poorer education have become more vulnerable, but women have not (Australian Productivity Commission, 2006)
- Australian research shows that a group of men, particularly low skill men, are increasingly 'missing' from both work and family life (Birrell and Rapson, 1998).
- Men who are not connected to the labour market are also often isolated from other social networks (King and Waldegrave, 2003).
- Men, and especially poorly educated men, are significantly over-represented amongst NZ's homeless population (Smith *et al*, 2006).
- A group of men, especially poorly educated Maori and Pacific men are 'missing' from the population through higher relative mortality by comparison with women in the same ages and ethnic groups (Fawcett *et al*, 2006.)
- If we are going to be a high skill, high income society we cannot let anyone fall behind

Where to from here?

We need to know why this change in education has taken place (does it start in ECE?). What can we do to change these patterns?

## Recommended References

### Changes in tertiary education

Callister, P., Newell, J., Perry, M. and Scott, D. (2006). The gendered tertiary education transition: When did it take place and what are some of the possible policy implications, *IPS Policy Quarterly*, 2(3): 4-13, <http://ips.ac.nz/publications/files/627083dc2a9.pdf>

### Changes in paid and unpaid work in NZ

Callister, P. (2005). The changing distribution of paid and unpaid work in New Zealand, Treasury Working Paper 05/07, <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/workingpapers/2005/wp05-07.asp>  
<<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/workingpapers/2005/wp05-07.asp>>

## **Avoiding the Minefield as a Male in Teacher Training and Employment: Tips and Strategies for Survival**

**Adam Buckingham (Auckland) with Stuart Cottam (Nelson), Duncan Fisher (Christchurch) & Garth Armstrong (Wellington)**

**Garth:** I have always enjoyed my job. Every day is different. Every day has challenges. And that is the positive thing about being an early childhood teacher. You have great interactions with people, some of them might be this big and others might be what's called the obsolete children the tall ones.

**Duncan:** One of the best things that has seen me through the more difficult issues has been that when I was training there were men around me and now when I am working there are men around me. In the industry now, although I'm not working with any men, there are men around me. I started training in 1990 at Christchurch College of Education. When I was training I think there were 7 or 8 men in training, so there was already a bit of a group of us there. When I came into the Kindergarten Assn there was a Senior Teacher, Anton, who was a male. Straight away there was a support system – a bit of a network set up for the male teachers and within two years there were 6 or 7 of us working within Kidsfirst Kindergartens and we quickly formed a network supporting each other. We got a lot of support from our Association including funding to go away on weekends to talk about issues. And there are still 5 or 6 of us male teachers here today. Next term at my kindergarten we have a male teacher starting, so there will be three teachers and two of us will be men

**Stu:** I got involved in ECE about 9 years ago. I got involved in Playcentre. There were other men involved in Playcentre and it was through support and encouragement from female colleagues that I decided to get qualified. I did an early childhood degree through Massey and have since gone on to do a post-grad Diploma in Special Education and I've just started a Master's thesis studying men in early childhood education. Almost universally I have been welcomed by female colleagues and by parents. The difficulty I have found has been at the institutional level. Sometimes it is difficult to be in a minority. I was the only male on the course. I have never had a male lecturer. Every placement I went on was with a female associate teacher. I didn't see it as being a problem. I thought of it in comparison to if you are training to be a female doctor and all through your education as a doctor you never had a single female lecturer, you never had a single female supporting you. This is what I would like to see changed.

**Adam:** I have been teaching for three years. I went through the same thing as Stuart. I was by myself in a classroom on average 80 to 100 women. I've got some tips here for anyone who is currently studying:

- Sit near the front.
- Focus on what you are there for – not the girls. You do learn if you sit to the back more but they talk a bit more. You do have to get used to being around women.
- Ask questions. When you see the curriculum, is it balanced?
- You learn to comply and go with the flow
- Who do you have lunch with? It can get a bit tricky. I found I got along with people who have brothers and sons or they have known men who have been a positive influence.
- Experienced early childhood teachers will do their job rather than watching you constantly and they value having men around more

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- Be positive. You will get negative experiences within your career. We all do. You are there for the children.
- I think it would be very hard for men not married or without children of their own, because people think you okay when you have. You have to remember to have a story about yourself and why you are there – because everyone wants to know. Over a period of a couple of months everyone in the class will have come up and want to talk or want to know something about you or why you are there.

**Duncan:** For a young man coming into the industry when of the biggest things is having a strong sense of identity. I look around here now and I see some strong looking men. I wonder how many of us went into the industry old, when we already had a good idea of who and what we already were. For a young man coming into an industry that is dominated by females, you need to be strong; you need to have a focus. To help you need good support around you. It isn't an easy job and the rules do change. Every time you think you have worked them out they change.

**Garth:** I agree with Duncan. You do have to have a strong sense of who you are. I take my hat off to the women I have worked with. I have learnt a lot from all those women I have worked with. You have to learn to work collaboratively. That's the approach in early childhood (besides the standard 'I enjoy working with children' thing). One of the reasons I became an early childhood teacher and not a primary teacher was I liked working in a team approach, I liked working with other people. Some one else to bounce an idea off, someone to build an idea on. Early childhood is a supportive environment if you can get it right and get the relationships sorted out and there is no little power struggle going on or whatever. You learn to deal with that overtime and you learn to deal with that right from the start in training. One of the issues that came up for me is that trainees need support. I had other male trainees in both the courses I did because I took a long time, but those other ones dropped out, there wasn't the support. We have a role as male early childhood teachers to support the trainees. I have always been an associate teacher and I think that's a very important role you need to take on as a male. You are a male – of course you have the novelty factor – you are going to be different – you've got to be as good if not better – but that's what we are in it for – to be as good and be better and be who you are. My goal as an early childhood teacher is for when a child leaves my centre they go away with a strong sense of who they are and 'I can do anything'. That's my job – so you have to reflect that in the relationships around you and the relationships with people coming into the centre. You need to be there promoting and supporting. We have a Code of Ethics. It's there for a reason. The downside is (laugh) there is a golden rule, it's probably a men thing, but don't screw the crew – it's unprofessional. Be realistic. You are working with a lot of women. You are going to stuff it up if you sleep with them as well as work with them (laughter).

**Stu:** Most of the children at my centre are one and two year olds. I am the only male who works there with about six teachers. The parents are very welcoming. Its hard work but I find it tremendously rewarding. I am also qualified to work in primary schools and for my first year after graduating I worked in a primary school. I was treated differently as a beginning teacher in primary school whereas I was very differently treated in the early childhood sector a lot of us are beginning teachers so you get a bit more respect.

**Duncan:** I have also done primary training and I am also a teacher of the deaf. I do prefer the team approach in teaching. I have been teaching where I am now for nine years. To my knowledge there haven't been any issues with the community. I would be a bit naïve not to think that someone hasn't come and seen a male and decided they don't want to come. I do know that there have been parents who have turned up to the kindergarten because they have heard there is a man there and they want to have that influence in their children's lives. I believe that's going to occur more and more – in a nice way. One of the things I have noticed, whether it is because of our socialisation or whatever, is that I would allow more robust play to go on for a little longer than the female staff. We have had some interesting discussions as to when or why superhero play should or should not occur, and how often do you turn girls away from the family corner, and why do we turn boys away from super play.

**Garth:** At the moment I am working in a Wellington kindergarten, a school day session kindergarten so we have children who sleep and lunch with us for six hours of a session. In my experience I can't say I've had very much negative feedback as a male. I've had one experience as a reliever when I went into a centre

and the teacher was approached by a parent who saw the child sitting across my knee when I was reading a story. The child initiated sitting on my knee so I went with that. The parent didn't like it. The teacher said at that time 'oh yes I'll talk with him about it'. Later afterwards she actually felt that she hadn't supported me and I expressed here because here I am an experienced and trained early childhood teacher. As a male I am probably more inclined to let children take more risk because I believe we are ironing risk out a little too much. It was lovely to see Russell's centre, and it looked like a pretty cool environment for a boy to hang out in, that's for sure. One example of the centre I work in at the moment is that we have this little bar on the top of the slide. We have children from 2 years at the centre. It is quite a high slide. If a child swings on this bar, they could fall beyond the slide but I have to say I haven't yet seen a child do that. I think we have to let children take more risks. There are ways to keep you, as a male, safe. One of the ways is to have a child sit across your knee, not straddling you.

**Adam:** When children want to say good bye to you, sometimes they will run up and want to give you a kiss, as a guy you can give them a High Five. I was given some good advice in my training, when you go looking for a job look at the centre layout first, is it open plan. You need to do this if you want to look out for yourself – it is quite sad I know. I work in a community centre with children 6 months to 5 years old. I don't change nappies, it's my choice and it keeps the parents happy It's in my job description, they requested that I didn't do nappies. I don't think it is a trust thing I think it is a choice to keep things nice and happy. But then women don't have the choice, do they? It can be hard being a male by your self. I normally involve families, like fish 'n chip nights involving a lot of parents and fathers. I try to find out what fathers do for a living and utilise resources they've got to involve them. I think we should all be involved in talking with the local media, about your job, what you do everyday and keep it very positive. We are an endangered species. We all enjoy our job and we need to tell people about it. I think we should allow people to see what we are doing and open it up more and see how positive it is and how cool it is.

**Stu:** When I was out on placement during training I found it useful to take something that you might enjoy to use with the children. It is something that the children will probably enjoy and maybe haven't seen before. It's not getting something off the centre. I've taken a cricket bat sometimes and it's been really useful for getting a rapport going and for helping me to settle in. Because if you are going to an unfamiliar centre, unfamiliar things, you are going to be very much under scrutiny. If you don't like mechanics, don't feel you've got to be a mechanic. If you love cooking do cooking.

**Garth:** Two years ago I was working at another kindergarten and I hadn't been there for too long. I had forgotten this story when it came up last year in a Letter to the Editor. The parent reminded me that I was giving her child a High-Five and the child decided it wasn't good enough and gave me the hug. I haven't given children a High-Five since. If a child goes to kiss me, well that's what it is. It is about the child having the power and control over that and not the other way around.

**Audience Question:** Do you leave the toilet seat up or down?

**Adam:** I worked in a centre that had a toilet seat that would never stay up.

**Garth:** I've been trained to leave it down.

**Stu:** Maybe the girls would like a urinal.

**Duncan:** I asked about a urinal in mine. For no additional cost I can turn the ladies toilet into a unisex toilet simply by walking in the door.

**Stu:** Boys generally won't have used a urinal at the centre until they go to school and then they go to school and they've got urinals. Maybe some of the bigger early childhood centres should think about getting urinals put in for the boys.

**Garth:** Yes, where is the role-modelling for them (laughter). Little boys sit down, you know.

**Audience:** I was never taught how to do it properly. Not that there is a proper way.

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**Garth:** I think you'll find there is at the rugby (laughter).

**Adam:** Teachers will tell you that boys don't use them very often. If they watch another boy use them then they will.

**Audience:** Do you have a policy on home-visiting.

**Duncan:** We used to do home-visiting but we dropped it because of the time factor. We can't just fit them in.

**Stu:** It's not something that's cropped up. Not because it's a problem. It's just not something that's really been thought about.

**Garth:** In one of my jobs we did do home-visits when requested. We also found with one particular child who was in the special needs category that it made a huge difference to our relationship with that child. There is a place for home-visiting. But the first thing is you would never go by yourself whether you are a female or a male teacher.

**Audience:** Comment on male students (... indecipherable on tape)

**Adam:** I go to a university lecture at least once a term, on technology and the blokey things. I get to meet the men and talk with them. I tell them where I work, and if they want to help or anything like that.

Audience comment indecipherable

**Stu:** I think you could ask them (training course lecturers) to ask some of their past male students in to come and talk with their students about what it is like to be a male in teaching.

**Adam:** I had a conversation with a past student at my centre who appreciated having a practicum feedback in the pub.

**Garth:** A big part of my training as an early childhood teacher was going to the pub with my colleagues, female and the odd male. That was valuable, having an opportunity to network and to have a social download about your day and what you do. That was something that one of my head teachers who is now a teachers' college lecturer presented as really solid professional development, get involved, you can't be just there at the centre, it's the whole profession and you've got to be involved in all the other stuff. You have probably guessed that I'm heavily into the political side of things. I always will be.

**Audience Member:** You shouldn't have to challenge the educational facilities. You shouldn't have to challenge them. Male students should go to centres where there is a male. It should be something they pick up straight away to help the males have support. I went to a centre with a male associate and that helped me heaps. But if I hadn't have asked I probably would never have gone there.

**Adam:** These are ideas we are going to take forward later for a session on how to get more men into early childhood.

## **An Overview of Early Childhood Teacher Recruitment Activities and Opportunities**

**Jacky Robertson & Karl Le Quesne**

**ECE Co-ordinator TeachNZ & Senior Manager Policy, Ministry of Education, respectively**

### **Karl**

There has been a lot of talk about why it has taken so long for the Ministry to respond. I guess the most up-front answer I can give you is that we have a national tragedy every week we have to fix. Every national tragedy takes up time. The kind of thing I want to put to you is do you want this to be defined as a national tragedy or do you want it to be defined as the possibilities for children's learning because that is what I've heard coming through really strongly this morning. I have also heard dissatisfaction with this being defined as a Peter Ellis problem. What makes it easier for us to work with you is when this is about a possibility that adds to children's learning and development. So I really encourage what I've heard today. That does make it easier. A lot of the things we've heard about the whys and the why nots are incredibly value-laden and that's really hard for a government department to lead on. If this is about possibilities for children then we can really go along way I think.

We have made a small start. Some of you have seen the new early childhood recruitment pamphlet that has lots of pictures of men. It would be easy to say "doesn't that look really good, we've done a lot" but I think there is a lot more we can do. I have a lot of contact with people from overseas who come to visit NZ to find out about our early childhood education. The thing that amazes them most is our work in getting more qualified and registered teachers, and then when they see all the policies we've got supporting that, all the various different grants and financial supports they are amazed. We have got a very good set of policies there that can be used to get more men into early childhood education. We can do a lot with that to try to take it forward. The key thing is finding the opportunities like today to hear from you, specifically how we can use it, obviously not just to get men into the profession but to help them to stay in the profession to support them to make it a really productive career for them.

I am hoping that today is the start of an opportunity to get together and work on that. We are here to listen to you and to learn and to find some ways of working together. We have been very busy on the Early Childhood Strategic Plan but we've got room for more work.

### **Jacky**

My position was established in Dec 2004 to support centres to meet the 'person responsible requirements' implemented on the 1 Jan 2005. Surveys in 2004 estimated, that 200 plus centres would be placed on provisional license for not meeting requirements. Auckland showed the highest numbers of centres at risk. That's why the position was set up in Auckland. There were 50 centres last year and at the moment in Auckland we have 3 centres on provisional license.

It is a difficult time in recruiting at the moment. We have a lot happening. But what I do say to centres when I visit them "its tough at the moment but in the end we are going to end up with something better". It is going to be better when we get more qualified teachers involved in early childhood. I don't think I've come across any teacher yet that doesn't see the benefits, and the dynamics in the centres change when the have qualified staff.



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My role is advising centres on recruitment initiatives and data base recordings to see how many vacancies there are throughout the country. It's interesting to see the trends. My role also touches on encouraging people to study and get their qualifications.

We would like to be going overseas for more teachers but unfortunately for most overseas teachers don't meet New Zealand requirements. We have high quality requirements. Therefore, we recruit very few overseas teachers unless they come here and do some sort of additional study. What we do is try to attract NZ qualified teachers back into the country.

There are two areas we focus on. One is access to financial assistance to support people in their study. The second is in the promotional materials that we have available. All the information I am giving here is not gender related. None of the support grants specifically target men.

New scholarships came out in 2005. Previous to that you would apply at the beginning of your training and if you missed out, you missed out. Now you are able to apply each year if your financial circumstances change. Since 2005 to the current round that's just gone through in 2007 there were a total of 4,224 applications and 2,443 of those were approved. Out of that there were 93 males applied and 48 were approved. This says that of those approved 2.2% were male, overall approval was 1.9%. So there is little difference between males approved and the overall figures. The scholarship is based on income and males may have in the year previous to enrolment a higher income, therefore they don't get approved their first year. If that is the case and their income drops then they will be able to apply again if they meet the criteria for the second or third year of their study.

Other financial supports are: Incentive Grant applied for by the students centre. Study Grant for those enrolled in the Graduate Diploma available to those with a degree or primary teaching qualification, this is a one year to 20months depending on which institution you study with. I think this might be an opportunity for males who have a prior degree or primary qualifications. Another support is the provisional registration grant which is to support early childhood teachers to get teacher registration.

Promotional materials: We have had males represented in Teach NZ materials since 2004; an example is the material recruiting Maori teachers. We have been aware of the need for some time but possibly we have not been as active as we could have been. A new pamphlet we have here now specifically targets male teachers. We now have profiles of male teachers up on our website too. This will also be complimentary to the DVD that we are producing. So you can show the DVD and hand out the pamphlets.

There is also available a new poster for up on the office wall or notice board which outlines the scholarships available and the criteria for them for quick reference. An updated generic pamphlet will also soon be available.

The TV adverts which most people would have seen is increasing the profile of early childhood [in general]. They are effective because most people I talk to and mention the TV ad will say "oh yes I know that one". It's giving early childhood a good image out there.

*Unfortunately the tape ran out here and discussion was not recorded.*

**SECTION B**  
**COMMENTS AND LETTERS**

## **The Early Childhood Council Views Men as Important**

**Sue Thorne**  
**Early Childhood Council**

*From Sue Thorne's speech to the Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit*

I head the Early Childhood Council, the largest representative body of licensed early childhood education centres in New Zealand. We have 1000 member centres that are both community and privately owned, that teach 50,000 children and employ more than 7000 staff.

I am aware that men in our sector can face substantial difficulties: the view of others that it is somehow 'not normal' to be a man and working with young children; the isolation of being the only man in a training course or in a centre; the pernicious suspicion men face that they are not as safe around children as women.

It is unacceptable because in the absence of men our sector fails to offer a valuable option to the families we serve. As well as the teaching and caring that is the core of what male teachers do, they bring some special things to the children they look after.

They provide an invaluable male influence, especially for those children who have no man at home. They bring rapport with fathers and an intuitive understanding of what boys need. They help teach both boys and girls that good men are sensitive and nurturing as well as strong and competitive.

Recent national campaigns to attract more men have succeeded in Denmark, Belgium and Britain. Norway will achieve 20% by the end of this year. And there is no reason why New Zealand cannot do the same.

International research suggests a sustained increased in the number of men working in early childhood education requires a sustained effort from all organisations in the early childhood sector.

The centres cannot do it on their own because they cannot attract trained male teachers who do not exist. The teacher trainers cannot do it on their own if centres do not provide environments in which men want to work. The Government cannot do it on its own if the sector is not ready to back new policy with new action.

I believe that this, the Summit and a workshop to follow at the ECC's annual conference to define an action plan, is an historic moment for early childhood education in New Zealand. The decline in the number of men in our sector needs to be, and will be, ended for good.

## Dialoguing

Alex Gunn

University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Hi Everyone, I am responding to the invitation to dialogue about the important issues raised, in the report *Men at Work: Sexism in Early Childhood Teaching* and the TVNZ Sunday documentary *A Few Good Men*. The report and reporting of issues have been provocative to be sure. Here are my immediate thoughts.

I agree with the challenge to the Ministry of Education that the overwhelming image of the early childhood teacher has been female. This raises questions for the Ministry who are trying to generate interest in teaching per se as a profession and who want to attract men into teaching. This image that has been portrayed may well begin to constitute institutional sexism and would need to be documented and challenged on that basis. Such an analysis would be helpful for assisting institutions such as the Ministry to see how they can perpetuate forms of discrimination like sexism. A future research project for someone out there perhaps?

The Civic Case is often quoted as a factor detrimental to men's involvement in early childhood education. I think however that the issues surrounding men's involvement are more complex than simply fallout from the Civic Case. I did notice in the written report, *Men at Work: Sexism in Early Childhood Teaching* that some of these things are touched on. First, the low status of childcaring work in itself means that men who go into the profession might have their motives unfairly questioned. Why would you want to be an ec teacher when childcaring is often positioned as a service industry - to women largely (i.e., working women) and perceived at times as glorified babysitting?

Second, the working conditions and pay of teachers in early childhood education has been comparatively poor with other professions - why would a man make a choice to enter into a career with long working hours, limited leave provisions and low pay? So those who do may well find themselves questioned. And yes, where this happens, it is unfair - for women as well as men.

Third, men who become teachers, especially of younger children are regularly challenging traditional gender performances when they engage in caring work, but also, regularly taking up positions where they uphold traditional ideas of gender with their activity choices etc. We saw this in the Sunday documentary, the men talked about being nurturing men but 'mostly' we saw images of them engaging in mechanical activities, rough and tumble play, active and outside pursuits, leading a parent evening - it must be very tiring to be upholding these two very different agendas - one, showing non-stereotypical maleness and two, making sure children don't miss out on 'men's unique contributions' - the inverted commas are indicating an intangibility about this idea as yet unresolved for me.

Fourth, the lasting effects of the Ellis case do feature in teachers thinking. The case has meant that men and women are acculturated into the profession in a way that foregrounds the risks posed to them by allegations of abuse. Teachers, men and women, find themselves continually keeping themselves visible. They are peer supervised, they check and double check on each other's whereabouts. Teaching is a risk averse profession undertaken in a climate of risk and risk management - a place many men choose not to enter into, but many women unquestionably subject themselves to every day in the course of their work.

A comment was made on the Sunday documentary about the over representation of women in childcaring work within early childhood centres being abnormal. I disagree. Isn't it the case that women in the home have traditionally been the dominant force in childcaring? Few men make decisions to parent at home - although some changes to this are occurring - overwhelmingly women take that role in our society. Do we not see the same pattern replicated within communal settings - i.e., early childhood centres? The idea that it is abnormal when women make up the significant proportion of people in childcaring work just doesn't hold up for me. What does such a message say to those families where women single parent or where lesbians raise children without men in the household - are they too, abnormal? It might be considered 'abnormal' to not have men in the household if your frame of understanding these things is entrenched in heterosexuality - i.e., normal families are nuclear in their form. Yet, many families are not this - it is

troubling when language is used in such a manner. A climate for change is rarely achieved when one's language and actions marginalise those with whom they need to work in order for change to come about.

If early childhood teaching is truly a profession - then yes, it should be as attractive to as many diverse peoples as possible. It should also be that if one is a professional in such a field that they are given recognition for the important job they're doing. I felt really saddened that the legitimate issues of a lack of institutional support for facilitating men's entry into teaching was clouded by the adversarial discourse in the report and the reporting of the issue. There is work to be done, yet I suspect it could be done for reasons different to those perpetuated in the report. I worry that the approach taken and perpetuated in the reporting of the issue will provide many more barriers to be overcome. Let's see what the response is. Respectfully yours, Alex Gunn,

## **Reflections on the Summit**

**Stu Cottam**

**The Child Care Co. Nelson**

Kia ora to the many men and women who recently attended the Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit. Wow, what an inspiring event it was and a huge thank you to Sarah for being the inspiration and the driving force behind the event. I'd have to echo the comment that I heard all day, 'I've never seen so many bloke teachers before!' That would apply to both the early childhood sector and the primary sector as I've got all too used to being the only male at meetings, courses & seminars and I'm sure many others share that experience.

I left the summit feeling that I'd made a good decision to be an EC teacher and that I could, perhaps, be a little more articulate in my efforts to explain what I do as an EC teacher & why it could be a great career choice for a bloke. I take my hat off to the many blokes who have been EC teachers for years, decades even! The longest I've lasted in any job (thus far in my life) has been 3 years!

One of the most thought provoking events of the day was Sue Thorne (from the Early Childhood Council) boldly announcing that this conference marked the point in time at which the number of men in ECE will begin rising again. I sincerely hope she's right but I continue to have a sneaking suspicion that it may still get worse before it gets better. In my experience there are very few men in training to be an EC teacher, few men expressing an interest to train to be an EC teacher, and a tiny pool of trained male teachers. This 'will' change and I believe the process has begun but in the short term the industry may become even more gendered than it already is (if that's possible?).

I don't know if the subsequent Early Childhood Council Conference resulted in any concrete decisions about how to recruit more male teachers into the early childhood sector but judging by Steve Maharey's ambiguous comments I don't think we can rely on the M.O.E. to be the driving force behind anything. I'm trying to be more pro active in my own community at interesting men in becoming EC teachers and I'm sure that many other attendees are doing likewise (and probably a lot more pro actively than me!).

From experience I know that we shouldn't underestimate the ambassadorial role that we, as a small band of male EC teachers, represent nor the power we have to plant a seed in the heads of other men who may see us doing what we do and think 'Yeah, I reckon I could do that!' Nice to meet some of you and hope that we can all meet up again sometime next year!

Lastly, as I mentioned at the summit, I'm in the process of undertaking research for a thesis that will look at the self-perceptions of and the perceptions towards the pedagogy of male EC teachers who work with infants and toddlers. So, towards the end of this year, I'm going to need some male interviewees who are teachers or educators working with infants and toddlers. At this stage I have three of you who have passed on your contact details to me and I'd be very grateful if anyone else could let me know, in confidence, if you might be interested in playing a part in the research. I've still a way to go before the interview stage! Thanks, I can be contacted at [stupom38@xtra.co.nz](mailto:stupom38@xtra.co.nz) Haere ra! Stu Cottam.

## **A Personal Response**

**Dr Beverley Clark**  
**AUT University, Auckland**

The one-day Summit, which I attended in Christchurch on the 29 March 2007, was extremely rewarding at a number of levels, including in terms of the realisation that in spite of the limited number of men working in centres, there are men in ECE who are making such a strong contribution to the lives of children and their families. What the Summit also did was to confirm this (potentially) to those who attended and to then go on from there to expand this at the Convention (which I was unfortunately not able to attend). It is evident that not only are these dedicated men making a difference at a local level but through their commitment they are making a difference at a national level.

It is very encouraging that in Kohanga Reo, men are significantly taking their place in this work. It is also encouraging that although the numbers in other centres in New Zealand is relatively small, that the men who are teaching are making a difference for the children and the parents and for their female colleagues. One of the points made that struck a chord with me was that when men and women work together in teams children see these positive male-female working relationships role-modelled. Overall, the positive effects of men in ECE were clearly evident through the stories and voices of the men who spoke at the Summit.

Overwhelmingly, the voices of the men provided solid support for their work. I have one concern though and that is the number of men who said that they did not have a role in some of the caregiving roles such as nappy changing. When we consider the theoretical principles on which much of working with infants and toddlers is based, then this is a serious concern.

I refer to the work of Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber who recognise the fundamental value and opportunity in the caregiving routines. These theories are explored further in Gonzalez-Mena and Widmeyer Eyer (2004) in which caregiving is considered to be curriculum. The question is: how can men who work with young children fully build on these multiple opportunities for communication, connection with and respect for young children if they are excluded from these interactions. I am also concerned at the message which this gives young children that men are not to be fully trusted with their care.

I value the comments of some of the men at the Summit that policies need to be in place that protect children at all times and that also protect all the teachers. It is this approach that I believe is necessary to ensure the safety of all in ECE rather than dissociation from certain roles. Providing a safe environment which allows teachers to work fully with young children rather than having a partial role, should, I believe, be something that we as a profession should work towards. A better understanding of how this is achieved in centres which support this practice could be accessed to provide support for centres who would like to change their policies and practice.

I thank you for the opportunity to attend this significant event and for the opportunity to hear the personal stories and of the contribution of men to ECE.

To the men in ECE: Kia kaha. I was inspired by your stories and filled with hope that your contribution can make a positive difference to the experiences of young children and their families, to our communities and ultimately to our society.

### **Reference**

Gonzalez-Mena, J. & Widmeyer Eyer, D. (2004) *Infants, toddlers, and caregivers. A curriculum of respectful, responsive care and education* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

## **A View from the Great White North (Canada)**

**Ron Blatz**

### **Discovery Children's Centre, Winnipeg, Canada**

Just received a report on your "Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit." I want you to know how encouraging this is for us in Canada. You guys are doing a great job of smashing the barriers, providing support for men, and gathering to plan better recruitment and retention strategies. These are sure to reap good results.

I'm doing my small part to move this issue forward here in Canada and it is nice to have others to follow, so lead on New Zealand. I will be forwarding this to the Manitoba Child Care Association (largest provincial association in our Country) in hopes that they might consider adding a similar summit to a future conference here in our province.

I've just returned from the World Forum on Early Care and Education (May 2007) in Malaysia and the growing level of support for, and recognition of the importance of male involvement was breath taking to experience. There is a growing global movement to see the under representation of Men in the ECE workforce be addressed. The first big push in this work will happen in Hawaii in 2008 at the Working Forum on Men in Early Childhood Education. I sure hope some of your women and men in the ECE field, come and share your success stories with the rest of the world.

Some of my most recent "lessons learned" have come from a colleague in Scotland. He tells us that it takes a very different approach to recruiting a male into the field. Women come on their own while men need to be invited. While processing this lesson I did a little experiment in Canada to see what would happen if I targeted men in an advertisement in the newspaper. A typical advertisement for a "childcare assistant" would probably bring 30 respondents with 29 or 30 of them being females. Our advertisement was placed in the general section of the help wanted ads and read "Wanted, a few good men with the courage to work in Child Care. Discovery Centre believes gender balance is good for young children....." The results of this advertisement absolutely shocked me (a 25 year veteran of the industry). We had replies from 30 men interested in working with young children. Three have been hired and we couldn't be happier with the quality of these staff. It would be interesting to see if this targeted approach also works in New Zealand.

I myself have the privilege of working in a centre with over 20% male staff (9 in total) and love the diversity, and certainly believe men have something very unique to bring into the lives of young children.

Thanks again for being on the cutting edge.

Ron Blatz  
Director

## A Mouse in a Fishbowl

Dale Neill

Brockville Kindergarten, Dunedin

Ok so I know quite a few of you are thinking to yourself what does the title have to do with reflecting on men in early childhood? Well I came home one day to my foster daughter screaming at me that there was a dead mouse floating in her fishbowl. As it had been such an interesting week I looked at this poor wee soul and thought 'I know how feel, mate'. At times this is so true through the often isolated professional work place, the gender imbalances that dominate our lives as men in early childhood through to the often feminisation of the education system itself we can feel like a mouse invading an environment that historically we would have stay well clear off.

So why as males have we decided to forge a path towards working with children in early childhood. I certainly can't speak for everyone but I do know that I personally could not see myself doing anything else. There is no other job I know of where you walk through the door to be greeted by a sea of warm friendly faces all who are actually pleased to see you and desire to spend time with you. It is also a great career for making a difference. There is not a day goes by that I know I am making a difference through the achievements of the children around me. I believe this is an important aspect of any job and it is an aspect I have and get in spades.

I was so warmly encouraged at the summit, which I attended in Christchurch on the 29th of March 2007. Encouraged by the fact that the room was so full of MEN, who through talks and discussions I discovered felt along similar lines as me. It is very empowering to know that there is a diversity of men from the top of the North Island to the bottom of the South Island who are striving to challenge the imbalance within the early childhood setting and more importantly working towards giving the children in their care the knowledge that men can be careers too.

I do believe that 'the times they are a changing' and more males are looking to a career in early childhood. However we need to address many issues including support into and through training financial, and emotional as well as addressing issues of a historical leaning - yes you know it and here it comes - in particular the Ellis case. I believe this case haunts us and will continue to haunt us as we try to create a name for ourselves in this sector of the workforce. The only way we will move forward from this is to get over it. While we continue to mention and debate this case it brings all the issue we don't want highlighted to the foreground. Therefore I issue a challenge to all reading this letter to resist the urge to mention this case; think of it as a Macbeth for teachers, but you can refrain from pinching your nose and all that stuff.

Ultimately I feel very blessed to be working in such a great part of the workforce. The majority of the people I have worked with and for have been very supportive and I believe that shows a great shift in the thinking of the wider community to the males in early childhood.

Before I go back to swimming in my fishbowl that seems to be losing water by the day I would like to share a comment I received by way of a card today. **"We think only a superhero decides to be a kindy teacher"**. That in itself sums up the importance of males in early childhood. Look at that guys we are superheroes I think I might leave the tights at home thou.... - Kia Kaha, Dale Neill



## **Changing the Culture in Centres**

**Christopher Jones**  
**Takarunga Playcentre Auckland**

Hi everyone, I have started a thread at the Playcentre bulletin board (<http://www.playcentre.org.nz/bboard.php?read=2018>) in the hope of getting into contact with other men involved in Playcentre. Do look up the thread and respond whether you are involved in playcentre or another early childhood service.

I have been actively involved at Takarunga Playcentre since January 2004, have completed the Playcentre training up to Course 3 level and have attended sessions as a duty parent once a week for the last three years. We are very fortunate at Takarunga to have four active dads, who started with us last term - all of whom help run the sessions and manage the centre. Indeed, on a Thursday morning, there are three of us all together on the one session, out of a duty team of six!

Two years ago, I started running 'Dads Sessions' at our Playcentre once a term on a Saturday which, I feel, has been a very powerful way to get the fathers more involved with their children's play and learning and to get them more involved at Playcentre. These have proven very popular that now we run them twice a term. They have, I think, played a very important role in changing the culture at our Playcentre (i.e. changing women's attitudes and views about male involvement) and making the place much more accessible to fathers as a result. – Christopher Jones.

## **Attracting Men into Early Childhood Work**

**Denise Heald**

I have taught for the past couple of years on a Level 5 Certificate/Diploma EC programme for International Students (Asian). This 1 year programme is proving very popular with both men and women because they get 50 immigration points when they complete the qualification and another 50 points if they get a job in a centre as a teacher. 100 points puts them in the pool for Permanent Residency. These students are well aware of the Ministry of Education 2012 deadline for completing their teaching diploma or degree - but they all want PR first so that they can enrol as domestic students and pay reduced fees.

Whereas their motivation for enrolling in an early childhood programme may be a concern, what I have found is that for those who really enjoy the practicums (field experiences) they become excellent early childhood teachers. They surprise themselves at how much they enjoy working with children. Whereas the males had some concerns relating to how they would be perceived by their family and friends as an early childhood educator, this became a non-issue when balanced against the job satisfaction of working with children. They really have fun!

I have kept in touch with many of my former students. It is tough for the men to stay in teaching, not because of the work but because of the attitudes of female staff. One Chinese guy has been working in a centre for just under a year and he tells me that although he enjoys working with children, he often feels lonely because apart from work related stuff, he has no one to talk to. Basically the women don't include him in their casual conversations and he feels quite 'left out'. So it seems nothing much has changed on that front!

It seems to me that although early childhood educators may say that we need more male teachers in centres, some female teachers are not living their philosophy by demonstrating inclusive and equitable practice to all. Isn't it about time that we started to practice what we preach by ensuring that all teachers are included in every aspect of centre life?

## **Just Go For It!**

### **Larry Walker Tikipunga Educare, Whangarei**

My name is Larry Walker. Here is my story. In September 2005 I started a training course at Regent Training, Whangarei, with the vision of becoming an early childcare teacher. The year long course available at the time was for Teacher Aide. I was the only student at the beginning of the course wanting to do early childcare, and one of two males in a class of 18. I had to do the teacher aide papers along with the other students as well as nine extra papers based on the early childcare certificate. During my time there several other students joined the course with early childcare in mind. By mid-June 2006 I had finished all my papers and gained passes in both the Teacher Aide and Early Childcare certificates. I was also the first student to achieve the honour of passing both, and all this in eight months!

I knew by then that I wanted to do my diploma in early childcare teaching and that there was an intake coming up in June. So I rang TeachNZ to make enquiries. After a long but very informative phone conversation, I was all signed up to start my diploma (just the paperwork to come in the mail for me to sign). My initial thought after putting the phone down was "what the heck have I just done"? Was I really ready to take the plunge and do this?

So I spoke with a friend who owns a childcare centre and with her help, guidance and confidence in me, I knew I had made the right choice and was ready to tackle the diploma head on.

I chose to do my diploma through Te Tari Puna Ora O Aotearoa and started in June 2006. I have found myself yet again the only male in the class. Alas, I am treated no differently and find the other students as well as the staff very helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. Part of all this has been the fact I have had to do some training within a childcare centre. From September 2005 until early 2006 I had the pleasure of working at Kensington Childcare Centre. Since then I have been based at Tikipunga Educare. Both of these fantastic centres are based in Whangarei.

I have been very fortunate in that both centres have been amazingly supportive and encouraging in how and what I do in regards to my training and learning. This has been of great value to me and my confidence. Everyday for me is a learning day and all comments passed on by my peers I have taken onboard in a positive way and tried to use to better my methods of teaching.

The most amazing thing I have found at both centres has been the outstanding support of the parents. Initially I had my concerns to their reactions of a male being at the centre. My concerns were all in vain. Parents have been so positive and I have even had comments passed on to me that some parents, when initially looking at the centre with the view of registering their child/ren, made their final decision because they liked the fact a male was present.

As for the children at the centre, they are what makes me want to go to work everyday. Seeing their faces light up and hearing them say "Larryyyy!!!!, Good morning Larry!!!!" is more than enough satisfaction to know I am at the right place in my life, doing what I want to do.

I am coming up to the last weeks of my first year of my diploma and it has gone so fast. I am the first to admit it hasn't been an easy road. Learning to study, reading material, trying to take it all in, assignments, weekly journals etc, but I stuck it out because I had faith in myself and believed in what I am learning.

As I have said in the past, I challenge all males who want a career in early childcare to go for it. I do it because I want to make a difference and a contribution to the community.

My thanks to Dr Sarah-Eve Farquhar for giving me this opportunity to tell my story. I hope it inspires you or any of your friends. - Larry Walker.

## **The Power of the Media**

**Caterina Murphy**

**Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare Association**

A prospective new student came to our teaching base after seeing the TVNZ doco "A Few Good Men" to obtain an enrolment pack. Jason (not his real name) is a 57 year old male who has always wanted to be an early childhood teacher. He said that after watching the Sunday doco his wife turned to him and said "it's what you've always wanted to do- go for it."

He was emotional about coming up to see me. I hadn't met him before, but he said this was the right time and that he was not going to put his application off for one more moment. He is raising three young grandchildren with his wife and also does a lot of community work for IHC. He said that the Peter Ellis case had totally put him off teaching and he has been scared to take the plunge all these years. When he goes to pick his grandkids up from a local centre, he takes time to read stories to the children when he's there. When he saw the doco he thought, "enough is enough, I'm going to do what I've always wanted to do. Surely from that and with police vetting etc, I will be safe to work with young children". But he's still scared.

I welcome men to be involved with young children and think it is important that we positively promote the profession as one good for men. In our local area, we have three men working in early childhood, one of whom is a student of ours. It is a pleasure having him add a new dimension to our classroom discussions. I think the recent media coverage has been empowering for men already in teacher education programmes and has opened a new window for those who are thinking about becoming teachers.

The power of the media is strong but not necessarily sustainable. Families will need to exercise their voice about how important it is for them to have men working alongside women with their children. Teachers will need to re-visit and share their beliefs about how important interactions with men are for young children. I'm doing that now. We will need to use that trusty cultural tool, the television, to promote men as teachers.

Men have so much to offer early childhood. I have noticed male teachers playing differently to female teachers in early childhood centres. Their play patterns and behaviours seem more energetic and vigorous, especially in places like the sandpit and carpentry areas. I've seen them take more risks with equipment such as paint sprayers and electric drills which is all exciting stuff as it makes the learning environment more interesting; more authentic; more flexible in its stance. I've seen greater voice intonation during story telling and puppet shows and different styles of negotiating conflict resolution between children. I've also noticed differing levels of tolerance about behaviours. All of this is important because gender differences there are and I want early childhood learning environments to reflect a more real view of life to young children.

More men in early childhood will add greater diversity to our learning environments and a richness to our Whaariki, a difference in our weaving style. The power of the media can only be truly effective if it is reinforced at every level of teacher education. This is a great time, right now, to question, "who is the weaver of the early childhood curriculum in the 21st century?"

**SECTION C**  
**ARTICLES**

## **Critically Endangered: Male Pre-school Teachers**

**Harald Breiding-Buss**

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*Despite fathers doing more and more childcare at home, male staffing at childcare centres is at a 20-year low. While New Zealand's leading association of childcare providers calls the situation a "national disgrace" there's no indication that the issue has made it on to the political agenda. Harald Breiding-Buss reports from the Christchurch Men in Early Childcare Summit held in March this year.*

Looking at your average kindergarten or childcare centre today it is almost hard to believe that some of the key drivers of early childhood education were male – and staunch Germans at that. It was people like Kindergarten founder Froebel or anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner who took early childhood away from a mere 'looking after' approach to it being the first step in education, and a very significant one. Movements like the ones founded by these men introduced the now generally accepted idea that a child is not merely an immature adult that has to learn about society's rules and mores, but has development needs specific to their age.

Beyond being role models, men and women provide specific stimulation for young children that is beneficial for their development. However, in childcare centres children will in all likelihood, mainly get the female variety.

New Zealand's track record in attracting men to the profession is particularly appalling. Not only have the numbers of male Early Childhood teachers always been small, they have actually been declining further in the last 15 years. While the childcare sector has ballooned in terms of the number of staff employed, the number of men teaching our smallest youngsters has gone down both relatively and absolutely. Amongst nearly 14,000 women Early Childhood teachers in state-sponsored centres there are only 130 males currently employed in this profession – less than 1% and down from 2.5% in 1992. Compare that to frontrunner Norway where the male proportion of early childhood teachers is 20%, or even 'macho' Australia at 4%. The Early Childhood Council, which is the largest national body for licensed early childhood centres, went so far as to say that the current lack of male teachers is a 'national disgrace'.

Should this concern us?

Absolutely, says Wellington researcher Sarah Farquhar, who has been pushing that particular barrel for nigh on 15 years now. Her perhaps strongest argument: "The Early Childhood Education sector is not reflective of the situation in the community." Translation: fathers have been taking up hands-on child care with their own offspring in droves, yet the situation that children encounter in childcare facilities is one where men are almost completely absent. "Society has moved on", she says. "Men are more actively engaged in caring for their children; yet the early childhood workforce seems stuck in the 1970s family model."

Childcare – or Early Childhood Education Centres – is a growth sector, because parents of pre-schoolers spend more and more hours in paid work. Because of the sector's female-dominated work force, "children's time with adult males is thus reduced", says Sarah.

The decline in the number of male Early Childhood teachers also goes against a trend in other female-dominated professions such as nursing, where increasing numbers of men are seen.

Sarah Farquhar felt strongly enough about the issue to convene a 'Summit' on 'Men in Early Child Care and Teaching' in Christchurch in March this year, attended by about 70 people with an interest in the area, including many male Early Childhood Educators. The summit's aim was to put this issue on the map and

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create a network, perhaps a movement, that can push the issue into the public and political limelight. Three issues were at the fore of the discussions:

*Fear of sexual abuse allegations.* More than a decade on from the Christchurch Civic Crèche case, where three female and one male childcare workers were accused of sexually abusing children (and the male, Peter Ellis, was eventually convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment) many at the summit felt that men are vulnerable to false accusations of sexual abuse. It's the 'elephant in the room that no-one wants to see' said Lynley Hood, author of 'A City Possessed', who thinks that none of the issues raised by the Ellis case have been addressed.

*Lack of role models in the profession.* Men working as Early Childhood Educators are so rare that men may be forgiven for thinking that this profession is simply not open for them. There are virtually no other men who can tell them what the job is like, what the rewards (and pitfalls) really are. Male Early Childhood Teachers also tend to attract more father involvement in the centre, which creates a better balance of male and female role models overall.

Some small efforts are made to at least include more images of men when advertising the career, for example on the TeachNZ web site which promotes teaching jobs.

Men who do work in the profession are quite isolated as it is highly unlikely that there will be another male working at the same centre. Networking amongst those working as Early Childhood Teachers was seen as a key to any progress.

*Unsupportive political environment.* Sarah Farquhar pointed out that compared to efforts to promote women into traditionally male-dominated jobs the government is more than a little cagey about opening women's professions to men. There is a tendency to blame the men themselves for not wanting to work in low-status, low-pay professions. However, many male-dominated jobs pay significantly worse and have lower status (supermarket trolley-pusher is one), and never mind job satisfaction.

Wellington researcher Paul Callister summed up the approach of the Wellington academic and political environment like this: "Whenever women are at a disadvantage it is a problem of society. Whenever men are at a disadvantage it is the problem of the individual men."

In his presentation, Paul showed how government policies of promoting women into men's jobs had the desired effect: When it comes to university or other tertiary degrees, women now outnumber men in previously male-dominated areas such as dentistry as well as maintaining or increasing their advantages in their own traditional strongholds.

Says Callister: "it's obvious that this kind of approach works." So why not take it to promote men into a profession that is so crucial for all of us?

When in opposition the two main political parties have always supported increasing the number of male early childhood teachers. Leading up to the 1999 general election Labour's Steve Maharey not only said there need to be more men in the profession but also slammed the then National-led government for policies that do not protect people against false abuse allegations. When in government, however, Labour did nothing about those policies, or anything to encourage men into Early Childhood teaching.

National education minister Nick Smith announced in 1999 a government initiative to get more men into primary teaching. This was to include television ad campaigns, but none were actually forthcoming. Now in opposition, National is criticising Labour for its inaction - and for policies that scare men away.

It is hard to see how the situation could improve without the political will. As summit participants pointed out, individual childcare centres may want to employ men, only there aren't any around with the right qualifications. Education providers may want to include men as much as women, but if there aren't any applicants there is not much they can do.

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One summit participant pointed out that in the late 1980s and early 1990s there used to be a scheme where male pre-school teachers would speak to high school students about the job as part of making students aware of career choices. This was dumped during the Peter Ellis case.

Without encouragement male pre-school teachers may become completely extinct. Do we, in this age of active fathers, really want to send the message to our youngest children that they are women's work and women's work only?

## **The Consequences for Children of an Absence of Men in Early Childhood**

**Peter Heaslip**  
**Consultant, Whangarei**

Several years ago I expressed my concern in a paper *Boys will be Boys but will they be Men* at an ECC national conference and asked why we were not facing up to the issues of the absence of men in early childhood.

The shape of the modern family has change and this has caused me to ask 'where are the male role models for our children?' Demographic changes have meant that the traditional male authority figure is now absent, not just from many home but also from our everyday lives. Men that children could look up to and model themselves on. Who are the present males for boys to model themselves on? Watch the television and you will be left in no doubt. Much of the male image is obtained from sportsmen, or from the buffoons of American sit-coms or the conflicting but not necessarily contrasting characters in police dramas. With the absence of a satisfactory male role model, this is all that both boys and girls are left with.

I thought I would check on the net to see what information it had on this issue- there are over 21 million entries under the heading 'male role models', so someone somewhere is thinking about the absence of men in young children's lives. It is fascinating and time-consuming to go through some of those entries - some are way out but in general there is obvious concern in some sectors and clear evidence that some governments are seriously concerned about the issue.

Stuart Millar from the National Centre for Education Information in Washington writes: "One of the interesting aspects of Society that I have noticed is that in addition to removing fathers from children's lives after separation and divorce, there are very few positive male role models for children. Children are very likely to encounter loving, nurturing female role models, but unlikely to encounter the same in the counterpart, especially in their early developmental stages. This reinforces our argument that fathers are the best opportunity to encounter positive, loving male role models."

There is now well documented evidence that girls are out-performing boys at almost every level from the primary school through to University. For more than a decade, Vice Chancellors of Universities in the United Kingdom have been concerned, not that women are out performing men in sciences as well as arts, but their concern has been the male response to this phenomenon. The men have reverted to laddish behaviour, which has not only affected their studies but made the females dismiss them even more and sent them on a continuing downward spiral of even greater laddish behaviour. There is another side of this culture of 'laddism', among the boys which leads to hostility towards others of their gender who are seen to be clever and this is evident in a younger pre-university age. With the absence of effective role models boys are under pressure to conform to a culture created by images in magazines and the media about what it is to be masculine.

If we wish the negative effect of a 'laddism' culture to be reversed, it is important that we do something about it urgently. An extensive study by the US Dept of Ed, national Centre for Education and Statistics took a representative sample of 22,000 children and concluded that although boys and girls aren't that different when they begin 'kindergarten' by the time they reach fifth grade or intermediate school age the gap in overall achievement between boys and girls had widened considerably.

Prof Alan Smithers, Sydney Jones Professor of Education and director for the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Liverpool, like others suggests that the problem with boys' relative under- performance originates in their early education. "Boys don't get a very good start at school" he states." Some experience failure and then seem to slip further out of the school context." Journalist Neil Linden agrees and feels that a key factor in their lack of achievement is the absence of men as early childhood and primary teachers. "The key factor he states is the extinction of men as teachers in the primary schools."



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As Lilian Katz has indicated, we know that boys are neurologically slower than girls, but that they should catch up in middle childhood. But the pattern is that they do not. Why? Boys are growing up in a culture where males are expected to be assertive. In other words they are being directed into a 'boy code'. And this is starting and being fostered in many of our homes and in our early childhood centres. If we 'get it wrong' in our early childhood centres, the boys are far more likely to be adversely affected than the girls.

Our Ministry should be asking if centres are doing sufficient to be an antidote to the media image of men? Is it possible in an almost "petticoat profession" to be able to do this? When many children in their own homes are unlikely to benefit from a constant available male figure, our centres helping the situation?

I have seen little evidence that there is any widespread public concern about the absence of men in primary or early childhood teaching. If our Ministry has any concern, I fail to see evidence of any steps that it is taking to remedy it. The lack of action in New Zealand is not evident in other parts of the world. Male teachers in many other countries are acknowledged as vital role models for both boys and girls, for they reinforce messages about masculinity and education, and help dispel the myth that it is not cool to do well at school. It is in the pre and primary school where young people get their first experience of life outside the immediate family. A strong positive role model there benefits students

The lack of action in New Zealand is not evident in other parts of the world. Conferences are being held in USA to face directly the concern. In New South Wales last year, John Aqilina, the Minister for Education and Training announced that he was holding an inquiry into the decline in male teacher numbers. "We need to find out why young males are not choosing teaching." If in the past there has been an absence of a lead from our own Government and Ministry of Education, what can you do to halt the trend of 'failing boys'? Lilian Katz, warns of the 'latent disposition syndrome', - dispositions acquired or destroyed in early childhood remained latent, often to reappear only at teen age.

This means in our homes and in the pre-school and primary we are setting the basis for 'failing boys' in their teen years. We do see the signs of laddish behaviour, but too often dismiss this as 'Boys will be boys!' The absence of positive male role models and the lack of clear immediate evidence to us may lull us into a sense of complacency - an indifference that I feel must be avoided.

From a personal perspective, it has been a lonely life for me as a man in early childhood. Too often at conferences which I have been asked to speak at over the last 20 years, I am the only male. In early childhood education and increasingly in primary education too we are now a petticoat profession. Whereas once you were quite likely to have a male teacher at some time in your primary schooling, now that becomes a rarity. It seems strange that this is against a national trend of men having more to do with what was often associated with the female or domestic side of family life. Men are increasingly seen in supermarkets, and not just pushing the trolleys, there has been an increasing acceptance of some men staying home to be house husbands while wives or partners are the main earners.

The decline in male teacher numbers is quite a genuine community concern" he stated. Male teachers are vital role models for both boys and girls for they reinforce messages about masculinity and education, and help dispel the myth that it is uncool to do well at school. It is in the primary school where young people get their first experience of life outside the immediate family. A strong positive role model can benefit all students.

Fifteen years ago in Bristol as part of a research study I surveyed staff in centres asking if it was important to have men in early childhood. I was surprised that only half felt men were necessary, ( the reasons given for welcoming them into the profession ranged from "They could help move the heavy furniture." to "It would stop the women being so catty"). I was dismayed to find the negative response to my questionnaire for at interviews there seemed to be an acceptance at the best and tolerance at the least to men working with young children. So I did an age analysis of responses expecting to see the older women being those who opposed men - but I was wrong. Those who were most positive to men in early childhood teaching positions were those in the 55+ range and those between 25 and 34. The strong negative response came from those in the 35 - 45 year range. Why, I asked myself? I suspect it was about career prospects.

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Kenneth Wilson, again reporting for the National Centre for Education Information in Washington comments: "From what I can tell the problem of the absence of men in the teaching profession becomes far more pronounced as you go down in age: day care, kindergarten, and early primary teachers are overwhelmingly female, and usually young. If you are a single father with a child of the young age, you can probably think of worse things than dealing with a large group of young females, but the key issue is that it is not good for providing role models for children".

We don't just want any men working in our centres, we need the 'right sort' of men. I remember well working with deprived children in a centre in Bristol when a single parent father brought his lad in, and seeing me with his son advised me, "Be rough with him man, be rough with him". That is not the image we want to convey, nor is it one of the weak effeminate male. Children need to feel secure in knowing that men can be gentle but strong, comforting yet firm, serious yet fun loving and displaying all the other qualities we hope they will aspire to from an appropriate role model.

Even before the Peter Ellis case achieved such publicity, a man working in what has traditionally been an all female domain has had its challenges. I know when I first started freelance lecturing in the United Kingdom I had to overcome three prejudices and misconceptions in my audiences. First that I came from a University, second that I was a foreigner, and thirdly that I was a man. I think I quickly dispelled those prejudices. But when I was first appointed as an S J C (formerly an Infant Mistress) in a large primary school I then too had to convince three sets of people that, as a man, I could work with young children. Those 3 sets of people were my colleagues, the children I was working with and their parents. The children were fine from the start, and when the parents saw that a man COULD work effectively with their own children they too were convinced, - the hardest were my colleagues especially those with whom I was not working directly.

When the British Council sent me to Czechoslovakia in the 70s when I asked why there were no men working in early childhood education, I was told with aghast faces that men just couldn't do it. I noticed a complete absence of men in the HIPPIE program in Israel but this was for a different reason. As there was a lot of home visiting associated with the programme it was felt to be culturally inappropriate to have men working closely with women in their homes. But how about here in New Zealand?

Can men do it?

The only comparison I can give you is this. A woman may be mechanically minded and completely competent with how a car works. But if she takes a car into a garage for repairs there is almost always the complete assumption by the mechanics, that as a woman, she won't understand too much, and it is better not to try to explain but for them to get on with it. Somehow there remains a belief that men can't and don't know how a young child 'works'.

I think that common sense makes clear the importance of males on which we model ourselves. If you have observed young children, you very quickly realise how much of their behaviour they model from you.

Are we doing sufficient to be an antidote to the media image of men? Is it possible in an almost "petticoat profession" to be able to do this? When many children in their own homes are unlikely to benefit from a constant available male figure, how are we compensating in our centres, or are we aggravating the situation? Now is the time for action. I plead for more men in early childhood services. I would like to see the concern about male teachers taken into a broader debate – a greater recognition of how and why boys are falling behind, and what we in the early years sector can do about it.

If the lead does not come from the Ministry, it must come from us, but better by far for it to be a collaborative effort.

## Men in Early Childhood Teaching

### Sarah-Eve Farquhar

Full reference: Farquhar, S. (1999). Men in early childhood teaching. *NZCER Early Childhood Folio*, 4, 29-32. (reprinted with permission)

There needs to be some support for females working with males. I've been in situations where two female teachers have faced angry parents because they are having a man turn up at the kindergarten who they haven't even met at that stage.... Some females [teachers] have difficulty working with the opposite gender or are not sure how to relate to a male as a teacher because they have always been around mostly women. (Denis, male teacher)

When James was first appointed to the job I felt that the Association could have warned me before James phoned. . . . There aren't many of them [male teachers], and you think to yourself about whether he is going to be able to do baking and all these things that women do. I must say that in the beginning our relationship was rather strained. (Bridget, female head teacher) [all names used are pseudonyms]

As the above quotes suggest men are uncommon in early childhood settings and this can present problems. Male teachers may cause initial debate and even tension in early childhood services because by their very presence they are challenging social norms.

Men's participation in early childhood teaching and the difficulties male teachers experience because of their sex need to be understood in context. Male teachers may have their masculinity questioned and perceived to be effeminate or gay due to the social belief that working with young children is not an appropriate occupation for men. Parents and employers may be more suspicious of the motives of men who choose to work with young children than women because of a view argued by some feminists that all men are potential child molesters and rapists. Further, the popular feminist slogan in the 1980s that "girls can do anything" was not matched by a similarly well-publicised message that "boys can do anything".

Hence one reason that women's earnings continue to lag behind those of men is that men are not making sufficient entry into the lowest paid areas of women's work, namely the care and education of young children.

Some traditionally female occupations such as nursing have become more gender neutral in recent years but early childhood teaching is one of the few occupations which has not experienced any improvement in gender balance. Over a decade ago being an air-hostess was seen to be an occupation for attractive young women only. With a change in title from air-hostess to cabin crew member and deliberate policies by the two major domestic New Zealand airlines to change the sexist image of the occupation, approximately one in five cabin crew staff are now men. In contrast only about one in 100 teachers in the kindergarten and childcare services are male. In recent years the percentage of male to female teachers in childcare centres dropped from 2.6 percent in 1992 to 1.35 percent in 1998. There has been a nominal increase in male teacher participation in kindergartens from 0.7 percent in 1992 to 1.2 percent in 1998.

What has been happening in the early childhood sector, or more correctly what has not been happening, in regards to recruiting and supporting male teachers is also evidenced in the primary school sector. In 1971, 37.8 percent of primary school teachers were male. This figure dropped to 24.4 percent in 1992 and has continued to decline to 20.5 percent in 1998. The figures suggest that many children will not have a male teacher until their secondary school years.

The disproportionate number of men to women in a profession which is so central in the lives of children and families is very worrying both from an educational perspective and from a gender equity perspective.

While kindergartens and childcare centres have focused on gender equity within their programmes, for example encouraging children to engage in a wide range of non-gender specific activities, the fact remains

that the vast majority of the adults providing the programmes are of one gender. Men are needed just as much as women in teaching, and especially during the first six to eight years when children are forming their gender identities, values and attitudes. Children as young as two-years know whether their teacher is male or female. While female teachers may purposefully model masculine behaviours and attitudes they are not actually men.

Overseas research has pointed to a range of benefits of having men on the teaching staff, including benefits for children's learning and improving the dynamics of staff relationships. As well there exists a substantial literature on the importance of men's involvement in child rearing. In recent years, due in no small part to the work of the late Commissioner for Children Laurie O'Reilly, the importance of fathers and the need for men to participate in children's lives has become a topical social issue.

As a first step to exploring ways of supporting male teachers, reducing unfair biases and tensions in centres, and recruiting men into the teaching profession, information is needed about male teachers and their experiences. Key questions are: Who are these men? Why are they in teaching? What differences might they bring to teaching because they are male? And what is it like to be a teacher who is male?

## **The study**

The aim of this study was to gain some preliminary insights into what male teachers are like and what it is like to be a male teacher. Twenty men working with children in kindergartens and childcare centres participated in the study.

They were selected through a process of approaching kindergarten associations and childcare centres at random to obtain five participants working in childcare in the North Island and five in the South Island, with the same number for the kindergarten service. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 54 years—the average age was 35 years. Kindergarten participants tended to be middle-aged with nine out of 10 being in their thirties or forties, and childcare participants tended to be either younger in their twenties or older in their fifties (eight out of 10 men). They had an average of seven years experience working in early childhood education (range 6 months to 15 years). All participants held some kind of teaching qualification except for two childcare participants. One was not trained and the other had the final year of his field-based diploma to complete. Four participants held university degrees and a fifth had only a third of his degree to complete. Five out of the 20 participants were the head teacher or supervisor at their centre.

Each participant was interviewed at a place and time of his own choosing. Interviews were tape-recorded for later transcription. Participants were asked a series of questions relating to their background, views, and experiences using a semi-structured interview format. The interviews were analysed with the assistance of the Q.S.R. NUD.IST computer program. Participants' responses were coded and categorised, and responses within and across categories were compared to identify common viewpoints and experiences and to note any differences.

## **About male teachers**

Data on the family and income status of the participants indicates that most were family men and that their earnings often formed the greatest contribution to the household income. Most participants (65 percent) were parents including one who was a single parent and at least two men who reported having responsibility for children not their own through marriage or re-marriage. Seventy-five percent of participants were the main or the sole household income earner.

## **Self-perception**

Participants' own perceptions of themselves were generally different from the social belief that men must be feminine or gay to choose to work with young children. When asked how they would describe themselves the majority (70 percent) talked either about having a mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics or being individuals and not feeling that they could fit into either gender category. Twenty-five percent described themselves as masculine men but not as strong macho types. These participants talked about how working with children and women had enlightened and changed their views especially on the social and economic disadvantages women as a group experience within society. Only one participant

described himself as effeminate, playing down his maleness, seeing issues in a female way, and preferring the company of women to men.

### **Reasons for entering teaching**

Women have some influence over men's decision to enter early childhood teaching. Twenty-five percent of men talked about how a female member of their family was instrumental during their childhood in helping them to value and like 'women's work'. For example, David explained that he was an only child and spent a lot of time with his mother who taught him much about women's work. As adults, 35 percent of participants reported that they entered early childhood work almost by accident through the suggestion or example of their wife, girl friend, or a female friend. Desmond, for example, explained that after he was laid off from his job as a plumber and experienced difficulty in finding a new job his partner suggested that he do some relieving work at her childcare centre. At the time he did not like the idea because he viewed it as a woman's job. However, he went along with his partner's suggestion as he considered it was better than doing nothing. Four years later he is still in childcare, aspires to become a childcare supervisor, and has no desire to return to plumbing.

Desmond's experience of entering the field as a second or later career choice was typical of many of the men in this study. Most participants (75 percent) were unemployed, made redundant from their job, or their business was closed prior to entering teaching.

This finding indicates that becoming a teacher is probably not something that men dream about or aspire to as teenagers, but rather something they go into after trying more traditional jobs.

Men can be encouraged to consider early childhood teaching as a possible career option through contact with a male teacher as was the case with 10 percent of participants in this study. For example, after chatting with a male teacher who came to his bookshop one participant decided to try teaching. One possible strategy to increase the participation rate of men in teaching would be to show men more often in advertisements about early childhood teaching. Another strategy would be for career advisers to ask male teachers to talk with groups of students and for recruitment agencies to call on male teachers to talk with unemployed and mature men who are seeking a career change. Most importantly, female early childhood teachers should not underestimate their influence through talking positively with men they know about early childhood teaching as a worthwhile and satisfying occupation.

### **Roles and behaviours**

Participants reported that they carried out the same work as their female colleagues, with the exception of 15 percent of participants who did not change children's nappies or pants (because their employer would not allow them to in two cases and because in one case the teacher wanted to reduce the possibility himself of being accused of child sex abuse). Although as teachers they reportedly did much the same work as their female colleagues it seems that male teachers may extend our current notions of the role of the teacher. For instance, in regards to how much the teacher gets involved in play, how much latitude is given for play that is usually classed as boisterous or fun but not educational, discipline, relationships, and challenging social bias.

Participants perceived themselves as being very much hands on in participating with children in the children's activities. They perceived the teacher's role as helping children to have fun, to laugh, and to enjoy learning through their play. In other words, a key part of the teacher's role was to be a playmate or friend.

Participants valued active participation in both standard activities such as dough and block play as well as in children's spontaneous social play including chasing games and rough and tumble play on the floor:

I do a lot of dancing with the children. I like to get involved with what the children are doing and will join them in building castles or tall buildings. ... I notice I have a lot more to do with the children when they are doing physical activities like jumping. Very rarely do I see the other [female] staff members holding the children and picking them up and

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getting the children to jump off objects or jumping to me. The children who are on bikes and can't reach the pedals, I will push them around. (Dirk)

It probably increases their [the children's] involvement because I am in their play. I am part of their play until I get tired and think I might take a seat. Then the children all go and hide and so I go and hide too. (Warren)

While male teachers seem to provide children with a greater range and scope of physical play at the same time they find they sometimes have a different kind of influence on children's behaviour compared with their female colleagues. The reasons given by participants for their tendency to sometimes be more effective in managing children's negative behaviour included their deeper voice, their understanding of why children (often boys) were behaving badly, and that children may have already learnt that within society men tend to command more respect (or fear):

You should have been here at mat-time. The kids were performing rather badly [for the female teacher]. As soon as I walked in they were quiet. They know they can't play up for me... the pitch of my voice is louder. ... I can be heard more clearly. (Don)

I have observed that I have fewer problems with discipline and I think that's probably a hangover from the wait 'till your dad comes home, you'll be told off type of thing. I try not to take on that disciplinary role but when I do speak to children they are more inclined to listen to me than the female teachers. (Dennis)

In addition Alan mentioned that children from some cultures responded to him as an authority figure because he was male.

For the participants an important part of their role as teachers was to establish rapport with the children, going beyond simple friendship to understanding where children were coming from and children's viewpoints and feelings. It seems that their different gender and minority status may help male teachers to identify more with children as people rather than as students and makes them aware of the possible influence of their gender on children:

Children can feel they can be the kind of person they are at home, at kindergarten. With the women [teachers] it is you are a four-year-old and I am the teacher.... I'll come in the morning and say to the kids, "Give me five! Good to see you!" (Alan)

I seem to have a really warm rapport with the children. If I start on a later shift and I walk in the door the kids are, like— "Richard's here!!!" (Richard)

We had one particular girl whose parents had split up and for the first three months after she started she would not go anywhere near me. All she saw when she saw a male was her father, and she was scared. As time went on we became very good friends, to the point that although she is at school now she still visits.... It was a good close bond and a positive one, which was important for her. (Grant)

Male teachers help by their presence and also through their activities and interactions to increase awareness of gender role stereotypes. For example, Noel reported that he noticed his kindergarten's dramatic play area excluded boys and after bringing the attention of his colleagues to this most of the sexist materials were discarded and the remainder was spread throughout the kindergarten environment. Dirk reported that children have talked to him about being a boy and discussed his gender with him. Martin explained that it is important children observe him doing traditionally feminine activities such as cooking as well as more traditionally masculine activities such as drilling holes and putting hooks in. All participants reported that a male teacher was beneficial for increasing children's awareness that men can be teachers and men can be caring; in Noel's words:

Children see that men care for them as well. It shows that there are men who are prepared to spend time with them - that men care for children.

## **Their personal and professional experiences**

### **Acceptance**

Only 25 percent of participants reported that immediate members of their family supported their decision to become teachers. It helped to have a wife or partner working in early childhood education, to have worked with children previously, or to have had difficulty finding work. Most participants (75 percent) spoke of family members who argued that they should not be teachers for any one or more of the following reasons: it is a woman's profession, it has low status, they risk being accused sooner or later of child abuse, that it was not real work, and they were capable of higher achievement. Similar reactions from friends and acquaintances were experienced by 50 percent of participants:

I used to go to parties and I used to be quite proud I was a kindergarten teacher. Now I just say I am a teacher. Not because I am not proud of it but because I can't stand the criticism. (Don)

Male friends joked "Oh, child molester." They thought I was a girl. (Richard)

Most of the participants who had undergone training reported little difficulty on the basis of their gender in being accepted into their training course. The exceptions were three who applied for training before 1985 when it was virtually unknown for men to be in early childhood teaching.

Anecdotal evidence was given by some participants of men they knew who were not (but they believed should have been) accepted into training around the time of the Civic Childcare Centre Peter Ellis sex abuse case 1992/3. The Ellis case seemed to have some influence on the decision of two participants in training at the time to enter kindergarten teaching instead of childcare work.

Difficulties were experienced by participants during training, centred around the lack of male peers and male lecturers and the feminine orientation of course content and expectations. As Ivan explained:

... the training was very female oriented. I wouldn't have got through it if I didn't have another male doing it with me. It is very difficult to be a male in that environment

Men can face discrimination on the basis of their gender when applying for teaching positions. For example, when Desmond applied for a new position at a childcare centre he reported that the committee looked more closely into his background and did a police check on him because he was a man (this had not been done for women staff appointments). Len was put on a month's trial when he started work in a childcare centre because the centre was unsure whether a man would be capable of doing the work. When Noel tried to change to a different kindergarten district he found after a year of trying that he could not even win a teacher's position although he was currently a head teacher. His experience over the years in applying for positions in different kindergarten districts was that some districts did not want male teachers. Only one participant who worked in childcare reported that he had never had any problem in applying for jobs and his experience was one of almost reverse discrimination because centres he had applied to wanted a teacher who was male.

### **Fish out of water**

As men in a female profession, male teachers are easily noticed and as Gary explained it is something they have to live with due to their small number. They can find it annoying to be singled out or treated differently simply because they are men and not women. Noel mentioned that at large area staff meetings other (female) staff tease him about being the only male. Denis noted that many people approach him first when they enter the kindergarten, assuming that he is the boss. When James started work at a kindergarten

he was very aware that he was the only male at committee meetings and he felt everyone else was aware of this too. It took quite a while before he felt accepted into the group.

While participants accepted that conversation amongst teaching colleagues is often on female topics this can make male teachers feel uncomfortable, isolated, and even excluded as the following illustrates:

Being the only male in my centre can be lonely because any social conversation that goes on I don't know if I necessarily fit into it. At times a female staff member has turned to me and said, "Oh you wouldn't understand, you're a male." (Dirk)

But equally annoying as feeling singled out or excluded can be an assumption that male teachers want to be accepted as women. Desmond and Glen disliked being regarded as honorary females and they believed their colleagues wanted to avoid dealing with the fact that teachers can be male.

## Implications and conclusion

Male teachers do not fit the macho traditional image of the masculine man and nor do they all fit the image of being girls or gays. It should be recognised that men have a right to care for children and that stereotypes can be harmful to their participation in teaching. There may be benefits for women in encouraging more men to enter early childhood teaching because, as some participants in this study said, working in early childhood can influence men's views about gender roles and increase their understanding of women's issues.

The level of salary or wage is probably an important consideration for attracting and retaining more male teachers into the field, given that many were the primary or main income earner in their household. Like women teachers, male teachers may also have family members to support. Careers advisers and recruitment personnel in training institutions could consider targeting mature-aged men, providing them with information about early childhood teaching, and arranging opportunities for them to meet male teachers. Women working in early childhood education could play a proactive role in encouraging male family members and acquaintances to enter teaching since this was one of the main way that participants in this study came to take up teaching.

There was no evidence that male teachers do not do the same work that female teachers do, however, in regards to interacting and relating with children there seems to be some differences. This may be due to how male teachers perceive their role, often as friends and playmates, and the effect of their gender on what they feel they add to the early childhood setting, for example a desire to understand the child's viewpoint. Children notice the gender of their teachers and this in turn can mean that children respond differently to teachers of different gender, for example in the area of behaviour management. Male teachers clearly have a contribution to make in helping programmes to become more gender inclusive and allowing for a wider range of differences to exist. Further study of the differences male teachers bring to the programme because of their gender would be useful, including looking at children's perspectives on their male and female teachers, and observation of teachers at work.

The social climate can influence whether men are accepted into training, but generally entry into training does not appear to be a barrier to male participation in teaching. Colleges of Education and teacher education/training establishments could note however that male students may experience a lack of support and find it difficult to fit in. Some simple strategies may help, such as ensuring male students are placed in the same class groups, addressing gender bias in course content (for example, in cases where there may be a focus on women's issues but not men's issues), and looking at how male students can have contact with male role models (for example, on teaching placement).

Socially it is often not easy for men who are early childhood teachers. Staff trainers, female colleagues, and employers could help by letting men know that they recognise they are going against social norms. They could also support male teachers by acknowledging and valuing their perspectives and interests, without making them feel singled out like freaks or turning them into honorary females. Employment policies should take into account the minority status of men in the teaching profession and ensure that men do not experience any disadvantage during the appointments process.



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Changes and Thinking

Moreover, employers should seek a gender balance in the staff of early childhood centres and not have none or only a token male staff employee.

The findings of this study suggest that male teachers tend to have a fairly hard time because it is so unusual for men in our society to be involved in early childhood education and care. We need to become more open to male participation in early childhood teaching and to more actively work to support and increase the participation rate of men in this important occupation.

NOTES

1. This paper comes from a larger study reported in:

Farquhar, S.-E. (1997). *A few good men or a few too many? A study of male teachers*. Research Report Palmerston North: Massey University.

2. Issues surrounding male participation in teaching:

Allan, J. (1993). Male elementary teachers: Experiences and perspectives. In C. Williams (Ed.), *Doing women's work: Men in non-traditional occupations* (pp. 113-121). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Bradley, H. (1993). Across the great divide: The entry of men into 'women's jobs'. In C. Williams (Ed.), *Doing women's work: Men in non-traditional occupations* (pp. 10-27). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Farquhar, S.-E. (1997). Teaching: A women-only profession? *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 7,169-180.

Gould.T. (1997). Buildings as well as systems can appear as negative to males in early years settings—exploring the role and status of the male educator working with the under-threes. In L Abbott & H. Moylett (Eds.), *Working with the under-3s: Training and professional development* (pp. 60 -77). Buckingham: Open University Press.

3. Statistics on teacher gender from: The Data Management Unit at the Ministry of Education, Wellington.

4. Review of the literature on the need for and value of men in early childhood teaching:

Jensen, J. J. (1996). *Men as workers in childcare services. A discussion paper*. European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities.

5. On the importance of men being involved in children's lives:

Callister, P. (1994, March). 'Just a father': Men as caregivers. *Playcentre Journal*, 89,22-23.

## **Men in the Lives of Children: Recruiting Male Teachers**

### **B. Cunningham & L. Watson**

For a copy of the full article go to: Cunningham, B., & Watson, L.W. (2002). Men in the Lives of Children: Recruiting male teachers. *Young Children*, November. Online at <http://naeyc.org/resources/journal/2002/11/recruitingMaleTeachers.pdf>.

#### **A Useful Checklist Given By the Authors to Check Our Own Attitudes**

We can all contribute to the recruitment and retention of male teachers. Use the following questions to review your beliefs and assumptions about men teachers.

- What do you think is the value of having male teachers?
- What are the drawbacks of not having men teachers for young children?
- What beliefs do you have about how well men can fulfil the role of teaching young children?
- Do you welcome all men as teachers or only some kinds of men? Which kinds? Why?
- What do you believe happens when males enter the early childhood field? Do they strengthen the field? Do they take away power from women? What other effects do they have? Why?
- What would your program be like if half the staff were men?
- How do you encourage families to welcome and accept men as teachers of their young children?

#### **And to Quote the Authors ...**

More men will want to teach young children when they see that more men are teaching young children

Men should be supported in exercising the full range of practices available to all teachers.

Are we the inclusive, diverse profession we claim to be?

## **Men at Work: Sexism in Early Childhood Education**

**Sarah Farquhar, Lance Cablk, Adam Buckingham, David Butler and  
Russell Ballantyne**

Available at [http://www.childforum.com/publication\\_details.asp?REF\\_NO=26](http://www.childforum.com/publication_details.asp?REF_NO=26). A limited number of printed copies are also available (send a cheque for \$15.00 in NZ or \$25 overseas, to Childforum, PO Box 58-078, Whitby, Porirua, NZ. Include the name of the paper, the number of copies you want, and your full postal address).

Men at Work. Sexism in Early Childhood Education (2006) features articles written by four men on their experiences of being involved in early childhood work: Russell Ballantyne, David Butler, Adam Buckingham and Lance Cablk. The writers point to difficulties in being men in a predominantly female job. Read the articles and you will get a strong sense that childcare teaching is work that interests men and that they can do it well.

The report also reviews progress – or the lack of it – since a 1997 research study titled “A Few Good Men or a Few Too Many” by Sarah Farquhar and provides an update on the situation.

In this 2006 paper “Men at Work. Sexism in Early Childhood Education” it is explained that sexism is stronger than ever in the early childhood education sector.

The child abuse argument has proven to be a convenient excuse to keep men out of an occupation that has been a site for feminist activism since the 1970s. Over a decade after the Peter Ellis, Christchurch Civic Childcare Centre case, it is time to move on and bring gender diversity into the workforce. But the hands of employers are tied.

The government, through the Ministry of Education and TeachNZ, has taken greater responsibility for recruitment and setting qualification requirements and the early childhood workforce now stands out as probably the ‘pinkest’ in New Zealand. For example, in nursing and midwifery male registered nurses now make up 6.5% of the workforce, and around 33% of flight attendants are male.

Internationally, NZ has amongst the lowest rate of male participation in early childhood teaching. Today less than 1% of teachers in early childhood education are men, as compared with over 2% in the early 1990s. This is in spite of:

- social change toward men participating more in child care as fathers and wanting children,
- awareness that female-intensive occupations hinder progress toward pay equity for women,
- higher teacher salaries,
- higher qualification requirements and status,
- considerable government money going into publicity and recruitment campaigns, and
- a shortage of staff in many parts of NZ.

## **A Case for Allowing and Enabling Men to Work with Young Children**

Published in Farquhar, S. E. (2005). *How to Pick Remarkable Childcare and Education*. Porirua: Childforum Research. (pages 65 - 67).

### **The Problem**

There is a problem of entrenched sexism in the early childhood sector. The beliefs behind this include:

- A historical emphasis on caring for children as women's work.
- A historical emphasis on women as the ones suffering from a variety of forms of economic and social disadvantage. Equal employment opportunity policy as it is interpreted in the early childhood education sector does not recognise men as a disadvantaged group.
- An emphasis within the early childhood profession on making sure children's play activities are not sex-stereotyped while ignoring the influence on children of the learning provided by an all female teaching staff.
- Since the Peter Ellis, Christchurch City Council childcare centre sex abuse case in 1992 and the Geoffrey Scott, Wellington Hospital childcare centre sex abuse case in 1994 public support for men as teachers dropped and has never recovered.
- NZEI Te Riu Roa, the early childhood and primary teachers' union, promotes a no-touch policy and advises teachers that any form of physical contact with young children poses a risk to the teacher.
- NZEI Te Riu Roa, early childhood representative groups and teacher education institutions have not made a serious attempt to rehabilitate the negative image that surrounds being a male who is a teacher. The common perception is that any increase in the participation of men would be damaging to the profession and potentially open early childhood services to up to more allegations of child abuse.
- Gender issues in employment and teacher training and recruitment appear not to have figured at all in early childhood education government policy. Only in 1999 the then Minister of Education announced a short-lived promise to recruit more men into primary teaching.

Ministry of Education statistics show that in 2003 of the 12,650 staff in kindergartens and childcare centres in New Zealand only 129 were men (approx. 1%).

### **Men's Contribution**

Why should men be involved in childcare and early education? Perhaps the strongest reason is that the profession should be representative of the community so that a message goes out to parents and children that (a) men do have a valued role to play alongside women in children's lives, and (b) learning and caring is for everyone.

A variety of literature points to a range of benefits for children of men working in childcare/early education:

- Girls and boys can observe that it is socially acceptable for men to participate in the care of children and do domestic duties (e.g. cuddle and comfort children, wipe tables and change nappies).
- Boys are more likely to admire and model the behaviour of male, rather than their female adults.
- Boys' interests are more likely to be respected and catered for by male adults (e.g. ball games, more boisterous play).

- The involvement of a man on the staff can lead to an increase in the range and variety of activities and conversation for girls.
- Male teachers/staff/home educators are important for girls and boys who do not have a father or who have little contact with a male in their family. Also they may provide a stable, positive male figure for children whose “fathers” are constantly changing, regularly absent from home, or are abusing them.
- Men may help to give boys in particular a better early foundation for learning because men are more likely to create a “boy-friendly” environment whereas the evidence points to women favouring girls and rewarding feminine behaviours.
- Further, having men working with children can signal to fathers that (a) it is a cool occupation for men and (b) it is a good thing for fathers to be involved in their children’s care and learning. It can also help to sensitise female staff and mothers to the possibility of their own (possibly latent) sexist attitudes by working alongside or seeing men caring for children.

## **Of Puppy Dog Tails, Sugar and Spice: Gender Inequality and Discrimination in Early Childhood Education**

**Sarah-Eve Farquhar**

Published in *Delta* 49(2), pp. 405-416, 1997. Also available for study or personal use only online at [http://www.childforum.com/publication\\_details.asp?REF\\_NO=7](http://www.childforum.com/publication_details.asp?REF_NO=7)

This paper looks at how equal the opportunities for men in early childhood teaching are.

Given that men are under-represented and that the profession is dominated by women, could it be that men experience discrimination? The findings reported here suggest that they do. The subjective experiences and perspectives of male childcare and kindergarten teachers and their female colleagues tell a story of apathy towards encouraging male participation in teaching, sexist treatment, and discriminatory employment practices.

To achieve a more equitable balance of male and female teachers in early childhood centres two major suggestions arise from the findings. First, specific projects to recruit men both into training programmes and into employment are needed, as are a set of guidelines for employers on the appointment of men and gender-equity in the workplace. Second, there needs to be recognition that the child abuse argument is being used to keep men out of teaching and to limit their involvements with children. Positive action for change should be taken by all groups and organisations associated with early childhood education (including the Ministry of Education and the teachers’ union New Zealand Educational Institute). A focus on increasing the involvement of men in caring for and educating young children is needed.

## **Fathers' Involvement in Early Years Settings: Findings from Research**

**Tim Kahn**

Published in the *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 2006, Vol. 10, pp. 115 – 126.  
Published by Childforum Research.

This research aimed to discover the extent to which fathers and male caregivers in England are involved in early years settings and the factors that facilitate and/or limit their involvement. The degree of father involvement (both current and future) was gauged by means of questionnaires completed by staff (paid and unpaid) at 322 settings; eight focus group interviews were also held involving a total of 21 staff and 21 fathers. The results suggest that while staff recognised the importance of father involvement, fathers often did not feel comfortable in these settings. Staff from only six percent of settings believed that setting up activities exclusively for fathers was necessary. At the majority of settings (71%) activities were provided for parents in general and fathers were not specifically targeted. Interestingly, in the context of focus group discussions the idea of separate activities for fathers was viewed very positively by staff, suggesting a possible difference between practices of parent involvement in settings and staff views.

A number of possible strategies for increasing father involvement emerged from the findings:

1. increasing the presence of men working in settings as paid staff, students on placement, and volunteers;
2. planning activities for fathers based on the interests of fathers within the individual setting;
3. understanding that different approaches may be necessary in different communities and with different groups of fathers; and,
4. staff needing to be aware that the language they use and the roles they assign to mothers and fathers and mothers assume (of being the primary carer) in the early years setting can be a barrier to male involvement.

Recommendations from the research include:

1. providing staff with 'what works' leaflets and training;
2. staff training to raise awareness of gender issues; and,
3. addressing the gender imbalance in the early years workforce.

Note: The research has been completed and a report is available entitled "Involving Fathers in Early Years Settings – Evaluating Models for Effective Development". Go to <http://www.pre-school.org.uk/research>

## **Including Men in Early Childhood Education: Insights from the European Experience**

**Jan Peeters**

Published in the *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 10, 2007, pp. 15 - 24.

The European Commission Network on Childcare introduced gender as an issue in early childhood services in Europe. In 1996 the Network set a target of 20% male workers in childcare that had to be reached by 2006. Several campaigns and interesting initiatives were set up and were successful in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the UK and Belgium, but no European country has reached the target. This has led us to investigate the reasons why early childcare and education is so gendered. Childcare is seen as women's work, something that women naturally do and are intrinsically better at. In addition, as gendered work assumes a female workforce, it is constantly reproducing its own patterns in recruitment and training. Several authors advocate on the one hand a gender-neutral culture that does not exclude men, and on the other hand they plead for gender pedagogy, a reflection on the differences between boys and girls, men and women.

This article examines the crucial question of what can be done to increase the employment of men. It discusses possible policy measures, men-only training courses, male mentorship of trainees, recruitment procedures that give equal opportunities to men, ways of remodelling the sector and of creating a men-friendly climate to make men visible in services.

### **Conclusions**

The early childhood workforce is almost exclusively female in all countries. Policy makers must emphasize the importance of male workers in early childhood policy documents.

Most men working in early childhood have chosen this as a rethought career. Therefore, adult/teacher education stands the best chance of getting more men in the sector. Providing appropriate career information for young males is also necessary. The recruitment methods have to focus more on men that have worked with children as volunteers in child, youth or sports clubs.

Networks have to be created for men working in early childhood services. These networks can attract new men and can avoid high turnover of male trainees and men working in the sector.

Improving the quality of training into a more men-friendly direction has been successful in several countries. Men-only courses and the support of male mentors have proven to be successful.

Countries with a high level of professionalism have greater chance of attracting men, but increasing the salaries alone will not lead to more male participation. The female workforce will continue to deter men from taking up the work, unless the sector is remodelled towards a more men-friendly culture so it does not constantly reproduce its own patterns in recruitment and training.

The notion of care is less attractive for men; but an emphasis on more social issues and on outdoor and sports has been successful to attract men. The predominance of part-time jobs is widely believed to deter men and full-time work options must be available. To change the gender balance, sustained commitment and policy priority is required for a period of at least ten years.

## **The Men as Role Models Argument: A Case for Researching Children's Views**

**Richard Harty**

Published in the *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 10, 2007, pp. 183 - 190.

The theory that male teachers provide positive role models that can counter any negative male role models and compensate for the absence of men in children's lives is considered in this paper. The review is positioned in the European context where there have been consistent calls over the years for an increase in the number of male teachers. It highlights the dearth of literature that attempts to identify and include the voices of very young children within the debate on the inclusion of men as workers within the early years.

My early analysis of the literature and my own pilot study of primary or elementary aged children's views suggest the possibility that young children may not necessarily agree with this idea of gender role model. The paper argues that a way forward for research on teacher gender, and in particular on the role model argument, would be to include children's voices.

A preliminary unpublished study (Williamson & Harty 2006) highlights one possible methodological approach to extend on Sumison's work. A local holiday programme with children ranging in age from four to 12 years was chosen as the staff team included a male member of staff who had worked there consistently over a number of years. Children participating in the programme were asked to describe the characteristics of good teachers. This was achieved in two ways. First, children were asked to identify whom they felt would, or would not be a good teacher, and why they thought this, from a selection of photographs of well-known famous people who would be known to the children. Second, children were asked to draw pictures of someone who would or would not be a good teacher.

The results indicated that the children did not use gender as a salient descriptor. Rather they used information they could infer about the person's personality, or skills, from their previous knowledge of that person. For example children thought that David Beckham would be a good teacher because he is 'nice' and 'he can teach us football', while half believed that he would not be a good teacher because 'he would be too busy playing football'. For all the personality photographs approximately half the children thought the person portrayed would be a good teacher and half thought they would not, there was no difference between boys and girls as to who they thought would be a good teacher. The results showed that positive aspects of a person's personality, for example being kind, happy and funny were important to children, they also considered having skills and knowledge to teach and pass on to children as a good quality. Qualities which the children most mentioned when talking about people they did not see as good teachers were being angry, being bossy and being lazy or too busy.



**SECTION D**  
**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

## **Abuse Allegations**

### **Editorial**

**For the full editorial go the Otago Daily Times, 28 January, 1997, p.8**

What is our society coming to when men are scared off becoming child care centre staff because of the danger of child abuse allegations? All sensitive men dealing with children and youth must now be aware of their vulnerability. A little parental and institutional caution, as well as sensible procedures, should provide some protection for all concerned. But if the children of New Zealand and society as a whole are not to become much the poorer, men willing to work in such fields must be encouraged and supported.

A new Massey University study has highlighted the problems in childcare centres. Lecturer Dr Sarah Farquhar's study on the male teachers there makes disconcerting but unsurprising reading. She has found not only that men are afraid to work in centres following two high-profile sex abuse cases, but also there appears to be discrimination against men applying for jobs. Many male teachers experienced parental suspicion of being a child-abuser or low-level sexual harassment (joking or put-downs). Against this background, the percentage of men working in the early childhood area has dropped by a third since 1992 to 1.4%.

Yet, Dr Farquhar lists some of the benefits of male teachers ...

In an age when many children are brought up by a mother alone, surely men can contribute to healthy development. While we are rightly aware of the possibility of abuse of trust, we need to give men willing to take on teaching roles and voluntary youth work all the kudos, support and encouragement we can.

## **Sex Abuse Fears Keep Men Out**

### **James Gardiner**

**For the full article go the NZ Herald, 27 January, 1997, p. A4**

Dr Farquhar's report, *A few good men or a few too many?*, was issued today based on interviews with 40 teachers, half of them male. She concludes that there are a variety of reasons few men work in kindergartens and crèches.

The already low numbers dropped further in the aftermath of high profile child sex abuse court cases in 1993 (Chrisruch Civic Centre crèche work Peter Ellis jailed for 10 years) and in 1994 (Geoffrey Scott, Wellington Hospital childcare centre, jailed for seven years).

Dr Farquhar says one of the men she interviewed was beaten up at his home after the Wellington case although he worked at a different child care centre. Another interviewee, working in the South Island, lived in fear after parents suspected their child had been sexually abused. He assumed, as a man, that he would be accused, although the culprit was found to be another child.

She says there is no evidence that male teachers are a greater danger to children. Male teachers are more likely to be actively involved in children's activities; they give the children a male figure to bond with. "There's some evidence that men are actually more effective teachers with children that age ... We certainly need more of them".

## **Men Scared off Teaching by Sex Claims – Report**

**Alison Tocker**

**For the full article go to The Dominion, Wellington, 28 Jan, 1997.**

Fear of being wrongly accused of having sexually abused children is scaring men away from early childhood teaching, according to a report by Massey University lecturer Sarah Farquhar.

More than half the male teachers surveyed report having been treated as if they were a child abuser, or being made to feel they could be one. All of the 20 male and 20 female kindergarten and early childhood teachers surveyed say the most relevant explanation for the lack of male teachers is the fear of being falsely accused.

However, Ms Farquhar said yesterday there was no evidence that men in early childhood education were more dangerous to children than women. And there were many educational advantages for children from having men around.

It could even be damaging not to have male teachers, as gender identification and attitude development took place under the age of five, she said.

Dr Farquhar called for positive publicity and support for men who choose to teach children.

Education Minister Wyatt Creech said he had no doubt that fears of being wrongly accused of sex abuse were putting men off the profession. He had heard the comment in many childhood centres he had visited.

Mr Creech said the only real answer was to change public attitudes, “but that will take time”.

The union that represents early childhood teachers, the Educational Institute, rejected the contention that sex abuse fears were the main reason for the lack of men.

“If you found early childhood workers were going to be paid \$50,000 a year, you’d suddenly have lots of men seeking to train”. While a few male teachers had reported not being fully trusted in their work after the Ellis case, the concerns appeared to have died off, Ms Beresford said.

## **The Pressures that Drove Carl from a 13-year Career**

**Mark Stevens**

**For the full article go to *The Marlborough Express*, 12 March, 1997, p. 13.**

It was a work environment where everyday tasks had to be undertaken with an imaginary camera pointed at him. Carl Wallace trusted himself and gave no reason for anyone else not to. Yet there was continual fear that some small-minded ignorant parent would one day point the finger at him and accuse him of sexually abusing their child. It was the scenario which drove the Blenheim man out of a 13-year career in early childhood education. And it all started when Christchurch crèche worker Peter Ellis was convicted of sexually abusing children in his care.

Carl was one of the lucky people in this world who not only worked for money, but also for the love of the job.

Carl felt the pressure of having untrusting eyes continuously falling upon him was affecting his ability to do his job. "You are supposed to be able to work as team and do the same as everyone else," he said. "You could tell they were looking at you sideways."

Carl is now in the primary education sector and can see children coming through that have trouble identifying with both genders. Early childhood is an important development stage.

"Males have a totally different perspective on things," he said. "My attitude was a lot more lax than some others. They see that the man is willing to get more involved. They learn basic social skills like being able to go up and talk to a male."

Before the Ellis case Carl could take children for walks or let them tag along when he did the crèche banking. That all stopped. His reputation in Blenheim for being good at his job was once a saving grace. But it was not enough and eventually the pressure got to him. "One minute I was relaxed and casual and had a great job. The next minute I had to think about justifying every action". Knowing he would never be accepted in the community or in the industry as an equal led to the decision to get out of early childhood work.

Fortunately, Carl has a Diploma in Education so he did not find it hard to win another job. But he questions whether he should have had to. He loved his job and he loved children. But because of the occupational path he chose he was eventually railroaded out of a 13-year career. He is now not there to offer his skills to the children of Marlborough. But who can blame him?

## **Society Suffering as Males Run Scared of Abuse Accusations**

### **Editorial**

**For the full editorial go to the Daily News, New Plymouth, 29 Jan, 1997.**

Massey University research Sarah Farquhar may have exposed more than she realises with her investigation into male under-representation in kindergartens and childcare centres.

In the light of publicity given to Christchurch Civic Centre worker Peter Ellis, and Wellington Hospital childcare centre teacher Peter Scott, [this has] left public perception of the problem quivering at the extreme alarm level. While this has its benefits in discouraging others from similar crimes and alerting parents and caregivers to the particularly unpleasant risks, it also has a significant downside. There is a strong likelihood of such awareness seriously damaging relations between adult males and children outside of the education system.

In preschool classrooms ... children under five are in their most impressionable years and any absence of male teachers can leave a quiet incorrect impression on the roles of the different sexes. This is doubly serious in a society with so many solo mothers raising children. It deprives these youngsters of another opportunity for beneficial male association.

The most unfortunate thing about this whole situation is that there is no evidence that men in early childhood centres are more dangerous to children than women. Dr Farquhar's call for an end to discrimination on this basis needs support. So does a rethink about our tendency to over-react to the risk of molestation. Because of it we may be turning potentially warm and caring individuals into cold, hyper-conscious, adults, shunning physical contact for fear of what others might think.

## **Men Shy Away from Teaching**

**Lisa Webber**

**For the full article go to the Christchurch Star 25 April, 1997, p.1**

Christchurch College of Education administrators are racking their brains to figure out why men are not applying for primary teacher training positions. This trend is in the face of a sharp increase in the number of first year students applying for 1997 training positions.

## **Growing Gender Gap in Primary School Teaching**

**For the full article go to EDUVAC: The Education Weekly, 15 Sept, 1997, p. 1**

Although the number of primary teachers has increased by more than 2000 in the past seven years, the number of men teaching dropped by 335, or 6.7%.

Labour's Trevor Mallard, who drew attention to the plight in a parliamentary question, said the gender gap in primary school teaching was appalling and could be blamed on low pay.

He said a work force was needed that better reflected society and that while primary school teaching had always been a female dominated profession, the gap was widening.

## Restoring Image of Male Teachers

**For the full article go to The Otago Daily Times, 4 Aug, 1999.**

*Massey University researcher Dr Sarah Farquhar discusses sexism in the teaching profession following the Government's announcement to push for more male teachers. Dr Farquhar's research results on men in early childhood teaching caused a furore when they were published in 1997.*

The announcement by Education Minister Nick Smith last week about an advertising campaign to attract men into primary teaching represents a momentous shift in government thinking, ... the Government is boldly sending out a statement to groups such as boards of trustees and the NZEI that while it is not politically correct to talk about a lack of men in teaching, the problem has to be addressed head on, and the Government is prepared to push for change.

Research and expert commentary have argued that the scarcity of men in teaching is having serious consequences for the status of the teaching profession, the educational outcomes for boys, the social development of boys and girls, men's career options in an economy where traditional male occupation opportunities are shrinking, and fathers' participation in their children's care and learning. Women cannot hope to achieve equal pay until the barriers to men's participation in working work, such as teaching young children, are broken down.

The Education Review Office report "the Achievement of Boys" detailed findings on boys' underachievement and behaviour problems in schools and pointed to an urgent need for boys to have positive role models. A 1997 research paper by Christchurch School of Medicine researchers David Fergusson and John Horwood, on gender differences in educational achievement in a cohort of over 1000 children, noted that boys and girls had very similar IQ test scores. The researchers concluded that the traditional educational disadvantage shown by females has disappeared and been replaced by male disadvantage.

The male teacher recruitment campaign will involve newspaper and television advertising, as well as promotional material for use by career advisers. The minister also stated that he is considering using TeachNZ scholarships, currently only available to Maori and Pacific Island trainees, to help attract male achievers into primary teacher education.

However, if the campaign is only a one-off and if the Teach NZ scholarships are not available for males in at least equal numbers to other minority groups, then the minister's best intention will not be achieved. The campaign should extend beyond advertising. It needs to look at challenging employment practices and making teacher training more inclusive of male values and needs. Male teacher trainees can feel isolated and lack support. Employers tend to favour the employment of women due to EEO policy and often an underlying fear of the school being sued should the male teacher abuse children.

"Good news" stories informing the public about the achievements and activities of men in teaching are needed, and the media has an important role to play in promoting a positive image of male teachers. There is an urgent need to examine and review "no touch" policies (promulgated by the NZEI). It is tantamount to child abuse for a teacher not to cuddle a child.

My research points to the influence that women have on men's decision to enter teaching. The recruitment campaign should be aimed at capturing the attention of women – mothers, sisters and girlfriends – and encourage them to see teaching as a good career option for their sons, brothers and boyfriends. The campaign should target men who are dissatisfied in their traditional male occupations and are looking for change. Simply recruiting more men into teacher training through advertising will not necessarily mean an increase in the actual employment rates of male teachers and their retention. What is needed also are guidelines and training for employers, pre-service teacher trainers, and female teachers on such things as handling parents' questions about teacher gender and providing support for male teachers.

## **Male Teachers Need Encouragement**

**For the full article go to The Evening Standard, Manawatu, 3 Aug, 1999, p. 3**

Men were reluctant to enter teaching because they feared accusations of sexual abuse and were affected by a social perception which saw teaching as a women's field. This was said by Massey education expert, Dr Sarah Farquhar, in support of Education Minister Nick Smith's announcement that an advertising campaign was to be launched in September to attract men into primary teaching.

Mr Smith said ... schools needed a better balance of male teachers to deal with an increasing number of social issues to provide positive role models for boys. "Male teachers send a message to boys that education is not sissy". He said the issues of salaries, social attitudes and the fear of accusations of sexual abuse would be looked into, and the recruitment campaign would encourage society to value the role of male teachers in primary schools.

Dr Farquhar said the announcement represented a "momentous shift" in government thinking.

The minister said he intended using TeachNZ scholarships, currently only available to Maori and Pacific Island trainees to help bring male achievers into the primary education training sector.

*But with a change of Government (from National to Labour) and Education Ministers from Nick Smith to Trevor Mallard there was no longer a commitment to getting more men into primary teaching; although in opposition Mr Mallard had expressed concern about the lack of male teachers. No reported statements of support for getting more men into ECE from the new Education Minister can be found.*

### **Media Statement – 26 Sept 2000, Minister of Education, Hon Trevor Mallard**

The Government is to offer scholarships to encourage an increase in the number of Maori and Pacific Teachers into early childhood education.

"This is the first time that the Government has offered teaching scholarships for the early childhood sector ...". "ECE services need teachers who have appropriate language and cultural understanding as well as appropriate teaching qualifications..." The scholarships are like those offered by TeachNZ in the compulsory sector.

## **Sex Slurs Forcing Men out of Teaching**

**Mark Henderson**

**For the full article go to Sunday Star-Times 1 Aug, 1999, p. C5.**

The Education Review Office warns boys are underachieving in class and a lack of male role models has been blamed. Are Sexual abuse safeguards harming children and damaging men's role as caregivers?

Anton Wartmann, a senior teacher with the Canterbury-Westland Free Kindergarten Association says male teachers are nervous. He is one of only about eight men out of 180 teachers at the association's 62 centres.

Ten years ago, he reckons he was naïve. "I thought if I got accused of anything my conscience was clear. Now I've seen how drastically an accusation can affect a teacher. It's traumatic for them and their family, even if there's no substance to it. You only need to be accused once."

Author Lynley Hood is putting the finishing touches to her book what she views as the politicising of sexual abuse over the past 25 years. Earmarked for release later this year, the book focuses on the Christchurch crèche case. Men have become stereotyped as dangerous sexual predators, she says.

Some male teachers are convinced sexual abuse has been politicised to keep men out of early childhood teaching. They cite cases of women childminders killing their charges, but say they have not heard any calls to stop females caring for babies and youngsters.

Russell Ballantyne, from the Dunedin Kindergarten association ... claims an element of the women's movement in government and early childhood colleges are happy to maintain a climate of mistrust, "They believe men have no place teaching small children." Ballantyne points to brochures for early childhood teaching courses: "They all feature women working with children, never a man."

There is bias in recruitment literature, concedes Lorraine McLeod, associate dean of early childhood education at the Auckland College of Education.

Phillip Ozanne is one of a handful of men studying early education. At 32, he is a latecomer to teaching. "I always wanted to teach young kids," he explains. "They have so much learning potential." His wife is a secondary school teacher. As part of his studies, Ozanne spends eight weeks a year at kindergartens and day care centres. Most have no-touch policies. "That's hard if a child is bawling their eyes out. But some centres let me cuddle."

Ozanne says it can get lonely being the only man among 20 women [in the class at training College].

Educators are unanimous in agreeing men are crucial for the balanced development of young children, especially boys. Yet, they say, there seem to be no initiative to retain or attract male teacher or efforts to confront social phobias.

Farquhar says the Government must step in and stem the crisis by funding and promoting recruitment of male teachers. Teaching colleges, she says, must also address their orientation toward females.



## **Call to End Anti-Male Bias**

**For the full article go to The Press, Christchurch, 25 Sept 2006, p. A9**

A paper released today shows that internationally New Zealand has one of the lowest rates of male participation in early childhood teaching with less than one per cent of the workforce men.

Dr Sarah Farquhar ... said that in the 1990s the fear of being accused of abusing children kept men out of the profession, but attitudes had changed ... it was time to move on and bring men into the workforce.

With 49% of children in early childhood programmes being boys the workforce was not reflecting society.

“What children need is to have contact with everybody within their community and instead they’re having only contact with women,” she said.

Both salaries and status in the profession had improved and more promotion was needed to attract men to early childhood education.

Russell Ballantyne, who has been in early childhood education for 23 years, said ... “I think it’s a travesty for young children that they don’t have the chance to build relationships with men”.

Lance Cablk, who is the only male in his early childhood course in Auckland, said it was interesting being a pioneer in the profession. “It’s been challenging,” he said. “Obviously it’d be easier if there were more guys there but the women that were in my programme are really good”.

## **Men Needed for Childcare**

**Arwen Hann**

**For the full article go to The Press, Christchurch, 26 Sept 2006, p.A7**

The Early Childhood Council has called for a government-led initiative to encourage more males into the sector, saying the “paedophile hysteria of the 1990s” had led to men leaving the profession and put off potential new recruits.

The call follows research by Sarah Farquhar that revealed less than 1 percent of today’s early childhood teachers were men.

But some early childhood experts say that while the hysteria ... may contribute to the lack of men in the profession, the focus on one problem is hiding other barriers.

“The issue is really complex and I don’t think the Peter Ellis stuff is really up there”, early childhood educator at Canterbury university Alex Gunn said. “The low status of child-care work, low pay and the perception of it being a career for women all put off men from going into early childhood work”.

Farquhar acknowledged there were other issues to be considered, saying it was “time to see the hysteria and moral panic for what it was – a panic. The veil of sexism inherent in the profession, due it being a site for feminist activism and continued promulgation of the idea that men are not safe to work with young children, needs to be lifted and discussed.”

Lynda Boyd, director of early childhood teacher education at the Christchurch College of Education, said she was lucky to see 10 male students in an intake of 500. “When I started at the college I would get four or five men just in my tutorial group. Now we are only getting four for five in the whole course,” she said.

## **Endangered Species**

**Arwen Hann**

**For the full article go to The Press, Christchurch, 26 Sept 2006, p.A7**

Duncan Fisher is one of an endangered species. He has worked in early childhood education for the last 16 years and is one of only about 130 men working in the profession across New Zealand.

“My first job was just after the Peter Ellis thing and when they heard I was coming, one parent took their child out of the centre I was due to work at ... Until about four years ago we were still hearing of things happening to male teachers.

“I really enjoy my job. It sounds like a cliché but it is a privilege to see the excitement in the children’s faces,” he said.

“But I question why the media only pick up on the negative – where are the stories about the positive impact of men in early childhood? We need positive stories to help encourage more men”.

## **Males Victims of Childcare Sexism**

**Lane Nichols**

**For the full article go to The Dominion Post, 26 Sept 2006, p.A3**

Children are being “quarantined” from men by sexist recruitment policies in the early childhood sector, an industry body says. Early Childhood Council chief executive Sue Thorne said children were missing crucial contact with male role models because men felt unwelcome in the profession. Mrs Thorne called on the government, teacher unions and education providers to launch a recruitment drive aimed at men to tackle a severe skills shortage and bring the male-female teacher ratio into line with other countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

A report issued yesterday by the Childfourm Research Network says Sexism is rife in the early childhood sector. “The child abuse argument has proven to be a convenient excuse to keep men out of an occupation that has been a site for feminist activism since the 1970s” (says Dr Sarah Farquhar). There is no evidence that more teachers’ were more likely to abuse children, she said.

David Butler has been an early childhood teacher for more than 30 years. He is now a supervisor at Kelburn’s Kea House crèche – and its only male employee. He felt discriminated against trying to find work in the 1990s but was now trusted by parents and colleagues, he said. Mr Butler said he knew male teachers who refused to change nappies or cuddle children but he continued doing so.

Education Minister Steve Maharey said professional qualifications and better wages had made the sector more attractive to men. He planned a recruitment drive to try to get more male teachers.

## **Men Avoided ‘Hysteria’**

**Claire Trevett**

**For the full article go to The NZ Herald, 26 Sept 2006, p.A3**

Early Childhood Council chief executive Sue Thorne said the shortage of men working in the sector was a “national disgrace” and New Zealand compared badly with other well-developed countries.

Her comments follow the release of a paper by researcher Sarah Farquhar who said a 1 per cent male workforce made early childhood education the ‘pinkest’ in New Zealand – compared with nursing which was 6.5 per cent male and flight attendants, 33 per cent of whom are male.

Tu Henare, National’s spokesman on early childhood education, said the best way for boys to develop learning skills was from men.

## **‘Get over it’**

**Editorial**

**The Timaru Herald, September 28, 2006**

There are gender anomalies in many professions, but it would be hard to find such an imbalance as in the early childhood sector.

The defence forces might come close, and the police and nursing are still out of kilter, but just 1 per cent of pre-school teachers are men and it’s looking to get worse.

It’s been 15 years since the paedophile hysteria generated by the Christchurch Civic Crèche case, and it is time to move on. It is the children who are missing out, especially today when so many of them do not have fathers at home.

## **Teachers Recoil from Risky Touching**

**Michele Hewitson**

**For the full article go to the NZ Herald, 4 Nov, 1999**

Dr Jones says the debate in New Zealand about touching has focused largely on children's safety and the surveillance of teachers. "Touching children and getting huge pleasure out of touching children has been tainted so horribly that it must really affect the way we teach little children. But one of the reasons people are attracted to teaching is that they love the physicality of kids." It is a debate Dr Jones wants to widen, hence the one-day symposium entitled Hands Off? Teaching Touching Children to be held at the Maidment Theatre in Auckland on Saturday.

Dr Sarah Farquhar ... will present a paper called The Disappearance of Caring in New Zealand Education, which traces the time-line leading to the "moral panic about touching" she claims is prevalent in early childhood education. ... the Peter Ellis case ... sent a shock-wave through the whole education community, causing a shift in emphasis from policies that promoted the safety of the child to a focus on teacher protection. Such a focus, says Dr Farquhar, has actually made [the classroom] less safe. You may be trying to protect teachers, but accusations can be made regardless of no-touching rules. "Are you really protecting children though not touching, or are you actually causing more harm by not touching them?". She argues that there is a potential contradiction between a school's legal requirements and its practices (as dictated by the NZEI union's no-touch policy). "Policies and practices limiting or denying any form of physical contact with their teachers can be argued to be contrary to current legal requirements for children's safety and emotional well-being". Male teachers are particularly affected.

Why, asks Dr Farquhar would men be tempted to enter a profession where "they're always having to watch their back?"

## **Panic Inspired Big Brother**

**Rebecca Rowe**

**For the full article go to NZ Education Review, 12 November, 1999.**

At a symposium for educators entitled "Hands Off? Teachers Touching Children at the University of Auckland ... Farquhar said a moral panic about touching had taken a grip on education in New Zealand, particularly the early childhood and primary sectors. If the trend was not arrested... "teaching will become a purely technical job", "Teachers will become like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz; people who work on oil but are not able to express feeling and warmth". Farquhar said the NZEI had reinforced the moral panic by warning teachers that any type of physical contact could be construed as assault.

NZEI said the union's code tried to strike a balance between protecting teachers and ensuring children's dignity and safety, which was paramount. "We're not about encouraging hysteria or depriving children of the contact they need to be physically safe and emotionally secure," Beresford said. Beresford noted that not all children like to be touched ... teachers shouldn't assume that touch was a necessary part of a child's schooling. Farquhar told of an early childhood centre where parents were phoned to come and change their child's pants when they become soiled, and if it was close to home time the child was asked to wait until their parent arrived. "How physically uncomfortable and embarrassing for the child!"

## **Teachers Should Touch Children – Lecturer**

**Jon Morgan**

**For the full article go to The Dominion, 9 November, 1999, p. 3**

“We need teachers and schools to get together and say, ‘Enough of this rubbish – regardless of a climate of fear and mistrust, we can be trusted not to abuse your children,” Sarah Farquhar said. Dr Farquhar said the Education Ministry and union had to tell teachers it was all right to touch children appropriately. The no-touch policy, designed to prevent abuse, was causing neglect. “What happens when you have a situation of one child hurting another? Do you say, ‘Look, I need to hold you tight to stop you hurting this girl, is that okay?’ Is this the values we want children to grow up with? How will they feel about touching as adults? It could affect their relationships later in life if they view any touching as bad, as abuse.

Union secretary Joanna Beresford said teachers were advised not to touch children, except when absolutely necessary, and then only if another adult was present.

## **Draft Teachers’ Code Touchy about Hugs**

**Tara Ross**

**For the full article go to The Sunday Star Time, 24 July, 2005 p.A5**

Touching kids is OK for primary teachers, new draft guidelines suggest – but a look might still be enough to get them into trouble. Primary teachers are debating the draft drawn up by the NZEI designed to replace its controversial eight-page, hands-off code of physical conduct introduced in the mid 1990s after the Christchurch Civic Crèche case. Michael Neville, the Levin teacher who was last year found not guilty of assaulting four former pupils said the draft was fraught with problems... **“but we’re too far down the track of everybody looking sideways at each other to roll it back.”**

## **Teachers can Touch Children Says Union**

**Claire Trevett**

**For the full article go to The NZ Herald, 26 Sept 2006, p.A3**

The primary teachers’ union will tell its members it is all right to children to comfort or praise them, in a major shift in its advice about physical contact. The code says teachers must use common sense, but touching was acceptable when “carried out in a professional and responsible manner that is age appropriate”. They advise enlisting witnesses to any physical contact when possible and for rooms to have visibility, such as with windows. *[Note that the new code still cautions against touching unless necessary instead of being part of spontaneous caring interactions between children and adults; it does not allow for touching for children when individually appropriate; it doesn’t mention personal needs for privacy for children; and, it now specifically includes early childhood centres].*

## **Teachers Want Help in Classroom War Zones**

**Lane Nichols**

**For the full article go to The Dominion Post, 26 Sept 2006, p.A3**

Secondary school teachers fed up with classroom violence have spoken out about pupils threatening them with knives and telling them they would be raped. Others say classrooms are battle grounds for gang recruits and angry pupils with behavioural problems are “time bombs” who threaten other pupils and staff.

## **Giving Men a Place at Preschool**

**Patrick Crewdson**

**For the full article go to The Dominion Post, 28 Feb, 2007, p.A7**

In seven years teaching at five early childhood centres, Phillip Ozanne has not worked with another man.

As head teacher at Grace Kindergarten in Khandallah, Wellington, the 40-year-old is a rarity in a workforce that is now more than 99 percent female.

The shortage of men ... has prompted a national summit in Christchurch next month.

Conference organiser Sarah Farquhar, said early childhood teaching rivalled midwifery as the most gender-segregated occupation. "And the number of men will continue to decline unless some kind of action is taken".

She said the summit was intended to bring male teachers together to form support networks and discuss ways to recruit more of their brethren.

Mr Ozanne said ... "Boys need to learn how to be a man". "And girls need to learn how a man acts around girls."

Dr Farquhar said in the years following Peter Ellis' conviction ... men stayed away from early childhood education for fear of being accused of abuse. Poor wages and low status were also factors. But since wages had risen and the industry had adopted a more professional focus, the main barrier cited by men was that early childhood education was promoted predominantly as the domain of men.

Mr Ozanne said the Government might need to create an incentive scheme to attract more men.

## **More Than a Job**

**Ruth Hill**

**For the full article go to Sunday Star Times, 4 March 2007, p.A7**

His youngest son's birth inspired Wellington electrician Ray Margrain's dramatic career shift – to become an early childhood teacher.

"... my wife's career was going from strength to strength, so it made sense for me to be the one to say home with him." It was such a rewarding experience that – at his wife's suggestion – he did a diploma in early childhood teaching. I was an electrician for 27 years, but frankly it was just a job," says Margrain. The 49-year-old father of four says he has now found his "passion".

He was surprised he was the only man on his course.

At my son's primary school, the gender split is about 50/50 on the teaching staff, so I'd just assumed it would be the same for early childhood education".

While the early childhood curriculum is all about inclusion and dispelling gender stereotypes, the lack of men on staff sends the wrong message he says.

"We don't push dolls on girls and trucks on boys any more, but if they only see women caring for children, it blows that.

## Why Preschools Need Men

**Ruth Hill**

**For the full article go to Sunday Star Times, 4 March 2007, p.A7**

Falling rates of men teaching in kindergartens and day-care could be turning boys off learning for life education experts say.

The number of men in teacher-staffed preschools has halved to less than 1% in the past decade. That's below other countries.

Dr Sarah Farquhar, of the Childforum Research Network, blames "a veiled form of sexism" for deterring men from a career in early childhood teaching. She's organising a conference this month to look at the role of men in the sector. In 1997, her research found the infamous Christchurch Civic case ... had driven many men from teaching. "I think that fear has dissipated as common sense has taken hold, but men still feel unwelcome".

Dunedin early childhood teacher Russell Ballantyne ... said the gender imbalance within early childhood was "not only tolerated but also closely protected".

Despite the chronic shortage of trained early childhood teachers the Ministry of Education was doing little to entice men into the profession, he said. "In all their promotional material, there's not a single male face".

In many early childhood centres there was more value placed on passive activities – such as art and reading – than on the physical activities favoured by boys.

Education campaigner and writer Celia Lashlie ... says "I think there is a link between the fact boys are falling behind academically and the way in which they are increasingly marginalised.

Farquhar... says more male involvement would be good for women, both within the profession and in the community. "If men are encouraged to be more involved in the care of young children, if that's seen as 'normal', it would take some of the burden off women. Female-dominated occupations also tend to have lower rates of pay."

A spokeswoman for Education Minister Steve Maharey, Helen Vaughan, said the number of male early childhood teachers has risen from just 40 in 2001 to 132 today – compared with more than 13,600 women.

*(NOTE: Figures supplied by the Ministry of Education, Data Management Section show that there were 154 men in 2002. The number of men and the percentage of men to women has decreased over the past decade, not increased).*

## **Men Scared of Abuse Label**

**Arwen Hann**

**For the full article go to The Press, Christchurch, 30 March 2007, p.A5**

Speakers at the Men in Early Child Care Summit in Christchurch yesterday said negative coverage on incidents such as the Peter Ellis – Christchurch Civic Childcare Centre case stopped men entering early childhood work.

Researcher Sarah Farquhar told the conference “There has been lots of media coverage, but mainly about sex abuse,” she said. “They don’t pick up on all the great things men are doing, but the one thing men are scared of is being accused of child abuse. Even items that try to say positive things still have that thread running through them.

David Baxendell has worked at Edmonds Smith Street kindergarten in Woolston for 25 years. He said the Ellis case cast a shadow over his profession. Baxendell said he hoped the sector was shaking off the Ellis tag. “Things like this conference are a great step. It is great to see so many men in the sector getting together like this”.

Farquhar said she hoped that men in early childhood education were starting to receive more positive coverage and that the sector’s leaders would become more supportive.

## **Support Plan**

**Arwen Hann**

**For the full article go to The Press, Christchurch, 30 March 2007, p.A5**

A national network for men working in the early childhood sector is planned.

The proposal, which has gained support from the Education Ministry, was put forward at the inaugural Men in Early Child Care summit in Christchurch yesterday.

The plan would see a national network co-ordinated by a small group of male early childhood teachers, with regional groups across the country.

Russell Ballantyne, who co-owns a childcare centre in Dunedin, said ... “One thing a lot of people have said at this conference is that they are surprised how many men there are here, and a national network could help that,” he said.



## **Anti-male Prejudice Plagues Childcare**

**Jenifer Johnston**

**April 2007**

**Full story at**

**<http://www.sundayherald.com/news/heraldnews/display.var.1346575.0.0.php>**

University of Edinburgh research into a male-targeted recruitment drive, *Men Can Care*, for a residential school in the west of Scotland.

The recruitment drive, funded by the European Social Fund, used radio and newspaper adverts and even a stand at Braehead Shopping Centre to alert male applicants to the training scheme. Despite there being only 34 places, a staggering 1253 men requested information, with 660 submitting a formal application. The course included training in social care and IT and students gained work experience in the residential unit, some reporting that “for the first time in years” they enjoyed coming to work and that the course was “a major life- changing experience”.

Researcher Mark Smith told the Sunday Herald the scale of interest in the scheme clearly showed that many men wanted to work as care professionals, but lacked confidence and felt unsure about how they would be perceived. Applicants for the *Men Can Care* project had backgrounds in various professions, from banking to taxi driving. Although had been unhappy in their previous jobs, they had not considered applying for a care position until the project emerged.

Smith said there was also an element of “institutional discrimination” from recruiters, which added to the hesitation of male applicants in coming forward to work with young people, as fewer of them gain full-time jobs. Men are under-represented in almost every caring profession in the UK. Last summer was the first time in 25 years that the number of men entering primary teacher training in Scotland rose above 10% of the intake, while the Equal Opportunities Commission in Scotland has shown that just 4% of childcare workers are male, although 27% of men say they would consider working in childcare.

## **Babysitters’ Club Changes Gender**

**Full story at [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c\\_id=177&objectid=10431730](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c_id=177&objectid=10431730)**

**March 31, 2007**

Male nannies, or mannies, are taking up a place in the American childcare industry, says journalist and author Holly Peterson. Male nannies tend to be like rough and tumble puppies, Peterson says, something that kids love.

“It doesn’t mean they can’t be nurturing like women, and doesn’t mean women can’t be fun like men, I just find that when I’ve had male babysitters, they are much more physical - throwing the kids on the bed, hanging them on their toes.”

The odd manny is popping up in Australia, but they are still few and far between, according to Delia Timms, founder of the Find a Babysitter website. “About 1 or 2 per cent of nannies are males,” Timms says. “Originally I was anxious about having male carers listed on my website, but I decided to be open-minded. Fifty percent of parents are male, so I don’t know why there aren’t more male nannies.”

Canberra-based manny Jake Holliday, 20, knows he is a rare breed in Australia. Young boys appreciate having a male babysitter, he says. Holliday is very aware of prejudice and wariness when it comes to men in the childcare industry and says he’ll generally care only for children aged over 5, and prefers to care for boys to avoid potential problems.

**SECTION E**  
**ONLINE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

Proceedings of the First NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching Summit and a Record of Challenges, Changes and Thinking

## New Zealand

Website for NZ Men in Early Child Care and Teaching, go to <http://www.ecmenz.org>

A chat room is available for fathers and men in early child care and teaching. Go to the thread in the Playcentre bulletin board and be in contact <http://www.playcentre.org.nz/bboard.php?read=2018>

TV New Zealand has a page with the Early Childhood Council's response to the "A Few Good Men" documentary and the "Sexism in Early Childhood Teaching" report. And on this page you can also view the documentary at <http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/411749/835675>. Sarah Farquhar has a TVNZ copy of the documentary plus other historical news clips which she is willing to show when talking with groups at seminars/classes/meetings, to request email: [sarah@childforum.com](mailto:sarah@childforum.com)

## International

Website of the Australian Males in Early Childhood Network "blokes can do it as well", go to <http://www.malesinearlychildhood.bravehost.com>

Men Teach is a United States clearinghouse for both men and women seeking information about men teaching (early childhood to college level). It has been running for many years and was started by Bryan Nelson, providing a valuable international resource. Go to <http://www.menteach.org>

The MenTeach website includes a NZ link  
[http://www.menteach.org/news/new\\_zealand\\_men\\_in\\_early\\_child\\_care\\_and\\_teaching\\_summit](http://www.menteach.org/news/new_zealand_men_in_early_child_care_and_teaching_summit)

Norway's national pages for men in kindergarten. It has some pages in English and some international links as well: [www.mibnett.no](http://www.mibnett.no)

Details a project aimed to set up a European and Flemish network of male childcare workers, trainers and academics who would together look for solutions to make day and evening school courses more accessible to men. Articles and papers by Jan Peeters also available from this page. Go to <http://www.vbjk.be/meninchildcare.htm>

The Males in Education Inquiry Group provides a Canadian website dedicated to men in education and to increase awareness of issues for boys in education. Go to [www.maleteachers.com](http://www.maleteachers.com)

Courses for men, literature and conference proceedings, details about the annual Men in ChildCare European Conference, go to [www.meninchildcare.com](http://www.meninchildcare.com)

The Californian Association for the Education of Young Children Men in Child Care Committee mission is to foster open and healthy discussions regarding issues affecting men in child care, to provide guidance and support for related policy initiatives, and to develop effective strategies to equalize the acceptance, recognition, participation, retention, and professional development of men in early childhood education positions. Go to website <http://www.orgsites.com/ca/childcaremen-caeyc/>



See also their cool button which they are selling for fundraising.

What do you think? Quite a clever attention grabber isn't it?