



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Summer Literacy Camps

In Partnership with First Nations, Métis, and
Inuit Communities

2025 National Report

Prepared by United for Literacy



Celebrating 20 Years of Camp!

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**SCHOLASTIC
EDUCATION**

FIRST BOOK CANADA 
Eliminating Barriers. Inspiring Young Minds.



United for Literacy recognizes TD Bank Group as lead national sponsor of this program.



Campers participating in a drumming circle at Piikani First Nation (AB)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

United for Literacy would like to thank **80 community partners** for another great summer of Summer Literacy Camps. It's a joy to share in literacy and learning. We are honoured to be welcomed into communities from coast to coast to coast! We are grateful to the campers, families, Elders, and community members who participated in camp activities. You make it all possible! The 2025 Summer Literacy Camps created lasting memories for every participant.

United for Literacy's Summer Literacy Camps were made possible through the generous support of our partners and funders:

- Air Borealis
- Calm Air
- Canadian North
- Carrier Sekani Family Services
- Chalmers Community Renewal Initiative
- DiscoverE
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Elmwood Community Resource Centre
- EPLS Group of Companies
- ESUMA (Kativik Regional Government)
- First Book Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Canada
- Government of Manitoba
- Kitaskinaw Education Authority
- Let's Talk Science
- Makivvik Corporation
- Manitoba Education and Training
- Maskwacis Education School Commission
- North Star Air
- NunaKatiget Inuit Community Corporation
- Nunastar Properties Fund for Northern Children
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Nunavut Department of Education
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
- Ontario Power Generation
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
- Ontario Teachers' Federation
- Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan (OTIP)
- Paul First Nation Education Authority
- Peigan Board of Education
- Rotary Club of Winnipeg
- Scholastic Classrooms Care
- Squamish First Nation
- Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation
- Sturgeon Lake First Nation
- Tachane Foundation
- TD Bank Group
- The McCain Foundation
- Wasaya Airways
- Welamukotuk (Oromocto) First Nation
- Wotstak (Woodstock) First Nation

Evolution of Summer Literacy Camps

2025 marks the 20th anniversary of our Summer Literacy Camps! In 2005 the late Honorable James Bartleman asked United for Literacy to run the first camps. These took place in five fly-in First Nations communities. Since then, United for Literacy has worked with Indigenous communities across the country to keep kids learning and reading through the summer.

Summer Literacy Camps aim to keep learners aged 5–12 interested in reading, writing, and math. Camps also help campers build confidence with learning and get outside. They are also a great place for campers to build friendships. In 20 years of delivering Summer Literacy Camps, our vision and goals have remained straightforward:

- Promote a love of reading and learning
- Bring Indigenous knowledge, language, and traditions into literacy learning
- Increase the size of home libraries through the distribution of free books
- Reduce skill and knowledge loss, also known as Summer Learning Loss, during school closures



Quiet Reading Time in a Cozy Tent in Nakina (ON)

Learners often enjoy taking a break from school in the summer. Unfortunately, this break can have a negative impact their learning. The average student can lose up to three months of what they learned in the previous year[i] if they are not kept engaged in learning. This effect is more severe for children from low-income or underserved families[ii]. Camp activities get campers to use, not lose, what they learned during the previous school year.

United for Literacy understands that education and learning play a vital role in the Reconciliation process. As such, we have made it a priority in our new Strategic Plan. As an education-focused organization, we aim to learn from our shared history. We are literacy experts but not experts in Indigenous literacies. Our partners have been willing to teach us and innovate with us. For that we are grateful. These partnerships have given us many opportunities to learn from both our successes and challenges. Thanks to feedback, we are able to appropriately incorporate intergenerational learning and teaching, local knowledge, stories, and histories into our literacy programs and activities.

New This Year

Indigenous Evaluation Network

United for Literacy has partnered with the Indigenous Evaluation Network (IEN) as part of our three-year project to assess and inform our camp evaluation framework. IEN is an organization that works to connect Indigenous program evaluators across Canada and internationally, to expand the field of Indigenous evaluation for the benefit of Indigenous communities and service providers working with Indigenous partners.

We want to learn what First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) communities think about the way we gather feedback and evaluation data. Some of our work over this first year of the project included consultations with Elders, youth, and knowledge keepers within the FNMI communities that we partner with across the country. A committee was formed—made up of Elders, youth, members of the IEN, and United for Literacy staff—to help inform and shape our assessment process. This committee also conducted further community needs assessments. These assessments will form the basis of a culturally relevant evaluation tool.

Overcoming Challenges

This year's devastating wildfires in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario meant not all camps could run as planned. We are thankful that many of our camp communities were safe from the wildfires. In these communities, camp continued as planned, with in-person activities.

Other communities, including Sandy Lake First Nations (ON), Loon River First Nation (AB), and Split Lake Cree Nation (MB), had to evacuate for their safety. In these areas, in-person camp could not go as planned. Instead, United for Literacy worked with our partners to find different options. These included offering free books and literacy kits to evacuated participants. Some in-person programs were rescheduled to a better time. These solutions align both with community needs and with our philosophy—every place is a learning place.

Camp Highlights

Across Canada, United for Literacy proudly partnered with **80 communities** to offer dynamic and fun learning activities. These activities are tailored to meet each camp community's needs and interests. We're proud of all we accomplished in collaboration with these communities.

This summer, United for Literacy and partner communities

- Reached **2,935 campers**, aged 5-12
- Distributed **1,060 literacy kits** to learners at home. Each learning kit comes with a workbook as well as brand-new children's books and craft supplies for the whole family to enjoy!
- Distributed **13,871 high-quality, brand-new books**, including books by Indigenous authors. These books help build home libraries and bring the fun of reading into campers' homes
- Hosted **183 guest presenters, 925 family members, and 362 community members**. These guests engaged in meaningful intergenerational learning and sharing with campers
- Participated in **186 special events and field trips**
- Experimented with **178 Let's Talk Science activities**



*Making art in Sturgeon Lake
Cree Nation (SK)*



*Campers from
Waywayseecappo First Nation
on a field trip (MB)*

Activity Spotlight

Each day, campers and counsellors explored learning with a variety of fun, hands-on activities! Activities included daily reading, cooking, science experiments, literacy projects, and many more. Elders and community members were frequent visitors. They shared their unique experiences and encouraging campers in learning and literacy.



Waywayseecappo Camp Field Trip

The Waywayseecappo First Nation (MB) Camp staff planned a full-day field trip to Winnipeg for the campers. They spent the day engaging in educational tours of The Manitoba Museum and The Forks. Campers got to experience the immersive galleries and interactive exhibits to learn about history, nature, and science!

"It's cool hearing the [Cree] language, even though I don't understand it. But I hope to someday."
- **Camper, Loon River First Nation (AB)**

Making Bannock in Aupaluk

Campers in Aupaluk, Nunavik, made their own bannock. Following the recipe helped them to practice their reading skills. Measuring ingredients turns practicing math skills into a fun activity. And then, of course, they got to enjoy the delicious results of their efforts!



Impact Story

Writing a Camp Book

In Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation, New Brunswick, campers wrote and illustrated their own book, *The Adventures of Erson The Person*. To start, they learned about what makes up a story. Then, as a group, they came up with their character, Erson the Person, and decided on an activity Erson would do for each month. Each camper got to create an illustration for the book. Finally, everyone received a copy of the book, and they had a chance to read it aloud together!

"Making the book was so much fun!" – Camper, Sitansisk First Nation (NB)

"I love that they all got a copy of the book, it's such a great idea." – Educator and Community Member, Sitansisk First Nation (NB)



Happy campers in Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation, New Brunswick, with copies of the book they wrote together

Impact on Campers: Community Reflections

United for Literacy records how much time campers spend reading each day. We also note the kinds of fun learning activities they take part in. This makes sure our Summer Literacy Camp activities and programs are reaching their goals.



Over the summer, learners can keep up with their grade level by reading for fifteen minutes each day. This boosts their chances of completing school, which opens more opportunities and outcomes in the long term [iii].

In 2025, campers spent **33,435 minutes reading**, and camp counsellors **read 1,885 books** to campers! **84%** of parents said that their child is reading more since attending camp.



Some quiet reading time in
Ermineskin Cree Nation (AB)



Campers enjoying group story
time in Postville (NL)

*"I've already seen a difference in my grandson's attitude towards reading!" - **Grandparent, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (ON)***

*"I love literacy camp because I'm learning to read and get to win prizes." - **Camper, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation (SK)***

Impact on Campers: Community Reflections

United for Literacy collects feedback and surveys from campers, their families, and their communities. This input is key to improving the Summer Literacy Camp program. We want our literacy activities to remain a fun learning experience for all! This is what was said about camp from coast to coast to coast this year.



*Campers reading together,
Umiujaq (QC)*

Here's what our campers said:

- **81%** of campers considered themselves to be a "good reader" after camp
- **92%** said reading is important
- **93%** said camp made them more interested or maintained their interest in reading
- **83%** said that they liked math and **85%** said that they liked science after attending camp

Family members were just as eager to share their experiences with us:

- **95%** of parents said that camp helped prepare their child to return to school
- **98%** of parents said that camp was valuable for their community
- **93%** of parents said that their child has attended camp for two or more years and does well at school



*Playing BINGO with words in English
and Inuttut, Makkovik (NL)*

*"It's important to learn reading at a young age. [My child] was looking forward to getting up in the morning." - **Parent, Naujaat (NU)***

*"Before camp, I didn't really like reading. Now I like it because we read stories together and the teachers helped us. The field trip was amazing. I learned a lot about human rights and history" - **Camper, Waywayseecappo First Nation (MB)***

Youth Mobilization: Community Impact

Summer Literacy Camps help strengthen community capacity. Each summer, camp staff and volunteers buy materials, food, and services from local businesses. As an employer, United for Literacy aims to hire camp staff directly from the area. This creates important employment opportunities to local youth.

Counsellors receive training from United for Literacy. This helps youth develop the skills needed to run day-to-day camp operations. They gain hands-on experience in communication, time management, and creative problem-solving. These are useful for future jobs, too.

The unique personality of every counsellor means that, every year, campers enjoy new activities and projects. Here is what camp staff said about their experience:

- **94%** said that camp provided a positive work experience
- **100%** said that camp helped campers strengthen their confidence and self-esteem
- **99%** said that camp provided an enriching learning experience for campers



*Camp Counsellors at
Elmwood (MB)*

“Working as a camp counsellor has equipped me with creativity and problem-solving skills I wouldn't have had otherwise.” – **Camp Counsellor, Akulivik (QC)**

“I improved personally and professionally because I learnt a lot of activities that will make me a better educator.” – **Camp Counsellor, Gift Lake Métis Settlement (AB)**

Letters of Support

Each year, community partners share letters of support to reflect on the successes and impact of our camp season. We are pleased to share with you a few partner reflections from the 2025 Summer Literacy Camps.



To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter of support for the summer camp provided by United for Literacy.

The program held at Oromocto First Nation during a 3-week period was very beneficial to the children in the community for various reasons. It allowed the children to learn and participate in activities with individuals outside of their daily lives in the community. It also allowed the staff from the community to learn new teaching strategies that continued throughout the rest of the summer. For the remainder of the summer, the children continued to speak highly of the staff from United for Literacy. We would love to continue the relationship with United for Literacy in the future.

Nikki Roberts

Summer Camp Coordinator

Registered Social Work Technician

Letters of Support Continued



MUNDO PEETABECK EDUCATION AUTHORITY EDUCATION OFFICE

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September 3, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: SUPPORT LETTER FOR UNITED FOR LITERACY

This letter is in support for the Summer Literacy programming to happen in each First Nation Communities every Summer.

I have been here since Summer Literacy started and has helped a lot of students that participate in these communities. They look forward to the Summer Literacy program including the parents, this helps their child in reading and other programs that Summer Literacy has to offer.

We hope this programming can continue for our children.

If you have any questions, please contact me at our office.

Sincerely,


Nicole Gillies
Education Director

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Letters of Support Continued



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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend the Ivujivik Summer Literacy Camp's continuation. As someone who has witnessed the impact of this program on children's learning and wellbeing, I fully support it.

Over the past four weeks, the counsellors have read 34 books aloud to campers, while the campers themselves have collectively read 138 books. 565 minutes was spent reading together, promoting the youth's vocabulary and ideas. The campers spent 1210 minutes on physical and outdoor activities, 510 minutes on STEM-based projects and 620 minutes in Inuktitut language programming. This balance echoes the national camp model in which reading, outdoor play and science activities are woven together to reinforce literacy. The inclusion of Inuktitut fosters pride in local culture and ensures that literacy development respects the community's linguistic heritage.

Attendance was strong, with an average of 20 campers each day. These children are not just reading – they are exploring, building, and connecting with their environment. The camp hosted seven special events: rock climbing, reading on the land, pyjama day, breakfast with family members, a picnic on the land, a candy drop and visit of the new landholding building, and an airport visit. Such experiences make learning memorable and link literacy to real-world contexts.

Ivujivik parents have expressed gratitude for the program, noting that it keeps children engaged and eager to learn over the summer. The camp's long-standing popularity in Ivujivik speaks to its effectiveness and the trust it has built within the community.

In a region where access to books and structured learning opportunities can be limited, the Ivujivik Summer Literacy Camp provides a critical bridge between school years.

For all these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend continued support for the Ivujivik Summer Literacy Camp.

Sincerely,

Thomassie Mangiok, Nuvviti's center director.

Conclusion

This summer marks another fabulous year of fun and learning! At United for Literacy, we know that learning doesn't happen alone. We are grateful for the chance to hold Summer Literacy Camps in partnership with Indigenous communities. Together with campers, families, and community members, we are creating more opportunities for literacy and learning across Canada!

[i] Munro, C. (2022). Learning Loss: A Summer Problem. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 14(2), 29–33. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclclefindmkaj/https://www.brandonu.ca/master-education/files/2023/03/BU-Journal-of-Graduate-Studies-in-Education-2022-vol-14-issue-2.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclclefindmkaj/https://www.brandonu.ca/master-education/files/2023/03/BU-Journal-of-Graduate-Studies-in-Education-2022-vol-14-issue-2.pdf)

[ii] Gierczyk, M., & Hornby, G. (2023). Summer learning loss: review of research and implications for remediation of post-pandemic learning loss. *Preventing School Failure: alternative education for children and Youth*, 67(3), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2023.2204823>

[iii] Barshay, Jill (2014). *Three lessons from data on children's reading habits*. The Hechinger Report. <https://hechingerreport.org/three-lessons-data-childrens-reading-habits/>

See you Next Summer!

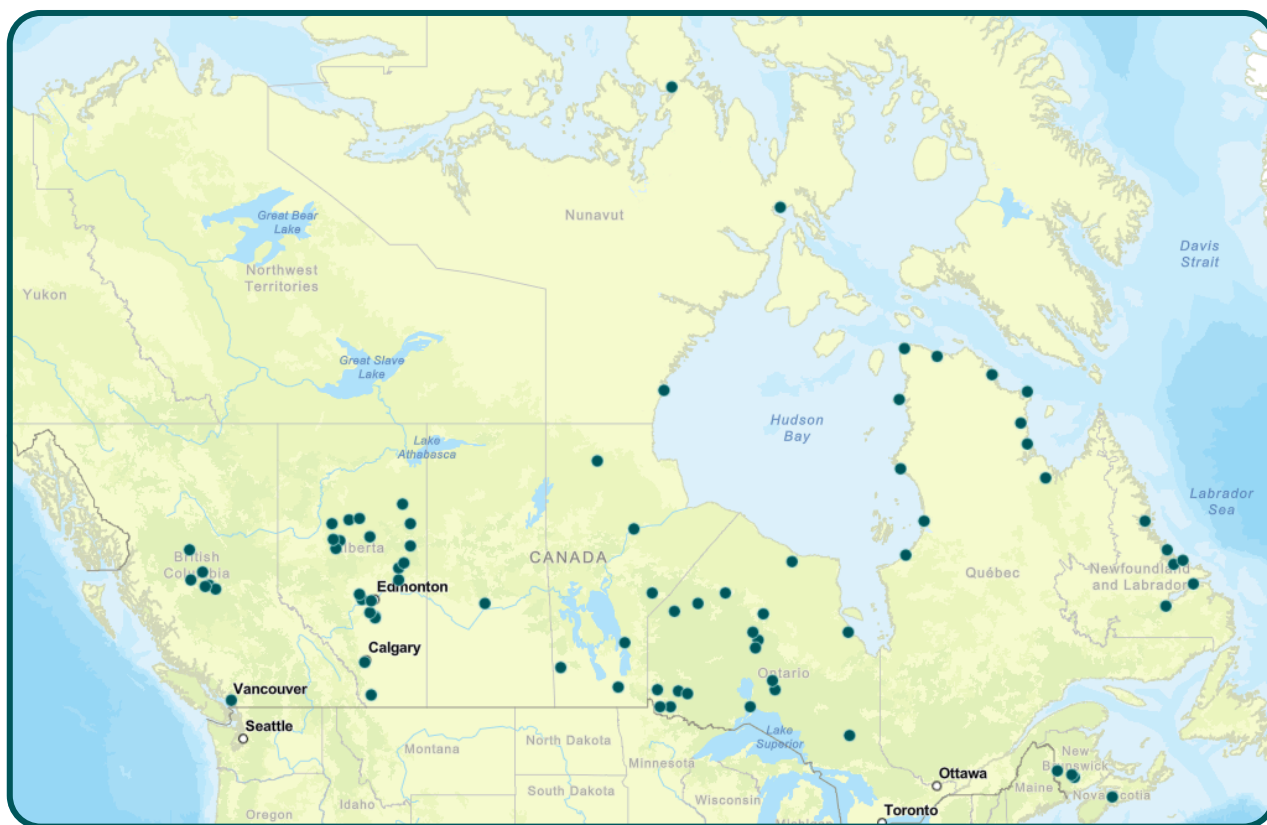


EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Appendix: List of Camp Communities

The 2025 Summer Literacy Camps were hosted in 80 communities across 10 provinces and territories:



Alberta (21)

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
Anzac
Beaver Lake Cree Nation
Bigstone Cree First Nation (Wabasca)
Cadotte Lake
Conklin Métis
Enoch Cree Nation
Ermineskin Cree Nation
Fort McKay First Nation
Gift Lake Métis Settlement
Goodfish Lake First Nation
Grouard
Heart Lake First Nation
Loon River First Nation
Paul First Nation

Peavine Métis Settlement
Peerless Trout First Nation
Pigeon Lake (Ma-Me-O Beach)
Piikani First Nation
Samson Cree Nation
Tsuut'ina Nation

British Columbia (7)

Carrier Sekani Family Services (Nadleh
Whut'en First Nation, Saik'uz First Nation,
Stellat'en First Nation, Wet'suwet'en First
Nation, Takla First Nation, Yekooche First
Nation)
Squamish First Nation

List of Camp Communities Continued

Manitoba (6)

Carberry
Bloodvein First Nation
Elmwood
Tadoule Lake First Nation
St. Theresa Point First Nation
Waywayseecappo First Nation

New Brunswick (3)

Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation
Welamukotuk (Oromocto) First Nation
Wotstak (Woodstock) First Nation

Nova Scotia (1)

Sipekne'katik First Nation

Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador) (6)

Goose Bay
Hopedale
Makkovik
Nain
Postville
Rigolet

Nunavik (Québec) (11)

Akulivik
Aupaluk
Inukjuaq
Ivujivik
Kangiarsujuaq
Kangirsuk
Kuujuaq
Kuujuarapik
Quaqtaq
Salluit
Umiujaq

Nunavut (3)

Arviat
Nauyasat
Taloyoak

Ontario (21)

Big Grassy First Nation
Boys and Girls Club Summer Program
Eabametoong First Nation
Eagle Lake First Nation
Evergreen Summer Program
Fort Albany First Nation
Kenora
Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI)
Longlac
Marten Falls First Nation
Mattagami First Nation
Muskrat Dam First Nation
Nakina
Neskantaga First Nation
Onigaming First Nation
Peawanuck First Nation
Sandy Lake First Nation
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation
Wabshkaa Animkii Benesii Program
Webequie First Nation
Whitesand First Nation

Saskatchewan (1)

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation