

Position Statement - Males in Early Childhood

It is essential for children to have both men and women working together in their care and education. Men have something to offer that is different to what females have to offer. This statement acknowledges the fundamental contributions of female staff and mothers working with young children and also recognizes that male staff and male volunteers are just as vital in early childhood services. The following strategies aim to; encourage acceptance within early childhood services of the important role of male staff, prevent men's professional isolation, encourage and support males to enter and stay in the field, and increase the professional development of the early childhood field as a whole.

Implementation Strategies – Three Streams

Engage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current male workers speaking to male high school students about entering the field• Promotional material developed to highlight male role models to other men in the field or others thinking of entering• Australian and State / Territory database developed to identify numbers of men, where men are working or studying, level of qualifications and service types working in• Each regional Males in Early Childhood Network Group to provide scholarships to encourage men to enter the field.• Training institutions encouraged to employ male teachers in early childhood courses• Develop materials for training institutions to target males, including training for female teachers / lecturers on inclusion of male students• Men only early childhood courses
Maintain & Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male mentoring support established for all male students within their first year of study• A regular newsletter disseminated to all men working or studying in the early childhood field• Funded position to set up and maintain regional Males in Early Childhood Network Groups• Financial incentives for employers to employ men as child care trainees (same employer incentives for females in non-traditional employment)• Central web site developed specifically for men in early childhood, including discussion forum• Increased wages and conditions to encourage more men to be retained and also to enter field
Educate & Inform
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding to run subsequent Males in Early Childhood conferences and subsidies for males to attend the conference• Workshops run at the Early Childhood Australia conference 2008, specifically targeting males in early childhood• Male staff members facilitating groups with fathers and other men to encourage male identity in early childhood services• Develop training materials for female early childhood staff, including policy development for services, to create awareness of male workers and students• Implementing successful overseas strategies to increase male involvement• Further research on the benefits for young children of men in early childhood services

This position statement was developed by the delegates of the Males in Early Childhood Summit held in July 2006. This men only event was the first of its type in Australia and was hosted by the Newcastle based Males in Early Childhood Network Group