

South Windsor County Even Start Evaluation Report

Fiscal Year 2002-2003, Year Eight



August 29, 2003

Prepared by:

Michele Cranwell, Evaluation Coordinator
Frederick Schmidt Ph.D., Co-Director
The Center for Rural Studies
The University of Vermont

Table of Contents

<i>I. Introduction.....</i>	4
National Even Start Legislation.....	4
State Even Start Requirements.....	5
Overview of South Windsor County Even Start.....	5
<i>II. Evaluation Methods</i>	8
Process Evaluation Methods.....	9
Outcome Evaluation Methods.....	9
<i>III. Participant Demographics.....</i>	11
<i>IV. Family Accomplishments</i>	15
SWCES Adult and Child Indicators	15
Family and Individual SMART Goals Met	16
Program Impact on Family Achievements	17
<i>V. Alumni Interviews</i>	20
<i>VI. Family Self-Assessment Questionnaire.....</i>	22
<i>VII. Parent Education Profile Structure</i>	27
<i>VIII. Early Childhood Progress Survey</i>	30
Even Start Youth School Status.....	30
Even Start Students Compared to Non-Even Start Students	32
<i>IX. Major Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start</i>	36
<i>X. Family Identified Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start.....</i>	39
<i>XI. Program Accomplishments and Improvements</i>	42
Center-based Programming	42
Advisory Council Meetings as Forums for Community Learning	45
<i>XII. Conclusions.....</i>	47
<i>XIII. Recommendations</i>	55
<i>XIV. Works Cited.....</i>	58

XV. *Appendices* 59

- A. Vermont State Performance Indicators
- B. Staff Questionnaire
- C. Even Start Client Questionnaire
- D. Alumni Questionnaire
- E. A Measure of My Family's Well-Being survey
- F. Parent Education Profile Structure
- G. Early Childhood Progress Questionnaire

Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Seven Goals of South Windsor County Even Start 5

Figure 2. Six Criteria for Participation in South Windsor County Even Start..... 6

Figure 3. Model of Even Start’s Hypothesized Services and Effects 8

Figure 4. Original and Revised Categories of Responses 32

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Families Enrolled in SWCES Over Time 11

Table 2. Age Ranges of SWCES Adults..... 12

Table 3. Age Ranges of SWCES Children 12

Table 4. Income Source of Adults in SWCES Families 13

Table 5. Education Status of Even Start Adults..... 13

Table 6. Collaborating Service Providers for SWCES Adults and Children, 2002-03 14

Table 7. Family Self Assessment Results 23

Table 8. Areas of Family Concern Compared by 2002 and 2003 25

Table 9. Parent Education Profile Scale Average and % of Highest Possible Score..... 29

Table 10. Teacher Rank of Student Academic Performance Areas..... 33

I. Introduction

This evaluation report is for the eighth year of the South Windsor County Even Start program (SWCES), the Fiscal Year period of July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003. The Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont has worked with SWCES as local evaluators for the eight years that the program has been in service to this area in southern Vermont. This evaluation report provides an overview of the national Even Start legislation, the SWCES program, and evaluation methodology for SWCES. The demographic profile of SWCES clientele are also discussed, followed by the findings of evaluation activities and their implication towards best practices and program outcomes. Results discussed include family accomplishments, adult and child outcome indicators, goals met, alumni interviews, family self-assessments, and the Early Childhood Progress survey. From this and previous evaluations of this program, the evaluators have identified major strengths of the program as well as significant program accomplishments and improvements. This report concludes with a summary and recommendations for future success of the program.

National Even Start Legislation

Even Start is a national family literacy initiative that was first authorized in 1988 under Even Start Law, Part B of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and reauthorized and amended by the Literacy Involved Families Together (LIFT) Act of 2000 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (information on current Even Start legislation is available at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/pg6.html>). Even Start focuses on teaching literacy, parenting, and family skills to eligible families. The goal of the program is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's families at the lowest ends of the literacy and economic spectrum. Even Start accomplishes this through the integration of four major components including: adult education (adult literacy or English as a Second Language), parenting education, early childhood education, and parent/child interactive activities (PCIA). The criterion for entrance into the program is based on factors including: 1) existing literacy levels 2) income, 3) age of children, 4) lack of current services, and 5) family composition. Special emphasis is given to teenage parents and English speakers of other languages. Reauthorization of Even Start under the LIFT Act of 2000 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has required the following major changes and areas for further emphasis:

- Promote academic achievement/reading readiness
- Instruction programs based on scientifically based reading research
- Prevention of reading difficulties
- Set asides for special groups or activities
- Minimum sub-grant for ninth (and succeeding year) projects
- Consistent definition of "Family Literacy Services"
- Staff qualifications
- Other program elements including: summer services, regular attendance and retention, local evaluation and program application, and continuity of family literacy services.
- Development of Indicators of Program Quality for adults and children

Success of an Even Start program requires collaboration among community resources, such as local service providers, the school system, and families participating in the program. This collaboration is a critical component as service agencies and schools act as a major referral source for potential Even Start families and provide additional services for families external to Even Start services. Through these support services, Even Start offers a comprehensive menu of services to meet family needs.

State Even Start Requirements

In June 2001, Vermont State Even Start at the Vermont Department of Education developed a new management information system, the INVEST (Information Nexus for Vermont Even Start Teachers) system, to meet the needs of federal legislative requirements. Through the INVEST system, the state Even Start office collects the Vermont State Performance Indicator data (Appendix A) from local programs, as required under the reauthorization of Even Start under the LIFT Act of 2000 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This report provides the data on SWCES Adult and Child Indicators and SMART goals reached.

Overview of South Windsor County Even Start

The SWCES program is administered and operated out of the Springfield Area Parent/Child Center (SAPCC) in Springfield, Vermont, and offers both home-based and center-based services to families in need. SWCES service area includes: Springfield, Cavendish, Weathersfield, and Windsor. Vermont Adult Learning (VAL), a major collaborator of Even Start, is also an employer of Even Start staff. VAL staff provide services in adult education and enhance the other three components of Even Start. For the eighth year, SWCES has outlined seven overarching goals to be met through program activities and services. The seven goals are identified in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Seven Goals of South Windsor County Even Start

1. Assist parents to be full partners in their children's acquisition of literacy skills through parent education and adult education.
2. Ensure that children reach their full potential as learners.
3. Improve economic opportunities of families through increasing the educational level of parents.
4. Strengthen the family's vision of themselves as a learning team.
5. Expand the ability of families to become contributing and self-sustaining members of the community.
6. Continue to serve 20 families while recruiting families identified as most in need of Even Start services.
7. Leave a legacy of intergenerational life-long learners who will positively impact their communities recognize and commit to delivering family literacy activities beyond Even Start's tenure

The Even Start administrators and staff recruit and obtain referrals for families who are most in need of the program's services and are willing to commit to the rigors of an intensive program. After recruitment and referral, potential clients apply to the program to see if they fit the program requirements. The six criteria, presented in Figure 2 are the initial descriptors of all clients in the program, as every client must meet these entrance criteria. At the beginning of the fiscal year, selection criteria included family level of isolation and those receiving little or no services. However, with the emphasis in federal legislation towards a center-based model, these criteria were phased out of the selection. Mid-year, in transitioning towards a center-based model, the program began to recruit people who were less isolated and connected with services, with the idea that they would be ready and able to fulfill all of their Even Start requirements. A committee comprised of the SWCES Coordinator, VAL Program Manager, and a retired early childhood educator selects families.

Figure 2. Six Criteria for Participation in South Windsor County Even Start

1. Income – Special consideration is given to families with and income less than 125% of the poverty level.
2. Level of Literacy – The last grade completed is considered, and an informal literacy interview is used to assess current function level in English literacy. Candidates with the lowest literacy are given the most consideration.
3. Age of Children – Families with children ages 0-3 years are given the most consideration. The program serves children from age 0-7 years.
4. Age of Parent – All mothers or fathers below age 18 receive more consideration, followed by parents between the ages of 18-25 who had their first child as a teen.
5. Family Composition – Single parent families receive the most consideration, as well as families with a disabled parent.
6. Other Need-Related Indicators – Other risk factors are considered that are not included in the above list, but may affect acceptance to the program.

This year, the program maintained intensive services to twenty-three families. SWCES works with families by providing both center-based and home based services. As of January 2002, SWCES added a twenty hour a week on-site option, *Life Works*, which delivers adult education, parenting skills, work skills, and job-site training. Families who choose this option may fulfill their PCIA hours through home visits and playgroups. In addition to the center-based program, some families continue to receive weekly home visits from a parent/child educator and an adult educator. In order to stay in the program, all families must set goals and participate in the four components of Even Start and the integrated family literacy services offered by the program including playgroups, classes, and programs. In coordination with the integrated family literacy services provided by the program, SWCES relies on collaborators to provide services to families, such as early childhood education, adult education, parent groups, educational and employment consultation, and mental health counseling. Major collaborators who provide these services

include Vermont Adult Learning (VAL), the Springfield Area Parent Child Center, PlayWorks, Head Start, and other preschool providers.

Many of these collaborating agencies make up the SWCES Advisory Council, in addition to other providers, school representatives, community members, and SWCES staff and parents. The Council meets on a monthly basis to plan and strategize for future program activities, provide updates on past and current projects, and program evaluation. Members of the Advisory Council include: Springfield Area Parent/Child Center, Windsor County RSVP, Windsor County Reads, Vermont Adult Learning, school representatives, the Department of Health, Health Care and Rehabilitative Services, Head Start, Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Early Essential Education Coordinators, and other community members. These agencies and organizations make referrals and help in decision-making, community development and project planning. The meetings of the Advisory Council help to maintain communication and foster a strong partnership among these organizations, which is another strength of SWCES program. These meetings also serve as a forum to monitor the success of the program on a regular basis. Other collaborating agencies that attend quarterly meetings include the Department of Social Welfare, the Vermont Council on the Humanities, local public libraries, New Beginnings, and the Visiting Nurses Alliance. This past year, the Advisory Council meetings were used as a forum for learning, discussion, networking, and information sharing on a variety of topics. The role and impact of Advisory Council meetings is discussed in detail on page 45 of this report.

II. Evaluation Methods

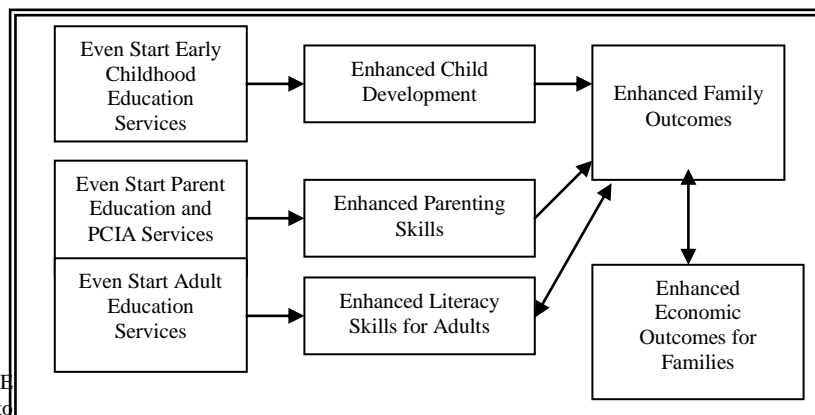
Evaluators from the Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont have worked with SWCES as local evaluators for the programs eight years of service. The eighth year of evaluation covers the 2002-03 funding period. Due to the evolving nature of the program and changes in national requirements, evaluation is a continuous process, as well as the evolution of the methods employed. Evaluation services are based on needs and priority areas of the program, as determined at the beginning of the fiscal year and recommendations from the previous year.

Evaluation of SWCES focuses on *process* and *outcome*, with evaluation strategies designed to address the seven goals of SWCES. The evaluation is also tailored to provide the program with feasible recommendations for the future success of the program. *Process evaluation* examines the quality of program delivery to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program, best practices, and areas in need of improvement (Scheirer, 1994). *Outcome evaluation* examines whether anticipated changes (both short and long term - i.e. attainment of GED/ADP, employment, improved relationship between parents and schools, etc.) among program participants have occurred as a result of program activities (Affholter, 1994). The evaluation also examines the relationship between program delivery and outcomes of the program on clients.

This year, *process evaluation* components include a review of SWCES activities and client demographics, program impact on family achievements, major program strengths (identified by evaluators and families), and significant program accomplishments and improvements. These strengths and improvements have provided for high quality of services and success rates among families. *Outcome components* include adult and child indicators, family and individual goals met, participant and alumni focus groups and interviews, family self-assessments, the Parent Education Profile Structure, and the Early Childhood Progress survey. Evaluation methods employed are both quantitative and qualitative and include survey instruments, focus groups, interviews, observations, and review of notes and meeting minutes.

The overall evaluation of SWCES is based on the model of Even Start's Hypothesized Services and Effects (Figure 3). This model, presented at the Evaluation Workshop by RMC Research in January 2000, shows how participant outcomes are developed within the four components of the program.

Figure 3. Model of Even Start's Hypothesized Services and Effects (Dwyer, 2000)



Process Evaluation Methods

The following highlights the evaluation methods used to collect program process data for continuous program improvement.

Client demographics

At the beginning of this Fiscal Year in June 2001, Vermont State Even Start at the Vermont Department of Education developed a new management information system, the INVEST (Information Nexus for Vermont Even Start Teachers) system, to meet the needs of federal legislative requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. To allow comparison of SWCES client demographics to the national data, CRS examines the demographic characteristics of participants in the program. SWCES obtained family demographic information through a questionnaire completed at program intake, ensuring complete confidentiality. Section III of this report provides a summary of the SWCES client population generated from this data. This section also discusses the services that Even Start participants are using outside of the program.

Staff Questionnaire

This year, the evaluators and SWCES Coordinator decided to collect information from staff about the program and family outcomes through electronic mail. The *Staff Questionnaire* (Appendix B) was emailed in May 2003 and responses were received in May and June. Through this information, the evaluators collected data on the program, family involvement, “hot topics” discussed at Advisory Council meetings, the Life Works program, the Parenting Education Profile Structure, and future evaluation strategies. This information informed the sections of this report on major strengths and accomplishments and improvements.

Even Start Client Questionnaire

The evaluation team administered the *Even Start Client Questionnaire* (Appendix C) at client end of year focus groups and interviews in June 2003 (Caudle, 1994; Krueger, 1988). This questionnaire included questions for participants who completed the Life Works program, other center-based activities, and home-based instruction. This questionnaire is used to assess participants’ progress towards goals, areas in which the program has impacted participant achievement towards these goals, and strengths and areas in need of improvement of the program.

Outcome Evaluation Methods

Outcome evaluation components include: the Even Start Client Questionnaire, the Alumni Questionnaire, family self-assessments, and the Early Childhood Progress Survey.

Even Start Client Questionnaire

The evaluation team administered the *Even Start Client Questionnaire* (Appendix C) at client end of year focus groups and interviews in June 2003 (Caudle, 1994; Krueger, 1988). This questionnaire included questions for participants who completed the Life Works program, other center-based activities, and home-based instruction. This questionnaire is used to assess participants’ progress towards goals, areas in which the program has impacted participant

achievement towards these goals, and strengths and areas in need of improvement of the program.

Alumni Questionnaire

From June to August 2003, the evaluators conducted telephone interviews with Even Start alumni to complete the *Alumni Questionnaire* (Appendix D). SWCES staff contacted program alumni who could be reached to invite them to participate in the evaluation. Five names and numbers were provided to the evaluators and three could be reached after at least five attempts to each number. The survey included questions on goals achieved and knowledge gained while in the program, their life since they have graduated, and feedback on the SWCES program. The three family stories are highlighted in this report and names are withheld to protect confidentiality.

Family Self-Assessment

In the fall of 2002, SWCES staff piloted the use of the family self-assessment tool, *A Measure of My Family's Well-being* (Appendix E). This year, returning families were followed up approximately one year after their initial completion and newly enrolled families completed the initial assessment. Through the use of t-tests conducted by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, this report compares the responses given by returning families (post) to newly enrolled (pre) to determine if there is a difference in their level of concern for various areas.

Parent Education Profile Structure

In FY 2003, SWCES staff were trained and began to use the *Parent Education Profile Structure* (PEP) (Appendix F). The PEP scale enables parent/child and adult educators, among others who have significant interaction with families in parenting roles, to observe and summarize the status of parent progress in regards to family literacy. The four major scales and fifteen sub-scales document parent progress and the level of behaviors that are consistently observable in both home and center based environment. Families are ranked for each sub-scale using a scale from level one to level five. Baseline data was available for this report, however SWCES intended to complete the scales on a six-month basis. This data may be used by educators to develop curriculum and instruction that is appropriate to parent needs and for family goal setting.

Early Childhood Progress Survey

SWCES administered the *Early Childhood Progress survey* (Appendix G) with teachers of Even Start students in preschool through grade 4. This survey documents the progress of Even Start children in school in the areas of school readiness and progress, social interactions, parent involvement and attendance, and special education eligibility. This survey also collects data for the Vermont State Performance Indicators (Appendix A). This tool was completed by teachers of SWCES children asking them to provide specific information on the child and compare the child to other students who are not in Even Start.

This report concludes with a summary of the evaluation and recommendations for continuous program improvement.

III. Participant Demographics

Through initial research for Even Start funding and collaboration with other social service agencies in the South Windsor County area, a population with a need for Even Start services was found to exist. To demonstrate that the program is serving this targeted population, the evaluators have provided a description of the South Windsor County Even Start program's client base.

Family Demographics

Families served and retention rates

SWCES provided service for a total of *twenty-three families in the eighth year of service*, with *sixteen families remaining in the program by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2003*.

SWCES continues to have a *high retention rate* of families at 70% (84% in 2001-2002, 61% in 2000-01). This number is slightly lower than last year; however, five of the seven families that left the program did so because they met their family goals. The other two left because of a lack of adult goals and a child that became too old for the program and therefore ineligible. Families who exited the program this year were in the program for less than one year to seven years, with an average of 3 years (only one family had less than one year and they left because they reached their family goals).

Highlights of Families Served and Retention Rates

- ✓ 23 total families served
- ✓ 16 families retained
- ✓ 16 adults and 29 children retained
- ✓ High retention rate of 70%
- ✓ Long term retention rate of 25% being enrolled for 2-7 years
- ✓ 84% of families enrolled for two years or less.

SWCES continues to have *long-term retention* of families. This year, 84% of families have been enrolled for at least two years, compared to 42% in the previous year (Table 1). Furthermore, 25% of the population has been in the program for 2 to 7 years compared to 42% last year. This change reflects the turnover of program graduates this and last year. Gladys Collins, the Program Coordinator of SWCES, stated that long term enrollment in the program is based on the need of families and families comfort level and commitment to maintain participation in all four components of the program. High retention indicates that the program is successful in maintaining this connection with most families and supporting them to fully participate in the program.

Table 1. Number and percentage of families enrolled in SWCES over time

Number of years	2002-2003 % (n)	2001-2002 %(n)
Less than 1 year	39% (9)	37% (7)
1 year	13% (3)	11% (2)
1.5 years	23% (5)	11% (2)
2 years	9% (2)	11% (2)
3 years	4% (1)	5% (1)
4 years	-	5% (1)
5 years	4% (1)	11% (2)
6 years	4% (1)	5% (1)
7 years	4% (1)	5% (1)

Gender, age, children, ethnicity, relationship status, and housing

A total of twenty-three adults were involved in the program this year, with 100% of them being female. Table 2 shows that more than half of the adults (57%) in SWCES are in the age range of 19 to 24 years old followed by 35% in the range of 25 to 44 years old.

Table 2. Age ranges of SWCES adults

Age range	% (n)
16-18	4% (1)
19-24	57% (13)
25-44	35% (8)
45-59	4% (1)

Thirty-nine eligible children were involved in the program, with 49% (19) female and 51% (20) male. Almost half of the children (46%) fall into the age range of birth to age two, with 26% in the age range of age five to seven years (Table 3). Even Start targets children from birth to age three and supports children through age ten. Thirty-three percent (6) of the families have children that are older than the target age living in the household.

Table 3. Age ranges of SWCES children

Age range	% (n)
0-2	46% (18)
3-4	21% (8)
5-7	26% (10)
8 years or older	8% (3)

The ethnicity of the families in Even Start is 91% (21) Caucasian, 4% (1) Hispanic, and 4% (1) Asian. Looking at relationship status, 43% (10) of families are single parent households, 30% (7) of SWCES households are married, and 26% (6) live in a two-parent household. Looking at the housing of families in SWCES, 43% (10) live in Section 8 housing, 30% (7) of the families rent an apartment or a house, 17% (4) own their own home, and two live with their parents or their partner.

Income source

Table 4 depicts the income source of all adults in SWCES. Similar to income data collected last year, 43% of the families are employed (41% in 2001-02). A slight increase is seen in the number of families relying on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), as 48% of families currently rely on federal assistance compared to 38% in 2001-02. Two adults (9%) receive their income from SSI (Social Security Income), one (4%) from their partner's income, and one (4%) from their parent's income. Thus, there are varying sources of income for the families in this program, reflecting the individual needs of each situation.

Table 4. Income Source of Adults in SWCES Families

Income Source	Number	Percent
TANF	11	48%
Employed	10	43%
SSI	2	9%
Partner's employment	1	4%
Parent's support	1	4%

Education status

Table 5 depicts the education status of adult participants when they entered the program. Almost half (45%) of the adults enrolled had completed up to tenth grade, with 32% having completed 11th grade. Data for one family was not available at the time this report was printed.

Table 5. Education Status of Even Start Adults

Highest Grade Level Completed	Number of Persons (%)
Less than ninth grade	5% (1)
9th grade	9% (2)
10th grade	45% (10)
11th grade	32% (7)
12th grade	9% (2)

Even Start instructional hours

All adults and children enrolled in the program participate and fulfill their required Even Start instructional hours, regardless of their specific goals. The SWCES Annual Report 02 shows that a total of 122 actual hours of adult education instruction were completed this fiscal year and 68 hours of parenting education and PCIA. For SWCES children, a total of 461 hours of early childhood education and PCIA were completed. Forty-nine total home visits were made this year with an average of 8 a month.

Client Services other than Even Start

Even Start is a collaborative program and would not be successful without productive interactions among families, service providing organizations, and social institutions in the area. Table 6 depicts service providers who clients work with in collaboration with SWCES for 2001-02, differentiated by adults and children (there is some cross over of services). Each service provider plays a key role in the program. Many of the providers make referrals to the program and they are all working with the families to improve the lives of those using the services.

Table 6. Collaborating Service Providers for SWCES Adults and Children, 2002-03

Adult Services	Child Services
Education Preparation Program	CUPS (Children's Upstream Services)
Family/Infant/Toddler (Parent/Child Center)	EEE (Early Essential Education)
HCRS (Health Care and Rehabilitative Services)	ESLL services
IFBS (Intensive Family Based Services)	FIT (Family/Infant/Toddler)
Individual counseling	Head Start
Life Works	Healthy Babies
TANF	Individual counseling
Teen Parent Education	New Beginnings
Vocational Rehabilitation	Playgroup
Vermont Adult Learning	Pre School
Futures	
Parent's groups	
Volunteer at Windsor County Resource Center	

IV. Family Accomplishments

SWCES families accomplished and achieved a lot this year, as seen in the adult and child performance indicators, in reaching their goals, and anecdotal stories of family achievements through focus groups and interviews conducted in June 2003. Family self-reported data also shows that the SWCES program has had a great impact on their achievements. This section of the report demonstrates that SWCES has met their program goals, specifically the goals of assisting parents to be full partners in their children's acquisition of literacy skills through parent education and adult education, improving economic opportunities of families through increasing the educational level of parents, strengthening the family's vision of themselves as a learning team, expanding the ability of families to become contributing and self-sustaining members of the community, and leaving a legacy of intergenerational life-long learners who will positively impact their communities as their communities recognize and commit to delivering family literacy activities beyond Even Start's tenure.

SWCES Adult and Child Indicators

In response to federal mandates under the reauthorization of the LIFT Act of 2000 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, in June 2001, Vermont State Even Start at the Vermont Department of Education developed the Vermont State Performance Indicators (Appendix A). Local programs are required to collect indicator data on adults and children to demonstrate measurable growth and improvement in learning and education. This year, SWCES adults and children showed many academic gains based on the key indicators, as highlighted below. The indicators with a check mark signify that it was met, whereas, the indicators with a dot indicate that the indicator was not met. Three of the four adult indicators were applicable to SWCES this year and all three were met. Four of the six child indicators were applicable to the program this year and two of the four were met. It is important to note that the program was off by one to two children in meeting all of the child indicators. Because of the low population size, the percentages are small. Of the two child indicators that were not met, the poor attendance rates is consistent with low attendance indicated by teachers of SWCES youth on the Early Childhood Progress survey (see p. 30).

Adult Indicators

- ✓ 92% (12) of adults achieved gains in one or more NRS areas of reading (6), writing (3), and math (3);
- ✓ 86% (6) of adults who set a goal related to employment met their goal. Three entered job training, three obtained employment, and one advanced in their career;
- ✓ 80% (4) of adults obtained secondary school credential or its equivalent within two years of Even Start enrollment.

Child Indicators

- ✓ 100% (1) of children eligible to take the SERP met or achieved proficiency;
- 66% (2) of children without an individual plan are progressing at a normal or higher rate on the COR, Language and Literacy subscale. The one child who did not meet this indicator showed a gain in three out of the six areas;

- 33% (1) of children met or exceeded the attendance rate of their peers;
- ✓ 100% (3) of students were promoted to the next grade level.

Family and Individual SMART Goals Met

Family self-reported data and staff records demonstrate that families and individuals met a variety of SMART goals for the four components of Even Start. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. SWCES staff reported that they assist families in setting SMART goals by writing determining areas to work on, breaking them down in a step-by-step format, noting progress, and revisiting them in a timely fashion. One staff member noted that setting SMART goals facilitates the process of growth and learning for both staff and families as setting small tasks that are specific and can be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time is a more realistic model of goal setting. The following are examples of SMART goals that families and individuals reached this past year in the four components of Even Start.

Adult Education:

- 3 participants completed GRTW
- 3 obtained employment
- 1 advanced in her career
- 4 obtained ADP or GED
- 12 adults made 22 NRS level gains in the areas of reading, writing, and math
- 1 will enter the Employment Preparation Program at SAPCC work site for 20 hours a week
- Improved reading skills as evidenced by a gain in NRS level score
- Worked on ADP and GED completion
- Improved math and writing skills as evidenced by a gain in NRS level score
- Developed resume and cover letter through GRTW
- Gained interviewing skills through GRTW
- One adult is a volunteer receptionist at the Windsor Resource Center and is gaining work experience
- One adult was chosen to represent VAL at the Voices of Adult Learners United for Education Conference (VALUE) and was awarded an all expenses paid trip to Florida to present there in June

Child Education:

- Read to child every night
- Enrolled child in Head Start
- Received speech evaluation resulting in speech therapy
- Children enrolled in Learning Partners, PlayWorks, and Pine Street Preschool.
- One child graduated preschool and will start Kindergarten in the fall

Parenting Education:

- Attended Mom's groups in Windsor every Thursday
- Attended parent-teacher conferences
- Attended classes on: Positive Discipline for Preschooler; How to Talk so Children will Listen; Parenting for Prevention

Parent and Child Together:

- Field trips with child, such as the visit to the Montshire museum
- Attended story time at local library with child. Received free books to read together at home.
- Learning about child's development and progress as early childhood educator works with child during home visits.

Other SMART Goals:

- 1 voter's registration
- 1 learner's permit
- 1 driver's license
- 2 moved into better housing

Leadership Experiences – one mother's story

One mother interviewed demonstrated leadership skills through her experiences with Even Start and Vermont Adult Learning. This woman was chosen to represent Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) at the Voices of Adult Learners United for Education Conference and was awarded an all expenses paid trip to Florida to present there in June 2003. For this conference, she had to prepare and practice a timed speech and would present this speech and have the opportunity to attend other seminars about leadership and education. After attending the conference, she plans to give a presentation on her trip to VAL and hopefully generate new ideas for adult learning. Another leadership experience she highlighted was that she spoke in front of the State Senate Appropriations Committee to ask for their funding support for Even Start and VAL. During this testimony, she talked about the accomplishments she had made in working with these programs. She also noted that she was also one month away from earning her high school diploma.

Program Impact on Family Achievements

During focus groups and interviews in June 2003, families discussed several ways in which the program has impacted or supported their achievements. Similar to the findings of previous years, families cited examples related to the Life Works program, adult education, parenting education, early childhood education, and the positive impact the program has had through connecting families to resources or services in the communities.

Impact of the Life Works program

The four parents interviewed participated in the on-site program, Life Works. All of them discussed positive impacts that this program had on their lives. During the initial part of the program, called "Futures", participants primarily focused on goal setting, which was helpful to provide direction and motivation to continue with the 12-week intensive course. Participants also spoke about

**Program Impact on
Family Achievements**

- ✓ Impact of the Life Works program
 - Gains in employment and professional skills
 - Increased social and human capital
- ✓ Adult education
- ✓ Parent education
- ✓ Early childhood education
- ✓ Connecting families to community resources

gains in employment and professional skills, as well as experiencing an increase in their social and human capital (Sherraden, 1991, Putnam, 1993 and 1993).

Gains in Employment and Professional Skills

All of the women interviewed stated that they gained employment and professional skills through the Life Works program, including developing a resume and cover letter for applying for a job. They also gained experience in interviewing for a job and learned how to dress appropriately for an interview and what to say and what to not say! All of the women enjoyed job training and working at the SAPCC and other locations on a job of their interest to gain practical experience.

Increased Social and Human Capital

All of interviewees indicated gains in social and human capital skills from being involved in the on-site program. These "soft" skill gains included increased self-confidence and self esteem, a positive change in attitude, and building a social network through making connections and friends with others in similar life situations (Sherraden, 1991, Putnam, 1993 and 1993). All of the women stressed that they enjoyed working in the group setting because they realized that other people have similar issues and challenges and were encouraged and motivated by how others worked through them. All of them noted that the group setting helped them to improve their social and interpersonal skills. Most of the group members live in rural and isolated communities and were initially not comfortable speaking and working in groups.

Adult education

All of the parents noted that they were working towards or had achieved their adult goals of attaining their ADP, GED or high school diploma. They noted that this would not have been possible without the support of their adult educators through the adult education component of SWCES. One woman reported that she was on her second to last task in completing her ADP and she had improved her literacy and research skills in working towards this goal. Another mother stated that she works closely with her adult educator to improve her math, writing, and vocabulary skills to work towards her ADP. Another cited that she works with her adult educator every Wednesday to improve her reading and math skills towards her high school diploma.

Parenting education

All of the parents talked about the positive impact parenting education has had on their relationship with their family and raising their children. Through participating in various parenting classes offered by SWCES, parents noted that they have improved their listening and disciplining skills to be better parents. Some areas skill improvement include: being better

Several parents indicated that because of SWCES, their parenting skills have improved and they have learned more positive ways to interact and raise their children.

able to listen to their children, learning how to say "no" in an appropriate way, how to speak appropriately to their children, and how to build their children's self-esteem so they succeed in school. One mother also stated that she attends Mom's Groups in Windsor every week, where she benefits from the support and knowledge of working and interacting with other parents.

Early childhood education

All of the mothers interviewed discussed the positive impact of their family's involvement in SWCES on their children's education. One mother stressed that the positive results of her adult education has transferred to her child's education by being better able to read to her son. Parents are also actively taking part in their child's education to work through speech or reading difficulties. All parents appreciated that parent/child educators bring educational tools, such as a lap top computer, games, books, and toys that benefit their children as well as other children who come over to play.

Several parents noted the "transfer of learning" effect that takes place from adult education to early childhood education. As parents improve their literacy skills they are better able to support their child's literacy skills.

Connecting families to community resources

Parent/child and adult educators connect families with needed resources in the community so families may continue to make strides towards goals and further their learning. All of the women interviewed noted that their adult educators had connected them to the resources and provided the paperwork and training to work towards and complete their ADP, GED, or earn their high school diploma. Other resources that parents cited include:

Families stressed the positive impact of the program had by connecting them to needed resources or services in the community, in order to attain their goals or work through a challenging situation.

- Vermont Student Assistant Corporation
- Department of Employment and Training
- Futures
- Howard Dean Technical Center
- Public library
- Essential Early Education program (EEE)
- Mom's Groups in Windsor
- Parenting Classes
- Literacy series through Vermont Council on the Humanities and Vermont Center for the Book

V. Alumni Interviews

The Even Start *Alumni Questionnaire* (Appendix D) was conducted via telephone from June through August 2003. SWCES staff contacted program alumni who could be reached to invite them to participate in the evaluation. Five names and numbers were provided to the evaluators and three could be reached. The survey included questions on goals achieved and knowledge gained while in the program, their life since they have graduated, and feedback on the SWCES program. The following highlights the stories of three families. Names have been withheld to protect the confidentiality of family members.

This family worked with SWCES for five years with her one child. When she was enrolled in SWCES, **this mother obtained her GED and childcare certification.** Her parent/child and adult educators also connected her with resources in the community for the application and registration process of establishing an in-home childcare facility. **Because of the assistance from SWCES, she was able to open and run a successful in-home child care business. Her involvement in SWCES has taught her how to problem solve, be accountable, and get things accomplished. Recently, she closed her childcare business and became employed full-time at a local Child Care Center. She is in charge of the Kindergarten Kids Club and is also an Assistant Teacher. She is now working towards completing 36 hours of training for her employment.** She noted that her son is going into fourth grade. He gets good grades and is reading at a higher-grade level.

Because she lives in Windsor, she participated through the SWCES program mostly through home-based visiting. She appreciated that home instruction was flexible with her schedule and she did not have to close the childcare center during her visit. Rather, the instructor would work with all of the children. She felt that her involvement in SWCES helped all of the other children in the community because of this. When she participated in center-based programming, she enjoyed meeting people, sharing ideas and opinions, and learning with other adults. Overall, SWCES program and instructors continuously provided needed support, guidance, resources, and opportunities for her to be successful.

This family began working with SWCES in 1997 and worked with them for one year. She has two children. This mom **met all of her adult education goals by receiving her high school diploma and driver's license, and becoming employed at Ben and Jerry's.** She and her husband also took computer and nutrition classes with SWCES. Through her involvement in the program's book clubs, she received a lot of free books and was able to read to her children every night. Both of her children went to preschool and are now attending grade school. She noted that her children receive really good grades. **Through Even Start, this mom learned of the importance of spending more time with her children and helping them with their homework. This family recently bought a house because of the mom's employment in a good paying job.**

This mom noted that Even Start helped her to improve everything in her life. When she came to the program she had really low self-esteem and now she has the skills to handle things in life as they arise. She felt that the home-based model worked well for her as she did not have transportation at the time.

This family began working with SWCES when the program first started and worked with them for about five years. They have four children. Their favorite part about SWCES were the book programs, play groups, and field trips. The mother **achieved her goal of attaining her GED.** They reported that since they graduated from Even Start, their annual household income has increased because of their work with Even Start. A positive aspect working with Even Start was that **her instructor helped her to recognize and work with oldest son's speech difficulties.** She also enjoyed working with instructors on adult education and they provided a good resource to talk to about family and life issues. **This family is now home schooling their children.**

VI. Family Self-Assessment Questionnaire

In the fall of 2002, SWCES staff piloted the use of a family self-assessment tool, *A Measure of My Family's Well-being* (Appendix E). In the fall of 2003, staff followed up with returning families (approximately one year after their initial completion) and newly enrolled families completed the initial assessment.

This survey was developed based on a survey from the Federal Economic Development Program and designed to reflect the family support matrix used by Reach Up. This survey is designed to document change in family well being over the course of their Even Start involvement. Families were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 10, with one being concerned and ten being not concerned, their level of concern for fourteen specific areas in life. These areas include: shelter, transportation, nutrition and clothing, finance and income, physical health and safety, children's development and education, social/emotional health, family relationships, parenting, legal, community relations, adult education, employment, and work skills and habits.

Fourteen families completed the self-assessment this year, six returning families and eight new families, for a response rate of 61%. The data and discussion presented below demonstrates that the program has met and is continually working towards their goals. Goals demonstrated include: assisting parents to be full partners in their children's acquisition of literacy skills through parent education and adult education, ensuring that children reach their full potential as learners, strengthening the family's vision of themselves as a learning team, expanding the ability of families to become contributing and self-sustaining members of the community, leaving a legacy of intergenerational life-long learners who will positively impact their communities as their communities recognize and commit to delivering family literacy activities beyond Even Start's tenure. The goal the program continues to work towards with families is to improve economic opportunities of families through increasing the educational level of parents.

Data Analysis

Because of the limited number of paired pre and post questionnaires (for returning families) and lack of a post for newly enrolled families, the evaluators decided to compare the responses given by returning families (the post group) to newly enrolled families (the pre group) to see if there is a difference in their level of concern for various areas. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the means of the pre and post groups, to determine if there was a significant difference in their responses. A low level of concern was indicated when the average

Highlights of the Family Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Areas of least concern:

- Shelter
- Family relationships
- Physical health/safety
- Parenting

Areas of low to medium concern:

- Nutrition and clothing
- Child development and education
- Social and emotional health
- Legal
- Community relationships

Areas of medium to high concern:

- Transportation
- Finance and income
- Adult education

Areas of most concern:

- **Employment**
- **Work skills and habits**

ranking was 7.8 or higher. A medium level of concern was indicated when the average ranking ranged from 7.0-7.7. A high level of concern was indicated when the average rank fell below 6.9. In Table 7, the pre and post n value, mean, level of concern, t value and p value (where statistically significant) are presented.

Table 7. Family Self Assessment Results

Area of concern	Pre and post	N	Mean	Level of concern	T value	P value \leq
Areas of low concern						
Shelter	Pre	6	7.8	Low	-	-
	Post	8	9.0	Low		
Family Relationships	Pre	6	8.0	Low	-	-
	Post	8	7.8	Low		
Physical Health/Safety	Pre	5	8.4	Low	-	-
	Post	8	9.5	Low		
Parenting	Pre	6	7.8	Low	-2.67	.05
	Post	8	9.4	Low		
Areas of low to medium concern						
Nutrition and Clothing	Pre	6	7.2	Med	-	-
	Post	8	8.0	Low		
Children's Development and Education	Pre	6	7.0	Med	-	-
	Post	8	8.1	Low		
Social/Emotional Health	Pre	6	7.0	Med	-2.06	.05
	Post	8	8.5	Low		
Legal	Pre	6	7.5	Med	-	-
	Post	8	8.2	Low		
Community Relationships	Pre	6	7.0	Med	-3.02	.01
	Post	8	9.0	Low		
Areas of medium to high concern						
Transportation	Pre	6	2.7	High	-2.98	.01
	Post	8	7.1	Med		
Finance/Income	Pre	6	4.8	High	-1.79	.10
	Post	8	7.1	Med		
Adult Education	Pre	6	5.0	High	-2.68	.05
	Post	8	7.9	Low		
Areas of high concern						
Employment	Pre	6	4.5	High	-	-
	Post	8	6.3	High		
Work Skills/Habits	Pre	6	6.0	High	-	-
	Post	8	6.9	High		

Areas of low concern

The majority of both pre and post families indicated that the areas of shelter, family relationships, physical health and safety, and parenting were of low concern. There was no significant difference because of the high averages received by both groups (averages ranged from 7.8-9.5), with the exception of parenting (7.8 rank from new families and 9.4 rank from returning families) ($t = -2.67, p \leq .05$).

Areas of low to medium concern

Table 7 shows that the areas of nutrition and clothing, children's development and education, social and emotional health, legal, and community relationships received average rankings from 7.0-9.4. Looking at the column marked "level of concern", the entire pre group indicated these areas to be of a medium level of concern, while the post group (those who have already received Even Start services for at least one year) marked them as of low concern. A statistically significant difference was seen in the area of social and emotional health ($t = -2.06, p \leq .05$) and community relationships ($t = -3.02, p \leq .01$).

Areas of medium to high concern

Three areas, transportation, finance and income, and adult education were reported to be of medium to high concern by responding families. Again, those in the pre group (new to Even Start) reported high levels of concern, while families in the post group (returning) reported medium levels of concern. All three areas were statistically significant, with average ranks from 2.7-7.9. Note that adult education received a low rank of concern (7.9) from returning families, compared to a high rank given by new families (5.0) ($t = -2.68, p \leq .05$).

Areas of high concern

All families who completed this self-assessment reported that the areas of employment and work skills and habits were of high concern. There was no significant difference between pre and post groups as all indicated an average ranking of 4.5 to 6.9.

Overall responses compared from 2002 to 2003

Table 8 compares family areas of concern based on level from data collected in 2002 to 2003. There are many similarities, yet many differences in areas of concern between the two years. In 2002, nutrition and clothing was of low concern, however this areas moved to a moderate level of concern in 2003. In 2002, family relationships were of moderate concern, while in 2003 this was a low concern. However, shelter was a high concern in 2002 and a low concern in 2003. Another interesting comparison is to examine family's areas of most concern from the two years. In 2002, finance and income and employment were the areas of most concern, while in 2003, work skills and habits joined employment and finance and income dropped to a high status. SWCES staff suggest that the addition of work skills and habits may be due to an increase in family involvement in the Life Works program. Through this program, families become more aware of and gain work skills and habits. Staff suggest that because families have a greater awareness, they may measure their abilities as low compared to the variety of work skills there is to learn and use in the work force.

Table 8. Areas of Family Concern Compared by 2002 and 2003

	2002	2003
Areas of low concern	Nutrition and clothing	Shelter
	Physical health and safety	Physical health/safety
	Parenting	Parenting
		Family relationships
Areas of moderate concern	Children's development and education	Children's development and education
	Family relationships	Nutrition and clothing
	Community relations	Community relations
	Social and emotional health	Social and emotional health
	Work skills and habits	Legal
Areas of high concern	Legal	Finance and Income
	Adult education	Adult education
	Transportation	Transportation
	Shelter	
Areas of most concern	Finance and Income	Work skills/Habits
	Employment	Employment

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the family self-assessment tool, "A Measure of My Family's Well-Being", showed that the areas of **shelter, family relationships, and physical health and safety** are considered to be of *least concern* to most families. The areas of **nutrition and clothing, children's development and education, social and emotional health, parenting, legal, and community relationships** are considered of *low to medium concern* to most families, with new families showing some significantly higher concerns compared to returning families. The areas of **transportation, finance and income, and adult education** are considered of *medium to high concern* to many families, with new families expressing a significantly higher level of concern compared to returning families. The areas of **employment and work skills and habits** are considered of *most concern* to many families.

Overall, it is important to notice that at a low level of concern, there is no significant difference in responses from newly enrolled to returning families. However as concern grows, results show a greater number of areas that are significantly different from new families to returning. When concern is at the highest for an area, there is no significant difference because all individuals, regardless of work with Even Start or not, are concerned. This suggests that working with Even Start for at least a year may assist families in reaching goals that alleviate their concerns in several areas.

SWCES staff should continue to work closely with families on an individual basis to determine their family goals based on their areas of concern as well as their areas of strength. Using these goals, staff should continue to work with families to develop a plan of action or steps to work towards and complete their goals in effort to reduce their level of concern for specific areas of well-being. The Life Works program option should be discussed with families that expressed concern about their employment and work skills and habits, as well as adult education. Staff should also continue to refer families to collaborators (such as VAL for adult education concerns) or other service providing organizations to meet other needs, such as legal, shelter, and transportation.

VII. Parent Education Profile Structure

This year, in response to changes at the state and federal level, SWCES began training and implementing the use of the *Parent Education Profile Structure* (Appendix F) with families. The following narrative describes the scale, how SWCES used the scale to monitor family progress in parent education, and family baseline data. The results inform several recommendations for improving the use of this scale and integrating it into curriculum development.

The Parent Education Profile Structure

The *Parent Education Profile Structure* (PEP) (RMC Research, 2000) is an observational record designed to assist in summarizing the status of parent progress in family literacy. Observations of parenting behaviors related to literacy and learning are made by parents and those who work with them in both home and center based settings. The record is designed to trace the progress of development of parents and to capture the highest level of typical behaviors within each area of development. The PEP is broken into four scales: 1) home environment, 2) interactive literacy, 3) support for children in formal settings, and 4) the parent's role. Each area is broken down into three or five sub-scales, which are described in Table 9. Each sub-scale is then scored from level one to level five. The subscale is defined as follows:

Level 1 – Little or no evidence of desired behaviors; limited awareness; limited acceptance; frustrated; not comfortable.

Level 2 – Beginning awareness and some interest in ways to improve but may be inconsistent; may need lots of support; low comfort level.

Level 3 – Some encouragement and comfort in use of desired behaviors; seeks out information and support; attends to child.

Level 4 – Routine and frequent use of desired behaviors; initiation of activities; comfortable in role.

Level 5 – Ability to work desired behaviors into daily life; adaptability to child's interests and abilities; extends learning; makes connections for child.

SWCES use of the PEP scales

SWCES staff attended two trainings on the use of the PEP scale in May and November 2002 and began using the tool with families in November 2002. The PEP was used with new families after they had participated in the program for three months and began using it with returning families immediately after training. Key SWCES staff trained other parent/child and adult educators on the use of the PEP scale, as well as others partner and collaborating organizations that would have significant interaction with parents. These organizations included the Maternal Health Coalition, such as Visiting Nurses from Healthy Babies, and home visitors for EEE. This training was significant because it heightened collaborator awareness of the SWCES mission. It also encouraged collaborators to observe the home environment as a holistic learning environment of the child. Further, through the awareness and use of the PEP scales, Even Start

collaborators became a part of making change in the home environment to support the child learning, and ultimately the Even Start mission.

As stated, SWCES began the use of the PEP scales in November 2002. At a staff meeting, staff selected one family to highlight, and the adult and parent/child educator of that family presented and discussed their observations of the family using the PEP scales. The family was scored by a consensus decision based on what was observed and reported. SWCES also included observations and input from collaborators who had worked with the family under a variety of circumstances (such as Visiting Nurses or EEE). Once the family was scored, the parent/child and adult educator used the score to determine areas for improvement and develop an appropriate curriculum for the family. For instance, one parent/child educator reported that although she did not use the tool directly with families, she would reference the scales, such as television viewing, being an advocate for one's child, etc, during home visits or lessons that were centered around parenting. She noted that one family that had always had the television on during home instruction began turning it off after she and the mom had a chat about it using the PEP.

Family baseline data and analysis

After this initial run of using the PEP scale in scoring families, the program documented baseline data using the scale for eleven families. The baseline data is presented in Table 9. This table presents the major scale, subscales, average family score for each subscale and total average for each major scale, and percentage the average score is of the highest possible score as noted. SWCES had intended to complete the scale with families every six months on a consecutive basis. At the time of this reporting, only the baseline data was available, as presented in Table 9. Parent/child and adult educators with SWCES reported that they have not yet begun to use this tool with families but have the goal of developing a family friendly version of this tool, which could be used with families for curriculum development, instruction focus, and goal setting relating to parent education.

Table 9 shows that families are consistently at level 2 for 14 of the 15 sub-scales, with parent behavior performing at 40% to 47% of the highest possible score. Level 2 indicates that parents are beginning to show awareness and some interest in ways to improve but may be inconsistent; parents may need lots of support; and parents show low comfort level. The sub-scale of "parent-school communication" received an average rank of level 1. This level indicates that there is little or no evidence of desired behaviors; parents show limited awareness and limited acceptance; parents are frustrated and not comfortable. This poor level of parent and school communication is consistent with teacher reports on the Early Childhood Progress survey, as this was noted as an area below other non-Even Start students.

It should be noted that nine out of the eleven parents are relatively new to SWCES, with a range of a half a year to one and a half years (average of one year). The other two families have been with the program for five and seven years. The mother who had been with the program for five years received high marks in all areas above all other parents. The families that received the lowest ranks had only been in the program for a half a year.

Table 9. Parent Education Profile Scale Average and % of Highest Possible Score

Scale	Sub-scale	Average	% of highest possible score
I. Parent's support for children's learning in the home environment	A. Use of Literacy Materials	2	40%
	B. Use of TV/Video	2	40%
	C. Learning Opportunities	2	40%
	D. Family Priority on Learning	2	40%
	Total average (20 = highest)	9	45%
II. Parent's role in interactive literacy activities	E. Expressive and receptive language	2	40%
	F. Reading with children	2	40%
	G. Supporting book/print concepts	2	40%
	Total average (15 = highest)	7	47%
III. Parent's role in supporting child's learning in formal educational settings	H. Parent-school communication	1	20%
	I. Expectations of child and family	2	40%
	J. Learning opportunities	2	40%
	K. As a partner with educational setting	2	40%
	L. Expectations of child's success in learning setting	2	40%
	Total average (25 = highest)	10	40%
IV. Taking on the parent role	M. Choices, rules, limits	2	40%
	N. Managing stresses on family	2	40%
	O. Safety and health	2	40%
	Total average (15 = highest)	7	47%

Recommendations

The evaluators recommend that parent/child and adult educators continue to use the PEP scale on a six-month basis. Given the baseline results, educators should continue to work with families on their parenting skills, using the PEP scales to develop a curriculum and instruction that is specific to family areas in need of improvement. The PEP scale can also be used to develop lesson plans that model and teach appropriate parenting behavior during center and home based instruction. Once the scale has been in place with families over time, a specific parenting education curriculum may be developed based on the trends in the data over time. The evaluators also recommend developing a tool to be used with families based on the PEP, so the language may be integrated into goal setting and allow parents to assist in planning their curriculum.

VIII. Early Childhood Progress Survey

The SWCES staff administered the *Early Childhood Progress (ECP) survey* (Appendix G) in June 2003 to teachers of SWCES students in preschool to grade four. Nine teachers completed the survey out of ten to whom it was mailed, for a 90% response rate. This survey is designed to document the progress of these children in school in comparison to their peers who are not in Even Start. Teachers were asked to assess these students in the areas of school readiness and progress, social interactions, parent involvement and attendance, and special education eligibility. Vermont State Performance Indicators 1, 2, 4, and 5 were also addressed on this questionnaire (Appendix A) (Indicator data are presented in detail on page 15 of this report). This survey also assists parent/child educators in improving the early childhood education portion of the program to meet specific needs of the children. Further, involving teachers in SWCES youth assessment also establishes a link between SWCES and the school systems. The continued high response rate of teachers (87% response rate in 2001, 89% in 2002) is a positive indicator of a growing relationship between the program and the schools.

Summary of Findings from the Early Childhood Progress

Areas below other children:

- Academic Performance
- Parent involvement

Areas at the same level as other children:

- Motivation to learn
- Relations with other students
- Classroom behavior
- Self-confidence

Areas above other children

- Motivation to learn
- Classroom behavior

The following reviews the data for the third year of data collection. Because there were few students that had both pre and post data, comparative analysis was not conducted.

Student demographics

Seven of the children surveyed live in Springfield and two live in Windsor, Vermont. Four of the children attend Park Street School, two attend Pine Street Preschool, and two attend State Street School. Three students are in preschool, three are in Kindergarten, two are in third grade and one is in fourth grade. Two students are in first grade, three are in second, one is in third, and three are in Kindergarten.

Even Start Youth School Status

The first part of the survey asked teachers to respond with a yes or no answer regarding students' school status, attendance, special education, IEP, and special services.

Center or home based program

One hundred percent of the teachers (9) reported that students attend a Center based program.

Full/part time status

Teachers reported that five students are in a full time program and four attend part time.

Attendance

Vermont State Performance Indicators requires that children enrolled in grades K-3 whose families have participated in the program for at least one full year will have attended school at a same or better rate than the average for their school buildings, as reported by their schools.

Three students were applicable to this indicator and one (33%) *met* or exceeded the attendance rates of their classmates. (Vermont State Child Indicator #4 - Did not meet the Vermont State Indicator).

Teachers who completed the ECP survey were asked whether or not the child missed more than twelve days of school (includes both students new to Even Start and those who have worked with the program for at least one year). Six of the eight teachers who responded noted that their student did miss more than 12 days of school, while only two teachers indicated the student did not.

Student promotion

Vermont State Performance Indicators requires that among children enrolled in grades K-3 whose families have participated in the program for at least one full year, 90% will be promoted to the next grade as reported by the children's schools. Three of SWCES students were applicable to this Indicator and all three (100%) were promoted to the next grade level. (Vermont State Child Indicator #5 - Met the Vermont State Indicator).

Eight of the nine teachers who responded to this question reported that their student was promoted to the next grade level. This includes new Even Start students and those who have been involved for at least a year.

Special education

Three of the nine teachers noted that their student was referred to special education.

IEP (Individualized Education Plan)

One of the nine teachers reported that their student was on an IEP.

Special services

Five of the nine teachers indicated that their students were receiving special services. Students that are receiving special services are involved in CUPS, O.T., Title I, Speech, ESLL, mental health, Wilson phonetic program, Special Skills support in reading and math, and writing support in the classroom.

SERP (Screening for Early Reading Processes) scores

Vermont State Performance Indicators requires Even Start programs to report student SERP scores for children six months prior to entering Kindergarten. This Indicator is applicable only for children who have received at least 200 early childhood instructional hours and whose families have participated in the program for at least two years. This year, one child was applicable for this Indicator and this child met or achieved proficiency level on the SERP Pre-K Sections 1, 2, and 3 (100%). (Vermont State Child Indicator # 2- Met Vermont State Indicator).

DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) scores

Vermont State Performance Indicators requires Even Start programs to report DRA scores of second grade students whose families have participated in the program for at least two years. No students were applicable to this Indicator this year. (Vermont State Child Indicator #1 – Not applicable).

Even Start Students Compared to Non-Even Start Students

The last section of the ECP survey asked teachers to evaluate student performance in comparison with classmates using the following lichert scale from 1 to 5:

- 1 = much below other children**
- 2 = somewhat below other children**
- 3 = about the same as other children**
- 4 = somewhat above other children**
- 5 = much above other children.**

The areas of focus included: academic performance, motivation to learn, parent involvement, relations with other students, classroom behavior, and self-confidence. Teachers were also asked to provide an explanation or comment on why any of the areas received a score of 1 or 2. For analytical purposes, the evaluators recoded the question into three categories by combing the categories of one and two and 4 and 5. The rank of three remained its own category (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Original and revised categories of responses

Original Five Categories	Revised three categories
1= much below other children 2= somewhat below other children	1 and 2= below other children
3= about the same as other children	3 = same as other children
4= somewhat above other children 5= much above other children.	4-5 = above other children

Data analysis

Because of the small sample size, the data presented below in Table 10 depicts the number of respondents rather than the percentage. Table 10 presents the rank (below, same or above other children), performance area, and number of students ranked at that level. The areas highlighted in bold indicate that four or more teachers ranked students at that level. It is important to note that four of the nine students are ESL students and six are from families that are new to the Even Start program (less than one year of involvement).

Table 10. Teacher rank of student academic performance areas

Rank	Performance area	Number of students ranked at level
Below other children	Parent involvement	6
	Academic performance	5
	Relations with other students	3
	Self-confidence	2
	Classroom behavior	1
	Motivation to learn	1
Same as other children	Self-confidence	7
	Relations with other students	5
	Motivation to learn	5
	Classroom behavior	4
	Parent involvement	3
	Academic performance	2
Above other children	Motivation to learn	2
	Classroom behavior	2
	Relations with other students	1

Areas below other children

Between one and six of the teachers ranked their students to be performing below other children in all six of the performance areas. The areas where the fewest children were ranked as performing below other children include: motivation to learn (one teacher), classroom behavior (1), self-confidence (2), and relations with other students (3). More than half of the teachers who responded to the ECP noted that their students' parent involvement (6) and academic performance (5) were below other children.

Areas ranked same as other children

Between two and seven of the teachers ranked their students to be performing at the same level as non-Even Start peers for all six areas. The areas of academic performance and parent involvement received the fewest number of rankings. Students were ranked as performing the same as other children by more than half of the teachers for three areas of self-confidence (7), relations with other students (5), and motivation to learn (5). Four teachers ranked students to be at this level in the area of classroom behavior.

Teacher Quotes:

"This student has made tremendous gains this year."

"This student is in a good place for Kindergarten next year."

Areas ranked above other children

Three performance areas, motivation to learn, classroom behavior, and relations with other students, received marks from one and two teachers, indicating that several Even Start youth are performing above other non-Even Start children in these areas.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings demonstrate that most of the SWCES youth (whose teachers completed the survey) are performing at the same level or above other non-Even Start children in the areas of self-confidence, relations with other students, motivation to learn, and classroom behavior. However, teachers ranked many students to be performing below other non-Even Start children with regards to academic performance, and especially their parent's involvement in their school life.

- SWCES staff should continue to work with youth on their **academic skills** through early childhood education intensive services, and address issues and make appropriate referrals as needed.
- SWCES staff should continue to and encourage and support **parent involvement** in children's schools, in ways such as encouraging parents to attend school meetings or attending these meetings with parents, assisting parents to advocate for their children, and encouraging them to take an active role in their child's lives through intensive PCIA hours. SWCES should also continue to address parent's needs and barriers relating to low parent involvement and refer parents where appropriate.
- The findings indicate that the majority of SWCES youth are **motivated to learn** at the same or better level compared to non-Even Start youth. Staff should consider working specifically with children who received low marks in this area to address these issues and make referrals to other collaborating services as appropriate.
- Although most of the youth were reported to have average or higher self confidence levels, SWCES staff should continue to encourage youth **self confidence** through planning activities (both home and center based) that can provide children with a sense of success and accomplishment to build their self esteem in learning and life. Further, they should encourage all parents to help build their child's self esteem at home on a daily basis.
- Similar to the results of self-confidence, results on **classroom behavior** indicate that several of SWCES youth behave similar to or better than class peers. SWCES staff should continue to work with children who received poor marks in this area on a one-on-one basis during home visits for early childhood education services and PCIA hours. This issue should also be addressed during any center-based group activities and field trips as needed.
- Although many SWCES children are reported to have average or higher peer relation skills, these results suggest that SWCES should consider working with children to improve their skills in **relating to other peers**. Staff could either provide support on a one-on-one basis or possibly hold more child-focused events where children can gain more experience in interacting with their peers in a positive learning environment.

Overall, the evaluators recommend that parent/child educators continue to work with SWCES children towards more positive behavior, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence through early childhood education and PCIA at both home and center based activities. Likewise, SWCES staff should continue to encourage and integrate parent involvement in their child's education into parenting and adult education and PCIA. The positive findings demonstrate that SWCES continues to work towards their program goals of assisting parents to be full partners in their children's acquisition of literacy skills through parent education and adult education, ensuring that children reach their full potential as learners, and strengthening the family's vision of themselves as a learning team.

IX. Major Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start

Through the past eight years of data collection from families, collaborators, and staff, the evaluation team have identified and added to the list of major program strengths of SWCES. The seven strengths highlighted this year stand out above other strong program areas because they provide the "something extra" needed for high quality services and high success rates among families. Through these strengths, SWCES continues to work towards their seven program goals and families continue to work towards their individual goals. These areas are consistent with those from Family Literacy Core Values and Quality Considerations as identified by RMC Research Corporation in the Revised *Guide to Quality* (2001).

Center-based Programming

Several families and home based instructors have stated that the Life Works program through the Getting Ready to Work (GRTW), Teen Parent Education, and Even Start participants is a major strength of the program. This center-based option provides intensive training, workplace experience, hard and soft life and professional skills development, and a group setting that offers encouragement, motivation and support. Interviews and focus groups with participants and staff show that the program has improved family involvement in program planning, increased the intensity of services and may help fulfill Welfare to Work requirements. Participants have also experienced gains in employment and professional skills, such as writing a resume and cover letter, interviewing, and "working" at the SAPCC. They also experienced an increase in their social and human capital, including increased self-esteem and self-confidence, and improved social and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, the center-based programming has improved collaboration among Even Start staff and partners. The evaluation of the Life Works program is discussed in detail starting on page 42 of this report.

Major Strengths of SWCES

8. Center-based Programming
9. Home-based Instruction
10. Connecting Families with Community Resources
11. Partnerships and Collaboration
12. Program Activities and Events
13. High Retention Rate of Families
14. Long-term Enrollment of Families

Home-based Instruction

Although the program operates out of the SAPCC and has an on-site option for families, as discussed above, SWCES continues to use home-based instruction services to support rural family needs. This allows the program to reach more rural and isolated families that otherwise might have limited access to quality education and services. Providing service through home-based instruction is one of the many strengths of the program, because most of their families live in rural areas and only one third of families have reliable transportation. Families have also identified that parent/child and adult educators support, flexibility, and strong commitment to work with families is a major strength of this home based program.

Connecting Families with Community Resources

SWCES further fulfills a need in the community by connecting families with available community resources, including services provided by collaborating agencies. This strength of the program offers families comprehensive services to meet their needs. As discussed in detail on page X of this report, services that families have been referred to this year include:

- Vermont Student Assistant Corporation
- Department of Employment and Training
- Futures
- Howard Dean Technical Center
- Public library
- Essential Early Education program (EEE)
- Mom's Groups in Windsor
- Parenting Classes
- Literacy series through Vermont Council on Humanities and Vermont Center for the Book

Putting families in touch with necessary resources has promoted parents to become better advocates for themselves and their children. Families also note that connecting them with other resources promotes learning to occur outside of the program.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Over the past three years, SWCES has significantly improved their relationship with collaborating agencies as the program continues to expand and grow. Strong partnerships and collaboration enables the program to continue to recruit and enroll eligible families, build on local resources, minimize duplication of services, provide professional development for area service providers, and assist others who work with the SWCES population to recognize the benefits of family literacy. Ultimately strong partnerships and collaboration strengthen program services to meet family needs in the best possible manner. Several strategies for improvement that have taken place over the past two years and have evolved this year have been: 1) the expansion of their Advisory Council to other service provider representatives, 2) the addition of quarterly meetings for regional collaborators, several of which focus on important local issues 3) the addition of the on-site program, and 4) monthly EFF study groups.

Gladys Collins, Program Coordinator, reported that throughout this fiscal year, several ties with collaborators and other agencies have been established and strengthened because of the on-site program and the grant re-application process. She stated that the program has gained the interest of Windsor Southwest (WSWSU) and Windham Northeast Supervisory Unions (WNESU) for the 2004 fiscal year. WSWSU is planning an early childhood center that combines Head Start and EEE in Chester, Vermont and WNESU has a public preschool program, both, which benefit SWCES. The program has also improved partnership with collaborators from Windsor County Head Start through the grant re-application process. There is also new representation from Windsor County Reads on the Advisory Council, who is dedicated to improving literacy among youth. Furthermore, the programs relationship with PATH (Department of Prevention,

Assistance, Transition, and Health Access) has improved as the Coordinator attended the Adult Service Provider Network monthly meetings. This provided a great opportunity to publicize the Life Works and Even Start program. PATH is also very interested in the offering of SWCES, specifically the Life Works program as it provides the Getting Ready to Work program for TANF recipients.

Program Activities and Events

Focus groups and interviews with families indicate that SWCES continues to improve its services by offering a wide variety of events and activities that serve the needs and interests of families. Participating families speak highly of the program and of the program's impacts on their lives. As many families have been involved in Even Start since the onset, several parents in the project have begun to take an active role in planning and promoting activities, specifically within the Life Works program. Parent participation in the planning process is a tremendous breakthrough of the project, suggesting that their involvement in SWCES has assisted in the development and improvement of leadership skills among several clients. Parents also commented on how their participation in SWCES has facilitated them to connect with other families in their communities. Activities and playgroups have offered parents an opportunity to leave their home, meet new people, and receive needed peer social interaction.

High Retention Rate of Families

SWCES continues to have a high retention rate of families, which is a strength of the program. This past year, SWCES retained 70% (16 of 23) of their families enrolled on July 1, 2002. This is a slight drop from the 84% of families retained in 2001-02, however many longer term families reached their goals and recently transitioned out of the program.

Long-term Enrollment of Families

SWCES continues to have *long-term enrollment* of families, as 25% of the population has been in the program for 2 to 7. The Program Coordinator of SWCES states that long term enrollment in the program is based on the need of families (i.e. learning disabilities and in and out of crisis situation). Their retention increases the likelihood that they will eventually meet their goals and graduate. Data from the National Center for Family Literacy (2001) show that of all families who enrolled in the program in 1997-98, 71% left the program having participated for 12 or fewer months. The long-term enrollment of SWCES families is a great success of the program and is a direct result of program strengths that assist families to continue to work towards their goals.

X. Family Identified Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start

During focus groups and interviews in June 2003, families were asked to discuss several strengths of SWCES that have made this an enjoyable program and assisted families in working towards and achieving their goals. In this discussion, they were asked to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of center-based and home-based programming. Overall, the adults interviewed enjoy and benefit from a combination of home and center-based learning, however limited transportation and childcare can often thwart on a person from attending center based events. Strengths identified by the families correspond to the Family literacy Core Values and Quality Considerations, as discussed in the Revised Guide to Quality (RMC Research, 2001). These strengths are incorporated in the seven major strengths of the program, as identified by the evaluation team (see Section IX).

Center and Home Based Programming

Families interviewed during focus groups and interviews in June 2003 talked about several advantages and disadvantages of center-based and home-based programming.

Family Identified Strengths of SWCES

- Center and home based programming
- Support, flexibility, and commitment of staff
- Promoting parent advocacy
- Family networking
- Activities and playgroups
- Promotion of learning outside the classroom
- Child care services

Advantages of center-based programming include:

- Easier to focus on work when away from home and children
- Learning together in a group environment
- Get out of the home and focus on self as a person and not just “mom”
- Make friendships with peers and talk about life

Disadvantages of center-based programming include:

- Not being at home (see advantages of home-based programming)
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of child care services
- Some parents may not be comfortable learning in a group environment (such as perception of being judged by others)

Advantages of home-based programming include:

- Working at home in a comfortable setting
- One-on-one work facilitates learning
- Have resources ready if need them, such as food and toys for children
- More convenient for those without child care or transportation
- Two educators visit – one to work with child and one to work with adult. This allows children to be occupied when parents work with their adult educator.
- Opportunity for children to socialize with other adults and not just their parents

- Children can stay in a “safe” and familiar environment.

Disadvantages of home-based programming include:

- Often difficult to concentrate with children present

Support, flexibility, and commitment of SWCES staff

All of the parents interviewed expressed deep appreciation and stressed the importance of staff strong commitment to work with families, through both good and bad situations. This program feedback has been consistent since the onset of the program. All of the interviewees noted that their educators are like family to them, providing a positive support and motivational system and are non-judgmental. One woman commented that they will "bend over backwards to help you out", from providing information on getting a GED to providing transportation to attend an Even Start event to bring a child to a doctor's appointment. Families also mentioned that the staff member with whom they work most closely helps them to realize, identify, and achieve SMART goals.

Promoting parents to be advocates of their children

All respondents noted that SWCES staff promote and encourage parent advocacy among families. Several also noted that their parent/child educators attend parent-teacher conferences and meetings with teachers and counselors to address the needs of children at school. Instructors also provide transportation for families, supporting their attendance at school-related and other meetings, such as court appointments and doctor's visits.

Connecting families with other families

Parents also commented on how their participation in SWCES has facilitated them to connect with other families in their communities. This is specifically an outcome of the parents who completed the GRTW training. Activities and playgroups have offered parents an opportunity to leave their home, meet new people, and receive needed peer social interaction.

Activities and playgroups

All of the mothers interviewed spoke positively about activities and playgroups offered by SWCES. Favorite literacy related activities included: attending various literacy series through the Vermont Council on the Humanities. Favorite field trips included: apple picking, the Montshire museum, and trips to farmer's markets. Parenting classes on a variety of topics, such as Positive Discipline for Preschoolers continue to be useful and enjoyed by families.

Promotion of family learning outside of SWCES

Through home visits and attending events such as book classes, families receive education materials to bring home. This encourages parents to work with their children in the development of literacy skills outside of the program. One woman commented that her involvement in

SWCES has taught her the skill of how to problem solve and how to get things accomplished, that she has applied in every day life. Those who completed the GRTW program also commented that this program encouraged them to pursue further education or find a job.

Providing childcare services

Many of the parents stressed how important it is that SWCES provides child care services at both the Parent/Child Center during special events and during the on-site program as well as during home based instruction. Parents indicated that this service allows them to focus on their studies during home visits or activities at the center, instead of focusing on their child.

Areas for program improvement

Few parents had specific suggestions for program improvement during client focus groups, however the evaluators have made several recommendations based on discussion.

- o All participants who completed the Life Works program suggested that staff encourage other families to take advantage of this opportunity.
- o SWCES should also continue to build on program strengths that families have identified. These strengths include: the addition of the on-site program; support, flexibility and commitment of parent/child and adult educators, promoting parents to be advocates of their children; connecting families with other families; activities and playgroups; promotion of family learning outside of the program; and providing childcare services.

XI. Program Accomplishments and Improvements

Continuing with the evaluation from last year, the evaluators highlighted several program accomplishments and improvements of SWCES, based on staff questionnaires and interviews, and Advisory Council meeting observations and minutes. These program improvements are a part of the natural progression and growth this program has undertaken, as it has become a mature and experienced Even Start program. These changes were prompted by the needs of SWCES staff, families, collaborators, and the local community, as well as the previous years of learning experience. Program accomplishments and improvement to highlight this evaluation period include the Life Works program and community learning and resource focused Advisory Council meetings. The discussion below demonstrates that SWCES is continually evolving and growing to best serve the ever changing needs of their clients and community as well as meet their seven program goals.

Center-based Programming

The Life Works program is an on-site program at the SAPCC, which was established in January 2002 through grant funding. This program consists of the Getting Ready to Work program (GRTW), Teen Parent Education, and Even Start. Families involved in this program commit to an intensive 20-hour a week option to receive education, parenting, and job skills through a twelve-week session. The program was funded to run three, twelve-week sessions throughout the year.

SWCES provides some of the staff for the on-site program, specifically for Even Start services including adult education, family literacy, parenting skills, family dynamics, early childhood education, computer literacy practice, and various risk prevention activities. Most families continue to fulfill PCIA hours during home-based instruction. In the previous fiscal year, SWCES had six families participate in Life Works and this year there were seven families enrolled in the program. Three of those participants were recruited into Even Start from Life Works. The addition of the on-site program to SWCES and the SAPCC has led to many successful outcomes for Even Start as a service as well as family success, consistent with those seen last year during the programs first year of operation. These outcomes include an increase in family involvement in program planning, an increase in the intensity of services available for families and possible expansion of service areas, and family gains in employment and life skills as well as social and human capital.

Improved family involvement in program planning

The four main SWCES staff members stated in their end of the year questionnaire that the Life Works program provides families with more opportunity to participate in planning aspects of the program. Life Works families help to plan activities and have input in their own individual

Areas of Program Accomplishment and Improvements

- ➔ *Center-based programming*
 - Improved family involvement in planning
 - Increased intensity of services
 - Employment and life skills
 - Social and human capital
 - Improved collaboration

- ➔ *Advisory Council meetings* as forums for community learning, networking, and information sharing

schedules and plan. They also shape the direction of the program based on their needs and goals and help to plan the celebration at the end of the twelve-week session.

Increased intensity of services

The Life Works program has enable SWCES to increase the intensity of services offered in adult education, job training, and parenting education skills. It also may fulfill the Reach Up work requirement of 20-30 hours a week, depending on family status as "pre work" or "work ready". Furthermore, children benefit from the on-site option as most are enrolled in a registered or licensed childcare facilities including preschool programs such as Head Start, PlayWorks, and Learning Partners. Given the rural nature of the program, families continue to use home-based instruction to fulfill PCIA as well as all other required Even Start hours, depending on their transportation, childcare, and other needs. The on-site option has also acted as a referral source for new Even Start families as eligible people who are not enrolled in Even Start but enroll in the GRTW option may later decide to enroll in Even Start to receive the other components of family literacy. This year, three families were recruited into Even Start from Life Works.

Gains in employment and life skills

As stated in a previous section of this report, four of the mothers interviewed in the evaluation of SWCES this year participated in the Life Works program and all discussed many gains in employment and life skills they experienced. Participants cited that they have gained skills such as learning to use a computer, writing a resume and cover letter, conducting a job search, and interviewing successfully. Gains have also been made in life skills including financial management, maintaining good credit, banking, and buying a home. Furthermore, participants have shown gains in practical skills such as balancing one's life, conflict resolution, communication skills, and appropriate behavior.

Gains in social and human capital

Michael Sherraden (1991) defines wealth and welfare to include both tangible and intangible assets. Intangible assets include: human capital (intelligence, education, esteem, etc.), cultural capital (the ability to know and practice the behaviors of the dominant group) and informal social capital (family, friends, contacts, etc.). Robert Putnam (1993 and 1993) states that social capital is important for impoverished areas because it raises the standard and quality of living, which provides an environment in which productivity is possible to work towards economic growth.

SWCES staff reported that the Life Works program has enabled rural families to gain social capital as they come out of isolation and work in a group with others in a similar situation towards their goals. Since the start of the on-site program, Gladys Collins states that she is convinced of the power of learning in a group setting, as families have found new support with one another and have "blossomed". Nancie Lorenz agrees in stating that families get involved in a great deal of networking with their peers and staff members, building a support system. She feels that the center-based model, "from child care to transportation to self-esteem building" has yielded positive outcomes because of this support system. She cited that one Even Start mom who participated in the Life Works program continues to stop by on a regular basis to check in with the staff as she feels a real connection to the staff and program. Families are given the opportunity to work in groups to enhance their networking skills and build social capital. With the intensity of services, people have the opportunity to work closely with one another and build

relationships. This type of bonding is different from the more superficial bonding that takes place during one time on-site activities and field trips, such as cooking classes or field trips to farmer's markets.

Through these new relationships, participants have shared parenting and relationship advice to support each other's personal and family life. They have also provided motivational support for one another to attend class, be on time, and complete all required course work. Collins states that there has been a "trickle down" effect of the "can do" philosophy among participants. Many of the participants have also gained more confidence in their ability to succeed because of tangible success they experience with the program. Tangible success have included gaining job experience such as interviewing and getting a job, coming to work, and receiving feedback, etc. through their work experience. An ESLL family has also improved their use and understanding of the English language through participation in Life Works. Families also show an improvement in social and interpersonal skills as many move from being isolated and withdrawn individuals to being more comfortable in a group setting and dealing with group dynamics and conflict resolution as situations arise.

The Life Works program has provided families with a different way to participate in Even Start and receive the intensity of services. This program expansion has led to many family gains and staff are excited to work with more families through this option as the program continues to grow, expand, and evolve. Further discussion about the impact of the on-site program from participants' point of view is available in sections IV and X of this report.

Improved Collaboration

The Life Works program has benefited not only family participants, but has improved the collaboration among SWCES staff and partners. Several of the SWCES staff reported that the Life Works program has improved collaboration among project partners, as they now work together in a more tight knit fashion to carry out a successful session. The Life Works program is a large part of the new direction of the Even Start program, focused on increased intensity and outcomes, through a center-based model. One staff member noted that through the design and improvement of Life Works over the past two years, collaborators are aware of the direction that Even Start is moving and have begun to make more referrals that are appropriate to the changes in the program.

Areas for Improvement

Few staff and participants had any complaints about the Life Works program. However, one theme that continues to emerge in discussion is the need for on-site childcare and improved transportation services. These two areas should be addressed in the future for the continued success of the Life Works program. Gladys Collins also noted that families should to be transitioned into and out of the program in order to be successful. This is needed to assist families in gaining trust and courage to become a part of a center based program, and then return to what their communities have to offer with their newfound skills.

Advisory Council Meetings as Forums for Community Learning

South Windsor County Even Start held eight Advisory Council meetings this year and one quarterly Advisory Council meeting. Several meetings, including the quarterly meeting, focused on community learning regarding substance abuse issues, federal legislation changes affecting education, and the history of SWCES. Council meetings also hold an important role of collaborator networking and information sharing, providing valuable resources for Even Start staff and others.

Substance Abuse Quarterly Council Meeting

The program held only one this year (as opposed to the typical three) so staff could use the time to develop the program's re-application grant. The quarterly council meeting held in October 2002 continued with the tradition of providing a forum to discuss community based issues. This meeting focused on substance abuse prevention and intervention in the Springfield and Windsor Area. The presenters for the meeting included Jane Harding Gurney from the Windham/Windsor Recovery Assistance Programs (WRAP program) of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services and Rocking Horse Circle of Support and Gail Mears of the "In Your Face Gorilla Theater" Intervention/prevention project and Mt. Ascutney Hospital. This meeting topic was suggested by a council member, in order to address the issue of family substance abuse issues and review the support systems that are available for them. Gladys Collins, Program Coordinator, stated that the meeting was beneficial as it familiarized staff and partner organizations with what resources are available for families and so they may support families through referrals.

Other Advisory Council meeting topics

Several of the advisory council meetings also held the focus of community learning. Nancie Lorenz, SWCES staff member, and Kitty Stanley, Director of Vermont Adult Learning, stated that the November 2002 meeting on the "No Child Left Behind" legislation, presented by Sarah Carter from the Springfield School District, was important and educational. Sarah discussed the ten titles in the Act and reviewed the overall focus of the legislation, moving towards improving student performance. Nancie and Kitty noted that the presentation was well done, and helped to clarify how changes in the federal legislation will impact all areas of public education.

Gladys Collins also noted that the January council meeting was important as Sue Buckley presented on the "new Even Start", in preparation for the grant re-application. This meeting provided a common ground of understanding of the changing face of Even Start for staff and collaborators and assisted them in preparing for a more "outcomes based" program. Throughout 2003, several other council meetings focused on organization for the grant re-application.

Nancie Lorenz also highlighted the February council meeting, which focused on the "River of Even Start Culture". This meeting provided staff and partners with a clear picture of the Even Start program, past, present, and future. It was educational in that it provided Even Start staff and collaborators with a common ground of understanding about the program and its mission.

Resources for networking and information sharing

In reviewing the council meeting minutes, these meetings also provide an important resource for staff and collaborator networking and information sharing. Each meeting has time set aside where members can make announcements or provide program updates. Updates often include:

- The availability of services or supplies, such as fuel assistance money for families in crisis or car seats;
- Classes being offered at various organizations in which Even Start families may enroll, such as the Life Works program, computer classes at VAL, “Cooking for Life” classes, Windsor Mom’s Groups, family literacy mentoring programs, literacy groups at Head Start, and various book clubs;
- Events and activities for families such as apple orchard trips and Fort #4;
- Sharing of information from conferences, such as the Building Blocks training attended by two SWCES staff;
- Discussion of Even Start family successes, program changes, and grant writing; and
- Presentation of local evaluation.

XII. Conclusions

The Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont has provided evaluation services for SWCES since the program's inception in 1994. This evaluation report is for the seventh year of the South Windsor County Even Start program (SWCES), the Fiscal Year period of July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003. The Center for Rural Studies (CRS) at the University of Vermont has worked with SWCES as local evaluators for the eight years that the program has been in service to the South Windsor County area in southern Vermont. This evaluation report demonstrates that SWCES continues to provide quality program services, as indicated by positive client reviews, identification of program strengths and the progress many families have made in working towards and achieving goals, as well as working through challenging life situations.

SWCES Goals

The conclusions highlighted below, discussed in detail throughout this report, demonstrate that SWCES has met all seven of the program's goals this year. Family demographic data, Vermont State Performance Indicator data, student performance data, and family success stories and examples of goals met presented through the two family case studies and several focus groups, interviews, and self-assessments show that the following goals have been met. These goals include:

1. Assist parents to be full partners in their children's acquisition of literacy skills through parent education and adult education.
2. Ensure that children reach their full potential as learners.
3. Improve economic opportunities of families through increasing the educational level of parents.
4. Strengthen the family's vision of themselves as a learning team.
5. Expand the ability of families to become contributing and self-sustaining members of the community.
6. Continue to serve 20 families while recruiting families identified as most in need of Even Start services.
7. Leave a legacy of intergenerational life-long learners who will positively impact their communities as their communities recognize and commit to delivering family literacy activities beyond Even Start's tenure

Client Demographics

In analyzing client demographics over the past seven years and comparing this data to national reports, this program has been consistent in providing services to a population in need of these services. This past year, the program provided services for twenty-three families enrolled in the program. Currently, sixteen families have remained in the program, with a total of sixteen adults

and twenty-nine eligible children. The program continues to have a high family retention rate of 70% with 25% of clients having been enrolled for two to seven years.

Adult and Child Indicators

Under federal legislation, local programs are required to collect indicator data on adults and children to demonstrate measurable growth and improvement in learning and education. This year, SWCES adults and children showed many academic gains based on the key indicators, as highlighted below. The indicators with a check mark signify that it was met, whereas, the indicators with a dot indicate that the indicator was not met. Three of the four adult indicators were applicable to SWCES this year and all three were met. Four of the six child indicators were applicable to the program this year and two of the four were met.

- ✓ 92% (12) of adults achieved gains in one or more NRS areas of reading (6), writing (3), and math (3);
- ✓ 86% (6) of adults who set a goal related to employment met their goal. Three entered job training, three obtained employment, and one advanced in their career;
- ✓ 80% (4) of adults obtained secondary school credential or its equivalent within two years of Even Start enrollment.
- ✓ 100% (1) of children eligible to take the SERP met or achieved proficiency;
- 66% (2) of children without an individual plan are progressing at a normal or higher rate on the COR, Language and Literacy subscale. The one child who did not meet this indicator showed a gain in three out of the six areas;
- 33% (1) of children met or exceeded the attendance rate of their peers;
- ✓ 100% (3) of students were promoted to the next grade level.

Family SMART goals met

Family self-reported data and staff records demonstrate that families and individuals met a variety of SMART goals for the four components of Even Start. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

Adult Education:

- 3 participants completed GRTW
- 3 obtained employment
- 1 advanced in her career
- 4 obtained ADP or GED
- 12 adults made 22 NRS level gains in the areas of reading, writing, and math
- 1 will enter the Employment Preparation Program at SAPCC work site for 20 hours a week
- Improved reading skills as evidenced by a gain in NRS level score
- Worked on ADP and GED completion
- Improved math and writing skills as evidenced by a gain in NRS level score
- Developed resume and cover letter through GRTW
- Gained interviewing skills through GRTW
- One adult is a volunteer receptionist at the Windsor Resource Center and is gaining work experience

- One adult was chosen to represent VAL at the Voices of Adult Learners United for Education Conference (VALUE) and was awarded an all expenses paid trip to Florida to present there in June

Child Education:

- Read to child every night
- Enrolled child in Head Start
- Received speech evaluation resulting in speech therapy
- Children enrolled in Learning Partners, PlayWorks, and Pine Street Preschool.
- One child graduated preschool and will start Kindergarten in the fall

Parenting Education:

- Attended Mom’s groups in Windsor every Thursday
- Attended parent-teacher conferences
- Attended classes on: Positive Discipline for Preschooler; How to Talk so Children will Listen; Parenting for Prevention

Parent and Child Together:

- Field trips with child, such as the visit to the Montshire museum
- Attended story time at local library with child. Received free books to read together at home.
- Learning about child’s development and progress as early childhood educator works with child during home visits.

Other SMART Goals:

- 1 voter’s registration
- 1 learner’s permit
- 1 driver’s license
- 2 moved into better housing

Program Impact on Family Achievements

During focus groups and interviews in June 2003, families discussed several ways in which the program has impacted or supported their achievements. Similar to the findings of previous years, families cited examples related to the Life Works program, adult education, parenting education, early childhood education, and the positive impact the program has had through connecting families to resources or services in the communities.

<p>Program Impact on Family Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Impact of the Life Works program ✓ Adult education ✓ Parent education ✓ Early childhood education ✓ Connecting families to community resources
--

Family Self-Assessment Questionnaire

SWCES staff piloted the use of a family self-assessment tool, "A Measure of My Family's Well-Being" in the fall of 2002. In the fall of 2003, staff followed up with returning families (approximately one year after their initial completion) and newly enrolled families completed the initial assessment.

- ❖ Results showed that the areas of shelter, family relationships, and physical health and safety are considered to be of **least concern** to most families;
- ❖ The areas of nutrition and clothing, children’s development and education, social and emotional health, parenting, legal, and community relationships are considered of **low to medium concern** to most families, with new families showing some significantly higher concerns compared to returning families;
- ❖ The areas of transportation, finance and income, and adult education are considered of **medium to high concern** to many families, with new families expressing a significantly higher level of concern compared to returning families;
- ❖ The areas of employment and work skills and habits are considered of **most concern** to many families.

Highlights of the Family Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Areas of least concern:

- Shelter
- Family relationships
- Physical health/safety
- Parenting

Areas of low to medium concern:

- Nutrition and clothing
- Child development and education
- Social and emotional health
- Legal
- Community relationships

Areas of medium to high concern:

- Transportation
- Finance and income
- Adult education

Areas of most concern:

- **Employment**
- **Work skills and habits**

Overall, it is important to notice that at a low level of concern, there is no significant difference in responses from newly enrolled to returning families. However as concern grows, results show a greater number of areas that are significantly different from new families to returning. When concern is at the highest for an area, there is no significant difference because all individuals, regardless of work with Even Start or not, are concerned. This suggests that working with Even Start for at least a year may assist families in reaching goals that alleviate their concerns in several areas.

Parent Education Profile Structure

Baseline data from the Parent Education Profile Structures shows that families are consistently at level 2 for 14 of the 15 sub-scales, with parenting behavior performing at 40% to 47% of the highest possible score. Level 2 indicates that parents are beginning to show awareness and some interest in ways to improve but may be inconsistent; parents may need lots of support; and parents show low comfort level. The sub-scale of “parent-school communication” received an average rank of level 1. This levels indicates that there is little or no evidence of desired behaviors; parents show limited awareness and limited acceptance; parents are frustrated and not comfortable. This poor level of parent and school communication is consistent with teacher reports on the Early Childhood Progress survey, as this was noted as an area below other non-Even Start students.

Early Childhood Progress Survey

The SWCES staff administered the *Early Childhood Progress (ECP) survey* in June 2003 to teachers of SWCES students in preschool to grade four. Nine teachers completed the survey out of ten to whom it was mailed, for a 90% response rate. This survey documents the progress of these children in school in comparison to their peers who are not in Even Start. **Students are**

assessed in the areas of: school readiness and progress, social interactions, parent involvement and attendance, and special education eligibility. **Vermont State Performance Indicators 1, 2, 4, and 5** were also addressed on this questionnaire.

Comparing the changes in the entire data set from 2001 to 2002, several trends in the six major areas of SWCES Early Childhood survey can be noted.

The findings demonstrate that most of the SWCES youth (whose teachers completed the survey) are performing at the same level or above other non-Even Start children in the areas of self-confidence, relations with other students, motivation to learn, and classroom behavior. However, teachers ranked many students to be performing below other non-Even Start children with regards to academic performance, and especially their parent's involvement in their school life.

- ❖ SWCES staff should continue to work with youth on their **academic skills** through early childhood education intensive services, and address issues and make appropriate referrals as needed.
- ❖ SWCES staff should continue to and encourage and support **parent involvement** in children's schools, in ways such as encouraging parents to attend school meetings or attending these meetings with parents, assisting parents to advocate for their children, and encouraging them to take an active role in their child's lives through intensive PCIA time hours. SWCES should also continue to address parent's needs and barriers relating to low parent involvement and refer parents where appropriate.
- ❖ The findings indicate that the majority of SWCES youth are **motivated to learn** at the same or better level compared to non-Even Start youth. Staff should consider working specifically with children who received low marks in this area to address these issues and make referrals to other collaborating services as appropriate.
- ❖ Although many SWCES children are reported to have average or higher **peer relation** skills, these results suggest that SWCES should consider working with children to improve their skills in relating to other peers. Staff could either provide support on a one-on-one basis or possibly hold more child-focused events where children can gain more experience in interacting with their peers in a positive learning environment.
- ❖ Similar to the results of self-confidence, results on **classroom behavior** indicate that several of SWCES youth behave similar to or better than class peers. SWCES staff should continue to work with children who received poor marks in this area on a one-on-one basis during home visits for early childhood education services and PCIA time hours. This issue should also be addressed during any center-based group activities and field trips as needed.

**Summary of Findings from the
Early Childhood Progress**

Areas below other children:

- Academic Performance
- Parent involvement

Areas at the same level as other children:

- Motivation to learn
- Relations with other students
- Classroom behavior
- Self-confidence

Areas above other children

- Motivation to learn
- Classroom behavior

- ❖ Although most of the youth were reported to have average or higher **self confidence** levels, SWCES staff should continue to encourage youth self confidence through planning activities (both home and center based) that can provide children with a sense of success and accomplishment to build their self esteem in learning and life. Further, they should encourage all parents to help build their child's self esteem at home on a daily basis.

Major Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start

Through the past eight years of data collection from families, collaborators, and staff, the evaluation team have identified and added to the list of major program strengths of SWCES. The seven strengths highlighted this year stand out above other strong program areas because they provide the "something extra" needed for high quality services and high success rates among families. Through these strengths, SWCES continues to work towards their seven program goals and families continue to work towards their individual goals. These areas are consistent with those from Family Literacy Core Values and Quality Considerations as identified by RMC Research Corporation in the Revised *Guide to Quality* (2001).

These strengths include: center-based instruction, home-based instruction, connecting families with available community resources, strong partnerships and collaboration, program activities and events, high retention rate of families, and long term enrollment of families. These areas are consistent with those from Family Literacy Core Values and Quality Considerations as identified by RMC Research Corporation in the Revised *Guide to Quality* (2001).

Major Strengths of SWCES

1. Center-based Programming
2. Home-based Instruction
3. Connecting Families with Community Resources
4. Partnerships and Collaboration
5. Program Activities and Events
6. High Retention Rate of Families
7. Long-term Enrollment of Families

Family Identified Strengths of South Windsor County Even Start

During focus groups and interviews in June 2003, families were asked to discuss several strengths of SWCES that have made this an enjoyable program and assisted families in working towards and achieving their goals. In this discussion, they were asked to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of center-based and home-based programming. Overall, the adults interviewed enjoy and benefit from a combination of home and center-based learning, however limited transportation and childcare can often thwart on a person from attending center based events. Strengths identified by the families correspond to the Family literacy Core Values and Quality Considerations, as discussed in the Revised Guide to Quality (RMC Research, 2001). These strengths are incorporated in the seven major strengths of the program, as identified by the evaluation team. These strengths include: Center and home based programming, support, flexibility, and commitment of staff, promoting parent advocacy, family

Family Identified Strengths of SWCES

- ➔ Center and home based programming
- ➔ Support, flexibility, and commitment of staff
- ➔ Promoting parent advocacy
- ➔ Family networking
- ➔ Activities and playgroups
- ➔ Promotion of learning outside the classroom
- ➔ Child care services

networking, activities and playgroups, promotion of learning outside the classroom, and child care services.

Program Accomplishment and Improvements

The evaluators highlighted several program accomplishments and improvements of SWCES, based on staff questionnaires and interviews, and Advisory Council meeting observations and minutes. These program improvements are a part of the natural progression and growth, prompted by the needs of SWCES staff, families, collaborators, and the local community, as well as the previous years of learning experience. Program accomplishments and improvement to highlight this evaluation period include the Life Works program and community learning and resource focused Advisory Council meetings.

The **Life Works program** is an on-site program at the SAPCC, which was established in January 2002 through grant funding. This program consists of the Getting Ready to Work program (GRTW), Teen Parent Education, and Even Start. Families involved in this program commit to an intensive 20-hour a week option to receive education, parenting, and job skills through a twelve-week session.

- ❖ The Life Works program provides families with ***more opportunity to participate in planning aspects*** of the program. Life Works families help to plan activities and shape the direction of the program based on their needs and goals.
- ❖ The Life Works program has enable SWCES to ***increase the intensity of services*** offered in adult education, job training, and parenting education skills. It also may fulfill the Reach Up work requirement of 20-30 hours a week, depending on family status as "pre work" or "work ready".
- ❖ Participants in the Life Works program cited ***gains in employment and life skills***, such as learning to use a computer, writing a resume and cover letter, conducting a job search, interviewing successfully, managing finances, and buying a home.
- ❖ The Life Works program has enabled rural families to ***gain social capital*** as they come out of isolation and work in a group with others in a similar situation towards their goals, network, and build a support system.
- ❖ The Life Works program has ***improved the collaboration among SWCES staff and partners***, as they now work together in a more tight knit fashion to carry out a successful session. The Life Works program is a large part of the new direction of the Even Start program and collaborators are more aware of this direction and have begun to make more referrals that are appropriate to the changes in the program.

Areas of Program Accomplishment and Improvements

- ➔ ***Center-based Programming***
 - Improved family involvement in planning
 - Increased intensity of services
 - Employment and life skills
 - Social and human capital
 - Improved collaboration
- ➔ ***Advisory Council meetings*** as forums for community learning, networking, and information sharing

Areas in need of improvement for the Life Works program include the addition of an on-site childcare center, specifically one that serves infants, and transportation services. Staff also note that they need to work with families to transition them into and out of the program.

Another significant program accomplishment and improvement has been the use of **Advisory and Quarterly Council meetings to focus on community learning. These meetings have** focused on substance abuse issues and support available to parents, changes in the No Child Left Behind legislation that affect education, a review of the past, present, and future of SWCES, and grant writing collaboration. Council meetings also hold an important role of collaborator networking and information sharing, providing valuable resources for Even Start staff and others.

XIII. Recommendations

This 2002-2003 evaluation report demonstrates that SWCES continues to serve the South Windsor County community with quality program services and activities, connecting families to needed resources and services in the community. Through the strengths of this program, SWCES continues to have a positive influence in participant's lives, as families work towards and reach goals and work through life situations. In June 2003, the program learned that it was not refunded for the ninth year of service. Gladys Collins reported that the program will continue to provide family literacy services to families, despite the financial limitations. Beginning in July 2003, all of the Even Start families were transitioned out of that program. Eleven of the twenty-three families will continue to work with staff at the SPACC through Healthy Baby home visiting, the Teen Parent Education program, and Reach Up workers. Families will also have the option to enroll in the Life Works program. Seven of the twelve families that will no longer work with the program graduated from Even Start and five were referred to other services.

The following recommendations derived from the data presented in this evaluation report, may be taken into consideration for improvement of SAPCC services similar to Even Start, or in re-applying for Even Start funding in the fiscal year of 2004-05.

- ***Work with parents to improve their relationship with schools*** - The Early Childhood Progress survey and Parent Education Profile results suggest that some of the parents have a poor relationship and low level of involvement in their child's school. Staff should continue to support parent involvement in school through adult, early childhood, and parenting education, and PCIA.
 - Where appropriate, staff should *raise awareness and model appropriate behavior to parents*. This may include asking questions and showing interest about the child's grades and attendance; encouraging parents to attend parent-teacher conferences or other school related events, and discussing the importance of parent involvement and excitement in their child's education in relation to their attendance and performance.
 - Educators should also talk with parents about any *issues* they may have with the school system or being more involved and *address barriers* they may have to becoming more involved.
- ***Work with parents on improving their parenting skills using the PEP scale*** - The PEP baseline results also suggest that adult and parent/child educators should continue to work with families, in general, on their parenting skills. The PEP scales should be used to develop appropriate parent education curriculum and instruction that is specific to areas in need of improvement.

- ***Work with parents to improve child attendance*** - The Early Childhood Progress survey and the Child Performance Indicators show that poor attendance continues to be an issue for some children in the program. It should be noted that most of the school age children in the program are from ESL families, thus their high absenteeism may be a cultural issue.
 - Staff should continue to work with families to *address barriers* and any *cultural issues* that may impede on a child from attending school regularly.
 - Through *adult and early childhood education and goal setting and achieving*, staff should work with parents to value education and raise their awareness of the importance of sending their children to school on a regular basis.

- ***Work with children to improve performance in school*** - Based on the other findings of the Early Childhood Progress survey, the evaluators recommend that parent/child educators continue to work with children to develop academic skills needed for success in school.
 - Many of the students whose teachers completed the ECP survey were ESL students. Thus, staff should consider *specific academic and cultural needs* relating to barriers ESL students face in learning.
 - Staff should also continue to *encourage more positive behavior, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence* through early childhood education and PCIA at both home and center-based activities.

- ***Use of PEP tool for curriculum development*** - The Parent Education Profile tool should be used with families on a six-month basis for observing and documenting change in parent behavior and the child's learning environment.
 - The PEP scale can also be used to *develop lesson plans* that model and teach appropriate parenting behavior during center and home based instruction. Once the scale has been in place with families over time, a specific parenting education curriculum may be developed based on the trends in the data over time.
 - The evaluators also recommend *developing a tool to be used with families* based on the PEP, so the language may be integrated into goal setting and allow parents to assist in planning their curriculum.

- ***Transition to a center-based program*** - Discussion with families and staff, as well as positive family outcomes demonstrate that the SWCES model of center-based programming provides a successful learning environment. Given the federal requirements of high intensity services in all program components, the program should continue to transition towards a center-based model with home visiting occurring on a seldom basis (once or twice a month) to supplement center-based learning. In order for the program to continue towards a center-based model, the SAPCC must work through the barriers of child care services, specifically for infants, and transportation that continue to exist in serving rural and isolated families.

- SAPCC needs to *establish an infant/toddler center on site* to provide childcare services for families with infants so they may fully participate in adult education until their child is old enough for early childhood education.
- SAPCC also needs to develop several means to *provide or support family transportation to and from the center*. Several possibilities include purchasing a van or another Good News Garage car share vehicle, reimbursing families for mileage, providing gas money, or providing vouchers for local supermarkets and other stores for getting to the site.
- ***Continue to build on program strengths and experience*** – SAPCC and staff should continue to build on their major program strengths that families, evaluators, staff, and collaborators have identified as key to a successful family literacy program. SAPCC should also draw from the eight years of experience as an Even Start site to inform best practices for other literacy and other related programs. These *strengths include*: center and home-based programming; support, flexibility and commitment of parent/child and adult educators, promoting parents to be advocates of their children; connecting families with other families; activities and playgroups; promotion of family learning outside of the program; providing childcare services; and strong partnerships and collaboration.

Through eight years of experience and service as an Even Start family literacy program, the SAPCC has a wealth of knowledge that it may draw upon in developing other family literacy or family-centered programs. These recommendations should be taken into consideration if the program decides to apply for future Even Start to meet the requirements of federal legislation. These recommendations will strengthen current services towards program sustainability and enable families to continue to work towards and reach their goals.

XIV. Works Cited

- Affholter, D. (1994). "Outcome Monitoring," in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Caudle, S. (1994). "Using qualitative approaches," in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Dwyer, C. (2000). "Local Evaluation". Even Start Evaluation Workshop, January 2000. RMC Research Corporation. Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
- Krueger, R. (1988). *Focus Groups: a practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications. London.
- National Center for Family Literacy. (2001). *Fact Sheet on the Even Start Family Literacy Program, July 2001*.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. (1993). "The prosperous community: Social capital and economic growth". *American Prospect*. Spring, p. 35-42.
- RMC Research Corporation. (2000). Parenting Education Profile, Full Scales. Available online at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/workforce/evenstart/parentinged/home.html>
- RMC Research Corporation. (2001). *Guide to Quality: Even Start Family Literacy Program Implementation and Continuous Improvement Volume I, Revised*. RMC Research Corporation. Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
- Scheirer, M. (1994). "Designing and using process evaluation," in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Sherraden, M. (1991). *Assets and the poor: A new American welfare policy*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

XV. Appendices

- A. Vermont State Performance Indicators
- B. Staff Questionnaire
- C. Even Start Client Questionnaire
- D. Alumni Questionnaire
- E. A Measure of My Family's Well-Being survey
- F. Parent Education Profile Structure
- G. Early Childhood Progress Questionnaire

Appendix A

Vermont State Performance Indicators 2002-2003

Adult Indicators

1. After 100 hours of adult education instruction, 30% of adult program participants assessed at NRS levels 2-5 in reading, writing, math, and problem solving or English Language acquisition, will achieve a one NRS level gain in reading, writing, math and problem solving, or English Language acquisition, as measured by a state-approved assessment instrument.
2. After 100 hours of adult education instruction, 25% of adult program participants assessed at NRS level one in reading, writing, math, and problem solving (Beginning ABE), or English Language acquisition (Beginning ESL Literacy), will achieve a one NRS level gain in reading, writing, math and problem solving, or English Language acquisition, as measured by a state-approved assessment instrument.
3. Within the program year, 20% of the adults who have a goal of 1) entering post secondary education, 2) entering job training, 3) obtaining employment and/or 4) career advancement, and who have attended the program for at least 12 hours, will achieve that goal.
4. Among adult program participants assessed at NRS levels 5 and 6 in all subject areas, and who have attended the program for at least 12 hours, 50% will obtain a secondary school credential within two years of their involvement with the program.

Child Indicators

1. Of the second grade children whose families have participated in the program for at least two years, the percentage who meet or exceed the standard for reading accuracy and comprehension as measured by the Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) will be equal to, or greater than the median on this same measure of the supervisory unions served by Vermont's comprehensive family literacy programs.
2. Based on assessments conducted in the six months prior to entering kindergarten, among children who have received at least 200 early childhood instructional hours and whose families have participated in the program for at least two years, 65% will score in or above the age-appropriate target range for reading readiness and phonological awareness as measured by the Screening for Early Reading Processes (SERP), Parts 1, 2 and 3.
3. Among four year old children who have received at least 200 early childhood instructional hours and whose families have participated in the program for at least two years, 65% will progress at a normal or higher rate than that established by the validation

study of the Language and Literacy subscales of the Child Observation Record (COR), as measured by pre- and post-assessments at ages 3 and 4 respectively.

4. Children enrolled in grades K-3 whose families have participated in the program for at least one full year will have attended school at a same or better rate than the average for their school buildings, as reported by their schools.
5. Among children enrolled in grades K-3 whose families have participated in the program for at least one full year, 90% will be promoted to the next grade as reported by the children's schools.

Appendix B

End of Year Staff Questionnaire May 13, 2003

Program Questions

1. Were there any "hot topics" or educational **Quarterly Council Meetings** that you would like to see addressed in this years evaluation report? Why was this topic covered? How did the community or Council members benefit from this discussion?
2. Has **family involvement** in planning for ES this past year (a) increased, (b) decreased or (c) stayed the same? Please provide an example from one of your families of their involvement in planning.
3. Overall, how has **collaboration** changed this past year? (especially with the Life Works program and re-application process?
 - Improved, stayed the same, worse?
 - What are plans for improving this next year?
4. How have you worked with families to set **SMART goals** this year? What have been the challenges of this? Has this been successful? What goals have been set and achieved? Do you feel they were achieved because they were "SMART" as opposed to lofty an intangible goals?
5. What are your feelings on the shift in focus of SWCES towards **center based** and Life Works? Do you feel this move will enable families to reach the intensity of service desired?
6. How will a **center-based** program benefit your families? Are there any drawbacks to the focus on center-based? What are your families reactions thus far?
7. How have you handled **identifying and transitioning families** out of the program that do not meet the "ready and able to participate" at the level of intensity required?
8. How has the process of **family recruitment and enrollment** changed this past year given the change in intensity of services required?

Life Works

9. Gladys only - how many ES families were involved in the Life Works program this year?
10. Please provide a general comment and/or examples of **major accomplishments** with your ES families through the Life Works program? What have been the major **benefits, impacts, or goals** reached specific to your families and in general?

Parenting Education Profile

11. How did you (or do you plan to) use the PEP scales in ES?
12. Do you or will you **involve families** directly in the use of this tool? How will you do this?
13. If you used this tool with families, was it **helpful** for their learning, goal setting, and reflection? How so? Please provide an example of observations you had where this tool helped families to learn.
14. For the next fiscal year, we are looking to develop a **family friendly tool** using the PEP scales. Do you have any suggestions for how this can best be done or presented and in what context it will be used (e.g. as part of a lesson or by itself)?

Evaluation of SWCES 2003-04

15. What would you like to see the **evaluation** of ES focus on? Is there a specific area or evaluation question you would like to see address?
16. We want this evaluation to provide the most useful information to you for program improvement, without inundating you with paperwork! Do you have any **suggestions for changing** current evaluation practices (please be honest, you won't hurt my feelings!)?

Appendix C

South Windsor County Even Start Client Questionnaire June 2003

1. Please introduce yourself, tell us how long you have been involved in Even Start, (if Life Works, how long involved there) something special about your children, and what is your favorite part about Even Start or Life Works (what do you like best about Even Start)?

2. As you know, there are four parts to Even Start. What are your Even Start **goals** for the following areas? What kinds of things are you **learning** or **skills gained** to work towards these goals?
 - a. Adult education: (Life Works)
 - b. Child education: (enrolled in a pre-school program)
 - c. Parenting education: (Parenting classes)
 - d. Parent and child together: (favorite activities or playgroups)

3. Have you been involved in the **center-based** part of Even Start, the **home based**, or **both**? By center based, I am referring to Life Works or on-site classes that are away from your home and in a group environment. Home based refers to when an instructor provides lessons in your home.
 - a. *If center based* - how has group/center based learning benefited you, your family, and your learning? What are advantages and disadvantages?
 - b. *If home based* - how has home instruction benefited you, your family, and your learning? What are advantages and disadvantages? Are you interested in trying the center based programming? If not, what are barriers to center based?

4. What are **examples** of some goals or successes you and your family have reached or accomplished thus far because of your participation in Even Start (Life Works)? Major **successes**.

5. What types of **community resources/services** has Even Start (Life Works) connected you to?

6. What do you feel are the **strengths** of the Even Start (Life Works) program? How did the program, instructors, classes, etc. **help** you to set and work towards your goals?
7. Would you like to share any goals or areas you have set or would like to **work on in the future**?
8. How can the **program help** you with any goals you feel you have lack of progress?
9. What are areas in the program that are **need of improvement**? How can Even Start (Life Works) better **serve your needs**?

Appendix D

**South Windsor County Even Start Alumni Questionnaire
June 2003**

Hello, may I please speak with _____. This is _____ and I am calling from the Center for Rural Studies on behalf of the South Windsor County Even Start program. _____(staff name) suggested that I call you because you are a graduate of the Even Start program. We are following up with Even Start graduates to find out how your involvement affected you and your family. This information will be used by Even Start staff to know how the program is doing and ways it can improve for the future. All of your responses will be kept confidential and responses will only be presented together with other responses.

Do you have some time to answer some questions? It will take about 15 minutes.

If no time - Is there a better time when I can call back?

If yes - Thank you for agreeing to participate!

10. In what year did you first get involved with Even Start? Or Approximately how long you were involved in Even Start, (if Life Works, how long involved there)?

11. In what year did you graduate from the program?

12. Could you tell me a little about your family, such as how many children you have and their ages?

13. If you could summarize it, what was your favorite part about Even Start (Life Works) (what did you like best about Even Start)?

Now I have some questions about your goals achieved and knowledge gained while you were in Even Start.

14. As you know, there are four parts to Even Start: adult and parenting education, child education, and parent and child together time. When you were in the program, what were the major Even Start **goals** you and your family **accomplished** in each of these areas?

- a. Adult education: (Life Works)
- b. Parenting education: (Parenting classes)
- c. Child education: (pre-school)

- d. Parent and child together: (favorite activities or playgroups)
15. What kinds of things did you **learn or skills** did you gain in these areas because of your involvement in Even Start?
- a. Adult education: (Life Works)
 - b. Parenting education: (Parenting classes)
 - c. Child education: (pre-school)
 - d. Parent and child together: (favorite activities or playgroups)
16. What, if any, changes in **attitude** and/or **personal outlook** did you experience because of your involvement in Even Start?
17. What types of **community resources or services** did Even Start connect you to? (i.e. public library, mom's group, etc.)
18. Are you and your family still involved with them or use them?

The following questions ask about your life since you have graduated from Even Start.

19. Would you please share any **major accomplishments** you and your family have achieved since you graduated from Even Start? This can include things like bought a house, gone on for more education, got a job, etc.
20. What are you and your family **doing now** in terms of parenting, employment and education since you graduated from the Even Start program? Would you say that Even Start helped you get to this point?
- a. Parenting
 - b. Employment
 - c. Adult education
 - d. Child education

21. On a scale of 0 – 10, with 0 being “No Improvements” and 10 being “a lot of improvement”, please rank the level to which your **personal life** has improved as a result of your involvement in Even Start. Personal life can refer to your mental and/or physical health, social skills, and self awareness, etc. (Record number given 11 = Refused)
22. On that same scale, please rank the level to which your **family situation** has improved as a result of your involvement in Even Start. This may refer to better communication, better parenting skills, improvement in children's behavior, etc. (Record number given 11 = Refused)
23. On that same scale, please rank the level to which your **relationships to your local community** have improved as a result of your involvement in Even Start. This may refer to involvement in your neighborhood, friends, church, youth groups, other community activities, etc.) (Record number given 11 = Refused)
24. Are there any **goals** that you are working on now or plan to work on in the **future**, in areas such as employment or your career, education, or your children's success in school? Any other areas?
- a. Employment
 - b. Education
 - c. Children success in school
25. We're looking to find out how Even Start may affect a family's financial situation. This is an optional question, so just answer if you are comfortable. Because of your involvement in Even Start, has your annual household income increased, decreased, or stayed the same since you graduated?

Household refers to all of the people living in your house.

- 1 Increased
- 2 Decreased
- 3 Stayed the same
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions to get your feedback about the Even Start program.

26. On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being completely dissatisfied or 0% satisfied and 10 being completely or 100% satisfied, how **satisfied** are you overall with the Even Start program? (Number 0-10; code 11 as refused)

27. What were some of the major **strengths** of the Even Start (Life Works) program?

28. How did the program, instructors, classes, etc. **help** you to set and work towards your goals? Specific examples if possible.

29. Were you involved in the **center-based** part of Even Start, the **home based**, or **both**? By center based, I am referring to Life Works or on-site classes that are away from your home and in a group environment. Home based refers to when an instructor provides lessons in your home.
 - a. *If center based* - how did group/center based learning benefit you, your family, and your learning? What were some advantages and disadvantages?

 - b. *If home based* - how did home instruction benefit you, your family, and your learning? What were some advantages and disadvantages?

30. Is there anything more that you would like to add that I did not cover?

That was my final question. Thank you very much for answering my questions and I really appreciate you taking the time to do so. You've helped us learn more about the Even Start program and how we may better serve you and others in the future. Have a good day/evening! Good bye.

Appendix E

**A Measure of My Family's Well-Being
2002-2003**

<p>Shelter</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Family Relationships</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Transportation</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Parenting</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Nutrition and Clothing</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Legal</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Finance/Income</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Community Relations</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Physical Health/Safety</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Adult Education</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Children's Development and Education</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Employment</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>
<p>Social/Emotional Health</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>	<p>Work Skills/Habits</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>Concerned Not concerned</p>

Appendix F

**Parenting Education Profile Structure
2002-2003
RCM Research, 2000**

This record is designed to help summarize the status of parent progress in family literacy programs by summarizing observations of behaviors related to literacy and learning made by parents themselves and those who know them well.

The record is designed to trace the progress of development of parents and to capture the highest level of typical behaviors within each area of development, that is, the level of behaviors that represents patterns that are consistently observable. In each area, statements of behavior are arranged from one to five in approximate order of development; the statements are arranged hierarchically.

Ratings should be made by a team that knows the parent well and based on evidence of behaviors from logs, portfolios, ESPIRS ratings, and interviews or discussions with the parent over a several month period. Observations would be made on everyday activities and routine program opportunities rather than specially constructed demonstrations. Thus, the focus of attention is on behavior initiated by the parent.

Ratings should be made approximately at six month intervals.

The scales, topics within scales, and levels of behavior are based on the U.S. Department of Education's Parenting Education Framework, Equipped for the Future, the findings about stages of parent development in New York's Even Start Longitudinal study, and the family behaviors identified for New York's Performance Indicators.

Developed by NY Even Start SEA and program staff and RMC Research
September 2000
©RMC Research

Summary of Parenting Education Profile Scales

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment		Scores (approx. 6 mo. intervals)			
		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
A.	Use of Literacy Materials	_____	_____	_____	_____
B.	Use of TV/Video	_____	_____	_____	_____
C.	Learning Opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
D.	Family Priority on Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total (Add A-D; divide by 4)		_____	_____	_____	_____
II. Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy Activities		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
E.	Expressive and Receptive Language	_____	_____	_____	_____
F.	Reading with Children	_____	_____	_____	_____
G.	Supporting Book/Print Concepts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total (Add E-G; divide by 3)		_____	_____	_____	_____
Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Formal Educational Settings		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
H.	Parent-School Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
I.	Expectations of Child and Family	_____	_____	_____	_____
J.	Monitoring Progress/Reinforcing Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
K.	Partner with Educational Setting	_____	_____	_____	_____
L.	Expectations of Child's Success in Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total (Add H-L; divide by 5)		_____	_____	_____	_____
IV. Taking on the Parent Role		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
M.	Choices, Rules, and Limits	_____	_____	_____	_____
N.	Managing Stresses on the Family	_____	_____	_____	_____
O.	Safety and Health	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total (Add M-O; divide by 3)		_____	_____	_____	_____

©RMC Research

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment

Use of Literacy Materials	Use of TV/Video	Learning Opportunities	Family Priority on Learning
1. Home has few books or writing materials; little or nothing is age appropriate.	1. There is no monitoring of TV; child watches whatever and whenever they choose.	1. Parent does not yet recognize play as important. Parent limits child's opportunities for play, exploration, and inquiry or does nothing to support play.	1. Family stresses prevent family from devoting time to family activities.
2. Home has some books and writing materials but they are not appropriate nor accessible to child. Parent accepts books from others to use with child.	2. Parent is aware that it is his/her role to limit television but has not successfully done so.	2. Parent is interested in opportunities for child's development but parent's choices for child often do not match child's age or ability.	2. Parent is aware of the importance of family learning activities and expresses desire to initiate them.
3. The home has some examples of age-appropriate reading and writing materials. Parent seeks out books for child and uses books several times a week.	3. Parent encourages some watching of child-appropriate programming.	3. Parent seeks information about age-appropriate learning opportunities and uses information to carry out appropriate learning activities.	3. Family relies on support from outside the immediate family to participate occasionally in family learning opportunities.
4. Home includes books and materials that parent has selected because parent believes children will like them. Parent uses literacy materials every day with child.	4. Parent tries to set some viewing limits and works on consistently reinforcing them.	4. Parent often bases his/her choice of activities on observations of child's skills and interests. Parent facilitates learning opportunities for child several times per week.	4. Family members routinely make an effort to initiate family opportunities that foster learning, e.g., attending field trip.
5. Home has a variety of materials for reading/ writing that are accessible to child. Materials are used daily. Parent and child select books based on child's interests and skill levels.	5. Parents uses television as a learning tool; parent watches with child and moderates messages from TV.	5. Parent regularly uses "teachable moments" with child. Parent takes cues from child and allows child to guide choices of learning activities.	5. Family members take pleasure in family learning opportunities. Parent is able to make learning opportunities from everyday activities.

II. Parent’s Role in Interactive Literacy Activities

Expressive and Receptive Language

Reading With Children

Supporting Book/Print Concepts

<p>1. Parent’s verbal interactions with child are predominately commands or discouragements. Parent responds inconsistently to child’s verbal or behavioral cues.</p>	<p>1. Parent tells stories, sings or reads infrequently to or with child. Shared reading or storytelling is a frustrating experience for parent and child.</p>	<p>1. Parent is not yet aware of their own role in modeling reading and writing with child.</p>
<p>2. Parent has limited verbal interaction with child, but the tone is more positive than negative. Language is characterized by simple sentences and questions that can be answered yes/no.</p>	<p>2. Parent sometimes tells stories, sings, or reads to child but does not attempt to engage child in the story or in the process of reading or telling the story. Parent has low comfort level.</p>	<p>2. Parent occasionally demonstrates awareness of child’s development of book and print understanding, e.g., points out words, shows book pictures to young children.</p>
<p>3. Parent is aware of the impact of their own speaking/language and listening to child on the child’s language and behavior. Parent sometimes tries out strategies to support child’s development of language.</p>	<p>3. Parent is interested in learning how to tell stories or read to child and tries out suggested strategies for engagement. Parent becomes comfortable with at least 1-2 strategies to support/reinforce reading and oral language, including, rhymes, songs, word play with younger children..</p>	<p>3. Parent begins to help child understand how print works, e.g., letter names connected to sounds, left to right progression, book handling.</p>
<p>4. Parent regularly adjusts own language or uses strategies to support child, e.g., choice of vocabulary, variation in words, asking questions, and listening to the child.</p>	<p>4. Parent regularly uses a variety of different strategies for engaging the child in reading books, storytelling, or singing.</p>	<p>4. Parent uses strategies with child to develop meaning for print, e.g., writing letters and words, playing games with sounds and words, child dictating stories to parent.</p>
<p>5. Parent actively engages the child in discussion, using strategies such as paying attention to the interests of the child, using open-ended questions, providing verbal encouragement, or giving the child an opportunity to process information.</p>	<p>5. Parent matches reading or storytelling strategy to situation, e.g., child’s developmental level, child’s mood, setting. Parent verbalizes connections between stories and the child’s experiences, and encourages child to make similar connections.</p>	<p>5. Parent takes advantage of every day activities to frequently make the connection between sounds, oral language, and print.</p>

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Formal Educational Settings

Note: Depending on the age of the child, formal educational settings may be school, preschool, and/or child care settings. Educational settings vary widely in the degree to which they actively promote interaction with parents; thus, the ratings here will need to take into account the context in which parents' initiatives and responses to school's initiatives are taking place.

Parent-School Communication	Expectations of Child and Family	Monitoring Progress/Reinforcing Learning
1. Communication between parent and child's teacher is infrequent.	1. Parent is not aware of school's expectations for child.	1. Parent does not know about nor question child's progress in educational setting.
2. Parent attends some school or center functions, e.g., open house, meetings--probably with outside support.	2. Parent knows that school has expectations but has not taken actions to learn specifics.	2. Parent acknowledges that he/she has responsibility and begins to monitor child's progress, at least in formal ways, e.g., review report card/progress report.
3. Parent verbalizes awareness of the importance of own role in communication with teachers. Parent usually responds positively to requests on own, e.g., for attending parent-teacher conference.	3. Parent finds out information about school's specific expectations of child.	3. Parent questions child and/or teacher about how child is doing.
4. Parent initiates contact with child's teacher and others in school/center setting in relationship to child's needs and interests.	4. Parent assesses expectations and the school's approach to helping children meet them. Parent begins to supplement school initiatives with actions of his/her own.	4. Parent inquires about ways to help child make more progress and works with child to reinforce what the child is learning.
5. There is ongoing exchange of information between parent and child's teacher; each is comfortable initiating contact with the other.	5. Parent finds out information to place the school's expectations in context, e.g., what others are asking of children of the same age. Parent works with others to promote system improvements for quality education for all children.	5. Parent takes an interest in what and how their child is learning and finds ways to extend child's learning beyond what is required by educational setting.

9/20/00; RMC
©RMC Research

III. Parent’s Role in Supporting Child’s Learning in Formal Educational Settings (continued)

As A Partner With Educational Setting	Expectations of Child’s Success in Learning
1. Parent takes no role or has no understanding of parent role connected to educational setting.	1. Parent has not formed expectations of child’s success or has low expectations. Parent gives negative or mixed messages to child about child’s ability.
2. Parent would like to be connected to school but does not feel ready or is not in a position to do so. Parent may reluctantly agree to participate in school-connected activity—perhaps with support for doing so.	2. Parent sometimes verbalizes concerns about the effects of negative expectations, e.g., verbal messages or actions, on child. Parent often demands more of child than is realistic for developmental level.
3. Parent occasionally participates in school-connected activities.	3. Parent tries to use positive and consistent messages with child. Parent asks for information about child development. Parent takes active role in helping the child reach appropriate expectations.
4. Parent sees that he/she could be involved with school in a variety of ways. Parent tries more than one type of involvement, e.g., going on field trip, making game for class.	4. Parent uses lots of different ways to encourage high but achievable expectations, including creating experiences that build the child’s success.
5. Parent participates in a variety of different ways on a consistent basis, i.e., 4-6 times a year.	5. Parent sets benchmarks to help child achieve longer term expectations. Parent creates opportunities that are challenging for child.

©RMC Research

IV. Taking on the Parent Role

Choices, Rules, and Limits	Managing Stresses on the Family	Safety and Health
1. Parent operates from an extreme position or moves between extremes, sometimes setting no limits and other times rigid rules. Parent does not provide choices for the child.	1. Parent is absorbed in own needs or needs of one member of the family. Parent does not acknowledge responsibility for whole family.	1. Parent is not aware of issues in the home settings/environment that affect child's learning and development, e.g., nutrition, smoking.
2. Parent observes the behavior of other adults with children and acknowledges that there is a connection between parenting strategies and child behaviors.	2. Parent is able to identify family problems, issues, or needs and express a desire for change.	2. Parent is aware that he/she has a role and responsibility to create a safe and healthy environment for child.
3. Parent seeks out information about strategies to develop child's skills to make choices, solve problems, and stay within limits.	3. Parent recognizes the various demands of different family members and also the strengths of the family. Parent sees his/her own part in family system.	3. Parent seeks out information on how to create environment that protects and nurtures children.
4. Parent applies strategies (as above) in appropriate situations. Parent begins to discriminate among strategies appropriate for particular situations.	4. Parent tries out various strategies to strengthen family. Parent engages other family members in strengthening family.	4. Parent engages other family members in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children.
5. Parent consistently provides opportunities for child to make choices within limits, e.g., age, safety. Parent is comfortable with and able to apply a range of strategies that match the situation.	5. Parent thinks about the family as a whole and balances the needs of different individuals and the whole family. Parent accepts that role of parent is to take responsibility for the well-being of the family as a whole.	5. Parent makes informed decisions to improve the health and safety of the environment.

Appendix G

Early Childhood Progress Survey 2002-2003

Please complete the following questions that are applicable to the student enrolled in South Windsor County Even Start. All responses will be kept confidential. This data is required by the Vermont Department of Education for children whose families are enrolled in Even Start. **Please complete this form by the end of June, 2003 and mail it to Gladys Collins using the address information provided at the end of this survey.** *Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!*

Student's name: _____ DOB: _____

Parent's name: _____

Town of residence: _____

School or program: _____

Is the school program home based or center based (circle one)?

Is the student full or part time (circle one)?

Entry date: _____ Exit date: _____

1. COR Score (**3 and 4 year old children**)

First test: _____ Second test: _____

2. SERP Score (**children entering kindergarten**): _____

3. DRA median for school district: _____

4. DRA score for student _____

5. Year or grade of student: _____

6. Has the child missed more than 12 days of school?

7. Is this child promoted to the next grade?

8. What tools did you use in your classroom to assess the students progress in school?

9. Has the student been referred to special education? Yes No

10. Is the child on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? Yes No

11. Is the student receiving special services? Yes No

11a. *If yes, what services are they receiving?*

12. Using the scale from 1-5, please rate the student in the following areas in comparison with classmates who are not in Even Start.

Area	Much below other children	Somewhat below other children	About the same as other children	Somewhat above other children	Much above other children
Academic performance	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation to learn	1	2	3	4	5
Parent involvement	1	2	3	4	5
Relations with other students	1	2	3	4	5
Classroom behavior	1	2	3	4	5
Self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide explanation or comments on why any of the areas above received a score of 1 or 2 (feel free to attach an additional sheet if needed):

Academic performance

Motivation to learn

Parent involvement

Relations with other students

Classroom behavior

Self-confidence

Thank you for your cooperation!

Please mail completed forms to: Gladys Collins, 2 Main Street, N. Springfield, Vermont 05150

For additional copies of this report, please contact:

The Center for Rural Studies
207 Morrill Hall
The University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont 05405
<http://crs.uvm.edu>

