

## Top 10 Tips for Supporting Young Fathers

Extracted from: New Pathways for Young Fathers Policy Briefing Paper Dr Carmen Clayton (Leeds Trinity University), Han Son Lee (DaddiLife) and John May (Leeds City Council) February 2021

1. Young fathers are a particularly vulnerable and invisible group. Sometimes it is not immediately obvious if the young man has child-caring responsibilities. Simply asking the question can help kick start a conversation.
2. Young fathers are all different, and these differences should be respected.
3. Negative stereotypes around young fatherhood can affect how young fathers engage with professionals. Be non-judgement and listen in a genuine manner.
4. Young fathers may feel reluctant to ask for help or how to ask for this help. Give them extra time to ask questions and be observant and sensitive.
5. Rather than being disengaged, data shows that young fathers want to be fully active in their role as a father. This can be capitalised upon when working with and supporting young fathers.
6. Young fathers can often provide great support for the young mothers regardless of the relationship status and they should be encouraged to be involved throughout the parenting journey.
7. Young fathers may have a desire to act as a breadwinner, but they may not have the ability to do so. Help them to understand non-financial ways of supporting the baby or child, which is just as meaningful and important.
8. Young fathers may struggle to attend meetings and sessions especially if expenses are incurred. Offer young fathers' flexible ways of participating which does not put them out of pocket (e.g., online meetings).
9. Young fathers are often under multiple strain and pressures and may become more susceptible to mental health problems.
10. Do not ignore fathers by focusing solely on the mother's interests. Use inclusive language to both fathers and mothers during consultations and documentations sent (e.g., letters). Try to signpost young fathers to support that is available and do not assume that young fathers are aware of such provision even if it may seem obvious.