

## Media Release

# FOCUS ON FATHERING

Edited by Robin Sullivan

*With various contributors*

*RRP \$29.95*

**Being a father is challenging. With many factors shaping perceptions of fatherhood and the way fathers behave, there is no longer a clear definition of a father's role.**

**Focus on Fathering** explores the debate about men's place in the world, as much as about their relationships with their children.

It's been argued that biologically, fathers are in danger of becoming obsolete, with media images reinforcing cultural stereotypes of fathers as figures of fun, struggling with the fathering role, or absent. Yet men's desire to be good fathers is important, suggesting that fathers are here to stay.

**Focus on Fathering** focuses on new ways to explore masculinity and re-think fatherhood, encouraging fathers to examine their place in the family, contribute equally to the caring of children and household tasks and be more emotionally connected to their children.

This book highlights the contradiction this debate creates. Is fathering different to mothering or are both simply parenting? Should fathers become more like mothers? Do services have the mother in mind when they think of the parent? Is keeping children functioning strictly women's business? What will happen if boys have no male role models? What are the barriers to fathering?

Few studies explore children's and young people's views of fathering. There is a significant gap in the data on the younger generation who are pivotal in the debate about the importance of fathers.

The book, **Focus on Fathering** brings together the sometimes conflicting views of young people, the professionals who work with fathers and those who conduct research in this area.

There is no question that men can and should play an important role in their families. The question is whether they should attempt to play this role as 'fathers', fulfilling a unique place in the family.

As research into the concept of fathering expands, so will our understanding of fathers.

**Focus on fathering** takes the first step in examining this vital role and inviting experts to put forward their case.

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