This document has been adapted from the draft of the *Early Literacy Checklist*, originally developed by The Mothercraft Institute for Early Development, 2002.

Second adaptation:
The Emergent Literacy Checklist – Niagara Region
© Literacy Link Niagara, February, 2005

Revision Committee:
Judy Arnott, Community and Program Development Coordinator, ECCDC;
Kathleen Cooper, Early Learning and Parenting Program Coordinator/Resource Teacher,
Family and Children's Services;
Darlene Edgar, Coordinator, Ontario Early Years Centres-Erie/Lincoln;
Arlene Garand, Francophone Early Literacy Consultant;
Debbie Hamilton, Speech-Language Pathologist, Speech Services Niagara;
Lynn Fazio, Early Literacy Consultant;
Helen Lake, Resource Consultant, Regional Niagara Children's Services;
Jennifer Lancione, Supervisor, Walker YMCA Child Care;
Sandy White, Chair, Early Literacy Consultant;
Cathy Wittmaier, Supervisor, A Child's World.

Third adaptation by a revision committee consisting of:

South East Region of Ontario Early Literacy Specialists:
Susan Ramsay, Hastings,-Frontenac-Lennox & Addington
Donna Kaye RECE, Hastings-Prince Edward
Deb Nesbitt-Munroe, Kingston and the Islands
Laura Lee McDonald, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Kathy Boelsma, Lanark County

Susan Snyder, Children's Specialist, Perth and District Union Library
Catherine Robinson, Speech Language Pathologist, Coordinator Language Express Preschool Speech and Language
Cindy Goodfellow, B. Ed. Administrative Coordinator, Language Express Preschool Speech and Language

Documents used in adaptation:
Early Literacy Checklists from Hastings-Prince Edward Counties, Leeds and Grenville Counties, Simcoe County, Waterloo Region, Hamilton and Niagara.
Thank you to all for your resources, formats and ideas.

Original Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy content developed by Kathy Boelsma, edited by Diane Bennett.

What is Emergent Literacy?

The term, *emergent literacy*, has become widely used and accepted, as it implies ongoing development of literacy skills. For the purposes of the *Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy*, we shall accept the definition below:

Emergent Literacy involves the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing. There is consistent evidence that there are three primary domains of emergent literacy skills related to later (conventional) reading and writing:

- **Oral Language – Vocabulary Knowledge, Syntactic Knowledge, Narrative Knowledge;**

- **Print Knowledge – The understanding that it is the print that reflects the words and not other parts of books like the pictures or spaces between words; the understanding that there are 26 different letters in English and that letters can look different and still be the same letter (upper and lower case, different print styles; the understanding that there are different sounds associated with each letter;**

- **Phonological Processing – Alphabetic languages represent language at the phoneme level (i.e., letters typically correspond to phonemes or sounds in words).**

(Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998)

http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Christopher_LoniganANG.pdf

What is the Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy?

The *Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy* is a reflective, self-assessment tool enabling programs and resource personnel working with young children to better evaluate to what extent they:

📖 support literacy development in young children;
📖 support literacy development within families;
📖 engage in community partnerships in supporting child and family literacy;
📖 support parents and professionals in enhancing emergent/early literacy.

The *Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy* focuses on two major areas:

📖 Environments Part 1
📖 Interactions and Collaborations Part 2

The *Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy* will help programs, on an annual basis, to determine strengths in promoting emergent literacy and will assist in identifying program goals related to emergent literacy. The *Guide* is to be used to augment environmental rating scales (*E.C.E.R.S, I.T.E.R.S)*. While they may include aspects of literacy in their content, the *Guide's* primary focus is literacy, providing greater detail as a result of a singular emphasis on emergent literacy. It is recommended to be used by Early Years Providers in their programs and can be used as a self-assessment tool and programming resource. The *Guide* encourages Early Years Providers to focus on the specifics related to the implementation of a quality program that supports and promotes emergent literacy.

Who Should Use the Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy?

This tool can be used by any "early childhood program or service". "Early childhood programs and services" refers to the range of programs and supports that serve children and families and include, but is not limited to: Ontario Early Years Centres, licensed Child Care Centres, Home Child Care agencies and associations, Public Libraries, and Kindergartens.

Not all components of the *Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy* will apply to each of these programs and services. For example, child care centres will find it useful to assess their program's ability to share documented information regarding a child's progress with parents. Libraries, however, will not find this component applicable, as library programs do not tend to document individual progress of children. Libraries may benefit from the physical environment and programming aspect of the guide. Each sector may find different parts of the guide useful.

It is hoped that the *Digital Resource Guide Emergent Literacy* will be viewed as a living document and that adaptations and modifications will evolve as a result of its use. Entire sections of the *Guide* may prove unsuitable for certain program types. Early Years Staff are encouraged to use the sections that pertain to their unique service delivery model.

Raising the Bar
This tool may be used as an additional level of ensuring program quality in licensed child care programs.

How can the Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy enhance emergent literacy?

The *Guide* provides a list of indicators that support and promote the development of emergent literacy skills and behaviours in young children. This guide has been developed using the best available research, promising and best practices and has been reviewed thoroughly.

The *Resources* section includes suggestions for Early Years Providers who may wish to explore a particular item more in depth.

What are the Benefits of using the Guide?
The *Guide* will assist in identifying strengths and gaps in the emergent/early literacy component of programs and supports that serve children and families.

Early Years Staff and support agency staff are also encouraged to use the *Guide* with new staff, or as a refresher in professional development with current staff.

Other benefits to programs in using the *Guide* include:

📖supports planning and evaluation;
📖supports proposals for new or enhanced funding and/or partnerships;
📖supports budgeting decisions.

Who is available to provide assistance with the implementation of the Digital Resource Guide: Emergent Literacy?

If you have any questions about the Guide, please contact the Early Literacy Specialist in your area:
Workshops can be tailored to all early childhood programs.

Donna Kaye, Early Literacy Specialist
Family Space/Ontario Early Years Centre
301 MacDonald Ave. Belleville, ON K8N 3Z3
Tel. 613.966.9427x270 / Fax 613.966.8819
Toll free 1.800.952.2279
email: dkaye@familyspace.ca