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Canadian Researchers Study Canadian Fathers

With Father's Day approaching, the Father Involvement Research Alliance (FIRA) has released new research on Canadian fathers. FIRA is the largest fatherhood research project in Canada and involves 10 universities and over 25 community partners.

Residential Schooling Hindering Today's Aboriginal Father

As the first in Canada to study aboriginal fathers, FIRA researchers have found one of the most significant challenges facing aboriginal fathers is the negative impacts on the family as a result of the residential school experiences. "Some Indigenous fathers of today grew up with parents who attended residential schools and therefore were not really parented themselves," said Prof. Jessica Bell, of the University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care. "So some aboriginal men grew up without a social model of how to be a father." As a result it has taken some aboriginal men a number of years to assume fatherhood responsibilities.

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Research Reveals Discrimination Experienced by Young Fathers

Research into teenage fathers by FIRA has found they are the most marginalized group of parents in our society. "Young fathers are not held in high regard by most people," said Prof. Annie Devault, of the Universite du Quebec en Outaouais. "Health professionals, social workers, the courts and even their own families at times do not see these young fathers as having an important role in the lives of their children." As a result, Devault said these young men feel discriminated against.

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Recognition of Foreign Employment Credentials Impacts and Fatherhood

FIRA researchers have found when an immigrant father is unable to find work that relates to his education, he is also prevented from assuming a proper fathering role. Not only is it difficult for them to meet their children's needs financially, but they are often working two or three jobs and don't have time to spend with their children. "These fathers also worry that their children are getting the message that working hard and getting a good education doesn't translate to good employment opportunities," said Prof. David Este, of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work.

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Other research projects include examining the experiences of separated/divorced fathers, gay fathers, new fathers and fathers of children with special needs.

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