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Movement for Canadian Literacy

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What is Family Literacy?

By Janet Shively

Family literacy is an old and very simple idea, and those who embrace it do so for a very simple reason: "It just makes so much sense!" As with any idea whose time has come around, it seems that everybody's either talking about it or doing it or wanting to do it, yet everybody seems to have a different definition of what "it" is.

Perhaps that is because by their very nature, definitions reflect the values and suit the purposes of the person/group doing the defining. Perhaps it's because both words that form the phrase family literacy are so value-laden, culture-specific, and open to interpretation themselves; or perhaps it's because there are so many sectors that have staked a claim in the family literacy turf, inevitably imposing their own perspective. Perhaps for all of these reasons there is still considerable discussion about what, exactly, we mean by family literacy.

The term "family literacy" was first coined by Denny Taylor in her 1983 study which explored the social context of the home as a key factor in the literacy development of

children. Neither in the initiatives and studies that predate Taylor's work, nor in the broad range of family literacy activities that have taken place since, is there a single, commonly accepted definition of what the term means.¹

Family literacy refers to the many ways parents, children and extended family members use literacy skills to accomplish every day tasks in the home and community.

Whatever the definition(s) we work with, it is important to keep in mind that in any discussion about the term or the field, "family" is always interpreted in the most inclusive sense of the term, encompassing significant others and extended family/community members whenever relevant.

The International Reading Association (1994) declared that Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. It occurs naturally during the routines

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of daily living and helps adults and children 'get things done.'

This broad definition includes all forms of literacy that families engage in together – from lullabies to shopping lists, from stories to the passing on of skills and traditions. Parents have always been their children's first and most important teachers. Family literacy projects or programs build upon this natural learning bond, recognizing and supporting the influence of the family on the literacy development of its members. ... →

The interest in family literacy as an effective approach to literacy development stems from a number of sources. Recent research has demonstrated the impact of early positive stimulation on brain and social development. Our understanding of emergent literacy has made it very clear that reading and writing behaviours begin long before children enter school. Our work with adult learners has taught us that parents are motivated to learn by their role as teachers of their children. This undoubtedly contributes to the fact that adults stay enrolled longer with higher attendance rates and higher achievement levels in family literacy programs than in most adult-only programs. (Philliber, Spillman, & King, 1996) It has been concluded that without family involvement, interventions by schools or agencies are less likely to be effective or lasting. (Nickse, 1989) And there is no question that parents learn from their children. Once more, the role of all family members as critical learning partners is being acknowledged with respect.

In what Elsa Auerbach refers to as “first generation” family literacy programs,² the focus was almost exclusively on transmitting to the home mainstream school literacy practices such as teaching parents how to read to their children, how to help them with homework, and how to support school-like literacy behaviours. Although most people agree that this is important and most literacy organizations can confirm that this is the type of support most frequently requested by parents, this narrower scope in family literacy programs misses an important opportunity to support a broader definition and may significantly reduce the potential impact of family literacy programs.

“Second generation” family literacy programs recognize and build on the strengths of families and the richness of cultural and literacy experience in most homes, even though it may not look like “school” literacy. They use a participatory approach to program design and delivery that supports the inter-related needs

of family members within the context of their homes and communities.

Although definitions of family literacy may vary in scope and emphasis, almost all reflect the beliefs that literacy develops in the context of shared social experience and that the literacy development of families impacts upon most other areas of their lives.

The term “family” is always used in its broadest, most inclusive sense; the term “parent” refers to a significant adult and primary caretaker in a child’s life.

Family literacy programs are rooted in research from a number of fields, vary widely in their design, and attempt to address a number of interrelated issues. Most programs hope to achieve any or all of the following goals:

- to promote reading as a valued family activity that encourages positive interactions and shared learning experiences
- to enhance the ability of parents to support their children’s language and literacy development from birth throughout the school years
- to address parents child-rearing concerns, providing information and support for positive parental involvement in all aspects of their children’s development and education
- to model and support developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for children
- to provide the opportunity for parents to pursue their own educational goals
- to encourage and support the use of literacy activities to address family and community concerns
- to encourage and support positive learning partnerships among families, communities, and schools.

... →

These goals are multi-faceted, complex, and ambitious. Their achievement requires government and community collaborations that (a) build creatively on existing programs and services and (b) support the complex needs of families in an integrated and sustainable manner. Education issues are all too often separated from health, social and economic issues that include employment, housing, physical and emotional security, and food. Programs and policies all too often overlook the mutual influence and inter-dependence of household and community members. The strengths of families and the impact of one generation upon another are powerful forces for positive change. When these are ignored, solutions are inevitably piecemeal and unsustainable.

So, what is family literacy?

No single, narrow definition of family literacy can do justice to the richness and complexity of families, and the multiple literacies that are a part of their everyday lives. The process of defining family literacy cannot be left in the hands of those outside the families and communities that are affected by the decision-making process. The culture of the community and the experiences of the families who live in the community are an essential part of all literacy programs. This implies that program developers should respect local definitions of problems, needs, resources and preferred courses of action. The resulting product is not some artificial measure of more “literate” parents and children, but more people working together, grandparents and parents, sons and daughters, sister and brothers, aunts and uncles, friends and neighbours, celebrating their own literacies while at the same time using the many forms of literacy available to them to find their own solutions to the problems they face within their families and communities.³

Family literacy projects/programs recognize:

- ***the influence of the family on the literacy development of all its members, and support families in building expertise in language development, reading and writing***
- ***the inter-related issues affecting families, and encourage community collaborations that build on existing programs and services.***

Family literacy programs can include the following components:

- ***literacy development for parents***
- ***literacy development for children***
- ***instruction for adults on fostering literacy in their families***
- ***interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.***

Footnotes

1. Thomas A., Skage S., and Jackson R. *Family Connections: 1998 Directory of Family Literacy Projects Across Canada*. Soleil: Welland, Ont., 1998; p.2.

2. Auerbach, Elsa. “Reading Between the Lines”, in *Many Families, Many Literacies*, ed. Denny Taylor, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997; pp 71-72.

3. Taylor, Denny. *Many Families, Many Literacies*, ed. Denny Taylor. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997; pp.4-5.

At the Forefront of Family Literacy

Toward Greater Collaboration: Family Literacy Forum Report

Barbara Macnutt, PEI Department of Education

With increased interest across Canada in family literacy as an effective approach to literacy development, there has also been an increased expression of interest among practitioners in initiatives that support the inter-provincial sharing of ideas, concerns, and strategies. In response to this desire to advance the field in a collaborative context, an Inter-provincial/Territorial Forum on Family Literacy was held in Toronto in October, 2000.

One result of that Forum was participants' articulation of a common vision concerning family literacy in Canada:

Family Literacy is a priority across sectors and jurisdictions, integral to the health, education, social and economic well-being of families and communities. Family Literacy is supported by sound policy, training, research and sustained funding.

This vision is rooted in the following principles: *We (policy makers, practitioners, parents) believe that:*

- The family is the primary context for literacy development.
- Family literacy is based on the overarching premise that people want to be the best they can be.
- Family literacy allows people and families to be the best they can be.
- Family literacy is delivered respecting a spectrum of realities: family well-being, education, health, welfare, economics, parenting.
- Family literacy must be delivered in a way that ensures high standards of quality are met.
- Family literacy is a field that requires a high level of expertise to be done well.
- Family literacy practice must be grounded in sound research.
- Family literacy practice must value and celebrate the diversity in communities, families and cultures.
- Family literacy must involve many partners in the community.

- Family literacy must be supported by sound, well-informed policy that cuts across sectoral and intergovernmental boundaries.
- Core funding is needed to support communities that wish to implement family literacy programs.

Forum participants acknowledged the scope and complexity of the challenge they envisioned – a challenge that could only be met through an equitably shared effort among those in every province and territory who are concerned with the education and well-being of Canada's families.

Neither the participants nor the Forum committee view the outcomes of this Forum as the definitive direction for such a large and diverse country, but felt that a formulation of basic principles and common language might be useful in achieving greater collaboration in the field and among individual provinces and territories.

Prior to the Forum, the committee gathered data from family literacy practitioners and organizations across Canada. The key findings provided the participants at the Forum with a starting point. The principle areas of need were:

- Training and Development
- Policy Framework
- Awareness Raising, Information Sharing and Advocacy
- Funding Strategy
- Research
- Expanding Partnerships (involving more stakeholders)

Forum participants are now reviewing the Forum report, *Towards Greater Collaboration* and providing feedback to the Forum committee who will be making changes to the document. This report will then be used as a working document that may be of interest to anyone involved in family literacy.

Since the October 2000 Family Literacy Forum, many Forum participants have become involved in the Interprovincial/territorial Foundational Training for Family Literacy project (see following article.)

Foundational Training in Family Literacy: Canada Leads the Way

Yvon Laberge, Family Literacy Consultant, Edmonton

Family literacy professionals from across Canada have been working together on a collaborative training project that lays the foundations for increased growth and professionalism in family literacy throughout the country. The ultimate goal of the Interprovincial/territorial Foundational Training in Family Literacy Project (FTFL) project is to develop a cross-Canada network of family literacy practitioners who are better equipped to support families and each other in this relatively new and powerful approach to literacy development. The foundational training is not intended to replace existing training for specific family literacy models or approaches. Rather, it aims to provide a common foundation and framework for the many models of family literacy program delivery.

A Manual for Foundational Training in Family Literacy and the accompanying Facilitators' Resource, have been developed by experts in the field from across Canada, and reflect the complex range of knowledge and skills required by those working in a family literacy context.

The elements covered in the Manual will come to life in the Foundational Training which will be delivered through a series of facilitated workshops using a participatory approach to adult education. The workshops should be of interest to practitioners already working in the field of family literacy as well as those interested in including family literacy in a collaborative approach to programs and services for families.

A one-week training event will be held in Nova Scotia in mid-October to train and prepare teams of 10 trainers who will return to four regions: Atlantic Canada, Ontario/Quebec, Saskatchewan/Manitoba, Alberta/BC/Yukon. A team of 5 will cover NWT/Nunavut. After this train-the-trainer institute, the regional teams will be available to deliver training in appropriate and

responsive ways for each regional reality. It will be the responsibility of organizations or governments in each region to organize and arrange funding for regional foundational training events.



Minister Stewart talks about the Inter-provincial Family Literacy Training project

The Manual for Foundational Training in Family Literacy includes the following topic areas:

- 1. Understanding Family Literacy***
- 2. Understanding and Working with Diversity in Family Literacy Programs***
- 3. The Dynamics of Working with Parents/Adults***
- 4. Understanding Children: A complex relational dynamic***
- 5. Understanding Emergent Literacy***
- 6. Working with Families in a Family Literacy Setting***
- 7. Working with Communities***
- 8. Administering a Family Literacy Project/Program***
- 9. Developing an Evaluation Plan***
- 10. Best Practices in Family Literacy***

With the flood of energy and initiatives going into family literacy efforts, organizations and practitioners throughout the country have expressed the need for a more systematic and comprehensive approach to professional development in family literacy. Canada ... →

is the first country to develop foundational training for family literacy.

To help ensure that the project incorporates multiple perspectives, an Aboriginal consultant is working with the project to encourage sensitivity throughout to an Aboriginal context. Francophone organizations are also studying the project's content and process to compare their needs in the development of a Francophone delivery component.

The FTFL project is being spearheaded by the Centre for Family Literacy (AB) and St. Francis Xavier University (NS) and builds on a successful pilot project done in Alberta pilot in 2000. It is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Manual for Foundational Training in Family Literacy and Facilitators' Resource will be available for purchase in conjunction with regional Foundational Training for Family Literacy initiatives. For further information, please contact the Centre for Family Literacy in Edmonton at tel: 780-421-7323. Keep an eye on upcoming training in your region by staying in touch with your provincial/territorial literacy coalition, or check the website at www.nald.ca/cfla

Launch of the Centre for Family Literacy

Maureen Sanders, Centre for Family Literacy, Edmonton

On Family Literacy Day, January 27th 2001, the Centre for Family Literacy of Alberta was launched in Edmonton. The opening event at the University of Alberta campus was the result of three years of development work by Prospects Literacy Association, in collaboration with the National Literacy Secretariat, Alberta Learning, Success by 6, the University of Alberta, and the United Way.

Master of Ceremonies, Lynda Steele, News Anchor from Global Television, did a wonderful job of helping the program run like clockwork. Mums and babies from the Rhymes that Bind program delighted everyone with their singing of rhymes and songs, and each of the mothers received a

book bag from Honourary Patron, Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole. As part of the celebrations Her Honour also distributed book bags to almost 100 children at the Stollery Children's Health Centre located in the University Hospital.



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Guests at the launch of the Centre for Family Literacy enjoy a Rhymes that Bind demonstration



The Honourable Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, reads to a premature infant in the neonatal unit.



Senator Fairbairn enjoys a Rhymes that Bind demonstration

One of the mothers read a poem she had written as a result of the Books for Babies program. A volunteer tutor spoke about her personal experience working with the Tutoring program and the relationship she has formed with her student. A student spoke about his own personal

struggles with literacy and about how he is now able to help his own children with their reading and writing.

In addition to many inspiring speeches from project partners, Alberta's Lieutenant Governor officially launched the Centre for Family Literacy. A reception followed, with the Lieutenant Governor speaking personally with many of the guests in attendance.

A few weeks later, in mid-March, The Centre welcomed HRDC Minister Jane Stewart and Senator Joyce Fairbairn for a visit. They came to announce National Literacy Secretariat funding for the Interprovincial/territorial Foundational Training in Family Literacy project (see previous article). Overall, it was a great opportunity to showcase the programs and participants and to draw attention to the strong work being done in the family literacy field.



The new Centre for Family Literacy is located in Suite 210, 11456 Jasper Ave., Edmonton, AB, T5K 0M1. Contact them at tel: 780-421-7323, fax: 780-421-

7324, or email: cfla@aal.ab.ca or visit the website at www.nald.ca/cfla

Special Request

We invite you to share your favourite photos of literacy people in action. Once you have permission from the subjects and/or the photographers, please send actual or electronic images to the MCL office. We will return them right away. We'll print your captions and credits as requested.

*If you do nothing else
I N S P I R E
 Once you have inspired
M A K E R O O M*

Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life

Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life was a project developed by the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada) in partnership with the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL). Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, the project was designed to increase the capacity of family resource programs to support the development of literacy in the families they serve. The project was designed to complement, not duplicate existing family literacy resource and to encourage cooperation between family resource centres and literacy.

Five resource booklets were produced in 2000, each packed with ideas, contacts, and real life Canadian experiences. The fifth booklet, called *A Literacy Worker's Guide to Family Resource Programs* created later than the initial four, is especially helpful as an overview to literacy workers.

Currently, a proposal is being developed to take *Weaving Literacy Into Community and Family Life* "on the road" as a tool for regional Trainer workshops designed to sensitize family resource workers and other community workers to literacy issues and to promote community partnerships around family literacy.

Weaving Literacy Into Community and Family Life and other excellent family resources may be ordered from FRP Canada by calling: (613) 237-7667 or visiting their website at www.frp.ca. The MCL office also has some copies of the booklets which are available by calling 613-563-2464 or email: mcl@literacy.ca

The Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life series:

- 1 Literacy In Our Lives
- 2 Creating Learning Environments for Children
- 3 Community-Based Family Literacy Partnerships
- 4 Literacy Initiatives in Family Resource Programs
- 5 A Literacy Workers' Guide to Family Resource Programs

Cross Canada Snapshots

Family literacy is a field filled with ideas and innovative partnerships which are currently converging into a critical movement. While the following list is not exhaustive it provides a look at some of the many inspiring models for family literacy delivery across Canada.

Performers for Literacy

As a national charitable organization, Performers for Literacy (PFL) brings together performers from every walk of life to illustrate the joy and importance of reading. Even local heroes such as firefighters and police officers can be performers for literacy.

PFL's unique programs for children create an environment in which they can develop their reading, writing, and listening skills. The programs also promote the value and importance of caregivers reading with children.

The **Kids-Lit/Jeux-Contes Program** offers a variety of live, interactive performances. They include: *Storytellers*, a forty-five minute interactive performance for children aged five to eight. *Alphabet Soup* is a thirty-minute interactive pre-school show. *The Big Picture* celebrates multicultural audiences through interaction and role-playing. The newest performance is a bilingual Cantonese-English show, that enables further community outreach. All performances encourage children to read by demonstrating how much fun it is to read and use your imagination. Performances are produced in schools, hospitals, shopping malls, libraries, and parks, as well as at community events and festivals.

The **Reading Series** allows performers to magically engage children's imaginations during creative book readings held in museums, hospitals, libraries, day care facilities, bookstores and other special events.

PFL operates two storefront **Second Story Reading Centres**, located in Gerrard Square mall in Toronto and Mill Woods Town Centre in Edmonton. Over 10,000 children, parents and caregivers attended the two programs between November 1999 and October 2000. The Second Story programs for preschoolers combine readings by volunteer performers with pre-literacy activities such as crafts and games. They also offer writing clubs for older children. To learn more about the Toronto Second Story, please visit <http://www.fave.ca/p122p01.htm>

During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, over 245 Kids-Lit/Jeux Contes shows were performed, reaching more than 30,000 children in nine Canadian provinces. PFL is committed to expanding programming to the Prairie provinces, the Maritimes, and the three Territories in 2001.

For more information, contact PFL at tel: 416-410-4193, email: or by mail at 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1304, Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3. Also visit the sponsored Web site at <http://toronto.com/E/V/TORON/0020/49/04/1.html> The new site at www.pfl.ca will be up and running soon.



New family literacy poster from PEI Literacy Alliance

You can order this poster for \$5.00 by contacting the Alliance at 902-368-3620 or peiliteracy.alliance@pei.sympatico.ca Discounts are also available for bulk orders.

Family literacy is learning through life

Parenting for a Literate Community

Pam Whitty, University of New Brunswick

Fredericton, New Brunswick was the scene of a National Train-the-Trainer Pilot in November 2000. Literacy educators gathered to take part in the **E/Merging Literacies: Parents Learn as They Teach Their Children** training. Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), this three and a half day workshop was developed by and for Early Intervention workers and Family Resource centre staff as part of the Parenting for a Literate Community (PLC) project. The November training was designed to prepare regional leaders to deliver training directly to family literacy educators across the country.

The training was based on a project between the University of New Brunswick (UNB) and the Fredericton Regional Family Resource Centre. They set up a program two mornings a week which had a component for parents, one for children, and one for both together. Based on their experiences and principles, a set of materials were developed. Two training manuals were developed. One is for service providers in the field and one is for the regional trainers. In addition, eight family reading booklets and a video were created with input of the families involved in the pilot. All materials can be viewed at <http://cspace.unb.ca/edfac/ecc/publications> (under Joint-authored Publications.)

Currently the project is developing a set of parallel reading materials for parents to read with children. These materials take the form of 8 children's books with parent text at the close of each one offering further suggestions for expanding literacy by activities such as singing, dancing and doing chores. The project is also developing a dissemination strategy for these print materials, in cooperation with other national family literacy training initiatives. For more information on this project please check the website (above) or contact the PLC project coordinator: Lori Jones-Clark at tel: 506-451-6875 or email: lorclark@nbnet.nb.ca

COW Crossing Ahead



Miss Frizzle Moove Over, Here Comes a COW bus

Edmonton's COW (classroom on wheels) bus is much more than a lending library on wheels. The bus known as Storytales is one of a fleet of five buses which are hosted by the Centre for Family Literacy and funded by the Success by Six initiative. All five buses support learning initiatives but the COW bus focuses on parents and children under 7. Every week the bus travels to lower income, higher risk or isolated areas. Parents are able to borrow some of the specially chosen books most of which are donated by the Rotary Club. The bus driver involves both parents and children in arranging special themes and program activities to encourage creative interaction with books. For more information, contact Wendy Peverett at tel: 780-421-7323.

Books for Babies

Reprinted with kind permission of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador

Books for Babies is an early intervention program which began in 1994 on the West Coast of Newfoundland. The idea was to promote reading from birth. Indeed, studies show that the most crucial period of a child's developmental period of a child's brain is during the first twelve months. Books for Babies provides parents and caregivers with the information and material to assist their children's learning during this important time. ... →

Volunteers deliver packages containing a board book for baby, a first year developmental calendar, and growth chart and brochures with tips on reading. Where funds allow, parents are given the opportunity to register their children with the four-year follow-up program in which they will receive another free book every year for the next four years.

This nationally registered program has now spread to many parts of the province. In fact similar programs exist in many parts of the country. Evaluation results show that Newfoundland participants are very pleased with their Books for Babies initiative. Many parents indicated that the program reminds them of the importance to read to their children every day. Others stated that they were not aware of the importance of reading to children right from birth. For information on the program, contact Charmaine Lynch at Humber Literacy Council at tel: 709-634-4888, fax: 709-634-2126 or email: charmaine.lynch@northatlantic.nf.ca

Early Learning, Language and Literacy: Conference Report

Anne Leslie, New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy



The New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy partnered with day care professionals in the province to organize the *Early Learning, Language and Literacy Conference* held in early June 2001 in Fredericton. The conference highlighted an interesting trend of partnerships between early childhood workers and literacy service providers who are both concerned with early literacy development in children. The conference included discussions on how to strengthen literacy development in young children and how to integrate resources so that both literacy

and early childhood workers can learn from each other. The conference was funded by the National Literacy Secretariat with in-kind support from the New Brunswick Department of Family and Community Services and Canada Post. For information or a conference report, call the conference co-ordinator Anne Leslie at 506-457-0531 or email aleslie@nbnet.nb.ca

Family Literacy: a Tool for Northern Community Building

Lisa Campbell, NWT Literacy Council



In 1997, the North West Territories Literacy Council initiated the Community Literacy Development Project as a pilot project in order to build relationships between the NWT Literacy Council and northern communities. The aim was to work with local organizations to enable them to develop the skills, resources and tools to plan, deliver and manage local literacy projects.

In 2000 the NWT Literacy Council and the Nunavut Literacy Council conducted a needs assessment to determine if and how management training might be useful to the individuals and organizations working on community based projects. The communities indicated their clear preference for face-to-face workshops rather than high tech alternatives. They also indicated that family literacy was a concern and a priority.

The project then designed a three-day workshop that focussed on family literacy issues and the skills needed to plan a project and write the proposal. Workshops were delivered in four communities which have resulted in proposals from each that reflect the family literacy issues and priorities for that community. This successful project will continue by offering the *Tools for Community Building* in other places throughout the NWT.

For further information, contact Lisa Campbell at the NWT Literacy Council at (867) 873-9262 or literacy@ssimicro.com

Best Practices in Family Literacy

There are more than 90 family literacy programs and services in British Columbia. A *BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy* has been developed and widely distributed even outside the province. It is available for viewing on the Literacy BC website at: www.nald.ca/lbc.htm

Storysacks

A Storysack is a large cloth bag containing a good quality picture book with supporting materials to stimulate reading activities. The Storysack contains soft toys of the main characters with props and scenery relating to the story to bring the book to life. A non-fiction book linked to the fiction theme, an audio tape and a language game based on the book are also included. Additionally there are ideas for parents and teachers to develop children's listening, reading and writing skills, using the contents of the Storysack.

The sacks are made by parents and other volunteers in the community once they have taken the workshop how to make a Storysack. The sacks can be made for little or no cost from donated materials.

The aim of a Storysack is to give a parent the confidence to enjoy books and reading together with their child. Not every parent finds it easy to read stories but, with the supporting materials a storysack offers, all parents can successfully share books with their child at a variety of levels. In addition, a Storysack is a wonderful tool for supporting literacy skills in the classroom.



The idea for Storysacks originated from Neil Griffiths, headmaster of a primary school in Swindon, England, who now delivers the project through the Basic Skills Agency. The idea has spread across the globe and was introduced to Canada in May 1999. Canadian interest in the popular Storysacks has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic and the program has grown since its start in New Brunswick two years ago. A Storysacks Canada project is scheduled to begin in November, 2001. More information can be found at <http://www.storysacks.nald.ca>

Family Literacy in the Correctional System

The *Keys to Family Literacy* Program runs at Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The program helps those who are in conflict with the law through various literacy and parenting activities to become active parents and productive members of society.

The four keys are Come Read With Me, Parenting Skills, The Oral Tradition, and Writing Process and Basic Computer Literacy. While the program is now legally mandated for offenders in the United States, Pine Grove's program is the first of its kind in Canada. Now funding has been made available to train other penal institutions and community-based programs who deal with individuals in conflict with the law. The three day training sessions can be arranged for groups who can arrange 10-12 participants. To find out more, contact Leanne McLeod at Pine Grove Correctional Centre, Box 3003, Prince Albert, SK S6V 6G1, tel: 306-764-7204, email: hlmcleod@sk.sympatico.ca or check the website: www.nald.ca/sklitnet.htm

Did we miss your family literacy story, project or initiative?

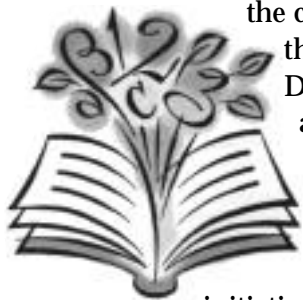
Articles and information on literacy and families are welcome in any issue of *literacy.ca* so help keep the information flowing. Please contact Fiona Huebner at fiona@literacy.ca or tel: 613-563-2464.

Family Literacy Day

Read all about it! Thousands participate in the Third Annual FLD 2001

Alexandra Dunsmuir, ABC CANADA

On January 27, 2001, thousands of Canadian families – along with ABC CANADA, local literacy organizations, libraries and schools across



the country – took part in the third annual Family Literacy Day. Premiers, MPPs, MPs, athletes, celebrities, media, Honda dealers and Indigo bookstores also lent their support to promote reading and other literacy-related

initiatives as family activities. Mayors in major cities in a number of provinces and territories even officially declared January 27 Family Literacy Day.

The most popular activities for literacy groups this year included athlete/author/celebrity storytelling sessions, Harry Potter reading circles, book drives, Teddy Bear's Picnics, pyjama parties, and literacy-themed games and contests. Some literacy organizations preferred to use the day for family literacy advocacy, conducting seminars with featured speakers. Literacy forums and mall displays offered information on family literacy programs and practical tips on how parents could help children achieve success with reading.

Corporate supporters Honda Canada and Indigo Books participated in the fun through their local dealerships and retail outlets. Indigo bookstores across Canada hosted bilingual story readings, bookmark- and storybook-making workshops, and provided FLD buttons and literacy grab bags for kids. Several Honda dealers partnered with literacy organizations in their communities to celebrate this special day. One Honda dealer in Calgary even invited kids to his dealership to paint literacy and learning images on a white Odyssey mini-van.

With Honda Canada's support, and the support of many other corporate partners and suppliers, ABC CANADA created and distributed a million dollar, fully integrated marketing campaign for Family Literacy Day that included promotional materials, TV, radio, magazine, newspaper, Web and alternative media advertising in English and in French.

The combination of advertising and public relations activities generated phenomenal advertising and editorial media coverage. This coverage included over 300 articles, and over 250 newspaper and magazine advertisements featuring sponsor recognition, in some of Canada's largest daily newspapers, national magazines and community newspapers.

In addition to designing bilingual Family Literacy Day information kits to assist local planning, ABC CANADA created and distributed over 170,000 promotional pieces to literacy groups, libraries and schools. The materials included bilingual bookmarks, buttons, stickers, posters and tips sheets offering suggestions for families on literacy and learning activities. Check the ABC Canada website at www.abc-canada.org or call 1-800-303-1004 for information to help you get ready for the fourth annual Family Literacy Day on Sunday, January 27, 2002.

Honda's Family Literacy Support

For the past two years, Honda Canada has been a significant national supporter for family literacy activities through its financial contribution to Family Literacy Day on January 27 and a special program spearheaded by its Honda automobile dealer network that includes a cash donation to local literacy groups. Honda also encourages employees to volunteer with local literacy agencies.



Resources for Literacy and Families

WEB LINKS AND CONTACTS

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)



NALD has a comprehensive family literacy resource listing with many online documents and links at: www.nald.ca Look under the

NALD Literacy Collection page for their family literacy collection. Also check their online directory of family literacy projects across Canada called *Family Connections 2000* at www.nald.ca/familit

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada)



Released a compelling document in July 2000 called *Family Support: A National Priority*. Also co-produced the five part series called *Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life*. FRP Canada also produces a

monthly newsletter called *Play and Parenting Connections*, containing information useful and interesting to family literacy workers. Contact: 707-331 Cooper Street, Ottawa, Ont. K2P 0G5, tel: 613-237-7667, fax: 613-237-8515, email: info@frp.ca, website is www.frp.ca

Centres for Excellence for Children's Well-Being

A consortium of 54 partners working to assemble and disseminate material on early child development through the Health Canada department. Website is www.hc-sc.gc.ca/centres

The Canadian Institute of Child Health



Promotes the health and well-being of children with many publications and resources for parents, health professionals and educators. Also works on advocacy and policy development. Contact

tel: 613-224-4144 or check the website at www.cich.ca

Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers (CANSCAIP)



A group of professionals in the field of children's culture with members from all parts of Canada. For over twenty years, CANSCAIP has been instrumental in the support

and promotion of children's literature through newsletters, workshops, meetings and other information programs for authors, parents, teachers, librarians, publishers, and others. Website is www.canscaip.org

National Children's Alliance



More than two dozen national organizations who represent thousands of people who work with children in the fields of health, education

and social services. The Alliance promoted the development of a national children's agenda by the federal and provincial governments. Website is www.nationalchildrensalliance.com

Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children

For the promotion and protection of children's rights in Canada and abroad. You can obtain the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: How does Canada Measure Up?* on the website at www.rightsofchildren.ca

The Canadian Council on Social Development



Publishes the annual report called *The Progress of Canada's Children*. Check at www.ccsd.ca

National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth

Survey was conducted by Human Resource Development Canada starting in 1995 and ongoing. Information available at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nlscy-elnej

Canadian Save the Children

Produced the 2001 report called *A Canada Fit for Children* which describes what most concerns young people. Check the website at www.savethechildren.ca

Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN)

Released a report in February 2001 called *The Well-being of Canada's Children: Towards a Better Policy Mix*. Download the document or executive summary, from <http://lists.magma.ca:8080/T/A17.44.138.1.1948>

The Early Years Study

Dr. Fraser Mustard's website has useful information and slides to download for presentations on early child development. These are based on the 1999 *Early Years Study* and can be found at wwwFOUNDERS.net. The reports and papers from the related Early Years conference (Ottawa, May 2001) are at www.earlyyears.ca

Child and Family Canada

A consortium of over 50 non-profit organizations are linked through this unique and comprehensive website which is managed by the Canadian Child Care Federation. Great links to the major Canadian organizations working on children's issues. Check www.cfc-efc.ca/

Family Literacy Association of Nova Scotia

A non-profit provincial organization that has produced some excellent materials and resource lists. Contact tel: 902-485-1635 or email: meadow@north.nsis.com or website at www.nald.ca/FLANS.htm

Youthfluence

Youthfluence is a new Canadian website that exists as a creative space for young people to come together to learn, share and influence decisions on issues that are important to them. It's a site driven by young people themselves who are interested in connecting with each other to support community involvement and active citizenship. This site is a work in progress so newcomers are encouraged to explore and contribute at www.youthinfluence.com

Canadian Parents

An online news magazine at the website www.canadianparents.com

Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS)

LAPS is working with provincial and territorial coalitions to develop a train-the-trainer package for their literacy and parenting skills development program. For information contact Bow Valley College at tel: 403-297-2876 or email either: ecairns@bowvalley.ab.ca or lmackenzie@bowvalley.ab.ca

The Parent Child Home Program

Main office in the USA, tel: 516-869-1283, or email: info@parent-child.org or website: www.parent-child.org. The Canadian contact is Nadine Fort in Brandon, Manitoba at tel: 204-726-7143, email: nfort@fs.gov.mb.ca

National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families (USA)

A national non-profit charitable organization whose aim is to strengthen and support families, practitioners and communities to promote the healthy development of babies and toddlers. Website is www.zerotothree.org

PRINT MATERIALS

Precious Minds



The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa has produced *Precious Minds: Nurturing Literacy in the Early Years*, video and pamphlet which valuable tools for promoting family literacy. Based on research which shows that children who are read to when very young are more likely to develop a lifelong interest in reading, do well in school and succeed in adult life. 17 minutes, \$10.95 plus shipping and handling. Call 613-233-1900 or check www.preciousminds.org

Read to Me... Read Together



The *Read to Me... Read Together* Family Literacy Guide has been produced by the NWT Literacy Council and the Health Promotion Office of

Yellowknife Health and Social Services Department. The Guide has been written to assist community groups who are interested in developing local family literacy programs and activities. It is available online at www.nald.ca/nwtlc.htm or you can contact NWT Literacy Council at (867) 873-9262 or kimcr@polarnet.ca to order it.

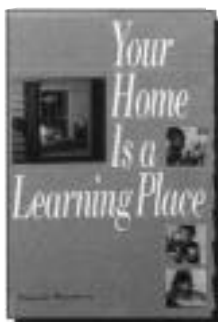
Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices



Adele Thomas edited this book which includes an overview of family literacy perspectives as well as twelve case studies of some selected programs that represent different approaches to family literacy across Canada. Although it is no longer available in print, the full text document can be viewed

and downloaded through NALD at www.nald.ca/fulltext/family/familit/cover.htm

From Laubach Literacy Canada



Laubach has produced an informative series of readers on various family and child issues, suitable for parents who are emerging readers:

- Your Home is a Learning Place (reading level 3-4) \$17.50
- A Good Beginning (reading level 3-4) \$17.00
- The Childbearing Years (reading level 4) \$14.95
- Alcoholic Beverages (reading level 5) \$5.00
- Parenting with a Heart (reading level 6) \$5.00
- You and Your Child's Teacher (reading level 3-4) \$17.50
- As a Child Grows (reading level 2-3) \$7.25.



Contact the Laubach's New Readers Bookstore at tel:1-877-634-1980, fax:1-866-634-0944, email: newreadersbookstore@nbnet.nb.ca

Guide to Government of Canada Services for Children and their Families

Recently released Guide is available online at www.cio-bc.gc.ca/children-enfants/index.html You can also request a print copy by contacting the Canada Information Office at tel: 1-800-O-Canada, or fax: 1-800-269-6412 or email: guide@pwgsc.gc.ca

From Grassroots Press

The following family literacy resources are available from Grassroots Press. Contact Grassroots Press at 1-888-303-3213 or www.literacyservices.com

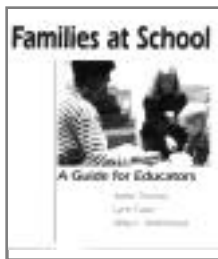
new! *Families at School:
A Handbook for Parents*

Adele Thomas, Lynn Fazio & Betty L. Stiefelmeyer

This handbook explains the importance of reading and writing and how children learn about literacy, and lists books recommended for both parents and children. Included are step-by-step instructions on making games, puzzles, arts and crafts, and more – all of them designed to help children learn about the world. This book is perfect for those involved in a family literacy program or who are looking for ways to develop literacy with children at home. Cost \$24.50.

new! *Families at School:
A Guide for Educators*

Adele Thomas, Lynn Fazio and Betty L. Stiefelmeyer



This hands-on guide shows how parents and children use literacy to strengthen their reading and writing abilities while building stronger family relationships. Included are background information on family literacy, suggestions for

establishing a family literacy program, and ideas about program structure. Also included are sample lesson plans, a list of recommended books and resources, suggested classroom activities, examples of parents' work, and numerous student handouts. Drawn from the authors' experience of what works with parents, these ideas can be adapted for use in many program settings. Cost \$29.95.

Help Your Child Get into Reading!

Cathy Mates



Reprinted by popular demand, this manual explains how to set up a family literacy program in five easy steps. It will save you hours of preparation time, as it highlights 30 weekly themes complete with suggestions for songs, finger plays, and craft ideas. These ideas can be used with children up to five years of age. Cost \$15.00.

Literacy and Your Family

Medicine Hat College & Homespun Video Productions



This two-video set (90 minutes in length) is an essential training tool for family literacy practitioners. It includes 13 segments which demonstrate reading and writing techniques to use with children: Cost \$99.00



Keep sharing any new and worthwhile resources on literacy and families. Contact Fiona at 613-563-2464 or fiona@literacy.ca

News Updates from MCL

Literacy Action Campaign sets stage for Literacy Action Day



As you may know, the federal government is paying special attention to literacy this year as part of a national Skills and Learning Initiative.

MCL needs your help in advancing a literacy agenda that is national in vision but respectful of local expertise and realities. As frontline literacy people, you are in a position to make literacy come alive for your local Member of Parliament (MP) at this crucial time. We've developed a Literacy Action Campaign toolkit to support you in this, and you'll find it online at www.literacy.ca.

If you have time to do just one thing to help the campaign, please personalize and send the campaign letter to your MP. It contains key information about literacy and the Skills and Learning Initiative; and suggests ways that MPs can support literacy at home and on the Hill. We would like each of the 301 federal MPs to receive this letter from members of their local literacy community. A few minutes out of your day could make a big difference.

Your efforts will also help set the stage for the 8th annual Literacy Action Day (LAD) on Parliament Hill. On October 25th, literacy workers and learners representing national, provincial and territorial literacy organizations will meet with MPs and Senators to discuss literacy issues. LAD will end with a reception hosted by Senator Fairbairn.

MCL's policy bulletin, *Federal Literacy Facts* (FLF), aims to keep the literacy community up to date on these and other national developments. FLF is also online at www.literacy.ca

MCL encourages all members to send us their email address so that we can send Federal Literacy Facts and other updates to you directly.

If you are not a member or are unsure about your membership status, please call the MCL office at 613-563-2464 or send us an email: mcl@literacy.ca. Remember, membership is only \$15.00!

Learners, tutor, teachers and administrators, we need your help!

MCL's Learners Advisory Network is doing a cross-Canada project collecting learner stories of change. These are stories that in some way tell of the changes in learners' lives since they decided to return to school. The stories will be put into *The Book of Changes* that MCL will display at Parliament Hill on Literacy Action Day, October 25. We think these stories will make literacy "come alive" for the politicians who read them.

Tutors and teachers, we encourage you to take time with your learner or class to work on this project. We need to receive the stories in early October.

Learners, what is your story? Can you describe your struggles, hopes and dreams? We are asking you to write your story, so that others can understand what it took to return to and stay in school. Let us know what learning has meant to you. How has literacy changed you and your life?

Please share your learners' stories with MCL and your provincial/ territorial literacy coalition.



To contact your coalition, check at www.literacy.ca/about/coal.html

To contact MCL by email:

network@literacy.ca

fax: 613-563-2504, or mail:

MCL Learners Advisory Network,

180 Metcalfe St., Suite 300,

Ottawa, Ont., K2P 1P5

Other News

Benchmarks for ESL Literacy Learners



The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* was developed by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) and the province of Manitoba with HRDC funding. Designed for ESL literacy teachers,

program developers and administrators, this document lays out the progression of reading, writing and numeracy skills for ESL adults who have little or no literacy skills in their first language.

The resource can be used to set learning objectives and identify appropriate learning activities and tasks. Test developers will be able to use it to develop assessment tools to determine the developmental level of their learners, and materials writers will be able to use it as a basis for preparing ESL Literacy learning resources.

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners is the culmination of years of effort to identify and breakdown ESL Literacy skills and concepts into incremental components. It also identifies points at which learners can celebrate their progress in learning to read and write. It has practical teaching suggestions in addition to the clearly written description of ESL Literacy competencies, and will be a valuable addition to the resource collections of ESL Literacy teachers nationwide.

For information, contact the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks in Ottawa, at tel: 613- 230-7729 or on the web at www.language.ca

Provincial Coalition News



In Newfoundland and Labrador, Della Coish has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (LDC). Della is a native

of Fogo Island on the north-east coast of the province. Della is a graduate of Memorial University of Newfoundland where she studied Psychology, English and Criminology. In 2000 she completed a Master of Education, Counselling Psychology. Della has participated in a variety of literacy projects as well practitioner training programs and workshops. She has also developed and implemented a literacy awareness campaign, written a book for adult learners called *Tales of Fogo Island*, helped establish a Community Learning Centre. This included a very successful family literacy centre which was featured in the book *Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices* (2000). Before coming to the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, Della conducted research on behalf of the Provincial Workplace Education Committee as well as the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Welcome also to Bessie Merrigan of Corner Brook who takes on the role of Chairperson of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland & Labrador. Bessie brings a wealth of literacy knowledge and experience to the board table and has been a tremendous presence in the literacy field in the province.

To contact the LDC, tel: 709-738-7323 or 1-800-563-1111 or dcoish@literacydevelopmentcouncil.nf.net



In Ontario, the Ontario Literacy Coalition welcomes back Susan Sussman as their Executive Director.

Susan has been on a one year leave of absence to do research work on an MCL sponsored project to examine the demographic information on adults at the lowest levels of literacy. Using the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) data, the project was to identify patterns in low literacy across Canada, to consider data on those populations not included in IALS and to review trends in public policies and programming that arise as a result of the available statistics. She has gathered her findings in a report *Moving the Markers* which will be available later this fall. Watch for the highlights of Susan's research in a future MCL newsletter.

Best wishes to Margaret Cheung who replaced Susan for the year. Thanks, Margaret, for your contribution at the MCL Board table. The Ontario Literacy Coalition can be reached at 416-963-5787.

New Literacy Awareness Campaign



The ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation has just released its new public service announcement for television, "Can You Read?" Based on input from the literacy field and particularly from learners themselves, ABC CANADA and Taxi Advertising worked to develop a message which respects the experience of the learner and presents a positive, success-oriented story. All except two of the actors shown in the ad are actual participants from real literacy programs. It was filmed at St. Christopher House in Toronto. Watch for the 30 or 60 second version to air through your local broadcaster or see it now online at www.abc-canada.org



Also as part of the "Can You Read?" campaign, ABC CANADA unveiled the first-ever "interactive" subway poster in a Toronto subway station in July. The innovative, life-size poster promotes awareness



for literacy without using printed words or logos of any kind. The poster is a blank piece of ruled paper with a button in the centre. When the button is pressed a voice begins

to talk about adult literacy and the message ends by encouraging people to look under Learn in the Yellow Pages for more information. Although the concept is simple, it is estimated that several million dollars of donated time, talent, materials and space were contributed by this partnership effort.

NALD's Network News Now Online

The summer edition of the NALD Networks News is now online at <http://www.nald.ca/WHATNEW/hdlnews.htm> As a PDF document, it can be downloaded and printed and even posted to a bulletin board. If you have any questions or comments, please call NALD's toll-free number 1-800-720-6253.

In Honour of International Year of Volunteers

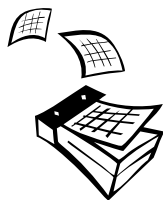
A Promotional Toolkit: Celebrating Literacy Volunteers in Your Community has been developed as one of many projects in this International Year of Volunteers. Community Literacy of Ontario has prepared a comprehensive toolkit of information, templates and even a CD-ROM to assist community based programs in promoting, recruiting and recognizing their volunteers. Cost \$25. includes shipping and handling. Call 705-733-2312 to order. Also ask about their new Celebrate Literacy Volunteers poster!

Useful related websites:

- United Nations: www.iyv2001.org
- Volunteer Canada: www.volunteer.ca
- International Association for Volunteer Effort: <http://iave.org>

Coming events

Literacy Action Day
October 25, 2001
Ottawa and Canada-wide



MCL and its partners will visit Parliament Hill to discuss literacy issues with federal politicians. MCL also has a toolkit of resources to help literacy supporters reach out to the politicians in their communities. Check the MCL website at www.literacy.ca for more information.

From Research into Practice
November 1-2, 2001
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

A conference on learning disabilities for researchers, practitioners, educators, and parents. Contact the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, tel: 416-929-4311, ext. 56 or 416-226-9756 or mggoebel@interlog.com or online at www.ldconference.topcities.com

Linking Research to Policy and Practice for Children and Youth
November 22-24, 2001
Ottawa, Ontario

Features the work of Health Canada's Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. For information contact the Canadian Child Care Federation at www.cfc-efc.ca/cccf or the Canadian School Boards Association at www.cdnsba.org

literacy.ca

Movement for Canadian Literacy

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 Website: www.literacy.ca

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is the national coalition that represents each provincial and territorial literacy coalition. The *literacy.ca* newsletter is a vehicle for literacy workers and supporters to share and exchange information, ideas, resources and research on emerging literacy issues. We welcome comments, photos, suggestions and news items. The views expressed in *literacy.ca* are not necessarily those of MCL, its Board of Directors or the Editor, but are published to stimulate discussion on a range of adult literacy issues.

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www.literacy.ca

Please visit the Movement for Canadian Literacy on the World Wide Web.