

A Short Briefing Paper on the Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP): March 2024

The Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP), developed within NHS Education for Scotland, and funded through the Mental Health Directorate at the Scottish Government, is aimed at improving the availability of the highest quality evidence-based parenting interventions (namely the Incredible Years Preschool, Incredible Years School Age, Level 4 Group Triple P and Group Teen Triple P) for families of children where there are concerns about the child’s social, emotional and behavioural development. Since its launch in 2013, the national implementation of PoPP has been ensuring that these strengths-based interventions are delivered, with fidelity, by the multi-sector wider children’s workforce, incorporating an implementation science framework.

These interventions focus on building strong parent-child relationships, empowering families and supporting parents to promote resilience in their children. They help parents to support their child’s brain development, most notably in terms of executive functioning and self-regulation through co-regulation, as well as strengthening parental competence and confidence, empathy, understanding and patience in parenting their child, especially during times when it is challenging. This helps to not only improve the child’s behaviour, but positive parenting strong parent-child relationships have been shown to buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES), which will ultimately improve the mental health and well-being of very young children.

Outcome data, in the form of parent responses on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), that is routinely used at the start and end of the groups, continue to show encouraging reductions in behaviour problems for children whose parents attended the groups. Independent analysis of outcomes has confirmed that this initiative is having meaningful positive impacts on the well-being of these children and their families.

Headline PoPP data

Number of PoPP groups delivered between 2013 to March 2024	1,194
Number of families enrolled in groups	7,784
Number of parents/caregivers enrolled in groups	8,914
Number children for whom pre- and post-group SDQs have been gathered	4,266
% of children in the clinical range at the start of groups who had moved out of this high-risk range when their parents finished attending a group	57%
Number of Community Planning Partnerships that have adopted the PoPP model	22
Number of multi-sector Early Years practitioners who have been fully trained, equipped and supported to deliver one of the interventions with fidelity	1,047

The Covid 19 pandemic brought about many challenges in delivering services to families and as such, in-person groups were halted. Some PoPP sites started to deliver Triple P and Incredible Years groups remotely. PoPP sites across Scotland are now back to delivering groups in-person, but some

continue to offer families a choice of attending a group remotely if this is their preference. Data reported above includes both in-person and remotely delivered groups.

In April 2020, the Scottish Government provided funding to PoPP as part of a pilot, to purchase codes which enabled families to access the Triple P Online programme. Triple P Online is a self-directed online intervention for parents, aimed at supporting parents to understand their child's behaviour, strengthen relationships and help build their child's social, emotional and behavioural skills. Triple P Online is comprised of 8 modules, which parents work through independently. Each module takes 30-60 minutes to complete and as one module is completed, the next is unlocked and can be accessed. It is recommended that parents receive additional PoPP Practitioner support, as research shows that parents who are supported through the intervention report greater improvements and complete more of the modules.

Headline PoPP data for Triple P Online (March 2024)

Number of families enrolled in Triple P Online between May 2020 and March 2024	235
Number of children for whom pre- and post SDQs have been gathered	130
% of children in the clinical range at the start of Triple P Online who had moved out of this high-risk range on completing the intervention	71%