



The PEPS Guest Speaker List: Info for Potential Speakers

PEPS – the Program for Early Parent Support – welcomes area professionals who are interested in volunteering as guest speakers at our parent support groups.

Basic Information about PEPS Meetings

PEPS offers three types of groups, serving approximately 1800 families per year. At all meetings, parents attend with their babies / children.

- Newborn Groups start when babies are 0 – 4 months old. Meetings are held in the homes of group members. A typical daytime group would have 10 moms and 10 babies in attendance, plus the volunteer leader. A typical evening group would have five couples, two moms who attend without partners, and 7 babies.
- Baby Peppers starts when babies are 5 – 12 months old, and is led by a volunteer. A typical group is 12 mothers and 12 babies. Baby Peppers are held in community sites in Seattle, Snohomish County, and the Eastside.
- Little Peppers is for families with two children under age 3, it's led by a professional facilitator. A typical group is nine mothers, nine babies, and 7 toddlers (some of the toddlers may be at pre-school or daycare.) Groups held in sites in North Seattle, West Seattle, and Bellevue.
- On-Going PEPS Groups: Each group meets for a 3-month session with a PEPS leader, and all are encouraged to continue meeting on their own for as many weeks, months, or years as they choose. On-going Groups also have access to our guest speaker lists and may contact you.

A typical PEPS meeting begins with the participants sharing highs and lows from their week, then singing songs, then a topic discussion for 45 minutes to one hour on topics of concern to parents. Generally, the leader guides these discussions; however, most will choose to have one or two guest speakers over the course of their 3-month session.

It's important that guest speakers understand that PEPS meetings can be busy and loud, with the possibility that at any given time any one of the babies in the room may be crying, feeding, having its diaper changed, or being distractingly adorable.

Role of the Guest Speaker

Your role would be to serve as an expert resource on a topic of interest to PEPS Parents. The typical format of PEPS is an informal discussion based on mutual support and shared information, so speakers are encouraged to think about how to present information in an interactive, discussion-based manner whenever possible rather than presenting a formal "lecture" on a topic.

You are welcome to distribute handouts related to the topic discussed; however, this is not required of our volunteer guest speakers.

PEPS believes in providing a safe, non-judgmental environment which acknowledges that there is no single “Right Way to Parent”, but that all parents are doing their best parenting job based on their own priorities and values. The role of the speaker is to provide a variety of options which parents can evaluate, and incorporate into their parenting as they see fit.

Limitations on the Guest Speaker

PEPS has a strict “no-sales” policy. When introducing yourself, you are welcome to share a little about your background/expertise, and welcome to give out business cards.

You may not give out brochures advertising your services. You may not suggest to them that they all use your service or buy your product. You are not allowed to ask for contact information from the participants, or to solicit them in the future. Certainly, if you have a service or product they are interested in, they are welcome to contact you at any time.

Logistics of guest speaking

1. Interested parties complete the application and agreement, which includes questions about what times they are available, and what parts of King and Snohomish County they could travel to for a group.
2. Upon approval, they are added to the guest speaker list. The list is distributed to leaders at volunteer trainings, and is also available on the “leader resources” section of our website.
3. Leaders may then contact you to invite you to their group. They are encouraged to contact you with several weeks advance notice, and to propose several alternative dates when you could come. We encourage you to get back to them within 3 – 4 days so that they can plan and communicate to their groups.
4. Typically, guest speakers arrive at the group about halfway through the meeting (so that the group will have completed highs and lows, songs, and break time.) The speaker then takes over for the rest of the meeting until the scheduled end time.
5. After the group, leaders give their feedback to the PEPS staff, so we can remain aware of how guest speakers are received by groups.