Dear Principal

This kit has been prepared to support school communities in celebrating National Literacy and Numeracy Week.

National Literacy and Numeracy Week is an Australian Government initiative during which the learning and teaching of numeracy and literacy are celebrated in all schools.

In New South Wales, National Literacy and Numeracy Week will:

- offer opportunities for community awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy skills
- promote successful practices in literacy and numeracy teaching
- acknowledge publicly the achievements of schools whose literacy and/or numeracy programs have raised the performance of their students
- affirm the importance of the role of parents and caregivers in supporting students’ literacy and numeracy learning.

National Literacy and Numeracy Week will be celebrated in New South Wales in the week commencing 28 August 2006. During the Week, awards for literacy and numeracy will be presented to successful schools by the NSW Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MP.

One component of National Literacy and Numeracy Week will centre on local celebrations. In this kit and on the NSW web site (www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au), there are various materials to support schools in the process of raising awareness and focusing attention on the literacy and numeracy achievements of their schools.

On the reverse of this page are short texts which may assist you in preparing literacy and numeracy information in your school newsletters.

In this kit there are two booklets for your reference that are intended to assist parents and caregivers in building their children’s literacy and numeracy skills. Primary and central schools will be sent sufficient quantities of the Pre-school to Year 6 booklet to issue one per family from K–6. They will also be sent quantities of the Middle School booklet to issue to each student in Year 6 only.

Central and high schools will have sufficient quantities of the Middle School booklet to issue one per family Years 7–8.

Additional information about National Literacy and Numeracy Week can be obtained from Bernard Pryor, NNLW Project Officer, on telephone (02) 9886 7619.

Robert Randall
Chairperson
NSW National Literacy and Numeracy Week Steering Committee, 2006

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Ways to focus on literacy and numeracy

Here are some ideas to assist you in preparing information about National Literacy and Numeracy Week in your school newsletters:

1. Visit the **Count Me in Too** web site for numerical games to play with your child: [http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au](http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au) and link to **Kindergarten to Year 6** and then **Mathematics**.

2. Did you know that the Australian population has reached 20.4 million? This year is a census year in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics includes information that may be interesting for you and your child to investigate: [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

3. Children learn more easily when they can connect numeracy concepts and procedures to their own experience. By using common household objects (such as measuring cups and spoons in the kitchen) and observing everyday events (such as weather patterns over the course of a week), they can ‘see’ the ideas better.

An important part of understanding numeracy is learning how to solve problems. Children should be encouraged to use trial and error to develop their ability to reason and to learn how to go about problem solving. They can learn that there may be more than one way to solve a problem and more than one answer. They can also learn to express themselves clearly as they explain their solutions.

4. **Scrabble and crosswords**: Like many boardgames, **Scrabble** is a marvellous opportunity to help build skills with counting (scores), spelling and vocabulary. You could also have your family visit [http://www.lovatts.com.au](http://www.lovatts.com.au) This Lovatt’s Homepage is the site of the famous crossword family, producers of many of Australia’s best known crosswords and puzzles, including Colossus, Mega and Big. It includes a teacher reference page and plenty of sample puzzles for families, suited to all ages.

5. **Developing reading skills at home**: Below are some reading prompts to assist in developing your child’s reading and critical thinking skills. Try to involve your child with conversations about books whenever you can:

**Before reading:**
- Share thoughts about the front cover and the impact of any artwork.
- Discuss the back cover and the blurb about the book.
- If the book has illustrations, talk about their purpose and impact.
- Discuss who might enjoy the book.

**During reading:**
- While you are doing something else, listen to your child read aloud in English and in your home language.
- Discuss any issues that might have been raised.
- Did your child understand all of the words? Can you discuss the meaning of some? Try to use them in future conversations.

**After reading:**
- Can your child retell an exciting or meaningful event in the story?
- Does the cover have more meaning now? What about the illustrations?
- Discuss who might enjoy the book and why.
- Encourage your child to read anywhere and any time.
- Visit your local library together.

6. **Technology is a literacy tool**: The use of computers has opened up rich and varied opportunities for children to develop relevant literacy skills in all school subject areas. Technology lets children interact with many forms of text. They can learn the skill of narrowing their focus to search out important information required in order to complete a task. In turn, they obtain the benefit of being able to display their learning in a wide variety of forms. They can, for example, include graphics, tables, pictures and various fonts in their reports and other writing. They can use slideshows, music samples, electronic graphic organisers and many other electronic tools. As well, they can operate in the cyber-environments that are becoming an increasingly important part of their daily lives if this meets with your family’s approval.

7. **Be positive about numeracy!**

Let your child know that everyone should learn about and use numeracy.

Let your child know that you think numeracy is important and fun.

Point out the ways in which different family members use numeracy in their jobs.

Be positive about your own numeracy abilities. Try to avoid saying, ‘I was never good at maths’ or ‘I never liked maths’.

Encourage your child to be persistent if a problem seems difficult.

Praise your child when he or she makes an effort and share in the excitement when he or she solves a problem or understands something for the first time.

8. **The Australia Post education site** has some fun activities: [http://www.auspost.com.au/EDP/0,1398,CH3206~MO18,00.html](http://www.auspost.com.au/EDP/0,1398,CH3206~MO18,00.html)

Students can write letters, design stamps, find out some interesting facts about the history of Australia’s postal system and its high-tech operations and much more.