Overview

In Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy, you will:

Discuss how parents are teachers;

Learn new ways to prepare your children for school;

Talk about the importance of feeling good about yourself and about learning;

Learn new literacy development skills to use with children;

Learn about normal child development from infancy to the school years;

Think about literacy as an every day activity;

Have fun with literacy development;

Learn about different learning styles;

Learn about the challenges faced by some children as they develop their literacy;

Share your experiences with other parents and learners;

Discuss home and school relationships which can be helpful to children.;

Most importantly, this course will build on skills and knowledge you already have and use every day.

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy

4. Overview

Table of Contents

1.0 Why Do a Course on Family Literacy?

This course should provide adult learners, many of whom are parents, with the tools to introduce literacy to the young children in their families. The course assumes that an adult's desire to learn can be a foundation for the ability and willingness of that adult to promote and strengthen literacy learning in their offspring.

1.1 Aims:

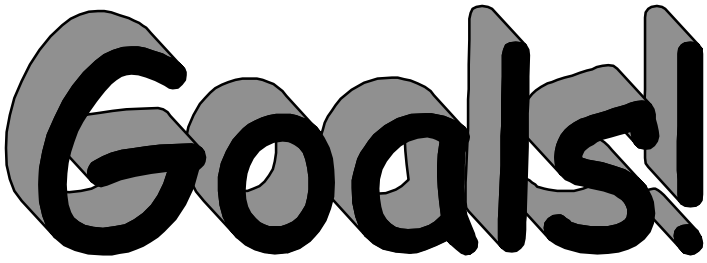
Over the long term, the children whose parents are enrolled in this course should have a better start on the road to life-long learning. As a result, it is hoped that *Eager to Learn* will make a positive impact on the lives of both parents and children, as well as the health and well-being of our society as a whole.

1.2 Goals:

The goals of this course were determined through a process of research and consultation. A literature review focused primarily on family literacy and explored child development, literacy in general, and learning disabilities.

Following this research, parents from the general public, early childhood educators, adult learners, and adult educators were consulted through a series of focus groups both to clarify what would be expected from a course in family literacy, and to discuss how these expectations could be met. In the end, this study and consultation combined to produce a set of guiding principles, or goals, that would have to inform our objectives if the broader aims of the course were to be met.

The goals are meant to complement one another.



The goals for this course are as follows:

1.To introduce the concept of family literacy.

2. To foster high levels of self-esteem and confidence in adult learners.

3. To emphasize the importance of parent-child interactions and activities.

4. To make learners aware of basic child development, and what is appropriate literacy learning for children at different stages.

5. To demonstrate the importance of a home environment conducive to literacy acquisition.

6. To explore with learners the manners in which parents can make literacy materials available to their children.

7. To highlight some techniques parents can use to develop literacy in their children.

8. To develop with learners an understanding of the importance of fun in acquiring literacy.

9. To enhance learners' abilities to support and advocate on behalf of their children with educators.

10. To equip learners with a basic understanding of learning styles and learning disabilities.

2.0 Rationale and Assumptions About Learners

An inadequate or non-existent introduction to literacy can sentence a child to a life of frustration and underachievement. Once this process is under way, it can only be addressed through a compensatory or remedial approach, which often does not reach those who need it most. Although such an approach can be successful, it would obviously be preferable for both the individuals concerned and society in general to avoid such problems in the first place. The traditional approach to literacy issues has been one of reaction after the fact.

The concept behind *Eager to Learn* evolved from several important facts relating to literacy and to adult learners pursuing high school equivalency:

- The vast majority of adult learners are either parents, grandparents, or are about to become parents.

- Adult learners are coping with personal needs as well as the needs of their children. Accordingly, the success or failure of their children in school has an impact on the lives of parents.

- Many adult learners self-refer specifically to improve their ability to read, write, and speak with their children. It therefore becomes especially important for adult learners to feel competent and confident as they prepare to assist their children with the rigours of school and homework.

Eager to Learn is an attempt to maximize human potential by helping to prevent future illiteracy. We know that young children are highly focused on absorbing and decoding the world around them. It is during this critical stage of their development, from birth to the early school years, that a solid foundation must be laid for the acquisition of literacy. Because parents are the primary care-givers during this period, it follows that they are the obvious candidates to provide the necessary immersion in literacy.

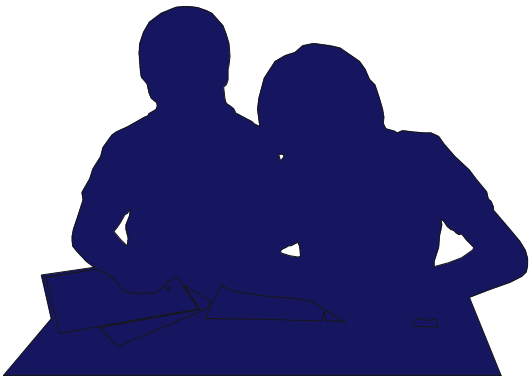
Our model of literacy promotion attempts to build on the strengths of parents, as well as their availability and orientation to learning within the ABE setting:

< Adult learners are an appropriate target group, because they are already motivated and present in a learning environment.

< They have daily access to the support of instructors and other professionals who are responsive to situations as they arise on a day-to-day basis.

< Adult learners are already in the supportive peer network of an adult learning facility.

< *Eager to Learn* is needed to strengthen the connection between the assets of learners in the adult education setting and the investment opportunity presented by their children. The end result should be a more literate, fulfilled, and productive society.



3.0 Evaluation

Focus group research strongly emphasized the importance of avoiding tests and quizzes whenever possible so as not to associate stress or negative connotations with this course. Instead, the facilitator must use a combination of approaches which will accurately reflect the degree to which learners meet each objective. This involves staying away from traditional methods in favour of indirect approaches which involve the learner to the fullest extent.

Participation should be a major component of evaluation. Participation refers to time spent both inside the classroom and during practicums or field trips. A course journal or portfolio should be kept by students as an instrument of evaluation. Activities included in the course could present opportunities for evaluation as well. Self-evaluation might also be an option in certain instances. Tests and assignments may be called for, however, when specific subject matter calls for familiarity with new terms and concepts. In general, it is hoped that students in this course will learn through observation, participation, and application, and should be evaluated using a combination of all of these methods.

The *suggested* value of each Module is as follows:

Module One	5%
Module Two	5%
Module Three	15%
Module Four	20%
Module Five	20%
Module Six	15%
Module Seven	10%
Module Eight	10%

4.0 Potential Resources

Please refer to the annotated bibliography at the end of this proposal for a brief description of each resource.

Growing into Literacy. William T. Fagan, James G. Anderson and Mary Cronin. (1998). Education, Learning Literacy Network. ISBN: 0-9681324-4-8

Helping Your Child Get Ready for School. Nancy Paulu. (1993). U.S. Department of Education.

Learning and Reading Partners. Maitland MacIsaac. (1996). The Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance. Charlottetown.

Literacy and Parenting Skills. Laureen Mackenzie and Elaine Cairns. (1996). Alberta Vocational College. ISBN: 0-9681233-0-9

Literacy for Life: Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties. (1996) Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. St. John's.

Literacy for Life: Home Reading Guide. (1994). Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. St. John's.

PACE Family Literacy Program. Lina Cramer. (No date). Family Resource Coalition.

Films and Videos:

Reading: A Gift of a Lifetime. Joan Oldford-Matchim (22 minutes) Available from: Literacy Services of Canada Ltd., P.O. Box 52192, Edmonton, Alberta. T6G 2T5 Tel: (780) 413-6491, Fax: (780) 413-6582 Email: brokop@telusplanet.net

Literacy and Your Family. Medicine Hat College & Homespun Video Productions (90 minutes) Available from: Literacy Services of Canada Ltd., P.O. Box 52192, Edmonton, Alberta. T6G 2T5 Tel: (780) 413-6491, Fax: (780) 413-6582 Email: brokop@telusplanet.net

Other Resources:

There are many suggestions for literacy activities on the Internet. Simply use a world wide web browser of your choice to conduct a search on family literacy or related topics.

Parents themselves are often a wealth of information, and teachers are also invaluable. Draw on your community resources as much as possible.

5.0 Course Outline

> ***Learner's Hint:***
>
> The literature on family literacy emphasizes the importance of parents having control in the learning process and sharing ideas with one another. It is therefore recommended that this course be offered in a group setting if and when possible.

1. What is Family Literacy? . . . . . Module 1

1.1 Determine the characteristics of family literacy.
1.2 Explain the importance of family literacy.
1.3 Explain how literacy is a school issue, a workplace issue, and a family issue.

2. Parents as People . . . . . Module 2

2.1 Discuss the concept of self-esteem.
2.2 Conduct and analyze a self-esteem assessment guide.
2.3 Explore methods of raising self-esteem.
2.4 Demonstrate the importance of self-esteem to learning.
2.5 Define family goals as a means of visualizing success.

3. Learning About Children . . . . . Module 3

3.1 Discuss the importance of parent - child interactions.
3.2 Understand the basics of child development and literacy acquisition during the pre-school years.
3.3 Identify learning styles.
3.4 **Practicum I** (Observation): Investigate developmental expectations of children at given ages through observation or discussion with child-care professionals.

4. Preparing Your Home for Literacy . . . . . Module 4

4.1 Identify the characteristics of a nurturing, supportive home environment.
4.2 Identify options for acquiring literacy material.
4.3 Understand that television can be a friend or foe as a literacy tool in early literacy acquisition.
4.4 Define environmental print and examine its use in enhancing family literacy.
4.5 Discuss the importance of writing, printing, drawing, and painting in literacy development, and explore their applications.
4.6 Describe the characteristics of a literacy-oriented home.
4.7 Define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.

5. Having Fun With Literacy . . . . . Module 5

5.1 Illustrate how new experiences can be used to build a broader foundation for literacy.
5.2 Explain the importance of play in the learning process.
5.3 Identify and evaluate some literacy-oriented games.
5.4 Examine some common rhymes and songs to assess their importance in literacy development.
5.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of jokes, riddles and comics as learning tools.
5.6 **Practicum II** (Interaction): Interact with children at a cooperating local daycare to investigate the value of fun activities in building literacy.

6. Reading and Talking . . . . . Module 6

6.1 Discuss the importance of oral language in literacy development.
6.2 Compare strategies learners can use when reading with children.
6.3 Define scaffolding, and examine how it can be used as a technique to build literacy.
6.4 **Practicum III** (Application): Read and talk to children, and apply techniques used in this Module.

7. Challenges of Learning ..... Module 7

7.1 Define and discuss the challenges to learning.
7.2 Establish some of the early warning signs of learning disabilities that may warrant further investigation by a professional.
7.3 Compare and contrast learning styles and learning disabilities.
7.4 Outline some common strategies for dealing with learning disabilities.
7.5 Investigate resources available in the community to help with learning disabilities.

8. Taking Literacy to School and Beyond ..... Module 8

8.1 Discuss the challenges associated with preparing children for pre-school.
8.2 Explain what is expected of children when they go to school, and discuss ways to prepare children for this experience.
8.3 Identify ways of developing good partnerships with teachers, and explore approaches to helping children with homework.
8.4 Explore ways to promote literacy throughout the school years and beyond.

Module 1

What is Family Literacy?

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MODULE 1 - What is Family Literacy?

Learners must understand what they are studying, and why they are studying it. The purpose of this module is to introduce family literacy, so learners can see that family literacy is not just a course, but something that is important in their lives. The module is designed to get learners thinking about, and demonstrating their own knowledge about families and literacy.

1.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Determine the characteristics of family literacy.	Learners will be able to describe several characteristics of family literacy, drawn from their own life experiences.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:*** How to use the Resources

  The facilitator may use the Brainstorming Session: "What is Family Literacy?" included in this document to assist learners in producing a list of characteristics of family literacy.

  - Have learners write their own suggestions on a flip chart.
  - Accept words, pictures and symbols.
  - Discuss the list.
  - Compare the list with the suggestions in the resource section.

1.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Explain the importance of family literacy.	Learners will be able to explain why family literacy is important in their lives and the lives of their children.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Only learners themselves can know how important family literacy is in their lives. The facilitator should guide a discussion about this after learners are comfortable discussing what family literacy involves.

  - Use the resource "Brainstorming Session - What is the importance of family literacy?"
  - Encourage discussion about all kinds of families.

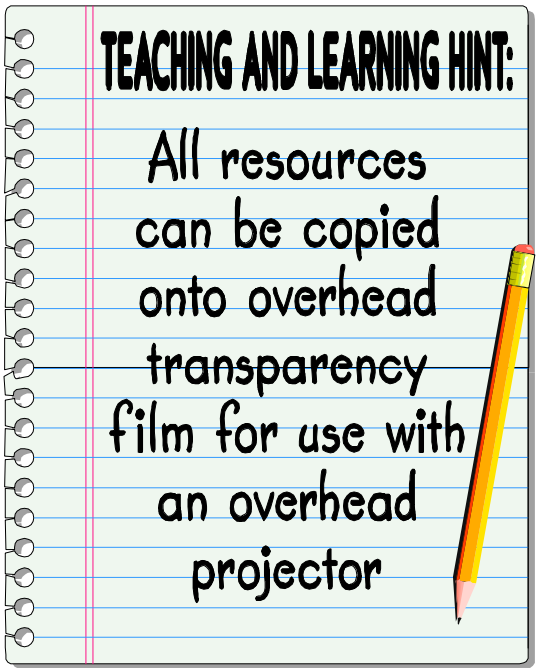
1.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explain how literacy is a school issue, a workplace issue, and a family issue.	Learners will understand the importance of literacy at school, at work, and at home.

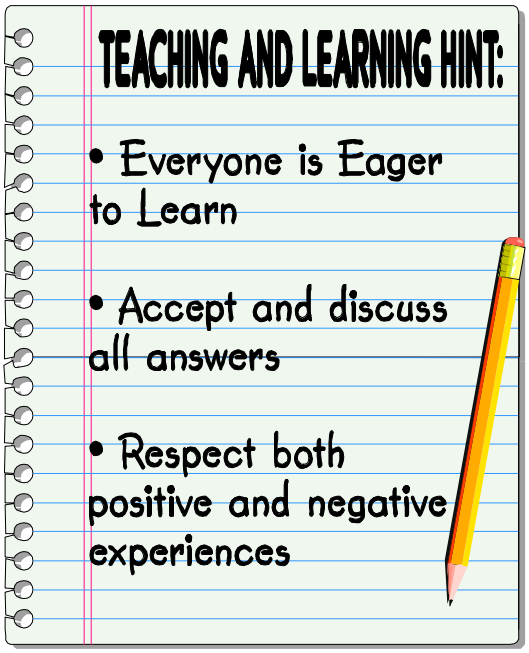
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  The facilitator should guide a discussion with learners, and may use the resource "Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home" as a guideline for this discussion.

  - Have learners list and discuss school, work and home issues.
  - Personal comments are welcome.
  - Encourage everyone in the group to participate.
  - Show a video on family literacy to help with the discussion.
  - Concentrate on what is important to the learners who are taking this course.

MODULE 1 - RESOURCES





Brainstorming Session - What is Family Literacy?

Family literacy is not easy to define because it includes so many different things. However, if we think about what a family is, and what literacy involves, we can probably get a good idea of what family literacy is. Let's try by writing down our ideas in the spaces provided!!

What do you think makes up a family?

What do you think literacy involves?

Write down some things you think would be part of family literacy.

Brainstorming Session - What is Family Literacy?

Some possible responses:

What do you think makes up a family?

- Mom
- Dad
- Children
- Cousins, Aunts & Uncles
- Those we live with
- Siblings
- Grandparents
- Neighbours
- Foster Parents
- Those we visit
- Those we talk to on the telephone
- Baby Sitters

What do you think literacy involves?

- Reading
- Writing
- Reading out loud
- Mail
- Drawing/Scribbling
- Using road signs
- Buying groceries
- Cards and letters
- Storytelling
- Play

What describes Family literacy?

- Reading together
- Crayons & paper
- Comics
- Homework
- Drawing
- Writing
- Notes on the fridge
- Groceries lists
- Books

Brainstorming Session - What is the Importance of Family Literacy?

Where do children learn?

When do children learn?

Why do I want my child to be literate?

Brainstorming Session - What is the Importance of Family Literacy?

Some suggested responses:

Where do children learn?

- In the womb
- In the stroller
- In Mom's arms
- In Dad's arms
- On the kitchen floor

When do children Learn?

- In the morning and afternoon and at night
- When they are happy
- When they are loved
- When they are interested
- When they see new things
- When they are having fun

Why do I want my child to begin literacy development in the family?

- To be able to read
- To do well in school
- To prepare for higher education
- To use a computer

Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home

In group discussion, try to answer the following questions. Chances are, there will be many different answers. Try for at least three..

Why do you think literacy is a school issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Why do you think literacy is a work issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Why do you think literacy is a family issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home

School Issues

- homework
- grades
- class presentation
- notes from teachers
- school announcements
- notes to school
- parental involvement

Work Issues

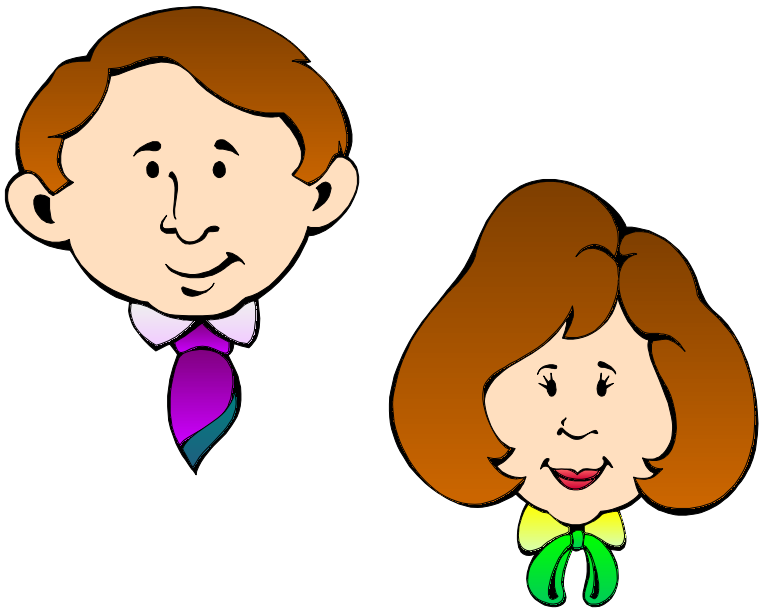
- invoices
- cash register
- signs
- following directions
- policy manual
- instructions
- memos

Family Issues

- We all live in families
- Families are our first teachers
- Families are different sizes
- Families helping others
- Helping children and siblings
- Siblings help each other

Module 2

Parents as People



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MODULE 2 - Parents as People

This Module is meant to provide the facilitator and learners with a sense of student self-esteem levels, and depending on whether learners have a generally high or low self-esteem, to engage in esteem-building activities as needed.

2.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the concept of self-esteem.	Learners will understand the relationship between attitudes and self-esteem, and the importance of self-esteem in family literacy.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Remember that all learners have strengths.

  Remember that all parents are teachers.

  To get learners thinking about the meaning of self-esteem, the facilitator can conduct a brainstorming session such as the one outlined in "What is Self-Esteem?" The results of this brainstorming session may then be used to launch a discussion about the importance of self-esteem in family literacy, asking learners questions such as:

  - Do attitudes about themselves affect the way parents approach their own literacy?

  - Does self-esteem affect the way parents approach literacy with their children?

2.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Conduct and analyse a self-esteem assessment guide	Learners will be aware of their own attitudes and self-esteem, and will understand how these affect decisions they make.

 Notes to Facilitator:

To make learners more aware of their own self-esteem, facilitator may use the "Self-Esteem Assessment," resource, but remember, it's not a test!

- This assessment could be used to get students thinking about the roots of their self-esteem, and to discover how the attitudes they have about themselves can affect the decisions they make.
- It is important that the facilitator make learners aware that this is an awareness exercise. They will not be graded! Allow learners to complete the guide in private.
- Follow the assessment guide with a supportive group discussion.

2.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explore methods of raising self-esteem	Learners will demonstrate knowledge of at least two methods of building self-esteem.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Facilitator may use the "Thinking About Good Things" resource to explain how self-esteem can be raised by focussing on a person's good qualities. The "Making Changes" resource could be used to illustrate how improving ourselves can also build self-esteem.

- Lead a discussion that would attempt to develop other methods of building self-esteem.

2.4

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Demonstrate the importance of self-esteem to learning	Understand the connection between self-esteem and literacy.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Use this learning opportunity to promote a belief that we are all teachers, with worth and skills.

  - Demonstrate that we learn best when we feel good about ourselves.
  - Demonstrate that negative personal feelings impair learning.

2.5

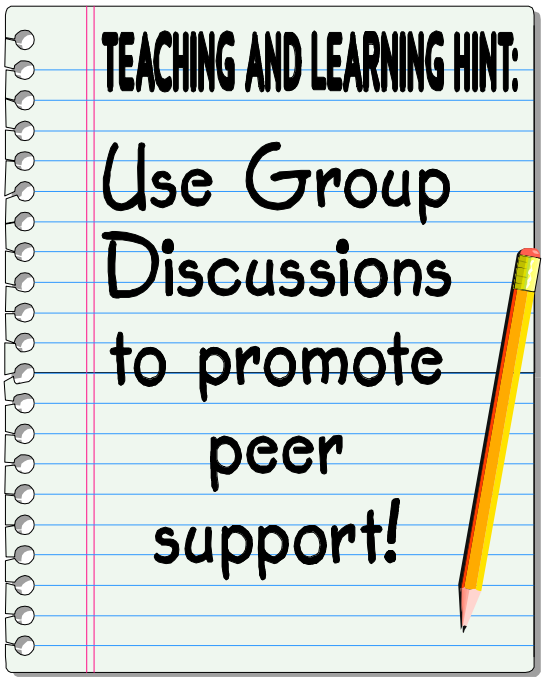
OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Define family goals as a means of visualizing success.	Learners will establish long-term literacy goals, both for themselves and their children.

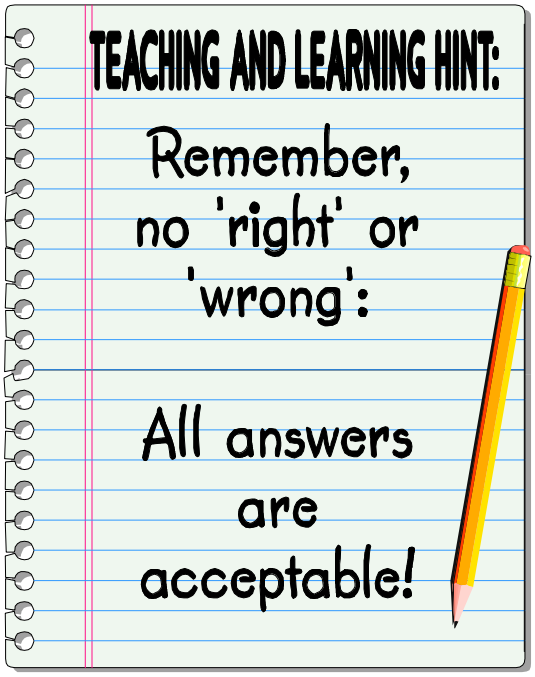
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

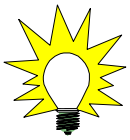
  Goal setting is one way the facilitator may choose to get learners thinking about long-term family goals. The facilitator may wish to discuss this activity with learners beforehand to explain that the purpose is to develop self-awareness and to set realistic goals.

  - Have learners share their goals for themselves.
  - Have learners share their goals for their children.

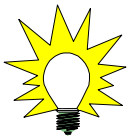
MODULE 2 - RESOURCES







Brainstorming Session
What is Self-Esteem?



We have all heard about self-esteem, and many of us can identify the characteristics of a person with a high self-esteem. But what is self-esteem? What do we mean when we say that someone has high self-esteem? If we can point out some characteristics of a person with a high self-esteem, and figure out why we chose the characteristics we did, then perhaps we can come up with a definition of self-esteem. After you write down your ideas in the spaces provided, see if you can write a definition of self-esteem.

What are some characteristics of a person with high self-esteem?

What are the characteristics of a person with low self-esteem?

How do people's attitudes affect their decisions?

Where do these attitudes come from?

What do these attitudes have to do with self-esteem?

Self-Esteem

Place a check (**U**) in the box under the response that you feel is most appropriate for each question.

1. I consider myself to be a nice person who is pleasant to be around.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

2. I am an interesting person.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

3. I am talented.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

4. I am always there to help others in need.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

5. I like to be challenged with new things.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

6. **I like to learn.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

7. **I am basically happy.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

8. **I work hard to make life better for myself and my child.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

9. **I have close friends that I can count on.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

10. **I try to laugh at life's little problems.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

11. **I look after myself.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

12. **I try to exercise regularly.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

13. **I have a lot of inner strength.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

14. **I can overcome obstacles in life.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

15. **I am loved.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

What Now?

This was not a test!

Have a group discussion on the following:

- Why do I think that way about myself?
- What are some things we do to ourselves to lower self-esteem?
- Where did my attitudes about myself come from?
- What do other people do to lower our self-esteem?
- How do my attitudes about myself affect the way I act?

Thinking About Good Things

One of the most important steps in building self-esteem is realizing that we have good qualities. Sometimes it is so easy to think about the things we do not like about ourselves, that we forget the things we do like. In this exercise, let us forget about the things we do not like about ourselves, and write down at least one good quality for each question.

What is something I am good at?_____

_____

What are some good things my friends say about me? _____

_____

What is something I know a lot about? _____

_____

What gives me a sense of satisfaction? _____

_____

What is something that is important to me? _____

_____

What helps me finish something I have started? _____

_____

What is something I have improved upon? _____

_____

What is something I have accomplished? _____

_____

What is something I am proud of? _____

_____

Making Changes

Realizing and focussing on our good qualities is an important part of building self-esteem. It is also important to think about things we can and would like to improve about ourselves, and to figure out how we can make these changes. In this exercise, let's identify some things we would like to change in our lives by completing the following sentences.

Remember, the best way to make changes is a little bit at a time, so try to finish each sentence with a change that you can realistically make.

Something I would like to improve about myself is ... _____

_____

I would feel better if ..._____

_____

If I could quit something, it would be ... _____

_____

I would like to have more time for ... _____

_____

Something I would like to do more often is ... _____

_____

If I had time, I would like to learn more about ... _____

_____

Something I would like to accomplish is ... _____

_____

I would like to have more patience when I ... _____

_____

Something I would like to do less is ... _____

_____

A Definition of Self-Esteem

I learn when I am...

Children learn when they are...

Why is Self-Esteem Important For Learning?

- Studies show that bright children who think poorly of themselves may do poorly in school, but average children who believe in themselves can excel.

- Good self-esteem has a positive effect on just about every part of children's lives - how they get along with others, how they handle school and studying, how they deal with pressure and stress, and just about everything they do as children, adolescents, and adults.

So why is self-esteem important to learning?

Children who have high self-esteem are willing to tackle tough learning assignments. They're willing to try something new. And even if they don't get the answer right the first time, they will usually keep on trying until they get it right. High self-esteem helps children in other ways as well. Kids with high self-esteem are happier, have more friends, and are more accepted by others.

Ways to Promote Self-Esteem in the Children we live with.

< When we feel a lecture coming on, we can switch it off; ask for further information; turn the discussion back to the child.

< When we are tempted to declare how "wrong" a child is, we can ask the child to clarify or to explain what he is thinking or feeling. Children will express themselves more freely if they do not feel the threat of a judge's sentence.

< When a "nagging session" is about to happen, we can try humour instead. Nagging destroys communication, while humour can salvage it. The most important thing to know about nagging is that we are often not aware that we are doing it. Instead of nagging a child, try turning a chore into a competition or a game.

< When strong emotions such as anger are present, it is usually better to talk out a problem later when things are calmer. Strong emotion makes productive dialogue impossible. Let the emotion subside before tackling the problem.

< Catch your child doing something good.

To build our child's self-esteem, we can say things like:

- “Let's do it together.”
- “We're really proud of you.”
- “Thank-you.”
- “You're the family expert on this.”
- “What do you think?”
- “That's the best job you've done yet.”

We can avoid saying things like:

- "When I was a child, I was lucky to have ..."
- "That's ridiculous."
- "When will you ever learn?"
- "You're too young to understand."
- "Here, let me do it, you'll only get it wrong."
- "Don't get in my way."

A Few More Thoughts....

- Every time you teach your children a new skill, such as setting the table, making a batch of cookies, building a bird house from scraps of wood, you're building self-esteem by helping them feel competent and capable.

- Comparing children is harmful to their self-esteem. If you have more than one child, try not to say things like, "Your brother always brought home straight ‘A’s. Why can't you?" Instead, help each child find - and feel good about - his or her own strengths.

- Try a sneak attack to build your child's self-esteem. Sometimes, let your child overhear a compliment, "accidentally- on-purpose."

- When you have a criticism to make, keep it short and to the point. When you have a compliment to give, praise your child to the sky. Chances are you'll have to spend less time on discipline.

Adapted from The Essential Link, by Eva Whitmore, Newfoundland & Labrador Home and School Federation, 1996.

A Practical Activity on Self-Esteem and Learning

Divide evenly into groups of two. Everyone gets a buddy! One buddy is the adult; one buddy is a child who is doing something 'wrong' and must stop.

Spend two or three minutes having the 'adult' insist that the activity stop. Use words only and have the 'child' buddy remain silent.

Come together as a group and have each 'child' buddy explain what it was like to be told to stop their activity . Use words only and have the 'adult' remain silent.

- How successful were negative comments on stopping activity by the child?

- How successful were positive comments on stopping activity by the child?

- How did the child feel, while being silent?

- How did the adult feel when being silent?

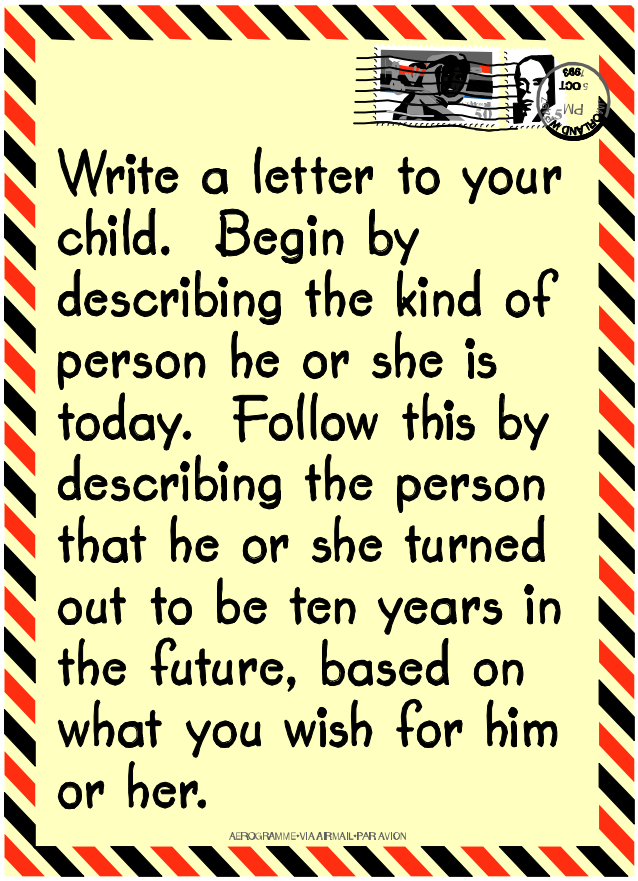
- What did the 'children' learn about self-esteem?

- What did the 'adults' learn about self-esteem?

Goals of Parents for Their Children

Imagine that it is ten or twenty years from today. Your child will be ____ years old. You, of course, don't seem to have aged a bit.

Activity:



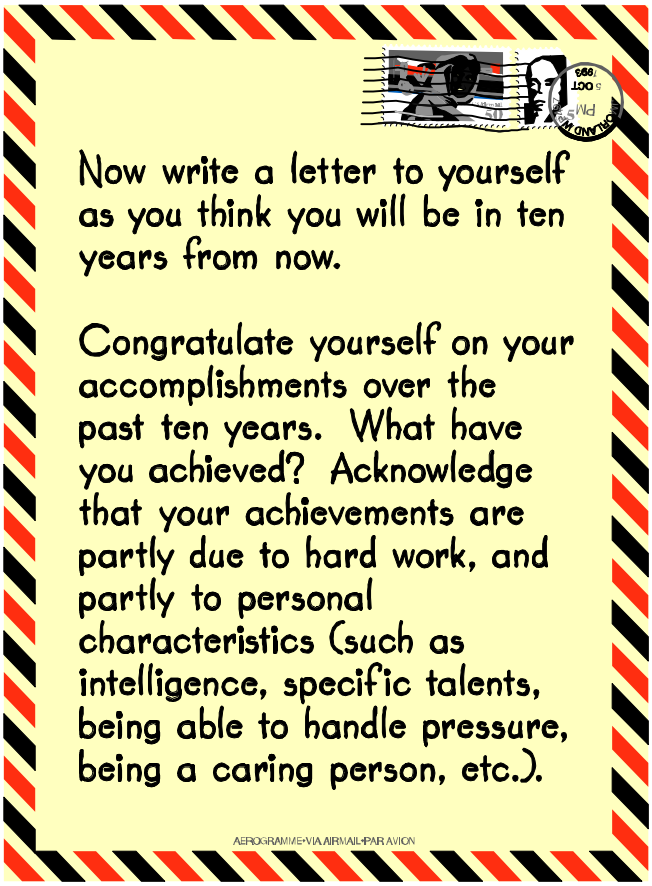
Here's a way to start:

"I want my child to ...."

When you have finished your letter, identify three or four of the most important qualities you would like your child to possess in the future. By yourself or through discussion, try to come up with ways that you can help nurture the development of these qualities in your child.

Goals of Parents for Themselves

Activity:

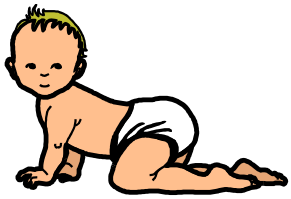


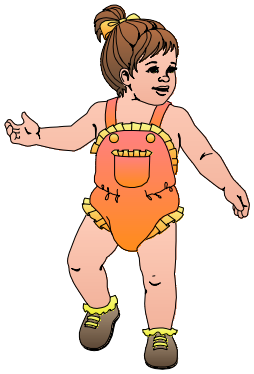
When you have written this letter to yourself, identify three or four of the personal characteristics which will have helped you succeed ten years from now. How can you build on and use these characteristics today to help achieve your goals in the future?

Partly adapted from Learning and Reading Partners, PEI Literacy Alliance, Charlottetown, PEI, 1994.

Module 3

Learning About Children





EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 3 - Learning About Children

Parents recognize the value of spending time with their children. They may not realize, however, that the time they spend is very important to the literacy development of each child. If parents are to be effective literacy teachers to their children, it is important that they understand this aspect of the relationship between parents and children. Parents can do this by learning about how children develop and grow - physically, emotionally, and mentally. If parents are able to gain this knowledge, they will be better prepared to guide their children towards successful literacy.

The goal of this module therefore, is to equip parents with some basic knowledge and an understanding of child development and literacy through addressing the following topics:

3.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the importance of parent-child interactions.	Learners will become aware of their own beliefs about the importance of parent-child interactions, and will also become aware of the beliefs of professional educators on this matter.
	Notes to Facilitator:	
	The facilitator should guide a discussion with learners to allow them to express their views on parent-child interactions.. • Learners may wish to read theses quotes aloud. or, • Ask learners to add their own comments.	

3.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Understand the basics of child development and literacy acquisition during the pre-school years.	Learners will understand what behaviours can be expected of young children at different ages, and what is needed at each age to best promote literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The resources on child development are meant only to give learners a brief overview of how children develop, and what they need.

- The facilitator may wish to supplement these resources with other material on this topic.
- Photocopy these resources to hand out.
- Ask for personal examples of children's activities for group discussion.

3.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Identify learning styles.	Learners will understand their own learning styles and the learning styles of their children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator may wish to use the resources on "Auditory Learners," "Visual Learners," and "Kinesthetic Learners."

- Photocopy the pages as handouts.
- Ask parents to compare their personal learning styles with the handouts.
- Ask parents to determine which type of learner their child is.
- Ask parents to use some of the techniques outlined to assist their children.

3.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Practicum I (Observation): Investigate developmental expectations of children at given ages through observation or discussion with child-care professionals.	Learners will gain practical knowledge of child development through observing them or through interviewing child-care professionals.

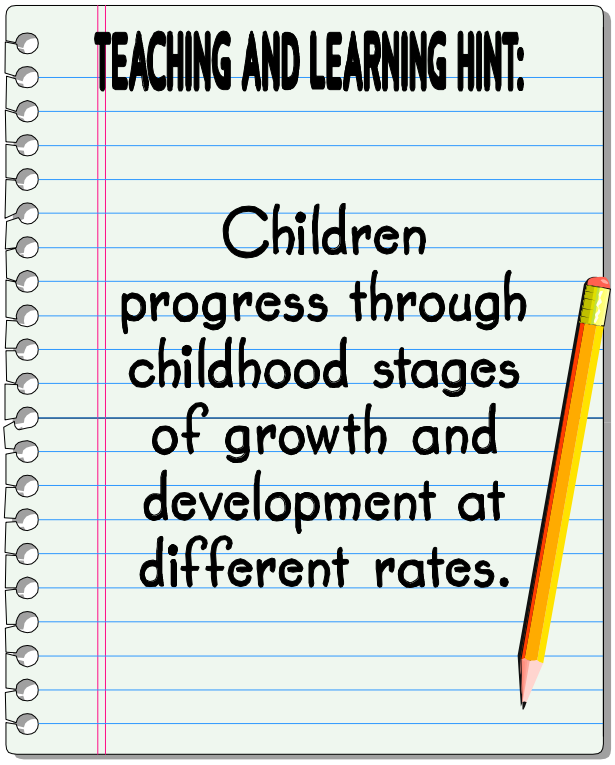
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

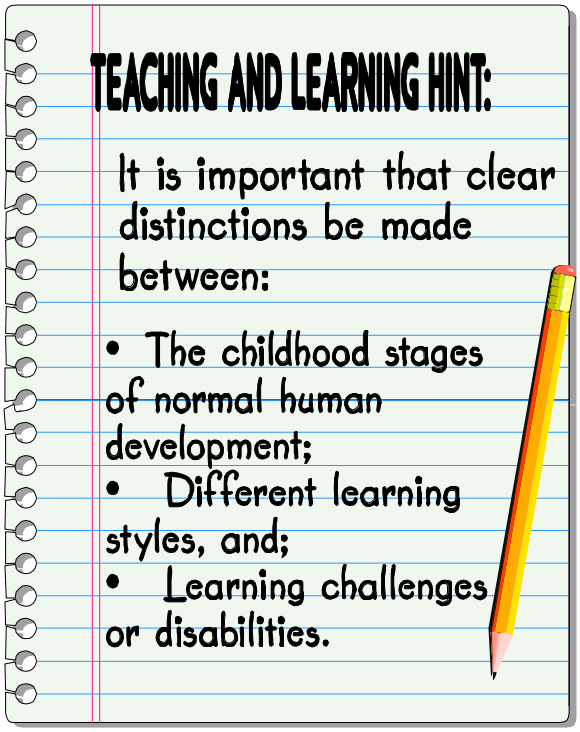
  The "Practicum I" may be used in meeting this objective.

  - Be creative if it is not possible to locate a child care centre with observation facilities. For example, have learners video tape a child and 'analyse' the child's activities.

  - Have learners tape children's activities on television commercials and encourage them to comment on the stages of child development.

MODULE 3 - RESOURCES





Parent-Child Interactions

The following are some quotations from authors in the field of family literacy which stress the importance of parents' roles in their children's literacy.

"When parents help their children to learn, they help open the door to a new world. As a parent, you can begin an endless learning chain: you read to your children, they develop a love of stories and poems, they want to read on their own, they practice reading, and finally they read for their own information or pleasure. They become readers, and their world is forever expanded and enriched."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Children learn to love the sound of language before they even notice the existence of printed words on a page. Reading books aloud to children stimulates their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and helps them to understand the written word. When the rhythm and melody of language become a part of a child's life, learning to read will be as natural as learning to walk and talk."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Even after children learn to read by themselves, it's still important for you to read aloud together. By reading stories that are on their interest level, but beyond their reading level, you can stretch young readers' understanding and motivate them to improve their skills."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Such practices in the home as shared reading, reading aloud, making a variety of print materials available, and promoting positive attitudes towards literacy have been found to have a significant impact on children's literacy learning."

Lesley Mandel Morrow, "Family Literacy:
Perspective and Practices," The Reading Teacher.

Birth to 1 Year

What to expect …

Babies grow and change dramatically during their first year. They begin to:

- **Develop some control over their bodies. They learn to hold up their heads; roll over; sit up; crawl; stand up; and, in some cases, walk**
- **Become aware of themselves as separate from others. They learn to look at their hands and toes and play with them. They learn to cry when parents leave, and they recognize their name**
- **Communicate and develop language skills. First babies cry and make throaty noises. Later they babble and say mama and dada. Then they make lots of sounds and begin to name a few close people and objects**
- **Play games. First they play with their hands. Later they show an interest in toys, enjoy "putting in and taking out" games, and eventually carry around or hug dolls or stuffed toys**
- **Relate to others. First they respond to adults more than to other babies. Later they notice other babies but tend to treat them like objects instead of people. Then they pay attention when other babies cry**

What they need …

Babies require:

- **A loving caregiver who can respond to their cries and gurgles**
- **Hugs and kisses**
- **Someone who gets to know their special qualities**
- **Someone to keep them safe and comfortable**
- **Opportunities to move about and practice new physical skills**
- **Safe objects to look at, bat, grab, bang, pat, roll, and examine**
- **Safe play areas**
- **Opportunities to hear language and to make sounds**
- **Someone to read, talk and sing to them.**

1 to 2 Years

What to expect …

Children this age are:

- **Energetic (walk more steadily, run, push, pull, take apart, carry, climb on and grab things)**
- **Self-centred**
- **Busy (like to flip light switches, pour things in and out of containers, unwrap packages, and empty drawers)**

Between their first and second birthdays, they:

- **Like to imitate the sounds and actions of others (by pretending to do housework or yardwork, for example)**
- **Want to be independent and do it themselves (and express this by saying "No!")**
- **Can be clingy**
- **Can have relatively short attention spans if not involved in an activity**
- **Add variations to their physical skills (by walking backwards or sideways, for example)**
- **Begin to see how they are like and unlike other children**
- **Become more sensitive to the moods of others**
- **Play alone or alongside other toddlers**
- **Increase their vocabularies from about 2 or 3 words to about 250 words and understand more of what people say to them**

1 to 2 Years (cont'd)

Children this age require:

- **A safe environment for exploring**
- **Opportunities to make their own choices ("Do you want the red cup or the blue one?")**
- **Clear and reasonable limits**
- **Opportunities to use big muscles (in the arms and legs, for example)**
- **Opportunities to manipulate small objects, such as puzzles and stackable toys**
- **Patience from caregivers**
- **Reasonable rules**
- **Activities that allow them to touch, taste, smell, hear, and see new things**
- **Chances to learn about "cause and effect"-- that things they do produce certain results (when a stack of blocks gets too high it will fall over)**
- **Opportunities to develop and practice their language skills**
- **Chances to learn about kindness and caring about others' feelings**
- **Someone to read to them**
- **Learning opportunities that are 'fun'**

2 to 3 Years

What to expect …

Children this age are:

- **Becoming more aware of others and their own feelings**
- **Often stubborn and may have temper tantrums**
- **Developing a great interest in other children and enjoy being near them (although they are usually self-centred)**
- **Able to jump, hop, roll, and climb**
- **Developing an interest in pretend play--playing at keeping house, for example, or pretending to cook and care for a baby**
- **Expanding their vocabularies (from about 250 to 1,000 words during the year)**
- **Putting together 2, 3, and 4-word sentences**

What they need …

Children this age require opportunities to:

- **Develop hand coordination (with puzzles or large beads to string or by scribbling, for example)**
- **Do more things for themselves, such as putting on clothing**
- **Make easy choices**
- **Sing, talk, and develop their language**
- **Play with other children**
- **Try out different ways to move their bodies**
- **Be read to**
- **Do things in the community, such as taking walks and visiting libraries, museums, informal restaurants, parks, beaches, and zoos**

3 to 4 Years

What to expect …

Children this age:

- **Start to play *with* other children, instead of *next to* them**
- **Are more likely to take turns and share**
- **Are friendly and giving**
- **Begin to understand that other people have feelings and rights**
- **Like silly humour, riddles, and practical jokes**
- **Like to please and to conform**
- **Generally become more cooperative and enjoy new experiences**
- **Are increasingly self-reliant and probably can dress without help (except for buttons and shoelaces)**
- **May develop fears ("Mommy, there's a monster under my bed.") and have imaginary companions**
- **Are more graceful physically than 2-year-olds, love to run, skip, jump, catch a ball, climb downstairs, and dance to music**
- **Are great talkers, speak in sentences, and continue to add more words to their vocabularies**
- **Have greater control over hand and arm muscles, which is reflected in their drawings and scribbling**

What they need …

Children this age require opportunities to:

- **Develop their blooming language abilities through books, games, songs, science, and art activities**
- **Develop more self-help skills--for example, to dress and undress themselves**
- **Draw with crayons, work puzzles, build things, and pretend**
- **Play with other children so they can learn to listen, take turns, and share**
- **Be read to**
- **Develop more physical coordination - for example: hopping on both feet**
- **Make correct choices**

4 to 5 Years

What to expect …

Children this age:

- **Are active and have lots of energy**
- **May be aggressive in their play**
- **Can show extremes from being loud and adventurous to acting shy and dependent**
- **Enjoy more group activities because they have longer attention spans**
- **Like making faces and being sill**
- **May form cliques with friends and can be bossy**
- **May change friendships quickly**
- **May brag and engage in name-calling during play**
- **May experiment with swear words and bathroom words**
- **Can be very imaginative and like to exaggerate**
- **Have better control in running, jumping, and hopping but tend to be clumsy**
- **Are great talkers and questioners**
- **Love to use words in rhymes, nonsense, and jokes**

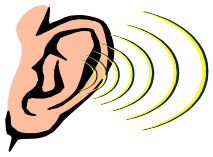
What they need…

Children this age need opportunities to:

- **Experiment and discover within limits**
- **Use blunt-tipped scissors, crayons, and put together simple jigsaw puzzles**
- **Practice outdoor play activities**
- **Develop their growing interest in academic things, such as science and mathematics, and activities that involve exploring and investigating**
- **Group items that are similar (for example, by size)**
- **Stretch their imaginations and curiosity**
- **See how reading and writing are useful (for example, by listening to stories and poems, dictating stories to adults, and by talking with other children and adults)**

1

Auditory Learners



What are Auditory Learners?

Auditory Learners are people who learn best when things are explained to them verbally.

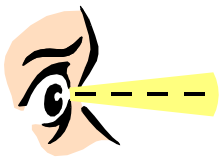
What are the characteristics of auditory learners?

- Follow oral directions well, much better than written directions
- Have strong verbal skills and seem to enjoy talking and auditory stimulation
- Moves lips when reading or actually reads aloud to self
- Relies on phonic cues
- Requires a pointer when reading; follows with finger
- Remember names more than faces
- Have difficulty with writing assignments and copying
- Poor note takers
- May reverse, invert, or omit letters
- Higher comprehension on oral reading than on silent reading
- Consistent error patterns in math
- Do poorly on matching, interpreting graphs and charts, and other visual tasks
- Learn best from lectures and auditory presentation
- Prefer music to art
- Physically express emotions; laugh out loud, become visibly angry, use hands to express self
- Attempt to solve problems by "talking them through"
- Have strong expressive vocabulary; mask problems well
- Great at outlining excuses and telling stories
- Attempt to memorize everything
- Good at giving others directions

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential

2

Visual Learners



What are Visual Learners?

Visual learners are people who learn best when they are shown how to do something; they learn best by following what they see.

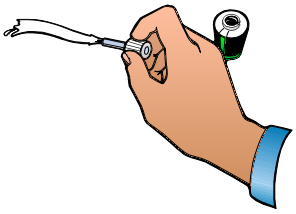
What are the characteristics of a visual learner?

- Learns by seeing and observing the actions of others
- Prefers demonstrations
- Follows visual instructions well
- Has difficulty with oral directions; does much better when shown what to do
- Recognizes words by sight & relies on initial consonants
- Likes descriptions and has vivid imagination, which is used to increase memory
- Notices subtle detail, changes, colours, typographical errors
- Memory is more visually structured (will remember faces more than names, and the visual placement of objects)
- Has neat handwriting, takes neat notes, and is meticulous
- Has to have surroundings neat and tidy
- Very deliberate and focussed in attacking a new concept; plans, organizes, structures very well
- Prefers art to music
- Prefers reading to listening
- Becomes confused by auditory detail more than visual detail
- Can use a dictionary well but needs to recite the alphabet to find the right section
- Rarely talks in class; "people of few words"
- Strong book orientation, can find their place quickly and are quick to start an assignment
- Like to watch the faces of teachers

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential.

3

Kinesthetic Learners



What are Kinesthetic Learners?

Kinesthetic learners are people who learn best when they are physically involved in doing what they are learning, and thus have more success learning athletic activities that require movement and physical participation, than activities that are geared towards visual and auditory learners.

What are the characteristics of kinesthetic learners?

- Extremely physical in actions; fidgets, touches, feels. Learn best by doing
- Struggle with reading; do not like reading or being read to
- Poor spellers and sometimes have weak language development
- Have poor handwriting and are sloppy in many tasks; write things over
- Appear not to pay attention; lost in their own world
- Appear to be restless and have trouble focussing on oral or visual presentations
- Have strong fine and gross motor skills; often are athletic
- Excel in physical tasks such as crafts, woodworking, machinery
- Not academically oriented
- Require concrete learning aids; have more difficulty with learning abstract concepts

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential.

1

L *Helping Auditory Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Teach children to talk through the steps in a task or activity
2. Encourage children to spell out loud so they can hear the letters
3. Have children say the sounds out loud when attacking new words
4. Have children point to written words
5. Encourage thinking out loud and listen to what children are saying
6. Encourage oral reporting
7. Sometimes name punctuation marks out loud when learning to read
8. Use tape-recorded instruction for information

What are some other things you can do?

1. Take out as much noise as possible when children are learning
2. Find a quiet place for children to work
3. Very soft music background may be used, but definitely not bouncy music
4. Do not talk too much since this can distract children from learning
5. Use as few words as possible
6. If you repeat something, use the same words, if possible
7. Speak directly to children
8. Children may need earphones to help cut out distractions

2

L *Helping Visual Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Give visual directions and demonstrations as often as possible
2. Use flash cards and wall visuals. Use a "look-say" whole word approach to reading
3. Use plenty of maps, graphs, and charts
4. Use colour-coding systems and other highly visual aids
5. Use mirror practice in speech training, and use rulers and number-lines to develop children's concepts of number and number skills

What are some other things you can do?

1. Take out visual distractions whenever possible
2. Put a heavy line around worksheets to help children attend to one item at a time
3. Give children a marker to highlight items of importance
4. Allow children to point if necessary
5. Have children work in a cleared area
6. Allow children to work on one sheet, rather than handling several sheets at once
7. Give one step of an assignment at a time

Used with permission; (adapted from Maitland MacIsaac, Learning and Reading Partners.)

3

L *Helping Kinesthetic Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Let children explore things as a part of learning
2. Use manipulatives when doing mathematics
3. Have children tap things out when they are learning
4. Use learning aids that allow children to touch for reinforcement
5. Use all the concrete, manipulative devices possible when teaching anything
6. Use role-playing whenever possible
7. Have children use painting, drawing, or building opportunities to learn

What are some other things you can do?

1. Use pictures to help establish associations whether in areas of words, numbers, or meanings
2. Attach labels whenever possible
3. Use hearing, seeing, and touching methods for teaching
4. Plan times for movement and breaks from learning

Practicum I

• *This practicum should reinforce what has been learned in Module Three. Learners might carry out their observations at a local daycare or pre-school if possible. This practicum can be carried out just as easily at home, however, or by using films or videos of children.*

• *Learners should record their observations, and may wish to answer the following questions:*

1. How old were the children you observed?

2. Do you think they were all at the same developmental stage?

3. Did you see the behaviours that should be expected at that age? Could you describe one?

4. What activities were being conducted to increase self esteem?

5. What activities were being conducted that increased children's growth in the following areas:

   - Speech
   - Oral
   - Play
   - Song
   - Parental involvement
   - Drawing
   - Scribbling

6. Did you see caregivers doing any of the things that children need at that age? Can you describe what was done? How did the children respond?

7. Did the caregivers make attempts to accommodate different learning styles? If so, how did they do this?

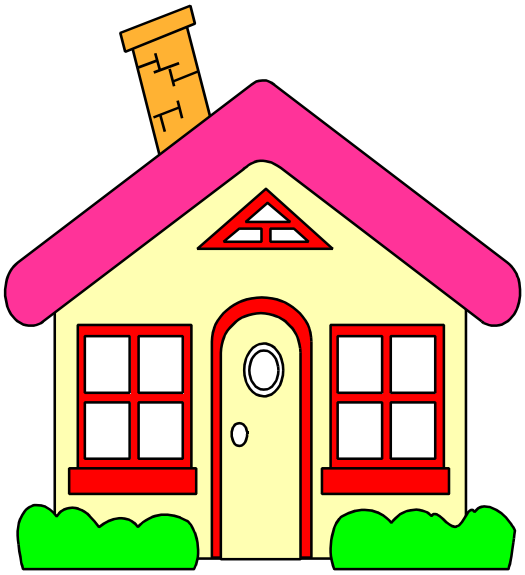
8. Do you think it is important that families also do such things? Could you do some of these thing at home?

9. Were the children learning things? What were they learning?

10. Could the daycare workers have enhanced the learning of the children?

Module 4

Preparing Your Home For Literacy



EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 4 - Preparing the Home for Literacy

The first environment known to a child is the home where he or she is living. Parents can make physical changes in this environment to create a good setting for literacy development.

4.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify the characteristics of a nurturing, supportive home environment	Learners will understand that a nurturing, supportive home environment will help children become literate.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Promote a sensitive and caring approach to this module. Respect the fact that all parents do the best they can for their children and want their children to succeed in literacy.

- Help learners identify themselves as teachers.
- Seek the knowledge that learners, themselves, bring to this course.
- Use the 'Developing Trust' exercise as a reading assignment.

4.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify options for acquiring literacy materials.	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of where books and other literacy materials can be found in the community, and ways to access those materials.

 Notes to Facilitator:

What books are appropriate for what ages? Parents can create a book exchange, visit the library, or discuss other resources. How this objective is met will depend on the resources available in the community.

- There are many different types of books. These should be explained to learners.
- Facilitator should become familiar with options for acquiring books in the local area.
- Focus on inexpensive ways to acquire print.

4.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Understand that television can be a friend or foe as a tool in early literacy acquisition.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of how television can have both positive and negative effects on literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Television is present in most homes and is used more often by children than by adults. Many TV programs are designed specifically for children.

- Use the 'Home Reading Guide' as a reading assignment.
- Use the 'Friend or Foe' reading about television to promote discussion.

4.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define environmental print and examine its use in enhancing family literacy.	Learners should be able to define environmental print and understand how it can be used to enhance literacy.

 Notes to Facilitator:

This topic extends the examination of literacy in the child's environment, including beyond the home.

- Focus on activities which help learners locate sources of print
- Conduct learning activities which give parents and learners new tools - new ways of recording/recognizing their environment for children, and teaching their children to recognize environmental signs. Examples include: street signs, supermarkets, stores, post office, fish plant, food, cereal boxes, health care aids, and clothing symbols.
- Identify inexpensive sources of print samples (flyers, signs, calendars).

4.5	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the importance of writing, printing, drawing and painting in literacy development, and explore their applications..	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of how these tools are used in literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

- Students should discuss the importance of making materials available to children.
- Developmental characteristics should be considered in terms of what kind of writing, if any, should be expected by a given age.

4.6	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Describe the characteristics of a literacy-oriented home	Learners should be able to list several characteristics of a literacy-oriented home.

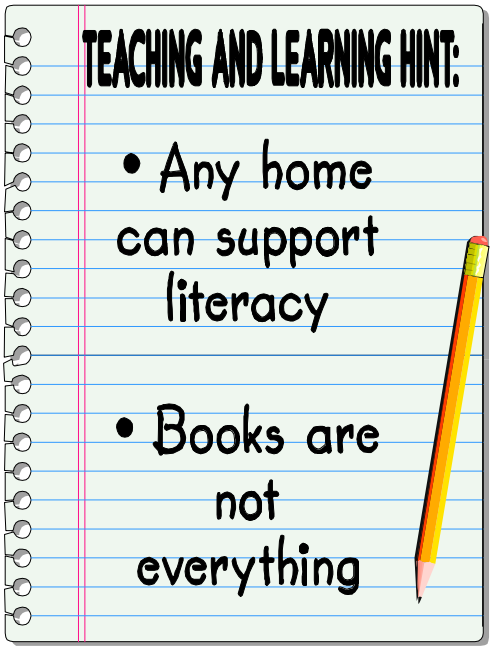
 Notes to Facilitator:

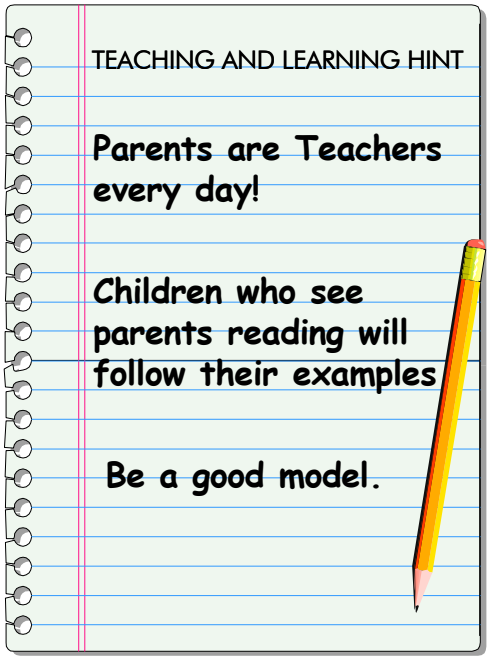
Learners may wish to design a home literacy centre. This is a place in the home where books, writing materials, environmental print, and other literacy resources are available in a comfortable setting for regular use

- A literacy centre has resources for reading, writing and drawing.
- A literacy centre is for fun.
- A literacy centre is just as much about ‘attitude’ as it is about printing or reading.
- Literacy includes music.
- Use a variety of materials for differing developmental ages.

4.7	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.	Learners should be able to define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.
	Notes to Facilitator: • Facilitator can use classroom modelling to explain the importance of parental modelling of literate behaviour. • Class demonstrations, paired or group activities, brainstorming, or other appropriate methods can be used to discover, discuss, and practice appropriate modelling behaviour.	

MODULE 4 - RESOURCES





Developing Trust: A Reading Assignment

Newborn babies need to become attached to at least one person who provides security and love. Usually this is a parent! This first and most basic emotional attachment is the start for all human relationships.

What you'll need

- Loving arms
- Music

What to do

1. Include happy rituals in your baby's schedule. For example, at bedtime, sing the same song every night, rock her, or rub her tummy.

2. Pick up your crying baby promptly. Try to find out what's wrong. Is she hungry? Wet? Bored? Too hot? Crying is your baby's way of communicating. By comforting her you send the message that language has a purpose and that someone wants to understand.

3. Gently move your newborn's arms and legs. Or tickle her lightly under the chin or on the tummy. When she starts to control her head, lie on the floor and put the baby on your chest. Let her reach for your nose, or grab your hair. Talk to her and name each thing she touches, and even some basic description including such things as colour and numbers.

4. Sing and cuddle with your baby. Hold her snuggled in your arms or lying face up on your lap with her head on your knees. Make sure the head of a newborn is well-supported. Sing a favourite lullaby.

   To entertain your baby, sing an active song. For example:

   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!
   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!
   If you're happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,
   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!

   If you don't know lullabies or rhymes for babies, make up your own!

5. Dance with your baby. To soothe her when she's upset, put her head on your shoulder and hum softly or listen to recorded music as you glide around the room. To amuse her when she's cheerful, try a bouncy tune.

Taken from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Learners are Teachers

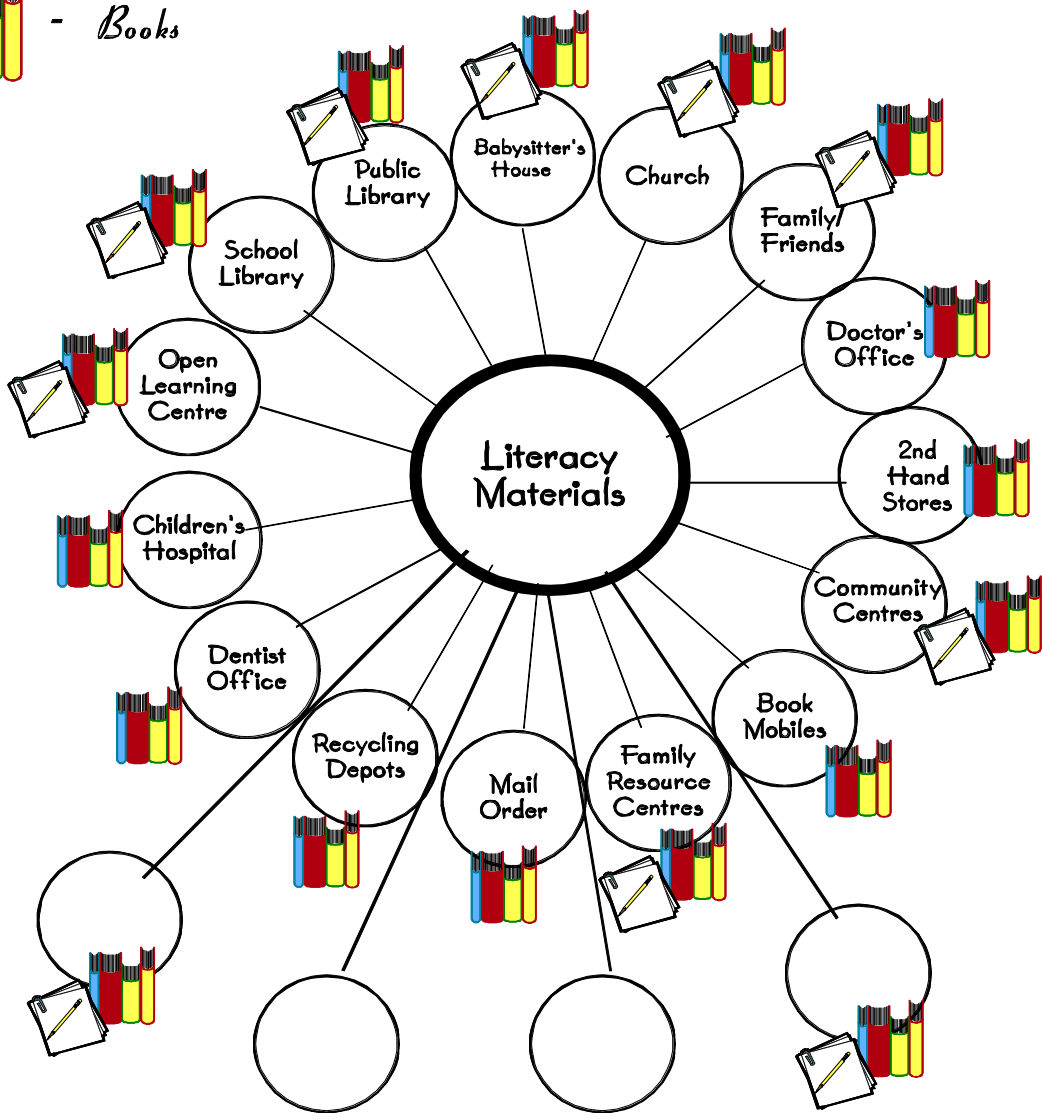
I am a learner when I:

I am a teacher when I:

Where Can I Find Literacy Materials?

- Drawing/Scribbling

- Books

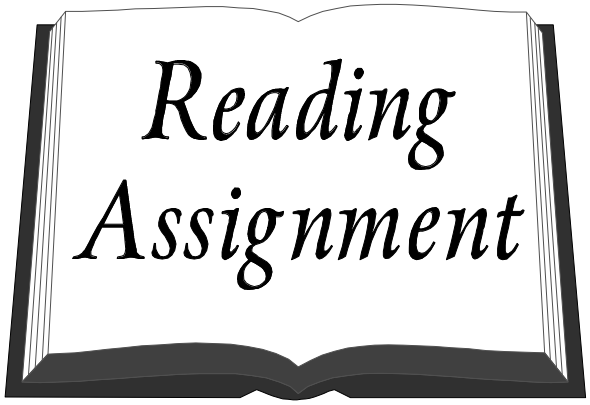


Can you think of other places to find literacy materials?

LITERACY FOR LIFE

Home Reading Guide

Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association



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Building A Home Reading Environment

The results of a Harvard University study rate the "home reading environment" as the single most important home factor affecting literacy development in children. In fact, children who grow up in a good "home reading environment" are much more likely to be strong and interested readers than children who do not, no matter how much reading is encouraged at school.

How do you create a good home reading environment? In this section, you'll find seven steps to help you get started. It's important that you follow each step, whether your child is three, five or 15 years old. However, not all the suggestions under each step will work with all ages - some are appropriate for younger children, some are best for older, and some are great for children of all ages!

STEP 1: Establish A Reading Routine In Your Household

▶ Decide on a **time** and **place** that works for you and your family. This doesn't mean that you have to read at the same time everyday if your schedules just won't allow that, or that you have to read in the same room every time. But it does mean that you have to establish a routine so you can read regularly. Sunday, for instance, could be for curling up in the family room at 2:00 in the afternoon; Monday, could be for sitting at the kitchen table and reading aloud to one another; and so on.

▶ The **times** you chose should be negotiated so they're convenient for everyone involved, and you shouldn't have to sacrifice other things you and your child absolutely want or need to do. The times should also be as free of distractions as you can make them - that means turning off the television and stereo!

▶ The **place** (or **places**) should be comfortable for you, whether that means reading around a table, while lounging on the sofa, or while curled up in bed. Remember, though, the place should also be well lit.

STEP 2: Provide A Variety Of Reading Materials

▶ Be sure to consider your child's interests (sports, hobbies, science fiction, adventure, whatever)!

▶ Try to select books and other reading materials that are at the right reading level. If you aren't sure how to go about doing this, there are two things you can try. The first is to ask your child to read a page or paragraph from his or her book, then count silently to yourself every word that's skipped or stumbled over. If you count five or more such words, the book is too difficult for your child, and you should either replace it or read it aloud.

▶ Make sure your child is exposed to different types of books: mysteries, biographies, fantasy, poetry, information books, fiction, non-fiction, and so on.

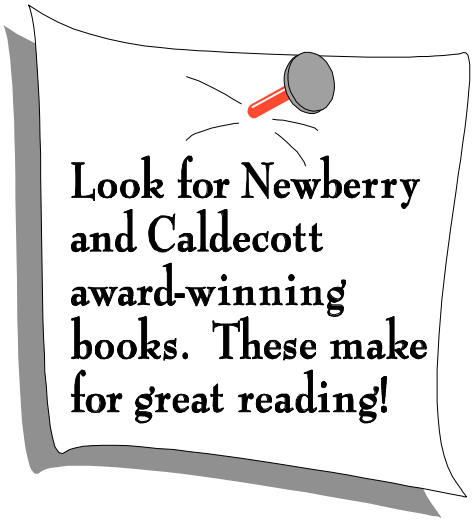
▶ Expose your child to various forms of reading material: newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, books on tape, etc. Books on tape, for instance, can provide great entertainment during long car rides!

▶ Call attention to the words on billboards, packaging, signs, and other such things in your home and community.

▶ Include books and other reading materials in your gift-giving; make a book the gift your child can count on receiving for any special occasion when you normally receive gifts.

▶ Remember that the public library is a great source of reading material and a great place to introduce your child to everything from picture books to encyclopaedias. One of your goals should be to have the whole family register in the library. However, if there's no public library, check to see if your school resource centre (library) is an alternative. Libraries often offer story time hours and have visiting authors.

▶ When buying books, remember to look at "used" as well as new books. If your community doesn't have a bookstore, be sure to take advantage of school book fairs or join a book club. This will keep you and your family in touch with new publications and provide an opportunity for regular purchases.



STEP 3: Motivate And Encourage Your Child

▶ Respond positively to your child's questions, thoughts and ideas. When reading aloud to your child, stop and ask questions about what might happen next, what just happened, or what your child thinks of the events unfolding in the story. Encourage your child to comment as you go along, and offer thoughts and ideas about what is being read. When a child is reading a book on his or her own, ask questions about the story.

Ask:

Who... What...When... Where... Why... How... Why do you think that... How do you know that... and, What do you think would have happened if...?

▶ Praise your children's reading efforts. Make sure you let them know that you notice when they're reading and you like it! The other half of this, of course, is to remind them when you notice that they're not reading and give some *gentle* encouragement (Don't nag).

▶ Create an expectation with an empty bookshelf! Start off with a book that will really stimulate an interest in reading together as a "shared" experience, then get a bookcase to hold the family's treasures. Exactly how you do this is entirely up to you. You can shop together for a bookshelf that you can simply bring home and put in place. You can purchase something that requires some assembly and have all bookshelf owners involved in putting it together. Or, if you have a talent or interest in woodworking, you might decide to build your own. The important thing is to fill the shelves with your shared books. And when the shelves are filled, you get to share the sense of accomplishment ... and probably start on the next bookshelf!

STEP 4: Show Your Child That You Value Reading

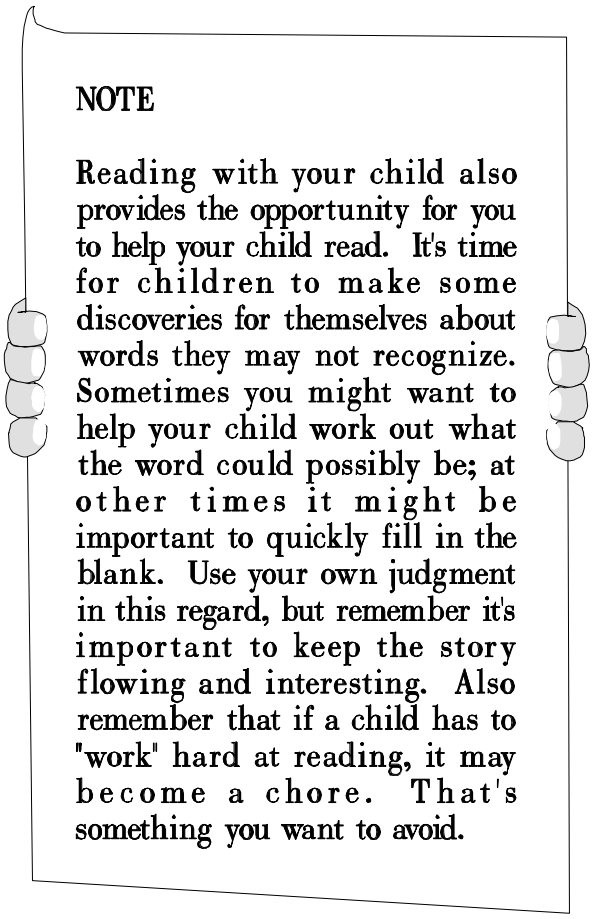
▶ READ! Your child should see you reading something everyday, even if it's the newspaper. It's a well documented fact that children imitate the behaviour of adults. If you're a good reading model (if you read regularly for information, pleasure, and certain everyday activities), chances are your child will get the message that reading is important! Remember, though, if you wait until your child is tucked into bed to have your own reading time, your child doesn't get to see you reading!

▶ Establish a "caught reading" rule in your household. It won't be one of those rules that means trouble, however. If you're caught reading you should expect to be rewarded (with smiles and approval at least)!

STEP 5: Share The Reading Experience With Your Child

▶ Read **aloud** to your child - everyday if at all possible. This doesn't mean you read only to children who can't yet read for themselves. The point has been made all too often that we stop reading when they can read for themselves. Although we associate it with childhood, reading aloud is enjoyed by people of all ages and can be just as stimulating for the teen as it is for the five-year-old. And, when children have the ability to read, it simply allows them to share the reading experience in a different way.

▶ Read **with** your child. This may mean that the two of you are sharing reading time by reading in the same room, it may mean that you're sharing the same book and are reading together, or it may mean your child is reading to you. All are valuable experiences! When you're reading the same book- whether you're reading, your child is reading, or you're taking turns - try asking questions and responding to the questions your child asks.



STEP 6: Make Reading Relevant

▶ Leave notes around your house as reminders of important dates, times, etc. and encourage your child to write notes to you. You can sneak notes into your child's lunch box, or put them under pillows, and you should remember to always ask for a response.

▶ Put junk mail to good use by sorting through and reading it together.

▶ Write the family grocery list together. You could even plan meals or entire menus together and have your child write them out. Then, when it's time to prepare meals that require the use of a cookbook, your child can read the recipe aloud and measure the ingredients. Reading cookbooks can provide a very tasty experience ... especially if you're cooking something!

▶ Encourage children to write by providing lots of materials. Depending on the ages involved, this could mean pens, pencils, crayons, or markers, and sheets of paper or blank page books. Remember that for young children, drawings and scribbles are the beginning of their writing development, so encourage these. For older children, writing in journals or diaries can help improve their skills and help them get excited about writing.

▶ Have your child help you scan magazines to clip the money-saving coupons. You may want to reward him or her by giving a percentage of the savings found.

▶ Enter contests and respond to consumer surveys with your child so that you can fill out the forms and address the envelopes together.

▶ Have children help you use the yellow pages in the telephone book when you're looking for particular information. Or, have them search the newspaper with you for sale prices of groceries and other family items.

▶ Have children help you select perfect greeting cards for family members or friends. This will mean they get to browse through the card stacks and read all the verses and messages until they find the card that's just right!

▶ Have a written conversation with older children; this really works when the conversation deals with a difficult topic.

STEP 7: Make Reading Fun

▶ Have children relate what they read to their own experiences. Always remember that when you read, it's very important to make the connections between the words on the page and the information you already have inside your head. If it's an adventure story, relate it to an adventure in your own life. Relate a happy story to a happy event in your life, a sad story to a sad event, and so on.

▶ Play reading games with younger children. For instance, you can make a game of finding letters hidden in your kitchen - on soup cans, cookie bags, cereal boxes and soap. Ask your child to find three A's or seven B's, or five items that have the first letter of his or her name. Or, play this transformer game. Begin with a word your child already knows, then change one or two letters in the beginning, middle or end of the word and have your child read the transformed word. For example, if you start with a boat, some transformed words could be goat, moan, mean, meat.

There are also lots of rhyming games that help with language development. Before you start, remember to explain that two words that sound alike are said to rhyme and give two examples-house and mouse; dog and log.

Here are some ideas:

Make up riddles

- I rhyme with cool. You can swim in me. What am I? (pool)
- I rhyme with lake. You can eat me. What am I? (cake)
- I rhyme with see. You can climb me. What am I? (tree)

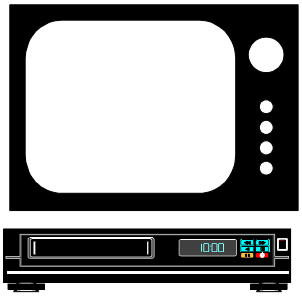
Make up statements and wait for the response

- Name an animal that rhymes with sat. (cat, bat).
- Name a flower that rhymes with toes. (rose)
- Name a letter that rhymes with tea. (P, C, D)
- Name a number that rhymes with shoe. (two)

▶ When reading aloud, read with expression. A story can be made all the more enjoyable when each character is given a different voice or accent. Exaggeration is usually a fun way to spice up a conversation between two characters, no matter what your age!

▶ Invite someone to your home, maybe a grandparent or friend, to be the guest reader during your regular reading time. While it's important to maintain the continuity and routine of your reading time, variety adds extra enjoyment. Make sure the person you invite understands how your reading time works and is willing to participate in a meaningful way.

▶ If you have a personal computer in your home, try taking advantage of many children's natural curiosity about computers. Very young children can point out letters on the keyboard. You can also look for reading (and even writing) software that's designed for your child's reading level.



TELEVISION - Friend or Foe?

Television must be considered in the context of any family literacy course. It is a reality in most homes. Children often watch television for hours a day. Some of this programming may be helpful for literacy, especially educational programming, but a lot of programming is not likely to have any positive effect.

To help you make these choices and to consider the pros and cons, we want to give you more than one source to work with, and encourage you to seek further ones.

Roll Credits…

- The first source is adapted from an essay entitled "Good Television Habits" from a U.S. Department of Education Internet publication called Getting Your Child Ready For School.

- The second source is a piece called "Television Viewing," which can be found in the Newfoundland and Labrador Home and School Federation resource binder called The Essential Link, with slight adaptations.

Good Television Habits

Children in North America may have watched an average of 4,000 hours of television by the time they begin school. Most experts agree that this is too much. But banning television isn't the answer, because good television can spark curiosity and open up new worlds to children. Monitoring how much and what they watch helps children, starting at an early age, to develop good viewing habits.

Too much television can be harmful because:

< It can expose children to too much sex and violence;
< Children can be unduly influenced by junk-food and toy commercials;
< It can give children a poor model for good behaviour before they have developed a clear sense of right and wrong;
< Young children do not have the experience and wisdom to understand complicated plots or scary scenes;
< Sitting passively in front of the set for extended periods of time can slow young children's social and intellectual development.

Here are some tips to help children develop good television viewing habits.

- Keep a record of how many hours of TV your children watch, and what they watch. Generally, it's good to limit the amount to two hours or less a day, although you can make exceptions for special programs.

- Learn about current TV programs and videos and select good ones. As parents, you know your children best. So, select TV programs and videos that are meaningful to your family. Some TV programs you may wish to consider include Sesame Street or Shining Time Station.

- Plan with your children (starting at age 3) what programs to watch. After selecting programs appropriate for your children, help them decide which ones to watch. Turn the TV on when these shows start, and turn the set off when they are over.

- Watch television with your children so you can answer questions and talk about what they see. Pay special attention to how they respond so you can help them understand what they're seeing, if that's needed.

- Follow up TV viewing with activities or games. You might have your child tell you a new word he learned on television that you can look up together in the dictionary. Or you might have her make up her own story about one of her favourite TV characters.

- Include the whole family in discussion and activities or games that relate to television programs. Older siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents can all contribute.

- Make certain that television isn't regularly used as a babysitter. Instead, try to balance good television with other fun activities for your child.

Television Viewing

You as parents have to decide how much television viewing you consider desirable. Your decision will be based on your views of the connection between violence on television and violence in real life, your views on the educational value of television, your observations of your children's other interests and other individual factors.

Research studies do not always agree but some things seem clear:

- Television does affect children - how they play, how they see the world, how they act.

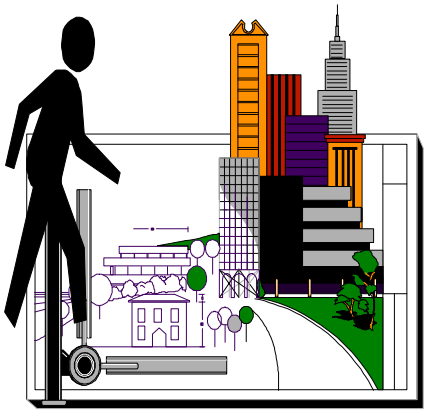
- Violence on television affects children and youth in several ways. Kids who watch a lot of violence may believe that it is alright for people to be violent. It makes them more likely to act in violent ways such as shouting, bullying, and fighting. The effects of television may be stronger on children who have experience with real violence. The effects of television violence on children can have a serious impact on school, on play, and on home life.

- Television has positive effects on children too, and is good at getting pro-social messages across.

- The more children watch, the greater the effects of watching.

- The more children talk and think about what they see on the screen, the less TV affects them. Children learn nonviolent ways to handle problems from adults who watch TV with them and who suggest other ways of solving problems.

- Television affects children's health, their physical fitness, and nutrition. Kids who watch a lot of television are less physically fit. Children are more likely to choose foods they see in television commercials and that means their choices are not always healthy.



Environmental Print

Environmental print is found in your physical environment. It may be a brand name on a box of cookies, a sign in the park giving directions, or a logo on a machine. There are many examples of environmental print.

Environmental print is a tool available to everyone to help with literacy development. You can teach your child to find print everywhere. Through environmental print, your child may begin to understand that words and letters mean something and that they are useful. This realization is a very important step on the way to literacy.

Best of all - environmental print is a free source of literacy-building!

Practice Activity

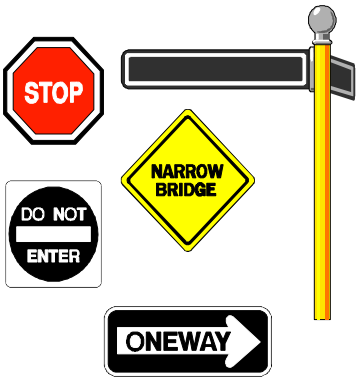
Go for a short walk outdoors (15 minutes or so) by yourself or with a friend. On your walk, write down as many examples of environmental print as you can find. What kinds of signs do you find? Look everywhere. Write down the examples you find and share them with others when you return to class.

Or,

Go to your kitchen and spend 10 or 15 minutes listing the sources of print. Overlook nothing. Open doors and lift things. Where is print? Write down the examples and share them with others.

Let's Take a Walk: A Reading Assignment

Taking a walk with your child is an excellent way to introduce environmental print. First, pick a street or two near your home that might have a small business, a recreation centre, or something else with a sign. As you walk with your child, point out some signs, such as street signs, stop signs, store signs, signs at a playground, etc. Explain to your child that signs must have letters, and that they tell you something. When appropriate, explain what the signs mean. See if your child can point out any signs to you. If you are walking near a sign, try playing "I spy:"



"I spy, with my little eye, a sign that is green."

or

"I spy, with my little eye, a very big red sign."

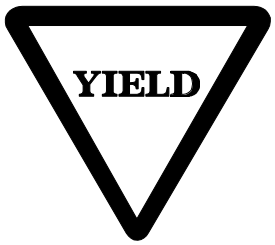
Don't worry if your child is not completely fascinated with signs. Just turn it into a game. Don't harp on it. If she isn't listening, just point out some signs to yourself, out loud. For example, "Wow, there sure are a lot of stop signs. They're always red, and they're always on corners and they have four big letters that spell "S-T-O-P." Your child will notice what you are talking about and become interested.

While you are out on your walk, remember to keep talking with your child, commenting on other things that you both see. If you play "I spy," you don't always have to use signs. Mix it up for variety's sake to maintain the child's interest. If she knows her colours, look for a black car, a blue house, etc. This is an activity that could be repeated many times. Walk the same route each time until the child knows where all the signs are, then try another route.

As your child gets older, point out bigger words! Have fun!

Here are Four Quick "Workshops" on Environmental Print:

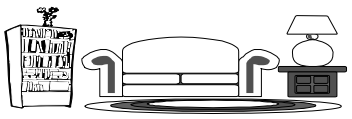
1. Making Signs



2. Shop 'Til You Drop

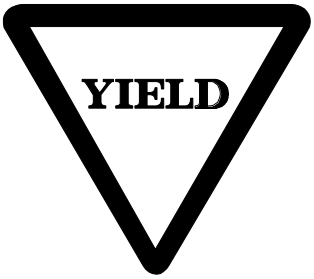
3. My Book

4. Building a Family Home Literacy Centre



Workshop 1 ..... *Making Signs*

Some things you will need:



- Paper or bristol board
- Blunt-nosed scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Pencil
- Tape

Activity:

Help a small child, at home, to make a printed sign for each room, object or person the child can name. Have fun hanging or placing the signs throughout the home.

Learning Discussion:

- How interesting was this exercise for you? For the child?
- Was it fun? If not, how could it be made more enjoyable?
- What age is best for this exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 2 .....*Shop 'Til You Drop*

Material:

- Sales flyers
- A trip to the grocery store

Activity:

Plan a shopping trip with a child by finding items in sales flyers. Use pictures, or words to make a list. At the grocery store, name or spell the items with the child.

Learning Discussion:

- What did you learn? What did the child learn?
- Was it fun?
- What age is best for this exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 3 ..... *My Book*

What you'll need:

- Paper
- Yarn, pipe cleaners, or staples
- A paper punch for holes
- Pencil, pen, crayons
- Paste
- Blunt-tipped scissors

Activity:

Help a child make a booklet of five or six pages. Your child can help punch holes close to one edge and thread yarn through the holes to keep the pages together. You can also bind the book with twisted pipe cleaners, or staple the pages together. Be creative and accept your child's suggestions.

On the outside cover, write your child's name, or encourage the child to do so.

Let your child decide what will go on each page. Examples: Other people in my family. My favourite toys. My favourite books. My friends. My pet. My neighbourhood. My home (or my bedroom). My own drawings.

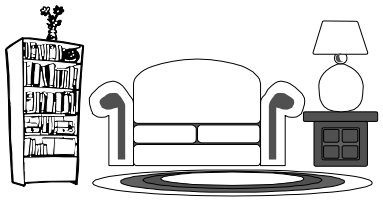
Learning Discussion:

- Printing, drawing, reading and writing are all literacy activities. Which are used by very young children? Which are used by older children?
- How long did the child stay interested in this activity?
- Was it a fun exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 4 …… *Building A Family Literacy Centre*

Material:



- A comfortable corner of your home where reading, writing or drawing can take place.
- Books, magazines, flyers, newspapers, playing cards, cardboard cartons, tape recorder, paper, pencils, pens, crayons, and anything else you think is useful in building literacy skills.

Activity:

Set aside a small part of your home for reading, writing and drawing. Take some time every day for a week or so to spend time with your child or children, just on these activities. Be flexible about the times because the 'attention span' of a child may be short, or be different from day to day.

Learning Discussion:

- What 'modelling' activities were you able to carry out?
- Did you spend time in the literacy centre alone?
- Did you read books together, print, write or draw together?
- Did brothers and sisters spend time together in the literacy centre?
- Which activities were the most fun?
- What are your recommendations for building a literacy centre in a home?

Notes:

Here are a few tips about introducing your preschoolers to art:

- **Q** Let them decide what to draw or paint.
- **Q** Don't fix up their pictures. It will take lots of practice before you can recognize their pictures. That may not happen until they are in kindergarten.
- **Q** Give them lots of different materials to work with. Parents can demonstrate new types of art materials.
- **Q** Find an art activity at the right age level for your child. Let the child do as much of the project as possible.
- **Q** Ask preschoolers to *talk* about their pictures.
- **Q** Display your child's art prominently in your home. Use lots of praise!

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Module 5

Having Fun With Literacy

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 5 - Having Fun with Literacy

Children love to play, laugh, sing, and experience the world around them. As they do, they develop their mental, physical, and emotional selves, and they learn how to relate to others. This is an important fundamental of literacy development.

This Module stresses the importance of the parent's role in facilitating the learning process by enriching the learning experience with fun and play. Parents should learn that literacy is not achieved through work alone, but through fun and new experience as well.

5.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Illustrate how new experiences can be used to build a broader foundation for literacy.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding that personal experience is a basis for literacy development in children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

New experience stimulates literacy by providing opportunities for communication and increased vocabulary.

- Field trips should promote new learning.
- Learners should have some choice about where to go on a field trip.
- Concentrate on a 'fun' field trip and let the learning happen naturally.

5.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explain the importance of play in the learning process.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of how play can be used as a learning tool.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Learners may want to brainstorm examples of play which facilitate learning, or more particularly, literacy learning.

- Make-believe is an example of a kind of play which comes naturally to children, that they enjoy, and which can have positive effects on vocabulary, imagination, and a child's ability to relate to others.

- Storytelling is a form of play.

5.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Identify and evaluate some literacy-oriented games.	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of literacy-oriented games and be able to assess their value in terms of literacy.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Many games are suited to older children and will have to be adapted for an approach with younger children. You may want learners to try the games themselves, and do a comparative analysis as to which game or games are the most educational and most fun.

- Learners may also want to bring in ideas or games themselves, such as Junior Boggle or Scrabble.

- Explain that these are only examples and try to have learners introduce games they know.

- Have learners choose a game to 'learn' with classmates.

5.4

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Examine some common rhymes and songs to assess their importance in literacy development	Learners should demonstrate an awareness that rhymes and songs play a role in early childhood literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Facilitator may want to compile some children's rhymes or songs from the library, or have learners bring examples to class.

- Each person could pick a rhyme or song and to find a way to teach it to the other learners.
- Developing a journal or portfolio of rhymes can be used for evaluation purposes.

5.5

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Evaluate the effectiveness of jokes, riddles, and comics as learning tools.	Learners should demonstrate an appreciation for the role of jokes, riddles, and comics as learning tools.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Learners should consider the developmental stages of children. At what age can children begin to appreciate humour? When can they appreciate puns and riddles? How can comics be used as a tool to promote literacy?

- A brainstorming session or other appropriate means can be used to explore these kinds of questions.

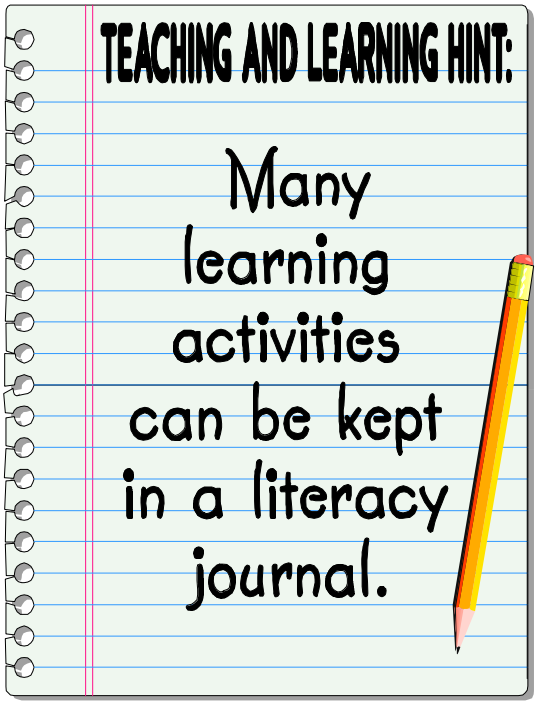
5.6	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Practicum II (Interaction): Interact with children at a cooperating local daycare to investigate the value of fun activities in building literacy.	Learners should demonstrate personal awareness of ways to use fun activities for encouraging early literacy development.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  The primary purpose of the Practicum is to allow learners the opportunity to put into practice something they have learned.

  - Direct interaction with a child or children, preferably in a supervised setting, should be encouraged.
  - Discuss the value of unstructured play.
  - Have learners discuss play which is appropriate to various age groups.

MODULE 5 - RESOURCES



Recording a Field Trip!

The purpose of this exercise is to introduce learners to new experience and to allow learners to discover how important such experiences are in building literacy. Remember that this is only one way to introduce new experiences to learners - there may be many more.

1. Try to pick a destination that is unfamiliar, and that everyone can agree on. Spend at least two hours in this place.

2. While there, explore and learn as much as possible. Ask questions, if possible.

3. Write about your new experience in a journal. In your journal, ask questions like ...

   (a) What was fun about this trip?

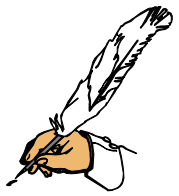
   (b) What did I enjoy the most?

   (c) What are some things that I learned during this trip?

   (d) What are some things a child might learn?

   (e) What is the value of going on trips like this in terms of my own literacy?

   (f) Would I take a child to this place?



NOTES:

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_____

Some Literacy-Oriented Games

Your library and bookstore have many books on language activities for children. Here are a few easy 'tried and true' favourites.

1. Grandma is Strange

Each player takes turns having a strange grandmother. The first player starts out: "My Grandmother is very strange. She loves tennis but she hates games." The statement is based on a secret combination that the player has thought up.

The next player asks a question, for example:
Q: "Does she like carrots?"
A: "Yes" answers the first, and gives them another clue, "but she hates peas."
Q: "Does she like dogs?"
A: "No, but she's crazy about raccoons."

The secret combination is that Grandmother likes anything that has a double letter in it, like buttons - but not bows; zoos, but not animals; pepper, but not salt.

As players discover Grandmother's secret, they can join in giving clues to other players.
The last player to "catch on" to the secret is the next one to have a strange grandmother.

2. Teapot

One of the players must cover his ears while all the others choose a secret verb. When the verb has been chosen, the player uncovers his ears and begins to question the others, substituting the word "teapot" for the mysterious verb. "How often do you teapot?" might be one question. "Can someone over eighty teapot with ease?" might be another. You can set a limit of ten questions before a guess, to which sensible answers must be given. If the player guesses correctly he gains a point and another player becomes the speaker.

3. The Minister's Cat

This game uses adjectives, or words that describe nouns. Each player has a definite order. The leader starts by saying, "The minister's cat is a _____ cat," filling in the blank with an adjective beginning with A, for example, an angry cat. The next person continues finding another adjective with A until everyone is out. Then everyone shifts to B, and so on through the alphabet. You may decide to skip X and Z!

4. Yarn Spinning

You need to fill a cardboard box with a random selection of different and preferably slightly unusual objects. For example, a toothbrush, a feather duster, binoculars, a left shoe, a foreign coin, a bus schedule, an egg cup, a Bible, a jar of sugar, and a screwdriver would do nicely. Try to pick safe objects which are not sharp.

To play the game, invite each player in turn to close her eyes and pick four objects out of the box. You then give her five minutes in which to tell a story, any story she cares to invent. The only condition is that she must bring each of her four objects into the story at some stage. When everyone has spun their yarn, the group should discuss the most amusing parts of each story.

5. Twenty Questions

One player must cover her ears while all the others choose an object - it can be anything from an apple to a zebra, from Mickey Mouse to the moon. When the object has been chosen, the player can unplug her ears and has twenty questions - all of them requiring Yes or No answers - in which to arrive at the identity of the mystery object. To help her on her way, the others are allowed to say whether the object is "animal," "vegetable," or "mineral," or a combination of all three. Players who uncover their mystery objects by the time they reach their twentieth question gain a point, and the player with the most points after a set number of rounds, wins the game.

..... *And for younger children*

These games are mainly for school-aged children. Can any of them be made simpler, so that a younger child might enjoy them? For example, "**Twenty Questions**" could become a simple guessing game. The adult could say "I am thinking of something that is ____," describing perhaps a toy or everyday object that the child is familiar with. There are no real rules, so the child can keep asking questions, and the adult can give hints whenever necessary. Start with something very simple, using more difficult things as the child becomes good at the game. What are some other examples of games for younger children which involve playing with words?

Adapted from The Essential Link, Eva Whitmore, Newfoundland & Labrador Home and School Federation, 1996.

Making Music Makers +

Music is a way to communicate that all children understand. It's not necessary for them to follow the words to a song. It makes them happy just to hear the comfort in your voice or on the recording or to dance to a peppy tune.

Introduce music to your children early. Listening to you sing will help them learn to make their voices go up and down--even if you can't carry a tune! Music and dance teach preschoolers to listen, to coordinate hand and finger movements, and to express themselves creatively.

Materials:

- dried beans
- buttons
- masking tape
- recorder and blank tape
- cardboard cylinders
- string
- pieces of wood
- elastic bands
- anything that makes a pleasing noise

Activity:

Using simple household products, and lots of imagination, create a musical instrument. Use the instrument to introduce a child to a song you know and love, perhaps one from your own childhood. Record your child having fun with the song and play it back, together. Discuss the song or write parts of the song on paper. A child may wish to 'draw a picture' of the song or its words. Encourage this, but do not insist - because this exercise is about fun, not work!

Learning Discussion:

- What was fun about this exercise?
- Did the child ask questions about your song?
- What did you learn about your own song?

Notes:

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Practicum II

• *Hopefully, learners will be able to visit a daycare (in a group size which is manageable and agreeable to the daycare), so as to spend two to three hours observing and interacting with children. Learners must act under the direction of Early Childhood Educators, assisting or leading activities with individuals or small groups of children as is appropriate. Learners should record their observations and the results of their interactions.*

• *Some questions which may be appropriate for learners to answer are as follows:*

1. Did you take note of activities which children *enjoyed* that also resulted in *learning*?

2. Describe one such activity.

3. What happened? Did children learn things such as: following directions; physical coordination; social skills (like cooperation or sharing); new vocabulary; using their imagination; anything else?

4. Does this activity have any value in terms of literacy?

5. Can families use this or a similar activity?

Module 6

Reading and Talking

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 6 - Reading & Talking

Most parents want to do everything in their power to assist their children's literacy development. This Module provides some proven techniques to assist parents in reading and talking to their children which parents may or may not already be using.

It is extremely important that the facilitator continue to build on the self-esteem of learners throughout this module. The goal is to make parents feel good about being parents, and to build on what they already do.

6.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Discuss the importance of oral language in literacy development	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of oral language in literacy development.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  "Some Points on the Importance of Oral Communication" might be a good place to start with this objective.

  - Stress the importance of starting early.
  - Discuss ways to create opportunities for reading aloud.
  - Hold a group discussion on how to make reading a daily activity at home.

6.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Compare strategies learners can use when reading with children.	Learners will demonstrate an awareness of strategies that can be used when reading to children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

"Read to Me" contains some suggestions for paired reading. Learners may want to practice reading to one another in pairs, using various strategies as appropriate.

- Demonstrate paired or shared reading in class.
- Demonstrate oral reading in class.
- Demonstrate creation of stories in class.

6.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define scaffolding, and examine how it can be used as a technique to build literacy.	Learners will demonstrate an understanding that literacy develops, over time, by adding new skills to old skills.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator may wish to use the resource “What is Scaffolding?” to explain this term. When this is done, parents should discuss occasions when they have used or would use this technique.

- Review child development issues.
- Demonstrate scaffolding in class.

6.4

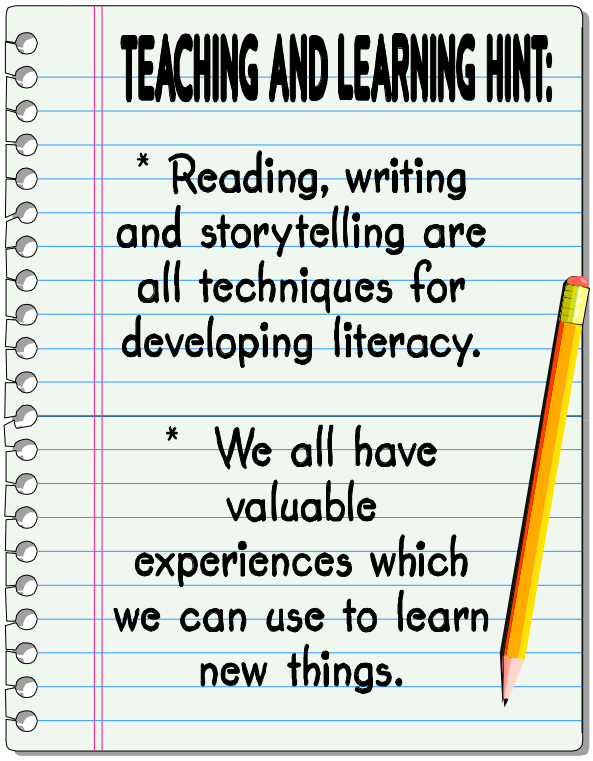
OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Practicum III (Application): Read and talk to children, and apply techniques used in this Module.	Learners should understand the relevance of reading techniques in the development of literacy.

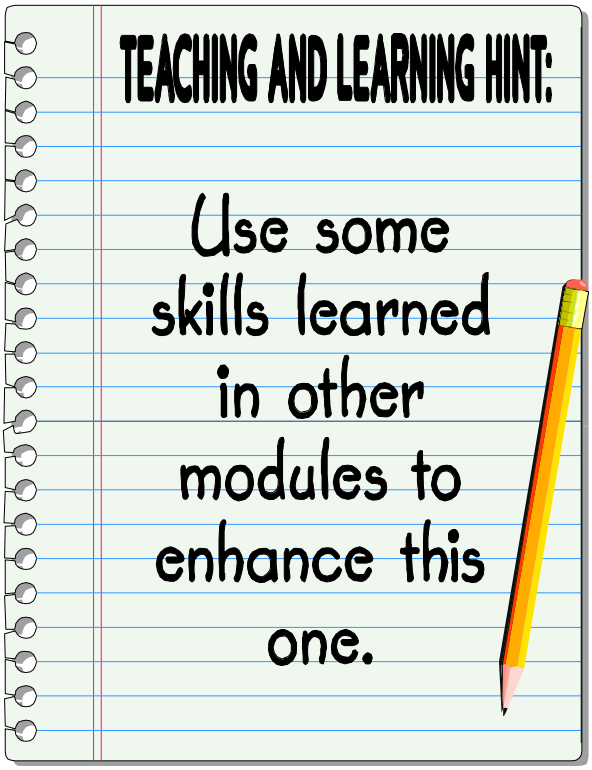
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  This objective could be met in a cooperating daycare or at home, whichever is most feasible.

  - Be clear about expectations
  - Choose only one form of reading activity to practice
  - Have learners record their observations about the practice activity.
  - Hold group discussions after the practicums to share learning.

MODULE 6 - RESOURCES





Read to Me!

The single most important way for children to develop the knowledge they need to succeed in reading is for you to read aloud to them--beginning early.

What you'll need:

- Children's books
- A children's dictionary (optional)
- Your own ideas about what to read aloud.

What to do:

1. **Read aloud to your child every day**. From birth to 6 months your baby probably won't understand what you're reading, but that's okay. You can get her used to the sound of your voice and get her used to seeing and touching books.

2. **To start out, use board books with no words or just a few words**. Point to the colours and the pictures and say their names. Simple books can teach children things that will later help them learn to read. For example, they learn about the structure of language--that there are spaces between the words and that the print goes from left to right.

3. **Tell stories.** Encourage your child to ask questions and talk about the story. Ask her to predict what will come next. Point to things in books that she can relate to in her own life: "Look at the picture of the boat. Do you remember the boat we saw in the harbour?"

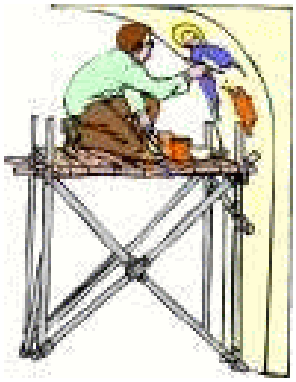
4. **Look for reading programs**. There may be programs in your community that can provide opportunities for you to improve your own reading, if you think that is necessary, and to read with your child. Friends and relatives can also read to your child, and senior citizen volunteers are available in some communities to do the same.

5. **Use a children's dictionary**. If possible, use one that has pictures next to the words. Then start the "let's look it up" habit.

6. **Visit a library as often as possible**. Begin making weekly trips to the library when your child is very young. See that your child gets her own library card as soon as possible. Many libraries issue cards to children as soon as they can print their names. If your community has no public library, ask a local school if you and your child can visit their library.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

What is Scaffolding?



Have you ever watched the construction of a two or three storey building?

If so, you know that it is difficult to finish the exterior siding in the high places without something to support you. Builders have solved this problem by simply building something to stand on - something called scaffolding. At the lower levels of the building, they do not need any help. As they need to reach higher and higher, however, the builders need the help and support of scaffolding in order to reach the highest places, as seen in the picture. So what does this have to do with family literacy?

Scaffolding is a technique that allows children to do for themselves what they have already learned, and supports them when they are reaching for higher levels of learning.

> Always remember that one purpose of scaffolding, both in construction and in literacy, is to keep people from falling. Do not be surprised if children forget some things you have already taught them. When they reach a point where they begin to have difficulty, it is your job, as the 'scaffolding', to make sure they do not see themselves as failures. Encourage them, support them, and help them reach their highest potential!! Help them 'build' on

Scaffolding occurs at all levels, regardless of the developmental stage of your child.

An example:

A child may have learned to connect the dots while drawing/scribbling. If the leader outlined some dots in the shapes of certain letters, for example an 'M,' the child could connect the dots and then discover that s/he has created a letter. This letter begins several words including man, marry, and marmalade. The child could then list other words that begin with the same letter. It may be nice to start with the letter that begins the child's name or even the beginning of the alphabet before moving on to whole numbers.

Some Points On the Importance of Oral Communication

Talk to your children, beginning at birth.

Babies need to hear your voice. A television or the radio can't take the place of your voice because it doesn't respond to coos and babbles. The more you talk to your baby, the more he will have to talk about as he gets older. Talking with children broadens their understanding of language and of the world.

Everyday activities, such as eating dinner or taking a bath, provide opportunities to talk, sometimes in detail, about what's happening and respond to your child. "First let's stick the plug in the drain. Now we'll turn on the water. I see you want to put your rubber duck in the bathtub. That's a good idea. Look, it's yellow, just like the rubber duck on `Sesame Street.'"

Listen to your children.

Children have their own special thoughts and feelings, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. As their language skills develop, encourage them to talk. Listening is the best way to learn what's on their minds and to discover what they know and don't know, and how they think and learn. It also shows children that their feelings and ideas are valuable.

Ask questions.

Particularly ones that require more than a "yes" or "no" response. While walking in a park, for example, most 2- and 3-year-olds will stop to pick up leaves. You might point out how the leaves are the same, and how they are different. With older children you might ask, "What else grows on trees?"

Answer questions.

Questions can help children learn to compare and classify things. Answer your children's questions thoughtfully and, whenever possible, encourage them to answer their own questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Then together with your child, try to find the answer.

Read aloud to your children every day.

Reading can begin with babies and continue throughout the preschool years. Even though they don't understand the story or the poem, reading together gives children a chance to learn about language, enjoy the sound of your voice, and be close to you. You don't have to be an excellent reader for your child to enjoy this time together. You may also want to take your child to a local library that offers special story hours.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Puppet Magic

Puppets can be fascinating. Children know that puppets are not alive. And yet, they move and talk like real living things. Try making one at home.

What you'll need:

- An old clean sock
- An old glove
- Buttons (larger than 1 inch in diameter to prevent swallowing)
- Needle and thread
- Ribbon
- Felt-tipped pens
- Nontoxic glue
- Yarn

What to do:

Sock puppet. Use an old clean sock. Sew on buttons for eyes and nose. Paste or sew on a piece of red fabric for the mouth. Put a bow made from ribbon at the neck.

Finger puppets. Cut the ends off the fingers of an old glove. Draw faces on the fingers with felt-tipped pens. Glue yarn on for hair.

Have the puppet talk to your child. "Hello. My name is Tanya. What a great T-shirt you have on! I like the rabbit on the front of your T-shirt." Or have the puppet sing a simple song. Change your voice when the puppet talks or sings.

Puppets provide an opportunity to talk to children and encourage them to speak. They also help children learn new words, use their imaginations, and develop their hand and finger coordination. Children will make many mistakes when they learn to talk. Instead of correcting them directly, reply by using the right grammar. For example, if your child says, "Michael done it," reply, "Yes, Michael did it." Speak slowly and clearly so that your child can imitate your speech. Use full, but short sentences, and avoid baby talk.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Chores!

Any household task can become a good learning game and can be fun.

What you'll need:

Jobs around the home that need to get done, such as:

- Doing the laundry
- Washing and drying dishes
- Carrying out the garbage
- Setting the dinner table
- Dusting

What to do:

Tell your child about the job you will do together. Explain why the family needs the job done. Describe how you will do it and how your child can help.

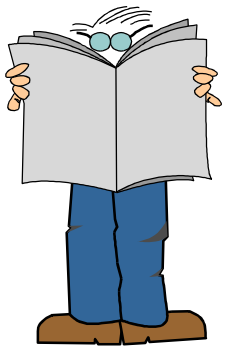
Teach your child new words that belong to each job. "Let's put the placemats on the table, along with the napkins."

Doing laundry together provides many opportunities to learn. Ask your child to help you remember all the clothes that need to be washed. See how many things he can name. Socks? T-shirts? Pajamas? Have him help you gather all the dirty clothes. Have your child help you make piles of light and dark colours.

Home chores can help children learn new words, how to listen and follow directions, how to count, and how to sort. Chores can also help children improve their physical coordination and learn responsibility.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

READING STRATEGY 1 - ORAL READING



Materials:

- Books, Magazines, Newspapers.
- Song Sheets

Activity:

Break into small groups to practice reading aloud.

Take turns reading aloud for three to five minutes. It might be helpful to break into groups of parents with very small children, parents with toddlers and parents of pre-schoolers. Discuss child development principles and review what activities are appropriate to children of differing ages.

Practice reading *with* children, not *to* them. Encourage children to interact with you, while reading. This may require you to answer lots of questions and sit with a child on your lap or very close to you. Remember the concept of *scaffolding*. You will need to respect prior learning of the child and look for opportunities to demonstrate new learning, by building on their skills.

Try pointing to pictures using different voices, speaking loudly or softly. Try to speak with emotions; try happy, sad, fearful.

Learning Discussion:

- Reading to very young children may require very basic skills. Readers may wish to concentrate on having children learn to hold a book upright, turn pages from right to left, point to words, point to characters in stories, see colours.

- Reading with toddlers will require more specialized reading and learning skills such as identification of words, punctuation, explanation of beginning and endings in a story line and comparisons between characters, colours or objectives.

- Reading to children who are about to enter school will require detailed attention to story lines, discussion about the meaning of stories, chances to change and expand on the stories and opportunities to make comparisons with other books or real-life events.

Notes:

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READING STRATEGY 2 - SHARED READING

Materials:

- Children's books with words and pictures

Activity:

Break into pairs of reading partners. Decide who will be the adult and who will be the child in each reading pair. You might like to think of the child at a certain age.

The adult begins this exercise by reading a part of the book and then encouraging or asking the child to read a portion and to ask questions or make statements about the contents. Try different approaches to shared reading such as: the adult reads a page and then the child reads a page, or the adult reads the entire book and then the child reads the book.

Think of as many different ways to share reading the same book, as you can. Spend two or three minutes on this activity. Then, switch roles, and do it again. You may wish to switch books, as well. It would be a good idea, for example, for some reading pairs to practice this exercise with very simple books and for some pairs to practice this exercise with longer or more detailed books or passages of writing.

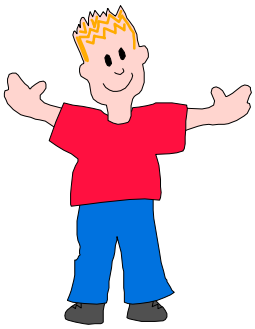
Learning Discussion:

- At what age do you think a child would benefit from shared reading? Would you use this technique with a very young child?
- What kind of books are best for shared reading?
- Was it more fun to be the adult, or the child? How would you make this exercise more fun?
- When you were the child, what kind of questions helped you stay interested or helped you understand the material?
- When you were the adult, did you find it easy to explain the reading materials? Would you encourage a child to ask questions before and after this type of reading?

Notes:

READING STRATEGY 3 - STORY TELLING

Materials:



- Photographs
- Household objects
- Puppets

Activity:

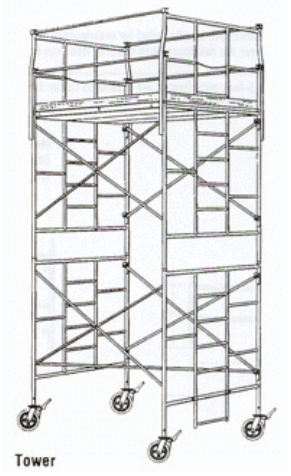
Take turns creating stories by starting with one object or picture. Try creating and telling a story alone. Then try creating and telling a story by asking for suggestions. Take a family photograph from a friend and make up a story about that photo.

Learning Discussion:

- Why is story telling an important part of literacy development?
- Is storytelling an opportunity for learning new words?
- Is storytelling done best by one person or with others?
- Is it more fun to hear a story or to tell a story?
- Did each story have a beginning, a middle, and an end?
- Could you predict the outcome of any of the stories?

Notes:

READING STRATEGY 4 - SCAFFOLDING


Tower

Activity:

Remember a skill or a task you learned for the first time. Or, try to remember the last time you taught someone else a new skill or task. This could be a recent skill such as a math or computer or grammar skill you learned while studying, or it could be something you learned at home such as a household maintenance chore or as a child. Think about any number of skills you already have in sewing, cooking, driving, cycling, sports or crafts.

Think about the steps of learning or techniques which were involved in the experience.

Using a sheet of paper, in two columns titled 'old activity' and 'new activity' outline the individual skills which you had used to develop your new skills.

Example:

Old Activity	New Activity
Hitting a softball	Shooting a hockey ball
Old Skill	**New Skill**
_____	_____
_____	_____

The discussion should be about the skills used in the old activity of hitting the softball, ie. hands together, feet spread appropriately, proper stance, eye-hand coordination, left or right hand swing, etc. and how these skills were used to develop the new activity. Compare the old list with the new list.

Learning Discussion:

How was scaffolding used to make the new technique easier to learn?

Did you notice after the discussion that you have probably used scaffolding on several occasions and not realized it?

How would scaffolding techniques apply to the development of literacy?

Notes:

_____

_____

Practicum III

• Choose one of the four reading activities which have been described in Module Six, oral reading, shared reading, story telling or scaffolding. Spend 30 minutes or more with a child, or children and practice the technique in a literacy outing.

Record your observations using the following questions:

Reading Activity: _____

1. Describe the activity, and why you chose it.

2. Did the child enjoy the activity? Why or why not?

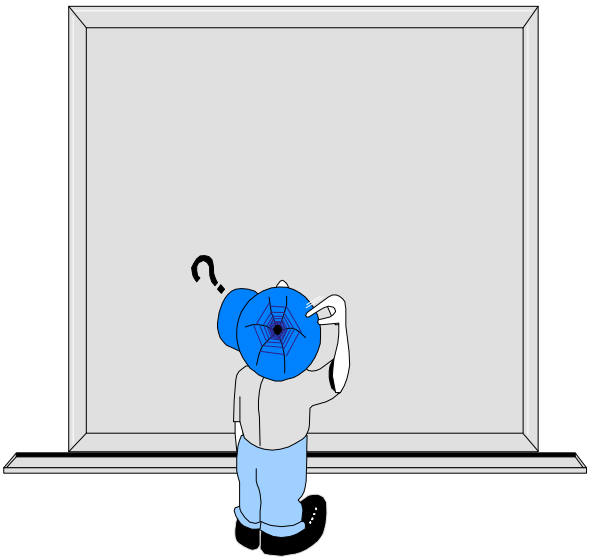
3. Did this activity help build literacy?

4. How could this reading activity be used every day?

Name:_____

Module 7

Challenges of Learning



EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 7 - Challenges of Learning

A continuing concern to some parents is whether or not their child is normal, healthy and able to learn. In most cases this is not a problem, but parents should know that there are some children who have difficulty learning, and that these children may need special help. Sometimes this is simply a matter of understanding children's learning styles. Students should, however, receive some exposure to the concept of learning disabilities, their warning signs, known coping strategies, and how and where to access resources.

7.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define and discuss challenges to learning.	Learners will gain an understanding of learning disabilities, warning signs, strategies, and available professionals.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Many definitions have been suggested for the term *learning disabilities*. You may have one that works with your group of learners, or you may wish to have the group develop its own definition.

The *Newfoundland & Labrador Teacher's Association Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties* contains a checklist which may be used by learners to help identify learning disabilities in school age children.

- Definitions might form a basis for discussion, or for sharing of personal anecdotes among students.
- The understanding of learning disabilities is subject to change. Students could be encouraged to come up with their own definitions.
- Students should recognize that the *diagnosis* of a learning disability must be done by a professional, and need not limit a person's potential to learn.
- Students could be encouraged to pursue independent research on learning disabilities to ensure their information is current, and to promote shared learning.

7.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Establish some of the early warning signs of learning disabilities that may warrant further investigation by a professional.	Learners will demonstrate an awareness of the early warning signs of learning disabilities.

 Notes to Facilitator:

It should be emphasized to learners that a checklist is not to be used to diagnose a learning disability, but only to get an indication for further investigation by a professional.

- Have learners supplement the checklist

7.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Compare and *contrast* learning styles and learning disabilities.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of learning styles as *opposed* to learning disabilities, and the difference between these classifications.

 Notes to Facilitator:

- Review normal child development issues
- Review learning ‘styles’
- Review learning ‘disabilities.’
- Note differences

7.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Outline some common strategies for dealing with learning disabilities.	Understand that learning disabilities do not have to impede learning.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  - "The NLTA Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties" contains information which will address this objective.
  - Brainstorm strategies in class for new ideas.

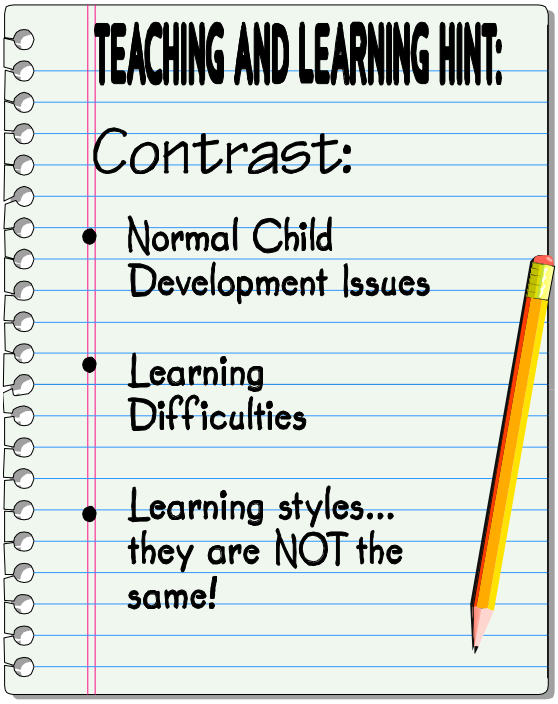
7.5	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Investigate resources available in the community to help with learning disabilities.	Learners should demonstrate knowledge of appropriate professionals who are available to work with learning disabled children. Learners should demonstrate a knowledge of community supports for parents.

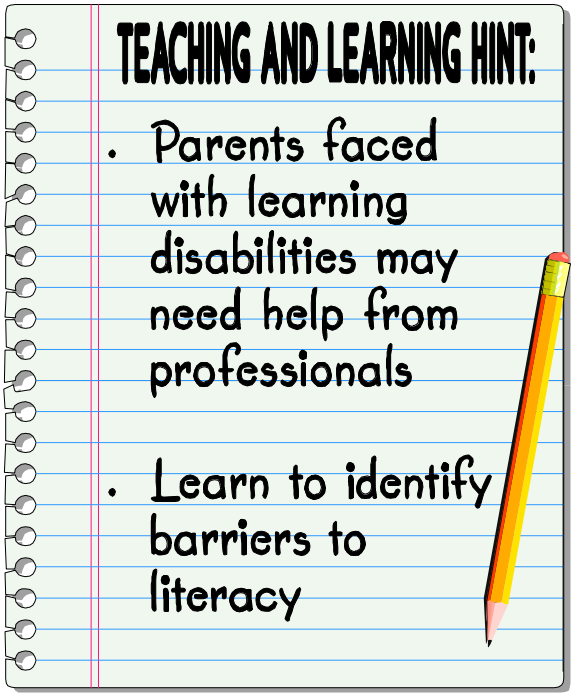
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Facilitator should investigate the various resources and supports available in the local area in order to make this information available to students.

  - Learners may be assigned to do this investigation themselves.
  - Learners could interview one of these professionals and prepare a report on how that individual is involved with learning disabilities.

MODULE 7 - RESOURCES





1.

Learning Disability

Definition:

- A learning disability is a barrier to some part of the learning process.

- It may be a result of a problem of information processing with respect to *perception*, *organization*, or *coordination.*

- It is a central nervous system dysfunction which interferes with the brain's ability to process information in a conventional manner.

Remember:

A learning disability is NOT the same as 'low intelligence.'

2.

Learning Disability

Indicators:

- Uneven and inconsistent achievement profile
- Problems with reading, comprehension, or mathematical computations
- Difficulty with writing, spelling, grammar, or oral expression of language
- Disorientation in space or time
- Reversing letters, numbers, or words (beyond a certain age)
- Difficulty in following directions
- Inability to organize studies
- Deficits in social skills
- Problems with short or long term memory

3.

Learning Disability

Characteristics:

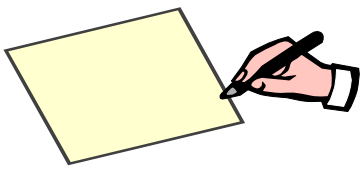
- A Learning Disability is not related to intelligence but rather is a problem of information processing,
- Learning Disabilities do NOT include visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental variables.
- Learning disabilities are predominantly problems of perception, organization or coordination.
- Learning Disabilities are often recognized in adults as deficits in one or more of the following areas: reading, comprehension, spelling, written expression, math computation and problem solving.
- Less frequent, but no less troublesome, are problems in organizational skills, time management and social skills. Many Learning Disabled adults also have language-based and/or perceptual problems.
- Learning Disabilities affect approximately 10% of the population.
- Learning Disabilities are not just childhood disorders, they remain for life.
- Individuals with Learning Disabilities often have low self confidence and poor self-esteem

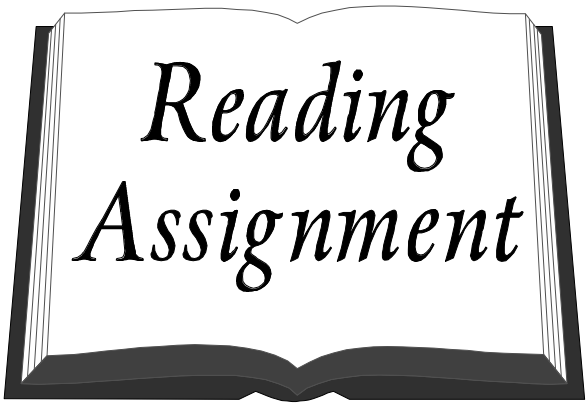
4.

Learning Disability

My Definition:

A learning disability is: _____





GUIDE TO READING AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Literacy for Life

(Thanks to the Newfoundland & Labrador Teacher's Association (NLTA) for this information! (

The **LITERACY FOR LIFE** Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties was prepared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association under the direction and guidance of the 1994/95 and 1995/96 Communication Committees, committees comprised of teachers with experience at a variety of grade levels.

1994/95 committee members: Fred Andrews (Chairperson), Don Ash, Maureen Cadigan, Rose Marie Deacy, Marilyn Donovan, Fred Wood, and Cynthia Hartery.

1995/96 committee members: John Sutherland (Chairperson), Linda Bailet, Bill Cooze, Jerry Jenkins, Tom Kendell, Marie Rose, and Patricia Ryan.

Special thanks are extended to reading specialists Gertrude Andrews, Gwen Maguire, and Pauline Pineau and the many parents for their assistance in compiling and/or reviewing the material.

ABOUT YOUR "GUIDE TO READING AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES"

Reading is an extremely important part of children's development process and one that affects not just how they do in school, but many other aspects of their lives as well.

The actual pace at which children learn to read varies widely. Even if your child seems uninterested in reading or can't recognize words that are known by a friend who's the same age, it doesn't necessarily mean he or she has a disability. However, if your child does have a learning disability that affects his or her ability to read, it's extremely important to catch the problem early.

This **Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties** has been produced to help you decide if your child **may** have a learning disability that affects reading and to provide some suggestions in the form of TIPS and IDEAS on what you should do if you're concerned. It gives you **basic** information only, about the most typical characteristics of children with reading difficulties, and **is not** meant to provide all the information necessary for a complete diagnosis - special testing by trained professionals is necessary for this.

Something very important to keep in mind when you're reading the following pages - **Many children have one or more of the characteristics mentioned in this booklet - that's perfectly normal and doesn't mean they have learning disabilities. However, a child who has many of the characteristics MAY have a learning disability and further investigation is strongly advised.**

1) READING SKILLS

Learning to read means learning to comprehend written material. It means learning to read stories and being able to re-tell stories which have been read. It means learning to read informational material and being able to recall important content.

Successful reading means successful comprehension and understanding of what has been read.

Children who are learning to read must successfully learn to use a number of different strategies.

1. Children must learn to recognize and understand the meaning of words by using the context the words are found in.

A child who is reading and meets an unknown word must be able to use the words which precede it and the words which follow it to help identify the unknown word. For example: a child who is reading the sentence, "The woman rode a horse into the castle," may have difficulty reading the word horse. Such children need to read past the unknown word, return to the beginning of the sentence, re-read the sentence, and think of a word that would fit the meaning of the sentence. Children with reading and language difficulties often do not use these "context clues" to identify unknown words; they may often make meaningless substitutions for unknown words, reading, for example, "the woman rode a house into the castle."

Children with reading difficulties often do not self-correct these kinds of substitutions.

This leads to difficulties with comprehending stories or informational material they are reading.

This stage in the reading process involves using context clues to identify unknown words. This is a comprehension skill.

2. Children must be able to accurately "see" letters and words.

This may seem like an overly simple statement, but the point is that a small number of children actually cannot see the words that are printed on the page; for some children "b" becomes "d;" "dog" becomes "god," etc.

While most children have difficulty seeing the difference between similar letters or words up to age six, children who have pronounced difficulties with this after age six may have a visual perception problem.

3. Children must know the particular sound that goes with each letter. This is particularly true of the letters called consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z, and for consonant combinations such as th, sh, ph, and so on.

The ability to read will obviously be affected if children can't recognize the letters that make up a word or don't see a word as it is actually presented. Research has also shown, however, that reading will also be affected if the children do not know how the word they see on a page may sound.

Children need to recognize words both by predicting from context clues (as noted previously) and by knowing how the word they see on the page may sound.

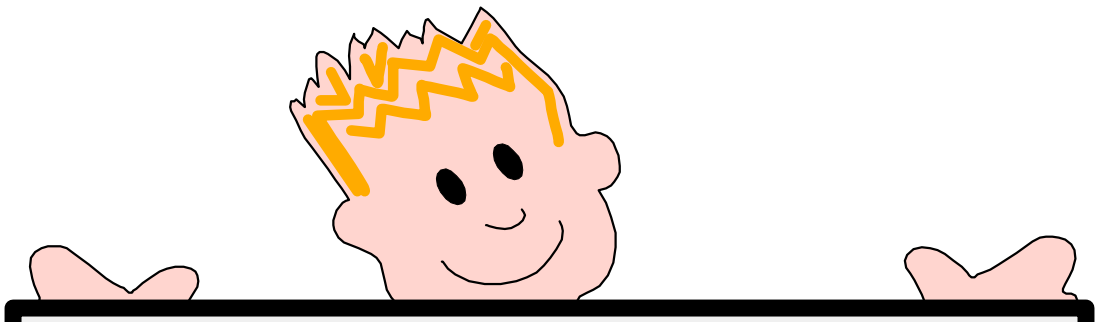
This stage in the reading process involves a combination of comprehension skill, visual skill, and auditory perceptual skill.

4. **As children recognize words "by context, by sight and by sound," they must be able to understand what they are reading. This is called "comprehension." When children read a story, they need to be able to tell who was in the story, what happened, where the story occurred, what the problem was in the story and how the problem was or was not solved. When children read informational material, they need to be able to separate important ideas from less important details.**

This stage in the reading process also involves the skill of comprehension.

Problems with reading can happen at any or all of these stages and how the problem will be handled will depend on the nature of the difficulty.

But how exactly do you know if your child has a reading/language difficulty?



The next section of this GUIDE TO READING AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES gives you information on the general characteristics of children with learning difficulties as well as specific characteristics of children with disabilities in the "comprehending," "seeing," or "hearing" areas.

We repeat, however, that many children have one or more of the characteristics mentioned in this next section - that's perfectly normal and doesn't mean they have learning disabilities. However, if your child has many of the characteristics, he or she MAY have a learning disability and we strongly advise further investigation.

2) WARNING SIGNS

Things to Look for if You Suspect There's a Problem.

- Your child has difficulty following two or three-step directions on how to complete an activity. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't give you meanings for words when presented to them in a sentence, or read to them from a familiar book. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't re-tell a story you read to them, or tell them. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't see words properly, not necessarily because he or she needs glasses, but because he or she actually sees the words or the letters differently than they appear. This is a visual perception problem.

- Your child doesn't hear words properly, not necessarily because he or she can't hear normally, but because there is a problem distinguishing between similar sounds, etc. This is an auditory perception problem.

- Your child can sing the alphabet song, but cannot recall forms and sequence while printing. This is a memory problem.

Some General Characteristics of Children with Learning Disabilities

Children with learning disabilities often:

- have very poor printing and/or writing skills;
- have difficulty using scissors, colouring and printing inside lines;
- have difficulty tying laces, buttoning clothes or holding pencils;
- have difficulty understanding the differences between "up" and "down," "top" and "bottom," "in" and "out," "in front of" and "behind," etc.
- have difficulty telling the difference between letters, sounds and numbers;
- may have good verbal ability, but have problems with reading or with putting their own thoughts on paper;
- have difficulty understanding what is read;
- have difficulty playing with more than one child at a time;
- have difficulty catching a ball;
- have difficulty expressing ideas and relating events in a sequence;
- become easily frustrated or upset when routine is changed;
- seem unable to judge consequences of actions;
- have difficulty remembering names of things (like the seasons, the months, streets, etc.);
- have a confused sense of time and/or distance;
- are either much more active or much less active than most other children;
- have a short attention span;
- get very uneven results in areas of testing - they preform either unusually well or unusually poor in certain areas;
- may have delayed speech development, saying only single words by age two, or producing only short sentences by age three.

Characteristics of Children Who Comprehend Poorly

Children who suffer from **comprehension problems** may not read for meaning. When they look at a word, they may over-use clues to the words provided by the letters, combinations of letters, and syllables. They may not attend to the meaning of what they are reading. Such children often make up nonsense words as they are reading, or substitute words that do not make sense in the story or in the informational material they are reading.

Sound confusing? It is, especially to the child who has this type of disability.

But how can you tell if your child has this problem?

- Read to them, and at certain points stop and ask them to fill in the next word that would make sense in the sentence or the paragraph. Do not expect them to read the word; expect them to provide a meaningful response.

- Listen to your child read from material in which he or she already knows 80 percent of the words. Note the substitutions he or she makes for words in the story or informational material. Do these substitutions change the meaning of what your child is reading? Are these substitutions real words? Are these substitutions approximations of the words in the story or text that are similar to the pattern of letters in the words?

- Listen to your child as he or she reads. When they make substitutions for the words in the text, do they notice that their reading has lost meaning and go back to attempt to make self-corrections? Are their self-corrections based on producing a ord that looks and sounds more like the word, or are they based on trying to make meaning from the word?

Characteristics of Children Who See Differently

Children who suffer from **visual perception problems** may look very carefully at the words on a page, but mix up what they see and, as a result, actually see differently from other children. So even if you think certain information has been placed clearly before them, it really hasn't been, because they're not seeing what you think they're seeing and what you know is there.

Sound confusing? It is, especially to the child who has this type of disability!

But how can you tell if your child has a problem seeing the letters and words on a page? Children who see differently because they have a visual perception problem typically display many of the following characteristics:

- They reverse their letters when reading or writing.
- They are slow readers.
- They sound out words they should know by sight.
- If they substitute a word when they're reading, it usually looks similar but has a completely different meaning. For example, they read, "The car was running up a tree" instead of "The cat was running up a tree."
- When reading, they may lose their place on the page, skip words or even lines or re-read words or lines.
- They have superior ability to remember what they hear, but can't remember what they've seen. (If you read a story aloud, they'll remember it; if you ask them to read it silently, they can't.)
- They sometimes begin to learn to read and write at the same time as other children and may even progress at the same rate until Grade 2 or 3, but then they may start falling behind.
- They may squint, open their eyes wide, rub their eyes, or have red watery eyes when reading. (Sometimes their attention span seems short simply because their eyes are hurting.)
- They may see small portions of a word in focus, while the rest of the word or the page is a blur.
- They may have difficulty copying material from blackboards, textbooks, etc.
- When reading, they may move a book around quite a bit to help get the page in focus or cut down on the glare. Sometimes they'll shade the book with their arms.
- They may get motion sick when reading because of the movement they see on the page.
- They get headaches after reading for awhile. In addition to these "reading" signs, there are also some other signs that can point to difficulties in visual perception. At home, you may notice your child writes up or downhill, has unequal spacing between letters and words, or can't write on the line. At school, your child's teacher may notice the same things as well as others, like he or she makes errors, or squints and rubs his or her eyes while copying things from the chalkboard. Depth perception is also affected, and people with visual perception problems may seem clumsy, drop things more than usual, have difficulty getting on and off escalators, or constantly walk into door jams or table edges.

NOTE:

A child who has been progressing normally and then starts falling behind in reading may have some other problem that needs to be dealt with immediately. There may be changes at home, e.g. separation, divorce, death, etc., or there may even be a clash between the child and the teacher, or there may be some physical cause for the problem. It definitely is not the normal course of events to start going backwards - so action should be taken without delay.

SOMETHING TO TRY!

Ask your child what he or she sees on the page - are the lines straight or wiggly, is the page clear or blurry, and does looking at it hurt his or her eyes? If you get answers that seem strange, believe them, because it isn't at all strange for children with visual perception problems to say things like:

"The words jump off the page at me."

"The letters start moving, look like ants and all walk off the page."

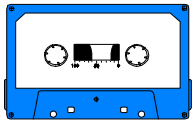
"The page turns white."

"The lines look like ocean waves and I get sick to my stomach."

IDEA!!

Teachers use a number of techniques to help children in their classrooms who see differently from others. Many of the techniques don't fit the home environment, but some do. For instance, you can encourage your child to use their fingers, a ruler or book mark to follow words when reading (this will help keep them from losing their place). You can tape record yourself reading a story and then have the child read along with the tape.

Remember, children with visual perception problems are much better at remembering what they hear than what they see. Keeping this in mind is an important part of helping both of you handle the disability on a day-to-day basis.



Characteristics of Children Who Hear Differently

Children who suffer from **auditory perception problems** may listen carefully, but hear inaccurately. Some can't tell the difference between the sounds they hear, or between different sounds heard at the same time; and some hear words in a sequence that are actually different from the real ones. They'll have problems doing what you tell them to do, or understanding what you say, simply because what you're saying doesn't make sense to them. In any case, these children are often accused of daydreaming, not listening, or being easily distracted.

Children who hear differently because they have auditory perception problems typically display many of the following characteristics:

- They never seem to listen.
- They never seem to remember what you tell them.
- They have limited speaking or listening skills.
- They have a poor sense of rhythm.
- They can't tell the difference between similar sounds or distinguish between vowel or consonant sounds.
- They mispronounce words.
- They have difficulty sounding out words (learning phonics).
- They usually write very slowly, or may whisper while writing.
- They usually whisper when reading silently.
- They can't remember basic spelling words.
- They have superior ability to remember what they see, but not what they hear.

IDEA!

Teachers use a number of techniques to help children in their classrooms who hear differently. Many of these techniques don't fit the home environment, but we've included the ones that do.

1st: you can try to eliminate extra noise; it may not distract you but it will distract a child with an auditory perception problem.

2nd: make sure you speak slowly and clearly, and, when possible, use visual clues to go with your words.

3rd: check with your child to see if he or she understands what you're saying.

SOMETHING TO TRY...

When your child substitutes one word for another word in the text and changes the meaning of the sentence:

- Repeat aloud to your child the entire sentence as he or she reads it, including the word which changed the meaning.
- Note the substituted word your child used.
- Ask your child if the word makes sense in the sentence.
- Ask your child to provide a word that makes sense.
- Read the story or text aloud to your child in a section by section, or paragraph by paragraph, or page by page manner as your child follows along in the print using their finger or a ruler. Following the reading of each section, have your child read the same section aloud.
- Read the story or text aloud with your child. This is called echo-reading. Keep your voice slightly ahead of your child's.

3) CHILDREN WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND

Sometimes, children who don't understand what they read are simply spending so much of their energy on "decoding" the words they don't have the time to "comprehend" them. These same children often have very good comprehension if someone reads to them, because when someone else is doing the reading, they do have the time to spend on figuring out meanings.

The best way to find out whether or not your child might have this sort of problem is to ask him or her about things he or she is reading. If the child can't describe the story to you or answer your "comprehension" questions, there may be a problem and you should seek professional advice.

You should be aware, however, that there are also disabilities that actually involve an inability to make those connections between word and meaning. Professional testing will be necessary so that you and your child's teacher can learn exactly what the problem is.

TIP!

If a child has not learned to read and to love reading by the middle of their grade one year, then parents should seek help at that time. Don't wait. The sooner the better. Many children are often saved from years of frustrating experience with books if they receive proper assessment and are put in the right direction when the problem arises. Research confirms the fact that prevention and early intervention are the key to successful reading.

4) WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK THERE'S A PROBLEM

As already noted a number of times, children often display a few of the characteristics described in this booklet without having a learning disability. However, if your child exhibits **many** of the characteristics described in either of the sections, it is important to seek further investigation. Here are some steps you can take to ensure your child gets the help he or she may need.

Step 1: Talk to your child's Teacher

One of the first things to do if your child is school-aged is to talk to his or her teacher. You need to compare notes to determine whether or not you are noticing similar problems. Remember, though, teachers and parents sometimes describe the same problems differently, simply because one of you sees the child in the classroom while the other sees the child at home. You'll want to make sure, early on, that you clearly understand one another.

Step 2: Talk to your child

Another important thing to do is to talk to your child. He or she may tell you simply that things sound strange or as straightforward as: "My problem is remembering what I read" or "I miss words sometimes." But you need to take the time to sit and **really listen** so you can hear what they're telling you, and you should not be critical of what they say.

Step 3: Rule out physical problems

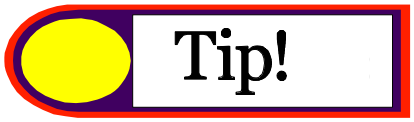
If you, your child, and/or your child's teacher think there may be a problem, it's time to arrange for professional assessment and extra help. The first things that should be ruled out are physical problems with vision or hearing.

Step 4: Arrange for educational, psychological and/or special testing

If physical problems have been ruled out, it's time for educational and psychological testing. Educational tests rate your child's academic achievement relative to other children around the same age. Psychological tests measure your child's capacities or potential in a number of areas - thinking, memory, self-esteem, etc.

1 Identify the presence or absence of a disability.

2 Provide a clear description of your child's strengths and weaknesses so effective remedial strategies can be developed.



Start keeping a file about your child as soon as you first suspect a problem. This can be in any format you find convenient (three-ring binder, series of file folders, etc.) but should include certain information:

- birth and developmental information
- medical information, including family history
- other pertinent family information (child's position in family, any changes or crises and any learning problems experienced by other members);
- information on schools and outside agencies you deal with;
- expenses and copies of correspondence;
- records of conversations, meetings, telephone calls (include date, person spoken to, result of conversation, etc.);
- names, addresses and phone numbers of the people who are involved with your child.
- anecdotal information that might help everyone involved understand your child's strengths and weaknesses.

You should be given written reports of all assessments, as well as copies of test scores. Ask for these reports, and ask as many questions as you need to, because you'll need to understand the problem fully if you're going to be able to help solve it.

5) AFTER A PROBLEM HAS BEEN CONFIRMED

Once a problem has been identified, a team effort will be particularly important in helping you and your child cope. The bottom line is that you, your child's teacher, and all the other professionals in the educational system, really want what's best for your child and together they will make up the **team** that helps your child deal with the problem. In fact, a team approach is vital, because the mix of skills and knowledge each individual will bring to the effort is vital.

Some difficulties will require only the implementation of alternative teaching strategies designed specifically to help children with disabilities learn more effectively. Your child's teacher will be familiar with these, or will have access to written information and/or other professionals who can help. You'll need to understand the various techniques being tried at school and know what you should do at home to help.

Other difficulties will require the development of an educational program designed specifically for your child (usually called the **Individual Program Plan** or IPP). This is a written plan that details curriculum, special accommodations (such as allowing your child to use a spell-checker, tape recorder, calculator or computer), and other important information. There are a number of people involved with the development of the plan, including parents, classroom teachers, specialist teachers, principals, and other professionals as required.

You'll also have a role in the implementation of the plan. For instance, you may need to read to your child every night, or to respond to teacher's comments in a home-school diary. You and your child's teacher may agree that you will always respond to particular behaviours in particular ways. In fact, there are all sorts of possible involvements, from hiring tutors to simply providing a quiet and comfortable area where your child can do his or her homework.

TIP!

After a problem has been identified, ask this question:

"What does my child need in order to learn?"

Also, make sure you understand your child's strength, as well as his or her weaknesses. These strengths will form the basis for learning and are needed to make the child feel good about himself or herself.

In all cases, ongoing evaluation and monitoring is an important part of your child's treatment, since this will show if the teaching techniques or program plan needs to be changed.

Other Organizations That Can Help

In addition to all the individuals in the education system who can help children with learning disabilities, there are also many organizations in the community. They fall into a number of categories, including: hospitals and medical clinics; home services; counselling services; recreational and social organizations; community service organizations; advocacy groups; support and self-help groups and child protection services.

Groups that may be particularly helpful are the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (whose mandate is to help children and adults with learning disabilities) as well as your child's school. The Department of Education should be able to provide you with information on some of the others.

6) JUST ONE MORE THING (AND IN CASE YOU'VE EVER WONDERED...) THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNERS...

How does your child learn?

People who have learning disabilities can still have different learning styles, something that's interesting to know and can help you understand why children respond better to some things you do than others.

The following characteristics will help give you an idea of how your child learns; they might also tell you a thing or two about your own learning style.

There are three main types of learners- the visual learner, the auditory learner and the kinesthetic (tactile) learner - which is not to say that we can only learn in one of these three ways; just that we all tend to be stronger in one or two than the other(s). You can decide which type of learner your child is by deciding which of the following descriptions best applies to him or her.

Visual learners basically like to see things. They follow instructions best after having been **shown** what to do rather than having been told what to do. They learn best from bulletin boards, banners, posters, slides, flashcards, etc. They're "show me, don't tell me" people who:

- learn by seeing; they watch to see what others do;
- like demonstrations;
- recognize words by sight;
- like descriptions, have lively imaginations and draw very detailed pictures;
- remember faces more often than names;
- take notes;
- have good handwriting;
- tend to be very deliberate - plan in advance, organize, and think through problems;
- are neat, meticulous;
- see details or components and may actually miss seeing a word or work as a whole;
- notice changes quickly;
- notice colour;
- prefer art to music.

Auditory learners like to hear things. They follow oral instructions easily and verbalize well. They learn best from radio, records, TV, speeches, lectures, panels, oral questions and answers, etc. They're "tell me, don't show me" people who:

- love noise, make lots of noise (to the point of getting in trouble for being noisy);
- enjoy talking and listening;
- move lips, whisper, or even read aloud to themselves when asked to read silently;
- tend to use phonics;
- remember names more than faces;
- have a well developed vocabulary for their age;
- are easily distracted by sound;
- talk problems out, try out solutions verbally;
- express emotions verbally (laugh or cry out).
- sometimes make poor clothing choices - have no sense of what goes together;
- prefer music to art.

Kinesthetic (tactile) learners are hands-on people. They have good motor skills and learn best by actually doing. In fact, they usually just want to dig right in! They're "just let me do it" people, who:

- don't enjoy reading or being read to;
- are poor spellers; have poor handwriting;
- don't pay attention to auditory or visual presentation;
- fidget, tinker, touch, feel, put things in their mouths;
- are very physical when emotional;
- read slowly and with difficulty;
- neither look nor listen;
- often seem absorbed by some inner life or thought and therefore seem unaware of their surroundings.

7) SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Hearing your child has a learning disability is very disturbing and it's natural to be upset or to worry. But while learning disabilities can't actually be "cured", children with these conditions can still lead very successful and fulfilling lives. (Think about the contributions made by Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie, Hans Christian Anderson, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein, all of whom had learning disabilities!)

As already pointed out, the earlier a problem is caught, the better, but it's never too late to seek help. And if you do learn your child has a learning disability, remember you don't have to cope alone - you, your child's teacher, and numerous other educational professionals and community agencies, all work in your child's best interests.

Focus on your child as a whole (not just the disability).

Remember that poor self-image is often an "invisible disability" that comes hand in hand with a visible learning disability.

And offer all the encouragement, support and love that you can, so your child can have a wonderful and satisfying life.

Module 8

Taking Literacy to School & Beyond

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 8 -Taking Literacy to School and Beyond

One of the biggest steps a child will ever take with parents is through the door of a school. This is also one of the most stressful steps for both. The new environment, the new guidelines, the new emphasis on "school work," and of course the new faces, can all make this a difficult experience for children and parents alike.

*It is important that children be prepared for this experience, and that parents work together with professional educators to make the school experience a successful one for their children. We know that children are **eager to learn**, but parents must ensure that they are **ready to learn** as well. This Module examines the process of getting children ready for school, and offers activities and suggestions that parents can use to guide both themselves and their children through this process.*

8.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Discuss the challenges associated with preparing children for pre-school.	Learners should be able to demonstrate awareness of what is involved in preparing a child for daycare or preschool.

 Notes to Facilitator:

If possible, an Early Childhood Educator should be brought in as a guest speaker to offer suggestions on preparing children for preschool.

The resources "Choosing Child Care" and "Getting Along" contain some information which might be helpful in meeting this objective.

- Respect the fact that many children receive no preschool or daycare experience before kindergarten.
- Empower parents to make decisions which are *right* for them and their children.

8.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Explain what is expected of children when they go to school, and discuss ways to prepare children for this experience.	Learners should demonstrate awareness of what is expected of children when they begin school, and how to prepare them for this.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  If possible, a Kindergarten Teacher could be brought in as a guest speaker to discuss preparatory measures. Resources which may be of assistance in this Module are "What Does it Mean to Be Ready For School?," "Ready for School Checklist,", and "What About Kindergarten?" All of which can be 'handouts' or 'discussion guides.'

8.3

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify ways of developing good partnerships with teachers, and explore approaches to helping children with homework.	Learners will know how to develop good relationships with teachers, and will understand how they can best help children with homework.

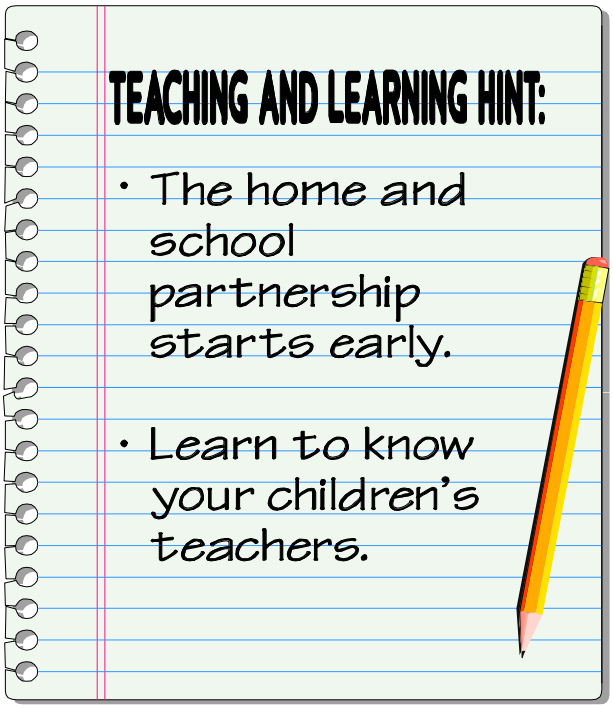
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

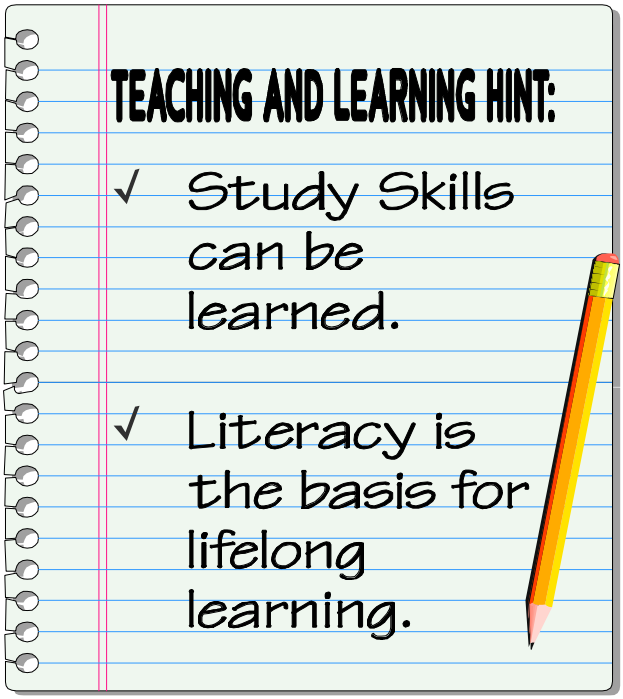
  Facilitator should guide a brainstorming session with learners in which they are the ones who suggest ways to develop good relationships with teachers. The facilitator may wish to have learners compile a list of things that make them nervous when dealing with teachers, and then have learners propose ways to change these things, or to make themselves less nervous.

  - Facilitator should guide discussion helping children with homework, and have learners explore methods they can use that would benefit children.
  - Brainstorm ways that parents, children and teachers can work together.

8.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explore ways to promote literacy during the school years and beyond.	Learners will understand that what they have learned in this course can be applied to the rest of their lives.
	Notes to Facilitator: Facilitator should guide a discussion with learners that will explore literacy beyond the scope of this course. Facilitator should try to get learners thinking about ways they can encourage learning in their children long after they have entered school.	

MODULE 8 - RESOURCES





Choosing Child Care

More and more children are in preschool or other child care settings before they enter kindergarten. Choosing the right child care is important because it can affect how prepared your child is for school. Some tips to guide you:

Think about the kind of care you want for your child.

Possibilities include (a) a relative; (b) a family day care provider, usually a woman who takes care of a small group of children in her home; (c) a child care centre, which generally offers a curriculum and staff with educational backgrounds in early childhood development; and (d) a caregiver who comes into your home.

Recognize that there are many ways to find good care.

Ask friends and neighbours how they found child care. See if they, or any day care providers you may know and trust, can recommend any good people or facilities. Look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book under "Day Care Centres" or "Child Care Centres". Look in the classified ads of your local newspaper, or place an ad of your own. Put up notices on your church bulletin board, in grocery stores, local community centres, or at the employment office of local colleges or universities. Look for notices that other people have put up.

If you are looking for a family day care provider, a local licensing agency can provide you with local listings. Many communities have resource and referral agencies that help parents identify the options that best meet their needs.

Gather information.

If you are looking for a family day care provider or for a person to come into your home, interview the person at length and check references. Before you meet with them, develop a list of questions. If you are looking at day care centres, visit them--more than once, if possible. Just because a person or a program worked for someone else doesn't mean it's right for you. With any kind of child care, check references.

No matter what kind of child care you are considering, look for caregivers who:

- **Are kind and responsive**. Good caregivers are affectionate, enjoy children, are energetic enough to keep up with your preschooler, patient, and mature enough to handle crises and conflicts.

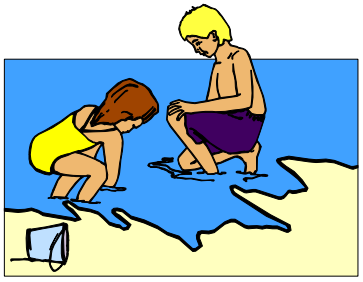
- **Have experience with preschoolers and like them**. Find out how long they have worked with preschoolers, why they are in the early child care field, and whether they provide activities that are appropriate for your child's age. Observe the caregivers with children. Do the children seem happy? How do the caregivers respond to them?

- **Recognize the individual needs of your child**. Look for caregivers who are considerate of different children's interests and needs and who can provide your child with enough attention.

- **Share a child-rearing philosophy that is similar to yours**. Find out what kind of discipline is used and how problems are handled.

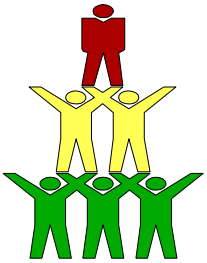
Be certain that the child care facility is clean and safe, and is filled with things to explore that are appropriate for your child's age.

Taken from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, Nancy Paulu (1993).



Getting Along

Learning to get along with others is very important. Children who are kind, helpful, patient, and loving generally do better in school.



What you'll need

- No materials required

What to do

1. **Let your child know that you are glad to be his mommy or daddy**. Give him personal attention and encouragement. Set aside time when you and your child can do fun things together. Your happy feelings toward your child will help him feel good about himself.

2. **Set a good example**. Show your preschooler what it means to get along with others and to be respectful. Say "please" and "thank you." Treat people in ways that show you care what happens to them. Ask for things in a friendly way. Be kind to and patient with other people.

3. **Help your child find ways to solve conflicts with others**. Help your child figure out what will happen if he tries to settle his mad feelings by hitting a playmate: "James, I know that Tiffany took your toy truck. But if you hit Tiffany and you have a big fight, then Tiffany will have to go home, and the two of you won't be able to play any more today. What is another way that you can let Tiffany know you want your truck back?" James might decide to tell Tiffany that he's mad, and that he wants his truck back. Or he might let Tiffany play with his truck for 5 minutes with the hope that Tiffany will then give it back. Listening to your children's problems will often be all that is needed for them to solve their own problems.

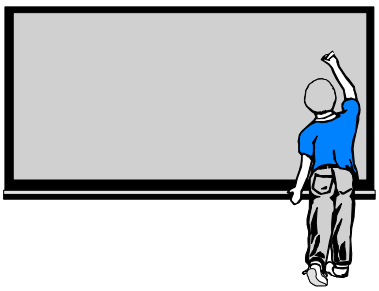
4. **Make opportunities to share and to care**. Let your child take charge of providing food for hungry birds. When a new family moves into the neighbourhood, let your preschooler help make cookies to welcome them.

5. **Be physically affectionate**. Children need hugs, kisses, an arm over the shoulder, and a pat on the back.

6. **Tell your child that you love him.** Don't assume that your loving actions will speak for themselves (although those are very important).

Children need good social skills. Teachers and other children will enjoy your youngster's company if he gets along well with others.

What Does it Mean to Be Ready for School?



There is no one quality or skill that children need to do well in school, but a combination of things contributes to success. These include good health and physical well-being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, an ability to solve problems and think creatively, and general knowledge about the world.

As you go about helping your child develop in each of these areas, remember:

- Children develop at different rates, and
- Most children are stronger in some areas than in others.

Remember, too, that being ready for school depends partly on what the school expects. One school may think it's very important for children to sit quietly and know the alphabet. Another may believe it's more important for children to get along well with others. Children who match the school's expectations may be considered better prepared. You may want to visit your child's school to learn what the principal and teachers expect and discuss any areas of disagreement. While schools may have different priorities, most educators agree that the following areas are important for success:

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

L *Prenatal - Start Early!*

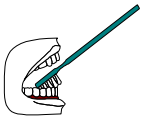
Young children need nutritious food, enough sleep, safe places to play, and regular medical care. These things help children get a good start in life and lessen the chances that they will later have serious health problems or trouble learning. Good health for children begins before birth with **good prenatal care**. Visit a doctor or medical clinic throughout your pregnancy. In addition, eat nourishing foods, avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful drugs, and get plenty of rest.

A Balanced Diet - know the food groups

Good health for children continues after birth with a balanced diet. School-aged children can concentrate better in class if they eat **nutritionally balanced meals**. These should include breads, cereals, and other grain products; fruits; vegetables; meat, poultry, fish and alternatives (such as eggs and dried beans and peas); and milk, cheese, and yogurt. Avoid too many fats and sweets. Children aged 2-5 generally can eat the same foods as adults but in smaller portions. Your child's doctor or clinic can provide advice on feeding babies and toddlers under the age of two.

Medical Care - even if children are healthy!

Preschoolers require regular **medical and dental checkups and immunizations**. It's important to find a doctor or a clinic where children can receive routine health care as well as special treatment if they are sick or injured.



Children need immunizations beginning around the age of 2 months to prevent nine diseases: measles, mumps, German measles (rubella), diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b), polio, and tuberculosis. These diseases can have serious effects on physical and mental development. Regular dental checkups should begin at the latest by the age of three.

Exercise - make it a daily habit!

Preschoolers need **opportunities to exercise and develop physical coordination**. To learn to control large muscles, children need to throw balls, run, jump, climb, and dance to music. To learn to control small muscles, particularly in the hands and fingers, they need to colour with crayons, put together puzzles, use blunt-tipped scissors, and zip jackets. In kindergarten, they will build upon these skills.

Parents of youngsters with disabilities should see a doctor as soon as a problem is suspected. Early intervention can help these children develop to their full potential.

Social and Emotional Checklist

U I can help a child build **confidence** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can help a child be **independent** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can **motivate** a child to learn by: _____

_____

_____

U I can encourage a child to be **curious** by**:**_____

_____

_____

U I can help a child be **persistent** with tasks by: _____

_____

_____

U I can teach a child **cooperation** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can assist a child with **self-control** by: _____

_____

_____

U Children learn **empathy** when I: _____

_____

_____

Social And Emotional Preparation

Young children are often very excited about entering school. But when they do, they can face an environment that's different from what they are used to at home or even in preschool. In kindergarten, they will need to work well in large groups and get along with new adults and other children. They will have to share the teacher's attention with other youngsters.

Not all 5-year-olds start school with good social skills or emotional maturity. These take time and practice to learn. However, children improve their chances for success in kindergarten if they have had opportunities to begin developing these qualities:

Confidence.

Children must learn to feel good about themselves and believe they can succeed. Confident children are more willing to attempt new tasks--and try again if they don't succeed the first time.

Independence.

Children need to learn to do things for themselves.

Motivation.

Children must want to learn.

Curiosity.

Children are naturally curious and must remain so in order to get the most out of learning opportunities.

Persistence.

Children must learn to finish what they start.

Self-control.

Preschoolers must understand that some behaviours, such as hitting and biting, are inappropriate. They need to learn that there are good and bad ways to express anger.

Empathy.

Children must learn to have an interest in others and understand how others feel.

Parents, even more than child care centres and good schools, help children develop these skills. Here are some ways you can help your child acquire these positive qualities:

Youngsters must believe that, no matter what, someone will look out for them.

Show that you care about your children. They thrive when they have parents or other caregivers who are loving and dependable. Small children need attention, encouragement, hugs, and plenty of lap time. Children who feel loved are more likely to be confident.

Set a good example.

Children imitate what they see others do and what they hear others say. When parents exercise and eat nourishing food, children are more likely to do so. When parents treat others with respect, their children probably will, too. If parents share things, their children will learn to be thoughtful of others' feelings.

Have a positive attitude toward learning and toward school.

Children come into this world with a powerful need to discover and to explore. Parents need to encourage this curiosity if children are to keep it. Enthusiasm for what children do ("You've drawn a great picture!") helps to make them proud of their achievements.

Children also become excited about school when their parents show excitement. As your child approaches kindergarten, talk to him about school. Talk about the exciting activities in kindergarten, such as going on field trips and making fun art projects. Be enthusiastic as you describe what he will learn in school--how to read and measure and weigh things, for example.

Provide opportunities for repetition.

It takes practice to crawl, pronounce new words, or drink from a cup. Children don't get bored when they repeat things. Instead, repeating things until they are learned helps youngsters build the confidence needed to try something new.

Use appropriate discipline.

All children need to have limits set for them. Children whose parents give firm but loving discipline are generally more skilled socially and do better in school than children whose parents set too few or too many limits. Here are some tips.

- Direct children's activities, but don't make unnecessary restrictions or try to dominate.
- Offer reasons when asking your child to do something (For example, say, "Please move the toy truck off the stairs so no one falls over it"--not, "Do it because I said so.").
- Listen to your children to find out how they feel and whether they need any special support.
- Show love and respect when you are angry. Criticize a child's behaviour but not the child (For example, say, "I love you, but it is not okay for you to draw pictures on the walls. I get angry when you do that.").
- Help your children make choices and work out problems (You might ask your 4-year-old, "What can we do to keep Kevin from knocking over your blocks?").
- Be positive and encouraging. Praise your child for a job well done. Smiles and encouragement go much further to shape good behaviour than harsh punishment.

Let children do many things by themselves.

Young children need to be closely watched. But they learn to be independent and to develop confidence by doing tasks such as dressing themselves and putting their toys away. It's also important to let them make choices, rather than deciding everything for them. Remember to give them a choice only when there really is one.

Encourage your children to play with other children and be with adults who are not family members.

Preschoolers need these social opportunities to learn to see the point of view of others. Young children are more likely to get along with teachers and classmates if they already have had experiences with different adults and children.

Language and General Knowledge

Kindergarteners participate in many activities that require them to use language and to solve problems. Children who can't or don't communicate easily may have problems in school. There are many things you can do to help children learn to communicate, solve problems, and develop an understanding of the world. You can:

Give your child opportunities to play.

Play is how children learn. It is the natural way for them to explore, to become creative, and to develop academic and social skills. Play helps them learn to solve problems--for example, a wagon tips over, and children must figure out how to get it upright again. Children learn about geometry, shapes, and balance when they stack up blocks. Playing with others helps children learn how to negotiate.

Be realistic about your children's abilities and interests.

Children usually do best in school when parents estimate their abilities correctly. Parents must set high standards and encourage their preschoolers to try new things. Children who aren't challenged become bored. But ones who are pushed along too quickly, or are asked to do things that don't interest them, can become frustrated and unhappy.

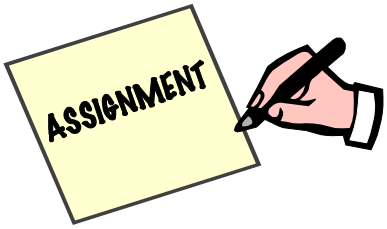
Try to keep your children from being labelled. Labels such as "dumb" or "stupid" have a powerful effect on a child's confidence and school performance.
REMEMBER TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD FOR A JOB

Provide opportunities to do and see things.

The more varied the experiences that children have, the more they learn about the world. No matter where you live, your community can provide new experiences. Go for walks in your neighbourhood, or go places on the bus. Visit museums, libraries, parks, and other community resources.

If you live in the city, spend a day in the country (or if you live in the country, spend a day in the city). Let your children hear and make music, dance, and paint. Let them participate in activities that help to develop their imaginations and let them express their ideas and feelings.

Assignment



Read the handout on Language and General Knowledge

In class, we will answer questions on:

Opportunities to play: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My child's interests include: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Chances to do and see things are: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Ready for School Checklist

This checklist, although not exhaustive, can help to guide you in preparing your child for school. It's best to look at the items included as goals toward which to aim. They should be done, as much as possible, through everyday life or by fun activities you've planned with your child. If your child lags behind in some areas, don't worry. Remember that all children are unique. They grow and develop at different rates--and no one thing guarantees that a child is ready for school.

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

My child:

- 9 Eats a balanced diet
- 9 Receives regular medical and dental care and has had all the necessary immunizations
- 9 Gets plenty of rest
- 9 Runs, jumps, plays outdoors, and does other activities that help develop large muscles and provide exercise
- 9 Works puzzles, scribbles, colours, paints, and does other activities that help develop small muscles

Social and Emotional Preparation

My child:

- 9 Is learning to be confident enough to explore and try new things
- 9 Is learning to work well alone and to do many tasks for himself
- 9 Has many opportunities to be with other children and is learning to cooperate with them
- 9 Is curious and is motivated to learn
- 9 Is learning to finish tasks (for example, picks up own toys)
- 9 Is learning to use self-control
- 9 Can follow simple instructions
- 9 Helps with family chores

Language and General Knowledge

My child:

- 9 Has many opportunities to play
- 9 Is read to every day
- 9 Has access to books and other reading materials
- 9 Has his television viewing monitored by an adult
- 9 Is encouraged to ask questions
- 9 Is encouraged to solve problems
- 9 Has opportunities to notice similarities and differences
- 9 Is encouraged to sort and classify things (for example, by looking for red cars on the highway)
- 9 Is learning to write his name and address
- 9 Is learning to count and plays counting games
- 9 Is learning to identify shapes and colours
- 9 Has opportunities to draw, listen to and make music, and to dance
- 9 Has opportunities to get firsthand experiences to do things in the world--to see and touch objects, hear new sounds, smell and taste foods, and watch things move

What About Kindergarten?

This resource can help your child get ready for kindergarten. As the first day of school approaches, however, you may want to do extra things to make the school seem a friendlier place for both you and your child. Find out as much as you can about the school before your child enters it. You will want to learn:

- The principal's name
- The kindergarten teacher's name
- When to register for kindergarten and what forms need to be filled out
- What immunizations are required for school entry
- A description of the kindergarten program
- The kindergarten yearly calendar and daily schedule
- Transportation procedures
- Recess or snack routines
- How you can become involved in your child's education and in the school

G Some schools will send you this information, or they may hold an orientation meeting in the spring for parents who expect to enroll their children in kindergarten the following fall. If they don't, you can call the principal's office to ask or to arrange a visit.

Find out, in advance, what the school expects from entering kindergarten students.

If you know a year or two ahead of time, you will be in a better position to prepare your child. Sometimes parents and caregivers don't think the expectations are right for their children. If that is the case, you may want to meet with the principal or kindergarten teachers to talk about the expectations and ways to seek changes in the kindergarten program.

N Visit the school.

When you visit the school, take your child so your child can become familiar with it, and it won't seem scary. Walk up and down the hallways to learn where things are. Observe the other children and the classrooms.

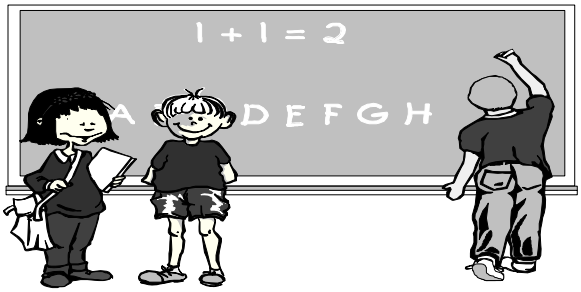
N Talk with your child about school.

During your visit, make positive comments about the school--your good attitude will rub off! ("Look at all the boys and girls painting in this classroom. Doesn't that look like fun!") Tell your child about what the children do when classes begin. Talk about the teachers and how they will help your child learn new things. Encourage your child to look at the teacher as a wise friend toward whom children should be courteous. Explain to your child how important it is to go to class each day.

N If possible, consider volunteering to help out in the school.

The staff may appreciate having an extra adult to help do everything from passing out paper and pencils in the classrooms to supervising on the playground. Volunteering is a good way to learn more about the school and to meet its staff and other parents. When the long-awaited first day of kindergarten arrives, go to school with your child (but don't stay too long). And be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first because they haven't had much experience in dealing with new situations. They may not immediately like school. Your child may cry or cling to you when you say goodbye each morning, but with support from you and the kindergarten teacher, this can rapidly change.

As your child proceeds through school, you will need to continue your encouragement and involvement. But for now, celebrate all that you have accomplished as a parent. Share your children's enthusiasm. Let them know how proud you are as they leave home for their first day of kindergarten. Let them know you believe they will succeed.



(Thanks to the NLTA for this material (

Homework Heaven

The best time to do homework is:

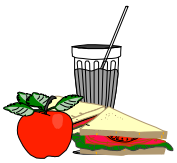
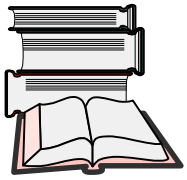
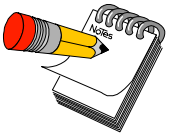
The best place to do homework is:

I like to do homework when:

I dislike homework when:

Study Tips

For you, or to share with your child!

1.  Study when well rested	**2.**  Study after eating rather than when you are hungry	**3.**  Have a routine - try to study at about the same time each day or evening	**4.**  Have a comfortable seat in a well lit area.
5.  Keep the noise down - turn off the television or loud music	**6.**  Review what you have studied, either alone or with a classmate or family member	**7.**  Keep it interesting by shifting topics - try to study small portions of several topics rather than one subject all evening long	**8.**  Keep a list of what you have studied - it shows that you are making progress

A WHO'S WHO GLOSSARY

Here's information about the people employed by some School Boards, many of whom may be involved in helping if your child has a disability.

Special Education Teacher: Provides support and instruction to students with special needs either in the classroom or in other environments.

Challenging Needs Teacher: A Special Education teacher who works with a child or a group of children with severe physical disabilities or moderate / severe handicaps.

Educational Therapist: Helps develop strategies for students with behavioural or emotional difficulties.

Student Assistant: Assists the teacher by providing personal care, carrying, lifting, behavioural management, and access to educational activities for students with difficulties.

Itinerant Teacher: Visits schools in the district to facilitate services for students with visual or hearing impairments.

Guidance Counsellor: Helps students develop positive self-images, good relationships with their peers, problem-solving skills, and an understanding of educational and career opportunities available to them.

Speech-Language Pathologist: Provides programs for students with speech and communication disorders.

School Psychologist: Promotes mental health and helps ensure children have successful learning experiences.

Language Arts Coordinator: Promotes Language Arts curriculum by working with teachers and students, including assisting in the development of individualized reading programs.