

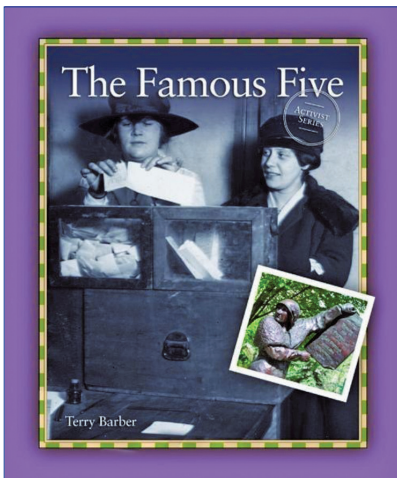


The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

BOOKS ARE FOR EVERYONE

"See? You can read books too!"

A few months ago, I had the pleasure of meeting four learners in the Book Club we run at the Millwoods Seniors Association. These women came to the group with ideas of what they wanted to learn over the 10 weeks, such as health, ageism, and the cow statues on Jasper Avenue.



One specifically expressed interest in reading books, so a quick browse through the Centre's library produced *The Famous Five* by Terry Barber. This book, published by Grassroots Press in easy-to-read English, tells the story of Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Emily Murphy, and Irene Parlby, who fought for women's rights in Canada in the early 1900s.

At the beginning of that session, one of the learners expressed concern that a book club would be too challenging for her. Yet, the way she engaged in the conversation along with her fellow learners quickly revealed that she could find many places to relate the book to her life.

The truth is that each of the women had something meaningful to contribute to the discussion of the book. Whether it was realizing how many things were named

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EARLY LEARNING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

A study from New York University followed a group of children from birth through 5th grade to track the influence of early home learning environments on later cognitive skills and the factors that might explain long-term influences.

The study confirmed that strong home learning environments provide children with foundational skills that are springboards to long-term academic achievement. Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, the study's lead author stated, "there is growing evidence for the power of early learning environments on later academic success."

The research showed that the home learning environment powerfully shaped children's language and cognitive development. Children's participation in learning activities, the quality of parent-child interactions, and the availability of learning materials like books and toys, are three key features of the home learning environment that support language and pre-academic skills in early childhood.

Children's learning environments were measured through a series of home visits at 14 months, at 2 and 3 years, and at pre-kindergarten. The researchers looked at literacy activities (including book reading, storytelling, and teaching letters and

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Family Literacy
is dedicated
to helping
families grow
and prosper.*

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BOOKS ARE FOR EVERYONE

Continued

after these women, understanding how long suffrage took, or thinking about the impact on a suffragette's family, each of the learners gained a new appreciation for the story of these five women.



I return to the opening phrase, not because I said it with a twinkle in my eye at the end of the session, but because the learner who thought books might be too challenging immediately recognized that **she** could read a book. The answering twinkle in her eye and her laughter was enough of a response for me. What an amazing thing to think you

cannot do something and then be shown that you are fully capable.

In the New Year, the Centre will be offering the following Adult Group Classes

- **Book Club** at Millwoods Seniors Association
- **Reading and Writing for English Language Learners Level 1** at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
- **Reading and Writing for English Language Learners Level 2** at Riverbend United Church

Contact us for more information.

EARLY LEARNING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

Continued

numbers), learning materials in the home (including books, toys, or games that facilitate expression and learning), and the quality of mothers' interactions with their children.

The learning environments were again assessed in 5th grade visits based on the number of books in the home and the quality of mothers' engagement with their children, both spontaneous interactions and during a discussion-based task.

At the pre-kindergarten and 5th grade visits, children were assessed on age-appropriate academic skills. The pre-K visit included measures of vocabulary, letter and word identification, and math problem-solving; the 5th grade visit measured vocabulary, reading, math, and cognitive abilities.

The researchers found that early learning environments supported the emergence of pre-academic skills that persisted into early adolescence. Experiences parents provide their infants as early as the first year of life can solidify into patterns of engagement that either continue to support or impede children's emerging skills.

The study highlights the importance of early childhood experiences for children's skill development and long-term academic success, and reinforces the notion that families have a major influence on children's academic outcomes.

“Learning materials in the home, learning activities, and meaningful conversation help children develop skills that help them succeed in school.”

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are recruiting for a number of volunteer roles for the new year.

OUR CURRENT OPENINGS INCLUDE:



- **Family Literacy Program Assistants**, who work alongside Centre staff assisting with greeting families, setting up and taking down activity rooms, assisting with circle time, and maybe even having the privilege of a baby or toddler on your lap!
- **Adult Group Facilitators** are paired in teams of two. They are responsible for guiding the learners in our Adult Classes as they work toward meeting their goals. Centre staff provide support and insight in preparing for classes.

• **Adult Literacy Tutors** meet weekly with their adult learner at a time and place that is convenient for both people. The tutor and learner work together to achieve the learner's goals that may include improving reading and writing skills, working toward their GED, applying for Canadian Citizenship, or passing a driving exam.

Training is provided for all of the positions. If you would like more information, please check our website at www.famlit.ca or contact us at volunteer_coordinator@famlit.ca

HELP US EMPOWER PEOPLE; STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES;
TRANSFORM LIVES.

ANNUAL BREAKFAST CELEBRATES LITERACY

Senator Paula Simon will give the keynote address at our annual Leading with Literacy Breakfast on **Friday, January 24, 2020** at the **Westin Hotel in Edmonton**. The breakfast coincides with National Family Literacy Day, an annual celebration of involving the family as a whole in literacy activities.

The recipients of the 2020 Lois Hole Memorial Literacy Awards will be announced in three categories: Adult Learner, Family Learner, and Community Leader. This is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of all of the nominees and to honour this year's award winners.

Tickets can be purchased through the Centre for Family Literacy website at www.famlit.ca

IMPORTANT DATES

Office Christmas Closure

December 23 - January 3

Leading with Literacy Breakfast

Friday, January 24

7:00–9:00 a.m.

The Westin Edmonton

Family Literacy Carnival

Sunday, January 26

2:00–4:30 p.m.

Robbins Health Learning Centre
MacEwan University

National Family Literacy Day

Monday, January 27

Visit our 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:



JANUARY FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Looking for a little free indoor fun for you and your kids? Join us at the Family Literacy Carnival taking place at MacEwan University!!

This is a drop-in event designed for the whole family. It is a perfect way to explore building literacy skills through innovative activities based on science, math, technology, music, and play. All of the activities can be duplicated at home with inexpensive materials you have around the house.

There will be special guest readers throughout the afternoon who will share their favourite books. An added BONUS – each child can select a free book to take home.

Make learning fun together and join us as we celebrate National Family Literacy Day at our Family Literacy Carnival:

When: Sunday, January 26, 2020
Time: 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.
Where: Robbins Health Learning Centre
 109 St & 104 Ave



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!

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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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