



makes you think

## media release

### **TVO AND HIPPY CANADA PARTNER TO CHAMPION LITERACY FOR CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANT AND AT-RISK FAMILIES**

- **New TVO resources will provide in-home support for parents of New Canadian children aged 3-5**

**Toronto** — TVO, Ontario's public educational media organization, and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Canada are pleased to announce a new partnership to equip parents of immigrant and disadvantaged families in Ontario to be their children's first and best teacher as they get ready for kindergarten.

"So many children are at risk of not being prepared for school because their families struggle with poverty and low levels of literacy, said Debbie Bell, Executive Director of HIPPY Canada. "Our partnership with TVO will help HIPPY address their diverse needs and maximize the educational potential of their pre-school children, and this can only serve to strengthen our communities as a whole."

Phase I of the partnership, currently underway, involves the integration of new TVO resources for early learners into HIPPY's in-home training programs for parents. HIPPY home visitors will now be using special episodes of *Gisèle's Book Club*, helping kids and parents discover together the joys of reading and diversity (with book selections provided by HIPPY publishing partner Groundwood Books); as well as the complete *Gisèle's Big Backyard Get Ready for School* DVD and CD-ROM, which help demystify the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

For phase II TVO is creating a user-friendly online community set to launch in the Fall of 2009. The site will focus on two key areas of need: delivering skill-based literacy tools that parents can use with their children; and addressing the challenges and opportunities related to instilling a sense of cultural identity in New Canadian children as they prepare for Ontario's school system. Web content will include panel discussions on cultural identity; video profiles of New Canadians telling their stories; instructional videos on *How to Read with Your Child*, *Practicing Vocabulary*, *Counting* and other themes; as well as a variety of interactive opportunities, research articles and multi-lingual resources.

"One of the things TVO does best is use media to help Ontario's youngest children be successful learners, especially in the crucial area of literacy," says Lisa de Wilde, TVO's Chief Executive Officer. "In partnership with HIPPY, we can take that track record and bring it right into the homes of families who can benefit most."

#### **About TVO**

TVO is Ontario's public educational media organization and a trusted source of interactive educational content that informs, inspires, and stimulates curiosity and thought. TVO's vision is to empower people to be engaged citizens of Ontario through educational media. [tvo.org](http://tvo.org)

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**About HIPPY**

HIPPY promotes parents as a child's first educator. Through culturally sensitive program delivery, HIPPY has established a proven record of reducing social isolation and fostering active participation by parents, into Canadian society – especially multi-cultural families.

Since it was established in 1999, HIPPY Canada has delivered family literacy services to more than 2500 residents. It currently serves over 600 immigrant and First Nation families/year at eight locations:

- Ontario - Toronto Working Women Community Centre; Oakville
- Montreal – The Centre for Literacy and Elizabeth House
- British Columbia – Britannia Community Centre; Aboriginal Consortium; Haisla Nation; Heiltsuk Nation; Vancouver Native Health Society

HIPPY Canada ([www.hippycanada.ca](http://www.hippycanada.ca)) is preparing to expand to at least three other Canadian cities within the next 2-3 months.

**Where to find TVO**

Cable channel 2 (channel may vary in some areas), Bell TV channel 265, Star Choice channel 353. For more information, visit [tvo.org](http://tvo.org).

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