

Appendix - Anecdotal Evidence of Benefits of Library Literacy Programs

Brantford Public Library

Read on Program

For the past twenty-one years, the Brantford Public Library has offered the Read-On Program during July and August. Read On is an intensive tutoring program for struggling readers in grades 2-6. The program is free and has helped many young readers avoid summer literacy loss and maintain or enhance their reading skills over the summer break.

The program is coordinated by the Brantford Public Library and *Read-On* tutors are hired to work one-on-one with the participants. The tutors are post-secondary students who are currently enrolled in or plan to enroll in Bachelor of Education program and who have a special interest in literacy. The goal of the *Read-On* program is to motivate and encourage struggling readers, and foster a love of reading.

This past summer, 143 children participated in the program over the course of the summer.

Read On 2009 Parent Feedback

- “The program is wonderful and so is her tutor, my daughter is already becoming more confident due to the positive attitude and the well thought out help/lessons that were planned. “
- “The difference it makes is undeniable.”
- “Hazen enjoys reading more now since his confidence has improved.”
- “Very much satisfied, not once did my son try to stay home. It also has him reading more at home.”
- “Yes, I satisfied with the program. Because my daughter improve her English level in reading and writing.”
- “It has given him a different look at learning to read. Having the students help works well because he did not think of them as teachers but helpers and friends.”

- “I would like to say what a fantastic program this is to help the kids have more fun with reading and it helps them feel more confident with their abilities because they work at their own pace.”
- “I think it’s great and it helps keep their minds sharp on summer holidays.”
- “I think one on one is great! My son has A.D.H.D. so 1 on 1 seems to work very well with him.”

Georgina Public Libraries

The library has been offering a One-On-One Program for a number of years in which we help a struggling/reluctant reader 7-12 years of age. Recently, while working with a 10 year old boy he happened to mention that his teacher commented on his improved reading skills. When asked why he thought he had improved so much he said “my mom said it is because I come to the library”. As an added bonus, he said he even thinks reading is fun.

For the last couple of years the library has been running a Reading Circle for school age children and 2 Family Circles for families with children under the age of 7. As testament to the benefit of these programs a number of teachers bring their children. There have been numerous accounts of parents (including teachers) taking the time to tell us how wonderful the programs are and the increased enjoyment their children take in reading. These Reading Circles are supported by Frontier College with generous donations of books for prizes and support programs for facilitators. Frontier is a wonderful place.

Our Reading/Family Circles serve dozens of families and children as well as providing an opportunity for local teens to volunteer. Our volunteers have been loyal and the children love teens. This past year alone we have had the privilege to welcome well over 1,000 children with their caregivers into our Family Circles and as many again in our Reading Circles.

Bev Walsh, Coordinator of Children’s Services

Brampton Public Library

Partnership with School Board

Brampton Library and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board developed a Brampton literacy initiative in 2009. A report was prepared which relates specific information on the impacts of a literacy initiative for Grades 1-3 called “Ready, Set, Read” that was done in partnership with the school board over the summer. It speaks specifically to the issue of the role of the program in retaining learning over the summer months in the area of literacy. The report clearly documents the baseline reading and the impact of the program in retention of learning.

Adele Kostiak, CEO Brampton Public Library

King Township Public Library

As Manager of Children and Young Adult Services at the King Township Public Library, for the past three years, I can honestly say that the literacy based programmes offered have always been in response to the needs of the community. In speaking and listening to parents and caregivers we have been able to increase our roster of events and programming for children and youth of all ages.

Caregivers have approached me and my programming staff on both a personal and a survey approach. The survey is for programme specific feedback where the participant is asked to rate and comment upon library programmes that their children attend. I have included some of these terrific testimonials.

Personal

1. Concerning our **Born to Read** programme, a grandmother wrote our CEO a letter (encl), it states;

“I have attended the last two sessions of “Born to Read”...., with my granddaughter. I am writing to say that we have found this so enjoyable as well as a wonderful learning experience. “(the leader)” of the group is always enthusiastic and has wonderful ideas, music, songs and stories for us all. It has been such a worthwhile activity and I think all parents and caregivers are looking forward to the next session.”

2. In a **Father/Son bookclub**, a father approached me and mentioned that as a result of the programme, his son has increased his reading level at school and never has a problem having his son read the book assigned at the Father/Son bookclub. This is an example of a programme asked for by the community. A parent discussed with me the need for this type of programme for young boys and their fathers. It continues to be a huge success.

3. For one of our Support Summer Programmes, a parent states;

“Our two children aged 7 and 9 LOVED this programme! I’m sorry we haven’t done more of them in the past.”

Survey

1. In response to our Computer Camp programme a parent writes (encl);

“The children had a lot of fun and were excited to go. They continued what they learned at home. I think it is very useful to learn these types of skills for later use in presentations, etc.”

In addition, I have included some reviews made to a portion of our website that the children visited during one of the Computer Camp sessions. The site is dedicated Walter Rolling, a local teacher that taught in our township in 1845, with his career spanning over 40 years.

2. A parent comments on a summer support programme (encl);

“This was a wonderful programme, it helped keep the kids interested in reading over the summer, and it gave them the opportunity to learn new things.”

We have been very fortunate to receive grants each summer through the federal government’s Canada Summer Jobs initiative. This allows us as a library to offer more children and youth programming throughout the summer months. These programmes run in addition to our core literacy programming throughout the year and the summer months.

Kelley England
Manager of Children and Young Adult Services
King Township Public Library

Windsor Public Library

Success Story - Adult Literacy Program

Rickey has been in and out of our program for four years. He had a history of absenteeism, and frequently left the program once he had obtained employment. When he realized his skills did not match the job requirements, he would return to the program, only to exit again for employment.

He returned to the program in October 2006 and was paired with a tutor approximately his own age. This seemed to be the perfect match, since he has been committed to learning, showing up for all sessions, and taking initiative. His goal, in addition to obtaining employment, is to get his GED, and he and his tutor are working towards getting him ready for a GED prep / school board program. He has created a resume which he is sending out. He has also written a 30-page story about the adventures of a team of documentary film-makers

in Africa - he even “typed” out a few pages of hand-written text using a video-game controller!

At his initial assessment, Ricky’s reading and writing skills were at a level 1 - he has now reached a high level 2. His oral communication skills have improved, and - whereas in the past he was a “one-word answer” learner - he will often come into the office and chat. His success, he says, is due to a realization of the importance of literacy upgrading, and to the measure of confidence he has gained in this program. He loves the Library!

Toronto Public Library

Adult Literacy Program: Success Stories

Jason

Jason participated in the adult literacy program for two years. During that time, he learned how to read signs, symbols, instructions, short stories and newspapers. He learned how to fill in forms and how to write greetings and short messages. Jason was proud of all of the things he could do; however, he was most proud of two things he had learned. Jason learned to read to his baby daughter and he learned to read and to write his work-related vocabulary. Now that he could write the words associated with his job, he could do what he had always dreamed of --he could open up his own business.

Jason did just that a few months ago. He opened up his own small house painting business and he even hired painters to work for him. He can read the brand names on paint cans and he can read and write the colours. He can fill out receipts for his clients. Jason always had very encouraging tutors and they are all proud of his accomplishments!

Sarah

Sarah has been in the adult literacy program for about 5 years. As she progressed through the program, writing was her least favourite activity. However, with ongoing encouragement and support, Sarah practised and persevered to the point where she now loves writing. She has written a book about a dog and is currently sending it out to children's book publishers.

Sarah has also become involved in community groups and learned to email so she can correspond with the other community group members. Sarah recently got a job working at a grocery store. When she joined the program she didn't think he could get and keep a job but now she feels able to do that. She recently met with his MP to discuss issues facing learners in literacy.

Paul

Paul is a learner in the literacy program who went from writing single words to complete sentences to descriptive paragraphs. Paul learned to love writing and the power of the written word. Tragically, when one of Paul's sons was murdered a few years ago he didn't want to miss the opportunity to express himself through the written word. When the murderer was found guilty, the judge asked all of the family members to write victim impact statements. Paul decided he wanted to write one. He wrote the victim impact statement and read it in court. When the judge sentenced the murderer, he said he was affected by the statements the family members had read to him. Paul was very pleased that someone had listened to his words and understood how he felt.

Peterborough Public Library

We have a great story to tell with our ESL Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. This program has recently been short-listed for the Ministry of Culture Angus Mowat Award and we love to tell about it! It has been a success on several levels, some of which are:

1. It is a successful partnership with the Peterborough New Canadians Centre, the Peterborough Parent-Child Mother Goose organization and the Peterborough Public Library. The program is to help New Canadians integrated into the community. Half of the attendees are recruited from the New Canadians Centre clientele and half are from more established Peterborough families. It has been funded by the Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation and the New Canadians Centre.
2. It helps to build English language skills for babies and toddlers which will lead to stronger literacy skills in the future.
3. It helps build English language skills for adults whose first language is not English. It is primarily stay at home mothers who attend. It is often more difficult for the stay at home parent to take advantage of opportunities to learn English.
4. It helps newcomers to build a social network and to integrate into the community.

I'll just include this quote from our Ministry of Culture submission:

It's Thursday morning at the Peterborough Public Library and parents and children are gathering in the auditorium. There are friendly greetings, laughter, rhymes, stories and singing. On the surface this sounds like a typical Library program. But it is not. It soon becomes apparent that what is happening here is a unique sharing of culture and language in a warm and relaxed environment. This is the English as a Second Language Parent-Child Mother Goose Program at the Peterborough Public Library. It is the result of a partnership of the Library, Peterborough

Parent-Child Mother Goose and the Peterborough New Canadians Centre. By the end of the ten-week program the participants have opened up and are eager to chat with each other and share their joys and concerns. This feeling of acceptance and belonging is critical in helping a new Canadian feel “at home.” Because we are impressed by the difference this program has made in people’s lives and we are both humbled by the participants and proud to be part of the program, we feel it deserves an award.

We feel that this program is literacy programming at its best!

Betty-Kay Murray, Head Librarian, Peterborough Public Library

Greater Sudbury Public Library

Learning Disabilities Section

“The Learning Disabilities Section” at the Greater Sudbury Public Library is the first of its kind in Ontario thanks to a powerful community partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Sudbury (LDAS). Unlike the other chapters of the association which maintain “resource libraries” at their offices, LDAS decided to establish its “resource library” within the public library beside the Children’s Section. Individuals with learning disabilities from across the city have access to one of the most current, up-to-date and complete “LD resource libraries” in the province. The success of this partnership is obvious after its first year of operation. Many of the items were checked out more than 15 times during the year. Numerous books and videos were out continuously with “reserves” for many of the newer acquisitions. The “Learning Disabilities Section” materials are more accessible through the network of 13 library branches, many of which offer weekend and evening service.

Reading Tails

This program is provided by Saint John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program in partnership with the Greater Sudbury Public Library. Reading Tails pairs dogs with young readers (ages 6 through 12) to change a child’s reading experience from intimidating to fun and rewarding. Reading Tails is designed to improve children’s literacy skills by having them read one-on-one to trained therapy dogs. With the dog, a child gets a non-judgmental, safe audience who won’t laugh at them, correct them, make fun of them or constantly jump in. Children involved in this program have shown:

- Improved READING skills
- A sense of PRIDE in their accomplishment
- Willingness to become INVOLVED in other positive activities
- More RESPECT and KINDNESS in their interactions with animals
- Found READING more enjoyable
- Check out more books from the LIBRARY

School Transit Pass Program

The School Transit Pass Program is a partnership between the Library and Greater Sudbury Transit Service. The premise of the program is to make it easier for elementary school teachers and their students to visit one of the 13 branches of the Greater Sudbury Public Library by riding regularly scheduled transit buses for FREE. Through this program, over 1400 students visited the libraries with their teachers in 2009. “Since we are not located within walking distance to the library, we would ordinarily have to charter a bus for the trip. This was not always feasible since a round-trip charter often costs in excess of \$150. It is certainly an encouragement to visit the library when we can simply hop on the transit,” said Lesley Fisher, Principal, Jessie Hamilton Public School, Lively.

Sault Ste. Marie Public Library

Babytime

Babytime is a delightful six-week program for parents and their children, from newborn to 17 months, which is designed to give babies the best possible start in life. Each session features rhymes, bounces, stories, and songs to help provide the building blocks for language and literacy. In 2009 the Babytime program, offered in the winter, spring and fall, educated 153 adults and entertained 147 babies. In addition to offering the Babytime program at the library, one staff member also travels to the Garden River Resource Centre to offer the 6 week Babytime Program to the Garden River First Nation community.

Toddler Time

Toddler Time is a six-week ‘Lap-Sit’ program which is designed to introduce parents and their children, ages 18 to 35 months, to the wide variety of simple stories and other literacy-rich materials that they can enjoy together at home. Toddler Time is offered in the winter, spring, and fall and in 2009, 232 children and 231 adults were entertained at 30 different sessions. When asked what the parents and their children enjoyed most about the program one parent stated that it was “the time we got to spend together and the variation in the program (reading, art gym, music).” Another parent said that Toddler Time provides a “good exposure to books and promotes reading, music and play.”

Pre-school Storytime

Preschool Storytime for pre-schoolers, ages 3-5 years, provides imaginative sessions of stories, games, and simple arts and crafts while helping children build the skills that are necessary once they start school. The library provided free coffee and tea for the parents who were delighted with the opportunity to chat and relax. In 2009, 211 children enjoyed over 20 sessions of music, stories, games and crafts. Many parents had much praise for the program:

“We really enjoyed our time. It was a great intro to jk/sk activities & setting.”

“Every week was a surprise and he enjoyed every part.”

“Twenty + years ago, I brought my daughters to the library programs. Now I am bringing my grandson! Let the tradition continue!”

“My son really enjoys every week, he gets really excited to see what songs and stories he gets to learn. Pre-school Storytime is a great program with great teachers!”

“The teachers were so creative and the crafts made were amazing. Better than the preschool he attends on a regular basis.”

Dryden Public Library

Dryden Public Library has offered Sunday Story Time for 4-6 year olds for several years. The program is a “drop-in” program, no registration required, no fee charged. The program has turned into an event that families make a priority on Sunday afternoons. Many of the participating children come from single parent, First Nations and disadvantaged families. Many first timers to the program do not have a library card and the parent or caregiver is unsure of how to get one. But over the course of one or two “story-times”, newcomers become “regulars” and not only do they obtain library cards for everyone in their family, they begin to take home everything from books to DVDs and magazines.

Dryden Public Library offers several other programs as well, geared towards drawing in children of all ages and their families or caregivers, and making them feel “at home” and welcome to their library. Many parents have remarked that the programs have gotten their children to associate fun, laughter, and a sense of belonging, with their library and with books, and has resulted a lifelong love of learning and reading.

Kingston Frontenac Public Library

The Library offers a 14 week summer session called Literacy Tutors. The tutors are students hired through one of the summer job programs and the program is designed to help children who have been identified as having low literacy skills to keep up with their reading over the summer while school is recessed. Approximately 35 children participate each year. Here are some comments from parents:

“This program helped to improve my child’s confidence and academics...I wish all libraries in the near future would have this program”.

“I’m confident [my son] came from this study group with better reading skills to prepare him for Grade 4”.

“This was the best program for building [my daughter’s] confidence with reading in English....I liked that it was held in a place that [she] was very familiar with - the library - so it was less stress for her to cope with.”

Thunder Bay Public Library

Readers are Leaders

The Library has offered this free program designed for children in grades one, two and three who need extra reading support for over 25 years. It initially ran during the summer only to help weaker readers keep up their skills during July and August. Due to popular demand and with the help of a partnership with the local Frontier College, the program was extended to also run during the school year. Children are matched with volunteer tutors from Frontier College and the community who provide one-on-one attention and personalized assistance with their reading. The Library has seen countless children improve in their confidence, skill and reading fluency, including newcomers to Canada who have appreciated the support for their efforts to learn English. One parent who had just moved to this city had this to say: *“It was a fantastic experience! It was so positive and the Library had a nice relaxed atmosphere. My child and I felt safe and welcomed. Chelsea did a great job explaining the program to us and orienting us to the location. My boy is excited to return and I just wanted to say how much I appreciated the good work you are doing. I would be the first to complain if there were problems, but I also believe in giving praise when it’s due. Thank you.”*

Summer Reading Game

Thunder Bay Public Library takes part in the Canada-wide program designed to encourage children (and their parents) to continue to read over the summer. Literacy studies show that children who continue to read over the summer maintain or improve their skills for when they return to school in the fall. Each summer, hundreds of children from preschool to approximately 13 years old get excited about reaching their reading goals and getting rewards and personalized attention from the children’s staff when they report in on their progress. Instead of back-sliding on their reading progress, they maintain or improve their reading skills while enjoying the challenge of the game, and also, the related-theme programs we plan each summer to expand upon the central theme.