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ABSTRACT

The Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) program was established in 1995 to make a significant long-term positive impact on the educational attainment of children and families in disadvantaged areas of the United Kingdom. This report examines the work of the PEEP program for the period April 1998 through March 1999. The sections of the management report examine 13 specific areas of program operation as follows: (1) an overview of the PEEP program principles; (2) "Recruitment and Community," on program awareness; (3) "Equal Opportunities," on implementation strategies; (4) "Program Delivery," on four specific PEEP programs; (5) "Resources," on efforts to supplement information; (6) "PEEP Publications," on the increase in demand for program publications; (7) "Data Protection," on privacy issues of program participants; (8) "Personnel," on new positions; (9) "Training and Staff Development," on new training efforts; (10) "Network PEEP," on service delivery issues; (11) "Curriculum Development and Review," on the review process for curriculum development; (12) "Learning Bridge," on this new PEEP service; and (13) "Centre Management," on program space issues. The report's appendix lists trustees, management team, and advisory group members. (SD)

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PEEP MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT

April 1998 – March 1999

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Future plans

PEEP's first five-year phase was from 1995 to 2000.

Phase Two (2000–2005) objectives are:

- Continuing Peers PEEP
- Completing longitudinal research studies
- Working in Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start
- Dissemination
- Replication
- Phase Three planning and funding

*'Generation' PEEP
would continue to
support families with
the youngest children
in disadvantaged
areas.*

A new possibility has emerged of significant outcomes in parents and carers of PEEP children which could impact positively on parenting skills, community capacity and social inclusion factors. The question arises as to whether to seek long-term public funding to continue PEEP in the Peers School area as a 'generation' project over, say, a further twenty-five years.

PEEP has built on the growing body of evidence which links such factors as the early development of language, literacy, personal and social development, with outcomes relating to higher educational attainment, improved behaviour and crime prevention, and the disposition to life-long learning. Running the project over such a period would mean that PEEP would be available to the Babies – Fours currently in the project who remain in the area if they themselves became parents. It would sustain and develop PEEP's contribution to family support in the current PEEP area. And it would also offer an opportunity to investigate and disseminate early intervention strategies more widely, supporting families with the youngest children and community regeneration in other disadvantaged areas.

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Learning together with PEEP

Why PEEP?

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) was set up in 1995, to make a significant long-term positive impact on the educational attainment of children in the Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill and Littlemore estates in south-east Oxford, thus improving their later educational opportunities and life chances. These areas represent the original catchment area of Peers School, a secondary school with which PEEP has always been closely linked. The programme has been designed for whole communities particularly in disadvantaged areas, working with parents and carers of all children from birth to five about supporting learning at home.

The PEEP programme

All parents want the best for their children. PEEP recognises that in all families children are given:

- O** opportunities to learn
- R** recognition and valuing of early achievements
- I** interactions with adults in learning situations
- M** modeling by adults of literacy and numeracy behaviours, learning strategies and dispositions.

This 'ORIM' framework (developed at the University of Sheffield) provides the PEEP structure for working with adults, to make the most of what happens at home.

PEEP's partnership with parents and carers focuses on babies' and children's development in the following areas:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| self-esteem | listening | talking |
| reading | writing | numeracy |
| learning dispositions | | |

The programme is published in the 'Learning together' series, in five levels: Babies, Ones, Twos, Threes and Fours.

PEEP aims to improve life chances of children and families in disadvantaged areas.

PEEP starts at birth – supporting parents to help their children to be confident learners.



peep

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Getting started

The project is currently offered to a whole population of under-fives and their families in the Peers School area. A Sure Start programme – 'Rose Hill-Littlemore Sure Start' – also operates in one-third of PEEP's catchment area, offering opportunities for further development and collaborative working with other agencies.

In PEEP all families know they are included and important.

A PEEP home visit is offered to all families with new babies, when they are about four weeks old. Around twenty different languages are spoken at home by families enrolled in groups in the PEEP area, so where needed home visiting takes place with bi-lingual PEEP staff, and bi-lingual support is provided in groups. The home visit is a time to discuss any special needs a family might have in terms of accessing PEEP, thus enabling group leaders to offer a warm, confident, informed and appropriately resourced welcome to all new families.

What does PEEP do?

Weekly group sessions where parents can share mutual support, with welcome time, songs and rhymes, 'talking time', a special story, book-sharing, and borrowing. The 'Learning together' series, with home ideas, activities and songs and rhymes, is the basis of PEEP

'PEEP Link' for families who do not come to groups, providing 'Learning together' with home visits and other opportunities for personal contact

Resources for use at home: the 'Learning together' series, tapes and song books, books, playpacks and scrap materials for making things together

Activities – about playing, talking and listening together, letter sounds and names, early numbers and sharing books

A termly newsletter by and for parents and staff

A diary 'Yellow Book' similar in format and philosophy to each child's 'Personal Child Health Record'

OCN accreditation for parents and carers

Parent User Groups for consulting parents about PEEP

Collaboration with pre-school settings and primary schools, using 'Learning together with Threes' and 'Fours' as the basis of long-term home-school partnerships beginning in the Foundation Stage

PEEP is about adults and children playing, talking and listening together, and sharing books every day.



peep

How can PEEP make a difference?

Children who have certain characteristics, dispositions and abilities by the end of the Foundation Stage are more likely to be successful life-long learners. PEEP aims to make a difference by supporting parents and carers who want to help their children to develop in these ways:

- feeling good about themselves
- listening carefully
- talking about their thoughts and feelings
- knowing many stories, songs and rhymes
- having a good vocabulary
- recognising their own written name
- recognising letters, and knowing both letter names and letter sounds
- recognising and understanding numbers 1 – 10
- knowing about the different reasons for reading and for writing
- wanting to learn how to read and write

Is PEEP working?

The PEEP Research Consortium, chaired by Professor Kathy Sylva at the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies, co-ordinates all PEEP research and evaluation. The Consortium aims over a period of time to research as thoroughly as possible both processes and outcomes.

A comparative study of PEEP for Threes and Fours will report in 2001. A longitudinal comparative study by NFER – The Birth to School Study – started in 1998. The samples are two cohorts of 300 babies born between April 1998 and August 1999, one from the PEEP area and one from a matched area. This study produces annual interim reports and will reach its final conclusions in 2004. Both studies are funded by the Department for Education and Employment.

There are early indications that PEEP positively affects children's and parents' well-being and ability to learn.

Studies are comparing the PEEP area with a matched non-PEEP area.



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OVERVIEW

What does PEEP aim to do?

PEEP has two main aims: firstly to bring about a significant improvement in educational achievement - especially in literacy - by a whole community of children, from their birth; through working with their parents and other important adults; and secondly, to develop a successful, sustainable, and transferable model; which complements existing pre-school provision.

Why?

Research studies have shown that long-term gains in educational attainment are most likely to be made when children have the benefit of high-quality early childhood education together with parental involvement. This is why PEEP works mainly with parents, and also pre-school settings, to support very early learning. There are early indications that PEEP has profoundly affected parents' interactions with their children, especially in the ways in which they support their children's learning. PEEP builds on the growing body of evidence which links such factors as the early development of language, literacy, personal and social development, with outcomes relating to higher educational attainment, improved behaviour and crime prevention, and the disposition to life-long learning.

How does PEEP work?

The project is currently offered to a whole population of under-5s and their families in a disadvantaged area of Oxford (Blackbird Leys and surrounding estates). The PEEP programme is delivered in over forty groups across the whole area, all meeting weekly. PEEP information is offered to families of new-born babies living in the PEEP area, about the partnership the project offers to them in relation to their children's learning. An enrolment home visit is offered, and weekly sessions usually start when a baby is about six weeks old. At their first birthday, a baby moves from Baby PEEP into Small PEEP (for one and two year-olds), then Big PEEP (including Playgroup PEEP) at three to four years, and Nursery PEEP at four to five years.

PEEP recognises that all parents want to help their children to do well, and that in all families to a certain extent children are given:

- opportunities to learn
- recognition and valuing of early achievements
- interactions with adults in learning situations
- adult models of literacy and numeracy behaviours, learning strategies, and dispositions.

This 'ORIM' framework (developed at the University of Sheffield) provides the PEEP structure for working with adults about babies' and children's developing self-esteem, disposition to learn, listening, talking, reading, writing and numeracy.

At PEEP group sessions parents and carers share ideas and experiences with each other and the group leader, whose role is to offer information and support.

The group session consists of welcome time, songs and rhymes, 'talking time', a special story, book-sharing, and borrowing. 'PEEP Guidelines' and 'PEEP At Home' offer ideas and activities for use at home from week to week.

Below are some characteristics of PEEP that parents have come to expect:

- Consistent mutual support between adults at weekly sessions
- Strategies to encourage daily book-sharing
- Extensive use of music: an approach which underpins the PEEP curriculum and facilitates language development and learning
- An increasing repertoire of songs, rhymes, stories and play ideas
- Ways of ensuring children's knowledge and understanding of letter names and sounds, and numbers 0-10
- High-quality resources and scrap materials, with ideas for use at home
- Home activities for parents/carers and children
- A 'Yellow Book' for recording parents' involvement and children's progress.
- Nationally recognised accreditation

PEEP's principles

These principles guide the work of the project, and will form the basis of future developments.

1. Adherence to agreed and explicit aims and curriculum

- All work to be consistent with the aims of PEEP, emphasising partnership with parents as children's first educators, and with other 'important' adults.

2. Coherent and flexible curriculum

- Coherent curriculum content, reflecting continuity and progression.
- Flexible organisation and delivery.
- Adaptable as appropriate for different communities.

3. Parents'/carers' choice

- Parents *choose* to join the programme (cannot be referred unless they have been given a genuine choice), and are free to decline each term.

4. Equal Opportunities

- Emphasis on: access and flexibility so that we can, for instance, accommodate those for whom attending groups is difficult by making home visits, and providing translations of material; acceptance and respect of individuals; valuing diversity; training.
- PEEP aims to be an equal opportunities employer

- **5. Quality of staff, their training and development**
- Recruitment from the local community a priority
- Careful training and induction procedures
- Staff fluent with the aims, rationale, principles and content of the programme, in order to work flexibly and creatively with job satisfaction.
- For Group Leaders: appropriate training and/or experience + (eventually) B. Ed. Level PEEP Certificate award
- Regular on-going training and supervision for all project staff + monitoring and evaluation procedures.

6. Resources

- Provision of a Resources Library to support books and play materials in homes, and programme delivery.
- Explicit criteria applied to all resources.

7. Community links

- Linking with other providers in the public, private, and voluntary sectors; and with the business and religious communities.

8. Efficiency

- Professional assessment of outcomes
- Effective recruitment procedures
- Careful attendance monitoring
- Comprehensive information management systems
- Clear employment structures and procedures
- Well managed budgeting and finance

Intended outcomes of PEEP

In relation to long-term outcomes, the focus is on developing the following characteristics, dispositions and abilities of the children by the time they enter reception class at age five:

- feeling good about themselves
- listening carefully
- talking about their thoughts and feelings
- knowing many stories, songs and rhymes
- having a good vocabulary
- recognising their own written name

- recognising numbers and letters, and knowing both letter names and letter sounds
- knowing about the different reasons for reading and for writing
- wanting to learn how to read and write

It is these characteristics, dispositions and abilities that are associated with long-term gains in educational achievement, especially in literacy.

PEEP MANAGEMENT TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

April 1998 - 31 March 1999

BACKGROUND: APRIL 1998 – MARCH 1999

In addition to the day-to-day development and running of the project, main events included:

Summer: April - August

Start of recruitment of cohorts for the Birth to School Study

'PEEP At Home' resources developed

PEEP Research Consortium formed

Successful completion of inspection by TEC for SRB

Monthly Visitors Days

PEEP group shadowed Kate Greenaway awards

Autumn: September - December

New Nursery PEEP model (Nursery teachers supported in delivering PEEP)

Baby Level pilot of Network PEEP

Deputy Director in post

Literacy Play Adviser in post

PEEP training at Oxford Brookes University validated: start date undecided

Ruskin College course for PEEP Parents

Adult and Community Learning Fund grant awarded

Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust grant awarded (£1m)

Spring: January - March

'Learning Bridge' started (life-long learning for PEEP parents)

PEEP Training Centre in use

Sure Start application made for Oxford (Rose Hill-Littlemore) and approved

Publications Assistant in post

Finance Officer (3 days a month) in post

Visit to PEEP by Margaret Hodge

Various conference presentations for PEEP, and Sure Start

RECRUITMENT AND COMMUNITY

This working area involves Community awareness of PEEP (both families and providers within the catchment area) and PEEP awareness of the community. Subsequent to enrolment in PEEP the recruitment co-ordinator monitors family pathways through PEEP, working closely with project delivery and information management co-ordinators. Outreach work contributes to whole project awareness of the cultural richness and diversity which families bring as first educators of their children. We work hard to promote genuine equality of access to all families.

Referrals of families to PEEP come from a variety of sources:

Health Authority (all babies born in the catchment area at time of birth)
 Health visitors
 Self referral
 Community workers.

The majority of children enrolled in PEEP at any one time will have been attending groups for more than one term; approximately 20% will be new.

Term	Total attending
Summer 1998	366
Autumn 1998	396
Spring 1999	376

Note: in Summer 98 there were additionally 30 families attending Nursery PEEP, but this figure has not been included in chart or graph below to allow greater comparability between terms. In autumn 98 Nursery PEEP was monitored from within the schools.

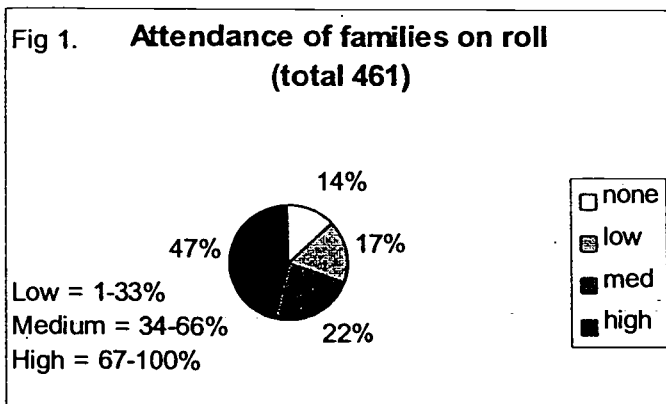


Fig.1 shows average rates of attendance across all levels for the three terms.
 (Note: calculated as a proportion of weeks it was possible to attend; ie if a family joined a group halfway through term total possible attendance is six, not twelve weeks)

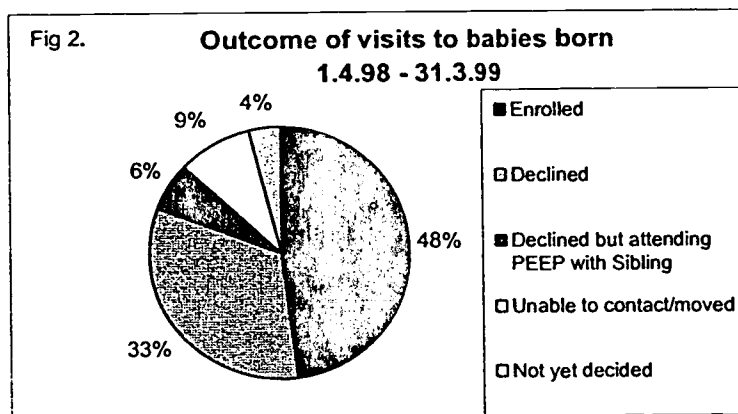
The majority of home visits are to families of new babies. Families receive a letter three weeks after the birth and we try to arrange an appointment at four weeks. Each family is offered a home visit.

Peep home visitors visit families in their homes for the purposes of:

- Indicating importance of parents as first educators
- Giving information about what PEEP offers them (including loan of PEEP video)
- Inviting family to be involved in PEEP

Between 1.4.98-31.3.99 there were 352 babies born in the catchment area. Contact has been made with 294 of these families. A home visit was made to 178 families. (Families who have experience of PEEP with an older sibling often do not wish an additional home visit.)

The pie chart below shows the outcome of these visits. Note that of all the families with a new baby 53% are enrolled in PEEP at some level. Approximately 10% of families enrolling at Baby level do not subsequently attend groups; they receive Network PEEP, as do all the families who decline enrolment.



Characteristics of enrolling families

27% of families enrolling of birth cohort 1.4.98-31.3.99 are from minority groups. (8% of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin.)

18 different languages were spoken at home by PEEP families on roll.

55% of enrolling families at Baby level left full-time education at sixteen or earlier.

Retention

Babies enrolling in PEEP stay for varying lengths of time. Of the 163 babies who enrolled during the Summer, Autumn and Spring term 104 remain on roll for Summer Term 1999. (retention = 64%) Reasons cited for not continuing with

PEEP are predominantly work commitments. This has been just one factor in the rationale behind the development of Network PEEP.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Our Equal opportunities statement is displayed in all PEEP venues. All staff have responsibility for putting it into practice. Area managers are responsible for developing the policy with staff, within their particular working area.

All regular meetings have an Equal opportunities agenda item which is an opportunity to strengthen our practice, make suggestions and pool strategies.

Some of the year's developments within the key working areas were:

Recruitment

- Employment of bi-lingual support workers in groups and on home visits (Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Arabic, Punjabi)
- Arrangements made with Travellers Education department to visit travellers' sites.

Personnel

- Employment and personnel issues laid out clearly in the handbook to be accessible to all staff.
- Clear recommendations put forward by group leaders for what they need in place in PEEP to work effectively and feel valued.
- Clarification of line management issues and procedures for allocation of casual work.
- Data base recording of all staff training.
- Analysis of salaried post applications re ethnicity and disability

Resources

- Development of bi-lingual materials and story tapes.
- Translation arrangements for guidelines as part of development of publications.
- Books being categorised so group leaders can request specific topics, interests or images.

Curriculum delivery

- Accessibility of materials reviewed on the basis of feedback from group leaders.
- Training re creating a welcoming atmosphere within groups to all.
- Pack and book borrowing open to all in nurseries and playgroups (not just those enrolled in PEEP.)
- Development of Network PEEP
- Training for group leaders on bi-lingual families and booksharing/use of resources.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY: BABY PEEP AND SMALL PEEP

General overview

The Summer Term 1998 was the last term in which PEEP Group Leaders were employed to run groups in the nurseries. During this term there were 11 Nursery PEEP Groups, 9 Big PEEP, 13 Small PEEP, and 10 Baby PEEP groups. Sally Thomas was employed as Early Years Literacy Play Adviser, in the autumn, to facilitate the change to nursery groups being run by school staff with help from PEEP personnel. The Autumn Term saw a change in the management structure for the delivery of the programme, whereby Baby and Small PEEP were separated from Big and Nursery PEEP, the latter, incorporating PEEP in existing provision and including 3 free standing groups, while Baby and Small all run within free standing groups.

The next two terms represent a period of comparative stability, with a constant number of groups in each level: 11 Big, 14 Small and 10 Baby groups.

Review of delivery is a dynamic process which is discussed through level meetings held four times a term. Through these and training sessions for group staff, a number of key issues have been addressed.

- Strategies to increase retention at baby level
- Meeting the needs of families in Small PEEP; splitting the current 2 year span groups into separate levels, for one year olds and two year olds.
- Refining the session plans to include suggested activities for talking time with adults on guideline material
- Introducing Baby PEEP at Home
- Increasing support for group staff
- Bilingual support work in groups

Increasing retention at baby level

In Autumn 1998, baby level group leaders were asked to spend more time specifically following up with telephone calls or letters or personal visits, those families who did not attend for two weeks, in an effort to retain as many families as possible in groups. Training included strategies for all group staff in helping everyone to feel welcome, in managing normal challenging behaviour and in promoting resources to borrow.

Small PEEP: dividing into two

By the end of December 1998, the first cohort of PEEP babies and their parents who had joined the project in Jan 1996 and who had stayed in PEEP, came to the end of the first two year cycle of Small PEEP. It was a suitable time to review the original decision to keep one and two year olds in the same groups, and to consider seriously the views of parents and group leaders.

From consultations with those parents in parent user groups and in general talking time in the sessions, a number of concerns were raised over the six terms:

- The younger toddlers are too big for Baby PEEP but too unsteady on their feet to cope with energetic children who are nearly three.
- Parents are worried by the 2 year age span and the wide developmental range within the same group.
- Some of the guidelines and PEEP suggestions for activities seem inappropriate for the children; the content is pitched at too old an age group.

The group leaders are adapting guideline content to suit the majority of the children in terms of their development, which is in danger of excluding other families. The session books in particular are not always appropriate, and story time is difficult to manage because children who are nearly three have longer concentration span than those who are 15 months.

Splitting the two levels has implications for the curriculum group, for programme delivery, for group distribution and group leader workload and for suitability of premises.

Refinement of session plans

Since September, session plans have been refined further to separate out information and ideas from PEEP from the suggested activities which can trigger conversations around ideas in the guidelines, to which parents and carers contribute their points of view. Often there are practical activities from PEEP at home booklets, which can be modelled in the group session.

Baby PEEP at home

Practical activities link to the material in the guidelines. There are 9 activities per booklet, reflecting 3 focal points in each of three guidelines in the term. For example, under the heading 'Mainly about babies exploring' are three activities:

- Young babies exploring
- Themed baskets (treasure baskets eg with all wooden or scented or metal or soft squashy things)
- Making a post box (for babies who can sit up, to post things into and then find them again.)

At baby level there has been increasing emphasis on how different ways of presenting guideline material has actually worked in groups. These ideas are collected on group review sheets.

Support for group staff

During the year there was the appointment of an assistants' co-ordinator, who services the groups with refreshments, keeps a register for supply cover and generally acts as the main channel of communication with the 13 group assistants. The line managers for assistants formally became their group leaders with whom planning and review meetings were set up on a regular basis. In addition to monitoring visits from their co-ordinator, group leaders now have an extra hour per term of one to one dialogue to reflect on their practice and development.

Training in house has been given to group staff in workshops using scrap in sessions, puppet making and story telling.

Bilingual Support Work in Groups

The bilingual support worker works with families who come to groups. She works with families for whom English is a second language and who need help with understanding what is going on in group discussions. Her role has developed this year to become much valued and recognised by both group staff and parents. Group leaders have had to learn to adapt their conversation to accommodate the families with support workers. Strategies in helping communication include making eye contact with the group member, even though simultaneous translation is taking place, and letting the support worker know in advance what the session will be mainly about.

Open College Network

PEEP parents continue to be interested in taking the opportunity to gain accreditation for their learning with PEEP. Over the year 139 parents have gained an OCN credit level one called **Helping Children to Learn at Home**. Parents can gain further credits for showing continued commitment to supporting their children's learning. Their achievements are celebrated at a PEEP Certificate Fair each term. Parents can then consider coming to the PEEP Evening Training or drawing on the resources of the Learning Bridge.

BIG PEEP

The numbers of parents attending the free standing PEEP groups for 3-4 year olds have remained fairly constant throughout this year, but there has been a decline in the numbers who attend PEEP groups that run as part of the Playgroup sessions. Parents and Group Leaders have put forward several reasons for this, namely:

- Parents pay for each playgroup session and are reluctant to return during this time that many feel is bought 'time off'. This is the first regular personal time in three years for some parents and for others it is a chance to give one-to-one attention to a younger sibling.
- Many three-year-olds find it difficult to cope with seeing their parent in a playgroup setting, especially at Circle time, and feel the need to ensure that Mum or Dad is constantly aware of them in the crowd. Methods used for attracting attention frequently involve shouting out or behaving like the youngest member of the group, and many parents find this irritating or very embarrassing.
- Some parents of playgroup children have already attended PEEP groups for three years, and although the curriculum is different for each age group, the underlying messages for the parents' role is very similar. Therefore some parents have said they are already PEEPed!
- A regular playgroup session means that many parents have been able to find regular paid work for a few hours each day.

In attempting to address and rekindle interest in PEEP at this level, we explored the possibility of incorporating the very positive results that came from encouraging book and pack borrowing for *all* children in the Nurseries, which has meant a sharp rise in the numbers of books going into the homes of 4 year olds in the PEEP catchment area.

PEEP had enough packs for 259 children at Big PEEP level and there are a total of 200 children of this age attending playgroups and free standing groups in the Rosehill, Littlemore, and Blackbird Leys areas. Therefore plans were set in motion to initiate pack borrowing for all these children from the beginning of the Summer term 1999.

There has been a considerable amount of work in making arrangements with the playgroups, ensuring that assistants can cope with the increased numbers of people borrowing and that the Group Leaders are supported in managing the increased logging out and organisation involved to ensure a smooth operation which will encourage parents to try the new system.

Termly meetings are held for Group Leaders and Supervisors to share experiences concerning the PEEP input. In the Spring term, a short practical session was instigated as part of this meeting, to introduce one aspect of Playgroup provision, and explore ways in which this could encourage literacy skills and meet other learning goals for the age group. The first of these sessions, (on Big Box Play) was very enthusiastically received and the ideas have already been implemented in several playgroups.

The indisposition of one Big PEEP Group leader during the Spring term provided an opportunity to pilot running a Circle Time in the playgroup, but holding the parents Talking Time as a free standing session after playgroup hours. This might provide a model for Big PEEP in the future.

Another proposal for increasing the involvement of parents at Big PEEP level lies in more vigorous encouragement to sign up for the PEEP evening training course as children come to the end of Small PEEP 2. This progression would stimulate a continued interest and encourage parents to explore their own role in more depth.

THE NURSERY PEEP CONSORTIUM

In September, the Nursery teachers for the 6 participating schools – Pegasus, Orchard Meadow, Windale, Speedwell, Rosehill and St John Fisher – took over the responsibility for running PEEP groups in their Nurseries. They were funded by the PEEP Trust for the cost of 8 half sessions of a Nursery teacher to provide extra support, and for 13 full sessions of a PEEP assistant to organise book & pack sharing and whatever practical work was essential to the smooth running of the group, from care of younger siblings to preparation of the venue.

Nursery staff were already under increasing pressure to fulfil planning assessment and record keeping commitments and were initially unsure of embarking on yet more demands on their time. However all were sure of the value of the opportunity to work more closely with parents and they devised a variety of methods for running sessions in ways that would not invade other important areas of their work.

It had been hoped that the schools would be able to find funding to mirror PEEP's contribution for supply teaching support, but all 6 schools are relatively strapped for cash and this has unfortunately turned out not to be financially feasible. Only Pegasus has felt able to add any financial commitment in the form of LSA support.

Details of individual arrangements in the six schools have varied, as follows:

School 1

The PEEP trained supply teacher would run sessions in close collaboration with the Nursery staff and the Headteacher. This teamwork is very visible to the parents and will probably ensure that the positive relationships between parents and teachers will extend into the main school.

The school supplies the funding to extend the 8 half sessions into 8 full time sessions, but only at LSA (untrained) rates, and is therefore heavily reliant on the goodwill of the supply teacher concerned. The advantage was that the PEEP programme was offered to both morning and afternoon attendees, ensuring equal opportunities to both sessions.

School 2

The Nursery teacher took over the PEEP Group Leader role from the beginning for the morning sessions in the Autumn term, and afternoon sessions in the Spring term. The Nursery teacher holds a weekly Talking Time with the supply teacher organising the Circle Time to ensure a less frenetic transition for those parents who want to stay on to talk to staff. This can be enormously beneficial for both sides, but needs foresight and tact by staff to see that a particular parent does not take up an inordinate amount of time each week, thus creating an Equal Opportunities issue. The school attempted to meet the needs of all parents by alternating the PEEP sessions between morning and afternoon each term, but found the morning take up much higher.

School 3

This school decided to use their PEEP-donated hours by having an introductory Open Morning followed by three main topic sessions for parents during the course of the term, with 'drop-ins' for Circle times in the intervening weeks. This scheme is working smoothly, although it doesn't encourage a high take-up rate by parents of the OCN aspect of the PEEP provision

Schools 4,5 and 6

These schools began by offering informal sessions with individual parents to discuss, inform & introduce PEEP related topics. This raised many issues, but proved to be labour intensive with the same message sometimes being given to several parents on the same day. However, this less structured approach produced the three schools who gained the highest book & pack borrowing rates, showing that the teachers were sensitive to the need for a gradual introduction of their partnership role with parents. For the Spring term, all three schools introduced a system of 'Talking Time' slots for groups of parents: three per term for both morning and afternoon attendees in Orchard Meadow, more frequent involvement in the morning sessions as a response to the higher level of take up by parents in Rosehill, and a weekly Talking Time for the afternoon session at Speedwell.

At the consortium meeting held at the PEEP Training Centre in the Spring term, the Nursery teachers confirmed their commitment to the principles of PEEP's aims, but nevertheless said that they would be unable to continue beyond the end of this school year without further support. The demands of the Nursery teacher's role are sufficiently exhausting to mean that enthusiasm alone is not sufficient to continue or expand the PEEP component without more designated time.

At the time of writing this report, PEEP is seeking ways to allocate more cover for the Nursery staff in order that Nursery PEEP can continue to develop.

LINKS WITH THE LEA

Termly meetings are held between the LEA's Literacy Adviser and the PEEP Early Years Literacy Play Adviser. These are information-sharing sessions, and from PEEP's point of view they have been very useful in helping to devise appropriate PEEP sessions for the Nursery teachers to use which combine current educational requirements with best PEEP practice in an accessible and stimulating form for parents.

The Early Years Literacy Play Adviser's other role as an Early Years Partnership worker for the LEA has enabled her to collaborate closely with the Early Years team at Cricket Road, and to begin working with Playgroups and Day Nurseries in the PEEP locality to promote high quality practice and provision for four year olds in these settings. Her ability to make monitoring visits and provide support in implementing changes is dependent on the settings applying to receive government funding for education for four year olds in the first place, but three 'PEEP' playgroups are among the ten placements for whom she has responsibility.

Although the Early Years Partnership Worker's main purpose is to promote all areas of children's development and learning, the work provides particular scope for language and literacy enrichment in the settings.

Training for staff in these early years settings, through PEEP (free) and the interagency courses (which are now being offered at the bargain price of £2.00 per session) is warmly encouraged, and the range and frequency of courses offered is expanding as the Early Years Partnership Workers are able to suggest topics in response to requests from Day Nursery and Playgroup staff, or to address needs which become evident during the course of a monitoring visit. Often the sessions are run by the Partnership workers themselves, and so can be tailored to known settings or areas of the city. The fundamentals of PEEP practice – interaction with children and parents, a partnership approach, literacy

enrichment, memorable story sessions, singing and rhymes – are already included in aspects of the existing training programmes. The Early Years Literacy Play Advisor is planning to submit details for courses to raise awareness and competence in these specific areas whilst at the same time fulfilling the requirements for the wider Early Years curriculum goals.

RESOURCES

During the past year PEEP has continued to resource the PEEP groups, to respond to the resources needs of parents and PEEP group staff, to supplement the library and seek parents' views of favourite books. As the curriculum continues to be reviewed and refined, and be made available to more families, it has been necessary to improve efficiency in producing the PEEP printed materials, especially the Guidelines and PEEP at Home activities. To implement the desk top publication, a publications assistant was appointed in November.

Resources in Nursery classes

In the Autumn term, around 400 books and 200 packs were given to the six nurseries in the PEEP area to lend out to their families. These have been borrowed to the full in all nurseries; indeed there have been requests for more. At the end of each term PEEP gives each nursery a big book of their own choice. Traditional tales have been very popular, and have been chosen within the context of the literacy hour which the children will experience in year 1 with teachers using previously unseen texts.

Resources in PEEP groups

PEEP groups operate in six playgroups and ten other venues, which include church halls, family centres and school family rooms. We have introduced toy boxes for each venue, which contain a variety of the same or similar toys for children to play with during adult talking time in the group sessions. In playgroups the individual boxes have themes, eg sea shells, vehicles, cooking sets. The playgroup toy boxes rotate round the playgroups during the term.

In the Autumn term, we created dual language story tapes for families whose first language is Punjabi. Three stories were selected, read in English on one side and told in Punjabi on the other. Sound effects were introduced as well as sounds to indicate page turns. These have proved to be very popular, and there are plans to create more, in Urdu and Bengali. The tapes were made into packs with English books.

Expansion of library and book review

In Spring '99 we visited the book trust in Wandsworth to supplement the PEEP library collection. We were looking for particular categories of books; information

books, special issue books, traditional fairy tales, board books for tiny hands, dramas where children solve problems and take chances, books with more text than pictures, for reading out loud and books about making and doing things. All newly-ordered books are categorised to make it easier for Group Leaders and parents to make particular requests, as well as to cross reference, eg books in Urdu for toddlers, which contain vehicles.

A review of borrowing rates in the baby level over two terms revealed that, overall, slightly more books than toys were borrowed, that on average, one item was borrowed per attendance, though this does not mean that every family borrowed every time they came. 17% of families did not borrow anything, while some families borrowed substantially.

All families are offered quality scrap during the term, and ideas for what to do with it. All families are given songs and rhymes on audio tapes and song books which correlate.

Training of group staff in Summer '99 has included strategies to encourage borrowing in the groups.

Inevitably items do go astray; it is up to Group Leaders to follow up resources which are not returned. Training for group staff in accuracy of recording and accounting for everything lent has been on going through the year. Records are kept of missing books and packs.

A review of families' favourite book titles over two terms across three levels of PEEP has given us the following information:

Baby PEEP

'Baby Goz' by Steve Weatherill

'Heads and tails' series by Richard Powell (any books in Touch and Feel series)

Books which are successful at Baby level are noted as needing

- Simple text
- Rhythm
- Repetition
- Flaps
- Photographs

Small PEEP

'Dear Zoo' by Rod Campbell

'Postman Pat' series by John Cunliffe

'Spot' books by Eric Hill

Big PEEP

'Big Red Bus' by Judy Hindley

'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle
'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell

PEEP PUBLICATIONS

Guidelines and PEEP at home booklets need to be ready at different stages in the term to be given out in group sessions. These, together with song books and audio tapes, have also been sent to those families who do not attend PEEP, in the Baby level, as part of the Network PEEP programme, and have been given to all nursery children, also as part of the network model. The work load in publishing and duplicating has increased accordingly. Notes for guidance in the PEEP house style were drawn up by the Resources co-ordinator and have been adopted by all writers and proof-readers. Detailed instructions on making alterations to text have encouraged a consistency of appearance in relation to purpose.

DATA PROTECTION

PEEP respects the privacy of staff and of families participating in PEEP. Information given by anyone about individual circumstances is treated with respect and not divulged to anyone else without their permission. PEEP is committed to upholding the eight Data Protection Principles of good information handling practice. The Senior Management Team review our data protection policy each term to ensure it conforms to the Data protection act. Training of staff takes place to ensure that the policy is implemented throughout the project.

PERSONNEL

Over the year, several new posts have been created: Deputy Director, Early Years Literacy Play Adviser, Publications Assistant, and Finance Officer. The expansion of group provision as well as a natural degree of staff turnover, means that recruitment is always important. A great deal of care has gone into recruitment, induction and training.

In December group staff contractual arrangements were improved, and PEEP was able to incorporate the European directive on holiday pay for part-time staff into a formal letter of agreement for each term.

The project is increasingly in demand to provide work experience for local schools and colleges.

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The PEEP evening training course has now expanded to eight sessions, and the delivery is shared between members of the Senior Management Team. New sessions have been added on Play and Learning, and on PEEP Groups. The other sessions are: an Introduction to PEEP, Families, Equal Opportunities, Literacy and Numeracy, Child Development, Self-Esteem, and Looking Ahead.

Training for Group Staff has covered the following topics: equal opportunities, practical play ideas, child development, strategies for improving retention of families in groups, health and safety, using the new PEEP Handbook, future directions for the project as a whole, the development of Network PEEP and publishing the curriculum.

Centre Staff training has included Knowing the Computer Network and Health and Safety in using computers.

As part of their personal and professional development, staff have attended external training of various kinds. Members of the Senior Management Team have attended courses provided by the Institute of Social Change.

NETWORK PEEP

About 50% of babies in our catchment area enrol in PEEP groups. This figure falls to 33% by the end of the year, and to 23% in Small PEEP. By Big PEEP, the figure is only 14%. In the knowledge that a very significant proportion of parents is therefore not accessing PEEP at all, an initiative called Network PEEP was launched on a pilot basis in the Autumn Term. That term's curriculum materials, tape and songbook were sent to Baby Level parents who were not coming to a group, along with an invitation to Network Night, and a contact number at the Centre. Following the distinctly lukewarm response, during the Spring Term Network was reassessed and discussed in the Senior Management Team, with Trustees and with the Advisory Group. A proposal was drawn up in March, which was discussed with the whole staff in April.

The need to consider Network PEEP has led to the opportunity to reassess how we deliver PEEP across the project, meeting the needs of those parents and carers who do not attend groups, as well as those who do. Parents need to be able to move freely between the two major kinds of provision, and any special PEEP events such as scrap days or treasure hunts can be planned for all PEEP parents.

A key factor which has emerged is the importance of personal contact in introducing PEEP to families. In PEEP groups, the Guidelines are skilfully presented by the Group Leader in relation to the needs and experience of the group. When Guidelines are simply sent in the post, this is the dimension which

is missing. Current plans for Network therefore include both exploring ways of expanding our programme of home visits, greater use of audio material, and sending a Birthday Book and card to each child.

In reassessing Network PEEP it has been acknowledged that the guidelines remain the core of the PEEP curriculum, and they represent a unique achievement in this area of learning in partnership with parents. They have been developed and refined to a point where they can now be consolidated by publication. Planning for this process is underway.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

This has been an ongoing process. Following on from a focussed week of review at the end of the Summer Term 1998, session plans were further refined in order to separate information and ideas from activities, and to increase the emphasis on facilitating talking time.

The review process is now drawing to an end and is reaching the point of consolidation, in readiness for publication. The Curriculum Group has been formalised and its four members work collaboratively in order to ensure breadth and balance in the review process. Group Leaders' comments on delivering the curriculum are fed in by the Programme Delivery co-ordinators.

LEARNING BRIDGE

The Adult and Community Learning Fund has funded a new service from PEEP called Learning Bridge. The purpose of the Learning Bridge is to support Peep parents who wish to continue their own learning or personal development or who are undertaking the Peep training. The Learning Bridge coordinators are also responsible for organising the Child Health Course and overseeing its accreditation with the Oxfordshire Open College Network. Three Learning Bridge Coordinators were appointed in January 1999, they took up their posts at the beginning of February. One member of the team is an experienced outreach worker, another coordinates Oxford City New Start, and the third is an experienced community worker. They have set up a well equipped office and appointed a part time administrative worker. They have visited all the groups and set up a database of potential students, organised a seminar for providers and an open day in conjunction with Cowley and Littlemore CEC which took place during Adult Learners Week.

Centre Management

As the project continues to expand and develop, space in the PEEP Centre continues to be at a premium. A further building on the Peers site is now used as a Training Centre for the PEEP evening training. It also houses the Learning Bridge and a new office for the Director. Increasingly other larger meeting rooms on the site are needed.

The centre continues to be a very busy working environment, supported by careful administrative systems and planning.

Appendix 1: PEEP Trustees, Management Team, and Advisory Group

PEEP TRUSTEES

Sir Colin McColl: *Retired senior civil servant*

Michael O'Regan: *Businessman and school governor*

Rosemary Peacocke: *Formerly H M Staff Inspector for the Early Years*

Ken Brooks: *Lawyer*

Bernard Clarke: *Secondary school headteacher*

Chris Dark: *Peers Upper School headteacher*

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Rosemary Roberts: *Director*

Anna Edwards: *Deputy Director*

Teresa Harvey: *Resources and Systems Co-ordinator*

Deidre Macfarlane: *Recruitment and Community Co-ordinator*

Alison Street: *Groups Co-ordinator*

Sally Thomas: *Pre school Literacy Play Adviser*

In addition, PEEP has the benefit of regular advice from its Advisory Group which includes the following people:

Professor Ronald Arnold: *Formerly HM Staff Inspector for Teacher Training, Secretary to the Bullock Committee, consultant to the National Foundation for Educational Research*

Sir Christopher Ball: *Adviser to the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust*

Dr. Greg Brookes: *National Foundation for Educational Research*

Julie Fisher: *Schools Adviser (Early Years Specialist), Oxfordshire LEA*

Professor Philip Gammage: *Professor of Early Childhood Research, de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia*

Dr. Peter Hannon: *Sheffield University*

Dr. Jill Head: *Primary Inspector*

Jim Hewitt: *Blackbird Leys Community Worker*

John Howson: *Education Consultant*

Penelope Hughes-Hallett: *Trustee, The Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust*

Bill Laar: *Education Consultant*

Dr. Aidan Macfarlane: *Consultant in Public Health and Health Policy, Oxfordshire Health Authority; and Senior Clinical Lecturer in Paediatrics, Oxford University*

Neil McClelland: *Director, National Literacy Trust*

Professor Ruth Merttens: *Professor of Primary Maths at the University of St. John and St. Mark, Plymouth; director IMPACT Maths at the University of North London; Co-director of the Hamilton Maths and Reading Projects*

Dr. Gillian Pugh O.B.E.: *Chief Executive, The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children*

Dr. Iram Siraj-Blatchford: *London Institute of Education*

Teresa Smith: *Director, Department of Applied Social Studies and Social Research, Oxford University*

Professor Kathy Sylva: *Oxford University Department of Educational Studies*



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