

Sector-wide survey – over 1 week in in August 2012  
834 responses from the ECE sector and teacher  
education

# NZ SURVEY

# Should government take some form of action to increase numbers

- No Government Action 12%
- Yes Government Action 64%
- Maybe 21%
- No opinion on this issue 3%
- No or 'maybe' - responsibility of men themselves to sign up as early childhood teachers
- Responsibility of ECE services & training providers
- Would discriminate against women and women's achievement in the sector
- Could lower the standard of teachers

**A range of suggestions to support an increase of men in the sector were put forward**

- **scholarships,**
- **media campaigns,**
- **incentive grants to ECE services,**
- **setting performance indicators,**
- **and helping to make ECE teaching an attractive career option**

**Would Having More Men  
Make a Difference and  
How?**

Answer Options	Better	Make no difference	Worse	No opinion
Children's learning	67%	30%	0.1%	3%
Children's behaviour and social skills	78%	19%	0,4%	3%
Children's physical skills and development	78%	20%	0.2%	2%
Children's access to male role models	96%	3%	0.1%	1%
The status of early childhood work	64%	32%	1%	3%
Wages and salaries in the sector	39%	54%	0.5%	7%
Staff team dynamics	70%	20%	3%	7%
Parents' views of a safe environment for their child	28%	48%	11%	13%
The value parents place on early childhood education	47%	45%	1%	7%
Dads and male caregivers participating in their child's ECE service	85%	11%	1%	4%

# More men in early childhood teaching would be beneficial for:

- ⦿ children's access to male role models (96% respondents)
- ⦿ dad and male caregiver participation in their child's ECE programme (85% respondents)
- ⦿ children's behaviour and social skills (78% respondents)
- ⦿ children's physical skills and development (78% respondents)
- ⦿ staff relationships/team dynamics (70% respondents)
- ⦿ children's learning experiences/outcomes (67% respondents)
- ⦿ the social status of early childhood work (64% respondents)

Respondents offered two main additional reasons for increasing the number of men in ECE

### **1. To give children greater choice in adults to relate to**

“Each child is unique relating to a range of people in different ways and therefore we need a range of diversity in our teaching teams; male teachers would contribute to this range” (Teacher Educator)

“Enabling children and their families to experience both genders in a teaching team encourages healthy 'normal' societal experiences and contexts, and is far more preferential than having one gender only” (Teacher-Led Centre)

## **2. So ECE services reflect the gender composition of their community**

“Any sort of diversity in relation to the ECE educators/teachers children engage with has got to be beneficial to everybody involved. It is important that the communities we have in ECE settings reflect the communities outside of these” (Teacher Educator)

“We have a male teacher in our Centre. Overall we love having him, and most of the children love him, particularly the boys. However, he is there more because he is a male than for the other skills he brings. Having more male teachers would then 'normalise' their employment in ECE and they could then be employed for the skills they bring as individuals, not just for being a male. It will take a while to get to this stage!” (Teacher-Led Centre)



## Small Minority Feared an Increase in Male Representation.

“Could make it worse for female teachers. Male teachers might demand higher wages which would be unfair on the female teachers even though they might be on the same level of qualifications and experience” (Teacher-Led Centre Service)

“It could create potential difficulties in leadership as males tend to dominate leadership in all other education sectors” (Teacher Educator)

“Exposure to a broader range of thinking / ways of being is always good for learning. We don't want the field to be overtaken by male dominated thinking, however, as women have worked long and hard to be heard and have influence in our society” (Teacher Educator)

In Norway children aged 1 - 6 years attend the same institution (not compulsory) called Barnehage. Almost every child attends because it is expected (89% 1 - 5 year-olds and 97% 5 year-olds).

The centres have a mixture of professional (3 year-degree) and untrained staff.

## **The Example of Norway and its Action Plan**

In 2011 8.3% of staff were men working daily with children.

How has Norway achieved this when other countries are struggling to attract men into early childhood education?

Norway's goal now is to increase the share of men working in Barnehages to 20%!

In Norway there is a consensus about the importance of men in children's lives. **The goal of gender equality is enshrined in laws, regulations, and curricula.**

- The arguments are often that early education is an important contributor to the goal of an egalitarian society.
- Politicians view gender equality as a means to providing more people in the labour force.
- Through full early education participation there is opportunity for both mums and dads to join the workforce and contribute to the country's economic wellbeing.

Moderate gender quotas and positive affirmative action helps.

Positive action is to treat the sexes differently in order to promote gender equality between men and women.

A survey by Bredeesen, Nordfjell & Askeland (2008) showed that Training Colleges had little focus on the issue and rarely strove to recruit male students.

- *To increase the number of men in centres it is worth thinking about making Colleges/Universities accountable for the number of men recruited.*

# **Government Action Plans for Gender Equality**

## 2008 - 2010 Plan

- The leaning environment in ECE shall promote equality between boys and girls
- A better gender balance among members of staff in ECE centres and in teacher education

## Several actions resulted

- Several networks for men (Men in Barnehage) were established. It was seen to be important for men to recruit men. The best promoters are men themselves
- Demonstration centres helped to guide and inform other centres on recruiting and importantly keeping men in the centre for a longer period of time.
- Recruitment teams did out-reach recruitment work and marketed ECE as workplaces for men e.g. at school principals meetings and educational fairs, and other places where young men meet.
- National meetings and conferences were organised
- A website for men in Barnehages was established



## Equality 2014 Action Plan

This Action Plan is inter-sectoral and describes the government goals and initiatives for gender equality.

Goal 1 - To increase awareness of gender equality in ECE

(a) promote gender equality and combat all forms of discrimination

(b) increase the share of men working in ECE to 20%

(c) strive for a better gender balance

German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth funded the initiative 'men in early childhood education and care'.

Thirty million Euros of this 1.7 million Euros was available over 3 years for Hamburg alone.

## Activities

- Fielding calls and providing counselling from those interested in training to be an early childhood educator or employing a male educator.
- Annual conference with lectures and workshops for men and women on men in early childhood education.
- Professional development courses for centres
- Initiating and managing five work groups focused on vocational orientation, qualification, early childhood centre management, abuse of power and men in early childhood education.
- Running a publicity campaign.

In just under two years, the Hamburg More Men in KITAS Project had:

- 20,000 viewers of its YouTube channel,
- more than 100 press/newspaper articles about the project,
- increased to 13% the proportion of men in the centres in the project, and
- seen the number of men enrolled in training increase to 18%.



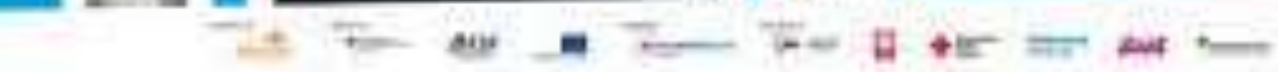
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# GO ON . . . . YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO

You don't have to be in your second childhood to work in childcare, but have you thought about working with children of all ages?

To help you, Young in Herts are running free taster courses to enable men of all ages to explore the opportunities in this rewarding field. So go ahead, - be a kid again.

For course details call Amanda at



For research: [www.childforum.com](http://www.childforum.com)

NZ Research in ECE Journal

EC-Menz website

Coming Up:

a special issue of EECERJ on gender balance in 2015. The **European Early Childhood Education Research Journal**, the Journal of EECERA, is one of the most prestigious early childhood journals in the world