

The DVD.

It can be used in schools, workplaces, in community groups and by individuals at home, including fathers and father-figures who cannot, or choose not to, attend group functions. It is intended to be shown to fathers and father figures by parent groups, school leaders, human resource staff, community leaders (eg pastors) school counsellors and/or chaplains as a stimulus for discussion and further reading. The aim is to improve the involvement of fathers and father figures in children's lives.

The Blue Book of Tips for Fathers and Father Figures

This booklet contains many practical ideas for men, and is designed to be used:

- to provide specific ideas following viewing of the video [the 21 minute video contains some tips but is mainly used to stimulate discussion whereas the book provides many specific tips]
- to be taken away by men and used as an ongoing reminder eg. to be kept in wallets, desk drawers, pockets, gloveboxes, toilets and on bedside tables. We hope that every father in the school would receive a copy [eg. one school has already ordered 1000 copies].

Suggested use of the material:

For the DVD, some of the approaches that have been suggested include

- show the DVD to fathers at schools via a parents' meeting, a sausage sizzle, after a working bee or other appropriate father-friendly function etc. Workplaces might use it during a lunch break or work retreat. Community groups such as churches have suggested they would use it at an evening or men's breakfast type function. Fathers who attend an initial function might then be invited to be 'champions' of the process and promote viewing of the video amongst the other fathers and father-figures who have not attended that initial showing.
- have each class at the school or section of a workplace or community group hold specific functions in homes.
- we have found in our research that fathers or father figures they are more likely to attend such functions if the children themselves write invitations to them and if they are also invited personally by other dads, rather than relying on notes or emails.
- some form of incentives has been used in other similar programs eg. a reward to a class children for high level participation by fathers or father figures. We have not tried that for this program.
- make it available on loan for individual viewing at home and also make sure that the school or workplace library has several copies for loan.
- promote the material via newsletters (eg list some of the BlueBook points), assembly items to trigger interest, home communication sheets and classroom/home activities eg: a bag with copy of the DVD information or booklet sent to homes.
- allow time for discussion following viewing [some suggested discussion topics are included in the downloadable Handout Sheet]. Such discussion could be general or could focus on specific topics eg. learning - how dads can help their children's education (see Blue Book pp 12-17) or encourage good health/avoiding drugs etc (see Blue Book pp18-22).
- make a copy of 'The Blue Book' available for each man to take home (most dads seem happy to pay for these but some schools are making them available free of charge).

Our hope is that this process would strengthen the process of creating school and community cultures in which fathers encourage their children, each other, other children and school staff in all that they do.

Target audience:

The video is aimed at fathers. It is also relevant to father figures such as step fathers, uncles, mentors, male teachers, youth leaders, grandfathers and coaches, because these people can be very important in children's lives, especially those children who do not have much father input.

Ordering more copies:

More copies can be purchased from the Project office. An Order Form for the DVD and booklet can be downloaded from our website. We encourage leaders to consider ordering sufficient copies of the Blue Book of tips to ensure that every father/father figure has their own copy.

Mothers: It is important to encourage mothers to support this initiative, in the interests of their children. It is also clearly important to create opportunities for children whose fathers are not able to be present for whatever reason to have an alternative adult male come along to such functions, to have the option of private viewing of the DVD at home or some other mechanism that won't cause any embarrassment.

Commendations

DVD/booklet commendations from the Primary and Secondary School Principals Associations, ECU Department of Education, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and others can be read on this website