

Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality

Adapted by the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy from the *Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality* (2002) and the *Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education* (2010), and the *Indicators of Program Quality* (2019) Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Education within the Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education

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Introduction

Pennsylvania has long been a proponent of using Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ) to ensure adults and families receive high-quality services. Since 1993, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Division of Adult Education within the Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education, have outlined the key characteristics and goals for all programs funded in the Division of Adult Education. In 1999, the IPQs were revised to match the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and in 2002 a new set of IPQs were developed, the Pennsylvania Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality, to target Family Literacy and Even Start programs. The intent of all revisions of the IPQs was to guide evaluation and continuous improvement for Division of Adult Education funded programs.

In 2010, the Division of Adult Education combined, revised, modified, and/or expanded the indicators related to adult education programs and family literacy programs. The indicators were combined primarily to support participant's goals as learners, workers, and family members. Finally, in 2019 the IPQs were revised again to match the language of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that replaced WIA. The 2019 revisions were not extensive and reflected new language around digital literacy and standard implementation.

Goodling Institute felt that it was important to have indicators that were specific to family literacy, and so combined and adapted the 2010 /2019 Division of Adult Education indicators, while also including wording from the original (2002) family literacy indicators. The updated Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality retain a majority of the indicators from the 2010 and 2019 version of the Pennsylvania Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education, while also going back to the original (2002) language of the Family Literacy indicators. This version strengthens the language around children and families, while updating and reflecting current best practices and requirements of family literacy programs (i.e., digital literacy). The current indicators outline expectations for family literacy components directed at adults, children, and interactive literacy activities. The Goodling Institute's primary purpose for updating the indicators was to provide guidelines and indicators of high-quality programming for the William Penn Foundation Family Literacy Initiative in the Philadelphia area.

Definitions of Terms

Adult Education (AE): Services and instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals who either lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills, do not have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, or have difficulty speaking, reading, or writing in English. Federal and state legislation provides specific eligibility criteria for these services.

Curriculum: A written plan that includes the goals for learning, the experiences through which the goals will be achieved, what instructional staff and learners will do to achieve those goals, and the materials needed to support the implementation.

Delivery Systems: Various processes for providing instruction, including center-based, home-based, large-group, small-group, individual (one-on-one tutoring), distance, and computer-assisted instruction.

Developmental Areas: Those areas in which young children are expected to exhibit growth related to their chronological age. These areas include, for example, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language domains.

Early Childhood Education (ECE): Consists of early childhood and school-based curricula for children from birth to third grade. The curriculum should be based on sound early childhood principles, practices, and focus on broad developmental domains in the areas of language, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.

Evidence-based Instruction: Methods and materials based on instructional practices that have a record of success. That is, there is reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence to suggest that when used with a particular group of students, adequate learning gains can be expected. “Research-based instruction” is sometimes used to convey the same meaning. (International Literacy Association, adapted)

Family Literacy (FL): Programs addressing the literacy needs of all family members. Promotes parents’ involvement in their children’s education as their children’s first teachers and a powerful influence on their academic success. These programs improve educational opportunities of eligible families by integrating early childhood education and adult education in a unified program.

Instructional Leadership: Involves the following major functions: setting academic goals; organizing instruction; hiring, supervising, and evaluating instructors; protecting instructional time; creating a climate for learning; and monitoring achievement and evaluating programs. Instructional leaders understand and are accountable for all facets of the instructional program, minimize the distance between instruction and administration, and instill pride and interdependence among teachers. (Based on James Weber’s 1987 book, *Instructional Leadership: A Composite Working Model. A Synthesis of the Literature*)

Family Instructional/Education Plan: The individual family instructional/education plan developed by program staff for families, children, and adults in collaboration with learners. It results in the subsequent development of an instructional design (i.e., assessment, instructional strategies, and curriculum) to achieve the plan.

Instructional Strategies: Specific teaching approaches and concepts such as contextualized instruction, language experience, project-based learning, participatory education, developmentally appropriate practices, immersion (ESL), support groups, and educational trips that allow adults and children to meet their goals.

Integration of Components: The connection of instruction within and across components through meaningful and consistent program messages and planning. Links service providers to the whole family and its needs, goals, and interests, thereby providing an intensive experience about the value of education and learning.

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA): A FL component that consists of regularly scheduled sessions for parent-child interaction, in which parents and children learn and play together as a family unit and acquire ideas for transferring learning to the home. Parent Education (PE) and ILA are closely connected so that the knowledge gained by parents during PE can be applied during ILA. Guidance about what to do and expect during ILA's is provided to parents during Parent Education or within the ILA Take-Home packets. Further, ILA may be conducted during home visits with family literacy staff or conducted by parents at home without staff facilitation if documented and debriefed.

Parenting Education (PE): A FL component that focuses on strengthening parents' support of their children's language and literacy development and early school success.

Skills: Learned or developed aptitudes and abilities, including communication skills (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening, and emergent literacy skills) in English, numeracy, problem solving, life skills, parenting, cultural awareness, and socialization as they relate to adults and children.

Participants:

Adult learner: the family member who is enrolled in the adult education component.

Parent: the parent or other family member or guardian with the primary caregiving role who has an educational need.

Child: child from birth to third grade.

Families: at least one parent (or primary caregiver) and one child in his/her care who participate in the required components of a family literacy program.

Special Needs: Classification for adult learners who demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics: intellectual disability, severe emotional illness, brain injury, severe visual or hearing impairment, or specific learning disabilities.

I. Program Operations

Key Concepts

- Articulate and promote a clear mission and vision that align with funders' expectations and local needs.
- Provide a learning environment and structure of support in which learners and staff can excel.

General Program Operations

- 1.1 The program has procedures and a process in place to fully integrate the family literacy components (Adult Education/Parenting Education, Early Childhood Education, and Interactive Literacy Activities) to maximize families' learning gains.
- 1.2 The program provides flexible scheduling and other services to support families' participation in all educational components.

Accountability

- 1.3 The program attains and exceeds enrollment expectations, actively recruiting in the community to reach those families most in need and eligible for family literacy services.
- 1.4 The program retains participating families with sufficient duration and intensity to develop the knowledge and skills needed to meet their short- and long-term educational goals.
- 1.5 The program attains or exceeds the William Penn Foundation Results, Milestones, and Activities (RMA) for Family Literacy programs, demonstrating effectiveness in improving adults' and children's literacy skills and interactions together.
- 1.6 The program maintains a high-quality information management system, including paper and electronic records with the capacity to document program performance and child, adult, and family learning progress and outcomes.

Learning Environment

- 1.7 The program's organizational and learning environments reflect the culture, community, language, and special needs of participating families.
- 1.8 Facilities are safe, accessible, clean, and appropriate for learners and provide adequate educational resources for staff and participating families.

Program Improvement

- 1.9 The program measures family satisfaction by systematically gathering feedback from caregivers about Adult Education/Parenting Education, Early Childhood Education, and Interactive Literacy Activities and uses the information to continuously improve services for all families.
- 1.10 The program has a well-defined program improvement process that includes regularly schedule meetings, agency-wide and partner participation, and an up-to-date program improvement plan informed by analysis of program and participant data.
- 1.11 Program leadership ensures full staff and partner participation in the continuous improvement process.

Staff and Professional Support

- 1.12 The program has qualified staff who have the knowledge and skills to implement effectively all components of a family literacy program.

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- 1.13 Program staff improve their practice through regular participation in professional development activities. New staff, paid and unpaid, receive an orientation to program operations and to the field of family literacy education.
- 1.14 The program provides ongoing assistance and supervision for staff to do their jobs effectively. The program provides instructional leadership and supports communities of practice.

II. Instructional Systems

Key Concepts

- Use assessment, student, and family goals as part of a comprehensive and integrated instructional planning process.
- Incorporate technology, real-life contexts, research, and proven practices into curriculum and instruction.

Assessment

- 2.1 Instructional staff use Goodling Institute-approved assessments appropriately (to the extent possible) to produce valid and reliable results in all family literacy components.
- 2.2 Instructional staff analyze results from ongoing assessments and use results to document student progress, continuously guide instruction, and update goals in all family literacy components.
 - 2.2.1 *Adult Education/Parenting Education* – Instructional staff use assessment results to place adult learners within the instructional program, develop instructional activities, and update instructional plans. Assessment results are also used to plan instructional activities that develop caregivers’ knowledge and skills to support their child’s development.
 - 2.2.2 *Early Childhood Education/K-3* – Instructional staff use assessment results, when possible and as appropriate, to guide curriculum development and the learning environment, meet the developmental needs of children, design activities that support a range of developmental levels, and assist in determining if further assessments and/or early intervention measures are necessary.
 - 2.2.3 *Interactive Literacy Activities* – Instructional staff use assessment results to develop activities that will assist caregivers in applying parent education knowledge and to support a positive relationship between parent and child.
 - 2.2.4 Instructional staff use informal assessments and personal/family goals as guidelines to assist parents in documenting the skills and knowledge necessary to support their children’s development, school success, and progress meeting personal/family goals.

Planning for Instruction

- 2.3 Instructional staff develop instructional plans that support the learning and development of adults, children, and families.
- 2.4 Instructional staff communicate routinely with caregivers about their child regarding assessment results, individualize the program to guide curriculum development and the learning environment, and design activities for the home setting to build parent involvement.

- 2.5 Instructional staff and caregivers jointly develop, regularly evaluate, and update an educational plan that includes personal plans/goals that offer opportunities for families to work, play, and learn together.

Curricula

- 2.6 Curricula provide for learning and skill-building in real-life and culturally appropriate contexts that support learners to be effective family members, workers, and citizens.
- 2.7 Development of curricula is based on learning theory, proven practices, current materials and technologies, and well-articulated instructional goals of reasonable scope and sequence.
 - 2.7.1 The early childhood/K-3 program uses a curriculum, when possible and appropriate, that is connected to ages and stages of child development and that supports all areas of a child's physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, linguistic, and cognitive development.
 - 2.7.2 The program integrates curricula that increase the knowledge and skills of caregivers needed to support their children's language and literacy development.
 - 2.7.3 The program uses a curriculum that supports language and literacy development that includes activities that immerse the parent and child in tasks that apply the knowledge learned about children's development.
- 2.8 A process is in place for the regular, comprehensive review and revision of curricula to incorporate new technology, materials, and research/evidence-based teaching methods.
- 2.9 The program uses a curriculum that helps parents engage, partner, and advocate for their child's learning and development in the school.

Instructional Practices and Delivery

- 2.10 Programs use research/evidence-based instructional practice and multiple delivery systems for adults, families, and children.
- 2.11 Instructional staff use practices that incorporate multiple approaches to build positive relationships between caregivers and children and to support caregivers' application of the knowledge acquired during Interactive Literacy Activities in family and community settings.
- 2.12 Instructional staff connect effective practices to ages and stages of child development and learning.
- 2.13 Instructional practices address parent and family needs and accommodate the parenting needs of a diverse population.

III. Community Collaboration

Key Concepts

- Effective programs work with community systems.
- Through meaningful and substantive community collaboration and support, families receive seamless and integrated services that enable them to reach their educational and personal goals in an efficient and effective manner.

- 3.1 Program and other family support services are coordinated with a variety of high-quality partners that provide services related to family literacy to ensure non-duplicative and integrated services in the community.
- 3.2 The program encourages cross training with community partners to ensure comprehensive interagency knowledge and ongoing communication.
- 3.3 The program provides community partners with timely and accurate information to clarify the roles and responsibilities of their respective agencies in terms of recruitment, programming, delivery, and reporting requirements.
- 3.4 The program connects with other initiatives in the community to provide better services for families.

IV. Learner Outcomes

Key Concept

- Learner achievement is the true measure of program success.

- 4.1 Learners advance through instructional levels.
- 4.2 Learners demonstrate skills needed to understand, critically evaluate, and manage life skills (such as digital literacy, financial literacy, health literacy, civic involvement, and citizenship).
- 4.3 Children meet developmental milestones, are ready for school, and demonstrate proficiency in school.
- 4.4 Learners persist in instruction long enough to acquire skills necessary to achieve their personal, educational, and/or career goals.
- 4.5 Learners provide feedback regarding services used to guide program improvement and address child, adult, and family learning goals.