



Give the gift of reading this Christmas

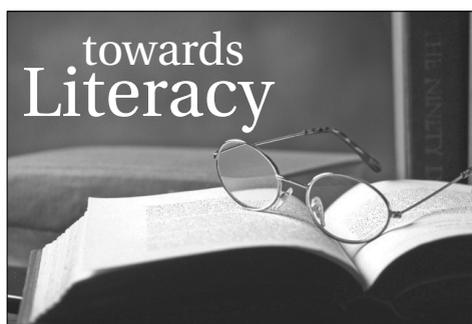
Reading impacts school curriculum and daily life

By MARILYNNE V. BLACK
For the TIMES

All parents are interested in their children's development and, by extension, their education.

A big segment of their education is literacy. Although there are many types of literacy, such as numeracy, visual, social, and emotional literacy, my focus is on one component: reading. Reading, after all, impacts most parts of the school curriculum and daily life in general—yes, even arithmetic and mathematics.

Parents often ask: How can I help my child do well in school, how can I help my child become a reader, a better reader, a life-long



Towards Literacy will appear monthly in the *Chilliwack Times* and serves to highlight programs and services available for those seeking to improve their literacy and numeracy.

reader and learner? The first steps in becoming literate begin very early in life when children learn about spoken language. They hear their family members talking, laughing, and singing. Therefore, surround your child with sounds by talking, singing and repeating nursery rhymes to babies. When

children hear adults read stories to them and see adults reading newspapers, magazines and books for themselves they begin to understand written language.

As they get older let them see how books "work" by tracking the text with your finger. Seeing that print stands for words, is from front to the back of the book and is from left to right are all important steps towards literacy. It is these early experiences with spoken and written language that set the stage for children to become successful readers and writers.

How else can busy parents help their child? In addition to signing, talking, and repeating nursery rhymes read to them and with them. Babies should be read to from day one—in fact, I know of at least one parent who started early—before the baby was born!

Children who have been read to are much more ready to begin school. Studies have shown that reading to a child just 20 minutes a day has a huge impact on their literacy level and ultimately their education. And

once children can read on their own, have them read to you or take turns. Even older children benefit greatly from being read to. And, of course, take your child to the library.

► *Marilynne V. Black is a retired elementary teacher librarian who completed a masters of arts in children's literature from UBC in 2005. She has been acting as a children's literature consultant for a number of years and has a website at www.heartofthestory.ca.*

For ideas for enhancing literacy for the whole family visit:

www.readnowbc.ca - BC's literacy site
www.readtome.ca - Nova Scotia's family literacy site
www.readwritethink.org - The International Reading Association

Christmas Storytime

Tuesday, Dec. 15 7 to 8 p.m.
Chilliwack Library 45860 1st Ave.
Storytellers Carolyn and Kathy celebrate with seasonal stories and fun. Sing-a-long with the amazing Mr. I.

Children need to **read** to succeed

Used books a good way
to build your library

By AMBER SHORT
For the TIMES

Babies need books. Toddlers need to read. Children crave stories. Studies show that exposing your children to books in their early development is crucial to lifelong literacy.

Reading is a secret language, and early childhood literacy helps us acquire the necessary tools to "crack the code." Not only does literacy open the entire world to us, it allows us to explore the magic of our limitless imaginations.

Libraries are by far the most affordable way to supply your family with an ever-changing selection of books. Children can learn the importance of taking care of borrowed items, and can have their own library card to make visits even more exciting.

Storytime, an ever expanding selec-

tion of books, and hardworking, well-trained staff to assist visitors make our public library system an extremely important resource.

That being said, many families prefer to have a permanent collection of books at home. With prices on new children's books rising on a yearly basis, it can be financially daunting to purchase a decent-sized personal library. That's where used bookstores come in handy.

Buying used books enables families of every income bracket to afford twice the amount of books, and stores like The Book Man, who offer trading credit deepen discounts to ensure affordability and accessibility to all young readers. A book that is \$10 new can often be found for \$5 or less at a used bookstore. Apply trading credit to that same purchase at stores such as The Book Man, and the same book is now only \$2.50.

That gives you four times the buying power, and four times the numbers of titles available to your young reader for the same cost as one new book.

Children learn about reusing, recycling and the importance of taking care of their books. Well-cared-for books can be brought back for further trading credits off of future book purchases. They also learn about reusing and recycling, and participating in alternative marketplaces.

No matter how you acquire books for your young reader, the heart of the matter remains the same: children need to read to succeed. From board books to chapter books, your little ones will grow into strong readers with your help (and the invaluable work of our librarians and educators).

► *Amber Short is co-owner of The Book Man.*


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