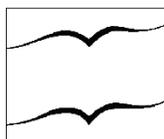


2009 Final Report

Summer Tutoring Program for Kids



PEI
Literacy
Alliance



Eastern School District



Western School Board



The Guardian
Journal Pioneer



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About the Summer Tutoring Program for Kids

Background

The Summer Tutoring Program for Kids (STPK) runs for eight weeks during July and August every year. We offer it free of charge.

The program began in 1998 with 5 tutors tutoring 97 children in 8 libraries across PEI. Since 2001, the PEI Literacy Alliance has been the community sponsor for the STPK. In 2008, 25 tutors tutored 762 children in 25 libraries, schools, and community centers. This year, we hired 26 tutors who tutored 600 children. The number of children is lower this year than last. We believe this is due in part because of 8 schools closing.

Purpose and Benefits

The purpose of this program is to support the learning objectives of the school system by offering an alternative learning environment during the summer months. The program offers numerous benefits for children with reading difficulties, including:

- ◆ personal attention for one hour per week
- ◆ learning made fun
- ◆ knowledge of how to use a public library and its databases
- ◆ introduction to reading as an activity that continues outside the classroom
- ◆ introduction to a wide variety of library books
- ◆ increased self-esteem and confidence

Objectives

1. To offer children with reading difficulties a chance to maintain their literacy skills over the summer months.
2. To provide relevant summer career employment for qualified students.



Target Group

This program was offered to Island primary and elementary school aged children. Resource teachers in each school identified the children most in need of additional help. Participants came from grades 1 to 6.

Staffing

PEI Literacy Alliance staff Jinny Greaves coordinated the program this year. She developed a training program for the tutors, mentored the tutors, and made sure the program ran smoothly.

In 2009, we hired 26 tutors. Eleven of them were returning tutors from last year. During their first two weeks, tutors took part in three training sessions, met with resource teachers and library staff, and contacted parents. They tutored for the following eight weeks. They were responsible for creating unique lesson plans to meet each child's needs. They were also responsible for creating a positive learning atmosphere to promote personal development and confidence.



2009 Supporters

The Summer Tutoring Program budget was \$134,000. It would not have been possible without financial and in kind support from community partners.

These departments, organizations and groups contributed to the program this year:

◆ Service Canada's Youth Employment Strategy Program	\$70,500 (84% of 23 tutors' wages)
◆ PEI Literacy Alliance	Community Sponsor and Host of the Program
◆ PEI Department of Education	\$20,000
◆ CanWest Raise-a-Reader The Guardian Newspaper and Journal Pioneer Newspaper	\$24,000
◆ PEI Public Library Service Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour	Tutors worked in 21 libraries across the Island
◆ PEI Literacy Initiatives Secretariat Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning	\$5000
◆ Eastern School District	\$5000
◆ Western School Board	\$1500
◆ French Language School Board	\$1500
◆ Club Richelieu	\$400
◆ The Rotary Club of Charlottetown Royalty	\$5000
◆ The Percé Program	\$1,875 (half of the wages for one tutor)
◆ Scholastic	Over 2500 new books donated

The total contribution of all our supporters totalled \$129,248 for the program this year. This does not include the donation of books and space at the libraries.

Program Coordinator's 2009 Final Report



We hired 26 tutors this year. We received support for 23 tutor positions from Service Canada and one position from the Percé Program. The other two positions were funded by money from the Raise-A-Reader Campaign.

This year we had 826 students referred to the program and 600 were able to take part. This includes all students who attended at least 3 out of 8 sessions. This number is significantly lower than last year. We think this is due to the closure of 8 schools.

Orientation and Training Sessions for Tutors

The tutors had three training days: June 22nd, 24th and 29th.

Day 1

The morning of Day 1 of training focused on reviewing the Tutor's Manual. This was a new addition to the program. We gave each tutor a manual that outlined everything they needed to know about their role as tutor. These were the categories in the manual:

- ◆ Job details
- ◆ Contacting resource teachers
- ◆ Scheduling
- ◆ Working with parents
- ◆ Staying organized
- ◆ Tutoring sites
- ◆ Reviewing referral forms
- ◆ Tutoring
- ◆ Reporting on students progress
- ◆ PEI Literacy Alliance staff and contact numbers

The manual also included an Island map, a name tag to wear in the libraries, time-sheets, mileage sheets, schedule sheets, permission slips, student reports, students' referral forms and tutoring locations.

Most tutors said that the manual was very helpful.

The afternoon of Day 1 focused on lesson planning. Sarah Hockey, a graduate of the Bachelor of Education program and past tutor, presented a session on how to develop lesson plans. She then facilitated an exercise where the tutors worked in groups to develop lesson ideas. Tutors then presented their ideas to the whole group.

Many tutors said that this section of the training was the most useful.

Day 2

The morning of Day 2 focused on learning disabilities and reading strategies for primary and elementary-aged children.

Julia Wright from the Learning Disabilities Association of PEI spoke about her organization. Although the information had value, tutors said this was the least helpful section of the training. The presentation was mostly about the organization and was not interactive enough.



Linda Inman-Hyson and Christine Thibaudier-Ness came from the Department of Education as Language Arts experts. They presented on reading strategies for primary and elementary-aged children. Linda presented to the students who would be working in English and Christine presented to those who would be tutoring in French. Tutors said this section was very helpful.

The afternoon of Day 2 focused on the libraries. We went to the Confederation Centre Library and Barb Kissick, Youth Services Librarian, and Rebecca Boulter, Literacy and Public Services Librarian, presented on the libraries' resources, rules and regulations. Tutors who didn't work at the Confederation Centre Library found this session less valuable than those that did, although rules and regulations applied at all libraries.

Day 3

The morning of Day 3 was split into two parts. The new tutors took part in UPEI Education Professor Ray Doiron's presentation. He spoke about literacy and how it requires practice, meaningful experiences and mediated support. Professor Doiron also talked about tips for tutoring and how to link literacy to the student's world.

The past tutors worked together in another room to develop a presentation for the new tutors. The past tutors then presented their ideas on what makes a good tutor and a good lesson plan. They ended with a group discussion where everyone had a chance to share their ideas.

Tutors said this session was very valuable and wished it was longer.

Training concluded at noon.

Overall, tutors said the training was very useful. Many said they would like even more interactive presentations on lesson planning.

For the new tutors the training is essential and very helpful. Some of the past tutors said the training was repetitive for them. Others said it was a great refresher and got them excited about tutoring again.

School and Library Visits

During the first training day, we stressed to the tutors that their first task was to contact the resource teachers as they would soon be finished for the summer.

Most tutors said the resource teachers were helpful in providing more detailed information than what was on the referral forms. Some resource teachers provided resource materials to the tutors. This was very helpful for those tutors. The more information that was given to the tutor the easier it was for them to develop a lesson plan for each student. Some tutors said they received very little information and didn't even know the reading level of some students. Next year the forms will be improved to encourage resource teachers to give more information.

The next task for the tutors was to visit the libraries they would be working in to introduce themselves and find out where they could set up. This was also a chance for the library staff to tell the tutor about any specific rules or regulations the tutor should follow. Many of the library staff were very welcoming of the tutors and helped the tutors find and use library resources.

Contacting Parents

After meeting with the resource teachers and library staff, we asked tutors to contact parents to set up weekly appointment times. The tutors had two weeks before tutoring began to get in touch with all the parents.



The most common problem for tutors was having invalid phone numbers for the parents. Some numbers were disconnected and some were simply wrong numbers. Also some parents didn't return messages. This is always the most frustrating part for the tutors. Next year we plan to ask for alternative numbers on the referral forms such as a relative's number.

Those parents that were reached knew about the program and had received a brochure from the resource teacher. Most parents were very appreciative and excited that their child had a free opportunity to learn outside of the school environment.

Borrowing Books

We borrowed English and French leveled books from the Department of Education. Each tutor received approximately 100 books to use in lesson plans.

The tutors were able to trade books at the mid-summer meeting so that they had new material to help engage their students.

We replaced two books that went missing. Next year we plan to brainstorm ideas for an easy way to keep track of the books that doesn't create a lot of extra work for tutors.



Resources

Thanks to a large donation of books from Scholastic we did not need to order new books this year.

We supplied each tutor with a tote full of books, crafts supplies, games and other learning tools. Tutors said the totes were a great help with lots of supplies they were able to use.

Each tutor received about a 100 leveled Department of Education books. The books were leveled from A to Q.

This year we borrowed more French books from the Department of Education.

This year the tutors could have used more French supplies such as games and flashcards.



English as and Additional Language (EAL) students

We hired a tutor who has worked with us as an EAL tutor for two years.

Prince Street school informed us that they would not be referring any EAL students this year because of past issues. Last year many of the EAL students did not show up for their sessions.

We contacted the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (PEIANC) and spoke with them about this issue. They referred 10 children who they knew would commit fully to the program. These 10 children all successfully completed the program. The EAL tutor said that this was her best year with the EAL students because attendance was great. Next year we plan to contact the PEIANC and get referrals directly from them again.

French Tutors

We hired 3 tutors to work with French students and 6 tutors who worked with French Immersion students.

We could have used another French tutor in the Eastern region to tutor the French students in Souris.

Next year we plan to ask for the referrals before hiring the tutors. This will allow us to see what the need is for each area and to hire tutors accordingly. This may also help lower the cost of mileage.

Visiting Tutors

As coordinator, I visited the new tutors during the third week of tutoring. This gave them a few weeks to feel the job out and to discuss any issues with me. It was also an opportunity for me to bring any supplies they needed. I also observed the tutors at work and was very pleased with what I saw. All the tutors worked with dedication and many of the lesson plan ideas I saw being used were creative and fun for the students.

In August I visited all of the tutors and delivered certificates for their students and any supplies they needed. We discussed how the tutoring was going and if they had any concerns or issues.

The tutors this year were all very professional and dedicated to their students. It was a pleasure to work with each of them.

Mid-Summer Meeting

We held this meeting on July 24th. This meeting was a chance for tutors to trade ideas, books and games, and to give us feedback on the program. Tutors filled out an evaluation survey about their experience as a tutor. Their responses have been incorporated throughout this report.

We also gave tutors parent evaluation surveys and student evaluation surveys. We asked that they conduct the survey with the child and send the parent evaluation survey home with the student during the last week of tutoring.



Prior to this meeting, we asked tutors to bring two lesson plan ideas that worked well. We asked them to form small groups to discuss problems they encountered, how they overcame them and what lesson plans worked best.

Each group then came to our office where we had the 2600 books donated by Scholastic. Each tutor was allowed to take about 100 books. The tutors gave these books to their students as a gift for being in the program. Each student received about 5 books. Both the tutors and the students were very excited about this.

Problems That Arose

Some schools said they sent referrals in but we never received them. This is always a very hectic time and there is not enough time to call each school to confirm receipt of their referrals. We asked in the referral request letter for teachers to call to confirm that we received their referrals. Next year we plan to ask for these referrals a few months earlier which will allow for more follow up time.

A few teachers called to say that they should be able to refer more students because they are a big school. Currently we limit most schools to 20 referrals and allow only a few to send in 30. Next year we hope to make this fairer. We will look closely at each school's student population and adjust the maximum number of referrals they can send in.

Not as many referrals were sent in this year. We think it is because 8 schools closed. We hired an additional tutor in anticipation of having similar numbers as last year. As the season progressed, 200 students dropped out of the program. This is normal but we didn't have the waiting list we usually have. This left some tutors with less than the optimal 30 students. These tutors offered more hours to their current students to fill up their week.

Attendance

This is a recurring problem for the tutors. Many students miss appointments without notifying their tutor beforehand.

Every year we do the following to try to improve attendance:

1. We ask resource teachers to:

- ◆ get a commitment from the parents before they refer a student to us
- ◆ give parents a brochure that explains the program and its policies
- ◆ tell parents that a tutor will contact them a week before the program begins to set up a weekly tutoring appointment

2. We ask tutors to:

- ◆ give parents a fridge magnet. On the magnet are the student's weekly appointment time, the tutor's contact information and the PEI Literacy Alliance's phone number
- ◆ explain our "no show" policy to parents. If their child misses two sessions in a row without notice, the child is out of the program
- ◆ tell parents that we have a waiting list and to please let us know if they will not take part so that another child can benefit from the program.
- ◆ call parents the night before their appointment during the first week of tutoring
- ◆ call parents when they have missed a session to remind them they had an appointment that day. They ask the parent if they want to continue with the program. They also remind them of our "no show" policy.

Recommendations for Next Year

I recommend updating the tutor's manual and the following forms:

- ◆ Time-sheets
- ◆ Mileage-sheets
- ◆ Parent permission slips
- ◆ Evaluation surveys
- ◆ Referral forms
- ◆ Student report forms

In the past we hired the Coordinator in May and he or she finished in September. This has not allowed time to fine tune the smaller details of the program. This year the Coordinator is also a full-time staff of the Alliance. This will allow for time to further improve the program.

I recommend requesting referrals in April before the tutors are hired. This will help a little with the high work load that results in June when the referrals are being sent in. It takes about 4 full days to go through the referrals and assign students to tutors and libraries. We can do this ahead of time if we receive the referrals earlier.

I recommend that we look at the student population of each school more closely so the maximum number of referrals can be increased or decreased for some schools. This will create a fairer system that we can explain to teachers who believe they should be able to refer more students.

I recommend that we buy more French games and flashcards for the tutors totes.

The STPK 2009 was a great success thanks to an incredible group of talented tutors. I hope that many of them return next year. Parents, teachers, tutors and students alike have expressed how valuable this program is and wish it could serve more children. It was a great opportunity for me to run the program this year after assisting with it for the past two years.



Jinny Greaves
Program Coordinator

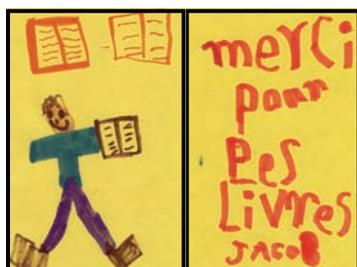
Evaluations

Children's Evaluations

During the last week of tutoring, we asked tutors to do a survey with their students.

"books show you a lot"
~ a student of the program

We got 433 completed surveys from the children. When tutors asked the student if he or she liked coming to the tutoring session, 98.6% of the children said "yes". Only 1.4% said "no". However, even the children that said "no" listed fun activities they did with their tutor.



The majority of the children enjoyed the hands-on activities. They really enjoyed the games, science experiments, and using the computers. They also enjoyed becoming more familiar with the library and discovering new books.

We asked each child, "If you were a tutor, what would you do differently?" Many commented that they would do nothing differently. Others wrote that they would "play more games," and "go outside more."

We asked, "What did you learn about yourself this summer?" Most children responded that they could now read better and that they like reading. The children's responses to this question were very positive and confident: "I am a good reader"; "I am smart"; "I am a good boy"; and "I am special."

Here are more examples of the children's responses to "what did you learn about yourself this summer?":

- That I like reading
- Really good at reading
Down by the Bay
- I like math
- I am good at writing
- I'm good at writing stories
- That I know a lot of things
and that I can read better
- Lots
- I can read chapter books
- I learned that I have to slow
down when I am reading
- I like books
- I play games well
- To read and write better
- I am good at English
- I could read better if I try
- I can look up in dictionary
- That I was reading a good book
- That to always try and not to give
up
- That I need to concentrate on
listening to what I am reading
- Je peux parlé en français plus bien
- I learned that I love the library

Parent Evaluations

We received 275 parent evaluations. 99.3% of these parents said the program was helpful. Most commented that it was very helpful, and beneficial to their child. 0.7 % of the parents said they didn't think the program was helpful.

We asked parents, "Was the program helpful?" Most parents remarked that the child enjoyed having the one-on-one time, that it was great to have the child practicing reading over the summer, that it helped build their child's confidence, and that the child was now reading more at home. Many commented that their child's reading skills had remained the same or had improved over the summer. This is great feedback as it indicates the program has successfully reached its goal.

We asked parents, "In what ways could the program be improved?" Most indicated they would not change anything. However some suggested that the sessions should be longer or more frequent. This suggestion is one we receive from many parents every year. Unfortunately, without more funding to hire many more tutors this is not something we are able to do.

Many parents also suggested that there could be better feedback from tutors for parents as to how their child is doing mid-way through and at the end of the program. This is a suggestion we hear each year and we continue to encourage tutors to do this during their training sessions.

All the parents except for two said that they would recommend this program to other parents. The majority of the parents felt that the extra help during the summer was very beneficial to their child. Most made comments on how wonderful their tutor was and how much their child enjoyed going. Many said that during the summer it is busy and easy for children to lose some of their reading and writing skills. This program helped their children to maintain their skills over the summer and be more prepared for school in September. The final comments on the parent evaluation sheets were mostly parents thanking tutors, as well as the program. The majority of the parents had wonderful comments to add regarding their tutor.

Here are some quotes from the parents:

- Miss Lilly was hesitant to go because she thought it meant that she had not done a good job at school. With every week attending, I saw a change in her attitude – to one of enjoyment. She would remind me of her impending class. Besides brushing up on her skills she learned about life and being open to new experiences.
- I have noticed a difference in my daughter's reading, and she will attempt to read something and sound out the words now.

- We are an English speaking home and Nick would not have been speaking French for the complete 2 months if this program was not available.
- Mackenzie loved attending this program every week. The tutor made it a fun, exciting and comfortable atmosphere for her to go and practice her reading skills. She was actually sad to see it end.
- I found it allowed her to maintain her French reading. It also boosted her math.
- The tutor was wonderful with Marie. She very much looked forward to going and was always pleased with herself afterwards.



Conclusion

This program began in 1998 with 5 tutors and less than 100 children. Eleven years later, the program has grown not only in size but in its confidence and sophistication. In 2008, there were 917 children referred to the program and 826 in 2009. There are indications that this number is very small compared to the children who could be helped by this program. School resource teachers have one major complaint about the Summer Tutoring Program for Kids – they have many more children than they are able to refer.

One of the goals of this program is to instill the love of reading in the children. From comments made in the evaluations we can see that the tutors accomplish this goal each year. This is important to do at an early age as we know students begin to disengage from school around grades 4 and 5. Recent research from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) looks at school engagement and engagement in reading and correlates them directly with higher achievement and future success in school and in life. Another interesting correlation in the PISA results is between confidence and achievement. We can see from the comments from both children and parents that confidence is raised by the Summer Tutoring Program for Kids.

In 2005, the government of Prince Edward Island released *Excellence in Education: A Challenge for Prince Edward Island*. The recommendations included the importance of early childhood interventions, specifically developing an intervention program for children identified as being at risk. The Summer Tutoring Program for Kids is an example of how these children can be helped. A goal of the *Excellence in Education* report is to have all children learning to read by grade 3. This program aids in achieving that goal. We know from research that reading enjoyment and student and parent engagement are huge factors in reading attainment. Those results are evident in this report.

The Summer Tutoring Program for Kids is cost efficient, considering the benefits gained each year for hundreds of children. In addition this program is a fine example of community engagement. It takes the whole community to raise literacy levels and this is reflected in our list of supporters.



This program has proven itself year after year as a valuable community program which should be expanded in order to provide these benefits to a greater number of vulnerable children.