

Council of Canadian Academies releases STEM Skills report

Let's Talk Science is well positioned to support recommendations from expert panel

On April 30, 2015, the Council of Canadian Academies released a new report entitled, [Some Assembly Required: STEM Skills and Canada's Economic Productivity](#). The expert panel was charged with examining how well prepared Canada is to meet future skill requirements in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

A key recommendation from the 11-member panel was to take a long-term approach to ensuring that all Canadian youth develop fundamental skills. This includes the development of STEM skills, as well as other complementary skills such as leadership, creativity, adaptability and entrepreneurial ability. The report indicates that building fundamental skills at preschool, primary and secondary education levels is a strategic, long-term approach towards "developing a skilled society that is prepared to respond to an uncertain future"¹. According to the panel, the acquisition of fundamental skills is critical for all Canadians, not just for those who continue on to post-secondary to develop practical and advanced STEM skills.

The panel reinforced the [Spotlight on Science Learning reports](#) that recommend a concerted effort among educators, community groups and governments to ensure that all Canadian youth develop fundamental skills. Let's Talk Science is prepared to play a significant leadership role in meeting this recommendation.

"We are pleased this report reinforces the importance of STEM skills for all Canadians," said Dr. Bonnie Schmidt, president and founder, Let's Talk Science. "For more than two decades, Let's Talk Science has recognized the importance of STEM skills for building Canada's future prosperity. We also know that meaningful STEM engagement offers a powerful learning platform to develop literacy, numeracy and the complementary skills described by the expert panel. Let's Talk Science programs help youth develop fundamental skills starting at an early age to prepare them for their future careers and citizenship roles."

Let's Talk Science programs focus on skills

Let's Talk Science has developed its free² programs to build fundamental skills in Canadian youth from early years to high school and beyond.

- Let's Talk Science's IdeaPark program, designed for preschool to Grade 3 educators to use with young learners, addresses fundamental skill development using STEM to build literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills.
- The Let's Talk Science Outreach program connects educators and youth at all grade levels with outstanding university, college and industry volunteers who facilitate a wide variety of meaningful STEM-based activities in hundreds of communities across Canada. These free outreach visits not only encourage students to see STEM as relevant to their future careers, but the visits also develop employability (complementary) skills of Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers.
- The Let's Talk Science Challenge for Grades 6-8 students is an exciting enrichment opportunity that builds capacity of students who often show an early predisposition toward STEM disciplines.
- CurioCity, cited in the report as a "promising STEM education initiative"³, engages Grades 8-12 students in exploring the relevance of STEM, including career opportunities.

¹ *Some Assembly Required: STEM Skills and Canada's Economic Productivity* (page xiii).
<http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/stem-skills.aspx>

² Most Let's Talk Science programs are free thanks to our [supporters](#) and [partners](#).

³ *Some Assembly Required: STEM Skills and Canada's Economic Productivity* (page 98).

- Tomatosphere™ brings scientific inquiry to life using the exciting hook of space exploration.
- All Let's Talk Science programs support educators, recognizing their pivotal role in youth development.

"This CCA report, coupled with the recently released federal Science, Technology and Innovation strategy, which included a significant financial investment in youth STEM engagement, sets the stage for developing and implementing a bold national vision to support the development of STEM literacy in Canada," added Schmidt. "We all have an important role to play to implement the recommendations from the STEM skills report: governments, policy-makers, industry, educators, parents and community organizations need to work together to ensure Canada builds a STEM-literate society for the future."

To read the full Council of Canadian Academies STEM Skills report, please visit:
<http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/stem-skills.aspx>

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