

INDIANA POWER!

**A Parents' Guide to
School Libraries**

**David V. Loertscher
with Connie Champlain
and Nancy A.S. Miller**

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A Parent's Guide to School Libraries

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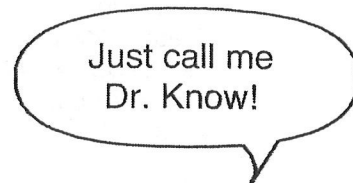
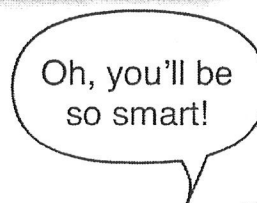
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Several Indiana librarians, other education professionals, and organizations contributed information to this book. A special thank you goes to Jack Humphrey, for his contribution of reading achievement data and the "Don't Leave Summer Reading to Chance" article. Also, thanks to the smart aleck cats, Wednesday (the Siamese) and Brigham for their snide remarks throughout the manuscript.

A School Library Agenda for Your Child/Teen

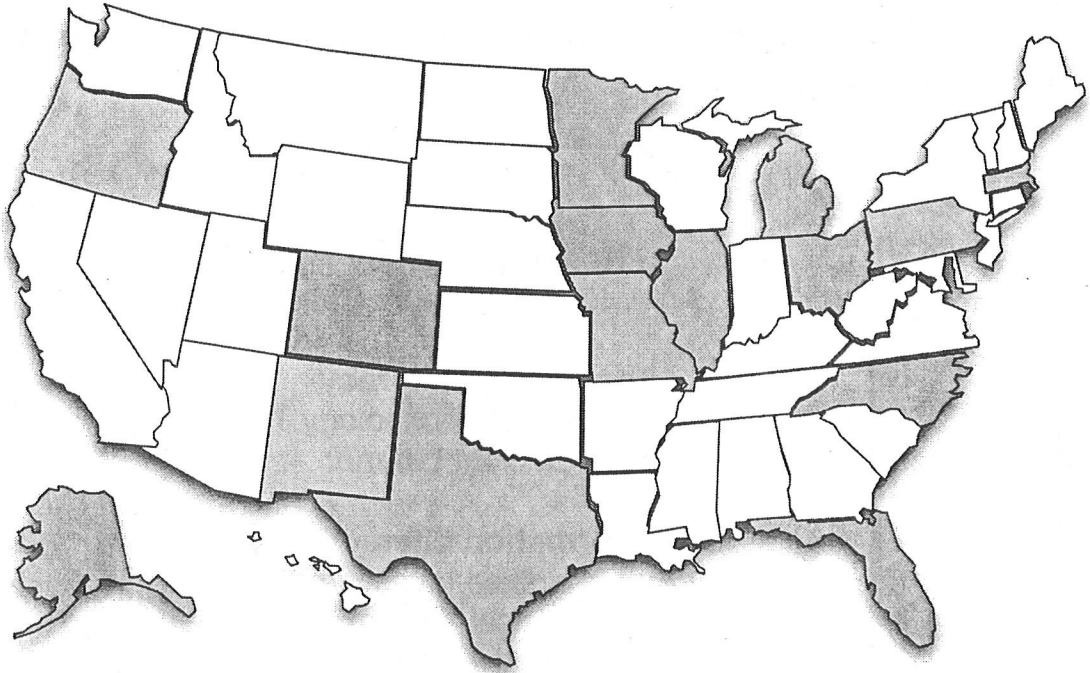
What type of person is likely to be successful in today's information-rich and technology-based world? What type of learner is likely to be successful in the world of the future insofar as we can foresee that world?

When an exemplary library program is in place, every young person can be equipped with:



Research on School Libraries: A National Picture

Since 1999, sixteen states have commissioned studies¹ about the impact of school libraries. In every instance, good school library media programs are linked to higher academic achievement—one part of a healthy educational diet.



Alaska, 2000
 Colorado, 2000
 Florida, 2003
 Iowa, 2002
 Illinois, underway
 Massachusetts, 2000
 Michigan, 2003
 Minnesota, 2002
 Missouri, 2003
 New Mexico, 2002
 North Carolina, 2003
 Ohio, 2004
 Oregon, 2001
 Pennsylvania, 2000
 Rhode Island, 2004
 Texas, 2001

It's like milk
 in your cat dish



Mmm!



¹ For a complete list of these studies, consult <http://www.davidvl.org> under "Research" or the Colorado State Library at <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp>.

What Every Parent Should Know About School Libraries and Reading Achievement

The case for readers in the age of information is clear. From *Indiana's Academic Standards: English/Language Arts*:

The world is changing fast. In order for students to succeed in school, at work, and in the community, they will need more skills and knowledge than ever before. To meet these challenges, Indiana established new academic standards in English/Language Arts. These world-class standards outline what students should know and be able to do at each grade level... The demand is greater than ever for people who can read, write, speak effectively, analyze problems and set priorities, learn new things quickly, take initiative, and work in teams.¹

What do you as a parent know about the role of school library programs in your child's education? What should you know? In a report of a study of differences between higher and lower-performing schools commissioned by the Indiana Department of Education, the following items were noted:

- **Key Finding:** "Higher-Performing schools use a wide array of literature, including trade books, newspapers, and basal readers to support their reading/language arts program
- **Policy Implication:** "Increase student access to instructional and print materials in lower-performing schools, including regular and flexible access to a working library,"²

School libraries and reading achievement are clearly linked.

The quality of school libraries is a significant measure of the caliber of middle, junior, and senior high schools. Major studies during the past five decades substantiate that reading achievement is increased by quality library collections and regular student use of the library.³

In their recent study of schools in Alaska, Pennsylvania and Colorado, Lance and Loertscher found that scores were 10 to 20 percent higher in schools where libraries have strong library specialists who collaborate with teachers, teach information literacy, promote reading, and see to it that collections are current and ample.⁴

¹ *Indiana's Academic Standards: English/Language Arts*. Teacher's Edition. Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Education, 2000, p. i. At <http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/>

² From: *A Study of the Differences Between Higher- Lower-Performing Indiana Schools in Reading and Mathematics*. Prepared for the Indiana Department of Education NCREL (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory), February 2000.

³ Holland, Earlene L. & Humphrey, Jack W. "Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior, and Senior High Schools," Middle Grades Reading Network, March 2004.

⁴ Lance, Keith and David V. Loertscher. *Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference*. 2nd ed. Salt Lake City: Hi Willow, 2002.

Research Linking Reading to Academic Achievement

Research completed by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich¹, Stephen Krashen,² and Jeff McQuillan³ plus the latest NAEP research⁴ from the U.S. federal government link the amount young people read with their scores on academic achievement. The message is clear:

For Everyone: Amount Counts! One hundred years of research supports the notion that free voluntary reading (the kind of reading you want to do, not have to do) is the best predictor of seven essential achievement basics:

*Comprehension, Spelling, Grammar, Vocabulary,
Writing Style, Verbal Fluency, General Knowledge*

For ESL Learners: Amount Counts!

Research also demonstrates that the fastest way to get anyone—child, teenager, or adult—to learn English is to have them read a lot in English!

Reading vs. Television: Consider this: 1) Children's books have 50 percent more rare words in them than adult prime-time television, and 2) Popular magazines have roughly three times as many opportunities for new word learning as prime-time television.

NAEP Results 2000.¹

Fourth graders in the United States do better academically when they:

- Read more pages in school
- Read more pages as homework
- Have more books, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedias in their homes
- Report that they read for fun every day
- Discuss what they read.

Indiana Action Research: Nancy McGriff, librarian, and Susan Angelos, reading teacher, of South Central Community Schools in northern Indiana completed a study linking student time spent in voluntary reading programs with ISTEP+ (Indiana State-wide Test of Educational Progress) reading achievement scores. Overall, the total student group made modest improvement between testing at 3rd grade (score = 60) to 6th grade testing (score = 66). Students who participated at the highest level in the voluntary reading program, however, achieved scores an average of 12 points higher (score = 69) than students who chose not to participate in the reading program (score = 57) in vocabulary and total reading scores.⁵



At the secondary level, Janet Tassell, Director of Learning and Assessment and Vickie Winkler, Library Media Specialist for North Spencer County School Corporation, studied test results of Heritage Jr. Sr. High School after they began a concerted focus on independent reading. She found steady improvements in standardized reading comprehension test scores. In particular, many students moved from the lowest performance group category to the highest group category between 8th and 10th grades.⁶

¹ "What Reading Does for the Mind" by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich. *American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 1998, p. 1-8.

² *The Power of Reading* by Stephen Krashen, 2nd ed. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

³ *The Literacy Crisis* by Jeff McQuillan (Heinemann, 1998).

⁴ "The Nation's Reading Report Card: Fourth-Grade Reading 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics," The Center, 2000, online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001499>

⁵ "Research into Practice: Free Voluntary Reading and Tracking Students Reading Progress" by Nancy Everhart, ed., with Susan Angelos and Nancy McGriff. *Knowledge Quest*, vol. 30, no. 5, May/June 2002, p. 43-46.

⁶ Loertscher, David V. with Connie Champlain. *Reinventing Indiana's School Library Media Programs in the Age of Technology*. HiWillow Research and Publishing, 2001.

How Does Indiana Compare to the Nation in School Libraries?

In March 2004, the Federal Government released the report: *The Status of Public and Private School Library Media Centers in the United States: 1999-2000*. available at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004313.pdf>><http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004313.pdf>

While the data are old (federal wheels grind slowly), it is the most recent national statistics we have. How did Iowa compare to the nation that year? The following table summarizes some of the most important findings:

Characteristic	Source	Indiana	Nation
Public schools that claim to have a library	p. 4	97.5%	91.6%
Private schools in the U.S. that claim to have a library	p. 6	Not Reported	62.8%
Public schools that have a certificated librarian	p. 8	76.8%	75.2%
Number of schools with a full time librarian at the school	p. 18	24.3%	60.5%
School libraries with paid library aides	p. 22	36.1%	71.6%
Average library expenditures (books and multimedia)	p. 28	\$8,151	\$8,729
Average number of books in the library	p. 28	11,393	10,232
Average library circulation of materials per week	P. 46	598	605

Conclusions:

- Indiana has many, many schools that do not have a full-time librarian. This means that many schools share a librarian with another school or several schools. Why is that a problem? David Loertscher conducted dissertation research in Indiana in 1973 in the school libraries of Indiana and found that the most frustrated professionals were those that serve more than one school. These librarians are unable to develop a full reading or information literacy program in any of their schools. Which is better when there is money to hire only a half-time person? In spite of the equity arguments, it would seem better to hire a full-time person who could really make a difference in one school but leave the other one vacant. At least half the children/teachers would flourish rather than everyone suffering. Equitable policies are the best action.
- Spending on materials is below the national average.
- Collections of books are above the national average but no measure was taken of copyright date so that the collections could be quite old in one school and current in another.
- Circulation is at the national average, but not high enough to give a major boost to literacy.

Good advice for every parent and grandparent:

- A school library with lots of books and a professional librarian makes a difference to your child's/grandchild's education.
- Find out if your school actually has a professional librarian and good budgets to buy materials you child wants to read.
- Even in hard times, if you cut the library, you decrease your child's chances of succeeding in school.
- Advocate for a great school library. Young minds are this nation's future, your Social Security, Medicare, and the best hope for a sound national future.

Why a Professional School Librarian?



"You mean we need a person with a Master's Degree in the school library? After all, can't the books just be checked in and out by a clerk or even a volunteer parent?"

"I'm afraid not, Kid. The school librarian of today is a teacher who administers a very complex print and digital information environment and serves as an information coach for teachers and students."

Here are a few things professional school librarians do:

1. They help teachers create exciting learning experiences in an information-rich and technology-rich environment.
2. They help every student get the best information to fulfill their assignments.
3. They build and maintain a digital school library open to your children/teens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere in the school and from home. And, they are interested in "smaller," "safe," and reliable information rather than the whole Internet.
4. They guide and teach students to evaluate information - particularly from the Internet. "Who's saying what to me, for what reason, and with what credibility?"
5. They teach students the research process in a world full of information overload and data smog.
6. When teachers bring classes to the library, the librarian serves as a second teacher so that every student gets individual attention.
7. And, by the way, they are still reading's best friend.

"Trying to staff a library with only a clerk is like trying to run a hospital entirely with nurses."

Requirements to be a professional school librarian in Indiana

- Have a valid elementary or secondary IN teaching credential.
- Complete School Library Certification Program (27 semester hour program).

Is your school library staffed by a PROFESSIONAL school librarian?

Ask the pointed question: "Are you a credentialed school librarian?" If your school does not have such a person, ask why it doesn't. Remember that in sixteen major studies since 2000 in over 9200 schools with professional school librarians, scores were 10 to 20% higher than in schools without these professionals.

Indiana Academic Standards and Information Literacy

Indiana, under the direction of the Indiana General Assembly, has developed new academic standards to prepare students for the future. The standards describe what a student should know and be able to do in each subject and at each grade level. They outline a connected body of understandings and competencies and are a comprehensive foundation that all students should learn.

Information and technology literacy standards are embedded in the Indiana academic standards. Indiana does not have separate information literacy or technology literacy standards. For example, English/Language Arts Standard 4, Writing Process, includes "Research and Technology," which requires students to develop presentations based on a variety of print and electronic sources and to use technology for all aspects of creating, revising, editing, and publishing. Standard 7, Listening and Speaking, asks students to analyze oral and media communications and to deliver multimedia presentations that demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of literary works and support important ideas and viewpoints through references to the text and other works.

The Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning¹

Information Literacy - The student who is information literate:

- accesses information efficiently and effectively.
- evaluates information critically and competently.
- uses information accurately and creatively.

Independent Learning - The student who is an independent learner:

- is information literate and pursues information related to personal interests.
- is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.
- is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.

Social Responsibility - The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society:

- is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.
- is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.
- is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

¹ American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning*. American Library Association, 1998. For more information about the nine information literacy standards, see the American Association of School Librarians web page at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/informationliteracy.htm>

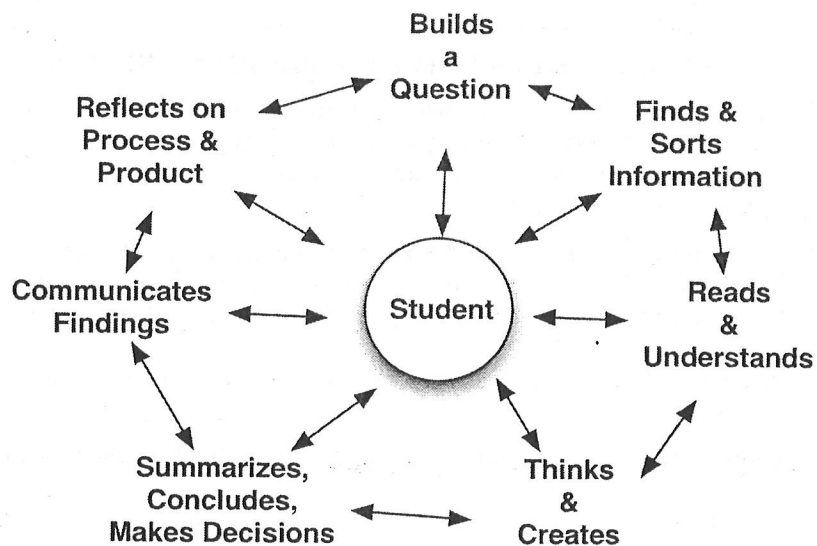
Information Literacy: A Life Skill

Whether your child is a kindergartner, a high school senior, or anywhere in between, school library media specialists help students learn to locate, evaluate, and use information on science, social studies, or any other school topic.

The challenge for the students of today is to sort through all the information and voices crowding into their world in order to make sound decisions, evaluate information, and prepare for jobs and careers.

Given a topic, a problem, an assignment, a paper, or just a personal quest, the child or teen might follow the process pictured below. It's a messy, sometimes frustrating process, requiring lots of work and hard thinking.

The Information Literacy Process



You expect me to do all that?



Keep it a secret, Kid, it's called learning.



Helping Your Child/Teen with Information

As young people do various assignments/projects requiring the finding and use of information, parents can help and support what the school librarian is teaching. Here are some ideas as the research process develops.

The Research Task	What the Librarian Teaches	How Parents Can Help
Builds a Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building background knowledge about a topic. • The difference between a good questions and a poor question. • Narrowing a topic. • Forming key words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find books on the topic with lots of pictures to share together. • Explain concepts about the topic and define terms. • Help narrow a topic to something manageable in the time available.
Finds and Sorts Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search strategies. • Locating resources. • Skim, scan and consider. • Evaluate resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep asking about the quality of the information being used. • Is this source the best information?
Reads and Understands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading strategies. • Actively read, view and listen. • Reading pictures. • Use features of non-fiction text. • Note-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep asking and helping to find the "main ideas" and the "supporting ideas" as reading/viewing/listening occurs.
Thinks and Creates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using graphic organizers. • Sorting, comparing, and classifying information. • Looking for patterns and trends. • Compare and contrast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make logical connections between ideas across the various sources being used.
Summarizes, Concludes, Makes Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to summarize ideas. • Drawing conclusions. • Making decisions. • How not to plagiarize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the conclusion, decision, or summary follow logically from the information collected?
Communicates Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques of presenting information in print or multimedia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ideas presented are more important than how flashy the presentation is.
Reflects on Process and Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to reflect: what I know and am able to do. • How well did I do. • How can I do better over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No matter the grade, what do you know and what are you able to do? • How can you do better next time?

Cut and Clip (Plagiarism): A Major Problem

The number one complaint of teachers and librarians today is that students cut and clip information from the Internet, books, and other resources and then pass it in as if it were their own work. There are services available on the Internet where for a fee, the student can download a research paper to print out and hand in. The impact on learning is devastating. There is none.

Replace **CUT** and **CLIP** with:
Cut, Clip, THINK!

Let's get a few things straight:

1. It's OK to cut and clip articles, pictures, quotes, or anything else as you assemble information for a project.
2. Hint: When cutting and clipping, be sure that the source (or citation) follows the information, so you don't lose the author, title, date, Internet URL, etc.
3. When we use information from a source, we cite it properly with the author, title, publisher, date or Internet URL. If we don't, we have plagiarized.
4. We may quote and summarize the ideas of others, but it is our own creative thought, analysis, and decisions that will be evidence of learning.
5. "How to THINK" is the true objective of learning and it is the life-blood of our society.

You can help by asking good questions as your child's/teen's project develops. Question starters will stimulate discussion and perhaps some appropriate advice.

1. Have you recorded the sources as you find information?
2. What is the difference between what this author says and what you think?
3. How did your teacher or librarian teach you how to record the sources of the ideas you have gathered?
4. How do you weave the ideas of others and your own into a finished product?

Judging an Internet Site: A Critical Skill

Use this guide to help decide whether or not the web pages are reliable sources for research. Need help? Ask your school librarian.

URL: _____

Author:	
Who is the author? (Can't find a name? Look at the top and bottom of the page. Click through other pages on the site looking for an author).	Based on the information you found, rate this source: <input type="button" value="Credible"/> <input type="button" value="Not Credible"/>
What makes the author an expert on this topic? What do you learn about the author's occupation , years of experience , education , or other facts that make him an expert?	
List any connection the author has to a university, research laboratory, governmental agency, or other reputable organization related to the topic.	

Purpose:	
What is the purpose of the website? To sell something? To provide information? To convince you of something? What does the domain name (.com, .gov, .org, .edu, .info) tell you about the purpose of the site?	Based on what you found out about the purpose, rate this source: <input type="button" value="Biased"/> <input type="button" value="Not Biased"/>
If only one side of the argument is presented, what side is left out?	
What is another resource or type of resource that might provide the other side of the story?	

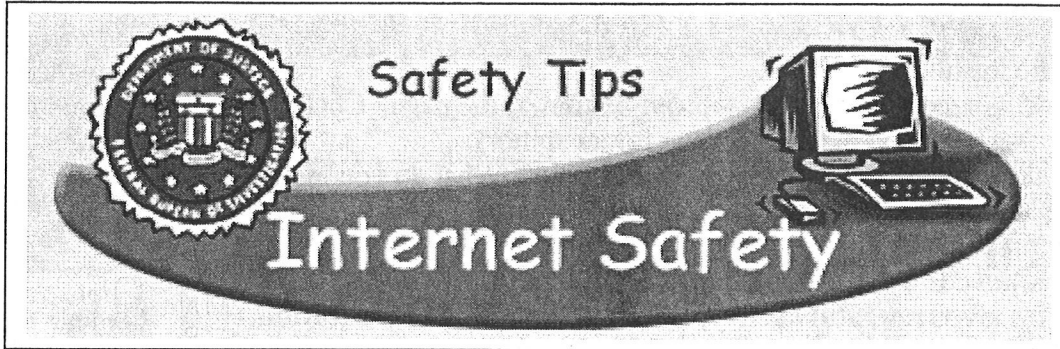
Accuracy:	
Note any obvious errors on the page, including spelling or grammar errors. What does this suggest about care in producing the page?	This information is <input type="button" value="Accurate"/> <input type="button" value="Not Accurate"/>
How does the information factually compare to information from other sources you've already read?	

Content and Currency:	
If statistics are provided, how old is the data?	This information is <input type="button" value="Current"/> <input type="button" value="Cited"/> <input type="button" value="Not Current"/> <input type="button" value="Not Cited"/>
How recent is the other information on the page? Does this make the information more or less valuable?	
When was the page written? When was it last revised?	
Does the author provide a bibliography, Works Cited page or footnotes that tell us where he got the information?	

Summary:	The best reasons for using or rejecting this website are: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>
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Internet Safety for Kids

Here are a few tips from the FBI about Internet Safety.



There are some very important things that you need to keep in mind when you're on your computer at home or at school.

- First, remember never to give out personal information such as your name, home address, school name, or telephone number in a chat room or on bulletin boards. Also, never send a picture of yourself to someone you chat with on the computer without your parent's permission.
- Never write to someone who has made you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Do not meet someone or have them visit you without the permission of your parents.
- Tell your parents right away if you read anything on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Remember that people online may not be who they say they are. Someone who says that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could really be an older man.

To read more about new privacy rules, visit the Federal Trade Commission's Web site at <http://www.ftc.gov>. There is a special section just for kids.

Also, download the FBI's "A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety" either in English or Spanish at: <http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguide.htm>.

Help Your Child/Teen Become an Expert: Start at the School Library

"I've been crazy about frogs since I was a kid. I collected them along with snakes, ants, and other critters, and even joined the Wisconsin Herpetological Society as a charter member—at age 14. Now, as a zoologist-photographer, I get to combine my two great passions. For a guy like me, an assignment to cover Brazil's Atlantic forest was a ticket to Frog Heaven."

~ Mark W. Moffett, "Frog heaven," *National Geographic*, March, 2004, p. 24.

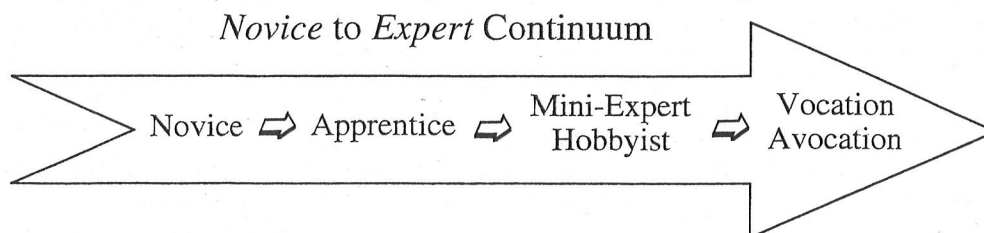
On winning the Academy Award for 2004, Peter Jackson, the Director of *The Lord of the Rings* movies said, "Thanks to my parents who gave me an 8mm movie projector at age nine."

Depending on the school your child/teen attends, the focus of education may be limited to learning basic knowledge about many topics. Projects and research or natural curiosity may lead your child into investigations far beyond the expertise of teachers or the curriculum.

When your child becomes interested in the Antarctic, whales, dinosaurs, science fiction, inventions, or a myriad of other topics, talk to the school librarian about ways to push an interest into expertise.

Libraries are Keys to Becoming Experts:

- ❖ Explore the school library first.
- ❖ Explore the public library.
- ❖ Explore the Internet.
- ❖ Link to experts.
- ❖ Gain access to advanced collections.
- ❖ Do experimentation and research.
- ❖ Question all information in libraries.



A Critical Thinker

Library media specialists see critical thinking as one of the major components of the information literate person. The ISTEP+ and other national tests such as the ACT and SAT have many items that test not only factual knowledge, but also the ability to think critically about a concept. Instead of advocating an add-on to the curriculum (a new scope and sequence or curriculum to be taught) critical thinking is best integrated with content.

Teachers and library media specialists should teach critical thinking strategies within the context of content-area projects, lessons, and information use. The objective is to create neither students who are sponges (believing everything they read, view, and hear), nor cynics (believing nothing they read, view, and hear), but healthy skeptics (using evidence and authoritative sources to judge believability).

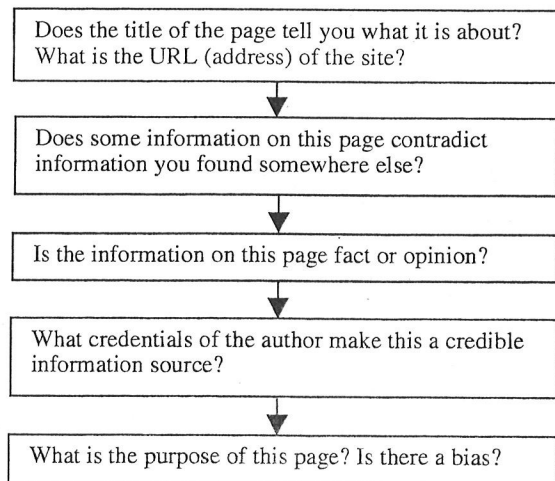
CRITICAL THINKING CONTINUUM

Sponges - - - - - Healthy Skeptics - - - - - Cynics

A Major Challenge: Evaluating Information on the Internet

One of the major challenges, for example, is to educate learners to evaluate information they find on the Internet. Teachers and library media specialists should work together to teach learners these evaluative skills. Very young users may simply be asked to decide whether a site seems to be on the right topic or whether it is easy to understand. As learners develop cognitively, becoming more sophisticated in their use of online resources, teachers and library media specialists should respond with increasingly sophisticated lessons about authority, bias, currency and accuracy.

As students become more sophisticated, so will the questions we ask of them.



Resources for Web Evaluation

1. "Critical Evaluation Information," by Kathy Schrock. <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html>
2. "Cyber Guides," by Linda Joseph. <http://www.cyberbee.com/guides.html>
3. Infopeople's "Evaluating Internet Resources." <http://infopeople.berkeley.edu/howto/bkmk/select.html>
4. "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources," by Jane Alexander and Marsha Tate. <http://www2.widener.edu/Wolfgram-Memorial-Library/webevaluation/webeval.htm>
5. "A Guide to Critical Thinking About What You See on the Web" <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/Training/hott.html>

A Creative Thinker

Is your child/teen creative? All of us have creative capacities and they can be improved. Creativity can also be squashed. Consider the definition in the box on the right¹ and an advertising poem used by Apple Computer.² School libraries are full of creative ideas and books that stimulate creativity. Enjoy!

To the Crazy Ones

Here's to the crazy ones.

The misfits.

The rebels.

The troublemakers.

The round pegs in the square holes.

The ones who see things differently.

They're not fond of rules.

And they have no respect for the status quo.

You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them,

disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them.

About the only thing you can't do is ignore them.

Because they change things.

They invent. They imagine. They heal.

They explore. They create. They inspire.

They push the human race forward.

Maybe they have to be crazy.

How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art?

Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written?

Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

We make tools for these kinds of people.

Because while some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

And it's the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world,
who actually do.

Think different.

c. 1997. Apple Computer Inc.

The Creative Process

First Insight



Saturation



Incubation



Verification

¹ The creative process is Getzel/Kneller's description in von Wodtke, Mark. *Mind Over Media: Creative Thinking Skills for Electronic Media*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993. P 11.

² ©1997, Apple Computer, Inc. Used by permission.

Tips for Homework Help

Homework: A Concern for the Whole Family

How to Help: Show that you think education and homework are important!

- ❖ Set a regular time for homework.
- ❖ Pick a place.
- ❖ Remove distractions.
- ❖ Provide supplies and identify resources.
- ❖ Set a good example.
- ❖ Be interested and interesting.

How to Help: Monitor assignments

- ❖ Ask about the homework policy.
- ❖ Be available.
- ❖ Look over completed assignments.
- ❖ Monitor and limit time spent viewing TV and playing video games.

How to Help: Provide guidance

- ❖ Help your child get organized.
- ❖ Encourage good study habits.
- ❖ Talk about the assignments.
- ❖ Watch for frustration.
- ❖ Give praise.

From: "Helping Your Child with Homework." U.S. Dept. of Education, Accessed March 2, 2004 at: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/index.html>

The entire manual is available for downloading in a number of formats.

Know How the School and Public Library Can Help

Resources:

- ❖ Know the open hours of school and public libraries since homework time often surpasses those hours.
- ❖ Know what's available on the digital school library (school site) and at INSPIRE (<http://www.inspire.net>).
- ❖ Expect lists of the best websites to be available on your school and public library websites. Several well-chosen websites will save countless hours of searching.
- ❖ Know if there is a "virtual reference service" available—a librarian online to help at any time of day or night.
- ❖ Know that INSPIRE (an online database resource collection) is available to any Indiana citizen at no charge and obtain, if necessary, any password needed to get access. (See note about digital certificates at <http://www.inspire.net>).

Advice:

- ❖ Be a supportive guide on the side.
- ❖ Help your child with organizational skills and timelines for the assignments.
- ❖ Help the child meet milestone deadline dates along the way for longer projects.
- ❖ **Don't do the projects for your child!**

The Library and the Textbook

Textbooks are extremely expensive sources of information. Check with your school, but many schools budget anywhere from \$60 to \$100 per year per student to keep the textbooks somewhat current. With the rise of students who are learning English or who are poor readers, it would not be uncommon to have 60% of a class that could not read and understand the textbook for any given course or class.

Textbooks constitute a core element of most schools in the United States because they provide structure, even content, and guidance for teachers on how to teach a course. In recent years, textbooks have been "dumbed down." That means their reading level has decreased and the content simplified as compared to the same textbooks you had in school. Yet the amount to be learned each decade continues to increase because knowledge is expanding.

A typical teacher faced with 60% of the class who cannot read and understand the textbook has one significant alternate information source: the library. If your child does not read well, then the library is the only hope to provide understandable content.

The rest of the United States looks to Texas and California for the textbooks they use because these two states make exacting demands on textbook publishers. Since these two markets are so large, what these two states want is what the rest of the country buys.

Typically, for less than half the budget of textbooks, the library collection will contain:

1. Multiple reading levels.
2. Depth of subject treatment vs. the breadth of treatment found in textbooks.
3. Pictures, diagrams, charts, and real objects.
4. Multimedia such as videos, audio, and computer software.
5. Periodical, maps, atlases, and reference books.
6. A wide variety of perspectives such as cultures and opinions.

The point is not to cancel the textbook. The point is to supplement any textbook with a fine collection of library materials that can support every learner—your child included. Schools with the most at-risk students should have the best libraries if we really expect every child to "pass the test."

School Libraries and Technology Departments

When microcomputers first came into school, the person who was usually put in charge was the person in the school who had any interest in the new contraptions—the science teacher, the math teacher, sometimes the librarian. In early computer years, there developed a split between the library and the technology department with its networks and computer labs. Today, there is a trend toward merging libraries and computer labs, but staffing is still a problem since no one person can do it all and keep it all running efficiently.

Librarians are most interested in what's ON the wires rather than being fascinated by the wires themselves. Their focus is on:

- ❖ Online databases containing periodicals and factual information.
- ❖ Linking to the best Internet sites.
- ❖ Tools students can use to do their assignments.
- ❖ Access in the library, the classroom, and at home.
- ❖ Portability of computers for differing classroom/library uses.
- ❖ Wireless access to library information systems anywhere in the school.
- ❖ Helping teachers create exciting learning experiences using technology as a teaching and learning tool.

No matter how the school is organized, whether libraries and technology staffs are separate or merged, parents will want results rather than excuses.

Determine the state of information systems in the school that are needed to support your child's education. Ask about:

- ❖ The state of computer equipment (age, software, operating systems).
- ❖ The reliability of the information systems. (Are they working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?)
- ❖ Equitable access to computers for every child (home access to school networks, extended hours, loaner systems for home use).
- ❖ Software needed for your child to do excellent work.
- ❖ Databases and digital periodical collections to easily locate high quality information (students are encouraged to use INSPIRE).
- ❖ Collections of the best Internet sites targeted at school topics and age levels.
- ❖ Filters to protect against advertising, pornography, and predators, yet open enough to find the information your child needs.

This handheld connects using Bluetooth



Huh?



The Digital School Library

More and more school libraries have web pages available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Find out your school library's URL and use it yourself and guide your child or teen to its features. Here is a list of features you might find useful:

Connections to Assignments	When assignments by teachers involve the library collections, links to those assignments with lots of helps is a common school library web page feature. http://www.bcsc.k12.in.us//northhs/media/Curriculum_Links/curriculum_links.htm
Bibliographies to Complete Assignments	Many librarians try to save learners time by posting the best web sites, tips, guides to helpful books, or online databases. http://www.vigoschools.org/~honyms/hcmedia.html
Tips on Research	A wide variety of helps might be available such as tips on citing sources, where to go to find information, helpful experts to consult, and mini-tutorials on parts of the research process. http://www.sacs.k12.in.us/mainembed.asp?section=Homestead&source=hhs/imc/splash/splash.htm
Online Periodical Collections	The web page should lead to students to digital magazines either purchased by the school, the public library, or the state. These digital collections will be invaluable in finding current articles on almost any topic. http://www.msdt.k12.in.us/schools/NC/WP499/htm/ACADicdatabs.HTM
Online Databases	Databases might contain all sorts of factual data such as weather information, science data, population statistics, lists of government agencies, or other current factual or experimental data. http://www.myilibrary.org/ISI/
Selected Internet Sites	Instead of turning the students loose in the ocean of the full Internet, many librarians select a body of "the best" of the web for use by their students. http://web.nafcs.k12.in.us/Users/NAHS/NAHS50/Library/SR/Shakespeare.htm
Best Book Lists	There are hundreds of recommended lists of good books for kids and teens to read. The librarian might link to some of these and encourage students to post lists of their favorites for others to access. http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/rea/literature.html
Published Student Work	Many students create very high quality papers, poetry, fiction, or other projects and these can be posted on the library web site for other students to enjoy. http://www.siec.k12.in.us/cannelton/echoes/
Connections to Other Libraries	There may be connections to other school libraries, public libraries, academic libraries, state libraries, and national libraries to link students to the best of the entire world. http://www.nobl.k12.in.us/media/NorthMedia/index.htm
Homework Helps	Virtual reference - a service providing online help 24 hours a day is beginning to emerge in many communities. The school library web page would link to these kinds of services for the level of students and those accessible to your area. http://www.plainfield.k12.in.us/hschool/library/research.htm
Connections to School Activities	The library web page would link to the school web page, school activities, sports events, competitions, and important school announcements. http://www.qcs.k12.in.us/rvms/hotlinks.htm
Parent Help Pages	Tips and helpful resources for parents might include emergency information, helping with homework, educational opportunities, and sources for scholarships. http://www.pike.k12.in.us/schools/index1.asp?school=ces
Resources For Teachers	While the teachers could use all the information sources listed above, special helps might include special subject web sites, professional development opportunities, and tips for busy teachers. http://shs.msdp.k12.in.us/depts/imc/imc.html

INSPIRE: Indiana Virtual Library

INSPIRE, Indiana's Virtual Library, is a collection of commercial databases and other information resources, which is provided at no cost to all Indiana residents as a service of the State and libraries of Indiana. INSPIRE can be accessed by Indiana residents who have Internet access at school, home, in their library or at their place of business. To logon to INSPIRE, point your web browser to <http://www.inspire.net>. Residents of other states may have similar services available to them.

Anything that you might find in a magazine or journal plus Websites, pamphlets, images, almanacs, and library catalogs is available on INSPIRE. Some of the more popular databases for elementary schools are Primary Search and EBSCO Animals. High schoolers and Middle schoolers like Middle Search and appreciate the Business File, Newspaper Source and the magazine databases. Of special interest is Informe, a database that provides information in Spanish from magazines and journals.

The databases are updated weekly. The currency of the databases varies by journal, although some articles are actually available ahead of their print publication counterparts.

In addition to offering the citizens of Indiana access to commercial databases, Inspire also provides links to quality resources elsewhere on the Internet, including many sites of local interest. Links include:

- Art & History - Indiana museums and historic sites
- Careers & Employment - jobs for students/adults
- Community Net - Indiana towns
- Reference - dictionaries, encyclopedias, libraries, phone/email
- Trees - identify trees from leaf/fruit
- Kids - websites for kids and homework help
- News and Media - Indiana online newspapers, radio and television stations

Why use INSPIRE instead of Google?

INSPIRE contains a collection of resources that have been selected, organized and endorsed by educators.

The information on INSPIRE is:

- ❖ AUTHORITATIVE, with quality information from recognized publishers/sources.
- ❖ SAFE, with little chance of children getting to inappropriate sites.
- ❖ FREE to all Indiana residents.

You can learn more about INSPIRE by talking with your school or public librarian. Remember, INSPIRE is FREE to Indiana residents and is accessible at HOME, SCHOOL or WORK.

Equip Your Child/Teen with the Right Tech Tools

Every year, computer technology makes advances and the industry hopes we will upgrade our home and school information systems. Computer-based technology at home can extend learning beyond the classroom and school day. When connected to the world-wide-web, the potential for learning is great. Indiana was actually the first state to engage in a large-scale project to test the impact of home-based technology to extend learning.¹ One of the lessons learned is that it is not enough to simply provide "technology stuff," that it is important to follow through with training, guidance and frameworks for learning to ensure that the technology is used wisely and for educational purpose. Since 1998, INSPIRE has been available for Indiana citizens, providing top quality information from leading publishers in several, easy-to-search databases. (Log into <http://www.inspire.net>.)

Getting connected requires some basic technology: a computer with keyboard, display, and mouse. A printer is one of the first useful additions (peripherals) for a home system. This allows you to create "hard copy" of letters written, drawings made, or web information found on the computer. One of the biggest expenses (after the initial purchase, of course) will be for ink or toner cartridges for printers. Teach your child to be a responsible user of family resources.

Connecting to the Internet requires a phone line at minimum. For a fast home connection, look into ADSL, cable or satellite modems. (Check with your cable or phone company for options in your area.) The speed of the connection (sometime referred to as "bandwidth") will determine how quickly you connect and are able to retrieve information with your computer.

Software is the name for programs that allow you to do things on the computer. Look for an "office suite" set of programs that includes word processing, spreadsheet/database, and presentation features. If you can obtain one that is compatible with the one used at your child's school, it will make it easy for your student to start and finish projects at either location. Compatible software and an eLocker, a password-protected web storage service, making files accessible from any other computer connected to the web. (<http://www.elocker.org>) can be important resource "boosts" your student needs to keep up with project work.

What if I can't afford a system like the one described above?

- Check with your school principal or librarian. Some schools offer loaner computers for the use of their students.
- Investigate use of extended hours at the school library or computer lab. Also check to see what special technology training programs are available for students and families at your school.
- Most public libraries in Indiana have computer systems available for patron use.

My child is very young. When should I introduce technology use?

There are many instructional activities that are enhanced by computer use even at preschool levels. As the child matures into a young adult, early exposure to appropriate and proper use of computer technology will result in confident and competent technology users. **IMPORTANT ADVICE!** It is important to supervise use and provide boundaries for all age learners while they use technology and communicate via the Internet. Discuss and enforce rules of use in your household to ensure productive learning while avoiding trouble.

¹ Visit <http://www.buddyproject.org> for resources and stories about schools who use technology to extend learning beyond the school day and place.

Some Indiana Web Resources for Students & Parents

Indiana has many bountiful resources for learning available through the world-wide web. We have already discussed the INSPIRE databases which are very useful for student as well as adult research. A few other notable resources of particular interest to Indiana parents and students might include:

- ❖ <http://doe.state.in.us/asap> ASAP or the Accountability System for Academic Progress includes information about our state's academic standards (expectations for student performance by grade level and content area) as well as reports on the academic achievement of Indiana schools as measured by our state's ISTEP+ test each year. Link from this site to find specific information about your child's school or even to compare your school's performance with others from around the state.
- ❖ <http://www.buddyproject.org> The Buddy Project is committed to promoting family involvement in student learning. At this site, find tips for parenting and support of your child's learning as well as several links to quality web resources for education and family fun.
- ❖ <http://www.in.gov/ism> Indiana State Museum is a great resource. Plan your visit to this new and ever-changing land of learning about our great Hoosier state.
- ❖ <http://www.childrensmuseum.org> The Children's Museum of Indianapolis is the largest children's museum in the world! Link to this site to plan an onsite visit, or take a virtual tour of some exhibits now featured at the museum.
- ❖ <http://www.eiteljorg.org> The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art is also located in Indianapolis and their website offers a thorough overview of the many interesting exhibits that explore and honor the contributions of native Americans to our nation as shown through arts and crafts of many cultures.
- ❖ <http://www.indyzoo.com> The Indianapolis Zoo is home to hundreds of animals who live in one of four biomes (Waters, Forests, Deserts, Plains). Visit this site to view or download a map of the zoo, take a sneak peek through one of the web cams or to learn about the habitats featured.
- ❖ <http://www.statelib.lib.in.us> The Indiana State Library offers a large collection (over 2 million volumes) on a wide range of topics. Included are collections devoted to family history (genealogy), county histories and American history as well as public policy, management and economics. Visit this site to view a thorough description of the collections available through onsite visits or via use of online databases.

The School Library, Reading, and Your Child

Krashen and McQuillan¹ reviewed 100 years of reading research and came to the following startling conclusion: The more a child/teen reads, the better they are at:

**Comprehension, Spelling, Grammar, Vocabulary,
Writing Style, Verbal Fluency, General Knowledge**

**Thus, how well your child reads is the number one predictor
of how well they will do in school!**



The most powerful reading your child can do is "free voluntary reading"—the kind they want to do rather than what they are required to do. Fiction, comics, newspapers, magazines, and stuff on the Web all contribute.

Here are a few tips for helping a child/teen want to read more:

1. See that your child/teen has a library card at the school and public library.
2. Demand unlimited checkout privileges at the school library. Your child should be able to check out all that can be handled responsibly.
3. See that there is a bed lamp and a safe place to store borrowed books at home. Even a cardboard box by the bedside will do. Encourage the "read-yourself-to-sleep" habit to form. It is a gift for life.
4. Read to your pre-school child every day. This can continue as long as it is a pleasurable experience - even into teenage years. The child/teen can read to you as their skill develops.
5. Talk about what everyone in the family is reading. Movie-book tie-ins are one strategy (ex.: *Holes* the book vs. *Holes* the movie).
6. If you have reluctant readers, keep looking until you find material they are interested in reading, such as dinosaurs, skate boards, cars, space, fantasy...
7. Do everything you can to make reading a pleasant experience. Kids may be getting skilled-to-death at school, so they learn to hate reading.
8. Buy books so that every family member has a personal library. They can often be had for 10 cents or a buck at sales. Books as gifts are always appropriate.
9. Above all, make reading and reading time a pleasant experience.
10. Remember, the school librarian and the public librarian are your best friends in helping your child to become a capable and avid reader.

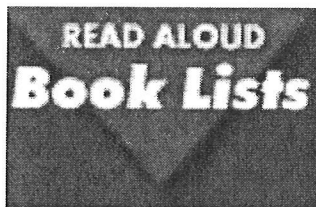
¹ Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 1993; McQuillan, Jeff. *The Literacy Crisis*. Heinemann, 1998; Cunningham, Anne E. and Keith E. Stanovich. "What Reading Does for the Mind," *American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 1998, p. 1-8.

Finding a Good Book for Indiana Kids and Teens

What should we choose at the library? What book should I buy my grandchild? There are so many books and too little time. Where should we start?

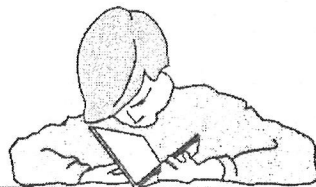
Here are some of the best book lists to recommend to your child or teen and the good thing about Indiana is that every year, your child can participate in choosing the best of the best.

There's nothing like curling up with a book and you!



Read-Aloud Books Too Good To Miss

Primary school, intermediate school, middle school, high school, and ageless

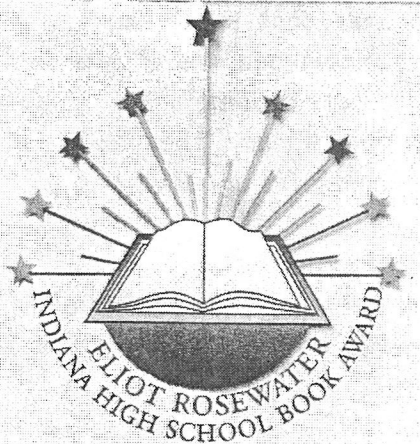


Young Hoosier Book Award

Association for Indiana Media Educators
Indiana's Professional Organization
for School Library Media Specialists

Young Hoosier Book Award

Picture Book
Intermediate Book
Middle School Book



Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award

Chosen annually by students across Indiana
in grades nine through twelve

Celebrate Reading—Indiana Style

Celebrating reading is appropriate any time. Indiana is fortunate to have a creative group of authors and illustrators producing exciting books for children and young adults including fiction, non-fiction, poetry for all ages. Consider inviting one to your school. Information can be found at the authors' websites or in the Directory of Indiana Children's Authors & Illustrators. Edited by Sara Laughlin.

<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/isl/ldo/childrens/index.htm>.

Introducing children to Indiana artists is an excellent way of sharing the authors' books but also inspiring future authors and illustrators. You might begin with one of the following:

Elaine Alphin, author—Madison; e-mail: ElaineMAlphin@aol.com

Website: <http://members.aol.com/elainemalphin/Index.html>

Sample Titles: *A Bear for Miguel; Counterfeit Son; Dinosaur Hunter; Germ Hunter; Ghost Cadet; Ghost Soldier; Simon Says.*

Claire Ewart, author/illustrator—Fort Wayne; Address: 5236 Arrowhead Pass, Fort Wayne, 46804; Telephone number: (260) 436-9101

Sample Titles: *The Giant; One Cold Night; Sister Yessa's Story; Time Train.*

Helen Frost - author—Fort Wayne;

Website: <http://home.att.net/~frost-thompson/index.html>

Sample Titles: *Keesha's House; Spinning Through the Universe; When I Whisper, Nobody Listens.*

Valiska Gregory, author—Indianapolis; e-mail: readermail@valiskagregory.com

Website: <http://www.valiskagregory.com/newsletter.htm>

Sample Titles: *On Her Way: Stories and Poems About Growing Up Girl; Through the Mickle Woods; When Stories Fell Like Shooting Stars.*

Keiko Kasza, author/illustrator—Bloomington;

Address: 2450 Browncliff, Bloomington 47408;

Telephone number: (812) 332-5914;

Website: <http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmr/mtai/kasza.html>

Sample Titles: *A Mother for Choco; My Lucky Day; Pig's Picnic; Rat and the Tiger; When the Elephant Walks; Wolf's Chicken Stew.*

Elsa Marsten, author—Bloomington; e-mail: harik@indiana.edu;

Website: <http://www.elsamarston.com>

Sample Titles: *The Cliffs of Cairo; Muhammad of Mecca; The Phoenicians; Women in the Middle East.*

Does Your School Library Support the Reading Program?

Use this checklist to determine how the school library program can support reading in your school.

A sustained silent reading program in every classroom once a day, K-12.

A program to read aloud to every student once a day, K-12. This includes storytelling as well as oral reading.

Motivational programs and challenges to encourage reading are preferable to contests.

A program to involve parents in the total school reading initiative.

A program to build a school-wide community of readers.

Use technology assists to reading as long as those assists actually increase reading time and amount read (educational television, CD-ROM and eBooks).

Celebrate reading regularly as milestones are reached.

Create the sense that reading is fun! Cool! Something I enjoy!

Other:

Sample Problems/Sample Solutions of Library Media Center/Reading Integration

When library collections and classroom collections are two separate entities and both are weak.

Assure that classroom and library collections are seen as a single entity and that classroom collections are rotating from the library collection. Teachers and students should assist in selecting reading materials so that everyone, particularly readers, will win. Put students in the classroom in charge of seeing that the classroom collection contains both materials of interest and materials helpful to their studies. They can manage the collection and see that it rotates often. The position of room collection managers can rotate throughout the year and can assist the adults in the responsible use and responsible circulation of the materials to the home.

When the collection of the library is outdated, old, or worn out from use.

Every school should add a minimum of *one book per year per student*. Schools with small enrollments should double this number. Dreadfully outdated collections will require two books per student until the collection is attractive again.

When the students are checking out only one book a week from the library but it is just not enough to affect the reading scores.

Students should have many, many books checked out at any one time. In grades K-2, every student should be taking at least two books home each night—one to "read" and one to be "read to." All students need to have the opportunity to have numerous titles checked out—as many as personal responsibility can allow. Revamp the entire policy to figure out how thousands of books a week can be circulated and re-shelved not only from the library but also from every classroom. It will require many hands and some ingenuity, but it must happen.

When circulation policy and computer automation systems have locked out certain students who owe fines or have lost a book from ever checking out another book.

There are two issues here: responsibility and literacy. Literacy should win! It must! Book loss is the cost of doing business. Make a pact with teachers to maximize reading and to help children shoulder the responsibility for public property. Students can pay service hours for fines and lost materials if the family cannot afford replacement costs. It is a crime to prevent a child from learning to read!

Bottom Line:

**The organization must serve the cause of literacy.
Don't let the tail (organization) wag the dog.**

Indiana Links to Great Reading Resources

There are many wonderful reading initiatives nationally and in Indiana. The difficulty is choosing those that will enhance and push the local agenda.

Listed below are but a few of those available:

American Library Association provides a number of reading initiatives, tons of booklists, and other information through its main website at <http://www.ala.org> and through its divisions: ALSC (Association for Library Services for Children), YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association), and AASL (American Association of School Librarians).

Children's Book Council is a non-profit trade organization dedicated to encouraging literacy and the use of enjoyment of children's books and is the official sponsor of Young People's Poetry Week and Children's Book Week each year. At <http://www.cbcbooks.org>

Civic Literacy Foundation works in innovative ways to foster sustainable service-learning programs, positive civic engagement, and educational improvement. At <http://serve.indiana.edu>

Hoosier Connection - Ann Chubb, Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation K-5 media specialist, provides a bibliography and suggestions for locating Indiana books appropriate for the elementary grades. Download PDF documents at www.indianalearns.org/readerresourceRM.asp

I-READ Literature Lists provides access to various reading lists including the Combined Awards Recognized Standards (CARS) lists of literature to be read by students at each grade level as correlated to the Indiana academic standards for English/language arts. At <http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/rea/literature.html>

Indiana Literacy Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening basic skills among children and adults through volunteer literacy programs across Indiana. At <http://www.indianaliteracy.org/>

Indiana Reading List is a suggested reading resource for students designed as a companion piece to Indiana's Academic Standards in English/Language Arts. Lists are available for grades K-12. At <http://www.indianastandards.org/readingList2.asp>

Middle Grades Reading Network provides research, programs, advice, and resources to spur reading in grades 6-8. Their newsletter, NetWords, is a must read. Directed by Jack Humphrey, this organization is an Indiana treasure! At <http://www2.evansville.edu/mgrnweb>

Reading is Fundamental helps deliver children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate school-age children to read regularly. At <http://www.rif.org>

Star Writers & Family Literacy provides a variety of writing and literacy projects in Indiana schools. At <http://www.buddyproject.org/star/default.asp>

Advice about Reading and Your Child

Here are a few common questions about reading and some possible solutions.

1. **How do you get a child excited about reading and keep them that way through teenage years? The tried and true methods include:**
 - a. Read to your child every day from birth.
 - b. Make frequent trips to the public library.
 - c. Give books as gifts.
 - d. Talk about books, and talk, and talk, and talk.
 - e. Have something to read all around the house: newspapers, magazines, books—materials that your kids want to read
 - f. Make reading a pleasant thing—not the enemy.
 - g. Share lots of suggestions for better and better books.
 - h. Read what your child/teen is reading and talk, talk, talk.

2. **My child reads nothing but series books. Should I worry?** Probably not. Many of us older folks grew up on Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys and turned out all right. Children or teens often go through reading phases but get tired of the same hackneyed plots after while. Instead of fighting against series books, read aloud better books and have access to lots of better titles. Reading *Holes* as a family and then seeing the movie, might be one way to introduce variety.

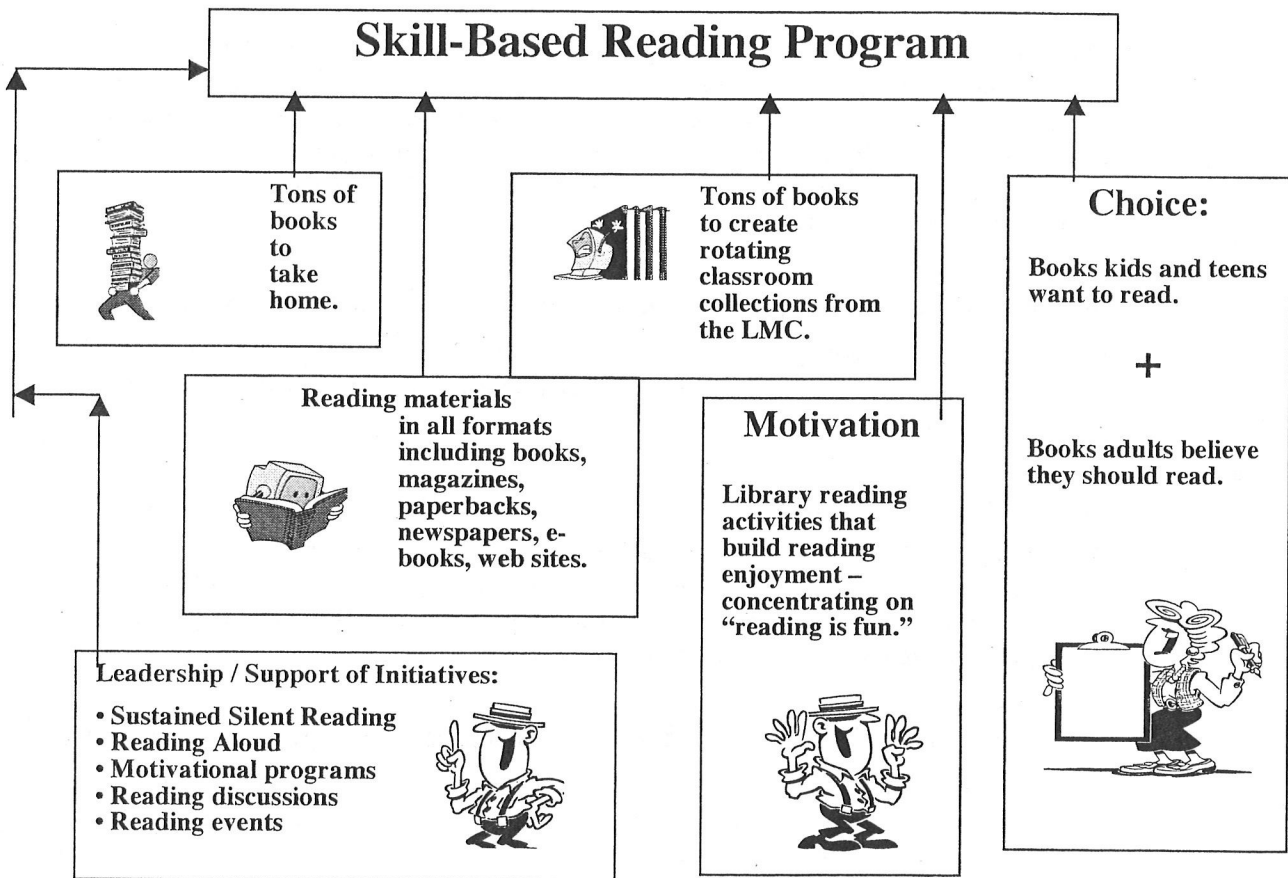
3. **My son reads nothing but science fiction and fantasy. Should I worry?** This literature is escapist for lots of boys and if they are participating in normal life activities, there is little to worry about. Dare we suggest reading a title they recommend and having a family discussion?

4. **Many of the teen novels seem to be so graphic about dysfunctional families, drugs, sex, and legal trouble.** There are a number of writers who treat teen lives realistically in their books. It all depends on your family values whether you want to allow, encourage, or restrict such literature for your own teens. Our best advice is to read what your teens are reading and talk, talk, talk.

5. **What are librarians doing about the various ways young people are taught to read?** Librarians often don't take sides in the reading wars (phonics, whole language, balanced reading, etc.) because they serve teachers of all stripes. What they do concentrate on is the LOVE of reading. Their belief is that there is no one right way to teach reading and that just plain "reading a lot" will compensate for any flaws in the prescribed skill program. If children or teens can read but don't, librarians are not happy about their graduation to a-literacy (a person who can read but doesn't).

If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should the Teacher, Parent, and the Librarian Provide to: "Learn to Read"

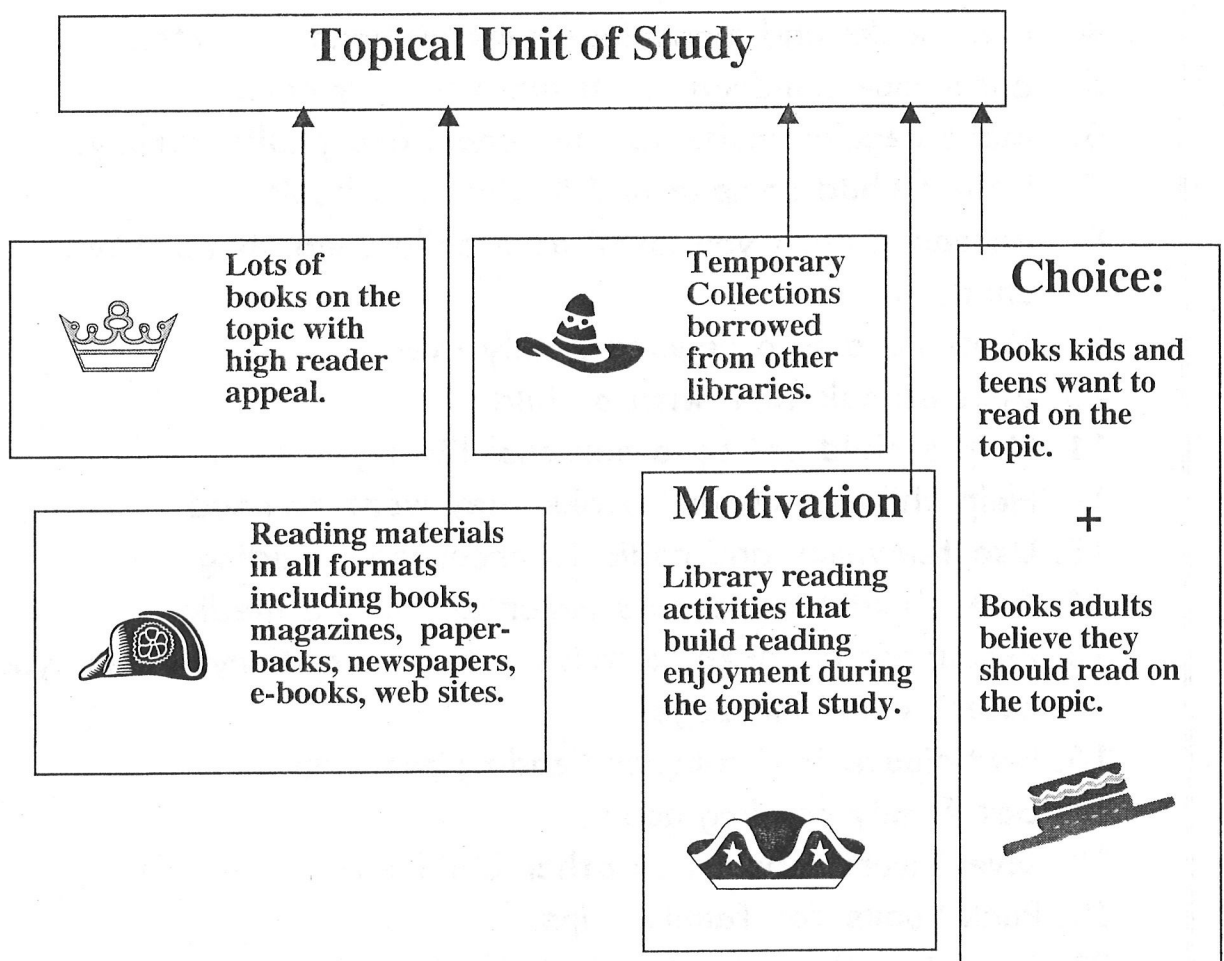
If a school community really believes the research saying that "amount counts," then the school and public library should have an extensive collection of reading materials young people want to read. So many school libraries in the nation have outdated, ragged, and uninteresting reading collections that young people ignore them. When reading collections are large, current, attractive, and easily accessible, good things happen. The best results of library media contributions to reading should be most noticeable when young people have few reading materials in their homes, and when they are poor readers. Is your school library media center program providing the following?



Bottom line: The library contribution to reading should plug the holes in whatever skill-based program exists toward the goal of 100% avid and capable readers. Does your school’s library reading program measure up? Are you, as a parent, taking advantage of library resources?

If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should Teachers and the Library Media Center Provide to: "Read to Learn"

As skill in reading builds, the concentration of the reading program shifts to using reading as a tool to learn as well as reading for enjoyment. The school library program has much to contribute to all subject disciplines as content knowledge is expected to mushroom. This will be particularly true in middle schools and high schools where reading is integrated into the entire curriculum and into all departments.



Bottom line: The library contribution to reading in the topical areas should stimulate more expository reading and thus more in-depth knowledge and understanding. Does your school's library reading program measure up? Are you as a parent taking advantage of library resources as your student explores required and non-required topics?

How to Raise a Reader!

Robert Frost once said the best way to get children to read is to surround them with so many books they stumble over them. Raising a reader demands that you surround your child in literacy. Here are 21 steps for building a literate environment in your family:

1. Read books/articles aloud to one another.
2. Talk about books you read.
3. Keep books and magazines around the house.
4. Give books and magazines subscriptions as gifts.
5. Encourage children to obtain a library card.
6. Make regular visits to the school and public library.
7. Help a child compile and illustrate a book.
8. Reread a book you loved as a child then share it with a child.
9. Make reading a regular family event.
10. Visit a bookstore with a child.
11. Help a child set up a personal library.
12. Help children choose books they want to read.
13. Use television and radio to encourage reading.
14. Talk about local events reported by the media.
15. Encourage children to write—stories, a diary, thank-you notes, email messages.
16. Participate in a summer reading program.
17. Set family reading goals.
18. Give favorite books to other children.
19. Pack books for family trips.
20. Read together about travel destinations.
21. Visit a literary landmark.¹

¹ Adapted from an article, "Twenty-one Steps to Building a Family/classroom of Readers," developed by Sharron L. McElmeel. Reprinted with permission.

I'm a Reader—And I Don't Apologize

Daniel Pennac in his wonderful book entitled *Better Than Life*¹ lists the following rights:

The Reader's Bill of Rights

1. The right not to read
*
2. The right to skip pages
*
3. The right to not finish
*
4. The right to reread
*
5. The right to read anything
*
6. The right to escapism
*
7. The right to read anywhere
*
8. The right to browse
*
9. The right to read out loud
*
10. The right to not defend your taste

¹ Pennac, Daniel. *Better Than Life*. Pembroke Publishers (Canada); Stenhouse Publishers (U.S.) (<http://www.stenhouse.com>) "Anyone who loves to read and wants our young people to develop a similar passion will savor *Better Than Life*—an enchanting, beautifully written and wise book. — Regie Routman.

Reading to Your Child: A Few Tips

Reading time is a special time. Hold your child in your lap. Cuddle. Be close. And this works with a small child, a big child, and more teens than you might expect. Reading together is a special time and the consequences of togetherness are far-reaching. Here are a few suggestions for that special time.

For Young Children

- ❖ Frequent, short book encounters—don't worry about short time span.
- ❖ Turn pages, name things, name colors; attention span is minimal.
- ❖ Have some regular times for reading: bedtime, quiet time, every time grandma comes.
- ❖ Repeat favorites.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

Developing Readers

- ❖ Repetition of sounds, words, and phrases helps.
- ❖ Variety will improve the richness of language development.
- ❖ Attention spans are growing as well as understanding of story lines.
- ❖ The child will begin to recognize letters and words. You need not press them to read.
- ❖ Use favorites regularly but introduce new ones also.
- ❖ Talk about the story.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

Beginning Readers

- ❖ Word and letter sounds can be a regular part of reading, but not the focus.
- ❖ Blend the two readers—you and the child—sometimes the child reads, sometimes you read.
- ❖ They read a line; you read a line.
- ❖ Expression begins—questions, phrasing. Mimic story characters with the voice.
- ❖ Read aloud stories they can't read to display the richness of language.
- ❖ Talk about the story, predicting what will happen, and asking what just happened and what they like and don't like.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

Reading Aloud

- ❖ It's ok to become emotional.
- ❖ Read aloud even if you don't read well.
- ❖ Read with fluency—your listener will pick up on your smooth delivery and the beauty of language.
- ❖ Use expression in your voice—get excited, sad, loving, and angry, as the story requires.
- ❖ Act out real parts or have the child do that acting at the appropriate times.
- ❖ Always make reading aloud time a pleasant experience.

My Adolescent Hates Reading! Is That Really So?

My child/teen doesn't read:

- ❖ Novels.
- ❖ Assigned textbook chapters.
- ❖ Any book I recommend.
- ❖ Anything that is "required."

However, the other day, I caught that kid reading:

- ❖ The Sports Page.
- ❖ An Internet site.
- ❖ A rollerblade magazine.
- ❖ A comic book.
- ❖ A car-repair manual.
- ❖ A fashion magazine.

What to do:

- ❖ If you discover an interest, feed it.
- ❖ Don't belittle or say such things as "You're dumb, you can't read."
- ❖ Don't talk about your child's reading problems or lack of reading interest when family, friends, or strangers are around.

Reading is its own reward.

No need to bribe, beg, threaten, or cajole.

Almost all children/teens will read something they really want to know about. Find the hook.¹ Of course there are exceptions for dyslexic kids or students with other physical or emotional problems.

If your child/teen really has reading skill issues, find a knowledgeable tutor with a good track record. But mostly, have lots of things your child/teen wants to read within arm's length and see that there is a good school and public library close by.

¹ Fader, Daniel. *The New Hooked on Books*. Putnam, 1977. The classic of the field. Fader worked with kids in prison and got them to read. Check a library. It's now out of print. Also: Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 1993. One hundred years of research about reading can't be wrong.

Public and School Libraries: A Winning Combination: Take Advantage of Both

Today, school library collections serve curriculum needs and public library collections more diverse needs for all ages. Using both collections provides both diversity of information and depth in selected topics.

School librarians are anxious to introduce children to the public library so that students become acquainted with services for nights, weekends, and vacation periods, because the public library collection will be the collection for life.

Check out some of the services of the public library that might be vital to your child's/teen's success:

- ❖ Digital collections of periodicals and databases that can be accessed usually from home.
- ❖ Special in-depth collections such as local history.
- ❖ Large fiction and nonfiction collections.
- ❖ Virtual reference services (the general public can ask questions over the Internet and library staff are on duty to help almost any time of day or night).
- ❖ Internet terminals.
- ❖ Special programs such as story hours, term paper clinics, guest speakers, workshops, children's or teen book clubs.
- ❖ Comfortable study and reading areas.
- ❖ After-school programming; homework help.
- ❖ Special assistance for home schoolers.

Check It Out - Hoosier Heritage Digital Library

Indiana's libraries are filled with treasures, including written and visual records of the state's history and culture. Indiana libraries are using digital technology to preserve these valuable resources and provide Hoosiers with access via the Internet to the historical and cultural heritage of Indiana.

www.hoosierheritage.net

Don't Leave Summer Reading to Chance

The following message is written to school librarians by Jack Humphrey, Director of the Middle Grades Reading Network, University of Evansville. What support and encouragement for summer reading exists at your community school or public library? Ask your school's librarian and teachers what they can do to encourage your child to take advantage of reading during the next scheduled break from school.

Parents of young adolescents may encourage their children to read over the summer. Students may visit the public library. Help change this from "may read" to "will read" over the summer or "will use" the public library or "will read" several books. Reading teachers, school librarians, and principals should develop a school-wide plan that increases independent reading during the summer. Reading practice helps ensure higher reading scores. Lack of practice results in summer loss, especially among middle grades students.

The following are some plans for middle grades schools to promote summer reading. Schools may wish to use a combination of the suggested plans.

Plan A: Young Hoosier Book Award. Purchase copies of the 2003-2004 YHBA books and promote them to students in classes and library. Work with public librarians to make certain they have copies of the books. Provide a copy of the list of books to parents so that they can help their children locate the books in a public library or purchase them in a bookstore. Put a list of the books on the school website. When school starts in the fall, have YHBA charts in classrooms or library where students place a check mark by the books they have read.

Plan B: Public Library. Work with the local public library to promote summer reading. Help students obtain public library cards. Have public librarians visit the school to talk about summer programs for young adolescents. Plan a field trip to the public library. If this is not possible, plan a meeting after school at the public library and encourage students to attend.

Plan C: Book Discussion Groups. Recruit students to participate in a book discussion group led by teachers or the school librarian at a public library. Select the first two book titles and encourage students to read the first book. At the first meeting, discuss the first book, set the date for the next meeting, introduce the next book, and seek recommendations from the participants for the third book.

Don't Leave Summer Reading to Chance¹ (cont.)

Plan D: School List. Work with teachers and students to decide on a list of five books that everyone should read over the summer. Promote the five books in classrooms and the school library. Ask the public library to purchase several copies of the books. Ask the PTA to purchase additional copies of the books to be placed in the public library. Find information about the authors, other books by the authors, and similar books written by other authors and place this information on the school website. At the beginning of school in the fall, have class discussions about the five books.


Plan E: Individualized Summer Reading. Prepare a summer reading booklet using copy paper. Make sections for books, magazines, and newspapers. Students write in date, material read, time spent, and comments. Show students an example of what might be written. Inform parents of the program and encourage them to provide the opportunities and encouragement needed to increase summer reading. Students turn in their completed booklets to teachers in the fall. Examples are used in subsequent years, and students who kept good records are invited to share their results prior to the following summer.

Plan F: Summer Reading for New Students. Prepare a list of books for summer reading and distribute and promote the list to students and parents at the orientation meeting for new students. Have an older student stress the importance of summer reading. Show a visual of how to access the school website concerning the summer reading program for new students. Invite a public librarian to explain how the public library will have programs and materials for use by students and how students may obtain public library cards.

Don't leave summer reading to chance. Principals, teachers, and librarians should work together to make certain that summer reading is a high priority for middle grades students. They should also promote the plan they choose with the school newsletter, school website, posters, and school sign as well as by working with their local newspaper to provide an article about the school and its interest in summer reading.

¹ Humphrey, Jack. Director of Middle Grades Reading Network, University of Evansville, 2004. Jack contributed this piece specifically for use in *Indiana Power!*

Launch Your Child with Book Bags and Curiosity Kits: Ideas for Parents and Teachers to Consider

Goal:		Result:
Each child from kindergarten through 2 nd grade reads 500+ books per year.		Every reader will read at or above grade level and develop a reading habit.

Try Book Bags: Each classroom acquires enough canvas book bags (either from commercial sources or by making them) for each child in the classroom, plus a few extras. Each book bag is numbered and can be decorated. Into each book bag goes a book that children can "read for themselves" (a wordless picture book, an alphabet book, books with a few words, highly illustrated books, etc.) and one book that can be read to the child by an older sibling, parent, friend, or caregiver (a good read-aloud picture book, a folktale, a nonfiction animal book, etc.). Back in the classroom, the book bags are hung on hooks or in cubbyholes. Each day as the children go home they take a different book bag, rotating throughout the month. The teacher keeps a list on a clipboard to record the book bag number next to the child's name. The homework for a kindergartner through second grader is to read two books a day. If the child forgets to bring the book bag back, the spares can be used. In no case is a child denied access to a book bag because reading practice is considered essential. The management of this program is considered a success when both the teacher and the library media specialist agree that the system requires very little monitoring. Books in the book bag program are checked out to the room. No individual circulation records are kept for these books.

Schools using this system report extremely low loss rates and damage, counting the cost of either as the cost of doing business. In addition to using the book bags, the class comes to the library once a month to choose books for the classroom collection (a minimum of 100 books at a time). Students make other visits during the month to select their own personal books to take home in addition to the book bags. The typical kindergartner, first or second grader should have read a minimum of 500 books during the school year and then linked into the public library system for regular reading during vacation periods. The *Buddy Family Backpack* is a similar Indiana project to promote collaboration between teachers and library/media specialists in furthering family literacy. For more information link to: <http://www.buddyproject.org/backpack/default.asp>

Curiosity Kits: A variant on the book bag program is the creation of curiosity kits where each child creates a book bag filled with 2+ books on a theme that they think other members of the class might be interested in: whales, riddles, drawing books, hobbies, paper airplanes, kite flying, etc.

Parent Involvement Kits: Julie McFadden, Kindergarten Teacher at Fairmont Elementary School in New Albany, Indiana has a program where a bag containing a book with activities for the parent and child expects parent involvement in literacy. It is worth writing for details. (1725 Abbie Dell, New Albany IN 47150). A similar project known as "Literacy Backpacks for Kindergartners" has high school students creating book-and-activity-filled backpacks for kindergartners to take home (Media Director, Northwest High School, 5525 W. 34th Street, Indianapolis IN 46224; www.723.ips.k12.in.us).

When Parents and Books Cross Swords: A Few Tips

The ideas in books have always stirred controversy. The treatment of religion, politics, swearing, sex, violence, and stereotypes such as culture or race can stir anger and resentment as these ideas conflict with parent and family values. One thing to always keep in mind:

There is no such thing as a non-controversial book!

Throughout world history, the ideas in books have been dangerous. Reading the Bible has been banned, books have been burned, and parents have requested that certain titles be removed from libraries.

Schools, teachers, parents, and librarians respect a parent's right to limit the exposure of their children to certain ideas and will try to help both the child and the parent to work on ways to carry out those wishes. The trouble comes, however, when parents insist that certain ideas not be available to all children in a class or school.

Almost all school libraries have a "Materials Selection Policy" that spells out how materials of all types are selected for the school library collection. Ask to see a copy of that policy so that you begin to understand how the professional library community tries to deal with ideas and controversial materials of all types in various communities. This policy will usually spell out ways for parents to register objections to materials in an orderly fashion. Remember, that if any library removed all objectionable materials, there would be nothing left on their shelves. Here are a few other tips.

1. Your children should understand the family values and know how to recognize objectionable materials and ideas.
2. Help your child to face objectionable ideas and materials when encountered. (Close the book/stop reading; "that's what you might think, that's not what I think;" "I don't read that kind of material.")
3. Ask both teachers and librarians for alternatives to books or materials that have been assigned. There are hundreds of alternative titles for literally any topic that is being studied.
4. Respect the right of other parents to allow their children to encounter ideas other than those you value.

5. Talk, talk, and talk to your children about the ideas they encounter daily in school, with friends, from the mass media, and from books. Give them strength to stand up for what they believe and value.
6. Help children and teens understand that just because everyone else is reading something, doesn't mean they need to participate. There is nothing wrong with being different.
7. Be sympathetic to librarians and teachers who may understand the specific needs of your child but also are dealing with 500-1000 other individuals and their needs. There is no way to drive on the highway without some risk even though we buckle up and follow all the rules.
8. Read the books your children/teens are reading and discuss them as a family.

The American Library Association provides a lot of guidance both to librarians and the general public on the topic of intellectual freedom. In their words:

Intellectual Freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas. It is a core value of the library profession and a cornerstone of democracy.

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=if>

ALA opts for the most freedom, yet respects community values. No librarians we know of would stock hundreds of anti-Catholic books in a Catholic school. Neither would they interleave *Playboy* among the picture book collection. We live in a world of unpopular ideas. The issue, of course, is when, where, and how our children will learn to handle those ideas. Work with your school, your librarian, teacher, principal, and in your community to handle ideas as they conflict with values. Intellectual freedom is a gift of our form of government and why we choose to live here and not somewhere else.



Helpful source: Indiana Intellectual Freedom Manual:
www.ilfonline.org/IFC/ifmanual.htm

Picture Books Too Good to Miss: Our Favorites

There are so many wonderful picture books for the younger set and for "children" of all ages. Here is a short list of authors and titles:

For Beginners

- *The Curious George* books (in various languages)
- Dr. Seuss books
- Ezra Jack Keats - any titles
- *Inch by Inch* by Eric Carle
- *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf
- *The Berenstain Bears* books - many titles
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* By Bill Martin
- *The Little Engine that Could* by Watty Piper
- Any of the Little Golden Books - they have been republished again after all these years.
- Richard Scarry - any titles
- Maurice Sendak - any titles
- Rosemary Wells - any titles
- Stephen Kellog - any titles
- Gene Zion - Harry the dirty dog books
- Mother Goose books - pick out several with good illustrations.
- *Changes, Changes, Changes* by Pat Hutchins
- David Wiesner - any titles
- P.D. Eastman - any titles such as *Go Dog Go!*
- Frances Hoban - the Frances books (a bear)
- A Child's Pictionary (a beginning dictionary with hundreds of pictures)
- Beatrix Potter - all the Peter Rabbit books
- David Shannon - all the David books (he gets in constant trouble!)
- Look for some simple cookbooks designed for small children - and help cook!
- Animal books and more animal books - you can never seem to have enough.

For a Bit Older Kids

- Patricia Polacco - any titles (*Pink and Say* is amazing)
- *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aradema
- Seymour Simon - any titles about science and space
- *How Much is a Million* by David M. Schwartz
- *The Red Balloon* by Albert Lamorisse
- Jon Scieszka - any titles
- Gerald McDermott - any titles
- There are so many wonderful illustrated editions of fairytales such as Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Hansel and Gretel
- Arnold Lobel - any titles
- David Macaulay - any books - for older viewers (*Castle, Pyramid*)
- Aesop's Fables - find a collection with pictures you like.
- Chris Van Allsburg - many titles such as *The Polar Express*
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein and other titles of his poetry.
- Bill Peet - many titles
- Ed Emberley - any titles
- *When Marian Sang* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- Arnold Lobel - any titles (*Frog and Toad* books)

Young Hoosier Picture Book Winners

- *Heckedy Peg* by Don & Audrey Wood
- *The Monster Who Ate My Peas* by Danny Schnitzlein
- *Zomo the Rabbit* by Gerald McDermott
- *Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm* by Jerdine Nolan, illus. by Mark Beuhner
- *Tuesday* by David Wiesner

Chapter Books Too Good to Miss: Our Favorites

There are so many wonderful chapter books for grades 2-6 that we could not resist listing some of our favorites:

For Beginning Readers

- Little House series by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- Charlotte's Web by E.B. White
- *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr
- *Dominic* by William Steig
- *Case of the Missing Monkey* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Bunnicula* by James Howe
- Time Warp series by Jon Scieszka
- *Arthur's Missing Envelop* by Marc Brown
- *Ramona series* by Beverly Cleary

YHBA Winners

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo
Saving Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Small Steps by Peg Kehret
Fudge by Charlotte Graeber
Ten Kids, No Pets by Ann Martin
Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger by Louis Sachar
<http://www.ilfonline.org/Programs/YHBA/winn>

For Older Readers

- *Catherine Called Birdy* by Karen Kushman
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963* by Christopher Paul Evans; also, his *Bud Not Buddy*
- *The Eye, the Ear and the Arm* by Nancy Farmer
- *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park
- *Out of the Dust* and *Witness* by Karen Hesse
- Redwall series by Brian Jacques
- *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor
- *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli

- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan
- *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine
- *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech
- Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling (if witchcraft doesn't bother you)

YHBA Winners

Harris and Me by Gary Paulsen
Don't Look Behind You by Lois Duncan
Forged by Fire by Sharon Draper
Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares
Twisted Summer by Willo Davis Roberts
Strider by Beverly Cleary

Non-Fiction Winners

- *Diary of Anne Frank* (there are many great titles about Anne and her ordeal as well as the Holocaust)
- *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine 1845-1850* by Susan Campbell
- *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali* by Walter Dean Myers
- *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman
- *Homesick: My Own Story* by Jean Fritz
- *Animals in Flight* by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page
- *Powerful Words* by Wade Hudson

Author Web Sites are linked from <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/%7EEdkbrown/authors.html>

Teen Books Too Good to Miss: Our Favorites

There are so many wonderful teen books that we could not resist listing some of our favorites to recommend.

- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
- Chris Crutcher - any titles - particularly good for boys
- *October Sky* by Homer H. Hickam (a good movie-book discussion)
- Richard Peck - almost any title
- *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850* (Non-fiction)
- *Winterdance* by Gary Paulsen and almost any other title. The *Brian* books are popular with boys
- *Slake's Limbo* by Felice Holman
- *The 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey
- *Dreamland* by Sarah Dessen
- *Timeline* by Michael Crichton
- *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* by Bill Bryson
- *Where the Heart Is* by Billie Letts
- *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers

<http://www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Programs/Rosie/rosie.htm>

Science Fiction/Fantasy

- Ray Bradbury - many titles
- Marion Ziller Bradley - many titles
- Frank Herbert - the *Dune* books
- *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. LeGuin and other titles
- Ann McCaffery - the *Dragon* books
- Robin McKinley - wonderful retellings of fairy tales such as *Beauty*

YHBA Winners: Grades 6-8

- *Doom Stone* by Paul Zindel
- *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- *The Dark and Deadly Pool* by Lois Lowery Nixon
- *Third Eye* by Lois Duncan

<http://www.ilfonline.org/Programs/YHBA/winners.htm>

Adult Books for YAs

- *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown
- Dave Pelzer - The *It* books
- Jane Austin - all writings - a classic favorite
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok

Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award

- *Minnie Swift* by Kathryn Lasky
- *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Ann Brashares
- *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher

Reluctant Reader? Try Information Books

Just because kids are not novel readers that doesn't mean they have to be non-readers. Try nonfiction (information books). There are now better information books for children and teens than at any time in the history of the world. Visit the school and public library and a large bookstore to find titles on:

- ❖ Airplanes and missiles
- ❖ Animals, animals, animals
- ❖ Cars, rollerblades, snowboards, motorcycles
- ❖ Cookbooks
- ❖ Cut-away picture books showing the insides of castles, submarines, pyramids
- ❖ Disasters - floods, tornados, shipwrecks, earthquakes
- ❖ Drawing
- ❖ Insects - the more close-up photos the better
- ❖ Jokes and riddles
- ❖ Rocks, minerals, jewels
- ❖ Sports record books, how to play, equipment, biography

The few excellent titles below show the range of subjects now available to entice even the most reluctant reader.

- *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy
- *Animé Mania: How to Draw Characters for Japanese Animation* by Christopher Hart
- *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life* by Candace Fleming
- *Beyond Beauty* by Jane Pratt
- *Blizzard!* by Jim Murphy
- *A Dinosaur Named Sue: The Story of the Colossal Fossil* by Pat Relf
- *Mosque* by David Macaulay
- *Hi is for Hoosier* by Cynthia Reynolds
- *NSYNC: The Official Book* by K.M. Squires
- *The Racecar Alphabet* by Brian Floca
- *Special Effects in Film and Television* by Jake Hamilton
- *Star Wars: Incredible Cross-Sections* by David West Reynolds
- *Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies

Essential book: Jobe, Ron and Mary Dayton Sakari. *Info-Kids: How to use nonfiction to turn reluctant readers into enthusiastic learners*. Stenhouse, 2002.

More Best Books Lists for Your Child/Teen

There are hundreds of best books lists for children and teens. Here are just a few of the recommended lists.

<p>Association of Library Services for Children (American Library Association) does a number of excellent book lists each year and sponsors the famous Caldecott and Newbery Awards, Bura Belpre and Coretta Scott King Awards.</p>	<p>http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alsc.htm</p>
<p>Young Adult Library Services Association (American Library Association) lists include: Best Books for Young Adults; Quick Picks for the Reluctant Young Reader; Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults</p>	<p>www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm</p>
<p>Booklist. Books for Youth; Adult Books for Young Adults; Media (Audio, Video, CDs)</p>	<p>www.ala.org/ala/booklist/booklist.htm</p>
<p>Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books</p>	<p>alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/</p>
<p>Children's, Teacher's and YA Choices (International Reading Association)</p>	<p>www.reading.org/choices/</p>
<p>Notable Trade Books (National Council for the Social Studies)</p>	<p>www.socialstudies.org/resourNotableces/notable/</p>
<p>Outstanding Science trade Books for Children (National Science Teachers Association)</p>	<p>www.nsta.org/ostbc</p>
<p>Horn Book Parent's Page</p>	<p>www.hbook.com/parents.shtml</p>
<p>Children's Literature Choices (annual Top Choices list)</p>	<p>www.childrenslit.com/clc.htm</p>
<p>The Christopher Awards Books for Young People to books "which affirm the highest values of the human spirit."</p>	<p>www.acs.ucalgary.ca/%7Edkbrown/christopher.html</p>
<p>Américas Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, U of WI)</p>	<p>www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach/americas.html</p>
<p>Best Children's Science Picture Book (Giverny Award)</p>	<p>www.15degreelab.com/award04.html</p>
<p>Children's Literature Web Guide</p>	<p>www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown</p>
<p>New York Public Library: 100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know</p>	<p>www.nypl.org/branch/kids/gloria.html</p>
<p>Chicago Public Library Best of the Best: Books for Great Kids and Teens</p>	<p>www.chipublib.org/008subject/003cya/bestofbest/best04_intro.html</p>

Responsibility, Fines, and Bringing Books Back

It's really Benjamin Franklin's fault that we have the public libraries of this country. He convinced folks to bring their one precious book to a room and allow others to check it out. Give one book, get many. Thus began the Library Company of Philadelphia that turned into our public libraries. It is an American gem. Everyone contributes the cost of one or several books through tax dollars and we have the "free" public library.

A perennial problem in every library is lost, missing, and overdue materials. No other issue makes so many library enemies. Nevertheless, just as soon as children come to Kindergarten, they are asked to check out books, take them home, and bring them back. An amazing feat indeed! Teachers often remark that getting anything from school to home and back to school is a miracle.

Everyone has to help children and teens learn responsibility. Yet they have to have books to read—and lots of them. How can we do both? If for example, a child doesn't handle materials very well, shall we deny access to books? **NO!** There is no alternative. Literacy must always win. Children and teens must have lots of books in their possession if they are to learn to read and continue reading. And they need to learn responsibility.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Get acquainted with the librarian and understand the rules of circulation, lost books, fines, and check-out periods. Make special arrangements for your child's or teen's needs. Do the same for public library materials.
2. Have a family conference at the beginning of the school year about library books, textbooks, notes, and other things that must go from school to home to school. Set up a reminder system so that everyone helps everyone else.
3. Have a few special places at home where library books are stored—a box beside the child's bed; a special "library" shelf, or personal book cases.
4. Have an appropriate container—a bag or backpack or wheelie cart to transport items to and from school—with identification on it.
5. Teach children how to care for books or other materials.
6. Decide as a family what to do about lost books and fines. Since the solution is not to cut off book borrowing, how can the whole family help?
7. If a book is lost, don't shout. It happens to most of us at one time or another. Figure out a solution. Dwell on the solution, not the problem.
8. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD A LIFE-LONG READING HABIT, and second, to be responsible.

Classroom Collections

Where should children/teens have access to reading materials? Everywhere is the simple answer, yet sometimes strange things happen in organizations that prevent logical things from working. Sometimes, parents can help.

Classroom collections have become quite popular in the last few years. The notion is that books and information should be at hand in addition to the repository down the hall in the library media center. Sometimes conflict develops over inventory, who owns what, and other matters. Resolution of such conflicts is not difficult when the larger vision of a school-wide print-rich environment is presented and implemented. In the age of technology, the conflict disappears as electronic sources go online.

Advantages of Print Classroom Collections

- Print-rich = more reading
- Close at hand
- Close at hand
- Close at hand

Disadvantages of static (i.e. permanent) classroom collections

- Interesting to students the first few weeks of school and not thereafter.
- Too small to have any significant variety.
- Cannot contain any in-depth information needed for research on various reading levels and in a variety of formats.
- Take up too much room as the collection grows.
- Another management problem for the teacher.

Solution: ROTATING Classroom Collections

- Teachers work with the library media specialist to create rotating classroom collections using the LMC as the warehouse.
- The rotating collection should be as large as the classroom can handle.
- Some items might be semi-permanent, others rotating every few weeks.
- The collection would contain materials for free voluntary reading chosen by students.
- The collection would contain materials to be used in a curricular unit.
- Materials could be circulated from the classroom to the home.
- The collection would contain materials in many kinds of formats including books, paperbacks, magazines, newspapers, multimedia, etc.
- Every room collection should also contain electronic resources, databases, selected Internet sites, and other digital information and multimedia items flowing from the LMC into the classroom and into the home.
- The electronic classroom collection would contain links to the central LMC collection, local, district, and national resources.

Money, Money, Money: What You Can Do

It would be nice to report that school libraries cost very little and could be run by volunteers. "If it sounds too good to be true, it's too good to be true." Good information systems cost money. And what's free on the Internet is... well, you get what you pay for.

First, ask the librarian how much per student the school/district spends for library materials. Enter that figure here: _____

Second, ask how much per child from federal, state, and other sources to buy library materials. Enter that figure here: _____

Total spent per student for library materials: _____

Consider this:

Just to stay afloat, a library needs to add one book per student per year. (\$20-\$30 a book)

To build a collection, the library needs to add two books per student per year. (\$40-60 for two books)

In Indiana. . .

"...Expenditures for school library books have remained static or decreased from 1992 to 2004 while average book prices have increased from \$9 in 1992 to \$19 in 2004."¹

How much money would your school library have to have to either build or just maintain its collection over and above what it gets now?

Here are a few things you could do:

1. Contribute \$20-30 each year for a birthday book for your child.
2. Ask grandparents to do the same.
3. Ask your child to "earn" the cost of a book and contribute it to the library.
4. Talk to the administrators about funding the library better and get a commitment for the school to do it.
5. Work on a grant for the library.
6. Talk to community organizations that would be willing to help.

¹Indiana State Reading Association Board of Directors resolution, January 24, 2004.

Volunteering at the School Library

Many parents or grandparents would like to help out in spare moments and wonder what they can do for the school library.

1. **Subject Expert.** From firemen to business executives, to chemists, to homemakers, many parents can offer expertise and experience to students doing topical research. Volunteer to allow students to interview you, tour your place of employment, or get answers to questions by email. You might be asked to be a guest speaker, be a resource person in the library when students are doing research, or just be available by telephone or email.
2. **Help with the Nitty-Gritty and Beyond.** There are seemingly hundreds of jobs in any library begging to get done if you have one or several hours to devote. Some are familiar such as shelving or repairing books, but others might require more expertise such as:
 - a. Trouble-shoot a student's problem accessing library databases.
 - b. Outline/write a grant.
 - c. Help a child read or understand a web site.
 - d. Organize a reading celebration; head a library fund-raising campaign.
 - e. Serve as a library advocate on a PTA parent council.
 - f. Carry a bill through the state legislature to fund library databases for every child in the state.
 - g. Be an artist-in-residence based in the library.
 - h. Do storytelling or reading aloud to classes as they come to the library.
 - i. Serve as a one-on-one tutor in the library.
 - j. Help students make a library quilt to be auctioned for the library fund.
 - k. Find sources for free or inexpensive supplies needed by the library.
 - l. Help paint the library or repair a worn spot in the carpet.
 - m. Head up and organize/train the parent volunteers for the library.

What school libraries don't need.

1. Cast-off equipment that doesn't contribute to the curriculum or the updating of school technology.
2. Book drives that result in old, outdated titles that will fill up shelves but never get read.
3. Persons with an ax to grind, something to sell, or a political agenda.
4. Volunteers who accept the responsibility to run a library when there isn't any librarian.

Advocate for the School Library

Most school kids live with their school library for 3-6 years. They have little voice in what goes on there, how large the collection is, who the staff are, or how the place operates. They need advocates.

It may seem odd, but many librarians feel helpless as they try to provide first-rate information systems with very little money. Can you imagine a winning football or basketball team without a parent's booster club? Neither can we. Likewise, a single voice in the school pleading for better information systems, materials, and staff is often unheard. Librarians need advocates.

Advocacy requires constant and steady pressure over time. There is no such thing as an instant or one-time library fund allocation that solves all the problems. Parents who demand the best education must demand over and over and over.

Adequate funding and staffing are probably the two most at-risk factors in good school library service. As budgets fluctuate, and the pressure for cuts increases, libraries are regularly on the chopping block. Your child's or teen's critical information system is on the chopping block. Suppose the library online database bill is not paid every year? It's like gas in the school bus. No gas. No go. What does it cost your child when the only information available is outdated or simply non-existent? What is the cost of ignorance and misinformation?

Advocacy requires strong, steady voices. It requires accompanying the librarian to the board meeting presentation of library needs; requires vigilance; requires speaking to administrators regularly. Yes, good school libraries cost money—plenty of it. There is no alternative. No free lunch. No instant solution. Sorry, the Internet is not the answer.

**How well your child reads and handles information will predict academic achievement. It's that simple.
The school library is an essential key.**

For more information download the "Toolkit for School Library Media Programs" at www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/schoollibrary/schoollibrary.htm

How Parent Groups Can Help the School Library

Many parent groups have a library committee and library issues come before the entire group for suggestions, recommendations, and action. Consider the following checklist for your parent organization dealing with library issues:

1. Understand how the school library is funded—school, district, state/federal/grant/ parent group funds.
2. Understand the budgetary needs a library program must have to operate and provide the service your children must have.
3. Set up a volunteer program to help the librarian.
4. Create a "Friends of the School Library" group.
5. Help plan and conduct various library activities:
 - a. Book fairs
 - b. Reading motivation activities
 - c. Research/term-paper clinics for parents/students
 - d. Tours of neighboring libraries such as getting every student a public library card and get access to their databases
6. Every time a politician/board member comes to the school, have the meeting in the library and have a large poster showing the needs that library has. Always mention library contributions and needs to outsiders, visitors, and other parents.
7. Whenever school funding is discussed, never forget the library.
8. Sponsor a birthday book contribution program. Families who can't afford \$25/\$30 should have a program to earn it. Don't forget the out-of-town grandparents as a source of these gifts.
9. If there is no librarian, lobby tirelessly for one—a good one.
10. Lobby for help for the librarian. One person can't do it alone.
11. When the subject comes up, always say something good about the library.

Resource: Learn more about ways to support your child's school library at www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/toolkits/whatparentsshould.htm

Bilingual Children/Teens: How Can the Library Help?

Many schools in the United States are filled with students who are learning English. The school and public library can help.

What the library offers for free:

- Checkout of books in English and the language in your home. (If books are not back on time or lost, there might be a fee.)
- Access to the Internet.
- Storytelling programs.
- Classes including how to use the computer.
- Instruction on how to search on the Internet for information.
- Videos on topics being studied in class.
- Bilingual dictionary, such as Spanish-English/English-Spanish, to look up words in either language.
- Programs that encourage reading such as a summer reading program.
- Programs during the year that introduce children and teens to new books, poetry, and other materials.

Check with your public librarian to find out details about programs, services and classes offered at your local library.

What you can do:

- Have many books in both languages in your home.
- Take your child to the library to check out books in both languages.
- Encourage your child to read a lot of English.
- Read in English with your child/teen. Teach each other as you read.
- Help your child to be responsible and return their library books on time.
- Find lots of "picture" books at the library about the topics your child is studying in school. Look at the pictures together and name what you see in English.
- If your child/teen cannot understand the textbook, find an easy children's book on the topic of the textbook chapter. It will help your child get the main idea about the topic.
- Meet and talk to the librarian often. When the librarian understands what you and your child need, you can expect help.
- Take your child to the public library often.
- Check at your school to be sure your child can visit the school library several times a week.

Check out this site for information and links to support families of language minority students: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp/parentinvolvement.html>

School Library Staffing: Good News, Bad News

The school library has become a complex information hub of the school—not the small book room of yesteryear. Here is the staffing scoop:

Every school library needs:

At least one full time professional librarian.

Why: The librarian will be a teacher; a teacher of reading; a teacher of information handling and research skills; a technology coach; a co-creator of exciting learning experiences with your child's teacher. When the majority of their day is spent on these tasks, your child will receive an important boost. Research demonstrates that it is the professional librarian who makes the actual difference in achievement.¹

At least one full time paraprofessional/clerical person.

Why: These people keep the warehouse running in its myriad and time-consuming functions of circulation, retrieval, shelving, discipline, materials processing, traffic control, facility monitoring and decorating. Nothing works if nothing is organized.

At least one full time technical assistant.

Why: This person keeps the networks, computers, web sites, communication systems, student access, filters, passwords, equipment and software maintenance and upgrades. When this technology doesn't work, it's a zero.

Rationale

The trio of library staff will provide an unbeatable team in working across the school to provide equity of access to information, supportive help for every child and teacher in dealing with information and technology, and will be reading's best friend. The bad news is that a full team is expensive. To hire only a clerk or aide to "run the library" negates the impact of the place and your child will suffer, but the suffering is often in silence: information not gained, poor research habits, rampant plagiarism, surfing the ocean web of the Internet, and ultimately, low test scores. The more your child needs help in school, the more critical the library will be.

How is your school library staffed?

¹ Lance, Keith C., Christine Hamilton-Pennell, Marcia J. Rodney, with Lois Peterson and Clara Sitter. *Information Empowered: The School Librarian as an Agent of Academic Achievement in Alaska Schools*. Revised ed. Juneau, AK: Alaska State Library, 2000.

No School Librarian? What to Do

The national research on school libraries links the professional school librarian with achievement.¹ Staffing the school library with only a clerk or a paraprofessional does make a difference in test scores.² Why? Because the professional person concentrates on teaching and the use of information while clericals or paraprofessionals concentrate on the organization.

If the library is considered just as a room full of books to be circulated to students, no special expertise is needed. If, however, scores, achievement, reading, information literacy, and Internet information systems are to be emphasized, then a professional is needed.

Sadly, many schools, particularly at the elementary level, do not have professional librarians. At the very time when children are learning to read and setting patterns for information use, there is no professional to help them. Scores, achievement, and reading all suffer when there isn't this vital person in the school. It is like trying to staff the classroom with only a clerk or a parent volunteer; the school with a school secretary but no principal; a hospital with nurses but no doctor.

Here are a few tips.

1. Understand what a good school library program can do for your child.
2. Know what the research says about the contribution of a good school library program to achievement.
3. Find out why the school administration does not have a school librarian as a high priority.
4. Find a great school library program and visit it. Then take others with you: parents, administrators, board members, and community leaders.
5. Begin to lobby for a school librarian. It is usually a matter of priorities rather than money. If it is money, what sources are available for any additional school staff? Are there grants, special state or federal programs? If there hasn't been a school librarian in the school, it takes a 3-5 year program boost to operate at maximum power.
6. If there really is no state allocation for a librarian, why not? A number of states have allocations and there is a school librarian in every school by state law.
7. Understand what really takes money vs. a simple realignment of priorities.
8. Don't take no for an answer.

Indiana ranks 49th in the ratio of librarians to students.³

¹ Keith Lance speech, White House Conference on School Libraries. At <http://www.imls.gov/pubs/whitehouse0602/keithlance.htm>

² See the Alaska Study at <http://www.davidvl.org> under Research.

³ Everhart, Nancy. "School Staffing Survey 2000, Looking for Few Good Librarians," SLJ Online, September 1, 2000.

Great Quotes

"Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always." ~ First Lady Laura Bush

"Children and teachers need library resources—especially books—and the expertise of a librarian to succeed. Books, information technology, and school librarians who are part of the school's professional team are basic ingredients for student achievement." ~ First Lady Laura Bush

"What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it thinks about education." ~ Harold Howe, former U.S. Commissioner of Education

"It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers."
~ James Thurber (1894-1961)

"Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please."
~ Mark Twain (1835-1910)

"I find television very educational. Every time someone switches it on I go into another room and read a good book." ~ Groucho Marx (1895-1977)

"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life."
~ Henry War Beecher

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" ~ Choruses from *The Rock*, T.S. Eliot

"Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read." ~ Groucho Marx

"Information is the currency of democracy."
~ Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

"Two forces are successfully influencing the education of a cultivated man: art and science. Both are united in the book." ~ Maxim Gorky (1868-1936)

"Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation." ~ Walter Cronkite

"Any book that helps a child to form the habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him." ~ Richard McKenna

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