



# A Look at Some Facts and Figures

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Access to books is key to reading skills. Studies confirm that the number of books in the home directly predicts reading achievement.

-  **18% of Idaho children live in poverty. For Hispanic children the rate is 27%. (2017 Idaho Kids Count)**
-  **In 2017-2018, 47% of Idaho public school children were eligible for free and reduced school lunch. (Idaho State Department of Education)**
-  **In 2017, 17,462 infants and 36,066 children ages 1 - 5 in Idaho received Women Infant Children (WIC) services. (Idaho Division of Public Health, Bureau of Clinical and Preventive Services, 2018)**
-  **61% of low-income families (nationally) have no children's books in their home. (National First Book, [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org))**
-  **In middle-income neighborhoods, there are on average 13 books for every child. By contrast, in low-income neighborhoods, the ratio drops significantly to one book for every 300 children. (Neuman, Susan B. and David K. Dickinson, *Handbook of Early Literacy Research, Volume 2*, 2006)**
-  **The availability of reading material in the home, whether owned or borrowed from the library, is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001)**
-  **80% of preschool and after-school programs serving low-income populations have no age-appropriate books for their children. (Neuman, Susan B., et al. *Access for All: Closing the Book Gap for Children in Early Education*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2001, p. 3)**
-  **Across the nation just under half of children between birth and five years are read to every day by their parents or other family members. (Russ, Perez, Garro, Klass, Kuo, Gershun, Halfon, Zuckerman. *Reading Across the Nation: A Chartbook (2007): Reach Out and Read National Center*, Boston, MA)**
-  **By the age of 2, children who are read to regularly display greater language comprehension, larger vocabularies, and higher cognitive skills than their peers. (Raikes, Pan, Luze, Tamis-LeMonda, Brooks-Gunn, Constantine, Tarullo, Raikes, Rodriguez, (2006). "Mother-child book reading in low-income families: Correlates and outcomes during the first three years of life." *Child Development*, 77(4))**
-  **Children who are read to at least three times a week by a family member are almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who were read to less than 3 times a week. (Denton, Kristen and Gerry West, "Children's Reading and Mathematics Achievement in Kindergarten and First Grade." U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Washington, DC, 2002)**

-  **Children entering kindergarten with basic math and reading skills are the most likely to do well in school later, even if they have various social and emotional problems.** *(Northwestern University. "Early Academic Skills, Not Behavior, Best Predict School Success." ScienceDaily 19 November 2007)*
-  **Idaho Reading Indicator scores for the 2017-2018 school year show that almost 63% of low-income children entering Kindergarten could not recognize at least 11 letters of the alphabet. And 74% of Hispanic kindergarteners could not recognize at least 11 letters.** *(Idaho State Department of Education)*
-  **The most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print.** *(Newman, Sanford, et al. "Americans Child Care Crisis: A Crime Prevention Tragedy"; Fight Crime; Invest in Kids, 2000)*
-  **Engaging caregivers appears to be an important factor in encouraging children to read. Children of caregivers who are given guidance on how to read to the child and encouraged to co-read with him/her appear to read more. Reading behavior is bolstered even more when distribution of print materials is combined with other teacher and/or caregiver-led activities.** *(from "Access to Print Materials Improves Children's Reading: A Meta-Analysis of 108 Most Relevant Studies Shows Positive Impacts," Learning Point Associates, 2010. Study commissioned by Reading is Fundamental.)*
-  **"Public libraries are helping to close the 'book gap' by providing children of all backgrounds access to high-quality reading materials and rich language experiences."** *(from "The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development: An Evaluation Report," Dr. Donna Celano and Dr. Susan B. Neuman, 2001)*
-  **Students who are not reading at grade level by the end of first grade have a one in eight chance of ever catching up to grade level without extraordinary and costly interventions.** *(Juel, 1988, 1994)*

*Conclusion:*

**One possible remedy to the socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement is to make sure that children of low-income families have access to high-quality, age-appropriate books. Having books can facilitate children's reading and shared reading between children and their caregivers.** *(from "Access to Print Materials Improves Children's Reading: A Meta-Analysis of 108 Most Relevant Studies Shows Positive Impacts," Learning Point Associates, 2010. Study commissioned by Reading is Fundamental.)*