Literacy and Numeracy for Life

Campaign to support parents and the wider community, support children's literacy and numeracy development supported by NALA

The national strategy ‘Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life’ (DES 2011), includes a range of actions to enable parents and communities to support children’s learning. It recognises that parents who are engaged in their child’s learning have a significant positive impact on a child’s educational achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy.

As part of this strategy, the Department has asked the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) to support a national public information campaign highlighting the role that parents and communities can play in improving children’s literacy and numeracy, using media, online resources and celebrity endorsements.

Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign (working title)

The objective of the Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign is to raise awareness of the important role that parents and communities can play in supporting children’s literacy and numeracy, provide them with easy access to resources, and encourage them to use them with children.

To achieve this, NALA will develop a simple website that will bring together relevant information for parents and the wider community to support children’s literacy and numeracy development.

At the moment there is a dizzying amount of resources for parents in different formats and numerous locations. The greatest difficulty is sifting through this information and finding the most relevant, age appropriate resources, quickly. There is also differing levels of understanding of this issue amongst parents and so there will be a layered approach to support behind this campaign.

Based on the highly successful UK campaign, www.wordsforlife.org.uk, this new website will showcase the best Irish and international content that already exists around this topic. It will be categorised and searchable according to a child’s age: Baby to 3yrs; Age 3 to 5; Age 5 to 7; Age 7 to 12. Some of the literacy and numeracy topics to be included are: sounds and rhymes; patterns and shapes; real world maths; creativity; learning outside.

Overall the site’s purpose will be to provide fun activities that parents can do with their children to develop their literacy and numeracy. It will include general information, milestones to look out for, fun activities and useful tips.
It will be simple in design and functionality, with information no more than three clicks away. It will also include audio and video content to support parents with literacy difficulties. Links to other sites providing more detailed specific information on topics will also be a feature.

Developed with social media at its heart, it will be a place where people can see that supporting a child’s literacy and numeracy development is a natural, easy and fun activity that can be integrated into any part of their day.

It will include data capture and sharing functionality so that people can share the idea with their friends and family who might also benefit from this. It will also encourage free sign-ups for regular updates and top tips on supporting a child’s literacy and numeracy.

This website will be used as the cornerstone resource from which NALA will promote the Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign. The site will be reviewed and added to on an on-going basis.

It is envisaged that the website will primarily meet the needs of parents and guardians. However it will also be of use to teachers and well as other practitioners working with children and families. There are already a wide range of statutory and voluntary groups at community level supporting the literacy and numeracy development of children or adults. This campaign aims to work with and support all those efforts by providing a single reference point for parents and guardians to better understand their role in their children’s literacy and numeracy development and how to best fulfil it. For some parents, this will be achieved through raising their awareness of the importance of home literacy and numeracy development. For others it will be providing new and exciting ideas to try with their family. Some parents may decide to embark on a more extensive learning process and link in with the community based family literacy and numeracy initiatives available.

Promotion

The Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign will be a series of awareness raising activities highlighting the role of parents and communities in supporting children’s literacy and numeracy development. Each activity will direct people back to the website where they can get further information or resources. It will be promoted across a number of platforms over a number of years. This will include annual targeted PR campaigns, use of traditional and social media, celebrity endorsements and brand partnerships. For example:

- **Launch**

  Launch the Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign on International Literacy Day on 8th September 2012.
As part of the launch, NALA will run a national story telling campaign that encourages parents, grandparents and the wider community to tell, read or write a story with a child. The objective is to raise awareness of the importance of verbal and written communication with children, drawing from the language acquisition model. Every child loves hearing true stories from ‘grown-ups’ and this campaign will support those ‘grown ups’ share their story. Further information and supports will be available on the new website.

In addition a similar maths campaign will be organised to occur during Maths Week in October. This will build on the idea of family numeracy trails and will aim to resource families and local communities run a fun event in their area.

- **Cross platform promotion**

NALA will promote the campaign on local and national radio, daytime TV and chat shows, raising awareness of the role of parents and communities in supporting children’s literacy and numeracy and encouraging them to check out the new website for more information.

It is also planned to submit a family literacy and numeracy TV proposal to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) for a 2013 broadcast, in conjunction with RTE. This would provide another valuable platform highlighting what can be achieved through parental engagement in literacy and numeracy activities. It would also provide the central plank from which to launch further activities in 2013.

- **Brand partnerships**

NALA will partner with key brands to promote the Literacy and Numeracy for Life Campaign. Brands such as An Post, Tesco and Lidl have huge access to parents, carers and communities. By running joint campaigns we will be able to reach a greater target audience and raise awareness of their role as the primary educators.

- **Celebrity endorsements**

NALA will secure suitable celebrity endorsements to promote the campaign among key target groups, for example parents such as Keith Duffy supporting ‘Dads and Lads reading initiative’. Inspired parents will be recruited to act as ambassadors for the campaign also.
- **Stakeholders**

There will be extensive engagement with the range of stakeholders already interacting with parents to both initially inform and help promote the campaign. Initial meetings with many of the stakeholders have already taken place and NALA has in place structured meeting arrangements with key stakeholders. These include community groups, schools, libraries, family resource centres, local community development groups, parents associations and other partners in education. National partners will include for example Barnardos, the NCCA, NPCs, INTO, TUI, ASTI, AONTAS, IVEA, The Reading Association, Community and Voluntary Pillar and Platform, CALMAST, Early Childhood Ireland, The Library Council, Library Association of Ireland and ILDN.

- **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Getting feedback on the site from parents and other users will happen twice a year. In addition usability testing of the site will be carried out periodically.

NALA will provide monthly progress reports to the DES as part of the implementation of the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy of Children and Young People 2011-2020.
Campaign schedule 2012 – 2013

April 2012
Complete consultation with all stakeholders in campaign, including education groups, family resource centres, libraries, parent focus groups, etc.

May - August 2012
Build website, populate with agreed content, and develop associated publicity material

September 2012
National launch on International Literacy Day 8th September (further launch during Maths week October)

Awareness campaign - celebrity endorsement, link with national radio stations, TV chat shows, and social media

January 2013
Awareness campaign: Make a new year’s resolution to read every day with your child

April 2013
Secure brand partnerships to target hard to reach audiences

September 2013
Launch RTÉ family literacy and numeracy TV series

November 2012
Review campaign and evaluate

November 2013
Review campaign and evaluate
Cross platform promotion

Radio, print and broadcast media

Brand partnerships

Celebrity endorsement
What is success?

- Parents and communities (extended family, carers and other stakeholders) understand that they have a role to play in improving children’s literacy and numeracy/they can answer the ‘what’s the benefit?’ question.
- Parents and communities understand what that role means/‘what they have to do?’ question.
- Parents and communities understand the resources and supports available and how to access them/‘where to go, what to use?’ question. This must include information on VEC adult and family literacy and numeracy programmes.
- Parents and communities implement that role or use those resources. These resources must be useful and relevant for people with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

How do we measure it?

- Through a survey, we ask parents and communities above questions at the beginning and once a year thereafter – aim to build on awareness each year.
- Through media coverage – radio, TV and press mentions.
- Through hits to online resources, website and social media. Through pop-up question or feedback option at the end of an online task.
NALA background information informing this proposal

- **Family learning in action - an overview of family learning programmes (NALA 2011)**
  Provides an overview of family learning as it takes place in local communities and details the benefits of participation to the families involved. The findings show that participation in family learning is beneficial to families and has a positive impact on the relationship between home and school.

- **Taking care of family literacy work (NALA 2010)**
  This is an enquiry with parents about their experience of nurturing language and literacy in the home.

  This report sought to develop adult and children’s literacy through understanding and supporting family literacy practices in the home. The primary aim of the research was to focus on and to identify where, how and why learning takes place in the home.

  This booklet contains a series of practical activities that people of all ages can engage in, helping to build their literacy and numeracy skills. The booklet demonstrates how to practise reading, writing and maths skills with your child, in a fun and colourful way.

  This book provides an introduction to the concept of family literacy and guidelines for groups interested in family literacy work.

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