



**Family Literacy Day 2012
Event Coordinator's Guide**



Family Literacy Day



Attention All Family Literacy Day® Event Co-ordinators!

Thank you for your interest in organizing a Family Literacy Day event.

Family Literacy Day was created in 1999 by ABC Life Literacy Canada to celebrate parents and children reading and learning together to become lifelong learners. Last year, nearly 315,000 Canadians participated in Family Literacy Day activities at schools, libraries, community groups, literacy organizations and in homes across the country.

The resources and information in this guide will help you plan and host a fantastic Family Literacy Day event, and help continue spreading the word about the importance of family literacy.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

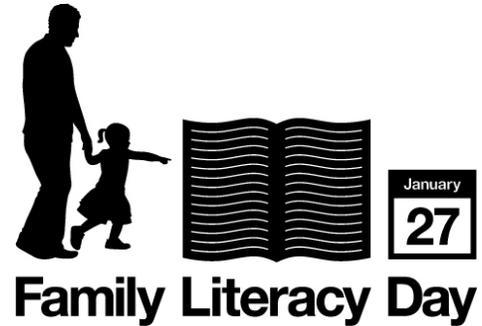
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SECTION 1

The History of Family Literacy Day®

Family Literacy Day, held annually on January 27, was developed by ABC Life Literacy Canada in 1999 to celebrate adults and children reading and learning together, and to encourage Canadian families to spend at least 15 minutes a day enjoying a learning activity together.



Q: What is family literacy?

Family literacy focuses on parents as the means to improve the reading and writing skills of all family members. By reading to children and engaging in fun literacy activities, parents are actively keeping their own skills sharp, while at the same time strengthening the relationship between the family. This, in turn, encourages lifelong learning. There are many activities that help strengthen literacy skills, and all it takes is 15 minutes of practice every day.

Q: Why is family literacy important?

Family literacy helps reinforce the importance of learning with children as a means of building the knowledge necessary for future skills, and helps adults maintain their literacy skills. Many studies have shown that improving parents' skills directly and positively affects the language development of children (*Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, IALS 1997*).

Q: How is Family Literacy Day celebrated?

Every year, thousands of events and activities are coordinated by literacy providers, schools, libraries and community groups across the country (visit www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca for a listing of events or to register your event). These activities range from fundraisers, book drives and children's reading circles, to literacy-themed games and contests. You don't have to participate in a formal event to be a part of this initiative. Family Literacy Day can be celebrated by simply setting aside 15 minutes of family time to read, play a game, write a letter, or even follow a recipe together.

Q: How do local communities and organizations benefit from Family Literacy Day?

Literacy providers have the opportunity to showcase their hard work and achievements on Family Literacy Day. They benefit from increased public awareness and support, and have the opportunity to connect with key influencers in their community. Family Literacy Day is a great time to spread the word about the importance of reading as a daily activity. This initiative also provides an opportunity for families to become aware of literacy programs available in their community. Family Literacy Day is also sometimes used as a fundraiser, where literacy groups and libraries can raise much-needed funds for literacy programming or new supplies.

Quick Facts on Literacy

Adult Literacy in Canada

- Approximately 94 per cent of Canadians 'agree' that 'Canadians' literacy skills are critical to quality of life' (Ipsos Reid, 2010). Yet, 42 per cent of adult Canadians have low literacy skills that do not enable them to cope with the demands of everyday life and work.
- Of those 42 per cent, 15 per cent function at the lowest level, where individuals may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle.
- In Canada and the US, adults who score at the two lowest literacy skill levels (the 42 per cent of adult Canadians mentioned above) are about two times more likely to be unemployed for six months or longer, compared with those whose skills levels are higher.
- Almost half (49.8 per cent) of adult Canadians score in the two lowest skill levels in numeracy, and these people are 2.5 times more likely to be recipients of social assistance, compared with those who scored higher in numeracy.

Family Literacy

- Family literacy refers to the many ways families develop and use literacy skills, from enjoying a storybook together, to playing with word games, singing, writing to a relative or friend, sharing day-to-day tasks such as making a shopping list or using a recipe, and surfing the Internet for fun and interesting sites.
- Reading to children more than once a day has a substantial positive impact on their future academic skills. In addition, research indicates that children with early exposure to books and reading are better at performing mathematical tasks.
- Children aged 2 to 3 who are read to several times a day do substantially better in kindergarten at the age of 4 and 5 than youngsters who are read to only a few times a week or less.
- Having a parent read aloud with their children helps children learn listening, vocabulary and language skills, and develop imagination and creativity.
- Parents should pay careful attention to three potential reading slumps that can hinder a child's reading development: upon entering kindergarten; at grade 4; and upon entering high school.
- Family literacy activities benefit the whole family. Reading ability is like a muscle - if you don't exercise it often, you may not be able to maintain the same level of reading ability as you age. Reinforcing reading and writing as a family activity benefits people of all ages. Setting aside time every day to read with your children, as well as independently, will help keep your mind sharp.



1,2,3,4,5,6 *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey* (Statistics Canada and OECD, 2005); 7 *Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices*, Adele Thomas (Soleil Publishing Inc., 1998); 8,9 *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, (Statistics Canada, 1996-1997); 10 Family Literacy Foundation, 2001; 11,12 *How to Make Your Child a Reader for Life*, Paul Kropp (Random House Canada, 2000). © ABC Life Literacy Canada.

SECTION 2

Take the Learning Journey!

All Canadians are invited to take a learning journey for Family Literacy Day® 2012.



Learning happens everywhere, and it's easy to make learning part of your daily life. Finding time to learn, even for just 15 minutes a day, can be hard to do with today's hectic schedules. But the benefits of families dedicating this time together on a daily basis, whether reading and writing, playing and exercising, or simply talking about their day, are far-reaching to everyone. Learning can take you anywhere!

Using the Journey to Learning Passport

Don't forget to download the Journey to Learning Passport at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca and start your learning journey today! The passport can be used by anyone and helps us all embrace the learning we do on a daily basis. Don't forget to also fill out the section on what else you will learn - learning something new is always fun!

Families can use this passport by completing at least five activities to understand how learning is already part of daily life.

Literacy groups can review the activities in the passport during classes, and then provide learners with the passport to complete at home with their families.

Teachers can give children the passport to take home and do as homework. This encourages kids to learn at home with their families, not just at school. Have kids return passports to school to find out what each family did. Alternatively, set up stations in the classroom representing the various passport sections. Have students complete the activities at each station.

Libraries can distribute passports to their patrons and encourage families to complete the activities. They can then return passports to the library.

Community groups such as Girl Guides and Boys & Girls Clubs can also use the passport! Send kids home with it to do with their families. They could even get a 'Learning Badge' for completing it!

Want to use the Journey to Learning Passport for an event? Check out our ideas on the next page!

Register Your Passport

Don't forget to register your passport! Families and organizations that complete the Journey to Learning Passport are encouraged to register it online at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca to share what they learned. Three lucky registrants will also win a Family Literacy Day prize pack.

Activity Ideas for Groups

Passport to Learning

Set up stations representing the categories in the passport: Learning at home, Learning around town, and Learning something new around the world! Set up activities at each station that represent those categories. For example, at the 'Learning around town' station, you might have a pretend grocery store with different priced items. Have participants write out a shopping list and add the cost of the items. Complete all stations and stamp the passport as they go along!



Create your own learning journey!

Create your own passport with different literacy activities for participants to complete. For example, throughout the week leading up to Family Literacy Day, ask participants to complete one activity each day and have a family member or friend sign off on each completed activity.

Around the world in 90 days

Set up stations with books on different countries. Have participants complete an activity that helps them learn about the different places. For example, write out five animals that you might see in Kenya on an African Safari, then draw a picture of them.

Chopsticks, anyone?

Find different recipes from around the world and cook a variety of ethnic dishes. Don't have access to a kitchen? You can find many recipes online that don't require cooking or many ingredients. Alternatively, share recipes with each other and encourage people to cook at home as a family.

Continue your learning journey...

Ask guests to come up with three things they want to learn and write them in the section provided in the Journey to Learning passport. Give guests time to find information about those three things - maybe it's dinosaurs, Mexico or fishing. Then ask everybody to share one thing they learned with others.



Pay it forward!

Everybody has a special talent or knows something unique - so why not teach it to someone else?! Get into pairs and have each person teach the other person something new - then find a new partner and do it again. You'll be amazed at how much you'll learn from your peers!

SECTION 3

Fundraise!

Family Literacy Day® offers a great opportunity for groups to fundraise. Turn your event into a fundraiser and help raise much-needed funds for your organization, or for a local literacy organization, library or school.

Don't need to fundraise? Why not hold a food drive to help support local food banks. Research shows that low literacy, poverty and health problems are interrelated. Ask guests to bring a non-perishable food item in order to participate in your Family Literacy Day event.

Here are some other fun ways to turn your Family Literacy Day event into a fundraiser:

Pay to Play: Charge people a “buy-in” fee to participate in your event. It can be a set amount or a donation of their choice.

Classroom vs. Classroom: Challenge each class in the school to see which one can raise the most money. The class that wins is awarded an afternoon for a fun literacy-related event and pizza party!

Encourage employees or students to make a donation in order to receive “play time,” such as an extra hour for lunch where they can play games. Board games are a great literacy activity as they promote language comprehension and improve reading skills.

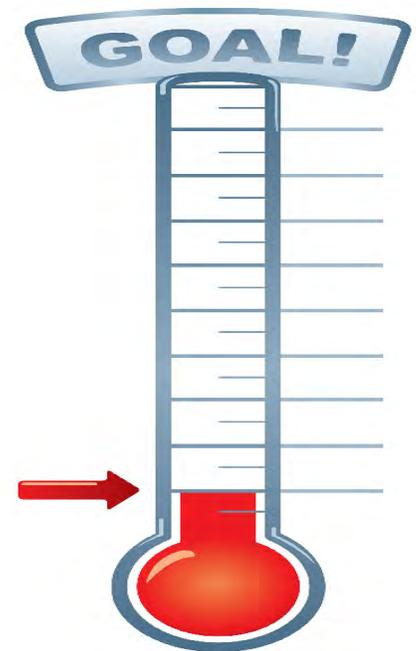
Create a Pledging Page: Ask friends and family to pledge you to participate in a Family Literacy Day event. You can create a free pledging page at www.CanadaHelps.org and choose a non-profit organization to donate the money to.

Celebrity Challenge: Invite a high-profile person such as a mayor or local celebrity to your event and ask guests to make a donation to participate in a read-a-long with them. This creates a great photo opportunity for media.

Donate in Other Ways: Short on cash but have a pile of gently-used books? Donate them to your local school, library or literacy organization. Want to support your local food bank? Ask guests to donate food items in order to attend your event.

Have a Book Sale: Raise money by selling gently-used books to the public.

Friend-raiser: Invite people to your Family Literacy Day event and ask them to bring along a friend who is interesting in finding out more about your group's activities. It's a great way to find new supporters for both your organization and your cause.



SECTION 4

Additional Family Literacy Day® Activity Ideas

Read All About It: Hold a reading contest where families are asked to keep track of all the books they read together as a family for one week. The family who reads the most together, wins. Winners could be awarded with a gift certificate donated from a local business.

Guest Speaker: Invite a local publisher or author to speak with your group to discuss how books are put together.

Who Am I?: Make up signs on pieces of paper, each with the name of a notable/famous person, place or thing. A sign is put on each player's back with tape, and then each player asks the other players questions to determine who (or what) he or she is.

Q & A Contest: Co-ordinate a contest in which the questions and answers are trivia from a chosen author or book.



Read aloud: Pick one of your favourite books to read aloud to the group, then ask the children to illustrate their favorite part of the story. Display the drawings for others to enjoy.

Caught in a Web of Reading: Decorate a designated wall with white string in the design of a big spider's web. For each book read by students, a cut-out paper spider is added to the wall. Each spider contains information on the book, such as the title and author, a brief plot summary and the name of the student who read the book.

Art and Authors: Stories can be inspired by many different things, such as a painting or photo. Give each student a piece of artwork, and then have them write a story that centres around the illustration.

Book Time: Organize a workshop for parents, offering tips and suggestions for reading and learning with their children, as well as activities to encourage learning in the home.

Read My T-Shirt: Distribute plain T-shirts and fabric paint to your group and ask them to write their favourite saying on the shirt and to decorate them as well.

Reading Buddies: Partner two classes of different reading levels together and schedule meetings for the buddies to read books and share stories together. These meetings could be followed with each buddy pair sharing their ideas about the story with the entire group, drawing pictures related to the story, or looking up information about the author.

Around the World in Eighty Books: Select age-appropriate books from around the world for your group. Give participants passports to be stamped for each region they cover.

Monster Masks: Read aloud a monster story that includes a good description of the monster. After reading the story, have children create their own visual of a monster out of paper plates, construction paper, paint and string.

Pyjama Party: Host a bedtime story night where young people and their families are invited to dress in their PJs and bring their sleeping bags and favourite books.

Class Newspaper: Create a class newspaper with each student submitting material. A large scrapbook could be used to showcase students' paintings, drawings, photographs and poems, as well as articles about class activities and interests and hobbies of the students. There are many other creative opportunities with this project, including thinking of a name for the paper, designing the logo and interviewing people for articles.

Wall of Fame: Designate a wall in your library to display photos of patrons along with lists of their favourite books and authors.



Activity Ideas for Smaller Groups:

Daffy Dictionary: Choose a word from the dictionary and write it on a piece of paper with one correct definition, then make up two more definitions that are incorrect but “sound” like they might be accurate. See who can guess the correct definition. Teams can play this game, with members coming up with the daffy definitions together and guessing the other team’s correct definition.

Watch a Book: Set up a book-and-movie group where a book will be read and discussed, and then the film version will be watched. There are many good titles, both for adults and young people that have been made into films, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Twilight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Charlotte’s Web*.

Surfing Safari: Use an atlas to find a country you would like to visit, then surf the Internet to find some interesting things about that place—customs, food, weather, anything at all. Write a story and draw pictures based on what you have learned. You could even post a map of the world on a wall and use push pins to identify the places you have been.

Have a Book-nic: Organize an indoor picnic featuring books and delicious treats. Choose a theme around family food and reading preferences; for example, enjoy honey-flavoured cereal while reading Winnie the Pooh stories.

SECTION 5

Event Planning Guide & Checklist

Start Early

Having enough lead time is essential for launching a successful event. Develop a workback schedule (a table showing the time frames in which you must have started, then completed, all stages of your planning and executing, indicating who is responsible for each of those items). This is an extremely valuable daily/weekly reminder to keep you on track.

Choose Your Team

Draw from staff, and sign-on volunteers, making sure there is a good balance between creative individuals, people with practical organizational skills, and others who are skilled with promotions.

Stretch Your Budget

An event doesn't have to be extravagant to be a success. In fact, having a tight budget often allows you to be more creative. Here are some tips to get started:

- Be realistic; determine the amount of money you will have available to plan and host the event.
- Draft a preliminary expense list for supplies, refreshments, prizes, etc.
- Identify items that are “must haves” vs. “nice to haves.” Must-haves should be covered in the budget first, and nice to haves can be slotted in later if there is budget remaining.
- Consider ways to save money by getting items or services donated by local sponsors in exchange for recognition on signage, promotional materials, newsletters or websites.



Recruit a Partner

There is strength in numbers. Establishing partnerships with other organizations may provide new opportunities for your event. Many local businesses will be eager to support a family-oriented cause. It is a great way for them to promote their business, while demonstrating they are good corporate citizens.

Partners can help you secure resources, market your event, provide financial assistance, donate products and/or volunteer staff time to help you out. Before you approach a partner, think about what type of recognition you can offer them in return for their support—for example, perhaps you could feature their logo on your invitations or website. For a sample partner pitch letter, [see section 7](#).

Scout a Location

Whether your event is held on location or off-site, it is important that your venue accommodates your needs. Be sure to create a checklist outlining your requirements. You may want to consider the following criteria:

- Is the location free-of-charge?
- Is the location large enough to accommodate your group?
- Is the location easily accessible by local transportation and does it have adequate parking?
- Is the facility equipped for guests with disabilities?
- Does venue provide supplies (chairs, tables, lighting, audio/visual equipment, etc.)? If not, where can these supplies be rented at a low cost?
- Does the location have easy access to washroom facilities?

Conduct site inspections of possible locations, and refer to your checklist. Once your location is selected, be sure to book the facility right away. Don't forget to also register your event online at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca to help promote it.

Score Some Politicians and Local Heroes

Politicians at various levels (municipal, provincial and federal) will be interested in attending Family Literacy Day® events because they offer great opportunities to show their support for a high-profile, positive, community initiative. From your perspective, their participation can:



- Strengthen your relationships with key influencers in your community
- Help you get recognition from local government for your contribution to the community
- Draw attention to your event and the importance of the literacy cause
- Highlight the community-focused philosophy of your organization

Ask your local mayor to proclaim January 27 as Family Literacy Day in your town. Be sure to give him/her ample time to prepare. For a sample letter to a local mayor and a proclamation template, [see section 7](#).

Local celebrities and special guests are a great way to attract attention to your event. In addition to being a media magnet, guests will also be thrilled at the chance to meet a well known community member. Consider inviting a local author, star athlete or fire chief. In your “ask letter,” make sure you highlight the positive impact their presence would have. For a sample letter, [see section 7](#).

Involve the Media

Local media can be your best ally. A media story about your event can increase exposure and generate buzz. Write a news release or media advisory (with the key details about your event) and distribute to members of the media a few days prior to your event (include newspaper, magazines, radio and TV stations). Follow-up with a phone call to provide further information, encouraging them to run the story. For more information on working with the media, [see section 6](#).

Game On

On the day of your event, make sure you're prepared, but try to remain flexible, calm and open to last-minute changes. Don't be disappointed if everything doesn't go exactly as expected - it rarely does. Enjoy the day!

Give Many Thanks

Recognize your volunteers, and thank your various speakers, guests and corporate supporters. Whether it's a certificate of appreciation ([see section 7](#)), a thank-you card, or some other token of thanks, people like to feel appreciated. And by recognizing their support, they'll be more likely to participate or volunteer again.



Post-Event Wrap-Up

Sit down with your staff and volunteers and look back on your event. Ask yourselves what worked well, what didn't work well, and how things could be improved. Taking notes on this analysis will help in planning next year's event.

It is also important to get feedback from event participants. A survey is a great way to do this. For a sample participant survey, [see section 7](#).

Event Planning Checklist

Regardless of the scope of your event, it is always easier to organize and manage it if you work with a detailed timeline. A thorough checklist of "to dos" will keep you on top of things. Here is a sample Family Literacy Day event checklist to help you get started:

8 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Select a team to help plan and organize the event, and assign roles (e.g. an event co-ordinator, a special guest ambassador and a media co-ordinator).
- Determine the event theme and activities and choose an appropriate location/venue.
- Register your event online at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca.

7 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Write a list of supplies and materials needed for the event and identify potential partners who might consider donating these materials.
- Contact prospective partners; state how recognition will be given for their participation.
- Identify possible special guests, then prepare and mail them invitation letters. Remember, government officials have busy schedules; contact them as early as possible.

6 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Follow-up on special guest invitations; confirm attendance and details.
- Prepare event invitation list (consult membership databases and directories).
- Confirm all partners and donations, as well as how they will be recognized.

5 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Publicize the event in every possible way by using any available medium (i.e. have your event posted on the Family Literacy Day section of www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca, post an ad and/or event listing in local newspapers, use flyers, posters, newsletters, your website, etc.).

4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Prepare and send out event invitations. Be sure to highlight planned activities and special guests who will be in attendance.

3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Follow-up with invitees to confirm their attendance.
- Recruit volunteers to help on event day.

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Prepare and send out a news release to target media. Ensure the release includes details, such as where the proceeds for the event will be donated, any dignitaries who will be in attendance and event activities.
- Check out www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca for a national media release about Family Literacy Day. Feel free to excerpt any material from this release for your own release, or to use it as is.
- Purchase materials required for activities, giveaway prizes for children and appreciation gifts for special guests. Certificates of participation are available for download at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca.

1 WEEK PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Appoint a team member to be the host or hostess to greet visitors as they arrive.
- Follow-up with the media to confirm their attendance, and be sure to mention any special guests who are attending, as well as potential photo opportunities.
- Prepare an event “crash kit” of items (including pens, markers, paper, scissors, tape, glue, erasers, rulers, paper clips, a stapler with staples, elastic bands, an extension cord, a first-aid kit and a small sewing kit) that may come in handy for last minute emergencies.
- Prepare event survey ([see section 7](#)).
- Prepare media information kits. Include the facts on adult and family literacy in Canada ([see section 1](#)), the Family Literacy Day news release from ABC Life Literacy Canada, and background information on your organization.
- Develop a reminder media alert. Include the 5-W's in this one-page synopsis: Who, What, Where, When and Why. Mention special guests who will be attending, as well as photo opportunities. Include contact information of the designated media co-ordinator.

DAY BEFORE THE EVENT

- Send reminder media alert to target media.

DAY OF THE EVENT

- Do a last minute check to make sure that everyone and everything is in its place before guests arrive.
- Thank attendees and special guests. Give small thank you gifts to special guests.
- Conduct a survey to obtain feedback on the event success and to ensure an even better event for the next Family Literacy Day.
- Take lots of photos that ‘capture the moment’. Don’t forget to email them to us at fld@abclifelifiteracy.ca so we can use them for future promotions. Include a brief description for each photo complete with names of key participants.

WEEK AFTER THE EVENT

- Send out thank you letters to special guests, corporate supporters, volunteers, sponsors and media that covered the event. Include a photo that really captured the essence of the event.
- Compile the results from your survey and calculate the number of guests who attended your event.

SECTION 6

Promoting Your Event

The local media will be the best means for getting the word out about your Family Literacy Day® activities to the widest audience. Here are some tips on getting their attention:

Writing a Media Release

Media releases need to be sent out sufficiently in advance to meet a publication's deadline. While the media alert is designed to spark interest in media covering your event on location and/or contacting you for further details, the media release actually provides the story, with details, about your event.

There are two opportunities to send out a release – in advance of the event, and immediately after it has taken place. The former speaks about the event coming up, your organization and why you are putting on this event, some key highlights and key people who will be featured, and, in this instance, why families reading and learning together is such a great thing. The latter provides the same information, essentially, but it is intended for publications that would not dedicate editorial space (or time) in advance of the event; they would instead report on it as having just happened. Adding a really good picture of the event can also be a plus for media, so be sure to take pictures during the event activities to make available to the media.



Content and length: The content should “sell” your event, so highlight the key activities and the celebrities, local politicians, etc. who will be attending – any details that make your event stand out. Write a “grabber” headline, and use subheads to break up the body copy and direct the reporter’s attention to some key elements in your story. The length should be no more than about one-and-a-half pages. (Although some recommend no more than one page, realistically, the copy can spill onto a second page.)

Contact information: Clearly provide contact information for media to reach you. Include name, phone, cell phone, and e-mail address.

To see a sample news release, visit the News & Events section of www.ABCLifeLiteracy.ca.

Writing a Media Alert

Media alerts are sent out the day before the event, and are distributed to the city editors/assignment desks, and photo editors/photo desks of all local newspaper, television and radio stations.

This is basically a “fact sheet” giving your reporters and broadcasters a heads-up on your upcoming event. It is designed to draw them out to the event (for photos and interviews with select people from your group), or to call and get details from you over the phone if they cannot attend in person.

It is comprised of:

An alert line (i.e.: “Media alert – Attention news/photo desk”)

A main headline (i.e.: Family Literacy Day at library, tomorrow, 7 p.m.)

Brief introductory paragraph

(i.e.: [Name of organization] will hold a Family Literacy Day® event tomorrow evening, a national awareness initiative held every January 27 by ABC Life Literacy Canada that promotes the importance of reading and learning as a family. As many as 80 [name of region]-area school children, will join in the fun, accompanied by their parents. [Name of person] will sing, tell stories, and [add one other detail about your key activities].)

Point-form note on essentials (centred on the page; lists Who, What, Where and When)

WHAT: Name of event

WHEN: Day and hours

WHO: Attendees (i.e. local celebrities, politicians)

WHERE: Full address, including room numbers and directions

You should also include a brief description of any potential media photo opportunities (like kids with a mascot, a family read-in, or the participation of a local celebrity) or any activities that will make your event stand out from anything else that might be going on that day in your community.

Contact information – Clearly state contact for media, including name, phone, cell phone (where applicable) and e-mail address.

Brief description of your organization – Provide a quick snapshot (one or two sentences) of your organization at the bottom of any media release.



Making the Pitch to Media

Once your media release or media alert has gone out and your contacts have had enough time to review the material, you should follow up with a phone call to confirm that they received the copy, will come to the event, and will cover the event. It also provides an opportunity to further “sell” the story.



- Prepare a 30-second “pitch” that tells your story in a few sentences and explains why it is relevant to the media outlet’s readers, listeners and viewers. Try to offer new information not included in the release.
- Tailor your pitch to each journalist based on what you know about them, their work, and the media outlet they work for. For example, if pitching a TV broadcaster, be sure to highlight the visuals that will go along with the story.
- Have your pitch and all additional information in front of you so you are prepared to answer questions.
- Try to speak with the journalist in person, rather than leaving a voice message. This may take several attempts; if you can’t reach them, leave a brief message highlighting your key points and providing contact information.
- If a journalist shows interest, do everything you can to help them prepare the story. Return all media calls promptly and provide background information and access to your spokesperson.
- If a newspaper contact tells you they cannot attend, offer to send them a photo the day of the event for possible publication in the paper.
- Know when to move on. Do your best, but accept it when a journalist is just not interested in the story. You want to remain on friendly terms for future communications.

Use Promotional Materials

ABC Life Literacy Canada offers free downloadable promotional materials online at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. Access posters, bookmarks, tipsheets and PSAs that will help promote your event. Contact your local print shop to see if they will donate the printing of materials in return for recognition on your event materials.

Other Ways to Promote Your Event

Create an Advertisement

Create your own ad or feel free to use one of the downloadable print ads or web banners in the promotional materials section of www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. Ask your local media if they will donate media space to your organization to help promote your event. Many media outlets have extra space they need to fill and would be happy to run your ad for free if there is room.

Put Up Posters!

ABC Life Literacy Canada offers free downloadable posters at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. These posters provide space at the bottom to write in the details of your event. Print a few posters, fill out your information and post them around your organization and your community.

Spread the Word Online

If your organization has a Facebook page, create a Facebook event! Let all your fans know about the event and ask them to spread the word to their friends and family. If your organization has a Twitter account, be sure to tweet about your event often and well in advance of it. Feel free to use a hashtag, such as #FamilyLiteracyDay or #Literacy to increase your chances of being noticed. Don't forget to also write about your event on your website if you have one.

Talk to Your Community

Use the community to get the word out to people around town. Put up posters or memos on bulletins around town, such as at church or the grocery store. Connect with local community centres, schools or other locations families may go, and ask if they can help promote the event.

Invite Celebrities in Your Community

Local media personalities are celebrities, too! Consider inviting the evening news anchor to participate as a story reader at your event and invite their kids, as well. The station they work for will be more likely to cover the story when one of their staff is involved.

SECTION 7

Sample Templates

Sample letter/email to a potential partner

[Date]

[Full Name]

[Full Address]

[Town], [Province] [Postal Code]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

On behalf of [name of your organization], I am writing to request your participation as a sponsor of our Family Literacy Day® event. Since 1999, children and adults in [your town] have celebrated Family Literacy Day on January 27 by participating in activities that promote reading and learning as family activities. This special day communicates the important message to children and parents in our community that the reading and learning activities we engage in as a family contribute to the development of good communication skills and future success.

In honour of Family Literacy Day, our organization is planning a [explain your event in brief detail. Include information about date, time and location, as well as what type of event it is, such as story circles, sing-along, puppet shows, celebrity readings, etc.].

[Insert here the reasons why you have identified this organization as a potential partner. Be sure to compliment them. For example: With your reputation as a good, child-friendly, family restaurant, your participation would be a great asset to our event.]

I am writing to ask for your support for our Family Literacy Day event by way of a donation of [Insert donation request: food, beverages, products required or services].

In return, we would like to offer you special name recognition in/on the following: [Insert what you can offer them. Here are some examples:

Posters promoting our Family Literacy Day event, which will be posted around the community; our website; and our monthly newsletter, distributed to a database of [XX] people.]

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I will follow up with you in a few days to discuss this opportunity.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your organization]

[Your phone number]

Sample letter/email to invite special guests to your event

[Date]

[Full Name]

[Full Address]

[Town], [Province] [Postal Code]

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

On behalf of [name of your organization], I am writing to request your participation in our Family Literacy Day® event as a [insert participant's role here - storyteller, singer, puppeteer, games host, etc.]. Since 1999, children and adults in [your town] have celebrated Family Literacy Day on January 27 by participating in activities that promote reading and learning as family activities. This special day communicates the important message to children and parents in our community that the reading and learning activities we engage in as a family contribute to the development of good communication skills.

In honour of Family Literacy Day, our organization is planning a [explain your event in brief detail. Include information about date, time and location, as well as what type of event it is, such as story circles, puppet shows, celebrity readings, etc.].

Your reputation as a respected [insert occupation here - firefighter, police officer, athlete, etc.] and community member would make your participation a great asset to our event. Your presence at our event will set a terrific example for this town's young people about the importance of reading and learning at any age.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I will follow up with you in a few days to discuss this opportunity.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your organization]

[Your phone number]

Sample letter/email to the local media

[Date]

[Full Name]

[Full Address]

[Town], [Province] [Postal Code]

Dear [publisher's name]:

As our organization, [your organization], gears up for Family Literacy Day® on January 27 to promote the importance of reading and learning as a family activity, I invite the participation of our community newspaper, [newspaper name]. This participation involves a simple suggestion: wouldn't it be great if some of your journalists wrote about their personal experiences with reading their favourite books, a great learning experience or even a story about an adult learner? They could write about the first book that inspired them to become a journalist, or the importance of reading as a family activity. Or they could write about the importance of families sharing a newspaper on Sunday mornings.

The impact that just a 200-word editorial would have is astounding. ABC Life Literacy Canada estimates that last year, more than 314,000 children and families participated in Family Literacy Day events and activities, and that the family literacy message reached millions of Canadians from coast to coast! This year, we hope to make Family Literacy Day an even bigger success.

For more information about this special day, please visit www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca.

I will follow up with you within the next few days. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your organization]

[Your phone number]

Sample letter/email to a local mayor

[Date]

[Name of Mayor]

[Full Address]

[Town], [Province] [Postal Code]

Dear Mayor [Last Name]:

Each year on January 27, hundreds of children and adults in [your town] celebrate Family Literacy Day[®] by participating in activities designed to promote reading and learning as family activities. This special day communicates the important message to children and parents in our community that the reading and learning habits we develop at an early age set the stage for our success later in life.

The residents of [your town] are committed to seeing children and adults prosper. They understand the importance of learning as a family activity, and are loyal supporters of our organization, [name of your organization], through volunteering and attending community events.

I am writing to request that you recognize January 27 as Family Literacy Day in [your town]. An official recognition of January 27 as Family Literacy Day will serve to reinforce our government's commitment to literacy and to securing a solid foundation for our children.

We would also like to extend our invitation to you and your council to experience Family Literacy Day for yourselves. We will be holding a [type of event] at [location] on [date and time] to celebrate Family Literacy Day.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I will follow up with you in a few days to discuss this great opportunity.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your organization]

[Your phone number]

Proclamation of Family Literacy Day

WHEREAS solid literacy skills are vital to our social and economic development as a [province / city / town / municipality];

AND WHEREAS research shows that parents have a strong influence on the literacy development of their children;

AND WHEREAS family literacy programs serve to secure a solid learning foundation for our children;

AND WHEREAS family learning helps maintain the literacy levels of adults and encourages the development of lifelong readers and learners;

NOW THEREFORE, I [official's name and title] do HEREBY PROCLAIM January 27 as "Family Literacy Day" in the [province / city / town / municipality] of [name of province / city / town / municipality]

[signature and name of official]

Family Literacy Day Event Survey

Thank you for attending our Family Literacy Day® event. In order for us to improve and create an even better event next year, we want to hear from you! Please complete and return this survey to one of the organizers.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Did you enjoy today's activities?			
2. Would you like to attend our Family Literacy Day celebrations again next year?			
3. Have today's activities encouraged you to spend more time reading and learning as a family?			

4. What was your favourite activity?

5. What was your least favourite activity?

6. Is there anything you would like to see more of next year? Please explain.

7. How did you hear about our Family Literacy Day event?

Other comments:

WINNER!

This award goes to:

For:

Signature

Date