

OCTOBER 28TH - CROWFOOT PUBLIC LIBRARY LITERACY

What's happening?

What stories and experiences can you share about what's working well when it comes to literacy in Calgary?

- Calgary Reads – a wonderful experience for volunteers, relationship-building, targeting kids in school, gratifying to feel you are making a difference, one-to-one experience
- Vast network of libraries and free services for literacy
- Corporate Calgary has begun investing more funds into early literacy programs
- WordFest
- Vital Conversations
- We are beginning to recognize multiculturalism in the world of literacy
- Literacy teaching has become more professional – teachers are better qualified
- Essential skills inform understanding of literacy
- Seniors in action – volunteers using and improving their skills (share their literacy knowledge with others)
- Many nonprofits are invested in literacy – especially family literacy/ESL
- Adult literacy needs are being met
- Promotion/knowledge of literacy organizations

What stories and experiences can you share about what's not working well?

- Challenges in locating volunteers
- Footprint of city – commuting to spaces that offer these services can be a challenge
- Lives are so frenetic...children are registered in so many programs already, how do we have time to read to our children?
- Families who are struggling to put food on the table – how do we help them?
Need more services available right in their communities so it is more convenient
- Tough population to attract and meet the needs of
- Increased funding required
- Technology is taking away reading time – becoming more passive
- Low high school graduation rates
- Need more sophisticated evaluation tools
- Literacy continuum – comprehension, crisis, skimming/scanning, emotions/engaging
- Need advocates in school
- Better work with First Nations people
- Communicating with parents about what needs to happen in the home to build the foundational skills for early literacy

- Public awareness about literacy rates in our own communities
- Not enough tutors or other kinds of supports for children (mentors)
- Busy parents working for inflexible corporations leads to less time available to read with children
- Not enough help for learning disabled
- Gap – for teens, not as easy to attract them to programs
- Many programs are funded based on socio-economic background of the participants
- No sustainable funding in place
- Not enough quiet time built into our everyday lives
- Not as much human contact – digital everything

What's possible?

How is it possible to energize and engage the wider community to get more citizens involved in addressing these challenges and in supporting what's working?

- Raising awareness, getting information out there – use a variety of ways to get the messages across, take the programs out to where families are, keep the messages simple
- Social marketing campaign about the importance of the early years
- Prevention and early intervention is crucial – “pay now or pay later”
- Ask children “what did you learn today?”
- Literacy strategies for all age groups
- High-skilled seniors should become leaders
- Better training of daycare workers – literacy/communication skills
- Create family-friendly workplaces so that parents can have more opportunities to have time at home with families
- Universal, high-quality child care
- Increase the amount of GDP we spend as a nation
- Need advocates in school
- Collaboration – collective input, coalition approach
- Have to have a multifocal lens to approach – includes family literacy
- Encourage volunteerism