

News story: Calls for more men to work in the early years

More men are to be encouraged in to a careers in nurseries and early years settings, in a new project to provide more diverse role models for children before they start school.

With men making up just 3% of early years staff in England, the project aims to break down the barriers that prevent men entering careers in children's early education, including the myth that men are less suited to caring roles.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi has today (24 April) announced a £30,000 grant to support the scheme and help provide more male role models for children in the early years.

The project, run by the [Fatherhood Institute](#), will challenge the stereotypes that exist around men's roles in early education, using relatable case-studies from men who have left other careers – including an ex-lorry driver and a young art student.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Every child needs a role-model to guide them – whether that's a parent, a close family member or friend, or someone at nursery or preschool that makes a difference in their life. The early years staff who support children in the first few years of their education equip them with important skills before they reach the classroom, getting them on track to succeed as they get older.

Just as parenting is a shared responsibility, so is kickstarting a child's love of learning. I want more men to play a positive role in educating and caring for our next generation. That's why we're supporting the Fatherhood Institute to encourage men from all walks of life into early years careers, to give children the best start in life and be a part of this important and rewarding sector.

To support careers advisers and early years employers across the country, the project will spearhead an innovative recruitment drive that highlights the positive roles men can play in the crucial first years of a child's education.

Using the government's new investment, the Fatherhood Institute will provide practical resources like mythbusters, 'how-to' guides and online content to support male recruitment into the profession, as well as online peer support for men already working in the sector.

The project's ambition is to reflect the diversity of modern Britain within early years settings, where both parents play an increasingly active role in

their child's development.

Dr Jeremy Davies, Head of Communications at the Fatherhood Institute, who will lead the project, said:

We are delighted to be leading this work on behalf of the early years sector. Old-fashioned attitudes about caring and education being 'women's work' have no place in modern Britain – the world has moved on, dads are doing more hands-on childcare than ever before, and our nurseries and preschools need to catch up.

We want careers advisers and employers to reach out and support men into early years work – including dads and other men with experience of looking after children, and those who have the interest and skills to build on. We all understand the importance of helping women into STEM careers; this is the other side of the same coin.

The grant will also help fund a national conference to further promote early years careers to fathers, other men with experience of looking after children and those with an existing interest in improving children's early education.

The Fatherhood Institute's project forms part of the government's wider efforts to give children the best start in life by strengthening the early years workforce, including the Department's £20 million Professional Development Programme targeted at better training for early years staff working in more deprived areas.

This contributes to the Education Secretary Damian Hinds' wider [ambition](#) to halve the percentage of children who leave reception without early communication or reading skills, through supporting the early years sector and building on the national mission to support children's learning at home.