

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities

Review: [Foundations for Life](#), July 2016

Note on provider involvement: This provider has agreed to EIF's terms of reference, and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the programme provider.

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) is for disadvantaged families experiencing behavioural difficulties with a child between the ages of two and 11.

Parents attend eight weekly two-hour sessions facilitated by pairs of trained and supervised peer facilitators. During these sessions, parents learn strategies for improving the quality of their interactions with their child, reducing negative child behaviour and increasing their efficacy and confidence in parenting. The sessions involve group discussions, demonstrations, role play and homework assignments.

Evidence
rating: 3

Cost rating: 1

EIF Programme Assessment

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities has evidence of a **short-term positive impact** on child outcomes from at least one rigorous evaluation.

Evidence
rating: **3**

What does the evidence rating mean?

Level 3 indicates **evidence of efficacy**. This means the programme can be described as evidence-based: it has evidence from at least one rigorously conducted RCT or QED demonstrating a statistically significant positive impact on at least one child outcome.

This programme does not receive a rating of 4 as it has not yet replicated its results in another rigorously conducted study, where at least one study indicates long-term impacts, and at least one uses measures independent of study participants.

Cost rating

A rating of 1 indicates that a programme has a low cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of less than £100.

Cost rating: **1**

Child outcomes

According to the best available evidence for this programme's impact, it can achieve the following positive outcomes for children:

Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Reduced frequency of behaviour problems

Based on study 1

10.57-point reduction on the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (Intensity Scale)

Improvement index: **+15**

This means we would expect the average participant in the comparison group who did not receive the intervention (ie, someone for whom 50% of their peers have better outcomes and 50% have worse outcomes), to improve to the point where they would have better outcomes than 65% and worse outcomes than 35% of their peers, if they had received the intervention.

Immediately after the intervention

Reduced number of behaviour problems

Based on study 1

4.04-point reduction on the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (Problem Scale)

Improvement index: **+21**

This means we would expect the average participant in the comparison group who did not receive the intervention (ie, someone for whom 50% of their peers have better outcomes and 50% have worse outcomes), to improve to the point where they would have better outcomes than 71% and worse outcomes than 29% of their peers, if they had received the intervention.

Immediately after the intervention

Reduced parent concerns about child

Based on study 1

23.01-point reduction on a visual analogue scale of parents concerns about their child

Improvement index: **+28**

This means we would expect the average participant in the comparison group who did not receive the intervention (ie, someone for whom 50% of their peers have better outcomes and 50% have worse outcomes), to improve to the point where they would have better outcomes than 78% and worse outcomes than 22% of their peers, if they had received the intervention.

Immediately after the intervention

This programme also has evidence of supporting positive outcomes for couples, parents or families that may be relevant to a commissioning decision. Please see the 'About the evidence' section for more detail.

Key programme characteristics

Who is it for?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to the following age-groups:

- Toddlers
- Preschool

How is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to implementation through these delivery models:

- Group

Where is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation in these settings:

- Children's centre or early-years setting
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Community centre

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

- Children's centre or early-years setting
 - Primary school
 - Secondary school
 - Community centre
 - Out-patient health setting
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How is it targeted?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation as:

- Targeted indicated
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Where has it been implemented?

Australia, England

UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence includes evaluation conducted in the UK.

Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- parenting programmes with violence reduction outcomes
programmes for children with recognised or possible special education needs
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About the programme

What happens during delivery?

How is it delivered?

- EPEC is delivered by two EPEC parent facilitators (QCF-3) to groups of 12 families.
- EPEC is delivered over eight sessions of two hours' duration each.

What happens during the intervention?

- Parents learn strategies for improving the quality of their interactions with their child, reducing negative child behaviour and increasing their efficacy and confidence in parenting.
- Sessions involve group discussions, demonstrations, role play and homework assignments.

What are the implementation requirements?

Who can deliver it?

- Both practitioners who deliver this programme are EPEC parent facilitators with NFQ-5 level qualifications.

What are the training requirements?

- The practitioners have 60 hours of programme training. Booster training of practitioners is recommended.

How are the practitioners supervised?

- It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by one host agency supervisor (qualified to NFQ-9/10) with 30 hours of programme training

What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

- Training manual
- Other online material
- Video or DVD training
- Face-to-face training
- Accreditation or certification process
- Supervision
- Booster training
- Fidelity monitoring
- Supervisor observation of programme delivery

Is there a licensing requirement?

There is no licence required to run this programme.

How does it work? (Theory of Change)

How does it work?

- EPEC is based on social learning principles that assume that some parenting behaviours inadvertently encourage unwanted child behaviours. Parents therefore learn strategies for discouraging unwanted behaviours and improving positive family interactions.
- In the short term, EPEC aims to provide parents with skills for improving children's behaviour and increasing their confidence in their parenting abilities.
- In the long term, children will be better able to manage their feelings and behaviour.

Intended outcomes

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About the evidence

EPEC's most rigorous evidence comes from a single RCT which was conducted in the UK.

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child and parent outcomes.

This programme is underpinned by one study with a Level 3, hence the programme receives a Level 3 rating overall.

Study 1

Citation: Day et al (2012)

Design: RCT

Country: United Kingdom

Sample: 116 families living in Southwark

Timing: Post-test

Child outcomes:

- Reduced frequency of behaviour problems
 - Reduced number of behaviour problems
 - Reduced parent concerns about child
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Other outcomes:

- Improved parenting
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Study rating: 3

Day, C., Michelson, D., Thomson, S., Penny, C., & Draper, L. (2012). Evaluation of a peer led parenting intervention for disruptive behaviour problems in children: community based randomised controlled trial. *BMJ* 2012; 344:e1107 doi: 10.1136/bmj.e1107.

Available at <http://www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.e1107.full>

Study design and sample

The first study is a rigorously conducted RCT.

This study involved random assignment of families to an EPEC treatment group and a wait-list control group.

This study was conducted in the UK, with a sample of 116 families with a child between the ages of two and 11 (mean = 4.5). The majority (71%) had a parent who identified themselves as being from Black and Ethnic minority groups. Most of the study participants were also more economically disadvantaged than the general population of Southwark (67% reported to have <£200 disposable weekly household income).

Measures

Child disruptive behaviour problems were measured using the intensity subscale and the problems subscale of the Eyberg child behaviour inventory (parent report). Child mental health problems were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) total score (parent report). Child conduct problems and hyperactivity/inattention were measured using the conduct subscale and the hyperactivity/inattention subscale of the SDQ (parent report), respectively.

Parenting competencies were measured using the Arnold-O' Leary parenting scale (parent report). Parental stress was measured using the parenting stress index-short form (parent report).

Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child and parent outcomes.

Child outcomes include:

- Improved behaviour

Other studies

The following studies were identified for this programme but did not count towards the programme's overall evidence rating. A programme receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Charalambides, M. (2013). An evaluation of peer-led parenting groups in routine practice. Service evaluation project submitted in partial fulfilment for the D.Clin.Psy. degree. King's College London.

https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/12505216/Studentthesis-Monica_Charalambides_2013.pdf) - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

Day, C., Michelson, D., Thomson, S., Penny, C., & Draper, L. (2012). Evaluation of a peer led parenting intervention for disruptive behaviour problems in children: community based randomised controlled trial. *BMJ* 2012;344:e1107 doi: 10.1136/bmj.e1107 - **This reference refers to a randomised control trial, conducted in the UK.**

Day, C., Michelson, D., Thomson, S., Penney, C., & Draper, L. (2010) Innovations in practice: Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities: A pilot evaluation of a peer-led parenting programme, *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 17, 52-57 - **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in the UK.**

Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have at least preliminary evidence of achieving positive outcomes for children. It provides information based on EIF's assessment of the strength of evidence for a programme's effectiveness, and on detail about programmes shared with us by those who design, run and deliver them.

The Guidebook serves an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Our assessment of the evidence for a programme's effectiveness can inform and support certain parts of a commissioning decision, but it is not a substitute for professional judgment. Evidence about what has worked in the past offers no guarantee that an approach will work in all circumstances. Crucially, the Guidebook is not a market comparison website: ratings and other information should not be interpreted as a specific recommendation, kite mark or endorsement for any programme.

[How to read the Guidebook](#)

[EIF evidence standards](#)

[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

EIF

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) is an independent charity and a member of the What Works network. We support the use of effective early intervention for children, young people and their families: identifying signals of risk, and responding with effective interventions to improve outcomes, reduce hardship and save the public money in the long term.

We work by generating evidence and knowledge of what works in our field, putting this information in the hands of commissioners, practitioners and policymakers, and supporting the adoption of the evidence in local areas and relevant sectors.

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