



Annual Report | 2020 2021

NWT LITERACY COUNCIL



Government
of Canada

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du Canada

NWT Literacy Council • PO Box 761 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6

Telephone: 867-873-9262 • Toll Free: 1-866-599-6758 • Email: nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca

www.nwtliteracy.ca

Who We Are

The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization. We promote and support the development of literacy and essential skills in all the official languages of the NWT.

VISION

People in the NWT will have the skills they need to be full and active participants in their family, in their community, in their culture, and in today's society.

MISSION

The NWT Literacy Council builds capacity through literacy training, research, resource development, and promotion for the benefit of all Northerners.

What We Do

- Each year we provide workshops, training, and professional gatherings for community-based literacy practitioners. Topics include family literacy, Indigenous language literacy, embedding literacy and essential skills, youth and adult literacy, proposal writing, program planning, facilitation skills and workplace learning.
- We develop, publish, and distribute resources and learning materials for community-based family literacy, youth and adult literacy, and Indigenous language programs.
- We conduct research into issues that affect literacy and essential skills development in the NWT, and monitor and share research from other places that impacts our work here.
- We promote the value of literacy and essential skills through the materials we produce and the events we sponsor. Events include International Literacy Day, NWT Literacy Week, National Family Literacy Day, Indigenous Languages Month and the Peter Gzowski Invitational Fundraiser for Literacy.
- We have an extensive network of interested stakeholders and partners, and share information about literacy and essential skills with them through our newsletters, e-news, social media and website.
- We promote the use of plain language and offer fee-for-service plain language design, writing, and editing services.
- We monitor and respond to territorial and national literacy and essential skills policies.
- We offer non-formal literacy and language programs to newcomers through our Community Connections program.

President's Message



Hello good people of the NWT and our friends beyond our boundaries! I am proud to present to you the NWT Literacy Council's 2020-21 Annual General Report. This has been a year like no other, and the staff at the

Council worked extremely hard to adapt to living and working in the pandemic and to deliver the quality programs that they have become renowned for. Although this year was extremely stressful, thanks to the tireless efforts of its staff, the Council has once again had a very successful year.

In March of last year, the Council had to shut its office and send people home to work. Not only did the executive director and staff have to figure out how to work remotely with all the technological and other challenges that presents, but they also had to figure out how to deliver programming that is almost always done face-to-face. As with most organizations, they looked for their answer online.

As I strolled and scrolled through a year's worth of programming, many things stood out to me. First and foremost, I was reminded of just how much this organization does and what a great resource it is for northerners. Just beneath that, though, I was reflecting on the many different kinds of things we do and support, and that list is extensive.

In the past year, the Council offered all sort of literacy-based activities online using video and Facebook Live. The Council also created "At home" kits to support family literacy activities in the home. On top of all this, the Council delivered literacy program training remotely to participants throughout the territory using virtual meetings and other online tools.

The NWT Literacy Council has a mandate to support the literacy development of northern youth, adults and families. It has benefited from great staff and management for the vast majority of its thirty-plus years. We can witness the strength, resiliency and importance of this organization through the trail of social media postings left during the pandemic year. They tell the story of an organization with a vital mission and great staff that was able to rise to the challenge of COVID without missing a beat. I am sure I speak on behalf of all northerners when I say, we are very grateful!

– Ken Latour, President NWT Literacy Council





Staff Members

- Kathryn Barry Paddock, Executive Director.
- Helen Balanoff, Project Manager.
- Katie Johnson, Family and Community Literacy Coordinator.
- Charlotte Upton, Canada Learning Bond Coordinator, Family and Community Literacy Coordinator (to February 2021), Skill Builders for Youth Coordinator (from February 2021).
- Coleen Hardisty, Youth and Adult Services Coordinator and Indigenous Languages Coordinator (to January 2021).
- Uma Sivakumar, Office Manager.
- Karen Johnson, Integration Literacy Coordinator.
- Stephanie van Pelt, Community Oral Health Literacy Coordinator.
- Grayce Patino, HIPPPY Coordinator (from October 2020).
- Jeremy Mousseau, Family and Community Literacy Coordinator (to August 2020).
- Catriona Profit, Summer Student (May-August 2020).

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT

- Beverly Garven (to October 2020)
- Ken Latour (from October 2020)

VICE PRESIDENT

- Ken Latour (to October 2020)
- Rosemary Gill (from October 2020)

TREASURER

- Rosemary Gill (to October 2020)
- Rachel VanderVeen (from October 2020)

SECRETARY

- Melani Adams

Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah Regional Representative:
Rachel VanderVeen

Deh Cho Regional Representative: Rosemary Gill

Beaufort Delta Representative: Melani Adams

South Slave Regional Representative: Minnie Whimp

Sahtú Regional Representative (to February, 2021):
Mary Ann Vital

Tłıchq Regional Representative: Vacant

Resources

This year we created several new resources, as well as updating some existing ones.

1. *30 Ways to Support Literacy*. This resource provides ideas to celebrate NWT Literacy Week and our 30th Anniversary, while remaining home.
2. *Family Literacy Training Institute video series*. NWTLC created videos of several of our training sessions.
3. *Little Chefs*. This resource has been updated with a new unit and now has numeracy components embedded.
4. *Learning in the Kitchen*. NWTLC worked with Registered Dietitian to make edits and updates to our nutrition modules.
5. *Family Literacy at Home*. This is an instructional resource with activities that use kits provided to families to support families learning at home due to COVID-19.



Adult Education Curriculum Supplementary Materials

Our partnership for resource development to support the Developmental Studies Curriculum continues with Aurora College. We also develop supplementary resources with funding from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). This year, we worked on:

- *Literacy III* and *Numeracy III*
- *Introduction to Support Assistant Course 1* and developed an outline for Course 2
- *Study Skills*
- Revisions to *Skill Boosters* to include *Study Skills*

The College pilot-tested *Literacy I* and *II* and *Numeracy I* and *II* and we will revise these in 2020-2021.

As always, we are very grateful to all the people who work with us on curriculum development resources: adult educators, other College and ECE staff, students, and our contractors. They all bring a wealth of experience to our work.

Dehcho Indigenous Youth Leadership Program

Aurora College, on behalf of the Dehcho First Nations, contracted the NWT Literacy Council to develop a leadership program for youth. The two courses for this program are in draft form. The Dehcho First Nations will pilot-test the program in 2020-2021.

Indigenous Languages

The NWT Literacy Council was not able to host the Indigenous Language Gathering this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions. The gathering typically brings together NWT language coordinators, youth, and elders to share information and ideas about language revitalization efforts. The NWT Literacy Council consulted with Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators to gauge technology needs and was able to purchase items for continual use, as well as for the 2022 workshop.

Indigenous Languages Month was celebrated in February, 2021 with the theme “Cook with Me.” Videos were shared on Facebook, and the news media featured some of the cooking initiatives both locally and nationally. Promotional items were created with the “Cook with Me” slogan including aprons, berry baskets, wooden spoons and trivets. The slogan was translated into nine Indigenous languages and items were shared with communities throughout the NWT. Language champions wrote weekly blogs throughout the month to share their personal reflections on language and culture.

Promoting Family Literacy across the NWT

Thank you to all of the creative family literacy program facilitators who tried new things and came up with safe ways to still reach out to families. Many of these facilitators ensured that families in their community were learning together and remaining connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We were unable to visit the Dezoah Undaa Etleh Koke Aboriginal Head Start in Fort Providence to provide staff training. Instead, they joined sessions of our virtual Family Literacy Training Institute. We provided Science Fun kits for 20 families to explore and learn together. This project was funded by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Supporting Children's Inclusion and Participation funding.



Our Reading Together project, funded by the Department of Health and Social Services' Healthy Choices Fund, was a partnership with the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC). NWTLC staff, NSCC programs staff and a videographer worked with 11 incarcerated fathers to record them reading stories with bedtime messages, and creating no-sew blankets to complete a bedtime comfort kit. Kits were mailed to 22 children.

Our Family Literacy Training Institute (FLTI) was held online. FLTI was a combination of live, interactive sessions and self-paced units with pre-recorded videos and learning activities. Twenty-one participants joined for one session or more. Participants were from Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and Fort Resolution. We began a virtual FLTI program with students of Aurora College's Early Learning and Childcare Certificate program.

Community Connections Program for Newcomers

The Community Connections program offers activities to Permanent Residents in Yellowknife. Through non-formal activities, immigrants improve their conversational English. When possible, we include all newcomers regardless of their immigration status. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is the principal funder. United Way NWT and the City of Yellowknife grants allowed more activities and for all newcomers to participate.



This year, the Speak English Café moved online. Participants were happy to see others and have a chance to speak English. Due to a lack of technological skills and inadequate devices, attempts to start a second Café group did not work out. However, the attempts to get people online gave us a chance to check in.

In-person programs began outdoors in the summer. Children attended summer camps and there were three fishing trips. These were an excellent opportunity to learn about the fishing culture on Great Slave Lake from a Métis fisherman. The gardening program ran through the summer at two gardening plots.

In the fall, there were three berry picking outings. Each event started with a talk on how to be safe in the woods. Starting in November, the pool was rented approximately twice a month. There were swims specifically for females, and occasionally the women could bring sons and daughters. One swim was specifically for fathers and their children, and other men.

Through the fall and winter, two children participated in The Bushkids Program. We coordinated three snowshoe walks and a series of igloo and fur orientation sessions. Newcomers experienced being in an igloo and learned how to build an igloo.

Multi-Cultural HIPPY Uplifts Family Literacy in Yellowknife

The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a program that works with families to support parents in their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher. The Multi-Cultural HIPPY program offers early childhood learning to families in Yellowknife in the comfort of their own homes. Our HIPPY program is offered to parents who are Permanent Residents of Canada with children aged 3-5 years old.

This year, the NWTLC's HIPPY program served five families. The program hosted eight group events in addition to individual sessions. Today, all our HIPPY families are engaged in schools and the community. Each one is proud, confident, and happy to be active members of Canadian society.

Canada Learning Bond

This project is funded in part by the government of Canada's Canada Learning Bond program. The CLB can provide up to \$2,000 towards a child's post-secondary education, but only if an adult opens a Registered Education Saving Plan (RESP) for the child. More than 4,000 children are eligible but not receiving the funding from this program in the NWT.

Most of the training and take-up events this year had to be cancelled or postponed. We hosted one in-person training in Hay River for communities in the South Slave, as well as two online information sessions as a part of our Family Literacy Training Institute. The trained community champions continue to support families to access the CLB program.



Oral Health Literacy

This was the final year of our Oral Health Literacy project, funded by GNWT Health and Social Services. This year, due to the pandemic, we had to change our program delivery.

An online training was developed to help facilitators run their own community oral health initiative. The training included key oral health messages and information about nutrition for oral health. There were presentations by a dental hygienist and collaborative planning time.

Seven oral health facilitators completed the training and hosted events/activities in their communities. The facilitators were creative in planning activities that were safe and physically distant.

All NWT schools received *Our Ever Awesome NWT Brushing Song!* book, oral health activity sheets, and brushing and flossing supplies for each child from Junior Kindergarten to grade three. An animatic for pre-teens was developed to be screened during health-related events/activities at school or in the community.

Five storybooks of *Our Ever Awesome NWT Brushing Song!* were created with characters from the book. Four of these storybooks will be kept in libraries to be lent out to communities in each region of the NWT. One storybook can be borrowed from NWTLC upon request.

Youth Literacy

Our Skill Builders for Youth program is about re-engaging youth with learning and their community. We provide training and mentorship to develop community capacity, and then offer funding and ongoing support to help community members run youth literacy programs.

Four participants from four communities attended the online Skill Builders for Youth training in December. The training helps prepare community facilitators to run youth programs using embedded literacy and essential skills. Eight Skill Builders for Youth projects were successfully completed in seven different communities. This is a significant decrease from our usual number of projects, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

GNWT Education, Culture and Employment funds the Skill Builders for Youth program. After six years, the program continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from youth and facilitators. In January 2021, Youth Literacy Coordinator Coleen Hardisty left to pursue new opportunities and Charlotte Upton took the lead for this project.



Rio Tinto Literacy Project

NWTLC partnered with Rio Tinto – Diavik Diamond Mine to support learning at home in six communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. These communities include the Tłıchǫ region, Łutsel K'e, Ndilo and Dettah.

Family Literacy at Home kits were for families with children 0-6 years old. The kits included supplies and instructions for activities taken from existing NWTLC Family Literacy resources. Kits were put together on three themes to help orient newcomer families to their new home: Wildlife of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous History, and Northwest Territories Geography. Bush Walk kits for youth included The Dene Nation's *Dene Medicine* Booklet, a bear safety pamphlet and safety items such as bear bells, a whistle and an emergency blanket.

Training

This year, we hosted the following trainings:

- **Skill Builders for Youth:** Embedded literacy and essential skills training for facilitators of programs for youth aged 16-29.
- **Family Literacy Training Institute:** Training for facilitators working with children aged 0-6 and their parents or caregivers.
- **Oral Health Literacy Training:** Training for community members to help share oral health information with families.
- **Literacy Goes Live:** NWTLC staff took turns hosting online activity tutorials for families, youth and adults throughout the spring and summer of 2020. These included recipes, crafts, singing and more.

We facilitated sessions during the following trainings:

- Aboriginal Sport Circle NWT's Online Wellness Workshops.
- Yellowknife Public Health and Moms, Boobs and Babies' Post-natal Program.
- Summer Literacy Camp Leader Training for Northern Youth Abroad.

Our staff attended the following training or professional development sessions:

- Public Health Agency of Canada's Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program Facilitator Training.
- Mackenzie Recreation Association's 2020 Recreation Leader Training Camp Program.
- University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada online course.
- Prosper Canada's Financial Literacy Facilitator Training.
- Mothers Matter Centre's Preventing, Identifying, and Directing Violence Against Women: A Capacity Building Initiative Training.

Funders and Supporters

PROJECT FUNDERS

- Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment
- Aurora College
- Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services
- Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
- Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Municipal and Community Affairs
- Rio Tinto – Diavik Diamond Mine
- City of Yellowknife
- United Way NWT

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- Catherine Harper
- Karen Hamre
- Dr. Amy C. Hendricks
- Rosanna Strong

NWTLC would like to extend our appreciation to all of our funders, donors and supporters. Without this support, we would not be able to provide the services that we do to NWT residents.

