



September is Life Literacy Month, as well as the 20th anniversary of the non-profit organization ABC Life Literacy Canada

A recent Ipsos Reid poll showed that 90% of Canadians believe that improving literacy levels in Canada is key to improving the country's economy. Furthermore, approximately 95% of Canadians agree that literacy training is critical to improving job prospects for Canadians.

The Government of Canada identifies nine essential skills (reading; document use; numeracy; writing; oral communication; working with others; thinking; computer use and continuous learning) that are important for everyone to possess in order to live a fully engaged life.

With that in mind, here are 20 top life-long learning tips for Clarington residents that can be used easily in day-to-day life.

20 Top Life-Long Learning Tips

1. Set aside some quiet time each day to read a book, magazine or newspaper. You will feel a sense of accomplishment when you finish. You will also serve as a reading role model for those around you.
2. Embrace curiosity. Constantly questioning what we think we already know leads to greater learning.

20 Tips to boost literacy

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3. Instead of sending an email, pick up the phone or visit your co-worker for a face-to-face conversation. Not only does this help increase your physical activity, it also helps with oral communication.

4. Do crossword puzzles, word jumbles or sudoku puzzles. They are a fun way to help keep your mind sharp and grow your vocabulary.

5. Start a book club with your friends or neighbours. Read and discuss the books together.

6. Take a professional development course through your employer or local library.

7. Practice your writing skills by updating your resume, handwriting a thank you note to a co-worker, salesperson or neighbour, or writing a "to learn" list.

8. When cooking, follow a new recipe – it's a fun way to practice reading, math and comprehension as well as enjoy a new meal option.

9. Boost baby's brainpower by reading aloud. Infants love the sound of a parent's voice and the closeness of sharing.

10. Let children count out the change when making a purchase. This helps reinforce the importance of math in everyday life.

11. Keep teens reading by providing them with books, magazines and safe Internet sites about things that interest them – like music, movies, TV and computers.

12. Create a game night once a week and invite another family over for a challenge. Depending on the game selected, you will be practicing critical thinking skills, reading, numeracy and

working with others.

13. Act as a mentor to friends or family on a subject you enjoy such as sports, knitting, cars or painting to name a few. You can learn though teaching.

14. Think about going back to school to learn a new language, pursue a hobby or even pick up a musical instrument. If you don't have time for in-class study, create your own study plan by doing research at your local library or through the Internet.

15. Give the gift of words – make a donation to a literacy organization in your community – or consider giving books as gifts to friends and family.

16. Learning a new sport or taking up a new physical activity helps you both physically and mentally; keeping you young in body and mind.

17. Purchase gently used books and magazines at garage sales and second-hand stores as a cost-effective way to continuously add to your library.

18. Question your child about the story you're reading together (what do you think happens next?) to make sure they understand and to stimulate thoughts.

19. Car trips can offer great opportunities to enhance literacy skills. Plan a new route to work to keep you thinking of alternatives, or if travelling as a family, read signs, billboards and licence plates together and show your children the proper way to read a map.

20. Use it or lose it! The more we stimulate our brains through new learning experiences, the stronger our thinking and remembering muscle becomes.

To learn more about literacy and lifelong learning please visit www.abclifelifiteracy.ca .

Article courtesy of ABC Life Literacy Canada.

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