



# Downtown Parents

## Neighbourhood Corner

Communities 4 Families  
(Downtown Parent-Child Coalition)

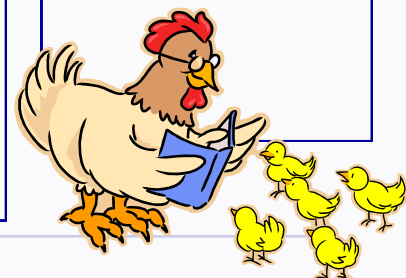
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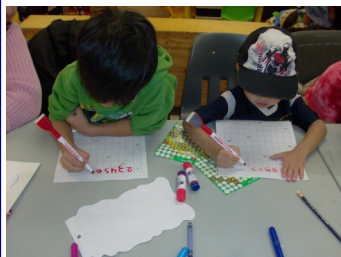
These new mothers heard the message that they are their child's first teacher and that their interactions with their baby from birth can influence brain development and set the stage for their future success. They made beautiful, meaningful books for their child, supporting literacy and positive self-esteem for the young parents.



### Wellington School Book Bags workshop

Wellington School received a Family Literacy grant from Communities 4 Families that was used to hold a workshop for families to make Book Bags. Here's what they said:

The grant funds were used for cultural intergenerational quality hard-cover books (*I'm A Frog Book* by MO Williams, *The Busy Farm* by Anton Poitier and *Awesome Animals* by Miles Kelly).



There were reading strategies, literacy math games, a handmade book bag, healthy food, photographs of the project, and individual family certificates for each of the participants.



Over the day participants created props for their chosen book. We hoped to help the parents make props that were fun. What became evident was the love and thoughtfulness they put into their creations. We also became aware of one another as we saw things through the lenses of others. We ate together, we laughed together, we grew. As one parent said, "This is my first year at Wellington and I really like the Wiggle, Giggle and Munch program. When Livia mentioned the Book Bags project I was kind of interested because I like reading books with my daughter. But I was worried that I would have trouble in making the props. Everybody helped each other! This is a really good program."

### Bookmates' Rock and Read at Villa Rosa

Facilitators guided a group of parents and infants at a Bookmates Rock and Read program with rhyme time, book sharing, and book-making. All the material was supplied for each parent to make a book for their child. They also received culturally appropriate pre-school books to keep, activity ideas, parent handouts and rhyme booklets.

The mothers learned the importance of spending one-on-one time reading and bonding with their children. It was obvious that the babies and toddlers were interested in what was going on.

The young mothers were very dedicated to creating books for their children. They spent a lot of time, effort, and thought on what they were doing, and created beautiful images with a learning component (counting or abc's for example) that they could later read with their babies.

# Storytelling

Did you know that family literacy is about more than just reading? Just talking to your baby and young children helps them learn about sounds and language, which is needed to be able to learn to read later. It helps the brain to grow! So use every reason to talk! Here's some great ideas that can help from

[www.parentsmatter.ca](http://www.parentsmatter.ca):

## Connecting Through Stories

When your children ask for a story, do you head for the bookshelf, or look for a DVD you can play? If you do, you're missing a golden opportunity. You've got everything you need without moving an inch. Take a moment to think and remember, then sit down and tell them a family tale.

### Family memories

Choose a memory and give it life. Here are some ideas:

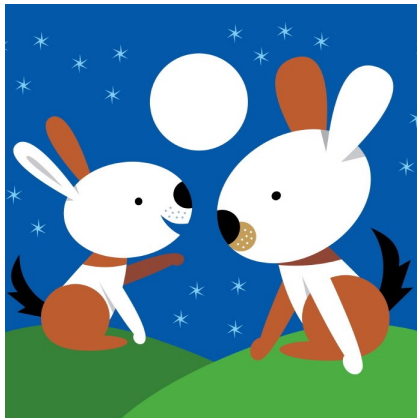
- Tell them something **about themselves**: where their names come from; the day they were born; the first time their grandparents saw them.
- Talk **about yourself**: the way you and your partner met, the best gift you ever received, the time you were most scared when you were little.
- Look back to your **family's roots**: remember stories about when your own parents' were growing up; if your family came from elsewhere, tell your children stories about that place, whether it was 500 or 5000 kilometres away.

- Tell a story about the **season**: if it's fall, tell about Halloween costumes; if it's winter, remember back to skating and adventures in the snow.

Storytelling can happen anywhere you and your children are together. You can be sorting laundry, walking to the bus stop, or cuddling together in a darkened bedroom at the end of the day.

## Play to your audience

You'll soon learn what kind of story your children enjoy. When they're very young, children like to hear the same story over and over again. They also like repetition of phrases within the story, like the refrain in a song. Sound effects, like cows that moo and bells that go ding dong, are also a sure bet to get their attention.



Older children go for action, surprises and drama. Teenagers like personal experience stories, especially ones about times when you were embarrassed or anxious or made mistakes. It's reassuring to know that the same difficult emotions plagued you when you were their age.



## Why?

There are all sorts of reasons to tell your children stories in your own words.

- Story time builds **family connections**. You and your children share a fun, creative experience. At the same time, your children are learning more about your life, your reactions and your roots.
- You stretch children's **imagination** with the word pictures you draw in your stories.
- When you tell stories that involve **dealing with difficult emotions**, you can give children relief from their own strong feelings. For instance, in a story, you can acknowledge children's fears and calm their worries. Even bad memories can inspire tales about difficulties lived through and overcome.

Once you get started, you'll catch the bug and start saving up stories for quiet moments together. Go ahead, tell a few tales!

## Other Family Literacy Activities

### **Bookmates Families Together Literacy Program 823 Ellice Ave.**

This free 8-week program is for newcomer parents and preschool children (6 and under). Every Thursday from January 23 to March 30, 1:30 - 3:30 pm.

Join us for rhymes, songs and art activities while meeting other families new to Canada. Supplies & snacks provided.

To register: call 204.774.7005 or email [outreach@dmsmca.ca](mailto:outreach@dmsmca.ca).

**The library is always a good place to find family literacy activities:**

#### **Millennium Library**

Registration begins January 17.  
Call 204.986.6488 for these 8 week programs.

#### **Baby Rhyme Time for newborn to 24 months & caregiver**

Discover the joy of songs, finger plays, simple books and bouncing rhymes. Fridays at 10:30 am starting Jan. 31

#### **Time for Twos for ages 24-36 months & caregiver**

Explore the world of picture books, rhymes, finger plays and felt stories. Wednesdays at 10:30 am starting Jan. 29

#### **Pre-School Story Time for 3-5 year olds**

A creative program of books, action rhymes, finger plays and felt stories for children who are ready to be on their own in a group. Tuesdays at 10:30 am starting Jan. 28

Some of these Wiggle, Giggle & Munch programs include a literacy component. Look for the program at one of these locations:

Sister MacNamara School  
Call Alexis at: 204.942.6965

Greenway School  
Call Debbie at 204.774.7298

Dufferin School  
Call 204.774-3409

Wolseley Family Place  
Call 204.788.8052

Learning and Play Program  
287 Laura Ave.  
Call Susan Currie at  
204.942.8682 ext 224

Wellington School  
Call Livia at 204.774.8085

John M King School  
Call Sue at 204.775.4404

IRCOM, 95 Ellen St.  
Call 204.943.8765

Sargent Park School  
Call 204.775.8985

#### **Family Story Time**

The whole family enjoys stories, rhymes and activities. Best enjoyed by ages 3-5 and their caregivers, but younger and older siblings can enjoy being part of the action too.

8 week session. Registration begins January 17.

**Cornish Library** (204.986.4679):  
Fridays at 10:30 am starting Jan.31

**Millennium Library:** Saturdays at 11 am, starting Feb.1 (Drop-in, no registration required)

**West End Library** (204.986.4677):  
Fridays at 10:30 am starting Jan.31

#### **Family Literacy Fun Days**

The whole family is invited, and fun is a guarantee! Exciting games and creative activities that promote the playful use of reading, writing, and language skills. Drop in.

**Cornish Library:** Monday, Jan.27 from 6-8 pm featuring Aboriginal-themed activities

**West End Library:** Saturday, Feb.8 from 1:30-3:30 pm

#### **Love is All Around**

Join us for stories of friendship and family and craft your own valentine to take home. For families.

**West End Library:** Tuesday, Feb.11 from 6:30-7:15 pm  
Call to 204.986.4677 register.

#### **Peeks 'n Pops**

Get ready for fun with pop up and lift-the-flap stories and create one of your very own to take home. For families with children ages 6-8.

**Cornish Library:** Tuesday, Feb. 25 from 7-8 pm. Call 204.986.4679 to register.

### **Wii Chiiwaakanak Reading Circle 511 Ellice Ave.**

A reading circle is a safe place where children can develop a love of reading and books.

For families with preschool children. Our circle will focus on Aboriginal literature, fun crafts and activities. Watch for details on the [Wii Chiiwaakanak website](#).

**Are you looking for some free fun with your kids?**

**Join us at one of our**

# **Family Literacy Celebrations**



**Activities based on the book:**

## **“The Old Woman and the Eagle”**

**By: Idries Shah**

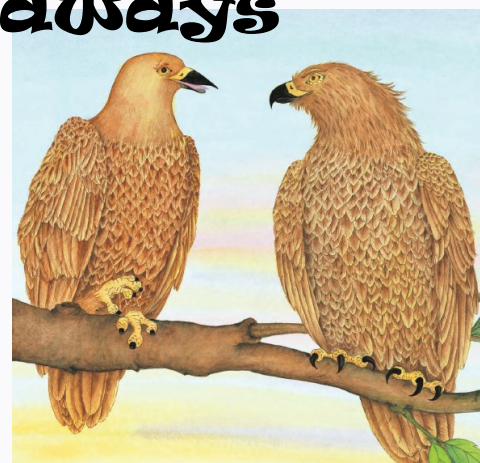


👉 **Book Giveaways**

👉 **Food**

👉 **Games**

👉 **Draws**



**For more information:**

E-mail: [info@communities4families.ca](mailto:info@communities4families.ca)

Web-site: [www.communities4families.ca](http://www.communities4families.ca)

**WHEN: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH**

**FROM: 5:00—7:00 pm**

(Get there early so you will not miss the fun!)

**Where:** West End Library &  
Cindy Klassen Recreational  
Complex

**Address:** 999 Sargent Ave.

**WHEN: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH**

**FROM: 5:00—7:00 pm**

(Get there early so you will not miss the fun!)

**Where:** Wii Chiiwaakanak  
Learning Centre

**Address:** 511 Ellice Ave.



**Fun and  
FREE!**