

The  
WORLD



Of  
WORDS

*Any Parent Can*

*S. Celia Jaipaul*

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## Words in Action Publishing

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**open for discovery**



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# Office of the Mayor

## Foreword

It is my pleasure to invite you to enjoy “The World of Words.” This book is a wonderful tool for parents to open the literacy box for their children. It is the start of a magic journey which will nurture them to become a part of the reading world. The book does not try to remedy, rather it focuses on preventing low literacy by promoting reading early in life.

My interest in literacy stems from my background as a teacher, and the recognition that literacy is the absolute key for people to function in our society. For adult learners, being able to read easily is the key to pursuing education and knowledge independently. Our ability to read gives us economic advantage in business and commerce. Our future direction in technology requires the ability to read text and other crucial information on a screen. Literacy is the key to safety, health, productivity, and participation in the mainstream. Without literacy we suffer; we are denied access in so many ways.

“The World of Words” is concrete, visible, enduring, and positive. It shows a personal understanding of the challenges parents face and shows that any parent can begin the journey to literacy from the first song they sing with baby on their lap. I encourage all parents to begin this journey from the moment your baby is born. Literacy is one of the most precious gifts you can give to your children.

Congratulations to Celia Jaipaul for taking the initiative to write “The World of Words,” and to the Red Deer Public Library and the Friends of Red Deer Public Library for providing support for its printing.



# Introduction

This book is for you - parents who want to give their children the precious gift of literacy.

It is not easy being a parent. You may face many difficulties as you struggle to spend time with your child, and to spend time reading. But this is natural. Never give up, just take it one step at a time.



The purpose of this book is to help you become more aware that reading with your children, even babies, is important. By reading with your children, you are giving them the most wonderful gift that no amount of money can buy. You are preparing them for success in school, and success in life. You are also sharing moments which will stay with you and your child for always. For example, my Mom often tells me that her most precious memory is of me, sitting at our kitchen table reading to her.

The other purpose of this book is to give you encouragement and support. Many parents question their ability to help their

children. But it does not matter if you are a teen parent, single or divorced, have a low income or low education, or speak English as your second language. You can still lead your child to literacy just by trying. This book will show you ways to do so.

My own mother did not have the opportunity to attend high school but she understood only too well how important it was for her seven children to have a proper education for success in life. A “proper” education could only be possible with good language skills. Apart from my Dad, there was no-one to offer active support and help for her to raise us and pursue her own education. But my Mom studied privately, teaching herself as well as her children along the way. As a little girl, I remember once asking her when she would be finished with her studies. She told me it would be soon. She became a School Teacher not long after that and taught for over 25 years! The most important part of what she taught me, her daughter, was the love of words, and the love for books. We were always surrounded by books which we borrowed from our local library.

**“Learn to love good books. There are treasures in books that all the money in the world cannot buy, but that the poorest laborer can have for nothing.”**

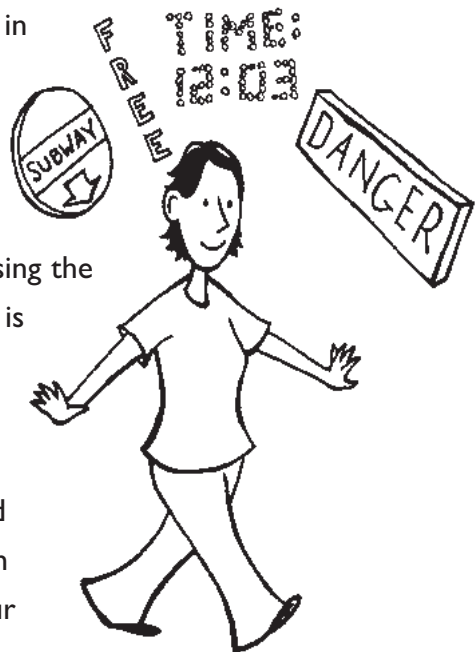
( Robert Ingersoll)

# What Is Literacy?

In simple words, being able to read and write.

Family literacy is taking place all the time as parents, children, friends, relatives, and members of the community go about their everyday tasks. It happens as part of our routine as we go to work, cook meals, shop, answer the telephone, and make lists of what we need to do. Many of the things we do with our children involve literacy, for example, homework, talking or writing about our day, writing notes or letters, listening to music or stories, singing, reciting poems or rhymes, even working on the computer. We are constantly using language by talking or writing. In fact, readiness for reading begins for your child in your home.

As a parent, you can help your child to develop strong literacy skills by stressing the value of literacy. Your home is your child's first school, and you are your child's first teacher. Your child's values, attitudes, outlook on life, and feelings start to develop from the first moment he is in your home, and continue to develop as



he grows. You can build a positive attitude towards reading, and show the value of books by providing as many reading materials as possible in your home. **You don't need special training to help your child develop reading and writing skills.**

Many of the things you can do with your child cannot be done in school. You can make a trip to the store, office, zoo, bank, or park an educational experience for your child. You can discuss what you see, encourage questions, talk about what was most interesting, even make up a story or poem about the trip. This stimulates thinking, exploring new words, and developing ideas. Even if you just take a walk in the park or around the block, you can talk about the different birds or animals you see, the different sounds you hear, and the colours of the sky, grass and flowers. In this way your child experiences the world around us. As your child grows, his skills grow and his confidence increases.

**Because we are surrounded by words, we must be able to read.**

# When Did I Learn To Read?

**I do not remember.**

What I do remember is reading to my Mom. And most of all, I remember the magic of our library. From as far back as I could remember, the library has been an essential part of my life.

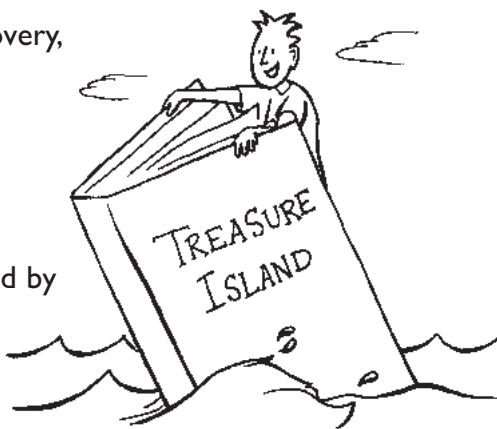
When I was growing up, a child could only obtain a library card at age six. This card had to be signed by the school Principal and a parent. You could borrow only one book with this card. I remember getting into trouble by borrowing my friends' library cards so I could get extra books.

As I think of those days I smell again the new books in our library. Whenever I enter a book store, or open a new book, the feel and smell of the books take me back to those days. Even before I look at the words, I touch the cover and let my fingers glide over the pages – just like our baby wants to smell and taste his story books. My love for words, for books, and for writing began in that big, old library. I remember waiting in line for the doors to open, so I could be the first to enter and have first choice of the “good” books.

I remember the puppet shows and the plays performed in that library. Sometimes we had candy given for treats. The words “The owl and the pussycat went to sea, in a beautiful pea green boat” still come to mind as I think of those days filled with magic and adventure. This wonderful world of words filled my summer

vacations with endless discovery, learning and wonder.

My first experience as a writer was the result of an essay competition sponsored by our Public Library. I now have that photograph of myself receiving a prize over 35 years ago. It was found in the city archives by someone who knew our family.



As I grew older and entered high school, the library became more important to me for another purpose. Every afternoon I would ride my bike and go to do research for my papers and exams. Without these resources to supplement my text books, I would have been lost.

Try to visit the library where you live. You will find the people who work there are very friendly and helpful. If it is your first time at the library they will explain how to get a card to borrow books, where to find the books you want, how long you can keep a book, and the number of books you can borrow. They will answer any questions you have, and tell you about the programs your children can attend.

**A visit to the library could become a world tour.**

# Why Do We Need To Read?

**Because language is all around us.**

We are reading and interpreting words all the time. As soon as we open our eyes in the morning, we “read” the time on our clock. We may have books or magazines on our bedside table.

In the bathroom, almost everything we pick up has labels with directions for use, ingredients, the name of the manufacturer and other details. This includes products such as our toothpaste, shampoo, bath soap, hair gels and sprays, medicines, lotions, skin care, and other items – all in just one small room. Most of the time we do not need to read the labels on many of these products since we already know what they are and how to use them. But when we went grocery shopping we had to read these labels to know the difference between the shampoo and toothpaste. Some of us even read the labels to find out what is used to make the product in case we are allergic to them. We also have to read the labels on medications so we can use them properly.

Our kitchen, too, is filled with items that require our ability to read. Here are some examples, and why it is so important to be able to read the directions:

I. Canned and packaged foods – labels give information on expiration dates (how long we can keep it, and safe to use).

Labels also show the ingredients, in case of allergies, and directions for preparation, calories and nutritive value.

2. Fresh and frozen meats – also give information on expiration dates and how to prepare them to avoid food poisoning.

3. Coupons – these need to be read to know when they can be used, the products for which they can be used, and which stores will take them.

4. Flyers are important to many people since they give good information on available products, good prices, and where they can be bought.

5. Recipe books – if we want to prepare something properly, we need to understand how a recipe is written, what ingredients to use, how much to use, and how to cook or bake the food. The way we read the ingredients is very important. When my seven year old son decided to make us pancakes as a

surprise, he was distressed to end up with a very runny batter! He did not

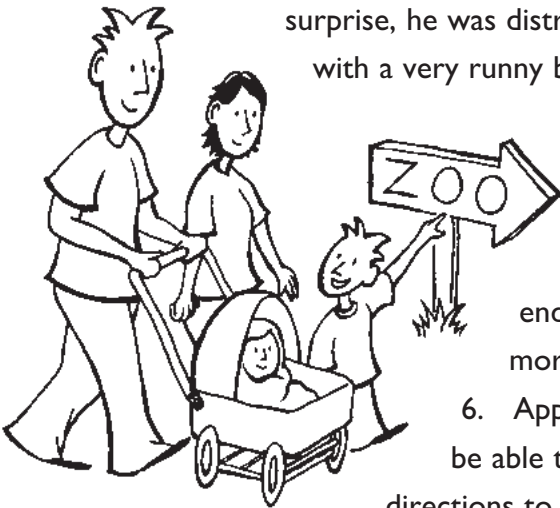
understand that 1 1/2 cups did not mean twelve cups.

We ended up with endless pancakes that morning.

6. Appliances – we need to be able to read the

directions to be able to use them

safely and keep our family from being hurt. For example, the kind of serving dish which is safe for use in a regular oven might not be safe to use in a microwave.



There are other reading materials in our kitchen we refer to often, including books, newspapers, telephone directories, clippings, and notes on our fridge. Sometimes we may even leave little notes for family members. If we do not understand or recognize words we could have trouble listening to the radio or watching television.

What happens when we step outside our home? Just the same. There are signs and advertisements everywhere. We know what most of them are, not just because we can read them, but because they are common symbols for familiar things. For example, we recognize a “STOP” sign before we even read the letters that tell us to stop. It is the same with many store signs and restaurant signs. But there are also many signs that we do have to read because they are not so familiar and we need to understand what they say so we can carry on with our business, or for our safety. We need to be able to read directions to know which bus to take, and street signs so we can find our way. When we go to a restaurant we have to read the menus to order our meal.

**We need to be able to read so we can perform our  
every-day tasks.**

# When Do We Start?

**Right away.**

From the moment your baby is born, you are his teacher and you can begin to teach him right from that moment. Your child wants to learn, and you are his most important teacher.

When you talk to your baby, he begins to hear the language that is his, the language he will speak as he grows. It does not matter that your baby is too young to speak, or to say words. As you read, your baby is learning many elements of language: the change in the tone of your voice, the movement of your eyes as you read from left to right, your facial expression, the sound of the words. As your baby grows he begins to connect words with the pictures. Your baby tries to imitate you when you speak, and you are overjoyed when he says his “first” word. But the most important part of the process is the bonding that takes place with your child.



The time you spend with your child is the start of a relationship which can last forever. This is time nothing can bring back. As you share moments,

you are sowing rich seeds which will blossom into mutual love, respect, and trust. You will find that this trust becomes more crucial as your child enters school and eventually becomes a teenager. You want your child to know that if there is a problem it is always okay to come and talk with you about it. You want to look into the eyes of your child when he is grown and feel content that you gave the best of yourself. You want to have no regrets for lost opportunities.

As any parent knows, life with a baby or very young child is not always easy. There are good as well as bad moments. There are times you might feel like running away from home, or nights when you cry in frustration. But it gets better every day. As his teacher, you are helping him to take one step after another on his pathway through life. As you help your child to learn, the more he grows, and each day brings new joy to your relationship.

You are the most important instrument in helping to create an adult who will experience success in his life.

**Start talking to your child from the moment  
he is placed in your arms.**

# How Do I Go About Reading With My Child?

**Very easily. You can read 15-20 minutes every day - start with less if you feel more comfortable.**

- \* Select a special time that is best for both of you, for example, before bedtime, after your child's bath, after supper.
- \* Select a book you both like.
- \* Choose a spot that is comfortable and away from other things that will attract your child's attention. If possible, hold your child in your lap.
- \* Say the name of the book and the author.
- \* Read slowly - do not rush. Show your child the pictures. Change the tone of your voice, and use lots of expression to fit the story.

\* Do not give up if your child seems tired or bored.

\* It is all right if your child wants to participate in the story e.g. providing a key word or imitating a sound.

\* Create opportunities to explore the world of books - go to the library often, and visit bookstores even though



you don't buy a book. You can buy books at garage sales for very little money.

- \* Choose a variety of books. Books with pictures, songs and rhymes are good for younger children.
- \* Let your child see you enjoy reading with him/her.
- \* If possible, do activities or games related to the story

In addition to reading, talk, sing and play with your child. All these activities help them learn words and the connection of these words with the world around.

**Choose a special time for you and your child  
to read and spend time together.**

# How Long Should I Take To Read a Book?

As long as you need.

There are no set time lines for how long you should take to read a book. I take as much time as I need to finish a book because language is so fascinating.



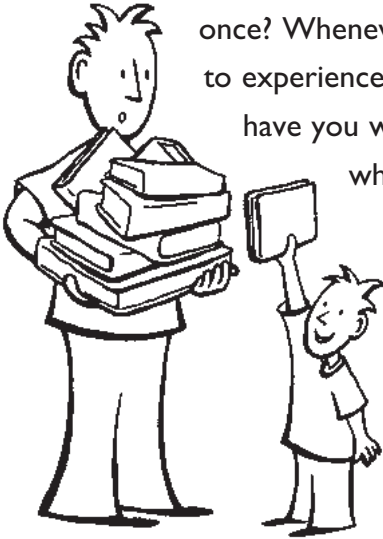
When I come across a beautifully written sentence or paragraph, I read it many times. I really want to enjoy the words that are used and the way they are arranged to make this piece of writing so appealing. I want to take time to put myself in that story so I can touch, feel, smell and experience what the author is writing about.

Because reading expands our experience and enjoyment in this way, it is all right to spend as much time as you want on a book. Again, you will need to be patient if it seems to take long to finish a book with your child.

**Enjoy reading your book – there is no need to rush.**

# Is It Okay To Read A Book More Than Once?

**Absolutely.**



Can you imagine hearing a song you like only once? Whenever we enjoy something, we want to experience it many times. How many times have you wished to go again to the place where you had a wonderful holiday?

There is nothing wrong with reading a book more than once. Many adults like to read a book they enjoy a second time. Children often want to read the same story over and over.

This is normal. It is an important part of their learning since they learn words, and also the words attached to pictures. Many children can recite the story after hearing it many times. You will find they know if you leave out a part of their favorite story.

Be patient with your child when they are in no rush to move on. It is a good sign – one that shows they are really enjoying the time you spend together.

**Reading the same book more than once gives you extra time to enjoy being together.**

# What About Play Time?

Play time is fun time as well as learning time.

Reading is not the only activity that helps to improve your child's literacy skills.

- \* Rhymes and songs help children learn new words.
- \* Board games, building blocks and puzzles help with letters, colors, shapes and new words.
- \* Pretend games and playing house give children the chance to make up their own stories and use their imagination.
- \* Simple crafts and recipes allow children to interpret instructions and to practice what is read to them.
- \* Dolls, puppets, toys, and play dough all help children to be creative in making up stories and talking with other children.



**Join in the fun - you can also have fun  
playing with your child.**

# What Did I Learn Today?

## My ABCs - in Music.

I am serious when I say I am now learning my ABCs. I have always loved music but life demanded my time and money for other important things. Recently, I decided the time had come for me to learn to play the piano. When my sixteen year old daughter finished her grade 8 piano with Honours, she was a great source of inspiration for me.

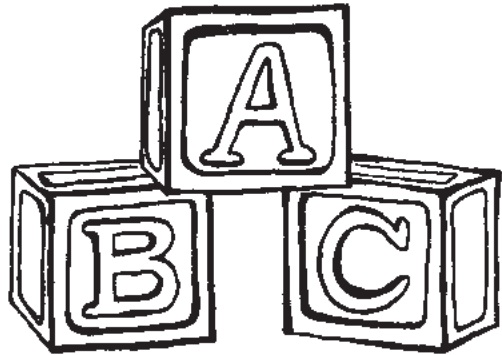
It is never too late to learn, and you are never too old to start learning. Quite often, there are good reasons for not doing some of the things you wanted to do, or should have done when you were younger. Perhaps there was little time or money. It could be when you were growing up you did not read much because your own parents did not know how important it is. It could be they did not read with you because they were busy with work. You yourself might have been busy helping your parents with chores and barely had time to do homework. Sometimes there are no books to read because there is no library, or no money to buy books.

If you are single, divorced, a teen parent, have a low education, or low income, a big challenge is having limited time and money to spend on building strong skills in reading and writing. However, parents usually want to make things better for their children so they can do well in school and in life. Sometimes this

means parents, whatever their age, might want to start improving their own skills so they can help their children and also be a good model. It is never too late to start, even if you are starting from “scratch”.

So ask yourself, “What Did I Learn Today?” We are learning all the time, and we do not have to be a certain age, or be in a classroom. We can learn anywhere, at any time, at any age, and be proud of it. It is when we stop learning that we should be embarrassed. Life should be a great learning adventure.

At the same time, we need to be realistic about what learning something new means to our



lives. It takes hard work and maybe sacrificing something else. It is easy to get frustrated or discouraged. We may feel like giving up and say it is not worth the effort of trying yet one more time. At these times remember the goal is to give your children their chance early in life.

**It is never too late to learn your ABCs! Start today.**

# Can You Imagine A World Without Books?

**No. We could not function without books.**

In the book “Lucifer’s Hammer” by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, Earth is about to be hit by a meteor. The place is California. People are trying to save their valuables, store food, trying to find a safe place to hide, and doing whatever they need to do to survive. What one man does is try to save civilization by preserving learning and knowledge - by saving a variety of books that were in his home.

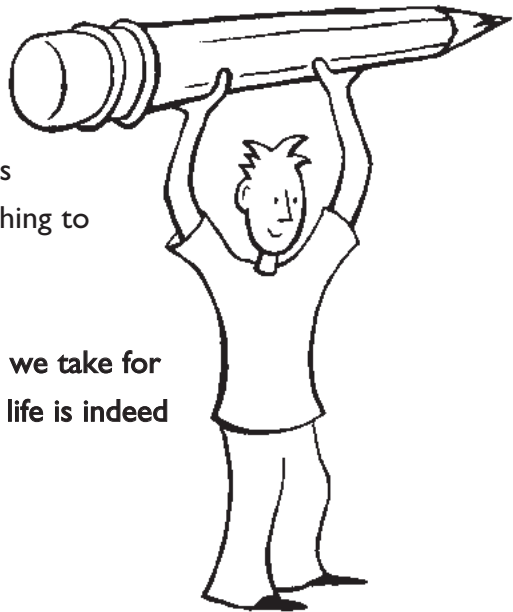
He does not pay attention to whether he will live or die. His main task is to get these books to safety as soon as possible because time is running out. He goes to the store and instead of buying food and survival supplies, he buys other things. He rushes home and from his bookshelves he selects a number of books he feels are necessary to rebuild civilization.

He sprays each book with the insect spray he has just bought, drops it into a Ziploc bag, adds some moth balls, then seals it. He then places the entire package into another Ziploc. He continues this so each book is sealed in four plastic Ziploc bags. The books include “Alice in Wonderland,” “Gulliver’s Travels” and some by Agatha Christie. He then places as many books as possible into his wheel barrow and pushes it to the farthest point uphill, through slippery mud and pouring rain to an old

construction site, and empties the books into abandoned septic tanks. In this same manner he makes several trips. The last book he places in his backpack. It is a book named “The Way Things Work.” With this book in his possession, he thinks he has something valuable to trade for food and other necessities.

Books are perhaps the single most prized possession of mankind. Think of going back to the beginning of civilization, and having to make the same discoveries all over again so our world could once more know how to make cottage cheese or build an airplane. Without the unique configuration from this magnificent world of words, we could not record formulae and codes and equations necessary for countries to build and explore. Through the written word, we have, over the ages, documented the rules of etiquette, the laws by which society must abide, and the events of history. Without the body of learning and knowledge committed in some written form, generations to come would have nothing to guide them.

**The little pen or pencil we take for granted in our everyday life is indeed mighty!**



## **Red Deer Family Literacy Projects - A Program of the Red Deer Public Library**

### **Mission:**

To foster greater literacy development of children and parents by

- early intervention
- building on strengths within families
- providing information, materials and personal support

**All of our programs are completely free and are delivered in a fun and friendly way.**

Family Literacy programs are intended to increase the awareness of the importance of reading, and to develop literacy skills at an early age. They are offered to parents and children through the following programs:

**World of Words** – in a number of schools, kindergarten children and their parents have fun learning through stories, rhymes, songs, and activities to help improve literacy skills and assist in the transition to Grade 1. Involving parents is a way of helping them to improve their literacy skills so they can help their children at home.

**Red Deer Firefighters' Community Fund Reading Pals** - This program is offered during July and August to Elementary school age students who are referred by their teachers, and need additional support in reading and/or writing. Students are paired with a “pal,” and receive assistance from a qualified tutor to

accommodate their specific needs. The program encourages a higher level of literacy in the family unit by giving the participants incentive to read independently and with family members.

**Kids Club** - This is a partnership between Family Literacy and the Red Deer Centre. The Kids Club is held once every month, except during July and August, for parents and caregivers with pre-school children. It consists of stories, rhymes, songs, and other activities to encourage the development and enhancement of early literacy skills in the family. Free refreshments are provided and registration is not required.

**Family Reading Fun** - This program is offered through local agencies where there are parents who need help with literacy. Family Literacy provides a facilitator who goes to the agency and teaches the literacy component for a portion of the agency's regularly scheduled program. Family Literacy contributes snacks through donations.

For additional copies of *The World of Words*, or for more information, please contact Red Deer Public Library Family Literacy Projects at:

Phone: (403) 309-3488

E-mail: [cjaipaul@rdpl.org](mailto:cjaipaul@rdpl.org)

This document can also be accessed from the Red Deer Public Library website in the Adobe Acrobat format at [www.rdpl.org](http://www.rdpl.org)

## **This book is meant to encourage you as a parent to read with your young child.**

*It does not matter if you are a single Mom or Dad, divorced, a teen parent, or learning a new language. Reading at home does not need a lot of money or a high education. You can still read with your child and have fun doing so, even if your child is only a baby.*

*Reading at home gives your children a great start. It paves the way for doing well in school and later in life. You are an important part of your child's life.*

*Celia Jaipaul writes from personal experience. This includes growing up in a large family, where both parents worked. She writes also as a parent, and as an adult learner.*

### **About the Author**

*Celia Jaipaul is a Family Literacy Coordinator for Red Deer Public Library and has been involved in Education for over 30 years. Her love of language and books began at an early age, and she has written short stories and articles for publication. She believes good language skills are essential to our conduct and survival in society.*



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