

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## News Report

### Dads attending births

---

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a dark teal background.

Times have changed in the world of childbirth in the UK.

In the 1950s fathers were rarely present at the birth of their children. Many men thought it was **not their place**.

In those days fathers preferred to wait in the kitchen or the pub for news.

This wasn't always the man's choice. Women too were not always happy for their husbands to see them while they were giving birth.

However, if you are in a hospital **maternity unit** now you will see many fathers. These fathers are not just waiting outside for information but taking an active part in **the delivery**.

By the end of the 1970s up to **80%** of fathers were present when their children were born.

There are a number of possible reasons for this change.

In 1948 the **National Health Service** was **established** in the UK. This led to more women having children in hospital than at home. Away from the familiar surroundings of the home, women looked for more **moral support** and men started **to play an increasing role**.

Doctors and **midwives** now generally encourage fathers to be part of the process. In the past this wasn't always true.

Changing attitudes in society towards relationships and parenting have also had a big impact. There is now more focus on the emotional **bond** between a man and a woman and a man and his newborn child.

Despite this some fathers still prefer not to be there when their children are born. Some are **squeamish** and some think that if they see their wives giving birth it will be bad for their relationship.

## **Vocabulary**

### **not their place**

not the right thing for them to be there

### **maternity unit**

the department in a hospital where babies are born

### **the delivery**

the process of giving birth

### **National Health Service**

system of health care in the UK which provides free medical treatment for all

### **established**

started

### **moral support**

help and encouragement

### **to play an increasing role**

to become more involved

### **midwives**

nurses who specialise in looking after women who are having babies

### **a big impact**

an important influence

### **bond**

strong connection

### **squeamish**

unhappy and uncomfortable when seeing blood

This story is based on an original BBC News story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21701683>