Exploring Young Fathers’ Information Practices

Where do young dads go when they have parenting questions? What barriers do they encounter?

Study Participants

23 young fathers interviewed (6 in Greater Vancouver and 17 in Prince George.)

Educational Attainment

- Did not complete high school = 13
- Currently completing high school = 3
- Graduated high school = 5
- Some college = 1
- Graduated trade school = 1

Young fathers were 16-29 years old.

Ethnicity

- Indigenous = 14
- White = 8
- Black = 2
- South Asian = 1

2 dads identified with multiple ethnicities

Key Findings

Data from this study show that many young fathers encounter barriers when trying to access parenting information because most of this information is tailored for mothers. Young dads often feel excluded from information provided by parenting documents, services and their communities.

Documents

Parenting services and programs have a lot of useful parenting information, including books, pamphlets and posters. However, a closer look at some of these resources shows that many of them were made for parenting women rather than parenting men. Parenting resources which used colours and designs associated with femininity (e.g., pink) and depicting only women gave young fathers the impression that the information was not for them.

Services

Young mothers often had access to Young Parent Programs and parenting services which were not available to young fathers.

“You go around your community and you see a lot of different things for moms. But you don’t really see much things about children with their fathers.” – Victor, young dad, Greater Vancouver

Community

Young fathers sought information from a variety of sources in their communities, including their partners, family, other dads, and the internet. Some young dads had child care knowledge from past babysitting experiences. Young dads also received advice from strangers without asking for it.

However, young fathers found that sometimes the information provided by these sources was not reliable or convenient to access.

Many dads felt that the lack of parenting services for dads was just something they had to “deal with.”
Recommendations to Support Young Dads

- Maintain a welcoming atmosphere by explicitly inviting young fathers and making their presence visible in the space.
- Develop opportunities for one-on-one support, such as appointments and informal meetings with professionals and service providers who can guide and advise young fathers.
- Preserve regular access through continued programming and stable funding.
- Create an accessible schedule of programs on evenings and weekends.
- Incorporate a “learning by doing” philosophy at services and programs, as opposed to didactic, one-way information provision.

For more about young fathers' information contexts, please see:


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The Young Parents Study

The Young Parents Study is a five-year research project that seeks to better understand the experiences of young parents (aged 15-24) with a variety of health, education, and social service interventions and policies. It involves interviews and fieldwork at young parent programs in Prince George and Greater Vancouver, British Columbia. The study aims to gather information that can be used to improve services and supports for young parents both locally and provincially.

This study is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and led by Dr. Jeannie Shoveller of UBC’s School of Population and Public Health.

For more information about the Young Parent Study, please visit our website:


Thank You.