

Common Family Literacy Programs/Models in Alberta

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 pre-school 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.

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

- 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 along with family literacy.
- 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:

- 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.

Parent/Child Mother Goose:

- A group program for parents and their babies and young children, focusing on orally-delivered interactive rhymes, stories and songs delivered at a slow and relaxed pace with plenty of repetition of materials and casual discussion of issues and questions that arise.
- The program aims to strengthen the parent-child bond, provide a welcoming and supportive group for parents and help link them to other resources in the community, and enhance literacy skills.
- Sessions are generally delivered once a week for ten weeks, with at least two program facilitators present at each session.

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):

- 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.