

Education

January 27, 2014



Investing in the Future of Children and Families



Early Literacy Program Helps Enhance Children's Development

The Early Literacy Foundations program, designed to give parents and caregivers the tools to promote and enhance early literacy development in children, was launched today (Monday, January 27) at the Michael Donovan Library in St. John's. The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Education, was joined by Kilbride MHA John Dinn, representatives of the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board, and participants in the program, which is being piloted at 14 sites around the province.

“Over the past several years, the Provincial Government has introduced a number of initiatives to support families, schools and communities to access early literacy resources and programming. We know that the early years are a critical time to develop the skills which form the foundation for future literacy development. Parent and family involvement throughout the early years is essential to providing young children the best opportunity for success in school, and in life.”

- *The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Education*

Close to \$2.5 million has been allocated over three years in an early literacy partnership with libraries. It includes funding for program development, implementation, evaluation, staffing, program resources and enhancement to library sites.

“I am very pleased to see this worthwhile program being piloted in my district. As a father, grandfather and former educator, I understand the importance of early learning. Playing, reading and exploring with children will help develop a child's confidence, a sense of belonging and help form the basis of all future learning.”

- *John Dinn, MHA for Kilbride*

The Early Literacy Foundations program, undertaken through a partnership between the Provincial Government and the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board, is a 12-session program for parents and caregivers and children up to three years old. The program includes information for parents and caregivers on early literacy and play. Activities include interactive story-time, songs, rhymes, time for play, and take home materials which promote early literacy.

“We are extremely pleased to participate in this new early literacy pilot program. Public libraries have always supported literacy development in children and families through library materials and programs like our story-times and more recently, The Literacy Connection. This new program will enhance our commitment to literacy and help show that public libraries are more than just books. They can and will play an important role in the development of our children and communities in the future.”

- *Calvin Taylor, Chair, Provincial Information and Library Resources Board*

Implementation of the first pilot phase of this initiative began earlier this month at 14 sites throughout the province; 12 in public libraries and two in outreach facilities. Communities involved are: Bell Island, Holyrood, Glovertown, Glenwood, Norris Arm, Pasadena, Lark Harbour, Burgeo, Ramea, North West River, Sheshatshiu, as well as three sites in St John's. Pilot programs are being implemented by a team of early literacy facilitators. A second pilot phase is being planned for spring 2014, which will include up to 20 additional

communities throughout the province.

Today's launch coincides with Family Literacy Day, established by ABC Life Literacy Canada. This national initiative raises awareness of the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family. This year, ABC is encouraging families to take "15 Minutes of Fun" each day. To learn more visit: <http://abclifeliteracy.ca/fld/family-literacy-day>.

The Provincial Government is committed to supporting important social programs, strong communities and the health and well-being of children, families and seniors.

QUICK FACTS

- Early Literacy Foundations is a program designed to help parents and caregivers develop skills that promote and enhance literacy development in children up to age three years.
- The program is being piloted at 14 sites throughout the province with a second pilot phase being planned for spring 2014.
- Approximately \$2.5 million has been allocated over three years in an early literacy partnership with libraries and includes funding for program development, implementation, evaluation, staffing, program resources and enhancement of library sites.
- Parents, caregivers and early childhood learning professionals can access a host of information on key topics related to the early years at: <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/earlychildhood/developing.html> and <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/earlychildhood/parent.html>

- 30 -

Photo:



The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Education, joins participants at the launch of the Early Literacy Foundations program at the Michael Donovan Library this morning as part of Family Literacy Day activities – January 27, 2014



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