

**BOND TO LITERACY: PARENT-CHILD READING PILOT PROJECT**

**Final Evaluation Report 2011-2012**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Project Description

The Bond to Literacy: Parent-Child Reading Program (BTL) is an initiative of HIPPIY Canada which started in 2009 with funding from the Social Development Partnerships Program of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The overall goal of the BTL program is to enhance the capacity of Canadian non-profit organizations to improve the literacy levels of geographically isolated, low-income and/or disadvantaged families and their children. The BTL program focuses on increasing children's readiness to succeed in school by developing the parents' ability and confidence to help their children (aged 3 – 5 years) gain literacy and related skills. Staff members in family service organizations in the community are trained to work with the parents using materials (story books and curriculum) provided through the BTL Program. The parents participate in a bi-weekly group led by a community facilitator for eight weeks (16 week time commitment overall). Parents learn how to animate storybooks and engage their children through accompanying activities (spending at least 15 minutes a day with each child).

The objectives of the BTL Program are:

1. To design, adapt, and distribute materials and HIPPIY-Groundwood books for the Bond to Literacy project to 200 remote family service centres in Canada;
2. To develop the capacity of 20 not-for-profit staff to become master trainers of the Bond to Literacy Program in remote regions of Canada;
3. To develop the capacity of 200 local community facilitators to engage parents in the Bond to Literacy Program;
4. To support 2,000 geographically isolated and otherwise excluded parents in improving their child's literacy and equipping them with the skills needed to enter school ready to learn and succeed.

### Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to discover the degree to which the BTL Program achieved its stated objectives during the pilot project implementation period (January 2011 – March 2012), and to determine how the BTL Program can be improved. The evaluation was conducted between March and October 2012. The evaluation design was mixed methods (triangulating both method and source) and included focus groups, questionnaires, interviews and visits to sites in Alberta and Ontario. In total,

there were 32 responses gathered from parents (focus groups: 16; questionnaires: 16); 16 responses from community facilitators (focus groups: 8; questionnaires: 8); and 4 responses from master trainers (interviews: 2; questionnaires: 2). Because the same sample of people filled out questionnaires and participated in focus groups/interviews (for all three data sources: parents, community facilitators and master trainers), the actual number of people in the evaluation (respondents) is smaller than the sets of responses: parents: 16 respondents; community facilitators: 8 respondents and master trainers: 2 respondents. The evaluation also reviewed progress reports (for unintended outcomes and challenges) and project records (for statistics on reach). The BTL Program is still ongoing and more parent groups are being convened. Therefore, project records are still being updated. The final statistics on reach should be available in March 2013.

## Findings

The design and production of all expected deliverables (materials and books) was completed. The distribution target (200 remote family service centres) is expected to be achieved by March 2013. Twenty-three master trainers were accepted into the BTL Program with broad regional representation across Canada. Seventeen master trainers have been active in training community facilitators (118 community facilitators have been trained, as of July 2012). Also, 940 geographically remote and or isolated families/caregivers were recruited to deliver the BTL Program (as of July 2012). As the challenges of recruiting families in remote communities became clear, the delivery model for the BTL Program changed to allow for ongoing, rolling recruitment of families until the target of 2,000 families is reached.<sup>1</sup> The master trainers and community facilitators have committed to deliver the BTL Program until they have reached the projected number of families.

Parents commented that they had acquired more tools to teach and support their child's development. The parents recognized the high value of the BTL program and positively validated the importance of the program. Parents indicated that the BTL program helped them to feel important as their child's first teacher and in turn the parents developed skills to lead self-driven initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> While the program was initially designed for each site to run the program once with 10 families, it became clear early on that the BTL Program would run many times throughout the timeframe, or until they run out of "stock" of families.

When parents, community facilitators, and master trainers were asked if they could think of things that should be dropped from the program, they suggested: the Pinwheel activity for safety reasons, the Lantern activity – as it is too thin when construction completed, the Accordion activity - as it is too small, the Ancient Thunder book- as it is not popular with groups, and The Eddie Longpans Book – because it “brought up emotional issues for some children.” When parents, community facilitators, and master trainers were asked if they could think of things that should be added, they suggested more focus on pre-alphabet and alphabet activities through alphabet recognition, alphabet songs and letters.

## Conclusion

The BTL Program cultivated the development, improvement and advancement of literacy skills in addition to other positive impacts among parents, children, master trainers, and community facilitators. The program increased the children’s and parent’s self-esteem and the parents emphasized that it improved their relationship with their child. The program provided children with school readiness skills prior to attending school; parents felt that this is important as the expectations for their children’s social skills, literacy and numeracy skill-based needs are increasingly vast.

## SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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### Background

The Bond to Literacy: Parent-Child Reading Program (BTL) is an initiative of HIPPY Canada, which started in 2009 with funding from the Social Development Partnerships Program of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The overall goal of the BTL program is to enhance the capacity of Canadian non-profit organizations to improve the literacy levels of geographically isolated, low-income and/or disadvantaged families and their children. The BTL program is based on the following set of assumptions:

"We believe that a parent is a child's first and best teacher. The Bond to Literacy program works in communities to help parents do their best. The children and the community benefit. We also believe that parents and children bond during their time of reading and learning together."<sup>2</sup>

The BTL program focuses on increasing children's readiness to succeed in school by developing the parents' ability and confidence to help their children (aged 3 – 5 years) to gain literacy and related skills. Staff members in family service organizations in the community are trained to work with the parents using materials (story books and curriculum) provided through the BTL program. The parents participate in a bi-weekly group led by a community facilitator for eight weeks (16 week time commitment overall). Parents learn how to animate storybooks and engage their children with accompanying activities (spending at least 15 minutes a day with each child).

After the initial phase of research, design, and development of the curriculum, the BTL program team focused on the recruitment of families. After being trained by the master trainers, each of the community facilitators was expected to recruit up to ten families. Support was provided to the master trainers through bi-weekly webinars. The pilot phase of the BTL program started in January 2011 when the community facilitators began the delivery of the BTL program to families across Canada through group meetings and the distribution of sets of BTL program curriculum and storybooks. The parents then delivered the curriculum to their children through reading, the animation of storybooks and related activities.

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<sup>2</sup> HIPPY Canada. *Bond to Literacy Master Trainers' Manual*, p.1

## Objectives

The objectives of the BTL program are:

1. To design, adapt, and distribute materials HIPPY-Groundwood books for the Bond to Literacy project to 200 remote family service centres in Canada;
2. To develop the capacity of 20 not-for-profit staff to become trainers of the Bond to Literacy Program in remote regions of Canada;
3. To develop the capacity of 200 local community facilitators to engage parents in the Bond to Literacy Program;
4. To support 2,000 geographically isolated and other-wise excluded parents in improving their child's literacy and equip with the skills they need to enter school ready to learn and succeed.

## Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the BTL program are:

- Bond to Literacy: Parent – Child Reading Program resources are available and utilized at remote not-for-profit organizations and communities;
- Curriculum is available to train staff of non-for-profit organizations in remote communities as Master Trainers in the Bond to Literacy Program;
- Not-for-profit organizations have the materials and processes for recruiting Community Facilitators;
- Parents have the resources and support to engage their children in early literacy and other preschool readiness activities;
- Participating not-for-profit staff have the capacity to train and support Community Facilitators in the Bond to Literacy Project;
- Community Facilitators have the capacity to develop parents' skills to improve preschool readiness skills; and
- Parents are better able to support their children in reading and other early literacy programs.

The resources available through the program include: Master Trainer Manual, Community Facilitator Manual, weekly family activity packets, and six books (published by Groundwood).

## SECTION 2: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### Focus of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to discover the degree to which the BTL Program achieved its stated objectives during the pilot project implementation period (January 2011 – March 2012), and to determine how the BTL Program can be improved. The evaluation data will be utilized to improve the quality, accessibility, impact, and dissemination of the services, training, resources, materials, and other literacy tools for families, communities, and staff.

### Evaluation Design

The evaluation was conducted between March and October 2012. The evaluation design was mixed methods (triangulating both method and source) and included focus groups, questionnaires, interviews and visits to sites in Alberta and Ontario. In total, there were 32 responses gathered from parents (focus groups: 16; questionnaires: 16); 16 responses from community facilitators (focus groups: 8; questionnaires: 8); and 4 responses from master trainers (interviews: 2; questionnaires: 2). Because the same sample of people filled out questionnaires and participated in focus groups/interviews (in each of the three data source categories: parents, community facilitators and master trainers), the actual number of people in the evaluation (respondents) is smaller than the sets of responses: parents: 16 respondents; community facilitators: 8 respondents and master trainers: 2 respondents. The BTL Program is still ongoing and more parent groups are being convened. Therefore, project records are still being updated. The final statistics on reach should be available in March 2013.

#### Sample Sizes, by Data Collection Method and Source

	Parents	Community Facilitators	Master Trainers
<b>Focus Groups</b>	Strathroy, Ontario: 10* Drumheller, Alberta: 6	Strathroy, Ontario: 4 Drumheller, Alberta: 4	--
<b>Questionnaires</b>	16	8	2
<b>Interviews</b>	--	--	Strathroy, Ontario: 1 Drumheller, Alberta: 1
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>

\* Note: there were two focus groups for parents in Strathroy (one group of four participants and one group of six participants).



The two sites were chosen for a variety of reasons: availability, proximity to a large pool of potential respondents, and regional representation. The sampling strategy for the parents, community facilitators and master trainers followed from the selection of the two sites: all those in the vicinity of each site were invited to participate in the evaluation. The questionnaires were administered onsite before each of the focus groups. The focus groups and interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed.

## Limitations of the Evaluation

While the mixed methods design of the evaluation allowed for triangulation across a range of perspectives (master trainers, community facilitators, and parents), an ideal sample would have been larger and included additional sites as originally planned. Another limitation of the evaluation is related to the availability of up-to-date statistics. This report includes statistics from July 2012 and therefore, under-states the actual numbers achieved.

## SECTION 3: FINDINGS

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### Achievement of Objectives

1. *To design, adapt, and distribute materials and HIPPY-Groundwood books for the Bond to Literacy project to 200 remote family service centres in Canada*

- The design and delivery of all expected deliverables was completed, including:
  - Master Trainer and Community Facilitator Manual
  - Lesson Plans for Community Facilitators,
  - Master Trainer and Community Facilitator Training (workshop)
  - Activity Guides, and Parent Activity Guides
  - the development of lending libraries
  - Parent Group Meetings/Workshops
  - the Master Trainer and Community Facilitator (web) Blog Site.
- As of July 2012, 14 remote family service centres were actively involved. The BTL Program will continue adding organizations until the target of 200 is reached.

2. *To develop the capacity of 20 not-for-profit staff to become master trainers of the Bond to Literacy Program in remote regions of Canada*

- 23 master trainers were accepted into the BTL Program, with the following distribution across Canada:
  - British Columbia: 5
  - Alberta: 3
  - Saskatchewan: 1
  - Manitoba: 1
  - Ontario: 4
  - Quebec: 1
  - New Brunswick: 2
  - Prince Edward Island: 1
  - Newfoundland: 1
  - Yukon: 3
  - Northwest Territories: 1
- 17 master trainers have been active in training community facilitators. The number is lower than the target of 20 because 2 master trainers could not attend the training or deliver BTL, 1 MT decided not to run the program after the training and there are sites that have more than 1 trained MT.

3. *To develop the capacity of 200 local community facilitators to engage parents in the Bond to Literacy Program*

- 118 community facilitators have been trained in the BTL Program (based on statistics from July 2012). The BTL Program will continue developing the capacity of local community facilitators until the target of 200 is reached.

4. *To support 2,000 geographically isolated and otherwise excluded parents in improving their child's literacy and equipping them with the skills needed to enter school ready to learn and succeed*

- 940 geographically remote and or isolated families/caregivers were recruited to deliver the BTL Program (as of July 2012). As the challenges of recruiting families in remote communities became clear, the delivery model for the BTL Program changed to allow for ongoing recruitment of families until the target of 2,000 families is reached.<sup>3</sup> The master trainers and community facilitators have committed to deliver the BTL Program until they have reached the projected number of families.

## Feedback

This section presents feedback organized by data source category. First, the perspectives of parents are provided (questionnaire and focus group), then the perspectives of community facilitators (questionnaire and focus group summarized together with master trainer interviews) and the perspectives of master trainers (questionnaire).

### Perspectives of Parents

#### Questionnaire (n=16)

Q1. Overall, are you happy with the training you received from the program?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *I've learned more.*
  - *Instructor was awesome!*
  - *I thought the program was great.*

Q2. Did the role-playing in the parent groups (or one-on-one) prepare you to work with your child on the program activities?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *Yes it was thorough- really like that we were prepared and given some of the materials for the crafts and have the opportunity to ask questions.*
  - *It was good to go through it before hand.*
  - *It made learning fun.*

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<sup>3</sup> While the program was initially designed for each site to run the program once with 10 families, it became clear early on that the BTL Program would run many times throughout the timeframe, or until they run out of "stock" of families.

Q3. Did you feel that staff were organized and prepared to show you how to use the book and activities with your child?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *Yes for sure as stated above things were laid out & ready for us.*
  - *MT was just awesome, it felt like she cared for each participant individually and she really made us feel welcome & a part of the group.*
  - *Yes they are organized. They show what they need to show.*

Q4. Did you feel the staff was available to help you when you were unsure on how to use the materials or if you needed to talk about things that were difficult?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *Yes, MT was very helpful.*
  - *There wasn't a whole lot that was difficult it was fairly straightforward.*
  - *Took time to always listen ... and show us our things like material were used for.*

Q5. Do you feel better prepared to help your child learn because of the Bond to Literacy program?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *I have more ideas now.*
  - *It helped my child to sit and be still and actually want to read.*
  - *I feel that this program was excellent.*
  - *Yes, the program was flexible – easy & fun to do for both parent & child while maintaining some structure.*
  - *It was great to have a consistent groove of learning to be involved in addition to the learning we already do at home on a daily basis. Good to have to keep on course.*

Q6. Did the Bond to Literacy program help your child develop skills to prepare her/him for school?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *Yes, it helped me to identify skills that she needed more practice with.*
  - *He enjoy the things that I teach in him without pressure.*
  - *My child refused to be interested in reading until we started this program.*
  - *This program helped myself learning new skills.*
  - *Before this program I tried to teach my son various things but did not know of all the expectations, this helps me with that and more.*

- *It was really good to have the program held at the school so my little guys who do not have older siblings could familiarize themselves with things like the big hallway, washrooms, and different rooms around the school.*

Q7. Do you think your child looks forward to learning because of the Bond to Literacy program?

- 81% (13) indicated yes; 6% (1) indicated no; and 13% (2) indicated unsure
- Comments - Yes:
  - *She was always very excited to do her "homework" and was always waiting for the next activity.*
  - *Because he understand the importance of learning.*
  - *It was fun- he like 'homework'.*
- Comments - Unsure:
  - *He wasn't always willing because he that it was school.*
  - *More confidence.*

Q8. Do you read or sing more with your child because of the Bond to Literacy program?

- 62% (10) indicated yes; 19% (3) indicated no; and 19% (3) indicated unsure
- Comments - Yes:
  - *Slightly more but we love singing together and reading and reciting numbers and alphabet letters.*
  - *We have always read to him but now we talk more about the books and the pictures we sing more too as we learn new songs.*
  - *We read often and also he will now sing songs.*
- Comments - Unsure:
  - *We have always read and sang lots!*

Q9. Do doing the Bond to Literacy program become an important part of your family's routine?

- 81% (13) indicated yes; 6% (1) indicated no; and 13% (2) indicated unsure
- Comments - Yes:
  - *He was asking when could he do his homework.*
  - *My other children looked forward to having the books read to them.*
  - *Yes, we improve our interest in learning many things.*
  - *Reading has always been important but my daughter refused to stay and read, but now she'll read to us.*
  - *I am a single parent so it sometimes was little bit difficult to remember that I had to leave to go to the class. When we had time for it it was awesome and when we needed a 'break' it was nice to go to the program and take a break from housework and for 'play'.*
- Comments - No:

- *Because he was not always willing so he had to do it on his time.*

Q10. Did the program give you an opportunity to further develop your relationship with your child?

- 88% (14) indicated yes; 6% (1) indicated no; and 6% (1) indicated unsure
- Comments - Yes:
  - *It was nice to have a special time to sit –talk-learn together.*
  - *It gave us special ‘alone time’ she felt very special having this time set aside for her.*
  - *We build trust, confidence & more happy now.*
  - *Yes she is proud she can read.*
  - *Yes, any time you spend one-on-one with a child is so important.*
  - *We could always try new things to do.*

Q11. Were the parent groups (or the one with the Community Facilitator) useful in preparing you to teach your child?

- 94% (15) indicated yes; and 6% (1) indicated unsure
- Comments - Yes:
  - *Epecially with preparing us for the next step.*
  - *It was a huge reminder of the importance of the role I have as her teacher.*
  - *They were useful in many aspects. Great to interact with parents and hear the things they bring up and great to go through the material with other adults and gain their perspectives.*
  - *Showed me many ways and had such great ideas.*

Q12. Has your participation in the program been a positive experience?

- 94% (15) indicated yes; and 6% (1) indicated no
- Comments - Yes:
  - *Yes, because we learned more.*
  - *Definitely a great program I was real happy to have been a part of it.*
  - *I really like going and liked that it was at the school. Really like the facilitator.*

Q13. Do you talk about the program with family or friends?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *I shared to my sister & friends.*
  - *Say what a great program it is.*
  - *I shared the benefits of it.*

- *All the time and recommend to others I meet with preschool children.*
- *I only found that I talked about it with other moms who have children the same ages.*

Q14. Do you think the program benefits your community?

- 100% (16) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *Knowledge is power & this is another way of passing it on.*
  - *Absolutely. Keep kids busy with positive interactive skills.*
  - *Sometimes I find people are unaware of the benefits offered until friend or family make them aware of what is out here.*
  - *With only one preschool in our town this is an excellent resource for preschool aged children.*
  - *This will help children learn the skills for kindergarten.*

Q15. Would you like to add any other comments?

- Comments:
  - *Overall awesome program...*
  - *Our CF found creative ways to get my child to want to be reading ready and now she can read and is so proud she can.*
  - *I think continue this program here in [our town], more moms didn't know the importance of knowing this.*
  - *This program truly gives parents and children a head start in school readiness. Its so good that as a parent & can be hands on with tiny child's learning.*
  - *I feel that the program would benefit preschool children such as four years old. My grandson was five and already in kindergarten so he was always willing to follow the program- more so he wanted to do it his way which I feel was OK.*

**Parent Focus Groups** (Strathroy, Ontario: n=6 and n=4; and Drumheller, Alberta: n=6)

QA. Overall, were you happy with the training that you got in the parent group or one on one with the community facilitator?

- Comment:
  - *Yeah [name] did a really good job of making everybody feel like they were supposed to be there and that everybody was comfortable and had their place to be. And it was nice to see all the other perspectives of the other individuals they'd give their thoughts on things that you might not have even thought about if you were just trying to prepare on your own. You got to hear four or five different perspectives that were totally exciting. No, it was good.*

QB. Can you tell me what you did not like about the training?

- Comments:
  - *The training itself - I don't really think I can just because it felt like a gift to me, I can't really say - there was nothing that I didn't like about it, I think it was a really awesome opportunity.*
  - *Um, because it was every two weeks right? Every week would have been nice I think.*
  - *Because if you're sick and you miss one then its four weeks and we did miss one.*

QC. Can you tell me what program activities you liked best to do with your child?

- Comments:
  - *I liked cutting out things with scissors and paper or they liked cutting things out with scissors and paper and putting them together and trying to cut on the lines. Or even just randomly cutting the tassels for the church, I don't know if you guys remember that one where we were cutting out the horse...*
  - *[Name] loved the crafts, I think the sense of something that she made or we made together and she liked the fact that she could do well. And she's good with fine motor so the cutting and the fine motor, you know, the different lines that they had to follow because she could do it well she just felt like a champion. [Laughter].*

QD. Can you tell me what program activities you least enjoyed doing?

- Comments:
  - *The pinwheel. Well we just had a hard time with . . . Folding it properly? No, getting it to stay and then when you've got other kids in the house we ended up improvising for our whole group. Maybe the nail, you know, because we had and I think I gave it somewhere in my feedback because we had, in our group there were people that had younger, younger kids and they weren't comfortable with the idea of . . . The tack? The tack or, or even the nail like . . . The parent because they had younger siblings and they thought of if it falls out and choking or something like that with the younger ones. If they have a four-year old they're not so worried but if you have a two-year old...*
  - *The only thing that is coming up as we're talking is the book "Eddy Long Pants", I was slightly put off by that book because I thought it was teaching or could teach your child how to be mean because when kids were saying these mean things I was like I don't ever say these kinds of things and they hadn't heard those things. They'd never heard that kind of stuff and I was like oh, this book is actually teaching my son to be mean, I mean they're going to go to school and they're going to hear it . . . Eventually although in the end it showed that, you know, it had come to something good. So I know, yeah, the bullying but then it had shown the other way that something good can come out of this, it wasn't a bad thing anymore, yeah. But it still was kind of - the content of it at that age I was like he's going to be getting that content when he's, you know, five or six does he need to have it at four?*



QE. Did you learn things from the program to help teach your child the skills he/she needs for school? And can you tell me what these skills are?

- Comments:
  - *I would say, yes, definitely, cutting for sure, the holding of pencils, holding, you know...*
  - *The structure of the program and the benefit of them like learning and turning their class into their own, you know, I made that, you know, with that horse, so proud of that.*
  - *Motor skills and then it's the one-on-one interaction.*
  - *A new approach on teaching focusing on 'it doesn't have to be like this, you can change it up if you like let's draw a picture and talk about this' instead of being like, 'yeah, we're going to read this story and that's it' - but make it fun.*

QF. Can you tell me what you as a parent have gained from participating in Bond to Literacy?

- Comments:
  - *I think gained an appreciation of my child's learning and a way to go through, you know, just a little bit of structure right because he is an only child and stays at home and likes to have the thing that was his and just to see him grow. And for me just to gain the knowledge and, you know, being able to teach him some things because honestly I wouldn't have thought about getting him some scissors and letting him like cut away and go ahead with the glue, go at 'er, you know, I wouldn't have thought of that necessarily so that was pretty good.*
  - *Ideas like I can take a book and do something with it on my own.*
  - *The interaction getting more out of a book than we ever did before. We always read every day. It didn't encourage us to read more I don't think, but we just did so much more with it.*

QG. Can you tell me what your child gained from participating in Bond to Literacy?

- Comments:
  - *Confidence is the main one I think, you know, in addition to the skills... confidence is important and all the things that will continue to help.*
  - *'Mum can I do this homework, mum is it time to do our homework yet?' Yeah and I thought that's pretty cool.*

QH. If you could talk to the funders of the program, what would you like to say to them?

- Comments:
  - *It's a very, very important program for both the children and the parents and for not just the two parent home but there's kids that have their grandparents, there's kids that have single parents, there's kids that are only children, there's kids that come from six children families and it just brings everybody in together as a group that literacy and learning is for everybody no matter who you are, no matter what color, what status,*

*what anything - everybody has their rights and the ability and the need to learn about words and letters and be a part of community.*

- *Everybody has a right to have a chance.*
- *It just gives everyone such a head start – parent and kids.*

Q1. Is there anything else you would like to add about the program and your experience in it?

- **Comments:**
  - *I guess I would just say that, you know, that back through everything giving him a bit of a head start in some ways, you know, like there are some families that don't think about reading to their kids and if they're involved in a program like this maybe that would be a great way to introduce them to it. And I think back to when I was in kindergarten I didn't know how to do scissors, I didn't know how to do anything, I wasn't even introduced to reading I think until grade one, yeah, the Jack and Jill book in grade one. And now it's almost like they need that way sooner to be able to survive in today's world and this is a great program to really push them into it.*
  - *I think that's a big part of why this program is so successful its finding a facilitator that loves the people and loves the kid as much as [name] loves the kids.*

## Perspectives of Community Facilitators

### Community Facilitator Questionnaire (n=8)

Q1. Were you satisfied with the training that you received from the Master Trainer to prepare you for your position as a Community Facilitator?

- 88% (7) indicated yes; and 12% (1) indicated N/A
- **Comments - Yes:**
  - *The length of the (2day) training was appropriate. It was great to train as a group – you learn so much from each other as well as the specifics of this program from the Master Trainer.*
  - *Knowledgeable, provided hands on examples, always available via phone and a lot of questions along the way.*
  - *It was a great experience.*

Q2. Was the Community Facilitator training guide useful for your work with families?

- 88% (7) indicated yes; and 12% (1) indicated no
- **Comments - Yes:**
  - *Easy to use and follow, all described thoroughly for easy referral.*
  - *I found it was essential – especially when first investigating the specifics of the program. I learned a lot of information specific to Aboriginal culture while reading the training guide.*

- *Once the training was over & I began preparing for my sessions I felt there was a lot of information given.*
- *I really liked the extensions that were included in the guide.*

Q3. Did you enjoy your experience as a trainer of groups or individuals?

- 100% (8) indicated yes
- Comments:
  - *It was a very positive experience. I could not have done all aspects of the program without the support of my colleagues.*
  - *I feel like I got to know the families better during the BTL program than some of the other programs I run. More personal contact with them & also because of the length of the program.*
  - *I am knowledgeable in providing group experiences to/ w[ith] families in a variety of workshops/ presenters.*

Q4. How did you feel about the length of the program?

- 14% (1) indicated too short; 43% (3) indicated just right; and 43% (3) indicated too long
- Comments – Just Right:
  - *Although the planning started in June, with families I started in September, and wrapped the program up in December. I felt the timing was great!*
  - *I liked the length. There are a lot of skills to be developed & that takes time. The length also allowed the parents to see the progression in their child of the developing skills.*
  - *I felt that for certain families the duration of the program was too long, others managed well with this time frame. With that being said, however, I feel that covering this amount of information in a shorter time frame would be impossible.*
- Comments – Too Long:
  - *Holding the sessions every other week for 16 weeks was too long of a time frame for some of the families in my group. The commitment level of several families went down as the weeks went by.*
  - *Too long in the sense of the families & their commitment to that many weeks. Lost families along the way. But also just right for the amount of activities & materials to be discussed to the families.*

Q5. Did you adjust your training to meet the needs of a diverse group of parents in terms of skills, needs and life experiences?

- 75% (6) indicated yes; and 25% (2) indicated no
- Comments – Yes:
  - *In that I provided everything needed to do each activity & home due to financial concerns. Also provided a snack and beverages each session which I do not normally do.*
  - *I had to adapt for those families who were not able to come to each meeting.*
  - *We have a large Philipeano [Filipino] community some had not seen their children in a*

*long time, parenting is new. They rely on their community a lot as family is not close by.*

- *I worked individually with a parent that has a special needs child, we went through all the sessions, but we did adjust how we carried out some of them and she kept out some things that were above his level.*
- Comments – No:
  - *I did not need to adjust my training, however different families had varying needs, that were sometimes addressed individually.*
  - *I needed to adjust based in the learning style of the individual children. I found some of the children loved the activities on paper, while others I stressed the use of the extension activities that were more “play” based.*

Q5. Did you learn how to support a parent to teach their child?

- 25% (2) indicated yes; and 75% (6) indicated already knew
- Comments – Yes:
  - *I found that modeling was very important, not only for the activities to be done in the next weeks, but also review what the students had already done at home – and brought in to show/ talk about.*
- Comments – Already Knew:
  - *I was able to combine some of my previous work & experiences with the BTL families program.*
  - *I found the facilitators guide very helpful.*
  - *There was much I knew in theory. But, building relationships that allowed for me to empower parents and encourage them in their role as their child’s first teacher was amazing!*
  - *This is something we do as an on-going, daily basis within [our provincial] early years so I was already aware of how to do it.*

Q6.1 Did you learn about facilitating a group?

- 50% (4) indicated yes; and 50% (4) indicated already knew
- Comments – Yes:
  - *We covered how to facilitate the group sessions, group dynamics and were given ideas on how to present the BTL materials.*
  - *Be flexible, don’t talk too much, listen to what the parents have to say. Validate them and their input. They often know more than they think - just need a little guidance.*
  - *I learned about the unique challenges of facilitating a diverse group.*
- Comments – Already Knew:
  - *Same as #6 above (This is something we do as an on-going, daily basis within [our provincial] early years so it was already aware of how to do it.)*
  - *Good to have more experience through the program.*
  - *However, bringing the group back on topic was necessary from time to time- yet, it was*

*important for parents to feel as if what they were saying was important – so, each week was different.*

Q7. Did you learn how to successfully problem solve?

- 37% (3) indicated yes; and 63% (5) indicated already knew
- Comments – Yes:
  - *Yes, in the sense of adapting to meet the needs of those involved.*
  - *I learned by being silent, parents would take the opportunity to share & problem solve together. I did not have to have all the answers. This would be why the group settings were so crucial to the individual program it was more of a challenge.*
- Comments – Already Knew:
  - *But new problems always require new problem solving.*

Q8. What did you not learn from the programme that you were expecting to learn?

- Comment:
  - *There was no area that did not meet my expectation. In fact there were some eye openers.*

Q9. List up to five things that you would add to the program.

- Comments:
  - *Alphabet recognition.*
  - *Add alphabet song, letters.*
  - *Just one 😊! More focus on the alphabet, I realize children were encouraged to make sounds and pre-write in the sense of making lines/ marks. This was amazing! But perhaps more one to one ratio. With letters.*

Q10. List up to five things that you think should be dropped from the program.

- Comments:
  - *Nothing.*
  - *Nothing it is great 😊.*
  - *Some of the days activities were too long. A 10-15 min max would be good.*
  - *Some of the activities would not work/ or be safe with young children in the home, i.e. a pinwheel!*

Q11. Do you think the home visits were of value to the parents?

- 50% (3) indicated yes; and 50% (5) indicated unsure

- Comments – Yes:
  - *For some this was the only way to connect.*
  - *I primarily was involved in home visits and my rural families really appreciated having the program brought to them.*
- Comments – Unsure:
  - *We ran the program as a group.*

Q12. Can you tell me how you promoted family participation in the program?

- Comments:
  - *Encourage parents to keep going even if life was in crisis around them.*
  - *I gave ideas and suggestions about including younger and older siblings in the home activities.*
  - *Mostly with enthusiasm of the program. I really enjoyed the program and valued how it was mostly play based and focused on all development areas of learning.*

Q13. Was it easy to recruit families to the program?

- 50% (4) indicated yes; and 50% (4) indicated no
- Comments – Yes:
  - *Fairly easy, since we started parents recruited for us.*
  - *Yes fairly easy, but some had issues with the length of time commitment.*

**Community Facilitator Focus Groups and Master Trainer Interviews** (community facilitator focus groups: Strathroy, Ontario: n=4; and Drumheller, Alberta: n=4; and master trainer interviews: n=2)<sup>4</sup>

The community facilitators and master trainers saw the importance of the BTL program and how it not only improves literacy skills, but also structurally improves the relationships of the entire participating family, which includes parents and grandparents; as well as relationships between community members who might not otherwise have crossed paths in such a proactive and productive fashion. Both sets of respondents indicated that the program training, training pace, training materials and activities prepared them to understand and undertake their program roles. Some individuals felt that a duration of 8 weeks for the program would make more sense than the present 16 week long program because the length did have its scheduling challenges and some parents were fearful about making a commitment to complete the program due to the length. Both sets of respondents felt it was important

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<sup>4</sup> The perspectives of the master trainers gathered during the interviews are included in the summary of the community facilitator focus group in order to preserve anonymity.

to recognize and celebrate individual and group achievements and growth. They also felt that it was important to be organized, task oriented, goal oriented, flexible, approachable and enthusiastic.

### Perspectives of Master Trainers

#### **Master Trainer Questionnaire<sup>5</sup> (n=2)**

The master trainers were satisfied with the training that they received and felt it prepared them for their position as master trainer. They felt the program training, training pace, training materials and activities prepared them to understand and undertake their program roles. The master trainers found that they utilized the Master Trainer Manual and helpful for their position. They enjoyed their experience as a trainer to the community facilitators and as it helped them to improve their skills as a leader and program trainer. When asked to list things that could be add to the program to improve it for community facilitators and or families, they commented that there was value in Home Visits, but saw groups meetings to be a more beneficial way to support parents and to relieve some of their feelings of isolation. They proclaimed the program “really helped” and supported parents in preparing their child for school readiness, using BTL program materials. In order to promote and establish effective partnerships among community facilitators, parents, community members, teachers, and schools, the master trainers mentioned that they made a lot of phone calls, emails, and met in person.

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<sup>5</sup> The results from the master trainer questionnaires are summarized (instead of presenting the responses to each question) in order to preserve anonymity.

## SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

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The BTL program cultivated the development, improvement and the advancement of literacy skills in addition to the other positive impacts among parents, children, master trainers, and community facilitators. The program increased the children's and parent's self-esteem and the parents emphasized that it improved their relationship with their child. The program provided children with school readiness skills prior to attending school; parents felt that this is important as the expectations for their children's social skills, literacy and numeracy skill-based needs are increasingly vast.

The design and production of all expected deliverables (materials and books) was completed. The distribution target (200 remote family service centres) is expected to be achieved by March 2013. Twenty-three master trainers were accepted into the BTL Program with broad regional representation across Canada. Seventeen master trainers have been active in training community facilitators (118 community facilitators have been trained, as of July 2012). Also, 940 geographically remote and or isolated families/caregivers were recruited to deliver the BTL Program (as of July 2012). As the challenges of recruiting families in remote communities became clear, the delivery model for the BTL Program changed to allow for ongoing, rolling recruitment of families until the target of 2,000 families is reached.<sup>6</sup> The master trainers and community facilitators have committed to deliver the BTL Program until they have reached the projected number of families.

Parents commented that they had acquired more tools to teach and support their child's development. The parents recognized the high value of the BTL program and positively validated the importance of the program. Parents indicated that the BTL program helped them to feel important as their child's first teacher and in turn the parents developed skills to lead self-driven initiatives.

When parents, community facilitators, and master trainers were asked if they could think of things that should be dropped from the program, they suggested: the Pinwheel activity for safety reasons, the Lantern activity changed – as it is too thin when construction completed, the Accordion activity - as it is too small, the Ancient Thunder book- as it is not popular with groups, and The Eddie Longpants Book –

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<sup>6</sup> While the program was initially designed for each site to run the program once with 10 families, it became clear early on that the BTL Program would run many times throughout the timeframe, or until they run out of "stock" of families.



because it “brought up emotional issues for some children.” When parents, community facilitators, and master trainers were asked if they could think of things that should be added, they suggested more focus on pre-alphabet or alphabet activities through alphabet recognition, alphabet songs and letters.

## APPENDIX: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

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### Master Trainer Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. My name is Heather Commodore and I am the Bond to Literacy project evaluator.

I would like to hear about your experience being involved in the Bond to Literacy program. The information you give me here today will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

All information given today is confidential and no names will be used in our report unless we ask permission from you to use a quote for example.

#### Questions:

- A. Tell me about the training you received from the program, and if it prepared you for this position.
- B. Did you find the training resources adequate to train the Community Facilitators?
- C. What strategies did you use to support collaboration and communication within your BTL team?
- E. How did you adjust your training to meet the needs of a diverse group of Community Facilitators in terms of skills, needs, and life experiences?
- F. Are there things that would have been helpful to you in delivering the program to your community?
- G. Are there things that would have been helpful to you in managing your BTL team?
- H. How did the project impact the intended audience(s)-parents, children, community?
- I. What would you say to a potential funder about the BTL program?
- J. What did you learn from the programme?

## Master Trainer Questionnaire

We appreciate your involvement in the Bond to Literacy program evaluation. The information you give us will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

All information given in the questionnaire is confidential and no names will be used in our report.

1. Were you satisfied with the training that you received to prepare you for the position of Master trainer?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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2. Was the Master Trainer manual helpful for your position?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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3. Did you enjoy your experience as a trainer of Community Facilitators?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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4. Did you need to adjust your training to meet the needs of a diverse group of Community Facilitators in terms of skills, needs, and life experiences?

Yes / No (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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5. How did you feel about the length of the BTL programme?

Too short       Just right       Too long

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6. What did you **not** learn from the programme that you were expecting to learn?

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7. List up to five things that you would add to the program to improve it for Community Facilitators and or families.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

8. List up to five things you think should be dropped from program.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think the home visits were of value to the parents?

Yes       No       Unsure (Unsure please comment)

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10. Can you tell me how you promoted family participation in the program?

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11. Was it easy to recruit families to the program?

12. Did the program support parents in preparing their child for school readiness, using BTL materials?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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13. Do you feel that the materials and resources worked for the Community Facilitators?

Yes / No (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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14. Can you tell me how you established effective partnerships between Community Facilitators parents and community members, teachers, schools?

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Thank You!

## Community Facilitator Focus Group Questions

Welcome and thank you for coming to. My name is Heather Commodore and I am the Bond to Literacy project evaluator.

We would like to hear about your experience being involved in the Bond to Literacy program. The information you give us here today will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

During the hour in group, all opinions will be honoured, there are no right or wrong answers. All information given in the group is confidential and no names will be used in our report. We ask that you respect this confidentiality when you leave the group.

You can pass on any question and if you need to leave at any point, we ask that you do so quietly.

Are there any questions at this point? Has everyone completed a consent to participate in the group form (hold up a copy). If not, can you please do so now before we can begin.

### Questions:

- A. Tell us about the training you received from the program, and how it prepared for this position.
- B. Describe your experience as a trainer of groups or individuals.
- C. Did you find the training resources adequate to train the Parents?
- D. How did you adjust your training to meet the needs of a diverse group of parents in terms of skills, needs, and life experiences?
- E. What do you see as the value of home visits?
- F. How did the project impact the intended audience(s)?
- G. What would you say to a potential funder about the BTL program?

## Community Facilitator Questionnaire

We appreciate your involvement in the Bond to Literacy program evaluation. The information you give us will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

All information given in the questionnaire is confidential and no names will be used in our report.

1. Were you satisfied with the training that you received from the Master Trainer to prepare you for the position of Community Facilitator?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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2. Was the Community Facilitator training guide useful for your work with families?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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3. Did you enjoy your experience as a trainer of groups or individuals?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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4. How did you feel about the length of the programme?

Too short       Just right       Too long

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5. Did you need to adjust your training to meet the needs of a diverse group of parents in terms of skills, needs, and life experiences?

Yes / No (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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6. Did you learn how to support a parent to teach their child?

Yes / No / Already Knew (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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6.1. Did you learn about facilitating a group?

Yes / No / Already Knew (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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7. Did you learn how to successfully problem solve?

Yes / No / Already Knew (If you answered Yes, please provide details)

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8. What did you **not** learn from the programme that you were expecting to learn?

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9. List up to five things that you would add to the program to improve it for families.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

10. List up to five things you think should be dropped from the program.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think the home visits were of value to the parents?

Yes / No / Unsure (Unsure please comment)

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12. Can you tell me how you promoted family participation in the program?

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13. Was it easy to recruit families to the program?

Yes / No (If you answered No, please provide details)

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Thank You!

## Parent Focus Group Questions

Welcome and thank you for coming. My name is Heather Commodore and I am the Bond to Literacy project evaluator.

We would like to hear about your experience being involved in the Bond to Literacy program. The information you give us here today will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

During the hour in group, all opinions will be honoured, there are no right or wrong answers. All information given in the group is confidential and no names will be used in our report. We ask that you respect this confidentiality when you leave the group.

You can pass on any question and if you need to leave at any point, we ask that you do so quietly.

Are there any questions at this point? Has everyone completed a consent to participate in the group form (hold up a copy). If not, can you please do so now before we can begin.

### Questions:

- A. Overall, were you happy with the training that you got in the parent group or one on one with the community facilitator?
- B. Can you tell me what you did not like about the training?
- C. Can you tell me what program activities you liked best to do with your child?
- D. Can you tell me what program activities you least enjoyed doing?
- E. Did you learn things from the program to help teach your child the skills he/she needs for school? And can you tell me what these skills are?
- F. Can you tell me what you as a parent have gained from participating in Bond to Literacy?
- G. Can you tell me what your child gained from participating in Bond to Literacy?
- H. If you could talk to the funders of the program, what would you like to say to them?
- I. Is there anything else you would like to add about the program and your experience in it?

## Parent Questionnaire

We appreciate your involvement in the Bond to Literacy program evaluation. The

information you give us will help us to improve the program in the future and to know what worked and what did not work so well for families.

All information given in the questionnaire is confidential and no names will be used in our report.

1. Overall, are you happy with the training you received from the program?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Did the role-playing in the parent groups (or-one-one) prepare you to work with your child on the program activities?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you feel that staff were organized and prepared to show you how to use the book and activities with your child?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you feel the staff was available to help you when you were unsure on how to use the materials or if you needed to talk about things that were difficult?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you feel better prepared to help your child learn because of the Bond to Literacy program?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the Bond to Literacy program help your child develop skills to prepare her/him for school?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you think your child looks forward to learning because of the Bond to Literacy program?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you read or sing more with my child because of the Bond to Literacy program?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Did doing the Bond to Literacy program become an important part of your family's routine?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Did the program help you to further develop your relationship with your child?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Were the parent groups (or the one-on-one with the Community Facilitator) useful in preparing you to teach your child?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Has your participation in the program been a positive experience?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you talk about the program with family or friends?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you think the program benefits your community?

Yes / No / Unsure

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Would you like to add any other comments?

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Thank you!