

COMPONENT X: ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

DEFINITION:

Judy Center Partnerships will encourage parents to pursue their own education in order to allow them to better support their children and to afford them opportunities at home, in school, or in the community to become full partners in their child's education. Raising parental awareness enhances and sustains a child's success. Adult Education is available to all parents and caregivers in every jurisdiction in Maryland. The Judy Center Partnership should include MSDE Adult Education Programs, in order to facilitate access to a wide variety of instructional opportunities.

Adult Education Services

Adult Education services, which are available in every Maryland jurisdiction, include basic academic skills instruction (reading, writing, and mathematics), delivered within the context of the parent's need whether it be economic/employment, assisting with the child's educational development, health literacy, or one of the many other challenges to parent's who are striving to provide the best quality of life possible for their children.

Additionally, the Adult Education Programs are equipped to provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction, and high school diploma options including (GED), the Maryland Adult External Diploma Program, (EDP) and high school credit recovery.

Family Literacy Services

Many of the MSDE Adult Education programs are involved in formal Family Literacy partnerships. These partnerships pair adult education with Even Start, Head Start, and Family Support Centers to provide integrated services for the family.

The broad goal of Family Literacy programs is to make educational and economic opportunity more available for disadvantaged families. In accordance with the Federal definition, Family literacy services are of “sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

BACKGROUND

In the words of the National Center for Family Literacy, “The family is one of the most powerful indicators of success for future generations. The economic stability of parents can and will effect the paths open to their children and the choices children will make along the journey. For some families, education may take a back seat to priorities such as financial well-being, health, and safety – not by choice, but by necessity or lack of opportunity.”

In Maryland, an estimated 20% of the adults are functioning at the lowest levels of literacy, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). What this means is that while some of these individuals are able to perform brief, uncomplicated tasks such as totaling an entry on a deposit slip, locating the time or place of a meeting on a form, or identifying a piece of specific information in a brief news article, many others are unable to do these simple things. The NALS also reports that these individuals generally perceived themselves as being able to read or write well or very well, with a good deal of help from family members.

Research shows that:

- The higher the mother’s educational level, the better the child performs on tests and in school.
- Children whose mothers complete high school earn higher scores on national achievement tests than those whose mothers did not graduate from high school.

- Children of parents who are unemployed and have not completed high school are five times more likely to drop out than children of employed parents.
- Only 39% of 3 to 5 year-olds whose mothers lack a high school diploma were read to daily. 71% of children of college-graduate mothers were read to daily.
- Children ages 6 to 8 whose parents have less than a high school diploma spend one third the amount of time reading and 50 percent more time watching television compared with children of college-educated families.
- Children who participate in Family Literacy programs make gains three times greater than would have been expected based on their pre-enrollment rate of development.
- Children who participate in Family Literacy demonstrate an 80% increase reading books.
- Children who participate in Family Literacy make twice as many trips to the library.
- Adults who participate in Family Literacy stay enrolled longer and make greater gains.

Annually, the parents of roughly 20,000 school age children enroll in Maryland's Adult Education programs.

Models

Adult Education grantees deliver programs in every jurisdiction of Maryland. Several Judy Centers have Adult Education available on site. Others have created partnerships where parents are referred to a nearby site for Adult Education. However Adult Education services are offered, it is important to create a welcoming environment for inquiries into adult education participation, as many of the adults in need of services are reluctant to admit to their need. Service Coordinators and/or Case Managers must offer the availability of adult education when developing a plan for the family. Sensitively addressing the possibility of a need for adult education services is critical, and may require the involvement of the Adult Education professional. When the services are available on site, this is facilitated by the opportunity for parents to casually meet the Adult Education staff, to observe the non-threatening nature of an Adult Education classroom, and to interact with parents enrolled in Adult Education classes.

Whether or not the program meets on site, the Service Coordinator/Case Manager can address the need directly with the parents, and also have promotional materials for distribution and display. Additionally, Adult Education staff located off site may visit the Judy Center to talk about their services, and generally create a sense of welcome regarding the program.

Judy Center Partnerships that offer adult education services off site may need to offer transportation, and childcare as a best practice for facilitating attendance for the parents who

need this service. Where available, a Family Literacy partnership with Even Start, Head Start, or a Family Support Center could address these needs. Where these partners are not available, other collaborative arrangements for the support services are encouraged.

The MSDE Adult Education programs design instruction to meet the individual educational, employment and parenting goals of the participants.

Adult Education Performance Indicators:

Three Core Indicators of Performance measure adult Education programs:

1. Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, number sense, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.
2. Placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.
3. Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Adult Education/Family Literacy grantees also measure:

1. Increases of parent involvement in their children's education by tracking whether they
 - Help more frequently in school,
 - Increase contact with children's teachers, or
 - Increase involvement with school activities.
2. An increase of parent involvement in children's literacy activities by tracking whether they are:
 - Reading to their children
 - Visiting libraries with their children
 - Purchasing books and magazines

Maryland's Even Start, available in thirteen local school systems throughout Maryland, follows the Federal Family Literacy program definition, with four integrated components. The U.S. Department of Education publication entitled, *Guide to Improving Parenting Education in Even Start Family Literacy Programs* articulates five goal areas for parents:

- Engaging in language-rich parent-child interaction,
- Providing supports for literacy in the family,
- Holding appropriate expectations for the child's learning and development,
- Actively embracing the parenting role,
- Forming and maintaining connections to community and other resources for meeting individual and family needs.

Maryland's Even Start Model recommends the following initiatives:

1. Involve adult educators in the recruitment and retention of parents for Adult Basic Education, GED, and ESOL classes; for computer literacy and distance learning opportunities; and for job skills training. Adult educators will actively encourage parents to do self-assessments of their educational and job training needs. Have them reinforce the connection between parent involvement and child success. Make certain that adult education schedules are visible and available so parents know when registrations and testing will take place, and when and where classes will meet.
2. Coordinate with adult educators to help parents and guardians:
 - Utilize pre-reading skills as well as reading and writing strategies they are teaching in adult education classes to support their children's learning.
 - Demonstrate realistic expectations of their children based on their children's ages, individual skills, learning styles, abilities, interests, and strengths.
 - Stimulate their children's learning by offering choices, extending play and providing multi-sensory approaches.
 - Serve as positive role models for their children by modeling self-discipline. Provide consistent, loving supervision by setting, communication and enforcing limits.
3. Create a parent resource or "drop-in" center. The service coordinator can talk about all the options from adult education to parenting seminars. Set goals with the family and follow up quarterly. Use "Comprehensive Family Services List" available at the Maryland State Department of Education's Early Learning Office.
4. Arrange Parent and Child Together Times (PACTs).
 - Offer parenting seminars as a result of needs assessment conducted by the service coordinator. If you offer childcare, you can work with the parents first and then end with carefully planned parent-and-child time during which everyone comes together and enjoys a learning activity. Each parent should be invited, reminded, and enticed to come to the seminar by the staff member with whom they have the closest relationship.

- The staff member closest to each parent encourages and arranges for the parent to volunteer in the child’s classroom. Set up the volunteer activity so that it involves both parent and teacher in order to insure maximum success for both parent and child. Support and follow up the volunteer activity.
 - Schedule a Family Night with food and an educational theme. Make a special effort to reach out to families whose needs are greatest. The staff member closest to each family invites and encourages the family individually. (A blanket flyer to all parents is not enough) Make sure that sign-in sheets record individual names, rather than one parent signing in for the entire family. Offer multi-cultural events to reach families from different cultures.
5. The parent representative should sit on the steering committee. It is the program’s responsibility to decide how long to wait before allowing a new parent to sit on the committee. The staff closest to the parent reflects with him or her on the process after each meeting.

Family Literacy Performance Indicators:

1. After six months of involvement with the Judy Center Partnership, a designated percentage of “most in need” parents or guardians will create home environments that support their children’s literacy development, as evidenced by the documentation of at least three new or expanded literacy-related family activities during a program year. Staff members closest to the families can interview them for documentation. Adult educators should encourage parent self-assessment along the way.
2. In the home environment, the following materials should be available:
 - Print materials
 - Writing materials
 - Educational toys, whether commercial or home-made (from “make and takes”) should be used in school literacy-related family activities.

3. The family also engages in or increases the frequency of engagement in the following in-home activities:

- Reading, writing and playing with the previously mentioned materials.
- Obtaining a library card for adults and children.
- Visiting the library and checking out books.
- Visiting cultural and recreational places (e.g., museums, zoos, parks) and attending cultural and recreational events (e.g. theater, sporting events).
- Using everyday routines and activities as learning activities.

4. After six months involvement with the Judy Center Partnership a designated percentage of “most in need” parents or guardians will support their children’s literacy development by being actively involved in school and community life, as evidenced by the documentation of at least three school or community literacy-related activities during the program year.

5. Parents and guardians engage in the following activities:

- Preparing children for school and supporting children in their completion of schoolwork and fulfillment of school requirements.
- Attending orientation and parent-teacher conferences for school or the early childhood program (staff member closest to each family needs to provide support and perhaps go to the first conference with the parent).
- Attending or participating in school or program sponsored special events, such as issue-oriented parenting sessions and Family Nights.
- Volunteering at children’s school or early education program.
- Participating in PTA, PTO, Parent Advisory Group or Judy Center Steering Committee.
- Participating in community events and organization.

Challenges/Strategies/Solutions:	
Challenges	Strategies/Solutions
Identification of candidates for Adult Education.	Service Coordinator should be familiar with Adult Education opportunities in the community and is trained to make appropriate referrals.
Adults are reluctant to seek Adult Education services	Facilitate inquiries regarding Adult Education by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering confidential case management services which, discuss adult education needs and services available to address needs. • Having Adult Education personnel onsite to distribute materials and welcome parents to orientation sessions.
Transportation to Adult Education may present a barrier to some individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Adult Education on site. • Provide transportation, or arrange through partnerships. • Some Adult Education providers offer Distance Learning for adult learners. • Offer in-home programs.
The lack of child care may be an impediment to attending classes for some adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Adult Education providers are delivering Family Literacy programs, which include children’s activities. • Some Adult Education providers offer Distance Learning for adult learners. • Provide on site childcare, or arrange through partnerships.

Adult and Family Literacy

National Institute for Literacy. Equipped for the Future Content Standards: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century-National Institute for Literacy (Appendix A) <http://www.nifl.gov>

The National Center for Family Literacy exists to create educational and economic opportunity for the most at-risk children and parents. NCFL's services include professional development for practitioners who work in children's education, adult education, English as a Second Language, and related literacy fields; model program development through our many ground-breaking initiatives; policy and advocacy support to sustain and expand literacy services for families; and the Family Literacy Alliance, a membership program. NCFL envisions a world where every child in every community receives the literacy support he or she needs from responsible, caring adults in order to succeed in school and in life. www.familit.org

Maryland's Adult Literacy Resource Center's mission is to collect and disseminate information, resources and data about literacy to adult literacy providers and support groups throughout the state. The Center's lending library contains a collection of materials covering ABE, Computer-Assisted Instruction, Correctional Education, Employability Skills, Family Literacy, GED, Homeless Literacy, Learning Disabled Adults, Life Skills, Math, Pre-GED, Reading, School-to-Work, and Workplace Literacy.
www.umbc.edu/alrc

ESOL Web Resources

Resources for language teachers and learners National Center for Family Literacy
<http://www.famlit.org/index.cfm>

Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners
<http://www.famlit.org/Publications/Practitioner-Toolkit-ELL.cfm>

Three sites offering comprehensive lists of resources for language teachers and learners are:

This site, run by Fred Riley, provides a vast number of links to sites related to language teaching and learning. The main categories under which the links are placed are as follows: General, Language-specific, Multilingual, Internet (sites related to the use of the Internet as a medium for language teaching and learning, including browser-based CALL software), Search Engines, and Commercial. <http://www.fredriley.org.uk/call/langsite/>

A rich, varied set of links for teachers and learners of English as a Foreign Language. Alternatively, visit the home page <http://www.wfi.fr/volterre/teacher.html> (Volterre-Fr Directory for English and French Language Resources) <http://www.wfi.fr/volterre/>

This provides information on language courses around the world, including information on language tests and certificates of proficiency, and on organizations active in the field of language education. <http://www.language-learning.net>

Links to a wide range of teaching materials resources for modern languages on The Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies website.
<http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/bankcontents.aspx>