



# literacy & essential skills

## fact sheet

## Families

**Literacy supports healthy family development, just as a stable home environment fosters literacy.**

**Early literacy skills are the foundation for future learning.** Research has shown that the skills and capacity to learn that children develop by the age of 6 stay with them for a lifetime.

**Literacy directly affects economic security.** Adults with strong literacy skills are more likely to be employed and occupy higher-income jobs. Literacy and education prepare parents to stay healthy, get and keep a job to become economically self-sufficient, and adapt to life's changes. These capabilities benefit their children as well.

**Literacy and economic security directly affect a child's ability to learn at school.** Participation in family literacy is strongly linked to scholastic achievement among children and to adults' success in finding and keeping employment. The children of more highly educated mothers are better prepared with oral language and literacy skills when they enter formal schooling. While children of less literate parents are more likely to have developmental delays, behavioural issues, and exhibit drop-out rates twice as high as other children. Parents with low literacy may also be ill-equipped to engage productively with the school system on behalf of their child.

**Literacy skills and academic achievement often continue from generation to generation.** If literacy has a valued place in the home, both children and adults are more likely to adopt and maintain good literacy habits.

**What can be done?** Investments in literacy can succeed if there is:

- **Set a positive example.** Demonstrate to children the meaningful uses of reading, writing, language and numeracy in everyday tasks.
- **Support family literacy programs.** Every dollar spent on family and intergenerational literacy programs does “double duty” supporting both early childhood development and adult basic education.
- **Get involved in the annual Family Literacy Day.** This takes place every year on January 27th. Find out how your community is celebrating with events and activities. Get involved, join in, or start your own events to promote awareness of this important issue. ch as poverty, that adversely affect both literacy and health

Family literacy programs emphasize the enjoyment of literacy for both parents and children, while also influencing broader growth and development in society as a whole.