

Fathers Reading Every Day

FRED is a simple, effective and sustainable intervention that recognises, values and strengthens fathers' involvement in supporting their young children's learning and development.

Originally developed in the US, we have delivered and evaluated FRED in a wide variety of UK primary schools and early years settings across England, and evaluations show that it can dramatically improve children's educational outcomes.

How FRED works

FRED is a 'reading for pleasure' programme delivered by education or family learning settings – which invite fathers to spend a fixed amount of time every day for an agreed period, reading, sharing stories and/or engaging in literacy-supporting activities with their young children. They record and report back on what they've done and are invited to an end of project celebratory event.

We offer a 'train the trainer' model to help schools, early years settings, libraries and others provide FRED. We provide them with training in father-inclusive practice, show them how to run the FRED programme, and provide them with key resources. Practitioners can then run FRED as often, and with as many fathers and children, as they like.

Why is engaging fathers important?

There is good evidence that children from less well-off backgrounds – and boys especially – are falling behind in their reading. We know that fathers read less with their children than mothers do, but research also shows that fathers' early involvement in reading and other interactive activities has a direct impact on children's educational outcomes at age 5 and 7¹ (for more on this, check out the [PIECE study toolkit](#)).

¹ Norman, H. and Davies, J. (2023). What a difference a dad makes: Paternal Involvement and its Effects on Children's Education. University of Leeds

Studies have shown that high levels of interest by a father in his child's schooling and education are associated with improved outcomes, including:

- Better exam / test / class results
- Higher educational qualifications
- Greater progress at nursery/school
- More enjoyment of nursery/school
- Higher educational expectations
- Better behaviour AND reduced risk of suspension or expulsion²

Conversely, low interest by fathers in their children's education (particularly boys) has a stronger negative impact on their achievement than contact with the police, poverty, family type, social class, housing tenure and child's personality³.

Where early years settings and schools are pro-active in their approach to engaging fathers, they see a significant increase in the numbers of fathers involved in the life of the setting/school – both in supporting children's learning and in governance.

Settings which engage fathers in specific support to children with low levels of attainment have seen substantive improvements in children's learning.

Research tells us that fathers⁴ – and mothers – want engagement with their children's learning and education. Children want this too.

FRED training

Find out more about FRED training in our [Parenting Programmes training brochure](#). Contact our training team for more information: training@fatherhoodinstitute.org

² Goldman, R. (2005). *Fathers' Involvement in their Children's Education*. London: National Family and Parenting Institute

³ Blanden, J. (2006). 'Bucking the trend': What enables those who are disadvantaged in childhood to succeed later in life? Working Paper No 31 Corporate Document Services. London: Department for Work and Pensions

⁴ 70% of co-resident fathers and 81% of non-resident dads want to be more involved in their children's education. Source: Peters, M., Seeds, K., Goldstein, A. & Coleman, N. (2008). *Parental Involvement in Children's Education 2007*. Research Report. DCSF RR034

Evaluations of FRED

- Read an [independent evaluation](#) of our FRED pilot in ten schools in Lambeth and Salford (2011-13)
- Read our [in-house evaluation](#) of FRED delivery with around 2,000 children in early years and primary school settings in four local authority areas (2013-15) and a [summary article](#) from Children and Young People Now
- Read about our [current project](#) (2023-27) to deliver and evaluate a new version of FRED in early years settings in Lambeth