

Literacy

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)

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.



Opportunity

Today, problem solving in technology-rich environments, reading, writing, and numeracy skill development are particularly important for adults and families. 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.



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. Statistics Canada confirms that "literacy skill level and household income are positively related."



Health

Literacy skills are strongest predictor of health status.

People with low literacy levels have difficulty reading medication instructions and visit hospitals more frequently than those with higher literacy levels.

Someone with low literacy is 2.5 times as likely to be in fair or poor health.



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.



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

65% of people entering correctional facilities in Canada have less than a Grade 8 education or level of literacy skills.

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.



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.



SOURCES: Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD and StatsCanada, 2000; Adult Literacy & Life Skills, Stats Canada & OECD, 2005; Health Literacy in Canada: A Healthy Understanding, Canadian Council on Learning, 2008; Literacy and Policing in Canada: Target Crimes with Literacy, 2009; From Poverty to Prosperity: Literacy's Impact on Canada's Economic Success, Canadian Literacy & Learning Network, 2011; Literacy & Essential Skills in Saskatchewan: An Environmental Scan 2012, Saskatchewan Literacy Network; Survey of Adult Skills: OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2012 & 2013; Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), Statistics Canada, 2013; Managing Money & Planning for the Future: Key Findings from the 2014 Canadian Financial Capability Survey, Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, 2015; Insights on Canadian Society: The association between skills and low income, Statistics Canada, 2016; Canadians & Their Money, Financial Planning Standards Council, 2016; Frontier College, 2017. Canadians with incomes under \$40K bearing the financial brunt of COVID-19. Prosper Canada, 2020; and, Roadblock to Recovery: Consumer debt of low-and-moderate-income Canadian households in the time of COVID-19. Prosper Canada, 2020.

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.

31% Low income households spend an average of 31% of their incomes on debt repayment.

92% of low income households are carrying consumer debt.

30% For those with income less than \$40K, 46% of employment earnings decreased and 30% indicated their personal debt worsened in 2020.

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



2,500 people



165 Volunteers



41,000 volunteer hours = 21 full-time positions!



96 Community Partners

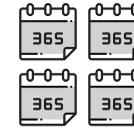


15 Staff

Results & Outcomes

Of Our Work In The Community

Children's Literacy



Over a span of four years we delivered one-to-one support to over 150 children. 1,200 books were sent home with children.

70%

of learners spend additional time each week to work on their learning goals.

Adult Literacy

78%

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

4/5

achieved their goals.

Family Literacy

3.5

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

82%

of parents/caregivers report increased literacy habits and activities to support their children's emerging literacy development.

90%

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

Financial Literacy

90%

of participants made changes to money management.

307

participants annually.

73%

shared what they learned with family and/or friends.

99

RESP's were opened to save for a child's future.

READ Saskatoon has served 25,000 people since 1979!

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