

# Enabling Parents

## The Role of PEEP in Supporting Parents as Adult Learners

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groups

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## List of Abbreviations

A Level	Advanced Level
AS Level	Advanced Supplementary Level
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DH	Department for Health
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELPP	Early Learning Partnership Project
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GP	General Practitioner
IdEA	Improvement and Development Agency
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LGA	Local Government Association
ONS	Office of National Statistics
ORIM	Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Modelling
NHS	National Health Service
PEAL	Parents, Early Years and Learning Project
PEEP	Peers Early Education Partnership
PHC	Practical Help Child
PHP	Practical Help Parents
PPEL	Parents as Partners in Early Learning
PSA	Parenting Support Advisers
SOA	Super Output Area
SES	Socio-economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom

## The Research Team

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## **Executive Summary**

### *Outline of the research*

The Enabling Parents project studied the impact on mothers of participation in the Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) programme. The programme for parents was implemented through weekly group meetings for mothers and their young children - all focusing on ways that young children learn and, more importantly, things mothers and other family members can do to support early learning at home and in the community. Mothers of four year old children living in the area where PEEP was implemented, and who were involved in the Birth to School Study (Evangelou, Brooks, and Pring, 1998-2005), were invited to join a separate study on facilities to support parents. Parents were selected if they had attended at least one PEEP session in the period between the birth of the target child and the age of four.

### *The Quantitative Study*

The final sample of PEEP mothers recruited to the Enabling Parents quantitative study who met the selection criteria was 74. A comparison group of 71 was then selected from another community where PEEP was not available but which had similar socio-demographic characteristics to the area in which PEEP was based. The mothers in the comparison group were matched to the mothers who had participated in PEEP on the following factors (all measured at the birth of the target child): socio-economic class as assessed by occupation, educational qualifications of the mother and family structure (single/partnered).

All mothers in the study were visited in their homes where a semi-structured interview was administered along with questionnaires. They were told that the researcher was interested in facilities and support for parents of young children in the area. PEEP was not specifically mentioned to either group, but mothers in the PEEP catchment area often spontaneously referred to their attendance at PEEP groups or use of PEEP materials. Mothers in both groups mentioned non-PEEP activities such as Baby Gym, Mother-Toddler Groups or Family Centres. In addition to their use and views on facilities that support parents, mothers were asked about their employment, training courses they had attended, and the amount and type of social support they received in their lives. The quantitative analyses of the interview and questionnaire data showed the following:

(1) Mothers in the PEEP group (i.e. those who attended five or more sessions in the 4 years since the birth of the target child) had improved their socio-economic status when compared to the mothers from the comparison area. Although they had not earned more formal qualifications, they had attended significantly more non-award bearing training courses and reported using a greater number of sources of information regarding employment and training opportunities.

(2) Mothers in the PEEP group said they learned how to stimulate their children's learning through attendance at PEEP. They also reported that PEEP helped them to understand children's development and how everyday activities at home and in the community could support their children's language development. Mothers living in the comparison community said that they valued the groups/facilities they had available because it gave their children opportunity to run around and play with other children. This reported difference in focus on children's learning opportunities as opposed to children's physical play ("running around") was statistically significant. However, there were no differences between the PEEP and comparison groups on standardised questionnaires regarding discipline, contact with child's pre school, and attitudes, or feelings towards the child.

(3) Mothers in both areas reported that social support was vital in their parenting. There were no significant differences between the groups in the amount of support individuals felt they experienced. Moreover there were no differences between the two groups in feelings of self efficacy or parenting stress.

### *The Qualitative Study*

A sub sample of twenty of the PEEP mothers who participated in the quantitative study were selected for in depth interviews which took place in their homes. Mothers were asked about their feelings towards PEEP, the leaders and their first session and learning about their child's development.

Qualitative results on the effects of PEEP were broadly in line with the quantitative ones. Mothers had more opportunity in the qualitative interview to give details on the PEEP groups such as the focus on playful activities which children enjoyed and which stretched their young minds.

### *Policy implications*

The report closes with a focus on the policy relevance of the results. The effect of PEEP to increase mothers' social class (through better jobs) was linked to the Learning Bridge activities in PEEP, such as the deliberate circulation of information about training opportunities in the area and to the PEEP Access courses which gave participating mothers Open College Network (OCN) accreditation. Of particular interest were the 'ordinary mums' who attended PEEP groups and then worked their way up the group leader hierarchy; from assistant group leader to group leader. Prominent also were the mothers who attended fewer than five sessions (and were excluded from the main study) in their reports of chance experiences which put them off PEEP and made them determined not to return.

All in all, the results of this well controlled study show that mothers who attend five or more PEEP group meetings report becoming more skilled "teachers" of their children. In addition to increases in parenting skills, their social class (measured by occupational category) increased as well. It is clear that PEEP made a positive contribution to life long learning in those who attended its sessions.

# **Part One – Overview of the Enabling Parents Study**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. The PEEP Programme**

The Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) is a pre-school intervention which works with the parents and carers of children aged from birth to 5 years old in the Oxford area. PEEP's mission statement is as follows:

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.

(<http://www.peep.org.uk>, 21/07/04)

PEEP aims to raise general educational attainment, but has a particular focus on literacy. PEEP also supports parents and carers in their role as children's first and most important educators. Its developmental programme, which works from birth to school entry was piloted and developed in consultation with families and practitioners.

The programme uses the Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Modelling (ORIM) framework (Hannon, 1995) to demonstrate how parents and carers can support their child's development during everyday life. PEEP emphasises the importance of self-esteem, and of listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books together every day. PEEP ideas and activities appear in age-related *Learning Together* folders and videos, for use by families and practitioners. PEEP song books and tapes are also given to families.

PEEP is delivered to families in a range of ways. Group sessions are run weekly, in various community venues. They consist of circle time (songs/ rhymes and a story); talk time, an activity, and book-sharing. Talk time involves discussion of a theme from the *Learning Together* folders, such as 'babies making choices', and gives parents and carers the chance to share experiences. PEEP sessions are also run in pre-schools and nursery classes. Families who do not attend a group are offered a sequence of home visits. Parents and carers can gain an entry-level Open College Network

Certificate (OCN 1) based on their use of PEEP ideas to support their child's development, thereby supporting their own lifelong learning. The OCN provided by PEEP is free of charge to the parents, and is entirely voluntary; it is not a requirement of attending the group sessions.

Lifelong learning was further supported by PEEP by the introduction of a "Learning Bridge" team in 1999 – 2000. The team had several roles, such as offering advice and guidance to parents considering returning to work or learning, with the opportunity to consider their own routes of progression. They also liaised with partner organisations and providers of education and training, to recruit to and support PEEP parents and carers within City Adult Learning provision. In addition, the Learning Bridge team consulted with parents to offer a range of accredited courses on PEEP premises, with free crèche facilities. Further details of the work of the Learning Bridge team can be found in Appendix 1.

Funding for the Learning Bridge finished in 2000 but since then PEEP has worked to integrate encouragement and support for adult learning into its general provision. PEEP staff work collaboratively with local Adult and Community learning organisations. All PEEP groups have up to date folders of local courses and training opportunities and staff endeavour to support and encourage participation in these courses. PEEP staff work hard to build bridges between parents and carers and Adult Basic Skills provision.

PEEP is mapped within the *Birth to Three Matters* framework. The PEEP programme is designed to be structured but flexible, so that it can be adapted to suit the needs of differing communities and settings. It has extended beyond the original project in south Oxford, into local councils (Education, Family Learning, Health and Social Services), Sure Start programmes, Early Start projects and other organisations around the UK, many of whom have done *PEEP for Practitioners* training. National and local networks help practitioners seek advice and share good practice, in line with the PEEP principles.

## 1.2. The Enabling Parents Study

This study researched ways in which adults are drawn back into learning as a result of their involvement in a programme for parents. It studied the impact on parents of participating in PEEP, looking specifically for improvement in employment and training, parenting skills, well-being and support networks.

### 1.2.i. Rationale

PEEP had accumulated anecdotal evidence of how parents perceived the group sessions, and how their lives had been changed by participation in the programme. However, despite extensive investigation into the child outcomes of PEEP, there had been no structured investigation into the area of parent outcomes. This study investigated whether *parental involvement in the child's learning has had an effect on their own personal or professional development*. This development was investigated in two separate but linked areas:

1. Increasing learning opportunities, qualifications and access to employment
2. Increasing self-esteem / confidence / skills and knowledge.

Two interlinked studies were carried out. A quantitative design was used in order to explore parenting skills, employment opportunities and training as well as social support networks. It contrasted two groups of demographically matched parents, an intervention and a comparison group. This was complemented by a qualitative study using a smaller sample that focused exclusively on individuals who had been involved with PEEP. It studied the in depth experiences and involvement of these parents with the programme.

## **2. Literature background to the study**

### **2.1. Overview of research**

Previous and ongoing research into PEEP, conducted by the University of Oxford, University of Sheffield and National Foundation for Educational Research, has focused primarily on the children's outcomes rather than the benefits for parents. However, studies looking at other early intervention programmes suggest that there are many benefits for parents who participate in Early Childhood Services. Much of this research on parental outcomes has been done in the USA where established, national intervention programmes such as Head Start have been running for many years and large, longitudinal studies have been undertaken to evaluate them. Head Start is fundamentally different to PEEP in that its main aim is to educate the children directly, as opposed to educating the parents to support their own children's learning, as PEEP does. Nevertheless, Head Start has been used as an access point for parents, offering them support and education, and allowing researchers opportunity to study the effects on adults of programmes initially designed for children. Some key research findings are summarised in Appendix 2, and are described in some detail below.

### **2.2. The importance of including parents**

Socio Economic Status (SES) has often been shown to be an important predictor of children's educational outcomes. From as early as 22 months, an index of development for British children has, along with family background, predicted educational qualifications at 26 years of age (Feinstein, 2001). In addition,

“The children of educated or wealthy parents who scored poorly in the early tests had a tendency to catch up, whereas children of worse-off parents who scored poorly were extremely unlikely to catch up and are shown to be an at-risk group. There is no evidence that entry into schooling reverses this pattern.”

(Feinstein, 2001)

This finding, from data collected from 2457 children, shows that SES (measured by occupation) and educational level of the parents is important in the child's future and suggests that educating parents may have educational benefits for their children.

However, it is worth noting that this study is correlational, and as such cannot conclusively prove that it is the parents' education or class which causes children to score more highly. What it does show is that as parents' educational level increases, the ability of the 'at risk' child to catch up also increases. Both of these variables might be directly influenced by a third variable that was not measured. However, in either case, it does show the importance of investigating parents' educational level.

In Hammer's (2003) international investigation into young people returning to work, several thousand (N=8585) young people were contacted for assessment by questionnaire in Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Scotland. It was concluded that their parents' education was a strong factor in returning to post-compulsory education or employment. Social capital, (which could also be conceptualised as parental support in this context) was also seen to be very important. This demonstrates two principles for the Enabling Parents study. Firstly, parents' level of education can have a long – term effect on the children, as it is related to their later education and employment. It also illustrates how important social support (in this case from parents) is in education and employment.

Parsons and Bynner (1999) looked at the impact of poor basic skills on employment, and found that a high percentage of early school leavers with poor literacy recognised that this had limited their job opportunities. The level of incidence for this recognition in a low-literacy group was over double that for the medium to high level groups, for both men and women. Also, fewer early school leavers with poor literacy had attended adult education programmes in the preceding 12 months, compared with those of medium – high ability. This helps to illustrate the problems that people with poor basic skills face. An index of occupational exclusion measures also revealed that both men and women are over twice as likely to be excluded on three or more measures if they have poor basic skills.

Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, and Younoszaial (1999) investigated parental membership in a transitional demonstration programme, which aimed to assist the transition of children from Head Start programs to primary schools. Although Head Start has been shown to give advantages to the children in it, these have been shown to reduce considerably by the end of the child's first primary school year (Hodges & Buzzelli, 1984). The supporting idea behind the transitional demonstration was that by continuing a service similar to Head Start, parents would forge closer links with the schools. Seefeldt *et al* suggest that the sudden drop in the level of support at the beginning of the child's

school education is at least partially responsible for the drop off in the advantages seen in Head Start children. It is proposed that this 'culture shock' for the parents has a detrimental effect on the children's outcomes. The transitional programme offered a wide range of services when the child started at school, including health and psychological support, as well as parental involvement services, and developmentally appropriate practices for families previously involved in Head Start. Although they all followed an outline, each of the centres put the plan into operation in different ways. This study focuses on a single demonstration programme, which was mainly concerned with enabling parents to become more effective teachers for their own children. The programme was largely developed by Family Service Co-ordinators, who were representative of the parents, and some of whom were former Head Start parents themselves. A range of activities were carried out; including giving the parents assistance in enrolling in classes, and getting each parent to fulfil an individual transition plan. The sample for this study included 8 schools in the Washington D.C. area, randomly assigned to either the demonstration or control group. Those in the demonstration group received the transition programme; those in the control group did not. The parents were assessed on level of education (Ramey & Ramey, 1992) and parental self-efficacy belief (Wentzel, 1993) at the end of the child's kindergarten year. The children were also assessed using standardised tests.

Seefeldt and his colleagues found that the parents' level of education and participation in the transitional demonstration was related to the parents' self-efficacy beliefs, and that these beliefs predicted the children's academic abilities. This research demonstrates the importance of the parents' abilities and beliefs for the child's outcomes.

At all levels from 22 months (Feinstein, 2001) up to the end of compulsory education (Hammer, 2003) the level of parental education is an important predictor of children's later educational achievement. Furthermore, after people have left compulsory education, those with the lowest levels of literacy and basic skills are the least likely to re-join education, and the most likely to have their job prospects limited and be the victim of occupational exclusion (Parsons & Brynner, 1999). For this reason, it is important to enable people to re-join the educational system – it benefits the parents, as adult learners, as parents and as workers. It also benefits the children. Furthermore, early childhood interventions can be a great benefit to the mother's psychological health; as Seefeldt *et al* (1999) demonstrated, early childhood interventions can affect the mother's self- efficacy beliefs, which in turn affect the child educationally.

The above research demonstrates the importance of the parental role in an intervention; far from being an afterthought, the parent should be a central component of any child intervention programme. There can be many effects on the parent, from increasing their level of self-esteem and all the benefits that brings, health and otherwise, to increasing their level of education. Not only do these factors have an impact on the parent, but the effect on the children can be dramatic too, increasing their educational attainment and well being.

### 2.3. The development of early childhood programmes

The majority of early childhood programmes are focused on children as the target for change, although a few of them focus on both children and their parents as adult learners. The current range of programmes has evolved from basic child focused programmes to more comprehensive approaches. The 'basic' approach to an intervention is aimed at benefiting children, through direct services to them. This is summarised in *Figure i*. Although simple, these interventions can be very effective.

Intervention



Children

*Figure.i Simple child focused intervention*

In another type of intervention, the main method of change is different. Whereas in *Figure i*, the intervention is directly applied to the children, in this second type the parent is trained to support the child's development. *Figure ii* illustrates this type of intervention, which affects the child indirectly.

Intervention



Parents



Children

Figure.ii Simple parent facilitated intervention

However, since the early 1990's, both these simple approaches changed to become more like each other. Programmes that used the simple child focused approach added parents into the model, recognising that parents play a key role in promoting children's outcomes. Additionally, some of the parent facilitated interventions added a component of direct involvement with the child. The additions to both models can be seen in *figure. iii* and *figure. iv*.

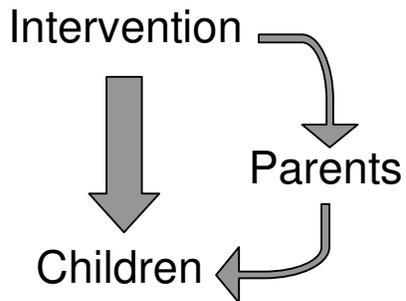


Figure.iii Integrated Child Focused intervention

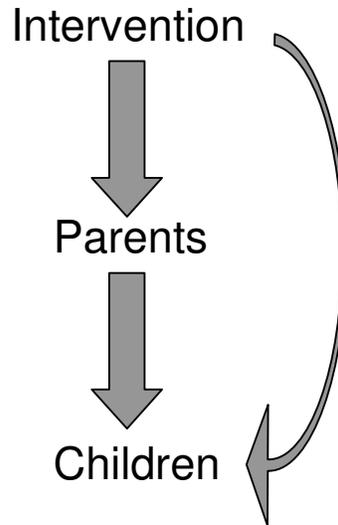


Figure.iv Integrated Parent Facilitation Intervention

An example of the modified child-focused intervention (*Figure iii*) is the current Head Start programme in the United States. The main focus of the programme is children's education at Head Start centres. Parents are now involved, and receive the intervention on a level such that they can improve their parenting skills, and thus the children can benefit twice; firstly through the Head Start tuition, and secondly as their parents acquire new parenting skills.

The second model (*Figure iv*) is represented by programmes such as Webster-Stratton's 'Incredible years' parent programme. In this example, the main focus of the programme is on parents; it helps them develop their child management skills. However, in some Webster-Stratton programmes children receive direct intervention from teachers or therapists. The children are again the main beneficiaries, and again they benefit twice; firstly, through their parents developing behaviour management skills, and secondly through the children receiving direct behaviour training from the therapist. Despite the different balance between parent and child the main focus of the intervention, the models shown in *Figures.i-iv* all aim primarily to enhance the child's development. None of these approaches has changing the parent as a main aim. *Figure v* introduces the parent as an adult learner and a beneficiary in their own right, and this is the key difference between these types of intervention. The programme in *Figure v* has two beneficiaries and therefore represents the aims of PEEP. For further detail on the aims of PEEP, please refer to section 1.1.

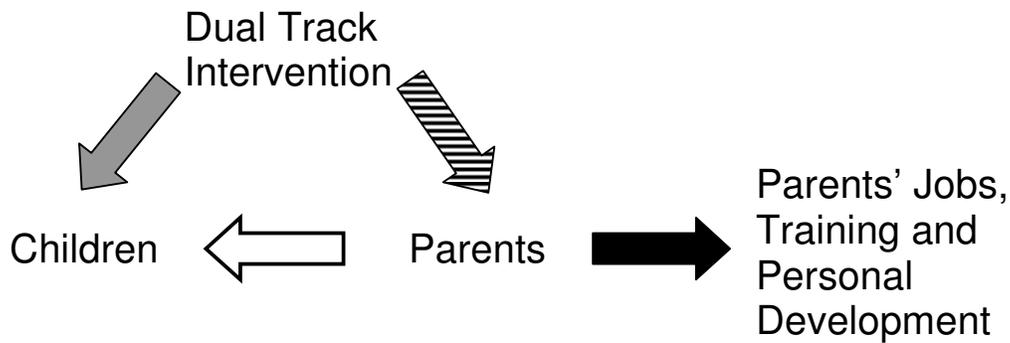


Figure.v The Dual Track Intervention

The Family Literacy programme was set up in 1993/94. Across the United Kingdom, 4 family literacy centres were established. Parents' skills were assessed at the beginning and end of the 12 week course and again 12 weeks and 36 weeks after the end of the training. The programme helped children to improve their reading, writing, language and literacy, and helped to improve the parents' literacy. *Figure v* describes the Family Literacy Programme, as its focus was not only on developing children's literacy skills through the parents, but also the basic skills of the adults. Due to taking a similar theoretical approach to early childhood interventions as PEEP; the Family Literacy programme evaluation gives a valuable insight to some of the methodological problems that need to be addressed when designing this aspect of the PEEP evaluation. These are discussed below.

## 2.4. Evaluating early childhood interventions

The benefits to parental psychological wellbeing of participation in Head Start sessions were investigated by Lamb-Parker, F., Chaya S. Piotrkowski and Peay, L. (1987). A pre-test / post-test design was used, and parental participation was measured by the Head Start staff. Participation was defined as a mother taking part in almost any aspect of Head Start. For example, home visits from staff, activities, conferences, one to one sessions, workshops, trips, and even phone calls of any substance were recorded by the staff. This method of data collection has the benefit of being more objective than simply asking the parents about their involvement, as it is less likely that an instance of contact would be missed. However, as the participation score was calculated simply by summing the number of contact events, all of the types of contact were scored as

having the same value. Thus the researchers assumed that a workshop would be as valuable as a phone call, which in reality would vary between the participants, as well as the style or content of the contacts. This limitation is acknowledged by the researchers. The broad definition of psychological wellbeing was also specifically addressed in this study. It was defined as containing 5 components; self evaluative attitudes, psychological symptoms, social integration and attitudes about the community, life satisfaction, and feelings of mastery. The sample contained 82 mothers from a new Head Start centre; and eligibility for Head Start was used to control for socio-economic status. Due to a mix of English and Spanish as first languages, both were offered to parents participating in the study. Most of the sample (61%) had not graduated from high-school. At post-test, 80 mothers were interviewed, losing only 2.6% to attrition. A wide range of demographic information was gathered on the mothers, such as age, education level, the number of dependants, employment status, and quality of housing. Other data were collected with standardised instruments, such as Rosenburgs Self Esteem Scale (1965) and the Centre for Epidemiological Studies (CES) Depression scale (Radloff, 1977).

Regression analyses indicated that when demographic variables were taken into account, the mothers with higher levels of participation showed fewer depressive symptoms. However, there are two limitations to this study. Firstly, the mothers tend to self-select themselves, as those who are already depressed would be less likely to attend a group. Thus the study that shows more participation is 'good' for the mothers who attend. This leads onto the second main problem of this study, which is the lack of a control group. As there is not a 'zero dose' group, it is difficult to be conclusive that participation will benefit all mothers. The demographic controls help to alleviate this problem, but they don't eradicate it. However, it is still a good example of how parents can be effectively targeted through child oriented interventions and of some of the advantages such a programme can offer, even if it is difficult to draw causal conclusions.

Effects of Head Start on parents were further investigated by Poresky & Daniels (2001), when services, additional to the 'Early Education' were made available to Head Start parents. The Family Service Centre provided additional support to Head Start parents by using a case manager to develop a unique plan for the parents, focussing on three specific areas; increasing literacy, employability, and decreasing substance abuse. Based in a rural area of Kansas, this study linked parents with local services, and tried to enable them in several ways. As well as assisting with problems such as

depression, and functional literacy, it provided practical assistance such as petrol or taxi vouchers for parents to 'develop themselves as adults'.

The intervention lasted for nine months, and the parents were interviewed three times; at baseline, at a one-year follow up, and again at a two-year follow up. Eighty people were recruited, and the sample was mostly female, 94% were either mothers or grand - mothers. They were randomly assigned to either an intervention group, or a control group. The intervention group received the supplementary service, with the control group receiving only the normal Head Start programme. This helps to control for selection bias in group membership. Twenty families dropped out of this study over the two years, (attrition rate of 25%) and they were evenly distributed between the two groups. The group assignment was carried out after the baseline interview, and therefore the interviewers were blind to the group allocation for the first interview. Checking revealed that the two samples were similar for many demographic indicators, including ethnicity. The only significant difference was that more of the intervention group were legally married than the comparison group. Although this might suggest that this group had greater social support due to their spouse, it does not mean that the comparison group were without social support, or life partners.

Data were collected using standardised instruments for assessment of literacy and depression. The parents' level of functional literacy was measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) (Tewkesbury & Vito, 1994) and depression was scored by using the Centre for Epidemiological Studies (CES) Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977, 1991). The study found that there were several benefits for the intervention group. The intervention group showed a significant rise in family income, as well as a non-significant increase in the number of people with a GED (an American qualification equal to age 18 qualifications). Additionally, the intervention group showed a statistically significant rise in their level of functional literacy between the baseline and the final interview, while the control group did not show any change over the same time period. The family service centre group also showed a significant reduction in the number of depressive symptoms between the baseline and final assessments which the comparison group did not. Due to the low level of reported substance abuse in this sample, the only effect seen in this area was on cigarette consumption; the intervention group reported smoking significantly fewer cigarettes. This study differs slightly from the EPS design, as it used random assignment and the additional services were made available in addition to Head Start education for the children. This is not possible when assessing PEEP as EPS cannot

assign parents randomly to the programme. The team only have attendance data from those living in the PEEP and comparison group area. Because of the free choice of the parents to attend any groups available to them within the two areas, random assignment was unethical for the EPS. For this reason, close demographic matching was used to ensure that the two groups were alike on background variables known to relate to adult outcomes.

The use of parent and teacher training to prevent conduct problems in children was investigated by Webster-Stratton, Reid and Hammond (2001). Fourteen Head Start centres were randomly assigned to an experimental condition, where the teachers and family service workers participated in the intervention (Incredible Years) or a regular Head Start Programme which served as the control condition. Demographics were taken into account when choosing the two areas from which the Head Start centres were recruited. Assessments consisted of both home and classroom observations, as well as teacher reports. A one-year follow-up consisted of parent reports, and home observations.

There were several effects on mothers in the intervention group – they reported more positive and less negative parenting than the mothers in the control group and more parent-teacher bonding, as measured by the INVOLVE-P scale. The children of the mothers in the intervention group exhibited fewer conduct problems than control group children. The INVOLVE-P scale was developed from the Oregon Social Learning Centre questionnaire, and was revised for use with parents and teachers and shown to be reliable. Dosage effects, where the intervention shows an effect only after a certain number of group attendances, were also seen. Experimental group children showed fewer conduct problems at home than control group children, if their mothers had attended 6 sessions or more. However, not all of these effects were maintained at the 1-year follow up interview. Analysis showed that intervention group mothers actually had less contact with their children's teachers than the comparison group. The authors suggest that this might be due to the parents not seeking teacher's advice as their children's behaviour was improved.

Interestingly, Webster-Stratton *et al* (2001) made this programme available to all who attended the experimental centres, it was not limited to those whose children demonstrated conduct problems. This widened the appeal as well as the availability of the intervention, and helped to negate any stigma that may have been attached to attending an intervention which may have been seen as 'only for failing parents'.

Several limitations to this investigation are noted, including the fact that not all of the Head Start families who could have taken part in the study did. So, despite the random allocation of centres, there were some differences between groups in demographic factors. Despite this, the study shows that there are benefits for parents in terms of own and their children's outcomes. Additionally, this study shows the validity of the INVOLVE-P scale as an assessment for parents' level of contact with the school.

This supports Webster – Stratton's previous work (1998) which also used random assignment of Head Start parents as a sample. In this investigation, Head Start centres were assigned to either the PARTNERS programme, or regular Head Start. The main component of the PARTNERS intervention was teaching positive discipline strategies to the parents, using both video tapes, and group discussions. At post-test intervention mothers were observed at home to use less harsh discipline, and be more positive in their parenting. In addition, the teachers reported a higher level of involvement by intervention mothers, using the INVOLVE-T scale (a version of the INVOLVE-P scale adapted for teachers). The parents' version of the same scale however, did not reveal any of the same effects. The children in the intervention also showed fewer conduct problems, and one year later many of the discipline benefits were maintained.

The Family Literacy programme was followed up by Brooks, Gorman, Harman, Hutchison, Kinder, Moor, and Wilkin (1997) after their original family literacy programme investigation for the Basic Skills Agency (Brooks, Gorman, Harman, Hutchison, and Wilkin, 1996). When the longer term effects of Family Literacy were investigated; 94% of the parents believed their child was still getting a benefit from the intervention, and teachers of the children reported that they had better behaviour compared to similar children in the same class. They seemed to be doing better at school than their peers, and had better support from their families. In 1995 (at the beginning of the original study) many of the parents were unemployed, lacked basic skills and were less likely to be involved with their child's school. Results at the end of the programme indicated it had helped the parents; specifically their levels of employment rose between 1995 and 1997 from 29% to 43%. Of those who had gained employment in that period 86% attributed it to the intervention. Many of the parents had undertaken a course (60%) whereas none were studying at the beginning of the original investigation in 1995. Finally 86% of the parents who were re-contacted felt that their reading and writing skills had continued to benefit from the intervention. All of this lends support to the theory that it is possible to get people back into education, and goes against the idea that learning is *mostly* related to school leaving age, and SES.

As well as the parents, the coordinators of the study were interviewed about their opinions as to why the intervention had been successful. Three areas emerged – raising parents' awareness of literacy, consolidation of activities that reinforce and promote literacy, and encouraging more specific activities, such as visiting the library.

The parents' involvement with the school was increased, showing not only that the parents had increased confidence in themselves, but also that the schools had confidence in the abilities of the parents. Parents also mentioned other benefits from the intervention, such as more confidence, better communication skills, more understanding of child development, and greater collaboration with both children and friends through the group.

There are several parallels between the PEEP and the Family Literacy programmes. They both promote literacy for the child, but also for the parent. They both use 'everyday things' as an educational aid, and are both centred on group meetings for adults.

The main limitation in the Family Literacy evaluation was the lack of a matched group of parents similar to those who received the intervention. Although teachers were asked to report on a control child from the same class as the target child, the 'control' child was matched only on age and gender. Other demographic indicators such as ethnicity, parents' educational level or family structure were not taken into account in the child matching. The response rates for the study were quite low, with less than half (43%) of the parents responding to the interviews. Due to the lack of a demographically matched adult control group, there is no way of telling if the 43% who did respond were more advantaged than the 57% who did not. It is possible that the sample self-selected itself, as the most motivated in the programme took part in the study.

A further problem in the design of the evaluation is that teachers were aware of which children were in the intervention group, and so a research bias cannot be excluded in the absence of standardised tests for children. The programme co-ordinators were also asked about their opinions on the effects of the intervention; however again, it is not possible to rule out a researcher effect.

To summarise there were weaknesses in this evaluation mainly stemming from the lack of a matched control group (for adult outcomes) and the inadequate matching and assessing of the children. In addition the short parents' interview assessed the impact

of the intervention through parents' eyes. Although researchers enquired about additional courses or qualifications parents had undertaken since leaving the project there was no matched comparison group to whom identical questions could be addressed.

Despite these limitations, the Family Literacy study suggests a positive effect of Family Literacy. This evaluation does however highlight some methodological pitfalls. The Enabling Parents Study was designed with these issues in mind:

- (1) Need for a comparison group of parents.
- (2) Additionally, the parents in the intervention group were not asked specifically about PEEP; only about parenting services available to them in their area. This may avoid the parent feeling 'encouraged' to mention PEEP in a positive light.
- (3) The Enabling Parents study used widely accepted measures of social class so that any change was carefully measured.

## 2.5. Research outcomes for Enabling Parents Study

The research studies outlined above have identified many ways in which parents benefit from attending early intervention programmes with their child. The EPS has drawn on the main themes raised by this previous research to investigate the possible benefits for parents of attending PEEP.

Three main research domains were identified for exploration in the quantitative study:

- Parenting skills
- Employment and training
- Wellbeing and social support

The broad research areas explored in the qualitative study were:

- Attitudes to PEEP
- Factors affecting attendance at groups
- Follow up on PEEP's suggested activities
- Adult's experiences and views on the adult learning component of PEEP

## 2.6. Research Questions

The overriding research question of the Enabling Parents Study was:

“Does PEEP benefit parents and if so, in what ways?”

This question was answered by comparing the experiences, views, and skills of mothers who have attended PEEP with similar mothers from a matched community.

The three main research domains in which this research study investigated the effects of participation in PEEP are:

- Parenting Skills:
  - Relationship with child;
  - Managing child’s behaviour;
  - Involvement with child’s learning at home and pre school;
  - Getting advice on child’s education.
  
- Employment and Training:
  - Return to and/or progression in employment and training;
  - Change in social class category (over the 3.5 years since the child was a year old);
  - Finding out about employment and training.
  
- Well-being and support:
  - Life satisfaction;
  - Self-efficacy;
  - Social support.
  
- Attitudes and experiences of PEEP
  - Factors affecting attendance;
  - Experiences of PEEP sessions.

The methods used in this study were drawn from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Letters to parents (Appendix 3) and some of the research tools (Appendices 4, 5 & 6) are included.

### **3. Sampling and Ethics – Qualitative and Quantitative Studies**

#### **3.1. The sample of families**

The data for the Enabling Parents Study (EPS) were collected from a sub-sample of parents in the Birth to School Study (BTSS) (1998). The children and their families were selected for the BTSS study from the PEEP catchment area and a comparison area, in 1998-1999. The original BTSS sample at the beginning of the study was 603; however, owing to attrition over the first 4 years of the BTSS project, the EPS recruitment in 2002-2003 was drawn from a BTSS sample of 459. Of the 220 members of the BTSS intervention group (families who had the opportunity to attend PEEP), 137 had attended PEEP once or more, and therefore were invited to participate in the study. This group was hand-matched with a group of 137 mothers from the comparison group. The criteria for the matching of families were prioritised as follows: socio-economic status, mothers' highest educational qualification, and presence of a partner in the household.

All 274 families were then invited to participate in the Enabling Parents Study and most of the intervention group (75%) and the comparison group (79%), agreed to take part. This gave a first sample of 103 intervention group attendees, and 108 from the comparison area. This first Enabling Parents sample provided the basis for the final samples for both the qualitative and quantitative studies. The sample criteria were later modified and a quarter of the intervention group were removed from the sample, as they had attended fewer than five PEEP sessions. The qualitative study used 15 families from the first sample of 103 families, and a further 5 taken from another source. More detail on the sampling strategy is included in the methodology sections for each of the studies (section 5.2 for the quantitative, and section 9.2 for the qualitative). An overview of the sampling method is shown in *Figure vi*.

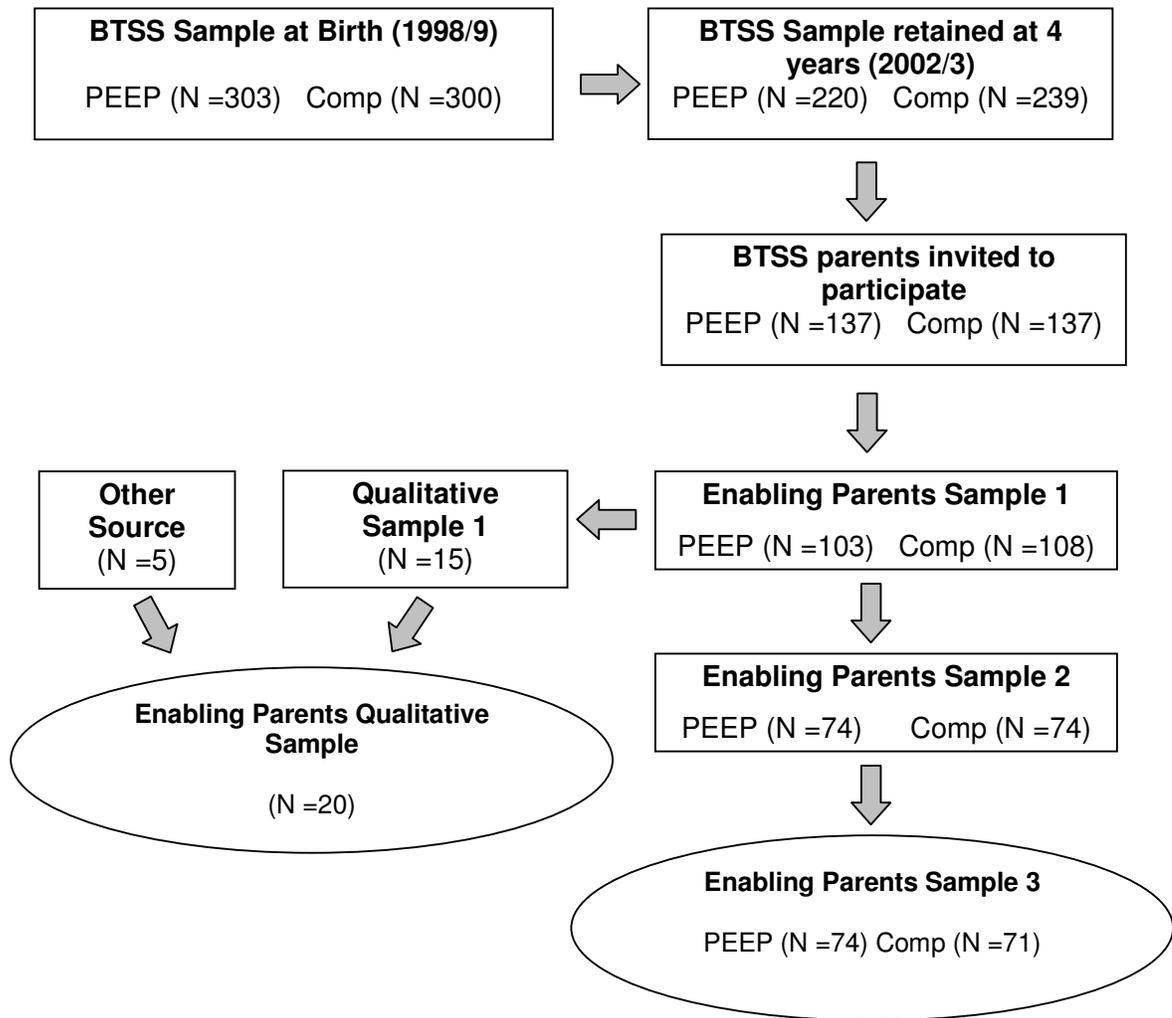


Figure.vi Enabling Parents sampling procedure overview

### 3.2. Ethics

The BTSS had already received ethical approval from the Health Ethics Committee, and the Enabling Parents Study was approved by the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies Research Committee. The study conforms to the current ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (<http://www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines.html> [18/06/04]) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) (<http://www.bps.org.uk/documents/Code.pdf> [18/06/04]). Parental consent was obtained at the interview for the quantitative component and for the qualitative component if applicable, using consent forms (Appendix 7.i, 7.ii). It was made clear to the parents that all data was confidential, and that they were free to leave the study at

any time. A certificate was awarded to the child to acknowledge that they had both taken part in the BTSS study for four years (Appendix 8).

Privacy concerns were also addressed, by ensuring that the names of the participants were replaced with serial numbers. None of the names were made available to any of the PEEP practitioners, and all the records identifying participants were stored in a locked cabinet at all times.

## **Part Two - The Quantitative Component**

### **4. Introduction**

#### 4.1. Rationale

This quantitative component looked at the effects of PEEP on parents by using a number of standardised questionnaires and a semi-structured interview, and comparing two samples of parents drawn from two socio-economically matched communities. The effects of PEEP were examined by studying three outcome domains, as detailed in section 5. Using the quantitative approach allows this study to demonstrate the effects of PEEP attendance on mothers as adult learners by comparing them to similar mothers who have been matched on demographic characteristics. The comparison mothers lived in a similar community where there was no PEEP provision.

#### 4.2. Research Questions

The overriding research aim of the Enabling Parents study was to discern the effects on mothers (if any) of participating in PEEP. The quantitative study focussed on three research domains which have been suggested by previous research (outlined in chapter 2 and summarised in Appendix 2.ii) as areas where outcomes for parents were likely to be found:

Domain 1 - Employment and Training:

- Is there a difference between the mothers in the intervention and comparison groups in returning to and/or progression in employment and training?
- Do the groups find out about employment and training in different ways?
- Has there been any change in social class category between groups?

Domain 2 - Parenting skills:

- Are there any differences between the groups regarding the parents' relationship with child, or how they manage the child's behaviour?

- Do the groups differ in the level of Involvement with child's learning at home and school?
- Are there differences in the ways that parents seek advice on child's education?

Domain 3 - Well-being and support:

- Are there differences between groups for levels of life satisfaction?
- Is the level of self-efficacy different between the groups?
- Does social support differ between groups?

## 5. Methods

### 5.1. Obtaining the Quantitative sample

There were several stages in obtaining the final sample for the quantitative study. An important element of the sample was that the two groups were matched on demographic criteria; social class, mother's highest qualification, and family structure. Preliminary analyses indicated that there was a tendency for mothers who went to PEEP to have a slightly higher socio-economic status and have more or higher formal qualifications. More detail of this analysis is included in Appendix 9. The details of this method are given below.

### 5.2. Matching the groups at the birth of the target child

Socio economic status was assessed by using the Computer Assisted Standard Occupational Coding (CASOC) (Elias, Halstead & Prandy, 1993). CASOC calculates a score on a scale of 1 to 15, and takes many factors relating to a persons' current or most recent job into account. The CASOC score is calculated based on the size of the company a person works for, and their role within it. Those with more responsibility or skills are put in a higher social class. The EPS uses a 5-point version of the scale, and the classes can be summarised as follows:

- Class 1 – Employers in large organisations, managers, professionals and associate professionals as well as higher level supervisors. These people generally manage one or more people, or are a professional. A large organisation is defined as one employing 25 or more people.
- Class 2 – Intermediate occupations, such as clerical or administrative jobs. These positions involve planning or supervision to a much lesser extent. This class also includes lower technical occupations.
- Class 3 – Employers in small organisations (less than 25 people) and own account workers. They are self-employed with either no employees, or they only employ family members.

- Class 4 – Lower supervisors (covering positions other than managerial) as well as craft and related occupations.
- Class 5 – Employees in routine, or semi-routine occupations, and those who are long-term unemployed.

The data for the CASOC classification used for the sample matching of the Enabling Parents study was gathered at the BTSS birth interview. Table 1 gives some examples of jobs and their associated CASOC scores on a 5-point scale. The description of duties is taken verbatim from the EPS interview.

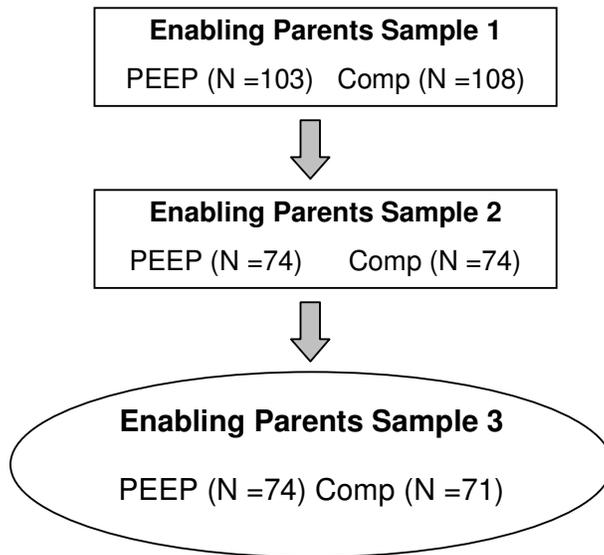
*Table 1. Examples of CASOC scores and jobs*

CASOC code	Job title	Description of duties
1	Business Manager	Sell meeting room space, admin etc for a hotel
1	Teacher	Music teacher and head teacher cover at a primary school
2	Medical secretary	Dealing with scans, appointments, clinics
2	Receptionist	Answering phone. Dealing with membership etc. at a leisure centre
3	Admin Assistant	Office work, wages, banking, general office duties, for an engineering firm
3	Hairdresser	Hairdressing
4	Housekeeper	Cleaning and housekeeping at a hospital
4	Supervisor at large company	Telephone, computers, dealing with queries, office, meetings
5	Replenishment Assistant	Shelf stacking at supermarket
5	Waitress	Orders, serving, clear away dishes at a hotel

Mothers were asked at the birth interview if a partner was living in the household or not.

Information on the mother's highest qualification was also obtained at the birth interview by asking the mother to list all her qualifications, and focussing on the highest one she had. Vocational courses as well as academic ones were included, and each qualification was given a score, with higher qualifications receiving a higher score.

This first sample was further refined as described in *figure vii*.



*Figure.vii* Detail of the Quantitative sampling strategy

Sample 1 – Mothers who had attended 1 PEEP session or more

The intervention group sample was drawn from the pool of mothers who had attended one PEEP session or more, and was matched to a comparison group on family structure, mother’s highest qualification, and socio-economic status variables; tests showed no differences on these criteria. Further tests established there were no other differences between the two groups on a wider range of demographic variables . Variables tested included: ethnicity, siblings of the study child, the child’s gender, the age at which the mother left full time education, smoking habits and benefits.

Sample 2 – Mothers who had attended 5 PEEP sessions or more

Preliminary statistical analysis indicated that a more representative sample of PEEP users would be drawn from mothers who attended more than 5 times in total. Once families that attended fewer than five times were removed from the sample, 74 families remained in the intervention group. This required a newly matched comparison group of 74 from the original comparison sample. Fifty five were matched with families that scored identically on the three matching criteria, whilst the remaining 19 were matched as closely as possible. Both samples then contained 74 participants. This double matching lead to an even closer match than the original sample of 103 and 108.

### Sample 3 – Excluding a possible contamination

Three more families were then removed from the comparison group due to the possibility that they may have attended a family centre which used PEEP materials. This revised (74 : 71) sample of the families was checked again for differences in demographic matching criteria, and none were found. The sample was also checked for the number and types of groups that each mother and child attended. The results are summarised in table 2 and each statistically significant result has been highlighted in grey.

*Table 2. Types of group attended by mothers in the two areas*

Groups Attended	Intervention group (N=74)	Comparison group (N=55)	Total	Sig
Attend PEEP	99%	0%	95	0.001***
Attend family centre	30%	40%	63	0.224
Attend baby gym	9%	42%	46	0.001***
Attend any other tots and mums group or playgroup	24%	51%	66	0.002**
Attend another group	4%	16%	15	0.017*

Legend:       \*\*\*     99.9% Confidence Level (p<0.001)  
                  \*\*     99% Confidence Level (p<0.01)  
                  \*     95% Confidence Level (p<0.05)  
                  †     A Trend (p<0.09)

As can be seen from Table 2 there were some differences between the groups. Apart from the obvious difference in attendance at PEEP groups, the comparison mothers reported attending more “other” groups than the intervention mothers, including baby gym, other mother and child groups, and other unspecified groups. It is worth noting that the above table only gives attendance according to the reports of the mother. This is why the PEEP attendance is only 99%. In fact, all of these intervention group mothers attended PEEP five times or more, even if one or two of them did not report the fact.

Table 3. Number of groups attended by mothers

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of Groups Mentioned	Intervention Group	74	1.6622	.88018
	Comparison Group	55	1.4909	.74219

The total number of groups each mother mentioned as having attended was also analysed using a t-test. The number of groups mentioned ranged from 1 to 5. The results showed that there were no significant differences between the mean number of types of groups attended for the two areas. This suggests that the two areas had similar arrays of choices ( $t= 1.167$ ,  $df =127$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.). The higher numbers of comparison mothers mentioning the other groups is balanced by the extremely high (99%) report rate for PEEP attendance. This shows that the comparison mothers were not living in an area devoid of support for parents, and that they had plenty of access to other sources of support. It is worth noting again that this is only the reported attendance for each group by the mother, as opposed to the actual attendance.

### 5.3. Research Instruments

Instruments found to be effective in other studies were used in the Enabling Parents Study; the supporting studies are summarised in section 2.6. The standardised instruments were used in a questionnaire form (Appendix 5). The interviews were conducted in the family homes at a time convenient to the mother. The interview (Appendix 4) addressed additional areas not accessed by the standardised instruments. Details on instruments used are summarised in *Table 4*:

Table 4. Instruments used and domains investigated

Domain	Instrument	Assessing	Used in	Developed by
Parenting skills	Involve Parent Questionnaire	Parent bonding with teacher Involvement with child –frequency	Questionnaire	Webster-Stratton, 1998
	Parent Discipline Interview	Discipline tactics Gives a global rating for harsh restrictive parenting practices	Questionnaire	Deater-Deckard, 2000
	Parental Feelings Questionnaire	Parents' feelings about relationship with child	Questionnaire	Deater-Deckard, 2000
	Parental Modernity Scale	Evaluates authoritative versus authoritarian parenting attitudes and behaviour	Questionnaire	Shaefer and Edgerton, 1985
Parent Wellbeing	Parenting Stress Index	Parenting stress, coping skills	Questionnaire	Abidin, 1996
	Generalised Self-Efficacy Scale	Measures the extent to which an individual feels a personal sense of control: that they can take action to solve a problem instrumentally	Questionnaire	Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992
	The Social Support Questionnaire	Quantifies the availability of and satisfaction with social support	Questionnaire	Sarason, 1983
All Domains	Enabling Parents Interview	Multiple aspects of parenting, employment, training, support wellbeing and group participation	Interview	Enabling Parents Team, 2002

#### 5.4. Coding Frames

Several of the items from the parent interview needed to be incorporated into a coding frame to allow them to be categorized and analysed. Coding frames were developed by the Enabling Parents team for this purpose using literature and data from the first twenty interviews in the main sample. They were then tested as part of the coding of the main sample, carried out by one of the researchers who consulted with the rest of the team on more ambiguous responses. The coding frames are shown in Appendix 6.

#### 5.5. Data analysis strategy

The data were analysed for possible differences between the groups on a variety of outcomes. The coded data were tested using a Kolmogorov – Smirnov test for normality and using Levene's test for homogeneity of variance. If these assumptions for

parametric analyses were met, a t-test for differences between the mean scores for the two groups was used. If this was not the case, then a Mann – Whitney test was used instead. All categorical data were analysed using a chi-square test. The data were also explored using multiple regression. Conventional levels of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were used throughout.

## 6. Results

The results are grouped by outcome domain and each statistically significant result has been highlighted. Detailed results of the chi-square tests are included in Appendix 10.

Legend:       \*\*\*     99.9% Confidence Level ( $p < 0.001$ )  
                  \*\*     99% Confidence Level ( $p < 0.01$ )  
                  \*     95% Confidence Level ( $p < 0.05$ )  
                  †     A Trend ( $p < 0.09$ )

### 6.1. Parenting skills outcomes

#### 6.1.i. Enjoyment and opportunities provided by groups

During the interview, mothers were asked about the opportunities that were provided by any of the groups that they had attended, and which aspects of these groups they had found enjoyable. The comments made by mothers were analysed for content and coded. The results were analysed for a significant difference with a chi-square test, and are summarised below.

*Table 5. Percieved benefits of group attendance*

Opportunity Mentioned	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=55)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Meet people	61%	62%	.908
Ideas for activities with child	30%	7%	0.002**
Child socialisation	35%	47%	0.165
Sing songs	26%	2%	0.001***
Develop child's reading	11%	0%	0.012*
Child able to run around, play	5%	29%	0.001***
Mother spends time with child at the group	4%	9%	0.241
Personal or professional development of the mother	27%	2%	0.001***
Help to understand child development	28%	5%	0.001***
Boost maternal confidence	5%	7%	0.664
Questions asked	What do/did you enjoy about the group you attend/ed? (And) If so, what would those [opportunities or experiences] be?		

### 6.1.ii. Parental feelings and stress

This construct was measured via several well proven questionnaires. The Parental Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ) assesses the parents' feeling towards the child in terms of a positive or negative relationship, and was completed as part of the parental questionnaire. The instrument consists of two subscales, positivity, and negativity, rating the parent on each of these. The scores for the subscales were calculated, and the differences between the means analysed for significance. There was no significant difference between the two means, for either the positivity subscale ( $t = -1.444$ ,  $df = 93$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95%) or the negativity subscale ( $t = .259$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.).

*Table 6. Parental feelings*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Score for Positivity	Intervention Group	74	42.6216	4.54416
	Comparison Group	68	43.4375	1.65289
Score for Negativity	Intervention Group	74	13.8919	3.30863
	Comparison Group	68	13.7402	3.67089

The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) consists of three subscales – Parental stress, Parent-child dysfunctional interaction, and Total stress. The responses were analysed with a t-test. There were no differences between the mean scores for parental distress, ( $t = .308$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) parent-child dysfunctional interaction, ( $t = 1.463$ ,  $df = 139$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) and total distress score ( $t = .833$ ,  $df = 139$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.).

*Table 7. Parenting stress index*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Parental Distress Score	Intervention Group	73	24.59	8.337
	Comparison Group	69	24.13	9.286
Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction	Intervention Group	73	19.33	6.862
	Comparison Group	68	17.92	4.172
Total Score	Intervention Group	73	43.91	13.299
	Comparison Group	68	42.14	11.924

### 6.1.iii. Parental discipline

The Parental Discipline Questionnaire (PDQ) describes the tactics that a parent uses in disciplining their child, as well as rating restrictive and harsh parenting practices. There are three subscales within the instrument, negative practices, positive practices, and displacement tactics, each assessing the use of these approaches in child discipline. The mean scores of each group were analysed with a t-test. Use of positive practices, ( $t = -0.914$ ,  $df = 135.1$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.), negative practices, ( $t = -0.419$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.), and displacement tactics ( $t = 0.701$ ,  $df = 137$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) showed no significant difference between intervention and comparison groups.

*Table 8. Parental discipline questionnaire*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Positive Subscale Score	Intervention Group	72	8.6806	1.452
	Comparison Group	69	8.8841	1.170
Negative Subscale Score	Intervention Group	73	5.3288	1.202
	Comparison Group	69	5.4203	1.398
Displacement Subscale Score	Intervention Group	71	5.0423	1.590
	Comparison Group	68	4.8529	1.600

In the interview, mothers were also asked about how they deal with difficult behaviour from their child. They were asked which approaches they used to deal with their child “at difficult times”, and the results were recorded if they did, or did not mention a list of specific tactics. This data was analysed with a chi-square test and there were no significant differences between the groups.

*Table 9. Dealing with difficult behaviour*

Approach	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Withdraw privileges	11%	17%	0.288
Rewards	9%	6%	0.384
Time out/send to room	35%	30%	0.475
Ignore him/ ignore behaviour	30%	28%	0.836
Count to 3,5 or 10	4%	6%	0.715
Try to keep calm	46%	37%	0.254
Shout or smack	4%	3%	1.000
Distract from situation	22%	14%	0.237
Question asked	All children can be difficult at times, what things would you say you find helpful in these situations?		

6.1.iv. Parental attitudes to childrearing – progressivism and traditionalism

The Parental Modernity Scale (PMS) was administered via questionnaire. It describes two styles of parenting behaviour – traditionalism, and progressivism which are the two subscales of this instrument. This instrument was also included in the parent questionnaire, and the differences between the groups were explored by a t-test. There were no significant differences between the intervention and comparison groups, in either the score for traditionalism ( $t = 0.473$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) or progressivism. ( $t = -0.718$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.).

Table 10. Parental modernity scale

Subscales	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Score for Traditionalism	Intervention Group	73	59.203	14.396
	Comparison Group	69	59.088	13.671
Score for Progressivism	Intervention Group	73	33.027	4.552
	Comparison Group	69	33.522	3.576

6.1.v. How the parents were influenced by any of the groups they attended

Mothers in the interview were asked if the group attendance had affected their parenting behaviour. The responses were analysed with a chi-square test.

Table 11. Parental influence

Has attending a group influenced your parenting?	Intervention Group (N=73)	Comparison Group (N=55)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Yes	70%	24%	0.001***
Question asked	Has attending this group had an influence (changed) in any way on what you do as a parent		

The test showed the intervention group reported that they were influenced more by attending (any) groups than the comparison group. We cannot know for certain that this greater influence in the intervention group was a direct result of PEEP, but it seems likely as this was the main group intervention mothers participated in.

The domains of parenting that the mothers reported as being influenced were then investigated with an open question to the parents about the ways they thought they had been influenced. The parents were not prompted on any of the subject areas that follow; they all arose from the data analysis. The responses were coded into a frame, and the results analysed by a chi-square test. A large proportion of the sample (46% of the final sample) did not respond to this question. This was even more marked in the comparison group, where only 18% (13 of 71) people responded. However, there is a strong tendency ( $p. <0.056$  for the intervention group to mention the Importance of reading/learning techniques. The table below summarises the results and, as well as the percentages, the number of respondents is also included to aid understanding of the data.

*Table 12. Areas of parenting influenced by groups*

Parenting skill area	Intervention Group (N=53)		Comparison Group (N=13)		Exact Sig. (2-sided)
	%	N	%	N	
Importance of reading/learning techniques	25%	13	0%	0	0.056†
Importance of talking to child	9%	5	0%	0	0.574
Empathise with child's needs/feeling or more aware of child's needs	19%	10	31%	4	0.450
General advice and ideas of things to do	49%	26	38%	5	0.493
Everyday things so important	11%	6	0%	0	0.589
Singing	21%	11	0%	0	0.104
Help and reassurance on parenting	11%	6	31%	4	0.098†
Question asked	If so, can you describe in what way/s?				

The number of ways that parents were influenced was also calculated from the above variables. Assumptions for parametric data were tested. Although the Kolmogorov – Smirnov test reported that the data followed a normal distribution, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance showed that the two groups had unequal variance. The intervention group (N = 53) had a mean of 1.482, and a standard deviation of 0.134, whereas the comparison group (N = 13) had a mean of 1 and a standard deviation of 0. A Mann-Whitney test was therefore used to compare the groups on this variable and it showed that there was a tendency for the intervention group to mention more influences than the comparison group ( $U = 247.00, p = 0.064$ ).

### 6.1.vi. Parents and activities with their children

During the interview, the parents were asked about the learning activities they routinely do with their child. These responses were coded into a frame, and the frequencies were individually analysed with a chi-square test. Reading, writing, and 'modelling behaviour' showed a significant difference in favour of the PEEP group, while helping with homework showed a difference in favour of the comparison group. Adults modelling behaviours such as reading, are emphasised in the PEEP sessions as a good basis for child learning.

*Table 13. Learning activities*

Learning Activity	Intervention Group (N=72)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Reading	86%	70%	0.023*
Writing	58%	41%	0.037*
Maths	33%	27%	0.391
Computer skills	3%	4%	0.638
Talking to child	22%	24%	0.807
Creative learning, activities	22%	24%	0.807
Helps with homework	0%	8%	0.012*
Plays educational games	24%	19%	0.616
Everyday activities	13%	6%	0.153
Singing	8%	6%	0.745
Modelling	14%	0%	0.001***
Foreign languages	4%	0%	0.245
Question asked	Are there things you do to help your child learn and get on/apart from what goes on at nursery/playgroup or what things do you think are important for helping your child to learn and get on?		

The total number of learning activities that the mother mentioned was then also calculated and analysed with a t-test.

*Table 14 Number of learning activities spontaneously mentioned*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Number of Learning Activities Mentioned	Intervention Group	74	2.74**	1.061
	Comparison Group	71	2.32**	1.118

The difference between the groups was found to be significant ( $t = 2.317$ ,  $df = 143$ ,  $p$ , significant at 95% c.l.) indicating that the intervention mothers engaged in more learning activities with their child than the comparison group.

The mothers were also asked about the number of other activities (which were not necessarily 'learning activities') they took part in with their child on a regular basis. The answers were coded into a coding frame, and analysed with a chi-square test.

*Table 15. Other activities spontaneously mentioned by the mother*

Other Activity	Intervention Group (N=73)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Swimming	33%	21%	0.113
Go out	12%	14%	0.756
Play in / go to park	51%	51%	0.998
Go to a club or society	8%	11%	0.537
Play at home, or in garden	52%	38%	0.091†
Create - arts, crafts etc	45%	48%	0.747
Audio / video, computers etc	12%	8%	0.446
Literacy - learning, words, numbers	62%	52%	0.248
Visit friends / relatives	40%	27%	0.099†
Domestic modelling	44%	45%	0.881
Talking to child	1%	0%	1.000
Question asked	What are the particular things that you and (child's name) enjoying doing together? I am thinking about things you do at home, going out, visiting people or places?		

The number of 'other' activities mentioned was then investigated with a t-test to see if the difference between the number of activities mentioned was statistically significant.

*Table 16. Number of other activities*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Number of Leisure Activities Mentioned	Intervention Group	74	3.5541	1.28364
	Comparison Group	71	3.1549	1.15447

The t-test shows that the difference between the mean number of 'other' activities mentioned by each group is significant ( $t = 1.966$ ,  $df = 143$ ,  $p$ , significant at 95% c.l.) with the intervention group mentioning significantly more activities.

Another activity specifically investigated was contact with a library. The item was included in the interview, and the parent was asked to rate on a scale how frequently they took their child to a library; with 1 being frequently, and 5 being never. The data was not parametric, and so a Mann-Whitney analysis was used. The difference in mean rank was significant.

*Table 17. Frequency of library contact*

	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Frequency of library visit	Intervention Group	74	61.50***	4551.00
	Comparison Group	71	84.99***	6034.00

The Involve Parent Questionnaire describes how well the parent is involved in various aspects of the child's development, and was also included in the parent questionnaire. The two subscales describe how the parent 'bonds with' and gets along with the school, and how frequently they are involved with the child's activities, academic and non-academic. A t-test showed that there were no significant differences between the means for each of the two groups for the bond with school subscale ( $t = -.190$ ,  $df = 191$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) or the involve with child frequency subscale ( $t = .213$ ,  $df = 207$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.).

*Table 18. Involve Parent questionnaire*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Score for Bond With School	Intervention Group	68	89.5710	11.35863
	Comparison Group	64	89.6828	12.48020
Score for Involvement With Child Frequency	Intervention Group	74	73.7346	9.44469
	Comparison Group	69	74.9381	9.957434

6.1.vii. Source of advice on child's learning

Parents were asked where they went for advice on their child's learning. The responses were coded according to the sources reported, and were analysed with a chi-square analysis; the results are summarised below.

*Table 19. Source of advice on child's education*

Where do you go for advice on your child's learning?	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
School, nursery or playgroup teachers	77%	77%	0.950
Health visitor or doctor	39%	45%	0.377
Friends or family or other parents	15%	10%	0.361
Family centre or PEEP	11%	1%	0.034*
Book or internet	8%	7%	0.809
Question asked	If you were concerned about something to do with your child's learning, to whom or where would you go for help and advice?		

Only one of these tests was significant; the intervention group used the PEEP group / Family centre more than the comparison group.

The number of sources of advice was also investigated, to see if one group cited more sources of advice than the other. The number of sources mentioned for each mother were summed, and a t-test was used to establish the significance of any differences.

*Table 20. Number of sources of advice on children's learning*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Number of sources of advice on child's learning mentioned	Intervention Group	74	1.4865	0.72609
	Comparison Group	71	1.4085	0.07659

The differences seen between the two groups were not statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

## 6.2. Employment and Training outcomes

### 6.2.i. Qualifications and new courses

The highest qualification that mothers reported at the BTSS birth interview were analysed as part of the data matching. As part of the Enabling Parents Study, the mother's highest qualification when the child was 4+ was also obtained. The qualifications were rated on a hierarchical scale according to level of academic achievement, and each mother was then scored on their highest overall qualification. This allowed for any existing qualifications to be taken into account.

*Table 21. Maternal qualifications*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Mother's Highest Qualification at birth	Intervention Group	74	5.4054	2.09
	Comparison Group	71	4.9718	2.38
Mother's Highest Qualification Overall, after Intervention	Intervention Group	74	5.7838	2.22
	Comparison Group	71	5.45	2.48

A t-test was used to assess differences between the means for the two groups at at 4 years test, but the differences were not statistically significant ( $t = .853$ ,  $df = 143$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.). Because of the scoring method, those waiting the result of an examination or assessment were given a higher score as they had shown that they were currently taking on a course ( $n = 17$ ). This may, however, have skewed the results, and so a second analysis was made with these cases removed. The result was not significant ( $t = .900$   $df = 126$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.)

Even if the highest qualification had not changed, there is still the important question of whether or not the mother had undertaken a new course. The above analysis, although perfectly suitable for the highest qualification, might mask the effects seen on a mother with a fairly high level of education (e.g. an A-level) who, since the child's birth, has undertaken a new course which could facilitate her employment, for example an I.T. access course. To allow for this, a second analysis was run on the interview data, focussing on the question 'have you undertaken a new course?' Follow up questions

were also asked regarding the choice of courses available, and the relevance of the courses to employment. The results were analysed by group.

*Table 22. Courses taken by the mother*

Have you undertaken any courses?		Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact sig (2-sided)
Yes		77%	61%	0.032*
Question asked	I would like to ask you about courses or training you have undertaken in the last 4 years (since child was born) or are planning to undertake. This means any sort of course or training, long or short, leading to a qualification or certificate or not.			

As can be seen, there is a significant difference between the two groups for the uptake of new courses, although quite a high proportion of both groups (over 50%) have taken some kind of course, the intervention group have taken more courses.

Those mothers that had taken some sort of course were then asked if they thought that it would be beneficial to their job prospects.

*Table 23. Courses helping with employment*

Does your course could help your employment prospects?	Intervention group (N=57)	Comparison Group (N=42)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Yes	82%	83%	0.909
Question asked	Do you think any course you have, are or will attend could or has helped you get employment?		

The difference between the groups was not significant for this question, suggesting that both sets of mothers believed to the same extent that the courses they had taken would help their employment prospects.

Mothers were also asked if they thought that the choice of courses was sufficient:

*Table 24. Suitability of existing courses*

Suitability of courses		Intervention group (N=71)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Yes	68%	54%	0.203
	No	17%	21%	
	Don't know	15%	25%	
Question asked	Did you feel that there is enough choice of courses to suit your needs?			

As table 24 shows, there were no differences in the range of courses available to one group as opposed to the other. This is important as we know that the intervention group took more courses, indicating that availability was not responsible for the difference.

#### 6.2.ii. Socio-economic status

The socio-economic scores for each parent were calculated by using the CASOC scoring system and, as already noted there were no significant differences between the mean CASOC scores for the two groups. The CASOC rating system relies heavily on a person's employment status, type of job and responsibilities within that post to calculate the CASOC value. The lower the CASOC value, the higher the job is rated on the scale – the job has more responsibility, probably more pay, and is more likely to require a higher level of education. The CASOC score is usually between 1 and 15, but for these analyses the system was reduced to a 5-point scale.

The means for the CASOC scores were calculated, and a t-test was used to examine any differences between the two groups.

*Table 25. Mother and partner SES scores*

	Parent group	N	Mean	S.D.
Mother's SES Score at birth, 5 point scale	Intervention Group	73	2.95	1.840
	Comparison Group	71	2.99	1.848
Partner's SES Score at birth, 5 point scale	Intervention Group	62	2.82	1.770
	Comparison Group	60	2.77	1.789

There were no significant differences between the groups for their CASOC score as calculated from the data collected at the birth interview.

Analysis was carried out on the differences between the SES scores at birth and at the four year interview. This score was calculated by subtracting the SES score at birth from the SES score at 4 years. The amounts of change varied greatly between participants, ranging from +4 to -4, the maximum change possible in this instrument.

*Table 26. SES change*

	Parent group	N	Mean	S.D.
SES Change, Mother	Intervention Group	73	-0.219*	1.170
	Comparison Group	71	0.310*	1.294
SES Change, Partner	Intervention Group	58	0.000	1.298
	Comparison Group	56	0.089	1.792

A t-test was carried out on the mean amounts of SES score change for both the mothers and their partners, and the difference between the means was found to be significant for the mothers ( $t = -2.575$ ,  $df = 142$ ,  $p = 0.011$ , significant at 95% c.l.) but not the partners. This suggests that mothers who were members of the intervention group had their score lowered by a mean amount of 0.219 (indicating a rise in social class) whilst the comparison group's scores increased by 0.310 (indicating a decline of social class). This divergence of the groups was also reflected in the partners, with the mean change for partners in the intervention group being 0, compared to a slight but insignificant rise in the scores for partners in the comparison group.

### 6.2.iii. Sources of employment information

Mothers were asked about where they got information about jobs and employment. The responses were examined with a chi-square test.

*Table 27. Job and employment information*

Course information source	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Job centre	4%	14%	0.035*
College	39%	69%	0.001***
Library	9%	10%	0.935
Family centre	15%	11%	0.521
Workplace	23%	8%	0.017*
Newspapers or journals	19%	14%	0.434
Leaflets	19%	1%	0.001***
Internet or TV	24%	14%	0.118
Question asked	Where have you been/would you go to get information about courses?		

As can be seen, there are several significant results between the two groups. The analysis suggests that members of the intervention group received their employment information from their workplace, and by picking up leaflets. The comparison group get their information from colleges, and job centres.

The number of sources of information that each parent mentioned were summed to see if one group used information sources more than the other.

*Table 28. Number of sources of employment information*

	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Number of sources of employment information	Intervention Group	74	79.30*	5868.00
	Comparison Group	71	66.44*	4717.00

The assumptions for parametric data were not met, as the distribution of the number of sources of employment information was not normal. A Mann-Whitney test was used to test the significance of the differences between the two groups ( $U = 2161$ ,  $p = 0.048$ ).

The test showed that the intervention group ranked higher for the number of sources of employment information than the comparison group at the 95% c.i.

The medium through which advice on careers and training was delivered was investigated. Mothers were asked how they received the advice, and their responses were analysed with a chi-square test.

*Table 29. Advice medium*

Advice Medium	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Leaflets	89%	80%	0.135
Videos	1%	11%	0.016*
One to one advice	28%	21%	0.312
Talks	15%	13%	0.702
TV	54%	51%	0.686
Newspapers	74%	82%	0.285
Internet	34%	17%	0.020*
Question asked	In the last 4 years have you had any of the following careers/training advice or information?		

As shown above, there were significant differences in the media used by the mother as a source of information on employment. The intervention group used the internet more than the comparison group, who reported using videotapes to a greater extent than the intervention group.

The total number of different media mentioned by the mother were analysed to see if one group had a wider accessibility to a variety of materials than the other. A t-test was used to assess the differences between the mean scores for the groups.

*Table 30. Number of advice media*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of different types of media referenced	Intervention Group	74	2.9595	1.369
	Comparison Group	71	2.7465	1.262

The t-test shows that there are no differences, suggesting that both groups accessed a similar quantity of information.

### 6.3. Maternal well being and social support outcomes

#### 6.3.i. Generalised maternal self-efficacy

A self-efficacy scale was included in the parental questionnaire, to assess the parents' beliefs of their own ability to deal with a variety of situations. There are no subscales within this instrument. The data was analysed with a t-test to establish the significance of any differences between the two groups. The t-test showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups for their score suggesting that neither the intervention mothers nor the comparison mothers had higher levels of self efficacy ( $t = -.545$ ,  $df = 139$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.).

*Table 31. Maternal self efficacy*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Self-efficacy Score	Intervention Group	73	30.19	3.306
	Comparison Group	68	35.48	3.752

#### 6.3.ii. Mother's life satisfaction and life improvement

Mothers were asked about how satisfied they were with each aspect of their life, on a likert scale of 1-5. The mean was calculated for each of these aspects, and the differences between the means were analysed for significant differences with a t-test. None of the differences were statistically significant, showing that the mothers were equally satisfied with their lives.

Table 32. Life satisfaction scores

How satisfied are you with...	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Your life at the moment?	Intervention Group	74	3.74	0.795
	Comparison Group	71	3.92	0.858
Your housing?	Intervention Group	74	3.59	1.072
	Comparison Group	71	3.83	1.242
The area in which you live?	Intervention Group	74	3.47	0.940
	Comparison Group	71	3.51	1.182
Your work?	Intervention Group	74	3.62	1.003
	Comparison Group	71	3.58	1.023
Family finances?	Intervention Group	74	3.27	.911
	Comparison Group	71	3.11	1.202
Your children?	Intervention Group	74	4.43	0.664
	Comparison Group	71	4.55	0.580
Your relationship with partner?	Intervention Group	64	4.11	0.857
	Comparison Group	66	4.20	0.898
Help and encouragement from parents?	Intervention Group	72	3.58	1.253
	Comparison Group	70	3.77	1.230
Help and encouragement from relatives?	Intervention Group	72	3.17	1.256
	Comparison Group	69	3.16	1.208
Help and encouragement from friends?	Intervention Group	73	3.52	1.042
	Comparison Group	70	3.61	0.982
Your life enjoyment?	Intervention Group	74	3.99	0.672
	Comparison Group	71	4.00	0.793
Total score for satisfaction	Intervention Group	63	40.3175	5.60479
	Comparison Group	64	41.1094	6.96503
Question asked	In the following areas, say how satisfied (1-5) you feel about them? (1=not at all satisfied, 5=extremely satisfied)			

### 6.3.iii. Quality of advice and support from different sources

At the interview, mothers were asked about who they receive information and advice from, and whether this support relates to with themselves, their child, or both. Many variables were investigated, (listed below) but none showed any significant differences between the two groups.

- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from parents);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from relatives);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from neighbours);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from other parents);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from work colleagues);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from friends);

- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from colleagues);
- Quality of advice on self, children, or both (from groups).

Mothers were also asked in the interview about the ways in which they believe they could improve their lives. These questions covered a wide range of areas, and are summarised below. There were no significant differences between the groups for any of these items, as analysed by a chi-square test. This supports the finding above that both groups of parents were equally satisfied with their lives.

*Table 33. Maternal views on improving life*

How would you like to improve your life?	Intervention Group (N=73)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
To be better off financially	14%	17%	0.593
Partner to get a job or new job/change hours	1%	6%	0.206
To have moved/ or finished house	38%	25%	0.094†
To have another child	11%	10%	0.829
More time for self/relationship	15%	11%	0.500
Working/change job/ work in job enjoy/do training or finished training	44%	35%	0.290
New partner/reconciliation with partner	0%	4%	0.076†
Same/healthy/family settled	16%	20%	0.609
To have more control over life/be more organised/ working towards specific goal	3%	4%	0.679
Question asked	Imagining your life in 3 years time, how would you like it to be/would you like it to be different in any way?		

The mothers were then asked about the feasibility of improving their lives in the areas indicated in the previous question.

*Table 34. Achieving goals*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
How likely is it that you will achieve these goals?	Intervention Group	60	2.30	1.124
	Comparison Group	57	2.40	0.979
Question asked	How likely is it that you will get there?			

These differences were found to be non-significant ( $t = -.530$ ,  $df = 115$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) showing that neither the intervention group, nor the comparison group felt that they had more, or less, control over their lives.

Mothers were asked which source of general information and advice they thought was the best. Their responses were then analysed to see if members of a particular group would favour a particular source of 'best' advice.

*Table 35. Sources of advice and information*

Best source of information?	Intervention Group (N=71)	Comparison Group (N=70)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Mum, dad or in-laws	42%	40%	0.786
Other relative/s	20%	23%	0.649
Partner	18%	19%	0.968
Friends or parents	35%	33%	0.768
Other best info	23%	13%	0.132
Question asked	Who or where would you say gives you the best information or advice?		

Part of the maternal interview asked the mother if they wanted more information or advice. The mother's responses were analysed with a chi-square test.

*Table 36. Additional information and advice*

Would you like more information or advice?	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Yes	31%	25%	0.165
Question asked	Would you like to have more/some advice/information?		

There were no differences between the two groups in wanting more advice.

*Table 37. General advice*

		Intervention group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
General Advice	Have you had any advice from job centre?	12%	15%	0.561
	Have you had any advice from a friend/relative?	49%	54%	0.557
	Have you had any advice from a drop-in centre?	27%	7%	0.001***
	Have you had any advice from a group?	30%	11%	0.001***
	Have you had any advice from the library?	22%	11%	0.086
	Have you had any advice from anywhere else?	1%	10%	0.030*
Question asked	In the last 4 years have you had advice/information from any of the following places or people?			

#### 6.3.iv. Negative aspects of groups they attended

Some of the comments about the enjoyment of the group brought up some negative feedback, which were analysed in the same way as the perceived benefits data (See Table v). The data were tested for significance with a chi-square test, and the results are summarised below. There were no significant differences between the groups.

*Table 38. Negative aspects of the groups attended by the mother*

Negative aspects	Intervention Group (N=74)	Comparison Group (N=55)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Mother felt patronised by the group(s) they attended	1%	0%	0.387
Mother felt unwelcome / unable to relax at the group(s) they attended	5%	2%	0.297
Mother did not enjoy attending, but went for the sake of their child	12%	4%	0.086
Questions asked	What do/did you enjoy about the group you attend/ed?(And) If so, what would those [opportunities or experiences] be?		

### 6.3.v. Encouragement and social support

One of the questions on the mother's interview asked about encouragement that the mothers receive. The answers were analysed with a chi-square test, and no significant differences were found.

*Table 39. Encouragement for the mother*

Have you received encouragement?	Intervention Group (N=72)	Comparison Group (N=71)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Yes	43%	44%	0.942
Question asked	Has any person, place or group given you particular encouragement or support in finding a job or going on a course?		

The social support questionnaire was included in the parent questionnaire, and assesses the mother's perception of support from a variety of sources. It rates the helpfulness of each source, and by summing these it is possible to get an overall picture of the support available to each parent. The instrument includes no subscales. The data was analysed with a t-test to establish the significance of observed differences between the mean score for each group.

*Table 40. Social support for the mother*

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Advice Score	Intervention Group	73	36.19	9.084
	Comparison Group	69	35.48	7.193

There were no significant differences between the two groups ( $t = .608$ ,  $df = 140$ ,  $p$ , ns at 95% c.l.) on this scale.

## 6.4. Dosage effects within the intervention sample

The intervention sample was also investigated for dosage effects, where changes in the level of attendance led to different outcome effects. The theory that was tested was that the level of attendance to the intervention might be able to significantly predict some of the outcomes. The dosage levels were taken from PEEP attendance records; a mother who had attended once would have a dose of 1, a mother who attended 10 times would have a dose of 10, and so on. The measure of dosage should therefore be subject to less error than a simple report of attendance from the mothers. Dose ranged from 1 to 87. This was investigated with a multiple regression analysis; however, no coherent themes emerged from the tests.

## 6.5. Appropriateness of Questionnaires

To ensure the validity of the instruments in this design, and with this sample, multiple regression analyses were carried out. The models for two of the instruments are included here to illustrate the effects found. All of the instruments from the questionnaires were analysed with multiple regression for two reasons – firstly, to look for possible dosage effects of PEEP attendance and secondly, to see if demographic variables were significantly predicting the outcomes, as might be expected from the previous research. The method of analysis was identical for all the outcomes.

First, the outcome variables were checked for normality. The demographic variables from when the target child was 4 were then correlated with the questionnaire results, along with the levels of attendance. Any variables that showed a correlation of greater than 0.2 or less than -0.2 were included in the initial regression model. Outliers that were more than 3 S.D. from the mean were excluded from the model, and as variables became insignificant within the model, they were removed. This allowed the list of correlates to be narrowed down until only one or two significant predictors remained. These were the maternal characteristics found to be related to the questionnaire subscales.

### 6.5.i. Parental Modernity scale

This instrument is made up of two subscales; parental traditionalism, and parental progressivism, and both of these were analysed. Traditionalism was initially correlated

with 5 demographic predictor variables when analysed in a univariate model. However, in multi-variate analysis, only one of the predictors remained significant. The analysis showed that the age at which the mother left full time education was the only significant predictor of traditionalist attitudes. The second subscale, parental progressivism, was correlated with two demographic predictors in univariate analysis, but only one of these, mother's SES score, was found to significantly predict progressivism in a multi-variate model. The models are summarised below.

*Table 41. Parental Modernity Scale regression model*

Subscale	Predictor(s)	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	B	P
Traditionalism	Age Mother left full time education	0.515	0.258	-0.515	-2.791	0.001***
Progressivism	Mother's SES at birth of the child	0.104	0.095	-0.322	-0.657	0.001***

#### 6.5.ii. Generalised self-efficacy scale

This instrument is made up of a single scale that assesses the extent to which a person believes they are able to solve problems. It also looks at their sense of personal control over situations. The initial correlation suggested that two variables were related to this instrument, and the regression model showed that both of these variables significantly affected the outcome. The model is summarised in table 42.

*Table 42. Generalised Self Efficacy regression model*

Scale	Predictor(s)	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	B	P
Self Efficacy	Father present	0.131	0.113	-0.227	-2.336	0.019**
	Younger siblings			-0.274	-2.277	0.005**

#### 6.5.iii. Social Support

The social support questionnaire (Sarason, 1983) assesses the satisfaction with and availability of social support for the mother. There are no subscales to this instrument. The initial correlation suggested that there was one variable which predicted the scores

on this variable. Regression analysis showed that this variable significantly predicted the outcome. The model is summarised in table 43.

*Table 43. Social support regression model*

Scale	Predictor(s)	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	B	P
Score for support	Mother's SES at birth of child	0.078	0.069	-0.280	-1.301	0.005**

## 7. Summary of Quantitative results

This is a brief summary of the quantitative results. They are divided by domain, and a brief outline of the areas in each domain is included at the start of each section.

### 7.1. Parenting skills Domain

- Involvement with child's learning at home and school
- Relationship with child
- Managing behaviour
- Advice on child's education

The first part of the parenting skills section uses data from the interview to address the opportunities that arose from the groups that the mothers attended. Both groups were asked at interview about all the groups that they attended. In order to avoid bias it was not made clear to the mothers that the study was about PEEP. The results are taken from an open-ended question; the mothers were not prompted for any of the areas that subsequently arose from the analysis. The results show that those in the intervention group reported different opportunities to the comparison group. Significantly more of the intervention group believed that they got ideas for activities with their child, ideas on how to develop their child's reading, as well as opportunities to sing songs and gain a better understanding of their child. The intervention group also reported that they got the opportunity to develop themselves personally or professionally. This was significantly more than the comparison group. The comparison group reported that one of the opportunities offered by the group was to enable the children to run around and play.

Mothers answered a number of questions aimed at assessing the parental relationships. The Parental Feelings Questionnaire, the Parenting Stress Index and the Parental Discipline Interview did not show any significant differences between the two groups. Further investigation into how parents deal with difficult behaviour was included in the interview, but again there were no significant differences between the two groups. The Parental Modernity Scale, a global assessment of attitudes towards being a parent, was also administered by questionnaire, but there were no significant differences. This indicates that the main impact on parents is related more to children's learning than to their behaviour, or to parents' child rearing beliefs.

During the interview parents were asked whether or not they felt that their parenting had been influenced as a result of them attending a group. Significantly more mothers in the intervention group reported that attendance had influenced their parenting when compared with the comparison group. In terms of areas of influence, although there were no significant results, there was a strong tendency ( $p < 0.06$ ) towards the intervention group reporting that they were influenced in the area of their child's reading and learning techniques. This lends support to the finding mentioned earlier in the opportunities that arose from the group. The two separate findings suggest an underlying theme of raising awareness of child literacy with mothers. The number of influences that the mothers reported were also analysed by group, and a statistical tendency was seen, suggesting that the intervention group mothers report being influenced in more areas of parenting.

The mothers were asked about activities they regularly do with their children to help them with their learning. This was an open-ended question and comments were coded for analysis. The intervention group mentioned both reading and writing significantly more frequently than the comparison group. In addition, the intervention group reported taking their child to the library more frequently when asked specifically about library attendance. This suggests that attending PEEP raises parental awareness of the importance of children's literacy, and ways of helping them with it. In addition, intervention mothers reported that they did more activities with their child that could be considered as modelling behaviour [as expressed in the ORIM framework (Hannon, 1996)]. Not all the differences were in favour of the intervention group; the comparison group reported helping their children with their homework more than the intervention group. The total number of learning activities mentioned in was also analysed; the intervention group mentioned a wider range of learning activities with their child than the comparison group.

Other enjoyable activities that the mother did with the child were analysed, but there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of which activities were done more frequently. In addition, neither group reported doing more of these activities with their child.

The Involve Parent Questionnaire was also administered, but there were no significant differences between the two groups.

When asked about where they go to get advice on their child's education, there were only differences between the groups on one item – the intervention group reported going to a family centre or group for advice significantly more frequently than the comparison group. They used the other sources to approximately the same extent. There was no difference in the number of sources used by the two groups of parents.

## 7.2. Employment and Training Domain

- Return to and/or progression in employment and training
- Finding out about employment and training opportunities
- Change in social class

The highest qualification of the mothers was recorded over two time points; firstly at the recruitment phase of the BTSS, and again during the current study. The qualifications were rated in a hierarchical system. There were no significant differences between the two groups at either time point on formal qualifications. Calculating the change in the score for the qualification did not show a difference between the two groups.

When asked about new courses that they had undertaken, significantly more mothers in the intervention group reported that they had taken a new course than the comparison group. Both of the groups reported that the courses they had taken would improve their employment prospects, and there was no difference between the two groups in the extent to which this belief was held. The perceived suitability of courses was also examined, and there were no differences between the two groups when they were asked about having enough courses to choose from.

The socio-economic status of mothers and partners was scored using the CASOC coding system. There were no significant differences between the two groups at the birth interview for either the mother's CASOC, or the partner's, which shows how close the match was. Change scores for the CASOC were then created, to show movement up or down the scale for the mothers and partners over the time of the intervention. The mean change in mother's CASOC score was significantly different in the comparison group compared to the intervention group – showing that the mothers in the intervention group have improved their social classification over the duration of the study. This might be explained by them taking more courses.

The sources of employment information that the mothers used was explored, and analysis shows significant differences between the groups. The comparison group prefer using Job Centres and Colleges, whereas the intervention group prefer using their current place of work or leaflets as a source of advice. The number of sources that the mothers used for information on employment was also looked at, and it shows that the intervention group reported using a greater number of different sources than the comparison group. The medium through which this advice was obtained was also looked at; the comparison group reported using videos more frequently than the intervention group, who seem to prefer using the internet as a method. The number of different media reported was also considered, but there were no significant differences between the two groups. It is possible that these differences could be explained by the local resources in the towns the two groups live in.

### 7.3. Well being and social support Domain

- Self-efficacy
- Life satisfaction
- Social support

Generalised maternal self-efficacy was included on the questionnaire, and measured with the Generalised Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalen & Schwarzer, 1992). There were no significant differences between the intervention group and the comparison group on this scale.

Mother's life satisfaction was assessed using a series of questions in the interview, but there were no significant differences between the two groups for scores in this area.

There were interview questions about the quality of advice from different sources, but there were no significant differences between the groups.

Life improvement and perceived ability to change was assessed and there were no significant differences. When asked if they thought that they would be able to achieve these goals, there were no differences between the answers of the two groups – both believed in their ability to change to the same extent.

Other types of advice were looked at as an indication of social support, but when asked about the source of 'best' advice, there were no significant differences between the two groups. Both groups believed that they had enough advice to the same extent, as the percentages of them asking for more information did not differ significantly.

General advice that the mother received did, however, differ significantly in its origin between the two groups. The intervention group referred to drop-in centres and groups that they attended more frequently, whilst the comparison group reported using another source of advice more frequently.

When asked directly if they had received any support, virtually identical percentages of both groups reported they had – there were no significant differences.

The social support questionnaire did not show any significant differences between the two groups.

#### 7.4. Synopsis

A number of significant differences were observed between the two groups. In the parenting domain, several of these are related to children's literacy, with the intervention group consistently reporting more understanding, awareness and practice of activities that support language learning than the comparison group. In the employment domain, there has been a significant change to the social class of the mothers. Additionally, significantly more of the mothers in the intervention group have taken one or more new courses. Finally, in the domain of social support and well being, few significant differences were found.

## **Part Three - The Qualitative Component**

### Parents' experiences of and involvement with PEEP

#### **8. Introduction**

##### **8.1. Rationale**

This qualitative component of twenty adults who have attended PEEP is an in-depth investigation into parents' views and experiences of PEEP and the adult learning and development opportunities arising, directly or indirectly, from their participation in the programme. Using a semi-structured interview, the aim of this study was to explore, more thoroughly than was possible in the quantitative component of the Enabling Parents Study, attitudes towards and involvement with various aspects of the PEEP programme and how parents' experiences might be related to life circumstances and other social issues.

The majority of the participants interviewed for the qualitative component had been part of the quantitative component; the remainder were parents whose names were provided by PEEP (see Sections 9.2 and 9.3. on selection and recruitment). This latter group had all been involved in PEEP recently and in addition to providing information on the issues discussed above, it was hoped they might offer insights into the current PEEP programme for babies.

##### **8.2. Why a Qualitative approach?**

A framework for the interview was provided by the information given by over 100 PEEP parents in the quantitative component, where they had the opportunity to talk briefly about their experiences of attending groups with their child. The majority of parents had talked about experiences at PEEP and the topics and attitudes that emerged provided indicators for the themes raised in the qualitative interview. However, the interview for the qualitative component was designed to cover areas over and above those raised by the quantitative and to be open-ended enough to allow new constructs to arise.

As well as indicating subject areas for the qualitative study, the quantitative study provided useful information to guide the selection of individuals for the qualitative study: Data collected during the quantitative study showed that 25% of the parents had attended PEEP for fewer than 5 sessions in the first 3 years of their child's life. Therefore, in order to understand better why some parents got "into" PEEP and others did not continue for long and to embrace a variety of experiences, the group for the qualitative study included a range of attendance levels – low, medium and high. The Birth to School Study (BTSS) also indicated that overall the parents who attended PEEP had slightly higher educational qualifications than those who chose not to attend PEEP. Bearing in mind that one of PEEP's aims is to help families who are disadvantaged educationally, over two-thirds of the qualitative component group were parents with lower qualifications as their views and experiences were felt to be particularly important.

Although the PEEP programme is open to and used by a range of carers (grandparents, fathers, childminders), each of the participants in this component of the study was the mother of the child she had taken to PEEP.

It should be noted that as most of the parents interviewed for this study were parents who were recruited for the Birth to School Study in 1998 and 1999, the majority had, by the time of the interview, left PEEP. Most of the low attendees had only been to PEEP a few times and this was about 4 or 5 years ago. Seven of the parents were currently or had recently been enrolled in PEEP.

## 9. Methods

### 9.1. Research questions

The interview investigated two main areas:

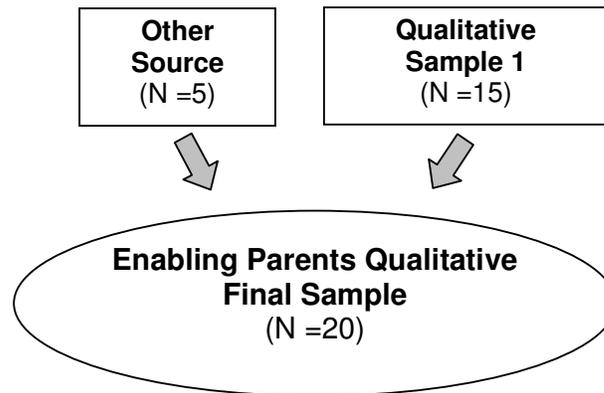
1. *Factors related to adults' attitudes to PEEP, attendance at groups and follow-up on PEEP's suggested activities.* The information gained from this interview was intended to help understand what factors might be related to people's attendance levels and how much they enjoyed or benefited from PEEP, as well as to indicate areas for improvement.

Some of the issues that were explored are:

- Attitudes to and views about PEEP groups
- Content or format of groups
- PEEP leaders and assistants
- Attendance at other groups with their child
- Parent learning about child development
- Family, work and social factors
- Family structure
- Other participants
- Employment and/or voluntary work
- Social networks and support

2. *Adults' experiences and views on the adult learning component of PEEP.* Through its own courses and certificates such as the Open College Network (OCN) accreditation and PEEP training as well as through disseminating information about courses taking place around the community, PEEP offers the opportunity for parents to develop their skills and qualifications. In addition, group assistants, other staff members and volunteers may be recruited from the PEEP user group. The interview explored what training parents might have undertaken since the birth of their children and asked what opportunities for training or work had been made available through PEEP.

## 9.2. Individuals selected for interview



*Figure.viii Detail of the Qualitative sampling strategy*

Twenty parents who have attended or are attending PEEP were interviewed for the study. Fifteen of the participants were taken from the Enabling Parents Study quantitative sample 1. The remaining 5 participants were nominated by PEEP, 4 of whom had recently attended or were currently attending Baby PEEP, while one was a PEEP volunteer who was also attending groups with her children. Also, two parents from the quantitative study were now enrolled in PEEP with a younger child and had recently or were currently attending a Baby PEEP group. Therefore overall, 7 of the group were current or recent “PEEPers”. Eleven had been to PEEP with more than one child.

### 9.2.i. Selection criteria and method

As explained in the introduction, the aim was to include participants with a range of attendance levels as this was thought to be a way of exploring a variety of experiences, attitudes and circumstances. The parents fell into one of the following 3 categories: low attendees (mean number of sessions = 4) (n=5); medium attendees (mean number of sessions = 32) (n=10), and high attendees (mean number of sessions = 112) who in addition had become either PEEP staff members (n=3) or volunteers (n=2). The overall spread of attendance or PEEP ‘dosage’ provided data from the two extremes, low and high attendance (25% each), as well as having a larger group (50%) of parents whose attendance level was more average and whose experiences were perhaps more generally representative. Nested within these categories were the parents who had

recently been to a Baby group, enabling us to see if any themes might arise that were particular to the current PEEP programme for babies.

The other criterion used to select the participants was their highest educational qualification since leaving school. As PEEP’s catchment covers a disadvantaged area of Oxford in order to target those with lower educational qualifications, the aim was for the majority of the participants in this study to have lower qualifications in order to gain deeper understanding of this group. The final group (see Table 44) included 14 with lower qualifications and 6 with higher.

*Table 44. Categories of participants showing attendance and qualification level*

	Low attendance (mean=4)	Medium attendance (mean=32)	High attendance (mean=112)	Total
Low Qualifications (O-level or below)	3	8	3	14
High Qualifications (FE or above)	2	2	2	6
Total	5	10	5	20

NB: 15 of the participants were from Study 1 and 5 nominated by PEEP

The 15 participants from Study 1 were selected from an SPSS data file using the mother’s identity code and therefore without the Research Officer’s knowledge of their identities. It was important to use the anonymous identity code to select participants to avoid any bias on the part of the Research Officer who had interviewed all parents in the previous 14 months. Where there were more potential participants than was required, identity codes were randomly chosen using the SPSS random selection command. Of the remaining 5 participants, 4 were chosen from a list provided by PEEP, the parents with the lowest qualifications being contacted first, and the final volunteer was nominated individually by PEEP.

#### 9.2.ii. Other demographics

The ages of the parents ranged from 25 to 43; the mean being 34. This is probably higher than the average age of parents currently attending PEEP as the majority of these parents had left PEEP.

Six of the families were single parent families. Fifteen of the parents were white British; the remaining 5 were of other ethnic origin. Two of the families had children with no siblings, the other families had more than one child. Seven of the children were boys and 13 were girls.

Four-fifths of the women were working, all part-time. Most of this working group were in paid employment, 2 were doing voluntary work and 1 was doing both voluntary and paid work. The remaining fifth were not working; all 4 in this group were among the 6 mothers in the Baby group. Half of the single parents were working. A range of childcare provision had been or was currently being used by parents to cover work or training – the following sources being mentioned (some using more than one type): Husband/partner – 6; Grandparents – 3; Other relatives – 1; Private nursery – 3 (1 of these was a temporary measure while parent was doing a course); Friend – 1; None – 9.

### 9.3. Ethics and participation

Participation in the pilot and main qualitative component was entirely voluntary – initially a letter was sent, followed by a telephone call to obtain oral consent and finally the participant signed a written consent form at the interview visit (Appendix 7.ii). The letter (Appendix 3.iv) invited parents to participate in a study on PEEP, allowing them to opt out of further contact by telephoning within 7 days. Although no parents telephoned in advance, two parents declined involvement when contacted. The same Research Officer who had previously interviewed the parents in the quantitative study (and therefore was known to 15 of the participants) telephoned the parents to explain the new study, invited questions and, if oral agreement was given, arranged an interview appointment. The parents were told that they would be given a £10 Boots or WH Smith voucher for participating. Several of the parents said that they felt their low attendance at PEEP meant their participation in the study would not be useful, but it was explained that a range of experiences and attendance levels was needed and that some of those who were taking part had been a lot, some very little. Both on the telephone and at the interview, parents were told that they had no obligation to participate and could withdraw at any time.

A letter was sent to parents whose names had been provided by PEEP as the Research Officer had not met them previously.

Overall, about twice the required number of participants were contacted by letter; this was because the interviewing was taking place in the weeks before Christmas and it was anticipated that quite a number of parents would not agree to participate. It was made clear in the letter that they might not be contacted. In the event, the take-up rate was very good (20 out of 22 telephoned agreed to take part).

Participants were asked to give permission for the interview to be tape recorded. With the exception of one interview where the interviewee did not wish to be tape recorded and a handwritten transcript was made, all participants in the pilot and main study agreed to the tape recording. Where anonymous quotes have been included, additional consent was received from the mothers.

Over the phone and at the interview parents were told that all information they gave would be treated in confidence. This was assured by not putting the names of the participants on tapes or written transcripts – each person instead could be identified by a number from 1-20 determined by the sequence in which they were interviewed. All transcripts and tapes were stored in locked cabinets. In addition, participants were told that should any of their experiences be mentioned in a report, their own name and those of their children, leaders, assistants or participants would be changed.

## 9.4. Research tools

An interview schedule was designed which covered the above areas (Appendix 11). Although the quantitative study had given some indicators about the kind of themes that might emerge, this follow-up study on PEEP was much more comprehensive and aimed to find out as much as possible about people's experiences and to bring in as wide a range of topics and attitudes as possible. The first questions aimed to be open-ended in order to encourage the interviewee to direct the interview, with the range of issues gradually being touched upon as the interview progressed through prompts from the interviewer if necessary. The last part of the interview, which asked about learning opportunities and work and employment history, was more structured.

### 9.4.i. Piloting

The interview was piloted on 4 parents chosen from a list provided by PEEP of parents who had given permission to be contacted by a researcher. Participants had a range of

attendance levels (from 1 to 70 sessions) and was either currently enrolled (N=1) or had recently been enrolled (N=3). Several of the questions were changed as a result of the piloting and subsequent discussion with members of the PEEP Research Consortium.

## 10. Results

A number of themes emerged from the interviews, most notably the following:

- Learning through PEEP (both parent and adult learning);
- The importance of singing, books and other activities;
- First impressions;
- Leaders and assistants;
- Meeting people and making friendships.

### 10.1. Learning about parenting and child development through PEEP

A significant majority of parents (18), when asked what they thought PEEP was trying to do, said they thought its purpose was educational and was to help parents' or children's learning. However, when asked how they would describe PEEP to a neighbour, only a few said they would mention the learning aspect, most parents preferring to describe PEEP as "a place for mums and babies to go with a focus around music, a relaxed atmosphere where you can be with your child and chat to other parents". One mother said she would just describe it as a family group, without mentioning any of the other aspects of PEEP. A few expressed their dislike for the "talking time" part of the session where topics to do with parenting are discussed, felt that the leaders were too opinionated or said they felt you had to know what the PEEP staff's views were on, say, discipline so that you knew what you could and could not say in a group without being criticized.

Many parents said that the reason that they attended in the first place or kept going was to help their child get on or because they saw how much their child got out of it. One mother said "I had heard about PEEP and that children tend to pick up things earlier – every parent wants the best for their child", another that she "wanted to encourage (child) in different ways" and a third said that when she heard about PEEP she was "really pleased to hear that it was about children's development". Several parents who did not enjoy PEEP themselves went along because they saw what their child was getting out of it said they had or would recommend it to other people.

When asked about what they felt they had learned from PEEP about helping their child's learning, the majority felt they had learnt about new techniques and ideas. These included the importance of sharing books from a young age, every day activities, routines, writing, broadening the imagination, "observing, being aware of what's going on in that little mind". In addition, about three-quarters of parents reported doing more with their children after going to a PEEP session, whether it was singing, reading, playing with the child or messy play. However, 4 of parents with the lowest attendance said that they had not learnt anything, although all could see the potential benefits.

Many parents felt that going to PEEP had helped them to be more aware of the different stages of their child's development, what they could do at a particular age and that their children could respond to and enjoy things from an earlier age than the parents expected. One said going to PEEP helped her to "know when to start anything with kids; like reading with them. Even though I had two children before, I suppose I felt silly when I talked to the baby. (But after going to PEEP) I used to sing to her and talk to her when I was alone and felt that I wasn't being stupid".

Six mothers talked about PEEP helping them to understand their child better and see things from the child's point of view. One mother found PEEP helped her "to understand child – child don't talk. Lots of things we can look out for, things we would not imagine. They (PEEP) tell us what to look out for. Their dislikes and likes, tastes". Another said that PEEP had helped her get on with her child better, another describing PEEP as helping "you have a closer togetherness with your child".

The learning from sessions also came from sharing views with other group members – although some parents felt put on the spot when asked to contribute, half the parents mentioned that they found it useful listening to other parents in circle time; "swapping ideas and hearing about how people deal with things in their family"; "having a chat about helping your child to develop"; "sharing views about the different stages, proves to yourself that your child is not backward".

## 10.2. Singing

One of the most popular activities reported by parents was the singing with many parents saying how much they and their child enjoyed it. For a few women this was the main reason they had attended in the first place as they wanted to be able to sing to

their child and had forgotten or did not know nursery rhymes: “My parents are from the Caribbean so I didn’t know [English] nursery rhymes” and “You know half the words of a song.”

However, the singing was also a source of embarrassment with several parents mentioning how silly they felt especially at the beginning, although most parents gradually felt more comfortable and participated more willingly because they saw how much their child enjoyed it. One parent said that she was pleased that she had been given the song book and tape before going to the session so she could familiarise herself with the words and tunes.

The song tapes provided by PEEP were also popular with 17 out of 20 of the parents saying they used the tapes, including 3 parents who had only been to groups a few times. The availability of the song tapes appears to have allowed and encouraged both the parents and children to continue with the singing after going to a group. One parent said that when she got home “we have to sing all the songs – at bedtime at bath time.” Nearly half said that the tapes were used by more than one child in the family – in some cases even by older children who had not been to PEEP - and many said how useful they were on long car journeys.

### 10.3. Books and literacy

About half the parents said that PEEP had introduced or emphasised to them the importance of sharing books with their child, particularly from a young age - “I would have encouraged them to read anyway, but very much doubt that I would have encouraged them at such a young age. We did have a few books for them but we got more involved with it and spent more time doing it than probably would have done.” One single parent said she “was pleased that PEEP provided the opportunity for her children to enjoy books as she was not a reader at all” and it is not something she would have done at home. Another remarked that usually books are not introduced until the child goes to nursery and that going to PEEP had resulted in her child enjoying books at an earlier age.

Several parents whose PEEP children were now at school said how pleased they were at the standard of their child’s reading or at how well they thought their child was generally doing at school and indicated that they thought PEEP attendance and

activities had contributed to these achievements. A few parents mentioned that PEEP had encouraged them to help their child with other aspects of literacy education such as writing or being aware of the importance of incorporating learning into everyday activities: “being out walking, just talking in general, signs along the road, shopping in supermarket, counting, constant really, general learning.”

#### 10.4. Other activities and materials

As well as the singing and sharing books with their child half the parents mentioned other PEEP activities that they enjoyed, particularly making things. Several of these parents said that doing these kind of creative, messy activities was important to them either because it gave them ideas or because they tended not to do these things at home – activities that were mentioned were putting shells in bottles, making bottles with water, cookies, shakers, the treasure basket and using everyday things such as pots and pans.

Four parents said that PEEP had made them see the relevance and use of every day things and were surprised how much their child responded to these things, such as playing with different textured fabrics. Phrases such as “things you wouldn’t think of” came up quite often when describing the sort of ideas PEEP gave them for helping their child learn and increase their enjoyment.

When asked about things given or lent to them by PEEP, although the tapes were most popular, parents also said they had used folders (11 said they had looked at them, although quite often just to flick through), videos (watched by 6 parents) and the book/toy bags (13 mentioned these).

#### 10.5. Hearing about PEEP and first impressions

People had first heard about PEEP through a number of sources, suggesting that knowledge of the programme has filtered widely through the community: through GPs or health visitors, nurseries and friends or relatives. However, the largest group - nearly three quarters – remembered being contacted by PEEP - most receiving a letter which was followed up with a telephone call and in some cases a visit.

When asked why they went along to a PEEP session, the most commonly cited reason (over half the parents) said it was because they wanted to meet other parents, particularly with children of the same age. Others had either heard that children get on better through attending PEEP, just thought it would be generally beneficial to their child or wanted to have a special time with their child – “A friend was working in a nursery. She could see the benefits for the children who had been to PEEP. (Their) concentration level, being able to sit, knowing how to hold a book, about joining in” and “It was an opportunity to have an hour just with you and your child”.

One highly qualified woman, who in fact lived outside the catchment area said her only reason for going along was the persistence of PEEP staff in phoning her on several occasions encouraging her to attend, even though she had said that she did not want to. She only went to one session.

The majority of parents (13) said that going along to their first session had been difficult, or very difficult, describing the experience as “overwhelming, nerve wracking, embarrassing, feeling as if they were being put on the spot”, “really embarrassed, I felt – someone’s filming me, felt what the hell am I doing here. I kind of knew what to expect but it was still a shock to the system” One parent said that she would not have gone along if a PEEP visitor had not gone with her – “I would not have gone on my own, it is just walking through that door, especially being a new mum...only just getting used to the baby” and another said she would not have gone along without the support of a friend who was also attending.

Three of the parents who had very low dosage, all of whom were highly motivated to attend both in order to meet people and to give opportunities to their child, found their first session particularly difficult. One of these, a single parent who had recently had her second child was promised she would be met at her first session by the PEEP person who had previously visited her, but when she arrived at the session the PEEP person was not there. Although, with difficulty, she managed to get through the first session, she did not go back again – even though she wanted to take part in PEEP to help her child and help herself to meet new people who had just become mothers. “really wanted to do it for (her older child), I didn’t want her stuck in the house with a new baby, and for me as well, to meet people in the same boat”. This mother echoed the feelings of several parents who said that it was a difficult time for them generally and that they felt vulnerable after just having a baby.

Another woman who only went twice was told by the group leader at her first session that she had to join in the singing when she felt uncomfortable doing so. “I wanted to just sit back and watch the children sing, [it] should not have been a problem, but she [the leader] said ‘of course you’ll join in’. Walking into a room, don’t know anyone. I find it hard to talk in front of people any way, it was embarrassing”.

Overall, whether or not they were put off by their first session, the vast majority of parents remembered how friendly or otherwise they found the first session - about half the people remembered that they found their first session friendly, a few of these describing it as very welcoming while the rest found it reasonably friendly, although for some it took several sessions before they felt comfortable. Most of the low attendees said that they did not find the group friendly or that they felt out of place. One said “I felt very unwelcome, felt more isolated by going to PEEP than not going, so preferred staying at home completely by myself – I felt less isolated like that than going into a room full of people all talking to each other, all getting on really well”. It may have been particularly difficult for 3 of these low-attendance parents because they were entering an established group of people who already seemed to know each other and to have made friends.

## 10.6. Meeting people and making friendships

In general, people’s desire to continue with PEEP seems to be associated with how friendly and welcoming they found the group even if it took some time to settle in. Although some in the low attendance group reported the sessions to be “unfriendly” only one mother in the medium – high attendance group found this to be the case.

When asked about friendships made through attending PEEP, the entire staff/volunteer high attendance group said that they had made a least one friend at a PEEP group with whom they socialized outside the group. None of the 5 low attendees made any friendships. In neither case is it possible to tell if friendship or lack of it was a consequence of, or motivator for, their heavy or minimal attendance. The remaining 11 parents, apart from the one mentioned above who never found the groups friendly, said that the groups were friendly but they had not made friendships that went beyond the group – the extent of their relationship being from “if I see them on the street, I acknowledge them” to “we stop and have a chat if I see her around”.

Interviewees were asked about other people in their lives with whom they could discuss their experiences of being a parent. The rationale behind this question was to see if either having a wide range of other sources of support or a lack of it made it more or less likely for people to attend PEEP. A significant majority of parents did have other sources, but in the most cases this appeared to be quite limited with only one or two people being mentioned as fulfilling this role (e.g. "Mum and a friend"), or people said that their friends did not have children or not of the same age. Approximately half of the participants said that PEEP offered them something different and in addition to their existing social network.

### 10.7. Leaders and assistants

Comments about the leaders were varied. Half the parents were very positive about at least one of their leaders. The leaders' and assistants' ability to make everyone feel welcome and to include everyone was felt to be important and when the groups got too big some parents felt that this became difficult.

A number of parents made less positive comments about at least one of their leaders. These ranged from mild criticism about the quality of leadership in the group to more strongly worded perceptions of the leader's manner. First impressions clearly make a difference; two of the low attendees did not feel positive about the leader at their first session and indicated this was one reason for not continuing with PEEP.

Occasionally the leader seems to have had a significant impact on people's satisfaction or continuance with PEEP. For example, one mother explained that a change of leader had had a positive impact on her enjoyment of the group, whereas another said that the group became "less exciting" under a different leader. Several parents mentioned that their children had quite extreme reactions to the leader. One parent emphasised how much the leader was "loved" by her child. Conversely another reported that she had left simply because her child "did not like" the leader. A few parents had said that the leaders had been particularly supportive on a personal level. Advice and encouragement was offered in training, employment, and parenting.

These negative views were in contrast to more positive comments made by other parents who had progressed from attending to working for PEEP. This gave them an

insight into the complexity and occasional difficulties of a leader's role. The qualitative study made clear that views about PEEP leaders varied considerably.

### 10.8. Adult learning and work opportunities arising from PEEP attendance

About two-thirds of the parents said they had been told about learning opportunities through PEEP and 9 had completed or were doing the PEEP Open College Network Certificate (PEEP OCN). The OCN is equivalent to a D-G pass in GCSE and is gained, usually over a year's PEEP attendance, through providing evidence (in the form of written or verbal reports, drawings or photographs) of parenting knowledge and activities. Some of the parents (n=7) did not recall hearing anything about courses or the OCN but this included all of those who had low attendance. The parents who were doing the OCN were mainly positive about it and some felt it was a good achievement – "I've done 3 OCNs, been really good, feel like I have done something", "I like the portfolio idea, wish I'd done it for my older daughter". Three parents who had been to PEEP for some time said they preferred the portfolio to the previous method of getting an OCN. Several parents said that they had not liked writing the diary pages in the sessions, saying things such as "my mind tended to go blank", it was like "an extension of being at school".

Other parents mentioned hearing about other learning opportunities through PEEP sessions – massage course, PEEP training, computer courses, assertiveness courses – and receiving leaflets about courses and listening to talks from Sure Start personnel about other courses.

Sixteen of the parents had undertaken some sort of adult training course since becoming a parent, 3 of whom had done the training through their workplace. A variety of courses had been undertaken at local colleges, training centres or through distance learning - CLAIT, RSA, various computer courses, Child Development, PEEP training, OCNs, Business Course, English and Maths, Childcare, Diploma in Fitness Training, Diploma in Preschool Education, Building Skills.

Four of the parents including three of those who had gone on to become volunteers or staff members for PEEP said they had been encouraged and supported by PEEP staff to attend a course or apply for a job. One single mother who left school with no

qualifications said that the leader gave her the confidence to get on an English course – “She really wanted to help you. If it wasn’t for her...she inspired you. She helped get me back into college”

The parents who went on to get voluntary or paid work with PEEP came from a variety of backgrounds. Two had higher qualifications, one of whom was from Asia and expecting her first child when she arrived in this country, while another had left school at sixteen but had subsequently gone on to get a degree. Of the others, two had left school with GCSEs and one, a single parent, had left school at thirteen and since joining PEEP had done three OCNs and become the driving force behind the PEEP Parents Newsletter. The other PEEP work opportunities that had been taken up by parents interviewed were: Administrative assistant, PEEP Assistants, Outreach Worker, Programme Support Coordinator and Training Assistant Facilitator.

Four parents interviewed had careers or jobs that they continued with after the birth of their child and none of these were interested in taking up training or work opportunities offered by PEEP.

## 10.9. Social factors relating to PEEP experiences

Working patterns: Apart from one Baby group mother, all of the parents with higher qualifications were working, and all in paid work except 1 who was doing voluntary work, compared with about three quarters of the mothers with lower qualifications.

About a third of the parents said that they had left PEEP temporarily or permanently or had found it difficult to attend because of working patterns. The commitment of some parents to continue with PEEP is demonstrated by a parent who had to arrange for time off each week to attend a 9.30am PEEP group before taking her son to his childminder. As well as overcoming work demands, she did not enjoy the PEEP experience for herself but felt it was valuable for her child and attended regularly for 3 years and went on to recommend the programme to friends.

Group attendance: Parents were asked about their attendance at any type of group with their child other than PEEP to see if there was any suggestion of this being associated with PEEP involvement. Nine of the interviewees had not been to any other group and 3 had attended only occasionally or as a one-off. Eight had attended other groups on a regular basis. Of the 6 higher qualified parents, 5 had attended other

groups on a regular basis and all of the parents in the high attendance category were regular users of other groups. In the low attendance category only 1 had been to another group.

Family Structure: Information about single-parent status and older or younger children was obtained to see if family structure had affected attendance or experiences at groups. Many parents mentioned that PEEP gave their child the opportunity to mix with children of the same age and this seemed particularly important to parents of only or oldest children or where there was a big age gap between children. A few parents, all low attenders, said that having younger children made it more difficult to attend PEEP.

#### 10.10. Baby PEEP

Six of the parents had recently been to a Baby PEEP group. This group did not mention any particular themes, except that the numbers in this group who were employed was proportionally less than in the overall group

## **11. Summary of Qualitative results**

### **11.1. Learning about parenting and child development through PEEP**

The interviews reveal that helping their children's learning and seeing their children enjoy themselves are strong motivating factors for parents first attending and continuing with PEEP. The comments made about PEEP learning and activities show that parents like the things they and their child get out of the programme and that they perceive PEEP as giving their child and themselves more than would be possible at the average parent and toddler group. They talked about PEEP helping them to improve their relationship with their child, giving them awareness of the child's different stages, encouraging them to spend more time singing, reading, doing messy play and providing new ideas for stimulating activities.

However, even though the majority indicated that they found PEEP beneficial to their parenting and their child's development, some parents found parts of the PEEP programme too overtly educational, as is perhaps revealed by their reluctance to dwell on this side of what goes on when discussing PEEP with others. Also, a few parents said they felt uncomfortable when being asked in a session about what they got out of going to PEEP or doing an activity - "I am going along for my child, it's not for me". In some cases the leader's manner may have exacerbated this, one mother describing a leader as "school teacherish".

Overall, the evidence gained from these interviews suggests that most of the time the PEEP programme offers a good balance between fostering parents' desire to help their child get on while not overdoing the parent education angle. Achieving this balance may be particularly important because many of the parents who were interviewed may not have had an entirely or mostly positive experience at school, but nonetheless want to help advantage their child.

### **11.2. Meeting people and making friendships through PEEP**

As has been noted, meeting other parents was a frequently cited reason for attending a PEEP group and this may be related to the reasonably small circle of people available

in many of the women's lives for sharing parenting experiences. Therefore, it is not surprising that the issue of the friendliness of group participants appears to be an important element of enjoying and sticking with a group.

However, as we have seen, apart from the high attendees, most people did not make friendships that went beyond the confines of the group. The interviews did not clearly reveal whether parents were hoping to make more developed friendships through attending PEEP but many of the cited reasons for going to PEEP ("feeling isolated, being on my own, not knowing people with children") suggest that some parents were hoping for a deeper level of friendship than they found.

The structured format of a PEEP group which does not allow much time for parents to chat with each other may be one reason why more friendships did not develop. Several parents said they felt that the sessions were too short and some stressed the effort involved in getting themselves and a baby to a group. One parent who had attended several PEEP groups with two children felt that not enough time was allowed for parents to share ideas informally and would have appreciated half an hour after the session finished to sit around, chat and to allow the children to play: "Not much time to talk to parents at the end. You hang around a bit to have a chat but they are all packing up and you feel you have to leave. Hard to chat – (you) have to do this, have to do that". On the other hand, several parents mentioned the benefits of knowing more people in the community and seeing more familiar faces at school – "you got to know people in the area, and got to talk to them when I took the other ones (i.e. other children) to school, so don't feel so isolated". A further point is that some of the more detached comments about other group members perhaps should be seen in the context of most mothers having left PEEP some time ago.

However, not everyone was looking for an opportunity to forge these kinds of relationships or connections. For example, one parent who needed to get back to work after the session found the leader "waffled on" too much and another said she would have preferred if there were no chitchat time at all - "it's just not me, I would have preferred just to have left at the end, but I felt I had to stay for a bit".

Some women seemed to find the make-up of a particular group difficult to integrate into – "they were all much younger", "lots of them knew each other, were related to each other", "all the babies were older", "I didn't have much in common with them". In

addition, one mother said that the people who attended the group were not from the estate she lived in (where the group was located in), but from other local areas.

### 11.3. PEEP's reach and the importance of the first sessions

The interviews powerfully express the difficulties of going along to the first session or sessions, with most women saying they felt nervous, even those who attended other groups and went on to become very involved with PEEP. Given that most of the women did not know any of the other group members, were often joining an established group, were not regular group users and were perhaps feeling "vulnerable" having recently had a baby, it is not surprising that it took quite a bit of courage to go to a first session.

If, in addition, the first session felt unfriendly it seems some women found it extremely hard to continue. Of the 5 low attendees who were interviewed, most left PEEP because they did not find it a socially comfortable experience - one felt "put on the spot" by the leader, 2 found other group members unfriendly or "standoffish" and another felt she did not have much in common with other group members. A compounding factor may be that most of the low attendees said that they were feeling socially isolated before they attended and were looking for a way to improve their situation – for these women it may have been particularly difficult not to have experienced the welcome or introduction for which they were hoping.

The fact that about two thirds of the parents who went along were not regular group users or had never been to another group indicates that PEEP is successfully reaching parents who perhaps would not normally attend any sort of group with their child. As well as this, the comments convey that these parents fully welcomed the opportunity to hear about and be encouraged to attend a group whether it is to give their child something extra or to feel less isolated themselves. However, the very fact that these parents would not normally or have never previously attended a group means that it is likely to be an especially stressful experience for them at first. Supporting parents through the first few sessions in particular seems to be an important and vital role for the leaders and assistants.

Going with a friend or PEEP worker or having met the group leader before seems to be one way of making the first session easier and it is PEEP practice to offer an

accompanied first session if it is thought to be helpful. One mother who only went twice said it would have helped if they changed the way they welcome people into the group or if she had been given a leaflet so she knew what to expect - "they assume you know what's going on; suddenly everyone got into a circle and no-one said why" . A follow up phone call to parents who stop going to a group was also suggested by one parent, a practice which PEEP aims to rigorously implement, with leaders making many follow up calls each year.

#### 11.4. Continuing with PEEP and becoming more involved

Four out of 5 of the women who got very involved with PEEP were on average older than the overall group (mean age at time of interview=41). Two of them mentioned their age as one motivating factor for joining a group in the first place because they did not know many women of similar age having children. Also, their age may contribute to their confidence in attending a group and overcoming initial nerves. It is also the case that all the participants in the high attendance category were regular users of other groups either prior to or since attending PEEP. Without exception, the high attendees made friendships that went beyond attending group sessions through PEEP, although we do not know if this was a reason for their continuance with PEEP or was a result of long term PEEP attendance, but these relationships clearly contributed to their positive experience.

The comments made about leaders and occasionally assistants show that people clearly recall (even if their PEEP experience was minimal or sometime in the past) the attributes they felt positive or negative about, and suggest that the PEEP staff play an important role in the facilitation and enjoyment of a group.

However, the range of comments also shows parents' varying responses to the personality or approach of the leader. For example, one was disappointed that the leader was not more "inspirational" and was expecting a "larger than life" character, whereas another left because her child found the leader too "boisterous". Another said other group members had found one leader "too teacherish" but she had preferred this style to another leader who was more "laid back". In addition, it could be that the leaders' personality is more significant if a parent is not integrated into the group through the other participants. One parent who found the leader too opinionated, nonetheless really enjoyed the group because all the parents got on so well.

Overall, characteristics that seem to be particularly important are warmth and the ability to welcome and include everyone without putting people on the spot. As well as this, leaders and assistants are in a position to offer something extra in terms of encouragement or support to some parents - "The initial thing was giving me the confidence. When looking for a job, [I] wanted to work in a school, [the leaders] said, 'you go for it', say you've been to PEEP. [It was] encouraging, quite nice actually".

### 11.5. Adult learning and work opportunities arising from PEEP attendance

The adult learning component of the PEEP programme appears to provide very good opportunities for some women, while being not relevant to others, most noticeably those who already had established careers.

Many parents found that the OCN which is now obtained through evidence compiled in a portfolio offered a valuable opportunity to do something for themselves as well as giving them a record of their child's development - "I've got 3 OCN certificates - makes me feel I've done something". One parent said that doing the OCN was good evidence for future employment - "(it) shows that if you go back to work that you have been willing to learn as well".

The large number of women who had done some sort of course in the few years since their child or children had been born indicates that as well as using the information and opportunities provided by PEEP, adults with childcare responsibilities are taking up the lifelong learning opportunities that are available through work, distance learning, the community and schools.

### 11.6. Conclusion

The findings of the qualitative study demonstrate that the programme appealed to adults on a number of levels: To meet and share with other parents; to participate in group activities with their child such as singing and reading; to learn about children's development; to embrace new ideas and materials for increasing their child's enjoyment and learning as well as developing their own learning and careers. All the

parents interviewed were motivated to attend, and in most cases continue with, PEEP by one or more of the above factors.

The interviewees became involved with PEEP in varying degrees and a range of outcomes and experiences were revealed. The group who did not stick with PEEP showed that even where there is genuine strong motivation to participate in a group, either for their own or their child's benefit, if the first encounter with the programme is not a good one, particularly from a social point of view, continuing is very difficult. For the group of parents who had been regular attendees but had not become more widely involved, PEEP provided a valuable opportunity to meet other parents, take up and learn about courses in their local area, discuss their child's different stages, participate in more activities with their child both in and beyond the groups, and fostered links and connections in the community. Finally, the stories of parents who had become heavily involved revealed the scope of opportunities and experiences, over and above those already mentioned, that PEEP has on offer - particularly in terms of making friends, providing a forum for enjoyable and sustained learning in children's early years and for supported and accessible training and work opportunities.

## **Part Four – Key Findings and Policy Implications**

### 12.1. Focus on adults

The main focus of the PEEP programme has always been on helping parents to support their children's learning at home. To date, the Birth to School Study (Evangelou Sylva, Pring & Brooks 2004) and a study on the Effects of PEEP on Children's Developmental Progress (Evangelou & Sylva, 2003) have explored the effects of mothers' participation in PEEP on their children's cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional development. Funded by the Learning and Skills Council, the Enabling Parents Study is the first research to focus exclusively on the effects of PEEP on parents as adult learners. Using a quasi-experimental design, quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to demonstrate the impact of the PEEP programme on mother's socio-economic status, access to training and skill at educating their young children. This research has important policy implications because there are so few well controlled studies in the UK documenting the effects of programmes for parents on their life-long learning and employment.

### 12.2. Key findings

The key findings of this report fall into 4 areas:

#### 12.2.i. Professional and personal development for the mother

Between the birth of the target child and age 4 years, mothers in the intervention group raised their socio-economic status as measured by job classification. Moreover, the intervention group reported taking significantly more courses than the comparison group. These results are particularly interesting; as the two locations were demographically matched on several criteria after the focal child was born, including employment and income. Individual families were also matched at this time on SES. There were no differences between the two groups in terms of *formal* qualifications, either at the beginning of the study when the child was born, or when the child was 4 years old. It seems likely that the intervention group improved their job related basic skills, but not their formal qualifications. The PEEP programme provided 'The Learning Bridge' initiative to assist parents in obtaining employment or improving their work-

related skills. More mothers in the intervention group took new courses, which did not lead to formal qualifications, but may explain the better jobs found in the mothers in the PEEP group. Some mothers mentioned PEEP as a direct factor in their returning to college or work. Describing her group leader, one mother said “she inspired you. She helped get me back into college”.

#### 12.2.ii. Parental skills development to benefit the child

Mothers in the intervention group reported keener awareness of how to influence children’s literacy development. This included their understanding of how children develop language, including sounds in words. Mothers in the PEEP group also spoke about the deliberate use of modelling literacy behaviours (such as reading) and the use of environmental print as stimulus for learning. The PEEP groups’ practice of a range of activities that support children’s literacy (especially music and play) and their acknowledgement of PEEP’s key role in this new awareness of their child’s literacy development attest to their enhanced parenting skills. This was echoed by findings in the qualitative study, showing that intervention parents spoke more positively about their awareness of children’s literacy. For example, one parent “was pleased that PEEP provided the opportunity for her children to enjoy books as I [the mother] was not a reader at all”.

#### 12.2.iii. The importance of social support

Social support was important to both groups, particularly in the qualitative study. It was a frequently cited reason for attending all types of group and was vital in their choice to continue attending. Social support was seen by mothers in both groups to be important for parenting skills and mother’s personal development. PEEP, particularly, was seen as a source of support and encouragement for continuing with their education, as well as help with parenting. Mothers in the comparison area reported similar levels of social support, not from PEEP, but from other community offerings. It appears that there was social support in both the PEEP and comparison areas, and it was seen by all as vital.

#### 12.2.iv. Continuing participation with PEEP

The first session they attend is of great importance for the mothers, attending any group. It seems that the first session sets the tone for the rest of the mother’s

attendance and if this is seen as 'unfriendly' by the mother, she is less likely to continue. Some mothers reported that they felt 'baffled' by the routine of the PEEP groups, and that they would have appreciated more information about the format of the sessions before going to their first group. Several motivating factors for continued attendance at groups included: parents' seeing their children enjoying themselves, getting new ideas for activities at home, enjoying the company of other mothers.

### 12.3. Policy context

The findings of this study are relevant to current governmental policy. Many current initiatives encourage mothers to return to work for two key reasons. Firstly are the economic benefits; as a person who has returned to work not only contributes to the wealth of the economy, but will claim less back from it in the form of benefits. Secondly, returning to work enables the parents to develop their own skills, allowing them to get better, more satisfying jobs.

The government's policy on parent education has two aims. Firstly, it can improve children's academic outcomes, with all the benefits this brings, including breaking the cycle of poverty by enabling children to make a better start at school. Programmes such as Local Sure Start help children in disadvantaged wards get the support they need to do better (academically) at school. Secondly, parental training can improve the child's behaviour (Webster-Stratton, 1998) if parents acquire more consistency in discipline and more 'positive' styles of interaction.

### 12.4. Strengths and limitations of the research

The matching method used in this study was one of its main strengths. The close matching between the two groups ensures that the adult learning outcomes of PEEP on participating mothers were compared to those of similar mothers. The only demographic difference was the attendance of one group at PEEP and of the comparison group at a range of other facilities for parents. This close matching adds to the validity of the conclusions. Also, being able to include mothers with limited PEEP experience in the qualitative study allowed the researchers to document factors associated with parents' continued participation within PEEP. All in all, the quantitative study was carried out to investigate the effects of PEEP on several outcomes to do with parents as adult learners and as parents. Similarly, the qualitative study, aimed to

investigate outcomes but uniquely it also aimed to describe feelings towards PEEP groups and towards other facilities for parents.

These results are limited by the fact that the design was quasi - experimental; PEEP participants were compared to a matched group in another area but were not randomly assigned. It is possible that the SES increase amongst PEEP mothers was brought about by better employment opportunities or day care in the PEEP area. However, this explanation seems less likely because it doesn't account for the increased training (courses) undertaken by the PEEP mothers. The rise in the number of courses attended supports the hypothesis that PEEP gave direct help to mothers in finding and securing better status jobs.

It is important to stress that this study has addressed the effects of the PEEP programme on those who attended the groups, (five or more sessions in the quantitative sample and at least one session in the qualitative sample). It has not studied mothers living in the PEEP area who have never attended any PEEP sessions. Further research is needed to examine the effects at community level, including the impact, if any, on those who did not participate.

## 12.5. Concluding thoughts

The findings of the Enabling Parents Study are relevant to current government policy on *maternal employment* to lift families out of poverty and *maternal education* to teach parenting skills that enhance children's development (Interdepartmental Child Care Review 2002, The Treasury Spending Review 2004). The results, overall, have shown that the measurable effects of PEEP on parenting centre on ways that mothers can stimulate children's learning at home through play-based activities. In this study there were no differences between the groups in terms of discipline, the quality of the adult-child relationship, parenting stress or social support. Thus the main effects of PEEP on adult learners (as demonstrated in this research) are focused on the 'personal development' of mothers; this includes employment and their parental skills as educators of their own children. In this well controlled study, attendance of five or more PEEP sessions led to lasting effects on adults as learners and workers.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: The Learning Bridge

Funded by NIACE (The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education)

The following courses were developed and or supported by the Learning Bridge Team at PEEP January 99 - June 2000;

Child health and development  
Computing  
ESOL  
First Aid  
Next step  
PEEP training (OCN offered at Level 1,2,3)  
Sociology  
Who said kids were easy?  
Women's studies  
Women changing direction

Plus open days, taster sessions, visit to Basic Skills Centre

Approximately 100 adults attended Learning Bridge courses and 100 adults participated in a one to one advice and guidance sessions run by New Start. Many adults had not participated in further learning, training or guidance sessions since leaving school at 16.

In 2002 PEEP families made a video 'Feeling good about learning together' which reflected their views on how participation in PEEP has helped their own learning and confidence and progression into work.

Funding for Learning Bridge finished in 2000 but since then PEEP has worked to integrate encouragement and support for adult learning into its general provision. PEEP staff work collaboratively with local Adult and Community learning organisations. All PEEP groups have up to date folders of local courses and training opportunities and staff endeavour to support and encourage participation in these courses. PEEP staff work hard to build bridges between parents and carers and Adult Basic Skills provision.

## Appendix 2: Summary of parenting programmes

### 2.i Summary of parent outcome studies

Authors	Title of Study	Areas of research showing effect	Sample size	Design
Head Start (2001)	FACES (Family and Childhood Experiences Survey)	Levels of mental well-being Social Support Control over lives Full time jobs Welfare Education	3200 families	Longitudinal - pre-post testing
Early Head Start (2001)	Early Head Start - Summary	Education Jobs Training Pregnancy Family environment	17 centres, 3001 families	Longitudinal - pre-post test
Poresky and Daniels (2001)	Two Year Comparison of income, education, depression among parents participating in regular HS and Supplementary Family Service Centre Services	Employment (no effect) Education Literacy Depression Income	80 parents	Random assignment to 2 conditions – reg. Head Start (control) and Family Service Centre (intervention)

Authors	Title of Study	Areas of research showing effect	Sample size	Design
Benaisch, Brooks-Gunn-Clewell (1992)	How do mothers benefit from Early Intervention Programs	Maternal employment Return to education Pregnancy Mother-infant interaction Maternal mental health and self esteem; internal locus of control Contact with teachers Maternal knowledge re: childrearing.	27 programs	Random comparison/matched control. Pre-post test.
Faith Lamb Parker, Chayas, Piotrkowski, Lenor Peay (1987)	Head Start as social support for mothers	Well-being improved (combination of measures – depression, anxiety, sense of support, self esteem, self efficacy)	82 mothers	Pre-post test
Patterson, Mockford, Stewart-Brown, Barlow, Pyper (2001)	Evaluation of a primary care based parent training programme	Maternal anxiety Depression and Self-esteem	118 parents	Random assignment
Webster-Stratton (1998)	Parent Training with low income families	Less negative parenting	210 parents	Random assignment

Authors	Title of Study	Areas of research showing effect	Sample size	Design
Webster-Stratton (2001)	Preventing conduct problems, promoting social competence: A parent and teacher training partnership in Head Start	Less negative parenting Higher positive parenting scores Parent-teacher bonding higher	394 parents	Random assignment
Barlow, Coren, Stewart-Brown (2001)	A systematic review of the effectiveness of parenting programmes in improving maternal psychosocial health	Maternal psychosocial health: depression, anxiety/stress, self-esteem, relationship with partner (page 40)	17 studies (59 assessments)	Random assignment
Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, Younoszaial (1998)				
Barnsley Right Start (2002)	An evaluation of the effect of Right Start courses on parents/carers of children under 5 in Barnsley	Confidence Voluntary work Employment Education	200 parents	Telephone interview of participants

## 2.ii Research Supporting investigation of each Quantitative domain

Domain	Sub-Domain	Supporting Research
Employment and training	Return to and/or progression in employment and training / Finding out about employment and training	Poresky (2001), Seedfeldt (1998, 1999), Hammer (2003), Parsons & Brynner (1999), Brooks (1997)
	Change in social class as categorised by occupation	Feinstein (2001), Brooks (1997)
Parenting skills	Relationship with child / Managing behaviour	Webster-Stratton, (1998, 2001)
	Involvement with child's learning at home and school / Advice on child's education	Lamb-parker (1987), Poresky (2001), Seedfeldt (1998, 1999) Webster-Stratton (1998, 2001), Brooks(1997)
Social support and wellbeing	Life satisfaction	Lamb-Parker (1987)
	Self-efficacy	Lamb-Parker (1997), Brooks (1997)
	Social support	Brooks (1997)

## Appendix 3: Contact letters

### 3.i Initial BTSS to PEEP Study Contact letter

Date

Dear,

I wanted to write to you to thank you and «Childs\_name» for participating in the Birth to School Study. You have been part of this study now for 4 years and your time and cooperation are really appreciated. The study is going well and we are looking forward to seeing «Childs\_name» again next year.

As a small thank you, I am enclosing a certificate for «Childs\_name» which I hope will be enjoyed.

I also want to tell you about a new, much smaller study that is linked to Birth to School Study and explained in the enclosed leaflet, called The Parents Study. It is about opportunities and experiences for parents and their key role their child's early years. It is an important area to research because we'll be finding out about what is working well for parents and what is needed to improve services. Because it is a smaller study we are contacting only half of the parents in the Birth to School Study, getting a mix of children's ages and gender. Parents we have visited so far have told us they found it interesting.

If you agree to take part in the study it will involve only **ONE** visit which will take up to an hour for an interview and questionnaire. We will not need to see your child although it will be fine if they are there. You do not have to decide to take part now; my colleague Rachel Taylor, will contact you at some point over the next few months to tell you more about it, answer any questions you may have and arrange a time to visit if you would like to take part. If you do decide to take part, your child will be given a nice book to keep.

However, if you do not want to be contacted, please phone Rachel on 01865 274016 to let her know in the next 7 days. Even if you do not phone her, you can always decide not to take part or opt out at anytime. Whether you participate or not, your child will still be part of the Birth to School Study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and with best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Maria Evangelou  
Director of the Birth to School Study

### 3.ii BTSS non-selection letter

Date

Dear,

I wanted to write to you to thank you and «Childs\_name» for participating in the Birth to School Study. You have been part of this study now for 4 years and your time and cooperation are really appreciated. The study is going well and we are looking forward to seeing «Childs\_name» again next year.

As a small thank you, I am enclosing a certificate for «Childs\_name» which I hope will be enjoyed.

With very best wishes and thanks,

Dr Maria Evangelou  
Director of the Birth to School Study

### 3.iii Confirmation of Visit Letter

Date

Dear ,

Thank you for helping us with the Parents Study which is part of the Birth to School Study about children's literacy and language development. In this new study we are researching what it is like for parents – experiences and opportunities and the key role you play in your child's education and development.

I look forward to seeing you on

**All information you provide will be kept confidentially. We do this by removing names and using codes and you will not be named or referred to in any reports or publications. All the information you give us will be kept safely in a locked cabinet.**

Again, thank you for your help in this study. The information we obtain from all the parents will be used to help us to understand more clearly what is working well for parents and their children.

If you have any questions, or need to rearrange the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07791692148.

With best wishes,

Rachel Taylor  
Research Officer  
Parents Study

### 3.iv: Qualitative sample contact letter

(for those also in the quantitative study)

24 November 2003

Dear,

I am a Research Officer from Oxford University doing a project about services for parents and carers in the Oxford area. I met you when I was doing a different study about being a parent of a 4.5 year old. I am now working on a new project which is about adults who said they had been to PEEP, asking them about their experiences. Some of the people have been to PEEP lots of times, others just a few as it is useful to get a variety of different experiences.

I am writing now to ask if you would be willing to be phoned to hear more about the study which will involve one visit to your home.

However, if you do not want to be contacted, please phone me to let me know on 01865 274016 or 07791692148 in the next 7 days. Even if you do not phone, you can always decide not to take part either when I contact you or at anytime.\*

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

With best wishes,

Rachel Taylor  
Research Officer

\* please note: I may not need to phone everyone, it depends how many people are able to take part.

## Appendix 4: Parents study interview

Parents' Name:

Child's Name:

Child's ID:

Date of interview:

Interviewer:

Start Time:

End Time:

Address:

Telephone

Important information from 4th Birthday:

Family Structure:

Name of BTSS interviewer:

### SECTION 1: You and your child

Thank you for letting me come and visit you as part of this study on being a parent. Everything you tell me is completely confidential. Just like in the BTSS, I would like you to answer the questions focusing on your four-year-old. As I haven't met you before, I'd like to start by asking you some general questions and then go onto some questions about you and (child's name).

1. I'm interviewing quite a few parents in this area, can you tell me if you have lived here for long?
2. And what are your general feelings about the area? (prompt: things and places for children to do/play; transport; shopping)
3. What are the particular things that you and (child's name) enjoying doing together? I am thinking about things you do at home, going out, visiting people or places?

Are there some things that you'd like do more of with (child's name)? And if so, what would those be?

5. What keeps you from doing these things?

6. Do you take/how often do you take (child's name) to the library or borrow books from anywhere else (Write down where they go eg. Library, PEEP, nursery. Nb. If child gets books by themselves it does not count?)

Once or more than once a week

Once or twice a month

A few times each year

Less than once a year

Never

7. And are you a member of the library yourself?

Yes

No

Do you go/how often do you go to the library to get books or information for yourself?

Once or more than once a week

Once or twice a month

A few times each year

Less than once a year

Never

Playgroups/preschool.

Last time you were interviewed, (child's name) was attending  
Is this still correct or has she/he moved?

Attending:

10. Are there things you do to help your child learn and get on/apart from what goes on at nursery/playgroup or what things do you think are important for helping your child to learn and get on?

11. If you were concerned about something to do with your child's learning, to whom or where would you go for help and advice?  
(prompt: if they say teacher or school, ask if there is anywhere else they might go – any other person, book, centre, newspapers, magazines etc.)

12. All children can be difficult at times, what things would you say you find helpful in these situations?

13. Do you feel that the things you do for your child are appreciated or recognised in any way, by anyone?

Yes   
No

14. If yes, in what way or by whom are you appreciated or recognised?

15. If not, would you like this to be different?

Yes   
No

If yes, in what way?

SECTION 2: About information and advice you get

Many parents feel it is helpful to talk to other adults for information or advice. This may be to discuss something to do with your child, or to do with yourself. I am going to list some people/places. Could you tell me if any of these gives you information or advice and how regularly?

(SHOW CARD)

(Phrase question: do you get information or advice from (eg. relatives)? How often? Is it to do with you or your child?)

Source	Yes/ No	Very regular	Regular	Occasional	Very Occasional	Never	To do with your child	To do with you
Parents or p-in-law								
Other relatives								
Neighbours								
Other parents								
Partner								
Friends								
Work colleagues								
Group/centre (specify)								
Other(specify)								

18. Who or where would you say gives you the best information or advice?

19. Would you like to have more information or advice?

Yes

No

20. If yes, what kind of thing do you think would improve the situation?

SECTION 3: Groups/Centres for mothers and babies/children

21. Are you attending or have you attended in the past any groups/centres with (child's name)?
- Yes   
No

22. If you have not attended a group, could you say why not?  
(Go to Section 4)

23. What kind of group/s or centre/s do/have you attend/ed?

24. If more than one group/centre, which one did you like best?

Qs 25 to 35 about group named in 33

25. How long have you attended/did you attend this group/centre?

26. What do/did you enjoy about the group you attend/ed?

27. Has attending this group/centre provided you with opportunities or experiences that you may not have otherwise had?
- Yes   
No

28. If so, can you describe what kind of opportunities/experiences those are?

29. Would you have liked the group/centre to provide you with more opportunities or experiences?
- Yes   
No

30. If so, what would those be?

31. Has attending this group had an influence (changed) in any way on what you do as a parent?
- Yes   
No
32. If so, can you describe in what way/s?
33. Overall, in what ways could it be better? (prompt: social, interesting, learning, accessible, friendly)

#### SECTION 4: Work

In this study, one of the things we are interested in finding out about what the work situation is like for parents with young children. Now can I ask you some questions about any work you may be doing at the moment or have done in the past? Remember everything you say is completely confidential.

34. (Interviewer to check 4th Birthday interview) Last time you were interviewed, you were...
35. Could you tell me if your situation is the same or has anything changed?
- Same   
Changed
36. So, at the moment you are....
- Employed full-time   
Employed part-time   
Temporary/seasonal worker   
Self employed full-time   
Self employed part-time   
Working from home   
Voluntary work   
(Go to 53)  
No job.   
(Go to 38)
37. How old was (child's name) when you started back at work?  
 years  months
38. Have you had a job since leaving school?
- Yes   
(Go to 39)  
No   
(Go to 56)

39. I'm going to ask you some questions about your current main job, or, if you are not working, about your most recent job – which will it be about?
- Current job   
Most recent job
40. Can you remember how you got your main or most recent job?
- An ad in paper   
Agency   
Friend/relative or contact   
Job centre   
Advert in shop   
A group, activity or school   
Other
41. What is/was your job title?  
(If in the armed forces ask) What is/was your grade/rank?
42. And what do/did you mainly do in that job?
43. And what does the firm or organisation mainly make/do?
44. Do/did you work for yourself or are/were you employed by someone else?(tick all that apply)
- Self employed   
Proprietor with employees   
Employed
45. Do/did you manage anyone?
- Yes   
No
46. (If yes) Do/did you have to make decisions about hiring or firing people, pay levels etc?
- Yes   
No
47. Do/did you watch over people as a supervisor or foreman?
- Yes   
No
48. How many people is/was that?    people managed
49. How many hours do/did you work on average each week including overtime whether paid or not?    hours worked

50. Does/did the job ever involve nights away from home or night shifts?
- Never
- Rarely (up to 3 nights per annum)
- Sometimes (4-12 nights per annum)
- Often (13-50 nights per annum)
- Frequently/regularly (more than 1 night most wks)

51. Do/did you work from home or do/did you go out to work?
- Work at home
- Go out to work
- Both

52. How many employees are/were there in this firm/organisation?
- 0
- 0-9
- 10-24
- 25-499
- 500+
- Don't know

53. Are you doing any voluntary work?
- Yes
- No

54. How many hours do you work per week on average?
- hours worked

55. How did you find out about this voluntary work?

I am going to ask you these same sort of questions about your partner (if no partner, go to no. 69)

56. Could you tell me about his current main job or if he isn't working, about his most recent job. So this is going to be about.
- Current job
- Most recent job

57. Could you tell me what is/was his job title? (If in the armed forces ask: What is/was his grade/rank?)

58. And what does/did he mainly do in that job?

59. And what does the firm or organisation mainly make/do?

60. Does/did he work for himself or is/was he employed by someone else? (tick all that apply)
- Self-employed   
Proprietor with employees   
Employed
61. Does/did he manage anyone?
- Yes   
No
62. (If yes,) Does/did he have to make decisions about hiring or firing people, pay levels etc?
- Yes   
No
63. Does/did he watch over people as a supervisor or foreman?
- Yes   
No
64. How many people is/was that?    people managed
65. How many hours does/did he work on average each week including overtime whether paid or not?    hours worked
66. Does/did the job ever involve nights away from home or night shifts?
- Never   
Rarely (up to 3 nights per annum)   
Sometimes (4-12 nights per annum)   
Often (13-50 nights per annum)   
Frequently/regularly (more than 1 night most wks)
67. Does/did he work from home or does/did he go out to work?
- Work at home   
Go out to work   
Both
68. How many employees are/were there in this firm/organisation?
- 0   
0-9   
10-24   
25-499   
500+   
Don't know

#### SECTION 5: Maternity Leave

69. If on maternity leave, do you intend to return to your job?
- Yes

No

70. If no, what are your reasons for not returning?

71. If yes, when do you intend to return?

72. How old will your baby be when you return?

73 Will you return full-time or part-time?

Full-time

Part-time

#### SECTION 6: Training and courses

74. I would like to ask you about courses or training you have undertaken in the last 4 years (since xxxx was born) or are planning to undertake. This means any sort of course or training, long or short, leading to a qualification or certificate or not.

None   
(go to no. 78)

Course	Institution	Dates	Qualification	Work related

Nb if course in future, only put down courses actually signed up for.

75. Do you think any course you have, are or will attend could or has helped you get employment?

Yes

No

76. If yes, what work have you found/will you be looking for?

77. How did you find out about course/s you are, have or are planning to attend?

78. Would you like to do a course/another course or more training? (nb. Put courses here that are less definite than those in 74)

Yes

No

79. If so, what course or training would you like to do?

80. If yes, how likely is it that you will do it?  
(SHOW CARD)

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

81. (if relevant) What is holding you back?

SECTION 7 – Advice and information about jobs/training/courses etc.

82. Where have you been/would you go to get information about courses?

In the last 4 years have you had any of the following careers/training advice or information?

- Leaflets
- Videos
- One to one advice
- Talks
- TV
- Newspapers/magazines
- Internet
- Other(specify)

84. In the last 4 years have you had advice/information from any of the following places or people?

- job centre
- friend/relative
- drop-in centre
- group
- library
- other (specify)

85. Has any person, place or group given you particular encouragement or support in finding a job or going on a course?

- Yes
- No

86. If yes, who or where?

87. Did any information or advice lead to you starting a course or taking up a job and if so what was the information and what did it lead to?

88. Did you feel that there is enough choice of courses to suit your needs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

89. If no, what do you think is needed?

90. Would you like to have more/some advice/information?

- Yes
- No

91. What would be the most helpful sort of advice, information or help?

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you feel about your life now and your hopes for the future...

92. Overall, how satisfied with your life are you at the moment? (SHOW CARD and tick box)

- Extremely
- Very
- Reasonably
- A bit
- Not at all

93. In the following areas, say how satisfied (1-5) you feel about them? (1=not at all satisfied, 5=extremely satisfied)  
(SHOW CARD and interviewer to fill out number)

- Housing
- Area in which you live

- Work
- Family finances
- Children
- Relationship with partner
- Help and encouragement from parents
- Help and encouragement from other relatives
- Help and encouragement from friends
- Life enjoyment

94. Imagining your life in 3 years time, how would you like it to be/would you like it to be different in any way?

95. How likely is it that you will get there? (SHOW CARD)

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

96. What do you think you would need to do/or what do you think would need to happen for you to get there?

Thank you for your contribution. ☺

## Appendix 5: Parental questionnaires

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ©

A great variety of different emotions, viewpoints and behaviours are described in the questions and many will not apply to you. Just fill it out as best you can.



**Mother's name:**

**Child ID:**

**Date**

Section 1: Parenting

**Every parent experiences all sorts of positive and negative feelings towards their children.**

**In this section, there are some positive and negative feelings that parents may experience.**

**For each statement, please think about *your 4 year old child* and CIRCLE the number next to the statement to show us how much you feel that statement reflects your feelings towards her/him.**

	Definitely untrue	Somewhat untrue	Not really true or untrue	Somewhat true	Definitely true
1. Sometimes I feel very impatient with my child	1	2	3	4	5
2. I usually feel quite happy about my relationship with her/him	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sometimes I am amused by him/her	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sometimes I wish she/he would go away for a few minutes	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sometimes he/she makes me angry	1	2	3	4	5
6. I usually feel close to her/him	1	2	3	4	5
7. Sometimes I am frustrated by him/her	1	2	3	4	5
8. I see both my child's good points and his/her faults	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel close to my child both when she/he is very happy and when she/he is worried	1	2	3	4	5
10. I care about my child even when she/he does less well than I know she/he could	1	2	3	4	5
11. I think of things that will please him/her	1	2	3	4	5
12. I give him/her a lot of care and attention	1	2	3	4	5
13. I consider his/her needs and interests when making my own plans.	1	2	3	4	5

Parents have many ways of disciplining their children. Below, there are some discipline methods that parents often use. Please **CIRCLE** the answer to show us how often you use each method with your 4 year old child.

	Never		Sometimes		Usually
1. Give a smack or slap	1	2	3	4	5
2. Telling off or shouting	1	2	3	4	5
3. Explain to child, or reason with child	1	2	3	4	5
4. Be firm and calm with child	1	2	3	4	5
5. Make a joke out of it	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ask someone else to deal with the situation (e.g. the other parent)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ignore it when child misbehaves	1	2	3	4	5
8. Give child 'time out'/send them to their room	1	2	3	4	5
9. Take away privileges (e.g. not let child watch TV/play computer games, favourite toy, not let child go to party)	1	2	3	4	5

**We would like to find out your views on bringing up children and about their care and education. A number of statements are written below and you are asked to TICK the box to show how much you agree or disagree with them.**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Mildly disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Mildly agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. Since parents lack special training in education, they should not question teacher's methods					
2. Children should be treated the same regardless of differences among them					
3. Children should always obey the teacher					
4. Preparing for the future is more important for a child than enjoying today					
5. Children will not do the right thing unless they are told they must					
6. Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents if they feel their own ideas are better					
7. Children should be kept busy with work and study at home and at school					
8. The major role of education is to put basic information into the minds of the children					
9. In order to be fair, a teacher must treat all children alike					
10. The most important thing to teach children is absolute obedience to whoever is in authority					
11. Children learn best by doing things themselves rather than listening to others					
12. Children must be carefully trained early in life or their natural impulses will make them unmanageable					
13. Children have a right to their own point of view and should be allowed to express it					
14. Children's learning results mainly from being presented basic information again and again					
15. Children like to teach other children					

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Mildly disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Mildly agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
16. The most important thing to teach children is absolute obedience to parents					
17. Once my child is in school, the school will have the main responsibility for his/her education					
18. Children generally do not do what they should unless someone sees to it					
19. I will teach my child that he/she should be doing something useful at all times					
20. It will be alright for my child to disagree with me					
21. Teachers need not be concerned with what goes on in a child's home					
22. I will go along with the game when my child is pretending something					
23. Parents should teach their children to have unquestioning loyalty to them					
24. Teachers should discipline all the children the same					
25. Children should not question the authority of their parents					
26. What I teach my child at home will be very important to his/her school success					
27. Children will be bad unless they are taught what is right					
28. A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making family decisions					
29. A teacher has no right to seek information about a child's home background					

**Parents have many feelings about being a parent and their child. This set of questions focuses on the more difficult things or feelings to do with being a parent and your child. For each item, please CIRCLE the number next to each statement that best describes how you feel.**

	Definitely untrue	Somewhat untrue	Not really true or untrue	Somewhat true	Definitely true
1. I often have the feeling that I cannot handle things very well	1	2	3	4	5
2. I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my children's needs than I ever expected	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent	1	2	3	4	5
4. Since having this child, I have been unable to do new and different things	1	2	3	4	5
5. Since having a child, I feel that I am almost never able to do things that I like to do	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am unhappy with the last purchase of clothing I made for myself	1	2	3	4	5
7. There are quite a few things that bother me about my life	1	2	3	4	5
8. Having a child has caused more problems than I expected in my relationship with my spouse (male/female friend)	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel alone and without friends	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I go to a party, I usually expect not to enjoy myself	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am not as interested in people as I used to be	1	2	3	4	5
12. I don't enjoy things as I used to	1	2	3	4	5

	Definitely untrue	Somewhat untrue	Not really true or untrue	Somewhat true	Definitely true
13. My child rarely does things for me that make me feel good	1	2	3	4	5
14. Most times I feel that my child does not like me and does not want to be close to me	1	2	3	4	5
15. My child smiles at me much less than I expected	1	2	3	4	5
16. When I do things for my child, I get the feeling that my efforts are not appreciated very much	1	2	3	4	5
17. When playing, my child doesn't often giggle or laugh	1	2	3	4	5
18. My child doesn't seem to learn as quickly as most children	1	2	3	4	5
19. My child doesn't seem to smile as much as most children	1	2	3	4	5
20. My child is not able to do as much as I expected	1	2	3	4	5
21. It takes a long time and it is very hard for my child to get used to new things	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel that I am: Circle number. 1. not very good at being a parent 2. a person who has some trouble being a parent 3. an average parent 4. a better than average parent 5. a very good parent	1	2	3	4	5
23. I expected to have closer and warmer feelings for my child than I do and this bothers me	1	2	3	4	5
24. Sometimes my child does things that bother me just to be mean	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 2: Your child's learning

The following questions are about the things you might do in your child's school, also how you feel about the school and the sort of things you do with your child and in your family. Please **CIRCLE** the response that best describes what you do or how you feel.

	Never	A few times a year	About once per month	A few times a month	About once per week	A few times per week	Every day	Not applicable
1. In general, how often do you go to parent/teacher meetings?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. In general, how often do you volunteer in the classroom or at school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. In general, how often do you help your child with school-type activities (eg. reading or talking about a story together, puzzle or word game?)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

	Never	A few times a year	About once per month	A few times a month	About once per week	A few times per week	Every day
4. In general, how often do you have contact with your child's teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	None at all	Less than ½ an hour	½ an hour - 1 hour	1 - 1½ hours	1½ - 2 hours	2 hours	2½ - 3 hours	3 or more hours
5. Over the LAST 2 SCHOOL DAYS, how many total hours did you spend with your child talking, playing or doing some activities together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

<b><i>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?</i></b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
6. My child's school is doing a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers don't tell me how my child is doing until it's too late.	1	2	3	4	5
8. School personnel make me feel inadequate or unwelcome as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5
9. How well my child does at school is not my responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I shouldn't need to help the teachers teach my child how to read and write.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The staff at your child's school are doing good things for your child.	1	2	3	4	5
12. You have confidence in the people at your child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Your child's school is doing a good job of preparing the children for their future.	1	2	3	4	5

	Very easy	Moderately easy	Slightly easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Very hard
14. How easy is it for you to make contact with your child's teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<i>The following questions relate to how you feel about your child's school. Please CIRCLE the appropriate response.</i>	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	A lot	A great deal
--	------------	----------	-------------	-------	--------------

15. You feel welcome to visit your child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

16. You enjoy talking with your child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

<i>The following questions relate to how you feel about your child's school. Please CIRCLE the appropriate response.</i>	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	A lot	A great deal
--	------------	----------	-------------	-------	--------------

17. You feel your child's teacher cares about your child.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

18. You think your child's teacher is interested in getting to know you.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

19. You feel comfortable talking with your child's teacher about your child.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

20. You feel your child's teacher pays attention to your suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

21. You ask your child's teacher questions and make suggestions about your child.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

22. Your child's teacher encourages you to send things of interest into the class.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

23. You send things you think will be interesting into the class.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

24. You feel supported by your child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

<b><i>Over the LAST 2 DAYS, how many times did you do each of the following?</i></b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once</b>	<b>Twice</b>	<b>3 times</b>	<b>4 or 5 times</b>	<b>6 or 7 times</b>	<b>More than 7 times</b>
--	--------------	-------------	--------------	----------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------------------

25. Eat a meal with your child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

26. Hug, kiss or show affection to your child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

27. Do any non-school type activities with your child (playing, arts/crafts etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

<b><i>Over the LAST 2 DAYS, how many times did you do each of the following?</i></b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once</b>	<b>Twice</b>	<b>3 times</b>	<b>4 or 5 times</b>	<b>6 or 7 times</b>	<b>More than 7 times</b>
--	--------------	-------------	--------------	----------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------------------

28. Talk with your child about his/her activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

29. Have an enjoyable talk with your child (about anything)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

30. Shared reading time with your child?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

<b><i>Over the LAST MONTH, how often have you done each of the following activities with your child?</i></b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once</b>	<b>Twice</b>	<b>3 times</b>	<b>4 or 5 times</b>	<b>6 or 7 times</b>	<b>More than 7 times</b>
--	--------------	-------------	--------------	----------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------------------

31. Eat together as a whole family?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

32. Watch a video or an entire TV programme together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

33. Read or talk about a book or story together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

34. Go to fun places together (such as visiting friends, sporting events, clubs or outdoor activities?)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

35. Do projects or activities together at home (such as hobbies, crafts, cooking, music, games etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

### Section 3: About you

Please **CIRCLE** the answer that best describes how you deal with every day situations

	Not at all true	Barely true	Moderately true	Exactly true
1. I always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4
2. If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want.	1	2	3	4
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4
4. I am confident that I deal efficiently with unexpected events.	1	2	3	4
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	1	2	3	4
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	1	2	3	4
7. I remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	1	2	3	4
8. When I am confronted with a problem I can usually think of something to do.	1	2	3	4
9. If I am in a bind I can usually think of something to do.	1	2	3	4
10. No matter what comes my way I am usually able to handle it.	1	2	3	4

Listed below are sources of support which are often helpful to members of families raising (or planning to raise) a young child. The questions in this section ask you to indicate how helpful each source of support is to you. Please **CIRCLE** the response that best describes how helpful the sources have been to you during the past 3 to 6 months. If a source of help has not been available to you during this period of time, **CIRCLE** the **NA** (not available) response.

	Not available	Not at all helpful	Sometimes helpful	Generally helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
1. My parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My partner's parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My partner's relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My partner's friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My own children	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Other parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Work colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Parenting groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Social clubs/groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. My church or other religious group	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not available	Not at all helpful	Sometimes helpful	Generally helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
14. Professional helpers (midwife, social worker, teacher, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. School/local nursery	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Early intervention programme (specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Other (specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Other (specify)	1	2	3	4	5	6

You've finished!

**Thank you for completing these questions! Your help and cooperation are appreciated. 😊**

## Appendix 6: Coding frames used in the quantitative study

### 6.i Criteria for activities with child

Swimming	Goes swimming
Going out	Parent takes child out, e.g. to a zoo, includes holidays
Park	Child plays in park, football etc, includes playing on bike
Club / society	Such as a football club, piano lessons etc
Home games	Playing in and about the house
Creative	Such as painting, or drawing, but not writing etc. (see Literacy)
AV	Such as TV, computer games, etc
Literacy	Such as reading, writing etc
Visit	Such as visiting friends, relatives
Domestic play	Such as cooking, washing etc, including shopping and gardening
Talk	Parent talks to child

6.ii Criteria for helping child learn categories  
(Interview Question 10)

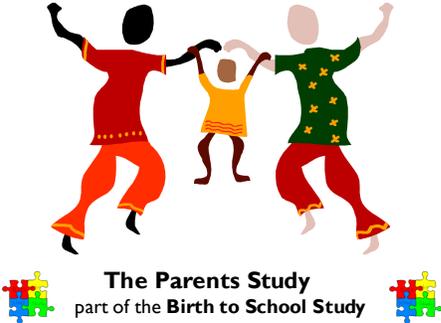
Reading	Mention of reading, books, library, alphabet, and letters
Writing	Mention of alphabet, writing, letters, making anything that involves writing. (e.g., a book)
Math	Mention of numbers, adding, or counting change at a shop.
Comp	Use of any computer, or computer games
Talk	Parent MENTIONS talking to the child, e.g. asking / answering questions, explaining things. Talking to child must be specifically mentioned
Create	Mention of anything creative. E.g., drawing, colouring swordsmanship or making something. Does not include writing, maths etc.
People	Mention of people skills, for example sharing.
Homework	Mention of helping with home work, or any work sent home from the school / nursery.
Games	Mention of puzzles, games, workbooks (in general - e.g. 'maths workbook' would be 'maths') rhymes, or play.
Everyday	Mention of everyday items / situations used as educational resource. E.g. counting change in a shop, reading car number plates etc
Sing	Mention of singing
Together	Parent mentions that they do something together – e.g. 'spend time together' counts. It is not enough to assume that some or all of the other activities involve the parent and child being together.
Foreign	Specific mention of teaching / helping the child to learn another language – e.g. French, German, Urdu etc.
Other	Other learning activities that do not easily fit into any of the other categories.

### 6.iii Coding frame for enjoyment and opportunities

Meet	Mentions that group is an opportunity to meet other parents / the group is friendly / lets the parent make friends
Ideas	Mentions that they use it as a source of ideas for activities for the child / opportunities or trips for the child
Child interaction	Mentions that they like the idea of the child interacting / socialising, and making new friend
Singing / songs	Use group as a source of songs, or sing with child at group
Reading	Uses group to advance child's reading
Run / play with kids	Child uses the group as an opportunity to play with other children and / or run about in a safe environment. Provision of a style of play that may be novel – eg messy, or outside
Time with child	Parent uses the group as a chance to spend time with the child
Development	The parent uses the group for personal / professional development (E.g., takes a course as a result of involvement with the group.
Understand child	Parent uses group as a source of information about the child, to help them understand the child, sharing experiences
Boost confidence	Parent uses group to boost their confidence with child
Felt patronised	Parent felt patronised at the group. (Worst case scenario)
Felt unwelcome	Parent felt unwelcome at the group, or uncomfortable – (not as bad as above)
Went for sake of child	Parent only went for child / because child enjoyed it / child enjoys it

**Appendix 7: Consent forms**

7.i Consent form for the Quantitative Component



**CONSENT FORM**

I voluntarily agree to take part in the Parents Study.

I have read and understood the information leaflet and I have been given a full explanation by the researchers of what the study is about, why it is being done and what I will be expected to do.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study.

I understand that the information I will provide in this study will be kept in the strictest confidence and will only be used for research purposes. My name and that of my child will also be kept confidential and will not be named in any publication.

I am aware that I can choose not to answer a question if it makes me uncomfortable to do so or for any other reason.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason for doing so.

Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

7.ii Consent form for the Qualitative component



University of Oxford  
Department of Educational Studies  
15 Norham Gardens,  
Oxford, OX2 6PY.

Tel: 01865 284095 / 274012

The University of Sheffield  
School of Education  
388 Glossop Road,  
Sheffield, S10 2JA.

Tel: 0114 222 8100

CONSENT FORM

I voluntarily agree to take part in the Parents Study.

I have read and understood the information leaflet and I have been given a full explanation by the researchers of what the study is about, why it is being done and what I will be expected to do.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study.

I understand that the information I will provide in this study will be kept in the strictest confidence and will only be used for research purposes. My name and that of my child will also be kept confidential and will not be named in any publication.

I am aware that I can choose not to answer a question if it makes me uncomfortable to do so or for any other reason.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason for doing so.

Mother's name

\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 8: Certificate



**Birth to School Study**

*Certificate of appreciation*

This certificate is awarded to

---

For being part of the Birth to School Study for 4 years

We have enjoyed talking to you and playing some games.  
You have worked really hard and helped us a lot.  
See you next year!

**Congratulations!**

*Congratulations!*

The certificate features a blue border with a white geometric pattern. On the left, four interlocking puzzle pieces in red, yellow, blue, and green form the words 'Birth to School Study'. On the right, a pink rabbit plays a trumpet. At the bottom left, a panda holds a ball. At the bottom right, a purple elephant with a green shirt holds a ball. The text 'Congratulations!' is written in red at the bottom left and in blue cursive with a ribbon at the bottom right.

## Appendix 9: Measuring maternal social class

Mothers' social class - whole BTSS sample retained at four years divided by area and group.

Area	Group	Social class category					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
PEEP area	Have never attended PEEP	11	17	0	8	55	91
	Have attended PEEP once or more	42	28	0	2	63	135
Comparison Area	Comparison group	35	56	7	14	130	242
Total		88	101	7	24	248	468

Mothers' highest qualification - whole BTSS sample retained at four years divided into 3 groups.

Area	Group	Mothers highest qualification								
		None	CSE	GCSE	O level	FE Qual	A level	Anything higher	missing	Total
PEEP area	Have never attended PEEP	24	6	23	6	22	4	8	4	97
	Have attended PEEP once or more	12	16	25	11	34	16	21	1	136
Comparison Area	Comparison group	28	40	59	35	48	18	23	2	253
Total		64	62	107	52	104	38	52	7	486

## Appendix 10: Chi-square results

Perceived benefits of group attendance, table 5, page 34

Meet people	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.013, p=.908$
Ideas for activities with child	$\chi^2 (1) = 9.887, p=.002^*$
Child socialisation	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.932, p=.165$
Sing songs	$\chi^2 (1) = 13.708, p=.0001^{**}$
Develop child's reading	$\chi^2 (1) = 6.339, p=.021^*$
Child able to run around, play	$\chi^2 (1) = 13.511, p=.0001^{**}$
Mother spends time with child at the group	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.376, p=.285$
Personal or professional development of the mother	$\chi^2 (1) = 14.711, p=.0001^{**}$
Help to understand child development	$\chi^2 (1) = 10.949, p=.001^{**}$
Boost maternal confidence	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.189, p=.723$

Dealing with difficult behaviour, table 9, page 36

Withdraw privileges	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.130, p=.288$
Rewards	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.756, p=.384$
Time out/send to room	$\chi^2 (1) = .511, p=.475$
Ignore him/ ignore behaviour	$\chi^2 (1) = .043, p=.836$
Count to 3,5 or 10	$\chi^2 (1) = .197, p=.715$
Try to keep calm	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.299, p=.254$
Shout or smack	$\chi^2 (1) = .167, p=1.000$
Distract from situation	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.339, p=.237$

Parental influence, table 11, page 37

Has attending a group affected your parenting? (Yes / No)	$\chi^2 (1) = 26.811, p=.0001^{**}$
---	-------------------------------------

Area of parenting influenced by attending a group, table 12, page 38

Importance of reading/learning techniques	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.971, p= .056$
Importance of talking to child	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.327, p=.574$
Empathise with child's needs/feeling or more aware of child's needs	$\chi^2 (1) = .885, p=.450$
General advice and ideas of things to do	$\chi^2 (1) = .470, p=.493$
Everyday things so important	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.619, p=.589$
Singing	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.238, p=.104$
Help and reassurance on parenting	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.071, p=.098$

Learning activities undertaken by the parent, table 13, page 39

Reading	$\chi^2 (1) = 5.182, p=.023^*$
Writing	$\chi^2 (1) = 4.374, p=.037^*$
Maths	$\chi^2 (1) = .734, p=.391$
Computer skills	$\chi^2 (1) = .222, p=.681$
Talking to child	$\chi^2 (1) = .060, p=.807$
Creative learning, activities	$\chi^2 (1) = .060, p=.845$
Helps with homework	$\chi^2 (1) = 6.351, p=.013^*$
Plays educational games	$\chi^2 (1) = .0231, p=.879$
Everyday activities	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.039, p=.153$
Singing	$\chi^2 (1) = .401, p=.745$
Modelling	$\chi^2 (1) = 10.603, p=.001^*$
Foreign languages	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.022, p=.245$

Mother and child activities, table 15, page 40

Swimming	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.516, p=.113$
Go out	$\chi^2 (1) = .097, p=.809$
Play in / go to park	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.000, p=1.000$
Go to a club or society	$\chi^2 (1) = .381, p=.584$
Play at home, or in garden	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.860, p=.091$
Create - arts, crafts etc	$\chi^2 (1) = .104, p=.867$
Audio / video, computers etc	$\chi^2 (1) = .580, p=.446$
Literacy - learning, words, numbers	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.334, p=.248$
Visit friends / relatives	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.723, p=.099$
Domestic modelling	$\chi^2 (1) = .022, p=.881$
Talking to child	$\chi^2 (1) = .979, p=1.000$

Source of advice on child's education, table 19, page 42

School, nursery or playgroup teachers	$\chi^2 (1) = .004, p=.950$
Health visitor or doctor	$\chi^2 (1) = .781, p=.377$
Friends or family or other parents	$\chi^2 (1) = .853, p=.361$
Family centre or PEEP	$\chi^2 (1) = 5.502, p=.034^*$
Book or internet	$\chi^2 (1) = .059, p=.809$

Courses taken by the mother, table 22, page 43

Have you taken a course? (Yes / No)	$\chi^2 (1) = 4.589, p=.048^*$
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Suitability of existing courses, table 24, page 44

Are there enough courses available? (Yes / No / Don't know)	$\chi^2 (2) = 3.186, p=.203$
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Sources of job and employment information, table 27 page 46

Job centre	$\chi^2 (1) = 4.467, p=.035^*$
College	$\chi^2 (1) = 12.967, p=.0001^{**}$
Library	$\chi^2 (1) = .007, p=.935$
Family centre	$\chi^2 (1) = .412, p=.521$
Workplace	$\chi^2 (1) = 5.726, p=.017^*$
Newspapers or journals	$\chi^2 (1) = .613, p=.434$
Leaflets	$\chi^2 (1) = 11.979, p=.001^*$
Internet or TV	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.438, p=.118$

Advice medium, table 29, page 47

Leaflets	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.234, p=.135$
Videos	$\chi^2 (1) = .6120, p=.016^*$
One to one advice	$\chi^2 (1) = .1021, p=.312$
Talks	$\chi^2 (1) = .146, p=.702$
TV	$\chi^2 (1) = .163, p=.686$
Newspapers	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.143, p=.285$
Internet	$\chi^2 (1) = 5.434, p=.020^*$

Maternal views on areas for improvement in their life, table 33, page 51

To be better off financially	$\chi^2 (1) = .285, p=.593$
Partner to get a job or new job/change hours	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.952, p=.206$
To have moved/ or finished house	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.800, p=.094$
To have another child	$\chi^2 (1) = .047, p=.829$
More time for self/relationship	$\chi^2 (1) = .454, p=.500$
Working/change job/ work in job enjoy/do training or finished training	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.119, p=.290$
New partner/reconciliation with partner	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.150, p=.076$
Same/healthy/family settled	$\chi^2 (1) = .262, p=.609$
To have more control over life/be more organised/ working towards specific goal	$\chi^2 (1) = .237, p=.679$

Best source of information, table 35, page 52

Mum, dad or in-laws	$\chi^2 (1) = .074, p=.786$
Other relative/s	$\chi^2 (1) = .207, p=.649$
Partner	$\chi^2 (1) = .002, p=.968$
Friends or parents	$\chi^2 (1) = .087, p=.768$
Other best info	$\chi^2 (1) = .2.263, p=.132$

Additional information, table 36, page 52

Would you like more information / advice? (Yes / No)	$\chi^2 (1) = .586, p=.444$
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General advice, table 37, page 52

Have you had any advice from job centre?	$\chi^2 (1) = .338, p=.561$
Have you had any advice from a friend/relative?	$\chi^2 (1) = .344, p=.557$
Have you had any advice from a drop-in centre?	$\chi^2 (1) = 10.142, p=.001^*$
Have you had any advice from a group?	$\chi^2 (1) = .21.777, p=.0001^{**}$
Have you had any advice from the library?	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.939, p=.086$
Have you had any advice from anywhere else?	$\chi^2 (1) = .5.138, p=.030^*$

Negative aspects of the groups attended, table 38, page 53

Mother felt patronised by the group(s) they attended	$\chi^2 (1) = .749, p=1.000$
Mother felt unwelcome / unable to relax at the group(s) they attended	$\chi^2 (1) = 1.090, p=.393$
Mother did not enjoy attending, but went for the sake of their child	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.940, p=.115$

Encouragement and social support, table 39, page 53

Have you received encouragement? (Yes / No)	$\chi^2 (1) = .005, p=.942$
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## Appendix 11: Qualitative Interview outline

### **Qualitative component Interview**

*Introduction: “Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study about your experiences of attending PEEP. I am talking to quite a lot of parents in the area, looking at PEEP and the PEEP activities that people have been involved in. Some of the people I am talking to have been only once or twice to PEEP, others have been a lot. I want to emphasize that everything you tell me is completely confidential and any information we give to PEEP will be without names. For example, we will change the names of leaders and groups to flowers and trees and neither your name nor that of your child will appear on any reports Just to confirm that you are happy for me to tape record our interview?”*

### **Section 1- PEEP experiences**

How long have you attended PEEP? Ages and number of children.

Can you tell me a bit about what it was or is like for you and for your child/ren attending PEEP?

What do you think PEEP is trying to do and do you think it succeeds?

If someone new came into the neighbourhood and they wanted to know about PEEP, how would you describe it to them/explain what it is or what happens?

What sort of things have you learnt from PEEP about helping your child to learn?

What do you think/like or dislike about the different things you do at a PEEP session?

## **Experiences of PEEP**

How did you first hear about PEEP?

Can you tell me what it was like going along to your first session?

Can you describe your own reasons for attending PEEP now/what would you say are the things you get out of attending PEEP?

## **Materials**

What materials (eg. Books, folders, videos, tapes) has PEEP lent or given you and have you found them useful?

## **People - leaders and other parents/participants**

Have you developed any friendships with people in the groups you attended? What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the group, leaders or assistants?

## **Learning**

(if not already mentioned) What, if any, opportunities for learning, training or courses has PEEP offered you?

**Things your child enjoys and things you do with your child**

Can you tell me a bit about the kind of things you do with your child?

**Social support/networks**

Is there anyone (apart from PEEP) who you talk about what it's like being a mother/your experiences of being a mother?

## **Section 2: Background information (for those not in the Quantitative Component)**

*“Finally, could I ask you a few questions about things such as, how long you’ve attended PEEP, work, learning etc? If any question has already been answered in the first part of the interview, we can skip that question.”*

### **2a: Other group attendance and general info**

- Have you attended any other groups at all in the past, either with or without your child?
- If so, what are groups were they and how long did you attend them for?
- Which area do you live in?
- How long have you lived in the area?
- And where were you living prior to that?
- What do you think of the area?  
for children  
transport  
shopping  
community facilities - swimming pools, libraries, parks  
friendliness
- Age of child/ren

### **2b: Work patterns**

- At the moment, are you:
  - Employed full-time
  - Employed part-time
  - Self-employed full-time
  - Self-employed part-time
  - Voluntary work
  - Not working
  - Maternity leave
  - Sick leave
  - Looking for work
  - Student

(If working):

- Job Title
- How long have you been in your current job?

- Can you describe your work experiences prior to the job you are currently doing?
- What childcare arrangements do you have?

(If not working):

- Can you tell me your last job and previous work experiences?
- When did that job end?
- What was/were the reason/s for the job ending?
- Can you tell me your reasons for not working at the moment?
- Do you plan to start working in the future?
- When do you think you will start working again?
- What job do you think you will do?

## **2c: Learning**

- What is your highest qualification since leaving school?
- Have you done any training since the birth of your children? (list)
- What courses have you done and what qualifications/certificates have you obtained?
- Where have you attended the courses?
- What did you think about the courses you attended?
- Have any of the courses led to employment or further training?
- What childcare did you use to attend the course?
- Would you like to do another course or training?
- If so, what?
- If not, what are your reasons for not wishing to attend a course?
- Who lives in your home?
- Your year of birth