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## Facts about literacy

### Literacy and families

Children learn their basic thinking, language and social skills in the family. Parents have a big effect on their

children's attitudes towards literacy and learning. Many don't know that even if they have low levels of education, they can help their children do better in school.

#### Fact

*Reading, holding, singing and talking to a baby builds a healthy mind, strong parent-child bond and the foundation of language and reading.*

There is a link between life long learning and family literacy. Parents are learning

models for their children. The International Adult Literacy Survey points out that children of parents with higher levels of education and literacy are more likely to read and do better in school.

### Children

For children, literacy begins in the family. This is where the foundation for life long learning is built.

### Parents

All parents want the best for their children. They deserve support as their children's first teachers.

### Family

There are many types of families. There are many ways all families use literacy every day.

### A foundation for lifelong learning

Supporting reading and language development in the first five years of a child's life can lay the foundation for literacy. Family literacy

programs see the family as a "learning unit" and provide support and learning for all family members. Programs may include:

- ◆ fun, interactive literacy activities for parents and children
- ◆ giving parents tools to help them provide enjoyable learning experiences for their children
- ◆ providing learning experiences for parents to achieve their personal goals
- ◆ preparing children for success in school and motivating them for success in life.

#### Fact

*The literacy development of families affects every other area of family life: health, employment, economic status and opportunities.*

*"Reading to a child provides sights and sounds which help the brain develop. It also helps develop important physical and emotional bonds and language skills."*

*Dr. Richard Goldbloom,  
Honorary Chair, Read to Me! Program*

*"In the moment of chanting a lullabye, telling a poem or story, or the reading out loud of a book, there is the creation of a 'safe place.' Every child deserves this. It is their birthright."*

*Sheree Fitch, Author*

## Literacy is for life.



## What is literacy?

Literacy is **the** essential skill. It is the ability to use printed information to function in society, at work and in the family. It is the combination of thinking and social skills we need to analyze and use information to control our own lives, achieve our goals and develop our knowledge and potential.

Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) supports the literacy community in Nova Scotia. Our mission is to make sure every Nova Scotian has access to quality literacy education.

## How to reach us...



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### Resources

NS Department of Education, *Background Information on Literacy*, 2001  
*Family Literacy Best Practices Guide*,  
[cehlibrary.ednet.ns.ca/pages/famlit/index.html](http://cehlibrary.ednet.ns.ca/pages/famlit/index.html)  
*Read to Me! News Release*,  
[www.ssdha.nshealth.ca/ReadtoMENR.pdf](http://www.ssdha.nshealth.ca/ReadtoMENR.pdf)

## Family literacy programs...

- ◆ respond to needs identified by the community
- ◆ are delivered through community partnerships
- ◆ promote parents as a child's first teacher
- ◆ assist families in supporting children's literacy development from birth and throughout the school years
- ◆ provide families with ongoing access to developmentally appropriate materials
- ◆ help children develop school readiness
- ◆ give parents a chance to achieve their own educational goals and help their children
- ◆ improve the quality of life for families with reading, learning and shared time together
- ◆ promote and support lifelong learning.

### Fact

*When governments invest in literacy programs for adults, children benefit as well. This is sometimes called "double duty dollars."*

## Simple truths

- ◆ Literacy and learning in families is an ongoing process.
- ◆ A child whose parent(s) did not graduate from high school is twice as likely to live in poverty as a child whose parent(s) did graduate. (National Centre for Children in Poverty, 1992)
- ◆ Literacy can reduce the inequalities caused by poverty and give tools for social unity.
- ◆ If we can't understand issues and respond to them, we can't participate well in society or democracy.

*Family Literacy Day is celebrated every year on January 27th!*

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Literacy Nova Scotia