

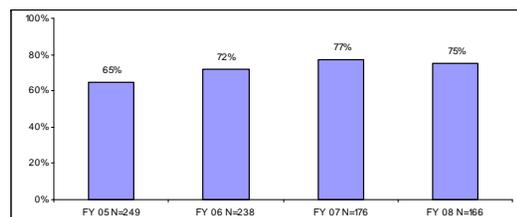
Program Report Card: State Department of Education / Even Start Family Literacy Program

Program Purpose: Even Start (Title I, Part II, federal initiative) helps break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of families most in need by combining early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education and parenting education into a unified family literacy program.

Contributes to Population Quality of Life Result: Even Start contributes to the population goal of ensuring that all children are healthy and ready to learn by age 5 by simultaneously providing services for parents and young children to help parents improve their literacy or basic educational skills; to help parents become full partners in educating their children; to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and to assist families in moving toward self-sufficiency and out of poverty.

Although we see solid gains in Even Start, the number of participants continues to decrease due to federal budget cuts. The state's federal allocation has decreased 70 percent from \$1,615,000 in 2005-06 to \$472,241 in 2008-09. Level federal funding is anticipated for 2009-10. In order to accommodate rising program costs and maintain fidelity to the federal program requirements, the number of participants will continue to decline in 2009-2010.

Performance Measure 1: Percent of Even Start children meeting standards in reading/reading readiness skills.



Story behind the baseline:

Even Start program performance data show that between 65 percent to 77 percent of the children met or exceeded standards in reading readiness for their age group (ages birth to 7). The trend in program performance is relatively stable. Reading/reading readiness skills are assessed with the following measures, depending on the child's age: the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, the CT Preschool Assessment Framework, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), grade promotion, Concepts About Print, and the Developmental Reading Assessment.

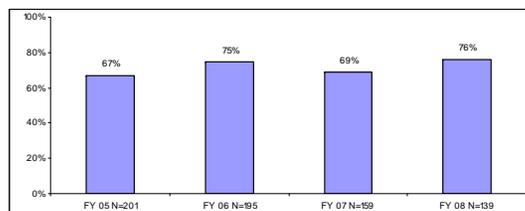
Although research data are not available for Connecticut, research from other states indicates that children who receive Even Start services outperform children who do not participate in Even Start. These

studies suggest that Even Start children score significantly higher on measures of reading readiness, and are twice as likely as non-Even Start children to be reading at or above grade level.ⁱ

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

Through state technical assistance, the early childhood classrooms will be reviewed using either the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale or Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, as appropriate. In order to continue to improve quality, the State Department of Education (SDE) will ensure that each program uses the results to develop a quality maintenance and improvement plan.

Performance Measure 2: Percent of Even Start parents showing significant learning gains or earning a high school diploma.



Story behind the baseline:

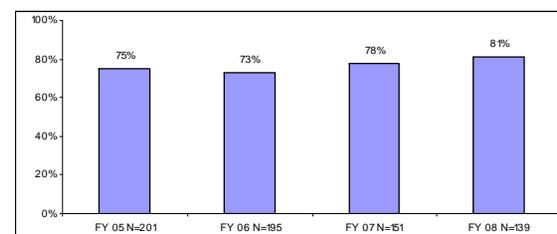
Over the past four years, adults in Even Start have consistently made significant gains. Compared to the entire population of adult education students, Even Start participants make impressive gains on measures of high school completion and English language acquisition. The percent of Even Start parents attaining a measurable educational outcome has been significantly greater than that of all adult education participants statewide by about 25 percentage points annually.ⁱⁱ

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

SDE will continue to increase the percentage of Even Start children and adults meeting the performance

measure by reviewing and revising the standard to ensure that it is challenging; continued monitoring (compliance reviews, local evaluations, state performance indicator monitoring, etc.); and professional development.

Performance Measure 3: Percent of Even Start parents demonstrating gains in family literacy skills.



Story behind the baseline:

Results show that in the past four years, three-quarters or more of the parents were observed to learn and apply parenting skills related to family literacy in all areas. The trend is improving in that 75 percent met the standard in FY 2005 and 81 percent met the standard in 2008. Programs have focused their parenting classes more purposefully on literacy development.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

SDE will provide professional development for all Even Start staff to strengthen parenting and interactive literacy across all program components. In addition, the 2008-09 state evaluation will focus on local practices in this area.

ⁱ Link, D. E. and Weirauch, D. M. (2005). Questioning the validity of the evidence against family literacy programming: A critical analysis of the National Even Start Evaluations. Literacy Harvest/Family Literacy Forum, 12, 33-38. New York: Literacy Assistance Center.

ⁱⁱ Source: Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS)