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ABSTRACT

The Even Start program represents an innovative combination of programs for adult basic education, parenting education, and early childhood education. Focusing on parents and children as a unit, Even Start projects have three interrelated goals: (1) to help parents become full partners in the education of their children; (2) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and (3) to provide literacy training for participating parents. This document is the second interim report of the National Even Start Evaluation. Data for this report, which is presented in eight chapters, reflect the operations and effectiveness of Even Start projects during the 1990-91 program year. Chapter 1 introduces the Even Start program and the national evaluation. Chapter 2 summarizes the study design and the evaluation activities that were conducted during 1990-91. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the activities that occurred in Even Start projects, and chapters 4 and 5 describe characteristics of Even Start participants and projects. Chapter 6 describes the nature and amount of services received by Even Start participants. A preliminary look at the effects of Even Start on participating families is presented in chapter 7. Chapter 8 draws conclusions based on the findings described in the report. An appendix containing in-depth studies of 10 local projects participating in the national Even Start program takes up about a third of this document. A second appendix provides information related to analyses of data collected by two assessment instruments used in the evaluation. (TJQ)

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

SECOND INTERIM REPORT

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Contents

		Page
PREFACE		i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		ii
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
	THE EVEN START PROGRAM	1
	MANDATE FOR THE EVALUATION	2
	CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EVEN START INTERVENTION AND OUTCOMES	3
CHAPTER 2	SUMMARY OF STUDY DESIGN AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	9
	RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION	9
	COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION	13
	NATIONAL EVALUATION INFORMATION SYSTEM ACTIVITIES (ALL PROJECTS)	15
	DATA QUALITY	20
	IN-DEPTH STUDY ACTIVITIES	29
CHAPTER 3	DESCRIPTION OF EVEN START IN-DEPTH STUDY PROJECTS	36
	CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN IDS PROJECTS	36
	OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES	36
	SYNTHESIS OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES	39
	CONCLUSIONS	51
CHAPTER 4	CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS	53
	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	53
	CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES	54
	CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING ADULTS IN EVEN START FAMILIES	55
	CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN	66
	COMPARISON WITH HEAD START AND CCDP	71

Contents
(continued)

		Page
CHAPTER 5	CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PROJECTS . . .	78
	PROJECT LOCATION AND RURALITY	78
	RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING STRATEGIES	78
	CORE SERVICE DELIVERED: TYPES AND PROVIDERS	80
	PROVISION OF CORE SERVICES TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER	87
	PATTERNS OF CORE SERVICES	88
	SUPPORT SERVICES: TYPES AND PROVIDERS	88
	SPECIAL EVENTS	90
	COOPERATING AGENCIES AND COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS	95
	IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS . .	100
	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS	116
CHAPTER 6	CORE SERVICES RECEIVED BY EVEN START FAMILIES	118
	CROSS-YEAR PARTICIPATION IN EVEN START	118
	PARTICIPATION IN CORE SERVICES	121
	AMOUNT OF CORE SERVICES	123
CHAPTER 7	PRELIMINARY ANALYSES OF EFFECTS ON EVEN START PARTICIPANTS	137
	DOMAINS OF EFFECTIVENESS	137
	EFFECTS ON EVEN START CHILDREN	138
	EFFECTS ON EVEN START ADULTS	146
	CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EVEN START EFFECTS	148
CHAPTER 8	CONCLUSIONS	151
	CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS	151
	IMPLEMENTATION OF EVEN START PROJECTS . . .	152
	SERVICES RECEIVED BY EVEN START PARTICIPANTS	155
	PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES OF PROGRAM EFFECTS	159
REFERENCES	. . . . .	163
APPENDIX 3.1	IN-DEPTH STUDY PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS	165
APPENDIX 7.1	BACKUP INFORMATION FOR PRELIMINARY EFFECTS ANALYSIS	256

PREFACE

The National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program is a four-year national effort designed to describe the types of Even Start projects that have been funded, the services that they provide, the collaborative efforts that they have undertaken, and the obstacles to program implementation that they have encountered. The evaluation also describes the families participating in Even Start, the services that they receive, and the effects of Even Start participation on adult basic skills, children's school readiness and literacy-related behaviors, and parent-child interactions. Finally, the evaluation provides assistance to Even Start projects so that they can conduct any locally-designed evaluations that they deem necessary, and so that they can prepare and submit applications to the Department of Education for entry into the National Diffusion Network.

This is the second report from the National Even Start Evaluation. It provides descriptive information about the first two cohorts of Even Start projects (73 projects first funded in the fall of 1989 and 47 projects first funded in the fall of 1990), about the services they provide, and about the families they serve. The report also provides preliminary information about the effectiveness of Even Start projects at enhancing children's school readiness and adult functional literacy, and it presents case studies of ten selected projects. Data for this report reflect the operations and effectiveness of Even Start projects during the 1990-91 program year (June 1990 - May 1991).

The report contains several chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to Even Start and to the evaluation. Chapter 2 contains a summary of the study design and the evaluation activities that were conducted during the past year. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the activities that occur in Even Start projects, Chapter 4 describes the characteristics of Even Start participants, and Chapter 5 describes characteristics of Even Start projects. Chapter 6 describes the nature and amount of services received by Even Start participants, and Chapter 7 presents a preliminary look at the effects of Even Start on participating families. Finally, Chapter 8 presents conclusions based on the findings described in this report. In addition to the main volume the report includes a separately-bound Executive Summary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program is a large, long-term study which requires the ongoing assistance of Even Start projects across the country. Special thanks are due to all of the Even Start project directors, project evaluators, and other staff members who are working to make the national evaluation an exemplary study.

The first two years of the evaluation have benefitted from the input of many researchers who participate on an ongoing basis as members of the project's Technical Work Group. Members include Phoebe Cottingham from the Rockefeller Foundation, Sharon Darling from the National Center for Family Literacy, Richard Light from Harvard University, Vonnie McLoyd from the University of Michigan, and Thomas Sticht from Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Inc. The Technical Work Group also includes three Even Start representatives: Wilma Harry, director of the Even Start project in Indianapolis, IN; Kathy Hinchman, local evaluator of the Even Start project in Syracuse, NY; and Lisa Levinson, director of the Even Start project in Waterville, ME.

Staff of the Office of Policy and Planning in the U.S. Department of Education are responsible for oversight of the evaluation. As Project Officer, Nancy Rhett oversees all planning, implementation, and reporting activities for the evaluation.

As prime contractor for the evaluation, Abt Associates Inc. is responsible for the entire evaluation and has specific responsibility for the In-Depth Study. Key staff at Abt Associates Inc. include Robert St.Pierre, Janet Swartz, Ruth Nickse, Beth Gamse, Marc Moss, and Maureen Hume. As subcontractor, RMC Research Corporation is responsible for implementing the National Evaluation Information System. Key staff at RMC include Stephen Murray, Dennis Deck, Paul Ryer, Phil Nickel, Donna Dreis, and Janet Alpine.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description of the Even Start Family Literacy Program, sets forth the mandate for the national evaluation, and presents a conceptual model relating the Even Start intervention to hypothesized outcomes.

THE EVEN START PROGRAM

The Even Start Family Literacy Program was authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, Part B of Chapter 1 of Title I (P.L. 100-297). In 1991, Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73) which amended Even Start. According to the law, the Even Start program is intended to:

> "...improve the educational opportunities of the Nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program....The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services." (P.L. 100-297, Sec. 1051).

The Even Start program represents an innovative combination of programs for adult basic education, parenting education and early childhood education. This Federal initiative offers promise of addressing the literacy crisis in the nation through an integrated approach to adult and early childhood education. Focusing on parents and children as a unit, Even Start projects have three interrelated goals:

- to help parents become full partners in the education of their children;
- to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and
- to provide literacy training for participating parents.

To be eligible for Even Start, a family must have an adult who is eligible for adult basic education programs, and who is a parent of a child less than eight years of age who lives in a Chapter 1 elementary school attendance area.

Even Start is "family-focused" rather than parent- or child-focused. Hence, Even Start projects must provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult basic skills training, and parenting training. The theory is that families need all three services, not just one or two, in order to effect lasting change and improve children's school success.

To achieve these goals, the Even Start program makes four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. Seventy-six demonstration grants totaling $14.5 million were awarded in fiscal year 1989. In October 1989, 73 of the grants, totaling $14.1 million, were made to projects in school districts; and three grants totaling $0.4 million were made to state departments of education for projects serving migrant populations. Grants ranging from $62,000 to over $500,000 were awarded to small rural and large urban school districts in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Program funding grew in fiscal year 1990 to a total of $24 million. Forty-seven new projects were funded in October 1990 for a total of 123. The Even Start program expanded again in fiscal year 1991 with funding reaching the level of $49.7 million, and Even Start became a state-run program in fiscal year 1992 when funding grew to $70 million.

MANDATE FOR THE EVALUATION

Section 1058 of the Even Start legislation requires an independent national evaluation of the projects funded under Even Start. This section is as follows:

> "(a) Independent Annual Evaluation. The Secretary shall provide for the annual independent evaluation of programs under this part to determine their effectiveness in providing:
>
> (1) services to special populations;
> (2) adult education services;
> (3) parent training;
> (4) home-based programs involving parents and children;
> (5) coordination with related programs; and
> (6) training of related personnel in appropriate skill areas.
>
> (b) Criteria.
>
> (1) Each evaluation shall be conducted by individuals not directly involved in the administration of the program or project operated under this part. Such independent evaluators and the program administrators shall jointly develop evaluation criteria which provide for appropriate analysis of the factors under subsection (a). When possible, each evaluation shall include comparisons with appropriate control groups.

(2) In order to determine a program's effectiveness in achieving its stated goals, each evaluation shall contain objective measures of such goals and, whenever feasible, shall obtain the specific views of program participants about such programs.

(c) Report to Congress and Dissemination. The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Congress a review and summary of the results of such evaluations not later than September 30, 1993. The annual evaluations shall be submitted to the National Diffusion Network for consideration for possible dissemination."

In January 1990, the Office of Policy and Planning in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) awarded a contract to Abt Associates Inc. (Abt), with a subcontract to RMC Research Corporation, for an evaluation of the Even Start program. The evaluation, which runs from 1990 through 1993, calls for the design and implementation of a four-part evaluation and includes annual reports to be delivered to ED as well as a final report to Congress.

The evaluation assists ED and the general public in several ways. First, it provides ED with data to meet the evaluation requirements of the Education Department's General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) which stipulate that all grantees conduct annual evaluations. Second, it enables ED to fulfill the legislative requirement for an evaluation of the Even Start program. Third, it adds to the knowledge base on the effects of family literacy programs by investigating the relationships between program processes and outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EVEN START INTERVENTION AND OUTCOMES

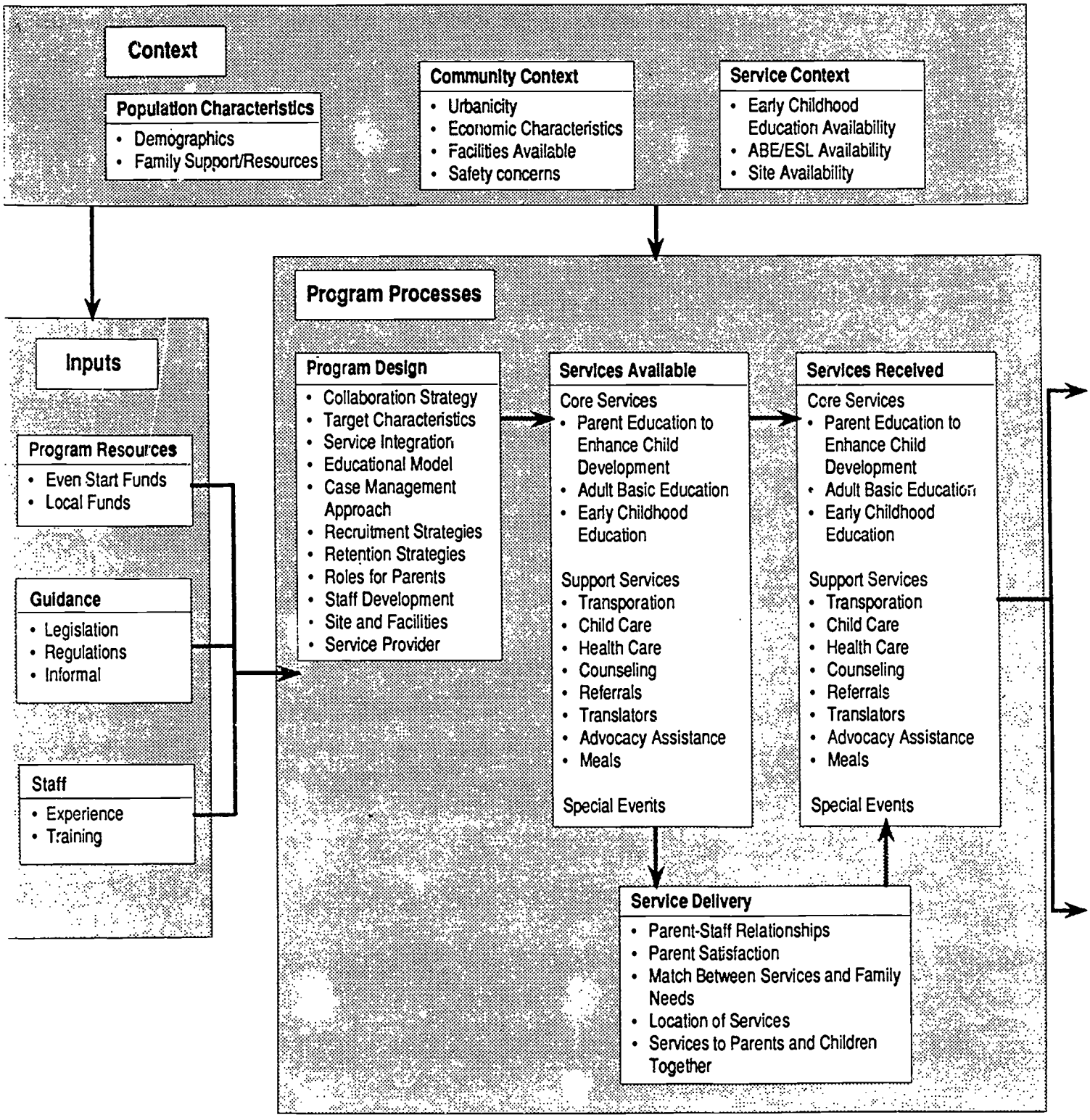
This section presents a conceptual model defining the Even Start intervention in terms of inputs and processes that exist within a service context. The model then relates the Even Start intervention to hypothesized outcomes for children and parents.

The model includes four sets of variables: contextual variables, programmatic inputs, program processes, and program outcomes. The formulation of the model is based on our understanding of the projects currently being implemented by Even Start grantees and of the variables that these projects hope to affect. Exhibit 1.1 presents the model, shows the four groups of variables, and illustrates the hypothesized linkages among them.

The model depicts a causal chain anticipated by Even Start projects. The projects are characterized as having a set of program inputs which influence the creation of program processes, which in turn lead to several sets of program outcomes. At each level (inputs, processes and outcomes), a set of contextual variables act as mediators. Examples of measurable indicators are provided for each major set of variables shown in the model.

Exhibit 1.1

Even Start Conceptual Model



Even Start Conceptual Model
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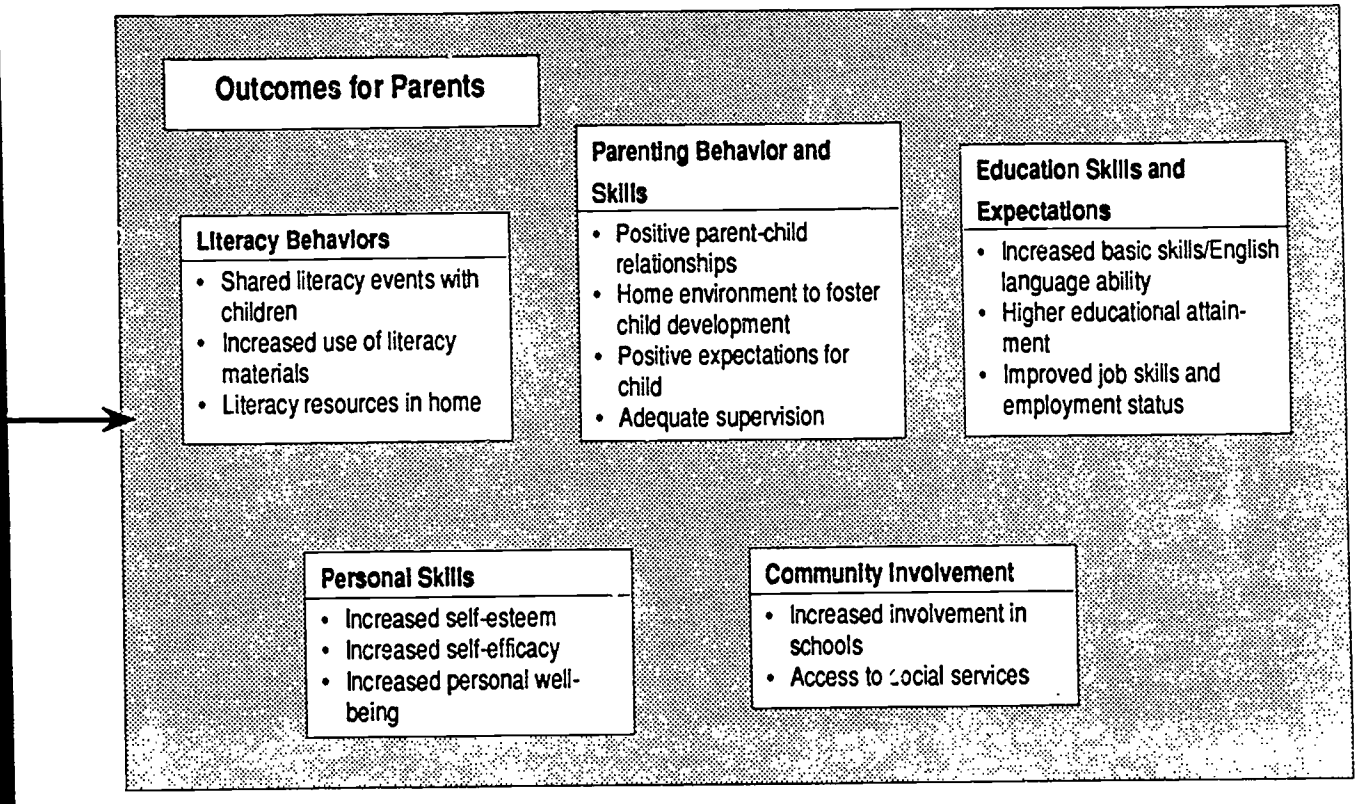

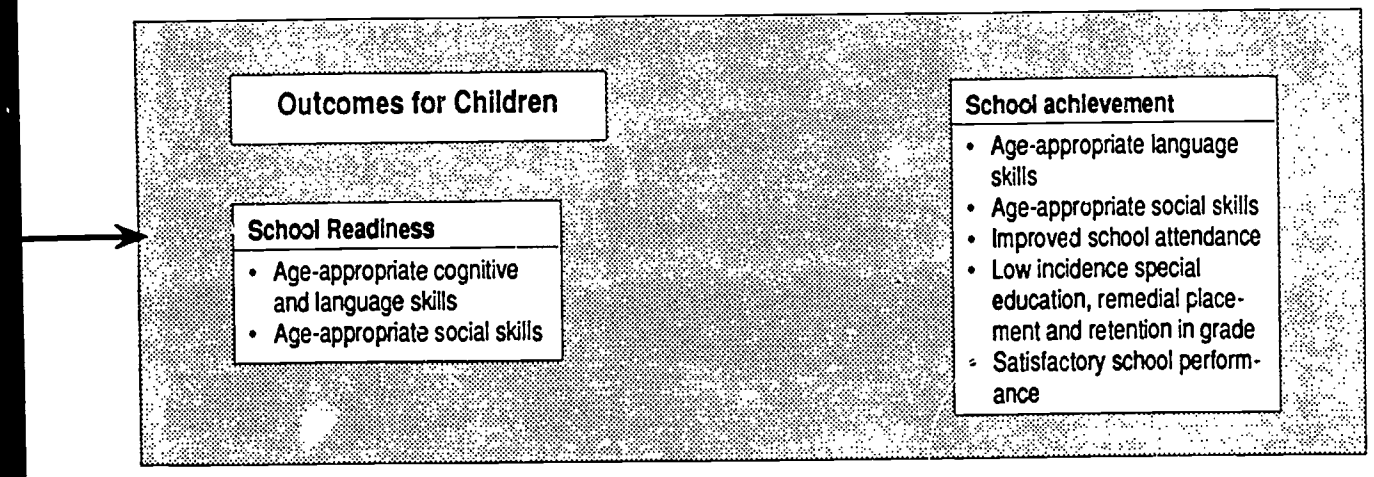

The conceptual model is useful to the evaluation in the following ways. First, it provides a vehicle for describing the problems being addressed by Even Start and the ways in which Even Start projects are attempting to solve these problems. Second, it provides a measurement framework for the evaluation because it is necessary for the evaluation team to understand the conceptual underpinnings of Even Start in order to select or develop measures that match program goals and activities. Finally, the model offers guidance on some of the hypothesized causal relationships among groups of variables, so that the evaluation team can make reasoned judgments about including a range of measures to assess short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

The conceptual model should be viewed as being dynamic rather than static. It is intended to reflect the ways in which Even Start projects actually operate and the ways in which they expect to produce outcomes. However, the model presented here is in a preliminary form, and as the study progresses it will be important to revise this model and perhaps to construct multiple models corresponding to the various approaches and hypotheses of different types of Even Start projects.

Program Context

An understanding of the context in which the program is implemented is crucial to the evaluation of Even Start. Contextual variables mediate the inputs that are available to the projects, the processes that occur as the projects are implemented, and the outcomes that result from the projects. Contextual conditions and their influences vary substantially across Even Start sites. One category of contextual variables includes the nature of the population served as measured by population demographics and family support and resources. A second category of contextual variables includes the community context in which the project is implemented, measured in terms of the urbanicity, economic characteristics, safety and support for Even Start within the community. Finally, the service context in which Even Start is implemented includes measures of the existing supply of early childhood education and adult basic education.

Program Inputs

Program inputs define the basic dimensions of the project including its scope, size, complexity, comprehensiveness, and overall goals. Inputs include the resources available to the project such as the level of Even Start funds provided from the Federal level and the amount of local funds available; guidance provided from the Federal level including, for example, the Even Start legislation, the Even Start grant application, program regulations, and formal or informal guidance provided through memos, meetings, etc.; and the type of staff available to the project measured in terms such as years of experience and amount of training.

Program Processes

The program inputs (mediated by contextual variables) are used by program staff to create program processes that involve the design, delivery, and receipt of program services by participating families. Several groups of program process variables are identified in the conceptual model. Program design variables include the collaboration strategy used by the project in deciding what services to provide directly and what services to provide through referrals, the characteristics of target children and adults (e.g., age of child, family language), the extent to which services for families are integrated, the use of an existing educational model for delivering early childhood and adult basic education services, strategies for recruiting and retaining program participants, the role that parents play in the project, and staff development activities. Further, many Even Start projects use case managers, parent liaisons, family advocates, etc. as key staff in the provision of coordinated services. These case managers conduct needs assessments and have ongoing contact with a number of families. They are responsible for the direct provision of some services as well as for ensuring that participating families take advantage of other services.

The services to be provided to children and their parents are described in the Even Start legislation and regulations and have been elaborated upon by the Even Start projects. Services can be grouped into three areas: (1) core services, (2) support services, and (3) special events. As is shown in Exhibit 1.1, the services actually received by Even Start participants may or may not match the services that are available. Three "core" Even Start services are outlined in the legislation:

- **Adult basic education services**: regularly scheduled core programming for adults that includes ABE, ASE, ESL, and GED preparation, designed to improve basic educational skills, particularly literacy skills.

- **Parent education/child development services**: regularly scheduled core programming for adults designed to enhance parent-child relationships and help parents understand and support their child's growth and development.

- **Early childhood education services**: regularly scheduled core programming for children alone, designed to enhance development and prepare children for success in school.

Even Start projects are required to provide core services to parents and children jointly and to provide home-based services. In addition to core services, Even Start projects typically provide a range of "support" services, some of which are designed to enable the provision of core services. Examples of support services are transportation, custodial child care, health care, meals, nutrition assistance, mental health referral, referrals for employment, advocacy assistance with governmental agencies, counseling, child protective services, referrals for screening or treatment for chemical dependency, referrals for services to battered women, special care for

a handicapped family member, or translators. The Even Start legislation requires that support services be obtained from existing providers whenever possible, to ensure that Even Start projects avoid duplication of services.

Finally, Even Start projects often provide "special events" for participants. These may be one-time events such as a pot-luck supper, or they may include occasional activities or demonstrations on subjects of interest to the participating families.

A second set of process variables defines the service delivery mechanisms used by the project. Some services are provided directly by the project, other services are provided through collaborative arrangements with cooperating agencies. Activities may take place in the family's home or at a center (when the cooperating agency is physically in the same building as the Even Start project), or in decentralized sites (when the cooperating agency or agencies are in different locations). The point is to distinguish between services that can be conveniently obtained by families at a central site as opposed to services that are more difficult for families to obtain simply because the service delivery locations are physically separated from one another. Services are also distinguished by whether they are provided to parents and children together or separately. Other variables of interest describe the nature of service delivery in terms of parent-staff relationships and the match between services and family needs.

Program Outcomes

Implementation of the program processes is hypothesized to produce a series of program outcomes for parents and children. Not every Even Start project will try to effect all of the outcomes listed in Exhibit 1.1; however, it is useful to provide a wide range of potential program outcomes in order to inform the selection of evaluation measures.

Hoped-for outcomes for parents may include positive effects in three areas linked to the Even Start legislation: literacy behaviors (e.g., shared literacy events with children, increased reading and writing activities in the home); parenting behavior and skills (e.g., positive parent-child relationships, positive expectations for child); and educational and employment skills (e.g., increased literacy/English language ability, higher educational attainment). In addition, goals for parents participating in Even Start might include growth in personal skills (e.g., increased self-esteem, increased self-efficacy) and community involvement (e.g., increased involvement in schools, access to social services).

It also is expected that Even Start will have a positive impact on children's school readiness and school achievement. School readiness variables include age-appropriate cognitive, language, and social skills. Once children enter school, outcomes might include satisfactory school performance, improved school attendance as well as a lower incidence of special education, remedial placement, and retention in grade.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY OF STUDY DESIGN AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

This chapter summarizes the design for the National Even Start Evaluation and describes evaluation activities conducted during the 1990-91 year. The first section of the chapter lists the research questions addressed by the evaluation. The second section summarizes the overall approach to the evaluation. Additional information on the design is contained in the first year report from this study (St.Pierre, et al. 1991). The remaining sections of the chapter describe evaluation activities, data quality, and planned analyses.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION

General Research Questions

In assessing programs like Even Start, a number of overarching research questions can be identified:

(1) Who is served by the program and what services do they receive?

(2) How well does the program's basic model work? Do participants perform better on key measures than similar persons who did not participate?

(3) How well was the Federal funding on the program spent? How many of the projects were well-implemented?

(4) What are project "best practices"? What types of projects or program elements work best under what circumstances?

(5) How does the program compare to alternative programs addressing the same problem? Is it more effective? How do the costs compare?

(6) What is the program's impact on its target population and service delivery structure?

It is rare that a single study would attempt to answer all of these questions. Often, questions about the basic model's effectiveness should be settled before resources are spent on identifying best practices or comparing the program to alternatives. The present evaluation is

focusing on the first three overarching questions, with some attention to the fourth question on best practices.

Even Start Research Questions

Included below is a comprehensive set of research questions that are intended to guide the evaluation. The list has evolved over time. Some questions have faded in importance, and new ones have been generated as more was learned about how projects are implemented. For now, the research questions are organized into four major sets of questions and subquestions:

(1) What are the characteristics of Even Start participants? (Who is in the program?)

(2) How are Even Start projects implemented and what services do they provide? (What does the program look like?)

(3) What Even Start services are received by participating families? (What do families receive by participating?)

(4) What are the effects of Even Start projects on participants? (What difference does Even Start make in the lives of participants?)

These questions build on those listed in the RFP for this study, as well as on the conceptual model that was presented in the previous chapter. Questions marked with an asterisk are addressed in this report.

What are the Characteristics of Even Start Participants?

This set of questions calls for a thorough description of the demographic characteristics of Even Start participants.

* What are the characteristics of families, adults, and children who are served by Even Start (e.g., gender, ethnicity, presence of handicapping condition, primary languages, educational status, employment status)?

* What proportion of Even Start participants are from special populations (e.g., handicapped, limited-English-proficient)?

* What social services were received by Even Start participants prior to entry into Even Start? What non-Even Start services are received by Even Start participants?

How are Even Start Projects Implemented and What Services do they Provide?

This set of questions focuses on the services being provided by Even Start projects and the ways in which Even Start projects are being implemented. Questions deal with the goals of each project, the distribution of projects, the use of available curricula/models, the cost of Even Start and the allocation of Even Start funds, recruitment and screening of families, characteristics and training of Even Start staff, collaborative efforts of Even Start projects, and barriers to program implementation.

* How are Even Start projects distributed by geographic location and urbanicity?

* Are Even Start projects designed as year-round or school-year projects?

* To what extent do Even Start projects use available curriculum materials or program models? What materials and models are frequently used?

  What is the cost of Even Start projects? How are Even Start funds allocated within projects? What proportion of Even Start funds is spent on different activities? How are local contribution funds obtained and used?

* Do projects target special groups of families? What procedures are used to recruit eligible families? What procedures are used to screen and assess parents' and children's needs?

  What is the background and training of Even Start staff? What is the proportion of professional, paraprofessional, and volunteer staff? In what topic areas does Even Start provide staff training? How much training is provided to Even Start staff (and to staff at other agencies) in each area?

* What types of collaboration exist between Even Start and other agencies? What types of agencies are collaborating with Even Start projects? What mechanisms are being used to enhance the cooperation/ collaboration (formal letter of agreement, informal agreement, increased communication, etc.)?

* What core, support, and special services are provided by Even Start projects? What services do collaborating agencies provide?

* What barriers exist to successful program implementation?

What Even Start Services are Received by Participating Families?

This set of questions deals with the Even Start "treatment" that is received by participating families. Questions concern the amount of core services received, the extent to

which services are delivered in the home, and the extent to which services are delivered to parents and children together.

* How much time do Even Start participants spend in each core service? Which core services (and how much of each) are provided to parents and children together? Which core services (and how much of each)are provided in the home?

* How long do families participate in Even Start?

What are the Effects of Even Start Projects on Participants?

This set of questions deals with the impact of Even Start projects. Questions concern areas such as effects on participating children, effects on parents and families, the relationship between amount of services and child/parent/family effects, and the effectiveness of different Even Start models.

* At entry to Even Start, how do the school-readiness and literacy-related skills of Even Start children compare with the school-readiness and literacy-related skills of children in other early childhood education programs for the disadvantaged? Of children nationally?

* At entry to Even Start, what is the level of basic skills and/or English-speaking ability of participating parents? What is their educational attainment? What are parents' educational expectations for their children and for themselves? What types of parent-child interactions do parents engage in? How involved are parents in their children's education? What are parents' ideas about child-rearing practices?

* What are the effects of Even Start on the school-readiness and literacy-related skills of Even Start children? After participating in Even Start, how do the school-readiness and literacy-related skills of Even Start preschool children compare with the school-readiness and literacy-related skills of disadvantaged children in other early childhood education programs? With children nationally?

* What are the effects of Even Start on the basic skills and/or English-speaking ability of participating adults? On parent-child interactions, parent behaviors, parent expectations, and parenting skills? On parent educational status, receipt of a GED, participation in job training or further education, and/or job placement?

  What is the relationship between amount of home-based services, amount of parent/child together services, length of participation, and outcomes for children? Outcomes for parents?

  How do parents' attitudes/expectations, basic skills, and patterns of parent-child interactions relate to children's school readiness or achievement?

Do adults participating in Even Start have better retention and/or attendance in ESL or ABE programs than adults in regular adult education programs?

Based on information about the services provided, is it possible to identify a set of Even Start "models" that exhibit variation in design and service delivery? Are some Even Start models more effective than others in terms of enhancing adult basic skills, children's school readiness, and parents' behaviors and expectations? Are some Even Start models particularly cost-effective?

Across Even Start projects, are there practices or components that are particularly effective?

What are the long-term effects of Even Start on children in terms of Chapter 1 placement, special education placement, school grades, and school achievement?

COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL EVEN START EVALUATION

A four-component evaluation has been designed in order to address the questions listed above. The components are: (1) the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS) for all Even Start projects, (2) an In-Depth Study of ten projects, (3) other local studies as desired by individual projects, and (4) local application for approval by the Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (PEP) and National Diffusion Network (NDN) (see Exhibit 2.1).

National Evaluation Information System

The first component of the evaluation is the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS), which is designed to collect a common set of data from each Even Start project and from most Even Start participants. The purpose of the NEIS is to provide ongoing descriptive information about the Even Start program, including the types of projects that have been funded, the services that they provide, the collaborative efforts that they have undertaken, and the obstacles that exist to program implementation. The NEIS is structured to provide detailed information describing the families that participate in Even Start, the services that they receive, and the progress that they make in areas such as adult basic skills, children's school readiness and literacy-related behaviors, and parent-child interactions.

In-Depth Study of Ten Projects

The second component of the evaluation is the In-Depth Study (IDS). This component is designed to complement the broad-based data collected from all Even Start projects through the NEIS by providing more in-depth information on a subset of ten purposively-selected

Exhibit 2.1
Components of Even Start Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Components	Population the data are collected on	Types of data to be collected	Data collection procedures	Years collected	Basic research questions	Analysis plan	Main Focus of evaluation	Funding source for data collection	Funding source for data analysis
NEIS - National Evaluation Information System	All Even Start projects and participants	Participant characteristics, Coordination, Services, Implementation, Basic Costs	Parent Quest, Family Service Log, Project Quest.	All years	Who participates in Even Start? What is the program? How well is the program implemented? How much service is received?	Descriptive analysis, review against Even Start goals	National description and assessment	Local project evaluation budget	AAI/RMC
		Outcomes - school readiness - adult basic education skills and attendance - parent/child interaction	Child and adult tests (PSI, PPVT, CASAS), parent interviews	2nd - 4th	What is school readiness status of Even Start children? What is the literacy level of Even Start adults? Do adults attend adult education regularly?	Compare participants' status and progress to test norms and other national programs for similar populations	National description and assessment	Local project evaluation budget	AAI/RMC
In-Depth Study	Even Start participants and control group from 10 selected Even Start projects	Participant characteristics, Coordination, Services, Implementation Outcomes - school performance - adult literacy and attendance - parent/child interaction Costs	Observation; in-depth data on participants and services; parent and staff interviews; Follow-up system for longitudinal study of children, including progress in early grades.	2nd - 4th	What are the short and long-term effects of Even Start on children, parents, and families? What models work best ? What aspects are key to success?	Compare against control group data and against data from other national programs.	Assessment of model projects	AAI and local project evaluation budget	AAI
Local Models Evaluation (PEP/NDN qualification)	Even Start projects that qualify Even Start participants and comparison/control group, if appropriate	Participant characteristics, Coordination, Services, Implementation, Basic Costs Outcomes - school readiness - adult literacy - parent/child interaction	Testing and parent interviews	3rd - 4th	Is the project exemplary? Is it a transferrable model?	Compare gains within the project to those of similar local families or to national norms. Number of projects that pass PEP is an outcome measure for the Even Start Program	Identification of model local projects that can pass the PEP and enter NDN	Local project evaluation budget	Local project evaluation budget
Other Local Evaluation Needs	Optional for each project.	Additional information desired by local administrators	Proposed in project application	All years	How does the project meet specified local needs?	Depends on questions	Local information needs	Local project evaluation budget	Local project evaluation budget

grantees. Whereas the NEIS provides common data on all projects, the IDS evaluates a subset of projects in more detail. The IDS will focus on the short-term outcomes of Even Start, on the relationship between services received and outcomes, and on the long-term effects of Even Start.

Other Local Evaluation Activities

After they have met requirements for the National Evaluation Information System and the In-Depth Study, grantees have the option of conducting other local evaluation activities that they think are necessary or appropriate. Local evaluation activities can be funded through the projects' evaluation budget but must be approved by the Department of Education, typically through the continuation grant.

Local Application for PEP/NDN Qualification

The final component of the evaluation is primarily the responsibility of individual Even Start grantees. In accordance with Section 1058(c) of the Even Start legislation, Even Start projects should submit evidence of their effectiveness for approval by the Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (PEP). Approval by PEP results in entry to the National Diffusion Network (NDN), after which the project may apply to NDN for additional dissemination funds as a developer/demonstrator project.

NATIONAL EVALUATION INFORMATION SYSTEM ACTIVITIES (ALL PROJECTS)

This section describes the NEIS data submitted by Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Even Start projects for the 1990-91 program year (the period from 1 June 1990 through 31 May 1991). All projects were required to submit data on 15 December 1990 and again on 15 June 1991. Reports on the data quality checks and the extent of missing data for the 1990-91 program year are also included.

Evaluation Technical Assistance

The purpose of evaluation technical assistance was to ensure that Even Start projects possess sufficient understanding of the evaluation requirements to produce high quality data for analysis and reporting. More specifically, technical assistance helps projects understand the evaluation requirements of the NEIS, answer project questions about the evaluation, keeps projects supplied with the necessary forms, and prepares projects for submitting applications to the Program Effectiveness Panel (PEP). Technical assistance has been provided through in-person training, telephone consultation, and mailings.

Training. Typically, the contractor for a national evaluation uses its own staff to collect data from projects. Using this strategy the contractor has significant control over the data

collection process and the quality of data, even though data collectors hired by the contractor may lack sensitivity to important project subtleties since their powers of observation are limited by the instruments they use and the activities they observe.

The NEIS, developed by Abt and RMC Research in consultation with ED and the Cohort 1 Even Start grantees, relies on Even Start project staff to collect and submit data to the national evaluation contractor. A portion of each grant award is specifically designated to support the collection of data through a local, part-time evaluator. Our hope is that this level of involvement on the part of project staff will make the evaluation more sensitive to local issues and constraints and will lead to greater participation of the projects in interpretating data they collect and submit to the evaluation contractor. One of the challenges of this approach is to overcome the inherent lack of control through training and technical assistance.

During the 1990-91 project year, Abt and RMC Research provided three NEIS training sessions to Even Start staff. The first round of training was offered to Cohort 1 projects during three weeks in August and September of 1990. Each project was invited to attend a one-week training session, held in Boston, to prepare its staff to implement the NEIS. Abt trained project staff in the administration and scoring of the PSI and PPVT, staff from CASAS trained projects in the administration and scoring of the CASAS, and RMC Research staff provided training on each of the NEIS forms and the general reporting requirements of NEIS. Each project was given a NEIS notebook that included all forms and instructions. The NEIS training included a detailed review of each reporting form, an explanation of data collection procedures, and a discussion of expectations for project reporting. Each presentation on the NEIS was approximately three hours and included a question and answer session that permitted projects to deal with individual concerns.

A second introductory training session was provided to Cohort 2 projects in February, 1991. Training for Cohort 2, which was similar to that provided to the Cohort 1 projects, was presented in three concurrent sessions held in the afternoon of a one day conference.

The annual Even Start evaluation conference that was held in April 1991, gave Cohort 1 projects a second opportunity for training in NEIS. A few projects opted to participate in a NEIS review. Cohort 1 projects were also given an overview of the requirements for submitting an application to PEP during the April evaluation conference.

Technical Assistance by Telephone. Telephone technical assistance to support the collection and reporting of data was provided throughout the 1990-91 project year. Although the end of the reporting period was May 31, 1991, calls regarding data for 1990-91 continued through April of 1992. These later calls were prompted by Data Quality Issues (DQI) feedback reports that RMC provided to projects in February and March of 1992.

Exhibit 2.2 gives the number of the technical assistance telephone consultations, by month, for the 20-month period from September 1990 through April 1992. A total of 872 incoming and outgoing calls were made for an average of 44 calls per month. The frequency of calls increased during and directly following the months that reports were due as indicated

Exhibit 2.2

Technical Assistance by Telephone
September 1, 1990 through April 1992

Month,	Year	Number of calls
September	1990	15
October	1990	19
November	1990	45
December	1990	60
January	1991	67
February	1991	14
March	1991	38
April	1991	23
May	1991	46
June	1991	106
July	1991	6
August	1991	12
September	1991	37
October	1991	34
November	1991	44
December	1991	72
January	1992	77
February	1992	37
March	1992	68
April	1992	52
	TOTAL	**872**

by the relatively large number of calls in December, January, and June. On the other hand, few calls were processed in July or August, months when project activity was less intense.

Requests for technical assistance by telephone covered the following topics: identification of the forms due with each report, assistance in completing the forms, requests for information about the use of using local computerized databases, scannable forms, and help with the rules governing outcome assessment and the recording of service hours on the Daily Contact Log. As projects became more experienced in data collection and recording, their questions tended to go beyond the guidelines in the NEIS training or the NEIS notebook. Such questions often dealt with how specific types of activities were to be coded and what criteria should be used for reporting information.

Mailings. Six mailings to all projects kept them abreast of new developments in 1990-91. Two mailings, one in October 1990 and one in November 1990, contained the OMB-approved NEIS forms and other information regarding the NEIS. In December, projects received additional information on completing the forms. Scannable forms, which were printed after OMB approval, were sent to projects in February 1991.

1990-91 Implementation of the NEIS

As depicted in Exhibit 2.3, NEIS implementation was phased in during 1990-91. All Cohort 1 projects were expected to gather "family intake" data on all families initiating participation after June 1, 1990 and to begin using "Daily Contact Logs" and administering "outcome tests" by October 1990. "Other reporting information" was to be recorded by the Spring of 1991 for each Even Start family receiving core service.

Cohort 2 projects, funded October 1990, were expected to collect participant intake information on all families served from the start of their project. Most Cohort 2 projects began using the contact logs in January 1991. Cohort 2 sites were not expected to begin outcome assessment until their second year of operation which began in the fall of 1991, after the 1990-91 reporting year.

NEIS Data Submitted for the 1990-91 Report

Exhibit 2.4 summarizes the data submitted by projects as of April 30, 1992. Fifty-two of the Cohort 1 projects reported on program implementation in December 1990; 67 reported on program implementation again in June 1991. Twenty-three Cohort 2 projects reported on program implementation in December 1990 and 43 Cohort 2 projects reported on program implementation in June 1991. Cohort 2 projects not submitting implementation data in December 1990 reported that their level of implementation had not reached a stage which permitted a response to the specific items in Form III.

Exhibit 2.3

NEIS Implementation Schedule

NEIS Component	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Family Intake (Form IB, Part A)	All families initiating participation since project start state (October 1, 1989). Data collection to begin as soon as possible after August/September 1990 training.	All families initiating participation since project start date (October 1, 1990). Data collection to begin as soon as possible after project received NEIS forms from RMC. Forms sent December 1990.
Parent Child Interaction Interview (Form IB, Part B)	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating since project start date (October 1, 1989). Data collection to begin as soon as possible after August/September 1990 training.	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating since the project start date (October 1990). Data collection to begin as soon as possible after project receives NEIS forms from RMC Research. Forms sent December 1990.
Other reporting information (Form IB, Part C)	All families participating since June 1, 1990. Data collection to begin as soon as possible after August/September 1990 training.	All families participating since project start date (October 1, 1990). Data Collection to begin as soon as possible after project received NEIS forms from RMC Research. Forms sent December 1990.
Daily contact logs (Form II)	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating after September 1990. Data collection to begin as soon as possible after August/September 1990 training.	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating since the project start date (October 1990). Data collection to begin as soon as possible after project receives NEIS forms from RMC Research. Forms sent December 1990.
Outcome data (Form IV)	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating after September 1990. Data collection to begin October 1, 1990.	All families (or a random sample of at least 50 families per project) participating after September 1991. Data collection to begin October 1, 1991. Not included in the 1990-91 report.

Seventy-one Cohort 1 projects and 46 Cohort 2 projects submitted data on 6,037 families served from June 1, 1990 through May 31, 1991. Families were included in analyses for the 1990-91 report only when it could be confirmed that at least one family member participated in at least one core service during the year. Such confirmation required lengthy analysis and follow-up with sites after the regular submission of their reports.

Exhibit 2.4
Number of Projects Submitting Reports for the 1990-91 Program Year

NEIS Component	December 1990 Report		June 1991 Report	
	Cohort 1 [1]	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Participant Characteristics				
Family Intake	71	3	66	43
Parent/Child Interaction	71	1	69	41
Other Information	48	0	72	42
Contact Logs	65	1	71	41
Outcome Data	63	0	68	3
Program Characteristics	52	46[2]	67	43

[1] 73 Cohort 1 projects received funding during the 1990-91 program year.

[2] 46 Cohort 2 projects received funding during the 1990-91 program year. Twenty three of the Cohort 2 projects submitted letters indicating that they were not able to answer specific items on program implementation in Form III because they had not yet begun to provide services. These letters were accepted in lieu of a Form III.

DATA QUALITY

Data Quality Control. Because the NEIS involves the collection and submission of data across time, extensive data quality checks are required. Many of the data quality checks are designed to ensure that families and individuals are accurately and consistently identified across the forms.

Upon receipt of a project's report, data clerks from RMC Research inventory the forms submitted and record the submission on a check-in log. Problems easily detected by visual inspection are noted and, if necessary, projects are contacted for resolution. The check-in log

is used to indicate whether scannable forms, hand-entry forms or a combination of scannable and hand-entry forms were submitted. Because of the short period between the OMB approval of forms and the due date for the first report on the 1990-91 program year, nearly all of the forms submitted by Cohort 1 projects were on photocopies of draft forms and required hand entry. Some scannable forms were received from projects that were late in submitting their December 1990 report.

Although scannable forms were available to all projects for the June 1991 report, some projects still submitted forms that required hand entry. Because of the volume of forms and uncertainty about the range of quality control issues that would emerge, it was decided to enter all data into the database, then conduct several quality control checks. The general types of data quality problems that emerged included the following:

- problems with bubbled responses on the scannable forms,
- missing or incomplete birthdates,
- inconsistencies or nonmatching birthdates and ID codes across forms,
- missing forms, forms submitted with data missing,
- inconsistent responses across items,
- reporting detailed demographic data on children who were too old for Even Start, and
- failure to indicate participation for all participants.

Problems with bubbled responses on the scannable forms have included the following: 1) bubbling a response that did not match the written response, 2) not bubbling a response where one was written, 3) bubbling a response that was not readable by the scanner. Through extensive procedures, including manual checking, RMC Research corrected many of the incomplete and inaccurate records resulting from these problems with scan forms.

Several methods were used to correct missing or incomplete birthdates. For example, data were checked across forms to determine if a full birthdate was given on one form but not another. If a birthdate was missing on two or more forms, but included on at least one form, the reported birthdate was automatically copied to the form(s) with the missing birthdate. If it was not clear a match existed, projects were asked to provide the missing birthdate or resolve the discrepancy. Valid birthdates for children are more critical for analyses than are valid birthdates for adults. Children's birthdates are necessary to determine whether a child was in the eligible age range for Even Start and to use in interpreting the outcome measures — the PPVT is age-normed and the PSI must be interpreted given a child's age.

Problems with inconsistencies or nonmatching birthdates and ID codes across forms were also corrected by cross-referencing forms. If the problem could not be solved by cross-referencing at RMC, projects were given a list of the conflicting birthdates reported for family members and asked to mark the correct birthdate, or provide a corrected birthdate.

Projects were also given a report of families that RMC's records indicated were missing one or more forms. Several projects failed to submit a Part C which is used to indicate which core services each family member received during a project year. Often, forms were missing because the project was unable to collect the data from the family. Many families were unavailable because they had left the project before data collection forms were approved by OMB and distributed to the site.

Because projects are expected to collect several data elements on each family and family member, missing data for submitted forms was also a problem. In some cases, the data were simply not available. However, in other cases, the data could have been reported by the project without depending on the participating family as the source of information. For example, the types of core services that a family had received can usually be answered by the project staff.

In some instances, the responses across items were inconsistent. For example, projects are asked to identify the number of adults and children in each household; they are also asked to provide detailed demographic data on each member of the household. For some families, the counts of members and the number of members on whom detailed information was provided did not match. For some items, projects are to report information on specific subgroups only (e.g., persons whose primary language was other than English), but, instead, reported on a broader group (e.g., including persons whose primary language was English). Such discrepancies were automatically resolved by deleting responses to items where they did not apply to the individual or family in question.

Exhibit 2.5 summarizes the status of missing data after exhausting all routes for resolving data quality issues. Counts and percentages of missing data presented in Exhibit 2.5 are based on the number of forms in which the data element is to be included. For example, adult date of birth at intake is counted as missing only if the project submitted a family intake form without including the adult's date of birth or the adult's date of birth could not be verified by the project after notifying them that the information was missing from their initial submission.

Data Quality Issues with Daily Logs. The "Daily Log of Core Services", is used to record the number of hours of service given to target adults and children in each of four service areas: adult basic education, parenting education, early childhood education, and adult/child activities. The number of hours of service in each area were reported on a daily basis.

Several data quality problems affect the contact logs including incomplete forms, irregular completion of forms, mis-identification of core services, non-reporting of services provided by cooperating agencies, and reporting of services received by clients of an agency running Even Start, who themselves are not direct participants in Even Start. Problems of missing data on the contact logs are not easily detectable. All families were to have a contact log submitted each

Exhibit 2.5
Percent of Data Missing from NEIS Forms
1990-91 Program Year

	Participants and Non Participants		Core Service Participants	
Characteristics of the Family Unit	**N**	**%[1]**	**N**	**%**
Number of adults	120	12.0%		
Number of children	95	1.6%		
Number of children < 1	213	3.6%		
Number of children 1 through 8	185	3.1%		
Number of children 8 through 16	150	2.7%		
Family Structure (couple, single parent, etc.)	52	0.9%		
Primary source of financial support	138	2.3%		
Level of annual family income	382	6.4%		
Characteristics of Adults				
Date of birth (Age)	521	3.4%		
Gender	379	3.8%		
Race/ethnicity	91	0.9%		
Educational attainment	734	7.3%		
Education in/outside USA	437	4.3%		
Employment status	738	7.3%		
Length of current employment status	1,225	12.1%		
Primary language of adults	306	3.0%		
If not English:				
How well adult understands English	81	2.9%		
How well adult speaks English	105	3.7%		
How well adults reads English	85	3.0%		
What language adult uses to read to child	52	1.8%		
From end of year information (Form IB, Part C):				
Birthdate (for matching intake and other records)			521	3.4%
Identified as disabled?			58	0.8%
If yes, source of identification information			30	11.2%
Employment status			150	2.1%
Length of current employment status			374	5.3%
Characteristics of Children				
Date of birth (Age)	226	1.9%		
Gender	424	3.7%		
Race/ethnicity	136	1.2%		
Formal educational experiences in the past	623	5.4%		
Formal educational experiences receiving now	833	7.2%		
From end of year information (Form IB, Part C):				
Birthdate (for matching intake and other records)	124	1.5%		
Identified as "special needs"	138	1.7%		
Source of identification information	177	2.5%		
Primary language	306	3.8%		

[1] Based on the number of forms submitted

month. The monthly log had space to record the amount of each Even Start core service on a daily basis. However, if a family received services on a given day that were not recorded, that omission would not be obvious.

Projects were not required to submit contact logs for a month in which a family did not participate. Conversations with project personnel reveal that many families have irregular attendance patterns. Thus, a family with only one or two months of contact log data in a six to ten month period does not necessarily indicate a failure to report service on the part of a site. On the other hand, it does not exclude that possibility. We have no efficient way to determine how much service was given but not reported.

Another possible error, also not easily verified, is the reporting of service hours in the incorrect area. Projects were asked to adhere to the following guidelines when deciding how to report services:

a) If adult and child were involved in the activity together, the core service coded was ADULT/CHILD, whatever the content of the activity. Active engagement between parent and child, rather than the mere presence of the adult and child was required to fit this category.

b) If the primary goal of the activity was to improve adult basic education skills and children were not physically present or engaged in activities with the parents, the core service was coded ADULT EDUCATION.

c) If adult education programming used parenting information as the content of services, but with the primary goal of improving basic education skills, the core service coded was ADULT EDUCATION.

d) If children participated in an organized early childhood program without parents physically present (or if parents were present but not engaged in activities with their own children), the core service coded was EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

e) If the primary goal of the activity was to enhance parent-child relationships and children are not physically present (or if children are not engaged in activities with their own parents), the core service was coded PARENT EDUCATION/CHILD DEVELOPMENT.

The rate of incorrect service reporting cannot be estimated, but does not appear to be great since patterns of service generally are consistent within projects and in line with service descriptions provided in the project implementation form. One exception is that for some sites, services that may best be described as custodial day care (and thus not a core service) were reported as early childhood education. Some sites appeared to describe any activities involving children as enhancing development. Thus, where one site may have reported four hours of early childhood education a day, when children were at the center for eight hours, another site may have reported all eight hours as early childhood education.

Two final sources of data quality problems in the contact log data have been suggested from technical support conversations with Even Start project staff. As with the other sources of data error, these cannot readily be quantified. The Even Start law requires that projects provide early childhood education, adult basic education, and parenting education, and encourages grantees to cooperate with existing community organizations in the provision of the required educational services. Many Even Start projects provide a broad spectrum of social and educational services through the efforts of collaborating agencies. However, having Even Start as a part of a larger organization or a cooperating group of organizations appears to lead to confusion by staff completing the NEIS forms. In the case of cooperating agencies, staff may not consider that the educational services provided to Even Start families by the cooperating agencies should be reported. Thus an adult may be going four hours per week to a community adult education program as an Even Start participant, but those hours may not be reported in the NEIS system.

Data Quality for Outcome Data. A summary of the NEIS design for outcome assessment gives context to the discussion of data quality issues for outcome assessment. Adult outcomes assessed for the NEIS include adult functional literacy, as measured by the CASAS, and the attainment of a GED as reported by projects. Child outcomes include school readiness as measured by the PSI and language development as measured by the PPVT or its Spanish equivalent, the TVIP. Children from three years old to five years old are to be administered the PSI while children from three years old through seven years of age are to be administered the PPVT (or TVIP).

Projects are expected to start outcome assessment at the beginning of their second project year. Consequently, Cohort 1 projects administered and reported outcome tests for NEIS during the 1990-91 program year; Cohort 2 projects were not expected to administer outcome tests until the 1991-92 program year; thus, outcomes data for Cohort 2 projects are not included in the present report.

The adult and child selected are called the "target adult" and the "target child" for outcome assessment. To be selected as the target, an adult must be eligible for adult basic education. If two or more adults in a family are eligible for adult basic education, the project is to select the adult they expected to be the primary recipient of adult basic education services.

The selection of the target child for outcome assessment is more complex as some families have more than one child in the eligible age range. Guidelines for selecting the target child are intended to maximize the probability that test scores on the target child are available across time. Projects were given the following guidance in selecting the target child:

> "Place priority on selecting those children who 1) receive Even Start core services, 2) are between three and seven years of age, and 3) speak English or Spanish. If two or more children in a family qualify for targeting, one child must be selected. The order of preference for selecting that child is as follows:

1st choice: A child who is three at intake
2nd choice: A child who is four at intake
3rd choice: A child who is five at intake
4th choice: A child who is six at intake
5th choice: A child who is seven at intake
6th choice: A child who is two at intake
7th choice: A child who is one at intake

For each family, select the highest choice possible."

Projects are to test target adults and children within one month after they begin to receive core services (adult basic education for the adult, early childhood education for the child) for the entry test. Adults and children are to be tested again when they exit from Even Start or by May 31 of each year, whichever comes first. Unless a score is clearly an entry score or an exit score, it will be considered an "other" score. The rationale for requiring entry scores to be administered no more than one month after the start of core services is to ensure that entry scores are not affected by participation in Even Start core services.

NEIS guidelines call for projects to alternate forms of the PPVT for outcome assessment. Form L is to be used for the entry test and Form M is to be used for the exit test or the spring test. The CASAS is available in four levels (A, B, C, and D) with two forms for each level. Projects select the appropriate level of the CASAS by using a locator test provided by CASAS. Odd-numbered forms are to be used for the entry test and even-numbered forms are to be used for the exit test or spring test. The PSI does not have alternate forms or multiple levels. Data quality problems with outcome measures include the following:

- changing the target adult or child for outcome assessment,
- inappropriately designating test scores as "entry" scores when they were administered more than one month after the onset of core services,
- reporting an incorrect score metric (e.g., reporting raw scores instead of scale scores),
- reporting scores outside the accurate scale score range for the CASAS,
- using the inappropriate form of the PPVT,
- using the inappropriate form of the CASAS or a version customized for a particular state,
- testing children who are outside the appropriate age range for the test,
- not reporting key information such as child's birthdate, the testing date, or the score,

- reporting two or more difference scores for the same testing date, or
- making incorrect conversions from raw score to scale score.

Planned Analyses of Data From the National Evaluation Information System

To date, much of the data submitted as part of the NEIS has been used in straightforward analyses which describe Even Start participants, projects, and services. The NEIS also provides for the collection of test data which can be used to assess the impacts of Even Start on the school readiness of participating children, the functional literacy of participating adults and other data on parental attitudes and perceptions. The present report includes the first analyses of these test data, including analyses which present the pretest status of participating adults and children and preliminary analyses of pre-post changes.

Analysis of Test Data on Participating Children. No "control group" of children is being measured as part of the NEIS.[1] Hence, test data on school readiness are collected only from children participating in Even Start. Suppose that these test data show that Even Start children gain a certain amount during a given program year. That is encouraging, but how do we know that the observed gain was due to Even Start? We know that children develop and do better on school readiness tests as they grow older, so how do we know that the gains observed for Even Start children wouldn't have occurred anyway, even in the absence of Even Start? One measure of what happens in the absence of Even Start could have been provided by a control group--but the NEIS does not include a control group. Therefore, we are using a different measure of what happens in the absence of Even Start--a measure based on what we know about the "normal" growth and development of children.

As part of the NEIS we are administering the Preschool Inventory (PSI) to children participating in Even Start. The PSI assesses a range of school readiness skills, e.g., identifying shapes and colors and understanding numerical concepts. No national norms exist for the PSI, hence we do not know how children nationally perform on this test. Even if we did, national norms would not provide a good yardstick for measuring the progress of Even Start, since children in Even Start are considerably more disadvantaged than the average child in the country, and would be expected to perform differently on the PSI.

Therefore, we will develop Even Start norms for the PSI. Consider the pretest scores on the PSI. Because the PSI can be used with children from three to five years of age, we will have pretest data on children throughout that age range. The pretest data will be used to develop estimates of the average PSI scores attained by children at three-month intervals from ages three to five. Given this information, we will be able to say that, in the absence of any special

[1]No control group was included as part of the NEIS for the following reasons: (1) the NEIS collects data on all participants from all projects and is intended to provide process and descriptive data; and (2) it would have been tremendously expensive to recruit and measure control families in each Even Start project.

program, disadvantaged children (like those participating in Even Start) attain an average PSI score of "x" at age 36 to 39 months, an average score of "y" at age 40 to 42 months, etc. Based on previous similar work, we know that average scores will increase with age. Older children do better than younger children. Because we will estimate these averages based on pretest scores, changes with age are due solely to normal development and maturation, and are not due to Even Start. We can then use these "norms" to compare the posttest scores of Even Start children to the scores that we predict they should have based on their age, and determine whether Even Start children score higher than would be expected by normal development.

This approach will be used for both tests administered to children through the NEIS: the Preschool Inventory and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The PPVT measures receptive (hearing) vocabulary and does have national norms. Comparisons will be made of how Even Start children perform against the PPVT's national yardstick. However, it is also important to develop Even Start norms for the PPVT as this will provide a fairer measure of what to expect from Even Start.

Analysis of Test Data on Participating Adults. The NEIS includes a measure of functional literacy for adults--the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). The CASAS has norms which have been developed on low-income populations and which should be appropriate for judging the effectiveness of Even Start. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that adults will not exhibit growth on the CASAS unless they are participating in an educational program of some sort--no developmental or maturational gain is expected for adults, as was the case for children. Hence, it is possible to make the case that changes in the CASAS over the time that adults participate in Even Start ought to be attributed to the program.

Hypotheses to be Investigated. Given a set of test data on children and adults, we will seek to address a number of questions about Even Start. The full set of questions to be investigated was given earlier in this chapter. Several questions deal with the effects of Even Start on participating children and adults. For example, we wish to determine whether, on average, children who participate in Even Start score higher than they would have in the absence of Even Start.

Other questions ask whether the effects of Even Start vary for subgroups of children and adults. For example, we wish to determine whether the effectiveness of Even Start is related to variables such as family income, mother's education level, race/ethnicity of the family, length of participation in Even Start.

Still other questions ask whether certain types of Even Start projects are more or less effective than other types of projects. Are projects that focus on home-based services more effective than other projects? Are projects that focus on delivering most or all services to parents and children together more effective than other projects? Are high-intensity projects (those that serve relatively few families intensively) more or less effective than low-intensity projects (those that serve relatively many families less intensively)?

IN-DEPTH STUDY ACTIVITIES

The IDS design includes several key elements that are listed below. A discussion follows which provides an update on implementation of the evaluation for each of the ten IDS projects.

- The IDS is implemented in ten projects selected from the first cohort of 73 Even Start grantees. Many additional projects indicated interest, and it is clear that it would be possible to implement additional well-designed research studies in Even Start.

- Families were randomly assigned to Even Start or to a control group in as many of the IDS projects as possible. Five of the ten IDS projects have implemented random assignment. Where random assignment was not possible, no comparison group was assigned. Instead, data collected on Even Start families will be compared to Even Start norms, created through analysis of data from the NEIS.

- The IDS plan called for about 20 Even Start families and 20 control group families in each project. In total, sample sizes are about 200 Even Start families (20 per project for ten projects) and 100 control group families (20 per project for five projects).

- The IDS sample focuses on families with three or four year olds. Project staff used this as a criterion for recruiting families to participate in the study.

- Recruitment of families was done in the summer/fall of 1991, assignment to groups and pretest data collection was done in the fall of 1991 through January 1992. Posttest data collection was conducted in the summer of 1992, and will be conducted again in the spring of 1993.

- Site visits by Abt staff were conducted in the spring of 1991, and findings from those site visits are contained in this report. A second set of site visits, focusing on project costs, was conducted in Spring 1992.

IDS Recruitment and Assignment

Abt staff spent considerable time during the 1990-91 program year negotiating a research design with each of the ten IDS projects. From the start it was clear that some projects would not be able to implement a randomized design because they already were serving a full caseload and did not have the capacity to handle a new cohort of families. Others thought that they could implement a randomized study, but ran into problems implementing the design. Still others have been successful in implementing a randomized study. The discussions below summarize the design and process that occurred in each of the IDS projects.

The general approach used in the projects that were implementing random assignment was to have project staff recruit a pool of families. Abt staff prepared a recruiting form to capture limited identifying information and background data, a script to be used to describe the research, and a consent form stating that the recruited family agreed to be part of a research project, and would have a chance to be included in Even Start. Project staff sent the completed recruitment forms to Abt, where families were randomly assigned to the program or to a control group. Project staff were informed of the group status of each family, and project staff then contacted families. In some sites recruitment was completed in a single wave, while in other sites more than one wave of recruitment and assignment was necessary.

Phoenix, AZ. The project had 130 applications for 25 to 30 openings. Project staff conducted home visits, completed their screening instrument with all families during September 1991 and rank ordered families according to need. Project staff sent the names of the 50 most needy families to Abt where 25 families were randomly assigned to the program and 25 to the control group. Classes started on October 1, 1991; by mid-month, five of the program families dropped out or moved. Thus, there are 20 program families and 25 controls in Phoenix.

Golden, CO. The project held off starting new families until October 1 because of limited funds at the end of their fiscal year. They recruited families in September and as of mid-October 1991, they had 20 names of eligible families with children ages three and four. Staff from the project and from Abt agreed to do the random assignment in two waves. Therefore, ten families from the initial group of 20 were assigned to the program and ten to the control group. In November, the project recruited another eight families; four were assigned to the program and four to the control group. By the end of January, the program had three additional interested families and all were placed in the program group.

Birmingham, AL. Project staff recruited families during the summer of 1991 and sent the names of 40 families to Abt to be randomly assigned to program and control groups. By the end of October, only eight of the original 20 randomly-assigned program families were actually participating in the program. The other families had dropped out--either they never came or they came once or twice and have not been back. Because of the large number of refusals and dropouts it is clear that a randomized design will not work in Birmingham. The project has continued to recruit new families--there are now 12 new families with children ages three and four in the program and one cross-over from the control group, for a total of 21. There is a control group, but it is not statistically equivalent to the program group.

Albuquerque, NM. Project staff were willing to implement a randomized design and thought that they would have space for 20 to 25 new families across their two sites (La Mesa and Barcelona). Funds to hire new staff at La Mesa were not available, so early recruitment took place only in the Barcelona site. In early September 1991, project staff sent 27 names to Abt for random assignment: 14 were assigned to the program and 13 to the control group. When told of their group assignment, some of the program families told project staff that they were no longer interested, they had taken a job, or they had enrolled their children in Head Start. Staff therefore recruited more families at the Barcelona site and a second stage of random assignment was done. Project staff also sent the first set of names for the La Mesa site. As of

December 1991, there were 13 program families and 17 controls. To increase the sample size we included four new families in the program group.

Reading, PA. Project staff were willing to implement a randomized design. They recruited families during the summer of 1991 and sent 50 names to Abt for assignment to groups in late September. The project has four sites and the number of families in each catchment area did not always match the number of slots at that site. In one site in particular, 24 families were recruited, but only five openings existed. The solution was to hold the extra families on a waiting list of replacements. Twenty families were assigned to the program and 19 to the control group in the first round of assignment. Of the 20 program families, 14 dropped out within the first week or two of the start of the program; and we were able to add five replacements from the original randomly assigned group. In the sites without the replacements, project staff recruited families that will be tested and identified as nonrandomly assigned. By the end of November, the program had recruited eight nonrandom replacements, for a total of 22 program families.

Indianapolis, IN. The project director originally was willing to participate in a randomized study until she and her staff realized that control families would not be able to participate in the program for the remainder of the study (almost two years). Since the Indianapolis project has had a relatively high rate of turnover of families and does not have a waiting list, project staff thought it would not be ethical or feasible to deny eligible families entry into Even Start. Project staff have recruited 21 new families for the IDS. There will be no control group in Indianapolis.

Waterville, ME. Random assignment was never considered to be feasible in this site because the project can only serve a total of 25 families and they do not take in more than four to five new families each year. Project staff are enrolling families on a rolling basis in September and October 1991. Seventeen families currently are in the program, most of whom were in the program last year. Two new families were recruited and added to the study. There is no control group in Waterville.

Billings, MT. Project staff did not feel that random assignment was feasible in Billings. Since most families stay in the program only six to eight months, the Billings project is able to serve many families. It was deemed unethical to ask families to participate in a control group (and not receive services for two years) when it was likely that they would be able to join the project in a few months. Over the summer and fall several slots in the project opened up, and Billings staff recruited families to fill those slots and to participate in the IDS. By the end of January 1992, the program had recruited 20 new families with children ages three to four. There is no control group in Billings.

Estill, SC. Project staff felt strongly from the beginning that random assignment would not work in their close-knit, rural community. Also, staff did not want to jeopardize their relationships with families or the trust in the program that they were attempting to build in the community. Twenty new program families were recruited for the IDS over the summer of 1991. There is no control group in Estill.

Richmond, VA. The project director and staff were willing to try to implement a randomized design but were unsure that they could recruit enough eligible families because there are several alternatives for families (e.g., the local Head Start project and the JOBS program had already done their recruitment). Several open houses and door-to-door recruitment in August 1991 resulted in only 15 eligible families with preschool children. At that point it became clear that Richmond would not be able to recruit the desired number of families, and it was decided to abandon the idea of a randomized study. Project staff continued recruiting and now have 22 new program families for the study. There is no control group in Richmond.

As can be seen from the above discussions, implementing a randomized design in Even Start has been difficult for many reasons. Some projects (Estill) felt that trying to implement a randomized study would be controversial and could harm their project. Other projects (Waterville) simply did not have the capacity to add new families. Still others (Richmond) had the capacity but could not recruit a sufficiently large sample because several other competing programs were available. Finally, it is unfair to withhold a program if the supply is greater than the demand, and some projects (Billings, Indianapolis) served families for relatively short periods of time and hence were not willing to withhold services from control families when, in fact, the services would be available shortly.

Abt staff worked with five projects to implement randomized designs. Staff in each of the projects were successful in recruiting families, but once families were assigned to participate in Even Start, some treatment group members decided that they were no longer interested. Others simply never showed up for services. Still others received services for a week or so and then quit. Our hoped-for sample sizes of about 20 per group per site are small, so our strategy has been to work with project staff to recruit additional waves and assign them to the program and control groups in each site. This has been successful, but in some sites (Birmingham) we will be left with nonequivalent control groups. It may not be possible to implement an experimental design in such projects, where agreement by families to participate in Even Start does not necessarily translate into program participation. A summary of IDS sample sizes is given in Exhibit 2.6.

Such issues of recruitment into Even Start and retention in the program are directly relevant to our ability to conduct an evaluation of program impacts. Identifying families eligible for Even Start has not been a major problem for most projects. However, the fact that free services are offered is no guarantee that a family will avail themselves of those services. Participation in Even Start requires a serious commitment from a family--an adult must participate in adult basic education and must participate in parenting education classes, and a child must participate in an early childhood education program. While we may see the provision of social services as a presumed benefit, it is often difficult to convince at-risk families of the validity of that point of view.

In voluntary programs like Even Start, no "stick" is available to ensure participation. Rather, a "carrot" is offered--free social services. And while parents often will be enthusiastic about the possibility of getting their child into an early childhood program, they tend to be less interested in participating in the other two parts of Even Start, or they cannot participate because

they have a job, or some other aspect of their lives interferes with the program. Therefore, it appears that many Even Start projects recruit a set of families and have very high dropout rates even before the onset of services. There may be a large amount of "churning" of families through the recruitment process before a project ends up with a full case load. This self-selection of families into the program means that while Even Start is providing important services to eligible families, many eligible families decide not to participate, or agree to participate but never start, or participate for a very short time before opting out of the program. Some projects have done major rescheduling of services (e.g., moving adult education or parenting education to the evening, changing collaborating agencies, etc.) to allow adults to participate. Still, the problem remains and is important.

In-Depth Study Pretest Data Collection

Pretest data collection began in October 1991 and was concluded by the end of January 1992. Data were collected by two On-Site Researchers (OSRs) in each project. The OSRs were hired locally at each project, trained centrally by Abt senior staff, and are responsible for all contact with families, scheduling of interviews, and conduct of child tests, adult tests, and face-to-face interviews.

Our initial plan was to pay an incentive of $25 per interview to members of the comparison group. Even Start project directors had strong feelings that members of the program group ought not to receive an incentive payment, since they were participating in program services. Discussions of the design with staff from the Office of Management and Budget led to a modification of the plan for incentive payments such that we attempted to collect data from each family without offering an incentive. To avoid damaging the study, it was decided that if we had five or more comparison group refusals in a given site, we would offer an incentive to all comparison families in the site. Of the five sites that had a comparison group, three (Albuquerque, Reading, and Golden) had five or more refusals and so all families in those sites were paid an incentive. The $25 payment was successful as an incentive for completing the interview. Of 16 families that initially refused to be interviewed in Albuquerque, Reading, and Golden, 13 (81 percent) completed the interview when offered $25.

In-Depth Study Site Visits

Each IDS site was visited by a team of two staff from Abt Associates in the spring of 1991. The purposes of the site visits were to discuss the research design for the project and to learn about project operations. The topics addressed during the visits included the following:

program development
target populations
program structure/administration
characteristics of the community served
recruitment procedures

Exhibit 2.6 Summary of IDS Sample Sizes		
Project	**N of Program Families**	**N of Comparison Families**
Phoenix, AZ	20	25
Golden, CO	20	14
Birmingham, AL	21	19
Albuquerque, NM	17	17
Reading, PA	22	19
Indianapolis, IN	22	0
Waterville, ME	19	0
Billings, MT	20	0
Estill, SC	20	0
Richmond, VA	22	0
TOTAL	203	94

content/delivery of adult education
content/delivery of parent education
content/delivery of early childhood education
content/delivery of parent-child activities
staff characteristics
retention strategies
impacts on families
program challenges

At the conclusion of each site visit, Abt staff compiled notes from discussions with project staff and observations of program activities. These notes were then edited and condensed according to a standard outline, and ten-page summaries were prepared and reviewed by staff at each project. Appropriate revisions were made, and copies of the summaries are presented in Appendix 3.1. A cross-site summary of Even Start activities is contained in Chapter 3 of this report.

Plans for the In-Depth Study

Two sets of additional activities are planned for the IDS: (1) Abt professional staff will re-visit each of the IDS projects in Spring 1993, and (2) Abt survey staff will conduct posttest data collection in the summer of 1992 and again in the spring of 1993.

Site Visits in 1992. Senior Abt staff visited each of the ten IDS projects in the spring of 1992. These visits were designed to (1) provide for collection of data on the costs and allocation of Even Start projects including federal funds as well as local contributions, (2) obtain an update on project operations, and (3) conduct focus groups with Even Start parents about their experiences in Even Start including perceptions of the benefits of participating. Reports from these visits will be included in the third annual report from this evaluation.

Posttest and Followup Data Collection. Pretest data were collected from families participating in the IDS during the fall of 1991. Posttest data were collected from the same families in the summer of 1992 and will be collected again in the spring of 1993.

Analysis of IDS Data. Straightforward descriptive analyses, based on case study data, are presented in order to describe the activities of each IDS project. Additional descriptive analyses will draw upon data collected through parent interviews (similar to the NEIS data) in order to describe the characteristics of Even Start and control group families. The results of these analyses will be presented for each project as well as across all IDS projects. Next, relational analyses will be performed to assess the effect of Even Start on each of several outcome variables and to assess the relationships among outcome variables. In addition to testing the effect of Even Start on each outcome of interest, we will also test the hypothesis that measures in some outcome domains (parental personal skills, parenting behaviors, literacy behaviors) are the antecedents of measures in other outcome domains (children's school readiness and parent's education and functional literacy). Finally, many of the measures proposed for use in the IDS are also being used in other ongoing large-scale studies of related programs. If data are available from those studies, comparisons will be made between Even Start participants and the program and comparison groups from those studies.

Analyses of data from the IDS will emphasize an assessment of the effectiveness of Even Start at improving children's school readiness and school-related literacy behaviors, at improving adult's functional literacy, and at changing the literacy-related interactions between parents and children. At least two sets of analyses will be conducted. The first will be limited to families in projects where randomized designs were implemented. These analyses will emphasize comparisons of families randomly assigned to Even Start with families randomly assigned to a control group. The second set of analyses will include all families participating in Even Start in all ten of the IDS projects, and will compare the progress made by children in these families to special Even Start norms created through analysis of data from the NEIS. The progress made by adults in these families will be analyzed using simple gain scores.

All of these analyses will be included in the third interim report from this evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF EVEN START IN-DEPTH STUDY PROJECTS

To give readers a sense of what some Even Start projects look like, this chapter presents the characteristics of participating families in each of the ten In-Depth Study (IDS) projects, followed by brief descriptions of program activities in each project. Fuller descriptions are contained in Appendix 3.1.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN IDS PROJECTS

Exhibit 3.1 summarizes the characteristics and number of families participating in the ten IDS Even Start projects during the 1990-91 program year. These projects serve families with a range of racial/ethnic characteristics, including Hispanic, black, white, Native American, Hmong, and Afghani families. Four projects (Birmingham, Billings, Reading, and Richmond) can accommodate between 30 and 50 families in the program at one time. Three projects (Phoenix, Indianapolis, and Estill) serve 60 to 70 families. Golden and Albuquerque are larger projects, with 90 to 100 families participating, and Waterville is the smallest program with 20 to 25 families maximum.

Exhibit 3.1 also shows the ages of the children targeted for educational activities. While most projects offer some activities or services for all children in the full Even Start age range consisting of zero through seven years of age as well as special events for all family members, many of the projects focus on a narrower age range for structured educational activities with children. Typically, projects offer classes for preschool children who are between three and five years of age.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Birmingham, Alabama. Early childhood, parenting and adult education classes are offered at the Eureka Family Center, a renovated elementary school. Parents and children come to the center together two days a week (either Monday and Tuesday or Wednesday and Thursday). The day starts with parents and children eating breakfast together from 9:00 a.m.to 9:30 a.m. and ends with lunch together from 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.. Parents participate in adult basic education instruction, parent groups and typing and sewing classes at the Eureka

Exhibit 3.1

Description of Families Participating in IDS Projects

Project	Ethnic/Racial Characteristics of Families	Languages Spoken among Families	Ages of Children in Educational Activities	Number of Families Participating
Birmingham, AL	Black	English	Birth-5 years	48
Phoenix, AZ	Hispanic (90%), white	Spanish, English	3-4 years	70
Golden, CO	White (55%), Hispanic (30%), Hmong (15%)	English, Spanish, Hmong	3-5 years	95
Indianapolis, IN	Black (50%), white (50%)	English	3-5 years	60
Waterville, ME	White	English	3-6 years	21
Billings, MT	White (80%), Native American	English	1-5 years	37
Albuquerque, NM	Hispanic (85%), Native American, white	Spanish, English	3-5 years	90
Reading, PA	Hispanic (33%), white, Afghani	Spanish, English, Persian	1-5 years	44
Estill, SC	Black	English	3-5 years	63
Richmond, VA	Black	English	2-4 years	37

Center while their children are in early childhood education classes. Adult basic education instruction also is available at the PALS lab in the district's Adult Education Center. Home visits take place once a week for an hour; parent meetings or "group home visits" take place once a month at one of the housing projects.

Phoenix, Arizona. Program activities revolve around preschool classes for children ages three and four that are held in portable classrooms on the campus of the Butler Elementary

School. Parents volunteer in their child's classes at least twice a month; attend parent workshops at least twice a month; and participate in "Read-to-Me" sessions once a month. ESL and GED classes are provided in the evenings by the Rio Salado Community College, with Even Start staff providing child care. For adults who are reluctant to go to classes or not ready for GED instruction, there is one-to-one literacy tutoring available through the local chapter of the Literacy Volunteers of America. Home visits are conducted by the early childhood education teachers and aides once a month for families of four-year-olds and once a week for families of three-year-olds.

Golden, Colorado. This Even Start project is based on a case management model in which five parent liaisons work with 18 to 20 families each to help adults participate in adult basic education classes and enroll children in early childhood education classes. In addition, the liaisons plan and implement parenting activities during biweekly home visits. The project collaborates with the Jefferson County school district to provide adult education, paying tuition for adults to attend the district's ESL, GED preparation, or high school diploma programs. Children of preschool age either attend one of the district's Language Development preschools, Head Start or day care.

Indianapolis, Indiana. The Indianapolis Even Start project is an adaption of the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project model where parents and children attend educational programs at the same site. Parents and children attend classes four afternoons or four mornings a week. While parents are in adult basic education classes, their three and four-year-olds are in a preschool based on the High/Scope curriculum. Parents spend one half-hour in their children's classroom each day working on activities together. One hour per week parents meet with a social worker for a group discussion on parenting issues or to hear a guest speaker. Home visits are conducted on Fridays by two-person teams; each family receives a home visit about every six to eight weeks.

Waterville, Maine. This is primarily a home-based project. Adult basic education, parenting, and parent-child activities are all provided by home visitors, with the curriculum tailored to the needs of each family. All together, each family is visited for between four and ten hours a week by two or three different visitors. There also are monthly potluck suppers for the whole family and parent discussion groups without the children. The project collaborates with Head Start to provide a structured early childhood program.

Billings, Montana. The project offers educational activities for children from birth through age five at the Even Start center. While children are in classes, their parents receive adult education at the school district's Adult Education Center a few miles away. The program also works closely with the JOBS program, and offers child care and parenting classes for JOBS participants who are taking adult basic education classes at the adult high school. Parenting workshops led by Even Start family advocates take place at the center and home visits are conducted twice a month.

Albuquerque, New Mexico. Project activities center around the Even Start sites at two elementary schools. At each site, there are half-day preschool classes twice a week for children ages three to five. For children one and two years old, the early childhood education teachers do home visits. Adult education options include ESL and GED classes at the Even Start sites provided by staff from the Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute and Southwestern Indian Polytechnical Institute. In addition, tutoring is offered by the Albuquerque Literacy Program, an affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America. Parents have a choice of activities to consider in order to complete the parent education component, including monthly parent meetings and volunteering in their child's classroom.

Reading, Pennsylvania. The Reading Even Start Project offers activities for parents and children at four community sites, including elementary schools and a local community college. Parents attend GED and ESL classes while their children are in the Even Start early childhood education component. The project serves children in the full range from birth through age seven, and all of the classrooms have mixed age groupings. Classes are offered in the morning or afternoon three or four days a week, depending on the site. Parent education takes place during parent discussion groups, parent-child time in the classroom and home visits.

Estill, South Carolina. The Estill Even Start project is structured sequentially in four cycles. Each cycle has a different emphasis: Cycle One, offered during October and November, focuses on parenting; Cycle Two runs from November through January and provides Life Skills; Cycle Three provides computer skills and literacy/GED training from January to June; and Cycle Four is the summer program offered during June and July. The project focuses on children who are four and five years old. Children attend either the district kindergarten or Head Start classes while their parents participate in the various nine-week segments. Even Start staff conduct monthly home visits to check in with families and share instructional materials.

Richmond, Virginia. The Richmond Even Start project provides adult education and early childhood education in the Richmond Adult Career Development Center. Parents come to the site with their children Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.. Adult education includes instruction in writing, English, reading, math, and science. The early childhood program is based on the High/Scope curriculum and includes classes for children ages two through four. Parents visit their children's classrooms every day to do activities together as part of Parent and Child Time.

SYNTHESIS OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

This section presents the themes and issues surrounding program implementation that arose during discussions with Even Start staff and observation of program activities. The synthesis includes examples of activities and issues about providing services in the three core program areas of adult education, parent education, and early childhood education as well as more general issues such as maintaining family participation and staffing Even Start projects.

Adult Education

Adult Education Activities. Even Start projects offer a range of activities designed to enhance adult basic skills. Almost all projects report that they provide services for adults to attain a GED certificate; a majority of projects also offers services in adult basic education and adult secondary education. Many projects offer services in English as a second language.

The ten IDS projects offer a range of activities to enhance adult basic skills. All programs have some special features that they use to augment their adult education program and make it more responsive and appealing to adult learners. Exhibit 3.2 lists some of the special features of the adult education programs in these ten sites. Some of these include computer labs, literacy volunteers, writing programs, academic counselors, parent newsletters, home-based instruction, and credit for life experiences.

Exhibit 3.2

Special Features of Adult Education in IDS Projects

Project	Special Features of Adult Education Curriculum
Birmingham, AL	IBM PALS computer lab; resume writing; journals
Phoenix, AZ	Literacy volunteers for adults not ready for group instruction
Golden, CO	Credit for life experiences; ESL writing program
Indianapolis, IN	Computers for writing; "USA Today" and "Classline Today"; pen pals with Even Start in Oregon
Waterville, ME	Home-based instruction; whole language and functional approach; computer lab and GED classes available
Billings, MT	Academic counselors
Albuquerque, NM	Free Spanish-language newspapers given to families; literacy volunteers for one-to-one tutoring
Reading, PA	Parents write monthly newsletters
Estill, SC	IBM PALS computer lab; cycles of instruction
Richmond, VA	"Life" lab; collaborative learning

A number of projects incorporate computers into their instructional program for adults. In Birmingham and Estill, adults use the IBM PALS program. The PALS curriculum is a 100-hour instructional program designed to teach computer and literacy skills to students who read at or below the fifth grade level. In Indianapolis, the adult education classes use computers purchased with a grant from the National Center for Family Literacy and Apple Computers. Students use the computers for math skills, geography programs and word-processing skills. The computers are linked with those at the Even Start program in Oregon, which also has an Apple grant, and the programs have instituted a pen pal program among adults at the two centers. In Reading, adult learners use computers to create monthly newsletters, as described below.

Writing a Newsletter in Reading, PA

The adult education classroom at the Amanda Stout elementary school is located next to the children's classroom and has several rectangular tables where parents work. Five women are working on a monthly newsletter. Two women are sitting together at one table writing their stories out on lined paper and referring to the dictionary placed on the table between them for help with spelling. Another woman is working on an Apple computer, entering her story and selecting the graphics to accompany the words. The women are chatting in Spanish but writing in English. The teacher moves from one table to the next, offering help and suggestions to the adult learners.

On the wall of the classroom there are sample stories from previous newsletters. Parents write about outings with their children and weekend visits to family members, illustrated with pictures of butterflies and kites. Other articles include personal descriptions and family recipes. All of the articles have by-lines or closing statements identifying the authors.

Several of the Even Start programs incorporate real-world reading materials into adult education classes. In Indianapolis, the adult classroom receives USA Today that students read daily and the Classline Today, a one-page list of questions and projects linked to USA Today that students complete as homework. The Even Start project in Albuquerque receives from local publishers 100 copies of newspapers that they send home with the children. The project has run workshops for parents on how to use the paper and tries to get two pieces of literacy materials into the home each week. The "Life Lab" example from Richmond illustrates another way that newspapers can be used to encourage reading and thinking skills.

Adult Education Challenges. One of the challenges of adult education expressed by staff is the extent to which it focuses on preparation for the GED. Some programs offer adult education classes geared toward the GED test and incorporate GED workbooks into adult education classes, while others provide general instruction in basic skills such as reading, writing and math. Some project staff are concerned that the legislation emphasizes the attainment of the

GED certificate as a key outcome of the success of Even Start, yet for many adults the GED is a long-term or possibly even unrealistic goal.

When to offer the adult education activities also has been a challenge for some projects. A number of sites offer adult education classes during the day when children are in early childhood classes. This option offers advantages: transportation can be coordinated and offered to adults and children; the early childhood program may meet parents' child care needs and enable them to attend classes; and, if parent and child classes are held at the same site, attendance might be enhanced by the requirement that parents have to attend if their children are to attend. On the other hand, this arrangement is not without its problems, since classes held during the day may be difficult or impossible for working parents to attend.

"Life Lab" in Richmond

Parents start the first half-hour of each day in "Life Lab," where they read the morning paper. The class is divided into three groups, each with four or five women sitting around a table. Every adult has a copy of the Richmond daily newspaper and each table has a dictionary. There is a large coffee pot on one side of the room and the adults help themselves to coffee.

The groups discuss different issues presented in newspaper articles. At two of the tables, adult education teachers serve as facilitator. At the third table, the Even Start adults are running the discussion themselves because one teacher just left on maternity leave. As one group reads an article about taxes, the adult education teacher offers information about different types of taxes and the uses of this money for public services. Another tables is reading an article about a local crime. Morning discussions may range from current events, such as these, to comments about sales or coupons at local stores. Each student takes the paper home at the end of the day.

Other programs offer adult education classes at night. Even though most of these provide child care and transportation, it appears that separate adult education classes are not as well attended as those held during the day. In some cases, the staff indicated that husbands and male partners are reluctant to let women go out at night to attend these classes. Even when classes are held in the same school building where the children go during the day, attendance is lighter than when parents and children have to come to school at the same time.

Parent Education

Parenting Education Activities. Parent education activities include group discussions, hands-on activities, home visits, and guest speakers. Projects tend to use materials from a variety of curriculum sources rather than relying on one source exclusively. Commercially available materials that are used include Bowdoin Parenting Education, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP), Dorothy Rich's Megaskills, and Head Start's "Looking at Life".

The frequency of activities ranges across the ten IDS sites from one hour a week of regularly scheduled activities to special parent meetings once a month.

Parent-child activities and home visits also enhance parents' knowledge and skills. Exhibit 3.3 summarizes the frequency and types of parent-child activities offered in the ten IDS sites. Examples include center-based activities such as parent volunteers in classrooms, pot luck suppers, and evening meals.

Phoenix runs monthly "Read-to-Me" sessions, described above, that serve multiple purposes of encouraging reading, encouraging parents and children to spend time together in educational activities, and getting more reading materials into the families' homes.

Home visits provide an opportunity for project staff to interact with parents and children in a less formal way than in a structured classroom. Many staff described benefits of going to families' homes, such as getting to know the whole family and giving parents the message that they care enough to come to their home. All of the projects in the IDS conduct regular home visits, with the exception of Richmond. These home visits generally have multiple purposes that include modeling for the parent some educational activity with the child, leaving toys and books in the home to borrow or keep, and maintaining contact with families. A description of a home visit in Indianapolis is presented as an example (see below).

A number of projects encourage or require parents to volunteer in their child's classroom as a method of learning positive ways to interact with their children and appropriate activities to foster their young children's development. Three of the projects incorporate Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, a feature of the Kenan model of family literacy programs, into their program and have parents spend between 30 and 45 minutes every day in their child's classroom working on activities together. In Indianapolis, the joint parent-child activities for PACT time are chosen either by the child, the parent, or the teacher. Because staff realized that parents became bored when their children always selected the same activity, they have tried having the parents select the activity on one day, the children on two days and the staff on the one day each week. In Richmond, the specific activities that parents work on during PACT time are planned by the early childhood teachers in concert with the adult education teachers. The children also have some say in the specific activities and often choose activities before their parents come downstairs.

Parenting Education Challenges. Staff from several projects discussed the profound need for social services by participating families. Some projects employ social workers to address these needs. In other sites, staff felt that it would be a great help to have a professional social worker available for families. In many sites, staff talked about the extra roles and responsibilities they take on to help families negotiate with local educational, medical, or social service agencies. Staff also discussed their concerns about the need to help families without "coddling" them and the importance of being open with families while keeping some professional distance.

Exhibit 3.3

Parent-Child Activities in IDS Projects

Project	Center-Based Activities	Home-Based Activities
Birmingham, AL	Volunteer in the ECE classroom once/month	Weekly home visits; monthly "group" home visits at housing project
Phoenix, AZ	Monthly "Read-to-Me" sessions; volunteer in ECE classroom twice/month	Weekly home visits for parents of 3-year-olds; monthly home visits for parents of 4-year-olds
Golden, CO	--	Home visits twice/month
Indianapolis, IN	PACT (Parents and Children Together) 30 minutes, 4 days/week	Home visits every 6-8 weeks
Waterville, ME	Monthly potluck suppers	Weekly home visits
Billings, MT	Volunteer in ECE classrooms	Home visits twice/month
Albuquerque, NM	Volunteer in ECE classrooms; special activities as part of monthly parent meetings	Home visits for parents of children ages 1-2
Reading PA	PACT (Parents and Children Together) daily 1-3 hours/week	Home visits twice/month
Estill, SC	Evening meals twice/month; joint classroom activities during Cycle 1	Monthly home visits
Richmond, VA	PACT (Parents and Children Together), 45 minutes, 4 days/week	--

It seemed clear that staff were compassionate and wanted to help families overcome the many problems they face, yet this additional role beyond teacher or home visitor could easily become overwhelming for staff. This is an area where Even Start project directors must make important resource decisions. Some projects have chosen to hire social workers specifically to deal with social service needs, while other projects have hoped that these tasks could be assumed by staff with training in early childhood education or adult education. It is not clear which approach is more effective, and it is likely that the best approach for a given site depends to a great extent on the characteristics of the population being served.

A "Read-to-Me" Session in Phoenix

The parent-child activity, led by two early childhood education teachers, is attended by about 15 mothers and 20 children. The mothers and their children sit together around tables in the preschool classroom. Younger siblings are in the next room with three classroom aides. The theme is "peek-a-boo" books (i.e., books where someone or something is hiding either literally under a flap in the book or somewhere in the picture). The teachers read three books to the group, going page by page and asking questions along the way, encouraging children to get involved (and they do--calling out answers, telling where objects are hiding). The session is a mixture of English and Spanish.

After the stories are read, the parents and children make their own peek-a-boo books to take home. Parents have the choice of making a book with English or Spanish text. The teachers explain to the parents how to make the book, pass out all the materials that they need, and encourage the parents to let it be a joint activity with their children. The materials include paper printed with a sentence identifying a hidden object, "flip-up" pieces of paper that the teachers and project director made with a die-cut machine, and stickers of the objects named on the page. The goal of the session is to have the parents read the text to the child and have the child select the sticker that matches the text.

When all of the pages are complete, the mothers use yarn to bind the pages into a book. This turns out to be a difficult task for some mothers, and there is a lot of discussion and help rendered by mothers at the same table. The teachers also circle around to help. The session lasts about an hour, with parents and children taking their new book home.

Projects that have joint parent-child time in the early childhood classroom described this activity as both a benefit and a challenge of the program. As one early childhood teacher

commented, parent-child time is the "heart" of the program that makes it unique and without it, "this would be just another program for disadvantaged children." Yet at the start of the year, staff report it is hard to get parents and children to play together because parents may be uncomfortable or unsure of how to play with their children or reluctant to let children do things like using scissors on their own.

Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education Activities. The Even Start projects in Phoenix, Indianapolis and Richmond base their preschool classrooms on the High/Scope curriculum which centers around key areas of cognitive development such as language, representation, classification, seriation, numbers, spatial relations, and time. The district preschools with which Estill collaborates are based on High/Scope. The curriculum gives children the opportunity to make choices at all times by building classroom activities around a sequence of "Plan/Do/Review": "Plan" is when children choose their activities, "Do" is the work part of the day, and "Review" is recalling what activities took place. The High/Scope curriculum also encourages the use of "life size" materials in the classroom such as real cereal boxes, telephone books and full-size pots and pans in the housekeeping area.

Another manifestation of the High/Scope model is the use of labels and symbols in the room. For example, in Indianapolis, on the shelves that hold art materials, there are pictures of crayons under the crayon boxes; on the shelves where the blocks are stored, there are different shapes of paper taped to the shelves to correspond to the various shape blocks. The symbols help children to put things back in the right place and also reinforce cognitive matching skills.

The early childhood classes in Birmingham and Albuquerque incorporate similar planning strategies. In Birmingham, the preschool children choose play centers such as the sand table, kitchen area, or manipulative toys. The teacher specifies how many children can be in each center and the children tell her where they want to work. The teacher puts on music during play time and the children know that when the music is turned off, it is time to clean up from that activity and gather for group story reading. In Albuquerque, classroom activities revolve around small group activities, called "committees," that the children choose. The teacher explains the different activities that children can choose and then holds up a card with a child's name on it and asks the child to put the card on the "choice board" to indicate which committee he/she wants to join. The choice board lists the activities for the day and has five paper clips under each activity; when five children have selected an activity, it is considered full. Staff described this instructional method as providing a structure that few children have at home, while still allowing for individual creativity.

Early Childhood Education Challenges. Providing educational activities for children in the full Even Start age range from birth through age seven has been a challenge for some projects. Some projects chose to focus on activities for preschool children because of an awareness of the special needs of infants and toddlers. Projects that offer center-based activities

A Home Visit in Indianapolis

An early childhood education teacher and social worker conduct the home visit with Jennifer and her mother. The mother and child sit side by side on the sofa. The early childhood education teacher sits next to the child and the social worker sits next to the mother, reflecting their roles in the home visit of helping the child and explaining things to the mother.

For the first activity, the early childhood education teacher hands the child a picture of Disney characters and a small scissors and helps her cut the stiff paper into abstract shapes. The social worker takes another card and cuts it up, explaining to the mother the purpose of this activity and suggesting other things that could be cut into puzzles, such as cereal boxes.

Once the pieces are cut up, the child starts to put the puzzle together. The early childhood education teacher offers guidance by pointing out colors or shapes that provide hints about the placement of pieces, while the mother and social worker watch and talk about a young niece who will be living with the family over the summer. When Jennifer reaches a difficult point in the puzzle, where she is left with only small pieces, her mother helps her finish the puzzle as she talks to her about the picture they are completing. She jokes with the child about the difficulty of the puzzle she has created by cutting the card into such small pieces, praises the child for her puzzle skills, and compliments herself on her ability to finish the task.

The second activity involves cutting geometric shapes from construction paper and pasting them onto paper plates in quantities to match the numbers written on the plates. The early childhood education teacher takes out plastic templates of the shapes for the mother to trace and cut out. As the mother finishes cutting out the shapes, the child pastes the shapes onto the appropriate plate, with assistance from the early childhood education teacher. All the while, the mother and the social worker are talking about family issues.

In the middle of the home visit, a little girl from next door knocks on the door to play with Jennifer. The mother goes to the door and explains that Jennifer has company and cannot play right now. About five minutes later, the little girl returns and knocks on the door again. This time Jennifer lifts her head up from her pasting and yells to the child that her teacher is there. Jennifer's comment is said with great pride--her teacher has come to her house!

for children less than three years of age, when the school district had not offered these services before, had to adapt space to the needs of infants and toddlers and meet additional day care and health regulations. Projects with space to have separate classrooms for children of different ages have seemed to be more successful in adapting their program to the wide age ranges than those who have tried to offer child care to multi-age groups of children.

Staffing Patterns

Staff Characteristics. Exhibit 3.4 presents information on the type and location of staff in the 10 IDS sites. Staff described as "Even Start" are those paid through the federal grant or local matching funds who work directly for the Even Start project; other staff are from collaborating agencies.

As the exhibit shows, the majority of projects rely on staff from collaborating agencies to provide some or all of the adult education. In the Birmingham, Golden, and Billings projects, all adult education is provided by staff from the school district adult education program. Phoenix and Albuquerque collaborate with community colleges and the local chapter of Literacy Volunteers of America. In Waterville, the primary service providers are Even Start staff but families have the option of also attending district adult education classes. Reading employs Even Start adult basic education teachers in three sites and collaborates with community college staff in the fourth site. Estill also utilizes a combination of Even Start and district staff. Only Richmond and Indianapolis have adult education programs staffed exclusively by Even Start staff.

With the exception of literacy volunteers, all adult education staff are certified teachers. However, in some sites, the teaching credential may be in elementary or secondary education rather than adult education.

Parent education and parent-child activities generally are provided by a combination of Even Start classroom teachers and home visitors/case managers. In Estill and Indianapolis, professional social workers are part of the parent education team. In most of the other sites, the home visitors are early childhood classroom teachers or paraprofessional staff.

In six of the IDS sites, early childhood education personnel are Even Start staff. Golden, Waterville and Estill collaborate with district and Head Start programs for early childhood classes. In Richmond, early childhood teachers are part of the Even Start team but are employees of a separate non-profit corporation originally set up to provide child care for children of the students at the district Adult Career Development Center.

Most of the early childhood classrooms use a combination of professional teachers and paraprofessional aides. In Birmingham, teachers are paraprofessionals working on their CDA certificate and are supervised by a facilitator who is an experienced preschool teacher. In Billings, three of the four early childhood education teachers have the CDA certificate and the fourth teacher has a master's degree.

Exhibit 3.4

Staffing Arrangements Among IDS Sites

Project	Adult Education	Parent Education and Parent-Child Activities	Early Childhood Education
Birmingham, AL	District teachers	Even Start facilitators; district parent education coordinator; Even Start home visitors	Even Start teachers
Phoenix, AZ	Community college teachers; literacy volunteers	Even Start ECE teachers	Even Start teachers and aides
Golden, CO	District ABE teachers	District ABE teachers; Even Start parent liaisons	District preschool and Head Start teachers
Indianapolis, IN	Even Start teachers	Even Start social workers; ABE teachers and ECE teachers	Even Start teachers and aides
Waterville, ME	Even Start home visitors; district ABE teachers	Even Start home visitors	Head Start teachers
Billings, MT	District teachers	Even Start family advocates	Even Start teachers
Albuquerque, NM	Community college teachers; literacy volunteers	Even Start ECE teachers	Even Start teachers and aides
Reading, PA	Even Start teachers; community college teachers	Even Start ABE and ECE teachers and home visitor	Even Start teachers and aides
Estill, SC	Even Start teachers; district ABE teachers	District teachers; Even Start project director and social worker	District and Head Start teachers
Richmond, VA	Even Start teachers	Even Start ABE teachers; Richmond Early Learning Center teachers	Richmond Early Learning Center teachers and aides

Staffing Challenges. Building a collaborative approach to adult education, parent education and early childhood education has been difficult for some projects, particularly when the staff and services across the three core areas are not located in the same site. Although all staff may attend meetings through an advisory panel or joint staff meetings, the curricula are not always integrated. For example, when adult education and parent education are offered by different staffs, there may be limited information on parenting incorporated into the adult education classes. Where the adult educators are involved in providing the parenting or parent-child activities, it seems that integration is enhanced, with the adult education classes including more functional literacy and life skills material related to children or parents (e.g., writing stories to read to children, writing newsletters about family activities, using math to balance a checkbook).

Retention Strategies

Maintaining parent participation is a continual challenge, according to Even Start project staff. Some staff expressed concern that the requirement for families to participate in adult education, parent education, and early childhood education places too great a burden on families. Others cited the fact that many adults who are unemployed are not used to the structures of school and may not have had positive school experiences themselves, which both affect attendance in program activities.

Most of the projects incorporate incentives of one kind or another to encourage families to participate. Contracts or rules for attendance are one type of retention strategy. Billings asks families to make a commitment to attend adult basic education classes a minimum of two days a week and participate in one parent meeting a week. In Phoenix, parents are required to attend five workshops or parenting sessions each month (i.e., two parenting workshops, one "Read-to-Me" session, and two mornings as classroom volunteers). On the wall of each classroom is a large calendar where parents sign up for their monthly activities; during home visits, parents select activities and complete their personal monthly calendar with staff.

In Birmingham, parents sign a contract that specifies the responsibility of the program and also the parent's responsibilities in the program. For example, for each home visit, the family has the responsibility of clearing a space in the living room either on a table or on the floor, turning off the TV, and keeping interruptions to a minimum. The program also makes a special home visit to families that have missed four classes without a reason; if attendance does not improve, a letter is sent telling the family they will be dropped from the program if they do not come to classes. While project staff are always reluctant to have families drop out of the program, they recognize it is necessary to know when families are no longer actively participating in order to offer that slot to other interested families.

Projects also provide tangible rewards for participation. In Birmingham, where they found that attendance was hardest to maintain during the summer, staff gave parents prizes, such as a fan or books, for participating in parenting classes. In Albuquerque, in addition to giving

out the newspapers described under adult education, there is a brief awards ceremony at evening parent meetings where parents are given t-shirts for perfect attendance. In Richmond, parents who maintain good attendance for two to three weeks are given a paperback dictionary to take home. On-time attendance for two days in a row also earns a $1 certificate in the Even Start "store" where parents can buy deodorant, detergent, toothpaste, vitamins and other items requested by parents.

Other incentives to participate are woven into program activities. For example, in Estill, where families come from a distance of 30 miles to the classes, the evening sessions start with a dinner where parents, children and staff eat together. In Indianapolis, the project stresses the importance of recognizing that students are adults and has set up a separate lounge where parents can smoke and installed in vending machines outside the adult basic education classroom so that parents can bring soda and snacks into class. Reading established a Parents' Council, which consists of two parent representatives from each of the four sites, that meets every two months with the program administrative aide/van driver and the home visitor to give parents a chance to express their concerns and offer suggestions.

Special events are another way that programs try to connect with families. In Phoenix, a Saturday family outing, paid for by the Coors Literacy Foundation, attracted about 220 people. A local puppet theater provided entertainment, local newspaper women showed the adults how to use the newspaper in everyday life and each family was given a year's subscription to the local paper (worth about $100). In addition, a church gave each family three books.

Two projects have started a mentoring program linking parents with adults from the community. Indianapolis began a mentoring program as a way to provide as much support as possible to adults in the program, to provide a positive role model, and to increase retention. The project developed a packet of information that describes the mentoring program, outlines the role of the mentor for parents, the parent's responsibilities, the guidelines and ground rules for mentors, and the rationale for the mentoring program. For example, the materials tell both the parents and the mentors that the relationship is one of sharing thoughts and feelings and should not involve loaning money or buying things for the families, and informs the mentors that any concerns about the families or need for social services should be directed to the Even Start social workers. In Richmond, a few students meet with black women who are part of a mentoring program from the Junior League and talk about job skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Across the core service areas, there were general challenges expressed by most of the IDS projects. Two primary concerns are transportation and child care. Where transportation is offered by the project and not viewed as a particular problem, it still was discussed as a major expense. Child care for the wide age range of children is also a challenge for programs. In a number of projects, finding adequate space is a continuing challenge and some projects have to

share space, move materials before every session or have staff carry most materials with them in their cars.

The ten Even Start projects in the IDS include a diversity of service delivery models and each is making an ongoing effort to improve their programs and help the families they serve. Each project has unique and innovative features that can serve as examples and ideas for other Even Start grantees. From our perspective after visiting these ten projects, it appears that all Even Start projects should be encouraged to share their approaches because the ideas of one project can address the challenges of another.

CHAPTER 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents data that describe the families, children, and adults that participated in Even Start during the 1990-91 program year in terms of household composition, race and ethnicity, income, educational and employment status, primary language, and other variables.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Even Start provides three types of educational services (i.e., adult basic education, parenting education and early childhood education) and several types of support services (e.g., transportation, counseling). Because not all families participate in all educational or support services, many different counts of families, children and parents served by Even Start are possible. Two types of counts are presented in Exhibit 4.1. The first set of counts is based on families who received any core service and includes the following: families, children receiving early childhood education, and parents receiving adult basic education or parenting education within families receiving any core service. A second set of counts is based on families who received all three core services and includes the following: families, children receiving early childhood education, and parents receiving adult basic education or parenting education within families receiving all three core services. Counts are based on 71 of 73 Cohort 1 projects and 42 of 46 Cohort 2 projects who reported individual family data for the 1990-91 program year.

The top half of Exhibit 4.1 shows that during 1990-91, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects provided some core services to 6,037 families, an average of 53.4 families per project. Projects provided early childhood education services to 8,063 children (71.4 per project), and adult basic education or parenting education services to 6,968 parents (61.7 per project) in these same families. These are the most liberal counts of participants, i.e., a family is included as long as some family member received at least one of the three core services.

The bottom half of Exhibit 4.1 shows that Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects provided all three core services to 3,693 families, an average of 32.7 families per project, during 1990-91. Projects provided early childhood education services to 5,331 children (47.2 per project), and adult basic education or parenting education to 4,480 parents (39.6 per project) in these more fully participating families during the 1990-91 program year. These are the most conservative estimates of participants, i.e., a family is included only if each of three core services was received by family members.

Exhibit 4.1

Number of Families, Children and Parents Participating in Even Start during the 1990-91 Program Year

Participants	Cohort 1[1]		Cohort 2[2]		Total[3]	
	Total N	Mean N per Project	Total N	Mean N per Project	Total N	Mean N per Project
Families receiving any core service	4,123	58.1	1,914	45.6	6,037	53.4
Children receiving ECE	5,402	76.1	2,661	63.4	8,063	71.4
Parents receiving ABE or PE	4,810	67.7	2,158	51.4	6,968	61.7
Families receiving all three core services	2,546	35.9	1,147	27.3	3,693	32.7
Children receiving ECE	3,598	50.7	1,733	41.3	5,331	47.2
Parents receiving ABE or PE	3,030	42.7	1,450	34.5	4,480	39.6

[1]Cohort 1 counts based on reports from 71 projects.
[2]Cohort 2 counts based on reports from 42 projects.
[3]One migrant project which reported providing educational services to 18 families is not included in this exhibit.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES

Family characteristics discussed here are based on data from the 6,037 families in which at least one family member participated in some Even Start core service during the 1990-91 program year. The data represent 71 out of 73 Cohort 1 projects, which provided core services to 4,123 families, and 42 out of 46 Cohort 2 projects, which served 1,914 families.

Household Composition. The structure of Even Start families is shown in Exhibit 4.2. The largest percentage of families participating in Even Start described themselves as couples (48 percent), followed by single parent households (40 percent). The remaining categories included extended families (11 percent) and "other" families (one percent). The latter category encompasses children living with grandparents, stepparents or guardians, or nonrelated children for whom the Even Start adult was the primary caregiver.

The composition of Even Start households is further defined in Exhibit 4.3. Consistent with descriptions of family structure, the majority of Even Start households included two adults

Exhibit 4.2

Structure of Even Start Families (1990-91 Program Year)

Family Structure	N	%
Single parent	2331	40%
Couple	2850	48%
Extended family	645	11%
Other	55	1%
Total families	5881	100%

(53 percent), followed by households with one adult (37 percent). Six percent of households included three adults, and four percent included four or more adults. Most households included one (19 percent), two (34 percent) or three (26 percent) children. Thirteen percent included four children, and eight percent included five or more children.

Exhibit 4.4 shows family composition by age of child. The top portion of the exhibit shows that the majority of families had either one (43 percent) or two (38 percent) children in the Even Start eligible age range, that is, children ages one through seven. Fourteen percent of households included three eligible children, and five percent of households included four or more children. The bottom portion shows that 39 percent of households included some children too old to participate in Even Start (ages eight through 16).

Household Income. Exhibit 4.5 presents a breakdown of the sources of financial support for Even Start families during the 1990-91 program year. The primary sources of financial support were government assistance (52 percent) and wages from jobs (47 percent). Exhibit 4.6 shows that the median annual household income reported was well under $10,000: 41 percent of families had income under $5,000, 30 percent had income between $5,000 and $10,000, 15 percent reported incomes in the $10,000 to $15,000 range, seven percent had incomes between $15,000 and $20,000, and only seven percent reported incomes over $20,000.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING ADULTS IN EVEN START FAMILIES

Each Even Start family contains one or more adults. Data were reported on a total of 9,850 adults in the 6,037 Even Start families.

Exhibit 4.3

Number and Percentage of Even Start Families by Number of Adults and Children in the Household (1990-91 Program Year)

Number of Family Members	N	%
Adults in household		
One adult	2147	37%
Two adults	3060	53%
Three adults	377	6%
Four or more adults	218	4%
Total families	5802	100%
Children in household		
One child	1134	19%
Two children	1966	34%
Three children	1501	26%
Four children	738	13%
Five or more children	492	8%
Total families	5831	100%

Age of Participating Adults in Even Start Families. Exhibit 4.7 shows a breakdown of the ages of adults who participated in Even Start core services. Most adults in Even Start families were between 22 and 29 years old (44 percent), or between 30 and 39 years old (30 percent). Only 12 percent were in the 18 to 21 age range, three percent were younger than 18, seven percent of Even Start adults were 40 to 49 years old, and four percent were 50 or older. Given the low-income population targeted by Even Start, it might be expected that more than three percent of Even Start adults would be under 18 years of age. However, a family is eligible for Even Start only if an adult in the family qualifies for adult basic education, and adult basic education participants must be at least 16 years old or beyond the age of compulsory schooling in their State.

Exhibit 4.4

Number and Percentage of Even Start Families by Number of Children in Different Age Categories (1990-91 Program Year)

Age Category	N	%
Children ages 0-7 years (eligible)		
One	2462	43%
Two	2165	38%
Three	836	14%
Four or more	289	5%
Total families	5762	100%
Children ages 8-16 years (ineligible)		
None	3528	61%
One	1267	22%
Two	667	11%
Three	220	4%
Four or more	95	2%
Total families	5777	100%

Gender of Participating Adults in Even Start Families. Exhibit 4.7 also displays the gender of adults who participated in Even Start core services. Of all adults, 34 percent were male and 66 percent were female.

Race/Ethnicity of Participating Adults in Even Start Families. Exhibit 4.8 displays the racial categories reported for adults who participated in Even Start core services. Forty-five precent of Even Start adults were categorized as white and 26 percent were black. However, this racial breakdown differs by cohort in that the Cohort 1 projects generally serve a larger black population than Cohort 2 projects. For Cohort 1, 30 percent of the adults were black and 41 percent were white, while for Cohort 2, 19 percent of the adults were black and 52 percent were white. Six percent of adults categorized themselves as Native American, four percent as Asian/Pacific Islander, and four percent as other. Nineteen percent did not specify a racial category but listed Hispanic as their ethnic heritage. Exhibit 4.9 shows that, of this group, 82

Exhibit 4.5

Sources of Financial Support for Even Start Families (1990-91 Program Year)

Source of Financial Support	N	%
Job wages	2716	47%
Government assistance	2989	52%
Alimony/child support	162	3%
Other	202	4%
Total families	5757	

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Exhibit 4.6

Range of Financial Support for Even Start Families (1990-91 Program Year)

Family Income	N	%
$0 - $4,999	2241	41%
$5,000 - $9,999	1659	30%
$10,000 - $14,999	810	15%
$15,000 - $19,999	392	7%
$20,000 - $24,999	223	4%
$25,000 or more	193	3%
Total families	5518	100%

Exhibit 4.7

Age and Gender of Adults in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Age/Gender	N	%
Age range		
< 18 years	232	3%
18-21 years	1092	12%
22-29 years	4062	44%
30-39 years	2798	30%
40-49 years	679	7%
≥ 50 years	384	4%
Total adults	9247	100%
Gender		
Male	3174	34%
Female	6070	66%
Total adults	9244	100%

percent listed their background as Mexican, six percent listed Puerto Rican, and 12 percent selected "other Hispanic."

Educational Attainment of All Adults in Even Start Families. A distribution of years of educational attainment prior to participating in Even Start is shown in Exhibits 4.10a and 4.10b. The solid line represents adults participating in any type of Even Start core service. The dashed line represents nonparticipating adults from families in which at least 1 adult participated in some type of Even Start core service. In general, nonparticipants in Even Start families had a higher level of education than participating adults. This makes sense since each participating adult ought to be in need of adult basic education, whereas nonparticipating adults may or may not have such a need. A total of 77 percent of core service participants and 63 percent of nonparticipants did not graduate from high school. An additional 17 percent of participants and 27 percent of nonparticipants either had a high school diploma or a GED, and five percent of participants and nine percent of nonparticipants had undertaken some postsecondary education.

Exhibit 4.8

Racial Composition of Adults in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Racial Category	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%[1]	N	%	N	%
Black	1878	30%	598	19%	2476	26%
White	2553	41%	1674	52%	4227	45%
Unspecified Hispanic	1187	19%	605	19%	1792	19%
Native American	237	4%	291	9%	528	6%
Asian/Pacific islander	297	5%	57	2%	354	4%
Other	256	4%	114	3%	370	4%
Total adults	6238		3228		9466	

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed, typically Hispanic and another category.

Exhibit 4.9

Background of Hispanic Adults in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Background Category	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mexican	1227	77%	785	91%	2012	82%
Puerto Rican	128	8%	21	2%	149	6%
Other Hispanic	242	15%	54	6%	296	12%
Total adults	1597	100%	860	100%	2457	100%

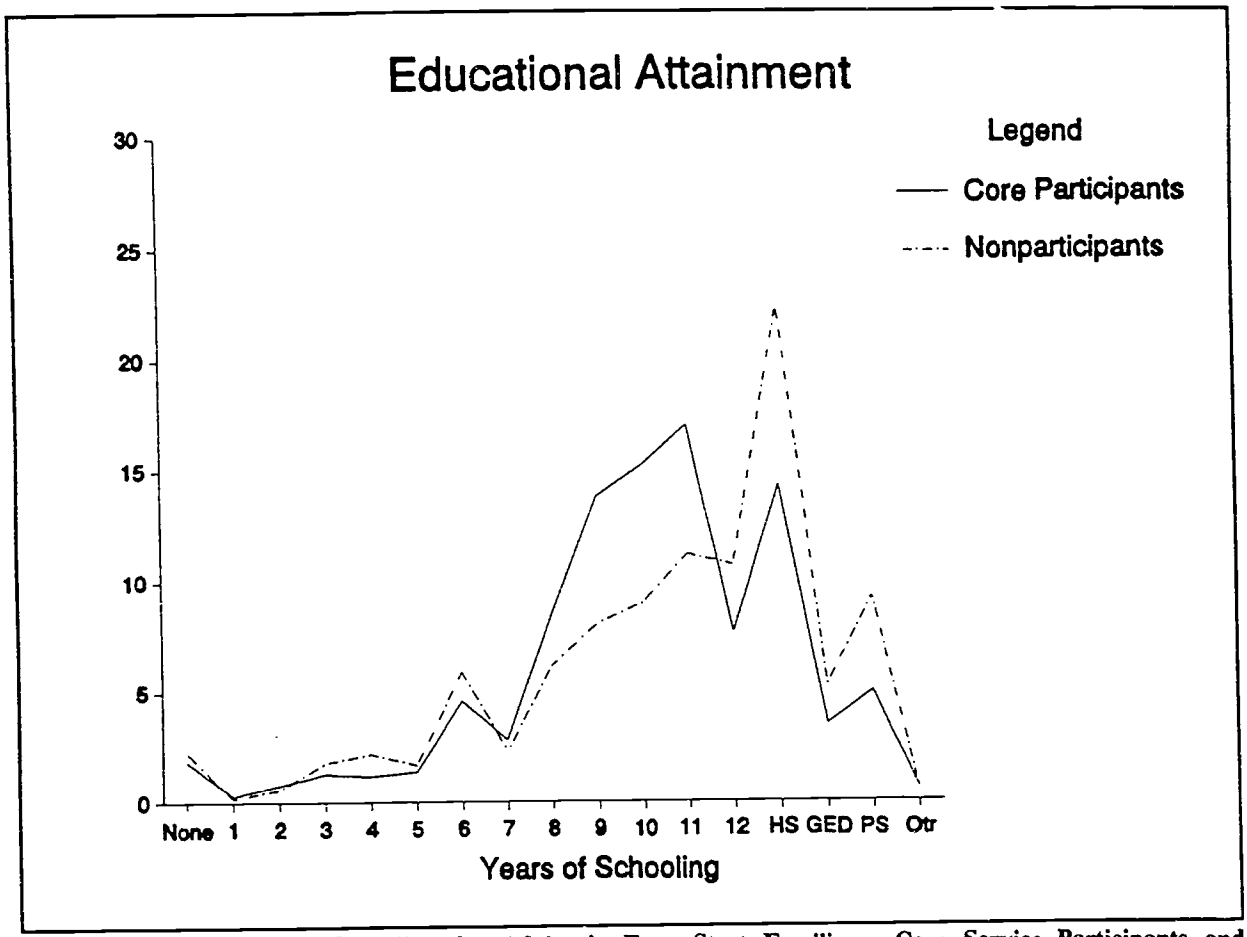

Exhibit 4.10a. Years of Schooling for Adults in Even Start Families: Core Service Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

Exhibits 4.11a and 4.11b present similar information except that it contrasts adults who participated in Even Start adult basic education with adults who were in Even Start families but did not participate in adult basic education. As is expected, participants in adult basic education had a lower level of educational attainment than adults who did not participate in adult basic education. It can be seen that 84 percent of the participants in adult basic education did not have a high school diploma or a GED, while 58 percent of nonparticipants did not have a diploma or GED. Program regulations allow adults to participate in adult basic education even if they have a high school diploma or a GED. Participation is based on educational need rather than diploma status. Also it should be noted that ESL adults may have completed secondary or postsecondary programs in their home countries but still require adult education for English-speaking purposes.

Employment Status of All Adults in Even Start Families. Information on the employment status of adults in Even Start families is presented in Exhibits 4.12a and 4.12b. Participants in Even Start core services were much more likely to be unemployed than nonparticipants: 70 percent of the adults who participated in Even Start core services were

Exhibit 4.10b

Years of Schooling for Adults in Even Start Families: Core Service Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

Years of Schooling	Core Participants %	Nonparticipants %
0	2%	2%
1	0%	0%
2	1%	1%
3	1%	2%
4	1%	2%
5	1%	2%
6	5%	6%
7	3%	3%
8	9%	6%
9	14%	8%
10	15%	9%
11	17%	11%
12	8%	11%
High school diploma	14%	22%
GED	3%	5%
Postsecondary	5%	9%
Other	1%	1%
Total adults	6428	2427

unemployed compared with 37 percent of adults who did not participate in core services, even though they were in Even Start families. Exhibit 4.13 expands on this information by showing the duration of employment or unemployment. Most adults who were unemployed had been so for more than 12 months (73 percent of the unemployed core service participants and 68 percent

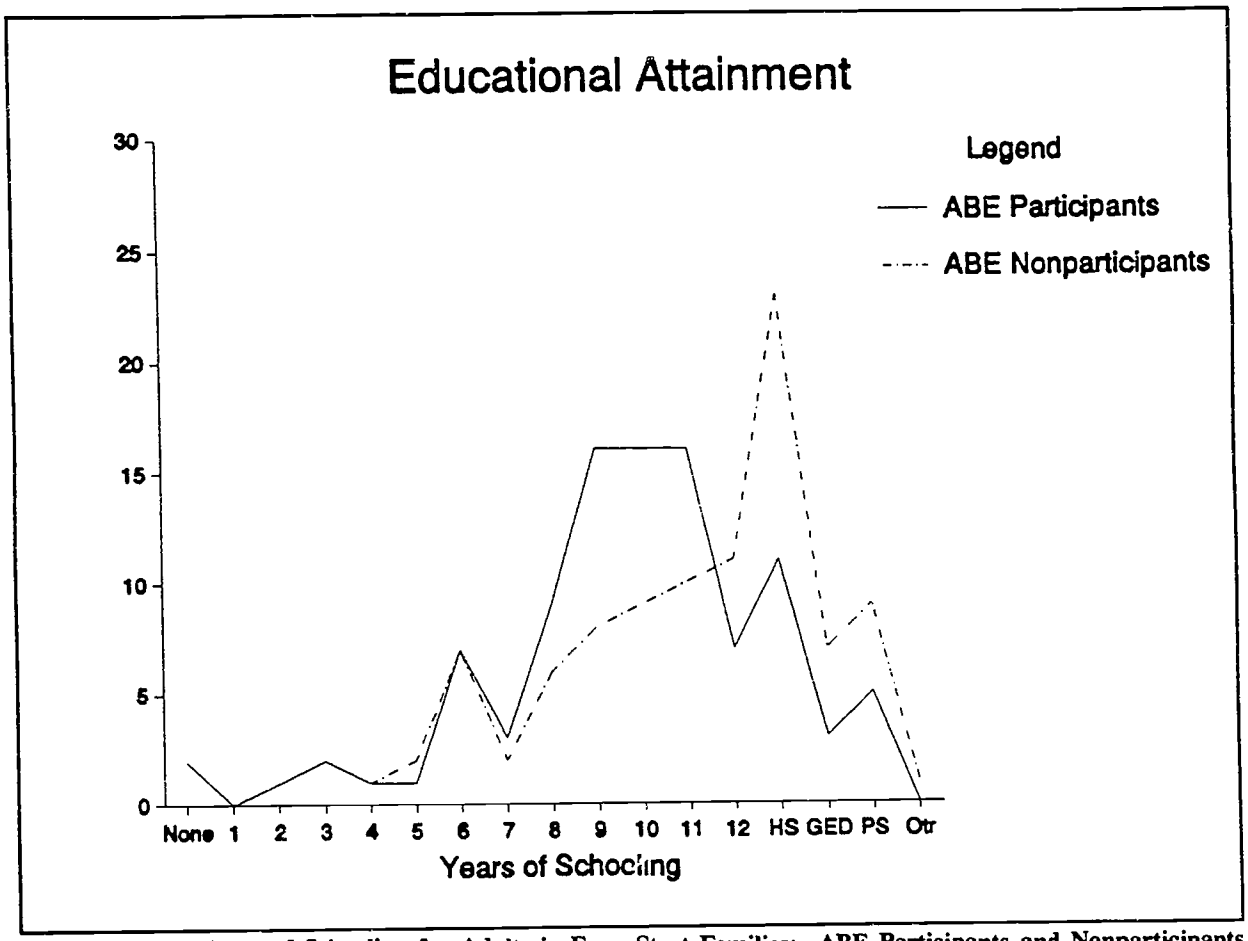

Exhibit 4.11a. Years of Schooling for Adults in Even Start Families: ABE Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

of the unemployed nonparticipants). Similarly, most adults who were employed had been so for more than 12 months (54 percent of the employed participants and 79 percent of the employed nonparticipants).

Educational Services Received by Adults in Even Start Families. Many Even Start projects see themselves as comprehensive social service programs and become involved in the coordination of many social services that exist outside of Even Start. Thus, Even Start participants may well have most or all of their social services coordinated by their Even Start "case worker." Exhibit 4.14 shows the percentage of families that participate in social and educational services concurrent with, but outside of, Even Start. Most adults in Even Start families do not receive any social or educational services outside of Even Start: 51 percent of participating adults receive no non-Even Start services compared with 79 percent of nonparticipating adults in Even Start families. By far the most frequently received non-Even Start social service is welfare, which is received by 43 percent of participating adults and 17 percent of non-participating adults in Even Start families. Other non-Even Start services

Exhibit 4.11b

Years of Schooling for Adults in Even Start Families: ABE Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

Years of Schooling	ABE Participants %	Nonparticipants %
0	2%	2%
1	0%	0%
2	1%	1%
3	1%	1%
4	1%	2%
5	1%	1%
6	5%	4%
7	3%	2%
8	10%	6%
9	16%	8%
10	18%	9%
11	20%	11%
12	6%	11%
High school diploma	9%	26%
GED	2%	6%
Postsecondary	4%	9%
Other	1%	1%
Total adults	4505	3421

received by only one percent or two percent of adults include employment training and vocational education.

Primary Language of Participating Adults. The primary language of participating adults and children is presented in Exhibit 4.15. English was reported as the primary language

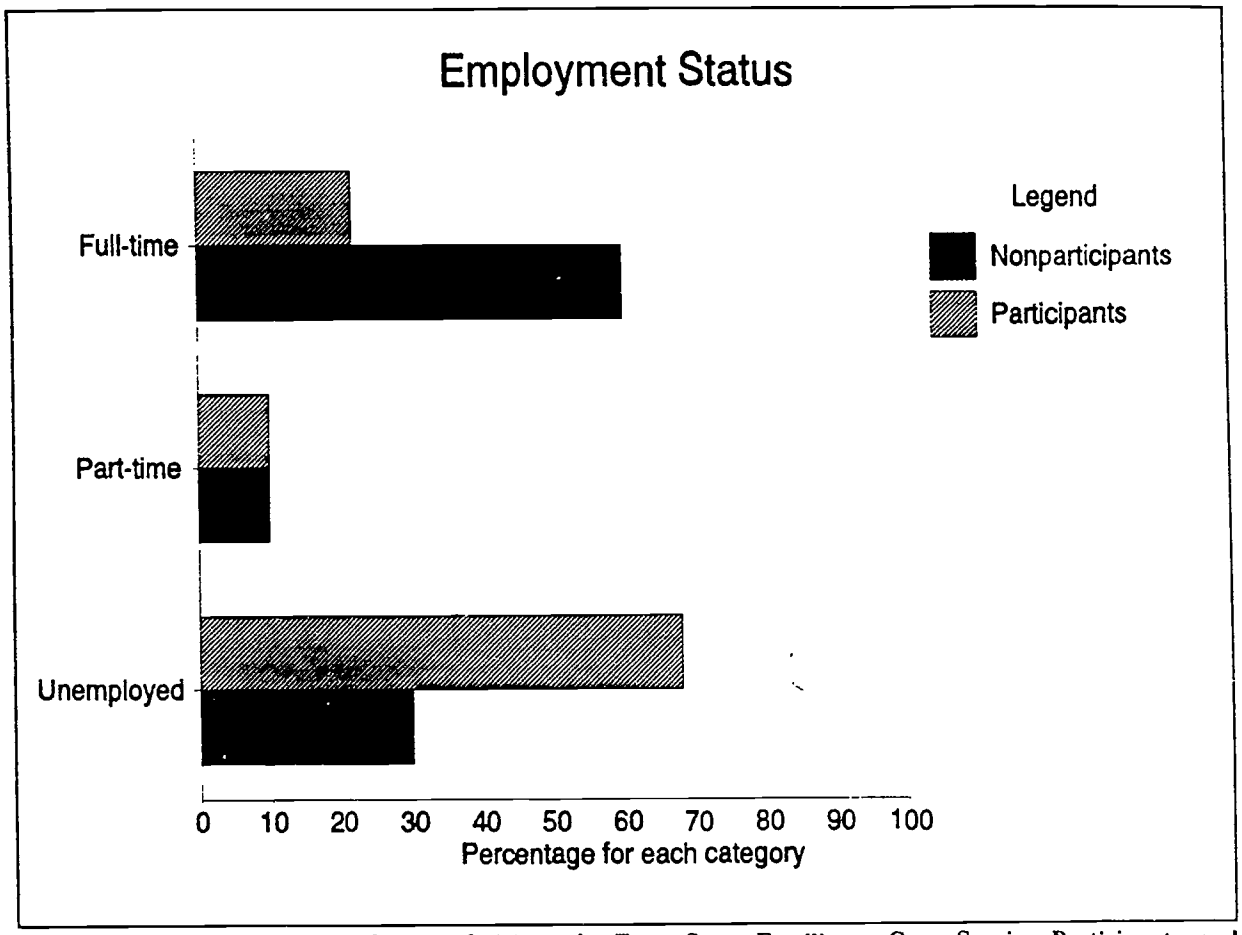

Exhibit 4.12a. Employment Status of Adults in Even Start Families: Core Service Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

for 74 percent of participating adults, Spanish was the primary language for 20 percent, and six percent reported some other primary language including Hmong, Vietnamese, Chinese, Creole. French, and others. English also was reported as the primary language for 78 percent of children, Spanish was the primary language for 13 percent of children, and the remaining nine percent reported other primary languages.

Exhibit 4.16 displays the ability of adults for whom English is not the primary language to speak, read and understand English. About 21 percent reported the ability to speak English "very well," 48 percent could speak English "somewhat," and 31 percent "not at all." Nineteen percent could read English "very well," 44 percent "somewhat," and 37 percent "not at all." Finally, almost three-quarters of adults participating in Even Start for whom English is not the primary language understand English "very well" (25 percent) or "somewhat" (51 percent). The remaining 24 percent understood English "not at all."

Exhibit 4.12b

Employment Status of Adults in Even Start Families: Core Service Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

Participation Status/ Employment Status	N	%
Core Participants		
Employed fulltime	1312	21%
Employed parttime	581	9%
Unemployed	4506	70%
Nonparticipants		
Employed fulltime	1321	54%
Employed parttime	238	10%
Unemployed	907	37%

Exhibit 4.17 follows up on this topic by presenting the language used by adults when reading to their children. It can be seen that 64 percent of Even Start adults for whom English was not the primary language reported that they read to their children in their primary language, 23 percent of this group read to their children in English, and ten percent read in both English and their primary language.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN

This section of the report presents data on children in families that participated in core Even Start services during the 1990-91 program year. A total of 11,377 children are in these families: 7,777 in Cohort 1 projects and 3,600 in Cohort 2 projects.

Age of Participating Children. Information on the age of participating children is presented in Exhibit 4.18. At the end of the 1990-91 reporting period, five percent of children in Even Start families were between zero and one year of age. The percentage of children who are age one, two, three, four, five, six, or seven years is fairly uniform, with between 10 percent and 16 percent of the total number of children falling into each of these age categories.

Exhibit 4.13

Employment Status of Adults in Even Start Families: Core Service Participants and Nonparticipants (1990-91 Program Year)

Participation Status/ Employment Status/ Duration	N	%
Core Participants		
Employed		
Less than 6 months	525	29%
6 to 12 months	312	17%
More than 12 months	970	54%
Unemployed		
Less than 6 months	654	16%
6 to 12 months	478	11%
More than 12 months	3030	73%
Nonparticipants		
Employed		
Less than 6 months	136	9%
6 to 12 months	181	12%
More than 12 months	1176	79%
Unemployed		
Less than 6 months	169	21%
6 to 12 months	97	12%
More than 12 months	556	68%

Exhibit 4.14

Participation of Adults in Non-Even Start Educational and Social Services Concurrent with Even Start Participation (1990-91 Program Year)

Non-Even Start Educational or Social Service	N	%
Core Participants		
Welfare	3001	43%
Employment training	172	2%
Vocational education	116	2%
Vocational rehabilitation	27	0%
Other	514	7%
None reported	3558	51%
Total adults	6998	
Nonparticipants		
Welfare	476	17%
Employment training	29	1%
Vocational education	26	1%
Vocational rehabilitation	8	0%
Other	80	3%
None reported	2262	79%
Total adults	2852	

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Gender of Participating Children. The percentage of male and female participating children also is shown in Exhibit 4.18: 51 percent of the children are male and 49 percent are female.

Race/Ethnicity of Children in Even Start Families. Racial and ethnic categories for children are presented in Exhibit 4.19 and, as expected, are similar to those presented for adults: 40 percent of children were identified as white, 32 percent of children were black, six percent were Native American, three percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, and four percent were other. For 18 percent of children, no race was specified but Hispanic ethnicity was listed. Of this

Exhibit 4.15

Primary Language of Adults and Children in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Primary Language	N	%
Adults		
English	6841	74%
Spanish	1816	20%
Other	551	6%
Total adults	9208	100%
Children		
English	8448	78%
Spanish	1447	13%
Other	973	9%
Total children	10,868	100%

group, 80 percent listed their ethnic background as Mexican, eight percent as Puerto Rican, and 12 percent as "other Hispanic" (see Exhibit 4.20). As was the case for adults, there are differences between cohorts, with Cohort 1 projects serving a larger proportion of black children than did Cohort 2 projects.

Educational Experiences of Participating Children. Information on the formal educational experience of Even Start children, prior to and concurrent[1] with their participation in Even Start is presented in Exhibits 4.21a and 4.21b. These percentages exclude children for whom previous and concurrent educational experiences were not reported.

The exhibits show that 54 percent of Even Start children were reported to have had no formal educational experience prior to the beginning of Even Start, 33 percent had a preschool experience (either Head Start or some other preschool), 18 percent had participated in kindergarten, and eight percent participated in a primary grade. About 44 percent of Even Start children also have had some non-Even Start educational services concurrent with their

[1]Even Start children can participate in non-Even Start educational services concurrent with their Even Start experience, e.g. participation in a preschool program that is not coordinated with Even Start.

Exhibit 4.16

Reported English Language Facility of Adults Participating in Even Start Core Services, For Adults Whose First Language Is Not English (1990-91 Program Year)

Reported English Language Facility	N	%
Speaks English		
Very well	324	21%
Somewhat	752	48%
Not at all	480	31%
Reads English		
Very well	299	19%
Somewhat	683	44%
Not at all	575	37%
Understands English		
Very well	383	25%
Somewhat	797	51%
Not at all	375	24%

participation in Even Start. Twenty-one percent participated either in Head Start or some other preschool program, while 33 percent participated in a non-Even Start kindergarten or early primary grade.

Special Needs of Participating Children. Of all children participating in Even Start core services, only eight percent were reported as having a special need. Exhibit 4.22 shows the specific types of special needs, none of which exist for more than three percent of the Even Start population. Learning problems were cited for 32 percent of the special needs children (2.57 percent of all Even Start children), speech problems for 26 percent, and emotional problems for ten percent. Visual, hearing and other physical disabilities each accounted for eight percent to ten percent of the special needs. Mental retardation (four percent), orthopedic problems (one percent) and deafness (one percent) make up the remainder of the specified needs. "Other" problems were listed for 28 percent of the special needs children.

Exhibit 4.17

Language Used to Read to Child for Adults Participating in Even Start Core Services, For Adults Whose First Language is Not English (1990-91 Program Year)

Language Used to Read	N	%
Primary language	1007	64%
English	363	23%
Both	150	10%
Other	55	3%
Total adults	1575	100%

COMPARISON WITH HEAD START AND CCDP

Even Start is a comparatively new federal program and it is of interest to see how the characteristics of Even Start participants compare to the characteristics of participants in other similar federal programs. Such cross-program comparisons are never easy because measures are often not comparable across studies. Nevertheless, Exhibit 4.23 presents selected data on Even Start families, on families that participated in Head Start, and on families who are participating in the Comprehensive Child Development Program (a family support program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Even Start families are less often headed by a single parent than families that participate either in Head Start or in CCDP (40 percent single parent families in Even Start vs. 55 percent in Head Start and 63 percent in CCDP). Even Start and Head Start appear to serve about the same percentage of very low-income families--40 percent of Even Start families have incomes below $5000 while 46 percent of Head Start families have incomes below $6000. CCDP seems to serve a somewhat larger percentage of very low income families--62 percent of CCDP families have incomes below $6000. Because of a lack of an income cut off, Even Start does serve a larger proportion of families with relatively higher incomes (over $15,000) than CCDP. Finally, Even Start serves a higher proportion of white families than Head Start or CCDP (45 percent, 33 percent and 24 percent respectively) and a lower proportion of black families (26 percent, 33 percent vs. 44 percent respectively).

Exhibit 4.18
Age and Gender of Children in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Age/Gender	N	%
Age Range		
0-1 years	537	5%
1-2 years	1156	10%
2-3 years	1345	12%
3-4 years	1557	14%
4-5 years	1794	16%
5-6 years	1811	16%
6-7 years	1404	13%
7-8 years	1475	13%
Total children	11,079	100%
Gender		
Male	5447	51%
Female	5224	49%
Total children	10,671	100%

Exhibit 4.19
Racial Composition of Children in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Racial Category	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%[1]	N	%	N	%
Black	2586	35%	855	24%	3441	32%
White	2754	37%	1631	46%	4385	40%
Unspecified Hispanic	1418	19%	599	17%	2017	18%
Native American	294	4%	369	11%	663	6%
Asian/Pacific islander	295	4%	53	1%	348	3%
Other	321	4%	131	4%	452	4%
Total children	7406		3517		10,923	

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed, typically Hispanic and another category.

Exhibit 4.20
Background of Hispanic Children in Families Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Background Category	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mexican	1420	75%	709	91%	2129	80%
Puerto Rican	191	10%	20	3%	211	8%
Other Hispanic	278	15%	50	6%	328	12%
Total children	1889	100%	779	100%	2668	100%

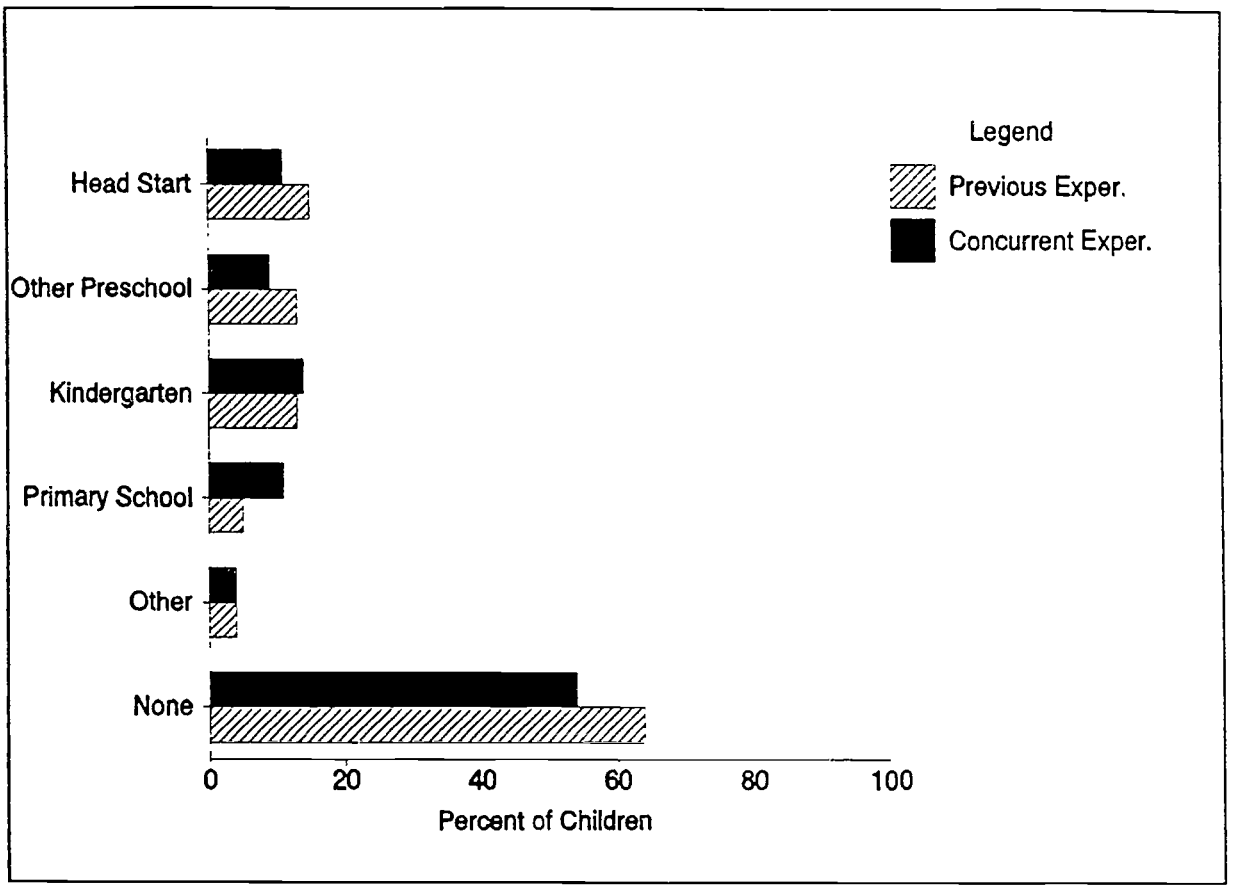

Exhibit 4.21a. Previous and Concurrent Educational Experience of Children Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Exhibit 4.21b

Previous and Concurrent Educational Experience of Children Participating in Even Start Core Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Educational Experience	Previous		Concurrent	
	N	%	N	%
Head Start	1272	18%	866	12%
Other preschool	1103	15%	677	9%
Kindergarten	1307	18%	1253	17%
Primary school	568	8%	1202	16%
Other	316	4%	244	3%
None	3892	54%	3230	44%
Total children	7217		7344	

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Exhibit 4.22

Types of Special Needs for Children Identified As Having a Special Need (1990-91 Program Year)

Type of Special Need	N	% of Children with Special Need (N=657)	% of Children in Even Start (N=8,063)
Visual problem	50	8%	0.62%
Speech problem	173	26%	2.15%
Hearing problem	64	10%	0.79%
Deafness	4	1%	0.05%
Orthopedic problem	8	1%	0.10%
Other physical disability	55	8%	0.68%
Specific learning problem	207	32%	2.57%
Emotional problem	65	10%	0.81%
Mental retardation	27	4%	0.33%
Other	124	19%	1.54%
Total children	657		

[1]Percentages sum to more than 100% because multiple responses

Exhibit 4.23

Family Characteristics: Even Start, Head Start, CCDP

Family Characteristic	Even Start	Head Start[1]	CCDP[2]
Single parent households (%)	40%	55%	63%
Race/ethnicity			
Black (%)	26%	38%	44%
White (%)	45%	33%	24%
Hispanic (%)	19%	22%	27%
Other (%)	14%	7%	5%
Mean family income	-	$7020[3]	$5707
Income distribution	$0-$4999=41%	$0-$5999=46%	$0-$5999=62%
	$5000-$9999=30%	-	$6000-$8999=20%
	$10000-$14999=15%	-	$9000-$11999=12%
	over $15000=14%	-	over $12000=6%

[1]Administrative for Children, Youth and Families (1991). Statistics are for 1990.
[2]Hubbell, R. et al. (1991). Statistics are for 1989.
[3]Glantz, F. et al. (1988). Statistics are for 1986.

84

CHAPTER 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PROJECTS

This chapter presents data describing the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Even Start projects as they were implemented during the 1990-91 program year. This was the second year of program operations for Cohort 1 and the first year of operations for Cohort 2. Data for the chapter are based on self-reports from project directors. Where it is relevant, statistics are presented separately for the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects. The discussion covers the following topics: project location, recruitment and screening, types of core services delivered, types of support services, types of special events, cooperative arrangements, implementation problems, and technical assistance needs.

PROJECT LOCATION AND RURALITY

Exhibit 5.1 displays the geographic dispersion of the 73 Cohort 1 and 46 Cohort 2 Even Start projects. The South has almost half (53) of the 119 projects, followed by the Midwest with 28, the Northeast with 20, and the West with 18. This distribution is not surprising since most states only funded four projects in any year, and the South has more states and a larger population than the other Census regions. Slightly more than half of the projects (55 percent) reported themselves to be in urban areas, while the remaining 45 percent designated themselves as rural. The distribution of projects is similar in both cohorts.

RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING STRATEGIES

Recruitment Strategies. Even Start projects were asked to identify the strategies that worked best for recruiting eligible Even Start participants during the 1990-91 program year. Each project checked up to three successful strategies from a fixed list and wrote in other successful strategies.

Exhibit 5.2 presents a rank-ordered list from the most to the least successful recruiting strategies used by Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects at the start of the 1990-91 program year and again at the end of the 1990-91 program year. This was the second year of operations for Cohort 1 projects, and recruiting strategies changed over the year. At the start of the year, the most successful strategies involved in-person contact with families. The home visit was listed as a successful strategy by 70 percent of the Cohort 1 projects, public school referrals were

Exhibit 5.1

Distribution of Even Start Projects by U.S. Census Region and Rurality (1990-91 Program Year)

Region/Rurality	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
South						
Urban	14	19%	13	28%	27	23%
Rural	18	25%	8	17%	26	22%
Total	32	44%	21	46%	53	45%
Northeast						
Urban	6	8%	5	11%	11	9%
Rural	6	8%	3	7%	9	8%
Total	12	16%	8	18%	20	17%
Midwest						
Urban	10	14%	6	13%	16	13%
Rural	5	7%	7	15%	12	10%
Total	15	21%	13	28%	28	24%
West						
Urban	9	12%	2	4%	11	9%
Rural	5	7%	2	4%	7	6%
Total	14	19%	4	8%	18	15%
All regions						
Urban	39	53%	26	57%	65	55%
Rural	34	47%	20	43%	54	45%
Total	73	100%	46	100%	119	100%

listed by 56 percent of the projects, and telephone contact was listed by 54 percent of the projects. Several other strategies were used by one-third or fewer of the projects including agency referrals (34 percent), targeted mailings (24 percent), Head Start referrals (30 percent), and the mass media (22 percent). By the end of the year, recruiting strategies had changed such that in-person contacts were no longer the most important methods. Rather, referrals, either by agencies (59 percent) or by the public schools (58 percent), were the most commonly listed strategies.

Exhibit 5.2 also presents similar information for Cohort 2 projects. These projects began operations at the start of the 1990-91 program year, and they emphasized different recruiting strategies than those used by the more experienced Cohort 1 projects. In fact, only half of the Cohort 2 projects listed any recruiting strategies at the start of the year, indicating that they were in the early phases of program start-up. Of the Cohort 2 projects that did list some recruiting strategies, referral from the public schools was the most commonly listed strategy (52 percent), with all other strategies being listed by fewer than one-third of the Cohort 2 projects. By the end of the year, all of the Cohort 2 projects reported some recruiting strategies, and the picture looked different. While referrals by public schools (53 percent) and by agency contacts (56 percent) remained an important recruiting strategy, in-person contacts by home visits (62 percent) and by telephone (40 percent) assumed a larger role than they had earlier in the year.

Steps Used in Formal Screening. Projects were asked to identify the formal steps they used to screen participants by responding to a checklist and by writing in additional steps or activities. A summary of end-of-year responses is presented in Exhibit 5.3. Nearly all of the projects in both cohorts verified the eligibility of potential participants (92 percent) and gave a basic orientation (84 percent) during the screening process. More than half of the projects assessed the basic skills of adults (61 percent) and contacted other agencies as part of the formal screening (63 percent).

CORE SERVICES DELIVERED: TYPES AND PROVIDERS

Three types of core services are delivered by Even Start projects including educational or instructional services that either:

- assist parents in developing their capacity to function as teachers for their children (parenting education),
- develop the basic literacy skills of the adult (adult basic education), or
- meet the early education needs of children from zero through seven years of age (early childhood education).

Core services may be provided by staff funded by Even Start or by staff funded by cooperating agencies (e.g., a local Head Start program). Consequently, Even Start project directors were asked to report the types of core services provided to Even Start participants by

Exhibit 5.2

Successful Strategies for Recruiting Eligible Participants (1990-91 Program Year)

Recruiting Strategy	Cohort 1				Cohort 2			
	Start of Year[1]		End of Year[2]		Start of Year[3]		End of Year[4]	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Home visits	35	70%	25	42%	7	30%	28	62%
Public school referrals	28	56%	34	58%	12	52%	24	53%
Telephone contact	27	54%	21	36%	5	22%	18	40%
Agency referrals	17	34%	35	59%	7	30%	25	56%
Targeted mailings	12	24%	15	25%	7	30%	11	24%
Head Start referrals	15	30%	17	29%	2	9%	12	27%
Mass media	11	22%	9	15%	3	13%	6	13%

[1]Based on reports from 50 projects.
[2]Based on reports from 59 projects.
[3]Based on reports from 23 projects.
[4]Based on reports from 45 projects.

Exhibit 5.3

Steps Included in Formal Screening of Potential Participants[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Screening Activity	N	%
Verify eligibility	95	92%
Orientation	87	84%
Assess basic skills of adults	63	61%
Contact other agencies	65	63%
Test children	29	28%
Counseling	23	22%
None	4	4%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 103 projects.

staff funded through Even Start, staff supported by cooperating agencies, or by both Even Start staff and cooperating agency staff.

Exhibit 5.4 shows the percentage of each core service that is delivered by (1) Even Start, (2) a cooperating agency, (3) both Even Start or a cooperating agency, or (4) neither.[1] It can be seen that all Even Start projects in both cohorts participate in the delivery of parenting education activities, either by providing the parenting activities themselves (20 percent of Cohort 1 projects, 30 percent of Cohort 2 projects), or by jointly providing the activities along with a cooperating agency (80 percent for Cohort 1, 70 percent for Cohort 2). No parenting education activities were provided solely by cooperating agencies. With respect to adult basic education, about 20 percent of the Even Start projects provide activities directly (19 percent for Cohort 1, 24 percent for Cohort 2), about half arrange for joint provision of activities with cooperating

[1]Several different types of activities are conducted under each core service area. The portion of the bar in Exhibit 5.4 labeled "Even Start" reflects projects where all core service activities are provided solely by Even Start, the portion of the bar labeled "cooperating agency" reflects projects where all core service activities are provided solely by a cooperating agency, and the portion of the bar labeled "both" reflects projects where any core service activity was provided by Even Start and any core service activity was provided by a cooperating agency.

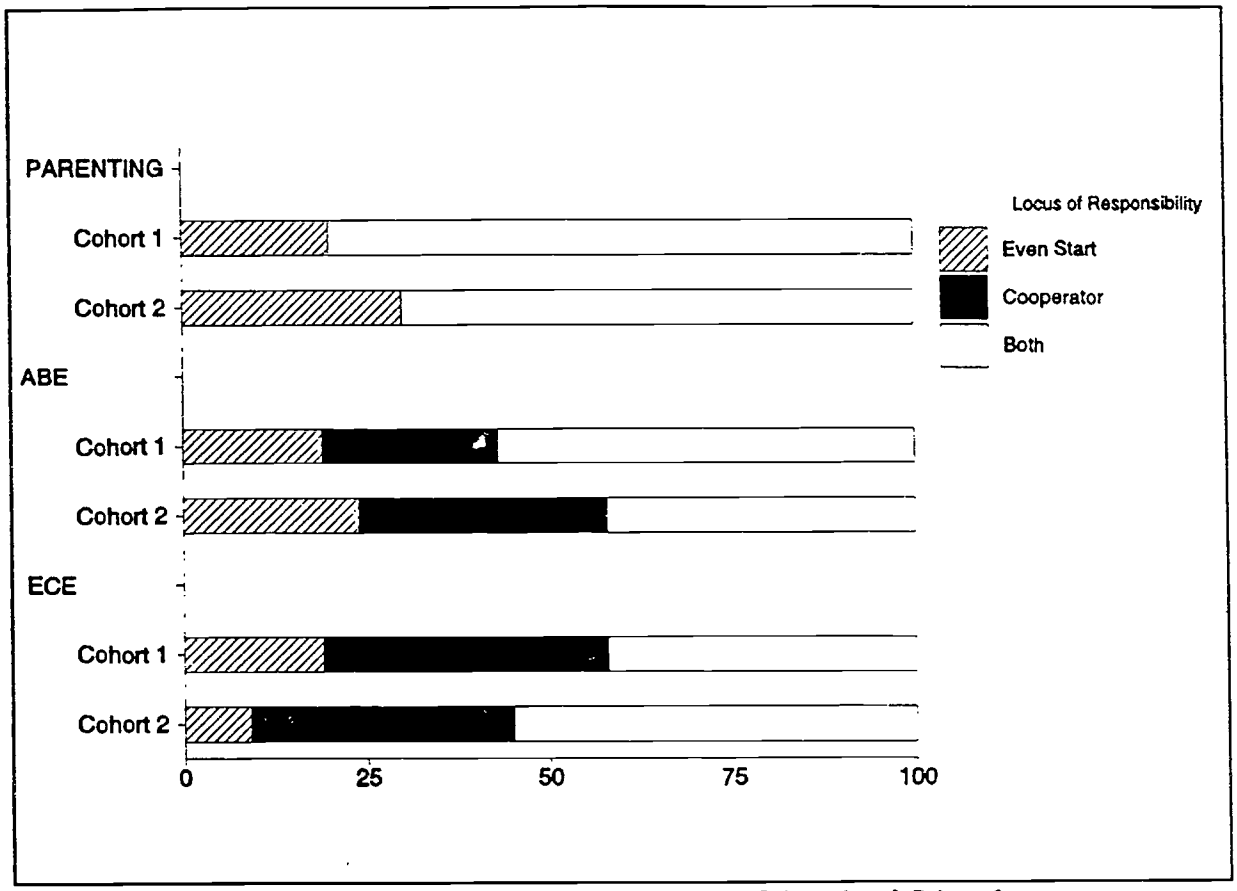

Exhibit 5.4. Types of Core Services by Locus of Responsibility for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

agencies (58 percent for Cohort 1, 41 percent for Cohort 2), and the remainder allow cooperating agencies to deliver all adult basic education services (24 percent for Cohort 1, 33 percent for Cohort 2). Finally, for early childhood education, 19 percent of Cohort 1 projects and nine percent of Cohort 2 projects provide services themselves; 42 percent of Cohort 1 and 54 percent of Cohort 2 share the provision of services; and 39 percent of Cohort 1 and 35 percent of Cohort 2 completely delegate the provision of early childhood education services.

Thus, Even Start projects are most likely to participate in the direct provision of services for parenting education and are more likely to delegate provision of services for adult basic education and for early childhood education. This fits with Even Start's mandate to build on existing services. In most communities, programs for early childhood education and for adult basic education already exist, and Even Start projects are taking advantage of these ongoing programs. On the other hand, programs for parenting education are much less likely to exist, and Even Start projects are focusing their resources in this area.

Parenting Education Services. As can be seen in Exhibits 5.5a and 5.5b, Even Start projects delivered a wide range of services to help parents raise their children in an environment

conducive to the development of a literate family unit. For example, projects helped families make use of services provided by other social agencies, bettered parents' understanding of their role in the education of their children, oriented parents and children to school routines, furnished information about child development, trained parents in child behavior management, worked on the building of parental self-esteem, and instructed parents in life skills such as the application of sound principles of health and nutrition.

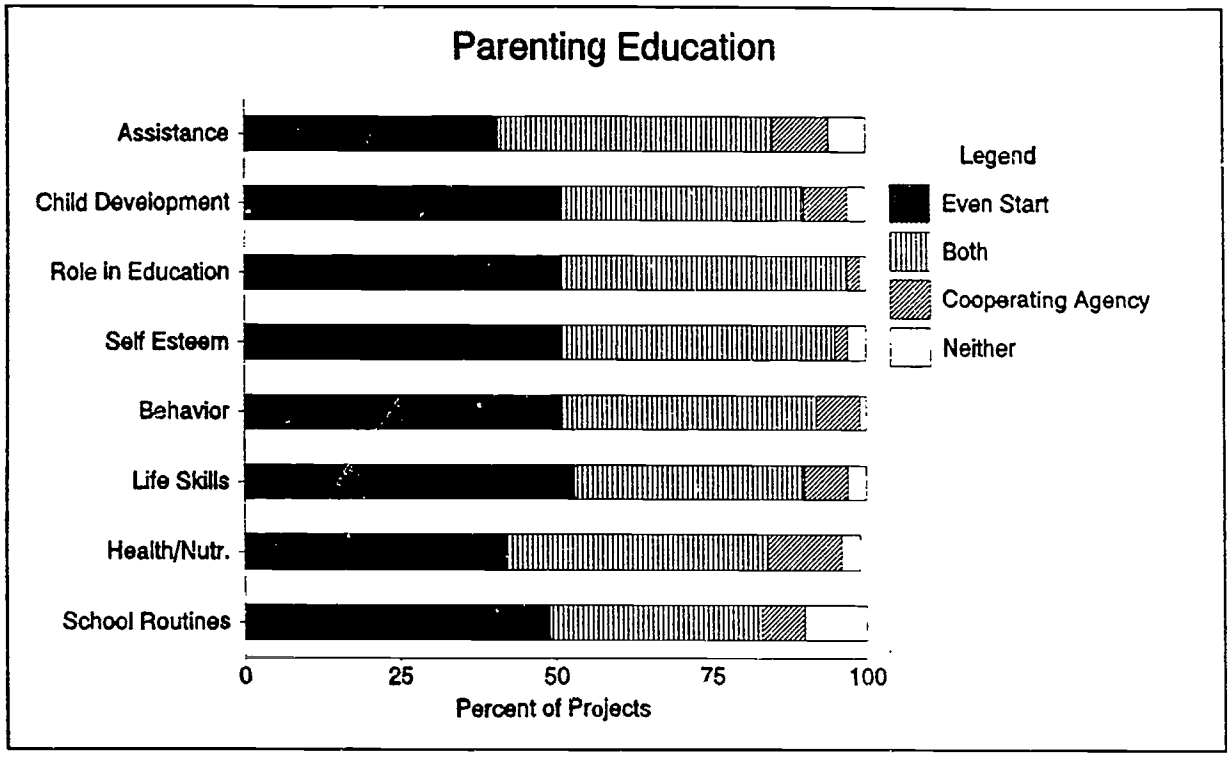

Exhibit 5.5a. Types of Parenting Education Services Reported for Even Start Projects (1990-91 Program Year)

Of eight different types of parenting education services, all except school routines were provided by 90 percent or more of the Even Start projects. Depending on the specific type of parenting education service, 35 to 55 percent of the projects provided services exclusively through Even Start staff; 35 to 45 percent of the projects delivered services jointly by Even Start staff and by staff from cooperating agencies; and about five to 10 percent of all projects provided services completely through cooperating agencies. In a small percentage of projects (fewer than ten percent) certain types of services were not provided at all.[2]

[2]The percentages shown in Exhibit 5.5a through 5.8b are calculated for each individual activity (e.g., role of parents in education) within each core service area (e.g., parenting education). However, the percentages shown in Exhibit 5.4 combine all activities within each core service area and, therefore, show higher percentages of projects in which both Even Start and a cooperating agency provide a core service.

Exhibit 5.5b

Types of Core Services Reported for Even Start Projects: PARENTING EDUCATION[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Activity	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assistance with agencies	41	40%	45	44%	10	10%	7	7%
Child development	54	52%	39	38%	7	7%	3	3%
Role in education	57	55%	40	39%	4	4%	2	2%
Parental self-esteem	51	50%	43	42%	4	4%	5	5%
Behavior management	56	54%	37	36%	7	7%	3	3%
Life skills	49	48%	39	38%	5	5%	9	9%
Health/nutrition	37	36%	49	48%	10	10%	7	7%
School routines	47	46%	32	31%	7	7%	17	16%

[1]Based on end-of-year report from 103 projects.

Adult Education Services. Exhibits 5.6a and 5.6b summarize the types of adult basic education services provided by Even Start projects. Almost 100 percent of all projects reported that they provided services to prepare adults to attain a GED, over 80 percent of all projects provided services in adult basic education, and more than 90 percent provided services in adult secondary education. Services in English as a second language were provided by 62 percent of the projects.

The locus of responsibility for providing adult basic education services differs from the provision of parenting education services. About 30 percent of the projects provided adult education services directly by Even Start staff, another 30 percent of the projects provided services by cooperating agencies, and about 30 percent of the projects provided services jointly by Even Start and cooperating agency staff.

Early Childhood Education Services. Children in Even Start projects were provided with a range of early childhood education services as can be seen in Exhibits 5.7a and 5.7b. Three different preschool options were used, with many projects using combinations: (1) 65

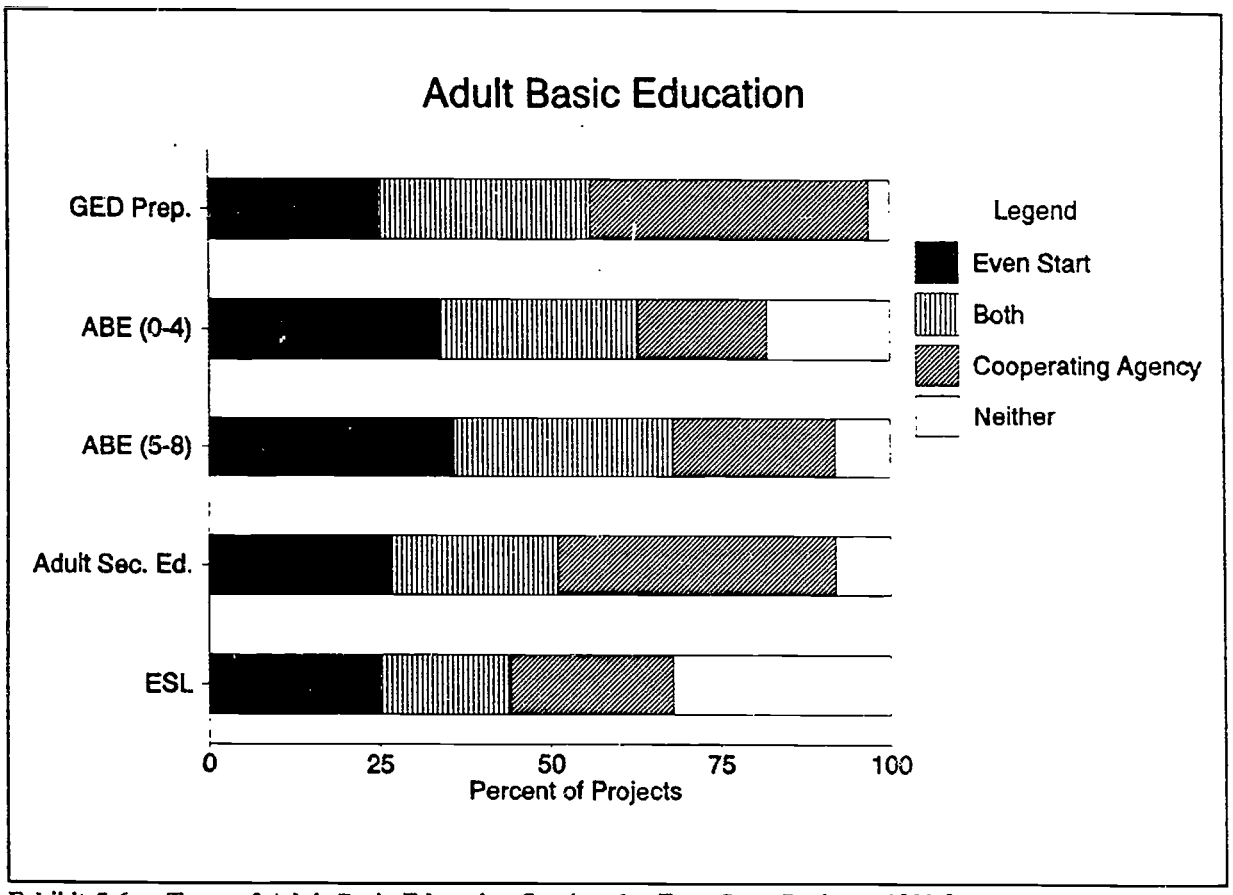

Exhibit 5.6a. Types of Adult Basic Education Services for Even Start Projects (1990-91 Program Year)

percent of the projects enrolled some of their children in Head Start; (2) 41 percent of the projects enrolled some of their children in a Chapter 1 pre-K program; and (3) 84 percent of the projects provided some other preschool option. For children old enough to be in the public schools, most Even Start projects participated in joint planning activities with the public schools. Hence, 82 percent of the projects included kindergarten as an Even Start service, and 70 percent of the projects provided early childhood education services to children under eight years of age who were in primary grades, again through the vehicle of joint planning with the public schools.

As would be expected, all Head Start and Chapter 1 pre-K services were provided by cooperating agencies, as were almost all kindergarten and primary school services. About 40 percent of the projects provided "other preschool" services directly by Even Start staff. This distribution is not surprising given the high cost of early childhood education services and their availability through cooperating agencies and the public schools.

Exhibit 5.6b

Types of Core Services Reported for Even Start Projects: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Activity	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GED preparation	29	28%	33	32%	40	38%	2	2%
Adult basic ed. (0-4)	32	31%	28	27%	26	25%	18	17%
Adult basic ed. (5-8)	37	36%	28	27%	28	27%	11	11%
Adult secondary ed.	29	28%	24	23%	42	40%	9	9%
English as a second language	23	22%	17	16%	25	24%	39	38%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 104 projects.

PROVISION OF CORE SERVICES TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

Even Start grantees are strongly urged to provide some core services to parents and children jointly, i.e., the services ought to be delivered to parents and children together. Exhibits 5.8a and 5.8b summarize the types of adult/child services delivered by Even Start staff and/or staff from cooperating agencies. At least 90 percent of all projects provided each of the following adult/child activities: reading and story telling, developing readiness skills, social development and play, development of gross motor skills, working with numbers, arts/crafts, and health/nutrition. Writing activities for parents and children together were provided by 84 percent of the projects, and computer-related activities were provided by 58 percent of the projects.

Even Start projects generally provided core services using the adult/child service mode directly, rather than through a cooperating agency. Depending on the activity, a bit more than half of the projects provided the activity directly, about 30 percent shared responsibility with a cooperating agency, and only about five to ten percent delegated exclusive provision of adult/child activities to an external agency.

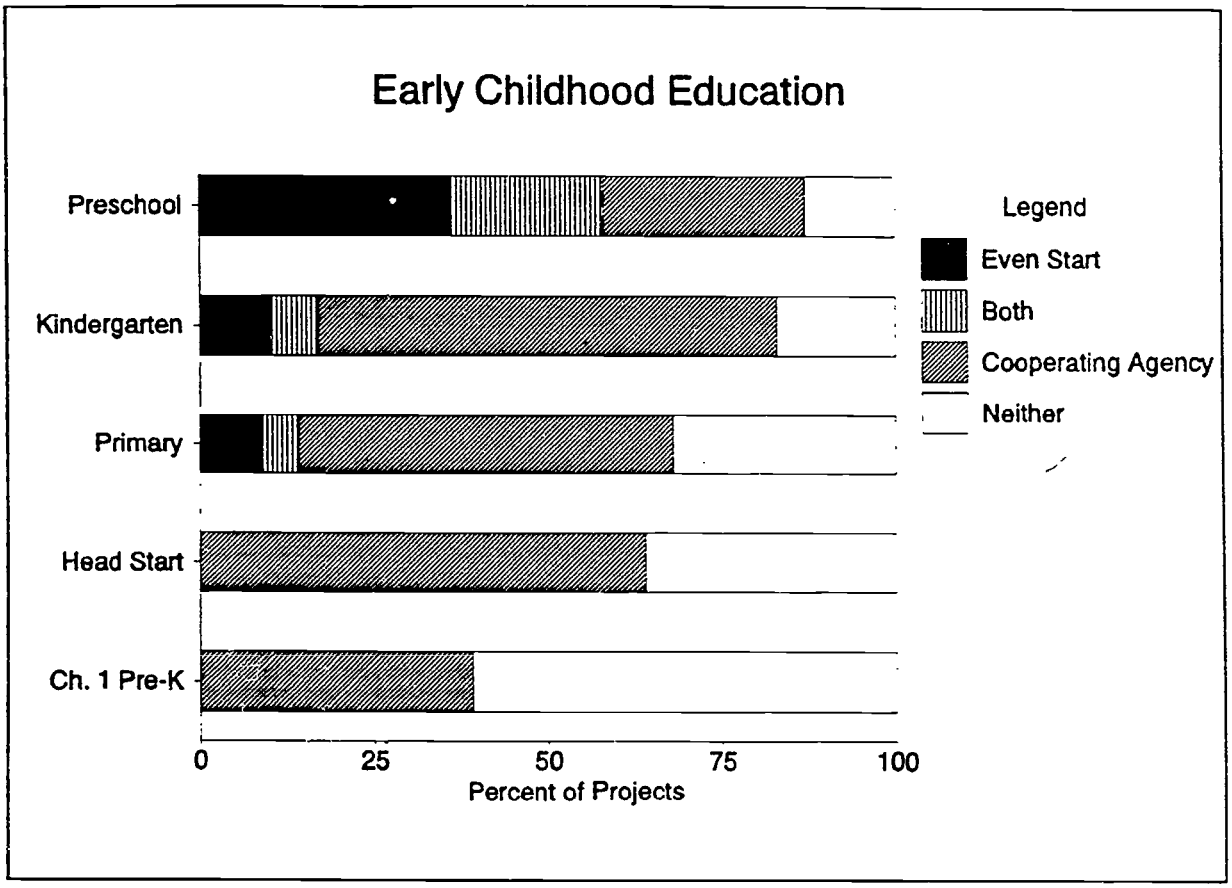

Exhibit 5.7a. Types of Early Childhood Education Services Reported for Cohort 1 Even Start Projects (1990-91 Program Year)

PATTERNS OF CORE SERVICES

Core services are offered using two primary patterns: (1) year-round services and (2) services delivered only during the school year. Some projects offered variations on these patterns, e.g., special month-long courses. Exhibit 5.9 shows that 73 percent of all projects provided parenting education year-round while 19 percent provided it only for the regular school year; 68 percent of all projects provided adult basic education year-round, while 19 percent provided it for the regular school year; and 61 percent of all projects provided early childhood education year-round, while 18 percent provided it for the regular school year.

SUPPORT SERVICES: TYPES AND PROVIDERS

As defined for this study, support services are activities provided directly to Even Start families to enable them to participate in core services. Support services remove barriers that, if unattended, restrict a family's ability to receive instructional and educational services. Such

Exhibit 5.7b

Types of Core Services Reported for Even Start Projects: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Activity	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Preschool	40	38%	22	21%	25	24%	17	16%
Kindergarten	8	8%	11	11%	66	63%	19	18%
Primary school	5	5%	10	10%	58	56%	31	30%
Head Start	0	0%	0	0%	69	66%	35	35%
Chapter 1 pre-K	0	0%	0	0%	43	41%	61	59%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 104 projects.

activities as staff development and training, while enabling the project to provide effective services to its clients, are not considered support services because families are not the direct recipients. To avoid duplication, support services should, as much as possible, be obtained from existing sources.

As is seen in Exhibits 5.10 and 5.11, more Cohort 1 projects generally provide each type of support service than Cohort 2 projects, indicating that the development of a strong system of support services requires time. Several types of support services were provided by 75 percent or more of the projects including transportation, referrals for employment services, mental health services, family advocacy assistance with government agencies, child care, counseling, nutrition assistance and health care assistance. Many other support services were provided by 50 percent or more of the projects including referrals for child protective services and for battered women, meals, and treatment services for chemical dependency.

Across all types of support services, Even Start projects provided 15 to 20 percent directly, cooperating agencies provided 25 to 30 percent directly, and Even Start and cooperating agencies jointly provided another 25 percent. However, as might be expected, there is substantial variation in the extent to which different support services are provided by Even Start or by cooperating agencies. The percentage of Even Start projects providing support services with their own funds ranged from less than ten percent for several types of services to more than 50 percent (for transportation in Cohort 1 projects). These findings suggest that Even Start

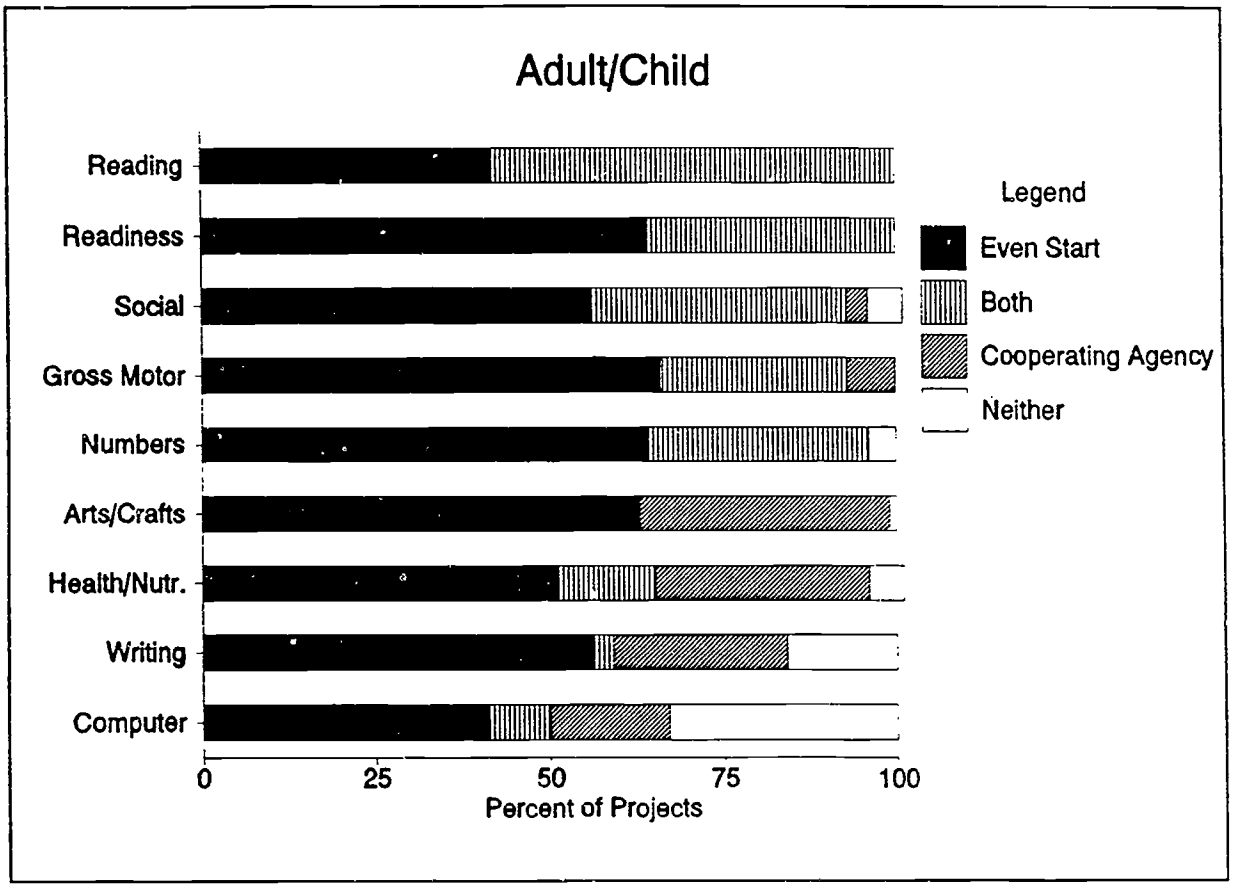

Exhibit 5.8a. Types of Adult/Child Services Reported for Even Start Projects (1990-91 Program Year)

projects did, as planned, obtain many existing support services from existing providers and stepped in to provide services not available locally.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In addition to providing core and support services, Even Start projects conduct other periodic or one-time activities for the families they serve. These special activities are used to recruit families, provide information or training, celebrate participant accomplishments, and promote family pride, unity and sense of belonging. Exhibit 5.12 lists 11 types of special activities and reports the number and percentage of projects, by cohort, reporting each type of activity. The category system is based on a content analysis of the written responses of projects in both cohorts. Because projects' responses were prompted by an open-end question, the percentage of projects reporting each type of activity is not an accurate indicator of the popularity of each type of activity. Projects may not have reported all special activities as they were on their own to decide which special activities were worth reporting. Exhibit 5.12, however, conveys a reasonable sense of the range of special activities employed by projects.

Exhibit 5.8b

Types of Services Reported for Even Start Projects: ADULT / CHILD SERVICE DELIVERY MODE[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Activity	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading	50	48%	42	40%	2	2%	1	1%
Readiness	63	61%	36	35%	3	3%	3	3%
Social	58	56%	38	37%	4	4%	5	5%
Gross motor	65	63%	31	30%	7	7%	2	2%
Numbers	65	63%	31	30%	2	2%	7	7%
Arts/crafts	62	60%	33	32%	4	4%	6	6%
Health/nutrition	49	47%	34	33%	12	12%	10	10%
Writing	58	56%	25	24%	5	5%	17	16%
Computer	36	35%	13	17%	12	12%	44	42%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 104 projects.

More than one-half of the projects (62 percent) conducted field trips. Common destinations included libraries, zoos, museums, historical landmarks, farms, and other places of business. Field trips were used to provide common experiences to encourage learning and parent-child communication and interaction--they usually had an educational component and promoted social interaction.

Sixty percent of the projects organized parties, picnics, and dining (family potluck meals) activities. These events help establish rapport and trust between the staff and participants, celebrate accomplishments of participants, provide opportunities for adults and children to be together, give adults a chance to support one another, and help motivate them to remain in the program.

Many projects (39 percent) organized recreational and leisure activities for families. Examples are nature walks, going to movies, swimming parties, and attending circus performances. Recreational and leisure activities serve purposes similar to parties, picnics and

Exhibit 5.9

Term of Year Core Services are Offered[1]
(1990-91 Program Year)

Core Service/Term of Year	N	%
Parenting education		
Year-round	74	73%
Regular school year	19	19%
Other[2]	9	9%
Adult basic education		
Year-round	69	68%
Regular school year	19	19%
Other	13	13%
Early childhood education		
Year-round	60	61%
Regular school year	26	18%
Other	13	13%

[1]Based on reports from 102 projects.
[2]For example, special month-long sessions or 3-month terms.

dining They provide a break from routines and give families the opportunity to be together in a moderately controlled environment, often less stressful than the home. Recreational and leisure activities offered a nonthreatening context to practice newly acquired skills and develop skills in dealing with other people.

Holiday activities are similar to the other social activities listed above. They are of special interest in that they provide the opportunity for projects to plan educational experiences uniquely associated with special holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Martin Luther King Day) and integrate them, quite naturally, into social occasions. Almost one-third of the projects reported special activities organized around holidays.

Just under one-quarter of the Even Start projects (23 percent) reported getting their families to work on special projects (e.g., putting on a bake sale, staging a puppet show,

Exhibit 5.10

Number and Percentage of Projects Providing Support Services and Other Special Activities through Even Start and/or Cooperating Agencies Cohort 1[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Support Services	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transportation	31	53%	19	33%	4	7%	4	7%
Employment	12	21%	22	38%	16	28%	8	14%
Advocacy	22	38%	26	45%	7	12%	3	5%
Mental health	15	26%	24	41%	11	19%	8	14%
Counseling	8	14%	21	36%	21	36%	8	14%
Child Care	27	47%	12	21%	9	16%	10	16%
CPS	1	2%	7	12%	31	53%	19	33%
Nutrition	9	16%	21	36%	22	38%	6	10%
Health care	3	5%	9	16%	35	60%	11	19%
Battered women	10	17%	24	41%	8	14%	16	28%
Handicap care	6	10%	8	14%	24	41%	20	35%
Meals	8	14%	15	26%	22	38%	13	22%
Chem. depend.	8	14%	17	29%	13	22%	20	35%
Translators	16	28%	10	17%	6	10%	26	45%
Parent stipend	4	7%	2	3%	10	17%	42	73%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 58 projects.

performing a play, making toys, writing letters to troops, making a presentation to a local school board) which helped build teamwork skills, apply new learning, and give a sense of accomplishment and empowerment to family members. Another 22 percent reported that they held graduation ceremonies or other events recognizing the accomplishments of participating families and family members, and 22 percent reported holding workshops and training or

Exhibit 5.11

Number and Percentage of Projects Providing Support Services and Other Special Activities through Even Start and/or Cooperating Agencies Cohort 2[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Support Services	Even Start		Both		Cooperating Agency		Neither	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transportation	12	27%	15	34%	9	21%	8	18%
Employment	6	14%	13	30%	13	30%	12	26%
Advocacy	12	27%	17	39%	8	18%	7	16%
Mental health	11	25%	10	23%	12	27%	11	25%
Counseling	9	21%	16	36%	11	25%	8	18%
Child Care	17	39%	6	14%	11	25%	10	22%
CPS	2	5%	3	7%	18	41%	21	47%
Nutrition	2	5%	16	36%	17	39%	9	20%
Health care	2	5%	7	16%	29	66%	6	13%
Battered women	9	21%	8	18%	9	21%	18	40%
Handicap care	0	0%	8	18%	10	23%	26	59%
Meals	8	18%	13	30%	10	23%	13	29%
Chem. depend.	5	11%	6	14%	11	25%	22	50%
Translators	5	11%	7	16%	4	9%	28	64%
Parent stipend	1	2%	1	2%	13	30%	29	66%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 44 projects.

inviting guest speakers to present on specialized topics. Other special activities offered by fewer than 15 percent of the projects included literacy theme events (e.g., day long literacy fairs), social services (e.g., offering banking services to participants, having children fingerprinted), program open house, and visits to schools.

Exhibit 5.12

Number of Projects Reporting Types of Special Even Start Activities[1] (1990-91 Program Year)

Activity	N	%
Field trips	58	62%
Parties/picnics/meals	56	60%
Recreational/leisure activities	36	39%
Holiday activities	29	31%
Special projects	21	23%
Graduation/completion ceremonies	20	22%
Workshops/training/speakers	20	22%
Literacy theme events	11	12%
Social services	8	9%
Open house	7	8%
School visits	6	6%

[1]Based on end-of-year reports from 93 projects.

COOPERATING AGENCIES AND COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Even Start projects are required to establish cooperative arrangements with other agencies to avoid duplicating services. This strategy allows optimal use of limited resources and allows projects to concentrate on providing new services to fill service gaps. Each project reported on the cooperative arrangements it established to provide core and support services during the 1990-91 program year.

Cooperative Arrangements for Core Services. All told, Even Start projects were involved in 2128 cooperative arrangements to provide core services during the 1990-91 program year (Exhibit 5.13). This is just about 20 cooperative arrangements per project. Fifty percent of the arrangements were for parenting education, 25 percent were for adult basic education, and 25 percent were for early childhood education.

Exhibit 5.13

Number and Percentage of Arrangements to Provide Core Services by Type of Organization (1990-91 Program Year)

Type of Organization	Parenting Education		Adult Basic Education		Early Childhood Education	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Other departments or programs within public schools	324	31%	148	29%	227	41%
Postsecondary college, university, trade-technical school or institute	103	10%	83	16%	44	8%
Head Start or home start	74	7%	15	3%	57	10%
Day care or preschool programs	26	3%	10	2%	43	8%
Local, county, state or tribal agencies or orgs.	218	21%	99	19%	64	12%
Foundations, fraternal groups	65	6%	32	6%	25	4%
Volunteer groups	55	5%	43	8%	35	6%
Other community-based orgs.	110	10%	41	8%	31	6%
Church, temple, mosque	34	3%	14	3%	8	1%
Other	50	5%	26	5%	24	4%
Total	1059	100%	511	100%	558	100%

The preceding paragraph states that only half of the collaborative arrangements made by Even Start projects are for parenting education, yet we noted earlier in this report that parenting education is the core service that is most often provided by Even Start staff. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that early childhood education and adult education services are generally available from existing providers, and Even Start grantees seldom provide these services with their own staff, preferring to arrange for Even Start participants to obtain these services from a relatively small number of providers, e.g., Head Start, Chapter 1, and other preschoolers for early childhood education, and local community colleges for adult basic education. On the other hand, parenting education services rarely exist in any organized fashion. Hence, Even Start grantees often provide or coordinate the provision of these services using their

own staff. They enter into multiple cooperative arrangements for parenting education services because no single agency is able to provide this service.

A wide variety of organizations cooperated with Even Start projects. The most common cooperator was "other departments and programs within the public schools" which accounted for 31 percent of the parenting education arrangements, 29 percent of the adult basic education arrangements, and 41 percent of the early childhood education arrangements. The next most common type of cooperating agency was "local, county, state, or tribal agencies or organizations" which accounted for 21 percent of parenting education arrangements, 19 percent of adult basic education arrangements, and 12 percent of early childhood education arrangements. Other cooperating agencies included postsecondary institutions, Head Start, day care or other preschool programs, foundations, volunteer groups, and other community-based organizations. Although they were mentioned infrequently, religious institutions (church, temple, or mosque) were involved in more than 50 cooperative arrangements.

Exhibit 5.14 displays the percentage of cooperative arrangements by core service area and source of authority over activities. The locus of authority for activities is evenly split between Even Start (about 35 percent of the cases), the cooperating agency (about 36 percent of the cases), and joint decision-making (about 29 percent of the cases). There are only minor differences between the two cohorts in this area.

Exhibit 5.14

Percentage of Cooperative Arrangements to Provide Core Services by Core Service Area and Source of Authority Over Activities (1990-91 Program Year)

Source of Authority over Even Start Activities	Parenting Education %	Adult Basic Education %	Early Childhood Education %
Even Start	38%	36%	32%
Cooperating agency	33%	34%	42%
Co-deciding	29%	30%	26%

Exhibit 5.15 shows the types of mechanisms used to govern Even Start activities in each core service area. It reveals that decision making arrangements may involve any of the means listed, but that informal agreements are used more often than any other means of coordination (in more than 40 percent of the cases), with no differences across cohorts or core service areas. Three other means of decision making are used with roughly the same frequency: informal

Exhibit 5.15

Percentage of Cooperative Arrangements to Provide Core Service by Core Service Area and the Means of Reaching Decisions About Activities (1990-91 Program Year)

Means of Decision Making	Parenting Education %	Adult Basic Education %	Early Childhood Education %
Informal communication	15%	16%	17%
Informal agreement	44%	42%	39%
Informal advisory group	19%	17%	21%
Formal written agreemt.	18%	22%	16%
Joint board	2%	2%	4%
Other	2%	1%	2%

communication (about 16 percent), informal advisory groups (about 19 percent). and formal written agreements (about 18 percent). Joint boards are used least often (in about three percent of the cases).

Exhibit 5.16 presents the percentage of cooperative arrangements by source of authority and type of organization. In most cases the source of authority varies only slightly with the type of organization.

Cooperative Arrangements for Support Services. Support services enable families to participate in Even Start core services by removing barriers to their participation. Support services involving cooperative arrangements were categorized into three possible configurations:

- The Even Start project provides support services that enable its families to participate in the core services provided by a cooperating agency (support provided by Even Start).
- A cooperating agency provides support services to permit Even Start families to participate in core services delivered directly by Even Start (support provided by cooperating agency).
- Both Even Start and a cooperating agency provide the same types of support services permitting families to participate in core services (reciprocal support).

Exhibit 5.16

Percentage of Cooperative Arrangements to Provide Core Service by Source of Authority and Type of Organization (1990-1991 Program Year)

Type of Organization	Even Start %	Co-op Agency %	Co-decision %	Total %
Other departments/programs within public schools	10%	12%	11%	33%
Post secondary college, university, trade-technical school or institution	4%	4%	3%	11%
Head Start/Home Start	1%	4%	2%	7%
Day care or preschool program	1%	2%	1%	4%
Local county, state or tribal agencies or organizations	6%	6%	5%	17%
Volunteer groups	3%	2%	2%	6%
Other community-based organizations	4%	3%	2%	9%
Other	3%	1%	1%	5%
Total	35%	37%	29%	100%

As Exhibit 5.17 indicates, most cooperative arrangements for support services called for the cooperating agency to provide the service for Even Start (72 percent). In 16 percent of the cooperative arrangements, Even Start provided the support service directly, and in 12 percent both Even Start and the cooperating agency provided the support service. There was some variation between cohorts, with the newer Cohort 2 projects (79 percent) being more likely than the older Cohort 1 projects (66 percent) to let cooperating agencies provide the support services.

Exhibit 5.18 shows the percentage of cooperative arrangements accounted for by each type of support service. None of the 15 specified support services accounted for more than ten percent of the total. Counseling, transportation, health care, child care, meals, employment referrals, advocacy, and nutrition each accounted for between five percent and ten percent of the support service arrangements.

As in shown in Exhibit 5.19, cooperative arrangements for support services most often involved "local, county, state, and tribal governmental agencies and organizations" (31 percent of the cases), "other departments or programs within the public schools" (19 percent of the

Exhibit 5.17

Number and Percent of Cooperative Arrangements for Support Services by Provider of Support (1990-91 Program Year)

Provider	Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Even Start	114	20%	61	12%	175	16%
Cooperating agency	378	66%	398	79%	776	72%
Both	78	14%	45	9%	123	12%
Total	570	100%	504	100%	1074	100%

cases), or "other community-based organizations (17 percent of the cases). The remaining types of organizations were involved in only three to six percent of the cases. This is somewhat different than the distribution of cooperative arrangements for core services, where "other departments within the public schools" were by far the most common cooperating agency.

IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Two types of implementation issues are addressed in this section. First, each project was asked an open-ended question about major barriers to the implementation of Even Start as well as the strategies or solutions used to deal with the barriers. Second, both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects were asked to identify features of the Even Start law or regulations which they felt needed revision to permit more effective implementation.

Barriers to Program Implementation. Exhibit 5.20 categorizes the types of barriers identified by Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects for the 1990-91 program year. Many different barriers were reported. The most common barriers were difficulties in the recruitment, retention, attendance, and motivation of families (41 projects across both cohorts), staffing problems such as the desire for fulltime rather than parttime staff (40 projects), a lack of transportation for families (40 projects), problems of communication and coordination with cooperating agencies (37 projects), and a lack of program models, materials and expertise (32 projects).

Exhibit 5.18

Number and Percent of Cooperative Arrangements for Support Services (1990-91 Program Year)

Support Service	N	%
Counseling	110	9%
Transportation	93	8%
Health care	90	8%
Child care	85	7%
Meals	73	6%
Employment referrals	54	5%
Advocacy	85	7%
Nutrition	54	5%
Handicapped care	30	2%
Translators	30	2%
Child protective services	31	3%
Mental health	34	3%
Referrals for battered women	29	2%
Chemical dep. referrals	31	3%
Parent stipend	25	2%
Other	342	29%
Total	1196	100%

Some barriers had to do with meeting the requirements of the evaluation (28 projects). Fitting the required data collection into an already busy schedule seemed to be the major class of problems in this area. Other barriers included problems with facilities (23 projects), a lack of child care (19 projects), difficulty with scheduling program services (19 projects), the timing of the grant award (14 projects), the unexpectedly profound needs of many families (12 projects), and several others mentioned by fewer than ten projects.

Although the Cohort 1 projects were funded a year before the Cohort 2 projects, it does not appear that this extra year led to any reduction in implementation problems. In fact, it is

Exhibit 5.19

Number and Percent of Cooperative Arrangements for Support Services by Organization Type (1990-91 Program Year)

Organization Type	N	%
Other departments or programs within public schools	224	19%
Postsecondary college, university, trade-technical school, institute	53	4%
Head Start or home start	76	6%
Day care or preschool programs	56	5%
Local, county, state or tribal agencies or orgs.	370	31%
Foundations, fraternal groups	60	5%
Volunteer groups	38	3%
Other community-based orgs.	202	17%
Church, temple, mosque	62	5%
Other	50	4%
Total	1191	100%

generally the case that the percentage of Cohort 1 projects reporting a given type of implementation problem was higher than the percentage of Cohort 2 projects reporting the same problem. The exceptions to this pattern occurred in two problem areas, communication with cooperating agencies and lack of a program model, both of which were mentioned more often by Cohort 2 projects. This is reasonable, since the data are from the first year of implementation for Cohort 2, and both of these areas are key to successfully implementing Even Start.

As noted earlier, the Even Start law and regulations specify broad service areas but do not give any specifics on how projects are to be implemented. Hence, it is not surprising that Even Start project directors cited the "lack of a model" as a major impediment to program implementation. Project directors had the difficult job of either creating or finding programs in each of the three core service areas. While specifying a single model to be adopted in all projects would run counter to the general approach taken by the Department of Education in its demonstration programs, project directors could be helped by guidance in selecting/adopting existing exemplary programs for each core service area. Many Even Start projects have ended

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Difficulties with recruitment / Retention / attendance / motivation of families	Cohort 1 = 29 Cohort 2 = 12	Conducted home visits Included all key staff in recruiting Used two full time assistants to recruit Met with other service providers Used program mailings and/or television advertisements Director on early childhood tracking committee Used Head Start waiting list for recruiting Emphasized welcoming families into program Director scheduled appointments with adults in each family Allowed nontargeted parents to attend workshops Rewarded participation, offered attendance incentives Duplicated services in various time slots Prepared attractive materials for adults Gave participants opportunity to choose time of day for service Provided meal to parents after long work day Made program comfortable and fun Instituted an attendance policy Implemented a case management IEP-like system Provided orientation Called ahead before home visit Worked with health and human services Used bilingual facilitators Tailored programs for men Provided all core services in one location

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Staffing problems	Cohort 1 = 24 Cohort 2 = 16	Reduced the number of part-time staff for greater continuity Focused on getting full-time rather than part-time personnel Employed fewer home visitors for more hours Hired part-time aide Hired a childcare coordinator Used bilingual Home/School coordinator & aide for assistance Used more volunteers Hired staff with commitment to project Hired staff outside school system Searched outside of school district In-depth staff meetings and more written communication Clarified job descriptions Reorganized use of staff for second year Made staff training an ongoing high priority

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Lack of transportation for families	Cohort 1 = 25 Cohort 2 = 15	Contracted with local agency Contracted with private daycare center Used taxi cabs Found vendor for door-to-door service Used shuttle buses Used school buses Provided a bus for parent child activities Used mini bus with seat belts Used leased van for transportation Used motor homes for rural population Staff, school and project shared transportation Paired staff who can drive with those who cannot Staff followed-up on absences provide transportation when essential Had teachers provide some transportation Greater collaboration across local agencies Called on civic and church groups to help Provided more center based service Some parents received travel vouchers from other agencies, purchased bus tickets and ID stickers Used car pools and tutors within walking distance

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Problems of communication/coordination with cooperating agencies	Cohort 1 = 16 Cohort 2 = 21	Conducted outreach with other agencies Explained benefits of program Included publicity in local paper Made presentations to other agencies Sent out flyers Used news releases Planned time to build trust with other agencies Formed community forum of all agencies Emphasized personal contact with directors of cooperating agencies Identified key contact person in each agency Held meetings with teachers Attended faculty meetings Worked with Head Start to set up summer program as incentive Met with Head Start leadership to improve cooperation Worked with JTPA for referral of GED graduates Developed a collaborative program with vocational education Used other agency staff in the hiring process Hired bilingual instructional assistants Hired adult education teacher as part of Even Start staff Utilized ABE volunteer and hired summer ABE instructor Transferred administration to office of adult education Went to state ABE director for assistance with problem

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Lack of program models/materials/expertise	Cohort 1 = 16 Cohort 2 = 16	ERIC search to locate family literacy model for rural setting Search book stores and other educational agencies Continued research of existing programs Reviewed literature on models Federal meetings helped Visited other Even Start project Obtained state funding for home based ABE project Staff developed curriculum, create new materials Use topics suggested by parents Trial and error, evaluation and adaptations Evolve vision through staff meeting and goals discussions Changed planning process to involve all core services as a team Used staff development Use home-based curriculum for children 3-5 — provide other children support services Refer families to cooperating agencies Contracted to translate materials to Spanish Clarified definitions of literacy underlying curriculum Used High Scope to fill gaps
Problems meeting evaluation requirements	Cohort 1 = 17 Cohort 2 = 11	Turned in paperwork late as time allows Adjust schedules to complete paperwork Tested in home where families are more comfortable Set up one CASAS test data and one PSI PPVT date per month Assured adults of confidentiality Talked to parents about the importance of collecting data Complete parent intake forms during family orientation Gathered information through home visits Used sign in sheets for adults Program selected another instrument to meet needs for planning ECE Identified additional assessment materials for adults and children

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Lack of or poor facilities/space/equipment	Cohort 1 = 19 Cohort 2 = 4	Built special modular unit Used mobile units Purchased and renovated buses for portable classrooms Use other space in neighborhood, schedule activities weekends Used elementary school that had been closed Contract with childcare facility to house adult education class Established a dedicated Even Start Center within existing family literacy centers Visited homes until space available
Lack of child care	Cohort 1 = 12 Cohort 2 = 7	Used several child care centers (too expensive) Developed cooperative arrangements among participating parents Infant care provided by US West grant Searched for childcare agency with sliding scale Developed preferred home-based baby-sitters list
Difficulty scheduling program services	Cohort 1 = 11 Cohort 2 = 8	Provided flexible hours and expanded services Used short sessions, advanced invitations, Saturday sessions Worked with school principal and teachers on childrens' schedule Placed parent educators in five Head Start centers Obtained funds for morning, late afternoon, evening and Saturday morning classes for adults Scheduled around established activities Developed more in-home curriculum Conducted family literacy classes at home
Timing of grant award	Cohort 1 = 4 Cohort 2 = 10	No resolutions suggested

Exhibit 5.20

Project Implementation Barriers and Resolutions
(1990-91 Program Year)

Barrier	Number of References	Resolution
Needs of families more profound than anticipated	Cohort 1 = 11 Cohort 2 = 1	Utilized services of part time social worker Experience with population helped Expanded program to three days a week Added home-based component Made more personal contacts
Communication with families	Cohort 1 = 4 Cohort 2 = 3	Assigned family support partner to pass messages Home visitors left calendars for activities
Local financial problems	Cohort 1 = 3 Cohort 2 = 4	No resolutions suggested
Lack of ECE/ABE/PE services locally	Cohort 1 = 3 Cohort 2 = 3	Provided short-term, home-based ABE to parents Collaborated with Spencer Foundation for new program
Complexity of program	Cohort 1 = 1 Cohort 2 = 4	Assisted all agencies involved in developing specific objectives and timelines Planned more time to prepare staff and secure more funds Recognized small successes along the way Strived for realistic solutions
Meals & nutritional snacks	Cohort 1 = 4 Cohort 2 = 1	Negotiated with district for free lunch to children Local resources used for meals/snacks Obtained one-time grant for parent meals Put snacks in budget for year three
Lack of support services	Cohort 1 = 3 Cohort 2 = 1	No resolutions suggested

up using existing curricula, e.g., the High Scope curriculum for early childhood education. The Department of Education could help project directors by providing five to ten examples of existing programs that might be adopted in each of the three core service areas.

Features of the Law or Regulations that Would Enhance Implementation. Exhibit 5.21 summarizes the responses given when projects were asked about features of the Even Start law or regulations that could be revised in order to enhance program implementation. A companion exhibit (Exhibit 5.22) provides a detailed list of specific comments provided by projects. The comments are paraphrased to give the reader a quick sense of what, in some cases, were fairly specific points projects wished to make.

Exhibit 5.21

Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations that May Need to be Revised to Permit More Effective Implementation[1]
(1990-91 Program Year)

Features of the Law	Number
Eligibility criteria	57
Program design	33
General evaluation concerns	20
NEIS forms/instruments	15
Fiscal issues	15
Administrative concerns	15

[1]Based on reports from 76 projects.

Fifty-seven projects responding to this item commented on the need to make eligibility criteria more flexible. Thirty-three projects commented on the need for the law to allow more flexible program design; 35 projects raised concerns about the evaluation requirements; and others expressed concerns about fiscal (15 projects) and administrative matters (15 projects). Many of the concerns expressed by projects could be addressed without making changes in the law or regulations, but no attempt to limit responses has been made here.

Exhibit 5.22

Abstracted Project Comments on Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations That May Warrant Revision

Features of the Law	Commentary	
	Cohort 1	**Cohort 2**
Eligibility criteria	Allow programs to serve families with children from birth (15)	Allow programs to serve families with children from birth (13)
	Allow programs to serve families who reside outside of Chapter 1 attendance areas (8)	Allow programs to serve families who reside outside of Chapter 1 attendance areas (1)
	Allow programs to serve parents who have a high school diploma or GED, but who lack basic skills (2)	Allow programs to serve parents who have a high school diploma or GED, but who lack basic skills (2)
	Extend eligibility to all parents with dependent children regardless of age (1)	Extend eligibility to all parents with dependent children regardless of age (2)
	Include pregnant moms (1)	Include pregnant moms (1)
	Allow service to parents with GED, but lacking parenting skills (1)	Allow migrant families to remain when status changes (2)
	More flexible eligibility requirements (1)	Allow service to all "uneducated" mothers (1)
	Review rules defining ages of children who can be served (1)	Revise eligibility criteria (1)
	Broaden eligibility for participating adults (1)	Individual communities should individualize entry requirements (1)
		Base selection of target child on a set of weighted criteria (1)
		Allow parents to complete their program even though their children are over the eligible age (1)

Exhibit 5.22

Abstracted Project Comments on Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations That May Warrant Revision

Features of the Law	Commentary	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Program design	Allow programs to phase in or phase out core services to families (5)	Allow programs to phase in or phase out core services to families (3)
	Require other agencies/programs (i.e., Chapter 1,Head Start, all state and local support services, ABE/GED grantees) to cooperate and make legislation more explicit about the relationship between Even Start and other programs (4)	Require other agencies/programs (i.e., Chapter 1,Head Start, all state and local support services, ABE/GED grantees) to cooperate and make legislation more explicit about the relationship between Even Start and other programs (4)
	Give more flexibility on what is considered core service	Allow more flexibility in program design
	Allow all family members to be served	Legislation should encourage the integration of parenting and literacy
	Allow adult education to include vocational and college level courses	Legislation should be consistent with current literacy research
	Give more recognition to direct experience in the role of instruction to children	Provide written guidelines to identify which programs will serve what families
	Give more weight to early childhood education for children from 0 to 2	Specify the number of hours per week that adults are required to attend ABE/ESL
	Allow programs to work with all pre-K children in a family	Allow Even Start participants to be eligible for school programs
	Do not restrict Even Start activities to Even Start participants	Change age priority to allow programs to serve the youngest child
		Allow childcare for children under 3

Exhibit 5.22

Abstracted Project Comments on Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations That May Warrant Revision

Features of the Law	Commentary	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
		Disseminate information—quarterly news flyer—about program practices that work
		Drop distinction between parent/child and parenting education—it is artificial
General evaluation concerns	Paperwork (evaluation) too demanding (10)	Paperwork (evaluation) too demanding (3)
	Information about evaluation requirements (e.g., due dates) comes too late (1)	Information about evaluation requirements (e.g., due dates) comes too late (1)
	Evaluation should allow sampling of information instead of requiring data on all families	Make target child ages 1-2 rather than 3-4
	Provide individualized feedback reports to projects	Timeline for testing clients causes problems
	National evaluators/federal officials should visit projects	
Specific concerns about NEIS forms and instruments	Childrens' test (PSI) not appropriate (1)	Childrens' test (PSI) not appropriate (2)
	Do not require a daily log or modify daily log of activities (1)	Do not require a daily log or modify daily log of activities (1)
	Outcome assessments should relate to individual project's models (2)	
	Eliminate inconsistencies in forms	
	Should have a follow-up form for participants who no longer need Even Start services	

Exhibit 5.22

Abstracted Project Comments on Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations That May Warrant Revision

Features of the Law	Commentary	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	National evaluators should send data-check reports sooner	
	Information about levels of CASAS required lacking	
	Should use CASAS math test	
	Reduce frequency of testing	
	Post testing not always possible; should not be required	
	Forms should have a place to indicate home visits that were made, but with no one answering the door	
Fiscal issues	Allow food purchases with program funds (3)	Allow food purchases with program funds (1)
	Drop or change matching fund requirement (3)	Drop or change matching fund requirement (1)
	All programs to rent space in "non school" areas	Allow first year grantees to carry over money into year 2
	Allow stipends to advisory council members	Allow participants to be eligible for a transportation subsidy
	Allow stipends to families	Allow indirect costs in budget
Administrative concerns	Make budget/grant cycle match school cycle (3)	Make budget/grant cycle match school cycle (4)
	Increase the maximum amount of grant to allow for program expansion	Keep Even Start at the federal level
	Revise procedures for making budgetary and program changes--current process takes too long	Give projects 5 to 7 years to develop and implement a model program
	Provide an earlier orientation for new grantees	Clarify directions in the initial grant application

Exhibit 5.22

Abstracted Project Comments on Features of the Even Start Law or Regulations That May Warrant Revision

Features of the Law	Commentary	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	Give prompt written notification of grants awarded, including budget categories permitted	Develop unique statues and regulations for migrant programs

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

All projects were asked to respond to an open-ended question asking them to identify the areas in which they would like technical assistance. Because the item was open-ended, the frequency with which any one area was identified should be interpreted with caution. A priority listing would be better based on an opportunity for all projects to consider all potential areas of need. Nonetheless, responses of projects to the open-ended item gives a rough indication of the prevalence of certain needs.

Approximately two-thirds of the projects in each cohort identified one or more technical assistance needs. A list of the needs and the number and percentage of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 projects reporting on each type of need is presented in Exhibit 5.23. By a considerable margin, the most frequent need identified by projects was for evaluation assistance, including the completion of the NEIS forms (38 projects). More specifically, projects identified the following evaluation needs: early childhood assessment, CASAS testing, efficient and accurate completion of NEIS forms, setting up electronic database systems for record keeping and reporting, local evaluation issues, assistance with NDN/PEP applications, evaluating program impact at the local level, using test results as teaching tools, and feedback of results to projects. While technical assistance needs in evaluation are being addressed by the ongoing telephone and mail assistance provided by the national evaluation contractors and by the annual evaluation conferences and NEIS training for new projects, the reports of projects indicate that significant needs for assistance in evaluation remain. Analyses of data quality support the need for more intensive technical assistance in evaluation.

All three core service areas were identified as areas in need of technical assistance. Parenting education was the core service area of greatest need (14 projects). Projects asked for information on effective parent-child interaction activities, selecting appropriate parenting curriculum materials for Even Start parents, getting parents involved in the education of their children, accessing ideas from research on parental involvement, and finding materials specifically appropriate for home-based activities.

Similar needs for materials and activities were identified for early childhood education (nine projects). Most of the assistance needs in adult education were general (e.g., "the adult learner," adult education) suggesting more basic needs for assistance in that area (nine projects).

The remaining areas of assistance listed in Exhibit 5.23 are self-explanatory. Fourteen projects requested assistance with funding and fiscal issues. Twelve projects were interested in cross-project sharing of information to learn more about running responsive and effective Even Start programs. Ten projects were interested in strategies for keeping parents actively involved in the program. Integration of the core service components into a unified whole was listed by several projects as a technical assistance need. Home visits was also listed as the focus of technical assistance needs. Projects were interested in models and curricula as well as staff training on cultural awareness.

Exhibit 5.23

Areas of the Program for Which Technical Assistance is Wanted (1990-91 Program Year)

Program Area	Number
Evaluation/NEIS	38
Parenting education	14
Funding/fiscal issues	14
Cross project sharing	12
Increasing participant involvement	10
Early childhood education	9
Adult education	9
Curriculum materials	7
Home-based programs	7
Multicultural issues	7
Integrating components	6
Staff development	6
Effective practices	5
Recruiting participants	4
Computer uses	3
Interagency collaboration	3
Social problems	2
Dissemination of results	2

CHAPTER 6

CORE SERVICES RECEIVED BY EVEN START FAMILIES

The previous chapter was based on reports by Even Start project directors in which they described the core services implemented by their projects during the 1990-91 program year. Data for the present chapter were taken from interviews with Even Start participants and from "contact logs" maintained by project staff on individual participants. Thus, while Chapter 5 discussed implementation from the project director's perspective (i.e., what services were offered), the present chapter discusses implementation from the participant's perspective (i.e., how much of each service was received and how long the family participated).

CROSS-YEAR PARTICIPATION IN EVEN START

Although the law and regulations do not specify any set length of participation in Even Start, the program is designed to serve families with low-literate adults and children from zero through seven years of age. It can take time to remedy literacy problems, and the law and regulations allow projects periods of up to four years. This permits projects to provide relatively long-term multi-year services. Information from interviews with project directors reveals variation in the intended length of participation of families. Some projects intentionally recruit families with very low-literate adults and plan to serve them for several years, while other projects plan to provide shorter-term services to families that have an adult who can reasonably expect to attain a GED within the coming year. Recruiting and retaining families are important issues for Even Start project directors, who identified the recruitment, retention and motivation of families as the most common barrier to effective program implementation (see data presented in Chapter 5).

Evidence attesting to the difficulties faced by Even Start projects in retaining families is presented in Exhibits 6.1 and 6.2 which show the overlap in the number of Cohort 1 families who participated in core Even Start services during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 project years. A total of 2,459 families participated in at least one core service during the 1989-90 program year. Yet, only 31 percent (758) of these families were among the 4,123 Even Start families who participated in at least one core service during the 1990-91 program year. Put another way, 69 percent (1,701) of the 2,459 families that participated in Even Start during 1989-90 did not continue into 1990-91, and Even Start projects recruited an additional 3,365 families to participate in 1990-91. Exhibit 6.2 shows that this pattern holds for each core service--between 28 and 33 percent of the families who participated in 1989-90 continued into 1990-91. Hence,

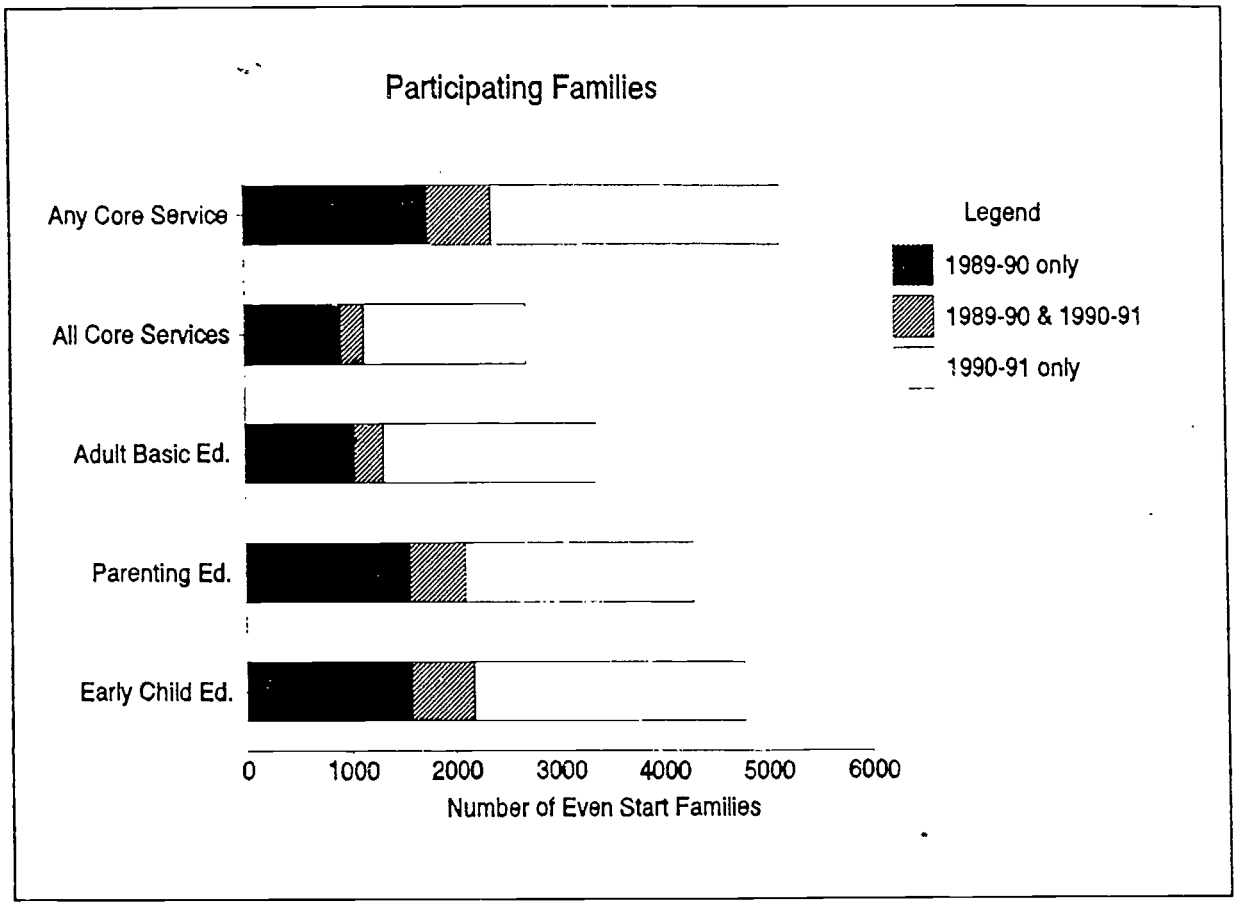

Exhibit 6.1. Overlap in Cohort 1 Families Participating in 1989-90 and 1990-91.

most of the families that participated in Cohort 1 projects during 1990-91 were families new to Even Start. There are many reasons for turnover of families in Even Start.

- Ineligible--some families were recruited and began to receive services but were later found to be ineligible.
- Employment--some adults obtained a job which made it impossible to attend Even Start sessions.
- Child birth--some women had to leave Even Start because they had a baby and the project was unable to provide child care.
- Graduation--some families left the program because the participating adult obtained a GED and met program goals.
- Dropout--some families left the program because they lost interest, moved out of the area, or the program didn't meet their needs.

Exhibit 6.2

Number and Percent of Even Start Families Participating in Core Services (1989-90 and 1990-91 Program Year)

Core Service	Cohort 1						Cohort 2		Total	
	1989-90		1990-91		Both Years		1990-91		1990-91	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parenting education	2172	88%	3653	89%	664	88%	1535	80%	5193	86%
Adult basic education	1322	54%	2924	71%	380	50%	1373	72%	4297	71%
Early childhood education	2234	91%	3937	95%	741	98%	1845	96%	5782	96%
Parenting & adult education	1151	48%	2597	63%	331	44%	1155	60%	3752	62%
All three core services	1137	46%	2546	62%	324	43%	1147	60%	3693	61%
Total families served	2459	--	4123	--	758	--	1914	--	6037	--

We do not yet have information on the relative frequency of these and other reasons for leaving the program; that information will be available in the interim evaluation report based on the 1991-92 program year.

It may be useful to think of the turnover in Even Start in terms of two distinct sets of families: (1) families who "failed to engage" in Even Start and (2) families who participated fully and then left the program. Anecdotal evidence from focus group discussions with project directors and from the In-Depth Study indicate that large numbers of families are recruited, a smaller number actually begin to receive services, and a smaller number yet become full and active participants. Our data collection system counts a family as a participant in Even Start if the project reports that they have received any core services, and hence may include a number of families which attended only for a few days or weeks, but failed to fully engage in the program. It is worth considering whether a longer term period of participation (e.g., two or three months of participation) ought to be achieved prior to counting a family as fully engaged in Even Start.

PARTICIPATION IN CORE SERVICES

Participation Across All Projects. Even Start project directors reported on the number of families that participated in each core service: adult basic education, parenting education, and early childhood education. Exhibit 6.3 shows the percentage of families that participated in each core service and in all three core services for Cohort 1 in 1989-90 and for Cohorts 1 and 2 in 1990-91. Several conclusions can be drawn from this graph. First, levels of participation are highest for early childhood education with over 90 percent of the families in each cohort participating in this core service each year. Participation is also high for parenting education, 88 percent in 1989-90 and 89 percent in 1990-91 (for Cohort 1). Participation is lowest for adult education, but it increased substantially over time for Cohort 1 projects, from 54 percent in 1989-90 to 71 percent in 1990-91.

The percentage of families participating in all three core services increased from 46 percent in 1989-90 to 62 percent in 1990-91. Even though participation in adult education is lower than for parenting education and early childhood education, Even Start families participate in adult education at a greater rate than they did prior to joining Even Start. Data from the first annual Even Start evaluation report (St.Pierre et al, 1991, p. 77) show that roughly 29 percent of Even Start families participated in some form of adult education before they joined Even Start. If a base rate of 29 percent is assumed, then Even Start is responsible for more than doubling the percentage of families that take part in adult education, even if Even Start's goal of having all families participating is not yet achieved.

There are reasons why the participation rate for adult basic education is lower than for the other core services. It is possible that Even Start project staff have difficulty knowing what kinds of basic skills instruction to provide to low-level learners. For example, if a collaborating agency offers primarily GED classes, the Even Start project may not have an appropriate

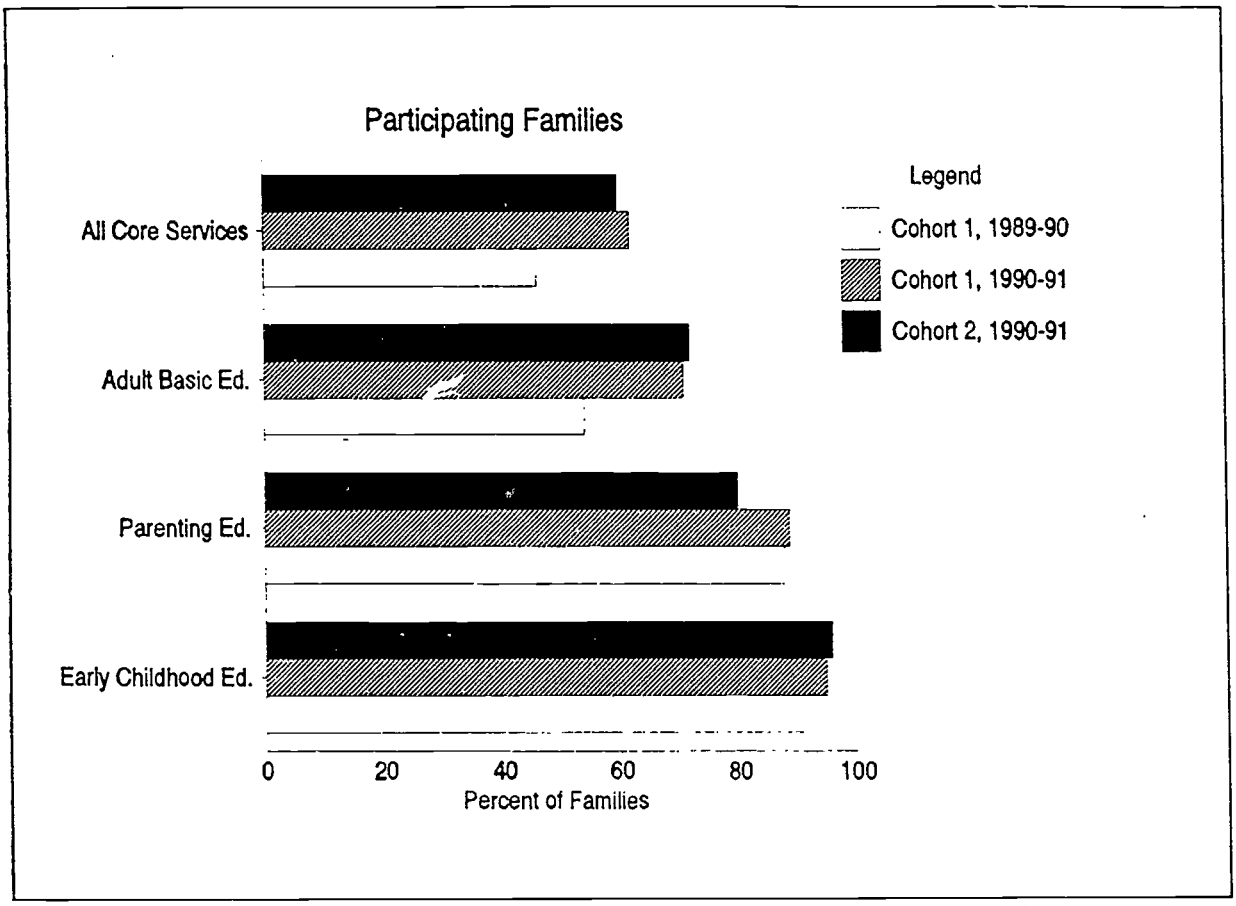

Exhibit 6.3. Percent of Even Start Families Participating in Core Services (1989-90 and 1990-91 Program Years).

instructional experience for the adult with low-level skills. The key for Even Start is that the project should be helping parents with poor reading skills improve. However, the finding that not all adults are considered by project staff to be in adult education services could be an indication that the available educational services do not meet the needs of low-level adults. These adults may be ready to learn, but Even Start projects may need help providing or finding appropriate services.

During the first year of Even Start it was understood that, due to normal implementation problems, some families might not participate in all core services. It was hoped that implementation problems would be solved, and by the second year of program operations all families would participate in all core services. Exhibit 6.3 shows that this expectation was not met.[1] Participation rates for Cohort 1 projects stayed roughly the same for early childhood

[1]Partially in response to this problem, beginning with FY1992 (1991-92) Even Start program regulations require participation in all three core services unless a family participant becomes ineligible for that service.

education. Participation increased for adult basic education, but not as much as hoped (from 54 to 71 percent). Finally, participation remained constant for parenting education (from 88 to 89 percent). The lack of large increases in participation can be attributed to the fact that most families did not continue in Even Start from 1989-90 to 1990-91. Rather, most Cohort 1 Even Start projects recruited large numbers of new participants, with the attendant problems of getting new families motivated to take part in each of the core Even Start services.

Another conclusion is that participation rates for 1990-91 did not differ much between projects in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. It might have been expected that participation rates would increase from year to year, under the assumption that projects would be better implemented after a year of operation and that a better implemented project would have higher participation rates. That this did not occur may be explained by Cohort 1's high turnover rate, and it appears that participation may be more dependent on the length of time that a family is in Even Start than on the state of project implementation.

Project-Level Variation in Core Service Participation. It was reported above that more than half of the Even Start families participated in all three core services during the 1990-91 program year. However, this percentage varies from project to project, depending on factors such as the degree of implementation of the project and the extent to which the project has recruited new families.

Exhibits 6.4 (for Cohort 1 projects) and 6.5 (for Cohort 2 projects) show the percentage of families that participated in all three core services during the 1990-91 program year. The patterns are quite similar for the two cohorts; a few projects in each cohort had all families participating in all core services, only one project in each cohort had no families that participated in all core services, and most projects had mixed results.

Project-level distributions of participation during 1990-91 are presented separately for each of the three core service areas in Exhibits 6.6 and 6.7 (for adult basic education), Exhibits 6.8 and 6.9 (for parenting education), and Exhibits 6.10 and 6.11 (for early childhood education). As was the case for 1989-90, adult basic education was the core service with the greatest amount of variability in implementation; many projects in each cohort had quite low levels of participation while others had full participation. There also was considerable variability among projects in participation rates for parenting education. There is less variability in participation rates for early childhood education, and many projects had 100 percent of their families participate in this core service.

AMOUNT OF CORE SERVICES

The above discussion was based on project directors' reports of which families did and did not participate in each of the three core Even Start services as well as focus groups with Even Start project directors. In addition, during the 1990-91 program year, Even Start project staff completed "contact logs" for families which recorded the number of hours spent in each

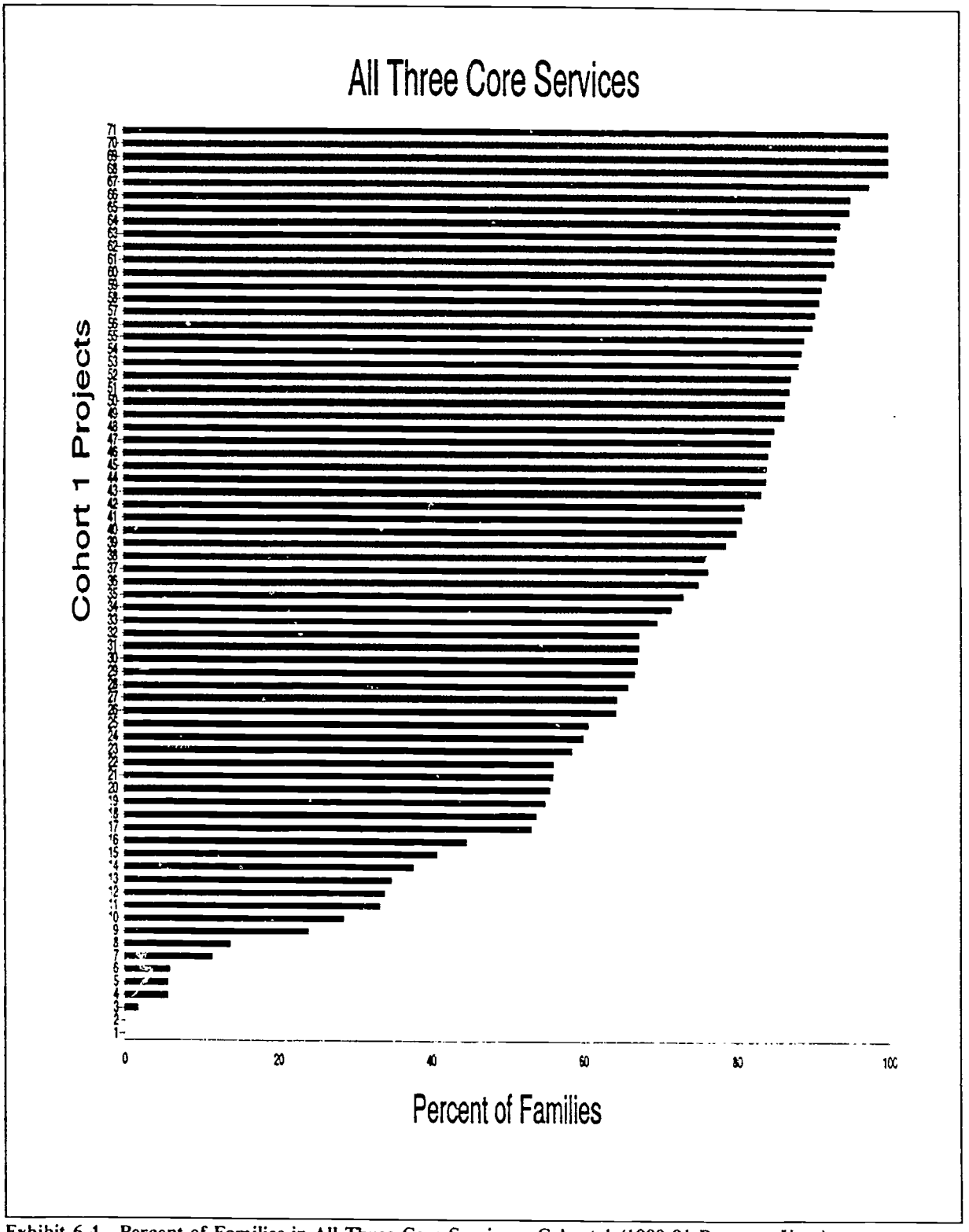

Exhibit 6.4. Percent of Families in All Three Core Services: Cohort 1 (1990-91 Program Year)

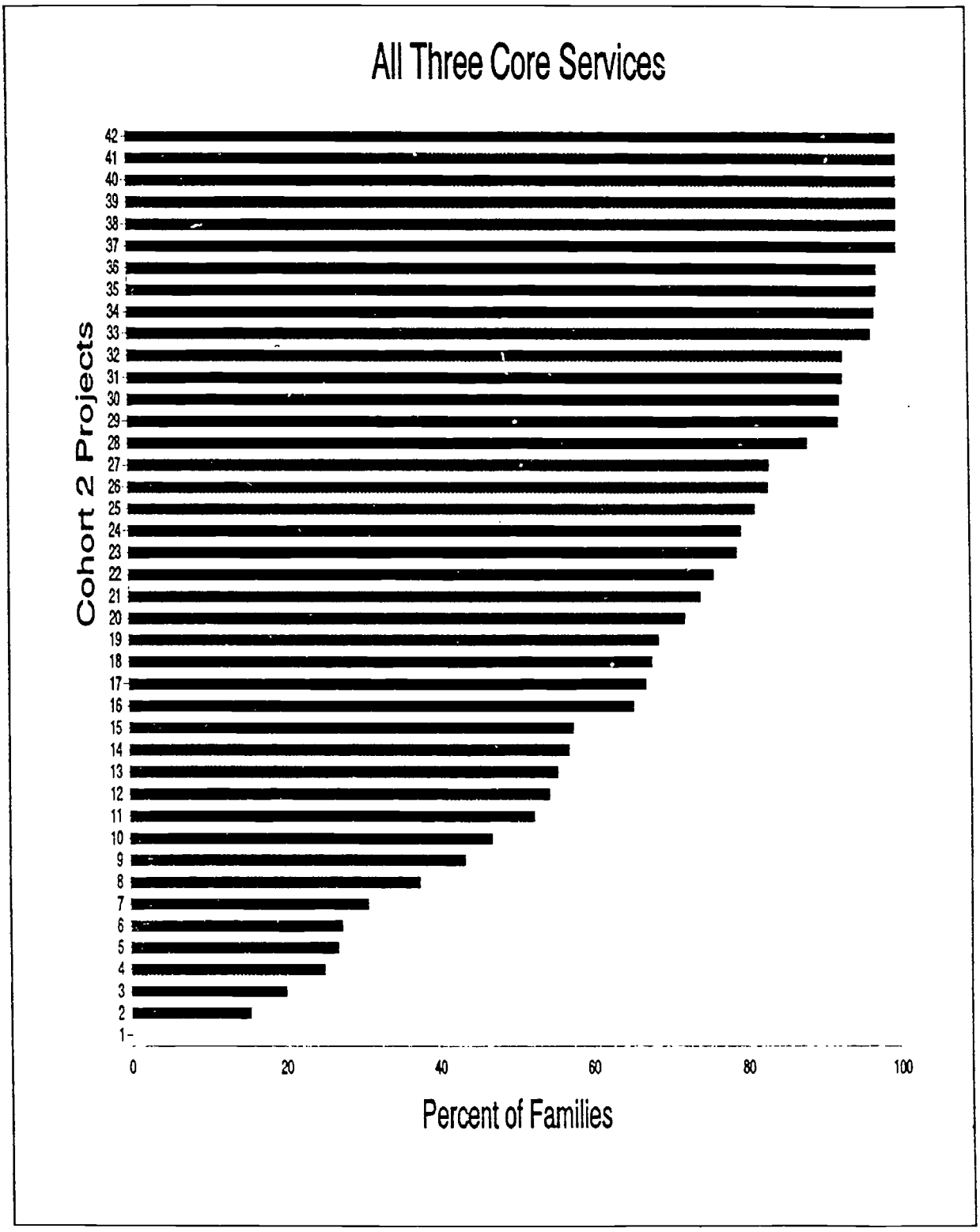

Exhibit 6.5. Percent of Families in All Three Core Services: Cohort 2 (1990-91 Program Year)

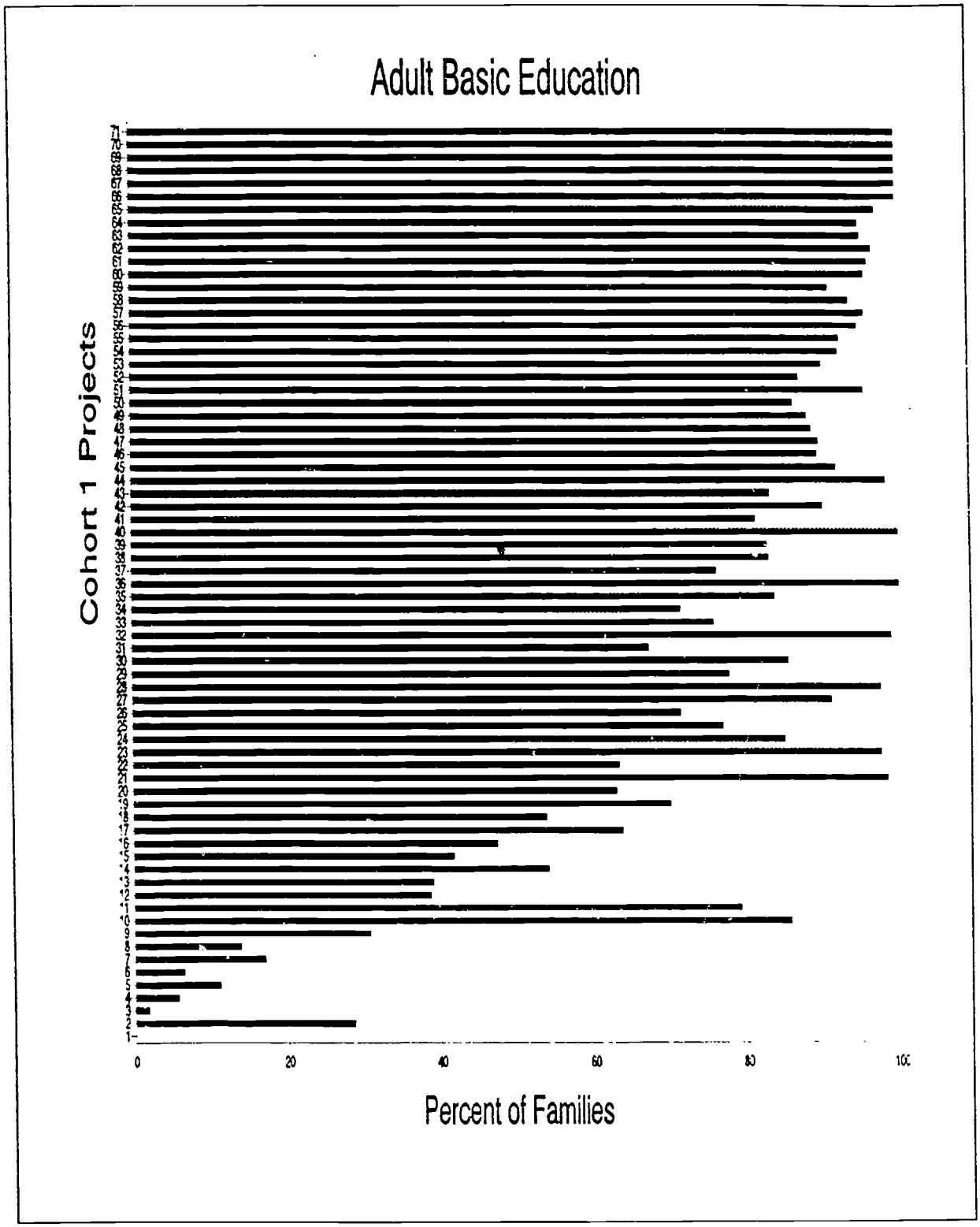

Exhibit 6.6. Percent of Families in Adult Basic Education: Cohort 1 (1990-91 Program Year)

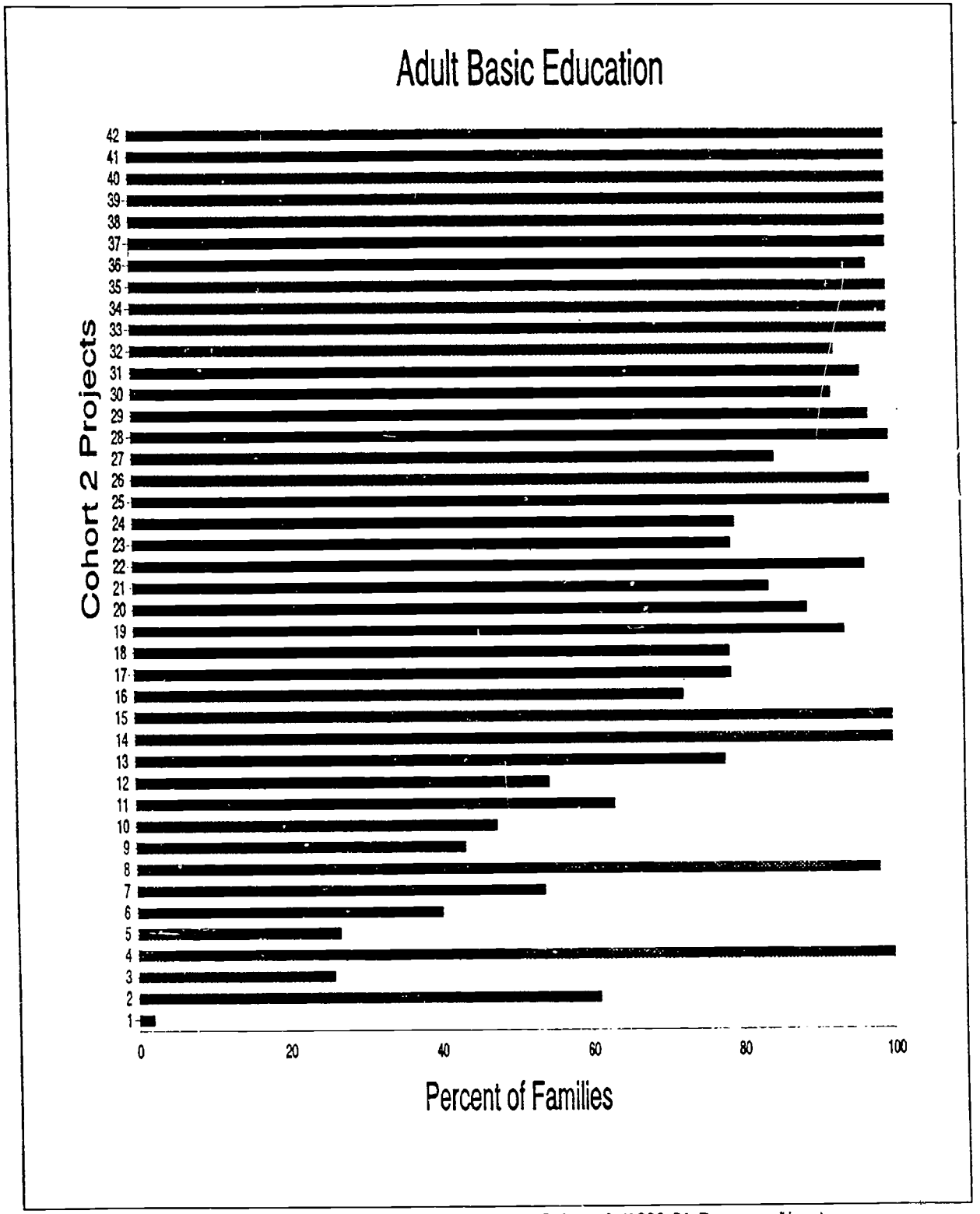

Exhibit 6.7. Percent of Families in Adult Basic Education: Cohort 2 (1990-91 Program Year)

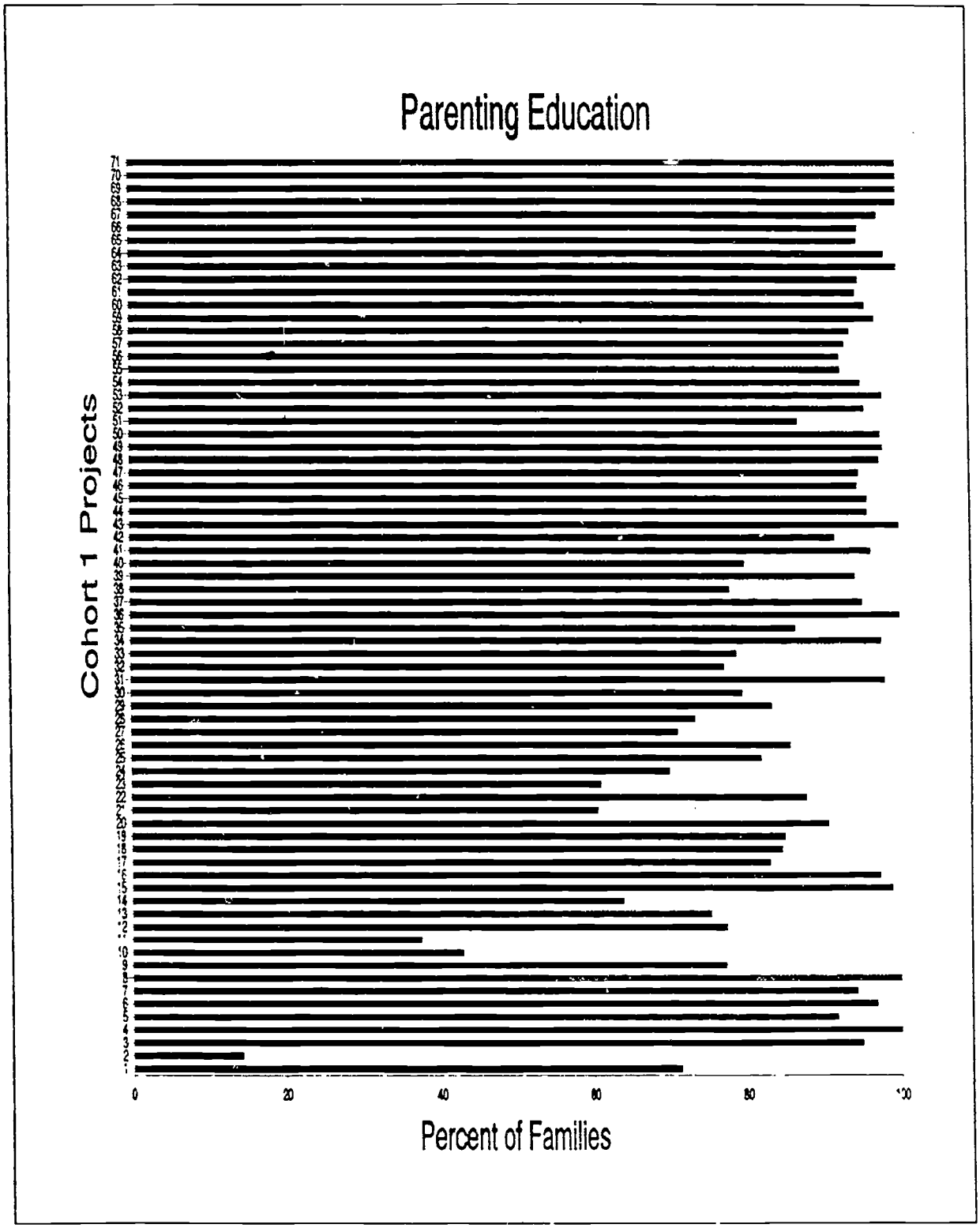

Exhibit 6.8. Percent of Families in Parenting Education: Cohort 1 (1990-91 Program Year)

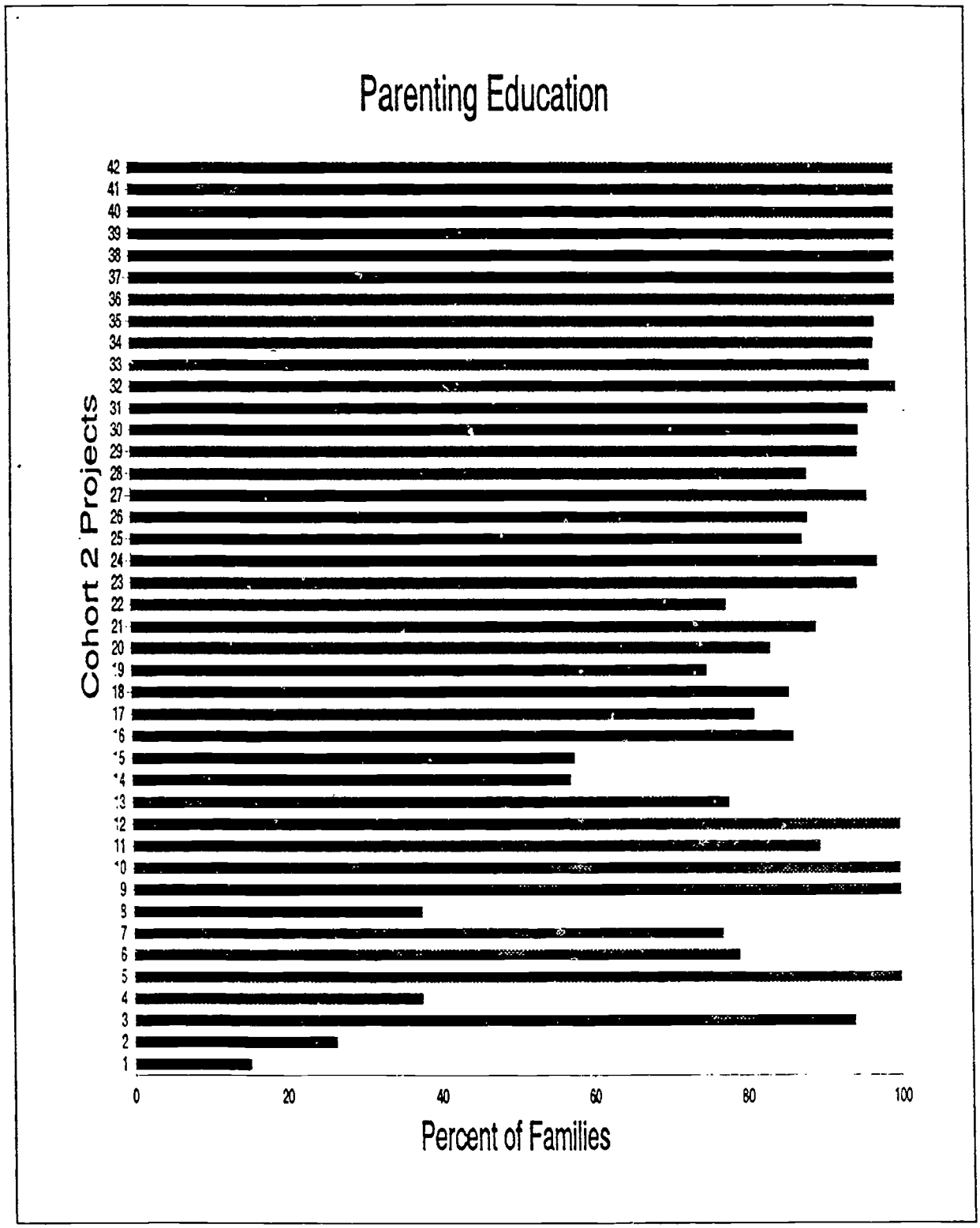

Exhibit 6.9. Percent of Families in Parenting Education: Cohort 2 (1990-91 Program Year)

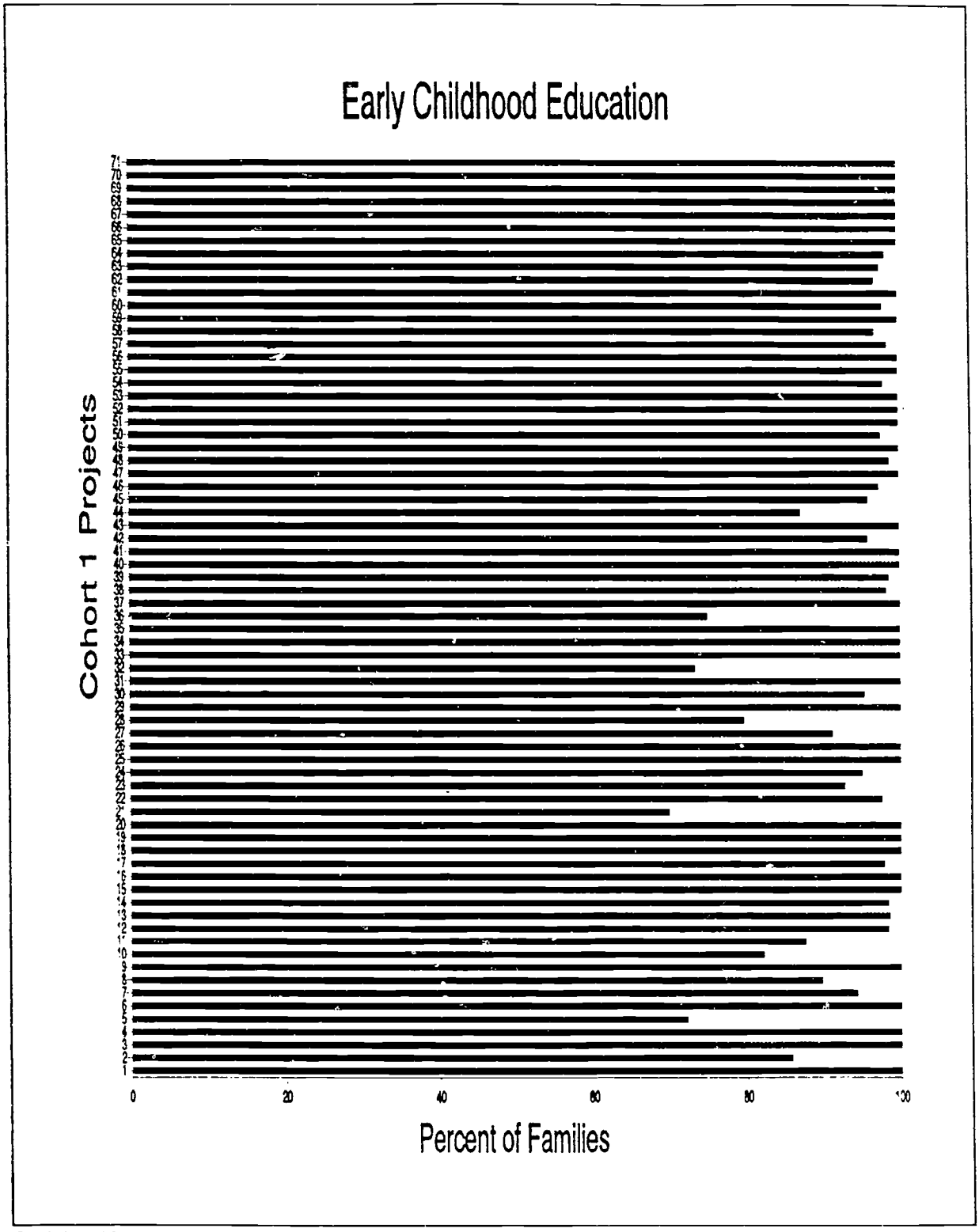

Exhibit 6.10. Percent of Families in Early Childhood Education: Cohort 1 (1990-91 Program Year)

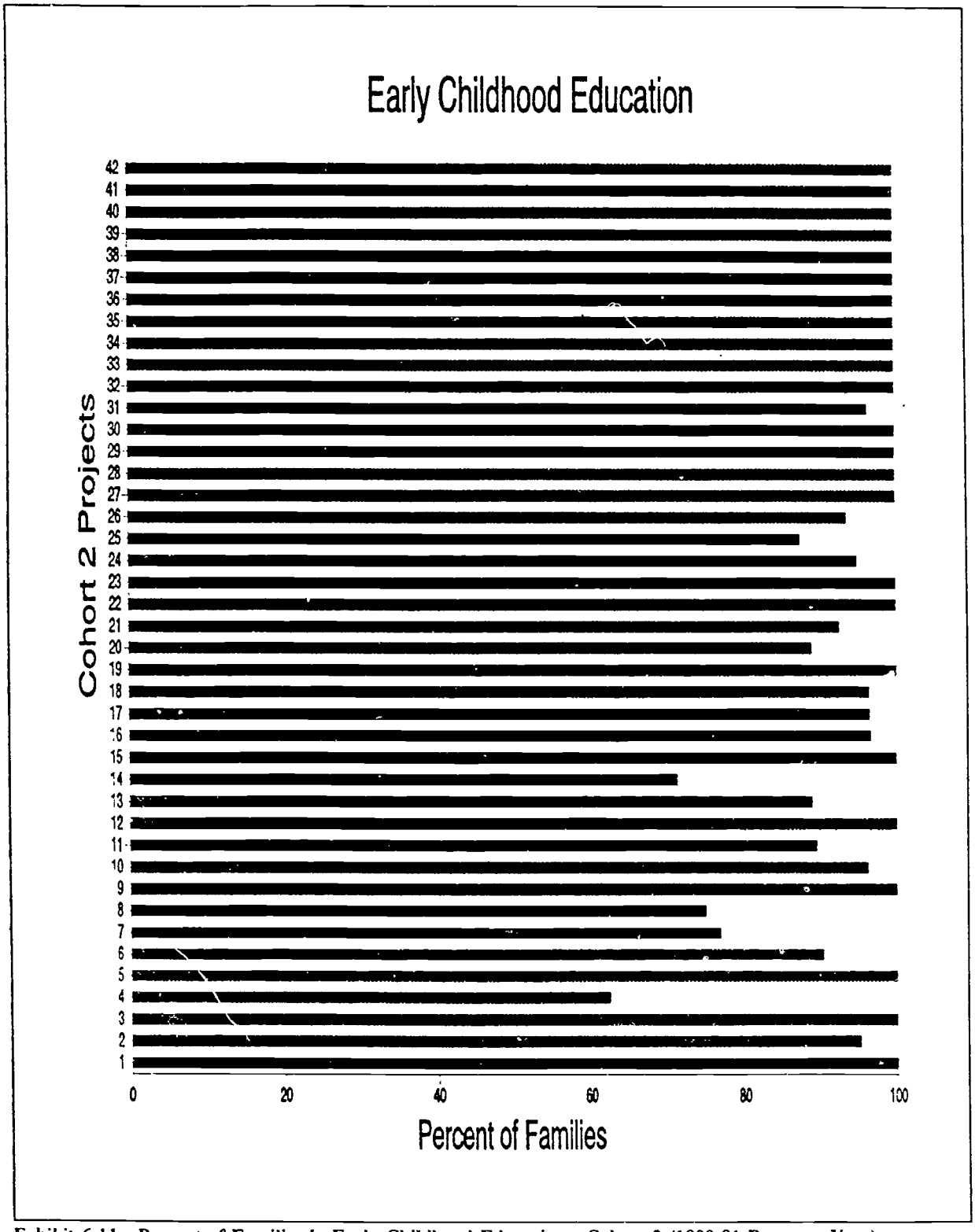

Exhibit 6.11. Percent of Families in Early Childhood Education: Cohort 2 (1990-91 Program Year)

core service during each month of the year. Data are currently available only for 6 months of the 1990-91 program year--from December 1990 through May 1991. Thus, we are able to describe the amount of service received by participants for an average week or a month while they are in Even Start. However, we do not have data from a complete year, and hence we have to extrapolate to determine how much service a participant would receive if they completed a full year in Even Start.

Amount of Core Services Across All Projects. Exhibit 6.12 shows four different measures of the average amount of service received by more than 4,800 Even Start families for each core service area: hours/month, days/month, days/week, and hours/day. It shows that the average Even Start family:

- received 6.5 hours of parenting education, 9.8 hours of adult basic education, and 29.7 hours of early childhood education per month;
- took part in parenting education 1.3 days per week for 1.3 hours per day;
- took part in adult basic education 1.0 days per week for 2.5 hours per day; and
- took part in early childhood education 2.5 days per week for 3.0 hours per day.

These statistics are based on data gathered from contact logs for the months December 1990 through May 1991. If we assume that the monthly averages calculated here are representative of the school year as a whole, then Exhibit 6.13 shows that a nine-month school year in Even Start would consist of about 59 hours of parenting education (6.5 hours per month * nine months), 88 hours of adult basic education (9.8 hours per month * nine months), and 267 hours of early childhood education (29.7 hours per month * nine months).

Project-Level Variation in Amount of Core Services. Presentation of averages masks the great variability associated with the amount of service received by families in different Even Start projects. Exhibit 6.14 shows the range of project means for the amount of service received each month by families in each core service area. For parenting education the overall monthly mean is 6.5 hours of service per family and project-level averages range from less than one hour per family per month to about 27 hours per family per month. Families in the lowest 25 percent of the projects receive between .4 and 3.4 hours per month, families in the next quartile receive between 3.4 and 5.0 hours per month, families in the third quartile receive between 5.0 and 9.3 hours per month, and families in the fourth quartile receive between 9.3 and 26.9 hours per month. Similar distributions are shown for adult basic education where project-level averages are as high as 48 hours per month, and for early childhood education where project-level averages range up to 145 hours per month.

Exhibit 6.12

Amount of Core Services Received by Even Start Participants

Core Service[3]	Cohort 1[1] (n=3052)		Cohort 2[2] (n=1785)		Total (n=4837)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Parenting education						
Hours/month	6.3	8.3	7.1	13.1	6.5	10.1
Days/month	4.9	5.0	5.8	6.8	5.2	5.6
Days/week	1.2	-	1.5	-	1.3	-
Hours/day	1.3	-	1.1	-	1.3	-
Adult basic education						
Hours/month	9.2	13.5	11.0	19.4	9.8	15.6
Days/month	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.7	3.9	4.3
Days/week	1.0	-	1.0	-	1.0	-
Hours/day	2.4	-	2.7	-	2.5	-
Early childhood education						
Hours/month	28.6	36.7	32.2	42.0	29.7	38.5
Days/month	9.7	8.4	9.8	9.2	9.8	8.7
Days/week	2.4	-	2.5	-	2.5	-
Hours/day	2.9	-	3.3	-	3.0	-

[1]Based on contact logs from December 1990 through May 1991 (6 months).
[2]Based on contact logs from January 1991 through May 1991 (5 months).
[3]Estimated are based on average hours, average months, and average days served.

Discussion of Recruitment and Participation Findings

Identifying families eligible for Even Start has not been a major problem for most projects. However, the fact that free services are offered is no guarantee that a family will avail themselves of those services. Participation in Even Start requires a serious commitment from a family--an adult must participate in adult basic education and must participate in parenting education classes, and a child must participate in an early childhood education program.

Exhibit 6.13

Projected Hours of Even Start Core Services

Core Service Area	Months of Service		
	6 months	9 months	12 months
Parenting education[1]	39 hours	59 hours	78 hours
Adult basic education[2]	59 hours	88 hours	118 hours
Early childhood education[3]	178 hours	267 hours	356 hours

[1]Assumes 6.5 hours per month.
[2]Assumes 9.8 hours per month.
[3]Assumes 29.7 hours per month.

In voluntary programs like Even Start, no "stick" is available to ensure participation. While we may see the provision of social services as a presumed benefit, it is often difficult to convince at-risk families of the validity of that point of view. Potential Even Start parents are often enthusiastic about the possibility of getting their child into an early childhood education program. Further, participation in adult basic education is a positive feature for some adults, especially those who see the possibility of obtaining a GED, but it is a negative point for other adults. On the other hand, participation in parenting education rarely seems to be a "drawing card" for Even Start.

As noted above, many families do not stay in Even Start more than one year, and there seems to be a large amount of "churning" of families through the recruitment process before a project ends up with a full case load. In addition, about one-third of Even Start families participate only infrequently or not at all in adult basic education. Officials at the Department of Education have been particularly concerned about this latter finding because participation in all three core services is seen as a key ingredient in achieving the desired long-term benefits for Even Start families.

These findings point out one of the key difficulties that Even Start project directors face in trying to design and implement their projects: at the local level there is a conflict between the objectives of recruiting and serving families "most in need," and at the same time, ensuring that all families participate fully in each of Even Start's core services. This conflict arises because the Even Start law requires that local projects target "...eligible participants most in need of the activities and services provided..." At the same time, the Department of Education requires that Even Start families must participate fully in each of Even Start's three core

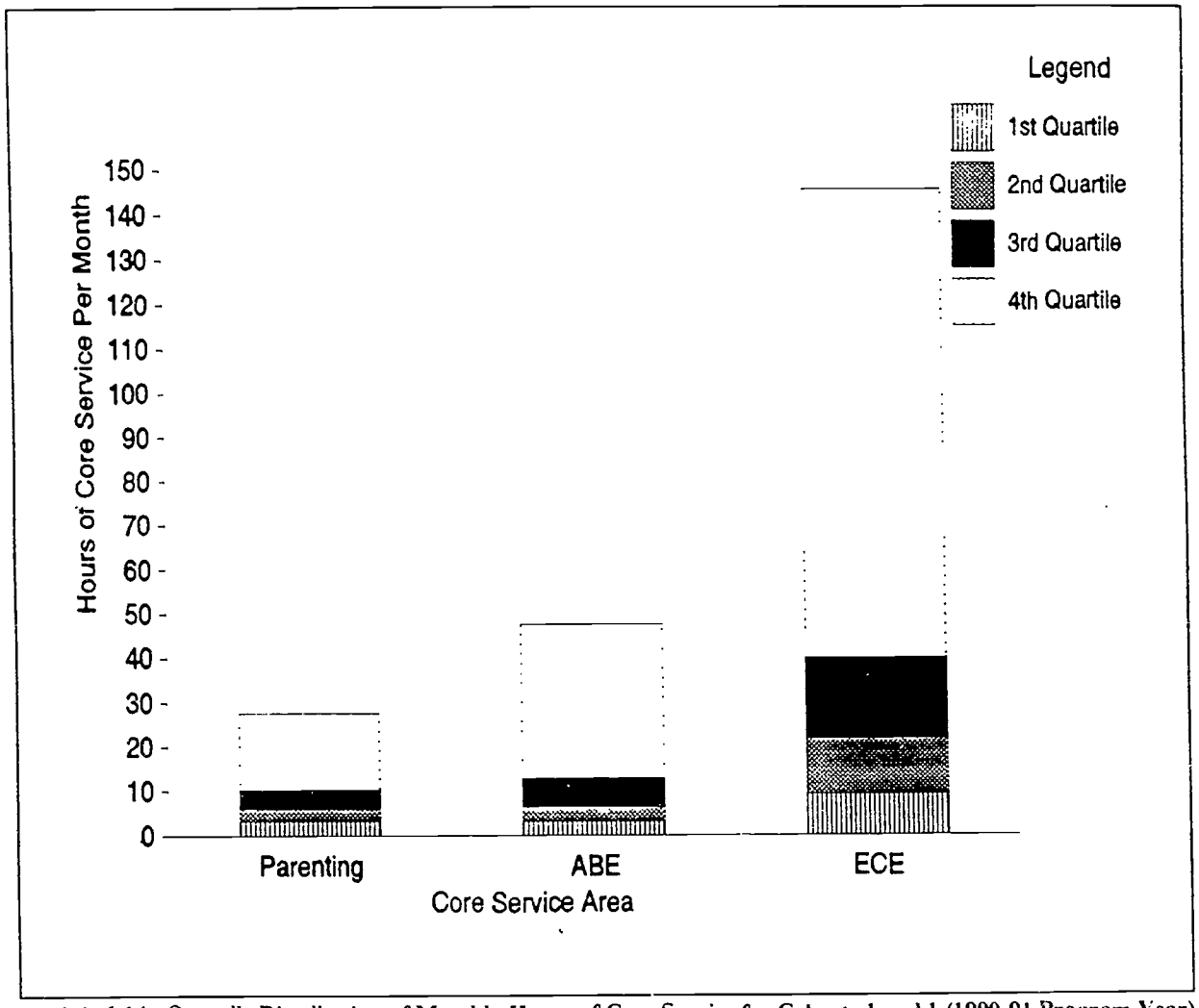

Exhibit 6.14. Quartile Distribution of Monthly Hours of Core Service for Cohorts 1 and 1 (1990-91 Program Year)

services. Finally, the conflict is compounded because there is no definition of "most in need," and because all of the families eligible for Even Start truly need its services.

Some projects have decided to focus on families that are at the upper end of the continuum of need. We say that these families are motivated and are "ready to learn." The result is that these projects have relatively high participation rates for core services and expend less energy than other projects on support services. The support services that they do use tend to be logistical in nature, e.g., transportation or child care. Other projects have tried to meet both requirements by focusing on families at the lower end of the need continuum. These are termed the most "difficult to reach" families. These families often require large amounts of Even Start's support services, and, in addition, are unwilling or unable to be full participants in Even Start's core services. Therefore, this approach can result in projects that obtain lower participation rates in core services and, at the same time, expend substantial energy and

resources on support services which tend to be "life supporting" rather than logistical in nature, e.g., substance abuse treatment, counseling, or housing assistance.

Finally, there is the problem of having no clear definition of "most in need." The term is usually interpreted with respect to a general need for social services and education on the part of an adult. That is, an adult who only completed sixth grade is seen as having a greater need than an adult who completed eleventh grade, and an adult with a substance abuse problem has a greater need than one without such a problem. These distinctions make sense, but lead Even Start project directors to feel that they cannot serve adults who could benefit greatly from Even Start (they could well obtain a GED within a year) because they have to focus on families which, although they are in greater need, are simply not able to benefit from Even Start's literacy-based activities. Further, such distinctions ignore the needs of children in potential Even Start families. It is likely that any child in a family which is eligible for Even Start needs a good preschool education, regardless of the need status of his or her parents.

Even Start is far from alone in facing this type of problem. Much the same issue has been reported in recent studies of the Family Support Act and the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program (Pauly, 1992). The JOBS program created incentives for states to provide or expand educational services for people on welfare, while stressing their reciprocal obligation to participate. However, Pauly (1992) reports that there was a lack of consensus and clarity of goals on whether JOBS programs should focus on job preparation, educational credentials, or daily living skills. Similar conclusions were reached by Herr, et al (1991) in their study of JOBS and Project Match. They conclude that "...the JOBS program is based on an unrealistic conception of what it will take to move the most disadvantaged welfare recipients into the mainstream and social worlds" (p.3). Further, they question the appropriateness of basic skills classes as a required first step for people with poor educational histories. Even Start's experience is directly in line with these findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER 7

PRELIMINARY ANALYSES OF EFFECTS ON EVEN START PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents preliminary analyses of the effect of Even Start on participating children, parents, and families. The findings presented here are important and we believe that they are valid representations of the effects of Even Start. However, it is important to remember that these are preliminary analyses and that several caveats apply. First, the data reported are from the National Evaluation Information System and thus apply to Even Start families only--no comparison families were tested. The lack of a randomly-assigned control group limits our ability to unambiguously attribute the observed effects to Even Start. Second, the amount of time between pretest and posttest is relatively short, ranging from a minimum of three months to a maximum of seven or eight months for any given family. This means that our conclusions are based on participation in Even Start for no more than one program year. Third, we have not yet analyzed all of the available data, and this report does not present conclusions about parent-level measures such as parenting skills, GED attainment, and other aspects of the parent's life. Fourth, the analyses presented here are relatively simple in nature, presenting an overall assessment of outcomes for children and parents. We have not yet had the opportunity to conduct any fine-grained analyses, e.g., assessments of outcomes for high- versus low-intensity projects, or for participants with varying amounts of exposure to Even Start. Finally, the analyses are limited to data reported by Cohort 1 Even Start projects for the 1990-91 program year.

The next annual report will remedy many of these shortcomings in that it will (1) present the results from small-scale randomized studies, (2) present results from the NEIS based on larger samples of families with longer periods of exposure to Even Start from projects in both Cohorts 1 and 2, and (3) contain the results of more complex analyses.

DOMAINS OF EFFECTIVENESS

The conceptual model prepared for this evaluation identifies many different effects that Even Start hopes to achieve. Some of these include the following:

- Even Start hopes to increase children's school readiness and literacy-related skills. Measures of these outcomes include the PreSchool Inventory and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

- Even Start hopes to increase adult's functional literacy, help adults obtain a GED, help adults become employed, increase adult's life management skills, and improve expectations for children and self. Measures of these outcomes include the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), records of GED status and employment status, and face-to-face interviews about life management skills, self-esteem, expectations for children, and many other aspects of the adult's life.

- Even Start hopes to improve parent's skills as teachers. Measures include direct observation of a parent-child reading task as well as several self-report items related to parenting skills.

At this point in the evaluation we have conducted preliminary analyses of only a few of these outcomes based on data collected in the 1990-91 year which cover between three and eight months of Even Start "treatment."

EFFECTS ON EVEN START CHILDREN

Even Start hopes to positively affect children's school readiness and this evaluation includes two measures that will be used to assess the effect of Even Start on children. But, before going any further, we need a definition of what we mean by "the effect of Even Start." *The effect of Even Start on a participating family is the difference between an observation taken after participation in the program and what would have been observed if the family had not been in the program.* Since it is impossible to know how a participating family would have performed if they had not been part of the program, we must estimate what that performance would have been. Such an estimate is called a "no-treatment expectation" and is often generated by measuring "control group" families that are deemed similar to the program families. Post-program observations made on program families are then compared to the no-treatment expectation to yield a measure of program effect.

The challenge in generating a no-treatment expectation is to ensure that the program group and the control group are, indeed, equivalent. To this end, the best control group is one constructed by randomly assigning potential participants to Even Start or to a control group. This method ensures that the characteristics of participating families, on average, will not differ systematically from the characteristics of nonparticipants. Random assignment of families to Even Start or a control group is being used as part of the In-Depth Study and results from that study will be available for the next annual evaluation report.

For the present report, we have data only on Even Start participants. No data are available from any control families. The question thus becomes, in the absence of a randomly-assigned control group, how can we best generate a no-treatment expectation so that we can estimate the effect of Even Start?

Our approach is to use external standards of comparison such as the norms that publishers provide for standardized tests, the scores attained by similar populations in other recently completed evaluations, or the scores of program participants prior to receiving program services. While these approaches are second-best to a randomized experiment, they provide a reasonable preliminary assessment.

Effects on the PreSchool Inventory. The PSI is a 32-item individually administered measure that assesses a range of school readiness skills, e.g., identifying shapes and colors and understanding numerical concepts. It requires 15 minutes to administer and is appropriate for children between the ages of three and five. For the Even Start evaluation, the PSI is administered to children participating in early childhood education at the beginning of the school year (or at any other time of entry to Even Start) and again in the spring (or at the time of exit from Even Start).

Exhibit 7.1 presents average pretest scores on the PSI for 1,211 children entering Even Start in the fall of 1990.[1] The PSI measures school readiness skills, and so we expect scores to increase as children age. This indeed was the case. Pretest means are 10.4 points for three-year olds, 15.1 points for four-year olds, and 18.7 points for five-year olds. Across all ages, the standard deviation was 6.7 points. Pretest means are also presented in Exhibit 7.1 for different types of family structure, for different levels of family income, for the language used in testing, and for the location of testing. Subgroup differences are generally in the expected direction; e.g. children from high income families score higher than children from low income families; and children of couples score higher than children of single parents or extended families.

Exhibit 7.1 also shows the gain scores (expressed in items per month) for 645 children who took the PSI as both a pretest and a posttest. The amount of time between pretest and posttest varied from project to project and even between individuals within a given project because pretesting was done as children entered the program (or in October) and posttesting was done when children left the program (or in May, if they continued in Even Start). Therefore, pre-post gains are expressed in terms of the number of PSI items gained per month in the program.

Overall, children who participated in Even Start attained an average gain of .90 items per month on the PSI. This amount of gain did not vary across levels of any of the variables shown in Exhibit 7.1. As noted above, children's raw scores on the PSI increase over time due to normal maturation/development--older children score higher than younger children. Hence, a simple comparison of pretest scores taken at entry to Even Start with posttest scores taken at the end of some amount of exposure to Even Start overstates the effectiveness of Even Start by including normal development as part of the Even Start effect. That is, the average gain of .90

[1]The scores shown in the exhibit are raw scores, i.e., the number of items correct on the test. The highest possible score on the PSI is 32.

Exhibit 7.1

Breakdown of PSI Raw Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores (1990-91 Program Year)

Variable	Pretest (Raw Scores)			Matched Gain (Items per Month)		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
Age of child[1]						
3.0 - 3.11	10.4	5.6	398	0.9	0.9	189
4.0 - 4.11	15.1	6.3	648	0.9	0.8	371
5.0 - 5.11	18.7	6.6	165	1.0	1.0	85
Family structure						
Single parent	13.8	6.9	459	0.9	0.9	216
Couple	14.7	6.8	543	0.9	0.8	322
Extended family	12.7	6.0	161	1.0	0.9	97
Family income						
Under $5,000	13.5	6.7	421	0.9	0.9	199
$5,000-$9,999	13.9	6.7	332	0.9	0.9	174
$10,000-$14,999	14.8	6.9	209	0.8	0.7	132
$15,000-$19,999	14.0	6.2	93	1.0	0.8	56
$20,000-$24,999	14.7	6.5	51	1.1	0.7	33
$25,000 or more	18.3	7.4	23	0.7	0.7	17
Language used in testing						
English	14.4	6.7	1072	0.9	0.8	586
Spanish	10.4	6.1	107	1.1	0.8	51
Location of testing						
Home	14.7	6.9	291	0.8	1.0	130
Center	14.2	6.9	664	0.9	0.8	357
Other	12.9	5.8	231	0.9	0.8	150
TOTAL	14.1	6.7	1211	0.9	0.8	645

[1]Age is expressed in years and months, so 3.0 is 3 years, 0 months

items per month is composed partly of an effect due to Even Start and partly of an effect due to normal development.

If the PSI had national norms, we could estimate the amount of growth to expert on the PSI by comparing the pretest-posttest growth of Even Start children with the growth of children nationally, but no such norms exist for the PSI. Therefore, to estimate the amount of PSI gain due to normal development, we have generated a no-treatment growth expectation on the PSI

for Even Start children by using the Even Start population as its own reference group. That is, we have generated an expected growth rate (defined as the number of additional test items correct for each additional month of age) based on the cross-section of pretest scores that were collected for Even Start children. Additional information on this topic is presented in Appendix 7.1.

Exhibit 7.2 shows two growth curves -- one for children prior to participation in Even Start, and a second for the same children after some period of participation in Even Start. The

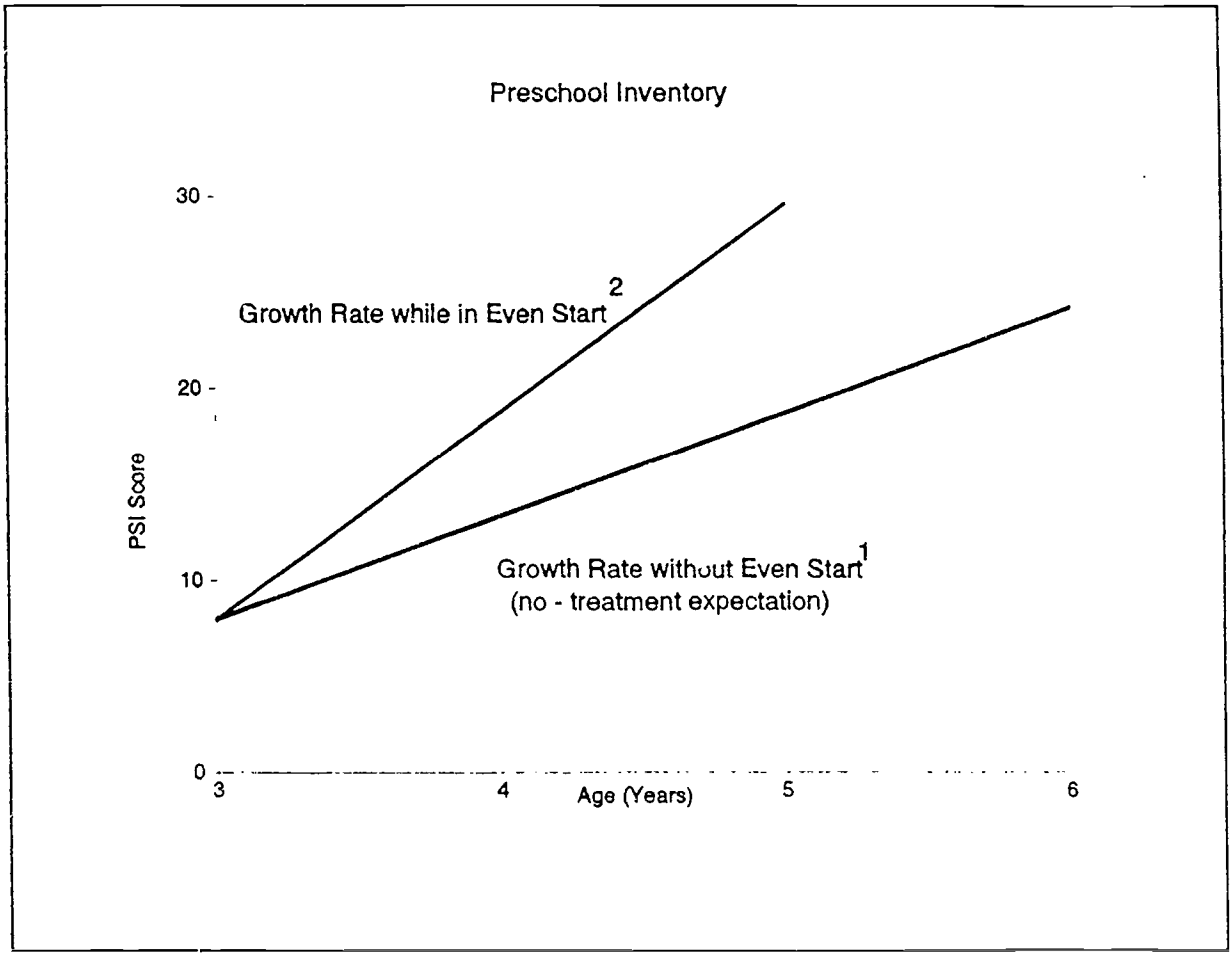

Exhibit 7.2. Cumulative Growth of PSI Scores: With and Without Even Start.

[1]Based on cross-sectional data from 1211 children of different ages who took the PSI as a pretest, prior to entry to Even Start.

[2]Based on pretest-posttest gains from 655 children who participated in Even Start.

growth curve "without Even Start" was based on the pretest scores of 1,211 children of different ages as they were entering Even Start and serves as a no-treatment expectation. It can be seen that children's scores on the PSI improve as they get older, by an average of .44 items per month of age. This is the effect due to normal maturation/development. When we analyze the data from 645 children who participated in Even Start, we see a different, steeper, growth curve which shows that children in Even Start gained an average of .90 items per month, double the amount that is expected in the absence of Even Start.

The gain of .90 items per month can be expressed as the combination of .44 items per month due to normal maturation plus .46 items per month due to Even Start. This is substantial effect due to Even Start, one which is commensurate with the largest child-level gains observed on the PSI in other studies of preschool programs. Exhibit 7.3 allows a comparison of the

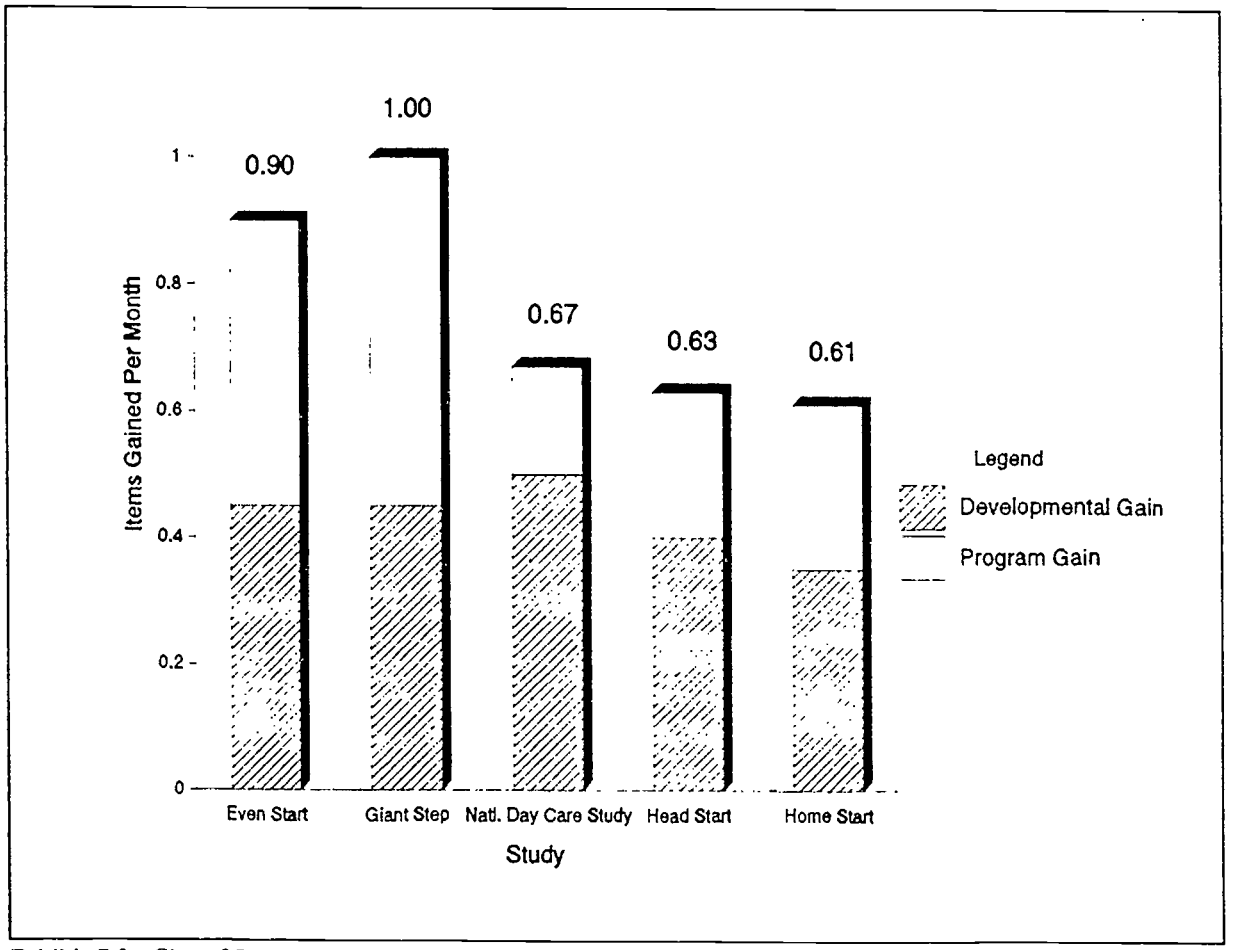

Exhibit 7.3. Size of Developmental and Program Gains on the PSI in Several Studies.

effects observed on the PSI in the Even Start evaluation with effects on the PSI as seen in four other large-scale evaluations of early childhood education programs conducted in the 1970s and

1980s. In the other evaluations the developmental gain (no-treatment expectation) on the PSI ranged from .4 to .5 items per month, and the gain including the effect of the program under study ranged from .6 to 1.0 items per month. Children participating in Even Start fit the developmental pattern observed in the other studies exactly, gaining .44 items per month prior to entering Even Start. Once in Even Start, they gained at an improved rate of .90 items per month. This accelerated rate of learning on the PSI means that as Even Start children enter the public schools they are more likely to know basic concepts and precursors of kindergarten skills than they would have in the absence of the program.

Effects on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The PPVT was administered to children at the same time as the PSI. The PPVT measures receptive (hearing) vocabulary, and gives a quick estimate of verbal or literacy-related skills. An individually administered test, it requires 15 to 20 minutes per child and is appropriate for children between the ages of two and 18 years. Whereas the PSI measures school readiness, the PPVT assesses verbal/language skills.

The PPVT has national norms and hence the pretest scores presented in this report are expressed as standard scores, which can be translated into percentile ranks. Our initial expectation was that PPVT standard scores would not change in the absence of a "treatment." That is, there is no particular reason that a child's percentile ranking relative to the PPVT norms group should change over time unless that child is receiving some special services. Therefore, any increase in standard scores during the time that a child is participating in Even Start might be taken as an indication that Even Start is helping to increase childrens' receptive vocabulary.

However, our initial expectation of no change over time appears to be incorrect. Exhibit 7.4 presents a breakdown of entry scores on the PPVT for 1,344 children who took the PPVT as a pretest, prior to entering Even Start.[2] Across children of all ages, pretest scores averaged 78.8 standard score points. This corresponds to the 8th percentile when compared to national norms and points out the low verbal skills of children prior to entry into Even Start. As was the case with PSI scores, subgroup differences for PPVT pretest scores are generally in the expected direction, i.e., higher scores for high-income families and higher scores for children of couples.

PPVT pretest scores are higher for five to six year-olds than for three to four year-olds, suggesting that we can expect PPVT scores to increase with age, especially as children enter kindergarten and first grade. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (Baker and Mott, 1986) support the hypothesis that PPVT standard scores increase with age: however, the increase disappears once children reach age seven. It would be incorrect to attribute this increase to Even Start, and so we used the same methodology used in the analysis of PSI scores to develop a no-treatment expectation for PPVT scores for children ages three-six. Over this

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[2]The scores shown in Exhibit 7.4 are standard scores which were developed on the PPVT norms group and which have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15 (for the norms group). Additional information is contained in Appendix 7.1.

Exhibit 7.4

Breakdown of PPVT Standard Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores (1990-91 Program Year)

Variable	Pretest (Raw Scores)			Matched Gain (Items per Month)		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
Age of child[1]						
3,0 - 3,11	78.9	22.3	370	0.3	1.7	85
4,0 - 4,11	75.6	21.3	554	1.2	2.0	207
5,0 - 5,11	80.3	17.4	213	0.8	2.4	60
6,0 - 6,11	85.9	19.1	107	1.2	2.1	30
7,0 - 7,11	87.2	15.4	52	-0.7	2.5	19
Family structure						
Single parent	77.2	24.5	505	1.1	2.3	142
Couple	81.9	17.5	590	0.8	2.1	200
Extended family	73.0	18.0	153	0.3	1.5	53
Family income						
Under $5,000	77.5	23.5	465	1.0	2.5	145
$5,000-$9,999	77.5	20.4	365	0.7	1.7	120
$10,000-$14,999	79.7	17.9	211	0.7	2.0	73
$15,000-$19,999	82.5	18.8	97	1.6	1.7	24
$20,000-$24,999	81.2	19.7	51	1.6	1.7	13
$25,000 or more	88.8	14.6	35	0.2	1.9	13
Language used in testing						
English	78.3	21.0	1244	0.9	2.1	396
Spanish	88.6	15.1	25	1.9	0.0	1
Location of testing						
Home	83.1	15.7	278	0.5	2.3	70
Center	77.3	23.2	758	0.9	2.0	276
Other	76.0	17.9	219	1.4	2.3	50
TOTAL	78.8	20.9	1344	0.9	2.1	404

[1]Age is expressed in years of months, so 3,0 is 3 years, 0 months.

age range PPVT scores increase by about .26 standard score points per month, or about 3.1 points per year (see Appendix 7.1 for details). This is the level of growth that we expect to see in the absence of Even Start.

As was the case with data from the PSI, an analysis of PPVT standard scores for children who participated in Even Start shows that they gain more than would be expected on the basis of normal development (see Exhibit 7.5). While in Even Start, children gain an average of .90 standard score points per month (only by coincidence is this the same number as the gain on the

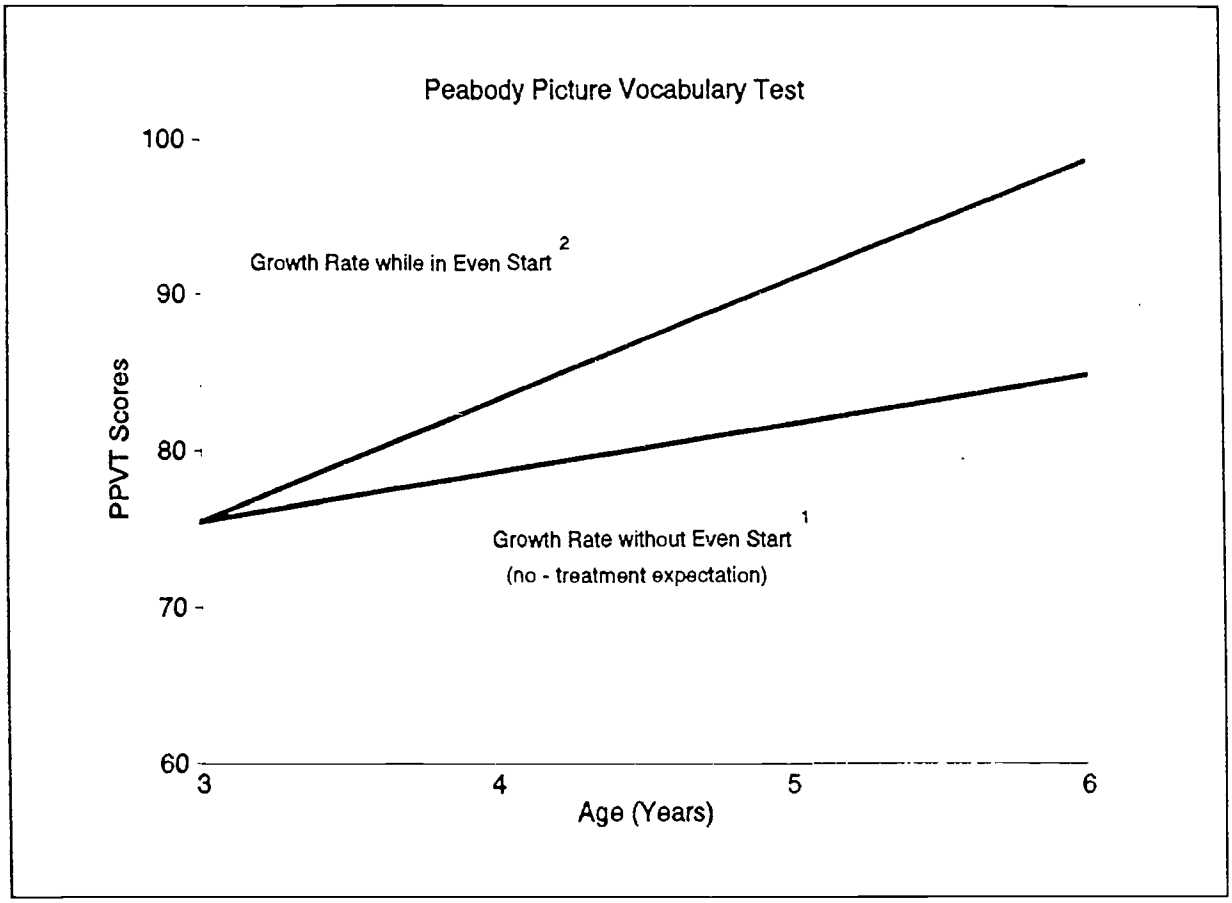

Exhibit 7.5. Cumulative Growth of PPVT Scores: With and Without Even Start.

[1]Based on cross-sectional data from 1485 children of different ages who took the PPVT as a pretest, prior to entry to Even Start.

[2]Based on pretest-posttest gains from 685 children who participated in Even Start.

PSI).[3] Subtracting the no-treatment expectation of about .26 points per month yields a difference due to Even Start of about .64 points per month.

[3]Analysis of data from 107 children who took the TVIP (the separately-normed Spanish version of the PPVT) as a pretest and 57 children who also took the TVIP as a posttest support the conclusions reached for the PPVT. The mean pretest score on the TVIP was 87.5 (corresponding to the 20th percentile of the combined Mexican/Puerto Rican norms group), and children in Even Start gain at a rate of 1.2 items per month.

This finding must be interpreted with the following caveats in mind. First, we have gain scores only for about 30 percent of the children for who have pretest scores. This percentage will increase over time as more children are posttested, but we do need to compare the pretest scores of children with and without a matching posttest score to determine whether these two groups of children are importantly different. Second, there is some evidence from previous studies that Form M of the PPVT, which has been used as a posttest, is "easier" than Form L, which was used as a pretest. This phenomenon, if true, would mean that the true effect of Even Start is smaller than what has been presented here. Finally, we need to do additional analysis to determine if the observed increase in PPVT pretest scores disappears for Even Start seven to eight year olds as it did in the NLSY data.

EFFECTS ON EVEN START ADULTS

The only adult-level measure currently analyzed is the Adult Life Skills test in reading of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). The CASAS is a functional assessment system that measures a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in real life domains including consumer economics, government and law, occupational knowledge, community resources, and health. As an untimed paper-and-pencil test, the CASAS may take as long as 60 minutes to complete.

Data from the 1990-91 program year are available on 1,599 adults who took the CASAS reading scale as a pretest, and on about 550 of the same adults who also took the CASAS as an exit test. Exhibit 7.6 shows that the mean pretest CASAS standard score was 225.7, about what is expected for a disadvantaged population. According to CASAS materials, adults scoring at 225 or above can generally perform at a high school entry level in basic reading. They can profit from instruction in GED preparation and have a high probability of passing the GED test in a short time if they do not have a high school diploma. This interpretation of the average pretest score is consistent with the level of education reported for Even Start adults. In Chapter 4 in this report we showed that 23 percent of the adults participating in Even Start core services never attended high school, 54 percent have some high school education, and an additional 23 percent have a high school diploma or a GED.

Exhibit 7.6 also shows how CASAS pretest scores vary according to the previous educational attainment of adults who took the test. As expected, CASAS scores are lowest for adults with minimal education, and they increase with each grade completed up through grade 11. Adults who earned a GED prior to entry into Even Start had a mean CASAS pretest score comparable to adults with a grade seven or eight education.

The pretest CASAS scores of Even Start adults are somewhat lower than the average CASAS scores of the 8,000 adults that participated in California's GAIN program (CASAS, 1990). GAIN participants were less variable in education level than Even Start participants (12 percent of GAIN participants never entered high school vs. 23 percent for Even Start; 76 percent of GAIN participants completed some high school vs. 54 percent for Even Start; and 12 of

Exhibit 7.6

Summary of CASAS Reading Scale Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores (1990-91 Program Year)

Educational Attainment of Adult	Pretest (Scale Scores)			Matched Gain (Points per Month)		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
Grades 1-5	201.9	10.6	24	1.0	1.8	9
Grade 6	208.0	15.7	44	0.6	1.3	14
Grade 7	222.2	13.5	39	0.9	1.1	20
Grade 8	223.5	22.5	149	0.9	3.8	57
Grade 9	227.4	13.5	263	-0.1	3.4	94
Grade 10	228.7	12.8	260	0.1	1.4	91
Grade 11	229.7	11.4	310	0.3	1.3	107
Grade 12	224.4	12.5	116	0.5	1.7	35
High school diploma	227.1	13.3	132	0.7	1.6	46
GED	221.9	31.8	47	2.6	10.3	19
Post secondary	229.6	13.9	49	0.9	2.0	19
TOTAL	225.7	16.5	1599	0.4	3.2	550

GAIN participants had a high school diploma or GED vs. 23 percent for Even Start), and they scored higher on the CASAS than Even Start participants (mean of 233.3 for GAIN vs. mean of 225.7 for Even Start). On the other hand, Even Start participants had higher pretest scores than the adults in a California study (CASAS, 1991) of participants in "321" adult basic education programs. The latter group averaged 220.1 at pretest, compared with the Even Start average of 225.7. In sum, it appears that adults who participate in Even Start adult education services have pretest CASAS scores which are roughly the same as the pretest scores of adults who participate in other adult education programs.

Examination of matched gain scores for 550 adults who took the CASAS as both a pretest and a posttest reveals an average gain of .40 points per month for each month of participation in Even Start.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EVEN START EFFECTS

In previous sections we developed estimates of the monthly gain that could be expected for parents (on the CASAS) and for children (on the PSI and PPVT) who participated in Even Start. However, we do not yet have participation data for a full year of Even Start, and so we do not know how many months families participate in Even Start during a given year. This means that, at this time, we cannot calculate an average effect for Even Start. What we can do is to estimate what the average effect would be for families that participate for different amounts of time. Exhibit 7.7 uses the monthly gains calculated earlier in this chapter to show the

Exhibit 7.7

Summary of Estimated Effects on Even Start Participants (1990-91 Program Year)

Months of Participation	PSI		PPVT		CASAS	
	Estimated Gain	Estimated Effect[1]	Estimated Gain	Estimated Effect[1]	Estimated Gain	Estimated Effect[1]
1	.46	.07	.64	.03	.40	.02
2	.92	.13	1.28	.06	.80	.05
3	1.38	.21	1.92	.09	1.20	.07
4	1.84	.27	2.56	.12	1.60	.10
5	2.30	.34	3.20	.15	2.00	.12
6	2.76	.41	3.84	.18	2.40	.15
7	3.22	.48	4.48	.21	2.80	.17
8	3.68	.55	5.12	.24	3.20	.19
9	4.14	.62	5.76	.28	3.60	.22

[1]Expressed in standard deviation units and calculated as estimated gain divided by the PSI standard deviation from this study of 6.7, the PPVT standard deviation of 20.9, or the CASAS standard deviation of 16.5.

estimated gain (in points) on the PSI, PPVT, and CASAS that would occur for families with between one and nine months of participation in Even Start. It also converts the raw score gain into an "effect size" expressed in standard deviation units by dividing the gain by the standard deviation of the measure.

Referring to the estimates in Exhibit 7.7 it is clear that, children and parents who participate for many months will gain more than children or parents who participate for only a month or two. A child or parent that participated in Even Start for a very short amount of time, only one month, would be expected to gain less than one point on any of the three outcome measures. In each case, this represents less than 1/10th of a standard deviation, and it would not be considered to be a very large or important effect. On the other hand, a child or parent who participated in Even Start for nine months (a full school year) would be expected to make much larger and more important gains.

Child-Level Effects

Over a full school year the average child in Even Start would be expected to gain 4.1 points on the PSI (.46 points per month * nine months), an effect of .62 standard deviation units. This represents a large effect relative to the standards of typical social/educational interventions, and it matches exactly the accelerated rate of learning on basic concepts that has been observed in other studies of high quality preschool programs.

Over a full school year the average child in Even Start would be expected to gain 5.8 points on the PPVT (.64 points per month * nine months), an effect of .28 standard deviation units. The estimated effect of .28 standard deviations over a school year on the PPVT is not as large as the effect on the PSI, however it is still as large as the effects observed in many evaluations of social interventions and is a positive indication that children are benefitting from participation in Even Start.

Another way to gauge Even Start's success is to compare the size of the effects on the child-level measures used in this evaluation (the PSI and the PPVT) with the size of child-level cognitive effects that have been found in evaluations of the Head Start program. Harrell (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of Head Start research and found 33 high-quality studies. Many different instruments were used to measure the cognitive effects of Head Start on children, and across all studies, the average effect size was .09 standard deviations. Assessed against the yardstick of .09 standard deviations, Even Start does quite well in terms of estimated child-level effects. In the present study, we estimated that a school year of Even Start would produce an effect size of .62 standard deviations on the PSI and .28 standard deviations on the PPVT. Both of these estimates are several times as large as the average effect of Head Start.

Adult-Level Effects

Over a full school year, the average adult in Even Start would be expected to gain an average of 3.6 points on the CASAS (.40 points per month * nine months), an effect of .22 standard deviation units. A recent study conducted in California by CASAS (1991) provides important comparable information on participants in adult basic education programs. Pretest and posttest data were collected for 1,529 adults who received between 81 and 100 hours of instruction in adult basic education during 1990-91. Pretest scores averaged 220.4 and posttest scores averaged 222.7, an increase of 2.3 scale score points. The pre-post data collected on Even Start families looks reasonable. We estimated that if they participated for a full nine-month school year, Even Start adults would receive an average of 88 hours of adult basic education instruction (see Chapter 6) and would gain an average of 3.6 scale score points on the CASAS reading scale.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents conclusions based on the data and findings contained in this report. The reader should realize that the analyses presented here are preliminary and will be expanded upon in future reports.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EVEN START PARTICIPANTS

Based on data reported for the 1989-90 and 1990-91 program years, Even Start projects are serving the intended population. All of the participating Even Start households had at least one child between the ages of zero and seven, 77 percent of the adults who participated in Even Start core services did not complete high school, and 71 percent of Even Start families had an income under $10,000. The Even Start population can be further described as follows:

- 48 percent of Even Start families describe themselves as couples with children. 40 percent are single parent households, and 12 percent have extended families or other living arrangements.

- 47 percent of Even Start families report job wages as their primary source of financial support, while 52 percent report that government assistance is their primary source of support.

- Most adults in Even Start are between the ages of 22-29 (44 percent) and 30-39 (30 percent).

- 45 percent of Even Start adults are white. 26 percent are black, 20 percent are Hispanic, six percent are Native American, and four percent are Asian or Pacific Islander.

- English is the primary language for 74 percent of Even Start adults; Spanish is the primary language for 20 percent.

- Eight percent of the children served by Even Start were identified as having a disability.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EVEN START PROJECTS

About $24 million was spent to fund 123 Even Start projects during the 1990-91 program year. More than half (55 percent) of the projects reported themselves to be in urban areas while the remaining 45 percent designated themselves as rural. Almost half of the projects were in the South, with the remainder split between the Midwest, Northeast, and West. This distribution is not surprising since, at most, four projects were funded in any state during each year and the South has more states and a larger population than the other Census regions.

Core Services Delivered Through Even Start

All Even Start projects are required to provide three "core services" for the education or instruction of adults and children: (1) parenting education services that assist parents in developing the capacity to function as teachers for their children, (2) adult basic education services that develop literacy skills of parents, and (3) early childhood education services that meet early education needs of children. As specified in the law, these core services can be provided either by staff funded through Even Start or by staff funded by cooperating agencies. In addition to the three core services, Even Start projects are required to provide educational and instructional services that involve parents and their children in joint activities, and to provide some of these activities in the home.

Beyond these requirements, the Even Start legislation allows grantees great flexibility in designing projects to meet local needs, and Even Start is best characterized by noting the great diversity that exists in activities conducted at the local level. Rather than prescribing a specific family literacy model, Even Start encourages local staff to draw on existing literacy models and on current technologies to create projects which are tailored to the needs of local families. Even Start can be regarded as a "family literacy laboratory" in which local projects adopt and adapt the most useful parts from existing approaches. This flexibility makes Even Start appealing to a wide variety of school districts, but it also makes implementation difficult. Since there is no "recipe" for Even Start, grantees have to be motivated enough and inventive enough to develop a project based on a combination of their own ideas and existing ideas from the field.

Parenting Education Services. Even Start projects provided a wide range of services to help parents raise their children in an environment conducive to the development of a literate family unit. For example, projects helped families make use of services provided by other social agencies, bettered parents' understanding of their role in the education of their children, oriented parents and children to school routines, furnished information about child development, trained parents in child behavior management, worked to build parental self-esteem, and instructed parents in life skills such as the application of sound principles of health and nutrition. Each of these different types of parenting education was provided by 90 percent or more of the Even Start projects. Depending on the specific service, about 35 to 55 percent of the Even Start projects provided parenting education directly, about 35 to 45 percent shared provision with a

cooperating agency, and only five to ten percent delegated provision of parenting education to a cooperating agency.

Adult Education Services. Almost 100 percent of the projects reported that they provided services to prepare adults to attain a GED, more than 80 percent provided services in adult basic education, and more than 90 percent provided services in adult secondary education. Services in English as a second language were provided by 62 percent of the projects. The locus of responsibility for providing adult basic education services differs from the provision of parenting education services. About 30 percent of the projects provided adult education services directly by Even Start staff, another 30 percent of the projects provided services through cooperating agencies, and about 25 percent of the projects provided services jointly by Even Start and cooperating agency staff.

Early Childhood Education Services. Children in Even Start projects were provided with a range of early childhood education services. Three different preschool options were used, with many projects using combinations: (1) 65 percent of the projects enrolled some of their children in Head Start, (2) 41 percent of the projects enrolled some of their children in a Chapter 1-funded pre-K program, and (3) 84 percent of the projects provided some other preschool option. For children old enough to enter the public schools, most Even Start projects participated in joint planning activities with the public schools. Hence, 82 percent of the projects included kindergarten as an Even Start service, and 70 percent of the projects provided early childhood education services to children under eight years of age who were in primary grades, again through the vehicle of joint planning with the public schools.

As would be expected, all Head Start and Chapter 1 pre-K services were provided by cooperating agencies. About 40 percent of the "other preschool" services were provided directly by Even Start staff. This distribution is not surprising given the high cost of early childhood education services and their general availability through cooperating agencies and the public schools.

Adult/Child Services Delivered Through Even Start

Almost all of the Even Start projects (more than 90 percent) reported that they delivered a wide range of core services to parents and children together. These included reading and story telling, developing readiness skills, social development and play, development of gross motor skills, working with numbers, arts/crafts, and health/nutrition. Writing activities for parents and children together were provided by 84 percent of the projects and computer-related activities were provided by 58 percent of the projects.

Support Services Delivered Through Even Start

Even Start projects used funds to provide many different kinds of support services designed to enable families to participate in the core services. Support services remove barriers that, if unattended, restrict a family's ability to receive instructional and educational services. Cohort 1 projects generally provided a higher level of support services than Cohort 2 projects, indicating that the development of a strong system of support services requires time. Several types of support services were provided by 75 percent or more of the projects including transportation, referrals for employment services, mental health services, family advocacy assistance with government agencies, child care, counseling, nutrition assistance, and health care assistance. Many other support services were provided by 50 percent or more of the projects including referrals for child protective services and for battered women, meals, and services for chemical dependency.

Across all types of support services, Even Start projects provided 15 to 20 percent directly, cooperating agencies provided 25 to 30 percent directly, and Even Start and cooperating agencies jointly provided another 25 percent. These findings suggest that Even Start projects did, as planned, obtain many existing support services from existing providers and stepped in to provide more immediate support services to enable families to participate in core services.

Cooperative Arrangements

Even Start projects are required to establish cooperative arrangements with other agencies to avoid duplicating services. This strategy allows optimal use of limited resources and allows projects to concentrate on providing new services to fill service gaps. Collaboration and cooperative arrangements were, indeed, a key focus of Even Start projects. During the 1990-91 program year, Even Start projects were involved in 2,128 cooperative arrangements to provide core services. This is about 20 cooperative arrangements per project. Fifty percent of the arrangements were for parenting education, 25 percent were for adult basic education, and 25 percent were for early childhood education. The most common cooperators were "other departments and programs within the public schools," "local, county, state or tribal agencies," and "postsecondary institutions." Several different decision making mechanisms were used by Even Start and cooperating agencies, the most common being informal agreements.

Even Start projects also entered into cooperative arrangements for the provision of support services including counseling, transportation, health care, child care, meals, and family advocacy. Typically, the cooperating agencies provided support services so that families could participate in core services delivered by Even Start. The most frequent cooperating agencies for support services were the same types of agencies that provided core services.

Implementation Problems

Even Start projects reported several barriers to project implementation. The most common barriers were difficulties in the recruitment, retention, attendance, and motivation of families (41 projects), staffing problems such as the desire for fulltime rather than parttime staff (40 projects), a lack of transportation for families (40 projects), problems of communication and coordination with cooperating agencies (37 projects), and a lack of program models, materials, and expertise (32 projects). Some barriers had to do with meeting the requirements of the evaluation (28 projects). Fitting the required data collection into an already busy schedule seemed to be the major class of problems in this area. Other barriers included problems with facilities (23 projects), a lack of child care (19 projects), difficult with scheduling program services (19 projects), the timing of the grant award (14 projects), the unexpectedly profound needs of many families (12 projects), and several others mentioned by fewer than ten projects.

Suggestions about the Law and Regulations

More than half of the projects that offered suggestions about the law and regulations commented on the need to make eligibility criteria more flexible. Several projects commented on the need for more flexible program design; many projects raised concerns about the evaluation requirements; some expressed concerns about fiscal and administrative matters.

SERVICES RECEIVED BY EVEN START PARTICIPANTS

Length of Participation in Even Start

Although the law and regulations do not specify any set length of participation in Even Start, the program is designed to serve families with low-literate adults and children from zero through seven years of age. It can take time to remedy literacy problems and the program allows projects to provide up to four years of services. Information from interviews and focus groups with project directors reveals variation in the intended length of participation of families. Some projects intentionally recruit families with very low-literate adults and plan to serve them for several years, while other projects plan to provide shorter-term services to families that have an adult who can reasonably expect to attain a GED within the coming year.

The difficulty that Even Start projects have in retaining families is evidenced by data which show that a total of 2,459 families participated in at least one core service during the 1989-90 program year. Yet, only 31 percent of these families continued their participation into the 1990-91 program year. Put another way, over two-thirds (69 percent) of the families that participated in Even Start during 1989-90 did not continue into 1990-91. There are many reasons for turnover of families in Even Start; some are indicators of program success, while others signal problem areas:

- Ineligible--some families were recruited and began to receive services but were later found to be ineligible.

- Employment--some adults obtained a job which made it impossible to attend Even Start sessions.

- Child birth--some women had to leave Even Start because they had a baby and the project was unable to provide child care.

- Graduation--some families left the program because the participating adult obtained a GED and met program goals.

- Dropout--some families left the program because they lost interest, moved out of the area, or the program didn't meet their needs.

We do not yet have information on the relative frequency of these and other reasons for leaving the program; that information will be available in the interim evaluation report based on the 1991-92 program year.

Participation in Core Services

Participation is highest for early childhood education with over 90 percent of the families in each cohort and each year participating. Participation is also high for parenting education, 88 percent in 1989-90 and 89 percent in 1990-91. Participation is lowest for adult education, 55 percent in 1989-90 and 71 percent in 1990-91. Taking all three core services at the same time, 62 percent of all Even Start families participated in all three services (an increase from 46 percent in 1989-80).

Even though participation in adult education is lower than for the other core services, Even Start families participate in adult education at a greater rate than they did prior to joining Even Start. Data from the first annual report from this evaluation showed that roughly 29 percent of Even Start families participated in some form of adult education before they joined Even Start. If a base rate of 29 percent is assumed, then Even Start is responsible for more than doubling the percentage of families that take part in adult education, even if the goal of having all families participate is not yet achieved.

During the first year of Even Start it was understood that, due to normal implementation problems, some families might not participate in all core services. It was hoped that implementation problems would be solved and that by the second year of program implementation almost all families would participate in all core services. This expectation was

not met.[1] Participation rates for Cohort 1 projects stayed roughly the same for early childhood education and parenting education, and increased for adult basic education (from 54 percent to 71 percent). The lack of large increases in participation can be attributed to the fact that most families did not continue in Even Start from 1989-90 to 1990-91. Rather, most Cohort 1 Even Start projects recruited large numbers of new participants, with the attendant problems of getting new families motivated to take part in each service area.

Finally, participation rates for 1990-91 did not differ much between projects in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. This, too, may be explained by Cohort 1's high turnover rate, and it appears that participation may be more dependent on the length of time that a family is in Even Start than on the state of implementation of the project.

Amount of Core Services Received

Based on data reported on over 4,800 Even Start families for 6 months during the 1990-91 program year, we can draw the following conclusions about the amount of time that families spend receiving Even Start services. First, the average family received 6.5 hours of parenting education, 9.8 hours of adult basic education, and 29.7 hours of early childhood education per month of participation in Even Start. Next, the average family took part in parenting education 1.3 days per week for 1.3 hours per day; in adult basic education 1.0 day per week for 2.5 hours per day; and in early childhood education 2.5 days per week for 3.0 hours per day.

Presentation of these averages masks great variability in amount of services received in different projects. An examination of project-level averages shows that the amount of parenting education received ranged from less than one hour per family per month to about 27 hours per family per month, for adult basic education project-level averages were as high as 48 hours per family per month, and for early childhood education project-level averages ranged up to 145 hours per family per month. Note again that these numbers reflect project-level averages. The variability in amount of service received by individual families is, of course, greater still.

Discussion of Recruitment and Participation Findings

Identifying families eligible for Even Start has not been a major problem for most projects. However, the fact that free services are offered is no guarantee that a family will avail themselves of those services. Participation in Even Start requires a serious commitment from a family--an adult must participate in adult basic education and must participate in parenting education classes, and a child must participate in an early childhood education program.

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[1]Partially in response to this problem, beginning with FY1992 (1991-92) Even Start regulations require participation in all three core services unless a family participant becomes ineligible for that service.

In voluntary programs like Even Start, no "stick" is available to ensure participation. While we may see the provision of social services as a presumed benefit, it is often difficult to convince at-risk families of the validity of that point of view. Potential Even Start parents are often enthusiastic about the possibility of getting their child into an early childhood education program. Further, participation in adult basic education is a positive feature for some adults, especially those who see the possibility of obtaining a GED, but it is a negative point for other adults. On the other hand, participation in parenting education rarely seems to be a "drawing card" for Even Start.

As noted above, many families do not stay in Even Start more than one year, and there seems to be a large amount of "churning" of families through the recruitment process before a project ends up with a full case load. In addition, about one-third of Even Start families participate only infrequently or not at all in adult basic education. Officials at the Department of Education have been particularly concerned about this latter finding because participation in all three core services is seen as a key ingredient in achieving the desired long-term benefits for Even Start families.

These findings point out one of the key difficulties that Even Start project directors face in trying to design and implement their projects: at the local level there is a conflict between the objectives of recruiting and serving families "most in need," and at the same time, ensuring that all families participate fully in each of Even Start's core services. This conflict arises because the Even Start law requires that local projects target "...eligible participants most in need of the activities and services provided..." At the same time, the Department of Education requires that Even Start families must participate fully in each of Even Start's three core services. Finally, the conflict is compounded because there is no definition of "most in need," and because all of the families eligible for Even Start truly need its services.

Some projects have decided to focus on families that are at the upper end of the continuum of need. We say that these families are motivated and are "ready to learn." The result is that these projects have relatively high participation rates for core services and expend less energy than other projects on support services. The support services that they do use tend to be logistical in nature. e.g., transportation or child care. Other projects have tried to meet both requirements by focusing on families at the lower end of the need continuum. These are termed the most "difficult to reach" families. These families often require large amounts of Even Start's support services, and, in addition, are unwilling or unable to be full participants in Even Start's core services. Therefore, this approach can result in projects that obtain lower participation rates in core services and, at the same time, expend substantial energy and resources on support services which tend to be "life supporting" rather than logistical in nature, e.g., substance abuse treatment, counseling, or housing assistance.

Finally, there is the problem of having no clear definition of "most in need." The term is usually interpreted with respect to a general need for social services and education on the part of an adult. That is, an adult who only completed sixth grade is seen as having a greater need than an adult who completed eleventh grade, and an adult with a substance abuse problem has

a greater need than one without such a problem. These distinctions make sense, but lead Even Start project directors to feel that they cannot serve adults who could benefit greatly from Even Start (they could well obtain a GED within a year) because they have to focus on families which, although they are in greater need, are simply not able to benefit from Even Start's literacy-based activities. Further, such distinctions ignore the needs of children in potential Even Start families. It is likely that any child in a family which is eligible for Even Start needs a good preschool education, regardless of the need status of his or her parents.

Even Start is far from alone in facing this type of problem. Much the same issue has been reported in recent studies of the Family Support Act and the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program (Pauly, 1992). The JOBS program created incentives for states to provide or expand educational services for people on welfare, while stressing their reciprocal obligation to participate. However, Pauly (1992) reports that there was a lack of consensus and clarity of goals on whether JOBS programs should focus on job preparation, educational credentials, or daily living skills. Similar conclusions were reached by Herr, et al (1991) in their study of JOBS and Project Match. They conclude that "...the JOBS program is based on an unrealistic conception of what it will take to move the most disadvantaged welfare recipients into the mainstream and social worlds" (p.3). Further, they question the appropriateness of basic skills classes as a required first step for people with poor educational histories. Even Start's experience is directly in line with these findings and conclusions.

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES OF PROGRAM EFFECTS

The evaluation is measuring the effects of Even Start in many different domains. For this report we have focused on effects on children as measured by the PreSchool Inventory (PSI) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and on parents as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Other measures will be addressed in future reports.

Effects on the PreSchool Inventory

The PSI is a 32-item individually-administered measure that assesses a range of school readiness skills, e.g., identifying shapes and colors, and understanding numerical concepts. It requires 15 minutes to administer and is appropriate for children between the ages of three and five. For the Even Start evaluation, the PSI is administered to children participating in early childhood education at the beginning of the school year (or at any other time of entry to Even Start) and again in the spring (or at the time of exit from Even Start).

Because the PSI measures school readiness skills, children's scores on the PSI improve with age, simply as a function of maturation. This study found that children's PSI scores increase by .44 items per month due to normal maturation/development. However, by participating in Even Start, children's PSI scores increase at double the expected rate, by .90

items per month. This is a substantial effect due to Even Start and is commensurate with the largest child-level gains observed on the PSI in several other studies of preschool programs. This accelerated rate of learning on the PSI means that as Even Start children enter the public schools they are more likely to know basic concepts and precursors of kindergarten skills than they would have in the absence of the program.

Effects on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

The PPVT was administered to children at the same time as the PSI. The PPVT measures receptive (hearing) vocabulary, and gives a quick estimate of verbal or literacy-related skills. An individually-administered test, it requires 15 to 20 minutes per child and is appropriate for children between the ages of two and 18. Whereas the PSI measures school readiness, the PPVT assesses verbal/language skills.

Unlike the PSI, the PPVT has national norms. When administered the PPVT as a pretest, prior to entry into the program, Even Start children averaged 78.8 standard score points. This corresponds to the 8th percentile nationally and highlights the low verbal skills of children at entry to Even Start.

As was the case with data from the PSI, an analysis of PPVT standard scores for children who participated in Even Start shows that they gain more than would be expected on the basis of normal development. When not in Even Start, children who are in the three to six range gain .26 standard score points per month on the PPVT. Once they join Even Start, children gain at an accelerated rate of .90 standard score points per month (only by coincidence is this the same number as the gain on the PSI). Relative to the standard deviation of the PPVT this is a smaller effect than was observed on the PSI, but it still is a positive indication that children are benefitting from participation in Even Start.

Effects on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System

The CASAS reading scale is a functional assessment system that measures a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in real life domains including consumer economics, government and law, occupational knowledge, community resources, and health. A group-administered paper-and-pencil test, the CASAS reading scale requires about 60 minutes to complete.

Data from the 1990-91 program year show that the mean pretest CASAS standard score was 226, about what is expected for a disadvantaged population. According to CASAS materials, adults scoring at 225 or above can generally perform at a high school entry level in basic reading. They can profit from instruction in GED preparation and have a high probability of passing the GED test in a short time if they do not have a high school diploma. This interpretation of the average pretest score is consistent with the level of education reported for

Even Start adults. About 53 percent of the adults participating in Even Start core services had some high school education, and an additional 24 percent had a high school-diploma or a GED.

Analysis of the CASAS data shows that adults who participated in Even Start gained an average of 0.4 points per month. Based on this finding and data on the amount of instruction received per month, we estimate that if they participated for a full nine-month school year, Even Start adults would receive an average of 88 hours of adult basic education and would gain an average of 3.6 points on the CASAS reading scale. This compares favorably with results from the CASAS evaluation of adult basic education programs in California, where adults who received 81-100 hours of adult basic education increased CASAS scores by 2.3 points.

Conclusions About the Short-Term Effects of Even Start

Over a full school year the average child in Even Start would be expected to gain 4.1 points on the PSI (.46 points per month x nine months), an effect of .62 standard deviation units. This represents a large effect relative to the standards of typical social/educational interventions, and it matches exactly the accelerated rate of learning on basic concepts that has been observed in other studies of high quality preschool programs.

Over a full school year the average child in Even Start would be expected to gain 5.8 points on the PPVT (.64 points per month * nine months), an effect of .28 standard deviation units. This is not as large as the effect on the PSI, however it is as large as the effects observed in many evaluations of social interventions and is another indication that children are benefitting from participation in Even Start.

Another way to gauge Even Start's success is to compare the size of the effects on the child-level measures used in this evaluation (the PSI and the PPVT) with the size of child-level cognitive effects that have been found in evaluations of the Head Start program. Harrell (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of Head Start research and found that across all studies, the average effect size was .09 standard deviations. Assessed against the yardstick of .09 standard deviations, Even Start does very well in terms of estimated child-level effects. In the present study, we estimated that a school year of Even Start would produce an effect size of .62 standard deviations on the PSI and .28 standard deviations on the PPVT. Both of these estimates are several times as large as the average effect of Head Start.

Over a full school year, the average adult in Even Start would be expected to receive an average of 88 hours of adult basic education instruction and to gain an average of 3.6 points on the CASAS (.40 points per month x nine months), an effect of .22 standard deviation units. A recent study conducted in California by CASAS (1991) provides comparable information on participants in adult basic education programs. Pretest and posttest data were collected for adults who received between 81 and 100 hours of instruction in adult basic education during 1990-91. Participants gained an average of 2.3 points. Thus, the gains exhibited by Even Start

participants are at least as great as those observed in some other large studies of adult education programs.

Based on the data collected to this point in the evaluation, Even Start appears to be having positive short-term effects on childrens' school readiness and language development; effects that are as large or larger than those seen in studies of other high-quality preschool programs. Even Start also appears to have small, but positive effects on adult literacy. Before drawing any final conclusions about the short-term effects of Even start it is important to wait for the next interim report from the evaluation which will report findings from much more extensive analyses.

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APPENDIX 3.1

IN-DEPTH STUDY PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Early childhood, parenting, and adult education classes are offered at the Eureka Family Center, a renovated elementary school. The building has four classrooms for children, one classroom for parents, a small cafeteria, and a small office that two facilitators share. There is an outside play area with playground equipment as well as easels for outdoor painting activities in the warm weather. The program operates 11 months of the year, closing only in August for building maintenance.

Parents and children come to the Eureka Family Center together two days a week (either Monday and Tuesday or Wednesday and Thursday). The day starts with parents and children eating breakfast together from 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. and ends with lunch together from 12:30-1:00. Meals are sent from a neighboring high school and served in the center's cafeteria. Parents participate in ABE instruction, parent groups, and typing and sewing classes at the Eureka Center. ABE instruction also is available at the PALS lab in the district's Adult Education Center.

Home visits take place once a week for an hour; parent meetings or "group home visits" take place once a month at one of the housing projects. There is a lending library of books and toys at the Eureka center.

As of the spring of 1990, there are 48 families enrolled in the project, with 80 children from birth to age seven. Each early childhood classroom has an average of six to ten children per day. The participants are recruited from two housing projects. Primarily black and English speaking, they range in age from 17-38 years. Most of the families are on welfare, with female head of households.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Birmingham Public Schools is the second largest district in the state with 42,248 students enrolled as of October 1989. There are 79 schools in the district, including 52 elementary, 16 middle and 11 high schools. The student population is about 86 percent minority. District staff estimate that 73 percent of students in the school system are eligible for free and reduced price lunches.

Kindergarten has been a full-day program for 15 years. Early childhood education for four-year-olds is available through Head Start, but Even Start is the only program in the district offering free early childhood education for children ages three and younger.

The district has offered adult basic education since 1965. There is a full time Adult Education Center and 35 satellite sites in schools and churches. The program serves more than 2,000 students a year in ABE classes, GED preparation, and ESL classes.

The district also has a parent education program, with a main center and five satellites, that offers the following: a lending library, make-and-take sessions, take-home computers, workshops, parenting classes, and monthly seminars. Parents involved in the district program volunteer in the schools, tutor children one-on-one, and serve on parent patrols in the school. The program has been distinguished by an award from NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education).

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Even Start parents are divided into two groups according to when they attend: Group 1 attends Mondays and Tuesdays and Group 2 attends Wednesdays and Thursdays. (During the 1991-92 school year, the program will be offered Tuesday through Friday rather than Monday through Thursday because attendance is typically quite low on Mondays.) Within each group, classes are divided by literacy level: low-level readers (0-4th grade) and readers at the 5th grade level and above. Both groups have two hours of ABE classes each morning. In addition, there is one hour of sewing and one hour of typing practice per week. Thus, the total amount of adult education is 6 hours per week for each group.

Adult education classes are provided in two locations: pre-GED and GED at the Eureka Center and literacy at the Birmingham Adult Education Center. Adults in the literacy class board a school bus at Eureka for the 30 minute ride to the Adult Education Center, where they use a PALS computer lab.

Eureka Center. GED classes are held in a large room furnished with tables and chairs; a teacher's desk; bookcases with adult education materials and workbooks; seven to eight sewing machines; six to eight electric typewriters; and two Apple Macintosh computers with a printer. The sewing machines, when closed, serve as additional tables. Currently, one end of the room is used for storage, but a Parents Library will be assembled here in the future.

Adult Education Center. Literacy classes are held at the Adult Basic Education Center, a city wide center with a complete range of ABE services. The building is used for day, night, and Saturday classes and houses classrooms and counseling offices. Eleven full-time adult education teachers and about 75 of the city's 150-200 literacy volunteers work here. However, when Even Start parents attend, it is a dedicated site for their use only.

The PALS lab has eight computer stations which enable 16 adults to work at one time. Other programs at the Center, which Even Start parents can attend, include the BLADE Program (Basic Literacy for Adult Development); the Time to Read Program; and a state employment collaboration, called Job Shop, funded by JTPA.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Eureka Center. The classes at Eureka are taught in English (there is no need at present for ESL) and are based on student's individual needs, with a combination of GED and functional life skills.

There are GED and pre-GED materials (from Contemporary, Steck-Vaughn, Globe and Cambridge) as well as realia (e.g., dictionaries, telephone books, newspapers). Resume writing, which was requested by parents, and writing in personal journals also are curriculum components. Some curriculum topics selected by parents have included employability skills (e.g., dress for success, ideas about personal hygiene, and how to prepare for work), life insurance, and taxes.

Teaching methods include a combination of class and individual work. Group activities include reviewing materials together, asking questions, and having a feedback session. The teacher provides individualized help to those who need it.

Adult Education Center. The primary curriculum is the IBM PALS computerized instruction designed to teach computer and literacy skills concurrently to low-level readers. PALS is a 100-hour program that the adults in Birmingham started using during the 1989-90 school year. The curriculum can be used with students who read at or below the 5th grade level; students can repeat the course if they wish.

Instructional methods include group discussion and collaborative work, and emphasize writing. Groups of adults listen to a story, then write about it, utilizing the whole word/language experience method. The teacher reviews and discusses work individually, urging students to send their pieces to PEN PALS, a newspaper for new readers (several have been published). Computers also are used by students for writing original pieces such as poems and stories.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent education takes place both at the center and through home visits. At the Eureka center, the parenting classes take place in the adult education room for one hour per week. Twice a year. Even Start parents attend city wide parent education meetings offered through the district.,

Home visits are scheduled once a week for one hour and are conducted even if the parent has not attended the center, to encourage them to come. Each home visitor goes to three or four homes a day. seeing about 10-12 families a week.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Parenting Classes. The center-based parent education curriculum uses materials from the Bowdoin method that help parents learn how to deal with their children (e.g., "words that win with children," using "inside voice," and alternate forms of discipline). They also borrow some from the STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) materials, Active Parenting, and Megaskills. Staff try to convey that all parents need help with parenting skills and that being a good parent does not depend on the amount of money you have.

The parenting classes are group sessions for about 10 parents. Because staff feel that smaller groups are better, half of the parents in a class have parenting while the other half have sewing. The exception is when there is a guest speaker, and then the whole class attends together.

The project does a "needs assessment" with parents to find out what topics are of interest to them. In this way, the program tries to address issues that the parents face, such as drugs, gang violence and teenage pregnancy. Field trips also are part of the curriculum for parents. For example, one trip was to the city jail, at parents' request, to view the facility and visit Death Row. Another trip was to the library.

Home Visits. The curriculum used in the home visits is a combination of Portage Project and Head Start materials, with adaptations made by the Even Start staff to fit the needs of the families. The purpose of the home visits is to teach parents ways of interacting appropriately with their children and to give parents a repertoire of activities to do at home that will help prepare their children for school.

The home visit curriculum also is influenced by the fact that the home visitors are completing requirements for the Child Development Associates (CDA) certificates. The CDA curriculum has 13 areas, some related to child development and some related to professional development. These include: cognitive development; physical development; safety; health; social development; learning environments; self-awareness; professionalism; program management; creativity; communication; families; and guidance. One of the project facilitators develops the monthly curriculum designed around these themes and then trains the home visitors in its use. For example, a parent-child activity, such as making a toy, would involve the functional areas of creativity (constructing the toy), communication (modeling and giving directions to the child), social skills (engaging child and parent in discussion), and use of fine motor skills (using scissors, paste, crayons).

Each home visitor has a written lesson plan designed specifically for a family and for the age of the target child. There may be two or three children at home when the home visitor arrives and they are included in the lesson with a developmentally appropriate task. However, the home visitors focus on the oldest child not yet in kindergarten, in hopes that the parent's skills will transfer to other younger children.

Parents are given two sets of written rules to agree to and sign--one copy remains with the family and the other is filed at the office--which clarify the responsibility of the program and

also the parent's responsibilities in the program. For each home visit, the family has the responsibility of clearing a space in the living room either on a table or on the floor, turning off the TV, and keeping interruptions to a minimum.

The home visitor's role is to model parent-child activities, provide adult literacy instruction, and help parents with the homework assigned in their ABE classes. The home visitors bring all necessary materials and lesson plans into the homes (e.g., basic materials like blocks, paint, glue, paper, paint and crayons). They also leave materials or lend books and games from the lending library at Eureka. Home visits generally include the following components: (1) a review of the previous week's activities; (2) introduction of the activities for the current week including the functional areas to be taught, their purpose and the necessary materials; (3) a preview of the plan for the next week including what materials will be provided by the parent and the home visitor; and (4) a segment in which the parent and the home visitor evaluate the session.

In addition to individual home visits, there is a monthly "group home visit" or parent meeting in the community center at one of the housing projects. There may be as many as 25 parents and 30 or more children at these events, which last 1 1/2 hours. Sometimes, they offer information exchanges about resources or planning field trips. Other times, parents read selections aloud. Parents, with staff assistance, take charge of these meetings. Staff commented that these group home visits are successful because they take place close to families' homes, allow parents to fraternize with their peers, and create a social gathering.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

The four classrooms for children are based on their age: infants (0 to 12 months), mobile infants (12-24 months), mobile infants/toddlers (2-3 years old), and preschool (3-4 years old). Activities for infants are considered to be support services necessary for parents to attend ABE classes. For children ages five to seven, staff collaborate with elementary school teachers.

All of the rooms are colorfully decorated with materials posted on bulletin boards around the perimeter of the room and individual activity areas (e.g., housekeeping, book corner) spread out within the room. The infant room has a clothes cupboard for extra clothes and a washer/dryer.

When the program first started, the district ECE coordinator selected the materials for the classrooms, based on books describing good preschool classrooms and day care regulations, to encourage hands-on experiences and experiential learning for children. References such as Decker and Decker, "Planning the Early Childhood Classroom" and the recommendations from the ACEI (Association for Childhood Education International) were used to select materials, particularly the materials for infants and toddlers. A consultant from the University of Alabama at Birmingham also gave advice about designing environments for young children.

Home Visit Vignette

The home visit to Corrinne and her four-year-old son Eric takes place in their apartment at the Loveman Housing Project, a group of brick two-story buildings. The mother had prepared space in the livingroom, cleared off the coffee table and turned off the large TV, according to the rules for home visits. The home visitor spreads a large plastic mat on the floor, and works on it and the coffee table during the lesson, using materials she has brought in a large basket and several boxes.

The first activity is to review colors and shapes with the mother, who then labels the paper circle, square, triangle, and parallelogram for her son. The home visitor introduces colors again in leaf shapes and asks Eric to recite the colors to her and his mother. Then, Eric names colors again, using blocks this time. The home visitor asks the mother to "draw a circle with Eric watching and then ask him to make one," explaining the importance of colors and shapes, saying "Eric will do more of this in school."

Next, naming farm animals and their sounds is the task. The home visitor plays a record and sings along, teaching the song to Eric and his mother, as she points out the animals in a large book that accompanies the record. The home visitor then brings out a pair of puppets made from yellow socks. (Yellow is the next color to be learned.) The puppets are given to Eric and his mother to keep, with the information that they "are easy to make, fun, and don't cost a lot of money!". The home visitor reminds the mother and child of something they had made out of milk cartons, and reiterates that "children don't have to have fancy toys."

After working with the mother and child together, the home visitor gives the child a viewmaster and some blocks to play with while she works with the mother on math homework from her GED class.

The last part of the home visit is reserved for "book reading time." The mother, who loves to read aloud and volunteers to does so at parent meetings, sits on the floor with her son, props the book against a chair and reads a Big Book about "monsters" to her son.

At the end of the visit, the home visitor tells the mother about coming events at the center, as Eric scribbles on a magic slate. Then, she asks the mother how she thinks the home visit went, encouraging the mother to evaluate the session along with the home visitor. As she gets up to leave, the home visitor reminds the mother to review with Eric colors and shapes and to talk to him while she cooks, telling him what she is doing.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The teachers use the Early LAP assessment for children up to 36 months of age to individualize the curriculum. The ECE teachers fill out the forms on each child and share the results with the home visitors. One of the facilitators talks to parents about their children's performance.

Parents volunteer once/month in the early childhood classrooms, working with children other than their own. Twice a year, there are parent-teacher conferences.

Infants. The teacher described the morning as starting "on the floor" with the infants. Other activities include reading to the children (where children point to the pictures), singing along with records, doing exercises with the children or letting them move/crawl on the floor, and a 15-20 minute nap. There can be a maximum of nine infants in the room, but if there are more than 3-5 babies, there is an additional adult in the room. Staff take the infants on "strolls through the neighborhood" to give them some experiences out of the classroom.

Mobile Infants. Activities in this classroom include singing and dancing to music, floor play with balls, and reading stories. The class has seven to eight children.

Toddlers. In this classroom, the day starts with whole group activities such as singing songs, finger plays and morning exercises. Children then have free choice to play with puzzles, blocks, manipulatives, or do art work. There is a maximum of eight children in the classroom, with an average of five to six children attending daily. There is an aquarium and a pet turtle in the room, and all of the children are assigned chores to do in the classroom.

Preschool. The activities are based on kindergarten curriculum so that the children will be ready for school. In group time, the teacher works with a calendar to teach children the days of the week and months of the year, counts days to introduce numbers up to 15, asks the children to construct sentences about the weather, and has a news session where children report what has happened to them and the teacher records it. During group time, the teacher also reads a short story from a "Big Book," reading the same books repeatedly so that children can begin to read along. She also goes over the classroom rules every day.

After group time, the children have play time where they choose play centers (e.g., manipulatives, house, kitchen, sand). The teacher announces how many children can be in each center and the children tell her where they want to go. The teacher puts on music during play time, and children know that when the music is turned off, it is time to clean up. After play centers, the children gather together again and the teacher reads another book. She may ask the children to recall stories in the correct sequence. Other activities include outdoor play, quiet time, and group play time. Before lunch, the children gather and review the morning's activities and the teacher reads another book before lunch (she tries to read three books a day).

There are themes for each month. Last month, the theme was "I love reading." This month the theme is community helpers. As part of this, a postman visited the classroom. The

preschool classroom also has gone on a number of field trips such as to the zoo, to a farm, to children's theater and to plays at the civic center.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

Staff encourage parents to attend program activities by telling them what they have missed when they don't come or what is coming up that they won't want to miss. It is hardest to maintain attendance during the summer. Last summer, staff gave parents prizes for attendance, such as a fan or books.

Parents also run a lending library of toys and books, which is open during a 30-minute break between the GED and parenting classes. Parents are responsible for keeping the materials clean, for checking out tape recorders, and watching the condition of the materials. Staff report that in the beginning, parents were careless with the materials, but, over time, they have taken on this responsibility and it has given them a sense of power.

STAFF

The Even Start project director divides her time between this program and her other responsibilities as director of federal programs. Other administrative support is provided by the district's directors of community education (adult education), early childhood education, and parent education.

Day-to-day program operations are handled by two full-time facilitators. One of the facilitators works primarily with the home visitors, the other supervises the early childhood classroom teachers. The four administrators meet every other week with the evaluator and the program facilitators to discuss the program and any problems.

Adult Education

The ABE classes at the Eureka Center are taught by a part-time ABE/GED teacher who is a professional ABE teacher in the school system. Classes at the ABE center are taught by a professional ABE teacher working part-time with Even Start and running the PALS Lab full-time. Two vocational education teachers from the district work four hours a week teaching sewing and typing at the Eureka Center.

Parent Education

Parent classes are led either by one of the facilitators, the coordinator of parent education, or by outside speakers from the district or other agencies.

Home visits are provided by four paraprofessional women who work full-time for Even Start and have extensive experience (from seven to 15 years) in early childhood classrooms. Three have been parent volunteers in the school district's parent education program; the other

was an instructional aide in a kindergarten class. There has been very little staff turnover--only one home visitor has left since the beginning of the program.

Early Childhood Education

The early childhood education staff consists of four paraprofessional classroom teachers. All have at least a high school diploma; one has a bachelor's degree. Prior experience includes operating a family day care home, working as a Chapter 1 aide in an elementary classroom, and working as a classroom aide with special needs infants.

One morning a week, each home visitor stays in the center and works with the children of the families she visits. In addition, if home visits are canceled, the home visitors either recruit families or come back to the center and help in the classrooms. In this way, the home visitors serve as additional staff in the classroom.

Training

Every Friday, staff meet to plan activities and discuss classroom issues and problems. Center-based and home-based teachers sometimes meet together, but more often meet separately to work on their own curriculum materials.

CDA training takes place every other Friday. All of the paraprofessionals (home visitors and early childhood aides) are working on their CDA credential, which includes collecting a portfolio and being observed in the classroom by an outside observer. The project's goal is to have all paraprofessional staff attain the CDA certificate.

At the start of the school year, there is a full week of staff development that includes information about community resources. Other inservice training has included a session provided by the housing authority police about safety which was offered to all district staff involved in visiting families (e.g., visiting nurses, Even Start home visitors) and CPR training. The early childhood teachers have gone to workshops provided by Head Start and a state conference on infant growth and development.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

Teachers report several changes in the children since the start of the year. Many children who cried all the time in their classrooms are now much more comfortable. In addition, staff report that the children talk a lot more and are cleaner now than when they first came to the program.

Teachers also see many changes in the parents. They feel that the program builds esteem in adults. Staff also report that parents are cleaner and better groomed, that parent-child communication has improved, and that parents are more positive with their children.

Aspects Most Important for Program's Success

Administrative staff commented that the team work and expertise of staff are important elements of the program's success. Staff concern for families also is important and staff continually tell families "I'm so glad you came to school today." As one staff member stated, "parents see the staff loving their children." As another person commented, staff have to be able "to focus on the individual and want to help the person and be able to overlook the lack of money and conditions of the home."

District staff believe that going out into the housing projects is very important because many parents are not willing to leave the projects. The fact that staff will go to the parents sends the message "I believe in you." Even Start staff have high expectations for parents and parents can sense that.

Another element of the program's success is that parents have to be involved in Even Start--parents have to come if they want their children to attend. Food also is important, particularly providing two meals a day. One staff member reported overhearing parents saying "You better eat now," implying that the children might not get another meal.

A number of administrative staff commented on the value of paraprofessional staff. One person indicated that employing paraprofessional staff helps build mutual respect among staff and families. Others pointed to the research that shows that paraprofessionals relate better to parents, are less intimidating to families, and are cost-effective for the program. However, administrators realize that employing paraprofessional requires more inservice training.

Challenges

Staff at the Eureka Center commented that space is a problem. They would like more bathroom facilities, space for the home visitors to have offices, a teachers' lounge and a larger lunchroom.

District staff identified a barrier imposed by the legislation: that there are caps to the federal funds allocated to each state. The additional money added to the federal program each year is given to new projects rather than added to existing projects to enable expansion. Also, the award process gives more points to projects that serve a high percentage of the eligible population. This formula works against large, urban area such as Birmingham.

Adult educators voiced concern about the emphasis on the GED. Staff feel that the program needs to develop some way to provide parents "a shorter road to success" in terms of their own personal development. To date, there has been one graduate from the GED program and three students are enrolled in a community college. However, many adults come in with much lower skills. If parents read at a sixth grade level, the GED is a long way off. Staff commented that, with two days a week in classes, the GED is almost unattainable for such parents. Parents can see growth in their children, and they need to be able to see it in themselves.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Even Start project in Phoenix is called Project IMPACT: Involving and Motivating Parents and Children Together. Program activities revolve around preschool classes for children ages three and four that are held in portable classrooms on the campus of the Butler Elementary School. Parents volunteer in their child's classes at least twice a month; attend parent workshops at least twice a month; and participate in "Read-to-Me" sessions once a month. The program can accommodate 70 children in the preschool classrooms.

ESL and GED classes are provided in the evenings by the Rio Salado Community College, with Even Start staff providing child care. For adults who are reluctant to go to classes or not ready for GED instruction, there is one-to-one literacy tutoring available through the local chapter of the Literacy Volunteers of America.

Home visits are conducted by the early childhood education teachers and aides once a month for families of four-year-olds and once a week for families of three-year-olds. During the home visits, the aides work with all children in the family who are home at the time. In addition, parents can bring all children in the family to the parent workshops and GED/ESL classes, where child care is available.

Families eligible for the program live in the catchment area of two elementary schools in the district. As part of the recruitment process, staff make home visits to all interested families and complete the "Home Screening Questionnaire," an instrument used in the district's special education program. Even Start staff have added two open-ended questions that give parents an opportunity to describe their family while providing information about their literacy skills. Based on the results of the screening instrument, the project selects the neediest families for the program.

The Even Start participants are primarily (90 percent) Hispanics from Mexico who are unemployed and highly transient. Seventy percent of the Even Start families are non-English speaking and 50 percent are single parents. Most of the adults have not completed the sixth grade, and few are ready for GED classes.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Even Start project is operated by the Isaac School District #5, the fifth school district formed in the state and one of 92 school districts in the city of Phoenix and the surrounding valley. The district has 6,000 students in five elementary schools and a junior high school (it is an elementary district and does not have a high school). The district is on the outskirts of the inner city of Phoenix and has a student population that is 80 percent minority.

There are very few options for preschool in the district, and it is estimated that 98 percent of children enter kindergarten without any preschool experience. However, the state has

mandated public preschool starting in the 1991-92 school year, and the district is preparing for this by renovating a building that will house Even Start, preschool and grades K-3.

ABE classes are offered in a variety of locations in the area. However, child care is not offered at any of these sites.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

The Adult Basic Education Services consist of a combination of ABE/GED classes, ESL classes, and a literacy volunteer program. ABE classes are offered year round, including summers, with child care provided. Parents may continue in the tutoring program during the summer, depending on their tutor's availability.

Frequency and Location of Services

ABE Classes. During the first program year, the ABE/GED and ESL classes for Even Start parents were offered by Friendly House, a local community agency. Since December 1990, these classes have been offered by the Rio Salado Community College. The project made this switch because Friendly House only has a one-year segment of classes so that if parents returned for a second year, they were essentially starting all over again, and, as a result, a number of Even Start adults dropped out at the start of the second year. However, some Even Start parents have elected to stay in classes at Friendly House because they offer Amnesty Program, where adults need to complete 60 hours of education as part of a year-long process to get US citizenship.

The Rio Salado Community College does not have a campus, but rather offers classes in various locations throughout Phoenix and the surrounding valley. The classes for Even Start adults are held at the Butler School on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. The ABE/GED class is held in the school library and the ESL classes meet in the school cafeteria. As of the spring of 1990, the ESL and advanced ESL classes had a total of 23 students, while the ABE/GED class (approximately 80 percent ABE, 20 percent GED) had 12 students.

Child care is provided at the Butler School in the evenings from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. during the adult education classes. The aides in the Even Start program or other part-time staff provide this care. When the ABE/ESL classes are over at 8:00 p.m., the parents join the children and aides for a half hour of storytelling or songs.

Transportation is not provided to Butler school in the evenings for ABE classes. Staff report that the adults who come at night either have a car or live close enough to walk there.

Literacy Volunteers. The literacy volunteer option, which started in September 1990, is provided by the Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) of Maricopa County, Phoenix. The LVA tutors work one-to-one with parents, usually meet twice a week and typically spend about 1 1/2 hours each session. LVA asks tutors to work with students at least 6-9 months.

Twelve Even Start parents work with LVA tutors rather than attend ESL or ABE classes. The location of the tutoring session depends on the student and the tutor. They can meet at the Butler school, in the students' homes, at local libraries, and other places. Often students will meet with their tutors while the children are in preschool. Staff commented that the majority of parents are more comfortable meeting at the school than at home.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

ABE Classes. The structure of the classes is left up to the individual teachers. There is a set of competencies identified in the teacher's handbook from the community college that guide instruction. The ABE/GED classes are noncredit courses; if students want to work toward a degree, they have to pay tuition to the community college.

Students are not categorized as ABE or GED students because staff believe it is important that all of the adults in the class feel that they are working toward their GED. Adults are given reading and math tests initially, and if they score at the tenth or eleventh grade, they are given the GED predictor test. If they score at a lower level, they are given basic education books and pre-GED contemporary books.

ESL Classes. The ESL classes are divided into two levels. The beginning class is for monolingual Spanish speakers who want to learn survival English, and there is little emphasis on the alphabet. Every other week, they start the class with a song, which the teacher has written out on the blackboard, as a way to motivate students and encourage their curiosity about the English language.

The intermediate class is geared toward those who speak some English and want to improve their vocabulary, concentrating mostly on reading and writing. The intermediate ESL class works on grammar, writing paragraphs, and critical reading skills. Some of the books used include elementary grammar books as well as Steck-Vaughn's "Real Life English" and "Contemporary Reading and Thinking in the Content Areas", by Martha Barnes.

The ESL students are given oral assessments to determine whether they will be placed in the beginning or intermediate ESL class. Individual student folders are maintained to chart progress.

Literacy Volunteers of America. LVA tutors work with Even Start adults who read below the fifth grade level and do not want to be in a group learning situation. The tutoring is described by the LVA director as a way to get adults ready to go into ESL or ABE classes.

The literacy volunteers decide together with their students what the content of their sessions will be. For example, one tutor used a driver's education book because the parent wanted to get her driver's license. Tutors have access to all the materials in the LVA resource center that has high-interest, low-level books, adult materials, and ESL workbooks. Tutors try to build parent's sight vocabulary, knowledge of word patterns, and language recognition. For example, a student might tell the tutor a story, which the tutor writes down and then teaches the adult to read.

An ESL Class at Butler Elementary

Twelve students sit around long tables in the elementary school cafeteria. There is a mix of male and female students, including one young married couple; most of the students are young and all are Hispanic (this is the only ESL class run by the community college where all students speak the same native language). The teacher, an aide in the Even Start preschool classroom during the day, is using the "New Oxford Picture Dictionary." Each student has a copy of the page labeling the exterior of a single-family house and yard.

The teacher writes the English words on the blackboard and points to the picture; occasionally, she further describes the word in Spanish. When all of the words have been written down, she reviews them and has the students point to the appropriate picture. Then she asks the students to get up from their seats and form two teams to play a version of "Pictionary", where one team member has to draw the part of the house and the other members have to name the word in English without looking at the page. The learning experience is very lively--there was much giggling as students try to remember the word in English or to draw a representation of the word on the blackboard.

PARENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Frequency and Location of Services

The program offers both home visits as well as center-based activities from September through June. Parent education activities include:

Home visits: An early childhood education (ECE) teacher and aide conduct home visits once a week for parents of three-year-olds and once a month for parents of four-year-olds.

Parenting workshops: Three-hour workshops are held several times a week. Three or four topics are offered, with each topic repeated several times during the month. Parents are required to attend two workshops per month.

Read-To-Me sessions: One-hour meetings for parents and children are held every Tuesday. Parents are required to attend at least one session per month.

Parent helper: Parents sign up to volunteer in their child's classrooms two mornings a month. While in the classroom, parents are "helpers," working with small groups of children on specific activities.

. Parent library: There is a small lending library of children's books (some also have tapes accompanying them) in one of the Even Start classrooms at the Butler site.

Parents are required to attend five workshops or parenting sessions at Even Start each month (i.e., two parenting workshops, one "Read-to-Me" session, and two mornings as classroom volunteers). On the wall of each classroom is a large program calendar where parents sign up for their monthly activities. In addition, during home visits, parents select activities and complete their personal monthly calendar with staff.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Home visits. An ECE classroom aide and teacher go together to each home visit, for safety reasons as well as to have the aide available to occupy the children while the teacher talks to the mother. One goal of the home visit is to work with the mother to choose her upcoming activities and complete the monthly Even Start activity calendar. In addition, the staff reviews any needs that the family might have, often prompting discussion of the mother's personal problems. The home visits are seen as a way for staff to get to know the whole family and to understand the family's situation.

For each home visit, there is a concept planned, such as making children's toys using household items. For example, one month they showed mothers how to make puzzles out of cereal boxes. At each home visit, staff bring something that they leave for the families, such as magazines that the mother can use with the child to find and cut out pictures on a theme. Staff commented that they always bring something, "even if it is just blank paper." At the start of the year, each target child was given a Rubbermaid storage box to have a place to keep these supplies.

Parenting Workshops. The workshops are conducted by Even Start staff or occasionally an outside speaker (e.g., a school psychologist or the director of a home for battered women). Workshop topics are repeated during the month so that parents can choose the one that best fits their schedule. Topics have included self-esteem, stress management, child abuse, domestic violence, parent-child communication, spouse abuse, how to take a local bus, and making children's toys. For example, in April, a workshop entitled "More Games to Play" was offered three times, where parents learned to make games to bring home to their children. Other topics have included self-esteem, stress management, child abuse, domestic violence, parent-child communication, spouse abuse, how to take a local bus, and making children's toys.

Even Start staff ask parents about the type of workshops to offer in order to base the topics on the needs of the parents. For example, one of the ECE teachers recognized that one child had impetigo and encouraged the mother, who had never been to a hospital, to take the child to the emergency room. The teacher gave the mother notes on how to get to the hospital on the bus. After the incident, the mother told her story to the rest of the group, proud that she

A "Read-to-Me" Session

The "Read-to-Me" session, led by two ECE teachers, is attended by about 15 mothers and 20 children. The mothers and their children sit together around tables in the preschool classroom. Younger siblings are in the next room with three classroom aides. The theme is "peek-a-boo" books (i.e., books where someone or something is hiding either literally under a flap in the book or somewhere in the picture). The teachers read three books to the group, going page by page and asking questions along the way, encouraging children to get involved (and they do--shouting out answers, telling where objects were hiding). The session is a mixture of English and Spanish.

After the stories are read, the parents and children make their own peek-a-boo books to take home. Parents have the choice of making a book with English or Spanish text. The teachers explain to the parents how to make the book, pass out all the materials that they need, and encourage the parents to let it be a joint activity with their children. The materials include paper printed with a sentence identifying a hidden object, "flip-up" pieces of paper that the teachers and project director made with a die-cut machine, and stickers of the objects named on the page. The goal of the session is to have the parents read the text to the child and have the child select the sticker that matches the text.

When all of the pages are complete, the mothers use yarn to bind the pages into a book. This turns out to be a difficult task for some mothers, and there is a lot of discussion and help rendered by mothers at the same table. The teachers also circle around to help. The session lasted about an hour, with parents and children taking their new book home.

was able to accomplish this task and encouraging others to do so. This led to a parent workshop on how to take the bus.

Some of the workshops are conducted in Spanish because a high percentage of parents are monolingual in Spanish, other workshops are conducted in English and Spanish to encourage parents to learn English. Every other Friday there is an "ice cream social" to which the whole family is invited.

Read-To-Me session. Sessions are held every Tuesday, using books with a particular theme each month. Parents choose which one they attend and come with their preschooler and other children to the sessions as well. The sessions are a mixture of reading and activities for the parents and children together.

Parent Helper (Classroom Aide). Parents are required to volunteer as a classroom aide twice a month, so that, ideally, each classroom has several parents each day to help with the daily activities. One way that parents get involved is to sit with three to four children at round tables and supervise small-group activities.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

The maximum number of children enrolled is 70, which includes 30 four-year-olds (two classes of 15 children each) and 40 three-year-olds (two classes of 20 children each). There is a waiting list for the four-year-old classroom, which has remained filled to capacity. Families are highly mobile and often return to Mexico during the school year, and the project takes children into the program from a waiting list.

Children eat breakfast together in the cafeteria at the start of their day. Lunch also is provided by the elementary school staff, although children eat in the classroom because the school cafeteria is too crowded. A child is designated as a lunch helper each day.

Transportation is provided via a school bus. The classroom aides ride the bus with the children to protect the district from any liability. Aides go to the door and get each child because the children are too young to wait at street corners.

Frequency and Location of Services

There are two classes of four-year-olds; one class attends Monday through Thursday mornings and the other attends Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Three-year-olds attend one day a week; one class is held on Thursday mornings and the other on Friday mornings. All classes run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The preschool activities are held in a portable unit that has two classrooms, children's bathrooms and sinks. The unit sits on the grounds of the Butler Elementary School and is close to all of the school's facilities, including the cafeteria, library, and adult bathrooms. Right outside of the classrooms are two fenced-in playgrounds--one for kindergarten children that Even Start uses for the preschool children during the day and one for older children that is used by Even Start at night when child care is provided for all siblings during ABE classes.

There are a lot of signs and information up in both classrooms in various locations, even in the bathroom, where there are posters describing rules for cleanliness (washing hands, etc.). There are six classroom areas--play house, art, library, blocks, science, and manipulatives--identified by signs that hang from the ceiling directly over the area and have English and Spanish words as well as pictures to describe the activities. Both rooms have fish tanks. The dramatic play area has empty food containers, clothing, and a telephone booth. The reading area has a brightly colored rug with the alphabet and numbers in different colored squares.

The plan was that this location would be temporary for one year until the renovated K-3 building was available. The district had hoped renovations would be completed by the start of

the 1990-91 school year, but it appears that the completion date will be delayed until the start of the 1991-92 school year. The new facility will have enough space for two Even Start classrooms for children, a parents' room, and an office for the project director.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The ECE classrooms are based on the High/Scope curriculum and incorporate the major components of "Plan/Do/Review," where children choose the learning centers in which they want to work. The classroom activities are divided between large group activities and smaller groups where either a parent or a teacher works with a few children on an activity.

Each class has a child chosen to be the "Superstar" for the week. Superstars are acknowledged each day that week, have their picture or something they have made (e.g., a painting) put on the bulletin board, and receive a gift certificate from a local fast food restaurant (which the program gets free from local businesses). Eventually, every child gets a chance to be "Superstar" and staff report that children really look forward to this recognition.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The program has several ways in which they try to increase participation and motivate greater attendance. For example, they give recognition certificates to parents for perfect attendance at workshops and to children for attending classes. In addition, certificates are given to parents and children for taking books from the program's lending library. Staff also commented that food and take-home materials, such as the books made in the "Read-to-Me" sessions, are a big plus in getting parents to attend. In addition, having fathers volunteer in the classroom is important, both as role models and as a way to have them identify with the program and allow their wives to come to the center.

For next year, the staff have proposed increasing the number of days that three-year-olds come to the center from one day to three days. Originally, the proposal was written so that the program for three-year-olds would be more home-based, with home visits every other week and only one day a week at the center. However, staff have found that it is harder to keep the classrooms for three-year-olds filled. They suspect that having more child care is attractive to parents and more of an incentive to participate in the program. Thus, staff have revised the program so that there will be two classes of three-year-olds who come three days a week.

There are also special events to encourage all family members to attend and feel a part of the program. One special event is a barbecue to celebrate Mexican independence day (Cinqo de Mayo), which is held at a local park. Last year, a group of fathers provided entertainment by singing.

Another family event was a Saturday outing paid for by the Coors Literacy Foundation. About 220 people attended, including extended families in Even Start and a church preschool. A local puppet theater provided entertainment, local newspaper women showed the adults how to use the newspaper in everyday life (e.g., how to cut coupons) and each family was given a

year's subscription to the local paper (worth about $100). In addition, the church gave each family three books.

STAFF

The project is administered by a full time project director, who works solely on Even Start. Her office is in the district administration building; next year when the project moves into the renovated building she will be on site.

Adult Education

The staff involved in adult education include: volunteer tutors from LVA, ABE and ESL teachers paid by Rio Salado Community College, a liaison from the community college, the director of LVA, and a master teacher from the community college.

The literacy tutors are all from a church in the northern section of the city, and are mostly young professionals or retired teachers. The tutors receive 20-24 hours of training that stresses cultural diversity and realistic needs of the students. In addition, tutors working with Even Start families receive special training in family literacy and information on the LVA program entitled "Reading to your Child." Eighteen tutors were originally trained, but only twelve are working with Even Start parents.

The three teaching staff conducting the ESL and ABE/GED classes are part time employees of the Rio Salado Community College and certified as ABE teachers by the state department of education. They are paid hourly and most take the job to supplement their income and hold other jobs as well. For example, the beginning ESL instructor works during the day as a teacher's aide in the Even Start ECE classroom, the intermediate ESL instructor works during the day as a teacher's aide in a transitional ESL classroom in the district, and the ABE/GED instructor teaches ESL and GED classes at Phoenix College two nights a week.

The teaching staff are supervised by a master teacher from the community college who travels to the different classroom locations to meet with teachers. He makes visits to each teacher at least monthly. His other responsibilities include providing workshops for teachers and keeping attendance records for the state (to justify enrollment).

Early Childhood Education

The ECE staff consists of three teachers and six instructional aides. Each classroom has a teacher and two part-time aides who work five hours per day in overlapping shifts.

Two teachers are certified teachers who previously taught kindergarten in the district. The third teacher taught in Head Start for 20 years and has an associate's degree plus the CDA certificate. Two of the three teachers are bilingual.

All of the aides are either native Spanish speakers or have learned Spanish. The aides have to have a high school diploma, and three also have the CDA certificate. Among the current aides, prior experience includes volunteering in Head Start classrooms, substitute teaching in the district, and college credit in education.

Parent Education

The ECE teachers are responsible for parenting workshops, "Read-To-Me sessions, and home visits in addition to classroom activities. The teachers of the four-year-olds work in the classroom three days a week and do home visits one day per week. The teacher of the three-year-olds teaches on two days and does home visits three days per week.

The aides help the teachers in the classrooms as well as accompany the teachers on home visits. They also provide child care for the children while the parents are in workshops or adult education classes, and help at other Even Start activities.

Training

The ECE teachers meet with the project director weekly on Monday afternoons. During these meetings, they go over paperwork, plan workshops, and make materials. Occasionally, there is staff development provided by college staff. Since the aides accompany the children home on the buses, they are not as available for these meetings.

At the start of the school year, there is a week-long training that includes a day devoted to conducting home visits. The teachers also attend conferences such as NAEYC and High/Scope training sessions. In fact, one of the ECE teachers is a national trainer for High/Scope who represents the Southwest region of the country. In addition, the staff also can attend three training conferences a year.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

The superintendent reported that the mobility rate among families in the district is about 50 percent, while in Even Start it is only about eight percent. He also indicated that the attitudes of Even Start families have really changed--parents are involved in the PTA and are no longer afraid to go to school. He sees Even Start as a way to impact multiple children at once by reaching their parents.

Staff commented that they see a big difference in the parenting skills and the quality/quantity of reading and talking to children among parents who have continued in the program for the second year. They emphasize that the second year of participation is really important for parents' growth.

Aspects important for success

The preschool teachers commented that they feel the program provides important connections for families between the home and school. Home visits help achieve this, as does serving the children breakfast.

The superintendent feels that the key components for success are the staff and their commitment as well as the home-based and parenting activities.

The head of the local LVA chapter said that the openness that the school district has to collaboration contributes to the success of the program. She commented that many school districts are reluctant to rely on volunteers, but that she thinks people in education have to realize the potential of volunteers to help schools.

Challenges

The scheduling of ABE classes still poses a challenge for the project. The ECE aides commented that the present schedule of ABE classes at night has the advantage of keeping parents free to volunteer in their child's classroom during the day, but that it is difficult for some parents to come at night.

Even Start staff noted several factors that could restrict the success of the LVA tutors: most are not bilingual and are from very different cultures (upperclass Anglo) than their students. Some staff commented that they need to get more bilingual tutors.

The ESL teachers said that their greatest challenge is teaching adults who are not literate in Spanish.

The project director commented that they need more staff--that staff are stretched too thin with responsibilities in the classroom, doing home visits, and completing the paperwork required for the national evaluation. She would like more staff planning time and administrative staff to help with the record keeping. Although staff turnover has been minimal (no one left last year and two aides left this year), finding staff to commit to staying at a job that has no benefits has been difficult.

Staff commented that the project needs a social worker, because, depending on the needs of their families, staff may be asked to take on the role of a family worker. Staff report that parents come to them to ask for help filling out forms for school or food stamps. During home visits, parents also want to talk with the Even Start teachers and aides about their personal problems. Staff report that many husbands are abusive, but that the women are reluctant to get help. Since divorce is not acceptable in the Hispanic community, even a woman's family does not encourage her to leave her husband. The Even Start staff are frustrated by the problems that they see but cannot solve. However, they do try to address these issues in home visits and parenting workshops.

GOLDEN, COLORADO

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Even Start project is based on a case management approach. Five parent liaisons work with 18-20 families each to help adults participate in ABE classes and enroll children in ECE classes. In addition, the liaisons plan and implement parenting activities during biweekly home visits.

Even Start collaborates with the Jefferson County school district to provide adult education, paying tuition for adults to attend the district's programs. Adults can choose between ESL, GED preparation, and a high school diploma. Most of the adults attend a district high school in order to complete the requirements for a high school diploma. Fewer adults pursue the GED and a small number take ESL classes.

The project includes children across the full Even Start age range from 1 to 7 years of age. Children of preschool age either attend one of the district's Language Development preschools, Head Start, or day care. The parent liaisons help negotiate the placement process for children in their case load. Each preschool generally has only a few Even Start children, although the Head Start program has a large concentration of Even Start children.

As of the spring of 1990, 95 families and 130 children are participating in the project. This includes 23 Even Start children in Language Development Preschools and 9 children in Head Start.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The program operates in Jefferson County, which is the largest in Colorado. Part of the greater Denver metropolitan area, the county covers 77,000 square miles and has a population of 450,000. The population is primarily white, with small percentages of Hispanics, Hmong and other Asians, and blacks.

The school district has 83 elementary schools and 14 high schools. There are 35 Chapter one schools serving grades K-6. There are 76,235 children in the school district, of which seven percent are Hispanic, two percent are Asian, one percent are black, and less than one percent are American Indian. The proportion of students eligible for free or reduced lunch has been growing--at the poorest school, for example, the percentage has doubled from 25 percent to 50 percent of children receiving free and reduced lunch.

The district offers a range of adult education programs, including GED preparation, alternative high school completion and ESL. Adult basic education and the alternative high school program are offered at McLain High School.

Head Start is available in the district but demand exceeds supply. The district also operates Language Development Preschools; which are open to all children but reserve a specific number of slots for children from low-income families.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

ABE classes are held at McLain High School, the adult high school in the district. Classes are offered five days a week in three separate sessions (morning, afternoon, and evening) for two to three hours each. The school operates from late August through mid-June, with a short summer session with a much smaller enrollment. The classrooms are large, and are furnished with tables for students and teachers, bookshelves, computers and some individual desks and chairs. The hallway is decorated with colorful bulletin boards, posters, and photographs of the "students of the month." The building's custodian plants a garden outside the front entrance which creates an inviting exterior.

ESL classes are held at the Wadsworth Elementary School. Most Even Start families attend Monday through Thursday in the mornings, although ESL is also offered on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. On Tuesday morning and on Monday evening, reading and writing classes are held to help ease the transition to the adult high school, high school diploma or GED programs. Approximately Even Start adults are taking ESL classes at Wadsworth.

Both the Wadsworth and McLain schools are on major bus routes. Adults also come by car and by car pooling. (ESL staff teach adults how to do car pooling as part of their life skills program.) Occasionally, a teacher will pick up a student and provide transportation to class.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The curriculum is more structured in the adult high school than in the ESL classes because the courses are designed to meet state high school graduation requirements and, as such, are somewhat traditional and academic. The ABE teaching staff plan and design their own curricula, in addition to being involved in planning for the school overall. Students get credit for life experience and the emphasis is on students as adult learners. Colorado is moving toward competency-based adult education and the state is incorporating its competencies into those outlined by CASAS.

The district has a whole language philosophy that permeates both adult education at McLain and ESL instruction. The materials vary from commercially available academic texts and workbooks to stories and literature. Instruction occurs via a variety of methods: whole-class instruction with small classes, peer tutoring, tutoring by volunteers, and computerized instruction. In addition, each content area has labs for practicing concepts and skills discussed in the larger settings. Each student at McLain helps design an individual learning plan. The particular instructional method is generally selected to suit the individual as well as the material.

Parents have input into the adult education curriculum by getting credit for life experiences and writing about their own parenting experiences in writing classes. Also, the use of peer tutoring gives parents the opportunity to talk with each other about what they learn. Another significant avenue for parents' involvement in program design is the choice of the adult education they feel is appropriate for them: ESL, the adult high school, or GED preparation.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent education occurs in three settings: during the regular language arts classes at McLain, in separate parenting classes at McLain, and during biweekly home visits. In the spring of 1990, one of the parent liaisons also began a four-session "Read-to-Me" class at McLain. Language arts classes meet daily and the parenting classes at McLain High School are offered once or twice a week. Any interested McLain student can attend the parenting classes held there.

Parent-child activities occur primarily during the biweekly home visits conducted by Even Start staff. Ideally, home visits take place every two weeks, on the same day that the child is visited in preschool or school by the parent liaison, so that the visit can build on what has happened in school that day. If parents cancel, the liaisons try to reschedule for the same week or the next week.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The curriculum for the "Read-to-Me" classes is based upon Patricia Edwards' principles of reading to children which emphasizes the value of parent-child time around a structured reading event. Edwards also suggests that parents be videotaped reading to a child so they can learn new strategies and tactics for helping children learn to read in order to create an activity that both parents and children enjoy.

Much of the content of the home visits focuses on educational concerns. However, when life events demand immediate attention, the parent liaisons deal with those stresses first before moving onto educational matters. The parent liaisons also try to use Patricia Edward's principles when doing home visits. They videotape occasionally, although not until parents are comfortable being filmed. For some families, there is no videotaping at all.

The materials used in home visits include toys, books, cassette tapes, stuffed animals, play dough, puppets, and any household items that can be used educationally with children. The parent liaisons share books and other materials they have created. (Each parent liaison's car is full of materials she/he uses in the home visits.) They also try to integrate reading and writing into anything--from cooking to shopping to going on an outing.

A Home Visit

The home visit is with Denise, who is a single parent, and her four-year-old daughter Kanaesa. They have been in the program for a year. Denise started out at a third grade reading level and is now reading at about the ninth grade level. She attends four hours of classes a day at McLain High School while her daughter is in Head Start.

The focus of this home visit in on reading. The liaison had made a magnetic fishing pole and fish with letters and numbers on them that are caught when the magnet hits the paper clip. To start, the liaison asks Kanaesa to fish for specific letters and numbers. Both the parent liaison and the mother help Kanaesa identify the letters and numbers and name words that start with each letter.

After this activity, the mother reads a story about teeth because the daughter is about to lose a tooth. Each line that the mother reads, the daughter repeats. The mother also asks her daughter questions about things in the story or in the pictures. Next, the liaison read a story about a cat to the little girl.

At the end of the visit, the mother gives the liaison the books and a toy that she has used during the previous week. In addition, she returns the journal called "Spot" that is shared among families--Kanaesa had drawn a picture of herself and Spot in the journal and her mother has written three paragraphs about how the daughter and Spot had gone to the hospital because the mother was sick and how Spot helped the daughter not be afraid in the hospital. In exchange, the liaison leaves a "Big Book" and the bucket with the letters and numbers with the family.

Most home visits last an hour and include several components: the parent liaison brings something to teach the child (and models it for the mother), the parent reads to the child (and the child had some interaction with both the liaison and her parent), and one set of books and toys are left while one is retrieved. The exact materials also are individualized the experiences of the family. The liaisons try to do more modeling of activities than any presentations or "lectures" because they don't want to jeopardize the trusting relationships they have established with their families. Parents request that certain topics be covered (e.g., nutrition, discipline), but typically it takes parents some time to get to know their liaison before they feel comfortable asking the liaisons to discuss topics.

The curriculum of the parenting classes includes STEP materials (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) and existing district resources such as books, cassettes, and staff

expertise. The topics are initiated both by the parent liaisons and the parents themselves. During home visits the topics and approach are individualized to the parent, while in parenting classes there is more group discussion facilitated by either a language arts teacher or a parent liaison.

Parents are asked to evaluate the liaisons and to evaluate the Read-to-Me class. The liaisons also commented that they have learned to be flexible about the level of parental involvement because it varies for different parents.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

The Language Development Preschools are housed in elementary schools in the district. Both the preschools and Head Start operate five days a week. Most Even Start children attend from 8:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The articulated philosophy is learning through play and exploration. The district's whole-language approach is visibly in evidence as signs, labels, books, and writing utensils are displayed around the classrooms. The classrooms have an abundance of resources, including books, paper, and manipulatives. There are clearly marked areas, such as housekeeping, large building blocks, drama, kitchen, art, sand, and story corner, that are easily accessible to children.

The child-staff ratio is about 5:1. An adult is always situated at the art table where there are scissors. The other areas, while monitored, are not always staffed by an adult.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The project coordinator has written a personal letter to each of the families encouraging them to participate more actively. The parent liaisons monitor the progress of the families in their caseload. In addition, one of the parent liaisons is trying to establish support groups among the parents to help them stay with the program.

STAFF

The Even Start staff consist of a project director, a project coordinator/manager and five parent liaisons.

An Early Childhood Classroom

Children in one classroom are working in small groups on activities involving the theme of animals and zoos. The specific animal for the day is the elephant. For example, children in one group are making elephant puppets, two children are listening to the story of "Dumbo," another group of children is looking at pictures of elephants, and three children are waiting to be served elephant-shaped pancakes. A few children are at what is usually the water/sand area where the sink has been turned into a jungle with animals hidden in the "Easter grass" and drinking or washing in the water area. At some point over the next two weeks, the children will go on a field trip to a zoo.

In another classroom, the activity centers around a box that is large enough to fit five to seven children. The children had decided they wanted to make the box into a boat, and over a number of days they cut portholes, made life preservers, painted a sail that hung above it, and painted the whole structure. Now they are sitting in the boat and inventing stories about their adventures.

The project director, who also is the district Chapter 1 Coordinator, spends 12.5 percent of her time on Even Start. She is the final decision maker rather than the day-to-day manager, meets regularly with the program coordinator, and helps to facilitate other agencies' cooperation with Even Start.

The project coordinator handles the day-to-day operation of the program. She works full time on Even Start and has an office next door to the parent liaisons office in the Chapter 1 resource center.

Adult Education Staff

ABE instruction is provided by district staff who are state-certified teachers in academic specialty areas such as reading, math, or science. There are four full time and many part time teachers. They are augmented by a core of some 30 volunteers who work one-on-one with students.

Parent Education Staff

The staff for parenting education and parent-child activities consists primarily of the parent liaisons. The parent liaison who teaches the "Read-to-Me" sessi ns is the only certified teacher. The other four liaisons have diverse backgrounds: two are former Head Start aides; one has extensive experience in community and family mental health counseling; and the other, who works primarily with Hmong families, has an educational background in Asian studies.

In addition to the liaisons, the adult education teachers at Mclain also teach some parenting classes.

Early Childhood Education Staff

The staff at the Language Development preschools are all certified early education teachers employed by the district, some of whom have master's degrees. The parent liaisons visit the classrooms in which their children are students--typically on the day of a scheduled home visit so the liaisons know what the children are doing.

Training

The five parent liaisons have had quite intensive inservice and staff development. The project coordinator hired the staff and then for approximately six weeks, she and the parent liaisons worked together in developing materials, learning, and training for the job before they began to recruit any families. Current inservice and staff development is often coordinated with the district's Head Start or Chapter 1 staff.

The ABE volunteers all are trained--they go through an orientation, periodic inservice, and observation--and are welcome to attend all state and metropolitan workshops. McLain staff meetings are attended by either the Even Start project coordinator or director. The parent liaisons--and sometimes parents--come to help with the registration that takes place every 8 weeks.

Although curriculum content is separate, the various staff groups work to make sure that there are not scheduling conflicts. For example, the district added some time onto the Language Development Preschool session so that parents could make it to and from the adult high school. The groups meet periodically and informally and are represented on the Even Start Advisory Board. They also do some joint activities such as the Colorado Literacy Day and the Literacy Hearings at the state capitol.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

Even Start staff feel that they are making a real difference in the lives of the families. Parents talk about having had no hope that they would ever finish high school. The parent liaisons also see changes in families, both in terms of higher self-esteem and more independence. Because families are beginning to link up with other services such as access to health care and vision screenings, there have been tangible differences for both children and parents. Staff also describe how some of the unemployed adults have gotten jobs and those already employed have gotten better jobs.

Child care workers also see changes in the children. District teachers have called to report that parents are doing very well at parent teacher conferences--for example, they are learning the right questions to ask.

Aspects of Program Most Important to its Success

The project coordinator and the project director, along with the affiliated educators in the adult high school and elementary schools, all lauded the parent liaisons. Everyone talks about how important they are and how good they are. The liaisons are characterized by their openness and their willingness to talk things out with their families. They are very knowledgeable about their families and their needs, and serve as advocates for the families.

Challenges faced by the program

Sustaining the participation of families appears to be the most significant challenge. This was mentioned by parent liaisons, the program coordinator and one school principal. Staff also would like to keep the parents in the program longer to ensure that they will be able to make lifelong changes (especially in parenting skills).

Decreased local and state aide for education is beginning to affect the Even Start program as well. A proposed mill levy failed in the last election which impacts the school district's budget. For example, it has forced the adult high school to cut back on the number of part-time faculty and to limit enrollment. As a result, they have 400 students enrolled and 400 on a waiting list. They are giving preference to Even Start adults on the waiting list, but they are still on the waiting list.

Day care and transportation are continuing problems. The project spends a considerable sum of money on day care, and have had a hard time finding affordable and quality day care. Project staff are working with the staff at the Language Development Preschools and the local mass transit authority to think about how to reorganize bus routes that would make the preschools more accessible to families.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Indianapolis Even Start is an adaption of the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project model where parents and children attend educational programs at the same site. Parents and children attend classes four afternoons or four mornings a week. The morning session runs from 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; the afternoon session runs from 11:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. While parents are in ABE classes, their three- and four-year-olds are in a preschool based on the High/Scope curriculum. Parents spend one half-hour in their children's classroom each day working on activities together.

One hour per week parents meet with a social worker for a group discussion on parenting issues or to hear a guest speaker. Home visits are conducted on Fridays by a two-person teams; each family receives a home visit about every six to eight weeks.

There are two Even Start locations--the Cold Spring Elementary School and the Central Township Trustee Office. The Cold Spring site is housed in a school building on the campus of the Cold Spring Elementary school in the western section of the city. The campus had been used by a private school and has two classroom buildings, an elegant stone house that was dormitory space, a playground, a greenhouse, and a large grassy field. Two of the classroom buildings are used by the school district and Even Start occupies the other, three-story building.

The second Even Start site is in a wing of the Center Township Trustee Office, a poor relief agency that distributes public assistance. The school district also uses space here for adult education classes. This location is much more urban, surrounded by office buildings and a parking lot. Even Start currently uses two classrooms--one for ABE and one for ECE--and is negotiating for a third room.

The Cold Spring site can take as many as 20 adults and 18 children in each session. The morning and afternoon sessions at Center Township can accommodate 12 children and ten adults per session.

Participating families are about equally mixed between blacks and whites. The participating adults are primarily women and all speak English. The majority of adults read below the seventh grade level, and some read as low as the third grade level.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Indianapolis Public School system (IPS) consists of 85 schools: 68 elementary, ten middle schools, and 7 high schools. There are 43 Chapter 1 schools in the district. About 65-70 percent of IPS students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. The dropout rate is between 19 percent and 25 percent.

There are 48,000 students in IPS, of which approximately half are white and half are black as a result of a busing plan. However, these student proportions are not representative of the overall population of Indianapolis, in which blacks represent only 20-30 percent of the population.

The IPS system offers some programs for at-risk preschool children, and there will be a preschool program for handicapped children offered next year in the Cold Spring Elementary School. Most of the other preschools in the area are private and too expensive for the Even Start population.

There are adult education programs offered by IPS at 40 sites in school buildings and community agencies, but there is no child care offered. However, as part of the vocational education program offered by IPS, there is child care for teen parents who are enrolled in a vocational program. IPS also offers an adult education program during the day for pregnant teenagers.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

The ABE classes at the Cold Spring site are in a classroom on the lower level. At Center Township, there also is one classroom dedicated for ABE.

Classes last two hours per day. Each session has a 15-minute break, which parents can take on their own timetable. On Thursdays, the ABE class is 1.5 hours to fit in an hour of Parent Time.

Transportation to the centers is provided via a private taxi company that bills the project through the school district. The project arranges the taxis so that two to three families are picked up together. Indianapolis has no mass transit system and the bus system is limited. so even getting to the downtown site is difficult without a car (and few families have cars). Last year the project contracted with a bus company in the city to pick up families, but that approach was very expensive and the bus was not always full. IPS buses bring some families home from the afternoon sessions.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The ABE classrooms at the two Even Start sites use similar methods, although each teacher uses some of her own materials and instructional strategies. Both teachers administer the TABE and the CASAS within the first two weeks for an assessment of the student's level.

Center Township. The ABE class at Center Township starts by having the adults write in their journals about topics that the teacher provides. The teacher uses Cambridge GED and pre-GED books. as well as materials such as "Finding a Job," "In Your Own Words." "Vocabulary Boosters," and "Stars," a magazine on topics such as black history and sports that

is written at the third and fourth grade level. The teacher makes copies of articles and materials for parents to take home as homework; she reports that parents like to have a lot of homework because they like the extra practice and also enjoy using materials other than textbooks.

There is one computer in this classroom, which students sign up to use for 20 minutes daily. Stories they have written and illustrated are displayed on the walls of the classroom.

The classroom receives USA Today, which students read daily, and the Classline Today, which is a one-page list of questions and projects linked to USA Today that students complete as homework. Classline Today includes the "Top Ten Review," a set of ten multiple-choice questions from the day's articles; in addition, there are "Today's Project," "Today's Issues," and "Today's Profiles" which give students ideas for further writing or research.

Math instruction differs somewhat from other curriculum areas. The teacher stated that students can get a lot of information through their own exploration but that learning math really requires a direct lesson. Students need particular help with basic math and algebra. As students get closer to taking the GED, the teacher gives them word problems and science and social studies materials, and then goes over questions to explain what they do not understand.

Cold Spring Site. The teacher initially tried to teach the class as a group, but found that there are so many differences in adults' skills that she was losing some students and holding others back. Now, she uses more individualized instruction and finds that a greater number of students are ready for the GED. Students who need extra help have individual tutors during classtime.

If parents score high on the CASAS and the TABE, they are given the GED book and subject matter books such as the Challenger reading series. There also are a lot of other ABE textbooks in the classroom, such as those published by Contemporary, Cambridge, and Steck-Vaughn.

The teacher still does group lessons on things she feels everyone will gain from, such as reading to children, children's literature, or computer skills. She also has students write reports, such as on American presidents. She finds that writing skills and word processing are challenges for parents.

There are two Macintosh computers and two Apple II computers in this classroom, purchased through a grant from the National Center for Family Literacy and Apple Computers. Students use the computers for math skills, geography programs, and word-processing skills. The computers are linked with those at the Even Start program in Oregon, which also has an Apple grant. Attempts were made to institute a pen pal program among adults in these programs.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Parent education is formally presented during parent groups at the center. It also is incorporated as a goal of the parent-child time in the ECE classroom and the home visits.

In addition, ABE teachers introduce materials that address parenting issues. Both ABE teachers present material in class that relates to reading to their children. One teacher makes copies available to parents of handouts on child development, such as "Developing Language and Verbal Expression" and "Vision Memory," from which parents can select activities to do at home with their children. At the Cold Spring site, parents wrote and illustrated stories for their children as part of a class on children's literature and fairy tales. The project collaborates with Reading is Fundamental, and at both sites, parents are involved in the selection and distribution of the books.

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent group meetings are held once a week for an hour at each site.

PACT (Parent And Child Together) time, a feature of the Kenan model, time takes place during the last half hour of the preschool program in the preschool classroom, four days a week. If parents do not have children in the preschool, they meet with the social worker during this time to plan activities to do at home with their children.

Home visits are made on Friday mornings (when there are no classes at the centers) and last 45-60 minutes. Staff can make two home visits per week, and there are four teams that conduct home visits. Thus, each family is visited approximately every six weeks.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Parent Groups. The parent groups start off at the beginning of the year with information about child development (e.g., "ages and stages"). The project has had guest speakers from the Red Cross talk about safety in the home. They use videos and films to spur discussions about how to teach children and also use some materials from the Bowdoin parent education curriculum.

The parent education component includes field trips, role-playing, group discussions and group activities. For example, one group activity to emphasize group connectiveness and foster parents' self-esteem has parents and staff stand in a large circle and toss a ball of twine across the circle, making a large "spider's web." Before someone throws the ball, she has to announce to whom she is throwing it and then say something nice about that person.

On another occasion, parents attended the preschool class without their children to help them understand what the children are experiencing in preschool. Because some parents complained that they did not like their children playing at the water table, teachers took this opportunity to explain to parents what children learn through this experience. Teachers feel this may be helpful to parents, particularly if they did not have much opportunity to play during their own childhood.

The social workers stated that their role during Parent Time is to be a group facilitator, not a lecturer. Staff ask parents what they would like to learn about; parents requested sessions on handling stress and on substance abuse. One of the social workers also commented that the

parents learn more from each other than they learn from the Even Start staff. For example, one meeting might start by reading something on how to praise children; after the topic and materials are presented, staff report that the parents do most of the talking during the session.

In addition to group parent meetings, the social workers also help parents set goals. Within two or three weeks of starting the program, a social worker meets with a family and develops an individual family plan that incorporates parent's educational and personal goals as well as their goals for their children. The plan is written out but can always be changed. Staff commented that it is often difficult for parents to set goals because they do not know about many options, and that they often gain new ideas from field trips and parent meetings.

PACT Time: The joint parent-child activities for PACT time are chosen either by the child, the parent, or the teacher. Because staff realized that parents became bored when their children always selected the same activity, they have tried having the parents select the activity on one day, the children on two days and the staff on the one day each week. Teachers try to select activities that they feel will benefit parents and children, or to ensure that parents do not shy away from certain types of activities. When the children select activities, the teacher writes each child's choice in letters and symbol on a small piece of paper that the children then give to their mothers when they come into the class.

Home Visits: Home visits focus on educational activities that parents can do with their children. For parents with children one to two years of age, the home visit is the only form of parent-child activity. If the parent has school-age children, one member of the home visit team will check with the child's regular school teacher to select an appropriate educational activity to work on at home with the child and parent. Some of the activities used in the home visit are taken from Bowdoin materials.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Early childhood classes are held at both sites at the same time that parents are in ABE classes.

Frequency and Location of Services

The early childhood classes take place at each of the two sites for half a day, four days a week. There are morning and afternoon classes each day. The morning session begins at 8:15 a.m. with breakfast, and ends at 11:30 a.m. The afternoon session starts at 11:30 a.m. with lunch, and ends at 2:45 p.m.

Center Township Trustee. The classroom at the Center Township location is a large rectangular room. At one end of the room, there are tables that are used for parent meetings and a desk for the social worker. There is no playground area for children, but they are able to ride Big Wheels and bikes outside on the pavement in the back of the building.

A Home Visit

The ECE teacher and social worker from the Center Township site conduct the home visit with Jennifer and her mother. The activities for the home visit reinforce the key experience of the ECE classroom, which for this visit includes numbers and representation. Even Start staff bring all of the materials with them to make a matching game of shapes and numbers as well as two puzzles. The mother and child sit side by side on the sofa. The ECE teacher sits next to the child and the social worker sits next to the mother, reflecting their roles in the home visit of helping the child and explaining things to the mother.

For the first activity, the ECE teacher hands the child a picture of Disney characters and a small scissors and helps her cut the stiff paper into abstract shapes. The social worker takes another card and cuts it up, explaining to the mother the purpose of this activity and suggesting other things that could be cut into puzzles, such as cereal boxes.

Once the pieces are cut up, the child starts to put the puzzle together. The ECE teacher offers guidance by pointing out colors or shapes that provide hints about the placement of pieces, while the mother and social worker watch and talk about a young niece who will be living with the family over the summer. When the child reaches a difficult point in the puzzle, where she is left with only small pieces, her mother helps Jennifer finish the puzzle as she talks to her about the picture they are completing. She jokes with the child about the difficulty of the puzzle she has created by cutting the card into such small pieces, praises the child for her puzzle skills, and compliments herself on her ability to finish the task.

The second activity involves cutting geometric shapes from construction paper and pasting them onto paper plates in quantities to match the numbers written on the plates. The ECE teacher takes out plastic templates of the shapes for the mother to trace and cut out. As the mother finishes cutting out the shapes, the child pastes the shapes onto the appropriate plate, with assistance from the ECE teacher. All the while, the mother and the social worker are talking about family issues.

In the middle of the home visit, a little girl from next door knocks on the door to play with Jennifer. The mother goes to the door and explains that Jennifer has company and cannot play right now. About five minutes later, the little girl returns and knocks on the door again. This time Jennifer lifts her head up from her pasting and yells to the child that her teacher is there.

There are several activity areas in the classroom, including housekeeping, blocks, a book area, a sand table, easels, and a computer. There is a fish tank in the room as well as a science area, where children had recently planted seeds that are germinating. Staff indicated that the High/Scope curriculum encourages the use of "life size" materials; as a result, there are real cereal boxes, telephone books and full-size pots and pans in the housekeeping area.

Another manifestation of the High/Scope model is the use of labels and symbols in the room. For example, on the shelves that hold art materials, there are pictures of crayons under the crayon boxes so that children will be able to put things back in the right place (this also reinforces cognitive matching skills). On the shelves where the blocks are stored, there are different shapes of paper taped to the shelves to correspond to the various shape blocks. The children also have symbols of their choices posted by their names on their "cubbies"; staff also have symbols next to their names. Staff indicated this is a way for children to recognize their things without reading, and also teaches children that letters are a type of symbol.

Cold Spring School. The preschool class at the Cold Spring site is large, extending over three connecting classrooms. In the first room, there are two Apple computers, a phonograph with individual headphones, a teacher's desk and a book corner with pillows on the floor. In the second room, there is a combination sand and water table, a construction/carpentry center, and a painting table. In the third section of the room, there are blocks, puzzles, and a housekeeping area with child-size refrigerator, sink, and stove and a real toaster, hand mixer, blender, and table with place mats. There are large signs that identify most of these areas. Colors are identified on the wall using very large cardboard crayons. On the wall there are also large colored and labelled balloons, as well as examples of children's art.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The program uses the High/Scope curriculum, in which activities are based on eight key experiences: active learning, language, representation, classification, seriation, numbers, spatial relations, and time. Also, as a part of High/Scope, themes are developed based on the children's interest. For instance, one young girl wanted to get married, so the teacher planned and subsequently held a wedding ceremony with all of the children in the class.

Another component of the High/Scope curriculum is "Plan/Do/Review": "Plan" is when children choose their activities, "Do" is the work part of the day, and "Review" is recalling what activities took place. The curriculum gives children the opportunity to make choices at all times.

The day begins at 8:15 a.m. with parents and children having breakfast together (lunch for the afternoon session). After breakfast, the first activity is a ten-minute meeting called "Greeting", that includes talking and singing.

Next, children and teachers "Plan" what activities they will do. During the planning, the teachers incorporate the key experiences. For example, if the key experience is numbers, the teacher and children will count all of the children present during the planning time.

The next 45 minutes are spent "Doing" the selected activity. The activities relate to the particular key experience that is being learned at the moment. At the Cold Spring site, the class divides into two groups for the key experience activity, with the teacher taking the older children and the aide taking the younger children to do the same key experiences but on different levels that match children's skills.

After the children clean up, ten minutes are spent "Recalling and Reviewing" what they did during the key experience activity period. Here, teachers will ask children "Where did you play today?" and they will talk about the activities.

At 10:15 a.m., the class has circle time which entails large group activities, often physical exercise or playing games. At the beginning of the week, a "Star Child" is selected who will receive special attention for that week. Also, during the group time, the Star Child's mother comes into the ECE classroom to do a special activity, such as reading to or cooking with children. At the Center Township site, the Star Child's mother had planted flower seeds with the children.

Group time is followed by a short (5-10 minutes) quiet time. After quiet time, the class divides into small groups again. Children are provided with materials of their own that they can explore and make an individualized product. For instance, children at the Center Township site were given the necessary ingredients to make "ants on a log" (i.e., knife, celery, peanut butter, and raisins). These activities are also related to the key experience (e.g., they counted the "ants" while they made the snack, because the key experience is numbers).

The final activity for the session is PACT time.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The project stresses the importance of treating parents as adults. One way that they have done this is by setting up a parent lounge where they can smoke. Also, at the Cold Spring site, there are vending machines outside the ABE classroom and parents are allowed to bring soda and snacks into class.

Teaching methods can also be a retention strategy. One of the ABE teachers described that the teaching she does in Even Start is not traditional because students will get turned off to that. She teaches in a more casual way, giving students more equality in choices. She stressed that teachers have to respect students as adults, while at the same time have high standards and expectations for them. Also, teachers cautioned that adult students are less willing to come to the teacher for help, so that teachers need to be sensitive to their progress and aware of which materials or subjects are difficult for them.

The social workers also help to maintain participation. After the morning attendance has been taken, they call all of the parents who are not present. If they have not heard from or seen parents in a while, they will make a special home visit.

Mentoring Program. The project began a mentoring program this year as a way to provide as much support as possible to adults in the program and to increase retention. The project director explained that many Even Start participants do not have someone in their neighborhood to be a positive role model. The project developed a packet of information that describes the mentoring program, outlines the role of the mentor for parents, the parent's responsibilities, the guidelines and ground rules for mentors, and the rationale for the mentoring program. For example, the materials tell both the parents and the mentors that the relationship is one of sharing thoughts and feelings and should not involve loaning money or buying things for the families, and informs the mentors that any concerns about the families or need for social services should be directed to the Even Start social workers.

There are four mentors involved with families now. Mentors have weekly contact with Even Start parents, either at the center or over the telephone, and talk with parents about their goals and encourage parents to stay in school. The mentors are mostly retired teachers and social workers.

STAFF

Each site has a social worker, adult education teacher, early childhood teacher and an early childhood classroom aide. In addition, there is a full-time project director.

The staff is racially balanced to reflect the population served. Half of the staff are black and half white, with an individual of each race in each job category (e.g., one white and one black ABE teacher, one white and one black social worker). All of the staff are the original ones hired at the start of the program--there has been no staff turnover.

ABE Staff

There are two full time teachers who provide ABE instruction--one works at the Cold Spring site and the other at Center Township. One teacher previously had been a job placement specialist at the Cold Spring Elementary School working with community and out-of-school youth. The other was a teacher for 31 years, including five years at the junior high level and 11 years as a reading consultant in addition to teaching math. Both women are certified teachers, which is a state requirement for all teachers who teach ABE through school districts. There is no certification in adult education in Indiana, so the district tries to get teachers who have reading endorsements or special education certification.

Parent Education Staff

The parent groups are led by the social worker at each site. Prior to Even Start, both women had been social workers in IPS and have led parent groups as part of that job. As experienced social workers, they both have training in group dynamics, group process and involving parents in group discussions. In addition, they had already collected a lot of relevant materials in their previous positions.

Home visits are conducted by pairs of teachers, always including one person who works in the early childhood classroom, paired either with the social worker or the adult education teacher. The four teams during the 1990-91 school year are made up of the ECE teacher and social worker from each site, and the ABE teacher and ECE aide from each site.

ECE Staff

There is one early childhood teacher and one educational aide at each of the two sites. One of the early childhood teachers taught kindergarten for five years. The other teacher was director of a child care center for three and a half years; prior to becoming director, she taught three- and four-year-olds in the center for five years.

One of the educational assistants was a special education teacher at the high school level at the Cold Spring school and also taught at a day care center. The other educational assistant has experience with preschool children and in special education.

Training

A number of district staff went to Louisville to the Kenan training. In addition, when the teaching staff first were hired, two staff members from the National Center for Family Literacy came to Indianapolis and provided staff training.

The staff from both centers meet together once a week at the Cold Spring site with the project director. The project director provides the agenda for this meeting, where the staff do joint planning, take care of "housekeeping" issues and get feedback from the school and district meetings that staff have attended.

The teams from each site also meet weekly. At these meetings, staff will discuss individual families and concerns (e.g., a parent who is not playing with her child during PACT time). They also plan special activities such as parent-child Earth Day activities.

There occasionally are guest speakers such as the director of local university preschool who came to talk about communicating with parents. Also, they have met with the staff from the other Even Start projects in Indiana.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

The project director reports that many parents thought they needed to have money to buy toys for their children and to promote learning in children. Now they are learning that this is not true.

Aspects of Program Most Important to Success

The project director feels that the parenting component is a critical element of the program. She stated that many parents might be self-motivated to get their GEDs, but they really need the help in parenting and they would not seek this out or get it anywhere else. The parent groups and the information about community resources are important for parents. Also, it is important to have staff capable of leading parent meetings and building parents' self-esteem.

Staff feel strongly that home visits increase the overall effectiveness of the program, although home visits are not part of the Kenan model. At home, parents receive the undivided attention of the teachers. Also, the teachers feel that during the home visit they can reinforce those skills and activities discussed in the parenting classes. As one of the social workers said, however much you talk about things at the center, the best way to reinforce ideas with parents is by example. Teachers also believe that the home visits do a lot in terms of interacting with parents and the whole family unit. As one teacher stated, "The home base component is critical to the program because it makes the parent more comfortable when she comes to the center for classes."

Challenges

Staff reported that retention is their greatest challenge. They cite a vicious cycle of poverty and health problems among participating families. Since they are trying to recruit those families with the greatest need, they also get the families with the most problems. Some parents leave for positive reasons, such as getting a job, and others leave and come back. However, as one social worker said, "we haven't been in business long enough to know who comes back."

Although the GED is a draw for parents to participate in the program, staff feel that there needs to be more concern for broader goals such as helping parents to be productive citizens. Staff talk a lot with parents about goals and that getting the GED is not enough, that parents also have to think about getting jobs and learning to be more effective as partners with school personnel as their children move through the educational system.

Staff also report that PACT time is a difficult part of the program. It is hard to get parents and children to play together because parents often would rather talk with each other and let the children play on their own. Parents are also reluctant to let children do things like using scissors on their own. Teachers are trying to stress the importance to parents of letting children make their own choices (e.g., the child can make a "less than perfect" circle), while they stress the impact that parents have on the child's attitude about learning and academic success.

The assistant superintendent indicated that the magnitude of the district's required in-kind contribution is a burden on the program. He felt that a ten percent match was okay, but that the increasing amount is difficult because the district cannot foresee the fiscal situation from the state allocation. The district has a $3 million shortfall this year, so it is difficult to say whether the district would be able to support Even Start after the federal monies stop. They will try, but there will be other priorities for these funds.

WATERVILLE, MAINE

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Waterville Even Start is primarily a home-based project. Adult basic education, parenting, and parent-child activities are all provided by home visitors, with the curriculum tailored to the needs of each family. There are also monthly group supper meetings for the whole family and parent discussion groups without the children.

The project collaborates with Head Start to provide a structured early childhood program. In addition, special home visits are conducted to work at home on activities for children. A different home visitor comes depending on the age of the child, either a primary childhood teacher or an early childhood educator. All together, each family is visited for between 6 and 10 hours a week by two or three different visitors.

As of June of 1991, there are 21 families participating in the program, with a total of 68 children. Most families are white and lack access to medical care, good housing and stable jobs. There is also a high degree of unemployment, substance abuse and physical violence, with many families described as "dysfunctional."

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

Waterville is a small town in central Maine with a population of just over 17,000. There are several schools, each serving a cluster of grade levels: Brookside serves the primary grades (K-3), Pleasant Street serves grades 4 and 5, Waterville Middle school serves grades 6-8, and Waterville High School serves 9-12 in addition to housing the adult education classes. There are 2,300 students in preschool through grade 12. Approximately 2,000 students take courses in the Adult Education Program.

There are many preschool programs available in the district, including family day care, Head Start, and YMCA programs. District staff estimate that 75 percent of children enter kindergarten with some preschool experience.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Frequency and Location of Services

The delivery system consists of weekly home visits that last between 1 and 2 hours. Recently the project began offering weekly computer classes at the Adult Basic Education computer lab taught by the home visitors.

During the school year, the instruction occurs through home visits. Additionally, during the summer, there are field trips to local places of interest such as the Dinosaur Museum, Portland Children's Museum, a live theater production, and the Marine Museum in Bath.

Other opportunities that emphasize ABE include access to the district's regular ABE program at the High School, in which five Even Start parents are presently enrolled. These academic courses are taught at the high school and are offered on a semester schedule for one, two, or four days a week.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The content of the adult basic education component of the program reflects a philosophy about working with adult learners more than a prescribed curriculum package or set of curriculum objectives. A whole language orientation integrating reading and writing, with a focus on experiential learning, characterizes the content and delivery.

The mode of delivery is an individualized one-on-one tutorial that is negotiated between each home visitor and the participant family. Individual goals, in the form of an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), are established in consultation with the adult education specialist assigned to the family. These may include developing academic skills to take the GED and functional skills, such as preparing to apply for a driver's license, learning computer skills, or taking various tests.

All instruction is in English. There is no ESL component, although American Sign Language is used with one family.

The district's regular adult education offerings range from external credit to GED preparation to crafts and other workshops and seminars. Generally, the instruction is more structured than that provided in the home visits. The adult education department provides counseling services to its students, and students choose the types of courses and the process that makes sense for them.

The computer lab is part of the district's regular GED program, but two times a week it is open just for Even Start parents. It is a long narrow room with a high ceiling in the basement of the school. There are facilities for four adults working in pairs at two computer stations. Computer instruction follows the individualized delivery of the home visits. Some programs available include: Read 'N Role, Alge-Blaster Plus, Math Booster Mystery and Math Blaster Plus, Spell-it Plus, Grammar Gremlins, Word Attack Plus, and Appleworks. The content of the class includes beginning word processing and computer literacy skills.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent education is woven into the weekly home visits, as are other services. Parent-child activities occur in homes as part of the weekly home visits and also through the monthly potluck suppers, special events, and occasional field trips.

An ABE Home Visit

The adult basic education component is the second part of a two-and-one-half hour home visit. (The first part concentrated on parenting and early childhood education.) The family includes two non-hearing adults and three young children who are able to hear. At the time of the visit, the mother, Patty, is home with John, who is 13 months old, and April, who is four years old. The ECE home visitor has just left and the ABE home visitor leads this part of the visit. Also present is a sign-language interpreter.

The kitchen table is cleared off for work and Patty, the interpreter, and the adult educator are all sitting at the table. The youngest child had just awakened from a nap and is wandering underfoot. April plays in the next room either alone or with her younger brother.

The home visitor had come in with a specific plan to review some reading Patty had done, but she held her lesson plans in abeyance while they discussed an issue that Patty raised. The mother had recently received a letter from SSI indicating a payment was forthcoming but when she received her bank statement the amount was less than expected. She has only had her bank account for three months, and she asks the home visitor to help her figure out the right way to organize her records so that her balance equals that of the bank's records. The home visitor identified a number of strategies for the mother to pursue and they discuss each of these for several minutes. They decide that their next appointment will focus specifically on resolving this issue. This discussion lasts for about 45 minutes.

The last fifteen minutes of the visit focus on the mother's recent experiments cooking healthier foods. At one point, April asks her mother a question, and Patty replies that it is her time to study with her teacher.

Curriculum and Instruction

Some home visits are spent entirely in discussion about children and their needs. Strategies to deal with children and with family problems are addressed as they occur in the course of the services provided. Staff use a case management approach to recommend appropriate information or action for families.

The monthly potluck suppers generally follow a particular structure. Most potlucks are held at the primary grade school. A family style dinner is followed with a presentation designed

to interest both parents and children. After the presentation there is an activity for parents to do with their children. The purposes of such dinners are several: to provide an experience that is both social and educational; to provide a family-centered activity; and to bring parents into the school building in a nonthreatening way.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Frequency and Location of Service

Even Start collaborates with Head Start to place children in their ECE programs. In addition, when families are visited, there are specific activities planned for individual children. These home visits occur weekly and last for about an hour.

Curriculum and Instruction

The specific activities for an individual child reflect the family's IEP. The content of the visit will vary depending upon the age, skills, and interests of the child. All visits include reading, listening, and a concrete activity like painting or drawing. Additionally, the parent is involved as a listener and participates in some portion of the activities.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The primary retention strategy mentioned by staff is building a trusting relationship with the families, which they feel has taken more than a year to do. Since the home visitors work so closely with families, they have the chance to discuss motivation or changes in parents' commitment to the program. All but three or four of the original families are still with the project.

STAFF

The Even Start staff includes a project director, four home visitors and a part-time secretary. The project director works half-time on Even Start and half-time as coordinator for Waterville's adult education department.

All Even Start personnel are part of the school department and are considered by the district to be on special assignment. They work four days a week for 11 months. Their accrued time yearly is that of a regular classroom teacher and they receive standard district benefits.

Adult Education Staff

The staff for adult education are primarily the two home visitors whose Even Start responsibilities focus on adult basic education. One adult education instructor is full-time, and has a caseload of 11 families and the other is part-time with a caseload of 4 families. Both have extensive teaching backgrounds and adult education teaching experience.

An Early Childhood Home Visit

This is the first half of a visit devoted to both ABE and ECE issues. The first hour or so of the visit is spent working with April, who is four years old. The ECE home visitor has a large bag of books and supplies and she asks April to choose a book. There are multiple copies of each book so that April's mother, Patty, also will have a copy of the book selected.

Many of the books are accompanied by audiotapes and the home visitor encourages the child to choose one with a tape. Because April's parents are hearing impaired, the home visitor points out that it is important for April and her siblings to hear things out loud because they don't get as much practice as other children. April chooses a book for the home visitor to read to her and the tape of the book is played at the same time. The reading is quite interactive: the home visitor frequently stops the tape so she can ask April questions, which April answers. In the meantime, the interpreter signs to the mother what is playing on the tape, what the home visitor asks April, and what April says in response.

Once the story has been completed, the home visitor asks April if she would like to paint a picture about something from the story. When April indicates interest, the home visitor takes paints, paper, and a brush out from her supply bag, while the mother gets newspaper to put under the painting. April paints large splashes of green and white, and announces that she has painted a building. The home visitor helps clean up, as the mother puts the painting on top of the refrigerator to dry.

Next, the home visitor takes flash cards from her satchel. She comments that in American sign language the use of personal pronouns and articles differs from that in spoken English, and that April's speech reflects this difference. The flash cards have pictures of children, animals, and objects, and she asks April questions about who or what is in the picture and what the subject of the card is doing or wearing. She reiterates that things belonging to girls are called "hers" and that things belonging to boys are called "his" because this is a stumbling block for April, who uses "his" for all possessives.

For the last activity, the mother asks the home visitor to read from a book she had been reading with April.

The district's Adult Education staff have backgrounds in adult basic education, literacy, and advocacy.

Parent Education Staff

All four home visitors do parent-child activities and modeling during their visits, although the early childhood staff probably spend more time developing and modeling various activities.

Early Childhood Education Staff

The early childhood staff consist primarily of the other two full-time home visitors. Both have worked with the project since it began in the winter/spring of 1990. One has worked as a developmental first grade teacher in the Waterville schools; she works more with school-age children while her colleague works with three- and four-year-olds. Families with children in both age ranges are visited by each of the two ECE home visitors.

Training

The staff have weekly meetings on Thursday afternoons that serve as debriefings, catching up, and planning sessions. That is often the only time staff members see one another since most of their work occurs outside the office. The director meets weekly with the Chapter 1 Coordinator and less frequently with the superintendent and the project's advisory board.

Staff training was designed in advance by the director for the entire staff, and is described as integral to the team's present success. At the start of the project, they met for two weeks to get acquainted. Together, they read the grant proposal, wrote their own job descriptions, took a Learning Styles Inventory (Myers-Briggs) and talked about the problems they might face in carrying out the program. Every five months they spend three days together to summarize where they are and revise as needed.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

Staff believe that families are demonstrating increased commitment to learning and change, as evidenced by honoring appointments and preparing for home visits. Additionally, families who did not participate earlier in group activities are now doing so. Other evidence of impact comes from the involvement of fathers or male partners in adult basic education and parenting sessions.

Parents are also more aware of their own responsibilities in caring for their children. One participant summed it up, saying "You're teaching us and our kids now so that they won't need their own Marcia [home visitor] later--no offense, Marcia!"

Aspects of Project Important to Its Success

Project staff and other educators within the community believe this project's biggest strength lies in its staff. Staff longevity and stability are also key elements; there has been no

turnover among professional staff since the program began. Another important feature is the extended service to families in need; the continuity of services is important when working with families to change behaviors.

Also cited as critical was the community and institutional support given the project. For example, Even Start complements the strong Head Start effort in the town.

Challenges Faced by the Project

Staff members believe they must continue to learn new strategies for working with hard-to-reach families who do not necessarily make progress easy. Some of the difficulties families face, such as substance abuse, violent behavior, and food and housing shortages, are beyond the knowledge and skills of the educationally trained home visitors, and functioning in the absence of a trained social work perspective has been particularly challenging.

Another challenge is the lack of space. The two-room office contains the project secretary and her equipment in an anteroom and an office shared by all four home visitors, the director, and all project records and teaching materials. The rooms are stuffed with bookshelves, games, papers, books and toys. Since there is only one desk, the staff share its use. Staff routinely keep most of their materials in their cars.

BILLINGS, MONTANA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Even Start directly provides child care, home visits, parenting workshops, and opportunities for parents to volunteer in early childhood classrooms. The project collaborates with the school district for adult education classes. The program also works closely with the JOBS program, and offers child care and parenting classes for JOBS participants who are taking ABE classes at the adult high school. In addition, parents in the JOBS program receive employment training to be child care workers.

The project offers educational activities for children from birth through age seven. Early childhood education and child care occurs at the Even Start center which is in one wing of a former elementary school. The Even Start grant is supplemented by a grant from US West that covers the salaries for an infant child care specialist and a classroom aide.

While children are at the center, their parents attend adult education classes at the Adult Education Center a few miles away. Parenting workshops led by Even Start family advocates are offered four times a week at the center. Family advocates also conduct home visits twice a month with each family.

The project can accommodate a maximum of 35-40 families, depending on the age and number of children in each family. As of the spring of 1990, there are 37 families participating. The project has an open entry/open exit policy and families leave when the adults have met the goals determined at the start of participation. The typical length of time families attend is from six to eight months. Thus, over the course of a year, the program serves about 90-100 families.

The target population includes Native American Crow and white families. Since the JOBS program offers services for AFDC parents, Even Start staff make a concerted effort to work with families who are not on public assistance who otherwise would not be able to attend any classes.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

Billings is a city of approximately 80,000 people. The school district is overseen by an eight-member school board and includes 32 schools: 24 elementary, four junior high, three high school, and one special needs school. There are about 15,200 students in the district.

Head Start is available within Billings, but other preschool options are quite limited. Adult education is available through the Adult Education division of the school system. The city has recently instituted a JOBS program in which participants are required to enroll in adult basic education or employment training; Even Start works closely with JOBS staff to coordinate services.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

The adult education offers pre-GED and GED courses at a central location in Billings. Even Start participants attend along with other adults from the community.

Frequency and Location of Services

Adult education classes are held morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday at the Adult Education Center. The Adult Education Center, also called the Lincoln Center, is a former high school that has been renovated. The first floor houses adult education classrooms, offices, and a lounge; district administrative offices are on the second floor. Each teacher has a dedicated classroom. The classrooms are large, airy, and bright, with tables, desks, and books on shelves on the side walls. There also is a student lounge.

Even Start participants are asked to make a commitment to attend adult basic education courses. Most attend between 15 and 20 hours a week, generally the same number of hours that the children are in classes at the Even Start site.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The curriculum is individualized to the student. Students work alone, or occasionally in pairs, at their own pace in workbooks or in textbooks. The materials used include commercially available materials such as Cambridge, Houghton-Mifflin, Steck-Vaughn and SRA, as well as locally developed reading and cassette materials.

Before attending classes, students have an academic counseling session during which they describe their goals and are assessed with the ABLE test. Then students have individual sessions with counselors to set goals, to recognize current strengths and weaknesses, and to decide whether they are interested in and can participate in a course of study at Lincoln. Many of the students at Lincoln Center are parents, and the classes, counseling, and scheduling all recognize the dual responsibility of most students.

Once students decide to attend, they begin with a week of orientation for two hours a day. This week includes sessions about computers and career information, and also familiarizes students with the school, the teachers, and the different classes and scheduling options available. After this orientation, students begin classes.

The students meet with their counselors after three months for an evaluation of their progress toward goals previously established, and if appropriate, goals are renegotiated with input from the teacher and student.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Parents have a fair amount of input into both the home visits and the parenting workshops. When parents enter Even Start, they meet with their family advocate and describe topics they would like to spend time discussing in group or individual settings.

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent education occurs both at the Even Start center and during home visits. Center-based parenting workshops are offered four times a week--Tuesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons--and are taught by the two family advocates. Topics may be repeated during the week, and parents are required to attend two meetings per week. Occasionally workshops are led by guests such as writing teachers, reading teachers, and public health and child development specialists. Parent-child activities occur primarily at home during biweekly home visits.

The program requires parents to observe or assist in the early childhood classrooms. Parents in the JOBS program are required to spend some time in the ECE classroom each day over a period of weeks.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Home Visits. The specific activities depend almost entirely on the individual. The family advocates plan their visits according to the expressed interests and needs of the parent and the child. The home visits include time for discussion, introduction of new materials or topics, or introduction of new books, modeling of activities, as well as time for the parent to practice new activities with the child. The home visits are quite flexible in that family advocates are prepared to discuss personal issues as well as educational concerns raised by parents. The visits also use a variety of materials; one family advocate said they "beg, borrow, and steal" whatever seems appropriate or whatever parents express an interest in learning about.

Parenting Workshops. The parenting workshops use a variety of instructional methods and curricula. Many workshops begin with short presentations and then parents are encouraged to talk about their experiences with their children. For example, one workshop on emergent literacy began with a presentation describing children's entry into the "literacy club," followed by parents' describing their children's early writing. The presenter, a reading teacher from Eastern Montana College, then asked parents more explicitly to discuss their experiences with their children's writing.

Most workshops are also hands-on, so that parents have regular opportunity to work with specific materials or ideas that they can later use with their children. While home visits are more individualized, the workshops cover topics of interest to a larger group of parents.

A Home Visit

The home visit is with Theresa, a mother in her mid-20s, and her two children, Josh, age two, and Matt, age three, who both participate in the Even Start preschool.

The advocate begins by going over the results of a standardized developmental test that is used on children four and older. The instrument is slightly advanced for Matt but it provides a structure for the home visit. The two areas of difficulty for this child are in hopping and tracking.

The advocate then starts a tracking exercises with Matt--having him use a black marker to follow lines of varying width, sometimes straight and sometimes curly. She watches him do it several times, praising his efforts and telling his mother why it is important as a prereading exercise. For example, she emphasizes it is important to draw the line from left to right because we read from left to right. While Matt follows the lines, his brother Josh draws lines too.

The visitor also talks with Theresa about Josh's temper tantrums and supports her handling of them. Then, the home visitor and the family go outside to practice hopping by jumping over a rope on the ground and by walking along the rope.

Next, the visitor reads a book aloud to Matt. They sit next to each other, and she interrupts the story occasionally to ask him questions about what he sees. He also asks questions and makes comments on his own.

At the end of the hour-long visit, the home visitor explains several ways that Theresa could make connect-the-dot and other games for Matt. Two books and the jump rope are left for the family.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Early childhood education is offered daily at the Even Start site from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. but some children whose parents are involved in JOBS program activities stay until 5:00 p.m.. Most children attend five days a week. In order to provide quality service and meet state laws about caregiver/child ratios, the project carefully monitors the number of children attending--the child care workers have erasable schedule boards on the walls indicating which child comes on which days and for how long.

There are several rooms at the Even Start site. The smallest is the infants' room which can accommodate four infants at one time. It is carpeted and has two playpens, four cribs, a changing table, and a rocking chair. The costs of operating and staffing this room are covered by a grant from US West.

A second, larger room is for one-year-olds. The room is developmentally appropriate with centers for one-year-olds containing pillows, toys, and soft books. The room for children who are two and three years of age is set up with developmentally appropriate centers containing, tables and small chairs, a sharing circle, as well as shelves with books, manipulatives and toys.

The room for children who are three to five years of age also has clearly defined areas for activities, including housekeeping, arts, science, library, circle, music, and make-believe. This room also accommodates six- and seven-year-old children during the summer months.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The curriculum for children from birth through age seven is based on a philosophy of learning through exploration and play. In the two to six age group, the morning begins with transition time when children arrive. Then they have breakfast and circle time, which includes a discussion of the calendar as well as songs, fingerplays, and stories. Next is group project time, in which the children choose areas they want to go to, and after that is outside play. After lunch, there is another transition time with songs, books, stories, or music, followed by nap time. After a nap, children play outside again, then come back inside for more group projects. During group time, children have access to reading, dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives, sensory, science, or circle areas while the child care staff circulate and facilitate activities.

Parents participate in the classrooms in several ways. First, as part of parenting education, they come into the classroom Tuesdays and Thursdays for about an hour and a half in the mornings and afternoons. Different parents come in during each of the four blocks of time. Secondly, the project has parents who volunteer additional time in the classroom. Parents who are JOBS participants and who are learning about careers in early childhood education or day care participate in on-the-job training.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The home visits serve as a key strategy for involving parents and maintaining their participation. Additionally, parents are asked to commit to a 70 percent or better attendance rate at adult education, parenting, and home visits for each two-week period. Staff comment, however, that the provision of free child care is the most effective retention strategy they have.

STAFF

Staff include a full time project coordinator, who manages day-to-day operations, and is assisted by the project supervisor who also is the Chapter 1 Specialist for the district.

Other full-time Even Start Staff include two family advocates, three child care teachers, and a secretary. The project also has foster grandparents who work in the early childhood classrooms, a number of volunteers who help out in the childhood classrooms, and interns who are studying child development.

There has been some staff turnover; four of the original seven are still with the project. In some cases, staff left to return to school, while others left for other positions in the community.

Adult Basic Education

Staff at the Lincoln Center are all certified teachers, most of whom have master's degrees in reading or other academic subjects. In addition to the teaching staff, there are two academic counselors who meet with incoming students to discuss goals, purposes, barriers, and expectations. The director helped to write the original grant, so the staff are quite committed to the Even Start project.

Parenting Education

Parenting education is provided by the two family advocates, both of whom are certified teachers. Additionally, the early childhood classroom staff facilitate parent and children interaction while the parents are in the early childhood classroom.

Early Childhood Education

There are four early childhood classroom teachers, one per room. The project also has a large number of volunteers who help as needed in each room. For example, in the infant room, there is a full time child care specialist who is assisted by a foster grandmother or other volunteer aide.

The child care specialist has a master's degree; the other three staff members hold various degrees, Child Development Associate (CDA) certificates, or experience in early childhood education. A proposed restructuring will lead to one certified teacher overseeing all four child care rooms, each of which will be staffed by child care aides.

Training

Staff members meet weekly to discuss progress of families and plan curriculum and activities. Family advocates attend staff meetings at the Adult Education Center as well.

The counselors and teachers at Lincoln also meet weekly with the case managers from the JOBS program and the family advocates and families are followed carefully as they progress through these different projects/schools. The project coordinator occasionally attends these weekly meetings as well. Additionally, the counselors and the teachers meet every Friday morning for internal case review, and then are joined by both Even Start family advocates and JOBS caseload managers for an interagency case review.

CONCLUSIONS

Aspects of Program Important to Its Success

The coordinator believes the core of this project is the family advocate position. The advocates keep track of everything with families, and they have to be able to go into homes and have people feel comfortable with them as home visitors.

The coordinator also thinks it essential that the project provide day care services which enable day-to-day contact with families. This provides an effective support system for parents.

The staff as a whole believe that the collaborations with other community agencies are also a necessity. The strong working relationships the coordinator and advocates have established with other agencies contributed to the project's effectiveness as a collaborative venture in a city full of social service agencies.

Challenges

The project director and staff identified three challenges for the project. Transportation is a major concern because public transportation is quite limited. The buses run only between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Alternatives, such as taxis, are quite expensive--a cab to transport a family to the center averages $5.25 a trip. While the downtown bus service seems adequate, the target area is quite spread out and it is not uncommon for parents to spend an hour each way on the bus.

A second major issue is child care, which is a barrier that adult students must overcome in order to participate. Finally, the project is concerned about the funding and the availability of district funds to provide continued support for the program.

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Project activities center around the Even Start sites at two elementary schools: Barcelona and La Mesa. At each site, there are half-day preschool classes twice a week for children ages three to five. For children one and two years old, the ECE teachers do home visits. For children ages six to seven, Even Start teachers collaborate their classroom teachers.

Adult education options include ESL and GED classes at the Even Start sites provided by staff from the Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute (T-VI) and Southwestern Indian Polytechnical Institute (SIPI). In addition, tutoring is offered by the Albuquerque Literacy Program, an affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA).

Parents have a choice of activities to consider in order to complete the parent education component: attend monthly parent meetings; attend Looking at Life workshops; or volunteer twice monthly in their child's classroom.

Child care is offered nights and Saturdays during ESL and GED classes. The Chapter 1 van is used nights and Saturdays to provide transportation to ABE classes. Transportation also is provided to three of the four ECE sessions by contracting with the bus company used by the district. Families are assigned to classes on the basis of where they live and whether they will need transportation.

About 85 percent of the families are Hispanic and ten percent are Native Americans. About half of all the Hispanic families are monolingual Spanish speakers. The Native Americans are all fluent in English. About half of the parents work.

As of the spring of 1991, there are approximately 90 families and 111 children enrolled in the project. Seventy percent of the children are three- and four-year-olds.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) include 117 schools: 79 elementary, 23 middle schools, 11 high schools and five alternative schools. Nationally, it ranks as the twenty-seventh largest school district based on student population. The school district is also extremely large in geographic area, covering approximately 1,250 square miles, with both urban and rural areas.

There are 88,000 students in APS, more than in the whole rest of the state of New Mexico. About 40 percent of the students are Hispanic, with 11 percent coming from non-English speaking households. Approximately 20 percent of the students receive free or reduced price lunches. The superintendent noted that 2.000 students have been identified as homeless.

There are several other preschool programs operating within APS: Title VII Bilingual/English Language; Chapter 1 Early Learning Program; City/APS Child Development

Project; Special Education; APS High School Parenting; a preschool lab for high school students; New Futures High School for adolescent parents; and Head Start.

There is very limited adult education available through the school district. There is a school on wheels for high school dropouts, but the APS community education offers enrichment classes only.

ABE classes are offered through the Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute (T-VI) and Southwestern Indian Polytechnical Institute (SIPI), which are the only two degree-granting community colleges in the area. T-VI offers GED/ESL classes at 20 sites in the community, including detention centers, churches and community centers. SIPI is run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Two types of ABE are offered: GED and ESL classes and tutoring through the Albuquerque Literacy Program, the local chapter of the Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA).

Frequency and Location of Services

ABE classes. Adult education classes are provided through collaboration with T-VI and SIPI. T-VI provides four classes for Even Start parents. Two GED classes are offered at Barcelona, one on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and one on Saturday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. One ESL class is held at Barcelona on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and one at La Mesa on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Classes are offered for three terms a year: May-August, September-December and January-April.

SIPI pays for one GED class at La Mesa on Saturday mornings. There are between 12 and 15 women enrolled, with an average attendance of ten women per class.

All of the ABE classes are open to anyone in the community. After the Even Start families who are interested have signed up, extra slots are open to the larger community.

ALP tutoring. The amount of time and the location of the tutoring varies with the adult and the literacy volunteers. LVA discourages tutors from meeting with adults in their homes, both for safety reasons and to reduce the number of distractions. One volunteer meets with a mother every Thursday morning at the public library while her child is in the Even Start preschool a few blocks away. Another tutor originally met with a group of parents from 6-7:30 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the La Mesa school but later moved the sessions to a church where there was more room for the classes and the child care workers.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

ABE Classes. Teachers have the flexibility to decide the materials used in their classes. There is a resource room at T-VI to help select materials, but teachers use a wide range of textbooks of their choosing. Classes include a combination of material presented to the whole class, small group work, individual work, and peer tutoring.

The GED class at La Mesa begins by writing about a topic of the parent's choice. The teacher commented that parents often write about things that are bothering them and he responds either in writing, in person, or by calling them during the week to see how they are doing.

ALP Tutoring. The ALP center has a library that tutors can use to get teaching materials and ideas. The training that ALP provides also gives tutors ideas about resources.

The ALP philosophy is to encourage the students to decide what they want to learn, and parents tell the tutors what they would like to work on during the sessions. For example, parents asked one tutor to teach them how to write checks. Another woman is starting to work towards getting American citizenship, and the tutor has taken books out of the library and gotten used history books from the school district to help the mother pass that test. One tutor works on math and writing essays, as a supplement to the GED classes provided by staff from T-VI. Another tutor works on reading fluency and grammar with the woman she tutors. She uses books from the library and gets old school books, asking the mother to read or dictating passages for the mother to write. She reported that she always has a Spanish dictionary handy to help when the mother does not understand something in English.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent meetings are held at least once a month during the day or at night at the Even Start sites. There are also occasional field trips as well as special group activities, such as a pot-luck dinner at Christmas.

Even Start staff are translating into Spanish the Looking at Life curriculum developed by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families for the Head Start Program. Classes are expected to be offered in the fall of 1991, for 15 weeks with each session lasting three hours. At present, the plan is to repeat the series of workshops a second time during the school year.

Home visits conducted for parents of one- and two-year-olds last about an hour. Staff try to schedule home visits twice monthly but because staff are also responsible for center-based activities, there is only enough time to do home visits with eight families per month. They give preference to those families who do not have any children in the Even Start preschool classes. Because the staff at La Mesa are only part time, there is not enough time to do home visits with families there.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Parent meetings focus on various issues. Staff work with parents to develop an Individual Family Plan (IFP) at enrollment that captures the family's "goals, dreams, and aspirations." Before developing the plan, a staff member makes a home visit to get a sense of the home and issues such as the number of books and toys available for children, the number of rooms, and whether there is a place for adults to study.

The program receives newspapers each day from local publishers. Over the course of a week, the program receives 100 copies of a Spanish-language newspaper and 120 copies of an English paper. The project has run workshops for parents on how to use the paper and tries to get two pieces of literacy materials into the home each week by sending newspapers home with the children.

Parents also volunteer in their child's ECE classroom. Parents have a choice of where they want to be in the classroom. The staff have designed a form in English and Spanish where parents can check five things that they would like to do in the classroom, including: help carry food, clean tables, clean kitchen, outdoor play, small groups, read to children, play a game with children, work on a puzzle with children, help children wash their hands after eating, help children brush their teeth, or work on computers with children. Staff commented that this variety of activities offers something with which most parents will be comfortable and includes options beyond purely educational activities.

Home Visits. The home visits focus on parenting, parent-child activities and activities just for the child. In a typical home visit, the teacher gives the parent something to read about a parenting issue relevant for the parent. The teacher will engage the child in some form of play activity. A parent-child activity also is introduced (e.g., setting up a costume trunk). The teacher also provides a book for the parent to read to the child.

The teachers indicated that there have been some problems with the home visits, such as parents forgetting, being ill, or simply not opening the door upon the teacher's arrival. In an attempt to improve the chances of having a successful home visit, one of the teachers is trying a new strategy: she is having her home visits in small groups (two to three parents) at the library, with a childcare worker present to take care of the children.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

The primary program for children is a preschool for children ages three to five. Some of the five-year-olds may be in half-day kindergarten and come to Even Start for the other half of the day. For children in school (ages six to seven), Even Start teachers collaborate with school district teachers. In the summer, school-age children come to the Even Start centers for three weeks of special activities.

An Evening Parent Meeting

The evening parent meeting is led by a bilingual education specialist for APS who is a consultant to the Even Start Program. The topic is music as a form of sharing between parent and child.

The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. with pizza and punch. At 7:00 p.m., about 25 parents enter the school library, where materials to make musical instruments have been set up at one table. The ECE teachers show parents how to make a simple instrument by placing dried beans in a round oatmeal box. Parents then choose a piece of wallpaper from a sample wallpaper book to cover the box. While parents are making the instruments, the bilingual specialist provides background music on the piano.

When parents complete the instrument, they take seats at round tables in the library. The bilingual specialist recalls for parents the role of music in her own life. She tells how she was introduced to music when she was a child in Mexico by a local woman without any formal music training. She stresses that music can be a spark to cultivate creativity in children and encourages parents to make music more active by singing to their children rather than just listening to the radio. She speaks mainly in Spanish, with English translation for the one mother who does not understand Spanish. She then performs one or two songs, inviting the parents to sing along and use their new instruments.

At 7:30 p.m., there is a brief awards ceremony where a few parents are given t-shirts for perfect attendance. At 7:40 p.m., the children come into the meeting and the parents perform a song for them, reading from a sheet on which the words have been written.

The culmination of the workshop is reading a story that includes a song. One of the children plays the xylophone on cue from the bilingual specialist who accompanies on the piano. As the children return to the Even Start classroom, the parents are asked about the best date for the next parent meeting and reminded of an upcoming Saturday when staff and parents will plant grass in front of the Even Start portable classroom. On their way out, parents help themselves to free copies of a Spanish newspaper that are distributed at parent meetings.

Frequency and Location of Services

The preschool programs take place at two sites: the Barcelona and the La Mesa elementary schools. There are four preschool sessions at Barcelona. Each child attends two half-days per week: Tuesday and Thursday mornings, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, Monday and Wednesday mornings, or Monday and Wednesday afternoons. There are up to 15 children in each classroom at Barcelona, although staff report that attendance is very irregular. At La Mesa, there is only one session (Tuesday and Thursday afternoons) with a maximum of 10 children.

Barcelona Site. The Even Start site at Barcelona is in a double-long trailer on the grounds of the elementary school. The classroom is a modern, well-equipped portable classroom adjacent to the Barcelona school building. In addition to the large classroom, the facility has a kitchen area and a staff office. Unlike most portable classrooms, this one has windows. The portable was purchased by the school district, and Even Start staff express great appreciation that it is "a deluxe model." In front of the classroom, a play area has recently been completed that features an oval cement track where the children can ride tricycles.

In the classroom there are several distinct areas labelled in English and Spanish: housekeeping; blocks and a building area, including a carpentry bench; dress-up and dramatic play; storytime area and a library; and a music area equipped with a tape deck, record player, and headphones. There is also an aquarium and a pet hamster in the classroom. A water table and painting easel are set up outside the classroom on the playground and are used during outside play.

La Mesa Site. The classroom at the La Mesa site also is in a portable classroom, but is much smaller than the one at Barcelona. The space is shared with the kindergarten class; for the 1991-92 school year the district will need this room for kindergarten, so Even Start is negotiating to use a local church for one year. The principal of La Mesa wants the program back on the school's campus the following year.

The La Mesa classroom has labels and signs in English, Spanish, and Navajo. Hung around the room are pictures with labels of body parts, colors, and money. A variety of art supplies are on a low shelf accessible to the children (e.g., stamp pad, scissors, pipe cleaners, paper, and pencils). There are several different activity centers separated by shelving or furniture, including housekeeping, music, blocks, a water table, a table with a vise and wood for carpentry, dress-up, and a book corner.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The teachers and aides plan monthly themes for classroom activities that they try to incorporate into as many activities as possible. For example, as part of a unit on safety, classes went on field trips to the fire station and set up a "safety town" in the classroom.

Staff described the daily schedule at Barcelona as follows. After breakfast, children brush their teeth (each child has a tooth brush in the classroom with his/her name on it and a

personalized place mat). Classroom activities revolve around small group activities, called "committees," that the children choose. The teacher explains the different activities that children can choose and then holds up a card with a child's name on it and asks the child to put the card on the "choice board" to indicate which committee he/she wants to join. The choice board lists the activities for the day and has five paper clips under each activity; when five children have selected an activity, it is considered full. Staff described this instructional method as providing a structure that few children have at home, while still allowing for individual creativity. Staff read to children several times a day, particularly when the group comes together to choose committees.

The schedule of the La Mesa classroom starts when children arrive on the bus at 12:15 p.m. After lunch is served in the classroom, the children brush their teeth and then have free choice of activities such as the water table, puzzles, or kitchen area. There are usually four adults in the classroom, including the teacher, an aide, and two parents. There is outdoor time, a snack, and more small group time before the children go home at 3:00 p.m.

The project is just beginning to implement take-home computers for parents. There are five computers at Barcelona and one at La Mesa available for parents to use at home and three computers in the classrooms (two at Barcelona and one at La Mesa). The Chapter 1 computer education resource teacher led a workshop for parents and project staff are developing a videotape on using the computers and will have a letter of agreement for parents to sign before borrowing computers. The plan is to have parents and children work together on programs such as MacWrite and MacDraw.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The project uses a number of strategies to reward and encourage participation. The free newspapers that families receive are way of supporting literacy activities in the home as well as giving parents something tangible for their participation. Attendance at parent meetings is recognized by giving parents t-shirts and other awards. Transportation to evening meetings as well as food and beverages prior to the meeting all encourage families to attend.

STAFF

The project has a full time project director who works solely on Even Start and is based out of an office at the Barcelona School. She has administrative support from a full time secretary who also helps out in evening parent meetings.

ABE Staff

There are five teachers who provide GED/ESL classes--four are paid by T-VI and one works for SIPI. The T-VI staff are part-time teachers, hired for a semester, who have at least a bachelor's degree in a related field in education.

In addition to the teachers, there are two administrative assistants from T-VI who work with the program and observe classes, as well as a dean, who supervises the administrative assistants.

The GED teacher paid by SIPI, who teaches at the La Mesa site on Saturday mornings, has taught elementary school in Indian schools and English and sociology at SIPI. He is a Native American and speaks Tiwa, the dialect of a local tribe. Both of the ESL teachers also are bilingual resource teachers in the school district and have been with Even Start since the beginning of the program.

Albuquerque Literacy Program (ALP)

ALP tutors generally come from "The Heights," the northern, more affluent sections of the city. It has been difficult to recruit people from the area surrounding the Barcelona site because people are afraid to come to the area for safety reasons. The ALP liaison has done extra recruiting and tried to get tutors from the Valley area by approaching local churches.

Tutors attend an 18-hour workshop that provided basic information about how to teach reading and how to develop a lesson plan, plus a workshop on teaching survival skills to ESL families.

Parent Education Staff

The parent meetings are conducted by a variety of individuals including consultants contracted by Even Start (e.g., a bilingual education specialist with APS) and the director of the program. Home visits are made by the early childhood teachers.

The director and a teacher from the Head Start program will conduct the Looking at Life sessions.

ECE Staff

The ECE staff at Barcelona consists of two full time teachers, one part time aide, and one full time aide. At La Mesa, there is a half time teacher and a half time aide.

The two teachers at Barcelona had been teaching in the district prior to Even Start. One was a full-day kindergarten teacher who taught in APS for 20 years; the other taught a Chapter 1 K-1 class and has supervised Home Start aides (a home-based kindergarten supplement). One aide worked with the teacher in the kindergarten class, and the other was a Chapter 1 parent and classroom volunteer.

The present staff at La Mesa are both relatively new. The ECE teacher also leads the GED class at La Mesa and started teaching the ECE class in mid-March when the previous teacher moved to Germany. The aide has been in the classroom since January, when the previous aide left to complete her teaching credentials.

There are several ECE child care workers who provide child care during parent meetings and GED/ESL classes. They all are part time, hourly workers. Two of these women are certified ECE teachers from Mexico.

Training

Fridays are set aside for staff meetings and staff development. The eight staff members paid through the grant (three ECE teachers, three ECE aides, project director, and secretary) meet to do problem-solving and paperwork.

Once or twice a month there is some sort of inservice training. For example, one week two of the teachers attended a bilingual conference. On another Friday, there was a special parent meeting lead by a woman from a domestic violence shelter. A bilingual education teacher from the district meets regularly with teachers and the project director to help them with Spanish literacy (most staff are bilingual in spoken, not written, Spanish). Early in April, one staff meeting was devoted to infant-toddler growth and development. In October of 1990, the three ECE teachers attended a week-long training session in Louisville on the Kenan model.

The project director leads a lot of the in-house training, since this is her background. About every 6 weeks, she discusses child abuse and neglect. In addition, she regularly does a lot of brainstorming with the staff at Barcelona and tries to get to the La Mesa site once a week.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Schools

There are new programs or services in the school that seem to be a result of the Even Start program and the project director's collaboration with the ECE community. She indicated that the district had Title VII and Special Ed preschools prior to Even Start, but that as a result of the program, there will be two Head Start classrooms in the district next year. The district also is considering applying for a joint grant with Head Start for family literacy programs.

The project director's previous experience with Head Start also had an impact on the school's food program. The district was not aware of the Child Care Food Program, which she knew about from Head Start. The project director got CCFP money for snacks in Even Start, and now the district also accesses these funds for their ECE programs.

Aspects of Program Important for Success

The project director indicated that transportation and child care are critical aspects of the program.

The ECE teachers felt that sharing with parents in an open and honest way is most important for the program's success. Also, the community involvement and collaborations being built by the project are critical aspects of the program.

Challenges Faced by Program

The project director commented that the ABE was the weakest part of the program and needed the most work.

The ECE staff commented that it is difficult to handle both the center and home-based activities. In addition, they said that the paperwork from the national evaluation is "overwhelming."

READING, PENNSYLVANIA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Reading Even Start Project offers activities for parents and children at four community sites. Three sites are in elementary schools: Thomas Ford, Amanda Stout and Glenside Elementary Schools. The fourth site combines classes at the Reading Area Community College (RACC) and Lauer's Park Elementary School. The project is administered jointly by the school district and RACC.

The adult education component includes both ABE and ESL instruction. Parents attend classes while their children are in the Even Start early childhood education component. Classes are offered in the morning or afternoon three or four days a week, depending on the site. The project serves children in the full range from ages one through seven, and all of the ECE classrooms have mixed age groupings.

Parent education takes place during parent discussion groups, parent-child time in the ECE classroom and home visits. In three sites, the parent groups are incorporated into ABE classes; for parents who attend RACC for ABE, parenting is offered as part of the ECE classroom.

The project targets four of the six Chapter 1 schools within the Reading community, two of which are connected to public housing projects. Participants who live close by are able to walk to the sites; however, Even Start has a van that provides transportation for those who live further away and for special events such as field trips and evening parent meetings.

As of the spring of 1991, there are 44 families participating in the program. Approximately 90 percent of the Even Start participants are Hispanic. Each site has adults who speak little or no English; for most of these, their native language is Spanish, but there are a few Afghani participants as well. The range in educational experience among adult participants is from those with only elementary school experience to those who completed tenth or eleventh grade.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

Reading's population is approximately 76,000. In the city, the population is 24 percent Hispanic; the student population in the schools is 33 percent Hispanic. School personnel estimate that half of the adults in the city have not earned high school diplomas and 18 percent have not finished elementary school.

The Reading Public School system has 12,000 students and 17 schools (12 elementary, 4 middle and 1 high school). There are six Chapter 1 schools and a Chapter 1 allocation of $3 million. Approximately 45 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

The district dropout rate is 8.2 percent, which district reports indicate is almost three times the state average. The dropout rate among Hispanic students is nearly 50 percent.

Reading Area Community College (RACC) is the chief provider of ABE in the area. The school district was the principal sponsor and funding source for RACC from 1972 until July of 1991, when the county assumed primary financial sponsorship. RACC provides a range of courses for adults and offers on-site child care, but slots are limited.

The district offers prekindergarten and kindergarten classes at all schools. Early childhood education is also provided through Head Start.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Adult education is offered at four different sites: Amanda Stout, Thomas Ford, and Glenside elementary schools, and at Reading Area Community College (RACC). Each site provides between five and six hours a week of adult basic education, spread over two or three days.

At the three elementary schools, the classes are for Even Start parents exclusively. However, the adults who take classes at RACC do so as part of the regular ABE courses that include other adults from the community.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The curriculum is competency-based around the CASAS competencies. Other books, such as pre-GED textbooks, literature, and computer software are supplementary to support the competencies. The Even Start adult classes uses a whole-language and functional instructional approach.

One teacher has a number of ESL students who want to learn English grammar, so she uses the text "English Step-by-Step" and spends some time each day on grammar. She also has students write in a daily journal about topics of their choice. Other classroom activities include use of children's books, such as "Big Books," work on computers, and regular visits to the library.

Another teacher divides the class into three groups: pre-GED instruction, beginning ESL, and intermediate English. Texts include commercially available materials provided through RACC as well as computer programs, math textbooks, and literature.

An Adult Education Class

The adult education classroom at Amanda Stout, which is next to the children's classroom, has several rectangular tables where parents work. Five or six women are working on a monthly newsletter. Two women are sitting together at one table writing their stories out on lined paper and referring to the dictionary placed on the table between them for help with spelling. Another woman is working on an Apple computer, entering her story and selecting the graphics to accompany the words. The women are chatting in Spanish but writing in English. The teacher moves from one table to the next, offering help and suggestions to the adult learners.

On the wall of the classroom there are sample stories from previous newsletters. Parents write about outings with their children and weekend visits to family members, illustrated with pictures of butterflies and kites. Other articles include personal descriptions and family recipes. All of the articles have by-lines or closing statements identifying the authors.

Classes offered at RACC are directed toward one subject or competency area. The curriculum and instructional approaches used by RACC reflect a mix of commercially available and locally developed material. The instructional approaches vary depending upon the needs of the students and the type of class offered.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Parent education classes are held at the four Even Start sites, with the schedule varying somewhat by location. For example, at Thomas Ford and Glenside, parenting classes are offered for one half-hour three times a week; at Amanda Stout, classes last one hour and are held three days a week. For parents who attend ABE classes at RACC, parenting and parent-child activities are combined and held at Lauer's Park Elementary School for 1.5 hours twice a week.

Parents join their children in the ECE classrooms for Parent and Child (PAC) time for 30-45 minutes three times a week. Parent-child activities also occur during the home visits. The home visitor conducts between one and four visits a day; the average home visit lasts between 45 and 60 minutes.

In addition to the regularly scheduled activities during the week, there are larger parenting workshops offered by the district two or three times a year at the Reading Education Center.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Parenting Classes. The goals for parenting classes include helping parents work with their children at home and to learn how to better care for their children, how to read to their children and how to choose books for their children. Materials include booklets such as those available from a doctor's office or health clinic about child development. The teachers also use filmstrips available in Spanish and English; some of these have companion cassettes for parents to listen to later and use as a way to discuss issues. Other activities include discussions and "make and take" sessions relating to activities in the children's classroom. Staff indicated that parenting time is when they relate to parents' needs and pay attention to their concerns. For example, parents often need help with practical skills such as talking to a doctor or writing a check. They also try to get parents talking among themselves so that they can help each other. Group discussions can also revolve around the themes used in the ECE classrooms.

At Glenside and Lauer's Park, parenting classes are offered to Even Start and non-Even Start families through the FOSPA program (Family Oriented Structured Preschool Activity) program. FOSPA, disseminated through the National Diffusion Network, includes parent-child activities, parental observation of children in the classroom, and parent discussion groups.

Parent-Child Activities. The early childhood and the adult education teachers jointly develop the curriculum during staff meetings early in the year. The specific themes then become the starting points for parent and child (PAC) time. The activities initiated during PAC time are generally activities that parents can do with their children at home. For example, parents and children may sing together or do "finger plays". Another activity during PAC time is called DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), where parents to their children for 15 minutes.

Even Start also takes families on field trips. For example, parents and children went to Pizza Hut, where they made their own pizzas. Other field trips have included going to the library to get a library card, going to a farm, and going to a zoo.

Home Visits. The home visitor has a kit of writing and reading materials such as a ruler, scissors, crayons, books, alphabet charts, paper, glue, rhymes and poems. All print materials are in both Spanish and English. Each biweekly home visit starts with an activity using the materials in the kit, with the activity being an extension of the themes established by the ECE teachers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Early childhood education classes are held at the four Even Start sites. The schedule varies somewhat based on the availability of space at each location. Two of the sites offer ECE programs in the afternoon from about noon to 3:00 p.m.; the other two sites have morning programs from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. Across the sites, classes are held either two or three days a week.

At the three elementary school sites, the ECE classrooms are located adjacent to the ABE classes. At RACC, the early childhood classroom is on the ground floor of the main classroom building and adults might take classes anywhere in the building. In each site, there is one classroom for the children. The classes are mainly geared for preschoolers, but child care also is provided for all younger siblings. Thus, each classroom has at least one crib or playpen where children who are one or two years of age can sleep or play.

At the Glenside site, there are 17 children enrolled with about 10 children attending regularly. This includes two infants as well as children up to age 6 (older children are in a morning kindergarten and come to Even Start in the afternoon). At Thomas Ford, there are 8-9 children from ages 1 through 5 who attend regularly. At RACC, there are 19-21 children enrolled. At Amanda Stout, there are 14 children enrolled, primarily ages three and four.

Classes at Amanda Stout and Thomas Ford are dedicated Even Start sites. The area at Amanda Stout is in the basement of the school in a room created in January of 1990 specifically for the Even Start classroom. The ECE classroom has several tables where children can work on activities. There is a book corner and a kitchen/house area. The room also has a piano, a couch and a rocking chair as well as portable cribs for the younger children. Children's pictures adorn the walls and there is a small bookcase that holds classroom materials. There is a large box with caterpillars that is part of a science project where children are watching the stages of development until the caterpillars hatch into butterflies.

The ECE classroom at Thomas Ford has housekeeping, music, and reading areas. There are also "cubbies" for children's belongings and a small kitchen area. An Apple computer and software has a prime location near the front entrance of the classroom. There are "Big Books" displayed in the classroom and nursery rhymes decorating the walls. The classroom also has a piano and a large tape player that provide background music as children work. There is an alphabet chart, puzzles, lotto and matching games, and a variety of writing materials available for children to use.

At Glenside, Even Start shares a classroom with a prekindergarten class because of lack of available space. As a result, the Even Start teacher has to pack up the classroom at the end of each day. She keeps all of her supplies in a large cart that is kept in the hallway outside of the classroom; the bulletin board is stored under the nearby staircase overnight. This means that all activities have to be put away each day, which the teacher reports is a disincentive for children to really get involved in projects. Also, she cannot decorate the classroom according to themes or show children's work.

Space at RACC is shared with the kindergarten class there. Since the kindergarten class ends at noon, at the same time that Even Start classes begin, there is very little time for the teacher to set up materials. An area of the room must be blocked off to keep the young Even Start children away from materials that are not appropriate or safe for small children.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The early childhood curriculum is based on themes such as: "I'm glad to be me", the family, seasons and weather, farm animals, special days, senses, growing things, feelings and make-believe friends. These themes were developed in collaboration with the former ECE director in the district. Even Start staff also have identified thirteen units for early childhood education, including: self, home, and the environment; health habits; family, community, and people; parts of the body; articles of clothing; food, utensils, and nutrition; numbers and colors; senses; days of the week, months and seasons; directional vocabulary; math concepts; thinking skills; and holidays.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers develop lesson plans. However, teachers noted that things never go exactly as planned, and that it is difficult to predict that they will spend exactly 15 minutes on a particular activity. They tend to "over-plan" (i.e., have more activities than they think they will need) so that if an activity takes less time than planned or does not work, they will have alternatives available. The lesson plans also serve as a guide for the classroom aide, if the teacher is out sick. The lesson plans list general goals and time schedules for the classroom, with space to add specific activities, staff responsibilities, and the associated theme.

The lesson plan for one of the ECE classrooms starts with a half-hour of free choice play, followed by breakfast eaten in small groups. During "shared language time," teachers and children will read and sing songs together to increase children's oral language, learn to recognize letters and develop self-confidence. The next activity for the morning is art, where children have a chance to use art supplies, learn to cut, color, glue, and so forth while completing art projects on a particular theme (e.g., making bugs using stamp pads and thumb prints). After art, twenty minutes are set aside for DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) to get children into the habit of reading for enjoyment and imitating the teacher who is reading. After a morning snack, the class plays active games such as "Hokey Pokey" or "Simon Says"; when the weather permits, the children go outside for these activities. After the active games, children have another opportunity for free choice among activities such as working with Playdough, color links, stringing beads, or using the computer. The morning ends with another shared language time, followed by PAC time with their parents.

The curriculum is affected by the varied ages of children in each of the classrooms. The teachers try to include in activities all children who will sit and do tasks. Some activities are geared toward the preschool children, others are adapted according to the child's age. For example, teachers will let the older children cut their own materials, but will pre-cut those for younger children. Teachers admit that it takes time to adapt activities to the various age ranges in their classrooms.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The biweekly home visits represent the project's most significant retention strategy. The home visitor visits each new family shortly after enrollment and every other week thereafter.

She also makes referrals to social services. In addition, Even Start teachers notify her when a parent or child misses a session and she calls immediately. When she is in the office, she spends much of her time on the telephone, checking in with parents.

The project's van driver also seems to play an important role in relating to families. As a Spanish-speaking woman who lives in the Reading community, she provides more services than simply transportation. Her responsibilities also include administrative tasks such as conducting exit interview with families for the national evaluation. By her own account, she often tries to convince the families of the value of program and encourages them to stay.

The project also has a Parents' Council that consists of two parent representatives from each school. Meetings are generally held every two months with the program administrative aide/van driver and the home visitor. The Council gives parents the chance to discuss the project, express their concerns, and offer suggestions. For example, parents at one site wanted the children to have milk for breakfast so the project installed a small refrigerator in the classroom. Parents at another site were concerned that they were losing time in ABE classes because they had to travel between the site for ABE and the children's classroom where parenting groups were held. As a result, the ABE and parenting classes are now held on alternate days so that parents do not lose time traveling back and forth.

Weekly staff meetings to discuss individual families provides the staff with information about families that allows more individual retention strategies to be planned. Teaching staff at each site meet with the project director and the home visitor for a half-hour to discuss "anecdotals" on each family. Anecdotals are social milestones and significant events for children and families (e.g., child is still crying when mother leaves, child participates in circle time, child can tie shoes). Staff instituted this practice to remain aware of families' progress in a more comprehensive way than a simple checklist, for example, would have allowed. At first, staff wrote the anecdotals in the meetings but found that took too much time. Now, they write the notes before the meeting and discuss them as a group during the meeting.

STAFF

There are thirteen staff members paid by the Even Start grant: a full time project director, a full time home visitor, three early childhood teachers, three adult educators, three classroom aides, a van driver, and a part time secretary.

Adult Basic Education Staff

The three Even Start adult education teachers are all certified teachers. Two are certified as secondary language teachers and the third is certified in early childhood and elementary education and majored in Spanish. All three have experience working with adults and prior experience with either RACC or the school district. Two of the teachers have worked with Even Start since the spring of 1990; the third began at Even Start in October of 1990.

In addition to the ABE teachers paid through Even Start, the project also includes teachers who work at RACC. These teachers also are certified, which is a state requirement.

Parent Education Staff

The parenting classes at Amanda Stout, Glenside, and Thomas Ford are run by the Even Start ABE teachers. At Lauer's Park, classes are led by the Even Start ECE teacher and aide who are paid through the district's FOSPA program.

The home visitor also provides parenting information. The current home visitor has been on staff since late March 1991. Her background includes nearly 10 years of experience as an employment training case worker; she is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Early Childhood Education Staff

Two of the ECE teachers have previous experience teaching preschool and one taught kindergarten for several years before coming to Even Start.

The three classroom aides are all Spanish-speaking. Two had experience in other early education programs (one is a certified elementary teacher from Mexico); the third aide is a former Even Start participant.

ECE staff are all part time employees who are paid on an hourly basis and receive no benefits such as vacation days, holidays, or medical insurance.

Training

There are general meetings with staff from all sites twice per session (there are three 10-week sessions per year). In addition, there is a staff orientation at the beginning of the year when all staff plan the themes and activities for the year. This training lasts three full days; on the last day, the ECE teachers work at the district's resource center. Although most training is in-house, staff members do occasionally attend conferences or workshops elsewhere.

Every two weeks, the ECE teachers get together to plan classroom activities, make games for classroom use and "brainstorm" with each other. They meet at the district's resource center where they can use die-cut machines and other equipment as well as resource books and materials. Teachers spend some time planning activities with the classroom aides on a daily basis (15 minutes before class and 15 minutes after class), but aides are not part of these biweekly planning sessions.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

Staff have seen changes in parents' behaviors, including working more with their children on school readiness activities such as colors, numbers, and letters. School district staff have reported that Even Start parents are becoming more involved in their child's education.

Aspects of Program Most Important to Its Success

The project director indicated that the most important aspect of the project is the staff. As she stated, "if the team works well, that makes the difference for the program." She feels that the staff meetings contribute to staff working well as a team. Also, they have worked hard to develop an early childhood curriculum in collaboration with the district's former early childhood curriculum specialist. Involving the teachers in the development of the curriculum was a key element. Support from the building principals also is important for the success of the program.

One of the aides commented that one reason families stay in the program is because there is someone who speaks Spanish. All of the aides are bilingual as are the home visitor and the van driver. In addition, the three ABE teachers and the project director speak some Spanish.

Challenges Faced by the Project

Two challenges for the project that were identified by staff include the amount of information to be covered in the ABE curriculum and the range of ages that the ECE teachers work with in the same class. One ABE teacher described herself and the other teachers as a "Jack of All Trades" who teach ESL, ABE, and parenting to a heterogeneous group of adults.

The ECE teachers noted that working with a wide range of ages is particularly challenging, and they would like "more hands" to help with the younger children. In general, the teachers seemed to feel that having mixed age groups takes time away from preschool activities.

Space also presents a challenge because space is shared at two sites, which limits teachers' ability to design the space and activities as they would like.

ESTILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Estill Even Start project, called Parents and Children in Action (PACA), is structured sequentially in four cycles. Each cycle has a different emphasis: Cycle 1, offered during October and November, focuses on parenting; Cycle 2 runs from November through January and provides Life Skills; Cycle 3 provides computer skills and literacy/GED training from January to June; and Cycle 4 is the summer program offered during June and July that features all-day family events every other Saturday and arts and crafts, reading, and math games every Monday. The Even Start staff conduct monthly home visits to check in with families and share instructional materials.

The project focuses on children who are four and five years old. Children attend either district kindergarten or Head Start classes while their parents participate in the various 9-week segments. Transportation and meals are also provided.

As of the spring of 1991, there are 63 families participating, with 143 children across the full Even Start age range. The project serves families who live in several towns spread over a 30-mile radius in Hampton County, including Estill, Garnett, Scotia, Luray, Lena, Gifford and Furman, South Carolina. Participants range from young mothers to grandmothers who may be primary caretakers. Many adults work at minimum-wage jobs at the Hilton Head resort area, leaving home by car or bus at 5:00 a.m. and returning at 6:00 p.m. in the evening.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Estill Even Start project is operated by the Hampton County School District #2 in a rural area of South Carolina that is listed as first or second on most state lists of educational and economic need. The entire county is designated as a Chapter 1 catchment area and 95 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. The school system is experiencing some growth, increasing from a student population of 1,438 in 1989 to 1,511 in 1990-91, resulting in space problems at each school building.

Head Start is the only preschool available to children in the district. The district offers GED preparation through its Adult Education Division in an evening program held at the middle school. Under the direction of the current superintendent, the district has begun a workplace literacy initiative in which any district employee without a high school diploma (including cooks, custodians, maintenance, drivers, etc) can participate.

The community lacks social service and other resources. Many school-aged children live with their grandparents because their parents have gone elsewhere seeking employment. Illiteracy is a widescale problem in the area, with an estimated 37 percent of the county's adults suffering from illiteracy.

ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES

The adult basic education program is offered during two of the four program cycles, and consists of: (1) an adult literacy program, exclusively for Even Start parents, which uses the IBM PALS program and (2) pre-GED classes that are part of the district ABE program. Even Start parents can study for a GED or earn a high school diploma through the district's evening program.

Frequency and Location of Services

The Even Start PALS lab instruction takes place during two nine-week cycles. The evening sessions, which run from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., are offered twice a week during the school year. The first hour of each evening starts with a dinner where parents, children, and staff eat together.

Some adult education courses are held in an Even Start temporary classroom, and the PALS adult literacy computer center is in the temporary classroom near the district offices. It is a large room with eight computer stations set up on tables on one side of the room, and shelves lined with materials opposite. There are three large round tables with chairs. The space itself is shared with Chapter 1.

The district ABE schedule begins in September and concludes on May 31st, with open entry/exit during the academic year. No ABE is offered during the summer. The district's adult basic education classes are help in the middle school in a regular classroom at night and at the computer lab in the elementary school.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Literacy and GED Instruction. The PALS curriculum is used for literacy instruction. It is a 100-hour program designed to be used for an hour a day, five days a week, for a period of 20 weeks. On shelves in the PALS lab are various health and consumer math series and some language arts and literature books. The PALS phonemic chart and objectives are mounted on the wall. In addition to the PALS, the director of a computer lab makes special diskettes of skills programs and games for parents and children to use.

The pre-GED and GED preparation course uses workbooks and a computer program, Steck-Vaughn 2000, and ends by awarding an equivalency certificate. The Evening High School program uses high school texts and is based on completion of 21 Carnegie unit credits and awards a regular high school diploma.

Both the computer and academic instruction are taught similarly. Students work individually, and sometimes in pairs, on the PALS curriculum. The Pre-GED and GED classes are taught to groups but individualized to each student according to ability.

During the computer cycle, one teacher works with the adults on Monday evenings while caretakers watch the children. On Wednesday nights, computer activities are done with parents

and children together. The parents and children are divided into two groups, and one visits the library while the other uses computers in the elementary school lab. Parents and children work together on MECC software, including numbers and letters. Sometimes the parents and children are mixed up so that adults have the opportunity to see how other youngsters behave.

Life Skills Program. The life skills, or second cycle, is taught using a MECC software program, by bringing in outside speakers, and by using role playing. Each year some new topics or modes of presentation are added; most recently, videos have been added. The curriculum is designed to improve self-concept and provide parenting as well as functional skills like job skills and preparing for work. Topics include: job attitudes, resumes made easy, study to succeed, positive parenting, filling out job applications, job interviewing, successful test taking, reasoning skills, and building memory skills. While using the computers, the students complete teacher-selected exercises and drill-and-practice routines and then return the diskettes to the teachers. Keyboarding and touch typing also are taught.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

The PACA project begins its cycles with parenting activities designed to capitalize on parents' common experiences and questions. Parents attend evening meals twice a week with their children. After the meals, parents participate either in sessions with their peers while Even Start provides child care or in sessions for parents and children together.

Frequency and Location of Services

Parenting classes are offered formally during the first cycle, from September through November, and informally twice a week, in the shared evening meals. All activities occur at the Estill Elementary School campus or at home during the monthly home visits.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Parenting Classes. The curriculum includes the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) program, Dorothy Rich's Megaskills Program and the Parenting Renewal program (PR). Megaskills are the values, attitudes, and behaviors that can help determine a child's achievement. They include confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense, and problem solving. Parents are divided into two different groups for parenting--one for parents of children aged one to five, the other for children aged five to 12.

PR was developed by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Services in South Carolina, and is based on research on how people are affected by their parents. PR is divided into two segments for understanding children from one to five years and five to twelve years. Each segment has nine topics as follows:

For parents of children one to five years of age

Overview
Readiness: Guiding Development
Esteem: Facilitating a Heathy Self-Concept
Nutrition: Developing Good Food Habits
Empowerment: Achieving Self-Discipline
Wellness: Keeping children Heathy and Safe
Adaptability: Coping with Parenting
Listening: Communicating with Children
Supports: Seeking Help

For parents of children five to twelve year of age

Overview
Readiness: Guiding Development
Empowerment: Achieving Self-Discipline in Children
Nurturance: Building Healthy Self-Esteem in Children
Education : Helping Children Succeed in School
Wellness : Keeping Children Safe and Happy
Awareness: Developing Values
Lifestyles: Adapting to Change
Supports: Seeking Help

Instructional methods include parent discussions and workshops. Parents are asked to indicate topics of interest, which have included drug use, mental health, and discipline. Some fathers come in the evenings because they are interested in computers.

Home Visits. Home visits are made once a month and last about an hour. They are usually scheduled on weekday afternoons. Both the project director and the project social worker make visits, sometimes going to a home together for safety reasons when the location is very remote.

The purposes of the monthly home visits are threefold: to introduce staff members as well as the Even Start project to prospective participants as part of ongoing recruitment efforts; to check in on currently participating families to see how they are doing; and to visit families when teachers or project staff have concerns about the family. The content of the visits focuses primarily on conversation, and secondarily, on giving families a book or tape.

Most visits are fairly brief and serve to remind parents that project staff are concerned about how they are doing and what is going on in their lives. Materials are exchanged at every visit but usually the topics of conversation are about personal issues and concerns.

A Home Visit

Like most visits, this home visit takes place in the afternoon. The home visit is to a woman who had missed class earlier the same day. Ms. Hardee and her family live in Estill's public housing project, a cluster of small two-story buildings with eight or ten apartments each. She is a 25 year-old black woman with two children, a two-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl.

The visit focuses on Ms. Hardee's health and a recent visit to her doctor. The project's social worker discusses the importance of a healthy diet for adults as well as children, asks Ms. Hardee about her upcoming medical plans, and discusses her attendance at Even Start classes. Then the social worker picks up a tote bag containing a story book, a cassette recorder, and a tape, and asks that Ms. Hardee sign for the bag and exchange materials from a previous sign-out.

Next, the social worker asks about Ms. Hardee's neighbor, who had recently expressed interest in Even Start. The remainder of the visit focuses on the neighbor, who the social worker interviews about the ages of her children and whether she has finished high school. The neighbor is invited to attend that evening's supper and parent-child class to see what the project is like. The entire visit lasts about twenty-five minutes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

The project targets 4- and 5-year-old children and collaborates with the district or Head Start for children to attend preschool or kindergarten programs.

Frequency and Location of Services

Preschool and kindergarten classes are held at the elementary school and Head Start classes are held at the Head Start site. There is one full-day kindergarten class: the other kindergarten and preschool classes run half-day sessions (5 days a week during the school year).

District preschool and kindergarten classes are in classrooms at the elementary schools or portable units outside the main school building. The classrooms are organized into areas including housekeeping, music, drama, storytime, kitchen; have access to a playground; and have a television and VCR. The preschool classroom we visited has two computers. The district kindergarten uses the computer program "Writing to Read" during the last nine weeks of the school year.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The preschool curriculum is modeled on High/Scope, with key experiences and child-centered learning. Objectives include gross and fine motor skills, colors, shapes, and letters, and placement concepts as well as conduct and work performance skills. The child-adult ratios are 12:1.

The kindergarten teachers follow state-determined objectives that are similar to the objectives of the High/Scope approach. These include gross and fine motor skills, visual and auditory memory, and discrimination, expressive language and listening skills, classification, comparison, and sequencing, conservation of numbers, and several emotional and interpersonal objectives.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

Retention strategies for the program rely heavily on personal contact from the project director and the social worker who travel around the community knocking on doors to recruit families and encourage them to continue in the program. In addition, flyers and a weekly educational radio program put on by the district act as ways to attract and retain families.

Parenting classes are one of the more popular topics for parents, which is why it is the first cycle. Staff feel that it attracts parents and acts as a draw into other cycles.

The provision of evening meals and transportation to and from Even Start activities also help maintain families' participation in the project. In addition, home visits serve to remind parents that project staff care about them and will listen to their concerns. The project will also help arrange social service or medical appointments, and will sometimes provide transportation for families. The evening child care also is a key factor as parents can attend classes while their children are in the same building.

STAFF

There are three full time Even Start staff: the project coordinator/director, a social worker, and a secretary. The coordinator, who has taught within the district for 20 years, is a former first-grade teacher.

Adult Basic Education

The Even Start adult education staff includes six teachers, all of whom are certified. Only those teachers who work with parents at the elementary school site are paid through the Even Start grant.

The teachers who work for the district's adult education program are paid by the district: this includes five part-time teachers employed in the middle or high school. The PALS lab is conducted by a retired teacher, who also teaches typing.

Parenting Education

The staff for the parenting include two teachers, both of whom teach full time in the district. One teacher oversees parenting for families whose children are between one and five years of age and the other is in charge of topics for the five-12 age range.

Early Childhood Education

Staff consist entirely of district-employed elementary and early childhood teachers. There are three kindergarten and two preschool teachers. Each classroom has an aide as well.

The project also uses four specially trained high school students, called caretakers, to provide child care for children who are too young to be in preschool (or kindergarten) while their parents are taking classes. The caretakers work during the evening sessions and during the summer. In addition, there are three van drivers who also work in the kitchen.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

The staff pointed out that this year there were only two "readiness" classes--children who score below state-mandated cutoff scores on an achievement test are placed in readiness classes instead of first grade--when there had been three in the previous year. Staff believe that Even Start had some impact on children's preparation for school. Other factors cited as evidence of success are that the families are neater and cleaner now and some are receiving social services for which they were eligible but had not previously applied.

An unanticipated effect is that parents are feeling more positive about school. They are coming to PTA meetings more often, for example, and are speaking to teachers about their children. Parents are now bragging about their kids to each other, which is a new behavior. The parents are pleased because they know the program provides experiences that will help their children pass the state test, and they do not want their children to be in readiness classes.

Aspects of the Program Important to Its Success

The success of the program is attributed to several factors, including the hot meal for the families, the transportation, and the child care offered. Staff doubt that participation would be maintained without these support services. The social worker also provides an important link to families. In addition, the summer program is an incentive for parents to participate.

According to the evaluator and the coordinator, the most important part of Even Start is the parenting component because the other components all existed before Even Start came into being. The project coordinator summed it up this way: "Handle the parents with respect and love, not as children, but as adults. This is a definite key to success. Once parents feel trust, you can get a lot out of them. They are looking for love and praise themselves; they did not get it as children and that affects their own parenting. Sometimes they have more fun doing the activities than the children. Having the parenting cycle first is good: people can express themselves on this subject and discuss it with others."

The relationships with the school district also contribute to program success. The superintendent visits the program frequently, and the school board is very supportive, as are other administrative staff.

Challenges Faced by the Project

Two continuing challenges for the program include finding and funding a dedicated site and getting a dedicated van to transport parents to Even Start activities. At present, the need for the program exceeds capacity. However, staff feel that transportation is the greater problem. The program has use of two vans, one of which is the district's, but it really needs a third van. Because the vans need to make two trips to accommodate all of the participants, adults are getting to classes late and missing instructional time. Some staff will transport families in their own cars.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Richmond Even Start project provides adult education and early childhood education in the Richmond Adult Career Development Center (ACDC). Parents come to the site with their children Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Adult education includes instruction in writing, English, reading, math, and science. Parents visit their children's classrooms every day to do activities together as part of Parent and Child Time (PACT).

The ECE component of Even Start is run by the Richmond Early Learning Center (RELC), a non-profit human service agency that serves children of parents in school or job-training. The early childhood program is based on the High/Scope curriculum includes classes for children ages two through four. In the summer, older siblings also attend activities at the Even Start center.

All instructional activities are center-based; the project has implemented home visits primarily as a recruitment and retention strategy.

As of June 1991, 40 children in 37 families are enrolled in the program. The participants are primarily young (in their 20s and mid-30s), single mothers, most of whom are black, and most of whom are on AFDC or other public assistance. Some are recent immigrants from the Caribbean islands. The schooling experiences participants have had vary, with some parents having a high school education, others never having finished elementary school, and some are special education students.

CONTEXT FOR EVEN START

The Richmond Public Schools is an urban district with 36 elementary schools, 8 middle schools and nine high schools (six comprehensive schools and three alternative high schools). The district is divided into northern and southern sections by the James River. According to the school district's annual report, there were nearly 27,000 students in prekindergarten through grade 12 in the district during the 1989-90 school year, when the present superintendent took over. Approximately 66 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. The student population in the district is 90 percent black, compared to the overall population of Richmond which is 60 percent black.

The school district and city are quite involved in literacy initiatives. The Junior League has just started a program modeled after Even Start, for which they have asked the school district to hire and train staff. The Literacy Foundation of Virginia (started by the previous governor's wife) in partnership with the school district is one of five locations nationally to win a Toyota grant through the National Center for Family Literacy. There are now three Toyota sites in Richmond located at elementary schools.

The district also provides adult and vocational education at several sites in the city, including the Richmond Technical Center, which operates both a day and night program; the Richmond Career Education Center, which serves special needs students; and the Adult Career Development Center, which houses a variety of alternative educational programs and employment training programs.

Early childhood programs are offered through the school district and Head Start. The school district has added one major goal for the 1991-92 school year--to start a comprehensive preschool program so that every four-year-old is enrolled in some type of educational program. The school district also is looking to expand Head Start, which presently has locations in schools and community action programs.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

Adult education instruction is offered four days a week for approximately 3.5 hours a day at the Adult Career Development Center (ACDC) building in Richmond. The program runs from September through July.

The adult classrooms are upstairs from the early childhood classrooms. On one wall there is a list of team names that parents have selected, including: "Silk Bookworms," "Jet Sets," "Untouchables," and "Winners." Under their team name, parents sign in when they arrive.

The classrooms used for adult education are print-rich, with pictures, maps, and vocabulary words on display. The bookshelves hold reference books, textbooks, workbooks, and literature books. Students sit at large group tables, and the rooms each have a couch. The classrooms used during the school year are different from those used in the summer in order to have air-conditioning.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

Each day begins with 30 minutes of "Life Lab," where students and teachers read and discuss the newspaper together.

After Life Lab, the class splits into three study groups of 8 students for academic classes in reading, English and math/science. There are two 45-minute classes in the morning after Life Lab, followed by 45 minutes of PACT time. After lunch there is another academic class. The last 45 minutes of the day vary to include science, literature, geography and parent education. The groups are deliberately heterogenous, and the classes integrate collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and individual reading and writing.

Adult Education Activities

Parents start the first half-hour of the day in "Life Lab", where they read the morning paper. The class is divided into three groups, each with four or five women sitting around a table. Every adult has a copy of the Richmond daily newspaper and each table has a dictionary. There is a large coffee pot on one side of the room and the adults help themselves to coffee.

The groups discuss different issues presented in newspaper articles. At two of the tables, adult education teachers serve as facilitators. At the third table, the Even Start adults are running the discussion themselves because one teacher just left on maternity leave last week. As one group reads an article about taxes, the adult education teacher offers information about different types of taxes and the uses of this money for public services. Another tables is reading an article about a local crime. Morning discussions may range from current events, such as these, to comments about sales or coupons at local stores.

* * * * * *

Seven women are sitting around a rectangular table with one of the ABE teachers. They're taking turns reading aloud from a xeroxed copy of the play, "Brian's Song." One of the parents had seen the movie and recommended it to the class, and on the previous day, the class had watched a videotape of the movie. Each woman reads a paragraph or so. Some read easily and others more hesitantly, and the group is patient as one woman sounds out words very slowly and carefully. As they read aloud, they stop to talk about how things are presented differently or similarly in the film and in the play's script. The teacher also points out the stage directions and explains their meaning.

There is not a structured or pre-established curriculum; the teachers draw from whatever they can find that suits the learning needs of their students. Reading and literature classes use classical drama such as Antigone, Oedipus, and Mid-summer's Night Dream; modern plays; and television/movie scripts. The reading teacher stated that she uses the classics for two reasons: (1) she wants to make students culturally aware, and most students have not had any experience with Shakespeare or classic stories such as Oedipus, and (2) she feels that the plots of the classics are more interesting and meaningful to students than other choices. She also writes statements on a flip-chart and asks the adults to comment. These "parlor games" encourage the adults to think about and formulate opinions about issues.

The English class uses a college composition text and grammar workbooks. The teacher also uses Barron's GRE vocabulary book to give students the sense that "they can do anything." The teacher buys these texts on sale or uses books she has at home; she tries to use books that present information in a straightforward way, which she finds to be more thorough than exercises or a GED preparation book. She also gives students spelling tests, which she says they like and increases their morale. As part of English class, students write at least once a week. The teacher commented that writing is a real need--many students cannot write a clear sentence. A goal is to have parents write their autobiography and a children's book, which they will bind.

There is a strong emphasis on real-life learning and on understanding the world around them. One adult education teacher commented that as a result of negative experiences with school, the adults do not expect things that they are learning to make sense. For example, when they were reading a book set in the 1950s, students asked if a black character was a slave. Because they are not used to applying logic to figure out situations, they had a hard time determining if it was likely that slavery existed in the 1950s. The teacher encouraged them to think about people they knew who were young in the 1950s, and, finally, one student realized that her grandmother, born long before 1950, was not born into slavery.

The instructional methods also vary. The Life Lab combines reading aloud with teacher-guided conversation, a routine that becomes more comfortable for participants over time as they practice reading out loud. The reading teacher started having students read out loud when she realized that they were skipping over words they did not know when they read silently. As a result of hearing students read out loud, she is more able to design the curriculum to meet their needs.

PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

The parent education services also are provided at the ACDC site. The structured time for parent education is an hour every Wednesday. Issues discussed are a result of parent concerns, as well as behaviors and attitudes observed by the staff during the Parent and Child Together (PACT) time. Parenting and life skills issues are also addressed by various speakers during one-hour workshops held either on Tuesday afternoon or Thursday morning. Parenting issues are informally addressed in other classes as well.

Parent-child activities occur at the ACDC site for 45 minutes each day from 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Parents come downstairs from their adult education classes into the early childhood classrooms to participate in activities with their children.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

For parent discussion groups, parents are grouped according to the ages of their children, so that parents of four-year-olds represent one group while parents of two-year-olds are in another group. In the group of parents with three-year-olds, for example, one topic at the end

of the school year was thinking of summer plans and educational activities. Breaking parents into groups based on the age of their children allows parenting discussions to focus on age-specific behaviors. Staff commented that parents of two-year-olds often need more time on a subject. For example, they talked about discipline for three consecutive sessions.

The actual choices of topics are often selected by the parents themselves--staff ask parents what topics are of interest. One parent session was a toy workshop, in which the focus was how to buy toys for young children. Another session was on talking to children about sex because one mother is pregnant and her child has been asking questions.

Parents have homework assignments--things they can practice at home with their children. In one session, parents each made a game to take home and play with their children and their assignment was to come up with another idea for a game and share it with the group at the next session.

The specific activities that parents work on during PACT time are conceived and planned by the early childhood teachers in concert with the adult education teachers. The children also have some say in the specific activities--they often choose activities before their parents come downstairs. The activities reflect the High/Scope philosophy of the program, which uses key learning experiences to structure the children's learning. Staff commented that they do not always follow the "Plan-Do-Review" sequence in PACT time because some mothers need to have certain play experiences with their children. Sometimes the parents work in pairs with their children alone, and sometimes parents work in groups with other parents and children. The teachers take notes during PACT time. At the end of PACT time, the mothers and children join group activities such as singing songs or finger plays.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Frequency and Location of Services

The ECE component of Even Start is run by the Richmond Early Learning Center (RELC), a nonprofit human service agency that serves children of parents in school or job-training. The RELC is licensed by Richmond social services. The nonprofit corporation was organized in 1984 when a JTPA program began in the building and staff thought that on-site child care would be an additional incentive for parents to participate. The building was renovated with a combination of funds from community block grant and neighborhood assistance act funds. The Early Learning Center was opened in the fall of 1988, with funds from social services, Title XX monies, and tuition from working parents. With the inception of Even Start, the program shifted away from working mothers. The Early Learning Center receives tuition from the Even Start grant for the Even Start participants and, as space allows, takes children of non-Even Start participants who attend adult education classes at ACDC.

The early childhood classes are held in the RELC space on the ground floor of the Adult Career Development Center (ACDC). The space includes: a large classroom that is divided through the use of room dividers into separate areas for children ages 2, 3, and 4; an office for

the early childhood director; and a kitchen on one side of the stairway. The kitchen is full-service with a sink, dish washer, refrigerator, microwave, oven, and an electric frying pan, but does not have a stove because of the health/fire requirements of additional venting (and greater costs) that are associated. On the other side of the stairway, there is another room that is divided in two and used for older siblings during the summer program, for large motor activities for the preschool children and for staff meetings.

Outside, there is a large, well-equipped playground with multiple climbing structures, a small "house," and flourishing vegetable and flower gardens.

The children's classes mirror the schedule of the adult classes--from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Classes are offered 11 months of the year.

Curriculum and Instructional Methods

The ECE curriculum is based on the High/Scope curriculum, which is reflected in the design of the classrooms. For example, the classroom for four-year-olds has several activity areas, including: reading, toys, art, blocks, housekeeping, a water table and a music area with phonograph and records. There are symbols under the blocks to indicate the shape and size of blocks that belong there, which is a feature of the High/Scope curriculum. Children's names are listed along with symbols as well.

The story area has a display of books and a large rug with an alphabet design. In addition, there is a reading loft about three feet off the ground built out of plywood; inside, the floor is carpeted and there are pillows to make the space a cozy reading area, on the shelf below are books and magazines. In the housekeeping area, there is a three-tiered round shelf with real cans and empty food containers. There are is a child-size sofa and chair with an ottoman as well as a real telephone.

On the walls, there are lists describing the components of different cognitive activities (e.g., visual discrimination). On one wall, there is a "preliterate clock"--an assortment of pictures arranged as hours on a clock showing the various activities of the classroom. Next to this is a calendar of the month with yellow school buses indicating the days when children come to school.

In addition to classroom activities, there are field trips for children. The ECE director commented that the children need "worldly experiences" to give meaning to the vocabulary they are learning.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

Project staff have implemented a number of retention strategies. The adults can take home the daily newspaper to do puzzles, clip coupons, or read additional articles.

Parents who maintain good attendance for two to three weeks are given a paperback dictionary to take home. On-time attendance for two days in a row also earns a $1 certificate in the Even Start "store." In this way, perfect attendance can give parents $2 per week to buy necessity items such as deodorant, detergent, toothpaste, or vitamins. The supplies are bought with JTPA funds and stocked with things that the parents have requested. Parents come to the center early to buy supplies before the school day starts.

Three students are currently involved with a mentoring program with members of the Junior League. Some mentors talk with students about job skills, using the book "What color is your parachute?"

The student teams are another strategy to encourage attendance. Members of a team take each other's telephone numbers and call another member who has not come to class. One parent has even offered to provide wake-up calls for any students who want them. In addition, as described above, students have to sign in each morning to show their attendance. This is to give the students responsibility for their own participation and attendance.

The adults also are encouraged to take leadership roles in the program. For example, class officers were elected and the officers made presentations about the program to representatives from Toyota and the National Center for Family Literacy.

The project director also commented that they treat the adults as if school is their job. She gives each student her business card and tells them to call her if they are not coming to class. If they are sick and do not have a telephone, they are encouraged to try to get to a phone by the second day that they will miss. If a parent has a doctor's appointment, she can bring her child to the ECE program and "sign out" to go to the doctors, but she cannot come to class without her child. If a parent does not attend, and other parents do not know why, the project director will call; if there is a family problem that interferes with attendance, the project director will ask social services to contact the parent.

Another retention strategy is the three-day orientation that the project director and the director of ECE run. Once adults join Even Start, the director guides them through an orientation program that uses materials she has developed, called "Motion." The orientation lasts about four hours, divided across three days. Participants talk on the first day about what they like to do and what they can do as well as what they would like to learn. On the second day participants get to know one another by describing activities or events in their lives. Participants begin the third day by describing others in the group, and conclude by setting goals for themselves. In addition to the MOTION curriculum, the orientation includes visits to the adult and children's classrooms.

STAFF

Project staff include the director, three adult education teachers, six early childhood education teachers, one classroom aide, and the director of the Richmond Early Learning Center. Only the three part-time adult educators are paid through the Even Start grant.

This year, the project hired an outreach worker to "recruit, recover, and rescue" families, as one staff member described it. However, project staff are uncertain whether they will have enough money to continue to support this position.

Adult Basic Education Staff

There are three adult education teachers. One has a master's degree in reading and experience in retail management and teaching. The other has been teaching in alternative and adult education for many years and is working on a master's degree. The third teacher left on maternity leave at the end of the 1990-91 school year.

Each teacher focuses on more than one academic subject area: one handles literature, GED preparation, crafts, and English; the other teaches reading and geography; and the third taught math and science. Both continuing teachers have been with Even Start since it began.

The adult education teachers work 32 hours a week but do not have a contract and do not get benefits.

Parenting Education Staff

The staff for parenting education include all of the adult education teachers, the early childhood teachers, the director of early childhood education as well as occasional speakers. The early childhood teachers and the three adult education teachers oversee PACT time.

Early Childhood Education Staff

There are six ECE teachers, two per age level, and one aide who works anywhere she is needed. The early childhood teachers are salaried personnel paid by the RELC who follow the school schedule and receive partial reimbursement for health benefits through the non-profit RELC.

The teachers have varied educational training. One teacher has a master's degree and two have a two-year degree in child development. All of the teachers have had prior experience in a developmental classroom; in fact, three teachers followed the director of the RELC from her previous job. Other teachers have experience in Head Start classrooms and in kindergarten classrooms in the Richmond Public Schools.

The classroom aide graduated from a vocational program in child care that used to be given at the ACDC.

In addition to the ECE classroom teachers, there is a cook, a custodian and foster grandparents. The cook works five hours each day, and is paid by an Urban League program that finds employment for low-income adults over 55 years of age. There are currently three foster grandparents who work in the program and are paid a stipend.

Training

At the beginning of the year, the project director trains all professional staff in cooperative learning strategies. During the year, the entire Even Start staff meets weekly on Fridays to review, share, and plan. During these staff meetings, project-wide concerns are discussed. Then the early childhood teachers meet as a group, while the adult education teachers meet to plan and discuss their lessons and activities for the next week.

During the summer after the first year of the program, the entire staff attended training sessions on the Kenan model sponsored by the National Center on Family Literacy.

CONCLUSIONS

Impact on Families

Staff see real progress in the mothers' ability to play with and enjoy their children. At the end of this school year, staff asked parents to write about the best part of the year. Many parents wrote about parent-child time, indicating that they did not know that they could have fun with their child.

Staff also point to real changes in children's skills. Over the course of the year, the early childhood teachers have seen growth in children's language, independence, self-help skills, attention span, and trust.

Aspects of Program Important for Success

The early childhood teachers believe that parent-child time is the "heart" of the program that makes it unique. As one teacher said, "Without PACT, this would be just another program for disadvantaged children."

The adult educators commented on the value of a team approach to teaching, which they think benefits the students and the staff. Advantages to participants include that staff get to know them more as individuals, and are more open with families. This holistic approach allows more than just the academic needs of parents to be met. For teachers, the team approach helps to reduce burnout.

Challenges Faced by Project

The director of Early Childhood Education listed three challenges for the program: recruitment, keeping the program filled, and absenteeism. She described how the program needs a "hook" to get parents to come and keep them interested. Yet, she also talked about the difficulty some parents have with transitions--that since the next step is scary to them, they may stay in the program longer than they need to.

The early childhood teachers discussed parents' motivation as a challenge. They commented that some parents are so frustrated and "beaten down" that they do not want to be helped.

The project director also stated that one challenge the program faces is helping parents to change their lives. She feels that the program's support groups helps to address individual's personal problems, but that it is still difficult to see those adults who cannot change or who become discouraged.

APPENDIX 7.1

BACKUP INFORMATION FOR PRELIMINARY EFFECTS ANALYSIS

PRESCHOOL INVENTORY

The PSI does not have national norms. This study calls for constructing "Even Start norms" based on the pretest scores of children as they enter the Even Start program. The methodology to be used in constructing Even Start norms is described in a paper written by Murray et al (1991), which is contained as an appendix to the first annual Even Start evaluation report prepared by St.Pierre et al (1991). In brief, the methodology calls for administering the PSI to 3-5 year old children as they enter Even Start and using these pretest scores to generate a growth curve which represents the no-treatment expectation for the Even Start population. This appendix presents the results of preliminary analyses of pretest data from the 1990-91 program year. A total of 1,211 children were pretested with the PSI during that year.

Exhibit A7.1 presents a summary of PSI pretest scores for the 1,211 children who were pretested in the 1990-91 program year and matched gain scores for 645 of those children who were posttested either at the end of the program year or at exit from the program.[1] Pretest means, standard deviations, and sample sizes are shown for children of different ages. Exhibit A7.2 shows a plot of the same pretest scores against age of child (in years and months). It can be seen that PSI pretest scores increase regularly with age of the child, except for some irregularities at the ends of the distribution where sample sizes become quite small.

We used these data to estimate a no-treatment growth expectation for Even Start children. In previous studies this expectation has been expressed in terms of the number of items per month that a child gains on the PSI. A simple linear regression was calculated in which age (in months) was used to predict PSI scores. The results of three regressions are shown in Exhibit A7.3. The three regressions differ in the number of observations included. Equation 1 includes observations for all 36 year/month combinations from age 3 to age 6. Equation 2 eliminates the last two observations (for age 5 years 10 months and for age 5 years 11 months) because these age points are based on small sample sizes, the scores are quite variable, and the means do not fit the growth pattern well. For similar reasons, Equation 3 eliminates the first three observations (for children 3 years 3 months and under). Each of the equations show that there

[1]Not all of the pretested children were posttested. The most common reason for not posttesting was that projects were instructed not to administer a posttest unless at least 3 months had elapsed since the pretest.

Exhibit A7.1

Summary of PSI Raw Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores, by Age of Child (1990-91 Program Year)[1]

	Pretest (Raw Scores)			Matched Gains (Items per Month)		
Age of Child (Years, month)	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
3. 0	9.7	7.2	17	0.7	0.6	6
3. 1	10.0	6.3	25	0.8	1.4	11
3. 2	9.4	4.6	37	0.9	0.5	18
3. 3	7.9	4.9	36	1.0	0.6	16
3. 4	9.3	4.0	32	0.9	1.2	13
3. 5	11.4	5.0	38	0.6	0.7	18
3. 6	9.9	5.2	29	0.8	0.9	14
3. 7	10.4	5.2	25	0.6	0.6	10
3. 8	11.3	5.6	37	0.9	0.9	19
3. 9	9.3	4.9	31	1.8	1.3	12
3.10	12.1	6.3	38	1.0	0.7	23
3.11	12.5	6.3	53	0.6	0.7	29
Age 3 Total	10.4	5.6	398	0.9	0.9	189
4. 0	14.5	5.8	53	0.9	0.8	23
4. 1	13.8	7.2	64	1.1	0.9	37
4. 2	13.4	5.7	65	0.9	1.0	45
4. 3	13.3	5.8	54	1.0	0.7	25
4. 4	15.0	5.8	62	0.8	0.6	38
4. 5	13.8	6.1	60	1.1	0.7	35
4. 6	14.9	6.2	48	0.7	0.6	23
4. 7	16.3	6.5	39	0.8	0.7	16
4. 8	16.3	5.5	68	1.0	0.6	41
4. 9	16.7	7.1	51	0.9	0.8	33
4. 10	17.3	6.7	40	0.8	0.6	27
4. 11	17.7	6.2	44	0.8	0.8	28
Age 4 Total	15.1	6.3	648	0.9	0.8	371
5. 0	16.3	5.4	34	0.9	0.8	20
5. 1	16.7	6.4	35	1.1	1.1	23
5. 2	19.4	8.4	18	1.1	0.6	9
5. 3	17.3	6.6	11	2.2	2.2	4
5. 4	20.9	4.3	16	0.8	0.2	5
5. 5	21.7	5.7	7	0.5	0.5	3
5. 6	20.6	4.7	10	0.5	0.3	3
5. 7	20.8	4.9	5	0.8	0.3	3
5. 8	23.0	4.9	9	0.6	0.6	5
5. 9	22.0	5.4	7	0.8	0.2	3
5.10	18.3	9.8	8	1.3	2.1	6
5.11	21.0	11.3	5	0.8	0.0	1
Age 5 Total	18.7	6.6	165	1.0	1.0	85
GRAND TOTAL	14.1	6.7	1211	0.9	0.8	645

[1] This analysis includes scores from tests administered in English or Spanish. Gain of matched scores is adjusted for the number of months between tests.

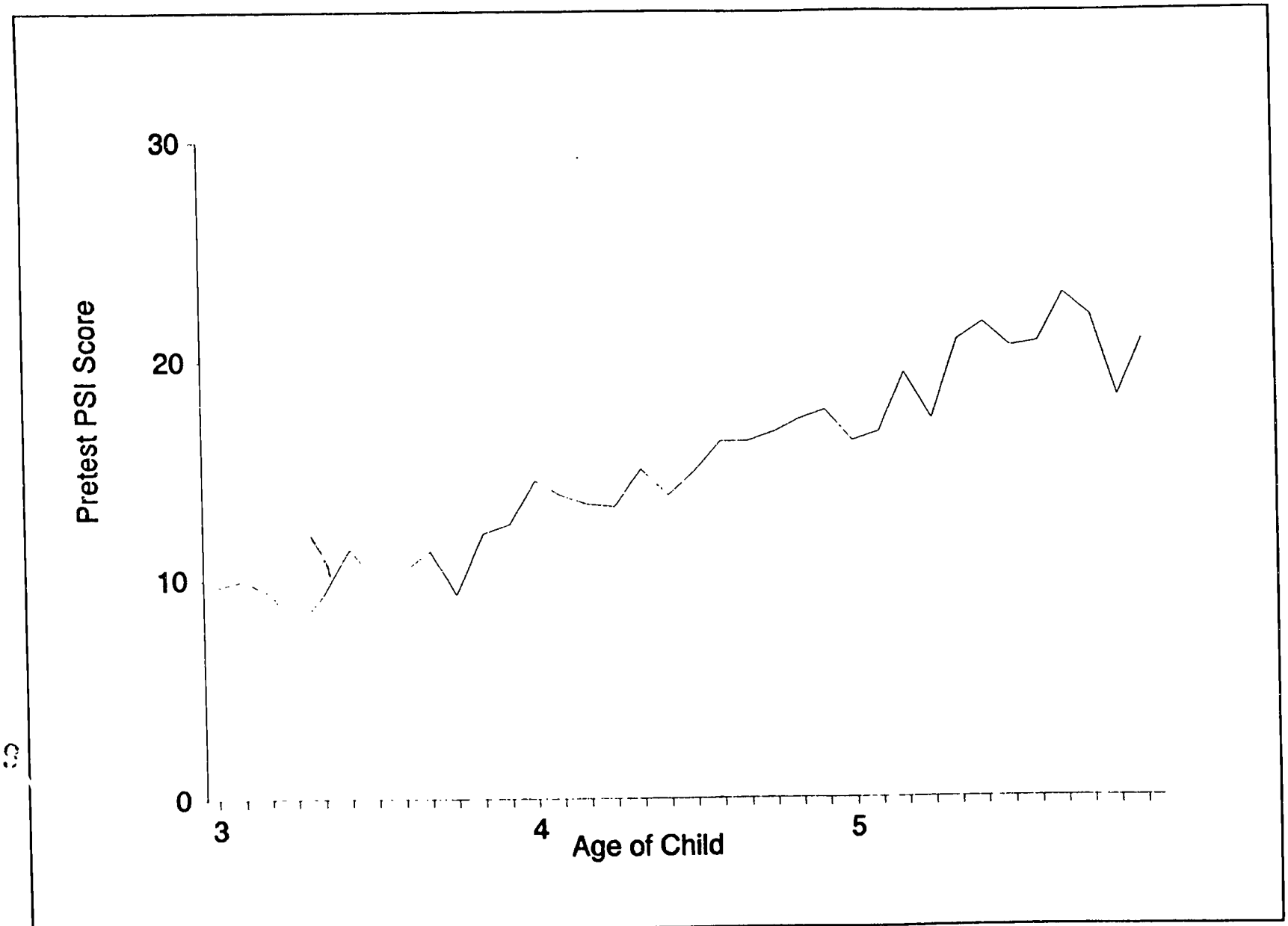

Exhibit A7.2. Relationship Between Age of Child and PSI Standard Scores at Pretest (1990-91 Program Year)

Exhibit A7.3

Regression Analyses for PSI Norms

Equation	Constant	R Squared	N of Obs	Coeff.	S.E. Coeff.
1	7.86	0.92	36	0.39	0.02
2	7.58	0.94	34	0.42	0.02
3	6.95	0.94	31	0.44	0.02

is a very strong relationship between a child's age and PSI score; R- squared in each equation is over .9. We prefer Equation 3 because it is based on data in which the extremes of the distribution have been truncated. This equation shows that a one-month increase in age is associated with a .44 point increase in PSI score. Thus, for each month that a child ages, his/her PSI score is expected to increase by .44 items. Over a year, we would expect normal development to cause an increase of 5.3 points on the PSI (12 months * .44 items per month).

PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST

The PPVT does have national norms. The norms were updated in 1981 and the standardization sample of 4,200 children was designed to represent the U.S. population with respect to age (from 2 years, 6 months through 18 years of age), sex, geographic distribution, occupational representation of the major wage earner in the family, ethnic representation, and community size representation. In addition, the PPVT has also been normed for Spanish-speaking populations.

Exhibit A7.4 summarizes the PPVT scores of children prior to entry to Even Start. Pretest data are available for 1,344 children between the ages of 2 years, 6 months and 7 years, 11 months. The exhibit also shows gain scores for 685 children who took both a pretest and posttest. The scores presented in the exhibit are "standard scores" which are raw scores converted so that they have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15, regardless of the age of a child. A standard score can be interpreted in two ways: (1) the number of standard deviation units away from the mean, or (2) in terms of percentile ranks. Thus, the overall pretest mean of 78.8 points can be interpreted either as being about 1.4 standard deviations below the mean of the norms group, or as being at the 8th percentile.

Exhibit A7.4

Summary of PPVT Standard Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores, by Age of Child (1990-91 Program Year)[1]

	Pretest (Standard Scores)			Matched Gains (Items per Month)		
Age of Child (Years, month)	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
3. 0	82.4	21.8	22	1.1	2.7	4
3. 1	83.7	18.4	28	-0.4	2.0	7
3. 2	77.8	14.6	34	1.0	1.7	10
3. 3	83.9	13.9	30	0.7	2.3	7
3. 4	71.5	23.2	32	0.8	3.4	7
3. 5	87.8	35.4	33	-1.0	1.4	11
3. 6	83.1	14.7	29	0.3	2.8	8
3. 7	75.6	22.5	28	0.0	2.8	2
3. 8	72.0	18.1	29	0.0	1.6	6
3. 9	75.8	23.9	25	-0.2	2.8	5
3.10	78.2	30.8	33	0.6	5.8	8
3.11	76.4	30.8	47	0.6	5.8	10
Age 3 Total	78.9	22.8	370	0.3	3.1	85
4. 0	72.7	20.9	38	0.8	2.9	7
4. 1	72.3	15.2	61	1.0	2.5	20
4. 2	72.0	18.6	47	0.6	3.7	21
4. 3	75.0	17.3	61	1.0	2.1	25
4. 4	76.5	20.9	38	1.7	1.7	17
4. 5	82.0	33.5	41	1.6	2.7	14
4. 6	76.9	19.5	53	2.0	3.1	21
4. 7	76.9	36.5	44	1.4	3.1	14
4. 8	75.2	18.3	47	1.6	3.1	16
4. 9	75.1	15.5	50	0.9	5.4	21
4. 10	75.6	15.7	35	1.6	2.4	12
4. 11	78.9	18.5	39	1.1	1.9	19
Age 4 Total	75.6	21.5	554	1.2	3.1	207
5. 0	77.4	20.1	24	0.8	1.9	9
5. 1	81.2	16.7	37	0.7	1.3	10
5. 2	75.1	24.0	16	1.6	4.6	6
5. 3	76.9	20.9	18	1.0	4.5	3
5. 4	84.8	17.0	13	1.0	3.0	3
5. 5	85.4	18.2	16	-0.7	1.4	8
5. 6	83.9	10.8	15	1.8	3.3	5
5. 7	78.8	15.8	14	1.3	1.2	3
5. 8	83.4	14.9	16	1.1	1.9	7
5. 9	77.4	14.2	20	2.3	5.7	2
5.10	79.4	16.1	12	-1.0	2.1	4
5.11	83.1	19.5	12	-	1.4	0
Age 5 Total	80.3	17.8	213	0.8	3.0	60

Exhibit A7.4

Summary of PPVT Standard Scores at Pretest and Matched Gain Scores, by Age of Child (1990-91 Program Year)[1]

	Pretest (Standard Scores)			Matched Gains (Items per Month)		
Age of Child (Years, month)	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
6. 0	95.9	17.1	15	0.3	3.2	5
6. 1	83.7	17.6	15	1.5	1.3	2
6. 2	82.0	20.5	8	0.2	0.6	2
6. 3	68.9	15.6	7	-	-	0
6. 4	74.5	20.3	10	0.1	1.6	2
6. 5	88.7	13.0	7	-1.1	1.5	3
6. 6	82.5	13.7	10	3.0	2.6	5
6. 7	84.3	16.8	9	2.1	1.2	3
6. 8	86.6	18.3	9	1.5	1.2	3
6. 9	91.8	16.4	6	2.2	1.5	2
6.10	97.0	32.9	3	3.6	0.3	1
6.11	99.0	24.4	8	0.8	2.7	2
Age 6 Total	85.9	19.2	107	1.2	2.4	30
7. 0	86.0	18.7	8	0.3	1.2	4
7. 1	80.8	11.2	5	-0.8	1.4	3
7. 2	82.0	0.0	1	-	-	0
7. 3	78.7	12.4	6	-0.8	1.8	4
7. 4	95.1	14.4	10	-0.6	0.6	4
7. 5	104.0	23.3	3	-	-	0
7. 6	88.0	5.3	3	-	-	0
7. 7	69.5	14.8	2	-	-	0
7. 8	94.3	10.1	4	-	-	0
7.9	69.5	13.4	2	2.1	0.0	1
7.10	95.0	18.4	2	-	-	0
7.11	85.8	20.6	6	-2.5	4.9	3
Age 7 Total	87.2	16.2	52	-0.7	2.1	19
GRAND TOTAL	78.8	21.1	1344	0.9	3.0	404

[1]This analysis includes scores from tests administered in English or Spanish. Gain of matched scores is adjusted for the number of months between tests.

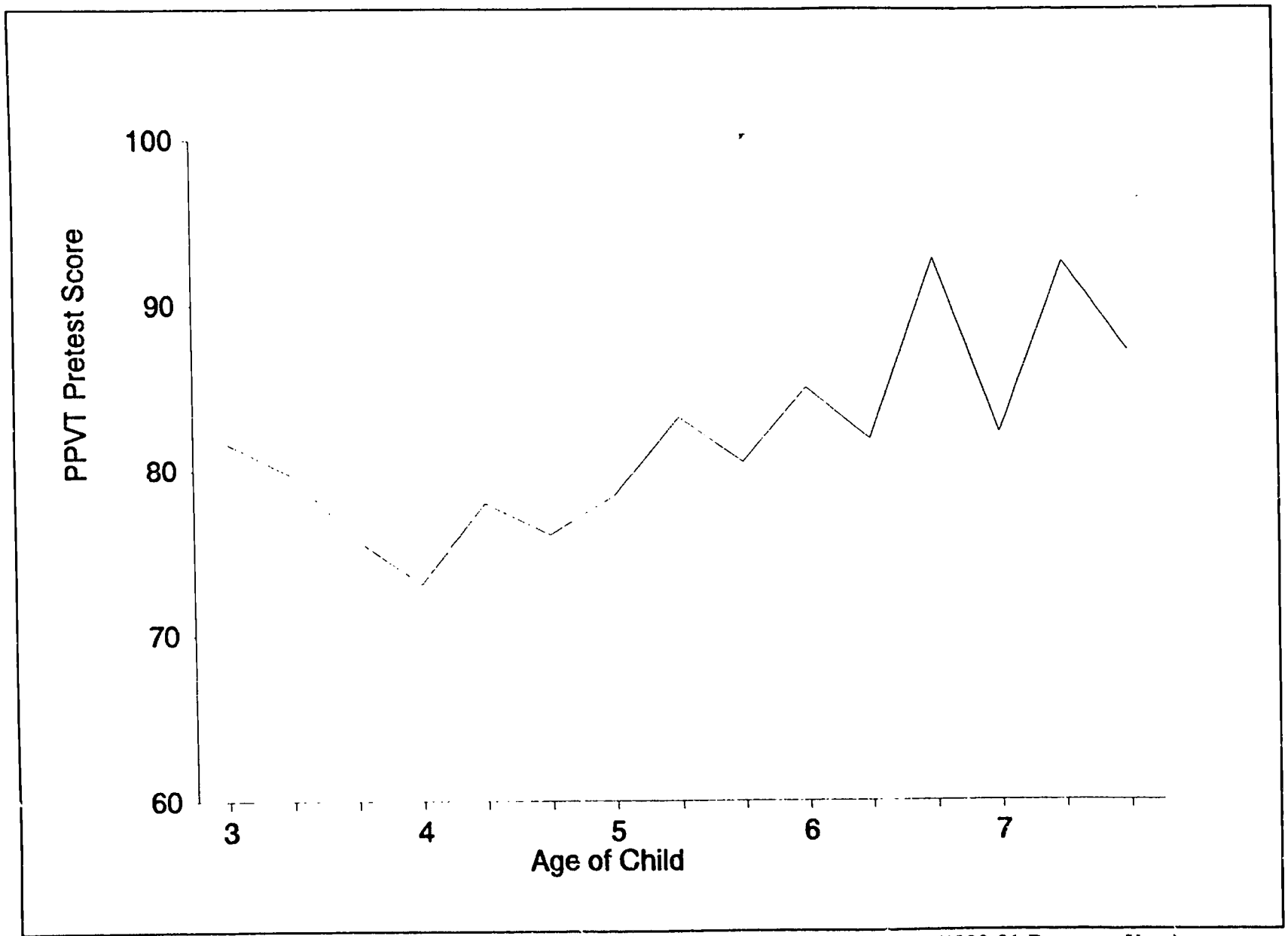

Exhibit A7.5. Relationship Between Age of Child and PPVT Standard Scores at Pretest (1990-91 Program Year)

Our initial assumption was that PPVT standard scores would not increase with age and that any changes in PPVT scores could (with sufficient caveats) be attributed to Even Start. However, the pretest data, shown in Exhibit A7.4 and graphed in Exhibit A7.5, show that older children (5, 6 and 7 year-olds) score higher than younger children (3 and 4 year-olds) and we do not want to attribute this apparent developmental gain to Even Start. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (Baker and Mott, 1989) support the hypothesis that PPVT standard scores increase from 3-4 years of age to 5-6 years of age. NSLY data collected in 1986 are summarized in Exhibit A7.6 and show that the average PPVT standard score is 90.7 for 3-4 year olds and 94.0 for 5-6 year olds, an increase that is present in the scores of Hispanic, Blank and White children. This matches the pattern seen in the present study, where the average standard score of 3-4 year olds is 76.9, and the average score of 5-6 year olds is 82.2 (a total of about 5 points over a 2 year period). However, the NSLY data shows that this apparent increase in scores disappears for the older age groups.

Exhibit A7.6

Summary of PPVT Standard Scores from National Longitudinal Study of Youth (Baker and Mott, 1986; Table A13.1)

Age of Child	Race of Child			
	Hispanic	Black	White	Total
3-4 years	76.4	74.3	96.6	90.7
5-6 years	82.9	79.7	99.6	94.0
7-8 years	78.1	79.6	98.6	91.7
9-10 years	86.7	79.7	98.5	91.6
11 + years	78.9	79.8	93.7	86.2
TOTAL	79.7	78.0	98.0	91.8

In our analysis of PPVT data for Even Start, we need to account for the fact that PPVT scores rise from ages 3-4 to ages 5-6. In subsequent reports this may not be an issue if Even Start data follow the pattern seen in the NSLY (where the standard score increase from 3-4 to 5-6 years of age disappears once children reach age 7).

Using the same approach that was taken in the analysis of data from the PSI, we developed linear regression equations predicting PPVT scores based on knowledge of the child's age. The results of three regressions are shown in Exhibit A7.7. Equation 1 is based on the 60 observations contained in Exhibit A7.4 while Equation 2 is based only on the first 54 observations contained in Exhibit A7.4 (eliminating the observations at the end which are based on very small sample sizes). Equation 3 was developed by averaging each set of four successive monthly observations so that we have 3 observations per year (total of 15 observations) instead of 60 monthly observations. Using this smoothed data set, Equation 3 has better predictive power than the other two equations, although it is clear that age simply does not correlate as highly with PPVT scores as it does with PSI scores (R-squared for the PPVT equations ranges from .17 to .45, compared with .92 to .94 for the PSI equations). Equation 3 has the best predictive power and we prefer to use the results from this equation in subsequent analyses. This equation shows that a one-month increase in age is associated with a .26 point increase in PPVT standard scores. Over a year, we would expect an increase of 3.1 points on the PPVT (12 months * .26 points per month).

Exhibit A7.7

Regression Analyses for PPVT Norms

Equation	Constant	R Squared	N of Obs	Coeff.	S.E. Coeff.
1	76.10	0.17	60	0.17	0.05
2	75.24	0.25	54	0.22	0.05
3	75.58	0.45	15	0.26	0.02