



The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

WHY FAMILY LITERACY?

Our Vision:

*A healthy,
literate society
where all
are able to
contribute and
succeed.*

The Centre for Family Literacy was established 15 years ago as a provincial organization committed to family literacy in Alberta. The National Literacy Secretariat, in partnership with Success by 6®, the University of Alberta, the United Way of Alberta Capital Region, and Alberta Learning, funded the development of the Centre, the first of its kind in Canada.



As the Centre reaches this milestone, it is important to reflect on our past work as we plan for the future. In 2001, when the Centre was established, it was felt the time was right for a more innovative and proactive approach to improving literacy levels. That was family literacy—an intergenerational approach focusing on the family rather than on the child or the adult separately.

Family Literacy programming is based on the concept that the greatest impact on literacy development is achieved by combining the

practices of early learning and childhood development, early parenting strategies, and adult literacy learning with parent support for their children's school readiness.

So is family literacy still a relevant approach today?

In the last three decades, research has produced compelling evidence that supports a focus on the family, with emphasis on the early years, *does* improve literacy levels. The research points to the importance of early language and literacy development, as learning begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Parents are their children's first teachers and role models, and therefore have a profound influence on their children's early literacy development. Yet studies continue to show that many parents are not aware of the important role they play in their children's learning and education.

These key findings from the research support the importance of family literacy as a preventative strategy for addressing low literacy levels:

- Early intervention is vital as children begin learning long before they enter the formal school setting.
- Parent involvement and support of their children's literacy practices provide them with the solid foundation they need to succeed in school.
- Parents' literacy skills, along with their attitudes about learning and formal education, have a great influence on the achievement of children.

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Summer
2016

WHY FAMILY LITERACY?

Continued

- Children learn best within the context of nurturing family relationships.

We know literacy weaves through all aspects of family and community life—through health, employment, education, social welfare and justice. It is the foundation of all other learning. Family literacy programs focus on developing literacy within the family as a whole.

Family literacy programs work on several levels: they improve parents' literacy skills; they provide parents with the tools to support their children's literacy; they develop stronger relationships between parents and children; and they help parents become involved in the education of their children.

Over the past 15 years, delivery of family literacy programs has responded and adapted to the complex nature of learning within an ever-changing social and cultural context. What has remained consistent though is the belief that the family unit is fundamental to supporting the literacy development of all family members.

So looking to the future, it is the Centre's belief that any efforts to improve literacy standards need to embrace the family as a whole and aim to raise parents' awareness of the difference they can make. As the Honourable Dr. Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta (1999-2005) stated so well,

“ Literacy is at the heart of all learning and families have a key role to play in developing and nurturing literacy through every stage of life. ”

LINKS FORE LITERACY CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT



The 5th annual Links fore Literacy Golf Tournament will take to the fairways this August in support of the Centre. Join our sponsors and community supporters in a fun Texas Scramble format that allows you to use string and mulligans to improve your team score. Your team might be lucky enough to win the famous “green jackets.”

Funds raised will benefit the Edmonton Literacy C.O.W. Bus. This program, for parents and their preschool children, visits 10 high needs communities in Edmonton for weekly visits. Parents borrow books for free and participate with their children in literacy activities that support early learning and language development.

Date: Wednesday, August 17

Time: Registration and lunch – 12:30 p.m.
Golf – shotgun start – 1:30 p.m.
Banquet – 5:30 p.m.

Place: The Links at Spruce Grove
Spruce Grove, Alberta

To register, go to our website at www.famlit.ca A portion of your registration fee is tax deductible.

PARENTING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Take a moment to think about how many digital devices you have in your home. It may sound something like this: two LCD TVs, a tablet, three smart phones, a laptop and maybe an Xbox. Technology has become such a big part of our lives, it's easy to forget just how ever-present it is.

It is understandable with the increase in the number of digital devices that children are being exposed to this technology at an earlier age. Is this a good thing?

We know through research on brain development that all learning happens in relationships through one-on-one interaction. We also know it's not realistic for most families to totally remove technology from our homes. But what we can do is be mindful about how and when we use it with our children by remembering the acronym ORIM, which stands for Opportunity, Recognition, Interaction, and Modelling.

Parents can ask themselves:

- Is there an *opportunity* to turn this into a learning experience? Learning takes place through interactions: talking, singing, rhymes, stories, and positive feedback.
- Is there a way to *recognize* and value your child and their efforts? This builds confidence and self-esteem.
- Does this activity have room for *interaction*? Brain development takes place through “serve and return”—healthy back-and-forth communication.
- Children absorb the behaviours and attitudes of the people around them. Does the way you use technology *model* a positive attitude about learning?

In short, learning occurs within the relationship between child and caregiver, and nothing compares to hands-on activities and interactions. Since family literacy is about making the most of your everyday activities, including technology, think of ways you can add value to these experiences! Here are a few ideas to try:

- Turn closed captioning on when watching TV.
- Use your smartphone camera together to capture items on a scavenger hunt.
- When playing games on a tablet, make it truly interactive by talking about what's happening and asking questions.

Digital technology has its place, but it's important to unplug and have boundaries. Try “tech time-outs” for the whole family!

IMPORTANT DATES

Links fore Literacy Charity Golf Tournament

Wednesday, August 17

Links Golf Course,
Spruce Grove AB

International Literacy Day

September 8

Literacy & Learning Symposium 2016

September 26-30

Fantasyland Hotel,
Edmonton AB

Check the Centre's website for more information.



Online donations to the Centre can be made through CanadaHelps.org



The Centre for Family Literacy gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the following:



COMMUNITY SUPPORT STRONGER THAN EVER



Another amazing Richardson GMP Evening of Wine & Words raised record dollars for the Centre's programs, bringing the total in the past nine years to over \$750,000. **Jim Cuddy**, the star of the event and the man who helped launch this "little" evening nine years ago, was joined by Suzie Ungerleider who performs under the name **Oh Susanna**.

The incomparable Mark Scholz entertained the audience with his wit as Master of Ceremonies. He also performed the duties of auctioneer and used his animated approach to engage the audience in bidding on six live auction items including the much sought after private concert with Corb Lund.

Former Edmonton Poet Laureate, Mary Pinkoski, joined us again this year and performed the poem "Telling New Stories." All of Mary's poems can be found on our website on the Evening of Wine and Words page under Special Events.

This story of success is only made possible with the great support we receive from those in attendance—some of whom have been at every Wine & Words event since 2008. The volunteer committee, comprised of eight hard working individuals, is key to making this the most sought after ticket in Edmonton.

We look forward to celebrating our tenth year on May 25, 2017.

THE GREAT CANADIAN GIVING CHALLENGE



- **Every \$1 donated to Centre for Family Literacy Society of Alberta on CanadaHelps.org IN JUNE earns us a chance to win a \$10,000 donation** (minimum \$3 donation required)
- Grand prize draw is on CANADA DAY, July 1, 2016 - \$10,000 will be donated to the winning charity
- The CanadaHelps.org link is on our website homepage at www.famlit.ca
- Contest rules at www.givingchallenge.ca

Literacy Develops in Families First

The Centre for Family Literacy is dedicated to helping Alberta grow and prosper. Our innovative programs, training and research help Alberta families achieve what they imagine—improved education, jobs and health.

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