



Starting a Family Literacy Program

How to Start a Family Literacy Program

The following topics and questions can be used as a guide to help get you started.

Community Needs

- What are the educational and non-educational needs of families in your community?
- Have you completed a community or neighborhood assessment?
- What programs are currently addressing these needs?
- Are there gaps in service delivery or any duplication of services to families?
- How would a family literacy program fit into your community network of family services?
- What family literacy model best suits the needs of the community based on the assessment?
- What resources will be necessary to support this program?

Collaboration/Advisory Committee

- Have you established an advisory committee to help guide and support your program?
- Who are the key organizations (adult literacy/ABE programs, schools, libraries, social service agencies, businesses, funding agencies, government, etc.) that can support the program to ensure its success? Are they represented on your advisory committee?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure that your collaboration/advisory committee is an active partnership?
- What agencies will assist in the delivery of services for your program?
- How will you increase awareness of family literacy issues and your program's goals and needs among your partners and the community?
- What can be done to lay the groundwork for continued funding and expansion?



Program Outcomes/Evaluation

- What are the specific outcomes you expect for the family members who enroll in your program?
- How will you measure each outcome?
- Who will be responsible for data collection and reporting to funders?
- How will results be used with program participants, collaborators, others?

Program Planning

- How will team planning be encouraged? Does the budget allow time for weekly team planning for staff and home visits to families?
- How will you accommodate the interaction among all family literacy sites in your city, town and region?
- How will you determine the daily and weekly schedule of participants and staff?

Recruitment and Retention

- What are the recruitment strategies you plan to employ? What will be the ongoing plan for recruitment?
- How will practitioners be involved in recruitment?

Management and Staff Selection

- Has the program coordinator been determined or will that position be a newly created one? (This needs to be determined as soon as possible.)
- What are the steps necessary in hiring staff for this program?
- How will you determine whether potential staff members are team players?
- How will the project coordinator be involved in hiring staff?

Site Selection

- What criteria will you use for selecting sites for the program?
- What needs to be accomplished to prepare the physical environment for the program?
- As you think of the basic components of family literacy (adult education, early childhood education, parent support, parent-child interaction), what are the specific needs for preparing the site?
- What needs to be accomplished to assure the acceptance and support of other staff members at the facility?

Staff Development

- How will you prepare your staff for their roles in the program?
- How will you respond to ongoing staff development needs?

Transportation/Day Care/Meals

- What will be your participants' needs in areas of transportation, day care and meals? How will the program respond to these needs? Funding?
- Which partners can work with the sponsoring agency in these areas?

Equipment and Materials

- What existing equipment and materials will be used?
- What needs to be ordered? What organization or agency can provide these?
- What time frame should be established that assures delivery of materials and equipment prior to program opening?

Budgets

When creating a budget, you will need to think about all of the components that support your program from administrative costs to program costs. As you build your partnerships with other organizations, add their in-kind contributions to your budget. The more in-kind contributions that you have for your program, the easier it is for a funder to support your program.



Funding

Though it takes a community to raise a child, it usually takes additional funding to develop and implement a family literacy program within your community. Various sources are available, but it will take time, energy and community collaboration. For more information, see the funding information document on the Saskatchewan Literacy Network's website (www.sk.literacy.ca).

Though each source will have their own funding criteria, it is best to create a standard format that you can work from and adapt accordingly. Your format should include:

- Support from community through in-kind contributions and/or support letters.
- Program rationale.
- Program goals and key objectives.
- Outcomes.
- Evaluation methods.
- Budget outline.
- Target Audience.

Program Format

Each family literacy program or initiative will be different as it is based on your community's needs. The following is a generalized format that you can adapt to meet your objectives.

- Opening/Welcome.
- Introductions.
- Housekeeping – exits, bathrooms, etc.
- Program outline.
- Guidelines for participants – to be decided by the participants.
- Ice breaker/Energizer.
- Topic Discussion.
- Book Discussion.
- Literacy Activity – craft, game, puzzle, etc.
- Clean-up.
- Closure.
- Quick review of the session.
- Ask for participant's thoughts on the session.
- Give quick outline of next session.
- Thank everyone for their participation.