

COLORADO EVEN START



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This report is available online at http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/NCLB/tib3_pub.htm

COLORADO EVEN START

2007–2008 Progress Report

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Key Findings of the 2007–2008 Progress Report

An **Even Start** family literacy program is an integrated adult education, early childhood education, and parent education program that facilitates parents and children spending time together doing literacy activities. This Progress Report provides information about the six Colorado **Even Start** programs, and the educational and self-sufficiency gains made by the families they serve. It includes past and current outcomes on the *Colorado Family Literacy State Performance Measures*. Data is presented on parents' support of children's literacy development and preschooler's growth in vocabulary and alphabet knowledge.

The following findings are highlights from the 2007–2008 Progress Report:

- Colorado **Even Start** programs met 78% of the targeted goals contained in the state performance measures.
- Colorado **Even Start** programs served 317 families with 420 children.
- Of the families served, 95% qualified for free or reduced price lunches, 85% of parents had no high school diploma or GED, and 45% did not go to school beyond the ninth grade.
- The percent of **Even Start** families with over 300 hours of attendance has increased from 36% in 2000–01 to 70% this year.
- An average of 82% of eligible teen parents in **Even Start** graduated from high school over the past nine years.
- 67% of parents learning English progressed through one learning level.
- 68% of preschool children made significant gains on receptive vocabulary.

- Preschool children recognized an average of 12.6 upper case letters.
- 83% of **Even Start** parents improved their support for children's learning at home.
- 88% of parents demonstrated progress in their involvement in literacy activities with their child.
- 59% of unemployed **Even Start** parents who were seeking work obtained a job and 83% held a job for six months or longer.

Family Literacy and the National Early Literacy Panel Research

Convened by the National Center for Family Literacy, the National Early Literacy Panel was charged with the task of synthesizing scientific research on the development of early literacy in young children. Findings from the National Early Literacy Panel provide valuable information on early literacy predictors and effective interventions (National Center for Family Literacy, 2008).

Based on the identification and analysis of 300 peer-reviewed research articles, the panel identified preschool and kindergarten predictors of later literacy skills. Strong evidence emerged for the importance of alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid naming tasks (naming letters, numbers, objects and colors), writing and name writing, and phonological short-term memory. Less consistent findings pointed to the importance of global oral language skills and concepts about print.

The panel then completed a review of almost 200 articles on interventions to assess the impact of various methods for building children's literacy skills. Of the five categories of interventions identified, all showed statistically significant positive effects for at least some skills related to reading and writing. The following interventions were found to be beneficial:

- Build code-related skills (phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and making sense of print)
- Share books with young children
- Enhance oral language

- Parent and home programs for improving young children's literacy, and
- Preschool and kindergarten programs

Each of these interventions is an integral part of a high quality family literacy program. Early childhood teachers teach coding skills, share books and enhance oral language skills through talking, reading and singing. Parent educators instruct parents on using the same interventions with their children.

The Background of Even Start

The purpose of **Even Start**, as outlined in federal legislation, is to help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and low literacy by providing a unified family literacy program for low-income families. **Even Start** has three related goals:

- to help parents improve their literacy or basic education skills,
- to help parents become full partners in educating their children, and
- to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

Even Start is funded through the U.S. Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act, Title I. Title I is the largest federally funded education program designed to provide services for preschool, elementary, and secondary students. **Even Start** is Part B, Subpart 3 of Title I (Refer to *Guidance for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program: Part B, Subpart of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]*, 2003).

Even Start funds are allocated to state governments and distributed to local programs through competitive grants. In Colorado for the 2007–08 program year, **Even Start** was administered by the **Even Start** State Coordinator, housed in the Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA) Unit, part of Student Support, at the Colorado Department of Education.

Federal funding for **Even Start** in 2007–2008 totaled \$66 million. This reflects a 20% decrease in funding from the \$82 million provided the previous year. Budget cuts over the past three years have resulted in discontinued funds for seven programs overseeing eleven sites that served approximately 170 families.

National statistics on **Even Start** consistently show that **Even Start** programs serve the intended population: undereducated, low-income families. Statistics provided by the **Even Start** Office at the U.S. Department of Education for 2006–07 (Even Start Family Literacy Program Annual Business Meeting, 2008) show that 23,763 families were served through **Even Start**. Participants had the following characteristics:

- 91% of families were at or below the federal poverty level.
- 90% of parents did not have a high school diploma or GED.
- 55% of parents had not progressed beyond the 9th grade.

State Funding for Family Literacy

Two types of state funds were made available for Colorado family literacy services during the 2007–2008 program year.

In the spring 2007 legislative session, representatives voted to allocate \$200,000 to the existing Family Literacy Education Grant Program (HB02-1303). The funds were administered by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Unit of the Colorado Department of Education and were dispersed through a competitive grant process for existing **Even Start** and AEFLA programs.

The second allocation of money came from the Title I Office at the Colorado Department of Education. In response to the decrease in federal **Even Start** funds for 2007–2008, Title I provided \$395,000 for family literacy services. Entities eligible to apply for these funds included Colorado **Even Start** programs, programs previously funded by **Even Start** and AEFLA programs.

Colorado Family Literacy Training Center

The Family Literacy Training Center provides training and technical assistance to organizations interested in the field of family literacy throughout the state. The Training Center is sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education; Pikes Peak **Even Start**; and Colorado Springs School District 11, Adult & Family Education and Title I.

This year, the Center's fourth year, staff provided 28 trainings with 700 participants. This is double the number of people trained during the Center's first year. Training topics ranged from *Family Literacy Overview* to *Parents as Teachers* Institutes. Of the trainings provided, 13 were rated by participants using a five-point scale. The overall average rating was 4.6.

Training Center staff also organized *Foundations in Family Literacy* trainings conducted by state professionals certified by the National Center for Family Literacy. The three-day Foundations training provides a basic overview of the principles and practices of family literacy and the research that supports those practices (information about the National Center for Family Literacy is available at <http://www.familit.org/>).

Two *Foundations in Family Literacy* trainings were offered this year, one in Colorado Springs and one in Parachute. The 100 attendees included new **Even Start** staff, Title I staff, adult educators, Head Start staff, district administrators and other community literacy advocates.

Colorado Even Start Programs

The most common type of **Even Start** program in Colorado is a center-based program in a location, such as a school, where families come to participate. A typical session includes instruction time for parents in adult basic education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED) examination preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, or job-skills training. Parents also participate in parent education classes that feature building skills to nurture children's literacy. During adult and parent education, the children are involved in early childhood education (ECE). Early childhood options range

from children learning and interacting in a preschool setting to 'homework help' for children in the primary grades. At some point during the session, children and parents come together for literacy activities referred to as Parent and Child Together (PACT) time or Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA). This often takes place in the early childhood classroom with some activities initiated by the children. Literacy sessions typically are held several times a week.

In addition to center-based services, Colorado **Even Start** staff makes regular home visits to provide individualized literacy instruction addressing the unique needs of each family. Home visits are integrated with center-based programming and are typically scheduled once a month.

Even Start programs may serve teen parents enrolled in high school. Teen parents often take parenting classes from **Even Start** personnel for high-school credit. PACT can be part of these classes or part of home visits. Adult education is obtained through the high school courses in which the teen parent is enrolled.

Staff Qualifications

Even Start staff members are required to meet qualifications as outlined in federal legislation and further delineated by state policy. In all cases, programs are encouraged to hire the most highly qualified staff available.

Colorado **Even Start** program administrators are required to have earned a minimum of an associate's degree; to complete the *National Center for Family Literacy's Even Start Administration Training*; to participate in specific ongoing professional development activities, such as national training and professional development meetings; and to participate in the statewide evaluation process.

Early childhood instructional staff members must have earned a minimum of an associate's degree in early childhood education. Because all **Even Start** early childhood facilities [child-care centers, family child-care homes, and/or preschools] must be licensed through the *Office of Child-Care Services in the Colorado Department of Human Services (OCCS/CDHS)*, individual early childhood staff may substitute OCCS/CDHS certification in their specific positions for a college degree.

All parent educators must have earned a minimum of an associate's degree. In order to expand the number of highly qualified, bilingual individuals who are supporting **Even Start** families, the Colorado Department of Education set policy that individual home visitors may substitute certification through the *Home Instructional Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters* (HIPPY) or *Parents as Teachers* (PAT) for a college degree.

Adult education instructors must have earned a minimum of an associate's degree and obtained the Colorado Department of Education's *Literacy Instruction Authorization*.

Qualifications for Adult Educators: Literacy Instruction Authorization

The Colorado Department of Education's Adult Education and Family Literacy Unit has created a teaching credential for adult and family literacy educators called the *Literacy Instruction Authorization* (LIA).

Five courses which lead to the authorization are available through the Colorado Community College Online system: *Introduction to Adult Education Instruction; Planning, Organizing, and Delivering Adult Education Instruction; Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education; Teaching English as a Second Language to Adult Learners; and Family Literacy in Adult Education*.

In addition to the online versions, these courses are offered in traditional classrooms by local community colleges when there is adequate enrollment. Enrolled students receive three hours of credit for each class successfully completed. The acquisition of this credential is required for each program funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), along with adult educators funded through **Even Start**.

An alternative means has been developed to assist educators in receiving the *Literacy Instruction Authorization*. Applicants submit a portfolio that includes documentation of professional teaching experience, coursework completed, and training/volunteer experience specific to adult education and/or family literacy. Members of a Portfolio Committee, representing the Colorado Department of Education, and external experts, review the application in order to recommend approval of experience equivalency through a Certificate of Equivalency,



granted through Colorado Community College System (CCCS). The Committee also reviews transcripts to determine course equivalency, as a substitution for one or more of the classes required for the LIA.

Colorado Basic Literacy Act

In 2004, the Colorado State Legislature revised the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, originally enacted in 1996. According to the requirements of this act, Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs) must be formulated jointly by parents, teachers, and administrators for children in the primary grades (K–3) who are not reading at grade level. **Even Start** personnel across the state are assisting school districts with the development of ILPs. When **Even Start** children are not reading at grade level, **Even Start** programs become part of the resources delineated in an action plan.

Program Descriptions

During 2007–2008, six Colorado **Even Start** programs operated sites in Aurora, Boulder, Carbondale, Colorado Springs, Delta, Durango, Glenwood Springs, Lafayette, and Rifle (see Appendix).

Aurora Public Schools provided an **Even Start** program for the seventh year. The program served families at the district's Early Childhood Center. Staff instituted school-age PACT at 12 elementary schools. The evening dad's class continued covering topics on child-development and parenting.

The Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program completed seven years as an **Even Start** grantee offering a daytime program at Pioneer Elementary in Lafayette and an evening program at University Hills Elementary in Boulder. This year, GED classes were started for parents who had reached the needed level of proficiency in English. A GED testing center was opened in conjunction with the Boulder County Library. The testing center serves as an avenue for recruiting parents who need additional support in preparing for the test.

Pikes Peak **Even Start** in Colorado Springs finished twelve years of funding. Community Partnership for Child Development (Head Start and the Colorado Preschool Program) served as the fiscal agent and collaborated with El Paso County School Districts 2 and 11 to implement the grant. This year an additional Early Head Start classroom was opened at Pikes Peak Elementary to address the long waiting list for families with infants and toddlers.



The Delta County Family Literacy Program operated an **Even Start** program for the third year. The program is a collaborative between Delta County School District, Delta County Adult Literacy Program and Delta County Department of Human Services. The program is located in the Delta Center which houses infant, toddler and preschool classes (including CPP and Head Start), the Backpack and Great Start programs (monthly exchanges of parent-child literacy activities), a parent library, play-groups; and family services for health literacy, advocacy and case management.

Durango School District 9R has received **Even Start** funds for seven years in collaboration with the Durango Adult Education Center. This year programs sites were at Animas Valley Elementary and Durango Adult Education Center's new facility. This new center, "The Commons," houses adult education classes for GED preparation and ESL classes, care and education for infants and toddlers, Pueblo Community College classes, Denver University programs and a dental clinic.

Colorado Mountain College (CMC), based in Glenwood Springs, in partnership with Roaring Fork School District RE-1 and Garfield School District RE-2, completed eleven years of **Even Start** programming. Services were offered at Glenwood Springs Elementary, Yampah Teen Parent program in Glenwood Springs, Crystal River Elementary in Carbondale and Wamsley Elementary in Rifle. Of the thirty-two teen parents served, fifteen were eligible for graduation and fourteen earned a diploma.

Evaluation of Colorado Even Start

There are two levels of evaluation for Colorado **Even Start** programs. The first level is a review of local programs that focuses on quality of services. The second level involves program data on the accomplishments of families. These data are aggregated for an analysis of program and state-level impact, including data for the *Colorado Family Literacy State Performance Measures*.

Local Program Evaluation

The following question guides the evaluation of local programs, which is coordinated through a statewide system:

- How can **Even Start** programs effectively support family gains in literacy and self-sufficiency?

Programs receive a peer review visit on an every-other-year schedule. Peer assistance teams conduct the visits. These are three-member teams made up of the independent evaluator and a coordinator from each of two other **Even Start** programs in the state. The program's outcomes on the state performance measures are used to design the site visit. Low outcomes are an area of focus. Program coordinators and staff also choose an area of program strength as a secondary focus for the review.

During the visit, team members observe classes and activities in each of the four program component areas. Focus groups are conducted with parents, staff members, and collaborators. Lesson plans are examined within the context of observed class activities. Family files and staff documentation of observations, rationales and ratings for the *Parent Education Profile* (RMC Research Corporation, 2003) are reviewed.

The *Guide to Quality: Even Start Family Literacy—Program Implementation and Continuous Improvement, Volume I, Revised* (RMC Research Corporation, 2001) is a key document in the local evaluation process used to define standards of effective **Even Start** programs. Program staff members complete the *Guide to Quality's* self-assessment in the identified areas prior to the team's visit. Peer assistance team members complete the same assessment at the end of the site visit. Using the observations, focus groups, and assessment results, team members derive commendations and recommendations for the program. Programs then provide a plan for addressing the team's recommendations as part of their continuation application.

Colorado Statewide Even Start Evaluation Results

Colorado Even Start Progress Report

The following questions guide the design of the *Colorado Even Start Progress Report*. They are based on the legislative goal of **Even Start** to expand educational opportunities for families and to break the cycle of poverty.

- What educational gains did adults make?
- What educational gains did children make?
- How did parents support their children's literacy development?
- What self-sufficiency gains did families achieve?

To provide useful information to the state Department of Education and the local programs, the report also addresses these questions:

- How many families were served?
- What was the cost of serving these families?
- How often did families attend **Even Start** programming?

Program staff submitted data in August of 2008 for families served during the 2007–2008 program year. Staff counted only those families who participated in 30 hours or more of **Even Start** programming. This total includes a minimum of seven hours of participation in each of the **Even Start** core services: adult education, early childhood education, parent education, and parent/child interaction. The 30-hour threshold increases the likelihood that program effects are being measured.

In order to assess progress on achieving state performance measures, program staff also tracked outcomes for families who participated in 300 or more hours of **Even Start** services and in 100 hours or more of adult education.

Performance Indicator	Past Performance	2007–08	Difference with Target/Average
2.2 After 100 hours of participation in the adult education program, 75% of parents in the ABE/ASE program will progress through one level, as measured by CASAS or TABE scores, or demonstrate adequate yearly progress as measured by appropriate assessment.	2000–01: 84% 2001–02: 91% 2002–03: 90% 2003–04: 87% 2004–05: 81% 2005–06: 77% 2006–07: 78%	72% of ABE/ASE parents progressed through one level (N=46)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: -3% • Eight year average: 82%
2.3 After 100 hours of participation in the adult education program, 75% of parents in the ESL program will progress through one level, as measured by Oral BEST, BEST PLUS, or CASAS scores.	2000–01: 76% 2001–02: 85% 2002–03: 88% 2003–04: 85% 2004–05: 87% 2005–06: 68% 2006–07: 78%	69% of ELL parents progressed through one level (N=130)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: -6% • Eight year average: 79%
2.4 After 100 hours of participation in adult education, 50% of parents in the ASE program will pass the GED exam, or high school seniors will earn a high school diploma, as measured by program records.	2000–01: 44% 2001–02: 34% 2002–03: 48% 2003–04: 53% 2004–05: 65% 2005–06: 70% 2006–07: 72%	67% of eligible parents passed GED exam or received high school diploma (N=27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +17% • Eight year average: 57%
2.5 After 100 hours of participation in adult education, 60% of eligible parents seeking to enroll in higher education or training, with access to financial aid, will enroll, as measured by program records.	2000–01: 87% 2001–02: 58% 2002–03: 84% 2003–04: 89% 2004–05: 78% 2005–06: 74% 2006–07: 92%	80% of eligible parents enrolled in higher education or training (N=10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +20% • Eight year average: 80%
3.1 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 75% of parents will achieve parenting goals according to their family education plans as measured by self-assessment.	2000–01: 95% 2001–02: 84% 2002–03: 90% 2003–04: 86% 2004–05: 95% 2005–06: NA 2006–07: 93%	88% of parents met their parenting goal (N=194)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +13% • Seven year average: 90%
3.2 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of a subset of parents will improve use of literacy materials in their home, as measured by one level gain on Scale I A of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 66% 2006–07: 58%	53% of new and returning parents improved the use of literacy materials w/ their children at home (n=58)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +13% • Three year average: 59%
3.3 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of a subset of parents will improve use of TV/Video their home, as measured by one level gain on Scale I B. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 60% 2006–07: 36%	37% of new and returning parents improved the use of TV/Video for their children at home (n=57)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: -3% • Three year average: 44%

Performance Indicator	Past Performance	2007–08	Difference with Target/Average
3.4 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of a subset of parents will improve the integration of language and learning in home activities, as measured by one level gain on Scale I C. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 60% 2006–07: 55%	61% of new and returning parents improved the integration of language and learning in home activities for their children (n=59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +21% • Three-year average: 59%
3.5 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of a subset of parents will increase their priority on learning together at home, as measured by one level gain on Scale I D. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 73% 2006–07: 57%	59% of new and returning parents increased their priority on learning with their children at home (n=59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +19% • Three year average: 63%
3.6 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of parents will improve the quality of their verbal interactions with their children, as measured by one level gain on Scale II E. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 74% 2006–07: 53%	64% of new and returning parents improved the quality of their verbal interactions with their children (n=59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +24% • Three year average: 58%
3.7 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of parents will improve their use of strategies for reading with their children, as measured by one level gain on Scale II F. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 53% 2006–07: 61%	56% of new and returning parents improved their use of strategies for reading with their children (n=59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +16%
3.8 After a minimum of six months of participation in the program, 40% of parents will improve their support for their child's learning of book and print concepts, as measured by one level gain on Scale II G. of the Parent Education Profile.	2005–06: 61% 2006–07: 55%	58% of new and returning parents improved their support for their child's learning of book and print concepts (n=59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +18%
4.1 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 85% of preschool-age children will be functioning at age-appropriate levels of development; or preschoolers will demonstrate one year's growth in reading readiness skills within one year, as measured by age-appropriate assessment instruments.	2000–01: 86% 2001–02: 93% 2002–03: 89% 2003–04: 92% 2004–05: 89% 2005–06: 94% 2006–07: 92%	93% of preschool-age children were functioning at age-appropriate levels of development (N=123)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +8% • Eight year average: 91%

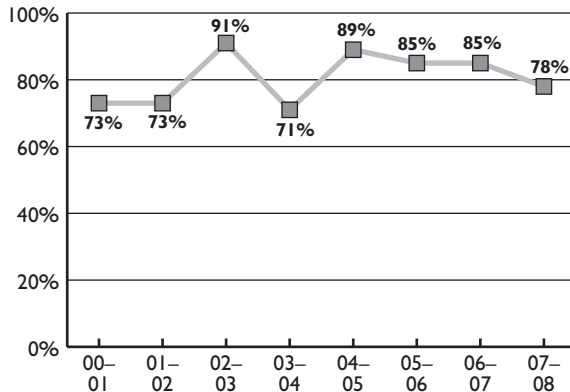
Performance Indicator	Past Performance	2007–08	Difference with Target/Average
4.2 After 300 hours of family participation in the program and 90% school attendance, 80% of primary-grade children will be reading at grade level [and will not be placed on Individual Literacy Plans]; or primary-grade children will demonstrate one year's growth in literacy skills within one year, as measured by age-appropriate assessment instruments.	2000–01: 85% 2001–02: 86% 2002–03: 96% 2003–04: 80% 2004–05: 84% 2005–06: 89% 2006–07: 84%	66% of children in the primary grades, with 90% attendance, were reading at grade level or one year's growth (N=62)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: -14% • Eight year average: 84%
4.3 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 80% of primary-grade children with an Individual Literacy Plan at the beginning of the school year will demonstrate one year's growth in literacy skills within one year as measured by age-appropriate assessment instruments.	2003–04: 68% 2004–05: 85% 2005–06: 79% 2006–07: 77%	72% of children in the primary grades with an ILP who made 1 year's growth in literacy skills in 1 year (N=29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: -8% • Eight year average: 76%
4.4 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 75% of primary-grade children will attend public school 90% of the time, as documented by school records.	2000–01: 54% 2001–02: 69% 2002–03: 71% 2003–04: 76% 2004–05: 81% 2005–06: 77% 2006–07: 87%	87% of primary grade children attended school 90% of the time (N=80)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +12% • Eight year average: 75%
4.5 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 90% of primary-grade children will be promoted to the next grade level, as documented by school records.	2000–01: 100% 2001–02: 97% 2002–03: 97% 2003–04: 92% 2004–05: 99% 2005–06: 100% 2006–07: 99%	100% of children were promoted to the next grade (N=78)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +10% • Eight year average: 98%
5.1 After 300 hours of participation in the program, 75% of parents will achieve self-sufficiency goals according to their family education plan, as documented by program records and staff assessment.	2000–01: 81% 2001–02: 80% 2002–03: 85% 2003–04: 83% 2004–05: 92% 2005–06: 82% 2006–07: 83%	Data not collected this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: NA • Seven year average: 84%
5.2 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 50% of parents seeking employment will obtain a job, as documented by program records.	2003–04: 72% 2004–05: 82% 2005–06: 91% 2006–07: 87%	63% of parents seeking employment obtained a job (N=27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007–08 difference with target: +13% • Five year average: 79%

Performance Indicator	Past Performance	2007-08	Difference with Target/Average
5.3 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 40% of employed parents will hold a job for six months during the program year, as documented by program records.	2003-04: 45% 2004-05: 61% 2005-06: 60% 2006-07: 58%	78% of employed parents held a job for six months (N=70)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007-08 difference with target: +38% • Five year average: 60%
5.4 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 25% of employed parents will improve their employment status, as documented by program records.	2000-01: 33% 2001-02: 38% 2002-03: 24% 2003-04: 20% 2004-05: 16% 2005-06: 15% 2006-07: 18%	31% of employed parents improved employment status (N=70)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007-08 difference with target: +6% • Eight year average: 24%
5.5 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 50% of parents learning English will demonstrate a sustained use of English in the community, as measured by staff assessment.	2002-03: 63% 2003-04: 87% 2004-05: 88% 2005-06: 75% 2006-07: 87%	Data not collected this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007-08 difference with target: NA • Five year average: 80%
5.6 After 300 hours of family participation in the program, 100% of eligible parents who want to enter the military will do so, as documented by program records.	2000-06: No parents had goal of entering military	100% of parents with this goal entered the military (N=1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007-08 difference with target: 0%



This year Colorado **Even Start** programs met the targeted percentages for 21 of the 27 performance measures (78%). Chart 1 shows an eight-year history of program attainment on state performance indicators.

Chart 1: Attainment of Performance Indicators



The six unmet indicators this year include: program staff working with school staff on implementing ILPs (met by 5 of 6 programs), parents in the ABE/ASE program progressing through one level (3% below target), parents in ESL progressing through one level (6% below target), parents improving the use of TV and video for their children (3% below target), primary grade children with 90% attendance reading at grade level or showing one year's growth in literacy (14% below target), primary grade children with an Individual Literacy Plan making one year's growth in literacy skills (8% below target).

Of the indicators for which the targets were met, the strongest outcomes were for parents enrolling in higher education or training (20% above target), parents improving integration of language and learning at home (21% above target), parents improving the quality of verbal interactions with their child (24% above target), and employed parents holding a job for six months or longer (38% above target).

Who participated in Even Start during 2007–2008?

Colorado **Even Start** programs served 317 families with 420 children during 2007–2008. The majority of families (95%) qualified for free or reduced price lunch program. The state average for families who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program is 33.1% (U.S. Department of Education, The Nation's Report Card, 2007).

Eighty-two percent of Colorado **Even Start** parents did not have a high school diploma or GED and 45% of parents did not attend school beyond ninth grade. Seventy-three percent of parents entered the program unemployed.

Participants this year included 317 adults, 75 infants, 75 toddlers, 176 preschool children, and 94 primary grade (kindergarten through third grade) children. English Language Learners comprised 61% of participating adults. The percentage of English Language Learners served by the Colorado programs has remained fairly stable with an eight year average of 64%.

What was the cost of serving Even Start families in 2007–2008?

During 2007–2008, the Colorado Department of Education disbursed \$874,000 to six community collaborations to fund **Even Start** programs. The **Even Start** federal statute requires that programs match federal funds with a percentage of funds from other sources that may include other federal, state, and/or local grants or funds from for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Program coordinators typically combine **Even Start** monies, AEFLA adult education grants, other grants and in-kind donations to cover costs.

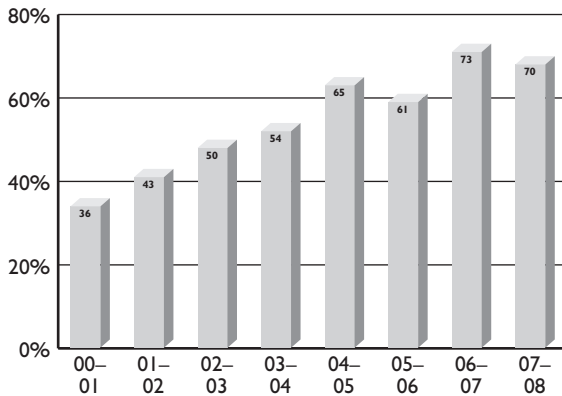
This year the average cost of serving an **Even Start** family in Colorado was \$2,757 (based on the state allocation of federal funds). This is a decrease of \$97 per family from last year's cost of \$2,854. As a comparison, Head Start's national average cost for serving one child was \$7,326 last year (Head Start Bureau, 2008).

How regularly did families attend Even Start programming?

Program staff members track attendance hours for each participating family. Once families have participated in 300 hours of service, they are included in the group of families whose successes are reported using the state performance measures. Three hundred hours of participation indicates approximately six months of consistent attendance, based on the state requirement that programs provide a minimum of 15 hours of service per week.

Chart 2 displays the percentage of families that participated 300 hours or more over time. The number of families with this level of attendance shows an overall increase beginning with 36% of families in 2000-01, and moving to 70% of families this year.

Chart 2: Families with 300 Hours of Attendance



What educational gains did adults in Even Start make?

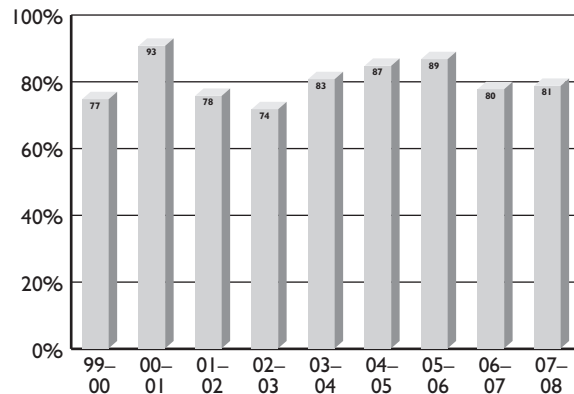
Parents seeking a GED or high school diploma: Parents who test at a ninth-grade level or higher (studying in Adult Secondary Education) are considered eligible to pass the GED test. Successfully passing the GED examination means passing five subject-focused subtests: mathematics, language arts—reading, language arts—writing, social studies, and science.

Of the 12 parents studying to pass the GED examination 42% passed. The average passing rate over the past five years is 42% (with a range of 30% to 50%). Nationally, 52% of eligible **Even Start** parents earned a GED in 2006-07 (U.S. Department of Education, Even Start Annual Business Meeting).

Of the parents working to pass the GED examination and teen parents working toward high school graduation, 61% were successful this year. The average GED/diploma completion rate over the past five years is 59%. In Vermont's **Even Start** programs, 69% of eligible adult students earned a high school diploma or a GED (Vermont Department of Education, 2007).

Teen parents participating in **Even Start** programs often are enrolled in high school. **Even Start** staff support parents to stay in school and graduate. This year, 75% of teen parents enrolled in high school remained in school. Twenty-one teens were seniors and eligible for graduation. Seventeen of these teens, or 81%, graduated from high school. The average graduation rate for teen parents in **Even Start** over the past nine years is 82% (see Chart 3). In comparison, the 2007 high school graduation rate for all public school students in Colorado was 75% (Colorado Department of Education, 2007).

Chart 3: Eligible Teen Parents Earning a Diploma

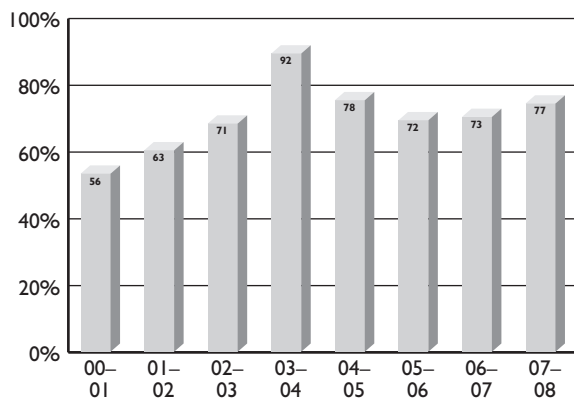


Parents who are English Language Learners (ELL): This year 195 parents in **Even Start** (61%) studied to improve their English language skills. Sixty-seven percent of ELL parents progressed through one or more learning levels as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) or Basic English Skills

Test (BEST Plus). Of the parents with 300 hours or more of participation, 69% progressed through one level. Last year, 284 parents studied English, and 72% moved through at least one level. Nationally in 2006–07, 75% of **Even Start** ELL parents made significant gains as measured by CASAS assessment (U.S. Department of Education, Even Start Annual Business Meeting).

Parents who advanced to vocational training or higher education: Of the 13 eligible parents, 77% continued learning by enrolling in college or a vocational training program. Chart 4 exhibits the percentage of eligible parents who entered higher education or training over time. In Pennsylvania family literacy programs, 76% of eligible parents advanced to post secondary education (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008).

Chart 4: Parents Enrolled in Higher Education or Training



What educational gains did children in **Even Start** achieve?

Infants and toddlers: This year, 97% of infants and 92% of toddlers participating in **Even Start** were functioning at age-appropriate levels of development.

Preschoolers: This year, 92% of **Even Start** preschoolers were functioning at age-appropriate levels of development. Most of the children were assessed using the Developmental Continuum from The Creative Curriculum (Dodge, D.T., Colker, L.J. & Heroman, C, 2002).

Even Start program staff assessed a subset of preschool children using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test—3rd Edition (PPVT-III: Dunn and Dunn, 1997). The PPVT-III measures children’s receptive vocabulary development. To be eligible for the test, children needed to be entering kindergarten the following year; have enough command of English to understand the directions for the test in English; and, have attended the program for at least six months.

Of the 34 children tested, 68% made significant gains from fall to spring (an increase of four or more standard score points). Fifty-nine percent made a standard score of 85 or higher (average score range is 85–115). The following table shows two years of PPVT III data.

PPVT-III Results	2006–07 (n=26)	2007–08 (n=34)
Standard score increase of four or more points	73%	68%
Standard score of 85 or higher	26%	59%

Nationally in 2006–07, 75% of **Even Start** children made significant gains on the PPVT (U.S. Department of Education, Even Start Annual Business Meeting). Of the 34 preschool children tested in Nebraska **Even Start** programs, 71% obtained a standard score of 85 or better (Nebraska Department of Education, 2007).

Programs also assessed preschool children using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS—Pre-K: Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier & Swank, 2004). The PALS addresses alphabet knowledge through a number of subtests. The subtest used by **Even Start** programs assesses children’s ability to recognize upper case letters.

Thirty Colorado children in **Even Start** were tested on the PALS Pre-K Upper Case Alphabet Recognition Subtest. This is a one-time, spring assessment given to children who are ready to enter kindergarten, know enough English to understand English directions and have been in the program for six months or longer. The preschoolers recognized an average of 12.6 upper case letters. The following table provides two years of PALS data.

PALS Results	2006–07 (n= 30)	2007–08 (n=30)
Average number of letters recognized	13.2	12.6

By comparison, 2006–07 national **Even Start** data show preschoolers recognized an average of 16.2 letters (U.S. Department of Education, Even Start Annual Business Meeting).

Primary-grade (K–3) children: Eighty-six percent of **Even Start** children in the primary grades attended school 80% or more of the time. Last year, 93% of **Even Start** children met this attendance goal.

This year, 97% of **Even Start** children in the primary grades (K–3) were promoted to the next grade level. This statistic has remained high for nine years, always 89% or above. Results of a statewide evaluation of Illinois **Even Start** programs showed that 93% of children in that state were promoted (Illinois State Board of Education, 2008). Of the children attending Pennsylvania family literacy programs, 97% were promoted to the next grade (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008).

Even Start personnel supported children in their programs who had Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs). Some school districts automatically place children on ILPs, regardless of their reading ability, if English is not their first language. Thirty-five primary-grade children served through **Even Start** had ILPs in 2007–2008. Eight of these children (23%) successfully attained all of their goals during the year and were removed from the ILP process.

Data were gathered on how many of the primary-grade children were performing at or above grade level or demonstrated one year’s growth in literacy skills within one year. Results show that 70% of **Even Start** children belonged in this category, compared to 85% last year. Using a broader statistic, Illinois reported 99% of K–3 students demonstrated progress in reading readiness or reading at or exceeding grade level (Illinois State Board of Education, Even Start, 2008).

How did Even Start parents support their children’s literacy development?

Parent Education Profile

Colorado **Even Start** programs use the *Parent Education Profile* (PEP) to assess growth of parents in their role as teachers of their children (developed by RMC Research Corporation and New York **Even Start** programs, 2003).

The PEP has four scales that incorporate research-based parent behaviors and correlate them to learning outcomes for children. The scales cover parent’s support for their child’s learning in the home environment (I), the parent’s role in interactive literacy activities (II), the parent’s role in supporting children’s learning in formal education settings (III), and taking on the parent role (IV). Within each of these four scales there are three to five subscales which further delineate parenting behaviors. Each of the subscales has five levels, with Level I describing behaviors that are the least supportive of literacy development and Level 5 describing behaviors that are the most supportive.

Colorado **Even Start** programs identified the first two scales as most relevant to the services they provide, and have used scales I and II for the past three years. The subscales for each of these two scales are listed below.

Scale I: Parent’s Support for Children’s Learning in the Home Environment			
Use of Literacy Materials	Use of TV/Video	Home Language and Learning	Priority on Learning Together
Scale II: Parent’s Role in Interactive Literacy Activities			
Expressive and Receptive Language	Reading with Children	Supporting Book/Print Concepts	

Assessments were made in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 on an average of 10 families from each program. Most programs rated a combination of new and returning families. Staff made observations and collected anecdotal records related to parenting behaviors identified

in the PEP. After compiling a minimum of ten observations per family, staff members met as a team to determine which level of each subscale best represented the parent's typical behavior. Rationales were written for the assigned ratings.

As the tables below illustrate, the majority of parents in **Even Start** make behavioral changes to support the literacy development of their children. Parent progress has decreased by 6% on Scale I over three years and increased by 8% on Scale II.

Scale I: Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment	Percent who showed improvement
2005–2006	89%
2006–2007	82%
2007–2008	83%

Scale II: Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy Activities	Percent who showed improvement
2005–2006	80%
2006–2007	79%
2007–2008	88%

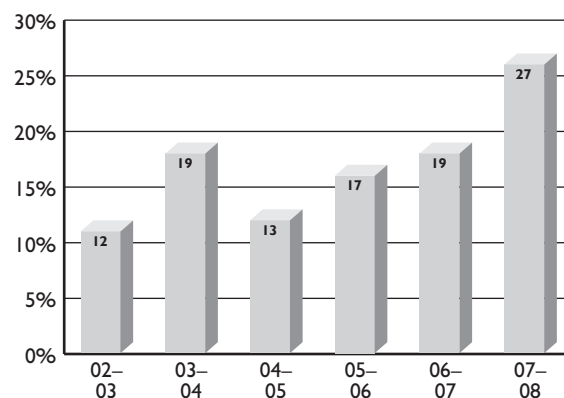
What self-sufficiency gains did **Even Start** families accomplish?

Self-sufficiency, in this report, is defined as increased independence, demonstrated mainly through gaining employment, holding onto jobs and bettering employment. This year, 27% of **Even Start** parents were employed prior to entering the program. Fifty-nine percent of the unemployed parents, who wanted a job, obtained a job during the program year. This is lower than last year when 86% of unemployed parents found work. In Pennsylvania family literacy programs, 69% of adults whose goal was to obtain a job did so (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2007).

Other characteristics of employment identified by **Even Start** programs are holding onto a job and improving job status. Of this year's employed parents, 83% held a job for six months or longer (57% last year). Improving

job status includes receiving a promotion, raise, or a different job with more desirable work conditions or benefits. This year, 27% of employed adults improved their employment status. Chart 5 displays a history of the percent of parents who bettered their status.

Chart 5: Parents Who Improved Employment Status



Conclusion

Colorado children living in poverty increased by 73% between 2000 and 2006. This translates into an additional 76,000 children who are considered poor. This rate increase for childhood poverty is the largest in the nation (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2007).

According to the Colorado Children's Campaign,

The social, educational, and physical outcomes for children in poverty are profound. Poverty, especially childhood poverty, affects all aspects of our community, including the job market, social services, family structure, educational attainment, crime and health (p. 1).

The state's child poverty status points to the ongoing and increasing need for family literacy services. Family literacy programs address issues related to childhood poverty through improved family education leading to greater future success and self-sufficiency. Findings from this report show that low income, low literacy, unemployed families continue to enroll in Colorado **Even Start** programs. After participating, the majority of parents provide better support for their children, most parents and children improve their literacy skills and many parents gain stable employment.

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APPENDIX: Colorado Even Start Directory

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Aurora Public Schools Family Literacy Program

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Boulder (Boulder and Lafayette)

Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program

Karen Carr, Even Start Coordinator

Colorado Springs

Pikes Peak Even Start

Jill Schlanser, Family Literacy Coordinator

Delta

Delta County Family Literacy Program

Lee-ann Short, Even Start Coordinator

Durango

Durango School District 9-R

Kim Beach, Even Start Coordinator

Roaring Fork Valley (Glenwood Springs and Rifle)

Roaring Fork Valley Even Start Program

Ellen Klement, Even Start Coordinator



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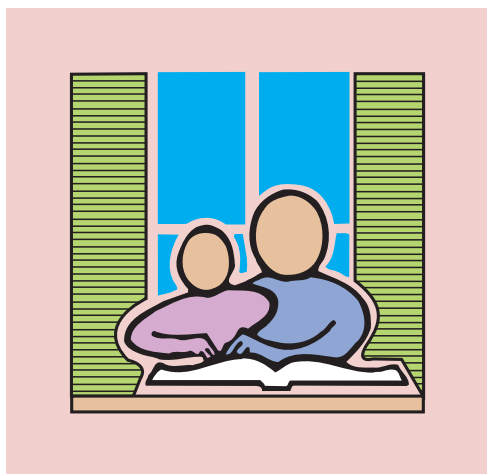
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