



THE JOHN MCKAY REPORT

Member of Parliament
Scarborough-Guildwood

Volume 17 Issue 10



JANUARY 27 IS FAMILY LITERACY DAY

ABC CANADA created Family Literacy Day in 1999 with the support of founding sponsor Honda Canada to increase public awareness of the importance of adults and their children enjoying learning activities together on a regular basis. In doing so, both child and adult are better prepared to succeed in a world of increasing literacy challenges at home, at work and in the community. By raising awareness of the need of ongoing literacy-building and learning, Family Literacy Day makes its contribution to addressing the reality of how low literacy affects more than 40 per cent of adult Canadians.

In 2003, Canada's best-selling children's author Robert Munsch became the Honorary Chair of Family Literacy Day. With a passion for literacy, Munsch has been a great spokesperson for Family Literacy Day. Munsch is the author of more than 50 children's books, including *The Paper Bag Princess*, *Thomas's Snowsuit* and *Love You Forever*.

PREPARING FOR CHALLENGES

Literacy is more than books. There are many ways to strengthen your literacy skills - all it takes is practicing for 15 minutes every day. Reading, writing, playing a game, following a recipe or even singing a song all help prepare children for challenges ahead and sharpen skills for adults.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Last year 11 years of Family Literacy Day were celebrated by holding a nation-wide Guinness World Record Attempt for "Most Children Reading With an Adult, Multiple Locations". Exactly 119,405 Canadians were documented reading in this attempt, which resulted in Canada breaking the record! In total, nearly 290,000 Canadians celebrated Family Literacy Day. The great thing about Family Literacy Day is that

you don't have to participate in a formal event to be a part of this initiative. Family Literacy Day can be celebrated by simply setting aside 15 minutes of family time to read and learn together - playing



This year, the Family Literacy Day theme is Sing for Literacy. For a listing of events in our area, visit <http://www.abc-canada.org/en/flid/2010/>

board games like Scrabble, writing a letter or even following a recipe together.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Here are some tips to assist you in making family literacy a priority in your home:

Let them catch you reading: Act as a reading role model for your kids by reading in your spare time. Remember that children learn by example.

Game On: Set up a family board game night where a different

game is played each week. Have each member of the family involved in reading instructions and game cards and keeping score

Book Time: Set aside at least one hour every night where the TV is off and the whole family takes time to read or do a cross word puzzle.

The Count: Have your child count out the change required to make a purchase. Reinforce the importance of math in everyday life.

Hi Ho the Merry-o: Engage in sing-along sessions with your children.

LITERACY TIPS FROM A TO Z

Act as a reading role model for your children by reading in your spare time. Remember, children learn by example.

Boost baby's brainpower by reading aloud. Infants love the sound of a parent's voice and the closeness of sharing.

Coordinate a book club with your friends or neighbours.

Donate some of your time to a literacy program in your community. Volunteer to tutor adult learners, read to children or help in the office.

Engage in sing-along sessions with your children. Singing helps develop a greater awareness of rhythm, rhyme, words and sounds.

Follow a recipe together - it's a fun way to practise reading, math and comprehension.

Give the gift of words - make a donation to a literacy organization in your community.

Have fun. Make learning a delight by writing a funny story, making up a new song or creating a new counting game.

Introduce a family board game night where everyone is encouraged to read instructions, spell words and keep score.

Just reading to your child for 20 minutes a day adds up to more than 1,450 hours of learning, from infancy to the end of Grade 6.

Keep teens reading by providing them with books, magazines and Internet sites about things that interest them - like music, movies, TV and computers.

Let children count out the change when making a purchase. Reinforce the importance of math in everyday life!

Make everyday tasks learning experiences. Ask your children to write out a shopping list, address

an envelope or help make a calendar of weekly activities.

Nurture good literacy habits by having a quiet place in your home with reading and writing material always handy.

Offer to proofread homework, spell-check a paragraph, or verify math answers after your child has done the work.

Purchase gently used books and magazines at garage sales and second-hand stores as a cost-effective way to continuously add to your library.

Question your child about the story you're reading together (*what do you think happens next?*) to make sure they understand and to stimulate thoughts.

Road trips can offer great opportunities to enhance literacy skills. Read signs, billboards and licence plates together and show your children the proper way to read a map.

Surf the Internet to discover fun and educational sites.

Turn off the TV and video games and set aside one hour each night for everyone in the family to do homework or quiet reading.

Use it or lose it! Reading is like a muscle, if you don't exercise it often, you will not maintain the same level of reading ability as you get older.

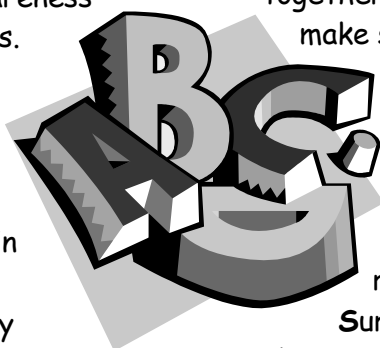
Visit your public library every week.

Write a letter, short story or song.

'X-ercise' your mind doing crossword puzzles, word jumbles and word searches.

Your child can pick up early math skills by playing games that include counting, such as skipping, jumping sidewalk cracks and hopscotch.

Zoo outings and visits to museums and galleries can be fun and educational. Be sure to read all the descriptions on exhibits and displays.



CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

3785 Kingston Road Unit 10

Toronto, ON M1J 3H4

Tel: 416-283-1226 Fax: 416-283-7935

Email: jmckay@johnmckaymp.on.ca

Hours: Monday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

549-D Centre Block, House of Commons

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Tel: 613-992-1447 Fax: 613-992-8968

Email: mckayj@parl.gc.ca

Website: www.johnmckaymp.on.ca