

The Learning Together Study adding to our evidence base

The Peep Learning Together Programme aims to improve children's outcomes by first improving their parents' skills and confidence to help their children to learn through everyday activities. The Programme is based on evidence that the quality of learning opportunities within a child's home environment increases their chances of doing well at school and beyond.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) funded a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) of a bespoke 20-week version of the Peep Learning Together Programme for three-year olds in Nursery settings, known as the Learning Together Study. The large-scale, independent evaluation was carried out by Queens University Belfast and involved 1447 families from 139 settings across England.

We are very pleased that the Study found that the Peep Learning Together Programme made a **positive difference of an additional two-months progress** over a five-month period to children's early literacy development.



The Peep Learning Together Programme also had positive effects on parents who reported improvements in:

- parental self-acceptance
- the home learning environment
- their confidence in enjoying and playing with their child
- their parenting knowledge and learning.

The findings of the Learning Together Study replicate those of the **Birth to School Study**, a previous six-year longitudinal evaluation of the Peep Learning Together Programme carried out by the University of Oxford.

During the first three years of the evaluation, the Birth to School Study found positive effects on parent/child interactions and the quality of the care-giving environment at home. In the following three years it went on to find an increased rate of progress for the children in a suite of outcomes related to early literacy development.



Practitioners noticed positive changes in the children's communication, and in engagement with parents:

"I think the children are more talkative, they're bringing things in more to school on a better basis, they're actually bringing activities to share or objects to share or books to share and some of the children were very quiet originally and they're much more talkative."
(Nursery Practitioner)

The Learning Together Study also looked at the children's language development and found no additional improvement in the children's core language skills. However, as the Peep Learning Together Programme aims to bring about change for the children by working with their parents, it may well be that changes to language skills will take longer to develop and become measurable by researchers. This was the case in the Birth to School Study.



The study highlighted the value of parenting programmes being available in the nursery:

'I don't think I would have... committed to that sort of thing if it hadn't had been available through the nursery.' (Parent)

Other findings showed that more than 90% of practitioners found that the Peep Learning Together Programme was easy to use and implement and that it was delivered with high fidelity.

Some practitioners felt that the length of the Programme (20 weeks) may have been a barrier for some parents. However, parents who attended at least one session of the Programme, attended on average 70% of sessions. We were pleased by this figure, given the various difficulties that can get in the way of parents attending weekly sessions with their three-year olds.

Practitioners found the training very useful:

'I thought the training was lovely, I really enjoyed the training, I thought it gave detail, it gave structure, it gave focus. I came away from the training feeling extremely confident about delivering the programme.' (Nursery practitioner)

The cost of delivering the Learning Together Programme is very low: £31.60 per pupil per year, averaged over three years based on two practitioners being trained per setting and delivering the programme to 10 pupils per year.



Parents noticed their children's growing engagement with literacy:

'The other session that she's really enjoyed recently was making a book, which again was something I thought she wouldn't be interested in at all and she made two in the end...and she sat and read them to herself and she's really proud of them.' (Parent)

We would like to thank the Education Endowment Foundation and Queen's University Belfast for their collaborative approach to working with People on the Study. Its robust nature (as with all studies funded by the Education Endowment Foundation) gives particular confidence in the findings which make an important addition to the evidence base for the Peep Learning Together Programme and to the evidence, more broadly, that working with parents to improve the home learning environment is a feasible and effective means to improve child outcomes.

Finally, we would like to thank all the settings, practitioners, parents and children who took part in the Study. We really appreciate the time and commitment involved and we hope that you will all continue to enjoy learning together!

people supporting parents and
children to learn together

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