

## CHECKLIST FOR INCLUDING FATHERS AND FATHER FIGURES IN SCHOOLS

Circle a score of either 0, 1, or 2 for each check statement. Add them up to get your score out of 30.

### SCHOOL ENTRY FOYER

- CHECK: Are there visual clues to tell men that they are welcome and valued at your school?

SCORE      0 (none)      1 (a few)      2 (many)

### STAFF SKILLS (INCLUDING OFFICE PERSON)

- CHECK: Are staff comfortable talking to men of all backgrounds?

SCORE      0 (some difficulties)      1 (good)      2 (very good)

### DROP OFF / PICK UP TIME

- CHECK: Are there strategies in place to engage fathers when dropping off or picking up their children?

SCORE      0 (none)      1 (working on it)      2 (yes)

- CHECK: Do your staff know the first and last names of the fathers who come into contact with the school?

SCORE      0 (a few)      1 (some)      2 (all)

### CHILD PROTECTION

- CHECK: Is it clear to men in contact with your school that you are seeking their help in keeping children safe?

SCORE      0 (unclear)      1 (sometimes clear)      2 (always clear)

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT (INCLUDING FATHERS)

- CHECK: Are fathers involved in all areas of the day to day running of the school (canteen, playground, excursions, classrooms, maintenance)?

SCORE      0 (none)      1 (a few)      2 (many)

- CHECK: Does your school use males in the planning, implementation and evaluation of your program, policies or practices?

SCORE      0 (none involved)      1 (a few)      2 (many involved)

### ENROLMENT / ORIENTATION

- CHECK: Do your orientation procedures make it clear that fathers are expected to be involved?

SCORE      0 (no)      1 (working on it)      2 (definitely)

### COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- CHECK: Are there materials that are clearly meant for fathers, in your parent library, for instance?

SCORE      0 (none)      1 (some)      2 (many)

- CHECK: Does your newsletter, pamphlets and posters recognise the positive role of fathers with children? Are fathers visibly valued (more than just as a support to mothers)?

SCORE      0 (no)      1 (sometimes)      2 (always)

- CHECK: How many fathers read your notes and newsletters?

SCORE      0 (no idea)      1 (some)      2 (all)

### ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- CHECK: Has your school investigated activities for encouraging male engagement?

SCORE      0 (no)      1 (working on it)      2 (activities have taken place)

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY (and diversity within the culture)

- CHECK: Does your school recognise that cultures in Australia have a range of value positions on the role of fathers?

SCORE      0 (no)      1 (sometimes recognised)      2 (always recognised)

- CHECK: Do uncles, de facto fathers, grandparents and other father figures understand that they are seen as important for children and infants?

SCORE      0 (not recognised)      1 (some recognition)      2 (always specifically included)

### SEPARATED FAMILIES

- CHECK: Do your enrolment forms include information on fathers? If families separate, is the information updated?

SCORE      0 (no)      1 (some information updated)      2 (updated for both parents)

Go through the checklist to add up your scores.

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

(out of 30)

How did you go?

- \* **Less than 10** - There may have been some attempts to make things happen, but fathers and father figures are not engaged very well at the school. More opportunities for fathers are needed and more discussion about how to get fathers involved.
- \* **Between 10 and 20** - Fathers and father figures have some engagement in some areas. Staff have thought about ways to increase father's involvement and obviously see this as an important aspect of their work. There is a good foundation to continue this work.
- \* **More than 20** - The school is doing really well with engaging fathers. Staff have thought about the best ways to actively encourage involvement of all fathers and father figures. Keep up the good work!

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### HINTS PAGE

\* *Think about some of these hints and suggestions for your service to better engage fathers and father figures. Each relates to a particular checklist statement.*

#### **SCHOOL ENTRY FOYER**

1. These could be posters / pamphlets / magazines that are "male oriented", such as, posters with images of fathers, children's artwork depicting fathers, displays of father's occupations.

#### **STAFF SKILLS**

2. Discussions of how to 'contact' dads in informal settings can allow staff to develop strategies such as having something to tell them about their child's work. Having specific events coming up also gives staff a reason to say 'Hello' to dads.

#### **DROP OFF / PICK UP TIME**

3. Well intentioned comments such as "Being mum today?" or communicating to a father to tell his wife about his child's behaviour do not help. Fathers want to be informed about their child's progress and valued as a primary carer in their child's life.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION**

4. Appropriate protocols for notifying children at risk or illegal activity, need not mean that school encounters are unsafe for men. Child protection can be a starting point for discussing school safety issues.

#### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT (INCLUDING FATHERS)**

5. As part of general parent involvement, perhaps you should document and benchmark father engagement. Undertaking this exercise can lead to a shift in thinking and bring about practical suggestions for involving males in the school.

#### **ENROLMENT / ORIENTATION**

6. Encourage men to identify with the school. Orientation nights with specific invitations to dads can validate their importance in raising children.

#### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

7. Having general parenting information will not send the message that fathers are valued. Publications need to be specific to fathers or to clearly announce that fathers are being addressed.

#### **ENGAGEMENT GOALS**

8. If you are staging a "fathers event" include games or active presentations that require participants to move.

#### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

9. In promoting father involvement with children, what positive values and examples might be highlighted from non-western cultures?

10. Are men from these groups also specifically invited to events? Are images portrayed also of these groups of men?

#### **SEPARATED FAMILIES**

11. A school policy stipulating that separated parents are to be kept informed of their child's progress throughout the term (unless legal restrictions exist) can help teachers recruit the whole family to support the learning of their child.

**The Engaging Fathers Project is sponsored by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.  
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