



State of Arizona  
Office  
of the  
Auditor General

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

**ARIZONA  
FAMILY LITERACY  
PROGRAM**

**Report to the Arizona Legislature  
By Debra K. Davenport  
Auditor General  
December 2000  
Report No. 00-22**

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DEBRA K. DAVENPORT, CPA  
AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF THE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

December 29, 2000

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Jane Dee Hull, Governor

Ms. Lisa Graham Keegan,  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Department of Education

Transmitted herewith is a report of the Auditor General, an evaluation of Arizona's Family Literacy Program. This is the fifth evaluation and was conducted pursuant to the provisions of A.R.S. §41-1279.08. I am also transmitting with this report a copy of the Report Highlights for this evaluation to provide a quick summary for your convenience.

As outlined in its response, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) agrees with all of the findings. However, ADE indicates that implementing the recommendations to continue monitoring program sites is contingent upon receiving additional state funding. Although nothing precludes ADE from doing so, it has chosen not to use any of the program's current funding for monitoring.

My staff and I will be pleased to discuss or clarify items in the report.

This report will be released to the public on January 2, 2001.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Davenport".

Debbie Davenport  
Auditor General

Enclosure

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## SUMMARY

The Office of the Auditor General has conducted its annual evaluation of the Arizona Family Literacy Program. The Legislature has required evaluations since the program was established in 1994. Pursuant to the provisions of Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §41-1279.08, this evaluation provides information about the program, recommends ways to improve the program's administration, and examines various aspects of the program's effectiveness.

The Family Literacy Program is directed at economically and educationally disadvantaged parents with preschool-age children. Family Literacy's approach integrates adult, child, and parent education in an effort to be more effective than programs that focus exclusively on adults or exclusively on children.

The State Board of Education and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) are responsible for administering the Family Literacy Program. Currently, ADE contracts with 13 providers to operate 23 sites in 5 counties—Maricopa, Pima, Cochise, Coconino, and Yuma. In order to serve populations “most in need,” the ADE only awards contracts to providers operating sites that serve economically at-risk populations. These providers include school districts, an adult education program, a community college, and community-based organizations. The Legislature has continued to appropriate \$1 million for the Family Literacy Program for each fiscal year between 1996 and 2001.

### **ADE Improves Program Administration and Sites Follow Statutory and Model Program Guidelines (See pages 13 through 19)**

ADE's Adult Education Division has improved its administration of the Family Literacy Program but needs to keep building on these improvements. Last year's evaluation highlighted the need for better administration when it reported that 7 of 23

sites were not complying with basic requirements for the number of families enrolled or the implementation of program components. In response, ADE hired a coordinator to make structured site visits to all program sites, monitor sites that were previously out of compliance, and maintain contact with site directors and program staff. ADE also improved its coordination with two model program sites that provide training and technical assistance to all program sites.

Previous OAG evaluations have found that site compliance with statutory and programmatic requirements have fluctuated with ADE's intensity of administrative oversight. In years when ADE improved administrative oversight of the program, compliance improved. During the 1999-2000 school year, all Family Literacy program sites operated in compliance with statutory requirements and program goals.

While all sites were in compliance with statutory and program guidelines, some sites did not follow contractual guidelines for administering tests and reporting results. To improve the accuracy and timeliness of data reporting ADE should continue to develop the reporting systems, change the reporting requirements, and enforce data submission deadlines.

### **Adult Participants Make Gains in Language Proficiency and Employment Outcomes (See pages 21 through 27)**

During the 1999-2000 school year, Family Literacy program adult participants made gains in developing their education skills and joining the workforce. When adult participants enter the Family Literacy Program, they enroll in one or both of two educational tracks: the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) track for English language development and the Adult Basic Education (ABE) track for instruction in basic education topics, including General Education Development (GED) preparation. Family Literacy program adult participants who took ESOL classes in the 1999-2000 school year made significant gains in their reading, writing, and listening comprehension skills. Their gains in writing and listening comprehension skills were comparable to and

their reading gains were greater than those of participants in the federally funded Even Start family literacy program.

Family Literacy program adults who took the adult basic education track of the Family Literacy Program also made progress in educational attainment, such as passing all portions of the GED. However, on average, participants did not improve in their scores on adult basic education tests. These results were similar to those of the participants in the Even Start program.

In addition, Family Literacy and Even Start program adult participants reported similar gains in employment. During the 1999-2000 school year, gains were made in participants' entry into the workforce, entry into job training programs, and attainment of certification necessary for certain employment.

### **Adult Participants Show Improvements in Parenting Attitudes and Behaviors (See pages 29 through 32)**

Adults enrolled in the parenting skills component of the Family Literacy Program improved both their attitudes about parenting and their parenting behaviors. Most Family Literacy program adults entered the program with positive parenting attitudes and did not make large improvements to their attitudes. However, Family Literacy program adults reported significant increases in the number of times they demonstrated positive parenting behaviors at home and in activities associated with their children's school. A comparison of gains made by participants in the Even Start program showed that while both programs had essentially the same impacts on parenting behavior, the Even Start program had a greater impact on parenting attitudes. These results were similar to those found in the evaluation for the 1998-1999 school year (see Auditor General Report No. 00-03, issued in March 2000).

## **Children in Family Literacy Improve Kindergarten Readiness Skills (See pages 33 through 38)**

During the 1999-2000 school year, children in the Family Literacy Program improved their readiness to succeed in kindergarten. Analyses of program children's scores on kindergarten readiness assessments showed, that on average, program children increased their development by 7 to 10 months. These results were comparable to those made by children in the EvenStart program and to those made by children in the state-funded Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) preschool program. The latter is a stand-alone preschool program rather than a family literacy program. While only a portion of the Family Literacy program's 4-year-olds advanced to kindergarten readiness levels in all test measures, these results were not only consistent with the Even Start and ECBG groups, but also with other research on similar at-risk populations. Several factors associated with the program, such as additional parenting classes and home visits by program staff, were related to children's levels of improvement. ADE should continue to monitor implementation of model program recommendations including those factors associated with improved kindergarten readiness.

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high school diploma are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than children whose parents are high school graduates.<sup>1</sup>

### **Program Serves Disadvantaged Parents with Preschool Children**

The Family Literacy Program is directed at economically and educationally disadvantaged parents with preschool-age children. The numbers, characteristics, and goals of the enrolled participants are as follows:

- **Families**—During the 1999-2000 school year, the program served a total of 391 families during all or part of the year. A typical family served had a family income of less than \$15,000, spoke Spanish as their primary language, and consisted of an unemployed adult who participated in the program with his/her preschooler. Eighty-three percent of the families reported Spanish as the primary language spoken at home. Eighty-three percent of the families had three children or less and 56 percent had two or less. As seen in Figures 1 and 2 (see page 3), 59 percent of the families had incomes of \$15,000 or less and 73 percent of the families consisted of a couple with children.

**By statute, to be eligible for the Family Literacy Program, parents must:**

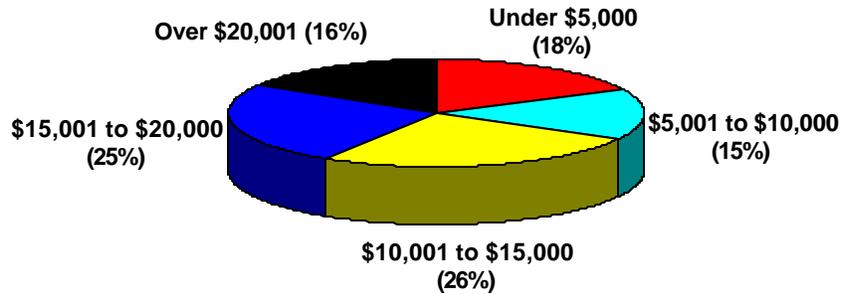
- Have a 3- or 4-year-old child;
- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational or basic English language skills to function effectively in society, or lack a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
- Be U.S. or legal residents, or otherwise lawfully present in this country.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Children in Poverty. *Young Children in Poverty: A Statistical Update, June 1999 Edition*, New York: National Center For Children in Poverty, 1999.

**Figure 1**

**Family Literacy Program  
Annual Family Income Level  
1999-2000 School Year**



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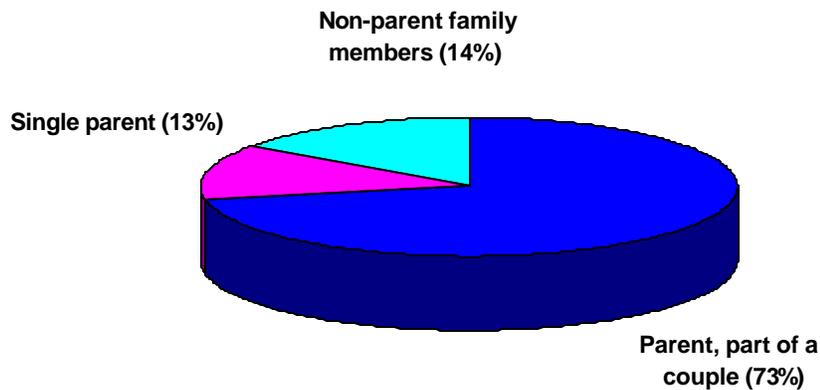
Note: Of the 391 families served by the Family Literacy Program, 343 provided information for this question.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy program staff.

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**Figure 2**

**Family Literacy Program  
Adult Participants' Family Status  
1999-2000 School Year**



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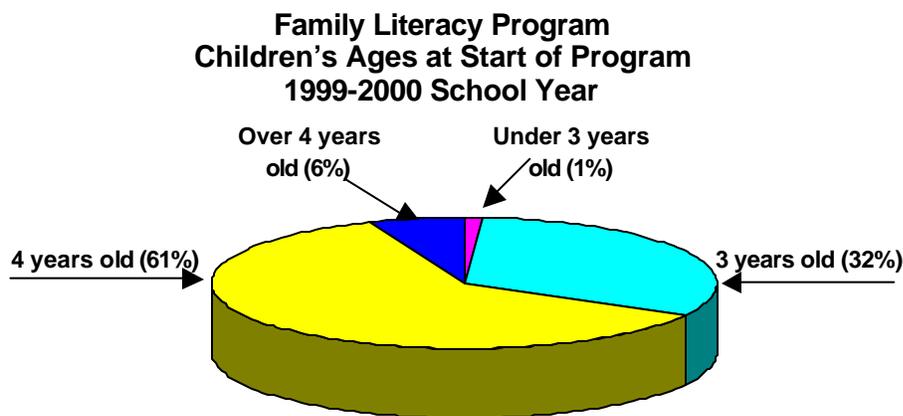
Note: Of the 391 families served by the Family Literacy Program, 389 provided information for this question.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy program staff.

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- **Adult participants**—Ninety-six percent of the adult participants were women. When the adult participants were asked what goals they wanted to pursue, 101 indicated that they were pursuing their General Educational Development (GED) certificate and 280 said they wanted to improve their English language skills. Sixty-two (17 percent) were employed at the start of the program: 27 working full-time and 32 working part-time. The median age was 28, with ages ranging from 14 to 57.
- **Children**—Fifty-one percent of the children in the program were boys and 49 percent were girls. As seen in Figure 3, the majority of the children were 4 years old at the start of the program.

**Figure 3**



Note: All of the 391 families served by the Family Literacy Program provided information for this question.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

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### **Program Model Integrates the Education of Adults and Children**

Family Literacy's approach integrates adult, child, and parent education in an effort to be more effective than programs that focus exclusively on adults or exclusively on children. Arizona's Family Literacy Program uses a model of family literacy advocated by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL). Families receive information and services in a classroom setting, gen-

erally on a school-year basis.<sup>1</sup> The model integrates the curricula and training found in the following four components:

- **Adult literacy instruction**—based on their individual needs, adults receive instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and/or Adult Basic Education (ABE) which can include GED preparation.
- **Early childhood instruction**—preschool children receive instruction from a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to improve their kindergarten readiness, specifically in the areas of cognitive, physical, and social skills.
- **Parent and Child Together (PACT)**—a parenting education component in which parents and children learn to play together. Program staff help parents to understand the early childhood learning processes at work in their children’s play activities and to communicate with their children using positive parenting skills.
- **Parent Time**—provides opportunities for parents to learn from the experiences of their peers, receive encouragement from the group, and practice collective problem solving.

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*Throughout the year, model program staff provide technical assistance to Family Literacy sites.*

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Program sites implementing this family literacy model can receive technical assistance from the NCFL through its Web site, newsletter, training materials, and training sessions run by NCFL national trainers. Additionally, Arizona’s Family Literacy Program funds two model program sites, the Family Tree Project of Mesa Unified School District and the Family Literacy Project of Pima County Adult Education, to train Family Literacy staff and instructors in the NCFL model. While state-funded family literacy programs in other states pay for single NCFL training sessions, Arizona provides ongoing technical assistance and NCFL-certified training in program implementation, staff development, and test administration throughout the year.

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<sup>1</sup> Sites provided families with informational materials such as instructional videos on parenting, brochures on community services, children’s books, and books on children’s development. Auditor General staff have no recommendations for additional informational material at this time.

**Legislature Appropriates  
\$1 Million for Program Contractors  
to Operate 23 Sites**

The State Board of Education and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) are responsible for administering the Family Literacy Program. In order to serve populations “most in need,” the ADE only awards contracts to providers operating sites that serve economically at-risk populations. To provide program services, the ADE contracts with other organizations including school districts, an adult education program, a community college, and community-based organizations.

***Contractors currently provide services in five counties—*** Maricopa, Pima, Cochise, Coconino, and Yuma. During the 1999-2000 school year, 13 contractors operated 23 program sites, 12 of which were in Maricopa County. Six contractors operated single sites and seven contractors operated multiple sites. By statute, each site must enroll at least 10 families but no more than 20 families. Table 1 (see page 7), shows the contractors and sites operating in each county and the number of participants served at each site. Some sites served more than 20 families over the course of the school year, but only served between 10 and 20 families at one time. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for information on sites’ completion rates. Of the 391 families served by Family Literacy contractors, 209 (53 percent) reside in Maricopa County.

The Legislature continued to appropriate \$1 million for the Family Literacy Program for each fiscal year between 1996 and 2001. ADE does not retain any funds for administration. All monies appropriated for the Family Literacy Program are awarded to contracted sites. Any leftover funds are nonreverting and can be carried over to the next year.

All of the program sites have funding collaborators who provide financial support in addition to the state grant. Resources required to operate a family literacy program vary depending on the number of days per week the program operates, the number of participants, and the cost of conducting the program in a particular community. The NCFL estimates that one full-time program site requires \$50,000 to \$90,000 per year in a rural area and

**Table 1**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**County, Contractor, Program Site, and Number of Families Served**  
**1999-2000 School Year**  
**(Unaudited)**

<b>County and Contractor</b>	<b>Program Site</b>	<b>Number of Families</b>
<i>Cochise</i>		
Cochise Community College	La Escuelita	12
	St. Paul's	15
<i>Coconino</i>		
Flagstaff USD No. 1	Leupp	11
	W. F. Killip	20
<i>Maricopa</i>		
Glendale ESD No. 40	Lamar Learning School	19
Isaac ESD No. 5	Isaac School, Site A	18
	Isaac School, Site B	11
Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County	C. J. Jorgensen	20
	J. R. Davis	15
Littleton ESD No. 65	Littleton School	21
Mesa USD No. 4	Eisenhower	19
	Lincoln	19
	Longfellow	18
Phoenix Indian Center	Longview	21
Southwest Human Development	Umon Center	14
Tempe ESD No. 3	Frank School	14
<i>Pima</i>		
Pima County Adult Education	Liberty	25
	Nash	16
	Prince	17
	South Tucson	11
<i>Yuma</i>		
Crane ESD No. 13	H. L. Suverkrup, Site A	20
	H. L. Suverkrup, Site B	20
Somerton ESD No. 11	Desert Sonora Elementary	<u>15</u>
Total participants		<u>391</u>

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy program staff.

\$75,000 to \$125,000 in an urban area. As illustrated in Table 1 (see page 7) and Table 2 (see page 9), for fiscal years 1999 through 2001, the contract amounts ranged from \$30,100 to \$65,050 for contractors with single classroom sites and \$59,700 to \$226,500 for contractors with multiple sites. By dividing the total 1999 to 2000 state contract amounts by the number of families served, Auditor General staff calculated the average cost to the state per family to be \$2,533. The long-term savings associated with the program will be assessed in the next annual evaluation when school data regarding student performance from the last decade will be available.

### **Scope and Methodology**

This evaluation, like those of previous years, examines program implementation and participant outcomes. It reports on how the program is administered by ADE, model programs, and program contractors. As in past reports, the evaluation also describes participant outcomes and compares them to the outcomes found in other programs, as well as to outcomes reported for the previous school year.

- **Program administration**—To assess the administration’s organizational structure and effectiveness in meeting statutory requirements, OAG staff conducted staff interviews, file reviews, a survey of program providers, and structured site reviews. During the 1999-2000 school year, all 23 program sites received structured reviews. As part of these site visits, program classroom sessions were observed, site documents were reviewed, and program staff and participants were interviewed. A survey of program providers was administered to describe the staff and collaborative partnerships found at each site.
- **Participant outcomes**—Methods used to assess participant outcomes include (1) analyses of the employment and educational gains of adult participants as noted on exit forms and

**Table 2**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Schedule of Contractors and Contract Awards**  
**Years Ended or Ending June 30, 1999, 2000, and 2001**  
**(Unaudited)**

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
<i>Cochise County</i>			
Cochise Community College	\$ 89,200	\$ 89,200	\$ 89,200
<i>Coconino County</i>			
Flagstaff USD No. 1	59,700	59,700	59,700
<i>Maricopa County</i>			
Glendale ESD No. 40	40,000 <sup>a</sup>	40,000	40,000
Isaac ESD No. 5	71,400	65,050 <sup>a,b,c</sup>	71,400
Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County	67,900	67,900	67,900
Littleton ESD No. 65	40,000 <sup>a</sup>	65,050 <sup>a,b,c</sup>	40,000
Mesa USD No. 4	168,100 <sup>a</sup>	169,000 <sup>a</sup>	168,100
Phoenix Indian Center	36,600	36,600	36,600
Southwest Human Development	30,100	30,800 <sup>a,c</sup>	30,100
Tempe ESD No. 3	38,200 <sup>a</sup>	39,350 <sup>c</sup>	38,200
<i>Pima County</i>			
Pima County Adult Education	222,000	226,500 <sup>a</sup>	220,000
<i>Yuma County</i>			
Crane ESD No. 13	70,300 <sup>a</sup>	70,300 <sup>a</sup>	70,299
Somerton ESD No. 11	<u>46,500<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>46,500<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>46,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$980,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,036,650</u></b>	<b><u>\$977,999</u></b>

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<sup>a</sup> These contractors did not entirely expend their contract award in fiscal year 1999 and 2000. Approximately \$26,200 and \$46,100 remained unspent at June 30, 1999 and 2000, respectively.

<sup>b</sup> These contractors received a total of \$47,400 in additional allocations for Internet connectivity that were made after the original contract.

<sup>c</sup> These contractors received a total of \$3,150 in additional allocations for an adult education conference that were made after the original contract.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education.

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(2) comparisons of scores at the end of the program to those at the beginning of the school year on the following:

- Results of standardized tests designed to measure:
  - adult basic education skills (*Tests of Adult Basic Education*),

- English language skills (*Language Assessment System* and *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System*), and
- parenting skills (*Parent as a Teacher Inventory*);
- Adult’s parenting behavior scores (*Behavior Frequencies Assessment*); and
- Children’s development scores (*Pre-K Success*).

Participants from the 1999-2000 school year took standardized tests upon entering the program and at the end of the school year. To most accurately measure the impact of the program, which runs through the entire school year, this evaluation reports on test data only for participants who were administered all instruments at appropriate times throughout the school year.

To assess how these test scores compare with those of another similar program, the results were compared to those of participants in the 1999-2000 Even Start Program. This federally funded family literacy program also adheres to the model for family literacy advanced by the NCFL.

Besides being compared to the Even Start Program, the pre-school component of the Family Literacy Program was also compared to the Early Childhood Block Grant program (ECBG). The ECBG program includes a state-funded preschool program targeting at-risk children. While the Even Start group provided a comparison with a similar family literacy program, the ECBG program provided a comparison with a stand-alone preschool program, a preschool program without the adult and parenting components. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for more information on comparison groups.

### **Summary of Evaluation Findings and Comparisons to Previous Outcome Findings**

This year’s evaluation reports improvements in program administration and site operation. Overall, participants made improvements comparable to those in other programs, but some improvements were only modest. This year’s evaluation reports findings in the following four areas:

- **Program administration**—ADE improved its administration and oversight of the program and all sites operated in accordance with statutory requirements and program model guidelines (see Finding I, pages 13 through 19).
- **Adult education and employment**—Family Literacy adults improved their English language skills, educational advancement, and entry into the workforce. While they made no significant gains in most tests measuring adult basic education, their scores were at least comparable to those made by Even Start participants (see Finding II, pages 21 through 27).
- **Parenting**—Family Literacy adults made significant improvements in their parenting behaviors, but made lesser gains in parenting attitudes than Even Start adults (see Finding III, pages 29 through 32).
- **Children’s development**—Children in the Family Literacy Program improved their kindergarten readiness skills and these gains were comparable to those of the children in Even Start and ECBG preschool comparison groups (see Finding IV, pages 33 through 38).

Table 3 (see page 12), includes this report’s and previous reports’ findings on the comparisons of Family Literacy outcomes to those of other programs.

**Table 3**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Compared to Even Start and Early Childhood Block Grant Programs**  
**Participant Outcomes**  
**1996-97, 1998-99, and 1999-00 School Years**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Comparison Program</b>	<b>Comparison Results</b>		
		<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
<i>Adult Education and Employment</i>				
English language skills	Even Start	Similar	Similar	Similar
GED attainment	Even Start	Similar	Less than Even Start	Similar
Adult basic education	Even Start	Similar	Data not available	Similar
Entry into workforce	Even Start	Similar	Similar	Similar
<i>Parenting outcomes</i>				
Parenting attitudes	Even Start	Similar	Less than Even Start	Less than Even Start
Parenting behavior	Even Start	Similar	Similar	Similar
<i>Children's development outcomes</i>				
Total kindergarten readiness	Even Start	Greater than Even Start	Not compared	Similar
	Early Childhood Block Grant	Not compared	Less than Block Grant	Similar

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy, Even Start, and Early Childhood Block Grant program staff.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Auditor General and staff thank the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the staff of the Arizona Department of Education's Adult Education Division; staff from the University of Arizona's Department of Educational Psychology; the model program administrators; and the staff and families of the Family Literacy, Even Start, and ECBG programs for their cooperation and assistance.

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## FINDING I

# ADE IMPROVES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND SITES FOLLOW STATUTORY AND MODEL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

ADE's Adult Education Division has improved its administration of the Family Literacy Program but needs to keep building on these improvements. Last year's evaluation highlighted the need for better administration when it reported that sites were not complying with basic requirements for the number of families enrolled or the implementation of program components. In response, ADE hired a coordinator to monitor the program, coordinated with model program sites to provide technical assistance to other sites, and began developing better systems for gathering information from the sites. This year's evaluation reports that all sites are in compliance, although some sites are not administering tests or reporting results in a timely or accurate manner.

### **ADE Improved Program Oversight and Administration**

Last year's evaluation reported that 7 of 23 sites were out of compliance with at least one statutory requirement and/or program goal. Since that time, ADE improved program administration and oversight through several measures. These include hiring a coordinator to oversee the sites, coordinating with two model program's sites to provide training and guidance to other sites, and developing systems to gather data about the sites' activities.

***Family Literacy Coordinator position developed***—At the end of the 1998-1999 school year, ADE created and filled an administrative position to oversee the Family Literacy Program and the federally funded Even Start family literacy program. Funded through sources other than the program appropriation, the Family Literacy Coordinator position improved ADE's administrative oversight of family literacy programs by:

## ***Finding I***

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*ADE's Family Literacy Coordinator visited sites and monitored compliance with statutory requirements and program goals.*

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- **Visiting all sites to monitor compliance**—To assess each site's compliance with statutory requirements and program goals, ADE's Family Literacy Coordinator conducted structured site visits to all 23 Family Literacy sites and provided each with technical assistance reports based on the results of the visit.
- **Taking action to improve compliance**—ADE required proof of recruiting efforts from a site that was previously out of compliance due to low enrollment numbers. ADE also required another site previously out of compliance to send monthly attendance rosters to prove current enrollment compliance.
- **Communicating with staff at the sites**—In addition to site visits, ADE maintained contact with program staff through an adult education conference and a mandatory meeting of all program directors and administrators. The Family Literacy Coordinator reviewed end-of-year reports submitted by each site to further assess sites' compliance and to recommend program improvements.

***Coordination with model programs improved***—ADE continued to contract with two model programs to provide other sites with technical assistance and training in program goals. Model programs maintained regular communication with sites and visited each family literacy site at least twice during the year. Throughout the year, model programs provided a variety of training sessions for program staff including an annual conference on the NCFL family literacy model program components, multiple training sessions in test administration, professional development workshops, and individual site workshops.

ADE also improved its coordination with model program staff regarding the guidelines and time frames for test administration. When requested by sites, model program staff provided additional training in areas such as test administration and team building.

***Systems for reporting program information developed***—ADE also continued to develop ways to enhance the collection and analysis of participant information and test score data from the sites by:

- **Contracting with a data specialist**—to develop and maintain a database containing Even Start and Arizona Family Literacy program information and provide a report on the effectiveness of Even Start and Arizona Family Literacy programs.
- **Developing two on-line reporting systems**—one for adult education information and one for parents' and children's information. The adult education reporting system became fully operational on July 1, 2000. The parents' and children's test score information system will be piloted in the 2000-2001 school year.

### **All Sites Operate According to Statutory Requirements and Program Guidelines**

During the 1999-2000 school year, all Family Literacy program sites operated in compliance with statutory requirements and program goals. The previous school year, sites had difficulty meeting statutory requirements for enrollment, eligibility, and program components. Sites that were previously out of compliance are now in compliance, or are no longer operating.

- **Enrollment and eligibility**—During the 1998-1999 school year, 4 sites had difficulty maintaining the required enrollment of at least 10 (and no more than 20) families throughout the year and 1 of those sites enrolled ineligible families. One of the noncomplying sites was closed and replaced by a new site. In 1999-2000, all sites met the enrollment requirements. On average, each site served 14 families at a time throughout the year.<sup>1</sup> Many sites continued to recruit and enroll families during the year to remain in compliance with enrollment criteria.
- **Program components**—The report covering the 1998-1999 school year found that four sites failed to sufficiently inte-

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<sup>1</sup> Sites were in compliance if they maintained 10-20 eligible families in their first month of operation, or for a majority of the months that they were operating. In the 1999-2000 school year, sites enrolled between 5 to 22 families month-to-month.

grate the program model components. Two of them were closed and replaced by new sites.<sup>1</sup> This year, all sites were found in compliance with program guidelines because they demonstrated the presence and integration of all four program components: adult education, early childhood education, Parent and Child Together time, and Parent Time.

### **Continued Administrative Oversight Needed to Ensure Compliance**

Previous OAG evaluations have found that site compliance with statutory and programmatic requirements have fluctuated with ADE's intensity of administrative oversight. In years when ADE improved administrative oversight of the program, compliance improved. In years when oversight was weak, compliance diminished. Table 4 (see page 17), shows how compliance and oversight have varied in previous years.

### **Further Improvements Needed at Site Level**

While ADE's efforts show promise, producing more complete and accurate information for program evaluation, further improvements are needed at the site level. While all sites were in compliance with statutory and program guidelines, 10 of the 23 sites did not follow contractual guidelines for administering tests and reporting results. A change in the reporting requirements would help identify those sites that are not administering tests and reporting data in a timely manner.

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*While all sites operated in compliance with statutory requirements, some sites did not report complete and accurate test score data.*

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<sup>1</sup> After the 1998-1999 school year, two sites were closed by the provider because they were not operating well. One site failed to meet the program model requirements and the other failed to meet either enrollment or program model requirements. The contractor that operated both sites replaced them with new sites for the 1999-2000 school year.

**Table 4**

**Family Literacy Program  
ADE Oversight and Site Compliance  
1996 through 2000 School Years**

<b>School year</b>	<b>Description of ADE oversight</b>	<b>Were most sites in compliance?</b>
1995-1996	ADE staff visited only a few sites and lacked a structured process to review the sites they did visit.	No. Only 7 of 26 sites met all statutory and program requirements.
1996-1997	ADE made structured visits to all sites, then closely monitored the sites that had difficulty with program guidelines.	Yes. 20 of 23 sites met all statutory and program requirements.
1997-1998	ADE did not visit sites or collect complete program data from sites.	Insufficient data to report on compliance or program outcomes.
1998-1999	ADE made only five structured site visits and did not collect sufficient data from those and unvisited sites to make a complete assessment of program outcomes.	Generally, yes, however, only 16 of 23 sites met all statutory and program requirements.
1999-2000	ADE made structured site visits to all sites, monitored sites that were previously out of compliance, and developed a data collection system so they could assess program outcomes.	Yes. All sites met statutory and program requirements.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

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***Ten sites did not meet testing and reporting requirements***—ADE requires contractors to submit the data needed to evaluate the Family Literacy Program and provides contractors with guidelines for administering the tests, and deadlines for reporting. While most contractors followed ADE’s contractual guidelines for testing and data reporting, ten sites failed to report test scores and/or send complete and accurate test data. See Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for sites’ reporting compliance as well as site rankings for each test.

- **No pre- and posttest data reported**—Four sites failed to report children’s assessment pre- and/or posttest data. Three sites failed to report data on tests measuring either adult basic education or English language skills.

## ***Finding I***

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- **Inaccurate or incomplete data sent**—One site sent inaccurate data on the adult basic education test scores. Five sites sent inaccurate or incomplete data on the children’s assessment test scores. Some sites had difficulty using a test reporting software program. Other sites sent incomplete data and left out information such as test dates and the age of the child. As a result, some data could not be used for this year’s evaluation.

***Separate pre- and posttest reporting would help ensure data completeness and accuracy***—ADE required sites to report children’s pretest and posttest scores together at the end of the year. This time frame for reporting children’s pretest scores prevented early detection of sites’ difficulties using the test software and their failure to comply with ADE test administration guidelines. Therefore, ADE should revise the timelines for data submission so that sites submit all pretest and intake data by mid-school year and exit and posttest data by the end of the school year.

## **Recommendations**

1. ADE should continue monitoring activities to ensure that all sites remain in compliance with statutory requirements and program guidelines. In particular, ADE should continue annual site visits and regular contact with all sites to determine site compliance.
2. ADE should develop a policy to monitor contractors' compliance with contractual guidelines of data reporting. To do so, ADE should:
  - a. Continue its efforts to develop a system for the collection and entry of data and monitor the accuracy and completeness of all data submitted throughout the year,
  - b. Revise data submission timelines so that pretest and intake data are submitted by mid-school year and posttest and exit data are submitted by the end of the school year, and
  - c. Enforce data submission deadlines.

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## **FINDING II**

# **ADULT PARTICIPANTS MAKE GAINS IN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES**

During the 1999-2000 school year, Family Literacy program adult participants made gains in developing their education skills and joining the workforce. In both areas, they made gains that were comparable to those made by participants in the federally funded Even Start program. While participants made improvements in their language skills, they did not show improvement in most tests measuring adult basic education.

### **Program Provides Two Educational Tracks: English Proficiency and Adult Basic Education**

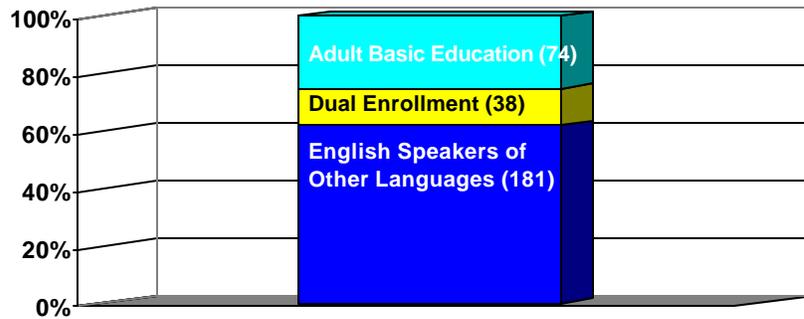
When adult participants enter the Family Literacy Program, they enroll in one or both of two educational tracks, depending on their goals and language skills. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) track emphasizes English language development. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) track advances students through basic education topics, including GED preparation for advanced students. Adults who speak English enroll in an ABE class, which may be offered in beginning (grades 0-4), intermediate (grades 5-8), or secondary (grades 9-12) levels, depending on the site. Adults who do not speak English enroll in an ESOL class, and those who speak some English may enroll in both ESOL and ABE classes. Of the 293 adult participants who completed exit forms, 181 indicated that they participated in an ESOL class, while 74 indicated that they participated in an ABE/GED class and 38 participated in both.

### **Participants Improve English Proficiency**

Family Literacy program adult participants who took ESOL classes in the 1999-2000 school year made statistically significant

**Figure 4**

**Family Literacy Program  
Participant Enrollment in Adult Education Classes  
1999-2000 School Year**



Note: Of the 391 families served by the Family Literacy Program, 293 provided information for this question.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

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gains in reading, writing, and listening comprehension skills. Their gains were greater than those of Even Start program participants in reading and comparable to those of Even Start participants in writing, combined reading and writing, and listening comprehension.

***Gains were greater in reading, comparable in writing***—Reading and writing skills are measured by the Language Assessment System (LAS). Family Literacy ESOL students made statistically significant gains in both skills. The LAS includes a reading, writing, and combined reading/writing test. Reading and writing scores are grouped into five categories of competence:

- Low beginner (0-20);
- High beginner (21-40);
- Low intermediate (41-60);
- High intermediate (61-80); and
- Competent (81-100)

**Finding II**

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The “competent” category was developed with the assumption that “with few exceptions, literate adults from English-speaking backgrounds should be able to pass the [subtests] as ‘Competent.’<sup>1</sup> As seen in Figure 5, the reading scores for all adults ad-

**Figure 5**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Improvement in Language Assessment System Test Scores**  
**1999-2000 School Year**



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<sup>a</sup> The pretest to posttest improvement was significant at the .01 level. That is, the probability that the improvement occurred by chance is less than 1 in 100.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

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vanced 20 points, on average, to the “high intermediate” level and the writing scores increased approximately 20 points, on average, to the “low intermediate” level. About one-third of the 130 Family Literacy program adult participants who took pre- and posttests in reading advanced to the “competent” level.

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<sup>1</sup> This guideline is provided in the LAS manual (DeAvila, Edward A. and Sharon E. Duncan. *Adult Language Assessment Scales Administration and Scoring Manual*. Monterey, CA: CTB-MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, 1993.)

Family Literacy ESOL students improved their reading, writing, and listening comprehension skills.

Although Family Literacy program participants had significantly greater gains than Even Start program participants on the reading test, the two groups had comparable gains on the writing and combined reading and writing portions of the LAS.<sup>1</sup>

**Gains also comparable in listening comprehension**—Listening comprehension skills are measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Family Literacy ESOL students made statistically significant gains in their listening comprehension skills.<sup>2</sup> They increased their pretest scores on average by 9.6 points to 211 points on a scale ranging from 0 to 241. This advanced their scores from a level at which students could “answer basic questions” and “follow simple directions” to a level at which they could “begin and end interview appropriately” and “can respond to multiple-step oral instructions.” The 9.6 points average gain in scores for Family Literacy adults was slightly higher than the 7.6 points gain for Even Start ESOL participants, but the difference was not statistically significant.

### **Participants Show Gains in Educational Attainment, But Not in Tests of Adult Basic Education**

During the 1999-2000 school year, adults who participated in the Adult Basic Education track of the Family Literacy Program, on average, did not improve in their scores on most adult basic education test areas. However, neither did participants in the Even Start program. Participants in both programs made progress in other measures of educational attainment, such as passing the GED.

**No significant improvement in most Adult Basic Education test areas**—Education skills are measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), which includes tests on math, language,

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<sup>1</sup> The difference between Family Literacy and Even Start gains was significant at the .05 level. That is, the probability that the difference occurred by chance is less than 5 in 100. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for the average scores for each program.

<sup>2</sup> The gains were statistically significant at the .01 level. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for the average scores of each program.

spelling, and reading. During the 1999-2000 school year, 35 of the 112 Family Literacy ABE students took pre- and posttests in all four tests. The average pretest to posttest gains ranged from 3 to 23 points on a 0-999 scale, and only the language test gain (23 points) was statistically significant. These small average pretest to posttest differences were comparable to those made by Even Start program participants. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for further discussion and the average TABE scores for both programs.

***Participants' progress seen in other measures of educational attainment***—Eleven adults who participated in the Family Literacy program during the 1999-2000 school year were accepted to or had attended a community college, college, or university. Of the 30 participants who indicated that they took the GED in that school year, 10 passed all sections and 20 did not complete or pass all sections yet. This shows improvement over the previous school year when only four students reported that they received their GED or high school diploma. Of the 21 Even Start program adults who took the GED, 11 passed all sections.

During the 1999-2000 school year, Family Literacy participants also reported gains in several other related programs or activities.

- 19 Family Literacy program adults obtained their Child Development Associate credentials, which is a minimum requirement for staff positions at most preschool programs.
- 121 Family Literacy program adults obtained their First Aid card and/or CPR certification.
- 205 Family Literacy program adults obtained library cards for their families.
- 7 Family Literacy program adults obtained U.S. citizenship while enrolled in the program.

## **Employment Outcomes Similar for Both Programs**

Family Literacy and Even Start program adult participants reported similar gains in employment during the 1999-2000 school year.

***Comparable entry into the workforce***—Forty-two (23 percent) of the 186 Family Literacy program adult participants who were unemployed at the start of the program reported that they were working by the end of the school year. Similarly, 55 (25 percent) of the 216 Even Start program adults who were unemployed upon entering the program reported that they were employed by the end of the school year.

***Employment results similar to comparison group and previous year's results***—Approximately one-third (34 percent) of the 256 Family Literacy program adults who completed exit forms were employed at the end of the program. Approximately another third of the participants were unemployed and not looking for work, and the remainder were also unemployed but either looking for work or enrolled in a job training program. As seen in Figure 6 (see page 27), these results were similar to those of Even Start program participants as well as the results found in the 1998-1999 school year.

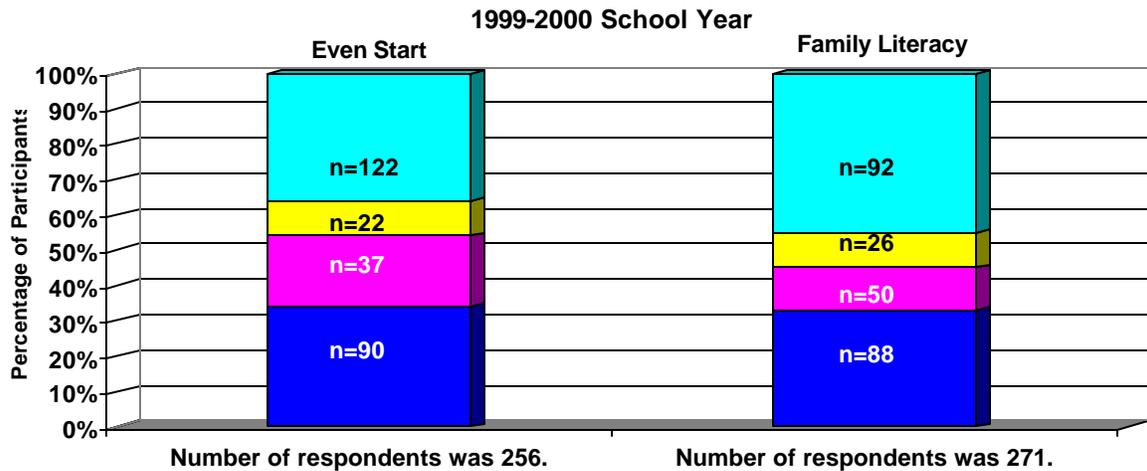
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*Employment gains were comparable to those of Even Start program adults and last year's participants.*

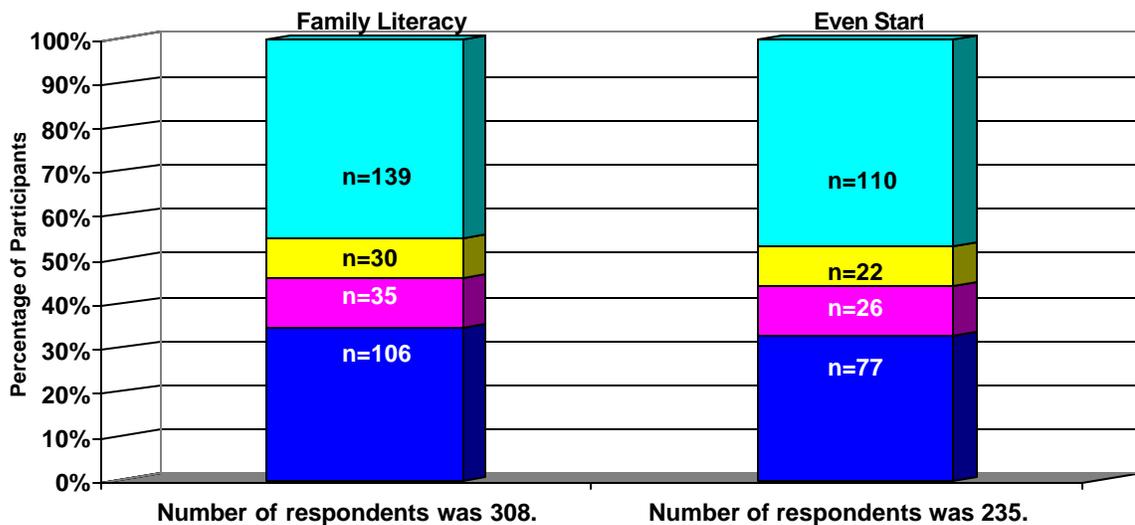
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**Figure 6**

**Family Literacy Program  
Compared to Even Start Program  
Participants' Employment Status at Exit  
1999-2000 and 1998-99 School Years**



**1998-1999 School Year**



■ Employed	■ In job training program (unemployed)
■ Looking for work (unemployed)	■ Not looking for work (unemployed)

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy and Even Start program staff.

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## FINDING III

# ADULT PARTICIPANTS SHOW IMPROVEMENTS IN PARENTING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Adults enrolled in the parenting skills component of the Family Literacy Program improved both their attitudes about parenting and their parenting behaviors. Compared to participants in the federally funded Even Start program, their gains in parenting attitudes were less and their gains in actual parenting behaviors were similar. These results are consistent with the evaluation for the 1998-1999 school year (see Auditor General Report No. 00-03, issued in March 2000).

### Program Seeks to Improve Both Attitudes and Behaviors

The Family Literacy Program focuses on developing parenting skills through two components: Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, and Parent Time group discussion. PACT time provides an opportunity for parents to play with their children in child-led and structured activities. With assistance and feedback from program staff, parents learn to practice supportive parenting behaviors. During Parent Time, adults discuss parenting and early childhood development topics.

To assess the impact of the Family Literacy Program on parenting attitudes and behaviors, adult participants took pre- and posttests on the following two instruments:

- **Attitudes**—Parenting attitudes were measured by using the Parent as a Teacher Inventory (PAAT). The PAAT assesses parents' attitudes in five areas: parental frustration, need for control, understanding of play, acceptance of a child's creativity, and views about their ability to help their child's development.
- **Behaviors**—The adults' parenting behaviors were measured by the Behavior Frequencies Assessment (BFA). Five indica-

tors in the BFA measure behavior on a weekly basis, such as the number of times they read to their children. Another five indicators measure behavior on a monthly basis and focus on school-related activities, such as helping children with their homework.

### **Parenting Attitudes Improve, But Not as Much as Those of Even Start Participants**

Most Family Literacy program parents entered the program with positive parenting attitudes that were strengthened further in the program. Although parenting attitudes improved for participants in both programs, adults in the Even Start program made significant improvement over those in the Family Literacy Program. This was also the case in the evaluation for the 1998-1999 school year (see Auditor General Report No. 00-03, issued in March 2000).

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*Most Family Literacy program adults enter with positive parenting attitudes.*

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***Most parents show modest gains in already positive parenting attitudes***—Adults entered the program with positive parenting attitudes overall. During the 1999-2000 school year, adults who took PAAT pre- and posttests had an average pretest score of 139, which is already above the 125-point cut-off for “favorable” parenting attitudes on the 0-200 scale. On average, adult program participants improved their scores by 4 points, to an average posttest score of 143 points.<sup>1</sup> This outcome was similar to results reported in the evaluation for the 1998-1999 school year. See Appendix (see pages a-i through a-xi) for specific results.

***Average gains greater for Even Start participants***—Even Start program participants increased their PAAT scores by 9 points on average, more than twice as much as Family Literacy program participants’ average gains.<sup>2</sup> The previous evaluation found similar results for the 1998-1999 school year.

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<sup>1</sup> There was statistically significant improvement in all of their subscores except for the subtest on “parental understanding of play.”

<sup>2</sup> The difference between the two programs’ total gains was statistically significant at the .01 level. That is, the probability that the difference occurred by chance is less than 1 in 100.

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*Similar to last year's results, the Even Start program had a greater impact on parenting attitudes than the Family Literacy Program.*

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We examined but could not find an explanation for the Even Start adults' significantly greater increases in PAAT scores. For example, Even Start adults could have had greater familiarity with the PAAT assessment because they can spend more years in the program compared to Family Literacy program adults. However, when only first-year participants were compared, Even Start participants still showed significantly higher gains than Family Literacy adults.<sup>1</sup> We also compared the pretest averages for the two groups because lower pretest scores can be associated with greater gains. However, the groups' pretest scores were similar. Additionally, differences between program models could have explained different gains, but the model was the same for both programs. Other factors, such as time in the program and hours of instruction, also failed to explain the differences in improvement.

### **Adults Increase Positive Parenting Behaviors**

As measured by the BFA, Family Literacy program adults reported significant increases in the number of times they demonstrated positive parenting behaviors. Even Start program adults showed similar gains in positive parenting behaviors from pretest to posttest.

- **Family Literacy**—This program's adults increased positive parenting behaviors at home and in activities associated with their children's school. On average, they improved their scores on all 10 indicators on the BFA.<sup>2</sup> As seen in Table 5 (see page 32), upon entering the program, Family Literacy program adults took their children to the library less than once a week (on average, 0.8 times per week). By the end of the program, they reported that they went to the library with their children at least twice as often (on average, 1.6 times per week). Also, at the end of the program, they almost doubled the number of times they participated in activities associated with their children's school.

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<sup>1</sup> The difference between Family Literacy and Even Start first-year participants' average gains was statistically significant at the .01 level.

<sup>2</sup> These improvements were statistically significant at the .01 level.

**Table 5**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Compared to Even Start Program**  
**Changes in Frequency of Parenting Behaviors<sup>a</sup>**  
**1999-2000 School Year**

Parenting Behavior	Family Literacy Number of Days			Even Start Number of Days		
	Start	End	Change	Start	End	Change
<i>Number of days per week parents:</i>						
Talk about children's day	5.2	5.7	+0.5	5.4	5.6	+0.2
Read book with children	4.1	4.7	+0.6	4.0	4.8	+0.8
Let children see them writing	4.5	5.1	+0.6	4.8	5.1	+0.3
Take children to the library	0.8	1.6	+0.8	0.7	1.4	+0.7
Play with children	5.3	5.9	+0.6	5.3	5.7	+0.4
<i>Number of days per month parents:</i>						
Go to a school activity	4.0	5.9	+1.9	3.5	6.7	+3.2
Volunteer for a school activity	2.2	4.3	+2.1	1.8	4.6	+2.8
Help children with homework	1.5	4.9	+3.4	2.2	5.4	+3.2
Talk to children's teacher	8.7	14.4	+5.7	14.0	16.7	+2.7
Talk to children about school	10.0	16.0	+6.0 <sup>b</sup>	16.2	18.2	+2.0 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> All gains from pretest to posttest were significant at the .05 level, except for Even Start participants' average gain in the number of days that they talked about their children's day.

<sup>b</sup> The difference between Family Literacy and Even Start gains was significant at the .01 level. That is, the probability that the difference occurred by chance is less than 1 in 100.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy and Even Start program staff.

■ **Even Start**—This program's adults also reported improvements in their parenting behaviors. These adults showed significant improvements on 8 of 10 BFA indicators. Even Start adults' improvements over their pretest scores were comparable to those of Family Literacy participants on all but the number of times they talked to their children about school. However, on that indicator, Even Start adults' average pretest score was as high as the Family Literacy average posttest score. While Family Literacy adults improved by talking to their children about school six more days per month, there was less room for improvement for the Even Start adults in that behavior.

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## FINDING IV

# CHILDREN IN FAMILY LITERACY IMPROVE KINDERGARTEN READINESS SKILLS

During the 1999-2000 school year, children in the Family Literacy Program improved their readiness to succeed in kindergarten. Analyses of the Family Literacy program children's scores on a kindergarten readiness assessment shows, that on average, they increased their development by 7 to 10 months, which is comparable to gains made by children in the Even Start and Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) programs. While only a portion of the Family Literacy program's 4-year-olds advanced to kindergarten readiness levels in all test measures, these results were not only consistent with the Even Start and ECBG groups, but also with other research on similar at-risk populations. Several factors associated with the program were related to children's levels of improvement. ADE should continue to monitor implementation of model program recommendations including those factors associated with improved kindergarten readiness.

### **Program's Preschool Education Component Aims to Enhance Kindergarten Readiness**

The Family Literacy Program strives to improve the school readiness of the preschool children in the program by providing developmentally appropriate preschool education. To measure the program's impact on the children's kindergarten readiness, children were administered pre- and posttests of the Pre-K Success assessment (PKS). The PKS uses a developmentally appropriate testing methodology and provides a kindergarten readiness assessment containing the following three subtests:

- **Language**—measures stages of vocabulary, sentence structure, expression, and comprehension.

- **Problem Solving**—measures cognitive skills, such as the classification and positioning of objects and the understanding of quantities and characteristics of numbers; and
- **Motor Skills**—measures gross and fine motor skills, such as balance, coordination, grasp, release, and the ability to sustain a motor pattern.

The 1997 evaluation compared the Family Literacy program children’s assessment scores to those of children in the federally funded family literacy Even Start program. The evaluation for 1998-1999 compared Family Literacy children’s assessment scores to those from the state-funded, stand-alone ECBG preschool program. This year’s evaluation compared the Family Literacy children’s assessment scores to those of both the Even Start and the ECBG programs.

### **Family Literacy Improvements Were Similar to Comparison Groups’ Improvements**

Family Literacy program children made significant improvements in the language, problem solving, and motor skills subtests, with their greatest gains made in language skills. Children in Family Literacy made similar gains to children in Even Start and ECBG programs in all three subtests. Figure 7 (see page 35), shows the Family Literacy program children’s average developmental gains reported in age equivalent months for each of the subtests. See the Appendix (pages a-i through a-xi) for additional test score information on all three programs.

- **Language skills development**—Language skill levels for children in the Family Literacy Program increased an average of 10 months, from a pretest at the 3-year, 6-month level to a posttest at the 4-year, 4-month level.<sup>1</sup> This 10-month increase is notable because the children participated in the program for only 7 months, on average, between pretest and posttest. ECBG program children improved by 9 months and Even Start program children improved by 11 months.

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*Family Literacy program children improved their language skills by 10 months, on average.*

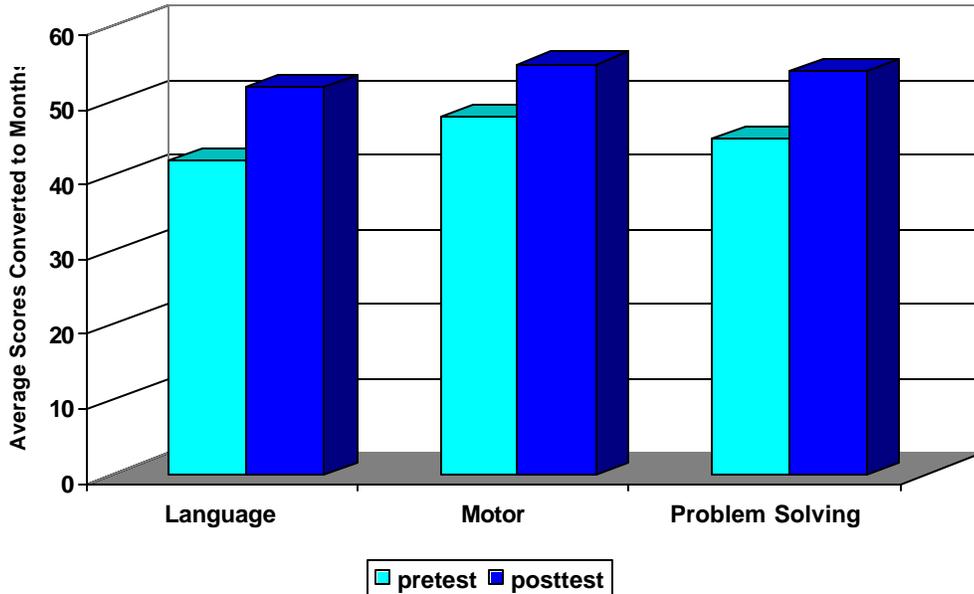
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<sup>1</sup> The gain was statistically significant at the .01 level. That is, the probability that the difference occurred by chance is less than 1 in 100.

**Figure 7**

**Family Literacy Program  
Average Improvement in Developmental Skills Test Scores  
Converted to Months  
1999-2000 School Year**



Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

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**Problem-solving skills development**—Problem-solving skill levels for children in the Family Literacy Program increased an average of 9 months, from a 3-year, 9-month level to a 4-year, 6-month level.<sup>1</sup> This gain was comparable to those of Even Start program children, who also began at the 3-year, 9-month level and advanced by 10 months. ECBG program children had slightly lower gains, increasing their problem-solving skills development by an average of 7 months. This result was in contrast to the evaluation for 1998-1999, which found that ECBG program children had greater improvement in problem-solving skills than Family Literacy program children.

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<sup>1</sup> The gain was statistically significant at the .01 level.

- **Motor Skills Development**—Family Literacy program children developed their motor skills by 7 months, on average, from a 4-year level to a 4-year, 7-month level. This statistically significant improvement was comparable to the 6-month gain made by Even Start program children and the 5-month gain made by ECBG program children. Although Family Literacy’s program gain was similar to the ECBG program gain, these results differ from last year’s report which found that ECBG program children, on average, showed greater gains than Family Literacy program children in motor skill development. The modest improvements in motor skill development by children in all three programs may be due to the high pretest scores in this area. As children approach the “ceiling” of a test scale, large gains are less likely.

### **Not All Program 4-Year-Olds Advance to Kindergarten Readiness Levels**

The Family Literacy Program strives to bring all 4-year-olds in the program to a level of kindergarten readiness in all 3 subtests, but most do not reach that point. However, the program’s 4-year-old gains are comparable to other at-risk programs.

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*Less than one-third of the Family Literacy Program 4-year-olds met kindergarten readiness levels in all test areas.*

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**Most 4-year-olds reach kindergarten readiness levels in at least one subtest**—Thirty-two (67 percent) of the 48 Family Literacy program 4-year-olds who took pre- and posttests reached kindergarten readiness levels in at least one of the three subtests. More specifically, 15 (31 percent) of the 48 four-year-olds post-tested at the kindergarten readiness levels in all three subtests, six (13 percent) reached the kindergarten level in two of the three subtests, and 11 (23 percent) reached that level in one of the three subtests. The remaining 16 four-year-olds scored below kindergarten readiness levels in all three of the subtests.

**Results conform to comparison groups and research on at-risk populations**—During the 1999-2000 school year, Even Start and ECBG program 4-year-olds reached kindergarten readiness levels in comparable proportions to the Family Literacy program children (see Appendix, pages a-i through a-xi). The modest kindergarten readiness results conform to research on at-risk populations reported in the 1997 Auditor General evaluation of

the At-Risk Preschool Expansion Program (see Auditor General Report No. 97-2). That evaluation found that at-risk children tended to score below national norms on standardized assessments. Further, educational experts who developed the Pre-K Success caution against comparing the test scores of children in lower income families with those from children in higher income groups.

### **Program Can Build on Factors Related to Children’s Developmental Gains**

For all three programs, children’s developmental gains tend to increase under certain conditions. Three factors are associated with higher gains: the number of home visits, the number of trips to the library, and the parent’s participation in additional parenting classes. The Family Literacy Program should take steps to take full advantage of these factors in increasing children’s preparedness for school.

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*Increases in home visits by program staff, trips to the library, and additional parenting classes were associated with greater gains in children’s kindergarten readiness.*

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- **Home visits**—Home visits by program staff were also related to children’s development. Although the NCFL family literacy program model recommends but does not require home visits, model program sites have increased the number of times their staff members visit participants’ homes. Statistical tests on the 1999-2000 school year data found that every additional home visit was associated with another month gain in children’s problem-solving skill development.
- **Trips to the library**—Going to the library is one of many positive parenting behaviors and has obvious relevance for improving family members’ literacy. When parents took their child to the library one more day a week on average, the children’s language skills increased by an additional month.
- **Additional parenting classes**—Some sites offer parenting classes, such as Parent University, in addition to the model’s parent education component. The parents’ participation in these additional parenting classes correlated with an additional 6-month increase in the children’s language skills.

### **Recommendation**

ADE should continue to monitor implementation of model program recommendations that are associated with improved kindergarten readiness; specifically, more home visits to families, improved positive parenting behaviors (such as going to the library), and additional parenting classes for adults.

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# APPENDIX

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# APPENDIX

## Introduction and Background (See pages 1 through 12)

### *Site Completion Rates and Reasons for Exit*

Table 6 (see page a-ii), shows the number of participants served and the completion rates for each site. Of the 391 participants served, 248 (63 percent) completed all portions of the program. Site completion rates ranged from 35 to 94 percent. Of the 133 adults who disenrolled their families before completing the program, 57 (43 percent) reported that they met their educational goals. Twenty-nine (22 percent) reported that they left because they had found employment that precluded their continued participation. Seventeen (13 percent) moved out the area or to a different program and 17 left because of a family crisis, conflict, or personal reason. Only 13 (9 percent) dropped out of the program because of a lack of interest, incomplete participation, or poor attendance.

### *Comparison Groups*

As with previous evaluations, this evaluation compared Family Literacy participants' outcomes to those of Even Start and ECBG program participants.

- **Even Start**—Even Start is a federally-funded family literacy program which implements the same four-component model as the Arizona Family Literacy Program. Even Start participants have similar eligibility requirements as Family Literacy participants, except Even Start families may enter the program with children whose ages range from infancy to 7 years old while Family Literacy children must be either 3 or 4 years old. Even Start adults could enroll for longer periods of time because of the extended eligibility of their children.

**Table 6**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Number and Percentage of Families Completing Program by Site**  
**1999-2000 School Year**  
**(Unaudited)**

Contractor and Program Site	Number		Percentage Completed
	Served	Completed	
<i>Cochise Community College</i>			
La Escuelita	12	9	75%
St. Paul's	15	8	53
<i>Flagstaff USD No. 1</i>			
Leupp	11	8	73
W. F. Killip	20	7	35
<i>Glendale ESD No. 40</i>			
Lamar Learning School	19	11	58
<i>Isaac ESD No. 5</i>			
Isaac School, Site A	18	17	94
Isaac School, Site B	11	8	73
<i>Literary Volunteers of Maricopa County</i>			
C. J. Jorgensen	20	17	85
J. R. Davis	15	7	47
<i>Littleton ESD No. 65</i>			
Littleton School	21	8	38
<i>Mesa USD No. 4</i>			
Eisenhower	19	13	68
Lincoln	19	11	58
Longfellow	18	14	78
<i>Phoenix Indian Center</i>			
Longview	21	10	48
<i>Southwest Human Development</i>			
Umon Center	14	12	86
<i>Tempe ESD No. 3</i>			
Frank School	14	10	71
<i>Pima County Adult Education</i>			
Liberty	25	15	60
Nash	16	7	44
Prince	17	9	53
South Tucson	11	7	64
<i>Crane ESD No. 13</i>			
H. L. Suverkrup, Site A	20	13	65
H. L. Suverkrup, Site B	20	13	65
<i>Somerton ESD No. 11</i>			
Desert Sonora Elementary	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>	93
Total Number served	<u>391</u>	<u>248</u>	
Average completion rate			63%

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

- **ECBG**—The ECBG program is a state-funded program that includes preschool tuition funding for at-risk children. There is no curriculum or model for the preschools that receive ECBG funds.
  
- **Adult comparison group**—The adult comparison group for the last three evaluations has been Even Start participants. Evaluations compared Family Literacy and Even Start program adults on adult education test scores, education and employment outcomes, and parenting test scores. During the 1999-2000 school year, the two programs served adult populations that were similar in terms of their gender, income, employment status, language spoken, and education level. Although the majority of adults in both programs were enrolled for the first time, Even Start had a slightly higher number of participants in their second and third years of the program.
  
- **Child comparison groups**—Previous evaluations have compared Family Literacy children’s test scores to those of either Even Start or ECBG program children. Children in Even Start can be older, but during the 1999-2000 school year, the children in Even Start were 4 years, 8 months old, on average, and Family Literacy children were 4 years, 4 months old, on average. The ECBG children were 4 years, 5 months old, on average.

This year’s evaluation compared Family Literacy children’s scores to those of a sample of children in the ECBG program. The sample size of the ECBG comparison group was 355 (10 percent of the total 3,549 ECBG population and 13 percent of the 2,788 ECBG children in sites not receiving Family Literacy or Even Start program funds). The sample size was chosen to match approximately the sizes of the Even Start and Family Literacy program participant groups. The sample was randomly chosen from sites not receiving Family Literacy or Even Start program monies and was stratified to reflect the same proportions of participants in Maricopa County (56 percent) and those outside of Maricopa County (44 percent) as found in the total ECBG population.

**Finding I: ADE Improves  
Program Administration and  
Sites Follow Statutory and Model  
Program Guidelines  
(See pages 13 through 19)**

While all sites followed statutory requirements and program guidelines, some sites failed to comply with contractual obligations for reporting data and test scores to ADE. Table 7 (see page a-v), shows which sites had difficulty reporting data and also includes rankings of the sites' average gains on all of the standardized assessments used in the report. When assessing sites' success in test score gains or difficulty in reporting data, there were no differences found among certain types of sites or contractors. For example, sites that made the greatest gains on one measure also made only modest gains on another.

**Finding II: Adult Participants  
Make Gains in Language  
Proficiency and Employment Outcomes  
(See pages 21 through 27)**

- **English Language Assessments**—English language skills of Family Literacy and Even Start program adults in ESOL classes were measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and the Language Assessment System (LAS) tests. The CASAS scale ranged from 0 to 241, the LAS reading and writing tests ranged from 0 to 100, and the LAS combined reading and writing test ranged from 0 to 200. For each program and each assessment, Table 8 (see page a-vi), reports the average pretest and posttest scores and the average of individual gains between pretest and posttest.

Table 7  
 Family Literacy Program  
 Site Data Reporting Results and Rankings by Improvements on Test Scores  
 1999-2000 School Year

Type of Contractor and Site	Comprehensive Assessment System of Academic Skills	Language Assessment System	Tests of Adult Basic Education				Parent As a Teacher	Behavior Frequencies Assessment		Pre-K Success
			Language	Math	Reading	Spelling		Weekly	Monthly	
School District										
Desert Sonora	14	12	1	7	6	7	5	15	7	10
Eisenhower	a	a	4	2	4	2	14	21	16	6
Frank	8	15	a	a	a	a	19	18	10	5
H. L. Suverkrup, A	11	10	3	1	2	1	11	13	14	11
H. L. Suverkrup, B	12	11	a	a	a	a	12	14	15	12
Isaac, A	2	9	9	9	7	6	10	3	4	I/D
Isaac, B	7	6	6	6	5	3	15	12	2	9
Killip	3	8	8	4	8	5	9	22	5	13
Lamar	N/D	2	a	a	a	a	13	20	8	14
Leupp	a	a	I/D	I/D	I/D	I/D	4	11	9	N/D
Lincoln	a	a	5	5	3	4	7	5	20	8
Littleton	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D
Longfellow	16	13	a	a	a	a	18	9	13	4
Community-based										
C. J. Jorgensen	5	3	a	a	a	a	2	4	12	I/D
J. R. Davis	1	4	a	a	a	a	1	1	1	3
Longview	4	1	a	a	a	a	21	2	1	N/D
Umon Center	18	19	a	a	a	a	22	10	17	N/D
Adult education										
Liberty	6	5	a	a	a	a	3	8	19	7
Nash	15	18	a	a	a	a	6	7	16	I/D
Prince	10	7	2	3	1	8	17	17	6	2
South Tucson	17	14	a	a	a	a	20	16	21	1
Community College										
La Escuelita	13	16	a	a	a	a	16	19	3	I/D
St. Paul's	9	17	7	8	8	N/D	8	6	11	I/D

a Test is not applicable to students; the site teaches only Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, but not both.  
 N/D No data is available because site did not administer tests or did not report pretest and posttest scores.  
 I/D Incomplete or inaccurate data reported by site.  
 Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy Program staff.

**Table 8**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Compared to Even Start Program**  
**Average Improvements in English Language Assessments<sup>a</sup>**  
**1999-2000 School Year**

Program	Measures	Comprehensive System of Academic Skills	Assessment Language Assessment System		
			Reading	Writing	Combined
Family Literacy	Pretest	201.40	51.42	31.46	79.14
	Posttest	211.03	71.42	50.69	119.21
	Average of individual gains	9.62	20.0 <sup>b</sup>	19.23	40.07
		n=137	n=139	n=125	n=137
Even Start	Pretest	200.95	51.77	35.69	85.14
	Posttest	208.51	66.66	54.88	119.76
	Average of individual gains	7.56	14.8 <sup>b</sup>	19.19	34.6
		n=164	n=177	n=162	n=176

<sup>a</sup> All pretest to posttest gains were significant at the .01 level.

<sup>b</sup> The difference between Family Literacy and Even Start gains was significant at the .05 level.

Note: "n" refers to the number of participants who completed pre- and posttests.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy and Even Start program staff.

■ **Adult Basic Education Assessment**—Changes in participants’ levels of adult basic education were measured by the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), a battery of subject area tests in language, math, reading, and spelling. Each subject area test is available in four levels: easy, medium, advanced, and difficult. Furthermore, each level contains a pretest and a posttest. The TABE scale ranges from 0-999. For each program and each TABE test, Table 9 (see page a-vii), reports the average pretest and posttest scores and the average of individual gains (and losses) between pretest and posttests. Although Even Start’s average pretest to posttest gains were greater than Family Literacy’s average gains, the difference between the programs’ gains was not statistically significant.

**Table 9**  
**Family Literacy Program**  
**Compared to Even Start Program**  
**Average Scores on Tests of Adult Basic Education**  
**1999-2000 School Year**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Spelling</b>
Family Literacy	Pretest	475.18	527.23	503.57	476.64
	Posttest	498.55	530.40	507.94	493.64
	Average of individual gains	23.37 <sup>a</sup> n=51	3.18 n=40	4.37 n=51	17.00 n=47
Even Start	Pretest	478.93	522.37	494.96	501.96
	Posttest	522.63	542.81	518.41	515.81
	Average of individual gains	43.70 <sup>b</sup> n=27	20.44 <sup>b</sup> n=27	23.44 <sup>b</sup> n=27	13.85 n=27

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<sup>a</sup> The pretest to posttest gain was significant at the .05 level.

<sup>b</sup> The pretest to posttest gain was significant at the .01 level.

Note: "n" refers to the number of participants who completed pre- and posttests.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy and Even Start program staff.

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Two factors may help explain the lack of improvement in Family Literacy program participants' average TABE scores. First, students in the highest level ABE classes (equivalent to grades 9-12) showed greater gains, on average, than the ABE students attending beginning (grades 0-4) and intermediate (grades 5-8) ABE classes. Approximately one-third of the ABE students who took the TABE tests were in the beginning and intermediate ABE levels and the large proportion of students in these levels may have lowered the program's average gains. Second, some students took posttests at more challenging levels than their pretests. If they were not prepared for the more difficult posttest level, their posttests scores could be lower than their pretest scores.

**Finding III: Adult Participants  
Show Improvements in Parenting  
Attitudes and Behaviors  
(See pages 29 through 32)**

***Parenting Attitudes***

Parenting attitudes were measured by using the Parent As a Teacher Inventory (PAAT) which identifies favorable attitudes and approaches needed for parenting children ages 3 to 9. In the PAAT, adults respond to statements about their expectations of and interactions with their child as well as the actions they would take in response to specific behavior. The responses are grouped into five areas with subscores computed for each area in addition to the total score. The five areas are:

- **Frustration**—parental frustration with the child and focus of the frustration;
- **Control**—parental feelings about the need to control the child’s behavior;
- **Play**—parental understanding of play and its impact on child development;
- **Creativity**—parental acceptance of the child’s creativity and willingness to encourage its development; and
- **Teaching/Learning**—parental views about child development and their ability to provide a supportive home environment.

Finding III (see pages 29 through 32), discusses comparisons of the total scores. The average total scores and the average of the subtest scores for both programs are reported in Table 10 (see page a-ix).

**Table 10**

**Family Literacy Program  
Compared to Even Start Program  
Average Improvements in Parenting Attitudes  
1999-2000 School Year**

Program	Measure	Parenting Attitudes Toward					Total
		Frustration	Control	Play	Creativity	Teach/Learn	
Family Literacy	Pretest	28.73	25.32	29.80	27.13	29.07	139.18
	Posttest	29.28	25.95	30.29	28.08	30.16	142.82
	Individual gains	0.55 <sup>a,c</sup> n=198	0.63 <sup>a,c</sup> n=198	0.50 <sup>c</sup> n=198	0.95 <sup>b</sup> n=197	1.09 <sup>a,c</sup> n=197	3.64 <sup>b,c</sup> n=191
Even Start	Pretest	28.40	25.29	29.32	26.72	28.73	138.42
	Posttest	29.98	27.43	31.34	28.35	30.79	147.77
	Individual gains	1.58 <sup>b,c</sup> n=222	2.13 <sup>b,c</sup> n=222	2.02 <sup>b,c</sup> n=219	1.64 <sup>b</sup> n=222	2.06 <sup>b,c</sup> n=222	9.34 <sup>b,c</sup> n=219

<sup>a</sup> The pretest to posttest gain was statistically significant at the .05 level.

<sup>b</sup> The pretest to posttest gain was statistically significant at the .01 level.

<sup>c</sup> The difference between Family Literacy and Even Start gains was significant at the .01 level.

Note: "n" refers to the number of participants who completed pre- and posttests.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy and Even Start program staff.

**Finding IV: Children in Family  
Literacy Improve Kindergarten  
Readiness Skills  
(See pages 33 through 38)**

For each child, the Pre-K Success (PKS) assessed kindergarten readiness according to three subtests and calculated a composite of those subtests into a total readiness score. Only the scales of the three subtests are converted into age equivalencies by the test publisher. The publisher does not convert the total readiness scores to age equivalencies.

For each of the three programs, Table 11 (see page a-x), includes the average of individual improvements in test scores converted into age equivalencies.

**Table 11**

**Family Literacy Program  
Pre-K Success  
Compared to Even Start and Early Childhood Block Grant Programs  
Average Improvements in Pre-K Success Test Scores Converted to Months<sup>1</sup>  
1999-2000 School Year**

<b>Developmental Skills</b>	<b>Family Literacy</b>	<b>Even Start</b>	<b>Early Childhood Block Grant</b>
Language	10	11	9
Motor	7	6	5
Problem solving	9	10	7

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<sup>1</sup> For each subtest and each program, the pretest to posttest gain was statistically significant at the .01 level. However, the differences between Family Literacy and Even Start gains, and Family Literacy and Early Childhood Block Grant gains were not statistically significant.

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy, Even Start, and Early Childhood Block Grant program staff.

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***Kindergarten Readiness Levels***

Children were considered “kindergarten ready” if their posttest scores were at the 5-year-old age equivalency level. For each of the three subtests, the 4-year-olds’ scores were compared to the 5-year-old developmental skill level. Most posttests were given between April 24 and May 17, 2000. Table 12 (see page a-xi) includes the kindergarten readiness results for Family Literacy, Even Start, and ECBG programs for the 1999-2000 school year.

**Table 12**

**Family Literacy Program  
Compared to Even Start and Early Childhood Block Grant Programs  
Number and Percentages of 4-Year-Olds Who Met Kindergarten Readiness Levels  
1999-2000 School Year**

Number of developmental skill levels met	Family Literacy		Even Start		Early Childhood Block Grant	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All 3	15	31%	17	28%	45	22%
2 of 3	6	13	11	19	33	16
1 of 3	11	23	17	28	46	23
None	16	33	15	25	80	39

Source: Auditor General staff analysis of data provided by the Arizona Department of Education and Family Literacy, Even Start, and Early Childhood Block Grant program staff.

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## Agency Response



State of Arizona  
Department of Education

Lisa Graham Keegan  
Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

December 19, 2000

Ms. Debbie Davenport  
Auditor General  
State of Arizona  
2910 North 44<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 410  
Phoenix, AZ 85018

Dear Ms. Davenport:

I am responding to your agency's final evaluation of the Arizona Family Literacy Program.

A meeting to review the report draft was held, in our office, with members of my staff on November 22, 2000. The discussion was very beneficial.

The report contains three recommendations for program improvement and our agency addresses the recommendations as follows:

1. ADE should continue monitoring activities to ensure that all sites remain in compliance with statutory requirements and program guidelines. In particular, ADE should continue annual site visits and regular contact with all sites to determine site compliance.

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the evaluation recommendation will be implemented. Currently, the state Family Literacy program is funded through a one-million dollar annual appropriation that provides **no** funding for administration or oversight. During the past year the ADE successfully began monitoring and oversight activities through the use of Federal Adult Education State Leadership monies, however, the federal government has reduced the state leadership allocation. Without state funding to administer Family Literacy, continuation of monitoring and oversight activities will be limited or in most cases discontinued.

2. ADE should develop a policy to monitor contractors' compliance with contractual guidelines of data reporting. To do this ADE should:
  - a. Continue its efforts to develop a system for collection and entry of data and monitor the accuracy and completeness of all data submitted throughout the year.

b. Revise data submission timelines so that pretest and intake data are submitted by mid-school-year and posttest and exit data are submitted by the end of the school year and

c. Enforce data submission deadlines.

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the evaluation recommendation will be implemented. ADE has taken the following steps:

a. The data collection software development is progressing on schedule and is anticipated to be completely implemented for FY2002.

b. ADE has changed the policy for submitting early childhood data to include a mid-year collection of pretest scores. With the support of Family Literacy program directors, ADE has changed the end of year data collection deadline from June 30, 2001 to June 8, 2001. This should allow adequate time to carefully review data for accuracy and completeness prior to the submission of the data to the Auditor General's office.

c. ADE will continue its enforcement of submission deadlines.

3. ADE should continue to monitor implementation of model program recommendations that are associated with improved kindergarten readiness; specifically, more home visits to families, improved positive parenting behaviors (such as going to the library) and additional parenting classes for adults.

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will continue to be implemented. ADE will require parental contacts in the FY2002 contracts with its local providers. Linkage has been made with programs such as Parents Anonymous to provide additional parenting classes for Family Literacy programs. Programs are currently encouraged to assist parents in obtaining library cards and sites often schedule field trips to local libraries. The ADE will continue to place emphasis on activities that promote kindergarten readiness.

Our agency extends our appreciation to your staff for the high degree of cooperation and assistance provided in the evaluation of the Arizona Family Literacy program.

Sincerely,



Lisa Graham Keegan  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Cc: Brian Jones  
Jennifer Mabry  
Karen Liersch  
Lois Schneider

## Other Performance Audit Reports Issued Within the Last 12 Months

00-2	Behavioral Health Services— Interagency Coordination of Services	00-13	Arizona Department of Agriculture Pest Exclusion and Management Program
00-3	Arizona’s Family Literacy Program	00-14	Arizona Department of Agriculture State Agricultural Laboratory
00-4	Family Builders Pilot Program	00-15	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Commodity Development Program
00-5	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Licensing Functions	00-16	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Pesticide Compliance and Worker Safety Program
00-6	Board of Medical Student Loans	00-17	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Sunset Factors
00-7	Department of Public Safety— Aviation Section	00-18	Arizona State Boxing Commission
00-8	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Animal Disease, Ownership and Welfare Protection Program	00-19	Department of Economic Security— Division of Developmental Disabilities
00-9	Arizona Naturopathic Physicians Board of Medical Examiners	00-20	Department of Corrections— Security Operations
00-10	Arizona Department of Agriculture— Food Safety and Quality Assurance Program and Non-Food Product Quality Assurance Program	00-21	Universities—Funding Study
00-11	Arizona Office of Tourism		
00-12	Department of Public Safety— Scientific Analysis Bureau		

## Future Performance Audit Reports

Department of Public Safety—Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program

Department of Economic Security—Division of Child Support Enforcement

Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery