

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03-07-99-0127
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 24 June 1999

TO/DEST. Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Committee Co-ordinator

SUBJECT/OBJET **“1, 2 ,3, READ WITH ME/1, 2, 3, LIS AVEC MOI” PROJECT-
FORUM OF OTTAWA-CARLETON PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee receive a presentation on the “1, 2, 3, Read with Me/1, 2, 3, Lis avec moi” Project for information.

BACKGROUND

The Committee Chair, A. Munter, has requested that the Committee hear a presentation from the Forum of Ottawa-Carleton Public Libraries on the above-noted subject.

Attached is a letter from Barbara Clubb, Chief Librarian and Secretary-Treasurer to the Board, Ottawa Public Library, to Chair Munter requesting an opportunity to discuss this matter with the Committee. A brief synopsis of the project is also provided for information.

Ms. Barbara Herd, Chair, Baby Kits Committee and Ms. Vera Yuzyk, Development Officer, Ottawa Public Library, will make the presentation to Committee.

Approved by
M. J. Beauregard

Attach: (1)



of Public Libraries of Ottawa-Carleton
des bibliothèques publiques d'Ottawa-Carleton

June 24, 1999

Councillor Alex Munter, Chair
Community Services Committee
Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
111 Lisgar Street
Ottawa ON K2P 2L7

Dear Councillor Munter:

The Forum of Ottawa-Carleton Public Libraries shares Ottawa-Carleton's pledge to Millennium children to invest in our youngest citizens by promoting healthy early childhood development -- yielding a lasting legacy that will strengthen Ottawa-Carleton for years to come.

We have approved as our Millennium project a **pilot bilingual infant literacy program** called *1,2,3 Read With Me/1,2,3 Lise Avec Moi*. Our goal is to educate parent(s) and/or caregivers of 10,000 babies born in Ottawa-Carleton during the Millennium year on the importance of early reading, starting at birth. Research indicates the benefits to be significant: enhanced pre-school development, better performance in school in reading, writing and speaking, greater social confidence and access to life-long learning.

In the hospital, or through midwifery groups, parents will receive an attractive book bag containing a certificate for a free Canadian board book as well as educational and resource materials. To receive the board book parents must bring their new baby to the nearest library. There, the baby will be registered as a new library member and parents introduced to a wide range of stimulating reading programs for all ages, and encouraged to return on a regular basis. One of our project partners Healthy Babies, Healthy Children has offered to follow-up with new mothers by encouraging them to visit the public library to receive their free board book.

The Ottawa-Carleton public libraries are collectively contributing \$17,000 towards the overall cost of the project which is \$71,824. We also have letters of support from community groups involved with literacy and children's health and welfare. We are currently seeking funding partners at the federal, provincial and regional levels of government. Our appeal to RMOC is for \$17,274.

We welcome an opportunity to speak to the members of the Community Services Committee on July 8, 1999 to discuss our proposed Millennium partnership. Please contact Vera Yuzyk, our Development Officer, at 236-0302 ext. 271 regarding your decision and the time and place of the meeting.

Sincerely,

Barbara Clubb,
Chief Librarian and Secretary-Treasurer to the Board
Ottawa Public Library

On behalf of the Forum of Public Libraries of Ottawa-Carleton

OTTAWA-CARLETON'S PLEDGE TO MILLENNIUM CHILDREN

Declaration of Commitment

Our vision for the new millennium: Every child in Ottawa-Carleton is given a good start in life and enters school ready to learn and to fulfill his or her potential.

Our mission: To work together in unprecedented ways to support parents and to promote healthy early childhood development for all children in Ottawa-Carleton from the prenatal stage to age six.

Our core beliefs:

We believe... Every child deserves to be born healthy, free of preventable health problems and deserves to achieve the best possible growth and development with nutritious food, adequate housing and the fulfillment of all basic needs.

We believe... Every child deserves to live in a safe home and community environment, free from abuse and violence, and in the care of nurturing adults.

We believe... Every child deserves early learning opportunities and experiences to enter school with a solid foundation for learning.

We believe... Investing in our youngest citizens will yield a lasting legacy that will strengthen Ottawa-Carleton for years to come.

OUR PLEDGE

We, the community of Ottawa-Carleton, pledge to do everything in our power to:

- ☉ Increase investment in early childhood development and education
- ☉ Provide support to all families with young children
- ☉ Provide additional support to families and neighbourhoods in greatest need
- ☉ Support programs based on best practices; approaches which we know make a positive difference for young children
- ☉ Increase understanding about the importance of early childhood and about the value of investing in our children in their crucial investment years
- ☉ Advocate for public policies which support young children

BABY KITS
CHIEF LIBRARIANS OF OTTAWA-CARLETON (CLOC)
1,2,3 READ WITH ME
1,2,3 LIS AVEC MOI
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is a CLOC Baby Kit?

A handsome bag to be given to every baby born in Ottawa. The bag will contain a colourful brochure about the importance of reading, ideas for reading, suggestions for where and when to read. Also in the bag will be a map of Ottawa-Carleton marking the locations of all the libraries; and a colourful certificate which will be redeemable at any CLOC library for a free board book for the baby. The bag will have the *1,2,3, READ WITH ME/1,2,3,LIS AVEC MOI* theme on it, as well as *The Libraries of Ottawa-Carleton* and any sponsor's name and logo. The theme is repeated on the brochure.

2. Why have a Baby Kit?

Many studies have shown the importance of reading to children from the day they are born. Children who are read to do better in school. Children are ready for informal learning experiences at birth and parents are crucial in starting them off right away. Many parents do not know this. One half of a person's ultimate intelligence is developed by age four. Reading expert, award winning author and lecturer, Jim Trelease, writes "...of great importance in an age of rising illiteracy, is the established fact that regular reading aloud strengthens children's reading, writing, and speaking skills...." Recent studies are showing that spoken language has an incredible impact on brain development. According to a report in *The Ottawa Citizen*, "some researchers say the number of words an infant hears each day is the single most important predictor of later intelligence, school success and social competence. There is one catch - the words have to

come from an attentive, engaged human being." The public library is a doorway to worlds of information, wonderful books and other material, as well as programs for parents and babies alike.

3. Can these kits be seen as part of fighting the illiteracy problem?

Yes. Five million Canadians cannot read, write or handle numbers well enough to meet demands of today's society. Poverty and education play major roles in deciding whether illiteracy is transmitted from one generation to the next. In Ontario, functional illiteracy ranges from 21% in London to 27% in Toronto, and from 23% in Ottawa to 32% in the rural area around Owen Sound. These Baby Kits can be seen to help at nipping illiteracy in the bud. They can help the parent as well as the child, since our goal is to get the adult into the library with their baby, where there are special literacy collections for all ages.

4. How were these kits organized?

Since the babies born in Ottawa hospitals come from the entire region, the Chief Librarians of Ottawa-Carleton agreed to support the planning of the kits. Representatives from Ottawa, Nepean, Gloucester and Kanata Public Libraries are on the Baby Kit Committee. This group of four experienced librarians drew up the brochure, researched literacy figures, investigated the number of babies born each year in Ottawa, looked at similar programs held in other cities, mainly in the U.S.A.

5. How many Baby Kits would be needed in Ottawa each year?

About 10,000 babies are born in local hospitals each year. The two midwifery groups in Ottawa deliver about 125 babies at home annually.

6. What would be the annual cost of the kits?

7. Sponsors are important!

It is hoped that corporate sponsor(s) will be found to start 1,2,3, *Read With Me* and to keep it going for more than one year. Separate sponsors for the bags, books and printing could be found, or one major sponsor. Reaching 10,000 families a year is no small thing.

8. Library involvement/partnerships:

Each of the 11 Ottawa-Carleton libraries would have a store of the board books to redeem for the certificates. Some of the libraries may act as resource centres for the hospitals; local groups could become involved in the packaging of the kits as well as become part of the distribution plan.

9. Monitoring, Co-ordination and Evaluation:

The Baby Kit Committee could be the vehicle for the co-ordination of distribution, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the program. The Committee would continue to report to the Chief Librarians of Ottawa-Carleton.

Prepared by
Barbara B. Herd, Chair
Baby Kits Committee
revised Feb. 1999