

What is Young Children Priority First?

Young Children Priority First is a venture aimed at enhancing children's reading and language skills before they start school. As part of this initiative, Kiwanis Club members of Niagara are supporting children's literacy by adopting 140 licensed child care programs across the Region. They will provide these programs with new books and learning materials designed to foster children's literacy. They will also perform minor repairs on child care equipment and invest over 1,000 volunteer hours reading and interacting with the children. This project is the first in a series of planned Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara ventures aimed at enhancing children's development before they start school.

Who is Involved in Young Children Priority First?

Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara joined forces with the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) to secure funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, power the administrative aspect of the project, ensure that all of the materials are ready for delivery, and give volunteers the tools and training they need to take on this important task. Literacy Link Niagara and Speech Services Niagara are working with the Kiwanis volunteers to help them select books that foster children's literacy.

How Is This Project Funded?

This project wouldn't be possible without the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the financial and in-kind support from the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara and their many hours of volunteer work, the in-kind support from the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC), Literacy Link Niagara, Speech Services Niagara, and the enthusiastic response of Niagara's licensed child care programs.

Why Does This Project Matter?

Children's language skills and ultimately, their literacy skills, are developed in early childhood. The amount of time children spend in child care centres offers an excellent opportunity to achieve a high level of comfort with reading, so once they're in school they can be successful.

As a former school Principal Ed Minchin would say, "Keep in mind, language and literacy skills are the foundation upon which all other education is built. If a child's language and literacy skills are well developed, the other aspects of his or her schooling pretty much take care of themselves. Without literacy, proficiency in mathematics, science, or computers is very unlikely".

- 1 either encourage its workers to get used to earning a whole lot less so we can compete with nations such as India and
- 2 grow the highly skilled workforce we need to attract higher wage jobs with information and technology-based

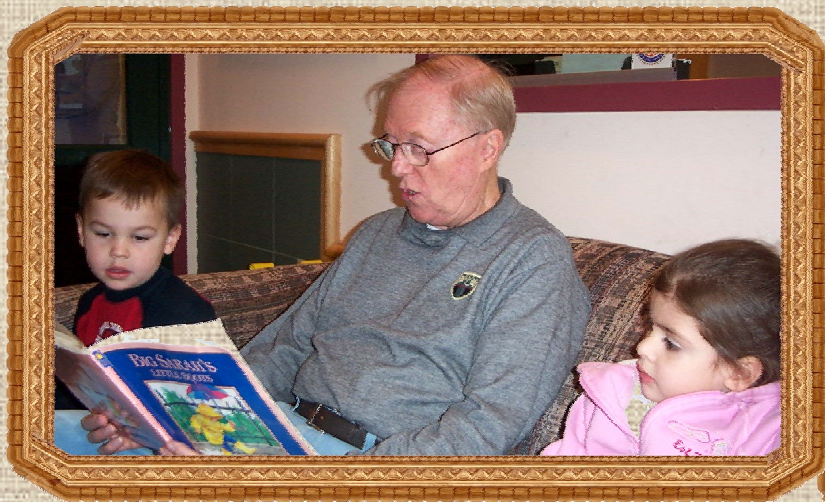
Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara believe in the second option, and that's why they say,
"Young Children Priority First!"

YOUNG CHILDREN PRIORITY FIRST

Young Children Priority First is funded
by the Ontario Trillium Foundation
and Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara



The logo for ECCDC, featuring the lowercase letters "eccdc" in a bold, dark brown font. A small green leaf is positioned above the letter "c".



Kiwanis members visit
Niagara area child care
centres as part of the Young
Children Priority First project.



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