

**State of Michigan Department of Education  
William F. Goodling Even Start Programs**

**COMMON ELEMENTS FOR LOCAL EVALUATION**

(Updated December, 2006)

Even Start statute includes local evaluation as one of the fifteen required program elements. The requirement for an independent local evaluation is “intended to provide Even Start family literacy programs with data they can use to develop and improve high quality, intensive services that can make a meaningful difference in literacy outcomes for families in widely varying circumstances.”<sup>1</sup> The local evaluation must go beyond summarizing existing descriptive data and state performance indicator information already collected by programs and should be primarily designed for program improvement – to identify what is and is not working well and the reasons why, in order to make changes that will improve outcomes for families relative to family literacy in that particular community.

Together the evaluator and project director determine the scope of the evaluation, frame the evaluation questions, and identify potential data sources. Then, the task of the evaluator is to provide an objective picture of participant outcomes and the factors that contribute to or inhibit progress. The role of the local evaluator is to analyze and synthesize a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative information, to interpret the findings and develop recommendations for improvement, and then to track the results of program changes over time. Local evaluations should document what a program does well, but must also make data-based recommendations for program improvement. Given this emphasis on continuous program improvement, it is expected that areas of focus and evaluation questions will change over the program's four-year funding cycle.

The following components are considered essential to a comprehensive local evaluation report. Refer to the *Guide to Local Evaluations of Even Start Family Literacy Programs*<sup>2</sup> for an in-depth discussion of each component.

1. Executive Summary: a brief (~2 page) stand-alone overview of the evaluation report including recommendations.
2. Table of Contents
3. Program Description:
  - Program goals
  - Community context
  - Partnership and collaborators
  - Staffing
  - Service delivery methods

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<sup>1</sup> *Guide to Local Evaluations of Even Start Family Literacy Programs*, U.S. Department of Education, January, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.michigan.gov/evenstart](http://www.michigan.gov/evenstart)

- Unique features/major changes
- Results of previous recommendations
- 4. Results of Indicators, Other Outcomes and Systematic Inquiry
  - State performance indicators
  - Other participant outcomes/additional measures (e.g. attendance, retention)
  - Analysis of patterns (e.g. subgroups, time in program, contact hours)
  - Additional information gathered about reasons for achievement (lack of) related to program implementation
  - Results of changes implemented
  - Longitudinal information
  - Accurate data and appropriate analysis
- 5. Summary of Findings
  - Summarize various data sources and results by topics or issues
  - Discussion of results as a link to the recommendations
  - Reference to previous year's recommendations relative to current findings
- 6. Recommendations for Program Improvement
  - Grounded in data
  - Linked to the evidence
  - Practical, clear and action-able
  - Suggested resources for recommended changes.