

Family Literacy Defined and Described

Family Literacy is an educational model designed to address the literacy and learning needs of an entire family through partnerships among community providers. Family Literacy is a family-centered educational approach that improves the basic reading, mathematics, writing, English language proficiency, and life skills of both parents and their children birth through age 8.

Family Literacy is a programmatic model that structures the work of partners into a comprehensive, integrated whole. It requires seamless integration and the full commitment of partners to work together in an undertaking that transcends their respective roles. Family Literacy employs an evidence-based, systematic approach that integrates the positive effects of the following four components:

Adult Literacy partners provide: basic skills development in reading, writing, math, and English Language; High School Diploma courses; GED preparation courses and testing; Workplace Literacy programs; and College Transitions services and course-work;

Early Childhood Literacy partners provide:

- brain-based, gross motor, and early language development programming for infants and toddlers; and
- language development, pre-literacy, and early reading/reading development programming for children between 3 and 8 years of age;

Parenting Education partners (including individuals such as healthcare providers) provide: coaching to help parents understand the importance of early brain development and its role in healthy development and the acquisition of early literacy skills; the support aimed at helping parents to head literacy-rich households, to become their children's first and most significant teachers, to promote their children's speech, reading, and educational development, and to form partnerships with their children's teachers and schools; and

Interactive Literacy partners provide: activities designed to build healthy, literacy-focused, nurturing relationships between parents and children by helping families to recognize and capitalize on varied opportunities to learn and grow together.

Family Literacy configures these four components in different arrangements based on need, resource, and/or geography, including:

1. Site-based services for both children and adults;
2. Services provided primarily through home visits;
3. A combination of regularly scheduled site-based classes and periodic home visits.

Regardless of the configuration, Family Literacy aims to address two significant societal challenges at once:

1. The literacy development of young children in the earliest years of life and school; and
2. The persistent problem of low level literacy among adults.

Family Literacy is designed to serve families headed by parents who possess neither a High School Diploma nor a GED; and/or who demonstrate Limited English Proficiency or other diminished literacy skills in reading, writing, or numeracy; and who are raising at least one child between the age of birth and 8 who is at-risk of lacking the skills necessary to be a successful learner. Other potential indicators of a family's need for Family Literacy services include:

1. Family living at or below poverty level;
2. Family relying on one or more forms of public assistance;
3. Single parent family or family headed by teen parents;
4. Family with four or more children.