

Certificate in Family Literacy

The Certificate in Family Literacy was created and is offered through a partnership between the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy at Penn State and the National Center for Family Literacy. There are five three-credit online courses, offered through Penn State's World Campus, required for the Certificate in Family Literacy:

ADTED 456: Introduction to Family Literacy

ADTED 457: Adult Literacy

ADTED 458: Early Literacy Development and Parental Involvement

ADTED 459: Interactive Literacy: Parents and Children

ADTED 460: Introduction to Adult Education

History, methods, agencies, program areas, and problems of adult education in the United States and selected countries.

ADTED 456: Introduction to Family Literacy Syllabus

ADTED 456 explores the rationale for and characteristics of comprehensive family literacy, focusing on the families served, services provided, outcomes achieved, and the roles and responsibilities of the individuals, organizations, and communities involved. The following topics are addressed in the lessons:

Introduction and Course Overview

- The importance of literacy in our everyday lives.
- Ways in which family literacy programs support literacy learning.
- Understanding the use of the terms *literacy* and *family literacy*.

Who Are Family Literacy Program Participants?

- The social impact of low literacy.
- Qualifying and distinguishing characteristics of families for whom comprehensive family literacy services are designed.
- Sensitivity towards individual and cultural differences.
- Effective ways to recruit program participants.

Why Is Family Literacy Important?

- Services and program characteristics that meet individual and family needs.
- Evolution of family literacy services.
- The federal definition of family literacy.

What Is Family Literacy?

- Ways to help participants set individual and family goals.
- Key messages pertinent to individual and family goals resonate across components (component integration).
- The four-component model for family literacy programs.

Adult Education and Children's Education Components

- Characteristics of adult education unique to family literacy programs.
- Assisting adults develop individual learning goals for themselves and their children.
- Characteristics of children's education unique to family literacy programs.
- How adult education and children's education integrate into a comprehensive system of services for individuals and families.

Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time

- PACT Time learning environment and routines.
- Developing learning experiences appropriate for PACT Time.
- Developing plans for parents and staff to review and reflect on PACT Time experiences.

- How PACT Time integrates into a comprehensive system of services for individuals and families.
- Ways literacy activities transfer into settings outside the classroom across ages of children.

Parenting Education

- The parenting education curriculum.
- Developing learning experiences appropriate for parenting education.
- Developing plans for parents and staff to review and reflect on parenting education experiences.
- How parenting education integrates into a comprehensive system of services for individuals and families.

Program Standards and Goals

- Major funding streams that support family literacy services.
- Key elements of program standards within several of the largest programs providing family literacy.
- Resources and reports on key findings regarding program effectiveness.

Who Makes It Happen?

- Identifying and evaluating appropriate curriculum, materials and events that lead to individual and program goal setting, achievement, and assessment.
- The cycle of effective instruction (establish goals, plan, implement, reflect and review, evaluate, revise goals, plan...).
- Developing strategies to scaffold learning into a hierarchy.

Assessment, Team Participation, and Retention

- Methods and/or tools for evaluating program participants.
- Characteristics of effective family literacy team members.

Advocacy and Collaboration

- The value of and describe ways for communicating purposes, practices, and results of program services for advocacy, sustaining program support and participant recruitment (as most recruitment is based on word of mouth and referrals).
- Identifying potential community partners for a family literacy program.

ADTED 457: Adult Literacy Syllabus

ADTED 457 is an introduction to adult literacy research, issues, methods, and practices. It provides students with 12 lessons that analyze and debate current adult literacy research and issues; examine, assess, compare, synthesize, and apply adult learning research and theories; and investigate, evaluate, synthesize, and apply adult basic and literacy education methods and practices. Each lesson includes assigned readings, an individual learning task, a group discussion task, and a portfolio task. In addition, there are three team tasks that engage students in cooperative research projects during the course of the semester. The final course project is a portfolio that students develop to reflect their own particular areas of interest within the field of adult literacy; students conduct more in-depth research, and create, devise, and/or illustrate and explain applications of the research and practices studied in the lessons.

The following topics are addressed in the 12 lessons:

1. Current Adult Literacy Research
Current and Emerging Literacy-Related Issues
2. Adult Learning Needs and Goals
Maslow's Hierarchy
M. Knowles – Andragogy

- K.P. Cross – Lifelong Learning Theory
- Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences
- 3. Integrating Assessment and Evaluation into Adult Basic and Literacy Education
 - Standardized Instruments
 - Reliability and Validity Issues
 - Alternative Assessments
 - Authentic Assessments
- 4. Adult Teaching Principles
 - C. Houle – Self-Directed Learning Theory
 - Developing Lesson Plans for Adult Students
 - Constructivist Theory
 - Creating Contextualized Learning Activities for Adult Students
 - Research-based Teaching and Learning Strategies
- 5. Teaching Adult Beginning Readers Word Identification Skills
 - Current Research on Teaching Adults Phonological Skills
- 6. Teaching Adult Beginning Readers Fluency Skills
 - Current Research on Teaching Adults Fluency Skills
- 7. Teaching Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension Strategies
 - Current Research on Vocabulary Development
 - Current Research on Teaching Adults Reading Comprehension Skills
- 8. Teaching Writing Skills
 - Current Research on Effective Writing Instruction
- 9. Teaching Critical Thinking Skills
 - Current Cognitive Science Research and Learning Theories
- 10. Second Language Acquisition Theories
- 11. English as a Second Language
 - Research on Needs
 - Research-based Effective Practices
- 12. Transitioning Adult Learners into Postsecondary Education
 - Research on Self-Regulatory Strategies
 - Need for Critical Reading Skills
 - Workplace and Workforce Literacy Issues
 - Employability Skills

ADTED 458: Early Literacy Development and Parental Involvement Syllabus

ADTED 458 focuses on young children's language and literacy development, including ways that parents and staff support this development; research related to children's learning; and ways in which family literacy supports early literacy development. The course addresses:

- Ways that parents and staff support this development,
- Research related to children’s learning, and
- Ways in which family literacy supports early literacy development.

It has several broad strands of focus that are developed and threaded across our study.

1. Children’s early language and literacy development—what it looks like at various stages of growth and development, and what is considered the usual order or sequence of that development.
2. Current research, primarily scientifically based research, regarding children’s early language and literacy development—what researchers conclude, particularly relative to the most recently shared knowledge base regarding early language and literacy development.

3. Evidence-based practices identified by research for teachers and parents to support children's early language and literacy development; as the strongest influence on children's education, how parents and teachers apply what is known about children's language and literacy learning to maximize their learning experiences.

4. Early literacy development and parental involvement in the context of comprehensive family literacy services.

ADTED 458 provides opportunities for students to explore the fascinating development of early language and literacy and learn the important role parents have in influencing children's transformation into successful readers and writers. In the context of comprehensive family literacy, staff supports parents as they improve their own literacy skills and learn to model skills important for literacy learning of their children.

The following topics are covered across 12 lessons:

- Foundations - Who, What, Why, When and How of Early Language and Literacy
- Research Review
- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Letter and Word Knowledge
- Learning Environments
- Integration of language and Literacy Areas
- Early Language and Literacy Development in the Family Literacy Context

ADTED 459: Interactive Literacy: Parents and Children Syllabus

ADTED 459 prepares family literacy and early childhood educators for understanding, preparing for and practicing interactive literacy lessons. This course stresses teaching in a planned and intentional mode. It is based on sound ideas of interactive family literacy and parenting education. Interactive literacy activities encourage language and literacy development by integrating language, reading, and writing/drawing processes. In this manner, interactive literacy activities become linked with assessment to document language and literacy progress. Finally, this course includes the intentional and planned uses of the parent-child interaction time in family literacy programs.

This family literacy course focuses on developing planned and intentional teaching methods and lessons, including advanced preparation of the lesson, delivery of the lesson, evaluation of participants' performance throughout the lesson and instructor self-reflection. These elements become sound processes and products of planned, intentional interactive literacy teaching.

Students explore and self-reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes about best practices of intentional teaching. After identifying individual beliefs and attitudes; students compare best practices derived from most current family systems' specialists.

The course also includes interactive literacy lessons for English Language Learners (ELL). ELL strategies and methods work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse parents, their children, and ALL children. In other words, good ELL strategies for families and children are not only appropriate for ELL but ALL children and families.

There are several important topics or messages that are common to this course and threaded across the lessons. They include:

1. Family systems research describing interactive baselines of contemporary family functioning and demonstrating how language development and literacy for writing and reading can be intentionally nurtured with the active, dynamic family unit.
2. Purposeful and intentional planning and implementing of teaching language development and literacy in home and school programs at infancy to grade 3.
3. Development as age and setting across lessons covering planning and content strategies including the:
 - Very young child at home and in child care center programs.
 - Young child in preschool and kindergarten.
 - Young child in primary grades 1-3.
4. Development as content showing lessons and strategies at the following developmental levels:
 - Language development and growth.
 - Emergent to later literacy including early or initial to more advanced reading and writing.
 - Interactive literacy using children's literature, oral communication, and technology.
5. Parenting education.
6. English-as-Second Language (ESL) scaffolding techniques.
7. Assessment pinpointing child's and parent's family literacy using instruments such as the Even Start Family Literacy Parent Education Profile.
8. Demonstration of intentional uses of parent-child interaction time in family literacy programs.