

Early BIRD Family Literacy Program Manual



— PHASE II — FOCUSING ON THE PARENT

Linking the Early BIRD Family Literacy Program Manual to
Adult Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Programming

by Sara Maggio

Hamilton Literacy Council

Early Literacy Hamilton

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Hamilton Literacy Council

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Introduction

Welcome to the Family Literacy Manual Phase II: *Focusing on the Parent!*

The focus of Phase I: *The Family Literacy Program Manual* was to provide a resource to support early childhood programs that wish to include a family literacy component as part of their regular programming. The manual identifies strategies and curriculum ideas for early year practitioners as a starting point to incorporating family literacy activities in their programs. The goal of family literacy activities and principles is to foster a love of learning for both children and parents, and especially children and parents together. In this way, we (parents, teachers, and the community) can provide early positive learning experiences for children that will, hopefully, provide a base for continual literacy development and success.

However, there are many parents that do not have the literacy skills needed to participate in many literacy activities with their children. With low literacy skills often comes frustration and anxiety around learning situations, which, in turn, can have negative effects on the learning attitudes of children.

Phase II: *Focusing on the Parent* will identify the issues of adult literacy levels and connect the Family Literacy Program topics to adult Literacy and Basic Skills programming. In this way, early year practitioners can identify the skill levels needed by parents for their planned activities and work to ease parents' anxiety and increase their comfort level when participating in learning activities with their children. Once this comfort level has been established, the opportunity may exist for practitioners to aid parents in seeking their own learning/upgrading experiences in the community.

Phase II is to act as the first link between early years programming and adult education and vice versa. There are endless possibilities in terms of partnerships and collaborations between programs, from displaying pamphlets of upgrading opportunities in your early years centre, to providing collaborative programming with an adult learning centre.

By making this literacy link between parent and child we are fostering an intergenerational community of lifelong learning so that we can encourage and support the educational successes of both children, and their parents!

1 Overview of Phase I: A Family Literacy Program Manual

The Early BIRD Program Manual as developed through a partnership between the Family Literacy Network and the Hamilton Literacy Council.

The Early BIRD Program was built on the strong belief that the best way to help young children to succeed in their literacy development is to support the family. The path to literacy begins when the child is born, and it is in the familiar surroundings of the home that children can best develop the foundation of listening and speaking, reading, and writing.

The term “family literacy” refers to the stories, songs, rhymes, games, conversations, and informal play that children and parents share together.

The purpose of the Family Literacy Program Manual is to provide program support for Family Literacy Programs, and for any early childhood programs, community programs, or Family Resource Centres that would like to include a family literacy component as part of their regular programming.

Characteristics of the Family Literacy Approach

1 **Family literacy programs seek to encourage and support parents in their role as the first teachers of their children.**

This is done as program leaders encourage the literacy activities parents do naturally through daily routines at home, share information about ways to extend and enrich literacy learning for children, and encourage discussions about other parenting issues.

2 **Family literacy programs enrich children’s literacy development through regular circle times** involving stories, rhymes, songs, alphabet games, and phonemic awareness activities. Sharing books, playing with literacy and other learning materials, and interacting with caring and supportive adults

will encourage children's growing self-confidence, and develop positive attitudes towards books, language, and learning.

3 Family literacy programs provide shared literacy experiences for parents and children to share and enjoy together. Program leaders have an opportunity to model story-reading techniques, teach new songs and rhymes, demonstrate simple creative activities that families can do at home and encourage positive attitudes toward literacy and learning in the family.

The curriculum component of the manual describes curriculum goals and outcomes, components of the program (including specific resources), and ten family literacy topics/activities to be used as a starting point for programming.

Curriculum Topics (to be discussed in further detail below)

- 1** Playing and Learning with your Child
Playing and Learning with your Baby
- 2** Reading Stories
- 3** Talking about Books
- 4** Choosing Books
- 5** Talking Together
- 6** Rhymes and Songs
- 7** Alphabet Letters and Sounds
- 8** Word Around Us
- 9** Writing and Drawing
- 10** Counting

2 The Importance of Family Literacy Programming

“Parents are their children’s first and most influential teachers.”

— Maitland McIsaac, Executive Director
Learning and Reading Partners Adult Learning System

Family literacy is the ways that families use literacy and language in their daily lives. It is about how families:

- ▶ Use literacy to do everyday activities
- ▶ Help children develop literacy skills
- ▶ Use literacy to maintain relationships with each other and with the community

— (OLC, 2003)

Why is family literacy important?

- ▶ The family is a child’s first teacher
- ▶ Literacy activities at home lay the foundation for learning to read and write
- ▶ Family literacy can have a big effect on how well children do in school
- ▶ Parents use literacy to help their children learn at home and to help them do well at school. Parents with strong literacy skills are better able to talk to teachers and principals to get their children the help they need.
- ▶ Family literacy can help children develop a love of reading and learning which can last a lifetime

— (OLC, 2003)

Several studies (discussed in The Family Literacy Program Manual) suggest that the **best way to help children achieve success in school is by supporting the family, and involving parents in their child’s education.** There is clear evidence that good early childhood development programs that involve parents can influence how they relate to and care for children in the home, and this parent involvement can greatly improve outcomes for children’s behaviour, learning, and health in later life. Therefore, rich, early childhood experiences are critical in determining the child’s future success (or failure) in learning.

3 Introduction to Adult Basic Education

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was undertaken in 1994 by seven post-industrial countries, including Canada, in order to better understand the nature of literacy. The survey recognizes that literacy is not a skill that one does or does not have. Rather, literacy is a continuum of skills, and depends on the degree of difficulty of the situation.

In this study, literacy is defined as using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve goals, and to develop knowledge and potential.

— (Statistics Canada, 1996)

Levels of skills are measured in literacy levels that range from 1 to 5 and will be referred to as IALS Levels.

IALS Levels:

- Level 1:** Individuals have great difficulty reading and are generally aware that they have a problem.
- Level 2:** Individuals read, but not well and they are often not able to recognize their own limitations.
- Level 3:** Individuals have basic literacy skills, but may not have the skills required for higher-skilled occupations (considered to be a measure of functional literacy).
- Level 4/5:** Individuals have a high level of literacy skills and can meet most literacy demands.

The results of the survey:

- ▶ Approximately 22% of Canadians between the ages of 16-69 score at or below Level 1
- ▶ Approximately 25% of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 69 score at Level 2

- ▶ In Hamilton, 27% of adults are functioning at Level 1 and another 33% are functioning at Level 2

Therefore, an average of 47% of Canadians and 60% of Hamiltonians have literacy skills that are at or below Level 2, making them functionally illiterate, or unable to complete or feel comfortable with daily literacy tasks such as reading the newspaper and writing a letter.

Why is discussing adult education/literacy skills important to family literacy?

There is an important link between literacy levels of parents and their children's educational success. The Ministry of Education and Training (1998), in their summary of the IALS findings, report that respondents whose parents have little education are more likely to be at the lower literacy levels themselves. There is a significant relation between the levels of education of parents and their children and the negative effect that has on their literacy levels.

To solidify the connection between education and literacy levels, IALS reports that:

- ▶ 91% of those rated at Level 1 have less than a grade 8 education
- ▶ Approximately 21% of those rated at Level 1 have some high school education
- ▶ 0% of those with less than grade 8 achieved a Level 4-5

Hence, when discussing family literacy, it is critical that we too address the education/literacy needs of parents and support them to increase their skills for themselves, as well as their children.

4 Learning Outcomes in the Adult Literacy Matrix of Skills

The learning outcomes approach to adult basic education focuses on learning achievements rather than program content or time invested programming. In this model, it is the literacy skills that learners actually require that matter most. In Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs, the learning outcomes approach is used for all learners. Learners are asked to set goals and identify skill gaps. All skill gaps are then expressed in learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes approach effectively takes the goal of the learner and works backwards to find the skill sets needed for that goal. For example, if a learner's goal is to be able to fill out her tax forms, work would be done to increase her skills around basic operations, understanding different formats and specialized vocabulary, and writing specific information.

Three characteristics of the learning outcomes approach:

- 1 Learners remain at the centre of the program
- 2 The program focuses attention on the ability of the learners to apply learning that has taken place in settings and situations related to their goals
- 3 The emphasis in learner assessment is on the applied demonstration of learning

In 1998 the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities released a draft document entitled, *Working with Learning Outcomes*. This document featured a skill matrix to be used by instructors in adult literacy programs.

From this document the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) developed a user-friendly tool to interpret the matrix: *The Level Description Manual*. This manual, popularly used by practitioners, will be used below to correlate the Family Literacy Curriculum to the adult literacy matrix of skills.

Learning Outcomes in the Adult Literacy Matrix of Skills

The skill areas that are addressed in the manual are as follows:

Communications

- ▶ Read with Understanding for Various Purposes
- ▶ Write Clearly to Express Ideas
- ▶ Speak and Listen Effectively

Numeracy

- ▶ Use Number Sense and Computation
- ▶ Use Measurement for Various Purposes
- ▶ Solve Geometric Problems
- ▶ Manage Data and Probability

Self-Management and Self-Direction

- ▶ Become a Self-Directed Learner

LBS Levels

The *Learning Outcomes Matrix* and the *Level Descriptions Manual* categorize adult achievement using Literacy and Basic Skill (LBS) levels. These levels refer to the standard assessment system for adults in pre-high school studies in Ontario. LBS levels range from LBS 1 (approximately grade 1) to LBS 5 (approximately grade 8-9). Once a client achieves LBS level 5 he/she is deemed ready for high school/GED level studies. (Please note: LBS levels are not the same as IALS levels.)

LBS Level Descriptions Relevant to the Family Literacy Program:

— *(Taken from The Level Descriptions Manual)*

Reading Level 1:

The reader locates, understands, and responds to simple, concrete ideas, and sequential information in graphics, sentences, and very short, simple texts about familiar topics. To do this, the reader uses basic reading strategies, personal experience, and familiarity with some common forms and conventions of simple texts.

EXAMPLE: Reads a simple menu.

Reading Level 2:

The reader locates, understands, and begins to interpret concrete and some inferential meaning in short, uncomplicated texts about familiar topics. To do this, the reader uses various common reading strategies, personal experience and knowledge, as well as familiarity with some forms and conventions of more formal texts.

EXAMPLE: Reads the classified ads in the newspaper.

Reading Level 3:

The reader locates, understands, interprets, and makes judgements about ideas and information in a variety of texts that have some complexity of content and form. To do this, the reader uses a variety of more advanced reading strategies, personal experiences and knowledge, and a familiarity with a variety of forms and conventions of formal texts.

EXAMPLE: Reads a small newspaper article or magazine article

Writing Level 1:

The writer writes for some specific, personally relevant purposes, using a few simple forms and sentences, a familiar vocabulary, and some basic grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

EXAMPLE: Fills out a ballot form that requires contact information

Writing Level 2:

The writer writes for a variety of specific, familiar purposes and audiences, using various forms and a basic paragraph structure, with simple support to convey a main idea. The writer uses words and phrases appropriate for the purpose and audience, and basic grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

EXAMPLE: Writes a note/memo

Writing Level 3:

The writer writes for a variety of specific purposes and audiences, using various forms of some complexity and developed paragraphs to convey a main idea. The writer begins to use appropriate style for the purpose and audience, and common grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

EXAMPLE: Writes a personal letter

Speaking & Listening Level 1:

The learner uses familiar vocabulary and is able to contribute to a discussion surrounding familiar topics. The learner uses basic interaction strategies such as opening and closing conversations and asking questions.

Speaking & Listening Level 2:

The learner is able to organize, link, and clarify ideas when speaking and is able to contribute appropriate ideas to discussions and provide feedback to others. The learner also works to repair misunderstandings in communication (i.e., he/she may ask for clarification/repetition).

Speaking & Listening Level 3:

The learner identifies the appropriate use of formal/informal language and speaks clearly in an organized way. The learner uses interaction strategies to maintain communication (i.e., encouraging responses from others) and understands non-verbal communication.

Speaking & Listening Level 4:

The learner regularly incorporates new vocabulary in discussions and is able to justify opinions with details, evidence, facts, and examples. The learner is aware of factors that contribute to the success, or lack of success, of a discussion (i.e., different ideas and opinions).

Speaking & Listening Level 5:

The learner logically expresses, orders, and develops concepts and ideas and justifies them clearly. The learner is able to listen and contribute collaboratively in discussions and builds on the ideas of others. The learner also works toward building agreement and deals with conflict in a discussion.

Number Sense & Computation Level 1:

The learner reads and writes whole numbers to 100, adds and subtracts single-digit whole numbers, and understands the concept of “half”. The learner is able to name and state the value of Canadian coins and recognizes, describes, and continues simple number patterns.

Self-Management/Self Direction:

Includes the following categories:

- ▶ Concentration/memory skills
- ▶ Goal-setting skills
- ▶ Personal advocacy and self-motivation skills
- ▶ Problem-solving skills
- ▶ Self-assessment and self-reflection skills

- ▶ Self-confidence building skills
- ▶ Thinking skills
- ▶ Time management and organization skills
- ▶ Understanding personal learning styles
- ▶ Working with others
- ▶ And more...

5 Family Literacy/Matrix Relation Table

Communications

- ▶ R — Read with Understanding for Various Purposes
- ▶ W — Write Clearly to Express Ideas
- ▶ S&L — Speak and Listen Effectively

Numeracy

- ▶ NS&C — Use Number Sense and Computation

Self-Management and Self-Direction

- ▶ SD — Become a Self-Directed Learner
- ▶ Please note that the Self-Direction category is a checklist and does not break down into LBS levels.

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
1. Playing with Your Child/Baby	-	-	1-5	-	N/A
2. Reading Stories	1-3	-	1-5	-	N/A
3. Talking About Books	1-3	1	1-5	-	N/A
4. Choosing Books	2-3	-	1-5	-	N/A
5. Talking Together	1-3	-	1-5	-	N/A
6. Songs and Rhymes	1	-	1-5	-	N/A
7. Alphabet: Letters and Sounds	1	-	1-5	-	N/A
8. Words Around Us	1	1	1-5	-	N/A
9. Writing and Drawing	1-3	1-3	1-5	-	N/A
10. Counting	1	-	1-5	1	N/A

6 Success Markers and Common Speaking & Listening Success Markers

Success Markers by Topic

Success Markers are the individual skills associated with the learning outcomes (subjects). The success markers are divided into LBS levels. Below are the individual success markers associated with the activity topics (see Family Literacy Curriculum — Linked to LBS Levels — page 23). Only appropriate markers are listed. Possible success markers that may be demonstrated are also listed with a *.

One component of the Matrix that is applicable to all Family Literacy activities is Speaking & Listening.

Speaking & Listening Success Markers Applicable to all

Family Literacy Topics

LBS 1

- ▶ Uses familiar vocabulary and common expressions
- ▶ Presents ideas and information in a sensible order
- ▶ Listens and contributes to discussions on familiar topics, expressing own ideas and opinions, and responds to questions and comments
- ▶ Uses basic interaction strategies such as opening and closing conversations, asking questions, etc.
- ▶ Recognizes miscommunications and responds appropriately
- ▶ Observes how some non-verbal cues affect communication
- ▶ Gets the main idea of a simple story or event
- ▶ Reflects on what is heard
- ▶ Retells simple information
- ▶ Uses basic strategies to check understanding

LBS 2

- ▶ Presents ideas clearly and in a coherent order and provides more detailed information

LBS 3

- ▶ Speaks clearly in a focused and organized way when presenting information to others on a variety of topics in familiar and unfamiliar situations
- ▶ Considers the audience's interests and needs ahead of time when giving a presentation
- ▶ Responds with feedback to the ideas of others
- ▶ Uses interaction strategies to maintain communication, such as encouraging responses from others, asking questions, and turn-taking

LBS 4

- ▶ Regularly incorporates a new and varied vocabulary and selects words to convey intended meaning, using comparisons to develop and clarify ideas
- ▶ Uses transitional expressions to signal a new or important point

LBS 5

- ▶ Responds to the audience while presenting and adjusts delivery accordingly (changes pace, asks questions, offers to clarify ideas, asks for feedback, etc.)
- ▶ Listens to others and contributes collaboratively in discussions by asking questions and building on the ideas of others
- ▶ Uses interaction strategies to facilitate understanding such as repetition and rephrasing

7 Family Literacy Curriculum — Linked to LBS Levels



SESSION 1: PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILD (OR BABY)

See page 91 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

This activity involves reading a book that focuses on everyday routines with Mom and Dad. Afterward, parent and child are encouraged to decorate a shoebox together to hold special treasures. There is also a tub of literacy materials and toys available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to notice their child’s new skills, involve their child with jobs around the house, and help them learn new skills by breaking new skills into small steps.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
1. Playing with Your Child/Baby	-	-	1-5	-	N/A

LBS Success Markers:

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

► See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem solving skills — develops and demonstrates techniques for breaking problems down into manageable parts
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports a successful application of newly-acquired skills in a real-life context*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information
- ▶ Demonstrates increased participation in the program*

Comments:

There are many other Communication/Numeracy skills that may be involved in household activities such as measuring laundry detergent, or counting the plates to put on the table. However, only overt skill demonstrations were listed above.



SESSION 2: READING STORIES

See page 93 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

In this activity, the group reads a story. The parents are then asked to have a question and answer period with their children, talking about the story and listening to their child's comments. After the book, parent and child are encouraged to use a toy or a puppet to ask questions about the story, or do a cut and paste activity, or play with other toys. Tubs with literacy materials and cognitive toys, as well as the book browsing area, are available for the children to explore freely. Parents are encouraged to observe their children to see what they liked about the story and how they responded. Then, parents are asked to share a book with their child, talk about the story, and listen to their child's comments.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
2. Reading Stories	1-3	-	1-5	-	N/A

LBS Success Markers:

Reading LBS

Level 1-3

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences

- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text
- ▶ Reads text of one paragraph (or a few short paragraphs) or a list of sentences
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording
- ▶ Reads symbols and common sight words from everyday life
- ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about stories and events
- ▶ Predicts what may happen in a story; revises or confirms predictions

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Uses phonics and knowledge of word parts to decode more easily*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and sentence structure in writing to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation*
- ▶ Uses context cues and personal experience to gather meaning from text*
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to gather information about the text
- ▶ Identifies the topic and purpose of a piece of writing
- ▶ Identifies the main idea and supporting details

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Uses a variety of strategies to decode and determine the meaning of unfamiliar words*
- ▶ Adjusts reading speed
- ▶ Begins to select appropriate materials for different purposes
- ▶ Makes judgements (predictions, conclusions) using evidence from the text

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Concentration/memory skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to focus on one task at a time
- ▶ Concentration/memory skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to persevere with a task until completion
- ▶ Personal advocacy and self-motivation skills — shows increased readiness to take responsibility for own work*
- ▶ Self-assessment and self-reflection skills — can demonstrate an accurate understanding of his/her own learning strengths and weaknesses*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments
- ▶ Reports a successful application of newly-acquired skills in a real-life context*
- ▶ Thinking skills — demonstrates that he/she can transfer knowledge from previous learning to complete a new task
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Understanding personal learning style — develops and uses strategies to deal with different types of learning materials
- ▶ Understanding personal learning style — develops and uses strategies to deal with different types of learning materials
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*



SESSION 3: TALKING ABOUT BOOKS

See page 95 in the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

Parents are encouraged to talk about the book (picture book) before they start to read it to encourage the children to predict what might happen in the story. Then, parents are to ask questions about the story while reading to get the children to think and reason. Afterwards, parent and child are encouraged to make a picture book with their child's name in the title. There is also free exploration of other literacy materials and toys. Parents are encouraged to talk with their child about a picture book that they have looked at together and then find a new book to share.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
3. Talking About Books	1-3	1	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1-3

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine meaning of

- unfamiliar words and gather information about the text
- ▶ Reads text of one paragraph (or a few short paragraphs) or a list of sentences
 - ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
 - ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording
 - ▶ Retells a simple story or event in order*
 - ▶ Reads symbols and common sight words from everyday life
 - ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about stories and events
 - ▶ Predicts what may happen in a story; revises or confirms predictions

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Uses phonics and knowledge of word parts to decode more easily*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and sentence structure in writing to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation*
- ▶ Uses context cues and personal experience to gather meaning from text*
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to gather information about the text
- ▶ Identifies the topic and purpose of a piece of writing
- ▶ Identifies the main idea and supporting details
- ▶ Begins to consider ideas from reading in development of own opinions
- ▶ Begins to make simple inferences
- ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about ideas in a piece of writing

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Adjusts reading speed
- ▶ Skims to understand type of text; scans to find specific information
- ▶ Makes judgements (predictions, conclusions) using evidence from the text
- ▶ Considers ideas from reading in the development of own opinions

Writing

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Gives personal information (writes own name, names of family members)

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem solving skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to identify problems and generate ideas about possible solutions/options
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information*
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*



SESSION 4: CHOOSING BOOKS

See page 97 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

Parents are to talk about the different kinds of books that are available (i.e., non-fiction, alphabet and number books, books for bath-time, etc.) and have children pick which books they want to read. Then, parents and children are given materials to make finger puppets or a book box. Parents are encouraged to listen to their child tell the story with the puppets and join it. Tubs of literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Also, the group, or just parent and child, are encouraged to plan a trip to the library.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
4. Choosing Books	2-3	-	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 2-3

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Uses various conventions of formal texts (i.e., simple charts and maps) to locate and interpret information

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Begins to select appropriate materials for different purposes

Speaking & Listening**LBS Level 1-5**

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem solving skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to identify problems and generate ideas about possible solutions/options
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports a successful application of newly-acquired skills in a real-life context*
- ▶ Thinking skills — demonstrates that he/she can transfer knowledge from previous learning to complete a new task
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information*
- ▶ Time management and organization skills — plans several activities in advance for a day
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*

Comments

Some of the above markers deal with the planning of the library visit.



SESSION 5: TALKING TOGETHER

See page 99 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about the story(ies) as a pre-reading activity. After the story is read in the group, parents are to ask open-ended questions and listen and respond to the children’s responses. Afterwards, by making finger puppets together, parents and children can retell the story. Play-dough and other creative materials are always available for children to explore freely. Parents are encouraged to respond to their child’s comments and join in with re-telling the story.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
5. Talking Together	1-3	-	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1-3

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text

- ▶ Reads text of one paragraph (or a few short paragraphs) or a list of sentences
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording
- ▶ Retells a simple story or event in order*
- ▶ Reads symbols and common sight words from everyday life
- ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about stories and events
- ▶ Predicts what may happen in a story; revises or confirms predictions

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Uses phonics and knowledge of word parts to decode more easily*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and sentence structure in writing to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation*
- ▶ Uses context cues and personal experience to gather meaning from text*
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to gather information about the text
- ▶ Identifies the topic and purpose of a piece of writing
- ▶ Identifies the main idea and supporting details
- ▶ Begins to consider ideas from reading in development of own opinions
- ▶ Begins to make simple inferences
- ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about ideas in a piece of writing

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Adjusts reading speed
- ▶ Skims to understand type of text; scans to find specific information

- ▶ Makes judgements (predictions, conclusions) using evidence from the text
- ▶ Considers ideas from reading in the development of own opinions

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem solving skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to identify problems and generate ideas about possible solutions/options
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*



SESSION 6: SONGS AND RHYMES

See page 101 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

The group sings songs and nursery rhymes to help the children distinguish between sounds. Then a story is read that is a collection of rhymes and songs. Afterwards, parents and children can play with nursery rhyme puppets or sing songs or use other creative materials. Tubs with literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to watch their child to see which rhymes are his/her favourite and find new rhymes to sing with their child.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
6. Songs and Rhymes	1	-	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information*
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*



SESSION 7: ALPHABET: LETTERS AND SOUNDS

See page 103 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

By reading nursery rhymes, songs, and nonsense rhymes, children are able to listen to, and play with, the sounds and patterns of language. Parents are to emphasize the sounds of letters to help children hear them and point out rhyming words. Then, parents and children can explore letters with magnets, cards, felt, puzzles, etc. Tubs with literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to sing the alphabet song with their child, look at alphabet books together, and talk about the letters in the child's name.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
7. Alphabet: Letters and Sounds	1	-	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of the alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text

- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*



SESSION 8: WORDS AROUND US

See page 105 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

Parents are to encourage their children to point out words in the community to read and discuss such signs and symbols. Books are read that incorporate signs and symbols to help children recognize them. Then, games are played with signs such as STOP and GO. Parents are encouraged to discuss names and have cards for the children to trace over or copy. Tubs of literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to read street signs with their child and introduce new letter names when their child is ready.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
8. Words Around Us	1	1	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of the alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording

Writing

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Gives personal information (writes own name, names of family members, etc.)

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem-solving skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to transfer problem-solving skills from one situation to another
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to attempt to work independently
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports successful application of a newly-acquired skills in a real-life context*
- ▶ Thinking skills — demonstrates that he/she can transfer knowledge from previous learning to complete a new task*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*

Comments:

The writing marker may or may not be demonstrated based on whether or not the parents write their child's name to copy/trace.



SESSION 9: WRITING AND DRAWING

See page 107 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

A story is read that involves a mother and child sharing time together cooking, making pictures, and writing a letter. Then, a variety of writing materials and tools are available for children to use freely. Tubs of literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to notice their child's interest in scribbling or drawing, and write messages with their child.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
9. Writing and Drawing	1-3	1-3	1-5	-	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1-3

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text

- ▶ Reads text of one paragraph (or a few short paragraphs) or a list of sentences
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording
- ▶ Expresses thoughts and feelings about stories and events
- ▶ Predicts what may happen in a story; revises or confirms predictions

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Uses phonics and knowledge of word parts to decode more easily*
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and sentence structure in writing to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic spelling conventions and simple punctuation*
- ▶ Uses context cues and personal experience to gather meaning from text*
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to gather information about the text*

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Adjusts reading speed

Writing

LBS Level 1-2

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Gives personal information (writes own name, names of family members, fills out a simple form, etc.)
- ▶ Writes a short list using familiar words*
- ▶ Writes simple notes and short, simple, personal letters*
- ▶ Writes simple sentences to express thoughts
- ▶ Writes for a familiar audience
- ▶ Uses words from oral vocabulary

- ▶ Uses capital letters for beginning of sentences, for familiar proper nouns such as names and for the pronoun “I”
- ▶ Writes word endings
- ▶ Uses basic punctuation
- ▶ Uses basic phonics to spell unfamiliar words*

LBS Level 2

- ▶ Writes lists, simple letters, and simple paragraphs*
- ▶ Organizes thoughts to convey a main idea in a paragraph*
- ▶ Uses basic organizers such as common linking words, titles, basic parts of a letter, and parts of a paragraph*
- ▶ Begins to show some awareness of different audiences*
- ▶ Chooses words and phrases most appropriate to their purpose
- ▶ Uses various sentence types*
- ▶ Uses an apostrophe in common contractions*
- ▶ Uses commas in lists, dates, and addresses*
- ▶ Uses common abbreviations*

LBS Level 3

- ▶ Writes letters*
- ▶ Uses noun/pronoun agreement, consistent pronoun and consistent verb tense
- ▶ Uses standard subject-verb agreement

Speaking & Listening**LBS Level 1-5**

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Self-Direction

- ▶ Problem-solving skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to identify problems and generate ideas about possible solutions/options
- ▶ Problem-solving skills — uses a variety of approaches to deal with problems encountered in the learning environment

- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to attempt to work independently
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments
- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports successful application of a newly-acquired skills in a real-life context*
- ▶ Thinking skills — demonstrates that he/she can transfer knowledge from previous learning to complete a new task
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*

Comments:

The writing markers may or may not be demonstrated based on whether or not the parents write words, phrases, lists, notes, etc. with their child.



SESSION 10: COUNTING

See page 109 of the Family Literacy Program Manual

Summary of Activity:

A counting book is read in the group where children are encouraged to join in with the counting and anticipate what number will come next. Then parents and children are given small toys, wooden beads, etc. for children to count and sort. A variety of counting books are available for reading and literacy materials and toys are available for free exploration. Parents are encouraged to count with their child during daily routines and to teach their child new numbers when their child is ready.

LBS Levels:

Topic	Communications			Numeracy	Self-Direction
	R	W	S&L	NS&C	SD
10. Counting	1	-	1-5	1	N/A

Success Markers:

Reading

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Uses knowledge of the alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words
- ▶ Uses knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns, and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
- ▶ Uses pictures and illustrations to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and gather information about the text
- ▶ Text is familiar with everyday content with personal relevance
- ▶ Text is simple, concrete, and in familiar wording

Speaking & Listening

LBS Level 1-5

- ▶ See pages 21-22

Number Sense and Computation

LBS Level 1

LBS Level 1

- ▶ Reads and writes numbers from 0-100
- ▶ Counts by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s to 100
- ▶ Uses the concepts of addition and subtraction to solve simple, real-life word problems

Self-Direction

- ▶ Self-confidence building skills — reports greater confidence in his/her own skills*
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and demonstrates the ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ▶ Thinking skills — develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities to deal with new information
- ▶ Working with others — develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ Working with others — demonstrates increased participation in the program*

8 Conclusion

According to the adult literacy Learning Outcomes Matrix of skills (LBS Levels), the Family Literacy Curriculum activities require parents to perform at the following levels.

Reading Levels 1-3

- ▶ Reading various types of children’s books, and words/signs out in the community and at home

Writing Levels 1-3

- ▶ Writing names, words, phrases, notes, letters, etc.

Speaking & Listening Levels 1-5

- ▶ Being able to communicate effectively and practice active listening
- ▶ Observing their child and be able to encourage responses

Number Sense & Computation Level 1

- ▶ Counting various objects and introducing numbers to their child at home or in the community

Therefore, although it might appear that the Family Literacy Program activities require few literacy skills on the part of the parent, that is not the case when the activities are analyzed closer.

The literacy requirements for this curriculum, therefore, may be intimidating for parents and lead some to withdraw from the program.

It is important for early year practitioners to recognize that some parents (and likely many parents) may have difficulty with everyday reading and writing activities.

Below is a brief list of characteristics that an instructor may notice about parents with literacy challenges.

- ▶ They may pick books to read with little or no text
- ▶ When asked to read they may say they have forgotten their glasses or that they have a headache
- ▶ When filling out registration forms they may ask someone for help or say they will take it home and bring it back the next day
- ▶ They may report that they did several literacy activities at home but not demonstrate them in the program
- ▶ They may send someone else in their place to the class or drop out altogether

9 Next Steps

As a program facilitator, there are many things that you could do if you suspect that some parents require help with their literacy skills.

- 1** Be aware of the skill level of activities in the program and provide lots of options with different literacy requirements so that all parents feel comfortable.
- 2** Provide a safe and encouraging environment so that parents feel comfortable disclosing their literacy concerns to you.
- 3** Connect with your local literacy network to educate yourself around what services are available to adults in your community (i.e., Literacy and Basic Skills programs, English as a Second Language classes, etc.).

To contact your local literacy network, visit www.alphaplus.ca and look in “LBS Information” to search for your regional network or search for literacy programs in your area.

- 4** Educate your colleagues about the issues of adult literacy and the programs/services available in your community so that they can also encourage and support parents to consider upgrading opportunities.
- 5** Gather pamphlets of local literacy/upgrading programs and have them available in your classroom.
- 6** Take some time to discuss upgrading opportunities to adults in your program.
- 7** Be sure to write clearly and simply when giving parents written information, for example:
 - ▶ Do not use “jargon” or complex words or phrases
 - ▶ Include a lot of white space in your documents
 - ▶ Use bullets as opposed to paragraphs wherever possible
 - ▶ Include pictures if possible to help give context to the text
 - ▶ Keep written materials short (1 page) if possible

- 8** Connect with a local literacy program to discuss possible collaborations, i.e., interested parents can go for a tour of the agency and can then be encouraged to sign up for classes, or, ideally, maybe discuss having a literacy class onsite when their children are involved in other activities in the centre.
- 9** Connect with the local Literacy Community Planning Committee to discuss further collaborations on a community level.
- 10** Invite representatives from the adult basic education community to your planning table to discuss collaboration/partnership possibilities.



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Further Reading/Resources

Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU)

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/main.html

- ▶ Current MTCU reports/publications
- ▶ List of related adult basic education sites

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

www.nald.ca/index.htm

- ▶ Literacy collection (including full text documents)
- ▶ Literacy discussion groups
- ▶ Literacy contacts
- ▶ And more...

AlphaPlus

www.alphaplus.ca

- ▶ Borrowing library
- ▶ Adult literacy discussion groups
- ▶ LBS services/network listings
- ▶ AlphaRoute — online learning (for learners)
- ▶ Purchase materials
- ▶ And more...

Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC)

www.on.literacy.ca

- ▶ Literacy fact sheets
- ▶ Advocacy and public awareness
- ▶ Resource development/projects



About the Author

Sara Maggio, B.A.

Sara Maggio has been involved in the adult literacy field for many years. She has been a tutor, small group instructor, assistant program manager, researcher/developer, instructor team leader, speaker, and — currently — an academic assessor with the Hamilton literacy network: the Adult Basic Education Association. This role includes comprehensive academic assessment (using LBS levels and grade level equivalents), as well as supporting the Literacy Community Planning Committee and other community adult basic education events.

She has worked in Literacy and Basic Skills programs, as well as in workplace essential skills education. She is a certified Laubach Literacy Tutor, and has specific training in such areas as: adult learning principles, literacy partnerships in the community, learning disabilities, and Clear Writing principles. She has an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from Guelph University, majoring in English, and minoring in Family & Child Studies. Currently she is completing a Not-for-Profit Manager Certificate at Mohawk College, and is also working on her Masters of Education degree through Brock University.

Sara has a long-standing partnership with the Hamilton Literacy Council and has partnered with them on several occasions to design/develop learner demonstrations related to the Learning Outcomes Matrix and to support other publications.



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