



# SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAMS AND EVEN START

**Even Start** is a literacy program that serves families. **Even Start** programs provide adult education, early childhood education, parenting education, and time for parents and children to learn together. As schools redesign themselves to increase student achievement and to more effectively serve the communities of which they are a part, family programs such as **Even Start** are increasingly becoming integral components of school restructuring efforts. One such school is Irish Elementary in Fort Collins. In the following paragraphs, the building's principal, *Lynette Salzman*, describes how **Even Start** and Irish Elementary collaboratively meet the needs of students and their families.

## Irish Elementary Schoolwide Collaboration

During the 1996-97 school year, Irish Elementary embarked on the planning process to be designated schoolwide for Title I funding. The Irish educational community conducted an intensive internal analysis during the planning process, which emphasized the importance and value of service collaboration for our students and their families. The goals established for the Irish Elementary Collaborative Service Delivery Schoolwide Plan focus on increased academic achievement for all students, improved collaboration among the school community, and improved communication and collaboration with our parent/guardian community.

The Fort Collins **Even Start** program has been a critical partner to Irish Elementary School and its Collaborative Service Delivery goals. **Even Start** serves a large population of Irish Elementary students and families. The strategies of



*Collaboration with Even Start makes a great positive impact on communication between school and families.*

**Even Start** programs parallel those of Irish Elementary for reaching academically at-risk students and families. Specific examples include after-school tutorial and enrichment opportunities at both **Even Start** and Irish, cooperative family involvement activities, and ongoing communication between **Even Start** and Irish Elementary staffs.

Our students and families mutually benefit from the collaboration between **Even Start** and the school. **The Even Start** coordinator meets monthly with Irish Elementary administrative staff. **The Even Start** family outreach worker attends weekly staff and team meetings at Irish. This

collaboration makes a positive impact on communication between school and families. In addition to **Even Start** facilitating contacts between families and school, members of its staff provide Spanish translation for activities and events.

The purpose of Title I federally funded schoolwide programs is to be able to collaborate services to better meet the needs of all students. The partnership between **Even Start** and Irish Elementary facilitates

the neighborhood/school connection. Our students are the benefactors of the communication and collaboration between **Even Start** and the school.

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## Guidance for Schoolwide Planning

The Colorado Department of Education has published a notebook to assist schools in their planning for and implementation of schoolwide reform. Entitled *SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAMS: Preparing for School Reform*, the document provides the following guidance, information, and suggestions about integrating **Even Start** into schoolwide programs.

Title I, Part B, of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) provides funding for the **Even Start** Family Literacy Program. Unlike Title I, Part A, the distribution of these funds involves a competitive process in which a community organization submits a response to a Request for Proposal, in partnership with a local educational agency. Each location applying for **Even Start** is requested to document the extent of its interagency/community involvement and commitment, the contribution the proposed program(s) will have to current child literacy and adult education efforts, methods which will be utilized to ensure outreach to diverse populations, and strategies which will support existing family involvement activities. This focus on interagency involvement and capacity building within a community necessitates a positive, ongoing relationship between Title I programs in local school districts and the **Even Start** program.

A community must provide evidence that **Even Start** funds will support adult education and family literacy while serving:

- underachieving or language-delayed preschool children;
- children in the primary grades who are at risk of failing to meet state academic content standards;
- areas of high unemployment and/or poverty;
- wrap-around child care for part-day literacy programs; and/or
- students in local school districts which have high concentrations of low-income children.

Each partnership also must present a plan for continuing **Even Start** services at the end of the grant period. This plan describes the extent of community involvement in addressing the continuation through uses of existing or

expected resources, as well as providing documentation that proposals have been submitted to access other funding sources, in an attempt to increase the financial base of the program.

Schoolwide programs may access and collaborate with **Even Start** programs to provide family literacy services. These collaborations offer schoolwides the opportunity to implement aspects in their program designs, which would not typically be funded through Title I, Part A monies. Such components of **Even Start's** service delivery model as infant/toddler services, wrap-around child care, and adult education (training in literacy and workforce skills) can be effective supports for schoolwides as they develop community-centered buildings.

By using **Even Start** to access such early childhood service as preschool for children three to five years of age, home-visitation, and parental/support, schoolwides may use Part A dollars, which would have paid for these services, to support other needs within the building. Similarly, schoolwide programs may utilize the various collaborative partnerships (e.g., with local departments of health and of human services, with self-sufficiency programs, and with public libraries) which **Even Start** has established within their communities to provide support for all children and families.

Schoolwides can support **Even Start** by facilitating, incorporating, and re-enforcing the provision of PACT {Parent and Child Together} time within the classroom and/or school building. The involvement of schoolwide personnel ensures that this approach to literacy development provides both community and school support for families, and assists children in the primary grades in meeting content standards, particularly those which focus on literacy. The expertise of school personnel (teachers, therapists, and resource people) who work with children in the primary grades, combined with the adult education/early childhood care and education/community partnerships inherent in **Even Start**, can serve as an effective means of facilitating the development of literacy for families and their children from birth through age seven.

*The strategies of **Even Start** programs parallel those of Irish Elementary School for reaching academically at-risk students and families.*

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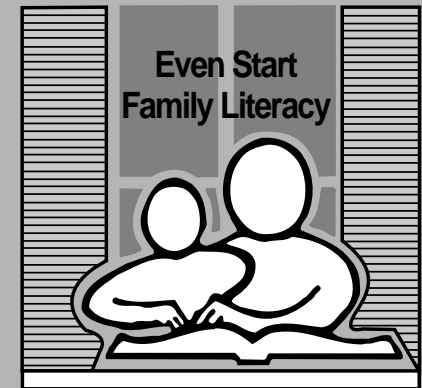


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*Even Start  
in Colorado*

**Update**

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