

## Literacy Statistics

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How well children read eventually affects how they learn and ultimately influences their chances for school success. (National Research Council, 1998)



Children in low-income families lack essential one-on-one reading time. A recent report by the Packard and MacArthur Foundations found that the average child growing up in a middle class family has been exposed to 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-to-one picture book reading. The average child growing up in a low-income family, in contrast, has only been exposed to 25 hours of one-on-one reading (*The Literary Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions*. Jeff McQuillan, 1998).

The rate of children growing up with low literacy skills is a national problem. More than one million children drop out of school each year, costing the nation over \$240 billion in lost earnings, forgone tax revenues, and expenditures for social services (*The Literary Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions*. Jeff McMullan, 1998).

Seven out of ten fourth graders cannot read at grade level and children in the poorest families are six times as likely as children in more affluent families to drop out of school ("The State of America's Children".) Children's Defense Fund, 2004).

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, (1992) U.S. Department of Education).



In 1999, only 53 percent of children aged 3 to 5 were read to daily by a family member. Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read aloud to everyday than are children in families with incomes at or above the poverty level (The National Center for Education Statistics, NCES Fast Facts, Family Reading).

So strong is the link between literacy and being a useful member of society that some states use grade-level reading statistics as a factor in projecting future prison construction (Bob Chase, President, National Education Association).

More than 4 in 10 preschoolers, 5 in 10 toddlers, and 6 in 10 babies are not

read to regularly (National Institute for Literacy, 1998).

A child who is not a fluent reader by 4<sup>th</sup> grade is likely to struggle with reading into adulthood. Today, 41% of fourth grade boys, and 35% of fourth grade girls read below the basic level, and in low-income urban schools this figure approaches 70% (The National Dyslexia Association (2000).

Poor reading and writing skills have a devastating lifelong impact- 75% of school dropouts report reading problems, and at least half of adolescents and young adults with criminal records have reading difficulties (Learning Disability Basics).