

Can your child read this? For Too Many Hoosier Kids, the Answer is, “No”

Briefly

Reading is the key to academic success and employment opportunities. Yet, only 30 percent of Indiana fourth graders and 28 percent of our eighth graders are at or above the “proficient” level in reading.¹ Overall, Hoosier reading scores have stagnated for years, and the percentage of students who are “below basic” has increased.

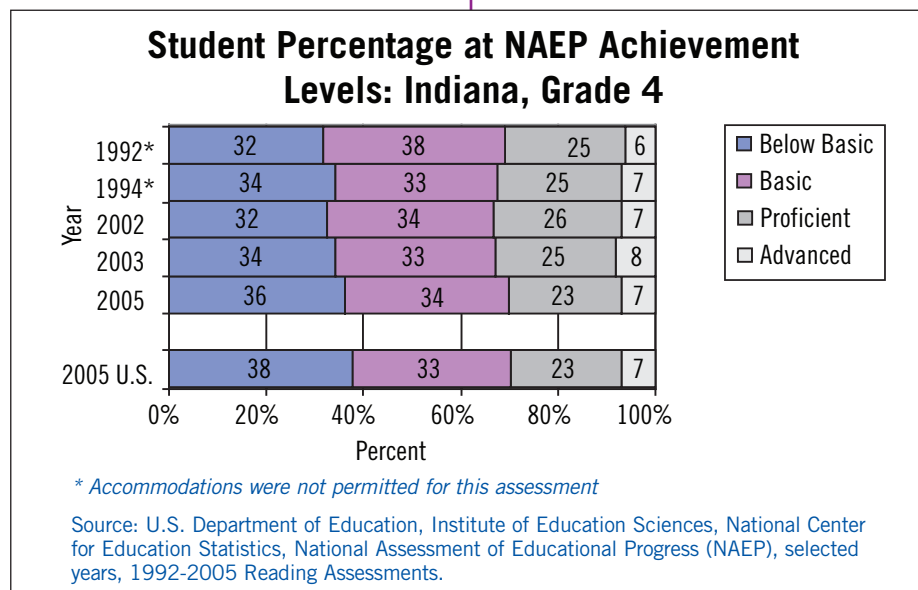
Good news/bad news

Indiana’s fourth and eighth grade students continue to score one point above the national average in reading, according to the Nation’s Report Card.² The discouraging news is that although Indiana’s rank

has remained relatively stable over time: As Indiana’s reading scores have dipped or stagnated over several decades, so have the reading scores of students across the country. Conclusion: The vital reading skills of children in Indiana are not improving.

What’s at stake

According to national research, how well a person will read as an adult is predictable as early as the first grade. More than 88 percent of children who have difficulty reading at the end of first grade display similar difficulty at the end of fourth grade. Three-quarters of students who are poor readers in third grade remain poor readers in high school and are less likely to graduate from high school.³



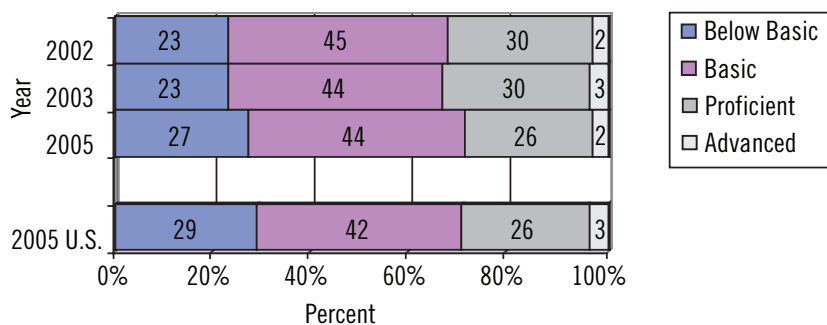
This research was funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). The Nation’s Report Card: Indiana State Profile. Retrieved from nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/profile.asp

² Ibid.

³ Education Commission of the States. (2006). Reading/Literacy Quick Facts. Retrieved from www.ecs.org

Student Percentage at NAEP Achievement Levels: Indiana, Grade 8



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), selected years, 2002-2005 Reading Assessments.

In the U.S., about 43 percent of adults with very low literacy skills live in poverty and 70 percent have no job or only a part-time job.⁴ Half of all adults in prison cannot read or write, and 85 percent of juvenile offenders have reading problems.⁵

U.S. businesses lose more than \$60 billion a year in productivity each year due to employees' lack of basic reading skills.⁶

Read early, read often

Student math scores are rising in Indiana, which is partly because schools play the dominant role in developing math skills. That is not the case with reading. Since children gain considerable knowledge about written language between birth and age 6, their parents directly and indirectly affect the development of reading skills.

Parents' vocabulary shapes the child's vocabulary. Parents' reading habits serve as models for the child's reading habits. The number and variety of books, magazines and newspapers that parents make available in the home can encourage or curtail a child's desire to read. Exposure to books and other print materials not only influences the development of vocabulary but also the

development of listening, comprehension and reading skills.⁷ Experts suggest several intentional ways parents can encourage literacy skills long before children enroll in school:⁸

- Make reading a part of your toddler's regular daily routine, even if only for a few minutes.
- Recite nursery rhymes and sing songs. Rhymes help children to develop language skills.
- Ask questions as you read, such as "What will happen next?" or "Why do you think he did that?"

Summer: Kick back, push ahead

Children who read as little as 15 minutes each day during the summer can advance their reading levels. The more a child reads during vacation breaks, the greater their potential for advancement. Reading four to five books has significantly larger effects than reading three or fewer books.⁹ Children who do not read during the summer can slide backward by two months or roughly 22 percent of the school year.¹⁰ According to Johns Hopkins researchers Karl Alexander and Doris Entwisle, learning losses over multiple summers contribute to the widening achievement gap between low-income and middle-class children.¹¹

⁴ National Institute for Literacy. (2000). Fact Sheet: Adult and Family Literacy. Retrieved from www.nifl.gov

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ ProLiteracy Worldwide. (2005). Fast Facts About Adult Literacy. Retrieved from www.proliteracy.org/media_room/literacy_facts.asp

⁷ Senechal, M. and LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73(2), 445-460.

⁸ Callison, D. (2004). Key Words In Instruction: Parent. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 21(3), 33-38.

⁹ Kim, J. (2004) Summer reading and the ethnic achievement gap. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(2), 169-188.

¹⁰ Reading is Fundamental. (n.d.) Keeping Kids Off the Summer Slide. Retrieved from www.rif.org/parents/articles/summerslide.msp

¹¹ Entwisle, D.R. and Alexander, K.L. (1992). Summer setback: Race, poverty, school composition, and mathematics achievement in the first two years of school. *American Sociological Review*, 57(1), 72-84.

EXPERTS OFFER PARENTS AND YOUTH WORKERS THESE GRADE-SPECIFIC TIPS
TO ENCOURAGE SUMMER READING:

PRE-K THROUGH FIRST GRADE:

Read daily to your child.¹²

Take your children to the public library and help them obtain their own library cards.¹³

Re-read books and pause during your reading to allow your child to finish sentences.¹²

Keep markers, crayons, pens, and paper on hand and encourage kids to make their own books.¹²

SECOND AND THIRD GRADE:

Have your child read recipes, then measure, stir ingredients.¹²

Have older children read to younger siblings.¹²

Play games that involve reading.¹²

Have your child write a grocery list.¹²

FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE:

Read aloud to them even if they can read alone.¹²

Link films and television shows to books.¹²

Let them stay up later if they are reading.¹²

Ask them to read schedules (movie, TV, etc.).¹²

SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE:

Set aside family reading time; read separately but in the same room.¹²

Recommend books you enjoyed when you were their age.

Encourage children to read aloud to others.¹²

Give reading-related gifts—books, gift cards from bookstores, bookshelves.¹²

NINTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE:

Set an example. Let your kids see you reading for pleasure.¹⁴

Build on your teen's interests. Look for books and articles that feature their favorite sports teams, rock stars, hobbies, or TV shows.¹⁴

Share books, newspaper articles, poems, or other things you've read recently that they might enjoy.¹⁴

With children of all ages, remember to be patient: Almost anything that youngsters read, including Sunday comics, helps build reading skills.¹⁴

¹² Callison, D. (2004). Key words in instruction: Parent. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 21(3), 33-38.

¹³ Humphrey, J. (2006). Personal communication.

¹⁴ Reading is Fundamental. (n.d.). How parents can encourage teens to read. Retrieved from www.rif.org/parents/tips/tip.aspx?View=18

Community based programs

Communities throughout Indiana have implemented various reading programs with positive results. For example:

I LIKE ME!

This research-based program uses personalized storybooks to promote reading among young children. The book includes references to having good friends, avoiding drugs, doing well in school and getting along with others. Studies show the 12-week program contributes to the overall growth in self-esteem, in addition to improving reading comprehension and recall. I Like Me! is offered in several Indiana communities by local Rotary Clubs. www.ilikeme.org/index1.html

REACH OUT AND READ

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national program that promotes early literacy by bringing new books and advice about the importance of reading aloud into the pediatric exam room. Pediatricians and nurses give children ages 6 months to 5 years a new book at each well-child exam accompanied by tips for parents about reading with their young children. www.reachoutandread.org

READ TO ME

This program encourages offenders in correctional institutions to read to their children. Incarcerated parents record a book on audio or videotape, and the tape is sent to their children. More than 50 offenders at four institutions have been active in the program since its launch in 2000. Read to Me is a collaborative effort of the Indiana State Library and correctional libraries.

www.statelib.lib.in.us/WWW/isl/ldo/readtome.html

PAWS TO READ

Certified dogs are all ears to encourage reluctant young readers to read to them. According to parent evaluations, the Brownsburg Public Library's PAWS to Read program has increased children's desire to read as well as their confidence in reading aloud. PAWS to Read is offered at several public libraries in Indiana.

www.brownsburg.lib.in.us

READING GIANTS

Programs that involve older children reading to younger children benefit both the readers and the listeners. Example: Last summer, 1,092 teen and pre-teen Reading Giants provided story hours for younger children at branches of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. All participants gave the program high marks; teens reported it increased self-confidence, gave them a sense of accomplishment and guided their career paths.

www.imcpl.org

BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING

Many libraries and other community organizations offer programming and materials in Spanish. For example, Thursday Story Time at the Walton & Tipton Township Public Library meets weekly to help Spanish-speaking students learn English as they continue to learn and read Spanish.

www.walton.lib.in.us/

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Since many children today come from families in which both parents work, several libraries offer outreach services. Example: The Vigo County Public Library visits day-care facilities to provide reading-related activities for children. Bookmobiles are another way libraries make services easy to access.

www.vigo.lib.in.us/

Indiana reading resources

The most likely place to locate a summer reading program for students and parents is at a local library. To find information about the library in your area, visit www.inspire.net/page42.html.

The websites of several professional organizations offer reading lists to help determine which books are right for children of specific ages and grade levels. Among them:

- **The Indiana Department of Education** offers a list of books appropriate for each grade level (www.doe.state.in.us/standards/readinglist.html) as well as resources for adult learners. www.doe.state.in.us/adulted/adultlearner.html
- **The Association for Indiana Media Educators** annually develops five read-aloud lists, each aimed at students in primary, intermediate, middle, high school and beyond. www.ilfonline.org/AIME/ReadAloud/ReadAloud.htm
- **Book Adventure** allows you to type in children's grade levels to find appropriate books for them. www.bookadventure.org/ki/bs/ki_bs_helpfind.asp
- **The American Library Association** suggests the top 10 books for teens as well as tips on reading them. www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/05TTTT.htm
- **The Lexile Framework for Reading** removes the guesswork of selecting books for young readers by matching readers to appropriate texts according to Lexile scores. www.lexile.com
- **Success by Six** is an early literacy program for children in Marion County. Any child under age 5 can register and receive one free hardcover book per month by mail. All books are age-appropriate. www.successby6Indy.org
- **Young Hoosier Book Award** encourages recreational reading in Indiana students and divides its program into three categories based on grade level: kindergarten through third grade; fourth through sixth grade and sixth through eighth grade. Children who attend schools that use YHBA books can get a head start by reading books on next year's list. www.ilfonline.org/AIME/YHBA/YHBA.htm
- **F.I.L.M.**, an acronym for "Finding Inspiration in Literature and Movies," is a collaborative project of the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) and Heartland Film Festival's Truly Moving Pictures. The literacy and film program encourages youth to view the featured films, read the books associated with the movies, participate in activities from the free, downloadable activity guides, and complete service projects that relate to the central themes of the books and movies. www.nassembly.org/film/index.htm
- **The Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award (Rosie Award)** is chosen annually by students across Indiana in grades nine through twelve. Students at participating high schools who read at least five of approximately 20 nominated books are eligible to vote for their favorite. The votes are tabulated each April, and the winner is announced. www.ilfonline.org/AIME/Rosie/EliotRosewaterProgram.htm

For additional county data, visit The Kids Count in Indiana Online Database at www.iyi.org.

Indiana Youth Institute Resources

IYI Weekly Update, a free, electronic newsletter featuring useful information such as training opportunities, free resources, new reports about youth, and a “Grant Tip of the Week.” Subscribe at http://www.iyi.org/weekly_updates/subscribe.asp

Kids Count in Indiana Data Book and online database, including state and county statistics on Indiana children and youth to support grant proposals and program initiatives. Access the database at <http://iyikcdb.iyi.org>

Virginia Beall Ball Library, a free lending library of youth development and nonprofit management materials, which can be borrowed easily by youth workers throughout the state, either on-site, online or through our toll-free main number. Search the catalog or sign up for an account at <http://www.iyi.org/library>

Youth Service Help Line, 877-IYI-TIPS, providing free phone assistance to youth organizations seeking quick answers to questions about fundraising, youth development and legal matters.

Free custom research on Indiana youth.

IYI's Web site, www.iyi.org, an online source for new reports on children, data for grant proposals, information about IYI's programs and library materials, and links to other valuable sources of youth development information.

Regional trainings, taught by nationally regarded instructors, offered at convenient locations across the state, on topics such as fundraising and working with youth.

Professional Development Grants, mini-grants for qualified youth workers to attend their choice of seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Kids Count in Indiana Conference, an annual fall conference designed to give Indiana youth workers the inspiration, networking opportunities, information and tools they need to serve children effectively.

Statewide assistance, providing free local service in all 92 Indiana counties. Call 1-800-343-7060 for information about how to contact the IYI Regional Field Representative near you.



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