

Parents Plus Early Years

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.

Parents Plus Early Years (PPEY) is for parents with concerns about a child between the ages of one and six.

Parents attend between eight and 10 weekly sessions, where they learn positive parenting strategies and effective discipline.

The group sessions involve eight to 12 parents and last approximately two hours. The session topics are drawn from two teaching DVDs of videotaped scenes of real parent-child interactions that were filmed both at home and in the clinic. The video input is backed up by group discussion, practice exercises, skills role play, homework activities and handouts.

Evidence
rating: **2+**

Cost rating: **1**

EIF Programme Assessment

Parents Plus Early Years has **preliminary evidence** of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the programme caused the improvement.

Evidence
rating: **2+**

What does the evidence rating mean?

Level 2 indicates that the programme has evidence of improving a child outcome from a study involving at least 20 participants, representing 60% of the sample, using validated instruments.

This programme does not receive a rating of 3 as its best evidence is not from a rigorously conducted RCT or QED evaluation.

What does the plus mean?

The plus rating indicates that a programme's best available evidence is based on an evaluation that is more rigorous than a level 2 standard but does not meet the criteria for level 3.

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

Improved behaviour

Based on study 1

Reduced hyperactivity

Based on study 1

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:

- Out-patient health setting

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

- Home
 - Children's centre or early-years setting
 - Primary school
 - Community centre
 - Out-patient health setting
-

How is it targeted?

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

- Universal
-

Where has it been implemented?

Ireland, United Kingdom

UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence does not include evaluation conducted in the UK.

Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- parenting programmes with violence reduction outcomes
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About the programme

What happens during delivery?

How is it delivered?

- Parents Plus Early Years is delivered in nine sessions of 2.5 hours duration by two mental-health professionals to groups of parents.

What happens during the intervention?

- Parents attend a combination of group and individual sessions.
- The individual sessions, which include parent, child and therapist, are designed to give parents an opportunity to 'try out' the ideas in the course and raise specific concerns, as well as tailor aspects of the course to an individual child's needs. Videos of parent-child interaction are created and then replayed and discussed in the individual sessions. The use of video feedback is central to these sessions.
- The group sessions involve eight to 12 parents and last approximately two hours. The session topics are drawn from two teaching DVDs of videotaped scenes of real parent-child interactions that were filmed both at home and in the clinic. The video input is backed up by group discussion, practice exercises, skills role play, homework activities and handouts.

What are the implementation requirements?

Who can deliver it?

- Two practitioners deliver this programme. Both are mental-health professionals with QCF-6 level qualifications.

What are the training requirements?

- The practitioners have 21 hours of programme training each. Booster training of practitioners is recommended.

How are the practitioners supervised?

- It is recommended that practitioners supervised by one programme developer supervisor (qualified to QCF-7/8 level), and one host-agency supervisor (qualified to QCF-6 level).

What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

- Supervision
- Booster training
- A 'Parent Plus quality protocol' checklist for practitioners to complete after every session

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?

- Developing and maintaining warm, positive, and enjoyable relationships with children is central to changing their behaviour.
- Once parents 'tune into' and understand their children, they are in a better position to learn more effective parenting strategies.
- Parents unintentionally reinforce unwanted child behaviours through ineffective parenting strategies.
- PPEY assumes that when parents have the opportunity to reflect on the reasons underpinning their child's behaviour they will understand how to encourage children's positive behaviours rather than inadvertently reward negative child behaviours.
- More effective parenting strategies lead to short-term improvements in children's behaviour and reduced parenting stress.
- In the longer term, children will be less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour, have an improved sense of self and perform better in school.

Intended outcomes

Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Contact details

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About the evidence

Parents Plus Early Years' (PPEY) most rigorous evidence comes from a QED which was conducted in Ireland.

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

This programme is underpinned by one study with a Level 2+, hence the programme receives a Level 2+ rating overall.

Study 1

Citation: Griffen et al (2010)

Design: QED

Country: Ireland

Sample: 117 parents and their children attending mental health services in Dublin

Timing: Post-test; five-month follow-up

Child outcomes:

- Improved behaviour
 - Reduced hyperactivity
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Other outcomes:

- None measured
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Study rating: 2+

Griffin, C., Guerin, S., Sharry, J. & Drumm, M. (2010). A multicentre controlled study of an early intervention parenting programme for young children with behavioural and developmental difficulties. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 10, 279-294.

Available at http://www.aepc.es/ijchp/articulos_pdf/ijchp-351.pdf

Study design and sample

The first study is a QED.

This study involved parents and children recruited from mental health services in Dublin, Ireland. A sequential block design was used to assign families to PPEY treatment group and a wait-list control group.

This study was conducted in Ireland, with a sample of 117 children aged 3 years to 6 years and 8 months.

Measures

Child behaviour (hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional symptoms, prosocial behaviour) was measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (parent report). Parent defined problems and goals were measured using the Parent Defined Problems and Goals Form (parent report).

Parental stress was measured using the Parental Stress Scale (parent report).

Findings

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

This includes:

- Improved behaviour
- Reduced hyperactivity

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to the treatment and comparison groups not being generated by sufficiently robust methods, hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

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.

Gerber, S., Sharry, J., Streek, A., & McKenna, G. (In press). Parent training: Effectiveness of the Parents Plus Early Years programme in community preschool settings. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* - **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in Ireland.**

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Hayes, N., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Keegan, S., & Goulding, E. (2013). Evaluation of the Early Years Programme of the Childhood Development Initiative, Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology and Institute of Education, University of London - **This reference refers to a randomised control trial, conducted in Ireland.**

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Kilroy, S., Sharry, J., Flookd, C. & Guerin, S. (2010). Parenting training in the community: Linking process to outcome, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 1-15 - **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in Ireland.**

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Lonergan, A., Gerber, S., Streek, A., & Sharry, J. (2015). Parenting groups, how long is enough? The efficacy of a community-run Parents Plus Early Years Program as a preschool parenting intervention of modifiable duration. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 6, 1-13 - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in Ireland.**

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Sharry, J., Suerin, S., Griffin, C., & Drumm, M. (2005). An evaluation of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme: A video-based early intervention for parents of pre-school children with behavioural and developmental difficulties, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 10, 319-336 - **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in Ireland.**

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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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