



# TRANSATLANTIC FORUM ON INCLUSIVE EARLY YEARS

INVESTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN FROM MIGRANT AND LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

## Parental Engagement in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC):

Fathers, low-income families and the move to a systemic analysis.

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# This Paper

## Men and Families

Men's changing family roles in Europe



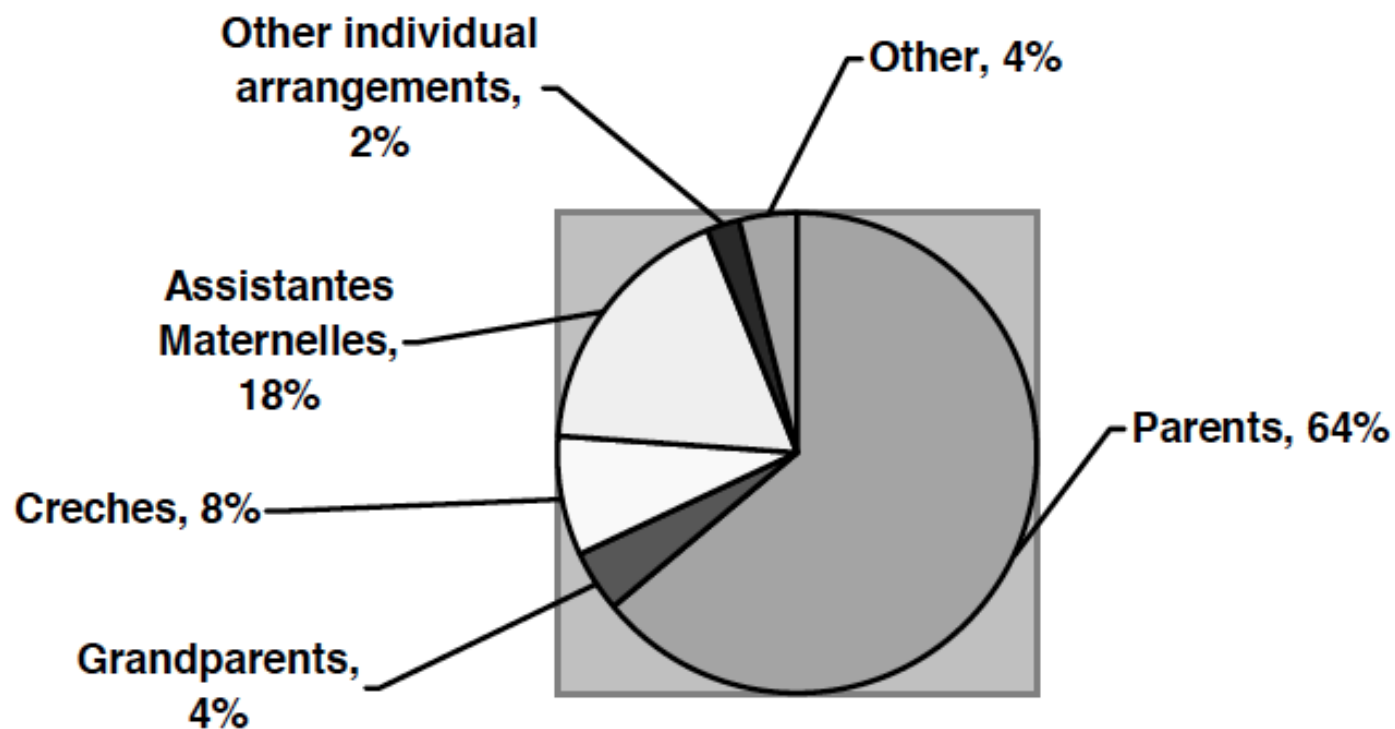
1. Men as parents
  - a. What part do fathers play in the care of their children?
  - b. Paternal sensitivity in parenting
  - c. Do fathers influence the development of their children?
2. Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration
3. Attempts to increase the involvement of fathers

# 1a. What part do fathers play in the care of their children

## ➤ UK Context:

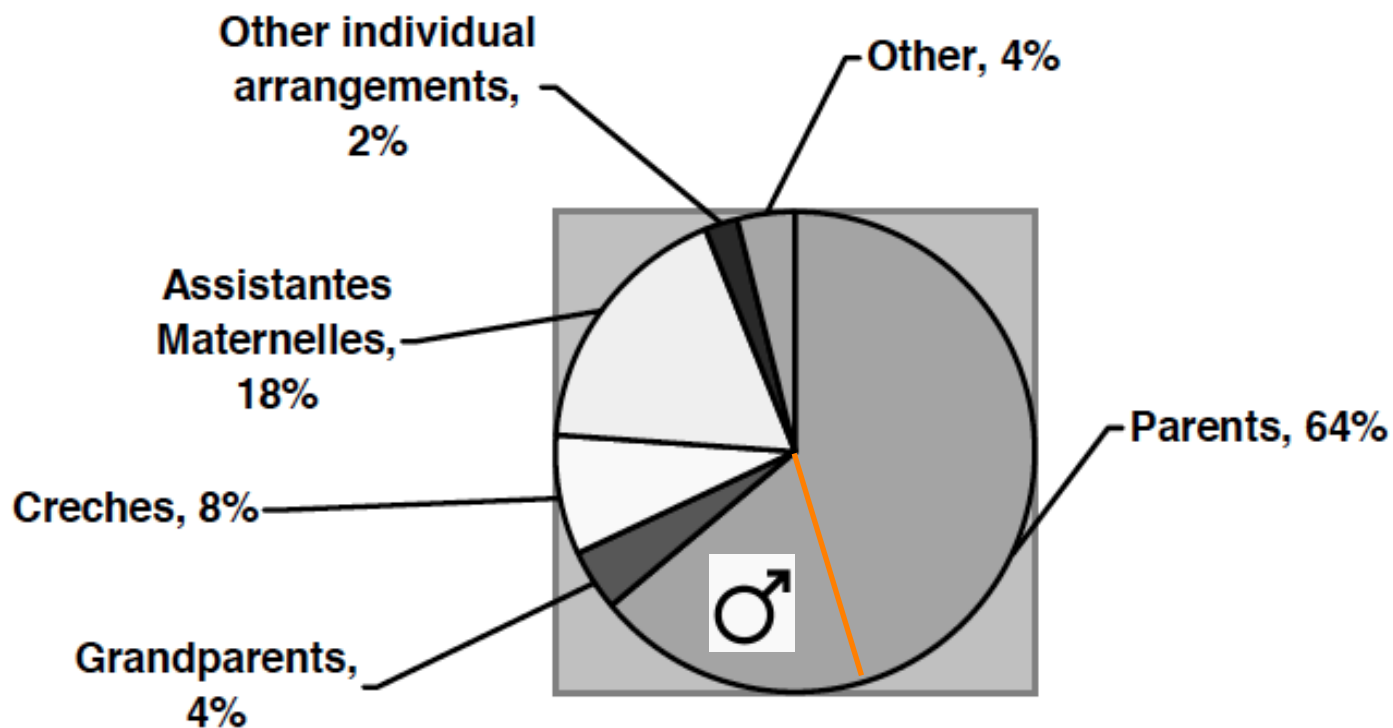
- Of the family members who care for preschoolers while mothers work, fathers do so in more households (Ferri & Smith, 1995)
- Men's commitment is less than women's (in the UK, 3 vs. 4.5 hours: O'Brien, 2005)
- So, should we consider the role of fathers (why)?

**Fig. 1: Primary ECEC arrangement for children under 3**



Source: DREES, Enquête Modes de garde et d'accueil des enfants de moins de 7 ans, mai 2002

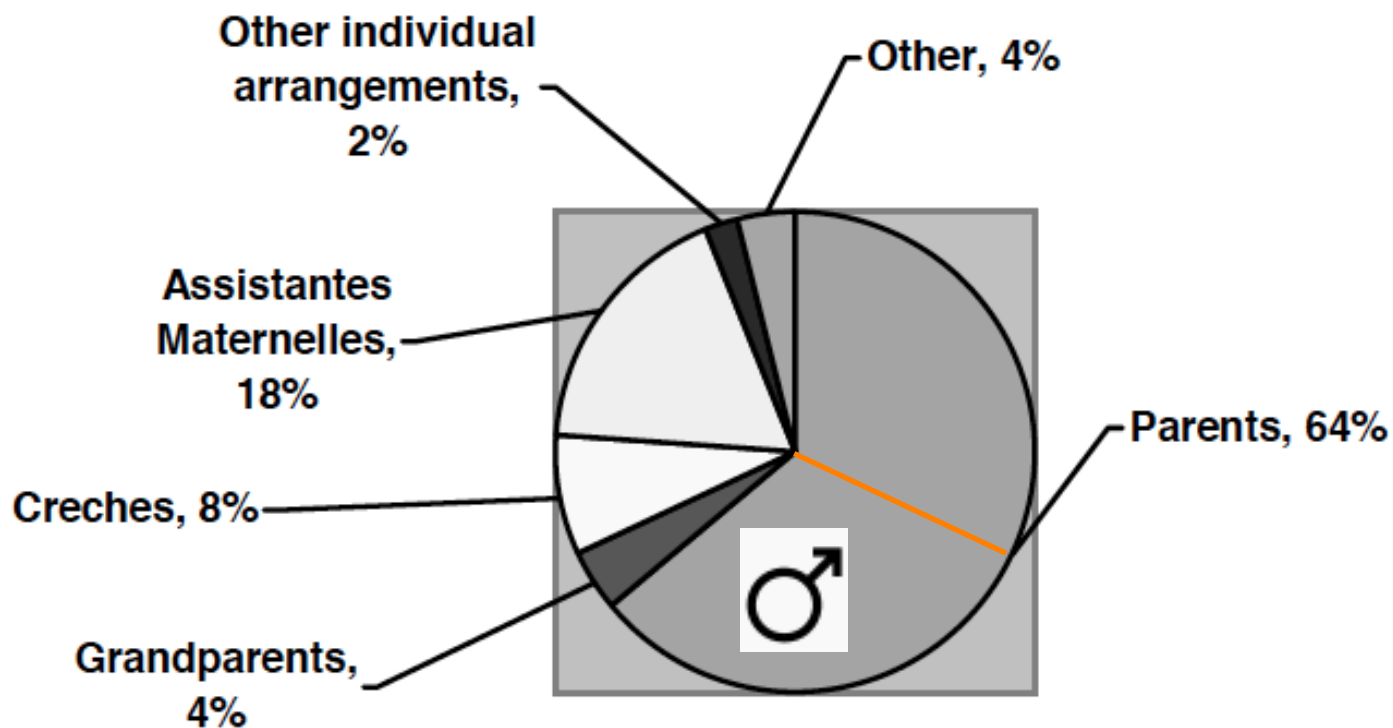
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Kan, Sullivan & Gershuny (2011): European Data Trends: 1976 - 2011

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## 1b. Paternal Sensitivity: Style

- ❖ Jean Berko Gleason (1975) Fathers and other strangers:
  - ❖ Men = similar to women but not as attuned = stretch the child's cognitive & language skills
  
- ❖ Why?

## 1b. Paternal Sensitivity: Style

- ❖ Jean Berko Gleason (1975) Fathers and other strangers:
  - ❖ Men = similar to women but not as attuned = stretch the child's cognitive & language skills
- ❖ Why?
  - ❖ Differential child care [working hours]
  - ❖ 'Biology' but what do we mean by biology?



# 1b. Paternal Sensitivity: Style

+ Weisman, Zagoory-Sharon, & Feldman, 2014 :

**Infant-father**

Positive

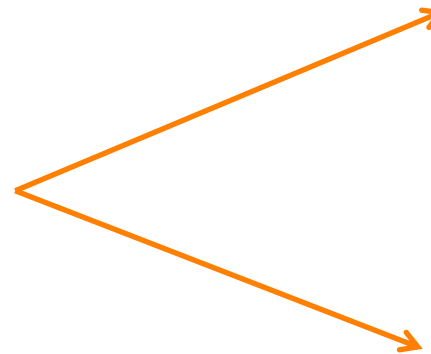
Affect

Synchrony  
in  
interaction

Nasal  
oxytocin



Lower  
Testosterone



## 1b. Paternal Sensitivity: Play

- + Lamb (1976): US: Men specialize in play particularly rough and tumble
- + 1990s-2000s: Men in northern Europe, Portugal & West Africa: Maternal play = paternal play
- + Emerging cultures: Greater emphasis on the provider role, for example in Taiwan (Sun & Roopnarine, 1996 )



## 1c. Do fathers influence the development of their children?

- ◆ Lewis & Lamb, 2003—Lamb & Lewis, 2013:
  - ◆ Fathers seem to 'influence' their children

# Fathers have no influence?: Attachment studies

1 year

3 years

6-11 years

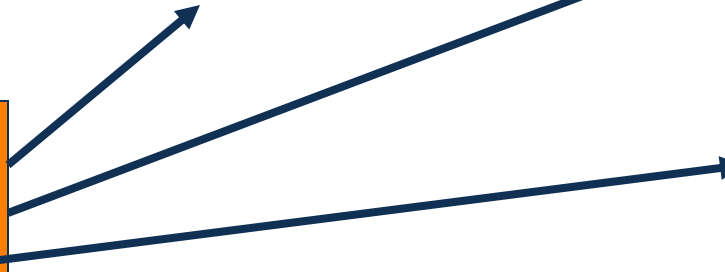
Paternal attachment

Peer competence

Novel events

Maternal attachment

Sociability



# Attachments: the longer view

Grossmann et al (2002a & b)

Infancy 3 yrs

6 yrs

16 yrs

22 yrs

Mother-child  
attachment

Mother  
-child  
Play

Child  
sociability

Child AAI

Father-child  
attachment

Father  
-child  
Play

Child  
Intimate  
Reltns.

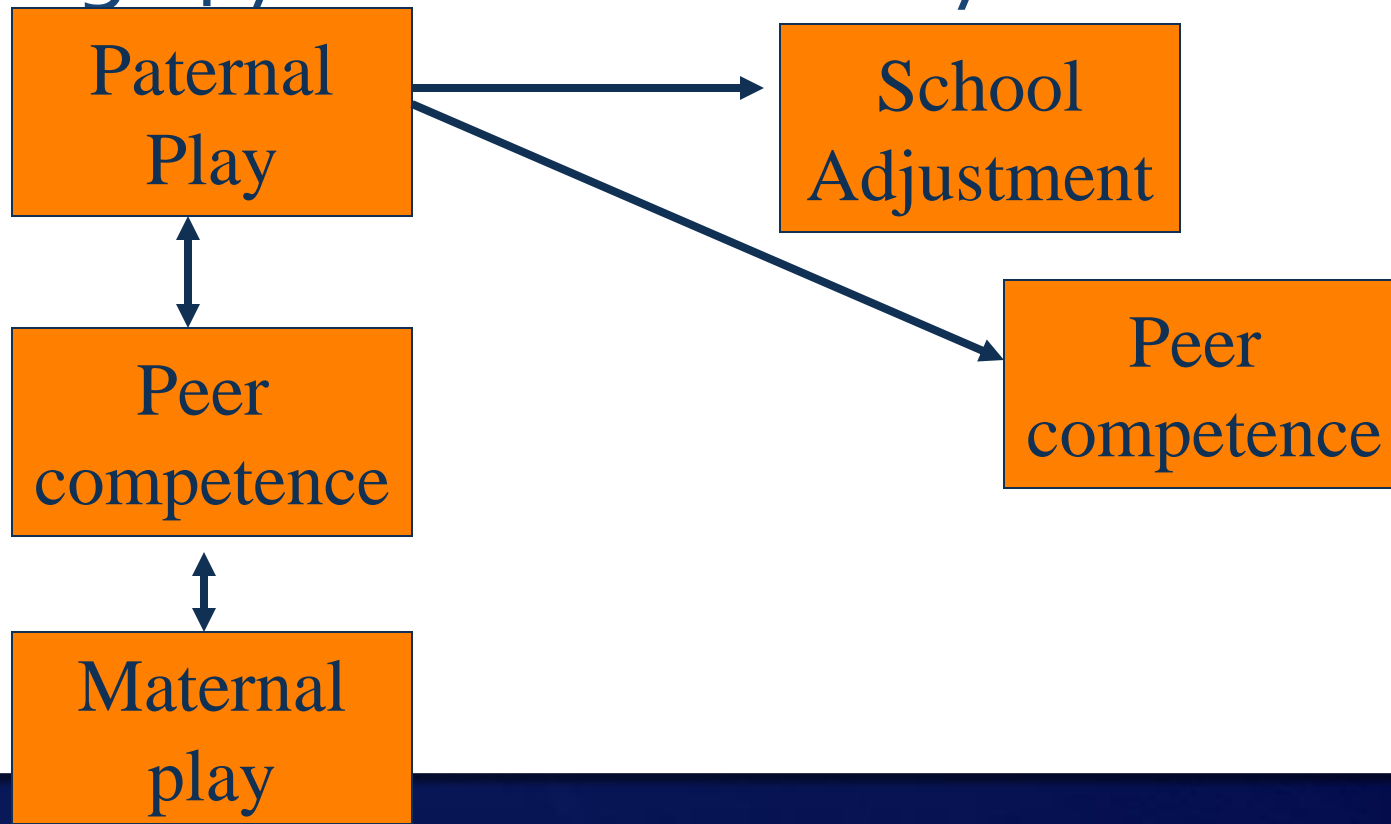


# Other influences: fathers & play

Parke et al. (2004)

E.g. 4 years

6 years



## 1c. Do fathers influence the development of their children?

- ◆ Lewis & Lamb, 2003—Lamb & Lewis, 2013:
  - ◆ Fathers seem to 'influence' their children = YES
  - ◆ The question is how?
    - ◆ We have long argued against the unique contribution of fathers: rather men's influence is nested in a network of relationships from the physiological to the macro-social



# The elements of the system- Parenting as a joint venture: which direction?

Fagan & Cabrera (2012)

Infancy

Parents'  
relationship

Coparenting

2+ 4 years

Parents'  
relationship

Coparenting

# The elements of the system- Parenting as a joint venture: which direction?

Fagan & Cabrera (2012)

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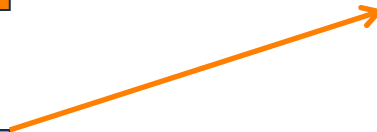
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Coparenting



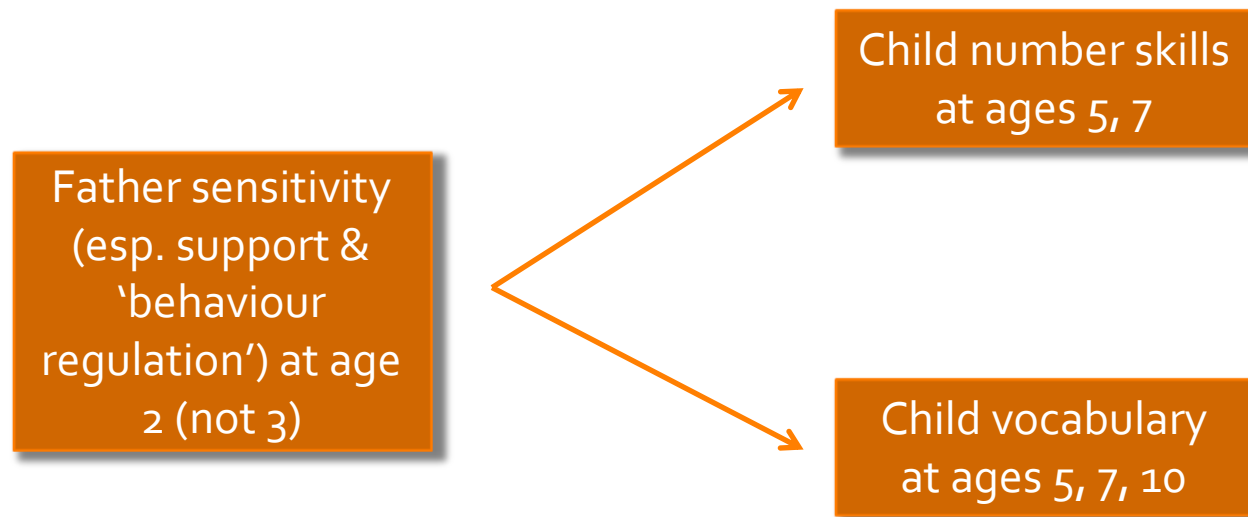
## 2. Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration: Stereotypes

Salway et al (2008): We must be careful about treating 'migrant' or 'ethnic minority groups as 'the same'

- + 4 'British groups originating from the 'Indian sub-continent': fathers' commitments to providing and care
- + Clear differences between groups originating from the same geographical area in terms of:
  - + Maternal paid employment ↔ paternal care

## 2. Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration:

- + McKelvey et al (2010): Fathers with children in preschool programme predicts later child skills



# Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration: Similarities with majority culture?

- + The same patterns apply but in different ways and with different intensity

Paternal  
Employment

Paternal  
Coparenting

Maternal  
Employment

Maternal  
Coparenting

# Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration

- + Emerging literature on paternal migration – even transnational, places strains on individuals and families

Paternal  
Employment

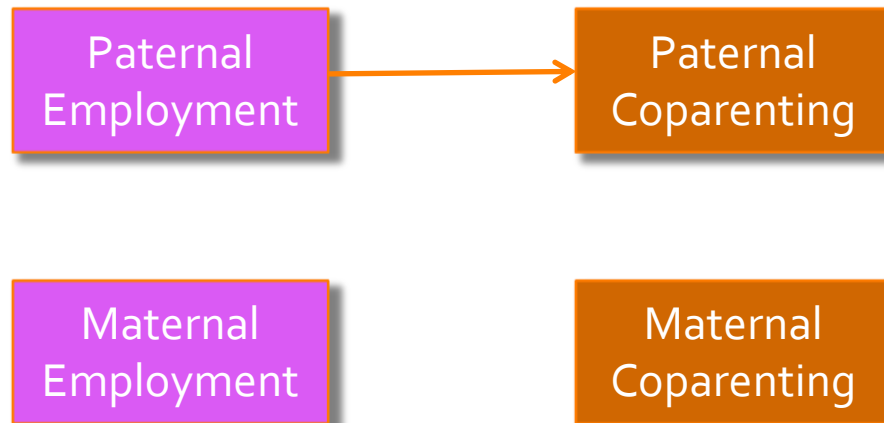
Paternal  
Coparenting

Maternal  
Employment

Maternal  
Coparenting

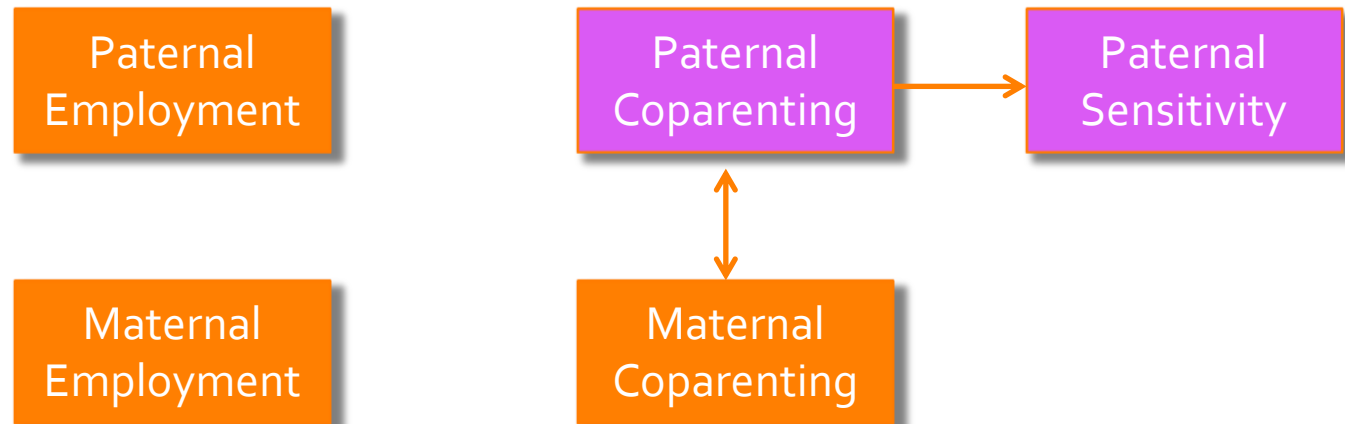
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- + Increased work-home conflicts in those with poor jobs and long hours of work (e.g. Goodman et al., 2008)



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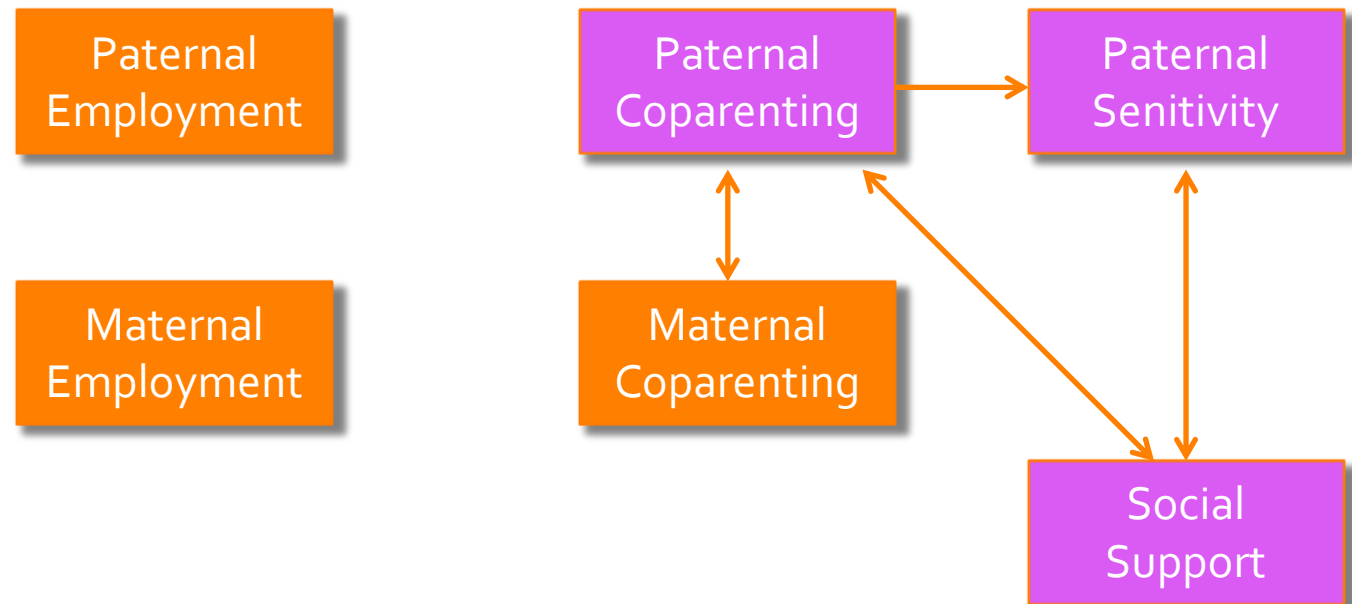
- + Coparenting influences paternal sensitivity in young [poverty] fathers with 3 year olds more than older non-poverty fathers (e.g. Fagan & Lee, 2012)





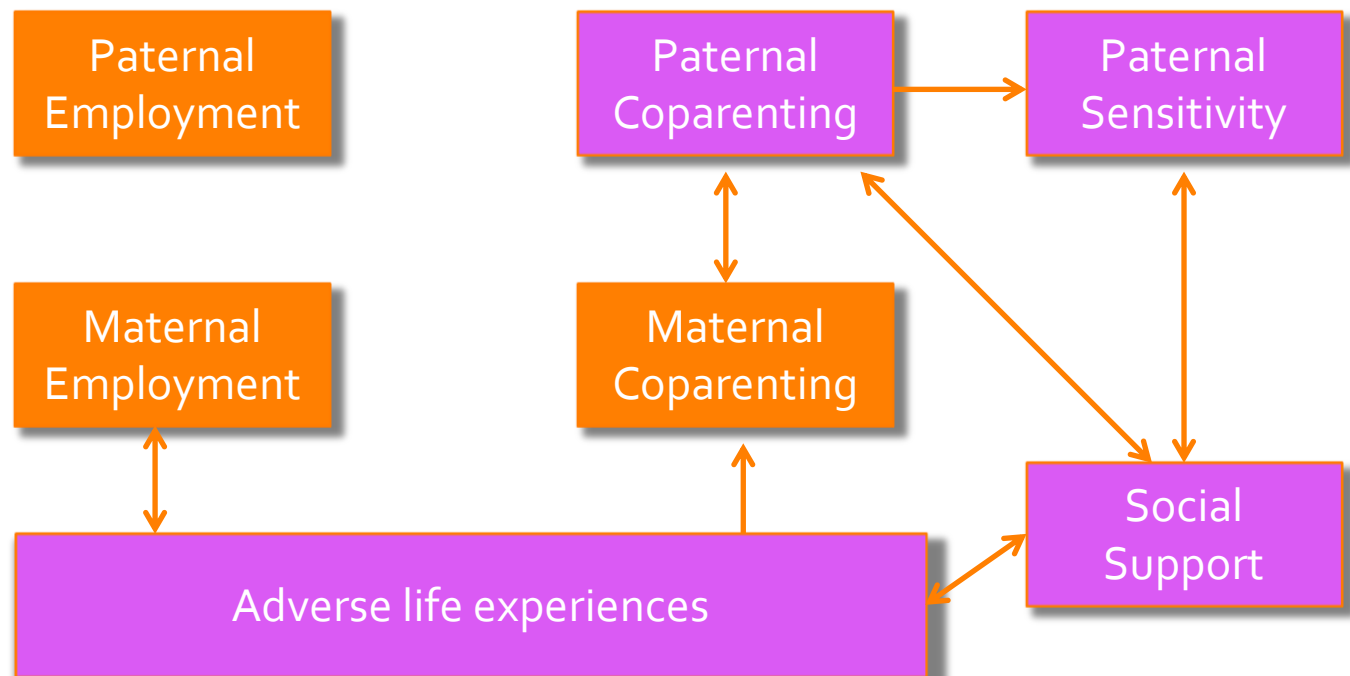
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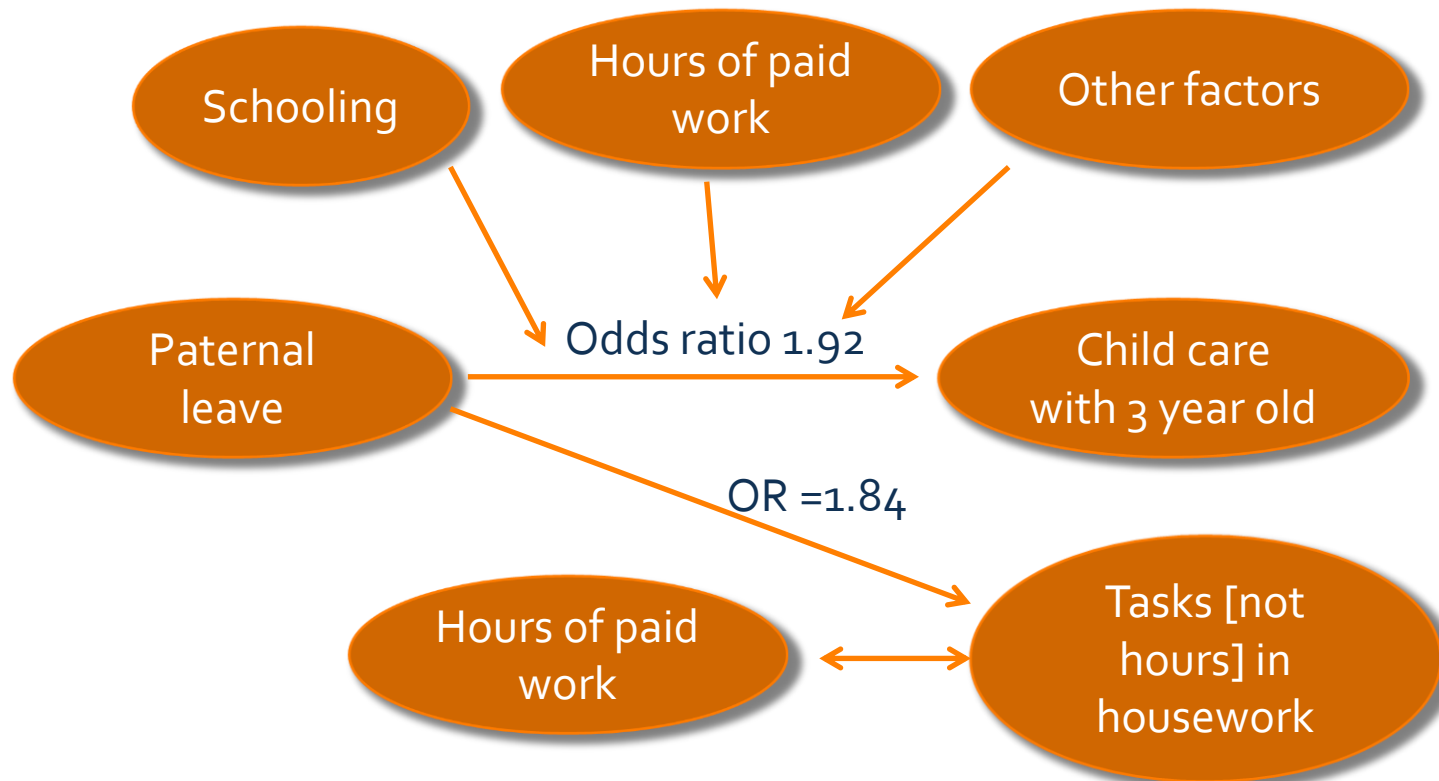
# Fathers' involvement: issues for poverty, minority groups and migration

- + Differential life experiences: early parenting, relationship breakdown, insecurity (many studies)



### 3. Attempts to increase the involvement of fathers: Parental leave

+ Meil (2013): European Working Conditions Survey: N=29,000



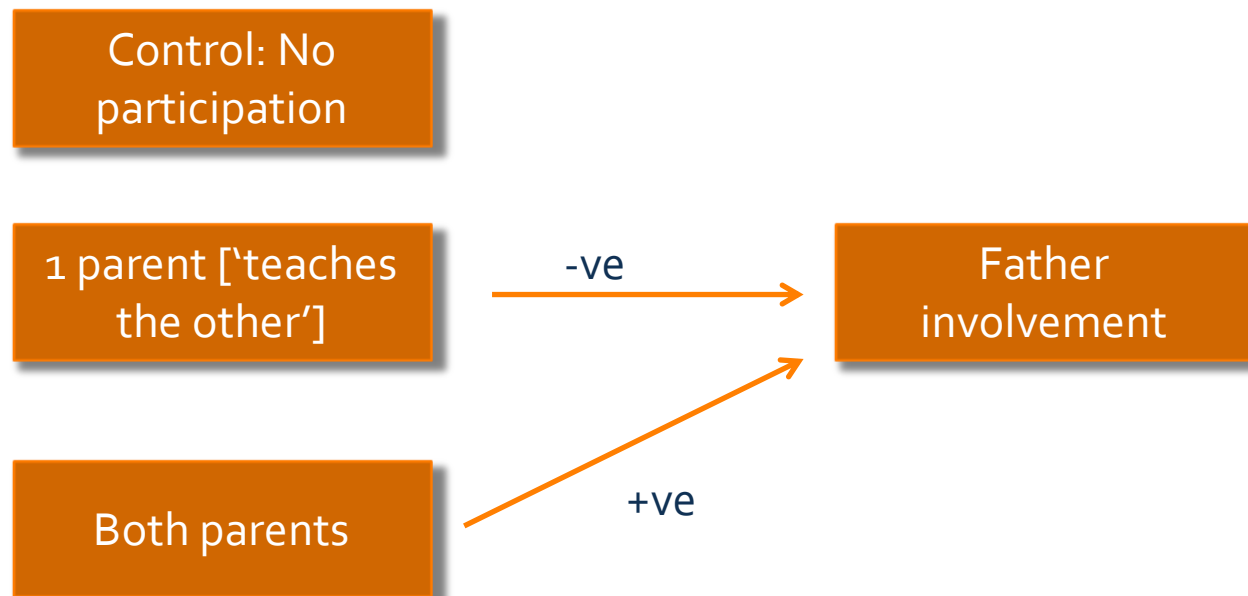
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#### + Background

1. Many different types
  - + 'Fathers' programmes'
  - + Parenting training
  - + Couple/relationship work
2. Recruitment in all cultures is a problem (e.g. Lloyd et al., 2003)

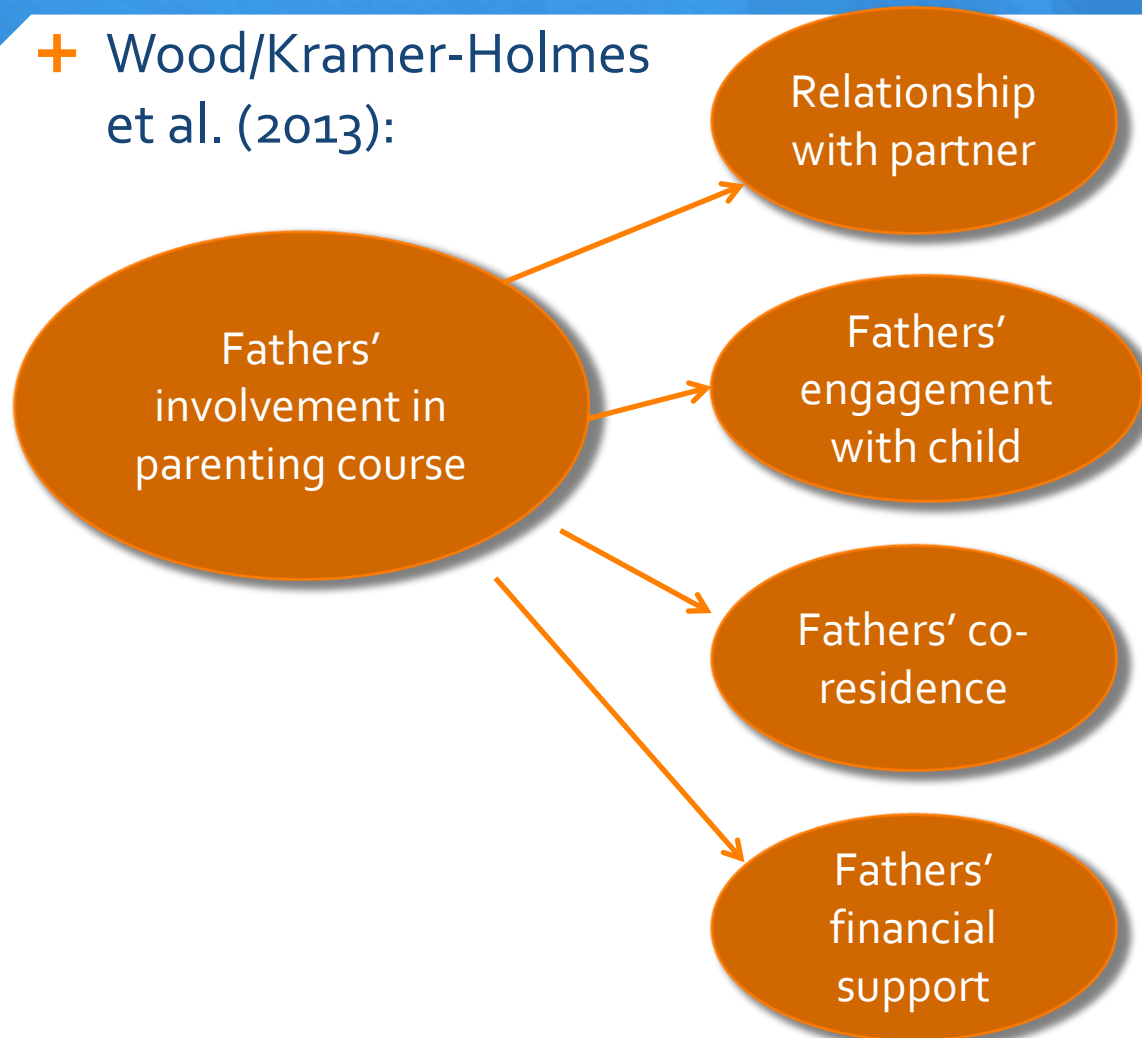
### 3. Attempts to increase the involvement of fathers: Parenting programmes: Complexity

- + Reinks et al (2011). 14 hour couple-based programme (Randomised Control Trial) in a poverty sample



### 3. Attempts to increase the involvement of fathers: Parenting programmes

+ Wood/Kramer-Holmes et al. (2013):



# Conclusion

- + Fathering is a barometer of family functioning
  - + Preschoolers live in a network of relationships
  - + Men's 'influences' can be seen over several years
- + Fathering in poverty/migrant samples is similar to that in more affluent families, but the social system is often more complex
- + Programmes involving fathers can influence the network of relationships in which they operate
  - + Intervening with fathers does not detract from the needs of mothers: Indeed the evidence suggests that a whole family approach is advantageous.