

## **Connecticut Even Start Overview**

**Purpose:** To provide intensive family literacy services that help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of low income families through programs that integrate early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education and parenting education into a unified family literacy program.

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Even Start is a unique family learning program that promotes the academic achievement of children and adults through a two-generation education model. The purpose of Even Start is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of families most in need. The program has three interrelated goals:

- ☐ to help parents improve their literacy or basic educational skills;
- ☐ to help parents become full partners in educating their children; and
- ☐ to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

Even Start accomplishes these goals by providing comprehensive family literacy services that involve parents and children, generally from birth through age seven, in a cooperative learning effort.

The term “family literacy services” is defined in federal legislation as services provided to participants on a voluntary basis that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, of sufficient duration to make sustainable changes in a family, and that 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 (literacy-based parenting education);
- ☐ Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (adult basic or secondary education, or English language training); and
- ☐ An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences (early childhood education, including supplemental services for school-age children). (Section 9101(20), ESEA).

Local programs are implemented through cooperative projects that do not duplicate but build on high-quality existing community resources, creating a new range of services for low-income children and parents.