



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

**Get Set Learn Afterschool (GSLA)** is a unique, dynamic program that helps families who struggle with literacy and/or language issues to escape poverty through education. Parents and their children (infants, preschoolers and school aged) learn together in a fun and exciting way. We use the home and community as settings for learning and growing. GSLA provides parents with tools and strategies to: support learning at home; success in school; and to make learning fun. Our program builds the skills of all family members while strengthening family connections and links to the community. We deliver this program in partnership with local partners including elementary schools, libraries, community agencies, and volunteers. For more details visit: <http://www.getsetlearn.ca/>

**Who We Help:** Our program reaches out to parents/grandparents whose children/grandchildren are most at risk of drop out, school failure and who lack of learning support at home. It targets parents who may desire to support their children, but lack the skills and confidence to do so. We invite families from all cultures to participate in GSLA. We know from research that a parent's literacy level is a predictor of their child's literacy level in adulthood. Research reinforces the importance of the parents' role in children's learning. We believe "a parent is their child's first teacher". This program is specially designed to meet the needs of struggling families and build a foundation of success. Our agency has over fifteen years of experience delivering family literacy programs in our community. We are a leader in the field in Canada with many publications on our website - [www.projectread.ca](http://www.projectread.ca)

**Program Outline:** GSLA is delivered once a week for two hours per class over a ten-week session. Our intercultural model of family learning helps parents to: become learning partners with their children; be role models of life long learning; enhance parent engagement in the school system; and improve their own literacy and language skills. A typical class includes: family-learning time with guided activities; nutritious snack; and age-based learning time (separate groups: parents, school-aged and preschool children) with fun, educational activities. Topics included: how to speak to your child's teacher; helping your child with homework even when your skills are limited; where to seek out adult education;

being a literacy role model; making math fun at home; multisensory learning and learning styles; and literacy and health. All programming is facilitated by qualified specialists in each age group. Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre facilitates the preschool program. Project READ provides adult facilitation and engages a teacher to provide the program for school-aged children. This Spring 2013, we are partnering with Wilfrid Laurier University and Melissa Dol, Masters student to provide a special reading comprehension program for children in grades 4 to 6.

**The Facts:** In Waterloo Region, 24% of adults (16 yrs +) experience serious literacy challenges (Level 1 of the International Adult Literacy Survey, Statistics Canada). In Ontario, 21% are found in Level 1 Prose (out of five levels) according to the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2003 (Stats Can). These challenges are difficulties dealing with print found in daily life. Canadians with the lowest literacy skills have higher rates of unemployment (26%) compared to those with the highest skills (4%). It is difficult to escape poverty with limited literacy skills.

**About Us:** Project READ Literacy Network (PRLN) is a dynamic, community collaboration promoting the growth of literacy and essential skills in Waterloo-Wellington. We focus on our vision of three long-term impacts: a more literate community; a more dynamic and collaborative education and training system; and literacy is viewed an issue of broad concern for the whole community. Incorporated in 1988, Project READ is a regional literacy network covering the counties of Waterloo and Wellington in Ontario. We are a registered charitable organization. Our focus is to support the development and delivery of quality literacy services and to increase access of adults and families to those services. In collaboration with literacy organizations in our region, PRLN develops solutions to local literacy needs. We view family literacy as a proactive solution to intergenerational low literacy. We define family literacy programming as activities and strategies facilitated with parents (or grandparents and guardians) that strengthen their skills to foster pre- and early literacy and math in their children. It is about intergenerational, interactive and emotionally-centred programming that builds on the strengths of families.

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