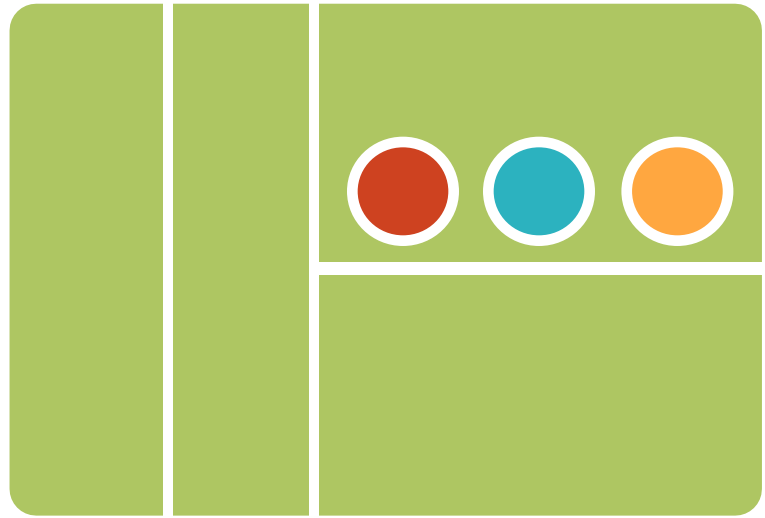


# literacy horizons

a guide for literacy  
coordinators



SASKATCHEWAN  
LITERACY  
NETWORK



# Contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network

---



202 – 626 Broadway Avenue

Saskatoon, SK S7N 1A9

Fax: 1-306-651-7287

Website: [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca)

Email: [saskliteracy@sasktel.net](mailto:saskliteracy@sasktel.net)

Toll-free: 1-888-511-2111

- ▶ Executive Director (interim): Grant Young  
(306) 651-7283  
[sln.executivedirector@sasktel.net](mailto:sln.executivedirector@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Communications Coordinator: Sheena Summach  
(306) 651-7289  
[sln.communications@sasktel.net](mailto:sln.communications@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Adult Literacy Coordinator: Connie Jones  
(306) 651-7286  
[connie.jones@sasktel.net](mailto:connie.jones@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Family Literacy Coordinator: Marilyn Stearns  
(306) 651-7285  
[marilyn.stearns@sasktel.net](mailto:marilyn.stearns@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Benchmarks Coordinator: Elaine Ebenal  
(306) 651-7284  
[elaine.ebenal@sasktel.net](mailto:elaine.ebenal@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Administrative Assistant: Helen Woodhouse  
(306) 651-7288  
[helen.woodhouse@sasktel.net](mailto:helen.woodhouse@sasktel.net)
- ▶ Finance Manager: Ollie Glemser  
(306) 651-7290  
[ollie.glemser@sasktel.net](mailto:ollie.glemser@sasktel.net)

# Table of contents

---



Welcome	1
Where to Start? People and Files	2
Introduction to the Saskatchewan Literacy Network	4
The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network	8
What is Literacy?	9
Family Literacy	10
Plain Language	11
IALSS in Saskatchewan	12
Adult Learning in Saskatchewan	13
Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills	15
Level 1 and 2 Literacy Benchmarks	16
Developing Community Partnerships	17
Making Media Connections	18
Funding Your Program	19
Literacy Acronyms	20
Beyond our Borders: Other Contacts and Friends of the SLN	21

# Table of contents

---



## Other Resources Included:

- IALSS in Saskatchewan Fact Sheet
- Making Media Connections Tip Sheet
- Plain Language Tip Sheet
- Benchmarks Fact Sheets
- Family Literacy Fact Sheets
- Funding Sources
- SLN Membership Benefits and Form



# Welcome!

---



Welcome to the world of literacy in Saskatchewan! We are excited that you have joined us in supporting the cause of literacy in the province and hope you'll take advantage of the many resources that are available to you.

If you're new to the literacy field, you may feel a little overwhelmed at first. Be encouraged! There are many supports available, and this handbook has been designed to help you find them more easily.

# Where to start?

## People and Files

---



The best way for you to dive in is to start reading everything you can find on past and current literacy activities in your area. Read the funding proposal that was written at the beginning of your program. Read advisory committee meeting minutes, learner files, volunteer files, project files, and anything else in your office relating to your program. This will begin to build a foundation of background knowledge for you.

Then, start making those important connections: call tutors, learners and other literacy stakeholders in your area and introduce yourself. Let them know that you are new in your position, and promise to touch back again once you feel more at ease with your duties. Be sure to write down any concerns or questions that come up so that you can respond later when you are more likely to have an answer.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. If the previous coordinator is available, ask if he/she might be willing to answer questions from time to time. Meet your advisory committee and determine their expertise.

Networking is important, especially right now. Find out what professional development is coming up, and plan to attend. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network offers various training opportunities and keeps an online running list of all upcoming literacy events in the province. Attending things like literacy conferences is a fun way to learn from others, and provides an opportunity to network with other coordinators who can be your most valuable resource. They will offer great tips on best practices, assessment tools, partnership development, reading materials for adult learners, and more.





As for right now, the best thing for you to understand is that you are not alone. Literacy efforts are going strong across the province, from Pinehouse and Ile-a-la-Cross to Estevan and everywhere in between. You can find a map of practitioners at the SLN website, [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca).

If you haven't already, contact the friendly staff at the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. We'd be happy to discuss any of your questions and concerns over the phone, or in person at our Saskatoon office or yours.

You'll also find a wealth of information at the Saskatchewan Literacy Network website. From literacy statistics to tips from learners to funding sources, you'll most likely find what you need at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca).

# Introduction to the Saskatchewan Literacy Network

---



The Saskatchewan Literacy Network is a provincial not for profit organization that promotes and supports literacy efforts in Saskatchewan. We do this by facilitating networking and information sharing, promoting the use of plain language, and engaging with policy makers on behalf of literacy stakeholders like you.

Our members are everyone from literacy practitioners to adult learners, community-based groups to government departments, and so many more.

Our provincial conferences, ongoing workshops and regional support groups offer opportunities for practitioners and adult learners to meet and to learn about initiatives within the contexts of family literacy, workplace literacy and essential skills, program planning and more. We also provide access to and information about literacy funding opportunities that you can use to support the needs in your area.

## The SLN Website

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network's website, found at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca), is a valuable resource for literacy information in this province. The site features regularly updated information on family literacy, literacy benchmarks, special literacy events, as well as downloadable resources and many more literacy-related items. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network's website should be one of the first stops on your list when you're looking for up-to-date information about literacy and learning in Saskatchewan.



## Learner Involvement

The SLN provides training and support to Saskatchewan adult learners in the development of advocacy and leadership roles. Learners also provide essential guidance in the work we do by serving on our Board of Directors and many advisory committees.

In addition, our provincial Learners Focus Committee is comprised of eight adult learners from various regions who meet at least twice per year to discuss issues pertaining to adult learners today. The Learners Focus Committee newsletter is printed twice per year. Copies are available through Connie Jones at the SLN office or on our website.

## Regular Events

- International Literacy Day: The SLN supports events around the province each September 8th.
- Family Literacy Day: The SLN supports events around the province each January 27th.
- Spirit of Community: Our annual provincial literacy conference occurs in the autumn of each year, featuring local and national keynotes, field-requested professional development, and great opportunities to network with other literacy practitioners in Saskatchewan.
- Lieutenant Governor's Literacy Awards of Merit: Held each spring in Regina or Saskatoon, the Awards of Merit recognize outstanding literacy leaders in five categories, including the Learner Achievement Award and bursary.



## Training available

Our online calendar of events is updated continuously. Please visit our website at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca) to view upcoming opportunities, or contact our office to request training in your area.

<b>Introduction to Family Literacy</b> 6 hours. Prerequisite to Come Read With Me training.	<b>Storysacks</b> 6 hours
<b>Come Read With Me facilitator training</b> 2 days (12 hours)	<b>Program Planning and Proposal Writing</b> 6 hours
<b>Parents' Roles Interacting with Teacher Support (PRINTS)</b> 2 days (12 hours)	<b>Spirit of Community</b> (annual fall literacy conference) 2 days, each November
<b>Plain Language</b> 6 hours	<b>Rhymes, Songs &amp; Storytelling</b> 6 hours

For more information on upcoming events or training, contact Connie Jones or Marilyn Stearns at the numbers listed at the front of this booklet.



## Membership benefits

Your voice is critical to building strong learning communities and network throughout the province. Consider joining a network that is committed to:

- Ensuring that all Saskatchewan residents have access to the literacy supports they need
- Connecting members with the latest literacy information and with one another
- Being a voice for literacy in Saskatchewan, provincially and nationally.

As a member of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network you have the opportunity to:

- Stay informed about the latest literacy research, policy and programs
- Learn about upcoming literacy events and workshops
- Receive and contribute to the Saskatchewan Literacy Networks monthly e-News
- Borrow resources from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network library
- Elect representatives for the Saskatchewan Literacy Networks Board of Directors
- Enjoy reduced rates on annual conference fees (savings of up to \$150.00) and free shipping of literacy resources within the province.

For more information on the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, please contact Grant Young at the number listed at the front of this booklet.

# The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc.

---

8



The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network (SALN) promotes Aboriginal literacy as a learner-centered approach to lifelong learning. It honours the inter-connectedness of all aspects of creation resulting in personal growth, empowerment, community development, and self-determination. Aboriginal literacy encompasses first languages, Elder and community involvement, culture, creating a holistic approach unifying mind, heart, body and spirit.

For more information contact

The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc.

1017 B - 22nd Street West

Saskatoon, SK S7M 0S2

Phone: 306-934-2632

Fax: 306-934-2633

Website: [www.aboriginal.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.aboriginal.sk.literacy.ca)

Email: [aboriginal.literacy@sasktel.net](mailto:aboriginal.literacy@sasktel.net)

## What is Literacy?

---



The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) defines literacy as “the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

Although many people still equate ‘literacy’ with the ability to read and write, the definition of literacy is evolving with society to include much more, within varied contexts such as daily activities at home, at work, and in the community. It includes the ability to use numbers, new technologies, and to interact verbally. Literacy affects our personal health, our social health, and our economy - there isn’t an area of society that isn’t affected by literacy.

Different people have varied understandings of what literacy means and is. When introducing your literacy activities, be ready to define it and hand out fact sheets to help promote a greater awareness. These can be found within the IALSS toolkit, available for download on the SLN website at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca).

## Family Literacy

---



Since parents are the first adults in a child's life to pass on information, they are essentially the child's first teacher. It is from a parent or caregiver that a child learns the basics of life, such as how to walk, talk, hold a spoon, etc.

Family literacy takes place when a trusted adult spends time with a child to enhance the child's skills, knowledge and experience. It can be the oral tradition of sharing history and stories, following a recipe, or sharing a story book. Family literacy has the potential to be an intricate tool in the growth of the family (adapted from Regina Family Literacy Network, 2006).

Family literacy training opportunities are ongoing throughout the province. For more information, contact Marilyn Stearns at the number listed at the front of this booklet.



## Plain Language

---



“Plain language” is a style of writing that is simple, direct, and presented in ways that help the reader understand the text and the ideas. Its purpose is to communicate clearly and effectively. Most importantly, it is written with the needs of the reader in mind.

Plain language pays attention to:

- What you write – only information your readers really need is included
- How you write – the information is written using grammar and words your reader will understand
- How you organize the information – readers can tell right away what the document is about and where they can find the information they need
- How you present the information – the final document is designed with the reader in mind.

Using plain language can lower costs and reduce staff time by reducing errors and ensuring that documents are easily understood.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network provides plain language services including:

- Client consultation
- Layout and desktop publishing
- Plain language editing
- Other services as required.

See the Plain Language information sheet included in this kit for more tips. For further information, please contact Connie Jones or Sheena Summach at the numbers listed at the front of this booklet.

## IALSS in Saskatchewan

---



The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) is an international survey that measured the literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skill levels of adults.

Saskatchewan IALSS research found that:

- 40% of adults (16 years and over) have below Level 3 literacy levels.
- 33% of adults (aged 16-65) score at Level 1 and Level 2.
- 75% of adults (65 and over) have below Level 3 levels.

See the IALSS information sheet included in this kit for more facts. Further information on Saskatchewan-specific literacy data is available by downloading the Saskatchewan IALSS toolkit from the SLN website, or by contacting Sheena Summach at the number listed at the front of this booklet.

## Adult Learning in Saskatchewan

---



An adult learner is someone who wants to increase the literacy skills that are needed for everyday life such as reading, writing and numeracy. An adult learner is someone who commits to literacy learning or is part of a literacy program.

Adult learners bring with them experiences and understanding based on their life stories. As practitioners and tutors working with adult learners, we respect and honour these experiences and ensure that programs are created with this in mind. Learning within the context of life experience is a key component to facilitating programs for adult learners.

### **A facilitator of adults:**

- Builds on the knowledge and experience of group members. Learners help shape the content of what is covered.
- Respects all ideas; everyone both teaches AND learns.
- Invites input from participants when developing lesson content.
- Chooses teaching or facilitation techniques according to factors such as the nature of the content, the objective of the session, and the participants' needs.
- Relies on methods that respect the learners and allow them to question and suggest alternatives. The facilitator is willing to engage in dialogue with participants and is willing to go with participants' agendas rather than his/her own.



For many participants, this may be a new way of learning. Many participants will bring with them expectations of teacher-delivered information and answers, or they may feel that they don't know much and have little to contribute. An important part of the learning for many adults may be discovering a new, more empowering way to learn.

For more information on adult learning, contact Elaine Ebenal or Connie Jones at the numbers listed at the front of this booklet.



The term 'workplace literacy' refers to the wide range of basic skills required to function successfully in the workplace. It is really an extension or application of the basic literacy we all need to function in everyday life. Without these essential skills, people find it difficult to get good jobs, to keep those jobs and keep up with the changing demands of the workplace.

Essential Skills are the fundamental skills that make it possible to learn all others. They are enabling skills that help people participate fully in the workplace and in the community. They are:

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- oral communications
- working with others
- thinking skills
- computer use
- continuous learning

The SLN website is currently updating resources pertaining to workplace literacy. Keep checking back for updates at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca).

In the meantime, you can visit the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) website or the NALD@work website for great resources:

**OLES:** <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills>

**NALD@work:** <http://www.naldatwork.ca>

For more information, please contact Elaine Ebenal or Connie Jones at the numbers listed at the front of this booklet.

# Level 1 and 2 Adult Literacy Benchmarks

---



Over the years, practitioners, learners, and funding agencies have all expressed the need for a consistent way to recognize and document Level 1 and 2 literacy learner achievements. In response to this need, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Advanced Education and Employment and the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission, with funding support from the National Literacy Secretariat (now Office of Literacy and Essential Skills) undertook a 5 year project. It developed the Level 1 and 2 Adult Literacy Benchmarks that will serve as a basis for evaluation or comparison across Saskatchewan.

The benchmarks and the processes around using them take a holistic approach to learning, drawing on gifts of the mind, body, heart, and spirit. They are respectful of diversity and allow learner centred planning. The benchmarks processes honour the knowledge of learners and empower them by providing them with opportunities to direct their own learning and to make changes in their lives as a result of their learning.

Additional information, including a document entitled The Circle of Learning, fact sheets and a podcast are available at our website, [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca). Or, you may contact Elaine Ebenal at the number listed at the front of this booklet.

# Developing Community Partnerships

---



Community-based partnerships are extremely important in building capacity and getting programs and activities off and running. Group efforts can develop dynamic and creative solutions, and partnerships often have the ability to affect powerful change. But they don't just happen – they require forethought, common goals and a commitment to nurturing over time.

Partnerships often accomplish things that, outside of a group effort, might otherwise be impossible to achieve. But it can be a challenge to find partners who share similar agendas, or who have the time and resources beyond their regular duties to make a long-term commitment to the common partnership goals.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network has additional resources on this subject. Please contact Connie Jones at the number listed at the front of this booklet, or visit our website, [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca)



We are exposed to more mediated messages in one day than our great-grandparents were exposed to in a year. Media reaches a wide audience of people who are a variety of ages from a variety of different backgrounds. Media experiences exert a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act on our world. Working with the media is a way of getting noticed and a way to build credibility. The media is not only a resource which helps us learn about the world, but is also a resource that can teach us how to learn.

See the Media Connection information sheet included in this kit for more tips on working with the media in your community.



## Funding your program

---



Solid programs are like icebergs – the bulk of their foundation and strength is found well beneath the surface. A well designed program requires planning long before any progress can be seen or funds procured. You can reduce time seeking literacy funds by investing time in initial program planning.

To plan a solid program, you'll need to build healthy community partnerships, understand your organizational strengths, determine the strengths and needs of your community, and develop a great idea – and that's just for starters. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network can help you through the entire process – from program design to securing funds to implementation. Our one-day workshop on program planning and proposal writing will provide you with everything you need to get started. For more information, contact Connie Jones at the number listed at the front of this booklet.

A comprehensive list of literacy funders in Saskatchewan is updated annually and available for download from our website, at [www.sk.literacy.ca](http://www.sk.literacy.ca).

## Literacy acronyms



Although adult learners have often suggested that it is best to avoid acronyms, you will likely run across many. Here is a list of commonly used acronyms.

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ALKC	Adult Learning Knowledge Centre (Canadian Council on Learning)
CANSASK	Canada Saskatchewan Career & Employment Services
CCL	Canadian Council on Learning
CLP	Community Literacy Plan (Literacy Office's Literacy Initiative Fund)
COL	Circle of Learning (Saskatchewan Literacy Benchmarks)
EALG	Estevan & Area Literacy Group
EOI	Expression of Interest (Literacy Office's Literacy Initiative Fund)
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
IALSS	International Adult Literacy Skills Survey
MCL	Movement for Canadian Literacy
MCL-LAN	Movement for Canadian Literacy – Learner's Advisory Network
NALD	National Adult Literacy Database
OLES	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (HRSDC)
PALN	Prince Albert Literacy Network
RLA	Regina Literacy Association
RFLN	Regina Family Literacy Network
RPL	Regina Public Library
SALN	Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network
SLN	Saskatchewan Literacy Network

Have you noticed any other acronyms commonly used in the literacy field? To have them added to this list, contact Sheena at [sln.communications@sasktel.net](mailto:sln.communications@sasktel.net).

## Beyond our borders: Other contacts & friends of the SLN




---

The literacy field is very active across Canada, offering a wealth of research findings, best practices, professional development and networking opportunities.

National Adult Literacy Database	<a href="http://www.nald.ca">http://www.nald.ca</a>
NALD@Work	<a href="http://www.naldatwork.ca">http://www.naldatwork.ca</a>
ABC Canada	<a href="http://www.abc-canada.org">http://www.abc-canada.org</a>
Movement for Canadian Literacy	<a href="http://www.literacy.ca">http://www.literacy.ca</a>
BC Literacy Forum	<a href="http://www.bcliteracyforum.ca">http://www.bcliteracyforum.ca</a>
Canadian Council on Learning	<a href="http://www.ccl-cca.ca">http://www.ccl-cca.ca</a>
Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc.	<a href="http://www.aboriginal.sk.literacy.ca">http://www.aboriginal.sk.literacy.ca</a>

Any other websites you've found to be useful? To have them added to this list, contact Sheena at [sln.communications@sasktel.net](mailto:sln.communications@sasktel.net).

## Anything else?

---



Was this booklet helpful?

Would you like to see additional content?

We invite your feedback! Tell us how we can improve this booklet by sending an email to  
Connie Jones ([connie.jones@sasktel.net](mailto:connie.jones@sasktel.net)), or  
Sheena Summach ([sln.communications@sasktel.net](mailto:sln.communications@sasktel.net))

