

Live, Horse, 'Til the Grass Grows!

A Study of Family Literacy in New Brunswick:
Work, Outcomes, and Best Practices



**From the Family Literacy Field Coordination and Research Project
Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (LCNB)**

February, 2006

Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Ottawa





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Researcher – **Cheryl Brown**

Primary Writer – **Joan B. Perry**, with some sections written by **Cheryl Brown**

Project Manager and Editor – **Jan Greer**

Layout and Design – **Mandy Wright**

Artistic Contributors – **Nikolas Murphy (Age 6 years)**, **Robyn Brown (Age 12 years)**,
Gordon Brown (Age 9 years), **Matthew Brown (Age 9 years)**

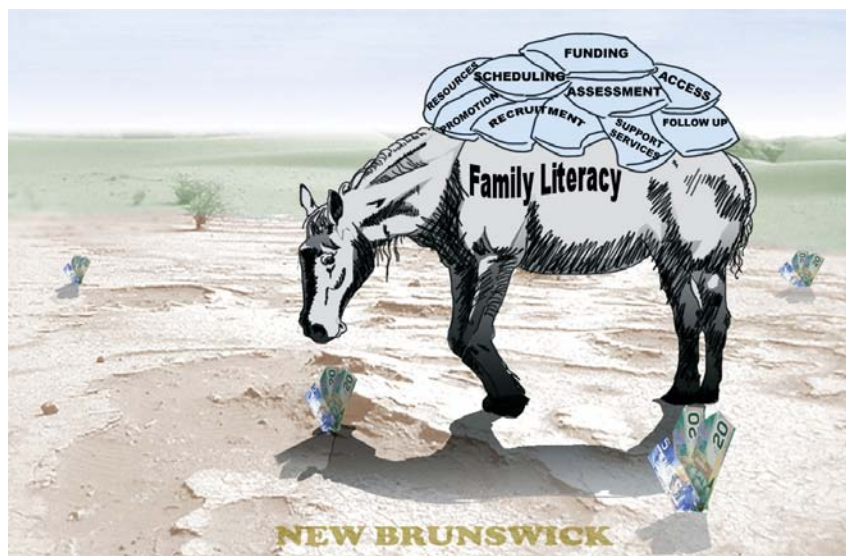


Illustration by Jim Middleton



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From the Family Literacy Field Coordination and Research Project
of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (LCNB)
944 Prospect Street, Suite 302, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 9M6
Tel: 506-457-1227
Email: nbcl@nbnet.nb.ca
www.nb.literacy.ca

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“Live horse ’til the grass grows,” is a saying that comes from a family storytelling tradition. Once the results of the study were documented the authors and editors faced the challenge of giving the document a name. The cluster of practitioners involved in family literacy is referred to as a “field.”

Since New Brunswick has a historic deep-rooted tradition of farming and animal husbandry, a similarity was noted in the descriptive language surrounding both the tradition of farming and the tradition of family literacy. Both require seeding, nurturing, cultivation, best practices, establishing strategies and methodologies. Both require patience, tender care, and making it through times of feast or famine, flood or drought. Both enrich the family.

The author said the state of the family literacy field reminded her of a traditional springtime saying in rural New Brunswick that harkened back to a time when families were dependent on a bountiful harvest from the family farm to sustain them and their animals over the winter.

There were times when there was barely enough food for the family, let alone the cattle. As spring got closer, and supplies got leaner, families prayed for an acceleration of warm weather so that the snow would melt and green shoots would begin to grow, finally providing food for the horses and other cattle. Families adopted the phrase, “Live, horse, ’til the grass grows!” This was an expression of faith that more abundant times were ahead, if humans and animals alike could just survive until the season changed and the earth would endow rich, lush provisions.



Abstract

This document outlines current work, outcomes, and best practices in community-based family literacy programs in New Brunswick. It communicates what practices are being demonstrated within the family literacy field, a field that is struggling to cultivate, thrive, and grow. By comparison to other richer provinces like Alberta and British Columbia, New Brunswick's efforts look more like a 'patch' than a field. The study reveals that the intergenerational model, considered the purest of family literacy programs, is barely evident in New Brunswick.

However, if properly nurtured and tended, family literacy practice in New Brunswick has potential to be a fertile and lush field, rich and abundant in experience and resources.

For now, practitioners and advocates continue to struggle and toil, turning the ground and forging ahead much like our farming foremothers and forefathers.





Acknowledgements and Author's Note

The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick Ltd. (LCNB) gratefully acknowledges the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), a department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), for funding this project. Participation from family literacy program participants and practitioners, who volunteered their time to share valuable experience and information, is greatly appreciated. Names, programs, and locations are not identified in order to protect anonymity.

Preliminary investigations were carried out by Cheryl Brown, a family literacy practitioner/researcher. Brown reviewed literature, consulted with field workers, and transcribed interview data. Brown's preliminary data analysis, writings, and research appear throughout the report. The documentation is based fully upon the masked data provided to the author, Joan Perry, and the author's literature review.

The writer's main objective was to evaluate and organize data.

It is anticipated that this report will:

- I.** Speak loudly and proudly of current best practices in advancing family literacy in NB.
- II.** Demonstrate the value of family literacy practice, with its potential for strengthening literacy skills in both adults and children while providing longer term outcomes.
- III.** Inform program planning, delivery, and policy-making, and advance best practice.
- IV.** See increased funding as well as increased appreciation and value for community-based family literacy programs.
- V.** Greater participation between government, community, and corporations.



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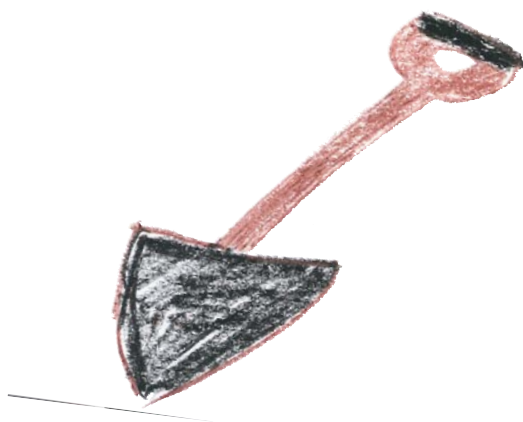
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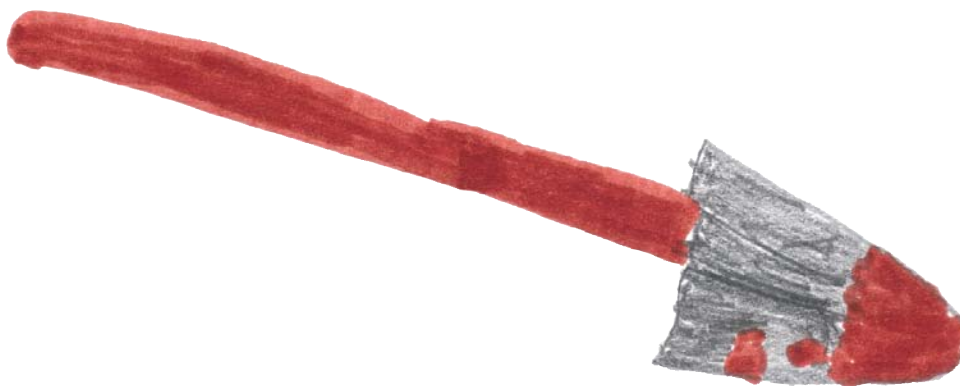


Executive Summary

Some would say that the practice of family literacy is barely germinating in New Brunswick. Certainly this field in other provinces shows not only more lush growth, but more variety.

This report is a benchmark study of how family literacy in New Brunswick has been cultivated up to and including the year 2005. There are wonderful examples of community-based activities and programs for families throughout the province. The people involved in these programs are their most valuable resource, well-informed and well-intentioned, working for the good of the people in their communities and doing so, in most cases, under impoverished circumstances. One could say that they are succeeding in spite of the lack of money, time, human, material and other resources. The Literacy Coalition intends to shift these circumstances through this study, and a multi-sectoral dialogue, as part of its response to the need for material resources and professional development and training.

The excellent news emerging from this study is the wonderful effort being carried out in communities across the province. There are good practices being demonstrated, as well as value-based underlying principles and increasing levels of local knowledge. These are all excellent fundamentals from which to further construct, cultivate, and contribute. It is the intention of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick to facilitate this through dialogue and by advancing a family literacy network.



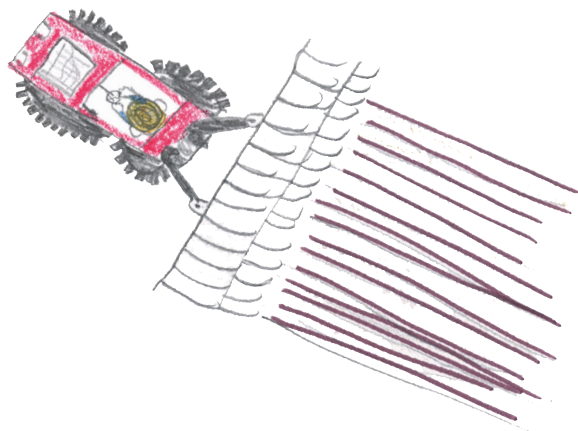


Introduction

The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (LCNB) partnered with practitioners in the province's family literacy community to identify best practices in current, 2005, programs and look at program success indicators and outcomes. The project was prompted by awareness that there were many family literacy efforts, and the knowledge that there was no compilation of outcomes or coordination of family literacy practices, which is vital in order for the growth and advancement of the practice.

The preliminary research phase was seen as a means of strengthening collaboration through information-sharing. These results will assist LCNB in creating real and virtual resources for practitioners and the families they work with. LCNB will continue to consult with partners to develop a strategic plan in order to create a collaborative, supportive environment and a 'field' of family literacy practitioners.

This report summarizes a literature review, methods of research, findings of the lived experiences in family literacy settings, and interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations. The document will be made available to the funder, respondents, public, and government.





Through the literature review process, family literacy models and best practices were examined. These helped to frame and interpret the findings. The expected outcome was to link accepted theory to New Brunswick's family literacy practice and program delivery.

Efforts were not exhaustive, but were directed towards current conversations, controversies, or practice guidelines within the field.

*"A literature review tells us what is out there on a topic...safe-guards against undertaking a study that may already have been done."
(Brown, 2004, p.3)*

What constitutes family literacy practice?





There is little consensus on the definition of family literacy (Skage, 1995; *Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation, 2000*, Hendrix, 2000; Shively, 2001). In 2001, Shively, a Nova Scotia practitioner, noted that the term 'family literacy' originated in Dr. Denny Taylor's 1983 study which explored the social context of the home as a key factor in the literacy development of children.

The work of Nickse and Quezada noted,

Programs are being developed with the realization that literacy is a slender thread that binds many issues together. Family literacy programs place an emphasis on the enjoyment of literacy, as well as such functional aspects as its importance to children's school achievement and adults' success in finding work in a worsening job market (1994, p. 211.)

In 1991, Nickse categorized family literacy programs according to the type of participant (adult and/or child), the degree of intervention (direct or indirect), and based on whether or not the adult and child are present *together* for literacy development any or all of the time. Skage (1995) summarized these four model types. (See Table 1.)

Table 1 Nickse's (1991) Models of Family Literacy Program Types

Type 1	Direct Adults • Direct Children
	<p>This model involves programming for both parents and pre-school child. Parents attend literacy instruction and may participate in parenting education, vocational training, or volunteer in the program or children's classroom. "Parent and child together" activities are also a key feature, and may include instruction on how to interact and play with children, as well as how to read to them. Programs use a dual curriculum and direct instruction that is class-based. Children take part in a structured early childhood or preschool program.</p>
Type 2	Indirect Adults • Indirect Children
	<p>Adults (may or may not be parents) and children attend together. The goal is the promotion of literacy for enjoyment. There is no sequential curriculum, but rather a series of reading enrichment events, such as storytelling, book talks, and library activities. Reading pal programs involving adult volunteers are another example of this type of program.</p>
Type 3	Direct Adults • Indirect Children
	<p>Adults are the main target for this type of program, and children do not participate regularly, if at all. Programs may include literacy or English language instruction, or instruction in reading children's stories or other behaviours that assist children. The goal is to help adults become more literate so they may positively influence their children's literacy development.</p>
Type 4	Indirect Adults • Direct Children
	<p>Pre-school and school-aged children are the primary recipients of service in this type of program. Parents may be invited to participate, but usually do not receive literacy instruction for their own needs.</p>

Note: This table is from Sharon Skage's A Practical Guide to Family Literacy (1995).

Three years later, Thomas determined that,

Family literacy programs provide models for positive interactions in the family and larger community. In doing so, family literacy programs provide assistance to whole families in developing skills to participate more fully in their communities. (Thomas, 1998, p. 4).

More recently in *Parenting for a Literate Community*, a project conducted in New Brunswick in 1999, Nason, Hunt, and Whitty described a connected home-school-community based literacy directive as:

...encouraging a culturally embedded approach to literacy learning, one which honours every day life and diverse family activities and draws upon resources in domestic and community contexts. The family's own everyday experiences and stories are the springboard for developing literacy teaching and learning (Early Childhood Centre UNB, 1999, website project notes).

Early in the new millennium, the Centre for Family Literacy in Alberta defined family literacy as “an approach to literacy development that builds on family strengths and connections within the context of the communities and the culture in which families live and learn” (2002, p.1,1.3).

Within six years of Skage defining Nickse’s four-tier family literacy model, her framework in 2001 was further developed to outline seven categories of family literacy. This was instructive in analyzing the scope of family literacy practice in New Brunswick and more closely matched the theories of Nason, Hunt, and Whitty. (See Table 2.)

Given this quickly-progressing, rich advancement in defining family literacy, when LCNB developed the *2002 New Brunswick Family Literacy Directory*, the steering committee guiding the project, made up of leading authorities on family literacy in the province, collectively determined that...

...family literacy initiatives are those that directly involve parents and children, also known as “intergenerational” literacy initiatives and are programs where both parents and children are seen as beneficiaries (LCNB, 2002, p.4).

Table 2 Skage's (2001) Categories of Family Literacy

Type of Family Literacy Work	Characteristic Nature
Intergenerational Projects	These have specific program components that involve sustained parent-child literacy interaction.
Focus on Parent or Primary Caregiver	The common characteristic is providing parents with ways to support home literacy and to foster reading with children.
Parental Involvement	The focus is on children's literacy development, with adults enlisted to provide program support (e.g. Family Resource programs, some school-based programs, and home-based tutoring programs.)
Family Literacy Activities for the General Public	Little or no direct literacy instruction is provided in this type of initiative, where both adults and children, as part of the general public, are invited to participate in literacy activities for enjoyment.
Projects for Family Literacy Resources	Family literacy materials are created by project staff or volunteers and are distributed to families for in-home use. In this type of project there is no on-going contact with recipient families to support the use of literacy resources in the home.
Family Literacy Professional Training and Resources	There are several initiatives that provide training and resources to family literacy practitioners across Canada.

Note: This table was created using Sharon Skage's outline text Foundational Training (2002).

Looking at Family Literacy through a Critical Lens by Cheryl Brown

Some researchers explain this variety in definition by pointing to the diverse fields family literacy was born of. *The Centre de recherché et de développement* (2000) cites adult literacy, emergent literacy, cognitive science, early childhood development and theory of the family unit as roots of family literacy. Thomas & Skage (1998) state that family literacy brings together research and practice 'from several fields of study and social service, including sociology, psychology and education' (Thomas & Skage, 1998, p.19). Dorothy Strickland (1996) noted that the study and analysis of family literacy as a concept is rooted in the work of anthropologists and sociologists. Ethnographer Denny Taylor first used the term 'family literacy' in her 1981 doctoral dissertation. The phrase was later popularized through her 1983 work *Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write*.

Janet Shively offers a slightly different reason for this diversity. Definitions of family literacy, she writes, 'reflect the values and suit the purposes' of those doing the defining. The words 'family' and 'literacy' are both 'value-laden, culture specific and open to interpretation themselves' (Shively, 2001, p.1). Consequently, there are 'many sectors that have staked a claim in the family literacy turf, inevitably imposing their own perspective' (Shively, 2001, p.1). Thus, differences in terminology, approaches and definitions - for example, the difference between a deficit or a strength-based model (Auerbach, 1989) - echo differences in the underlying assumptions brought by certain fields or sectors, as much as they

do the diversity of families and programs. This has left the family literacy field struggling to define common goals and practices (DeBruin-Parecki, Paris & Seidenberg, 1997; Hendrix, 2000).

Not surprisingly, the authors have found it hard to categorize the diverse responses received in this project. Our challenge was to capture a picture of what is happening in family literacy in New Brunswick right now. But, what is 'family literacy'? For the authors, family literacy is something that happens in families, and therefore at home or in the community. It is what children and parents or grandparents do together. Presumably, then, family literacy programs, resources, and/or supports are those efforts which deliberately set out to nurture or scaffold this. The element of intention is crucial. Family literacy often happens in the midst of grocery shopping, but grocery stores are not, in the main, in the business of offering family literacy programming. Family literacy can happen when a family goes to a museum. Here the museum is the context, but not the provider, of the literacy effort. On the other hand, any program, project, resource, and/or support, deliberately created to foster or further family literacy, must be respected as legitimate family literacy efforts. The challenge is to appropriately classify these efforts.

Literature Review

Thomas and Fisher (1996) listed five levels of program evaluation identified by Weiss and Jacobs in 1988. (See Table 3.)

Table 3 Weiss and Jacobs' (1988) Levels of Program Evaluation

Level 1	
Needs Assessment	To document need for services. (pre-implementation of program) Strategies: define target population, describe services offered.
Level 2	
Program Documentation	To determine who is receiving services and what services are provided. Strategies: numbers served, what services used.
Level 3	
Program Clarification	To improve services to participants. Strategies: determine participant satisfaction.
Level 4	
Progress Toward Objectives	To determine the nature of participant progress. Strategies: document participant progress.
Level 5	
Program Impact	To determine long-term effects of program participation. Strategies: document participant progress, community perceptions over an extended period of time.

Note: This table created from a list given by Thomas and Fisher in *Assessment and Evaluation Strategies in Family Literacy Program Development* (1996).

Identified best practices for family literacy programs

British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Nova Scotia created best practices documents for family literacy. (See Table 4.) Other provinces, like New Brunswick, are not as evolved in their family literacy practice and are working to develop a family literacy network.

Table 4 Provinces with Family Literacy Best Practice Statements

British Columbia (1999)	
BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy Available at: www.nald.ca/fulltext/framwork/cover.htm	16 factors that contribute to best practice in family literacy: program philosophy, planning, community involvement & linkages, awareness activities (public relations, recruitment, advocacy), access, participation, facilities & equipment, administration, staff training & development, volunteer support services, assessment, family support services, instructional strategies & materials, program evaluation, resources, and language diversity
Manitoba (2000)	
Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Family Literacy Programming Available by ordering from link at: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/all/publications.html	This report was written to assist community-based programs to work towards developing quality family literacy programming practices. A Summary Report is also available.
Saskatchewan	
Family Literacy Fact Sheets Available by contacting Saskatchewan Literacy network whose website is at www.sk.literacy.ca Fact sheets at: www.sk.literacy.ca/family/facts.htm	A series of 10 fact sheets about family literacy, as to who it benefits, programs, & training and its connection to adult education, community, schools, employment, health, justice system

Table 4 Provinces with Family Literacy Best Practice Statements *continued*

Alberta (March 2002)	
<p>Family Literacy Good Practices</p> <p>Available by contacting Centre for Family Literacy in Edmonton on website: www.famlit.ca or download at: http://famlit.ca/resources/goodpractice.html</p>	<p>10 themes: intergenerational, collaborative, build on strengths, responsive, culturally sensitive, essence of family literacy, sound methods, staff qualifications, access, and evaluation.</p>
Nova Scotia (2003)	
<p>Family Literacy Best Practices Guide for Programs in Nova Scotia</p> <p>Available from Literacy Nova Scotia online at: www.nald.ca/clr/best/cover.htm</p>	<p>Guiding principles for high quality programs include: family-centred, focused on strengths, access, sensitive to linguistic/cultural/gender issues, evidence-based, community links, collaborative process & partnerships. The best practices dealt with funding, administrative accountability, program content, safety & liability issues, program assessment & evaluation, personnel, program materials, program access, promotion & public awareness, and volunteer recruitment.</p>

In the last fifteen years in NB, provincial policy developments connected with children have brought in universal kindergarten (1991), early childhood initiatives for at-risk families and children (1992), and federally-funded Community Action Programs (CAPC) for priority preschool children and families (1994). Following these developments, Family Resource Centres were started to deliver an inclusive approach to early childhood and family initiatives (UNB, 1999, website project notes).

Some principles underlying best practices in other provinces include universal access, learning environment and approaches, free support services, professional development and training for staff and program evaluation methods.



LCNB wanted cooperative qualitative research, valuable for those working in family literacy, that would respond to the literature review in some way. Previous experience had already confirmed the findings of Merriam & Simpson (1995):

Practitioners stereotype researchers as ivory-tower residents who investigate questions no one needs to answer. Researchers, on the other hand, characterize practitioners as naïve about research and too tied to everyday concerns to see the larger questions. Such attitudes thwart advancements that could be effected through the close cooperation of researchers and practitioners in applied areas.

In order to carry out the New Brunswick research, LCNB approached community-based practitioner-researcher, Cheryl Brown. She partnered with university researcher, Dr. Heather Richmond, in framing the methodologies and developing the interview format for collecting data from *family literacy* settings. With the varied definitions for family literacy within the literature, it was important to understand what practitioners in New Brunswick perceived it to be. A number of open-ended interview questions and prompts were used to elicit perceptions and experiences.

In December 2004, letters ([Appendix A](#)) were sent out to family literacy groups and organizations from a contact list developed by LCNB. Enclosed with the letter to program participants, practitioners, and administrators, was an invitation to participate, a brief project description ([Appendix B](#)), an informed consent form for participation ([Appendix C](#)), and the interview guidelines ([Appendix D](#)).

The intent was to have focus groups with representation from program participants, practitioners, and administrators in a number of areas, with the goal of one personal interview per participating community. Before focus groups or personal interviews were started, the researcher submitted the questions to a University research ethics committee. The ethics committee would not advise because the researcher was community-based and not professionally affiliated with an academic facility. Well-established research guidelines were followed, however, in the collection and analysis of this data.

Method of Research

A total of 28 people (9 participants and 19 practitioners, who were program practitioners or administrators) took part in the research, through personal interviews or focus group discussions. Every participant completed a *General Information Survey* (Appendix E). *Quantitative socio-demographic data* collected appears in Appendix F, and the *numerical data* in Appendix G.

Twelve (12) people over the age of nineteen were interviewed. A total of 5 participants (3 urban, 2 rural) were interviewed in-person, while 7 practitioners (4 urban, 3 rural) were interviewed in-person or by phone. Anonymity of interviewees was protected by the use of a single researcher, who did the audio-taping, tape-storing, and transcription.

Familiarity with participants became evident early on when Brown field-tested the interview processes. Brown interviewed a practitioner who was aware of Brown's personal definition of family literacy. This initial data yield paralleled Brown's own definition. A follow-up interview yielded a more personal perspective from the respondent.

There were three (3) focus groups, made up of the following:

- i) Urban-centred participant *and* practitioner group of (5) = 4 participants and 1 practitioner
- ii) Rural-centred practitioner group of (4) = 2 practitioners and 2 practitioner/ administrators
- iii) Rural-centred practitioner group of (8) = 2 administrators, 4 practitioners, and 2 practitioner/administrators.





Family Literacy Practice

What the research clarified was the diversity of perceptions of what ‘family literacy’ practice is,

“There isn’t a definition of what family literacy programming looks like, therefore we’re free to adapt to whoever’s with us...”

Currently, there appears to be very few full-blooded ‘family literacy’ programs involving *both parents and their children* within New Brunswick. One interviewee said,

“...a lot of things are called family literacy programs that have a component of family literacy, but does it really constitute a family literacy program? I don’t know.”

With a few exceptions, what seems to be occurring is that family literacy practices or principles are ‘*embedded*’ (Auerbach, 2002) into other programs and services, and also at home. One practitioner said,

“We do in-home based service. Part of our role is to provide developmental programs for the families and the children, so, of course, literacy is a part of that program.”

One setting used a core curriculum of simple, familiar rhymes and songs presented in a semi-formal active learning format to suit the families involved. Another used popular book titles and everyday learning materials in looking for the teachable moments that arise naturally from activities.

In an attempt to reduce the error of reaching any false conclusions in analyzing the data, the writer has provided an all-inclusive list from participant and practitioner information. Respondents considered many things elements of family literacy programs or home-based activities. Common responses included: listening to music, playing,

“Nobody takes family literacy very seriously because they don’t know what it is. Why would they give money to it? ... Oh, so you’re telling stories, okay, you’re reading books to children? Well, we do a little bit more than that, you know.”

“And people’s perceptions, society’s perception around literacy, let alone family literacy...what is this? ...They just don’t understand, so therefore if they don’t understand it, they don’t want to support it. They want something concrete.”

Research Findings

working with books/resources (reading/ lending/borrowing), storytelling, singing songs, reciting rhymes, doing crafts, writing, counting, drawing, making cards, as well as group gatherings for topic-discussing, learning, snacking, and socializing events.

Note: There was no site visitation by the researcher to view programs or check for the accuracy of elements of practice. The assumption was that respondents were honest about what was being done, rather than what was perceived as should be done. This was foundational to building a comfortable interview format.

Participants said that they were involved with community-based family programs, playgroups, library and storytelling activities, collective kitchen and book clubs, school literacy events, children's church programs, and home-based reading and writing practices. Participation ranged from acting in an instructional role or board membership to serving in some volunteer parent support capacity. Some research respondents listed subscribing to journals, parenting magazines, or newspapers as family literacy involvement.

Practitioners mentioned a host of family literacy programs by name, committee seats, and school-based teaching, community events, in-home social work, resource distribution tasks, reading programs, workshops, promotional campaigns and public awareness events, poetry-writing, literacy instruction, music and craft activities, libraries, Sunday school, and drop-in songs or crafts events. In New Brunswick, the hub of various literacy efforts differs slightly. From those mentioned in our research, this range in focus outlines various examples of the family literacy practice being done.

Classification Systems by Cheryl Brown

One of the most commonly used frames of reference for classifying family literacy programs was Nickse's (1989) typology of four basic models. Nickse grouped programs according to the type of participant or whom the service targets, and according to the degree of influence (direct vs. indirect).

A second classification system comes from the Foundational Family Literacy Training. This is similar to Nickse's categories, but adds project work, resources, and practitioner training.

If we keep our focus to family literacy *programs*, we can look at the first four categories. Table 5 compares the two classification systems.

Research Findings

Ruth Nickse's Typology

(1989) (U.S.)

Direct Adult/Direct Child

Programming for both parent and preschool child. Parents attend literacy instruction; children take part in structured early childhood or preschool program.

Direct Adult/Indirect Child

Adults are the main target and children do not participate regularly if at all. May include literacy or ESL instruction, or instruction in reading children's stories or other behaviours that assist children. Goal is to help adults become more literate so that they may positively influence their children's literacy development.

Indirect Adult/Direct Child

Preschool and school-aged children are primary recipients. Parents may be invited to participate but usually do not receive literacy instruction for their own needs.

Indirect Adult/Indirect Child

Adults and children attend together. The goal is the promotion of literacy for enjoyment (Storytelling, book talks, library activities, reading pal programs) (Nickse in Alberta Manual, 1995)

Sharon Skage's Model

(2001) (Foundational Family Literacy Training)

Intergenerational Projects

Have specific program components that involve sustained parent-child literacy interaction.

Focus on Parent or Primary Caregiver

Provide parents with ways to support home literacy and to foster reading with children.

Parental Involvement

The focus is on children's literacy development, with adults enlisted to provide program support. Examples are Family Resource programs, some school-based programs, and home-based tutoring programs.

Family Literacy Activities for the General Public

Members of the general public, both adult and child, are invited to participate in literacy activities for enjoyment, with little or no direct literacy instruction provided.

Projects for Family Literacy Resources

Family Literacy Materials are created and distributed for in-home use. There is no on-going contact with recipient families to support the use of literacy resources in the home.

Family Literacy Professional Training & Resources

These are initiatives that provide training and resources to practitioners.

Resources for the General Public

Public awareness activities that foster interest in developing literacy activities in the home, including FLD (Family Literacy Day) bookmarks or posters, TV programs, and special interest articles and newspaper inserts such as *Literacy matters* (Calamai, 1999) (Foundational Training in Family Literacy Manual, 2001).

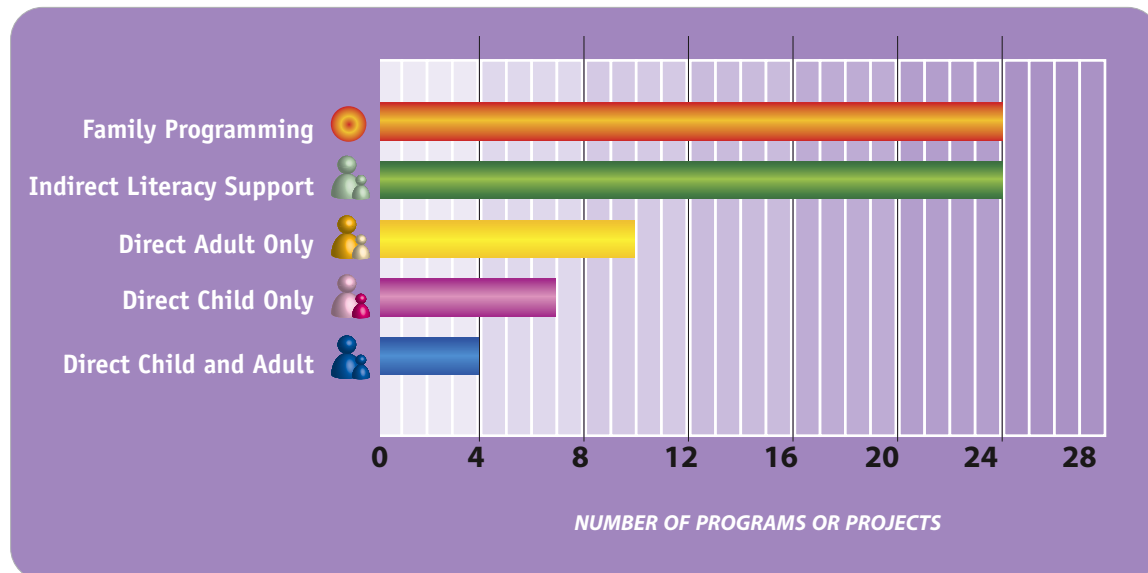
Table 5 Comparison of Nickse & Skage Classification Systems

Note: For the purposes of this paper, we only focused on program delivery, which is covered in the first 4 rows above, and excludes rows 5 to 7 in Skage's model, which are not seen as programs, but as supports.

Research Findings

The most intense family literacy program is the intergenerational type, one that involves the literacy enhancement of both parent and child. Direct-child programs provide literacy enhancement for children. Programs that are indirect adult-indirect child involve public events or the type of promotion that families may attend and enjoy the activities provided. The goal may be to encourage or impart information, but not to directly work to enhance a family's literacy. Programs that fall outside this classification system can have an influence on family literacy in the home or have a 'family literacy activity or component' added into their programming. They remain a craft, prenatal, or parenting program, per original intent.

Figure 1 Distribution of Effort in Family Literacy Services in New Brunswick



Note: This figure was created by Cheryl Brown using the raw data.

Figure 1 shows that of the programs represented in this research, most (25) fall into the category of general family programming or indirect family literacy support. By comparison, there are fewer programs (10) that provide programs directly to adults, with even fewer (7) direct-child programs.

Figure 2 New Brunswick Family Literacy Model of General Programs & Supports
(From Least to Most Intense)



Note: This figure was created by Cheryl Brown using the raw data.

Researchers have concluded that programs involving both the parent and child in learning are most effective for nurturing family literacy (Philliber, Spillman & King, 1996). Picturing these direct-parent/direct-child programs as our core, it's possible to conceptually map family literacy programs, as shown in [Figure 2](#).

If we accept that the direct-parent/direct-child intergenerational model is the most effective for scaffolding literacy development and empowerment in the home, then it causes concern that the number in this cohort is a minuscule (4) representation of family literacy program models in New Brunswick, as per [Figure 1](#).

Research Findings

Program Impacts and Outcomes

Findings indicate that there is a multi-faceted approach to evaluating success in programs. One program measured success quantitatively, rating the scale of participation and tracking increases in reading levels using guided reading books. One practitioner explains that quantitative measurement for his or her program was consistent attendance and full involvement of the participants.

Program Impacts by Cheryl Brown

Family literacy programs the world over have been cited as having various positive impacts on families. This research documents impacts for parents, children, families, communities, practitioners, promotion and resources. Impacts for parents as cited by participants and practitioners were that they:

- felt good spending more personal time with their children
- met new people, made friends, talked (enlarged their social context)
- found helpful support and learning opportunities (learned more positive discipline strategies)...

The success indicators shared in our project were often more *qualitative* than *quantitative*. Program outcomes/impacts were often *non-measurable* data that came in the form of oral feedback. One practitioner noted that the people in his or her program became confident participants in society rather than voiceless observers.

"Participants express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what they've done, or interest or disinterest with certain activities."
– Practitioner

Practitioners could not always be aware of every positive impact or change in the participant's home, school, or community. This might only show up in a long-term study. However, practitioners could see changes in the way parents and children learned or interacted on a daily basis. In response to a discussion about qualitative benchmarks, one practitioner respondent stated,

"When she comes out and sings songs to me, I know she has learned."
– Parent

"...When people are involved in a program they don't want to be measured all the time. They understand perfectly well that what you're doing is making judgments about whether they're good enough yet."

Many practitioners voiced concern over the time that paperwork robs from program delivery, while they work wearing many 'hats' in the delivery of literacy services.

"...I never feel like anybody got enough of what I could give them. They just got a little piece today..."

Research Findings

"Paper work can be wonderful when it leads to reflective practice...I and my coworkers journal constantly, track numbers... a way of getting a larger view of what we are doing...Occasionally, paperwork becomes a barrier between a program and participants, because it either becomes time consuming and alienating, so a person approaches a program with understandable trepidation, or it creates formalized categories into which people have to fit. For example... have to attend certain hours or have to state in advance what their goals are...things like that. When that

sort of thing happens in my own work, I go to considerable lengths to avoid or ignore that kind of paperwork...The question, "Who does the paperwork serve?" needs to be asked and my perception is that when paperwork does pose an obstacle or a distraction, it's because it's not serving the participants...and there's no excuse for that...again, part of the net transfer of resources from the community to larger institutions, like major funders or government."
– Practitioner

One mother shared her perception of what the various programs were for and how/why she uses the programs available to her to enhance her child's literacy. Her comments show the bonus of diversity in various programs without any apparent service duplication. Some program *names* were removed and substituted with a program *type* (see Appendix H.)

Practitioners talked about feeling more confident in improving their skills (like singing in a group.) Seeing parents' self-confidence increase, and assisting them to see their roles in children's education, as to what could be done at home to support that, was rewarding. One big benefit was in getting parents together and seeing friendships develop that carried on.

Early intervention programs intent on having children from birth to age 5 as developmentally ready-for-kindergarten as possible, saw participants continuing in the (program) service until they felt ready to go. Another program's major goal was in developing independent learners, so staff looked for increasing degrees of independence, confidence, and competency. If there was a lack of interest or participation, or no noted impact, then practitioners tended to view the program as a failure.

Emerging themes from our information-gathering are presented (in random order) in table format, sorted by *who benefited* from the impact or outcome. (See Appendix I.)

"Watching her and seeing that she is not hitting, and she is sharing and getting along... I learned that if you put the time into doing something with your kid, something good will come out of it. If the program hadn't been there, I probably wouldn't have taken the time to teach her all these things."
Parent

Research Findings.....

One urban practitioner shared,

This isn't the sort of program that has a goal where you can measure how people are progressing toward it and when they've reached it. And in that sense, we are not an educational program. You don't come here to learn XYZ and then we test you and discover that you've done it. It's a voluntary learning program and we support learning in the community or in families. As long as they feel that they're benefiting from the program/from the service, they'll use it and we'll provide it. Now, if people don't use the service...that's an indication that the service isn't working for them and that's an indication that they're not reaching their goal. If people relate to us that things had gotten better in school or that they're going to the library more or if they give other indications of being more involved in the community in a way that they weren't before—they've joined a committee, they're voting this year, they're thinking of taking a course, they're reading some health material. Those ... stories indicate to us that we've been successful...

Valued Best Practices by Cheryl Brown

In looking at best practices already documented in provinces and other countries, it was noted that there's usually one list of principles. The research, in developing questions to elicit 'best practices' questioned *whom* these were best practices for...participants?... practitioners?... funders?... administrators? It was decided, in this project, to separate the responses of participants and practitioners and also to document those that were common to both.

In developing family literacy programming, adhering to valued practices cited by both parents and practitioners will certainly increase your chances of success. In this paper, those practices cited by both parents and practitioners were also those most commonly cited by other documents (BC, NS).

The three practices that practitioners and participants had the most documented comments about were: accessibility, friendly/safe/comfortable people and environment, and adequately-resourced programs. Both groups felt access to free books were important, and so programs and promotion activities that had book giveaways were cited often as being important. Access to programming was also important, with reduction of barriers, like childcare and transportation ranking high. As well, many talked about

Research Findings.....

increasing accessibility by taking programs to where families were, whether it was in their communities or in family organizations where families gathered.

Both participants and practitioners said it was important to have well-funded programs. It is important to have funds for materials, especially books, and for staff and/or volunteer support. Funding was needed to provide multiple programming for a variety of ages (as opposed to single programs for a mixed age group) and responses indicated that programs could run longer and be offered more days per week.

Also valued by both were: socialization opportunities for children and parents; seamless services (services for birth to older children – with no cut off at age five); child-led programs; programs that had relevant and useful information; flexibility of methods, practices, and policies; high visibility and promotion (word of mouth); involvement of participants in decision-making (participatory); small group programs; and of course, programs that are FUN for everyone.

Participants felt it was important to teach and/or meet the needs of the parents; to have opportunities for parent/child interaction; to receive a personal invitation to the program; to have follow up for one-time contact programs, to maintain and increase services; and to have libraries (and bookmobiles).

Practitioners thought it was important to build relationships, use learner-centered practices, use critical reflection for program improvement and problem-solving, partner with like-minded agencies, provide food, obtain regular and relevant professional development, have minimal paperwork, and have respect for and pay attention to process.

So, building on common statements of valued practices, the New Brunswick best practice statements for family literacy are...

Accessibility

Strive for maximum accessibility by reducing transportation and childcare barriers, and if possible, take your program services to where families are. Provide access to free books and eliminate any participant program fees.

For a summarized table of valued practices, see [Appendix J](#).

Research Findings

Supportive staff and environment

Friendly program staff & volunteers who are supportive (non-judgemental) provide maximum comfort for participants. As well, creating a physically comfortable, homey atmosphere is appreciated. Programs also need to be child-friendly, in that they offer low structure, or child-led opportunities (*as opposed to inflexible, highly-structured*)

Adequate resources

Programs need to be well-staffed, with adequate materials and books to meet the program participant needs. Adequate funding also needs to be sought to offer programs for a variety of ages at various times, frequency, and duration for increased convenience (*and accessibility*). Adequate resources for providing seamless programming to young children over the age of five are also valued.

Universality

Programs need to be open to all families, regardless of family type, SES (Single Entry System), nationality, etc.

Flexibility

Flexible methods, practices, and policies meet a range of needs.

Socialization Opportunities

Socialization opportunities for children and parents are highly valued and produce opportunities to learn from each other, build networks, and develop valuable social skills. Programs offered in small groups provide maximum opportunity for socialization comfort.

Participatory

Involving participants in decision-making about the program empowers, builds capacity, and helps to create ownership.

Fun

Families are more likely to participate in a fun learning program.

Interpretation of Results

With such a small sampling, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the socio-demographic data. There is an assumption in literacy circles that people who attend programs live in poverty. Household incomes shared in our data seem to have no bearing on whether the person was participant or practitioner, so no conclusive results are evident. Answers that we received do not guide us in any one direction. A larger sampling might produce more conclusive results.

For New Brunswick, we've identified some of the *family literacy work being done*, given an overview of *program outcomes* being experienced, and started a list of *best practices* for family literacy efforts, sharing those most common for participants and practitioners.

Family literacy practices: There is no clear definition of what constitutes family literacy in New Brunswick. It appears to be developed from assumptions of *deficits* in families in diverse fields like social services, education, and adult literacy, often developed in response to meeting the assumed needs of parents in various communities, whereas true family literacy practitioners will take an *asset-based* approach, honouring the families. This project supports much of the ongoing discourse about defining family literacy among the Canadian literacy network.

It confirms the findings of Nason and Whitty, who stated:

Program models are distinguished by a number of factors:

- *Who they serve – prospective parents, parents, children, or parents and children together;*
- *What goals they seek to accomplish and principles they adhere to;*
- *Where they take place --- in homes or centers;*
- *When they occur---duration (how long) and frequency (how often);*
- *How they decide upon and organize program content; (2004, p.44)*

Our preliminary evidence shows that there is a fairly broad range of perceptions on what constitutes family literacy in New Brunswick, which supports our literature review. On the surface, it would seem that there are a host of family literacy efforts, but a closer look reveals them as elements within other agendas. This supports Shively's statement of "many sectors that have staked a claim in the family literacy turf, inevitably imposing their own perspective (Shively, 2001, p.1)."

While this project hasn't coined any more of an absolute definition for *family literacy* than other research efforts, it has taken a first step in laying some ground work by

Research Findings.....

applying a classification system to what is currently offered in the province. Through this reflective lens, we see that the reality in New Brunswick is that there are only four programs in our study that match the acclaimed intergenerational model (i.e. the one most effective for scaffolding literacy development and empowerment in the home). This raises cause for concern and warrants further inquiry into the cause and effect of this reality.

Program impacts and outcomes: From the information shared in our research, much practitioner effort is being applied to program survival strategies as well as program delivery. Needs assessments and program documentation is being done, but often to meet client-driven or funding-driven needs. With limited funding available for family literacy ventures, New Brunswick practitioners realize the importance of tracking program success, yet a lot of times haven't really known what their participant goals actually were. They may have been set and met by them, without practitioners ever learning what they were (e.g. attachment concerns re: parent-child relationship.)

Since the identities of the programs, practitioners, and participants are masked, individual program objectives were not matched with actual effects and results as a means of indicating success. However, there were similarities with the key findings of other family literacy research. Campbell identified one Prince Edward Island research project (MacGillivray & MacLeod, 2002, *Enhancing family literacy in rural Prince Edward Island*) that also experienced a major benefit of family literacy programs being "the rapport that parents build with one another" (2003, p.58). She shared Hayden & Phillips 2000 findings that "Parents reported the social aspects of the program to be of considerable benefit for themselves and their children" (2003, p.47). These mirror the findings of our own research, wherein parents identified social benefits of attending family literacy programs in New Brunswick. Nason and Whitty wrote:

Almost all programs reported that parents gain knowledge and a range of skills in their capacity as their children's first literacy teachers. Parents also gained a better understanding of texts relating to child development, health and safety...Outcomes relating to oral language – confidence in speaking and attention to patterns of language- were most often reported. Access to books and recognition of print patterns were also frequently mentioned. These factors, along with play and drawing, which were also identified, are generally recognised as foundational to the development of literacy in young children. (2004, p.7-8)

Parents in our research spoke of personal gains for themselves as well as oral language improvements for their children.

Research Findings.....

Thomas (1996) outlined a number of common program objectives that were voiced as outcomes shared in our research, namely: i) increased family involvement with young children in everyday literacy activities, ii) increased parent-child reading in the home, iii) increased parent involvement in children's tutoring/homework activities, and iv) increased self-esteem of parent and/or child. This supports Campbell's summary key finding of The Canadian Institute of Child Health's 2001 report, *A preliminary evaluation of the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program as a family literacy program*, that "Family literacy is strongly associated with family well-being" (2003, p.57).

Our research could not determine how long-lasting any program outcome or family change was, that people experienced. We had no way of identifying other factors (like variety of needs, goals, family cultures, etc...) which may have impacted the program results that were shared.

One urban practitioner felt partnerships were a terrible idea, saying: "I think partnerships are popular because business and politicians either see success in the non-profit sector and they want to be part of it, or opposed to the socialist tendencies in the non-profit sector and they want to redirect these. I think that the more partners you have, the less voice participants have in what a program does or how it does it, and the less responsive a project can be to a community."

Determining the effectiveness of current New Brunswick programs is not simple. As programs have tried to stay flexible in fitting their client needs, through various methods, it's been hard for the field to determine success only through direct, short-term *measurable* indicators. If a lot of people used the program or service, it was viewed as doing its job. If not, there was still other positive feedback on changes that participants experienced or observed in their children. Many expressed it as quality time or the value of staying in touch with their children.

The problem is that such observations have not always been esteemed as 'real' evaluation since there are no precise instruments to reflect or measure them. (If such exist they may not be known to practitioners, or they may be too impractical due to time, cost, and training requirements for use.)

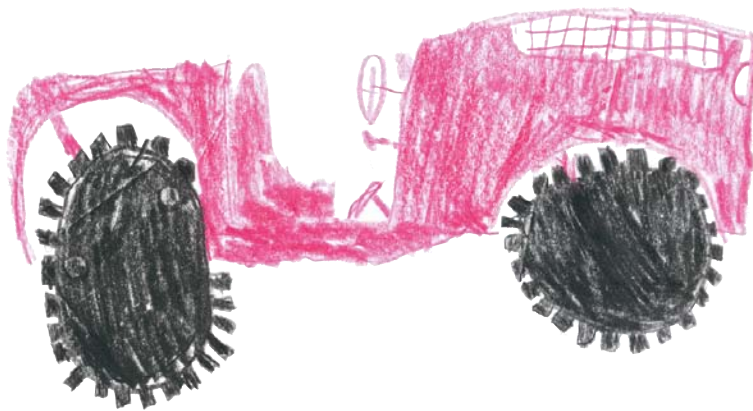
Practitioner observations are often viewed as unreliable, judgement-based, informal opinions, or even as hit-and-miss (Thomas, 1996). Some New Brunswick practitioners hesitate to engage in such evaluation methods on the basis of feelings of inadequacy, devaluation, or unacceptability. So, in relation to Weiss & Jacobs' levels of program

Research Findings

evaluation, there appears to be few evaluative consistencies in New Brunswick programs which participated in our research.

Emerging best practices: Many programs were experiencing financial insecurity, affecting everything from resources and supplies to staff and space in which to offer services. Some family literacy programs and activities were only offered as short-term funded projects. Practitioners spoke of the lack of sustained funding and wished that family literacy would be “seen as valuable enough to really apply resources to it, to do a good job.”

There was no shortage of suggestions for the ‘dream program’. What our research produced was a list of valued practices, shared by participants and practitioners, which we developed into a list that might serve as a basis for statements of best practice in family literacy. (See [Appendix J](#).)





Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for Family Literacy Practice

More field conversations are needed before a definition is agreed upon for family literacy funding and policy-making in New Brunswick. A consensus in definition is important to establishing an infrastructure framework for evolving community-driven family literacy programs here. Whatever definition is framed, it should encompass the practices and links between intergenerational literacy, family literacy, and early childhood literacy. In the process of defining family literacy, people might take it more seriously and lend their support.

It appears that all of the New Brunswick organizations listed as having family literacy projects in the *Family Connections 1998 Directory*... are still working in the field, though some projects specified have been completed. Family literacy appears to be an emerging field, embracing an array of good practices to address common goals.

There is more room for resource and information-sharing as the field develops. Data confirms a recommendation made in *First Words: A Journal of Family Literacy in New Brunswick 1997-2001* for continued co-operation and teamwork (p.4). Supports that allow continued collaboration through partnerships and resource-sharing will strengthen the development of new ventures. Networks and relationship-building have been essential to launching various family literacy projects/programs. Having a central contact for dissemination on family literacy research, resources, and programs would be advantageous to the developing 'field.'

Recommendations for Evaluating Program Outcomes

The size of our small field sampling warrants additional collaborative investigation before provincial statistics can be determined for family literacy programs. There's a continuing need to document the development of family literacy programming. Meanwhile, we must embrace the positives that we do see, namely, families interacting in literacy development and practices and participating in community literacy programs and events. Nason and Whitty reported that,

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

"...programs that involve both children and parents intensively over a period of time have been found to produce the most measurable, positive outcomes" (2004, p. 44)

Allowing the field to offer more consistent, long-term programs would lay the foundation for gathering outcomes data of the Level 5 type that Weiss and Jacobs outlined in 1988.

Thomas (1996) suggested an EPE (entry/progress/exit) context for assessment that involves entry or enrolment baseline information, progress monitoring checklists, and exit interviews or program evaluation forms. In keeping with the variations in program lengths and types, there must be flexibility in a report time-frame to accommodate such variances. Where learners stay longer in programs, progress monitoring by routine assessment could provide a bevy of evaluative data. Evaluation methods should be minimally intrusive in nature and subject to program duration (e.g. In brief programs, simple attendance-tracking or sign-out tracking for books and materials may be all that is possible. However, routine follow-up and tracking of parents and children who attend programs can provide feedback on how families make use of the activities/services, helping us to revamp what we do.)

By making family literacy/program evaluation research & training accessible, all can benefit from shared experiences and resources, as we work toward building a framework for family literacy in New Brunswick.

Creating confidence and expertise in observation-recording and reflection must be encouraged and supported. Practitioner and learner observations of home, school, and workplace achievements must be valued in program evaluations. Systematic methods of recording literacy development *and* reflective observations must be developed with practitioner collaboration.

Recommendations for Best Practices (The A-B-C's)

1. Approach – In future, it may prove helpful to always identify best practices, from a *participant* or *practitioner* perspective. Meanwhile, what we've listed can help to inform program design, delivery, and policy decision-making in New Brunswick, when balanced with recent family literacy research used in our literature review. (See [Appendix K.](#)) A list of all (perceived) best practices shared in our research is included. (See [Appendix L.](#))

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

2. Backing – Many practitioners talked about financial stability for programs, supporting Brown’s statement, “The reality is that financial sustainability for family literacy programs is minimal, if it exists at all” (Literacy New Brunswick Inc., 2002, p.5).

Finding more secure funding would benefit in ensuring program stability, consistency, accessibility, and availability. Short-term funding is viewed as a barrier by many practitioners, as it creates problems in program planning, promotion, and continuity for meeting community needs. Increases might help create a greater sense of community for some provincial areas.

3. Collaboration – Having a participatory network of programs and supports that are contributed to and valued by the communities is a long-term goal of family literacy promotion. In reaching it, it’ll be the number of programs, resources available, and money allocations for family literacy disbursement that will be the measurable success indicators.

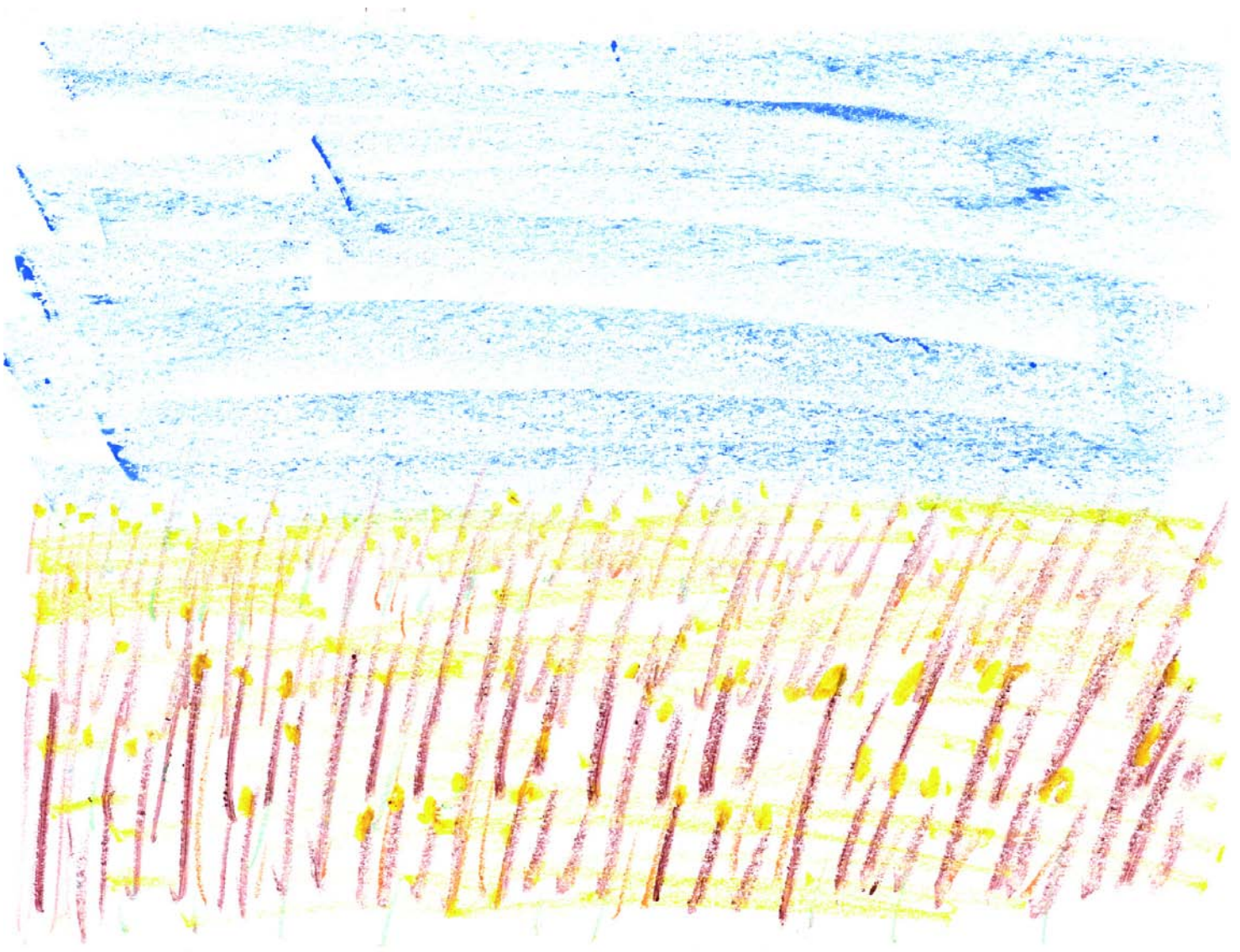
4. Design for Time – There appears to be a shortage of time available for reporting, reflecting, and researching in family literacy efforts. Though advocacy, volunteer recruitment, and promotional campaigns help in raising awareness, these responsibilities should not fall to practitioners. Scheduling and funding supports from employers are essential to allow family literacy practitioners the time to gather ongoing individual/collective data in an effort to discover what’s working and what’s not. This best practice will help to make us better at what we do!

5. Excellence in Practice – Many best practices shared by New Brunswick practitioners confirm those outlined in the frameworks of statements and standards in other provinces. Like BC, New Brunswick family literacy programs will flourish if standards address convenient accessibility; universal participation; quality assessment and evaluation methods; community links and supports; safe, comfortable sites that are well-equipped and conducive to program needs; program planning, instructional methods, and variety of age-appropriate resources; promotional awareness and recruitment strategies; staff and volunteer training and development; scheduling flexibility; and cultural or language sensitivities (Literacy BC, 1999).

6. Focus – Practitioner responses confirm the program choice findings of Nason and Whitty for fitting principles, feasibility, and effectiveness issues. Things like parent-child interaction and focus, family support strengths, equity and accessibility, program flexibility, community-based planning and collaboration, and networking partnerships were mentioned in Nason and Whitty’s family literacy research study (2004), as they were by our research participants.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

7. Government Policy – It will be interesting to see whether this research impacts policy and practice. Dissemination of the research will be important, confirming the comments of Dr. Pat Campbell, “Despite the growing body of adult and family literacy research, pressing questions still need to be addressed in order to inform policy and practice. Moreover, the research findings need to be broadly disseminated in innovative ways in order to transform policy and practice.” (2003, p.3)





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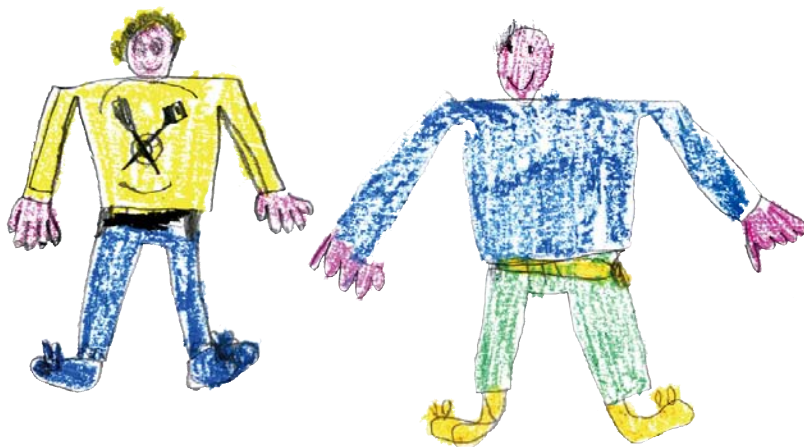
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Appendices

- A. Letter to Family Literacy Groups Requesting Participation
- B. Nature of the Research Info (for Potential Participants)
- C. Informed Consent Form for Participation
- D. Research Questions- Interview Guides for individual participants, practitioners, and focus groups
- E. General Information Survey
- F. The Quantitative Socio-Demographic Data
- G. Numerical Data of our Research
- H. Participant Mom's Response for Impact of Family Literacy Programs
- I. Impact & Outcomes of Family Literacy Efforts in New Brunswick
- J. Summarized Table of Valued Practices
- K. Summary of the Literature Reviewed
- L. List of All the Best Practices Shared in the Research



Appendix A

Letter to Family Literacy Groups Requesting Participation

Letterhead

Date

Name and Address
of family literacy practitioner
or department head or supervisor

Dear _____:

The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick has been funded by the National Literacy Secretariat to carry out research in family literacy programs across the province. I am writing asking for your help to connect with administrators, practitioners and participants of family literacy programs in your area.

The purpose of this study is to:

- Document the work that is being done in family literacy programs in Anglophone New Brunswick;
- Determine the impacts of these programs; and
- Document the best practices in these family literacy programs

Please contact Jan Greer Langley of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick at 1-800-563-2211 before January 15, 2005, if you or your agencies have an interest in participating in this research.

Once we hear from you, a focus group or individual interviews will be set up in your area. The interviews will be conducted by the principal researcher in the project, Cheryl Brown, a widely respected community literacy worker and a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. The results will be analyzed and documented in a report that will be available to all participants as well as the general public.

The interview guides are attached. The guides were designed with input from Dr. Heather Richmond, a family literacy research specialist at St. Thomas University.

Thank you for your kind cooperation. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Appendix B

Nature of the Research Information (for potential participants)

The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick is commencing a research project to document: the work that is being done in family literacy programs in Anglophone New Brunswick; the impacts of these family literacy programs; and the best practices in these family literacy programs. The principle investigator, Cheryl Brown, is a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Cheryl is also a foundation family literacy trainer, Mother Goose Teacher, and has experience co-developing and administering family literacy projects. Cheryl can be reached through the Literacy Coalition at 944 Prospect Street, Fredericton NB, or by calling 1-800-563-2211.

The interviews for this research project will take place in January and February of 2005 in various interested communities across New Brunswick.

You are being invited to participate in the research, and provide information that will help us document family literacy programs; determine the impact; and record best practices.

- Participants/practitioners/administrators may be interviewed by the researcher
- Participants/practitioners may be part of a focus group
- Interviews will take approximately 1 hour; focus groups will take approximately 1.5 hours
- Interviews and/or focus groups may be tape-recorded
- Pseudonyms will be used in place of real names and places in the written report to maintain confidentiality of the research subjects
- Information about family literacy projects and how they have impacted participants will be collected in interviews and focus groups. Subjects can decline to answer specific questions
- All research subjects will be asked to fill out a General Information Form for data analysis purposes
- Only the researcher will know specific information about participants

Research subjects will need to sign a consent form to participate, and can withdraw from the research project at any time. Subjects can withdraw any data about themselves at any time.

If interested, participants can receive a copy of the results by having a copy mailed to them:

Street address, city/town, province, postal code



Appendix C

Informed Consent for Participation

Informed Consent for Participation Family Literacy Coordination and Research Project

Date: _____

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

I have read (or had explained to me) the proposed research project and agree to give my consent for:

_____ My own participation in this research project

_____ Family Literacy Program pictures of me and/or my children to be used in the report.
Names will not be used.

I understand I can withdraw my participation at any time during the research (January to end of February 2005).

Signature of participant _____



Appendix D

Research Questions: Interview Guide for Individual Participants

Individual Participant Guide

Date Interviewed: _____

I. Documenting: the person; the program

- Describe your family
- Describe the program you have participated in (are participating in)
- What is the/your goal? How do you know when that goal has been reached?

II. Impact of the program

- What have you learned? (Give an example of something you've learned)
- Give some examples of how you've been able to help your child
- What are some things you and your children have done since the program finished
- Describe any changes you have seen in your children since the program finished
- Why should we have family literacy programs/support; or what would you be doing if this program wasn't here?

III. Best Practices

- What do you think of the time the program took place/ how it was organized/what information was presented/how the information was presented
- How do you think kids/people learn to/improve their reading
- What did you like about the program
- What would you change about the program
- How are you involved in the program (set up, delivery, evaluation)
- Who decides what/how you/people(?) learn
- If money were no object, what would your 'dream program/support' look like?

Practitioner Interview Guide

Date Interviewed: _____

I Document: the person; the program

- What is your role in the program/ what your responsibility is?
- What brought you to this work?
- What is the goal of the program? How do you know if/when the goal has been reached?
- What are your expected outcomes? How do you measure these outcomes (success indicators)?
- Describe what you use for materials and/or curriculum.
- Describe the atmosphere/environment of the program.
- Who comes to this program? How do they get here? How do you deal with barriers (childcare, etc)?
- Describe what you do in your program?
- Describe what the participants do?

II. Impact

- What are the benefits/impacts of this program for the children/parents/families/yourself? Or?
- What changes have you noticed in the Children/parents/families/yourself?

III. Best Practices

- How do you recruit participants? Obtain funds? Promote?
- Tell me about your project partners/sustainability/paperwork?
- How are participants goals set and met?
- How much flexibility is there in adapting material to meet learner's/parent's families needs?
- How and when is the program evaluated?

Focus Group Interview Guide

Date of Focus Group: _____

- Describe the program you are/were involved in.
- How did you find out about the program?
- Why do you come? Did you get what you came for?
- How did you/your family/your community change?
- What did you think of when this program took place, how many times per week and how long the sessions were?
- What did you like?
- What would you change?
- If money were no object, what would your 'dream program/support' look like?



Appendix E

General Information Survey

General Information Survey

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Age group

- ☐ 19 - 23 years
☐ 24 - 28 years
☐ 29 - 33 years
☐ 34 - 38 years
☐ 39 - 43 years
☐ 44 - 48 years
☐ 49 +

3. Mother Tongue

- ☐ English
☐ French
☐ Other

4. Where do you live?

- ☐ City (over 40,000)
☐ Town (5,000 - 39,000)
☐ Village or service district
(under 5000)

5. Family Income

- ☐ Under 20,000
☐ 20,000-25,000
☐ 25,000-30,000
☐ 30,000-35,000
☐ 35,000-40,000
☐ 40,000-45,000
☐ 45,000-50,000
☐ 50,000+

6. Highest education level achieved

- ☐ Completed grade 6
☐ Completed grade 9
☐ Completed high school
☐ Completed GED
☐ Completed community college
☐ Completed university degree
☐ Completed private school training
☐ Other

7. Marital Status

- ☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Other

8. Number of children

- ☐ 0
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 4+



Appendix F

The Quantitative Socio-Demographic Data

Basic background information was gathered from each respondent using the *General Information Survey* (Appendix E) under gender, age group, mother tongue, location, family income, highest educational level achieved, marital status, and number of children in the household. The results are documented in Appendix G.

Of those who responded:

- 100% of the program participants were female while 95% of program practitioners were female and 5% were male.
- Five program participants (5) lived in cities, two (2) in towns, and two (2) in villages.
- The net household income taking into account *all income earners in each household* varied from <\$20,000 per year to \$50,000-\$60,000 per year with the average household income <\$26,000 per year.
- The net household income taking into account *all income earners in each household* of practitioners ranged from <\$20,000 per year to \$60,000 plus with the average household income >\$53,000. Two declined to provide this information.



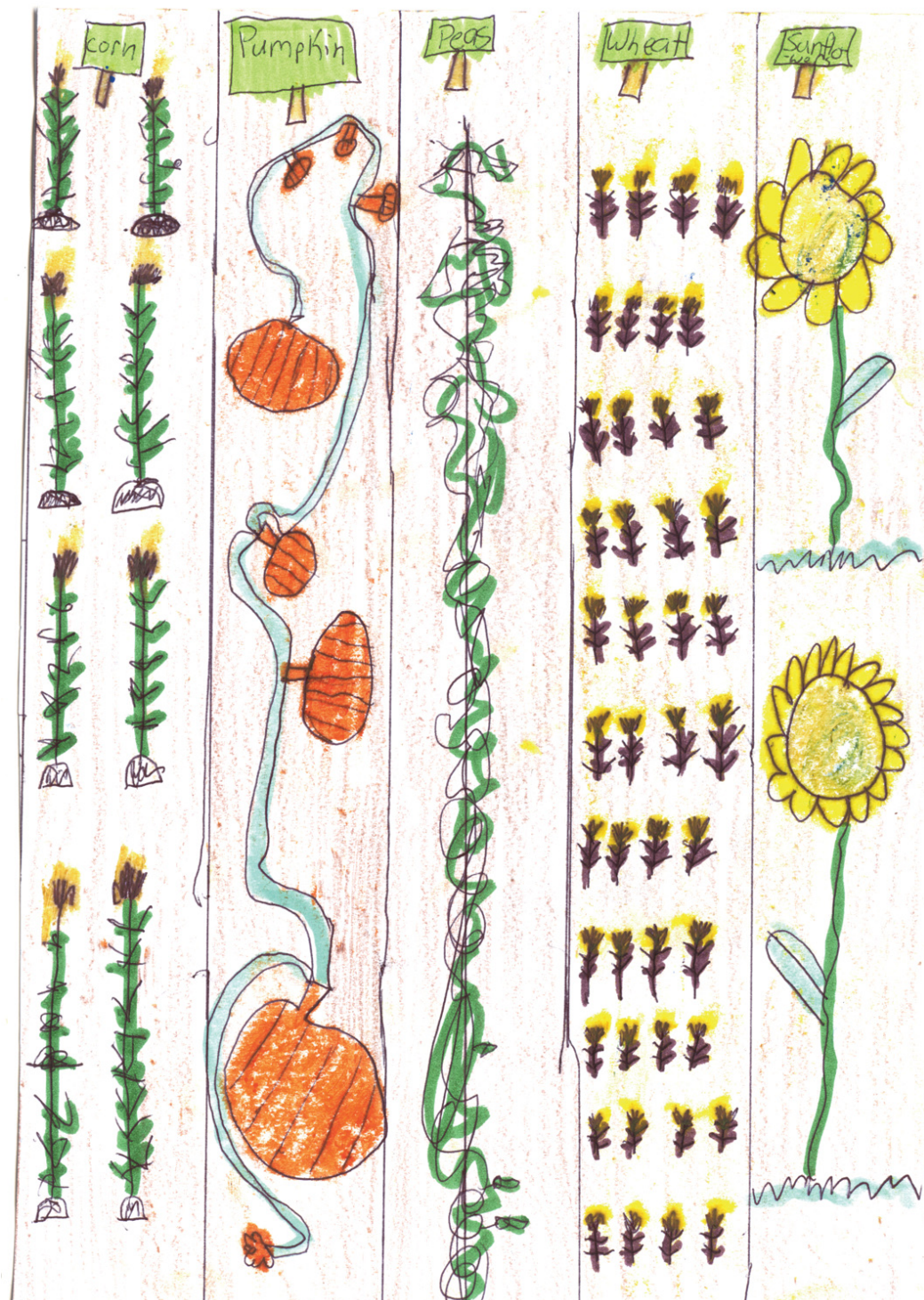


Appendix G

Numerical Data of Our Research

Family Literacy Coordination and Research:
Summary of General Information Survey–September 2005

P / F	Gender	Mother Tongue	Location	Income	Education	Marital Status	Number of Children & Ages	Interview / Focus Group	Age Group
Participant	Female	English	City	< 20	HS	Common Law	3 (5, 11, 14)	INTERVIEW	34 - 38
P	F	E	Town	30 - 40	HS	Married	2 (4, 7)	I	24 - 28
P	F	E	T	50 - 60	U	M	6 (2, 13, 14, 14, 17, 17)	I	44 - 48
P	F	E	C	< 20	< HS	Single	2 (1, 6)	I	29 - 33
P	F	E	C	< 20	HS	CL	4 (13, 9, 7, 4)	I	29 - 33
Facilitator	F	E	C	50 - 60	U	M		I	24 - 28
F	F	E	Village	30 - 40	U	Other	3 (18, 20, 28)	I	49 +
F	Male	E	C	< 20	U	S		I	39 - 43
F	F	E	C	+ 60	U	M	3 (22, 24, 20)	I	49 +
F	F	E	T	50 - 60	U (1 yr)	M	2 (46, 46)	I	49 +
F	F	E	V	20 - 30	U	Widow	5 (35, 39, 41, 42, 43)	I	49 +
P	F	E	C	< 20	NBCC	CL	1 (6.5 Months)	Focus Group	24 - 48
P	F	E	V	20 - 30	NBCC	M	2 (3, 1)	FG	29 - 33
P	F	E	C	60 +	HS	Divorced	1 (2)	FG	34 - 38
F	F	E	C	50 - 60	HS	S	0	FG	19 - 23
P	F	E	V	20 - 30	NBCC	M	4 (14, 7, 6, 6)	FG	39 - 43
F	F	E	C/V	60 +	U+	S	0	FG	49 +
F	F	E	T	60 +	U	M	5 (23, 24, 25, 30, 32)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	T	60 +	U	M	7 (19 - 29)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	T	50 - 60	U	S	0	FG	49 +
F	F	E	V	60 +	NBCC	M	3 (36, 34, 30)	FG	49 +
F	F	E	T	60 +	U	M	3 (17, 21, 23)	FG	49 +
F	F	E	T		NBCC	M	3 (25, 21, 19)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	V	60 +	U+	M	2 (12, 9)	FG	39 - 43
F	F	E	T	60 +	HS	M	3 (25, 24, 17)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	T		U	M	4 (21, 20, 17, 14)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	T	60 +	U+	M	2 (15, 18)	FG	44 - 48
F	F	E	T	60 +	U	M	3 (25, 23, 18)	FG	49 +





Appendix H

Participant Mom's Response for Impact of Family Literacy Programs

{Parent-involvement} *[is a] program for my youngest to learn new rhymes 'n stuff. {Direct-child} is for {my daughter} to think that she is safe when I'm not there and to know that I'm going to be coming back. {Direct child/ indirect parent programs} [are] for my children to get into books, and me too, because I wasn't really into books. {Intergenerational program is} to teach her to be around other people other than family [and] also to learn social skills. I did receive a {Family Literacy Resource Project} bag of books at the hospital for {my daughter} when she was born... I probably packed the books away in a box somewhere because at that point I didn't read. When she was born, I wasn't reading to the other kids.*

{In parent-involvement program} I learned that if you put the time into doing something with your kid, something good will come out of it. If the program hadn't been there, I probably wouldn't have taken the time to teach her all these things. I've been able to help her be interested in books, into more songs and stuff. She just played [before]. Since we've stopped going, we still sing songs and still read books. Before she used to do everything on her own. Now she wants me to do it with her, which makes me feel good. {At direct-child program} I learned that if I give [my daughter] time and give her some leeway that she will learn to be away from me and know that everything is safe. She's more independent, cries less or not at all, plays or talks with the other kids [and] listens to the teachers well. {Direct child/indirect parent programs} I learned that outside my home are places that I can go to be with [my daughter] and play with her and meet new people. She [doesn't] cling to me as much now. {Through the Direct child/indirect parent programs} I learned that there is people out there willing to help and take the time to help you. It helps the kids want to read. [Now] I pick up a book and read to them more. [W]e started reading and borrowing books and now they love reading and want me to read with them all the time. There's been a big change in [my son], he's forever asking me to read. Now I'll ask or the children will ask to read [and] we've continued to read every day now. [I think we should have family literacy programs/ support] because I think it helps out families read to their kids, get closer to their kids and just help them read, and kids need to read.



Appendix I

Impact and Outcomes of Family Literacy Efforts in New Brunswick

Parent Impact	Child Impact	Family Impact
felt good inspending more personal time with kids (attachment)	more interest & time exposed to books, songs, text, rhymes, music, art	more time spent bonding (sing, read, play, talk, paint, build relationships)
enlarged social context, met new people at programs (made friends, cooking group, talked)	increased social skills, leadership abilities (play, listen, talk, met new friends, act with other adult)	interactivity in the home (both parents, at bath/supper/bedtime, cooperating, & get along more)
helpful support, & learning opportunities (learned non-destructive ways of discipline, encouraged)	greater patience, attention span & independence (pick out own books, cry less, look right at her, relaxed)	love of stories & value of books developing (joy, enjoyed hearing oral stories, way of reward, respect books)
read more to/with their kids (frequency & fluency level increased, given effective tools & strategies, feel empowered)	better reading & memory skills (remember night before, read with expression, tweaks ability for hand/eye coordination)	shared/paired reading practice occurs more (Harry Potter, bedtime stories, read to each other, joy of reading)
job-readiness & continuing education experience (opened doors, did things never had a chance to do growing up, got better job/GED, computer skills, in up-grading now)	school-ready, & more creative (make up story, tell to younger, act out Bible story, improved/ practice, cutting/gluing, more aware of time line, acting out books, do own coat/boots)	start new things (parents weren't used to singing, everyone sang, becoming part of supptime routine, father reads paper with son now, learn importance of parental involvement)
perceptions of self as a learner, reader, worker, parent changed (more confident, self-esteem, problem-solving, non-readers turn into readers, speech improvements, job acquisition, if I know I can read/stay sane)	added language awareness for word, picture, letter & sound recognition (names, know when miss page, find things in pictures, put words together, understanding alphabet/what's read, read all words on page)	family members communicate in better ways (see value/worth of talking/reading to baby, taped a book so they can read/ follow along, ask questions, grow closer everyday)



Appendix I: Impact and Outcomes of Family Literacy Efforts in New Brunswick *continued*

Community Impact	Resource Impact	Practitioner Impact	Promotional Impact
a safe, healthy environment for learning activity (time/ place to work together)	quicker, easier access to books (closer, no late charges)	rewarding sense of own time investment (smile/response, kids' drawings)	showing up regularly means program time is right (schedule fit)
made children ready for school (children listen well to teachers, family interacts with school)	instils a greater love/interest for books (join clubs, circles, get magazines)	aware to make it relevant and comfortable for kids (being more approachable for connecting)	people looking forward to it, asking for our help with other things (meeting needs)
put in touch with community expanding the existing world for everyone (provided taxis, trip to libraries)	a <i>variety</i> of books/resources, more books in the home (book, sticker, booklet, or bookmarks given away)	got feedback from people for what works best for them & what resources are needed (tailor program to suit)	discovered how little is known (outside staff) about programs and services
increases in family literacy involvement (celebrations, book drives, book club, core family literacy presence in city)	go to library more (children borrow books for adults, greater access to resources than before)	apparent lack of funding to meet demand (need large voluntary component to keep program going)	realizing a need to celebrate the process of becoming more literate (awards, plaques, badges, and prizes)
feed community involvement & development (voting, food bank helping, bully/ violence prevention, wrote letter, good cross dynamics of races, religion & languages)	new resources created by staff on an as-needed basis(no need for expensive equipment, now reading health materials, do more things like Storysacks)	desire to know more about LD, & ADHD, new skills, to expand knowledge base (to increase awareness of environment in home literacy, focus groups for initiatives)	discovery that family literacy is FUN (enjoyable, make school-readiness pamphlets, bring preschoolers to kindergarten class visits)
families set new goals/plan to do more/valued learning (okay to act silly, now to find ways to give other kids 1-on-1 time, not bad to let them paint, see music/ songs as tool for literacy, help with homework)	funding cuts = awareness that means fewer resources than actually needed, therefore more books = more kids in programs	perception as a teacher changed (it's a wonderful feeling to know that you taught somebody, see benefits of after school program, being so comfortable with mom that she's able to reveal own weaknesses)	parents used word-of-mouth to tell others about programs





Appendix J

Summarized Table of Valued Practices

Valued Practices of:		
Participant	Participants & Practitioners	Practitioners
Teach/Meet the needs of the parent	Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To free books To programming (take services to families; provide transportation; make it free) 	Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide childcare
Opportunities for Parent/child interaction	Provide seamless services (i.e. services for children of all ages, not just 0 – 5)	Build relationships
Personal invitation to attend the program	Inclusive/Universal (i.e. All welcome regardless of income, race, etc)	Learner-centered
Importance of Libraries	Friendly people and atmosphere; safe/ nonjudgmental/comfortable environment	Critical reflection
Maintain/Increase services	Child-friendly/Child-led programs	Partnerships with like-minded agencies
Follow up for one-time contact programs	Relevant and Useful information	Evaluations & Reports
	Adequately-resourced (funding; materials, especially books; staff and/or volunteers; variety of programming for different age groups; lengthen programs)	Food
	Socialization opportunities	Professional development
	Flexibility (of methods and practices)	Simple/little paperwork
	Visibility/Promotion of programs (word of mouth; good advertising)	Attention and respect for process
	Participatory	
	Fun	
	Small groups	



Appendix K

Summary of Literature Reviewed

Provincial: (NB-Relevant) in Chronological order of publication

Author & Date	Title of Literature
Heather Jardine Richmond (1999)	<i>Community & Family Literacy Partnerships in NB</i> (PhD Thesis for Univ. of Nottingham) Available at UNB-F'ton, in HIL Special Archives, as LC5254.2 N4R52
Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation. For Literacy New Brunswick Inc. (LNBI) (2000)	<i>Family and Early Childhood Literacy in New Brunswick: A Provincial Snapshot</i> Part I (59 pgs.) Part II (111 pgs.) Part III (58 pgs.) Part IV (69 pgs.) Part V (57 pgs.) Part VI (62 pgs.) Available at: www.anbi-lnbi.nb.ca/English/famlit/titlpage.htm
Whitty, Pam (UNB, 2000)	<i>Parenting for a Literate Community: Moving Toward National Dissemination</i> Available at www.unbf.ca/education/ecc/publications/ Whitty/ontlit.htm
Landal Inc. For Provincial Partners in Literacy (PPL) (2002)	<i>Comprehensive Training Needs Assessment for Literacy in New Brunswick</i> (77 pgs.) Available at: www.nald.ca/fulltext/landal/english/cover.htm
Literacy New Brunswick Inc. (LNBI) (2002)	<i>FIRST WORDS: A Journal of Family Literacy in New Brunswick 1997-2001</i> (22 pgs.) Available at: www.anbi-lnbi.nb.ca/English/newslet/content.htm
Nason, Pamela Nuttall & Whitty, Pamela Ainsley (2004)	<i>Family Literacy Inventory Project</i> (called <i>Language, Literacy Healthy Development</i>) (77 pgs.) Available at: www.unbf.ca/education/ecc/

Provincial: (NB-Relevant) in Chronological order of publication

Descriptive Summary

Studies the nature/effectiveness of CASP *adult* literacy programs in 2 particular communities, and the experiences of learners and practitioners.

A Provincial Focus in NB - 6-part research study outlining a lit. review, socio-demographic profiles, inventory of family & early childhood interventions, survey of parents of preschool children, focus groups with family literacy partners, and a summary report.

Overview of PLC 1998-99 National Train the Trainer Pilot project, *E/Merging Literacies: Parents Learn as They Teach Their Children*; development of family literacy materials.

The Provincial Perspective: outlines the state of literacy services in New Brunswick and lists 24 *recommendations for government action*.

A product of individual & group contributions including words from 2 Prov. family literacy champions & other orgs. giving points of view, activities, definitions, & tips for reading to kids

Family Literacy Inventory-work of CAPC & CPNP projects of Health Canada; literacy outcomes, events, models, resources & programs

Appendix K: Summary of Literature Reviewed *continued*

National: (Canada-Relevant) in Chronological order of publication

Author & Date	Title of Literature
Adele Thomas & Bram Fisher (1996)	<i>Assessment and Evaluation Strategies in Family Literacy Program Development</i> (121 pgs.) At: www.nald.ca/CLR/ae Strat/cover.htm
Adele Thomas, Sharon Skage, & Ronna Jackson (1997)	<i>Family connections: 1998 Directory of Family Literacy Projects Across Canada</i> (158 pgs.) Avail. at: www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/family/famconn/cover.htm
Adele Thomas (ed.) (1998)	<i>Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices</i> (198 pgs.) At http://www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/family/famlit/cover.htm
Literacy BC (1999) prepared by Jean Rasmussen, Project Mgr.	<i>The BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy</i> (16 pgs.), at www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/framwork/toc.htm
Sharon Skage, Edited by: Darlene Scott, Richard Engram (1999)	<i>Eager to Learn-A Course on Family Literacy</i> (from Community Services Council, St. John's Newfoundland) www.nald.ca/CLR/eager/cover.htm
The Centre for Family Literacy (2002)	<i>Statements of Good Practice</i> (for family literacy programs in Alberta) (tri-fold brochure) available at: www.famlit.ca/resources/goodpractice.html
Colchester East-Hants Regional Library (2003)	<i>Family Literacy Best Practices Guide for Programs in Nova Scotia</i> (Available at: www.nald.ca/clr/best/cover.htm)
Dr. Pat Campbell, Literacy Services of Canada Ltd. (2003)	<i>From Coast to Coast: A Thematic Summary of Canadian Adult Literacy Research</i> (170 pgs.) Available at: http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/pat/coast/cover.htm

National: (Canada-Relevant) in Chronological order of publication

Descriptive Summary

Family Literacy Assessment/Evaluation – shared experiences of 4 community-based programs over 2 yrs., implementing/reviewing variety of assessment procedures

Family Literacy Initiative – summary of projects by province, including details on resources for learners & practitioners and contacts for national & provincial organizations

Family Literacy – sample approaches from 12 Anglophone programs in 8 provinces, written in practitioner-author voice.

Family Literacy Standards Perspective – focuses on best practices for family literacy from field input in British Columbia

designed as a resource binder with course modules, from pilot ABE program. Includes lit. review, focus group research on planning & delivery for family literacy programs of all sorts (e.g. to deliver an 8-16 week course on family literacy)

Family Literacy – 10 guiding principles for good practice from family literacy practitioners in Alberta

Best practices for family literacy from NS practitioners

Family Literacy section (p.41-62) contains 17 studies in 3 topics of: intergenerational aspects, impacts of family literacy training & programs, and emergent literacy for children



Appendix L

List of All the Best Practices Shared in the Research

Accessibility

- take services to where families are (visible, portable, rural)
- easy to get to (central, in home community, walk-in service)
- provide free programs/services (no fees/registration papers, offer free childcare to accommodate adults)
- overcome transportation barriers (car pool, transit, taxis, gas vouchers)
- warm, welcoming, non-threatening, universal, and relaxed atmosphere (where folks can blend in without restrictions, feel accepted and able to bring favourite books/activities, tones that are open rather than judgmental)
- held when it's convenient for families to come together

Assessment, Evaluation and Follow-Up

- follow-up for one-time contact programs (letter by mail, e-mail, phone call, questions, personal contact/invitation)
- debriefing feedback/comments from participants
- celebrate process of literacy (progress recognition, awards)
- use manageable, dependable, reflective practices to review and improve program service on a regular basis (session note-taking, self-reflective journals, discussions, attendance-tracking, practical surveys/reports of what's working well, comparisons to valid formal research)
- end/exit progress report distribution to let folks know how the program went, who participated, and success markers
- early childhood programs should follow through with children into schooling system
- open communication with partners, participants, parents, and practitioners (regular updates, chats, thank-you notes)

Community Links

- access to other learning opportunities (e.g. trips to the library, clothing/food bank, self-esteem course, continuing education)
- partnerships with *like-minded* agencies to provide input, participation, outreach, and support (do more together, sharing similar agendas and philosophies)
- community connections for promotion, resources, volunteers

Environment and Facilities

- welcoming, caring, warm, open, friendly, 'homey' atmosphere
- non-threatening, flexible, non-judgmental, all-inclusive space (e.g. what you do in program can't make it hard for somebody else to use the program; don't criticize/blame/nag; don't use bribery to get people to do things, no offensive language)
- showing respect and value for all partners, participants, and staff (not making assumptions on parents having skills and tools, being kind and sensitive to all cultures and disabilities)
- have cozy chairs for those not comfortable sitting on the floor
- a safe, healthy place conducive to adult learning (having few distractions, kids watched while you learn something)
- adequate space for offering services/programs (e.g. play mats in large play area, big comfy chairs for story-time, separate area for snacks or crafts)
- stress the positives of parenting and encourage sharing between the group (emphasize doing what's best for child)

Program Planning and Delivery

- relevant to children and adults (family & learner-centred)
- involve parents in decision-making for empowered voice (encourage the process of parent-involvement)
- be sensitive to gender differences in children, for learning aptitudes, emotional literacy, and creative expression
- make learning flexible, fun, interesting, with variety (puppetry, music, song/rhymes, story time, reading circle, role-modeling, art/crafts, computers, games, snacks, social time, videos)
- gentle agenda (less-structured/informal, settle in where comfortable, least paperwork possible for participants and accountability)
- have programs for older children, learning opportunities for mothers, something for everyone (responsive to meet adult & child needs through learner-centred approach)
- have more adult participation and interaction with children (a 'building families' approach)
- maintain consistency and universality in program services (follow sound methods and strategies)
- meet goals of parents (oral communication, learner-centred approach to foster independent learning)
- work in small groups (avoid information overload)

Appendix L - List of All the Best Practices Shared in the Research

Program Planning and Delivery *continued*

- all-inclusive programs that offer simple, do-able, practical strategies, age-appropriate stuff (guided reading, role-modeling builds on parenting strengths already evidenced)
- learner-centred program that's *voluntary* not mandatory
- focus on getting everyone into books, weaving literacy into fabric of life
- do crafts that focus on exploring, discovery, imagination, and creativity (risk-taking preferred over laid-out activities)

Promotional Awareness and Recruitment

- advertise to promote available services, raise awareness by information brochures, newspaper articles, radio/TV ads, signs, posters, flyers, reports, photos, reading contests, calendars, billboards, newsletters, and mascots
- use literacy stickers, booklets, bookmarks, slogans, videos
- make invitations to come personal (face-to-face, phone)
- make programs well-known by word-of-mouth/letters/formal presentations (missions, objectives, program times/details)
- recruit by being part of the community (strong impact, visibility at events, program sampling by sit-in participation, phone contact for waiting lists, pre-registration surveys)
- emphasis on building relationships with family/community
- use curriculum displays of kids' work in parent-teacher nights
- work towards changing the general literacy mindset, from one of problem 'intervention' to one of 'prevention' (to learn to understand and celebrate the process of becoming literate as we do the process of learning to walk)
- repetition of positive messages in public relations campaign
- beneficial to have a project on the road (outreach support, travelling resource help or program)
- use fundraising events for promotion (barbecue, ticket sales)

Resources

- need wide range of flexible books/resources to offer more programs and services to all learning ages (age-relevant, books related to TV characters, adaptable curriculum)
- need quality materials and books (educational but emphasize fun of learning & language, various reading levels but high interest and life experiences, interactive, real life pictures)
- ideal to have huge book-lending library/delivery service and funding to develop materials (theme-based for friendship & diversity, multiculturalism, emotions & feelings, life events)

Appendix L - List of All the Best Practices Shared in the Research

Resources *continued*

- flexibility in taking out books/giving books away (into homes)
- information on services, opportunities, community agencies
- information provided in plain language
- have safe equipment, supplies, and furniture (play-mats, soft & cuddly toys, non-toxic crayons/markers, washable paints, magnetic/felt boards, puppets, audio tapes)
- containers to sort curriculum books/learning activity supplies
- use a wealth of common items (construction paper, stickers, magazines/books, household supplies)
- fundraising/donations from community for resources/supplies
- flexible curriculum and content

Scheduling

- get target group and find the time that works best for them
- programs could start/end at a certain time for regularity
- open longer, flexible time (to let you finish what you're doing)
- held at times of day/week when it's convenient for families to come together (early enough in day so kids aren't tired but still interested – morning, after lunch, early evening, weekend)

Socialization

- focus on building relationships/networking with people
- use small groups for children/parents
- playtime for children, kids the same age gathering together
- nutritional snacks for children, coffee and tea for adults (meet and talk, discussion groups)
- getting parents together for support (Meet & Greet, Parenting Groups have same problems/pick up strategies from others)
- start groups with an icebreaker activity (something to make them feel they can always ask questions and interact)

Staff

- warm, friendly, welcoming staff are key
- approachable, accommodating, trustworthy, collaborative
- qualified workers, child-friendly, patient with kids, speak at their level, allow comfortable participation without pressure (knowing how to work with children, families, communities)
- partner with parents (to volunteer, instruct, interact, advise) in order to provide service to numbers who want to access it

Appendix L - List of All the Best Practices Shared in the Research

Staff *continued*

- access to ongoing and relevant workshops, training, resource helps for personal/professional growth and development (to keep skills current)
- strong, interpersonal teamwork emphasis in working hard for the cause, to make something happen (no power struggles)
- staff who value and respect each other's expertise (no hidden agenda, willing to reflect on what's being done, determined to continue improving)
- have literacy background (know how to use whole language approach, offer services with freedom of choice)
- having flexibility, adaptability, & sensitivity to ebb and flow (might be nurturing type or concerned about social action)
- having personality and character that kids can relate to

Support Services

- have peer and parent discussion groups (share working strategies, child-related topics e.g. ADHD, child development)
- professional development opportunities for staff, or access to outreach support project/person to provide it
- more funding and focus on early prevention/intervention (strategies to reach whole families)
- cooperation/coordination with community agencies/services for emergencies, further education, and life skills
- need funding to invest in children and time to follow through with them as long as a literacy need is there
- access to help for developing a program website

