

What is Even Start?

Even Start is a 4 year Early Literacy grant which targets the whole family in order to make an impact on the literacy of young children from birth through age 7. We plan to begin with **40** families!

Even Start has 4 major components:

- 1. Parenting Classes**
- 2. Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Activities (Remember the 'Funtastic' Reading/ Lectura 'Funtastica') and the Target on Reading mini-grant parent training sessions?)**
- 3. Adult Education (ABE, GED and/or ESL) with initial placement tests and regular progress assessments.**
- 4. Home visits and ECH evaluation, referral, and intervention (when appropriate).**

Did you know that you can refer a family or the family can apply on their own? Forms will be available in the black file cabinet at the front counter.

How this should help you:

We will train parents to monitor AR and independent reading; set up, make, supervise, and rotate work stations; take dictation (a la the Rice Classroom Storytelling Project), help struggling students and actually help their OWN children with their homework, read to, speak to, and sing to their own children AND other children.

Even Start families will have a Summer School which is based on Literacy, Fine Arts, and Science that goes through the month of July and they will have fun homework from the Children's Museum of Houston through the month of August. They will be allowed and encouraged to check out developmentally appropriate books and toys at the Even Start Center☺!

Evaluation:

1. Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME)

- *Infant/Toddler – less than 3 years of age*
- *Early Childhood – 3 through 5 years of age*
- *Middle Childhood – 6 through 9 (we only test through 7)*
 - *Variety and quality of stimulation available*
 - *Safety of physical environment*
 - *Discipline strategies*
 - *Parental acceptance/ responsiveness, etc.*
 - *Organization*
 - *Involvement*

**2. Bayley Infant Neuro-developmental Screener (BINS)
– Ages 3 through 24 months**

- *Basic Neurological Functions/ Intactness (muscle tone, asymmetries in movement, etc.)*
- *Receptive Functions: Visual and auditory (mostly) with some tactile input.*
- *Expressive Functions: Fine motor, manipulating objects, oral motor, and gross motor.*
- *Cognitive Processes: Memory, learning, thinking, reasoning, object permanence, goal-directedness, attention, and problem solving.*

**3. Preschool Language Scale – 4th edition (PLS-IV) – English Only –
Will be administered to all 4 year olds.**

- *Auditory Comprehension & Expressive Communication*

4. Preschool Language Scale – 3^d edition (PLS-III) – Spanish

- **Optional – To be administered to Spanish speaking LEP 4 year olds.**

Monitoring:

The Even Start staff will visit homes, call parents, and monitor every aspect, including attendance, of a family's participation in this program. If they can not or will not participate fully, they will be asked to leave the program and the next family on the waiting list will come aboard.

It is very likely that most of our Sutton Even Start families will be LEP.

Added benefits for you:

- Previously trained teachers in the Rice Classroom Storytelling Project will get monthly refresher seminars.
- Sutton teachers will be given preferential treatment when it comes time to hire teachers who would like to pick up extra hours or work in a fine arts summer school program. Ask anyone who has ever worked in a summer program like that what it is like. **FUN!!!**
- You will actually have a voice, some input into the implementation of this program, since we can make some minor changes to the grant as needed. Also, we reapply every year and it can be slightly different each year. Your good ideas could make a difference. You will be given ample opportunities to comment, suggest, recommend changes, and ask questions.

Finally, the Sutton Even Start program will be collaborating with some very fine partners: Rice University Classroom Storytelling Project and Cultural Conversations, the Children's Museum of Houston (Raise and Reader and Summer Stars Curricula, among others), the Houston Community College System for additional adult education, the Depelchin center for the Nurturing Family program series, and other Even Start programs and Early Childhood campuses.