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Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education: Why More Men? A Review of the Literature

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Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education:

Why More Men? A Review of the Literature

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007), 18.3% of elementary and middle school teachers were male, and fewer than 3% of early childhood education and care (ECEC) were male. In 2016, 21.5% of elementary and middle school teachers were male, and still only 2.5% of preschool and kindergarten teachers were male (BLS, 2016). There's not a growth but a slight drop of men working in ECEC. Researchers argued that many jobs have been divided according to the gender lines since the beginning from the first gender division of labor in primitive societies, and gender disparity of occupations is still very stable over long periods of time (Maccoby, 1998). From the beginning of preschool, it was meant to take care of and feed young children, so it was regarded in females' scope. Although "gender imbalance" in teaching, especially in ECEC, has been a concern across the world for many years, there is only a slight growth of the male workforce in higher grades, and many of them move rapidly to higher-paying positions (Cohen, 1992).

Ironically, it has been argued that schools are expected to promote democratic and egalitarian values (Johnson, 2008). However, many students have never had a male teacher until middle or high school. On the other hand, it is believed that boys are more likely to consider teaching as a teaching profession if they see more male teachers in the classroom (Seifert, 2004).

In terms of the achievements to engage more men in ECEC, no European country has reached the benchmark set for 20% male teachers in ECEC. Norway has a

more successful result than other countries, reaching only 9% male ECEC teachers (Vandenbroeck & Peeters, 2008). Denmark and Spain reached more than 8% (Jensen, 1996). In the US, there is no growth at all from 2007 to 2016.

Over the years, there has been numerous studies and interviews regarding the underlying reasons of so few men in ECEC. Several studies state causes as low salary, lacking of social status, fear of child abuse allegations, and scarcity of male camaraderie in the field (Klecker & Loadman, 1999). While the promotion of more men into ECEC is going on internationally, Ballema, Dievendorf, Huberts, Mick, Muntter, and Ward (1999) suggested that there is no single cause that is preventing men working with young children. As women's movement have expanded their career options beyond teaching and nursing, lacking men in ECEC remains a huge concern due to its possible implications.

After all this research and promotion with little achievement, it is suggested that researchers should focus on different perspectives such as whether more men should be involved (MacNaughton & Newman, 2001), and why more men are needed (Owen, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

While it has been documented that women are entering traditionally male occupations and professions, and they're encountering "hostile male environments and harassment" (Kenway, 1997), there is relatively scant empirical basis about the experiences of men moving into traditionally 'female' work environments, or about the rewards or risks entailed (Williams, 1992).

As an ECEC worker myself with a community psychology major background and currently pursuing master of Leadership in American Language Education. Meanwhile, I've been working in a preschool for 2 years. My struggles started from the beginning of my master program and last until now. I've been confused why I was only one of the few male preservice teachers in a classroom, and if there's a physical distance that I should keep from the girls when I am teaching in the field. I also worry that if I'm making enough money to support my future family. I wonder where all these concerns came from and if there are ways to solve them. On the other hand, I do realize my passion and enthusiasm while working with children. The inner conflict of myself makes me want to explore this topic more.

Therefore, based on the existing research, this paper aims to gather and investigate the information about male teachers in ECEC from several perspectives. First, the history of ECEC and male teachers will be explored. Second, the differences between male and female teachers will be discussed. Third, the strengths and benefits that male teachers could bring to their students will be studied. Finally, some successful strategies to recruit male teachers will be gathered.

In addition, researching and discussing the teacher gender disparity in early childhood education brings out many other related factors including gender differences, role models, influence of feminism, social views of femininity and masculinity, etc. All are significant to the results of the research.

Research Methods Description

All resources are gathered from Elton B. Stephens. Company (EBSCO)

through library search engine from St. Cloud State University. Several groups of keywords were used during the review of research:

1. Male teachers, Female teachers, Early childhood education
2. Male teachers, History
3. Male teachers, Female teachers, Differences
4. Male teachers, Early childhood education, Advantages
5. Male teachers, Female teachers, Gender differences
6. Male teachers, Female teachers, Disadvantages

The majority of the related articles found are full texts, and some are linked through Journal STOrage (JSTOR).

Definition of Key Terms

Early Childhood Education and Care:

“Early childhood, birth through age 8, is an exciting time of growth and development in the life of young child and his/her family. Early childhood education and care is a distinct developmental phase of a child’s life is a critical time for optimizing the healthy development of children and their families. professional field that serves children from birth through age 8 and their families in a wide variety of settings, including family child care, center-based child care and preschool programs, after-school programs and family support, early intervention programs, home visiting, and early elementary school care” (UMass Boston, 2017, p.1)

Gender:

“The male or female sex, or the state of being either male or female”

(Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Role model:

“A person who someone admires and whose behavior they try to copy”

(Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Identity:

“an ‘identity’ refer to either (a) a social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviors, or (b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential (or(a) and (b) at once)” (Fearon, 1999, p.2)

Masculinity:

Masculinity is seen as a ‘social construction about what it means to be male in certain times and certain places. These constructions change over time and according to context and dominant discourses (Kenway, 1995, p. 61).

Femininity:

“Femininity was understood as the opposite of the more obvious *masculinity*. Femininity represented those traits, characteristics, behaviors, or thought patterns not associated with a given society's expectations of men” (Grayson, 2017, p.1).

Feminism:

“The belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and

opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state” (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Background and History

ECEC builds on care and education, founded upon the notion that taking care of and educating young children have always been ‘womens’ work’ (Cameron, Moss, & Owen 1999; Cameron 2001). In the nineteenth century, while working-class parents were at work, childcare services were provided as a welfare (Kaga, Bennett, and Moss 2010), especially when there was a need for a (cheap) female workforce. In addition, care service served to protect working-class children from mortality and infections and civilize the working-class (Vandenbroeck 2004; Vandenbroeck, Cousse and Bradt 2010). It also fit the patriarchal and bourgeois model of the family at that time. Usually carers were hired from women of the lower classes as long as they work as the stereotypical ideal mother figure. Considering younger kids are not capable of taking care of themselves, caring is offered to satisfy physical, emotional, social, and mental needs. Moreover, it was part of democratic practice and citizenship (Tronto 1993; Pols, 2006). During this time, kindergartens were built to educate older children both intellectually and morally for preparation of formal schooling (Oberhuemer, Schreyer, and Neuman 2010).

Among all those working in care and education settings, few were formally educated professionals. Being a good teacher or a care giver is almost the same as being a good mother. As a result, working with young children was poorly paid and hard to obtain opportunities to advanced careers. Also consequently, there were even less males in this field mostly because of the low income and socially constructed

view of this job. The roles of men and women have been segregated since the beginning of public education in westernized societies (Skelton, Francis & Smulyan, 2006).

Then in the 1970s, during the second wave of feminism to claim women's rights socially and economically, challenge patriarchy in daily life, Early Childhood Education was significantly influenced. Childcare was no longer a product of bourgeois and patriarchy model of society, it gave women a chance to work and be social for themselves while it was recognized as a significant occupation. As a result, professionalism was increased in the field, salary was raised, and ECEC was considered a labour market for women. What's more, feminists claimed that caring work was essentially feminine (Noddings, 1984), and they want fathers to be more engaged in the education of children, but not as ECEC workers. As a result, while there were more women working in ECEC in many countries, the field remained female dominated (Cockburn, 2010). The gender disparity of the workforce in ECEC was still unnoted.

Then in recent decades, people started to pay more attention to the educational part of ECEC. Based on neuroscience (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000) and economic science (Heckman, 2006; Barnett and Masse 2007), it is believed that the early years of education are critical to the success of a child in a later stage. ECEC should be a place to better prepare children for academic achievements. This trend was named as "schoolification". While cognitive and language competence were emphasized, social, physical, and affective existence were neglected (as cited in Brostrom 2006, 2009;

Hjort 2006). At the same time, teaching was more formalized and constructed to measure children's academic achievements in order to prepare students for international competition (Kamens, 2013; Meyer and Benavot, 2013). Therefore, more specialized teaching practitioners were needed and higher social status and salary were provided. Teacher professionalism and a more 'masculine' teaching environment were expected to challenge the mother-like the practice of ECEC (Cameron, Moss, and Owen 1999; Rolfe 2005; Peeters 2008).

However, ECEC remains female dominated, just as Cameron (2006) suggested that a more professionalized teaching group can't attract more men into the field. It is also supported by the four conclusions made from a study regarding male educators' view on recruiting male early childhood educators (Ballema et al., 1999, p.5):

1. The small number of men in the field of early childhood education does not prevent men who are interested in the field from becoming teachers of young children.
2. Men who teach young children were not influenced to do so by having a male and female teacher that they perceived as a role model.
3. Administrators do not discourage men from teaching young children.
4. Poor salaries are not enough to cause male teachers of young children to seek employment in a more lucrative field.

This was the case in 1970s and still is now. Based on the research in 15 European countries, low-qualified staff are doing the "caring" job while better paid teachers are

doing the “educating” job (as cited in Laere, Peeters, & Vandenbroeck 2012). The divide between these two jobs led to the debate about mind-body dualism in order to understand the scarcity of male in ECEC. As Laere, Vandenbroeck, Roets, and Peeters (2014) also argued, the separation of caring body and educating mind reinforced the perception that women were supposed to take care of children, therefore making it harder for men to find their places in ECEC and also difficult for women to identify themselves under the influence of feminism. Therefore, to seek for a centrality of mind and body (caring and educating), and a gender-neutral practice is recognized by the society, and supported by the percentages of male staff in Norway and Denmark (Braidotti, 2006). By increasing the amount of outdoor course experiences, the number of male teachers increased and pre-service male dropout rates decreased (Wohlgemuth, 2003).

As history reveals, lacking of male in ECEC is traced back from the introduction of ECEC, and it is still an ongoing case all over the world. Although great efforts have been made to get more male involved in ECEC, progress has been slow and limited with only a few exceptions like Norway and Denmark. According to the history, causes of gender disparity in ECEC are various including gender roles of male, low salary, social reviews of masculinity and femininity, and etc.

Based on the research above, male figures were socially constructed as the main support of a family, which means they were supposed to be financially responsible while women were taking care of the children. This view of male gender role led males to seek better paid jobs since ECEC jobs were mostly not well paid.

Based on Occupational Employment and Wages (BLS, 1998 & 2014), as Table 1 below indicates, in the United States, ECEC workers including child care workers and preschool teachers were getting paid much less than teachers working in higher grades, especially when there is a huge pay jump between preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers. Although the salary was increasing, the pay gap remained.

Table 1

Annual Salary Comparison (source: BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics). 1998. Occupational employment and wages, 1997. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/history/ocwage_010499.txt & BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics). 2014. May 2013 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates United States. https://www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/oes_nat.htm#25-0000)

	1997 annual salary (\$)	2013 annual salary (\$)
Child care workers	14,615	21,476
Preschool teachers	18,900	31,420
Kindergarten teachers	34,150	52,840
Elementary teachers	37,310	56,320
Secondary teachers	39,010	58,170

Outside of U.S, according to a study conducted by the Education International ECE Task Force (2010), in Denmark, ECEC educators get paid 3,350 Euros monthly while primary educators' monthly salary is 3,900 Euros. In Cambodia, ECEC teachers' salary are much lower than teachers in high level of education, and they have fewer career prospects. In Hungary, though qualified ECEC teachers have access to the same pay scales as primary education teachers, their average salary are still lower most of the time. In Mexico, salary for ECEC teachers are relatively low, and often

times, they have to work double shifts and extra jobs. In Norway where there is a higher percentage of male teachers in ECEC, salary for ECEC teachers are still comparatively lower than teachers in higher grade levels. Meanwhile in New Zealand, ECEC teachers are getting well paid just as primary education teachers due to a shortage of teachers and government incentives.

Therefore, lower salary for ECEC workers appears to a global issue. Although countries like Norway, Denmark, and New Zealand are making policies to close the gap, low salary is still a main concern when male decide to work in ECEC field or not, and at least it is a concern of myself as noted in the introduction.

In addition to gender roles and low pay, throughout the history, men are concerned about potential accusations of child abuse or sexual harassment when they choose to teach in ECEC (Rice & Goessling, 2005). In Thornton's (1999) study of three preservice male teachers, they shared the concerns:

How a male teacher deals with a girl crying is different to how a female teacher would deal with it and how I want to see how.....I need to be able to see how to deal with that in the proper recognized way.....people think, don't they. People always assume a lot, that scares me a little bit. (Alan, Year 2)

Fear of being accused of abuse. (Roy, Year 4)

Afraid of being called a dirty old man. (Kez, Year 1)"

At the same time, there are teachers with more classroom experiences who claimed that they became more relaxed about how to interact with children physically over time (Guyton, Saxton & Wesche, 1996).

Overall, there has been a great deal of research regarding what's preventing men from becoming ECEC workers, there are not many studies done to investigate "whether more men should enter ECEC" and "why more men should enter ECEC".

Male Teacher vs. Female Teachers in ECEC

There are many differences between teachers, not to mention between a male teacher and a female teacher. The question is about if gender difference makes a difference both in teaching style and teaching outcomes. Locally, nationally, and internationally, there are concerns about boys' academic achievement compared to girls' (as cited in Peeters, 2007; Lloyd, 2009, 2011; Moran, 2011; DfE, 2012; Parity, 2013). As Schwartz (2002) supports the idea that increasing of male presence in ECEC will improve academic achievements of boys by paying more attention to boys' interests and preferences, governments also urge to recruit more "brave" men (Britain, Plowden, B. H & Plowden, B, 1975). Meanwhile, noticed by both female and male teachers from Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson's study (2005), female teachers are more likely to use calm play and focus on social development, and male teachers like to incorporate more physical play in teaching. What's more, self-report studies by Rentzou and Ziganitidou (2009) and Vandenbroeck and Peeters (2008) also found that male teachers are more likely to engage in physical activities, to let children freely explore themselves, and to make more use of humor. A lot of male teachers claimed that there was an altruistic drive such as helping people that led them to teaching (Robinson & Hobson, 1978).

On the contrary, studies based on the analysis of children's drawing of their

male teachers suggest that men don't offer much differently than others in ECEC (Sumison, 2005). What's more, according to the experience of 11-year-old children who attended 413 separated classes taught by 113 male and 300 female teachers, there is no evidence to indicate that male teachers improve the learning outcome of boys (as cited in Carrington, Tymms & Merrell, 2008). Also Professor Fagot et al. (1985) concluded young children's learning outcomes are more linked to school settings than teachers' gender.

Meanwhile, Thevenin (1993) suggested that it is critical to have both a male and a female teacher working together with young children because children learn the differences from the different traits that both male and female teacher bring to the classroom.

It is interesting that while there are so many studies suggesting that increase of male teachers doesn't necessarily improve children's performance, the need for more men in ECEC is still spreading and expanding. Therefore, what other strengths and benefits that male teachers could bring to ECEC is the question.

Why More Men in ECEC

Among most of the arguments regarding benefits that men could bring to early childhood education and care, there are three main aspects:

- Having more men into the field of ECEC will benefit the society as a whole for gender equality. Cameron and Moss (1998) mentioned:

“... the absence or presence of men in early childhood services contributes to or challenges dominant ideologies about gender roles and relationships in the wider

community. A center with a mixed gender workforce, for example, is part of a gender equity discourse, including equal sharing of childcare between men and women, just as a center with only women workers is part of a very different discourse which identifies women as particularly suited to caring for young children.”

- More male teachers could benefit the early childhood education profession by creating a different working dynamic at school and raising teachers’ status.
- Male presence in ECEC will benefit all children with a male role model, especially for children who have a single-parent family or long-hour working parents. A male teacher could help to compensate for the absence (Jensen, 1996).

1. Gender fair classroom and society

Early childhood education remains one of the most gender-unbalanced of all occupations all over the world. It is argued that male teachers could bring gender balance in a school setting by affirmation of behaviors that are acceptable for boys and girls (Bittner & Cooney, 2003). The UK Teacher Training Agency (TTA) also stated that ‘pupils need a balance of experience from different teachers. Having men and women provides that balance’ (Budge, 1995). What’s more, European Union Council Recommendation on Child Care encourages more involvement of men in children’ education and care, and one way to achieve that goal is to increase male employment in ECEC (as cited in Burgess & Ruxton, 1996). In this way, by challenging the idea that working in ECEC is naturally gendered, it supports the

employment of a mixed gender workforce (Cameron, Moss & Owen, 1999).

On the other hand, while there might be more male teachers in the classroom, there are still arguments about how it doesn't change gender bias in order to contribute to gender equality (MacNaughton & Newman, 2001). Male teachers are usually trained from predominantly female students' classrooms where gender bias is an issue, and it influences their choices of texts, dominant perspectives expressed in class discussion, and chosen content (Cooney & Bittner, 2001). What's more, missing male mentors is an additional concern. Therefore, Cooney and Bittner argued that in order to create a gender fair classroom and to promote gender equality, ECEC teachers and administrators need to "understand the change process within institutions". In other words, having more men in ECEC itself doesn't help to create gender fair classroom and build gender equality, only with "purposeful, explicit change in how teachers of young children think about teaching, and learning with diverse group" (Cooney & Bittner, 2001), the mission can be achieved.

2. Benefiting the early childhood education and care profession

Jenson (1996) suggests that more male teachers could improve workplace dynamic, staff interrelationship, and status of the professionals. In history, ECEC remains a female dominated occupation with low salary due to the bias that women's work is less worthy than men's work. While teachers are now better formally educated, the job requirements to become a teacher are set higher, with more men in the field, they could help to push for worthy wages. What's more, there are assumptions that mixed gender of teachers in ECEC could loosen the tension of an

all-women workplace.

On the contrary, there are more critics regarding rapid promotion of male teachers comparing to female teachers, which could increase workplace tension (Pringle, 1998). Pringle also argues that men enjoy this structural advantage to be in position of social control.

3. Being a role model and a father figure

This is one of the biggest arguments among all about how male teachers contribute to younger children's growth and development. Firstly, it is believed that men can provide role models for the children, especially boys. According to the argument by Jensen (1996), male teachers are better at identifying and resolving boys' issues at school than female teachers based on the understanding of boys' perspectives and experiences. Also, boys could better explore their interests with help from males. Supporting this idea, a study of women's perspective on quality male teachers by Jones (2007) suggests four points:

- “(1) Enthusiastic about young children and hold an ‘early years philosophy’
- (2) A listener—not arrogant
- (3) A team worker with a sense of humour
- (4) Macho—not a ‘wimp’!”

Critics assert that these views not only positioned male and female fundamentally different, but also reinforce the gender stereotypes from privileging boys that fit the dominant form of masculinity (Alloway, 1995; Martinez, 1998).

Another aspect of the argument is about the “disappearing fathers”. While there is a

rise of families with single mother or long-hour working parents, the presence of male teachers could help to provide a stable and positive male figure for those children (Jensen, 1996). On the other hand, there are many debates about how much parenting is missing because of the various reason of fathers' absence. A survey of a pre-kindergarten at-risk programmes conducted by McBride and Lin (1996) found that most mothers claimed that their children have a regular and intimate connection to a male figure in their lives. What's more, as "fatherhood" is related to many aspects including personality, values, social and economic structure, and family structure (William, 1998), it's not clear that male teachers' presence could compensate as a father figure or not.

It appears that arguments remain. While there are no universal agreements about how uniquely male teachers benefit young children compared to female teachers, there is no doubt that a qualified male teacher is very welcomed in the field. Therefore, how to recruit more males into the field becomes more important than figuring out how unique is a male teacher to a female teacher.

Suggestions and Strategies to Recruit More Male Teachers

According to the history, the shortage of male teachers is caused by many reasons including "economic development, urbanization, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the [low social] value of children and childcare" (Drudy, 2008). In order to attract more men in the field, focusing on any single factor is not going to work. Barnard, Hovingh, Nezwek, Pryor-Bayard, Schmoltdt, Stevens, and Weaver (2000) suggest that with collaborated work by administrators,

government policy makers, current teachers, and trainers of teachers, greater success to recruit more male teachers could be achieved.

1. For policy makers

Now, almost every country in the world is urging to attract more men into ECEC. Some countries step in the front to make policies determined for the goal. Norway has set a target of 20% male workers in early children services. (Moss, 2000). New Zealand announced a program offering ten \$4,500 scholarships for men entering its ECE teacher education program. Germany put 13 million euro to the “More Men in Early Childhood Education and Care” initiative, and their long term aim is 20 percent (ChildForum, 2012). Although the results have had limited success, there has been progress to establish a less gendered ECE workforce in these countries. Meanwhile, The United States has been slow in the progress, and the results are disappointing. As Wilkins and Gamble (2012) propose, increasing financial rewards such as raising teacher salaries, implementing federal loan repayment programs, and providing graduate school stipends would be beneficial to attract more male teachers into ECE. Other than that, establishing a network for male teachers to communicate, support, and protect each other is also important for male teachers to stay in ECE. Examples are NAEYC Forum, Men in Education Network (Men), and Men Teach. As Cunningham (1999) suggests, many men feel that they work under many accusations that could force them to leave the job. Therefore, related policies are needed protect them.

2. For administrators and Current teachers

It is important that administrators and teachers in the classroom incorporate positive male images to daily teaching and displaying in school. For example, other than a poster of a president in the hallway, images of males working in nurturing and caring professions should be exhibited too.

Administrators and teachers should examine their own gender bias in the interaction with young children through using gender-neutral languages, providing opportunities for every student to explore themselves, and encouraging staffs to observe and reflect each other.

What's more, teachers and administrators should actively work with high schools to give high school students chances to learn and understand ECEC teaching profession. From an article by Isobel Leybold (2016), Katarina Farkas who is in charge of project at the Zug University of Teacher Education in Switzerland suggested that as male teachers encourage boys to think about ECEC teaching as a profession, boys need living role models rather than virtual ones to develop realistic images of men. In other words, administrators and current teachers should create more opportunities for boys to learn about what is like to be a male teacher.

3. For teacher trainers

It is now essential for pre-service male teachers to understand what differences they can make in ECE. Therefore, trainers should introduce current male teachers to support and mentor male teacher candidates. Also colleges should work with career services and trainers to promote the option to work in ECEC.

Finally, trainers should provide stronger preparation in literacy of male candidates. One of the most successful programs is The Call Me MISTER Program (CMMP), it is a collaborative work between Clemson University and three private historically black institutions in South Carolina, by giving the participants many more opportunities to learn and practice in the teaching field and providing strong tutoring and mentoring services, thousands of young African American young men have become teachers.

What's more, Cunningham & Charyn (2002), from a survey of licensed child care workers in Washington State, suggested for teacher educators:

“• Include the phrases “men encouraged to apply” or “men welcome” in ads for employees

- Place ads under “recreation” rather than “child care”
- Recruit and train men through high school and college work study programs, sports teams, and for work during school breaks
- Use men to recruit other men; if a candidate is reluctant to be the only man on staff, ask if he has a friend who might like to work with him
- Start men working with school-age children with whom they may initially feel more comfortable and accepted”

Decades of efforts have made to encourage more men in ECE, suggestions and strategies vary differently in every country. Studies about the effectiveness of those suggestions are needed in order to seek for the most sufficient methods to recruit more men in ECE.

Conclusion

For more than a century, women teaching younger students and men teaching higher grades are common (Clarke, 1985; Sampson 1991). This paper aims to find out why and how to get more male teachers into ECE through looking at history and existing debates. The results show that voices over the world are trying to encourage more men to work with younger students. However, there are not universally agreed scientific findings to prove that the presence of men lead to better performance of the children. The call for more men is considered to be a step towards gender balanced classrooms, and possibly to contribute to social equality. As history reveals, the scarcity of men in ECEC is related to many factors including gender role, social structure, beliefs about masculinity and femininity, and others. Although polices and suggestions are made to attract and keep more men in ECE, results are limited. To further explore this topic and to successfully involve more men in ECE:

1. Current recruiting strategies and suggestions need to be assessed and valued for their effectiveness.
2. Instead of figuring out the advantages of male teachers, how to make female and male teachers work together for the good of students' performance and care should be investigated.
3. There should a global organization about ECEC in order for different countries to share experiences and work together.

As an ECEC educator myself, I strongly support the initiatives to recruit more male teachers in ECEC. It is not only a strong support for current male teachers, but

also an enhancement for the physical, emotional, and academic development of children. With a balanced teaching style and gender role models, it should help students to shape their own identities. On the other hand, as research demonstrates, I do think this is going to be a very long and challenging process.

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