

Family Literacy Day Event Coordinator's Guide



www.familyliteracyday.ca



Attention All Family Literacy Day® Event Co-ordinators!

Thank you for your interest in organizing a Family Literacy Day event.

Family Literacy Day, **held annually on January 27**, was created in 1999 by ABC Life Literacy Canada to celebrate parents and children reading and learning together to become lifelong learners.

The resources and information in this guide will help you plan and host a fantastic Family Literacy Day event, and help continue spreading the word about the importance of family literacy.

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Section 1

The History of Family Literacy Day®

Family Literacy Day, held annually on January 27, was developed by ABC Life Literacy Canada in 1999 to celebrate adults and children reading and learning together, and to encourage Canadian families to spend at least 15 minutes a day enjoying a learning activity together.



Q: What is family literacy?

Family literacy focuses on parents as the means to improve the reading and writing skills of all family members. By reading to children and engaging in fun literacy activities, parents are actively keeping their own skills sharp, while at the same time strengthening the relationship between the family. This, in turn, encourages lifelong learning. There are many activities that help strengthen literacy skills, and all it takes is 15 minutes of practice every day.

Q: Why is family literacy important?

Family literacy helps reinforce the importance of learning with children as a means of building the knowledge necessary for future skills, and helps adults maintain their literacy skills. Many studies have shown that improving parents' skills directly and positively affects the language development of children (Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, IALS 1997).

Q: How is Family Literacy Day celebrated?

Every year, thousands of events and activities are coordinated by literacy providers, schools, libraries and community groups across the country (visit www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca for a listing of events or to register your event). These activities range from fundraisers, book drives and children's reading circles, to literacy-themed games and contests. You don't have to participate in a formal event to be a part of this initiative. Family Literacy Day can be celebrated by simply setting aside 15 minutes of family time to read, play a game, write a letter, or even follow a recipe together.

Q: How do local communities and organizations benefit from Family Literacy Day?

Literacy providers have the opportunity to showcase their hard work and achievements on Family Literacy Day. They benefit from increased public awareness and support, and have the opportunity to connect with key influencers in their community. Family Literacy Day is a great time to spread the word about the importance of reading as a daily activity. This initiative also provides an opportunity for families to become aware of literacy programs available in their community. Family Literacy Day is also sometimes used as a fundraiser, where literacy groups and libraries can raise much-needed funds for literacy programming or new supplies.

Family literacy

Family literacy refers to the many ways families develop and use literacy skills, from enjoying a storybook together, to playing word games, singing, writing to a relative or friend, sharing day-to-day tasks such as making a shopping list or using a recipe, and surfing the Internet.

Parents' literacy skills and their ability to engage with their children in ways that encourage literacy at an early age have a lasting and far-reaching impact on children's language development, future success in school and well being throughout their lives. Having a parent read aloud helps children learn listening, vocabulary and language skills, and develop imagination and creativity. Additionally, it's important for adults to continue exercising their reading abilities at all stages of their lives.

- 48 per cent of adult Canadians have low literacy skills that fall below high school equivalency and affect their ability to function at work and in their personal lives. 17 per cent function at the lowest level, where individuals may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle. (OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013).
- Almost half (49.8 per cent) of adult Canadians score in the two lowest skill levels in numeracy, and these people are 2.5 times more likely to be recipients of social assistance, compared with those who scored higher. (Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey – Statistics Canada and OECD, 2005).
- Parents' reading habits play a large role in determining how often kids read: 57 per cent of kids who are frequent readers have parents who read books 5–7 days per week, compared to only 15 per cent of kids who are infrequent readers. (Kids and Family Reading Report – Scholastic, 2017).
- Nine in 10 kids and parents say they enjoy/enjoyed read-aloud time, and parents of children ages 0–5 cite reading books aloud, telling stories and talking together as among the most important things parents should do with their children to develop language skills. (Kids and Family Reading Report – Scholastic, 2017).
- Higher reading proficiency by age 15 is associated with higher levels of education attainment, lower levels of unemployment and higher average income levels by age 25. (Education Matters: Insights on Education, Learning and Training in Canada – Statistics Canada, 2011).
- Child development researchers agree: children's symbolic play (where an object is used as a stand-in for another object, such as a wooden block representing a car) correlates to cognitive and language development (Edward Fisher, 1992).
- Family play doesn't just encourage reading: a study in the Journal of Music Therapy found that singing correlates with increased language development, math ability and overall improved school grades (1999).



Section 2

Family Literacy Day® Activity Ideas

Host a Watch Party

Choose a book that has been turned into a movie. Read the book first and then schedule a movie night to see the book come to life on the screen.

Sing Along

Invite some local musicians to lead a sing along of some classic songs.

Create Bookmarks

Have participants make their own bookmarks and ask them to include why they love to read.



Scavenger Hunt

Create a giant scavenger hunt where participants have to find items in a list.

Host a Spelling Bee

Put everyone's spelling to the test with a fun competition.

Card Games

Improve numeracy skills by learning fun new card games, like Uno.

Read S'more

Organize an outdoor storytime event and roast some marshmallows around the campfire.

Dress Up

Invite participants to arrive dressed up as their favourite story character or author.

Board Games

Invite participants to bring in their favourite board game. Make groups and take turns playing the different games.

Physically-Distant Activity Ideas

Involve Distant Family and Friends

Books can be read aloud over FaceTime or Skype to friends and family members that live far away. Record children reading their favourite book and send the video to loved ones.

Photo Contest

Ask families to send in a photo of them doing a literacy activity together. Provide winners with a prize.

Parent Workshop

Host an online workshop for parents on effective ways to improve literacy at home as a family.

Book Experts

Invite a librarian, local publisher or author to share about their job, or the ins and outs of how books are written and published on a webinar.

Go for a Hike

Get outdoors and learn about nature on a hike.



Best Practices for Virtual Events

Determine which platform will work best for your event. Tools like Facebook Live and GoToWebinar can work well if you're looking for a one-way presentation with no interaction from the audience. If you want audience engagement, try something like Zoom, Skype or Google Meet. Check out our free lesson plans at <https://youthteachingadults.ca/resources> on how to use some of these tools. Be sure to choose something that your participants will have easy access to.

Put together an event outline. Figure out who is going to say what before the event. Like any event, you need a plan, and with online events it's harder to just wing it.

Do a trial run. Technology can be complicated, so it's best to do a trial run before the event to make sure you know how everything is going to work. You don't want to have technical difficulties on the big day.

Try to make the event as interactive as possible by using things like Q&A chat or polling functions. This will ensure participants stay engaged.

Limit the event to no more than 45 minutes. It can be hard to keep concentration in real life, but online it can be even harder.

Section 3

How to Promote your Family Literacy Day Event

Use Promotional Materials

ABC Life Literacy Canada offers free downloadable promotional materials online at FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. Access posters, bookmarks, tipsheets and PSAs that will help promote your event. Contact your local print shop to see if they will donate the printing of materials in return for recognition on your event materials.

Create an Advertisement

Create your own ad or feel free to use one of the downloadable print ads or web banners in the promotional materials section of FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. Ask your local media if they will donate media space to your organization to help promote your event. Many media outlets have extra space they need to fill and would be happy to run your ad for free if there is room.

Put Up Posters

ABC Life Literacy Canada offers free downloadable posters at FamilyLiteracyDay.ca. These posters provide space at the bottom to write in the details of your event. Print a few posters, fill out your information and post them around your organization and your community.

Spread the Word Online

If you have a website, be sure to publish your event on the website at least a month or two in advance.



If your organization has a Facebook page, create a Facebook event! Let all your fans know about the event and ask them to spread the word to their friends and family.

If you're on Twitter or Instagram, be sure to promote your event on these accounts as well. Be sure to use hashtags such as #FamilyLiteracyDay to increase your chances of being noticed.

Feel free to download our social media guide at FamilyLiteracyDay.ca, which has pre-written posts you can use to promote the day.

Contact the Media

Reach out to your local newspaper, TV or radio station and see if they would be interested in covering your event, either before or during. Offer to do an interview with them or invite them to attend! Most media contacts can be found on the contact page of an outlet's website.



Certificate of Participation

Congratulations to:

For participating in:

Signature

Date