Participation and Performance of Youth in Adult Education Programs

▶ **1.** What is the participation rate of youth, ages 16 to 24, in WIA Title II programs?

Over the past 5 years, approximately 32% of the total enrollment for California's WIA Title II was composed of youth (16 to 24 years of age).

However, there were differences among the three WIA Title II program areas that include Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) including GED. See Table 1 and Figure 1.

  a. In ASE programs, approximately 55% of the enrollees are young adults.

  b. In ABE programs, approximately 40% of the enrollees are young adults.

  c. In ESL programs, approximately 27% of the enrollees are young adults.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, ESL programs have the highest enrollments of youth and those 25 years of age and older. For 2003-04, the proportion of youth (ages 16 to 24) enrolled in WIA Title II programs for ABE was 20.7%, for ASE 21.5%, and ESL 57.8%. For the enrollment of those 25 to 75 years of age, 12% were enrolled in ABE, 6.7% in ASE, and 81.3% were enrolled in ESL.

Table 1. *Enrollments of Youth in ABE, ASE, and ESL WIA Title II Programs in California*

| Program Year	ABE # Enrollees	% of Total ABE[1]	ASE # Enrollees	% of Total ASE[1]	ESL # Enrollees	% of Total ESL[1]	Total Youth # Enrollees	% of Total[1]
1999-2000	14,026	33%	49,109	67%	79,810	23%	142,945	31%
2000-2001	29,776	47%	25,380	60%	99,404	27%	154,560	33%
2001-2002	22,604	33%	20,928	33%	129,866	33%	173,398	33%
2002-2003	37,491	45%	39,212	58%	104,225	25%	180,929	32%
2003-2004	39,403	44%	38,494	59%	110,757	25%	188,654	32%

[1] Total of participants of all ages eligible for inclusion in Federal Tables of the *WIA Title II Annual Performance Report.*
CASAS 2004

▶ **2.** Are the primary reasons for youth entering adult education programs different from those of participants 25 and older?

*The largest percentage of learners in both age groups had a primary goal of improving their English skills.*

See Table 2. The major difference between the two age groups was that higher proportions of youth enrolled to attain a GED or high school diploma than did the percentages of the 25+ age group, (proportions for youth were three times larger). There were no significant gender differences within age groups.

Figure 1. *Age Distribution of ABE, ASE, and ESL Enrollees in WIA Title II Programs in California 2003-04*
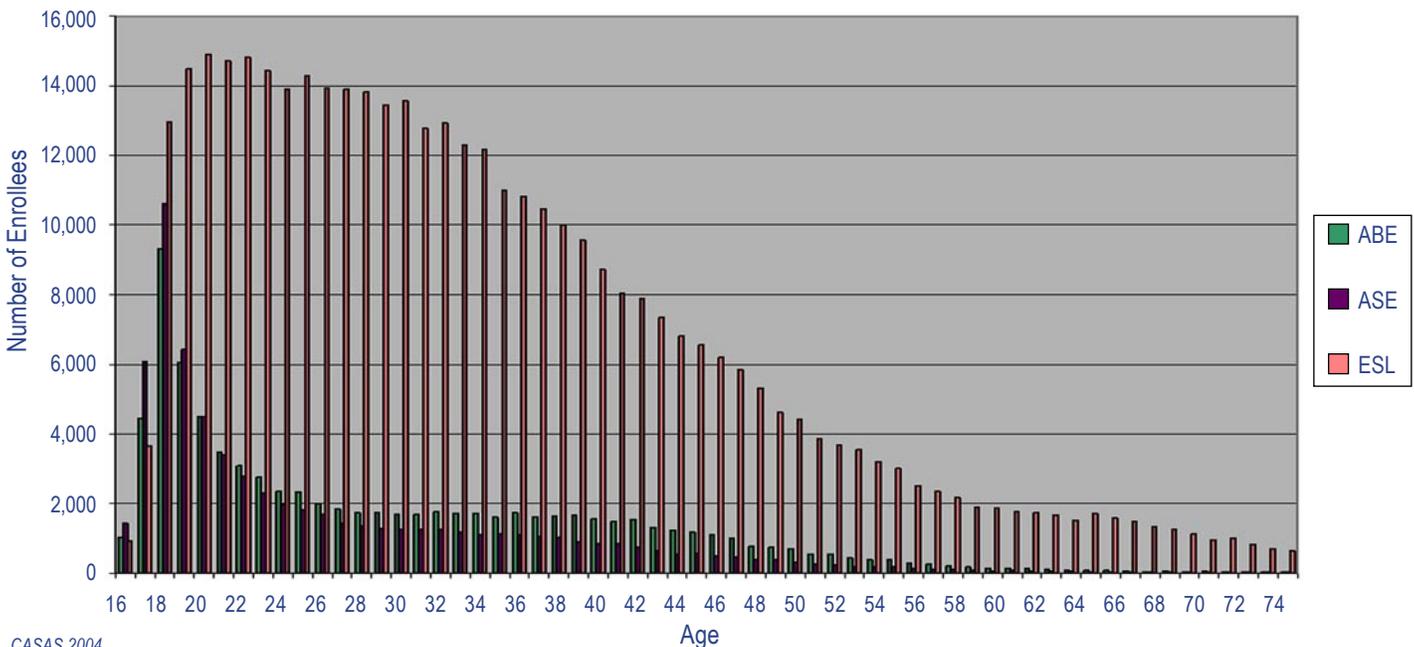
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Figure 2. *Distribution of Youth Enrollment by Age In ABE, ASE, and ESL in WIA Title II Programs in California 2003-04*
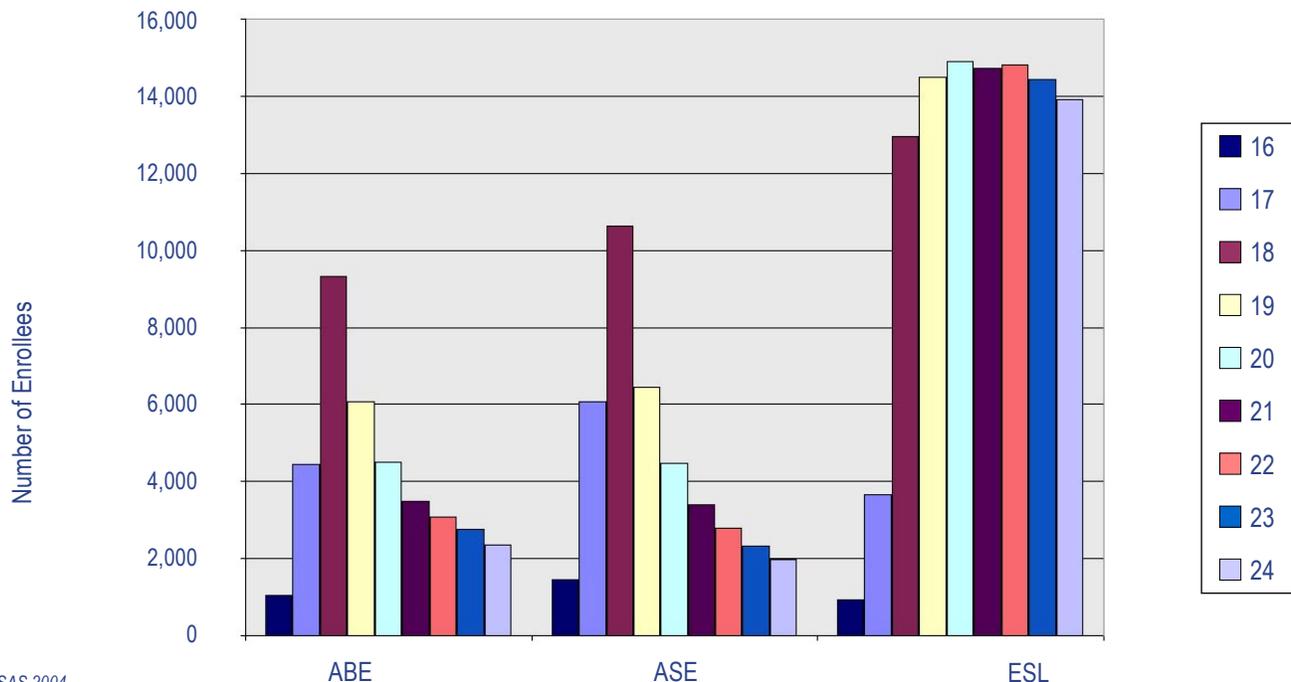
CASAS 2004

Table 2. *Enrollees' Primary Goal for Program Entry by Age and Gender Grouping*

Primary Goal for Enrolling in Program	16 to 24 Year Olds				25+ Year Olds			
	Total Enrolled	Total Enrolled	Enrolled Males	Enrolled Females	Total Enrolled	Total Enrolled	Enrolled Males	Enrolled Females
H.S. Diploma/GED	49,260	26.1%	26.0%	26.2%	30,428	7.6%	8.8%	6.8%
Improve Basic Skills	35,993	19.1%	19.3%	18.7%	84,179	21.0%	23.8%	19.1%
Improve English skills	80,385	42.6%	42.3%	42.9%	226,240	56.4%	51.5%	59.7%
Other Attainable Goal	23,169	12.5%	12.3%	12.2%	60,317	15.0%	15.9%	14.4%
Total	188,807	100.0%	(108,736)	(80,071)	401,164	100.0%	(162,492)	(238,672)

CASAS 2004

▶ **3.** Is the labor force status different between younger and older adult education enrollees?

The largest percentage of learners in both age groups were employed (36% of the youth and 35% of the adults ages 25 and above).

A smaller percentage of youth (9%) were not seeking employment as compared to older adults (13%). Approximately 30% of both age groups self-reported as being unemployed. Shown in Table 3, twice as many young males were employed compared to young females, whereas there was just a slight (6.5%) difference between the older males and females. There were just slightly (3.3%) fewer young unemployed males than females, but there were twice as many older unemployed females than males. There were about twice as many young females not seeking employment as young males.

▶ **4.** Do the performances of youth, ages 16 to 24, differ from participants 25 and older?

Almost 80% of youth and 90% of older adults enter adult education programs with reading skills below a high school entry level.

See Table 4. See page 4 for National Reporting System (NRS) Functioning Level Descriptors. When completion rates within a program year were computed against those enrollees who persisted in program (had both a valid pretest and post-test in the same modality), the youths' overall completion rates were higher than the older group by 5% (67% to 61 %). In addition to these differences, the younger age group attained these higher rates consistently in far fewer hours of instruction (372 average hours of attendance for youth at ABE Beginning Literacy versus 513 for the older group, 170 average hours versus 216 at ASE Low, 138 average hours versus 200 at ASE High).

Table 3. *Labor Force Status by Gender for Two Age Groups in WIA Title II Programs in California 2003-04*

| Age Groups	16 to 24 Year Olds			25+ Year Olds		
Labor Force Status	Total Number Enrolled	Enrolled Male	Enrolled Female	Total Number Enrolled	Enrolled Male	Enrolled Female
Employed	68,874	69.8%	30.1%	140,694	53.2%	46.7%
Unemployed	57,771	48.3%	51.6%	116,143	33.9%	66.0%
Not Seeking Employment	17,741	33.5%	66.4%	50,845	19.1%	80.9%

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Table 4. *Program Level Completion Performance on Two Age Groups in WIA Title II Programs in California 2003-04*

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Average Hours Per Total Non-Persistor	Persistor Rate	Average Hours Per Persistor	Percentage of Persistors Completing a Level	Percentage of Total Completing Level	Average Reading Pre-Test Score	Total Number Enrolled	Average Hours Per Total Non-Persistor	Persistor Rate	Average Hours Per Persistor	Percentage of Persistors Completing a Level	Percentage of Total Completing Level	Average Reading Pre-Test Score
				16 to 24 Year Olds								25+ Year Olds		
ABE Beginning Literacy	2,422	181	47%	372	64%	30%	194.8	7,983	418	59%	513	36%	21%	183.6
ABE Beginning	5,451	111	45%	280	80%	36%	211.5	8,214	109	56%	244	79%	45%	208.8
ABE Low Intermediate	9,362	107	44%	264	75%	33%	220.8	10,539	95	48%	266	74%	36%	219.7
ABE High Intermediate	21,958	105	51%	216	55%	28%	229.9	22,649	106	58%	255	52%	30%	229.8
ASE Low	27,994	100	27%	170	83%	23%	240.7	19,615	130	31%	216	69%	21%	240.6
ASE High	10,556	96	41%	138	81%	33%	250.7	8,185	94	44%	200	56%	24%	250.9
ESL Beginning Literacy	7,457	71	35%	182	91%	32%	174.2	19,273	88	43%	222	86%	37%	173.0
ESL Beginning	39,839	94	45%	195	68%	31%	193.1	94,906	97	47%	223	67%	31%	193.2
ESL Low Intermediate	32,489	104	60%	227	69%	41%	205.2	93,424	107	62%	242	69%	43%	205.6
ESL High Intermediate	15,158	102	61%	263	70%	43%	216.2	51,813	98	63%	266	69%	43%	216.2
ESL Low Advanced	14,274	101	62%	254	37%	23%	227.0	56,414	101	65%	267	35%	23%	227.2
ESL High Advanced	1,847	92	48%	243	35%	17%	239.5	8,149	93	51%	271	37%	19%	239.8
Total	188,807	100	48%	220	67%	32%	210.7	401,164	108	55%	251	61%	34%	209.8

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Figure 3. *Youth Enrollment in ABE, ASE, and ESL with Their Entry Basic Skill Levels Based on NRS Descriptors*
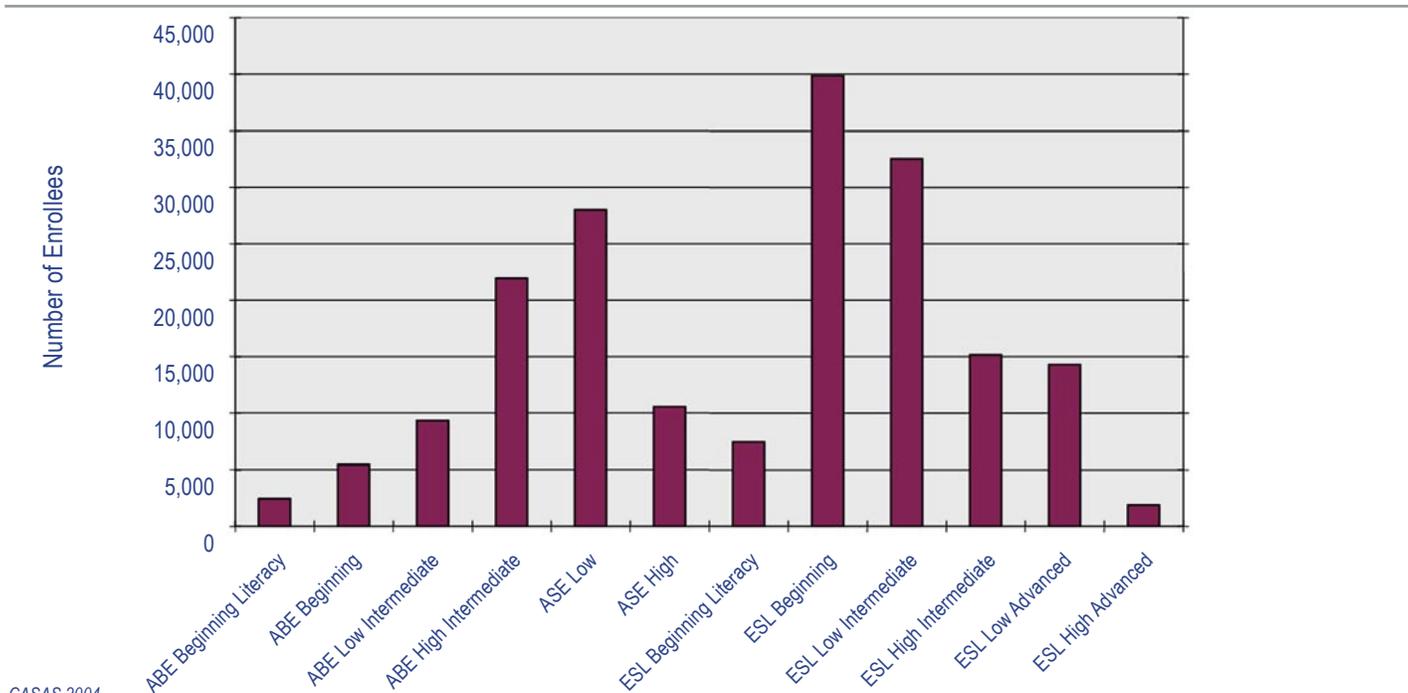
CASAS 2004

▶ **5.** If there are any differences noted in this report, are they consistent over a two-year period?

The findings reported are remarkably stable, even up to five years.

See Table 1. The findings reported here for program year 2003-04 were actually taken from a recent research report (Stiles 2004) that made the same age group contrasts, but also included program year 2002-03 for confirmation of findings. In every case this confirmation was made with results from the 2002-03 program year showing the same kinds of difference patterns between age groups and performance differences by gender.

References

U.S. Dept. of Education, OVAE, March 2001. *Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education Implementation Guidelines.*

Stiles, Richard, *The Participation and Performance of Youth in Adult Education Programs.* California Adult Education Research Paper, *CASAS*, December 2004.

Developed by   *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) under contract with the California Department of Education.*

National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Level Descriptors (Excerpt)

ABE Beginning Literacy
Test Benchmark: CASAS 200 and below
Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps, can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.

ABE Beginning
Test Benchmark: CASAS 201-210
Individual is able to read simple directions, signs and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages and make simple change. There is minimal knowledge of, and experience with, using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts, e.g. understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery; can read want ads and complete simple job applications.

ABE Low Intermediate
Test benchmark: CASAS 211-220
Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms or job applications; can read simple charts, graphs labels and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.

ABE High Intermediate
Test benchmark: CASAS 221-235
Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts and labels, and can follow multi-step diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involves following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts; can follow simple instructions for using technology.

ASE Low
Test benchmark: CASAS 236-245
Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multi-step directions, and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.

ASE High
Test benchmark: CASAS 246 and higher
Individuals are able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes, can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations and can instruct others, in written or oral form on software and technology use.

ESL Beginning Literacy
Test benchmark: CASAS 180 and below
Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases. Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.

ESL Beginning
Test benchmark: CASAS 181-200
Individual functions with difficulty in situations related to immediate needs and in limited social situations; has some simple oral communication abilities using simple learned and repeated phrases; may need frequent repetition; can provide personal information on simple forms; can recognize common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as labels and product names; can handle routine entry level jobs that require only the most basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. There is minimal knowledge or experience using computers or technology.

ESL Low Intermediate
Test benchmark: CASAS 201-210
Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs and maps; can fill out simple forms, but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication, but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).

ESL High Intermediate
Test benchmark: CASAS 211-220
Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; complete basic medical forms and job applications; can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. The individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing; can follow simple instructions for using technology.

ESL Low Advanced
Test benchmark: CASAS 221-235
Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and can communicate on the telephone on familiar topics; can interpret simple charts and graphics; can handle jobs that require simple oral and written instructions, multi-step diagrams and limited public interaction. The individual can use all basic software applications, understand the impact of technology and select the correct technology in a new situation

ESL High Advanced
Test benchmark: CASAS 236-245
Individual has a general ability to use English effectively to meet most routine social and work situations; can interpret routine charts, graphs and tables and complete forms; has high ability to communicate on the telephone and understand radio and television; can meet work demands that require reading and writing and can interact with the public. The individual can use common software and learn new applications; can define the purpose of software and select new applications appropriately; can instruct others in use of software and technology.