



Reading aloud can help children to develop literacy skills. SHUTTERSTOCK

# Impact of low literacy can be profound: Experts

**Definition.** Canada's understanding of what it means to be literate has evolved

**GEORDON OMAND**  
For Metro

The days are long past when literacy simply meant the ability to read and write.

Canada's understanding of what it means to be literate has evolved in the 21st century, and this new definition appears to have left Nova Scotia behind.

According to the Dartmouth Learning Network, 38 per cent of Nova Scotians qualified as low literate in the latest Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

"That means they lack the skills required to work in a knowledge-based economy," explained Lesley Dunn, the network's executive director.

**Quoted**

**"When you have a literate community you have a strong community."**

Lesley Dunn, executive director, Dartmouth Learning Network

**What parents can do**

ABC Life Literacy Canada suggests participating in the following activities to develop literacy, numeracy, and other skills essential for success in school:

- I Spy, the game of observation, can be adapted for language patterns (... something that rhymes with cat), spelling (... something that starts with C), and other variations.

Besides reading, writing and numeracy, those skills include problem solving, information processing, communicating and using technology.

Based on the network's analysis, Nova Scotia's low-literacy statistics varied drastically between regions, from more than 50 per cent on the Eastern Shore to the low 20s in south-end Halifax.

A TD Economics report, released in late 2013, described the country's performance in the literacy assessment as depressing.

"Canada has an essential skills problem," said the report.

"(And it) has clearly not gone away. ... If anything, we are heading in the wrong direction."

- Go on a counting walk to develop numeracy and observation skills. Take a walk and count specific types of items on porches, lawns, and store displays.

- Keep reading stories at bedtime and at other times. Encourage kids to read aloud too — take turns reading pages from favourite books.

NEWS CANADA

The impact of low literacy on one's standard of living can be profound.

"If you have low literacy your earning capacity is much lower," said Annette Hegel, a spokeswoman with the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network.

It impacts health, civic engagement and even the next generation, said Hegel.

"How can you go and support your kids in education when you can't participate in it?" she added.

For Dunn, the campaign for better literacy is connected to democracy.

"If the laws of the land are written, then everybody should be able to read and understand them without mediation," she said.

Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial est prochainement d'une école élémentaire de Lower Sackville. L'école élémentaire Gertrude du CSAP le 1er août 2014 et accueillera les régions de Sackville, Fall River, Enfield, N

Tous les parents désirant inscrire leur enfant priés de communiquer avec :

- École Beaubassin au (902) 457-6810 ou
- Diane Racette, directrice régionale – région

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial is in September 2014 of a French language Elementary School in the Sackville area. The present Gertrude Parker CSAP school to accommodate students at the surrounding areas of: Sackville, Fall River, Windsor

All interested parents wishing to register their child may contact:

- École Beaubassin at (902) 457-6810 or
- Diane Racette, Regional Director – Central at (902) 433-7045

L'élève, notre passion, notre avenir

Halifax Metro News  
Monday Mar 31/14

CPF Canadian Parents for French  
Nova Scotia

## French Summer

**FrancoForum**  
St Pierre et Miquelon,  
July 4-9 (grs 9-12)

**Nautical Camp**  
Magdalen Islands,  
July 13-19 (grs 6-9)

**Sea Kayaking  
Adventure Camp**  
Magdalen Islands,  
July 13-19 (grs 6-9)

*French camp is a great way to learn and make new friends and have fun.*

Day camps are held in Halifax and Dartmouth.  
For more information, call 453-2048 or  
Website ns.cpf.ca @CPFNovaScotia #iSupport

