

## Focus on Early Literacy/Early Childhood

- \* **Catalyst:** The program's PLS-4 scores do not show gains for preschool age children. Both the program director and the evaluator feel that the PLS-4 is not measuring what Even Start children are learning. They feel Even Start prepares children well for kindergarten success in literacy in the local school system.

Systematic Inquiry	Relationship to Performance and Program Indicators	Program Description and Context	Areas for Possible Recommendations
<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> Do preschool age children in Even Start develop the skills in phonological awareness, concepts of print, and alphabet knowledge that kindergarten expects at entry?</p> <p><b>Requires:</b> information about school's readiness expectations, additional tests, assessment schedule</p>	<p>Additional outcomes to supplement PLS-4 for the preschool age group</p> <p>Relationship of PLS-4 outcomes to results of other assessments</p> <p>Might analyze by contact hours and children's ages</p> <p>Might analyze differences in outcomes by teacher qualifications</p>	<p>Number of preschool children, ages, amount of time in Even Start, other educational experiences</p> <p>Curriculum related to phonological awareness, concepts of print, and alphabet knowledge, including specific parent-child activities</p> <p>Materials and typical instructional strategies</p> <p>Amount of instructional time typically devoted to curricular goals</p> <p>Staff qualifications in early literacy</p>	<p>Appropriateness of curricular goals</p> <p>Alignment of materials and strategies with curricular goals</p> <p>Adequacy of instructional time</p> <p>Appropriateness/effectiveness of instructional strategies</p> <p>Professional development for staff</p>

\* **Catalyst:** The program director is worried that children who are receiving early childhood services are not all receiving the same quality of opportunity for language development. Some Even Start children receive services through Head Start, some through a local public preschool, and a few are in a family home day care setting. All participate in home visits but there is great variation in the early childhood qualifications of home visitors.

<b>Systematic Inquiry</b>	<b>Relationship to Performance and Program Indicators</b>	<b>Program Description and Context</b>	<b>Areas for Possible Recommendations</b>
<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> How do the oral language development opportunities available to Even Start children vary by site?</p> <p><b>Requires:</b> focus on defined opportunities (e.g., conversations with adults and peers, direct and indirect vocabulary development; exposure to books and stories; pre-writing opportunities); process for documenting experiences through observations, logs, teacher survey; systematic schedule for data collection</p>	<p>Check PLS-4 outcomes by site</p> <p>Might check by site the amount of contact time available and actual for children and parent-child opportunities as well as home visit time</p>	<p>Description of each site, including teacher expertise, number of children, ages, schedule</p> <p>Oral language model that underlies curriculum and language development curricular goals</p> <p>Description of the environment in each site with attention to characteristics that facilitate language development</p>	<p>Additional assessments</p> <p>Professional development</p> <p>Options for supervision</p> <p>Alterations to the environment</p>