



Bookmates' Programs and the EDI

Tricia Robinson, Bookmates Inc. 623 Erin Street, Winnipeg MB www.bookmates.ca



Bookmates Rock & Read program is a six week interactive experience for parents and young children focusing on book sharing and book making techniques. Program variations include aboriginal Rock & Read and Enriching Additional Language Learning Rock & Read.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Helps develop fine and gross motor skills through finger plays, crafts, songs and movement.	*Introduces child to the group environment in a relaxed setting with parents. *Social skills are practiced in the rhyme and reading circles, sharing, taking turns, self control.	*Child is exposed to other children and adults in a social setting. *Child gets the opportunity to spend quality time with parent in a nurturing, fun way, as well as spends time in a early child development program setting without the parent	*A fun risk free setting to enjoy language, rhymes, and songs and books. *Free play centres introduce early writing and art activities, and games with math and language skills. *Age appropriate books are introduced to parent and child, with reading tips for parents. *Rhymes and reading continue at home.	*Expose parents and children to quality children's books. *Repetition of rhymes and songs increases confidence in speaking in a group, articulation and vocabulary.



Bookmates is a charitable organization with 25 years of experience in intergenerational literacy programming with the goal of supporting parents to create a learning environment in their home.

The Benefits of Family Learning Programs through the Five Early Development Instrument Domains.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Prepare families for routines *model expectations of participation *movement and play *provide encouragement and skills to continue the activities at home	*practice in participating in a group activity *learn group and leader expectations *learn appropriate behaviors through modeling, written and verbal prompts *programs can take place in schools, introducing the family to that environment *opportunity for parents to learn strategies to deal with socially inappropriate behaviours.	*helps with bonding that can result in increased pro-social behavior and emotional stability *participation in a group activity *provides a safe, nurturing environment to develop coping skills *opportunity for structured and unstructured interaction with peers *provides an inclusive environment that respects, accepts and honours individuals.	*elicits interest in and use of books, reading, and language-related activities. *encourages early literacy development *reinforces the educational role of the parent *provides enable literacy activities and strategies for use at home *introduces and reinforces specific skills such as recognizing letters, reading and writing and environmental print *through fun with math introduces and reinforces skills such as the ability to recognise and compare numbers, counting, sorting.	*increases positive home-school connection *provides parents with information on child development, reasonable expectations, and value of education *engages families in positive language activities *exposure to quality rhyme, story and song

Family Learning Programs Provide the Opportunity and Environment to Address the Variables Related to Low EDI Scores.

Low income	Less parental education	Low family health and well-being	Higher parent ratings of emotional problems, aggression	Lower scores in direct language tests
*Allow parents to participate in a learning program in a non-threatening, low-risk environment *Allow parents to participate in a free program with no financial barriers	*Provide parental education regarding literacy, parenting and child development *Increase skills necessary to participate in formal education *Increase parental literacy/numeracy skills	*Increase knowledge of health issues including nutrition, physical activity, and parenting *Increase parent-child bonding *Increase family emotional well-being through positive physical and verbal contact	*Increase self perception of parents' skills and ability to parent effectively *Increase connection with community resources *Honor and value cultural strengths and wisdom *Allow peer interaction, respect and support *Expose parents to healthy family interaction	*Increase literacy skills through language, vocabulary, children's books, reading, writing, oral storytelling, talking, listening and sharing.

Bookmates' model for program development incorporates community development by involving parents each step of the way. This model has been used to create *Alphabet Soup* and *Alphabet Soup in Motion*.



Advisory Meeting
Community parents are supported to speak about their needs and challenges

Pilot Program
Parents participate in the weekly debrief
Parent focus group to assess success against program goals and identified needs

Program Training
Parents are trained as facilitators and assess the effectiveness of the training

Completed Program
Community organizations create partnerships with parents to attend training together and to co-facilitate a program in their area



Alphabet Soup teaches preschoolers (2-5) and their parents the basics of healthy eating through the love of reading rhythm and song. The program is developed by Bookmates in partnership with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and parents and staff from four diverse Winnipeg communities.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Parents and children gain knowledge of healthy eating *Children learn food concepts through rhymes and songs and books *Families learn to create and eat healthy inexpensive foods	*Parents and children prepare a snack together as part of a group *Practice social skills including helping, sitting, and eating together with other families.	*Parents and children practice appropriate skills making eating time less stressful *Child gets the opportunity to spend quality time with parent in a nurturing, fun way *Child spends time in a early child development program with trained child minders separate from parent.	*Parents and children interact with books related to a nutritional theme *Parents make numeracy and literacy games to use at home with their children *Parent handouts provide age appropriate activities to support learning in the home *Rhymes, songs and stories are practiced	*An opportunity to discuss eating issues, likes and dislikes etc. *Parents and children are exposed to concepts concerning measurement, ethnic foods etc. *Learn where food comes from, food identification, table manners



Alphabet Soup in Motion engages families in active play concepts through a love of reading rhyme and song with an emphasis on family eating. Alphabet Soup in Motion was developed by Bookmates in partnership with Winnipeg in motion, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and parents and staff from four diverse Winnipeg communities.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Families are involved in physically active rhymes and stories, and through yoga. *Children practice fine and gross motor skills through movement, and games. *Families learn how physical activity can be incorporated daily into their lives through active play *Parents learn how to support their child's physical development through discussion topics, activity and handouts *Importance of families eating together	*Children learn cooperative play techniques through taking turns and waiting *Children have opportunities to practice skills and gain confidence in their abilities *Parents learn activities that support the child's abilities and sense of self *Practice social skills including helping, sitting, and eating together with other families.	*Families learn positive stress control strategies, breathing, relaxation, and imagery *Children learn to identify feelings and emotions in themselves and others	*Children and parents do physical activities including counting, sorting, and comparing *Spatial relationships are explored through movement *Families enjoy book sharing and rhyming	*Weekly story repetition assists children to recall a story through words sounds and movement. *Children learn about movement through many themes including animals, balls, feet, etc.



Family Learning Olympics is a half day or evening event where families move from station to station enjoying fun literacy and numeracy activities for family members of all ages. Trained facilitators in Manitoba are able to borrow Family Learning Olympics Kits with all the needed materials for the 12 event stations from Bookmates.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Lots of physical activity is involved including skipping, hopping and bowling *Families are involved in crafts and games involving fine and gross motor skills	*Families must work cooperatively through the stations *The event can take place in the school environment *Families move from one station to the next	*Families learn to take turns and deal with each other and the other families in a cooperative way *Children are presented with choices based on their abilities and see other family members doing activities based on abilities	*Every station in the Olympics is based on a literacy or numeracy theme *Stations can be adapted to suit a particular skill or theme *There are directions at each of the stations for families to read and follow. Children see print as meaningful. *The stations such as Storypacks, "Page Flipper" and the "Tarp Game" deal with books and comprehension	*Families must communicate to successfully complete the stations *Sentences such as "Streetwise" help families to explore their neighbourhood *Families actively participate in the retelling of a story at the Storypack station



Play to Learn, Learn to Play encourages parents to engage in child-led play with their child. Parents explore the value of play for their children and themselves. Families learn and enjoy group games together.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Adults learn to play with their children *Adults learn the value of play for themselves and their children *Participants are involved in group gross motor activities	*Introduction to rules, group activities, structured and unstructured play *Involves cooperative games *Parents learn how to use play to encourage socially appropriate behaviours	*Parents learn how to use play from birth on to bond with their children *Parents gain knowledge of appropriate play, expectations and parameters	*Connect play to cognitive development *Through play, children are actively involved in literacy and numeracy activities *Introduction to journaling for parents and children *Parents make a book of their children's play activities	*Increased confidence in a social situation *Exposed to a variety of structured and unstructured play activities



Getting Ready for School is a parent program which examines the many ways parents prepare their children for school. The curriculum is set by the participating parents following their interests and concerns. The significance of social and emotional readiness are discussed. A concurrent children's program is optional.

Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
*Parents gain an understanding of the need for physical activity and how it relates to the school curriculum	*Parents examine how to interact with the school personnel resulting in increased respect and empathy that they can then pass on to their children *Parents can gain a realistic view of school expectations	*Parents have an opportunity to discuss their and their child's feelings about school *Parents can attain realistic expectations and understand school expectations	*Parents learn the language of school increasing their ability to deal with issues involving the school and their child *Parents learn how they can prepare their child for school from birth on *Parents learn appropriate literacy and numeracy activities they can do with their child	*Parents learn to communicate with their child and with their school *Parents' contribution to the education of their child is recognized *Parents realize their strengths and how to build on them *Parents see themselves as their child's first teacher

Bookmates' programs address topics such as literacy, nutrition, and physical activity as well as diverse communities including low literacy, immigrant, EAL, and aboriginal groups.



In Manitoba parent-child coalitions are able to select a program which best relates to the needs of the neighbourhood they wish to target (based on data collected including EDI).

STAR rating 1 to 3 *	Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
Bookmates Rock & Read	*	**	*	***	**
Alphabet Soup	***	**	**	***	***
Alphabet Soup in Motion	***	**	***	**	***
Family Learning Olympics	**	***	*	***	**
Play to Learn - Learn to Play	**	**	***	**	*
Getting Ready for School	*	***	***	**	**

Through the support of Healthy Child Manitoba Bookmates provides program training to community members and program staff in order to implement and adapt the program to their specific local challenges. This training is offered in the community increasing accessibility, particularly for rural areas.



Alphabet Soup goes National

Families across Canada are enjoying *Alphabet Soup* as a result of Bookmates' *Literacy in Action* project (supported by OLES) which brought facilitator training to seven communities. Partnerships from this project continue and currently Bookmates is working with Health Canada and Aboriginal Head start programs in eastern Canada and Ontario. Prince Albert SK now offers *Alphabet Soup* through their community schools to parents and children entering the school system.

Next Steps

Assessment of outcomes for this type of programming is difficult, but an important next step in Bookmates' commitment to best practice in this field.