

Literacy Centre

Introduction - Student Profile

Students who benefit most from the Literacy Centre program typically have:

- ~ average range intellectual (i.e. thinking and reasoning) and language abilities
- ~ a specific processing deficit (e.g. phonological processing, orthographic processing, decoding, working memory)
- ~ reading and/or writing skills that fall below expectations.

Eligibility for the program is based on a combination of each of the above factors, not just on a student's reading and/or writing skill level. It is the reason that underlies the 'below-expected reading and/or writing skills' that ultimately determines a student's eligibility.

The Literacy Centre program is not the best intervention for students who demonstrate the following profiles:

- ~ students who demonstrate Below Average language disorders or delay;
- ~ students who demonstrate Below Average intellectual abilities;
- ~ students whose literacy difficulties are secondary to attentional and behavior problems, anxiety issues or second language acquisition.

Experience has shown that these students have difficulties not amenable to short-term intervention.



Programming Access

The ESBRT refer potential candidates to the Literacy Centre Screening Committee.

A referral from the ESBRT for potential selection to the Literacy Centre program assumes a teacher/school commitment to the following:

- ~ visitation with the student at the Literacy Centre program;
- ~ participation in an IEP meeting upon the student's completion of the program;
- ~ implementation of recommendations (articulated in the IEP) upon the student's return to his/her home class.

At this point, the parents of a selected student are asked for their permission to enroll their child in the Literacy Centre program. Without agreement and consent, the next prioritized student in the eligibility pool will be offered a place in the program. Parents are expected to make their own travel arrangements to and from the Literacy Centre. Parents who have difficulties with transport should discuss this with the school principal as in exceptional circumstances, accommodations can be made.

Important: To avoid possible parent frustration and misunderstanding, it is important that preliminary discussion of the Literacy Centre program does not imply referral to or guarantee of selection.

Information for Schools, Parents and Students

Referral Process

The well-defined referral process includes consideration of ongoing and well documented assessments and interventions. This includes evidence of:

1. Weak pre-reading and writing skills as identified in Kindergarten and Grade 1 using assessment instruments such as the TOPA and DIBELS. These students are brought to the attention of the Extended School-Based Resource Team (ESBRT) for discussion and monitoring.
2. Previous appropriate interventions, classroom adaptations, Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT) and Learning Support Worker (LSW) support being implemented and the student's progress regularly assessed and documented.
3. More intensive Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) assessment and intervention continuing. ESBRT discussion involving the School Psychologist results in further clarification of the student's strengths and needs as well as refinement of interventions being provided.
4. Continued unexpected delays in skill development resulting in the need for psycho-educational assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to determine underlying difficulties (or deficits) that are interfering with the student's acquisition of literacy skills.



What is the Literacy Centre Program?

Located at Montroyal and Sherwood Park Elementary schools, the Literacy Centre program is directed at Grade 3 students who require an extensive, literacy experience. Students selected for the program are engaged in a variety of high interest, remedial learning activities, facilitated by the instruction and guidance of a specialist teacher. Leaving their home school for one term, students benefit from small class size, where limited enrolment promotes more intensive individualized instruction.

Referrals are made through the Extended School based Resource Team (ESBRT) from each school. Students are selected for one of three sessions provided throughout the year. Students who are selected for the Literacy Centre program enroll only once. Students selected are prioritized according to the student information gathered over a period of time. The selection team includes school psychologists and the Literacy Centre teachers.