

**1) Organization’s Background and Need for the Project:** The Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) has been collaborating with Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), the City of Berkeley, and several other community partners to implement the Berkeley Even Start program for the last four years. The partners have coordinated existing services to provide early childhood education (with an emphasis on preschool), adult education, parenting education, and “Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Activities” for approximately 30 high need families each year. The program has been extremely successful, demonstrating impressive evaluation results, and has been authorized for an additional four years of funding.

Unfortunately, because of the current funding level and existing California Department of Education (CDE) regulations, the program cannot serve any more families than the existing target of 30-45 families per year. At Rosa Parks Elementary School in Berkeley Unified School District, one of the project’s target sites, there is an intensive need to expand the program to serve a group of 30 kindergarten students and their families due to lackluster literacy assessment results and a current kindergarten class with higher levels of need. Currently, Rosa Parks enrolls 80 students in four kindergarten classes. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the students live in poverty, and 32.4% are not fluent in English, speaking approximately 60 different languages (although the majority speak Spanish as their primary language). While Latinos and African Americans make up small percentages of the overall population of Berkeley, they constitute the majority of students enrolled in kindergarten at Rosa Parks (47% Latino, 16% African American).

**2) Project Purpose and Objectives:** The purpose of the project is to expand the existing successful Even Start Family Literacy program in Berkeley to serve an additional 30 kindergarten students and their families, providing early childhood education, adult education, parenting education, and intergenerational literacy activities to families most in need of services.

Need will be determined by poverty status, English language proficiency, and education level of the parents. Other need-related indicators to be considered include disabling conditions, homelessness, and chronic unemployment. Staff will use the rating scale provided by the National Center for Family Literacy to prioritize families most in need of services.

The project objectives for the expanded services will mirror the performance indicators established by the CDE for the Even Start project, and will include the following: **Objective 1:** At least 30 qualified new families will receive services participating in all four program components between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. **Objective 2:** At least 50% of adult learners enrolled in ESL classes will demonstrate at least a 3-point post-test gain on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). **Objective 3:** At least 50% of adults will meet their goals of postsecondary education, employment, English language development, or career advancement. **Objective 4:** At least 85% of the children enrolled in the program will attend at least 95% of possible school days from the date of enrollment in the program. **Objective 5:** At least 75% of participating kindergarten children will meet grade level content standards in reading and math, as measured by the school's standards-aligned report cards. **Objective 6:** At least 75% of participating kindergartners will meet standards-based requirements for advancement to first grade, as reported by the school's records. **Objective 7:** By the end of the project year, 70% of participating parents will report that they support their child's literacy development at home, according to the indicators measured by the California Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS) survey.

**3) Project Design:** The Project Director will offer training for teachers and staff in eligibility requirements to help identify families, and will maintain a list of potential enrollees. Prospective families will receive a program orientation provided in their home language, and

staff will clearly articulate program expectations so parents can fully understand the level of commitment required. Staff will assist families in resolving barriers that prevent their full participation, such as transportation, changing work schedules, etc. Families who meet eligibility criteria and are willing to comply with all participation requirements will sign a participation contract. Once enrolled, adults will be assessed using the CASAS Oral Screen and CASAS Reading Test to determine baseline levels of oral language and literacy. Children will participate in standards-based literacy assessments developed by the school district. Retention will be promoted by: (a) ensuring all families understand the commitment, (b) communicating in the home language, and (c) providing support services (i.e. childcare, etc.).

Once the assessment has been completed, parents will be enrolled in the appropriate adult education options provided at Rosa Parks (appropriate level of ESL or Adult Basic Education; minimum of 60 hours per month), and parenting education (provided by Even Start staff, the Berkeley Public Library, and the Berkeley YMCA; minimum of 20 hours per month). Early childhood education will be provided by kindergarten teachers. Intergenerational literacy activities will be provided for a minimum of three hours per week. For parents who are available during the daytime hours, these activities will be provided in the kindergarten classroom for three, one-hour sessions per week facilitated by two Even Start staff members. For working parents who cannot participate in a daytime program, in-home intergenerational literacy activities will be provided for a minimum of three hours per week by project staff.

Formal parent education instruction and intergenerational literacy activities will focus on improving student literacy outcomes and increasing home-based literacy development behaviors such as parents reading to and with children at home, increasing the number of books in the home, and increasing parent modeling of literacy behaviors (reading for pleasure, writing, etc.).

Explicit instruction and guided practice in shared and guided reading will be provided, along with instruction in developmentally appropriate concepts of print.

Instruction will begin in September 2006, with family recruitment and enrollment beginning with the notification of funding (over the summer months). Upon notification of funding, existing Even Start staff will begin recruitment of families while new staff are hired so project services can begin immediately at the beginning of the school year.

Childcare and transportation will be provided for all adult education and parenting education activities, as needed. The project home visitor will meet individually with each family during the intake process to conduct assessments and determine the family's need for ancillary services such as housing, clothing, and food, and will connect families with collaborative partners and other service providers in the community to meet these needs.

Please refer to "Community Support" for a description of collaborative partnerships.

**4) Project Evaluation:** A detailed evaluation management plan for the Even Start program has been developed and will be applied to this expansion project. Project objectives include assessment measures and criteria for achieving each objective. Pre-testing will be done upon enrollment and includes CASAS assessments and the administration of the CA-ESPIRS survey for adults, and California standards-based literacy assessments for the students. Post-testing will take place according to the schedule identified in the evaluation management plan (CASAS post-testing after every 100 hours of instruction, CA-ESPIRS at the end of the school year, student literacy assessments at the end of each trimester).

The same external evaluator responsible for the overall Even Start project evaluation will conduct the evaluation of this expansion project, providing a separate evaluation report focusing on outcomes for the 30 kindergarten families identified for this project. In addition, the

evaluator will guide project staff in completing a program quality self-assessment, focusing on CDE Even Start program quality indicators.

**5) Community Support:** Our key partner is BUSD/Rosa Parks Elementary School, which will be coordinating the services of a Family Resource Specialist and Family Resource Center Director to provide support to identified families. The school will also provide facilities (office space, classroom space, library, computer lab, conference room, auditorium, etc.). KQED will provide family literacy resources, free books, family outreach resources, and professional development for staff. Berkeley Adult School will provide adult GED, ESL, technology, and vocational education instruction. *Berkeley Reads* (a local non-profit organization) will provide one-on-one tutoring, family literacy events, and library services. The City of Berkeley Department of Health and Human Services will provide vision and hearing screening, medical assistance, and counseling services, as needed. Please see attached letters of support.

**6) Future Funding Plan:** The majority of the services provided by the project are funded through ACOE Even Start and its collaborative partners (as described above), with substantial commitment from Rosa Parks Elementary School. These commitments will continue beyond the 2006-07 school year until at least 2009. The specific staff positions to be funded through this proposal will be funded to the degree possible through future grant applications and the reallocation of existing funding through ACOE and BUSD.

**7) Staff Qualifications:** The project will be managed by the Berkeley Even Start program director Martha Martinez, who will be responsible for monitoring the budget; hiring and supervising staff; communicating with all project partners; overseeing recruitment, assessment, and program implementation activities; and completing all evaluation reporting requirements in collaboration with the project evaluator. The project director will be supported by two part-time

positions (three hours per week each), including a parent educator and a home visitor. The family advocate will be responsible for coordinating family participation in all program components, and assisting with the intergenerational literacy activities. The parent educator will be responsible for providing parent education instruction on-site and through home visits, and coordinating the intergenerational literacy activities on the site.

A detailed staff development plan has been developed for all staff. All project staff will meet monthly to discuss the needs of enrolled families and plan activities. Early childhood educators and the two new project staff members will meet weekly with the Even Start director to plan intergenerational literacy activities.

**8) Project Site:** Project services will be provided at Rosa Parks Elementary School, and include office space for project staff, classroom space for all program components, the school's computer lab, library, and restrooms. The site is accessible to parents through public transportation; however, most families live within walking distance of the school. The site was selected because of the intensive need of the children and families, the commitment of the school staff and administration to participate in the program, and the availability of facilities and a wide variety of other collaborating resources at the site.

**9) Budget:** Fiscal records will be maintained by the ACOE accounting department, and will be governed by appropriate principles of accounting, including an annual audit. The Barbara Bush Foundation funds will provide the services necessary to enroll an additional 30 kindergarten families in the existing Even Start project. By providing staff to provide direct services and coordinate existing services for the 30 identified families, the project can leverage the vast resources of the Even Start collaborative to support the new families, including funds for childcare, adult education, etc. In-kind contributions include a total of \$38,083.