

## Definition of Illinois Family Literacy Programming

*Developed by the Illinois Family Literacy Consortium of State-Level Agencies and Offices*

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**Integrated, intensive services for at-risk families that must include, but not be limited to adult education, child education, parenting education, and literacy-based, interactive, parent-child activity services in order to improve the literacy skills for families.**

- Literacy skills:** The ability to read, write, speak, compute and solve problems at appropriate levels of proficiency necessary to function as an individual within a family or in society.
- Integrated services:** All services are purposefully connected to encompass a holistic approach to serving the family as a unit rather than as individuals.
- Intensive services:** The services are regularly and frequently scheduled over an extended period of time.
- At-risk:** Adults and children who are subject to such language, economic and like circumstances that they have been determined, through a screening process, to be at risk of academic failure. At risk factors may include: a low household income, being homeless, a household in which English is not the primary language spoken, or a household where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school. However, neither an adult's or child's membership in a certain group nor a child's family situation should determine whether that child is at-risk.
- Families:** The significant adult(s) or primary caregiver(s) and child(ren) who are living in the same household. *When the term parent is used, this term refers to the significant adult(s) or primary caregiver(s).*
- Adult Education:** It is the purpose of Title II of Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to create a partnership among the Federal Government, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services in order to:
- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
  - assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and
  - assist adults in completion of a secondary school education.
- Program elements include:  
Instructional services: adult basic education, adult secondary education, and GED, vocational skills, English as a second language (English Literacy), life skills, parenting education, citizenship education, and employability skills.

Supportive Services: social work services, guidance services, assistive and adaptive equipment, assessment and testing, participant transportation services, workforce coordination services, childcare services and literacy services.

Eligible populations include:

adults age 16 years and older who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law and who (1) lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society; (2) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or (3) are unable to speak, read or write the English language.

**Child Education:**

Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences, from birth through age 16. Children acquire knowledge as a result of concrete encounters and meaningful research-based experiences in environments structured to meet individual developmental, cognitive, and social needs of all children. Supplemental instruction and support may be needed to facilitate an individual child's progress.

**Parenting Education:**

Information and support for parents on issues such as childbirth, development and nurturing of children, child rearing, family management, support for children's learning, effective advocacy strategies for the rights of all children, and parent involvement in their children's education. Through parenting education, parents and professionals build relationships in which the resources of both are shared in the task of supporting family strengths. In addition, parents build relationships through which they receive support both for themselves and their children.

**Interactive, Literacy-based  
Parent-Child Activities:**

Family literacy includes regularly scheduled, interactive, literacy-based, learning activities for parents and children. These may focus on recognizing and encouraging literacy practices and environments in the home, strengthening family relationships, increasing connections between the family and the school and/or fostering a better understanding of child development. These reciprocal learning activities are opportunities for parents to build the skills and confidence to take supportive, teaching roles with their children. They offer the children the opportunity to see their parents as knowledgeable and capable adults. They offer both adults and children time to share and reinforce skills learned in the other components.