



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

TOOLKIT

Fathers and outcomes for children

**Keeping Fathers in Sight: good
practice toolkit for engaging and
working with fathers**

2023 Edition





Keeping Fathers in Sight: good practice toolkit for engaging and working with fathers

“

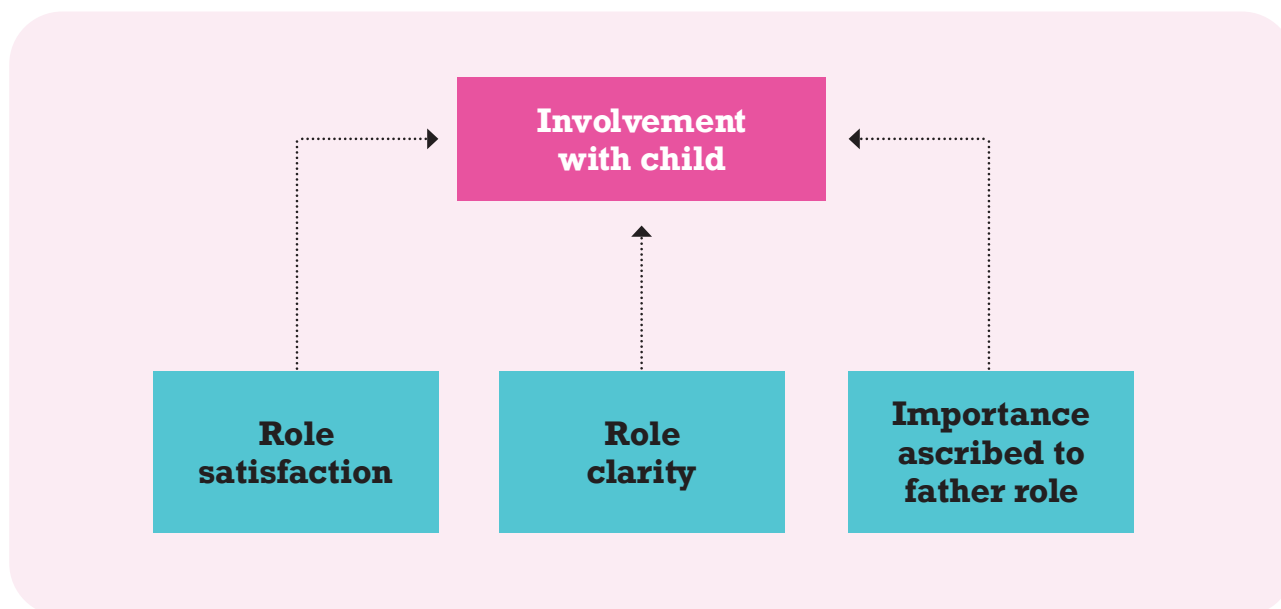
The view of the CSPR Panel is that... ..fathers are equally important [as mothers] and that including fathers should be a mantra of safeguarding practice – this is the cultural shift Norfolk is aiming for.”

**Norfolk Child Safeguarding Practice Review
AK 2023**

”

Research evidence is clear that when a father is positively involved in their child's life outcomes improve for that child throughout their development into adulthood. This involvement influences cognitive and motor skills in infants, readiness for school, emotional resilience, mental wellbeing, greater levels of sociability, confidence, and self-control, fewer behavioural problems, greater educational attainment, higher self-esteem, reduced likelihood of detrimental risky behaviours in adolescence, lower levels of criminality or substance misuse, and greater life satisfaction. For the majority of these, there is little evidence that this is specifically about the parent being male, the key factor is the active involvement of both parents.

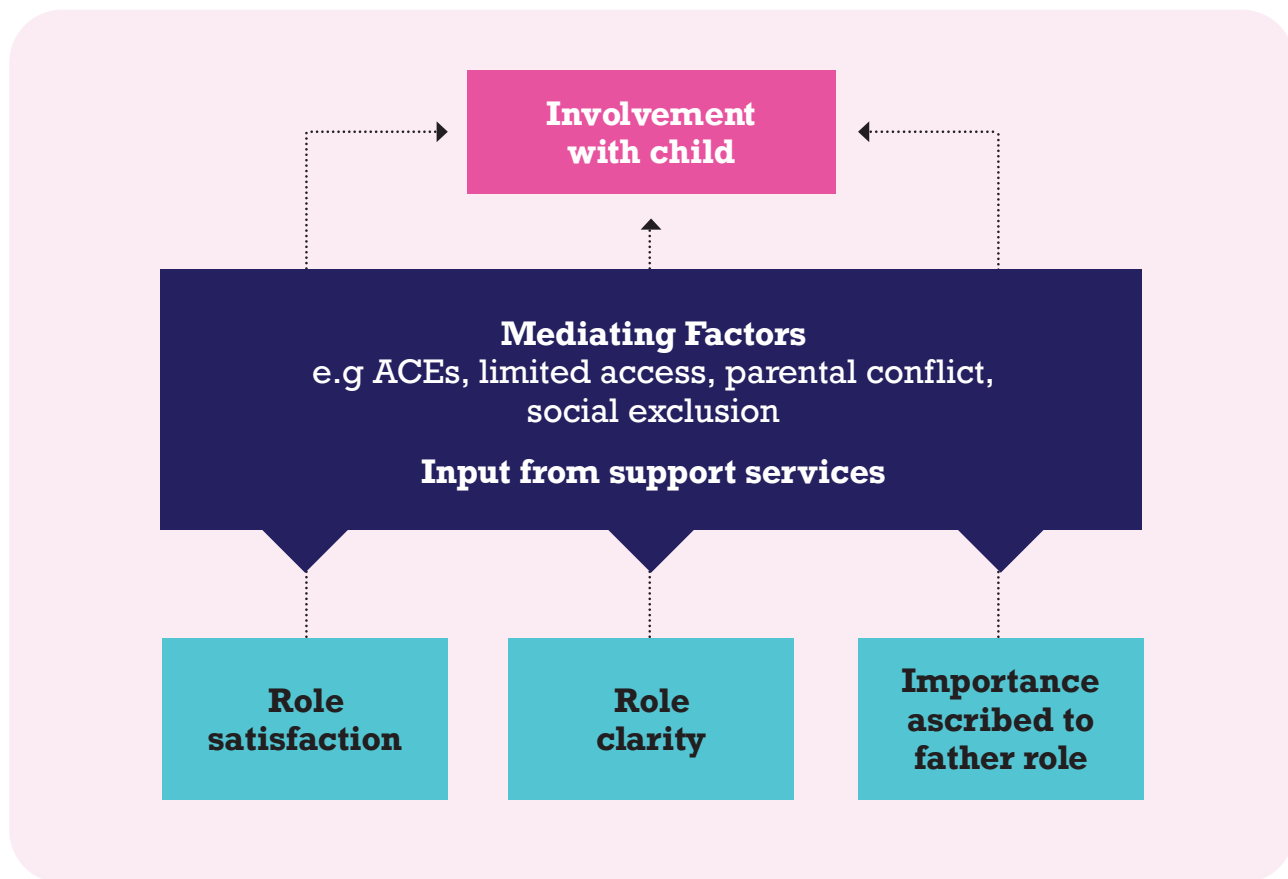
Fathers usually have as much impact on the child's development and wellbeing as mothers. Fathers and mothers, as well as professionals, don't always understand the benefits of the father being actively involved in his child's life. A father's involvement with his child is predominantly influenced by how he, and those around him, understand and value his input.



It is essential that fathers are not seen as an additional parent to the mother but that they are equally important in their child's life, especially when their contact time with their child is limited. The quality of the father-child relationship matters more than the specific amount of hours spent together. The positive effect that fathers have is not limited to birth fathers living with their children, but includes non-resident fathers, stepfathers, and partners providing that nurturing role for children.

A father's appreciation of his role and how he sees it is influenced by very many factors including (but not exclusively) his own experience of being parented, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the relationship with his partner.

Practitioners and services have a vital role to play supporting both fathers and mothers to understand the importance of both parents playing an active and positive role in their child's development.



Negative and harmful parenting from either parent is obviously detrimental to that child and the absence of a parent will continue to affect that child's lived experience and influence their outcomes from infancy through to adulthood. The influence that practitioners have on the father's appreciation of his role and the impact that it has on his involvement with his children should not be underestimated.

There is a large body of research collected over decades which evidences the impact that fathers have on their children. This includes outcomes such as, children's emotional, psychological and educational development, their future careers and future division of housework. Research has also revealed the positive outcomes on family relationships such as a reduction in separation and divorce.

Below are just a very few references for further information:

There is currently a study looking into Paternal Involvement and its Effects on Children's Education (PIECE) led by the University of Leeds.

<https://piecestudy.org>

Good practice with fathers in children and family services Gary Clapton

<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/good-practice-fathers-children-and-family-services>

The influence of fathers on children's mental health Report from the Association of Infant Mental Health (AIMH) Conference, 29 September 2017 Karen Morgan and Sharon Naylor

https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/RESEARCH-Morgan_0.pdf

Shared care, father's involvement in care and family well-being outcomes

A Literature Review Research report prepared by H. Chung, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, University of Kent Jan 2021 Government Equalities Office

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957538/Shared_care_and_well-being_outcomes-Literature_review.pdf





Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

