ENGAGING SOUTH AFRICAN FATHERS:
The MenCare Childcare and Protection Programme
This programme brief provides a review of programmes that promote or facilitate the involvement of fathers and father figures in their children’s lives. It provides an overview of parenting programmes across the world and the results of the MenCare South Africa Childcare and Protection Programme’s evaluation, and finally makes recommendations for policies and programmes to encourage the promotion of responsive, non-violent fathers as caregivers in South Africa.

Contents

Introduction 3
Why father involvement is important

Fatherhood programmes from across the world, an overview 5
Increasing engagement and interaction between fathers and children
Improving parenting skills and father–mother–child relationships
Reducing violence against women and children
Increasing male involvement in maternal and child health
Increasing gender-equal caregiving and domestic work

South Africa’s policy environment supporting fatherhood 8

Evaluation of the MenCare South Africa Childcare and Protection Programme 9
Overview of the programme
Evaluation methods
Key findings
Conclusions

Recommendations 13
Policy reforms to support diverse families
Labour market reforms
Strengthen existing parenting programmes
Scale up parenting programmes
Work with social service providers

References 15
Introduction

Families, parents and caregivers play a vital role in a child’s wellbeing and development. The family is the primary socialisation role model in creating a child’s identity. It is also the family that provides a child with love, care, provision and protection. While families can be the greatest source of support for children, they can also be their source of harm. This holds particularly true in South Africa, where violence against children remains alarmingly high. For example in 2005, more than half of parents in South Africa approved of and/or used corporal punishment [1]. A national study on child homicide has shown conclusively that children under 5 years are at increased risk of being killed in the home due to fatal child abuse [2].

In short, children continue to experience corporal punishment and emotional abuse in their homes by parents or other caregivers.

Critical to promoting children’s safety and wellbeing, South Africa, like many other countries, has put policies and legislation in place that promote programmes to develop parenting skills and strengthen families [3, 4]. However, there are limited instruments and government funds to put these intentions into practice. To embark on these parenting programmes, there is need for unity of purpose. Civil society organisations, public institutions, the private sector and communities must share responsibilities in delivering effective and sustainable parenting – particularly fatherhood – programmes to those who need them most.

In South Africa, for each hour that a man spends on unpaid care work, including childcare, a woman spends eight hours of equivalent work.

In South Africa, for each hour that a man spends on unpaid care work, including childcare, a woman spends eight hours of equivalent work. Most children (64%) do not live in the same house as their biological father and are likely to live with a female primary caregiver [5]. In about a
third of households an adult man who is not the child’s biological father is present; he could be an older brother, new partner to the mother, uncle or grandfather. The dilemma that families face is that men are not involved enough in caregiving, whether these men are father figures, or resident or non-resident biological fathers [5].

This brief provides a review of programmes that promote or facilitate the involvement of fathers and/or father figures in their children’s lives. It draws on parenting programmes from across the world and presents the results of an exploratory evaluation of the MenCare South Africa Childcare and Protection (CCP) Programme, and finally makes recommendations for policies and programmes to encourage the promotion of responsive, non-violent fathers as caregivers in South Africa.

**Why father involvement is important**

Engaged, responsive fatherhood¹ and men’s participation in the lives of children are positive for children, women and men themselves. A father’s positive involvement benefits a child’s outcomes in domains ranging from physical to socio-emotional development and academic achievement [6]. Mothers who are supported by their children’s fathers experience greater satisfaction from their parenting roles, have lower levels of stress and are less likely to suffer mental health problems [6, 7].

Supportive fathers not only contribute to mothers’ wellbeing and happiness, but studies have shown that fathers can buffer children against abuse and neglect [6]. Having said this, the high proportion (64%) of non-resident biological fathers in South Africa has been identified as a major challenge to active father involvement in children’s lives [5]. Furthermore, co-resident fathers are not always as engaged and involved as they could be, with mothers and other female caregivers usually taking responsibility for most of the childcare, caregiving and household chores [8]. High rates of male violence and popular perceptions have helped normalise the view that men should be violent and uninvolved [9].

The *State of South Africa’s Fathers 2018* report highlights the importance of father involvement irrespective of marital or residence status [5]. The report provides direction for research into, advocacy of, and policy and implementation regarding increased male involvement in caregiving. Of particular interest are case studies on paternal involvement in the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, with key recommendations for increased involvement in a child’s early years. The *State of South Africa’s Fathers 2018* report also makes special mention of the importance of social fathers – men who are not the child’s biological father, but who still play important roles in the child’s life.

The role of caring fathers in the lives of children and families is very important and undisputed. Although there are high levels of father non-residency, reported violence and neglect by men, many fathers and male caregivers are currently involved and playing positive roles in their children’s lives, and others would like to be supported to be more involved. Parenting interventions, like the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme, are critical to reinforce positive attitudes and shift negative perceptions of fatherhood by acknowledging that men – particularly fathers – and mothers and children all benefit from holistic programmes that focus on paternal, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence.

¹ In this programme brief, fatherhood goes beyond child conception. It extends to a network of other close social relationships between adult males with children in which the children might biologically be a man’s own (in the case of a biological father) or not (in the case of a father figure).
Fatherhood programmes from across the world, an overview

Recent attention on the positive influences of father involvement has seen an increase in fatherhood programmes globally, with many evaluating their effectiveness in helping fathers become better parents and partners. This overview focuses on fatherhood programmes that impact on: 1) increased engagement and interaction between fathers and children; 2) increased parenting skills and father–mother–child relationships; 3) reduced violence against women and children; 4) increased male involvement in maternal and child health; and 5) increased gender-equal caregiving and unpaid domestic work.

**Increasing engagement and interaction between fathers and children**

The Head Start and Early Head Start programmes in the USA are some of the most cited parenting interventions serving low-income fathers and their children aged 0–5 years [10–13]. The results of these programmes show that fathers in the intervention group were significantly more likely to increase their direct interaction with children and support learning activities with children at home than the comparison group of fathers, but only if the fathers were at least moderately involved in the programme [11, 12].

The Family Foundations’ couples intervention, which offered four sessions prebirth, four afterwards, and between-session homework, also had positive outcomes, including improved father–infant relationships.

Reports from mothers in Mother Child Education Foundation’s (AÇEV’s) Father Support Program in Turkey indicated that fathers who participated in the intervention spent more time with children, shouted less and became more involved in parenting [14]. AÇEV is one of the first partners of the MenCare global fatherhood campaign...
and has significantly drawn on Program P\(^2\) and other MenCare resources to expand their Father Support Program.

**Improving parenting skills and father–mother–child relationships**

Philip and Carolyn Cowan in their three programmes – namely, Becoming a Family Project, Schoolchildren and their Families Project, and the Supporting Father Involvement Project – found that involving both parents in preventive interventions to be more beneficial than working with just one. Changes at home were made more quickly and gains were maintained when both parents were engaged. Furthermore, couples intervention was more successful than men-only intervention in sustaining fathers’ participation [15]. These findings of the Cowans and their colleagues in 2009 [15], were reinforced by the Family Foundations’ couples intervention, which highlighted improved co-parenting, quality of couple relationships and sexual satisfaction, parenting quality, infant self-regulation and child adjustment and school adaptation [16–18]. Mothers in ACEV’s Father Support Program also indicated that their husbands showed improved communication and greater respect towards them [14].

A parenting intervention for first-time fathers in Canada, using video self-monitoring reviewed with a home visitor, found that although fathers in both the intervention and comparison groups reported increased competence in parenting over time, those in the intervention group were significantly more skilled in fostering cognitive growth and maintained their sensitivity to infant cues when the baby was eight months old [19]. Consistent with the above results, the Caring Dads intervention showed that participants had improved parenting skills, knowledge and attitudes, spent more time with their children and were better able to communicate effectively with their partners and children [23, 24]. Qualitative results from Program P’s implementation in Nicaragua have shown positive changes in the lives of men and their families with improved relationships between fathers, their children and partners.

**Reducing violence against women and children**

The Proyecto Papa en Acción (‘Dad in Action Project’) intervention in Peru and Program Pai (Program P) in Chile focused on positive parenting and the importance of reading to young children. Data revealed that fathers felt more involved in the family and more connected to their children, and had learned to respect family members and how to refrain from using violence [25].

Program P’s implementation in Sri Lanka has shown positive changes, as men managed difficult emotions and decreased their use of alcohol. In Botswana, Cape Verde, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa, MenCare partners focus on issues ranging from gender

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2 The ‘P’ in Program P refers to padre or pai, Spanish and Portuguese for ‘father’. Program P provides a direct and targeted response to the need for concrete strategies to engage men in active fatherhood from prenatal care through delivery, childbirth to their children’s early years. Refer to https://men-care.org/what-we-do/programming/program-p/ for more information.
equality and violence prevention to masculinity and men’s health. Caring Dads intervention has resulted in reduced risk of child maltreatment, improved emotional availability and respect of the child’s boundaries, and reduced hostility towards and rejection of the child and exposure of the child to hostile interactions with the child’s mother [20, 21].

In South Africa, Sinovuyo Teen is an evidence-informed 14-week parenting support programme aimed at reducing child abuse and externalising behaviour among adolescents in at-risk families with 10–18 year olds. It is implemented through a collaborative effort between the South African Departments of Social Development and Basic Education, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Universities of Cape Town and Oxford.

Specific to eliminating domestic violence against women and protecting children, Sonke’s Fatherhood and Child Security Project and the ‘One Man Can’ Fatherhood Programme encourage and support men to play a more active role in the lives of their families, to work towards eliminating violence against women and children and to prevent the spread of HIV [26].

**Increasing male involvement in maternal and child health**

Aimed at engaging men and women as partners in maternal and child health, and in sexual and reproductive health and rights, MenCare+ was launched in 2013 by Promundo and Rutgers World Population Foundation (WPF). It was implemented over three years in Brazil, Indonesia and Rwanda; in South Africa Sonke implemented it through their MenCare South Africa programme; and in Ukraine, the UNICEF ‘Papa’ schools focused on supporting fathers during the perinatal period. The main goals were to strengthen couple relationships and prevent violence against women and children. Results were impressive: male attendance at birth increased from 4% to 75%; child morbidity decreased by 15%; postnatal complications decreased by 48%; and childhood trauma rates decreased by 58% [27, 28].

Also, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) funded Écoles des Maris (‘Schools for Husbands’) project in Niger found that male involvement in maternal support and childcare transformed their attitudes towards healthcare, as well as substantially increasing the rate of attended labour in a country where maternal and child death rates at birth remain high [25]. Collaborating these findings further, the Family Foundations’ couples intervention showed positive outcomes, which included healthier births and lower rates of maternal depression [16–18].

**Increasing gender-equal caregiving and domestic work**

It is important to acknowledge that not many fatherhood programmes have shown an increase in gender-equal caregiving and unpaid domestic work between fathers and their partners. The implementation of Program P in Nicaragua, however, did lead to the increased participation of men in household work and childcare. The Siempre Papa and the 24/7 Dad Curriculum interventions led to improved perceptions of gender roles and partners’ roles as parents [23, 24]. The Proyecto Papa en Acción intervention highlights its success in increasing shared domestic and caregiving work between mothers and fathers [25]. ACEV’s Father Support Program in Turkey showed that fathers who participated in the intervention became more involved in household chores and caregiving [14].
In nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, MenCare global partners are engaging men as caregivers and as fathers through powerful media campaigns, high-impact programme development and local- and national-level advocacy initiatives. The gender-transformative Bandebereho couples’ intervention to promote male engagement in reproductive and maternal health and in violence prevention in Rwanda showed that culturally adapted programmes can be effective at changing deeply entrenched gender inequalities and a range of health-related behaviours. The results indicate that compared to the control group, women in the intervention group reported less past-year physical and sexual intimate partner violence and greater attendance and male accompaniment at antenatal care. Women and men in the intervention group reported less child physical punishment from women and men; increased modern contraceptive use by women and men; higher levels of men’s participation in childcare and household tasks; and less dominance of men in decision-making [29]. These are clearly innovative strategies to encourage men and particularly fathers to be more involved in caregiving and domestic work.

South Africa’s policy environment supporting fatherhood

There are a number of mechanisms that need to be in place to support fathers to become more involved parents, including a supportive policy environment. Such policies need to have a much broader focus than simply including fathers in positive parenting programmes. South Africa’s Bill of Rights has provided a solid basis for the establishment of a welfare system that gives effect to the socioeconomic rights of all citizens, and includes extra protection for children. Section 28(1) highlights the importance of children’s rights to family care, basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services, social services and protection. Since the adoption of the Constitution in 1994, the government made good strides to meet its commitments therein through the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare in 1997. The white paper put a strong emphasis on social security and child protection, and related legislation. The white paper focuses on the empowerment of individuals, families and communities to become more self-reliant. The white paper also highlights the ‘family’ as the basic unit of society, and advocates for the promotion of ‘family life’ through the strengthening of ‘family-oriented policies and programmes’.

Other key post-apartheid legislation includes the Children’s Act (No. 38 of 2005), which advocates for a stronger shift towards early intervention services with a clear focus on parental rights and responsibilities. Another more recent and key policy change is the introduction of the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2013). This white paper emphasises the importance of father involvement and also advocates for the introduction of parenting leave for fathers in South Africa.
Evaluation of the MenCare South Africa Childcare and Protection Programme

Overview of the programme
MenCare’s global fatherhood campaign is a multi-pronged initiative to promote men’s equal involvement in caregiving and the universal uptake of equitable, non-violent parenting practices (www.men-care.org). The campaign is coordinated by Sonke Gender Justice and Promundo in collaboration with steering committee members, MenEngage Alliance, Oxfam GB, Plan International Sweden and Save the Children Sweden.

The MenCare South Africa CCP Programme is adapted from MenCare’s Program P and other fatherhood programmes from across the world. In Phase 1, the programme conducted a 12-session intervention with state social services professionals focusing on the impact of fathers; pregnancy; birth; family planning; caregiving; gender non-violence; the needs and rights of children; and division of caregiving. In Phase 2, the programme conducted a five-session intervention with child and youth care workers, and male beneficiaries and their partners (where applicable); it focused on father legacy, clarifying gender values, and violence and caregiving activities.

The MenCare South Africa CCP Programme recognises diversity in caregiving and the right for all people to care for children. The programme further promotes a father’s presence during pregnancy and advocates for paid parental leave for both parents.

The evaluation of the programme presented below was implemented in five provinces – Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and North West – in partnership with the Department of Social Development.

Evaluation methods
Important to note is that due to limited funding this evaluation of the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme is exploratory only. The evaluation could not be conducted in all the provinces or

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with a large sample. As such, the evaluation results might not be representative of the South African population. The findings of this evaluation should be considered indicative, and are generally consistent with global findings. However, a comprehensive evaluation of the programme is required, pending the availability of funding.

Participants
A total of 110 state social workers, 26 child and youth care workers, and 610 male beneficiaries and their partners (where applicable) took part in the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme.

Procedure
This evaluation was conducted in two phases and took a mixed-methods approach. In Phase 1, data were collected from state social workers in 2016; quantitative measures of pre- and post-intervention evaluation criteria were measured using self-report questionnaires. In Phase 2, data were collected from child and youth care workers, and male beneficiaries and their partners (where applicable) in July 2017; an interview schedule of an exploratory qualitative design was used.

Data analysis
Quantitative data were entered into MSExcel, cleaned and coded. The data were then analysed using SPSS by means of descriptive statistics including frequencies, means and standard deviations. Qualitative data were analysed thematically, whereby all data were transcribed, coded and analysed according to emerging themes.

Key findings

Addressing gender norms and involving males in parenting
There are various stereotypes of men and masculinities in South Africa, often maintained through popular opinion and based on frequent harmful behaviour by men [30]. Intervention participants acknowledged that stereotypes such as absent, strong, unfeeling, uninvolved, violent, disengaged, uncaring, macho or ‘ATM fathers’ match their perceptions of South Africa’s fathers.

This is illustrated in a statement by one of the child and youth care workers:

… Fathers are regarded as scary people in their homes. Mothers always tell their kids that … your father will beat you. And this is the idea there is of what is a role of a father. Fathers don’t like involving themselves in their children’s lives.
—CYCW-EC, female participant

Men and women in both phases of the evaluation indicated that socialisation and community influences defined responsibilities for men and women. Men are laughed at if involved in childcare, caregiving or household chores, and are labelled as ‘bewitched’ or ‘moffies’ (a slang term for gay). It is because of such views that men (and some women) indicated that women were mostly responsible for childcare, caregiving and household chores – because of their ‘maternal instincts’.

However, several participants also acknowledged that many fathers have a strong desire to be involved in their children’s and partner’s lives. Some, however, are prevented from doing so, as emphasised by one child and youth care worker who stated:

I also did not want the fathers of my children to be involved in their lives because they were not providing financially. I thought providing financially was a father’s duty and that was the only way a man could take care of his child. MenCare told me about parent engagement in the child’s sports life, going to school meetings as the father of the child, to check on the child’s school performance and wellbeing.
—CYCW-EC, female participant
Respondents spoke on the importance of focusing on the positive roles of fathers and men as leaders in their homes and communities. Acknowledging that some men are violent towards or uninvolved in the family, data from the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme motivates for more training programmes for fathers against any forms of violence towards women and children; the importance of treating women with respect needs to be emphasised. Fathers need to be encouraged to be present and actively involved in their children’s lives. They need to know the importance of sharing responsibilities and – regardless of cultural, traditional or religious beliefs and marital, residential or financial status – that they are important in the lives of their children.

**Increased father involvement in domestic and caregiving roles**

The MenCare South Africa CCP Programme aimed to improve gendered perceptions of participants in terms of sharing domestic and caregiving duties. Social services professionals spoke of gender-role perceptions pre- and post-intervention. Pre-intervention, there were distinct differences between men's and women’s perceptions regarding the responsibilities of childcare, household chores and caregiving. In Phase 1, involving the state social workers, men were more likely than women to state that a woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and look after her family; in Phase 2, men were less likely than women to agree with that statement.

These perspectives on men and fatherhood shifted after the MenCare South Africa intervention, with participants acknowledging that fathers are both providers and carers, and that women and men should be regarded as equal. After the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme most of the participants in both phases disagreed with the following statements: ‘A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family’; ‘Changing diapers, giving the kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother’s responsibility’; and ‘It is a woman’s responsibility to avoid getting pregnant’. In the post-intervention, both men and women showed more gender-sensitive attitudes and awareness of the importance of gender equality in all spheres of life. A female child and youth care worker who supported this stated:

*When my husband is in the garden and working outside, I don’t mind assisting and taking a spade to help him scoop. I believe that there is no difference in [a] woman’s and [a] man’s chores.*

—CYCW-EC, female participant

The MenCare South Africa intervention also led participants to shift their view of fathers as providers, only, to viewing them as supporters and partners. The intervention provided an opportunity for participants to change their perceptions, attitudes and, potentially, behaviours towards parenthood, as emphasised by one male participant who stated, “When I am at home, I do assist [with] tasks, which I did not do before the workshop,” (Participant 101-Male).

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Such changes in perceptions have been transformed to action in some cases with many participants speaking of improved partner communication in terms of roles and responsibilities, fluidity in conducting household chores, greater involvement of fathers with the family and school activities, and fathers spending more time bonding with children and being present as a parent.

**Improved relationships between fathers, and their partners and children**

The participants in the evaluation highlighted positive changes in family interactions due to changes in fathers’ involvement. These included increased communication; increased time spent with their families (“weekends are family time”);
and increased involvement with children’s school projects. Relationship building and bonding was improved because fathers were available and present in the lives of the children. For example, non-resident fathers were visiting regularly, and fathers were ensuring that their children’s needs were met; they were showing interest in the children’s health and wellbeing. One participant noted, “He has changed after the programme because he is expressive. He does not bottle things inside anymore,” (Participant 107b-Woman).

Another female partner highlighted the benefits of taking part in the intervention with her partner when she stated:

*At first we had a strained relationship; it was only after the programme when he started to reach out to me, and ever since, I can say our relationship is getting better.*

—Participant 201-Woman

These statements indicate the importance of the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme in building and improving relationships between fathers, children and mothers.

**Reduced violence against women and children**

The MenCare South Africa CCP Programme aimed at reducing gender-based violence. However, post-intervention results for female state social workers are disturbing in that there was an increase in reporting current partner violence and history of partner abuse in intervention surveys. While this is indeed worrying and should be addressed as a matter of urgency, it is commendable that MenCare intervention made it possible for survivors to speak out. It provides opportunities to engage both survivors and perpetrators in the fight against gender-based violence, and to come up with prevention programmes for the future.

More disturbing is that male state social workers reported using violence against their partners, although somewhat encouraging that the reporting of such violence decreased from 48.2% to 22.2% post intervention. To support these statistics on reduced domestic violence due to the intervention, a female partner of a participant stated that: “... he hasn’t beaten me after the programme, he now initiates a conversation and we talk well now,” (Participant 201-Woman).

The importance of intervening early in life’s course was summed up in a statement made by one of the child and youth care workers:

*We need to go into schools and give an after school programme pushing forward MenCare. The children in high school need the information because they start beating their girlfriends from that age.*

—CYCW-EC, female participant

**Conclusions**

This evaluation has highlighted positive changes for those who participated in the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme, despite the challenges and barriers that still exist. The evaluation indicates positive changes in stereotyping and gender-role perceptions, improved relationships with children, more communication and less aggression. This evaluation has critically shown that when well resourced and supported, integrated parenting programmes can be successfully implemented, strengthened and potentially be adapted and replicated elsewhere. MenCare South Africa CCP Programme has shown the power of involving service providers and male beneficiaries and their partners. This approach provides an all-centred mechanism where all stakeholders are involved in successfully reaching out to the fathers that take part.

The programme was implemented in a context where violence is prevalent; it confirmed the fact that social service professionals are exposed to violence, and also use violence. It was concerning to see social service employees admitting to using violence, but useful to be able to identify the problem and begin to respond to it. Violence is not isolated to clients of social services, but also includes social service professionals as perpetrators and survivors. This emphasises the need for urgent intervention – not only in communities, but also within government institutions.
Recommendations

Childcare, child protection and violence prevention should start at home. By intervening early and providing support to families, parents and caregivers, we can profoundly influence the trajectory of children’s lives, thereby investing in a long-term and long-lasting violence prevention effort. There are several other steps that should be taken, as recommended below.

Policy reforms to support diverse families

Renewed political commitment to recognise and support the rich diversity of families is required, and the coordinated implementation of such a commitment. A systematic approach to supporting children and families is fundamental. Policymakers, researchers, practitioners, development partners and civil society, as highlighted in the White Paper on Families, all have a role to play. This requires greater coordination and collaboration that promotes an enabling environment for an equitable share in childcare and protection.

The newly approved Labour Laws Amendment Act (No. 10 of 2018) is a step in the right direction with its new parental leave policy by providing 10 days paid parental leave to parents who do not benefit from maternity leave (fathers and adoptive parents). Similarly, the National Fatherhood Strategy should be reviewed to include fathers in interventions broader than just those in the social development sector. The Department of Social Development needs to review the National Fatherhood Strategy to include diverse parenting practices pertinent to fathers as well as interventions that include father figures, non-resident fathers and fathers in correctional facilities.

Labour market reforms

The labour market – formal and informal – needs to ensure gender equality. The persistence of traditional gender norms in the workplace reinforce inequality, making it difficult for men to become active and engaged fathers,

Government should provide policy guidelines for government officials and civil society organisations on how to include fathers in family-centred and family-preservation programmes.

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especially in the first 1,000 days. Workplace support for men taking parental leave, supported by the labour law, could go a long way towards normalising men’s involvement in the care of their children.

**Strengthen existing parenting programmes**

Instead of reinventing the wheel, it is important to refine the content and methodologies of existing parenting programmes, such as the MenCare South Africa CCP Programme. There is a need to integrate training around gender norms to include male involvement, particularly, in caregiving and household responsibilities for professionals in the social, protection and justice services. It is therefore recommended that such professionals attend in-service training workshops focusing on gender sensitivity and the importance of including men and boys in parenting interventions. They should also be trained around the theoretical underpinnings of parenting and importance of father involvement in order to get a greater understanding about the benefits of father involvement for children, mothers, fathers and the economy at large. These programmes should take into consideration the contextual, socioeconomic, cultural and individual factors of beneficiaries.

**Scale up parenting programmes**

Holistic, positive parenting programmes such as the MenCare South Africa CCP need to be implemented at scale in an effort to reform social norms concerning gender. This is especially true for social services professionals who are tasked to implement key policies such as the Children’s Act and the White Paper on Families. Increased funding and multi-sectoral integration among government, corporate, development, civil society and community partners are critical for successfully scaling up parenting programmes. Important, is measuring the impact and sustainability of parenting programmes, like the MenCare South Africa, and conducting comprehensive evaluation exercises that have a baseline and end-line data.

**Work with social service providers**

Government, together with tertiary institutions, should review the training curriculum of social workers and other social services professionals to promote gender-equal parenting practices and ensure a healthy workforce. Social services professionals should also undergo compulsory counselling and debriefing sessions to ensure that they cope with and recover from exposure to violence, and to prevent their own use of violence.
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The MenCare Global Fatherhood Campaign

MenCare is a global campaign to promote men’s and boys’ involvement as equitable, non-violent caregivers. With activities in more than 55 countries, MenCare partners carry out joint advocacy initiatives, research and programming to engage men in positive parenting; in equitable caregiving; in violence prevention; and in maternal, newborn and child health. The campaign is co-coordinated by Sonke Gender Justice and Promundo US, with Save the Children, Plan International, Oxfam GB and MenEngage Alliance serving as Steering Committee members. For more information about the campaign and its partners, visit https://men-care.org/.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of any of its affiliated organisations.

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