

**POSITION SPECIFICATION**

**Vice President, Programs**

**Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation**



**Canadian  
Children's  
Literacy  
Foundation**

**Fondation pour  
l'alphabétisation  
des enfants  
canadiens**

**October 2021**

## ROSENZWEIG & COMPANY INC.

<b>POSITION:</b>	Vice President, Programs
<b>LOCATION:</b>	620 King Street West, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1M6
<b>THE COMPANY:</b>	Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation (CCLF)
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<a href="http://childrensliteracy.ca">Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation (childrensliteracy.ca)</a>
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Chief Executive Officer (Ariel Siller)
<b>STAFF:</b>	Currently 6; expected 10, with incoming VP to buildout 50% of the team

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### **THE ORGANIZATION**

Over one million children in Canada - at least one in eight - do not have the literacy skills they need to reach their full potential in school and life. Many of these children are starting their reading journey behind and staying behind. The preliminary evidence on the impact of disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic indicates a significant worsening of reading-related learning gaps over the last year. Many people don't realize that learning to read starts at birth. Surrounding young children with words, by talking, reading and singing, supports brain development and builds the foundation for them to become readers. The important social, cognitive and self-regulation skills children develop in those crucial early years affect not only the child's school readiness and learning outcomes but also their resilience and social-emotional health. Early literacy interactions help children learn how to understand the world around them, form connections with others and thrive.

Yet approximately 27% of children start Grade 1 without fundamental skills needed to learn to read. Critically, children from the lowest-income neighborhoods are twice as likely as their peers from highest-income neighbourhoods to start school without these skills. About half of the children who start school behind will never read at grade level, leading to a lifetime of inequitable access to education, fewer job opportunities and poorer health.

[The Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation/ Fondation pour l'alphabétisation des enfants canadiens](http://childrensliteracy.ca) ("CCLF") enables equitable access to early literacy and, more generally, educational opportunity. The Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation is a charity that was founded in May 2017 with the mission of ensuring that all children in Canada are equipped to achieve their full potential. They champion, connect and develop initiatives that will enable Canada's children to become the most literate in the world.

Children in the early years typically experience three learning environments — home, childcare and their community. The Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation is working to ensure that each of these learning environments supports early literacy development. Pandemic-related disruptions have highlighted the

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critical need for more equitable access to education and the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation is well-positioned to help all children in Canada get a strong start on their reading journey.

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### **THE POSITION**

#### **Overview**

Reporting to and working closely with the Chief Executive Officer, the **Vice President, Programs** will be responsible for leading and guiding all of the organization's programs. The initial focus of this role will be scaling the *Early Words/Premiers mots* program five-fold over the next three years. The successful incumbent will also play an integral role in identifying and developing additional evidence-based practices for promoting early literacy that CCLF can effectively bring to scale.

We are looking for someone who has demonstrated: an unwavering commitment to programmatic excellence for themselves and their team while scaling an highly-effective program nationally; lived and/or professional experience working collaboratively with low literacy communities in Canada; the ability to attract, develop, coach, and retain diverse, high-performance teams; cultivation of strong, productive relationships with a range of internal and external stakeholder groups; comfort responding to changing circumstances that require innovation and nimble-thinking; and conduct that embodies CCLF's values of integrity, effectiveness and collaboration.

CCLF strives to foster a workplace that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves and welcomes applications from all qualified candidates. CCLF is also committed to developing an inclusive, barrier-free selection process and work environment. Please advise if you require any accommodations to ensure a fair and equitable selection process.

#### **Key Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Leading *Early Words/Premiers mots* strategy, planning and implementation including expansion, evaluation and funding. More specifically this includes,
  - o Recruiting, developing and supporting an expanded high-performance program team to advance *Early Words*' mission.
  - o Initiating and overseeing an expanded operational planning, risk management and reporting system that will support effective scaling as well as leading progress reporting to internal and external stakeholders, including funders.
  - o Ensuring robust outcomes evaluation and feedback structures are in place and being implemented systematically
  - o Building relationships and partnerships with organizations that can support or inform *Early Words*, particularly healthcare providers, early learning organizations and community leadership.

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- Participating in the development of the necessary systems, processes, and tools to better support the facilitation, collection, and sharing of knowledge that is generated by Early Words.
- Driving continuous program improvement.

*Note: This will constitute 80% of the VP's role in Year 1, 50% of the role thereafter.*

- Participating in consultations and collaborations with our multi-sector partners as part of CCLF's identification and development of additional evidence-based programmatic initiatives
- Partnering, as needed, with the CEO and other team members on governance, organizational strategic planning, human resources, finance, fundraising, and stewardship.

### **Professional Experience and Qualifications:**

- A deep belief in CCLF's mission of advancing children's literacy in Canada and enabling more equitable access to educational opportunity.
- Exceptional track-record of bringing evidence-based programs in the non-profit sector to scale nationally while building and leading an engaged and diverse high-performance team.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a strong sense of diplomacy and demonstrated ability to build strong, collaborative relationships with colleagues, partners, external stakeholders and funders.
- Excellent English communication skills (written and verbal), including public presentation skills, with French and any additional language skills a strong asset.
- Excellent project management skills, including developing and implementing information management systems, budgeting and reporting.
- Professional and/or lived experience working collaboratively with low literacy communities is a strong asset.
- Demonstrated fundraising experience with the ability to engage a wide range of funders, including foundations, corporate sponsors, governments and practitioner groups is a strong asset.
- Understanding of primary healthcare system structures and primary healthcare provider education systems is a strong asset.
- Subject matter expertise in early learning and education and related stakeholders is a strong asset.
- Familiarity with the development of digital communication platforms, including apps, is a strong asset.
- Availability to occasionally work flexible hours and occasionally travel to program sites and conferences.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you are interested in exploring this opportunity, please contact:

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