Guidelines for Effective Comprehensive Family Literacy Programs

Massachusetts Department of Education
Adult and Community Learning Services

75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls
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Guidelines for Effective Comprehensive Family Literacy Programs

These Guidelines for Effective Comprehensive Family Literacy Programs are based on research and performance data and outline the essential program components and processes that constitute effective family literacy services. Any future updates to these guidelines will be posted on the DOE website for family literacy: http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit. Please check the website regularly for the most up-to-date information.

When reviewing the guidelines it is important to note the distinction between those components and processes that are designated as “must” be present in a program and those components and processes that are designated as “recommended” or “preferred” in a program.

The guidelines are divided into 5 sections: Overview of Family Literacy, Eligibility, Family Services, Program and Staff Development, and Administration.

The Overview of Family Literacy section provides the definition and purpose of family literacy.

The Eligibility section focuses on family eligibility requirements and guidelines for both parents and children.

The Family Services section provides optimum criteria for family literacy programming and required components. This section also addresses enrollment and key supports of the program design: outreach and recruitment, intake, orientation, placement, curriculum and instruction, educational counseling, retention, goal setting process, performance criteria, assessment and follow-up.

The Program and Staff Development section focuses on the guidelines that a program must follow to support program development (activities that support program improvement) and the professional development of staff.

The Administration section focuses on the components of effective program leadership and management including, but not limited to, the following: effective collaborations documented in a signed Memorandum of Agreement, required documentation and data entry requirements, staff salary and benefits information, community planning, and an overview of fiscal responsibilities.
Overview of Family Literacy

The purpose of comprehensive family literacy is to help families overcome intergenerational cycles of illiteracy and poverty by providing integrated early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting education in a unified program. Family literacy builds on the strengths and addresses the needs of parents/primary caregivers and their young children. Many family literacy models exist, ranging from simple family literacy activities such as parents/primary caregivers and children reading together to comprehensive family literacy programs such as the federally funded Even Start Program.

Comprehensive family literacy programs must provide sufficient intensity in terms of hours and are of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (adult education instruction);
- age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences;
- interactive literacy activities between parents and their children;
- training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; (parenting education); and
- home visits to reinforce learning in the home.

The purposes of comprehensive family literacy programs are to:

- provide parents/primary caregivers and their children a strong educational foundation that empowers them to reach their full personal, social, and economic potential;
- support parents/primary caregivers and their children to achieve learning gains;
- provide high quality instructional programs based on scientifically based research;
- build on existing community resources through collaborative relationships; and
- ensure cooperation and coordination among service providers.
Eligibility

Eligible Families are Parents/Primary Caregivers and their children.

The Department will give priority to programs that target families most in need as indicated by high levels of poverty, undereducation, unemployment, limited-English proficiency, homelessness or other need-related indicators such as a high percentage of children to be served by the program who reside in a Title I school attendance area, a high percentage of parents who have been victims of domestic violence, or a high percentage of parents receiving public assistance.

Eligible Parents/Primary Caregivers

- Parents/Primary Caregivers may include teen parents ages 16 and up.
- Primary Caregivers may include extended family members or other adults who either reside with the child or play a primary role in the child’s life.
- Parents/Primary Caregivers must include those that lack the level of skills expected of a high school graduate or whose lack of mastery of basic skills results in an inability to speak, read, or write the English language.
- If parents/primary caregivers have a high school diploma but lack the basic skills of a high school graduate, they may be eligible for the program. However, they should not represent the majority of adults in the program.

Eligible Children

- The Department will support family literacy programs for children from birth to age 12; however, specific grant programs such as Even Start may target services for specific age ranges.
Family Services

Optimum Criteria for Family Literacy Programming

A literature search was conducted in March 2007 to identify research of evidence-based models that demonstrate effective family literacy programming. The bulleted list below represents key criteria from the research:

Program Design

- Arrange classes and activities so they are accessible in terms of scheduling, location, and ADA compliance. Example: offer evening and weekend classes in addition to weekdays.
- Offer sufficient intensity to enable parents and children to achieve their goals.
- Supplement school age children instruction with after school programming.
- Create strong and seamless coordination with school programs.
- Provide counseling to families.
- Develop, implement and monitor a goal setting process.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for parents/primary caregivers to give feedback on all aspects of the program.

Adult Education

- Offer a minimum of 8 hours of adult education per week.
- Minimize mixed ability grouping.
- Ensure staff proficiency in adapting curriculum and instructional approaches to learning differences and student needs.
- Broaden design of programs beyond attending classes to include activities such as: self-study, tutoring, access to computer labs and other learning opportunities. Base participation options on family circumstances.
- Address multiple aspects of the reading process through a structured approach including comprehension.
- Explicitly teach comprehension strategies across subject areas.
- Form partnerships with institutions of higher learning.
- Use systematic monitoring of progress to inform instruction.
- Intentionally build reflection into daily activities.

Early Childhood Education (Preschool and Kindergarten)

- Provide extended / full day programs (NAEYC accredited).
- Create high-quality print and literacy-rich environments.
- Schedule daily opportunities to write and dictate ideas.
- Expose children to different kinds of texts.
- Work with letters and sounds daily.
- Integrate reading into all daily routines with 2 structured reading groups for half-day programs and 4 structured reading groups for full day programs.
• Conduct progress monitoring at a minimum of 3 times per year.

Interactive Literacy

• Target increasing quality interactions as the primary goal of interactive literacy.
• Provide parents/primary caregivers an opportunity to preview activities and discuss the ways it will support their children’s language and literacy development.
• Build interactions on the knowledge, skills and relationship of parents/primary caregivers and their children.
• Provide parents/primary caregivers a variety of roles to support their children’s learning and engagement such as conversing, observing, directing or leading, etc.
• Build opportunities for parents/primary caregivers to demonstrate and practice skills.
• Engage parents/primary caregivers in structured reflection on how to support their children during interactive literacy.
• Provide activities and strategies to support parents/primary caregivers in extending interactive literacy at home and in the community.
• Use family routines to introduce vocabulary and have extended conversations with their children.

Parenting Education

• Provide intentional instruction to parents/primary caregivers in facilitating school readiness and reading skills.
• Provide information on child developmental milestones to support parent’s/primary caregiver’s understanding of their child’s development.
• Provide sessions including parent/primary caregiver generated topics to support their roles as parents, e.g., health, nutrition, child rearing, etc.
• Provide information about community resources, how to access them and include community representatives to present and engage with parents/primary caregivers to reinforce learning.
• Use a variety of strategies such as discussion, coaching, role-playing, group projects, etc.
• Build the skills of parents/primary caregivers to help them actively partner with teachers.
• Strengthen links to school programs.
• Provide advocacy skill development for parents/primary caregivers, especially around their child’s education.
• Provide opportunities for parents/primary caregivers to share with and support one another.
Home Visits

- Employ home visitors with the experience, skills and qualifications to support parents/primary caregivers in transferring and applying skills and activities into the home.
- Build on individualized needs and skills from interactive literacy sessions.
- Create a literate home environment through increased availability and use of literacy and print-rich materials for children.
- Help families establish reading routines, space and support for homework and use of print to communicate.
- Use appropriate guiding techniques to support learning: model, demonstrate, lead, observe.
- Provide literacy kits for parents to use with children at home to reinforce learning activities.
- Document results of visits in order to communicate with the team (program staff) for tailored follow-up on each family.

Integrated Service Delivery Model

In order to support families in achieving their goals, a program must provide an integrated coordinated approach. The staff should operate as a team to provide specific connections across all program components. This is accomplished through required built in time for purposeful joint planning on a weekly basis. Staff meetings with all team members must be conducted on a weekly basis to review and support the participation and progress of families, and address any programmatic issues.
Required Program Components

Programs must provide services of sufficient frequency, duration and intensity to enable families to reach their goals. Summer programming is required to provide continuity in learning and skill development.

Adult Education
Frequency/Duration/Intensity

- Programs must provide a minimum of 8 hours of instruction per week.
- The preferred level of intensity is 12 to 15 hours of instruction per week.
- Programs must provide classes for a minimum of 36 weeks between September 1 through June 30, and a minimum of 5 weeks from July 1 through August 31.

Student/Teacher Ratio for Classes
Programs must offer classes of no fewer than seven and no more than 20 students per teacher.

Childhood Education
Frequency/Duration/Intensity
Children in elementary school will follow the local school district schedule for frequency, duration and intensity of instruction as well as student teacher ratio for classes.

Early Childhood (Preschool and Kindergarten)
Frequency/Duration/Intensity
Early childhood education for preschool and kindergarten must be provided for a minimum of ten hours per week. The preferred level of intensity is a full day program, five hours a day over five days a week, or four days plus a home visit on the fifth day. The preferred program will be National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited.

Student /Teacher Ratio for Classes
Early childhood programs must follow the Department of Early Education and Care regulations: http://www.eec.state.ma.us/kr_regulations_main_gcc.aspx

Family literacy programs are encouraged to collaborate with:
- All day preschools such as Universal Pre-Kindergartens (UPK) funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Programs that have been awarded UPK funding are listed on the Early Education and Care website http://www.eec.state.ma.us; and
- Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Programs funded by the Department of Education’s Elementary School Services: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ess/.

Interactive Literacy, Parenting Education and Home Visits
Frequency/Duration/Intensity
The Interactive Literacy, Parenting Education, and Home Visits components combined should total a minimum of 10 hours of service provided to each family per month. The preferred level of intensity is 14 hours per month.
Key Program Design Elements

Family Enrollment
Programs must maintain an average monthly enrollment of at least fifteen families. Programs may over-enroll classes by not more than 20% of their approved program plan. For example, in a class approved for 15 students, another three students ($15 \times 0.2 = 3$) may be enrolled for a total of 18. Only students who are officially enrolled in a class may attend that class.

Programs must immediately enroll any student in good standing who seeks to transfer from another DOE funded adult education or family literacy program, or place this student at the top of the appropriate waiting list.

Outreach and Recruitment
Programs must employ a variety of outreach and recruitment strategies in order to ensure that eligible families are aware of the program’s services. It is critical to tailor recruitment practices to language, culture and interests of the target populations. Effective strategies may include:

- Provide presentations to social service agencies and programs that serve similar target populations.
- Approach leaders of religious and cultural institutions.
- Meet with parent coordinators, counselors and teachers in education programs.
- Provide an information table at preschool screening/kindergarten registration.
- Conduct a media campaign in relevant language groups through newspapers, local cable television and radio.
- Use current or former students as spokespeople.
- Set up information tables at stores, laundromats, etc.
- Conduct events offering fun, games and food for parents and children that provides direct contact with families.

Wait List Policy
Programs are expected to maintain an active and up to date wait list for applicants who are unable to enroll due to capacity constraints.

Family Intake
Programs must have a formal process in place for conducting family intake. Programs must:

- use an intake form for both parents/primary caregivers and children that capture the information required to enter students in Massachusetts’ SMARTT student database. (Each parent/primary caregiver should be asked in a neutral manner to provide his/her social security number and to sign a release of information form for the purpose of goal follow up.);
- use a process to screen families for eligibility to ensure they meet the educational and economic guidelines;
- use a process to ensure that the ages of the children are within the eligible age range; and
- ensure the family is at a readiness level to fully commit to the program by reviewing the purpose, requirements and expectations of the program; identifying any supports that may
be needed such as child care, transportation and referrals to outside agencies; and other flexible options that will meet their needs.

Orientation
Within 2 weeks of enrollment, programs must provide all parents/primary caregivers with an orientation to ensure they understand the program and the opportunities available to them, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

- Programs must ensure that all parents/primary caregivers, including limited English proficient learners, understand the information provided at orientation.
- The information should be made available to parents/primary caregivers with low levels of English proficiency in their native language. Translation may be provided in writing, through a recording or through an interpreter (who may be a volunteer translator, a bilingual counselor, upper level student, etc.).

Student Placement
Programs must use effective assessment tools to place both parents/primary caregivers and children in the most appropriate instructional/class level.

Goal Setting Process through Family Action Plans
Family literacy providers must develop, implement, and monitor Family Action Plans (FAP). Criteria for Family Action Planning includes the following:

- Development of the plan should be conducted with a staff member who is likely to have an ongoing relationship with the parent/primary caregiver (e.g., counselors, teachers).
- Family Action Plan goals must be determined by the parent/primary caregiver in consultation and negotiation with a staff member.
- At least one goal must be identified for the parent/primary caregiver, the child and the family.
- Goals must be recorded as articulated by the parent/primary caregiver and communicated to the respective program staff.
- Family Action Plan goals must be entered into SMARTT when they are set, and their achievement must be entered when they are met.
- Family Action Plan goals must inform instruction and be incorporated into a program’s curriculum development process.
- Family Action Plan goals must be revisited on a regular basis between staff and parents/primary caregivers to assess progress and engage the learner in self-reflection regarding the level of progress made.
- The attainment of a Family Action Plan goal(s) must be documented according to the DOE’s Countable Outcomes policy (http://www.doe.ma.edu/acls/, located in the “Performance Standards” section).

Follow-up of Family Action Plans and Goal Accomplishments
Programs must use effective processes for follow up with parents/primary caregivers and former parents/primary caregivers to ascertain goal changes and achievements.

- Programs must establish protocols for follow-up services and assign staff to this function.
Follow-up utilizing a survey method of the following goals is required of all parents/primary caregivers, even when a social security has been provided:
- Enter post-secondary education
- Enter occupational training
- Obtain an ADP/EDP

Follow-up utilizing a survey method of the following goals is also required of all parents/primary caregivers who did not provide a social security number:
- Enter employment/Get a job
- Retain employment

When a social security number is provided, follow-up is not required for the following goals because data matching can be used:
- Obtain a GED
- Enter Employment
- Retain Employment

Family Retention
Programs must employ a variety of strategies to promote retention to ensure families participate in the program long enough to reach their goals:

- The program must provide each parent/primary caregiver with a student handbook that clarifies and explains program policies.
- The program must have an attendance policy that is applied effectively.
- The program must implement a process that follows up on absences of family member(s).
- The program design, schedule, and location must be responsive to the needs of the target population.
- Transportation and childcare must be provided to enable a family’s full participation in the program.
- Counseling must be provided to address issues that interfere with attendance, learning and persistence.
- The program must provide a learner centered and integrated curriculum.
- Ongoing monitoring of family progress is conducted through the Family Action Plan process.
- Celebrations of progress and accomplishments are conducted on a regular basis.
- Opportunities are provided on an ongoing basis for parents/primary caregivers to give feedback regarding all aspects of the program.
- Empowerment and leadership opportunities as well as decision-making roles are provided to parents/primary caregivers.
- Stopping out strategies such as distance learning opportunities, learning kits and other literacy materials should be offered to those families or members of families who wish to continue but external circumstances beyond their control prevent them from participating onsite for a certain period of time.

Required Assessments
Family literacy programs must conduct assessments on:

- Adult learning gains; see ACLS assessment requirements: (http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/);
• Children’s learning gains: at a minimum, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – III; and
• Parent/Primary Caregiver gains which support the role of parents/primary caregivers as their child’s first teacher and partner in their child’s education. The Parent Education Profile (PEP) assesses the skill of parents/primary caregivers in engaging in language-rich parent-child interaction; providing support for literacy in the home; holding appropriate expectations of their child’s learning and development; and forming and maintaining connections with community and other relevant resources.

Formative Assessments
In addition to the DOE assessments, programs must conduct ongoing formative assessments. Both the required and the formative assessments must be used to measure learner progress, inform learners of their progress and inform instruction. These assessments may include activities such as role plays, mock interviews, writing exercises, quizzes, dictations, student self-assessment, portfolios, and presentations.

Curriculum and Instruction
Adult Education
Curriculum development and instruction must be aligned with and incorporate learning standards from the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks and contribute to parents’/primary caregivers’ progress toward achieving their goals. The program must be working toward one unified program-wide curriculum for each service type (e.g., ABE, ESOL).

• The curriculum development process must involve all levels of stakeholders from the student to the Program Director.
• The program must have regular and ongoing common planning time for the purpose of developing curricula.
• The program must base its methodologies and strategies on a foundation of research and effective practice.
• Programs must have a written curriculum outline that provides high quality instructional programs based on scientifically based research that is aligned with the Massachusetts ABE curriculum frameworks learning standards and is used by all staff and administrators.
• Instructional methods must include interactive activities to engage a range of learning preferences, e.g., visual, aural, tactile, kinesthetic, etc.
• Curricula must be designed to bring students from the lowest to the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities. (SPL 0-6 and GLE 0-12; programs may serve up to SPL 7.)
• Where curriculum offerings are met through collaborations, the curricula at the collaborating entity or entities must be complementary to each other and aligned with the curriculum frameworks.
• Parents’/Primary Caregivers’ goals and objectives must be incorporated into the curriculum, shaping and updating it as parents’/primary caregivers’ needs change.
• The curricula and associated materials must reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the parents/primary caregivers served.
• Curricula must incorporate “authentic” real-life contexts that are responsive to the needs, skills, goals and interests of parents/primary caregivers in their roles as workers, family members, members of the community and lifelong learners.
• The curriculum must not be dependent upon a single publication or student text.
• Instructional design, lesson planning and teaching strategies in the classroom must be coordinated with curriculum design at the program level.
• Instructors must have written lesson plans. Instructional strategies including whole group, small group, and individualized instruction must be used to respond to the needs of the learner population at diverse levels and with different learning styles. Strategies should also promote team and leadership skills.
• The program must use the benchmarks in the Curriculum Frameworks to help coordinate instructional levels.
• A variety of tools and technologies (e.g., audio-visual, computers, video, telephones, tape recorders, calculators, etc.) must be used to support learning.
• Teachers should create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and promotes active classroom participation in which learners are willing to take risks, e.g., in ESOL with respect to the use of English.
• Increase staff proficiency in curriculum and adaptations.

See the Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Frameworks (http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/) for more information.

Early Childhood
Curriculum development and instruction for preschool programming must follow the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences (http://www.eec.state.ma.us, Key Resources, Technical Assistance Papers).

Curriculum development and instruction for kindergarten must be aligned with and incorporate learning standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and contribute to child’s progress toward achieving his/her learning goals (http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/).

Instructional Materials for Parents/Primary Caregivers
Approximately $80 can be allocated for instructional materials per parent/primary caregiver.
• Parents/Primary Caregivers must be provided with instructional materials (e.g., texts, workbooks, worksheets, dictionaries, and manipulatives) for classroom use and for review at home. The expenses for educational software may also be included.
• Photocopying that infringes on copyright laws is not permitted.

Integration of ABE and Workforce Development
In order to assist the many parents/primary caregivers that identify employment related goals (e.g., get a job, get a better job, increase earnings, advance in current job) the integration of ABE and workforce development is encouraged. Workforce development partners include but are not limited to: Career Centers, businesses, unions, Local Workforce Investment Boards, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and skills training programs.

If a parent’s/primary caregiver’s articulated goals indicate a need for employability skills, programs are encouraged to provide instructional services that align with employment related outcomes. For example, these programs should develop an integrated or contextualized curriculum. A contextualized curriculum makes instruction more immediately relevant to the parent’s primary caregiver’s career interests that is likely to improve retention.
An integrated curriculum usually refers to working with multiple content areas in the same curriculum, e.g., an ABE/ESOL integrated curriculum with a workforce development focus would integrate basic skills, literacy and numeracy with employability content. This content might include job readiness skills, interview techniques, vocabulary from business technology, creative use of literature and video to explore larger workplace themes, workplace communication issues, etc.

**Role and Responsibilities of an Educational Counselor**

Programs must have a designated Educational Counselor to provide parents/primary caregivers with support services and guidance to assist them and their families in meeting their goals. Educational Counseling responsibilities include:

- Intake, assessment, and follow-up. Family goal setting must be coordinated with teachers to inform instruction;
- Referrals to other community resources/agencies. If the program is in a community that has a DOE funded program, referrals should also be made with organizations identified through and participating in ABE Community Planning;
- Assistance in overcoming barriers to attendance and persistence such as childcare and transportation;
- Assistance with transitioning:
  - parents/primary caregivers to their next step in their academic/job training experience; this includes maintaining a close and proactive working relationship with area Career Center and Community College admissions staff; and
  - children as they move from one educational level to another, i.e., preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to Grade 1.
- Record keeping to include documentation of counseling activities and hours

Educational Counseling must be provided to all enrolled parents/primary caregivers in the program. The program must have the capacity to communicate and provide counseling with the most predominant learner language group in their native language. Educational counseling must be available at flexible times to meet the needs of the parents/primary caregivers, including the time during class hours. There must be a posted schedule stating the days and times that counseling is available to students.

**Program Accessibility**

Programs must provide physical accessibility to all. Disabled students must be able to access all services, but not necessarily at every site. The program must have a system (policy, staffing and resources) in place to provide reasonable accommodations for students with physical and self-disclosed disabilities either through its own resources or by referral to outside agencies.

**Indicators of Program Quality**

The performance standards for family literacy programs are the criteria set forth in the Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ). There are performance criteria for adults (parents/primary caregivers), children and families. The performance criteria are informed by several years of Even Start data and are set at or near the Massachusetts state average. The performance criteria encourage programs to work toward continuous improvement and effective program administration and lead to successful outcomes for both parents/primary caregivers and children. The Even Start
Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ) for Massachusetts are available at: www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/resources/.
Program and Staff Development
Program and Staff Development

Program Development

Each program is required to engage annually in a formal planning process for continuous improvement. (The terms Program Development/Program Continuous Improvement Planning may be used interchangeably.) The overall goal of program planning is to ensure the program is offering high quality services to families to assist them in meeting their goals. Program development activities must focus on the infrastructure that comprises the systems or components that make up the whole program. It should examine the practices and processes that the program uses to support or prevent families from achieving their goals and pinpoint and describe the factors that impact the program’s ability to meet performance standards.

Programs are required to submit an annual Continuous Improvement Plan to their Program Specialists. Programs must use one of the two formats for “action plans” found in the SABES Planning for Program Improvement: A Manual for ABE Programs available at http://www.sabes.org/administration/dirdocs.htm. Note that what is labeled as an action plan in the manual is the format programs should use for their “Continuous Improvement Plan”.

The continuous improvement planning process must be purposeful and intentional as well as ongoing and systematic so that a program continually evaluates its efforts to improve its services. A program with a planning process in place is better able to respond to changing community needs and demographics, new initiatives, new trends in technology, staff turnover, etc.

Key steps in the continuous improvement planning process include:

- Assess program needs/strengths (The process looks at each component and the interrelationship of components within the program, e.g., intake, orientation, curriculum development, instruction, assessment, counseling, follow-up, etc.) Programs are encouraged to engage in a self-assessment process using the Guide to Assess Quality of Family Literacy Programs in Massachusetts as a tool. See www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/resources/ under the heading Even Start Family Literacy Documents;
- Define and prioritize goals for program improvement based on needs;
- Develop a continuous improvement (action/work) plan to meet goal (s) that incorporate individual staff development plans;
- Engage in activities to implement the plan in order to meet those goals and document these efforts; and
- Evaluate efforts and progress such as the effectiveness of the plan and making revisions as needed.

Additionally, the Continuous Improvement Plan must include an established process for collecting, analyzing and using data (including Cognos data) to assist with daily operations, program planning and continuous improvement.
These activities constitute a cycle of planning that guides the process of continuous improvement from one year to the next. The steps may be simple or involved. For example, the “assess program needs/strengths” step may be as straightforward as asking, “What is needed?” A more elaborate approach might involve a staff retreat, outside consultants, and a year-long extensive data collection activity. Programs make these determinations based on their individual philosophies, identified goals, staffing and the resources at their disposal.

Programs must ensure time is available to conduct a thorough continuous improvement planning process that includes all staff.

**Staff Development for Each Staff Member**

Every staff member in a program, e.g., teachers, support staff, counselor, director, no matter how experienced, must participate in professional development activities. (The terms “staff development” and “professional development” may be used interchangeably.)

Many different kinds of activities “count” as staff development (not only workshops) so that staff may study, practice and reflect in the process of acquiring new skills and/or knowledge. Some examples of these types of staff development activities include: peer coaching, study circles, teacher research, mini-courses and institutes, reading, visiting another program to learn new practices, etc.

Annually, each staff member must:

- assess his/her needs for professional development;
- set and prioritize goals for each year’s staff development;
- create an individual staff development plan. (The plan should address the individual staff member’s goals for professional development and also align with the program’s improvement goals.);
- engage in the selected staff development activity(ies); and
- evaluate and document the staff development efforts and activity(ies).

Programs must ensure that staff is compensated for participation in program approved and/or DOE required staff development activities.

**Integrate Program and Staff Development Planning**

Every program benefits from efforts to improve its own systems as well as individual staff members’ skills and knowledge. A "process", however is needed to help the program and the individual staff manage these efforts so they are working toward a common goal or purpose. The full impact of the program and staff development efforts can best be achieved when the two are joined systematically. The steps recommended earlier in this section for the continuous improvement planning apply as well as the creation of an individual staff development plan for each staff member.
Planning Time

Weekly Staff Meetings
Programs must have weekly staff meetings that allow for the participation of all staff. It is recommended that staff use this time to address programmatic areas such as: family progress, recruitment strategies, rates of retention and persistence, curriculum development; student learning gains, and/or other program related activities.

Integration of Components
The program schedule must include time for staff which supports planning an integrated curriculum across program components.

Program Improvement
Programs must set aside time at the beginning and end of the year for planning purposes. This should be an opportunity to engage all staff in an overall program planning process that includes an opportunity to reflect on all aspects of the program and to make changes/modifications needed for program improvement.
Administration
Administration

Program Directors are expected to implement these guidelines and must have written personnel and administrative policies and procedures in place to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and to guarantee fiscal accountability.

Educational Leadership

The Director is responsible for the overall coordination, administration, and educational leadership of the program. The Director oversees the hiring, training and supervision of all staff, provides written job descriptions, policy manuals, mission statement, and organizational chart to all staff. The demographics of the program staff reflect the ethnicity, linguistic and cultural background of the target population. Interview/hiring teams include key stakeholders (e.g., learner and staff representation). The Director is responsible for preparing grant applications, reports and statistics to DOE, as well as for sharing any DOE updates and mailings with all staff.

The program must have an organizational chart that includes the umbrella organization as well as the entire program.

The Director’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Facilitates effective program development activities in accordance with program needs and leads the process to set program goals and program improvement goals;
- Oversees overall fiscal oversight and ensures that expenditures are allowable and appropriate and that allocated funds are available throughout the fiscal year;
- Ensures accessibility for all learners;
- Oversees curriculum design and development and ensures that program curricula are aligned with DOE Curriculum Frameworks for parents/primary caregivers and kindergarten children; and Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences for preschool children. Instructional processes and strategies must be based on scientifically based research. Student goal-setting and the assessment of student learning are part of the curricula design;
- Conducts staff evaluations annually at a minimum, including classroom observations, written feedback and follow up for instructional staff;
- Maintains a time and effort record for each staff person;
- Maintains written job descriptions for each job category of the program;
- Oversees student outreach, intake, orientation and recruitment policies;
- Provides ongoing staff supervision;
- Promotes clear procedures for collecting, documenting, analyzing and reporting data and engages the staff in data analysis. The Director also promotes the use of data for program improvement and accountability. The Director must establish and maintain an effective record-keeping system;
- Oversees activities that build capacity within the community to incorporate strategies and practices that support all parents as partners in their child’s education to ensure school success; and
- Attends all DOE required meetings.
**Program Governance**

Programs must provide an annual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) reflecting all required elements representing the primary collaborators and their respective accountability.

The MOA must be signed by all parties, renewed annually and must:
- include a description of how grant funds relate to supporting overhead costs as well as how funding will be allocated among the partnering organizations;
- include the roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization;
- outline decision-making protocols; and
- include protocols for terminating the partnership/s.

**Staff Compensation**

Programs must provide a competitive package of salary and benefits that will attract and retain highly qualified and experienced staff. Programs are encouraged to use the following calculations as a minimum standard for setting salary and benefits rates:

- **$18.27** for professional services staff who receive fringe benefits and **$22.83** for such staff not receiving benefits. This results in a "contact hour rate" of **$34.25** for teachers.

The $34.25 contact hour rate is computed as follows:

1. use a direct service rate of $18.27/hour and 25% fringe benefits;
2. add fringe benefits = $18.27 x 1.25 = $22.83; and
3. compensate a teaching to prep time ratio of 2:1.

A teacher paid for two hours of teaching plus one hour of prep receives $68.49 for 2 hours of teaching ($22.83 x 3), or $34.24 for 1 hour of teaching. The rates do not support paid prep time for teachers earning an hourly rate equal or close to this contact hour rate of $34.25.

Paid prep time is not needed when the hourly rate paid by programs meets or exceeds the $34.25 per hour.

It is recommended that the program support an hourly rate of **$25.12** for administrators plus fringe benefits valued at 25% and **$31.40** for those without benefits.

It is recommended that the program support an hourly rate of **$13.70** for clerical staff plus fringe benefits valued at 25% and **$17.13** for those without benefits.

**Collaboration**

Programs are required to have an Advisory Council made up of a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, students, businesses and local officials). The Advisory Council must include the collaborating agencies that are providing family literacy services.

This Council should play an active role to support the program’s ability to meet its goals; contribute to the program’s success; assist in financial support of the program and meeting local match requirements; and incorporate family literacy programming into existing systems. The Advisory Council must meet at least quarterly per year and programs must maintain meeting minutes.
Statement of Assurances
Programs are required to submit a signed Statement of Assurances each year. Listed below are some of the key assurances:

Documentation of Services
Programs must maintain accurate documentation for all required and agreed to services.

- An updated staffing chart or equivalent documentation must be maintained on site to provide accurate details of how staff resources are assigned to all essential program functions.
- Programs must be able to demonstrate that required functions, equipment and materials are provided according to the approved budget (e.g., counseling, transportation, program and staff development).
- Programmatic and fiscal data collection and reporting systems are official records. Falsification of any required documentation or report may be grounds for immediate termination of the grant, return of grant funds and/or prosecution.
- Programs must maintain both programmatic and fiscal records for seven years. Programmatic records include, but are not limited to SMARTT intake forms, goals information sheets, educational counseling notes, meeting minutes.

Required Reporting
Programs must submit timely and accurate reports. Examples of these reports include the Standard Application for Grants, amendment requests, final financial reports, continuous improvement planning reports, etc.

- Programs must input data at least monthly into the SMARTT ABE database program.
- Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports may result in a suspension of further payments until the DOE receives accurate and complete reports.

Required Staff Trainings

New Staff Orientation
A program must offer each new staff person an orientation to the program. This orientation must include an overview of the program’s philosophy, services, goals, policies and procedures and DOE requirements including these Guidelines. Additionally, all staff must receive an employee policies and procedures handbook that addresses key employee issues, for example, absenteeism, travel reimbursement, benefits, accessibility policies, grievance procedures, performance appraisal, expectations for staff behavior, working hours, professional development, and benefits.

The SABES New Staff Orientation (NSO) provides a broad introduction to the Adult Basic Education system in Massachusetts, and includes information on the adult learner, adult learning theory, approaches to teaching, curriculum and assessment, literacy and language acquisition, and an overview of the field. Not intended as a basic course in teaching, the NSO is rather a first step from which adult education teachers can go on to further staff development.
Directors must complete a New Family Literacy Directors Orientation and all staff, including directors, must participate in a two-day family literacy training.

**Program Design Training**

Family Literacy Programs are required to utilize the tools in the System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT) to develop a program plan. The Program Design training is designed to enable participants to develop a fundable plan using SMARTT that is consistent with the Guidelines for Effective Comprehensive Family Literacy Programs and DOE policy requirements.

All Directors and other staff who may be required to enter program plans into SMARTT must complete this training within the first 12 months of hire.

Programs are required to maintain at all times a minimum of two staff proficient in using SMARTT and Cognos. Programs are encouraged to send two staff members (who have regular SMARTT responsibilities) to SMARTT and Cognos trainings, including refresher/update trainings as needed in order to stay current with changes.

Directors need proficiency in using SMARTT in order to prepare and submit a program design annually; and in Cognos in order to regularly review and analyze their performance data. In addition to the director, most programs choose as the second trained person a support staff person who then usually becomes the primary data entry person. Programs are required to send new people for training whenever turnover of trained staff necessitates.
Adult Basic Education Community Planning
If a family literacy program is located in a community that receives DOE funding for an Adult Learning Center, the Director or representative of the program is required to participate as a partner in their community planning process. Adult Basic Education Community planning partnerships work towards the following goals:

- To ensure that the needs of all undereducated and/or limited English proficient constituencies are accounted for, and that strategic plans are developed that identify how and when every such constituency will ultimately be served;
- To ensure that every organization with an interest in, and the potential for, supporting services to these populations is included in such planning, and that protocols are established to coordinate these services;
- To ensure that students benefit from the broadest possible array of education, employment and training, health and human services that so many students need in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations; and
- To ensure that adult basic education takes its place as a key ingredient in every organization’s, community’s and region’s plans to improve the quality of life.


Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance
 Adults
The Americans with Disabilities Act, enacted in 1990, is federal legislation to ensure that people with physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities have equal access to services available to the general population. As a provider of services to the public, each program is obligated to provide reasonable access to services for all persons. In an effort to ensure that all programs are responsive to adult learners with disabilities, the Department requires that each program ensure compliance with ADA.

Children
Programs should ensure that all preschool children be screened through the community’s annual preschool screening to determine if there are any special needs.
Fiscal Responsibilities
Grantees must operate programs using sound fiscal procedures that meet all state and federal requirements.

- Non-governmental grantees must submit an annual audit report to the Department of Education.
- The grant recipient will not use the award funds to pay for expenses that have been paid for by any other local, state, federal, or private award.
- Fiscal reports must be submitted by the deadline established by the Department of Education unless the grant recipient acquires a prior written waiver. Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports will result in a suspension of further payments until the Department of Education receives accurate and complete reports.
- Programs must track expenditures and notify DOE if there is a change in their fiscal plan (under-spending, etc.). If a program believes that funds will be unspent during the program year, they must notify ACLS at least 2 months prior to the end of the fiscal year. ACLS will reallocate these funds, as unspent funds are reverted back to the state or federal government, not to ACLS.
- Programs must maintain a time and effort record for each staff person that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.
- All staff must be paid for the number of hours and at the hourly rate reflected in the approved Program Design. This includes hours and rates on the DOE Direct and Non-DOE (Match) staffing charts.
- Grant recipients must identify the Department of Education as the entity supporting the delivery of services in any official correspondence, brochures and publications.
- Grants Information can be found at: http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/

Facility Costs
Rental costs may be charged to the DOE grant if the budget request was approved.

- The agency must have on file rental documents, such as leases or receipts that demonstrate the actual amount of money paid to the landlord.
- The cost of the space being claimed by the agency must be adjusted to reflect the percent usage for the funded program.
- If the agency claims donated or in-kind space as match, the agency must be able to demonstrate that the amount claimed reflects the market value of that space prorated for usage by the program.
- Agencies receiving 100% reimbursement for facilities costs from state government (e.g., public schools, community colleges, corrections facilities) may not charge lease, rental, or utilities costs to state or federally funded grants with the intention of using the grant money to supplant the state's contribution. Grant funds may be used for facilities costs if the agency has a cost allocation plan to identify each allocated service and defines the method used to appropriately distribute the costs on a reasonable and consistent basis.
Administrative Costs and Indirect Costs
Grantees must not commit more than 25% of grant funds to administrative costs.

For grant programs that allow indirect costs the list below applies. Please note this does not apply to the Even Start Family Literacy Program.

- Agencies with a DOE approved indirect cost rate (IDC) shall not receive more than a 5% indirect rate for programs.
- Agencies with an approved federal indirect cost rate shall not receive more than an 8% indirect rate for programs.
- The total of direct and indirect costs may not exceed your total grant award.
- In lieu of charging for indirect costs, grantees that provide an appropriate and detailed allocation of agency wide costs to programs may receive DOE approval to include them as direct costs.
- Agencies must re-apply every year for an approved indirect cost rate.

Indirect Cost Assignment When Sub-Grantees Are Involved
An agency that oversees sub-grantees may distribute overhead in one of several ways, depending on whether the grantee and its sub-grantees have approved indirect cost rates.

- If the Prime Grantee is the only agency with an approved IDC rate, then only the Prime Grantee can charge IDC.
- If the Prime Grantee has no approved IDC rate, but the sub-contractors do, then only the sub-contractors can charge IDC.
- If the Prime Grantee has an approved IDC rate, and the sub-contractors also have approved rates, then both the Prime Grantee and the sub-contractors can charge IDC.
- DOE only approves indirect rates to the prime recipient. If DOE doesn’t directly approve an indirect rate for a subcontractor, the Prime Grantee must ensure that the sub-contractor has an approved indirect cost rate. If both agencies claim indirect, the total indirect dollar cannot be higher than the amount the prime recipient could receive.

Full-Time Equivalency
Grantees must base full-time equivalency (FTE) calculations on the grantee agency's written definition.

- FTE for non-public school programs is calculated by dividing the employees paid hours/year by the number of annual hours that the agency defines as "full time," i.e., (actual paid hrs/wk) x (paid wks/yr)/ (agency definition of full time hrs/wk) x (52 wks).
- The FTE for public school programs is based on the district's definition of full-time employment.

No Charges to Families
Programs must ensure that families enrolled in DOE funded family literacy programs shall NOT be charged tuition, fees or any other charges or be required to purchase any books or materials that are needed for participation in the program.
Equipment Inventory
Programs should maintain an inventory of equipment. The inventory of computers, copiers, furniture and other major items purchased with DOE funding must be updated annually. There is a policy for disposal of such items when they become out of date. The inventory list should include:

- A description of each item;
- The model and serial or other identifying number;
- The source of the property (grant number, agreement number, etc.);
- Acquisition date and cost;
- Location and condition of the equipment prior to disposal; and
- Date of disposal and sale price (including the method used to determine fair market value) if applicable.
Obsolete Equipment
Equipment may be considered obsolete depending on the type. For example, a computer older than four years may be considered obsolete. Some office equipment such as fax or copy machines, overhead projectors may be considered obsolete after five years, while furniture and other large items (desks, file cabinets, vehicles, etc.) may be considered obsolete after ten years. While equipment items may be discarded or disposed of, equipment databases or inventory lists must be kept for not less than 15 years and should be updated annually. Equipment purchase records such as requisitions, packing slips, and invoices must be retained for seven years.

Equipment Disposal Requirements
If a program is closing or has usable equipment and/or materials it no longer needs, the program must contact ACLS. The reallocation of the equipment and/or materials is at the discretion of ACLS and subject to any grant funded requirements. ACLS will notify programs on what process to use.

Mandated Reporters of Abuse
All DOE funded programs are considered mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse. Mandated reporters:

- include public and private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or adjustment counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, social workers, day care providers, health care professionals, court and public safety officials;
- are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report. (Non-mandated reporters are also protected providing the report was made in “good faith”);
- are protected from retaliation and identities will be kept confidential; and
- who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to $1,000.

The table below outlines age, population, reporting agency and statute information for mandated reporters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE: 0 – 17 years old</th>
<th>18 – 59 years old</th>
<th>60+ years old</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Disabled Adults</td>
<td>Elderly</td>
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<td>Disabled Persons Protection Commission</td>
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<td>Social Services</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Statute</td>
<td>51A</td>
<td>19C</td>
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