



*The Columbia Basin  
Alliance for Literacy*

Building Community Literacy  
From The Ground Up



## *The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy*

### Building Community Literacy From The Ground Up

*by*

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*Funding and full support for this manual provided by the  
**National Literacy Secretariat**  
**Human Resources Development Canada**  
through the Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program in partnership with the  
British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education*

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Published by The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy*

## *Acknowledgements*

Literacy work throughout the Columbia Basin could not be as effective or as extensive without the appreciated support of many organizations and people. In particular:

Members of the Community Literacy Advisory Committees have spent considerable volunteer time and energy thinking about their communities and the literacy needs of those communities, lending their experience and expertise, and believing that even small groups of committed people can make a difference.

The Columbia Basin Trust has provided funding over a period of several years, giving communities sufficient time to develop programs and foster growth. The faith of Don Johnston, Jean Terlesky, and the Education Sector in the literacy workers of the Basin has been most supportive and has given everyone the courage to carry on.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and the National Literacy Secretariat provided the initial planning and ongoing program funding. Audrey Thomas, Yvette Souque and others continue to believe in the importance of literacy and the programs in the Columbia Basin.

Literacy BC has provided funding and support for the Regional Literacy Coordinators and family literacy programs in the Columbia Basin. Linda Mitchell and Jean Rasmussen provide ongoing support.

College of the Rockies provides office space, equipment, telephone, internet access, a computer, and moral support to the Regional Literacy Coordinator in the East Kootenay.

Selkirk College provides support for adult literacy programs and continues to believe in the importance of basic skills development.

The Vancouver Foundation, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, Rotary Clubs, Community Foundations, and other local groups have provided monetary and in-kind support.

Gavin Perryman, organizational consultant, whose experience, wisdom and friendship have kept everyone focused and directed.

Gord Johnston, Executive Director of the Cranbrook Boys' and Girls' Club, who believed in the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy from the beginning and continues to support both the process and the people involved.

All the literacy coordinators, adult and family, whose dedication to and passion for their communities and the people in them has made a difference in the lives of many.

Judy McLaren	Kim Asquith	Trish Huesken	Tracy Spanner
Denelda Minty	Faye Cobbe	Marilyn Johnstone	Shelley Stickle-Miles
Betty Knight	Maureen Brownlee	Ursula Kopatsch	Margaret Sutherland
Bev Roberts	Pat Powell	Christy Luke	Meg Langley
Carrie Johansen	Carol Miller	Shauna McKeating	Greg Meaker
Kate Bidder	Lisa Chapman	Donna Milburn	Lorrie Lane
Len Van der Meer	Barb Cyr	Barbara Padwicki	Gina Bennett
Anna Wilson	Joan Exley	Sue Port	Kevi Remple
Lynn Mace	Evelyn Goodell	Margaret Raymond	Mary Shier
Deborah Johnstone	Joanne Harris	Rhonda Palmer	Leanne Caillier-Smith
Kim Howden	Trish Harrison	Brenda Smith	Deb Heal

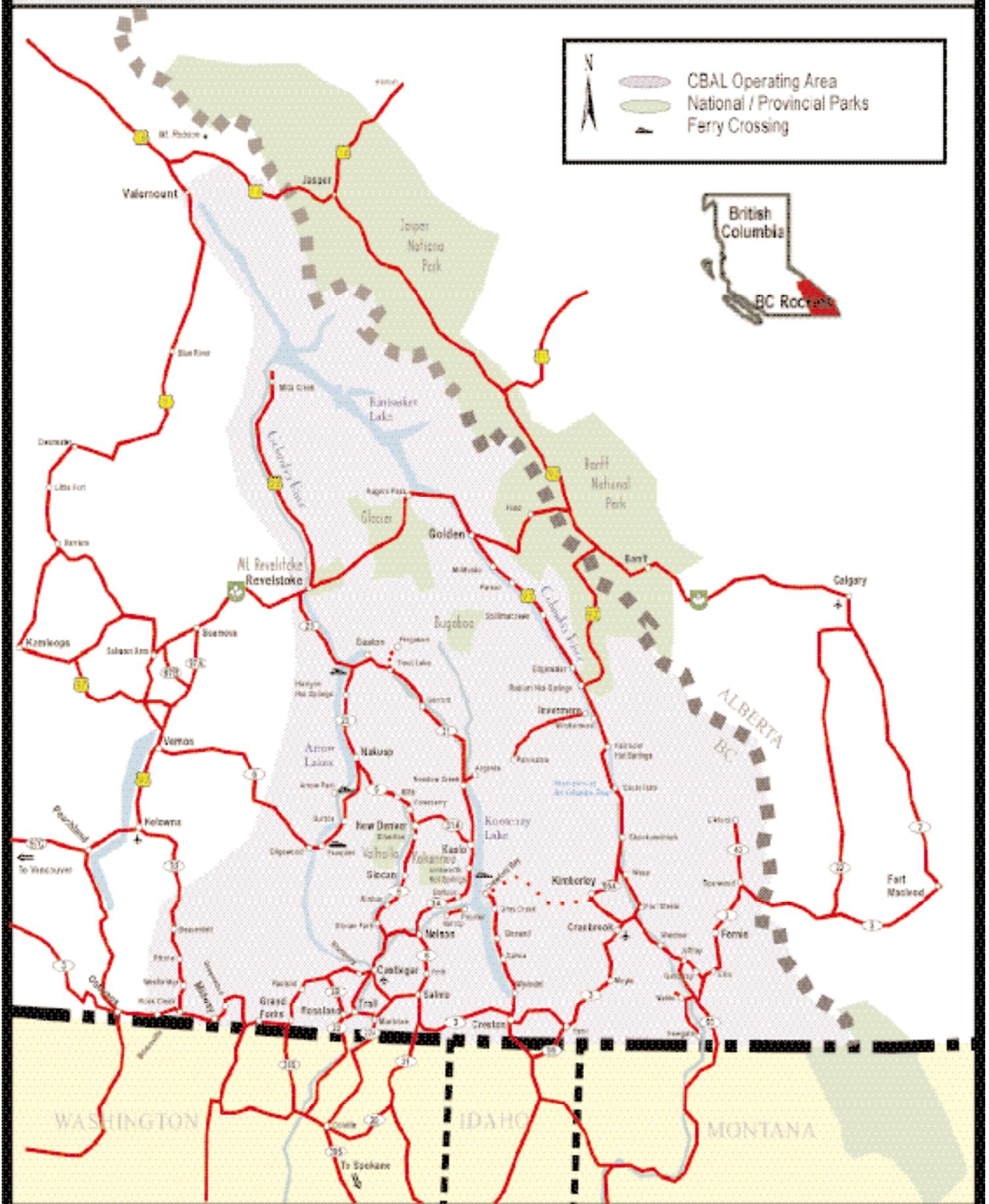
Shawn Maisey who read the manuscript and gave us thoughtful feedback and Linda Boutet who keeps us organized and fiscally sane.

Mary Thompson Boyd who started the Regional Literacy Coordination project in BC and who inspired us in many ways.

And finally, Cos Capone, editor and layout person, whose kind patience and guidance finally got us to the end of this book.



CBAL Operating Area  
National / Provincial Parks  
Ferry Crossing



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## Building Community Literacy From The Ground Up

### **FOREWORD**

Since 1996, communities in the Canadian Columbia Basin of British Columbia (East and West Kootenay Regions, Valemount, and Revelstoke) have been planning, developing, and delivering family literacy programs with encouragement and widespread support. During those years, a total of seventeen communities have agreed to work together and to support each other.

The programs are the result of the hard work and commitment of many people from diverse backgrounds and interests. They believe literacy is important and are willing to work together to ensure that children growing up in their communities will have strong literacy skills.

Adult literacy programs have been operating in the Basin for many years. They have been very helpful to many, but the number of people with literacy problems has not decreased. Clearly, other approaches to literacy delivery must be developed and executed.

The next logical step suggested focusing on *family* literacy. It provides a context for assisting adults who might not attend an adult literacy program and it allows for paying attention to prevention as well as remediation.

Literacy workers also decided that they needed to work with other organizations in the community, particularly those which were already successfully working with families. It makes sense to build on the strengths of those programs.



This manual relates the story of the development of family literacy programs and the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. It provides an example of community and program development that may be useful to other communities wishing to build cooperative movements around specific community issues. This is an on-going approach requiring dedication, contexts, relationships, patience, opportunities, and time. It is based on the understanding that small communities with limited resources will solve community problems most effectively if they work together.



## Background

### **Adult Literacy Programs**

In the East Kootenay, adult literacy programs have been in operation for many years. These programs are provided by the College of the Rockies and are part of the Adult Basic Education Department. For several years, the programs enlisted community volunteers to work with students and, in the smaller communities, these tutors were the primary delivery mechanism. Recently, all the programs are classroom-based with small group work and individualized instruction.

Adult literacy programs have also been in operation in the West Kootenay for many years. Selkirk College has Adult Basic Education classes. Until 2002, Project Literacy West Kootenay (PLWK) offered one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction in community settings outside the college. The work of PLWK is being carried on by the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. An Adult Literacy Coordinator manages a community literacy program in each of six communities.

PLWK started in 1990 as a partnership between The West Kootenay Library Association and Selkirk College. Funding is provided by Selkirk College and The Adult Literacy Cost Shared Program. Both the West Kootenay Library Association and Project Literacy West Kootenay have a successful history of collaborating and networking.

### **Literacy B.C.**

Founded in 1990, Literacy BC is the provincial organization that promotes and supports literacy and learning in BC. It has taken a strong leadership role in literacy in BC.

A volunteer board of directors consisting of 15 regional representatives meets regularly to carry out the goals and objectives of the organization. Literacy BC is funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, the National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada and generous donations from many corporations and individuals.

Literacy BC believes that literacy is a human right; that literacy is everybody's business; and that we all have a part to play. It promotes literacy, supports adult learners, develops networks and partnerships, and presents a united voice on



## **Regional Literacy Coordination**

literacy issues. Literacy BC also supports a diverse membership in order to strengthen and increase regional and local literacy efforts in the province.

For some years, regional literacy coordination has been a priority in the literacy field in B.C. Since 1976 there has been a recognized need for leadership from one ministry within the provincial government; for lifelong learning as an organizing principle for policy and planning; quality, learner-centered programs; viable support for community-based, non-institutional programs and coordination among and between ministries in the provincial government.

In 1989, the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee (PLAC) to the Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology published a report entitled, *Opening the Doors to Lifelong Learning: Empowering Undereducated Adults*. The PLAC report contains several recommendations related to coordination, principally that, *each college would be required to have a Regional Literacy Coordinator working with a community-based advisory committee to develop active partnerships of business, labour, libraries, volunteer organizations, educational institutions, and other agencies for the coordinated planning and provision of adult literacy opportunities in the communities of each college region.*

In 1992, Ron Faris wrote *Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century: A Report on the Future Development of Adult/Continuing Education in British Columbia*. The report was the result of a study regarding the policy framework and delivery of adult continuing education in British Columbia. The objective of the report was to make recommendations regarding these. It recommends seven general directions for the provincial ministry. One of these is *to ensure coordination and decentralization of programming to the community level*. It goes on to say that *the future challenge is to move to an even higher level of cooperation which uses the existing resources of the non-formal (voluntary and enterprise) sector as well as those of a wide range of formal providers. New partnerships and forms of collaboration at the local level can assure greater impact for fewer dollars. The secret is to develop meaningful models of ongoing cooperation at the local level.*



In 1994, Literacy B.C. developed a plan to provide Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) in remote regions in B.C. Funding for this position was provided by the Adult Literacy Cost Shared Program. Two of the first regions to get RLCs were the East and West Kootenays. The original objectives of the position were to:

- Build, develop and strengthen regional networks
- Build community partnerships, which in turn would lead to the development of literacy programs and services in regions in the province
- Develop the regional coordination skills of literacy practitioners
- Provide resources and information about literacy to practitioners, volunteers, students and community members
- Develop regional community resource material collections

After the first year of the regional coordinator initiative, more regions were added until in 2002, there were 10 RLCs. The positions have continued to be funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education through the Adult Literacy Cost Shared Program. Each region receives the same amount of money. This typically amounts to approximately one day of work a week from September to June.

It has been essential, for the effectiveness of the project, to respect the uniqueness of each region. The geography, culture, economics, resources, educational programs and history of each of the regions have all affected the ways in which regional coordination has developed.

***Adult Literacy Cost  
Shared Program  
(ALCSP)***

Grants for adult literacy initiatives have been funded through a cost-shared program between the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS-HRDC) and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) since 1987. In British Columbia, a public participation process, in conjunction with an internal ministry review, is used to review applications and provide priorities and recommendations to NLS-HRDC and to AVED.



*The purposes and roles of the ALCSP are:*

- To enhance adult literacy activities
- To encourage and improve partnerships between community groups, school districts and colleges
- To promote the active involvement of all sectors of society in the support and development of adult literacy initiatives in BC

To date, the ALCSP has supported adult literacy initiatives such as public awareness campaigns, a variety of curriculum and professional development activities, research, Aboriginal initiatives, tutoring programs, an electronic literacy network, family literacy development, regular learner events, and much more.



## The Story

### ***From Idea to Alliance, 1997-2001***

#### ***East Kootenay***

In November of 1996, Adult Literacy Instructors in the East Kootenay invited Barbara Bate to give a workshop that focused on her experience with setting up a family literacy program in Chilliwack, B.C. They had known for some time that family literacy programs were needed. In fact, there had been at least two family literacy programs in the region. Unfortunately, each of those programs lasted for only one year.

Initially, the Adult Literacy Instructors had some concerns about establishing family literacy programs for these reasons:

- They did not have time to carefully and thoroughly set up additional programs.
- Funding for adult programs was already limited; how could more programming be sustained?
- They did not want to create expectations that could not be met.

Barbara made these important suggestions:

#### **1. Set up advisory committees made up of interested community members. This would:**

- Afford the best possible opportunity to plan a program that would be most effective.
- Involve the community from the beginning so that members would feel some ownership, make referrals to programs and, perhaps, help with funding issues.
- Reduce the isolation that literacy workers often experience.



## **2. Hire coordinators to facilitate the work of the committees. This would:**

- Make an individual responsible to ensure that the work of the committees was executed.
- Make busy people more willing to take part in the advisory committees by pointing out that others would be paid to do the work generated by committee discussions.
- Provide colleagues for the Adult Literacy Instructors.

## **3. Spend a year planning family literacy programs.**

All Adult Literacy Instructors were aware that it might be possible to receive funding through the Adult Literacy Cost Shared Program of B.C. (ALCSP) which would allow the planning of family literacy programs to proceed.

They also knew that if each instructor applied to develop programs individually, only one or two communities would receive funding. They decided that communities that would like to take part in planning for family literacy programs would apply together in a single application. This approach would result in each community receiving less funding, but would ensure every community would receive at least some support.

### ***The Planning Year***

The Regional Literacy Coordinator (RLC) agreed to write the proposal for planning with input from each community. Initially, three communities wanted to apply. After careful consideration, two others entered into the process. The original partnering communities were Golden, Invermere, Kimberley, Cranbrook, and Creston. To determine the level of interest in undertaking the projects, the Adult Literacy Instructors held a lunch and invited those in each community who they felt had an interest in literacy and families.

At the lunch, the RLC discussed:

- Literacy - what is it and what are the issues
- Family Literacy - what is it and why is it important
- The proposal for planning family literacy programs

Community members talked about:

- their role in the community
- their perception of the literacy needs in the community



- whether or not they were interested in taking part in the planning project

Every agency representative could see the need for and advantages of family literacy programming. At these lunch meetings, some agencies and individuals signed agreements to take part; others consulted with their boards and signed up later, and some asked to be kept informed, but did not feel they could take part in the project.

This first proposal to the ALCSP was the first part of what would become a two-year proposal – a planning year and a project year. The planning year consisted of hiring a Family Literacy Coordinator in each community who would develop and facilitate the Community Literacy Advisory Committee.

The Family Resource Centre of Invermere agreed to be the administrative agent who would receive the funds and administer them during the planning year. All the Community Family Literacy Coordinators were contracted.

### ***Getting Started***

In the East Kootenay, members of each community agreed to participate in the process of hiring a Family Literacy Coordinator. There were very few people in the region with literacy experience and those who did have it, were working to capacity in the field. As a result, all the coordinators who were hired had little or no experience in literacy work. They did, however, have various experiences with the school system, early childhood education, group facilitation, research, organizing information, and problem solving. They relied to a great extent on the advisory committees to provide them with information about the community and literacy.

***“I had no experience in literacy work prior to being hired (as the Family Literacy Coordinator) to coordinate the work of the advisory committee. I was hired in June 1997, and as the planning project was not due to begin until September, I had two months to prepare for it. I did this by reading several final reports from other family literacy projects and browsing the internet, especially on the NALD and FLAG sites. I also subscribed to the NIFL e-mail lists for family literacy, workplace literacy and technology.”***

***— Betty Knight, Invermere***



The RLC met with the Family Literacy Coordinators in late August to talk about the project. She provided them with materials about family literacy initiatives in B.C. and other provinces, websites and print resources, and information about what had already occurred in their communities. The coordinators then met with her face-to-face four more times throughout the year. They were in frequent telephone contact with her and were connected to the First Class conferencing system for literacy practitioners. They attended several professional development workshops.

Had they had more literacy knowledge, the learning curve for the coordinators would not have been so steep. Nevertheless, it was exciting to have new people involved in the field and coming into it with fresh perspectives and ideas.

### ***The Advisory Committees***

The first task in each community was to develop the advisory committees further. Essentially, each Family Literacy Coordinator started by calling the people in her community who had worked on or had been introduced to the planning proposal. In most cases, these were the people who had hired her. Contact with others was made by letter and by personal visits. Project presentations were made to a number of groups including Parent Advisory Committees, Child and Youth Committees, the staffs of elementary schools, and service clubs.

***“The Executive Director of the Golden Family Centre and the Fundamental Instructor at the College of the Rockies, Golden Campus, identified agencies and people who would be beneficial to the Advisory Committee. I wrote letters to them introducing myself and the project and inviting them to the first meeting, which was held in early October. I followed up my letter with a personal visit so I could become familiar with the mandate of each agency represented on the committee.”***

***— Denelda Minty, Golden***

The size of the committees varied from community to community. Sometimes coordinators felt there were people in the community who should be sitting on the advisory committee, but were not. They started with those



who wanted to work on the project. In communities where there was already a tradition of co-operation, the committees came together more quickly and easily.

In some cases, community members wanted to be kept informed about the project, but did not want to participate in meetings. They were given minutes of meetings. Some people wanted to be involved in special events, but not in the committee on a regular basis. They did, however, assist in planning community reading or fund raising events.

### *Some things we learned about Advisory Committees*

- It is important to work with those who want to work with you. Don't worry about individuals who you think should be there and are not. Don't wait for them or you'll never get started.
- Committee members should discuss what they can give to the project and what they hope to get from it.
- Because the coordinator was hired to do the work between meetings, committee members were not obligated to contribute further. But, as the project progressed, coordinators realized that committee members could be most helpful if they were willing to perform tasks on an occasional basis between meetings.
- Provide a snack for meetings
- It is easier to encourage people to participate if funding is available. Most would not want to waste time planning and working if they feel their efforts will endure for only a short period of time or worse, not at all.
- It is important to clarify the committee's purpose in the first one or two meetings. It is a sure way to lessen confusion and misunderstanding of the committee's goals and strategies. A vision, mandate, and/or terms of reference are helpful.
- Something concrete needs to happen as a result of the committee's work. If people spend time meeting, talking about issues and planning, and then nothing occurs, they are not likely to take part again.



*“The committee members are committed to family literacy and all are busy people. We tried to maintain a social aspect in our meetings while continuing to focus on our goal. After the extensive time commitment required prior to the grant deadline, our committee was greeted with a basket of Hershey Kisses and literacy pins. The token of appreciation was a pleasant surprise and gratefully received. For our final meeting we had an appreciation tea with snacks and hors d'oeuvres to celebrate the accomplishments of the year and the ongoing commitment for next year. I believe a show of appreciation for the committee members' time and contribution is very important and offering delicious food is one of the best ways to convey it.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

### ***The Project Year***

At the end of the planning year, each community had a plan for a project or program with which to start the next Fall. The Regional Literacy Coordinator wrote a proposal that included the plan of each community. That proposal had 20 partners. For the project year, the Cranbrook Boys and Girls Club agreed to be the administrative agent and act as the employer. Since the Club had established policies for working with adults and children, a bookkeeping system, a board of directors, and insurance to cover employees and volunteers, including the advisory committees, this was an ideal situation. The Club acted as the administrator and the Regional Literacy Coordinator managed the project.

### ***The Community Literacy Resource Coordinators***

The most serious difficulty faced by most planning committees was choosing a family literacy program that would best suit their community. The coordinators presented a number of sample programs to the planning committees. Each committee could see that several of the available programs would be useful. Their primary concern was to choose the one that would be most effective. There was also concern that funding could be obtained for only one year and that the search for ongoing funding for programs would be difficult and time consuming. The Creston group decided it would be advantageous to their community to have someone whose primary job would be to continue to develop literacy programs and search for the funding for them. This idea appealed to all the coordinators and was presented to the other planning committees.



***The coordinators felt strongly that a mechanism had to be developed by which public awareness could be increased, further funding sought, and program development continued.***

Committee members understood the need for the community to develop ways in which literacy instruction could be provided and community development regarding literacy issues could take place. They understood the need to find a collaborative model by which all agencies could work together for the development of literacy skills for people of all ages. The committees further believed that the most effective strategies to address the needs of the communities would include: family literacy development, a long term plan, a funding strategy, and the creation of an infrastructure to ensure continuity.

The Community Literacy Advisory Committees decided to find funding to continue the position of the Family Literacy Coordinators, who had guided them through the planning year. They decided to apply jointly to the ALCSP, the Vancouver Foundation and the College of the Rockies for funding for this position, which would be called “Community Literacy Resource Coordinator”.

***The original goals for the Community Literacy Resource Coordinator were:***

- to promote parental involvement in the development of children’s literacy skills
- to support continuity in community family literacy development by pursuing funding for present and future projects
- to facilitate interagency cooperation in the development and implementation of family literacy programs
- to encourage and develop family literacy initiatives that can be taken on by existing agencies and services
- to support educational programs and projects that already exist in the community
- to collect and organize literacy resource materials through the public library system

Once the role of the Community Literacy Coordinator was clearly defined, the committees were better able to settle on a program for presentation in the next year. They felt their choice did not have to be the definitive program for their community, but simply the one with which to start.



When the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy became an official non-profit organization, it developed a job description for the position with input from the coordinators and their advisory committees. The position was then called *Community Family Literacy Coordinator* and eventually became simply *Community Literacy Coordinator*. This job description is included in Appendix 4.

### **West Kootenay**

In November of 1996, Barbara Bate gave a family literacy workshop in the West Kootenay. Adult Literacy Coordinators from across the region attended. While there was interest in setting up family literacy programs in that region, we decided to wait a year to do so. It was advantageous in two ways:

- We had more time to prepare
- We could see how the planning year would go in the East Kootenay region and follow their example

In 1998 the West Kootenay Region applied for funding to plan and pilot family literacy programs in the region. The Adult Literacy Coordinators in six communities – Nakusp, New Denver, Nelson, Castlegar, Trail and Grand Forks – agreed to coordinate the planning and piloting year. Those coordinators were already doing outreach and mapping in their communities, so it seemed a natural add-on.

Advisory committees were set up in the six communities, and a local community administration agent was hired to administer each project. There are numerous non-profit societies in the West Kootenay, thus it was decided that a local agency doing similar work would administer the family literacy funding. In Nakusp and Grand Forks, the library was the administering body. The Family and Individual Resource Society (FAIR) administered the project in Trail. Project Literacy West Kootenay administered the Slocan Valley and Nelson projects, and Blueberry Creek Community School administered in Castlegar.

### **The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy**

The Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) for the East and West Kootenays realized that much of the work they were doing was the same in each region. They also realized that the Community Family Literacy Coordinators could benefit from sharing information, ideas, and resources between regions. They arranged for coordinators from both regions to meet. At the initial informal networking meeting



in January of 1999, the coordinators decided they would like to work more closely as a group, resulting in the formation of a loose, informal Alliance: The East-West Kootenay Alliance for Literacy.

The East and West Kootenays are part of The Columbia Basin. The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) was formed in 1995 with a mandate to promote social, economic, and environmental well being to the area most affected by the Columbia River Treaty. The Regional Literacy Coordinators realized that the CBT presented an opportunity for funding. They made a presentation to the CBT Board. The Education Sector of the CBT took an interest in family literacy. The RLCs thought that all the communities of the Columbia Basin that wanted to do so could have an opportunity to work together with CBT funds. They also thought that working together would strengthen the chances of receiving funding.

Therefore, in January of 2000, Gavin Perryman, an organizational consultant from Vancouver who was introduced to the RLCs by Literacy B.C., facilitated a meeting of the Community Literacy Coordinators from the Columbia Basin. The meeting included interested people from Valemount and Revelstoke, which are part of the Columbia Basin, but outside the Kootenay Regions, to determine if an Alliance could be made and how it might be formed. Everyone was in agreement that we should work together. A mandate, principles, and structure were formalized for the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL). At that time, fourteen communities were involved in the Alliance. During the years 2000 to 2001, three more communities joined the Alliance, forming Community Advisory Committees and planning family literacy initiatives.

Family literacy programs (such as, Books For Babies, Parent-Child Mother Goose, Family Night Out, Families In Motion and Parents Reading, Children Succeeding) were well underway in all larger communities and in a number of smaller satellite communities. Many local partnerships were established. See Appendix 5 for explanation of programs.

In September, 2000, the Alliance held its first highly successful conference, bringing people together from across the Columbia Basin to look at community development approaches for literacy, long term financial sustainability issues, and the future of CBAL.



Initially, CBAL was administered by two existing non-profit organizations – the Cranbrook Boys’ and Girls’ Club and Project Literacy West Kootenay. Since human resources were limited, this alleviated the need to develop a board. Though these administrative organizations were very helpful and supportive, the family literacy programs grew so quickly that it became necessary to incorporate CBAL as a separate entity. It became formally incorporated as a B.C. non-profit society in August, 2001 and obtained registered charitable status with the federal government in November, 2001. All those working in family literacy programs with funding administered by CBAL are CBAL employees. CBAL now carries insurance and is developing policies to cover this work.



## ***Principles Of The Alliance***

### ***The work of the Alliance is based on the following principles:***

1. Providing opportunities for all community members to be included in literacy programs.
2. Being proactively responsive to local needs across the Columbia Basin.
3. Networking and cooperating with interested individuals, groups, programs, organizations, and businesses.
4. Fostering and building partnerships that support literacy and life-long learning.
5. Maintaining a participatory and democratic organizational structure.
6. Increasing the profile of literacy and life-long learning across the Columbia Basin through a unified voice.
7. Incorporating an inclusive understanding of literacy: family literacy, adult literacy, and workplace literacy.
8. Seeing literacy as a way to build community capacity based on existing strengths and programs.
9. Maintaining a learner-focused approach in planning, delivering, and evaluating programs.

## ***Functions Of The Alliance***

### ***What the Alliance does includes the following:***

- Supports the work of local Community Literacy Advisory Committees and their coordinators.
- Finds and distributes funding for local community literacy and life long learning programs.
- Acts as the employer for local literacy coordinators and program staff.
- Helps community literacy advisory committees to develop ways to link smaller communities to larger ones.
- Provides an overall administrative structure to support family literacy and other community literacy programs.
- Builds a partnership with the Columbia Basin Trust and other regional bodies on behalf of the local Community Literacy Advisory Committees.
- Raises public awareness of literacy, basic skills, and life long learning issues across the Columbia Basin.
- Brings together diverse people from across the Columbia Basin, and helps them move forward in the development of literacy, basic skills, and life long learning issues.
- develops and supports longer term sustainable financial strategies in support of the work in local communities.
- builds recognition within local communities of the importance and value of literacy and life-long learning services and programs.
- reaches out to the less visible and more isolated people in local communities.



***Functions Of The  
Local Community  
Literacy Advisory  
Committees***

***The local Community Literacy Advisory Committees  
perform these functions:***

- Identify, evaluate, and prioritize the literacy and life-long learning needs in local communities.
- Develop visions, dreams, and plans.
- Take action on the plans.
- Initiate new programs that are responsive to changing needs.
- Support existing programs.



## Topics of Discussion

### ***For Advisory Committees in the Planning Year***

Family Literacy Coordinators guided their advisory committees through the planning process and developed a pilot project. Each community approached this task somewhat differently. The following pages describe the topics originally discussed by committees in the Columbia Basin. They continue to come up even as programs are implemented and developed.

#### ***1. The Goals of the Planning Project***

It is important for all advisory committee members to fully understand the nature of the work and what is required of them. There must be discussion about the meaning of the planning objectives and how the committee will help accomplish them.

The established objectives should be reviewed each year and, after careful consideration, should be altered to meet the current needs of the community.

The objectives of the planning proposal for Community Planning for Intergenerational Literacy in the East Kootenay Region were:

- ***To identify existing literacy related services in each community and to determine if there is needless overlapping. At the same time assess those services which can contribute successfully to community intergenerational literacy.***
- ***To consider intergenerational programming models that would be a suitable fit within the demographic and social context of each community and to assess their adaptability.***
- ***To develop a plan for a program that might possibly meet community needs. Such a program would include objectives, locations, funding sources, staff required, staff qualifications, and commitments from participating partners.***



- *To develop partnerships between participating agencies and existing programs which will increase the possibility for further literacy development and decrease the isolation that many literacy workers feel.*
- *To create greater understanding of intergenerational programs and adult literacy in general. Equally important is to promote involvement in identifying and eliminating barriers to participation, developing methods of reaching out to people, and creating community action.*
- *To set a community and regional example for interagency collaboration for intergenerational programming.*
- *To provide employment opportunities in each community.*

## ***2. Committee Membership***

Who should sit on the advisory committee? Since the major goal of the advisory committee is to examine the literacy needs in the community, consider what is already happening, and determine which programs could be developed to meet the need, it is important that those on the committee are familiar with the community and the people in it. Those who may be most desirable are often very busy. They need to be convinced of the importance of family literacy to the work they do. The more broad-based the committee is, the better the chance that appropriate programming and initiatives can take place by building on what already exists.

It is not always possible, however, to get everyone who would be an asset, to participate. There are a variety of reasons. People are too busy, they are not interested, or the meeting time does not work for them. At some point, we simply must move ahead with those who are available and are interested.

The committees in the Columbia Basin are always open to whomever wants to attend. Initially, in some communities, only two or three people made a commitment to attend on a regular basis. The committees have tended to fluctuate. Some have remained consistent for over four years; others have grown. Attendance varies depending on the time of year, but there is almost always a consistent core group.



*Following is a list of organizations which have been represented on advisory committees:*

Colleges	Community Resource Societies
Boys and Girls Club	
Literacy Society	Speech and Language Programs
Community Action Program for Children	Daycares
Supported Childcare	First Nations Education Societies
Infant Development	Community Law Centres
Ministry of Children and Families	Community Skills Centre
Family Resource Centres	Community Nutritionist
Baby Talk	Community Schools
Elementary Schools	Home Support Services
Public Health	The Salvation Army
Public Libraries	Life After Birth
	Learning Centres
Employment Services	
Women's Centres	

Other representatives include ministers, teachers, retired teachers, parents, literacy tutors and professionals, and other interested community members.



### ***3. The Meeting Structure and Schedule***

Where and when will you meet? Who will chair the meetings and who will take minutes? How will people be kept informed about the work of the committee?

This was a surprisingly difficult issue. We realized almost immediately that the meeting times would at least partially determine who within the community would be able to attend and become committee members. For example, if we wanted teachers and principals to participate, meetings would have to be held after school. Staff members of non-profit organizations sometimes preferred to meet during regular office hours. There was rarely a meeting time that worked for everyone. In the end, most committees met either at lunchtime or in the late afternoon.

***“The committee agreed to meet once every two weeks at least until the Christmas break and then after Christmas to decide on a meeting schedule from January to June. They also agreed that the meetings would be no longer than one and one half hours, that the date, time, and location of the meetings would be consistent and remain the same as the initial meeting and that I would continue to chair the meetings. Choosing the time and dates for the meetings was challenging, as those present at this first meeting and others I had talked to about the work of the committee, are very busy people with full schedules. The committee recognized that it would be impossible to identify a time that would suit everyone interested and therefore chose to continue meeting at the same time as the initial meeting because that worked well for those present. We felt that it was more important to have continuity within the committee than to vary times and dates to try to accommodate as many potential members as possible. We thought the latter choice would likely result in much time being lost when different people were able to attend each meeting or need to miss many meetings. Although this meant that the representation on the committee was not as broad as it might have been, those who were on the committee were consistent and dedicated.”***

***— Betty Knight, Invermere***



#### ***4. Reasons for Being on the Community Literacy Advisory Committee***

People will participate in the advisory committee for a variety of reasons. It is important to recognize the reasons people are coming to the table. They need to talk about what they hope to get from being involved in the project as well as what they can give to it. This discussion can include committee members' interests in family literacy, the specific issues they would like to discuss, and additional goals they hope will be achieved during the planning process.

This is an ongoing discussion. Since the advisory committee members do not always remain the same and the climate for social programming and funding changes frequently, it is important to remain open to changes that are happening throughout the community. If an attitude of open discussion, acceptance, and willingness to share and participate is maintained, everyone has the best chance of using all the resources in the community to best advantage.

In many of the Columbia Basin communities, family literacy programs are being attached to Better Babies, Baby Talk, Moms and Tots, and to other early childhood groups. It is often advantageous to work with an already established group of parents who express an interest in a literacy program.

#### ***5. A Name for the Committee***

To identify the group and what it is doing locally, it is nice to have a simple name by which people in the community can know you.

Most communities chose to incorporate the name of their community in the name of the committee, such as Cranbrook Family Literacy.



***“At its first meeting, the committee agreed on The Windermere Valley Intergenerational Literacy Planning Committee as a working title. The choice of Windermere Valley rather than Invermere was intended to convey that our committee would be addressing the needs of the seven communities and two rural areas between Spillimacheen and Canal Flats. We chose intergenerational literacy rather than family literacy because the connotation of the term is more inclusive, in the sense that the literacy interactions of non-custodial adults and children would be included in our discussions as well as the interactions of parents and children.”***

***— Betty Knight, Invermere***

Over time, the Windermere Valley committee decided the name was too long and Intergenerational Literacy was too complicated a term. As well, they passed the planning stage and started implementing programs. They changed their name to the Windermere Valley Family Literacy Action Group.

## ***6. The Role of the Coordinator and the Role of Committee Members.***

It is important for coordinators to understand what the committee expects them to do. Will the coordinator or a committee member chair meetings? Will the coordinator lead the work of the committee or will the committee direct the coordinator? It may take a little time for the committee to work out how it will operate and to determine the expectations of its members. It is very important and helpful to ensure that the coordinator understands clearly her role within the group.

***“At the first meeting, we attempted to define the role of the coordinator and the advisory committee. Originally, the committee felt that its role would be to direct the work of the coordinator. This was true to some extent, but because the coordinator was doing the research and providing information, it often fell to the coordinator to bring to the attention of the committee items that needed to be discussed in order to make decisions. It also became the role of the coordinator to keep the committee on track and moving toward the goal.”***

***— Denelda Minty, Golden***



The coordinator's role varied slightly from community to community, particularly with regard to chairing meetings and taking minutes. At times, committee members took on those tasks. In general, however, the coordinator performed the following functions during the planning year:

- Gathered information for the committee
- Organized meetings
- Kept minutes and wrote letters, reports, or proposals
- Conducted a literacy needs assessment by interviewing people in the community other than committee members, and took an inventory of existing programs

***The role of the committee members:***

- reviewed the written information to prepare for discussions
- brought their ideas, experiences, knowledge and expertise to the table
- committed to staying involved throughout the year's planning project timeline
- assisted the coordinator to broaden the membership
- talked to colleagues and friends regarding literacy and the project
- worked to reach a consensus on initiatives to meet the objectives of the committee

***“I felt some initial confusion about my relationship as coordinator with the committee. I believed that my role was to be one of support to the committee and expected that the committee would actively direct my work. However, I found that because I initially contacted potential committee members, organized and conducted the first meeting, was chosen to chair all future meetings, did the required research, prepared reports and completed the grant applications, that the committee, in fact, saw me as the leader of the process rather than filling a support role. Once I recognized this and accepted the dynamics of the situation, I felt more comfortable in the role in which I found myself.”***

***— Betty Knight, Invermere***



## ***7. Terms of Reference***

It is important for the committee to have some work guidelines. Such directions will keep them on the correct path and provide a discussion point in the event of a dispute over the kinds of programs that could be developed or the committee's role in managing them.

Some committees made "terms of reference" for themselves. When the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy became a registered non-profit organization, it developed more formalized terms of reference for committees to follow. A copy of those terms of reference is in Appendix 4.

***Following is an example of the terms of reference originally made by one of the committees:***

1. To maintain diverse community representation on the Community Literacy Advisory Committee.
2. To meet on a regular basis.
3. To hire and advise program staff.
4. To foster community partnerships emphasizing collaboration to achieve our goals and those of our partners.
5. To develop appropriate literacy programs for delivery.
6. To identify and pursue funding opportunities.
7. To share information among committee members and between communities regarding the needs of the community and the opportunities to meet those needs.
8. To promote training in the areas of community and professional development in literacy locally and regionally.
9. To participate in and support the regional network.
10. To work with the Regional Literacy Coordinator.

## ***8. Background Information defining Family and Intergenerational Literacy***

It is unlikely that all committee members will have prior knowledge of the nature of family literacy. They need to understand the importance of effective literacy skills and the link between acquiring literacy skills and family life. They must know the principles already in place for family literacy and have at least some historical knowledge of the development of family literacy programs.



*“One (committee) member took it upon herself to phone members to confirm the time and place of meetings. This was vital as we varied the times of our meetings to accommodate the members’ different time schedules. The positive aspect of varied times was that we got input from everyone on our large committee. There were two negative aspects. First, we could never accommodate everyone’s schedules. Secondly, time was needed to update members, which meant some points of discussion were debated again.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

*“In between the meetings, we communicated with members using faxes, phone calls and visits. The email and fax modem on the computer were helpful to communicate minutes and developments to the whole group at once. I discussed a variety of issues and presented different models and programs on a one-to-one basis in person in between the meetings. Doing so allowed us to foresee stumbling blocks and research and plan accordingly, using the meeting times as efficiently as possible.”*

*— Kate Bidder, Kimberley*



The Coordinators found the manuals on family literacy from Alberta and Saskatchewan very helpful. At times, it was difficult to locate needed information. But they were resourceful in their search and obtained further guidelines from sources they found on the internet. They shared their good fortune with others. Since the first planning year in the Kootenays, the field of family literacy in Canada has grown considerably. There are more books and training sources available. See Appendix 6 for sources of information many coordinators find useful.

## ***9. Models of Family Literacy Programs***

As the work of the committee proceeds, members will want to know about the types of programs being used in other communities. It is important to stay in touch with their colleagues in other communities who may be using models that could be adapted. Re-inventing the wheel is a time waster. Members will want to know those programs and models that have already proven to be successful.

At times, Coordinators found it difficult to learn about family literacy programs. When plans were being developed in the East Kootenay, there were very few family literacy programs in Canada. The coordinators obtained information about Alberta's Homespun program, the Parent-Child Mother Goose program from Ontario, and Families In Motion from Chilliwack.

Since the first planning year, several family literacy programs have been developed throughout the Columbia Basin. These are listed with short explanations in Appendix 5.

Coordinators throughout the Basin have found it invaluable to meet periodically and discuss their work, share ideas, and support each other with problem solving solutions and resources.



## ***10. Community Needs Assessment***

It will be difficult for committees to know which direction to take if they do not have a clear idea of the literacy program status in their communities and what people think is needed. Since they want to pool resources and build on other programs that families are attending, they need to know about other family programs — what is included; can their programs work together or become complementary to each other; what might be missing. The committees have to decide how to gather this information and how literacy programming could work with or complement those programs. They also need to look at what might be missing from the overview of family and literacy programming in their communities.

***“At the second meeting I introduced the issue of conducting a needs assessment for our community. The committee members expressed the opinion that it would not be necessary to approach a large number of people outside the committee because the committee members represented several interested and involved sectors of the community and could contribute a great deal of the information we needed. The committee members also provided useful suggestions as to which community members I might interview in order to gather further information.***

***We first discussed the parameters of our needs assessment. We decided, in addition to the information the committee members could provide, we needed to gather information from a representative sample of our community. We also generated a list of people and organizations, which could be approached.***

***The committee agreed that informal personal interviews conducted by me, as coordinator of the committee, would be more useful and generate a better response than a mailed questionnaire. We agreed that the interviews would also provide an opportunity to build broad based community ownership of any future initiatives and enhance support and awareness among community agencies***



*and individuals while encouraging collaboration and cooperation. We wanted to know what programs and services already exist in our community that address literacy, family support, parenting, school-based initiatives, pre-school programs, programs and services that could complement an intergenerational literacy program and those which could include a literacy component. We also hoped to gain a better understanding of the issues and barriers to participation we might find in the community. This information would allow us to decide what needs we might meet with a family literacy program.*

*I was unable to find a needs assessment tool that had been developed by other family literacy programs to use in the interview process. I therefore prepared a list of possible questions and topics of discussion that I could refer to in informal interviews with members of our community.*

*Conducting a needs assessment was a useful and necessary step in identifying existing services and the gaps that we might fill with a family literacy program, helped us to clarify the interests and willingness to collaborate among representatives of our helping service professions, and resulted in useful feedback from community members concerning program ideas the committee was discussing. The assessment was neither formal nor exhaustive but gave the committee a base of information from which to make decisions about programming needs and what our priorities and most important considerations should be when we began to plan a family literacy program.”*

*— Betty Knight, Invermere*

Once programs were developed and running, advisory committees were able to gather further information about which programs to offer and how to adjust what was being offered from program participants. Though it was possible to speak with adult literacy students about programming they thought would be beneficial during the planning year, the students' needs did not represent those of all community members. Those people who would attend family literacy programs were not necessarily already attending adult literacy programs; in fact, they usually were not.



*“As community representatives covering a broad range of services, the committee felt that the knowledge of its members, along with discussions with colleagues and the coordinator’s research, would be sufficient to identify the basic literacy needs within the community. It was felt that even with a formal needs assessment, the end result would not be indicative of all the needs. They felt that by starting a literacy project based on general identified needs, they would then learn more about the specific literacy needs of the community.”*

*— Beth Carter, Cranbrook*

*“The committee concluded that with the time and money constraints, the best available resource for information was from those people actively involved in the community. For the most part, those were the people on the committee. The committee members’ varied experiences, community contacts, and backgrounds gave ample information for a comprehensive picture of our community’s needs. These needs were discussed at length by committee members and their colleagues and within committee meetings. The glaring conclusion of the Creston needs assessment was that there is nothing in place in our community that addresses family literacy issues.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

*“Golden has gone through some hard times with mill closures and layoffs. While I was gathering information about the needs of the community, I found some statistics which had been compiled by the Public Health Unit which indicated levels of education and socioeconomic factors. After reviewing this information and the rest of the needs assessment, it was recognized that many people in the community have low literacy skills and a program was needed that would start to change the community as a whole.”*

*— Denelda Minty, Golden*



## ***11. Considerations for Possible Programs***

As committees begin to narrow their focus in determining the kind of program(s) they feel would be most suitable for their communities, they will have to sort through and discuss several considerations which determine the philosophy of programs and how they will be developed.

The considerations varied from community to community as did the conclusions.

### ***Here are some examples of the conclusions arrived at by Community Literacy Advisory Committees:***

1. Structure the first family literacy program around parents and children directly, as opposed to indirectly for either of these (Ruth Nikse's models).
2. Follow an enhancement model which focuses on strengthening families. Develop a program that recognizes and builds upon the skills and abilities parents already have and encourage them to see themselves as their children's first and most important teacher.
3. Be inclusive and have content that is useful and relevant to the needs of parents and their children regardless of the current literacy skills of the parents. (Although they wanted to encourage participation by those community members who were most in need of skill development, the enhancement model the committee agreed upon was not dependent for success on reaching a particular group of parents).
4. Do not offer family literacy information in the context of regular parenting programs. (Eventually, when family literacy programming was widely understood, family literacy information began to be introduced into other parenting programs).
5. Address social and geographic barriers to participation and serve as much of the widespread population of the area as possible.
6. Address the barrier to participation that a lack of childcare presents to parents. (This consideration and the wish to offer literacy enrichment activities to children as well as provide opportunities for parents and children to put into practice new skills and techniques led to the decision to offer workshops for parents and children together).



7. Encourage and assist parents to recognize and embrace the paradigm shift in literacy and education philosophy from one that is solely based on formal schooling to one that recognizes the central importance of family support and involvement in the education of children (non-formal education).
8. Develop programming that is participant driven. (This led to the decision that the committee would develop a framework and set of guiding principles for the program while leaving the details of content to be determined by the staff hired to run the project after consultation with interested participants).
9. Set up programs in such a way that fathers as well as mothers would be made welcome and comfortable.
10. Design the program in such a way that parents of varying literacy skills will feel comfortable participating. Any handouts will be written in clear language and will be covered verbally in detail during the workshop.
11. Participant-active and not lecture format. Parents must be actively involved in specific concrete activities and given the opportunity to practice techniques with their children that will enhance literacy and learning. The program should not be purely instruction or discussion.

***“Other goals of the committee, particularly those revolving around broad community awareness and education about family literacy, the necessity for ongoing planning and development of programs, encouraging further collaboration between agencies and others, and securing further funding would be pursued by the Community Family Literacy Resource Coordinator.”***

***— Betty Knight, Invermere***



*We identified that many families in our community seem to be struggling to support themselves by providing a solid base for education and learning. This process incorporates many factors, and literacy was felt to be one of the basic underlying issues. We discussed at length that this is not necessarily specific to any one "target" group but a broad community issue that should be addressed. In discussing the best way to support adults in this process, the Committee acknowledged that participants would have to feel safe in the environment. They felt that a common ground was needed to provide an environment that was non-threatening and conducive to shared learning.*

*Based on feedback from participants in a previous literacy project offered in the community (Learning Together, Playing Together) and community partners working with families, the committee felt that parents needed a place where they would feel supported and comfortable to expand their learning, especially related to increasing their literacy skills.*

*It became evident through discussion with community partners that there was a need to develop a support network for adults who feel isolated due to various factors: literacy skills, socioeconomic status, transportation, education, support services waiting lists. It became evident that there was a need to further support adults who have difficulty accessing and experiencing community life. There was a strong need to expand adults' community interactions and knowledge of community resources and services.*

*Information from educators - early childhood, school and college - as well as the increased demand for help through the food bank, Salvation Army, Home Support - indicate a need to expand the knowledge base and skills of adults in our community. This is specific to basic functioning skills such as money management, shopping, supporting children in their education, accessing services. Through communication with staff of local child care settings*



*and schools, it was determined that there is a strong need for the education of adults regarding nutrition and its role in raising a healthy family. Educators have clearly seen the link between children's motivation to learn and nutrition.*

*Through discussion with various service organizations, business operators and community partners, it was obvious that there is a need to educate our community regarding the diverse range of literacy levels within the community and how they can accommodate and support that diversity.”*

*— Beth Carter, Cranbrook*

*“The development of the project for the Creston committee was slow to take shape. The diverse committee needed more time to define and clarify the identified needs and agree on the best approach to address those needs. The Creston committee spent a lot of time discussing the need for a community literacy coordinator and identified many projects a coordinator could do, the project defined in the cost-shared grant application being just one of them. Starting small and choosing one focus did not address the many needs in our committee's collective mind.*

*The committee compiled a list of guidelines any future endeavor would need to address:*

- a) Establish partnerships to support and enhance programs in place. This is vital to the ongoing success of established programs and any new ones, especially in a small town.
- b) Focus on strengthening people's abilities instead of trying to "fix" them.
- c) Give clients a chance to give something of themselves back thus leading to a mutually beneficial relationship.
- d) Empower clients.

*With these guidelines in place and time pressing, the committee was happy to turn the details over to the coordinator to shape and define.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*



To reach their decision, the committee members:

- a) Considered the history and concerns of literacy programs in Kimberley as described by the past literacy instructor and tutor trainer for the School District.
- b) Explored several family literacy models throughout Canada.
- c) Considered the agencies that already exist and the services and clients with whom they currently work.
- d) Considered the limitations of the community - size, volunteer potential, imminent closure of the largest employer.

*“We considered Ruth Nickse's four basic models of family literacy and agreed that working with adults and children (direct adults - direct children) was desirable. Knowing that we wanted to attach ourselves to an existing agency, we explored a number of different options. We readily agreed that the public library was an ideal setting as it is centrally located, already has a wealth of resources to benefit the program, and is willing to donate the time to catalogue and make available any future resources within its existing collection, has an environment conducive to a possible lifetime of literacy activities once the doors are opened, has an area not directly attached to the library that is spacious and well lit for possible meeting space, and has a large membership of volunteers who are dedicated to supporting literacy in Kimberley.”*

— *Kate Bidder, Kimberley*



## ***12. Possible Programs to Meet Community Needs and the Goals of the Committee***

The ultimate goal of the planning year is to run an effective family literacy program. That means the committee must decide on the kind of program to run, apply for or raise funds, and consider details like staffing, facilities, resources, advertising, and referrals.

Each committee developed a plan for a family literacy project/program for the next year. Since each community is unique, the projects varied. By the end of the planning year, each community was at a different stage in its planning. Some had more work to do in the fall to prepare for the start of the program, but each community hired staff in June or through the summer months. All the committees were very anxious to have participant input in the development of the programs. A couple of the committees were able to get some input from possible participants during the planning year, but this was minimal. Although the general structure of the project was established in each community, there was still the need for further development. Committees were aware that the projects might change in some ways once staff members were able to talk more fully with participants.

***“The committee decided to offer a series of workshops for parents and children of varying ages that would be presented in several local communities. The committee recognized that many parents are intimidated by a formal education setting, are unaware of available resources such as ABE instruction or are unwilling to make use of them. These parents are, however, concerned that their children succeed in their education. Recognizing that it is often an interest in the learning and literacy of their children that leads parents to develop their own literacy skills, the committee chose to approach the issue of raising literacy skills in parents through example and exposure to the principles and benefits of literacy learning for their children. Parents need clear information about and strategies for assisting their children to learn and continue to practice and develop literacy skills both before they enter school***



*and throughout their school years. The planned workshops would seek to provide this information, develop confidence in parents and give them concrete strategies and skills to assist their children. In this process, parents would also refresh, acquire, or further develop skills that would be of benefit to themselves.*

*By the end of the planning process we had decided on “Parents Reading, Children Succeeding” as a name for the workshops. We had developed a workshop framework and a list of possible topics, which the staff hired to run the project could use as a basis for their discussions with participants to decide specific content of the workshops. We had developed some participant recruitment strategies. We had done some community awareness through a booth at the local Trade Fair and attendance at two family events in the communities of Spillimacheen and Canal Flats. We had used these events to distribute printed information about family literacy and our workshop project for the next year in the form of a brochure and a Family Literacy Newsletter. We had also created detailed job descriptions for three staff, a list of qualifications for each position, had established a hiring committee and procedure, and were ready to place a prepared advertisement in the local paper as soon as we had confirmation of the funding we would receive from all the funding sources.”*

*— Betty Knight, Invermere*

*“The project started with the idea of partnering with the local nursery school. The school has in place a parental education component. Since the children's program is the focus of the school, the parent's program was lacking. Parents were resenting the time required of them to attend fruitless sessions. The nursery school needed to develop an intriguing adult segment. A family literacy program was the natural step. From the literacy committee's library a video called Read to Me was shown at the nursery school parent meeting. A mother approached me after the meeting, unable to contain her emotions, saying that the message of the video was so important. She has problems with literacy and is now incapable of*



*helping her eldest child with Grade Two homework. Through that exchange, the committee felt it was on the right track and then expanded the concept to be in touch with as many parents as possible, no matter what their children's age.*

*We will be offering workshops at all the schools, daycares, nursery schools and through the library and the health unit. Discussions with parents will be held on general topics such as learning styles, ways to include literacy activities in daily life, how to support their child's learning in school, and child development. We will also sponsor family math nights. From these contacts, we hope to be in touch with parents who would like more help to improve their ability to help their children and will tailor future sessions to their wants and needs. For this specific project, it is important to keep in mind that this is not a parenting program and also that the information shared will be useful to anyone, regardless of literacy skill level.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

*“The project we decided on is a home based tutoring program that would support and encourage reading within the family setting for recreation and enjoyment, as well as assist parents to help their school-aged children with homework and assist parents with pre-school children in reading readiness. This program will be linked to the Kimberley Public Library with someone hired as a community resource person and program facilitator. This facilitator will compile resources to take into the homes (or a mutually convenient location) of families for a period of a few weeks, months or the year depending on the needs and interest of individual families. The facilitator will plan activities for both parents and children. There may be collaboration with the child's teacher, church, family centre and the library services. The ultimate goal will be to raise the confidence of families who do not already use the*



*library services and have a low level of confidence with reading and homework support for their children.”*

*— Kate Bidder, Kimberley*

*“Our project is Golden Families in Motion. It will include 8 adults and 8 to 15 preschool children between the ages of 2 and 5 years. If the adult has 2 children in this age group they will be allowed to bring them both. The program will run 3 mornings a week for 3 hours per morning starting with a quick nutritious breakfast at the Rainbow Daycare. After breakfast, the children will remain in the daycare in a program organized only for them. The adults will walk one block to the College to participate in existing programs run by the college for Fundamental or Adult Basic Education (including computer training) for 2 mornings and the third morning will participate in workshops covering topics of interest to the participants. Each morning will end with a half hour of adults and children together at the daycare in a child-led activity.”*

*— Denelda Minty, Golden*

### **13. Participant Recruitment**

There can be considerable discussion about the best way to attract people to the program. Recruitment has been an issue for the literacy field in general. How it will be done depends to a large extent on the nature of the program and, consequently, the nature of the “target population”. What age should children be who are coming to the program? Should only parents with literacy problems be able to attend programs? How can those parents most in need of the program be determined? How should “family” be defined?

To determine what their profile might be, it is important to consider the objectives of participants coming to a program. For example, people coming to a program that includes upgrading are likely to have “finishing school” as their objective. The profile of participants will, therefore, include the fact that high school has not been completed. This fact will influence recruitment methods.



The issues about “the target audience” occupied considerable discussion time. It was a difficult issue for several committees because they thought the family literacy program might be more important for some parents than for others. However, they did not want to make assumptions about who those parents might be. They also did not want to stigmatize people and programs. In most cases, unless there were specific criteria about the ages of children who would be appropriate for the programs or direct upgrading for adults was included, the programs were open to all members of the community.

*“The committee considered the issue of finding participants. The members discussed ways of making the community aware of the program in order to open doors for participants to come forward. Possibilities include small workshops for teachers, social workers, the family center and day cares; running information articles in the newspapers and on the radio; developing a brochure and posters. This year, the committee planned and hosted what is to become an annual event to raise awareness about the importance of literacy. Raising awareness about the local program will be an important part of this event.”*

— *Kate Bidder, Kimberley*

*“Our main concern was about informing possible participants about the project. We decided to have 3 public meetings at the College of the Rockies and advertise by poster, radio interview, and a newspaper article during the spring of this year. The Family Literacy Coordinator made posters and distributed them throughout town on bulletin boards and on windows, talking to ministers and pastors and owners of every business and agency not represented on the advisory committee and explaining the project to them before the posters went up. Attendance at the meetings was minimal, but I feel the time spent explaining the information of the posters was well worth the time. Many people in the community became aware of the project which will begin in the fall of 1998.”*

— *Denelda Minty, Golden*



#### ***14. Lack of Funded Time and a Timeline to Reach the Objectives***

As with literacy in general, there is usually not enough funding to cover all the time required by the coordinator to do the necessary planning work with the committee. It may be helpful to develop a timeline and realistic goals that can be accomplished.

*“At times, I found it frustrating to recognize that, even though I was prepared to spend more than the allotted paid hours to the project, there was a great deal more I could have done more thoroughly, such as the needs assessment, than I could reasonably justify spending additional hours on. I eventually accepted the fact that I needed to recognize that I had to restrict my activities to what was necessary to be accomplished. I did find it an advantage that this was the only paid work I was engaged in during the course of the project. It allowed me to spend additional hours when necessary without the work interfering with other employment commitments. On the other hand, I recognize that if I had been working in a related field, I would have had ready-made connections in the course of that work which would have assisted me in making and maintaining contact with the community. For a coordinator who is not actively working in another capacity in the community, it is important to join and attend other committees or organizations, such as the Community Vision Action Team, that will provide these connections. The more varied and frequent the community interactions of the coordinator, the more funding opportunities can be identified and the more possibilities for broader community commitment can be developed.”*

— Betty Knight, Invermere



## Applying for Funding

When it came time to think about applying for program funding, the communities of the Columbia Basin realized they would, once again, be competing with each other for funds. They wanted to ensure each community would be able to run the programs being planned during the “Planning Year” of funding. They decided each community would submit its plan to the Regional Literacy Coordinator who would consolidate them into one proposal for programming. This method dictates that each community would get less but everyone would get some. The same policy of support for one another had already occurred in the West Kootenay for adult literacy programs.

The first proposal for programming funds was made to the Adult Literacy Cost Shared Program, commonly called the Cost Shared Program. This was the second year of a two-part proposal. The first year was the planning year. Due to the nature of the guidelines for ALCSP, this second year’s proposal was for family literacy projects, as opposed to programs. This is one-time only funding and all the communities involved knew that there was no guarantee of continued funding for the proposed projects.

The ALCSP requires that proposals be submitted by the end of February. This was part-way through the planning year so all the details regarding projects and even some decisions about the nature of some projects were not worked out prior to the submissions of the proposals in the East and West Kootenay.

***“The committee made its decision concerning programming for 1998/99 in time to complete funding applications to the Cost Shared program. Although many details of the program were not finalized at that time, we had a clear enough view of what we wanted to accomplish and a broad outline of how the workshops would look which allowed us to submit funding applications. Some committee members were uncomfortable with the lack of detail in some areas and with the issues we had not yet resolved at the time of the application deadlines. However, once the applications were submitted we had sufficient time from the first of March until the end of June to fine tune the program and address outstanding issues.”***



*As Family Literacy Coordinator, I completed the Cost Shared funding application for the workshop project in our community and brought it back to two committee meetings for discussion and revision. Our proposal was then combined with those from the other communities in the East Kootenay into one regional application for funding. I also worked with the Regional Literacy Coordinator to complete an application to the Vancouver Foundation for additional funding for the Community Family Literacy Resource Coordinators positions within the East Kootenay region.*

*The interest of some committee members fell off after the funding applications had been made. I think some felt that they had little to contribute to the detailed planning and some felt unwilling to invest time in further planning when there was no assured funding. Most committee members understood the need for further planning, however, and realized that we would have to be ready to hire staff immediately after hearing if we would receive sufficient funding.”*

*–Betty Knight, Invermere*

*“The Cranbrook Steering committee worked in collaboration with the Regional Literacy Coordinator, to submit a funding proposal for the project. The committee considered the following when designing its proposal:*

- Those items that clearly needed to be full funded
  - e.g. salaries
- Those items that could be "in-kind" contributions
  - e.g. location
- Those items that could be a combination of both
  - e.g. supplies
- Staffing needs
- Other potential funding sources

*The funding proposal was the focus of the January and February meetings. The committee was under a great deal of pressure to agree upon and develop the final project. Because the committee felt the need for further discussion of the project to ensure there was*



## ***Ongoing Funding***

After the planning and project years, the East Kootenay communities and then the West Kootenay communities each applied jointly for program delivery funding from the ALCSP. This funding can be applied for each year, as opposed to project funding, which is one-time only. Each region received \$25,000 — the maximum possible from Cost-Shared funds for a region. This amount had to be divided between all of the participating communities. In the East Kootenay it is 6 communities; in the West Kootenay it was initially 6 communities, but as other communities went through the planning and project phases, the program delivery money eventually needed to be shared between 9 communities.

Since the Cost Shared program delivery funds are insufficient to fully support programs in all the participating communities, other sources had to be found. In the East Kootenay, an application was made to B.C. Hydro, which provided some funds for one year. Each community did its best to raise funds locally. This included fundraising events such as dinner theatres, Christmas story readings and golf tournaments. Other local sources of funding have included service clubs such as Rotary and Kinsmen, the Hospital Auxiliary (particularly for Books for Babies) and community specific foundations.

The Regional Literacy Coordinators continued to develop proposals for funding from sources that would be likely to support a whole region or the Columbia Basin as a whole. At about the time that the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy was being informally developed, the Columbia Basin Trust was preparing to start giving out funds for social issues.

The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) is a result of the efforts of Basin residents who came together in the 1990's to press the Province of BC for recognition of and mitigation for the negative impact the Columbia River Treaty had on the region.

The CBT invests in power projects and other businesses and uses the revenue for the benefit of communities within the Canadian Columbia River system.

The Regional Literacy Coordinators made a presentation to the board of the CBT about the importance of literacy and family literacy programs, in particular. The Education



Committee of the CBT decided to put its funds toward the support of family literacy programs. Initially the committee wanted to make a Request for a Proposal process that would mean each community would have to submit a proposal requesting funds. This would have placed the communities and agencies within communities in the competitive position they had been working to avoid for two years. After some negotiation, the Education Committee decided to approve one proposal from the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy for all of the eligible communities. CBAL was then able to divide the money evenly between the communities for use in family literacy programs. The Community Literacy Advisory Committees determined the use of the funds in each community. This method of dividing money assisted in bringing together community members, making the delivery of service more cohesive.

The Education Committee of the CBT decided to place its funds with CBAL for three years to support family literacy programs. The decision allowed communities to develop programs that would come to be trusted. Participants could know that the programs would be there for some time. Program coordinators and facilitators could get to know participants and talk with them about other initiatives that might meet their needs. Relatively long term funding allowed the Community Literacy Advisory Committees to plan ahead.

Although the program delivery funds from ALCSP and the ongoing funds from the CBT provided some stability, they were not sufficient to fully support all of the family literacy initiatives in all the communities. The Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) applied for funds from the Vancouver Foundation, the Social Sector Committee of the CBT and other private and philanthropic organizations. Some proposals were successful; others were not.

The application process is different for each source of funding. However, the RLCs used the core application that was made each year to the ALCSP as a base for all other proposals. Partnership agreements and letters of support are required for the ALCSP and these could be used for all the other proposals.

Similarly, a final report is required by all funders. It would have been time consuming and difficult for each Community Literacy Coordinator to write a final report for



*nothing missed, it was difficult to focus on the requirements needed for the funding application. Accordingly, we proposed that the date for submission of funding proposals be reviewed or that the planning process begins earlier to allow enough time to fully prepare the project prior to the funding proposal deadline.”*

*— Beth Carter, Cranbrook*

*“The deadline for the Cost Shared grant application appeared in the middle of the year. There was some consideration to just let the Cost Shared grant pass by. There was resistance to spending meeting time clarifying grant requirements. Perhaps a sub-committee would have been a popular suggestion.”*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

*“Ongoing funding concerns surfaced time and again. Offers of in-kind support were received from the Kimberley Public Library, the School District and the Kimberley Community Skills Center. Representatives from Cominco were involved in all of the meetings at the beginning of the year which indicated their concern for employees who might wish to further their education. After Christmas, the Cominco representatives did not attend but indicated a possible commitment to the program in the future.”*

*— Kate Bidder, Kimberley*

*“The application for funding was completed by a sub committee made up of 2 members of the advisory committee and the coordinator. At this point the working interest of the advisory committee dropped considerably. The sub committee met a total of 4 times and constructed the budget as well as the Cost Shared proposal for submission.”*

*— Denelda Minty, Golden*



each funder so they were required to write only one report at the end of each year. This report was based on the ALCSP requirements since it provided a consistent format. The RLCs compiled all the community reports into one for each funder. Sometimes the reports had to be altered slightly depending on the requirements of the funding source and the goals of the proposal that had been submitted.

In general this method of applying and reporting has been appreciated by funders since it saves time and paperwork for them. It is far easier to give \$70,000 in one proposal to 14 communities than it is to receive 14 separate proposals and reports. The collaborative approach has also saved Community Literacy Coordinators' time and energy. It is, however, a time consuming task for the Regional Literacy Coordinators. As everyone involved becomes more used to the process and templates are developed based on previous years' experience, it gets somewhat easier.

***What we have learned  
about funding***

- Finding money is very time consuming.
- Since most funding applications are quite complex and take time to write, it can be helpful to be reasonably assured of receiving funds before putting too much effort into the application process. Some funders, such as the Vancouver Foundation, ask for a letter of intent. If this is acceptable, then the longer proposal is invited. Many funders have liaison people who will discuss your funding needs prior to a proposal submission. These people will discuss the potential that your proposal might have for being accepted in terms of the funding criteria. Research the funder's mandate to see if it fits your needs. It is important to weigh out the benefits of the amount of money likely to be received against the time and effort of making the proposal.
- Writing reports is an integral part of funding. Check out the reporting requirements before applying to make sure that you are prepared to meet them, particularly in terms of the amount of money that you are likely to get. Start preparing to write the final report at the beginning of the project.
- Talk about the literacy work you are doing. Discussion increases awareness in the community and may lead funders to decide to help you.



There never seems to be enough money for literacy work. In the Columbia Basin, the funding dilemma has been helped by running joint programs with other family and early childhood programs, such as Better Babies, Community Action Program for Children and Infant Development. Pooling the community resources for family and children's programs makes sense and is a good way to integrate basic skill development throughout the community.

In spite of all the fundraising, proposal writing, and joint initiatives that have gone on, considerable volunteer time has been invested by the Community Literacy Coordinators, program facilitators, and the Regional Literacy Coordinators.

### **Funding Timeline**

*Following is a timeline of the progression of funding and development of the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.*

**1996-97** – Barbara Bate workshop in the East and West Kootenay

**1997-98** – Planning Year (ALCSP) in the East Kootenay

**1998-99** – Project Year in the East Kootenay (ALCSP, Vancouver Foundation, College of the Rockies)  
Planning and Pilot Year in the West Kootenay (ALCSP) – meetings of Family Literacy Coordinators between regions to share ideas and resources resulting in formation of a loose, informal alliance.

**1999-2000** – Program Delivery Year in the East Kootenay (ALCSP, B.C. Hydro, fundraising)  
Project Year (ALCSP) in the West Kootenay – formation of the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy

**2000-01** – Program Delivery Year in the East and West Kootenay (ALCSP, Columbia Basin Trust, fundraising)  
Community Literacy Planning Conference in September

**2001-02** – Program Delivery Year (ALCSP, Columbia Basin Trust, Vancouver Foundation, Private Foundation, Honda/ABC Canada, fundraising) -  
incorporation of the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy



## **Unexpected Outcomes**

Our original intent was to develop family literacy programs; to take a new and proactive approach to addressing literacy issues in the Columbia Basin. An important part of this new approach was involving as much of the community as possible. We wanted to embed literacy activities and awareness into a variety of community activities and organizations. During the planning year, people who took part in the advisory committees had quite often not met together before. Though the primary focus was the discussion about literacy, participants came to understand each others' work, agencies, concerns, strengths and challenges.

*“An unexpected benefit of the Community Family Literacy Planning Committee was the networking that happened between people and services. A new awareness of the existing programs available in our community as well as the people connected with them provided valuable contacts. The increased awareness has led to an atmosphere for sharing possible new partnerships. For example, the Lower Kootenay Band school is joining the other elementary schools in the valley for the annual Read-a-Thon. There was also a strong show of goodwill between people as opposed to a sense of competition.*

— Faye Cobbe, Creston

*“We benefit from discussion with community professionals from different sectors. The experience of various people in the community getting together to talk about families has been very positive. We bring ideas to the meetings, and debate them openly, saying "yes, I like that idea", or "No, I don't like that idea because in our agency, such and such a thing happens.*

*This partnership model has strengthened the service network considerably. Through inter-agency referrals, our services to families are much more integrated. This benefits the families and communities too, because when other issues come up, whether or not they are literacy related, we are better able to respond to it. We have the strength built in.”*

— Executive Director of Family Agency



People gained a new understanding and appreciation for the importance of literacy skills and the rewards of literacy work.

*“An unexpected outcome for me personally was the degree of interest and commitment I found within myself to literacy in general and to family literacy in particular during my work with the committee. I had the opportunity to tutor ESL students for the first time beginning in early March and found that I enjoyed working with adult students a great deal. This experience confirmed my personal interest in literacy work and reinforced my decision to remain involved in whatever literacy development opportunities that present themselves. I also assisted with the Literacy Charity Golf Tournament, which is organized by the Public Library and the Regional Literacy Coordinator in cooperation with a local golf resort. The experience was very enjoyable also and provided me with an opportunity to meet some of the local business people and general community members who are supportive of literacy development in our community.”*

— *Betty Knight, Invermere*

When the projects that were envisioned in the planning year were able to be produced in the following year, everyone felt more confident that in fact something could be accomplished, that the community, by working together, could address its literacy issues.

*“Advisory committee members are starting to visualize other programs that could be started under the umbrella of family literacy. I feel a genuine interest from the community at large – they recognize the need but do not believe that something of this magnitude can happen. I’m confident that after they see it happening, there will be more support for other projects – big or small.”*

— *Denelda Minty, Golden*



The experience of planning community programs together created a feeling that it is possible to effect change on a deep level, that we can respond to the needs of individuals and groups. It is a hopeful way of working.

***“Our working partnership makes it possible to deal with literacy issues on a deeper level. It's not just a program, a band-aid. It's also a vision and an effort to address issues that affect learning more broadly, like economic equality, and the creation of safe and caring communities. And, we have a stronger capacity now to deal with other challenges that come our way.”***

***— Infant Development Officer***

***“The in-kind contributions in these projects are extensive. We manage to accomplish a lot with very little in the way of direct costs. There is no way we could have had this success without them.”***

***— Executive Director, Family Resource Organization***

With the direct involvement that sitting on the advisory committees provided, people learned about the effects of poor literacy skills and how those might impact their own work with people. They learned about how they might recognize that someone is struggling with literacy problems and how to assist that person.

***“Prior to this family literacy partnership, I don't think our outreach workers were as aware as they could have been of how literacy issues affect families and our work with them. The staff would say, “Well the books are there, the information materials are there, why aren't they reading them? How come they haven't filled out the forms we left with them?” So, through my involvement on the advisory committee, I have been able to pass on to them a greater awareness of literacy issues.”***

***— Family Resource Centre, Executive Director***



Although some partnering groups had periodically worked together to support various programs, they began to share resources, time, expertise, and ideas in ways that had not often occurred previously. The family literacy programs belonged to the whole group and the organizations that made up the advisory committees all felt some ownership of the programs.

***“We give 2 hours a month of our time to the advisory committee meetings, provide photocopying facilities, and the use of space for special events. I also put forward literacy issues to our funders and boards, whereas before it would never have occurred to me. And I can inform the advisory committee of ways we can position ourselves in order to access alternative forms of funding.*”**

***So, clearly partnerships are not just about bringing in more money: There are a lot of other very valuable things to bring to the table. Although, the bottom line is having sufficient resources, including money, to sustain the relationships and activities. It becomes exhausting and counter productive too, to have to scrap for every single dollar.”***

***— Family Resource Centre, Executive Director***

We learned a great deal about working with a variety of people and organizations. Partnerships occur on a variety of levels and it is important to pay attention to the level of partnership that each player is comfortable with and can maintain. Considering the number of people involved across the regions, there was some potential for misunderstanding and difficulty. However, this was minimal and we found that family literacy is a good vehicle for bringing the community together. Everyone has an interest and can benefit from increased literacy and family support.

***“There are risks to entering into partnerships that are not natural fits. Many partnerships don't work and many are ill conceived because organizations are forced into them to get funding. Most social service organizations find themselves competing with one another for funds and support. The fewer resources*”**



*that are available, the more organizations compete. It takes the right conditions and the right people and frame of mind to make it work, and this can't be legislated or demanded. The East Kootenay family literacy initiative works because everyone involved can see that family literacy programs are a good thing, something our communities really need."*

*— Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club*

**Personal Reflections  
from Family Literacy  
Coordinators in  
the planning year**

*"I found coordinating the Family Literacy Advisory Committee to be an interesting, challenging, and exciting experience. I appreciate the knowledge I was able to acquire about literacy in general and family literacy in particular. Although in the beginning I had some trepidation about being able to absorb as much information as I felt was necessary to do a good job for the committee, as time passed I found that I felt more confident. The experience of working with the committee members, the Regional Coordinator and the other East Kootenay Community Coordinators was very satisfying and enriching.*

*I feel the opportunities for support and consultation among the five community coordinators and the Regional Coordinator in our region was invaluable to me. I also appreciated the First Class Conferencing system and the opportunities that afforded for networking and learning more about literacy initiatives and issues in BC. The Literacy: Investing in Our Future conference in Victoria in November 1997 and particularly the additional day devoted to family literacy was very stimulating and informative.*

*I was very impressed by the almost universal interest and support I found for family literacy in the community.*

*Individuals may not have a clear idea what it might involve but the self evident principles of the importance of literacy as it relates to the family is*



*obviously a concept that has instinctive, if not yet fully informed, support. This leads me to believe that with some further concerted effort to educate the community about family literacy and some good programs to support its development, real change and benefits can be realized in our community.”*

*—Betty Knight, Invermere*

*“I feel that the coordinator role requires far more time than 5 hours a week to be able to fully complete all components of the job description. I would suggest at least another 5 to 10 hours per week. I found that , for the most part, I was able to do only the minimum required to ensure the completion of the planning process. In taking on this role, I did not realize the extent of the literacy field and how diverse and complex the related issues and challenges were. As I was also working in other positions related to my career in child care, I found that I did not have the time - or often the energy - to give what this position truly needed. I feel that the person who takes on this role needs to have the time to focus solely on this area or at least does not have too many other commitments.*

*I found my experience working with committees and my understanding of how a group functions were both very helpful in this process. I would suggest this be part of the orientation for such a position and similarly for any ongoing project positions.*

*I learned a LOT about literacy and all it involves. I had no idea the extent of the issues or the variety of ways it can impact one’s life. I found it to be very complex and comprehensive, which is a big part of why I feel the person in the role of coordinator needs more time.*

*I feel I worked well with the steering committee and the whole process felt very collaborative. There was a*



*strong commitment to the process, and accordingly the final project, so the committee was very focused and very open to each other's views and opinions."*

*— Beth Carter, Cranbrook*

*"As a volunteer in the community, I know the amount of time and cooperation needed to accomplish beneficial endeavors. Volunteer work cannot always be accomplished as quickly and thoroughly as work by someone who is paid for her time. I am often caught up in the cause of literacy and am happy to volunteer my time and energy, although my family and I appreciate the paid time as well.*

*The support from the Regional Literacy Coordinator has been invaluable, especially after I climbed on board halfway through the year. I am looking forward to expanding my knowledge in the field of literacy and, more substantially, volunteering as a tutor myself.*

*On a personal level, the coordination of the Advisory Committee has been an eye-opening and positive experience. I have greatly increased my computer literacy. As well, writing proposals, filling out grant applications, and interviewing applicants have all been new experiences for me. I enjoy the new context which brings me in contact with people, enhancing a relationships already established as well as beginning new relations with other people."*

*— Faye Cobbe, Creston*

*"I believe the process our committee went through to develop the Cost Shared proposal for next year's program was efficient and proved to be successful. The Regional Literacy Coordinator's guidance, insight, and support was invaluable. I am confident that Kimberley's steering committee has worked well together preparing a program, laying the foundation, and networking for the benefit of literacy in our*



*community. This year has set the stage for the commitment it will take to develop and implement the project for next year and possibly many years to come.”*

*— Kate Bidder, Kimberley*

*“I accepted this position without having a clear understanding of its scope and magnitude. After being briefed as to the expectations, I was very overwhelmed. However, with the able guidance of the Regional Literacy Coordinator and support of the advisory committee, I was excited about the new field in which I had become involved.*

*It was an exciting year full of challenges and rewards – the biggest being receiving funding so that our year of planning can become a project.*

*I certainly gained a great respect for those working in literacy – they give so much for so little monetary gain. The expectations of the regional and community coordinators’ positions are far above what can possibly be accomplished in their contracts. Many, many volunteer hours are given because these people are dedicated to literacy. Their reward is helping and watching people’s lives change for the better, but how long can they keep it up? Literacy workers do make a difference in our society!”*

*— Denelda Minty, Golden*



## Appendix 1

### Terminology



## Terminology

When we began developing family literacy programs using a collaborative approach, we were introduced to terms that we were familiar with but had not used in relation to literacy work before. Sometimes we found this terminology confusing. As with many definitions including the variety used for “literacy” and “family literacy”, there was not necessarily consensus on the meanings of the terms that we began to apply to the development of literacy programs.

***Community Development*** - When the process of planning family literacy programs in the Kootenays started, we thought of it as just that — planning programs. Later on, when objective “outsiders” looked at what we were doing, they called it “community development”. Initially we were surprised by this because it was not what we had set out to do. Eventually we understood that “community development” can mean various things depending on the circumstances and that, indeed, the process we were using was a form of community development. We also recognized that in some sense of the concept of “community development”, literacy programs have been involved in developing the community all along, because they focus on strengthening the skills of individuals. Also they are often a component of other programs such as employability and retraining programs.

***Learning Communities*** – This is not a term that we knew when we started developing family literacy programs. However, it has become more widely used in Canada as well as in Europe and developing countries.

***“One approach to creating sustainable community futures is for them to create “learning communities” in which both formal and non-formal lifelong learning of individuals and groups is systematically fostered in order to enable sustainable economic development, promote social inclusion and cohesion, and encourage civic and social participation. Learning communities are a form of community development in which local people from every community sector act together to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community. The total formal and non-formal learning resources of a community are therefore harnessed to provide immediate impacts as well as longer-term consequences according to the needs and priorities set by the community. In every community prior or current local initiatives are not replaced but rather built upon by the learning community approach.”***

— Ron Faris, Ph.D.

*Learning Communities: Villages, Neighborhoods, Towns, Cities, And Regions  
Preparing For a Knowledge-Based Society, January 2001*

***Capacity Building*** – This is a term that we hear a lot now. We understand it to mean the development of skills and ideas in individuals, organizations, and communities. Literacy work has always been about a developing the capacity of people to read, write, work with numbers, and learn. This builds community as people can contribute in new ways. When organizations are able to develop new programs, administrative structures, and funding, they are building their capacity to contribute to the community.



## Appendix 2

### Creating Partnerships that Work



## **Creating Partnerships That Work**

Early in the process of developing family literacy programs in the East and West Kootenays, Literacy B.C. provided some training for Regional Literacy Coordinators about building partnerships. The training was provided by Gavin Perryman. His discussion was very helpful and we have continued to consult with Gavin since that first workshop. Following is his workshop outline ideas with comments from the Columbia Basin experience or workshops that we have held using this outline.

### **1. Think of a Partnership that you have been involved in that worked – what made it work, what was good about it?**

Here are some possible answers:

1. People have distinct responsibilities
2. Common goal for working together
3. Complementary skills
4. Complementary resources
5. Input counts – positive feedback
6. Committed to concept of community development
7. Mutual respect
8. Clear goals
9. Sharing information – no one owns the information or all the partners own it together
10. Trust
11. Openness
12. Time – give everyone time for the process
13. Hope and humour
14. Faith in what you are doing together and in each other
15. Celebration of successes
16. Understanding of the people you are working with
17. Honesty

The above are traits that can be applied to all relationships from marriage to business-related partnerships in order to make them work.

### **2. Partnerships start because of an opportunity**

- a) Not all relationships are partnerships
- b) There is a difference between partners and sponsors
- c) Be clear about what you mean by partnerships



## *Our Experience*

Sometimes it helps to take the word “partnership” off the table and simply talk about what we are trying to do. We have found that the word “partner” can be confusing. It can have a variety of definitions. Sometimes people think of partners as only those entities that are providing funding. We have tended to think of those entities as funders and different from partners. We have tended to think of partners as anyone with a genuine interest who is participating in some way to provide the programming. To a large extent, these are the people who sit on advisory committees since they provide expertise, volunteer time, meeting and program space, phone/fax, and photocopying. We view each of the communities that collaborates for funding as a partner.

- d) There are advantages and disadvantages to working with partners. Identify the opportunity that will allow you to develop partnerships for family literacy.

## *In The Columbia Basin*

The opportunity was the possibility of funding for family literacy programs through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, the National Literacy Secretariat, and The Columbia Basin Trust. There was a more likely chance to receive that funding for every community if we partnered with each other.

**Who are the possible partners in your community?**

**Look widely for possible players.**

**At what level do you think you would work with each of them?**

### *What are the advantages to working with partners?*

In the Columbia Basin, the advantages to partnering were:

- Every community received funding
- We could share ideas and resources
- Funders liked the fact that we were cooperating
- A supportive and accepting environment was created

### *What are the disadvantages?*

In the Columbia Basin, the disadvantages were:

- Each community got less money
- Time was required to work with all of the advisory committee members and make ensure that everyone understood what we were doing
- Each relationship needed to be nurtured
- We had to agree on what needed to happen – sometimes we had to compromise



**3. There are several levels of partnership. These are:**

- a. Information sharing
- b. Responding to new needs with new funds
- c. Collaboration on a joint project (time limited)
- d. Developing protocols – If X, then you will do A and I will do B
- e. Case coordination – family gets service from a variety of organizations
- f. Running a joint program (no time limit) – even though roles may not be equal, they must continue
- g. Creating joint structures or fundraising
- h. Merger

The above are listed from least complex to most complex. You may be working with partners at a variety of levels.

***In The Columbia Basin***, here is a list of the people and agencies that have worked together:

Women's Resource and Drop-In Centres	Daycare Centres
Dental Hygienists	Teacher's Associations
Public Health Nurses	Law Firms
Health Services Societies	Learning Centres
Better Babies Programs	Drug and Alcohol
Community Action Programs for Children	Metis Association
Nobody's Perfect	Children's Activity Society
Nutritionists	Secondary Schools
College of the Rockies	Community Schools
Supported Child Care	Parent Advisory Committees
Ministry for Children and Families	Home Support and Community Kitchens
Infant Development Programs	Selkirk Community College
Cranbrook Boys' and Girls' Club	Teachers
Elementary school teachers	Early Childhood Education Societies
Community speech and language pathologists	Play Schools
Community Skills Centre	Childcare workers
Public Libraries	Elementary school counselors
Principals	Okanagan University College
Chambers of Commerce	Family and Youth Resources
Community Law Centre	Healthy Families
Retired Literacy Instructors	Childcare Resource and Referral
Literacy Tutors	Multicultural Society
Special Needs Child Consultants	Pregnancy Outreach Program
Retired teachers	Family and Childcare Services Societies
Youth Outreach Workers	Kidz Klub (after school day care)
Community Resource Centres	Home Support Service
Family Resource Centres	Early Intervention Task Force
Community Resources Societies	Food Banks



#### ***4. Important Factors:***

##### ***A. Process is the key***

It is very important to pay attention to the process and not just the end product. It can be difficult since funding does not usually provide for the development of the processes to ensure sound planning of family literacy programs. The process is critical to the success of family literacy programs in a community development model. Communities planning to develop programming in this way need to be very clear about their need to develop the process as much as the programming.

The same principles that apply to family literacy work can apply to the process by which we work with communities – building on strengths, being respectful, being participatory.

##### ***B. Leadership***

Without good, strong leadership, the partnership will not work. Leaders are the “passionate prophets”. Their vision must be shared with everyone. The “language of the angels” (what is in the public good) is what hooks good people. Leadership is not about control. It must be consistent, but it can change so long as it is always present. When necessary, leadership should be given over to others. And to be successful, there should be an open discussion — what it means and the determination of who is going to lead.

***Who would take the leadership role in your community? Does that person (agency) have time for it?***

##### ***In the Columbia Basin***

The leadership role was taken by the Regional Literacy Coordinators. This was natural since it was inherent in their jobs. Eventually that role was assumed in each community by the local Community Literacy Coordinators.

Initially the Regional Literacy Coordinators talked about family literacy in the “language of the angels”. They were assisted by the people they brought to the regions to talk about literacy and family literacy. The “angel language” was used by the Community Literacy Coordinators when they talked with interested people and agencies in their individual communities.

##### ***C. Resources***

The resources you require may be money, time, or some other element. If you do not have at least some of these components, do not form the partnership. If the partnership is important enough, the funding has to be available to do the development work. Partnerships take a lot of time and energy to develop. Do not create partnerships you cannot maintain.



### ***In the Columbia Basin***

The Regional Literacy Coordinators were already being funded to develop and support partnerships, although not to the extent required eventually for the family literacy programs. The Basin has the unique opportunity presented by The Columbia Basin Trust, which has potential funding for social programs in the Columbia Basin. This funding eventually allowed for more time for the Regional Literacy Coordinators and Community Literacy Coordinators and ongoing funds for programs.

### ***D. Organizations at the table***

Partnerships work best and last longest when they are embedded into the participating organizations. One strategy for embedding the partnership is to request that every organization commit resources (people's time, in kind, money). The power players in an organization should be involved at some point. Make a formal presentation to Boards about partnerships, their importance, and that the success of the operation depends on them and their complete cooperation. Finally, ask at the beginning – What can they give? What gifts do they bring?

***Sometimes potential partners need help to understand what they can give. Look at your list of possible partners. Ask yourself: What could they give? What do you need from them?***

### ***In the Columbia Basin***

From the partnership agreements in ALCSP proposals, following is a list of what various partners contributed:

#### ***Administrative***

- Receive and manage the project funds, including payroll
- Provide liability insurance coverage
- Submit interim and final financial reports
- Manage cash funds allotted specifically to the community based on recommendations of the Advisory Committee
- Provide an advisory committee member
- Participate in the hiring of staff
- Collaborate in the application for funds
- Provide advertising support for programs

#### ***Concrete Items***

- Give money
- Provide staff for the program
- Prepare snacks for the program
- Provide photocopying
- Provide meeting space for the advisory committee and/or the programs
- Provide computer lab services
- Provide use of internet, fax machine, telephone
- Provide office space
- Catalogue and sign out literacy resources



- Contribute supplies for library based programs
- Provide accessible space to store literacy resources
- Host library orientation tours for families and project participants
- Provide advertising support for programs

***Provide expertise and information regarding:***

- the needs of families especially with employability difficulties
- family dynamics
- childhood development and activities for preschool children
- speech and language activities for preschool children
- legal issues
- ordering of resource materials
- early childhood development and children's educational activities
- the needs of adults in the community
- the needs of adults and/or children in the community
- the literacy needs of families who are seen by the public health nurse
- children's programming and books
- the selection of materials for parents and children
- the literacy needs of women and children
- issues that surround literacy — ways children learn, literacy activities for adults and children and how reading, writing and math skills are acquired by both adults and children
- how reading, writing and math skills are acquired
- adults and literacy
- ordering or collecting resources that are suitable for individual families and their needs

***Resources and Materials***

- Share resources and materials as appropriate
- Make available any appropriate reference materials for planning and/or delivering workshops
- Provide children's books for use during the project
- Catalogue, store, and sign out literacy resources
- Provide access to information for learners and families
- Provide shelf space for researched family literacy information
- Provide a resource library that includes easier to read self-help books and pamphlets

***Support***

- Provide advocacy support
- Refer participants to the programs
- Promote the project within their organizations and in the community
- Use the program as part of the required parental education necessary for daycare licensing
- Provide resource person for women in programs
- Promote family literacy and programs
- Participate in determining specific workshop content
- Contribute volunteer time to the programs



***Review the benefits to the various organizations in the partnership.***

This is absolutely essential. The individual agency desires must be discussed thoroughly. You may have to interview individuals to get their complete agenda –  
*What do they need to get?*

***What do you think your potential partners require from a relationship with you?***

***In the Columbia Basin***

Since organizations are not always aware of what they can get from the relationship, it is helpful for the Literacy Coordinator to think in advance about what potential partners will receive before approaching them. Here is what collaborating agencies reported they received or could receive from their relationship with the Community Literacy Advisory Committees.

- More patrons or services for their patrons
- Some training
- Publicity
- More positive public image
- Program delivery
- Actual funding
- Not being left out of a large scale community initiative
- Information
- Hear about funding opportunities
- Community service opportunities
- Contribution to the community because they love the community

You need a process that evaluates both the higher outcome desired and the desired outcome for each agency or individual. Did they get what they needed?

***E. Start slowly and move through concrete projects and experiences***

It is critical to act on the purpose of the partnership. If people talk about what is needed and plan possible solutions, they have to see the results of their work.

***F. Find change champions***

Especially in terms of people who are at the table. It is too difficult to champion the “vision” all by yourself. Be intentional about finding support.

***G. Ambiguity***

Partnerships are really a new experience for most groups. They are easier for people who are able to “wing it” and who can handle unstructured stuff. Especially in the early stages, you need people who are comfortable with chaos. When it comes to actually doing things, you need people who are sequential. You may need to do some team development work.

***H. Respect***

Team members must respect each other and may need to learn to understand each other.



Appendix 3

Literacy and  
Community Development  
Conference 2000

*Community Conference Workshop Outline*  
*Thinking Community Capacity*  
*Reflecting on Community Tragedy*



## ***Literacy and Community Development Conference 2000***

In September 2000, the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy hosted a conference for interested people living in the Columbia Basin. The conference provided an opportunity for advisory committee members and others, in addition to the Community Literacy Coordinators, to meet and discuss what they were doing, to talk about the region's literacy needs and to be part of a facilitated planning session. As stated in the funding proposal, the objectives of the conference were:

- To provide a local, cost effective, professional, community development opportunity for literacy practitioners, facilitators, and their volunteer advisory committees.
- To train advisory committees and facilitators in the processes of planning for literacy programs and community capacity building.
- To demonstrate and discuss the attitude of cooperation essential to capacity building and assist organizations to understand the benefits to themselves.
- To provide an opportunity for volunteer advisory committees to strengthen and practice the leadership skills needed to encourage people and organizations in all sectors to work together to address broad community issues.

### ***The conference themes listed in the brochure were:***

1. How do we map assets, identify strengths, assess needs, and build action plans in our communities?
2. What are our visions for literacy in our communities? How do we build consensus?
3. How do we create stronger alliances that are more inclusive?
4. What are the forces for change in our communities? What are the barriers: how do we think and act strategically to move forward?

### ***Who should come to a conference like this?***

1. Local Community Literacy Advisory Committee members.
2. Literacy Practitioners and others interested in literacy development.
3. Others wanting to engage in a learning process about community change and action.

The majority of people who attended the conference were not literacy practitioners, although family literacy coordinators and facilitators from every community and several adult literacy instructors attended. Most were directly invited by letter or by a personal visit.



***Following is a list of the occupations of people who attended:***

Training Consultants - Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security  
Employment Agency Personnel  
Superintendent of Schools  
Family Resource Centre Directors  
Women's Centres Directors  
Bookstore owner  
Elementary School Counselor  
School District Director of Instruction  
Skills Centre Director  
Public Health Nurses  
CEO of the West Kootenay Community Health Services Society  
Boys' and Girls' Club Director  
Childcare Workers  
School Trustee  
Canadian Mental Health Director  
Valemount Learning Centre personnel  
Social Workers  
Lawyer from the Law Centre in Cranbrook  
Librarians  
First Nations Bands representatives  
Infant Development Workers  
CAPC Workers  
College Dean

The Conference, which was focused on community planning, was facilitated by Gavin Perryman. Ellen Szita, former literacy student, opened the conference with a very moving and inspiring speech which helped everyone understand why they were there. Linda Mitchell, from Literacy B.C. and Yvette Souque, from the National Literacy Secretariat presented facts about literacy in Canada and how their organizations work. Don Johnston, CEO of the Columbia Basin Trust, talked about the Trust and its role in supporting literacy work in the Basin. Mary Gordon ended the conference with a very moving talk, which made everyone in attendance feel the importance of literacy work and helped to cement their dedication to it.

Richard Mulcaster, CEO of the Vancouver Foundation presented a pre-conference workshop one day before the main conference meetings started. He talked about Community Foundations, how they are organized, their role in the funding process for social programming, and how communities can develop foundations. These topics were of great interest to all social organizations attending.



*Here is what worked well for this conference:*

- Starting with a student speaker such as Ellen Szita. It focused attention on the purpose of the conference and the issues to be discussed.
- Ending the conference with someone like Mary Gordon made people feel good about what they are doing and increased their understanding about family literacy.
- Having a planning conference in September when people are fresh and thinking about what they are going to be doing for the year.
- Providing a large and comfortable facility is important. It needs to feel comfortable and workable in terms of small groups and large groups. The ability for everyone to hear is important.
- Having a highly skilled, very experienced facilitator, one familiar with the literacy work.

Gavin began the community planning part of the conference by talking about approaches to literacy program development:

1. One approach is to take current programs and improve or expand on them.
2. Another approach is to start with a discussion about how many people are in need. Who are they? What are the needs? What should the programs be?
3. Or, start with the whole community. Look at the assets and capacities of that community. Then talk about how can we build on these. How can we develop a sense of hope?

We took the third approach. From a community perspective, we can see literacy as a whole. Following is the outline Gavin used to lead conference participants through the workshop.



***List all of the assets in your community that in any way relate to literacy. Keep listing. Add more.***

***Here are conference participants' comments:***

- Many marvellous programs people might be unaware of
- Marvellous people running them
- Lots of creativity
- Similar assets/commonalities that can be tapped into between communities
- Variety of clubs, sports, infrastructure
- Contribution available from local business, industry \$, time off
- Cooperation—current collaboration
- Volunteerism
- Libraries, colleges, school districts involved
- Daycares, ECE capacity
- Ability of our participants to network—families involved tell their friends
- Word of mouth in small communities
- Seniors
- Health services
- Venues
- Funders both close and far
- Networking of advisory committees, Alliance
- Parents
- CAP-C
- 0-6 increase in research
- Parent-child groups
- Cultural groups
- First Nations involvement
- Ministry of Children and Families
- Festivals/Arts in general
- Media
- Children
- Technology
- Child, Youth and Families Committees
- Home tutoring/schooling
- Churches
- Professional groups: teachers, retired folks
- Workplace training programs
- Community schools
- Home work clubs
- Book sharing/recycling/ book stores
- Books for Babies
- Speech and language pathologists
- Sport
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Centres: Boys and Girls, Women's
- Coffee shops, bars
- internships which bring in resources
- Readers and writers
- Service clubs—ie. rotary, Lions, Kinsmen



***Draw mindmaps for your communities, starting with literacy in the center and branching out into all the facets of your communities that relate to literacy.***

Here are the links to literacy from the mind mapping experience:

- Build library use
- Primary program has brought more parents to schools as active partners
- Linkage to business, industry/economic development
- Workplace literacy
- Partnerships that bring different social services together
- Links to family fun/bonding
- Links to community bonding—is there a cohesive sense in this community?
- Development to new economic development (small business or ski hills, for example)
- Health
- Esteem
- Justice system
- Success
- Financial success
- Full field of child development
- Equity
- Child behaviour –link to schools
- Social assistance
- Individual to family link
- Youth crime, depression, suicide
- Alcohol and drug use
- Unemployment
- Family violence
- Isolation: literacy is about building neighbourhoodness
- Links to family history: “illiteracy breeds illiteracy”.
- Creating healthy communities—healthy in the broadest definition of the word
- Environmental linkage

***What are the Challenges?***

- People might be unaware of programs
- Money
- Engaging all parents in the programs
- Program outreach
- Education and awareness of literacy
- Transportation
- Fees and costs
- Child minding
- Coordination of awareness groups
- Access to programs and information
- Nutrition
- Low income among individuals, youth, seniors, men
- Strengthening partnerships
- Reduce turf wars/competition
- Polarization of communities
- Divisiveness of communities



***Community groups then discussed four questions:***

1. Given all the capacities, which one(s) should we build on?
2. How do we strengthen those capacities?
3. In terms of literacy, where do you want to be in 5 years.
4. What challenges do we face in going there?

***Conference participants were encouraged to talk about partnerships.***

***What is working?***

- Shared goal/end result
- Ownership by all stakeholders
- Get through the threat
- Increased awareness, more people at the table
- Looking wider for partners
- Recognition that it is a dynamic process
- Partnerships need celebration and planning
- Mutual support
- Coordination is required
- Help to reduce overlap of services
- Identify gaps
- Legitimizes the cause through diversity
- Credibility
- Sense of pride develops
- Enthusiasm, fun, energy
- Keeps us honest

***What is not?***

- Agendas—people pushing forth their own agendas
- Often hidden agenda
- “Turfism”
- Trust/vulnerability
- People unwilling to take risks, or be honest about their own interests
- Too much meeting, not enough action
- People like to see tangible results
- Wins keep people at the table
- Communication/common language
- Time constraints—done off the corner of our desks
- Dynamics (personal)

Specific challenges listed earlier were discussed in terms of how they might be overcome. People shared strategies that had worked in their communities. Funding was listed as one of the biggest challenges and there was considerable discussion about sustainable funding for the long term. How could this be achieved? There was a general feeling that we need to position literacy as community well-being and that it is essential to do so.



## Appendix 4

Job Descriptions  
Contracts  
Terms of Reference  
And other forms



*Following is the contract for the Family Literacy Coordinator for the planning year:*

**Contractual Agreement  
Between  
Name  
Family Literacy Coordinator, Community  
and  
The Organization of Community**

The following contract between Name and Organization is for the period between September 1, XXXX and June 30, XXXX. Name agrees to carry out the responsibilities of a Family Literacy Coordinator, as outlined in the attached job description and description of the XXXX-XXXX cost shared proposal, Community Planning for Intergenerational Literacy. Name understands that she/he? is not an employee of the Organization which is simply administering the funds for the cost-shared project.

The terms of this contract are:

1. Name will be paid on a fee for service basis. Name will invoice Organization for services on a monthly basis.
2. Name will provide a report of activities to the Advisory Committee for the project in the community of Invermere. The Advisory Committee will direct Name in the activities during the period of the contract.
3. This contract is based on a maximum of 250 hours total for the period between September 1, XXXX and June 30, XXXX.
4. The fee for service rate is \$20.00 per hour. The total contract will not exceed \$5000.
5. The fee for service does not include employee benefits such as Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance. Income Tax will not be deducted. Name will be responsible for reporting income.
6. Organization will reimburse Name for costs related to travel, accommodation, meals, phone, and mailing related to carrying out the project. Costs are not to exceed the agreed upon budget for the project. Organization is not responsible for automobile or accident insurance required while Name is traveling in the course of fulfilling the requirements of the project.

---

Name  
Family Literacy Coordinator, Community

---

Executive Director  
Organization, Community



## **Job Description**

### **Coordinator of the Family Literacy Planning Committee**

**Length of Term: 10 months**

**Hours per week: 5**

**Salary: \$20.00 per hour (contract basis)**

#### ***Development of the Project***

- Read the proposal for the project and discuss it with the Regional Literacy Coordinator or the community contact agency for clarification
- Invite individuals to attend who may be interested in the project and have useful information to bring to the committee.
- Gather information regarding literacy-related work in the community
- Meet with the Regional Literacy Coordinator and coordinators from other communities to discuss information which may be presented to the advisory committee, develop timelines, and share ideas
- Prepare information which will assist the members of the committee to learn about and understand the principles and issues in the field of family literacy
- Read a variety of materials related to the principles of family literacy and models of programs

#### ***Project Implementation***

- Assist the committee to establish guidelines for meetings and set the dates for these
- Arrange for and call meetings of the committee
- Facilitate the meetings
- Assist the committee to assess the needs of the community and establish goals for a family literacy program
- Research and present questions and information to the committee
- Assist in decision making and problem solving
- Keep minutes of the meetings and distribute them.
- Write any reports of proposals required by the committee
- Conduct an ongoing evaluation of the project

#### ***Final Reporting***

- Assist the Regional Literacy Coordinator in the evaluation of the project
- Write a final report of the group's activities and plans
- Reports to: Advisory Committee, Regional Literacy Coordinator



*Invoice from the planning year:*

**XXXX -XXXX (Year) Community Planning for Intergenerational Literacy**

**INVOICE**

TO: FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE, INVERMERE

FROM: COORDINATOR NAME AND ADDRESS

FOR THE PERIOD OF: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR: CONTRACT SALARY  
XXXX-XXXX (YEAR) COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR  
INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY PROJECT

TOTAL HOURS: \_\_\_\_\_ HRS. @ \$20.00/HR.

CONTRACT SALARY CLAIM: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSE CLAIM: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE ATTACH RECEIPTS)

TOTAL CLAIM: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Organization and contact information**



*Sample letter to potential advisory committee members:*

Dear Community Partner,

As the coordinator for the new XXXX Family Literacy Project – funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Advanced Education – I am writing to ask if you, or a colleague, would consider supporting this project by joining a local advisory committee.

The purpose of the XXXX Family Literacy Project is to assess the needs of the community in the area of intergenerational literacy and develop a plan to strengthen family literacy. Family literacy is the intergenerational sharing of literate experiences that provide a family environment which supports and expands the range of literacy activities in the home, and which encourages parents to incorporate those activities into their own cultural context.

As the coordinator for this project, I will be responsible for all administrative duties. The

role of the advisory committee members is to attend meetings and offer feedback, ideas, and suggestions related to what is required to build, strengthen, and enhance family literacy in the XXXX community.

I have scheduled the first Family Literacy Advisory Committee meeting for 7:00 p.m. on

\_\_\_\_\_ in the main boardroom of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Broad community representation is vital to the success of this project. If you are unable to participate, please share the information with your colleagues. Everyone is welcome!

If you have any questions or require further

information, I can be contacted at \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,



# **Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy**

## **Regional Literacy Coordinator**

### **Job Description**

#### **Overall Purpose:**

The Regional Literacy Coordinators are the senior staff of the Alliance. They have responsibility for all of the day-to-day activities and operations of the Alliance, and for working with the Board.

#### **Areas of Responsibility:**

##### ***1. Community-Level Activities:***

##### ***Goals:***

- ***Develop inclusive and active Community Literacy Advisory Committees throughout the Basin.***
- ***Develop relevant and effective local literacy programs and community development processes.***
- Work with and support the Community Literacy Advisory Committees and their coordinators, to develop local literacy activities, programs, and resources.
- Promote and help ensure good practices in community literacy initiatives, including family literacy, adult literacy, and workplace literacy.
- Support collaboration and information sharing across local communities.
- Facilitate local community planning processes and the sharing of ideas and solutions to common problems and good practice.
- Support local Community Literacy Advisory Committees and their coordinators in building local community partnerships and carrying out community development processes.
- Assist in linking literacy people through the First Class conferencing system.
- Organize and attend regular conference calls and face-to-face meetings with literacy people.
- Support the development of Community Literacy Advisory Committees in new communities.
- Support local Community Literacy Advisory Committees and their coordinators in local fund-raising and resource development.



## **2. Finances:**

### **Goals:**

- ***Ensure a transparent and accountable financial management system for the Alliance.***
- ***Develop sufficient funds and resources to support local and regional literacy activities, programs, staff, and processes.***
- ***Ensure a financially sustainable Alliance.***
- Oversee the bookkeeper and accountant.
- Ensure effective financial management processes and systems.
- Work with the Treasurer to ensure that the Board is well informed about financial matters, sets appropriate financial policies, and takes action to acquire funds and resources.
- Report to funding providers.
- Research partnerships and funding opportunities and write funding proposals.

## **3. People Resources:**

### **Goals:**

- ***Provide effective, value-based, and legal policies and procedures to support staff and volunteers.***
- ***Develop a group of local and Basin-wide staff, volunteers and contractors to sustain the vision and work of the Alliance.***
- Work with Community Literacy Advisory Committees to hire and support local literacy coordinators.
- Coordinate and share information about professional development opportunities for Alliance staff, volunteers and contractors, and literacy practitioners.
- Work with the Board to establish appropriate policies and processes.
- Hire, supervise, discipline, and fire all Alliance staff and contractors.

## **4. Basin-Wide Activities:**

### **Goals:**

- ***Develop a strong, collaborative and co-operative alliance across the Columbia Basin, promoting and supporting literacy and life-long learning.***
- ***Develop Basin-wide partnerships and projects to further the goals of the Alliance, and the work of local Community Literacy Advisory Committees.***
- Participate in relevant community, regional, and provincial committee meetings and conferences.
- Provide information to Literacy BC and related government agencies.
- Maintain strong relations with the Columbia Basin Trust.
- Build Basin-wide partnerships with government, educational institutions, businesses and other non-profit organizations.
- Research, document and publish emerging literacy issues.
- Make presentations about literacy issues.
- Supervise Basin-wide projects.



## **5. Board:**

### **Goals:**

- ***Ensure a diverse and committed Board for the Alliance.***
- ***Provide effective Board governance and involvement.***
- Keep the Board informed about the programs, activities, finances and staffing issues.
- Organize, attend and provide support to Board meetings and general meetings of the membership.
- Work with the Board to ensure effective recruitment and on-going Board development.
- Work with the Board to ensure effective planning and evaluation processes for the Alliance overall.
- Report to the Board challenges and risks facing the Alliance.

### **Primary Relationships:**

- Board of the Alliance
- Local Community Literacy Coordinators
- Funding providers
- Basin-wide partners
- Provincial literacy organizations



# **Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy**

## **Community Family Literacy Coordinators**

### **Job Description**

#### **Overall Purpose:**

The Community Family Literacy Coordinators are the link between the Regional Literacy Coordinators and the communities of the Alliance. They have responsibility for the operation of the community programs, for facilitating the Community Literacy Advisory Committees, and for providing leadership for community development processes.

#### **Areas of Responsibility:**

##### ***1. Community-Level Activities:***

###### ***Goals:***

- ***Develop an inclusive and active Community Literacy Advisory Committee***
- ***Develop relevant and effective local literacy programs***
  
- Work with and support the Community Literacy Advisory Committee (CLAC) to develop local literacy activities, programs, and resources.
- Coordinate/Manage local literacy initiatives and programs including advertising, setup, staffing, purchasing, evaluation, and reporting
- Promote and help ensure good practices in community literacy initiatives
- Support collaboration and information sharing within the community
- Build local partnerships with the support of the CLAC
- Build positive relationships with community groups, local government, educational institutions, businesses, and other non-profit groups
- Carry out local fund-raising and resource development with support from the CLAC
- Make local presentations about literacy issues
- Be familiar with and carry out the policies and procedures of CBAL

##### ***2. Finances:***

###### ***Goals:***

- ***Ensure transparent and accountable financial management***
- ***Develop sufficient funds and resources to support local literacy activities and programs***
  
- Manage petty cash funds and submit accounting of these including receipts on a monthly basis
- Follow guidelines set out by Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) and bookkeeper for paying employees and keeping track of local funds
- Report to local funding providers
- Research local partnerships and funding opportunities and write local funding proposals
- Carry out local fundraising activities with support of CLAC



### **3. People Resources:**

#### **Goals:**

- ***Develop a group of local staff, volunteers, and advisory committee members to sustain the vision and work of the CLACs and the Alliance***
- ***Build the human capacity around literacy***
- Work with CLAC to hire staff and volunteers for local literacy activities and programs
- Supervise local staff and volunteers
- Assist the Regional Literacy Coordinators to recommend appropriate policies and processes
- Share information regarding professional development opportunities

### **4. Basin-Wide Activities:**

#### **Goals:**

- ***Develop a strong, collaborative and co-operative Alliance throughout the Columbia Basin, promoting and supporting literacy and life-long learning***
- ***Develop Basin-wide partnerships and projects to further the goals of the Alliance, and the work of local Community Literacy Advisory Committees***
- Participate in relevant community, regional, and provincial committees, meetings, professional development events, and conferences
- Provide information to the Regional Literacy Coordinators regarding programs, community needs, emerging issues
- Provide information to Literacy B.C. and related government agencies when required
- Maintain positive relations with the Columbia Basin Trust
- Communicate with other coordinators using the First Class conferencing system
- Support collaboration and information sharing with other communities.
- Attend meetings of community and regional coordinators

### **5. Board:**

#### **Goals:**

- ***Ensure an efficient, responsive and informed Alliance Board.***
- Through the Regional Literacy Coordinators, keep the Board informed about the programs, activities, finances and staffing issues.
- Make recommendations to the Board (through the RLCs) to ensure effective planning, recruiting, and evaluation processes for the Alliance

#### **Primary Relationships:**

- Regional Literacy Coordinators
- Local Community Literacy Advisory Committees
- People in the community
- Other Community Literacy Coordinators



# Terms of Reference for Community Literacy Advisory Committees

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

— Margaret Mead

## ***1. Preamble***

The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy is a collaboration of 17 communities, focusing on lifelong learning and all forms of literacy. Community Literacy Advisory Committees (CLACs) are the creative driving forces in the Alliance: listening to their communities, leading community development processes, setting priorities, and organizing programs and events. The Advisory Committees link the Alliance to communities, learners, and practitioners.

## ***2. Principles***

The Alliance operates on a set of fundamental principles. These shape the work of Community Literacy Advisory Committees.

1. Providing opportunities for all community members to be included in literacy programs.
2. Being proactively responsive to local needs across the Columbia Basin.
3. Networking and cooperating with interested individuals, groups, programs, organizations, and businesses.
4. Fostering and building partnerships that support literacy and life long learning.
5. Maintaining a participatory and democratic organizational structure.
6. Increasing the profile of literacy and life long learning across the Columbia Basin through a unified voice.
7. Incorporating an inclusive understanding of literacy: family literacy, adult literacy, and workplace literacy as resources allow and community needs are identified.
8. Seeing literacy as part of community capacity building, building on community strengths and programs without duplicating services.
9. Maintaining a learner focused approach in the planning, delivering, and evaluating of programs

## ***3. Scope***

Community Literacy Advisory Committees focus on:

- Lifelong learning
- Family literacy
- Adult literacy
- Workplace literacy

*(Community Literacy Advisory Committees may add to this list)*



They operate in ways that are uniquely responsive to each community, through community development, events, programs, partnerships, and local fundraising. Each Advisory Committee has a Coordinator who will carry out the work of the committee.

Each Advisory Committee has a responsibility for:

- Assessing needs, interests, and priorities in their community
- Developing action plans to move forward
- Acquiring resources (for example: staff, volunteers, partners, in kind contributions, funding)
- Working with the Community Literacy Coordinator
- Reporting to their community and to the Alliance
- Implementing and evaluating programs
- Building partnerships

*(Community Literacy Advisory Committees may add to this list)*

#### **4. Membership**

Membership in CLACs is diverse, reflecting history, programs, and community characteristics. Often, Advisory Committees have representation from

*(Community Literacy Advisory Committees may add to this list)*

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Schools            | 11. Learners                              |
| 2. Libraries          | 12. Parents                               |
| 3. Daycares           | 13. Churches                              |
| 4. Preschools         | 14. Infant Development                    |
| 5. Recreation Centers | 15. Community Action Program for Children |
| 6. Colleges           | 16. Legal Services                        |
| 7. Public health      | 17. Family Centres                        |
| 8. Social services    | 18. Women's Centres                       |
| 9. Businesses         |   |
| 10. Service clubs     |   |

#### **5. Accountability**

CLACs are primarily accountable to their local communities: partners, learners, practitioners, and citizens. They are also responsible for working with other communities in the Alliance, and for keeping the Alliance informed about their plans, evaluations, challenges, and work



## Appendix 5

### Summary of Programs 1998 - 2003



## Summary of Programs in The Columbia Basin

***Parent-Child Mother Goose/Rhyme Time/Baby Goose/Little Goslings Activity Time*** – rhymes, songs, fingerplays, and stories taught to parents and children over a period of several weeks.

***Tumble Goose*** – a Mother Goose style program that includes vigorous activities for young children

***Books for Babies*** – a canvas bag with baby’s book, t-shirt that says “Read To Me” and community information regarding programs for literacy development, parenting, and for children is given to families with new-borns through the public health unit.

***Volunteer Readers Program/One to One Tutor Program*** – in cooperation with the Elementary School, community volunteers read with children at the school.

***Parents Learning/Parents Reaching. Children Succeeding*** – workshops for parents about how people learn, activities for developing cognitive skills in children, and other topics requested by participants related to their own and their children’s learning. Separate workshop series are developed for parents with pre-school children and those with school-aged children.

***Families In Motion/Education for Young Parents*** - parents of pre-school children get upgrading and high school completion while their children attend a pre-school program. Part of the program time is spent with parents and children together in activities for mutual skill development. Breakfast or lunch is provided.

***Earthwalk Circle*** – specifically for the mothers’ group at Columbia Lake Band, workshops for parents about how people learn, activities for developing cognitive skills in children, and other topics requested by participants related to their own and their children’s learning.

***Family Tutoring*** – a private tutor is provided to families where some member has identified difficulty with reading, writing, or math. Parents receive assistance in how to help their children with school and literacy-related areas of difficulty.

***Family Fun Kits/Story Adventure Kits*** – in conjunction with parents, kits with a variety of literacy, and learning related activities around the theme from a book are developed for parents to take home. These can be borrowed through public libraries and programs.

***Journalling Program for Women*** – a weekly program for women to improve writing and other communication skills.

***Lower Kootenay Band*** – an after-school program for children and their extended families, elders, and others to do activities related to learning in a fun way.



***Family Night Out*** – an evening program for the whole family to enjoy together. Mother Goose, Homework Club, resource lending library, and multi-age group activities are some of the features of Family Night Out, all aiming to improve awareness of the value of reading as an integrated family activity.

***Family Night In*** – a one-on-one program for families who have expressed an interest in having at-home literacy support or who are unable to get to Family Night Out. Coordinators visit homes of families and bring activities to help with pre-school literacy skills, strategies to help with homework, and information about further support available in the community.

***Mother Goose in Motion*** – a one-on-one program for families which have expressed an interest in having at-home literacy support or are unable to get to a Mother Goose program. Coordinators visit homes of families and bring activities to help parents develop their children’s pre-school literacy skills, strategies to help with homework, and information about further support available in the Trail area.

***‘LAFF’ (Learning Adventures for Families)*** – a weekend program for children (mainly pre-school) and their families to share activities, songs, rhymes, and crafts to facilitate parents to be active partners in their children’s learning processes.

***Family Storytime*** – Held at public libraries, Family Storytime is a fun program of stories, songs, and rhymes for children of all ages and their families.

***Parent and Child Homework Club*** – for parents and children of all ages to work together on skills to help with school success.

***Reading Time ~ Family Time*** – A program held in the schools for parents/caregivers and their children to share books, stories, rhymes, and crafts based on a different theme and project each week.

***Reading at Home workshops*** – workshops for parents to assist them with ideas about making reading at home with their children enjoyable and fun.

***Bridges to Literacy (A Book Under Every Tree)*** – books are gathered during November and early December for distribution to families at Christmas time.

***ABC and Me*** – a canvas bag with books, preschool materials and community information is distributed to children aged 2 to 4.

***Parenting and Family Literacy Centre*** – drop in programs for parents and pre-school children. Activities are available for parents and their children to participate in together. Facilitators support parents to understand the learning that is acquired through the various activities.



***Festive Family Story Night*** – interactive puppets, stories, songs with families. Held two or three times a year as part of the Children’s Party and the Community Christmas Party (for families in need).

***Reading with Parents*** – workshops for parents to assist them to help their children with school related activities and with activities in every day home life to support learning.

***Salmo Grows Together/Family Matters*** – a conference for families. In partnership with other members of the community, local professionals offer parents, youth and children an opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops and activities designed to support families as they seek to grow together in learning, health, nurturing positive values and addressing concerns in their lives.



## Appendix 6

### Bibliography



***There are a number of excellent resources and resource lists.  
Here are a few suggestions.***

Isserlis, J., McCue, L., Weinstein, L. (1994) *Community Literacy: An Intergenerational Perspective*. Sponsored by the National Literacy Secretariat

Auerback, E.R. (1992). *Making Meaning, Making Change; Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems, Inc.

Taylor, D. (Ed.) (1997). *Many Families, Many Literacies: An International Declaration of Principles*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Thomas, A. (Ed.) (1998). *Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices*. Welland, ON: Soleil Publishing Inc.

Skage, S. (1995). *The Saskatchewan Family Literacy Resource Manual*. A project of the Cypress Hills Regional College

McCoy, L, Watts, T. (1992). *Learning Together: Family Literacy in Ontario*. A project of the Family Literacy Interest Group of Ontario

Family Literacy Action Group of Alberta. *Building Strong and Effective Community Partnerships*.

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Bate, B. (1996). *Families In Motion*. Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

Bate, B. (1997). *A Family Literacy Kit*. National Literacy Secretariat and the British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training

Smythe, S., Weinstein, L. (2000). *Weaving Literacy Into Family and Community Life*. A project of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs and Movement for Canadian Literacy

Purton, D. (1995). *Reading A Family Affair: Family Literacy Information Kit*. Parkland Regional College

*Tools for Community Building* – A Planning Workbook for Northern Community-Based Literacy, NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils

***Literacy B.C. provides a list of resources available through its library.***



### ***Some useful websites of particular interest to coordinators***

Statistics Canada  
[www.statcan.ca/start.html](http://www.statcan.ca/start.html)

B.C. Statistics  
[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/)

National Adult Literacy Database  
[www.nald.ca/index.htm](http://www.nald.ca/index.htm)

Assessment and Evaluation Strategies  
in Family Literacy  
[www.nald.ca/clar/aestrat/contents.htm](http://www.nald.ca/clar/aestrat/contents.htm)

ABE Canada  
[www.abc-canada.org/](http://www.abc-canada.org/)

Canadian Community Newspapers  
[www.ccna.ca/](http://www.ccna.ca/)

Movement for Canadian Literacy  
[www.literacy.ca/](http://www.literacy.ca/)

IALS  
[www.nald.ca/nls.htm](http://www.nald.ca/nls.htm)

Canadian Council on  
Social Development  
[www.ccsd.ca/facts.html](http://www.ccsd.ca/facts.html)

The National Institute for Literacy  
[www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov)

Economic arguments for literacy from  
the NIL in US  
[www.nifl.gov/newworld/present.htm](http://www.nifl.gov/newworld/present.htm)

ERIC Clearinghouse on  
Assessment and Evaluation  
<http://ericae.net/pare/>

The Early Years Study  
[www.childsec.gov.on.ca/](http://www.childsec.gov.on.ca/)

Ministry of Advanced Education  
[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/)

Community Tool Box  
[http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/  
orientation/orientation.htm](http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/orientation/orientation.htm)

Health Literacy Toolbox  
[www.prenataled.com/  
healthlit/hl2k/scrip/index.html](http://www.prenataled.com/healthlit/hl2k/scrip/index.html)

Literacy and Health Information  
from Health Canada  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/  
healthpromotiondevelopment/  
pube/literacy-health/literacy.htm](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/healthpromotiondevelopment/pube/literacy-health/literacy.htm)

Family Literacy Resource Notebook  
[http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/  
famlitnotebook/toc.html](http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/famlitnotebook/toc.html)

National Centre for Family Literacy  
[www.famlit.org/](http://www.famlit.org/)

International Reading Association  
[www.reading.org/links/](http://www.reading.org/links/)

The Vanier Institute of the Family  
[www.vifamily.ca](http://www.vifamily.ca)

The Canadian Association for  
Family Resource Programs  
[www.frp.ca/](http://www.frp.ca/)

Alphabet Soup  
<http://alphabet-soup.net/>

