

LITERACY & OPPORTUNITY

In this information age, with technology and the world at our fingertips, we have moved beyond literacy being defined by Grade levels or just being able to read or write. Today, “Literacy is about more than reading and writing – it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relations, about knowledge, language and culture.” (United Nations)

Literacy is “understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential”.

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012)

Today, more than ever, reading, writing and numeracy skill development is particularly important for adults and families in our province. Literacy is linked to economic and personal success. The jobs people find, salaries they make, upgrade opportunities, and their ability to participate in their community are all directly related to their literacy skills.

In short, literacy affects opportunities.

NUMERACY
The knowledge and skills required to effectively manage the mathematical demands of diverse situations OR understanding written instructions that rely on charts, numbers, and conditional statements.



IMPACT OF LOW LITERACY



Literacy is directly related to a person’s quality of life. Low literacy is linked to poor health, poverty, high unemployment, and crime rates.

EMPLOYMENT

Canadians with low literacy and numeracy skills are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than those with higher skill levels.

Someone with low literacy has fewer choices when it comes to jobs, education, and housing.

Those with low literacy levels have lower rates of employment and usually work in jobs with lower skill requirements, that are precarious, or have no contract.



JUSTICE

Criminal offenders have triple the amount of literacy problems than the general public.

Someone with low literacy is more likely to get involved with the criminal justice system.

Neighbourhoods with lower literacy levels tend to have higher crime rates, while those who commit crimes or are victims of crimes are more likely to have lower literacy levels.



HEALTH

Literacy skills are strongest predictor of health status.

People with low literacy levels can’t read medication instructions and visit hospitals more frequently than those with higher literacy levels.

Someone with low literacy is 1.5 to three times more likely to have adverse health outcomes.



FINANCES

Literacy has the most significant effect on earnings, followed by education.

Adults with low numeracy skills are 2.5 times more likely to receive social assistance than those with higher scores.



WHY INVEST?

An investment in literacy can benefit the economy by: reducing costs for social assistance, health care and justice, as well as increasing productivity and earning.

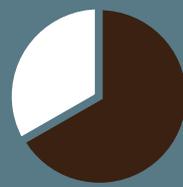
A concerted effort to raise the literacy level of every Canadian would result in annual social assistance savings of \$542 million. Higher literacy levels are associated with increased community involvement and volunteerism rates.



THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

- 48%** of Canadian adults lack the basic literacy skills to cope with everyday life and work.
- 55%** of Canadian adults score in the two lowest skill levels of numeracy.
- 54%** of Canadians do not have a budget.
- 60%** of Canadian adults don't know how much money they will need to save for retirement in order to maintain their desired standard of living.
- 40%** of Canadians say that money is a daily concern, while one third of low-income Canadians report worrying about money all the time.
- 46%** of Canadian adults with the lowest literacy levels live in low-income households.
- 60%** of Canadian adults are unable to get, understand and act on health information and services, or make appropriate health decisions on their own.
- 90%** of Canadians agree that boosting literacy rates will improve everyone's quality of living.

THE SASKATCHEWAN CONTEXT



1/3 of Saskatchewan adults struggle with literacy.

57%

of Saskatchewan adults score in the two lowest numeracy skill levels

Of Saskatchewan adults who scored in the two lowest literacy skill levels:

- 34%** have not completed high school
- 65%** are employed

READ SASKATOON

ANNUALLY WE SERVE



3,000 people



120 Volunteers



30,000 volunteer hours = 15 full-time positions!



75 Community Partners



9 Staff

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

OF OUR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

ADULT LITERACY

4/5

achieved their goals.

3

hours average homework per week.

89%

of adult learners and their coaches report improved literacy skills for employment, employment-focused, education and/or self-identified long-term goals.

FAMILY LITERACY

3.5

We host a free family literacy session in the community every 3.5 days.

90%

of parents/caregivers report increased literacy habits and activities to support their children learning to read at home.

82%

of parents/caregivers gained awareness of other community learning opportunities and resources because of our programs.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

67%

of participants made changes to money management.

30%

made monthly contributions to emergency savings/RRSP/RESP/TFSA.

50%

took steps to repair credit.

71%

of RESP workshop participants planned to open their first RESP after attending the workshop.

READ Saskatoon has served 20,000 people since 1979!



READ Saskatoon
READsaskatoon.com
info@READsaskatoon.com
 (306) 652-5448