

Family Foundations



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What is FF?

- Universal early intervention programme developed in US.
- Focus on family formation period
- Delivered through children's centres and antenatal settings
- 4 prenatal and 3 postnatal sessions
- Mothers and fathers together

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Transition to Parenthood

CRASH

Elevated rates of depression, stress, marital conflict; decrease in sexual intimacy, affection

Arguments increase eight-fold.

Once relationship troubles start, frequently continue to spiral down

Increased likelihood that the couple will separate in the two years post birth.

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Who is FF for?

- Family Foundations is effective for committed, adult couples expecting a first baby.
- Effects on co-parenting, parent depression & adjustment, parenting quality, family violence, & child outcomes
- Strongest intervention effects for families with
 - Low parental education
 - Low father emotional security

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The content of FF

- Expectations of parenthood
- Co-parenting support and skills
- Parenting, including:
 - Promoting attachment security
 - Promoting regulatory capacity

What's different about FF?

- Not child birth preparation – prep for first year.
- Uses careful self-disclosure by facilitator.
- Couple focused
- Not group work
- Solution focused
- Teaches different techniques for communicating “observation” and “practice”
- Group Agreement and Welcome v important.

Gender Aware Delivery

- Include each partner in a couple equally.
- Give eye contact to both
- Welcome both
- Listen to both
- Validate mothers and fathers experiences
- Don't make assumptions about who does what or who is more capable.

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The birth of a new baby is a golden opportunity to engage fathers

- Expectant and new fathers tend to re-evaluate their own health risk behaviours (Blackburn et al, 2006b; Westmaas et al, 2002; Lupton & Barclay, 1997), make more healthy choices
- (Brenner & Mielck, 1993) and, when they receive emotional support, experience better physical and emotional health (Jones, 1988).
- Handling infants generates hormonal changes in men which promote attachment and reduce aggression (*Feldman et al, 2010*)

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New parents are highly interdependent

- 96.4% of new parents are married/live together/ or live apart but say they are a couple/good friends
(*Kiernan & Smith, 2003*)
- 78% of teenage mothers register the baby's birth jointly with the father
(*DCSF/DH, 2009*)
- 70% of today's new mothers turn to their partner for emotional support, compared with only 47% in the 1960s
(*GMTV survey, 2009*).

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Relationship satisfaction after the birth

- 18%-33% of couples report an improved relationship
(*Gottman et al, 2010; Cowan & Cowan, 1995; Belsky & Kelly, 1994*)
- The rest experience relationship satisfaction decline which often never recovers
(*Doss et al, 2008; Lawrence et al, 2008*)
- Satisfaction decline is particularly marked in contemporary samples
(*Twenge et al, 2003*).

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Evaluation: What kind of impacts are we measuring?

1. Co-parenting
2. Parental mental health
3. Parent-child interaction
4. Infant regulation
5. Couple relationship satisfaction
6. Gender roles and responsibilities