

**Recommended Additions:
Pertinent Facts and Sources, Public Relations Toolkit**

A summary of literacy statistics nationwide

- 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)
- A student who finishes second grade without learning to read has just a 1-in-4 chance of reading at grade level by the end of elementary school. (National Coalition for Learning Disabilities)
- Kids who don't read proficiently by 4th grade are more likely to drop out of school. (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- 35% of children with reading disabilities drop out of school, a rate twice that of their classmates. (National Center for Learning Disabilities)
- Of all 17-year-olds, 13% are functionally illiterate. (National Commission on Excellence in Education)

Literacy in the family

- Enthusiastic and habitual reading is primarily a function of the family environment and culture, and it is most effectively inculcated in the earliest years (0-6), but can be accomplished at any age. (Charles Bayless, owner of the online children's bookstore Through the Magic Door)
- The average reading achievement difference is very large between students from homes with many children's books (more than 100) and those from homes with few children's books (10 or fewer). (Ina Mullis, Michael O. Martin, educators and learning-assessment researchers)
- Children whose parents have lots of books are nearly 20% more likely to finish college. Indeed, as a predictor of college graduation, books in the home trump even the education of the parents. (M. Evans, J. Kelley, J. Sikora, D. Treiman, educators and reading researchers)
- Children with the highest reading scores use the library more than those with lower scores. (Jim Trelease, educator and author of "The Read-Aloud Handbook")
- Where parental involvement in school is low, the classroom average reading score is 46 points below the national average. Where parental involvement is high, classrooms score 28 points above the national average—a gap of 74 points. (U.S. Dept. of Education)
- The greatest single indicator of children's success in school is their mothers' level of education. (The Literacy Center)
- As the education level of adults improves, so does their children's success in school. Helping low-literate adults improve their basic skills has a direct and measurable impact on both the education and quality of life of their children. (African Caribbean American Center)

- Students whose parents have high school diplomas are also more likely to complete high school. (Urban Institute)

The economic and social effects of below-average literacy

- Children in families living below the poverty line are less likely to be read to daily than those in families living at or above the poverty line. (U.S. Dept. of Education)
- By age 3, children from privileged families have heard about 30 million more words than children from underprivileged families. (B. Hart, T. Risley, educators, researchers and authors of “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap”)
- Half of juvenile delinquents show some kind of learning disability, primarily in the area of reading. (National Center for Learning Disabilities)
- More than 65% of all state and federal corrections inmates can be classified as low literate. (Jim Trelease, educator and author of “The Read-Aloud Handbook”)

Positive facts about literacy

- When low-literate adults improve their reading and writing skills, they become more active in their communities. (U.S. Dept. of Education)
- When competent readers are developed through early detection and assistance, they can go on to succeed in both academics and life. (African Caribbean American Center)
- 8th-grade reading proficiency in PA ranks 8th among U.S. states. (U.S. Dept. of Education)
- In the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 4th-grade boys did better in reading than on the two previous comparable assessments. (National Center for Education Statistics)
- 9-year-old boys did better on the 2004 and 2008 reading assessments than ever, dating back to the test’s beginning in 1971. (National Center for Education Statistics)
- Since 1971, the reading performance of 13-year-old boys remained stable and of 17-year-old boys declined, but 2008 reading assessment results showed scores for both groups were rising. (National Center for Education Statistics)

Tips from the experts

- The most important thing that parents can do is talk and read to their children. (Reid Lyon, educator and reading researcher)
- Children who like reading tend to read more often. Reading to them early, even as infants, helps. (Jim Trelease, educator and author of “The Read-Aloud Handbook”)

- As children grow, the time spent reading with them in one sitting should increase from a few minutes to at least 20 minutes. (Jim Trelease)
- Once children learn to apply sounds to letter symbols, they must practice to ensure their reading becomes rapid and fluent. (Reid Lyon)
- It is critical that young children observe their parents reading and learn why reading is so important in our lives. (Reid Lyon)
- Parents should make language and literacy interactions in the home positive and enjoyable. (Reid Lyon)
- Children must get reading help before age 9; after that, they respond more poorly to reading instruction. (Reid Lyon)
- Reading four to five books during the summer is potentially powerful enough to prevent a decline in reading achievement from spring to fall. (James Kim, educator and reading researcher)
- Place a reading lamp near a child's bed and allow staying up 15 minutes later to read in bed. (Jim Trelease)
- Research shows up to 10 TV hours a week has no impact on kids' grades, but after that, grades decline. (Jim Trelease)