

think about: Why did Horton hear a who? What did the Grinch's dog eat? Would I be a Star-bellied Sneetch if I had the choice? I can still hear his voice every time I open up a Dr. Seuss book. I can see his broad hands. I can smell his aftershave. More importantly I can still feel him, warm and calm and wrapping me in his arms.

Now, I watch my children with their grandparents. What do they choose to do with them when they get the chance?

They read — by habit or by choice they snuggle in beside them every chance they get and read.

They read anything. Most often they will trudge out tattered and torn books that they know by heart.

Sure, they might learn something. But mostly they read with their elders to get something far more valuable: time. The TV is off. The cell phone is off. The adult conversation is stopped. There is only a snuggling warm grandparent close by sharing a quiet moment with them.

This is family literacy. The real thing. There's no need for baby Einstein tapes and

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of British Columbia's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Early Development Instrument mapping project conducted throughout B.C. — including Mission — has discovered a stunningly simple fact: one of the most important indicators of whether a child will be successful in school is their proximity to a public library.

Who would have thought it? Not me. And surely not my grandfather who was clearly on to something. But way back then, I didn't care that I was getting a solid start to my education. I just knew it was the right thing to do. I could feel it.

•The Mission Library, a member of the Early Childhood Development Committee, will host several special summer events including drop-in book picnics on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. For more information: 604-826-6610, or visit www.fvrl.bc.ca/comm_mission.asp. More early childhood development information is available at www.missionecd.com.shawbiz.ca/Home.html

Instill a love of reading in children

My grandfather never heard of the idea of family literacy — a phrase used often these days as a buzz word to get us to read with our kids. To tell you the truth, he wasn't much of a reader at all.

Unlike my children's grandfather, there were no bookcases full of classics in his home, no book-of-the-month club, no leather-bound classic Shakespeare sitting on his desktop.

Instead, my grandfather began to pay attention to books as a way to pay attention to his grandchildren. He learned to love books because he loved us.

And he knew how to pick a classic. He was amazed at the genius of Dr. Seuss, and we couldn't help but share his enthusiasm, even though we had our own favourites. He was a slow reader, taking time to pour over pictures, and to ask us questions no one else bothered to take the time to think about. Why did Horton hear a

elaborate and expensive ABC games to hook our kids on books or to create a habit that will keep them heading back to the bookshelf.

I had no idea I was instilling a love of reading in my child as we poured over books for hours. It was an excuse to sit still — and don't we all need that once in a while? What turned into an excuse for some quiet time became a ritual. Just like my grandfather's arms — it just felt right.

Before long we began heading to the library as an excuse to leave the house. And we were lucky to frequent the Mission library where the legendary Elspeth created a haven of happy

puppets willing to entertain my happy children giving me a half-hour when I was off duty. Happy mom. All for free.

Reading with your child is now touted as one of the best ways to help young children develop their language and cogni-

The Love of Reading



Lynn Easton