

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Division of Early Care and Education

Even Start Family Learning Program

Locations: Middletown, New London & Torrington, CT

For over a decade the Connecticut Even Start Family Learning Program has been providing comprehensive two-generation supports to help create positive outcomes for disenfranchised families that are most in need and hardest to serve.

This state funded Two-Generation Program provides families access to comprehensive family-centered education programs and the training and support they need to create a literate home environment, enhance the academic achievement of their children and increase the parents' economic opportunities.

It is designed to integrate early childhood education and education for parents of young children into a project that builds on existing community resources with collaboration of multiple agencies that serve families at the core of this outreach. Even Start was specifically developed to improve family literacy in low-income areas.



Primary Program Components

Local Even Start programs integrate the following primary components:

1. *Early Childhood and/or School-Age Education* - The early childhood component includes children from birth through age 5 and is based on developmentally appropriate activities and curriculum.
2. *Adult Education* - The adult education component encompasses basic skills and English as a second language. It is designed so that adult students of all abilities will be equipped to think critically and creatively, set goals and solve problems, and acquire interpersonal skills that are needed for participation in society
3. *Interactive Literacy & Home Visiting Support* - The parent and child interaction component provides time for parents and children to work and play together as a family unit. The reciprocal learning that takes place during this time offers parents and children a chance to become true partners in their education and to transfer the new learning into the home.
4. *Home Visits to Support Educational Programs* - The home visit component supports families in transferring learning from the other program components to their daily lives. The home visitor acts as a coach or mentor to guide the family in developing its own literacy-based family activities.
5. *Parent Education and Support* - The time parents spend together blends the goals of parent support groups and parent education to meet the needs of the families in the program. This component provides time and a safe place to educate and inform parents, to provide opportunities for mutual support, to offer advocacy services to families and to study particular topics related to being a parent.

Ascend Continuum: Parent-Child Focused

Sector: Public

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CONNECTICUT EVEN START FAMILY LEARNING SYSTEM:

Unified two-generation strategies to help low-income families achieve greater education and economic success

Federal and State evaluations demonstrate the importance of these evidence-based practices:

ADULT LEARNING

Adult Education:

(30+ hours monthly)

- English as a Second Language
- Adult Basic Education
- High School Diploma / GED
- Certificate

Parenting Young Children:

(12+ hours monthly)

- Child development
- Early literacy

CHILDREN & ADULTS LEARNING TOGETHER

Interactive Literacy:

(10+ hours monthly)

- Applying literacy skills in early childhood environment mentored by professional staff
- Parent and child together on site

Literacy focused Home Visiting:

- Connecting school to home
- Coaching families at home

CHILDREN LEARNING

Early Childhood Education:

(36+ hours monthly)

- Nationally Accredited early childhood programs
- Curriculum/Instruction to ensure school success
- Developmental screening and monitoring skills and learning

Support Services delivered by community agencies to help families succeed:
Housing, mental and physical health, job counseling, food stamps, etc.



Connecticut Even Start is a state-funded comprehensive family learning system that serves our states' poorest families who are the result of many generations of poverty and illiteracy. Connecticut Even Start changes participants' thinking and behaviors while establishing a sense of accountability, not entitlement.

1. Connecticut Even Start is Different

- The only state-funded education program accountable for educational outcomes for adult learning, children's learning, and adults and children learning together
- Serves the poorest and lowest educated families in Connecticut
 - Even Start families are poorer than Head Start families
 - Even Start families are less educated than Adult Education students
- Even Start is an intensive family support system. Families must participate in all five program components: Adult Education; Early Childhood Education; Parenting Education; Interactive Literacy; and Home Visiting
- Even Start uses evidence-based practices and monitors for fidelity of implementation

2. Connecticut Even Start Works

- Even Start has demonstrated effectiveness utilizing Results Based Accountability (RBA)
- Leverages other community resources to help families become self-sufficient
- Results show long-term learning and economic success for low-income families
 - 80% of former Even Start parents are in the labor force compared to 43.6% of CT residents with less than a high school diploma
 - 40% increase of average annual household family income after Even Start
 - 29% reduction in families using housing rental assistance after Even Start
- Even Start participants aim higher
 - more than 50% of Even Start participants go on to further education and training
 - Even Start families express higher aspirations for their children
- Even Start builds citizenry and community
 - 81% increase in voter registration
 - 63% increase in home ownership
- Even Start conducts annual RBA of program systems and parent /child outcomes
- Adults do better
 - 79% of adult English learners showed state-defined significant gains on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System reading test
 - 74% of ELL and English learners showed state-defined significant gains on Test of Adult Basic Education
- Children do better
 - 80% of Kindergarteners show state-defined significant gains on Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
 - 70% of Kindergarteners score 80% or higher on PPVT

3. Connecticut Loses if Even Start is Lost

- The only program that provides early education for infants and toddlers so that low-income families can attain high-school equivalency or learn English
- Many of the only infant toddler spaces available for needy families
- Ability to replicate a lead experience as a model in a dual generational learning
- Home visiting literacy experiences that link school and home
- Access to federal grants for innovative two-generation programs