



**Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy:
Annotated Bibliography
Research Section H:
Government Policy**

Government Policy – Government Policy – Explores the interaction between the government and family literacy programs. The goal is to provide policy makers with a rich description of program practice and implementation so that effective policies may be explored and instituted regarding family literacy programs.

Annotations are also cross listed as it is possible that a single document addresses several of the research strands identified in the annotated bibliography.

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indicates that the article is a research study

Alamprese, Judith. (2004). Understanding Adult Education in the Context of Family Literacy. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (pp. 253-269). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This chapter presents an overview of adult education services as components of family literacy programs, particularly those programs that fall within the Head Start framework. Alamprese describes main funding sources, typical services, populations served, agencies that offer these services and the effectiveness of these services. Also highlighted are: participant enrollment and stability of enrollment; considerations and problems regarding assessment, instructional and curriculum issues; program effectiveness; and participant outcomes. These topics are discussed within the context of family literacy (Even Start) and contrasted to adult education programs which do not provide the additional services incorporated into Even Start programs. The author bases her discussions on research findings and delineates areas for future research that will serve the field. This article is of use to researchers, program administrators, curriculum developers, evaluators, and practitioners as it provides insight into the population represented by Head Start programs, their motivations and relevant family literacy issues with which the field continues to try to understand.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment & Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Alamprese, J. (1996, January). Integrated services, *cross-agency collaboration, and family literacy*. Paper presented at the symposium for Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Washington, DC. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/integ.html>

Current studies of family literacy programs have found that cross-agency collaboration between education and human services organizations is a necessary and critically important aspect of program design. The collaboration between many diverse agencies is important for meeting the complex needs of parents and children in literacy programs. A reduction in the funding and funding sources for education and social services has also led to the need for programs to collaborate.

The author notes that few studies have investigated cross-agency collaboration within family literacy programs and that most information about collaboration in these programs is taken from handbooks and program reports. While these reports do not outline the collaborative process and its benefits, they do identify the different organizations participating in collaborative ventures and the challenges met in trying to collaborate with other agencies.

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The author defines cross-agency collaboration as the process of two or more entities working together toward a common goal. To follow the four-component model of family literacy programs, provided by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), integration of services involves collaboration among all four components. The services provided by all four components may be fulfilled by one agency, as is done by most Even Start programs; in cooperation with other agencies; and/or through contractual agreements with other agencies. Even though it is acknowledged that collaboration is an important and essential part of any family literacy program, implementation and sustainability are difficult to accomplish.

State and national legislative mandates have begun to require that family literacy programs initiate collaborative relationships and develop multi-faceted services. The author identifies two types of collaborative ventures. One venture focuses on strategies needed to develop relationships and the other venture focuses on communication mechanisms used to sustain the collaborative relationship. The author also notes that for collaboration to work the payoff of working together must be greater than the effort that is required to develop and maintain services; boundaries must be identified; communication must take place both between and within organizations; and staff in both local and state agencies must provide leadership.

Finally, the author closes by providing ideas for tentative areas of research, given the lack of research on cross-agency coordination in family literacy.

Cross-Reference:

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Section H: Government Policy

Alamprese, J. A., & Voight, J. D. (1998). *Delivering family literacy in the context of welfare reform: Lessons learned*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates.

This is a report of the initial phase of the Family Independence Initiative. This study examines how five family literacy programs worked to adapt their services to meet the challenges of recent welfare reform. This report reviews the five development sites with regard to program operations, collaboration with local agencies and businesses, and documentation of participant outcomes.

Key lessons for family literacy programs learned through this study:

Time

- The amount of time participants spend in a program will be less.
- Activities need to be planned carefully and focus on basic and work preparation skills.

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- Programs may need to supplement onsite activities—for example, collaborating with local businesses and agencies for offsite activities or shifting Parent and Child Interactive Literacy activities to participants’ homes.

Content

- Instruction should include career awareness and work preparedness topics in adult education, early childhood, and parenting components.
- Teach basic skills in the context of work.

Program Processes

- Programs should include shadowing, mentoring, and work experience activities. “The challenge for programs is to balance the overall goals of family literacy program—preparing parents as their children’s first teachers while developing their own skills—to include a broader definition of parental skill development” (I-19).

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section H: Government Policy

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. (1989). *First teachers*. Washington, DC: Author.

This book contains a brief introduction which discusses the problem of illiteracy in the United States, the intergenerational transmission of literacy, the beliefs underlying family literacy programs, and how family literacy programs address illiteracy. The book consists of "snapshots" of the following 10 family literacy programs:

1. Parent and Child Education (PACE) Program
2. The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project
3. SER Family Learning Centers (FLCs)
4. Parent Readers Program
5. MOTHERREAD
6. Mother's Reading Program
7. Arkansas Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
8. Parents as Partners in Reading
9. Parent Leadership Training Project
10. Avance Family Support and Education Program.

For each program, information is provided regarding how and why the program was developed, the setting, funding, and components of the program, evidence for the success of the program, and advice for policymakers and practitioners. A summary chart which details the goals, population, outreach efforts, funding, support services, materials,

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special features, and outcomes is also presented. A list of program contacts and other sources for information on literacy conclude the book. This book is helpful to individuals interested in learning about the different types of family literacy programs and efforts, as well as how to contact programs or centers for more information.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Benjamin, L. A., & Lord, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education-Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's Even Start Program.

This report is a collection of ten commissioned papers intended to be background reading for a symposium discussion. This report represented "an important step in the developing of a family literacy research agenda."

The symposium was structured around the following five areas:

1. Assumptions and Perceptions About Family Literacy
2. What We Know From Research and Practice and How We Know It
3. Defining the Characteristics of Family Literacy Programs
4. Looking to the Future: Arguing for the Top Priorities for Research and Practice
5. Refining and Articulating Our Top Priorities for Research and Practice

Top priorities for future research fell into six categories. They are listed here with accompanying questions that were raised. (pp. 12-13)

1. Family functioning
 - a. What is it about the relationship between parents and children around literacy activities at home that is crucial to program content in family literacy programs?
 - b. How do parents and children learn, both together and separately, and does their interaction improve learning?
 - c. What different methods do parents use in the exchange of literacy with their children?
 - d. How does education in parenting skills affect the literacy skills of adult and children?
2. Collaboration with support services
 - a. What is the difference in effectiveness between a stand-alone family literacy program and one that operates in conjunction with a number of other service agencies?

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- b. How can the goals and structures of family literacy programs be included within already existing service institutions?
 - c. What strategies are most effective for developing and sustaining interagency coordination?
 - d. Ultimately, to what extent must a family literacy program be a family support program in order to be effective?
3. Staff development
 - a. What can be used as a model for effective staff behavior?
 - b. What staff development practices are most effective in preparing adult literacy instructors to be effective in family literacy?
4. Comprehensiveness and effectiveness of programs
 - a. How do we target literacy skills to all client needs regardless of economic or cultural differences?
 - b. How can we more efficiently design computer networks and assistive technology to improve family literacy effectiveness and training?
5. Effective program design strategies
 - a. How can we design interventions that capitalize on the existing beliefs and strengths of families?
 - b. What roles should the clients themselves play in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs?
6. Measurement of program effectiveness
 - a. How can we anticipate both positive and negative unintended consequences of programs, and how do we measure them?
 - b. How do we measure best practices in family literacy?
 - c. Ultimately, how do we know if family literacy programs work?

Further research questions proposed in the commissioned papers:

- What are the “structural conditions that lead to successful interagency relationships, such as legislative or policy mandates or voluntary actions, which result in effective family literacy programs” (p. 22)?
- Research is needed “that examines the processes for assessing the benefits of a relationship; the procedures used in setting relationship boundaries and establishing formal and informal agreements; the mechanisms for communication such as advisory councils and networks; and the strategies that are useful for providing state and local leadership to a collaborative” (ibid.).
- What are the “direct and indirect outcomes from collaboration” (ibid.)?
- What are the “processes used to generate and to sustain cross-agency collaboration” (ibid.)?
- Does “collaboration [lead] to improved family literacy services or enhanced support for families at the community or state level” (ibid.)?
- What are the “ways in which agencies providing literacy training can be made more sensitive and accessible to immigrant families” (p 29)?

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- Research is needed “on community-based literacy programs serving immigrant families which are dedicated to creating general community consciousness and local public policy awareness of the needs of families in critical domains of sociocultural survival” (ibid.).
- Research is needed “on programs and interventions that stress the importance of individuals and families establishing confidence in their own learning and in helping themselves” (ibid.).
- “Research on literacy initiatives supporting biliteracy also should be undertaken” (ibid.).
- “Research should examine ways in which electronic technologies can improve the literacy of immigrant families and family members” (ibid.).

Papers and authors included in this report:

1. *Integrated Services, Cross-Agency Collaboration, and Family Literacy*—Judith Alamprese
2. *English Immigrant Language Learners: Cultural Accommodation and Family Literacy*—Richard Duran
3. *Designing and Conducting Family Literacy Programs That Account for Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Other Cultural Differences*—Vivian L. Gadsden
4. *Family Literacy Programs: Creating a Fit with Families of Children with Disabilities*—Beth Harry
5. *Longitudinal Study of Family Literacy Program Outcomes*—Andrew Hayes
6. *Family Literacy: Parent and Child Interactions*—Larry Mikulecky
7. *Teaching Parenting and Basic Skills to Parents: What We Know*—Douglas Powell
8. *Intergenerational Transfer of Literacy*—Catherine Snow and Patton Tabors
9. *Informing Approaches to Serving Families in Family Literacy Programs: Lessons From Other Family Intervention Programs*—Robert St. Pierre and Jean Layzer
10. *Meeting the Needs of Families in Family Literacy Programs*—Dorothy Strickland

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Bolick, L., Lawrence, J., Lugo, T. & Whitfield, R. (Speakers). (1997, December 18). *Family literacy as a welfare reform strategy* (Family Independence Initiative Audioconference). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED421618)

The proceedings from this audioconference are included to represent the dialogue that was surfacing among literacy policy makers and practitioners relative to the NCFL’s newly established Family Independence Initiative. While not based on formal research, the dialogue is useful for understanding some practical implications of positioning family literacy programs as a key strategy for state welfare reform. Collaboration between

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organizations providing welfare assistance, transportation, substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health services was deemed essential for success. The reality emphasized by policy makers, however, was the often-singular connection between literacy and employability (moving adults from welfare-to-work), used as a criterion for allocating funds. Although this remains the prevailing view, its disproportionate focus on adults' *worker* role gives insufficient attention to adults' roles as *family member* and *citizen*. This suggests, perhaps, a philosophical difference between the National Center for Family Literacy and the National Institute for Literacy (which advocates balanced support of all roles in its Equipped for the Future program introduced in 1994).

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Brizius, J. & Foster, S. (1993). *Generation to generation: Realizing the promise of family literacy*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

This book provides a good overview of the family literacy movement. It explains the need for family literacy programs, provides a comprehensive definition of family literacy, and traces the history of such programs. Guidelines and suggestions on how to anticipate and deal with the issues of family literacy are offered to policymakers and practitioners. Finally, key issues about the future of the family literacy movement are addressed. The book is divided into the following eight chapters:

1. *Family Literacy: The Need and the Promise*
2. *Defining Family Literacy*
3. *The History of Family Literacy*
4. *The Research: How Do We Know If Family Literacy Works?*
5. *Building a Community Family Literacy Program*
6. *Developing a State Family Literacy Initiative*
7. *Challenges for the Family Literacy Movement*
8. *The Future of Family Literacy*

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

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Brooks-Gunn, J., Berlin, L. J., & Fuligni, A. S. (2000). Early childhood intervention programs: What about the family? In J.P. Shonkoff, & S.J. Meisels (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

The authors note that discussion pertaining to parent and family roles in early childhood initiatives appear to be missing or distorted. To address this omission, the authors depict ways in which families are critical to early childhood program access and how the programs influence parents' well being. This chapter also highlights how child outcomes are mediated through program effects on parents. It also shows how parent involvement is contingent on the relationships among parents, staff, and children. The authors review four types of programs: parent-focused home-based programs, parent-focused combination center- and home-based programs, intergenerational family literacy programs, and parent-focused literacy programs. These programs are discussed in relation to parent and family outcomes. The authors also examine the role of parents as catalysts of change in early intervention programs. The final two sections focus on policy, implications for practice, and recommendations for programs and their evaluations.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section H: Government Policy

Section J: Parent Involvement

Chen, C., Seaman, D., & Perry, Y. (2003). Using evaluation data to document the value of Even Start family literacy programs. *Family Literacy Forum*, 2(1) 25-30.

Evaluations are the primary format used when assessing the effectiveness of a program, and are particularly useful to policy-makers in their decision-making relative to funding and the continuation of the program.

In this article, the authors argue the importance of evaluation data in Even Start Family Literacy programs. In fact, they propose that a program becomes strengthened through an effective evaluation process which ultimately leads to program direction, development, and the ability to make informed decisions about future program changes.

Chen, Seaman, and Perry describe the evaluation efforts of the Even Start program through the use of a variety of assessment tools including the Pre-school Language Scale, Basic English Skills Test (BEST), and Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) describing each tool individually. However, the authors also noted the need for alternative forms of assessment. They propose that using only standardized assessment does not provide a complete picture of the effectiveness of a program, and suggest non-standardized forms of assessments such as interviews, surveys, and observations by the

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staff and evaluators to provide useful information in determining progress and possibly needed changes.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Even Start programs must be determined using solid data which needs to come from both qualitative and quantitative assessments. Evaluation reports that employ both qualitative and quantitative assessment provide a complete picture to policy-makers, the public, and other family literacy programs.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy

Section H: Government Policy

Debruin-Parecki, A., Paris, S. G., & Siedenburg, J. (1997). Family literacy: Examining practice and issues of effectiveness. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 40, 596– 605.

The authors of the article work on the assertions that the field of family literacy struggles to define goals and practices and that single descriptions of family literacy are not possible because individual programs must tailor goals and services to the target population. To address these issues, the purpose of this study was to examine the broad range of family literacy programs throughout Michigan. Of 700 literacy programs contacted, only 50 programs fit criteria selected by the authors as family literacy programs, and 11 programs were selected for further in-depth analysis. Information on program processes was collected through classroom observations, interviews, and surveys. This article elaborates on two case studies to describe how family literacy program processes are implemented under different circumstances. This article ends with four factors important for the design of an effective family literacy program: access to participation, curriculum with meaning in participant's lives, collaborating staff and administration with varied backgrounds, and stable funding.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Fuligni, A.S. & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2004). Early childhood intervention in family literacy programs. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.) *Handbook on Family literacy* (pp. 117-136). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

This chapter summarizes research supporting early intervention for those children, from birth to age seven, who are economically disadvantaged, with focus on research relevant to family literacy. The overview includes types of intervention, research base for intervention and any implications for family literacy.

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Research suggests that children from low income backgrounds do make gains – including reduction of delinquency and behavior problems. As research results support early intervention, the implications for supporting family literacy are positive. If young children and their families are involved in intensive programs of high quality, the effects are stronger than if the children alone are involved.

The authors stress that most research has studied the cognitive outcomes for preschoolers in specific environments. They suggest that the social, emotional and behavioral outcomes are equally of importance, as are the effects on children of other ages.

Ten recommendations for practice and implementation, and seven for evaluation studies are listed in detail at the end of this article before the extensive reference section. This information would be of value to anyone wanting access to a broad survey of research available within one document.

Cross-Reference:

Section A: Interactive Literacy

Section C: Program Description and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation

Section H: Government Policy

Section J: Parent Involvement

Hannon, P. and Bird, V. (2004). Family literacy in England: Theory, practice, research, and policy. In B. Wasik (Ed.) *Handbook on Family Literacy: Research and Services*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum. 23-39

In this article Hannon and Bird recall the past 30 years of family literacy research and practice in England both its developments and challenges. They begin by discussing some of the theoretical aspects of family literacy by distinguishing two basic meanings of the term. The first being *literacy practices within families* and the second being *literacy programs involving families*. From there they go on to explain how the practice of family literacy evolved from two separate strands of education, early childhood and adult literacy.

They explain how during the 1980s “family literacy programs in the broad sense were established,” and prescriptive approaches—paired reading, shared reading, and pause, prompt and praise, and family reading groups—to literacy emerged. Hannon and Bird highlight the significance of the ALBSU, a government funded agency, when it “imported a model of family literacy from the United States.” They discuss how the ALBSU went about developing and implementing programs through research, and that through this research and other projects like it the idea was to establish “a national prominence for family literacy.”

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In terms of program evaluations, Hannon and Bird posit that enough research has been conducted in order to conclude that early childhood forms of family literacy programs are effective. In spite of this claim they argue that not enough research has been conducted in other areas relating to parental literacy development—take-up and participation. They continue by admitting that not enough research has been conducted which examines the “synergistic benefits of the intergenerational program” as compared to stand-alone programs.

The authors then address four key policy issues—*funding, flexibility in program development, professional development, and research and evaluation*. They explain that in order for family literacy to grow it “needs to catch up with the rapidly changing policy climate and restate what it is for and where it fits” (p.34).

In conclusion they settle on the idea that up until now there seems to be the promotion of one main model of family literacy practice, and that what the field needs is more of an international exchange of ideas and experiences in order for family literacy to meet the developing and diverse needs of families around the world.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

Le Tendre, M. J. (1997). Strengthening the ties between Title I and family literacy.
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 2, 3–5.

The author of this article provides suggestions on how Title I can support initiatives such as family literacy to enhance parent involvement. Because Even Start limits family involvement to families with children between the ages of 0 to 8, Title I funds can target family literacy initiatives for families with children older than 8 years. Schools can also use Title I monies to implement family literacy models or supplement existing programs. For example, Title I funds can be used for preschool services.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Section J: Parent Involvement

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McGee, L. M., & Purcell-Gates, V. (1997). "So what's going on in research on emergent literacy?" *Reading Research Quarterly*, 32(3), 310.

This article is comprised of a dialog between the two authors regarding the question posed in the title. The authors first discuss the definition of emergent literacy and that it can be different depending on whether it is relating to children or adults. They mention various research studies in the field and draw a number of conclusions:

- Research has generally shifted from one of cognitive to a more sociocultural perspective
- Research has previously involved small numbers and further studies are needed
- Although we have learned many things about emergent literacy, we have much more to learn
- Although research indicates the need to individually adjust instruction, this is frequently not the case
- More research in emergent literacy is needed in non-white, non-middle-class environments
- More longitudinal research studies are needed that examine different ways in which children experience literacy development
- Research is, at this point, incomplete and we should not establish instructional applications as if we have completed it.

Possible future research questions also emerged in the dialog:

- Do children who develop phonemic awareness over time, as they naturally interact in literacy events, have a different way of operating with phonemic awareness than do children who have been trained?
- Is there a difference in the ways that children operate with phonemic awareness knowledge while learning to read and write between, on the one hand, those who were trained in it in a way that focused only on working with sound segments and letters without a purpose of function as part of a larger activity and, on the other hand, those whose training in phonemic awareness was embedded in functional literacy events?

A good summary of current research in emergent literacy, as stated in the article, says: "In fact, we do know a lot about the emergent literacy process, but we clearly don't know enough to ensure that all children will learn to read and write successfully."

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

indicates that the article is a research study

Morrison, F. J., Bachman, H. J., & Connor, C. M. (2005). *Improving Literacy in America: Guidelines from Research*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

The authors (professors at U. of Michigan, U. of Pittsburgh and Florida State, respectively) examine the changing policies, educational reforms and practices in the arena of literacy. Their central argument is that in seeking answers to the literacy crisis occurring in the U.S., one should look to the proximal (parent involvement, childcare, etc.) rather than the distal (social economic status, reducing class size, etc.). The authors promote: literacy learning from a very young age, effective parenting, quality daycare, and effective teaching and training strategies, such as mentoring, professional development. The researchers emphasize the need for and the application of continued research in all the aforementioned areas, particularly in teacher education. While the authors make useful suggestions for the improvement of successful literacy learning, they underplay both the socio-cultural aspects of literacy and the policy and financial aspects of implementing these changes.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Description and Models

Section B: Parenting Education

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Time

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Morrow, L. M., Tracey, D. H., & Maxwell, C. M. (Eds.). (1995). *A survey of family literacy in the United States*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

This book, intended for use by teachers, parents, and policymakers, describes the historical development of the field of family literacy, as well as a current picture of family literacy in the United States. It offers detailed information about specific programs in the field in its more than 100 sources concerning family literacy. In addition to an Overview section, there are several other sections providing informative entries: Parent Involvement Programs; Intergenerational Programs; Research on Naturally Occurring Literacy in Families; Agencies and Associations Dealing with Family Literacy; and Further References About Family Literacy.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Section J: Parent Involvement

indicates that the article is a research study

Movement for Canadian Literacy. (2003, April). *Strengthening our literacy foundation is key to Canada's future: Recommendations for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities*. Paper presented at House of Commons, Quebec, Canada. Retrieved August 20, 2003, from <http://www.literacy.ca/govrel/strength/strength.pdf>

In this advocacy brief, Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) calls on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HRD Committee) to endorse recommendations that support literacy development. MCL states that if Canada makes literacy a priority policy, then Canada's economic and social outcomes will benefit.

The brief is organized into nine sections. The first section introduces the non-profit organization that prepared the brief, *The Movement for Canadian Literacy*. The second section, *Serious literacy challenges demand national attention*, proposes that literacy is a national issue and calls for national leadership. The next section, *The Necessity for Action: Literacy advances are key to Canada's economic and social prosperity*, addresses the need for greater literacy skills. The fourth section, *A commitment to literacy will benefit Canada's economy*, discusses how an investment in literacy produces a skilled workforce. The fifth section, *A commitment to literacy will pay social dividends too*, details the social benefits of improved literacy. Positive outcomes reviewed include reduce child poverty and improve children's prospects for success, investments in the development of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, reduce the strain on the healthcare system, reduce crime and the costs of crime, support integration of immigrants, and ensure the strength and vitality of Canadian democracy. The following section, *Making the case for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy*, reiterates the call for national leadership citing statistics on funding issues. The *Addressing challenges to the development of a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy*, section outlines three frequent criticisms in the form of myths. The myths addressed are: (1) literacy falls under provincial jurisdiction, so there's nothing the federal government can do; (2) literacy is a problem for the schools, not for government; and (3) literacy is too complex an issue for the federal government to tackle. Family literacy programs are specifically cited as an illustration in refuting the second myth. The *Conclusions and Future Direction*, section restates the premise that literacy is crucial to Canada's economic and social prosperity. The final section lists ten specific, *Recommendations*, with corresponding action steps for the HRD Committee.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

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National Center for ESL Literacy in Education: Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2002). *Assessment with adult English language learners* (Contract No. RR 93002010). Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED461305)

The debate over standardized testing has again forced practitioners, researchers, and policy makers to re-evaluate what constitutes success and how to measure it: test or performance assessment. This current debate arises from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. According to the Act, each state must report learner gains in terms of level descriptors as defined by the National Reporting System (NRS), which requires each state to choose a standard assessment procedure. Policy, however, does allow states to choose their own performance measures and assessment procedures for meeting the criteria.

Current issues and trends addressed by practitioners focus on how long it takes to acquire English proficiency based on learner characteristics (age, educational background, opportunity to use language in natural setting) and program design (intensity of classes, adequacy of facilities, training and experience of instructors, resources available).

Standardized testing is one method of testing language acquisition but it does not capture the incremental changes in learning that occur over short periods of instructional time. However, these types of tests are easy to administer and have documented reliability and validity. Performance assessments, on the other hand, provide a direct link between instruction and assessment and they also require learners to tap into prior knowledge and to connect it with recent learning to accomplish tasks. The problem with performance assessment is that they are limited in their accountability.

Regardless of the debate between standardized and performance assessments, there are best practices available. For example, it is important to clearly identify the purpose of the assessment, select assessment instruments and procedures that match the program's learning goals, use multiple measures, have adequate resources to carry out assessment, and to remember that assessment is not an end in itself.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

indicates that the article is a research study

National Center for Family Literacy. (1997). *Funding a family literacy program*.
Louisville, KY: Author.

Funding a family literacy program is a 12-page guide offering a step-by-step process to secure funding. These steps include (1) developing a mission statement, (2) identifying the funding sources available to you, (3) presenting your case, (4) asking for support, (5) managing your funding, and (6) asking your funding agency for more support. This guide offers a beginning framework valuable to a family literacy program starting to think about funding.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

National Center for Family Literacy (2001). *Research: Literacy Facts & Figures*. [Online] Available: www.familit.org/research/research.html

The National Center for Family Literacy's web site divides their Research: Literacy Facts & Figures into two categories: research on family literacy, and research on other literacy topics.

NCFL's Research on Family Literacy

This report provides statistics that support the claim that "family literacy works better than traditional approaches to adult education, early childhood education, or stand-alone parent programs for the most vulnerable adults and children." Statistics are given to show increases in:

- Parents' education
- Parental at-home literacy involvement
- Parents' employment status
- Parental involvement in children's schools
- Parenting efficacy
- Parents' internal locus of control
- Self-esteem
- Program retention rates

And decreases in:

- Dependence on public assistance
- Children's "at-risk" status

NCFL's literacy facts and figures about literacy topics include statistics relating to:

- Adult literacy in the U.S.
- Education and economics
- Families, income, and poverty
- Public assistance and welfare reform

indicates that the article is a research study

- Employers, workers' skills, and the New Economy
- Crime
- Voting behavior
- The home literacy environment
- Pre-school education
- Kindergarten
- U.S. student achievement
- Schools and teachers
- International comparisons to U.S. education
- Television
- Homework
- Absence from school
- Parental involvement
- Fatherhood
- Technology

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Section J: Parent Involvement

National Center for Family Literacy (2000). *Connecting families and work: Family literacy bridges the gap*. Louisville, KY: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED450945)

A skills gap separates adults from the jobs they need and the employers from the workers they want. These adults are characterized as welfare recipients under the stress of welfare reform, immigrants with limited English language skills, and low-skilled workers unable to transcend poverty. They are also the parents of the children in our nation's public schools. For most of these adults, the biggest obstacle to success in the workplace is poor literacy skills. It is estimated that American businesses lose more than \$60 billion a year due to the lack of basic skills of employees. Employers today are expecting more than ever from their employees. They expect employees to not only have basic academic skills, but also creative thinking, problem solving, and interpersonal skills. Technological advances, too, have raised the standards for the level of skills needed in today's marketplace. To bridge the gap between adults and the marketplace, support needs to be provided to struggling families; parents need to learn to help their children; and families, communities, and employers need to envision brighter futures. This is all possible through multifaceted family literacy programs that focus on literacy and skills development. These programs help meet employers' demands of the workforce and at the same time improve the outcomes for families.

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Recent studies at the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) revealed that adult's literacy gains were far greater and children's probability of school success increased from participation in family literacy programs as opposed to those adults and children who participated in either adult or early childhood education programs delivered in isolation.

NCFL has established and developed powerful collaborative programs with employers and community agencies in order to examine how family literacy programs can be adapted to match the students' skills to employers' needs. In short, these partnerships have proven to be a very effective strategy in the effort by family literacy programs to help families gain economic independence. For example, students in the Careers for Families in Louisville, Kentucky, are developing employment skills through job shadowing and volunteering. At the onset of the program, only 14% of participating adults were employed. By year's end, 40% of the participating adults were employed.

Welfare reform has forced programs to shift in focus towards a more concerted effort to integrate work with learning. This requires programs to be creative and to continue to maximize effectiveness. Many examples of this initiative across the country are cited. The connection between economics and education is clear. People with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed than those individuals with less education.

“Family literacy is a welfare-to-work strategy that focuses on strengthening the family unit while helping the parents become economically stable” (pg. 19). A work-focused program develops skills in people that are applicable throughout all aspects of their lives – work, family, community. Finally, employers are increasingly looking to programs like family literacy to find and train workers.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

National Center for Family Literacy. (2001). *Creating partnerships for learning: Family literacy in elementary schools*. Louisville, KY: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED450946)

According to the federal government, family literacy means “services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrates all of the following activities:

- A. Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
- B. Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children

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- C. Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency
- D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences” (pg. 1).

This definition stems from the philosophy that if we are to level the playing field for our children, we also need to create a level playing field for our parents; we need to have high expectations of them as well.

The Families in School model presented in this paper was developed as a result of a collaborative effort between the National Center for Family Literacy, the Toyota Motor Corporation, and 15 school districts across the country. The primary goal of this initiative is to improve the academic success of children as a direct result of increasing parental involvement by helping parents attain a higher level of education. This model focuses on local collaboration (as an important part of the program design) as well as federal funding to ensure program stability and sustainability beyond the initial grant cycle. Family Literacy programs must draw on the strengths of families, schools, and communities while at the same time focus on intensity, duration, and integration of services, in order to maximize its effectiveness.

Family literacy impacts schools in many ways: Student behavior improves, absenteeism declines, communicative relationships between parents and teachers grow, parental involvement increases, literacy activities of children at home increase, etc. Family literacy programs are important because a substantial achievement gap continues to exist between children in highest- and lowest-poverty schools. Research continues to show that there is a very strong correlation between parents’ educational attainment, which is an indicator of a parent’s economic status, and the success or failure of their children in school. In a recent evaluation of the Families in School model, parents named being a better parent, ensuring that their children succeed in school, and attaining their GED as their top three goals.

The Families in School model is made up of four components: Children’s education, Adult education, Parent time, and Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Time. Adults and children learn in similar ways; the difference is found in the motivation. Therefore, the Families in School model offers and requires collaborative, innovative, and creative practices. The only way to guarantee success is through the provision of choices and opportunity.

Success of this model is dependent upon the school climate, the integration of family literacy into the school culture, the enthusiasm of the staff, the planning of teamwork, and the recruitment and retention of families. Leaders in key roles must carry out all of these elements to ensure success. These roles include a district coordinator, school principal, elementary school teacher envoy, adult education teacher, and parent liaison.

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In conclusion, research and practice continue to show that supportive relationships between and among teachers, parents, children, and schools are the key to enriching the lives of children today and tomorrow and these practices must be brought to the forefront of public education.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies Section

H: Government Policy

Nickse, R. S. (1990). *Family and intergenerational literacy programs: An update of "the noises of literacy."* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education, The Ohio State University Center on Education and Training for Employment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 327 736).

This report serves as a comprehensive overview of family and intergenerational literacy programs for a wide audience, including policymakers, legislators, program administrators and staff, and individuals interested in family literacy education. The first section of this report provides background information such as definitions, purposes, federal legislation, and sponsorships that have produced literacy initiatives, program expectations, and reasons and motivations for validating program development. The second section of the report discusses research from related fields of study that justify family and intergenerational literacy program growth. In the third section, the author describes family and intergenerational literacy programs in the following five sectors: (1) adult basic education; (2) libraries; (3) family English literacy; (4) preschool and elementary education; and (5) corporations and businesses. A table is included in the report that depicts strengths and challenges for each sector. A typology for classifying family and intergenerational literacy programs based upon the intervention type and target is presented. The result is four models of programs (direct adults-direct children, indirect adults-indirect children, direct adults-indirect children, and indirect adults-direct children) for which the author provides examples and discusses advantages and disadvantages for each.

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) programs

Section H: Government Policy

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Nickse, R. S. (1990). Family literacy programs: Ideas for action. *Adult Learning*, 1, 9–13, 28–29.

In this article, Nickse addresses factors that perpetuate illiteracy. She then discusses benefits of family literacy programs, including improved attitudes, behavior, and reading skills for parent and child. Although there has been some empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of programs, there needs to be more research in the field. For example, she found no evidence of changes in achievement for participants in family literacy programs. Nickse describes four basic models for delivering family literacy services and provides examples of each type of program. Suggestions for designing programs that address local needs, as well as ways to secure funding for programs, are discussed. Nickse also addresses issues related to program design effectiveness (e.g., collaboration and parent participation) and administration and management of programs (e.g., staff, funding, and sites). The author then covers some matters associated with teaching (e.g., collaborative approaches and multiculturalism). The article concludes with tips for program evaluation (e.g., techniques and information dissemination).

Cross-Reference:

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Office of Technology Assessment (1999). Technology and adult learning: A collection of current perspectives. *Literacy Practitioner*, 5(2).

The article is a combination of comments made by Susan Gaer, David Rosen, Susan Imel, and Emily Hacker. It is a preface to a series of articles that address changes in findings relating to technology and adult learning during the six years since the publication of *Adult Literacy and New Technologies-Tools of a Lifetime* by the Office of Technology Assessment. The following are questions asked of the contributing individuals and some responses.

Do you see technology as a central concern in adult literacy and how is it impacting the field now?

- Adult literacy programs need to help students function in today’s society
- Technology may not be a central concern in all states
- Technology should be part of literacy education
- Literacy students will learn most by learning with technology, not about technology

Is the increased need for funding still the major barrier to fully realizing the promise of technology”?

- People need to become literate in technology
- Teachers and administrators who make technology “scary to access” are a barrier

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- Lack of creativity is a barrier
- Staff development is necessary
- Many adult literacy practitioners do not have regular access to computers for themselves or their students
- Stable funding and staff development are needed
- Programs need to integrate technology tools as normal components of instruction
- Funding is still a major barrier

How can personal access to learning resources be extended to all adult especially those who are not being reached by the current system?

- Partnerships with local schools to use computer labs during after-school hours
- Involve communities in teaching each other about technology
- Help students understand how to buy and use computers at home

How have you, or the groups you work with, found creative ways to address the educational software issue?

- Use project-based learning, using computers as tools for word processing, publishing, and communication
- Have students create their own learning based on what they need to know
- Open-ended applications of real world tools are more flexible and appropriate than canned educational software

Has the WWW replaced much of what educational software has to offer?

- The WWW is a source of authentic material
- Neither educational software or the WWW has offered much
- We need talented teacher/curriculum developers in our field that can create curriculum on the Web
- The WWW can lead to constructivist teaching and learning
- Much of the material on the WWW is one-way, providing information

Along with “using technology to learn,” is it important that adult literacy programs help students “learn to use technology?” Does the definition of literacy include computer literacy?

- YES
- Technology is almost a requirement of modern life
- Students need to learn to adult to and use technology
- The WWW and publishing software can support the EFF purpose of student voice
- Learning how to access and produce information using computers is a step in learning to be active and critical readers of information

What is your vision of the future and how can literacy providers move in that direction and take full advantage of the technological tools that are now, and will be available in the future?

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- Students will come to programs with the expectation of learning and using technology
- Providers can help meet future challenges by exploring distance education, using assistive technology, better hardware and software, and staff development opportunities.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Peyton, T., & Wheeler, M. G., & Dalton, D. (1998). *States can use family literacy programs to support welfare reform goals*. National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED463420)

Many studies over have made known the plaguing link between under-education and chronic, intergenerational welfare dependency. The “work first approach” recently adopted by welfare reform is requiring policymakers to revamp current practices and create new innovative programs designed to meet the needs of the undereducated people in the welfare reform environment. The first and most important step, as outlined by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, to gaining self-sufficiency is to move people into the workplace. PRWORA also requires that state welfare reform agencies help clients and their children learn to become self-sufficient. One way to solve this issue is to have family literacy and welfare-to-work programs collaborate or incorporate strategies.

The change in direction of welfare reform from pre-employment to work creates opportunity for states to adopt family literacy programs as a method of reform. Family literacy programs can compliment the education of working individuals while at the same time provide children with the support necessary for academic success. When programs assist more than one generation within a family, the family is strengthened and adults become more competitive in the job market.

Family Literacy (FL) facilitates the transition from welfare to work because the structure of the four components model (adult education, early childhood education, parenting life-skills education, parent and child together time) helps adults transfer skills from their families to the workplace. Second, research conducted by the National Center for Family Literacy demonstrated that FL raises the rates of adult employment and child school readiness, helps welfare recipients get and keep jobs, and improves children's learning.

Finally, this paper discusses different ways (examples of programs are described) to incorporate family literacy and welfare reform. Incorporating Family literacy into the state's welfare-to-work strategy is an easy transition. Most FL programs already include

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community service assignments and work experience programs in their curriculums. This makes FL an allowable activity under the state's work requirements. FL instructors can also serve as case managers and in conjunction with a social services case manager can provide follow-up guidance to guarantee a recipient becomes self-sufficient.

Parents who drop out of school and become welfare recipients often have children who do the same, and the goal of FL programs is to break the cycle of poverty and under-education for the whole family unit. Children must be included in welfare reform to reduce the risk that another generation will be dependent on public assistance.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Riedinger, S. (1997). *Even Start: Facilitating transitions to kindergarten*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Office of the Undersecretary.

The purpose of this report was to document and describe effective kindergarten strategies used by Even Start projects, as well as to develop recommendations for the U.S. Department of Education, other federal agencies, and early childhood and parenting education programs that have an interest in the transition to kindergarten. Data was analyzed through the Even Start Information System. Qualitative data was also collected and analyzed through visits to five Even Start projects with transition programs perceived as being high quality. The transition services described were specifically designed to support families as children moved to kindergarten and included such approaches as kindergarten orientation, educating parents about transition services, and meeting with school staff about children's strengths and needs. Approaches considered successful across the Even Start projects include emphasizing family strengths, developing and maintaining long-term relationships with families, empowering families to identify their needs, and being flexible in providing services. Difficulties of transition projects are also discussed, as well as recommendations.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

indicates that the article is a research study

Smythe, S. & Isserlis, J. (2003). "The Good Mother": Exploring Mothering Discourses in Family Literacy Texts. *Family Literacy Forum* 2(2), 25-33.

The authors of this article look at the real message behind materials used for family literacy: the underlying message of family literacy publications and promotional materials latently labels the mother as main caregiver and create unreal expectations for her. This focus on mothers is implemented through the use of "mothering discourses". Mothering discourses are defined as the following: "culturally bound beliefs and values that form society's definition of good mothers, normal families, and, by extension, appropriate literacy and parenting practices in the home." (p.25) Three types of mothering discourse are identified and explained: the normal family, mothering as pedagogy, maternal responsibility. This article is of interest to readers that are concerned with policy and equity issues in teaching, informing, interacting and recruiting for family literacy or in dealing, particularly with mothers, in school settings . The article also includes a historical perspective of how family and school interaction has changed over the years. This type of discourse affects government policy making.

The authors encourage educators to question images and language used in family literacy texts in order to form more inclusive, supportive and diverse programming in the field. Current concrete examples to support their work are provided in this article.

Cross-reference:

Section H: Government Policy

##Sparks, B. (2001). The gendered construction of the adult education and family literacy act. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2001(91), 47-54.

Sparks offers an insightful analysis of The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Investment Act, focusing on how policy texts construct gender and difference to maintain a system of exclusion and power. She bases her analysis in feminist epistemology using Smith's concepts of *ruling relations* (intersection of institutions which organize and regulate society). Sparks argues that family literacy programs promote the ideology that families are the locus of society's problems, which, in turn, justifies government intervention in the domestic (feminine) sphere. Statistics reveal the gendered, racial nature of family literacy. Sparks contends that family literacy programs highlight the child's success, subsuming the mothers' educational needs under those of her child's. This policy perpetrates a system of gendered inequality which disallows multiple definitions of woman (e.g., as worker, learner, mother). The author calls for further research into the implications of this policy, program implementation, and the role of "family" which will disrupt patriarchal systems of power.

indicates that the article is a research study

Cross-reference:

H: Government Policy

G: Culture & Context

St. Clair, R., & Sandlin, J. (2002, July). *The unlettered state: Illiteracy and intrusion in US social policy*. Paper presented at SCUTREA, 32nd Annual Conference, Stirling, UK. Retrieved August 13, 2003, from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002094.htm>

In this paper the authors' argue that illiteracy is "a metaphor for moral and economic failure" that US educational policy uses to justify intrusive home interventions. This paper is organized into three main sections: (1) Illiteracy as a social and economic threat, (2) Illiteracy and marginalization, and (3) Family Literacy and the unlettered state. The first section, *Illiteracy as a social and economic threat*, reviews the historical context of the term illiteracy in the United States. The second section, *Illiteracy and marginalization*, argues that changes in the definition and use of the term illiteracy leads to social marginalization. In the third section, *Family Literacy and the unlettered state*, the authors use Even Start programming and legislation to illustrate how "illiteracy as a metaphor" affects government policy. This paper presents a brief historical treatment on illiteracy and literacy policy in the US. The authors develop the theme of "illiteracy as a metaphor" of social ills, which enables the government to use intrusive interventions in literacy programs.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

St. Pierre, R. G., Ricciuti, A., & Creps, C. (2000). *Synthesis of Local and State Even Start Evaluations*. U. S. Department of Education.

This is a report of local and state Even Start programs conducted to describe types of evaluations, describe findings, and provide guidance on improving evaluations. Evaluations are conducted to comply with program requirements and track progress of participants. Data from evaluations can be used to direct and drive program improvement. The most common evaluation processes reported program outcomes. Pre and posttests of the participants were reported as were information on project implementation, levels of participation, recruitment and retention, and how programs collaborated with other agencies.

Findings reported in evaluations:

1. Local evaluations showed a consistent pattern of positive gains for child development.

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2. Adult development also showed a consistent pattern of positive gains.
3. Local gains were sometimes compared to national data, national, statistics, gains in other evaluations, and to “normal” development.
4. How evaluations were used to improve programs was NOT reported.

Recommendations:

1. Change the Even Start legislation and preliminary guidance to refer to “local continuous improvement efforts: instead of “local evaluations.”
2. Provide guidance to state coordinators and/or local projects on the amount of funding that needs to be spent on a good local evaluation that focuses on program improvement.
3. Help establish a community of local evaluators.
4. Provide training for local grantees in using data collected at the state and/or national level for continuous improvement at the local level.
5. Provide guidance to local projects on the use of data/evaluation for program improvement.

Suggested principles for continuous improvement:

1. Collaboratively set outcome goals for children and families.
2. Devise an intervention to achieve those goals.
3. Set intervention thresholds necessary to achieve goals.
4. Assess progress toward goals with sound measures.
5. Use evaluation to monitor program quality and results, and to target areas for improvement.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

St. Pierre, R., Ricciuti, A. & Tao, F. (2004). Continuous Improvement in Family Literacy Programs. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (pp. 587-599). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

This chapter discusses the evaluation process of Even Start on the national, state and local levels. Even Start programs are required to participate in the national evaluation process, with the data from these evaluations providing insight relative to the performance and effectiveness of programs nationwide. The evaluations are also useful in identifying effective Even Start programs and targeting these programs with technical assistance leading to program improvement.

State evaluations are not required by law; however, recent legislation has emphasized quality and intensity as important factors of the Even Start program, leading states to integrate evaluations as a process to support improvement for local programs.

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Local Even Start programs are required to provide an independent evaluation of the program to be used for program improvement. The data from these evaluations provide critical information regarding program strengths and weaknesses and are used to improve the services of the programs and the outcomes of the participants. These evaluations are also useful in providing pertinent information to states, the U.S. Department of Education, and Congress regarding outcomes such as retention of participants, services provided, and the achievement of the families in the program.

The authors end the chapter with recommendations on using the evaluation data for consistent program improvement. They propose that improvement practices need to be accomplished through legislative changes at the federal level, program refinements, and required evaluation activities taking place at the local, state, and federal levels.

Cross-Reference:

F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy

H: Government Policy

St. Pierre, R., & Swartz, J.P. (1995). The Even Start Family Literacy Program. In I.E. Sigel (Series Ed.) & S. Smith (Vol. Ed.), *Advances in applied developmental psychology*: Vol. 9. Two generation programs for families in poverty: A new intervention strategy (pp. 37–66). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

This article provides a well-detailed overview of the Even Start program and the Even Start National Evaluation conducted by Abt Associates. After describing the history of the development of family literacy programs, the authors define core components as well as describe a comprehensive model placing Even Start in the context of population, community, and service characteristics. A description of the National Even Start Evaluation is also provided. Some highlighted areas from the Evaluation include: characteristics of Even Start participants, descriptions of core services (early childhood education, adult education, and parent and child time together), home-based services, support services and special events, service integration, program participation, recruitment strategies, retention strategies, and participation rates.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

indicates that the article is a research study

St. Pierre, R., Swartz, J., Gamse B., Murray, S., Deck, D., & Nickel, P. (1995). *National evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program: Final report*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates, Inc.

The Even Start Family Literacy Program was authorized in response to the conceptualization of "family literacy" that united two previously separate areas of adult education and early childhood education. This report presents a 4-year national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program (1989–92) and provides detailed information about the first four cohorts studied in the project. The 13 chapters discuss the following: (1) background information on the program; (2) program design and the components of evaluation; (3) characteristics of families and project activities; (4) the population served by Even Start; (5) characteristics of Even Start projects and staff; (6) the depth of Even Start services; (7) their approach to the assessment of effects; (8) effects on children served by Even Start; (9) effects on parent literacy; (10) effects on parenting skills; (11) effects on the family as a whole; (12) the cost of Even Start; and (13) a summary and conclusions. The conclusions drawn in this report address only the short-term effects of the Even Start project on families. The authors recommend a longitudinal study to examine the long-term impact of the program.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Sticht, T. G. (2001, March). *The POWER of Adult Education: Moving the Adult Education and Literacy System of the United States From the Margins to the Mainstream of Education*. El Cajon, CA.

In this summary paper, Sticht addresses four questions:

1. What is the Adult Education & Literacy System (AELS) of the United States? Sticht states that "some 4,000 organizations operate under the rules and regulations of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act" (p.1). He says that it is the third major publicly funded branch of education behind K-12 and Higher Education. He relates that "the AELS serves those most in need of education. Of some 31 million enrollees in the AELS from 1992 through 1999, 7.9 million were the working poor, over 3.3 million were welfare recipients, 9.3 million were unemployed and 2.2 million were incarcerated" (p.1).
2. What is the Power of the Adult Education & Literacy System of the United States? Sticht details that government can expect return on investment in: 1. Improved productivity at work, 2. Improved self- confidence and other psychological and physiological aspects of health of adults, 3. Improved health of adult's children, 4. Improved productivity in the schools, and 5. Improved criminal justice system.

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3. Why is the Adult Education & Literacy System of the United States Marginalized? Sticht states that the AELS “remains a marginalized, under-funded, step-child of the total American educational enterprise” and that it “reflects the marginalized status of the adult students who make-up the majority of those who turn to the AELS for educational opportunity”(p. 3).
4. How can the Adult Education & Literacy System of the United States move from the margins to the mainstream of public education? Sticht proposes three steps that move the AELS from the margins to the mainstream of education: 1. Increase funding, 2. Increase enrollments, and 3. Improve the AELS. The third step should include “better staff development, new technology-based curriculum materials, new methods of assessment of knowledge and skill, and the routine collection of data on indicators of program achievements”(p.4).

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Sticht, T. G. (2001, April). Reforming Adult Literacy Education: Transforming Local Programs Into National Systems in Canada, the United Kingdom, & the United States. El Cajon, CA.

In this paper, Sticht summarizes what these three countries are currently doing relative to adult literacy. He categorizes these activities into five areas:

1. Scale of Need: determining how many adults are in need of adult literacy, including numeracy education.
 - a. Sticht states that in the United States, 23.7 percent of adults aged 16-65 were considered to be “at risk” for social inclusiveness due to poor literacy. This would be about 32 million adults. Only about 8 million adults considered themselves as “at risk.” This perception could result in lower enrollment in adult literacy programs.
2. Access to Provision: determining how many adults are aware of, have access to and enroll in adult education and literacy education programs.
 - a. Sticht relates that “fewer than 10% of the more than 40 million adults who lack a high school diploma in the U.S. enroll in the Adult Education and Literacy System [AELS] of the U.S. in a given year. However, as of 2001, no major efforts with major funding, as in the United Kingdom, were underway to reach out to adults in the United States” (p. 3).
3. Nature of Provision: determining the nature of the delivery system for meeting the needs of adult literacy provision, including the use of information and communication technology.
 - a. There are about 4,000 organizations that operate under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act with some 31 million enrollees from 1992 through 1999.

indicates that the article is a research study

4. Quality of Provision: determining the nature of and need for improved instructional quality, including teacher qualifications and establishing content and outcome standards for programs.
 - a. “In Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States there are common findings about adult literacy education.
 - Only a small proportion of adults deemed to be in need of provision actually enroll...
 - Studies of participation in adult education have repeatedly identified three major categories of barriers to participation in adult literacy education.
 1. Situational...
 2. Dispositional...
 3. Institutional...
 - Dropout rates are high in all three nations... In the US, dropout rates in excess of 50 percent have been found in some studies...
 - Professionalism and preparation of teaching staff is a major concern... Data for 1998 from the U. S. Department of Education indicate that in the [AELS], of 92,019 paid personnel, only some 25 percent were full-time personnel and the system relied on an additional 85,924 unpaid volunteers for tutors... In the United States, the U.S. Department of Education’s Division of Adult Education and Literacy has implemented the Pro-Net project to develop competencies and performance indicators for adult literacy educators.
 - Skills, content and curriculum standards have been the focus of government and professional agencies... The *Equipped for the Future* project in the United States presents content standards for what adults should know and be able to do...” (pp.5-8).
5. Accountability of Provision: improving methods of determining achievements of programs in terms of student learning outcomes and broader impacts for adult family, workplace and community.
 - a. “In the U.S. a new National Reporting System has been implemented to capture a wide variety of data on demographics, attendance, and outcomes in programs that are part of the [AELS] of the U.S., that is, those 4,000 or so programs that receive at least some of their funding through the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998” (p.9).

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

indicates that the article is a research study

Taylor, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Many families, many literacies: An international declaration of principles*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In an effort to counter what is described as the prevailing deficit-based view of family literacy, a group of 50 participants from around the world gathered at the International Forum on Family Literacy to set up principles for redefining family literacy. The intent was to have a broad spectrum of professionals address issues related to the family literacy movement, especially issues related to ethical and human rights concerns. This book, a result of that conference, identifies a set of principles for family literacy and presents a compilation of articles on family literacy by researchers, teachers and parent learners. Challenging the reader to question practices based on a deficit view of family literacy, the articles cover the many different types of families served in family literacy programs, the general principles of language and literacy, ethics in research and program development, and principles for assessment, funding agencies and policymakers.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

##Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In Taylor's second book, she and Dorsey-Gaines follow four inner-city African-American families. In this qualitative study, the reader learns that children from these families can be successful readers, even in the face of overwhelming poverty and unfortunate circumstances. Like the middle-class families Taylor studied previously, these families provided literacy experiences for their children in their everyday lives. However, they are distinguished from the middle-class families in that they often used literacy activities as a means to an end (e.g., applications for food stamps, AFDC, WIC, and student financial aid forms). The authors of the book recommend their work for educators, researchers, and policymakers.

Cross-Reference:

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

indicates that the article is a research study

Van Horn, B. & Forlizzi, L. (2004) Assessment of Adult Literacy Skills. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of Family Literacy* (pp. 567-586). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

This chapter reviews the planning and implementation needed to choose appropriate tools for assessing adult learners involved in family literacy programs. The authors discuss (a) federal accountability; (b) different types of assessments (standardized and informal) and the strengths and weaknesses of each category; (c) choosing the appropriate assessment tool(s) (What purpose will the assessment serve? Will it be used to place students, drive instruction, or demonstrate progress?); (d) considerations for writing one's own program specific assessment; (e) strategies for implementation, and (f) the importance of a "supportive test environment." (p. 568) A section of the chapter focuses specifically on the evaluation of English-language Learners. Also included are several useful tables relevant to the topic. This chapter is of interest to program developers, administrators, evaluators and practitioners.

Cross-Reference:

Section F: Assessment & Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section H: Government Policy

Wagner, D. A., & Venezky, R. L. (1999). Adult literacy: The next generation. *Educational Researcher*, 28(1), 21-29.

The authors of this article synthesize studies relating to adult literacy in order to provide guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. They divide the work into seven key topic areas and provide major findings and recommendations for each.

A. Literacy and Economic Well-being

a. Findings:

- i. Literacy and education are closely related to a nation's economic development.
- ii. According to the NALS: income of American adults was significantly higher for each literacy level attained; income differences between ethnic and racial groups disappear when controlled for literacy and education; adults who complete a GED improve their earnings potential.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Adult education and training are essential as one means of addressing our nation's economic and social goals.
- ii. Adult literacy education appears to be a promising and well-targeted investment.

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B. Literacy Instruction and Measurement

a. Findings:

- i. Most literacy programs classify learners by grade levels rather than instructionally relevant variables.
- ii. There are few practical diagnostic instruments for adult literacy programs to assist teachers in tailoring instruction.
- iii. Much instruction is oriented toward the stated needs and interests of participants.
- iv. There aren't many "milestones" to guide learners in making life or learning goals.
- v. Current instruction emphasizes basic skills assuming they will transfer to other contexts but research shows little transfer.
- vi. Numeracy has received little attention from policymakers and program planners
- vii. Adult literacy testing is limited by a paucity of instruments, and a lack of normative data.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Diagnostic and remediation models for adult literacy instruction need to be better understood.
- ii. Shift resources to incorporate more extensive diagnostic testing.
- iii. A balance is needed between functional context learning and basic skills practice.
- iv. Individual progress should be measured by both standardized tests and applied tasks.
- v. Evaluation should have separate measures for: individuals with special needs; participants who reflect normal progress; and, those not working toward academic certification.
- vi. More information about instructional and other outcomes needs to be provided directly to the participants.

C. Workforce Literacy and Competitiveness

a. Findings:

- i. Adult education services are available to only a fraction of the individuals who need it.
- ii. When there are strong incentives for developing literacy skills, workers participate and increase their literacy skills more frequently.
- iii. Also, company productivity increases as do workers' earnings.
- iv. Participants in welfare-to-work programs who enroll in appropriately designed literacy programs can increase proficiencies and reduce long-term dependency rates.
- v. When adult learners are motivated and make progress in learning, they also raise their level of economic well-being.

- vi. Availability of programs is directly affected by the incentive structures of different nations.
- b. Recommendations:
 - i. The number of services should be increased.
 - ii. Reallocation of resources can reward and foster collaboration between businesses, unions, educators, and private groups.
 - iii. There needs to be increased diversity of delivery systems to accommodate both small and larger businesses.
 - iv. The overall quality of training programs needs attention.
 - v. Policymakers should consider the balance between individual skills and learning potential, requirements for job skills, and reward for learning new skills.
 - vi. Effective designs should provide incentives for basic skills development that are both direct and readily perceived by the learners and the providers.

D. English as a Second Language

- a. Findings:
 - i. ESL learners are not a homogeneous group.
 - ii. Quality and efficiency of programs have been hard to assess.
 - iii. Research suggests that adult learners from different backgrounds benefit from their native language literacy skills.
 - iv. Speaking skills in English were found to be less important for English literacy than previously thought.
- b. Recommendations:
 - i. Determining accurate and consumer-relevant information about specialized needs should be a priority for adult ESL.
 - ii. “Research and development into the literacy learning processes of adult ESL learners, appropriate curricula, and especially the power of technology are important in this domain.”

E. Family Literacy

- a. Findings:
 - i. Three models are most popular: the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project, the Missouri Parents As Teachers Program, and Parents As Partners in Reading.
 - ii. Our knowledge in this area is still rather limited.
 - iii. Most evaluations have focused on cost and effectiveness of specific programs than on dynamics of intergenerational learning and instruction.
 - iv. Family literacy programs may offer hope for solving socioeconomic problems in low-income urban communities through enhanced family support systems.
- b. Recommendations:

- i. Programs need to be field tested and better understood.
- ii. Development of specialized training for family literacy instructors is particularly important.
- iii. Cultural aspects of family literacy programs need significant emphasis.
- iv. There needs to be coordination between the network of family support systems.

F. Professionalization and Standards

a. Findings:

- i. Large majority of instructional staff is part time.
- ii. There have only been limited resources and strategies for staff development.
- iii. Staff development has been largely remedial.
- iv. Professional staff need to feel more in control, motivated, and empowered.
- v. Setting standard will pose major challenges.
- vi. Standards have focused on workplace competencies.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Staff training and development should be an ongoing process in programs and be linked to program improvement and evaluation.
- ii. Without increasing full-time staff, programs do not have the incentive to spend resources on teacher development.
- iii. Regional, state, and national networks can enable educators in generating and disseminating knowledge.
- iv. Standards should establish a vision of knowledge across a diversity of contexts.
- v. Standards development should not drain resources from staff development or instructional design.

G. Technology

a. Findings:

- i. Many programs lag far behind in using newer technologies.
- ii. Many programs have limited funds for hardware and software purchases.
- iii. There is inadequate staff training and lack of knowledge on effective implementation and specialized uses of technology.

b. Recommendations:

- i. At the policy level, federal and state funding should be targeted specifically for technology purchase and accompanying staff development.”
- ii. Administrative data should be collected electronically.
- iii. Government can facilitate partnerships and provide incentives to the private sector for funds.

- iv. Staff development in technology training should be built into the staff-development planning process.
- v. Research is needed to develop distance education models for participants at home, at the workplace, and in literacy classes.
- vi. Creative uses of low technologies (i.e. hand-held vocabulary devices) and higher technologies (i.e. intelligent tutoring systems) have yet to be explored for literacy work.

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

Weinstein, G. (1998). *Family and Intergenerational Literacy in Multilingual Communities*. *ERIC Q&A*. (ERIC Document No. ED421899)

This article addresses questions relating to family and intergenerational literacy in multilingual communities. Weinstein provides answers for questions relating to:

A. Research

- a. Current research is more focused on how language and literacy practices are rooted in native culture that may or may not be similar to a local school system
- b. Often children become fluent in English much quicker than their parents which may be reflected in changing intergenerational relationships.

B. Policy initiatives

- a. Equipped for the Future, the current national initiative, is consistent with ethnographic research and can be a useful guide for family literacy work.

C. Program goals

- a. Improving school achievement by promoting parental involvement
- b. “Improve skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors linked to reading”
- c. “Enable adults to develop a critical understanding of schooling”
- d. Construct “activities that address family and community concerns and attend to the role of home language and culture”
- e. Reconnect generations in a positive way

D. Delivery models

- a. Kenan model
- b. Models that begin with one generation and reach out to others

E. Curricula and materials

- a. “Curricula and materials are largely influenced by program goals.”
- b. Participatory, problem-posing, project-based

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- F. Directions for the future
- a. Collaboration between home and schools
 - b. “There is more to family and intergenerational literacy than children’s school achievement.”
 - c. “Planning and instruction begin with inquiry into learners’ lives”
 - d. “The program addresses needs that learners themselves define.”
 - e. “The program encourages generations to share knowledge and experience.”
 - f. “Learning communities are fostered both among learners and among practitioners.

Cross-Reference:

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

Wolter, D. L. (1995). Becoming family literacy advocates in early childhood education. *Early Education Journal*, 23(2), 89–91.

This article discusses the important role that early childhood educators can play in promoting family literacy. Ways are addressed for early childhood educators to be sensitive and supportive of family literacy. Wolter emphasizes the need to (1) "Recognize that family literacy is highly individualized;" (2) "Provide nonjudgmental and confidential support;" and (3) "Use strengths as resources for literacy enrichment in the classroom."

Cross-Reference:

Section H: Government Policy

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