

The Learning Together Study – for Schools and Academies

What is the Learning Together Study?

This exciting new study is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and it is led by the Oxford-based charity Peep. It will train practitioners from nursery settings to deliver the Peep Learning Together Programme to groups of children and their parents and will evaluate its effects. The evaluation will be carried out by Queen's University Belfast. The aim is to find out how successful the Learning Together Programme (the intervention) is in improving the learning environment at home, and whether this improves children's vocabulary, early literacy skills and social skills. This evidence will add to the existing positive evidence about the Programme which has already been established by the University of Oxford.

We are seeking 150 schools and academies in England that have places for 3-year-olds to take part in the study which will be a Randomised Controlled Trial. This means that half the settings (75), chosen at random, will receive the intervention. These are the Intervention Settings. The other half (75) will *not* receive the intervention. These are the Control Settings. Once the intervention is completed, outcomes from parents and children in the Intervention Settings will be compared to those in the Control Settings to find out whether the intervention has made a measurable difference. Control Settings will receive a payment of £500 on completion of the study. They may spend this on Peep Learning Together Programme Training once the study is completed.

What is the Learning Together Programme?

The Peep Learning Together Programme is an early intervention which supports parents to understand more about how children learn - and to do more of the things at home which make a difference to children's outcomes like singing, sharing books and stories, and talking about a wide range of ideas, thoughts and feelings. The Programme is delivered by trained practitioners to parents and children together. The Programme will start with a single home visit followed by 20 group-based sessions. You can deliver these at a time that is mutually convenient for your families.



Can my setting participate in the study?

We are looking for settings which:

- have children who turned three before 31 August 2017 and who are intending to stay in the setting until July 2018
- are located in the 50% most deprived areas in England
- are interested and enthusiastic to take part in a research study!

What are the benefits for my setting?

The 75 Intervention Settings will be trained and supported to deliver a Programme that:

- is particularly relevant for children in receipt of the Early Years Pupil Premium (helping to narrow the attainment gap)
- you can continue to use after the study is over.

The 75 Control Settings will be given a one-off payment of £500 once the study is complete.

What is involved for settings taking part?

The Intervention and Control settings will be asked to:

- explain the study to parents (Peep and Queen's University Belfast will provide you with promotional leaflets and all the other necessary paper work throughout the study)
- promote the Learning Together Programme to parents and encourage them to participate as a fun and easy way to help their children to learn at home
- recruit a minimum of ten families to participate in the study
- obtain opt-in consent from parents
- carry out a simple Concepts About Print test with the children at the beginning of the study
- identify two or three practitioners to be trained to deliver the Peep Learning Together Programme (a two-day training).

If your setting is chosen (at random) to be an Intervention Setting you will be asked to:

- release two or three practitioners to attend the two-day Peep Learning Together Programme training (this could be delivered over four twilight sessions)
- provide a room or venue in/near your setting for the Peep Group
- deliver the Learning Together Programme to parents and their children together (some costs for back-fill can be provided).



The Intervention Settings will be provided with full guidance and support from a mentor who will help you with strategies for parental recruitment and with planning and delivery of the Programme.

How will the Programme be evaluated?

The Programme will be evaluated by Randomised Control Trial by Queen's University Belfast. The evaluation will include all 150 Intervention and Control Settings.

At the beginning of the study the Queen's University Belfast research team will:

- contact you to gather data about participating children (names, dates of birth and Unique Pupil Numbers if available) once parents have signed opt-in consent
- support your practitioners to carry out a simple Concepts About Print test with all children whose parents have said they would like to take part in the intervention
- ask all practitioners and managers to complete a short questionnaire.

At the end of the study the researchers will:

- send a short questionnaire to parents to complete and return by post/electronically to the University
- visit your settings and carry out two or three short assessments with each child whose parents opted-in to the study
- ask all practitioners and managers to complete a short questionnaire.

How will the data be used – and will it be confidential?

The Queen's University Belfast researcher team will not be evaluating your setting, practitioners or the children. Their role is to assess how successful the *Programme* is in improving the learning environment at home and, if so, if this has any impact on children's attainment. No children, practitioners or schools will be named or identified in the report arising from the research. All data, including the children's test responses and any other data, will be treated in the strictest of confidence. The study has received full ethical approval from the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work Research Ethics Committee at Queen's University Belfast.

Named data will be matched with the National Pupil Database and shared with Queen's University Belfast, People, the Department for Education (DfE), Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), EEF's data contractor FFT Education and, in an anonymised form, to the UK Data Archive.

What support will my setting receive?

All settings (both Intervention and Control) will have support from People and researchers from Queen's University Belfast to:

- recruit families
- obtain consent
- carry out some pupil assessment.

We will provide you with all necessary paper work and a range of leaflets that you can share with parents. We will also be on-hand by phone, email or in person for guidance or support.

The Intervention Settings will be given all the Programme resources including session plans and hand-outs for parents. They will also be assigned a mentor who will visit them regularly to support with recruitment, planning and delivery of the Programme.

Timetable for study

2017 Jan - July 2017	Peep recruits Settings.
Sept - Oct 2017	Settings recruit families.
Oct 2017	Settings gather consent forms from families.
Oct 2017 (by half term)	Settings assess children on Concepts About Print Researchers randomly assign Settings to Control or Intervention.
Nov / Dec 2017	Peep delivers Learning Together Programme (LTP) Training to Intervention Settings.
2018 Spring term 2018	Intervention Settings deliver Peep sessions for parents and children together. Peep provides mentoring to Intervention Settings. Control settings carry on with 'business as usual'.
Summer term 2018	Intervention Settings continue to deliver Peep session for parents and children together. Peep provides mentoring to Intervention Settings. Control settings carry on with 'business as usual'.
July 2018	Researchers assess children and ask parents to fill in questionnaires in Control and Intervention Settings.



If you're interested in being involved or you have any other questions, please get in touch with us at Peep:

Email research@peep.org.uk or call us on 01865 397970.

www.peep.org.uk/lts