



This work has been submitted to **NECTAR**, the **Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and Research**.

Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Fathers, sons and schools: historical dilemmas and future possibilities

Creators: Garner, P.

Example citation: Garner, P. (2013) Fathers, sons and schools: historical dilemmas and future possibilities. Invited Presentation presented to: *Second International Scientific Conference on 'Parenthood in the Face of Difficult Situations. Disability – Neglect – Disintegration'*, Kamień Śląski Castle, Opole, Poland, 08-09 May 2013.

Version: Presented version

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/5723/>



Fathers, sons and schools: historical dilemmas and future possibilities

Professor Philip Garner
(The University of Northampton, UK)

Second International Scientific Conference:
'Parenthood in the face of difficult situations.
Disability – Neglect – Disintegration'

Kamień Śląski Castle, 8 & 9 May, 2013

Key areas for discussion

Masculinity

Recollection of schooling

Early nurturing

Fathers as teachers

Fathers as classroom helpers

Non-resident fathers

SEN & disability

School sport

Bereavement

Criminality & delinquency

Young dads

'Outside the school gates'

Themes from recent research

Change in role

Parenting 'breakdown'

Boys & men: 'negative careers'

Mental health needs

Silent sons

Early Nurturing

de-skilling fathers

lack of confidence in their child-rearing skills

importance of emotional closeness, touch

‘anxious’ fathering

the challenge of being a ‘young’ father

sons want physical and emotional closeness

Narrative data

Personalised and partisan

N = 25 fathers (and sons)

Reference Group

Analysis: themes and focal points

Key areas for discussion

Masculinity

Recollection of schooling

Early nurturing

Fathers as teachers

Fathers as classroom helpers

Non-resident fathers

SEN & disability

School sport

Bereavement

Criminality & delinquency

Young dads

'Outside the school gates'

SEN & Disability

emotional attachments: surrogate fathering or 'thinking like a father'

key individuals and events inform responses

helplessness and frustrations

reluctance to be involved based on personal fears and histories

actualised sons

Delinquency & Criminality

socialised deviance amongst families

subtle or overt isolation of 'non-normal' fathers

schools as delinquent playgrounds

paternal approval of inappropriate behaviour in school

'like father, like son' responses by professionals

Outside the school gates

feelings of embarrassment (sons), awkwardness (fathers)

strong sense of 'place' and identity with fathers by sons

feelings of being marginalised

fathers are conscious of status, linked to employment

competition amongst sons ('my dad's better than yours')

at KS 1 and 2, boys like to be met by their fathers

What father's say

these Dads lacked information about activities

some Dads indicated that any information sent to the home was invariably addressed to the mother

some Dads indicated an uncertainty about many school activities being only for women

several Fathers indicated that they felt 'out-of-place' and 'uncomfortable' in the presence of (mainly) women

the employment circumstances of these Fathers, and especially their work-hours, did not allow for participation

these Fathers were very positive about wanting greater involvement in their sons' education and welcomed suggestions about participating in play-school events, coffee-mornings and so on.

Whole-school issues

Does the school publish/utilise data regarding boy's progress?

Does the school identify boys specifically in its mission and action statements?

How does the school promote the developmental, social and learning needs of boys in its teaching and assessment?

How does the school cater for the different learning needs of boys (and girls)?

What is the principles and processes of/for staff recruitment?

How are boys involved in decision-making?

How are boys who are shy, overweight, 'arty' or 'middle-band' recognised and celebrated?

Does the school have an explicit strategy for involving Dads?

Is part of the staff development programme directed towards boys/fathers?

Some more strategies...

opening lines of communication directly with fathers

actively seeking out input to school activities by fathers whether as classroom helpers, assisting on school journeys, participating in school sports and social activities

publicising mentoring and coaching roles which provide opportunity for fathers to present pro-education models

promoting social-coaching roles for fathers during break or lunchtimes

positively discriminating in the appointment of men as teaching assistants

inviting fathers to present at assemblies and other school gatherings

providing regular opportunities for fathers particularly to come into their son's classroom at the start of the school day

holding fathers-only events such as a 'Father's Day' in school

including an explicit statement valuing the involvement of fathers within the school's handbook

arranging coaching and mentoring sessions for fathers about boys' learning

A case(-study) in point....*

- Setting & Context
- 10 x fathers, boys , teachers
- Interviews, observation & document analysis
- Preliminary snapshots

** With acknowledgements to Abide Zenenga, Doctoral Candidate, in the School of Education, The University of Northampton*

A research & practice agenda

father's biographies and educational careers
father-friendly schools
fathers as mentors in schools
sons and fathers 'working together' in classrooms
excluded pupils and the role of fathers
teacher-shadowing by fathers
fathers-and-boys clubs
'father-line' communication
male-orientated curriculum development
father involvement in 'SEAL' curricula inputs
greater involvement of men in Parent Partnerships
studies of resilience factors relating to 'effective fathering'
father-friendly home-school communications