



# Who Benefits from Family Literacy?

## Adult Learners Benefit

Increasing the opportunity to improve literacy levels, parents skills and motivation for learning. A study in Nova Scotia showed that adults stay enrolled in family literacy programs longer than in most adult-only programs. Their attendance rate is also higher. Family Literacy programs help adult learners gain the skills they need to become their children's teachers. Adults' attitudes about education improve and the value they perceive in education increases. Family Literacy programs also broaden adults' knowledge about parenting options. Adults' social awareness and self-advocacy also increases.

## Children Benefit

Children have opportunity to interact with adults in a fun, safe and creative place. The setting just doesn't focus on their education, but also includes emotional, social, and spiritual skills. Children's reading, vocabulary and comprehension skills improve, as well as their self-esteem and attitudes towards learning. Family Literacy programs also motivate children to read.

## Families Benefit

Family literacy programs recognize and support the influence of the family on the literacy development of all its members. Every dollar spent on family and intergenerational literacy programs does "double duty" supporting early childhood development as well as adult basic education. Furthermore, research conducted with 2000 American families that attended family literacy programs showed that literacy intervention reduced participants' full dependence on public assistance from 67% to 11% (National Center for Family Literacy).



**Saskatchewan  
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## The Literacy Cycle

Early literacy skills are the foundation for future learning. Current research shows that early experiences help to determine brain development which in turn shapes the way we learn, think, behave and respond to challenges for the rest of our lives. The skills and capacity to learn that we develop before the age of 6 stay with us for a lifetime.

Employees with higher literacy skills earn more income, are less likely to be unemployed, have greater opportunities for job mobility, are more likely to find full-time work, and are more likely to receive further training. They also report higher self-esteem and fewer occupational injuries. The labour market demands higher levels of skills than in the past. There is increasing demand for higher literacy skills in the workplace, even for entry into positions where the skills are underused. Jobs that do not require much reading and writing are disappearing (e.g., in resource-based industries such as fishing, mining, forestry). Well-paying, secure jobs require higher levels of skills and credentials.

Family poverty and low literacy have a negative impact on a child's readiness to learn at school. The children of more highly educated parents are better prepared with knowledge, oral language and literacy skills when they enter formal schooling. Children of less literate parents are more likely to have developmental delays and behavioural issues that negatively affect school readiness. They also have drop out rates twice as high as for other children. Less literate parents may also not have the information, confidence, or skills to confront the school system to help their children.



Parents with higher literacy skills have greater economic security which contributes to healthy child development. Adults with low literacy are more likely to be unemployed, work in lower paying jobs and live in low-income households. Children of parents who have not graduated from high school are twice as likely to live in poverty as those whose parents graduated (source: National Centre for Children in Poverty, 1992.) In this environment children have many barriers and disadvantages. Parents with more education are better prepared to stay healthy, get and keep a job, to become economically self-sufficient and adapt to life's changes. These capabilities benefit their children as well.