

# How to Engage Men in Nurturing Care\* Across the Early Life Stages

MEN CAREGIVERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENSURING ALL CHILDREN RECEIVE NURTURING CARE.



Pregnancy and Childbirth



Postnatal and Newborn



Infant and Toddler (<3 years)



Young Child (3 to 6 years)



## Enabling policies:

Adopt paid parental leave, policies and regulations that encourage men's participation in maternal, newborn, child health services and early childhood care.

- **Healthcare policies, guidelines and protocols:** For example, [Program P: A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, and Maternal and Child Health](#) includes guidance and checklists for training healthcare providers and a curriculum for engaging fathers; and an exemplary country policy is the [Brazilian Comprehensive Healthcare Policy for Men](#).
- **Paid parental leave:** [MenCare, A Global Fatherhood Campaign](#), provides a range of advocacy resources, including [ten key features of parental leave policies](#).
- **Early childhood care policies,** e.g., policies supporting pre- or in-service training on [how to promote father engagement](#); policies that promote men's recruitment into caring professions by setting quotas for the proportion of early childhood educators who are male.

## Supportive services:

Engage men in maternal, newborn and child health services and in home and centre-based learning.

- **Engaging men in MNCH services:** A range of tools and resources have been developed on training healthcare providers in maternal, newborn and child health, including this [MenCare Guide for training healthcare providers on male engagement](#).
- **Engaging men in early learning** by systematically inviting all fathers to activities for parents, ensuring that meetings are held at times that meet both the mothers' and fathers' schedules; recruiting male carers/educators. [Promoting Men's Engagement in Early Childhood Development: A Programming and Influencing Package](#) provides guidance on working with leaders to promote men's engagement in early childhood development.

## Caregiver capabilities:

Build men's parenting skills and peer support while incorporating dialogues that promote gender equity and joint couple-decision-making.

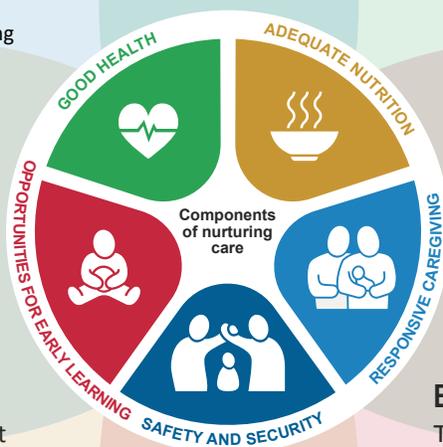
- **Father or parenting support groups** that create safe spaces for mutual learning, critical reflection and dialogue on gender roles and norms with respect to caregiving, skills-building and peer support;
- **Mentoring programs** with older, respected men coaching new fathers;
- **Home visitation** by community health or social protection workers who can observe, provide direct feedback and build skills of fathers as they interact with their children.

Various guides and curricula for these interventions are available, such as [The Fathers Clubs Manual on Engaging Men in Maternal, Newborn, and Child health and Sexual and Reproductive Health](#), [REAL Fathers Implementation Guidelines](#), and [Step by Step: Engaging Fathers in Programs for Families](#).

## Empowered communities:

Transform expectations and gender norms around men's caregiving through social and behavior change.

- **Social and behavior change interventions** transform attitudes and expectations around men's caregiving and mobilize the wider community to adopt egalitarian norms and practices for maternal and newborn health. See for example:
- [Promoting Men's Engagement in Early Childhood Development: A Programming and Influencing Package](#) includes a specific chapter on social behavior change communication and community engagement.
- [Fathers Matter](#) offers a facilitation guide, online training and access to Whatsapp groups for peer support to fathers on how they can be more positively involved in their children's lives at every life stage.



\* Refers to a stable environment created by parents and other caregivers that ensures children's good health and nutrition, protects them from threats, and gives young children opportunities for early learning, through interactions that are emotionally supportive and responsive. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272603/9789241514064-eng.pdf>.

Please see DO's & DON'Ts for Engaging Men & Boys | IGWG [<https://www.igwg.org/resources/dos-donts-for-engaging-men-boys/>]

For more information on the evidence related to engaging men in nurturing care see: <https://nurturing-care.org/engaging-men-in-nurturing-care/>. (forthcoming)



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