

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE

LITERACY

(HEALTH, FINANCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, & FAMILY)



Let's get to work.

OACES

Office of Adult & Career Education Services
Rochester City School District

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE

The Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES), a department of the Rochester City School District, and the Catholic Family Center (CFC) have collaborated to support various community agencies in their efforts to provide services to new Americans.

This guide was partially funded by the New York State Office of New Americans (ONA). ONA supports programs that encourage new Americans to fully participate in New York State civic and economic life by providing training for English Language Students, helping legal permanent residents navigate the path to citizenship, and encouraging entrepreneurship. ONA is taking steps to protect new Americans as they transition to full participation in New York's communities.



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WHAT IS ADULT EDUCATION?

Adult Education is instruction, often at no cost, for adult students who want to improve their employability, education, or English language skills. Adult Education programs offer basic reading, writing, math, and problem-solving classes, English language lessons, employment preparation and training, Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) preparation, and other basic educational services for adult students. Adult Education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL).

Adult Education programs are for adults 16 years of age and older who are not in school, who have academic skills below the 12th grade level, and/or who need help learning English. The goal of Adult Education is to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens.

Adult Education is funded in part by the federal and state governments, with local and community support. Many programs receive grant funding from private and corporate sources. The New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) unit oversees Adult Education programs in New York. ACCES works with public schools, community-based organizations, colleges, correctional facilities, and other agencies to provide Adult Education services.

In Rochester, the Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES) is a workforce preparation organization that helps adult students learn the skills they need for success in the workplace and outside the classroom.

With unique focus on the education and employment needs of New York State's adult citizens, several vital interests and goals can be best served through:

- Ensuring that the needs of adults and out-of-school youth are met through efficient and effective access to relevant services, programs, and opportunities offered by the NYSED.
- Encouraging full participation of adults with disabilities.

- Enhancing post-secondary transitions by developing the capacity of individuals to engage in post-secondary education leading to high-quality employment opportunities.
- Promoting workforce investment through unified collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor and State and local Workforce Investment Boards to assure that individuals have access to a “one-stop” source for a full range of services leading to high-quality employment opportunities.
- Supporting individuals experiencing poverty and relying on public services to develop their capacity to earn income and develop assets toward greater economic independence.
- Utilizing a more comprehensive and effective representation for adults in coordinating services and program initiatives with New York State agencies such as the Departments of Labor and Health, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Office of Children and Family Services, and the State University of New York (SUNY).

There are multiple literacies addressed by Adult Education.

- Survival Literacy
- Oral/Speaking and Written Literacy
- Cultural/Social and Civic Literacy
- Workplace and Employment Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Financial Literacy
- Technological and Digital/Electronic Literacy
- Geographic Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Scientific Literacy



The importance of each of these literacies in an individual’s life varies based on specific circumstances. They all, however, have the potential to greatly affect the life of every adult and his/her family.

Literacy begins within the family and is reinforced, whether positively or negatively, in subsequent generations. Adult Education seeks to reinforce, promote, and support literacy to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens and in turn continue the cycle of literacy into the future.

Adult Education provides for the Community in numerous ways:

- Adult Education programs benefit businesses, workers, and job seekers. Businesses encourage Adult Education in order to provide and sustain a highly skilled and specialized workforce a workforce with the skills to perform a variety of tasks or workers with “cross-functional” skills. Workers may receive promotions, gain more power in the job market, or become more valuable employees by enrolling in Adult Education programs.
- Adult Education training facilities often house state-of-the-art equipment such as computers and computer-based training equipment.
- Adult Education programs benefit families. Increased literacy and skills translate to a higher earnings potential for the household. Parents’ literacy levels directly correlate to their children’s educational success (according to the National Center for Families Learning).

LITERACY (HEALTH, FINANCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, & FAMILY)

What Is Health Literacy?

Health literacy is the degree to which an individual has the ability to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.

Why Does Health Literacy Matter?

Studies reveal that up to half of patients cannot understand basic healthcare information. Low health literacy reduces the success of treatment and increases the risk of medical error. Every day people confront situations that involve life-changing decisions about their health. These decisions are made in places such as grocery and drug stores, workplaces, playgrounds, doctors' offices, clinics and hospitals, and around the kitchen table. Obtaining, communicating, processing, and understanding health information and services are essential steps in making appropriate health decisions; however, research indicates that today's health information is presented in ways that are not usable by most adults. "Limited health literacy" occurs when people can't find and use the health information and services they need.

- Nearly 9 out of 10 adults have difficulty using the everyday health information that is routinely available in our healthcare facilities, retail outlets, media and communities.
- Without clear information and an understanding of the information's importance, people are more likely to skip necessary medical tests, end up in the emergency room more often, and have a harder time managing chronic diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure.

Improving Health Literacy

We can build our own health literacy skills and help others—community members, health professionals, and anyone else who communicates about health—build their skills too. Every organization involved in health information and services needs its own health literacy plan to improve its organizational practices. Learning about health literacy issues, developing skills, creating an action plan, and applying what you learn to create health information and services will

greatly affect people's lives by making them better educated.

What Is Financial Literacy?

Financial literacy is the ability to understand how money works in the world: how someone manages to earn or make it, how that person manages it, how he/she invests it (turn it into more) and how that person donates it to help others. More specifically, it refers to the set of skills and knowledge that allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions with all of their financial resources.

The Importance of Financial Literacy

Making thoughtful and informed decisions about your finances is now more important than ever. Several trends are converging that demonstrate the importance of financial literacy.

- Many companies have shifted their retirement plans from traditional pension plans to those requiring employees to pay part of the cost and to be involved in the investment decision-making. 401(k) plans are the best example of this.
- Social Security used to be seen as a major source, if not the major source, of retirement income. Now it serves more like a safety net that will provide enough only for survival, not enjoyment.
- We are living longer. This means that we must accumulate more funds before retirement to cover living expenses over a longer time.
- The financial environment seems like it is changing faster.
- There are more financial options. Hundreds of credit card options, several types of mortgages, different types of IRAs, and the ever-growing number of investment options further complicate financial decision making.
- There are more choices of financial services companies. Banks, credit unions, brokerage firms, insurance firms, credit card companies, mortgage companies, financial planners, and others are all trying to get your business.
- Costs and wages have generally continued to rise to the point where having an income or retirement nest egg that would have seemed luxurious several years ago is now just barely adequate.

Considerations with Financial Literacy

Considerations need to be made when thinking about Financial Literacy.

- Be as informed as you can be about your finances. After all, you are the one who is going to have to live with your decisions.
- Try to find a financial institution or financial advisor that is knowledgeable, that you can trust, and with whom you can comfortably work.
- Try to develop good financial habits. Just paying attention to how you spend your money will probably lead to some ideas about how to save more. Over time, your savings can make a large difference in your future financial lifestyle.
- Participating in your company's retirement plan, contributing to an IRA, starting to save early for college education, enrolling for direct deposit of your paycheck, and using some form of automatic saving plan will help you accumulate funds.
- Try to develop some sort of a financial plan or budget.

What Is Technological Literacy?

The term "technological literacy" (sometimes called "digital literacy" or "technical literacy") refers to one's ability to use, manage, evaluate, and understand technology. In order to be a technologically literate citizen; a person should understand what technology is, how it works, how it shapes society and in turn how society shapes it. Moreover, a technologically literate person has some abilities to "do" technology that enables them to use their inventiveness to design and build things and to solve practical problems that are technological in nature. A characteristic of a technologically literate person is that they are comfortable with and objective about the use of technology, neither scared of it nor infatuated with it. Technological literacy is much more than just knowledge about computers and their application. It involves a vision where every person has a degree of knowledge about the nature, behavior, power, and consequences of many aspects of technology from a real world perspective.

Why Is Technological Literacy Important?

In a world where technology is ever growing, it is essential that a person understands the concepts behind computing equipment, network connectivity, and application software. Also knowing the skills to responsibly use appropriate technology to access, synthesize, evaluate, communicate, and create information to solve problems and improve learning. Lastly, technological literacy is

having the ability to acquire new knowledge for on-going and lifelong learning in the 21st century global workplace.

What Is Family Literacy?

Family literacy is lifelong learning for the entire family. It is a term used to describe parents and children - or more broadly, adults and children - learning together. Parents and children – both generations – learn best when they learn together. Adults and children receiving family literacy services not only strengthen their learning skills among their peers, but also come together to support and inspire each other's educational success. Parents also learn how to support their children's education as their first and most important teacher.

Of the 93 million adults in the U.S. functioning at or below basic levels of literacy, 30 million are the parents or primary caregivers of children ages 0-8. The effects of low literacy – dropping out of school, minimum wage jobs, and homelessness – are cyclical, continuing from one generation to the next. This multi-generational problem needs a multi-generational solution – family literacy. Comprehensive family literacy programs serve the entire family by including children's education, adults' education, parent time, and interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.

Why Is Family Literacy The Solution?

Facts to consider:

- A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors such as neighborhood and family income.
- Children whose parents are involved with them in family literacy activities score 10 points higher on standardized reading tests.
- A single year of parental education has a greater positive impact on the likelihood of a son or daughter attending a post-secondary institution than does an extra \$50,000 in parental income.
- Children spend five times as much time outside the classroom as they do in school; therefore parents and caregivers must be equipped to support their learning.

Who Benefits From Family Literacy?

Families in poverty and immigrants struggling to learn a new language

can benefit from family literacy. Children unlikely to succeed in our educational system can also benefit and adults in need of skills to get a job or increase their educational attainment can benefit as well. These are only a few of the beneficiaries of family literacy services. Independent research from cities and rural communities throughout the nation prove that a family literacy solution may be the best way to impact multiple generations. Ultimately, schools, communities, and the economic health of the nation are the beneficiaries of a strong family literacy initiative.

Family C.A.R.E.E.R.S.

The Family, Community, and Adults in Rochester-Employment and Education Resource System (Family C.A.R.E.E.R.S.) is a combined family literacy + workforce development program run by the Rochester City School District's Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES). Parents attend school with their children and participate in literacy activities and adult education. Additionally they are and are partnered with a school employee-mentor in a one-to-one relationship to gain valuable work skills.

The Four Components of Family C.A.R.E.E.R.S.

- Children's Education - Children attend school as scheduled; there is no disruption or "pull-out."
- Parent and Child Together (PACT) time – Parents volunteer in their child's classroom on a regular basis.
- Parent's Education – Parents attend a literacy class; they also receive training in health, finances, parenting, etc.
- Work Experience/Parent Time – Parents are matched with a staff mentor on a one-to-one basis for work experience at their child's school.

Family Literacy is a proven, research based methodology that gets entire families involved and committed to education.

- 94% of students involved in a family literacy completed high school, received their Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) diploma or were still in school.
- 75% of children involved in a family literacy program had higher attendance rates than the building average.
- When former family literacy participants enter high school, 90% read at or above grade level.

Additional Resources

American Medical Association

www.ama-assn.org

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy

www.barbarabush.org

The Latino Family Literacy Project

www.latinoliteracy.com

Sources

Branch Banking and Trust Company

www.bbt.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

International Technology and Engineering Educators Association

www.iteaconnect.org

National Center for Families Learning

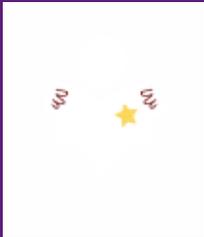
www.familieslearning.org

New York State Education Department

www.nysed.gov

Wikipedia

www.en.wikipedia.org



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oaces.net