



## Minnesota Adult Basic Education FAMILY LITERACY FACT SHEET 1-20-11

*By using a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, Family Literacy programs are making great strides in helping families break the intergenerational cycle of low literacy, poverty, and hopelessness.*

### Need/Research Facts

- Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational level of their parents, especially their mothers.
- Parental income and marital status are both important predictors of success in school, but neither is as significant as having a mother (or primary caregiver) who completed high school.
- Children of parents that are unemployed and have not completed high school are five times more likely to drop out than children of employed parents.
- Of Minnesota's 3.3 million working age adults, 60% have not completed college and are ABE potential clients for basic literacy or family literacy if they have pre-school children. Of these adults:
  - 251,210 have not completed high school
  - 892,744 have completed high school but have not entered college (well over half would require remedial or brush-up math or reading)
  - 832,371 have some college but no degree or credential (more than one-third would require remedial or brush-up math or reading)
  - 61,327 speak 'little or no' English
  - 346,968 earn less than a living wage (twice the federal poverty level)*Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) 2009*

### Family Literacy Program Structure

The Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) system supports local programs that include the four essential components for family literacy:

1. *Early Childhood Education:* focuses on children's pre-literacy skills such as vocabulary building and verbal expression.
2. *Adult Literacy Education:* helps parents enhance their own reading, math and language skills.

3. *Parent and Child Together (PACT)*: brings parents and children together in the pre-school classroom in order to teach parents how to best fulfill their role as their child's most important teacher.
4. *Parent Time*: offers topics for study and discussion, including child nurturing, managing and coping with child behavior, self-esteem, career options, and community resources.

## **Minnesota and National Family Literacy Program Outcomes**

- In Minnesota, Family Literacy programs combine ABE resources with other revenue streams such as Early Childhood and Family Education to establish 4-component Family Literacy programming. Approximately 15-20 Family Literacy programs operate annually serving over 200 adults and 350 children per year.
  - Adults stay enrolled in family literacy programs longer than in most adult-only programs, and their attendance rate is higher.
  - Children participating in family literacy programs in 15 US cities made gains at least three times greater than would have been expected based on their pre-enrollment rate of development.
  - Adults significantly improve their self-confidence, confidence in their parenting abilities, and in their employment status (29 percent increase).
  - Children showed an 80 percent increase in reading books, and made twice as many trips to the library.
  - Long-term National Center for Family Literacy follow-up studies<sup>1</sup> found the following:
    1. Fifty-one percent of adults participating in family literacy programs earned their GED or the equivalent.
    2. Forty-three percent became employed, compared with 14 percent before enrolling.
    3. Thirteen percent enrolled in higher education or training programs and another 11 percent continued in GED programs.
    4. Twenty-three percent of those who were on public assistance when they enrolled are now self-sufficient.
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