



Take a StoryWalk[®]



Created by:

Families Strong Stable and Connected Pillar,
Niagara Children's Planning Council

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What is a StoryWalk®?

A StoryWalk® is an opportunity for children to experience reading a book while walking through an outdoor area such as a park, trail, or neighborhood. StoryWalks® promote literacy, outdoor physical activity, and encourage parent and community involvement.

Along with a parent, caregiver or educator, children follow a path from one laminated poster board to the next, each containing one page of a children's picture book.

StoryWalk® was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition (VBPC), and the Kellogg Hubbard Library.



Why do a StoryWalk®?

A StoryWalk® supports the Ontario Ministry of Education four foundations of “How Does Learning Happen?” Pedagogy for the Early Years:

1. BELONGING

Exposing children and their families/caregivers to StoryWalks® in the community fosters a feeling of connectedness, not only to others who are taking part in the StoryWalk®, but also to their community.

2. WELL-BEING

Participating in StoryWalks® involves being outdoors, physical activity and sharing the experience with others. This promotes both physical and emotional health and well-being.

3. ENGAGEMENT

As the children and families take part in the StoryWalk®, they are able to explore the world around them. Through this type of experience, they may have the opportunity to develop valuable skills including problem solving, self-regulation, and engagement within their natural surroundings.

4. EXPRESSION

Children develop a variety of literacy skills. A StoryWalk® provides an opportunity for children and families to enjoy storytelling, develop oral language skills, and express their ideas.

Every Child Ready to Read[®]

StoryWalk[®] events are an opportunity to combine the five early literacy practices recommended by Every Child Ready to Read[®]

Talking

Talking with children helps them learn oral language more quickly, one of the most critical early literacy skills. The experience of self-expression also stimulates brain development, which supports all learning.

Singing

Singing (which also includes rhyming) increases children's awareness and sensitivity to the sounds in words. This helps prepare children to decode print (written language).

Playing

Play is one of the primary ways young children learn about the world around them. General knowledge is an important literacy skill that helps children understand stories once they begin to read.

Reading

Reading together, or shared reading, remains the single most effective way to help children become proficient readers.

Writing

Writing and reading go hand in hand. Writing helps children learn that letters and words represent sounds and that print has meaning.

Information in this handbook is adapted from materials produced by Every Child Ready to Read[®], which is a project of the Association for Library Services to Children[®] and the Public Library Association[®], divisions of the American Library Association[®].

Tips on Making Your StoryWalk® a Success

1. **How should I market my StoryWalk® event?**

You can promote your public event on the Niagara Falls Public Library website for StoryWalk® at <http://nfpl.info/storywalk>. Consider inviting community groups who may benefit from participating in your StoryWalk® event. This could include Ontario Early Years Centres, School Boards, and Public Libraries. To access a full list of services available for children from 0-12 please refer to <http://www.parentdirectniagara.ca/>.

2. **How do I set up a StoryWalk®?**

An outdoor space is ideal as the stakes go directly into the ground. Place the first page at the beginning of your path. The next page should be in sight but far enough away that you have to walk over to it. The distance from sign to sign would vary on the total space you have for your event.

3. **What do I do if the StoryWalk® kit is damaged?**

Please tell us about any damage that has occurred when you return the kit to your local library.

4. **How do I return the StoryWalk® kit?**

Please return the kit to your local library, using the checklist to ensure all pieces are returned. Please wipe down each piece so it is returned in the condition in which it was borrowed. Before you return the kit, please fill out the Borrower Survey provided in your kit. Your feedback will help us with our future planning.

5. **Additional Suggestions**

Make other activities available before and after the StoryWalk® which incorporate ideas from the book, including a snack, a creative learning opportunity, and/or a musical activity. Promote your event with the Advertising Poster Template and on social media using the hashtag #storywalkniagara.

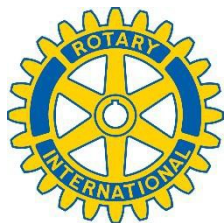
Obtaining feedback – Use the StoryWalk® Survey

StoryWalk® kits are provided free of charge due to the efforts of multiple community partners. It is important for us to be able to show funders how the kits are being used to benefit children and families. Included in this kit is a **red folder** with copies of a survey for participants to complete. As a borrower, we ask that you ensure that your StoryWalk® event participants take the opportunity to complete a survey in order to provide the data that is vital to obtaining future funding. We also ask that you complete the Borrower's Survey (**green paper**) and return it in the red folder along with the completed Participant Surveys. Survey Templates are available at <http://nfpl.info/storywalk>.

How to Sponsor a StoryWalk®

If you are interested in sponsoring a StoryWalk® kit, please contact the Niagara Children's Planning Council through the website www.niagaracpc.ca/contact.

Special Thank You to Rotary Club of Niagara Falls



The Families are Strong, Stable and Connected pillar would like to acknowledge and thank the Rotary Club of Niagara Falls for their financial support for our StoryWalk[®] pilot book kit. The pilot project demonstrated that StoryWalk[®] was successful and worthy of expanding across Niagara for children and families to enjoy.

Appendices

- A. Advertising Poster Template – Insert your information at <http://nfpl.info/storywalk>
- B. Who are the Niagara Children's Planning Council?



Come on out to a

StoryWalk[®]

at

Place

Address

on

Date

#storywalkniagara

Organization Logo



Who are the Niagara Children's Planning Council?

The Niagara Children's Planning Council (NCPC) is a collaboration created in 1998 to enhance the lives of children and families within the communities of Niagara region. The



NCPC is comprised of agency and organization representatives within the region of Niagara who share a keen interest and shared vision of ensuring the rights of children and their families are optimized, protected, and serve as the foundation of decision-making and planning. With this focused attention, the Niagara community can engage in thoughtful planning that purposely examines the supports necessary for children to learn, be healthy, be safe and live in strong, stable and connected families. The Vision of the Niagara Children's Planning Council is: *"Niagara – a community that ensures every child will reach optimal potential through cooperative investment in the Early Years. All children in Niagara region are safe, healthy and respected. All families in Niagara are supported to provide children with the best possible opportunities early in their lives."*

NCPC Partners:

A Child's World
Brock University
Business Education Council of Niagara
Centre de Santé Communautaire
Hamilton/Niagara
Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique
Centre-Sud
Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
Contact Niagara
District School Board of Niagara
Early Childhood Community Development
Centre
Family and Children's Services Niagara La
Boîte à soleil
Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara
Region
Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Ministry of Education

Niagara Indigenous Children's Planning
Council
Niagara French Language Children's
Advisory Committee
Niagara Catholic District School Board
Pathstone Mental Health
Niagara Child Care Sector
Niagara College
Niagara Children's Centre
Niagara Region Children's Service
Niagara Region Public Health
Ontario Early Years Centres - Niagara
Region
Port Cares
Public Libraries of Niagara
Quality Child Care Niagara
Speech Services Niagara
Strive Niagara
YMCA of Niagara

The Families are Strong, Stable and Connected Pillar Committee of the NCPC is composed of various organizations, agencies, programs and services with an interest or mandate that supports families which leads to children's optimal development. The committee focuses their efforts to support and strengthen families and their engagement with their children and their community. The vision of the committee is: *Niagara's families feel respected, connected and supported in a community that honours their diversity.*

Families are Strong, Stable and Connected Pillar Partners:

A Child's World
Community Parent Representative(s)
Contact Niagara
District School Board of Niagara
Early Childhood Community Development
Centre
Family and Children's Services Niagara
Niagara Falls Public Library
Niagara Aboriginal Children's Planning
Council
Niagara Brighter Futures/Healthy from the
Start

Niagara Catholic District School Board
Niagara Child Care Sector – Executive
Committee
Niagara Falls Community Health Centre
Niagara Region Public Health
Niagara Region Children's Services
Ontario Early Years Centres
Pathstone Mental Health Port Cares
Representative from the Niagara Children's
Planning Council - Research Group (non-
voting)
YMCA