
What should the theme for next year's conference be?

- feedback from group discussion

In this session, participants were asked to think about the focus of the next Dads Express event. Some respondents offered titles for this event, while others named particular issues and ways of working. The following list does not reflect any order of priority ...

Possible Titles ...

- Misters are doing it for themselves.
- Fathers: speaking our truth.
- It's my child too.
- Fathers care.
- Who are men who parent?
- Engaging young fathers.
- Real dads: finding out from fathers about the important issues.
- Early intervention: involving dads from the start and keeping them involved.
- Fathers: the link between home, school and community.
- Misconception: how we perceive fathers.
- Getting on track: engaging fathers and mobilising men.
- Making the future: devising an action plan and doing it.
- These are our stories: the diversity of fatherhood in the north of Ireland.
- Toolkit for delivery: how to set-up and run a programme for fathers.
- Alternative fathering: a weekend workshop on creative activities.
- Vive la difference!

Issues ...

- Preparation for parenthood: where do we need to focus our energies?
- Challenging stereotypes of the 'Mum, Dad and 2.4 Children Family' - not all families are like this e.g. lone parents, step-parents, foster parents, adoptive parents.
- Workers' experiences of engaging with fathers.
- Fathering teenagers.
- D-Day: review of what was done over the previous year and the links made.
- The cost of being a dad: financial and emotional.
- How the relationship of parents affects parenting work.
- How we could interact with women's groups and community development groups.
- How to influence service providers and policy-makers.
- Why fathers' issues should be a political issue.
- Promoting positive father roles from an early age and dispelling the notions of 'strong men' and 'weak women'.

Methodology ...

- Stick to a clear theme for a defined audience i.e. professionals, fathers or both. But recognise that if you try to do both you may please neither group.
- Balance learning opportunities/theoretical input with networking/sharing experience.
- Hear fathers telling their stories/experiences of parenthood.
- Provide examples of effective practice from local projects - also hear fathers' views of these initiatives from a participant point of view.
- Allow some time for workshops on specific subjects.
- Look at longer-term development plan for Dads Express.