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## **Parenting Early Intervention Programme: 2nd interim report**

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### **Introduction**

The Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) provides funding for local authorities (LAs) to deliver evidence-based parenting programmes which have been shown to improve parenting skills, to parents of children and young people aged 8 to 13 years who are concerned about their child's behaviour. This second interim report presents the findings up to July 2010 on the implementation and impact of four evidence-based parenting programmes: Incredible Years, Triple P, Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities, and the Strengthening Families Programme 10-14. The final PEIP report will be published in Spring 2011.

Based on the evidence collected so far from the national rollout of PEIP, we recommend the following:

- Provision of parenting programmes should be directed mainly at those in greatest need; however, there are also benefits in recruiting a broader spectrum of parents in order to optimise group dynamics and achieve better outcomes.
- In order for evidence-based parenting programmes to maintain effectiveness when rolled out on a large scale, local authorities should ensure that the programmes are quality assured and maintain fidelity to their evidence-based models of implementation as set out in the guidance<sup>1</sup>.

### **Main Findings**

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/parents/ID91askclient/localauthority/fundingforparents/>

The rollout of evidence-based parenting programmes through the PEIP has been successful on a national scale and has significantly increased support for a large number of parents. The parenting programmes have had positive effects on the parents' mental well-being and the style of parenting, as well as their children's behaviours.

Our findings show that:

- The population of parents and children participating in PEIP has the same characteristics as that which PEIP is intended to target. Overall, they were more disadvantaged than the general population and their children were more likely to have significant behavioural difficulties
- The population of parents and children also has very similar characteristics to that seen in the PEIP Pathfinder, which suggests that local authorities are continuing to target those with the highest need
- Parent outcomes were significantly improved in all four programmes after course completion:
  - Overall, 79% of parents showed improvements in their mental well-being
  - The average level of parental mental well-being increased from the bottom 25% of the population to the national average
- A considerable proportion of parents reduced their parenting styles of laxness and over-reactivity to misbehaviour over the course of the programme:
  - 73% of parents reported reductions in their parenting laxness
  - 74% of parents reported reductions in their over-reactivity
  - The percentage of parents who reported that their child had serious conduct problems reduced by a third, from 59% to 40%

It is important to note however that the individual parenting programmes may also lead to improvements in outcomes other than those which are measured in this report, due to differences in the nature and aims of the programmes.

- Parents highly rated their experiences of the parenting groups they attended:
  - 98% reported that they had found the parenting group helpful

- 95% reported that the programme had helped them deal with their problems
  - 96% reported that the programme had helped them to deal with their children's behaviour
  - 86% reported that they experienced fewer problems after completing the programme
- There were differences in effectiveness on outcomes between the individual programmes but these were relatively small compared to the overall improvements reported by parents
  - The number of parents supported through the programme varied substantially between LAs which were funded from 2008, ranging from over 500 parents supported per LA to fewer than 100 parents supported per LA
  - The feedback from interviews conducted with parents and professionals indicates that the success of the programme and its delivery at LA level is not only a function of the quality of the parenting programme, but also the LA infrastructure and organisational setup which support the implementation of PEIP
  - Most of the parents interviewed reported that they were introduced to strategies that enabled them to bring about positive change in their own and their children's behaviour. Parents interviewed 3-6 months after programme completion reported that these improvements had been maintained.

## **Methods**

PEIP funding enabled LAs to fund one or more of five evidence-based parenting programmes as approved by the National Academy of Parenting Practitioners (NAPP). These were:

- Incredible Years
- Triple P
- Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC)
- Families and Schools Together (FAST)

- Strengthening Families Programme 10-14 (SFP10-14)

All five parenting programmes have strong evidence base for improving parent and child outcomes when tested in small scale, controlled trials. This evaluation examines whether these outcomes can be maintained and replicated when the programmes are rolled out and implemented in LAs. To do so we have collected information on:

- Reported changes in parenting styles following the attendance on one of the five NAPP approved parenting programmes (measure of impact)
- The organisational factors that support effective implementation of PEIP and its rollout

To assess the impact of the parenting courses on parent and child outcomes, we provided parents with questionnaires to complete at the beginning and end of their course and these scores were compared in order to measure change. Findings were derived from 3320 parents attending 474 parenting groups in 39 sample LAs. To measure longer term changes, parents are being asked to complete a one year follow up questionnaire and the results from these will be presented in the final report.

The measures of outcome used in the questionnaires completed by parents have been substantiated by, and used in prior research, including the PEIP Pathfinder report. These measures assess parental mental well-being, parental laxness and over reactivity in dealing with their child's behaviour, and the parent's view of the child's behaviour, all of which are expected to be influenced by the parenting courses.

To examine the organisational factors that support effective rollout of PEIP, interviews were conducted with a sample of parents and professionals.

Improved outcomes in this study are measured by:

- increases in parents' mental well-being
- reductions in inappropriate parenting styles (laxness and over-reactivity)
- reductions in child behaviour difficulties

### **Additional Information**

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.education.gov.uk/research> Further information about this research can be obtained from Yuan Ren, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.  
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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.