

## Definition of terms used In these statements

**Family** is defined as two or more people related by blood, marriage, adoption, or commitment to care for one another. (The Illinois Family Education Institute, 1996)

**Family literacy** is defined as “the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community.” (International Reading Association, n.d.)

**Family literacy programs** are defined as “the range of initiatives that recognize the influence of the family on the literacy development of family members, and that support families in literacy activity and in accessing literacy resources.” (Thomas, Skage, and Jackson, 1998)

**Literacy** is defined as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society.” (UNESCO, 2004)

**Parent** is defined as a significant adult and primary caretaker in a child’s life. (The Illinois Family Education Institute, 1996)

The Statements of Best Practice for Family Literacy Programs in Alberta were developed by a committee of family literacy practitioners from

around the province. This committee looked at examples of best practice statements and guiding principles from other provinces and associations, prepared a number of drafts of statements, and received feedback from other literacy coordinators and practitioners in Alberta.

Sincere thanks to the members of the Centre for Family Literacy Best Practices Committee for development of these statements.



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# Statements of Best Practice for Family Literacy Programs in Alberta



# Statements of Best Practice

## for Family Literacy Programs in Alberta

These Best Practice Statements reflect what we believe to be the elements of an effective, high-quality family literacy program. They are a way of setting goals that can inform program planning, delivery, and evaluation. They are not definitive or meant to be used as measures, but rather should serve as guiding principles for practitioners, funders and policy makers.

As the field of family literacy continues to grow and change, what is considered to be best practice in family literacy will also change. These statements, therefore, should be seen as dynamic and needing to be re-evaluated over time.

The Statements have been developed to address eleven themes in the practice of family literacy.



### 1. Intergenerational

Work with parents and children, directly or indirectly, to establish an intergenerational cycle of literacy achievement.

### 2. Collaborative

Recognize the importance of collaboration, and are developed, delivered, and continually improved with participant and community input.

### 3. Build on strengths

Build on literacy behaviours and strengths already present in families, and introduce additional strategies to help further enrich literacy activities in the home.

### 4. Responsive

Flexible and responsive to the needs and interests of the families who participate in them.

### 5. Inclusive

Inclusive of diverse participants, and use resources that are appropriate.

### 6. Essence

Offer activities that celebrate and emphasize the joy of learning.

### 7. Focus on adult learning

Effective in providing adults with confidence in their role as a child's first teacher and their commitment to lifelong learning.

### 8. Sound methods

Follow sound educational practices, appropriate for the literacy development of children and adults. Practitioners select from a variety of research-based approaches according to the needs of each group.

### 9. Staff qualifications

Have qualified and trained staff appropriate to the educational needs of children and adults and appropriate to specific roles and responsibilities within a particular delivery model.

### 10. Access

Held in accessible, welcoming locations. Support is given to overcome barriers to participation, such as lack of child care.

### 11. Evaluation

Include an on-going, manageable evaluation process that produces information useful for program development and accountability.