

Literacy & Family

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The Problem

- ✂ Focus on the symptom
- ✂ Family based literacy
- ✂ Community Based Literacy

Current Status

- The last International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey found that:
- 38% of Nova Scotians between 16 and 65 have inadequate education and skills to participate fully in the knowledge economy.

Basis for our contention

- The literacy levels of the parents/primary care givers are a significant problem.
- Child literacy development is directly related to the literacy levels of their primary care givers.
- Adult engagement in educational pursuits has a positive impact on the child learning behaviour

Adult Programs

- Available and supported by federal and provincial agencies
- Not easily accessible or practical for many of our clientele.

Action

- Education is for the most part a provincial responsibility
- But..... significant new funding must be made available through Federal sources
- Educational tax credits and EI incentives, do not entirely address the problem.
- Basic literacy programs must be tailored to reach the demographic.

Adult Learners

- Prefer self-direction
- Learn and retain information more easily if they can relate it to their experience
- Needs and interests are the starting points and serve as guideposts for training activities
- Primarily Competency-based learners

Wish List

- Adult programs need to be:
- Accessible
- Have flexible hours
- Well funded

There must be

- Access to tutors, who can work with clients individually and in small family groups.
- Business/industry needs to be engaged
- Programs delivered on or near the job site during employees off hours would improve the participation rates.
- Accessible Transportation
- Accessible Child Care

Engaging Business

- It is widely documented that a literate workforce is more productive.
- There is also a strong correlation with literacy and reduced workers compensation issues.
- Tax credits
- Payroll incentives to the employer

Expected Impacts

- By engaging the caregivers/parents the child will have positive role models to pattern their learning behaviours.
- Facilitates life long learning
- Aggressive learning strategies for the adults will have an impact on the youth in their community.

Resources Needed

- Non-profit agencies such as DCFRC are already including literacy components in programming
- Increased funding and staffing for non-traditional approaches to family literacy
- Central coordination of all learning activities by one entity in each area

DALA- (Digby Area Learning Association)

- Adult high school
- Multiple literacy programs
- Day Care
- PACT
- Employer specific literacy training
- Learning Centre

Concerns

- Educators have not had a raise in over 10 years
- Funding programs are piece worked together to meet the needs
- Materials and supplies are limited

We Suggest

- Working with the entire family in the home with tutors and individual supports.
- Set up small groups in easily accessible buildings like churches and rural schools for the entire family to attend.
- Develop initiatives that provide child literacy programs occurring in adjacent rooms to the adult literacy programs.

Evaluation

- Initially assess the reading levels of the participants.
- Reassess and modify if necessary
- Flexibility is key in this pursuit. Educators must be constantly adapting and modifying their approach to ensure that the targets are being met.

Where do we go from here?

- We need to foster literate communities
- We need the appropriate resources to ensure that this target is met.
- Think outside the box!



Questions?