

**AN EVALUATION OF FAMILY
FOCUS EVEN START: YEAR
FOUR (2002-2003)
LIVINGSTON COUNTY**

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July, 2003
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LIVINGSTON COUNTY

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SUMMARY

Note: this evaluation final report was written under the assumption that the program would be re-funded for the next four-year cycle. Therefore, it contains a number of recommendations for change in the next program year which will be relevant only if the program finds alternative funding.

As in previous years' evaluations, the Year Four Evaluation of the Livingston County Family Focus Even Start program (FFES) focuses on the perceptions of families and Family Educators on family experiences in the program, perceptions of Family Educators on the overall functioning of the program, perceptions of eleven parents participating in the program, suggestions from the Advisory Board, and an analysis of performance indicators (ESTARS). The Year Four evaluation also includes two added components: a survey of collaborating partners' perceptions of the Even Start program and a focus group with new Even Start staff members.

Overall, the Family Focus Even Start program in Livingston County is performing very well. Many families have seen improvements, and the program has met or exceeded many of the state performance indicators. Many of the concerns raised in this year's surveys and written comments can be addressed by improving communication. For example, families may not always know what their goals are, how well they are progressing toward achieving their goals or what constitutes success. Likewise, partners and collaborators would like to be kept informed about how Even Start interacts with their shared clients. Schools and other service agencies also would like to maintain strong communication links.

***Comparison of Family
Experience and
Family Educator
Perception of Family
Experience***

As in previous years, each actively enrolled Even Start family was asked to complete a survey regarding their experience thus far with the program. Similarly, the Family Educators were asked to complete a separate survey for each family they visit. A total of 24 family surveys were matched to Family Educator surveys, and were used in the analysis. The two surveys were nearly identical in the questions asked. The goal of these surveys is to determine whether Even Start participants are making progress, and whether the families and Educators have similar perceptions of the progress the families are making.

Overall, families have made at least some progress since entering the Even Start program. For the most part, families and Family Educators agree on their assessment of each family's progress. In cases where there is a mismatch, it is possible that families are not aware of their specific goals or how they are progressing. Regular or more frequent discussions of progress would likely overcome these misunderstandings. Lack of progress on goals seems to be explained primarily by the complexity and instability faced by some families. Most families attend the parent group meetings (15 of 24 respondents (63%)). For those who don't attend, the most common reasons are a lack of transportation (3 respondents) or a lack of time (3 respondents).

***Family Educator
Perceptions Survey***

Again this year, a third survey was administered to Family Educators and the Parent Educator to gather their perceptions of the program's implementation, its evolution over time, and how well it does in meeting and remaining true to its stated goals and objectives. Information gathered in this process is shared with the Family Focus staff so that they may consider it as part of a continuous improvement process.

Family Educator perceptions of the Even Start program continue to be positive in Year Four. Educators continue to see the program as having a high value and impact and to be functioning smoothly. The majority of Family Educators believed that the referred families match the program criteria well. Family Educators believe the program provides "a bridge" to connect isolated young mothers to the resources in their communities.

There was a slight decrease in how smoothly the Family Educators felt the program was functioning overall this year, with two

educators for the first time indicating that the program was running only “somewhat smoothly.” Several Family Educators indicated in their written comments that the program could increase interactions with the schools to improve its functioning, so perhaps increasing emphasis in this area will allow the program to run more smoothly. Another Family Educator recommended expanding service hours so that Family Educators could provide more visits in the evenings and on weekends.

As in previous years, the program still receives high marks for overall value and impact, although here again, there is a slight decline in ratings compared to previous years, with three educators selecting the highest rating this year, compared to four educators in Year Three. Family Educators indicated “many” or “most” referred families match the Even Start program criteria well. Initially, one respondent indicated that “very few match well.” However, the person did not elaborate on this response in written comments, and follow up conversations with staff indicated that the response may have been made in error (wrong end of the response scale). This would be consistent with performance indicator results that indicate that all new families met both literacy and poverty criteria.

Family Educators wrote that the program was making a difference in overcoming the social isolation of limited literacy families and in helping them find the necessary resources in their communities. While they wrote that the primary goal of the program is to improve adult reading and writing skills, as well as to model positive parenting skills, the Family Educators indicated that they do much more in helping families establish additional community links and supports. One Family Educator wrote that the program allows families to set their own goals, improving self-esteem. The program builds on strengths rather than emphasizing the remediation of deficits.

***Advisory Board Group
Interview***

As in previous years, this year the evaluation once again included a group interview with Advisory Board members. Six members of the Family Focus Even Start program Advisory Board attended the group interview conducted April 2, 2003 in Mt. Morris. Overall, the group was very positive about the Family Focus Even

Start program and the accomplishments it has achieved in the previous year.

In Year Four, the Board focused on ensuring that staff completed the needed training in order to be compliant with State law. They mentioned that Margaret was concerned about making sure that staff were on track to complete the necessary college education requirements. It is the Board's impression that all staff are working toward the necessary accreditation as planned. The Advisory Board also focused on the Even Start program's relationship with school districts and fostering collaboration and coordination between FFES and school districts. The Board also took a close look at the new group activities FFES has initiated. They discussed concerns about a lack of transportation to group events and low attendance rates. They talked about ways to improve the attendance, such as offering a meal.

***Parent Group
Interview***

As in previous years, the evaluation included a group interview with parents who participate in the Even Start program. Eleven adults participated in a group interview as part of the Wednesday night parent/advisory group for the Livingston County Family First Even Start program on April 2, 2003.

Parents reported that the Even Start program taught them how to develop a relationship with their family. They also learned how to read with their children and how to interact with them. Even Start helped parents to begin studying for the GED. One parent reported that without Even Start, she would not even have tried to obtain her GED. Even Start has also helped families learn about household budgeting and how to manage household finances. Even Start has taught parents and children a love of reading. The program teaches parents to read to their children and to let their children read to them.

***Collaborating Partners
Survey***

For the first time this year, the evaluation included a survey of Family Focus Even Start collaborators and partners. Sixteen Even Start collaborators and partners completed a survey: four classroom teachers, three therapists, and nine other partners. Seven respondents indicated they had been with the program since the first year, two respondents joined in Year Two, one respondent started in Year Three and the remaining six respondents began this year.

The vast majority of responding partners and collaborators indicated strong support for their work with the Even Start program. A few respondents indicated some reservations about their organization's role with Even Start and one person was very unclear and skeptical about the organization's involvement with the Even Start program. All the responding partners and collaborators indicated that the program has a positive impact on the families involved.

***Group Interview with
New Staff***

For the first time this year, the evaluation included a group interview with staff members new to the Family First Even Start program. These staff members assist with the group activities for parents and children offered in the evenings across the county. Staff indicate that these group activities are positive for both the parents and the children. Initially, parents were very shy and quiet in the group setting. They did not speak much during the group sessions. Staff have worked to create an environment in which the parents feel comfortable. As a result, the adult participants are more talkative and willing to share concerns as well as successes. Many of the children are isolated at home. Even Start staff see the children in their homes, but the group activities allow the children to interact with others, develop social skills and become more extroverted.

***Performance
Indicators***

All Even Start programs in New York State must report their performance on six indicators for adult participants, four indicators for children's performance, two indicators for family performance, and six indicators for program performance.

Many families have been involved with the Even Start program long enough to take pre-tests and post-tests on important data indicators that measure performance on literacy criteria. FFES meets or exceeds the goals set by the state on nearly all of the indicators. However, in some cases, the number of adults, children or families eligible to be evaluated is low, indicating that Even Start must do a better job of providing families with the basic knowledge necessary to be evaluated on the performance indicators.

Of the six adult indicators, FFES meets or exceeds the state goal on three, was slightly below goal on one, and on the remaining two indicators, no adults were eligible for evaluation.

Of the four child indicators, FFES meets or exceeds the state goal on three, and barely missed achieving another indicator (was at 73% versus goal of 75%).

Of the four family indicators, FFES achieved two while on the remaining two, no families were eligible to be evaluated.

FFES meets or exceeds all of the seven program indicators.

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Staff Team

Marilyn E. Klotz assisted with the data collection and data analysis. She also wrote substantial portions of this report. Mark Huntley provided data entry assistance and survey analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Note: this evaluation final report was written under the assumption that the program would be re-funded for the next four-year cycle. Therefore, it contains a number of recommendations for change in the next program year which will be relevant only if the program finds alternative funding.

The national Even Start Family Literacy program was first enacted in 1988 to provide intensive family-centered education programs that involve both parents and their children, ages from newborn through seven years old. Even Start was designed to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving educational opportunities for low-income families. The Livingston County Family Focus Even Start program received initial funding in September 1999 from the New York State Department of Education. The program began to enroll families in January 2000. In addition to an ongoing federal evaluation of Even Start, each local program is required to conduct an independent local evaluation.

The Year One Local Evaluation report (June 2000) for the Livingston County Family Focus Even Start program provided a detailed overview of the program, a description of staffing and staff development in the first year, a description of the planned local evaluation of the program over the next four years, as well as preliminary evaluation results from Year One. The Year Two report (June 2001) provided a more limited overview of the program, and focused on evaluation results from two years of program operation. The Year Three report (June 2002) focused on perceptions of Family Educators over the three-year time period, perceptions of seven parents participating in the program, suggestions from the Advisory Board and an analysis of performance indicators (ESTARS). The Family Educator Staff have been stable over the past year.

This Year Four Evaluation includes many of the components from Years 1 through 3, with the addition of a survey of collaborating partners and a group interview with staff hired to assist with the group activities for families. This report will

summarize findings over the past four years as the four-year funding cycle draws to a close.

OVERVIEW OF FAMILY FOCUS EVEN START PROGRAM IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY

The Even Start program functions as a partnership at the local level intended to provide family-centered education and intervention to improve literacy among parents and their children. The partnerships aim to intervene in the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving access to and opportunities for education in low-income families. Literacy is defined as more than just the ability to read and understand; family literacy includes services that help a family to make sustainable changes in literacy activities between parents and their children, help for parents to become teachers for their own children, parental literacy that leads to economic self-sufficiency, and education to help prepare children for success in school and in life. The Even Start partners share the responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the Even Start Family Literacy Project.

In Year Four, the Livingston County Even Start program made services available to six school districts: Dansville, Geneseo, Keshequa, Livonia, Mt. Morris, and York. In addition to the six school districts, other formal partners in this effort include Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Western New York Child Care Council. Other agencies provide in-kind services such as administrative support, supplies and computer support.

The Livingston County Even Start philosophy centers around the family as the target unit. Focus is on early intervention and literacy promotion. In this rural county, many disadvantaged families are isolated with few social contacts. The social isolation is compounded by a lack of transportation. The Family Focus Even Start program encourages families to take advantage of the many resources available to them within their communities.

Family Assessment for Participation

Family Visitors began to see families in December 1999, and began formally enrolling families in January 2000. In order to be admitted into the program, families must:

- not have an income that exceeds federal poverty level;

- have a child between the ages of newborn to seven years of age;
- have adults in the family who have one or more the following indicators of low literacy levels:
 - No high school diploma,
 - Below 9th grade reading level,
 - Limited English proficiency, or
 - Teen parent.

If the family is eligible for Even Start bases on the above criteria, the Intake form is then administered. The Intake form is straightforward and collects information about the family members, their phone number and address, income and education levels, and any health concerns they might have. It also addresses the family's short and long-range goals.

Once the family is admitted and services are provided regularly, staff use a "Family Action Plan" to outline ongoing activities.

Other Livingston Even Start forms include a Teacher/Even Start Communication form, given by the Family Educator to the teachers in participating children's classrooms. This form is used to inform the teacher of the role of Even Start in one or more of their students' lives, and to encourage contact and communication between the teachers and the Family Educator.

A "Follow-up" form is sent to any person referring a family to FFES to inform the referral person of the outcome of the program's contact with the family. In earlier years, referral persons voiced concern that they did not always hear back from the program after a family was referred. This form aids in promoting good communication.

ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY EDUCATOR AND FAMILY PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS

Three surveys were developed to collect data anonymously from the four Family Educators and one Parent Educator, and from the families enrolled in the Even Start program during the 2002-03 funding year as of March 2003. The first and second surveys asked both the families and the Family Educators to address the progress made by each family, and are discussed in this section. The third survey asked Educators about their own perceptions of the Family Focus program, its start-up process, and its impact. That survey is discussed in the next section. Copies of the survey instruments are found in Appendix A.

Methodology and Purpose of Matched Educator and Family Surveys

Each actively enrolled Even Start family was asked to complete a survey regarding their experience with the program. Of the currently enrolled families, 24 completed the survey, compared with the same number in Year Three, 34 in Year Two and 21 in Year One. Similarly, the Family Educators were asked to complete a separate survey for each family they visit. This year, the surveys completed by the families and the surveys completed by the Family Educators matched perfectly, with each family completing a survey and each Family Educator completing a survey for each family she assists.

The two surveys were nearly identical in the questions asked. The goal of these surveys was to determine whether Even Start participants are making progress, and whether the families and Educators have similar perceptions of the progress the families are making. A unique identifying number was assigned to each survey so that the family survey and the Educator survey could be matched in the analysis process. This year, for the first time, families were asked to check a box indicating whether it is okay to share their answers with their Family Educator or not okay. Twenty-one families (87.5%) said it was okay to share their answers. No families refused to allow their answers to be shared, and three families did not answer the question.

All questions were answered on a scale of 1 to 5. In these two surveys, a score of 5 is the most desirable response for each

question. Areas of concern include those in which the family or the Family Educator indicate a “below average” score of 1 or 2. Please see Table 1 at the end of the report for the tabulated survey results.

Survey Results

Do you understand what Even Start is about?

The families self-report that they have a very good understanding of Even Start. Of the 24 responses, 17 families said they “understand well” (5) what Even Start is about. All the remaining families, except one, said they “understand somewhat” or better. One family selected a value of 2, which may indicate that they do not understand what Even Start is about. Their educator selected a value of 3, which is consistent with the family’s perception. The educators all indicated that their families understood “somewhat (3)” or better. This year, all the families and Family Educators were in general agreement and there is no case where a family and an educator had more than a one-point difference in their rating.

Does your family participate regularly and enthusiastically?

Over half the families (14 of 24 respondents) indicated participating regularly in Even Start. Both the families and the Family Educators agreed that all the families “participate regularly and enthusiastically somewhat” (3) or better. In a few cases, there was a mismatch of perceptions. In two cases, families indicated that they participated somewhat, while the Family Educator indicated that they participated regularly. In one case, a family indicated it participated regularly, while the Family Educator indicated they participated only somewhat. Although this does not represent a large number of mismatches, Family Educators might want to review with families what constitutes regular and enthusiastic participation.

Recommendation: Every few months, Family Educators should review with each of their families what constitutes regular and enthusiastic participation. Family Educators should make families aware of their role in helping the program succeed.

Has your family defined specific goals?

Families and Family Educators agreed that all families had at least “begun to identify” specific goals to achieve during the program. Half of the families (12 of 24 respondents) have identified a specific goal. A few mismatches exist. In four cases, the Family

Educator indicated that the family had identified goals (5), while the family indicated it had begun to identify a goal (3). Also, in three cases, the family indicated that they had identified a goal (5), while the Family Educator indicated that they had begun to identify a goal (3). In all cases, it might be useful for the Family Educator to ensure that the family understands the steps in the goal-setting process and where they are in the process.

Recommendation: Family Educators should regularly review with their families the goal-setting process and where each family is in that process.

Do you know what your goals are under Even Start?

All the Family Educators, and all but one of the families, indicated that they at least “sort of knew” what the family’s goal is in the Even Start program. In one case, a family indicated they only vaguely know what their goal is (2), while the Family Educator indicated that they knew their goal well (4). In one case, the family indicated that it knew exactly what its goal is, while the Family Educator indicated that they “sort of” know. Although mismatches on this question are rare, it seems worth having Family Educators reiterate with each family their goals for the Even Start program.

Recommendation: Family Educators should regularly review with their families what each family’s goals are in the program. Family Educators should make clear to families the link between their goals and the purpose of the program.

How much progress have you made toward your goals?

For the most part, families and Family Educators agreed on the extent of progress made toward the Even Start goal. Both families and Family Educators indicated in all cases that they had made at least “some progress” (3) on achieving their goal. In four cases, families indicated that they had made “great progress” (5) toward achieving their goal, while the Family Educator indicated only “some progress” (3). Clearly, Family Educators should keep families informed of their progress in achieving their goals.

Recommendation: Family Educators should keep families informed of their progress toward achieving their goals. Family Educators should also discuss with families what steps the family must take to reach the goal. Family

Educators should offer assistance to help families take the necessary steps to achieve their goals.

How much progress have you made toward achieving Goal 1? Goal 2?

This question specifically identifies a goal for each family and asks both the family and the Family Educator to assess progress on that specific goal. In one case, the family indicated that they had made only minimal progress (3) on the goal, while the Family Educator indicated great progress (5) for this family. In two cases, the family indicated great progress (5), while the Family Educator indicated some progress (3). Finally, in one case, the family indicated they had completed their goal (6), while the Family Educator believed they had made some progress (3). Family Educators should make sure families understand how they are progressing on their individual goals and what they need to do to achieve the goal.

On the second family-specific goal, most families and Family Educators indicated at least some progress, although in one case both the family and the Family Educator agreed the family had made no progress. In two cases, the family reported great progress (5), while the Family Educator reported some progress (3). In one case, the family reported they had completed the goal (6), while the Family Educator indicated they had made substantial progress (4).

Recommendation: Family Educators should make clear to families the progress they are making toward achieving their goals. They should also make sure families know when they have achieved a goal. The Family Educators and the Coordinator should explore whether there is a way for the program to better support families in achieving their goals.

Have things gotten worse, stayed the same, or gotten better since you started Even Start?

For the most part, families and Family Educators indicated that family situations have stayed the same or gotten better since the family began the Even Start program. Only two families were identified by either the family or the Family Educator as doing somewhat worse (2) since joining the program. In one case, a family indicated that things had gotten somewhat worse (2) since joining Even Start, while the Family Educator indicated that things had gotten somewhat better (4) and in one case, the family indicated that things were better (5), when the Family Educator indicated they were worse (2). The latter case raises particular

concern because of the substantial disparity in perceptions of the same situation.

Recommendation: Family Educators should work to ensure that families share as much information as possible about their situation with the educator. In addition, educators should periodically ask families if they feel that things are better, worse or the same since they entered the Even Start program.

Are you aware there are services available to you in the community?

Families and Family Educators generally agree on the level of awareness of available services in the community, and for the most part, families are aware of at least some community resources. In one case, a family indicated they were relatively unaware of resources (2), while the Family Educator indicated they knew of quite a few (4). In another case, the family responded they knew of some resources (3), while the Family Educator said they knew of many services (5). Overall, these differences seem fairly minor.

Recommendation: Family Educators should ensure that families are aware of the community resources available to them. Because families might be embarrassed to admit they don't know where to find help for a particular need, Family Educators should regularly remind them of community resources and specific services if the Family Educator knows of a certain need.

Do you know how to access services in your community?

The vast majority of families (22 of 24 respondents) indicated they know how to access at least some additional services in the community. All the Family Educators indicated that their families could access at least some additional resources. In one case, a family indicated they did not know how to access any services (1), while the Family Educator said they could access some (3). In three cases, families indicated they could access some services (3), while Family Educators said they could access many (5), and in one case, a family indicated they knew how to access many (5), while the Family Educator said they know how to access some (3).

Recommendation: Family Educators should work with families to have them develop confidence in their ability to access other community services. It seems that the

educators believe the families could access these services, but the families lack confidence in their ability to do so.

How has your awareness of services changed since Even Start?

All families except one, and all the Family Educators, indicated that the families had at least about the same level of awareness of services in the community since beginning the Even Start program. In one case, a family believed their awareness of services had decreased somewhat (2) since entering the Even Start program, while the Family Educator indicated the awareness had increased somewhat (4).

Recommendation: Family Educators should work to increase each family's awareness of available services.

Has Even Start helped you understand how to access services?

Most families and Family Educators agreed that the Even Start program has helped somewhat to increase the family's understanding of how to access services. In five cases, the families indicated that the program had helped greatly (5) while the Family Educator felt the program had helped somewhat (3). Families that are not aware of the vast array of services available may be happy to have access to at least some services, while the Family Educator is more likely to be aware of additional services the family is not accessing.

Are you less or more comfortable with your child's teacher since becoming involved in Even Start?

In every case, families and Family Educators indicated that the family had at least the same level of comfort with the child's teacher since joining the program. The vast majority of families (19 of 22 respondents who have a school-aged child) indicated an improvement in their comfort level with their child's teacher since beginning the Even Start program.

Recommendation: Family Educators should work to improve each family's comfort-level with their child's teacher(s) in school. Family Educators should help parents become effective advocates for their children.

Are you less or more involved with your children's schoolwork?

Families and Family Educators indicate that families demonstrate at least the same level of involvement with children's schoolwork since entering the Even Start program. The majority of families (16 of 22 families) indicated that they were at least somewhat more involved in their children's schoolwork since beginning the Even Start program.

In a few cases, the child in the family is very young and not participating in pre-school or school. In such cases, the Family Educator works with the family to teach them about brain development in infants and to help them interact positively with their child. In some cases, the family has experienced significant tumult and these uncertainties have limited progress in achieving Even Start goals.

Recommendation: Family Educators should assist parents in learning how to help their children to develop the discipline to do their homework. In addition, Family Educators should show parents how to support children in their homework without doing the homework for them.

Do you attend parent group meetings?

The majority of families (63%), indicate that they attend parent group meetings. The most common reasons for not attending a parent meeting are a lack of transportation (3) or a lack of time (3). One person indicated they were not interested in going and another was nervous about going.

Recommendation: Family Educators should accompany their families to the first parent group meeting and introduce them to other parents so that they will recognize people at future meetings. Making the parents feel welcome will make them much more likely to return for future meetings.

Families wrote positive statements about how the program has helped them achieve their goals and that they liked the program. Families were particularly loyal to their specific Family Educator.

FAMILY EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

As indicated earlier, the third survey was administered to Family Educators (and in Year Three to the Parent Educator and in Year Four to a long-time volunteer) to gather their perceptions of the program's implementation, its evolution over time, and how well it does in meeting and remaining true to its stated goals and objectives. Information gathered in this process is shared with the Family Focus staff so that they are able to consider the information as part of a continuous improvement process. A process evaluation can help managers assess the start-up of a new

program, and assess both ongoing program strengths and problem areas that develop over time.

Family Educator Surveys

Family Educators believe the program provides “a bridge” to connect families to community resources.

The four Family Educators, as well as a long-time volunteer, each completed a survey regarding their perceptions of Even Start overall, their experience with barriers or problems, and their perceptions of the training they have received in Year Four.

Family Educator perceptions of the Even Start program continue to be positive in Year Four. Educators continue to see the program as having a high value and impact and to be functioning smoothly. The majority of Family Educators believed that the referred families match the program criteria well (Table 2). Family Educators believe the program provides “a bridge” to connect isolated young mothers to the resources in their communities.

The program could increase interactions with schools to improve functioning.

There was a slight decrease in how smoothly the Family Educators felt the program was functioning overall this year, with two Family Educators for the first time indicating that the program was running only “somewhat smoothly.” Several Family Educators indicated in their written comments that the program could increase interactions with the schools to improve its functioning, so perhaps increasing emphasis in this area will allow the program to run more smoothly. Another Family Educator recommended expanding service hours so that Family Educators provided more visits in the evenings and on weekends.

Recommendation: Expand service hours so that Family Educators are able to provide more visits in the evenings and on weekends.

The program still receives high marks for overall value and impact, although here again, there is a slight decline in ratings compared to previous years, with three educators selecting the highest rating this year, compared to four educators in Year 3.

Family Educators indicated “many” or “most” referred families match the Even Start program criteria well. Initially one respondent indicated that “very few match well.” However, the person did not elaborate on this response in written comments, and follow up conversations with staff indicate the response may have been made in error (wrong end of the response scale). This

would be consistent with performance indicator results that indicate that all new families met both literacy and poverty criteria.

The program is making a difference in overcoming the social isolation of limited literacy families.

Family Educators wrote that the program was making a difference in overcoming the social isolation of limited literacy families and in helping them find the necessary resources in their communities. While they wrote that the primary goal of the program is to improve adult reading and writing skills, as well as to model positive parenting skills, the Family Educators indicated that they do much more in helping families establish additional community links and supports. A Family Educator wrote that the program allows families to set their own goals, improving their self-esteem. The program builds on strengths rather than emphasizing the remediation of deficits.

Family Educator Perceptions of Barriers or Problems

Compared to Year One, Family Educators indicated that problems had been reduced considerably.

As in previous years, Family Educators are quite positive about their working relationships with families, schools and service agency representatives (Table 3). Family Educators reported slightly more barriers in working with assigned families this year than in previous years. They reported about the same limited level of problems in working with schools and service agency representatives. Compared to Year One, Family Educators indicated that problems had been reduced considerably. In their written comments, Family Educators emphasized the importance of maintaining regular contact with service agency representatives, and especially with schools.

Recommendation: Maintain regular contact with service agency representatives, especially schools.

Family Educators are facing somewhat more barriers in working with assigned families than they have indicated in Years 2 and 3.

Overall, Family Educators indicated that they were facing somewhat more barriers in working with assigned families than they have indicated in Years Two and Three. Perhaps the new families entering the program face more chaotic home lives or are more socially isolated, resulting in more challenging work than Family Educators have faced in the past.

Recommendation: The FFES program should evaluate the reasons for the perception of increased barriers to working with assigned families and work to institute methods to overcome these barriers.

Overall, the relationship between the Family Educators and the schools is positive.

For the most part, Family Educators report the same positive working relationship with the schools that they have had in the past. No respondents indicated facing “major barriers” with schools and two report “few or no barriers”, while the remaining three report “occasional barriers.” Overall, the relationship between Family Educators and the schools is positive. One Family Educator recommended dropping collaborations with school districts that are not interested in being partners. It should be noted that FFES is in the process of eliminating three schools from the next round of funding.

Family Educators report only minor barriers in working with service agency representatives. Two of the educators have experienced “few barriers or problems” and three have had “occasional barriers or problems”. Generally, Family Educators seem to work well with service agency representatives.

Two of the Family Educators indicated that overall they face “fewer barriers or problems” than in Year One and three indicated “slightly fewer barriers or problems.” None indicated the same or greater barriers compared to Year One.

Family Educators and the Advisory Board believe the program can become even stronger by maintaining regular interactions with service agency representatives

Family Educators wrote that the Even Start program could be even stronger by continuing to maintain regular links with service agency representatives. Members of the Advisory Board echoed this view during the focus group interview. Family Educators also wrote that regular interactions with the school were especially important in making the program a success. It should be noted that last year’s evaluation recommended that the FFES program explore the reasons for the perception of increases in barriers. It appears that some barriers have since decreased. Family Educators recommended expanding the parent advisory group to foster leadership skills and have families provide peer support.

Recommendation: Expand the parent advisory group to help parents develop leadership skills. The FFES program should encourage families to provide peer support to each other.

Family Educator Perceptions of Training

***Family Educators
would like to integrate
the performance
indicator results into
family goals.***

Overall, Year Four Family Educator perceptions of training are the most positive seen over the course of the evaluation. Family Educators report that training presenters are well-informed, training builds on their existing knowledge and skills, is adequate for their needs, is timely, and maintains the right level of complexity (Table 4). As the program is institutionalized, the Family Educators indicate that the need for training has decreased somewhat. Family Educators indicate they would like to make greater use of performance indicators to help them assess their families and focus their efforts on specific needs and goals.

Recommendation: Family Educators should use the performance indicator results to better serve their families. For example, each family’s goals could be linked to specific performance indicators.

Family Educators were positive about the knowledge and experience that presenters at training sessions possessed. The majority indicated that the presenters had “much knowledge” while one person indicated that the presenter had “more than average knowledge” and another indicated that the presenter had “average knowledge.” No one reported that the presenter was not knowledgeable. These results are similar to previous years.

Four Family Educators indicated that staff development training activities “built greatly” on their knowledge and skills (scored a 5 on a 5-point scale) and one Family Educator indicated that the training activities “build a great amount” on knowledge and skills. While previous years’ results have been positive for this indicator, this year’s responses were the strongest yet.

Recommendation: In future years, the survey will be altered to ask Family Educators about specific staff development/training sessions, so that feedback on these questions is more targeted and useful.

All but one Family Educator indicated that staff development is “very adequate” for their needs (score of 5 on 5-point scale). One Family Educator reported that the training is “more than somewhat adequate.” While results in previous years have always been positive, this is the strongest endorsement of the quality of staff development.

Family Educators strongly endorse staff development efforts.

Overall, Family Educators reported that staff development is timely, with three indicating it is “quite timely” and two indicating it is “very timely” (4 and 5 on a 5-point scale). While previous years’ results were positive, this year had the strongest endorsement of timeliness for staff development activities.

The majority of Family Educators indicated that training had “about the right complexity,” with one person indicating that training was “slightly high on complexity.” These results are similar to results in Year Three and an improvement over Year Two, when training was considered too complex.

Family Educators remain committed to continuing education and training.

Family Educators continue to see a need for ongoing training. The majority indicates that the need for training “has dropped off somewhat” while one Family Educator indicated that “the need has not dropped off” and one Family Educator indicated the need has “dropped off substantially.” No one responded that the need “has dropped away completely.” Clearly, Family Educators remain interested and committed to ongoing education and training.

Recommendation: Family educators continue to be interested in ongoing training to help them better serve their families. The Even Start program should continue to offer training opportunities to Family Educators.

COLLABORATING PARTNER PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

For the first time, the Year Four evaluation included a survey of Family Focus Even Start partners. Sixteen Even Start partners completed a survey: four classroom teachers, three therapists and nine others. Seven respondents had been with the program since the first year, two joined in Year Two, one started in Year Three and the remaining six began in Year Four.

Some partners are unclear about their role with Even Start, but most are clear.

The vast majority of partners indicated strong support for their work with the Even Start program (Table 5). A few respondents indicated some reservations about their organization’s role with Even Start and one person was very unclear and skeptical about the organization’s involvement with the Even Start program. All the partners indicated that the program has a positive impact on the families involved.

The vast majority of respondents, 88%, felt that their organization was an active partner with Even Start. However, one respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.

Most respondents, 9 of 16, felt that they personally had an important role in meeting the goals of Even Start. Four people felt neutral about their role, and one person strongly disagreed that they personally have an important role in working with Even Start. Two people indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

The vast majority of respondents, 13 of 16, indicated that they understood their role as a partner with Even Start. Two people were neutral and one person indicated that he/she did not understand the organization's role with Even Start.

Recommendation: Even Start should check in with collaborators and partners regularly to ensure good communication and ensure that the individuals providing services are aware of their organization's role in Even Start.

Recommendation: Even Start Family Educators and partner agency staff should attend joint training sessions as a way to share the same information and to bolster a sense of common purpose.

Most respondents, 79%, indicated that their organization has a clear agreement with Even Start that describes the organization's role in providing services to families involved in Even Start. One person indicated that this was not the case.

All respondents indicated that Even Start has a positive impact on families.

All respondents indicated that Even Start has a positive impact on the families involved in the program and the majority of respondents (94%) indicated they enjoyed working with Even Start staff.

The majority of partners, 12 of 16, believe that Even Start uses their organizations appropriately and effectively. Only one partner strongly disagreed with this statement.

Eleven respondents indicated they had referred families to Even Start, while one respondent strongly disagreed. Four respondents indicated the question was not applicable.

The vast majority of respondents, 11 of 12, indicated that Even Start stayed in touch with their organizations about the families they referred. This is an important finding since in past years, partners have voiced concerns that they were not notified of a family's outcome after referral.

A small number of partners were neutral or disagreed that Even Start staff share information about families' progress.

The majority, 80%, stated that Even Start staff and the respondent share information about families when doing so makes it possible to improve services; however two were neutral and one respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.

Recommendation: Even Start staff should make an effort to inform all staff working with a family about the Even Start program's goals for the family and the family's progress toward achieving those goals.

The vast majority, 93%, indicated that Even Start is well-informed about the respondent's and the partner agency's role in the families' or children's lives. One respondent disagreed with this statement.

A large majority of respondents, 13 of 15, agree or strongly agree with the statement that "Even Start staff express respect for the me and my organization." The remaining two respondents were neutral about this statement.

Likewise, a large majority of respondents, 13 of 15, believe that the Even Start staff appreciate the respondent's and the respondent's organization's contributions to helping the families. Two people were neutral about this statement.

Most respondents, 10 of 13, indicated that Even Start's leadership are accessible and open to suggestions for change. Three respondents were neutral about this statement.

The Even Start program could be even stronger if it maintained frequent communication with partner agencies.

Partners wrote that the Even Start program has had a positive impact on the families with whom it works. Partner respondents indicated that participant families' quality of life is improved by the Even Start program. Parents are more likely to achieve their educational goals and develop a better understanding of their children's development and needs through participation in the Even Start program. They indicated that the program could be

even stronger if it maintained frequent lines of communication to let the partners know of any changes in the Even Start program, to prevent duplication of services, and to share training sessions.

Recommendation: Even Start staff should work closely with partner agency staff to keep partner agency staff aware of a family's goals and progress. Also, this type of communication will reduce duplication of services or any appearance of working at cross-purposes.

Recommendation: The Coordinator should foster a positive working relationship with each school district. The support and assistance of the school districts is crucial in allowing the Even Start program to succeed.

In addition, it was suggested that Even Start could do a better job of preparing families for testing and in following-up when families miss scheduled appointments for services. Partners also felt that Even Start could improve outreach by doing more presentations at partner agencies. One respondent indicated that people only find out about the program through word-of-mouth and that the program could do a better job of advertising its services.

Recommendation: The Even Start program should improve their methods to prepare families for testing and improve follow-up procedures when a family misses a scheduled appointment for services. The Even Start program can improve outreach to collaborating partners by conducting more presentations at partner agencies.

ADVISORY BOARD GROUP INTERVIEW

Six members of the Family First Even Start program Advisory Board attended the group interview conducted April 2nd in Mt. Morris. Overall, the group was very positive about the FFES program and the accomplishments it has achieved in the previous year.

General Perceptions of Past Year

When asked what the general topics of interest have been over the last year, board members mentioned the staff educational

requirements recently enacted and stated it is their impression that all staff are working toward the necessary accreditation.

The Advisory Board also described discussions regarding Even Start's relationship with school districts and fostering collaboration and coordination between FFES and school districts. This topic is described in greater detail below.

The board also took a close look at the new group activities FFES has initiated, such as the parent evening group. They discussed concerns about transportation to group events and the low attendance rates. They talked about ways to improve the attendance, such as offering a meal. This topic is discussed in more detail below.

Collaboration

Over the past year, the board has discussed ways to promote collaboration and networking among organizations represented on the Advisory Board.

The Board is not aware of any concerns among collaborators and believes that the partnerships are functioning well. As far as they are aware, all appropriate potential partners have been invited to collaborate with Even Start and there are not any additional organizations they need to contact. The main challenge the Advisory Board faces with collaboration is finding a meeting time that all partners can attend. Many partner agencies would like to send a representative, but have scheduling conflicts.

There is a concern that many partner agencies think that the FFES program works with "bad" kids or "bad" families or that it is for teenage parents. There may be some confusion over the FFES purpose and mission. Some board members thought that partnering agencies might have the attitude that Even Start works with "kids that need to be fixed" and not realize that some concerns involve the whole family or the adults in the family, not just the children. This misperception can lead to inappropriate referrals from one school district. Also leads to parents not accepting that they need services, not just their children.

Advisory Board members report that there may be some confusion among the general public between Head Start and Even Start. In addition, some people in the community have a hard time understanding there is a broader definition of literacy beyond just reading.

The Coordinator of the Family First Even Start program is clear about the purpose of the program and explained the FFES mission to each partner when it joined. Still, she should visit the partner agencies again to remind them about Even Start's mission and the services it offers.

Recommendation: The Coordinator should visit partner agencies to remind them about Even Start's mission and the services it provides.

Recommendation: Even Start could offer some in-service training opportunities for partner agencies as a way to remind them of the FFES mission. The opportunity for in-service training was also something the partners mentioned on their surveys.

Recommendation: The Advisory Board also recommended that the Coordinator consider writing a monthly column in the local newspaper to educate the general public about the Even Start concept.

A concern the Board raised is that while partner agencies may send a representative to the Advisory Board meetings and that person may know the details about FFES, that information does not always get disseminated within the partner agency. Therefore, service providers may not be fully aware of what FFES is doing in the community. It is important that the people providing direct services are aware of the FFES program and what it can offer families.

Recommendation: Even Start might offer joint training sessions or other efforts to promote interaction between Family Educators and collaborating partners' serve staff. This would allow agency staff to learn more about the Even Start program so that the administration is not the only part of the partner agency that is aware of the collaboration.

In the Mt. Morris school district, the Even Start program visits with each teacher of FFES age appropriate children each year to acquaint the teachers with the services Even Start offers. As they did in Year 3, the Advisory Board recommends again that Even Start staff make similar visits in all participating school districts and also to other partner agencies. Turnover will occur each year among teachers and agency staff. So annual reminders are

necessary. This year, Family Educators now have mailboxes in the schools and visit the school regularly to promote communication.

Recommendation: Even Start staff should make annual visits to classroom teachers of FFES age appropriate children to inform them of the program.

Progress from Year 3

Last year, the Advisory Board recommended that the Parent Educator's presence should be expanded in the schools. Family and Parent Educators have a stronger presence this year, with permanent office space and mailboxes. Last year, the Advisory Board recommended that FFES review its process for follow-up with referral persons. This year, a new follow-up form was developed to improve communication with referral persons.

Adult Education

The parent evening group has been very useful in moving more adults toward advanced goals such as a GED or employment. Families have been attending these evening parent groups and many families attend consistently. In the bad weather, though, attendance is poor.

Families need goals that they can achieve relatively quickly to give them a sense of accomplishment.

Many families in FFES have very low life skill levels and face multiple barriers to advancement in even basic education. Families in the FFES program are spending more time on such basic skills as parenting skills, and are not spending as much time on more advanced educational goals such as getting a GED. FFES families face multiple barriers and cannot focus on education or employment. The board believes that families need to focus on more basic needs initially. Families need goals that they can achieve relatively quickly to give them a sense of accomplishment. For FFES in Livingston County, a GED or a job is a longer-term goal and families must build their confidence before attempting such a lofty achievement. Family Educators work with families to set both short and long-term goals.

The change in the GED class location is positive.

A positive change this year is that GED classes have been moved from the May Center to the White House and Genesee Community College Campus. Adults did not like going to the May Center because children were there during the day. Adults felt it was demeaning to be with children for their educational classes. A barrier to enrolling more families in adult education is that GED class hours are at inconvenient times for many adults. The classes are offered either 2 days a week in the morning or one evening a week.

Recommendation: Work with local community colleges and other education providers to make class scheduled more convenient for working families.

Future Challenges

In the future, the Advisory Board anticipates more referrals to FFES from the schools and they expect the number of families in the program will increase.

The Advisory Board expressed some concern about the fact that families change residences and school districts within the county. The FFES program has tried to keep families with the same Family Educator, even if the family moves to another town within the county. However, they do not want to overburden the Family Educators with travel time.

Teen pregnancy is increasing, although the Board believes that teen parent families are not necessarily appropriate for Even Start and would be better served by programs that work exclusively with teen parents. Even Start should focus on other at-risk families.

Another concern board members expressed is the competitive funding environment. Non-profits that Even Start relies on for services for their families are experiencing funding cuts and may have to reduce services in response.

PARENT GROUP INTERVIEW

Eleven adults participated in a group interview as part of the Wednesday night parent/advisory group for the Livingston County Family Focus Even Start program.

Overall Perceptions of Even Start

When asked to give their general impression of what it is like to be in Even Start and what Even Start has done for them, parents were very forthcoming with positive examples. Parents reported that the Even Start program taught them how to develop a relationship with their family. They also learned how to read with their children and how to interact with them. Even Start helped parents begin studying for the GED. One parent reported that without Even Start, she would not even have tried to obtain her GED. Even Start has also helped families learn about household budgeting and how to manage household finances.

The Even Start program has helped parents improve their interactions with their children. Even Start teaches a love of reading. The program teaches parents to read to their children and to let their children read to them. The Family Educators work with parents to help address any concerns they have. The Family Educators help parents interact positively with their children. Family Educators offer advice on discipline, toilet training, how to help a child sleep in his own bed, and help a child learn to write his name or recognize letters.

Even Start also offers advice on dealing with concerns parents face in raising their children. For example, the Family Educator tells parents about their child's stages of development. The Family Educator also helps parents learn about their child's separation anxieties and how to overcome those fears. Even Start brings kits for education on a particular topic and children like the activity kits. Parents make suggestions for topic ideas, and Even Start develops the kits to meet these needs. For example, the staff have developed kits for potty training, appropriate discipline, teaching a child to write his or her name, and helping families break the habit of a child sleeping in a parent's bed.

The Family Educators help families work with the Department of Social Services and obtain the help they need. Many families report that their DSS caseworker was not very helpful or responsive, but became more responsive when the Family Educator contacted the caseworker. Services parents have been introduced to through Even Start include AutoDream, Head Start, Child Care Council, and GED at home.

Purpose of Wednesday Night Group

The Wednesday night group offers stress relief.

Parents would like more opportunities for socializing and a chance for their children to interact in a safe environment.

Parents report that the Wednesday night group offers stress relief. It provides a chance to spend time with other adults and, because child care is offered, it is nice to have a short break from their children. The Wednesday night group offers help finding affordable housing, help with household budgeting, and a chance to share ideas, concerns, and experiences.

Participants have made friends within the group and enjoy seeing each other each week, although they don't socialize with each other outside the group meetings. Parents would like the chance to have more opportunities for socializing and a chance for their children to interact and exercise in a safe environment. One participant is making arrangements for the local school to open

their gym for a few hours on the weekend, so children can play and parents can exercise. Parents were also interested in more gatherings – perhaps a picnic on the weekend when the weather is warmer or other opportunities to interact together and let their children socialize. Parents expressed an interest in a “parents’ night out” in which children are watched for a few hours while parents have some time to themselves – either to run errands or to have some recreation.

Recommendation: The Even Start program should explore opportunities for providing more socialization among participating families.

If families don’t attend the Wednesday night group, focus group participants speculated that maybe they haven’t opened themselves up to the idea. It is intimidating to attend the group for the first time. It would help if the Family Educator came with the family for the first time and introduced the parents to other families and children of the same age. The vans for transportation also help considerably.

Recommendation: Family Educators should accompany their families when they first attend the parent group so that they can be introduced and have a chance to make some friends with families having similar experiences.

Parents mentioned that they like that this group is more interactive than some of the others they have attended. Some of the other groups have more of a lecture/teaching format. Topics in this Wednesday evening group are interesting and useful. The community educators are always open to suggestions for topics to discuss. One family expressed an interest in learning about First Aid, especially how to handle an emergency involving a child, as part of the Wednesday Night education classes.

Recommendation: The Parent Educator should provide an evening presentation on First Aid for children.

Role of Family Educators, Community Educator and other staff

The Family Educators and Margaret are very open to suggestions and changes. There is good communication between parents and the Even Start staff. Margaret and the Family Educators are always asking what more they can do to help families.

Even Start's Impact on Children

Parents report that their children like Even Start and enjoy the program. For example, one parent reports, "My son is really excited [about the Wednesday night gatherings]. He loves Peggy." Peggy is helping him write his name. One parent reported that Even Start was teaching her older child to show respect for his younger sibling. Another parent said that Even Start has taught her daughter her colors and numbers. The child loves her Family Educator and looks out the window for her car on the days she is scheduled to visit. One mother reported that Even Start taught her son greater independence so that he was less reliant on her for help.

NEW STAFF GROUP INTERVIEW

The Even Start program has hired several new staff members to assist with the Wednesday evening parent groups and other group activities for Even Start families. The new staff view these group activities as positive for the children. Many of these children are isolated. Even Start staff see the children in their homes, but the group activities allow the children to interact with others, develop social skills and become more extroverted.

The Adult Group Leader uses active learning where the parents participate in the process.

The Even Start staff designed the programs for the adult component of the group activities. The adult group leader uses a fixed curriculum as a starting point, but appreciates that Even Start offers him the freedom to build on the curriculum and to tailor it to meet the needs of the parents in the group. As much as possible, the adult group leader attempts to use active learning where the parents are participants in the process. He tries to have practical applications of the lessons such as filling out job applications, completing a resume and preparing a household budget. For example, one evening, he and the Coordinator conducted mock job interviews with parents.

The new staff members report that initially, parents were very shy and quiet. They did not speak much during the group sessions. The adult group leader has worked to allow the parents to feel comfortable. They are more talkative now and willing to share concerns as well as successes.

The new staff members feel that they are given independence. They believe all staff have the sense that they are trusted by the

The child care provider has been working with the children to improve their independence.

Coordinator and are given the freedom to do their job. They feel empowered. This situation is in contrast with their experiences with other (previous) employers.

The person who provided child care during the parent group meetings noticed that initially, children had trouble separating from their parents. She has been working with children to increase their independence.

The new staff attend the Wednesday morning staff meetings and participate in the shared planning for families. They believe that Even Start keeps them well-informed about the families' progress. Rachel has accompanied Family Educators on some home visits to learn more about the families and their goals.

The new staff members believe one evening a week of group activities in each community is sufficient for families. They think that offering too many evening programs would overwhelm families and they might stop participating. Some parents are working and don't have time to attend the group meetings. If families are looking for additional activities, they can attend a meeting in another town. To increase attendance, the new staff members recommend that Family Educators encourage their families to attend, and encourage their families to visit an evening activity at least once. Families would feel more comfortable if their Family Educator attended the meeting, especially for their first visit. They think parents would be more likely to attend if their Family Educator introduced them to other families at their first meeting. This recommendation is consistent with what parents indicated during their focus group. Offering a meal or snack has been a way to attract families to the group activity sessions. Evening sessions seem to work better than daytime sessions.

Offering a meal or a snack is a way to attract families to group activity sessions.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Many families have been involved with the Even Start program long enough to take pre-test and post-tests on important data indicators that measure performance on literacy criteria. Even Start staff have collected the necessary data for the evaluation of the following performance indicators and provided CGR with the proportion of participants who passed each indicator, as of June

2003. See the Appendix for Table 6 and a summary of performance indicator data.

Adult Indicator Results

The six performance indicators for *adults* are as follows:

- 1.1. Fifty percent of all parents who have completed at least a 100 hour block of parent literacy and who pre-tested between 0 and 8.9 on the TABE in math or reading will demonstrate a one grade level gain as measured by TABE in math or reading.
 - The program had five of eleven (46%) adults achieve this goal, up from one person out of three (33%) last year. The number of eligible adults this year increased from 3 to 11, which shows good progress. However, the total “n” or number of adults in the “slice” is still low due to a number of reasons: (1) seven adults exited the program before achieving 100 hours of parent literacy; (2) four adults were relatively new and had not yet reached 100 hours; (3) others face employment hours or family circumstances that make it difficult for them to reach their necessary hours.
- 1.2. Fifty percent of all parents who have completed at least a 100 hour block of instruction for English language learners and who pre-test at levels 1, 2, or 3 on the NYSPLACE will demonstrate a one grade level gain as measured by the NYSPLACE.
 - The program has no adults who qualify to be tested for this indicator, nor were there any last year. The ELL program started in October 2002, and as of June 2003, six families were enrolled. None had yet reached their 100 hours of instruction. Two had improved their English well enough to find employment.
- 1.3. Fifty percent of participating Even Start parents who have a goal of a high school diploma or equivalent and who score 9.0 and above in reading and math on the TABE will earn a high school diploma or equivalent during the program year.

- The program had one adult qualify to participate for this indicator, and that person achieved the goal. Another adult is scheduled to take the exam in July 2003.
- 1.4. Fifty percent of Even Start participants, who have this goal, will enter into post-secondary education, job training, or retraining during the program year.
- The program had only one person who fit the criteria for this indicator and that person achieved the goal, compared to six adults in 2002.
- 1.5. Fifty percent of Even Start participants, who have this goal, will enter employment, or obtain career advancement during the program year.
- Even Start had six adults qualify for this indicator and achieve their goal, compared to two adults in 2002. Five of the six adults reaching this goal in 2003 previously reported that most of their income was from TANF.
- 1.6. Thirty-five percent of adults who score at or below Level 3 on the National Reporting System benchmarks for writing will improve one level after 100 hours of instruction.
- No adults in the program were eligible to participate in this indicator, nor were any eligible in 2002.

Child Indicator Results

The four indicators for *children* are as follows:

- 1.7. Fifty percent of all Even Start children age 6 months to 5 years old who score at the 50th percentile or below on either auditory comprehension or expressive communication will increase their percentile rank on auditory comprehension and expressive communication as measured by the PreSchool Language Scale after one year of participation.
- Ten out of 14 children eligible for this indicator passed (71%), compared to two out of three (67%) last year. Children who did not increase their percentile rank have

been referred to Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education. Seventeen children have a “pre” score and have “post” scores scheduled over the next year.

- 1.8 Seventy-five percent of all Even Start children in school Pre-K through grade 3 will have attended school at the same or better rate as the building attendance rate.
- For this indicator, the Even Start program had 26 eligible children, of which 19 achieved the goal, for a 73% success rate, up from 58% from last year. Three children not meeting this goal faced serious illness, three had head lice, and one had parents who did not ensure his/her attendance.
- 1.9 Ninety percent of all children from participating Even Start families, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1, and who attend school, K through grade 3, will be promoted to the next grade level as reported by the child’s school district.
- 100% of the 12 children eligible for this indicator achieved the goal.
- 1.10 Fifty percent of children, who are enrolled in Even Start by November 1 and who are in school grades 1-3, will read at grade level or above as reported by the child’s school district at the end of the year.
- Three of six children eligible for this indicator achieved it. Two of the children who did not achieve the indicator are classified with multiple disabilities. The third child has shown growth since joining Even Start, and is receiving additional support from the school’s reading clinic.

Family Indicator Results

The four indicators for *families* are as follows:

- 1.11 Fifty percent of parents who participated in Even Start within the reporting year will demonstrate a 0.3 gain in supporting children’s learning in the home environment (Scale 1) interactive literacy activities as indicated by the Parenting Education Profile (PEP).

- The Even Start program had no families eligible to participate in this indicator. Fifteen families have taken a PrePEP, and have PostPEPs scheduled over the next year.
- 1.12 Fifty percent of parents who participated in Even Start within the reporting year will demonstrate a 0.3 gain in supporting interactive literacy (Scale II) as indicated by the Parent Education Profile (PEP).
- Fourteen of sixteen parents eligible for this indicator achieved it (88%), compared to three out of four last year. This shows excellent progress in the last year in terms of the number of parents eligible.
- 1.13 Fifty percent of the parents who participated in Even Start within the reporting year will demonstrate a 0.3 gain in supporting children's learning in formal educational settings (Scale III) as indicated on the Parenting Education Profile (PEP).
- Seven out of 14 parents achieved this goal (50%) compared to two out of two (100%) last year. While the percentage dropped, it is more important that the number of parents achieving this goal more than tripled.
- 1.14 Fifty percent of the parents who participated in Even Start within the reporting year will demonstrate a 0.3 gain in taking on the parent role (Scale IV) as indicated on the Parenting Education Profile (PEP).
- The Even Start program had no families eligible to participate in this indicator.

Program Indicator Results

The seven indicators for the *program* are as follows:

- 2.1 The program offers integrated instruction in the home for a minimum of two, one-hour visits each month for each family.
- The Even Start program offers three home visits per month, but the actual number of visits per month is 2.3. Each visit lasts approximately 1.5 hours. Offered visits dropped from four last year to three this year, as

participation in group settings increased. The program exceeds the state goals for this indicator.

- 2.2 Ninety-five percent of the families enrolled in Even Start during the program year will have at least one participating parent with low literacy levels at intake.
 - The Even Start program enrolled 16 new families, and all 16 had at least one parent with low literacy levels at intake. This compares to 10 out of 10 families in 2002.
- 2.3 Ninety percent of families enrolled in Even Start during the program year will be at or below the poverty level at intake.
 - All sixteen new families this year were at or below the poverty level.
- 2.4 Even Start programs will retain fifty percent of the families for 12 or more months.
 - Twenty-one of 40 families enrolled this year were retained for 12 or more months (53%). This compares to 17 out of 34 (50%) last year.
- 2.5 Even Start programs offer integrated instructional activities in a group setting for a minimum of 6 hours each month for participants.
 - The Even Start program provides eight group setting opportunities each month. Each group lasts 2 hours, so that participants have access to up to 16 hours of group activity per month. This is double the hours offered last year, and attendance is increasing.
- 2.6 The program offers an average of 5 hours per month of combined general professional development and individualized professional development for staff, who provide direct services to families.
 - The Even Start program offers staff 4.2 hours of general development and 2.5 hours of individual development each month, for a monthly total of 6.7 hours of continuing

education. This result exceeds the goal of an average of 5 hours per month of training.

- 2.7 Each staff member who provides direct services to families will participate in a minimum of 8 hours per month of shared planning time (based on staff's FTE) to insure integrated instruction.
 - The Even Start program offers 7.2 hours per month of shared planning time with the staff who provide direct services to families to insure integrated instruction. Given the Even Start staff FTEs, 6.2 hours are needed per month to meet this goal. This result exceeds the state goal for this indicator.

CONCLUSION

Over the past four years, the Even Start program has made great strides. It is now well-established in the community and has a number of families active in the program. Both families and Family Educators report that the program has had a positive impact. The program has recruited numerous partners and has a strong relationship with local school districts. While the program is a success, there are always opportunities for continuous improvement.

Communication and Collaboration

Throughout this study, respondents repeatedly mentioned an interest in greater communication and collaboration. Both collaborating partners and Family Educators were interested in greater communication and collaboration between partner agencies and the Even Start program. In all cases, our informants reported the program was working well, but to maintain that success would require ongoing communication. Family Educators wanted to have more open lines of communication with schools so that they would be better informed about how “their children” were doing in classes. Partners wanted a better understanding of the services that the Even Start program offers and what role their agency could play.

Communication with participating families is also a key in continued program success. We found that Family Educators

must make clear to families what the expectations are for participation, and make certain they understand what goals they are working to achieve. In our research, families could not always express a clear understanding of the purpose of the program, their role in the program or what goals they were attempting to achieve.

The Advisory Board recommended that the Even Start program do a better job of communicating its role and services to the larger community and the public. The Advisory Board expressed some concern about public confusion regarding Even Start's purpose. For example, some board members thought that the general public confused the Even Start and Head Start programs. They also felt that the general public attached a certain stigma to Even Start parents, and especially children, believing that the children were "bad kids". The Advisory Board believes it is important to overcome these negative stereotypes, both to assist in recruiting new families to the program and to gain greater support for the program among partners and the public at large.

Parental/Adult Progress

This year, the Even Start program established evening parent groups to foster peer support and opportunities for group education. From all accounts, these evening programs are quite successful for the parents who attend. The program has helped reduce the social isolation of families, has taught parents important life skills, and has encouraged participants to take a more active role in planning program events. At the same time, the Even Start program faces challenges in encouraging all program families to participate. Some families have not yet attended an evening session, although the program is actively working to encourage greater participation.

The program Coordinator, Family Educators and the Advisory Board have all expressed concerns about the retention of families in the program. Many families move frequently. If the family moves within the county, the Even Start program attempts to keep the family with the same Family Educator, if possible, to maintain continuity. Even for families who remain in the county, some choose to leave the Even Start program. Program guidelines indicate that the program is most effective if families continue to receive services for a minimum of a year. However, many Livingston County Even Start families leave the program before

achieving this milestone. The inability to retain families in the program for a sufficient period of time can reduce the likelihood of program success.

The Livingston County Even Start program is also facing challenges in helping families accomplish their more substantial goals. Many participating families are not in a position to attempt a GED or post-secondary education. While we recognize that many families face multiple barriers and we are sympathetic to the need for families to begin the program with goals they can readily achieve to boost their self-confidence, we believe the program should put greater emphasis on moving families toward at least attempting more substantial goals. Performance Indicator results show that more adults improved on their TABE score this year compared to last, but only one adult achieved a GED, one entered post-secondary education or job training, and no adults were eligible for two of the indicators.

One option might be to construct a multi-year plan of goals for each family, listing both readily achievable goals in the near-term while also showing longer-term goals in the future. Families will then see how their ultimate goals fit into the picture alongside smaller, more immediate goals. Having both short and long term goals might also help keep families in the program as they see a detailed plan for their future and what they might achieve if they remain in the program. Alternatively, it is possible that families facing so many barriers to success are not appropriate for the Even Start program and that perhaps the program should focus recruiting efforts on families who are ready to attempt secondary and post-secondary education.

Performance indicator analysis shows that six adults achieved the important goal of employment or career advancement.

Children's Progress

Across the study components, informants agreed that the Even Start program has had a positive impact on children. Families all provided rave reviews of the impact that the Family Educators have had on their children. They mentioned specific examples of skills that Family Educators taught their children and the eagerness with which their children anticipated visits by the Family Educator.

Family Educators also reported that children had made significant progress as a result of their efforts. Even Start program staff mentioned that children benefited from the socialization skills they developed during the parent evening group meetings. While the parents participated in the group meetings, the children played together. Staff mentioned that many Even Start children do not have much contact with other children, so these group sessions were an important component of their social development.

Partner agencies tend to focus primarily on the children in the family and they too report that the Even Start program has had a positive impact on the children they serve. While communication could be improved, as mentioned above, partners indicate that the Even Start program is an important component of children's success.

Performance indicators confirm the success Even Start has had with children; the program met or exceeded all performance indicators (if we include the attendance indicator on which Even Start achieved 73% compared the goal of 75%).

Table 1: Family Responses Crossed by Family Educator Responses

Families were asked to complete a survey about their experience with the Even Start program, and their assigned Family Educators were asked to complete an identical survey regarding each of their assigned families. The goal of these surveys was to determine whether progress is being made, and whether the families and their Educators have similar perceptions of the progress the families are making. While the surveys were anonymous, a unique identifying number was assigned to each survey so that the family survey and the Educator survey for that family could be matched in the analysis process.

The tables below are cross-tabulations that cross the responses of families with the responses of their respective Family Educators. For example, in the first table below, a total of 17 families responded "understand well," or a value of 5 to the question. A total of 10 Family Educators also responded with a 5. Of those 17 families who responded with a 5, 10 of their Family Educators also gave them a 5, while in 7 cases, the Family Educator assigned the family a value of 4.

		Family: Do You Understand What Even Start is About?						
		Do not understand	Understand Somewhat			Understand well	TOTAL	
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
Family Educator: Does This Family Understand What Even Start is About?	Do not understand	<i>1</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
	<i>2</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Understand somewhat	<i>3</i>	0	1	1	0	2	
	<i>4</i>	0	0	3	2	7	12	
	Understand well	<i>5</i>	0	0	0	0	10	10
TOTAL			0	1	4	2	17	24

		Family: Does your family participate regularly and enthusiastically in Even Start?						
		Does not participate	Participates somewhat			Participates regularly	TOTAL	
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
Family Educator: Does this family participate regularly and enthusiastically?	Does not participate	<i>1</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
	<i>2</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Participate somewhat	<i>3</i>	0	0	2	2	1	5
	<i>4</i>	0	0	1	2	4	7	
	Participates regularly	<i>5</i>	0	0	2	1	9	12
TOTAL			0	0	5	5	14	24

Family:Has your family defined specific goals?

		Has not identified...	Has begun to identify		Has identified	TOTAL		
		1	2	3	4	5		
Family Educator: Has this family defined specific goals?	Has not identified goals	1	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	
	Has begun to identify	3	0	0	1	0	3	4
		4	0	0	1	4	3	8
	Has identified goals	5	0	0	4	2	6	12
TOTAL			0	0	6	6	12	24

Family: Do you know what your goals are under Even Start?

		Do not know goals	Sort of know		Know exactly	TOTAL		
		1	2	3	4	5		
Family Educator:Does this family know what its goals are under Even Start?	Does not know goals	1	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	
	Sort of knows	3	0	0	0	1	1	2
		4	0	1	1	6	5	13
	Knows exactly	5	0	0	0	2	7	9
TOTAL			0	1	1	9	13	24

Family: How much progress have you made towards your goals?

		No Progress	Some Progress		Great Progress	TOTAL		
		1	2	3	4	5		
Family Educator:How much progress has this family made towards their goals?	No Progress	1	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	
	Some Progress	3	0	0	4	3	4	11
		4	0	0	2	6	0	8
	Great Progress	5	0	0	0	2	3	5
TOTAL			0	0	6	11	7	24

Family: How much progress have you made towards Goal 1?

		No Progress	Some Progress		Great Progress	Completed Goal	TOTAL		
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
Family Educator:How much progress has this family made towards Goal 1?	No Progress	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	2	0	0	2	
	Some Progress	3	0	0	4	2	2	1	9
		4	0	0	2	3	1	0	6
	Great Progress	5	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
	Completed Goal	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL			0	0	9	5	6	2	22

Family: How much progress have you made towards Goal 2?

		No Progress		Some Progress		Great Progress	Completed Goal	TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Family Educator:How much progress has this family made towards Goal 2?	No Progress	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		2	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Some Progress	3	0	4	0	2	0	6
		4	0	4	2	1	1	8
	Great Progress	5	0	0	0	4	0	4
	Completed Goal	6	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL		1	0	9	2	8	1	21

Family: Have things gotten worse, stayed the same, or gotten better since you started Even Start?

		Gotten worse		Stayed same		Gotten better	TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	
Family Educator:Have things for this family gotten worse, stayed same, gotten better?	Gotten worse	1	0	0	0	0	0
		2	0	0	0	1	1
	Stayed same	3	0	0	0	1	1
		4	0	1	1	5	13
	Gotten better	5	0	0	0	3	9
TOTAL		0	1	1	8	14	24

Family: Are you aware there are services available to you in the community?

		Unaware	Know of some		Know of many svcs	TOTAL	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Family Educator:Is this family aware there are services available in the community?	Unaware of services	1	0	0	0	0	0
		2	0	0	0	0	0
	Know of some services	3	0	0	1	1	2
		4	0	1	1	4	11
	Know of many services	5	0	0	1	3	7
TOTAL		0	1	3	8	12	24

Family: Do you know how to access services in your community?

		Do not know	Know how to access some		Know how to access man	TOTAL	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Family Educator:Does this family know how to access services in the community?	Do not know	1	0	0	0	0	0
		2	0	0	0	0	0
	Know how to access some	3	1	1	3	0	1
		4	0	0	1	6	3
	Know how to access many	5	0	0	3	2	3
TOTAL		1	1	7	8	7	24

Family:How has your awareness of services changed since Even Start?

		Less aware		About the same		Much more aware		TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5		
Family Educator:How has family's awareness of services changed since Even Start?	Less aware	1	0	0	0	0		0
		2	0	0	0	0		0
	About the same	3	0	0	1	0		1
		4	0	1	3	8	4	16
	Much more aware	5	0	0	0	0	7	7
TOTAL			0	1	3	9	11	24

Family:Has Even Start helped you understand how to access services?

		Has not helped		Helped somewhat		Helped greatly		TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5		
Family Educator:Has Even Start helped this family access services?	Has not helped	1	0	0	0	0		0
		2	0	0	0	0		0
	Helped somewhat	3	0	1	0	3	5	9
		4	0	0	0	4	3	7
	Helped greatly	5	0	0	0	0	8	8
TOTAL			0	1	0	7	16	24

Family:Are you less or more comfortable with child's teacher since Even Start?

		Less comfortable		About the same		More comfortable		Not Applicable	TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
Family Educator:Is family less or more comfortable with child's teacher since Even Start?	Less comfortable	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	About the same	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	
		4	0	0	2	6	5	1	14
	More comfortable	5	0	0	0	1	4	0	5
	Not applicable	6	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
TOTAL			0	0	3	8	11	2	24

Family:Are you less or more involved with your children's schoolwork ?

		Less involved		About the same		More involved		Not Applicable	TOTAL
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>		
Family Educator:Is family less or more involved with children's schoolwork?	Less involved	<i>1</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		<i>2</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	About the same	<i>3</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		<i>4</i>	0	0	4	2	5	0	11
	More involved	<i>5</i>	0	0	0	1	7	0	8
	Not Applicable	<i>6</i>	1	0	0	1	0	2	4
TOTAL			1	0	5	4	12	2	24

Table 2: Family Educator Perceptions of Even Start

	Year 1* (n=5)	Year 2 (n=4)	Year 3* (n=5)	Year 4* (n=4)
How well was start-up process organized?				
Not well organized	0	NA	NA	NA
Fair organization	0	NA	NA	NA
Somewhat organized	0	NA	NA	NA
Well organized	2	NA	NA	NA
Very well organized	2	NA	NA	NA
No answer	1	NA	NA	NA
How smoothly does program seem to be functioning overall?				
Not very smoothly	0	0	0	0
Less than somewhat smoothly	0	0	0	0
Somewhat smoothly	0	0	0	2
Very smoothly	4	2	3	3
Extremely smoothly	1	2	1	0
What is your perception of overall value/impact of program?				
No value or impact	0	0	0	0
Small amount of value or impact	0	0	0	0
Some value or impact	0	0	0	0
High Value or impact	3	1	1	2
Much value or impact	2	3	4	3
How well do the referred families match the Even Start program criteria?				
Very few match well	0	0	0	1 ^a
Some match well	0	0	0	0
About half match well	0	0	0	0
Many match well	3	1	0	2
Most match well	2	3	5	2

*In Year One, the Administrative Assistant completed a survey, and in Year Three, the Parent Educator filled out a survey, in Year Four, a long-term volun

^a This response is believed to be in error, after discussion with Even Start staff.

Table 3: Family Educator Perceptions of Barriers or Problems

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Do you experience barriers/problems in working with assigned families?				
No barriers or problems	0	0	0	0
Few barriers or problems	0	1	2	0
Occasional barriers or problems	4	2	3	4
Some barriers or problems	0	1	0	1
Frequent barriers or problems	0	0	0	0
Do you experience barriers/problems in working with school representatives?				
No barriers or problems	0	3	1	1
Few barriers or problems	2	0	2	1
Occasional barriers or problems	2	0	2	3
Some barriers or problems	0	1	0	0
Frequent barriers or problems	0	0	0	0
Do you experience barriers/problems in working with service agency reps.?				
No barriers or problems	0	2	0	0
Few barriers or problems	2	1	2	2
Occasional barriers or problems	2	1	2	3
Some barriers or problems	0	0	1	0
Frequent barriers or problems	0	0	0	0
Do you experience more or fewer problems or barriers now than you did during Year One (or when you first started at Even Start) with families, school representatives, and agency representatives?				
Fewer barriers or problems	NA	3	3	2
Slightly fewer barriers or problems	NA	1	0	3
About the same barriers or problems	NA	0	2	0
Slightly more barriers or problems	NA	0	0	0
Many more barriers or problems	NA	0	0	0

Table 4: Family Educator Perceptions of Training

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Do individuals who present during training have adequate knowledge and experience?				
No knowledge	0	0	0	0
Little knowledge	0	0	0	0
Average knowledge	0	0	1	1
More than average knowledge	1	0	0	1
Much knowledge	3	4	4	3
Do staff development training activities build on your knowledge and skills?				
Do not build on skills	0	0	0	0
Build a little bit	0	0	0	0
Build somewhat	0	0	1	0
Build a good amount	1	2	1	1
Build greatly	3	2	3	4
Do you feel staff development is adequate for your needs?				
Not adequate	0	0	0	0
Slightly adequate	0	0	0	0
Somewhat adequate	1	1	1	0
More than somewhat adequate	0	2	1	1
Very adequate	3	1	3	4
Do you feel that staff development is timely? (Occurs regularly, when you need it)				
Not at all timely	0	0	0	0
Slightly timely	0	0	0	0
Somewhat timely	3	1	1	0
Quite timely	0	0	1	3
Very timely	1	3	3	2
Has training maintained the right level of complexity?				
Not complex enough	NA	0	0	0
A little bit complex	NA	0	1	0
About the right complexity	NA	1	3	4
Slightly high on complexity	NA	0	1	1
Too complex	NA	3	0	0
Has the need for training dropped off?				
Need has not dropped off	NA	1	0	1
Dropped off slightly	NA	1	2	0
Has dropped off somewhat	NA	2	3	3
Dropped off substantially	NA	0	0	1
Need has dropped away completely	NA	0	0	0

Table 5: Perceptions of Teachers, Therapists, and Other Partners with Livingston Family Focus Even Start

	n (#)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A (#)
I feel that my organization is an active partner with Livingston Even Start.	16	56.3%	31.3%	6.3%	0.0%	6.3%	
I feel that I personally have an important role in meeting the objectives and goals of Even Start.	16	28.6%	35.7%	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%	1
I understand clearly what my role is as a partner with Even Start.	16	43.8%	37.5%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	
My organization has a clear agreement with Even Start that describes our role in providing services to families involved in Even Start.	16	57.1%	21.4%	14.3%	0.0%	7.1%	1
I believe Even Start has a truly positive impact on the families with which it works.	16	68.8%	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
I enjoy working with Even Start staff.	16	62.5%	31.3%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	
Even Start staff use me and my organization appropriately and effectively.	16	53.3%	26.7%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%	1
I have referred families to Even Start.	16	58.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	4
Even Start staff stay in touch with me about families I have referred.	16	58.3%	33.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4
Even Start and I share information about families when doing so makes it possible to improve services	16	53.3%	26.7%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%	1
Even Start staff are well-informed about my role, or the role of my organization, in the families' or childrens' lives.	15	66.7%	26.7%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	
Even Start staff express respect for me and my organization.	15	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2
Even Start staff appreciate my and my organization's contributions to their families.	15	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	
Even Start leadership are accessible and open to suggestions for change.	15	69.2%	7.7%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2

Table 6: Results on New York State Even Start Family Literacy Performance Indicators

	Total passing	Total Evaluated on Indicator	Livingston passing rate	Statewide passing goal
Adult Indicators (total adults served in Year Three = 42)				
1.1 TABE score increases by one grade level	5	11	45%	50%
1.2. NYSPLACE score increases by one grade level	0	0	NA	50%
1.3. Attain HS Diploma or equivalent	1	1	100%	50%
1.4. Meet goal of post-secondary education, job training, retraining	1	1	100%	50%
1.5. Meet goal of employment, career advancement	6	6	100%	50%
1.6. National Reporting System writing score increases by one level	0	0	NA	35%
Children Indicators (total children served in Year Three= 81)				
1.7. Children at or below 50th percentile on auditory/expressive communication will increase their rank on PLS-3	10	14	71%	50%
1.8. Children in grade K through grade 3 will have average or better attendance	19	26	73%	75%
1.9. Children will be promoted to next grade level on time	12	12	100%	90%
1.10. Children will read on or above grade level	3	6	50%	50%

Table 6, continued

	Total Evaluated on Indicator	Total passing	Livingston passing rate	Statewide passing goal
Family Indicators (total families served in Year Three = 40)				
1.11. Parents will demonstrate a gain in supporting children's learning in home environment	0	0	NA	50%
1.12. Parents will demonstrate a gain in supporting interactive literacy	16	14	88%	50%
1.13. Parents will demonstrate a gain in supporting children's formal learning	14	7	50%	50%
1.14. Parents will demonstrate a gain in taking on the parent role	0	0	NA	50%
Program Indicators				
	Livingston Time Offered			Statewide Passing Goal
2.1. Offers two, one-hour integrated instruction visits a month	3 visits/1.5 hours each			2 visits / 1 hour each
2.5. Offer integrated instructional activities in a group setting for minimum of 6 hours/month	16 hours per month			6 hours per month
2.6. Offer professional development for staff who provide direct service	6.7 hours offered			5
2.7. Eight hours per month (or adjust for FTEs) of shared planning time for staff who provide direct service	7.2 hours			6.2 (based on FTEs)
	Total Evaluated on Indicator	Total passing	Livingston passing rate	Statewide passing goal
2.2. Enrolled families have low literacy at intake	16	16	100%	95%
2.3. Enrolled families at or below poverty level	16	16	100%	90%
2.4. Retain families for 12 or more months	40	21	53%	50%

Even Start Family Survey

1. Do you understand what the Even Start program is about?

1	2	3	4	5
Do not understand		Understand		Understand well

2. Does your family participate regularly and enthusiastically in Even Start?

1	2	3	4	5
Does not participate		Participates somewhat		Participates regularly

3. Has your family identified specific goals?

1	2	3	4	5
Has not identified goals		Has begun to identify goals		Has identified specific goals

4. Do you know what your goals are under the Even Start program?

1	2	3	4	5
Do not know goals		Sort of know		Know exactly

5. How much overall progress do you feel you have made towards your goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress

6. How much progress have you made towards the following goal: _____?

1	2	3	4	5	6
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress	Completed goal!

7. How much progress have you made towards the following goal: _____?

1	2	3	4	5	6
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress	Completed goal!

8. Do you feel things have gotten worse for you, stayed the same, or gotten better since you started Even Start?

1	2	3	4	5
Gotten worse		Stayed the same		Have gotten better

****CONTINUED→**

9. Are you aware that there are services available to you in the community?

1 2 3 4 5
Unaware that services exist Know of some services Know of many services

10. Do you know how to access services that exist in your community?

1 2 3 4 5
Do not know how to access services Know how to access some services Know how to access many services

11. How has your level of awareness of services changed since you started working with Even Start?

1 2 3 4 5
Less aware About the same level of awareness Much more aware of services

12. Do you think Even Start has helped you understand how to access services available to you?

1 2 3 4 5
Has not helped Helped somewhat Helped greatly

13. Are you less or more comfortable interacting with your child's teacher than you were a year ago?

1 2 3 4 5
Less comfortable About the same More comfortable

14. Are you less or more involved in your children's schoolwork than you were a year ago?

1 2 3 4 5
Less involved About the same More involved

15a. Do you participate in the Parent Group meetings? ___ Yes ___ No

15b. If not, why not? ___ Time is not convenient ___ I don't have enough time
 ___ I'm not interested ___ I'm nervous about going
 ___ Transportation ___ Other reason _____

16. Do you have any other comments about the Even Start program?

Please check one of the following:

- It is OK for my Family Educator to see my answers on this survey.
 It is NOT OK for my Family Educator to see my answers on this survey.

Family Educators' Perceptions of Individual Family Progress

1. Does this family understand what the Even Start program is about?

1	2	3	4	5
Does not understand		Understands somewhat		Understands well

2. Does this family participate regularly and enthusiastically in Even Start?

1	2	3	4	5
Does not participate		Participates somewhat		Participates fully and enthusiastically

3. Has this family identified specific goals?

1	2	3	4	5
Has not identified goals		Has begun to identify goals		Has identified specific goals

4. Does the family know what its goals are under the Even Start program?

1	2	3	4	5
Does not know goals		Sort of knows		Knows exactly

5. How much overall progress do you feel this family has made towards its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress

6. How much progress has this family made towards the following goal: _____?

1	2	3	4	5	6
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress	Completed goal!

7. How much progress has this family made towards the following goal: _____?

1	2	3	4	5	6
No progress/slid backwards		Some progress		Great progress	Completed goal!

8. Do you feel things have gotten worse for this family, stayed the same, or gotten better since the family started Even Start?

1	2	3	4	5
Gotten worse		Stayed the same		Have gotten better

Continued →

9. Is this family aware that there are services available to them in the community?

1 2 3 4 5
Unaware that services exist Knows of some services Knows of many services

10. Does this family know how to access services that exist in your community?

1 2 3 4 5
Does not know how to access Knows how to access some Knows how to access many services

11. How has this family's level of awareness of services changed since it started working with Even Start?

1 2 3 4 5
Less aware About the same level of awareness Much more aware of services

12. Do you think Even Start has helped this family understand how to access services available to them?

1 2 3 4 5
Has not helped Helped somewhat Helped greatly

13. Is this family less or more comfortable interacting with their children's teachers than it was a year ago?

1 2 3 4 5
Less comfortable About the same More comfortable

14. Is this family less or more involved in their children's schoolwork than it was a year ago?

1 2 3 4 5
Less involved About the same More involved

15. Are there any other comments you would like to make about this family?

Family Educators Survey: Perceptions of Even Start Program Process and Outcomes

1. How smoothly does the Even Start program seem to be functioning overall?

1 2 3 4 5
Not very smoothly Somewhat smoothly Runs extremely smoothly

2. What is your perception of the overall value or impact of the program on families?

1 2 3 4 5
No value or impact Some value or impact Much value or impact

3. Do you experience barriers or problems in working with your assigned families?

1 2 3 4 5
No barriers/problems Occasional barriers/problems Frequent barriers/problems

4. Do you experience barriers or problems in working with school representatives?

1 2 3 4 5
No barriers/problems Occasional barriers/problems Frequent barriers/problems

5. Do you experience barriers or problems in working with service agency representatives?

1 2 3 4 5
No barriers/problems Occasional barriers/problems Frequent barriers/problems

6. Do you experience more or fewer problems or barriers now than you did during Year 1 (or when you first started at Even Start) with families, school representatives, and agency representatives?

1 2 3 4 5
Fewer barriers/problems About the same barriers/problems Many more barriers/problems

7. How well do the referred families match the Even Start program criteria?

1 2 3 4 5
Very few match well About ½ match well Most match well

8. Do the individuals who present during training sessions have adequate knowledge and experience in content areas?

1 2 3 4 5
No knowledge Average knowledge Much knowledge

Continued →

9. Do staff development training activities add to your knowledge and skills?

1	2	3	4	5
Do not build		Build somewhat		Build greatly

10. Do you feel that staff development is adequate for your needs?

1	2	3	4	5
Not adequate		Somewhat adequate		Very adequate

11. Do you feel that staff development is timely (i.e., occurs regularly, when you need it)?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all timely		Somewhat timely		Very timely

12. Has the training maintained a sufficient level of complexity as you have gained experience with the program?

1	2	3	4	5
Not complex enough		About the right complexity		Too complex

13. Has the need for training dropped off substantially as a result of your increased experience?

1	2	3	4	5
Need has not dropped off		Has dropped off somewhat		Need has dropped away completely

14. What are the objectives of Even Start, and how is Family Focus meeting those objectives? (use the back or additional sheets if you need more room.)

15. In what ways do you think Family Focus Even Start is having an impact on families?

16. What suggestions can you give to improve the ways in which Family Focus Even Start works with families? With schools? With agencies?

17. What other suggestions do you have for continuous improvement in view of the changes in federal focus?

18. How are Performance Indicator data used to plan and thereby improve results for families?

Survey of Teachers, Therapists, and Other Selected Partners with Livingston Family Focus Even Start

Note: This survey information is confidential. Results will be reported in summary form only. Even Start staff will not have access to individual survey results. Please be honest and candid in your responses. If you have questions, please call the program evaluator, Sarah Boyce, at 585-327-7065.

1. How would you characterize your profession?

- (1) Classroom Teacher (Public Schools, Head Start, Adult Education)
- (2) Therapist (OT/PT, Early Intervention, etc.)
- (3) Other Partner (Visiting Nurses, CPS, School-Based Social Worker, Human Services agency, etc.)

2. During which program year did you become involved as a partner in Even Start?

- (1) Year One (1999-2000)
- (2) Year Two (2000-2001)
- (3) Year Three (2001-2002)
- (4) Year Four (2002-2003)

3. Please circle one number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
a) I feel that my organization is an active partner with Livingston Even Start.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
b) I feel that I personally have an important role in meeting the objectives and goals of Even Start.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
c) I understand clearly what my role is as a partner with Even Start.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
d) My organization has a clear agreement with Even Start that describes our role in providing services to families involved in Even Start.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
e) I believe Even Start has a truly positive impact on the families with which it works.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
f) I enjoy working with Even Start staff.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
g) Even Start staff use me and my organization appropriately and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
h) I have referred families to Even Start.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
i) Even Start staff stay in touch with me about families I have referred.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
j) Even Start staff and I share information about families when doing so makes it possible to improve services.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
						OVER →

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
k) Even Start staff are well-informed about my role, or the role of my organization, in the families' or childrens' lives.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
l) Even Start staff express respect for me and my organization.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
m) Even Start staff appreciate my and my organization's contributions to their families.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
n) Even Start leadership are accessible and open to suggestions for change.	5	4	3	2	1	NA

4. In what ways do you think Family Focus Even Start impacts families it works with?

5. Are there other potential partners in the community who are not yet involved with Family Focus Even Start?

6. What suggestions do you have for continuous improvement of Family Focus Even Start in its interactions with partner organizations or schools such as yours?