

REB File # 23-010 Private literacy tutoring in Nova Scotia

Jaylynn Skeete & Dr. Nicole Conrad

The goal of this research project was to identify the prevalence of, and barriers to accessing private literacy tutoring in Nova Scotia. Using structured interviews and thematic analysis we examined the landscape of private tutoring in Nova Scotia – who is using private tutoring, how they are sourcing tutors, who is doing the tutoring, and what the barriers are to access.

We interviewed 7 NS mothers who have used private tutoring for their children and generated seven key themes. The first theme identifies dissatisfaction with the education system as the key reason for obtaining the services of private literacy tutors among our NS families. This is one of three potential reasons identified in past international research (Lee, 2007) and sets the NS context apart from that of many other countries in the world who have longer traditions of relying on extracurricular tutors (e.g., Liu & Bray, 2022).

The six remaining themes discussed challenges and barriers identified by families when obtaining services, and these included diagnostic assessments as a gatekeeper to services and information, lack of information about literacy development and practices that adhere to science-based knowledge creates difficulties for parents when evaluating programs and tutors, greater demand than resources for tutors means many private tutors do not advertise their services, long waitlists for assessments and tutoring services, reliance on social networks for information is affected by stigma, and the financial and time costs associated with private tutoring means it is inaccessible for some parents, while others make different sacrifices to afford.

To learn more about this study, please see this [CBC article](#) and/or contact Nicole.conrad@smu.ca