

Pennsylvania's

Indicators

of
Program

Quality

**for Adult Basic and
Family Literacy
Education**



Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
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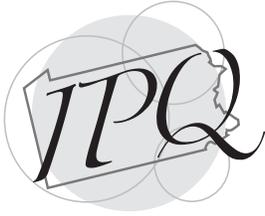
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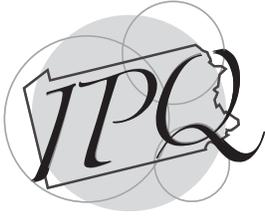
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Introduction to Pennsylvania's Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education (2010)

What are the elements of quality Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education programs? In 1993, as mandated by the National Literacy Act of 1991 (NLA), the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) adopted its first Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ) to outline the characteristics and goals every ABLE-funded program would strive to achieve. In 1999, after the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) replaced the NLA, a revised IPQ was developed. In 2002, *Pennsylvania's Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality* targeted Family Literacy and Even Start programs. These documents have served to guide evaluation and continuous improvement of Pennsylvania's ABLE-funded programs.

The conceptual framework for the Indicators relies on principles of the Baldrige National Quality Program, aimed at promoting performance excellence in the learning and sharing of successful organizational performance practices, principles and strategies. Baldrige principles were applied to demonstrate consistency in Pennsylvania's approach to continuous program improvement in its workforce development system, and then extended to ABLE specifically. The ABLE indicators recognized the many reasons that adults have for enrolling in education programs, including purposes not directly related to the workforce, as well the extensive use of volunteer tutors in Pennsylvania.

Revisions to Pennsylvania's Indicators of Program Quality have reflected a variety of contemporary developments. First, the revisions addressed new federal requirements contained in Title II of the WIA, including reference to research-based practice, use of technology and the ability to produce documented learner outcomes. Second, revisions reflected Pennsylvania's emphasis on continuous program improvement, use of sound assessment practices linked to curriculum and instruction and participation in comprehensive community planning. Indicators were added to align with the Pennsylvania CareerLink® system, such as those related to measuring customer satisfaction and meeting the needs of employers.

In 2002, a separate set of Indicators of Program Quality was developed for Family Literacy programs. Included were indicators established by Even Start, Head Start, the National Center for Family Literacy and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Research and practice related to parenting education and parent involvement were reviewed and incorporated. Focus groups of family literacy practitioners reviewed the draft IPQs to get feedback on usability and consistency with other accountability systems. Most important, these IPQs developed an integrated and comprehensive Family Literacy accountability system. They created a framework for aligning and connecting the

program performance standards, statewide evaluation and local Even Start evaluations with the program improvement system, professional development and technical assistance. Thus, programs could study their data in the context of the IPQs, then identify and investigate specific problems in order to support ongoing program improvement and tailor training and assistance to real needs.

This, the 2010 revision, responds to new research, new developments in the field, new philosophies, a new political environment and new federal and state mandates. Much of the preceding content was retained, but in modified or expanded form. Most notable is that general Adult Education and Family Literacy indicators are now combined, in support of participants' goals as effective family members, workers and citizens. Several indicators address requirements unique to Family Literacy programs.

This edition consolidates indicators into four sections: **Program Operations**, **Instructional Systems**, **Community Collaborations** and **Learner Outcomes**. Here is a brief description of how each section and subsection differs from comparable areas of earlier versions of Pennsylvania's Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Basic and Literacy Education and Pennsylvania's Family Literacy Indicators of Program Quality.

Program Operations

Learning Environment extends concepts from the *Family Outcomes and Program Accountability* section of the former Family Literacy IPQs to all ABE programs, setting the stage for a program structure conducive to positive learner outcomes.

Professional Support and Continuous Improvement places new emphasis on the essential elements that foster teacher change: a framework for supporting instructional staff and a true investment in professional development, particularly by allowing time for reflection on practice.

Leadership is a significantly expanded subsection asserting that program leaders not only abide by the regulations and manage budgets, but also exhibit wide-ranging characteristics of excellent leadership.

Accountability builds on the preceding elements to demonstrate effectiveness. New in this edition is maintenance of fiscal records.

Instructional Systems

Assessment recognizes the value of formative, alternative and employment-skills assessments in addition to standardized tests in all types of programs.

Planning for Instruction adds support for the development of learning plans and for sufficient instructional planning time.

Curricula includes Family Literacy and emphasizes staying abreast of new technologies and methods and incorporating them into curriculum.

Instructional Practices and Delivery enlarges to address all types of

programs: basic literacy, English language, work readiness and Family Literacy, with a new emphasis on applying professional development to practice.

Community Collaborations

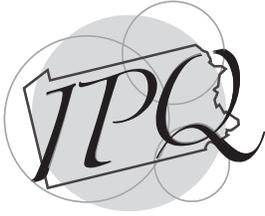
Community Collaborations reflects the current collaborative relationship among adult and family literacy education, community agencies and workforce development partners—a more comprehensive, coordinated approach to supporting participants’ paths toward goals.

Learner Outcomes

Learner Outcomes incorporates and augments the student-related indicators from the former *Customer Results and Accountability* section. This section promotes critical markers of learner success, such as self-management, critical evaluation, independence and persistence.

The Bureau of ABLÉ encourages our funded programs to prioritize these new Indicators of Program Quality and discuss ways to apply them to continuous program improvement and professional development planning. The IPQs provide a valuable resource for identifying and analyzing key areas of service on which to concentrate our efforts for optimal results.





Definitions of Terms

Adult Education — Services and instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals who either lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills; do not have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent; or are unable to speak, read or write the English language. Federal and state legislation provide specific criteria for eligibility for these services.

alternative assessment — Assessment for the special needs populations that requires the instructor to define student-specific learning targets (academic or behavioral), and to periodically measure and document the extent to which those targets or objectives are met.

community of practice — A group of people who share information and experiences to learn from each other and develop themselves professionally.

cross-training — The training of one employee to understand another's work; for example, an ABLÉ teacher who acquires PA CareerLink® Certification or a Head Start employee who participates in ABLÉ professional development activities.

curriculum — A written plan that includes the goals for learning, the experiences through which the goals will be achieved, what instructional staff and learners do to achieve those goals and the materials needed to support the implementation.

delivery systems — Various processes for providing instruction, including center-based, home-based, large-group, small-group, individual (one-on-one tutoring), distance and computer-assisted instruction.

evidence-based instruction — Methods and materials based on instructional practices that have a record of success. That is, there is reliable, trustworthy and valid evidence to suggest that when used with a particular group of students, adequate learning gains can be expected. "Research-based instruction" is sometimes used to convey the same meaning. (International Reading Association, adapted)

Family Literacy — Programs addressing the literacy needs of all members of the family while promoting parents' involvement in their children's education as their children's first teachers and most powerful influence on their academic success. These programs improve educational opportunities of eligible families by integrating early childhood education and adult education in a unified program.

formative assessment — Assessment used by teachers and students during instruction to provide feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. (PA Department of Education, Standards Aligned System, www.pdesas.org)

instructional leadership—Instructional leadership involves the following major functions: setting academic goals; organizing instruction; hiring, supervising and evaluating instructors; protecting instructional time; creating a climate for learning and monitoring achievement and evaluating programs. Instructional leaders understand and are accountable for all facets of the instructional program, minimize the distance between instruction and administration and instill pride and interdependence among teachers. (Based on the work of James Weber (1987) *Instructional Leadership: A Composite Working Model. A synthesis of the Literature*)

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA) — Component of a Family Literacy program that consists of regularly scheduled sessions for parent-child interaction, in which parents and children learn and play together as a family unit and acquire ideas for transferring learning to the home.

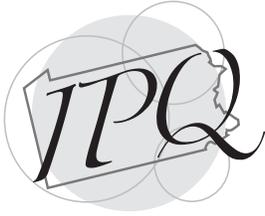
PA CareerLink® — PA CareerLink® is the name of Pennsylvania's One-Stop delivery system. The One-Stop system, mandated by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is a system under which entities responsible for administering separate workforce investment, educational and other human-resource programs and funding streams (referred to as One-Stop partners) collaborate to create a seamless system of service delivery for job seekers and employers.

Parenting Education (PE) — Component of Family Literacy that focuses on strengthening parents' support of their young children's language and literacy development and early school success.

special needs — Classification for adult learners who demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics: mental retardation, severe emotional illness, brain injury, severe visual impairment, severe hearing impairment, or specific learning disabilities.

stakeholder — Person, group, organization or system that affects or can be affected by an organization's actions.

standardized assessment—Assessment with predetermined, established, standard procedures for administration, scoring, interpretation and reporting of results. (McMillan, J. (2001). *Essential Assessment Concepts for Teachers and Administrators*, p. 103. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.)



The Indicators of Program Quality

The indicators of quality in Pennsylvania's Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education programs are described in four categories:

1. Program Operations

- **Learning Environment**
- **Professional Support and Continuous Improvement**
- **Leadership**
- **Accountability**

2. Instructional Systems

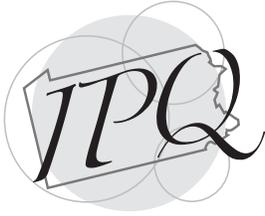
- **Assessment**
- **Planning for Instruction**
- **Curricula**
- **Instructional Practices and Delivery**

3. Community Collaborations

4. Learning Outcomes

All of the elements work together in various interrelated configurations toward the goals of desired outcomes.

The following pages break down each category into specific elements. Italics indicate inclusion in Definition of Terms on pages 7 and 8.



I. Program Operations

Key Concept:

Quality programs:

- articulate and promote a clear mission and vision that aligns with state priorities and local needs.
- provide a learning environment and structure of support in which learners and staff can excel.
- continuously strive to improve products, services and processes.
- provide leadership that ensures accountability, collaboration, continuous improvement, support for staff and quality instruction.
- account for activities, accept responsibility for them and disclose the results in a transparent manner.

Learning Environment

- 1.1 The program's organizational and learning environments reflect the culture, community, language and *special needs* of learners.
- 1.2 The program offers a range of quality and intensive services to enable learners to persist in instruction and meet their educational and career goals.
- 1.3 Facilities are safe, accessible and appropriate for learners and families.
- 1.4 The *Family Literacy* program has procedures and a process in place to fully integrate the four components of *Family Literacy (Adult Education, Parenting Education, Early Childhood Education and Interactive Literacy Activities)* to maximize learning gains for its families

Professional Support and Continuous Improvement

- 1.5 The program has a well-defined program improvement process that includes regularly scheduled meetings, agency-wide participation and an up-to-date program improvement plan informed by the use of state, program and student data.
- 1.6 The program provides ongoing assistance and supervision for staff to effectively do their jobs. The program provides *instructional leadership* and supports *communities of practice*.
- 1.7 The program develops and implements agency and individual professional development plans reflecting both organizational and individual needs. The program supports staff in professional development planning, reflection and application of new knowledge and skills.

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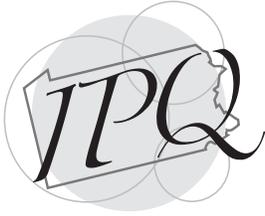
- 1.8 Program staff improve their practice through regular participation in professional development activities. New staff, paid and unpaid, receive orientation to program operations and to the field of Adult and Family Literacy Education.
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- 1.9 The program has well-trained staff. Advanced training and degrees in fields such as *Adult Education*, *Early Childhood Education* (for *Family Literacy*) or social work are rewarded.
-

Leadership

- 1.10 Program leaders ensure compliance with federal and state legislation, rules and regulations and Bureau policies, while demonstrating effective management skills.
-
- 1.11 Program leaders coordinate funding streams with Workforce Investment Act Title I and Title II programs as well as additional partners including the *PA CareerLink*[®] system, community colleges, career and technical schools, early childhood education providers and health and human services.
-
- 1.12 Program leaders, with input from *stakeholders*, develop multi-year, program-specific strategic plans that guide service delivery, program improvement and staff development.
-
- 1.13 Program leaders ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, are properly qualified through training, education or experience. Program leaders supervise and conduct regular performance appraisals with all staff with an emphasis on quality instruction.
-
- 1.14 Program leaders recognize exemplary achievement in staff and learners.
-
- 1.15 Program leaders are aware of advances in the field of Adult and Family Literacy Education and ensure research- and *evidence-based instruction* with a focus on life skills, work and preparation for postsecondary education and training.
-
- 1.16 Program leaders participate in activities, initiatives and professional organizations at the state and national levels.
-

Accountability

- 1.17 The program demonstrates effectiveness in improving learners' academic and employability skills by meeting or exceeding performance standards established by the state.
-
- 1.18 The program maintains a high-quality information management system including paper and electronic records with the capacity to document learner progress and outcomes and program performance.
-
- 1.19 The program maintains fiscal records and follows sound financial practices that enable compliance with federal and state legislation, rules and regulations.
-



2. Instructional Systems

Key Concept:

Effective instructional systems:

- *use assessment results and student goals as part of a comprehensive and integrated process of instructional planning.*
- *incorporate technology, real-life contexts, research and proven practices into curriculum and instruction.*

Assessment

- 2.1 Program staff are trained in and correctly use state-approved adult *standardized assessments* to obtain valid and reliable results. *Family Literacy* staff is also trained in and correctly use appropriate state approved early childhood and *Interactive Literacy Activity (ILA)* assessments to obtain valid and reliable results.
-
- 2.2 Assessment results are used to place learners within the instructional program, document student progress, continuously guide instruction and update goals.
-
- 2.3 Additional assessment tools are used to assess literacy and numeracy skills, career interests, work-readiness and vocational skills, knowledge and abilities.
-
- 2.4 *Family Literacy* instructional staff use *formative* assessments and personal/family goals to assess parenting skills and parents' knowledge of their children's development and school success.
-
- 2.5 Instructors are trained in and correctly use *alternative assessments* when *standardized assessments* are not appropriate, in accordance with Bureau policy related to serving adults with *special needs*.
-

Planning for Instruction

- 2.6 Program staff and learners jointly develop, regularly evaluate and update individual learning plans that incorporate the students' assessment results and short- and long-term educational and employment goals.
-
- 2.7 Program staff develop instructional plans that support the learning and development of adults. *Family Literacy* instructional plans support the learning and development of adults, children and families in all *Family Literacy* components.
-
- 2.8 Instructors are allotted sufficient planning time to develop lessons of appropriate intensity and duration with clear learning objectives that support instructional goals and individual learning plans.
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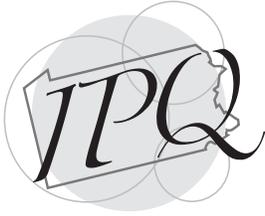
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Curricula

- 2.9 *Curricula* provide for learning and skill building in real-life and culturally appropriate contexts that support learners to be effective family members, workers and citizens.
-
- 2.10 *Curricula* development is based on learning theory and proven practices, current materials and technologies and well-articulated instructional goals of reasonable scope and sequence.
-
- 2.11 *Family Literacy curricula* meet Pennsylvania’s Early Learning and Academic Standards and are modified to meet children’s individual developmental abilities.
-
- 2.12 The *Family Literacy* program integrates *curricula* that increase the knowledge and skills parents need to support their children’s success with *curricula* that support language and literacy development for the parent and child.
-
- 2.13 A process is in place for the regular, comprehensive review and revision of *curricula* incorporating new technology, materials and research- and *evidence-based* teaching methods.
-

Instructional Practices and Delivery

- 2.14 Instruction focuses on helping low-skilled adults attain the basic literacy, English language and work-readiness skills they need to successfully progress to postsecondary education or training and/or family-sustaining employment.
-
- 2.15 *Family Literacy* instruction connects effective instructional practices to ages and stages of child development and learning, parent and family needs and positive family relationships.
-
- 2.16 The program uses technology, research- and *evidence-based* instructional practices and multiple *delivery systems* to accommodate a diverse student population.
-
- 2.17 Instructors apply knowledge and skills from professional development in the classroom.
-



3. Community Collaborations

Key Concept:

Effective programs work within community systems.

- 3.1 The program coordinates educational and support services with community resources, especially the *PA CareerLink*[®] system, to ensure non-duplicative, comprehensive and seamless services, including basic skills instruction that meets the needs of the workforce development system.

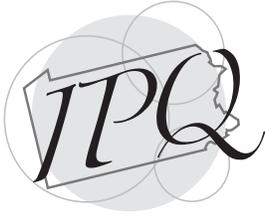
- 3.2 The program participates in community awareness activities to inform the public of the need for *Adult Education* and *Family Literacy* services and to target populations most in need of educational services.

- 3.3 Program staff are *cross-trained* with community and workforce partners to ensure comprehensive interagency knowledge and ongoing communications. The program is well represented in activities and on committees with community agencies.

- 3.4 The program recruits and uses volunteers from the community to support program goals.

- 3.5 The program provides community and workforce partners with timely and accurate program information regarding recruitment, programming, reporting requirements and policies.

- 3.6 The program has an advisory committee that includes learners, program staff, key partners and representatives from community organizations to promote and support literacy services.



4. Learner Outcomes

Key Concept:

Learner achievement is the true measure of program success.

- 4.1 Learners advance through instructional levels.

- 4.2 Learners demonstrate skills needed to understand, critically evaluate, and manage life skills, such as fiscal literacy, health literacy, civic involvement and citizenship.

- 4.3 Learners earn appropriate educational credentials or certificates, gain employment and/or pursue postsecondary education or training.

- 4.4 Children in *Family Literacy* programs meet developmental milestones, are ready for school and demonstrate proficiency in school.

- 4.5 Learners persist in instruction long enough to acquire skills necessary to achieve their personal, educational and career goals. They engage in self-directed study when unable to attend class and return to the program as soon as possible.

- 4.6 Learners move from being dependent learners to independent lifelong learners through self-efficacy, awareness of barriers and resources and establishment of and progress toward goals.

- 4.7 Learners are able to independently access workforce and educational systems.

- 4.8 Learners provide feedback regarding services which is used to guide program improvement and address learner needs.
