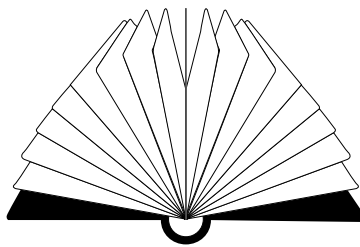


Family Tutoring



**Families Learning to Read and
Write Together**



NWT Literacy Council

Acknowledgements

Family Tutoring is a family literacy program that helps parents and tutors work with school-aged children to develop and improve their reading and writing skills.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance for this project from the National Literacy Secretariat and the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment.



Human Resources and
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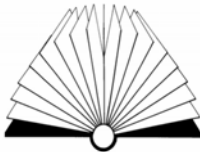
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National Literacy Secretariat

Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation

Please copy any materials from this manual for educational purposes.

Contact the NWT Literacy Council to get copies of the Family Tutoring Program. You can also download it from our website.



NWT Literacy Council

Box 761, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6

Phone toll free: 1-866-599-6758

Phone Yellowknife: (867) 873-9262

Fax: (867) 873-2176

Email: nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca

Website: www.nwt.literacy.ca



About the NWT Literacy Council

The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization that promotes and supports literacy development in all the official languages of the Northwest Territories.

The NWT Literacy Council:

- Works with communities to help develop local literacy projects.
- Provides literacy resources to people.
- Develops literacy teaching and learning materials.
- Promotes the use of all official languages.
- Researches literacy issues.
- Encourages reading and writing in all official languages.

About Literacy in the NWT

Literacy affects everyone. It is a community issue. When we hear the word 'literacy' we may think about how well people read and write. Literacy is much more than that. Literacy is about how people get, use, and share information. Literacy is also connected to many other social issues facing northern communities.

Good literacy skills can help you:

- Be healthy and safe.
- Help your children with their homework.
- Get and keep a job.
- Participate in your community.



We know that many people in the NWT don't read and write English very well. And many people read and write English as a second language.

Recently the NWT took part in a literacy survey called the International Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey or IALLS. This large international study tells us how well adults understand and use printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in their community. The first study was conducted in 1994, but the three northern territories did not take part in that survey. They **did**, however, take part in this recent survey, conducted in 2003.

Do you know?

- About 42.5% of adult ages 16 - 65 in the NWT do not have the literacy skills they need for daily living.
- About 69% of Aboriginal adults ages 16 – 65 have serious literacy challenges.¹

These people might not understand a land claims or impact benefits agreement, medical information, or an environmental assessment report. They may have trouble helping their child with homework, reading the newspaper or filling out a housing application.

The NWT Literacy Council has developed an information pamphlet about IALLS. You can download the pamphlet from <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resource/ialss/cover.htm>.

¹ Source: Learning Policy Directorate, HRSDC



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What is the Family Tutoring program?

Family Tutoring is a family literacy program that supports school-aged children to develop reading and writing skills. The program works with parents, teacher's assistants, and tutors to strengthen the English literacy skills of the whole family.

Program participants learn reading and writing strategies to support their learner's reading and writing development. Family Tutoring works with adults who tutor children at the emerging and early reader stages. Usually these children are in grades 1 to 4. The reading strategies can be adapted for older children and youth who struggle with reading and writing.

What are the goals of Family Tutoring?

- To provide parents, tutors, and volunteer readers with new skills and strategies they can use, to help their children or learners with reading and writing.
- To develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning.
- To help parents become actively involved in their children's learning.
- To provide reading and writing support to school-aged children.
- To work with the whole family to strengthen literacy skills.



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What are the values of Family Tutoring?

- Every parent wants to support their children in school.
- Parents are their children's first and most important teachers.
- Families must be involved - schools alone can not support children's literacy development.
- Families need support to help their children.
- Children learn differently and may need the support of their family or other community members to be successful with reading and writing.
- Tutors and volunteer readers need guidance to support the learners they work with.

What are the objectives of Family Tutoring?

- To develop a program that works to address the literacy needs of school-age children and their families.
- To develop a program that is suited to the cultures of the NWT.
- To develop a resource manual that supports schools and family literacy workers in the NWT.



Why do we need the Family Tutoring program?

Why develop a program for school-aged children?

The NWT Literacy Council has developed a variety of tools and resources that address early literacy skills and family literacy. We have worked mainly with families and children between the ages of 0-6 years.

NWT communities have told us they need a literacy program for school-aged children and their parents. Many children struggle with their reading and writing in English – these are fundamental skills that children need in order to be successful in school. As a result we decided to develop the Family Tutoring program.

Why family literacy?

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. They have a great deal of influence on their child's attitudes towards literacy and learning. Children have a better chance of success in school and in their adult life if someone reads to them at home and they learn to use reading and writing materials.

The direct link between literacy and well-being is evident when families work together to improve their reading and writing skills. Parents and children spend more time together and create bonds when they share stories and books.



Introduction

What is family literacy?

Family literacy is the way parents, children, and other family members learn together at home and in the community. Some examples of family literacy are:

- Reading bedtime stories together.
- Grocery shopping.
- Baking or cooking together.
- Telling family stories.
- Playing board games.

These activities allow parents to support their children's learning and help children develop literacy and language skills. Sometimes families need support to help their children with literacy and language development. Family literacy programs support families to build a literacy-rich environment at home.

Family literacy encourages and models reading and learning as a valuable and positive activity. We believe that family literacy can help support parents in their role as their children's first and most important teacher.

Family literacy programs can:

- Be done in any language.
- Promote languages, cultures, and traditions.
- Be developed and delivered by local people.
- Be lots of fun for the whole family.



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Family literacy programs will:

- Model literacy and language skills for parents.
- Increase the literacy skills of both parents and children.
- Help parents be more comfortable with reading and doing literacy related activities with their children.
- Promote and support literacy and life-long learning.
- Promote reading as fun and enjoyable.

Successful family literacy programs:

- Respect and understand the diversity of families they serve.
- Build on literacy skills in families.
- Do not try to 'correct' or 'fix' the family.
- Are held in accessible locations.
- Create a supportive environment. For example, provide transportation, childcare, and refreshments.
- Work with parents and children together or separately.
- Bring parents together to share experiences and learn from one another.
- Give parents ideas and materials for literacy activities in the home.
- Combine strengths when many organizations in the community work together.



Why is reading important and how do we learn to read?

Reading is a fundamental skill that children need to be successful in school and work. In kindergarten, grade 1 and 2 children learn to read. In grade 3 they read to learn.

We read to take in information around us. We do this everyday by reading the newspaper, books, signs around town, labels, pamphlets, application forms, contracts etc.

How do children learn to read?

For many years there has been much debate over how to teach reading. All major English-speaking nations implemented whole language and the results have not been good. Literacy levels remain the same and or have decreased in some countries.² Whole language assumes that children learn to read just like they learn to talk – naturally. Learning to read is very different from learning to talk.

We learn to talk by hearing the language and using it. We can't learn to read by solely being read to. To learn to read we must learn the mechanics of language. We must learn the relationship between the alphabet and speech sounds and take a balanced approach to literacy development.

² Adapted from <http://www.seidl.org/reading/topics/balanced.html>



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What is the balanced reading approach?

We now have the 'balanced reading approach' that includes whole language and phonemic awareness. This is a very new approach and the Family Tutoring program applies it. The 'balanced reading approach' uses a variety of reading approaches to recognize that students need to use multiple strategies to become skilled readers.

What is its purpose?

The 'balanced reading approach' provides and cultivates the skills of reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening for all students.

A balanced literacy program includes:

- Modeled reading or reading aloud, and modeled writing
- Shared reading and shared writing
- Guided reading and guided writing
- Independent reading and independent writing³

Good reading programs apply strategies that cover five components of reading.

- **Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to hear, identify, and play with individual sounds or phonemes in spoken words.
- **Phonics** – The ability to understand the a relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.
- **Fluency** – The capacity to read text accurately and quickly.

³ © 2004 [Saskatoon Public School Division](http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/balancedliteracy/index.html), Inc. All rights reserved.
<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/balancedliteracy/index.html>



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- **Vocabulary** – The knowledge of words students must have to communicate effectively.
- **Comprehension** – The ability to understand and gain meaning from what we read.

Learning to read

As a basic foundation for learning to read, children need strong speaking and listening skills. Adults need to encourage children to talk, ask questions, and use dramatic play. This helps their vocabulary to increase, it allows them to hear and practice building sentences, and it gives them more knowledge to understand spoken and written language.⁴

Reading is a skill like playing the piano. We need lots of practice and repetition to learn a skill. Parents and tutors need to encourage children to practice - at least 20 minutes each day to start. When children get older they should read and do homework for at least one hour each day.

Why do some children struggle with reading?

There are many reasons why some children struggle with learning to read.

- He may be working at a level that is too difficult. He may become frustrated and feel like a failure. As with any skill you need to start where the learner is at.

⁴ <http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,63-25465,00.html>



Introduction

- She may have no interest in the reading material that she has to read. The answer to this problem is simple – find material that she likes; let her choose her own books to read.
- He may learn differently and needs some alternative techniques for learning how to read.
- She may have a learning disability that is hindering her from learning to read. If you have tried various teaching methods and have been consistent and she still does not progress, you should talk to a teacher or principal to get some help.

How does a child learn to read fluently?

Reading fluently refers to how smoothly people read. We need to know and understand several things before we read fluently.

Fluent readers know:

- Speech consists of individual sounds, joined into syllables, words, and sentences.
- The sounds each letter makes.
- How to identify sight words, some of which have unpredictable spelling.
- How to use context to help identify words.
- Reading goes from left to right, and down to the next line.
- How to re-read something and figure out the proper words when something doesn't make sense.
- How to respond to punctuation when they read.



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Readers need to be able to instantly identify basic vocabulary to read fluently and to understand the story. Learners need to monitor their reading. If a passage does not make sense, a good reader stops and asks herself what is wrong. Is it a problem with a word? Is it an incorrect phrase or sentence?

Once children become fluent readers they begin to love stories and reading independently. ⁵

Some comments about reading

- Good readers always try to match what they read with their own experiences.
- Different people have different learning styles and different life experiences, so people react in different ways to reading material.
- Nobody reads everything well or enjoys every kind of reading material. All readers have dislikes and likes. Read what you enjoy.
- Try to create visual images as you read.
- Good readers are active. They think about, question, discuss, challenge, and criticize what they read.
- Attitude to reading is as important as reading skills.
- Try to hear the voice of the author and the characters when you read.
- Meanings are in the readers' head, not in the words on the page.⁶
- "Tis the good reader that makes the good book." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

⁵ Adapted from **Tutoring for Mastery** – Bob Parvin <http://www.sfo.com/~parvin/part1.html>

⁶ Adapted from **Reading for Life**, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada



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- “Reading furnishes our mind only with knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.” – John Locke
- “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” – Sir Richard Steele



Who should participate in the Family Tutoring Program?

The Family Tutoring program is for:

- **Parents** who want to support their school-aged children's reading and writing in English.
- **Children** who struggle with English reading and writing.
- **Organizations** that want to deliver programs that help develop literacy skills for children and families.
- **Literacy workers** that work with families and or children in their home or at school.
- **Volunteer tutors** that work with children and adults to help them develop their reading and writing.
- **Schools** that want to support family literacy.

The manual is set up for adult tutors, except Session 6. For that session, tutors and learners both come to the session and work together.

Facilitators can easily adapt the program to work with both tutors and learners. For example, you can skip the group discussion activity and move onto activities related to reading strategies. Or offer learners their own activities while tutors participate in the group discussion. Tutors and learners can easily work together on the reading strategies and craft activities.



How does the Family Tutoring program work?

You can use the **Family Tutoring** program in a variety of ways. The manual describes a program with ten sessions – a welcoming session, eight learning sessions, and a closing session. Each session has the same basic agenda and offers a variety of different activities.

We encourage community members to read the manual and use the sessions and activities that meet their needs. Facilitators choose the sessions and activities they want to use. The manual is a guide to help plan a program that suits the participants and the time available.

Family Tutoring program can work many different ways:

- **Literacy workers or other facilitators** can organize evening sessions and offer an eight to ten week program for parents and children.
- **Literacy workers or other facilitators** can offer a one or two-day workshop for parents, teacher's assistants, volunteer readers, and other interested people.
- **Teacher's Assistants** can use the ideas and strategies with their students at school.
- **Daycare workers** can use some of these ideas with parents in their program.
- **Volunteer readers** in the school and daycare can learn and use the reading and writing strategies.



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- **Family visitors** can use the program with the parents they work with. Or they can use the program with the school-aged children in their program.
- **Homework clubs** can use the program to support the literacy development of the learners that attend their program.
- **Literacy workers or other facilitators** can use this program as a home literacy support program for families with literacy needs.
- **Volunteer tutors** can use this resource for ideas and strategies to help their learners with reading and writing strategies.

The manual describes how to carry out all the activities for each session. Facilitators can plan their own program or follow the manual. They need to decide what sessions and activities fit into the schedule. You and your participants may need more time for certain topics. You may decide to skip some activities or sessions, or you may decide to do them all. We encourage facilitators to respond to the needs of the participants, as they arise. We also encourage facilitators to spend time and energy planning the Family Tutoring program – a good plan helps the program succeed for everyone.



Introduction

How to use the Family Tutoring manual

The Family Tutoring manual gives complete information to carry out the program. The manual offers the facilitators a checklist to plan a program, facilitating tips, and detailed directions for the ten sessions that make up the complete program. The ten sessions include a Welcoming Session, eight learning sessions, and a Closing Session.

Information for each session is organized the same way in the manual and follows the session from start to finish. Each session includes an agenda, background information, and activities with facilitator notes and handouts for participants. Look for these symbols.



Background information gives detailed information about the reading strategy in the section.



Facilitator notes give detailed information on how to do the activity.



Handouts are pages you need to copy for participants to use during the session.



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Each session has the same agenda:

- Welcome
- Review
- Warm-up Activity
- Group Discussion
- Reading Strategy
- Craft Activity
- Closing

The Welcoming and Closing sessions are a bit different. The Welcoming session provides participants with detailed information about the program and gives them a chance to talk about what is important to them. The Closing Session celebrates participants' learning.

Please note:

The Family Tutoring manual is for a varied audience. We use the term tutor to describe someone who works with a child. The tutor may be a parent, teacher's assistant, or volunteer reader. We use the term learner to describe the child the tutor supports. The learner may be your own child, a student, or a child you help with reading and writing. We use he and she throughout the manual to refer to the learner.



What materials do you need for a Family Tutoring?

Facilitators need the following resources to run a successful Family Tutoring program. Each session lists materials for that session.

Book Kit

Develop a book kit with a variety of reading material. Participants use the book kit for the many activities in the program. They may want to borrow books to use with their learner at home or at school. The Resources and Website section of this manual has a detailed list of books you may want to include in your book kit.



Free Books

Give free books to participants each week. They use these books with their learners. Have a variety of books and a range of reading levels. Refer to the list of books in the Resources and Website section. Try to find out the ages of the participants' children ahead of time, so you can get appropriate books.



Introduction

Crafts

You will need lots of craft materials for the program. Each week participants learn a new craft. The craft is related to the reading strategy of the session.



You need:

- Material
- Scissors
- Different coloured paper
- Cardboard and cardstock, such as cereal boxes
- Glue sticks and glue guns
- Binders
- Exercise books
- String, ribbon
- Markers, crayons
- Paint
- Hole punch
- Glitter, sparkles
- Packing tape etc.

