

# ***Celebrate Family Literacy***

Winter 2010

Special Publication of the PEI Literacy Alliance

**Family Literacy Day**  
is January 27

Read • Write • Surf • Sing

**W**  
FAMILY LITERACY DAY

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# ***Live and Learn***

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

Published by the PEI Literacy Alliance.

Edited, written and designed by Catherine O'Bryan, Norman Finlayson and Jinny Greaves.

We would like to hear from you if you have:

- learners' stories
- creative writing by learners
- articles or news about teaching adults
- upcoming events
- new resources for adult education

Please send your material to:

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Welcome to a special family literacy edition of our newsletter.

Early literacy is the foundation for all future learning. Parents and family members are the child's first teachers, they help develop positive attitudes toward learning.

To help encourage children's learning we have included some family activities that the whole family can enjoy.

You can also check out free programs at the provincial libraries for children and families of all ages.

*Catherine O'Bryan*



**Word Monster recommends  
"Read 15 minutes a day!"**

## What is Family Literacy?

Family literacy is a community-based effort to promote and support the literacy of children. It also promotes life-long learning within the family and the community. Family literacy builds stronger families and healthier communities.

The family is the child's first teacher and continues to educate the child throughout life. Family literacy includes the many ways that adults use literacy and language in everyday situations.

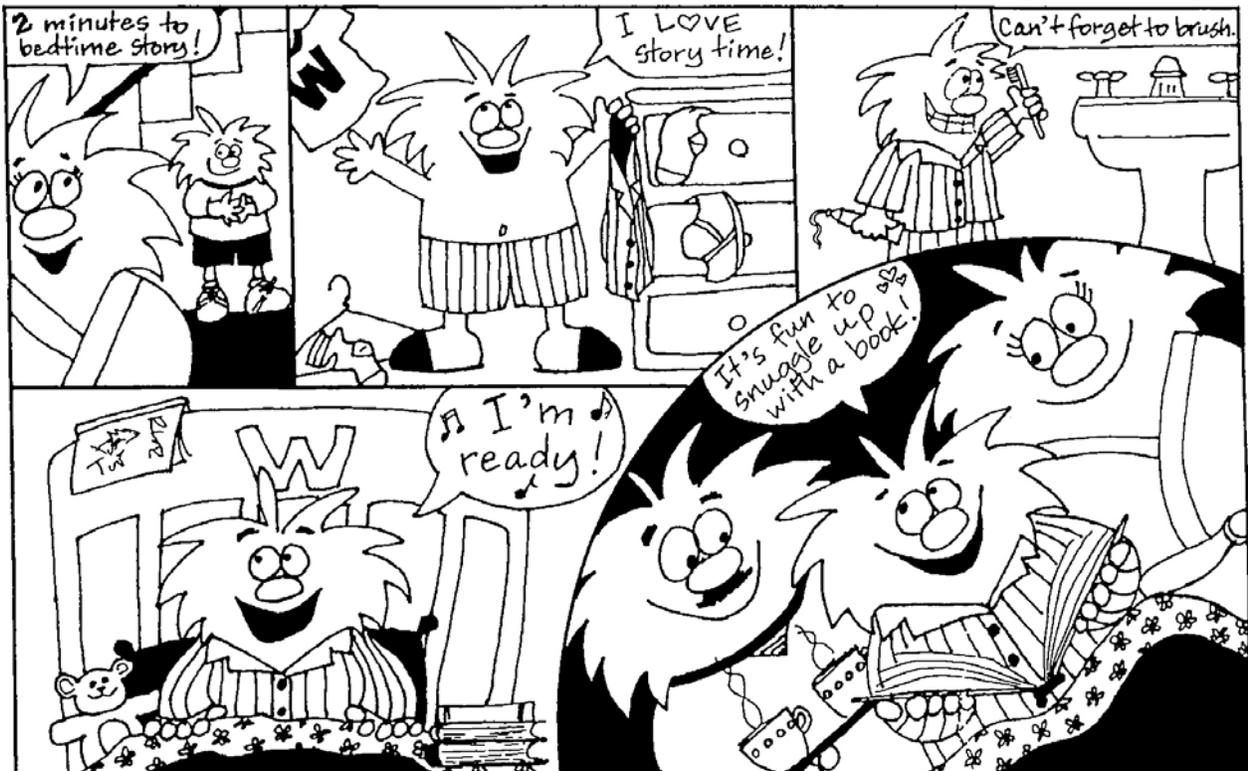
Family literacy is not only about reading and writing. Every family has literacy practices like:

- walking up stairs and counting as you go
- telling stories
- pointing out billboards and street signs
- singing
- teaching a child to use a recipe book
- reading aloud from the newspaper

These family activities improve reading, writing, math, language, and social skills.

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## How does Family Literacy Benefit Family Health?

Attitudes about health care, healthy lifestyles and disease prevention tend to be passed on from generation to generation. Evidence links literacy levels to a wide range of lifestyle practices. These practices include:

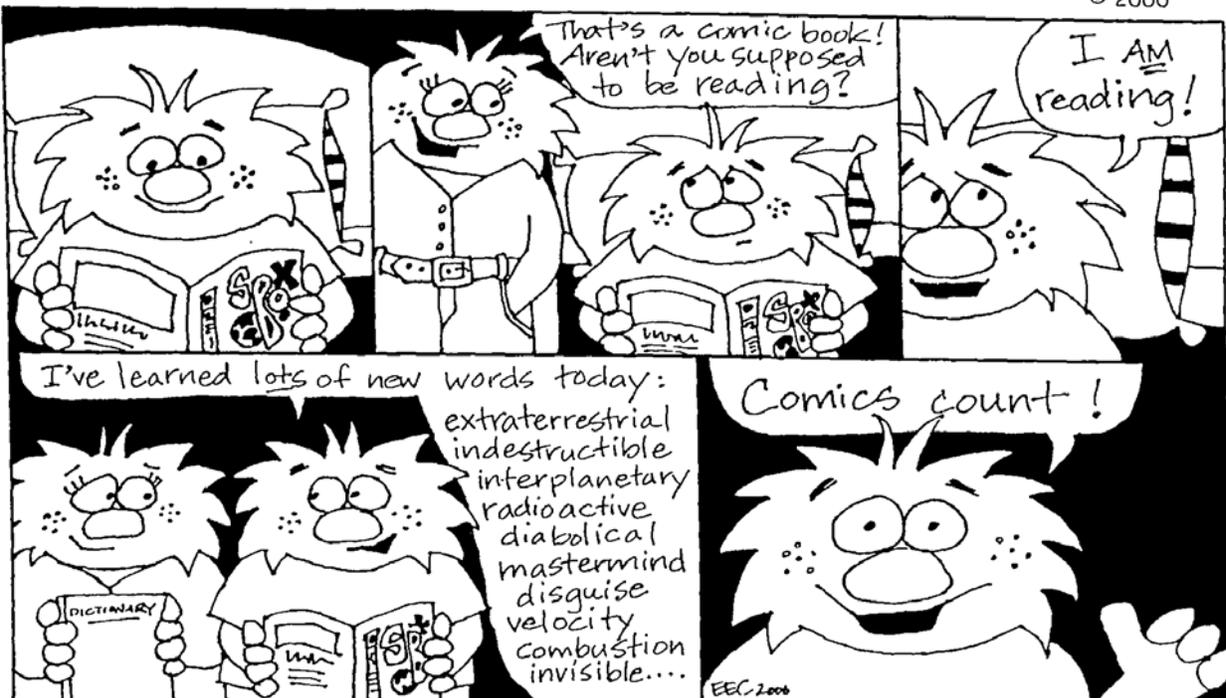
- nutrition choices
- the decision to smoke or not
- physical activity
- alcohol and drug use
- the decision to breastfeed or not
- frequency of visits to medical professionals

Your literacy level affects your education and employment opportunities. Having low literacy skills affects your ability to get information and resources. This means you have less control over your life. Low levels of literacy may lead to poverty, low self-esteem, uninformed lifestyle choices, and increased stress. All these all can be bad for your family's health.

Research shows that the most reliable gauge of family health is the education level of parents, especially that of the mother.

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## How does Family Literacy Benefit the Justice System?

There is a link between literacy levels and crime rates. We also know that very early experience has a strong effect on learning, attitude and social skills. When learning problems are identified early, children can be helped more effectively. High-risk behaviours can be reduced through positive activities.

Some positive activities are: parents frequently talking, sharing stories, playing, praising, laughing, and doing special things with their children. These are the same things that support literacy development.

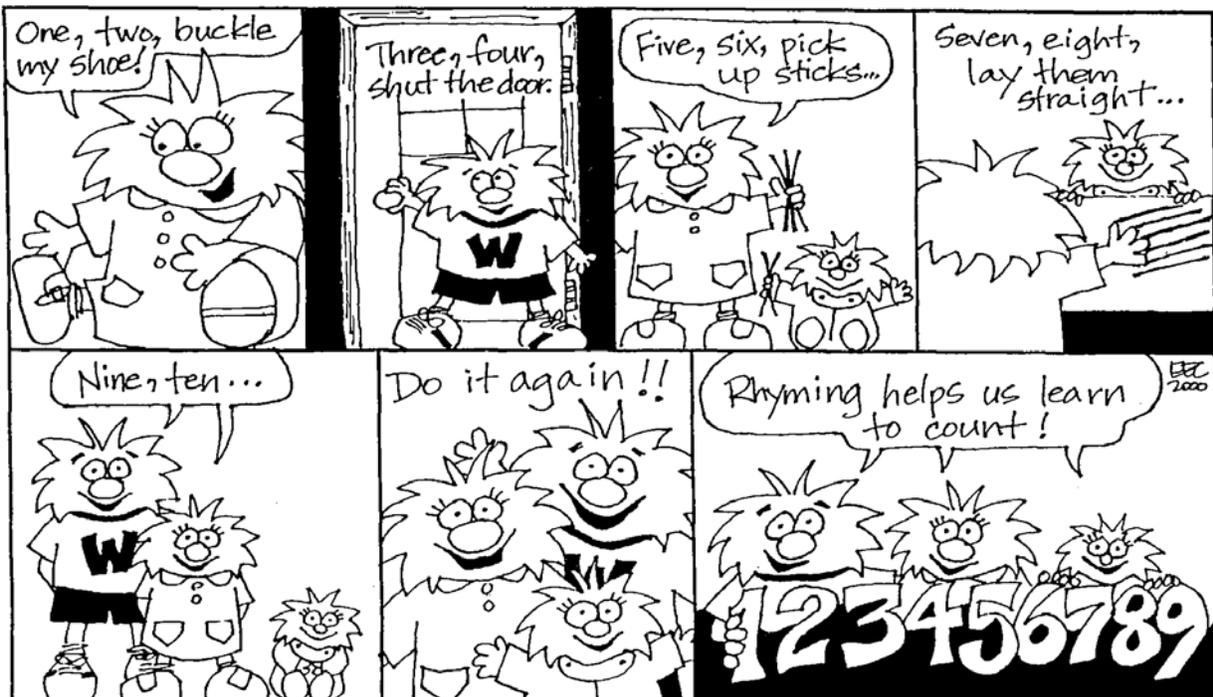
## How does Family Literacy Benefit the Community?

Good literacy skills helps can help people maintain their independence and quality of life, and be active participants in society. These people build strong families, and strong families build strong communities. Children live in and are dependent on families. If a family is poor, so are the children. Families at-risk have children at-risk.

Family success contributes to children's success and to the success of communities.

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## Family Literacy Activities from ABC Canada Literacy Foundation

**Surfing Safari:** Use an atlas to find a country you would like to visit, then surf the Internet to find some interesting things about that place -- customs, food, weather, anything at all. Write a story and draw pictures based on what you have learned. You could even post a map of the world on a wall and use push pins to identify the places you have been.

**Daffy Dictionary:** Choose a word from the dictionary and write it on a piece of paper with one correct definition, then make up two more definitions that are incorrect but 'sound' like they might be accurate. See who can guess the correct definition. Teams can play this game, with members coming up with the daffy definitions together and also guessing the other team's correct definition.

**Community book club:** Challenge your neighbours to read the same book during the holiday season and through January and then meet at a convenient location (at someone's house for a pot-luck supper, for example) on Family Literacy Day, January 27, to discuss the book. It may be so much fun you'll want to hold two or three throughout the year.

**Have a Book-nic:** Organize an indoor picnic featuring books and delicious treats. Choose a theme around family food and reading preferences; for example, enjoy honey-flavoured cereal while reading *Winnie the Pooh* stories.

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## Baby Sign Language



These children are learning the sign word for “more.”

Wee Wonderz Learning Centre in Summerside recently received a literacy grant of \$3000 from the Department of Early Education and Child Development.

Wee Wonderz owners Peggy Dunville and her brother Kent are teaching parents how to use baby sign language to better communicate with their babies.

Peggy said since they opened a year ago they have been using baby sign language in the daycare. She and her staff use it to help communicate with children 6 to 24 months old.

Very young children can get frustrated, cry and sometimes throw a tantrum when you don't understand what their thoughts, wants or needs are. Using baby sign language helps babies and small children express themselves.

Rayona Arsenault works at Wee Wonderz and runs the baby sign classes. She wants to teach parents how to use baby sign language because there are so many benefits. It is a wonderful way to bond with your baby as it lowers frustration and creates a happier baby. Using sign language increases IQ levels and encourages babies to talk earlier. Sign language enhances brain development and increases a baby's self esteem and confidence.

Free classes for parents and babies began in October 2009 but there is room for more parents and their babies. Rayona will teach parents more than 30 words that babies can sign such as, milk, ball, more, hungry, and cracker.

Each week parents and babies will learn a new sign. Classes are on Friday mornings and run from October to the end of June. Space is limited and those who join earlier will learn more words.

Please call Rayona to register at 724-4002.

## Essential Skills for Family Learning

Essential Skill	Used to:
Reading Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read to your children</li> <li>• Read mail</li> <li>• Enjoy books for personal pleasure</li> </ul>
Document Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read recipes</li> <li>• Read instructions to assemble new furniture</li> <li>• Interpret warning signs on cleaning products</li> <li>• Help children with homework</li> </ul>
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figure out how much to pay for something</li> <li>• Budget the family income</li> <li>• Help children with math homework</li> </ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record appointment times</li> <li>• Write cards to family and friends</li> <li>• Help children with homework</li> </ul>
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share ideas with family</li> <li>• Present concerns to doctors or teachers</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts with family members</li> <li>• Seek, obtain and share information for personal health</li> </ul>
Working with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop good relationships with parents, children and siblings</li> </ul>
Thinking Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find information</li> <li>• Plan family trips and parties</li> <li>• Manage time and money</li> <li>• Make decisions to benefit the family</li> <li>• Help children with learning</li> </ul>
Computer Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send email</li> <li>• Help children with homework</li> <li>• Find information online about health</li> </ul>
Continuous Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a mentor to other family members and continue to learn new things no matter what age you are</li> <li>• Learn a new skill with your kids or partner</li> </ul>