



# COLLABORATION IN EVEN START

**E**VEN START is a family literacy program. The law authorizing EVEN START calls for community agencies to create partnerships in order to receive an EVEN START grant. These partners use existing resources to build an EVEN START program.

EVEN START programs in collaboration with school district Title I programs can be especially effective. Title I programs, funded with federal compensatory education dollars, serve children in need of educational support. This support can be provided through one-to-one or small group instruction, additional staff members in the regular classroom, preschool services or programs such as EVEN START.

## THE CENTER FOR FAMILY LEARNING

The Center for Family Learning in El Paso County's Harrison School District is an exemplary model of an EVEN START /Title I collaboration. Jean Koch, the Title I Parent Coordinator for Harrison, worked on a collaboration team to obtain a countywide EVEN START grant. Her site was one of three chosen to set-up a family literacy program (other sites are Colorado Springs School District 11 and Community Partnership for Child Development, a collaboration between Head Start and the Colorado Preschool Program). The

*"If I were to say what I think can be the quintessential leveler in our country of the haves and have nots, it would be family literacy." Mary Jean LeTendre, Director, Compensatory Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education\**

Center for Family Learning opened in January of 1997 and primarily serves families in the Harrison School District.

The Parents As Teachers (PAT) program has been used as a Harrison District Title I parent involvement program for several years. The PAT program is now an integral part of the Center for Family Learning. The PAT curriculum is used for home visits, and PAT curriculum themes are used for the early childhood program and activities for the Parent and Child

Time Together (PACT).

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Center for Family Learning offers adult education classes two mornings a week. There are two instructors team teaching the class. One instructor is paid by EVEN START; the other instructor is paid by Title I.

During adult education there are two children's instructional programs. One program is for infants and toddlers and one for preschoolers. The preschool teacher's salary comes from the EVEN START grant. The infant/toddler teacher is paid partially by EVEN START and partially by Title I. Two child care providers also work in the infant/toddler program. One is paid by Community Partnership for Child Development, and the other is paid by EVEN START.



Parent and Child Time Together (PACT) is held once a week in each of the children's

classrooms. Parent information and support time is also once a week. Home visits are conducted monthly with each family. Visits are done by the Title I Parent

Coordinator and the preschool teacher. Materials for "The Nurturing Program" (used during parent time) are purchased with Safe and Drug Free Schools funds from District 11. The program is provided through a contract with the El Paso County Health Department.

Parents are asked to volunteer in the Title I Resource Center as part of their participation in the program. When they are ready to take the GED (general education diploma) test, they can volunteer for additional hours in the Resource Center in exchange for the cost of their test.

Flyers describing The Center for Family Learning were sent home with every child in all the elementary schools in the district. Several community agencies also refer families to the program. Currently, 22 families are receiving services. There are 23 families waiting to get into the program.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

Program staff surveyed participating parents to evaluate the impact of the program. After four months of involvement in the program, 87% of the parents reported an increase in reading time with

*"I'm able to bring Cirraiah with me and she has her own classroom. Not only do they watch her for me, but she's learning as well. I know she's only nineteen months old but I can tell she has gotten so advanced in her learning skills... We have a program called PACT and it helps me learn as well as helping teach Cirraiah. Before, I never really was interested in reading to myself or others. Now thanks to PACT, I know reading to my child is important in her learning process. I can see by the words I am reading to her, and the pictures on the page help her understand what things are around her." Shayna, age 16 \*\**

their children, and 75% reported more involvement in their children's schooling. Thirteen of the participating parents have earned their GED, and five are in the testing process.

Jean Koch, the Title I Parent Coordinator, considers Title I and **EVEN START** a natural mix. The Center for Family Learning is considered a Title I program by the district. The family literacy program has helped Title I recruit and work with families that are most in need.

The tie with Title I also helps the **EVEN START** staff. They are able to participate in Title I staff development opportunities. **EVEN START** staff share Title I clerical support. Title I funds have been used for supplies, snacks and catering for a family literacy luncheon. When a participating **EVEN START** parent attended a PAT conference, Title I paid for her child care.

Collaboration can be challenging. Yet, when successful, this joining of staff, expertise and funds improves the quality of services for families.

*\*Window on the world of family literacy*  
[Third Quarter, 1996]  
National Center For Family Literacy

*\*\*These quotes are from letters written by participants at The Center For Family Learning.*

*"I tried to go back to high school three times. I also tried to do it on my own. With having to work and take care of my kids nothing was helping ... I'm really glad I have been given the chance to accomplish my GED. This is a family oriented class, they actually care that you are a mom or dad ... The family literacy program is that light at the far end of my tunnel"*  
Brenda, age 32\*\*

*"I have wanted to get my GED for many years. This is one goal that is a dream come true. I have worked very hard all my life. Factory work is the only thing I have done. Now it's time to advance and get a real job .... The best part of the program is being able to bring my son with me. We're both learning at the same time. We both look forward to coming!"*  
Gina, age 36\*\*

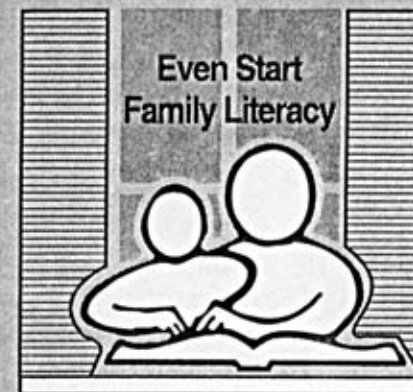


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*Even Start  
in Colorado*

**Update**

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