



Using Your WITS All Year Round

Tips for principals and vice-principals on implementing and sustaining the WITS Programs throughout the school year





September - October: Get Started

1. Get trained

The WITS Teacher Accreditation Program is a 90-minute online training module that teaches school staff about the WITS Programs and helps them become Accredited WITS Programs Teachers. School staff can complete the training individually or as a group on a professional development day or during a staff meeting. When new teachers join your staff, ask them to complete the training as part of their orientation to your school.

Encourage teachers to print their accreditation certificates and display them in their classrooms.

 [ACCESS THE ACCREDITATION PROGRAM | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [WITS Online Training](#)

2. Involve community leaders

Identify leaders in your community, such as police officers, firefighters, paramedics, members of the armed forces, athletes or Elders, and invite them to partner with you for the WITS Programs. Encourage your community leaders to complete the WITS Training Program for Community Leaders – a 60-minute online training module that teaches community leaders about their role in the programs.

 [LEARN ABOUT COMMUNITY LEADERS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [Working with Community Leaders](#)

 [ACCESS THE TRAINING PROGRAM | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Community Leaders](#) > [WITS Online Training](#)

3. Work with community leaders to conduct kick-off assemblies

The Swearing-In Ceremony and Tug-of-Help are special assemblies led by community leaders. They happen in September or early October every school year and kick off the WITS and LEADS Programs. Work with community leaders to plan and conduct the assemblies. Consider inviting parents, school district officials and local media to make it a community-wide celebration.

Reading a story called *Walrus's Gift* is a special part of the WITS kick-off. Encourage teachers to use the book's lesson plan in their classrooms to reinforce its message. www.witsprogram.ca/schools/books/walrus-gift.php

 [LEARN ABOUT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Community Leaders](#) > [Swearing-In Ceremony](#)

 [LEARN ABOUT THE TUG-OF-HELP | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Community Leaders](#) > [Tug-of-Help](#)

4. Make WITS and LEADS resources accessible to teachers

Find a designated place for WITS and LEADS books and resources, like the staff room, office or library, where teachers can readily access them. Remind teachers they can also access lesson plans, as well as other multimedia resources, online.

Print off lesson plans and package them in resealable bags with their corresponding books for quick and easy access.

 [ACCESS LESSON PLANS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [Lesson Plans](#)

 [ACCESS OTHER RESOURCES | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [WITS Multimedia Resources](#)

5. Put up posters in your school

Make WITS and LEADS messages visible in your school by putting up posters in classrooms, hallways, offices, the staff room, library and waiting areas. Make sure everyone who comes into your school knows that students and staff use their WITS.

Have students create their own posters depicting WITS or LEADS strategies and display them too.

 [ACCESS POSTERS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [WITS Multimedia Resources](#) > [Print](#)



November - December: Build the Community

1. Encourage teachers to use WITS or LEADS books and lessons

Teachers should try to read at least one WITS or LEADS book per month in their classes. Each book has a lesson plan, containing suggested questions and activities designed to support WITS Programs messages while satisfying provincial/territorial learning objectives. Teachers can also reinforce WITS and LEADS messages in their class meetings and through teachable moments.

Designate a 'book of the month' for the school and ask teachers to use it to reinforce WITS and/or LEADS messages.

2. Encourage children to use their WITS and be WITS Leaders

Encourage use of WITS and LEADS strategies through PA announcements and talk about successes you have seen. Play a WITS song over the PA or make up your own. Create a recognition program, like the WITS Special Constable of the Week, to recognize children who use their WITS or help others.

 [ACCESS WITS SONGS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > WITS for Schools > Multimedia Resources > Audio

 [SPECIAL CONSTABLE PROGRAM | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > WITS for Schools > Primary Program > Classroom Resources & Activities

3. Involve parents

WITS Programs materials include brochures for parents that can be sent home with children or made available at parent-teacher interviews. You can also include information about the programs, like pictures from the Swearing-In Ceremony or information about the WITS book of the month, in your school newsletters. Provide a link to www.witsprogram.ca on your school website.

Set up a WITS information table at your school for parent meetings.

 [ACCESS PARENT RESOURCES | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > WITS for Families > WITS Toolkit for Parents

4. Work with community leaders to conduct follow-up visits

Following the Swearing-In Ceremony and Tug-of-Help, community leaders should make regular classroom visits at least once every two months throughout the year. Work with community leaders to create a visit schedule that works for everyone. Classroom visits generally include the distribution of reminder gifts, such as books, bookmarks, pens, pencils and posters, which are labelled with the WITS or LEADS acronym to reinforce the programs. Keep enough reminder gifts on hand so that community leaders can distribute one to every student at each visit.

Reminder gifts were developed by the WITS Programs' partner, the non-profit Rock Solid Foundation, to help students use their WITS at home and at school. The foundation orders reminder gifts in bulk and can therefore offer them to schools at a reduced cost. Contact wits@rocksolid.bc.ca for info. Some schools have also created their own reminder gifts and had them manufactured locally.

 [LEARN MORE ABOUT CLASSROOM VISITS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > WITS for Community Leaders > Classroom Visits

5. Monitor your progress

Reflect on the successes and challenges you've had while using the WITS Programs. Do you know if the programs are working? Keep track of disciplinary action that is taken in your school to address bullying. Has there been a noticeable decline?

Are students using WITS and LEADS language? Ask them on the playground.



January - May: Sustain the Momentum

1. Get creative about incorporating the WITS Programs into activities

Teachers across Canada have found innovative ways to integrate the WITS Programs into every aspect of learning. Be creative with the programs' message and materials. For example, other schools have made online cartoons, written songs, and put on plays about WITS and LEADS.

Has your school created a WITS-inspired song or play? We'd love to hear about it. Send photos, audio or video to wits@uvic.ca.

 [LISTEN TO WITS SONGS | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Schools](#) > [Multimedia Resources](#) > [Audio](#)

2. Participate in a WITS Programs poster contest

Every year, the Rock Solid Foundation sponsors a WITS Programs Poster Contest. Students across the country are invited to submit original artwork about WITS, LEADS and/or bullying for a chance to win a \$500 Chapters Shopping Spree for their school. Encourage classes to participate and display posters around the school. Alternatively, organize a school-wide poster contest and invite your community leaders to help select the winners.

The WITS Programs also occasionally hold contests centered on events like Pink Shirt Day or National Bullying Awareness Week. Like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/witsprograms) or follow us on Twitter (@witsprograms) to ensure you never miss a contest.

 [CHECK OUT SOME WITS ARTWORK | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS for Kids](#) > [WITS Art Gallery](#)

 [TIPS FOR A WITS POSTER CONTEST | www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca) > [WITS Primary Program](#) > [Classroom Resources & Activities](#)

3. Check in with staff about how the WITS Programs are working

At staff meetings, try to make time for a discussion about the WITS Programs. What books do teachers like? What strategies have they found helpful in strengthening WITS and LEADS messages in the school? Sharing successes, as well as challenges and their solutions, can be an excellent way to encourage continued enthusiasm for the programs.

Some schools designate books for specific grade levels, targeting more complex stories for older students. Others use the same books in every grade, allowing students to examine them from different perspectives as they develop and learn. Talk to your staff about which method they would prefer.

4. Involve non-teaching staff

Ensure that all school staff members are familiar with the WITS language. EAs, playground supervisors and other adults in your school play a valuable role in reinforcing the WITS message. When everyone is on board, children feel that they have more support within their community and a larger network from which to seek help.

5. Contact community leaders to see how classroom visits are going

Community leaders help show children that they are supported outside of their school and that they live in safe and caring communities. Reconnect with your community leaders to find out how classroom visits are going and discuss ideas for future visits. For some community leaders, this may be the first time they've worked in schools so your praise, support and ideas can help them feel more comfortable.

It's helpful if community leaders can share their WITS Programs duties. Partnering with a local high school or university can be great source of support. Many student athletes have a community service requirement and helping community leaders make WITS Programs classroom visits is a great way to fulfil it.



June: Wrapping Up

1. Include the WITS Programs in end-of-year activities

Make the WITS Programs part of end-of-year celebrations and activities at your school. Recognize children who have been outstanding WITS Special Constables or WITS Leaders at the year-end awards ceremony. You could even ask community leaders to attend so they can hand out these special WITS and LEADS awards. Include photos from the Swearing-In Ceremony or Tug-of-Help in your school yearbook or year-end photo slideshows.

Include a special message to parents in the last newsletter of the school year, providing helpful hints about how they can ensure their children continue to use their WITS with siblings and friends throughout the summer break. For ideas, visit www.witsprogram.ca/families/using-wits-with-your-children/

2. Thank your community leaders

Make an effort to recognize your community leaders for their contributions to the WITS Programs at your school. You could present a certificate of appreciation to them at an end-of-year awards ceremony or ask some of your best art students to design a thank you card. Even just a simple thank you note from you will let them know how much their time and efforts are appreciated by children and staff and encourage their continued involvement.

3. Share your experiences with us

We greatly value your feedback and are always happy to hear about your experiences with the WITS Programs. What books and resources worked well? What other resources do you wish you had to help better implement the program? What other books outside of the WITS book lists have your teachers found helpful in teaching about bullying? What creative ways did you use to tie WITS into your school environment? What successes did you enjoy and what challenges did you face? Any information you'd like to share would be greatly appreciated.

 **CONTACT US | www.witsprogram.ca > Contact Us**

4. Let us know your anticipated school enrollment before summer break

You may receive an email from the WITS resource coordinator (wits@rocksolid.bc.ca) asking how many children are in your school and how many are in the WITS Primary Program (Kindergarten to Grade 3) and the WITS LEADS Program (Grades 4 to 6). Providing this information in June helps us anticipate next year's enrollment numbers and prevent delays in getting the resources to you in September.

5. Congratulate yourself, your school and your community!

Implementing the WITS Programs helps create responsive communities for the prevention of peer victimization among elementary school students. The hard work that you, your staff, students, parents and community leaders have put in can make a huge difference for your school community. Congratulate yourselves on a job well done!

Be sure to tell others about how WITS is working in your school. Word-of-mouth among colleagues is key for the programs' widespread dissemination and implementation.