



PEAL e-Bulletin - September 2007

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly PEAL e-bulletin. PEAL originated as a consortium project of the National Children's Bureau (NCB), Coram Family and the London Borough of Camden. It is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as part of the Early Learning Partnerships (Strand 3: Developing the Workforce) and its rollout is currently led by NCB, the National Childminding Association (NCMA), the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

The PEAL e-bulletin will be emailed on the last Tuesday of every three months.

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1. Introducing the PEAL Team

Sue Owen is Director of the Early Childhood Unit at the National Children's Bureau (NCB). Sue compiled the original PEAL funding bid to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, now Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)) in 2003, with Gillian Pugh. Sue has general management responsibility for the Workforce Development Strand of the Early Learning Partnership Project (ELPP), which includes the PEAL rollout. She works on this project with Parenting UK.

Joyce Connor joined NCB in September 2005 as the PEAL Principal Officer, Parents and Families. She developed the training programme and supported materials to help early years practitioners enable parents to become involved in their children's learning. Her role now involves managing the PEAL roll out, including management of staff and resources, promotion, quality assurance of the training and materials, and keeping links within NCB and ELPP Strands 1 and 2. Joyce's early work included working as a teacher, in community play schemes and residential units, in a number of childcare organisations and as a freelance trainer and consultant.

Helen Wheeler is the PEAL Senior Development Officer. She was appointed to the project in July 2005. Her role includes collating successful practice in involving

parents in their children's learning in the early years, reviewing the latest research and literature, and producing materials for the PEAL training pack. Helen has taught in infant and nursery schools for over twenty years, most recently coordinating an ethnic minority achievement team across two nursery schools in the London Borough of Ealing. This included working in innovative ways with children's families to build relationships and parental engagement in learning. She has also worked part time in the Sure Start London Regional team, as a home-school tutor tutoring writing courses and supporting families educating their children at home, both in the UK and abroad.

Liz McIntyre is the PEAL Development Officer. Her main job aspects are to contribute to development of the website, work towards the accreditation of PEAL, evaluate the training, and be aware of new policy/research initiative that might contribute to the PEAL training. She also attends trainings where she supports trainers. She previously worked as a Family Learning Development Officer in the London Borough of Harrow and has worked in the voluntary sector as a Coordinator of a Weekend Family Learning Group for families with pre-school children. She is also a qualified social worker and adult teacher.

Heather Goodwin is the PEAL Admin and Training Coordinator. She has been working with PEAL since its inception and is responsible for the logistics of the training as well as the coordination of the trainers. Her previous experience includes working in the Arts sector, managing venues in the South East of England.

Ashley Duke joined the PEAL project as the Administrator in May, previously having worked in the children's charity sector for the past five years. His main role is to take all bookings for events and to send confirmation letters to all delegates.

Faye Hounsome joined the PEAL Project as the Temporary Administration Assistant in September 2007. She is responsible for supporting PEAL in the 2007-2008 roll out. Before joining PEAL she completed a masters degree in human rights at the University of London.

Keith Phillips has worked for children's organisations all his working life. Starting out as a Playbus driver and playleader, Keith went on to be a teacher in a secondary school, then running community based children, young people and family projects. Keith has been working as a freelance consultant for nine years on Sure Start Children Centre development, training and quality assurance and organisation development in the voluntary sector. As Associate Lead Trainer for the Peal training programme, Keith has worked with the team from the beginning helping to pilot the training and support of new trainers, as well as training and assisting at events.

Laura Dixon joined the PEAL project as the Conference Organiser in September 2007. She is responsible of organising the training events. That involves booking venues, catering and being involved in the general attendees booking process.

Lynn Stevens is the PEAL Grant Monitoring Officer. She joined NCB in June and works primarily with the 15 sub-contracted organisations funded by the ELP3 strand to deliver training. She is a central point of contact for advice and support, and manages the reporting and payment process. Lynn previously worked in a similar role for three and a half years at the Big Lottery Fund and is currently a voluntary fundraiser for a local charity in Brighton.

Paulina Filippou is the PEAL Communications Officer. She was appointed to the project in July. In her role she focuses on raising the profile of the project through all the possible communications channels available. Having completed a Psychology degree, Paulina worked for five years in mental health, both directly with mentally ill patients and with families and carers, including young carers and siblings. Her career then changed direction and for the last three years she has been working in communications and events management in the voluntary sector, and with an interest in health and children and young people.

Beki Hawes is the PEAL E-publishing Assistant. Her main role is to develop and update the new website. Appointed to the post in June, Beki worked previously on the Understanding Slavery website, and in the publishing department of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

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2. PEAL News

2a. New Redesigned PEAL Website

The new redesigned PEAL website <http://www.peal.org.uk/> was launched in September. It plays a key role in supporting early years practitioners working with parents to improve the learning outcomes of children. The new site offers a range of essential tools and resources, including latest links to research and information on training programmes supporting early years practitioners. It also acts as a platform for the development of an online community, uniting practitioners across the country by sharing good practice ideas and invaluable experience beyond the skills gained from attending the PEAL training. Also available on the site are details on all the training events and the booking process.

2b. Updated Training Pack

PEAL has a new DVD illustrating the importance of involving parents in their children's learning, and tips on how early years settings can encourage this involvement. It includes parents talking about how observing their children has made them realise how children try and make sense of their world and how much they can learn from a very early age. The DVD is projected during the training events and will soon be available for the training participants.

PEAL has also produced seven new practice examples of good practice ideas for early years settings, some of which are taken from our new partners: the Pre-school Learning Alliance and National Childminding Association. The new themes that are covered describe alternative ways of building partnerships with parents, and involving parents in their children's learning. This includes working with fathers, working with parents with babies, and taking day trips.

2c. Feedback from Evaluations

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the delivery of PEAL training to ensure consistency and quality for all those attending. The Research and Evaluation Department of the NCB (National Children's Bureau) conducted a postal survey of a random selection of participants who attended the first eight PEAL training events for children's centres between September 2006 and January 2007. 83 people responded to the survey.

Headline findings revealing what participants gained from the training include:

87% felt more motivated to involve parents where they work:

31% were 'a lot more motivated'

56% were 'quite a bit'

79% felt the training gave them more confidence in their own ability to involve parents at their setting:

24% had gained 'a lot' more confidence

55% had gained 'quite a bit' more confidence

71% had gained confidence in their ability to encourage parents' engagement in learning in their own homes:

21% had gained 'a lot' more confidence

50% had gained 'quite a bit' more confidence

A fifth of respondents reported that they were using some of the practical examples suggested. These included completing more home visits; using video and digital cameras to share observations; sharing music sessions with parents; establishing portfolios for record keeping; involving parents in role-play; and developing a listening library. Others had started to develop new settling in procedures, were having an 'inspire day' in which parents would help select from the ideas, and had thought through priorities in order to create more time to talk to parents.

For more information on our evaluation process, or to see more comments on the training, go to our [evaluation page](#)

2d. Future Training Dates

Details of training events are available on our [training page](#)

We want your feedback and ideas!

Please direct any comments or queries to:

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