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ABSTRACT

This resource packet presents information on youth literacy in three main sections. The first section presents statistics on literacy; facts about literacy; reading in Indiana middle, junior, and senior high schools; and family reading. The packet's second section contains a bibliography and resources, offering a reading and literacy bibliography, and listings of organizations concerned about youth literacy, youth literacy programs, resource people, periodicals for adults on youth literacy and periodicals that encourage youth to read and write, sources of inexpensive materials, audiovisuals, and software programs. The packet's third section contains six articles on literacy: (1) "A Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior and Senior High Schools Executive Summary" (Jack W. Humphrey); (2) "Every Child's Right: Literacy" (Anne McGill-Franzen and Richard L. Allington); (3) "Signs Encouraging for an Upsurge in Reading in America" (George Gallup, Jr. and Frank Newport); (4) "Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do" (Marilyn R. Brinkley); (5) "Adding Books to a Summer Fun List" (Leah M. Lefstein); and (6) "The Right Place to Find Children" (S. K. List). (SR)

RESOURCE PACKET

ON

YOUTH LITERACY

The Indiana Youth Institute
Working with adults who care about youth

RESOURCE PACKET

ON

YOUTH LITERACY

Prepared by Kelli Garing, Ann Kirwan,
Barbara Ludlow and Becky Ristow

MARCH 1992

The Indiana Youth Institute is a nonprofit, independent center dedicated to the healthy development of Indiana's young people and the adults that serve them. Through training, research, and technical assistance, IYI enables youth-serving professionals to be more effective and ensures that the voices of youth are heard. IYI recommends but does not endorse the resources and information provided in this packet. This is only a sampling of materials and information available on youth literacy. For further information, please contact your local libraries.

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SELECTED ARTICLES ON LITERACY

- A Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior and Senior High Schools Executive Summary by Jack W. Humphrey
- Every Child's Right: Literacy by Anne McGill-Franzen & Richard L. Allington
- Signs Encouraging for an Upsurge in Reading in America by George Gallup, Jr. & Dr. Frank Newport
- Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do by Marilyn R. Brinkley
- Adding Books to a Summer Fun List by Leah M. Lefstein
- The Right Place to Find Children by S.K. List

STATISTICS ON LITERACY

FACTS ABOUT...

LITERACY

Illiteracy is the inability to read and write. Functional illiteracy is the inability to read, write and compute well enough to perform everyday tasks such as following directions on a street sign or medicine bottle, completing a job application, or reading a bedtime story to a child.

- 11% of adult Americans cannot read at all.
- 85% of juvenile offenders are illiterate.
- 6 of every 10 prison inmates are illiterate.
- 3/4 of the unemployed do not have the basic reading skills necessary for high-tech jobs. Thus, new high-tech jobs will not solve unemployment problems.
- 1 of 3 mothers receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cannot read.
- Nearly one-third of all navy recruits are functionally illiterate.
- 40% of Americans say that they have never read a book.
- The average male, age 18 and over, watches nearly 29.5 hours of TV per week. The average female watches almost 35 hours per week.
- 1 of every 10 drivers on the highway cannot read the road signs. Their driver's license exams were read to them.
- Children whose parents are functionally illiterate are twice as likely to be functionally illiterate.
- The number of functionally illiterate adults corresponds to the number of people living in poverty (roughly 33 million).

Statistics compiled from: Michigan Literacy Inc. c/o Library of Michigan, P.O. Box 30007, Lansing, Michigan 48409 and Accent, newsletter for the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, Vol.2, No.2, Summer 1987.

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READING IN INDIANA MIDDLE, JUNIOR, AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Based on a survey of middle, junior, and senior high schools in Indiana by Jack Humphrey, Director, Middle Grades Reading Network. **Questionnaires were sent in the spring of 1991 to 615 schools; 460 or 74.8% responded.** Additional information can be found in A STUDY OF READING IN INDIANA MIDDLE, JUNIOR, AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, by Jack Humphrey.

When we think of literacy, we usually focus on adults. This survey focuses on reading and literacy efforts in Indiana public middle, junior, and senior high schools. Following are some of the findings, based on answers given by the schools responding to the survey.

- Reading teachers in Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high schools spend an average of 3.8 hours per year for staff development in reading. This includes workshops, seminars, college courses, conferences, and visitations by teachers to other reading teacher's classrooms.

- 62.1% of the state's middle, junior, and senior high schools have no planned staff development for reading teachers.

- 75.5% of schools have no programs that encourage teachers to read.

- An estimated 35,784 students in the 460 schools were at least two grade levels below their grade placement in reading. Of these, 13,696 (38%) received no special assistance in reading.

- Only 31% of Indiana's middle schools require that students take a course in reading, compared to the national average of 71%.

- Students in Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high schools checked out from their media centers, an average of .38 books per week during the 1990-91 school year.

- Indiana middle, junior, and senior high school media centers bought an average of .59 books per student during the 1990-91 school year. At this rate of replacement, collections rapidly become dated and of less value to students.

- Two thirds of the schools reported that less than 40% of their students read for pleasure.

- Only one-fifth of the schools have a program that encourages parents to read and discuss books with their children.

- Approximately one-fourth of the schools indicated that reading is a low priority.

- Nationally, eighth grade students spend an average of 21.4 hours per week watching television but only 1.8 hours per week reading non-school materials.

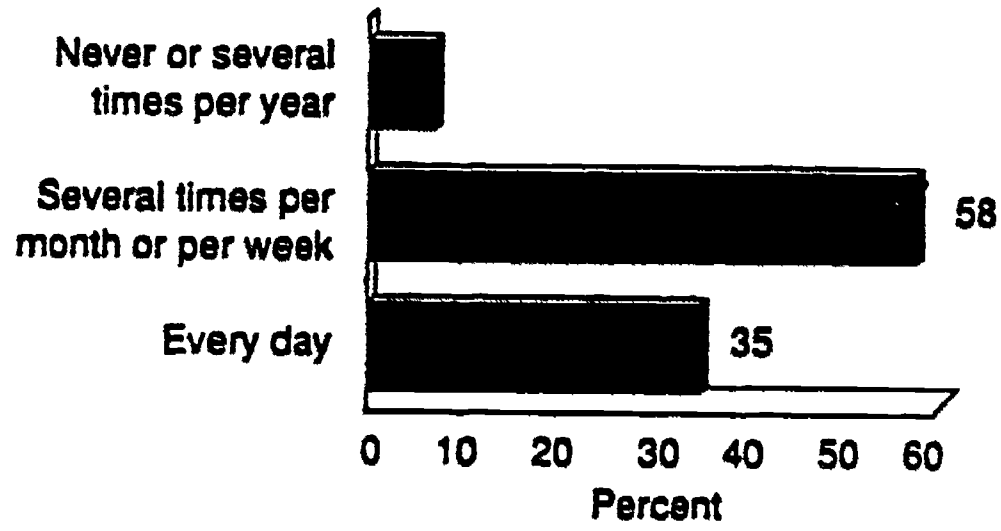
DIMENSIONS

Family Reading

More than one-third of children ages 3 to 8 are read to by family members on a daily basis, according to preliminary data from the 1991 National Household Education Survey.

The survey, conducted for the National Center for Education Statistics, found that the majority of children in that age group are read to by a parent or sibling several times each month or week. Only 7 percent of the children are never read to or are read to infrequently.

Percent of 3- to 8-year-old Children Who are Read to, by Frequency



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Daily reading activity decreases with the age of the child, the survey found; parents reported reading to 33 percent of 1st graders, but only 14 percent of 3rd graders.

Similarly, television viewing decreases as children advance in school, the survey found. Preschoolers average 3.1 hours a day of watching television or videotapes, while those in nursey school or kindergarten average 2.6 and 2.5 hours daily, respectively. Children in primary grades watch from 2.2 to 2.3 hours a day.

A large majority of parents in the survey, 89 percent, said they set rules on how early or late television may be watched. But more children have restrictions on the types of shows they may watch than on the number of hours they may watch.

Data were collected in February through April during telephone interviews of a random sample of 13,892 parents or guardians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

The Indiana Youth Institute

Working with adults who care about youth

BIBLIOGRAPHY

from the Indiana Youth Institute

READING AND LITERACY

American Association for the Advancement of Science. **Science for all Americans.** Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989. Contains recommendations from the National Council on Science and Technology Education on what information is necessary to know to be literate in science, mathematics and technology.

Applebee, Arthur N. **Learning To Write in our Nation's Schools: Instruction and Achievement in 1988 at Grades 4, 8, and 12.** Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1990. A comprehensive study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) evaluating the writing skills of 20,000 representative fourth, eighth and twelfth grade students in America. Includes reports from teachers.

Association for Library Service to Children. **First Steps to Literacy: Library Programs for Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers.** Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1990. This is an extensive bibliography by the Preschool Services and Parent Education Committee on library programs that parents, child care workers, and library staffs all will find useful.

Barr, Rebecca, and Barbara Johnson. **Teaching Reading in Elementary Classrooms.** New York, NY: Longman, 1991. A guide that will help teachers plan and organize reading instruction. The authors encourage parental and community involvement and career-long professional development.

Behm, Mary. **101 Ideas to Help your Child Learn to Read and Write.** Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse, 1989. A guide for parents providing numerous suggestions for developing a child's reading and writing ability while simultaneously fostering a healthy relationship between parent and child.

Binkley, Marilyn R. **Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do.** Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1988. This practical booklet provides advice for parents on how to improve the reading skills of young children and how to assess school reading programs.

Calfee, Robert C. **Indicators of Literacy.** Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1988. Presents a method for attaining the necessary level of critical literacy in the future and for enhancing the indicators with which we measure literacy by including the views of classroom teachers.

Chall, Jeanne S., Vicki A. Jacobs, and Luke E. Baldwin. **The Reading Crisis: Why Poor Children Fall Behind.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990. A look at reading, writing, and language development of at-risk children that encourages the teaching of word recognition and decoding in the early grades and language and word meaning in intermediate grades.

Darling, Sharon. **The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project Guidebook.** Louisville, KY: Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project, 1989. A valuable guide for those interested in implementing a literacy program that focuses on the needs of the parent and child and on breaking the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

Davidson, Judith and Robin Pulver. **Building Youth Literacy: A Training Curriculum for Community Leaders.** Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, 1991. A working curriculum manual designed for community leaders and staff of youth serving agencies. It includes strategies and information on designing programs that meet the literacy needs of youth.

Davidson, Judith. **Adolescent Literacy: What Works and Why.** New York, NY: Garland, 1988. An excellent and practical resource providing case studies of successful literacy programs as well as analysis as to why they succeed.

Farr, Roger C. **Then and Now: Reading Achievement in Indiana, 1944-45, 1976, and 1986.** Bloomington, IN: Center for Reading and Language Studies, 1987. A comparative statistical analysis of the reading abilities of sixth and tenth grade students in the state of Indiana. An important study for policymakers.

Greene, Ellin. **Books, Babies, and Libraries: Serving Infants, Toddlers, Their Parents and Caregivers.** Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1991. This practical guide covers child development and learning processes, and planning effective programs and services to meet those needs. Includes lists of resource organizations, book dealers, and extensive bibliographies.

Humphrey, Jack. **A Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior, and Senior High Schools.** Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Youth Institute, 1992. A look at literacy and reading in 460 schools in Indiana. The author includes information on staff development of reading teachers, students in need of special assistance, and parental and community involvement.

Kirsch, Irwin S. **Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults.** Princeton, NJ: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1986. An analytical study of the literacy skills of young adults between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five in America. Numerous statistics provide a focus for intervention, especially in relation to minority populations and parental education levels.

Kozol, Jonathan. **Illiterate America.** Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1985. One of the more powerful accounts of the growing problem of illiteracy in our country. Kozol presents us with the truth about illiteracy as well as with hope and ideas for solutions.

Langer, Judith A. **Learning to Read in our Nation's Schools: Instruction and Achievement in 1988 at Grades 4, 8, and 12.** Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1990. The National Assessment of Educational Progress's (NAEP) detailed report on reading skills and comprehension among 13,000 American fourth, eighth and twelfth grade students. Also contains input from the teachers.

LiBretto, Ellen V. **High/Low Handbook: Encouraging Literacy in the 1990s.** New York, NY: R.R. Bowker, 1990. Provides valuable advice and resources for those who work with teenagers who lack either the skills or the motivation to read at or above their grade level.

McLane, Joan Brooks, and Gillian Dowley McNamee. **Early Literacy.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990. Part of **The Developing Child** series, this book includes a definition of literacy and writing samples from young children. It also describes ways to help preschoolers and kindergartners sharpen their reading and writing skills in home and school settings.

Mullis, Ina V.S. **The Reading Report Card, 1971-88: Trends from the Nation's Report Card.** Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1990. An excellent report on the reading performance of nine, thirteen and seventeen year old students, as measured in five studies from 1971-88. Examines these trends in relation to external factors of gender, race, and home environment.

Reading Connection: Teachers and Library Media Specialists Working Together. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Department of Education, 1991. A helpful resource packet full of practical suggestions for elementary and junior high school teachers interested in promoting reading. Includes a recent report on Project REAP (Reading Excitement and Paperbacks project) implemented across the state of Indiana.

Taylor, Denny. **Growing up Literate: Learning from Inner-City Families.** Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988. A fascinating study of literacy among children growing up in black, urban, poor families which proposes the idea that literacy is not correlative to sex, race, economic status and setting.

Willows, Dale M. **An Education Consultant's Report: Writing to Read.** Toronto, Ont: IBM, 1986. An alternative to traditional early Language Arts programs that focus on teaching children how to read by means of their own writing and at an individualized pace.

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ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED ABOUT YOUTH LITERACY

INDIANA

FAMILY LITERACY CENTER
Michael Shermis, Assistant Director
2805 E. 10th Street
Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Betty Johnson, Manager
Center for School Improvement and Performance
Office of School Assistance
Room 229, State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
(317) 232-9141

INDIANA LIBRARY FEDERATION
Ellen Munds, Project Director
1500 N. Delaware
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 636-6613

INDIANA LITERACY COORDINATING COMMITTEE, INC.
Kathy Zeigler, President
118 W. Church Street
Cambridge City, IN 47327
(317) 529-8010

INDIANA LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER
Linda Warner, Executive Director
Margaret Kennedy, Material Specialist
17 W. Market Street
Suite 400
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 684-2535

INDIANA READING PROFESSORS
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Franklin College
501 E. Monroe
Franklin, IN 46131
(317) 738-8229

INDIANA STATE READING ASSOCIATION
(Affiliate of the International Reading Association)
c/o Dr. Peggy Ransom, Executive Director
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Teachers College 829
Muncie, IN 47306
(317) 285-1861

INDIANA YOUTH INSTITUTE
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333 N. Alabama Street
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Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 634-4222

INDIANAPOLIS STAR & NEWS
Karen Braeckel, Education Services Manager
P.O. Box 145
Indianapolis, Indiana
(317) 633-1240

OTHER

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Young Adult Library Services Association and/or
Association for Library Service to Children
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(800) 545-2433

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION
Betty L. Sullivan, Director of Education Services
Ruth Finn, Assistant Director of Education Services
Box 17407, Dulles Airport
Washington, D.C. 20041
(703) 648-1048

BARBARA BUSH FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY LITERACY
Benita Somerfield, Executive Director
1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 338-2006

CENTER FOR EARLY ADOLESCENCE
Robin Pulver, Acting Director of Youth Literacy Initiatives
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
D-2 Carr Mill Town Center
Carrboro, NC 27510
(919) 966-1148

COORS FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY LITERACY
Celia Sheneman, National Program Manager
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Golden, CO 80401
(303) 277-2784

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
Wendy Russ, Public Information Associate
800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139
(302) 731-1600

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA
Emily Dain, Field Services Officer
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214
(315) 445-8000

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY LITERACY
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401 S. 4th Avenue
Suite 610
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 584-1133

NATIONAL PTA
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700 N. Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2571
(312) 787-0977

PUSH LITERACY ACTION NOW (PLAN)
Tony Kroll, Executive Director
1332 G Street S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 547-8903

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC.
Karen Kotchka, Program Specialist
600 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Suite 500
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
(202) 287-3220

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YOUTH LITERACY PROGRAMS

INDIANA

BUILDING YOUTH LITERACY
Indiana Youth Institute
Gail Thomas Strong, Director of Community Services
333 North Alabama Street, Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 634-4222

EARLY LITERACY SKILLS PROJECT (Birth-Age 3)
Monroe County Public Library
Ginny Richey, Head of the Children's Department
303 East Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408
(812) 339-2271

EXCHANGE/INTENSIVE TEACHER PROJECT
Office of Professional Development
Indianapolis Public Schools
Carole Hall, Coordinator
30 East Walnut Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 226-3597

MIDDLE GRADES READING NETWORK
University of Evansville
Jack Humphrey
1800 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, IN 47722
(812) 479-2624

The programs in this network include:
- **Books for Rural Youth Access**
- **Building Comprehensive Literacy Learning Supports**
- **Marketing Reading in Indiana**
- **Opening Doors**
- **Parents Sharing Books**
- **Reading Excitement and Paperbacks**
- **Reading for Real**
- **SOAR (Stimulating Opportunities for Adolescents to Read)**
- **Student-Operated Paperback Bookshops**
- **Teachers Under Cover**

OPENING DOORS FOR MIDDLE GRADES-READERS
Indiana Library Federation
Dr. Martha Brinton
1500 North Delaware
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 636-6613

READ THE ZOO PROGRAM
Indianapolis Star & News
Karen Braeckel, Education Services Manager
P.O. Box 145
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145
(317) 633-9004

READING CLINIC
Delaware County
Juvenile Detention Center
920 East Charles Street
Muncie, IN 47305
(317) 747-2828
(Call for information. No walk-ins permitted)

STEUBEN COUNTY LITERACY COALITION
Kathy Bruns, Executive Director
403 South Martha, Suite 1
Angola, IN 46703
(219) 665-1414

OTHER

BEGINNING WITH BOOKS
The Carnegie Library
Susan Palumbo
Homewood Branch
7101 Hamilton Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
(412) 731-1717

FAMILY FOCUS
American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation
Betty L. Sullivan, Director of Educational Services
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Louisville, KY 40202
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MOTHEREAD, INC.
Nancy Gay
4208 Six Forks Road
Building Two, Suite 335
Raleigh, NC 27609
(919) 781-2088

THE MOTHER'S READING PROGRAM
The American Reading Council
Maritza Arrastia
45 John Street, Suite 908
New York, NY 10038
(212) 619-6044

PARENT READERS PROGRAM
NYC Technical College
Ellen Goldsmith, Ed.D.
300 Jay Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 260-5389

PROJECT LEAP
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Janice Smuda, Project Leap Librarian
2111 Snow Road
Parma, OH 44134-2792
(216) 398-1800

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL (RIF) PROGRAM
Karen Kotchka, Program Specialist
600 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
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Smithsonian Institute
Washington, D.C. 20560
(202) 287-3220

TAKE UP READING NOW (TURN)
PLAN, Inc.
Janet Brown
1332 G Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 547-8903

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RESOURCE PEOPLE

The following people are included as resources because of their special interests and knowledge in the fields of reading and literacy. Please feel free to call them if you have questions about youth literacy or ideas to share.

DANA BURTON
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Monroe County Public Library
303 E. Kirkwood Avenue
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Center for Early Adolescence
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(919) 966-1148

GAIL THOMAS STRONG
Director, Community Services
Indiana Youth Institute
333 N. Alabama Street, Ste. 200
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 634-4222, (800) 343-7080 in Indiana

STUART SILVERS
Professor of Education
Director of the Reading Center
Jordan Hall, Room 183
4600 Sunset Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 283-9363

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PERIODICALS FOR ADULTS ON YOUTH LITERACY

JOURNAL OF READING. International Reading Association, Inc., Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139. (302) 731-1600. 8/yr., $30. Contains practical articles on reading instruction and problems at junior high through adult level.

LANGUAGE ARTS. National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. (217) 328-3870. 8/yr., $30. A journal that emphasizes reading and composition skills for the elementary and junior high levels. Contains thoughtful articles that help demonstrate how language and literature are important for children to understand themselves and the world around them.

READING TEACHER. International Reading Association, Inc., 800 Barksdale Road, Box 8137, Newark, DE 19714-8139. (302) 731-1600. 9/yr., $30. Articles are practical and focus on the process of learning to read at the preschool and elementary school levels. Includes "how-to" articles and reviews of professional books, software, and children's books.

PERIODICALS THAT ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO READ & WRITE

BOY'S LIFE. Boy Scouts of America, 1325 Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079. 12/yr., $15.60. Distributed by the Boy Scouts of America. This monthly magazine is intended for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Explorers. It contains a variety of quality information on everything from fiction and comics to magic and photography.

CALLIOPE. Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., 20 Grove Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. 4/yr., $13.95. An illustrated specialty magazine on myths, legends, and ancient civilization for 10-17 year olds. Articles are well written, some illustrations are from rare, out-of-print books.

CHILDREN'S EXPRESS. Children's Express News Bureau, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, P.O. Box 3000, Indianapolis, IN 46206, weekly. Featured every Monday in The Indianapolis Star, the Children's Express has several articles on a chosen topic. A book review as well as a survey - "What do you think?" - are often included. All articles are researched and written by local youth.

COBBLESTONE. Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., 20 Grove Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. 12/yr., $18.95. A monthly magazine for 8-14 year olds that covers the history of America. Each issue covers one topic that ranges from lighthouses to Harriet Tubman, to jazz, to the U.S. Mint. Format includes stories, songs, photographs, articles, biographies, maps, puzzles, poems, and cartoons.

CRICKET. Carus Corporation, 315 Fifth Street, Peru, IL 61354. 12/yr., $22.50. Recommended for children ages 6-12, Cricket features articles, stories, crafts, songs, games, and poems, including some works from other countries. Internationally known authors and illustrators are among the contributors, and children are exposed to many writing styles and artwork.

CURRENT HEALTH 1. Weekly Reader Corporation, Publication and Subscription Offices, 4343 Equity Drive, Columbus, OH 43228. 9/yr., $6.50. This periodical is full of valuable information on health issues including nutrition, disease, drugs and physical fitness. Written for students in the 4th through the 7th grades, the magazine presents the topics in a clear and readily understandable manner and includes activities and games as well.

CURRENT HEALTH 2. Weekly Reader Corporation, Publication and Subscription Offices, 4343 Equity Drive, Columbus, OH 43228. 9/yr., $6.50. Similar to Current Health I, this journal is aimed at students who are in junior and senior high school. Various topics relating to health education are covered and a teacher's guide is also available.

KID SPORTS. K Sports, 1101 Wison Blvd., 18th Floor, Arlington, VA 22091. 6/yr., $9. This magazine is a sure hit for youth from six to fourteen years of age who are interested in sports. Each issue contains feature articles on sports figures as well as facts and advice on playing various sports.

MERLYN'S PEN. 98 Main Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818. 4/yr., $19.95. Merylin's Pen is a magazine of essays, poetry, and short stories by and for young adults, ages 12-18. Many pieces are prize winning.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WORLD. Pat Robbins, National Geographic Society, 17th and M Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 12/yr., $12.95. Similar to its parent magazine, National Geographic World provides many educational articles of interest to youth in each issue. Subjects include nature, art and space; and the photographs are excellent.

PEANUT BUTTER PRESS. The Indianapolis News, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145. 12/yr. A newspaper written by and for youth in the Indianapolis area, Peanut Butter Press contains everything from articles on politics and yo-yos to poetry puzzles.

RANGER RICK. Gerald Bishop, National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184. 12/yr., $15. Intended for an audience of 6-12 year olds, this monthly journal focuses on nature. Articles address such topics as animal life and conservation. Puzzles and games are included along with the articles to enhance learning and interest.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED FOR KIDS. Jason McManus, Time Inc. Magazine Co., Time and Life Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1393. 12/yr., $17.95. Like Kid Sports, this magazine includes articles on almost every sport. Famous athletes and successful youth athletes are featured. It is aimed at an audience under the age of fourteen, and older youth will prefer the original adult edition.

STONE SOUP. Children's Art Foundation, 915 Cedar Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. 5/yr., $19. A magazine by and for children ages 6-13. Includes stories, art, book reviews, and poems.

3-2-1 CONTACT. Children's Television Workshop, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023. 10/yr., $12.97. A specialty magazine that makes science fun for 8-14 year olds. Contains short articles, games, and software reviews.

ZILLIONS. Consumers Union of United States, Inc., 256 Washington Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10553. 6/yr., $13.95. Geared toward 8-14 year olds, Zillions helps teach children to be informed consumers. Includes upbeat, entertaining articles on food, clothing, television shows, toys, home video games, allowances, movies, and music.

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Please note: This list is only a sampling of periodicals that will help young people improve their reading and writing skills. For other titles, please consult a directory of periodicals at your local public library.

SOURCES OF INEXPENSIVE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

ALA GRAPHICS
American Library Association
50 E. Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(800) 545-2433

CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL
568 Broadway Street
New York, NY 10012
(212) 966-1990

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Center for School Improvement and Performance
Office of School Assistance
Room 229, State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
(317) 232-9141

ORGANIZATION FOR EQUAL EDUCATION OF THE SEXES
808 Union Street
Brooklyn, New York 11215
(718) 783-0332

UPSTART
P.O. Box 889
Hagerstown, MD 21741
(800) 448-4887

WONDERSTORMS
1278 W. Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44113-1067
(800) 321-1147

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AUDIOVISUALS

FROM THE CRIB TO THE CLASSROOM. Push Literacy Action Now (PLAN): Washington, D.C., 1990. Introduces activities for parents and children to learn together. This includes formal and informal learning activities with infants, preschool and early school-age children.

LITERATURE, LITERACY, AND LEARNING. Distributed by International Reading Association: Newark, DE, 1989. $125 non-members/$99 members. Videotape with supplementary text presents new revitalized approaches to language arts and examines the key principles and characteristics of each approach. The tape will prove useful for classroom teachers, library media specialists, and school administrators.

READING RAINBOW. PBS (Check local listings for time and channel). 1/2 hour daily television program that encourages reading and use of the library.

READ TO ME. International Reading Association: Newark, DE, 1991. $30 non-members/$20 members. A 13-minute video developed by the Idaho Literacy Project that introduces parents to the importance of reading aloud to their children. Read to Me shows parents how to read to their children, how to set aside time to read, and how to select appropriate books. Excellent for parent/teacher programs.

STORYBOUND. Children's Television International: Springfield, VA, 1980. Series on 16 cassettes for $133. Using 16 favorites from children's literature and the excitement of television to encourage reading, each Storybound program ends in a "cliff-hanger" situation to entice youngsters to check out the book to see how the story ends.

TEACHING READING: STRATEGIES FROM SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOMS. Distributed by International Reading Association: Newark, DE, 1991. $200 (sold as a set only). A series of six videotapes designed as simulated field experiences for use in college-level education courses and in inservice workshops for teachers. Shows successful practices in K-3 classrooms.

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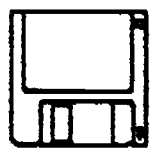

SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

ACCELERATED READER. Advantage Learning Systems, Inc., 210 Market Avenue, P.O. Box 95, Port Edwards, WI 54469-0095, (800) 338-4204. Three step reading program. Students select a title from a list on the database, read the book at their own pace, and then take a computerized test over the material.

BOOKBRAIN. The Oryx Press, An Arizona Corporation, 4041 North Central at Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012, (800) 279-ORYX. Database that lists thousands of books, some include annotations. Searchable by subject, author, title. Three versions: Grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-9.

BOOKWIZ. School Services-88D, Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6715, Princeton, NJ 08543-9894, (800) 545-2302. An interactive program that helps students discover the joy of reading by matching their interests with appropriate book titles. Uses creative graphics in a question and answer format. Three versions: Grades 3-6, 6-9, 9-12.

HIDDEN TREASURE. Learning Well, 200 South Service Road, Rosyln Heights, NY 11577, (516) 621-1540. A game in which two to four players search for treasure chests. They land on certain spots, get questions and must answer them correctly to get additional turns. Promotes reading and writing.

MICROZINE. Information Technology Design Association, Scholastic Software, Scholastic Inc., P.O. Box 645, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071-9986. Child receives four programs on a disk: an adventure story, two interactive programs, and a word processing or database program. Encourages reading through instructional fun.

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SELECTED ARTICLES ON LITERACY

Please note: All articles are reprinted with permission.

A STUDY OF READING IN INDIANA MIDDLE, JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Jack W. Humphrey

Executive Summary

Because they are unable or unwilling to read proficiently and voluntarily, many of Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high school students do not successfully complete their schooling. Ideally, the school setting should enable and encourage students to read with alacrity; yet significantly improving reading among Indiana's young people, requires a strategy that goes beyond the classroom. Heroic advances in reading must be pursued both in and out of school settings. Serving as models are adults in the school, the home, and the community who are themselves interested in reading. School library media centers and public libraries also help capture young adults' interest in reading. Activities such as reading incentive programs are examples of support that community institutions such as youth agencies and businesses can offer. The status of reading in Indiana's schools is revealed in the results of a questionnaire administered to 460 of the state's 615 middle, junior, and senior high schools.

Findings and Policy Issues

1) Accessibility to current and appropriate books is vital to increasing Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high school students' reading proficiency and voluntary reading. Indiana's schools' library media center book collections have suffered neglect for many years. New book acquisitions are only about one-fourth of the recommended number needed to keep collections current. When categorical funds were provided by the Federal government, schools purchased a large number of books. Later, when school systems were given many options for use of Federal funds, Indiana school systems chose to use the funds for purchases other than books.

2) Indiana's school reading and literature teachers need opportunities to learn more about teaching reading and reading motivation. Teachers in the 460 surveyed schools reported that, on average, they spend less than four hours per year in reading/literature staff development activities including conferences, college or university classes, visitations, and locally-sponsored meetings.

3) Indiana's schools should be staffed with full-time certified library media specialists. Currently, five percent of the schools lack such a specialist; thus, they lack staff members who have been trained to review collections, discuss ways to encourage students' reading, and cooperate with public libraries and other potentially helpful organizations.

4) Ample time should be provided for Indiana's sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students to learn to read proficiently and voluntarily. Prior to the advent of junior high schools in the 1940's, most students had a reading period every day from the first through the eighth grades. Today, these students do not participate in reading/literature classes or, when they do, they spend

less time than in the past because reading/literature has been merged with English/language arts. Almost one out of every five Indiana junior high school students was not enrolled in a reading/literature class during the 1991 school year.

5) Programs should be provided for all students who need special assistance in reading. Thirty-eight percent of the students whose reading ability falls two or more grade levels below their actual placement are not provided with any special assistance. A quarter of the surveyed schools do not have such programs while the others do not have enough support for these students. High schools offer the least assistance. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Chapter I program services for students decrease as students move to higher grade levels; only one-fifth of ESEA Chapter I students are enrolled in the sixth through the twelfth grades.

6) Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high schools should establish cooperative programming with public libraries. Little programming of this sort occurs now. The majority of the schools estimate that 30 percent or fewer of their students use the nearest public library even though their collections are more extensive and their hours extend beyond school hours.

7) Adults within the schools, homes, and community should serve as role models and provide guidance to ensure that reading becomes a priority in the lives of Indiana's middle, junior, and senior high school students. Most of the schools neither provide programs that encourage teachers to share and discuss books nor allow them to stress the value of reading books. Similarly, few schools help parents encourage their children to read despite the existence of several national models that encourage parental involvement. Youth-serving agencies already provide programs to help encourage youths to read, and they could do much more if schools worked cooperatively with them.

(Jack Humphrey's paper, A Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior and Senior High Schools, is an occasional paper of the Indiana Youth Institute. It will be available in its entirety from IYI in the early spring of 1992.)

COMMENTARY

Anne McGill-Franzen
Richard L. Allington

Every child's right: Literacy

McGill-Fransen is Assistant Professor of Reading at State University of New York at Albany. Allington is Professor of Reading at the same institution. The two work together to study federally funded intervention programs for U.S. children who are low-achieving readers.

Why is it that after countless millions, nay billions, of federal and state dollars targeted for extra educational services, and a quarter century of trying, all U.S. children still don't learn to read? After all this effort, why do 9 out of 10 children who start first grade in the bottom reading group stay in the bottom group throughout all of elementary school? How is it that by the end of first grade children's achievement predicts with alarming accuracy who will succeed and who will fail in life? Former U.S. Secretary of Education James B. Allen's *Right-To-Read Decade of the 1970s* was apparently just so much smoke and mirrors: despite the authorizations and assurances of state and federal legislation for educational services, children have no right to read. Children become adults; children who *don't* learn to read become adults who *can't*, and adult illiteracy has become, once again, a national concern.

President Bush, along with the National Governors' Association, has set as a national goal the right of all *adult* Americans to be literate. But what about the children? Why should today's children have to wait until they are tomorrow's underemployed or unemployable workers, welfare mothers, or wards of the criminal justice system to collect on the promise of literacy? If we aspire for our schoolchildren to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement, another highly touted national goal set by the governors and the president, shouldn't we also—perhaps first—teach every child to read?

Commentaries are peer refereed submissions in which authors express their opinions on a variety of current issues in literacy education. The opinions expressed in commentaries do not necessarily reflect those of the Editors, nor are they necessarily endorsed by IRA.

While William Bennett was still Secretary of Education he wrote that the "elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child in it to read" (Bennett, 1986, p. 21). Of course, schools did not always have this job. In the United States colonial period and in the early days of public education it was parents who were supposed to teach their children to read. Parents who shirked this responsibility were fined by the state; children who could not already read and write were not admitted to public school. Even now as we approach the 21st century the idea of holding parents responsible for their children's literacy development is slow to die.

In the contemporary version, education officials wring their hands and deplore the state of affairs that allows children to come to school "unready" to learn because parents are too busy, too self-absorbed, too poor, or too undereducated themselves to attend to their children's preschool development. We would argue that all young children, regardless of the diversity of experiences that they bring to school, are ready to learn. Anthropologists, linguists, and psychologists tell us that children of even the poorest families participate fully in the language of their culture, although families isolated by poverty may use written language differently than do those in the mainstream.

Middle-class routines of reading bedtime stories to young children, encouraging them to write stories and messages of their own, and otherwise tutoring them in the rituals and rules of literacy do provide those children with an estimated 2,000 hours of one-to-one instruction before first grade. *But schools should neither reward nor penalize children for the parents they have.* We know how to accelerate—not just remediate, but accelerate—literacy development so that even those who have not been "tutored" before school can become literate with their peers. Although we can accomplish this, and some communities do, children are not entitled to literacy in first grade, or second, or even in third grade.

How do we respond to the failure of children to acquire literacy "on schedule" with their peers? We frequently use remediation or special education services, although in the early grades retention seems the most common response. Under various federal or state program regulations, schools are required to provide instructional support services to at least some of the children who are deemed eligible. There has been no requirement that the interventions be timely and actually work, or that the targeted children catch up and keep up with their peers. Indeed, the national evaluations of compensatory education programs indicate that children gain an additional month's growth on standardized tests for every year that they participate in remedial services. But at this growth rate, participating children require an average of 5 to 10 years of remedial services to read as well as their peers. Many of these students don't stick around school that long.

In addition, many school districts can't afford to wait that long to show improvement in their statewide assessments in basic literacy skills. What about these state assessments? Don't they demonstrate that students' reading is improving? We're not so sure.

One way to increase schoolwide test scores is to retain, or flunk, the lowest scoring students, or to place them in so-called transition or developmental programs that also extend schooling by a year. American schools retain far more children than schools in Japan, England, and Germany; in fact the practice is exceedingly rare in those countries. Retention rates in the U.S. resemble the rates reported for Cuba and Kenya where per pupil expenditures are far lower than ours. Despite decades of research demonstrating the negative effects of failing children in elementary school, record numbers of children are repeating the early grades primarily because they are "behind" in reading. This practice has the short-term effect of increasing achievement scores at the school level, but over the long run children who repeat grades do less well than peers with the same low test scores who are "socially" promoted. Children who fail one of the primary grades are much less likely to achieve at an average level in their classroom than similar "underachieving" readers who are promoted, even though students who repeat grades are being compared to younger children on a presumably less sophisticated curriculum. *Flunking kids would be an expensive response even if it were effective—which it isn't.*

By the time these early school failures become teenagers they are overage for their

grades and still behind in reading—the two most potent predictors of dropping out of school. According to the Association of California Urban School Districts, children who fail either of the first two grades in school have only a 20 percent chance of graduating from high school. The dropout rate in the U.S. has been increasing. Now will it climb even higher given the increase in the practice of flunking students?

And dropping out of school is not the only correlate of low achievement in basic literacy. Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund tells us that girls who are consistently in the bottom of their class in basic skills are much more likely to become pregnant, and if they are also poor, the likelihood increases still further. Every minute of every day a teenage girl gives birth which adds up to about a half million babies each year.

The ultimate stigma of failure for children is to be called learning disabled or dyslexic, "handicaps" characterized by not being able to read well. Once children have been labeled this way—and the number of children identified as learning disabled has simply exploded in the U.S.—failing to learn to read is attributed to a permanent, organic deficiency within the child. This is so despite widespread acknowledgement that such neurological impairment is extremely rare, if it exists at all. Learning disabled and dyslexic children are then not expected to learn to read like "normal" children, nor is the school held accountable for their progress. Although learning disabled and dyslexic children should participate in statewide assessment programs, in many instances they do not take these tests or their scores are not included when districts report achievement to their communities and to the state. Thus, classification of low-achieving children as learning disabled may bolster the school's reported achievement test scores, but what does it do for the children?

The ultimate stigma of failure is for children to be called learning disabled or dyslexic, "handicaps" characterised by not being able to read well.

Researchers Alan Gartner and Dorothy Lipsky wrote to the federal Office of Special Education Programs to find out what has become of the millions of children who have been identified as having a "mild" handicap (the generic label for learning disabled, dyslexic, emotionally disturbed, or educable mentally retarded handicapping conditions) and who have received services through the special education system. They were told that no one at the federal level routinely collects information on the outcomes of schooling—whether the identified children ever returned to mainstream education, whether they graduated, went to college, got jobs, or indeed, if they ever learned how to read. In short, these children have *disappeared* from public accountability. What we do know is that these children received a public education; they were not banished from the educational system entirely. But most were educated in a separate educational system, one administered by a large and continually growing special education bureaucracy. We know that it is a bureaucracy that consumes an ever expanding share of the budget. What we don't know is whether there was any educational benefit for the children in those programs. Based on years of research in schools we would argue that there has been *no* such benefit for the mildly handicapped.

The issue is not a question of money alone. It's not just a case of pay now or pay later. *We currently pay now and later.* The issue is that large amounts of money are being spent on programs that fail children. The last national study of the costs of special education suggests that programs for handicapped children cost 2.3 times more than regular education. Given average per pupil expenditures of $4,000 to $6,000 for 1 year of regular education in the U.S., the cost of 1 year of services to the handicapped would be $10,000 to $14,000. Because children tend to be labeled learning disabled early and seldom, if ever, return to mainstream education, the costs for

the 2 million learning disabled youngsters over the course of their 10- to 12-year school career is staggering. The *New York Times* recently reported that for each child referred to special education it costs at least $3,000 just to complete the preliminary testing!

Flunking grades is expensive too. Using the same U.S. average educational costs per student, an additional $4,000 to $6,000 is spent on every child who repeats a grade in school. Many schools have failed half of their students at least once by sixth grade, with cumulative total costs that are hefty indeed. Retentions typically occur in the early grades with many schools in our recent study retaining (or transitioning) a quarter of their students before third grade. If we imagine that this occurs in a school where 100 children begin kindergarten this fall, then 25 of these students will experience an extra year of schooling before the school year begins in 1994. This will cost from $100,000 to $150,000, or between $30,000 and $50,000 per year, and result in no long-term benefit academically or socially for the students.

By contrast, remediation is inexpensive. Right now for about $750 for each year of services, at least small achievement gains are realized. But most remediation is not timely or intensive enough. Such intervention is rarely an option for kindergarten and first grade. Children typically have to fail standardized or state-mandated tests somewhere near the end of second or third grade before they are given help with reading. Before then the problem is more likely to be viewed as one of delayed development, requiring another year "to grow" or special education services for "language concepts" instead of massive amounts of story-reading and writing and talk about books. When low-achieving children are finally eligible for remedial services (usually only those who are still in the mainstream), teachers and children struggle to make remediation work. Because remediation is often too little too late, it rarely *accelerates* literacy development and it is possible for children to remain in remedial programs for years without ever catching up with their peers. And, like the rest of us, children stop believing in themselves when they are identified as failures.

Clearly we are already spending a lot of money in the U.S. on programs for children who find learning to read difficult. But we should be supporting children, not programs. We argue here for an entitlement—early, intensive efforts so that all children learn to read "on schedule" with their peers. It is possible. For example, in New Zealand, where these efforts have been underway for decades, each child starts school, ready or not, on his or her fifth birthday. Children who experience difficulty acquiring early literacy skills are provided with intensive one-to-one instruction in first grade. Only 2 percent of the children are unable to achieve within the average range of their peers. Further, in New Zealand so-called "learning disabled" children are not separated from the rest of the children.

Where intensive, personalized acceleration of children's literacy development has been attempted in the U.S.—in Columbus, Ohio, and Baltimore, Maryland, for example—children have been successful beyond anyone's expectations. Such programs may cost $2,000 or more per child, a small sum compared to the alternatives of special education and retention, and these intensive programs actually benefit the children by improving their educational futures. Such programs are ultimately far more cost-effective than the current array of misguided efforts.

We don't need an ever expanding array of programs and funding sources and ever larger bureaucracies. We need a unified effort that merges or eliminates the current hodgepodge of programs and funding streams and trims administrative costs to less than 5 percent of the program expenditures. Every child can and must be literate. American members of the International Reading Association could take the bold step to make us the first professional organization to call for U.S. legislation that would entitle all children to the right to read and the right to sufficient instruction to achieve this end.

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The GALLUP POLL
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Mirror of America:

Signs Encouraging For An Upsurge In Reading In America

By George Gallup, Jr. and Dr. Frank Newport

PRINCETON, N.J. — There are signs of a coming surge in reading in America. Almost half of Americans — particularly young people — say they expect to read more in the future than they do today, while only a handful expect to read less. Additionally, despite recent publicity about "aliteracy", young people are just as likely to read for pleasure as older Americans, and are much more likely to be readers of books for work or school.

The latest Gallup Mirror of America also shows a dramatic increase in the amount that parents are reading to their children. Today's Americans are more likely than were their own parents to read to their children, and to do so at an earlier age.

The survey also offers evidence that reading to very young children stimulates them to learn to read sooner, and to have better reading habits throughout their lives.

All of this suggests a turnaround in the making — that despite television and its pervasive influence on today's young people, reading may be coming back into favor with renewed fervor. These and other results are from a special Gallup Poll survey on attitudes toward reading, conducted among 1,019 Americans in December, 1990.

Impact of Reading to Very Young Children

Americans are more likely today than ever before to be reading to their children. Sixty-three percent of Americans say that when they were children, their parents read to them. But today, 89 percent of parents read to their children, and they are doing so to much younger children.

The impact of reading to children at an early age is dramatic — the earlier a child's parents read to him or her, the earlier the child learned to read:

- Thirty-one percent of those whose parents read to them when they were young — but only 12 percent of those who did not — learned to read before age 6.
- Of those whose parents read to them at two or younger, half — 47 percent — read before the age of six.
- Those who were read to before age three read an average of 21 books last year; those who were not read an average of 13 books.
- Ten percent of those whose parents did not read to them say reading is so difficult for them; only 3 percent of those who were read to before age 3 have that problem.

Judy Fellmann, president-elect of the International Reading Association, called these findings "wonderful." She said they reflect research which shows the importance of reading to children before they go to school. "I saw a bumper sticker that said 'Parents who read have children who read.' It isn't just the parents — it's grandparents and older siblings, too." One reason so many parents are reading to their children, she said, is "the plethora of children's literature — there's much more than when I was a child."

Americans Read Less Than in the 1970s

On any given day, 71 percent of Americans read a newspaper, 36 percent read a magazine, 38 percent read a book for work or school and 33 percent read a book for pleasure. Contrary to some opinions, younger Americans (18-29) are just as likely to be reading a book for pleasure or recreation as older Americans, and are much more likely to be reading a book for work or school.

Despite this encouraging news, Americans as a whole are reading slightly less today that they did in the 1970's.

Twenty-four percent in the current Gallup survey say they completed a book in the past week, down from 30 percent in 1975. Additionally, twice as many Americans today as in 1978 did not read a book all the way through in the past year (16 percent did not finish a book, compared to 8 percent in 1978). All in all, half of Americans (48 percent) read five or fewer books last year, compared to 37 percent in 1978.

Overall, 83% of Americans say that they have read at least one book for pleasure or recreation since they last attended school.

Not surprisingly, better educated Americans read the most. Reading is also more prevalent in the West, and among higher income groups.

Women Read More

Although women and men are just as likely to have read a book during the past week, women are much more prolific

readers: women say they have read 18 books during the past year, compared to only 12 for men. College-educated females read most, averaging 25 books over the past year, compared to only 15 for the college educated men.

Of those who recalled reading a book, 55 percent said the last book they read all the way through was a novel, 7 percent said a biography, 5 percent said a "how-to" book, 10 percent said another kind of non-fiction book, 5 percent said a textbook and 2 percent said the Bible.

Americans Find Reading More Rewarding, TV More Enjoyable

There is a fascinating conflict between Americans' use of and attitudes towards television and books. Americans watch television more than they read, but think it not nearly as good a use of their time, and wish they were reading more.

Eighty-eight percent of those surveyed said they had watched TV the day before the survey, while only 23% read a book for pleasure the day before. Looked at another way, the average American spends 34 minutes a day reading a newspaper, 14 minutes reading a magazine, 44 minutes reading a book for work or school and 23 minutes reading a book for pleasure, for a total of one hour and 55 minutes. In contrast, the average American spends two hours and 38 minutes a day watching television and an hour and 56 minutes listening to the radio.

Nevertheless:

- Americans think they watch television too much and read too little. Forty-nine percent of Americans say they watch too much television, while virtually no Americans say that they read too much. On the other hand, a whopping 73% say they read books for pleasure too little, compared to only 18% who feel they watch too little television.
- More than nine out of ten Americans say that reading is a good use of their time, compared to only 58% who say that watching television is — and fully 38% say that watching television is a bad use of their time.
- Sixty percent say reading is the best way to learn, while 31 percent say television is the best way.
- Sixty-one percent of Americans say reading is the most rewarding for them; 33% say television.
- Americans are evenly divided on which is the most relaxing — 48% say reading is more relaxing, while 46% say television relaxes them more. (Men prefer TV, women reading).
- Television wins hands down as the most enjoyable way to spend an evening — 52% say watching TV is most enjoyable, while 34% most enjoy reading.

Young Americans Anticipate Reading More

Almost half of Americans (45%) say they expect to read more in the future than they do today; only 3 percent expect to read less. Age is an important factor here: 55% of those 18 to 29 and 51% of those 30 to 49, but only 30% of those over 50, say they expect to read more in the future.

Significantly, this is the mirror image of recent Gallup findings about TV usage; younger Americans were most likely to say they will be watching less television in the future.

In short, Americans think TV is more enjoyable, TV and books equally relaxing, but believe books are much more rewarding and a better way to learn. Behaviorally, TV is overwhelmingly the more prevalent activity, but attitudinally, Americans wish they could discipline themselves to read more. Overall, Americans think that reading is a much better use of their time.

Looking ahead, younger Americans in particular appear to be poised to do more reading and less television viewing — an intent which, if fulfilled, could have dramatic consequences for American leisure-time activities in the years ahead.

King, Steele Lead List of America's Favorite Authors

There is a little good news but more bad news in the Gallup Poll for serious lovers of literature. To be sure, several authors who are considered to be among our best are widely-known and widely read by Americans. Unfortunately, several others, including some who are thought of as the greatest writers of all time, are relatively unknown and virtually unread.

If anyone can lay claim to being the best-known and best-read author in America, it would be Mark Twain: 97% of Americans say they've heard of him, and 86% say they've read one of his books. Almost as many have heard of Charles Dickens (95%) and Ernest Hemingway (94%): 77% have read something by Dickens and 64% by Hemingway.

There is a big drop-off in recognition and reading of other authors measured in the Gallup survey. While 82% have heard of F. Scott Fitzgerald, only 34% have read one of his books. Similarly, 79% have heard of William Faulkner, but only 34% have read one of his books.

A number of other "serious" authors do not fare well at all. Less than one-half of all Americans say they have ever heard of such authors as Leo Tolstoy, James Joyce, John Updike, Herman Melville, Saul Bellow, and Gustave Flaubert. And readership of works by these authors is very low: 24% claim to have read something by Melville, 21% by Tolstoy, 16% by Joyce, 12% by Updike, 6% by Bellow, and only 3% by Flaubert.

Three contemporary, "popular" writers do better: 78% have heard of Stephen King and 43% have read one of his books; 59% have heard of James Michener, and 36% have read him; 59% have heard of Danielle Steele, and 30% have read her.

Americans rank horror writer Stephen King as both the greatest living author and their own favorite author. Steele and Michener are tied for second as greatest living authors, followed by techno-thriller writer Tom Clancy. A host of others received honorable mention in this "greatest living author" category — including a number of authors

who have not been living for quite some time, ranging from Hemingway and Twain to William Shakespeare, John Steinbeck, J.R.R. Tolkein and the recently deceased Louis L'Amour. Other living authors mentioned were Sidney Sheldon, Alex Haley, Isaac Asimov, V.C. Andrews, Robert Ludlum and Dick Francis.

Thirty-nine percent of Americans say they have a favorite author (living or dead). Here's how they rank them:

1. Stephen King
2. Danielle Steele
3. Louis L'Amour
   Sidney Sheldon
4. James Michener
   V.C. Andrews
5. Charles Dickens
   Mark Twain
   Ernest Hemingway
   John Steinbeck
   William Shakespeare
   Tom Clancy
6. Robert Ludlum
   Isaac Asimov
   J.R.R. Tolkein
   Dick Francis
   Alex Haley

Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, ranks high among blacks, although he trails Steele and Shakespeare as their favorite author and trails King as greatest living author.

Most of King's fans are young. Those under 30 are the most likely to list him as their favorite author, while only a handful of those over 50 pick him. (The favorite authors among older Americans: Danielle Steele, James Michener, and Ernest Hemingway).

Most of Steele's readers are women; 48% of the women in America have read one of her books. King and Michener, on the other hand, appeal equally to men and women — 43% of each have read one of King's books, and 35% of men and 37% of women have read one of Michener's.

A 32-year-old man from New Jersey says he likes King's novels "Because of the suspense. He keeps you on the edge a lot." He says he suspects King himself is "pretty demented...brilliant but warped." A 36-year-old man from Georgia says King "has a macabre sense of reality." Both say *Pet Sematary* is their favorite King book.

A 47-year-old woman from Idaho explains why she's a Danielle Steele fan: "It's pure escapism. Her heroine is always beautiful, the men in the novels are always handsome, the people are rich and everything turns out fine, unlike life." She says *Palomino* is her Steele favorite.

Knowledge About Literature Low

While Mark Twain is the best-known author in America, only 51% of Americans could correctly identify him as the author of *Huckleberry Finn*. Encouragingly, this is up from 40% in 1953.

But fewer Americans today (17%) than in 1953 (22%) correctly identified Dickens as the author of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Only 2% were able to identify James Jones as the author of *From Here to Eternity*, a popular book in the early '50s; 7% correctly identified him in 1953.

Americans Overestimate Extent of Literacy

Seven percent of adults say they have real difficulty in reading, lower than the 13% the U.S. Department of Education says are illiterate. Americans overestimate the degree of illiteracy in the country: 52% believe that 20% or more of Americans are illiterate, including 9% who think it is over 50%.

One American in three — 35% — knows someone who is illiterate. This rises to 44% among Southerners and 50% among blacks.

Those over 50 (12%) are more likely than those under 50 to have difficulty reading. The differences are most pronounced by education and income level — 14% of those with household incomes below $20,000 a year and 22% of those with less than a high school education report real difficulty with reading.

The Reading Environment

Other facts about reading and books:

- 9% of Americans currently belong to a book club.
- 59% of Americans have a library card.
- 84% of Americans have bookcases or bookshelves in their homes, up from 58% in 1953.
- The average home in America has 154 books in it. In fact, only 16% of all Americans say they have fewer than 20 books. The average number of books in the home ranges from 74 books for those with less than a high school degree to 249 for college graduates.

Methodology

The results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly-selected national sample of 1019 adults, 18 and older, conducted December 13-16, 1990. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

We are trying to determine as accurately as possible, just how much time people spend listening to the radio, viewing television, and reading magazines, books and newspapers. Please tell me, as accurately as you can, the amount of time you spent yesterday, that is morning, afternoon, and evening...

	None	Less than one hour	One to less than 2 hours	Two to less than 3 hours	Three or more hours	No opinion
Listening to the radio	22%	20%	22%	11%	25%	0%
Watching television	12	8	21	21	38	0
Reading newspapers	29	39	26	4	2	*
Reading magazines	64	22	11	3	*	*
Reading books for work, school and so forth	62	11	12	6	9	*
Reading books for pleasure or recreation	67	14	11	5	3	*

* Less than 0.5%

Thinking about the last seven days, have you had the chance to...

	Yes	No	No opinion
Read a book	52%	47%	1%
Read a magazine	69	31	*
Read a newspaper	89	11	0

* Less than 0.5%

Which of these two activities — watching television or reading books — is...

	Watching TV	Reading a book	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
The most relaxing for you	46%	48%	3%	3%	*
The best way to learn for you	31	60	6	2	1
The most rewarding for you	33	61	3	2	1
The most enjoyable way to spend an evening for you	52	34	5	8	1

* Less than 0.5%

Thinking about how you spend your non-working time each day, do you think that you spend too much time or too little time...

	Too much	Too little	About right (vol.)	No opinion
Watching television				
1990	49%	18%	31%	2%
1977	31	17	48	4
Reading newspapers				
1990	8	54	35	3
1977	5	47	45	3
Reading magazines				
1990	6	65	24	5
1977	6	49	39	6
Reading books for pleasure or recreation				
1990	7	73	16	4
1977	NA	NA	NA	NA
Reading books for work, school and so forth				
1990	9	62	19	10
1977	NA	NA	NA	NA

As far as you are concerned, is reading a good use of your time, or not a good use of your time?

Good use	92%
Not a good use	7
No opinion	1
	100%

Looking ahead, do you think you'll find yourself reading more in the months and years ahead, reading less, OR is the amount of reading you do probably going to stay the same?

More	45%
Less	3
The same	51
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you happen to be reading any books or novels at the present time?

	Yes	No
1990 Dec	37%	63%
1957 Mar	17	83
1953 Oct	17	83
1952 Oct	18	82
1949 Jan	21	79

Did you get the book from the library, a friend or relative, or did you buy this particular book? (Based on those presently reading a book, 377 respondents)

Library	13%
Friend or relative	30
Purchased	53
Other	4
No opinion	*
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

When, as nearly as you can recall, did you last read any kind of book all the way through — either a hardcover book or a paper-bound book?

	1975	1990
Within the last week	30%	24%
Within the last month	20	22
One to six months ago	14	20
7 to 12 months ago	8	5
Over one year ago	18	22
Never	*	2
No opinion	10	5
	100%	100%

* Less than 0.5%

What kind of book was that? (Based on those who have read a book all the way through, 950 respondents).

Novel	55%
Biography	7
How-to book	5
Another kind of non-fiction	10
Textbook	5
Bible	2
Other	11
No opinion	5
	100%

During the past year, about how many books, either hard-cover or paperback, did you read either all or part of the way through?

	1978	1990
None	8%	16%
One to five	29	32
Six to ten	17	15
Eleven to fifty	29	27
More than fifty	13	7
No opinion	4	3
	100%	100%

All in all, do you find yourself reading each of the following more or less than you did ten years ago?

	More	Less	The same (vol.)	No opinion
Books for pleasure or recreation	44%	42%	13%	1%
Books for work, school and so forth	40	46	10	4
Magazines	43	39	16	2
Newspapers	59	20	20	1

Have you ever had an occasion to read a book for work since you last attended school?

Yes	56%
No	42
No opinion	2
	100%

Have you ever had an occasion to read a book for pleasure or recreation since you last attended school?

Yes	83%
No	16
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you have a favorite author?

Yes	39%
No	60
No opinion	1
	100%

Who is your favorite author? (Based on those with a favorite, 411 respondents)

Stephen King	18%
Danielle Steele	9
Louis L'Amour	4
Sidney Sheldon	4
James Michener	3
V.C. Andrews	3
Charles Dickens	2
Mark Twain	2
Ernest Hemingway	2
John Steinbeck	2
William Shakespeare	2
Tom Clancy	2
Other	44
No opinion	3
	100%

I am going to read you the titles of some books and I'd like you to tell me who wrote them. The first is...(ROTATED) *Do you happen to know who wrote this book?*

	Correct	Incorrect/ No opinion
Huckleberry Finn		
1990	51%	49%
1953	40	60
From Here to Eternity		
1990	2	98
1953	7	93
A Tale of Two Cities		
1990	17	83
1953	22	78

I am going to read to you a list of names of authors: some of these authors you may have heard of while others are not as well known. For each please tell me if you have heard of that author, or not? (ROTATED) (If heard of, respondent asked): *Have you ever read a book by...*

	Heard of	Read
Mark Twain	97%	86%
Charles Dickens	95	77
Ernest Hemingway	94	64
F. Scott Fitzgerald	82	34
William Faulkner	79	34
Stephen King	78	43
James Michener	59	36
Danielle Steele	59	30
Tom Wolfe	48	16
Leo Tolstoy	47	21
James Joyce	45	16
John Updike	44	12
Herman Melville	44	24
Kurt Vonnegut	30	15
Saul Bellow	17	6
Gustave Flaubert	12	3

At what age did you first start reading?

One	*%
Two	*
Three	1
Four	6
Five	17
Six	29
Seven	13
Eight or older	25
No opinion	9
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

Did your parents read to you when you were a young child?

Yes	63%
No	32
No opinion	5
	100%

At what age did your parents first start reading to you?

Younger than one	9%
One	8
Two	15
Three	21
Four	12
Five	9
Six	5
Seven	2
Eight or older	2
No opinion	17
	100%

Did/Do you read to your (oldest) child when he/she was a young child? (Asked of those with children, 744 respondents)

Yes	89%
No	11
No opinion	*
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

At what age did you first start reading to your child (oldest)?
(Asked of those with children)

Younger than one	24%
One	20
Two	29
Three	14
Four	5
Five	4
Six	2
Seven	*
Eight or older	*
No opinion	2
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

Is reading so slow and difficult for you that you consider it too hard to do?

Yes	7%
No	92
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you happen to belong to any book club at present?

Yes	9%
No	91
No opinion	*
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

Do you happen to have a library card?

Yes	59%
No	41
No opinion	*
	100%

* Less than 0.5%

Do you happen to have any book cases or book shelves in your home?

	1953	1990
Yes	58%	84%
No	42	16
	100%	100%

About how many books do you have in your home right now — not including text or school books? Just your best guess.

Less than 20	16%
20 to 49	20
50 to 100	27
101 to 249	15
250 or more	16
No opinion	6
	100%

What proportion of adults in the United States do you think are illiterate — that is can't read or write?

Less than 10%	9%
10% to 19%	22
20% to 29%	22
30% to 49%	21
50% or more	9
No opinion	17
	100%

Do you, yourself, know anyone who is illiterate?

Yes	35%
No	64
No opinion	1
	100%

Reading.
Once you start,
you'll never stop.
D.C. Heath and Company

Becoming a Nation of Readers

What Parents Can Do

Prepared by: Marilyn R. Binkley

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March 1988

At some point you may decide to go outside the school for private help. Reading tutorial resources are widely available. A good place to call for information may be the nearest college or university. Most have reading programs and provide services on a sliding-fee scale. If they do not have a program, they often keep lists of graduate students or teachers interested in tutoring. Once you have selected a tutor or program, monitor it in much the same way you would monitor your child's progress in school. After 6 to 8 weeks, can you see a difference in your child's reading performance? Can the tutor or instructor explain the goals of the program and document the progress your child has made? If the answer to these questions is no, you may need to review the course of action.

As cheerleader and advocate, remember to have faith in your child's ability to learn to read. No matter how long it takes, with very few exceptions, all children can and do learn to read. Children thrive in supportive environments, and if your children get off to a slow start, it may not be because they aren't trying, but because the situation is inappropriate. Look for a program that supports your child's development.

Developing Readers

Reading instruction should not end when your children can decode words with a fair degree of ease and can understand simple, well-written stories. Once the basic mechanics of reading are mastered, reading becomes an integral part of learning. Children must extend their skill to meet the challenges of subject matter learning. They must develop a variety of strategies that will enable them to learn effectively from text. Good reading programs help students do just that.

What to Expect in Good Developing Reading Programs

Good reading programs emphasize reading and writing. As you walk through the school building, you see displays of book reports or bulletin boards encouraging reading and writing. In addition, the school allocates a good deal of time to reading. Reading and writing activities occur in every classroom and in conjunction with every subject studied.

Good reading programs teach children how to understand and think through what they are reading as well as how to recognize when they do not understand what they have read. Teachers provide direct instruction—teaching students strategies that help them focus on the relevant information, consolidate it, and integrate it with what they already know (*BNR*, p. 72). For example, teachers might model a strategy by talking about the questions they ask themselves while reading. This might include looking at the title and thinking "What could this be about?" Then as they read, they might observe "This is just what I thought the author would say!" or "I disagree with the author."

It is not enough just to tell students how to approach reading. It is also important for students to understand why a particular strategy is used and when to use it. In addition to making sure students know how, when and why to use a strategy, good reading programs give students ample opportunities to practice reading.

For developing readers, opportunities to *practice reading* means that students should be given plenty of time for silent reading. This

should include at least two hours a week of independent reading for children as early as the third or fourth grades (*BNR*, p. 82). This opportunity to read gives children a chance to develop reading fluency, enlarge their vocabularies, and learn about sentence structure and literary forms, as well as just learning lots of information about the world around them.

Signs that your child's school promotes independent reading include well-stocked school or classroom libraries. Schools do not necessarily have to own all the books themselves. Many local public library systems have programs that allow schools or teachers to borrow books on a rotating basis. The essential point is that students should have easy access to a wide variety of books and that they be given an opportunity to read with a minimum number of interruptions.

Likewise, good reading programs give students opportunities to write about what they have read. It is not enough to fill in the blanks on worksheets. Students need to organize information gathered from their readings into paragraphs, and reports. They must also go beyond the information given in the text to analyze and criticize what they have read. Writing forces children to crystallize their thoughts in a meaningful way. The emphasis is on actively thinking about what was read, how the information fits together with what the child already knows, and on communicating these thoughts to others.

Reading instruction should not occur just during the reading lesson. Good programs incorporate reading and writing activities in all aspects of their instructional program. Most programs emphasize stories and literature, but informational articles are equally important. Reading science and social studies textbooks gives students a chance to use their reading ability as well as to practice outlining and summarizing as they deal with important but unfamiliar content.

Helping Your Child Succeed in School

You will always play an important role in your child's development. However, with each new stage, the support and help you provide should change.

Research has shown that parents of children who become successful readers do two things: they are involved in school programs and they monitor their children's progress in school. These actions indicate to children that their parents are concerned about and value school achievement. Through action, not just words, these parents reinforce the idea that school is important. For busy parents, there are easy ways to let your child know you care.

Participating in School Activities

Being involved in school activities helps. It is important to come to school and meet with your children's teachers. Some schools now simply send home report cards twice a year but request that parents come in at the other two marking periods. Some schools have orientation meetings at the beginning of the school year. These provide you with an opportunity to meet your children's teachers, to establish a cooperative relationship with them, and to let them know that you would like to be informed if anything of concern should develop. Once school has begun, you can go to school to observe in your children's classes. You might also serve as class parent and go on field trips with the class. Even if you do this only once a year, it makes a big impression on your children. You can also participate in parent-teacher organizations. Their activities might include fund-raisers for the school and periodic volunteer work. Many of the activities occur during the evenings or on weekends so that working parents can participate. Your involvement in these activities shows your concern for your children and for the community they are a part of.

All parents receive report cards and results of standardized tests. They provide an opportunity to talk about school, schoolwork, and attitudes toward school with your child. But report cards are sent out only periodically. Day to day, parents can review their children's homework, ask about projects, and help their children structure time. All are examples of monitoring your child's progress.

Helping with Homework

You can do a number of things in your home as well. Parents can help their children and support the school program by providing regular study times, with no distractions, and quiet places to work. Establishing a routine helps. Remember the ritual of bath and story time with your preschooler? In a similar manner, setting aside a particular time and following a particular routine makes homework and study become a naturally expected part of the day. A time without outside interruptions is essential. Some children do best if they do their homework before dinner, while others prefer after dinner. The time is not important, the regularity is!

Homework and studying involve thinking. Thinking is easiest in a quiet place, away from traffic and interruptions. It need not be elaborate—just a table and chair in a well-lit room will do. But it should be quiet and neat, with enough room to spread out the papers and books. It helps to make sure in advance that the necessary supplies are available. These include pencils, pens, paper, scissors, tape, ruler—stored in a shoe box if need be. Preparing for

the expected needs of children will make it easier for them to "get on with it."

Assignments will vary in complexity and length. Often children of any age will be asked to do a long-term project that will be too much work for one night. Because children frequently lack the planning skills to manage long-term work successfully, parents can help them think through how to break a large task into manageable subtasks. Don't do it for your children. Instead talk about what has to be done, how it might be done, and make lists of subtasks, what will be needed at each step, and when they should be done. This will help your children structure what needs to be done and helps them learn how to organize for future assignments.

Coaching may be the most useful way to help your child with homework. The focus in coaching is on accomplishing the homework, not on tutoring or remediation. Let your children talk through the assignment. Let them explain what they think needs to be done, what the answers are, and how they arrived at those answers. Where they aren't clear, or you don't understand, ask them to explain further. In coaching, you do not do the assignment, you guide your children along, helping them to clarify and flesh out their thinking.

Too many students think they have homework only if it is written work to be turned in the next day. If a teacher asks students to write the definitions of some words and turn in the assignment, most students will do it. On the other hand, when a teacher asks students to *study* the definitions of words or *review* a chapter, students often ignore the assignment. If you find that your child only studies the night before a test, you might suggest a brief study period each evening in addition to any written homework assignments. This will be easy if there is routine regular study time. This may make the difference between success and failure over the long haul.

Remember that homework is primarily your children's responsibility. If you find yourself doing your children's homework for them or helping with much of their homework, something is wrong. Talk it over with your children, and if need be with their teachers. Part of what students should learn from homework is to organize their time and to work efficiently without an adult's supervision.

Monitoring Your Child's Progress

If you have monitored your child's progress, you will know whether the school program is meeting your child's needs. If you are in doubt, make an appointment with your child's teacher. Make your concerns known as specifically as possible. If you feel your child

needs special services, such as those of a reading specialist, discuss it with the classroom teacher and the principal.

If your child is not getting what you believe is necessary, go outside the school for help—especially when efforts to get the school to respond appropriately have been unsuccessful. If your children have shown persistent difficulty in learning to read, write, or both, you should consider having them fully tested. Try all the possible steps within the system before going outside, but once it becomes clear that school or district personnel cannot or will not help, be sure to go outside. Again, colleges and universities in your area are likely to be of help. School personnel should be able to make recommendations.

Encouraging Reading for Fun

School books are not the be-all and end-all of reading. Encourage reading for the fun of it and as a free-time activity. Most children will learn *how* to read. Whether they *will* read depends in large part upon the encouragement they receive and the example their parents set (*BNR*, p. 26).

A family reading hour is always appropriate. And so is reading aloud. School-age children can appreciate the beauty of language, the poetry of well-phrased ideas.

Trips to the library and, when possible, to bookstores are even more important once your children can read on their own. Providing time for reading at home may mean curtailing television. But the payoff will be gains in reading achievement. One way to provide reading time might be to establish a going-to-bed time and a lights-out time and allow your child to read in between (*BNR*, pp. 26–27).

Your children should be allowed to choose their own books, although you may disapprove of an occasional choice they may make (*BNR*, p. 27). When parents allow children to choose their own reading materials and encourage reading as a leisure time activity, children read more and improve their reading.

The public library is an excellent resource for your children. If they do not already have their own library cards, now is the time to get them. Many librarians are specially trained to help children find books that will appeal to them. Librarians can also help your children learn to locate materials for school research projects. Many families find that setting aside a specific time each week to visit the library provides both parents and children with a recurring adventure they can both look forward to. You may also want to seriously consider giving books or magazine subscriptions as presents. Putting books and reading in this special class of items will reinforce the value you place on reading.

Afterword: Next Steps

> **The more elements of good parenting, good teaching, and good schooling children experience, the greater the likelihood that they will achieve their potential as readers.** (*BNR*, p. 117)

The Commission on Reading was formed to critically review the great mass of research and theory on beginning reading and language comprehension. Their report translates this vast research into ways to improve instruction for all children (*BNR*, p. 123). Only a small part of its wealth of information is covered in these pages.

Becoming a Nation of Readers calls upon us all to actively participate in creating a literate society. Parents, teachers, school personnel, and policymakers each have different but very complementary roles that will help us reach that goal. Parents, however, have what may be the most crucial role.

Becoming a Nation of Readers calls upon parents to

> **lay the foundation for learning to read...[by] informally teaching preschool children about reading and writing by reading aloud to them, discussing stories and events, encouraging them to learn letters and words and teaching them about the world around them....In addition to laying a foundation, parents need to facilitate the growth of their children's reading by taking them to libraries, encouraging reading as a free time activity and supporting homework.** (*BNR*, p. 57)

This is only a part of the picture. *Becoming a Nation of Readers* calls for "preschool and kindergarten reading readiness programs [that] focus on reading, writing, and oral language." (*BNR*, p. 117)

Becoming a Nation of Readers recommends that teachers

- maintain classrooms that are both stimulating and disciplined (*BNR*, p. 118);
- present well-designed phonics instruction when teaching beginning reading (*BNR*, p. 118);

Adding books to a summer fun list

By LEAH M. LEFSTEIN

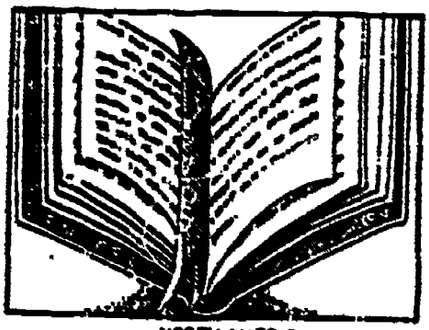
There are more than a million children in Indiana schools — nearly one-third of them in grades six through nine. And it is during these critical middle-grade years that students' reading scores begin to plummet.

Young adolescents need extra support if they are to be involved in reading, especially during the summer. Such support must come from parents. It has been estimated that 75 percent of primary age children's parents are highly involved with their children's reading. But the amount of parental encouragement drops drastically in the middle-grades age group, when only 25 percent of parents help children read more.

This is the age group that finds itself with easy access to other forms of entertainment that overshadow reading. Television and video games have long stood as easy alternatives to leisure time reading. Other outside interests such as sports and social activities also are likely to take precedence over reading.

NONE OF these is inherently bad or should be avoided, but reading should be remembered and included in the list of day-to-day activities.

Joan Rigdon and Alecia Swasy in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article pointed out that the "literacy problem is rooted in modern culture, where flashy distractions easily win short attention spans away from literary pursuits. Instead of reading, writing letters or discussing politics, students spend their free time watching television, talking on the phone, zapping video monsters and playing sports."



NORTH AMERICA SYNDICATE

They emphasized how vital the middle-grade years are to reading. In junior high school, students' reading habits may be shattered "when they suddenly face a myriad of social pressures."

Middle-grade students face many problems. "Many are coping with the lure of drugs or the pain of divorce . . . More activities vie for students' attention."

No matter how hectic life gets, families always seem to find time for the things that are important to them. One of those things should be reading with a child. Although school is out for the summer, it is not only an excellent time for children to learn, but it also is a time to have fun and enhance reading skills.

RESEARCH SHOWS that many children who do not read during the summer find themselves behind when they return to school in the fall. Children with marginal reading skills suffer most over the summer without help. These children need to realize that reading can be fun. Parents can use the summer months to stress the importance of reading in a child's spare time by increasing family reading time.

How can families keep the momentum for reading during the summer months? Easy. The child can become involved in something as simple as reading and discussing the local newspaper each day with a parent. Adults tend to discard the newspaper after the cursory "thumb-through" without realizing the teaching tool that is literally in their grasp. The newspaper contains a wealth of information that is presented in a relatively easy to read format. No matter how old children may be, there are sections that will interest them.

The whole family can make a trip to the public library where there are thousands of exciting books waiting to be discovered. Many libraries have lists of books that families can enjoy together, reading silently or aloud, at home or on vacation.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES make children and teen-age collections irresistibly inviting during the summer months, often providing contests and clubs to promote reading.

Children watch adults and learn from them. They can learn that the library is a warm and exciting place; or they can get the impression that the library is a place where adults do not venture because reading only has a place in school.

The best time to encourage a child's summer reading is now. Unlock the door to reading by having your child read this very article. Then sit down and decide how you and your child can make this summer fun with reading.

Lefstein, of Indianapolis, is deputy director of the Indiana Youth Institute.

YOUTH

The Right

Magazines and newspapers for children offer a smaller and more select audience than children's television. Many of the magazines do not take advertising, but corporate sponsorship is often allowed. Children are an elusive audience, and the new wave of print media is the most efficient way to reach them.

by S.K. List

Saturday morning has been the home base of children's television for decades. That may soon change. NBC's Saturday morning programs have been suffering from low ratings, and so the network has decided to get out. "We're going to abandon Saturday morning cartoons," says Horst Stipp, NBC's director of social and developmental research.

Today's parents prefer to plop their children in front of a television during the hours after school, from 4 to 6 p.m. Twenty-nine percent of children aged 2 to 11 watch TV before dinner, compared with 24 percent who give their parents an extra hour of sleep on Saturday morning, according to Simmons Market Research Bureau. Like everyone else, children spend the most time watching prime-time TV.

Children are an audience worth targeting in hundreds of consumer markets. But reaching them with television commercials is rapidly growing more expensive and less efficient. Advertisers are looking for better ways to deliver messages to American youth. Increasingly, they are turning to magazines, newspapers, and radio.

Children's versions of *Sports Illustrated*, *National Geographic*, *Field and Stream*, and *Consumer Reports* are already being thumbed by little hands. The number of periodicals for youngsters almost doubled between 1986 and 1991, with 31 new titles, according to professor Samir Husni at the University of Mississippi.

S. K. List is a freelance writer living in Trumansburg, New York.

SMALLER AND MORE SELECT

Fifty-seven percent of children read magazines, according to Pamela Baxter, executive vice president at Simmons Market Research Bureau. That is more than the share of children who read comic books. Children who read magazines are slightly more likely to be boys than girls, and they are also more likely than nonreaders to live in high-income households. Compared with the audience for children's TV, they are a smaller and more select group.

The demographics are convincing enough that many established children's TV shows are now crossing over to print. The list of crossovers includes *Sesame Street Magazine*, the monthly *Nickelodeon*, Fox's *Kids' Club* magazine, and Disney's *Duck Tales*. *Sesame Street Magazine*, like its parent television show, has a strong educational emphasis. But the magazine's parents' guide carried almost 200 pages of advertising in 1990.

A brand new magazine called *Spark* targets the creative side of children aged 6 to 11. It's filled with art and writing projects, plus ads for Crayola crayons, Pentel pens, and Fruit Stripe gum. The projects "are things kids can do on their

Place to Find Children

own with minimal assistance from parents," says managing editor Beth Struck. But the marketing plan is aimed squarely at mom and dad. *Spark for Parents*, a 16-page insert in the November issue, includes a creative guide and tips on exposing children to art museums in a positive way.

Some magazines for children try to establish brand loyalty at an early age. *Sports Illustrated for Kids* made a big splash when it was launched by Time Inc. in 1989. Following the debut, then-publisher Ann Moore said, "We believe children make brand decisions very early that they will carry into their adult lives."

Current publisher Susan Sachs defines "brand loyalty" broadly. One of the magazine's primary purposes, she says, is "fighting illiteracy and creating long-term readers. Another is getting the magazine into the hands of those who couldn't otherwise afford it." About 250,000 free copies of *SI for Kids* are distributed nationwide to classrooms in low-income schools, along with a monthly teacher's guide. The pro-

gram is co-sponsored by the advertisers.

Sports Illustrated for Kids is a success because it offers advertisers a mix of flexibility and precision in reaching children. One advertiser, Wheaties, offered a free subscription on cereal boxes; another, McDonald's, co-produced a nutrition and fitness guide for teachers' use.

"We help advertisers see what kids like," says Sachs. "A lot of our creative [material] is busy, colorful, fun, and interactive. It's a new field."

The owners of *SI for Kids* also collect mountains of information about their readers. Paid subscribers draw an average of about $4 a week in allowance. That amounts to $125 million in spending money each year. The copy is geared to a fifth-grade reader, but the average reader is slightly younger—about 9 or 10. About

> Many established children's TV shows are now crossing over to print.

half of the subscribers live in two regions: the Middle Atlantic states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and the East North Central states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Boys outnumber girls two to one in the readership.

If boys outnumber girls, why does *SI for Kids* give equal attention to women's sports? Perhaps it's because the magazine's real customers are affluent working couples. More than 70 percent of the parents of paid subscribers fall between the ages of 35 and 44, and more than three-quarters of the parents have attended college. The parents' median household income is $54,700.

NO ADVERTISING, BUT...

Many children's magazines do not accept advertising, but some of the ad-free magazines still seek relationships with businesses. *P3* (or *Planet Three*) is an environmental magazine for readers aged 6 to 12, printed in color on recycled paper and published by the Vermont-based P3 Foundation. The magazine does not carry advertising, but the foundation does encourage "corporate sponsorship." One such contribution resulted in a full-page message from the Patagonia clothing company in the spring 1991 issue, describing the company's commitment to preserving nature.

One of the largest-circulation children's magazines is *National Geographic World*, with 1.2 million paying readers. The magazine carries no ads, just as the grown-up version of *National Geographic* refused advertising for many years. But "the possibility of ads has been discussed," says *World* editor Pat Robbins. "It is our board's policy not to carry them, but that's not to say that the policy won't change."

It's fair to assume that *Zillions* will never carry advertising. The child of *Consumer Reports*, *Zillions* is an advocate for a "kids' market" it says has $8 billion a year to spend. The bimonthly magazine's mission is to help children get the most for their money. Toys, peanut butter, jeans, mail-in clubs, and TV shows have all been scrutinized. One regular feature is "The Sneaky Sell," which encourages kids to read fine print and spot ad double-talk.

The 250,000 subscribers to *Zillions* are highly involved with the magazine. "We do reader surveys after every issue," says editor Charlotte Baecher. A hundred children from across the country make up the Product Test Team, and a larger panel of subscribers regularly advises staff on products the magazine evaluates.

Some children's magazines have been around for generations, such as *Ranger Rick*, *Cricket*, and *Highlights for Children*. But even these are reaching out. *Cricket*'s Illinois publishers, Carus Corporation, introduced the monthly *Ladybug* for younger readers in 1990. The *Ranger Rick* staff also produces *Your Big Backyard*, an environmental magazine for children aged 3 to 5. It's an improbable idea—print media for people who haven't learned to read. But the niche is growing because the real customers are grownups.

The main reason for the explosive growth in children's magazines is not advertiser interest. It's the growing number of well-educated parents and grandparents who want to give every advantage to their progeny. For example, *National Geographic World* began 16 years ago when Gilbert M. Grosvenor, president and chairman of the board at the National Geographic Society, became concerned that his children were watching too much TV. "He wanted to launch a magazine that would offer good competition for television and offer the same types of quality material as other Geographic products," says Pat Robbins. "Essentially, that's been our mission since then."

The mission may remain unchanged, but Robbins says the magazine's design and features are always evolving "because kids are not a static population." The *World* staff monitors changes in that population with children's focus groups, post-publication surveys, and analysis of their "enormous amount of mail—hundreds of pieces every month."

ELUSIVE AUDIENCE

Newspapers are not overlooking children, either. More than two-thirds (68 percent) of teenagers read at least one daily newspaper a week, according to Simmons Market Research Bureau. Not surprisingly, readership increases with age: half of teenagers (aged 12 to 17) read both daily and Sunday editions of a newspaper. The demographics of teenaged newspaper readers are similar to those of adults. White teenagers are more likely to read than blacks, for example, and Sunday readership is higher than weekday readership. Teens who live in the Northeast are most likely to read a newspaper, while those in the South and in rural areas are least likely.

Dozens of newspapers now print special sections for children. The national leader may be a weekly children's section in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* called "Class

Acts." The material in the 12-page supplement is syndicated to about 20 other papers. Article topics range from what it means to be adopted to getting a fair shake at allowance time. The target is a reader aged 8 to 14, but editor Sharon Cox says her 300 to 500 pieces of weekly mail also come from kindergartners and high school students.

Several weekly pages and sections in the *Chicago Tribune* are aimed at children, including "Spots," in the Sunday funnies; "In-Style," a fashion spotlight; "Preps Plus," on school sports; and "Take 2," which includes a panel of high school movie reviewers. "Newspapers have an aging audience," says *Tribune* comics editor John Lux, so they must try to develop the daily habit among younger groups.

There are even signs of an emerging children's radio network. Hundreds of stations already feed the voracious appetite teenagers have for pop music. But in Minneapolis, WWTC-AM offers news, theater, and music for younger children in a format called "Radio Aaha." Owner Chris Dahl says his station reaches 50 to 60 percent of children under age 12 in St. Paul and Minneapolis. He hopes to project the station via satellite to other markets, and he's looking for backers.

He isn't alone. Philadelphia-based Kidwaves is also trying to gather affiliates and support. In Cleveland, the Kids' Choice Broadcasting Network shut down a year ago.

Children's radio is an idea ahead of its time. Part of the problem is an almost total lack of information on how young children use radio. The Arbitron Company gathers information on radio use from diaries kept by 12-to-17-year-olds, for example. It would be possible to do a study of younger children, using adult assistance, says vice president Tom McCarskey. But so far, few advertisers have expressed any interest in knowing the answers.

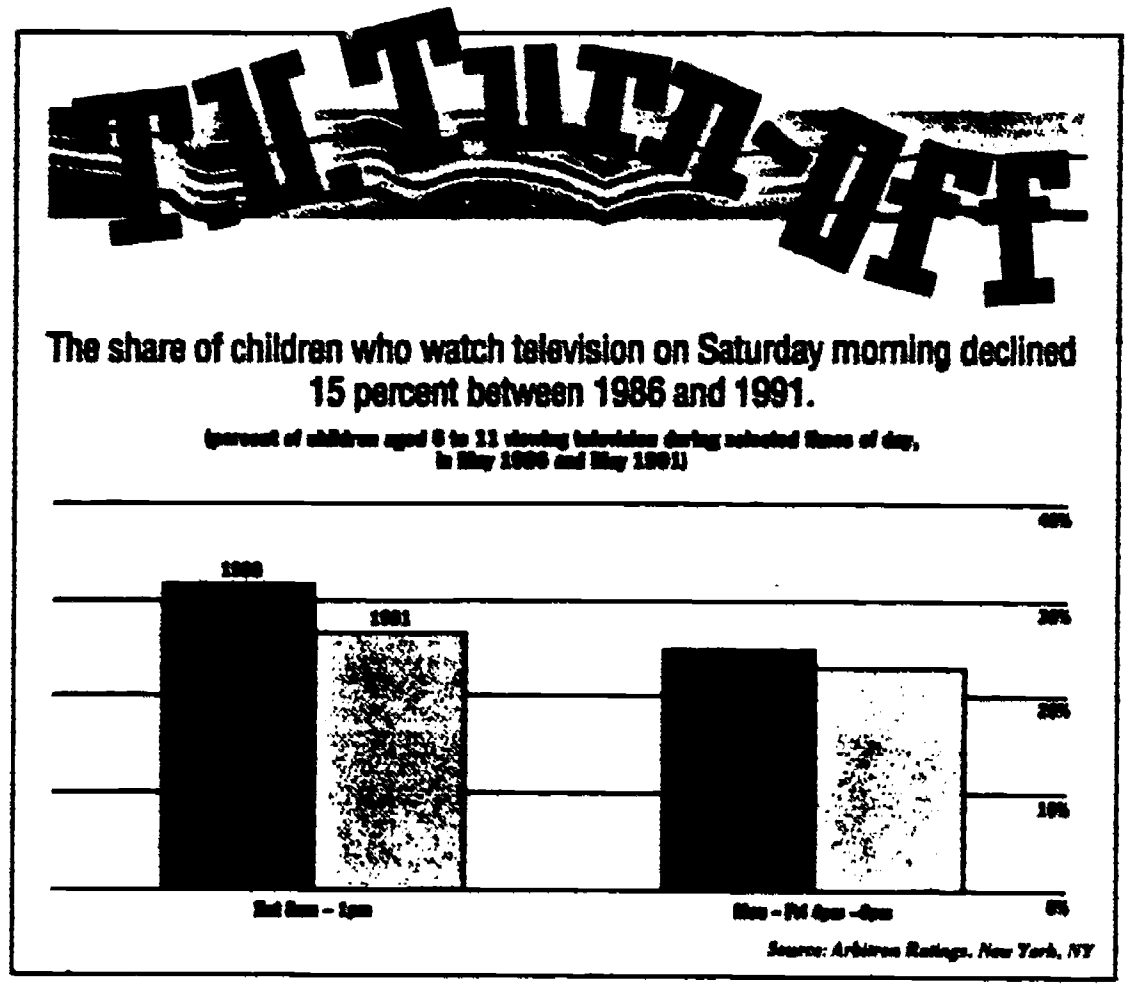
Measuring the audience for any kind of media is a tricky business. When the audience is children, the task gets even trickier. Advertisers who sponsor children's television programs can get estimates of the number of 2-to-5-year-old and 6-to-11-year-old viewers, but it's almost impossible to gauge the accuracy of those estimates.

Arbitron's ScanAmerica system measures television audiences using a "people meter," which combines a remote-control wand and a measuring device wired to the set. Each member of a participating household is assigned a code to enter when they start and stop watching TV. Very young children are represented by older household members, says McCarskey. Older children get special coloring-book training manuals and jingles to help them remember which buttons to push. But when you come right down to it, no one knows how often children forget to use the wand.

> Children are more likely to read magazines than comic books.

If the people meter system is accurate, Saturday morning cartoons are in serious trouble. Between 1990 and 1991, the A.C. Nielsen Company's people meters recorded a 13 percent decline in Saturday morning TV-watching among children aged 2 to 11. Saturday morning cartoons produce an estimated $200 million a year in ad revenue to the networks, according to *Mediaweek* magazine, so a 13 percent drop in viewers could cost the networks $25 million. Network executives say that for some reason, children simply didn't push the buttons this fall. But Arbitron has been using people meters since 1986, and their data show a 15 percent decline in Saturday morning viewing over five years.

It's easier to gauge children's use of print media. And fortunately for the producers of those media, it's easy to prove that children influence billions of dollars a year in consumer spending. As long as children remain a choice market segment, media options for them should grow more plentiful, more sophisticated, and more focused. •



INDIANA YOUTH INSTITUTE

10 Blueprints for Healthy Development

The Indiana Youth Institute's blueprint for healthy development of all Indiana's children is based on the premise that every child in Indiana—regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, handicapping condition, geographical location or economic status — deserves an equal opportunity to grow up in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.

BUILDING A HEALTHY BODY

Indiana's youth will be born at full term and normal birth weight to healthy mothers. They will receive a well-balanced diet in adequate supply to grow strong bodies to acceptable height for their age. They will be provided a balance of physical activity and rest in a safe and caring environment. They and their families will have access to good medical care and educational opportunities that teach them how to abstain from health-endangering activities and engage in health-enhancing activities.

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Indiana's children will experience love and care of parents and other significant adults. They will develop wholesome relationships while learning to work collaboratively with peers and adults.

BUILDING SELF ACCEPTANCE

Indiana's children and youth will perceive themselves as lovable, and capable; they will act with self-confidence, self-reliance, self-direction, and control. They will take pride in their accomplishments. As they develop self-esteem, they will have positive feelings about their own uniqueness as well as that of others.

BUILDING ACTIVE MINDS

Indiana's young people will have stimulating and nurturing environments that build on their individual experiences and expand their knowledge. Each young person will reach his or her own potential, gaining literacy and numeric skills that empower the lifelong process of asking questions, collecting and analyzing information, and formulating valid conclusions.

BUILDING SPIRIT & CHARACTER

Indiana's young people will grow up learning to articulate and inculcate values upon which to make ethical decisions and promote the common good. Within safe boundaries, children and youth will test limits and understand relationships between actions and consequences.

BUILDING CREATIVITY AND JOY

Indiana's young people will have diverse opportunities to develop their talents in creative expression (e.g., music, dance, literature, visual arts, theater); to appreciate the creative talents of others; and to participate in recreational activities that inspire constructive, lifelong satisfaction.

BUILDING A CARING COMMUNITY

Indiana's communities will encourage their young people to see themselves as valued participants in community life. In addition to being recipients of services that express the communities' concerns for their safety and well-being, young citizens will become resources who will improve their surroundings, support the well-being of others, and participate in decisions that affect community life.

BUILDING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Indiana's children and youth will learn to see themselves as part of the global community, beyond ethnic, religious, state, and national boundaries. In formal and informal educational experiences, they will have opportunities to become familiar with the history, political issues, languages, cultures, and ecosystems that affect global life and future well-being.

BUILDING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Indiana's young people will be exposed to a variety of educational and employment experiences that will contribute to vocational and career options. Their formal and informal educational experiences will prepare them to make the transition from school to work, to contribute to the labor force, and to participate in an economic environment that will grow increasingly more complex and will require lifelong learning.

BUILDING A HUMANE ENVIRONMENT

All children will have access to a physically safe environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of violence. They will have adequate housing and living conditions; safe neighborhoods; clean air, food, and water. Their environment will be free from toxins, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. All children will have an opportunity to learn how to protect their environment for the future.