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Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." (UNESCO, 2004, p.13)

*The greatest gift
is a passion for
reading.*

Elizabeth
Hardwick

Literacy is also about more than knowing how to read and write. The ability to listen; speak; understand and interpret images, text and video; solve problems; and express ideas and opinions, are all part of literacy.

What is Family Literacy? What is Children's Literacy?

"Family Literacy is an approach to literacy development that builds on family strengths and connections within the context of the communities and the culture in which families live and learn." (Centre for Family Literacy, 2002, pg. 1.1.3)

The goal of Family Literacy is to create positive interactions, both within the family and in the larger community, that allow the family to grow and share with those around them. In the case of Family Literacy, the family can include members of all generations, and may be as simple as two or more persons with a shared interest in learning and growing together.

Children's literacy is part of the larger umbrella of Family Literacy. The objective of Children's Literacy is to develop age-appropriate programs that will prepare children for success in school and throughout their lives. When a



child becomes passionate about reading, school success is increased due to developing vocabulary, writing, comprehension, and study skills.

Successful Children's Literacy programming plays a role in building a healthy, successful child, while also helping instill a life-long love of learning.

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.

Frederick Douglass

Importance of Children's Literacy

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. The early lessons learned in the home are often carried into adulthood and beyond. If a child develops a love of learning at an early age, it is very likely that he or she will maintain a life-long love of learning.

Literacy is a skill that begins in infancy and continues to grow over our lifetime. The first five to six years of life are the most important years in the literacy process. Active reading and language development during these pivotal years provides a foundation for continued literacy success. Parents, siblings, grandparents, caregivers, other family members and friends can all play a role in building this foundation and nurturing future growth.

Literacy affects all aspects of our lives, including our health and economic status. Studies have shown that low literacy skills and lack of education are major contributors to poverty.

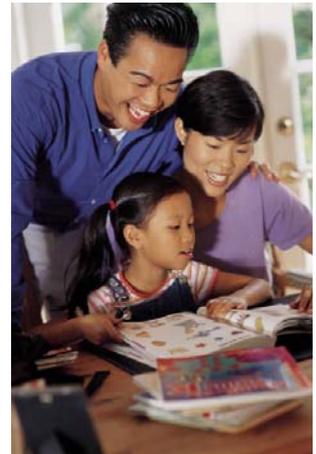
“People with literacy problems have only 2/3 of the income of other adults. Inequalities in literacy contribute to inequalities in income, occupational status and access to certain labour markets. Individuals with level 1 [the lowest] literacy skills make \$28,000 less than those with level 4/5 [the highest] literacy level.”

(Movement for Canadian Literacy).

Children who develop a love for books and reading are more likely to succeed in school and later in life.



It is important to remember that Children’s Literacy does not end when a child enters school. Families should continue to encourage literacy in the home even after children have entered their formal school years. Continued literacy efforts will allow children to advance their reading, writing and speaking skills and ensure a well-rounded education. “Studies show beyond dispute that children’s achievements in school improve with increased parent involvement in education” (Henderson, 1998).



Support for Traditional Languages

In Northeastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, traditional languages remain a part of the fabric of communities. Inhabitants of this region have spoken French, Mi’kmaq and Gaelic for centuries. Today, however, these traditional languages face mounting challenges and it has become increasingly important to foster learning in French, Mi’kmaq and Gaelic. Introduction to traditional languages is particularly important in children’s programming, as children are the most receptive to the language learning process. It is only through support for continued literacy activities that these languages can survive and become strengthened.

Reading: Age Levels

It is important to keep a child’s age in mind when selecting books to read. Some children may be able to read above their age level, but it is equally important for the child to understand and enjoy the book they are reading. Even kids that can read above their grade level may not be able to grasp the more complex subject matter found in books of higher reading levels.

*Children are
made readers on
the laps of their
parents.*

Emilie
Buchwald

If you are unsure what books may be appropriate for a specific age or are simply looking to find new authors and materials, your local public library is

always a good source. Your library can help you find a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to suit all interests and reading levels. Remember that the format of the book is less important than the material. Some children may want to read chapter books while others will enjoy graphic novels.

Audiobooks, which can be borrowed from most public libraries, are also a good option for those with reading difficulties.

Below is a basic guide that may assist in selecting books for a specific age group:

Babies & Toddlers

The best books for babies and toddlers are sturdy board books or books with soft plastic pages. Look for colourful, bold illustrations or photographs with simple or no text. This includes the ABC type of books, counting books, or simple rhyming stories. Books that contain pictures of things familiar to your child will make reading more enticing.



Preschoolers (3-4 years)

At this age most children are ready for the shift to picture books. Look for eye-catching illustrations and rhythmic and/or rhyming text that's fun to read aloud, such as books by Dr. Seuss and Robert Munsch. Try simple stories that relate to children's experiences. You may want to choose books that feature favourite characters, such as Franklin, Dora the Explorer or Thomas the Tank Engine.

Grade Primary – Grade 2 (5-7 years)

Begin to select a wider variety of picture books — some with text at the child's reading level, which he or she can tackle alone, and others with more difficult sentences and vocabulary, which you can read and discuss together. Introduce basic chapter books, which feature large, simple text and illustrations on each page. Children at this age enjoy fantasy, including classic fairy tales and their contemporary parodies. Kids this age also love animal stories.

*The more that
you read, the
more things you
will know. The
more that you
learn, the more
places you'll go.*
Dr. Seuss

- Children in grade primary will benefit from longer stories but still with a lot of pictures to hold their interest. Classics like *Madeline*; *Goodnight Moon*; *Clifford the Big Red Dog*; *There's an Alligator Under My Bed*; and Nursery Rhymes are continual favourites.
- First graders may be able to read simple books themselves but they still enjoy being read to. Good choices may include: *I'm a Caterpillar*; *The Curious George Series*; *The Cat in the Hat*; and *Have you Seen Crocodile?*
- By Grade two children should be able to read on their own but often will still want to be read to. Some favourites are the *Arthur Series*; the *Berenstain Bears* books; *Little Bear*; and the I CAN READ series of books.

Grades 3-5 (ages 8-10)

As imagination and reading skills grow, children will begin to select both fiction and non-fiction that follows their particular tastes. Most children in this age group will begin the transition to reading chapter books. If a child is having difficulty making the transition from picture to chapter books, try those with easy-to-read, large-print text and illustrations on each page.



It is particularly important to note that, at this age, children will often begin to develop their own tastes and express a preference for specific types of books. These preferences should be supported whenever possible, as children will often read more when they are interested in the material. It is best not to try to force a child to read a book they are uninterested in, as this may create negative attitudes toward reading. While children may have to read books they do not enjoy as part of their school studies, their pleasure reading should be just that – pleasurable!

- Children in grade three often prefer longer books which take more than a day to read. They are ready for books with fewer illustrations and more text. Try

books such as *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo; *The Wayside School* series by Louis Sachar; and the *Artemis Fowl* series by Eoin Colfer.

- Once children enter fourth grade they are generally reading at a pre-adult level. Book series are popular with children of this age, as are authors such as E.B. White [*Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*]; Beverly Cleary [*Ramona* series]; and Judy Blume. Graphic novels are also a popular choice, including the *Bone* series, *Geronimo Stilton*, and the *Boxcar Children*.

- Fifth grade children are ready to take on longer and more difficult books. This is the level at which they can truly appreciate the Harry Potter books and other detailed fantasies, such as Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Middle School (ages 11-14)

By 6th grade most children should be reading at or close to an adult level. For avid readers, classic books containing elevated language, like *The Wind in the Willows*, may be a good choice. For less enthusiastic readers, try lighter series fiction that will keep him engaged and interested in finding out what will happen next. Some good titles include: Louis Sachar's *Holes*, Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and Kate DiCamillo's *Tale of Despereaux*.

Boys this age often gravitate towards non-fiction books about science, sports, history, and a range of other topics. Action and adventure titles are also popular with middle school readers, as are graphic novels. Books exploring teens' social lives and adolescent experiences may also strike a chord with readers in this age category. Some authors and series to look for might be: Erin Hunter's *Warrior* series; Brian Jacques' *Redwall*; Gary Paulsen [*Hatchet*; *Tracker*; and *Dogsong*]; and the *Dear Canada* series.

*There are many
little ways to
enlarge your
child's world.
Love of books is
the best of all.
Jacqueline
Kennedy
Onassis*

For more advice of what books to choose for your child or for children in a community literacy program, visit your local library and speak to a librarian.

Questions to answer when developing a children's or family literacy activity:

- What are the needs of the community?
- What age groups will be included in the program/activity?
- What materials are appropriate for the target age group?
- What activities are appropriate for the target age group?
- What is the goal or intended outcome of the program?

Checklist for developing a children's or family literacy program/activity:

Program Content

- Programs build on the existing strengths of the families
- The parent is acknowledged as the child's first and most important teacher
- The parent and/or child are the focus of all designed activities
- Program content reflects the cultural interests of the community
- Program reflects the traditional language(s) of the community, when applicable

- Program responds to the needs identified by the community
- Families are involved in the planning process where possible
- Goal 1: Increase literacy levels and understanding of the importance of literacy within families
- Goal 2: Increase self-esteem of participants
- Goal 3: Increase family and individual involvement in literacy-enhancing and broader community activities

Program Materials

- Uses quality materials in a variety of mediums (i.e. books, audio, video, crafts, etc.)
- Materials on hand to accommodate a variety of reading levels and interests

Promotion and Public Awareness

- Upcoming events are well publicized in the community through posters, community bulletins, internet/e-mail, radio and local organizations

- Events are promoted by word of mouth and personal contact to reach potential participants who do not have a high level of literacy

Volunteer Recruitment

- Former participants are encouraged to become volunteers
- To ensure safety of children, volunteers work with groups of children (not one-on-one) and volunteers work in pairs where possible
- The strengths of volunteers are recognized and utilized when possible (ex: artistic individual used to lead a craft; strong reader used to lead story reading)
- Volunteers are encouraged to give feedback about the program/activity



Making Use of Library Services and Resources

@ Eastern Counties Regional Library

In developing any children's or family literacy program, it is important to be aware of the literacy resources that are available in your area. In Guysborough, Inverness and Richmond Counties, the Eastern Counties Regional Library provides a wide variety of services, from public library branches to monthly community sites and books by mail.



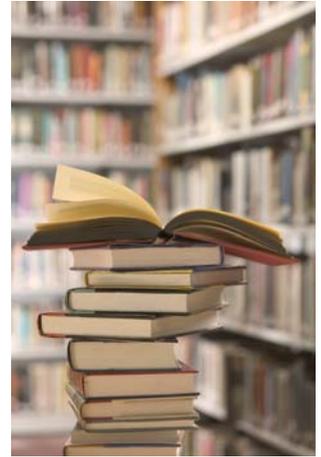
Library Branches can be found in seven communities throughout Guysborough, Inverness and Richmond Counties: Canso, Guysborough, Sherbrooke, Mulgrave, Port Hawkesbury, Margaree Forks, and Petit de Grat. Library branches feature books, large print books, audiobooks, DVDs, CDs, book kits, and more.

Libr@ry Link Sites are located in nine communities in Inverness and Richmond Counties: Judique, Port Hood, Mabou, Inverness, St. Joseph Du Moine, Cheticamp, Whycomomagh, St. Peter's and L'Ardoise. Library services are offered in these communities on a monthly basis (bi-weekly in Inverness, Mabou and St. Joseph Du Moine). A Libr@ry Links schedule can be obtained on the library website or at the library headquarters in Mulgrave.

Visiting Library is another service offered by the Eastern Counties Regional Library. This service allows household delivery of a general selection of books, audiobooks, DVDs and CDs every 6 weeks to specified communities in Guysborough County. Those interested in obtaining Visiting Library services can contact library headquarters and speak to the Outreach Services Manager.



Books By Mail is a service that allows requested books to be mailed directly to your home address. Audiobooks, DVDs and CDs cannot be obtained through this service. Those interested in obtaining Books By Mail services can contact library headquarters and speak to the Outreach Services Manager.



Online Catalogue – The online catalogue allows users to search all the holdings of Eastern Counties Regional Library, search for items in other library systems in Nova Scotia, search several periodical databases, place a hold on desired items, request specific items, and review their user account.

Library website – In addition to the online catalogue, the library website also features: branch hours and locations; pages designed for teens and kids; an “Ask a Librarian” feature; links to a variety of websites, including genealogy, weather, science & health, employment & business, and more.

To find out more about any of these services, visit the Eastern Counties Regional Library website at:

www.ecrl.library.ns.ca



Programming Ideas

In the following section you will find a variety of ideas for developing a children's or family literacy program or activity. Each activity includes a symbol that indicates what age group(s) it is appropriate for:



Babies & Toddlers



Preschool



Ages 5-7



Ages 8-10



Ages 11-14



All ages

These activities can be delivered in the community, school, or in the home, and can be delivered in any language. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of activities, but is designed to provide some basic programming ideas and maybe spark your imagination. Let the interests of the children and families determine the direction of your programming and feel free to develop your own new, exciting ideas!

Storytime



Pick a topic and conduct readings from a book or several books that deal with your theme. Use crafts, games, puppets and snacks to compliment your theme.

Some themes may include:

- **Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss** – Celebrate the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel on March 2nd with a day of Seuss books and crafts. If you want to do this event during other times of the year, make it a Silly Seuss Saturday or

maybe a Wacky Wednesday. The Seussville website includes games, print & play activities and colouring pages.

<http://www.seussville.com/>

- **Favourite TV characters** – Create a day of activities around some recognizable cartoon characters such as Franklin, Max & Ruby, Toot & Puddle, The Wonder Pets, Miss Spider, Dora the Explorer, and Diego. Websites for children’s television shows often include games, printable colouring pages and craft ideas. Check out these websites for ideas:

www.treehousetv.com/

www.nickjr.com/

- **Insects, Animals and Nature** – Children love to learn about bugs, animals and the natural world. Read from a selection of fiction and non-fiction books about nature, conduct a nature craft, and maybe create some nature-themed snacks such as “ants on a log,” trail mix, or even “moose lips” (* always enquire about food allergies before preparing snacks).

There are many websites with ideas for animal-themed crafts. You may want to create a safari map, make some paper tube binoculars for nature-watching, or maybe a collage of favourite jungle animals.

Crayola’s website has a great list of craft and game ideas that can be adapted to suit your activity.

www.crayola.com/

Ants on a log: Spread peanut butter or Nutella on a celery stick, stick raisins into the spread to look like “ants” on the log.

Moose Lips: Spread a tablespoon of peanut butter or Nutella on one side of an apple slice. Top with a second apple slice, leaving some peanut butter exposed. Add mini marshmallows to the front to make teeth.



Kids Trail Mix: mix equal parts Shreddies or Chex cereal, M&Ms, raisins, dried fruit (cranberries, apricots or bananas), and peanuts in ziplock bags.

Character Show & Tell

Pre-K

5-7
years

8-10
years

Like the storytime activity mentioned above, pick a topic and conduct readings from a book or several books that deal with your theme. Make sure to pick books that feature recognizable characters from children's television shows or movies. Let the children know that they should come to the event dressed like their favourite television or movie character. Also let them know that there will be a show-and-tell in which they can say what character they are and why that character is their favourite. After the reading(s), conduct the show-and-tell. Give prizes for participation whenever possible. Play games, make crafts and maybe watch a video that features one of the more popular children's characters. DVDs can be borrowed from the library, along with books, so it should be easy to find materials to fit your theme.



Read-to-Me

B&T

Pre-K

This is an activity for parents or caregivers with infants and toddlers. Have parents or caregivers sit with their children so that the pair can interact directly. As young children generally have short attention spans, use a variety of tools to keep the children interested. Allow parents to read directly to their child, using board books with lots of illustration and few words. Provide ABC books, counting books, or simple rhyming stories. Make use of flashcards, puppets, stuffed animals, videos and music to stimulate the child in a variety of ways.

Stuffed Animal Sleepover

Pre-K

5-7
years

This event requires the ability to host activities on two consecutive days. Host a Teddy bears picnic at a library branch or local community centre. Have children bring a stuffed animal that they can sit with to enjoy a snack (or even an imaginary tea party), storytime and a craft. At the end of the picnic have the children leave their stuffed animal at the facility for an overnight “sleepover.” Once the children have gone, take pictures of the stuffed animals doing a variety of different activities (playing games & sports, eating, sleeping, etc). Print off one or two photos of each animal. Have the children return the following morning/afternoon for another storytime (this one can be a shorter activity). Read another book - maybe a *Toy Story* book or other book featuring talking toys - and then discuss all the activities that the animals got up to during their sleepover. Give the children pictures of their animals’ overnight adventures to take home.

** When planning this event, be sure to tell parents to supply a stuffed animal that can be left overnight, not one that the child sleeps with every night. You do not want children to become upset because they do not have their favourite animal at bedtime.*



Story Sacks



Create a series of story sacks to be loaned out to families in your community. A story sack begins with a reusable canvas bag or backpack. The sack is then filled with a variety of items that centre around one particular theme. Items in the story sack might include books, games, craft ideas, colouring pages, puppets, CDs, DVDs, recipes, and anything else you can think of that fits the theme.

A story sack is a fun way for parents and children to read stories together. Grandparents, older siblings, babysitters and any one else who spends time with children will also find these sacks useful. Keep a list of the items in each sack and check that all items are in the sack when it is returned. Allow families to borrow each sack for 1-2 weeks at a time.

An example story sack:

(idea by Sherri Osborn, About.com)

Books: *Horton Hears a Who* – Dr. Seuss

Horton Hatches the Egg – Dr. Seuss



Craft Ideas:

Dust Speck on a Clover -

To recreate the clover and Whoville speck from the book & movie, start out with a green pipe cleaner and glue a pink pom-pom to the end of it. Then glue a tiny white pom-pom or bit of cotton onto the pink pom-pom and let it dry. You now have a clover just like Horton's!

Elephant Ears & Trunk – Materials: Construction paper, Markers, Tape/Stapler, Paper towel tube, Elastic band (long)

Ears: Using the construction paper, cut out a strip of paper about 2 inches

thick and long enough to wrap around your forehead (make sure you make it an inch or two longer so you can staple the ends together.) Now, fold another piece of paper in half and cut out a set of large, floppy ears. Put the bottom edge of each ear up against the strip of paper and staple or tape them in place. Once the ears are attached, staple or tape the ends of the strip together to snugly fit around your forehead.

Trunk: Wrap paper towel tube with construction paper, leaving ends open. Staple or tape elastic band to one end of tube (one end of elastic on either side of tube), leaving the band long enough to put over head and fit snugly around cheeks. Place open end of tube over nose and you now have an elephant trunk.

Song:

The Elephant Song (sung to the tune of The Mulberry Bush):

The elephant goes like this and that, this and that, this and that.

(Walk heavily and stomp feet loudly)

The elephant goes like this and that, cause he's so big and fat!

(Puff up cheeks and stretch out arms)

He has no fingers and has no toes; He has no fingers and has no toes.

(Wiggle fingers; wiggle toes)

He has no fingers and has no toes, But goodness, gracious, what a nose!

(Stick arms out like a long trunk.)

Recipe:

Elephant Ear Cookies

Ingredients:

1 c sugar

1 tbsp molasses

½ c shortening, melted

1 egg

½ c sour milk



- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp soda, dissolved in milk
- 2 ½ c flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 c raisins, chopped

Mix all ingredients in order given; drop by teaspoonfuls on greased cookie sheet. Bake 10 minutes in 375-degree oven.

Movie: Horton Hears a Who! (2008)

Seasonal Storytime



Select books that celebrate a particular holiday and plan a seasonal craft or activity to compliment the reading. You may want to celebrate some holidays that are less familiar to children in the area, allowing them to learn about a new holiday or culture. You can also combine holidays from different cultures to give children a broader view of the world. For example, at a Christmas reading add in stories that talk about Hanukkah and Kwanza (two holidays that are celebrated at the same time of year as Christmas).

Author for a Day



Host a book writing event where children can write their own books to take home and read to family members. Have supplies on hand for children to write and design their own books: Bind several sheets of blank paper together with string or brass fasteners and use card stock or Bristol board pieces for the front

and back covers; have markers, crayons and coloured pencils on hand so children can illustrate their books. Depending on the age of the participants, books may range from scribbles and basic letters that can only be “read” by the child-author to well thought-out storylines with accompanying illustrations.



You may want to start with a theme or multiple theme ideas so that participants have a starting point and do not feel lost for subject matter. Alternately, you may want to conduct a reading and have children create books that feature some of the same characters or a similar setting. Once the books have been created you may want to allow the children to read their books to the group or, if time does not permit or the children are shy about reading aloud, encourage them to go home and read their books to friends and family members. Let children be as creative as they want to. The sky is the limit with this activity.

Mad Science



The mysteries of science are often intriguing to children. Wow a group of children with some science facts and maybe debunk some science myths. Let them see science in action and give them a chance to become scientists themselves by conducting some experiments.

Some science books you may want to consider:

365 Simple Science Experiments – E Richard Churchill, et al.

365 More Simple Science Experiments – E Richard Churchill, et al.

101 Great Science Experiments – Neil Ardley

Oxford Illustrated Science Encyclopedia

Science On The Loose – Helaine Becker

Super Science Challenges – Janice VanCleave

The book of totally irresponsible science: 64 daring experiments for young scientists - Connolly, Sean

Amazing materials - Hewitt, Sally

Forces and motion - Silverstein, Alvin

You may also want to look at some websites for additional experiments that can be done at home or in group settings:

www.kids-science-experiments.com/

<http://www.easy-kids-science-experiments.com/>



Grossology



Kids love all things gross and disgusting. The goal of Grossology is not only to gross people out, but to use children's love of grossness to teach science in a relatable manner. Read about real world gross facts, make a gross-out recipe and try gross-out experiments.

Some books that may help when planning a Grossology activity:

Grossology - Sylvia Branzei

Oh, Yikes! History's Grossest, Wackiest Moments – Jay Masoff

Oh Yuck! The Encyclopaedia of Everything Nasty – Jay Masoff

Dirt & Grime – Vicki Cobb

Gross and Disgusting Things About the Human Body – Joanna Emery

Gross Me Out: 50 Nasty Projects to Disgust Your Friends & Repulse Your Family – Clay Meyer

Animal Grossology: The Science of Creatures Gross and Disgusting
- Sylvia Branzei

Hands-On Grossology: Really Gross Science Experiments - Sylvia Branzei

Reading Challenge

All ages

This activity could target all ages and all members of a community. A reading challenge can be conducted on as small a scale as an at-home family challenge or as large as a community-wide challenge. Challenge participants to read a specific number of books in a month. Keep a chart to record the number of books each individual or family reads. Have a prize for the individual or family that reads the most books by the end of the challenge.

This activity can be adapted to involve individuals, families, the local school or the community as a whole.

Another way to add a boost to your Reading Challenge is to create **Super Reader Certificates** for children or families who read a set number of books in a given time period. If possible, you may also want to conduct a prize draw for all those who reached Super Reader status during the Reading Challenge.

Book Club

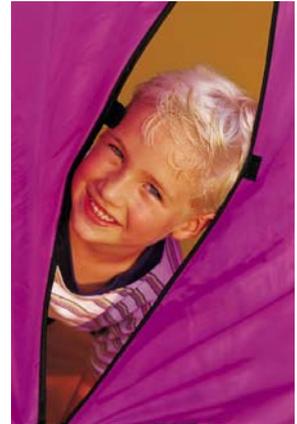
All ages

A good way to get members of your community reading is to start up a book club. Book clubs can function in several different ways. In many book clubs, members choose one book to read and gather monthly or bi-monthly to discuss the book. Another option is to have members read different books that focus on similar topics and come together at a meeting where each gives a brief synopsis and review of the book he or she read. The way you choose to organize the club will depend on the number and age of participants. Book clubs can be organized for any age group or reading level and are a good way to get people interested in reading.

Storytent

All ages

This activity requires a few supplies: a tent or sun canopy that can be set up outdoors, several blankets to spread on the ground, and a variety of quality books. The purpose of a storytent is to provide an outdoor space for children to read, be read to, and enjoy their environment. In a storytent, many types of reading can take place: independent reading, children reading in groups, children reading to children, and adults reading to children. A storytent can either involve a structured schedule (such as a storytime event) or simply be a free space for children to read at their own pace. Card games, board games, crafts and snacks are also good activities for a storytent. Just be sure to have one or two volunteers on hand to assist children with reading and crafts.



Reading Pizza

Pre-K

5-7
years

8-10
years

11-14
years

This activity works like a children's reading challenge but with a little added twist. Have children read at least one book per week, with each book representing a pizza topping. Supply each child with a large sheet of paper or Bristol board with a big round pizza drawn on it. Leave room on both sides to write the title and author of each book read. Also allow space for the child to comment on the book and give it a pizza rating (a scale from 1 to 5 pizza slices with 1 representing the lowest rating and 5 representing the highest). Have the children draw pizza toppings on other sheets of paper. Let them cut out a topping for each book read and glue onto their pizza. At the end of the club participants should have a pizza loaded with toppings!

You may want to host a pizza party (if possible) to mark the end of the Reading Pizza book club.

More Advanced Version of a Reading Pizza: To get children reading a variety of materials you may want to link toppings to specific types of books. For example: adventure (cheese), thriller (bacon), comedy (onion), sci-fi (salami),

nature (mushrooms), biography (peppers), and history (sauce). To complete their pizza they must read one of each type of book.

Reading Road Trip



Like the Reading Pizza mentioned above, this activity is a children's reading challenge with a twist. Start by choosing a country, province, or city for your participants to explore. Each time a child reads a book, count the number of pages that have been read. For every page award the child 1 kilometre. These kilometres accumulate and enable them to 'travel' around the country. For example, if a child reads 50 pages they will travel 50 kilometres. Ensure that your country or province has lots of towns, cities or landmarks that are relatively close together. Each time the child passes a town or landmark he or she is rewarded with a treat (a pencil, bookmark, small toy, candy, etc). Once the children have traveled all around the country, choose a new destination for them to visit. Depending on the reading abilities of your participants and the size of your country or province, you may want to adjust the number of kilometres awarded (1 kilometre for every 2 pages read; 1 kilometre for every chapter read, etc.).



Cliffhanger



Select a longer length novel or a series of books to read at regular meetings over a given period of time. Listeners will have to return next time to hear the next chapter or next book in the series. Make each meeting special by offering snacks, puzzles, lists of ideas for further reading, etc. This type of event would work with the earliest of series or chapter books, right up to the most complex of adult fiction or non-fiction.

Online Scavenger Hunt



Create an online scavenger hunt using educational websites and the regional library website. Provide children with a list of questions that must be answered by visiting these sites. This activity would allow children to become familiar with the library catalogue and other educational web resources. Once the children have completed their hunt, have them e-mail their answers to the “judge” (person who will confirm the answers). Select a prize winner from among the names of children with all the correct answers.

Sequels and Prequels



Develop the writing skills of older children by having them write a short sequel to a beloved chapter book or series. Bind several sheets of blank paper together with string or brass fasteners and use card stock or Bristol board pieces for the front and back covers. Tell participants to bring along their favourite books as reference and also have some popular books on hand for those who do not have easy access to books at home. Challenge participants to place the characters in new and exciting scenarios or to come up with new characters to add into the mix. Provide pens, pencils and markers to allow the participants to illustrate their sequels.

Graphic Novel Night

8-10
years

11-14
years

In recent years, graphic novels have become a popular choice among older children and teens. Everything from classic comic strips to Shakespearian dramas have been turned into graphic novels. To tap into this new area of interest, host a Graphic Novel Night in your area. Allow participants to work on plotline, character development, storyboarding, and drawing, ultimately moving towards completion of their own personal graphic novels. Have lots of drawing materials on hand (white paper, pens, pencils, coloured pencils, binding materials) and bring along some graphic novels so that participants have some examples to look to in the creation of their own works.

Some popular graphic novels include:

Watchmen

Bone

Magic Pickle

Naruto

Cheeky Angel

Hardy Boys



These activities are just a few of the endless possibilities for children’s literacy programs. Brainstorm to come up with new ideas for your community or library, use the internet as a source for more ideas, and always remember to ask families what programs they would like to see in their area.

Resources

Family & Children's Literacy Resources:

ABC Life Literacy Canada
<http://www.abclifeliteracy.ca/>

Centre for Family Literacy
<http://www.famlit.ca/>

Department of Community Services – Children, Youth & Families
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/index.html>

Eastern Counties Regional Library
<http://ecrl.library.ns.ca/>

KinderArt Littles
<http://www.kinderart.com/littles/index.html>

LiteracyCentre.Net
http://www.literacycenter.net/lessonview_en.php

Literacy Nova Scotia
<http://www.ns.literacy.ca/>

National Adult Literacy Database
<http://www.nald.ca/>

Volunteer Canada
<http://volunteer.ca/>

French Resources

Caillou
<http://www.caillou.com/indexFR.shtml>

Dictionnaire Acadien
http://drobicho.com/lapiquine/dictionnaire_acadien/

French as a Second Language – Activities with M. Renaud
<http://fslactivities.ca/>

Internet Picture Dictionary – French
<http://www.pdictionary.com/french/>

LiteracyCentre.Net
http://www.literacycenter.net/lessonview_fr.php#

Nova Scotia Department of Education, Acadian and French Language Services
<http://dsalf.ednet.ns.ca/en/index.shtml>

Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/acadien/en/index.htm>

The Acadian Language – CBC Digital Archives
http://archives.cbc.ca/for_teachers/939/

Gaelic Resources:

An Clachan Gàidhealach (Highland Village Museum)
<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/hv/>

Cainnt mo Mhàthar (My Mother's Language)
<http://www.cainntmomhathar.com/>

Gaelic College – St. Ann's
<http://www.gaeliccollege.edu/>

Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/oga/>

Sheena's Garden – English/Gaelic interactive storybook
(Pictou Antigonish Regional Library)
<http://www.parl.ns.ca/ebooks/sheenas-garden-ebook.htm>

Sìol Cultural Enterprises - Gaelic books and more
<http://www.gaelicbooks.com/>

Mi'kmaq Resources:

Aboriginal Language – Atlantic Canada's First Nation Help Desk
<http://www.firstnationhelp.com/ali/>

Mi'kmaq Resource Centre – Cape Breton University
<http://mikmawey.uccb.ns.ca/miscellany.html>

Native Council of Nova Scotia
<http://ncns.ca/>

Native Languages of the Americas: Mi'kmaq
<http://www.native-languages.org/mikmaq.htm>

Pronouncing Mi'kmaq – Waycobah First Nation
<http://www.kinu.ns.ca/waycobah/sounds.html>

The Jilaptoq Project
<http://www.firstnationhelp.com/jilaptoq/index.html>

The Mi'kmaq Talking Dictionary
<http://www.mikmaqonline.org/>

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<http://abclifeliteracy.ca/en/family-literacy-facts>

About.com. Horton Hears a Who By Dr. Seuss Story Sack.

<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/homemadebooks/p/sshortonwho.htm>

About.com. Recipes for Kids.

<http://parentingteens.about.com/od/recipesforkids/a/snacks.htm>

BigOven.com. Elephant Ear Cookies.

<http://www.bigoven.com/82462-Elephant-Ear-Cookies-recipe.html>

Canadian Paediatric Society.

<http://www.cps.ca/english/HealthCentres/literacy.htm>

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Family Literacy Advisory Group (2003). Family Literacy Best Practices Guide: for Programs in Nova Scotia. Truro, Nova Scotia: Colchester East Hants Regional Library.

Literacy Quotations.

<http://thinkexist.com/quotation>

Movement for Canadian Literacy. Factsheet #9: Literacy and Poverty.

<http://www.literacy.ca/themes/mcl/PDF/litforlife/poverty.pdf>

Teaching Ideas. Rewarding Reading.

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/rewardingreading.htm>

Tiny Tips for Library Fun. Stuffed Animal Sleepover.

<http://tinytipsforlibraryfun.blogspot.com/2009/03/stuffed-animal-sleepover.html>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2004). The Plurality of Literacy and its Implications for Policies and Programs. Paris: UNESCO Education Sector.