

A photograph of a child in a green coat and red boots splashing in water, holding an adult's hand. The child is wearing blue jeans and red boots with grey fur trim. The adult is wearing blue jeans. The water is splashing around the child's feet. The background is a rocky shoreline.

Revised Edition

Let's Play Together

A Guide for Families with Young Children



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Let's Play Together: A Guide for Families of Young Children

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

September 2025

Introduction

Did you know that play is the way your child learns?

*This means it's easy to help your child learn about their world
—just play together!*

This booklet explores four key learning goals that support your child's growth and development:

- well-being
- discovery and invention
- language and communication
- personal and social responsibility

For each goal, this booklet suggests tips for healthy cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and ways to help your child learn through play. You will also see books you can read together that match each of the learning goals.

Every child learns at their own pace. Try a variety of the activities to see what your child is ready to learn today.

Your child will learn best when you are having fun together.

Enjoy!



Tips to Support Well-being

Children feel loved, respected, protected, and supported by their families and communities.

- Run, jump, climb and dance with me—indoors and outdoors.
- Talk to me about what we are doing and what will happen next.
- Let me tell you how I feel when I am upset. I learn a lot from watching you.
- Invite another family to do something together.
- Take me out to a library or other interesting places in our community.
- Create a bedtime routine with me.



I Want to Build a Seahouse –

Author, Whitney Moran

Serge the Snail Without a Shell –

Authors, Harriet Alida Lye and
Rosa Rankin-Gee

While You Were Sleeping –

Author, Briana Corr Scott

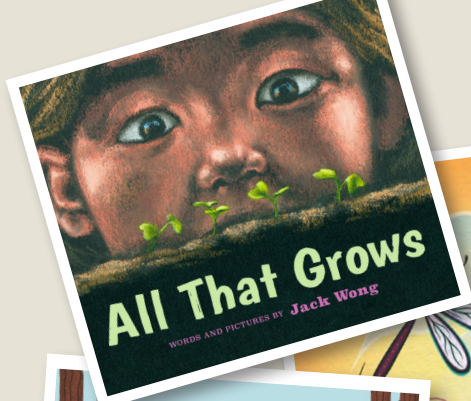


Tips to Support Discovery and Invention

*Children learn by exploring, working together,
and solving problems.*

- Help me learn to use my imagination and play pretend games like house, dress-up, school.
- Listen to me when I talk to you; I ask a lot of questions.
- Count with me. Talk about shapes and colours with me.
- Let me sort and match things—socks, spoons, shells, rocks.
- Take walks with me. Give me time to explore the places and things that interest me most.

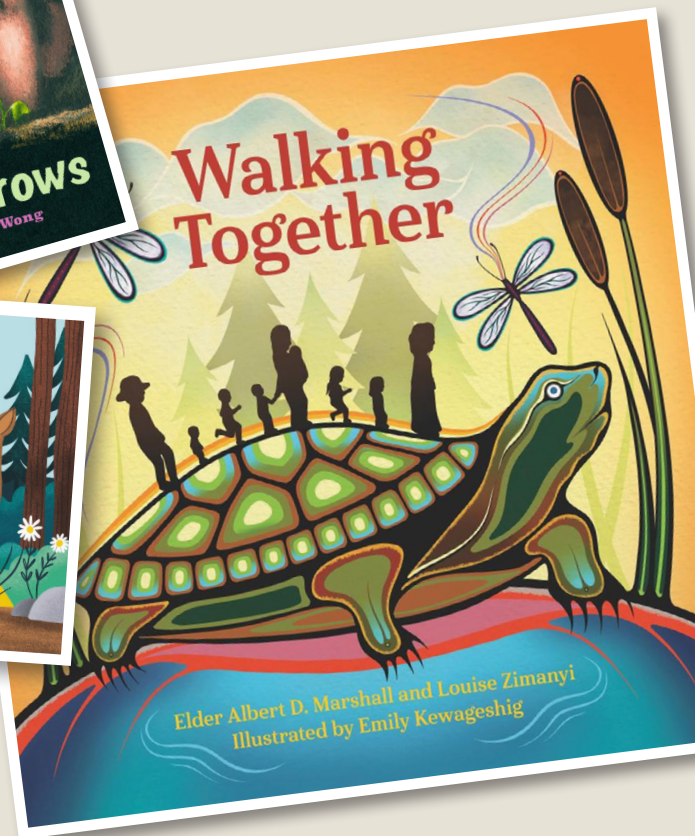




All That Grows –
Author, Jack Wong

Wild About Camping –
Author, Jane Whittingham

Walking Together –
Authors, Elder Albert Marshall
and Louise Zimanyi



Tips to Support Language and Communication

*Children connect through gestures, sounds, faces,
and words.*

- Talk with me about the pictures and ideas in the books we read together.
- Sing and make up songs with me.
- Ask me about the best part of my day—and give me time to answer.
- Help me to find the words to explain my feelings and solve problems.
- Help me read the signs we see in our neighbourhood—STOP, Walk, Main Street, Corner Store.

Two Crows –

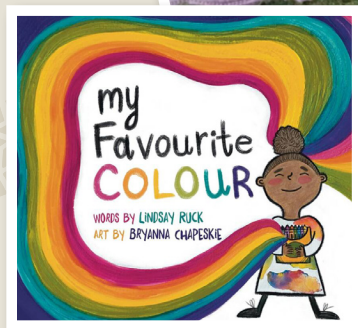
Author, Susan Vande Grike

Sing in the Spring! –

Author, Sheree Fitch

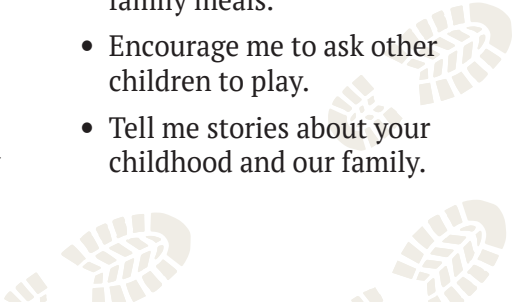
My Favourite Colour –

Author, Lindsay Ruck



Tips to Support Personal and Social Responsibility

Children's relationships and experiences help shape their identity.

- Let me practice taking care of myself—dressing, hand washing, brushing my teeth.
 - Offer me a few choices in the things we do and the clothes I wear. This helps me practice making decisions.
 - Read and speak with me every day in my first language.
 - Ask me to do simple tasks at home like setting the table and helping to prepare family meals.
 - Encourage me to ask other children to play.
 - Tell me stories about your childhood and our family.
- 
- Four stylized, light green footprints are scattered at the bottom of the page, pointing in various directions.

My Two Grandmothers

Story by
Diane Carmel Léger
Art by
Jean-Luc Trudel



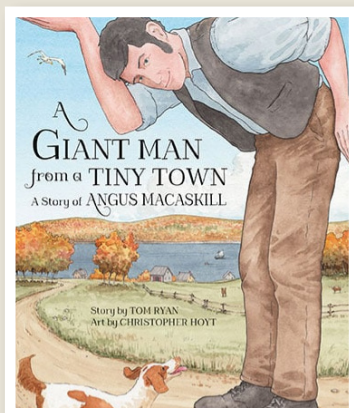
My Two Grandmothers –
Author, Diane Carmel Léger

The Words We Share –
Author, Jack Wong

The Terrible Horrible Smelly Beach –
Authors, Jacqueline Halsey and Carrie Muller



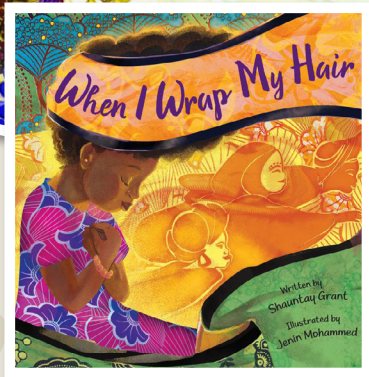
More Local Books to Read Together

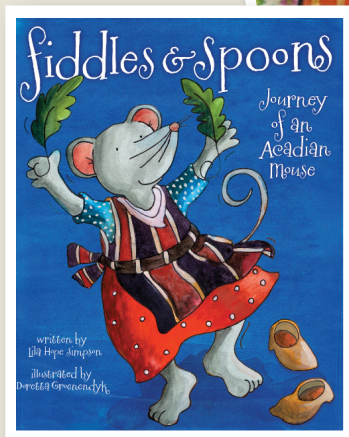


A Giant Man from a Tiny Town:
A Story of Angus MacAskill –
Author, Tom Ryan

If You Could Be Anything –
Author, Jennifer Britton

When I Wrap My Hair –
Author, Shauntay Grant

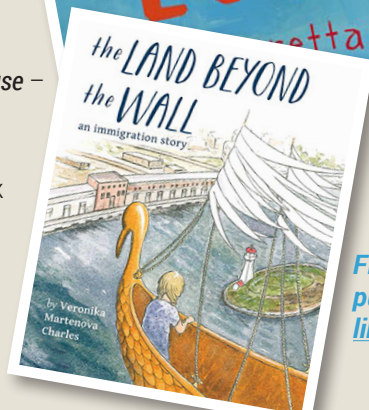
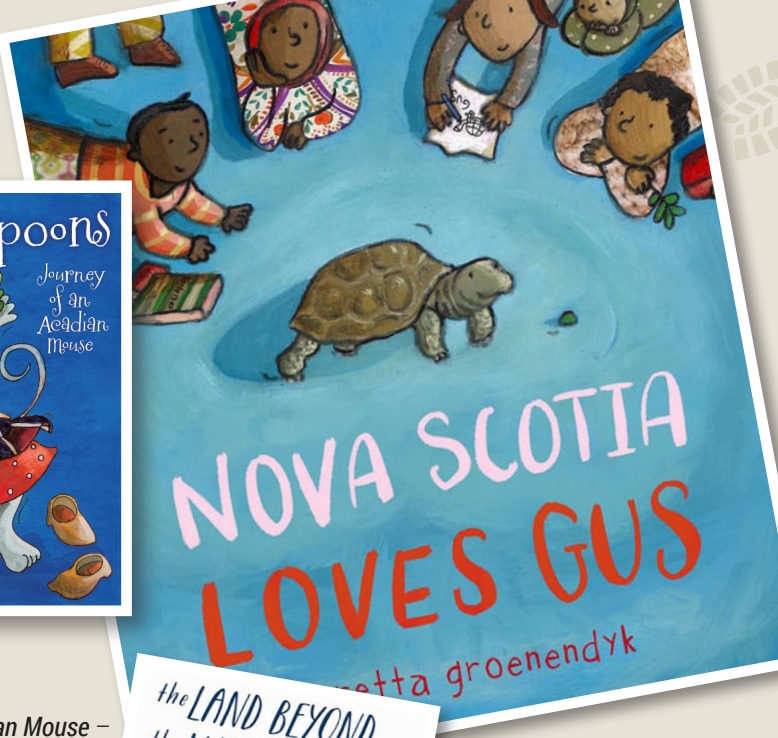




Fiddles and Spoons:
Journey of an Acadian Mouse –
 Author, Lila Hope-Simpson

Nova Scotia Loves Gus –
 Author, Doretta Groenendyk

The Land Beyond the Wall:
An Immigration Story –
 Author, Veronika
 Martenova Charles



Find these books at a
 public library near you:
library.novascotia.ca/map

*If you try some of these
ideas each day, your child
will build the skills to help
them learn and develop.*

*But more importantly,
**you will have fun
together!***



The background of the page features several diagonal stripes in varying shades of green. Overlaid on these stripes are several boot prints, suggesting a path or journey. The text is positioned in the lower right area of the page.

The 4 learning goals in this booklet are pulled from *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (NSELCF). For more information on the NSELCF and resources to help families during the early years, visit [**ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/**](https://ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/)




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