



### Book Reviews

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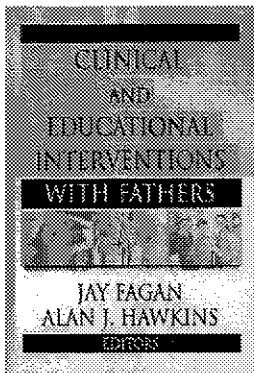
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## Appendix

### Book Reviews



#### **Clinical and Educational Interventions with Fathers**

*Jay Fagan and Alan J. Hawkins, Editors*  
*The Haworth Press, NY (2001)*

As a family therapist with a keen interest in the evolving familial experiences of males, I

have been acutely aware of two flaws in the growing literature on fathering. First, practitioners are in dire need of resources to shape interventions that address the familial role challenges men face in the 21st century. Second, more documentation of theoretical models is needed that addresses the increasingly diverse contexts in which fathering occurs. Jay Fagan and Alan Hawkins, editors of *Clinical and Educational Interventions with Fathers*, have attempted to fill these gaps in the practice literature by presenting a spectrum of scholarly articles that share a cohesive set of theoretical frameworks and unifying themes.

The book is divided into two major segments: four chapters on therapeutic interventions and six chapters focused on psychoeducational approaches. The editors shape the volume by laying out four main objectives: (1) Providing a knowledge base for practitioners; (2) Stating specific rationales for each intervention; (3) Stimulating the development of innovative interventions and approaches; and (4) Promoting an empowerment (vs. deficit-focused) theoretical perspective for interventions. Though the current wave of fathering literature is still in the developmental stage, the editors push each contributor to address evaluative approaches in their respective chapters. This emphasis, combined with the integration of theory and practice throughout the volume, yields an energizing synergy that makes reading this book a thought-provoking adventure.

Several chapters provide clear, concise descrip-

tions of important clinical concerns. After clearly defining anger and discussing their approach to anger management, Humphrey and Toogood make a solid case for employing constructive engagement as a method to prevent anger from damaging family relationships. Greif's chapter on divorced fathers presents a thorough articulation of structural and family systems therapies before introducing readers to his particular approach for reconnecting divorced fathers and their children. This clear linkage between theory and application gives the intervention more credibility.

Most family clinicians working in agency settings will recognize the challenge predominantly female-staffed organizations face in engaging fathers. For this reason, I particularly appreciated McBride and Rane's discussion of the institutional barriers that agencies unknowingly erect, which discourage fathers from fully participating in their children's care and education. My own experience in child guidance has been that, however well intentioned staff, and particularly management is, many agencies continue to be ineffective in their attempts to develop more male- and father-friendly programming. This was one of several chapters that presented clear insights on the barrier(s) facing practitioners, along with practical recommendations for addressing them.

Some chapters, particularly those in the second section of the book covering psychoeducational interventions, initially appear narrowly focused on specific sub-groups of fathers, but first impressions can be deceiving. Palm's discussion of parenting education for incarcerated fathers, and Horn's review of faith-based approaches to promoting responsible fathering, both effectively demonstrate the importance of developing men's inner resources. If harnessed, these resources can motivate consistent and effective paternal involvement. Roopnarine, Shin, and Lewis contend that more attention must be given to the unique needs of specific fathers (in this case Caribbean immigrants), and advocate for the active participation of fathers

in the development of interventions affecting their parenting behaviors and their families.

Throughout the book, insights are provided that have application beyond a text focused solely on approaches to fathers. Furrow makes an intriguing appeal for therapists to "revisit their own paternal images" as an important first step in helping fathers develop new methods of fatherhood and paternal involvement. This could apply to other social service providers (e.g., teachers and child protection workers), as well as those in non-clinical settings (e.g., divorce mediators and guardian ad litem). In their call for the development of a "family oriented masculinity," Franklin and Davis are clearly reaching beyond the needs of African American fathers and families. Their assertion that "the family system will be more effective when authority rests in working partnerships between responsible adults..." lifts fatherhood out of the potential trap of individualism, and orients it toward the essential interdependencies of all stakeholders seeking to promote the well-being of children.

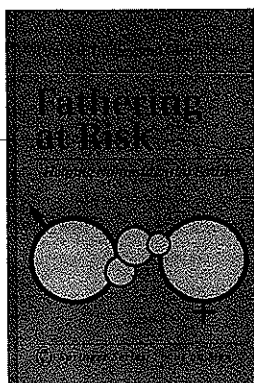
The call for increased collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers at the beginning of the book touches one of the books few weaknesses. As Gadsen, Pitt, and Tift state, though researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers may "share the goal of strengthening father involve-

ment," they do not always share a common conceptualization of what that involvement looks like. I would go even further, and suggest that the three groups must address the needs of different constituents; a factor that inhibits more effective collaboration between these groups, whose work should be mutually supportive. In general, the book would have benefited from more discussion of successful collaborations, particularly those that illustrate how effective researcher-practitioner alliances can be in guiding the efforts of policy makers.

This, however, is a minor criticism in what must be considered an extremely thoughtful and informative volume. The chapters provide comprehensive treatments of their given subjects, while suggesting related areas of further inquiry. Taken as a whole, the book does a masterful job of focusing on fathering and acknowledging the interrelated nature of parenting and the various contexts in which fathering occurs. This book will become a valued resource for anyone interested in the familial experiences of men, or in working with fathers and their families.

Highly Recommended.

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**Fathering at Risk:  
Helping Nonresidential  
Fathers**

By James R. Dudley and  
Glenn Stone  
Springer Publishing  
Company, New York 2001

*Fathering at Risk:  
Helping Nonresidential  
Fathers*, in the Springer  
Series, *Focus on Men*, is a

significant addition to the expanding literature on the role of the father in child rearing and child development.

Though long neglected by post-industrial society, the emerging emphasis on fatherhood over the past twenty-five years has occurred against a backdrop of high rates of separation, divorce, unmarried parenthood, teenage parents, and the resulting familial dysfunctions. While the broad based Civil Rights, Women's Liberation, and Children Rights Movements were being highlighted in research, social policy-planning, and clinical practice, men's rights and responsibilities received minimal attention and were widely ignored.

James R. Dudley and Glenn Stone are among an elite group of scholars, whose pioneering work has consistently emphasized the vital role of the father in healthy family life and successful child nurturing. (Their book is an excellent companion to the recent *Clinical and Educational Interventions with Fathers*.) Dudley and Stone have focused upon the aspects of "father presence," rather than the disruptive elements associated with "father absence." This emphasis has enabled them to sharply define the crucial roles, interactions, and personal and social responsibilities of the nonresidential father.

The authors' shared goal, as stated in the Preface, is to maximize a neglected dimension of the "best interest" of the child in child philosophy. In highlighting this dimension, the authors seek "to promote . . . strategies that will actively involve

both fathers and mothers" in the challenging and rewarding tasks of child rearing. In "What We Hope For," the authors define more discreet goals: (1) To stimulate awareness of and research on the impacts of father presence, (2) To enlighten and empower fathers to value and use their role contributions toward child development, (3) To expand the benefits of fathering over several generations (grandparents and great grandparents), and (4) To advocate for social change that will minimize family dysfunction and elevate "wholeness" as the family norm.

The book, in its exceedingly excellent scope and depth, is organized under the following titles: Part I: Why Fathering Is at Risk, Part II: What We Can Do (Principles and Strategies), Part III: Professional Practice Considerations in Work With Fathers at Risk, and Part IV: Policies and Programs to Assist Fathers at Risk. Throughout the inclusive twelve chapters, the authors pose formal "Reflection" questions and "Questions for Discussion." The Reflection questions allow the audience to assess their own individual and family experiences that have influenced their perception of the importance of the father's role and behavior in either family unity or alienation. Moreover, the Questions for Discussion reinforce educational emphases and the content previously covered.

In the Afterword, the authors propose: "What can we expect of fatherhood in the 21st century?" Though the possibilities range from extreme optimism to pessimism, the desired outcome is that "The nurturing father role will become the norm for all socioeconomic and ethnic groups." To achieve this outcome, social service professionals and policy makers, working alongside an informed and empathetic public, must continue to pursue an effective and focused partnership.

The book's invaluable Appendix provides a comprehensive list of fatherhood organizations and websites. This volume is well indexed and the comprehensive Reference list will aid scholars, instructors, and students in their scholarly and research-oriented

activities. The book's consistent format efficiently incorporates the array of research data, cumulative principles, practice insights, and methods strategy in a creative manner. The style is logical, easy to follow, and appropriate for both scholarly and practical purposes. The book is at once an academic text and a manual for training practitioners.

An interesting touch is noted in the authors' insights from personal experiences. These insights are neither intrusive nor idiosyncratic. Rather, they provide meaningful glimpses of close reality.

Dudley and Stone have made a major contribution to the growing body of literature on the role of the father in both the united and fragmented family

unit. When the family is in crisis, the whole of society is in crisis. Hence, the value of the book's scholarly and practical approaches within the academic disciplines of sociology, psychology, and education, and within the practice professions of social work and related human services, cannot be overstated. The book is a basic essential for undergraduate and graduate study, for workshops, and for programs in Continuing Education.

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