

## What is Workplace Literacy?

**Workplace literacy** is the skills employees need to have in order to be successful at work functions and manage the demands of their jobs in a healthy, productive way. These skills include life skills and employability or soft skills.

Increasing employee skills in the workplace helps provide a foundation for lifelong learning as people and businesses grow together. Improving workers' skills creates a more productive workforce and a more competitive economy.



## Workplace Literacy in Canada

- Canadian employers spent, on average, \$889 per employee on learning and development in 2016–17, an increase of \$89 per employee since 2014–15. The average number of hours of learning per employee per year is also on the rise, increasing from 25 hours in 2010 to 32 hours in 2016–17 (*Learning Cultures Lead the Way: Learning and Development Outlook—14th Edition, Conference Board of Canada, 2018*).
- Even modest investments in workplace literacy and skills training can have notable effects, including gains in workers' skills and job performance and increases in:
  - ▶ Employment
  - ▶ Earnings
  - ▶ Job retention
  - ▶ Productivity
- Investment in workplace literacy also leads to cost savings from reduced errors and waste (*UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on worker and business outcomes: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2016*).
- Workers who participated in skills training were nearly 25% more likely to report a reduction in their work-related stress levels than those who had not received this type of training (*UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on worker and business outcomes: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2016*).
- 40% of working Canadians say that their company rarely or never provides them with career development support, and 39% say they would take a pay cut from another employer that offered better professional development opportunities (*ADP Canada Sentiment Survey, 2017*).
- According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, on average, a one-dollar investment in training returns a benefit to the employer of \$1.38 (*Apprenticeship – Building a Skilled Workforce for a Strong Bottom Line, R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (2006)*).