

Parent-Child Literacy Strategy

Progress Report

**Community Programs Branch
September 2006**



Parent-Child Literacy Strategy Progress Report

Introduction

The Parent-Child Literacy Strategy

The P-CLS focuses on intergenerational educational approaches that integrate adult literacy instruction and early oral language development for children from birth to age six for economically and socially disadvantaged families.

The objectives of the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy are:

1. To enhance the oral language, early literacy and social interaction skills of children from birth to age six so that they are better able to achieve success at home, school and the community.
2. To strengthen and build the basic literacy skills of parents.
3. To support and foster the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
4. To develop and enhance community-based partnerships that support the development of language and literacy skills of families.

The following principles guide the Strategy:

- **The sooner the better** – The more effective approaches are those that provide early supports for families and promote healthy, positive behaviours.
- **Supportive of parents** – Because the early years are critical for the healthy growth of a child, some of the most effective ways of helping children is assisting their parents in caring for their child's physical, emotional and intellectual needs.
- **Family focused** – Recognizes that the needs of children are in most cases best met within the context of the family, culture and community.
- **Culturally appropriate** – Recognizes and respects the culture, spirituality and traditions of children and families.
- **Comprehensive, integrated and sustained** – Responds to the needs of families and children requiring comprehensive, integrated and longer-term approaches.
- **Capacity building** – Recognizes and responds to the needs of children by building the capacity of families and communities to meet those needs.
- **Community-based partnerships** – Preventive approaches are most effective when they are comprehensive, community-based interventions that involve many community partners and are readily accessible to families at convenient community sites.
- **Builds on what already exists** – Recognizes and builds on the expertise, programs and community-based partnerships that already exist.
- **Best practice** – Initiatives for children and families will be based on sound early literacy and adult literacy principles and practice informed by empirically validated research and experience.
- **Accountable** – Effective initiatives will have an appropriate accountability structure and will account regularly for decisions, choices and outcomes.

The P-CLS is made up of a number of key components. These include provincial co-ordination and planning, and support for the delivery of family literacy programs through training, funding, information, needs

assessments and evaluation. Much of the support to local programs is offered by the Centre for Family Literacy. The Centre for Family Literacy is a key partner which is funded to provide consultative advice and assistance, training and other services to support family literacy in Alberta. In addition, the First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework also supports the development of a distinct Aboriginal family literacy component of the P-CLS.

Summary of Accomplishments

Funding for Family Literacy Programs

Through the Family Literacy Initiative Fund (FLIF) non-profit organizations can apply for up to three years of funding (to a maximum of \$40,000 per year) to provide family literacy programs in their community.

In 2004-05:

- 44 organizations were contracted to offer the following family literacy programs:

Family Literacy Model	Number of Programs Delivering Model	Family Literacy Model	Number of Programs Delivering Model
Books for Babies	12	Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS)	8
Rhymes that Bind/ Parent-Child Mother Goose	25	Story Sacks/ Pillowslips	4
Building Blocks	10	Magic Carpet Ride	1
Homespun/Books Offer Our Kids Success (B.O.O.K.S.)	12	Other	30

Appendix 1 provides a description of the common family literacy models. A list of contracted programs by location is provided in Appendix 2.

- 9,501 parents and 10,490 children aged birth to six years of age benefited directly from family literacy programming, for a total of 19,991 participants in 103 Alberta communities and 12,854 direct service delivery hours.
- the most highly attended programs were those offering Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose and Books for Babies. Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose promotes oral language development in babies and toddlers through positive, supportive group-based delivery with parents. Books for Babies encourage parents to read, sit down and discover the joy of reading with their babies everyday beginning at birth. The 25 programs offering Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose accounted for 3,427 parents (36%) and 4,539 children (43%). The 12 programs offering Books for Babies accounted for 1,624 parents (17%) and 1,507 children (14%).

Appendix 3 provides the number of participants by model and Appendix 4 provides information on service delivery hours by literacy model.

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- of the parents who participated in the programs, 741 (or 8%) were Aboriginal and 1,345 (or 14%) were from other language or cultural groups; and of the children, who participated, 972 (or 9%) were Aboriginal and 1,403 (or 13%) were from other language or cultural groups.

Appendix 5 provides information on the number and percentage of Aboriginal participants and other language/cultural group participants by family literacy model.

Of course, the benefits of participation are best captured through the stories of actual participants:

Story 1:

One older woman, a grandmother raising her grandchildren, came to the first few classes very shy, hesitant to speak or participate. She walked each week and never missed a class. Towards the middle of the cycle she began interacting some with one or two other women and gradually made a few friends. By the end of the cycle she was sharing her thoughts and feelings. A couple of months ago, the Family Literacy Coordinator saw her at the grocery store and she mentioned that she now worked part-time as an assistant librarian at ...College on the reserve. She said the course gave her the courage to apply for the job and that she is using books and ideas learned in the course to help her raise her grandchildren.

Story 2:

A mother commented, "I am not a good reader; I never read much. But this program showed me how important it is to read to my kids so I do and it's lots of fun now. I practice reading those kid's stories over and over after they have gone to bed so that I can do a good job of reading with them the next day. I'm getting to be a better reader – I've even started reading a novel on my own. I might be 90 before I finish it but I'll read it all the way through."

Story 3:

A mom whose three children had been apprehended by child welfare but had them back for weekends...They spent the whole Saturday morning curled up in bed together reading a pile of books she had brought home from a (family literacy) program. She told her group the next week that it was "magical" and that it was the first time in her life that she felt she had ever done anything positive for her children."

Provincial Co-ordination and Planning

A cross-ministry team led by Alberta Learning (now Alberta Advanced Education) with representatives from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Children's Services, Health and Wellness, Human Resources and Employment, Learning, Solicitor General and Health Canada continued to ensure that the Strategy is coordinated with other early childhood development and adult learning initiatives in Alberta. A subcommittee of the team reviewed proposals submitted to the Family Literacy Initiative Fund and recommended which programs should be funded. In addition, the development and implementation of the

Aboriginal family literacy component of the P-CLS was supported by an Aboriginal Family Literacy Steering, and then, Advisory Committee.

Training

The Centre for Family Literacy explored, developed and/or delivered a number of training opportunities:

- piloted On-Line Foundational Training in Family Literacy from February to August with 16 participants receiving their Foundational Training in Family Literacy certification.
- provided training in specific family literacy program models for 124 family literacy coordinators and facilitators in 13 program models at the annual Models Training Institute. Descriptions of the common family literacy models are included in Appendix 1.
- provided three sessions of the two-day basic family literacy training (Introduction to Family Literacy) for 88 family literacy practitioners.
- provided family literacy training for 61 home visitation workers in Wainwright, Calgary and Medicine Hat.
- delivered six regional training sessions in Rhymes that Bind and Books for Babies.
- provided a Books for Babies Train-the-Trainer facilitator workshop that resulted in four Books for Babies trainers able to deliver facilitator training in their home communities and other areas of the province.
- developed a Books for Babies video for training and informational/awareness purposes for funded family literacy programs.
- delivered family literacy awareness training sessions to 54 library personnel at three sites.
- delivered training in outcome-based planning and evaluation methods to 22 family literacy practitioners in Wetaskiwin, Athabasca, Edson and Edmonton.
- developed good practice criteria for Books for Babies, Rhymes that Bind, Books Offer Our Kids Success and Storysacks family literacy models.

Assisting Programs through Information, Needs Assessments and Evaluation

The Centre for Family Literacy responded to more than 490 requests for information and assistance about family literacy and visited nearly 90 communities across Alberta in the Alberta Prairie Classroom on Wheels (C.O.W.) Bus. This literacy classroom on wheels, a school bus painted to look like a Holstein cow, raises the awareness of family literacy and the role of family and community by modeling fun literacy-based activities, providing family literacy information and providing books to communities through the gift of a “legacy library”.

In partnership with Alberta Education, the P-CLS continued to respond to requests for information on census and demographic information to support FLIF applicants in demonstrating the need for funded family literacy programs in specific geographic areas. Additionally, specific evaluation tools have been developed for the Books for Babies and the Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose family literacy programs to ensure linkage with the goals and outcomes of the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy.

An orientation package of resource information was provided to all newly funded FLIF programs including the information package entitled “Family Literacy: Growing and Learning Together” (which included a video, information kit and PowerPoint presentation); the “Pathways Sourcebook: A guide for family literacy coordinators and facilitators to attract parents into community programs”; background information on the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy; and a listing of FLIF supported programs.

Information on “Starting Grade One” and “Tell a story, read a story” was developed in two separate *Family Literacy – Learning Together* inserts to complete the eight issue series on family literacy. More than 70,000 copies were distributed as special inserts in *English Express* and as individual publications. *English Express* is a newspaper that features English language articles at three reading levels for adults who are improving their English reading skills. The free newspapers are distributed to public libraries, English as a second language programs, adult literacy programs, day care centres, family day home agencies and providers, family literacy programs, home visitation programs and health units in Alberta.

Aboriginal Family Literacy

Implementation of the Aboriginal family literacy component of the P-CLS began with the establishment of four family literacy projects with Aboriginal organizations. The Aboriginal Family Literacy Steering Committee transitioned to an advisory committee to support the implementation of the component. A baseline for the number/percentage of Aboriginal participants in existing FLIF family literacy programs was also established (refer to Appendix 5).

Appendices

1. Description of Common Family Literacy Models
2. Family Literacy Initiative Fund (FLIF) Contracted Programs - By Location
3. Number of Contracted Programs Delivering Models
4. Direct Service Delivery Hours by Model
5. Number and Percentage of Participants - Aboriginal and Other Language/Cultural Groups

Appendix 1: Descriptions of Common Family Literacy Program Models

Books for Babies

- ◆ This program encourages parents to read, sit down and discover the joy of reading with their babies everyday beginning at birth.
- ◆ Families receive a book bag, a number of books suitable for babies, and often a teddy bear or other toy and easy-to-read information on other programs and services.
- ◆ Some programs include a series of workshops for parents where book sharing ideas are modeled and parents are given guidance on choosing appropriate books for their baby. Parents may also be introduced to their local library and other available resources as well as receive a library card.

Building Blocks

- ◆ In this type of home visitation program, trained literacy workers called “builders” work with families in their homes for at least 20 half-hour sessions.
- ◆ Builders work with parents and children, providing the parents with strategies, ideas and knowledge on how to tap into everyday activities to promote literacy development and create a literacy-rich environment in the home.
- ◆ Builders provide follow-up support by telephone.
- ◆ The target population is preschool children but programs have worked with families with children up to age twelve.
- ◆ This program was specifically designed to meet the needs of rural families, where travel can be an issue, where it is not feasible to bring parents together to meet as a group, and/or parents are simply not ready to be part of a group-based program.

Books Offer Our Kids Success (B.O.O.K.S.) / Homespun

- ◆ A facilitator works with a group of parents for eight weeks, modeling book-sharing and extension strategies. Children generally do not attend this program.
- ◆ Ideas and themes in children’s literature are discussed and extended by craft and drama activities. Parents borrow the books to share at home with their preschool children.
- ◆ Parents also engage in informal writing, often writing a story for their children during the program.

Literacy and Parenting Skills (L.A.P.S.)

- ◆ The program provides literacy and parenting skills workshops.
- ◆ Groups choose from 14 parenting topics (e.g., positive discipline, building self-esteem in our children, listening skills) presented through lower-literacy materials.
- ◆ Parents learn to model good literacy practices with their children.
- ◆ Four variations of the LAPS program have been developed to meet the needs of a variety of participants: mainstream, Aboriginal, English as Second Language, and Francophone (“Grandir avec mon enfant”).

Rhymes that Bind / Parent-Child Mother Goose

- ◆ The program promotes oral language development in babies and toddlers and provides a positive, supportive environment for parents through group-based delivery.
- ◆ Programs involve circle time with parents and infants/toddlers during which rhymes, stories and songs are shared.
- ◆ In most programs, two facilitators lead a program for 10 weeks, with one hour-long session per week.

Storysacks / Pillowslips

- ◆ Storysacks is a tool for supporting the development of literacy skills in a range of settings, including families, child care settings, libraries, prisons and other settings.
- ◆ A Storysack is a large cloth bag, made by parents or other volunteers in the community, and contains a children’s fiction picture or story book, soft toys of the main characters, props and scenery relating to the story, a non-fiction book linked to the fiction theme, an audio-tape and a language game based on the book to stimulate and extend reading activities.
- ◆ The francophone community’s adaptation is known as “Prêt-à-conter”.

Magic Carpet Ride

- ◆ Parents and preschool children engage together in activities that enhance development of oral language, early literacy and social interaction skills.
- ◆ Parents also participate in presentations/discussions to increase their knowledge of literacy, child development and positive parenting.
- ◆ The program seeks to inform and link families with other child and adult learning programs available in the community.
- ◆ Sessions run weekly for 15 to 30 weeks and are facilitated by community volunteers who are supported with ongoing training, mentoring and program resources.

Garden of Active Learning (GOAL)

- ◆ Sessions run weekly for 15 to 30 weeks and are facilitated by community volunteers who are supported with ongoing training, mentoring and program resources.
- ◆ The program facilitates growth in literacy knowledge of parents and children through modeling family literacy activities and promoting positive parenting and enhanced parent-child interactions.
- ◆ GOAL has two components: the New Buds Program and the Home Reader Program:
 - New Buds is a community-based program where families meet once a week for 15 weeks. The program includes parent-child interactions during the activities such as reading, singing, listening, talking, drawing, finger plays and movement, as well as parent discussions on topics including early literacy, positive parenting, nutrition, health and safety.
 - The Home Reader Program supports literacy needs of families in the comfort of their own home. Home visits are one hour in length and are scheduled weekly. The content and desired learning outcomes of this program are similar to the New Buds Program.

**Appendix 2: Family Literacy Initiative Fund (FLIF) Contracted Programs
– By Location**

Location	Organization	Model
Athabasca	Words Work Literacy Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies
Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks
Calgary	Bow Valley College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homespun ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills ▪ Parent-Child Mother Goose
Calgary	Calgary Immigrant Aid Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-Cultural Parent-Child Literacy Program for immigrant parents and their children aged three to five years
Calgary	Calgary Learning Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Magic Carpet Ride
Calgary	Calgary Immigrant Women's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pebbles in the Sand – ESL Literacy for Parents and Children
Calgary	Families Matter Society of Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Building Blocks
Calgary	Rocky View School Division No. 41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills
Camrose	Camrose and Area Community Adult Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills ▪ Building Blocks
Cardston	Cardston & District Community Literacy Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LAFF (Learning Activities for Family Fun) kits ▪ FUNdamentals Learning Festival ▪ Parent-Child Music Sessions ▪ Parent-Child “Stay and Play” Sessions
Claresholm	Willowcreek Community Adult Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Building Blocks
Drayton Valley	Drayton Valley Adult Literacy Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success
Edmonton	Centre For Family Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind
Edmonton	Chinese Cultural Promotion Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read Inspire Share Encourage (R.I.S.E.) – a program for the Mainland Chinese community
Edmonton	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multicultural Language and Literacy Enhancement Program
Edmonton	Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Books for Toddlers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Preschoolers ▪ PRINTS Program for Parents
Edmonton	Terra Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Bookmobile ▪ Literacy-related crafts
Edson	Edson and District Community Learning Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Bag of Books ▪ Parent/Caregiver education
Edson	Grande Yellowhead Regional Division #35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family literacy through home visitation
Fort Saskatchewan	City of Fort Saskatchewan Family and Community Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose
Grande Prairie	Grande Prairie Council for Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Garden of Active Living
Hanna	Hanna and District Association for Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks
High Level	Chinchaga Adult Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Garden of Active Learning
High River	Literacy for Life Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Building Blocks ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Pillowslip Stories
Innisfail	Henday Association for Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Storysacks
Kikino Lake Métis Settlement	Lac La Biche and District Public Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks
Lethbridge	Lethbridge Public Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose
Lloydminster	Lloydminster Learning Council Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose
Manning	Manning and District Further Education Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills ▪ Storysacks
Medicine Hat	Medicine Hat College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills
Morinville	Sturgeon Adult Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhythm and Rhyme Family Time (a combined Books for Babies and Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose program)
Olds	Mountain View Community Literacy Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks ▪ The First Years Last Forever
Ponoka (County of)	County of Ponoka Literacy Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Storysacks
Rocky Mountain House	Rocky Community Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Storysacks
Ryley	Beaver County Community Adult Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Literacy and Parenting Bkills
St. Albert	Star Literacy Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose
St. Paul	Société des parents pour l'éducation francophone de St-Paul et region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grow with Books ▪ Stories on Wheels ▪ Storysacks
Stettler	Stettler Read and Write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose
Taber	Taber & District Community Adult Learning Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success
Valleyview	Valleyview Adult Literacy for Individual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success ▪ Literacy and Parenting Skills ▪ Family Literacy Fun Nights
Vermilion	Vermilion CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose ▪ Books Offer Our Kids Success
Vegreville	Community Association for Lasting Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks
Vulcan	Rainbow Literacy Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Blocks
Westlock	Each One Teach One Literacy Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Books for Babies ▪ Rhymes that Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose

Appendix 3: Family Literacy Initiative Fund (FLIF) Contracted Programs - Numbers of Participants by Model

Family Literacy Model	Number of Parents/ Caregivers	Number of Children (birth to six years)
Books for Babies	1,624	1,507
Rhymes that Bind/ Parent-Child Mother Goose	3,427	4,539
Building Blocks	445	448
Books Offer Our Kids Success (B.O.O.K.S.) / Homespun	344	295
Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS)	634	674
Story Sacks/Pillowslips	176	214
Magic Carpet Ride	74	108
Others	2,801	2,763
Totals:	9,525	10,548

Appendix 4: Service Delivery Hours by Model

Family Literacy Model	Number of Service Hours	Family Literacy Model	Number of Service Hours
Books for Babies	691	Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS)	749
Rhymes that Bind/ Parent-Child Mother Goose	3,915	Storysacks/ Pillowslips	127
Building Blocks	3,731	Magic Carpet Ride	300
Homespun/Books Offer Our Kids Success (B.O.O.K.S.)	462	Other	2,879
Total Hours All Models:			12,854

**Appendix 5: Number and Percentage of Participants - Aboriginal and Other Language/
Cultural Groups**

Model	All Participants		Aboriginal				Other Cultural/Language Groups			
	Parents	Children	Parents		Children		Parents		Children	
			Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%
Books for Babies	1,624	1,507	47	3	56	4	501	31	541	36
Rhymes That Bind/ Parent-Child Mother Goose	3,427	4,539	250	7	342	8	354	10	377	8
Building Blocks	445	448	92	21	78	17	203	46	127	28
B.O.O.K.S.	344	295	53	15	47	16	23	7	2	1
Literacy and Parenting Skills	634	674	68	11	165	24	99	16	165	24
Storysacks/ Pillowslips	176	214	4	2	5	2	44	25	42	20
Magic Carpet Ride	50	50	0	0	0	0	45	90	37	74
Other	2,801	2,763	227	8	279	10	76	3	112	4
Total:	9,501	10,490	741	8	972	9	1,345	14	1,403	13