



No-man's land – the UK Early Education sector: a right's issue for men and children?

David Wright

Parity AGM
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Paint Pots Nurseries

- **based in Southampton**
- **operating since 1992**
- **10 settings – 6 day nurseries, 3 preschools,
1 out-of-school club**
- **Supporting 1,000 children each week**
- **150 staff of whom 5 are male, currently**

David Wright – My Story

- 25 years working in IT
- 15 years in Early Years - practitioner, manager, owner
- qualified as Early Years Teacher



Men working with young children in England - where are we?



Ian Braisby @BraisbyI · 19h

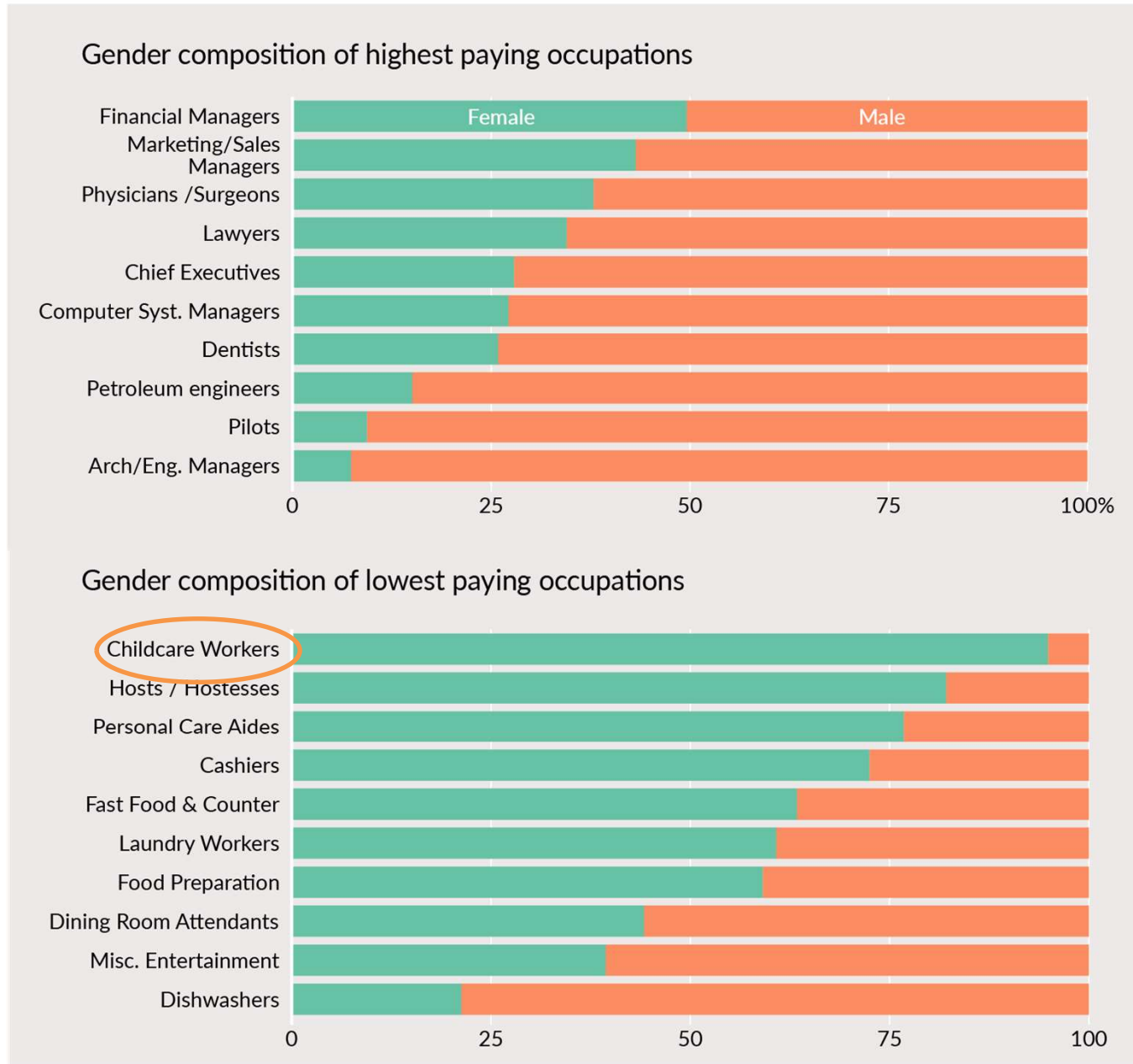
Replying to [@stoneg8training](#) [@Mr_PaintPots](#) and [@kathybrodie](#)

Have been a childminder for 15 years, this morning I got a call from a prospective client, she wouldn't speak to me and would only speak to a woman, insisted i couldn't be in child care because I was a man



The enduring U.S. divide between men and women at work

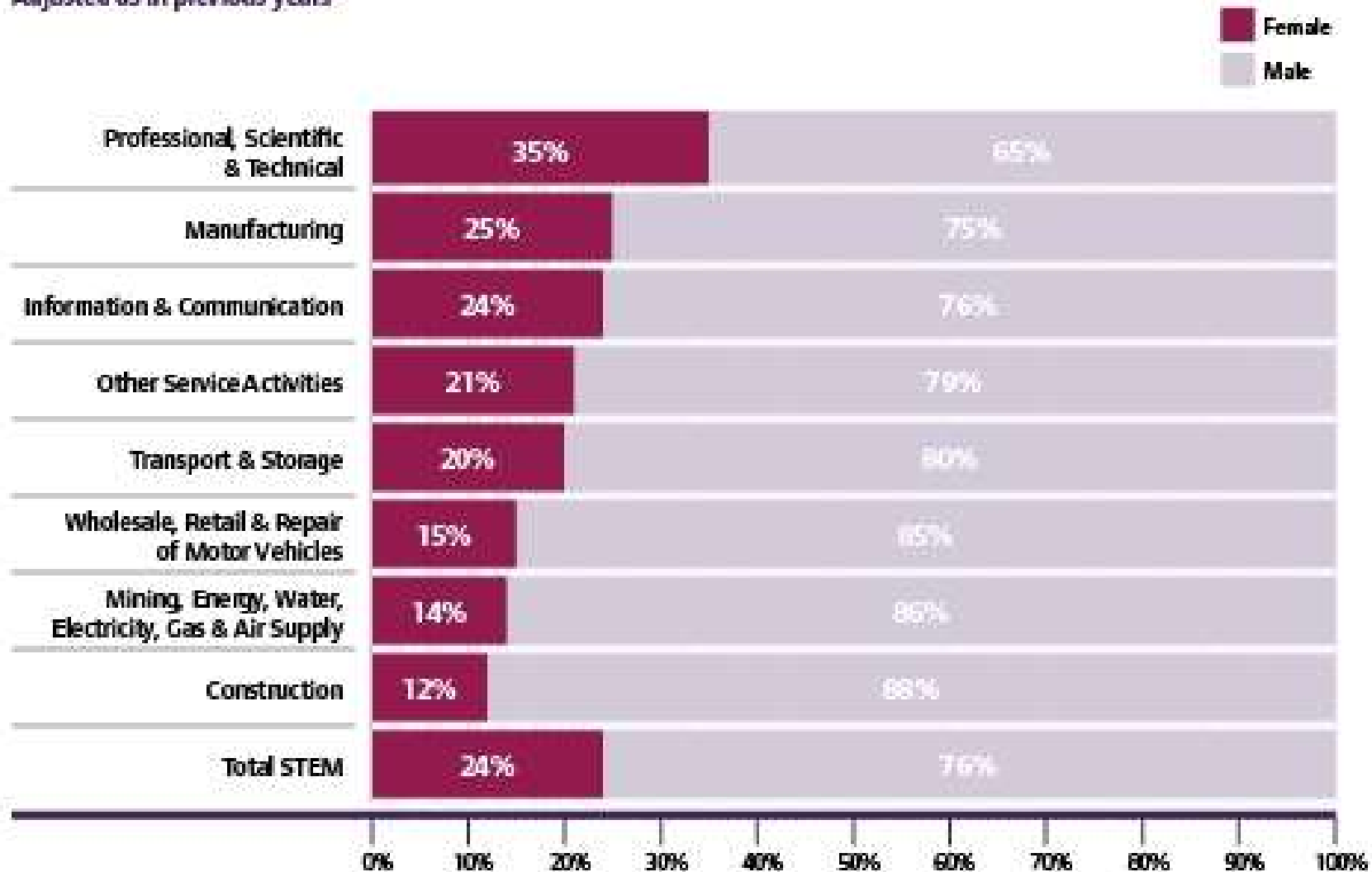
The gender composition of the highest- and the lowest-paying U.S. occupations, 2015



Source: Author's compilation of available gender composition data for broad occupational categories with highest and lowest mean wages according to Bureau of Labor Statistics tables "May 2015 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates" and "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity."

Female employment by STEM industry in 2017

Adjusted as in previous years



Source: Labour Force Survey August 2017. Males aged 16-64 and females aged 16-59. Decimals were rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

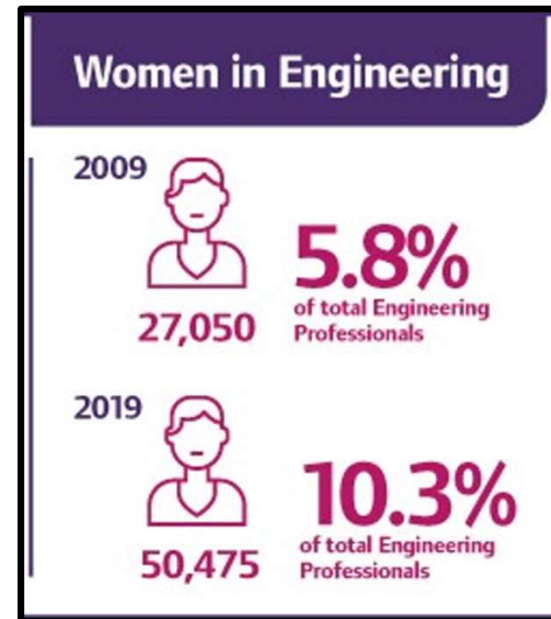
Men in Early Years

1998 - The Teacher Training Agency and the DfEE set a target for the UK early years workforce to increase male recruitment to 6% by 2004.

During this period attention was given to the linked promotion of positive fathering and the increase of male practitioners within Sure Start (children's) centres.

2020 - The proportion of male staff in the workforce **remains at between 2 - 3%** in England (DfE, 2017; DfE, 2019),

Static over 22 years



Doubled in 10 years

Women in Science & Engineering

<https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/why-wise/>



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Join Us Now



Case for Change ▾ Who we are ▾ What we do ▾ WISE Membership ▾ #1ofTheMillion

If you want **more women** in science, technology, engineering, manufacturing, construction – from the classroom to the boardroom and at all stages in between – WISE is here to help.

Whether you are a business, employer, research institution, professional body, education or training provider or simply an individual wanting to join like-minded people with the energy and commitment to bring about positive change – you have come to the right place.

Our long term vision

For **gender balance** in STEM, from the classroom to the boardroom.

Our short-term goal

One million women working in core STEM occupations by 2020.

Our purpose

To enable and energise people who increase the participation, contribution and success of women in the UK's scientific, technology and engineering (STEM) workforce.





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Ministerial role

Minister for Women and Equalities

Organisations: [Government Equalities Office](#) and [Department for International Trade](#)

Current role holder: [The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP](#)

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Responsibilities

The Minister for Women and Equalities has responsibility for:

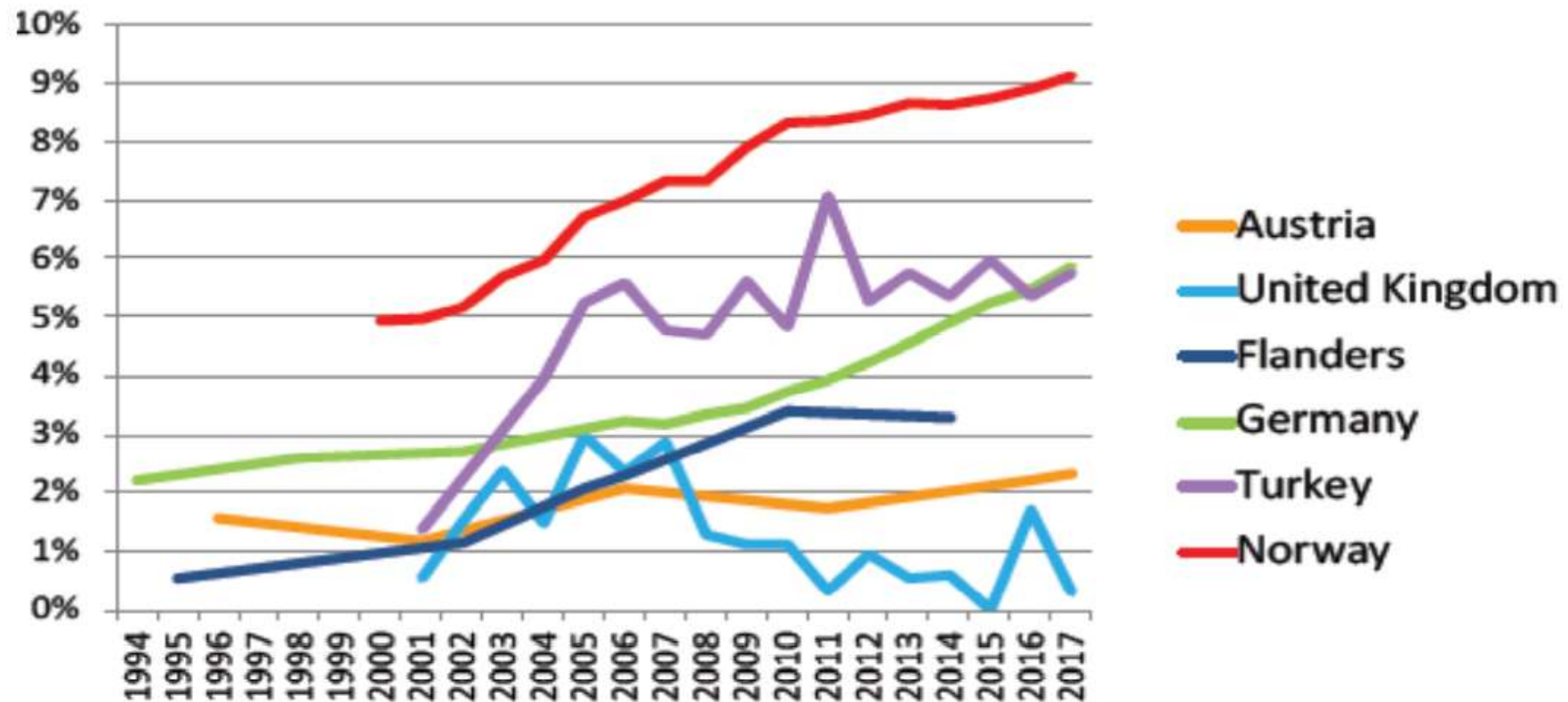
- developing an equalities policy that it is based on individual autonomy and dignity
- promoting equality of opportunity for everyone

Before July 2014, this role was covered by the [Minister for Women](#) and the [Minister for Equalities](#).

Men in care for young children

Few men are working in ECEC

(Oberhuemer, Schreyer, & Neuman, 2010, Peeters, Rohrman, and Emilsen, 2015, Brody et. al. 2020).



Proportion of male workers in ECEC staff in selected European countries Rohrman & Emilsen et al: EECERA (2018). Source: authors' calculations from various national statistics. Definitions of "Male workers in ECEC" vary between countries.

ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care

Do we need men in Early Years?

and if so...

Why? or

Why Not?

Maybe we're better off without them?! -



This is why women live
Longer

Reasons why we might not need men -

- Risk Takers / Dangerous
- Get the children “worked up” “rough & tumble”
- Feckless, Lazy
- View with suspicion / question their motives
- Not a job for men – not manly, nurturing, caring
- Intruding into women’s world
- Don’t see what’s going on around them

Possible uses for men -

- To play football
- To go outside, especially when it’s wet and cold!
- To carry the heavy stuff
- To fulfill a quota – “We’ve got a male teacher!”
- Role model nb boys



Gender

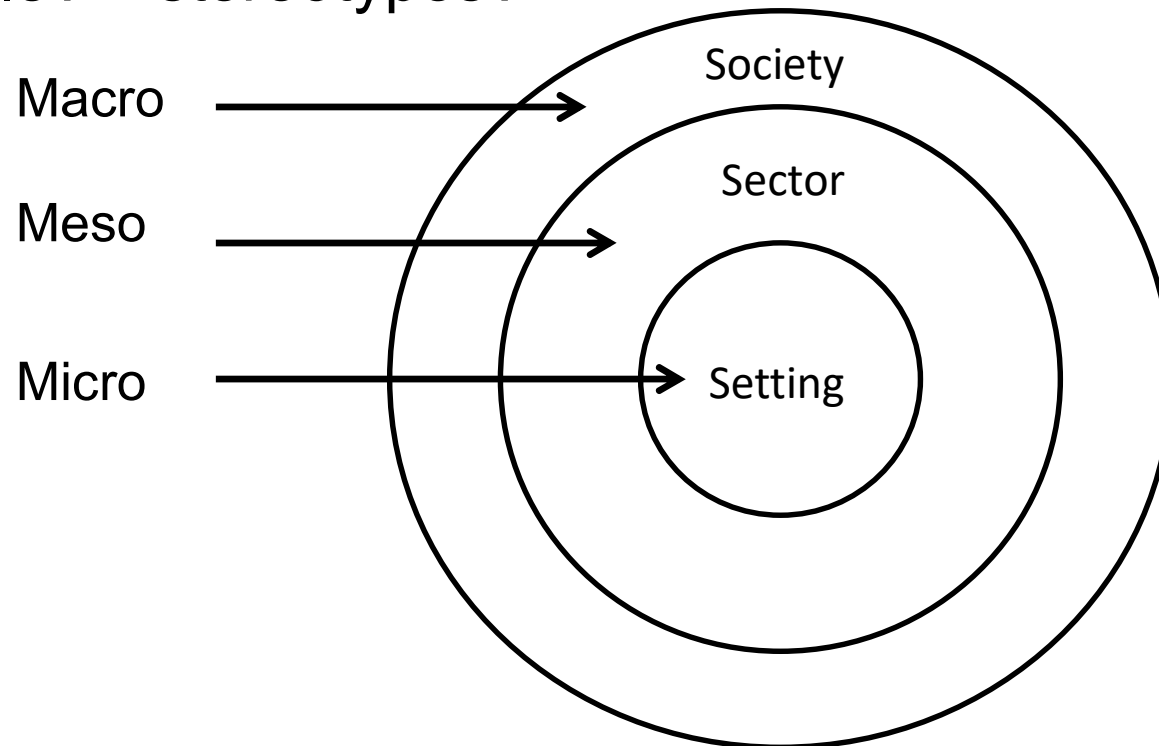
The World Health Organisation says that:

*Gender is the **characteristics** , **roles** and **responsibilities** of women and men, boys and girls, which are **socially constructed**.*

Gender is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organised, not because of our biological differences.

Culture

- ideas, values, attitudes, and expected patterns of behaviour (implicit as well as explicit)
- the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another – male vs female? – stereotypes?



“Most managers (55%) reported that male staff stay in post for less time than their female colleagues and more than half (51% of men vs 6% of women) have contemplated leaving the profession due to concerns around allegations of sexual abuse.

Lancaster University ‘Gendereye’ Study 2020

Parental Views Survey Dec 2017

440 respondents

92% believe it is beneficial for children to be cared for by men as well as women in Early Years settings.

Consistent result across males and females

95% happy for their child to be cared for by a male Early Years worker.

Consistent result across males and females

14% concerned about men working in Early Years.

12% females, 21% males.

Parental Views Survey Dec 2017

'I am probably old fashioned but, according to the National Crime Agency, 1 in 35 men have sexual urges relating to children. This is a terrifying prospect. I appreciate women are also capable of this however, I feel that some men can present a greater risk.'

'Having worked for 10 years in child protection I am aware of the much higher ratio of male to female child abusers'

'My children are used to having a female primary carer. I feel more comfortable with this being replicated in a nursery environment.'

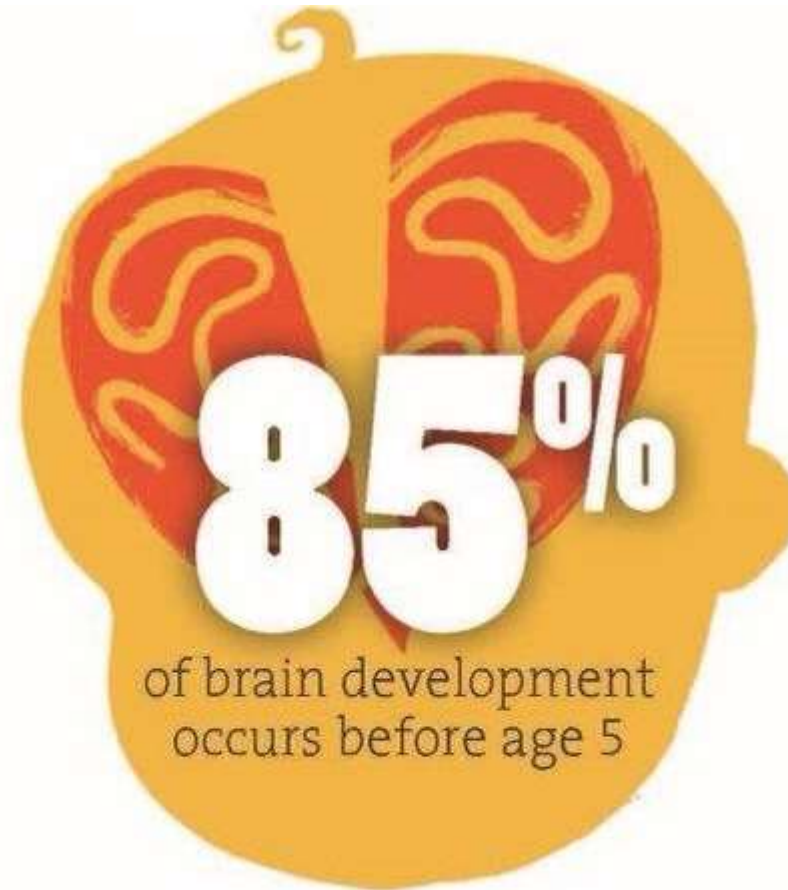
'Children tend to be more scared of men. Men don't tend to want to work in this role and so I am suspicious of men that do.'

'Due to lack of experience surrounding men in childcare, I am wary of the unknown also media portrayal of men and selfishly lack of trust although I know this is wrong.'

'I do not believe that men instinctively have the same level of empathy as women to deal well with young children.'

'They wouldn't be able to give the same warmth and comfort as a female would I suppose?'

So what? Does it actually matter?

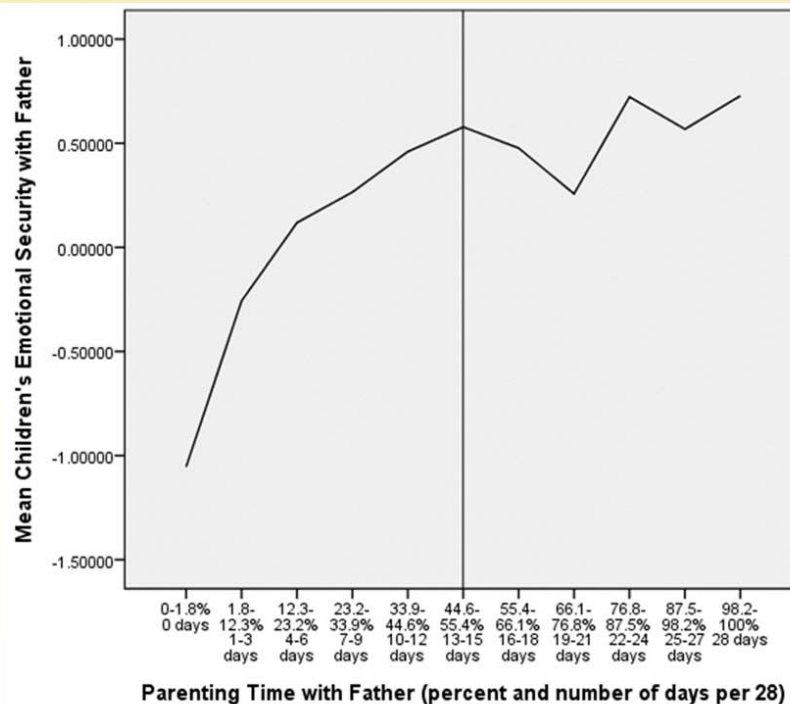




Lads Need Dads @SShaljean · 14h ▼

Feeling overwhelmed and a bit emotional at the end of a long week. Having taken 16 new referrals in the past two days and seeing how many of the boys had no contact with Dad since they were babies, just breaks my heart. But the day I stop feeling is the day I stop doing my job.

The more joint care children have after separation the greater their emotional security as adults



“Young adults’ emotional security in the father-child relationship improved with each increment of overnights with fathers during infancy”

with no deterioration, in fact, with some improvement in mother-child relationships

William V Fabricius 2019 and
William V Fabricius, Suh and Go Woon 2017
Arizona State University

- Arguably the most important job – we need to ensure the best people working with our youngest children.
- Diversity – to represent the community to our children.
- Equal Opportunity
 - men have a right to work with children
 - children have the right to be cared for by people of all genders
 - more chance of meeting all children's needs
- Enrich experience
- Improved outcomes for children
- Tackle stereotypes
- To challenge the status quo
- To change society
 - more tolerant



Changing Culture

Words matter. What are we asking men to do -
Early Years Education, Child Development, Child Care??

Change attitudes

Outside Early Years Sector (macro culture)

Not currently promoted as a viable/credible career option for men and boys

Inside Sector (meso & micro culture)

Support networks, mentoring, environment, attitudes

It's normal here for children to be cared for by men and women

Build on success

Where are males working currently?

Promote success stories / benefits to men / benefits to children

Put men together – host male students / mentoring

Male only training courses

Changing Culture

Examples –

- Anders Farstadt, Asker Region, Norway – 40% males
- Leanna Barrett, Little Forest Folk, South London – 53 staff, 27 men.

Partly because we are a bit different, our parents idolise them. They are like rock stars to the children. They know that they are changing a child's life. The amount of positive feedback they get makes them so proud of what they are achieving.

Start from where we are

- Men represent less than 3% of the Early Years workforce in UK, similar across the World. (14% of the workforce in primary schools)
- 25% of primary schools in England have no male teachers
- Challenge attitudes in society – gender roles, suspicion
- Campaign for improved pay, status
- Identify and support male workers
- Promote early years as a viable career path for men.
- Support and learn from each other, pool resources.

Activities

Personal	SAMEY, Advocacy, Support, Book, Articles, Blogs, Videos, Presentations
Local	
Networks	Southampton, Bristol, York, London
Schools' work	
National	
Conferences	Southampton, Bradford, Bristol,
Government	Early Years Workforce Strategy (Mar 2017) Task & Finish Group May 2019 £30K Fatherhood Institute –
MITEY	website, charter, myth busting, case studies, conference, resources
GENDEREYE	Research, conference, training
International	Network, conferences, research, World Forum

The five statements that make up the MITEY Charter:

- We value men's capacity to care for and educate children, both within families and as professionals
- We value the benefits to children of being cared for and educated by a diverse, mixed-gender early years workforce
- We acknowledge that early years education should benefit from the talents of all, so we are actively seeking to create a workforce that includes men, women and people with other gendered or non-gendered identities
- We are committed to removing the obstacles that stand in the way of a mixed-gender early years workforce, including low pay and status, limited career progression and gender-discriminatory treatment
- We view early years education as a critical context in which to address gender inequality and stereotypes, for the benefit of children and wider society.

Boys and Girls need Men and Women





Thank You

Questions?

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