



CONNECT

THE READ TO ME! QUARTERLY
SUMMER 2009

DID YOU KNOW?

Read to Me!
gives a
bag of books
to every baby
born in
Nova Scotia

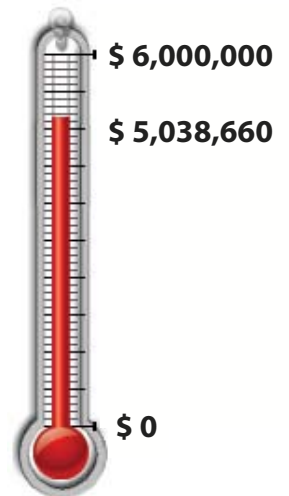


To date,
Read to Me!
has given out
55,000
bags
containing over
135,500
high quality
baby books!

THANKS TO YOU READ TO ME! IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals, corporations and government partners who have provided the financial and in-kind support to make Read to Me! possible. Thanks to you, Read to Me! is making a difference to the children of Nova Scotia. When the program was launched, the Founding Partners made the very wise decision to create an endowment fund to ensure that Read to Me! would be in place for future generations. An endowment of \$6 million is required to generate enough yearly capital to support the program in perpetuity. I am delighted to report that we have just passed the \$5 million mark and are closing in on our goal to secure the program forever.

Over the next year we will push even higher with our fundraising efforts to reach our endowment goal. I'm confident that with your help we will get there. When we reach that goal we will celebrate a Canadian first - Read to Me! will be the very first provincial early literacy program to be fully endowed. I believe this represents a very powerful investment in the future of Nova Scotia. To all who have supported us, and for those who will help us get across the endowment finish line, we give our heartfelt thanks. Your investment in Read to Me! will continue to reap benefits for Nova Scotian children for generations to come.



Read to Me!
Foundation Inc.
endowment
to date



HAVE YOU VISITED US ONLINE LATELY?

Read to Me! is excited to announce that our website has been redesigned!

Visitors to the site will now be welcomed to our home page with the colourful new look designed by Pam Maher who also designed our Family Reading Guide (see story opposite). Our website has many new features for families, volunteers and others to enjoy, including a great 'book of the month' to read with baby, video clips of author Sheree Fitch reading the English and French versions of her book, *Kisses Kisses Baby-O!/Bisou Bisou Bébé-Ô!*, as well as downloadable reading tips brochure for parents who speak French, Arabic or Chinese.



Want to know how we select the books in the bag? Visit our 'What's in the Bag?' page and click on the red bubble to find out! The Read to Me! website is hosted by the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD), an award-winning service that collects, organizes, files and distributes information to the adult literacy community in Canada for learners, literacy practitioners and others. They also build, host and maintain websites for literacy organizations

like Read to Me! We are extremely grateful to the production team at NALD for helping us 'go live' with ease! A special thank you to web designer Tracy Hine for her dedication and hard work. To visit us online go to readtome.ca

COMING SOON TO THE READ TO ME BAG: A NEW MUSIC AND RHYME CD FOR BABY!

Read to Me!, in partnership with CBC, is currently creating a new music and rhyme CD for babies and their families. In an effort to empower parents to use music and rhymes in their baby's life every day, the new CD will feature the very best musicians from the region, including such fabulous artists as Mir, Lennie Gallant, Jill Barber, Meaghan Smith and George Canyon!

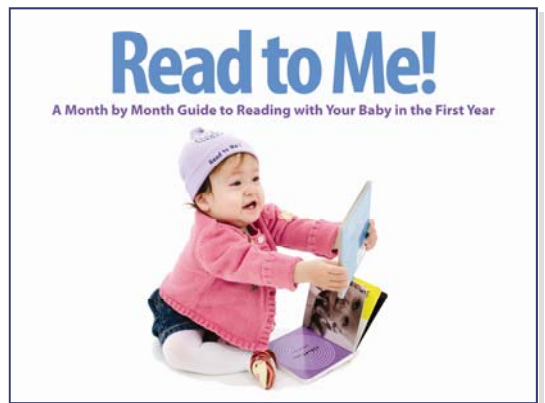
Why does Read to Me! give music and rhymes to babies? Research shows that early experiences with music, song and rhyme have a significant impact on a child's literacy development. Not only do they draw a baby's attention to patterns in language, they strongly contribute to active listening, comprehension and speaking skills and help to build an understanding of basic concepts. Songs and nursery rhymes often have richer language than that used in every day speech, which can help to build a child's vocabulary. Music and rhymes encourage rhythmic movement while helping to develop strong social interaction and emotional well being. And the benefits do not just extend to the baby – the use of nursery rhymes and songs can become a powerful tool for parents and a fun accompaniment to daily routines ranging from a fussy diaper change or a long car ride, to a relaxing bedtime routine.

THE READ TO ME! OFFICE HAS MOVED!

Read to Me! has moved— our provincial office is now located on Spring Garden Road on the Market Level of Spring Garden Place. All of the Read to Me! bags for the province will be packed here. It is also the office location for the Director and the Provincial Coordinator for the program. Read to Me! will be maintaining a satellite office for the IWK Coordinator, who delivers the bags to all of the families who give birth at the IWK Health Centre. Our mailing address will continue to be:
Read to Me! IWK Health Centre, 5850/5980 University Avenue, P.O. Box 9700, Halifax, NS, B3K 6R8

INTRODUCING ...

The *Read to Me!* Family Reading Guide!



The *Read to Me!* Family Reading Guide is the newest resource created for the Read to Me! bag. Filled with reading tips, recommended books and rhymes, it is designed to get parents excited about their role as their baby's first and most important teacher. Research shows that experience wires the growing brain and parents and families play an important role in bringing that richness of experience to babies in the early years. The Reading Guide is filled with activities that will support language development and encourage bonding and attachment. The Reading Guide acts like a 'user guide' to the Read to Me! bag, showing how the books and resources can be woven into a family's daily routine. The message is simple—make time to read, talk, sing and cuddle with your baby every day.

Take a look inside the guide!



Each page features beautiful pictures of Read to Me! families

Parents can follow the growth of baby's language development

5 months

Your baby...

- * Can sit with support
- * May reach for and grasp objects
- * Mimics sounds and gestures

Tips

- * Make silly faces and watch to see if your baby imitates you. An older sibling will love to help!
- * Have fun using words and sounds like 'oh-oh-oh' and 'ba-ba-ba'
- * Hold your baby on your lap so they can see the colourful pages of a book

Books

- Row Row Row Your Boat**
illustrated by Heather Collins
- Moo, Baa, La, La, La**
by Sandra Boynton
- Wiggle & Move**
from Child's Play Ltd

Rhyme of the month

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

Over 46 great baby books are recommended

Tips to stimulate, entertain and support baby's language development

Every month features a rhyme to sing or chant with baby

Special Thanks to ...

Developmental Consultant, Dr Sarah Shea, Family Reading Guide Designer, Pam Maher, Photographer, Jenine Dowden of Blue Vine Photography & all of the families who participated in our photo shoot

THE GENEROUS SUPPORT BEHIND READ TO ME!

Many thanks to our Founding Partners who had the vision of changing the literacy landscape of Nova Scotia.

The Halifax Youth Foundation, a private foundation committed to improving literacy in Nova Scotia has contributed over \$1,500,000; the **IWK Auxiliary** stood behind the program when it was just a dream and provided over \$80,000 in operating funding which allowed us to get up and running while we built the endowment; the **IWK Health Centre** has been the host organization since the birth of Read to Me! providing office space from which we run the province-wide program; the Province of Nova Scotia including the **Department of Health, Education and Community Services** have given in excess of \$1,000,000; **Human Resources and Skills Development Canada** contributed over a million dollars to the endowment. **CBC** has also provided tremendous in-kind contributions, including the production of the Read to Me! DVD in both French and English, our first nursery rhyme CD and the fabulous new music and rhyme CD currently in production.

To build a province-wide early literacy program requires a broad base of support. **Dexter Subaru** and **Subaru Canada**, have provided a Subaru Legacy affectionately known as the "Readmobile" which takes us around the province. The **Counselling Foundation** of Canada has provided operating funding which have helped us to grow the program while we grow the endowment. The **Windsor Foundation** and **Clearwater Seafoods** have provided important endowment contributions. In 2003 the Aliant Telephone Pioneers sponsored a book in the bag and for the past three years the **Nova Scotia Nurses Union** and the **Nova Scotia Teachers Union** have partnered to provide a book in English, French and soon, Mi'kmaq. Generous support over the years has also come from corporations, banks and family foundations. Some of our most meaningful gifts have come from individuals. A retired nursery school teacher in Bridgewater donated thousands of dollars because she knew the difference reading can make in a child's life. We have also received many touching gifts in memory of loved ones who had a passion for reading and literacy. To all of our partners across Nova Scotia we extend our heartfelt thanks for your support.

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About Read To Me!

Read to Me! is a province-wide hospital-based program developed to help families enrich their child's early years with books and reading. We present parents with a bright yellow bag of books and literacy resources at the hospital bedside within 24 hours of the birth of their baby. The program is delivered at 11 hospitals in Nova Scotia that offer maternity services, reaching every baby born in the province.

What's in the bag?

Each bag contains:

- three high-quality board books
- the Read to Me! Family Reading Guide
- our music and rhyme CD
- a Read to Me! hat for baby
- information about local library programs

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YOUTH
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