

## **Agenda Document Number 9d**

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**Subject: Early Literacy Outcomes Study Steering Committee**

**Prepared by: Edith Hopkins, Chair of Steering Committee**

**Prepared for: FOPL AGM**

**Meeting of: January 30, 2012**

**Date of Preparation: Dec 12, 2012**

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### **Final Report on the Early Literacy Study**

In the Fall of 2010, a committee was formed to oversee the development of a research study to examine the benefits of preschool literacy programs in Ontario public libraries. It was expected that there would be a correlation between the delivery of these preschool programs and positive literacy outcomes. The consultants expected to be able to identify multiple sources that contribute to the increase in pre-literacy skills. They also expected that the study might help to direct further research into guiding criteria for the delivery of successful early literacy programs in public libraries. These findings would be used with government funders to encourage them to work more closely with public libraries as program partners in their early literacy and healthy community initiatives.

The Federation was successful in its application for a Cultural Strategic Investment Fund (CSIF) grant to assist with the cost of this study. It was awarded a grant of \$24,967.

Members of FOPL's Early Literacy Steering Committee included:

1. Deborah Attack, Senior Department Head, Children and Youth Advocates' Office, Toronto Public Library
2. Jim Bennett, Trustee, Ottawa Public Library
3. Julie Brandl, Coordinator of Children & Youth Services, London Public Library
4. Patricia Enright, CEO, Kingston-Frontenac Public Library
5. Lisa Heggum, Children and Youth Advocate, Toronto Public Library
6. Edith Hopkins, CEO, Clarington Public Library and CHAIR of Committee
7. Helen Kelly, Coordinator of Children's Services, Cambridge Public Library
8. Inge Saczkowski, Manager of Children's Services, Niagara Falls Public Library
9. David Allen, CEO, FOPL
10. Erin Menzies, FOPL Librarian

The study was conducted by a research team, comprised of two assistant professors, Dr. Shelley Stagg Petersen and Dr. Eunice Jang, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/University of Toronto and five research assistants: Carol Jupiter, Kerrie Kennedy, Maggie Dunlop, Brittney McCarter, and Jennifer Shade Wilson.

Ten (10) libraries participated in the Sept 2011-March 2012 study. They included the following:

Ajax Public Library	Chatham-Kent Public Library	Clarington Public Library
Markham Public Library	Niagara Falls Public Library	Ottawa Public Library
Thunder Bay Public Library	Toronto Public Library	Whitby Public Library
Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library		

The final OISE report, “Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries, submitted May 29, 2012” highlighted the research purpose and methods, research results including stated program goals, principles and practices for achieving library program goals, program outcomes from the parents’/caregivers’/staff members’ perspectives, and program outcomes related to literacy and school readiness skills.

The Executive Summary of the report provided the following strengths of the Early Literacy Programs of Public Libraries:

1. Fostering of children’s readiness to participate in school activities and their motivation to read
2. Contribution to children’s enthusiasm for literature
3. Participating children learned new vocabulary, demonstrated an awareness of rhymes and sounds of language, and showed an understanding of books that were read by library staff
4. Provision to parents/caregivers of new ways to interact with children to engage them with books and with print at home.

The report concluded as follows:

***“We [OISE] believe that the present study offers positive evidence of the effects of the early literacy programs offered by Ontario public libraries”***

The final report was posted on the FOPL website:

<http://fopl.ca/news/preschool-early-literacy-programs-in-ontario-public-libraries-final-report>

along with a news release:

<http://fopl.ca/news/preschool-early-literacy-programs-in-ontario-public-libraries-final-report/>

The final report was distributed to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Children and Youth.

OISE will publish the article: “Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries” in the bi-annual journal: “Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research” in 2013.

A joint presentation of FOPL/OISE is scheduled for the 2013 OLA Super Conference.

***As part of the FOPL advocacy strategies, there are plans to reach additional provincial, federal educator, research and local community audiences with key libraries and literacy messages. As well there are plans to investigate new literacy program funding proposals.***

### **Thank Yous**

Huge thank-yous go to the OISE research team of Drs. Shelley Stagg Petersen and Eunice Jang, to the committee members working together with OISE on this study, and to the ten (10) Libraries who participated in the study.

And as always, the capable and wise support of the FOPL Board and FOPL’s Chief Executive Office, David Allen - the foundation on which this study and all of FOPL builds its successes.