

# The **READ**Saskatoon **READer**



May 2007

## PGI – an amazing event in the making

READ Saskatoon is hosting the PGI-The Golf Tournament for Literacy on **September 21, 2007** at The Willow's Golf and Country Club. We have been very fortunate to have an incredible planning team come together with lots of energy and new ideas to make the event a day to remember.

### What is the PGI?

- It is more than just about golfing, it is a literacy event founded by Peter Gzowski in 1984;
- There is a national link. There are 15 PGI's across the nation every year;
- Celebrities with CBC support the event. Shelagh Rogers will be joining us for the day;
- The PGI is generally quite informal, with music, a literacy quiz, the Learner award, the Gzowski award and a Poet Laureate that closes the day;
- The PGI's have raised over 10 million dollars for literacy;
- All the money raised by the Saskatoon PGI will stay in our province;
- Fun is an important part of the day!

Check out our web page at [www.readsaskatoon.com](http://www.readsaskatoon.com) for more information. Mark your calendar; we need golfers, sponsors and volunteers.

## Saturday, June 2nd

Now that we have your attention, make sure you come to our annual YEAR END EVENT!

**Where?** Kinsmen Park shelter (across Spadina Crescent from the Mendel Art Gallery)

**Time:** Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**What if it rains?** It has rained the last three years, but it makes it that much more fun!

There's so much to celebrate: your volunteering, our learners' hard work, our Board of Directors and the list goes on.

**Please call to register at 652-5448.  
See you there!**



### READ Saskatoon Office

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Office Hours:  
Monday – Friday  
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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# The Political Economy of Early Child Development and Family Literacy



By integrating expertise from the fields of adult literacy, and early child development (ECD), family literacy programs enhance the ability of parents and caregivers to support their pre-school children as they develop pre-literacy skills.

Why should we care about ECD, and by extension, family literacy? There have been important new developments in our understanding of the significance of early childhood and the effects on health, learning, and behaviour in later stages of life.

Recent research regarding the impact of early childhood environment on biological processes in adulthood now provides us with much more than statistical evidence. Studies on brain 'plasticity', the stress system, and serotonin metabolism provide clear accounts of the causal mechanisms involved. Today, we know a good deal about direct influences on health, learning, literacy, and indeed behaviour throughout the life cycle. This recent body of research in natural sciences gives a substantial boost to economic and political arguments for ECD initiatives.

Traditionally, arguments for supporting ECD initiatives have been based upon notions of social justice. The economic argument for supporting ECD initiatives is based on the notion of efficient allocation of resources. By addressing issues of social justice while simultaneously promoting economic productivity, a policy framework for ECD carries the potential to generate support from across the political spectrum. These developments have led many leading international experts to make policy recommendations, to governments across the world, which emphasize the crucial need to teach parents how to provide an enriching environment for their children.

Most politicians, policy makers and even many academics subscribe to the conventional wisdom that formal educational institutions play a central role in the production of skills required by the modern economy. According to Nobel Laureate economist **James Heckman**, however, the **return on investment** (ROI) from money spent on ECD is much greater for both individuals and society as a whole than money spent on formal education. The ROI ratio in formal education is about three to one in contrast to at least eight to one for ECD programs, excluding the effects of early child development on physical and mental health in adult life. Using findings from studies carried out in the United States (US) including such projects as the *Abecedarian Project*, the *Chicago Child Parent Center Project*, and the *Perry Preschool Program*, Heckman provides specific examples of his argument regarding ROI from ECD. In the US, his findings have started drawing attention from centres of power across the political spectrum.

*By Askin Taner, OLC Public Policy Analyst  
- Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) - Literacy on the Move - October 2006 - Cover*

# Some Ideas to Help Your Learner Write Better

## Sentence Completions

Say to your learner: "I'm going to give you the first two



words of a sentence. Copy these two words and then make up the rest of the sentence yourself."

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| I always...   | I never... |
| I remember... | I can...   |
| I wish...     | I hope...  |
| I hate...     | I miss...  |
| I believe...  | I know...  |

## I Hear

"Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Now open your eyes and write down what you hear. Start with the words "I hear..."."

## Alphabet Sentences

"List the letters of the alphabet down the left-hand side of the page. Next to each letter, make up a sentence using as many words beginning with that letter as you can. (e.g. Annie Adams ate and ate apples.)"

## How To

"Think of something you know how to do and could explain clearly.

Write a step-by-step set of instructions to guide someone through the task. Remember that the

person you are explaining it has no idea how it's done. Make the instructions simple and clear."

## I See

Cut out a startling or interesting, beautiful or funny picture from a magazine (colored if possible, with no words on it).



"Take a long careful look at this picture. Then write a list of what you see in the picture. Begin each sentence with the words "I see..". Finish the sentence with something you see in the picture."

## Good Advice

Have several advice columns (Annie's Mailbox, etc.) cut from newspapers. Cut off the answer from the question.

"Here's an advice column with the answer missing. Read the letter and write your own advice." **OR** "Here is the answer to an advice column. Write down what you think the question was."

## My Perfect Day

"What would a perfect day be like for you? How would you spend the day? Where would you be? Would you share your day with anyone? Who would you share it with? Think about these questions and write about your perfect day."

# Words of comfort to parents about homework

A national survey on learning recently released by the Canadian Council on Learning reveals that almost two-thirds of Canadians feel parents don't have enough knowledge to help their children with homework. Although parents may not be able to cope with the homework themselves, 93 per cent of Canadians believe that homework "is an important part of schooling."

They are absolutely right. Research supports the idea that homework assignments in reasonable amounts can substantially contribute to learning. Not surprisingly, students who do homework perform better on tests and other assessments than students who duck it. And, up to a point—there is such a thing as too much homework—the more homework students do, the better they perform.



So, is parents' inability to provide homework assistance a serious problem? The short answer is no.

Parents will be relieved to learn that they don't need to rush out and brush up on their knowledge of physics, calculus and literature. However, parents should play an important part in their children's homework by taking an interest in their children's schoolwork, ensuring their children have a regular time and place to do their homework, and making certain that their children complete their homework in a timely fashion.

What parents shouldn't do is complete their children's homework, because this defeats its purpose.

Homework is a form of independent practice designed to be done without the assistance of the teacher or parents. Homework is usually assigned so students will practice and solidify newly acquired concepts and skills, or apply ones that are already well-honed. Students shouldn't practice something independently if they haven't mastered the skill or concept well enough to avoid making mistakes again and again. Repeating errors simply reinforces misconceptions, making subsequent instruction more difficult for the teacher, and more challenging and frustrating for the learner. When homework is too difficult, it becomes counter productive and its value for the student is lost.

But parents take heart. You can make a significant contribution to your children's schoolwork, even without expertise in specific subjects. Here are four ways:

1. Help your children develop good work habits, manage their time and set priorities, so they can address homework assignments in a disciplined manner and avoid last-minute panics.
2. Provide your children with a quiet study space and ensure that homework time is established and respected within the family schedule. This could mean requiring your children to finish their homework before playing with their friends.

3. Take an interest in your children's schoolwork and acknowledge the effort they have devoted to complete their assignments, at home and in school.
4. Watch for signs that your children are experiencing unusual degrees of difficulty. If a child needs help understanding or completing the work assigned by the teacher, it may mean the concepts haven't been mastered in class to the extent required for independent practice at home. The best way a parent can assist a struggling student is to talk to the teacher. Ideally, all three parties—the student, the parent and the teacher—will be involved in finding solutions to a student's challenges.

Schools and families both share responsibility for children's education. Among the greatest contributions parents can make is developing a positive attitude toward learning, which starts with reading to their children at an early age, by serving as models for ongoing learning themselves and by acting as advocates for their children if they continually struggle with schoolwork.

By Paul Cappon, President and CEO, [Canadian Council on Learning](#)  
Oct. 25, 2006

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## Websites to check out

<http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz22400419a5ee8.html> A short on-line quiz on the emblems and symbols of the Province of Saskatchewan \*\*\*We've included this quiz in the learner edition\*\*\*

<http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/geography/canada/saskatchewan.html> A webpage that lists fun Saskatchewan quizzes. These are ready to print or be completed on-line.

<http://www.funtrivia.com/canada> A webpage that lists over 100 fun Canadian quizzes.

[http://durhamliteracy.org/home/adult\\_literacy/tutorlinks](http://durhamliteracy.org/home/adult_literacy/tutorlinks) The website offers practical tips for tutors on subjects including learning styles, Civics, computer training, etymology, fluency...and the list goes on.

<http://www.historynewsnetwork.org/> History News Network is a wonderful America resource for adult literacy learners. The information is posted based on: the week's events, News at Home, News Abroad, Historians & History, History Q & A and historical books.

<http://www.tolearnenglish.com/> A handy site for tutors and learners. There are over 4,000 English exercises to improve writing, spelling, syntax and grammar, vocabulary, nouns, verbs, pronunciation, idioms, sentences and audio comprehension.

<http://www.englishtenseswithcartoons.com/> This is a site about learning English visually. You will find here the main 11 verb tenses. Each contains: formation of a given tense, use of a given tense, cartoons to help you understand the use of a given tense and entertain you a bit, example sentences and exercises.

# Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

As learners get into the reading habit, they will encounter many new words. They will begin to have questions about the uses, pronunciation and meanings of word. It will be important for you to teach vocabulary in a very intentional manner.



Vocabulary activities should be kept brief. These are meant as starter suggestions, not a complete course on vocabulary. Be sure to teach your learner about compound words, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homographs, prefixes, suffixes and dictionary skills. Whenever possible, reinforce special vocabulary activities by citing examples in the students' regular reading materials.

**Compound words** (two words put together to form a larger word). Put each of the following words onto a flash card. Have students make compound words from separate words and find the small words in the compound words:

to	over	flash	be	in
day	coat	light	side	side
today	overcoat	flashlight	beside	inside

air	every	news	some	some
plane	thing	paper	thing	times
airplane	everything	newspaper	something	sometimes

**Synonyms** (words that mean the same or nearly the same). In order to teach contrasting pairs, make flash cards for each word. Try yellow and green (or any 2 colours), so that colors can be used in matching exercises. The learner matches a yellow card with a green card. Begin with just a few words. Learners can also use each word in a sentence. Example: bending (green card) /stooping (yellow card)

begged/urged	grateful/thankful	pleasure/happiness	hastily/quickly
afraid/scared	smell/sniff	tossed/threw	disappeared/vanished
astonish/amaze	polish/shine	pleased/delighted	attempted/tried
start/begin	path/trail	screamed/yelled	kind/goodhearted
desire/wish	unhappy/sorrowful	roamed/wandered	snatched/grabbed
shut/close	loud/noisy	load/burden	

**Antonyms** (words that have opposite meanings). Use two colours of flash cards again; proceed as with synonyms:

empties/fills	nobody/somebody	fearful/brave	there/here
push/pull	clever/foolish	least/most	hard/soft
strange/familiar	tidy/untidy	cautiously/boldly	bad/good
tall/short	bottom/top	loud/quiet	shut/open start/end
usual/unusual	hungry/well-fed	big/little	ahead/behind
great/small	above/below	sadly/happily	

**Homonyms** (words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings). Example: **write** (green) /**right** (yellow)

sells/cells	toe/tow	sew/so	but/butt
one/won	chews/choose	meddles/medals	be/bee
threw/through	sent/scent/cent	hour/our	or/oar
hear/here	whole/hole	heal/heel	your/you're
stare/stair	herd/heard	wood/would	not/knot
paws/pause	guest/guessed	bored/board	

**Homographs** (words that have different meanings and/or different pronunciations but are spelled exactly alike). Discuss each word with the learner. How many meanings does he know? How many can you add? Check the dictionary together for more meanings. Then ask the learner to try to use each word twice in a sentence, illustration different meanings. For example, "You can *wind* a clock while the *wind* blows."

face	well	state	convict
line	land	miss	desert
mean	close	record	fire
fabric	read	address	bowl
sentence	play	climb	match
set	run	farm	train

FirstSask Credit Union is committed to READ Saskatoon and our community. As they articulate, community investment is one of the socially responsible ways they do business. Through partnerships, organizations not only benefit financially but also through the volunteerism of our employees in a variety of ways.



READ Saskatoon President, Mary Leggett and FirstSask Representative Carm Michalenko smile for the camera.

**Thank you FirstSask for supporting  
READ Saskatoon and the PGI!**

You are invited to take part in our  
Family Literacy Camp  
**Romp & Read**  
Preschool Summer Camp  
for Parents & Preschoolers

Date: June 11 – 15

Breakfast:

9:00 – 9:25 am

Lunch: Friday only at  
12:00 noon



Program time: 9:30am – 12:00pm (Snack will be provided)

Location: Holy Cross Lutheran Church 1405  
31<sup>st</sup> Street West. (Basement)

Cost: No charge

\*Children must be accompanied by an adult.  
(Max. 3 children per family)

Need Transportation? Bus Tickets are  
available upon request.

**Call 652-5448 to learn more and to register!**

*This project is funded by Saskatchewan Lotteries and  
the City of Saskatoon.*

**READ**Saskatoon  
The logo for READ Saskatoon, featuring the word "READ" in red and "Saskatoon" in black, with a stylized open book icon below it.

[www.READSaskatoon.com](http://www.READSaskatoon.com)

## READ 'n' Feed

May 8<sup>th</sup> was our  
10<sup>th</sup> annual  
READ 'n' Feed  
event. READ  
Saskatoon was  
lucky enough to  
have Brent



**NewsTalk 650**  
CKOM

Loucks from News Talk 650 CKOM Radio  
host the event. He raised the bar, helping us  
raise a record \$4,200! What an auctioneer!

Also, congratulations Tony Gauthier who was  
selected as our recipient for the *Rigby-Wilcox  
Learner Award* for 2007. Tony's nomination is  
available for viewing at:

<http://www.nald.ca/readsask/moreread.htm>

## Summer time is here!

On June 15<sup>th</sup> the  
READ Saskatoon  
Adult Program  
Coordinator will begin  
her summer holidays.  
We will be back in  
full-swing mid-  
August, but in the  
meantime there will



be a break in service at the READ Saskatoon  
Office.

You and your tutor can decide together if you want  
to continue tutoring or if you would like to take a  
break to celebrate the summer. Please decide  
with your tutor what you will do.

Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge  
with others and for helping them recognize the  
ability within themselves. Have a great summer!

# Top hazards of being an obsessive reader

- You may be tempted to read while stopped at red lights.
- You might think driving on straight roads and reading is okay.
- You may have to reschedule an appointment with a doctor (that you made an hour before) because you'll completely lose track of time.
- When you decide not to read while driving (after nearly crashing), you will likely stop at a red light for a long period of time, despite the fact that you are turning right-on-red, simply because you are thinking about fictional gorgeous-people.
- You might sneak into an exclusive book signing by author of obsessively-read book just to ask a question. You may get kicked out of said signing, and then sneak back in, only to be dragged out by author's body guard.
- You probably won't blog for nearly a week, despite the fact that you haven't gone that long in quite a while, just because the book is too hard to put down. You may try to read blogs of friends WHILE reading your book.
- You may start calling strangers to tell them about this book you are so obsessed with.
- When someone asks for book recommendations that are deep and inspirational and informative, you might recommend this book despite the fact that it is anything but deep or inspirational or informative or unridiculous.
- You may visit the author's website obsessively. That is, after reading all the books that the author has published.
- Your spouse, after accusing you of having an affair with your book, will beg you to remember to feed your children.



Disclaimer: Although some of these may have happened to me personally while reading the following book, others may be representative of things happening to others I know.

Taken from: <http://whimsybooks.livejournal.com/data/atom>

*It may be hard on the ears,* but a literacy expert says karaoke can motivate and dramatically boost the skills of struggling young readers. Susan Homan is a literacy professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. She says using sing-a-long computer technology to help kids read has shown "amazing" results among Florida kids in grades three through 12. Homan says that after nine weeks of half-hour sing-a-long instructions, three times a week, reading skills improved, on average by one grade level. Homan will present the findings of three studies at the International Reading Association convention in Toronto on Wednesday.

- May 14, 2007 Toronto Star



# READer Family Fun Page

Children learn by touching, tasting, feeling, smelling and listening. They love to help prepare food and cook because they can use all their senses.

Children like to eat the foods they make. Plan ways the children in your care can help you. Be sure to consider the age of the child

**Two-year-olds** are learning to use the large muscles in their arms. They will enjoy activities such as:

- scrubbing vegetables and fruits
- wiping tables
- dipping vegetables and fruits
- tearing lettuce and salad greens
- breaking bread for stuffing
- snapping fresh beans



**Three-year-olds** are learning to use their hands. Try activities such as:

- pouring liquids into a batter
- mixing muffin batter
- shaking a milk drink
- spreading peanut butter on firm bread (This may be messy!)
- kneading bread dough

**Four- and five-year-olds** are learning to control smaller muscles in their fingers. Offer them experiences such as:

- rolling bananas in cereal for a snack
- juicing oranges, lemons, and limes
- mashing soft fruits and vegetables
- measuring dry and liquid ingredients
- grinding cooked meat for a meat spread
- beating eggs with an eggbeater

## IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1) Good cooks of all ages always wash their hands before cooking.
- 2) Tell children to wait until the dish is done before sampling it. This will help prevent illness.
- 3) Expect spills and messes.
- 4) Children have short attention spans. Give them quick, simple jobs, and give instructions one at a time.
- 5) Children get excited and forget. Repeat directions as often as needed.
- 6) Young cooks need constant supervision.
- 7) Give children jobs to help with cleanup.

- From: <http://www.preschooleducation.com/art17.shtml>