

Sure Start
Battersea,
PEEP

Sure Start Battersea runs **PEEP*** (Peers Early Education Partnership) sessions every week. Parents and children meet in age specific groups – babies, ones, twos and ‘pre-nursery’.

Parents are able to socialise and support each other as well as play with their children, sing, read stories, and discuss issues concerning early learning and development with a range of early years and health professionals.

The groups are led by a teacher and have input from health visitors, dieticians and speech and language therapists, who have all received PEEP training.

The sessions start with a ‘welcome time’, when parents and children are encouraged to settle in and feel comfortable. This is followed by singing the Hello song in a circle, greeting each child by name.

Parents and children join in with more songs and action rhymes and then share a mixture of stories and play activities together, usually planned around a particular theme. Parents also have a chance to discuss a particular aspect of child development. In Sure Start Battersea, parents share new steps for their child in what has become known as the ‘check-in’ session. Parents can take it in turns to update the group on their child’s progress and discuss their own experience of parenting, giving and receiving support from each other.

Parents are given ideas to use at home with their children and picture storybooks can be borrowed to share. All families have a PEEP song book, plus CD-ROM, so that songs and rhymes can be practised at home. These are particularly popular.

PEEP Learning together folders are made available during the sessions for parents to use and borrow. The videos are also used in some of the groups and can be borrowed for home viewing.



*PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) provides a two-day training course for practitioners who wish to develop their work with parents and become more familiar with the PEEP approach and material.

PEEP focuses on working in partnership with parents to enhance children’s learning, building self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning, all through effective communication and warm relationships.

Material is provided for five age levels: babies, ones, twos, threes, and fours. Each level has a Learning together folder of activities, a video, a songbook and CD for parents to use at home.

More information is available at:
www.peep.org.uk or by phoning 01865 395145

Some parents are reluctant to join in groups at first. Sure Start Battersea has found that some families appreciate the company of a family support worker, who is already known to them through outreach work, at their first PEEP session. This initial support can help to build trust and enable the inclusion of all families.

One of the most powerful aspects of PEEP is the way in which it increases parents' confidence by enabling them to see that much of what they are already doing in their everyday lives is helping to support their children's learning. Parents who have been involved in the programme quickly become role models for newer parents.

Parents have facilitated their own groups and there are currently two parents working as paid assistants.



“I take time to listen and play with my child now.”

“It's helped me realise I should be proud of my children and help build their confidence.”

Parents using PEEP material and attending at least one session had higher ratings in quality of care-giving when their children were age two. The children made greater progress from ages 2–5 in a range of early literacy skills and, at 5 years old, had higher ratings on self-esteem.

Evangelou, M (2005) Birth to School Study: A longitudinal evaluation of PEEP 1998–2005, University of Oxford.

“I'm really enjoying being a parent now. I never knew he could do so much.”

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