



The most vulnerable families in our society need the most intense intervention. The Even Start Family Literacy program is unique in offering a comprehensive one-stop family literacy intervention that includes early childhood education for the children from birth through age 7 years; adult literacy, adult basic education, GED preparation, and English-as-a-Second Language; and training for parents in how to be the primary teachers for their children and full partners in their education. In addition, teachers supervise and support parents as they work with their children in literacy activities so that parents will continue to foster their children's literacy at home. Rather than separate interventions for children and adults, Even Start Family Literacy is a holistic program that targets the family.

It provides for high quality education services that produce positive results for our state's poorest and most undereducated families. In FY 2007, through 44 Even Start programs, 1,292 at-risk families, which included 1,939 children and 1,352 adults, received the services and support they need to be successful in school, at work, and in their communities. At-risk factors for these families include the fact that

- 80.5% of these families are at or below the Federal Poverty level,
- 73% of the parents are unemployed,
- 76% of the parents do not have a high school diploma or a GED,
- 49% of the parents have not gone beyond the 9th grade,
- 57% of these families speak a language other than English as the primary language in the home, and
- 53% of these families speak Spanish as the primary language in the home.

Illinois performance measurement data for these children, adults and families who have been enrolled in an Even Start Family Literacy program show that Even Start works.

- Children are improving their language literacy and reading skills, their school attendance, and their grade promotion. For example, third grade children in an Even Start program are reading on grade level at a higher rate (65.8%) than economically disadvantaged third graders as a whole (54.2%).
- Adults are increasing their own learning, gaining knowledge to help their children achieve success, and meeting their education-related and employment-related goals. For example, 88% of participating adults who have identified at least one education-related goal (e.g., pass the GED test) or one employment-related goal (e.g., enter into first job) attained at least one of their goals within a prescribed period of time.
- 61 adults earned their GED.
- 31 teen parents earned their high school diploma.
- 185 adults entered into employment, and 41 adults got a better job.
- Families have books in their homes, read together, and attend family-school activities. Parents are working at home with their children on literacy skills, assisting their children in making transitions (e.g. pre-k to kindergarten) and becoming more involved with their children's schools. For example, 99.5% of participating families independently demonstrated one of the interactive literacy behaviors identified or learned in the program.

Even Start Creates a Foundation for Intergenerational Lifelong Learning!

Illinois State Board of Education

http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/even_start_family_literacy.htm