

FIRST WORDS:
A Journal of Family Literacy in New Brunswick
1997 - 2001

*This journal has been compiled by Literacy New Brunswick Inc. with funding support
from the National Literacy Secretariat.*

Forward

Over the past several years, there has been a growing awareness of family literacy in our province, with an accompanying increase in the number of projects, programs and special events in support of this area of literacy. As a result, many partners who make up New Brunswick's emerging family literacy network have identified a need for more information sharing about these developments.

First Words is the product of contributions by individuals and groups throughout the province who have a passionate commitment to family literacy. We all have a common goal — the promotion of early childhood literacy — and ***First Words*** recognizes and celebrates the work that has been done in support of that goal.

Several terms are used to designate family literacy, according to the context and the approach. Intergenerational literacy, early childhood literacy, emerging literacy, and prevention are other examples.

In this journal, family literacy encompasses all the various ways in which family members develop and use their reading and writing skills in their everyday tasks and activities, such as playing educational games, reading or telling stories, letting children choose their activities, drawing up a shopping list, following a recipe, and writing a letter together.

Family literacy also comprises the reading and writing activities that adults do at home for various reasons and their literacy-related discussions, since parents can serve as models in the home.

Words from Our Two Provincial Family Literacy Champions

The Honourable Marilyn Trenholme Counsell Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this celebration of family and early childhood literacy in New Brunswick.

The stories in this chronicle confirm that family literacy has emerged as a positive force in New Brunswick and is enjoying enthusiastic support from many literacy and early childhood practitioners, volunteers and organizations. New and expanded initiatives are bringing that energy and enthusiasm into the homes of more and more of New Brunswick's young families. Parents must realize that they are their child's first teachers and, in my mind, the most important ones. The home is the cradle of learning.

In my travels around our beautiful province, I have many opportunities to meet with parents and their little ones. I share the message that we must begin in the first years to stimulate and encourage our children's imagination, curiosity and love of learning. Reading, rhyme, singing and playing introduce young minds to the wonder of words and pictures and music. The result is a greater capacity to learn and to love. Such is the bonding created by family time dedicated to literacy in its fullest meaning.

It is encouraging to know that so many good people are spreading this same message throughout New Brunswick. I commend you for your vision and leadership in the field of family literacy in our province. Your collective commitment and hard work has made it possible for a vital family literacy network to take root and grow. Working together, I am confident that we can successfully sustain and expand this network. We are creating a legacy of girls and boys better prepared for our schools and teachers.

May your efforts prosper as we promote the importance of literacy in the homes and lives of each of our littlest learners.

Diane Lord
Spokesperson for the
Provincial Born to Read/Le gout de lire Committee

Family Literacy: A “Magical” Tool for Early Childhood Development

As a trained educator and mother of two young children, I am privileged to be able to observe the benefits of family literacy on a daily basis.

As if by magic, family literacy introduces our children to the world around them and prepares them for the wonderful adventure of communication and the written word.

As if by magic, it helps our children learn social skills and promotes their emotional development.

As if by magic, it even forges ties of love and affection between members of a family or a community.

In a healthy, culturally rich family environment, all the members of the family, and especially the parents, play a role in educating the other members. The family unit is the cradle of learning in all its forms, as Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor expressed it so well.

All family literacy activities, whether they take place in family homes, day-care centres, public libraries, churches, family resource centres, hospitals, community centres, town halls, or wherever, make an important contribution to the overall development of New Brunswick’s children.

These activities are initiated by parents, educators, health professionals, social workers, and volunteers who believe in the merits of family literacy as a tool for prevention, evaluation, intervention, and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend all those people for their outstanding work in promoting family literacy. The family is our children’s first school, and their parents are their first educators. And sometimes, knowing the importance of education for their children’s future, parents experience feelings of uncertainty and discouragement.

New Brunswick parents need your support, your advice, and the educational and family literacy tools you have to offer. They need to be told that they are the most important players in their children’s education and development. And above all, they need to believe they are capable of meeting that challenge.

Now more than ever, we must continue to develop family literacy and promote its benefits in New Brunswick homes and communities.

To ensure ongoing progress toward that goal in all regions of New Brunswick, organizations and individuals active in family literacy and related fields must continue to work in close co-operation.

This journal is one more tool that will help promote the teamwork essential to the development of literacy in New Brunswick.

Congratulations to the originators of this project, and long live *First Words!*

Points of View on Family Literacy

Cheryl Brown
Saint John Family Literacy Committee Inc.

With over nine years experience as an adult literacy practitioner and with three children of my own, I am often overwhelmed with the triumphs and challenges that come with being involved in New Brunswick's family literacy movement. Very few things in my life have been more rewarding, or more frustrating!

The statistics concern me: almost 60% of adults, aged 16-65, are in the lowest two levels of literacy. Children enter school with varying degrees of pre literacy skills, ranging from children who have been read to one-on-one for thousands of hours to children who have been read to for as little as 25 hours.

However defined or measured, people with limited literacy skills are worse off than those with higher literacy skills. The effects of low literacy, poverty, and health are all interrelated and interdependent in a number of ways. Literacy is also a critical determinant of employability, and in turn, income. It affects the economic viability of an entire society.

With the 'new brain research' infiltrating every aspect of our lives, it has become accepted that the first three years are the most important, along with the message that literacy development begins at birth.

Parents, no matter what their income or literacy skills, want what's best for their children. Those with low or no literacy skills may find it difficult to provide a pro-literacy environment. They may lack the skills, ideas and confidence, making low literacy an intergenerational challenge. Many parents have said to me "Well, I can't read, so there's nothing I can do to help my child." The child who grows up without being read to, has children that s/he cannot read to, and so on, and so on.

Family literacy programs interrupt this cycle. By supporting parents and caregivers in their role of their child's first and most influential 'teacher', family literacy programs have a positive impact upon a child's success in school and life.

Much kudos to those who support family literacy, and who give many, many, many hours to this important cause. There are wonderful things happening in New Brunswick. It is a positive trend. The reality is that financial sustainability for family literacy programs is minimal, if it exists at all.

I'm not sure why we're not investing more heavily in something so instrumental to lifting our children out of poverty. It may be because it takes so long to see the results. It may be because not enough people are aware of how effective and efficient family literacy programs are, providing what Tom Sticht calls 'double duty dollars' – the same dollar helping the parent and the child at the same time. It may be because we are not aware that the direct parent/direct child, or the Kenan Model, is the most effective for breaking the cycle of low literacy and helping adults with their literacy.

Whatever the cause, we need to help the parents who cannot read. We need funding for programs to help adults like Ron, who sat in my office and cried because he couldn't read well enough to give his two-year-old daughter her medicine. We need to help him reach his stated goal: "I want to learn to read stories to my little girl."

Imagine what a difference we could make in our society (and in that adult literacy statistic) if all of us in the community pledged to assist just one child whose development of language and literacy was at risk. Parents, community, business and government share the combined responsibility of advocating and supporting the literacy development of our most important little citizens. Together, we need to make the investment and demand a more literate society, so that the future health of our communities is ensured.

Mahfoud Akkouche
Haut-Saint-Jean Library Region
New Brunswick Public Library Services

I would just like to say that the following remarks are not based on studies or research of any kind, since I do not have any quantifiable or measurable data. Rather, they are my own personal opinions and beliefs, which I am expressing in my capacity as a librarian in the public library system.

Public libraries have played and continue to play a key role in family literacy. I say "family" because libraries are frequented by children, their parents and grandparents. Libraries not only house books and other documents in various formats (audio tapes, videocassettes, CDs, talking books, CD-ROMs, etc.), but they are also places for public cultural activities (art, painting, craft, and antique exhibits; lectures; get-togethers with authors; launching of new books, etc.).

As we all know, the die is cast in the early years of a child's life, even before school entry. Consequently, a family environment conducive to literacy is a decisive factor in the development of literacy. Similarly, public libraries are prime venues for literacy.

Family literacy is given considerable attention in our public library system. We have been offering the following programs for several years now: Story Hour, Pyjama Tales, the Literacy Program for Kids (a program where children who have difficulty reading are tutored throughout the summer), the Summer Reading Club for school and preschool children (in the latter case, the children's parents read to them), get-togethers with authors, etc.

In my opinion, in order to have an impact on young children, we have to reach out to parents and grandparents first, because they are the ones who will be reading to the children, encouraging them to read, and going with them to the library.

The importance of reading is clear. Learning to like reading while young can pave the way for a life full of discoveries, pleasure, and success, both personally and occupationally. It is to that end that public libraries will continue to play their role in the field of family literacy.

A Study of Family Literacy in New Brunswick

Highlights from Early Childhood and Family Literacy in New Brunswick: A Provincial Snapshot (Spring, 1999)

This study was conducted by the Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation (CRDE) at Université de Moncton in co-operation with LNBI, and with funding support from the National Literacy Secretariat. The study includes: a brief literature review; socio-demographic profiles of families with children aged 0 to 4; an inventory of family literacy interventions; a survey of parents or guardians; and the results of focus groups conducted with family literacy and early childhood partners in 12 areas of the province. Significant findings are outlined below.

- The research indicates that the first years of life are crucial for the development of literacy. It also notes that socio-economic variables alone do not explain all the differences in the development of language and literacy in children. The parents' literacy levels as well as their involvement count. It seems that of all environments, the home has the greatest impact on academic performance and that the parent as a facilitator has a greater impact than the reading parent as a model.
- According to the 1996 Census of Canada, there were 44,560 pre-school age children in 28,580 families in New Brunswick. Eighteen percent (18%) are single-parent families. Close to 23% of all families have a total income of less than \$20,000, and of these, 61% are single-parent families, headed by women.

The majority (69%) of the 44,560 children have English as their mother tongue, 26% have French, and 3% have both. One third (33.4%) of these children have one parent with French as their mother tongue and thus have the right to obtain education in French for their child. Of the children with only one of the two parents with French as mother tongue, 51% understand French and 37% speak it.

- According to the survey, 67.9% of the sample of parents interviewed reported that they organise family literacy activities in their home and a majority reported having reading material in the home. Although most parents have very favourable perceptions, desires, and intentions when it comes to family literacy, generally speaking, parents tend to rarely take part in literacy activities in the community. However, further study of this aspect of family literacy is needed since according to family literacy partners, family literacy activity is not part of everyday life in most families.
- Although no one organization has the mandate to provide services in family literacy, the inventory lists a wide range of activities being carried out throughout the province. Often conducted in partnership, family literacy and early childhood initiatives are sporadic, one-time and short-term.
- Regional partners consulted during the course of the study noted that there is a lack of resources for families and practitioners, and more so in rural and Francophone contexts. Needs vary a great deal between regions, according to the populations. Literature and partners suggest specific approaches.
- Some partners felt that there are not enough promotional or awareness-raising activities. They noted shortcomings in terms of access to information, availability of information, co-ordination of the dissemination of information, and definition of roles and responsibilities. Partners suggest establishing co-ordination structures as well as defining more clearly roles and responsibilities.
- The partners identified the need for training for practitioners and for an evaluation process for family literacy activities. Advances made in family literacy have been more of a practical rather than a theoretical nature, so more research is necessary to better understand this aspect. The literature recommends the use of evaluation techniques that take into account cultural differences and family relationships.
- Suggested directions for future action include: 1- increased promotion and awareness of the value of the role of parents; 2- adoption of current approaches in programs and interventions; taking into account needs, conditions and specific resources; 3- increasing the accessibility of materials in the home as well as for the use of practitioners; 4- enlarged partnerships; 5- increased training offered to interested parties; 6- co-ordination and information sharing on a province-wide basis; 7- continuing evaluation mechanisms for intervention; and 8- further research particularly with regard to the effect of parents' literacy and educational levels.

Please note that the full study is posted on Literacy New Brunswick Inc.'s Website at www.anbi-lnbi.nb.ca under the Family Literacy section.

Provincial Family Literacy Activities

The Lieutenant-Governor's Early Childhood Literacy Awards

For the fourth year, Lieutenant-Governor Marilyn Trenholme Counsell honoured individuals and groups in New Brunswick, last September 8th, for making a difference in early childhood literacy. The Lieutenant-Governor is quoted as saying,

"These awards honour those who have completed an exemplary effort toward the enhancement of literacy for children from birth to six years of age. During my term in office, I have tried to promote the importance of reading, stories and songs, pictures and numbers, and family communication. These awards pay tribute to those New Brunswickers who believe as strongly as I do in the value of literacy at the earliest age."

The Lieutenant-Governor's Early Childhood Literacy Awards are presented in six categories: author (children's story); author (children's poetry); organization; library; individual; and grandparent. A volunteer group, committed to early childhood literacy, have selected the winners. 2001 winners are as follows:

Author, children's story: Nicole Daigle, St-Louis de Kent

Organization: Price's Family Daycare, Fredericton; Centres de Ressources Familiales de Kent, Richibucto

Library: Nashwaaksis Public School Library, Fredericton

Individual: Barbara Tracey LaRocque, Saint John; Ellie Weaving, Florenceville

Grandparent: Imelda Perley, St. Mary's First Nation

Honourable Mention: Marc-André Roy (13-year-old author), Tracadie-Sheila

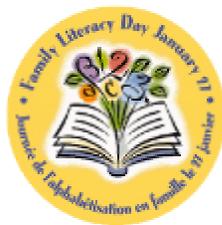
For more information please refer to the Lieutenant-Governor's Website at <http://www.gnb.ca/lg/early-e.htm>. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Office of the Lieutenant Governor by telephone (506-453-2505) or by mail at P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1.

The Minister of Education's Alpha Awards



The Lieutenant Governor also serves as Honorary Patron of the Minister of Education's Alpha Awards, which celebrate the accomplishments of adult learners, volunteers, facilitators, community organizations and corporate supporters of literacy. The Lieutenant-Governor has presented the Lieutenant-Governor's Alpha Award for Early Childhood Literacy since 1997. This award recognizes an individual or an organization that has made a significant contribution to the fields of early childhood literacy in New Brunswick. The 2001 winner was the Early Active Reading and Storytelling (EARS) Committee, Moncton, in recognition of its work in setting up a library for pre-schoolers at the Beaverbrook School.

Family Literacy Day



Since January 27, 1999, ABC Canada and its partners, supported by Honda Canada, celebrate Family Literacy Day (FLD) in Canada. The New Brunswick FLD Organizing Committee, composed of the Honourary Chair, Mrs. Diane Lord and the provincial literacy partners, have taken this opportunity to organise an annual promotional and awareness raising campaign.

Most regions take their own individual approach in organizing this annual event, arranging promotional spots on radio, family events, puppet shows, readings for children and other initiatives.

Every year, the Provincial Committee organises a provincial event with media coverage and participation of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Premier, the Minister of Education, and Mrs. Lord.

A poster contest, launched at FLD 2000, attracted the participation of 588 children and adults. The goal of this initiative was to raise awareness and to encourage community participation in FLD activities. The 17 winning posters were used to produce a family literacy calendar, which was sold to raise funds for the future FLD events.

Provincial events have been held at the Fredericton Family Resource Centre (1999), Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne in Fredericton (2000) and at Champlain Place, Dieppe (2001) organized by the Greater Moncton Literacy Advisory Board. Literacy partners of the Péninsule acadienne are organizing the 2002 ceremony.

The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) reports all events on-line at NALD's national FLD web page, at <http://www.nald.ca/EVENTS/evntssub.htm>.

Provincial *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* Committee



The reputation of the *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* community project, launched by the IODE in the early 1990s, is well established. What a beautiful gift and what a valuable message to give to the parents of newborns: the importance of stimulating infants' development through books!

Lieutenant-Governor Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, with the assistance of Literacy New Brunswick Inc., has supported the *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* project since 1997 and has given it its current provincial scope in co-operation with IODE, regional Francophone organisations and public and hospital nurses.

A Provincial *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* Committee was established in April 2000. Its mandate is to maintain the quality of the project and ensure that all newborns receive a book bag. Members of the committee are Lieutenant-Governor Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, Honourary Chair; Diane Lord, spokesperson; Shirley Downey, Born to Read; Victorine Robichaud, la Coalition Le goût de lire; representatives from the Lieutenant-Governor's office, the Department of Health and Wellness, Literacy New Brunswick Inc. and the voluntary sector.

The committee appreciates the financial support of government and the private sector as well as the 18 regional partners who add books and help with distribution and the nurses

who distribute bags directly to most of the approximately 8000 families of newborns in the province each year.

The *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* Committee has received funding support from the Department of Family and Community Services and plans to become incorporated as an independent organization in 2002.

The Early Childhood and Family Literacy Summer Student Project

In 2001 the four major literacy NGOs - La Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick (FANB), Laubach Literacy New Brunswick (LLNB), Literacy New Brunswick Inc. (LNBI) and the New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy (NBCL) collaborated to design the Early Childhood and Family Literacy Summer Student Project 2001 and to identify sponsoring agencies around the province with which students would be placed. Literacy New Brunswick Inc. (LNBI) acted as administrative coordinator for the project. LNBI supported sponsoring agencies around the province by serving as the employer of record for all summer students, provided management tools, and organized orientation sessions in collaboration with the other provincial literacy partners.

The four provincial literacy partners identified the following objectives for the Early Childhood and Family Literacy Summer Student Project:

1. To engage preschool age children, their parents and families in early childhood and family literacy activities which promote and foster early literacy skills;
2. To raise awareness of parents of preschool age children, as well as the general community, of the important role early childhood literacy activities play in the prevention of subsequent literacy difficulties later in life;
3. To assist project sponsors in developing, expanding or sustaining early childhood and family literacy initiatives in the community.

Twenty-three summer students were hired by 18 regional and provincial early childhood and family literacy partners and carried out 7 projects in English, 8 projects in French and 3 in both official languages. The projects were rich and varied in nature.

It can be conservatively estimated that, as a result of the summer student project, no fewer than 17 New Brunswick communities saw tangible benefits, both human and material. In terms of human benefits, more than 750 children and 350 parents were affected directly. At least five new adult literacy learners were recruited. No fewer than four new volunteers were hired. A new client group was attracted to at least one family literacy centre. Ties were forged with at least 20 other community organizations. Twenty-three (23) summer students learned about family and early childhood literacy. The 18 regional and provincial agencies or partners indicated they were willing to repeat the exercise next summer and several other non-participating partners are interested in trying

it out as well. In terms of material benefits, 11 Storysacks were put together, 15 puppet shows and 10 children's plays were written, 10 stories and legends were chosen for inclusion in a collection, no fewer than 200 resources and activity kits were developed for use; and two research projects were begun.

Family Literacy Activities by Individual Literacy Organizations

Laubach Literacy New Brunswick - LLNB



Creating a Learning Culture in the Home Julie Kean Marks

The year 2000 was busy for Laubach New Brunswick's Family Literacy program.

The communities of Grand Manan, Apohaqui and Keswick Valley each held a "Creating a Learning Culture in the Home" workshop. The workshop participants learned how to create a positive home learning environment for children and how to include literacy activities in family routines. They also had the opportunity to explore and discuss quality children's books and to ask questions and share experiences. Participants left the workshops with a better understanding of how children develop literacy skills.

"Creating a Learning Culture in the Home" is a series of three family literacy workshops developed by Laubach Literacy of Canada. These workshops aim to break the cycle of illiteracy by showing families how they can enrich learning in their homes. Parents and other caregivers are provided with practical guidance to help children develop reading and writing skills and positive self-esteem.

The three workshops are called: "Access to Reading," "Reading to Write, Writing to Read," and "Building Self-Esteem through Communication." Each workshop lasts approximately four hours. Between ten and twenty-five participants are required for each workshop.

"Access to Reading" helps parents and caregivers understand how children learn to read and shows them ways to help children experience success. Activities include finger plays/ action rhymes, reading aloud and making fold-a-books. This workshop is directed at parents and caregivers of children up to age seven or eight.

"Reading to Write, Writing to Read" looks at how children learn to write and provides parents and caregivers of elementary school children with practical ideas and activities to support and encourage children's writing. Activities in this workshop include language games and making fold-a-books.

"Building Self-Esteem through Communication" considers the ways children develop healthy self-esteem and explores how parents and caregivers can help by encouraging positive communication patterns. Activities include participation in a listening skills role-play and the discussion of positive and negative responses. This workshop is suitable for parents and caregivers of children of all ages.

To request one of the "Creating a Learning Culture in the Home" workshops in your community, contact:

Julie Kean Marks

Laubach Literacy Field Services Coordinator for NB

365 Gowland Mountain Road

Elgin, NB E4Z 2L2

(506) 756-8899

toll-free 1-877-633-8899

fax: (506) 756-1987

email: bjkmarks@nbnet.nb.ca

Web site: <http://www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/nb/nbhome.htm>

La Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick - FANB



Family Literacy and the FANB

The Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick (FANB) has been working since 1988 to make the public aware of the benefits of literacy in French in the province. To break the cycle of illiteracy, the FANB has also advocated prevention while focusing primarily on family literacy.

In May 1999, the FANB contributed to the emergence of family literacy in French by organizing a province wide event. The Séminaire portant sur l'alphabétisation et la famille brought together some forty people from across the province. Its aims were to spark discussion about learning cultures in families, identify needs, and examine the various facets of family literacy.

Representatives of public libraries, literacy councils, family resource centres, and early intervention and preschool programs, among others, acknowledged that family literacy is “a process whereby the members of a family, a community, a region, or a province work together on initiatives designed to promote and create family and community environments conducive to lifelong learning.”

Four measures were also singled out as being vital to achieving this vision: establishing partnerships for joint planning; taking stock of existing resources; developing a promotional strategy; and creating mechanisms for disseminating information more effectively.

The FANB is an active member of the provincial Family Literacy Day Committee. Its participation thus constitutes a first step in building a partnership with a view to implementing the priority measures identified by the Seminar participants.

In September 1999, the FANB used the Village de la Francophonie to raise public awareness on a large scale. In cooperation with Literacy New Brunswick Inc.(LNBI) and the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD), it hosted a booth featuring numerous family-literacy activities with the theme L’alphabétisation au coeur de la Francophonie branchée (connecting the Francophonie through literacy]. Also featured was a story hour with such well-known figures as Lieutenant-Governor Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, Aline Chrétien and Diane Lord, Marguerite Maillet of Les Éditions Bouton d’or d’Acadie, and authors Denise Paquette and Florian Lévesque. There were also two puppet shows by Pèpère Goguen and Éco-Sun Soleil, as well as a presentation to parents by Florian Lévesque on the importance of reading to children.

In 2000-2001, thanks to funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, the FANB is hosting workshops for literacy learners and people who work in early childhood development in order to help them foster reading skills and instil a love of reading in young children.

In 2001, NLS support is enabling FANB to meet people working in the field of early childhood and explore the possibility to create a communication network for family literacy in French. FANB has developed a guide to help parents develop learning skills with their children. In cooperation with day-care centers, this guide will be distributed to some 500 parents in the francophone regions.

FANB can be reached at:

Tel. : 506-473-4404

E-mail: fanb@nbnet.nb.ca

Web site: <http://www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/nb/nbhome.htm>

The New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy - NBCL



Family Literacy and New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy

NBCL was established in 1988. It is a not-for-profit agency made up of representatives of government departments and community groups that carry out literacy services.

Family literacy activities carried out by the NBCL include: a family literacy round table in 1998; the Making Reading and Learning Fun Workshops in April 1999 co-ordinated with a small local group of educators and social workers and the introduction to Canada and ongoing promotion of Storysacks, a family literacy concept developed in the U.K.

The NBCL continues to support and promote family literacy activities across the province through involvement with the Provincial Family Literacy Day Committee.

The NBCL, with its francophone partner, La Fédération d'alphabétisation du N.-B., hosted family literacy workshops at a conference in April, 2001. Internationally known Canadian speaker, Mary Gordon, was a keynote speaker and workshop leader. The NBCL also co-ordinated and hosted the Early Learning, Language and Literacy Conference in partnership with the Department of Family and Community Services and Health Region III Day Care Workers. The ELLL conference was held in June, 2001.

NBCL is producing a bilingual catalogue of family literacy programs and services in New Brunswick and this will be available in January 2002.

For information about the NBCL visit the website at www.nald.ca/nbclhom.htm or call 1-800-563-2211.

Literacy New Brunswick Inc. - LNBI



The Community-based Family Literacy Initiative

From 1997 to 2001, LNBI employed two family literacy project officers, one Francophone and one Anglophone through project funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. The Community-based Family Literacy Initiative was developed to promote the importance of early literacy interventions to parents of preschool-aged children in their homes and communities. Provincial and regional partners were identified to carry out community projects, events, public education, resource development, and other initiatives.

Over the years, 31 field workers were placed with 20 community partners including libraries, low-income housing associations and family resource centers with funding from the federal Youth Strategy and Department of Training and Employment programs. As well, 15 regional family literacy committees were supported in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

The initiative also supports provincial committees; the Family Literacy Day Committee with Diane Lord as the Honourary Chair and the *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* Committee whose Honourary Patron is Lieutenant-Governor Marilyn Trenholme Counsell. Diane Lord serves as the Official Spokesperson of the *Born to Read/Le goût de lire* Committee which provides bags of books to parents of newborns throughout the province. Further information on this project has been provided under the ***Born to Read/Le goût de lire Committee*** described under ***Provincial Family Literacy Activities***, above.

As part of the Community-based Family Literacy Initiative, LNBI collaborated with the Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation (CRDE), Université de Moncton, in the research report Family and Early Childhood Literacy in New Brunswick: A Provincial Snapshot. The objective of the study was to take stock of family literacy in New Brunswick as things stood in the spring of 1999. Highlights of the study are provided above under the section, ***A Study of Family Literacy in New Brunswick***. The full study can be accessed at www.anbi-lnbi.nb.ca under the section on Family Literacy.

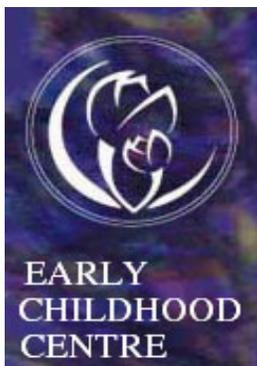
In September 1999, LNBI collaborated with FANB and NALD to sponsor a kiosque at the Village de la Francophonie. For further details see **Family Literacy and the FANB** in the section above.

In the year 2000, LNBI conducted virtual study circles in cooperation with the FANB and NALD and with financial support from Industry Canada. The project took shape following the Francophone Summit. The Réseau international de cercles d'études en alphabétisation en français enabled groups of 3 to 15 participants to communicate and learn together via the Internet. One family literacy study circle took place from June to August and attracted participants from New Brunswick, Alberta, Quebec, and France.

LNBI coordinated the production of the family literacy day calendar in collaboration with Communications NB and CCNB-Dieppe. As well, LNBI in partnership with other Family Literacy Day Committee Day members, is managing distribution of the calendars for sale in support of family literacy day activities.

For information about LNBI visit the website at www.anbi-lnbi.nb.ca or call (506) 457-READ.

UNB Early Childhood Centre



Pam Whitty, Ed.D.
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education
Director, UNB Early Childhood Centre
University of New Brunswick

As individuals deeply concerned with literacy growth, we know that families are a singularly important influence on how young children become literate. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and family friends all have the potential to contribute to the many ways that children learn to communicate. For a young child, becoming literate is at once as simple, and complex, as having conversations about what to wear or how to cross the street safely.

Literacy is about communication. Making sounds, singing, moving to music, learning sign, playing with language in the context of pretend play and creating art works are but a few of the many ways in which children communicate their feelings, desires, wants, needs and creativity to us and each other. Children bring the knowledge gained in these

everyday literacy events to the acts of reading and writing. Thus the greater the range of ways we engage with children's understanding of the world, the more a child will eventually bring to those critically important acts of reading and writing. One of our biggest challenges, then, in bringing every child to their full literate selves is nurturing the ability, across communities, to share our knowledge in ways that respect the principle that everyone is literate and that each and every one of us has much to learn and much to contribute.

With the importance of families in mind, the Early Childhood Research and Development Centre at the University of New Brunswick, in September 2000, received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat to develop family literacy reading materials for children and their parents. The content of these books parallels the topics we created for training materials that we developed for an earlier Health Canada project entitled Parenting for a Literate Community (see www.cspace.unb.ca/edfac/ecc/plc for more details on this project.) For our current Family Literacy Children's Book Collection, we have hired New Brunswick authors and illustrators to create children's books for parents to read on the possibilities that everyday activities hold for literacy growth. We have had wonderful sessions with mothers as we shared drafts of our texts. Their feedback was immensely helpful to us in the development of this family literacy collection. We look forward to launching our materials next summer.

Pour une communauté alphabétisée

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Everyone is aware of the challenge of promoting family literacy in the field. The project called Pour une communauté alphabétisée was designed and carried out in response to that challenge. Its primary objective was to complement existing literacy resources for people working with young children and their parents. The work tools suggested by the project must be seen as supplements to existing resources. However, the project is unique because its objectives are based on principles specific to the Francophone community.

The suggested approach is to educate and train family literacy workers and partners so that they will be able to work effectively with young children.

The project consists of two major components: training for partners and publication of a basic work tool.

Family literacy partners attended two-day training workshops on family literacy. The workshops took place successively on the Shippagan and Moncton campuses of the Université de Moncton. Those attending were from the Early Intervention Program and the Family Resource Centres.

The final step was the publication of a basic work tool. A training handbook for family literacy stakeholders was published in December 1999. It consists of four parts, followed by about ten appendixes. The handbook outlines the training activities covered in the workshops and contains a wealth of other information relevant to all those interested in family literacy. Copies of the handbook were given to Health Canada, the Educational Resources Centre and the Research and Development Centre of the Université de Moncton's Faculty of Education, and the Champlain Library on the Moncton campus.

This project was funded entirely by Health Canada and spearheaded by a five-member steering committee: Lynn Richard, Rose-Marie Duguay, Lynn Charlebois, Micheline Trempe, and Charline Vautour. It is the French counterpart of the Parenting for a Literate Community project at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

Réseau d'appui à l'intégration des enfants des ayants droit

Getting Children Ready to Enter French School

The mission of the Réseau d'appui à l'intégration des enfants des ayants droit au système éducatif francophone, a support network for the integration of Charter Rights students into the Francophone school system, is to provide couples with one Anglophone and one Francophone parent, with the information they need to make enlightened decisions about their children's education. The network also ensures that the children of such parents meet the necessary prerequisites for French school.

The network was officially launched in April 2000, although the groundwork for it began two years earlier. It consists of some 20 private and public-sector organizations that have joined forces to advance the cause of Charter Rights students. The network's vision is for the children of such parents to opt for French school in the future.

Members of the network consider that support services for parents, welcoming classes and other catch-up programs, educational materials designed to develop French-language skills in the home, and firm commitment by government and non-government partners are alternatives to alleviate the situation.

Couples with one parent Anglophone and one Francophone systematically choose the Anglophone school system and this contributes to the assimilation of Acadians and Francophones. The network believes that with concerted efforts and existing resources, this trend can be reversed, and that more and more eligible couples will enrol their children in French schools. In the long run, countering assimilation will promote Acadian culture, a part of Canada's cultural heritage.

For more information, email compar@nbnet.nb.ca or call 506-859-8109.

The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. – NALD



The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. (NALD) is a federally incorporated, non-profit service organization, which fills the crucial need for a single-source, comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible database of adult literacy programs, resources, services and activities across Canada. From its base in Fredericton, New Brunswick, NALD provides data, referrals, program models and much more, on virtually every adult literacy program in the country. It helps users to build on the experience and expertise of over 5000 contacts and programs (including Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy) from around the world on the Internet.

NALD lets the literacy practitioner and administrator share ideas and methods, and the information multiplies with every contact. It is the vehicle that helps to organize and funnel that information in useful ways, by gathering, sorting, storing and making available information on literacy programming, resources, services, contacts, events, awards, funding sources. It provides adult literacy information to practitioners, teachers, volunteers, program administrators, policy setters and learners across the country through its toll-free number (1-800-720-6253), through its Website (www.nald.ca), and through its newsletter, which it posts online on a quarterly basis. Among the other services provided, we publish learners' stories on our Website on Story of the Week.

NALD encourages the sharing of resources within the adult literacy community as well as with other players involved in fields such as employment development, family literacy and correctional education. We promote the networking of these groups and individuals through the use of our website and services such as listservs, provided to specific target groups for sharing of information. One example of an online service provided by NALD is the Family Literacy Directory, a comprehensive database containing a directory of family literacy projects across Canada. Also, under Links to Internet Resources, there is a section called Educational Resources - Family Literacy. These links lead to many different links to helpful resources on the Internet.

To navigate on NALD's site, go to <http://www.nald.ca> .

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Tips for Reading to Children

Restigouche Family Resources Center & Speech Pathology Services Campbellton Regional Hospital

Having Fun with Reading, it's so easy.....

Books help children develop:

- Language, expression and comprehension
- Imagination
- A sense of sharing
- Attention and concentration
- A desire of responsibility and personal value

Remember: The more you read the more you learn! You can learn anywhere:

- At the grocery store, describe what you put in the cart.
- While driving... look on street signs to find letters that are in your child's name.
- While cooking... read and take out ingredients for the recipe.
- When getting dressed... name what you put on first, what you wear in the winter, etc.
- During mealtimes... take time to talk about your day.

10 Helpful Hints.... "How to make reading a story with your child fun"

1. Before you start reading a story, make sure that your child is calm and the location appropriate. Your child will be more attentive and interested if he/she is calm and in a quiet place that he/she enjoys, such as his/her bedroom.
2. Help your child choose a book that is not too long or complicated. A child will pay attention for a longer period of time if he/she finds the book interesting. Lift the flap books or books with the child's favorite characters are excellent choices. They will draw his/her attention.
3. Let your child hold the book and turn the pages. Your child will enjoy having a responsibility in book reading and will look forward to reading again.
4. Bring the story to life by using a puppet or other objects represented in the book. The child will perceive reading as a fun game. He/she will remember words and concepts more easily.
5. Be expressive when reading. The child will be fascinated and amused at various facial expressions and tones of voices. He/she will remember the words each character uses more easily.

6. Tell the story in your own words. The child will pay more attention for a longer period of time if the words and sentences are age-appropriate.
7. Go back over the story as often as needed. When your child stays on the same page, or always wants to read the same book, stick to it and be positive. If your child is interested, it means he/she is learning so don't rush through the book.
8. Take the time to listen to and answer your child's questions. Your child will know that what he/she is saying is important to you. He/she will look forward to your next "story time".
9. Let your child tell you what happened and what will happen in the story. Time will help your child develop his/her imagination. This will also help you check if the child has understood the story or if the book was too difficult.
10. Remember that telling a story is a game. It is important that this activity be as fun for the adult as for the child. Reading can become a cherished daily activity for the whole family.

For more information or to obtain copy of the flyer, please call 753-4172 or e-mail crppres@nbnet.nb.ca .