

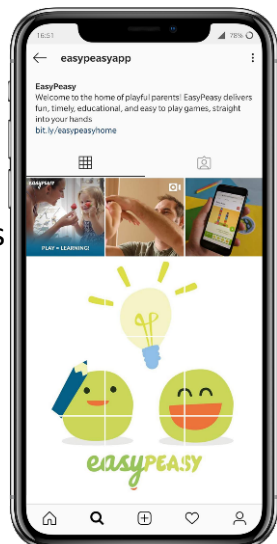
Background

Oxford has one of the largest attainment gaps in the U.K. between children from high and low-income families.

Oxfordshire County Council is trialing a parent app in disadvantaged schools to help parents support their children's learning at home.

EasyPeasy is a smartphone app that sends game ideas directly to parents' mobile phones.

The aim of the app is to encourage parents to play with their children inspired by short video clips featuring real families.



Collaborating with the Local Authority

A partnership was formed between the Department of Education, Oxfordshire County Council and EasyPeasy, the developers of the app.

An MSc student (Hilders, 2019) designed and analysed the study with support from researchers with previous experience evaluating EasyPeasy (Jelley & Sylva, 2018).



Research Questions

1. What is the effect of EasyPeasy on children's self-regulation and social-behavioural development?
2. What is the effect of EasyPeasy on children's Foundation Stage Profile?
3. What are parents' experiences with using the app?

Sample

- 7 Intervention schools implemented EasyPeasy in their reception classes.
- 6 Comparison schools matched on Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs, English as an Additional Language, and Foundation Stage Performance.
- 52 children were randomly selected from Intervention schools and 63 randomly selected from Comparison schools.
- Post-test was 20 weeks after pre-test.

Group	Boys	Girls	Total
Intervention	29	23	52
Comparison	35	28	63

Measures

- Child Self-Regulation and Social Behaviour Questionnaire (CSBQ) administered pre and post intervention (teacher-report).
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of reception.
- "Good Level of Development" (GLD) = expected level in the five prime areas of learning.

Findings

A two way mixed ANOVA showed a significant increase (compared to Comparison children) in Intervention children's scores on:

- Cognitive self-regulation
- Emotional self-regulation
- Behavioural self-regulation
- Sociability
- Pro-social behavior



There were no significant differences between the two groups in scores on Internalizing or Externalizing behaviours.

Significantly more children in the Intervention group achieved a Good Level of Development compared to those in the Comparison group.

Group	% children achieved GLD	% children not achieved GLD
Intervention	84.6%	15.4%
Comparison	65.1%	34.9%

In a focus group discussion with parents, they reported high satisfaction with the app but felt it was aimed at younger children and not reception age. Therefore, they worked out ways to make the games more interesting for reception age.

Discussion

These findings confirmed similar findings on improvements in children's self-regulation related to EasyPeasy (Jelley & Sylva, 2018). The Oxfordshire study shows that giving parents in disadvantaged schools access to EasyPeasy leads to improvements in their children's self-regulation and certain aspects of social behaviour.

References

- Hilders, A. (2019). *The Effect of a Parent App Intervention on Children's Self-Regulation and Social-Behavioural Development* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Oxford, Oxford, U.K..
- Jelley, F., & Sylva, K. (2018). *EasyPeasy Evaluation in Newham: Findings from the Sutton Trust Parental Engagement Fund (PEF) Project*.