



# beginnings

2017 Annual Report

**PEPS**

PROGRAM FOR EARLY PARENT SUPPORT

Dear PEPS Community,

PEPS turned 35 in 2017! As we celebrated the growth of PEPS, the tens of thousands of parents it has connected over the years, and the incredible community of volunteers and supporters that keep it going, I was humbled by the immeasurable ways this organization has shaped our community.

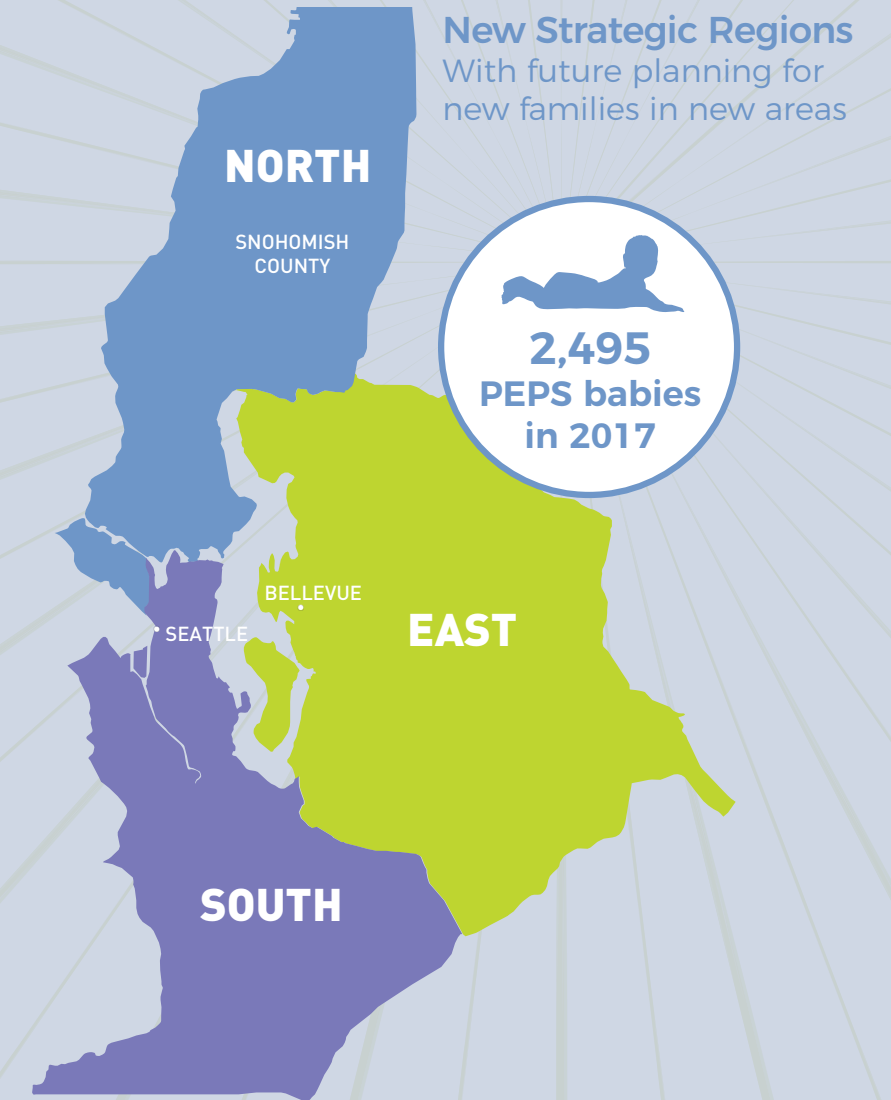
The need for community is timeless and, after 35 years, families need connection more than ever as they navigate their new beginnings with a new baby.

We want to honor all of the new beginnings that we were a part of in 2017: new beginnings for more than 3,500 parents, for budding partnerships with incredible community organizations, for the PEPS organizational culture, and for efforts that advance our commitment to racial equity in our community. Thank you for being a part of our story and the new beginnings for so many families.

Warmly,



Jessica Lawmaster  
PEPS Executive Director





# new baby

Every 15 minutes **a new baby is born** in our community.

*“There is no end to the number of organizations doing valiant, meaningful work to improve quality of life and strengthen our communities. I have come to realize that among all of those organizations and efforts, there are just a few that are providing solutions – work that is creating transformational change for future generations. PEPS is one of those rare few. PEPS is committed to equity and inclusion, it understands how critical a baby’s first 1000 days are to well-being, and is dedicated to empowering new parents to be able to support the healthy development of their children. This is a formula for truly and sustainably improving quality of life and building functional, supportive communities.”*

— Mary Ellen Cunningham, PEPS Board President



**3,515 parents** met in **293 groups** for peer support and social connection



Parents had a satisfying PEPS Group experience (weighted average on an 0-10-point scale)





# now identity

**We want the best for them** and their future.

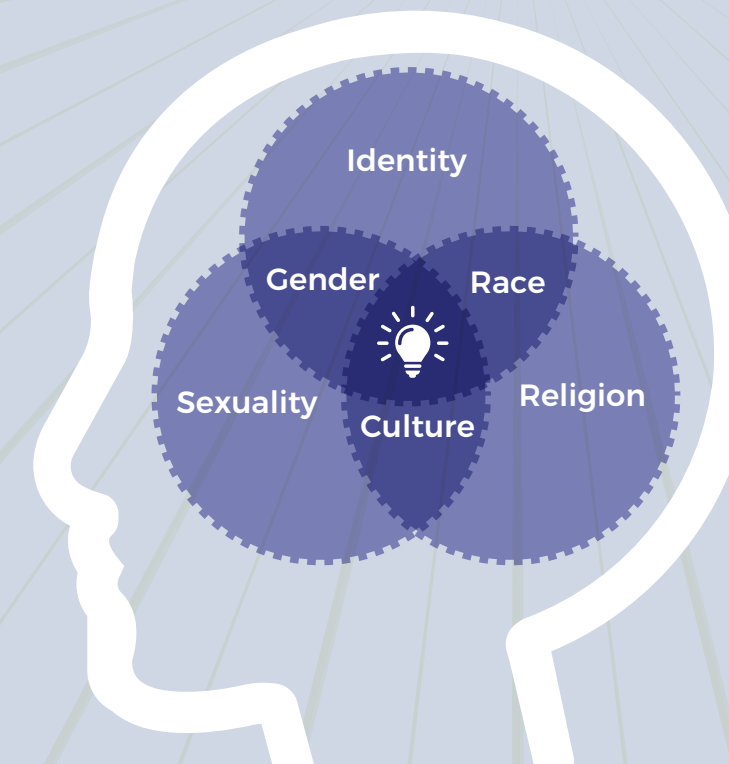
*"We support a baby's identity development when we play games like Peekaboo, look in the mirror with baby, or sing or do rhymes with baby's name. Noticing ourselves as distinct and different from others, learning about differences and then groups, is what we call social identity development. We couldn't have a more important role in supporting our baby's healthy development to grow up in an increasingly diverse world."*

*—Debbie LeeKeenan, MEd, Early Education Consultant and PEPS Board Member*



New topics, resources, events and opportunities.

PEPS programming increasingly looks beyond the newborn phase to include important parenting conversations about the ages and stages just ahead for families.





# now parent

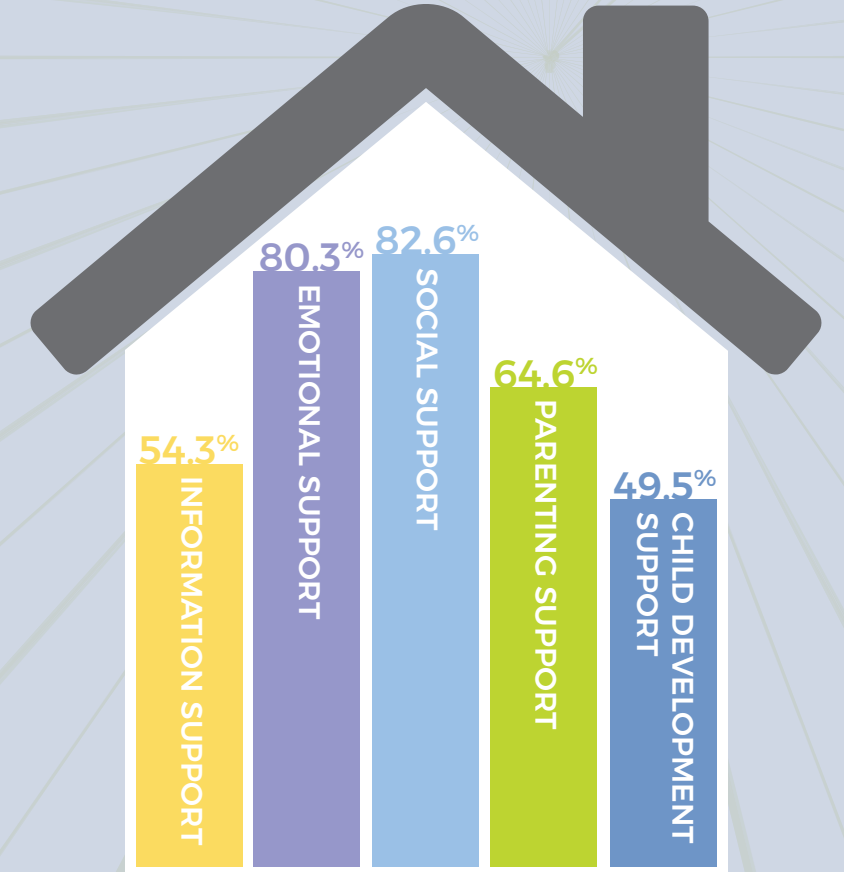
That's why we focus on parents. **All new families deserve support, friendship, and community** during what many parents describe as the most challenging transition of their lives.

*"I feel like PEPS actually saved me — I was feeling so isolated and confused, and having support at that critical time was amazing for me, my child, and my marriage."*

—PEPS Parent



PEPS asked parents what type of support they received from their PEPS Group.





# new feelings

After welcoming a new baby, **parents are particularly vulnerable** and may be physically isolated, healing from birth, experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, and/or coping with sleeplessness and exhaustion.

*"The reality of becoming a parent almost never matches up with our expectations going into it. We know that things will change but we don't really anticipate how we will change as people and partners. We also fail to acknowledge that change is actually quite hard and with it can bring many mixed emotions.*

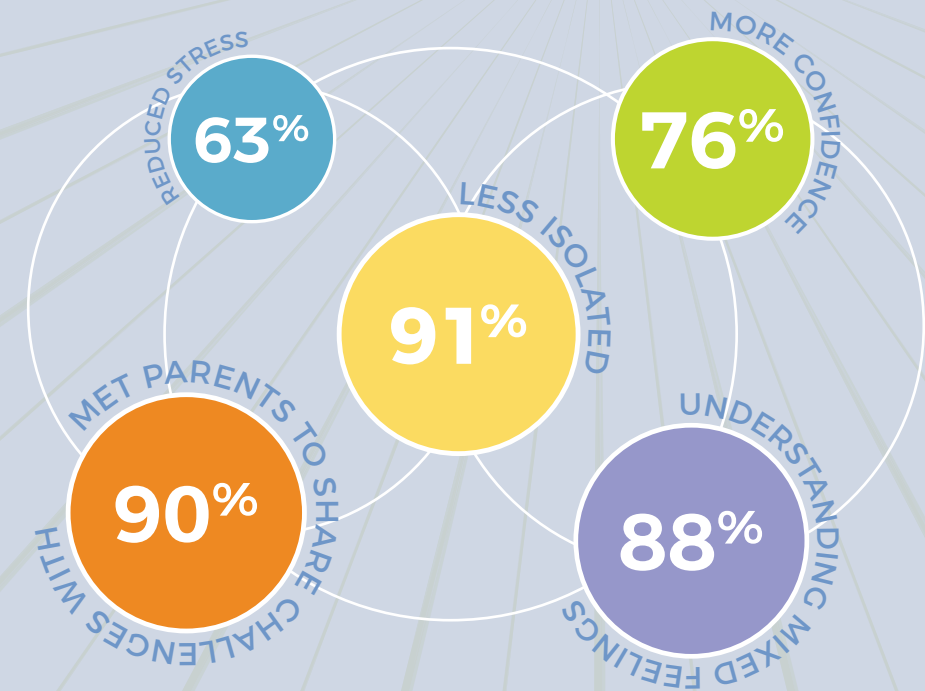
*Parenting is meant to be a social experience yet parenting today is often isolating. Isolation is the leading cause of postpartum depression and anxiety and yet the antidote is so simple. It's really amazing to see the impact of new parents getting together and realizing that that the struggles they are having are not unique to them. It's like a weight is lifted off their shoulders."*

—Mia Edidin, LICSW, Program Director, Perinatal Support Washington



PEPS supports parents and family wellbeing during the transition to parenthood.

Programs at PEPS are structured to build confidence in new parenthood, which in turn supports attachment, infant mental wellness and parental resilience.





# now family

We know that **social connection for new parents is important** to family wellness and to infant mental health and development.

**Good support strengthens resilience** for the next milestone, challenge or change, helps create the bond between parents and babies, and shapes a baby's healthy development.

*"An infant's social-emotional development happens in the context of engaged relationships with caregivers. When adults feel supported emotionally in their development as parents through a program like PEPS, it boosts their own self-confidence and wellbeing, allowing them to be more present and attuned when with their babies."*

*—Jamie Elzea, LICSW, MPH, Executive Director of the Washington Association for Infant Mental Health and PEPS Board Member*



## At PEPS

**76%**  
of parents  
learned  
activities and  
ways to support  
development

**81%**  
learned about  
responding to  
baby's needs

**88%**  
spent enjoyable  
time with their  
baby and found  
fun ways to  
interact

PEPS meetings include a focus on development activities and a range of topics including newborn cues, daily interactions, routines, and much more.

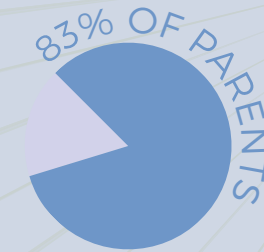


# new challenges

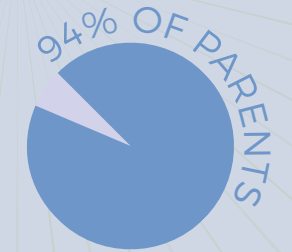
**Parents share about daily frustrations and more complicated concerns like emergent perinatal mood disorders and anxiety.** The connections and learning provided by PEPS Groups help shape the healthy development of babies, build resilience in families and foster healthier communities.

*“While having a baby can bring great joy, the postpartum period is also a period of profound transition. On top of all of the life-changes that women have to adapt to, research supports that women’s brains also undergo neurobiological changes that can increase their risk of mood and anxiety symptoms. Having peers to turn to for support, normalization, and validation is essential and can make a profound difference with coping or decreasing these risks.”*

*—Veronika Zantop, MD, Medical Director, Center for Perinatal Bonding and Support, Swedish Medical Center*



learned about emotional issues and ways to take care of themselves and seek additional support



look forward to their PEPS Group each week



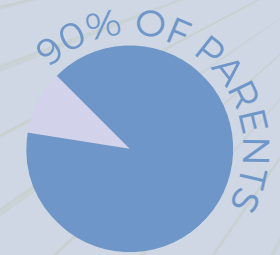


# now community

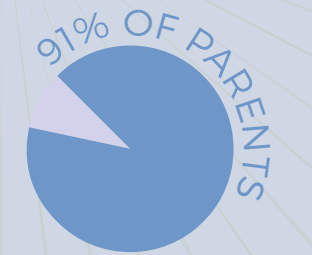
PEPS Groups are fun and meaningful and always include the babies. **Groups learn and share resources, and parents build confidence.**

*“Being a single parent there were many times when I could have felt isolated or overwhelmed, but knowing that I could look forward to PEPS every week was invaluable and benefited my life and my son’s life. I am so grateful for PEPS.”*

—PEPS Parent



continue to meet  
with their PEPS Group



would  
recommend PEPS



# now learning

**We've invested in our group leaders** — who are with these new parents each week for 12 weeks — to help them create a gentle, welcoming, non-judgmental space so that the parents feel seen and heard and are there for each other.

*“Our PEPS Group Leaders are at the heart of our impact at PEPS. Leading a PEPS Group is a significant responsibility that requires a great deal of time, intention, and love, and every parent’s PEPS experience is shaped by their Group Leader. At PEPS, we see equipping and supporting our Group Leaders as paramount in our responsibility to the families we serve.”*

*—Jessica Lawmaster, MSW, PEPS Executive Director*



NEW  
Short 2-hour trainings  
for repeat leaders in addition to regular  
4-hour trainings for first-time leaders

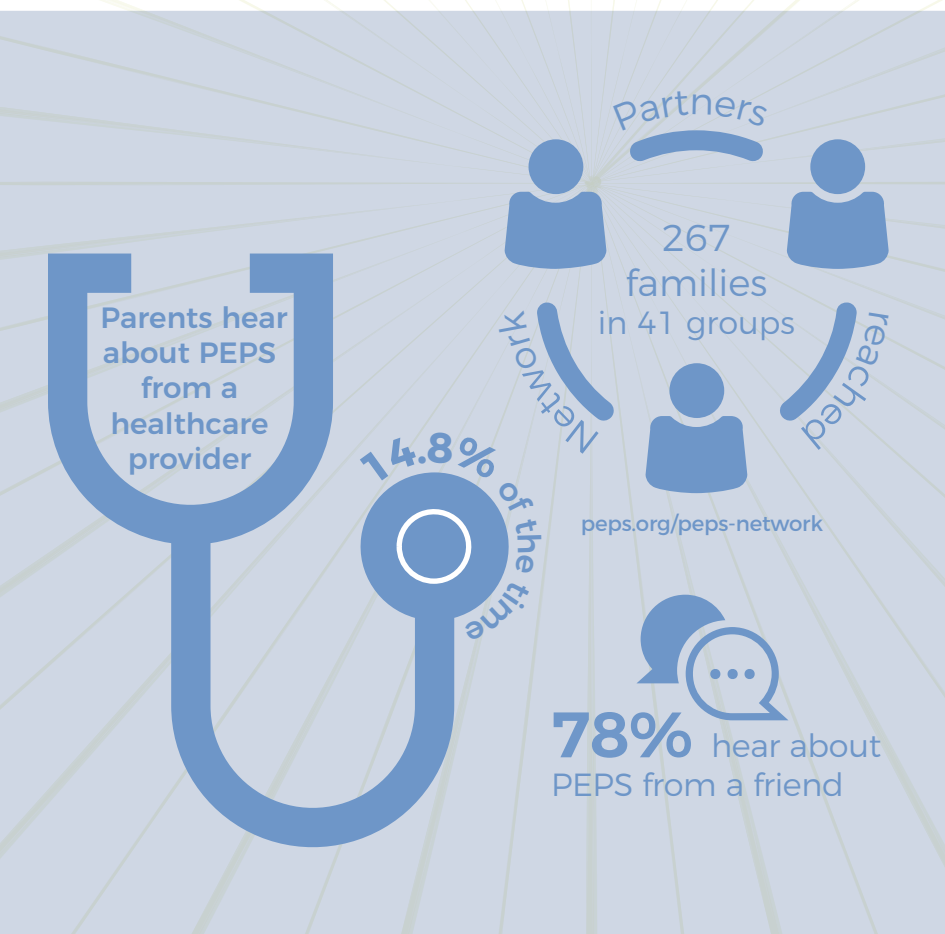


# new connections

**Collaboration with the wider professional community is informing and enriching our programming.** Partners help us support more parents by forming groups within their organizations. In 2017, a partnership with Cocoon House, the Snohomish Health District, and Crossroads Alternative High School offered a PEPS Group to new teen mothers as part of their high school experience. That partnership continued in the spring of 2018 with another group of new moms.

*“My goal as a public health nurse is to help vulnerable populations while being a good steward of our limited resources. No one agency can do this alone. The partnership that Snohomish Health District has with PEPS to serve teen moms means that we can leverage existing resources to promote resilience among teen parents, so that their children have the best chance to be healthy and productive members of our community.”*

—Felicia Cain, MSN, RN, Snohomish Health District





# 10 ways to work

PEPS has invested in adequate levels of staffing support, brought salaries up to market value, hired new and redefined existing positions. We've also increased capacity with staff training and support, new infrastructure, improved processes and an ongoing commitment to staff and board learning and analysis with a racial equity lens.

*"PEPS stands out as a bold and innovative organization that courageously engages in difficult conversations with its staff and community while maintaining a compassionate and mission-driven perspective. They tackled questions of culture, norms, expectations, and diversity in a brave and direct way and delved deep into personnel policies looking at things through the equity lens. It was an energizing experience to work with the PEPS leadership team to develop a performance review process that reflects the culture and values of the organization. These and other thoughtful and intentional efforts paved the way to develop and foster an inclusive work environment at PEPS."*

—Efrat Hurvitz, HR Consultant, 501 Commons



## Growing Staff Competencies

As PEPS consistently increases the number of families we serve by 5-10% year over year, we also invest in staff competencies.

**NEW Parental Leave Policy**  
Gives staff time to care for a new baby

**NEW Staff Compensation**  
Adjusted compensation based on Washington nonprofit salary survey

**NEW Employee Handbook**  
Forward-thinking and responsive policies including extended family leave, domestic violence leave

**3,515**  
families in 2017

KEEPING UP WITH GROWTH



# now impact

In 2017 the Growing Impact Campaign continued efforts to increase access to our programs, strengthen the cultural responsiveness and inclusiveness of our programs, and collaborate with partners in our community who serve parents and families. 34 funders pledged \$975,939 for 2017-2019. **Thank you to our entire giving community** — individual donors, foundations and community minded businesses — who so generously invest in the work we do to build resilient families and connected communities. And a special welcome to 347 NEW PEPS donors in 2017.

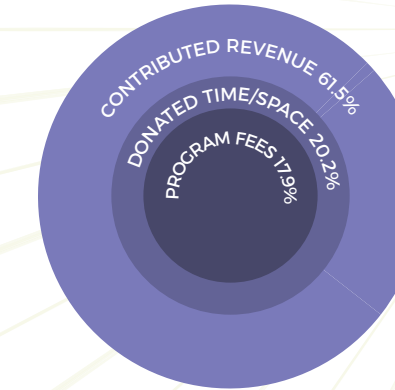
*“As a former teacher and a financial supporter of programs for school-age children, I recognize and value giving parents and babies a support network to lay a strong foundation. That’s why PEPS is so important to the future well-being and success of children.”*

—Heidi Stolte, Stolte Family Foundation

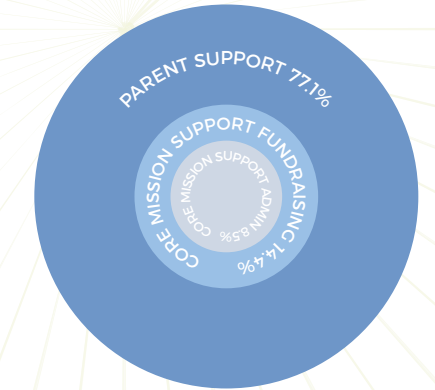


REVENUE = \$2,363,463

EXPENSES = \$1,762,417



ESTIMATED PRIOR TO YEAR-END FINANCIAL REVIEW.  
Reviewed financials will be available at [peps.org](http://peps.org) by late summer.



PARENT SUPPORT

- PEPS Groups
- Leader Training
- Curriculum & Support
- Community Engagement
- Partnerships
- Parent Resources

DONORS: [PEPS.ORG/GIVE/SUPPORTERS](http://PEPS.ORG/GIVE/SUPPORTERS)  
FINANCIALS: [PEPS.ORG/ABOUT/IMPACT/ANNUAL-REPORTS](http://PEPS.ORG/ABOUT/IMPACT/ANNUAL-REPORTS)





**volunteer** with PEPS this year.  
[www.peps.org/volunteer](http://www.peps.org/volunteer)

**give** a gift and invest in new families.  
[www.peps.org/give](http://www.peps.org/give)

**recommend** PEPS to friends and family and encourage them to take care of themselves as parents and find nonjudgmental support.  
[www.peps.org/about/recommend-peps](http://www.peps.org/about/recommend-peps)

**thank you** for volunteering, partnering, recommending, giving and supporting PEPS and families in our parenting community.



## At PEPS, all families are welcome.

The PEPS experience strengthens families, increases family wellness, and prepares families to cope with life stresses by creating social, thriving neighborhood-based parent groups.

Financial assistance is available.

## 2017 PEPS Board of Directors

\* Partial Year

Laurie Alexander

Sarah Cody Roth

Mary Ellen Cunningham

Tracy Cutchlow

Shanna Donhauser\*

Chrissy Egan

Jamie Elzea

Lesley Graham

Sara Hasan

Camille Heinen\*

Tera Holman

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# PEPS

PROGRAM FOR EARLY PARENT SUPPORT

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