

Press release  
Thursday 13 April 2017

## **Charity consortium launches programme to improve children's life chances by empowering parents as first educators**

A consortium of education and children's charities have secured funding from the Department for Education to deliver projects to improve the life chances of children from six disadvantaged communities in England.

The projects will be run by the National Literacy Trust, the National Children's Bureau, Peeples and the Foundation Years Trust. The four charities are working together to support families and practitioners to improve the home learning environments of more disadvantaged children. The consortium has received a grant of £430,000, as part of a wider £55 million government investment in childcare schemes announced by the Minister for the Early Years, Caroline Dinenage [1].

In England, children from poorer backgrounds do worse at school and in the world of work than their more affluent peers. By the time children start school, aged five, those from poorer backgrounds are already 18 months behind their wealthier peers in school-readiness [2]. What's more, 60-70% of gaps in attainment at age 11 are due to inequalities present at age five [3].

Despite strong evidence that parental involvement in a child's early learning is a more powerful force for success than socio-economic factors [4], one-quarter of parents from poorer backgrounds do not consider themselves to be the primary influence on their child's learning [5].

The programme will help parents and early years educators develop the skills and confidence they need to better understand the positive impact they can have on their child's life chances through learning together in the home.

### **Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust, said:**

"Early childhood is a period of rapid growth and development, and what children learn in the early years provides the foundation for later learning and health. We are delighted to be working with the National Children's Bureau, Peeples and the Foundation Years Trust to support parents to become their child's first educator. Working together, we can create a more level playing field for all children growing up in England today."

### **The Rt. Hon. Frank Field MP, Chairman of the Foundation Years Trust, said:**

"The funding from DfE to support programmes around the home learning is a great start towards what we hope will become a standard part of early years education. I am delighted the consortium has the opportunity to demonstrate that, through helping parents to support their children's development, we can start to create a fairer society for everyone."

The National Literacy Trust will work in Bradford and Leicester to identify and train champions from nurseries to support families with two year olds to improve their home learning environments and gain the confidence to support their child's development.

The National Children's Bureau will use an adapted model of effective early intervention, [Raising Early Achievement in Literacy \(REAL\)](#), to develop positive home learning environments in key areas of Sussex and Knowsley. Children and families will be invited, by their nurseries, schools and children's centres, to participate in a series of home visits and literacy events – building parents' confidence to support children's learning and development at home.

Peep and the Foundation Years Trust will coordinate their work across Wirral and Oxfordshire to provide the [Peep Learning Together](#) programme through nursery and community settings. The programme positively promotes and builds on parents' skills to support their child's development, through demonstrating fun ways that learning can be incorporated into everyday life at home. The approach is designed to boost parents' confidence and to help parents understand their valuable role as their child's primary educator, whilst strengthening partnerships between parents and early years professionals.

All the charities will work together to promote the role of the home learning environment and the key role of parents more widely.

**-ENDS-**

### **Media contact**

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### **Notes to editors**

[1] Department for Education press release, Tuesday 11 April 2017: [www.gov.uk/government/news/families-to-benefit-from-55-million-boost-to-childcare-schemes](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/families-to-benefit-from-55-million-boost-to-childcare-schemes)

[2] The Sutton Trust and the University of Oxford, [Subject to Background: What promotes better achievement for bright but disadvantaged students?](#) 2015

[3] The Sutton Trust, [International Inequalities](#), 2016

[4] Flouri and Buchanan, 2004

[5] National Literacy Trust, [Early Literacy Practices at Home](#), 2015

### **About the National Literacy Trust**

We are an independent charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

Visit [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk) to find out more, donate or sign up for our free email newsletter. You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The National Literacy Trust is a registered charity no. 1116260 and a company limited by guarantee no. 5836486 registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in Scotland no. SC042944. Registered address: 68 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL.

### **About the National Children's Bureau**

The National Children's Bureau is a leading children's charity working to build a better childhood for every child. We champion children's right to be safe, secure and supported, by using evidence and our expert knowledge to influence government policy, and help practitioners to do the best job possible, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. For more information, visit: [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

### **About Peep**

Peep is a charity that trains professionals and works with families, to support children's early learning. The Peep Learning Together Programme helps parents to improve the quality of the home learning environment and attachment relationships with their children, by making the most of everyday learning opportunities –

listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books and stories together. For more information, visit: [www.peeple.org.uk](http://www.peeple.org.uk)

**About the Foundation Years Trust**

Working alongside early years teachers and practitioners, the Foundation Years Trust is testing the viability of a model of engaging parents in weekly, nursery-based sessions to learn fun and playful ways in which they can enhance their child's learning, and of introducing this model as a standard and universal part of early years education offered in all nurseries. The Foundation Years Trust currently operates in deprived communities on the Wirral, with plans to expand their work to other Local Authorities in the North West. For more information, visit: [www.foundationyearstrust.org.uk](http://www.foundationyearstrust.org.uk)