



literacy & essential skills

fact sheet

Libraries

Every Canadian a Reader.

Libraries are rooted in the democratic right of all citizens to have equal access to recorded knowledge and creative expression. Libraries are for access to information. Libraries have long been a place of free access to the printed word. They now also connect people to the internet, distance education and a wide variety of audiovisual materials. Libraries respond to community needs and are an integral part of Canada's investment towards a fully literate society.

Libraries are for lifelong reading and lifelong learning. Libraries build positive reading experiences knowing that reading purely for the sake of enjoyment is the most powerful tool for literacy development. Research has shown that the quality of school libraries directly correlates to the test scores and literacy rates among students.

Libraries are vital tools in the fight to educate and encourage a fully literate Canadian society.

What can be done?

Access to literature and educational resources is a crucial factor in literacy achievement. In order to bridge the literacy gap, libraries should:

- Develop and deliver innovative and appropriate library and information services inclusively to all community members.
- Provide special literacy learning materials, in the form of print, audiovisual and basic skills software, for learners, tutors and instructors.
- Offer lifelong literacy programs and train volunteer tutors to work with adult learners.
- Provide support services by developing partnerships with local literacy and social agencies. This should involve publicizing local library services, providing program referrals, providing space for local learning sessions, and highlighting literacy programs in the community.
- Provide special reading and story-time programs in the form of parent-child story times, homework clubs, reading groups and special interest workshops to encourage library use.