

# What is PEEP?

*Confident communities learning together with children*

PEEP aims to contribute towards a significant improvement in educational attainment by whole communities of children, from their birth, by working with parents and carers.

## Background to PEEP

PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) was set up in 1995. It is an early learning intervention which aims to contribute towards improving the life chances of children, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

Its purpose is to raise educational attainment, especially in literacy. The PEEP programme focuses on how to make the most of the learning opportunities in everyday life at home – listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books every day. By working *with* adults *about* their children's very early learning, PEEP supports parents and carers in their role as the first educators of their children.

## Research

Three formal research studies on PEEP have been carried out by the University of Oxford:

- The six-year *Birth to School Study* (2005) of over 600 children, found that PEEP parents reported a significantly enhanced view of their parent-child interaction. PEEP Parents were also rated significantly higher on the quality of their care-giving environment. PEEP children made significantly greater progress in a cluster of skills related to future literacy, eg vocabulary, awareness of rhyme and alliteration, letter identification, understanding of books and print, and writing. PEEP children were also rated higher on self-esteem by the age of five.
- The *Foundation PEEP Study* (2003) found that three- and four-year-olds engaged in PEEP made significantly greater progress than others in several key areas, including language comprehension, understanding about books and print, and self-esteem.
- The *Enabling Parents Study* (2005) found that adult PEEP participants had made a significant improvement in their job status. They also reported significantly greater awareness of their child's literacy development and of ways to foster it.

## Encouraging further learning

### **Parent accreditation**

Parents/carers are offered the opportunity to gain an Open College Network (OCN) accreditation (level 1 and 2) by participating in PEEP activities. They build up a portfolio of activities done with their child at home, with explanatory comments. This process has helped to increase parents'/carers' own confidence to access other courses.

In the video *Feeling Good about Learning Together* (which can be ordered from PEEP) parents/carers engaged in the Oxford programme talk about the ways in which PEEP has supported them.

## Programme Aims

1. To promote parents' and carers' awareness of children's very early learning and development through making the most of everyday activities and interactions.
2. To support parents/carers in their relationships with their children, so that the children's self-esteem will be enhanced.
3. To support parents/carers in the development of their children's literacy and numeracy.
4. To support parents/carers so that they can encourage the development of positive learning dispositions in their children.
5. To promote and support parents' and carers' lifelong learning.

## The PEEP Model

### PEEP Principles

The PEEP model consists of a set of principles, a spectrum of delivery methods, and a programme with core elements and materials.

All PEEP projects share core principles which have been developed by practitioners in Oxford, in partnership with practitioners in other parts of the country. They are expressed in four areas:

#### *About relationships with parents/carers*

PEEP:

- values parents'/carers' knowledge and experience of their children, using this as a starting point and building on it by offering ideas and information
- works with parents as equal partners (PEEP is done *with* parents not to them)
- has a non-judgemental approach towards families
- values diversity, welcoming people from all backgrounds and cultures
- creates opportunities for parents to share experiences and ideas in a safe and supportive environment.

#### *About learning together with children*

PEEP recognises that:

- parents/carers are a child's first and most important educators
- self-esteem is central for learning
- learning works best when the world is understood from the child's point of view
- children learn through play and interaction
- singing, stories and books are extremely important in the education of children, beginning at birth
- relationships are at the heart of learning.

and encourages:

- parents/carers to learn together with their children
- high expectations of what children and adults can achieve together.

The other principles, 'About the PEEP programme' and 'About the organisation', along with the PEEP aims (which focus on affirming and supporting the crucial role that parents play) can be found on the PEEP website.

### Delivery Methods

The PEEP model is flexible but structured, enabling delivery to be adapted to the needs, opportunities and existing services in local communities. A range of organisations, including Children's Centres, local councils (with lead partners from

education, family learning, health and social services) and voluntary sector projects are now using PEEP.

PEEP may be delivered in the following ways:

### **Home visits**

Home visits can be made soon after a baby's birth. These are to introduce families to the PEEP programme, and to explore how parents and carers could use PEEP materials to support their child's learning at home. Families are also invited to join a PEEP group, if they wish. Those who choose not to attend groups may be offered further visits as their child grows.

### **Home programme**

A programme lasting about six weeks, offering ideas and support, can be organised for families who would benefit from a one-to-one approach.

### **PEEP groups**

PEEP group sessions are generally run weekly for parents and carers to attend with their children. The video, *Beginning with PEEP*, shows scenes from group sessions.

### **Open access PEEP**

Some families prefer to access PEEP-type activities in a less formal way. Projects have used PEEP materials, ideas and approach on a drop-in basis, eg in a family centre or a local shopping centre, or in an existing group, eg Play and Stay. This increases the accessibility of PEEP, by starting where families are and by collaborating with other organisations.

### **PEEP in settings**

PEEP is also offered in settings, such as foundation classes, day-care and pre-schools. This provides a range of activities and opportunities for discussion, which encourage adults' involvement in their children's learning.

## The PEEP programme

Organisations using PEEP activities work with the underlying PEEP principles and use PEEP's work is based on the implications of research findings: that the first years of a child's life are crucial for later development, and that the key role of adults who are for the child during those years must be affirmed and supported.

the core elements of the PEEP programme. The programme is structured about the 'ORIM' framework developed by Peter Hannon at the University of Sheffield. This recognises that children need to have:

#### **Opportunities to learn**

**R**ecognition and valuing of their early efforts and achievements

**I**nteraction with adults to talk about what they do and how they feel

**M**odelling by adults of behaviour, attitudes and activities.

#### **Core activities of the PEEP programme**

The core activities of the programme are:

- songs and rhymes, sharing books and stories, and activities. Singing, talking and playing together helps develop children's listening, talking and later literacy, and strengthens relationships.
- talking time – discussion of a theme relating to children's development, giving parents/carers a chance to share experiences together.

Five broad areas are focused on, eg self-concept and learning dispositions (such as perseverance and curiosity). Each area is explored through a range of themes, eg 'Babies making choices', 'Managing difficult behaviour'.

### **PEEP materials**

The *Learning Together* series has been developed to help support parents/carers and practitioners to use PEEP ideas and activities. There is a *Learning Together* folder for each of five age-levels – babies to four-year-olds. The material is divided into themes, combining information and ideas for things to do at home. Five accompanying videos present ideas on the key themes.

There are two songbooks with CDs. *Singing Together 1* is for babies and very young children, and *Singing Together 2* is for young children from around three years old. Both books contain ideas for actions and notes about how the songs support children's development.

### **Comments from Parents**

*"I first came to PEEP when my baby was 9 weeks old and both my baby and I have benefited a great deal. I have been able to meet other mums in the PEEP area and we have a good network where we support each other during PEEP and holiday periods".*

*"Baby PEEP was invaluable to me, as becoming a parent was a very exciting time but also somewhat daunting, especially as I am a single parent. I want to give my son the best start I can, regardless of our circumstances, and PEEP has become an essential part of our lives"*

*"In the beginning I was a shy person with hardly any confidence at all. I was welcomed with open arms and gradually taking my son there helped me make friends which I still have today 6 years later."*

*"As a foster carer, I have found PEEP to be a great way to enable a child and parent who are apart to spend quality time together in a non-judgmental environment".*

*"PEEP has helped me find things that my child and I can enjoy doing together. That makes us both happy and I gather it is also setting him on the right path for learning. What a bonus!"*

### **Comments from Practitioners**

*"Very inspiring, was excellent in demonstrating PEEP in action. I now feel confident in using the materials and structuring a programme to meet the needs of our community."*

*"It has been one of the best courses I have attended and can see how could work in the groups I already run. Excellent."*

*"Enjoyed the course – group leaders great. Well done! Best course I've been on in years!"*

*"It was all appropriate and extremely helpful in order that we can roll out PEEP at Sure Start – I can't wait!"*

*"Well organised days – looking forward to receiving the PEEP publications & downloading the worksheets."*

## Further information and training

### **Website: [www.peep.org.uk](http://www.peep.org.uk)**

The PEEP website is easy to use and contains comprehensive information and downloads. The latest developments can be found there, such as practitioner registration and local networks. It also has a log-in area to provide further support for practitioners who have done PEEP training. This area includes a discussion forum, useful documents and info about PEEP in other areas.

### **Information Day**

A one-day event which gives managers and others the opportunity to explore the possibilities for using the PEEP programme and materials within their organisation. This event can be useful for those needing information about the programme who will not be directly involved in delivery. Info Days can be arranged in any part of the UK.

### **PEEP for practitioners training course**

This is a two-day course for practitioners who are planning to use the PEEP programme and materials. Participants are introduced to the PEEP principles, the curriculum and materials, and are encouraged to explore how PEEP could be used to meet the needs of the families in their area. Ideas and information are offered about strategies for working with parents/carers and children together in groups, homes and settings. A comprehensive handbook accompanies the course.

### **Contact us for more information on:**

- ordering PEEP materials (folders, songbooks & CDs, videos)
- Information Days & training courses, and visits to PEEP
- further background information
- any other questions.

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