

MEN IN CHILDCARE – an international view

Research suggests that only 3% of the Early Years education workforce in the UK are men. Whilst gender-based stereotypes continue to play a part in reinforcing ideas that women are naturally better at caregiving than men, low pay and a lack of access to information about Early Years careers, contribute to the ongoing stigma associated with a man working with young children.

The good news is that international comparisons indicate change is possible. Several initiatives and campaigns targeting men for jobs in childcare were developed in mostly Nordic countries. And, although the shift was likely a reflection in part of a legal responsibility for employers to work towards 20% male workers, in 2008 Norway had 10% male childcare workers.

One such campaign in Norway to increase the number of male childcare workers provided opportunities for boys in lower secondary school to work in childcare. The boys were paid for their work in a bid to change the traditional views of men's gender roles. More men in childcare enables more role models to demonstrate that men can provide nurturing care.



Similarly, recent research carried out at a nursery in Norway saw men account for 50% of the workforce with much focus on male and female practitioners doing the same job – outdoor play, cooking, reading and intimate care were performed equally by men and women. Here children were looked after equally by men and women and the hope is those children would grow up thinking caring roles are a normal job for boys to do.

At Kids Planet we too believe we should be modelling the fact that looking after educating young children should be a job for everyone, not just women. Our male employees play an important role in the care and education of children in our care. As a result, we are actively recruiting a cohort of 12 men across Greater Manchester through our in-house Early Years (Level 2) Apprenticeship. And we are particularly interested to hear from men who may have lost their jobs or changed their working patterns or aspirations during the Covid-19 crisis. Additionally, we would love to recruit male school leavers.

Jason Holmes, Tutor/Assessor at our Training Academy is taking a lead role on recruiting the 12 male apprentices. Previously Nursery Manager at Kids Planet Southport and with significant experience working in Early Years, Jason will welcome the new apprentices and will be on hand to support them throughout their training and journey into their careers.

For more details about the project or to register your interest, please get in touch at Jason.holmes@kidsplanetdaynurseries.