BREAKING GENERATIONAL POVERTY THROUGH LITERACY

Increasing Capacity through Reading, Writing, and Speaking
READING IS A FOUNDATIONAL SKILL

- History
- Music
- Art
- Science
- Cooking and Baking
- Chemistry
- World Languages
- Anatomy
- Computer Science
- Law
- Political Science
LITERACY IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Without an elementary reading, writing, and speaking ability, children are more likely to:

- Become or remain impoverished
- Drop out of school
- Work for minimum wage or less
- Bear children who will have low literacy levels
- Be dependent on social services
- Exhibit poorer mental and physical health
ADULTS WHO CAN’T READ HAVE CHILDREN WHO CAN’T READ

MAJOR CAUSES OF ILLITERACY AMONG ADULTS

- Poverty (inaccessibility to reading resources and education)
- Unidentified Learning Disabilities
- Drop Out of School (for Work)
- Early Imprisonment/Incarceration
- Immigration and/or frequent relocation
- Early Parenting/Teen Pregnancy
- No free adult education programs

MAJOR CAUSES OF ILLITERACY AMONG CHILDREN

- Lack of parental mediation and modeling
- Low literacy household
- Lack of early intervention
- Insufficient Services for LD
- Frequent Relocation
- Insufficient childcare (low income, single parent households)
ILLITERACY FACTS IN THE U.S.

ADULTS (2016)

- US is 16th globally in adult reading skills
- 32 Million (14%) US adults are considered illiterate
- 40-44 Million (20-23%) possess basic reading skills
- 5th Grade/10 years old average literacy level for low level adults
- 63 Million cannot read past 8th grade level
- Males have lower proficiency than females, 33% to 38%

YOUTH (2016)

- High School students with 3rd grade reading level are 4 times more likely to drop out
- 19% of High School Grads do not have basic proficiency
- Single parent households negatively impact child’s literacy development
- 77% of children who are read to will read on their own
- 57% of children do not have a set time for reading at home
- Independent reading decreases as children age: 70% Middle to 49% High School
85% of Arrested Youth considered functionally illiterate, basic or below

70% Adult inmates score lowest in reading

Recidivism highest among inmates whose literacy does not improve in prison (27% to 60%)

66% of those who struggle to read well by 4th grade run into trouble with the law at some point
• 75% of welfare recipients are well below basic reading proficiency

• Illiteracy is estimated to cost the US $225 Billion in productivity

• Illiteracy costs the US $100 Billion annually in healthcare, particularly for those with chronic conditions requiring ongoing treatment

• Illiteracy compounds the wage gap for women:

  • Men with similarly low literacy skills were twice as likely to earn $650 or more per week

  • Women with low literacy skills are twice as likely to earn $300 or less per week

• Low literacy is a predictor for poverty and dependency on government assistance
What Can We Do?
✓ Use every opportunity to engage students in reading
✓ Make reading fun and interactive
✓ Choose texts and subjects the students care about
✓ Praise every effort to be engaged in a reading and writing activity
✓ Consider reading a fundamental goal of your time together
✓ Model reading and enjoyment from it
✓ Talk about the books you’re reading or have read
✓ Explore a book cover to cover
✓ Let the child choose what to read
✓ Avoid correcting every minor mistake