

LITERACY IMPACTS LIFE



Literacy in 21st century Ontario is about much more than just reading and writing — it is about how we communicate in society and how we prepare for a changing world.

The connections between literacy and health, poverty, corrections and many other aspects of our society are abundant and intertwine to create a complex web of lifelong learning.

When people think literacy, they tend to think illiteracy. You can read - or you cannot. This is a myth! Adult learning includes the full spectrum of skills and today's society requires individuals to have a wider range of skills and adapt more readily to new information and technology.



The majority of Ontarians with literacy issues are not easily identifiable – they have jobs, care for their families, help their children learn, vote and volunteer. Because they participate at work, at home and in the community, they do not see themselves as needing to upgrade their skills.

In fact, literacy and skills issues often only come to light when individuals are faced with change.



When our lives change, our skills are tested. We begin to ask ourselves:

- Can I communicate effectively?
- Do I understand the latest technology?
- Do my skills meet workplace demand?

Literacy skills help us greet change with confidence.

Strong literacy skills help us be better workers, parents and citizens.

Did you know?

- A 1% increase in the literacy rate would generate \$18 billion in economic growth every year. (C.D. Howe Institute, 2005)
- There are over 1.5 million immigrants in Ontario with literacy issues. (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2007)
- Less than 20% of people with the lowest literacy skills are unemployed. (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2007)
- Investment in literacy programming has a 241% return on investment. (Data Angel, 2009)
- Literacy impacts personal health, poverty and crime rates, families, employment and wages, self-esteem, and community engagement. (Statistics Canada, 2003).

There are 350 adult literacy and upgrading programs working across the province to offer Literacy and Basic Skills training to 50,000 Ontarians each year.

Literacy programs across Ontario cover a range of skill development from basic reading and writing skills to more advanced essential skills to prepare people for their next step in life – a high school diploma, college or university, their first job or a second career.

Find a program near you by visiting www.on.literacy.ca.



The Ontario Literacy Coalition's Learning for Life Strategy seeks to:

- Gather data and intelligence on literacy issues and trends
- Foster partnerships between literacy agencies and community partners
- Identify professional development opportunities
- Advise policy and program development.

Support Learning for Life. Visit us at www.on.literacy.ca.