

Literacy Statistics  
**From Literacy Chicago**  
www.literacychicago.org

**Children & Reading**

- ☞ A child who is raised in an environment rich with books and love for reading is better prepared for school than a child who is not.
- ☞ Homes where family reading is part of the daily routine produce children who have broader vocabularies, can better understand their teacher's directions, and are more likely to excel academically and in life.
- ☞ Children whose parents do not have a high school diploma or GED score poorest on reading tests and are 5 times more likely to drop out of school themselves.

**General Adult Literacy Statistics**

- ☞ 40 million adults in America read at or below the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level.
- ☞ Approximately 53% of the adult population in greater Chicago have low or limited literacy skills.
- ☞ 20% of all adults read at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level – far below the level needed to earn a living wage.
- ☞ 50% of those receiving public assistance did not graduate from high school and do not have a GED.
- ☞ In prisons alone, nearly 70% of those incarcerated lack a high school diploma or GED.

**The Poverty/Literacy Connection**

- ☞ Poverty is a factor that positively correlates to low literacy.
- ☞ Research shows that children in homes where the family is at or below poverty level are exposed to an average of 3,000 words before reaching kindergarten - - whereas children from non-impooverished homes are exposed to an average of 20,000 words. 3,000 vs. 20,000 words!
- ☞ Research reveals that in poor homes, children are read to an average of only 15 hours before reaching kindergarten, compared to 2,500 hours in on-poor homes. 15 vs. 2,500!
- ☞ 61% of low / no income families do not have books in their home for their children.
- ☞ Only 7% of children from poor homes are able to recognize all the letters of the alphabet.

**Earnings**

- ☞ Those who do work but lack a high school diploma or GED earn just 25% of what a college graduate earns for a living.

- œ Adults with limited literacy skills (no High School diploma or GED) earn 42% less than high school graduates.
- œ ... Even Corporate America bears the impact of low literacy. Studies show that it costs businesses over \$60 billion a year in lost productivity, waste, errors, and accidents. Businesses also report that 34% of job applicants lack the basic skills necessary to fill available positions.
- œ The American Management Association reports that 36% of job applicants tested by major U.S. corporations lack sufficient reading and math skills to do the job they seek. Further, shortages of skilled workers are reported by 47% of all U.S. corporations.