



**ONE TO ONE**  
A Children's Literacy Program

# ONE TO ONE Literacy Society

## 2013 Evaluation Report

*Through one to one tutoring, we help children develop literacy skills for life*

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Literacy is about more than reading and writing – it's about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relations, about knowledge, language and culture... Those who use literacy take it for granted – but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today's world. Indeed, it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of 'literacy as freedom'. - United Nations

## INTRODUCTION

**ONE TO ONE is a unique children's literacy program** that provides one-to-one tutoring to elementary school-aged children. Our trained volunteer tutors work with students identified by their teachers as **needing a boost** in their literacy skills. Typically, each student spends approximately 30 minutes twice a week with a ONE TO ONE volunteer tutor during normal school hours. Our program began in 1989 as a collaboration between the Vancouver School Board and the Junior League of Greater Vancouver. We now boast a strong history of success and are known and respected by the public for our work with children. In 2012-13 ONE TO ONE's 300 volunteer tutors provided **24,000 hours of reading instruction to over 800 children in 56 schools** throughout Vancouver and North Vancouver.

Research shows that receiving one on one instruction from a caring adult significantly impacts a child's reading skills. Our approach is to **initiate early, critical intervention into the lives of at-risk children**. Children chosen for the program often receive little or no literacy support at home. Their resulting poor academic performance, reduced economic opportunities and loss of self-confidence generate a cascade of consequences with a heavy social cost both for the children and for society at large. **It is these children, who might otherwise fall through the cracks in the system, who most benefit from ONE TO ONE's program.**

In addition to building children's literacy skills, ONE TO ONE also promotes and builds volunteerism and literacy capacity in the community. Our 300 volunteers take their literacy tutoring skills and share them with the wider community. By engaging the community through volunteer participation, we strengthen our communities and schools, support seniors and create important connections between our schools, parents and neighbourhoods.

The program is available to any student in our participating schools, who has been identified as needing a boost in reading skills. **There is no cost to schools or students.** The ONE TO ONE Literacy Society is a registered charity and our program is completely funded by grants and private donations.

## PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation, undertaken every three years, is to objectively report to stakeholders the impact of the ONE TO ONE Literacy program on the students it serves. Outcomes from this evaluation identify program strengths, as well as opportunities for improvement so that enhancements to programming can be well-planned and effective.

## GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

1. Monitor **growth of the program** through comparison of statistics on the number of students and volunteers participating in the program.
2. Assess the **impact on students' reading ability**.
3. Assess **volunteer satisfaction and impact**.
4. Report on **program progress** by comparing current data to data collected in 2009 to determine if program initiatives undertaken as a result of the previous evaluation have been implemented.
5. Identify **opportunities to strengthen** current programming and operations.

## THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Data collection was undertaken in April, 2013 from randomly selected ONE TO ONE program schools. Surveys were designed for each of the four groups involved in the program. Results were then tabulated from:

- 194 program students
- 61 classroom teachers
- 44 School Coordinators
- 146 volunteer tutors

## OVERALL SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM

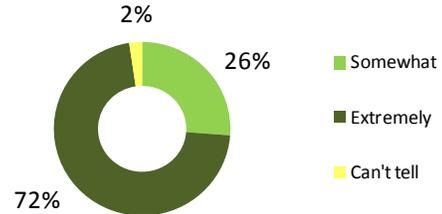


The School Coordinators were asked how successful the ONE TO ONE program was at each of their schools. The results were overwhelmingly positive with 98% of the Coordinators reporting that the program was extremely or somewhat successful. This is a much stronger response than in the previous survey, with 72% now reporting it to be extremely successful, versus only 50% in 2009.



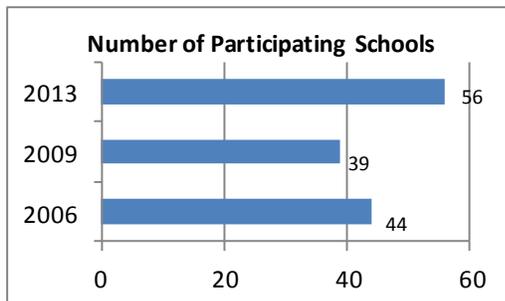
**98%**  
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### Overall Success of Program

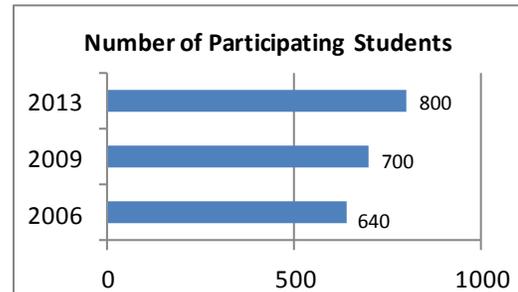


## 1. GROWTH OF THE PROGRAM

**44%**  
increase in  
participating  
schools since 2009



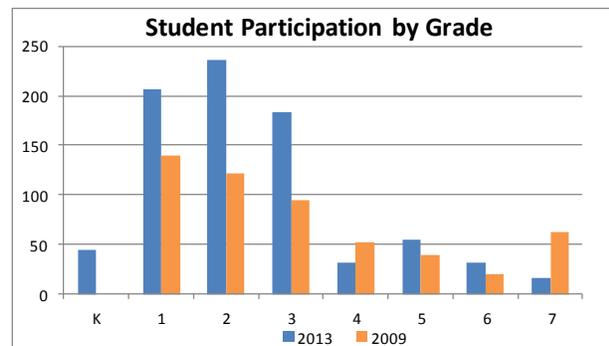
**25%**  
increase in  
students since 2006  
and **14%** since  
2009



**ONE TO ONE focuses on earlier intervention.** Although the program serves all students in Grades 1 -7, ONE TO ONE emphasizes the importance of raising a student's literacy skills by the end of Grade 3, which reflects current research.

A child's reading level at the end of Grade Three is a more accurate predictor of school success than any other variable – including family income, educational attainment of parents, ethnic or cultural identity, or home language.

Since 2009, in addition to an overall increase in the number of students in the program, the percentage of students in the primary grades has risen in order to meet this goal. In **2013, over 83% of students in the ONE TO ONE program were in the primary grades, versus over 67% in 2009.**





## 2. IMPACT ON STUDENTS' LITERACY SKILLS: 5 KEY THEMES

The survey then addressed specific criteria to assess student progress, which was evaluated on 5 key themes.

### READING LEVEL AND COMPREHENSION

The fundamental criterion in measuring program effectiveness is how successful the program has been for improving students' reading levels and comprehension.



**86%** of teachers reported an improvement in student reading levels.

**95%** of the students reported **'I feel I am a better reader now'**.

*"Two of my students were reading at kindergarten level in September. They are both now exceeding expectations and are reading at a Grade Three level. These two students have gained confidence and have a positive attitude toward learning which has transferred into all areas of learning." (Classroom Teacher)*

*"I can read longer books. I even read a chapter book that was 68 pages in one night." (ONE TO ONE Student)*

### ATTITUDE TOWARD READING

One of the core values of the ONE TO ONE program is to foster a love of reading. A child's attitude about reading can be as important as his or her skill level. Our volunteers help engage reluctant readers by helping them find materials that are of interest to them, and at their reading level.



**86%** of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the students showed a more positive attitude toward reading.

**96%** of the students reported that they **liked reading more now**.

### GENERAL CONFIDENCE

A key component to building self esteem in children is building their literacy skills. As children improve their reading and writing skills, they also improve their academic ability and self-confidence. The opportunity for a child to spend one-on-one time with a caring adult, one who actively listens and shows that child that his or her ideas are valuable and important, is key. Many of our students do not have this type of support at home.



**83%** of the teachers reported an improvement in students' general confidence.

*"The program has enhanced students' love of reading whether they enjoyed reading in the beginning or not. The program gives the lucky child who is selected some personal one on one time they may not get in class." (ONE TO ONE School Coordinator)*

## 2. IMPACT ON STUDENTS' LITERACY SKILLS RESULTS (cont'd)



### CONVERSATIONAL LEVEL

Being literate enables us to express our thoughts, ideas and feelings to others. Many children, including those who speak English as a second language, do not actively engage in conversation with peers or adults. The ONE TO ONE program ensures that students have plenty of opportunity to engage in conversation with adults to build confidence and ability.



**76%** of teachers saw improvement in the students' conversational levels.

**79%** of the students stated that they **felt more confident when asked to read out loud.**

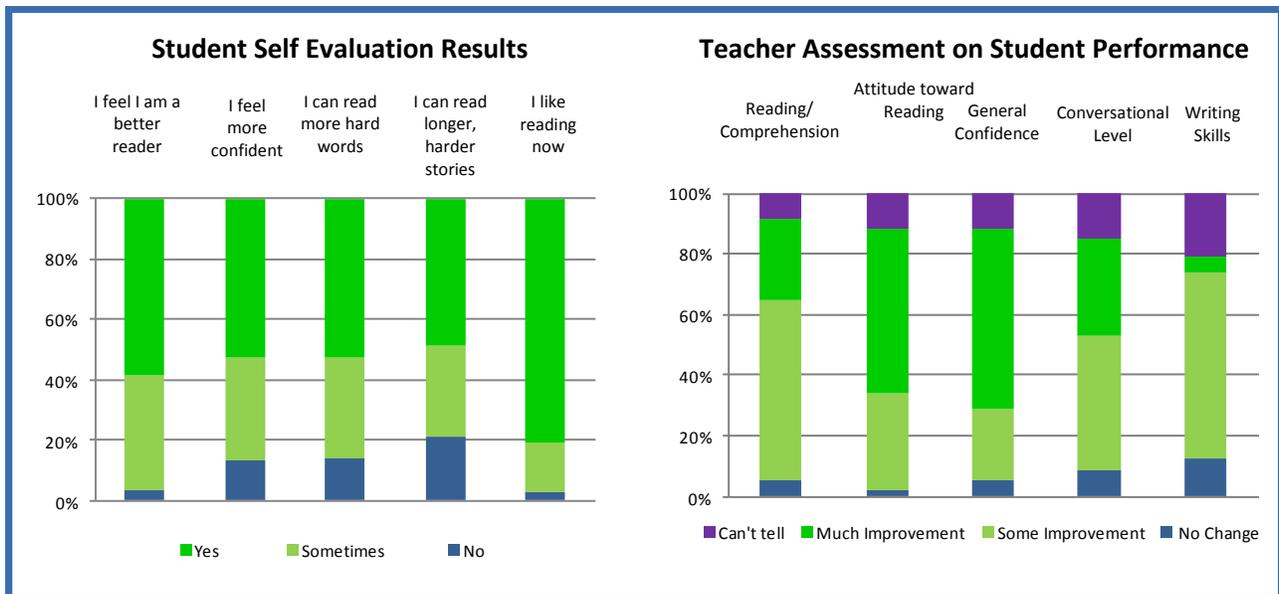
### WRITING SKILLS

Although the ONE TO ONE program focuses more heavily on reading than writing, the two skills are closely tied. Our volunteer tutors engage their students in games and activities that involve writing out words and sentences.



**67%** of classroom teachers reporting some or extreme improvement in writing skills.

The two charts below provide a detailed breakdown of the survey results from the classroom teachers and the students themselves. It is clear that the students benefit greatly from the program, especially in the areas of ability, confidence and positive attitude toward reading.



"I can read harder words and longer books that are like 350 pages." (student)

"I'm learning new words and reading faster." (student)

"I am a faster reader now. I understand what I read better." (student)

"I don't skip as many words anymore." (student)

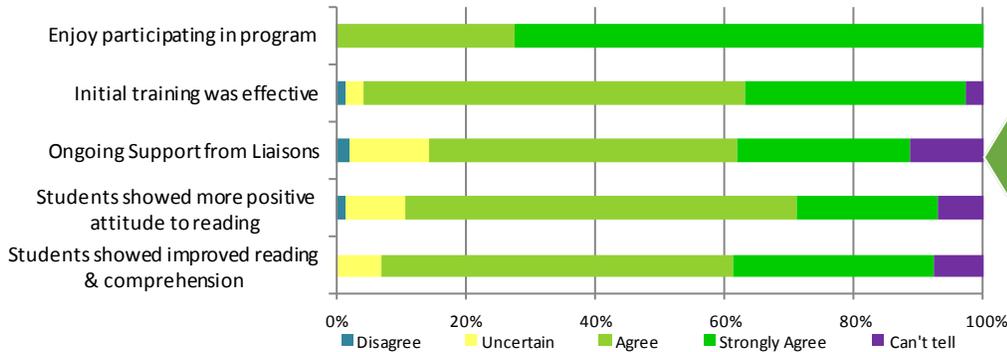
"I'm getting really good at sounding out words." (student)



### 3. VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION AND IMPACT

With approximately 300 volunteer tutors, it is imperative that we keep the volunteers **engaged and aware of the positive impact they have on the lives of students** who struggle with reading. By measuring volunteer satisfaction, we can identify areas of strength, as well as those requiring improvement and, in turn, maximize volunteer retention. Volunteers want and need to know they are making a difference. By asking volunteers how they feel about their students' progress, we can further measure how effective and valued they feel in their roles.

**Volunteer Assessment of Program and Student Performance**



**100%**  
of volunteers enjoy participating in the ONE TO ONE tutoring program.



**“What these volunteers do for our at risk students is nothing short of amazing.** These students need individualized attention, skills reinforced and confidence improved. The volunteers are able to achieve this over the course of time they work with the students as they develop a relationship with the students that is calm and positive.” (ONE TO ONE School Coordinator)

“I remember when Jane and I were reading and I realized she was actually reading without difficulty. I stopped her and asked her to read words that I randomly pointed out to her. She read the words without any difficulty. **I said “Jane, you are reading!!” She looked at me and said, “Yeah! I know!!”** I will always remember this moment.” (ONE TO ONE Volunteer)

“What a difference it makes to have these wonderful volunteers come into the room. The students eyes light up, as they often have multiple academic struggles. **They feel a sense that they’ve escaped some overwhelming challenge to go and have fun reading!** The sessions are a real highlight of their week.” (Classroom Teacher)

“My highlight is that special moment when you see that everything has clicked, a light goes on and my student is now reading, sounding out words on his own and **that smile that covers his entire little face!**” (ONE TO ONE Volunteer)



## 4. PROGRAM PROGRESS

The next goal of the evaluation was to report on program progress to determine if program initiatives undertaken as a result of the previous evaluation have been implemented. The five recommendations made by the volunteer tutors in 2009 (shown in green) and the initiatives that have been undertaken to address them (bullet points) are:

### Additional Games, Books and Resources

- Provided 20 stocked rotating book boxes, circulated through the program schools.
- Supplied home reading kits to students, including a guide for parents to support reading (in 4 languages), a literacy game, a journal for keeping track of books read, and public library information.
- Donation of 1000 new books from First Book Canada in 2012 for distribution to schools and for rotating book boxes.

### Ongoing Training

- Instituted annual Spring in-service training session to provide ongoing training to volunteer tutors, in addition to Fall coffee chats, which provide a forum for tutors to exchange ideas and tips.
- Produced a training video, available on the ONE TO ONE website, to supplement the training sessions and training manuals.

### Ongoing Communication

- Addition of 4 Liaisons, each responsible for a group of schools, to communicate between the ONE TO ONE office, schools and volunteers.
- Set up a Gmail account for wider distribution of information. A more regular volunteer tutor email system coming in 2014.

### Opportunities for Volunteer Leadership

- Since 2009, additional funding allowed ONE TO ONE to increase staff hours, negating the requirement for volunteers in leadership roles. However, we recognize the need to further engage our volunteers and plan to implement additional volunteer roles in the coming year.

### More ONE to ONE Newsletters

- Newsletters now produced regularly twice a year. Going forward, this will increase to quarterly, and regular email updates to volunteer tutors will be sent bi-monthly.



## 5. PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

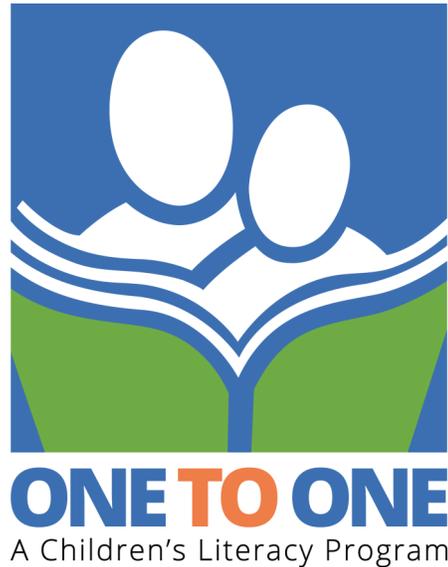
The final area of the 2013 Evaluation Survey was to identify opportunities to strengthen current programming and operations. Classroom teachers, students and volunteer tutors were asked to identify areas of the ONE TO ONE program that they felt needed improvement. From the feedback provided, the following recommendations were identified:

- ➔ **Increase number of volunteer tutors** in order to meet program demand, provide backup tutors.
- ➔ **Increase availability and quantity of levelled books and literacy resources**, including games and activities.
- ➔ **Provide more volunteer tutor support sessions** in order to share ideas and strategies.
- ➔ **Provide more regular, streamlined communication from ONE TO ONE**, such as regular emails and newsletters.
- ➔ **Provide better communication for volunteer tutors from classroom teachers** such as discussing student progress, ensuring students are reading books at the appropriate level and identifying where students need the most help.
- ➔ **Increase and provide more valuable resources and information on website** to support volunteer tutors and School Coordinators. Only 15% of the volunteer tutors currently refer to the website on a regular basis.

## CONCLUSION

The 2013 ONE TO ONE Program Evaluation confirms that the program is making a **significant impact on students' reading abilities** and is providing our tutors with **very satisfying volunteer opportunities**. Because of its success, the program has shown steady growth since its inception in 1989. By addressing the results and recommendations from this program evaluation, ONE TO ONE will not only ensure that we deliver a better quality program for our current schools, but will ensure that we **build capacity to grow the program to new schools in existing and new communities**, which is a priority over the next three years.

800 Students  
300 Volunteer Tutors  
24,000 Volunteer Hours



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**ONE TO ONE Literacy Society**  
**204-1130 Keefer Street, Vancouver BC V6A 1Z3**  
**contactus@one-to-one.ca 604-255-5559**