

# Archived Information

## EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

<p><b>Goal:</b> To help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation’s low-income families through a unified family literacy program that integrates early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education.</p> <p><b>Legislation:</b> Title I, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, (20 U.S.C. 6361-6370). Most recently amended through the Literacy Involves Families Together Act, as enacted by P.L. 106-554, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001.</p>	<b>Funding History</b> (\$ in millions)			
	<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Appropriation</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Appropriation</b>
	1985	\$0	2000	\$150
	1990	\$24	2001	\$250
	1995	\$102	2002 (Requested)	\$250

### Program Description

The program supports family literacy services for parents and children, from birth through age seven, to help parents become full partners in the education of their children and to help children reach their full potential as learners.

Even Start is family-focused rather than parent- or child-focused. Family literacy services are defined in the legislation as follows:

- (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.
- (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.”

The Department awards formula grants to State educational agencies that, in turn, make competitive discretionary grants to partnerships of local educational agencies and community based organizations for Even Start Family Literacy projects. In addition to the state grant programs, funds are set aside for Federal discretionary grants for projects serving families of migratory workers, families in Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and families living in outlying areas. The statute also requires that funds be set aside for a grant to a prison that houses women and children, and authorizes a reservation of funds for statewide family literacy initiatives. Funds support Even Start projects tailored for groups of participants in special circumstances. Since 1993-94, approximately 10 to 20 of both Migrant Special Education Even Start (MSEES) and tribal Even Start projects have been funded each year.

Most Even Start projects are now administered by the states, and \$135 million was distributed to approximately 770 Even Start projects in FY 1999. Each state receives funding based on the relative proportion of funds it receives under the Title I allocation formula. States hold grant competitions and make subgrant awards.

## Program Performance

OBJECTIVE 1: THE LITERACY OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES WILL IMPROVE.

Indicator 1.1 Adult literacy achievement: Increasing percentages of Even Start adults will achieve significant learning gains on measures of math and reading.					
Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress		Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of adults showing moderate to large gains on Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)</i>			<b>Status:</b> Unable to judge. Next data point to be reported with the Third National Even start evaluation in 2002.		<b>Source:</b> Second National Even Start Evaluation: sample study. <i>Frequency:</i> Occasionally. <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Even Start Evaluation: Experimental Design Study 2000-2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.  <b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.  <b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> <i>Limitations:</i> Study was designed to look at new participants' gains each year, thus the populations being compared in 1994-95 and 1995-96 were different. The sample study also had a small sample size, as well as grantee-collected data. <i>Planned Improvement:</i> The Third National Evaluation will use an experimental design, which is the strongest design for measuring program impact.
Year	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	
Math		Reading			
1994-95:	26%		31%		
1995-96:	24%		20%		
1998-99:	No data available	Continuing increase	No data available	Continuing increase	
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>NoData Available</b>		<b>NoData Available</b>		
2000-01:		40%		30%	
2001-02:					
<b>Indicator 1.2 Adult educational attainment: Increasing percentages of adult secondary education (ASE) Even Start participants will earn their high school diploma or equivalent.</b>					
Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress		Sources and Data Quality
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets			
1995-96:	18%*			<b>Status:</b> No significant progress toward target.  <b>Explanation:</b> There has been no significant change in the percentage of ASE participants earning a Graduate Equivalency Diploma. The GED figures presented for 1998-99 and 1999-00 represent only the GED attainments for new enrollees within the program year of their enrollment. Thus, GEDs participants earned after the year of their enrollment are not reflected.	
1996-97:	19%*				
1998-99:	18.4%**	Continuing increase			
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>17%**</b>	<b>Continuing increase</b>			
2000-01:		25%			
2001-02:					
*Indicates the percentage of all adult secondary education Even Start participants who earned their high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma.					
**Of the new enrollees who were working toward a high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma, the percentage who obtained a diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma by the end of the program year.					
			<b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.		

Targets and Performance Data	Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
		<b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> Definitions of participation in ASE and Graduate Equivalency Diploma may vary across programs, and these data are obtained through grantee self-report. Sample sizes and composition have varied. The 1998-99 and 1999-00 figures were derived from only those participants with pre and post information, approximately one-fifth to one-fourth of all Even Start adults.

**Indicator 1.3 Children’s language development and reading readiness: Increasing percentages of Even Start children will achieve significant gains on measures of language development and reading readiness.**

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of children achieving moderate to large gains on a measure of language development</i>			<b>Status:</b> Target met.  <b>Explanation:</b> There has been a continuing increase in the percentage of children achieving gains on a measure of language development. Progress toward the target cannot be judged since the assessment will be changed for the next data point. (An improved but different assessment instrument will be used in the next measure of performance toward this target).	<b>Source:</b> Second National Even Start Evaluation: sample study. <i>Frequency:</i> Occasionally. <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Even Start Evaluation: Experimental Design Study 2000-2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.  <b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.  <b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> <i>Limitations:</i> Study was designed to look at new participants' gains each year; thus, the populations being compared in 1994-95 and 1995-96 were different. The sample study also had a small sample size, as well as grantee-collected data. <i>Planned Improvement:</i> The Third National Evaluation will use an experimental design, which is the strongest design for measuring program impact. The new study will use measures that align for the most part with Head Start’s national FACES study.
<b>Year</b>	<b>Actual Performance</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>		
1995-96:	45%			
1996-97:	64%			
1998-99:	No data available	Continuing increase		
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>No Data Available</b>	<b>Continuing increase</b>		
2000-01:		60%		
2001-02:				

Indicator 1.4 Parenting skills: Increasing percentages of parents will show significant improvement on measures of parenting skills, home environment, and expectations for their children.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of parents of 3-to-6-year-old children making medium-to-large gains on the Home Screening Questionnaire</i>		<p><b>Status:</b> No 1999 or 2000 data, but progress toward target is likely.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> The percentage of parents showing significant improvement on measures of parenting skills has continued to improve. ED has also placed a strong emphasis on improving the literacy focus of parenting education in the last year.</p> <p>The third national evaluation will use a different assessment instrument in the next measure of performance toward this target.</p>	<p><b>Source:</b> Second National Even Start Evaluation: Universe Study. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Evaluation: Universe Study and Experimental Design Study 2000-2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p><b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before the Education Department <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.</p> <p><b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> Instruments used to measure parenting outcomes often have accuracy problems; parents often respond with the answer that is socially acceptable, even if not accurate.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1994-95:	41%			
1995-96:	50%			
1998-99:	No data available			Continuing increase
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>No Data Available</b>			<b>Continuing increase</b>
2000-01:				Continuing increase
2001-02:				

OBJECTIVE 2: EVEN START PROJECTS WILL REACH THEIR TARGET POPULATION OF FAMILIES WHO ARE MOST IN NEED OF SERVICES.

Indicator 2.1 Recruitment of most in need: The projects will continue to recruit low-income, disadvantaged families with low literacy levels.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of families having incomes at or substantially below the Federal poverty level at intake</i>		<p><b>Status:</b> Target met.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Projects are already successfully targeting service to the neediest of families. No declines expected.</p>	<p><b>Source:</b> Second and Third National Even Start Evaluations: Universe Study. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Evaluation: universe study 2000-01. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p><b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.</p> <p><b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> The second national evaluation in 1996-97 had some accuracy problems with income survey questions. The third national evaluation currently under way benefits from improvements to the survey to increase the accuracy of income information. A significant number of families do not report income.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1996-97:	93%			
1998-99:	81%*			No decrease
<b>1999-00:**</b>	<b>82%*</b>			<b>No decrease</b>
2000-01:				No decrease
2001-02:				
<p>*The income reporting prior to 1997-98 reflected the income of the participating families. The income question in 1998-99 and beyond counts the income of the entire household.</p> <p>**Represents new enrollees only</p>				

Percentage of parents having no high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma or a ninth-grade education or less at intake			
Year	Actual Performance		Performance Targets
	No Diploma or GED	Ninth Grade or Less	
1995-96:	87%	44%	
1996-97:	87%	45%	
1997-98:	85%	44%	
1998-99:	84%	45%	
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>No decrease</b>
2000-01:			No decrease
2001-02:			

For example, in 1999-00, the poverty figure includes only families who provided data on family size and income at intake, totaling 54% of participating families.

OBJECTIVE 3: LOCAL EVEN START PROJECTS WILL PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY, COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ALL FAMILIES IN A COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER.

Indicator 3.1 Service hours: Increasing percentages of projects will offer at least 60 hours of adult education (AE) per month, 20 hours of parenting education (PE) per month, and 65 hours of early childhood education (ECE) per month (60 hours for children ages 0-2).							
Targets and Performance Data				Assessment of Progress		Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of projects that offered at least the target number of hours per month of the three core components:</i>				<b>Status:</b> Generally positive movement toward target.		<p><b>Source:</b> Second and Third National Even Start Evaluations: Universe Study.  <i>Frequency:</i> Annually.  <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Evaluation: Universe Study 2000-01.  <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p><b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.</p> <p><b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> Data collections undertaken in 1995-98 required providers to report service hours in a way that was difficult for them to reliably calculate. The calculation method has been improved for the 1999-00 collection.</p>	
Year	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Target
	AE		PE		ECE (0-2/3-4)		
1995-96:	24		34		21/29		
1996-97:	28		36		24/31		
1997-98:	33		39		31/34		
1998-99:	35	Continuing increase	43	Continuing increase	32/36		Continuing increase
<b>1999-00:*</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Continuing increase</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Continuing increase</b>	<b>30/35</b>		<b>Continuing increase</b>
2000-01:		Continuing increase		Continuing increase			Continuing increase
2001-02:							
<p>* Before 1999-00, Even Start projects reported "hours offered in a typical month." In 1999-00, they reported the hours for each month. Even though the 1999-00 hours above are based on average hours offered from September through June, the actual hours tend to be lower in some months (e.g., December and June) than the rest of the academic year. This is likely to be the reason for the percentages dropping somewhat in AE, ECE0-2, and ECE3-4 from 1998-99 to 1999-00.</p>							
				<p><b>Explanation:</b> On average, projects have increased the number of service hours that they offer to participants. Although these data show positive movement toward the target, service intensity is not at the target level for the majority of projects.</p> <p>One possible reason for the drop in PE from 1998-99 to 1999-00 is the change in the data collection instrument in 1999-00 that no longer reported PE hours in two parts (parent alone and parent and child together). In 1999-00, projects were asked to include the parent-child time in PE or AE (but not both) and to report one number for PE. This may have resulted in their reporting a lower number than in previous years.</p> <p>Also, welfare reform could have increased the amount of time offered in AE (GED prep) and decreased the PE time. Since projects have to split the "integrated instruction" hours into PE or AE, this may tend to reduce the amount of time offered in PE.</p>			

Indicator 3.2 Participation, retention, and continuity: Projects will increasingly improve retention and continuity of services.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of participating families who were in the program during more than 1 program reporting year</i>		<p><b>Status:</b> No significant progress toward target.</p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> ED has observed no significant movement toward target. Projects are faced with new challenges related to the pressures associated with the competing demands of welfare reform.</p>	<p><b>Source:</b> Third National Even Start Evaluation: Universe Study.  <i>Frequency:</i> Annually  <i>Next collection update:</i> Third National Evaluation: Universe Study 2000-01  <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p><b>Validation Procedure:</b> Data Collection before ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u> were developed. Other sources and experience corroborate these findings.</p> <p><b>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements:</b> Data are grantee-collected and require accurate record-keeping. The calculation method has been improved for the 1999-00 collection.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance*			Performance Targets
1997-98:	38%			
1998-99:	40%			Continuing increase
<b>1999-00:</b>	<b>37%</b>			<b>Continuing increase</b>
2000-01:				
2001-02:				
<p>*The figures included above do not reflect the percentage of families who stay in the program for more than 12 months. True analyses of retention must be longitudinal and link the data on families from year to year. The formal evaluation reports for the Third National Even Start Evaluation will report retention by following each successive cohort of enrolling families through their entire period of participation. The figures here simply reflect the percentage of families who were present in the database during two successive program years, but do not reflect the exact number of months of participation from entry to exit from the program.</p>				

