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# WILLIAM F. GOODLING EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

Fact Sheet  
**76**

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## ***What is the Even Start Family Literacy Program?***

Even Start is an education program for low-income families and is designed to improve the academic achievement of parents and their young children, especially in the area of reading. Even Start provides educational services for the family, parents, and children alike. Local projects help families with at least one child who is under eight years old and one or both of the parents need basic skills education. In most instances, the parents either have not graduated from high school and need adult basic skills education or General Education Development (GED) training, or the parents have limited English proficiency and need English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

## ***What is the purpose of the program?***

The purpose of the program is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and secondary-level education and/or instruction for English language learners, parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities into a single unified family literacy program. Currently, there are more than 850 local projects in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

## ***What are the core elements of the Even Start Program?***

Local projects design programs to meet the needs of the diverse population they serve. There are 15 program requirements. All programs must:

- Identify and recruit families most in need of Even Start services
- Screen and prepare parents to participate in the program
- Design flexible service delivery, including interactive literacy-based activities between parents and their children
- Provide high quality intensive instructional programs that promote adult literacy, empower parents to support education, and are developmentally appropriate for early childhood education
- Meet the staff qualification requirements
- Staff training
- Home-based instruction
- Operate on a year-round basis
- Coordinate with other specific programs
- Serve families that are most in need of Even Start services
- Use instructional programs based on scientifically based reading research for children and adults
- Encourage participating families to attend regularly and remain in the program a sufficient time
- Include reading readiness activities for preschool children
- Promote the continuity of family literacy
- Serve families most in need of the activities and services
- Provide for an independent evaluation of the program.

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***How many programs are there in Maryland?***

Maryland currently administers funding to four local school systems for four projects statewide. Local programs are available in the following school systems. To learn more about the local programs, contact the local program coordinator at the telephone number listed below.

Baltimore City - 410-396-6602

Calvert County - 410-535-7291

Prince George's County - 301-431-6220

Queen Annes' County - 410-827-4629

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***How else can I learn more?***

Contact the State Coordinator for the Even Start Family Literacy Program at 410-767-0314.