



## Family Literacy Programs

*A Model for Whole-Family Success*

UNH FY18 Budget Recommendation: Launch \$5 million *NYC Family Literacy Initiative* to promote family stability and enhance academic outcomes for children and their parents.

### The Challenge

**Educational deficits jeopardize family economic security and educational success for too many New York City families.**

- Only 38% of 3rd to 8th graders are considered proficient in English Language Arts, and just 36% are proficient in Math. Many of these children will eventually leave high school prematurely, without the full range of skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary education or the job market.
- NYC is home to 2.2 million adult residents who lack English proficiency and/or a high school diploma. As a result, these New Yorkers earn significantly less than their peers, putting economic success for them and their families out of reach. On average, Spanish speaking English Language learners lose \$3,000 per year relative to their English-speaking peers.

### The Solution

**Family Literacy programs are designed to involve a whole family in their collective educational success. By engaging both children and their parents (or other adult family caregivers) in a collaborative and mutually reinforcing learning process, families are better equipped to gain the skills they need to succeed.**

- A \$5 million initiative will allow for approximately 20 community based organizations to expand or launch family literacy programs for roughly 800 families throughout the five boroughs.
- The funding will also support the establishment of a peer-learning exchange for CBO family literacy providers to share best practices, troubleshoot, and innovate. In addition, contract awards to CBOs would support robust data collection systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative.
- Short-term outcomes of the initiative will include: increased parenting skills and levels of parent-child engagement, improved English language and/or basic literacy skills for parents, and improved educational outcomes for children.
- Anticipated long-term outcomes include: enhanced skills and employment opportunities for parents, sustained parental engagement in children's academic success, healthy parent-child relationships, and age-appropriate emotional and cognitive development of children.

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## The Model

Although Family Literacy models vary, they represent one form of two-generation programs which are designed to focus equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for both a parent and their child to maximize the overall success of the family.

According to the National Center for Families Learning, typical aspects of Family Literacy include:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and children.
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life.

## The Evidence

When New York City last funded family literacy programs, the Department of Youth and Community Development found that:

*“Programs have reported noteworthy improvements by both children and parents. As reported by their classroom teachers and parents, participating children are more motivated to learn, have greater self-confidence, and therefore do better academically. Parents have improved their literacy skills as well. Parents are more aware of the resources available to support their families and have increased their involvement in their children’s education and schools. They go to the library and read with their children, and they participate in school activities by working as volunteers and PTA meetings.”*

Additional research into the benefits of two-generation and family literacy programs has found that:

- When parents are dedicated to their own education, they serve as positive role models for their children’s academic success.
- More sophisticated language skills in children have been linked to parent’s literacy skills and shared reading.
- Skills that parents learn through their own education can be applied to their children, leading to better educational outcomes.
- Family literacy programs increase job skills and employment opportunities for parents by incorporating vocational skills training into their programs.

## Families United for Learning & Literacy (FULL) Coalition

### ***Founding Steering Committee Members***

Center for Family Life in Sunset Park  
Educational Alliance  
Queens Community House  
Union Settlement Association  
University Settlement Society

East Side House Settlement  
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement  
St. Nicks Alliance  
United Neighborhood Houses  
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