

FEDERAL FUNDED EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS IN NEVADA

2007-08
Evaluation Report

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Special Education, Elementary & Secondary Education,
and School Improvement Programs
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Executive Summary

Even Start is a family literacy program. The basic concept behind family literacy is that parents are the first teachers of their children. Even Start is based on the belief that strengthening children's relationships with their parents and enriching their literacy environments will have a positive impact on children's learning and performance in school. When parents understand the connection between the ways they interact with their children and their children's development, they can turn ordinary experiences into learning experiences.

Even Start addresses the literacy needs of both children and parents by offering parenting education, early childhood education, interactive literacy activities (ILA), and adult education, including English language instruction. These services should be of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family. Even Start projects also typically offer a range of “support services,” such as transportation and child care, designed to enable families to participate in the program.

To qualify for Nevada Even Start, parents must be eligible to participate in an adult literacy program under the Adult Education Act, or be in need of basic literacy skills or English acquisition, and have children from birth through age seven.

Nevada funds five local Even Start projects through the U.S. Department of Education. The five projects are operated by five school districts: Carson City, Churchill County, Nye County, Pershing County, and Washoe County. Each project has a required local partner, which is jointly responsible for program operations and compliance, and several collaborators.

During 2007-08, the five Even Start projects in Nevada provided services to 134 families, including 136 adults and 188 children.

The purpose of this report is to describe the Even Start population and projects and to report the results of data collected on 14 indicators of program outcomes in early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting skills. The evaluation addressed four major questions.

1. Who is served by the program and what services do they receive?
2. How is the funding spent on the program?
3. How do projects implement Even Start?
4. What are the outcomes of Even Start?

The remainder of the executive summary is divided into findings about key sections of the evaluation, followed by a set of conclusions from the evaluation findings.

Even Start Funding. Nevada continued to receive fewer funds to award Even Start projects due to a reduction of Title 1 Even Start funds at the federal level. The Nevada Department of Education awarded the same allocation to all five projects in 2007-08. All projects received an allocation of \$130,000, a decrease of \$20,000, or 13 percent from the 2006-07 allocation.

Participant Recruitment. To be eligible to receive Even Start services, a family must have at least one parent who qualifies for adult education under the Adult Education Act and have at least one child birth through seven years old. All projects also used supplementary criteria to target certain families beyond basic eligibility requirements.

Specifically, projects targeted—

- ✓ recent immigrants or persons with limited English proficiency,
- ✓ parents who did not complete high school,
- ✓ children from three through five years old, and
- ✓ parents who are already enrolled in adult education with a collaborating agency.

All projects easily located eligible families to participate in the program as evidenced by the fact that projects reached capacity by the fall 2007 and two projects developed a waiting list of families to enroll in the program. Projects relied primarily on referrals from collaborating agencies and “word of mouth” to recruit potentially eligible families. Another common recruitment strategy included referrals from community and government agencies.

Once recruited, all five projects took the necessary steps to determine whether families were eligible for services and oriented families to the program. Most projects also reported they adequately assessed family skills (i.e., adult and children skills) consistently.

Even Start Participants. The general profile of Even Start families is that they are primarily poor and face multiple social and economic disadvantages, including limited educational experiences, low-paying career tracks, and, for most, limited English proficiency. Even Start provides these families an important opportunity to better their lives by improving their basic literacy and parenting skills and by providing developmentally appropriate experiences for their children.

Even Start adults cited three primary reasons for participating in Even Start: to learn English, to improve their child's chance for future success in school, and to become a better parent.

Even Start projects are expected to serve the families most in need. The characteristics of Even Start families show that projects, in fact, met that target. Thirty-three percent of Even Start adults (42 adults) had an elementary school education and three percent (4 adults) had no schooling. In addition, 76 percent of Even Start adults (104 adults) were educated outside the United States (primarily in Mexico).

The primary reasons adults participated in Nevada Even Start were to learn English, to improve their child's chance for future success in school, and to become a better parent.

Even Start families represent the poorer segment of the population. Ninety-three percent of Even Start families (124 of 134 families) have incomes under \$30,000. Some families, however, earned more than \$30,000, which may make the family ineligible for services.

Most Even Start children (147 of 188 children or 78 percent) did not participate in any educational program before participating in Even Start, and about 38 percent (71 children) did not participate in any other educational program when the family enrolled in Even Start.

Even Start families represent the poorer segment of the population with limited educational background for adults and children. Most are English Language Learners.

The typical Even Start family included two parents—representing 68 percent of families (91 families). Single parents headed 38 families (28 percent).

The adult Even Start population is primarily female: 127 females (93 percent) vs. nine

males (7 percent). Most adults were between 20 and 29 years of age (58 adults or 43 percent) or between 30 and 39 years of age (44 adults or 33 percent). The Even Start population also included a sizeable group of 21 teen parents (16 percent). The ethnic composition of Even Start adults was primarily Hispanic, representing 91 percent (127 adults) of the adult population. Almost nine of every 10 Even Start adults (116 adults or 86 percent) speak Spanish as their primary language.

The largest percentage of Even Start adults (67 adults or 49 percent) were full-time homemakers. A smaller percentage of adults were employed (43 adults or 32 percent): 23 adults were employed full-time and 20 adults were employed part-time. Eight adults (6 percent) were unemployed. In addition, the vast majority of Even Start adults were in low-paying career tracks in service positions (e.g., housekeeper, waitress) when they worked (107 or 79 percent).

Overall, Even Start programs served the entire eligible age range of children (birth through seven years old)—but tended to focus on children three to five years old (91 children or 48 percent). Like their parents, most Even Start children are Hispanic (175 of the 188 children or 92 percent) and most are Limited English Proficient (138 children or 73 percent).

Even Start Program Development. One way to help develop a quality Even Start program is to draw upon effective or established programs and practices when planning program activities. All Nevada Even Start projects used at least one research-based model to develop program activities. Four projects used the effective research-based program, *Parents as Teachers*, when conducting home-visits. Three projects used the *Bowdoin Method* in parenting education and two projects used child development materials from the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension program.

Even Start Program Implementation. The “average” project included about 5.2 staff—most of whom are part-time—which represents a decrease in the average of 7.0 staff during 2006-07, probably due to a reduction of funds. Projects have an average of 1.0 administrators, 1.2 instructors, 1.2 instructional aides, 0.8 family specialists, and 0.2 “other” staff. In addition, all projects have an external evaluator who is a subcontractor.

By December 2004, Even Start staff were expected to meet federal qualifications for education level. When analyzed at the state level, Even Start staff meet the federal qualification requirements. A majority of instructors must have a college degree under the new federal qualifications by December 2004. In fact, all six Even Start instructors (100 percent) have at least a college degree.

Instructors in early childhood education must also meet state requirements. According to the recent state law, a teacher must hold a special license or endorsement in early childhood education to teach in a program of instruction for pre-kindergarten children. During 2007-08, the one reported early childhood instructor met the state requirements for teaching in an early childhood education program.

All paraprofessionals who provide support for academic instruction must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent under the new federal requirements by December 2004. As of June 2008, all Even Start family specialists and Even Start aides met these federal requirements.

Even Start partners and collaborators play a critical role in Even Start by providing some services in adult education, early childhood education, and parenting. Even Start collaborators provide many of the adult education services to Even Start adults. In addition, collaborators conducted some of the parenting education and early childhood education services provided by Even Start projects in 2007-08.

Instructional Even Start staff received a substantial amount of training to implement Even Start programs. All but one project staff received at least two days of training during 2007-08. The largest number of instructional staff (18 of 20 of project employees, or 90 percent) received at least two days of training.

Staff received the most training in areas related to parenting education and early childhood education probably because most projects provided these two core services. Staff received less training in adult education probably because projects rely more upon their collaborators to deliver it.

Even Start projects identified three barriers to successful implementation: obtaining suffi-

cient financial resources, improving retention or motivation of participants, and improving attendance.

Project directors did not believe they had a “great need” for technical assistance, perhaps because most staff have been in Even Start for many years. Three project directors thought they could use “some assistance” in seeking funding or fiscal issues.

Intensity of Services. The number of hours that Even Start projects offer to program participants in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting is an important variable in determining the potential impact of the program. The more hours of service offered typically result in the more hours of service attended—increasing the likelihood the program would impact participants positively.

Projects offered essentially year round services in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting in 2007-08. On average, projects offered between 288 and 341 hours of adult education depending upon the education program, 228 hours of parenting education, and between 444 and 700 hours of early childhood education, depending upon the age group.

In comparison, projects in the national evaluation of Even Start offered between 335 and 430 hours per year of adult education (depending upon the education program), 196 hours of parenting education, and between 406 and 554 hours per year of early childhood education (depending upon the age group).

All projects used a variety of strategies to bring parents and children together in meaningful interactive literacy activities (ILA). On average, the five projects provided ILA time in the center or classroom for 7.8 hours per month, during home-visits for 2.8 hours per month, and during field trips and socials for 2.6 hours per month.

Levels of Participation. It is important to distinguish between services offered by projects and participation in services. On average, Even Start adults participated in 194 hours of adult education: more than the 98 hours reported in the national evaluation of Even Start. English as a Second Language (ESL) was the most commonly attended adult education program—attended by 77 percent of Even Start adults.

Even Start adults also participated in an average of 23 hours of parenting education: less than the 28 hours reported in the national evaluation of Even Start.

Even Start children participated in early childhood education services an average of 264 hours, about the same number of hours reported by Even Start projects in Nevada in 2006-07—267 hours.

Several participants in a few families did not participate in the three core components of early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education.

An important required activity for Even Start is the home-visit. Although the number of home-visits for families varied greatly, Even Start families participated in an average of eight home-visits during 2007-08, which is an increase from the six home-visits that Even Start projects conducted in 2006-07. The increase in the number of home-visits is probably the result of a monitoring visit by the U.S. Department of Education which recommended that the Nevada Department of Education require Even Start projects to conduct monthly home-visits with families.

Retention and Reasons for Leaving. Of the 134 families in Even Start during 2007-08, 74 families enrolled in 2007-08 and 60 families enrolled during the previous seven years. On average, Even Start families were in the program for 17 months between their intake date and the end of the 2007-08 program year or exit date.

Nevada Even Start projects did not retain the majority of families in the program (i.e., almost two-thirds), as they had done in all previous evaluations. Thirty-six percent of Even Start families (48 of 134 families) enrolled in the projects during 2007-08 were still in the projects at the end of the program year in June 2008. When the data were further divided into families new to the program in 2007-08 and continuing families, 28 of the 74 families (34 percent) new to the program during 2007-08 and 23 of the 60 families (38 percent) enrolled from the previous years were still in the program in June 2008. One reason for the low retention rate is that one project exited 16 families at the end of the year because the project plans to serve only teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion. Another possible explanation is that several families had to leave

the program because of economics and several other families had to leave the program because of immigration issues.

Of the 86 families who left the program, the three most common reasons why families exited the program were “other reason”¹ (22 families), family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (17 families), and family members met goals or completed the eligible planned education (13 families). As mentioned previously, 16 of the 22 families who exited under “other reason” were exited because the project plans to serve teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion.

The reasons for why new and returning families exited the program differed slightly. The main difference was that 17 new families exited for “other reason” compared to five existing families exited for “other reason.” In addition, four new families exited because they moved out of the area compared to nine existing families.

Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Even Start. The primary purpose of the state evaluation is accountability—to relate program participation in Even Start to educational and developmental outcomes for adults and children. The evaluation investigated 14 outcome indicators developed for Even Start family literacy programs in Nevada. The 14 outcome indicators included four indicators in early childhood education, six indicators in adult literacy, and four indicators in parenting. Overall, Even Start participants showed positive gains on all adult and child measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on 13 of the 14 outcome indicators, falling short on one outcome indicator.

In early childhood education, Even Start projects in Nevada met or exceeded the expected performance levels on three of the four indicators. Even Start children met the expected performance levels on two standardized assessments in reading, including a measure of an individual’s English speaking vocabulary and a measure

Overall, Even Start projects in Nevada are helping to improve adults’ reading and parenting skills and children’s language development and school readiness. Even Start participants showed positive gains on all adult and child measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on 13 of the 14 outcome indicators, falling just short on one outcome indicator.

¹ Projects do not specific in data collection the meaning of “other reason” other than the reason for exiting is other than the choices listed.

of receptive vocabulary (understanding/interpreting what is heard). In addition, Even Start children who attended public school had a slightly higher student attendance rate than the school student attendance rate and over an expected level of 95 percent of children were promoted to the next grade level.

Even Start children did not meet the desired level on an assessment measuring reading readiness, specifically for expressive communication.

In adult literacy, Even Start projects in Nevada met or exceeded the expected performance levels on the six indicators. In terms of academic indicators, Even Start adults met the expected performance level for adult learning in reading. In addition, Even Start adults met the expected performance level of advancing at least one Educational Functional Literacy Level on an assessment of literacy, for enrolling in postsecondary education or training by the end of the reporting year, and for earning a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Even Start adults also met the expected performance levels of the two indicators on individual employment goals. Even Start adults not employed at enrollment into Even Start met the expected performance level for obtaining unsubsidized employment within a specified time period. In addition, Even Start adults met the expected performance level for retaining or improving their unsubsidized employment within a specified time period.

In parenting skills, Even Start projects in Nevada met or exceeded the expected performance levels on all four indicators. Even Start adults achieved at least one parenting goal that they had established for themselves. Even Start adults with children enrolled in a public school had a higher parent/teacher conference attendance rate than the school parent/teacher conference attendance rate. In addition, first-year Nevada Even Start adults met the expected performance levels for spending more time with their children in Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA) and reading with their children by the end of the evaluation period than when they enrolled in the program.

Conclusions.

This is the seventh year that Nevada has conducted a statewide evaluation of federal

funded Even Start projects. Many of the same conclusions made about the Even Start program in the six previous evaluation reports are the same or similar in this evaluation report for 2007-08—including both program strengths as well as areas for improvement.

The evaluation found that most projects continue to develop into experienced family literacy programs. They have established many solid procedures and practices, some of which are based on effective research-based programs, and others designed to increase the intensity of services to participants. Perhaps most importantly, Even Start positively impacted program participants in early childhood development, adult literacy, and parenting skills, even though Nevada Even Start projects had a 13 percent reduction in funds in 2007-08, or a reduction of \$20,000 per project. Ultimately, the reduction in funds will either impact the effectiveness of projects or cause projects to serve fewer families. These statements are based on several conclusions we made about the program development, implementation, and outcomes. They include—

- ❖ Overall, Even Start projects in Nevada are helping to improve adult’s reading and parenting skills and children’s language development and school readiness. Even Start participants showed positive gains on all adult and child measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on 13 of the 14 statewide outcome indicators for family literacy programs. Even Start participants fell just short of meeting the expected performance level on one outcome indicator in early childhood education.
- ❖ Projects drew upon some effective research-based and established programs to develop services in parenting education and early childhood education. Although adopting an effective research-based or established program does not guarantee success, it does increase the likelihood that projects will provide quality services to their participants—and thus increases the chance of success.
- ❖ Overall, projects recruited eligible families and families who could benefit from Even Start core services. Most families have multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency, low-paying career tracks) and can benefit from the services offered to them. At intake, Even Start adults have basic or beginning literacy levels, and Even Start children typically start below their peers on school readiness and reading measures. However, the income level for some families may be a little high for the targeted population.
- ❖ For many families, Even Start was the only structured opportunity to better prepare

their children for school. Most children from Even Start families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Even Start, and many Even Start children do not participate in any other program while in Even Start.

- ❖ Even Start adults and children seemed to have been adequately screened by most projects so they are placed in and receive appropriate services.
- ❖ Projects have established positive working relationships with collaborating agencies and partners. Collaborators and partners provide some services—primarily in adult education.
- ❖ When analyzed at the state level, Even Start project staff met the new federal education requirements, expected by December 2004. In addition, all of the reported early childhood education instructors meet the new state qualifications for instructors of preschool education programs.
- ❖ Projects provided training to staff in early childhood education and parenting so staff can offer quality services to families, adults, and children.
- ❖ Several Even Start projects continued to provide their own ESL classes to adult participants, and in other cases, supplemented the ESL classes provided by collaborators to ensure Even Start adults received sufficient intensity of instruction. Perhaps because some projects provided some adult education classes, Even Start projects cited “identifying effective practices in adult education” as one of the top training needs.
- ❖ Overall, projects offered early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Even Start adults and children.
- ❖ The average number of home visits per family increased from six per family in 2006-07 to eight per family in 2007-08, due to a recommendation from a monitoring visit conducted by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ❖ Project participants attended services in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting at a level lower than the services were offered. While many participants attended Even Start services regularly to benefit from the program, some other families were not in the program long enough or did not attend services regularly to benefit appreciably from the services, especially for parenting education.
- ❖ The retention rate of families who remain in the program until the end of the year decreased substantially in 2007-08 from all previous evaluations, which reported retention rates of about two-thirds of families. The Nevada retention rate of 36 percent is substantially below the average national Even Start retention rate at 64 percent. The primary reason for the low retention rate is that one project exited 16

families at the end of the year because the project plans to serve only teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion.

- ❖ Projects encountered common barriers to implementing family literacy programs, including obtaining sufficient financial resources and improving retention or motivation of participants, and improving attendance.

The overall conclusion we can draw from the 2007-08 evaluation of Even Start projects in Nevada is that most projects have established sound family literacy programs and Even Start families have benefited from these services. Even Start projects in Nevada, however, can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are three recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to ensure that Even Start families attend more often, establishing attendance requirements for participants.
2. Seek technical assistance in several crucial areas, such as identifying effective practices in adult education and early childhood education as well as strategies to improve the auditory comprehension and expressive communication of children.
3. Develop an improvement plan for each outcome indicator that the project did not meet, especially in early childhood education, and for each program delivery indicator on which the project scored relatively low.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals if it follows three recommendations.

1. Provide technical assistance and training in key areas identified in this report, especially in effective practices in adult education and early childhood education as well as strategies to improve the expressive communication of children from birth to three years old.
2. Continue to monitor project activities, especially on the amount of parenting education offered to adult participants, the quality of the early childhood education experiences, the implementation of monthly home visits, participant attendance at adult education and parenting education, and the income level of families admitted into the program.
3. Continue to work with each Even Start project to determine if the project meets the federal requirements for the education level of Even Start staff and if the early childhood education instructors meet the state's new licensure requirements for teachers who provide early childhood education programs.

Chapter I. Introduction

The national Even Start Family Literacy Program, authorized in 1988 under Title I by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, is a family literacy program. The basic concept behind family literacy is that parents are the first teachers of their children. Even Start is based on the belief that strengthening children's relationships with their parents and enriching their literacy environments will have a positive impact on children's learning and performance in school. When parents understand the connection between the ways they interact with their children and their children's development, they can turn ordinary experiences into learning experiences.

Even Start was reauthorized in December 2000 under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001 (P.L. 106-554) as the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Program. The law contained several new or amended program elements including strengthened staff qualifications, required instructional services during the summer months, instructional programs and reading readiness activities to be based on scientifically-based reading research, encouragement of regular attendance and continuity in the program, and local evaluations used for program improvement. These amendments were continued when the program was reauthorized under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

Even Start projects must provide four high-quality, core educational components (early childhood education, adult education, parenting education, and interactive literacy activities) taught by qualified staff, as well as support services, year-round. These services are defined as—

- **Adult Education and Adult Literacy.** High-quality intensive instructional programs to promote adult literacy including adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), English as a second language (ESL), and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) certificate.
- **Parenting Education.** High-quality intensive instructional programs to help parents support the educational growth of their children.

- **Early Childhood Education.** Developmentally appropriate, intensive educational services for children to prepare them for success in school.
- **Interactive Literacy Activities.** Interactive literacy activities between parents and children to help develop parenting skills and the role of the parent as a teacher.

This four-pronged approach is essential because, as research confirms, early experiences affect children’s brain development and learning. To achieve the goals of Even Start, the services provided to participants must be of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family. To be eligible for Even Start, parents must be eligible to participate in an adult literacy program under the Adult Education Act, or be in need of basic literacy skills or English acquisition, and have children from birth through age seven.

Even Start projects also provide a range of “support services”— some of which are designed to help families participate in the program. Examples of support services are transportation, child care, health care, nutrition assistance, mental health referral, referrals for employment, advocacy assistance with governmental agencies, and counseling. To avoid duplication of services, Even Start guidelines encourage projects to obtain the four primary services and support services from existing providers when possible.

Finally, Even Start projects often provide “special events.” They may be one-time events, such as a potluck supper, or they may include occasional activities or demonstrations on subjects of interest to participating families, e.g., visiting the local library.

Even Start Projects in Nevada

Since 1992, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has received annual funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support local Even Start projects. Local educational agencies (i.e., school districts) in partnership with a non-profit community-based agency, a public agency other than a local educational agency, an institution of higher education, or a public or private nonprofit organization other than a local educational agency are eligible to apply.² NDE awards Even Start grants based on a competitive

² Partners are jointly responsible for program operations and compliance, and often contribute to the cost of the program—either in cash or in-kind services.

application process. Grant awards are made for a period of four years. Local educational agencies may reapply for a second four-year Even Start grant after successfully completing a first four-year Even Start grant. A local education agency can even reapply for a third and a fourth four-year Even Start grant if it reapplies with a new partner.

Nevada funds five local Even Start projects through the U.S. Department of Education. The five projects are operated by five school districts: Carson City, Churchill County, Nye County, Pershing County, and Washoe County. Each project has a required local partner jointly responsible for program operations and compliance, and several collaborators. Table 1 shows the five local educational agencies that operated the Even Start programs, their partners, the amount of money they were awarded for program operations in 2007-08, and the year of their Even Start award. The size of the awards was the same for all five projects in 2007-08: all projects had a budget of \$130,000, which represents a decrease of \$20,000 in 2007-08 for every project, or 13 percent.

Table 1. Characteristics of Even Start Projects in Nevada

Local Educational Agency	Partner	Federal Award³	Award Year in 2007-08
Carson City	Nevada Hispanic Services	130,000	14
Churchill County	Churchill County Social Services	130,000	17
Nye County	Nye Community Coalition	130,000	12
Pershing	Pershing County Reading Center & University of Nevada—Reno Cooperative Extension	130,000	7
Washoe County	Truckee Meadows Community College	130,000	14
Total		\$650,000	

³ The Federal award to an Even Start program can not exceed 90 percent of the total cost of the program in the first year of the award, 80 percent in the second year, 70 percent in the third year, and 60 percent in the fourth year. Program collaborators and partners contribute in-kind services to make up the remainder of the cost of the program.

Organization of this Report

Following this chapter, *Chapter II: Even Start Evaluation* describes the components of the statewide evaluation of Even Start. *Chapter III: Even Start Program Implementation* provides additional project level information about the administrative context of Even Start projects including the level of resources, staffing patterns, problems or challenges to implementing the Even Start model, and issues for which projects need technical assistance. *Chapter IV: Even Start Participant Characteristics* presents descriptive information of Even Start families, adults, and children.

Chapter V: Even Start Services describes the educational services that projects offer to participating families. The next chapter, *Chapter VI: Participation in Services* reports the adult and children participation in Even Start services. This chapter helps distinguish between the services that projects offer and the extent to which the families participate in services.

Chapter VII: Participant Outcomes presents data on the educational progress of participants in adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting. *Chapter VIII: Conclusions and Recommendations* presents the conclusions of Even Start implementation based on the results reported in all previous chapters of this report. The conclusions are followed by a set of recommendations.

Chapter II. Even Start Evaluation

The Nevada Department of Education has conducted several statewide evaluations of federal funded Even Start projects. From 1997 to 2001, NDE contracted with an outside evaluator to combine the evaluation results from the required local evaluation reports of projects to produce the first statewide evaluations of federal funded Even Start projects in Nevada. Beginning in 2001-02, NDE established a statewide evaluation of Even Start projects consistent with Section 1210 of the federal Even Start law. This law requires that each state which receives federal Even Start funds develop statewide outcome indicators to evaluate, monitor, and improve Even Start family literacy services. The statewide Even Start outcome indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start State-wide Family Literacy Initiative.

This report presents the results of the statewide evaluation. The purpose of the statewide evaluation is *program accountability*—to describe program and participant characteristics and to determine the progress of program participants.⁴ The evaluation is guided by four primary research questions developed by the Even Start Evaluation Design Team established by NDE in summer 2001. The four primary research questions are:

1. Who is served by the program and what services do they receive?
2. How is the funding spent on the program?
3. How do projects implement Even Start?
4. What are the outcomes of Even Start?

The four research questions are restated below—followed by sub-questions. Together, the questions and sub-questions guided data collection for the statewide evaluation.

⁴ In addition to the statewide evaluation, all Even Start projects participate in two other evaluation components. All projects must conduct an independent local evaluation based on 12 quality indicators of effective family literacy programs for the purpose of *program improvement*. Projects submit their local evaluation reports to the state Even Start Coordinator. All projects must also submit six-month progress reports about progress on implementation to the state Even Start Coordinator for the purpose of *program monitoring*.

Research Question # 1

Who is served by the program and what services do they receive?

This research question focuses on the participants and the services they received. Specific sub-questions to be addressed under this primary research question are listed below. Most of the questions call for participant-level analyses.

- ◆ What are the characteristics of families participating in Even Start? Do Even Start families also participate in Title I Part C Migrant Education Program⁵ or the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act?⁶
- ◆ What are the background characteristics of Even Start adults (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, employment status, and primary language)? How do the characteristics of project adults compare to the characteristics of adults in similar programs?
- ◆ What is the educational history of Even Start adults? What percentage enters with a high school diploma or GED?
- ◆ What are the background characteristics of the children who participate in Even Start (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, presence of disability-developmentally, and primary language)? How do the characteristics of project children compare to the characteristics of children in similar programs?
- ◆ What is the educational history of Even Start children?
- ◆ How many families participate in Even Start?
- ◆ How long (how many months) do families participate?
- ◆ On average, what is the intensity (hours) of the services *provided* in the early childhood education, adult education, parenting, and interactive literacy activities (ILA)?

Research Question # 2

How is the funding spent on the program?

This research question addresses the concern of how program dollars are used at the local level. It provides both program-level and project-level data.

- ◆ What are the funding levels for Even Start projects?
- ◆ What services are purchased with Even Start funds?

⁵ A child can participate in Title I Part C Migrant Education if the family has moved in the last 36 months from one school district to another school district to obtain employment in agricultural or fishing.

⁶ A child is considered homeless if he/she lacks a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime place of abode.”

- ◆ What services are contributed “in-kind” by Even Start collaborators?

Research Question # 3

How do projects implement Even Start?

This question focuses on a range of implementation issues. An important issue is to determine whether projects are fully implemented.

- ◆ How are families recruited into Even Start? How do projects target recruitment?
- ◆ What is the nature of services in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education offered by the project? What activities does the project offer for parents and children together?
- ◆ What is the educational background of Even Start staff? What kinds of training have Even Start staff received to implement a family literacy program effectively? How many volunteers participate in the program?
- ◆ What types of collaborations exist between Even Start and other agencies? What types of agencies are collaborators?
- ◆ What barriers exist to successful implementation?
- ◆ To what extent do adults and children participate in Even Start core service areas?

Research Question # 4

What are the outcomes of Even Start?

This set of research questions is designed to address the impact of the program on child and adult literacy levels, parenting education, and on parent-child relationships.

- ◆ What gains are observed for Even Start children on measures of improvement in the ability to read on grade level or reading readiness, school attendance, grade retention, and grade promotion?
- ◆ What gains are observed for Even Start adults on measures of achievement in reading, writing, English language acquisition, problem solving, and numeracy; receipt of a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma; entry into a postsecondary school, job retraining program, or employment or career advancement, including the military; and parenting skills?
- ◆ With what degree of confidence can observed gains be attributed to Even Start rather than to other factors? What can be said of Even Start participants’ progress vs. progress made by participants in other programs?

Chapter III. Even Start Program Implementation

This chapter presents a first look at the Even Start projects and how they are implemented by examining their administrative and operational issues. The chapter examines staffing patterns, inservice training, interagency collaborations, barriers to program implementation, and technical assistance needs.

Staffing Patterns

Project directors were asked to report the number of paid Even Start staff and their full-time equivalents (FTE) or whether they were paid on a personal services contract. To avoid duplicating staff counts, we asked project directors to count each staff member only once in his or her primary assignment area even though many staff members perform multiple roles and functions. Table 2 presents the number of staff across the five projects, their FTE, and the number of these staff on contract.

Table 2. The Number of Paid Even Start Staff

Staff	Number of Staff	Ave. No. of Staff/Project	FTE of Staff	Number on Contract
Administrators	4	0.8	3.5	0
Instructors (teacher, tutor)	6	1.2	5.14	0
Aides (educational assistant)	6	1.2	4.75	0
Family Specialists (home-visitor/advocate)	4	0.8	3.0	0
Evaluators (data collection, local evaluation)	5	1.0	0	5
Support Staff (secretary, clerk)	0	0	0	0
Others	1	.2	0.5	0
TOTAL	26	5.2	16.89	5

Even Start projects had an average of 5.2 staff during 2007-08—which represents a decrease in the average of 7.0 staff during 2006-07, probably due to a reduction of funds. All projects have at least one person who serves as project administrator, although not necessarily paid with Even Start funds. The typical Even Start project also has 1.2

instructors who provided adult education, parenting, and early childhood education services; 0.8 family specialists who took primary responsibility for home-visits; 1.2 teacher aides who assisted in the early childhood program; and 0.2 “other staff” who provided child care during adult education or parenting education classes at one project.

All five projects also reported having an evaluator—who were on contract. All projects are required to hire an external evaluator to conduct an external evaluation of the project.

We also asked project directors to report how many of their Even Start paid instructors and volunteers teach adult education, parenting education, or early childhood education. If an instructor or volunteer works in more than one area, he or she could be counted in all the relevant educational areas. However, each individual was counted only once in the total number of Even Start paid instructors or the total number of volunteers.

Table 3 shows the instructional areas (adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education) that the six Even Start paid-instructors work. Most of the Even Start instructors work in adult education and parenting education, since Even Start staff took some responsibility for providing these services. Only one instructor worked in early childhood education since this core area was provided by collaborators at five projects.

Table 3. Number of Even Start Paid-Instructors and Volunteers by Instructional Area

Instructional Area	Instructors		Volunteers	
	Number Across Projects	Average Per Project	Number Across Projects	Average Number
Adult Education	5	1.0	5	1
Parenting Education	5	1.0	2	0.4
Early Childhood	1	0.2	20	4
Program Support			7	1.4
Total	6	2.2	34	6.8

Table 3 also shows that the five projects had 34 volunteers. The majority of volunteers (31) were from two projects, working primarily in the early childhood education programs.

Professional Qualifications

Project directors reported the qualifications of their instructors and aides in terms of their highest level of education and years of professional experience in the areas they teach or in family literacy. Staff education levels are important for federal funded Even Start projects because the federal Even Start law requires all instructors and paraprofessionals have specific levels of education by December 2004. New hires must meet similar qualifications when hired. The new federal requirements are presented below.

All Instructional staff—by December 2004, a *majority* of the individuals providing academic instruction—

- ◆ must have obtained an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree in a field related to early childhood education, elementary or secondary school education, or adult education; and
- ◆ if applicable, shall meet qualifications established by the State for early childhood education, elementary or secondary school education, or adult education provided as part of an Even Start program or another family literacy program.

New instructional staff who are hired to work in Even Start staff must—

- ◆ have obtained an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree in a field related to early childhood education, elementary or secondary school education, or adult education; and
- ◆ if applicable, meet qualifications established by the State for early childhood education, elementary or secondary school education, or adult education provided as part of an Even Start program or another family literacy program.

Project Director—not later than December 2004,

- ◆ the individual responsible for administration of family literacy services must have received training in the operation of a family literacy program.

Paraprofessionals—not later than December 2004,

- ◆ paraprofessionals who provide support for academic instruction have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

As of June 2008, the data show that Even Start staff met the new federal requirements for education level, when analyzed at a state level. Each individual Even Start project must analyze the education levels of its own staff annually to determine whether the project meets the new federal requirements. Table 4 shows the highest level of education attained

for Even Start administrators, instructors, aides or para-professionals, and family specialists. Although there is no specific education level for administrators, four of the five have a college degree. One administrator has a high school diploma.

A majority of instructors must have a college degree by December 2004 under the new federal qualifications. As of June 2008, all six of the reported Even Start instructors have a two-, four-, or six-year college degree.

All paraprofessionals who provide support for academic instruction must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent by December 2004. As of June 2008, all of the Even Start family specialists and aides meet the new federal requirements. Of the four family specialists, all four have a high school diploma or GED certificate. Of the six aides, all six have a two-, four-, or six-year college degree.

Table 4 also shows the experience level of Even Start staff. Of the four paid Even Start administrators, three (75 percent) have more than 10 years of experience. Of the six instructors, two (33 percent) have one to five years of experience and four (37 percent)

Table 4. Education and Experience of Even Start Staff

	Adminis- trators	Instruc- tors	Aides	Family Specialists
Highest Level of Education				
Did not complete diploma/GED	0	0	0	0
High school diploma or GED	1	0	1	4
AA	0	1	4	0
BA/BS	1	3	0	0
MA/MS/M.Ed	1	2	1	0
Ph.D./Ed.D	1	0	0	0
Years of Experience in primary area				
Less than 1 year	0	0	1	1
1-5 years	1	2	2	0
5-10 years	0	3	2	2
More than 10 years	3	1	1	1

have more than five years of experience. Three of the nine aides (50 percent) have less than five years of experience and the other three (50 percent) have over five years of experience. One (25 percent) family specialist has less than a year of experience and three (75 percent) have more than five years of experience.

For instructors, the evaluation also collected data on the type of state teacher license and endorsement. Data on the type of license and endorsement held by the early childhood teachers are important because of new state requirements for teachers in early childhood education programs. According to the new state law, a teacher must hold a special license or endorsement in early childhood education to teach in a program of instruction for pre-kindergarten children.⁷ The new law does not apply to a teacher who holds an elementary license, is employed full time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and continues to teach full time in a prekindergarten program after July 1, 2002.

As reported previously, of the 6 instructors, five provide instruction in adult education and parenting education, and one provides instruction in early childhood education. The one instructor in early childhood education has a teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education, meeting the state requirements for teaching in an early childhood education program.

Although there are no additional state requirements for instructors in adult education (unless students receive credit toward high school graduation) or in parenting education, we also collected data about their certification. Of the five instructors in adult education and parenting education, all five have a two-, four-, or six-year college degree.

⁷ See Nevada Revised Statutes 391.019 and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.087 for the complete list of qualifications, provisions, and exceptions for the revised law.

Inservice Training

Inservice training is an important part of providing quality services to Even Start families, allowing staff to learn about family literacy and receive training in the program models (e.g., *Parents as Teachers*) the projects adopt. Table 5 shows that all but two staff person received at least two days of training during 2007-08. Most instructional staff (11 of 20 staff) received at least five days of training.

Table 5. Training Days for Even Start Staff

Staff Assignment	Days of Training					Total Staff
	None	1 day	2-5 days	5-10 days	11 + days	
Administrators (coordinators)	0	1	0	1	2	4
Instructors (teachers, tutors)	0	0	3	1	2	6
Aides	0	1	3	2	0	6
Family Specialists (home-visitors)	0	0	1	2	1	4
Total	0	2	7	6	5	20

Next, we asked project directors to indicate the type of training staff received in five areas. Table 6 shows that projects trained the highest percentage of their staff in *parenting education*, followed by *early childhood education* and *family characteristics*. Overall, the results show that staff received more training in the areas they provide (i.e., parenting and early childhood education) and less training in the areas typically provided by collaborators (i.e., adult education).

Table 6. The Percent of Staff Trained in Inservice Topics

Inservice Topics	No staff	0-25% Staff	26-50% Staff	51-75% Staff	76-100% Staff
Program Coordination					
Recruitment	2	2	0	1	0
Retention strategies	2	1	0	1	1
Team building	1	1	1	0	2
Interagency collaboration	1	1	0	0	3
Local program evaluation	1	0	1	1	2
Statewide program evaluation	0	1	2	0	2
Planning/program improvement	0	1	0	2	2
Conducting home-visits	1	0	1	1	2
Visiting other programs	2	2	0	1	0
First Aid, CPR, or emergency procedures	1	0	0	2	2
Adult Education					
ESL	1	1	1	2	0
Reading, writing, math, social studies	3	0	1	1	0
Vocational/occupational	3	1	0	1	0
Assessment	1	0	2	1	1
Parenting Education					
Parents' role as teacher	1	0	2	0	2
Parent and child activities	0	0	1	1	3
Child rearing, child development	2	0	1	0	2
Life skills (<i>e.g., consumer awareness, health, nutrition</i>)	1	1	1	0	2
Early Childhood Education					
ESL	1	2	1	0	1
School readiness	0	0	1	2	2
Child development (<i>e.g., developmentally appropriate practices</i>)	0	0	2	1	2
Classroom or behavior management	0	2	1	1	1
Assessment	0	2	1	0	2
Family Characteristics					
Relating instruction to ethnic/cultural background	1	1	1	1	1
Dealing with family or personal problems (<i>e.g., family violence, chemical dependency</i>)	1	1	0	0	3
Adapting instruction for learners with special needs	1	2	0	2	0

Training in Program Coordination. Training in program coordination was the third top training priority. It covers a wide range of topics from recruitment, state and local evaluation, to first aid and CPR. The results in Table 6 show a wide range in the percent of staff trained in the various topics of program coordination. Four projects trained most of their staff in *Planning/program improvement* and *First Aid, CPR, or emergency procedures*. Three projects also trained at least half their staff in *Interagency collaboration*, *Local program evaluation*, and *Conducting home-visits*.

Training in Adult Education. Although project staff received less training in adult education than other core service areas, many staff still received training in adult education. The training that staff received in adult education supports the suggestion that more and more Even Start projects are supplementing the adult education provided to Even Start adults. Three projects trained over half their staff in *ESL* and *Assessment*.

Training in Parenting Education. Training in parenting education was the top training priority. Two projects trained at least 75 percent of their staff in all four elements of parenting education, and four projects trained at least half their staff in *Parent and child activities*.

Training in Early Childhood Education. The second top training priority was early childhood education. Four projects trained at least half their staff in *School readiness* and three projects trained at least half their staff in *Child Development*.

Training in Family Characteristics. Training in *Family characteristics* helps staff design an individually tailored educational plan for each family to accommodate the wide range of needs that families have when they enter the program. This is especially important because a large percent of Even Start families just recently came to the United States, having a wide range of needs. Three projects trained at least half of their staff on *Dealing with family or personal problems*.

On the other hand, three projects trained less than 25 percent of their staff in *Adapting instruction for learners with special needs*, such as dyslexia or learning delays. A possible explanation for this result is that Even Start projects may typically refer children with

special needs to other programs—not needing substantial training in this area. The result could also mean that Even Start staff have a need for more training in working with children with special needs.

Even Start Partners and Collaborators

Even Start partners and collaborators continue to play a critical role in Even Start by providing some services in three core service areas. Table 7 presents the areas and the extent to which partners provided services in three core areas.

Overall, the results show collaborators provide services in certain core service areas more than others. Specifically, most partners and collaborators provide adult education. For example, collaborators in three of the five projects provide all of the *Beginning ABE*, *Intermediate ABE*, and *Adult Secondary Education* classes offered to Even Start adults.

Table 7. The Amount of Core Services Provided by Collaborating Agencies

Core Service Areas	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A lot</i>	<i>All</i>
Adult Education				
Beginning ABE (0-5.9: CASAS 0-200)	1	1	0	3
Intermediate ABE (6.0-8.9: CASAS 201-235)	1	1	0	3
Adult Secondary Education/GED preparation (9-12: CASAS over 235)	0	2	0	3
English as a second language	0	3	1	1
Parenting Education				
Workshops	0	3	2	0
Home-based activities	2	3	0	0
Early Childhood Education				
Home-based activities	2	3	0	0
Center-based programs	1	2	1	1

To a lesser extent, collaborators provided services in *Parenting Education* and *Early Childhood Education*. In *Parenting Education*, collaborators provided “some” or “a lot” of the parenting education workshops in all five Even Start projects and provided “some”

of the home-based activities in three Even Start projects. Collaborators of two projects did not provide any services for home-based activities.

In *Early Childhood Education*, collaborators in four of the five Even Start projects provided “some” to “all” of center-based early childhood education programs. However, project collaborators did not provide any early childhood education through home-based activities in two of the five Even Start projects.

Project directors were also asked to identify the services that paid Even Start staff provided or that were paid for by Even Start funds. Table 8 presents the areas and the extent to which Even Start funds provided services in three core areas. The results confirm the data presented on the core service areas provided by collaborators. It shows Even Start provided more of the *Parenting Education* and *Early Childhood Education* than did collaborators. In fact, all five projects provided “some,” “a lot,” or “all” of the parenting education services and four of the five projects provided “some,” “a lot,” or “all” of the early childhood education. On the other hand, the majority of the projects did not

Table 8. The Amount of Core Services Provided by Paid Even Start Staff

Core Service Areas	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A lot</i>	<i>All</i>
Adult Education				
Beginning ABE (0-5.9)	4	1	0	0
Intermediate ABE (6.0-8.9)	4	1	0	0
Adult Secondary Education/ GED (9-12)	2	2	1	0
English as a second language	0	1	4	0
Parenting Education				
Workshops	0	2	2	1
Home-based activities	0	0	4	1
Early Childhood Education				
Home-based activities	0	1	3	1
Center-based programs	1	1	2	1

pay for the many adult education services, except English as a Second Language. All five Even Start projects provided “some” or “a lot” of the English as a Second Language classes.

The results support the hypothesis that projects, in some cases, provided their own ESL classes to participants, and in other cases, supplemented the ESL classes provided by col-laborators to ensure Even Start adults received sufficient intensity of instruction.

Barriers to Implementing Even Start

Table 9 presents a list of 17 potential barriers to successful implementation of Even Start. We asked project directors to indicate the extent to which they present a barrier to the im-plementation of their Even Start projects. Overall, all of the potential barriers projects were given to choose from were not selected as major barriers. The results suggest the projects are more experienced and have overcome many of the barriers they have encoun-tered over the years. The three issues that received the highest total rating (on a 5-point scale where a total of 25 points is the highest score) were *Obtaining sufficient financial resources* with 13 points and *Improving retention or motivation of participants* and *Im-proving attendance* with 10 points each. The results suggest these factors are common barriers and Even Start staff might find information and/or training in the three areas as beneficial.

The four issues receiving the lowest ratings included *Recruiting families most in need*, *Coordinating with other agencies*, *Understanding or meeting state evaluation requirements*, and *Finding adult education, parenting education, or early childhood services locally* (5 points). The results suggest project directors have no trouble recruiting appropriate families, easily coordinate with other service agencies in the community, understand State guidelines for the evaluation, and have little trouble finding Even Start core services.

Table 9. Barriers Encountered by Even Start Programs

Potential Barriers to Implementation	<i>Not a barrier</i>				<i>Major barrier</i>
Recruiting eligible families	4	1	0	0	0
Recruiting families most in need	5	0	0	0	0
Improving retention or motivation of participants	2	1	2	0	0
Coordinating with other agencies	5	0	0	0	0
Obtaining sufficient financial resources	1	0	4	0	0
Improving attendance	2	1	2	0	0
Understanding or meeting state evaluation requirements	5	0	0	0	0
Meeting local evaluation requirements	4	1	0	0	0
Hiring and retaining qualified staff	4	1	0	0	0
Hiring and retaining bilingual staff	2	3	0	0	0
Obtaining adequate facilities, space, or equipment	4	0	1	0	0
Arranging or providing adequate transportation	4	1	0	0	0
Meeting social service needs of families	3	1	1	0	0
Finding quality childcare	2	3	0	0	0
Understanding/working within state guidelines	4	1	0	0	0
Understanding/working within the local model	4	1	0	0	0
Finding adult education, parenting education, or early childhood services locally	5	0	0	0	0

Technical Assistance Needs

Project directors were also asked to rate their technical assistance needs in 23 areas divided under four headings: *Educational Services*, *Program Operations*, *Support Services*, and *Evaluation*, as shown in Table 10. Overall, project directors did not identify a “great need” for technical assistance—perhaps because most project staff have been involved in Even Start for many years. In fact, no project director expressed a “great need” for technical assistance in any single topic. The results do show that project directors believed they had the most need for technical assistance in topics related to *Educational Services*, followed by topics related to *Program Operations*, *Support Services*, and *Evaluation*.

Three project directors expressed “some need” for technical assistance in *Funding or fiscal issues*, consistent with the decrease in Title 1 Even Start funds over the last few years. Two project directors expressed “some need” for technical assistance in five areas.

- ✓ *Sharing information with other projects,*
- ✓ *Identifying effective practices in adult education,*
- ✓ *Identifying effective practices in early childhood education,*
- ✓ *Increasing participant involvement or retention, and*
- ✓ *Staff development.*

Table 10. Technical Assistance Needs of Projects in Key Program Areas

Technical Assistance Areas	<i>No need</i>	<i>Some need</i>	<i>Great need</i>
Educational Services			
Sharing information with other projects	3	2	0
Selecting or implementing curriculum materials	4	1	0
Integrating program components	4	1	0
Identifying effective practices in adult education	3	2	0
Identifying effective practices in parenting education	4	1	0
Identifying effective practices in early childhood education	3	2	0
Making home-visits	4	1	0
Using computers	4	1	0
Program Operations			
Program administration	5	0	0
Interagency collaboration	5	0	0
Funding or fiscal issues	2	3	0
Recruiting families	5	0	0
Increasing participant involvement or retention	3	2	0
Staff development	3	2	0
Staff evaluation	4	1	0
Support Services			
Solving transportation problems	4	1	0
Handling social or health problems	4	1	0
Maintaining balance of educational and support services	4	1	0
Evaluation			
Conducting a local evaluation	5	0	0
Complying with the statewide evaluation	5	0	0
Administering and scoring assessment instruments	5	0	0
Using assessment data to drive program implementation	4	1	0
Using new program delivery indicators	4	1	0

Project directors identified six topics in which they did not need any technical assistance:

- ✓ *Program administration,*
- ✓ *Interagency collaboration,*
- ✓ *Recruiting families,*
- ✓ *Conducting a local evaluation,*
- ✓ *Complying with the statewide evaluation, and*
- ✓ *Administering and scoring assessment instruments.*

Overall, the results suggest that some projects still have some needs to help them solve problems around educational services and program operations, but that all are familiar with and have a good understanding of Even Start evaluation requirements.

Chapter IV. Even Start Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of Even Start participants are based on data from five projects that provided services to 134 families, including 136 adults and 188 children who participated in Even Start core services through June 30, 2008. Table 11 shows the number of families, adults, and children served by Even Start projects.

Table 11. Number of Even Start Participants

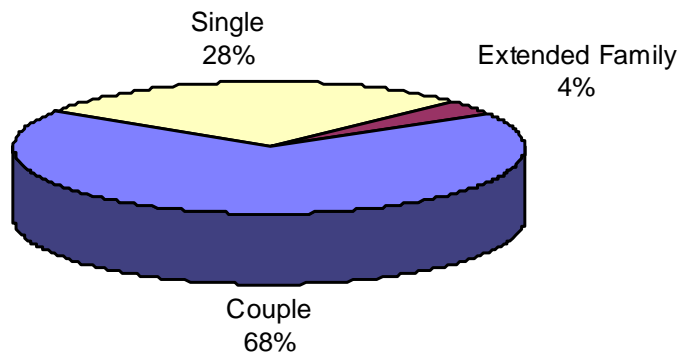
Project	Families	Adults	Children	Total Participants
Federal Funded				
Carson County School District	31	31	42	73
Churchill County School District	24	24	33	57
Nye County School District	22	22	37	59
Pershing County School District	19	20	35	55
Washoe County School District	38	39	41	80
Total	134	136	188	324

In addition to the families served, two of the five projects also maintained a waiting list. The two projects had a total of 37 families waiting to enter the program—one had 32 families on a waiting list and the second project had five families on a waiting list.

Characteristics of Families

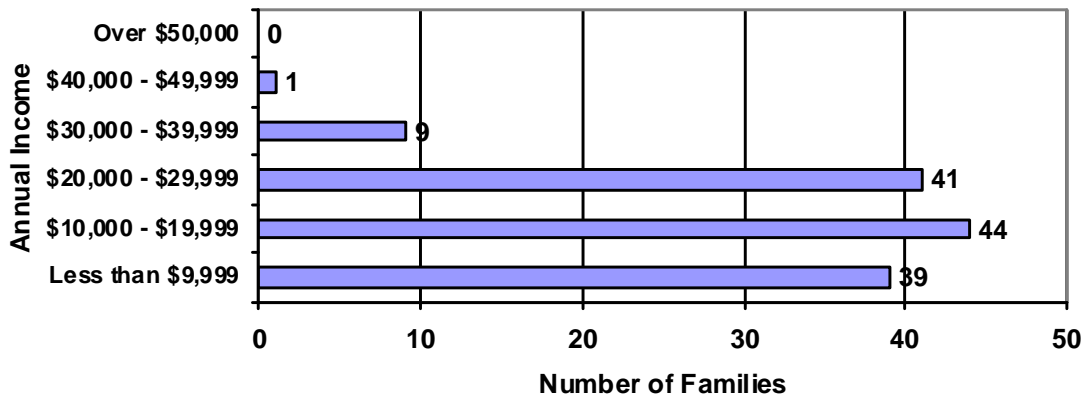
Household Composition. The largest percentage of families participating in Even Start described themselves as couples—68 percent or 91 families. Thirty-eight families (28 percent) described themselves as a single parent household, and five families (4 percent) as an extended family household. Extended families include children living with grandparents, stepparents, or guardians.

Figure 1. Structure of Even Start Families



Family Income Level. Family income level is an important criterion for the Title 1 Even Start program. A purpose of Even Start is to help break the cycle of poverty of

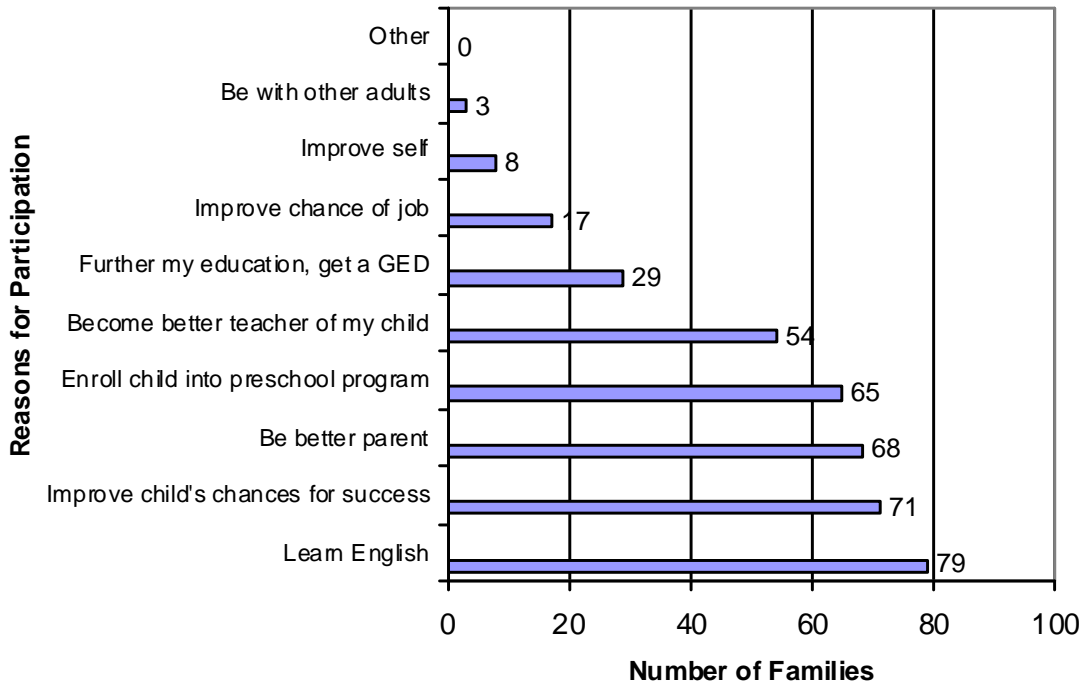
Figure 2. Income of Even Start Families



participating low-income families. The data collected from families indicate most Even Start families represent the poorer segment of the population. Of the 134 families that reported family income, 124 families (93 percent) have incomes under \$30,000. In addition, 84 of the 134 families (63 percent) are below the federal poverty level for their respective family size. Nevertheless, it appears that the income level of some families may be high for the targeted population.

Reasons for Participating in Even Start. Even Start adults were asked to provide up to three reasons why they wanted their families to participate in Even Start. The two primary reasons for enrolling in Even Start were to learn English (79 adults or 59 percent) and to improve their child’s chance of future school success (71 adults or 53 percent). Other common responses from adults included to become a better parent (68 adults) and to enroll their child into an infant/toddler and preschool program (65 adults).

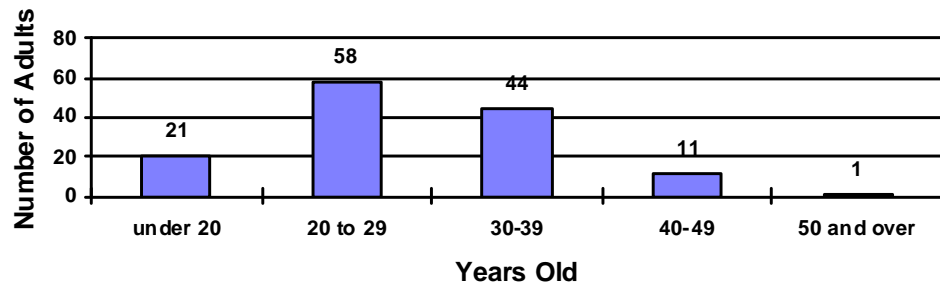
Figure 3. Reasons for Participating in Even Start



Characteristics of Adults

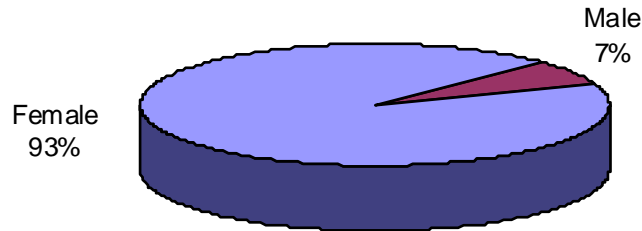
Age.⁸ Most adults were between 20 to 29 years of age (61 adults or 41 percent) followed closely by adults from 30 to 39 years old (55 adults or 37 percent). Nine adults (6 percent) were 40 to 49 years old 22 adults (15 percent) were under 20; and one adult (1 percent) was over 50 years old. Data were unavailable for one adult.

Figure 4. Age of Even Start Adults



Gender. The Even Start projects served primarily female adults—consistent with national data on Even Start. Of 136 adults, 127 (93 percent) were female and 9 (7 percent) were male.

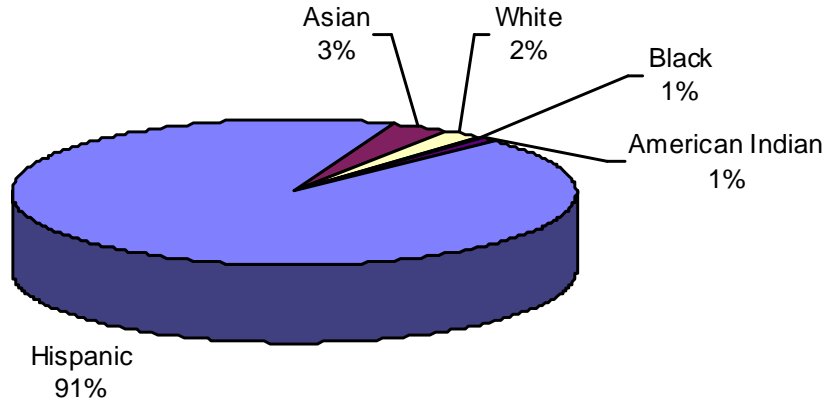
Figure 5. Gender of Even Start Adults



⁸ Age was calculated as of September 1, 2007, at the beginning of the program year.

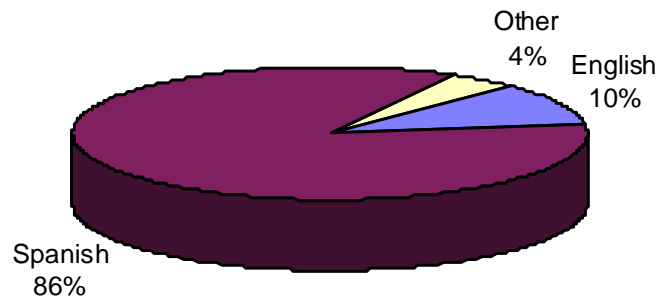
Ethnicity. The five projects served primarily Hispanic families. Of the 136 participating adults, 127 (91 percent) categorized themselves as Hispanic, four adults (3 percent) as Asian, three adults (2 percent) as White not of Hispanic decent, one adult (1 percent) as Black, and one (1 percent) as American Indian.

Figure 6. Ethnicity of Even Start Adults



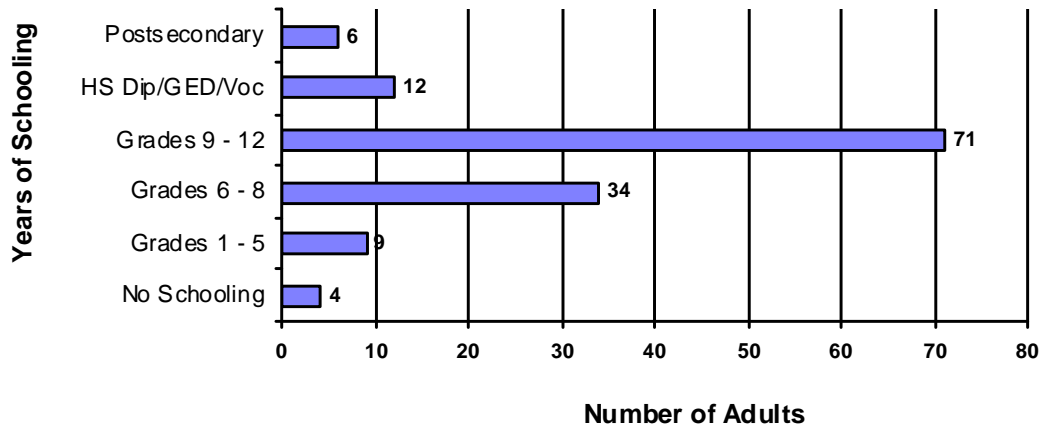
Language Spoken at Home. Of participating adults, over four-fifths (116 adults or 86 percent) reported speaking Spanish at home—consistent with the facts that most Even Start families are Hispanic and many joined Even Start to learn English.

Figure 7. Language of Even Start Adults



Educational Attainment of Participating Adults. Although adults showed a wide range in “years of schooling” prior to participating in Even Start, the largest group of Even Start adults had 9 to 12 years of schooling (71 adults or 52 percent) followed by adults who had 6 to 8 years of schooling (34 adults or 25 percent). Smaller percentages of adults had a high school diploma, GED, or vocational certificate (12 adults or 9 percent); 1 to 6 years of schooling (9 adults or 7 percent); and some college or a college degree (6 adults or 4 percent). Four adults (3 percent) had no schooling.

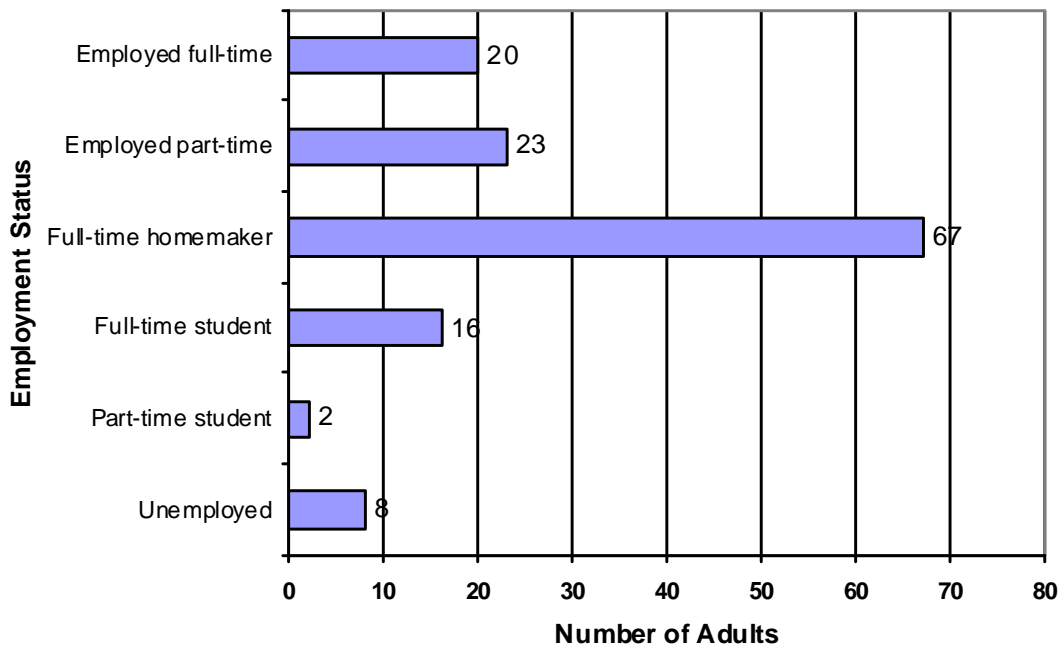
Figure 8. Education Level of Even Start Adults



Over three-fourths of adults (104 adults or 76 percent) were educated outside the United States, primarily in Mexico. This figure validates the primary reason that adults gave to participate in Even Start, i.e., to learn English.

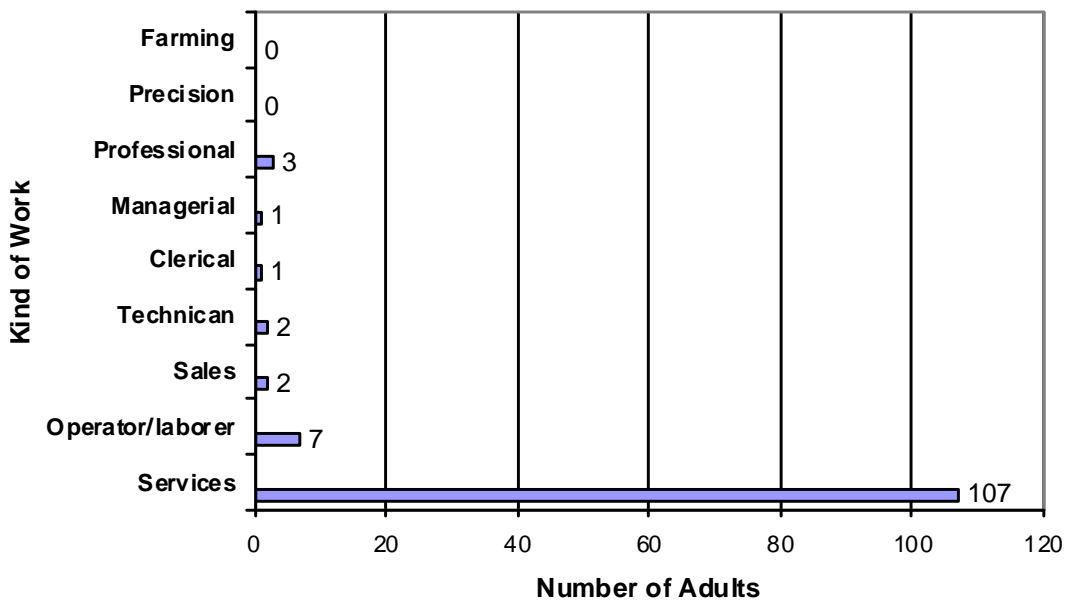
Current Employment Status. At the time of the initial interviews, almost half of the adults (67 adults or 49 percent)) were full-time homemakers. A smaller percent were employed (43 adults or 32 percent): 23 adults were employed full-time and 20 adults were employed part-time. Eighteen adults were either full-time students (16 adults or 13 percent) or part-time students (2 adults or 1 percent). Eight adults (6 percent) were unemployed.

Figure 9. Employment Status of Even Start Adults



Kind of Work When Employed. The evaluation also asked adults to indicate the kind of work they did when employed from one of nine employment categories. For adults who had reported that they were full-time homemakers and never employed, the evaluation classified them as working in the “services” area. The results show that the majority of Even Start adults reported they were in low-paying career tracks when employed. The largest number of adults (107 or 79 percent) worked in “services” when employed. Seven adults (5 percent) reported being an operator/fabricator and three adults (2 percent) were in professional positions. Two adults each (1 percent) were in sales or were technicians, and one adult (less than one percent) each was in clerical or managerial positions.

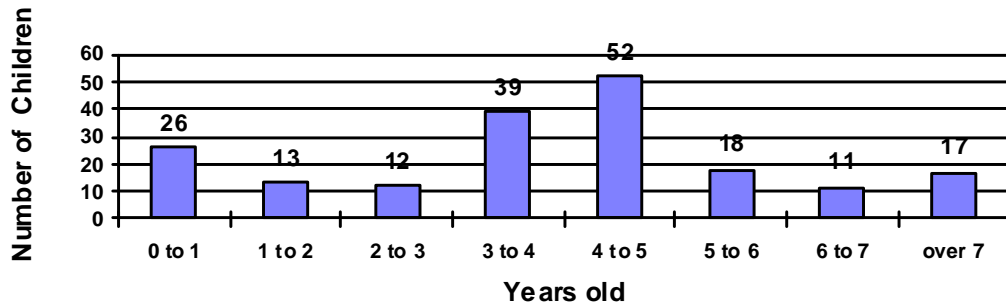
Figure 10. Kind of Work of Even Start Adults



Characteristics of Children

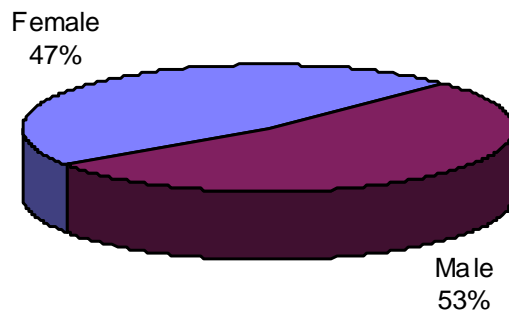
Age.⁹ The program served the entire eligible age range of children (birth through seven years old), focusing on children from three to five years old. Of the 188 children, 26 children (14 percent) were from birth to one year old; 30 children (16 percent) were one to three years old; 91 children (48 percent) were three to five years old; 29 children (15 percent) were five to seven years old, and 17 children (9 percent) were over seven years old.

Figure 11. Age of Even Start Children



Gender. The five projects served about the same number of female and male children. Of 188 children, 99 (50 percent) were male and 89 (50 percent) were female.

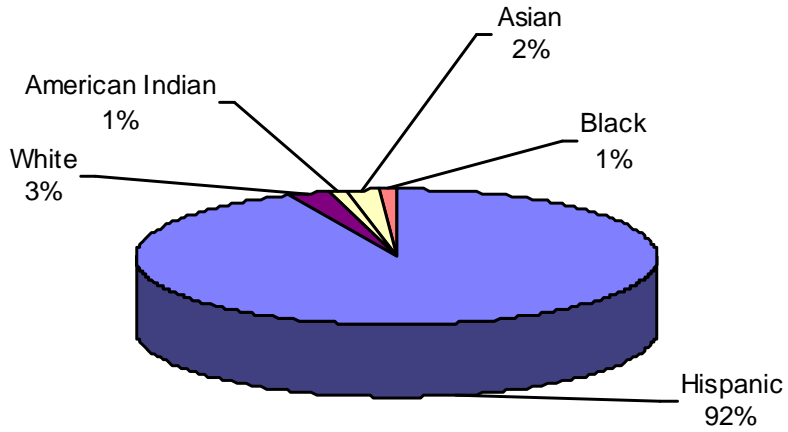
Figure 12. Gender of Even Start Children



⁹ Age was calculated as of September 1, 2007, at the beginning of the program year.

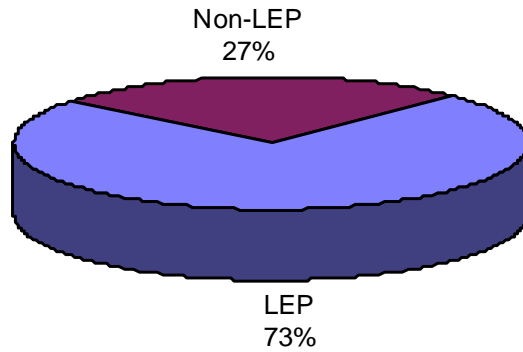
Ethnicity. Of the 188 children, 175 (92 percent) were Hispanic, five (3 percent) were White, four (2 percent) were Asian, two (1 percent) were Black, and two (1 percent) were American Indian.

Figure 13. Race/Ethnic Background of Even Start Children



Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Status. Of the children enrolled in Even Start, almost three-quarters (138 children or 73 percent) are Limited English Proficient: 50 children (27 percent) are not.

Figure 14. LEP Status of Even Start Children



History of Participation in Non-Even Start Programs. Even Start plays an important role in the lives of children as reflected in their lack of participation in other educational programs. Over 78 percent of the children (147 of the 188 children in the program) did not participate in any other educational program prior to Even Start, and 38 percent (71 children) did not participate in any other educational program when the family enrolled in Even Start. In other words, without Even Start, many children may not have participated in any educational program other than compulsory schooling. For many children, Even Start was the only structured program they participated in to prepare them for school.

Table 12. Number of Children Participating in Educational Programs Prior to and at Intake into Even Start¹⁰

Non-Even Start Programs	Prior to Even Start	At Intake
Head Start	1	2
Other Even Start	1	
Title I Preschool	5	28
Migrant Education, Home Early Learning program	5	1
Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education	6	2
Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program	14	29
Kindergarten	9	13
Primary School (Grades 1-3)	3	18
Other	1	28
None	147	71

The profile of Even Start families in Nevada is that Even Start families are poor and face multiple social and economic disadvantages, including limited educational experiences, low-paying career tracks, and, for a very large majority, limited English proficiency. In many ways, Even Start gives the families an important opportunity (and for many the only opportunity) to better their lives by improving adult basic and parenting skills and by providing children with developmentally supportive experiences.

¹⁰ Children can participate in more than one program.

Chapter V. Even Start Services

Even Start projects are required to provide services in adult basic education, parenting education, early childhood education, interactive literacy activities (ILA), and conduct home-visits with participating families. In addition, projects typically offer a wide range of support services, such as providing or arranging for transportation and child care that help projects provide core services. This chapter describes aspects of the services provided to families and how they are provided, including recruited populations, recruitment strategies, screening procedures, educational models used by local projects, intensity of services, and joint parenting and adult education. The data were collected from a survey completed by project directors.

Recruited Populations

To be eligible to receive Even Start services, a family must have at least one parent who qualifies for adult education under the Adult Education Act, or be in need of basic literacy skills or English language acquisition, and have at least one child birth through age seven. Within this general parameter, projects may choose to serve particular groups, such as families with children from birth to three years old.

Table 13 shows the number of projects that targeted specific groups within the eligible

Table 13. Specific Populations Recruited by Even Start Projects

Recruited Populations	Yes	No
Family resides in specific housing development or other neighborhood	3	2
Recent immigrant or limited English proficiency	5	0
Parent did not complete high school	5	0
Single parent	3	2
Teen parent	3	2
Child is infant or toddler (age birth through 2)	3	2
Child is age 3 through 5	5	0
Parent is already enrolled in adult education through a collaborating agency	5	0
Child is already enrolled in early childhood education through a collaborating agency	3	2

pool. The most common responses were that five projects targeted four groups:

- ✓ recent immigrants or persons with limited English proficiency,
- ✓ parents who did not complete high school,
- ✓ children from three through five years old, and
- ✓ parents who are already enrolled in adult education through a collaborating agency

The data presented in Chapter IV suggest the Even Start projects were successful in recruiting all three of targeted populations.

Recruitment Strategies

All projects used several strategies to recruit families. As shown in Table 14, the most common strategies were “collaborating agencies” and “word of mouth” which all five projects “used often.” This finding suggests the five projects, which are all well-established, do not rely on active recruitment strategies.

Table 14. Recruitment Strategies Used by Even Start Projects

Recruitment Strategies	<i>Not used</i>	<i>Used little</i>	<i>Used some</i>	<i>Used often</i>
Public school referrals (e.g., Title I)	0	1	2	2
Referrals by Head Start or preschool	2	0	2	1
Referrals by community or government agency	0	0	2	3
Walking the neighborhood	4	1	0	0
Home-visits	1	2	1	1
Telephone contact	1	0	3	1
Word of mouth	0	0	0	5
Targeted mailings	1	2	1	1
Mass media	1	3	1	0
Posters or flyers	0	2	0	3
Collaborating agencies	0	0	0	5
Presentations/visits to community agency	1	1	2	1

The next most frequently used strategy was referrals from community and government agencies. The least used strategies were walking the neighborhood and targeted mailings—which three projects each did not use.

Screening Procedures

Before applicant families are officially enrolled in Even Start, projects undertake various methods to screen them. As shown in Table 15, all five projects reported they took the necessary steps to determine whether families were eligible for services and conducted an orientation. In addition, while most projects reported that they assessed family skills consistently (i.e., adult and children skills), one project reported they did not. In this case, presumably, the adults and children were assessed by a collaborating agency. At screening, substantially fewer projects referred many families to other agencies or contacted other agencies involved with families to coordinate services—perhaps because there was either little need at that point or project staff were not familiar enough with the families to make appropriate referrals.

Table 15. Screening Procedures Used by Even Start Projects

Screening Procedures	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Verify eligibility	0	0	0	5
Conduct an orientation	0	0	0	5
Assess basic skills of adults	1	0	0	4
Assess language development or school readiness of children	1	0	0	4
Contact other agencies involved with families to coordinate services	2	0	1	2
Make referrals	1	1	1	2

Educational Models Used by Local Projects

Even Start projects have the flexibility to tailor the delivery of the core educational components in ways that best serve the needs of participating families. To determine which models were used to design local programs, we provided project directors with a list of programs and educational models and asked them to select those that were very influential in the design of their projects.

The results from the surveys showed that all projects used at least one, and most projects used several commercial programs in designing their services. Several commercial pro-

grams are seen as effective from scientifically-based research studies. Table 16 shows the number of programs/models that directors reported using when developing their projects. Four projects used the effective research-based program, *Parents as Teachers*, when conducting home-visits. Frequently used parenting programs included *Bowdoin Method* (three projects) and child development materials from the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension program (two projects). Two projects used *Head Start* as the early childhood education program.

Table 16. Education Models Used by Even Start Programs

Education Models	Number of projects
AVANCE Family Support and Education Program	1
Bowdoin Method	3
Family and Child Education Program (FACE)	0
Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) curriculum	0
High Scope curriculum	1
Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model	0
Parent and Child Education (PACE)	1
Parents as Partners in Reading	0
Parents as Teachers (PAT)	4
Portage home teaching model	0
Project AHEAD	1
Project Home Base	0
Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP/PECES)	0
Locally developed model	1
Teaching Involved Parenting (TIP)	1
University Cooperative Extension	2
Head Start	2
Other model (<i>specify</i>) <i>Emilio Reggio (1), Family Storyteller (1) Creating Lasting Families (1) and Creative Curriculum (1)</i>	4

Only one project reported they developed their own model, suggesting that projects rely more on commercially available programs/models to best serve the needs of their families.

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)

An important part of an Even Start program is the time parents and their children spend together in meaningful interactions about literacy, called interactive literacy activities (ILA). ILA time allows parents to become increasingly involved in their children's education as well as refining their own parenting skills. To determine the types of activities that projects conducted with parents and their children together, project directors were asked to identify how frequently projects conducted specific types of ILA activities with families.

All projects used a variety of strategies to bring parents and children together in meaningful interactions. Table 17 shows that all five projects used five types of ILA activities with most families—

- ✓ language development,
- ✓ reading, storytelling, pre-reading,
- ✓ early academic skills,
- ✓ arts and crafts, and
- ✓ independence, self-discipline, self-help skills.

Table 17. ILA Activities Used by Even Start Projects

ILA Activities	<i>Not taught</i>	<i>Few families</i>	<i>Some families</i>	<i>Most families</i>
Sensory stimulation (<i>auditory, visual, tactile</i>)	0	0	1	4
Language development (<i>vocabulary, explain, talk</i>)	0	0	0	5
Reading, storytelling, pre-reading	0	0	0	5
Working with letters and writing	0	0	1	4
Working with numbers (<i>counting, number games</i>)	0	0	1	4
Early academic skills (<i>shapes, colors, classification</i>)	0	0	0	5
Computer activities	0	2	2	1
Arts and crafts	0	0	0	5
Gross motor activities	0	0	1	4
Fine motor activities	0	0	1	4
Social development (<i>sharing, working together</i>)	0	0	1	4
Independence, self-discipline, self-help skills	0	0	0	5
Health and nutrition	0	0	2	3
Activities selected and led by the child	0	0	2	3

Intensity of Services

A very important piece of information is the number of hours that Even Start projects offered participants in adult education, parenting education, early childhood education, and ILA. Typically, research has found that the more hours participants spend in program activities, the larger the impact. In fact, federal Even Start legislation defines “family literacy services” as services... “that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family.” In other words, it is important that projects offer enough hours of an activity to achieve “sustainable changes.”

To determine the intensity of educational services, we asked directors to report: (a) scheduled hours per month, (b) duration of instruction in months, and (c) hours per month of services in a home-based setting for adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education services whether provided by Even Start staff or partners. Table 18 reports the average scheduled hours provided for three core educational service areas. The number of projects that offered the service is in parentheses. (Some projects did not offer services in all areas.)

Adult Education. Overall, Table 18 shows that Even Start projects offered adults sufficient opportunities to make “sustainable changes.”¹¹ Projects offered an average of 288 hours in *Beginning Adult Education*, 339 hours of *Intermediate Adult Education*, 341 hours for adults enrolled in *Adult Secondary Education*, and 320 hours in *English as a Second Language (ESL)* during the program year. All adults attended adult education classes outside the home. No project reported providing any adult education instruction as part of the home-visit.

¹¹ Developers of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) suggest that adult students should receive 100 hours of adult education to show a significant gain on the CASAS.

Table 18. Scheduled Hours of Adult Education, Parenting, and Early Childhood Services

Core Service Area	Hours per month (No. of projects)	Duration of instruction in months (No. of projects)	Total Average Hours (No. of projects)	Hours per month services are in home-based setting (No. of projects)
Adult Education				
Beginning ABE (0-5.9: CASAS 0-200)	24.8 (5)	11.6 (5)	288 (5)	NA
Intermediate ABE (6.0-8.9: CASAS 201-235)	29.5 (4)	11.5 (4)	339 (4)	NA
Adult Secondary Education/GED preparation (9-12: CASAS over 235)	29.4 (5)	11.6 (5)	341 (5)	NA
English as a second language (ESL)	27.6 (5)	11.6 (5)	320 (5)	NA
Parenting Education				
Parent alone	9.1 (5)	11.6 (5)	106 (5)	1.38 (4)
Parent and child are involved together	10.5 (5)	11.6 (5)	122 (5)	1.9 (5)
Early Childhood Education				
Under age 3	39 (5)	11.4 (5)	444 (5)	1.7 (5)
Age 3 and 4	45.8 (5)	11.0 (5)	503 (5)	1.7 (5)
Age 5	61.4 (5)	11.4 (5)	700 (5)	1.7 (5)
Age 6 and 7	51.4 (5)	11.4 (5)	585 (5)	1.7 (5)

Overall, the total number of hours offered in 2007-08 for adult education programs represents a slight increase in the number of hours offered in 2006-07 by the same Even Start projects. Last year, Even Start projects offered 258 hours in Beginning ABE, 300 hours in Intermediate ABE, 334 hours in Adult Secondary Education, and 331 hours of ESL.

The total number of adult education hours offered to Even Start adults in Nevada is below the number of adult education hours reported offered by national Even Start projects, except ESL classes. These programs offered an average of 390 hours of Beginning ABE, 412 hours of Intermediate ABE, 430 hours of Adult Secondary Education, and 335 hours of ESL.

Parenting Education. On average, the five projects offered a total of 106 hours per year of *Parenting education alone*—9.1 hours per month for 11.6 months per year. In addition, the five projects offered an average of 122 hours per year of *Parent and child time together*—10.5 hours per month for 11.6 months per year. In other words, most adults

could receive a total of about 228 hours of parenting education during a program year. The number of hours of parenting education offered in 2007-08 is smaller than the 236 hours that Even Start projects in Nevada offered in 2006-07.

The hours of scheduled parenting education in Even Start projects in Nevada are greater than the scheduled hours reported for national Even Start projects in the *National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program* for the last two years (January, 1997). National Even Start projects reported a total of 99 hours of *Parent education alone* and 96 hours of *Parent and child time together* per month—a total of approximately 195 hours of parenting education—about 10 percent less than the number of hours offered by Even Start projects in Nevada.

Early Childhood Education. The scheduled hours of early childhood education differed depending upon the age group. On average, projects scheduled a total of 444 hours per year of educational services to infants and toddlers up to three years of age—39.5 hours per month for 11.4 months. For three to four year olds, projects scheduled an average of 503 hours—45.8 hours per month for 11.0 months. Five year-olds were scheduled an average of 700 hours—61.4 hours per month for 11.4 months. Six to seven year-olds were offered a total of 585 hours—51.4 hours per month for 11.4 months.

Four and five year olds received the most scheduled hours of early childhood education because the Even Start projects that offer preschool programs typically target children from four to five years old. Projects reported that children from six to seven years received the next most scheduled hours of early childhood education. However, these children are in compulsory schooling and do not attend Even Start services to that extent. Based on the data submitted, two projects probably submitted the hours that students were in compulsory schooling rather than just time with Even Start paid staff. The other three projects reported an average of 64 scheduled hours, which seems like a better estimate of the scheduled hours provided to this age group of Even Start children.

Overall, the number of hours of early childhood education offered in 2007-08 increased from 2006-07 for three of the four age groups, except three to four year olds. Last year, Even Start projects scheduled a total of 420 hours for children under three years old, 545

hours for three to four year olds, 460 hours for five year-olds, and 343 hours for six and seven year-olds.

In addition, Even Start projects in Nevada offered children more hours of early childhood education than Even Start projects reported nationally for all four age levels, as indicated in the *National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program* (January, 1997). National Even Start projects offered 350 hours of educational services for children from birth to three year-olds, 489 hours to three to four year-olds, 519 hours to five year-olds, and 557 hours to six and seven year-olds.

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)

Project directors were asked to identify the number of hours per month that a typical family spends in structured interactive literacy activities in three different settings: during home-visits, in the center or classroom, and on field trips and other social functions.

Table 19 shows that all projects provided some structured parent-child time. All five projects provided structured ILA time during the home-visits, in the center or classroom, and during field trips and social events. Typically, families spent more time in structured ILA time per month in the center or classroom per month (7.8 hours) than during home-visits (2.0 hours) or field trips and social events (2.3 hours).

Table 19. Hours Which Families Participate in Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)

Settings	Number of Projects	Average hours per month
During home-visits	5	2.8
In Centers/Classrooms	5	7.8
During field trips, socials, etc.	5	2.6

Parenting and Adult Education

To determine the extent to which adult education was integrated with parenting education, project directors were asked to identify the number of hours per month that adult education is combined with parent education.

Overall, Table 19 shows that most projects combined adult education with parent education. All five Even Start projects combined adult education with parent education in *English as a Second Language*. Four projects combined adult education with parenting education in *Adult Secondary Education*, three projects combined adult education and parent education in *Beginning ABE* and two projects did in *Intermediate ABE*.

Table 20. Hours Which Projects Integrate Adult Education and Parenting Education

Settings	Number of Projects	Range of reported hours (Average)
Beginning ABE (0-5.9: CASAS 0-200)	3	1-8 (5.0)
Intermediate ABE (6.0-8.9: CASAS 201-235)	2	6-8 (7.0)
Adult Secondary Education/ GED preparation (9-12: CASAS over 235)	4	1-8 (4.1)
English as a second language (ESL)	5	1-20 (6.9)

In general, two projects reported combining adult education with parenting education for eight to 20 hours in all four adult education settings. The three other projects combined adult education with parenting education for one to four hours per months in those setting in which they combined adult education with parenting education.

Chapter VI. Participation in Services

Chapter IV showed that many Even Start families have multiple disadvantages that include limited educational experiences, poverty, low paying employment, and limited English proficiency. Chapter V showed that Even Start projects implemented various strategies to address the diverse educational needs of these families. However, given the difficulties families face, encouraging and maintaining participant motivation is one of the most significant challenges for projects—and a technical assistance need. This chapter will present participation outcomes for Even Start families. The extent of participation was assessed by several measures.

For families, we examined—

- ◆ The length of time families participated in the program,
- ◆ The number of home-visits conducted with each family during the year,
- ◆ The percentage of families still participating in the program, and
- ◆ The reasons for exiting the program during the year.

For adults, we examined—

- ◆ The number of adults participating in different adult education services,
- ◆ The number of hours adults participated in adult education programs, and
- ◆ The number of hours adults participated in parenting education.

For children, we examined—

- ◆ The number of children participating in different early childhood services, and
- ◆ The number of hours children participated in early childhood education.

The results are presented in three sections: family participation, adult participation, and child participation.

Family Participation

New and Existing Families

As reported previously, the five projects served 134 families during 2007-08. Table 21 shows when the families enrolled in the program. Of the 134 families, 74 (55 percent) were new to the program in 2007-08 and 60 (45 percent) were in the program from previous years.

Table 21. Number of Families by Year Enrolled, n=134

Year Enrolled	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Number of Families	4	1	1	4	9	7	34	74

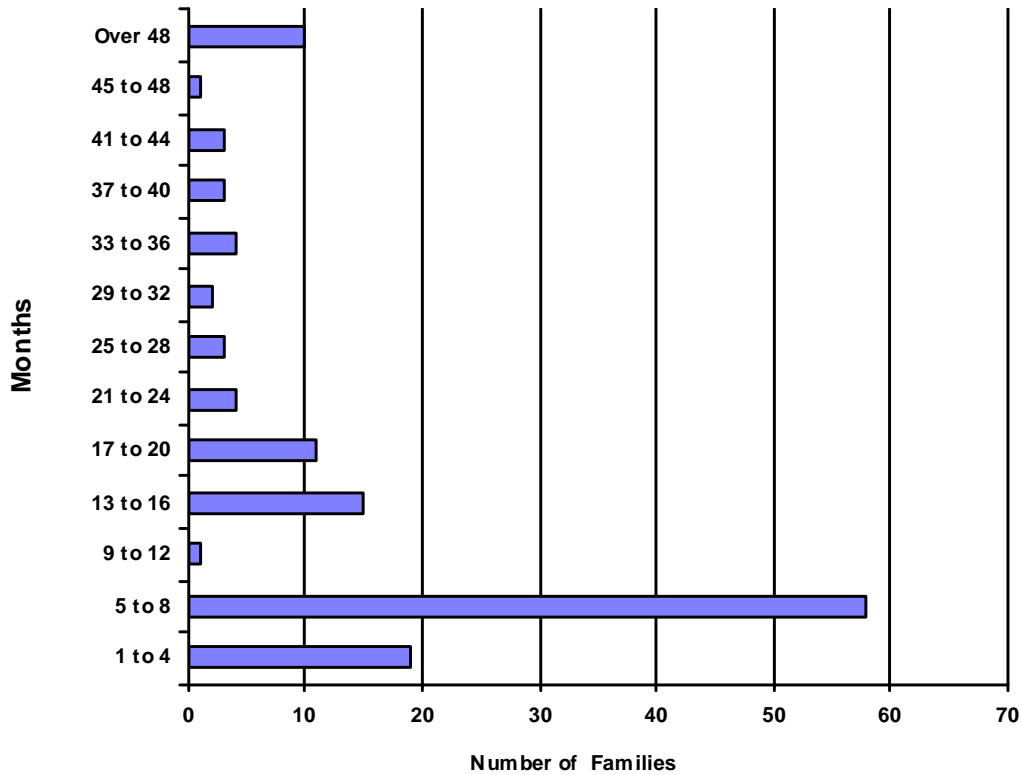
Length of Time in Program.

Research has found that the length of time families participate in Even Start is positively correlated with the gains of adults in adult education and parenting skills and children in school readiness (*National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program, 1995*). Clearly, a primary purpose of the program is to retain families in the program long enough so families can reach their goals, such as obtaining a high school diploma, learning to speak English, or better preparing their children for school. Many families stay in the program for one, two, and even three years as they work on family goals.

Figure 15 shows the number of families enrolled in Even Start projects by months in the program. Data are available on all 134 families in the program.

Overall, Even Start families were in the program for an average of almost 17 months between their initial intake date and the exit interview date. The distribution, however, is skewed: the majority of families (78 families or 58 percent) were in the program under 12 months.

Figure 15. Length of Participation in Months, n=134

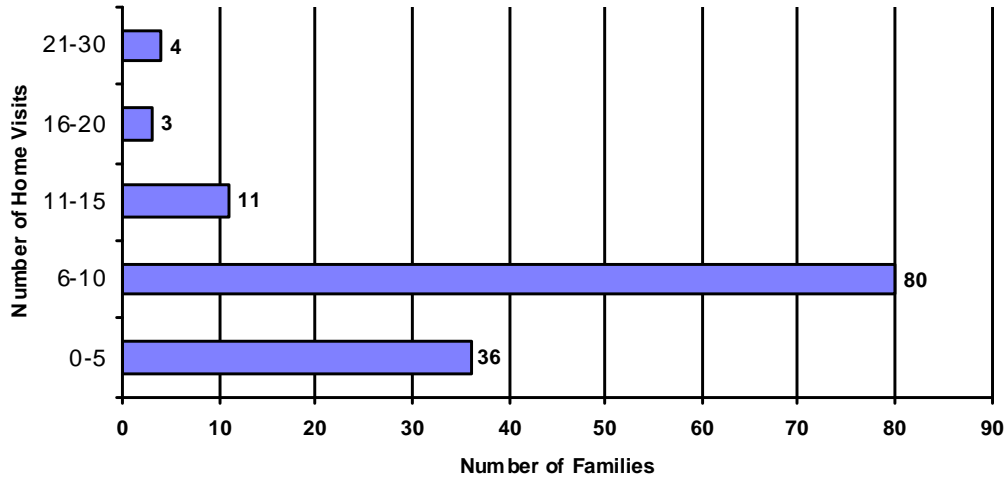


Number of Home-visits.

A home-visit is one of the critical (and required) activities in the design and delivery of Even Start. Home-visits allow Even Start staff the opportunity to build a one-to-one relationship with the family to promote adult and child growth and development. During home-visits, Even Start staff typically work with children and parents together on early childhood education and parenting skills.

Although Even Start projects are expected to conduct home-visits, projects are not required to conduct a specific number of home-visits per family. Instead, projects are given the flexibility to determine the frequency of home-visits based on program design, family need, staff resources, as well as the families’ receptiveness to home-visits. However, in a recent Title I Even Start monitoring visit by the U.S. Department of Education, the monitors suggested that projects should conduct at least monthly home visits with families.

Figure 16. Number of Home-visits, n=134



The results show that the number of home-visits for Even Start families ranged from 1 to 30 home visits.¹² Some families received only one or two home-visits while three families received 30 home-visits. The largest number of families (80 families) received from six to ten home-visits followed by the number of families (36 families) that received zero to five home-visits.

On average, Even Start families participated in over eight home-visits during 2007-08, which is an increase of two home-visits per year from the six home-visits that Even Start projects conducted in 2006-07. The increase in the number of home-visits in 2007-08 is probably the result of a monitoring visit report by the U.S. Department of Education which recommended that the State require Even Start projects to conduct monthly home-visits with families.

Family Retention

Of the 134 families who were enrolled in Even Start in the 2007-08 program year, 48 families (36 percent) were still in the program in June 2008. The retention rate for 2007-08 is substantially below the retention rate of Even Start projects in Nevada for the last two years: 59 percent in 2005-06 and 69 percent in 2006-07. In addition, the 2007-08 retention rate is below the retention rate of families reported in the national evaluation of

Even Start, i.e., 64 percent (*National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program*, 1995). One reason for the low retention rate is that one project exited 16 families at the end of the year because the project plans to serve only teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion. If we include these families as retained, the total number of families retained increased to 64 families, or 48 percent, which is still below all previous state retention rates. Another possible explanation is that several families had to leave the program because of economics and several other families had to leave the program because of immigration issues.

The data was further divided between families new to the program in 2007-08 (74 families) and families who were already in the program prior to July 2007 (60 families). Of the 74 families who were new to the program in 2007-08, 25 families (34 percent) were still in the program in June 2008. Of the 60 families who participated in Even Start during 2006-07 from previous years, 23 families (38 percent) were still in the program in June 2008. The data show that the Even Start projects retained existing families and new families at similar percentage rates. The data also suggest projects did equally as well retaining new and existing families.

Table 22. Retention Rate of New and Existing Families, n=134

	New Families	Existing Families
Number of Families Enrolled	74	60
Number of Families Retained	28	23

Reason for Exiting Program.

Eighty-six families (64 percent) left the program during 2007-08. Project staff reported a range of reasons why families left the program. Table 23 shows the number of families that exited the program by reason. Overall, the two most common reasons why families

¹²The number of home-visits is not available for one family.

exited the program were “other reason”¹³ (22 families), family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (17 families), and family members met goals or completed the eligible planned education (13 families). As mentioned previously, 16 of the 22 families who exited for “other reason” were exited because the project plans to serve only teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion.

The results are also divided between the 49 new families and the 37 continuing families who exited Even Start during 2007-08 before the end of the program year.

Table 23. Reasons for Exiting Program for New and Existing Families

Reasons for exiting program	New	Existing	Total
Family members met goals or completed the eligible planned education	9	7	16
Parent or child switched to a different program	1	0	1
Family moved out of the area served by the Even Start program	4	9	13
Family stopped participating due to a lack of interest	1	1	2
Family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance	10	7	17
Parent(s) found employment that prevents further participation	5	4	9
Family crisis prevented further participation	2	0	2
Conflicts or problems prevented continued participation	0	4	4
Other reason	17	5	22
Reason unknown	0	0	0

The results for why new and returning families exited the program differed slightly. The main difference was that 17 new families exited for “other reason” compared to five existing families. In addition, four new families exited because they moved out of the area compared nine existing families.

¹³ Projects do not specify in data collection the meaning of “other reason” other than the reason for exiting is other than the choices listed.

Adult Participation

The evaluation collected data on adult participation in adult education and parenting education—two of the required components for Even Start participation. The two components are intended not only to improve adult literacy skills, but also to better equip parents to support their children’s social, emotional, and academic development. The evaluation collected information on the hours of participation in adult education and parenting education as well as the types of adult education in which parents participated.

Type of Adult Services

Table 24 shows the number and percent of adults that enrolled in each adult education program. (The number and percentages in Table 24 total more than the number of program participants because adults could participate in more than one type of education program.) The largest number of adults enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes: 104 adults or 77 percent. The next most common type of adult education was GED preparation in which 20 adults (15 percent) participated, followed closely by participants in adult secondary education: 17 adults or 13 percent.

Table 24. Number of Adults Participating in Adult Education Programs, n=136

Type of Adult Education Program	Number	Percent
Beginning adult basic education (<i>grades 0-5.9</i>)	1	1%
Intermediate adult basic education (<i>grades 6-8.9</i>)	0	0
Adult secondary education (<i>grades 9-12</i>)	17	13%
GED preparation	20	15%
ESL	104	77%
Other (specify) _____	4	3%

The “Other” category of adult education program typically included computer-assisted instruction for English Language Learners, such as through the *ELLIS* program (*English Language Learning and Instructional System*). The projects reported that all but four adults (all in the same project) enrolled in adult education and attended at least some classes. These four adults were exited due to attendance issues.

Hours of Participation in Adult Education

The amount of time that Even Start adults participate in adult education classes is a strong positive predictor of gains in literacy. Overall, Even Start adults participated in an average of 194 hours of adult education during the program.¹⁴ The average hours that Even Start adults participated in adult education in 2007-08 is greater than the hours of adult education reported in last year's evaluation of Even Start projects in Nevada, i.e., 165 hours, which probably reflects improved attendance in adult education as well as a slight increase in the number of adult education hours offered to students, as reported previously. In comparison, projects in the national evaluation of Even Start reported adults spent 98 hours in adult education. In other words, adults in the Nevada Even Start projects participated in almost twice the number of adult education hours than participants in the national Even Start evaluation.

The number of hours that Even Start adults participate in adult education is influenced, in part, by the type of adult education program—as reported in Chapter V. Table 25 shows the number of adults that participated in only that type of adult education and their average total hours in each type of adult education. Because adults can participate in more than one program, adults who were in more than one type of program were excluded from this analysis since they would not provide a true picture of the hours that adults spent in each type of program. Out of the 136 adults in Even Start, 118 adults participated in just one type of adult education program. The results show that the average hours of participation in adult education programs ranged from 52 to 724 hours. On average, the 17 Even Start adults enrolled in “adult secondary education” programs spent the most time in adult education at 724 hours. The three adults enrolled in “other” adult education classes spent 595 hours and those enrolled in ESL classes spent an average of 110 hours in class.

¹⁴ If the four adults who did not attend any adult education classes are excluded from the analysis, Even Start adults participated in adult education an average of 200 hours of adult education during the program.

Table 25. Average Hours of Participation in Adult Education Programs

Type of Adult Education Program	Number of Adults	Average Hours
Beginning adult basic education (<i>grades 0-5.9</i>)	1	80
Intermediate adult basic education (<i>grades 6-8.9</i>)	0	----
Adult secondary education (<i>grades 9-12</i>)	17	724
GED preparation	6	52
ESL	91	110
Other (specify) _____	3	595
All programs	118	207.5

Hours of Parenting Education

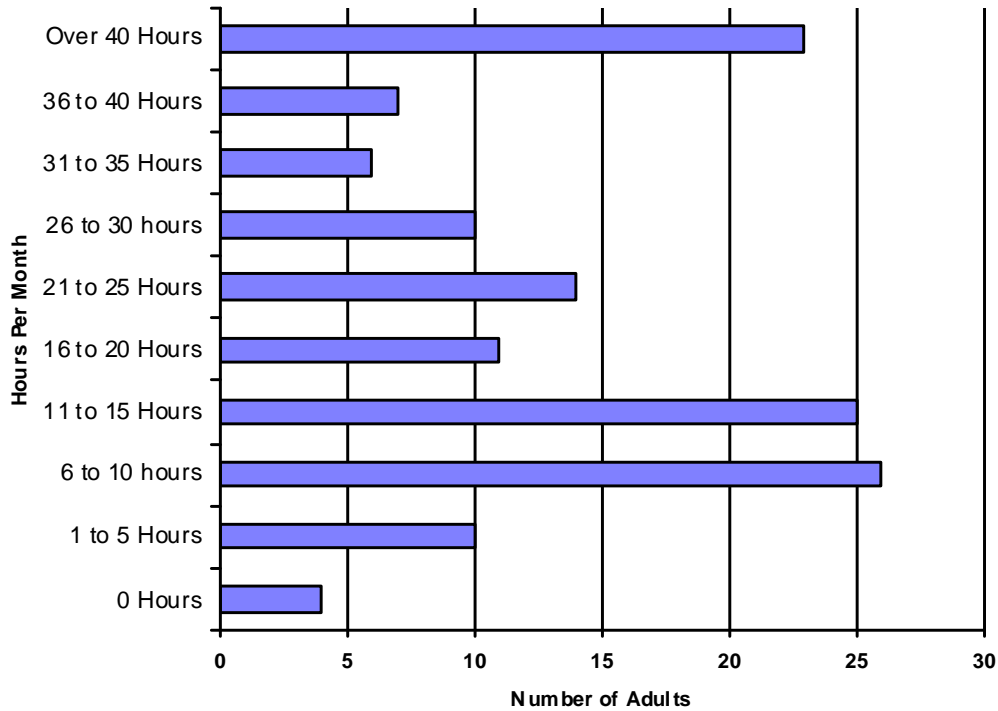
Like adult education, parenting education is a required component of Even Start. The evaluation found that all but four adults (3 percent) participated in at least some parenting education. For comparison, 12 percent of adults from the national evaluation of Even Start did not participate in parenting education.

Overall, Even Start adults participated in an average of 22.8 hours of parenting education during 2007-08, which is an increase over the two previous years.¹⁵ The figure is more than the 17.8 parenting education hours reported in 2006-07 evaluation of Nevada Even Start as well as the 22.1 hours reported in 2005-06. The figure is less than the 28 hours reported in the national evaluation of Even Start.

Figure 17 shows the total hours of adult participation in parenting education in five-hour increments. Overall, given the average months that families spent in Even Start, most adults probably did not meet the minimum number of parenting education hours per month, i.e., six hours, suggested in *Nevada Family Literacy Programs—Quality Indicators of Program Delivery*.

¹⁵ If the four adults who did not attend any parenting education classes are excluded from the analysis, Even Start adults participated in parent education an average of 23.5 hours during the program.

Figure 17. Total Hours of Participation in Parenting Education



Child Participation

Another required component of Nevada Even Start is early childhood education. A primary purpose of early childhood education is to better prepare children for school.

Type of Child Services

Project staff reported the type of education program in which each child participated. Table 26 shows the number and percent of children who participated in various types of early childhood programs. (The number and percentages in Table 26 total more than the number of program participants because children can attend more than one type of program.). The most prevalent program was organized, center-based ECE in which 103 Even Start children (47 percent) enrolled. The next most common type of early childhood education program was individualized, home-based ECE in which 48 children or 22 percent of children participated. In addition, 45 children (20 percent) attended compulsory schooling.

Table 26. Number of Children Participating in Early Childhood Programs

Type of Early Childhood Education	Number	Percent
Organized, center-based ECE	103	47%
Individualized, home-based ECE	48	22%
Day care with educational component	8	4%
Educational services for school-age children outside school hours	1	<1%
Compulsory schooling (K-3) coordinating with Even Start	45	20%
Special Education Services	6	3%
None	6	0%
Other	1	<1%

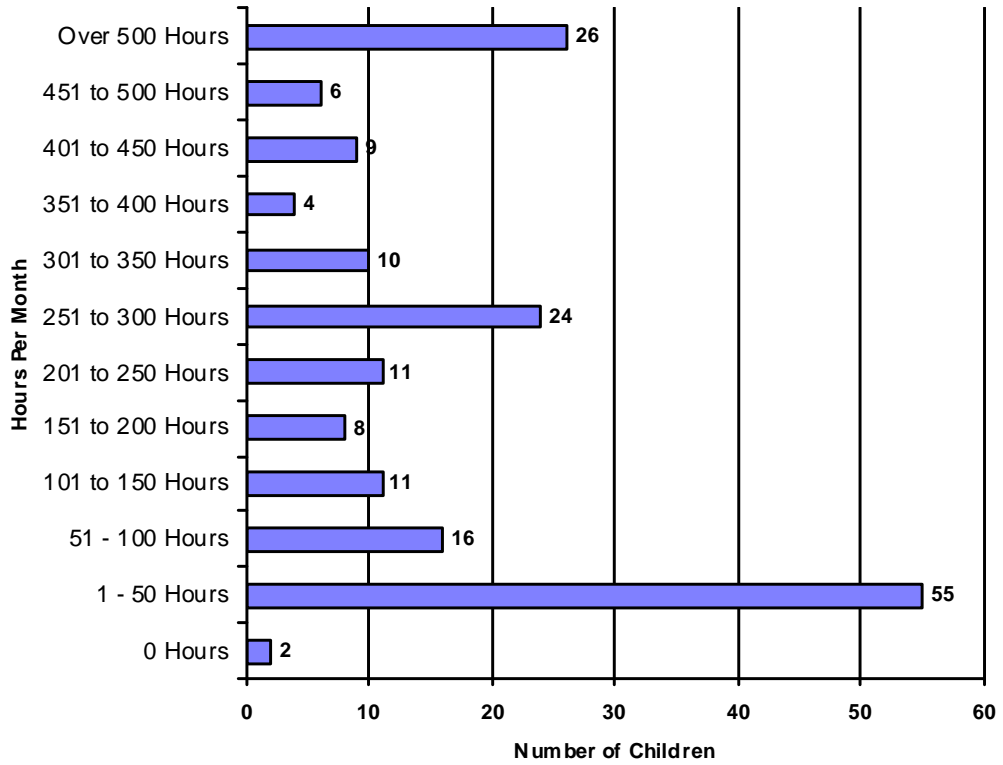
Hours of Participation in Early Childhood Education

The amount of time that Even Start children participated in an early childhood education program is a strong positive predictor of performance on early childhood measures. Overall, Even Start children participated in early childhood education an average of 264 hours of early childhood education, which is about the same as reported in the previous year's evaluation of Even Start projects in Nevada, 267 hours in 2006-07.¹⁶

Children showed a wide range of participation in early childhood education (from 0 to 1186 hours) and a wide range of length in participation (from 1 to 12 months). It suggests that the distribution of the hours of participation in an early childhood program may be skewed. To obtain a better picture of the amount of time children spent in early childhood programs, Figure 18 presents the number of hours that children spent in early childhood program by hour ranges. Clearly, a large number of children (55 children or 29 percent) attended from 1 to 50 hours of early childhood program during the program year. Most of these children probably attended a home-based program within Even Start projects, such as children who are in school and only participate in Even Start home visits and family events.

¹⁶ If the eight who did not attend any early childhood education are excluded from the analysis, Even Start children participated in early childhood education an average of 275 hours during the program.

Figure 18. Total Hours of Participation in Early Childhood Program



The data also show that a sizeable group of children (26 children or 14 percent) attended over 500 hours of early childhood education. Most of the children in this group probably attended full-day center-based Even Start projects.

Chapter VII. Participant Outcomes

This chapter presents data on 14 statewide Even Start outcome indicators: four indicators in early childhood education, six indicators in adult literacy, and four in parenting education. The statewide Even Start outcome indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative to fulfill a requirement of the grant. That is, each state receiving the grant was required to develop statewide indicators of program quality to monitor, evaluate, and improve Even Start programs within the State.

In fact, Nevada developed two sets of indicators of program quality: one set for program delivery and a second set for program outcomes. Even Start projects in Nevada use the quality indicators for program delivery as part of the required local evaluation to assess the program and build a program improvement plan. Projects use the quality indicators for program outcomes as part of the statewide evaluation of all Even Start projects in Nevada. See Appendix A for a complete list of the outcome indicators and how the performance levels were established.

Overall, Even Start adults and children in Nevada achieved the expected level of performance for 13 of the 14 outcome indicators: three in early childhood education, six in adult literacy, and four in parenting. While Even Start projects achieved positive results on the one early childhood education indicator that projects did not meet, the performance of Even Start children fell short of the expected performance level for the indicator.

The evaluation also interpreted the relative size of the gains of Even Start participants on the assessment instruments by, for example, comparing Even Start results with the results of Even Start participants nationally, where data were available.

Table 27. Outcome Indicators Met in Each Area

Indicator Area (n)	Yes	No
A. Early Childhood (4)	3	1
B. Adult Literacy (6)	6	0
C. Parenting (4)	4	0

Outcome Indicators

A. Early Childhood Education

Outcome Indicator A1. Seventy percent (70%) of Even Start children from birth until three years old with a minimum of four months of participation will increase their standard score on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subtests of the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).

Reading Readiness. The PLS-4¹⁷ is an individually administered norm-referenced language assessment for children from birth to six years old. Even Start projects in Nevada administered the Preschool Language Scale-4 to children from birth to three years old. The test produces scores for auditory comprehension and expressive communication. It can be administered in English or Spanish depending on the individual child. In almost all cases, Even Start projects in Nevada administered the PLS-4 in English. One project administered the PLS-4 in Spanish to one child.

The PLS-4 data are expressed in standard score units. Standard scores express the extent to which a child's score exceeds or falls below the mean score of children the same age upon which the test was normed. PLS-4 scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. For example, one-year-old children in the PLS-4 norm group have an average raw score of 11 in expressive communication which equates to a standard score of 100; two-year-olds have a average raw score of 20, which is also assigned a standard score of 100; three-year-olds have an average raw score of 29 which equates to a standard score of 100, and so on.

The analysis of data on the PLS is done with standard scores, and because of the way a standard score scale is constructed (as explained above), our expectation is that the

Table 28. Performance on Early Childhood Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Reading Readiness	70%	Auditory 74% Expressive 60%
2. Reading Ability	70%	PPVT (88%), EOWPVT (90%)
3. School Attendance	94.7%	95.9%
4. Grade Promotion	95%	98%

PLS-4 standard scores should not change in the absence of a “treatment.” That is, assuming children develop at about the same rate, a child’s relative position with respect to children’s skills their own age should not change without a treatment or intervention. There is no “maturation effect” for the PLS-4 because the standard scores are age-linked. A one-year-old who scores at the mean for all one-year-olds will have the same standard score as a three-year old who scores at the mean for all three-year-olds. Hence, there is no particular reason a child’s standard score in relation to the PLS-4 norm group should change over time unless that child is receiving special services. An increase in standard score during the time that a child is participating in Even Start is, therefore, taken as an indication that Even Start is helping increase the child’s auditory comprehension and expressive communication.

For Even Start projects in Nevada, pretest and posttest scores are available for 35 children on the Auditory Comprehension and on the Expressive Communication subtests who were in the program at least four months. In terms of the outcome indicator, 26 of the 35 children (74 percent) made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest, and 21 of the 35 children (60 percent) made a standard score gain on the Expressive Communication subtest—the expected performance level is that 70 percent of children would make a standard score gain. Therefore, Even Start projects in Nevada did not achieve this outcome indicator for early childhood education.

To help interpret the overall impact of Even Start on children as measured by the PLS-4, we calculated the mean gain scores of the children on the PLS-4. Table 29 shows that the 35 children made a mean gain of 7.5 standard score points on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and a mean gain of 1.6 standard score points on the Expressive Communication subtest. These results show that, overall, Even Start had a positive effect on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication of many participating children, but fell short of the expected performance level in expressive communication.

¹⁷ The Preschool Language Scale has been used in the national evaluation of Even Start with children from two to six and a half years-old

Table 29. Preschool Language Scale-4 Mean Scores, n=35

Subtest (n)	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Auditory Comprehension	91.7	99.3	7.5
Expressive Communication	91.5	93.1	1.6

In comparison, data from the *National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program (1997)* shows that Even Start children made a mean gain of 5.2 standard score points. Thus, the gains of Nevada Even Start children on the PLS-4 are larger than the gains of children in the National Evaluation of Even Start for Auditory Comprehension, but smaller for Expressive Communication.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. Overall, projects could not administer the three early childhood assessments (PLS-4, PPVT, and EOWPVT) in English when the child enrolled into the program for 80 of the 182 children for whom data were available (44 percent). These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Even Start staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher thought the child had sufficient language skills to take the test. On the PLS-4, projects could not administer the assessment in English at intake for 26 of the 35 children (74 percent) who had both a pretest and posttest because these children did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. As a result, these students had less time between the pretest and posttest than other children.

Outcome Indicator A2. Seventy percent (70%) of Even Start children from three years old until grade 3 will improve in their ability to read on grade level or above as measured by Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition.

Reading Ability—PPVT. The PPVT is an individually administered norm-referenced test that measures receptive vocabulary (understanding/interpreting what is heard) and gives a quick estimate of the child's verbal and other literacy-related skills. The PPVT is appropriate for children between two and 18 years old. Nevada Even Start programs adminis-

tered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to children beginning at three years-old.

The PPVT data are expressed in standard score units. PPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Like the PLS-4, there is no “maturation effect” for the PPVT. Therefore, our expectation is that the PPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a “treatment.” Thus, an increase in the standard score on the PPVT during the time a child is participating in Even Start is taken as an indication that Even Start is helping increase the child’s receptive vocabulary.

Even Start projects served 103 children who had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest. In terms of the expected level of performance on the PPVT, 91 of the 103 children (88 percent) made a standard score gain — above the expected performance level of 70 percent on this measure. Thus, Even Start projects in Nevada met the expected level of performance for this measure.

As with the PLS-4, we calculated the mean gain scores on the PPVT to help interpret the overall impact of Even Start on children’s receptive vocabulary. Table 30 shows that the 103 children made a mean gain of 8.7 standard score points on the PPVT. These results suggest that Even Start projects in Nevada had a positive effect on the receptive vocabulary of children in the program.

Table 30. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n=103

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
80.3	89.0	8.7

We also compared the gains of Even Start children in Nevada on the PPVT to the gains of children reported in the national evaluation of Even Start. The national study calculated monthly standard score gains for children who were administered the PPVT. Children in the national sample made a monthly gain of 0.94 standard score points.

Nevada Even Start children were in the program (between the pretest and posttest) an average of 6.8 months. Based on the gains of Nevada children reported above, children administered the PPVT made an average monthly gain of 1.27 standard score points on the

PPVT. In other words, Even Start children in Nevada made monthly gains in receptive vocabulary about 33 percent larger than the monthly gains reported for children in the national evaluation of Even Start.

Reading Ability—EOWPVT. The EOWPVT is a standardized, norm-referenced test designed to assess an individual’s English speaking vocabulary by asking the child to name objects, actions, and concepts depicted in illustrations. The age-range for the test is 2 years 0 months to 18 years 11 months. Like the PPVT, Even Start projects in Nevada administered the EOWPVT to children beginning at three years-old. The test contains 170 test items that begin relatively easy and become progressively more difficult. The starting point is staggered based on the child’s age so that typically fewer than 50 items are given to any one child. The EOWPVT is widely used in early childhood and family literacy programs for evaluating progress.

The EOWPVT data are expressed in standard score units. EOWPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Like the PLS-4 and the PPVT, our expectation is that the EOWPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a “treatment.”

Even Start projects served 89 children who had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest. In terms of the expected level of performance on the EOWPVT, 88 of the 89 children¹⁸ (90 percent) made a standard score gain on the EOWPVT— above the expected performance level of 70 percent on this measure for the outcome indicator.

As with the PLS-4 and the PPVT, we calculated the mean gain scores of the 89 children on the EOWPVT to help interpret the overall impact of Even Start on children as shown in Table 31.

¹⁸ The sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the EOWPVT (n=99) is less than the sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the PPVT (n=103) because it is more difficult for English Language Learners to obtain a score in the valid range on a test that measures expressive communication (EOWPVT) than receptive vocabulary (PPVT) in English.

Table 31. Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n = 89

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
78.2	89.1	10.9

Children made a mean gain of 10.9 standard score points. The EOWPVT was not used in the national evaluation of Even Start, so no national comparisons are possible. Instead, I calculated an “effect size” which researchers sometimes use to estimate the “value” of the gain.¹⁹ In this case, the effect size was medium—a standard deviation of 0.75 as compared to the effect of other social programs. This means that if Even Start children were “typical” children at the time of the pretest, half of the population they were drawn from would have scored above the Even Start pretest score and half would have scored below. However, by the posttest, only about 23 percent of the same population they were chosen from would have scored above the Even Start children. Thus, the Nevada Even Start program had a positive effect in improving the English skills of children in the program.

Overall, when examining the results from the PPVT and the EOWPVT, Even Start children in Nevada met the expected performance level for this outcome indicator for early childhood education. As mentioned previously, the results must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. Projects could not administer the EOWPVT in English at intake for 12 of the 89 children with pretest and posttest data (13 percent) and 23 of the 103 children with pretest and posttest data (22 percent) who took the PPVT because the child did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test.

¹⁹ Effect size is a type of standard score. It is found by dividing the difference between experimental and control group means divided by the standard deviation of the control group. In this instance, it is found by dividing the difference between the pretest and posttest means by the standard deviation of the pretest. It would then represent, in standard score terms, the superiority of the average person in the treated group over the untreated group. To help interpret the meaning of effect sizes: 1.0 is considered large, .5 considered medium, and .2 considered small.

Outcome Indicator A3. *Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who attend public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will have attended public school at the same or better rate as the school student attendance rate.*

School Attendance. Of the 188 children involved in the Even Start projects in Nevada, 42 children were enrolled in Even Start by November 1, 2007, in the program at least four months during 2007-08, and attended public school. Data are available on 41 of the 42 children. The 41 children attended 13 elementary schools across Nevada. The 41 children had an average student attendance rate of 95.9 percent across the 13 schools. Data on the school average daily attendance rate are available from all 13 schools from the Nevada School Accountability Report. The overall student attendance rate at the 13 public elementary schools the children attended ranged from 92.7 to 96.2 percent with a weighted average student attendance rate of 94.7 percent.²⁰ Thus, Even Start children in Nevada achieved the expected level of performance on the outcome indicator. That is, Even Start children attended school at the same or better rate as the overall student attendance rate at the schools in which they were enrolled.

Outcome Indicator A4. *Ninety-five percent (95%) of all participating Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who attend public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will be promoted to the next grade in the child's school district.*

Grade Promotion. As reported previously, of the 188 children involved in the Even Start projects in Nevada, 42 children were enrolled in Even Start by November 1, 2007, in the program at least four months during 2007-08, and attended public school. Data are available on 42 children. At the end of the school year, 41 of the 42 children (97.6 percent) were promoted to the next grade. Thus, Even Start projects met the expected level of performance of 95 percent on this outcome indicator.

²⁰ The evaluation used the school attendance rates from 2004-05 since the attendance rates for 2006-06 were not yet available.

B. Adult Literacy²¹

Outcome Indicator B1. *Adults who have completed 80 hours of adult education within a reporting year will demonstrate an average gain of 5 scale score points on each of the appropriate Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) subtests (reading, mathematics, and listening).*

Reading and Listening. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System is a functional assessment measuring a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in real-life domains including, consumer economics, government and law, occupational knowledge, and community resources and health. The CASAS includes subtests in reading, writing, listening, mathematics, and problem solving skills. All five Even Start projects in Nevada used the Reading subtest.

Table 32. Performance on Adult Literacy Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Reading and Listening	5 points in reading	6.0 points in reading
2. Educational Literacy Levels	51%	72%
3. Postsecondary Education	45%	100%
4. Entry into Employment	62%	100%
5. Retain/Improve Employment	76%	100%
6. Receipt of Diploma or GED	37%	67%

The CASAS has the flexibility to measure adults at different reading levels ranging from non-readers to adults at the GED or high school level. The CASAS was used in the National Evaluation of Even Start as well as the National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs. CASAS scores are reported in scaled scores that range from 150 to 260.

Of the 136 adults in Even Start projects in Nevada, 88 adults were in the program at least four months in 2007-08, attended at least 80 hours of adult education, and had pretest and posttest scores on the CASAS. In fact, the 88 adults had an average of 251 hours of adult education.

²¹ Five of the six adult literacy indicators are the indicators used by adult education programs in Nevada. The only adult indicator not used in adult education program in Nevada is Outcome Indicator B1: Reading and Listening. The Nevada Department of Education raised the expected performance levels for the five adult literacy indicators used in adult education programs in Nevada for 2002-03. Even Start projects adopted these new increased performance levels for the adult literacy indicators to measure program success.

Table 33 shows the pretest and posttest means on the Reading subtest for the 88 adults in the sample. The results show that Even Start adults made an average gain of 6.0 points in reading, above the expected average gain of five standard score points for this indicator. The reading gains are also slightly larger than the gains found in other federal and state adult literacy programs. For example, adults in the national evaluation of Even Start made a mean scale score gain of 4.9 in reading (*National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program*, 1997). A study of state-funded competency education program in California reported gains of 4.2 scale score points (*CBAE*, 1987).

Table 33. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Scores, n=88

Subtest	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Reading	214.2	220.2	6.0

Even Start adults in Nevada met the expected performance level for this outcome indicator for adult education.

Outcome Indicator B2. *Fifty-one percent (51%) of adults, who are enrolled in adult education programs for at least four months within a reporting year, will advance at least one Educational Functioning Literacy Level as determined by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).*

Educational Literacy Levels. The CASAS scaled scores are divided into six Educational Functional Literacy Levels for adult basic education (beginning literacy, beginning basic skills, intermediate basic skills, advanced basic skills, adult secondary, and advanced adult secondary). For adults who speak English as a Second Language (ESL), the CASAS Reading subtest scaled scores are divided into eight Education Functional Literacy Levels: beginning literacy, low beginning ESL, high beginning ESL, low intermediate ESL, high intermediate ESL, advanced ESL, adult secondary, and proficient skills.

Of the 136 adults in Even Start projects in Nevada, 105 adults had been in the program at least four months and had pretest and posttest scores on the Reading subtest of the CASAS. In terms of the outcome indicator, 76 of the 105 adults (72 percent) advanced at least one Educational Functional Literacy Level.

Even Start adults in Nevada surpassed the expected level of performance of 51 percent for this outcome indicator.

Outcome Indicator B3. *Forty-five percent (45%) of adult learners with a goal of advanced education or training will enroll in postsecondary education or training by the end of the reporting year.*

Postsecondary Education. At the beginning of the reporting year, Even Start staff help participating adults establish appropriate goals in adult literacy and employment. One adult set a goal to enroll in postsecondary education or training by the end of the year, and that adult (100 percent) reached his/her goal. The results must be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size.

Even Start projects in Nevada met the goal of 45 percent for this outcome indicator.

Outcome Indicator B4. *Sixty-two percent (62%) of adult learners not employed at enrollment will obtain unsubsidized employment by the first quarter after the program exit quarter.*

Entry Into Employment. At the beginning of the reporting year, 20 adults who were not employed at enrollment into Even Start established a goal to obtain unsubsidized employment by the first quarter after the program exit quarter. All 20 adults (100 percent) who set this goal retained or improved their unsubsidized employment—even though most of them had yet to exit the program.

Even Start adults in Nevada met the expected level of 62 percent for this indicator.

Outcome Indicator B5. *Seventy-six percent (76%) of relevant adult learners will retain or improve their unsubsidized employment by the third quarter after the program exit quarter.*

Retain/Improve Employment. At the beginning of the reporting year, 29 of the 136 Even Start adults established a goal to retain or improve their unsubsidized employment by the third quarter after the program exit quarter. All 29 adults (100 percent) retained or improved their unsubsidized employment—even though most of them had yet to exit the program.

Even Start adults met the performance level of 76 percent set for this outcome indicator.

Outcome Indicator B6. *Thirty-seven percent (37%) of adults with a high school completion goal will earn a high school diploma or recognized equivalent within a reporting year.*

Receipt of Diploma or GED. Of the 136 Even Start adults, nine adults established a goal to earn a high school degree or General Education Development (GED) certificate. Six adults (67 percent) achieved their goal. Even Start adults in Nevada met the performance level of 37 percent set for this outcome indicator.

C. Parenting

Outcome Indicator C1. *Ninety percent (90%) of all participating adults enrolled in Even Start for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, caregiving environment) within the reporting year.*

Table 34. Performance on Parenting Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Ex-pected	Actual
1. Individual Parenting Goals	90%	100%
2. Parent/Teacher Conferences	89%	100%
3. Time With Children	60%	94%
4. Reading With Children	50%	90%

Individual Parenting Goals. Of the 136 Even Start adults, 120 adults were enrolled in Even Start for at least four months during the reporting year. Data are available for all 120 adults. All the 120 adults (100 percent) met at least one parenting goal. Nevada Even Start projects met the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator. Overall, the 136 adults set a total of 516 goals, making 483 of them (95 percent).

Outcome Indicator C2. *Parents of Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by September 1 and who are in public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will have attended parent/teacher conferences at the same or better rate as the school parent/teacher conference attendance rate.*

Parent/Teacher Conferences. Of the 188 Even Start children in Nevada, 42 children had enrolled in Even Start by September 1, were in the programs at least four months, and attended public school from kindergarten through grade 3. The parents of all 42 children (100 percent) attended parent/teacher conferences.

The 42 children attended 13 elementary schools and data on the percent of parents that

attended parent/teacher conferences were available for all 13 schools. The overall rates of attendance at parent/teacher conferences for the 13 elementary schools ranged from 74 percent to 98 percent, with a weighted average of 88.9 percent.²² In other words, Even Start parents did not meet the expected performance level for this outcome indicator.

Outcome Indicator C3. *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Even Start parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children daily within a reporting year.*

Time With Children. Even Start staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours they spent with their child each day when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the evaluation period. Increasing the amount of time parents spend with their children is an important goal in parenting education. ILA provides an opportunity for parents to become increasingly involved in their children's education, to increase their parenting skills, and to ultimately play a more important role in their child's learning.

Of the 188 children enrolled in Even Start, 94 children were first-year participants. A total of 77 of these children were in Even Start at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for all 77 children. Of the 77 parents, 72 (94 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, three adults (4 percent) spent the same amount of time with their children, and two adults (2 percent) reported spending less with their children. Even Start projects in Nevada met the expected performance level of 60 percent.

Although the outcome indicator focuses on first-year parents, I feel it is important to note the amount of time that parents of all 188 children reported spending with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 165 children who were enrolled in the program at least four months. Table 35 shows that Even Start parents spent an average of 130 more minutes per week with their child in meaningful activity: a gain of almost 100 percent at the end of the evaluation period.

²² The evaluation used the parent/teacher attendance rates from either 2005-06 or 2006-07 since data from 2007-08 were not yet available.

Table 35. Interactive Literacy Activity (ILA) Time, Mean Scores in Minutes, n=165

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
137	267	130

Outcome Indicator C4. *Fifty percent (50%) of first-year Even Start parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.*

Reading With Children. An even more specific Even Start goal is to increase the amount of time adults spend reading to or with their children. Reading together has many benefits. It provides parents with an opportunity to become more involved in their child’s education, increases the child’s school readiness skills, and even improves adult literacy.

Even Start staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours each week they spent reading with or to their children when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the evaluation period. As mentioned previously, there were 77 first-year children enrolled in the Even Start program after June 2007 who were in the program at least four months. Of the 77 children, 69 of their parents (90 percent) reported spending more time reading with their children at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, five parents (6 percent) reported spending the same amount of time, and three parents (4 percent) reported a decrease. Even Start projects in Nevada met the expected performance level of 50 percent for this outcome indicator.

As in the case of ILA time, although the outcome indicator focuses on first-year parents, I feel it is important to note the amount of time that parents of all 188 children report spending reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 165 children who were enrolled in the program at least four months. Table 36 shows that Even Start parents spent an average of 53 minutes more per week reading to or with their child (a gain of about 85 percent) at the end of the evaluation period.

Table 36. Parents and Children Reading Time, Mean Scores in Minutes, n=165

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
62	115	53

Chapter VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the seventh year that Nevada has conducted a statewide evaluation of federal funded Even Start projects. Many of the same conclusions made about the Even Start program in the six previous evaluation reports are the same or similar in this evaluation report for 2007-08—including both program strengths as well as areas for improvement.

The evaluation found that most projects continue to develop into experienced family literacy programs. They have established many solid procedures and practices, some of which are based on effective research-based programs, and others designed to increase the intensity of services to participants. Perhaps most importantly, Even Start positively impacted program participants in early childhood development, adult literacy, and parenting skills, even though Nevada Even Start projects had a 13 percent reduction in funds in 2007-08, or a reduction of \$20,000 per project. Ultimately, the reduction in funds will either impact the effectiveness of projects or cause projects to serve fewer families. These statements are based on several conclusions we made about the program development, implementation, and outcomes. They include—

- ❖ Overall, Even Start projects in Nevada are helping to improve adult’s reading and parenting skills and children’s language development and school readiness. Even Start participants showed positive gains on all adult and child measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on 13 of the 14 statewide outcome indicators for family literacy programs. Even Start participants fell just short of meeting the expected performance level on one outcome indicator in early childhood education.
- ❖ Projects drew upon some effective research-based and established programs to develop services in parenting education and early childhood education. Although adopting an effective research-based or established program does not guarantee success, it does increase the likelihood that projects will provide quality services to their participants—and thus increases the chance of success.
- ❖ Overall, projects recruited eligible families and families who could benefit from Even Start core services. Most families have multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency, low-paying career tracks) and can benefit from the services offered to them. At intake, Even Start adults have basic or beginning literacy levels, and Even Start children typically start below their peers on school readiness and reading measures. How-

ever, the income level for some families may be a little high for the targeted population.

- ❖ For many families, Even Start was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Even Start families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Even Start, and many Even Start children do not participate in any other program while in Even Start.
- ❖ Even Start adults and children seemed to have been adequately screened by most projects so they are placed in and receive appropriate services.
- ❖ Projects have established positive working relationships with collaborating agencies and partners. Collaborators and partners provide some services—primarily in adult education.
- ❖ When analyzed at the state level, Even Start project staff met the new federal education requirements, expected by December 2004. In addition, all of the reported early childhood education instructors meet the new state qualifications for instructors of preschool education programs.
- ❖ Projects provided training to staff in early childhood education and parenting so staff can offer quality services to families, adults, and children.
- ❖ Several Even Start projects continued to provide their own ESL classes to adult participants, and in other cases, supplemented the ESL classes provided by collaborators to ensure Even Start adults received sufficient intensity of instruction. Perhaps because some projects provided some adult education classes, Even Start projects cited “identifying effective practices in adult education” as one of the top training needs.
- ❖ Overall, projects offered early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Even Start adults and children.
- ❖ The average number of home visits per family increased from six per family in 2006-07 to eight per family in 2007-08, due to a recommendation from a monitoring visit conducted by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ❖ Project participants attended services in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting at a level lower than the services were offered. While many participants attended Even Start services regularly to benefit from the program, some other families were not in the program long enough or did not attend services regularly to benefit appreciably from the services, especially for parenting education.
- ❖ The retention rate of families who remain in the program until the end of the year decreased substantially in 2007-08 from all previous evaluations, which reported retention rates of about two-thirds of families. The Nevada retention rate of 36 percent is substantially below the average national Even Start retention rate at 64 percent. The primary reason for the low retention rate is that one project exited 16

families at the end of the year because the project plans to serve only teen parents in 2008-09 and these 16 families did not meet that criterion.

- ❖ Projects encountered common barriers to implementing family literacy programs, including obtaining sufficient financial resources and improving retention or motivation of participants, and improving attendance.

The overall conclusion we can draw from the 2007-08 evaluation of Even Start projects in Nevada is that most projects have established sound family literacy programs and Even Start families have benefited from these services. Even Start projects in Nevada, however, can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are three recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to ensure that Even Start families attend more often, establishing attendance requirements for participants.
2. Seek technical assistance in several crucial areas, such as identifying effective practices in adult education and early childhood education as well as strategies to improve the auditory comprehension and expressive communication of children.
3. Develop an improvement plan for each outcome indicator that the project did not meet, especially in early childhood education, and for each program delivery indicator on which the project scored relatively low.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals if it follows three recommendations.

1. Provide technical assistance and training in key areas identified in this report, especially in effective practices in adult education and early childhood education as well as strategies to improve the expressive communication of children from birth to three years old.
2. Continue to monitor project activities, especially on the amount of parenting education offered to adult participants, the quality of the early childhood education experiences, the implementation of monthly home visits, participant attendance at adult education and parenting education, and the income level of families admitted into the program.
3. Continue to work with each Even Start project to determine if the project meets the federal requirements for the education level of Even Start staff and if the early childhood education instructors meet the state's new licensure requirements for teachers who provide early childhood education programs.

APPENDIX A

Even Start Outcome Indicators

Early Childhood Education

Improvement in Ability to Read on Grade Level or Reading Readiness.

Outcome Indicator A1. Seventy percent (70%) of Even Start children from birth until three years old a minimum of four months of participation will increase their standard score on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subtests of the Pre-school Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).

Performance Level. The standard of “70 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start children from birth through two and one-half years of age on the PLS-4 during 1999-2000.²³ Seventy-three percent of Even Start children made a standard score point gain from the pretest to posttest on auditory comprehensive and 65 percent on expressive communication.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects are expected to administer the PLS-4 to children receiving Even Start services from birth through three years old when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the children exit the program.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Outcome Indicator A2. Seventy percent (70%) of Even Start children from three years old until grade 3 will improve in their ability to read on grade level or above as measured by Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition.

Performance Level. The standard of “70 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start children five years of age and older on the PPVT during 1999-2000. Seventy-three percent of Even Start children made a positive standard score point gain from pretest to posttest administrations of the PPVT.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects or their collaborators are expected to administer PPVT and Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to Even Start children who attend public school from three years old through grade 3 when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the children exit the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest to children who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

²³ State funded Even Start projects administered the PLS to children from birth through two and one-half years of age.

School Attendance.

Outcome Indicator A3. Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who attend public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will have attended public school at the same or better rate as the school student attendance rate.

Performance Level. The standard of “at the same or better rate as the school attendance rate” is based on data from two Even Start projects in 1999-2000. Even Start children in these two projects had an attendance rate similar to the school average.

Project Data Collection. All schools in Nevada are required to record and report the student average daily attendance (ADA) rate annually as part of state accountability requirements. Even Start projects are expected to work with their local schools to obtain the student average daily attendance rates of Even Start children who are enrolled in public school in kindergarten through grade 3 and compare it against the schools’ student ADA rate.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report student level information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System. In addition, projects will report separately the student ADA rates of all schools attended by Even Start children.

Grade Retention and Promotion.

Outcome Indicator A4. Ninety-five percent (95%) of all participating Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who attend public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will be promoted to the next grade in the child’s school district.

Performance Level. The standard of “95 percent” is based on state and school district promotion rates in kindergarten through grade 3 for 1998-99. Students at these grades had a promotion rate of at least 97.5 percent.

Project Data Collection. All schools in Nevada are required to record and report the student promotion rates by grade level as part of state accountability requirements. Even Start projects are expected to work with their local schools to obtain data on whether Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who attend public school from kindergarten through grade 3, were promoted to the next grade level.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report student level information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System. In addition, projects will report separately the school district's promotion rate by grade level (K, 1, 2, and 3).

Adult Literacy

Achievement in Reading, Writing, English Language Acquisition, Problem Solving, and Numeracy.

Outcome Indicator B1. Adults who have completed 80 hours of adult education within a reporting year will demonstrate an average gain of 5 scale score points on each of the appropriate Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) subtests (reading, mathematics, and listening).

Performance Level. The standard of “an average gain of 5 scale score points” is based on data from state funded and federal funded Even Start adults for the last three years. Even Start adults, who have been in the program at least four months, have made an average gain of approximately 5 scale score points on the reading subtest.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects (or their collaborators)²⁴ are expected to administer the CASAS to all Even Start adults when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the adults exit the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest to adults who have attended 80 hours of adult education classes.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System—described later in this Guidebook.

Outcome Indicator B2. Fifty-one percent (51%) of adults, who are enrolled in adult education programs for at least four months within a reporting year, will advance at least one Educational Functioning Literacy Level as determined by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).

Performance Level. This indicator is similar to indicators established for adults in Nevada Adult Education programs. The indicator differs from the Adult Education indicator in that the Adult Education indicator specifies a different standard or performance level for each of the 11 different Educational Functioning Literacy Levels. For example, 14 percent of adults in Beginning Literacy and 32 percent of

²⁴ The Adult Education programs provide almost all of the adult education classes to Even Start adults. All Adult Education programs in Nevada are required to administer the CASAS.

adults in Beginning Basic Functioning Literacy Levels are expected to advance one Educational Functioning Literacy Level.

The Even Start standard, on the other hand, represents an average expected performance level (of the Adult Education performance levels) for adults who start in the Educational Functioning Literacy Levels primarily served by Even Start.

The Adult Education Program established the standard of 30 percent based on data collected during 1997-98 and 1998-99. In 2002-03, Adult Education Program staff revised the expected performance level upwards based on more recent data. Nevada Even Start increased its expected performance level to 51 percent based to reflect the changes in the Adult Education program standard.

Project Data Collection. As reported previously, Even Start projects (or their collaborators) are expected to administer the CASAS to all Even Start adults when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the adults exit the program.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Entry into Postsecondary Education, Job Retraining Program, or Employment or Career Advancement, Including the Military.

Outcome Indicator B3. Forty-five percent (45%) of adult learners with a goal of advanced education or training will enroll in postsecondary education or training by the end of the reporting year.

Performance Level. This indicator is the same as an indicator established for adults in Nevada Adult Education programs. The Adult Education Program established the standard of 25 percent based on data collected during 1997-98 and 1998-99. In 2002-03, Adult Education Program staff revised the expected performance level to 45 percent based on more recent data. Nevada Even Start revised its standard to reflect the changes in the Adult Education program standard.

Project Data Collection. Adult Education programs in Nevada are expected to report the data on the indicator to the Nevada Department of Education annually. Even Start projects are expected to work closely with their Adult Education program collaborators to obtain this information. Local project staff need only collect this information on the adults who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Outcome Indicator B4. Sixty-two percent (62%) of adult learners not employed at enrollment will obtain unsubsidized employment by the first quarter after the program exit quarter.

Performance Level. This indicator is the same as an indicator established for adults in Nevada Adult Education programs. The Adult Education Program established the standard of 25 percent based on data collected during 1997-98 and 1998-99. In 2002-03, Adult Education Program staff revised the expected performance level to 62 percent based on more recent data. Nevada Even Start revised its standard to reflect the changes in the Adult Education program standard.

Project Data Collection. Adult Education programs in Nevada are expected to report the data on this indicator to the Nevada Department of Education annually. Even Start projects are expected to work closely with their Adult Education program collaborators to obtain this information. Local project staff need only collect this information on the adults who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Definitions. “Program exit quarter” refers to the quarter when the participant exited the program.

Outcome Indicator B5. Seventy-six percent (76%) of relevant adult learners will retain or improve their unsubsidized employment by the third quarter after the program exit quarter.

Performance Level. This indicator is the same as an indicator established for adults in Nevada Adult Education programs. The Adult Education Program originally established the standard of 25 percent based on program estimates. In 2002-03, Adult Education Program staff revised the expected performance level to 76 percent based on more recent data. Nevada Even Start revised its standard to reflect the changes in the Adult Education program standard.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects are expected to conduct a follow-up survey with adults who have exited the program at the end of the third quarter after the program exit quarter. Local project staff need only collect this information on the adults who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Definitions. “Relevant adult learner” refers to (1) those enrolled adults employed at program entry with a job retention goal, and (2) those enrolled adults not

employed at program entry with an employment goal who obtained employment by the end of the first quarter after exit quarter.

Receipt of a High School Diploma or General Equivalency Diploma.

Outcome Indicator B6. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of adults with a high school completion goal will earn a high school diploma or recognized equivalent within a reporting year.

Performance Level. This indicator is the same as an indicator established for adults in Nevada Adult Education programs. The Adult Education Program established the standard of 25 percent based on data collected during 1997-98 and 1998-99. In 2002-03, Adult Education Program staff revised the expected performance level to 37 percent based on more recent data. Nevada Even Start revised its standard to reflect the changes in the Adult Education program standard.

Project Data Collection. Adult Education programs in Nevada are expected to report the data on this indicator to the Nevada Department of Education annually. Even Start projects are expected to work closely with their Adult Education program collaborators to obtain this information. Local project staff need only collect this information on the adults who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Parenting Education

Parenting Skills.

Outcome Indicator C1. Ninety percent (90%) of participating adults enrolled in Even Start for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.

Performance Level. Data have not been collected on this performance indicator previously nor are parenting goals established consistently across projects to estimate a reasonable performance level. In the absence of evaluation data, the standard of “90 percent” was determined through discussion with experienced Even Start project directors who thought the expectation was reasonable.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects are expected to help parents establish annual goals for themselves in parenting (e.g., attending monthly parenting workshops, learning positive discipline techniques, attending six Family Storyteller workshops) and criteria for determining whether the goals are met.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report this information into the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Increased Involvement in Children's Education.

Outcome Indicator C2. Parents of Even Start children, who are enrolled in Even Start by September 1 and who are in public school from kindergarten through grade 3, will have attended parent/teacher conferences at the same or better rate as the school parent/teacher conference attendance rate.

Performance Level. Data have not been collected on the performance indicator previously. In the absence of evaluation data, the standard of “the same or better rate” was determined through discussion with experienced Even Start project directors who thought the expectation was reasonable.

Project Data Collection. All schools in Nevada are required to record and report the percent of parents who attend parent/teacher conferences as part of state accountability requirements. Even Start projects are expected to work with their local schools to obtain the number and percent of parents of Even Start children in kindergarten through grade 3 who attend parent/teacher conferences, and compare it against the schools' parent/teacher conference attendance rate.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report student level information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System. In addition, projects will report separately each school's parent/teacher conference attendance rate for all schools attended by Even Start children.

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA).

Outcome Indicator C3. Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Even Start parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children in interactive literacy activities weekly within a reporting year.

Performance Level. The standard of “60 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Sixty-two percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent with their children in interactive literacy activities weekly from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report student level information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.

Parents and Children Reading Together.

Outcome Indicator C4. Fifty percent (50%) of first-year Even Start parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.

Performance Level. A standard of “30 percent” was first selected as the expected performance level based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Thirty percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent reading to or with their children from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program. The expected performance level for the 2005-06 to make it consistent with the performance level used for Nevada Early Childhood Education program funded under SB 525. The Nevada ECE program raised the performance level based on a direction from the legislation to increase the performance level of outcome indicators based on available data. Data from the previous three years of the Nevada ECE program showed that around 50 percent of parents increased the amount of time they spent reading to or with their children from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

Project Data Collection. Even Start projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Even Start projects are expected to report student level information in the Nevada Even Start (NEST) Information System.