



The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

WHAT IS FAMILY LITERACY

Most people, if asked, would not have too much trouble describing what they think is meant by the terms literacy or essential skills. They would probably describe literacy as the ability to read and write, and essential skills as the skills you need to do your job. Asking people to describe what is meant by family literacy would be a more difficult challenge.



Denny Taylor first coined the term “family literacy” in 1993. He noted that there was no single definition of family literacy that could reflect the richness and complexity of families and the multiple literacies that were part of their everyday lives.

Family Literacy programs were developed as research confirmed the important role that a child’s family and home environment

had on his/her language development and educational achievement.

These programs are a proactive and preventative approach that focus on achieving the greatest impact on literacy development by combining early childhood interventions, early parenting strategies, and adult literacy and learning opportunities.

In other words, family literacy is an approach to learning that focuses on intergenerational

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS ENCOURAGES INVESTMENT IN LITERACY

“We need to build a labour force for the future with the skills to compete in a highly technical environment.”

Craig Alexander, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist with the Conference Board of Canada, was the keynote speaker at the Centre’s annual Leading with Literacy Breakfast held on January 23. His presentation, Literacy Matters: The Economic Imperative of Investing in Literacy Skills, was a real eye opener for many in attendance.

Mr. Alexander told attendees that people with strong literacy skills take them for granted. They cannot imagine a world without them. He went on to say that 5 in 10 Canadians do not have the desired level of literacy to succeed in the modern knowledge based economy. Many of those with weak literacy skills do not recognize that if they increase their skills capacity, it would unlock many opportunities for them.

Alexander stated, “We cannot compete with China on the cost of labour, so we need to

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The Centre for Family Literacy is dedicated to helping families grow and prosper.

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WHAT IS FAMILY LITERACY

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interactions, and links adult education, parents' education, and pre-school or primary education – to enhance the literacy of both adults and children.



If parents are a child's first teacher and a child's early experiences and relationships are key to their future success, it is vital to deliver programs that support parents in this critical role. Programs like Books for Babies, Rhymes that Bind and 3,2,1, Fun! are examples of innovative programming aimed at providing that grassroots support.

Program participant comments say it all: "I never would have read to an infant – but what a difference it makes. He is only 6 months, but he already has two favourite books!" or "I have more confidence in reading and writing with my child and my reading is improving too."

What is unique about family literacy programming is the intergenerational outcomes. Through activities embedded in everyday activities, parents learn to support their child's early language and learning, and through these activities they improve their own reading, writing, and math skills, as well as oral language communication.

So next time you are asked what is meant by family literacy, you can say it is families learning and growing together.

KEYNOTE

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build a better product to compete. We need to build a labour force for the future with the skills to compete in a highly technical environment." Literacy is foundational to building those skills and we need to get the basics right if we want to be a leader in the global economy.

Mr. Alexander asked the employers in the crowd if they would invest in a new product that was guaranteed to:

- increase output and profitability
- lower error rates
- increase their ability to do on the job training
- get better team performance and
- better health and safety records.

Of course, they would. So, what is this product that would do so much?

Simply put, it is investing in improving literacy and numeracy skills that will make that difference. Investment in literacy has big payoffs for the individual, big payoffs for business, and big payoffs for the economy.

"I defy you to come up with a policy topic that we have a problem with today that literacy doesn't help alleviate. It is not the silver bullet that solves everything, but it is a great enabler," said Alexander. He encouraged investment in literacy as a significant tool to help Canadian society reduce poverty, address pressures on the health care system, and engage citizens in their communities. We need to ensure that every Canadian has the opportunity to succeed.

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2018 LOIS HOLE AWARD WINNERS



Ruth Nunifu

Dr. Hole was passionate about literacy and education. She was a tireless advocate and believed strongly that “families play a key role in developing and nurturing literacy through every stage of life.” The Centre is honoured that her family allows us to present our annual literacy awards in her name.

This year’s award recipients exemplify Dr. Hole’s commitment and devotion to literacy. Ruth Nunifu, winner of the Adult Learner Award, was forced to drop out of school early, and described her reading and writing skills as “level zero.” As a result of her continued hard work, she now reads independently and constantly texts family and friends.



Mandarae Nolan

Although facing some challenges over the past year, Mandarae Nolan, winner of the Family Learner Award, has faithfully attended Rhymes that Bind with her daughter. She is committed to her daughter’s social, emotional, and intellectual development, and has learned much at the program.



Golden Key

The Golden Key International Honour Society, MacEwan University Chapter, has championed family literacy at their annual Family Literacy Carnival. Over the past six years, hundreds of families have enjoyed fun and creative activities that encourage parents and children to learn together. They are deserving recipients of the Community Leadership Award. Lois Hole would be very proud of this year’s award recipients.

To read more about each award winner go to our website at www.famlit.ca

I NEVER KNEW I COULD LEARN MATH

When I first came to Canada I didn’t know how to write, read or speak English. I was put in a newcomer class to learn. I learned but I wanted to improve my writing, reading and speaking skills. I am glad to have found one on one tutoring sessions.

I meet with my tutor Kate every Wednesday. Kate is a good tutor. She uses different techniques for me to understand the concepts when she is tutoring me. Kate began tutoring me in a Math course I was taking at NorQuest College as part of a Practical Nursing Diploma. I never knew I could learn math, but the way Kate taught me I was able to understand. My final mark was 82%.

I have noticed my reading, writing, and speaking skills are improving as well. Now we are working together on a Science course. In September, I will be a full-time student at NorQuest College and will finish my diploma in the next two years.

IMPORTANT DATES

Free Wills Workshop
Wednesday, April 11
6:30 - 8:00 pm

Centre for Family Literacy

National Volunteer Week
April 15 - 21

Wine & Words
Thursday, May 3
Fairmont Hotel Macdonald
Jim Cuddy and guest

CFL AGM
Tuesday, May 22
5:00 - 6:00 pm
Centre for Family Literacy

Family Literacy Training Week
June 4 - 8
Centre for Family Literacy

Ruth Hayden Award Nomination Deadline
Friday, September 7



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



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





LINKS FORE LITERACY CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 7th annual Links fore Literacy Golf Tournament takes to the fairways this August. 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 benefit the Classroom on Wheels (C.O.W.) Bus program that visits 10 underserved communities in Edmonton on a weekly basis. Parents borrow books for free and participate with their children in literacy activities that support early learning and language development.

Date: Wednesday, August 15

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.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Your support will help us make a difference in the lives of Alberta families! Together we can make Alberta a healthy, literate society where all are able to contribute and succeed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Dr.

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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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