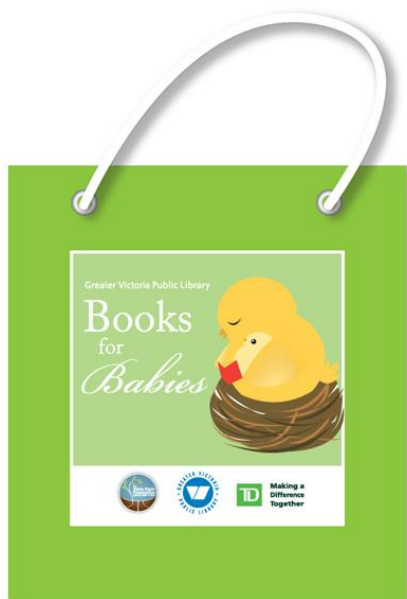


# Greater Victoria Public Library's Books for Babies Program

By Joy Huebert.

The Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL) is happy to announce a beautiful new Books for Babies program that includes Kathy Reid-Naiman's CD *A Smooth Road to London Town*, Andrea Spalding's board book *Dance Baby Dance*, an informative in-house flier, and bookmarks and magnets contributed by various community organizations.



GVPL's Books for Babies promotional image

## Funding for GVPL's Books for Babies program

The GVPL Books for Babies program has been made possible with funding from the Steve Nash Foundation and the Toronto Dominion Bank, and replaces the program formerly funded by the Ministry of Education, through the Public Library Services Branch.

On November 1, 2009, an article in the *Victoria Times Colonist* outlined funding cuts faced by public libraries. Included in the cuts was the Books for Babies program that supported family literacy for several years by providing a bag with a book and CD to all newborns in the province. Paul Gerrard, chairman of the GVPL, stated: "Of all the cuts, this one was really mean-spirited." The article caught the attention of the Steve Nash Foundation, and the Foundation approached GVPL to offer a grant to continue the program. The Toronto Dominion Bank also approached the Library to add their support. These organizations believe that the program has been valued by families, contributing to an appreciation of books and music, and to family bonding through the shared activities of reading and playing.

## The distribution of the Books to Babies kits

Staff at GVPL quickly put a proposal together that succeeded in obtaining a grant to provide 2,000 kits, beginning in April 2010. The kits are lively and bright, and will be distributed to health units, midwives and doulas in the communities that fund the GVPL. The kits will be distributed in these locations to all parents of newborns. Anyone missed in this distribution will be able to pick up a kit at their local GVPL branch. These kits will provide a baby's first book and music. Even the vibrant green bag will be appreciated by the babies, who in years past have seen its play potential. We are thrilled to be able to continue a program which has been a great asset for promoting public libraries and its values of literacy and family support.

*Joy Huebert is a Children's and Family Literacy Librarian with the Greater Victoria Public Library.*