

third national



even start

evaluation

Description of Projects and Participants



earlychildhoodparent
childliteracyinteractionadult
literacyparentingearlychildhood
parentchildliteracyinteraction
adultliteracyparentingearly
childhoodparentchildliteracy
interactionadultliteracyparenting



**THIRD NATIONAL
EVEN START
EVALUATION:
DESCRIPTION OF
PROJECTS AND
PARTICIPANTS**

2001

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The national evaluation would not be possible without the efforts of all local Even Start projects throughout the country. Each year, in addition to the challenging work of carrying out the Even Start model, projects collect and report data describing the nature of their program, the intensity of the services they provide, the families they serve, and the extent to which these families participate. Even Start state coordinators also provide support to projects and evaluation contractors that is necessary for the success of the evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Adult Education
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ASE	Adult Secondary Education
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
ECLS	Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
ESL	English as a Second Language
EDS	Experimental Design Study
ESPIRS	Even Start Performance Information Reporting System
ECE	Early Childhood Education
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GED	General Education Development
FACES	Family and Child Experiences Study
HS	High School
JOBS	Job Training for Basic Skills
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
NHES	National Health Education Survey
PC	Parent-Child
PE	Parenting Education
PPVT	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
SSI	Supplemental Security Income

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third national Even Start evaluation continues the Department of Education's decade-long series of studies of the Even Start Program. Two complementary sets of information are being collected in the third national Even Start evaluation¹ through (1) the Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (ESPIRS) and (2) the Experimental Design Study (EDS). The ESPIRS provides annual data on the universe of Even Start projects. The EDS is an experimental study of Even Start's effectiveness in 18 projects.

This interim report draws on data from two years (1997-1998 and 1998-1999) of the ESPIRS. No data from the EDS were available in time to be included in this report; hence, the report describes Even Start participants and projects but does not contain information on program outcomes or effects.

A second interim report will be submitted to the Department of Education in June 2002. That document will present analyses of the first year of pretest and posttest data from 18 EDS projects, and will update descriptive information on Even Start projects and participants using ESPIRS data from 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

The final report from this evaluation will be based on four years of ESPIRS data (1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000, and 2000-2001), as well as on pretest, posttest, and follow-up data from 18 EDS projects. It will update the descriptions of Even Start participants and projects, and will contain an assessment of the effects that Even Start has had on participating families, children, and adults. It also will present an analysis of the cost of Even Start and the cost-effectiveness of providing Even Start services. The final report is scheduled to be completed in July 2003. Some of the major findings documented in this interim report are summarized below.

EVEN START CONTINUES TO GROW (CHAPTER 1)

One of the evaluation themes for the past decade has been the continued growth of Even Start Program, both in terms of total federal funding as well as the number of projects that are supported with those funds. From a small demonstration program in which \$14.8 million was used to fund 76 projects in the 1989-1990 program year, Even Start has grown ten-fold. In 1999-2000, \$135 million in funding was distributed to about 800 projects in all 50 states.

The number of families served by Even Start grew steadily from 1989-1990 when 2,460 families participated to 1996-1997 when the program served a high of 34,400 families. During the past two years, the total enrollment in Even Start has dropped—to 30,500 in 1997-1998 and

¹ The first national evaluation spanned the years 1990-1993; the second national evaluation covered 1994-1997. The third evaluation provides information about Even Start during 1998-2001.

32,200 in 1998-1999. This is a consequence of a gradual reduction in the number of families served by the average project, from a high of 62 families per project in 1991-1992 to a low of 44 families per project in 1998-1999.

Over the past few years the Department has been consistent in its guidance to Even Start state coordinators and to local projects—the best way to help families achieve progress is to provide intensive levels of service to the most needy families, rather than spreading services more thinly over a larger number of families. The long-term drop in number of families served per project and the more recent drop in total number of families served by Even Start may well result from this approach, a strategy intended to maximize Even Start's benefits.

PARENTS IN NEWLY ENROLLED EVEN START FAMILIES REPORTED ON THE LITERACY STATUS OF THEIR FAMILIES WHEN THEY ENTERED THE PROGRAM (CHAPTER 2)

A parent in each newly enrolled Even Start family was asked to report on several literacy-related progress indicators at the time the family entered the program. About one-quarter of new Even Start parents reported that they **read stories to their child daily**, and another quarter read stories to their child about three times a week. Even Start projects appear to have done a good job of recruiting needy families, because these are lower rates of reading to children than reported by national samples of parents from the National Household Education Study and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, as well as parents of Chapter 1 (now Title I) and Head Start children.

Parents were asked whether their child knows all, most, some, or no letters of the **alphabet**. Few parents (only 17 percent) reported that children under age 3 know any letters of the alphabet. Preschoolers are much more likely to know some letters (75 percent). Finally, parents reported that 55 percent of the school age children who are joining Even Start know all of the letters of the alphabet. This is reasonable given national estimates from the NHES in which 24 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year old children, 10 percent of mothers living below poverty, and 7 percent of mothers who do not have a high school diploma reported that their child knows all of the letters of the alphabet (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7).

Parents were asked whether their child can **count** up to 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, or not at all. In response, similar to the alphabet question, parents reported age-related development with respect to counting. Three-quarters of children under age 3 cannot count at all, while only 9 percent of preschoolers cannot count at all. By the time they are in school, more than half of the children can count to 50. Parents also reported that 19 percent of Even Start preschoolers can count to 20 or higher, substantially less than reports from the NHES where 57 percent of mothers of 3 to 5 year olds, 39 percent of mothers living below poverty, and 36 percent of mothers who do not have a high school diploma reported that their child can count to 20 or higher (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7).

Parents were asked whether their child likes to **write or pretend to write** (either in English or in the child's primary language). Fifty percent reported that their child under age 3

never writes or pretends to write; 84 percent of the parents of preschoolers and 90 percent of the parents of school-age children reported that their child writes.

Parents were asked whether their child can identify the **colors** red, yellow, blue, and green by name. Only four percent of infants or toddlers could identify all these colors, compared with 40 percent of preschoolers and 76 percent of school-age children.

Parents were asked whether their child **reads or pretends to read**. About half (53 percent) of the infants or toddlers were reported as reading or pretending to read, compared with almost all of the preschoolers (92 percent) and school-age children (95 percent). The percentage for preschoolers is higher than what was seen in the NHES, where 74 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year old children, 63 percent of mothers below the poverty level, and 53 percent of mothers without a high school diploma reported that their child reads or pretends to read storybooks (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7). This difference may be due to the fact that Even Start parents were asked about reading in general, while NHES mothers were asked about reading storybooks.

ALMOST ALL FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN ALL CORE SERVICES (CHAPTER 3)

One of Even Start's underlying hypotheses is that it is important for families to participate in all three core services, not just one or two. We would worry about the viability of the model if only a small percentage of the Even Start families were willing to participate in all core services. But, data from this evaluation show that 91 percent of enrolled families met the requirement to participate in all three core services. This percentage has been stable during the past decade, indicating that the tri-service model is acceptable to Even Start families.

Knowing that almost all enrolled families participated in each core service is only part of the story. We also want to know **how much** they participated. The data (see Exhibit E.1) show that during 1998-1999 the average Even Start parent participated in adult education about 25 hours a month for a total of 156 hours.² This is equivalent to six hours a week, or three two-hour classes; and is about double the average amount of participation in adult education programs nationally (Development Associates, 1994). The data also show that the average Even Start parent took part in parenting education eight hours a month for a total of 53 hours. This is equivalent to a two-hour parenting class once a week. Finally, the average Even Start child participated in early childhood education about 43 hours a month for a total of 325 hours. These statistics are calculated across Even Start children of all ages. This is roughly equivalent to three half-days of preschool or school per week, somewhat less than a Head Start program. Of course, infants and toddlers participate for fewer hours (average of 175) while children age 5 and older participate for about 500 hours.

² Some families participate in Even Start by virtue of "continuing eligibility" whereby a child continues to receive Even Start services after his or her parent has completed the adult education requirements. In these families, adults are not expected to continue participation in adult education.

EXHIBIT E.1
SUMMARY OF EVEN START PARTICIPATION DATA (1998-1999)

CORE SERVICE AREA	TOTAL HOURS	HOURS/ MONTH	HOURS/ WEEK	WEEKLY CLASS EQUIVALENTS
Adult Education	156	25	6	Three 2-hour classes
Parenting Education	53	8	2	One 2-hour class
Early Childhood Education	325	43	11	Three half-days

SOME FACTORS ARE RELATED TO INCREASED AMOUNTS OF PARTICIPATION (CHAPTER 3)

Previous Even Start research (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998) found three factors that related to amount of participation: (1) service intensity, defined as the number of service hours that a project offers in each of the three core educational components, (2) the number of support services that a family receives, and (3) the extent to which core instructional services are integrated. The same relationships were found to exist in the data collected for the third national evaluation, suggesting that:

- ❑ Projects should increase and maintain high levels of hours offered in each core service area. Even though most Even Start families participate in fewer hours of instruction than the amount offered, families participate more in projects that offer more hours.
- ❑ Projects should provide the support services that are needed by families, either directly or through referrals to collaborating agencies, to enable families to participate fully in Even Start educational services.
- ❑ Projects should integrate, as much as possible, the instructional context, contents or activities across adult, parenting, and early childhood education.

FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN EVEN START FOR WIDELY VARYING LENGTHS OF TIME (CHAPTER 3)

Many Even Start projects operate under a rolling admission policy whereby families can enroll throughout the year. Further, participation in Even Start is open-ended, with no set length of expected participation. Therefore, families can enter Even Start at any time of the year, and they can leave at any time of the year. This means that at the beginning of each program year, some families are continuing participants from the prior year. Then, throughout the year, new families enroll in the program. Also throughout the year, some of the newly enrolled families and some of the families that continued from the previous year leave the program.

Data from this evaluation confirm reports from Even Start project directors that they recruit and enroll families on a rolling basis during the entire year.

The data also show that 71 percent of the families that enrolled in Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year left the program, having participated for 12 or fewer months.³ Conversely, 29 percent of all families that enrolled in Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year participated for more than 12 months. Of these families, 9.7 percent left Even Start with between 13 and 24 months of participation, while 19.3 percent remained in the program for 24 or more months. Data from the 1999-2000 ESPIRS will give us more information about exactly how long this latter group of families participated in Even Start.

EVEN START FAMILIES LEFT THE PROGRAM FOR VARIOUS REASONS (CHAPTER 3)

Even Start project directors reported that 31 percent of the families that participated in Even Start during 1998-1999 left the program sometime during the year and gave one or more reasons for leaving (additional families left the program but did not give a reason for leaving). Seven percent of all families participating in 1998-1999 left Even Start after completing their planned educational goals; 8 percent left Even Start because parents found employment that conflicted with continued participation; 7 percent moved out of Even Start service areas; and 5 percent left because they switched to other educational or job-training programs or to look for employment. Twenty percent left because of various motivational problems (for example, poor attendance, family problems and crises preventing participation, or lack of interest).⁴

EVEN START IS FOCUSING SERVICES MORE INTENSIVELY ON A SMALLER NUMBER OF FAMILIES (CHAPTER 4)

Compared with prior years, Even Start projects in the late 1990s spent more dollars per family, served a smaller number of families per project, and offered more intensive services to those families. The long-term reduction in number of families per project and the shorter-term drop in the total number of families served by Even Start likely result from a conscious technical assistance strategy by the Department of Education to focus resources intensively on the most needy families in order to achieve the best outcomes. This strategy was formed, in part, on the basis of findings from the first national Even Start evaluation (St.Pierre, et al., 1995) which showed that (1) families in projects that offered more hours of core instructional services participated more than families in projects that offered fewer service hours, and (2) families that participated more intensively in core instructional services had better learning gains than families that participated less intensively.

Over the past few years the Department has been consistent in its guidance to Even Start state coordinators and to local projects—the best way to help families achieve progress and hence to maximize Even Start’s benefits is to provide high levels of service to a smaller number of families, rather than spreading services more thinly over a larger number of families.

³ This includes 21 percent of families who enrolled in Even Start during 1997-1998, and then left the program during 1997-1998, with no exit date. To calculate a length of participation, we assumed that each of these families participated from their enrollment dates until the end of the program year (6/30/1998).

⁴ Percentages add to more than 31 percent because families were allowed to report up to three reasons for leaving Even Start.

THE AMOUNT OF CORE INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES OFFERED TO EVEN START FAMILIES CONTINUES TO RISE (CHAPTER 4)

The amount of service offered in each type of adult education during 1998-1999 increased by between 13 and 17 percent when compared with data from two years earlier, and by much larger amounts when compared with data from 1993-1994. The amount of parenting education offered to families was stable for several years before increasing by almost 10 percent in 1998-1999. Finally, the amount of early childhood education offered to Even Start children has increased substantially during the past two years. The hours of educational activities offered to infants and toddlers under age 3 rose by roughly 17 percent in the past two years, and by 70 percent since 1993-1994. Smaller, but still substantial, increases occurred for preschool children ages 3 and 4, who saw increases of 7 percent in the past two years, and 50 percent since 1993-1994.

ALMOST ALL PROJECTS COMPLY WITH LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS (CHAPTER 4)

An analysis of the Even Start legislation showed that projects are expected to comply with 11 different programmatic requirements. Data from the national evaluation show that only 7 percent of all Even Start projects reported that they were not able to comply with all of the legislative requirements (another 10 percent did not supply data sufficient to allow a determination of the extent to which they met each of the legislative requirements). None of the program requirements appeared to pose special problems for Even Start projects. The requirement to provide year-round services was the most difficult to meet, with 3 percent of the projects unable to comply with this mandate during 1998-1999.

For the special legislative requirement that projects offer intensive services, we defined high, moderate, and low levels of service intensity based on the performance indicators that the Department of Education developed for Even Start and on standards for high quality programs (definitions are shown in Exhibits 4.39, 4.40 and 4.41).⁵ Applying these definitions, we found that Even Start projects are most often able to offer high-intensity services in parenting education and in early childhood education for preschoolers; they are least able to offer high-intensity services in adult education, with the exception of adult secondary education (ASE). In particular:

- **Parenting education:** 46 percent of all Even Start projects offered high-intensity parenting education services, 47 percent offered moderate-intensity services, and the remaining 7 percent offered low-intensity services.
- **Early childhood education:** 47 percent of all Even Start projects offered high-intensity early childhood services to preschoolers (3 to 5 year-olds), 45 percent offered moderate-intensity services, and 9 percent offered low-intensity services. For infants and toddlers (0 to 3 year-olds), 36 percent of all projects offered high-intensity services, 58 percent offered moderate-intensity services, and 6 percent offered low-intensity services.

⁵ The Even Start statute does not define what is meant by “intensive” services.

- **Adult education:** High-intensity programs were most common for adult secondary education (43 percent of all Even Start projects), less frequent for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) (32 percent and 33 percent), and least common for English as a Second Language (ESL) (22 percent of all projects). Low-intensity programs occurred with roughly the same frequency across types of adult education (ranging from 7 percent to 11 percent).

EVEN START CONTINUES TO SERVE A NEEDY POPULATION (CHAPTER 5)

Even Start families are drawn from the most educationally and economically disadvantaged segment of the population. The percentage of undereducated parents entering Even Start has increased since 1992-1993 when 79 percent of participating adults did not have a high school diploma or GED when they entered the program with their children. In 1998-1999, 85 percent of adults had neither completed high school nor earned a GED at the time they enrolled in Even Start.

More than 80 percent of the families enrolling in Even Start in the last two program years (1997-1998 and 1998-1999) reported annual incomes below \$20,000; more than 46 percent of families earned and/or received annual incomes of less than \$9,000. On average, these families had five to six household members. Wages from employment represented the primary source of income for 61 percent of Even Start families who enrolled in 1998-1999. However, only 26 percent of the parents who enrolled in Even Start were employed full- or part-time when they entered the program. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that about half of Even Start families are headed by couples; and in most families one parent (usually the mother) participates in Even Start while the other parent often is a wage earner.

EVEN START IS SERVING GROWING PROPORTIONS OF TEEN PARENTS AND HISPANIC FAMILIES (CHAPTER 5)

While many characteristics of Even Start participants have remained consistent since the program's inception, some changes have taken place. One notable change is that the percentage of teen parents in Even Start almost doubled during the past five years, from 9 percent in 1994-1995 to 17 percent in 1998-1999.

A second important change has occurred in the racial or ethnic mix of families served by Even Start. The proportion of Hispanic families in Even Start has almost doubled during the 1990s, from 22 percent in 1992-1993 to 41 percent in 1998-1999. This rate of increase far surpasses the increase of Hispanics in the national population from 10 percent in 1992 to 11 percent in 1998.

Offsetting the increase in Hispanic families, the representation of Caucasian families has declined from 40 percent to 30 percent; African American families have declined from 26 percent to 20 percent; and Asian families declined from 8 percent to 3 percent. The percentage

of American Indian families in Even Start has remained between 2 and 4 percent since 1992-1993.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACHIEVING POSITIVE EFFECTS ON FAMILIES

The data from this evaluation have implications for the ability of Even Start to produce positive effects on families. On the whole, Even Start projects are meeting their legislative mandate. They recruit and serve needy families. And, a high percentage of families take part in all three core services and receive an amount of service that compares favorably with other existing programs.

Future reports from this evaluation will investigate whether the amount of service received by Even Start families (in 1998-1999, an average of 156 hours of adult education, 53 hours of parenting education, and 325 hours of early childhood education) is sufficient to lead to important and lasting changes in families. We know from previous research that low-intensity social programs are not sufficient to ameliorate the effects of poverty and low-literacy (St. Pierre & Layzer, 1998). But what amount of service is sufficient to help low-income families? And what size impacts do we hope to see from Even Start? Do we really expect Even Start to make large and long-lasting changes in the lives of participating families (for example, moving families out of poverty, helping mothers get through college, making children into high achievers), or will we be satisfied with small, incremental, but nonetheless statistically significant (hence, real) improvements? The history of social programs tells us that we should be satisfied if we are able to achieve the latter.

That story will be told in the final report from this evaluation where we will investigate whether Even Start participation is sufficient to make a difference to families, over and above the amount of services that they would have received had they not been in this particular program. On the basis of past research we expect that Even Start children will grow, develop, and benefit from receiving high-quality early childhood services (for example, Barnett, 1995). Similarly, we expect that Even Start parents will benefit from participating in adult education programs (for example, Development Associates, 1994). And, we hope that the parenting education services provided through Even Start will enhance parenting skills and subsequently will positively affect child development, although the research evidence on this point is mixed at best (for example, Clarke-Stewart, 1988). Therefore, we expect that future data from this evaluation will show that families who participate in Even Start change and develop in positive ways.

The key question to be addressed in future reports is whether families who are not in Even Start (a “control group”) also change and develop in similar positive ways, perhaps by availing themselves of similar services on their own, without the help of Even Start funding. We need to know the percentage of control group children that enroll in Head Start or other preschool programs, the percentage of control group adults that enroll in adult education programs, and the percentage of control group families that take part in parenting education programs. And subsequently, we need to know the extent to which the hoped-for benefits obtained by Even Start families are more substantial (larger) than any benefits gained through the services obtained by

control group families. This is information that will be provided by the Experimental Design Study of 18 projects as well as by the ESPIRS through the collection of data on parent-reported changes in literacy status.

CHAPTER 1: THE EVEN START PROGRAM AND THE NATIONAL EVALUATION

The third national Even Start evaluation continues the Department of Education's decade-long series of studies of the Even Start program. Two complementary sets of information are being collected in the third national Even Start evaluation⁶ through (1) the Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (ESPIRS) and (2) the Experimental Design Study (EDS). These two sets of data are designed to provide an assessment of the outcomes and effects of Even Start, as well as to augment the descriptive information about Even Start programs and families that has been contained in various national evaluation reports prepared during the past ten years.

The ESPIRS provides annual data on the universe of Even Start projects, on the types of projects funded, the nature and amount of services they provide, the collaborative efforts they undertake, and the obstacles that exist to implementation. The ESPIRS also provides data on Even Start children, parents, and families, including demographic information, education and income data, the amount of service they receive, and the progress they make on indicators of parent, child, and family well-being, such as economic self-sufficiency, literacy skills, and parent-child relationships.

The EDS is an experimental study of Even Start's effectiveness in 18 projects.⁷ It uses the same progress indicators as the ESPIRS, augmenting those measures with direct assessments of adult and child literacy skills, teacher and parent ratings of child competencies and behaviors, and school record abstractions. The EDS provides for experimental vs. control group comparisons on most of these measures at three points in time (pretest at the start of a program year, posttest at the end of the program year, and follow-up a year later); it also includes case studies of program operations and a study of program costs.

This document is the first interim report from the third national Even Start evaluation. It draws on data from two years (1997-1998 and 1998-1999) of the ESPIRS. No data from the EDS were available in time to be included in this report. Hence, **this report describes Even Start participants and projects but does not contain information on program outcomes or effects.** The first chapter describes the Even Start program and key findings from prior Even Start studies, the purpose of the national evaluation including key policy issues, and the study design and research questions. The next two chapters set the stage for the effectiveness data that will be analyzed in subsequent reports. Chapter 2 uses ESPIRS data to describe the baseline literacy status of Even Start participants when they entered the program in fall 1998, and Chapter

⁶ The first national evaluation spanned the years 1990-1993; the second national evaluation covered 1994-1997. The third evaluation will provide information on Even Start during 1998-2001.

⁷ Plans called for 20 projects to be included in the EDS. However, only 18 projects currently are participating.

3 uses ESPIRS data from 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 to report on participation rates in Even Start including the number of families and length of time that they participate, and the intensity of their participation during 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. The final two chapters update the program and participant characteristics that have been reported during the past several years. Chapter 4 uses ESPIRS data from 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 to describe Even Start projects, the services that they offer, the cost of those projects, and the extent to which they meet Even Start's legislative requirements. Chapter 5 uses ESPIRS data to describe the background characteristics of Even Start participants.

A second interim report will be submitted to the Department of Education in June 2002. This document will present analyses of the first year of pretest and posttest data from 18 projects that started the EDS in fall 1999 and 2000, and will update descriptive information on Even Start projects and participants using ESPIRS data from 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

The final report from this evaluation will be based on four years of ESPIRS data (1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000, and 2000-2001), as well as on pretest, posttest, and follow-up data from 18 EDS projects. It will update the descriptions of Even Start participants and projects, and will contain an assessment of the effects that Even Start has had on participating families, children, and adults. The final report is scheduled to be completed in July 2003.

LEGISLATIVE AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Even Start Family Literacy Program addresses the basic educational needs of parents and children from birth through age seven from low-income families by providing a unified program of (1) adult basic or secondary education and English language instruction for parents, (2) assistance for parents to promote their children's educational development, and (3) early childhood education for children. Projects provide some services directly and build on existing community resources by collaborating with other service providers.

The Even Start Family Literacy Program was first authorized in 1989 as Part B of Chapter 1 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Competitive subgrants were awarded to local educational agencies (LEAs) in collaboration, when appropriate, with other non-profit entities. In July 1991, Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73), lowering the age of children served from age one to birth and allowing community-based organizations to receive grants. In 1994, Even Start was reauthorized as Part B of Title I of the ESEA as amended by the Improving America's Schools Act. According to this legislation, the Even Start program is intended to:

... help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program.... The program shall (1) be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range

of services; (2) promote achievement of the National Education Goals; and (3) assist children and adults from low-income families to achieve to challenging state content standards and challenging state student performance standards (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201). Competitive subgrants are awarded to partnerships between one or more LEAs and one or more non-profit entities.

Over the years Even Start was altered by several different pieces of legislation:

- The National Literacy Act of 1991 amended Even Start by (1) strengthening and broadening the subgrant recipients by requiring subgrant recipients to be an LEA in collaboration with a community-based organization or a community-based organization in collaboration with an LEA, and adding set-asides for Indian tribes and tribal organizations and for outlying areas to the existing set-aside for programs serving migrant families; (2) strengthening program quality by requiring instructional programs to be of high quality, and setting a minimum subgrant size of \$75,000; (3) strengthening the focus on family services by allowing families to continue to participate generally until all family members become ineligible; (4) focusing on addressing family needs by adding developmental and support services to the screening tools that projects can use to prepare parents for full participation; (5) adding flexibility to the local match requirement by allowing states to waive the match requirement in whole or part under appropriate circumstances; and (6) targeting services to high-need areas of each state.
- The 1994 legislation made the following substantive changes to Even Start: (1) targeting services on those families most in need was strengthened, and services were extended to teen parents within the compulsory school attendance age range, when they were among those most in need; (2) continuity and retention were strengthened by requiring projects to serve at least a three-year age range of children and provide services during the summer months; (3) the focus on family services was strengthened by allowing projects to involve ineligible family members in appropriate family literacy activities; (4) linkages between schools and communities were improved by requiring stronger partnerships and collaboration in the application and implementation process; and (5) the demonstration nature of the program was strengthened by limiting funding for local projects to eight years.
- In 1996, Congress sought to strengthen Even Start further by passing an amendment requiring instructional services to be intensive.⁸
- In 1998, the Reading Excellence Act amended Even Start by (1) providing a definition for the term “family literacy services” to match other legislation with family literacy components, including Head Start, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the Reading Excellence Act program, and (2) requiring states to develop results-based

⁸ Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act, 1996, Section 2755, P.L. No. 104-134 (1996).

indicators of program quality and to use these indicators to monitor, evaluate, and improve Even Start programs.⁹

- In 1999, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 2000 allowed local grantees to continue to participate in Even Start beyond eight years and reduced the federal share for the ninth and succeeding years to 35 percent.¹⁰

When Even Start began as a federally administered program in school year 1989-1990, grants totaling \$14.8 million were awarded to 76 projects. According to the Even Start statute, if funding reached \$50 million, the program was to be administered by state agencies. This level was exceeded in 1992 when the federal appropriation was \$70 million. Most Even Start projects now are state administered, and the Program Year 1998-1999 appropriation of \$124 million supported 737 Even Start projects in all states (Exhibit 1.1). In addition, family literacy programs specifically for migrant families, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and outlying areas are supported through special set-aside funds (5 percent of the total Even Start allocation) and remain under federal administration. The statute also authorizes discretionary grants for statewide family literacy initiatives for which Congress separately appropriated \$10 million in Fiscal Years 1999 and 2000, and a family literacy project in a prison that houses women and their preschool-aged children that is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (hereafter referred to as the Department).

DESIGN OF EVEN START PROJECTS

THE BASIC MODEL

The Even Start legislation requires that all local projects recruit and serve families most in need of Even Start services,¹¹ screen and prepare families for full participation, provide three core instructional services (adult, parenting, and early childhood education) and support services, provide for joint participation of parents and children together, provide some home-based services, integrate educational activities across the three core areas, provide some services on a year-round basis, coordinate service delivery with other local programs, provide staff development, and conduct local evaluations; and requires the Department to conduct a national evaluation. Even Start families are required to participate in each of the three core services:

⁹ Title VIII of the United States Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, enacted by the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Section 101(f), P.L. No. 105-277 (1998).

¹⁰ Section 306(a) and (b)(2) of H.R. 3424, as incorporated by the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000, Section 1000(a)(4), P.L. No. 106-113 (1999).

¹¹ To be eligible for Even Start a family needs (a) a parent who is eligible for adult education services under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act or who is within the state's compulsory school attendance age range and (b) a child under 8 years of age. The definition of "most-in-need" is community-specific and is based on locally established criteria which must include, at least, family income and parent's literacy level.

- ❑ **Adult Education and Adult Literacy:** high-quality intensive instructional programs to promote adult literacy, including adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English as a second language (ESL), and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) certificate.
- ❑ **Parenting Education:** high-quality intensive instructional programs to help parents to support the educational growth of their children.
- ❑ **Early Childhood Education:** developmentally appropriate intensive educational services for children to prepare them for success in school.

Screening and referral may include referrals for mental health counseling, services to battered family members, child protective services, employment, and screening or treatment for chemical dependency. Even Start projects also must offer support services, which include: transportation, child care, flexible scheduling, nutrition assistance, health care, meals, and special care for a disabled family member.

Even Start is intended to benefit families in several ways. While not every Even Start project will try to affect all of these, potential outcomes for parents are improved literacy behaviors (for example, shared literacy events with children and increased reading and writing activities in the home), parenting behavior and skills (for example, positive parent-child relationships), and educational and employment skills that lead to economic self-sufficiency (for example, improved reading and English language ability and higher education attainment). Goals for Even Start parents also may include growth in personal skills and community involvement. The potential effects of Even Start on children include improved school readiness and achievement (for example, language development and emergent literacy). Once in school, outcomes might include satisfactory performance and attendance, and a lower incidence of special education and retention in grade.

VARIATIONS ON THE BASIC MODEL

The Even Start legislation is more specific than the legislation of many federal programs, although the requirements stop short of defining curriculum given the diversity of the populations served.¹² Decisions about implementing each requirement are left to individual projects. For example, the legislation requires high-quality, intensive instructional programs; services for parents and children together; and instructional services in the home. But projects decide on the frequency and duration of program activities,¹³ whether activities are primarily center-based or home-based, and whether to invent educational curricula from scratch or use a hybrid of existing approaches. Based on the availability and quality of local services, projects decide which activities will be supported by Even Start funds and which will be supported by collaborating agencies.

¹² Congress prohibits the Department of Education from specifying curriculum (Section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232a).

¹³ The recently added definition of family literacy services (Section 1202(e)(3)) provides that services must be of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family.

Most Even Start projects provide, either directly or by collaborating with existing early childhood programs such as Head Start (for 3 and 4 year olds) or Early Head Start (for 0-3 year olds), a center-based early childhood program. Center-based programs usually incorporate elements of existing curricula for young children. Generally, school-age children through age seven receive Even Start services designed to supplement their required school activities. Such services may take the form of homework or tutoring assistance given in before- and after-school child care programs and summer school activities. The extent to which Even Start funds early childhood services directly, as opposed to delegating this responsibility to a collaborating agency, is related to the age of the children served. Data from the 1998-1999 program year show that 66 percent of the projects provide all Even Start early childhood services for children under age 3, 43 percent of the projects provide all Even Start early childhood services for children ages 3 and 4, 27 percent of the projects provide all Even Start early childhood services for five year olds, and 17 percent of the projects provide all Even Start early childhood services for six and seven year olds (see Chapter 4 in this report). Conversely, collaborating agencies are much more likely to provide Even Start services to five to seven year olds, who are of school age, than to younger children.

Adult education services are provided in a variety of formats by personnel who range from volunteers to certified adult education teachers. Some projects offer adult education classes geared toward completing a GED, others provide general instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing, and math, and still others focus chiefly on ESL. Projects that work with adults who have low-level basic skills may arrange tutoring through organizations such as the Literacy Volunteers of America or provide other types of one-on-one adult education instruction during home visits. Depending on the level of adult education, 24 to 37 percent of the Even Start projects directly funded adult education services in 1998-1999 (see Chapter 4 in this report), while 27 to 34 percent of the projects obtained all adult education services from other sources.

Parenting education is less often available through existing agencies than are adult and early childhood education programs. Thus, 69 percent of the projects relied solely on Even Start resources to deliver parenting education in 1998-1999 (see Chapter 4 in this report). These services may take the form of group discussions, hands-on activities, home visits, and presentations by invited speakers. Topics addressed may include helping families to use learning resources, increasing parents' understanding of typical child development patterns and of their role in their children's education, and training parents on reading to young children.

Educational activities often are offered in institutional settings, for example, adult education classes in high schools and community colleges, and preschool programs collaborating with community-based organizations or local education agencies. In about 15 percent of the projects, particularly those in sparsely populated rural areas, Even Start services are primarily home-based, with instruction tailored to each family's needs (see Chapter 4 in this report).

HYPOTHESES ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EVEN START

There are many hypotheses about the kinds of effects that can be expected from Even Start. A simple model of those hypotheses is presented in Exhibit 1.2. One principle behind the Even Start Program is that the combined effects of an integrated program of early childhood education (ECE), parenting education and parent-child activities (PE and PC), and adult education (AE) should be greater than the sum of the individual effects, though there is no formal theoretical basis for that hypothesis. Program leaders anticipate that there will be direct effects on children and adults who participate intensively in Even Start. Further, it is hypothesized that early direct effects on adults will lead to later, indirect, effects on children. The following list of hypotheses and the time line for when program effects should occur were generated through discussions with staff from the Department and members of our Expert Work Group. In terms of measurement and evaluation, we place highest priority on direct effects, and lower priority on indirect effects.

DIRECT EFFECTS ON ADULTS

- ❑ Short-term positive effects on literacy skills of adults due to adult education. These effects should occur in one year.

- ❑ Short-term positive effects on parenting skills of adults and the home literacy environment due to parent education and parent-child together activities, as well as enhanced literacy skills. These effects should be apparent in one year.

DIRECT EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- ❑ Short-term positive effects on the literacy skills of children due to early childhood education, including effects on school readiness. These effects should be apparent in one year.

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON ADULTS

- ❑ Longer-term positive effects on economic self-sufficiency of adults due to adult education and mediated by subsequent enhanced literacy skills. These effects should occur within two or more years.

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- ❑ Longer-term positive effects on literacy skills of children mediated by earlier effects on parenting, enhanced literacy skills of parents, and enhanced economic outcomes for the family. These effects should occur within two or more years.

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON NONPARTICIPATING CHILDREN

- ❑ Longer-term positive effects on literacy skills of nonparticipating children mediated by earlier positive effects on the parenting skills, literacy skills, and economic self-sufficiency of participating adults. The time frame for these effects is probably two or more years.

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON NONPARTICIPATING ADULTS

- Longer-term positive effects on parenting skills and literacy skills of nonparticipating adults mediated by earlier positive effects on parenting skills, literacy skills, and economic self-sufficiency of participating adults. The time frame for these effects is probably two or more years.

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY

- Finally, the model posits long-term positive effects on the family in areas such as family stability and continued enhanced economic outcomes.

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION

Since 1989, the Even Start legislation has included evaluation requirements at both the local and national levels. These two levels of evaluation respond to different information needs of the Department and local Even Start projects. Though the legislative mandate has changed slightly over the years, the national evaluation's basic purposes have remained the same—to describe Even Start projects and participants, to examine the performance and effectiveness of Even Start, and to identify effective Even Start projects for use in program improvement and technical assistance. Two cycles of four-year national studies have been completed and this report represents the first two years of the third national evaluation. There is substantial continuity across the three national evaluations, but each had its own special focus and challenges.

FIRST NATIONAL EVALUATION (1989-1990 THROUGH 1992-1993)

The first national evaluation (St.Pierre, Swartz, Gamse, Murray, Deck, & Nickel, 1995) was broad in scope, addressing questions such as: What are the characteristics of Even Start participants? How are Even Start projects implemented and what services do they provide? What Even Start services are received by participating families? and What are the effects of Even Start on participating families? These questions were addressed through the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS) which was used to collect data on participant characteristics, project implementation, and participant outcomes from all projects using paper and pencil or optically scannable forms. Literacy assessments were administered at program entry and exit to one adult and one child in each Even Start family. In addition, the evaluation included an experimental component (the In-Depth Study) in which families in five volunteer sites were randomly assigned to be in Even Start or a control group and were measured three times during an 18-month period.

The first national evaluation described whether early Even Start projects were able to implement the program as intended. Documentation of program implementation helped the Department and grantees agree on the definition of key program terms by answering questions such as: What counts as adult education in Even Start? and Who counts as a program participant? The Department used data from the first evaluation to identify areas where Even Start projects needed technical assistance, in particular, improving the literacy focus and intensity of their

parenting education components, engaging adults in adult education, and recruiting and retaining families.

While national data from the NEIS showed consistent child and adult gains on literacy outcomes, the lack of a national level control group meant there was no way to know whether the observed gains resulted from participation in Even Start. The five-site In-Depth Study provided experimental evidence about the effectiveness of Even Start, but suffered from a small sample size (five sites, total of about 100 Even Start and 100 control group families) and a lack of information on control group services.

Information from the first national evaluation was used to improve the program through legislative changes. Findings that showed a fairly low year-to-year retention rate were used to modify the legislation to require year-round services so that families would remain involved in Even Start throughout the summer and into the next year. The study served as a catalyst for other substantive changes made to the legislation including: focusing program targeting on those most in need, requiring that projects serve at least a three-year age range of children, allowing projects to serve teen parents, and allowing the involvement of ineligible family members in appropriate family literacy activities. The finding that there was a relationship between the amount of participation in Even Start and child-adult test gains, coupled with similar early findings from the second evaluation, provided evidence that resulted in an amendment in 1996 requiring Even Start services to be intensive.

SECOND NATIONAL EVALUATION (1993-1994 THROUGH 1996-1997)

In the second evaluation (see final report by Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998) the national survey was improved, converted to a computer-based system, and renamed the Even Start Information System (ESIS). While program and participation information continued to be collected from all Even Start projects, the administration of literacy assessments was restricted to children and adults from a 10 percent sample of projects (approximately 60 out of 600), called the Sample Study. No control or comparison group was included in the second evaluation.

Implementation data collected through the ESIS allowed tracking of changes in the population served over eight years, and the Sample Study provided national data on the size of gains made by Even Start participants. Early data from the second evaluation corroborated the positive relationship between service intensity and family outcomes found in the first national evaluation. However, without a control group, the Sample Study could not address lingering questions about the program's effect.

Perhaps the most important innovation in the second national evaluation was a computer program that helped grantees use national data at the local level by generating summaries of their own ESIS data. Another innovation was the development of annual profile reports for each Even Start project that could be used for continuous program improvement. First sent to each project and state coordinator in the fall of 1997, these reports compare several important variables for each project to state and national data and to other projects with similar characteristics.

THIRD NATIONAL EVALUATION (1997-1998 THROUGH 2000-2001)

The Department funded the third national Even Start evaluation (the current study) in the fall of 1997. The national survey was again updated and renamed the Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (ESPIRS). Major improvements to the reporting system include the addition of an entirely new section asking parents to report the types of literacy-related activities and behaviors in which they and their children engage as well as the kinds of literacy-related tasks that their children can perform, a more detailed set of forms for collecting data on the amount of time that families participate in Even Start, and an updating of the project profile system developed in the second national evaluation.

A second component of the evaluation, the Experimental Design Study (EDS), was included to provide a strong assessment of program effects in 18 projects. The EDS uses a research design in which families that want to take part in Even Start are randomly assigned to begin the program right away (intervention group) or to wait for one year (delayed intervention or control group).

SELECTED FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST AND SECOND EVALUATIONS

The first and second Even Start evaluations provided a wealth of information about program characteristics, participant characteristics, and program outcomes. A few of the key findings from those evaluations are listed below. A comprehensive review of evaluation findings is available from the Department (St.Pierre, Gamse, Alamprese, Rimdzius, & Tao, 1998).

The Even Start Program has grown significantly since its inception. In the 1989-1990 program year, the Even Start Program had \$14.8 million in funding and the U.S. Department of Education administered the program to 76 grantees. In that year, Even Start served about 2,500 families. In the 1992-1993 program year, with \$70 million in funding, the program converted to state administration of 340 Even Start projects serving almost 21,000 families. In 1998-1999, Even Start funding reached \$124 million and supported 737 local projects that served 32,200 families.

Even Start has recruited and served low-income, disadvantaged families with low literacy skills. At least 90 percent of Even Start families in 1996-1997 had incomes at or significantly below the federal poverty level (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998). Forty-five percent of 1996-1997 new enrollees had reached ninth grade or below at intake; an additional 42 percent had reached grades 10 to 12 but had not graduated. The percentage of parents in the Even Start program under the age of 20 has increased over time, as has the percentage of primarily Spanish-speaking parents. Three-fourths of 1996-1997 new enrollees who spoke languages other than English at home were unable to speak or read English well or at all.

Over the years, Even Start projects have significantly increased the amount of instruction offered in all three core service areas. The amount of adult education services offered increased by 25 to 30 percent and the amount of early childhood education offered

increased by 10 percent from 1993-1994 to 1996-1997. The amount of parenting education, while generally increasing over time, seems to have stabilized during this time period (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998).

There is a clear, consistent relationship between the amount of services that projects offer and the amount of time that participants attend. Families that are enrolled in projects that offer larger amounts of service tend to receive larger amounts of service than families that are enrolled in projects that offer smaller amounts of service (St.Pierre, et al., 1995; Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998).

In most of the areas examined in the Even Start national evaluation, children and parents in Even Start make gains. However, except for one small-scale experimental study conducted in five projects in the early 1990s (the In-Depth Study reported by St.Pierre, et al., 1995), the research does not allow us to gauge whether or not these gains are due to participation in Even Start.

POLICY ISSUES FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL EVALUATION

The findings cited above, combined with current policy debates, lead to several policy issues that are being addressed by the third national evaluation.

DEMONSTRATE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

To respond to criticisms that the first and second national evaluations did not adequately address the issue of program effectiveness, the third national evaluation provides for an experimental study to test the effectiveness of Even Start in 18 projects with a total of 400 Even Start families and 200 control group families.

INVESTIGATE THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT PROGRAMMATIC PRACTICES

The Department is interested in finding out whether key programmatic practices enhance program outcomes. Some of these include the intensity (amount of core educational services offered to families), whether services are provided in a center or in the home, the amount of parent-child time offered to families, and whether parenting education must have a focus on literacy to be effective. A justification for the interest in each of these practices is presented briefly below.

- ❑ **Amount of core educational services:** A substantial body of research on the effectiveness of early childhood education programs shows that gains are enhanced by a high level of exposure to a high-quality, center-based program (for example, Barnett, 1995; Ramey & Ramey, 1992). Even Start research supports this finding in that adults

and children with high levels of participation in Even Start's core services had larger learning gains than those with low levels of participation (St.Pierre, et al., 1995).

- ❑ **Center vs. home-based services:** Data from the second national Even Start evaluation showed that children in projects that emphasize center-based programs had larger learning gains than children in projects that emphasize home-based services (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998).
- ❑ **Amount of parent-child time:** Families in projects that have large amounts of time for parents and children together had better home environments (for example, more materials in the home, parent-child learning activities, approaches to discipline) than families in projects that have smaller amounts of parent-child time together (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1997).
- ❑ **Literacy-based parenting education:** Early on, projects received strong messages from the federal level to focus on literacy-based parenting education. Findings from the first national evaluation showed a positive relationship between the amount of parenting education received and children's vocabulary test scores (St.Pierre, et al., 1995). During the second national evaluation, there was anecdotal evidence that parenting education became less literacy-focused. This would be one possible explanation for the disappearance in the second national evaluation of the relationship between amount of parenting education and child test gains (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998). During the period of the third evaluation, the Even Start Program office has been working to ensure that parenting education does indeed have a focus on literacy.

DESIGN OF THE THIRD NATIONAL EVALUATION

The third national evaluation is addressing three major research questions, each with a set of subquestions (see Exhibit 1.3). The major questions are focused on the policy issues identified above, asking about the outcomes and effects of Even Start projects, the implementation of Even Start projects and the kinds of families served by Even Start, and whether certain approaches produce better outcomes for Even Start participants. To address these questions, two complementary data collection efforts are being undertaken: the Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (ESPIRS) and the Experimental Design Study (EDS).

The ESPIRS continues the decade-long annual collection of a common set of data from the universe of Even Start projects. In the 1998-1999 program year, the universe consisted of 737 projects and 32,200 families. This data set allows the Department to manage the program at the federal level, provide oversight to Even Start state coordinators, provide project-level comments to individual Even Start grantees, track changes in the program over time, make policy decisions, suggest program improvements, and respond to the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. The ESPIRS data are also used to help select the sample of projects to participate in the EDS, to check the generalizability of gains observed in the EDS, and

to obtain information on the types and intensity of services received by families in the EDS (which can serve as predictors of gains).

The ESPIRS provides information on the types of projects funded, the nature and amount of services they provide, the collaborative efforts they undertake, and the obstacles that exist to program implementation. The system also provides annual child, parent, and family-level data, including demographic information, education and income data, the amount of service families receive, and the progress they make on indicators of parent, child, and family well-being, such as economic self-sufficiency, literacy skills, and parent-child relationships.

As has been the case since the inception of Even Start, data collection for the ESPIRS reporting system is being conducted by Even Start grantees with training supplied by the national evaluation contractor. Grantee staff conduct face-to-face interviews with program participants, maintain records on services received, and complete program-level questionnaires. Grantee staff enter these data into a computerized database and transmit it annually to the evaluation contractor.

The EDS was designed to assess the effect of Even Start. It uses the same progress indicators as the ESPIRS, adding direct assessments of adult and child literacy skills, teacher and parent ratings of child competencies and behaviors, and school record abstractions. The EDS provides for experimental vs. control group comparisons on most of these measures; it also includes case studies of program operations and a study of program costs. All data collection for the EDS is done by contractor staff, instead of by program staff as is the case for the ESPIRS.

An experimental study of 18 Even Start projects, the EDS was restricted to projects that met Even Start's legislative requirements, operated during the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 program years, and served a sufficiently large number of families. However, no examination of the quality of project implementation was done. From this pool, we selected ESL projects (provide ESL services to Hispanic families), and non-ESL projects (enroll few or no Hispanic families); projects that provide high-intensity service levels and projects that provide moderate-intensity service levels; and urban and rural projects. In each of the EDS projects, we planned to randomly assign 30 new families—20 to Even Start and 10 to a control group. Eleven projects participated in the EDS during 1999-2000, with pretesting being done in fall 1999 and posttesting in summer 2000. Seven additional projects are participating during 2000-2001, with pretesting in fall 2000 and posttesting in summer 2001. Follow-up assessments will be administered one year after posttesting, in spring 2001 for the first group of 11 EDS projects and in spring 2002 for the second group of seven EDS projects.

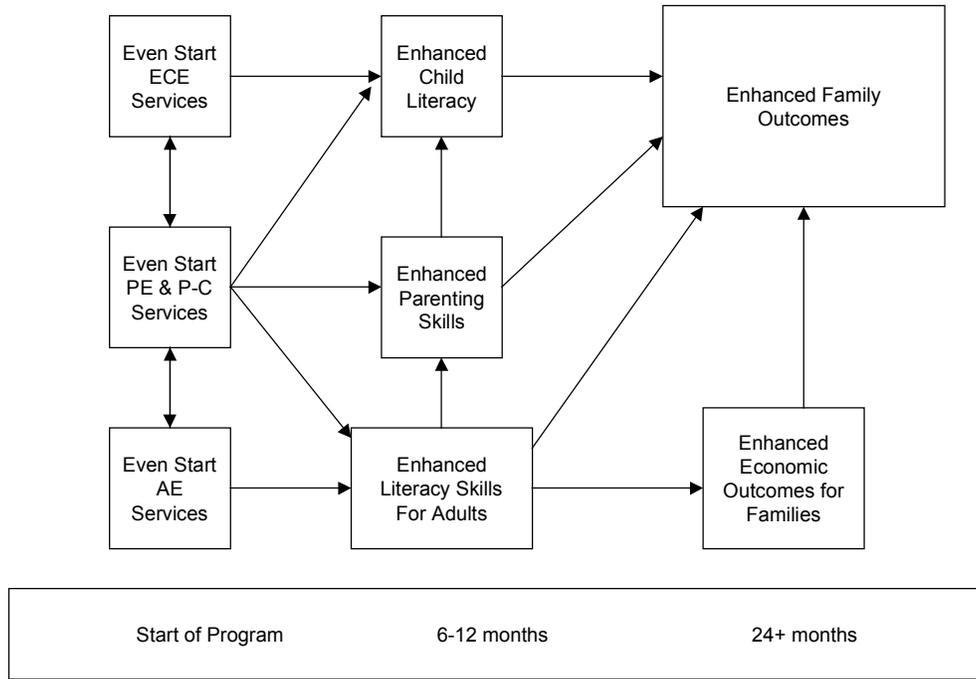
**EXHIBIT 1.1
EVEN START SIZE AND EXPENDITURES, BY FISCAL YEAR**

PROGRAM YEAR	N OF PROJECTS [A]	N OF FAMILIES [B]	N OF FAMILIES PER PROJECT [B/A]	FEDERAL EVEN START EXPENDITURE [C]	FEDERAL EVEN START EXPENDITURE PER PROJECT [C/A]	FEDERAL EVEN START EXPENDITURE PER FAMILY [C/B]
1989-1990	76	2,460	32.4	\$ 14,820,000	\$195,000	\$6,024
1990-1991	122	6,600	54.1	\$ 24,201,000	\$198,369	\$3,667
1991-1992	239	14,900	62.3	\$ 49,770,000	\$208,243	\$3,340
1992-1993	340	20,800	61.2	\$ 70,000,000	\$205,882	\$3,365
1993-1994	490	29,400	58.0	\$ 89,123,000	\$181,884	\$3,031
1994-1995	513	27,200	53.0	\$ 91,373,000	\$178,115	\$3,359
1995-1996	576	31,500	54.7	\$102,024,000	\$177,125	\$3,239
1996-1997	637	34,400	54.0	\$101,997,000	\$160,121	\$2,965
1997-1998	655	30,500	46.6	\$101,997,000	\$155,721	\$3,344
1998-1999	737	32,200	43.7	\$124,000,000	\$168,250	\$3,851
1999-2000	~800			\$135,000,000		
2000-2001				\$150,000,000		

Note: Federal Even Start expenditures include funds for technical assistance and evaluation, and state administrative funds. Subtracting these relatively small amounts of funding would not change the conclusions drawn in this report. The federal Even Start cost per project and cost per family are calculated by using federal-level data on the total program expenditures and the total number of projects funded, combined with project-level data on the total number of families served. Program expenditures do not include matching funds.

Exhibit reads: In 1989-1990, 76 projects were funded by Even Start.

Exhibit 1.2: Model of Even Start's Hypothesized Effects



Note: ECE stands for early childhood education; PE for parenting education; P-C for parent-child joint activities; and AE for adult education.

EXHIBIT 1.3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION

RESEARCH QUESTION	SUB-QUESTION
<p>1. What are Even Start's outcomes and impacts?</p>	<p>1a. How many families participate in Even Start? In each of Even Start's core services? In all core services?</p> <p>1b. How long do families participate in Even Start (for how many months are services received)?</p> <p>1c. How many hours per month (and in total) do Even Start adults and children participate in each service?</p> <p>1d. What gains do Even Start children make on measures of school readiness and vocabulary?</p> <p>1e. What gains do Even Start adults make on measures of literacy, GED attainment, employment status, annual income?</p> <p>1f. What gains do Even Start families make on measures of the home environment and parent-child interactions?</p> <p>1g. With what literacy skills do Even Start participants enter and leave the program?</p> <p>1h. With what degree of confidence can gains be attributed to Even Start? Do control group families have similar gains? What can be said of Even Start participants' progress vs. progress made by participants in other programs?</p> <p>1i. How do teacher ratings of child literacy skills relate to parent ratings of those same outcomes?</p> <p>1j. How much confidence do we have in generalizing findings from the EDS to the full Even Start population?</p>
<p>2. To what extent are Even Start projects properly implemented? What kinds of families are served by Even Start?</p>	<p>2a. What is the geographic and urban-rural distribution of Even Start projects?</p> <p>2b. What is the federal cost for Even Start projects? What resources are contributed to Even Start by local agencies? How are Even Start funds spent?</p> <p>2c. To what extent do projects meet Even Start's legislative requirements?</p> <p>2d. What early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education services are offered by projects? What activities does the project offer for parents and children together? What is the nature of home visits? What support services are provided to participants?</p> <p>2e. How much of each core service is offered to families?</p> <p>2f. How are families recruited into Even Start? How do projects target families for recruitment?</p> <p>2g. What local evaluation activities are being undertaken by Even Start projects? To what extent do projects respond to the findings of their local evaluations?</p> <p>2h. What collaborations exist between Even Start and other agencies? What types of agencies are collaborators?</p> <p>2i. What barriers exist to program implementation?</p> <p>2j. Are differences in program implementation associated with factors such as project cohort, length of time that the project has had a grant, or area of the country?</p> <p>2k. What types of technical assistance do local projects need? Are local projects able to obtain the technical assistance they need from the States?</p> <p>2l. What are the characteristics of State operations and support for local projects?</p> <p>2m. What are the characteristics of Even Start families?</p>

EXHIBIT 1.3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION

RESEARCH QUESTION	SUB-QUESTION
	<p>2n. What are the background characteristics of Even Start adults?</p> <p>2o. What is the educational history of Even Start adults? What percentage of adults enter with a high school diploma or a GED and what are their characteristics?</p> <p>2p. What are the background characteristics of Even Start children?</p> <p>2q. What are the program participation histories of Even Start children and adults?</p> <p>2r. How do characteristics of Even Start adults compare with characteristics of participants in adult education programs nationally?</p> <p>2s. How do characteristics of Even Start children compare to characteristics of Title I and Head Start children? To what extent is there overlap in program participation?</p> <p>2t. How do child and adult background and literacy characteristics vary across projects? Do projects use different targeting criteria? Do some projects target "high need" while others target "low need" populations?</p>
<p>3. What Even Start approaches produce better outcomes?</p>	<p>3a. What participant characteristics are associated with positive outcomes? Are outcomes related to family need level?</p> <p>3b. What project characteristics are associated with positive outcomes?</p> <p>3c. What service characteristics are associated with positive outcomes?</p>

CHAPTER 2: LITERACY STATUS OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS AT ENTRY TO THE PROGRAM

This chapter describes the literacy status of Even Start participants who entered the program during the 1998-1999 program year. These baseline data set the stage for measuring changes that occur during Even Start. The data are taken from Form E of the ESPIRS in which one parent in each newly-enrolling Even Start family was asked to report on a range of literacy-related progress indicators at the time the family entered the program. Some indicators show specific child or adult behaviors or statuses that Even Start hopes to improve. Other indicators are mediating variables (for instance, parents' employment status and English proficiency). Even Start hopes to affect these latter variables because research has shown that they exert influence on child outcomes.

This report provides information on selected indicators that form a literacy profile of Even Start families as they enter the program. There are few normative expectations for many of the pretest variables presented in this chapter, so it is difficult to judge the entry status of Even Start children and adults based on these parent reports. However, where possible we provide comparative data from other relevant studies, including: the National Household Education Survey (NHES), a telephone survey of a national sample of households with school-age children conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999); the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of kindergartners conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000); the Prospects study of Chapter 1 (now Title I) students, a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of Chapter 1 programs conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (Puma, Jones, Rock, & Fernandez, 1993); the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (FACES), a longitudinal study of a representative sample of Head Start children and families conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families (1998); and a national study of parent behaviors conducted by the Commonwealth Fund (Young, Davis, Schoen, & Parker, 1998). Once EDS posttest data have been collected at the end of the 1999-2000 program year, comparisons of pretest and posttest data will provide one measure of the impact of Even Start.

Compared with parents of Chapter 1 and Head Start children, Even Start parents tend to report lower or equivalent levels of reading to their child, parent-child interactions, literacy resources in the home, and child competencies. This is an indicator that Even Start projects have been recruiting needy families. Even so, many of the questions asked of parents have socially desirable answers, and it is likely that parent reports on these sorts of variables present an overly optimistic view of the literacy-related behaviors, interactions, and competencies than actually are present in low-income families. This is true for Even Start as well as for Head Start and Chapter 1. It also is worrisome that, at least for Even Start, parent reports are obtained through interviews conducted by Even Start program staff who generally do not have training in methods

of obtaining answers to questions with socially desirable responses. One way to help ensure the quality of these data would be to provide Even Start staff with training on interviewing techniques.

This literacy profile is organized according to a framework for parenting education in Even Start that was developed by Powell and D'Angelo (2000). The major dimensions of the framework are listed below:

- ❑ Engage in language-rich parent-child interactions;
- ❑ Provide supports for literacy in the family;
- ❑ Hold appropriate expectations of child's learning and development;
- ❑ Actively embrace the parenting role; and
- ❑ Form and maintain connections with community and other resources.

The data set for this chapter consists of information on 8,054 families that newly enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 and that completed Form E of the ESPIRS within 30 days of enrolling. This represents 46 percent of all 17,388 newly-enrolled families (see Exhibit 5.1). Some questions were asked of the Even Start parent, while others were parent reports about the "focus child" in their family. In general, Even Start projects do not focus on a specific child in each family. However, for the purposes of completing Form E, a focus child was selected as the reference for several questions.

ENGAGE IN LANGUAGE-RICH PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Parents can read to preschoolers at bedtime or other times and can listen to school children's oral reading, providing assistance as needed (Teale, 1986). In a meta-analysis, Bus, van Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995) concluded that book reading by parents explains about 8 percent of the variance in various child reading outcomes.

Data from this evaluation show that about one-quarter of newly-enrolled Even Start parents report that they read to their children daily, and another quarter report reading to their children about three times a week. These are lower rates than any other group of parents for whom we could find comparable data including nationally representative samples of parents, as well as parents of Chapter 1 and Head Start children. Even Start parents report high rates of other literacy-related interactions with their children, such as learning to count, learning colors, and learning letters.

READING WITH CHILDREN

New Even Start parents were asked how often they read stories to their child. As with many other questions in this section, answers were obtained separately for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age focus children.

About one-quarter of new Even Start parents reported that they read stories to their child daily, and another quarter read stories to their child about three times a week (Exhibit 2.1). Depending on the age of the child, between 70 percent and 80 percent of parents reported that they read stories to their child at least weekly. Parents of infants and toddlers were more likely to report that they never read to their child (17 percent) than parents of preschoolers (5 percent) or school age children (6 percent).

Comparing these rates of reading to children to what we know from other data sources, we see that Even Start projects face a difficult task, since newly enrolled parents report that **upon entry to Even Start** they read to their children at lower rates than the other groups of parents studied including nationally representative samples of parents, as well as parents of Chapter 1 and Head Start children (Exhibit 2.2).

Perhaps most relevant are data from the National Household Education Survey (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 3), which reported that 81 percent of a nationally-representative sample of mothers of 3 to 5 year old children read to their child three or more times a week in 1999, compared with 58 percent of newly enrolled Even Start parents. The NHES data show that the percentage of mothers reading to their children drops when we restrict the sample to low-income and non-high school educated parents: only 69 percent of mothers living below the poverty line and 61 percent of mothers with less than a high school education read to their child three or more times a week. These latter numbers are closer to, but still higher than, the Even Start pretest percentages.

Using Prospects data as a basis of comparison, parents of Chapter 1 first-graders were twice as likely as newly enrolled Even Start parents of school-age children to report reading stories to their child on a daily basis: 51 percent vs. 26 percent (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 209). Similar findings come from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000, p. 52), which shows that a family member reads to 45 percent of all kindergartners on a daily basis. However, only 36 percent of children who have mothers with less than a high school diploma are read to on a daily basis. This is consistent with data from the Head Start FACES study which show that 33 percent of Head Start parents read to their child daily during a sample week in fall 1997; 7 percent did not read to their child at all (Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1998, p. 55). A national survey of parents with children under age three (“Listening to Parents” by Young, Davis, Schoen, and Parker, 1998) shows that 39 percent report that they read to their child daily compared with 26 percent of new Even Start parents of infants and toddlers.

OTHER PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

New Even Start parents were asked how much time they spend with their child, as well as the kinds of literacy-related interactions that they or other family members had with the child. Answers were obtained separately for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age focus children.

Time Spent with Child. Infants and toddlers were more likely than older children to spend substantial amounts of time with their parent (Exhibit 2.1). Three-quarters of the parents of infants and toddlers reported spending two or more hours a day with their child, compared with about half of the parents of preschoolers and school age children.

Literacy-Related Learning. A high percentage of the parents of preschoolers (this question was not asked of the parents of infants and toddlers or parents of school age children) reported that they helped their child learn many literacy-related items during the past week (Exhibit 2.1). For example, 87 percent said that they helped their child with colors, 83 percent helped with learning to count, 75 percent helped with the alphabet, 72 percent helped with nursery rhymes or songs, and 67 percent helped with shapes. Less common was help with recognizing numbers in books (56 percent) or writing the child's name (51 percent).

Data from the Head Start FACES study show some similar rates of literacy-related activities with children. Most relevant is that 88 percent of parents had taught their child letters or numbers during the past week (Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1998, p. 55). The NHES reported that 64 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year olds taught their child letters, words or numbers, 49 percent taught songs or music, and 39 percent did arts or crafts three or more times in the past week (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 3). Similarly, the ECLS-K showed that 72 percent of parents sang songs with their child, and 52 percent did arts and crafts three or more times during the past week (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000, p. 53).

Parent-Child Interactions. On the survey form, several questions were asked about parent-child interactions during the previous week. In general, new Even Start parents reported a high level of interaction with their child (Exhibit 2.1). More than 80 percent of the parents of school-age children either helped their child with homework or checked to see that homework was done. High percentages of parents reported that they talked with their child about several different aspects of school and home life during the past week. For example, 80 percent of the parents of preschoolers talked with their child about school activities, 76 percent talked about TV programs, 76 percent talked about problems and fears, and 74 percent talked about school studies. Parents of school-age children reported even higher levels of verbal interaction with their child.

Trips with Child. Parents of preschool and school-age children also were asked about places that they took their child during the past month. One-third of the parents of preschoolers and 40 percent of the parents of school-age children reported taking their child to the library during the past month (Exhibit 2.1). Between 15 and 20 percent of the parents in each group

took their child to the zoo and to a musical event. Trips to art museums were the least frequent activity, visited by 8 percent of preschoolers and their parents, and 10 percent of school-age children and their parents. This is partly due to the unavailability of museums in many communities.

These appear to be low rates of library visiting on the part of newly enrolled Even Start families when compared with nationally representative data from the NHES which show that 36 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year old children, 24 percent of mothers living below the poverty line, and 18 percent of mothers without a high school diploma reported that they took their child to the library three or more times in the past week (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 4).

PROVIDE SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY IN THE FAMILY

By reading and writing themselves and encouraging children to read and write, parents can demonstrate that they value literacy activities. Most Even Start adults appear to value literacy as evidenced by their engagement in some sort of reading and writing activities at home.

ADULT USE OF READING AND WRITING AT HOME

Payne, Whitehurst, and Angell (1994) found that adult literacy activities (such as the amount of time an adult spends reading for pleasure) were not related to child language. Instead, child language development was best predicted by activities in which the child was directly involved. Still, in any comprehensive investigation of the effects of a program such as Even Start, it seems prudent to measure the extent to which a parent engages in reading and writing at home, both as a potential mediator of child effects, and as an outcome for parents.

New Even Start parents were asked whether, during the past week, they read each of a series of commonly-encountered materials. Similarly, they were asked whether they wrote each of a series of items that might be written during a typical week.

Reading Activities. When they were new enrollees, the great majority of Even Start adults reported that they engaged in some type of reading activities during past week (Exhibit 2.3). The most common materials read were letters or bills (84 percent), mailed advertisements (78 percent), and street or bus signs (74 percent). This sort of reading might be thought of as primarily functional. Reading that is more informative or pleasurable in nature was less common. Books were read by 67 percent of the adults, newspapers by 63 percent, and magazines by 57 percent. The least commonly read materials included religious materials (39 percent), instructions (43 percent), and television-related matter (43 percent).

Writing Activities. In general, a smaller percentage of adults new to Even Start engaged in writing than in reading activities (Exhibit 2.3). Most common were functional activities such as writing appointments on a calendar (66 percent), grocery lists (62 percent), and notes or memos (57 percent). Writing for pleasure or to communicate with others was done less often;

letters were written by 45 percent of adults; crossword puzzles were done by 23 percent; and stories or poems were written by 20 percent.

AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIALS

Literacy experiences are more likely to occur in homes that contain books and other reading and writing materials designed for children, and research has shown that the level of reading resources available to children is related to early literacy skills. Payne, Whitehurst, and Angell (1994) found that the availability of reading materials and parent reading to children explains between 12 percent and 18 percent of child language skills. More recently, Griffin and Morrison (1997) showed that a broad measure of the home environment, including variables such as hours of TV watching, number of newspapers and magazines in the home, number of books owned by the child, and frequency of reading to the child, is related to early literacy skills.

Parents were asked several questions about the literacy resources available to the focus child in the home. Questions were asked separately for children in three different age groups: birth through 2 years, 11 months; 3 years through 4 years 11 months; and 5 years through 7 years, 11 months. Only one-third of Even Start families have a library card and many Even Start households seem resource poor. About half of school-age Even Start children have books at home, but 21 percent of newly-enrolled Even Start infants and toddlers have no books at all.

Library Card. A little more than one-third (36 percent) of newly enrolling Even Start families have a library card (Exhibit 2.4). Roughly 25 to 30 percent of new Even Start parents brought books into the home during the week prior to the interview, either by borrowing them from the library or buying them.

Play Materials at Home. Parents were asked a series of questions about the kinds of play materials that they have at home (Exhibit 2.4). Most common for children birth through 2 years of age were various kinds of toys (86 percent for rattle or squeak toys, 79 percent for pulling or rolling toys), as well as a range of materials that can be used for creative purposes including crayons and paper (78 percent), scissors (63 percent), blocks (62 percent), and tape, paste, or stapler (61 percent). Least common for infants and toddlers were more “grown-up” items such as plants (21 percent) and make-believe toys (25 percent), as well as items that can easily be ingested such as clay or playdough (26 percent). The nature of these play materials differed in expected ways for older children. For example, the most common toys for the youngest children (rattle and squeak toys) were one of the least common for children in the 5 year old and older group. Items that can be used for writing (crayons, paper, paint, or magic markers) also were much more common for older than for younger children.

Books a Child Has. Each new Even Start parent was asked how many books the focus child has. As would be expected, older children have more books than younger children (Exhibit 2.4). Almost half of school-age children (47 percent) had 10 or more books, compared with 32 percent of infants and toddlers. At the other end of the scale, 21 percent of infants and toddlers had no books, compared with 4 percent of school-age children.

Other Reading Resources. In addition to providing information about the child's books, new Even Start parents were asked about the availability of other reading resources. About 70 percent of the parents of school-age children reported that magazines were available in the house, 56 percent had a newspaper, 43 percent had comic books, 39 percent had a TV guide, and 79 percent had other reading materials (Exhibit 2.4). Parents of preschoolers reported quite similar percentages.

Families entering Even Start with school-age children reported generally higher levels of home literacy resources than Chapter 1 families. Data from the nationally representative Chapter 1 Prospects study (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 231) show that 44 percent of Chapter 1 first-graders had access to a daily newspaper, 55 percent had magazines in the home, and 67 percent had more than 50 books available to them.

HOLD APPROPRIATE EXPECTATION OF CHILD'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

By expressing positive expectations for achievement by their child and knowing their child's abilities, parents can create an atmosphere in which children are expected to achieve. Most Even Start parents have high hopes for their children, expecting them to graduate from high school or college. However, according to Even Start parents' reports, their children are achieving lower than children nationally, as well as equal to or lower than children from families living below the poverty level and children whose mothers do not have a high school diploma.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

New Even Start parents were asked how far in school they expect their child to go (Exhibit 2.5). There was little difference between the responses of parents of infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. In general, parents have high hopes and expectations for their children. About half think their child will graduate from college, and another 20 percent believe that their child will attend graduate school. Only 2 percent stated that they did not think their child would graduate from high school. Therefore, most Even Start parents have high hopes for their children, a finding contrary to the oft-held perception that economically poor and undereducated parents generally have low expectations and aspirations for their children.

Although parents of Chapter 1 children in the Prospects study were not asked this question, seventh grade students who had been in Chapter 1 were questioned about their own educational plans. Their responses are remarkably similar to those of Even Start parents: 45 percent thought that they would graduate from college, and 18 percent believed that they would attend graduate school. Only 6 percent did not think that they would graduate from high school (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 225).

KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD'S ABILITIES

New Even Start parents were asked to report on several of their child's literacy-related skills, such as knowledge of the alphabet, ability to count and write, recognition of colors, and so on (Exhibit 2.6). In the ESPIRS data, all of these potential "progress indicators" are measured via parent report, and such reports are prone to socially desirable responses. Still, outside of the difficult and expensive approach of administering a standardized direct assessment to the child (for instance, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test), parent report is generally seen as the best way to learn about the competencies of a young child. Parents typically are the best observers of their preschool age children and know what their child can and cannot do better than any other potential reporter. Further, any socially desirable reporting on the part of parents will be the same for the randomly assigned Even Start and control groups in the EDS.

Alphabet. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child knows all, most, some, or no letters of the alphabet. Few parents (only 17 percent) reported that children under age 3 know any letters of the alphabet. Preschoolers are more likely to know some letters (75 percent). Finally, parents reported that 9 percent of preschool age children who are joining Even Start know all the letters of the alphabet. This is reasonable given national estimates from the NHES in which 24 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year old children, 10 percent of mothers living below poverty, and 7 percent of mothers who do not have a high school diploma reported that their child knows all of the letters of the alphabet (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7).

Counting. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child can count up to 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, or not at all. Similar to the alphabet question, parents reported age-related development with respect to numbers. Three-quarters of children under age 3 cannot count at all, while only 9 percent of preschoolers cannot count at all. By the time they are in school, more than half of the children can count up to 50.

Parents reported that 19 percent of Even Start preschoolers can count to 20 or higher. This is substantially less than the levels mothers reported through the NHES where 57 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year olds, 39 percent of mothers living below poverty, and 36 percent of mothers who do not have a high school diploma reported that their child can count to 20 or higher (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7).

Writing. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child likes to write or pretend to write (either in English or in the child's primary language). Fifty percent of the parents reported that their child under age 3 never writes or pretends to write, but 84 percent of the parents of preschoolers and 90 percent of the parents of school-age children reported that their child writes at least sometimes.

Speaking. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child's speech can be understood by a stranger. A "yes" answer was given by 38 percent of the parents of infants and toddlers, 87 percent of the parents of preschoolers, and 95 percent of the parents of school-age children.

First Name. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child can write his or her first name and whether their child recognizes his or her first name in writing. Only a small percentage of the parents of infants and toddlers reported that their child could do these tasks (2 percent and 7 percent, respectively). However, almost all school-age children could write and recognize his or her first name (89 percent and 96 percent, respectively).

Parents reported that 29 percent of Even Start preschoolers could write their first name. Once again, this is lower than data from the NHES indicate: 51 percent of the mothers of all 3 to 5 year old children, 37 percent of mothers living below the poverty level, and 32 percent of mothers without a high school diploma reported that their child could write his or her first name (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7).

Colors. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child can identify red, yellow, blue, and green by name. Only four percent of infants and toddlers could identify all of these colors, compared with 40 percent of preschoolers and 76 percent of school-age children.

Reading. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked whether their child reads or pretends to read. About half (53 percent) of the infants and toddlers were reading or pretending to read, compared with almost all of the preschoolers (92 percent) and school-age children (95 percent). The percentage for preschoolers is higher than what was seen in the NHES, where 74 percent of all mothers of 3 to 5 year old children, 63 percent of mothers below the poverty level, and 53 percent of mothers without a high school diploma reported that their child reads or pretends to read storybooks (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 1999, p. 7). It is likely that this difference is due to the fact that Even Start parents were asked about reading in general, while NHES mothers were asked about reading storybooks.

ACTIVELY EMBRACE THE PARENTING ROLE

Parents can demonstrate a commitment to literacy by being active about literacy and about their role as a teacher. Parents also can be involved with school, have and express positive feelings and opinions about school, and volunteer at school. Most newly-enrolled Even Start parents appear to enjoy their role as teacher. They are in contact with and visit school, have a relatively high level of comfort in dealing with school, and have a high opinion of the school their child attends. If we assume that parents are accurate reporters about these socially desirable feelings and opinions, Even Start projects will find it difficult to make a large improvement in these areas.

PARENT AS A TEACHER

Even Start sees the parent as a child's first and best teacher. Thus, many Even Start projects work to ensure that parents see the importance of their teaching role. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents of infants and toddlers and preschoolers were asked whether they agree or disagree with a series of propositions about how children learn (Exhibit 2.7). The great majority

of parents, more than 90 percent, reported that they agreed with statements like “I really like to teach my child something new,” “My child needs to play with me,” and “My child learns by playing with other children.” Relatively few parents, between 10 percent and 20 percent, agreed with statements like “Playing with my child makes me restless,” “I scold my child for not learning,” and “It is hard to stay interested when playing with my child.”

PARENT INVOLVEMENT WITH SCHOOL

Parents who are involved with school demonstrate their interest in schooling, and show by example that schooling is important. For many Even Start parents, school may have been a negative experience, and being involved in a positive fashion with the school their child attends is a desired outcome in itself. Newly-enrolled Even Start parents of preschoolers and school-age children were asked two sets of questions about their school involvement: whether the school contacted them for various reasons, and whether the parent spent time in school for any of several reasons.

Contact by School. Parents reported that schools or preschools generally contact them for positive, not negative, reasons (Exhibit 2.8). During the past month, parents of school-age children were most frequently contacted by school about good academic performance (42 percent), programs or services available at school (40 percent), or positive school behavior (37 percent). The same holds for the parents of preschoolers. Parents of school-age children reported that they were much less often contacted about behavior problems or poor academic performance (12 percent each), health or discipline problems (8 percent each), or attendance issues (5 percent).

Data from the Prospects study of Chapter 1 children (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 259) show that the parents of Chapter 1 first-graders were somewhat more likely than Even Start parents to report that school had contacted them, possibly because the Prospects questionnaire asked about contacts since the beginning of the school year instead of during the prior month. Still, the contacts were for quite similar reasons: 52 percent of first grade parents had been contacted by school for good academic performance and 40 percent for positive child behavior. Twenty percent were contacted for poor school performance, 26 percent for student behavior problems, 5 percent for attendance or tardiness, 15 percent for discipline problems, and 22 percent for health problems.

Participation in School Activities. Parents reported that they are most likely to take part in school activities when their child is directly involved or when the activity directly affects their child (Exhibit 2.8). During the past month, parents most frequently went to school for a conference with their child’s teacher (44 percent), for an informal talk with a teacher or the principal (40 percent), to observe classroom activities (34 percent) or to attend an event in which their child participated (30 percent). Parents were least likely to go to school to work or to help organize activities tangential to their child, for instance, working as a paid employee (1 percent), serving on the school’s governing board (2 percent), volunteering in the office, cafeteria, or

library (7 percent), for a parent advisory committee meeting (7 percent), or for fundraising (14 percent).

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences (FACES) study asked parents about the program-related activities in which they had participated (Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1998). The percentages are substantially higher for Head Start families than for Even Start because the Head Start questions referred to the past year while the Even Start questions referred to the past month. However, Head Start parents, like Even Start parents, were most likely to participate in child-centered activities such as observing in the child's classroom, attending parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering in the child's classroom, instead of school-focused activities such as preparing or distributing newsletters, participating in policy council meetings, or visiting other Head Start parents (Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1998, p. 56).

Data from Prospects (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 261) shows a different pattern of school involvement for the parents of first-graders. The most common activity in which parents were involved was fund-raising (51 percent), followed by 39 percent for Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, and 31 percent for classroom volunteer activities. The emphasis here seems to be on activities that support the school, rather than activities that support the child, perhaps because the data come from a school setting instead of a preschool setting.

PARENTAL FEELINGS AND OPINIONS ABOUT SCHOOL

New Even Start parents who have school-age children participating in Even Start were asked how comfortable they are in school settings, and in addition were asked a series of questions designed to elicit their opinions about their child's school.

Comfort in School Settings. Many new Even Start parents reported that they felt at home in school settings (Exhibit 2.8). About two-thirds of the parents of school-age children felt comfortable or completely comfortable when visiting their child's school, talking to their child's teacher, and when meeting new families at school.

Opinions about Child's School. Parents of school-age children who were new to Even Start reported high opinions about their child's school (Exhibit 2.8). More than 90 percent of these parents agreed with a variety of positive statements about school, for instance, that their child is treated fairly, that their child is respected, and that school is safe.

FORM AND MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND OTHER RESOURCES

We take a broad view of parent connections with the community, and include in this area factors such as volunteering, employment status, and language usage. Data for some of these adult progress indicators are presented again in Chapter 5 of this report which focuses on the background characteristics of families participating in Even Start. The present chapter uses these data in a different way, as baseline or pretest data for some of the progress indicators that Even Start hopes to affect. Compared to Chapter 1 families, parents in Even Start families are less likely to have formal education credentials and to be employed, and are more likely to receive welfare benefits and have a low household income.

ADULT VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY, INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION

Newly-enrolled Even Start parents were asked a series of questions about their involvement in the working world—their educational credentials, whether they took part in any volunteer activities, their involvement in social programs, their employment status, and the sources of income and annual household income for their family. The reader should remember that these data are based on responses from 8,054 families that newly enrolled in Even Start in the fall of 1998 and that completed Form E of the ESPIRS within 30 days of enrollment.

Educational Credentials. When asked about their educational credentials, 12 percent of new Even Start adults reported that they had a GED, 3 percent had a high school diploma, and 2 percent had some college. The remaining 83 percent did not have any of these credentials (Exhibit 2.10). Fifty-two percent of new enrollees were working to acquire a GED certificate, and 9 percent were working on a high school diploma. Only a small percentage of adults reported that they had, or were working on, any other type of license or degree. Mothers of Chapter 1 first-graders had substantially higher levels of educational achievement than new Even Start parents (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 145). Thirty-nine percent of the mothers of Chapter 1 first-graders had a high school diploma or a GED and 12 percent had done some college work.

Social Services. Forty-three percent of new Even Start parents reported that they were receiving some sort of welfare benefits (Exhibit 2.10). Less than 1 percent were participating in employment training, vocational education, or vocational rehabilitation programs. Families of Chapter 1 first-graders were less likely than new Even Start families to be receiving welfare benefits (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 143): 22 percent of the Chapter 1 families received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and 8 percent received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

Volunteer Work. New Even Start parents did a modest amount of volunteer work, mostly in schools or churches (Exhibit 2.10). At the time they enrolled in Even Start, 10 percent of parents volunteered in Head Start or other preschool classrooms, 9 percent in churches, and 8 percent in elementary schools. Three percent or less of parents volunteered in hospitals, community centers, or for political groups.

Household Income. Sixty-one percent of newly-enrolled parents reported that most of the money their family lives on comes from wages from a job; 32 percent reported that most of their money comes from government assistance (Exhibit 2.10). By any standards, new Even Start families have low annual household incomes. One-third of the families have incomes under \$6,000. About 40 percent have incomes between \$6,000 and \$15,000. The remaining 27 percent have incomes above \$15,000.

Comparisons with Prospects data are not straightforward because the two studies used different reporting intervals for household income. Still, Chapter 1 families appear to have higher incomes than Even Start families. Fifty percent of Chapter 1 families with a first grader had incomes under \$15,000 compared with 73 percent of new Even Start families; and 44 percent of Chapter 1 families had incomes over \$20,000 compared with 15 percent of Even Start families (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 141).

Employment Status. Twenty-five percent of parents reported that they were employed when they joined Even Start (Exhibit 2.10). About half of these had full-time employment and half had part-time or seasonal jobs. Of the 75 percent that were unemployed, two-thirds were enrolled in school. This is a substantially higher unemployment rate than is found in Chapter 1 families, where data from the Prospects study showed that 45 percent of the mothers of Chapter 1 first-graders worked full-time and 11 percent worked part-time (Puma, et al., 1993, p. 147).

ADULT USE OF ENGLISH

Children who are acquiring English as a second language are more likely to have difficulty learning to read and write in English than children whose first language is English (August & Hakuta, 1997). Newly enrolled Even Start parents were asked which language they usually speak at home, as well as questions about how well they understand, speak, and read English. They also were asked what language they use to read to their child.

Sixty percent of newly enrolled Even Start parents reported that they usually speak English at home, while 33 percent reported speaking Spanish (Exhibit 2.11). About two-thirds of all newly-enrolled parents reported that they understand, speak, and read English either well or very well, and that they read to their child in English.

**EXHIBIT 2.1
READING TO CHILD AND OTHER PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)**

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
(source: Form E: B8, C16, D19)	Every day	26%	27%	26%
	About 3 times a week	25%	31%	28%
	Once a week	18%	21%	19%
	Several times a month	10%	10%	13%
	Several times a year	4%	6%	8%
	Never	17%	5%	6%
(source: Form E: B5, C9, D13)	More than 2 hours	74%	49%	47%
	1-2 hours	13%	22%	24%
	About 1 hour	6%	13%	12%
	30 minutes to 1 hour	4%	10%	10%
	Less than 30 minutes	2%	5%	6%
	None	1%	1%	1%
(source: Form E: C8)	Colors	N/A	87%	N/A
	Count things	N/A	83%	N/A
	Alphabet	N/A	75%	N/A
	Nursery rhymes or songs	N/A	72%	N/A
	Shapes (for instance, circle, square)	N/A	67%	N/A
	Recognize numbers in books	N/A	56%	N/A
	Write his or her name	N/A	51%	N/A
(source: Form E: C13, D16)	Help child w/homework	N/A	N/A	80%
	See if homework is done	N/A	N/A	82%
	Read to/with child	N/A	89%	89%
	Talk w/child re: school activity	N/A	80%	90%
	Talk w/child re: TV programs	N/A	76%	76%
	Talk w/child re: problem/fears	N/A	76%	85%
	Talk w/child re: school studies	N/A	74%	89%
	Talk w/child re: expectations	N/A	67%	81%
	Talk w/child re: plans/goals	N/A	57%	72%
(source: Form E: C14, D17)	Go to library	N/A	33%	40%
	Go to zoo	N/A	20%	19%
	Go to musical event	N/A	16%	18%
	Go to art museum	N/A	8%	10%

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Twenty-six percent of new Even Start parents with a child age birth through 2 years, 11 months reported that they read stories to their child every day.

EXHIBIT 2.2
SUMMARY OF DATA ON PARENT READING TO CHILDREN

SOURCE	YEAR	CHILD AGE/ GRADE	READ TO CHILD DAILY	READ TO CHILD THREE OR MORE TIMES A WEEK
Even Start	1998-1999	0-2 years	26%	51%
National Evaluation		3-5 years	27%	58%
		6+ years	26%	54%
National Household Education Study	1999	3-5 years		81% (national) 69% (poverty) 61% (no HS diploma)
Chapter 1 Prospects Study	1993	Grade 1	51%	
Early Childhood Longitudinal Study	1998	Grade K	45% (national) 36% (no HS diploma)	
Head Start FACES Study	1997	3-4 years	33%	
Listening to Parents	1997	0-3 years	39% (national)	

Exhibit reads: Twenty-six percent of parents of children age 0-2 years in the national Even Start evaluation reported that they read to their child daily.

EXHIBIT 2.3
ADULT USE OF READING AND WRITING AT HOME
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	PERCENT OF ADULTS (N = 8,054)
Reading: Material that the adult read during past week (source: Form E: A3)	Letters, bills	84%
	Advertisements in the mail	78%
	Street signs, bus signs	74%
	Books	67%
	Newspapers	63%
	Labels on food, cooking recipes	62%
	Coupons	61%
	Notes from teacher or school	60%
	Magazines	57%
	TV Guide or other TV listing	43%
Writing: Items that the adult wrote during the past week (source: Form E: A2)	Instructions, bus schedules	43%
	Religious materials	39%
	Appointments on calendar	66%
	Grocery lists	62%
	Notes or memos	57%
	Forms or applications	55%
	Letters	45%
	Checks, money orders	45%
	Greeting cards	25%
	Crossword puzzles	23%
Journal or diary	23%	
Recipes	21%	
Stories or poems	20%	

Exhibit reads: Eighty-four percent of new Even Start parents reported that they read materials such as letters and bills during the past week.

EXHIBIT 2.4
RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO CHILD AT HOME
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
Do you have a library card. . . (source: Form E: A4)	Yes	36%	36%	37%
In the past week did you take books home from the library or from Even Start or did you buy any books. . . (source: Form E: A5)	Yes	25%	31%	28%
Which of these things do you have in your home. . . (source: Form E: A6)	Rattle or “squeak” toys	86%	64%	51%
	Pull toys, rolling toys	79%	77%	67%
	Crayons and paper	78%	95%	95%
	Scissors	63%	79%	89%
	Blocks	62%	62%	51%
	Scotch tape, paste, stapler	61%	72%	77%
	Tinkertoys, Legos, Beads	56%	62%	58%
	Puzzles	51%	61%	62%
	Paint or magic marker	48%	60%	67%
	Picture catalogs to read/cut up	46%	53%	54%
	Yarn, thread, cloth for sewing	35%	39%	43%
	Clay or playdough	26%	34%	35%
	Make-believe toys	25%	29%	33%
Plants in pot or garden	21%	28%	37%	
About how many books does child have. . . (source: Form E: B7, C15, D18)	None, too young	21%	9%	4%
	1 or 2 books	19%	17%	17%
	3 to 9 books	28%	32%	32%
	10 or more books	32%	42%	47%
Do you have any of the following in your home for child to look at or read. . . (source: Form E: C11, D14)	Magazines	N/A	69%	70%
	Newspapers	N/A	54%	56%
	TV Guide	N/A	34%	39%
	Comic books	N/A	37%	43%
	Other	N/A	74%	79%

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Thirty-six percent of new Even Start parents with a child age birth through 2 years, 11 months reported that they read stories to their child every day.

EXHIBIT 2.5
PARENT EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILD
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE	CHILD AGE	CHILD AGE
		0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
How far in school do you think your child will go. . .	Will not finish high school	2%	1%	2%
	Graduate from high school	17%	15%	15%
	Voc, trade, business, military	11%	11%	12%
	Attend college but will not graduate	4%	3%	4%
(source: Form E: B4, C7, D12)	Graduate from college	48%	48%	45%
	Attend graduate school	19%	22%	23%

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Two percent of new Even Start parents with a child age birth through 2 years, 11 months reported that they expect their child will not finish high school.

EXHIBIT 2.6
PARENT REPORTED CHILD LITERACY SKILLS (FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
Alphabet: Child recognizes, either in English or in primary language. . . (source: Form E: B11, C23, D25)	All alphabet letters	2%	9%	55%
	Most alphabet letters	2%	14%	18%
	Some alphabet letters	13%	52%	23%
	No alphabet letters	84%	26%	4%
Counting: Child can count, either in English or in primary language. . . (source: Form E: B12, C24, D26)	Up to 100 or more	0%	1%	37%
	Up to 50	0%	2%	15%
	Up to 20	1%	16%	25%
	Up to 10	7%	43%	17%
	Up to 5	18%	29%	4%
Writing: Child likes to write or pretend to write, either in English or primary language. . . (source: Form E: B14, C26, D28)	Often	24%	51%	65%
	Sometimes	19%	33%	25%
	Once or twice	7%	10%	7%
	Never	50%	7%	3%
	Yes	38%	87%	95%
Speaking: Child's speech can be understood by a stranger. . . (source: Form E: B16, C28, D30)	Yes	38%	87%	95%
	No	62%	13%	5%
First name: Child can write his or her first name. . . (source: Form E: B15, C27, D29)	Yes	2%	29%	89%
	No	98%	71%	11%
First name: Child recognizes first name in writing. . . (source: Form E: B18, C30, D32)	Yes	7%	55%	96%
	No	93%	45%	4%
Colors: Child can identify red, yellow, blue, green by name, either in English or in primary language. . . (source: Form E: B19, C31, D33)	All of them	4%	40%	76%
	Some of them	20%	49%	21%
	None of them	76%	11%	3%
Reading: Child reads/pretends to read. . . (source: Form E: B17, C29, D31)	Yes	53%	92%	95%
	No	47%	8%	5%
Reading: Child reads for enjoyment. . . (source: Form E: D21)	Every day	N/A	N/A	35%
	Several times a week	N/A	N/A	33%
	Several times/month	N/A	N/A	13%
	Several times a year	N/A	N/A	4%
	Never	N/A	N/A	15%

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2, 11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Two percent of new Even Start parents with a child age birth through 2 years, 11 months reported that their child recognizes all alphabet letters.

**EXHIBIT 2.7
PARENT AS A TEACHER
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)**

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
Do you agree or disagree with these items. . . (source: Form E: B6, C10)	I really like to teach child something new	98%	98%	N/A
	Child's education is responsibility of our family	94%	94%	N/A
	Child needs to play with me	94%	93%	N/A
	Child learns by playing with other children	89%	92%	N/A
	More of child's learning at this age takes place by watching people and things rather than by being told	85%	77%	N/A
	It is hard for me to tell when child has learned something	20%	18%	N/A
	It is difficult for me to think of things to say to child during play	18%	20%	N/A
	Playing with child makes me restless	16%	17%	N/A
	It is hard to stay interested when playing with child	15%	19%	N/A
	I scold child for not learning	10%	17%	N/A

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Ninety-eight percent of new Even Start parents with a child age birth through 2 years, 11 months reported that they like to teach their child something new.

**EXHIBIT 2.8
PARENT INVOLVEMENT WITH SCHOOL THEIR CHILD ATTENDS
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)**

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
Contact by school: During the past month, were you contacted by child's preschool/school about. . . (source: Form E: C4, D5)	Good academic performance	N/A	N/A	42%
	Other programs or services	N/A	31%	40%
	Positive school behavior	N/A	41%	37%
	Behavior problems in school	N/A	11%	12%
	Poor academic performance	N/A	N/A	12%
	Health problems	N/A	19%	8%
	Discipline problems	N/A	N/A	8%
	Attendance/tardiness problems	N/A	N/A	5%
	Skipping or cutting classes	N/A	N/A	1%
Participation in school activities: During the past month, did you go to child's preschool or school for any of these reasons. . . (source: Form E: C5, C6 D6, D7)	Conference with teacher	N/A	31%	44%
	Informal talk with teacher/principal	N/A	42%	40%
	Observe classroom activities	N/A	49%	34%
	Attend event in which child took part	N/A	25%	30%
	Volunteer for projects or trips	N/A	27%	21%
	Meet with parent-teacher org.	N/A	12%	20%
	Volunteer in child's classroom	N/A	25%	17%
	Fundraising activities	N/A	9%	14%
	Meet with school counselor	N/A	N/A	9%
	Attend after-school programs	N/A	N/A	9%
	Conference with director/principal	N/A	10%	8%
	Parent advisory committee meeting	N/A	5%	7%
	Volunteer in office, cafeteria, library	N/A	5%	7%
Serve on school's governing board	N/A	3%	2%	
	Work as paid employee	N/A	2%	1%

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Forty-two percent of new Even Start parents with a child age 5,0 through 7,11 reported being contacted by their child's school regarding good academic performance during the past month.

EXHIBIT 2.9
PARENT FEELINGS AND OPINIONS ABOUT SCHOOL
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	CHILD AGE 0,0 – 2,11 (N=3,563)	CHILD AGE 3,0 – 4,11 (N=2,537)	CHILD AGE 5,0 – 7,11 (N=1,619)
Comfort with school settings: Are you comfortable when you . . . (source: Form E: D8)	Visit child's school	N/A	N/A	67%
	Talk to child's teacher	N/A	N/A	65%
	Meet new families at the school	N/A	N/A	60%
Opinions about child's school: Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements about your child's school. . . (source: Form E: D11)	School places priority on learning	N/A	N/A	96%
	Child is respected by school staff	N/A	N/A	96%
	I am respected by school staff	N/A	N/A	96%
	School feels parents should participate	N/A	N/A	96%
	Homework assigned is worthwhile	N/A	N/A	94%
	My child is treated fairly at school	N/A	N/A	94%
	School standards are realistic	N/A	N/A	94%
	School is a safe place	N/A	N/A	94%
	School maintains discipline/order	N/A	N/A	93%
	I would pick this school for child	N/A	N/A	91%
	My child is challenged at school	N/A	N/A	90%
	My child gets any needed help	N/A	N/A	88%
Parents work to support school board	N/A	N/A	86%	
Parents have a say in school policy	N/A	N/A	81%	

Note: Child age is indicated in years and months (for example, 2,11 means 2 years and 11 months).

Exhibit reads: Sixty-seven percent of new Even Start parents with a child age 5,0 through 7,11 reported that they feel comfortable visiting their child's school.

EXHIBIT 2.10
ADULT ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	PERCENT OF ADULTS (N=8,054)
Which educational diplomas, degrees, job-related certificates, or licenses do you have? (source: Form E: A14, A15)	Trade license or certificate	7%
	GED certificate (or equivalent)	3%
	High school diploma	12%
	Associates degree	1%
	Bachelors degree	1%
	Graduate degree	0%
Which certificate, diploma or degree are you working toward? (source: Form E: A16, A17)	Trade license or certificate	3%
	GED certificate (or equivalent)	52%
	High school diploma	9%
	Associates degree	2%
	Bachelors degree	1%
	Graduate degree	0%
In which of the following social or educational services are you currently participating? (source: Form E: A10)	Welfare (AFDC, general assistance, SSI)	43%
	Employment training (JTPA, JOBS)	4%
	Vocational education	4%
	Vocational rehabilitation	1%
	Other	15%
Do you do any regular unpaid volunteer work or help out in any of the following groups or organizations? (source: Form E: A1)	Head Start or other preschool	10%
	Church or religious group	9%
	Elementary school	8%
	Neighborhood or community center	3%
	Hospital or community health center	1%
	Political or advocacy group	1%
Where does most of the money your family lives on come from? (source: Form E: A7)	Wages from a job	61%
	Alimony or child support	2%
	Government assistance	32%
	Other	5%
About how much money does your household make or receive each year? (source: Form E: A8)	< \$3,000	18%
	\$3,000 - \$5,999	16%
	\$6,000 - \$8,999	13%
	\$9,000 - \$11,999	13%
	\$12,000 - \$14,999	13%
	\$15,000 - \$19,999	12%
	\$20,000 - \$25,000	8%
	\$25,000+	7%
Are you currently employed? (source: Form E: A9)	Yes	25%
	full-time paying job	46%
	part-time or seasonal paying job	46%
	job training program	4%
	subsidized employment	1%
	other	3%
	No	75%
	enrolled in school or educational program	68%
	retired or disabled	2%
	currently seeking employment	13%
not currently seeking employment	17%	

Exhibit reads: Seven percent of new Even Start parents reported that they have a trade license or certificate.

EXHIBIT 2.11
ADULT USE OF ENGLISH
(FAMILIES NEW TO EVEN START IN 1998-1999)

QUESTION	RESPONSE	PERCENT OF ADULTS (N=8,054)
What language do you usually speak at home? (source: Form E: A11)	English	60%
	Spanish	33%
	Other	7%
How well do you understand English? (source: Form E: A12)	Not at all	8%
	Not well	22%
	Well	15%
	Very well	55%
How well do you speak English? (source: Form E: A12)	Not at all	12%
	Not well	21%
	Well	15%
	Very well	52%
How well do you read English? (source: Form E: A12)	Not at all	12%
	Not well	22%
	Well	18%
	Very well	48%
If you read to your child, what language do you usually use ? (source: Form E: A13)	English	66%
	Spanish	28%
	Other	5%
	Unable to read to child	1%

Exhibit reads: Sixty percent of new Even Start parents usually speak English at home.

CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPATION IN EVEN START

One of the most basic aspects of any voluntary social or educational program is the extent to which families participate—the degree to which they take advantage of the services that are offered. Even Start families are supposed to take part in three core instructional activities and to receive various support services. Parents are to spend interactive time with their children on literacy-based activities. Even Start does not have a set program duration, that is, families are not required or asked to participate for any particular period of time. The definition of family literacy services added in 1998, however, provides that services should be “of sufficient hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family.” Even Start projects are supposed to recruit and serve families that are most in need within each community, setting an expectation for a relatively long period of participation to achieve the goal of sustainable change.

There are many ways to measure participation in Even Start: the number of families that take part in any program activities during a given year, the number or percentage of families that participate for a given period of time (for instance, a year), and the level or intensity with which families participate. Each of these measures is discussed. The description of Even Start participation is based on data reported through the 1998-1999 program year. The analysis examines, except where noted, the extent of participation by all families (both new and continuing) that received Even Start services in 1998-1999. For selected analyses, the results are compared to participation data from previous years. The primary comparison year is 1996-1997, which was the final year of the second national evaluation of Even Start.

PARTICIPATION IN ADULT AND PARENTING EDUCATION

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATING ADULTS

One of the requirements for participation in Even Start is a parent’s regular involvement in adult education and parenting education. In 1998-1999, 93 percent of all parents (new and continuing) for whom projects submitted data participated in some form of adult education,¹⁴ and 94 percent participated in parenting education (Exhibit 3.1).¹⁵ These high participation rates are identical to those observed during the last year (1996-1997) of the second national Even Start evaluation.

¹⁴ Some families participate in Even Start by virtue of “continuing eligibility” whereby a child continues to receive Even Start services after his or her parent has completed the adult education requirements. In these families, adults are not expected to continue participation in adult education.

¹⁵ Approximately 16 percent of participating adults in 1998-1999 had missing data on participation in adult or parenting education. The participation rates cited here are based on participants with data.

The type of **adult education** in which newly enrolled parents participated depended on their education and English proficiency levels.¹⁶ About two-thirds of the parents who entered Even Start with a seventh to 12th-grade education (but without a high school diploma) and who were proficient in English participated in GED preparation services.¹⁷ In addition, 35 to 40 percent of these parents participated in Even Start adult secondary programs. Thirty percent or more of the English-proficient parents who entered with sixth grade or less education participated in beginning, intermediate, GED, and/or ESL programs. As might be expected, English-proficient parents who entered Even Start with a GED or a high school diploma were less likely to participate in most forms of adult education than their less-educated Even Start peers were. Parents with limited English proficiency were more likely to participate in ESL programs than any other type of adult education, regardless of their education level at entry to Even Start.

Participation in **parenting education** was consistent across all groups of parents. More than 90 percent participated in parenting education regardless of English proficiency or educational background.

Even Start parents were asked if they had met the specific goals they set to achieve within specific instructional services. Typically, programs set educational goals for each participant; these goals may be intermediate, progress-indicator goals that are attainable before the final goal of program completion is achieved. A parent could have several intermediate goals for a given year of program participation.

A majority of participating adults reported that they had met their goals in 1998-1999. For adults enrolled in Beginning Adult Basic Education, 59 percent reported reaching their goals in that service. Fifty-five percent of adults who enrolled in Intermediate Adult Basic Education and 53 percent of those taking Adult Secondary Education classes reported meeting their goals. Similarly, among parents taking ESL classes, 55 percent reported reaching their goals in 1998-1999. In parenting education, 61 percent of adults reported reaching the goals they set.

HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

During the first Even Start evaluation, average annual hours of participation in adult education increased steadily—from 68 hours per year in 1990-1991, to 91 hours in 1991-1992, and to 107 hours in 1992-1993. The latter figure represents 13.7 hours per month over an average of 7.8 months of participation (St.Pierre, et al., 1995, p. 138). These findings, based on a relatively small number of maturing projects, indicated that hours of participation increased as projects gained experience.

¹⁶ Parents who did not participate in adult education were not different in most respects from those who did participate, except for the years of schooling prior to entering Even Start. Twenty-nine percent of parents who did not participate in adult education had attended the 12th grade in high school (without receiving a diploma), compared with only 15 percent of parents who did participate in Even Start adult education.

¹⁷ Included in this group are about 10 percent of all 1998-1999 new enrollees who spoke languages other than English at home but could read, write, and understand English well or very well.

During the second national evaluation, average annual hours of participation in adult education stabilized after the increases evident in the program's early years. From 1994-1995 to 1996-1997, average annual hours of participation in adult education ranged from 92 to 96 hours, based on data from all Even Start projects, including both new and mature projects, and new enrollees and continuing participants.¹⁸

The method of reporting hours of participation for all three core education areas was changed for the third national evaluation. Instead of providing an annual total hours for each participant, projects were asked to report the "typical participation hours per month" and the number of months per year that each adult and child participated in Even Start educational services.

For each adult, a measure of annual hours of participation during the third evaluation was created by multiplying the hours of participation in a typical month for the adult by the number of months of participation for the adult. The average adult participated in 156 hours of adult education in 1998-1999 and 149 hours in 1997-1998.¹⁹ Both of these numbers are greater than the hours reported under previous evaluations and are about double the average amount of participation in adult education programs nationally (Development Associates, 1994). This increase may reflect a new method of estimating the annual hours of participation based on "participation in a typical month," in the absence of information about atypically low attendance months.²⁰

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF ADULT EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT OR FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

In the second Even Start evaluation, Tao, Gamse, and Tarr (1998, Exhibit C.7) examined the relationship between project characteristics and annual hours of participation and found that the number of support services that families received and the amount of adult education offered had a positive relationship to adult education participation hours. Examining the relationship between monthly hours of participation and these two variables shows a similar pattern for 1998-1999 (Exhibit 3.2).²¹

¹⁸ Program participation data were not collected in the 1993-1994 evaluation year. Due to many differences in data collection procedures between the first and the second evaluations and refinements in the data reporting system during the second evaluation, relatively small changes in participation rates over the years should not be interpreted as reflections of substantive changes in program operations or effectiveness.

¹⁹ These averages include participants reporting zero hours or months of participation in adult education services. Further, the average participation hours per year is not equivalent to multiplying "the average hours per month" across all participants by "average months of participation." Instead, this measure is created at the individual adult or child level for adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education.

²⁰ In previous evaluations, projects reported the total attendance hours for the entire year for each participant. In 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 projects reported the number of hours in a typical month and the number of months of participation. Beginning in 1999-2000, projects will report the actual hours of participation for each family on a monthly basis.

²¹ Causal interpretations of these results should be made with caution. For example, the relationship between support services received and participation hours may mean that regularly participating families also had more opportunities to receive support services, rather than the availability of more support services leading to greater hours of participation.

- ❑ **Number of Support Services Families Received.** Families that received between five and nine support services participated in an average of 215 hours of adult education per year, compared to an average of only 53 hours per year for families who received no support services.
- ❑ **Hours of Adult Education Offered per Month.** Participation hours were higher in projects that offered more hours of adult education services when compared with projects with lower service intensity. Parents in projects that offered 48 or more hours of adult education per month participated an average of 216 hours, compared to an average of 100 hours in projects that offered less than 16 hours per month of adult education services.

The amount of adult education participation was also examined in relation to parents' age and educational background (Exhibit 3.3).

- ❑ **Parent's Age.** Teen parents were the most active participants in adult education. They participated for an average of 241 hours per year, compared with about 140 hours per year for older parents.
- ❑ **Parent's Education Level.** As might be expected, parents who enrolled in Even Start with a high school diploma, GED, or some postsecondary education spent less time in adult education (average of 129 hours per year) than less educated parents, who averaged 145 to 166 hours.

In addition, there is an interaction between parent age and education level. Teen parents who enrolled with a 10th- to 12th-grade education, without a high school diploma or GED, were the most active participants of all (259 hours per year). It is not surprising that parents with a well-defined short-term goal would participate more regularly and intensively. The higher participation rates among teen parents also may be explained by projects reporting (as they were requested) most or all of high school class hours for parents enrolled in high schools.²²

Among parents age 40 or older, those educated at or below the ninth-grade level participated the most, possibly because their educational needs and the effort necessary to overcome them are the greatest. The group that seems to present the greatest challenge in maintaining regular attendance in adult education is older parents (40 years or older) who already had a high school diploma or GED when they enrolled in Even Start. Of this group, 37 percent had limited English proficiency, and 46 percent had received most of their formal education outside the United States. Although they had completed high school or GED before entering Even Start, many of these parents may need to improve their English language skills or may lack the basic skills necessary to function in society.

²² Although teen parents attending school are not eligible for services under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, they are eligible to participate in Even Start so long as they are within the compulsory school attendance age range for the state and the local education agency (LEA) provides or ensures the availability of their basic education component. Even Start projects may directly fund supplementary adult education services for those parents, such as tutoring.

HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN PARENTING EDUCATION

In 1998-1999, 94 percent of all Even Start parents participated in parenting education, the same percentage observed during 1996-1997, the final year of the second evaluation. The average parent participated in parenting education for eight hours per month (this includes parents with zero hours of participation). Among parents who attended parenting education at least one hour during the year, the average was nine hours per month. The average number of months where parenting education was received was six.²³

The number of hours in which parents participated in parenting education decreased over the course of the first and second evaluations. The average parent participated for 58 hours per year in 1992-1993 (based on participants in 120 mature projects), higher than 32 hours in 1994-1995, 27 hours in 1995-1996, and 28 hours in 1996-1997. The averages after 1994-1995 are based on both new and continuing projects, and project age has a positive relationship to the hours of participation in parenting education. Thus, part of the drop in hours of parenting education between 1992-1993 and subsequent years could be due to the inclusion of data from new projects in the later years (parents in new projects generally participate in fewer hours of parenting education). However, even among the 1996-1997 fourth-year projects, the average participation hours were lower (35 hours) than the 58 hours reported for 1992-1993. As the Even Start program expanded and evolved during the latter half of the 1990's, it is possible that the emphasis on parenting education may have waned.

During the first years of the third evaluation, parenting education participation hours appear to have reversed their recent declines. Calculated by multiplying monthly hours by months per year of participation, annual participation averaged 52 hours in 1997-98 and 53 hours in 1998-99. Again, this apparent increase may be due to the new method of computing the annual participation hours based on attendance in "typical" months, without accounting for atypically low participation months. This issue will be addressed in more detail in the next report from this evaluation.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF PARENTING EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT OR FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Analysis of data from the second national Even Start evaluation suggested that the extent of participation in parenting education varied greatly across parents. An analysis of 1996-1997 Even Start data examined factors related to parents' participation in parenting education (Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998, Exhibit C.8). That analysis, updated using 1998-1999 data, shows that hours of participation in parenting education were related to several features of projects and program operations (Exhibit 3.4):

- ❑ **Number of Support Services Families Received.** Families receiving five to nine types of support services participated an average of 76 hours per year in parenting education, compared to 17 hours for families that received no support services.

²³ The average was also six months when parents who reported zero hours of parenting education were excluded.

- ❑ **Hours of Parenting Education Offered per Month.** Parents in projects offering fewer than eight hours of parenting education per month participated for an average of 29 hours per year compared to 80 hours per year for parents in projects offering 25 or more hours of parenting education each month.
- ❑ **Integration across Core Service Areas.** Parents in projects with a higher degree of integration of core services participated more frequently in parenting education than parents in projects with lower degrees of integration.²⁴

Data from the first and second national evaluations showed a generally positive relationship between project age and annual parenting education participation hours. However, this relationship was not found in the 1998-1999 data.

PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN

Ninety-seven percent of the children for whom projects submitted participation data in 1998-1999 participated in some form of early childhood education services. This is up slightly from the 95 percent of children who participated in 1996-1997, the final year of the second Even Start evaluation.

Exhibit 3.5 shows that the most commonly used types of early childhood education services in 1998-1999 were organized, center-based programs (55 percent of all children) and individualized, home-based programs (50 percent of all children).²⁵ As expected, the early childhood education service received by most Even Start children age 5 years and older was coordination of Even Start with compulsory education. Participation in Even Start-sponsored center-based programs and home-based services was more common among infants and toddlers (ages 0 to 2 years) as well as preschoolers (ages 3 to 4 years) than among kindergarten and school-age children.

Children participating in day care programs with educational components increased by 8 percentage points between 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 (from 19 to 27 percent), possibly reflecting the increasing numbers of infants and toddlers in Even Start (not shown in exhibit). Children receiving Even Start services designed for school-age children increased from 7 to 13 percent during the period from 1996-1997 to 1998-1999, after declining from 17 percent to 7 percent in the two previous years.

²⁴ Integration is defined by the extent to which a project reports that instructional services across core service areas are (1) conducted by the same instructors, (2) involve the same or similar activities, and (3) are planned together and coordinated.

²⁵ Of the 4 percent of children who did not participate in any Even Start services in 1998-1999, 51 percent were 0 to 2 year-olds, 21 percent were 3 to 4 year-olds, 7 percent were 5 year-olds, 11 percent were 6 to 7 year-olds, and 9 percent were older than 7 years (not shown in exhibit). The nonparticipating infants and toddlers (representing less than 1 percent of all children in Even Start in 1998-1999) may have been younger siblings of preschool age children who were regular Even Start participants. Nonparticipating children ages 8 and older represent less than 1 percent of all Even Start children in 1998-1999 and may have graduated from the core early childhood education services offered by their projects, although their parents were still completing their educational goals.

HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

During 1997-1998 and 1998-1999, children received Even Start early childhood education services for an average of 41 and 43 hours per month, respectively (the averages included children with zero hours of early childhood education). The average months of participation were six months in both 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. To examine children's participation for the entire year, we multiplied each child's "participation hours in a typical month" by "the months of attendance" and then averaged the results across all children. On average, children received 301 hours per year in early childhood education services in 1997-1998 and 325 hours per year in 1998-1999.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT OR FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Analysis of data from the second national Even Start evaluation (see Chapter 6 in Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998) identified several parent, child, and project characteristics that were related to measures of participation in early childhood education. We updated the previous analyses by examining the relationships between these factors and children's participation hours in 1998-1999. The annual participation hours in early childhood education were related to the following factors (Exhibit 3.6):

- ❑ **Time in Program.** Not surprisingly, the time in program was related to participation hours. Combining all age groups, continuing children averaged over 100 hours more per year of early childhood education than new enrollees.
- ❑ **Age of Child.** Children 5 years and older reported much higher participation hours than younger children. Their participation hours included the hours they spent in compulsory education classes as well as any additional educational services provided by Even Start, while a large portion of the younger children's hours likely represents services provided directly by Even Start.
- ❑ **Number of Support Services Received.** Children in families receiving five to nine support services during 1998-1999 participated in an average of 432 hours of early childhood education that year, compared with only 260 hours for children in families receiving no support services.
- ❑ **Hours of Early Childhood Education Offered per Month.** Projects offering less than 24 hours per month of early childhood education services averaged 235 hours per year of participation, compared to 410 participation hours for projects offering 80 or more hours of services monthly.

PARTICIPATION IN ALL THREE CORE INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Families who enroll in Even Start are expected to participate in adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education instructional services. Ninety-one percent of families in 1998-1999 participated in all three core instructional components, including some time for parents and children together.²⁶ This represents a slight decrease from the 93 percent of families with comprehensive participation in the final year of the second evaluation; however, the rates of full participation have remained slightly over 90 percent since 1993-1994.²⁷

Two programmatic factors are related to participation in all core services: the number of support services families received and project age (Exhibit 3.7). Nearly all (95 percent) of the families who received five to nine support services during the program year participated in all core services, compared to 82 percent of families who received no support services.

Fifth and sixth year projects as a group had the highest rate of families participating in all core services—higher than in younger or more mature projects (Exhibit 3.7). The rising rates up to the sixth year may reflect progressive enhancements in service implementation, while a slight drop among seventh year and older projects may suggest that some families in these projects are completing some, but not all, of their educational goals.

Nine percent of all 1998-1999 families participated in some, but not all, core services. No specific family characteristics (for example, teen parents, older parents, parents with various levels of prior education, families with young versus older children) were related to partial participation. While the data do not allow us to examine reasons for partial participation, these may include children who continue to participate after their parents completed their program goals; new projects offering partial services in the beginning months of implementation; some families being more interested in adult education than child education; or adults who continue after children are beyond the age of eligibility.

ENTRY TO AND LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION IN EVEN START

Many Even Start projects operate under a rolling admission policy whereby families can enroll throughout the year. Further, participation in Even Start is open-ended, with no set length of expected participation. Therefore, families can enter Even Start at any time of the year, and they can leave at any time of the year. This means that at the beginning of each program year, some families are continuing participants from the prior year. Then, throughout the year, new families enroll in the program. Also throughout the year, some of the newly enrolled families and some of the families that continued from the previous year leave the program.

²⁶ All family records with missing participation data in one or more service areas (16 percent of all families) were excluded from the computation of the 1998-1999 rate based on the rationale that we did not know whether these families participated in all three service areas. If we assume that families with missing records did not participate in one or more of the core services, then only 76 percent of families participated in all three core services.

²⁷ Once parents reach their adult educational goals, they only must participate in parenting education and parent-child joint activities; their children must continue to participate in early childhood education.

It was not possible to fully investigate this complicated pattern of entering and leaving Even Start with data from the previous two national evaluations because those studies did not collect information on the enrollment and exit dates for each family. Those evaluations were able to tell us whether each family participated in Even Start at some point during each year but not how long they participated. Therefore, estimates of length of participation and program retention from the first and second national evaluations were based on relatively crude data. The present evaluation allows a better analysis of enrollment and retention patterns by examining data from the two cohorts of families that joined Even Start in the 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 program years.

Because of the improved quality of data on program enrollment and exit, it is possible that findings from this evaluation about length of participation and retention will differ from those of the first two national evaluations. **In all likelihood this is due to improved measurement rather than to any real change in the phenomena being investigated.**

PATTERN OF ENTRY TO EVEN START

Many Even Start project directors tell us that they have a rolling admissions policy, but the issue of exactly when during the year families join Even Start has never been investigated. An analysis of enrollment dates was done to show the percentage of families that enrolled in each month during the 1998-1999 program year (Exhibit 3.8a). The data confirm what project directors say, that Even Start families do indeed enter throughout the year. As expected, a somewhat larger percentage of families enter in the fall (September-October), and after the winter holidays (January-February) than in other months. About 60 percent of the families in each year were enrolled in the first half of the program year, between July and December; conversely, about 40 percent enrolled between January and June. But, on the whole, these data make it clear that Even Start projects recruit and enroll families on a rolling basis during the entire year.

LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION

As discussed above, the prior Even Start evaluations were only able to tell whether a family was present or absent at some point during each program year, not how long the family participated. This means that in the first and second national evaluations, a family that enrolled in Even Start at the end of one program year (for example, May) and then left at the beginning of the next year (for example, August), would count as having participated in two program years, when in reality the family participated for only four months.

Families that Enrolled in the 1997-1998 Program Year. Enrollment and exit dates from the present evaluation were used to improve on prior analyses by looking at newly enrolled families and calculating the percentage of families that left Even Start after participating for one, two, three, etc. months. We first work with the cohort of 16,663 families that newly enrolled in Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year. For this analysis, the year in which a family leaves Even Start is irrelevant. What is important is the number of months between their

enrollment and exit dates. Several conclusions can be drawn from the data presented in Exhibit 3.8b.

The data show that 71.0 percent of the families that enrolled in Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year left the program, having participated for 12 or fewer months.²⁸ Conversely, 29.0 percent of all families that enrolled in Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year participated for more than 12 months. Of these families, 9.7 percent left Even Start with between 13 and 24 months of participation, while 19.3 percent remained in the program for 24 or more months. Data from the 1999-2000 ESPIRS will give us more information about exactly how long this latter group of families participated in Even Start.

Families that Enrolled in the 1998-1999 Program Year. Exhibit 3.8c presents a similar, although shortened, analysis for the next cohort of Even Start families—the 15,855 families that enrolled in Even Start sometime during the 1998-1999 program year. This is the most recent cohort for which we have data, and only 12 months of data currently are available.

As of June 1999, 31.5 percent of all newly enrolled families had dropped out of Even Start with 12 or fewer months of participation. The remaining 69.5 percent of all newly enrolled families either left with no termination date or were still participating at the end of the program year (June 1999). We will not know which is the case until we receive and analyze ESPIRS data for the 1999-2000 program year. Because they joined Even Start throughout the year, these families experienced anywhere from one month to 12 months of participation during 1998-1999. “Still participating” families with long participation periods joined Even Start early in the year, while “still participating” families with shorter amounts of participation joined Even Start later in the year.

Therefore, we expect the percentage of families that participated for 12 months or less to grow, as families that enrolled in the 1998-1999 program year continue to leave the program. If we want to know the percentage of families that joined Even Start in 1998-1999 and that participated for 12 or more months, we will have to wait for the 1999-2000 ESPIRS data. This is because some, perhaps many, of the 69.5 percent of families that joined Even Start in 1998-1999 and are still participating joined late in the year and may drop out before completing 12 months in the program. We will not know that percentage until we receive the 1999-2000 data.

REASONS FOR LEAVING EVEN START

Even Start project directors reported that 31 percent of the families that participated in Even Start during 1998-1999 left the program sometime during the year and gave one or more reasons for leaving (additional families left the program but did not give a reason for leaving). While no data are available for families that either left during the year and did not provide a reason, or that may leave prior to the start of the next program year, it could well be that these “non-

²⁸ This includes 21 percent of families who enrolled in Even Start during 1997-1998, and then left the program during 1997-1998, with no exit date. To calculate a length of participation, we assumed that each of these families participated from their enrollment dates until the end of the program year (6/30/1998).

responding” families leave for reasons that are different from families that report a reason for leaving.

FAMILIES THAT MET THEIR GOALS AND LEFT EVEN START

Even Start has no standard criteria for “goal completion.” The specific goals for each family are likely to reflect the educational needs and capacities of participants and the educational curriculum offered by the project. Accordingly, the determination of goal completion is also likely to be specific to each family.

Seven percent of 1998-1999 participating families left after completing their planned educational goals (Exhibit 3.9). Comparisons among participant groups shows that rates of leaving the program after meeting goals vary by parent age, educational level, and whether or not the parents enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 or earlier (Exhibit 3.10). In general, parents who entered Even Start with a higher education level were more likely to meet their goals than parents who entered with a lower education level. Further, teen parents who entered with some high school experience or with a high school diploma were more likely to meet their goals than older parents.

FAMILIES THAT LEFT BEFORE MEETING THEIR GOALS

Of all the 1998-1999 participating families, 8 percent left Even Start because parents found employment that conflicted with continued participation; 7 percent moved out of Even Start service areas; and 5 percent left because they switched to other educational or job-training programs or to look for employment (Exhibit 3.9). Twenty percent left because of various motivational problems (for instance, poor attendance; family problems and crises preventing participation; and lack of interest). In addition, 7 percent of families participating in 1998-1999 left Even Start for reasons other than those listed in Exhibit 3.9 such as health problems, maternity leave or the arrival of a new infant, lack of transportation, homelessness, and termination or reduction of Even Start services due to insufficient resources.²⁹ The effects of welfare reform legislation, first reported by projects in the 1995-1996 evaluation as reasons for some families’ termination, were also specifically cited in 1998-1999.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PARTICIPANTS?

We hypothesized that families who participated for short vs. long periods of time might leave Even Start for different reasons. Families who participated for relatively long periods of time (19 to 24 months) were more likely than short-term participants to leave because they met their goals, whereas short-term participants were more likely to leave for a lack of interest or because of a family crisis or conflict (Exhibit 3.11).

²⁹ These percentages do not total 31 percent because families could leave the program for multiple reasons.

We also hypothesized that short-term participants (defined as families that participated for three or fewer months) might have different background characteristics than long-term participants (defined as families that participated for 12 or more months). Exhibit 3.12 shows that, compared to short-term participants, families that stayed in Even Start for more than one year were more likely to be Hispanic (less likely to be black or white), and more likely to have either a relatively high or relatively low education level (less likely to have completed grades 7-12).

PARTICIPATION FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Regular, active participation is a necessary step toward achieving Even Start program goals—both for participating families and for projects. This chapter concludes with a summary of key participation results for three groups of families that enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999: families in which the participating parent entered Even Start with a sixth-grade or less education, families in which the participating parent had limited English proficiency, and families with teen parents. These family characteristics overlap (for instance, low education and limited English proficiency); however, grouping families by these characteristics portrays different profiles of family strengths and difficulties that affect participation patterns.

Parents who enrolled in 1998-1999 with little formal education (sixth grade or less) participated for fewer hours in adult education but for more hours in parenting education than the average family in Even Start. Their rate of participation in all core services and rates of meeting goals (Exhibit 3.13) were similar to the national levels.

Families who had limited English proficiency participated more in adult and parenting education than the average new enrollee family. They also had slightly higher rates of participating in all core services and program completion rates compared to all new enrollees.

For the teen parents who enrolled in 1998-1999, participation hours in adult education were much higher than the average for all new enrollees, reflecting the fact that many teen parents are finishing their compulsory high school education. New families with teen parents were more likely to have participated in all core services than new 1998-1999 enrollees in general. Teen parents met their goals at about the same rate as the national average, even though their length of stay in the program was somewhat lower than average.

EXHIBIT 3.1
PERCENT OF PARENTS PARTICIPATING IN ADULT AND PARENTING EDUCATION SERVICES,
BY ENTERING EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (1998-1999)

ENTERING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE	TYPE OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM					PARENTING EDUCATION
	BEGINNING ABE	INTERMEDIATE ABE	ASE	GED	ESL	
All Parents – New and Continuing (N=28,866)						
All educational backgrounds	Participation in any level of adult education 93%					94%
New Parents with English Proficiency (N=7,650)						
0 – 6 th grade	34%	30%	18%	49%	44%	91%
7 th – 9 th grade	15%	29%	35%	67%	6%	92%
10 th – 12 th grade	12%	22%	40%	66%	4%	93%
High school diploma, GED, or postsecondary	9%	12%	22%	12%	18%	90%
New Parents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (N=4,047)						
0 – 6 th grade	23%	10%	5%	13%	90%	90%
7 th – 9 th grade	14%	9%	16%	33%	84%	92%
10 th – 12 th grade	13%	8%	21%	37%	85%	93%
High school diploma, GED, or post- secondary	15%	7%	10%	18%	93%	91%

Note: Percentages in the top row are based on all parents, new and continuing, for whom we received adult education and parenting education participation data. Percentages for parents by English proficiency and educational background are based on the number of new parents for whom pre-Even Start educational level, English proficiency, and participation data were submitted. In 1998-1999, data for English proficiency were collected only for new participants. Thus, these percentages are based on a smaller number of parents than the top row. Percentages do not total 100 because a parent could participate in more than one type of service.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 23 percent of LEP parents who entered Even Start with six or fewer years of schooling participated in beginning adult education programs.

EXHIBIT 3.2
AVERAGE ANNUAL HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION,
BY PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS: 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT CHARACTERISTIC	HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION
Number of Support Services Received by Family	
0 support services	53 hours
1-2 support services	110 hours
3-4 support services	151 hours
5-9 support services	215 hours
Hours per Month of Adult Education Offered	
< 16 hours	100 hours
16-29 hours	119 hours
30-47 hours	151 hours
48+ hours	216 hours
TOTAL Annual Hours of Adult Education	156 hours

Note: The results are based on analyses of variance.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, parents in families that received five to nine types of support services participated in adult education services for an average of 215 hours.

EXHIBIT 3.3
AVERAGE HOURS/YEAR OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION,
BY PARENT AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (1998-1999)

PARENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PARENT AGE				
	<20 YRS (N=4,580)	20-29 YRS (N=12,413)	30-39 YRS (N=7,315)	40+ YRS (N=1,941)	ALL AGES (N=26,249)
6 th grade or less (n=3,843)	204 hours	136 hours	146 hours	148 hours	145 hours
7 th - 9 th grade (n=8,001)	226 hours	139 hours	150 hours	160 hours	165 hours
10 th - 12 th grade (n=10,133)	259 hours	138 hours	141 hours	133 hours	166 hours
HS diploma, GED, or post-secondary education (n=4,272)	203 hours	125 hours	131 hours	120 hours	129 hours
All Educational Levels (n=26,249)	241 hours	136 hours	142 hours	141 hours	156 hours

Exhibit reads: Teen parents who reached the 10th to 12th grades at the time of enrollment participated in adult education programs for an average of 259 hours per month in 1998-1999.

EXHIBIT 3.4
AVERAGE ANNUAL HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN PARENTING EDUCATION,
BY PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS: 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS	ANNUAL HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN PARENTING EDUCATION
Number of Support Services Received by Family	
0 support services (N=2,372)	17 hours
1-2 support services (N=6,725)	34 hours
3-4 support services (N=8,740)	50 hours
5-9 support services (N=9,513)	76 hours
Hours per Month of Parenting Education Offered	
< 8 hours per month (N=4,247)	29 hours
8-15 hours per month (N=7,644)	37 hours
16-24 hours per month (N=6,698)	55 hours
25 + per month (N=7,569)	80 hours
Extent of Integration Across Educational Service Areas (Rating range 2-4)	
Integration measure rating 2 (N=12,240)	45 hours
Integration measure rating 3 (N=14,174)	57 hours
Integration measure rating 4 (N=936)	81 hours
TOTAL Annual Hours of Parenting Education	53 hours

Exhibit reads: On average, participants who received five to nine types of support services participated in 76 hours of parenting education per month in 1998-1999.

EXHIBIT 3.5
PERCENT OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS,
BY CHILD AGE: 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

ECE SERVICE	TOTAL (N=33,498)	CHILD AGE IN YEARS (NUMBER OF CHILDREN)				
		0-2 (N=12,625)	3-4 (N=10,094)	5 (N=3,938)	6-7 (N=4,726)	8+ (N=2,115)
Organized, center-based	55%	55%	74%	52%	28%	25%
Individualized, home-based	50%	56%	54%	46%	37%	33%
Coordination with compulsory schooling	26%	2%	8%	54%	75%	58%
Day care with educational component	27%	36%	29%	19%	13%	12%
Even Start for school-age children	13%	4%	8%	20%	29%	35%
None of these	4%	6%	3%	3%	3%	5%

Note: The percentages in each column are based on the number of children in that age group. The percentages do not total 100 because each child could participate in more than one type of service. The percentages in the row labeled "None of these" represent children for whom projects specifically marked "None of these" to describe the types of programs in which children participated. However, using responses to several questions that referred to participation (for instance, months of participation), we determined that 97 percent of all children participated in some form of Even Start early childhood education services.

Exhibit reads: Fifty-six percent of children 0 to 2 years old participated in individualized, home-based Early Childhood Education in 1998-1999.

EXHIBIT 3.6
AVERAGE ANNUAL HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE),
BY NEW VS. CONTINUING STATUS AND PROJECT OR FAMILY CHARACTERISTIC (1998-1999)

PROJECT/FAMILY CHARACTERISTIC	ALL CHILDREN (N=34,696)	1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES (N=19,150)	CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS YEARS (N=15,546)
Child Age			
< 3 years	175 hours	163 hours	199 hours
3-4 years	316 hours	309 hours	325 hours
5 years	468 hours	440 hours	492 hours
6-7 years	544 hours	489 hours	579 hours
8+ years	451 hours	356 hours	477 hours
Number of Support Services Received by Family			
0 support services	260 hours	224 hours	290 hours
1-2 support services	303 hours	247 hours	372 hours
3-4 support services	356 hours	301 hours	422 hours
5-9 support services	432 hours	374 hours	500 hours
Hours Per Month of ECE Offered			
0-24 hours	235 hours	201 hours	281 hours
25-52 hours	291 hours	219 hours	369 hours
53-79 hours	305 hours	259 hours	354 hours
80+ hours	410 hours	355 hours	473 hours
TOTAL Annual ECE hours	325 hours	274 hours	381 hours

Exhibit reads: Newly enrolled children younger than 3 years received 163 hours of early childhood education services in 1998-1999.

EXHIBIT 3.7
RATE OF FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN ALL THREE CORE SERVICES,
BY PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS: 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT CHARACTERISTIC	RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN ALL CORE SERVICES
Number of Support Services Received by Family	
0 support services	82%
1-2 support services	88%
3-4 support services	91%
5-9 support services	95%
Project Age	
1-2 years	90%
3-4 years	91%
5-6 years	95%
7+ years	90%
Overall Participation Rate	91%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 95 percent of families that received five to nine types of support services participated in all core services.

EXHIBIT 3.8A
MONTH OF ENTRY TO EVEN START,
FAMILIES WHO JOINED EVEN START IN 1998-1999 (N=15,855)

MONTH OF ENTRY	PERCENT OF FAMILIES	CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES
July	3.1%	3.1%
August	11.5%	14.6%
September	20.5%	35.1%
October	13.0%	48.1%
November	7.6%	55.7%
December	4.5%	60.2%
January	11.3%	71.5%
February	9.0%	80.5%
March	7.8%	88.3%
April	6.1%	94.4%
May	3.4%	97.8%
June	2.2%	100.0%

Exhibit Reads: Nine percent of all families who enrolled in Even Start during the 1998-1999 program year joined the program in February 1999.

EXHIBIT 3.8B
MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION FOR FAMILIES WHO JOINED EVEN START IN 1997-1998
(N=16,663; MAXIMUM OF 24 MONTHS)

MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION	FAMILIES WHO DROPPED OUT BETWEEN 7/1/97 AND 6/30/99		FAMILIES WHO WERE STILL PARTICIPATING AS OF 6/30/99	
	PERCENT OF FAMILIES	CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES	PERCENT OF FAMILIES	CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES
1	7.7%	7.7%	N/A	N/A
2	6.9%	14.6%	N/A	N/A
3	6.7%	21.3%	N/A	N/A
4	7.0%	28.3%	N/A	N/A
5	5.9%	34.2%	N/A	N/A
6	6.2%	40.4%	N/A	N/A
7	3.7%	44.1%	N/A	N/A
8	4.0%	48.1%	N/A	N/A
9	5.9%	54.0%	N/A	N/A
10	9.2%	63.2%	N/A	N/A
11	5.4%	68.6%	N/A	N/A
12	2.4%	71.0%	N/A	N/A
13	1.5%	72.5%	0.7%	81.4%
14	1.4%	73.9%	0.9%	82.3%
15	1.1%	75.0%	1.6%	83.9%
16	1.1%	76.1%	2.0%	85.9%
17	0.8%	76.9%	1.6%	87.5%
18	0.8%	77.7%	2.0%	89.5%
19	0.6%	78.3%	0.9%	90.4%
20	0.7%	79.0%	1.4%	91.8%
21	0.5%	79.5%	2.6%	94.4%
22	0.5%	80.0%	3.8%	98.2%
23	0.4%	80.4%	1.5%	99.7%
24	0.3%	80.7%	0.3%	100.0%

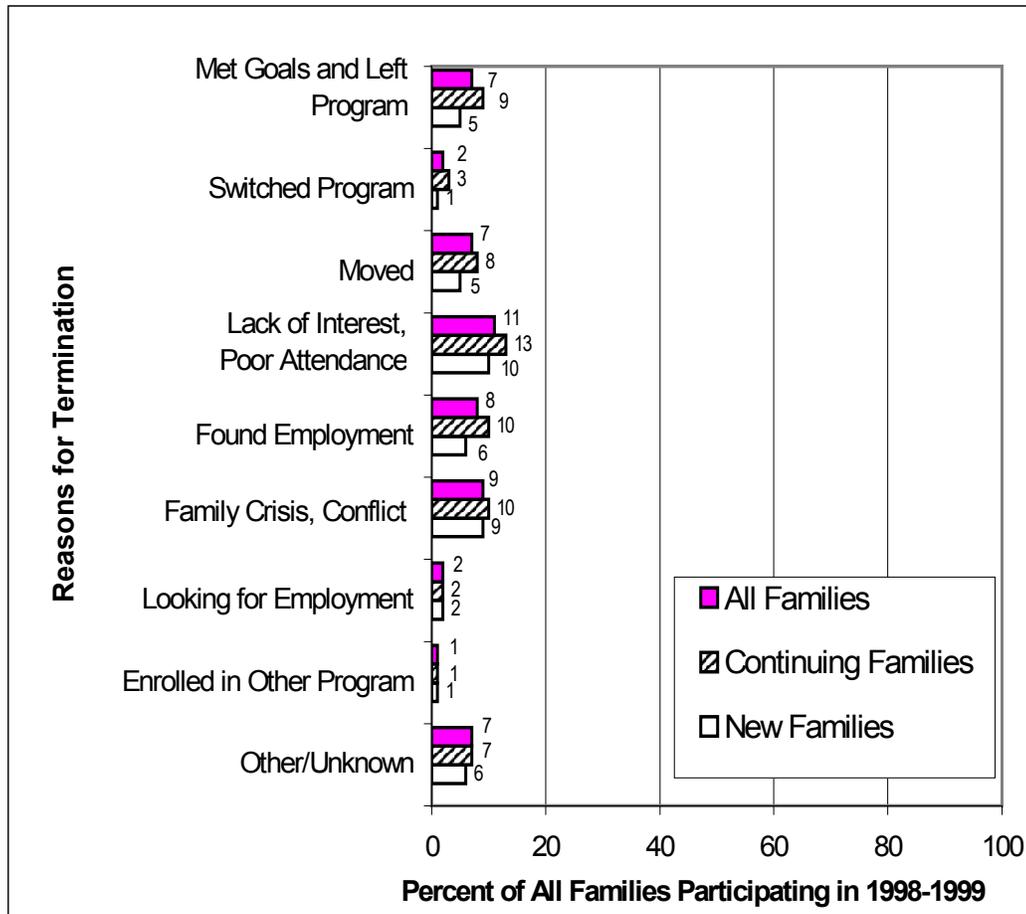
Exhibit reads: Seven percent of all families who joined Even Start during the 1997-1998 program year left the program with between three and four months of participation.

EXHIBIT 3.8C
MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION FOR FAMILIES WHO JOINED EVEN START IN 1998-1999
(N=15,855; MAXIMUM OF 12 MONTHS)

MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION	FAMILIES WHO DROPPED-OUT BETWEEN 7/1/98 AND 6/30/99		FAMILIES WHO WERE STILL PARTICIPATING AS OF 6/30/99	
	PERCENT OF FAMILIES	CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES	PERCENT OF FAMILIES	CUMULATIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES
1	7.1%	7.1%	1.7%	33.2%
2	5.5%	12.6%	3.2%	36.4%
3	4.5%	17.1%	5.4%	41.8%
4	4.0%	21.1%	6.3%	48.1%
5	3.1%	24.2%	6.8%	54.9%
6	2.3%	26.5%	8.1%	63.0%
7	1.8%	28.3%	3.0%	66.0%
8	1.4%	29.7%	4.7%	70.7%
9	0.9%	30.6%	7.9%	78.6%
10	0.3%	30.9%	12.6%	91.2%
11	0.1%	31.0%	7.2%	98.4%
12	0.5%	31.5%	1.6%	100.0%

Exhibit reads: Four percent of all families who joined Even Start during the 1998-1999 program year left the program with between three and four months of participation.

EXHIBIT 3.9
PERCENT OF FAMILIES, BY REASONS FOR LEAVING EVEN START (1998-1999)



Note: Families could report up to three reasons for leaving the program.

Exhibit reads: Of the families who continued participation from previous years, 9 percent exited the program in 1998-1999 after meeting their education goals.

EXHIBIT 3.10
PERCENT OF FAMILIES THAT MET GOALS, BY ADULT AGE, EDUCATIONAL LEVEL,
AND NEW OR CONTINUING STATUS (1998-1999)

EDUCATION LEVEL AND ADULT AGE	1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES (N=19,150)	CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS YEARS (N=15,546)
Grade 0-6		
< 20 years	1%	3%
20-29 years	1%	4%
30-39 years	1%	2%
40+ years	0%	3%
Grade 7-9		
< 20 years	5%	6%
20-29 years	4%	9%
30-39 years	3%	6%
40+ years	5%	6%
Grade 10-12 (non graduates)		
< 20 years	9%	15%
20-29 years	8%	11%
30-39 years	3%	10%
40+ years	2%	11%
High school diploma, GED, postsecondary education		
< 20 years	6%	25%
20-29 years	4%	9%
30-39 years	3%	8%
40+ years	3%	10%

Exhibit reads: Among parents who enrolled in previous years with a 10th- to 12th-grade education and continued participation, 15 percent of teen parents completed at least one of their goals and left the program in 1998-1999 compared to 11 percent of parents age 40 or older.

EXHIBIT 3.11
REASONS FOR LEAVING EVEN START, BY LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION
(FAMILIES THAT ENTERED IN 1997-1998)

REASON FOR LEAVING	MONTHS OF PARTICIPATION					TOTAL (N=7,954)
	1-3 (N=2,900)	4-6 (N=1,756)	7-12 (N=2,043)	13-18 (N=958)	19-24 (N=295)	
Met goals	10.4%	15.4%	21.0%	18.5%	34.2%	16.1%
Switched program	4.2%	5.0%	4.8%	6.1%	7.1%	4.9%
Moved out of area	15.7%	19.4%	19.4%	16.8%	12.2%	17.5%
Lack of interest	32.0%	30.5%	28.9%	28.5%	21.4%	30.0%
Found employment	18.7%	19.9%	19.5%	25.6%	21.4%	20.1%
Family crisis/conflict	26.9%	26.5%	21.4%	25.9%	19.6%	25.1%
Looking for employment	4.2%	5.2%	3.8%	4.4%	3.1%	4.3%
Enrolled in job training	1.9%	3.0%	2.6%	3.9%	2.7%	2.6%
Other or unknown	20.7%	16.1%	15.5%	16.0%	18.7%	17.7%

Exhibit reads: Of all families that entered Even Start in 1997-1998 and left the program after 1 to 3 months of participation, 10.4 percent reported that they left because they met their goals.

EXHIBIT 3.12
CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT- AND LONG-TERM PARTICIPANTS

CHARACTERISTIC	SHORT-TERM PARTICIPANTS (1-3 MONTHS)		LONG-TERM PARTICIPANTS (MORE THAN 12 MONTHS)	
Race/Ethnicity				
Black		30.5%		19.7%
Hispanic		28.0%		42.7%
White		35.2%		29.1%
Other		6.3%		8.4%
Education				
Grades 0-6		8.6%		15.7%
Grades 7-9		33.4%		31.1%
Grades 10-12		46.7%		36.7%
HS diploma or GED		11.3%		16.3%

Exhibit reads: Twenty-eight percent of families that participated for 1 to 3 months were Hispanic.

EXHIBIT 3.13
**YEAR-END PARTICIPATION MEASURES FOR VARIOUS GROUPS OF
1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES (1998-1999)**

PARTICIPATION MEASURE	ALL NEW FAMILIES	PARENT CHARACTERISTIC		
		6TH GRADE OR LESS EDUCATION	LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT	TEEN PARENTS
Hours per year participation in adult education	161 hours	144 hours	167 hours	235 hours
Hours per year participation in parenting education	51 hours	60 hours	65 hours	52 hours
Hours per year participation in early childhood education	274 hours	299 hours	291 hours	190 hours
Percent that participated in all core services	92%	93%	94%	95%
Months of participation in 1998-1999	6.3 months	6.7 months	6.7 months	5.8 months
Percent that met goals	5%	1%	2%	6%

Note: The percentages for "met goals" represent new enrollee families in each group that exited the program in 1998-1999 after meeting their educational goals.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, teen parents participated in adult education an average of 235 hours per year.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF EVEN START PROJECTS

This chapter describes the 737 Even Start projects that operated across the nation during 1998-1999. The chapter also presents cross-year comparisons for selected project characteristics and discusses the extent to which projects operating in 1998-1999 met the requirements set forth by the Even Start legislation.

GEOGRAPHIC AND URBAN-RURAL DISTRIBUTION

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Even Start has undergone a substantial expansion throughout the 1990s. Exhibit 1.1 in Chapter 1 shows Even Start's funding history and the associated growth in terms of number of projects and families served. In the 1998-1999 program year, 737 projects were funded in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Exhibit 4.1 shows how those projects were distributed across the nation. A large percentage of the projects (39 percent) were in the South, followed by 23 percent in the West, 22 percent in the Midwest, and 16 percent in the Northeast. The geographic distribution of local projects relates, at least in part, to the relative proportion of low-income children within a given state. Even Start funding is based on each state's share of Title I LEA grants, which are allocated primarily based on the number of school children from low-income families. The distribution of Even Start projects within each state must be representative of urban and rural areas in the state. The number of Even Start projects in each state (either state administered, migrant education, or tribal) is shown in Exhibit 4.2.

URBAN-RURAL DISTRIBUTION

In 1998-1999, approximately 40 percent of Even Start projects operated in rural areas. More than half of the projects (55 percent) operated in urban areas, with 34 percent in urban areas having populations equal to or greater than 50,000 persons, and 21 percent in urban areas having populations of less than 50,000.³⁰ The remaining 6 percent described their communities as combinations of the above categories.

³⁰ This breakdown is different than that reported in earlier Even Start evaluations where urban and rural areas were defined by population more or less than 50,000, respectively.

EXISTENCE OF ADULT EDUCATION, PARENTING EDUCATION, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN EVEN START COMMUNITIES

Even Start projects are supposed to coordinate (rather than duplicate) services that already exist in communities, to the extent that those other services are of high quality. Therefore, it is not surprising that the core educational services provided by Even Start also were available through other programs in communities where projects operated (Exhibit 4.3).³¹ Adult education services were widely available, including GED preparation (94 percent of the Even Start communities), adult basic education (89 percent), adult secondary education (88 percent), and ESL programs (81 percent).

Early childhood programs also were available in most communities: programs for 3, 4, and 5 year old children were available in 92 percent of the communities. As would be expected, programs for infants and toddlers (0 to 2 year olds) were less common, and existed in only about half of the communities. Parenting education programs existed in a surprisingly large 74 percent of the communities. Finally, other family literacy programs were found in 32 percent of the Even Start communities. This is double the percentage reported two years ago, in 1996-1997.

The widespread availability of core services in Even Start communities fits with Even Start's mandate to "glue together" existing services. The fact that states are funding projects in areas with high concentrations of existing services is an indication that state coordinators are paying attention to this important aspect of Even Start.

In spite of the availability of existing services, there can be circumstances that prevent families from receiving those services. For example, existing educational services for adults may only be available during the daytime, when adults often are working. Or an existing parenting education program may be across town, presenting transportation problems. This is most prevalent for adult education; families in 50 to 60 percent of the projects are limited in their ability to access other programs offered in their communities. Similarly, educational services for children ages 3 and 4 are available in most Even Start communities, but access to these services is limited in a majority of these areas. This is where the flexibility of Even Start projects, the mandate to provide support services such as transportation and child care, and the ability of Even Start to "glue" together existing services (including direct funding of those services when otherwise unavailable) become most critical.

ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING EVEN START PROJECTS

For program years 1991-1992 through 1994-1995, the law required that Even Start projects be operated by a local educational agency (LEA) in collaboration with a community-based organization (CBO) or other nonprofit agency, or by a CBO or other nonprofit agency in

³¹ The term "community" connotes "service area" for each local project.

collaboration with an LEA. Since 1995-1996, the 1994 reauthorization has required that one or more CBOs be formal partners with one or more LEAs as joint recipients of the Even Start grant.

Although public schools and government agencies head a large percentage of Even Start projects, the program as a whole includes a variety of organizations, both large and small, serving highly diverse target populations, and providing a wide array of educational and social services. This diversity among service providers is ideal for a national demonstration program.

The types of organizations serving as partners with LEAs have remained stable since 1992-1993. In 1998-1999, 27 percent of all Even Start projects had local, county, or state government agency partners; postsecondary institutions and Head Start each were partners in 16 percent and 13 percent of projects, respectively. Preschool or day care programs, trade schools, and volunteer groups served as partners for 2 percent, 3 percent, and 2 percent of projects, respectively.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS AND AGE OF PROJECTS

Federal grants represent the primary funding source for the vast majority of Even Start projects. Since 1992, all grants have been administered by the states except for a relatively small number of federally-administered set-aside grants. In 1998-1999, 16 Migrant Education projects and 10 tribal projects received these set-aside grants. The U.S. Department of Education also directly awarded and administered 34 statewide family literacy initiative grants with 1999 funds and one grant to a family literacy project in a prison that houses women and their preschool-aged children.

Even Start grants are awarded by state agencies for periods up to four years in duration, after which a project has the option of reapplying. Until recently, grantees were limited to a maximum of eight years of federal funding. However, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 2000³² eliminated the eight-year limit on Even Start grantees.

In 1998-1999, 85 percent of the projects were operating under four-year grants, 3 percent had three-year grants; 3 percent had two-year grants, and 10 percent had a one-year grant. Many projects received more than one Even Start grant (though not more than one at a time). The age of Even Start projects (years of experience in operating Even Start) ranged from less than one year to eight years (Exhibit 4.4). Prior to 1999-2000, the Even Start legislation did not allow projects to receive federal funding for more than eight years. However, a grantee that had received eight years of federal funding was allowed to significantly “reconfigure” its services and change the recipient partnership (for example, by serving a new target population such as teen mothers and adding or substituting new partners) and apply for a new Even Start grant.

³² Section 306(a) and (b)(2) of H.R. 3424, as incorporated by the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000, Section 1000(a)(4), P.L. No. 106-113 (1999).

For projects receiving multiyear grants, the portion of the total budget supported by non-Even Start matching funds (these local match funds include in-kind contributions) is mandated to increase by at least 10 percent each year for the first five years, and by 15 percent in the ninth year. The non-Even Start local share must constitute at least 40 percent of a project's annual operating budget by year four, 50 percent from years five through eight, and 65 percent in any subsequent years.

Exhibit 4.5 shows various sources of funding for Even Start projects operating in 1998-1999. Projects reported that they received an average of \$153,989 in federal Even Start funds.³³ Thirty-four percent of the projects also received an average of \$67,098 in cash support from state or local agencies, 82 percent of the projects received an average of \$112,992 in non-cash support from state or local agencies, and 15 percent of the projects reported that they used an average of \$55,648 in other federal funds (for instance, Title I, Head Start, adult education) as part of their non-Even Start cost share for Even Start services.³⁴ As was the case in previous program years, some projects had budgets that were substantially larger than the average amount.

STAFFING OF EVEN START SERVICES

On average, Even Start projects reported just under six full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members who were paid totally or in part with Even Start funds (Exhibit 4.6). The most common primary assignment for Even Start staff was professional teachers or tutors (1.6 FTEs per project). In addition, the average project had between three-quarters and one FTE of an administrator, a paraprofessional educational assistant, a family specialist such as a case manager or home visitor, and a support service provider such as a bus driver.

SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT

SCREENING PROCEDURES

To qualify for Even Start a family must have at least one parent who is eligible for adult education under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or who is within the state's compulsory school attendance age range (as long as an LEA provides the basic education component), and at least one child age 7 or younger. Even Start projects are required to screen families to ensure that they meet eligibility requirements. Further, projects are required to recruit and serve families who are most in need of Even Start services in their respective communities. The legislation defines "most in need" on the basis of family income and literacy level, at a

³³ Data presented in Exhibit 1.1 show an average grant amount of \$168,250 in 1998-1999. This estimate was calculated by dividing the total Even Start federal funding by the number of grants made during the year. The estimate of \$153,989 was calculated by averaging the grant amounts reported by 678 Even Start grantees. The difference between the two estimates is likely due to the fact that the larger estimate includes all Even Start funds including funds for the national evaluation and technical assistance as well as for state administration, evaluation, and training.

³⁴ The Even Start statute specifically allows local projects to use other federal resources to meet their matching or cost share requirements.

minimum. Instead of relying on uniform national standards (such as uniform income standards) for assessing families' need for services, each Even Start project is expected to develop recruitment and screening approaches to identify families most in need of the services offered by the project.

All projects are required to consider family income (not necessarily below poverty level) and the literacy level of a parent in determining which families are most in need in that community. Exhibit 4.7 shows that in 1998-1999, the vast majority of projects used the following income-related targeting criteria: family income below poverty (92 percent), receipt of public assistance (88 percent), or lack of any earned income (81 percent). Projects also used several different measures of educational need including parent not completing the eighth grade (86 percent), limited English proficiency (76 percent), and parent being a new reader (76 percent).

In all cases, the percentage of projects using a given targeting criterion has increased substantially over time. For example, projects that target families with a single parent increased from 62 percent in 1994-1995 to 82 percent in 1998-1999; targeting for teen parents also increased by 20 percentage points during the same time period; and targeting for recent immigrant parents or those with limited English proficiency increased from 54 percent in 1994-1995 to 76 percent in 1998-1999.³⁵

Even Start projects must screen all applicants to verify that families meet the basic mandated eligibility criteria and to further assess family circumstances, educational needs, and potential barriers to participation. In fact, 90 percent of the reporting project sites used eligibility verification as a screening procedure "a great deal" in 1998-1999 (Exhibit 4.8). Here, "a great deal" is defined as using a given screening method with 76 to 100 percent of a project's participants.

From program years 1994-1995 on, the use of additional screening procedures has been fairly consistent. In addition to verifying eligibility, the screening procedures most frequently used "a great deal" included assessment of adults' basic skills (79 percent of sites) and conducting orientations (79 percent). Assessment of children's school readiness and language development was used "a great deal" by 59 percent of the projects, an increase from 48 percent in 1996-1997.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Word-of-mouth is the most commonly used recruitment strategy for more than three-quarters of the projects (Exhibit 4.9). This is consistent with findings from prior Even Start evaluations. Referrals from various sources is another commonly used approach. For example, 68 percent of the projects relied on referrals from collaborating agencies, 51 percent used

³⁵ The percentages reported in Exhibit 4.7 for 1998-1999 were virtually identical to those reported in 1997-1998.

referrals from other community agencies, 49 percent used referrals from public schools, and 44 percent used referrals from Head Start.

Compared with first-year projects, Even Start projects with several years of experience were more likely to use methods that target individual families, for example, home visits, telephone contacts, and walking the neighborhood. First-year projects had less experience in recruiting and were more likely to use methods that reach many potential participants but which may be relatively ineffective, for example, mass mailing, mass media, posters and flyers, and making presentations in community agencies.

PREPARATION FOR FULL PARTICIPATION IN EVEN START

Projects are encouraged to provide a “period of preparation” for new Even Start families. This is a time when new families can try out Even Start services and ensure themselves that they truly want to participate in Even Start. Also, projects can conduct screening and other activities to assess families’ needs for social services and other support services. Large percentages of Even Start projects conducted orientation sessions (88 percent) and home visits (83 percent) before engaging adults fully in parenting and adult education (Exhibit 4.10). More than half of the projects invited adults to social functions (65 percent), as well as to field trips and other outings (54 percent). However, 25 percent of the projects undertook no special preparation activities before adults started participating in adult or parenting education services.

AMOUNT OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICE OFFERED

Service intensity is a critical element of any educational program.³⁶ Intensity refers to at least two aspects of instructional curricula—amount and quality of services. While it is beyond the scope of this study to capture the qualitative aspects of Even Start educational activities across more than 700 projects, the amount of core instructional activity that projects offer has been tracked over several years. Analyses from the first and second Even Start evaluations have shown positive relationships between the number of hours offered and key participation measures.

ADULT EDUCATION AND PARENTING EDUCATION

Exhibit 4.11 displays the average hours per year of adult education and parenting education services offered by Even Start projects since 1993-1994. The average number of hours offered in each level of adult education has increased substantially over time, so that in 1998-1999 adults in Even Start were offered an average of between 400 and 500 hours of service each

³⁶ In April 1996, the Even Start statute was amended to require high-quality, *intensive* instructional programs. This requirement became effective for projects in program year 1996-1997.

year, depending on the type of adult education in question.³⁷ This represents an increase of between 13 and 17 percent when compared with data from two years earlier (1996-1997) and an increase of between 30 and 50 percent when compared with data from 1993-1994.

On average, Even Start projects provide fewer hours of parenting education than adult education. The average number of parenting education hours that projects provide increased by almost 10 percent in 1998-1999 after being stable at around 200 hours for several years.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The average number of instructional hours of early childhood education offered to Even Start children has increased for children of all ages over the past two years (Exhibit 4.12). The hours of educational activities for infants and toddlers under age 3 rose by roughly 17 percent in the past two years, and by 70 percent since 1993-1994. Smaller, but still substantial increases occurred for children ages 3 and 4, who saw increases of 7 percent in the past two years, and 50 percent since 1993-1994. The amount of early childhood services for children age 5 and ages 6 to 7 also increased; however, data for children in this age group do not distinguish the number of hours of service provided by Even Start from the hours provided through compulsory education.

The trend toward increasingly more intensive core service offerings follows from the recommendations and technical assistance that the Department of Education has been providing to projects. For years, the Department has recommended that when trade-offs have to be made, projects should serve fewer families at more intensive levels, instead of spreading services thinly across large numbers of families. The data show that projects are following this advice, as the intensity of services offered has increased over time, while the number of families served per project has decreased (see Exhibit 1.1).

HOME-BASED VS. CENTER-BASED SERVICES

Most Even Start projects provide “center-based services.” These are instructional activities conducted in classrooms or other centralized facilities. However, some projects offer large amounts of “home-based services” in which Even Start staff conduct highly individualized instructional activities in participants’ homes.³⁸ Home-based services may be particularly suitable for projects located in rural areas where participating families are geographically dispersed and access to transportation is constrained by availability or cost. Even in more urban areas, projects may choose this mode of service to ensure that participants receive individualized services that are closely tailored to each family’s needs and home circumstances.

³⁷ Averages are based on the projects that reported at least one hour of service in each component. For example, projects that do not offer ESL services and hence that report zero hours for this component were not included in the average for ESL hours.

³⁸ All projects are required to provide some home-based instructional services to each participating family.

Within a given project, the prevalence of home-based activities can vary by the educational service area. For instance, a project's adult education program may focus on GED preparation classes conducted in a high school or community college, while parenting education and a large portion of early childhood education may be conducted in participants' homes. Regardless of service area, few projects provided a large portion of instruction in participants' homes.

To characterize projects as "home-based" or "center-based" we calculated, for each project, the percentage of home-based adult, parenting, and early childhood education hours relative to the total hours offered for each of these core service areas.³⁹ We then averaged across three percentages of home-based hours and labeled projects as home-based if this average was 40 percent or higher. Using this definition, only 15 percent of all Even Start projects are labeled as home-based (Exhibit 4.13). These projects were somewhat more prevalent in rural areas.

VARIATION IN AMOUNT OF SERVICE OFFERED TO FAMILIES

The wide variation in the amount of core service hours offered by Even Start projects suggests that we try to determine which project and participant characteristics are related to program intensity. The second national Even Start evaluation examined the relationship between hours of adult education services offered per month and several project characteristics, each of which could potentially affect the amount of services that projects offer.⁴⁰ Exploratory analyses were conducted involving many program characteristics. We selected for further analysis only the factors that produced statistically significant relationships, relatively strong correlations compared to other factors, and consistent patterns of results across similar analyses. In the second evaluation, findings were reported only for project characteristics that had significant and substantial relationships to the amount of services offered. We replicated these analyses using data from the third evaluation, again focusing on the same variables that had been shown in the second evaluation to have significant and important relationships to the amount of services offered. One result that continues from the second evaluation is that center-based projects typically provided significantly more hours of adult education than did home-based projects. Home-based projects, defined by the method described above, offered an average of 21 hours of adult education per month compared to an average of 41 hours in center-based projects (Exhibit 4.14).

³⁹ We first computed the ratio of hours offered in a home setting to the total hours offered for each instructional level (i.e., four levels of adult education including ESL, one level of parenting education, and four levels of early childhood education). Second, within each component (i.e., adult, parenting, or early childhood education), if any of the ratios of home-based hours were 40 percent or higher, we coded that component as "home-based." Thus, a project could be coded as providing "home-based adult education," "home-based parenting education," or "home-based early childhood education." Finally, we computed a mean ratio across the three ratios—home-based adult education, home-based parenting education, and home-based early childhood education hours. In 1998-1999, 12 percent of projects offered 40 percent or more of adult education hours in the home, 28 percent of projects offered this level of home-based parenting education, and 23 percent of projects offered this level of early childhood education. The choice of 40-percent criterion reflects a practical concern to have a sufficient number of projects for analysis. Choosing a much higher percentage would have excluded nearly all projects from the "home-based" services analysis.

⁴⁰ Variables that were examined in relationship to amount of service offered are listed in Tao, Gamse, and Tarr, (1998) Exhibit C.1.

In terms of participant characteristics, projects with higher percentages of teen parents offered more adult education hours. This is not surprising because high school instructional hours can be reported as Even Start adult education hours for this study. Exhibit 4.14 shows that projects in which less than 3 percent of parents were teens offered an average of 29 hours of adult education per month, compared with nearly 45 hours offered in projects where more than 25 percent of parents were under age 20.

Home- versus center-based project design also is related to variation in the amount of parenting education. Home-based projects offered an average of 13 hours of parenting education per month compared to 22 hours per month among center-based projects (Exhibit 4.15).

Home-based projects also offered fewer hours of early childhood education services than did center-based projects—32 versus 61 hours in 1998-1999 (Exhibit 4.16). Another project characteristic that was related to service intensity was project budget size. Projects with larger budgets offered more hours of educational services to children (64 hours per month) than projects with smaller budgets (51 hours per month).

In sum, home-based programs offered consistently and substantially fewer instructional hours across service areas relative to center-based programs, suggesting that projects balance the ability to offer a greater number of hours to a group of participants at a central facility against the hoped-for benefits of individually-tailored instruction during fewer hours of home visits.

DESCRIPTION OF CORE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES

Welfare reform exerts an important influence on what is taught in Even Start adult education classes. Even Start participants or project leaders may feel an added urgency to focus on job-related skills of adults who lack high-school level academic competencies. This focus is compounded by the fact that Even Start is being pushed in several ways to meet the requirements of state-level welfare reform efforts.

Even Start projects consistently offer several services considered important for the transition from welfare to employment and other educational opportunities. In 1998-1999, more than 90 percent of the projects provided class time in job readiness skills including discussion of educational and training opportunities, and learning how to access community services and solve problems (Exhibit 4.17). Eighty-five percent of the projects used class time to help develop a plan for goal attainment, and 76 percent of projects develop and maintain connections with employers and postsecondary institutions.

The great majority (63 to 94 percent) of Even Start projects incorporated life skills, vocational, and parenting topics and activities into their adult education curricula during 1998-1999 (Exhibit 4.18). Furthermore, the percentage of projects doing this has increased over time. While life skills and parenting have been common topics of adult education lessons in a majority

of Even Start projects in recent years, inclusion of vocational topics has increased, possibly in response to welfare reform's mandate that recipients obtain employment. Projects using vocational materials for beginning, intermediate, secondary, and ESL classes increased between 5 and 13 percentage points from 1994-1995 to 1996-1997 and between 13 and 24 percent from 1996-1997 to 1998-1999 (not shown in exhibit).

PARENTING EDUCATION SERVICES

Parenting education in Even Start hopes to increase parents' knowledge about early childhood development and effective parenting behaviors and practices so they can contribute actively and constructively to the literacy development and school readiness of their children. Some activities offered in parenting education are child-focused; some are parent-focused; and others focus on parents and children jointly.

Many kinds of parenting activities are considered to be important by Even Start projects (Exhibit 4.19). Several topics dealing with child development and school readiness were considered among the most important aspects of parenting education: the development of children's motor skills (91 percent), preparation of children for school routines (89 percent), development of children's social skills (87 percent), and helping children with their homework (86 percent). A second set of important topics dealt with the day-to-day functioning of adults. These included assisting with knowledge of vocational and educational opportunities (87 percent) and knowledge of community and social services (82 percent). Constructive approaches to discipline (20 percent) was considered to be the least important issue in parenting education.

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

Parent-child joint literacy-based activities are an essential part of Even Start services. Projects reported the hours of parent-child joint activities offered in three instructional contexts: during home visits, in center-based activities, and during special activities such as field trips, meals, and social functions.

In 1998-1999, families were offered about 18 hours per month of activities for parents and children together: 2.9 hours of structured parent-child time through home visits, 10 hours in a center-based environment, and 5.4 hours of field trips, meals, or social functions (Exhibit 4.20). The number of hours of parent-child joint activities offered in a center or classroom increased from 1994-1995 to 1998-1999 while hours at home and hours offered through field trips and other functions remained constant.

Projects provided many different types of parent-child joint activities, both in center-based activities and during home-based services. The types of parent-child activities commonly used in the center setting were similar to those conducted in the home setting, although there were some differences (Exhibit 4.21). In particular, activities designed to promote social development and those led by child were seen as more important in center-based parent-child

sessions, while reading aloud and other reading activities were seen as more important parent-child activities in the home-based sessions. Working with numbers, working with letters, writing, or computer work were not reported as important parent-child activities in either center or home setting.

LANGUAGES USED IN CORE SERVICES

Forty to 50 percent of the projects use both English and other languages in the provision of core services, depending on the language-speaking composition of the families they serve (Exhibit 4.22). About one-third of the Even Start projects have only English-speaking families, and in these cases the core instructional services are taught only in English. Another quarter of the projects teach only in English, even though some participants speak other languages.

INTEGRATION OF CORE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The integration of instruction across the three core service areas to encourage “value-added” services is one of the cornerstones of Even Start. Successful integration is expected to result in services that are more meaningful and useful to the whole family. Projects provided information on the integration of services by reporting on the extent to which pairs of core services were provided by the same instructors, accomplished through parallel activities, or planned for the whole family together. Adult education and early childhood education were the least likely core services to be integrated, reflecting the disparity in curricular content between, for example, GED preparation classes and educational activities for preschool children.

In terms of methods of service integration, 63 percent of the projects in 1998-1999 reported that they integrated parenting and adult education services through coordinating activities for parents and children, 73 percent used this approach to integrate parenting education and early childhood education services, and 53 percent did so for adult education and early childhood education (Exhibit 4.23). Much smaller percentages worked toward integration of core services by using the same instructor, or by using the same or similar instructional activities.

Measured this way, the level of service integration has declined since 1996-1997 for all three of the integration categories shown in Exhibit 4.23. In some categories the decline was dramatic. For example, the extent to which projects report that they integrate parenting and adult education as well as parenting and early childhood education declined by 15 and 18 percentage points respectively, from 1996-1997 to 1998-1999 (see Exhibit 5.13 in Tao, Gamse, & Tarr, 1998).

TYPES OF COLLABORATION AND COLLABORATING AGENCIES

Even Start often is referred to as the “glue” that binds together existing services available in the community to meet participants’ diverse needs, to avoid duplication of services, and to

maximize effective use of Even Start resources. Interagency collaboration is one of the elements that is emphasized in the Even Start legislation, and projects have developed a wide network of collaborative arrangements.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The direct or indirect delivery of educational services to Even Start families constitutes an important contribution to Even Start by collaborating agencies. Here we consider whether Even Start projects or collaborating agencies had the primary responsibility for providing instructional services.

Collaborating agencies were solely responsible for providing educational services at different levels of adult education in 27 to 34 percent of the Even Start projects, Even Start was solely responsible in 24 to 37 percent of the projects, and Even Start and collaborating agency staff shared responsibilities in 18 to 24 percent of projects (Exhibit 4.24). These percentages are fairly comparable to those reported in the second national evaluation.

Responsibility for service delivery was different for parenting education where almost 70 percent of the projects relied solely on Even Start staff to deliver these services. This is an increase from the 60 percent reported in the second evaluation.

The pattern of interagency collaboration varied across levels of early childhood education. Even Start resources were most often used to provide services for young children; 66 percent of the Even Start projects were the sole providers of instruction for infants and toddlers; 43 percent for children ages 3 and 4; 27 percent for children age 5; and 17 percent for children ages 6 and 7. As children enter the public schools, collaborating agencies play a much more prominent role in their Even Start experience.

TYPES OF COLLABORATING AGENCIES

While Even Start staff are responsible to varying degrees for the delivery of services in all educational components, in many communities a variety of agencies and organizations collaborate with Even Start projects—either as the primary provider of specific services or to augment services provided largely by Even Start projects.

Public school departments (other than the specific departments sponsoring Even Start) are the most common collaborators in Even Start projects, serving as primary providers of adult, parenting, and early childhood education services in about one-third of the projects (Exhibit 4.25). Other collaborators tended to focus on a single core service area. For example, community colleges, colleges, and universities were most likely to be the primary provider of adult education services (about 20 percent of the projects), as were technical schools (10 percent), while their involvement in parenting and early childhood education was less common. As would be expected, Head Start and other preschool programs were the primary provider of

early childhood education for 13 and 14 percent of projects respectively, while they seldom served this responsibility in adult or parenting education areas. Other types of organizations (for instance, volunteer groups, government agencies, foundations, and associations) tended to serve as secondary service providers, supplementing the educational services provided by Even Start projects.

TRANSITIONAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN MOVING TO KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Each Even Start project is required to design an early childhood education program spanning at least a three-year period. During these years, children may experience one or more transitions in services, for example, from home-based activities to enrolling in a pre-kindergarten program, from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, or from kindergarten to primary school. Projects are expected to assist children and parents to make these transitions successfully.

In 1998-1999, the transitional services most commonly provided by projects for both preschool and kindergarten children dealt with information, advice, and support for parents (Exhibit 4.26). For example, 97 percent of projects helped to inform parents about rights and responsibilities and encouraging parental participation in school, 96 percent helped parents deal with children's anxieties about the transition, and 91 percent incorporated planning for the transition in parenting classes or home visits. The least common activities called for direct involvement with other programs or schools, such as interaction and planning with staff from receiving schools (66 percent), visits to the receiving schools (65 percent), or arranging for joint activities for children with older children in receiving programs (57 percent). However, more than half of projects implemented even these relatively infrequent transitional activities.

ACCOMMODATING PARTICIPANT NEEDS

Even Start requires that projects serve families most in need and provide support services to help families participate in core educational services. Given the diversity among families enrolled in Even Start, flexibility in service delivery and negotiating the many constraints that families experience also are critical program elements.

NEED FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

Projects reported that a large number of support services are needed by their families. More than 60 percent of the projects reported that families need health care, child care, transportation, nutrition assistance, and meals (Exhibit 4.27). Relatively low on the list of needed support services (reported by fewer than 30 percent of the projects) were translators, housing, mental health services, crisis intervention, and care for the disabled. Most of the needed

support services noted above also were reported as needed during the second national Even Start evaluation.

SUPPORT SERVICES RECEIVED

The above discussion highlights the types of support services that Even Start families needed the most. Projects reported a reasonably close match between services needed and services actually received (Exhibit 4.28). The support services most commonly received by parents included child care (65 percent), meals (54 percent), family support (53 percent), social services (51 percent), and transportation (50 percent). The services that children most commonly received were child care (59 percent), meals (57 percent), and transportation (48 percent).⁴¹

There are some areas where Even Start was not able to meet the support service needs of participating families. Most notable is health care, identified as a need on the part of most families by 67 percent of the projects, but only received by 44 percent of the families. Similarly, employment assistance was a need for most families in 57 percent of the projects but was only received by 37 percent of families. These are outside of Even Start's traditional core instructional service areas, so it is not surprising that Even Start projects find it difficult to deal with these needs.

FLEXIBILITY OF SERVICES

The schedules and needs of Even Start parents differ, and projects strive to accommodate these differences by flexibility in service delivery. Ninety-one percent of project sites in 1998-1999 provided child care, 80 percent provided both home- and center-based instruction, and 62 percent provided day and evening or weekend classes (Exhibit 4.29). More than one-half of the projects reported that they incorporate all three approaches described above. Another third used at least two approaches, and 14 percent incorporated one approach.

LOCAL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The Even Start legislation requires each project to arrange for a local evaluation by an independent evaluator. Given the diversity of program design and service delivery approaches, each project is best suited to assess its progress and effectiveness in relation to its specific program goals. Local evaluations should produce information that is directly applicable to efforts in project improvement.

⁴¹ Child care can function both as a core instructional service and as a support service when it allows parents to attend core educational services. The difference between the percentage of parents and children receiving this service—consistent with findings in previous evaluations—may result from many families having multiple children in Even Start. Thus, a parent with one 3-year-old and one 7-year-old may receive child care for the younger child but not necessarily for the older child.

Almost all projects (93 percent) reported that their local evaluations examined how well project components have been implemented, and 91 percent reported that their local evaluation included a detailed description of participants, project services, and interagency collaborations (Exhibit 4.30). As was the case in the second Even Start evaluation, a large percentage of projects reported that they assessed participant growth in adult literacy (90 percent) and child literacy (84 percent); parenting skills (85 percent), and the quality of educational and support services (88 percent). As was found in earlier years, fewer projects evaluated the quality of staff training and development (76 percent).

REACTION FROM PARTICIPANTS

Obtaining and using comments from individuals involved in Even Start is a crucial aspect of improving program operations. Projects reported that they collect extensive comments on their program services (Exhibit 4.31). In 1998-1999, Even Start projects obtained comments on program operations through interviews or meetings with project staff (99 percent), project participants (100 percent), or project administrators (100 percent); or through questionnaires or ratings from project participants (98 percent).

RESPONDING TO EVALUATION FINDINGS

In 1998-1999, only about 10 percent of the Even Start projects were planning major changes in each area of program operations based upon their most recent local evaluation (Exhibit 4.32). However, about half of the projects were planning minor changes in staffing and in-service training, recruitment and screening procedures, and their service delivery model and curriculum.

PLANS FOR CONTINUATION

Eighty-four percent of Even Start projects planned to continue their program after their current grant expires (top of Exhibit 4.33), 14 percent of projects had no plans yet, and only 3 percent planned to close the project at the end of the grant period.

Among projects that were in their first four years of their Even Start grant and thus eligible to apply for another four-year grant, 87 percent planned to continue providing family literacy services after the current Even Start grant expires (not in exhibit). Ninety-eight percent of this group planned on applying for another federal Even Start grant. Among projects with five or more years of Even Start experience, 79 percent planned to continue services after the current federal grant expires. Of this group, 71 percent indicated plans to reapply for federal Even Start funds.

Across all projects that planned to continue services after the completion of their current grant, 88 percent planned to apply for another Even Start grant, 86 percent said they would

continue to use local or state funds, and 80 percent planned to obtain funding from foundations, corporations, or other sources (bottom of Exhibit 4.33).

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Projects were asked to indicate the extent of problems they experienced in terms of 18 potential barriers to program implementation. Three issues were identified as “big problems” for about one-fourth of the projects—improving attendance, improving participants’ retention or motivation, and obtaining adequate transportation services for participants (Exhibit 4.34). These issues have been among the most difficult problems cited every year since 1993-1994. Least problematic for projects were recruiting families most in need (seen as a big problem by only 5 percent of the projects), finding sources of core service delivery locally (a big problem for 6 percent of the projects), and finding qualified staff (a big problem for 11 percent of the projects).

NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to reporting barriers to implementation, project directors were asked to describe their needs for technical assistance. Twenty-one percent of projects reported having great need for technical assistance in using computers in instruction. Only 8 to 14 percent of projects reported great technical assistance needs in sharing information with other projects; selecting or implementing curriculum materials; identifying effective practices in adult, parenting, and early childhood education services; making home visits; and integrating program components. However, roughly half of projects reported having some need for technical assistance regarding all of these issues (Exhibit 4.35).

In the area of support services, meeting the transportation needs of participants continued to be an issue for which projects needed a great deal of technical assistance (22 percent, Exhibit 4.36).

With respect to program operations, 31 percent of the Even Start projects indicated a great need for technical assistance in increasing participant involvement and retention (Exhibit 4.37). This represents a substantial increase from the 20 percent of projects reporting such needs in the second national evaluation. Since 1996-1997, reports of great need for technical assistance also increased substantially for recruiting families (from 8 to 15 percent) and for staff development (from 4 to 12 percent). Similar to two years earlier, 19 percent of projects reported a great need for assistance with funding and fiscal issues.

Projects were asked to report how helpful various providers of technical assistance were in providing technical assistance. In 1998-1999, more than half (53 percent) of projects found state coordinators to be “very helpful”; another 38 percent found them to be “somewhat helpful.” The U.S. Department of Education was reported to be “very helpful” by 19 percent of projects and “somewhat helpful” by 39 percent. Comprehensive technical assistance centers (12 percent)

and Goals 2000 Parent Resource Centers (10 percent) were found to be “very helpful” to a lesser degree.

FEDERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

An important challenge to Even Start, as a demonstration grant program, has been to provide high quality technical assistance to states and to local projects in a cost-effective manner that moves grantees to the Department’s vision of quality service delivery. This challenge has become greater as Even Start has expanded, welfare reform has made service delivery more complex, and the education and economic needs of families have intensified. In 2000-2001, the federal Even Start program office intends to develop and begin to implement a long-range strategic plan, tied to the Department's strategic plan and in response to the Even Start performance indicators developed for the Government Performance and Results Act.

The Even Start program office has systematically provided technical assistance to states and local projects that responds to the needs identified in national and local evaluation studies and the recommendations offered by evaluation contractors. The Department has most recently concentrated its efforts on strengthening service intensity in all core components, improving the quality and usefulness of local evaluations, and sharpening the focus on literacy, particularly in the parenting education component of the program. It has accomplished this in several ways:

- ❑ **A Staff Mentoring project** through which local Even Start programs are paired for the purpose of joint problem solving and sharing successful approaches.
- ❑ Development of a **Guide to Improving Parenting Education in Even Start Family Literacy Programs** which is being modified for use in project training and continuous improvement. This guide is research-based and concentrates on the parent beliefs and behaviors that support children's literacy and success in school.
- ❑ Wide dissemination and use in training of the **Guide to Improving Local Evaluations**.
- ❑ **State coordinator and new local grantee training sessions** concentrating on issues related to improving service intensity, new research on language development, emergent literacy and beginning reading instruction, and strengthening parenting education and local evaluations.

In 1998, the Even Start legislation was amended by the Reading Excellence Act. States were required to develop quality indicators based on the best available research and evaluation data and use these indicators to evaluate and improve local projects and make decisions about continued funding. In 1999-2000, several technical assistance meetings for Even Start State Coordinators focused on the development of a system of indicators that would include those required in the legislation. Technical assistance resources will be used in 2000-2001 to continue to help states set the highest standards for performance and use these standards to improve the quality of all local projects. This technical assistance will emphasize the importance of coordinating accountability systems with performance standards, indicators, and assessments

used under Title I, Part A, Head Start, state funded preschool, and the Adult Education program. This will be accomplished through:

- ❑ Publication of a revised **Guide to Quality in Even Start Family Literacy Programs** which will include a section on model performance indicators.
- ❑ **Peer review**, on a voluntary basis, of quality standards in states receiving grants under the Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiatives.
- ❑ **State mentoring** whereby State Coordinators and Statewide Family Initiative staff will visit states other than their own to share accountability systems and interagency coordination efforts.
- ❑ **A National Forum** held in conjunction the Head Start Bureau and the Office of Adult and Vocational Education specifically on issues related to coordinated accountability and integrated services.

Based on new evaluation data, the Department plans to add a technical assistance focus in 2001-2002 on improving participant retention and, because of the large increase in Hispanic families, improving educational services for English language learners.

EXTENT TO WHICH PROJECTS MEET LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Even Start law imposes numerous requirements on each project. This analysis draws on the 1998-1999 ESPIRS data to examine the extent to which projects reported that they meet their legislative mandate. Projects that meet the legislative mandate are not necessarily well-run or effective. Rather, they meet the definition of a functioning Even Start project. The analysis was done as follows:

- ❑ We examined Sections 1205 and 1208 of the Even Start legislation and found 11 program requirements that each Even Start project should meet.
- ❑ We examined the 1998-1999 ESPIRS data system to determine which items could be used to create a definition for each program requirement.⁴²
- ❑ We worked with the Department of Education staff to set criteria for each program requirement.
- ❑ We determined whether each project met each of Even Start's legislative requirements.

The 1998-1999 ESPIRS data can be used to address eight of the 11 program elements. The three program elements that could not be addressed using 1998-1999 ESPIRS data will be covered in the final report from this evaluation. Exhibit 4.38 shows the number and percent of

⁴² The 1998-1999 version of the ESPIRS was not designed as a tool for assessing the extent to which projects meet Even Start's legislative requirements. An updated version of the ESPIRS, being used in 1999-2000 and beyond, has been redesigned to do a better job of assessing the extent to which projects meet legislative requirements.

projects that submitted ESPIRS data in 1998-1999 and that met the criteria for each program element (Appendix A provides operational definitions for each requirement).

Eighty-three percent (n=581) of the Even Start projects operating in 1998-1999 provided data confirming that they met each of the legislative requirements. Only 7 percent (n=49) of the 1998-1999 Even Start projects provided data indicating that they did not meet each of the legislative requirements. The remaining 10 percent (n=70) did not provide enough information to determine their status on one or more elements.

None of the individual program elements appeared to pose special problems for Even Start projects. The requirement to provide year-round services was the most difficult to meet, with 3 percent of the projects unable to comply with this mandate.

SERVICE INTENSITY

The amount of instructional services offered to families is an especially important programmatic variable in that it appears to be related to outcomes for children and adults (St.Pierre, et al., 1998) and can be manipulated by program practitioners. The legislative requirement about service intensity states that services must be of “sufficient intensity” without specifying what is meant by “sufficient,” so there is no specific criterion for intensity of services. Instead, for the purposes of this report, three broad levels of intensity were defined for each of Even Start’s core instructional services: (1) high, (2) moderate, and (3) low. This was done by combining the Department’s Even Start performance indicators on service intensity with judgments about the intensity of services required for a high-quality program that is capable of leading to change in educational outcomes. ESPIRS data from the 1998-1999 program year were used to determine the number of projects that fell into each group. Exhibits 4.39, 4.40, and 4.41 show the definitions of high, moderate, and low service intensity for parenting education, early childhood education, and adult education, as well as the percentage of Even Start projects that fell into each intensity category.

Parenting Education. A high-intensity parenting education program is defined as one that offers 20 or more hours of parenting education in each month, equivalent to five hours per week, or one hour per day. A low-intensity program is defined as one that offers four or fewer hours of parenting education each month, equivalent to one hour a week. Moderate-intensity programs fall between high and low intensity programs.

By these definitions, 46 percent of all Even Start projects offered high-intensity parenting education services, 7 percent offered low-intensity services, and the remaining 47 percent offered moderate-intensity services.

Early Childhood Education. It is easier to provide a greater number of service hours for preschoolers than for infants and toddlers. Thus, the definition of high, moderate, and low intensity for early childhood education programs differs slightly between programs that serve infants and toddlers (0 to 3-year-olds) and programs that serve preschoolers (3 to 5-year-olds). A

high-intensity early childhood education program for 0 to 3-year-olds is defined as one that offers 60 or more hours each month, equivalent to 15 hours a week, or a three-hour daily program. For 3 to 5-year-olds, a program must offer 65 or more hours each month to be classified as high intensity. On the other hand, a low-intensity program for 0 to 3-year-olds is defined as one that offers fewer than four hours per month, less than one hour per week. A low-intensity program for 3 to 5-year-olds is defined as one that offers 12 or fewer hours per month, equivalent to three hours a week or less. If an Even Start project offers a high-intensity early childhood education program either for 0 to 3-year-olds or for 3 to 5-year-olds, then it is considered to be a high-intensity program.

According to these definitions, 47 percent of all Even Start projects offered high-intensity early childhood services to 3 to 5-year-olds, 45 percent offered moderate-intensity services, and 9 percent offered low-intensity services. It is more difficult to provide a high-intensity program for infants and toddlers. Not only was the definition of high-intensity more liberal for infants and toddlers than for preschoolers, but the percentage of projects qualifying as high-intensity was smaller. For 0 to 3-year-olds, 36 percent of all projects offered high-intensity services, 58 percent offered moderate-intensity services, and 6 percent offered low-intensity services.

Adult Education. The same definition of high-, moderate-, and low-intensity programs was used across different types of adult education. That is, regardless of whether we are talking about GED, ESL, ASE, or beginning or intermediate ABE programs, a high-intensity program is defined as one that offers 60 or more hours of instruction each month, and a low-intensity program is defined as one that offers eight or fewer hours a month. Some projects offer all five types of adult education listed above, while others offer only a subset. An Even Start project is considered to offer high-intensity adult education services if it offered high-intensity services in **any** of the five areas of adult education. A program is considered to offer moderate-intensity services if it offered moderate intensity services in at least one area but did not offer any high-intensity services. Finally, the only way that a project is considered to offer low-intensity adult education services is if it did not offer any moderate or high intensity services.

Even Start programs appear to find it easier to provide high intensity services for certain areas of adult education. High-intensity programs were most common for ASE (43 percent of all Even Start projects), less frequent for ABE and GED (32 percent and 33 percent), and least common for ESL (22 percent of all projects). Low-intensity programs occurred with roughly the same frequency across types of adult education (ranging from 7 to 11 percent).

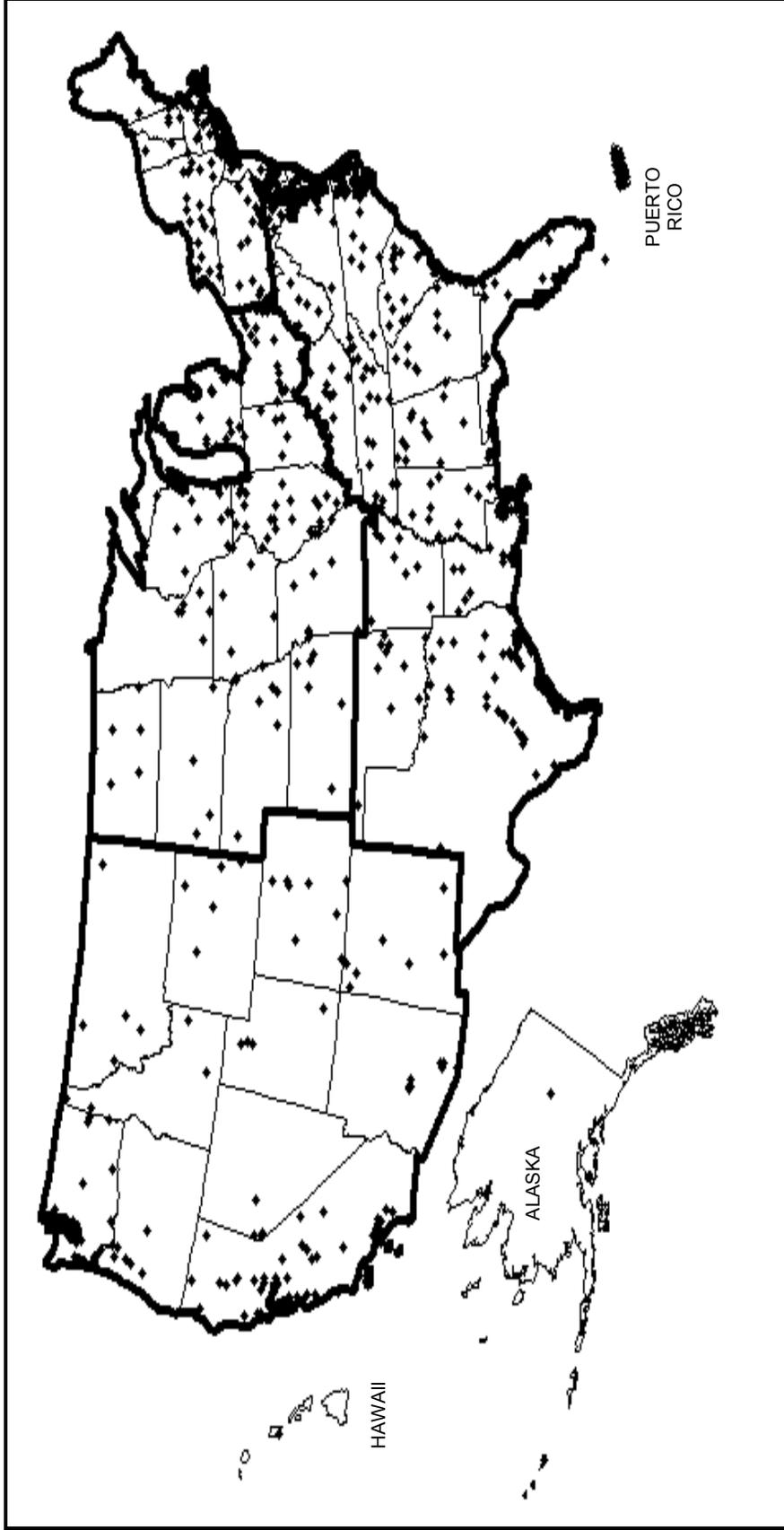
In summary, when the definitions used here are applied, Even Start projects are most often able to offer high-intensity services in parenting education and in early childhood education for preschoolers. Projects are least able to offer high-intensity services in adult education (with the exception of ASE).

Low-Intensity Projects. Even Start projects are supposed to provide high-intensity services. We identified 76 projects that provided low-intensity services in one or more core service areas. Of the 76 projects, only 4 of them offered low intensity services in all three core service areas (adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education). An

additional six projects offered low intensity services in two service areas, and 66 projects offered low intensity services in only one service area. Exhibit 4.42 displays the patterns of service intensity for these 76 projects. The two most common patterns include one area of low service intensity, with that area most likely to be parenting education or adult education.

We compared the projects with at least one area of low service intensity to all other projects to see whether they had any characteristics in common. Projects with at least one area of low service intensity (Low projects) are more likely to be in rural settings than other projects (Moderate or High). However, they are equivalent in terms of the average age of the projects, and the percent of Hispanic participants (Exhibit 4.43).

EXHIBIT 4.1
LOCATION OF EVEN START PROJECTS IN 1998-1999



Note: In 1998-99, the Northeast region included 124 projects located in: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The South region included 286 projects located in: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Midwest region included 160 projects located in: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The West region included 167 projects located in: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

EXHIBIT 4.2
NUMBER OF EVEN START PROJECTS THAT OPERATED IN 1998-1999,
BY STATE AND TYPE OF PROJECT FOR 50 STATES PLUS THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND PUERTO RICO

STATE	STATE- ADMINISTERED	MIGRANT EDUCATION	TRIBAL	TOTAL
Alabama	13	0	0	13
Alaska	4	0	1	5
Arizona	9	0	1	10
Arkansas	16	0	0	16
California	70	0	3	73
Colorado	11	1	0	12
Connecticut	6	0	0	6
Delaware	5	0	0	5
District of Columbia	4	0	0	4
Florida	23	1	0	24
Georgia	13	0	0	13
Hawaii	5	0	0	5
Idaho	6	0	0	6
Illinois	38	0	0	38
Indiana	7	0	0	7
Iowa	8	0	0	8
Kansas	7	1	1	9
Kentucky	15	2	0	17
Louisiana	13	0	0	13
Maine	6	0	0	6
Maryland	8	0	0	8
Massachusetts	13	0	0	13
Michigan	20	1	0	21
Minnesota	9	0	0	9
Mississippi	13	0	0	13
Missouri	9	0	0	9
Montana	5	1	1	7
Nebraska	7	0	0	7
Nevada	5	0	0	5
New Hampshire	4	0	0	4
New Jersey	17	0	0	17
New Mexico	8	1	0	9
New York	45	1	0	46
North Carolina	11	1	0	12
North Dakota	6	0	0	6
Ohio	28	0	0	28
Oklahoma	12	0	0	12
Oregon	7	2	0	9
Pennsylvania	24	1	0	25
Puerto Rico	24	0	0	24

(Continued on next page)

EXHIBIT 4.2
NUMBER OF EVEN START PROJECTS THAT OPERATED IN 1998-1999,
BY STATE AND TYPE OF PROJECT FOR 50 STATES PLUS THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND PUERTO RICO
(CONTINUED)

STATE	STATE- ADMINISTERED	MIGRANT EDUCATION	TRIBAL	TOTAL
Rhode Island	4	0	0	4
South Carolina	15	0	0	15
South Dakota	3	0	0	3
Tennessee	26	0	0	26
Texas	51	3	0	54
Utah	4	0	1	5
Vermont	3	0	0	3
Virginia	9	0	0	9
Washington	14	0	2	16
West Virginia	8	0	0	8
Wisconsin	15	0	0	15
Wyoming	5	0	0	5
Total	711	16	10	737

Note: A total of 737 projects operated the Even Start Program in 1998-1999. Of these, 701 (95 percent) submitted data for the National Even Start Evaluation.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, there were 13 Even Start projects in Alabama, all of which were state administered.

EXHIBIT 4.3
PERCENT OF PROJECTS REPORTING AVAILABILITY OF NON-EVEN START
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES (1998-1999)

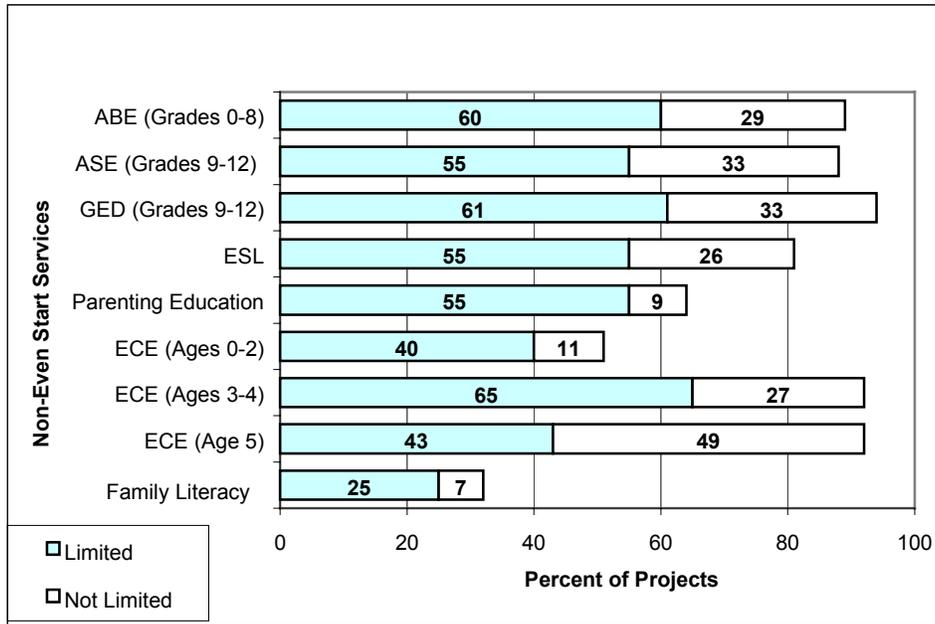


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 89 percent of Even Start projects reported that adult basic education (grades zero through eight) was available in their communities through programs other than Even Start. However, 60 percent of the projects reported that access to these services by Even Start families was limited by factors such as transportation or scheduling.

EXHIBIT 4.4
PROJECT AGE (YEARS OF OPERATING EVEN START) AS OF 1998-1999

PROJECT AGE (YEARS OF OPERATING EVEN START)	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Reconfigured (one or two years)	2%
One year (new)	14%
Two years	15%
Three years	12%
Four years	16%
Five years	7%
Six years	15%
Seven years	10%
Eight years	9%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 16 percent of projects were fourth-year projects.

EXHIBIT 4.5
LEVELS OF FUNDING FOR EVEN START PROJECTS (1998-1999)

TYPE OF FUNDING	AVERAGE PER REPORTING PROJECT (N OF PROJECTS REPORTING)	RANGE IN 98% OF REPORTING PROJECTS
Federal Even Start funds	\$153,989 (678)	\$ 62,000-\$408,454
Non Even Start federal funds	\$ 55,648 (111)	\$ 100-\$327,324
State and Local contributions—Cash	\$ 67,098 (251)	\$ 75-\$488,888
State and Local contributions—Non-Cash	\$112,992 (605)	\$ 2,500-\$500,000

Note: Project averages are based on the projects that reported non-zero amounts.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, the average amount of federal Even Start funds was \$153,989 per project.

EXHIBIT 4.6
AVERAGE NUMBER OF FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STAFF, BY PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT (1998-1999)

PROFESSIONAL ASSIGNMENT	AVERAGE FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS
Administrator (director, supervisor, coordinator)	.76
Professional (teacher, tutor)	1.65
Other Professional (social worker, speech therapist)	.14
Paraprofessional (educational assistant)	.85
Family specialists (recruitment, case mgmt, community liaison, home visit)	.96
Support service providers (transportation, child care)	.72
Evaluators (data collection, testing, data analysis)	.29
Others (secretary, clerk, educational media staff, janitor)	.37
Total Staff FTEs	5.88

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, Even Start projects, on average, had .76 full time equivalent staff serving as program administrators.

EXHIBIT 4.7
CRITERIA FOR TARGETING SERVICES TO A SEGMENT OF THE ELIGIBLE POPULATION
(1998-1999)

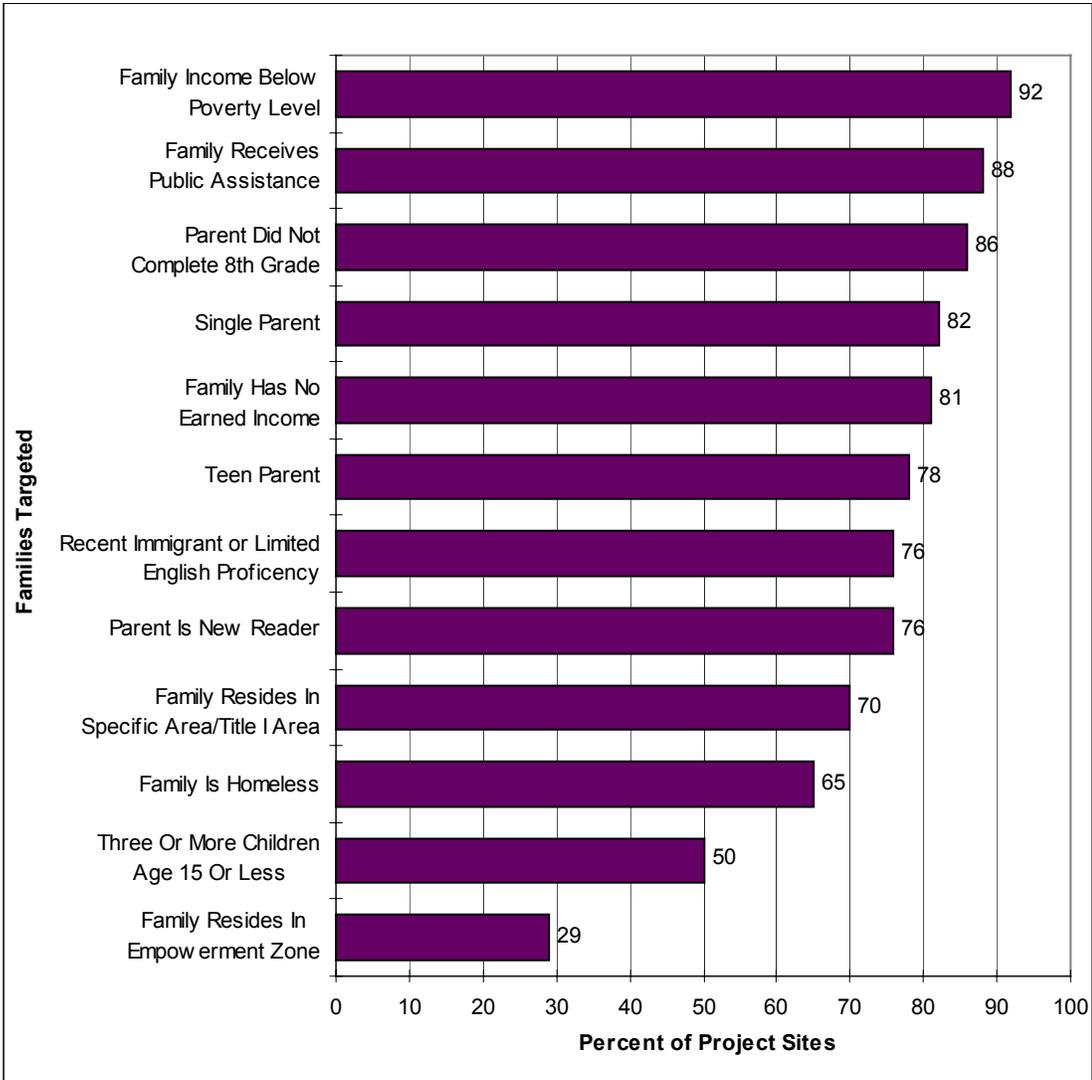
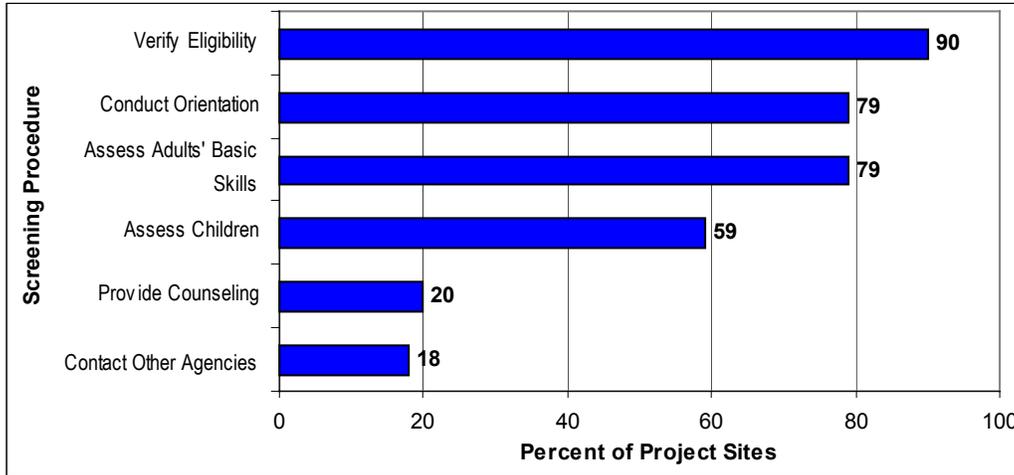


Exhibit reads: Among Even Start project sites that used additional criteria for recruiting families in 1998-1999, 92 percent targeted families with incomes below poverty level.

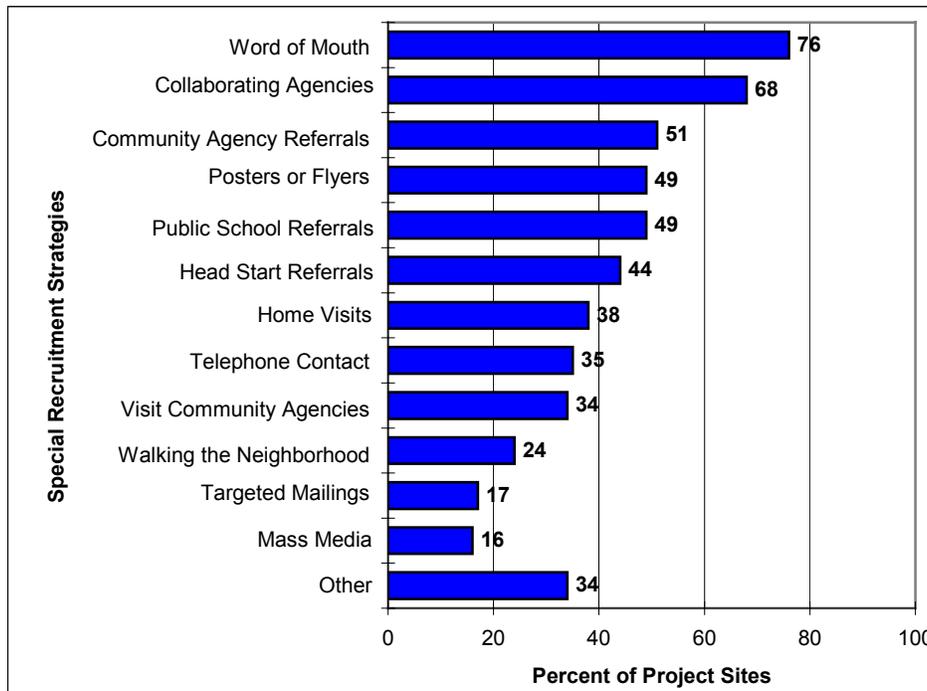
EXHIBIT 4.8
PERCENT OF PROJECTS, BY FORMAL STEPS USED "A GREAT DEAL" IN SCREENING POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS (1998-1999)



Note: "A Great Deal" is defined as project reporting that a specified formal step was used with 76-100 percent of its clients.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 90 percent of Even Start projects used verifying eligibility "a great deal" as a screening procedure.

EXHIBIT 4.9
PERCENT OF PROJECTS USING SPECIAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES "A GREAT DEAL" (1998-1999)



Note: The percentages are based on the 795 project sites operated by the 701 projects included in evaluation analyses.

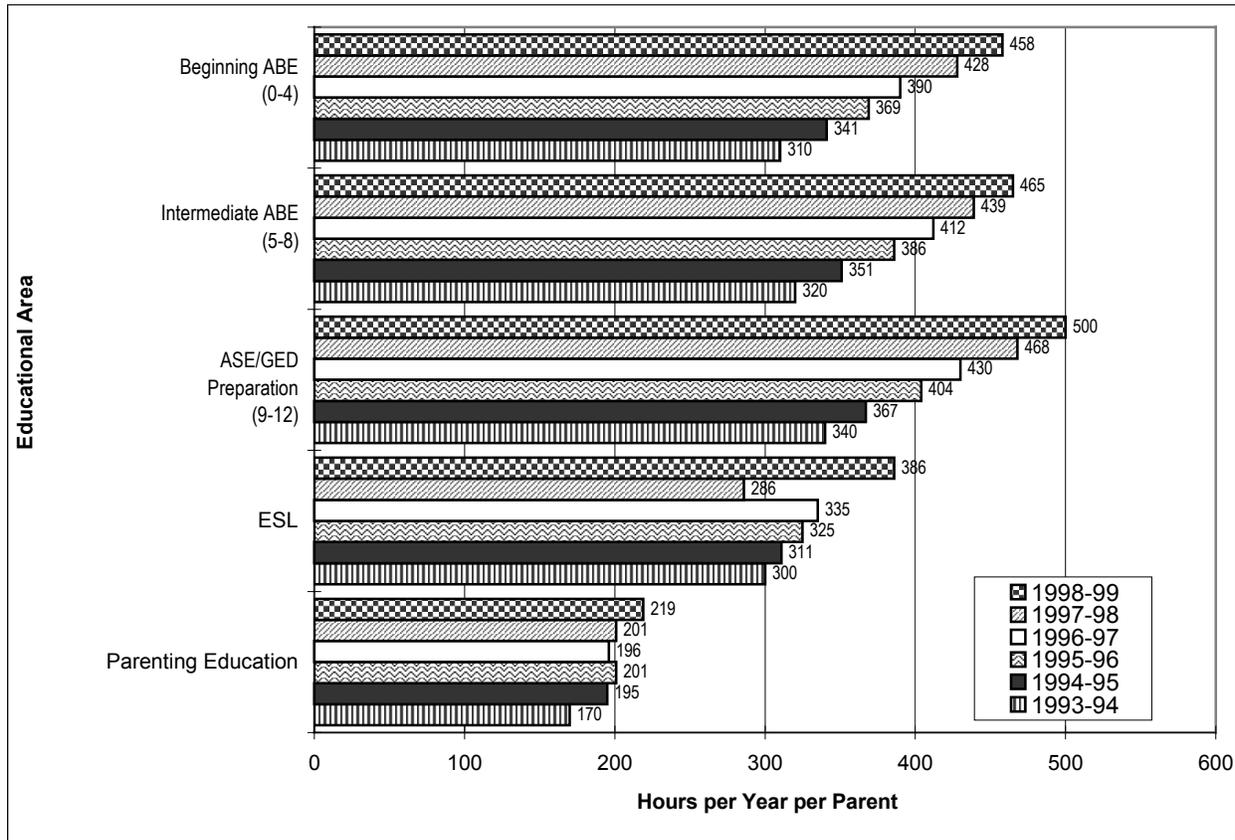
Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 76 percent of projects used word of mouth "a great deal" for recruiting families.

EXHIBIT 4.10
PERCENT OF PROJECTS USING VARIOUS METHODS TO PREPARE ADULTS
BEFORE FULLY ENGAGING THEM IN ADULT EDUCATION AND PARENTING EDUCATION (1998-1999)

PREPARATION METHOD	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Conduct orientation sessions	88%
Conduct home visits	83%
Invite to social functions	65%
Invite to field trips or other outings	54%
Begin adult education first	44%
Begin parenting education first	31%
No preparation period	25%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 31 percent of Even Start projects began parenting education before fully engaging participants in other core services.

EXHIBIT 4.11
HOURS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES OFFERED PER YEAR PER PARTICIPANT
IN ADULT AND PARENTING EDUCATION (1993-1994 TO 1998-1999)



Note: For 1997-1998 and 1998-1999, ASE/GED preparation hours were calculated by averaging the hours reported for ASE and GED, separately.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, projects offered an average of 458 hours of instruction in beginning adult basic education.

EXHIBIT 4.12
HOURS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES OFFERED PER YEAR PER PARTICIPANT IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (1993-1994 TO 1998-1999)

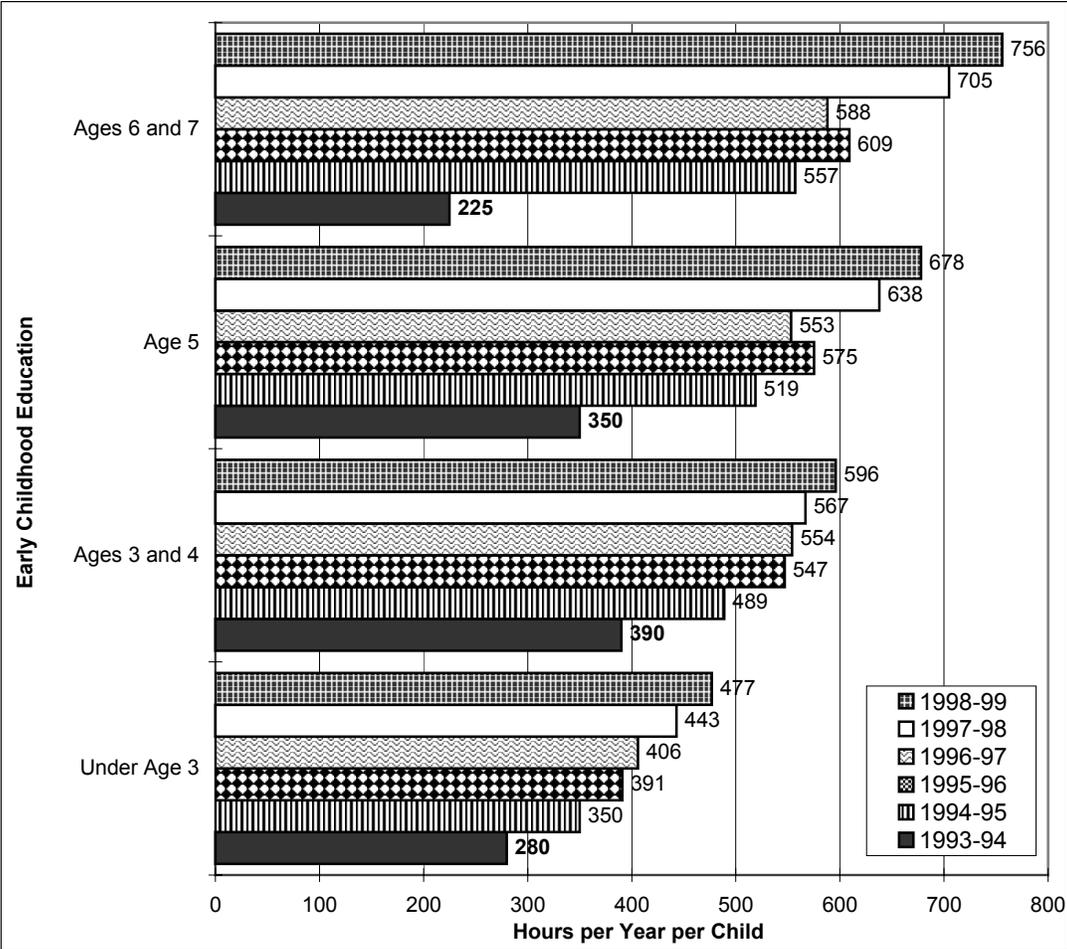


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, projects offered an average of 756 hours per year of early childhood education services to children 6 and 7 years of age.

EXHIBIT 4.13
PERCENT OF SERVICE HOURS OFFERED IN HOME SETTING

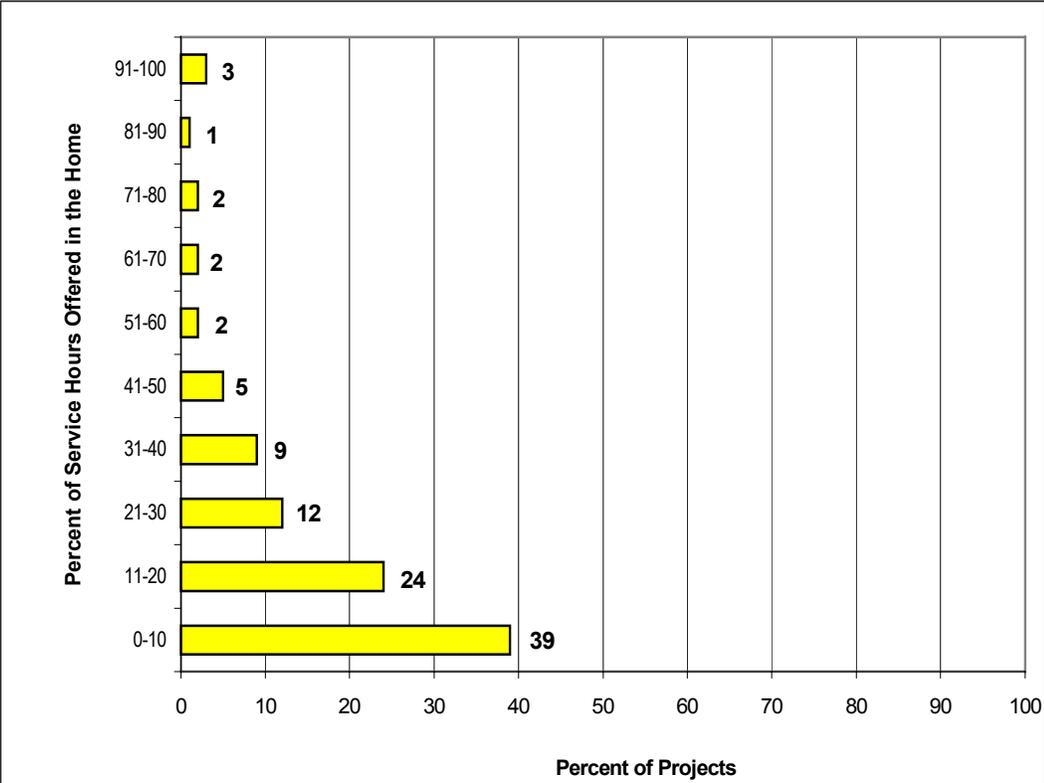


Exhibit reads: In 39 percent of projects, home-based services constituted 0-10 percent of total instructional hours offered.

EXHIBIT 4.14
AVERAGE HOURS OF ADULT EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH,
BY HOME- VS. CENTER-BASED SERVICES AND PERCENT OF TEEN PARENTS (1998-1999)

PROJECT/PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTIC	AVERAGE HOURS OF ADULT EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH
Home- vs. Center-Based	
Primarily home-based projects (N=98)	21
Primarily center-based projects (N=573)	41
Percent of Teen Parents	
< 3 percent (N=151)	29
3-11 percent (N=174)	36
12-25 percent (N=170)	40
26+ percent (N=176)	45

Note: The results are based on analysis of variance. "Primarily home-based projects" offered 40 percent or more of instructional services in the home setting; "primarily center-based projects" offered less than 40 percent of home-based instruction.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, primarily home-based projects offered an average of 21 hours of adult education per month, while primarily center-based projects offered 41 hours per month.

EXHIBIT 4.15
AVERAGE HOURS OF PARENTING EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH,
BY HOME- VS. CENTER-BASED PROJECTS (1998-1999)

PROJECT CHARACTERISTIC	AVERAGE HOURS OF PARENTING EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH
Primarily home-based projects (N=100)	13
Primarily center-based projects (N=578)	22

Note: The results are based on analysis of variance. "Primarily home-based projects" offered 40 percent or more of instructional services in the home setting; "primarily center-based projects" offered less than 40 percent of home-based instruction.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, primarily home-based projects offered an average of 13 hours of parenting education per month, while primarily center-based projects offered 22 hours per month.

EXHIBIT 4.16
AVERAGE HOURS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH,
BY HOME- VS. CENTER-BASED PROJECTS AND PROJECT BUDGET (1998-1999)

PROJECT CHARACTERISTIC	AVERAGE HOURS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OFFERED PER MONTH
Home- vs. Center-Based	
Primarily home-based projects (N=98)	32
Primarily center-based projects (N=598)	61
Total Project Budget	
< \$156,702 (N=166)	57
\$156,702 - \$232,199 (N=166)	56
\$232,200 - \$351,453 (N=172)	51
\$351,453 + (N=192)	64

Note: The results are based on analysis of variance. "Primarily home-based projects" offered 40 percent or more of instructional services in the home setting; "primarily center-based projects" offered less than 40 percent of home-based instruction.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, primarily home-based projects offered an average of 32 hours of early childhood education per month, while primarily center-based projects offered 61 hours per month.

EXHIBIT 4.17
PERCENT OF PROJECTS BY SERVICES PROVIDED
TO HELP ADULTS PROGRESS TO EMPLOYMENT (1998-1999)

SERVICE	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Class time spent in job readiness skills and discussion of educational and training opportunities	94%
Class time is spent on how to access community services and solve problems	93%
Adults develop a plan for goal attainment, including time line and resource requirements	85%
Project maintains connections with employers and post-secondary institutions to facilitate next steps for adult	76%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 94 percent of Even Start projects spent some of the adult education class time in job readiness skills and discussion of educational and training opportunities.

EXHIBIT 4.18
CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES (1998-1999)

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT	ADULT EDUCATION COMPONENT				
	BEGINNING (0-4)	INTERMEDIATE (5-8)	ASE	GED	ESL
Life skills	84%	89%	75%	94%	72%
Parenting	76%	82%	68%	85%	66%
Vocational	67%	76%	66%	85%	63%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 84 percent of Even Start projects used life skill contexts in the beginning adult education programs.

EXHIBIT 4.19
PERCENT OF PROJECTS LISTING VARIOUS PARENTING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AS
AMONG THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT (1998-1999)

PARENTING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Develop child's motor skills	91%
Prepare child for school routines	89%
Develop child's social skills	87%
Knowledge of vocational and educational opportunities	87%
Assist with homework, build on instructional activities	86%
Knowledge of community and social services	82%
Parent-child Literacy activities	82%
Ensure child's safety and well-being	81%
Good health and nutrition practices	80%
Working with children's teachers	80%
Manage child's behavior	67%
Apply child development principles	63%
Develop child's language and thinking	60%
Build parent life skills	59%
Build parent self-esteem	58%
Understanding child's development status	50%
Developing constructive discipline	20%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 60 percent of Even Start projects reported that developing children's language and thinking was among the five most important topics used in their project for parenting education.

EXHIBIT 4.20
HOURS PER MONTH OF PARENT-CHILD JOINT ACTIVITIES OFFERED,
BY SETTING (1994-1995 TO 1998-1999)

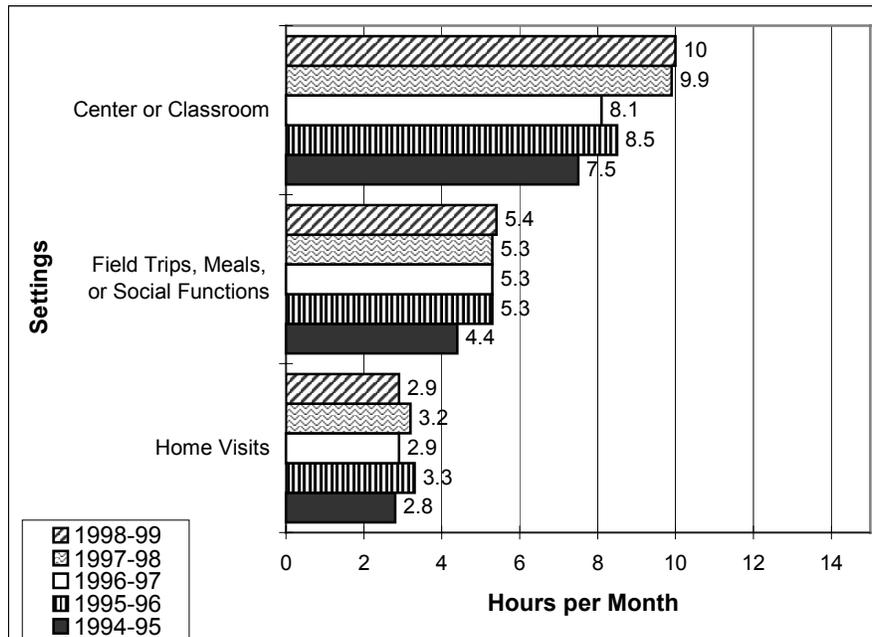


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, the average Even Start project offered 10 hours per month of parent-child joint activities in a center or classroom setting.

EXHIBIT 4.21
PERCENT OF PROJECTS LISTING VARIOUS PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES
AS AMONG THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT (1998-1999)

PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES	CENTER-BASED ACTIVITIES	HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES
Social development	64%	36%
Language development	57%	53%
Early academic skills	44%	48%
Reading aloud	41%	62%
Activities selected and led by child	40%	24%
Sensory stimulation	37%	37%
Arts and crafts	28%	19%
Reading, pre-reading	27%	35%
Independence, self-discipline, self-help skills	25%	38%
Story telling	22%	25%
Gross motor activities	22%	16%
Computer activities	14%	6%
Health and nutrition	13%	25%
Working with numbers	13%	20%
Working with letters and writing	12%	15%

Note: Exhibit reports the percent of projects reporting each type of parent-child joint activities as among their five most important, separately for the center-based activities and home-based activities.

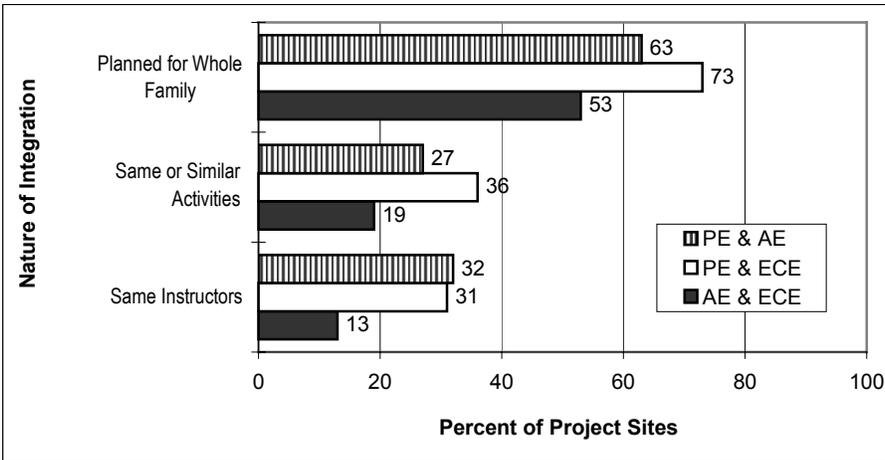
Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 64 percent of Even Start projects reported that social development was among the five most important topics in center-based parent-child joint activities.

EXHIBIT 4.22
PERCENT OF PROJECTS BY LANGUAGES USED IN PARENTING, ADULT,
AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CLASSES (1998-1999)

CORE SERVICE AREA	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Parenting Education	
Project has only English speaking participants	33%
English only (with some participants who speak other languages)	20%
English and non-English languages of all participants	29%
English and non-English languages of some participants	18%
Adult Education	
Project has only English speaking participants	32%
English only (with some participants who speak other languages)	28%
English and non-English languages of all participants	24%
English and non-English languages of some participants	17%
Early Childhood Education	
Project has only English speaking participants	34%
English only (with some participants who speak other languages)	24%
English and non-English languages of all participants	25%
English and non-English languages of some participants	17%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 33 percent of Even Start projects had only English speaking participants in their parenting education classes.

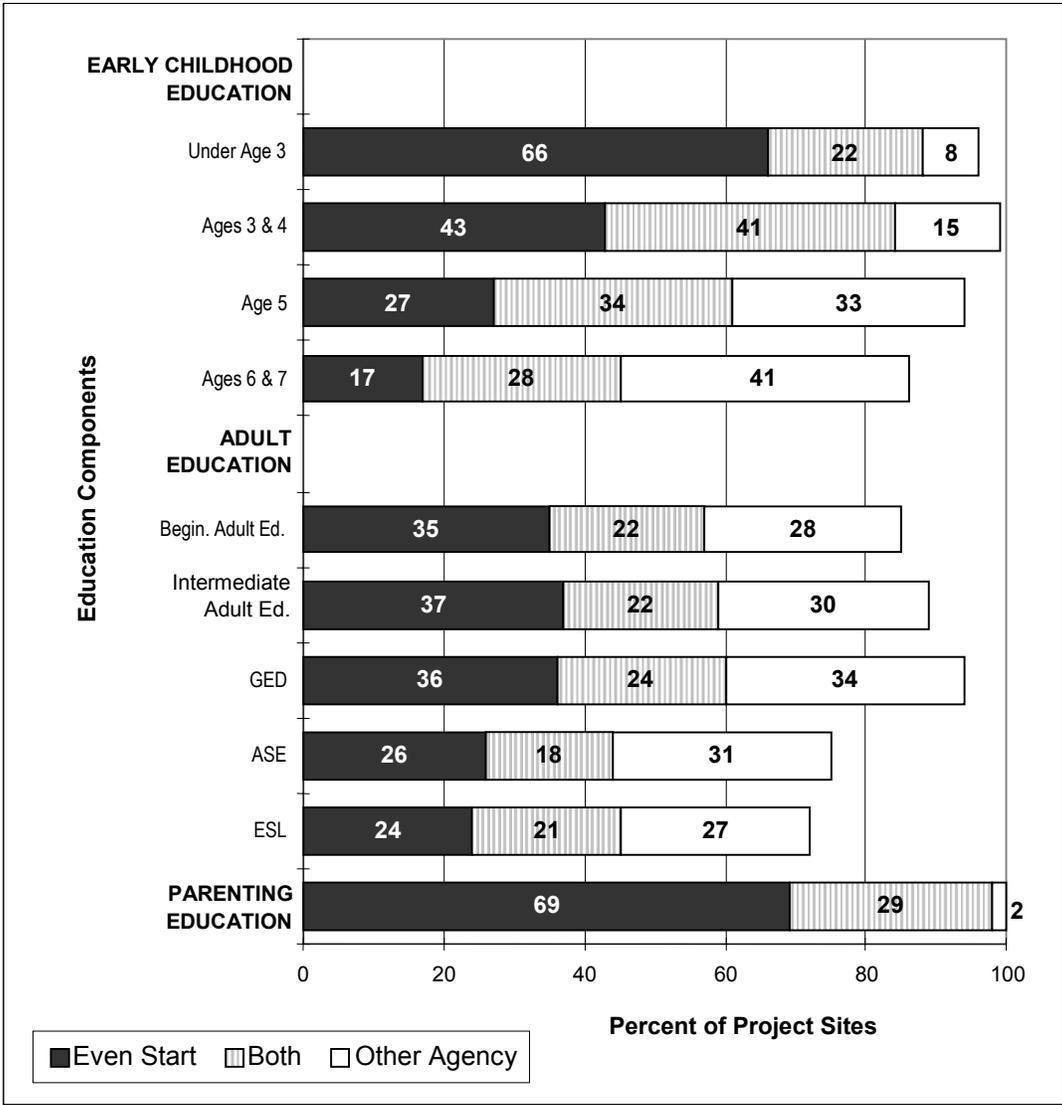
EXHIBIT 4.23
PERCENT OF PROJECTS, BY FREQUENTLY USED METHOD OF INTEGRATING EVEN START CORE SERVICES
(1998-1999)



Note: "Frequently used method" is defined by projects reporting the use "always" or "usually."

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 63 percent of Even Start projects integrated parenting and adult education curricula by conducting activities involving the whole family.

EXHIBIT 4.24
PERCENT OF PROJECTS COORDINATING SERVICES WITH COLLABORATING AGENCIES,
BY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AREA (1998-1999)



Note: The percentages are based on 795 project sites reported by 701 projects included in the 1998-1999 evaluation. Some percentages do not add to 100 because some project sites did not provide certain types of services (i.e., neither Even Start nor other agency staff provided the services).

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 35 percent of projects used Even Start staff exclusively for their beginning adult basic education services.

EXHIBIT 4.25

PERCENT OF PROJECTS WHERE COLLABORATING AGENCIES WERE THE PRIMARY OR SECONDARY PROVIDERS OF ADULT, PARENTING, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES (1998-1999)

TYPE OF COLLABORATING AGENCY	ADULT EDUCATION		PARENTING EDUCATION		EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	
	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Public schools	34%	11%	32%	18%	36%	14%
Colleges/universities	19%	20%	5%	12%	4%	10%
Volunteer groups	4%	24%	3%	18%	2%	18%
Government agencies	9%	15%	6%	21%	5%	14%
Technical schools	10%	15%	2%	6%	2%	4%
Head Start	2%	9%	3%	21%	13%	24%
Other preschool, daycare programs	3%	5%	4%	11%	14%	19%
Foundations, associations	1%	6%	1%	6%	1%	4%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 34 percent of projects had collaborative arrangements with public school systems that were the primary providers of adult education instruction for their Even Start parents.

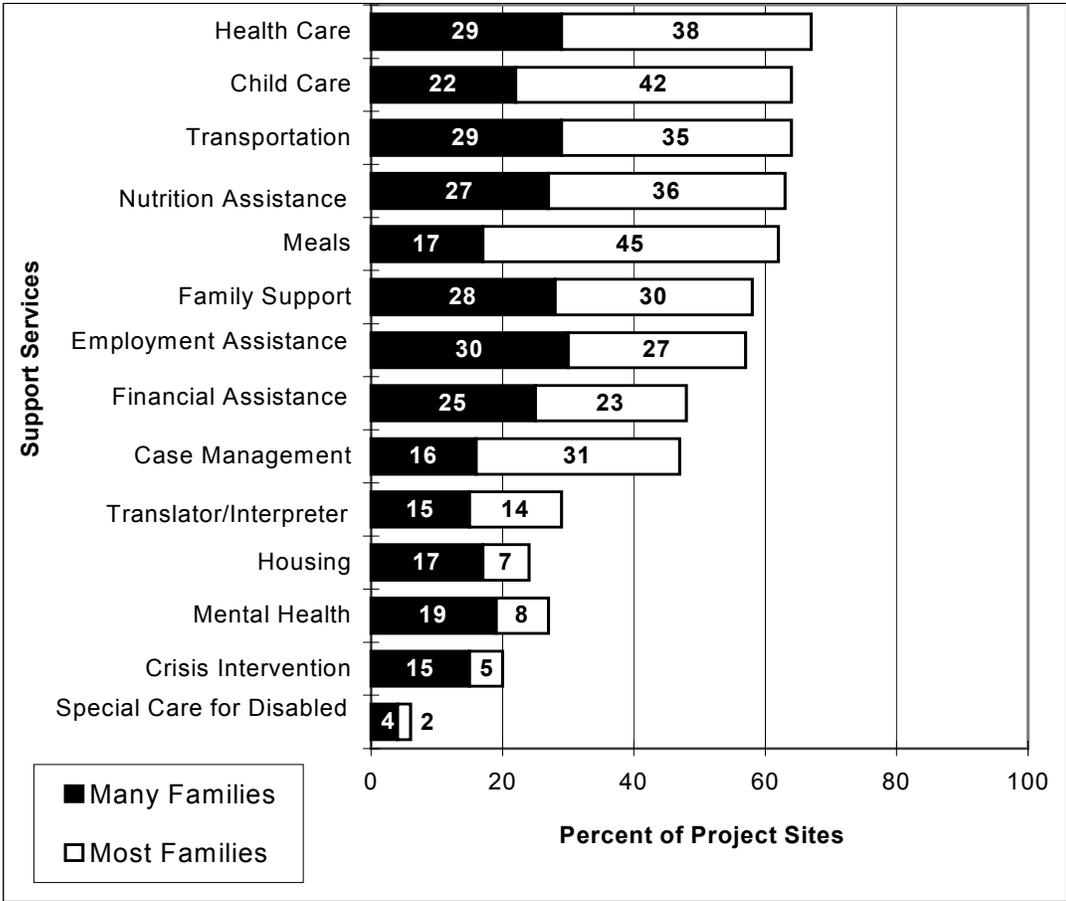
EXHIBIT 4.26

PERCENT OF PROJECTS PROVIDING TRANSITIONAL SERVICES TO EVEN START CHILDREN (1998-1999)

TRANSITIONAL SERVICES	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN	
Inform parents about rights and responsibilities and encourage and facilitate parental participation in school	97%
Help parents with ways to deal with children's anxieties	96%
Include planning for transition as a topic within parenting classes or home visits	91%
Take proactive role with school staff (and staff from early childhood programs) to help bridge cultural and language differences, to help staff gain an understanding of parent's involvement, and/or help staff recognize strengths of disadvantaged families	83%
Facilitate transfer of student information to kindergartens (e.g., student assessment information, student records)	79%
Establish communications with next teachers (preschool, kindergarten, elementary school) to share information about child's development progress	79%
Conduct special programs for pre-kindergarten and/or kindergarten children and parents to facilitate the transition (e.g., special summer program for children, readiness workshops for families)	69%
Take preschool children to visit kindergarten and/or take kindergarten children to visit elementary schools	65%
Conduct joint activities for preschool and kindergarten children and/or kindergarten and elementary school students	57%
FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN	
Incorporate transitional activities in early childhood programs to prepare children directly (role playing, modeling, new routines)	77%
FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN	
Work with staff from kindergarten and/or elementary schools to coordinate program activities or conduct joint staff training	66%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 69 percent of Even Start projects conducted special programs to help pre-kindergarten and/or kindergarten children and their parents to transition to kindergarten or primary schools.

EXHIBIT 4.27
PERCENT OF PROJECTS, BY FAMILIES' NEED FOR SUPPORT SERVICES ("MOST" AND "MANY" FAMILIES)
(1998-1999)



Note: "Most" indicates that 76 to 100 percent of families needed this service. "Many" indicates that 51 to 75 percent of families needed this service.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 67 percent of Even Start projects reported that "many" or "most" of their families needed health care services.

EXHIBIT 4.28
PERCENT OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN RECEIVING SUPPORT SERVICES (1998-1999)

SUPPORT SERVICES	PERCENT OF PARENTS (N=28,866)	PERCENT OF CHILDREN (N=37,999)
Child care	65%	59%
Meals	54%	57%
Family support	53%	N/A
Social services	51%	N/A
Transportation	50%	48%
Health care, referral, screening	44%	42%
Employment assistance	37%	N/A
Translator, interpreter	25%	17%
Counseling	N/A	18%

Note: "N/A" indicates the types of support services that were assessed only for parents or children but not both.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 65 percent of Even Start parents received assistance with child care.

EXHIBIT 4.29
FLEXIBILITY IN SCHEDULING OF EVEN START SERVICES TO ACCOMMODATE ADULT PARTICIPANTS (1998-1999)

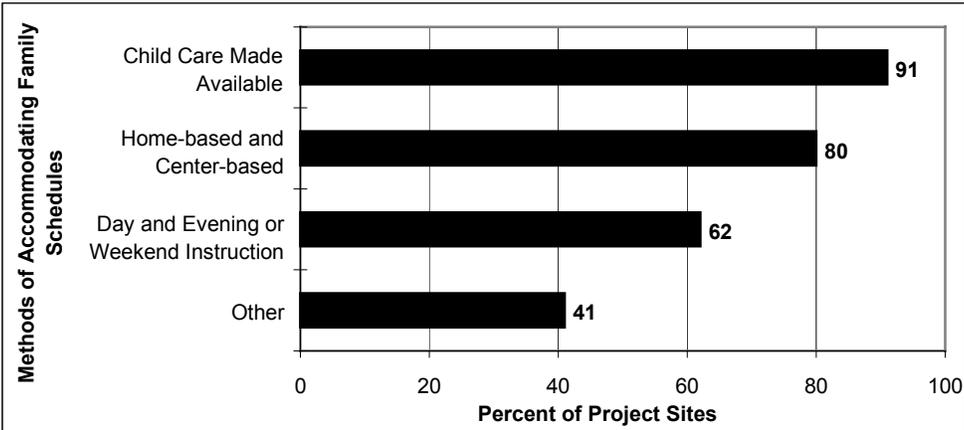


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 91 percent of projects provided child care to enable parents to attend Even Start services.

EXHIBIT 4.30
PERCENT OF PROJECTS BY ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THEIR LOCAL EVALUATION (1998-1999)

EVALUATION ISSUE	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
How adequately or completely project components were implemented	93%
Description of participants, project services, and collaborations	91%
Assessment of the growth in adult literacy	90%
Assessment of the quality of educational and support services provided	88%
Assessment of the growth in parenting skills	85%
Assessment of the growth in child literacy	84%
Assessment of the quality of staff training and development	76%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 91 percent of Even Start projects examined characteristics of participants, project services, and interagency collaborations in their local evaluations.

EXHIBIT 4.31
PERCENT OF PROJECTS USING VARIOUS STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT (1998-1999)

STRATEGY	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Interviews or meetings with project staff	99%
Interviews or meetings with project participants	100%
Interviews or meetings with project administrators	100%
Questionnaires or rating sheets from participants	98%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 99 percent of Even Start projects interviewed project staff to obtain comments and found this method useful for improving project operation.

EXHIBIT 4.32
PERCENT OF PROJECTS PLANNING CHANGES BASED ON MOST RECENT LOCAL EVALUATION (1998-1999)

PROJECT AREA	NO CHANGES	MINOR CHANGES	MAJOR CHANGES
Project administration	64%	30%	6%
Recruitment and screening	33%	55%	12%
Basic model and curriculum	43%	49%	8%
Staffing and in-service	30%	58%	11%
Collaborative agreements	45%	43%	13%
Local evaluation	51%	41%	9%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 64 percent of Even Start projects planned no changes in the area of project administration—based on their most recent local evaluation.

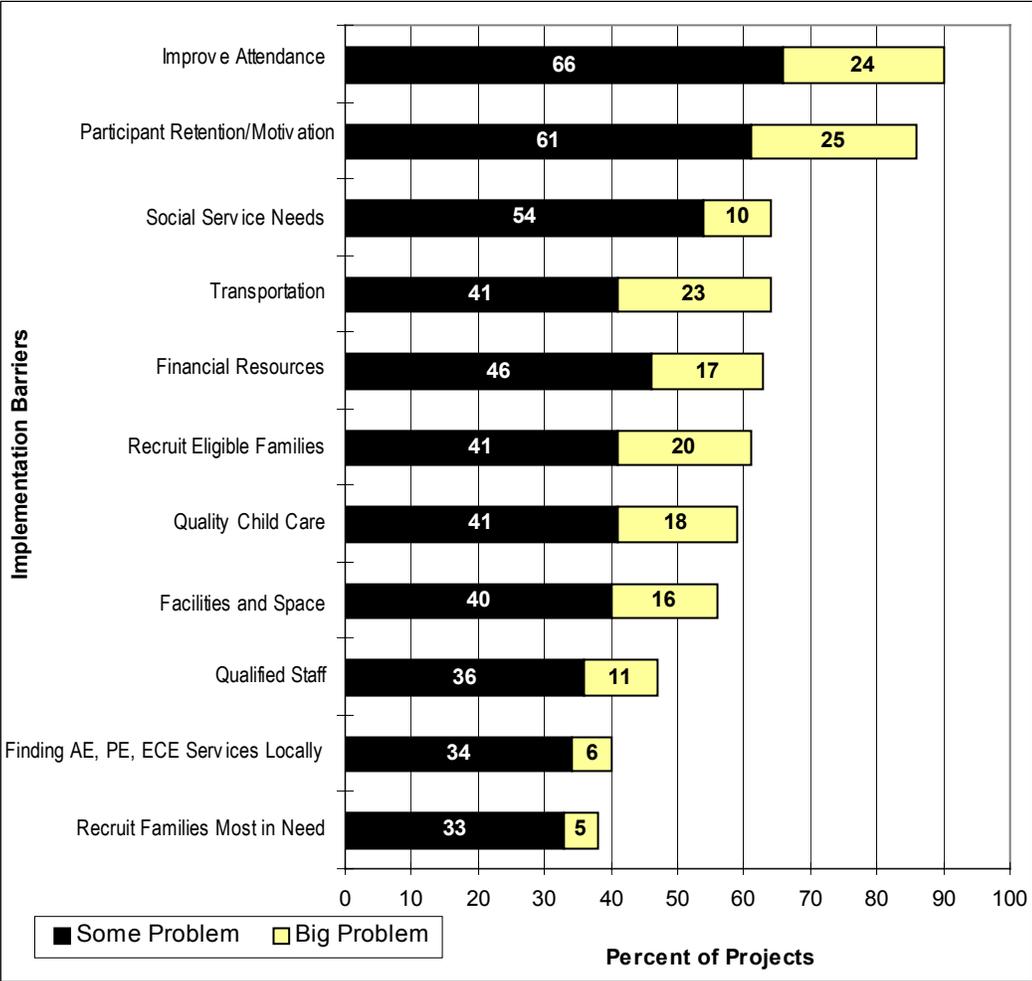
EXHIBIT 4.33
PLANS FOR CONTINUATION AFTER CURRENT MULTI-YEAR GRANT EXPIRES (1998-1999)

PROGRAM CONTINUATION PLANS	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Plan to continue	581	84%
Have no plans yet	95	14%
Plan to close the project	18	3%
Strategies for Continuing the Program		
Reapply for another Even Start demonstration grant	501	88%
Obtain funding from foundations, corporations, or other sources	402	80%
Carry on with local funds	432	86%
Other	96	52%

Note: Because projects could indicate more than one strategy for continuation, the percentages add to more than 100.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 84 percent of Even Start projects planned to continue to provide family literacy services after the current grant expires.

EXHIBIT 4.34
PERCENT OF PROJECTS REPORTING BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (1998-1999)



Note: The percentages are based on 701 projects included in the 1998-99 evaluation.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 24 percent of Even Start projects reported that improving attendance presented big problems in program implementation.

EXHIBIT 4.35
PROJECTS' NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (1998-1999)

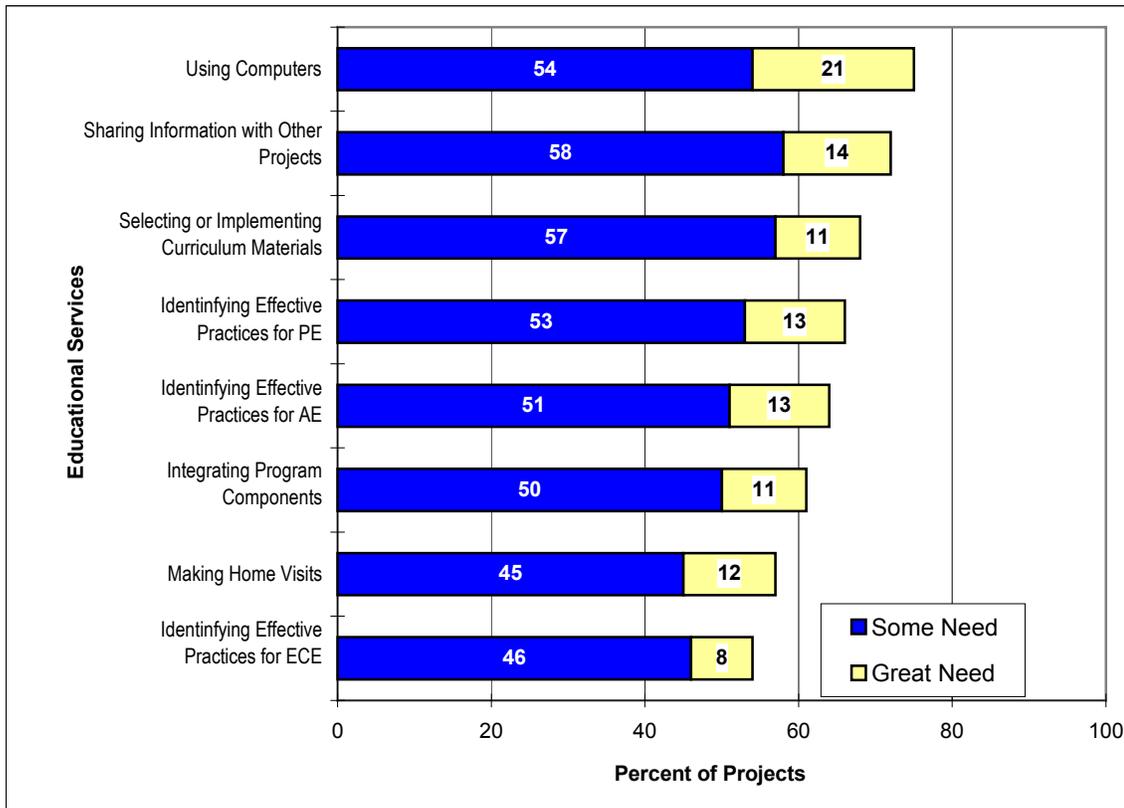


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 21 percent of Even Start projects indicated that they had a great need for technical assistance in the area of using computers in classroom instruction.

EXHIBIT 4.36
PROJECTS' NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: SUPPORT SERVICES (1998-1999)

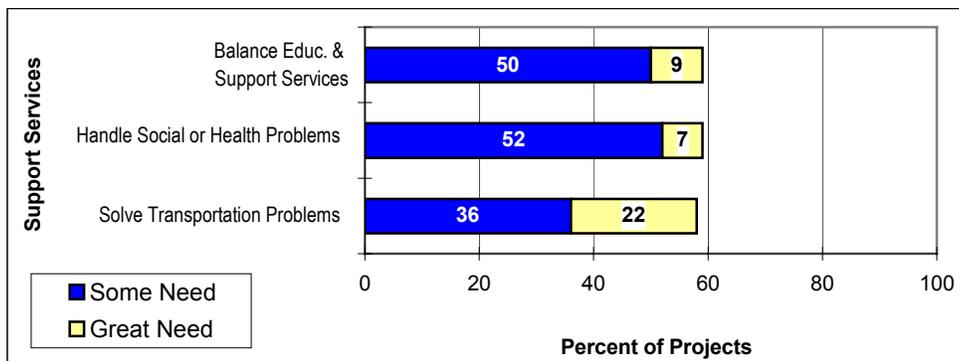


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 22 percent of Even Start projects indicated that they had a great need for technical assistance in providing transportation for participants to attend Even Start activities.

EXHIBIT 4.37
PROJECTS' NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: PROGRAM OPERATION ISSUES (1998-1999)

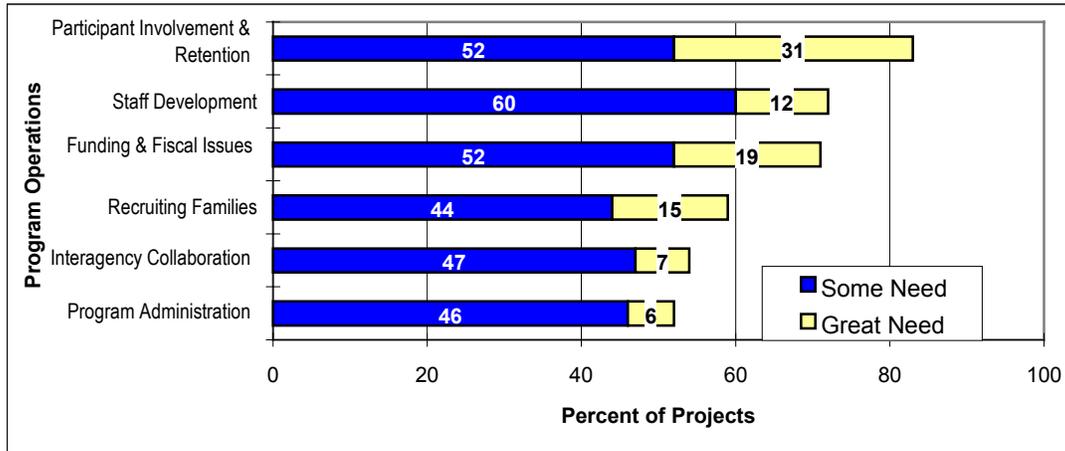


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 31 percent of Even Start projects indicated that they had great needs for technical assistance in the area of increasing participant involvement and retention.

EXHIBIT 4.38
PERCENT OF PROJECTS THAT MET, DID NOT MEET, AND HAVE MISSING DATA FOR EVEN START'S LEGISLATIVELY REQUIRED PROGRAM ELEMENTS (BASED ON 700 PROJECTS IN 1998-1999)

PROGRAM ELEMENT	MET THE REQUIREMENT	DID NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENT	MISSING DATA
Identify and recruit families most in need of services	98%	<1%	2%
Screen and prepare families who then participate fully in Even Start	94%	2%	4%
Accommodate family schedules and provide support services	96%	1%	3%
Provide high quality instructional programs of sufficient intensity	See separate analysis		
Provide staff with training	Not available in 1998-1999 ESPIRS		
Provide some home-based instructional services	93%	2%	5%
Provide year-round services	91%	3%	6%
Build on community resources to avoid duplication of services	97%	0%	3%
Serve families most in need and provide tailored services	Same as #1, targeting		
Participate in an independent local evaluation	97%	1%	2%
Serve children in at least a three-year age range	Not available in 1998-1999 ESPIRS		
All Program Elements	83%	7%	10%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 98 percent of Even Start projects reported that they met the requirements to identify and recruit families most in need.

EXHIBIT 4.39
PERCENT OF EVEN START PROJECTS,
BY INTENSITY OF PARENTING EDUCATION SERVICES (1998-1999)

LEVEL OF INTENSITY	PERCENT OF PROJECTS (N=655)
Low intensity (> 0 and <= 4 hrs/month)	7%
Moderate intensity (> 4 and < 20 hrs/month)	47%
High intensity (>= 20 hrs/month)	46%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 46 percent of Even Start projects offered high-intensity parenting education programs.

EXHIBIT 4.40
PERCENT OF EVEN START PROJECTS,
BY INTENSITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES AND CHILD AGE (1998-1999)

LEVEL OF INTENSITY	PERCENT OF PROJECTS
Birth Through Two-Year-Olds (n=593)	
Low (> 0 and < 4 hrs/month)	6%
Moderate (>= 4 and < 60 hrs/month)	58%
High (>= 60 hrs/month)	36%
Three- to Five-Year-Olds (n=640)	
Low (> 0 and <= 12 hrs/month)	9%
Moderate (> 12 and < 65 hrs/month)	45%
High (>= 65 hrs/month)	47%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 36 percent of Even Start projects offered high intensity early childhood education services to 0-3 year olds.

EXHIBIT 4.41
PERCENT OF EVEN START PROJECTS,
BY INTENSITY AND TYPE OF ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES (1998-1999)

LEVEL OF INTENSITY	BEGINNING ABE (N=524)	INTERMEDIATE ABE (N=554)	ASE (N=468)	GED (N=614)	ESL (N=456)
	Low (> 0 and <= 8 hrs/month)	11%	9%	9%	7%
Moderate (> 8 and < 60 hrs/month)	57%	59%	48%	60%	69%
High (>= 60 hrs/month)	33%	33%	43%	32%	22%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 33 percent of Even Start projects offered high intensity adult education services to adults in beginning adult basic education (ABE).

EXHIBIT 4.42
INTENSITY PATTERNS OF SERVICES OFFERED BY PROJECTS WITH
AT LEAST ONE LOW INTENSITY CORE SERVICE AREA IN 1998-1999.

ADULT EDUCATION INTENSITY	PARENTING EDUCATION INTENSITY	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTENSITY	NUMBER OF PROJECTS (TOTAL N=76)
Low	Low	Low	4
High	Low	Low	1
Moderate	Low	Low	1
Low	Low	High	1
Low	Low	Moderate	3
High	High	Low	1
High	Moderate	Low	1
Moderate	High	Low	1
Moderate	Moderate	Low	4
High	Low	High	7
High	Low	Moderate	3
Moderate	Low	High	6
Moderate	Low	Moderate	18
Low	High	Moderate	1
Low	Moderate	High	5
Low	Moderate	Moderate	19

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, four projects offered low intensity services in adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education.

EXHIBIT 4.43
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECTS THAT OFFERED LOW INTENSITY SERVICES IN AT LEAST ONE
SERVICE AREA AS COMPARED TO ALL OTHER PROJECTS (1998-1999)

CHARACTERISTIC	LOW INTENSITY PROJECTS (N=76)	MODERATE/HIGH INTENSITY PROJECTS (N=623)
Percent of projects in urban or suburban community	45%	58%
Average age of projects	4 years	4 years
Percent of participants who are Hispanic	30%	36%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 45 percent of projects that offered low intensity services in at least one area were located in an urban or suburban community.

CHAPTER 5: DESCRIPTION OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents a description of the families, adults, and children who participated in Even Start during the 1998-1999 program year, and makes cross-year comparisons for selected characteristics.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED BY EVEN START

The amount of funding and the number of projects funded through Even Start have grown steadily since the program began in 1989-1990. During the 1990s, funding increased almost ten-fold; from \$14.8 million in 1989-1990 to a current high of \$124 million in 1998-1999. Over the same period, the number of Even Start projects also increased ten-fold; from 76 to 737 (see Exhibit 1.1 in Chapter 1).

The number of families served by Even Start grew steadily from 1989-1990 when 2,460 families participated to 1996-1997 when the program served a high of 34,400 families. However, during the past two years, enrollment in Even Start dropped—to 30,500 in 1997-1998 and 32,200 in 1998-1999. This reflects a gradual reduction in the number of families served by the average project, from a high of 62 families per project in 1991-1992 to 44 families per project in 1998-1999.

The long-term reduction in the number of families per project and the shorter-term drop in the total number of families served by Even Start may result from a conscious technical assistance strategy by Congress and the Department of Education to focus resources intensively on the most needy families in order to achieve the best outcomes. This strategy was formed, in part, on the basis of findings from the first national Even Start evaluation which showed that (1) families in projects that offered more hours of core instructional services participated more than families in projects that offered fewer service hours, and (2) families that participated more intensively in core instructional services had better learning gains than families that participated less intensively.

Over the past few years the Department has been consistent in its guidance to Even Start state coordinators and to local projects—the best way to help families achieve progress is to provide high levels of service to the most needy families, rather than spreading services more thinly over a larger number of families. The long-term drop in the number of families served per project and the more recent drop in total number of families served by Even Start may result from this approach, a strategy intended to maximize Even Start's benefits.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START FAMILIES

In 1998-1999, 54 percent of families were new enrollees in Even Start (Exhibit 5.1). Thus, 46 percent of 1998-1999 families continued from the previous year. While many characteristics of Even Start participants have remained consistent since the program's inception, some changes have taken place. In particular, the proportions of language-minority families, as well as families headed by teen parents have increased substantially. These and other changes in participant characteristics have direct implications for Even Start program designs and service delivery.

AGE AND GENDER OF PARTICIPATING PARENTS⁴³ AND CHILDREN

In 1998-1999, the average age of all adult participants in Even Start was 27 years. The average age of Even Start parents has declined over time, as the percentage of teen parents served by the program has increased. Exhibit 5.2 shows that the percentage of teen parents in Even Start almost doubled, from 9 percent in 1994-1995 to 17 percent in 1998-1999.⁴⁴

Any child in a participating family, from birth through age 7, is eligible to receive Even Start's core educational services. Once an Even Start family's youngest child reaches age 8, the parent may continue to participate in adult and parenting education until he or she is no longer eligible for services under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act or for two years, whichever comes first. Until then, a child who otherwise would be ineligible (due to age) may continue to participate in appropriate project activities. Similarly, if a parent is no longer eligible for services because of educational advancement, the family may continue to participate in the program until all children in the family reach age 8. In this case, the parent may continue in appropriate activities such as parenting education and interactive activities for parents and children.

The average age of Even Start children has fluctuated over the years but has trended downward recently—from 4.3 years in 1989-1990, to 3.7 years in 1992-1993, 4.4 years in 1994-1995, 3.8 years in 1995-1996, 4.2 years in 1996-1997, 3.7 years in 1997-1998, and 3.6 years in 1998-1999. Children in the 3 to 5 year-old age range have always constituted the largest group (40 to 47 percent, Exhibit 5.3). However, the proportion of infants and toddlers (birth through 2

⁴³ The Even Start legislation specifies adult participants as parents who are eligible to receive adult education under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act or who are within the state's compulsory school attendance age range. If other caregivers serve in place of the parents of participating children, they are considered the children's parents within the context of Even Start.

⁴⁴ The 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 evaluation findings are presented in comparison with findings from previous program years. Because the 1994-1995 evaluation did not collect data on the year of enrollment for each family, we could not distinguish the 1994-1995 new enrollees and 1994-1995 continuing participants. Thus, most exhibits in this chapter compare data for new participants who enrolled in the years 1995-1996 through 1998-1999 with data for all program participants in 1994-1995. The exhibit titles and the narrative text indicate the participant groups being compared. Exhibit titles with one program year in parentheses [e.g., (1998-1999)] indicate that the data refer to all participants in the year indicated. Comparisons with findings from the first evaluation and second evaluations are based on data reported in the final reports of those evaluations (St.Pierre, et al., 1995; Tao, et al., 1998). Although similar data on family characteristics were collected in all three evaluations, changes in the data collection instruments and analytic methods prevent precise comparisons for some issues.

years) served by Even Start has increased substantially during the past two years, from 30 percent in 1996-1997 to 38 percent in 1998-1999. This may reflect the requirement, effective in 1995-1996, that Even Start projects target at least a three-year consecutive age range with their early childhood education services. It also may reflect a national concern with providing early services to children from birth to age 3.

The increase in the number of infants and toddlers served by Even Start has mirrored the increase in the percentage of teen parents in Even Start. Eighteen percent of all children who enrolled in 1998-1999 had teen parents; most of these children, 16 percent, were 0 to 2 years old (Exhibit 5.4). In contrast, infants and toddlers constituted less than half of all children who had 20 to 29 year old parents. As for gender, boys and girls have been represented equally among Even Start children throughout the program's history.

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SIZE

The proportion of two-parent Even Start families has been consistent over the years, ranging from 45 to 50 percent. However, the past six years have seen an increase in the prevalence of extended families, from 12 percent to 19 percent, offset by a decrease in the percentage of single parent families, from 39 to 32 percent (Exhibit 5.5).⁴⁵ These changes probably stem from the rising enrollment of teen parents who continue to live with their parents. Projects reported that 33 percent of teen parents enrolling in 1998-1999 were single parents, 23 percent were part of two-parent families, and 44 percent lived in extended families. Further, 13 percent of the teens described as single parents reported having two or more adults living in their households.⁴⁶

The average Even Start household declined from 5.5 persons during the 1994-1997 second national evaluation to 4.7 persons in 1998-1999. The most common family structure was a couple between the ages of 20 and 39, with two to four children (31 percent of families). Another group of families was headed by single parents, also with two to four children (16 percent). Almost all adult participants, 96 percent, were the parents of participating children. In only a small percentage of families, grandparents (2 percent) or other adults (1 percent) received Even Start services instead of children's parents. Ten percent of families had more than one participating adult.

⁴⁵ The term "Even Start family" in this report refers to the nuclear or extended family that includes at least one adult and one child participating in Even Start, and, in all but unusual cases, living in the same household. Not all individuals in the family necessarily participate in Even Start. Our descriptions of Even Start family structures are likely to be approximations. The data collection form for the third evaluation did not clearly define the term "extended family." The term referred to Even Start families that include additional family members beyond a single-parent or two-parent nuclear family living in the same household. The data do not allow us to distinguish the overlap of a single-parent or a two-parent family living in an extended family.

⁴⁶ These changes may reflect a change in the wording of the question. Previously, we asked for the "structure of the family"; for the current evaluation, we ask for the "household structure."

FAMILY ECONOMIC STATUS

Even Start families are drawn from the most economically disadvantaged segment of the population. More than 80 percent of the families enrolling in Even Start in the last two program years reported annual household incomes below \$20,000; more than 45 percent of families earned or received annual household incomes of less than \$9,000 (Exhibit 5.6).⁴⁷ During the first two Even Start evaluations, the distribution of income among Even Start families remained fairly consistent.⁴⁸

The household income data from the first years of the third evaluation showed a general increase compared to data from earlier evaluations. For example, in 1996-1997, more than 55 percent of families had annual income of \$9,000 or less. In 1998-1999, the percentage of families earning under \$9,000 had declined to 46 percent. On the upper end of the Even Start distribution, 16 percent of Even Start families earned \$20,000 or more in 1998-1999, up from only 10 percent of families in 1996-1997. The apparent increases are due, at least partly, to a more precise way of asking for this information. In the third evaluation, projects are specifically asked to include incomes of all household members, rather than simply “the Even Start family” as stated in previous questionnaires.

Because household income data are reported in income ranges (for example, \$3,000-\$5,999), it is not possible to determine precisely whether a family was below the federal poverty level. However, by assuming that each family received the minimum of the income range it reported, we estimate that 81 percent of Even Start families in 1998-1999 had incomes at or below the federal poverty level.⁴⁹

Although 19 percent of families fell above the federal poverty level using the method described above, these families still have literacy and educational needs. Of the families that have annual incomes above the poverty level, about a quarter of the parents in these families had limited English proficiency, and three-quarters of parents in these families lacked a high school diploma or GED.

SOURCES OF INCOME

Among the new families who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999, 61 percent reported that their primary source of income was employment wages, while 32 percent relied on government assistance as their major source (Exhibit 5.7). This represents a dramatic shift from 1996-1997 and earlier years when equal percentages of Even Start families derived their primary income from government assistance and employment wages. This change parallels the dramatic

⁴⁷ The small percentage of households with annual incomes greater than \$25,000 tend to be located in areas with a high cost of living (for example, San Francisco, California, or Long Island, New York).

⁴⁸ The income ranges used in the first evaluation do not coincide exactly with the ranges used in the subsequent evaluations—thus preventing precise comparisons.

⁴⁹ The 1998 federal poverty level was \$16,530 for a family of four. The 1998-1999 poverty analysis is based on new enrollees during the 1998-1999 year who reported household income and family size (37 percent of all 1998-1999 participants).

decline in welfare caseloads nationally. It also may reflect the rising percentage of teen parents in Even Start, many of whom live with their parents. In these extended households, the primary source of income may often be the wages earned by the teens' parents, even if the teen parent may also be receiving public assistance. This is corroborated by the finding that only 26 percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 were employed. This means that there are many households in which most of the income comes from wages but the parent participating in Even Start is not the wage earner.

Among the 1998-1999 new families, 37 percent had annual household incomes higher than \$12,000 and most of their income was from job wages (Exhibit 5.8). Another 25 percent of new families also earned most of their income, but they received less than \$12,000. Twenty percent of new families had annual incomes of less than \$6,000, mostly in the form of government assistance.

With the increased percentage of Even Start families whose household incomes are derived mostly from wages, reliance on government assistance among newly enrolling Even Start families has declined during the past three years (Exhibit 5.9). A higher percentage of teen parents (55 percent) received public assistance at the time of intake in 1998-1999 than did older parents. However, the public assistance received by some of the teen parents may not be the primary income source for the extended households that include the teens' parents.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARENTS AT ENROLLMENT

Employment status is an important indicator of a family's capacity for self-sufficiency and has become more critical to Even Start participants in the context of welfare reform. As shown in Exhibit 5.7, wages from employment represented the primary source of income for 61 percent of Even Start families who enrolled in 1998-1999. However, only 26 percent of the parents who enrolled in Even Start were employed full- or part-time at the time of enrollment (Exhibit 5.10). This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that about half of Even Start families are headed by couples; and in most families one parent (usually the mother) participates in Even Start while the other parent often is a wage earner.⁵⁰ In addition, some teen parents who live with their parents while attending high school may rely largely on incomes earned by their parents. This interpretation is supported by the finding that 74 percent of families where participating parents were not employed reported job wages as their primary source of income (not shown in exhibit).

The rate of full-time employment among teen parents was lower than the rate for older parents (5 percent versus 13 to 17 percent) because many teens were attending high school (Exhibit 5.10). However, teen parents were quite employment-oriented and were as likely as older parents to be working part-time or seeking employment, and less likely to report not seeking employment.

⁵⁰ This evaluation does not collect data on the employment or educational status of nonparticipating parents.

RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

The racial and ethnic composition of Even Start participants has important implications for the design and the delivery of Even Start services. Race and ethnicity are related to the languages families use at home and, for language-minority groups, their levels of English proficiency. In addition, in multi-racial or ethnic communities, educational activities can serve as opportunities for people to interact with members of different racial or ethnic groups, providing benefits for individuals and the community beyond the specific educational objectives. At the same time, racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity increases the difficulty of developing culturally sensitive and appropriate instructional materials and approaches.

The Even Start community includes a wide spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and notable changes in the mix of major racial and ethnic groups have occurred since the program began.⁵¹ The proportion of Hispanic families in Even Start has almost doubled over time, from 22 percent in 1992-1993 to 41 percent in 1998-1999 (Exhibit 5.11). This rate of increase far surpassed the increase of Hispanics in the national population from 10 percent in 1992 to 11 percent in 1998 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999).

Offsetting the increase in Hispanic families, the representation of Caucasian families in Even Start has declined from 40 percent to 30 percent, African American families have declined from 26 percent to 20 percent, and Asian families declined from 8 percent to 3 percent. The percentage of American Indian families in Even Start has remained between 2 and 4 percent since 1992-1993.

The racial and ethnic distribution of families in Even Start is now quite different from that of Head Start. In 1998-1999, 36 percent of Head Start families were African American, 32 percent Caucasian, 26 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 3 percent American Indian (Head Start Bureau, 1999).

The distribution of racial and ethnic groups varies in different regions of the country. Hispanic families constitute the largest group in the western and southern region projects, while Caucasian families represent the largest group in the Northeast and Midwest (Exhibit 5.12). These regional differences are similar to those found during the second evaluation.

The above-average concentration of Hispanic and Asian families in some states suggests that the need for ESL programs is particularly critical in the associated regions. States where more than 50 percent of Even Start parents were Hispanic are Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Texas (not shown in exhibit), as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. About 87 percent of parents enrolled in the set-aside Migrant Education Even Start projects were Hispanic, although they constituted only 8 percent of all Hispanic parents participating in Even Start in 1998-1999 (not shown in exhibit).

⁵¹ The race or ethnicity of the participating parent was used for most analyses.

African American families represent the second largest racial minority group in Even Start (20 percent of all 1998-1999 participants—see Exhibit 5.11). They are most prevalent in the South. States where more than 50 percent of Even Start parents were African American are Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

Asian American and Pacific Islander families comprise a small percentage of the Even Start population (3 percent of all 1998-1999 participants—see Exhibit 5.11). States where more than 10 percent of Even Start parents were Asian are Hawaii, Kansas, Nebraska, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The number of American Indian families in Even Start was small (3 percent of all 1998-1999 participants—see Exhibit 5.11). States where more than 20 percent of Even Start parents were American Indian are Alaska, Arizona, Oklahoma, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah. Of 961 parents who identified themselves as American Indian, only 264 (27 percent) were enrolled in the nine special set-aside, tribal Even Start projects that submitted data. The majority participated in state-administered, non-set-aside projects.

As reported earlier, two-parent families represented 48 percent of new Even Start families in 1998-1999, and single-parent families represented 32 percent (see Exhibit 5.5). The majority (57 percent) of African American families who enrolled in 1998-1999 were headed by single parents, compared to 15 percent of Asian families, 20 percent of Hispanic families, 35 percent of American Indian families, and 30 percent of Caucasian families. The high percentage for African American families suggests that they may experience disproportionately the social, economic, and parenting difficulties associated with single-parent families.

As groups, Hispanic and Asian parents in Even Start were more likely to experience problems related to limited English proficiency than other families. Thirty-three percent of Hispanic parents and 43 percent of Asian parents who enrolled in 1998-1999 had lived in the United States for five or fewer years at the time of enrollment. These percentages have remained fairly constant in recent years (Exhibit 5.13).

EVEN START PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF EVEN START PARENTS

Even Start parents' educational backgrounds vary widely, although the distribution of backgrounds has remained stable in recent years.⁵² In each of the past several years, 40 percent of entering Even Start parents had completed some high school, and 45 percent had attended school for nine years or less (Exhibit 5.14). A complete lack of formal schooling is rare among Even Start parents, reported by only 2 percent of parents enrolling in 1998-1999 and previous program years.

⁵² This evaluation collected background information only for parents who participated in Even Start. Therefore, the descriptions of parent characteristics presented in this report are limited to parents in the Even Start program. If only one parent from a two-parent family participated, characteristics of the nonparticipating parent are not represented in this study.

The percentage of new Even Start parents without a high school credential has increased since 1992-1993 when 79 percent of participating adults did not have a high school diploma or GED at the time of enrollment. Exhibit 5.14 shows that 85 percent of new 1998-1999 enrollees had neither completed high school nor earned a GED upon entering the program. Conversely, 15 percent of new Even Start parents (10 percent with a GED or a high school diploma and 5 percent with some college experience) had a relatively high education level, raising questions about other background characteristics of this group of parents: 4 percent were recent immigrants (having lived five years or less in the United States) and 8 percent received most of their education outside the United States. Perhaps most important, two-thirds (10 percent) of the 15 percent of Even Start adults who entered with a high school diploma were native English speakers. It is unclear why these adults were included in the program, although adults with a high school diploma are not precluded from participating in federally supported adult education programs.

Most teenage parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 had not yet completed high school (Exhibit 5.15), however, with Even Start's help they hope to do so. On the other hand, a relatively large percentage of older Even Start parents have only a grade school education; 30 percent of parents age 40 and older, and 20 percent of parents 30-39 years of age. Furthermore, 90 percent of parents with a grade school education had limited English proficiency and 38 percent have lived in the United States for five years or less. Given that the average Even Start parent participated in about 160 hours per year of adult education services (see Chapter 3), many parents face a long and difficult road before completing their basic education goals.

EXPERIENCE WITH ADULT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Approximately 60 percent of parents had participated in some form of adult education before enrolling in Even Start in 1998-1999 (total across all educational levels for 1998-1999 in Exhibit 5.16). This represents a substantial increase from the early years of Even Start, where only about 40 percent of parents had previous adult education experience. Most of the experience (26 percent of adults) was at the level of secondary education and GED preparation (Exhibit 5.16).

Even Start parents tend to be young adults who had completed some high school grades at the time of enrollment. These background factors may explain why only a small percentage had participated in employment (12 percent) or vocational training (9 percent) before or at the time of enrolling in Even Start (not shown in exhibit). In addition to lacking a high school diploma or GED, most parents had received no job skill training before Even Start. In the context of welfare reform, Even Start projects may be challenged to incorporate more vocational and employment-training materials and activities in their adult education curriculum while maintaining the primary objective of basic academic and literacy education.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF ESL PARENTS

Forty-two percent of parents who enrolled in 1998-1999 reported speaking languages other than English at home at the time of enrollment: 35 percent spoke Spanish and 7 percent spoke other languages. The increase of non-English speakers from 34 percent among the 1992-1993 participants is not surprising, because almost one half of Even Start parents were Hispanic, or Asian or Pacific Islanders in 1998-1999 (Exhibit 5.11). The percent of parents who speak Spanish at home increased from 26 percent in 1992-1993 to 35 percent in 1998-1999, reflecting the increase of Hispanic families in Even Start.

In 1998-1999, about 75 percent of the newly-enrolled parents who spoke a language other than English at home reported difficulties in understanding, speaking, or reading English (Exhibit 5.17). The remaining quarter of newly-enrolled parents who reported speaking languages other than English at home were able to read, speak, and understand English well or very well.⁵³

On average, Hispanic parents had fewer years of formal education when they entered Even Start than Caucasian, Asian, African American, and American Indian parents (Exhibit 5.18). Parents in the latter groups had a 10th- to 11th-grade education, while Hispanic parents' educational experiences averaged around the ninth grade. Within each racial or ethnic group, the educational levels were fairly constant across parents' age groups, except for Asian and Hispanic parents 40 years or older who averaged more than one grade level lower than younger parents (Exhibit 5.18). Further, 86 percent of Asian and 88 percent of Hispanic parents in this age group had received most of their previous schooling outside the United States (not shown in exhibit).

The profile of Even Start parents points to increasing educational needs, and consequently, greater challenges for Even Start projects. Since 1992-1993, projects have enrolled higher percentages of parents with no high school diploma or GED and parents with limited English proficiency. Although a large percentage of Even Start parents had completed all but a few years of high school before enrolling in Even Start, many older parents who are Hispanic or Asian have greater service needs.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN NON-EVEN START PROGRAMS

Even Start provides the first early childhood education experience for many children. The percentage of children enrolling in Even Start with no prior educational experience dropped from 58 percent in 1995-1996 to 48 percent in 1998-1999 (Exhibit 5.19). Among 1998-1999 new enrollees, the most common pre-Even Start programs that children had experienced were kindergarten and Head Start (13 percent each).

For 44 percent of children who enrolled in 1998-1999, Even Start was the only educational program in which they were participating at the time of enrollment. However, many

⁵³ These parents constituted 7 percent of all parents who enrolled in 1998-1999. Their educational backgrounds ranged from primary grades to postsecondary education. Less than 10 percent of all Even Start parents were not native English speakers, but were proficient in English and had at least a high school diploma.

children enrolled in Even Start also received educational services provided by non-Even Start programs. Among children who enrolled in 1998-1999, 11 percent were attending primary schools, 9 percent each were in kindergarten and Head Start, and 10 percent were in other preschool programs. Most of the educational services these children received in addition to Even Start were also public programs. These additional services may represent a substantial portion of their educational experiences.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Project staff were asked each year to indicate whether a child was identified as having any special needs.⁵⁴ Seven percent of Even Start children participating in 1998-1999 were reported to have special needs, which is lower than the 11 percent reported in 1996-1997 but consistent with the national average and the rates in 1994-1995 and 1995-1996.⁵⁵ The prevalence of children with special needs in Even Start is lower than the 13 percent of such children reported in Head Start (Head Start Bureau, 1999).

⁵⁴ The Even Start statute requires each applicant project to describe the methods it will use to provide services to individuals with special needs, such as limited English proficiency and physical or learning disabilities.

⁵⁵ We did not ask who identified the presence of special needs. Even Start staff may assume the primary responsibility for identifying needs that are directly related to education, such as specific learning disabilities. Other needs (for example, visual, hearing, and orthopedic impairment) may involve testing by medical professionals.

EXHIBIT 5.1
1998-1999 EVEN START PARTICIPANTS (ESTIMATED FOR ALL 737 PROJECTS OPERATING IN 1998-1999)

	TOTAL 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS	NEW ENROLLEES (PERCENT OF TOTAL)	CONTINUING FROM 1997-1998 (PERCENT OF TOTAL)
Families	32,200	17,388 (54%)	14,812 (46%)
Parents	30,800	16,016 (52%)	14,784 (48%)
Children	40,500	19,845 (49%)	20,655 (51%)

Note: The numbers in this exhibit are estimates based on family, parent, and child participation records submitted by 688-690 projects (depending on the ESPIRS forms) for the 1998-1999 program year.

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, an estimated 32,200 families participated across all 737 projects, of which 17,388 (or 54 percent) were new families, and 14,812 (46 percent) were continuing families from 1997-1998.

EXHIBIT 5.2
PERCENT OF PARENTS, BY AGE,
1994-1995 TO 1998-1999 ALL PARTICIPANTS

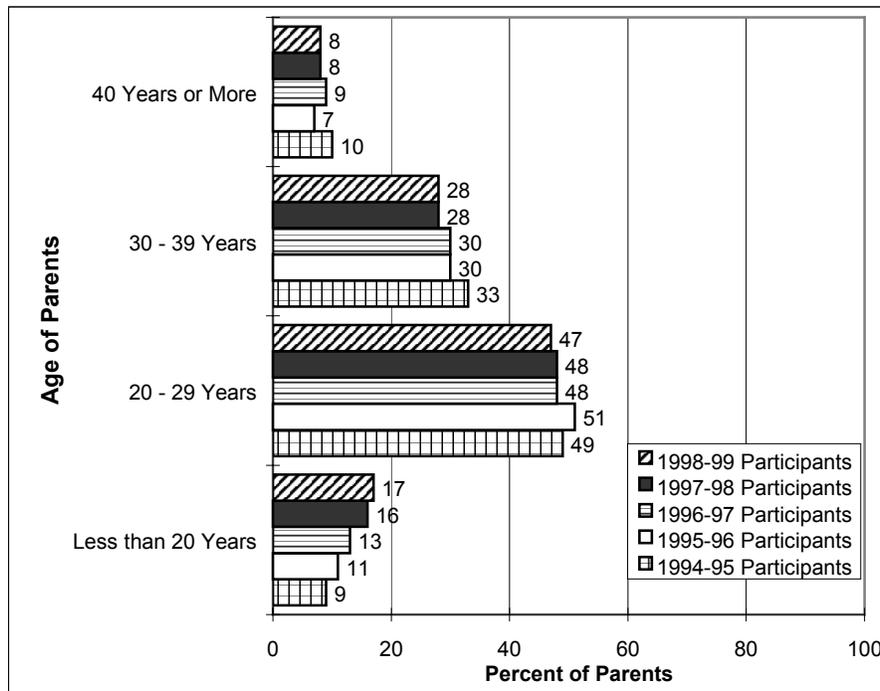


Exhibit reads: Eight percent of parents participating in Even Start in 1998-1999 were 40 years or older.

EXHIBIT 5.3
PERCENT OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN, BY AGE: 1994-1995 TO 1998-1999, ALL PARTICIPANTS

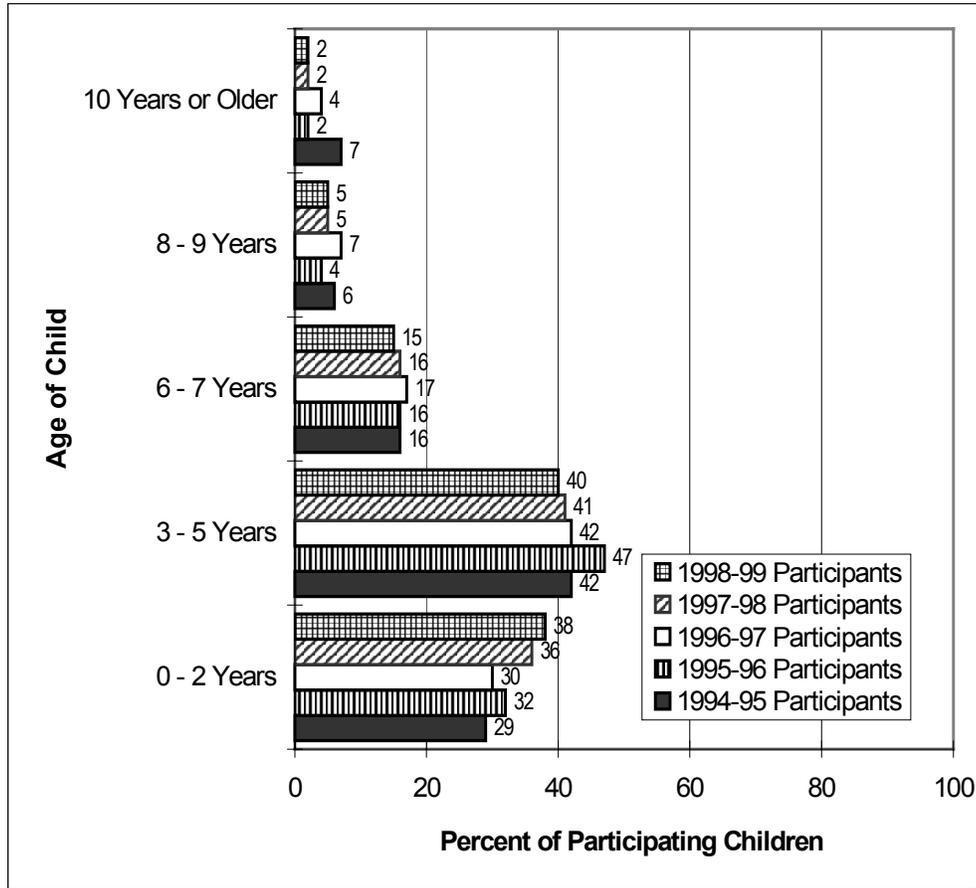


Exhibit reads: Forty percent of children participating in Even Start in 1998-1999 were 3–5 years of age.

EXHIBIT 5.4
PERCENT OF CHILDREN, BY AGE AND AGE OF PARENTS: 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

PARENT AGE	ALL CHILDREN	CHILD AGE				
		0-2 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	5 YEARS	6-7 YEARS	8+ YEARS
< 20 years	18%	16%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%
20-29 years	52%	22%	18%	6%	5%	1%
30-39 years	25%	7%	9%	3%	4%	1%
40+ years	5%	1%	2%	<1%	1%	<1%

Exhibit reads: Of all children who enrolled in 1998-1999, 16 percent were younger than 3 years of age and had teen parents.

EXHIBIT 5.5
PERCENT OF FAMILIES BY HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE,
1992-1993 AND 1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS, 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

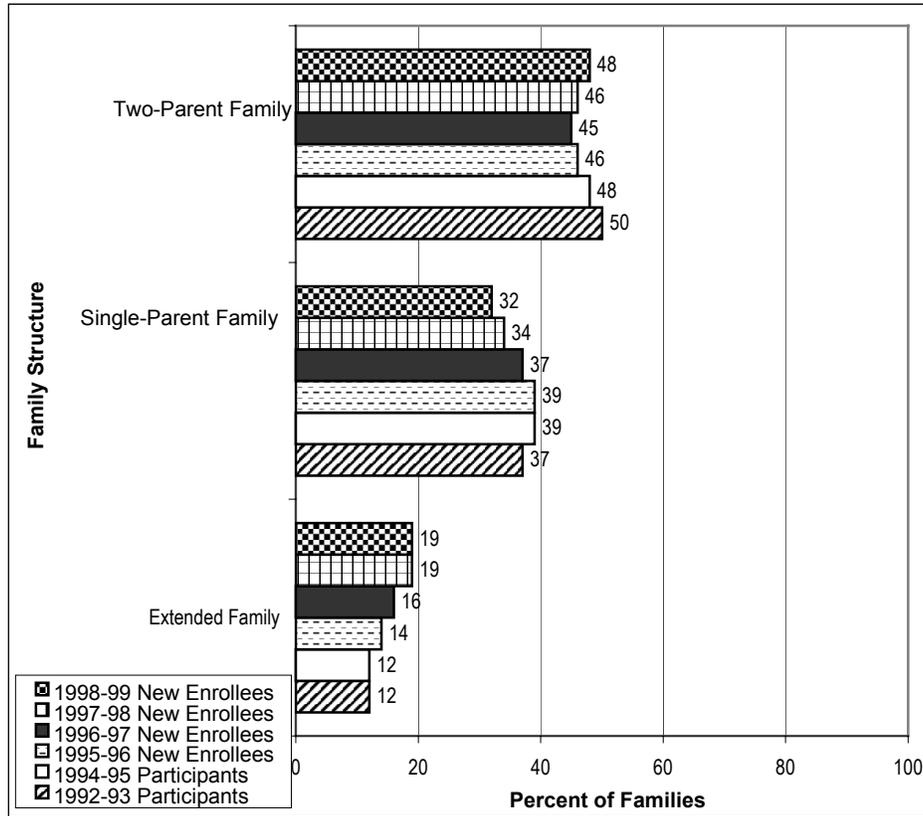
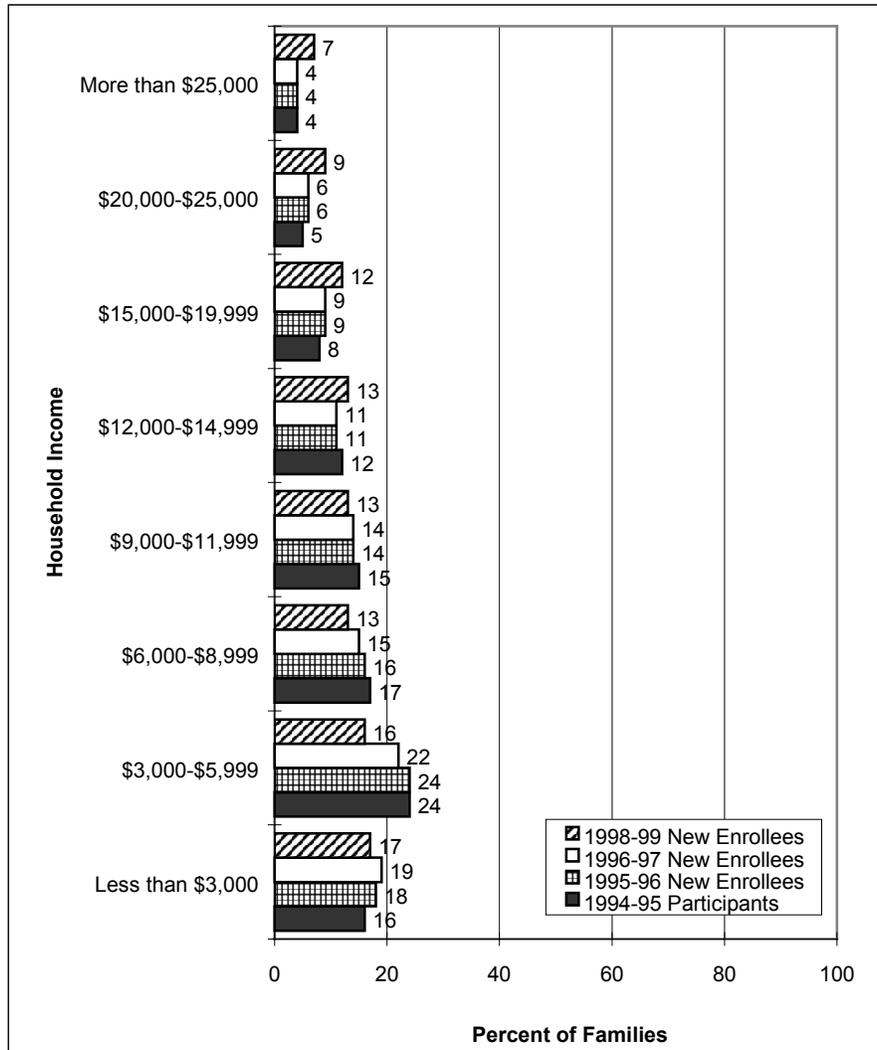


Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 48 percent of families who enrolled in Even Start were two-parent families.

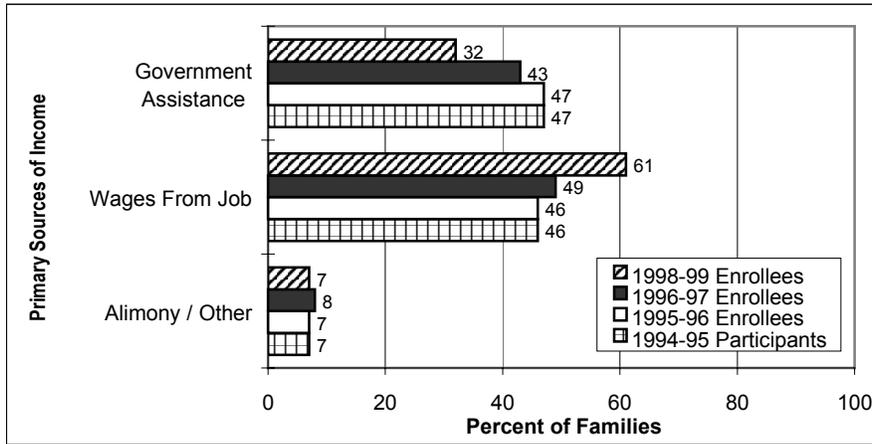
EXHIBIT 5.6
PERCENT OF FAMILIES, BY ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME,
1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES



Note: Because of changes in the evaluation data collection procedure in 1997-1998, data on household income for the 1997-1998 program year are insufficient for analysis. For 1998-1999, the data in the exhibit are based on responses from 12,098 families, representing 71 percent of 1998-1999 new enrollee families .

Exhibit reads: Seventeen percent of families who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 had annual household incomes below \$3,000.

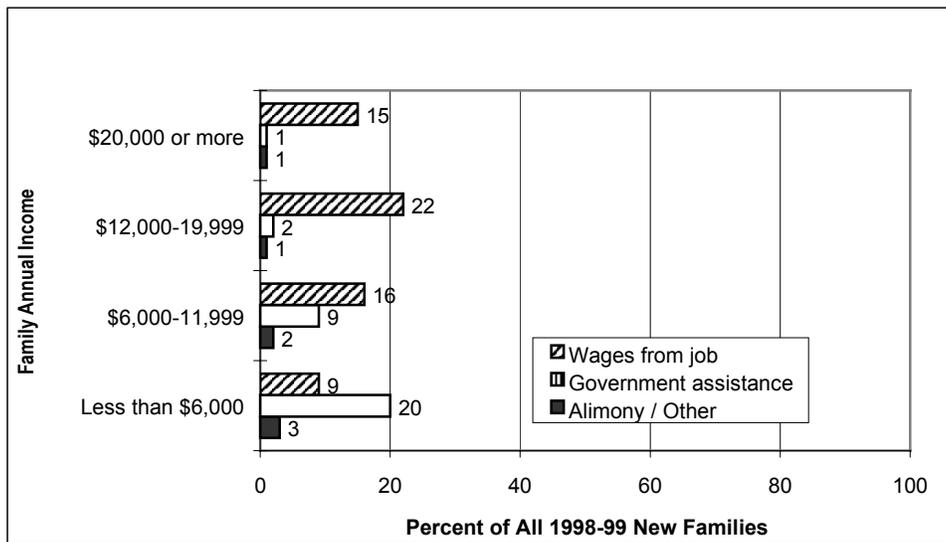
EXHIBIT 5.7
PERCENT OF FAMILIES BY PRIMARY SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME,
1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES



Note: Data on source of income were not available for program year 1997-1998.

Exhibit reads: Thirty-two percent of families who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 relied primarily upon government assistance for income.

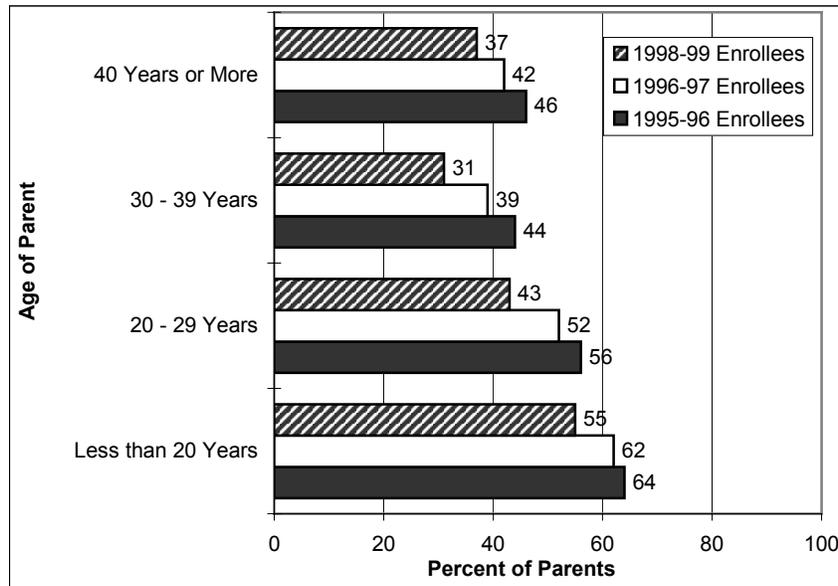
EXHIBIT 5.8
PERCENT OF FAMILIES, BY PRIMARY SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND INCOME LEVEL,
1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES



Note: Each percentage refers to all new families that enrolled in 1998-1999.

Exhibit reads: Among new families enrolling in 1998-1999, 20 percent reported annual household incomes of less than \$6,000 primarily from government assistance.

EXHIBIT 5.9
PERCENT OF 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE
AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT, BY PARENT'S AGE



Note: Because of changes in the evaluation data collection procedure in 1997-1998, data on receipt of government assistance for the 1997-1998 program year are insufficient for analysis.

Exhibit reads: Among 1998-1999 new enrollees, 37 percent of parents 40 years or older were receiving government assistance at the time of enrollment.

EXHIBIT 5.10
EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND PLANS OF PARENTS
WHO ENROLLED IN 1998-1999, BY PARENT AGE

EMPLOYMENT STATUS/PLANS	PARENT AGE				
	ALL NEW ENROLLEES	< 20 YEARS	20 - 29 YEARS	30 - 39 YEARS	40+ YEARS
Employed at enrollment: 26 percent of all 1998-1999 new enrollees					
Full-time job	13%	5%	13%	17%	16%
Part-time job	13%	16%	13%	12%	12%
Job training program	1%	1%	1%	1%	<2%
Not employed at enrollment: 74 percent of all 1998-1999 new enrollees					
Enrolled in school or educational program	51%	60%	49%	46%	42%
Currently seeking job	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%
Currently not seeking employment	12%	8%	13%	13%	12%
Retired or disabled	2%	<1%	1%	2%	8%

Note: Some column totals differ from 100 percent due to rounding.

Exhibit reads: Five percent of teen parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 were working full-time at the time of enrollment.

EXHIBIT 5.11
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS OF EVEN START PARENTS,
1992-1993 TO 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

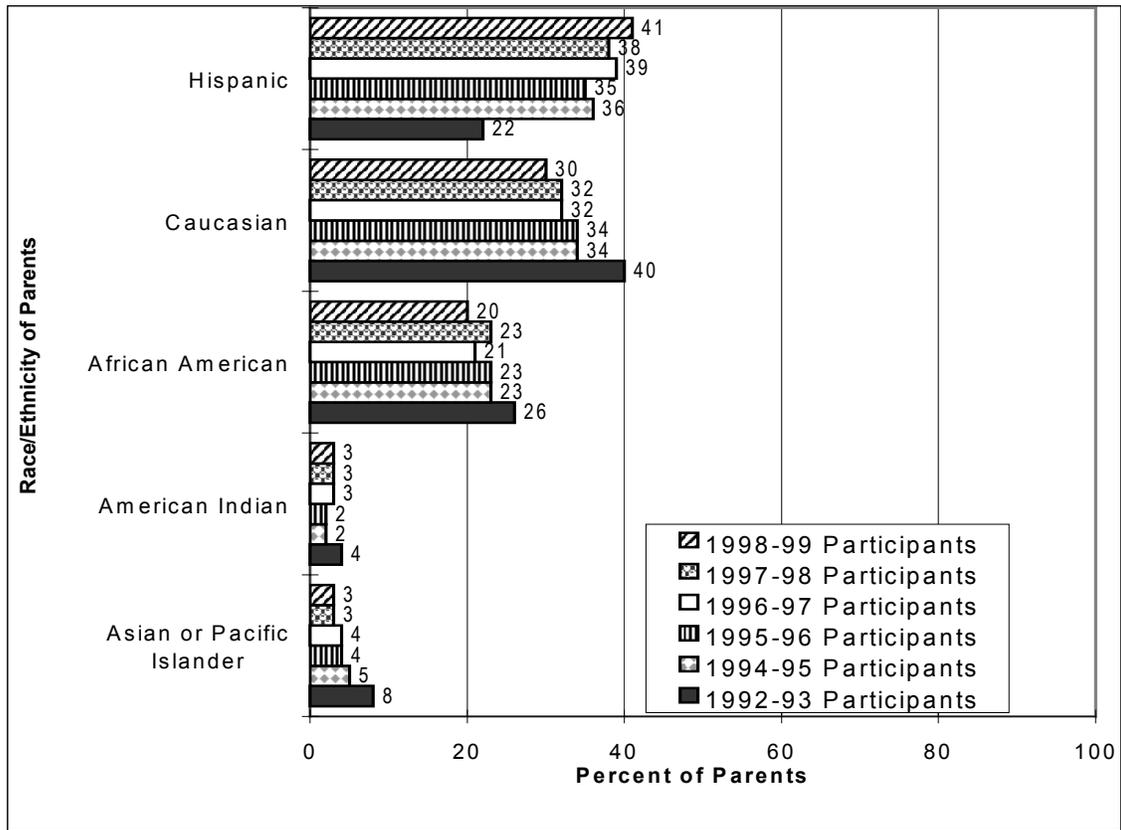


Exhibit reads: Forty-one percent of parents participating in Even Start in 1998-1999 were Hispanic.

EXHIBIT 5.12
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS OF EVEN START PARENTS,
BY REGION, 1998-1999 PARTICIPANTS

RACE/ETHNIC GROUP	NORTHEAST	SOUTH	MIDWEST	WEST
Hispanic	35%	42%	26%	69%
Caucasian	41%	27%	42%	17%
African American	20%	29%	25%	2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3%	1%	4%	5%
American Indian	1%	1%	4%	7%

Exhibit reads: In 1998-1999, 35 percent of families participating in Even Start in the Northeast region were Hispanic.

EXHIBIT 5.13
PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO HAD LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES FOR FIVE YEARS OR LESS AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT, BY RACE OR ETHNICITY: 1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

RACE OR ETHNIC GROUP	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1998-1999
Asian or Pacific Islander	44%	39%	47%	43%
Hispanic	32%	30%	33%	33%
Caucasian	2%	2%	3%	4%
African American	3%	3%	2%	4%
American Indian	0%	1%	1%	2%

Note: Each percentage represents parents in the specific racial or ethnic group who were recent immigrants compared to all parents of the specific racial/ethnic, within each program year. Thus, the percentages do not total to 100 by row or column. Because of changes in the evaluation data collection procedure in 1997-1998, data on recent immigration status for the 1997-1998 program year are insufficient for analysis.

Exhibit reads: Among Asian/Pacific Islander families who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999, 43 percent had lived in the United States for five years or less.

EXHIBIT 5.14
PERCENT OF PARENTS, BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AT ENROLLMENT: 1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

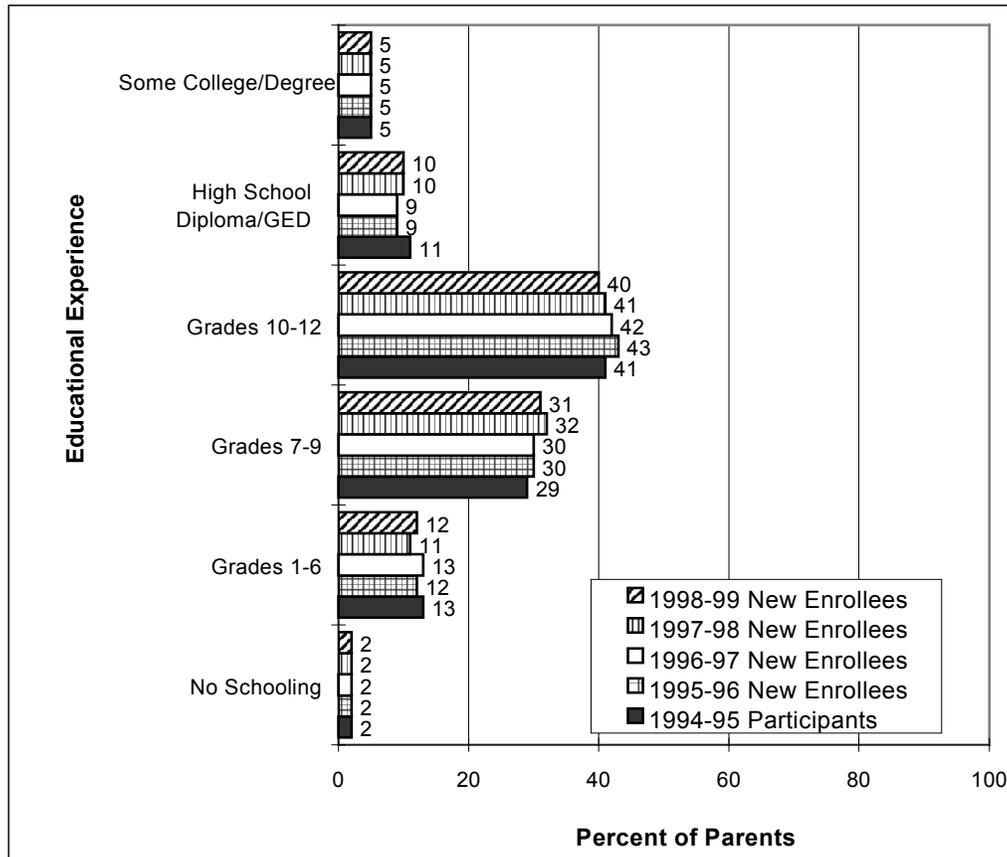


Exhibit reads: Two percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 had no schooling before enrolling in Even Start.

EXHIBIT 5.15
PERCENT OF PARENTS, BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AT ENROLLMENT AND PARENT AGE:
1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

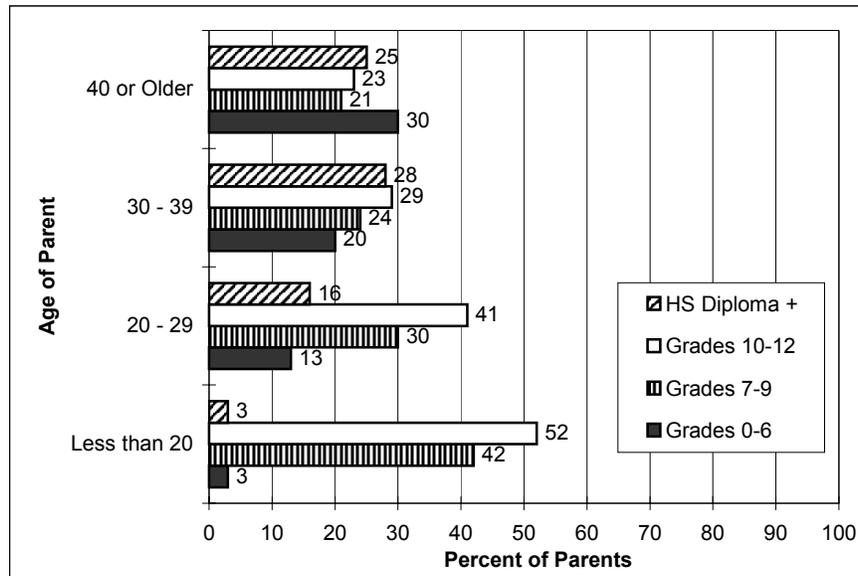


Exhibit reads: Fifty-two percent of teen parents who enrolled in 1998-1999 had reached 10th-12th grades but had not completed high school at the time of enrollment.

EXHIBIT 5.16
PERCENT OF PARENTS, BY PREVIOUS ADULT EDUCATION EXPERIENCES:
1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

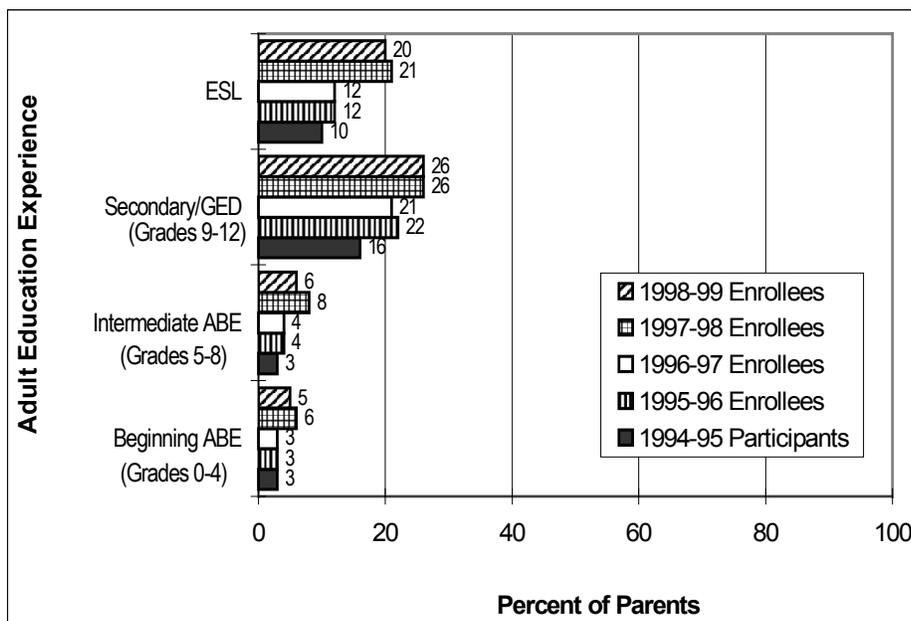


Exhibit reads: Twenty percent of parents who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 had participated in ESL services before Even Start.

EXHIBIT 5.17
PERCENT OF ESL PARENTS, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVEL:
1994-1995 PARTICIPANTS AND 1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

SKILL LEVEL	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1998-1999
Read English not well or not at all	77%	76%	76%	76%
Speak English not well or not at all	76%	78%	77%	79%
Understand English not well or not at all	71%	73%	71%	73%

Note: Sufficient data on English proficiency were not available for 1997-1998.

Exhibit reads: Seventy-six percent of parents who enrolled in 1998-1999 and spoke a language other than English at home could not read English well or at all.

EXHIBIT 5.18
AVERAGE YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPLETED AT ENROLLMENT,
BY PARENT AGE AND RACE OR ETHNICITY (1998-1999, ALL PARTICIPANTS)

RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	PARENT AGE				
	ALL AGE GROUPS	< 20 YEARS	20-29 YEARS	30-39 YEARS	40+ YEARS
Hispanic	8.9	9.0	8.9	9.1	7.5
Caucasian	10.3	9.7	10.3	11.1	10.6
African American	10.3	9.9	10.5	10.9	10.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	10.1	9.7	10.5	10.8	7.9
American Indian	11.1	10.0	11.4	11.7	11.8
All Racial or Ethnic Groups	9.7	9.6	9.8	9.9	8.8

Note: The years of education correspond to academic grades (e.g., 1=First grade, 9=Ninth grade).

Exhibit reads: Among parents who participated in Even Start in 1998-1999, Hispanic parents younger than 20 years had reached, on average, the ninth grade in high school.

EXHIBIT 5.19
PERCENT OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN NON-EVEN START EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
BEFORE AND AT THE TIME OF ENROLLING IN EVEN START:
1995-1996 TO 1998-1999 NEW ENROLLEES

TYPE OF PROGRAM	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999
Prior to Enrollment in Even Start				
Kindergarten	12%	12%	13%	13%
Head Start	12%	13%	14%	13%
Other preschool or infant/toddler program	9%	9%	11%	11%
Primary school (Grades 1-3)	6%	8%	8%	8%
Title I preschool	4%	4%	5%	5%
Early intervention, early childhood special education	3%	3%	5%	4%
None	57%	58%	49%	48%
At the Time of Enrollment in Even Start				
Primary school (Grades 1-3)	11%	11%	12%	11%
Kindergarten	10%	9%	10%	9%
Head Start	9%	9%	10%	9%
Other preschool or infant/toddler program	7%	7%	8%	10%
Early intervention, early childhood special education	3%	3%	4%	5%
Title I preschool	3%	3%	4%	4%
None	50%	52%	45%	44%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100 because a child could have participated in more than one type of program.

Exhibit reads: Thirteen percent of children who enrolled in Even Start in 1998-1999 had attended kindergarten prior to enrolling in Even Start.

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**APPENDIX A: OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF EVEN START'S
LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #1. The project shall “include the identification and recruitment of families most in need of services provided under this part, as indicated by a low level of income, a low level of adult literacy or English language proficiency of the eligible parent or parents, and other need-related indicators.”

ESPIRS data on “targeting” families most in need of services comes from Form B #24. Data on “recruiting” families comes from Form B #25.

24. In targeting services to families most in need, which of the following considerations are used?

	Yes	No
a. Family income below poverty level	1	2
b. Family receives public assistance	1	2
c. Family has no earned income	1	2
d. Family resides in specific housing development or other neighborhood within Title I attendance area	1	2
e. Family resides in an empowerment zone	1	2
f. Family is homeless	1	2
g. Parent is recent immigrant or limited English proficient	1	2
h. Parent did not complete eighth grade	1	2
i. Parent is a new reader	1	2
j. Single parent	1	2
k. Teen parent	1	2
l. 3 or more children ages 15 or younger	1	2
m. Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	2

25. To what extent do you rely on the following recruitment strategies to find eligible families who are most in need?

	Not Used	Used Little	Used Some	Used Great Deal
a. Public school referrals (e.g., Title I)	1	2	3	4
b. Referrals by Head Start or pre-kindergarten	1	2	3	4
c. Referrals by community or government agency	1	2	3	4
d. Walking the neighborhood	1	2	3	4
e. Home visits	1	2	3	4
f. Telephone contact	1	2	3	4
g. Word of mouth	1	2	3	4
h. Targeted mailings	1	2	3	4
i. Mass media	1	2	3	4
j. Posters or flyers	1	2	3	4
k. Collaborating agencies	1	2	3	4
l. Presentations/visits to community agency	1	2	3	4
m. Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	2	3	4

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #1:

TARGETING: To meet this criterion a project must target services to families which have at least one of the need-related indicators identified in #24 (respond "yes" to #24a or #24b or ... or #24m).

RECRUITING: To meet this criterion a project must use at least one of the recruitment methods identified in #25 (respond "2" or "3" or "4" to any item in #25).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #2. The project shall “include screening and preparation of parents, including teenage parents and children to enable such parents to participate fully in the activities and services provided under this part, including testing, referral to necessary counseling, other developmental and support services, and related services.”

ESPIRS data on “screening” of participants comes from Form B #19. Data on “preparation” of parents comes from Form B #32.

19. What formal steps did you take in screening potential participants?

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
a. Verify eligibility	1	2	3	4
b. Conduct an orientation	1	2	3	4
c. Assess basic skills of adults	1	2	3	4
b. Assess language development or school readiness of children	1	2	3	4
e. Contact other agencies involved with family	1	2	3	4
f. Provide counseling	1	2	3	4
g. Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	1	2	3	4

32. How do you work with parents during the preparation period before they fully engage in both adult education and parenting education?

	Yes	No
a. No preparation period before adult education and parenting education	1	2
b. Begin parenting education first	1	2
c. Begin adult education first	1	2
d. Conduct orientation sessions	1	2
e. Invite to social functions	1	2
f. Invite to field trips or other outings	1	2
g. Conduct home visits	1	2
h. Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	1	2

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #2:

SCREENING: To meet this criterion a project must use at least one screening method with 25% or more of their participants (respond “2”, “3” or “4” to #19a, c, d, e, or g).

PREPARATION: To meet this criterion a project must do at least one of the preparation activities listed in this item (respond “yes” to any of 32b-h).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #3. The project shall “be designed to accommodate the participants’ work schedule and other responsibilities, including the provision of support services, when such services are unavailable from other sources, necessary for participation in the activities assisted under this part, such as;

- (1) scheduling and locating of services to allow joint participation by parents and children;
- (2) child care for the period that parents are involved in the program provided under this part; and
- (3) transportation for the purpose of enabling parents and their children to participate in programs authorized by this part”

ESPIRS data on this program requirement come from Form B #40 for flexible scheduling, and Form B #44 and #45 for Parent and Child Together activities.

40. Do you schedule or offer services in any of the following ways?
- | | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Both day and evening or weekend instruction are available for parents with different schedules | 1 | 2 |
| 2. Child care or other arrangements are available when parents are participating in services or working | 1 | 2 |
| 3. Home-based and center-based instruction are offered | 1 | 2 |
| 3. Other | 1 | 2 |
44. What are the scheduled amounts of services offered for the typical participant in each educational service? This item asks about your project design rather than actual participation patterns. Indicate the typical hours per month a participant in each content area would be expected to spend in instruction. For example, a home-based project might visit the parent twice a month for a total of four hours per month to work on parenting skills: two hours with the parent alone and two hours with the adult and child interacting together. Next, indicate the number of months that instruction is provided during the year. For example, the typical year-round project operates eleven months and then takes a one month vacation. Finally, indicate how many of the total instructional hours per month are provided in a home-based setting. In the example above, all four hours are provided in a home-based setting.

The hours in one instructional area may overlap with those in another area. For early childhood education in our example above, the child attends a center-based preschool for 80 hours per month but also participates in the two hours per month of parent-child activities during home visits. The two parent-child hours would count toward both parenting education and early childhood education.

—	Hrs/Mo	# Months	Hrs/Mo in Home
a. Adult Education			
1. Beginning ABE (grades 0-4)	_____	_____	_____
2. Intermediate ABE (grades 5-8)	_____	_____	_____
3. ASE (grades 9-12)	_____	_____	_____
4. GED preparation	_____	_____	_____
5. ESL	_____	_____	_____
b. Parenting Education			
1. Parent alone	_____	_____	_____
2. Parent and child involved together	_____	_____	_____
c. Early Childhood Education			
1. Under age 3	_____	_____	_____
2. Age 3 and 4	_____	_____	_____
3. Age 5	_____	_____	_____
4. Age 6 and 7	_____	_____	_____

45. Enter the hours per month that the typical family is offered in structured parent-child time in each of the following settings.

	Hours per month
Parent-child activities during home visits	_____
Scheduled parent-child time in center or classroom	_____
Field trips, meals, or social functions (fairs, potluck)	_____

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #3:

FLEXIBILITY/SUPPORT SERVICES: To meet this criterion a project must respond “yes” to any of #40a-d.

PARENT AND CHILD TOGETHER ACTIVITIES: To meet this criterion a project must offer at least 1 hour per month for 1 month in #44b2, or 1 hour per month in #45a or #45b or #45c.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #4. The project shall “include high-quality intensive instructional programs that promote adult literacy and empower parents to support the educational growth of their children, developmentally appropriate early childhood educational services, and preparation of children for success in regular school programs.”

This program requirement says that each project should provide an adult literacy program, a parenting education program, and an early childhood education program; and that each of these should be high-quality and intensive. ESPIRS data bearing on the intensity of program services comes from Form B #44 (reproduced above under Program Requirement #3). However, the ESPIRS provides no information about the quality of any of the services provided through Even Start.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #4:

High, moderate, and low intensity services were defined as part of the process of creating a stratification variable for the Experimental Design Study. The cut-off values for high, moderate, and low intensity are shown below:

	HIGH INTENSITY	MODERATE INTENSITY	LOW INTENSITY
PARENTING EDUCATION	>=20 hrs/month	>4 and <20 hrs/month	>0 and <= 4 hrs/month
EARLY CHILDHOOD ED			
- BIRTH TO THREE YRS	>=60 hrs/month	>=4 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <4 hrs/month
-THREE TO FIVE YRS	>=65 hrs/month	>12 and <65 hrs/month	>0 and <12 hrs/month
ADULT EDUCATION			
- BEGINNING ABE	>=60 hrs/month	>8 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <=8 hrs/month
- INTERMEDIATE ABE	>=60 hrs/month	>8 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <=8 hrs/month
- ASE	>=60 hrs/month	>8 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <=8 hrs/month
- GED	>=60 hrs/month	>8 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <=8 hrs/month
- ESL	>=60 hrs/month	>8 and <60 hrs/month	>0 and <=8 hrs/month

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #5. The project shall “include special training of staff, including child care staff, to develop the skills necessary to work with parents and young children in the full range of instructional services offered through this part.”

The 1999-1999 ESPIRS contains no questions on staff development or training.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #5:

STAFF TRAINING: To meet this criterion a project must provide some training to staff members. Based on 1996-97 data, we assume that all projects provide some staff training, and therefore that all projects meet this criterion.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #6. The project shall “provide and monitor integrated instructional services to participating parents and children through home-based programs.”

This program requirement calls for the provision and monitoring of some home-based services. The ESPIRS items relevant to this program requirement are Form B #44 (reproduced above under Program Requirement #4) and Form B #45 (reproduced above under Program Requirement #4). These items provide data on provision, but not monitoring of home-based services.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #6:

HOME-BASED PROGRAMS: To meet this criterion a project must indicate a non-zero amount somewhere in column 3 of #44 or a non-zero amount in #45a.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #7. The project shall “operate on a year-round basis, including the provision of some program services, instructional or enrichment, during the summer months.”

ESPIRS data relevant to this element is Form B #44 (reproduced above under Program Requirement #4). This question tells us about instructional activities, not enrichment activities.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #7:

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES: To meet this criterion a project must provide instructional services during 9 or more months of the year. This means they must respond with 9, 10, 11, or 12 somewhere in the second column of #44.

ENRICHMENT SERVICES: The issue of enrichment services during periods of low service intensity (e.g., the summer) is addressed in the 1999-2000 ESPIRS.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #8: The project shall “be coordinated with -
 (1) programs assisted under other parts of this title and this Act;
 (2) any relevant programs under the Adult Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Job Training Partnership Act; and
 (3) the Head Start program, volunteer literacy programs, and other relevant programs.”

ESPIRS items relevant to this program requirement are Form B #46 and Form B #47.

46. Do staff from Even Start staff or staff from collaborating agencies have the primary responsibility for providing the educational services to participants in each of the instructional areas? Include both paid and volunteer staff. Please choose one of the following responses for each area:

		Even Start	Other Ag'cy	Both	NA
a.	Adult Education				
	1. Beginning ABE (grades 0-4)	1	2	3	4
	2. Intermediate ABE (grades 5-8)	1	2	3	4
	3. ASE (grades 9-12)	1	2	3	4
	4. GED preparation	1	2	3	4
	5. ESL	1	2	3	4
b.	Parenting Education or PACT (Parents and Children Together)	1	2	3	4
c.	Early Childhood Education				
	1. Under age 3	1	2	3	4
	2. Age 3 and 4	1	2	3	4
	3. Age 5	1	2	3	4
	4. Age 6 and 7	1	2	3	4

47. For each of the following types of service providers, specify the level of involvement with each instructional area of your project.		Prim	Sec	Joint	None
a.	Departments or projects within public schools				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
b.	Community college, college or university				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
c.	Trade or technical school or institute				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
d.	Head Start project				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
e.	Preschool or day care projects other than Head Start				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
f.	Local, county, state government agencies or tribal organizations				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
g.	Foundations and fraternal groups				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
h.	Volunteer groups				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4
i.	Other (<i>specify</i>) _____				
	1. Adult education	1	2	3	4
	2. Parenting education	1	2	3	4
	3. Early childhood education	1	2	3	4

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #8:

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS: To meet this criterion a project must provide some evidence of coordination. They do this by answering "2" or "3" to any of #46 items, or by answering "1" "2" or "3" to any of the #47 items.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #9. The project shall “ensure that the programs will serve those families most in need of the activities and services provided by this part.”

Program Requirement #1 requires that projects recruit families that are most in need, while this program requirement requires that projects serve families that are most in need.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #9:

SERVING FAMILIES MOST IN NEED: To meet this criterion a project must serve the families that it recruits under Program Requirement #1. Because we cannot distinguish between families that are recruited and families that are served, we assume that any project which passes the standard for Program Requirement #1 also passes this standard.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #10. The project shall “provide for an independent evaluation of the program.”

ESPIRS data relevant to this program requirement is Form B #12.

12. Which of the following things are produced as part of the local evaluation of your project?

	Yes	No
a. A detailed description of participants, project services, and interagency collaborations	1	2
b. An assessment of how adequately or completely the project components have been implemented	1	2
c. An assessment of the quality of the educational and support services provided	1	2
d. An assessment of the quality of staff training and development	1	2
e. An assessment of growth in child literacy	1	2
f. An assessment of growth in adult literacy	1	2
g. An assessment of growth in parenting skills	1	2
h. Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	2

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #10:

LOCAL EVALUATION: To meet this criterion a project must answer “yes” to one or more of the response options in #12. This provides evidence that an evaluation was done. We don’t know whether the evaluation was “independent.”

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #11. The project shall serve children in at least a three-year age range [from section 1208 (a)(1)(c)].

ESPIRS data relevant to this criterion come from Form B #44 (reproduced above under Program Requirement #3), but these data do not allow us to be certain that a project is serving a three year age range.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT #11:

THREE-YEAR AGE RANGE: Data on the specific ages served by Even Start projects are included in the 1999-2000 ESPIRS.