

Study Reveals Cracks in Canada's Literacy Foundation: Community says politics must not stand in the way of progress - comments by MCL

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Ottawa: A [Statistics Canada](#) study released today reveals serious cracks in Canada's literacy foundation with as many as 4 in 10 Canadian adults below the skill level considered necessary to thrive in today's knowledge society. Success in today's world demands continuous learning, and the study confirms that millions are being left behind.

"The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey confirms what front-line literacy workers have long known first hand," said the Executive Director of the [Movement for Canadian Literacy](#), Wendy DesBrisay. "Literacy barriers are sidelining too many Canadians and this inequality and loss of potential has serious consequences for them, their families and our communities."

Despite the many benefits to be gained from shoring up our literacy foundation, Canada remains one of the few industrialized countries without a comprehensive system, vision, or approach to adult literacy and basic education. Higher-level skills training gets the bulk of attention and support from governments and employers, while adult literacy and basic education goes begging.

Recently the federal budget promised to act on the community's long-standing call for a comprehensive literacy strategy. The announcement was greeted with optimism in the literacy field, but now there is widespread concern that political change could put the brakes on the momentum that has been building over the past few years.

"Our community's message to politicians and government decision-makers from across the political spectrum is this: please don't let anything stand in the way of progress on this vital issue," said Ms. DesBrisay. "The ALL survey shows us that national attention and action on our literacy challenges is critical to the well-being of our country."

Here are some of the survey's key findings:

- Too many Canadian adults (4 out of 10) score below the skill level necessary to meet the everyday demands of our information society.
- Low literacy limits individuals' chances of success in a knowledge economy.
- Advancing literacy would address many of our most pressing social challenges, including unemployment, poverty, immigrant settlement and health.

"Front-line literacy workers are struggling to meet the needs with too few resources," said Ms. DesBrisay. "The ALL survey is a wake-up call to politicians - meaningful action and investments for literacy are in everybody's best interest."

[Click here](#) to view backgrounder on the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) prepared by the Movement for Canadian Literacy'

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MCL is a national organization representing provincial and territorial literacy coalitions. Regional literacy coalitions are listed at www.literacy.ca.