

Partners for Prosperous Athens Early Care and Learning Work Group

Vision: All young children in Clarke County will be ready to succeed in school and beyond.

Mission Statement: To reduce poverty in the next generation of Athenians by ensuring that all young children in Clarke County can experience high quality early care and learning in a safe and caring environment at home and in out-of-home early care and learning programs.

Objective II: Increase the supply of programs that are effective in developing parenting skills and behaviors that promote healthy early child development in all developmental areas to facilitate children's success in school and life.

Recommendations for Objective II:

1. Educate the community about the need for opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills and for adult education.
2. Support the continuation and expansion of comprehensive family literacy programs such as Even Start. (See note below for a description of Even Start.)
3. Increase accessibility of effective parent education programs; preserve the best practices of Even Start within these programs
 - a. Expand the adult education, family literacy, and parenting skills components of Early Head Start, Head Start, and other early care and learning programs.
 - b. Write a grant for the new federal Reading First Program and supplement the best practices it excludes by partnering with others in the community to offer adult education and family engagement.
 - c. Build a core of advocates who will work to secure funding for adult education and parenting skills programs.
4. Increase supply of effective programs for addressing challenges to parenting such as lack of education and job skills, homelessness, chemical dependency, teen parenthood, mental illness and domestic violence.
5. Develop a Family Mentoring Program with emphasis on supporting parents from birth.
6. Develop a nurturing environment in Clarke County for young children and their families through provision of mentoring and faith-based initiatives.

Note 1: Programs like Even Start ensure that parents in need of a GED or ESOL instruction who have child care needs would be able to attend classes. High quality Early Learning Classrooms are housed in the same building as Adult Education Classes. Children receive readiness skills to prepare them for school while parents are working on ESOL or GED skills. Parents are also supported as the first and most important teacher through parenting workshops and through ongoing support. The four components of a comprehensive Family Literacy Program are...

- High Quality Early Childhood Education
- High Quality Adult Education (GED and ESOL)
- Parenting Education
- Interactive Parent/Child Literacy Activities