

## Messaging for Families

Market research conducted with families across Pennsylvania showed that families (and students) sometimes have a hard time understanding how improved literacy can lead to a greater chance of success for students in the real world, not just school. Success is something that all families want for their children, so we have provided some sample messaging that can be used in communications that you may already be sending to family—newsletters, emails, status reports, family/teacher night materials, classroom blogs, etc.—to start the conversation about how families can help.

### Sample messaging for families (can be used as is, or edited as needed):

*Literacy is more than just reading assignments or spelling tests. Literacy involves reading, writing, listening and speaking, which are all skills that your child is going to need, no matter what path he or she takes in the future.*

*We are not talking about profound illiteracy—not being able to read or write at all. Students with challenges of that level are easily identified and placed in programs to help. We’re talking about the subtle differences between low literacy, proficient literacy and high literacy. We want to reach the students who think they are “literate enough” and help them to see that improving their literacy, even in small increments, can only help them—in school and in life.*

*The foundation for your child’s success in achieving a higher level of literacy starts at home. And it’s never too early to start. If your child is too young to read, schedule time to read to them. Just a few minutes a day makes a difference. If your child is old enough to read to himself, encourage daily reading habits at home. Look for books about subjects they’re interested in, so it becomes something they want to do, not have to do. Graphic novels, e-books, strategies for playing their favorite video games—all of these materials encourage children to digest and understand what they’re reading, which is one of the keys to improving literacy.*

*The more you can do to encourage good habits at home, the easier it will be for your child to continue on the path to improving his or her literacy and their chances for success.*

- *When families are involved, students have*
  - *Higher grades, test scores and graduation rates*
  - *Increased motivation and better self-esteem*
  - *Lower rates of suspension, better attendance*
  - *Enrollment in more challenging courses*
  - *Better social skills and adaptation to school*
  - *Decreased use of drug and alcohol*
  - *Fewer instances of violent behavior*
- *Family engagement in education is twice as predictive of student success as socioeconomic status.*

**Facts of importance for families:**

- 3 out of 4 jobs in PA require education beyond high school. –Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
- Kids who don't read proficiently by 4th grade are 4 times likelier to drop out of school. – The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- As of 2011, America was the only free-market OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) country where the current generation was less well-educated than the previous. –Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy
- 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare –U.S. Department of Justice
- 53% of 4th graders admitted to reading recreationally “almost every day,” while only 20% of 8th graders could say the same. –National Center for Educational Statistics
- 6 out of 10 households do not buy a single book in a year. –The Literacy Project Foundation
- Americans who are below average in literacy are struggling to find jobs, stay healthy and support their families. –The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
- In today's tech-centric world, basic literacy skills simply aren't enough. –Pew Internet and American Life Project
- 20% of Americans read below the level needed to earn a living wage. –National Institute for Literacy
- To determine how many prison beds will be needed in future years, some states actually base part of their projection on how well current elementary students are performing on reading tests. –The Justice Project
- Between 1973 and 2008, the share of jobs in the U.S. economy requiring postsecondary education increased from 28% to 59%. –Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce
- Children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are 3 - 4 times more likely to drop out in later years. –National Adult Literacy Survey