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To: New York State Even Start Family Literacy Partnerships

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Subject: Guidelines for English Language Learners

Effective July 1, 2006, changes went into effect for the National Reporting System for Adult Education. These changes, described below and in the attached, will impact services to English Language Learners.

One significant change is to the National Reporting System levels for English Language Learners. Both the previous and new levels are presented in the table below.

Current ELL Levels	Previous BEST Plus Score Range	ELL Levels Effective July 1, 2006	BEST Plus Score Range Effective July 1, 2006	BEST Plus Student Performance Levels Effective July 1, 2006
Beginning Literacy ESL	400 and below	Beginning Literacy ESL	400 and below	0 – 1
Beginning ESL	401 – 438	Low Beginning ESL	401 – 417	2
		High Beginning ESL	418 – 438	3
Low Intermediate ESL	439 – 472	Low Intermediate ESL	439 – 472	4
High Intermediate ESL	473 – 506	High Intermediate ESL	473 – 506	5
Low Advanced ESL	507 – 540	Advanced ESL	507 – 540	6
High Advanced ESL	541 - 598			

As depicted in the above table, previous practice for New York State's adult education programs defined low literacy for ELL as below 507 on the BEST Plus. Low literacy for New York Even Start Family Literacy is 472 or lower on the BEST Plus. The exit criteria for adult education is when an ELL scores 599 or higher on the BEST Plus.

Adult Education Modifications Effective July 1, 2006

Beginning July 1, 2006, the following changes will be made in adult education:

1. The NRS Beginning ESL will be divided into two categories. Low Beginning ESL is defined as 401 – 417 on the BEST Plus. High Beginning ESL is defined as 418 – 438 on the BEST Plus.
2. High Advanced ESL will be eliminated.
3. ELL Low Literacy will be defined as below Student Performance Level (SPL) 5, which will be consistent with NYS Even Start Family Literacy.
4. The new ELL exit criteria will be a score above 540 on the BEST Plus.

Even Start Family Literacy Modifications Effective July 1, 2006

As a result of these changes, Even Start Family Literacy will:

- allow programs to provide ELL instruction until learners score above 540 on the BEST Plus.
- transition learners scoring above 540 to adult basic/adult literacy instruction. Educational growth will be assessed using the TABE.

Initial eligibility for Even Start Family Literacy (below 473 as measured by the BEST Plus) will remain the same. In addition, the CASAS Functional Writing Assessment will not be used to determine initial eligibility for Even Start Family Literacy.

Impact on Even Start Family Literacy

Potential impact on Even Start Family Literacy programs serving ELL is illustrated in the following examples.

1. Upon intake, an ELL parent is assessed at 435 on the BEST Plus (High Beginning ESL/Student Performance Level 3). This learner meets the New York State definition of low literacy based on the BEST Plus assessment and the locally defined criteria for most-in-need. This learner will receive English Language instruction and be assessed every 100 hours using the BEST Plus. In addition to participating in parenting education and interactive literacy activities, this learner may continue to receive English Language instruction until she achieves a score above 540 on the BEST Plus. At that time, the learner will be transitioned to adult basic/literacy instruction.
2. Upon intake, an ELL parent is assessed at 490 on the BEST Plus (High Intermediate ESL/Student Performance Level 5). This learner does not meet the New York State definition of low literacy based on the BEST Plus assessment, but does meet the locally defined criteria for most-in-need. Depending on the needs of the learner, the program has two options.

Option A: The program may enroll this adult in English language instruction. Learner growth will be measured using the BEST Plus. When the learner is assessed above 540 on the BEST Plus, the learner will be transitioned to adult basic/literacy instruction. Subsequent growth will be assessed using the TABE.

In this case, the BEST Plus standard score of 490 is entered on the intake screen for ES-Star. The family learner will **not** be considered as meeting the eligibility guidelines for low literacy. Programs should ensure that of all new families enrolled, 95 percent meet the State's guidelines for low literacy.

Option B: The learner's goals are related to and appropriate for adult basic/literacy education. The learner is assessed using the TABE and receives adult basic/literacy instruction. Subsequent growth is measured using the TABE.

In this case, the TABE scores are entered on the intake screen for ES-Star. If the TABE scores are below 9.0 on reading or math, this learner now meets the New York State definition of low literacy.

3. In the prior program year, an English language learner scored 530 on the BEST Plus post-test. Following earlier guidance, the program began to transition the learner to adult basic/literacy instruction. Depending upon the needs of the learner, the program may opt to:
 - continue to provide adult basic/literacy instruction and assess growth using the TABE, or
 - resume English language instruction and assess learner growth using the BEST Plus.

Once this learner scores 540 or higher on the BEST Plus, the program will transition the learner to adult basic/literacy instruction and assess growth using the TABE.

ES-Star will be modified to ensure consistency with the new policies.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your respective program specialist or Performance Indicator Content Mentor.