



WPI

Improving Fathers' Involvement in Early Childhood Development

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Abstract

Many children in Cape Town, South Africa do not grow up with an involved father in their lives, often leading them to engage in delinquent behaviors. This project aimed to help the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development (ECD) in Cape Town. We conducted interviews with experts on father involvement, principals of ECD centers, and fathers of young children to gain different perspectives from multiple key informants. From these interviews, we identified challenges fathers face and supports they need. We developed a father involvement program for the CECD to implement through ECD centers across Cape Town. The recommended program is intended to improve the relationships of families in Cape Town.

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Executive Summary

In South Africa, only 26% of fathers live in the same household as their children (Clark et al., 2015). South African children from low income families are more prone to growing up without involvement of their fathers in their early years of life (Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001). It is well known that the absence of fathers has significant negative impacts on the development of their children. Children of uninvolved fathers often engage in delinquent activities including joining gangs and breaking laws (Eddy et al., 2013). On the other hand, when a father has an active, positive relationship with his child, the child is more likely to have improved educational, behavioral, and mental development outcomes (Feldman, 2013; Pruett, 2001; Ratele, 2018).

We collaborated with the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) which has been widely involved in improving early childhood development (ECD) in South Africa. The CECD is a non-profit organization in Cape Town, which provides early childhood development programs and resources for diverse communities in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. One of the goals of the CECD was to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development at the ECD centers they already support. To accomplish this goal, our team created a recommended program for the CECD to implement.

Methods

This project aimed to help the Centre for Early Childhood Development improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development in Cape Town. Completion of the following objectives guided the success of the project:

1. Identify the daily operations and activities of ECD centers
2. Determine the level of participation and engagement of fathers in ECD centers
3. Identify the challenges that fathers face and the supports they need to improve their involvement in early childhood development
4. Determine strategies and activities that the CECD can implement to increase father participation in early childhood development

We visited eight ECD centers of different socio-economic status. To understand the operations of ECD centers, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the principals of each of the centers. We asked them questions focused on the programs and activities they had available at their center for parents, as well as their view on father involvement.

At one of the ECD centers, we arranged an exercise for the oldest children, aged 4-5 years, to draw different activities that they enjoy doing at home with their families. We discussed with the children who were in their drawing and asked them what activity they had drawn.

We conducted several semi-structured interviews with experts on father involvement. We interviewed Shuaib Salie, a representative from the Parent Centre, which offers training, counselling and support for parents. We also interviewed Lauren van Niekerk, a Ph.D. student

from the University of Cape Town whose research focuses on father involvement in early childhood development. We conducted an interview with Wessel van den Berg, a Children's Rights and Positive Parenting Unit Manager at Sonke Gender Justice and the co-coordinator for the MenCare Global Fatherhood Campaign.

Additionally, we facilitated a focus group interview with the director of the Foundation for Community Work (FCW), Riedewhaan Allie, a coordinator of the Family in Focus program and a father, and six other FCW employees, one of which was a father. The FCW is an organization that works with parents to provide resources and training for their children outside of ECD centers.

To gain further insight on father involvement, we conducted two semi-structured individual interviews with fathers of preschool aged children. We asked them questions about their own participation in their children's lives and their opinions on father involvement.

The team reviewed global and local programs that have addressed the issue of the lack of father involvement in their children's lives. We collaborated with Bridget Kahts and Chanel Fredericks from the CECD. Both Ms. Kahts and Ms. Fredericks are program managers at the CECD and are knowledgeable on successful programs and how they run. Their feedback helped the team to modify the design of the final recommended program.

Findings

From our visits to the ECD centers and interviews with the principals, our team learned how each ECD center operates and gained insight into the children's everyday schedules. We found that it may be difficult to host a program for fathers in the ECD centers during the school day. However, the high attendance of fathers at several of the center weekend events and the good communication between principals and parents, indicated that there are opportunities for a father program to be promoted through ECD centers.

Our interviews helped us understand different perspectives from multiple key informants. We analyzed several themes including operations of ECD centers, challenges fathers face, and the supports fathers need. Many of the father interviewees noted the social factors that prevent fathers from being involved, such as cultural stereotypes and work obligations. They described that having to work and provide for their families takes priority over dedicating spending time for them. We also found that many fathers grew up without an involved father. For some, this resulted in them continuing the cycle of being uninvolved in their children's lives. For other fathers, it motivates them to want to be more involved and be the father that they never had. They decide to prioritize their children and attend their school or sports events when they can. From these findings, we gained insight on how to create a program that would address these challenges and needs of fathers.

From our interviews and review of global father programs, we found key strategies and activities to develop a new father program for the CECD to implement. Our study showed that to stimulate fathers' interest in the program, we need to incorporate a hands-on, interactive event. We discovered that it is common for fathers to enjoy activities that involve building something

or sports and being outdoors. We also learned that fathers may be more responsive if a male, who is knowledgeable about the community, runs the program. The fathers we interviewed, as well as the experts on father involvement, made it clear that weekly sessions with an intimate group of fathers would be most effective.

Recommendations

The CECD asked us to provide a detailed guide for a program that will help improve father involvement in ECD. Based on the results from our interviews with fathers, fathering experts, and ECD center principals, we provide several recommendations for how the program could be implemented that follow the outline of the program manual.

We recommend that the CECD **implement a six-week program** with sessions every Saturday for one and a half to two hours. The recommended timetable for the program is based on Mr. van den Berg's MenCare Childcare and Protection Programme, as well as our findings from interviews with fathers, principals, and other father program experts.

From the suggestions made by Mr. van den Berg, Ms. van Nierkerk, Mr. Salie, and the FCW members, we recommend that the CECD **hire a male facilitator** who is sensitive and responsive, knowledgeable on gender equality and the community, actively involved in his children's lives, interested in working with fathers of young children, and very motivated. Our findings show that a highly qualified facilitator is imperative for a successful program. We therefore propose the CECD consider an individual with these advantageous and desirable qualities.

Our observations from our visits to the ECD centers showed that there are established positive and productive relationships between the ECD center staff, the CECD staff, and the parents of the children of the center. We recommend that the program facilitator **recruit fathers for the program using the CECD's pre-existing network** of ECD centers.

From our conversations with both experts and fathers, we concluded that a smaller, intimate group of fathers will be most effective for this program because it will allow the fathers to be more open and willing to participate in discussions. We therefore recommend that the program facilitator **recruit fifteen to twenty fathers** for the program.

We recommend that the six sessions of the program consist of the following main themes:

1. Introductions, Expectations, and Father Reflections
2. My Child in 20 Years
3. Building Healthy Families
4. Importance of Play
5. Time Management
6. Reflections

The main themes for each session are based on the challenges and motivations we found fathers are currently facing, as well as the suggestions from the various father experts we interviewed. We recommend that during each session, the facilitators ensure the fathers are aware that their

involvement in ECD is important. There was a common understanding among each of the experts we interviewed that one of the main challenges a father can face is overcoming cultural stereotypes. Therefore, we concluded that providing support on the issue would be important to integrate within every session of the program.

Following the six sessions, we recommend that the program **conclude with a family event** run by the participating fathers. Based on the suggestions of interactive activities made by the interviewed experts, principals, and fathers, we recommend that this event consist of an activity for building toys from recycled materials, fun sports games, and a traditional South African braai. To keep the fathers interested in the final activity, we propose that this event include a ceremony rewarding the participants certificates of completion.

We recommend that there be a **pre- and post- evaluation for the participants**. A pre-evaluation can be used to gauge how involved fathers already are and understand what aspects they may need help with. The post-evaluation will help measure the knowledge and skills gained by the participants.

We recommend that about three months after the completion of the program, a **check-in meeting with the participants** should be conducted. This check-in could follow-up with how the participants are doing and how their interactions with their children have changed since completing the program. Another post-evaluation may be conducted to receive feedback on the value and effectiveness of the program and any further recommendations for improvement.

With these recommendations, we hope that the CECD can implement an effective and long lasting program that will help improve and encourage father involvement in ECD.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In South Africa, only 26% of fathers live in the same household as their children (Clark et al., 2015). South African children from low income families are more prone to growing up without involvement of their fathers in their early years of life (Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001). It is well known that the absence of fathers has significant negative impacts on the development of their children. Children of uninvolved fathers often engage in delinquent activities including joining gangs and breaking laws (Eddy et al., 2013). On the other hand, when a father has an active, positive relationship with his child, the child is more likely to have improved educational, behavioral, and mental development outcomes (Feldman, 2013; Pruett, 2001; Ratele, 2018). Although there have been programs implemented to increase father involvement around the world (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012), this societal issue has not yet been adequately addressed in Cape Town.

One of the organizations that has been widely involved in improving early childhood development (ECD) in South Africa is the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD). The CECD is a non-profit organization in Cape Town, which provides early childhood development programs and resources for diverse communities in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. One of the goals of the CECD was to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development in a way that could be implemented in crèches also known as ECD centers. Through observations and interviews with local experts on father involvement, principals of ECD centers, and fathers of young children, our team, in collaboration with the CECD, created a program to achieve this goal.

This report provides background research on the significance of fathers in early childhood development, context on the challenges South African fathers face, and review of different global programs that have been implemented to improve fathers' involvement in ECD. We provide our methods of research that fulfill the objectives of the project. The results from these methods are then described and analyzed. The report concludes with recommendations for the CECD to implement in an integrated program that improves the involvement of fathers in ECD, which will create a positive, lasting change for the families of Cape Town, South Africa.

Chapter 2: Background

Involved fathers can have countless, significant effects on the lives and futures of their children (Coleman, 2004; Feldman, 2013; Pruett, 2001; Ratele, 2018). Despite the important role of fathers in their child's educational, emotional, mental, and physical development, only one in every three African children live with both of their biological parents (Ratele et al., 2012). The average African child is therefore more likely to be raised and nurtured by a single mother, missing out on the unique impact his or her father provides (Ratele et al., 2012). There are many children in South Africa who do not know who their biological fathers are, and for some children

that do know their fathers, they can feel as though their fathers do not care about them and often crave their presence (Freeks, 2017).

People have different definitions of who a father is to them. One definition that encompasses many aspects of a father is stated as, “the male or males identified as most involved in caregiving and committed to the well-being of the child, regardless of the living situation, marital status, or biological relation” (Coleman, 2004, p. e2). This meaning of father could include foster fathers, stepfathers, adoptive fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or any male figure that contributes to the life of a child (Coleman, 2004). This is the definition adopted throughout this project. Extended family members, such as grandfathers or uncles, often fulfill the male figure role that children need (Smit, 2001), and therefore have an important part in the development of a child.

In this chapter, we explain the significance of both parents in early childhood development and highlight the profound impact an active father can have on his child’s life (Ratele, 2018). We then discuss the potential reasons for the low involvement of South African fathers in their children’s lives. We review literature on global programs that were implemented to encourage paternal involvement in the early lives of children, and highlight their successes. This chapter concludes with an overview of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and our project goals to create a program that would encourage and increase male involvement in early childhood development.

Significance of Both Parents in Early Childhood Development

The importance of parenting for a child’s well-being, health, and development has been repeatedly recognized and proven (Aboud, 2015; Britto et al., 2017; Ejuu, 2016; Feldman et al., 2013). Children who are provided with “nurturing care” from their parents, which includes a stable environment, protection from threat, opportunity for early learning, responsive, supportive, and stimulating interactions, have shown greater development of important brain regions and advanced developmental skills (Britto et al., 2017). These positive settings, provided by mothers, fathers, as well as other family members, have increased the child’s ability to learn, succeed in school, show strong citizenship initiative, and become involved in the community (Britto et al., 2017).

In cases where parental skills were lacking, parenting interventions were implemented to stimulate positive parental skills (Aboud et al., 2015). Such interventions are in the form of services aimed at improving parental interactions, behaviors, knowledge, and practices. This is accomplished through home visits, group sessions, and clinical appointments (Aboud et al., 2013). When more than one of these methods were used in the household, there was a noticed improvement in the child’s mental development (Aboud et al., 2013). With an increase in the number of hours that parents spent with their children, came improvement in basic health and nutrition, education and protection for the children (Britto et al., 2017). Enhanced parenting skills have shown positive effects on the measure of psychosocial, motor and cognitive development in children from birth to five years old (Britto et al., 2017; Aboud et al., 2015).

The relationship and communication between mother and father also influence the development of their child (Feldman et al., 2013). Interactions between parents and their children have been most effective when there is input from both partners, as they join to support their child (Feldman et al., 2013). These experiences, with both mother and father, help the child's ability to be socially adept in both groups of peers, as well as within close friendships from childhood to adolescence (Feldman et al., 2013). When a mother and father have good communication with each other and with their child, it is more likely that their child will show fewer behavioral problems and more comprehension skills at young ages (Feldman et al., 2013). These studies provide evidence that parents play an influential role in their child's life and can influence the type of an adult that their children develop into.

On the other hand, children who live without both parents are more likely to engage in dangerous and risky activities (Eddy et al., 2013). This is especially apparent in lower income families. Children of single parent households tend to become more vulnerable to poverty, have behavioral problems, drop out of school, and become involved with drugs and alcohol (Eddy et al., 2013). Girls from such backgrounds are more likely to be sexually active at a young age and become pregnant. This may come from seeking attention from a male figure (Eddy et al., 2013). Single-parented girls are more likely to have low self-esteem, whereas boys are more likely to become aggressive and involved in criminal activity (Eddy et al., 2013).

The Role of Maternal Involvement in ECD

Although the relationship between both parents and their child is a significant element of their child's progression, father-infant interaction and mother-infant interaction have distinct effects on child development (Feldman et al., 2013). Mothers often provide their children with the ability to develop attachment security, self-regulation, moral character, empathy, sensitivity, and a better ability to adjust (Feldman et al., 2013). A biological study showed that infants seek comfort from their mothers. Mothers are often the parent to go to for reassurance when the child is upset or fearful (Feldman et al., 2013; Pruett, 2001). Mothers also tend to prefer face-to-face interactions with affectionate touch and mutual conversation, which helps children acquire better communication skills with peers and close friends during childhood (Feldman et al., 2013). These maternal-specific interactions are clearly beneficial to a child and his or her development, but the impression a father leaves on a child can prove to be just as significant.

The Role of Paternal Involvement in ECD

The active engagement of a father has a significant effect on the social, emotional, and mental development of a child (Coleman, 2004; Feldman et al., 2013; Pruett, 2001; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). An involved father includes one who actively engages in communication and play with their child and provides basic care for them (Coleman, 2004). Several works have shown that "father-child rough-and-tumble play" was directly related to lower forceful and violent behavior in two to six-year-old children when the father was in control of the play. There was, in turn, less behavioral outbursts and increased social competence in these preschoolers (Coleman, 2004; Feldman, 2013). When a father communicates with his child

at age three, it is a good indication that the child will have advanced language development (Coleman, 2004). In another study, it was perceived that increased father involvement in infancy reduced mental health symptomatology at nine years old (Coleman, 2004). The long-term Fatherhood Study has also shown that active involvement of a father in his child's life from birth fosters more emotional balance, greater curiosity, and stronger self-assurance in the child (Pruett, 2001).

A study done in South Africa also contends that the father's role in a child's life is greatly significant and influential on their development. The State of South African Fathers report discusses the impact of present and active father involvement in young children's lives, stating that increased involvement has led to "improved academic performance, healthy sexual socialization, as well as favourable social, emotional, and cognitive functioning" (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018, p. 29). When the emotional connection between father and child is not established, it can affect the child's performance in school and their social interactions. Studies suggest that when the father is absent, children show lower mental, emotional, and behavioral abilities (Ratele, Shefer, & Clowes, 2012).

It is clear from the many studies previously conducted that a healthy and active relationship between father and infant can produce countless positive attributes and advanced developmental traits in children. This is especially important in South Africa because of the lack of positive male involvement in early childhood development in many lower income communities, including those in Cape Town (Clark et al., 2015; Richter et al., 2010:360; Smit, 2001). Knowing that fathers have a significant impact on early childhood development, it is important to consider the many factors that could influence fathers' involvement within the South African context (Clark, et al., 2015; Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001).

Factors Influencing Fathers' Involvement in ECD in South Africa

South Africa has the second highest rate of father absence in Africa, after Namibia (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). Although there is not one structure that defines South African families, a household without a father present is often a reality for many children living in South Africa (Clark et al., 2015; Smit, 2001). Due to the large number of uninvolved fathers, there is a general perception in South Africa that nonresidential fathers are careless and selfish (Montgomery et al., 2006; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). However, a study done in South Africa found that 66% of nonresidential fathers strive to contribute in their child's life and 61% continue to provide financially (Clark et al., 2015). Children need the physical support of their fathers (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018), but research has shown that fathers may not be able to be physically involved as a result of several factors. Major influences such as labor migration, cultural aspects, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic affect fathers' ability to be involved in their child's life (Clark, et al., 2015; Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010).

The Impact of Migrant Labor System in South Africa

South Africa's complex and unique history underpins the current economic structure of black and colored communities. Today, men of lower income communities in South Africa are

subject to high levels of poverty and are faced with significant rates of unemployment. With 40% of young men ages 16 to 24 unemployed, partly due to a limited number of jobs in cities such as Cape Town, many young fathers are often forced to leave their homes and children in order to find work elsewhere (Clark et al., 2015; Leibbrandt et al., 2010).

Widespread urbanization within the last century and dominance of the mining industry developed South Africa's distinctive migrant labor system (Smit, 2001). Migrant labor refers to people temporarily moving away from home to work (Smit, 2001). The growth of the migrant labor system was fostered by several different factors, mainly government policies (Smit, 2001). The Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 declared squatter farming illegal, restricted farming participation, and helped to demolish the African agriculture industry, moving the job sector into the mining industry (Smit, 2001). Apartheid policies, such as the Group Areas Acts, forced lower income black South Africans to live in informal settlements, unable to settle permanently or find opportunities for work in urbanized areas such as Cape Town. Men would have to migrate for work, often for the mining industry, as a means of economic survival (Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001).

Today, 60% of black and colored men ages 35 to 54 in South Africa remain a part of the migrant labor system. These lasting effects of Apartheid contribute to the absence of fathers in their children's lives, and results in poor participation by fathers in early childhood development (Clark et al., 2015; Smit, 2001).

While current studies support a wide array of theories resulting in the absence of a father, many young South African men have been negatively affected by their own absent fathers during their childhood. For many decades, migrant work opportunities have been the most available and abundant (Smit, 2001). Several generations of men have been forced to leave their families and households for extended periods of time, disrupting the stability of marriages and family life (Smit, 2001; Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). Therefore, young fathers today do not have experience with supportive fathers or knowledge to emulate upon their children.

Cultural Aspects

Young South African fathers' approach to fatherhood is also affected by cultural aspects of their upbringing and societal norms. One such cultural pressure is the popular *lobola* practice. This is the tradition in which the groom's family is expected to provide payment to the bride's family, which is intended to strengthen the relationship between the couple and their extended families (Madhavan, 2010). Due to the expectation of *lobola*, men believe that they are only obligated to provide financially for their child because it is considered a woman's role to care for their child physically and emotionally (Kaufman et al., 2001). Therefore, men may not understand the concept of being an involved father (Kaufman et al., 2001).

In the case of a child born before marriage, other adults in the child's life from the maternal side may help care for the child so that the young mother may finish her education (Madhavan, 2010). In this case, the maternal family members may influence the degree to which

the father can be in the child's life financially, emotionally, or physically, since they are the most involved in the child's care (Clark et al., 2015). Lack of financial support or ideal character may stigmatize the father by the mother's family, undermining the father's ability to maintain an active relationship with his child (Clark et al., 2015; Mtshali, 2015).

The Role of HIV/AIDS in Fatherlessness

In addition to the high degree of separation between fathers and their children caused mainly by migrant labor, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has had significant impact on South African families (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010). As of 2018, an estimated 7.7 million people in South Africa live with HIV and another 71,000 have died due to AIDS (Avert, 2019). In 1990, HIV prevalence rates were at 0.8% and increased to 24.5% in 2000 (Montgomery et al., 2006). It was reported in 2000 that for 12% of children under 15 years old, their fathers died due to HIV/AIDS and were left as "paternal orphans" (Montgomery et al., 2006). While the lack of involvement by fathers in their children's lives may not be by choice, this is an issue seen in several countries which have already implemented programs to encourage fathers to be more active in early childhood development (McAllister et al., 2012; Best Start Resource Centre, 2012).

Strategies to Increase Involvement of Fathers in ECD

Several programs have been implemented in other countries that promote father involvement in early childhood development, to address the problems that arise when there is a lack of father participation in young children's lives (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012; McAllister et al., 2012). These programs (Table 1) have shown success in improving father involvement in ECD, providing a lasting impact in their targeted areas (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012; McAllister et al., 2012). An overview of these programs is discussed below.

Step By Step

Step By Step: Engaging Fathers in Programs for Families is a manual created by the Best Start Resource Centre in Ontario, Canada that was designed to give a "step by step" guide to assist in engaging fathers in their children's lives (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). It consists of ideas from fathers and experts, including reflections of the information and insight on effective programs. The program identified that fathers tend to be more involved in their child's life if the mother, or significant other, is encouraging them. Men often need reassurance that they are appreciated and supported to promote further involvement (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). Having hands-on experience with taking care of children allows fathers to feel more comfortable and confident in their abilities to be a father. It is important to encourage fathers who had no fatherly role model to connect with their children and teach them about where they come from. It is also necessary for fathers to relate to their children by playing with them or comforting them (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012).

Coming to Daddy and Me

“Coming to Daddy and Me,” is a preschool program in Ontario, Canada. The school wanted to offer opportunities for fathers to engage with their children at school (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). This program consists of play sessions, where the fathers were welcome to join in with their children and converse with other fathers about parenting. This “dad-targeted” program enables fathers to be on their own with their children. They can interact with their children in activities and connect with other fathers to discuss topics they most likely would not discuss in a different setting. This program, among others, has received positive responses from fathers. One participant commented “Coming to Daddy and Me gives me the chance to hang out with my daughter and do things daddy-style once in a while” (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012, p. 21). The benefits of these programs are that fathers can have time to spend with their children one on one and have a good time together.

The manual also promotes integrating fathers into existing programs, such as offering family drop-ins while fathers are available (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). The benefit of this is that both parents are welcome to come to these programs and experience the same things (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). Both mothers and fathers can participate in parenting discussions and understand each other with regards to how they parent. It may also allow them to feel equal (Best Start Resource Centre, 2012). One parent is not the expert. They can come together and learn as a team.

The Fatherhood Project

The Fatherhood Project, sponsored by Massachusetts General Hospital in the USA, created a program to help teenaged fathers learn about and understand fatherly skills. Younger fathers tend to be judged by their family and friends because of their lack of knowledge about parenting. The Fatherhood Project holds two group meetings per month to provide these young men with a safe space to connect with others and share their experiences. They can get advice and partake in skill-building activities and learn about child development. This program allows those who have no one to have such conversations with to be heard and supported.

The Fathers in Action Project

The Fathers in Action Project was managed in five sectors of Peru from 2006 to 2008. It aimed to work closely with fathers, families, and the communities to strengthen early childhood development (McAllister et al., 2012). The purpose of the program was to “promote father involvement in early childhood” and promote sharing tasks with mothers (McAllister et al., 2012, p. 43). Five hundred people participated in this program, which consists of five fatherhood workshops to cover the topics of “positive parenting, the importance of reading to young children, a support session for fathers, and a session that included the importance of visual and verbal stimulation for early childhood development” (McAllister et al., 2012, p. 43). Results show that the fathers who participated feel more involved in the family and more connected to their children.

Children’s Centres’ Work with Fathers

Children’s Centres in England and Wales, funded under the Sure Start program, provide childcare and family services. “In 2003, an evaluation of fathers in Sure Start found that many Children’s Centres were positive about involving fathers, but opportunities to engage them were routinely missed” (McAllister et al., 2012, p. 40). They wanted to start employing more men, design activities to appeal to fathers, and extend their hours so working fathers could participate. Two London Children’s Centres employed these strategies to increase father engagement. “Sports Fit” is an event designed to involve the football club on a Saturday morning. It aims to get families to be active together with the hopes that the element of football would increase the fathers desire to participate (McAllister et al., 2012). “In Barking and Dagenham, fathers’ attendance had more than doubled from 200 in 2007, to 550 fathers using services in 2010. In Greenwich, 8% of registered fathers in the borough used Children’s Centres in 2008, compared to 30% in 2010” (McAllister et al., 2012, p. 40).

Many aspects of the global programs discussed above can also be beneficial in South Africa, as they address the same or similar problems currently present in Cape Town. With a foundation already provided by the many early childhood development centers in Cape Town, an effective plan to increase father involvement in Cape Town could be created that integrates several existing global programs.

Table 1: Programs implemented around the world to improve father involvement

Global Programs	Location of Program	Type of Program	Who’s Involved?	How Often?
“Daddy and Me”	Canadian Preschool	Engagement in the Classroom	Dads and their Children	Monthly
“The Fatherhood Project: Teen Dads”	Massachusetts General Hospital	Group meetings and skill building activities	Teen Dads	Twice a Month
“The Fathers in Action Project”	Sectors of Peru	Workshops and support sessions	Fathers and Mothers	Once a year
Children’s Centres Engaging Fathers	Preschools in London	Activities to Include Working fathers	Fathers and Whole Families	Multiple events per year

Early Childhood Development Centers in South Africa

A crèche in South Africa is a care center for children up to age six, where they get the support and care they need at their age and stage of development. In South Africa, crèches are daycares used by many parents. The crèches are any building used, whether for profit, or for the “admission, protection and temporary or partial care” (UNICEF, 2006) of more than six children. Within the definition of crèches, however, there exist both informal and formal crèches.

Informal crèches often have poor infrastructure and facilities, a lack of positive socio-emotional and learning environments, and meager nutritional offering (THDA, 2014). However, crèches are typically places where children learn, play, and eat. With little funding, these informal versions sometimes are not able to provide enough tools, such as toys, crayons, and books, for every child to learn and play.

Crèches are considered “places of care” if they are formal, and if they have been approved or maintained by the state, however, certain regulations come with this approval. One regulation from the Republic of South Africa Department of Social Development, for example, outlines the rights of the children attending a crèche. Among other things, this regulation states, “All children in a place of care shall, where appropriate, have the right [1] to regular contact with parents, family and friends...” and “[2] to the involvement of their family or significant others in their care or development programme...” For parents, one possible benefit of placing their child in a formal crèche is that their child has the right to maintain contact with them regularly. Informal crèches might not guarantee such a right, since they are not legally backed by the state or some form of regulation (UNICEF, 2006).

The Role of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (Non-profit Organization)

The Centre for Early Childhood Development is a non-profit organization in Cape Town, South Africa, that is “committed to putting young children first by ensuring quality early childhood development” (CECD, 2019). Their knowledge development has a global focus to promote effective and affordable ways to offer early childhood development programs. They provide programs nationally and across the continent to increase the effectiveness of early childhood development. As part of these efforts, the CECD refers to crèches as ECD centers to help make them more accepted as formal educational centers. We partnered with the Centre for Early Childhood Development to determine the current levels of fathers’ participation in Cape Town’s crèches, and to find strategies and ways to encourage them to become more involved in the development of their children. We believed we would be able to build upon some of these existing programs, as well as create new ideas, to help increase the involvement of fathers, particularly in crèches. We helped the CECD develop a program that will improve father involvement across communities in Cape Town.

Chapter 3: Methods

Our project goal was to help the Centre for Early Childhood Development improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development in Cape Town. Completion of the following objectives guided the success of the project:

1. Identify the daily operations and activities of ECD centers
2. Determine the level of participation and engagement of fathers in ECD centers
3. Identify the challenges that fathers face and the supports they need to improve their involvement in early childhood development
4. Determine strategies and activities that the CECD can implement to increase father participation in early childhood development

In this chapter, we explain the methods used to address each objective. We outline our process for gaining the information needed to achieve our goal, providing details and justifications throughout the chapter.

Objective 1: Identify the daily operations and activities of ECD centers

It was important for our team to learn how each ECD center operates so that we could gain insight into the children's everyday schedules, as well as to identify if there were potential opportunities for fathers to participate within the ECD centers.

We accomplished this objective by visiting several ECD centers of different socio-economic status and interviewing the principals using the questions found in Appendix A. The CECD helped us set up eight visits to various ECD centers: one in Bonteheuwel, a lower income community, three in Blackheath, a community of lower-to-middle income status, and four in Retreat, a more affluent community. The number of ECD centers visited and interviews done were restricted by time and availability of the principals. We chose to interview the principals of the centers because they are the individuals who decide on the curriculum and schedules for the children. Although we saw that teachers interact with the children more, we believed that the principals would be able to provide us with detailed information on the operations of the ECD center. Moreover, we did not interview teachers because we did not want to disrupt the teachers from supervising the children. We conducted semi-structured interviews so that we could have a guided yet open conversation with the principals (Barriball & While, 1994). The interviews asked about both the daily operations of the center, as well as existing opportunities for parents to be involved. Using the data from our observations and interviews, we had a better understanding of the operations of the ECD centers and where greater father participation could occur.

Objective 2: Determine the level of participation and engagement of fathers in ECD centers

It was necessary for us to learn the current level of engagement of fathers in ECD in the communities visited, in order to create strategies that would be most beneficial and adaptable to different communities.

We held a drawing activity at one of the ECD centers in Bonteheuwel. Creating drawings is a common method for children to express complex thoughts and feelings that are not best depicted in words (Zvara et al., 2014). This exercise was intended to gather visual information for our team to learn about different activities that children enjoy doing with their families at home. The specific ECD center was chosen by our sponsors based on the willingness of the principal and teachers to participate. Before the activity, a letter (Appendix B) was sent out to the parents of the children explaining our project and the activity we planned to do with their child, giving parents the opportunity to decide whether they wanted their child to participate. The principal also signed a consent form (Appendix C). We chose to do this activity with the four to five year old class because they were the oldest. We explained to the teachers our goal for the activity which allowed them to help the children if necessary. We introduced ourselves to the group of children and stated that we wanted them to draw some of their favorite activities to do with their family. Each member of our group moved around the room and discussed the drawings with the children. We asked them about who and what they had drawn. From this interaction, our team gained a better understanding of who was a part of their families and what kinds of things they enjoyed doing together, helping to indicate how involved a father may be from the child's perspective.

Objective 3: Identify the challenges that fathers face and the supports they need to improve their involvement in early childhood development

In order to encourage father involvement, we had to first know and understand what motivates and hinders fathers from being involved. To help complete this objective, we first conducted an individual semi-structured interview with Lauren van Niekerk, a Ph.D. student from the University of Cape Town whose current research focuses on father involvement in early childhood development. The interview took place at the CECD office and the questions we asked her were aimed at learning more about her research process and view on father involvement (Interview questions in Appendix D).

We also hosted a focus group interview with the director of the Foundation for Community Work (FCW), Riedewhaan Allie, a coordinator of the Family in Focus program, Ayanda Nondinyana, and five FCW Home Visitors (Interview questions in Appendix E). We wanted to interview members of the FCW because they are an organization that works with parents to provide learning opportunities for children outside of ECD centers. We believed they would provide valuable insight on the struggles men from a lower income community may face and which activities they may be interested in. All of the interviewees were men except for one woman. Two of the men, Mr. Allie and Mr. Nondinyana, were fathers themselves. These

employees were the first men to become Home Visitors for the FCW and to work with families in Khayelitsha, an informal township 30 km from Cape Town. A focus group interview was the best method to understand the challenges of and potential for father involvement in ECD with this group because it allowed everyone to share their perspective (Berkowitz, 2019).

We also conducted two semi-structured individual interviews with fathers of preschool aged children to hear their opinions on father involvement. Both men were fathers of children who attended the same ECD center in Rondebosch, a low to middle income area. We conducted individual interviews because it was difficult to arrange a focus group interview with several fathers. We held the first interview at the ECD center and asked the father questions in Appendix F. Following this first interview, we realized that we needed to rephrase and add questions to align with the interviewee's current level of participation. Therefore, we used the updated question guide in Appendix G for subsequent interviews. We held the second interview at the father's home. As suggested by our sponsors, we had our male team member moderate the meetings, hoping that the fathers would respond better to a male.

Objective 4: Determine strategies and activities that the CECD can implement to increase father participation in early childhood development

To accomplish our final objective, we conducted several interviews with experts on father involvement in ECD. To help gain insight on creating a program, we conducted a semi-structured interview with Shuaib Salie, a representative from the Parent Centre, which offers training, counselling and support for parents. The questions, listed in Appendix H, focused on his perspective on father involvement, as well as understanding how their Fatherhood Training Program runs. We believed he would provide useful experiences and recommendations that would help us to develop the final product of this project. In addition to our interview with Mr. Salie, we interviewed Ms. van Niekerk, an expert in ECD, to determine some strategies that could be used within the program. At the suggestion of our sponsor, we also interviewed Wessel van den Berg, a Children's Rights and Positive Parenting Unit Manager at Sonke Gender Justice and the co-coordinator for the MenCare Global Fatherhood Campaign. His campaign focuses on gender equality, reducing violence in the home, and increasing men's contribution in child care. The interview (Interview questions in Appendix I) focused on his work with fathers and his positive fatherhood programs that are already implemented throughout South Africa. We believed he would contribute valuable suggestions on how to create a successful father involvement program and how to recruit fathers to participate.

The team also reviewed the global programs found in Table 1 and collaborated with the CECD to determine what kind of program will be implemented. The review of global programs helped us learn what has been done and provided ideas on how to create a new program. We were able to find the key elements that made them successful in involving fathers in early childhood development. We also incorporated the knowledge we have gained throughout our interviews.

We collaborated with Bridget Kahts and Chanel Fredericks from the CECD, so we could receive constructive feedback on the plausibility of the programs. Both Ms. Kahts and Ms. Fredericks are program managers at the CECD and are knowledgeable on successful programs and how they run. This feedback helped the team to modify the design of the final recommended program.

After reviewing our research data and consulting with the CECD, we analyzed and compared the existing programs found in Table 1. This gave us insight into the existing and potential problems and successes of the programs so that we were able to address them when creating strategies to involve fathers in ECD. With this, the team created a successful plan for a program that the CECD can implement to help improve father involvement in early childhood development in Cape Town.

Chapter 4: Findings

From our research, we found several key components of the operations of early childhood development centers, challenges that fathers face, and successful elements from existing local programs. In this chapter, we outline the results from our interviews and review of global programs which were used to develop our recommended program for the CECD to implement.

Operations of ECD Centers

Curriculum

Each ECD center follows a daily curriculum designed by the principal. While there was some variation between the exact curriculums from center to center, they often included educational activities, play time, bathroom training, and snack times. Although fathers have the potential to be more involved in their children's daytime activities, children do not see their parents until they are picked up at the end of the day. Furthermore, we noted that the ECD centers may have around 20 children and it could be hard for the facilitator to run the program while the teachers watch over all of the children. We found that it may be difficult to host a program for fathers in the ECD centers during the school day.

Parents Communication

Data from interviews and observations indicate that principals have established positive relationships with the children's parents in each of their respective ECD centers. From the eight principals we interviewed, four of them directly stated that they have strong communication with the parents of the children in their ECD center. At least one center uses a WhatsApp group to keep communication open between parents and staff. This principal uses the WhatsApp group to update and notify parents on what the children are learning and directly message them if they notice a change in their child's behavior. Moreover, two fathers we interviewed informed us that they have clear methods of communication with the staff of their children's ECD center. Three of the eight principals stated that they conduct individual parent meetings as well as PTA

(Parent-Teacher Association) meetings to inform parents of their child’s development or behavior. The principals stated that these meetings are often attended by both parents. This suggests that because of the strong lines of communication between parents and principals, ECD centers are able to communicate with families to schedule events or programs.

Opportunities for Participation in the ECD Centers

We asked the principals of the ECD centers where they see the most father participation within events at their centers. Seven out of the eight principals stated that fathers drop off and pick up their children from the ECD center. Figure 1 shows which school activities the principals stated have high father participation.

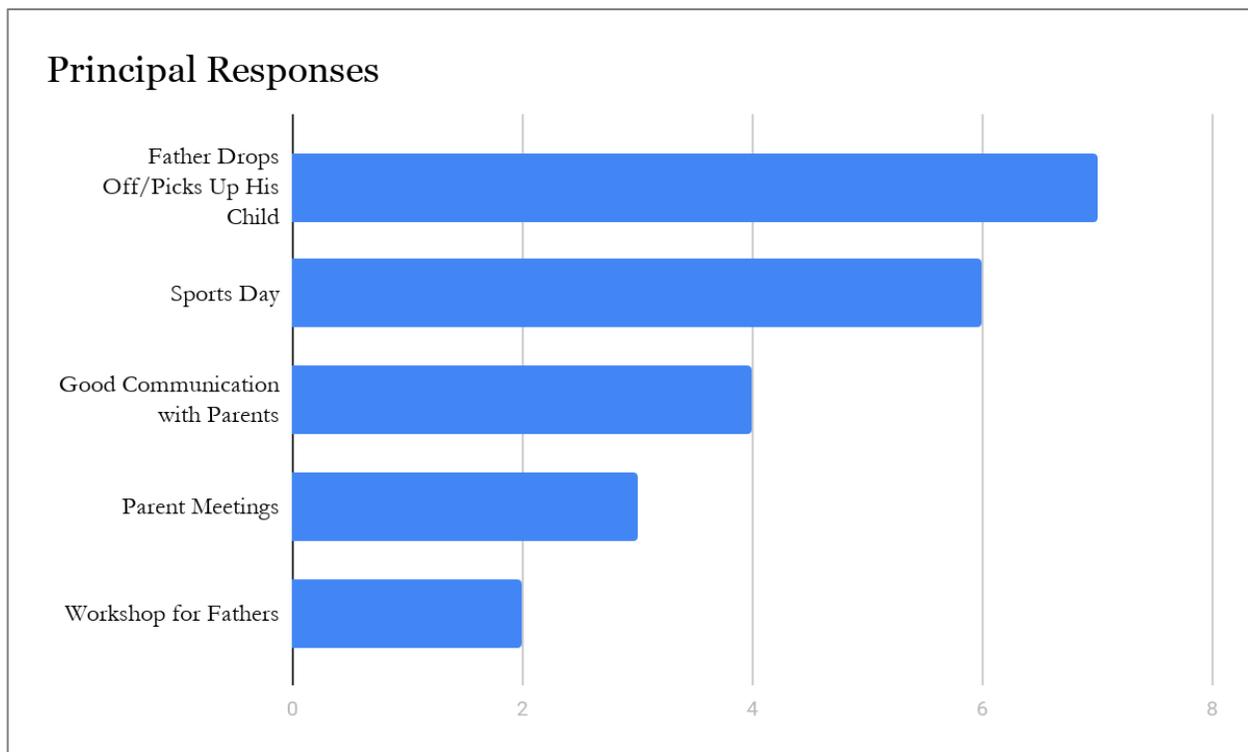


Figure 1: A summary of the responses from the eight ECD center principals explaining what ECD center activities are available for fathers to participate in.

This data was based on principals remembering if fathers drop off and pick up their children. We did not have any way to check the actual frequency of the fathers picking up or dropping off their child, such as sign in sheets. Some principals host an annual Sports Day at the ECD center on Saturdays. The six principals who mentioned this event said that they observe a high attendance of fathers who watch their children participate. One of the fathers we interviewed stated that he has attended multiple Sports Days at his child’s ECD center. He enjoys watching his son participate and cheering him on. During our drawing activity, many children

drew themselves playing soccer or other outdoor games with their fathers. Based on our data, fathers may be more engaged with their children when participating in outdoor recreation.

The principals appeared to be very interested in implementing a program to improve father involvement within their ECD center. When asked about their perspective on the issue, all eight principals expressed the importance of improving father involvement. Six of the eight also believed that implementing a program within the ECD center to help father involvement would be both plausible and beneficial. One principal explained that she currently implements a program within her ECD center dedicated for fathers. Her program includes annual events such as a friendly barbecue competition and a father workshop. At her PTA meetings, she provides parents with a planner for the year of upcoming events such as this father program. She noted that there is a high level of father attendance in the program. The popularity of annual family events that most ECD centers host, indicate that there are opportunities for a father program to be promoted through ECD centers.

Challenges Fathers Face in Participating in ECD

Societal Factors

From our discussions with fathers and various experts in father involvement in Cape Town, it became clear that in South African culture, it is conventional for fathers to provide financially for their family, while mothers care for the child. Members of the Foundation for Community Work (FCW) stated that one of the reasons for the current lack of father involvement in ECD is because there is a common belief that “it’s a woman’s job”. We learned that the Home Visitors for the FCW share tools and ideas for caregivers to provide their children learning opportunities in the home. The Home Visitors we interviewed noted that they mostly work with women, as they are the caregivers at home when the visits occur. An FCW worker and father highlighted that women are often unsupportive of men taking on a larger caregiving role and expect fathers to only provide financially due to traditional South African culture. Our literature review provides support for the idea that fathers are often seen as the financial providers (Morrell, 2005; Richter, 2006). A father also stated that many men, including himself, are sometimes “embarrassed” to become more active in childcare because it is not seen as masculine. Another father also stated that he has seen fathers refrain from participating in household activities because their partners “take over” all of the responsibilities, leading the men to “back off” so conflict does not arise in the house. According to these experts and our literature review, fathers therefore may think that providing financially is an adequate level of involvement and may not participate in domestic or caregiving work. From this data, we found that fathers may struggle with overcoming the stereotype that they are only meant to provide finances for their children and family.

Members of the FCW, Ms. van Nierkerk, and Mr. van den Berg claimed that there is a lack of awareness among fathers and society on the importance of having a father figure involved in ECD. These experts in ECD acknowledged that many early childhood development advertisements and products are geared towards women. Ms. van Nierkerk and Mr. van den Berg

both explained examples of the fact that they have seen changing tables only available in women's bathrooms and special parking spots labeled as "Moms and Prams", with nothing geared towards fathers. Ms. van Nierkerk and Mr. Salie, two of the local experts on father involvement, noted that some mothers and grandmothers are seen to push the fathers away from being involved in ECD and child care if they cannot provide financial support. Their claims are supported by our background literature review on the cultural aspects that influence father involvement in ECD (Clark et al., 2015; Mtshali, 2015). Mothers and grandmothers do not see the importance of an active father (Clark et al., 2015). We concluded from this data and literature that fathers are not adequately supported by society, and therefore often do not notice the significance of their role in their child's early development.

Work Obligations

In South African society, men are responsible for working and providing for their family. After long workdays, fathers may come home tired and stressed, unable to interact with their young children, who might already be asleep. One father we interviewed explained that he leaves for work early in the morning, comes home late, and then continues doing work at home. This prevents him from being able to drop off and pick up his child from the ECD center. He is not able to participate in activities with his child as much as he would like to.

The other local father we interviewed stated that when he was working, he could not be actively engaged with his children. Now that he is not working full time, he has more time to be involved. For instance, he has been able to attend his children's school events and take them with him on errands. He said that he can see the growth in his youngest child, who is currently enrolled in an ECD center. He was not able to see this with his older children, because he had to prioritize work back then. It is challenging for fathers to have time to spend with their children because many fathers have full time jobs and are committed to providing for the family.

Challenges Faced by Unfathered Men

Through our interviews, we learned that the upbringing of some fathers directly influences how they choose to raise their own children. Ms. van Nierkerk stated that men who grew up with uninvolved fathers may follow one of two paths: continuing the cycle by not being involved in their children's lives, or wanting to change and be the involved father they never had. Either path may lead men to struggle with not knowing how to engage and interact with their children. Evidence from Ms. van Nierkerk showed us that men who grew up without a father may become motivated to break this cycle. She explained that she has seen first-hand that having an uninvolved father can motivate fathers to want to participate as much as they can with their children and be present through their early development. This information was supported by four fathers, two from the semi-structured interviews and two from the FCW focus group. Two fathers shared with us that they had uninvolved fathers when growing up and they were determined to be different than them. They appeared passionate about wanting a better childhood for their child than what their father provided them. This suggests that for fathers to be involved

in their child's life, they need encouragement and support to provide a foundation for their child's success.

When interviewing fathers, we learned that it gives them pleasure to watch their child grow and perform the new skills they have been taught within the ECD center. It makes them proud to see their child happy and progressing. One father stated that he does not want his child to be on the streets when he grows up and he wants to be a good role model to prevent that from happening. He wants his child to stay in school so he can be successful in the future. Another father stated that although he may not enjoy every activity done at the ECD center, he still attends to make his child happy. A member from the FCW who is a father, mentioned that although he works long hours, when he arrives home and sees his daughter waiting to do homework with him, he is always willing to stay up and help her. It must be highlighted that all of these fathers we spoke to are highly involved in their children's lives. This indicates that when a father wants to see his child succeed and loves them endlessly, they will strive to be an active and involved father.

Potential Ways to Encourage Fathers to be Involved

Activities that Appeal to Fathers' Interests

Several interviewees suggested activities that could be used for the program (Figure 2). Ms. van Niekerk argued that the program will be effective if it includes activities for fathers and children. Mr. Salie explained how the Fatherhood Training Program incorporates children into some of their sessions, hosting activities that allow for father-child interactions and encouraging problem solving. For one group, they held a picnic to help fathers interact with their children, providing them a space to enjoy lunch and participate in games. In this manner, men learn how to actively engage and improve their involvement with their children. After speaking with the staff members from the FCW, we found that fathers may be most interested in a sports event or an interactive activity. The two FCW workers that were fathers listed some of the activities they do with their children, including helping with homework, playing games, and singing songs. The FCW Home Visitors shared that they teach parents to use basic household objects to help develop the child's understanding of shapes and colors. An example they described was taking a tomato and explaining to the child that the color is red and the texture is smooth. They do this to show both parents that their children can learn through different means, such as observation and play.

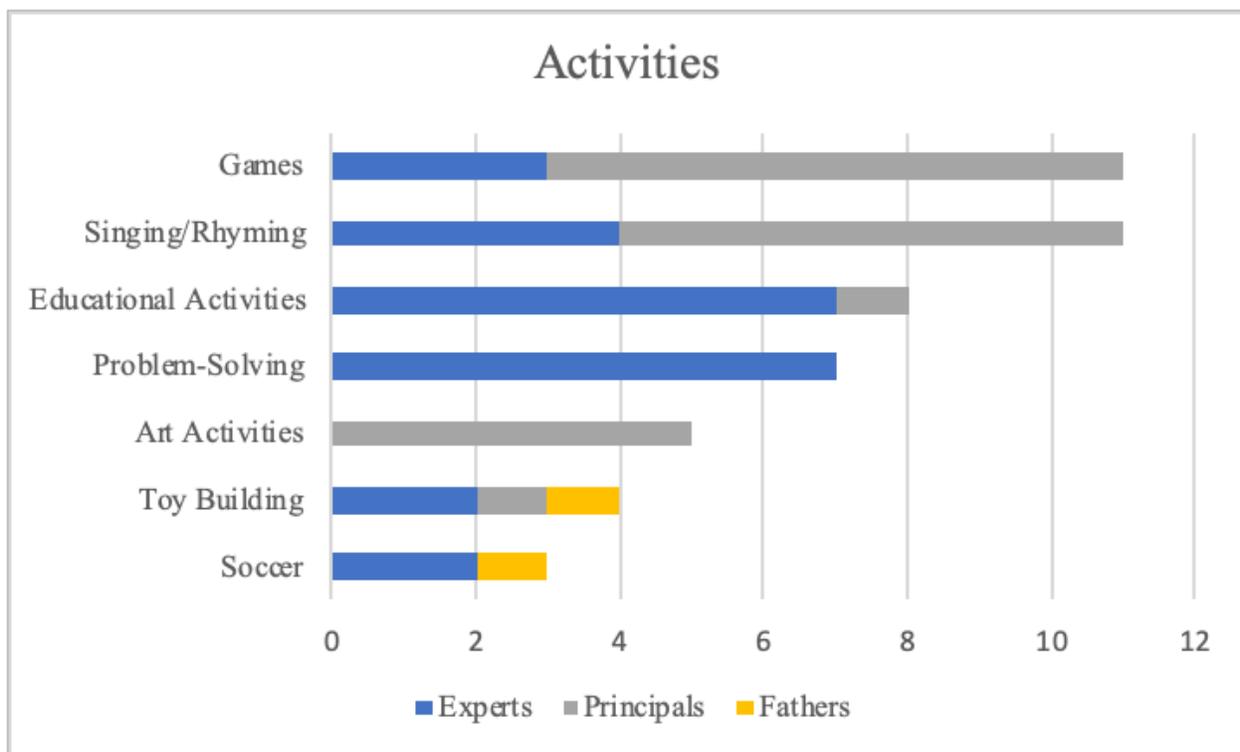


Figure 2: Several activities suggested by ECD center principals, fathers, and local father experts to potentially implement in our program

As seen in Figure 2, many of the experts on father involvement suggested the same activities. Likewise, the principals of the ECD centers had similar ideas to each other, as well as to the experts. This suggests that there may be several common activities that are important to implement within the program. We could not therefore, identify ideal activities that would interest fathers the most. However, we found that the majority of activities suggested, were those that engaged both father and child and requires them to work together to accomplish a common goal.

Key Elements from Local Programs

From our interview with Mr. Salie, we learned that South African fathers do not always see themselves as having a significant impact on their child’s life. Mr. Salie’s Parenting Skills Course, which is led by male facilitators, helps raise awareness among fathers of the importance of their involvement. It encourages fathers to become a more active parent by contributing more than just financial support in raising their child. This course found success in using a combination of practical examples, such as building and adventurous activities, and group discussions of their family’s dynamics. Mr. Allie mentioned that the FCW’s training program includes songs, games, and other household activities for fathers to do with their child. They also assign homework for the fathers in their program to complete in between training sessions. During the interview with Mr. van den Berg, he noted that his programs often meet with fathers

during the weekend over the course of six sessions and uses the first meeting to set the rest of the program's schedule. The facilitator is then able to set the following meetings at the best times for the fathers by working with their schedules. Mr. van den Berg also stressed that the most important part of his programs is the person who leads the discussions, not necessarily the content of the program. He explained that the facilitator of his programs motivates the participants to be open and willing to engage in the program. The CECD also indicated that they have had success in allowing the communities they work with to advocate for themselves in continuing programs started by the CECD. From these interviews, we found that the success of these local programs were dependent on combining discussion and activities, raising awareness of the importance of the role of a father, and continuous encouragement from a motivated facilitator.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Discussions

When analyzing our results from our interviews and observations, we discovered several interesting connections to be further discussed. Ms. van Niekerk argued that, from her research, there is a dependent correlation between socio-economic status of the community and the level of father involvement. She explained that affluent communities have more involved fathers because they have better resources and more employment opportunities than lower income communities. Our background research also supports that fathers are less involved in lower income communities because men are away from home seeking jobs and are less aware of the benefits of their engagement with their child. However, due to the low number of interviews we were able to have, this trend was not directly observed.

The principal who runs the ECD center in Bonteheuwel, an area of lower income, has strong communication with parents, a father workshop currently in place, parent meetings, and hosts Sports Days and family barbecues that fathers enjoy. This may suggest that a lower socio-economic standing does not necessarily correlate to the ability of the ECD center to be effective or able to implement a father program. More data and analysis of different socio-economic ECD centers is needed.

Limitations of the Study

Our ability to complete each objective was limited by multiple factors. The difficulty of aligning multiple fathers' schedules and our seven-week period in Cape Town, hindered our ability to host a fathers focus group. Instead, we held two interviews with individual fathers and one additional group interview with two fathers in the discussion with the FCW. The two individual father interviews were with fathers who seemed to be very involved in their child's life. Therefore, we did not receive any data from fathers who are not involved, which made it difficult to create a program catered to their needs. We also noticed that the fathers in the individual interviews seemed to hesitate in answering some questions and seemed to want us to

only have a positive image of their relationship with their child. This could have biased our data. There was also the possibility of some of the principals only wanting us to only know the positive aspects of their ECD center. A few principals also did not seem to fully understand some of the questions we were asking due to the wording of questions. For example, when asked open-ended questions, they would provide a “yes” or “no” response. Although we attempted to reword the questions and probe for more details, the principals still had difficulty answering. Future researchers could adapt interview questions to be less pressuring, easier to understand, and ensure that the interviews are in a more conversational format.

The data from the drawing activity were inconclusive. During our drawing activity, only five out of the thirty children drew their fathers and explained that they play soccer or games outdoors with them. Most other drawings were difficult to discern and the children may have been influenced by what we were speaking with them about and the other children around them. Moreover, we were not able to interview a sufficient number of fathers and therefore did not gain enough data to accurately quantify the level of involvement of fathers in Cape Town.

Recommendations

The CECD asked us to provide a detailed guide for a program to improve father involvement based on our findings. We therefore provide several recommendations for what the program could be and how the program could be implemented. With these recommendations, we hope that the CECD can implement an effective and long-lasting program that will help improve and encourage father involvement in ECD.

We recommend that the CECD implement a six-week program with sessions every Saturday for one and a half to two hours.

The recommended timetable for the program is based on Mr. van den Berg’s MenCare Childcare and Protection Programme, as well as our findings from interviews with fathers, principals, and other father program experts. From our conclusion that many fathers have work obligations during the week, it became clear that holding the program on the weekend would be more accommodating to fathers. Several ECD center events that occur on Saturdays have also had high father attendance. The fathers we were able to interview all agreed that they would be interested in attending a father development program held once a week. In addition to the information gained from our interviews, we found that the MenCare Childcare and Protection Programme run by the Sonke Gender Justice organization had success with hosting six weekly sessions that were around 90 minutes. We recommend a range of times for each session because they have different topics, discussions, and activities planned.

Based on several existing father programs, we believe that each session could be run by a facilitator and include objectives for the session, hands on activities, group discussion, and “homework” assignments that would help prepare the participants for the next session.

We recommend that the CECD hires a male facilitator with the following characteristics to run the program: sensitive and responsive; knowledgeable on gender and community; actively involved in his children’s lives; interested in working with fathers of young children; motivated.

Mr. van den Berg emphasized that the person who runs the program is more important than the contents of the program. Therefore, we recommend that the CECD hire someone with the most potential. A male facilitator was recommended by Mr. Salie and members of the FCW because the participants may be more responsive towards a man rather than a woman. The facilitator should also be knowledgeable on the community so that they appear more relatable to the participants. Mr. van den Berg suggested that the facilitator be knowledgeable on gender roles in society to understand some of the challenges that fathers face that prevent them from being involved in their children’s lives. We recommend that the facilitator be an involved father himself, so that the participants can hear from someone who can share their personal story on being involved in ECD. One of the fathers we interviewed noted that he would prefer a younger facilitator, so we recommend the new employee be 30 to 35 years old, as we believe this best reflects his suggestion. We also recommend this facilitator be highly motivated and interested in working with fathers of young children. The program is intended to be an open supportive space among the fathers, so it is essential that the facilitator has these key characteristics.

We recommend that the CECD recruits fathers for the program using the CECD’s pre-existing network of ECD centers.

From our interviews, we learned that it would be most beneficial to recruit fathers through an existing organization. The CECD’s current connections to ECD centers throughout Cape Town could therefore be an effective way to recruit participants for the program. Our results showed that there is a positive relationship between ECD center staff members and the CECD. We also found that the principals of the centers have strong communication with parents and expressed interest in a father program. We therefore recommend that the facilitator use the principals as a resource to initially contact the fathers of the centers and promote the program. Our results also showed that the ECD centers have existing events and activities that welcome fathers and mothers. We suggest that the facilitator use these events as well to recruit fathers for the program.

We recommend that the program facilitator recruit a small, manageable number of fathers for the program.

From our conversations with both experts on father involvement and fathers, we believe that an intimate group of about fifteen to twenty fathers will be most effective for this program. Mr. van den Berg stated that his program usually consists of ten to twenty fathers. This will allow the fathers to be more open and willing to participate in discussions. A smaller group is less intimidating and allows more speaking time for each participant. They will have the

opportunity to get to know each other better and can learn from each other through these discussions.

We recommend that the six sessions take place in a comfortable and easily accessible facility.

The location of the program may have an impact on whether the fathers will participate in the program or not. Based on existing local father programs, we suggest that the program take place in a familiar and accessible setting where the participants feel safe enough to be open in discussions. It could be beneficial for the venue to be closed off to the public so it is just the participants and the facilitator. This would eliminate any distractions and would keep the sessions private.

We recommend that new program consists of the following six sessions:

- 1. Introductions, Expectations, and Father Reflections**
- 2. My Child in 20 Years**
- 3. Building Healthy Families**
- 4. Importance of Play**
- 5. Time Management**
- 6. Reflections**

The main themes for each session are based on the challenges and motivations we found fathers to be currently facing, as well as the suggestions from the various local experts on father involvement we interviewed. We recommend that during each session, the facilitator frequently reiterates the importance of father involvement on the future of their child. There was a common understanding among each of the experts we interviewed that one of the main challenges a father can face is overcoming cultural stereotypes. Therefore, we concluded that providing support and awareness for gender equality in the home, especially with regards to childcare, would be important to integrate within every session of the program. A detailed guide for the program, with examples of each session is provided (Appendix J) and can be adapted to the specific needs of the participants.

From our conclusion that fathers may be motivated by their own upbringing, we recommend that the first session focused on the impact the participants' fathers had on their view of fatherhood. Based on the suggestions from the interviewees who already run programs, we also believe discussing the expectations of the fathers as well as the program in the first session would help establish a positive and productive environment.

We recommend the second session focus on the fathers' long-term goals for their children and how their parenting techniques can greatly influence them. Our results showed that fathers can be motivated by their desire to see their children successful and happy. Moreover, it became clear that they often do not realize the significance of their impact on their children's

future. Therefore, we believe it will be beneficial for them to imagine what their child will be like in 20 years and what they can do to help their child become that individual.

Based on one of the primary challenges we found that fathers face, we recommend the third session focuses on understanding children's behavior, emphasizing good communication, and analyzing caregiving roles. This will allow participants to become more aware of their current roles as fathers and learn techniques to create healthy relationships with their partners and children.

We recommend that the CECD use tools from their current Parent Trainings to teach fathers about the importance of play in the fourth session. We learned from our sponsor that one of their workshops, which only has female participants, focuses on teaching the importance of play time for young children, since it plays one of the largest roles in their development. It also became clear that some fathers may not know how to interact with their child, and which everyday activities they could do with them. We therefore propose a session that highlights activities that fathers can do with children.

Based on the conclusion that work obligations and busy schedules can inhibit fathers from becoming more involved in their child's early life, we recommend that the fifth session help fathers with time management and making quality time for their children. Although our results showed that there is some father involvement in ECD, we were not able to find the extent of involvement. Based on expert opinions, we also learned that fathers should recognize the importance of spending quality time with their child.

We recommend the final session include reflections on what was learned throughout the program. Based on existing programs, this will allow for the fathers to not only review and demonstrate their knowledge, but also make a stronger commitment to themselves to implement what they learned. This session will show the progress of the group and encourage them to remain in contact with each other.

We recommend that there is a pre- and post- evaluation for the participants.

A pre-evaluation would be helpful for the facilitator to gauge how involved fathers already are and what they may need help with. This will allow the facilitator to adapt the program if needed to make it as effective as possible. A post-evaluation could be given at the end of the program with questions focused on the themes of the sessions. This will help measure the knowledge and skills gained by the participants. The participants may also be able to give recommendations for future improvements of the program, making notes on what they liked or disliked about the program and sessions. We recommend these evaluations be completed individually to obtain strong responses.

We recommend that the program concludes with an interactive event with the fathers and their children run by the participating fathers following the six sessions.

In culmination of the six sessions, we propose that the participating fathers host a father-child interactive event, where they will be able to exercise their newly-developed parenting skills. Throughout the program, the fathers will be encouraged to host this event themselves. Based on activities we found that appeal to fathers' interests, we recommend that this event consist of building toys from recycled materials, fun sports games, and a traditional South African Braai. This event can conclude with a ceremony presenting certificates of completion of the program and other rewards to the fathers.

We recommend that the CECD budgets for: new staff member salary, venue, catering, transportation for the facilitator, printing, and resources/materials.

As this is a new program run by the CECD, we recommend the CECD allocates funding for purchasing materials needed for the six sessions. These materials may include pens, paper, and markers for the hands-on activities in each session. We believe hiring a new facilitator would be most beneficial for the program because the CECD does not currently have a male employee that has the desired characteristics to run the program. This would therefore require funding for the interview process, salary, and transportation costs when recruiting the fathers for the program. Depending on the community, further funding may be needed for the six sessions to take place at an accessible and communal location. We also recommend that there is funding for snacks and refreshments for each session because we believe this will encourage fathers to attend the sessions. We recommend that there be funding for printing of flyers so that the program can be promoted and spread throughout the community.

We recommend that the facilitator check-in with the participants about three months after the completion of the program.

About three months after the completion of the program, we recommend that the facilitator check-in with each of the participants. This check-in could include a follow-up on how the participants are interacting with their children nowadays. Another post-evaluation may also be conducted to receive feedback on the value and effectiveness of the program.

Conclusion

There are many reasons why South African fathers are less involved in their children's lives, including the popular *lobola* practice, the maternal family's role in childcare, migrant labor, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Clark, et al., 2015; Madhavan, 2010; Smit, 2001; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010). Our sponsor, the CECD, advocates for early childhood development because they believe children are the future of society. By spreading awareness of the importance of male figures in their children's lives, the CECD can begin to address the issue of low father participation in ECD.

Through observations of ECD centers and interviewing local fathers, principals, and experts on father involvement, we created a program that will hopefully help improve father involvement in ECD for the communities of Cape Town. This program may currently only be able to improve the quality of involvement from active fathers. However, in the future, with more time and research, it will hopefully be able to achieve the long-term goal of increasing the participation of completely uninvolved fathers. The immediate effect of fathers becoming more involved in their child's early life may be that the child displays advanced developmental skills at a young age (Coleman, 2004; Feldman et al., 2013; Pruett, 2001). Studies have shown that this often leads children to have higher IQs and to perhaps stay in school and move on to higher education (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). This may allow for them to obtain higher paying jobs and create stable relationships. Children who have positive paternal role models to look up to will then be able to become active and involved parents themselves. By providing fathers with the knowledge and tools to become more engaged in their child's life, the program could lead to all of these social improvements and eventually foster a significant, positive change in the communities of Cape Town.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions for ECD Center Principals

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. The notes and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

1. How did you begin working in the crèche?
2. How long have you been working in this crèche?
3. What are your roles in the crèche?
4. What is the average day like for the crèche?
 - a. How does it operate?
 - b. Do you see how many mothers or fathers drop their children off in the morning or pick them up in the afternoon?
5. Do you hear children talking about their fathers or other family members throughout the day?
6. Have any of you worked in another crèche before?
 - a. How is it different here?
7. What is your perspective on the level of involvement of males, whether fathers or family members in crèche activities?
8. Do you have any activities where parents can be involved?
 - a. Which crèche activities have you noticed fathers to be most involved?
9. How do you think you could interest fathers in participating in the activities in the crèche?
10. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about fathers participation in crèche activities?

Appendix B: Example of the Parent Consent Used for the Drawing Activity

ART ACTIVITY AT ECD CENTRE

Worcester Polytechnic Institute in partnership with Centre for Early Childhood Development

24 Oct 2019

A team of students from an American university (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) are visiting your child's ECD centre. They are working alongside the Centre for Early Childhood Development to determine ways to increase the engagement and involvement of fathers and male figures in the upbringing of the children in their lives.

The team plans to draw pictures with the children that show the people in their homes and illustrate the activities and games that the children like to play with the father and male figures in their lives. The drawings are intended to help the Centre for Early Childhood Development develop future programmes with ECD centres to increase involvement among fathers and male figures.

The drawings will be made with crayons and coloured pencils, and the drawings will be photographed for future reference. No names or identifying information of the children will be placed on the drawings. No identifying photographs of the children will be taken. The experience will be presented as a fun activity for the children and should take no more than 1.5 hours.

You are welcome to opt out of this activity by contacting the Principal and your child will be able to play in another room with no repercussion. There is no obligation to participate. The activity is completely voluntary.

If you would like more detail about the initiative of the Centre for Early Childhood Development, please contact the Centre for Early Childhood at bkahts@cecd.org.za or the Principal.

Thank you very much for participating in this event.



Appendix C: ECD Principal Consent Form for the Drawing Activity

Contact Information: (Alana Guilbault, Mattea Gravina, Dennis Leary, & Kiara Awunti)

Email: gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu

Title of Research Study: Improving Father Involvement in Early Childhood Development

Sponsor: Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD)

Introduction:

The children involved in your crèche are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you agree for them to be involved, however, you must be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and any benefits, risks or discomfort that they may experience as a result of their participation. This form presents information about the study so that you may make a fully informed decision regarding your participation.

Purpose of the study:

To help the Centre for Early Childhood Development improve father involvement in early childhood development in Cape Town.

Procedures to be followed:

Our team will ask the children to draw what their family looks like to them. The children will draw on paper using crayons, colored pencils, etc. Our team will take pictures of the drawings for our records.

Risks to study participants:

There are no foreseeable risks.

Benefits to research participants and others:

The children will engage in a fun activity that will provide visual data for our team to understand the current involvement of fathers in their childrens' lives.

Record keeping and confidentiality:

We will take a photograph of the children's drawings for our records. Records of the children's participation in this study will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or its designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify the children by name. Any publication or presentation of the data will not identify the child.

Compensation or treatment in the event of injury:

This research involves minimal risk of injury or harm to the children.

For more information about this research or about the rights of research participants, or in the case of research-related injury, contact:

You can contact our team at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our advisors, Melissa Belz (Email: mbelz@wpi.edu or Tel. 064-839-9709), and Thidinalei Tshiguvho (Email: thidinalei@yahoo.com or Tel. 071-945-4847).

In addition, you may also contact the WPI Institutional Review Board chair member, Professor Kent Rissmiller (Email: kjr@wpi.edu or Tel. 1-508- 831-5019), and the Human Protection Administrator, Gabriel Johnson (Email: gjohnson@wpi.edu or Tel. 1-508-831-4989).

The children’s participation in this research is voluntary. Your refusal to allow them to participate will not result in any penalty to you or any loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may decide for them to stop participating in the research at any time without penalty or loss of other benefits. The project investigators retain the right to cancel or postpone the experimental procedures at any time they see fit.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have been informed about and consent to the children being a participant in the study described above. Make sure that your questions are answered to your satisfaction before signing. You are entitled to retain a copy of this consent agreement.

Study Participant Signature

Date: _____

Study Participant Name (Please print)

Signature of Person who explained this study

Date: _____

Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion with FCW

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. With your permission we would like to record the interview via voice memos. The audio recordings, notes, and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

- Our reason for being in Cape Town
 - Our goal of the discussion: To identify the challenges that fathers face and the supports they need to improve their involvement in early childhood development
 - Explain what we mean by involved father
 - Address that this is an open discussion and there will not be any judgment
 - Ask about recording/consent form
1. Towards home visitors:
 - a. What do you do at home visits?
 - b. How many homes do you go to?
 - c. How often do you go out?
 - d. What do you observe at the visits?
 - e. How did you get involved?
 - f. What are your thoughts on father involvement?
 2. Based on your experiences (past, present) what do you think some benefits of having an involved father are?
 - a. What do you think are some of the reasons that fathers in general do participate in their children's lives?
 - b. Do you think having a support system is important in encouraging your involvement in your child's early life?
 3. Would you be interested in participating in activities with your children within the crèche?
 - a. During the day or on a Saturday?
 - b. What activities would you like to do? What about a Sports Day? Or making toys with your children?
 - c. Why or why not?

- d. Are there activities or events you participate in already? Such as the graduation concert?
 - e. What are your thoughts on a Father Training program?
 - f. Do you think you would attend?
 - g. Would you complete the training or do you think you would lose interest?
 - h. If it were to occur over multiple days, would you be able to attend every day?
 - i. If you were given a take home kit of little games or things to do with your child, would you try to do them on your own time?
4. What do you think your role as a father is?
 5. What kind of fun activities did you do as a child?
 - a. Who did you do those activities with?
 - b. Are there some activities you do with your children that you did with your father?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for Lauren van Niekerk, PhD Candidate

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. The notes and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

1. What led you to become interested in early childhood development?
2. How did that lead you to focus on father involvement?
3. What are the differences of father involvement in the different socio-economic regions?
4. What are the biggest challenges you are facing while conducting this research?
 - a. How have you been able to overcome them?
5. What are some of the methods you are using to obtain the information needed? Interviews? Focus groups? Observations?
6. Have you been able to interview fathers?
7. What information have you found so far?
 - a. What have you found promotes or deters father involvement?
 - b. Is there a lack of involvement in ECD centers?
8. What makes an ECD program effective?
 - a. Have you discovered a specific structure that makes it effective?
 - b. What are the guidelines you have used in the past to create an ECD program?
9. Do you think it would be possible to create an ECD program that would help increase father involvement?
 - a. Would it be possible to create one that can be implemented in the crèche?
 - b. Do you think it would be beneficial for us to focus on father involvement in the crèche?
10. Have you noticed that fathers respond better to community members, people who are involved in their child's life already (crèche staff), or outside people?
11. Do you think fathers would attend a father training?
 - a. When have you seen them to be most interested in participating? Weekend? Evening?
 - b. Would they be able to commit to a few days of training? How long do you think they would stay?

Appendix F: Father Interview Questions

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. With your permission we would like to record the interview via voice memos. The audio recordings, notes, and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

1. Thoughts on early childhood development centers?
 - a. Are your children in crèches?
 - b. Do you ever bring them/pick them up?
 - c. Do you think the crèches are effective? Are they benefitting your child?
 - d. Could they be improved at all?
2. Have you heard of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD)?
 - a. What do you know about them?
3. Based on your experiences (past, present) what do you think some benefits of having an involved father are?
4. What do you think are some of the reasons that fathers in general do participate in their children's lives?
5. What do you think are some of the reasons that fathers in general don't participate much in their children's lives?
6. Do you think having a support system is important in encouraging your involvement in your child's early life?
7. (If children are in a crèche) Do you attend activities at the crèche?
8. What activities were they?
9. Did you enjoy participating in the activity?
10. What is an activity or event that the crèche could offer that you would like to participate in?
11. What are some of the activities you wish the crèche would do?
12. How would you like to be involved? With just fathers, fathers and children, whole family?
13. Would you be interested in participating in activities with your children within the crèche? During the day or on a Saturday?
14. What activities would you like to do? What about a Sports Day? Or making toys with your children? Why or why not?

15. Are there activities or events you participate in already? Such as the graduation concert?
16. What are your thoughts on a father training program?
 - a. What do you think you would want training on?
 - b. Do you think you would attend?
 - c. Would you complete the training or do you think you would lose interest?
 - d. If it were to occur over multiple days, would you be able to attend every day?
17. If you were given a take home kit of little games or things to do with your child, would you try to do them on your own time?
18. What do you think your role as a father is?
 - a. Do you think it's important for a child to have a relationship with their father?
19. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about?

Appendix G: Revised Father Interview Questions

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. With your permission we would like to record the interview via voice memos. The audio recordings, notes, and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

1. Thoughts on early childhood development centers?
 - a. Are your children in crèches?
 - b. Do you ever bring them/pick them up?
 - c. Do you think the crèches are effective? Are they benefitting your child?
 - d. Could they be improved at all?
 - e. Do you have any communication with the crèche principals? How much communication?
2. Based on your experiences (past, present) what do you think some benefits of having an involved father are?
 - a. What do you think are some of the reasons that fathers in general do participate in their children's lives?
 - b. What do you think are some of the reasons that fathers in general don't participate much in their children's lives?
 - c. Do you think having a support system is important in encouraging your involvement in your child's early life?
3. (If children are in a crèche) Do you attend activities at the crèche?
 - a. What activities were they?
 - b. Did you enjoy participating in the activity?
4. What is an activity or event that the crèche could offer that you would like to participate in?
 - a. What are some of the activities you wish the crèche would do?
 - b. How would you like to be involved? With just fathers, fathers and children, whole family?
 - c. What are some activities you do with your child outside of the crèche?
5. Would you be interested in participating in activities with your children within the crèche?
 - a. During the day or on a Saturday?

- b. What activities would you like to do? What about a Sports Day? Or making toys with your children?
 - c. Why or why not?
 - d. Are there activities or events you participate in already? Such as the graduation concert?
6. What are your thoughts on a father training program?
- a. What do you think fathers would want training on?
 - b. Do you think fathers would attend?
 - c. Would fathers complete the training or do you think they would lose interest?
 - d. If this training program were to occur once a week, do you think fathers would attend?
 - e. If they were given a take home kit of little games or things to do with their child, would they try to do them on their own time?
7. What do you think your role as a father is?
- a. Do you think it's important for a child to have a relationship with their father?
8. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about?

Appendix H: Interview Questions for Shauib Salie, Trainer at the Parent Centre

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

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1. How did the Parent Centre get started?
 - a. How long have you been a part of it?
2. What types of activities and tools does the Fatherhood Training include?
 - a. How do you go about showing the importance of building relationships with their children to the fathers?
 - b. How have you overcome the challenges of finding a group of willing fathers?
3. What have you found the fathers to be most interested in?
4. Do you come across many father figures/male figures in the Parenting Skills Courses?
 - a. If yes, what parts of the program do they participate in?
 - b. If no, why do you think they're not as involved in your programs?
 - c. Where do you see that male figures could potentially be more involved?
5. What are your methods for working with the families on how to enhance child development?
 - a. What methods have you seen to be most effective?
6. How often do field workers visit the families?
7. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about fathers participation?

Appendix I: Interview Questions for Wessel van den Berg, Children's Rights and Positive Parenting Unit Manager

We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the USA. We are conducting a research project on behalf of the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development within the community. As part of this project we are conducting a series of interviews with key individuals. We have asked you all to participate because we believe you have unique knowledge of these issues that will be valuable to the project.

Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to discuss any question or terminate the interview at any time. The notes and transcripts of the interview will be kept confidential, and will be accessible by only the members of the team and our immediate faculty advisors. We will not record your name or any identifying information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at gr-CT19-CECD@wpi.edu. You may also contact our WPI project advisors Melissa Belz, at mbelz@wpi.edu and Thidi Tshiguvho, at thidinalei@yahoo.com.

1. How did you get involved at Sonke Gender Justice?
2. We read a little about the The MenCare South Africa CCP Programme, and were interested in the sessions with the male beneficiaries that participated in the programme.
 - a. How did you recruit the male beneficiaries and their partners?
 - b. Were they from different socio-economic regions?
 - c. What activities were done with the male beneficiaries?
 - d. How did you determine the number of sessions with each group?
 - e. Who ran the sessions?
 - f. How long was each session?
 - g. Where did they occur?
 - h. When did they happen? Weekend?
 - i. What is the father legacy activity?
 - j. What kinds of discussions occurred in the pre-intervention session? Was it geared towards gender equality? Benefits of father involvement?
 - k. How did you address gender norms with the mothers and the fathers?
3. We are hoping to help the CECD create a program that improves father involvement in early childhood development. We have some ideas and would love to ask you some questions about them.
4. Father/Parent Training? before activity with child? after?
5. Type of activities fathers would be interested in?
6. Implemented in the crèche/Have the activity in the crèche?
7. Incentives/take home kit?
8. How could we make our program apply to different socio-economic regions?
9. How do we determine if someone is qualified enough to help run the program?
10. We were originally thinking of having someone from CECD and a now-involved father to co-run the program. Do you think this could work?

11. We also read that some outcomes of the program led to positive changes within the families, such as increased time spent with children and involvement with school projects.
 - a. What are some ways we could continue this?
 - b. How can we get the fathers to be involved in ECD?
12. Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about father involvement in ECD?

Dads Matter in ECD



A detailed program manual

By:

Kiara Awunti, Mattea Gravina, Alana Guilbault, & Dennis Leary

In collaboration with:

The Centre for Early Childhood Development

Overview of Program

What is it?

Six weekly sessions of an hour and a half to two hours in length with a facilitator and a group of no more than 20 participants. Each session will contain discussions, interactive activities, and important training on early childhood development (ECD).

Where is it?

The location is dependent on the community and the participants. The following characteristics should be considered for the venue:

- Location
- Comfortable conditions/Facilities
- Security
- Costs

Who can join?

Any male figures who parent young children are encouraged to join this program! This does not have to only be biological fathers. This can include fathers, step-fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or older brothers!

What is the goal?

The goal of this program is to improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development (ECD).

Why is this important?

Men play a significant role in the early development of children. Children of involved fathers have an improved academic performance and favorable emotional, social, and cognitive functioning compared to children of uninvolved fathers.

Session 1:

Introductions, Expectations, and Father Reflections

Objectives

1. Learn names
2. Understand program goals
3. Identify group and individual expectations
4. Emphasize the importance of ECD and fathers in ECD
5. Reflect on personal influence

Opening the Session

The facilitator introduces themselves and conducts an ice-breaker activity for the group to participate in. Participants pair up and introduce themselves to each other, giving a brief background of their family:

- How many children do you have?
- How old are they?
- Where are you from?

Then each pair introduces each other and shares their partners' answers to around to the group. The facilitator then states the objectives of the program and should go over logistics with the participants. A WhatsApp group should be created with the participants and the facilitator to establish easy communication. The facilitator will also review the objectives of Session 1. The following questions help identify group and individual expectations:

- What will make you feel welcome and comfortable in the group?
- What would encourage/discourage you to talk in the group?
- What could happen that would make you want to leave the group?
- What would you like to gain from these sessions?

Activity

Everyone will complete a pre-evaluation to determine their current level of involvement with their children. Then they will be given a piece of paper and a pen. Split the page in half. On the piece of paper, write:

- One thing I want to take into my relationship with my children from my father
- One thing I do not want in my relationship with my children from my father

Once everyone is finished, every participant will share their responses on a flipchart for everyone to see.

Group Discussion

The facilitator will lead a discussion on similarities and differences of the responses on the flipchart. The facilitator will emphasize the importance of ECD and the importance of male figures in ECD.

Questions and topics to discuss:

- What impact did your father have on you?
- How do traditional male roles impact how you parent your children?
- Reflect upon the influence that fathers or other male figures had on the participants while they were growing up
- Discuss how participants can take the positive aspects of their fathers' influence and the negative impacts so they don't repeat them
- Thoughts on gender roles in modern society
- Reflect on what the participants gained from this session

Homework

- Think about your hopes and fears for your child
- Think about discipline techniques you use with your child

Session 2:

My Child in 20 Years

Objectives

1. Make connections between the long-term goals each of the fathers have for their children
2. Explain how harsh discipline affects those goals
3. Review positive parenting discipline techniques

Opening the Session

This session will begin with the facilitator explaining the interactive celebration event that the participants should host following completion of this program (See Post-Program section). The facilitator will then lead a discussion on the participants' homework from last week and objectives for this session.

Activity

Have each of the participants imagine what their child will look like in 20 years. The participants should consider:

- What will they be like?
- What job will they have?
- What characteristics will they have?
- Do you have a good relationship with them?
- What are your goals for them?

Group Discussion

The facilitator will lead a group discussion including the following questions:

- What are some of the characteristics you would like your child to have by age 20?
- How does yelling or hitting affect children?
- How might it impact your long-term goals?
- What does yelling or hitting teach children instead about resolving conflict?
- Is it possible to prevent all misbehavior of children?
- What does your child need in order to be what you imagined them to be in 20 years?
- Discuss Positive Parenting Techniques:
 - What are ways in which we can recognize children for positive behavior?
 - What do you do if you get angry at your child? What are some positive actions/options you can take?

The facilitator will emphasize on the importance of fathers in their child's early development and will teach positive discipline techniques to implement. The facilitator will also have the participants reflect on what they have learning during that session.

Homework

The participants will fill out the supplemental chart for Session 3.

List of Chores:	Who does the chore?			
	Partner	Me	Both	Neither
Clean the floor				
Dust the house				
Tidy up the house				
Make the beds				
Fix things in the home				
Take out the rubbish				
Buy food				
Cooking				
Serve the food				
Wash the dishes				
Wash clothes				
Hang up the clothes				
Fold clothes				
Iron clothes				
Fix the bicycle or car				
Change nappies				
Feed the baby				
Bath the baby				
Brush the child's teeth				
Take child to school				
Picks up child from school				
Help with homework				
Stay home with sick child				
Comfort and help if child gets hurt				
Buy child's clothes				
Mend child's clothes				
Fix a blocked toilet				
Cut the grass				

Session 3:

Building Healthy Families

Objectives

1. Understand children's behavior
2. Learn how to deal with child's feelings
3. Emphasizing the importance of good communication
4. Analyze caregiving roles

Opening the Session

Begin with the objectives for this session and reflect on the participants' homework from last week.

- Which column (Partner, Me, Both, or Neither) had the most/least checkmarks?
- Any similarities or differences among the group?

Activity

This session will consist of different roleplay activities for the participants to better understand their child's behavior. The facilitator will also conduct What-If scenarios for the fathers to learn how to deal with their child's feelings.

Group Discussion

The facilitator will lead the following discussion questions:

- What are some ways that men can be more responsive to the needs of young children?
- What are the things that you do with or for your child, and what are the things your partner does?
- Is this fair? Why or why not?
- Why don't fathers participate more in taking care of young children, particularly babies? What makes it difficult for fathers to participate in caregiving?
- What are one or two things you can do to be more involved in caregiving of your child?
- How will this affect the mother?
- What are 1-2 things you can do together with your child?
- How can men support each other in their caring roles?

The purpose of this discussion is for participants to analyze caregiving roles and learn about the importance of communication with their partner and with their child. The facilitator will then ask the participants to reflect on what they learned that session.

Homework

Bring in one of your child's toys for next session.

Session 4:

Importance of Play

Objectives

1. Understand the importance of playing with your child
2. Understand breaking gender roles when it comes to play

Opening the Session

The participants should have brought in one of their child's toys. Each participant should discuss why they chose that toy to share. This introduction will lead towards the activity.

Activity

The facilitator will educate participants on the importance of play using various ECD training tools from the CECD's current Parent Trainings.



This will consist of playing with block or puzzles and educating participants on things at home children can be involved in such as cooking.

Group Discussion

Following the educational activities, participants will reflect upon what they learned and how they will implement the things they learned in their own home.

The facilitator will also lead a discussion on breaking gender roles when it comes to girl's toys versus boy's toys.

Homework

There is no formal homework for this session, however, participants should try and interact more with their child through play.

Session 5:

Time Management

Objectives

1. Understand the difference between quality vs. quantity time with children
2. Reflect on current use of time
3. Strategize ways to better balance time

Opening the Session

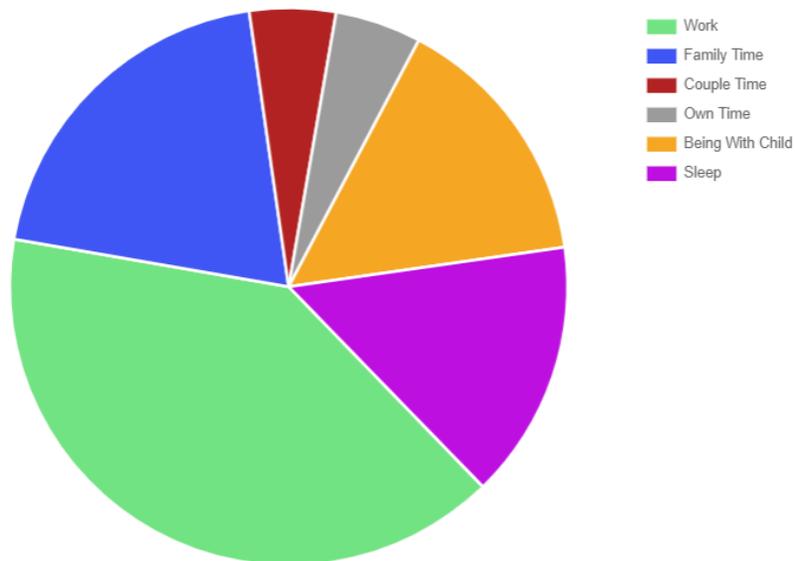
The facilitator will go over the objectives for this session.

Activity

Develop a time chart. Draw pie chart circles. Each pie chart represents a 24-hour day. Divide up the pile into six slices to show how much time you spend on the following activities:

- Work
- Family time
- Couple time
- Being with child
- Own time
- Sleep

Repeat this exercise for the ideal amount of time you would like to spend on the above activities.



The above figure is an example of the pie chart activity.

Group Discussion

The facilitator will teach the participants how to balance, work, couple time, personal time, and family time. The facilitator will emphasize that discussion between the fathers and their partners is the most important between their realistic versus ideal time management and how they can close that gap. The facilitator will teach the participants about differences between qualitative and quantitative time spent with their child. The facilitator will also ask the participants to reflect on what they learned that session.

Homework

This session will not require any homework.

Session 6:

Reflections on Dads Matter in ECD

Objectives

1. Reflect on the experiences participants have had in the sessions
2. Make a commitment to be a more involved father
3. Encourage the participants to continue to meet/stay in contact after the program ends

Opening the Session

Ask participants to form a circle and ask each of them to complete the following phrases:

- “My favorite moment of this group was...”
- “Something unexpected that happened in the group was...”
- “I will be a better and more involved father by...”
- “Something I feel proud of is...”

Activity

With a ball of string, the participants will create a “Web of Fathers”. The participants will pass around the ball of string. The person who has the ball of string says one thing they’ve learned from this program and pass it on to a random participant of their choosing. The string will then form a “web,” signifying the connection between all the fathers.

Group Discussion

The facilitator will conduct a post evaluation of the program. The facilitator will also ask the participants what they liked or did not like about the program or any of its sessions. The facilitator will ask for recommendations for improvement.

Homework

Following completion of this session, the family event should be arranged for participants and their families to attend (See Post-Program).

Post-Program

Family Event

This event will be hosted by the participants of the program following sometime after completion of the sixth session. The participants should host this event themselves as it will give them some responsibility and make them excited to attend with their families. This event should include a Braai for the fathers to conduct. Fun outdoor games such as soccer should also be hosted for families to engage in with their children. An activity to build toys from recyclable materials is also encouraged. This allows for the fathers and children to work together to achieve a common goal and for the fathers to implement some of what they learned in the program.

This family event should conclude with a ceremony rewarding certificates of completion to the participants of the program.

Check-Ins

About three months after the completion of the program, a check-in meeting with each of the participants should be conducted. This check-in should follow-up with how the participants are doing and how their interactions with their children have changed since completing the program. Another post-evaluation may also be conducted to receive feedback on the value and effectiveness of the program and any further recommendations for improvement.

Impact of the Program

By spreading the importance of fathers or any male figures in the lives of children, our program can improve the involvement of fathers in early childhood development. This will pave the way for a brighter future in the lives of children in Cape Town.