

MINNESOTA POWER!



**A Parents' Guide to
School Libraries**

**David V. Loertscher
with Doug Johnson**

Minnesota Power!

A Parent's Guide to School Libraries

Anne Hanson,
Doug Johnson
David V. Loertscher

DRUM ROLL!
And, Introducing
Us Cats



Brigham

You don't have
to be so
dramatic, Kid



Wednesday

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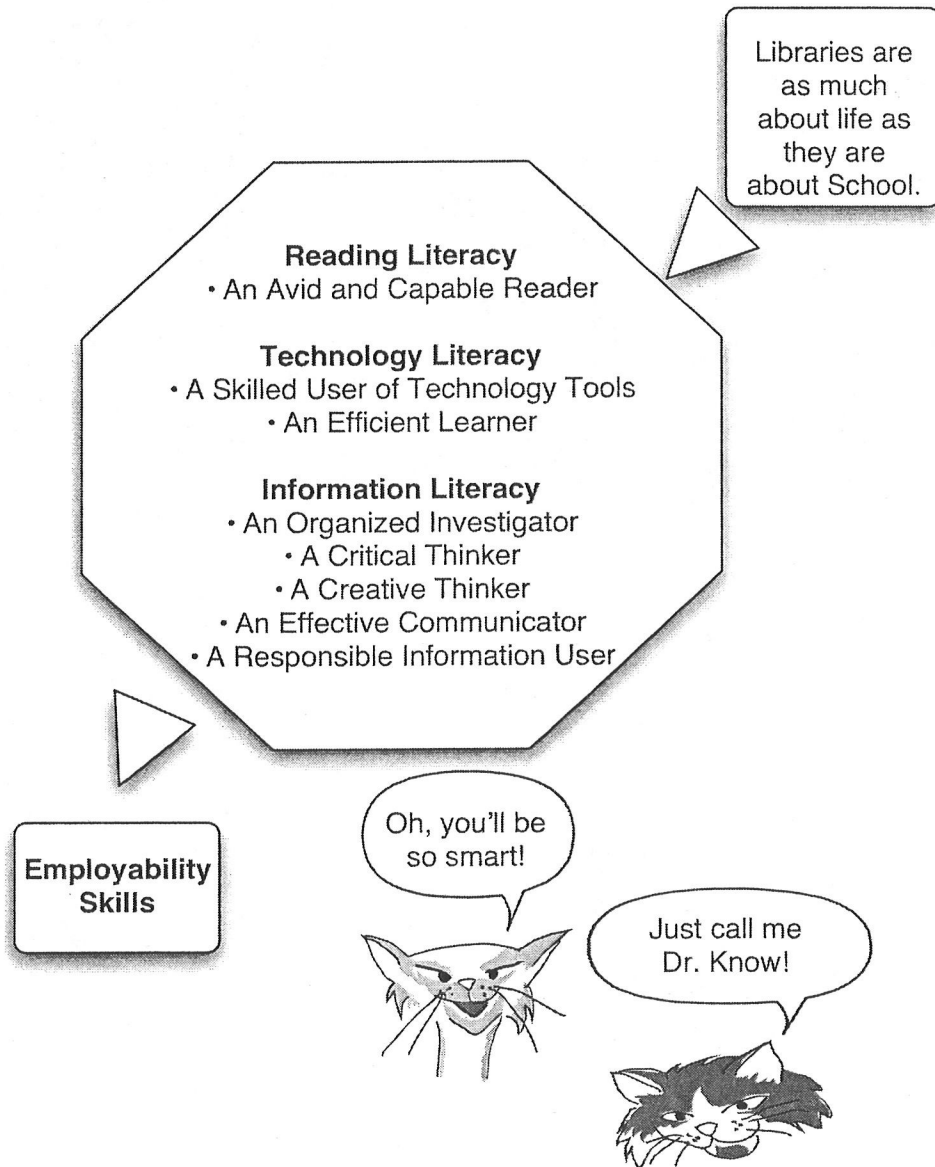
Appreciation

Numerous school librarians made suggestions for topics in this book. They are very anxious to connect with parents to provide the very best service they can. Douglas Achterman constructed the Internet site evaluation guide on p. 10. And 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

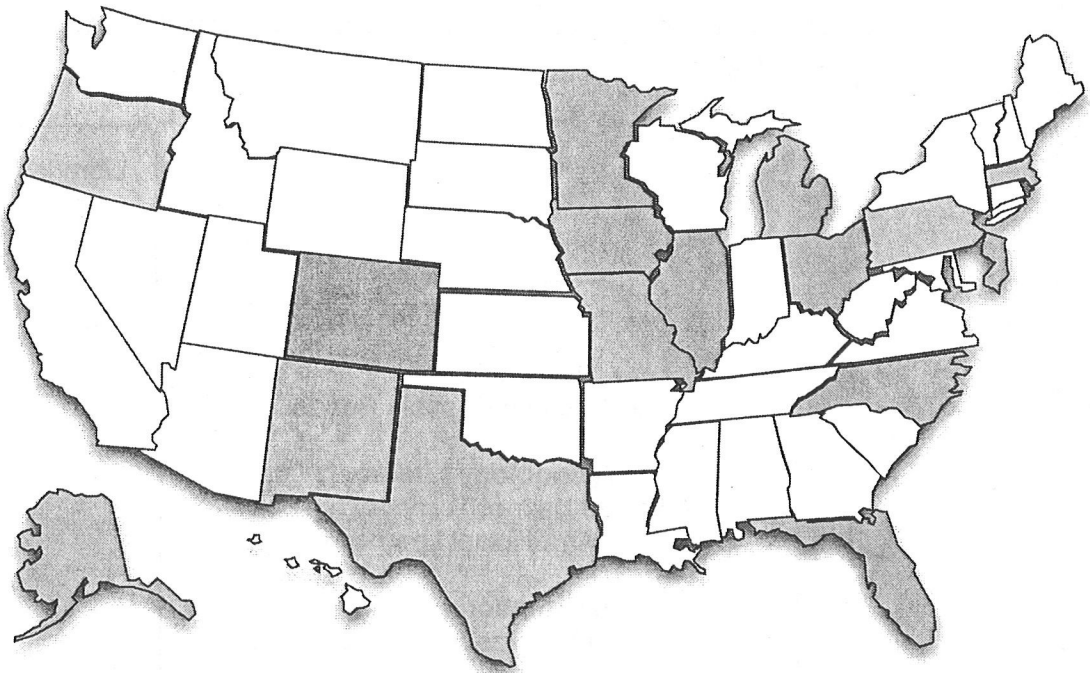
What type of person is likely to be successful in today's information-rich and technology-based world? What type of learner is likely to be successful in the world of the future insofar as we can foresee that world?

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



Research on School Libraries: A National Picture

Since 1999, seventeen 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.



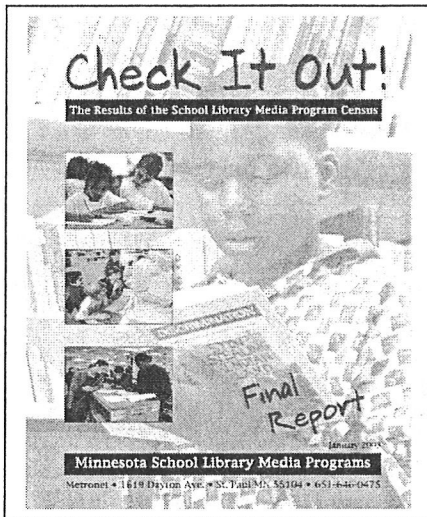
Alaska, 2000
 Colorado, 1993, 2000
 Florida, 2003
 Illinois, underway
 Iowa, 2002
 Massachusetts, 2000
 Michigan, 2003
 Minnesota, 2002
 Missouri, 2003
 New Jersey, underway
 New Mexico, 2002
 North Carolina, 2003
 Ohio, 2004
 Oregon, 2001
 Pennsylvania, 2000
 Rhode Island, underway
 Texas, 2001

It's like food
 in your cat dish.



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 Minnesota School Libraries



In 2003, Metronet published a study of Minnesota school libraries titled *Check It Out!: The results of the School Library Media Program Census*. Here is a reprint of their executive summary:¹

Key Findings

In Minnesota schools with above average student scores on the Grade 3, 5, and 8 reading tests, 66.8% were schools where the media specialist worked full-time. Twice as many schools with above average scores had full-time media specialists. Student reading achievement in elementary and secondary schools is related to increases in school library media program spending.

- Correlation analysis shows that elementary students' MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) scores are significantly related to library budgets for books and materials, particularly at the fifth grade level. The larger the library budget is for books and electronic materials, the higher students' reading achievement is.
- The average copyright for all books in Minnesota schools is 1985. In high schools, the average age is 1983. Minnesota students are using books for research and study that are older than they are, and in some cases, older than their teachers.

Highlights

Census Findings

- Minnesota lags behind in spending for books for its school library media programs. Average annual spending for books in Minnesota school library media centers is \$5,107. In the North Central region of the U.S., which includes Minnesota, the average amount spent on books annually is \$6,700, over 30% higher than Minnesota's spending. Minnesota school library media centers spend an average of \$9.35 per pupil for books at the elementary level, \$10.44 at the middle school level, and \$11.29 at the high school level.
- Minnesota school library media centers own an average of 31 books per pupil. This exceeds the highest level in the *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2002* for collection size. The average copyright date of 1985, however, suggests that many of these collections are old due to lack of weeding.
- Media specialists are the most common workers in school library media programs. 84% of

¹ Baxter, Susan J. and Ann Walker Smalley. *Check It Out! Results of the School Library Media Program Census*. St. Paul MN: Memonet, 2003. The entire report and an executive summary document can be printed out in pdf format at <http://metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/index.cfm> An update will be available late 2004. Reproduced here by permission.

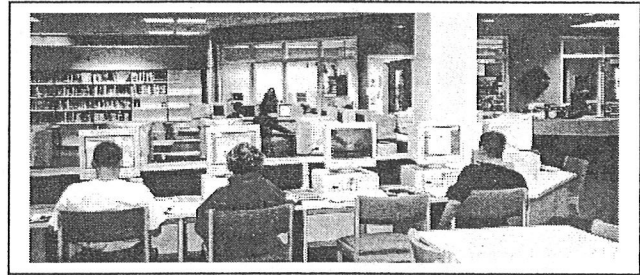
the responding schools report one licensed media specialist works in the media center; 5% report two media specialists work in the media center.

- Support staff works an average of 18.6 hours per week in a media center. The smaller the school, the less likely support staff is available.

- Hours worked for licensed and clerical staff increased with the school size in almost all cases. The smaller the school, the fewer hours a media specialist has to spend with students.

- Media specialists report their most frequent activity is "other library activities" such as shelving books, circulation of materials, materials processing, and related tasks. These tasks are considered to be support tasks and do not require a licensed media specialist to perform them.

- In descending order of reported frequency, media specialists spend time on: managing and troubleshooting computer and technical problems, teaching information skills to students, collection development, and assisting students with Internet skills. 68% of library media specialists report their most frequent activity is "collaborating with teachers."



- The average elementary library media specialist provides 58 prep coverage periods per month. Prep coverage is less common at the high school level, where the average number of prep coverage periods is five.

- School library media centers have an average of more than of 100 visits by students per day, more than 2,064 visits per month. 737 items are checked out per average week. This does not reflect the materials that are used within the library media center.

- School size affects the number of networked computers in the media center, the presence of an automated library catalog, and access to statewide electronic resources from home. The smaller the school, the less likely there will be an automated cataloged or remote access to media center and statewide electronic resources.

- 1,172 schools responded to the online School Library Media Program Project Census, an unprecedented 82% response rate. In 217 districts every school responded. 74 districts had at least some schools respond. In 45 districts, no school responded.

Site Visit Findings

- 131 elementary and secondary schools were visited as part of the project to determine the impact of less quantifiable elements such as the role of the principal and of the atmosphere of the media center on program effectiveness.

- The site visits confirmed the census findings: large collections of old, worn books, many programs run by part-time library media specialists or non-licensed staff, increasing workloads for media specialists including technology support, classroom teaching, and other duties, and the widespread responsibility of elementary media specialists for prep time coverage for teachers.

- The more knowledgeable and supportive a principal is about school library media program, the greater the chance that an effective school library media program will be in place in the school.

- The more hours a licensed school library media specialist works in the media program, the more effective the program.

- Many school library media specialists have too few resources to maintain an effective school library media program. Site visitors found effective programs in all areas of the state.

- There is a digital divide in Minnesota schools, both across districts and within districts.

Access to up-to-date technology varied widely.

- Schools with technology integration specialists and/or professional media specialists involved in planning with teachers on using technology to enhance curriculum make better use of their technology investment to improve student learning. In these schools, curriculum drives the technology investment.

- The presence of district level support for school library media programs makes a difference in the effectiveness of school library media programs. In districts with media coordinators or similar positions, students were more likely to have access to resources and materials and to be taught information literacy skills.

- Implementation of computerized reading programs such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts are having an impact on media center budgets and usage.

Recommendations

- Principals, teachers, parents, school boards, and other administrators need to raise their expectations for media programs and the results they expect from these programs based on the research on the impact of school library media programs on student achievement and *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.

- All school districts need to make a commitment to a full-time professional media specialist and adequate paraprofessional staffing in every school building to ensure all students learn information literacy and research skills—and develop a love of reading.

- Minnesota needs to make immediate state and local investments in school library media program print collections so they meet the Standard of current—books less than 10 years old. This will require a long-term commitment to resource building.

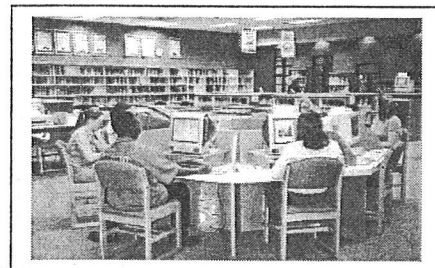
- The Legislature and Department of Children, Families & Learning (CFL) need to recognize the importance of school library media programs in improving student achievement by hiring staff at the state level to assist school districts develop effective library media programs based on *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.

- The Legislature, CFL, and local districts must commit to maintaining and developing statewide resources and services to provide student access to what they need to succeed, including continued state support of telecommunications costs and maintenance and development of resources that expand access and availability statewide.

- All stakeholders must work to eliminate the digital divide in Minnesota public schools. All students need access to up-to-date technology in media centers, computer labs, and classrooms and training in how to use it.

- The Department of Children, Families & Learning should continue data collection on school library media programs to provide on-going measurement of program development.

- Library media specialists and their supporters must become vocal advocates for all school library media programs and document and disseminate information on the impact of media programs on student achievement.



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 an aide 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's 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 (world wide web): "Who's saying what to me, for what reason, and with what credibility?"
5. They teach students the research process in a world where information overload is the norm at all ages.
6. When teachers bring classes to the library, the librarian serves as a second teacher so that every student gets individual attention.

And, by the way; the library is still reading's best friend.

Requirements to be a professional school librarian in Minnesota

- Minnesota teaching license or its equivalent.
- 33 content course hours in library media at an accredited university
- 200 hour internship under the supervision of a licensed library media specialist
- Passing score on the PRAXIS examination



"Trying to staff a library with only an aide is like trying to run a hospital entirely with LPN s."

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 not. Remember that in the Texas study of school libraries, in schools with professionals, 10% more of the students passed the state achievement test.

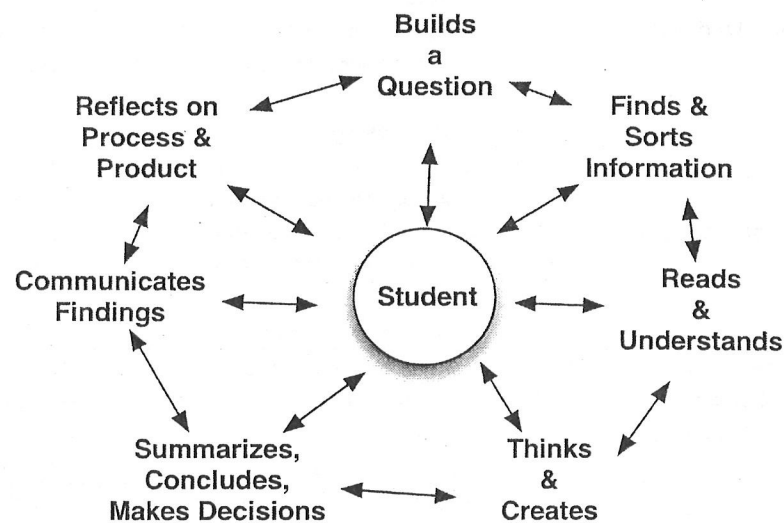
Information Literacy: A Life Skill

Whether a kindergartner or an advanced high school senior, doing research in the world of information is what students need librarians' help for as they study 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. Though overwhelming, they must learn 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 process, sometimes frustrating, requiring lots of work and hard thinking.

The Information Literacy Process



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
Build a Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building background knowledge about a topic. • The difference between a good question 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 and define terms. • Help narrow a topic to something manageable in the time available.
Find and Sort Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search strategies. • Locating resources. • Skim, scan and consider. • Evaluate resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about the quality of the information being used. • Is this source the best information?
Read and Understand	<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.
Think and Create	<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.
Summarize, Conclude, Make 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?
Communicate Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques of presenting information in print or multimedia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the ideas presented more important than how flashy the presentation is?
Reflect 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 they know and what are they able to do? • How can they 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: zero learning.

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 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 to record the sources of the ideas you have gathered?
4. How do you weave your and other's ideas into a finished product?

Thinking makes my head hurt!



Better than getting your butt kicked, Kid



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:
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.	
	Credible
	Not Credible

Purpose:	
What is the purpose of the website? To sell something? To provide information? To persuade you of something? To entertain you? 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:
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?	
	Biased
	Not Biased

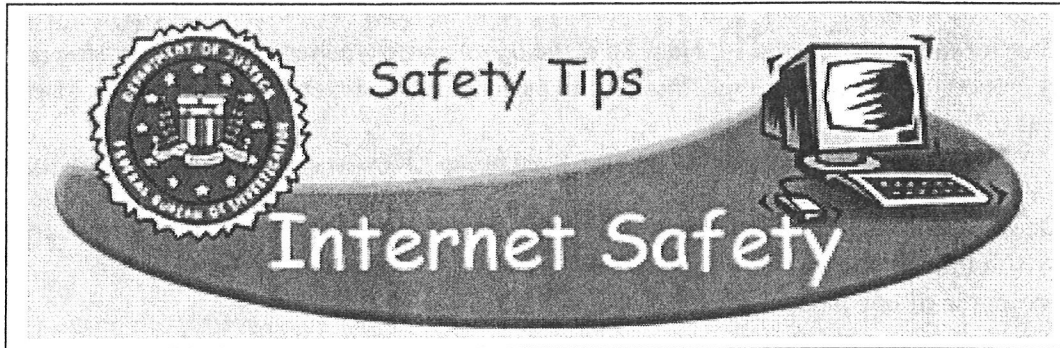
Accuracy:	
Note any obvious errors on the page, including spelling or grammar errors. What does this suggest about care in producing the page?	This information is
How does the information factually compare to information from other sources you've already read?	
	Accurate
	Not Accurate

Content and Currency:	
If statistics are provided, how old is the data?	This information is
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?	Current
Does the author provide a bibliography , works cited page, or footnotes that tell us where he got the information?	Cited
	Not Current
	Not Cited

Summary: The best reasons for using or rejecting this website are:

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.

You mean, dobermans are everywhere?



File your claws, Kid



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."

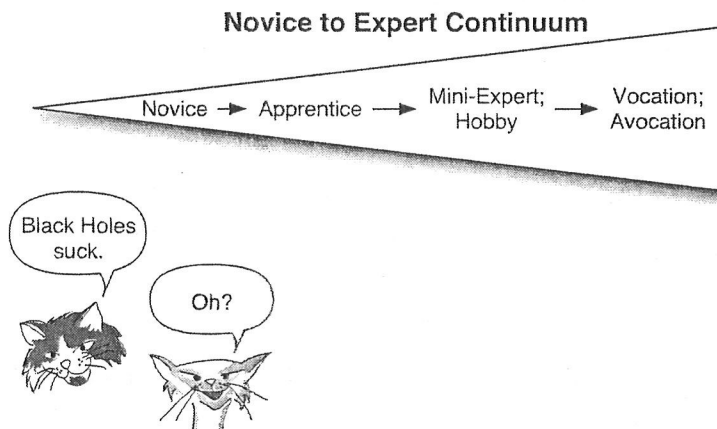
Depending on the school your child attends, the focus of education may be on gaining basic knowledge about many topics. Projects and research or natural curiosity may lead your child into topics far beyond the expertise of teachers or the school's curriculum.

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

You and your child might:

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

Your child might be in the forefront of something great.



A Critical Thinker

Numerous educators have been interested in the idea of critical thinking in the past decade. Indeed, there is a major body of literature on the topic. Librarians see critical thinking as one of the components of building an information literate person. The objective is to create neither students who are sponges (believing everything they read, view, and hear), nor skeptics (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

Becoming a healthy skeptic is one of the life skills librarians try to build rather than an idea just for school. One of the major challenges, for example, is to educate children and teens to evaluate information they find on the Internet. Parents will want help their children ask:

Who is saying what to me, for what reason, and when was it said?



Another way of involving young people is to make them answer questions about a source before they can use it in their projects/research papers. We want the questions to become second nature so that as adults, they discriminate among the flood of messages they encounter.

Evaluative Questions for Judging Quality Information

- Is the source authoritative? (Trustworthiness is a key factor.)
- Is the information current? (Current insofar as the topic requires the latest information.)
- Is the information fact or opinion? (Opinions are fine as long as we recognize them as such.)
- Is the information accurate? (Ah, most difficult to ascertain such as an Enron report to stockholders several years ago.)
- Is the information easily understood and useful? (This is a critical factor for children and teens who lack the time or skill to plow through complex information sources.)
- Does the provider of the information have an agenda? (Beware of the information source that is really out to sell the reader something, or is propagandizing the reader.)

A Creative Thinker

Is your child/teen creative? All have creative capacities and they can be improved. Creativity can also be squashed. Consider the definition at 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?

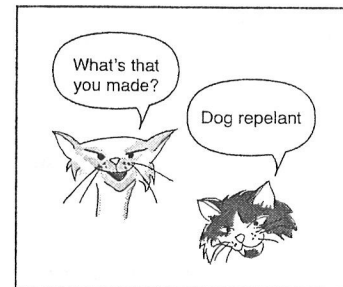
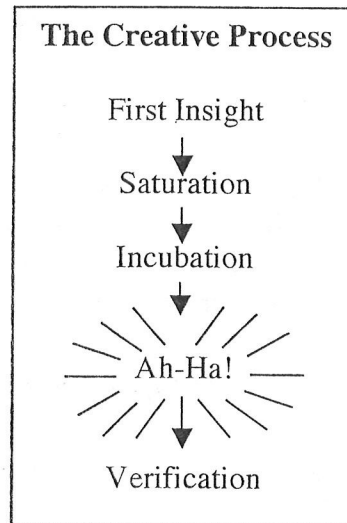
We make tools for these kinds of people.

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.



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. 115.

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

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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 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 on the digital school library and the digital public library.
- ❖ Expect lists of the best websites to be available on the 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 what online databases and digital periodical collections can be accessed from home including any passwords needed for access.

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-\$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.

Textbooks constitute a core element of most schools in the United States because they provide structure, standardized 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 only one 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 rules for textbook publishers. Since these two markets are so large, whatever these two states want taught is what publishers print and 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 in textbooks
3. Pictures, diagrams, charts, and real objects
4. Multimedia such as videos, audio, and computer software
5. Periodicals, 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."

This textbook is BORING!



Where's your library card?



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—mostly men at first. 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.

Fortunately, librarians are more interested in what's ON the wires rather than 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 tool.

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

By asking your child/teen and then interviewing the school librarian, you will be able to ascertain 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)
- ❖ If the information systems are reliable and working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- ❖ Equitable access to computers for every child
- ❖ Software my child needs to do excellent work
- ❖ Databases and digital periodical collections to easily find high quality information
- ❖ Collections of the best Internet sites targeted at school topics and age levels
- ❖ Filters to protect against advertising, porno, and predators, yet open enough to find the information my 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 its 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.
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.
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.
Online Periodical Collections	The web page should lead 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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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 accessible in your area and appropriate for the level of students.
Connections to School Activities	The library web page would link to the school web page, school activities, sports events, competitions, and important school announcements.
Parent Help Pages	Tips and helpful resources for parents might include emergency information, helping with homework, educational opportunities, and sources for scholarships.
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.

Great resource: The electronic library from the Texas State Library accessible by the holder of any Texas public library card: <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/lot/>

See exemplary Texas digital school libraries at: <http://it.springbranchisd.com/library-resources/> and <http://www.school-libraries.net/usa/tx.html>

Equip Your Child/Teen with the Right Tech Tools

Every year, computer technology makes advances and the industry all hopes we will upgrade our home and school information systems. Some schools have found the money to provide every child a laptop computer linked to school networks, the school library and the public library. Experimentation is underway to link to information systems with hand-held devices that double as phones, personal data assistants, and Internet access. Certainly wireless technology is the current favorite system so students have access to information systems anywhere in the school.

What system is pretty basic that will work for my child?

No gourmet catfood for six months, Kid



I'm worth it



- ❖ A basic computer with a current operating system that can access school networks: computer, keyboard, mouse, monitor, floppy disk and a CD burning drive is very nice.
- ❖ A way to connect to the school and the school library network: either a dial-up modem (slow), a DSL line (getting more reasonable but not available everywhere), cable modem, or home wireless system. Speed (bandwidth) is the critical thing (It's like the difference in size between a garden hose or a fire hose in downloading and uploading information).
- ❖ A reliable printer. Now days, the printer costs little but the ink/toner will be very expensive (industry plot). Find an inexpensive source of supplies and be sure you ask how much it costs to print before you buy.
- ❖ Software. It is best to have the same or similar software package that your child/teen will be using at school. An "office" package" and a graphics program will be essential.

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

- ❖ The school may supply one.
- ❖ Find a place your child/teen can use a computer: the school library after hours, the public library, or the computer lab.
- ❖ Ask the school librarian for advice. Some schools have programs to help equip students at very inexpensive costs. There will always, however, be costs associated with computer systems such as supplies, and connection fees and no school we know of will bear those costs.

How old should a child be to have their own computer? There is no right answer to this question. Some start early, some later. Your choice.

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, nonfiction, comics, newspapers, magazines, 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 and uses library card (school and public).
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 (dinosaurs, skateboards, 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 from a dime to 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. Also: Cunningham, Anne E. and Keith E. Stanovich. "What Reading Does for the Mind," *American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 1998, p. 1-8.

* Minnesota Power! © 2004 Hi Willow Research & Publishing. Available at <http://www.lmcsources.com> *

Finding a Good Book for Minnesota Children 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 Minnesota is that every year, your child can participate in choosing the best.

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



	<p>Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award Division One: Grades 3-5 http://www.isd77.k12.mn.us/lovelace/myra.htm</p>
	<p>Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award Division Two: Grades 6-8 http://www.isd77.k12.mn.us/lovelace/myra.htm</p>

Minnesota Book Awards

The Minnesota Humanities Commission's Family Literacy Initiatives includes:

- Bilingual Initiatives: includes the Hmong Translation Initiative; Somali Bilingual Initiative; Spanish Bilingual Initiative; and "Tips for Reading with Your Children" in multiple languages. See <http://minnesotahumanities.org/Literacy/bilingual.htm>
- Minnesota Storytime: a collection of free reading guides of children's picture books by Minnesota authors, illustrators and/or publishers. See <http://minnesotahumanities.org/Literacy/library.htm>

Find current reading lists and past winners for

- Minnesota Youth Reading Awards at <http://www.isd77.k12.mn.us/lovelace/myra.htm>
- Minnesota Book Awards at <http://www.minnesotahumanities.org/Book/awards.htm>
- The Minnesota Humanities Commission at <http://minnesotahumanities.org/>

Celebrate Reading—Minnesota Style



Celebrating reading is appropriate any time. And two great First Ladies, Barbara Bush and Laura Bush, are role models in encouraging reading in the lives of children. Here are just a few of the Minnesota celebrations on reading. Some are for parents and children, others for parents alone. Some are fundraisers and others just celebrations of reading.

- The Minnesota Book Awards Celebration of Books is a day-long celebration of Minnesota books and writers. <http://minnesota.humanities.org/Book/festival.htm> held in April.
- Twin Cities Book Festival <http://raintaxi.com/bookfest/>
- CLN Children's Book Week Festival; CLN Annual Conference: <http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/events.html>
- Naomi Chase Lecture, University of Minnesota <http://education.umn.edu/CI/k12books/chase.asp>
- Annual Book Week Lecture, University of Minnesota Children's Book Week <http://education.umn.edu/CI/k12books/bookweek.asp>
- Annual Celebration of MN Children's Authors and Illustrators, Red Wing, Minnesota <http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/events/region.html>
- Calendar of author/illustrator events in Minnesota <http://childrensliteraturenetwork.org/events/authors.html>
- Spotlight on Books <http://nlln.org/spotlight.html> This annual conference features speakers, authors, illustrators, educators, and librarians. Northern Lights Library Network, 103 Graystone Plaza, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501.

Celebrate reading almost any month:

February	Library Lovers Month
March	Read Across America, March 2 Freedom of Information Day, March 16
April	National Poetry Month School Library Week National People's Poetry Week TV Turn-off Week El día de los niños/El día de los libros, April 30
May	Get Caught Reading Month
September	Library Card Sign-Up Month International Literacy Day, September 8 Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read
October	International School Library Day National Book Month National Storytelling Festival (Jonesborough, TN) Teen Read Week
November	Children's Book Week Family Literacy Day, November 1

If these don't work for your community, invent something!
Celebrating reading is appropriate anytime.

Advice about Reading and Your Child

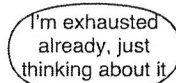
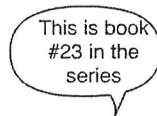
Here are a few common questions about reading and some possible solutions.

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.
- i. Maximize access to school and public libraries.

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. 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 child reads nothing but science fiction and fantasy. Should I worry?

This literature is escapist for many kids 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. What should we do?

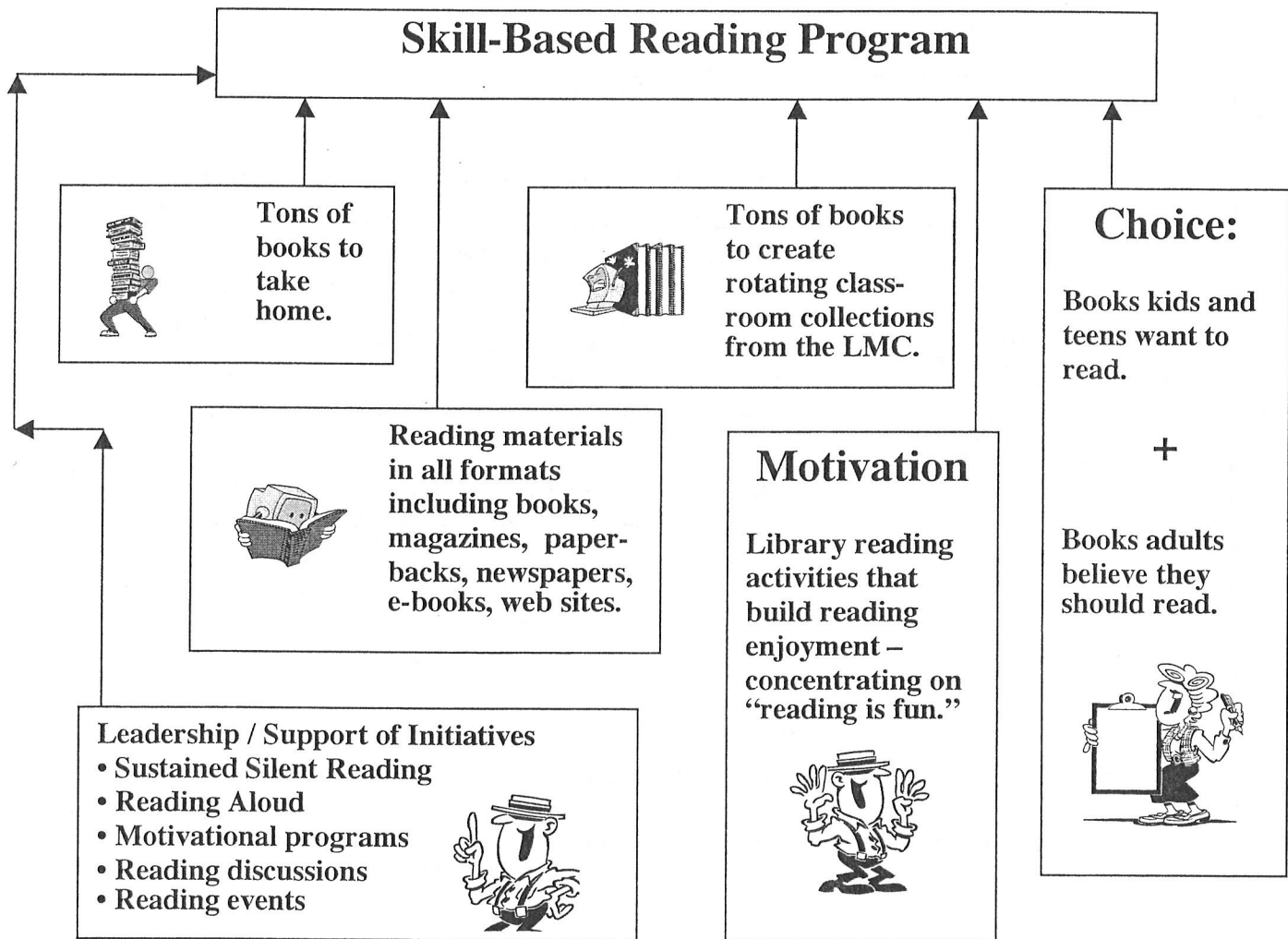
A number of writers treat teen lives realistically in their books. It all depends on your family values whether you want to allow, encourage, or restrict such literature for your own teens. Our best advice is to read what your teens are reading and talk, talk, talk.

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 emphasize 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 aliteracy (a person who can read but doesn't).

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

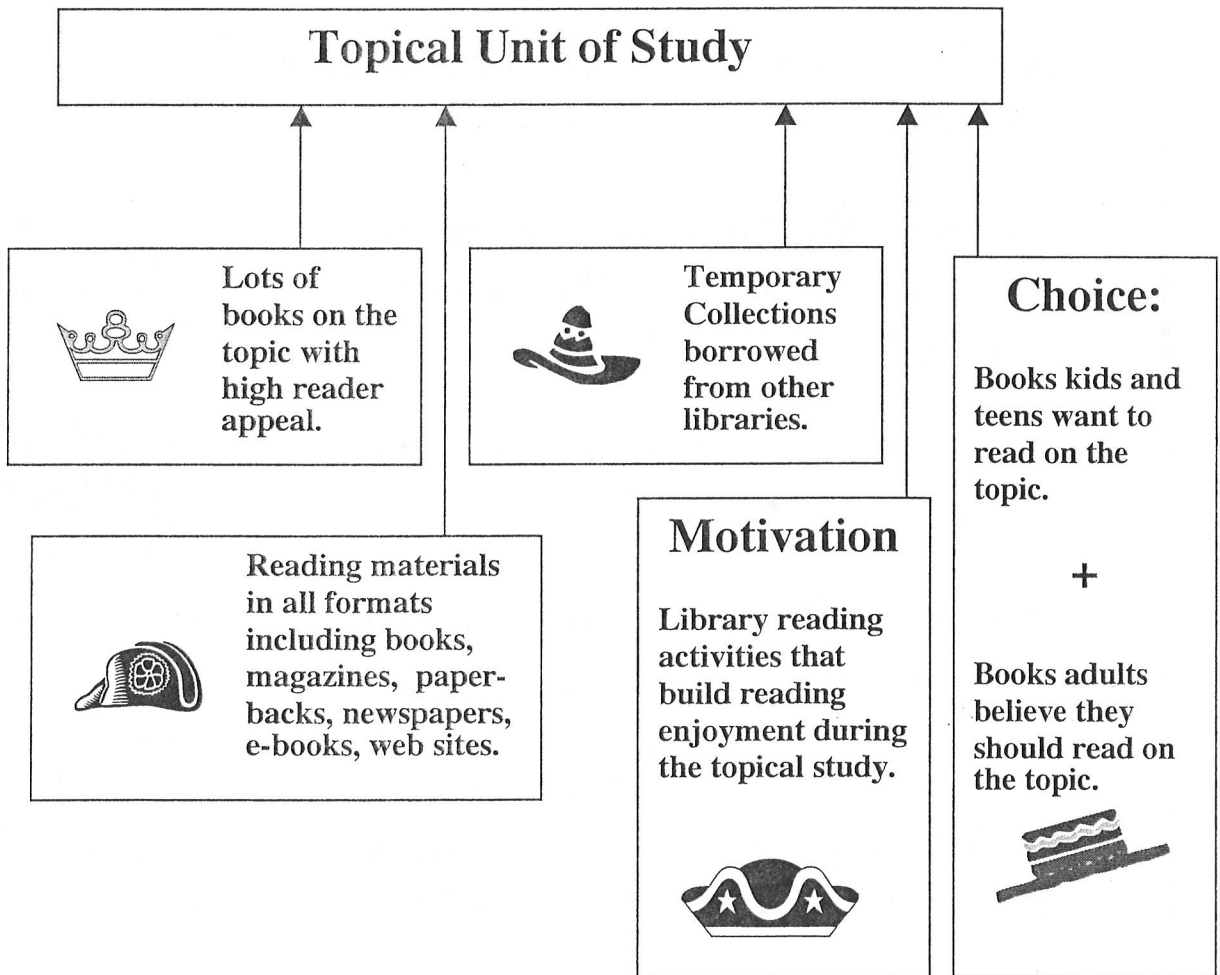
If a school community really believes the research saying that "amount counts," then the school and public library should have an extensive collection of reading materials young people want to read. So many school libraries in the nation have outdated, ragged, and uninteresting reading collections that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

If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should Teachers and the Library Media Center (LMC) 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 the library resources as your child/teen explores required and non-required topics?

You, Too, Can Raise a Non-Reader!

It is much easier to raise a non-reader than a reader. Here are a few critical suggestions:

1. Don't let your child see you reading.
2. Use TV and videos as the primary babysitter.
3. Don't buy books for your child—they're too expensive.
4. If your child has a library fine or loses a book, cut off the library privileges.
5. Don't take your child to the public library or to the bookstore.
6. Talk about TV and movies but never about books.
7. Keep your child away from those pop culture magazines, series books, and picture books (after the 2nd grade).
8. Don't allow reading in bed or get a bed lamp.¹

You didn't do any of these things



I care, Kid



¹ For other similar suggestions, see: "Unlucky Arithmetic: Thirteen Ways to Raise a Nonreader" by Dean Schneider and Robin Smith. *Horn Book*, March/April 2001. Find at www.hbook.com in the archives. Also: "Ten Ways to Prevent Reading by the Parent," LEA Working Parties, at <http://www.stockportmbe.gov.uk/docs/literacy/leaparties/repleasure/adult/t3.htm>. And thanks to Lynne Michels for sharing her list.

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

Whoopee,
I'm free!



Yes, but I wouldn't
climb every tree
I saw



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'd 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

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

Developing Readers

- ❖ Repeat sounds, words, and phrases.
- ❖ Use favorites books regularly but introduce new ones also.
- ❖ Use a variety of books to improve the richness of your child's language development.
- ❖ Note that attention spans are growing as well as understanding of story lines.
- ❖ Talk about the story.
- ❖ Remember that children will begin to recognize letters and words. You need not press them to read.
- ❖ Note that listening vocabulary is more developed than reading vocabulary.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

Please read
me a sto'wy



Purr



Beginning Readers

- ❖ Remember that 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.
- ❖ Encourage expression by questions, phrasing, and vocally mimicking story characters.
- ❖ Read aloud stories above their reading level to enrich the child's language.
- ❖ Talk about the story; predict what will happen; ask what just happened; ask what they like and don't like.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

Reading Aloud

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

My Child/Teen 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 don't know how to 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 dyslectic kids or other physical or emotional problems.

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

I read 100 books.
You owe me \$100.



Nice try, Kid



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

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.

Today, school library collections serve curriculum needs and public library collections serve more diverse needs for all ages. School libraries reach 90% of the U.S. youth, public libraries, fewer. Using both collections provides both diversity of information and depth in selected topics.

School librarians are anxious to introduce children to the public library. They want students to become acquainted with services for nights, weekends, and vacation periods. Public library collections will be their collection for life.

The public library is three dogs away



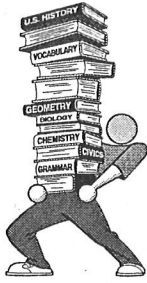
It's worth it, Kid



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 usually be accessed 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's book clubs.
- ❖ Comfortable study and reading areas.
- ❖ After school programming; homework help.
- ❖ Special assistance for home schoolers.

Launch Your Child with Book Bags, Curiosity Kits, and Theme Bags: Three Ideas for Parents and Teachers to Consider for K-2

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.

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. Once a month, the class goes to the library, where the children help select the books for the book bags. 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 cubby holes. 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. At the end of the month, the class revisits the LMC, where the books are exchanged for new ones. 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 damage and loss rates, counting the cost 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). And the 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.

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.

Theme Bags: During a month when the teacher will be studying a topic, children fill a third or half the bags with books on the topic.

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 other children in a class or school. They might, for example, ask that a book be removed from the library.

Almost all school libraries have a "Materials Selection Policy" that explains 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 a library removed all objectionable materials, there would be nothing left on their shelves. Here are a few other tips:

1. Help your child understand the family's values and know how to recognize objectionable materials and ideas.
2. Help your child to deal with 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 many 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, 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. Read the books your children/teens are reading and discuss them as a family.
8. Be sympathetic to librarians and teachers who may understand the specific needs of your child but are also 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.

The American Library Association (ALA) provides 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, while respecting 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 dangerous 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 your community to handle ideas as they conflict with values. Intellectual freedom is a gift of our form of government and it's a reason we choose to live here and not somewhere else.



Helpful source:

Texas Intellectual Freedom Handbook:
<http://www.txla.org/pubs/ifhbk.html>

Picture Books Too Good to Miss: Our Favorites

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

For Beginners

- *You're the Boss, Baby Duck* by Amy Hest
- *Tops & Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- Dr. Seuss - any titles
- Eric Carle - any titles
- *The Story of Ferdinand* - Munro Leaf
- *The Berenstain Bears series* - any titles
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin
- *Wow! It's Great Being A Duck!* - J. Rankin
- *My Little Sister Ate One Hare*. Grossman
- *The Library Dragon* by Carmen A. Deedy
- Mem Fox - any titles
- *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper!: a Maasai Tale* by Tololwa M Mollel
- *Alistair in Outer Space* by Marilayn Sadler
- *Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock & others* by Eric A. Kimmel
- *Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester
- The *Curious George* books
- Ezra Jack Keats - any titles
- *The Little Engine that Could* by W. Piper
- Richard Scarry - any titles
- Maurice Sendak - any titles
- Rosemary Wells - any titles
- Stephen Kellog - any titles
- Gene Zion - any titles
- Mother Goose books - pick out several with good illustrations.
- *Changes, Changes, Changes* by P. Hutchins
- David Wiesner - any titles
- P.D. Eastman - any titles
- Frances Hoban - the Frances books
- Beatrix Potter - any titles
- David Shannon - all the David books
- 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.
- Wordless picture books - ask for them at the library.
- Any of the Little Golden Books
- Alphabet books of all kinds
- Board books of all kinds
- Counting books - many titles

- A child's pictiory (a beginning dictionary with hundreds of pictures)

For Kids a Bit Older

- *The Eleventh Hour* by Graeme Base
- *Rapunzel* by Paul Zelinsky
- *Rapunzel* by Lynn Roberts
- *The Wolves in the Walls* by Neil Gaiman
- *Lon Po-Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China & others* by Ed Young
- *Sam and the Tigers* by Julius Lester
- *The Rough-Face Girl* by Rafe Martin
- *The Talking Eggs* by Robert D. San Souci
- *Pink and Say & others* by Patricia Polacco
- *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by Marianna Mayer
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe
- Verna Aradema - any titles
- *Seymour Simon* - any titles about science and space
- *How Much is a Million* by D. M. Schwartz
- Jon Scieszka - any titles
- Gerald McDermott - any titles
- David Macaulay - any books
- Aesop's Fables - many editions
- Chris Van Allsburg - any titles
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein and others of his poetry.
- Bill Peet - any titles
- Ed Emberley - any titles
- Arnold Lobel - any titles
- There are so many wonderful illustrated editions of fairytales such as Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Hansel and Gretle

Picture Books for Teens/Everybody

- *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*. By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, illustrated by Christopher Bing
- *When Marian Sang* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida
- *Crazy Horse's Vision* by Joseph Bruchac

Author Web Sites (find others using Google)

- Eric Carle: www.eric-carle.com

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

- *Junie B. Jones* series by Barbara Park
- *Captain Underpants* & others by Dav Pilkey
- *The Magic Tree House* by Mary P. Osborne
- Laura Engels Wilder - any titles
- Beverly Cleary - any titles
- Marc Brown - any of the Arthur books
- Dav Pilkey - Captain Underpants series

For Older Readers

- *Hatchet* & others by Gary Paulsen
- *Time Warp Trio* series - Jon Scieszka
- *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz)
- *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Curtis
- *I Got a D in Salami* by Hank Zipzer
- *Artemis Fowl* and others by Eoin Colfer
- *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke
- *Stargirl* or *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli)
- *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech
- *Redwall* & others by Brian Jacques
- *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sones
- *The Man from the Other Side*. Uri Orlev
- *Shadow Spinner* by Susan Fletcher
- *Mr. Monday* by Garth Nix
- *Sorcery and Cecelia* by C. Stevermer and P. Wrede [Minnesota author]
- *Shabanu* by Suzanne Fisher Staples
- *Skeleton Man* by Joseph Bruchac
- *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman
- *Sweetblood* by Pete Hautman [MN author]
- *Blackwater Ben* by W. Durbin [MN author]
- *Letters to Anna's Papa* by Anne Ylvisaker [Minnesota author]
- *The Giver* & others by Lois Lowry
- *Holes* & others by Louis Sachar
- E.L. Konigsburg - any titles
- Cynthia Voigt - any titles
- Jane Yolen - any titles
- *Matilda* & others by Roald Dahl
- *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt
- *Mary Casanova*—any titles [MN Author]
- Phillis R. Naylor - any titles [MN author]
- *Nightmare Mountain* & others by Peg Kehret [Minnesota author]
- *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White
- J.K. Rowling - the Harry Potter books
- *Catherine Called Birdy* by Karen Kushman

- Richard Peck - numerous titles
- Lawrence Yep - any titles
- C.S. Lewis - any titles
- Madeleine L'Engle - any titles
- DiCamillo, Kate - any titles
- *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park
- *Witness* & others by Karen Hesse
- *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor
- *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by and other titles by Avi
- Katherine Paterson - any titles
- Roald Dahl - any titles
- *Shiloh* by Phyllis Naylor
- *Souder* by William Armstrong
- *The Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford
- Lemony Snicket - any of the Unfortunate Events books
- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan

Non-Fiction Winners

- *The Diary of Anne Frank* (and other titles of the Holocaust)
- *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine 1845-1850* by Susan Campbell
- *An Extraordinary Life: The Story of a Monarch Butterfly*. Laurence Pringle
- *Leonardo da Vinci* by Diane Stanley
- *The Truth About Great White Sharks* by Mary M. Cerullo.
- *The World at Her Fingertips: The Story of Helen Keller*. By Joan Dash
- *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali* by Walter Dean Myers
- *Lincoln* by Russell Freedman
- *Navajo Code Talkers* by N. Aaseng
- *Homesick* by Jean Fritz
- *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr
- *The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours* by Jane Goodall
- *Animals in Flight* by Jenkins and Page
- *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jenne and James D. Houston

Author Web Sites (find others using Google)

- Lois Lowry: www.loislowry.com

Teen Books Too Good to Miss: Our Favorites

There are so many wonderful teen books that we could not resist recommending some of our favorites:

- *Ophelia Speaks : Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search for Self* by Sara Shandler
- *Lord of the Rings Trilogy* by J.R.R. Tolkein
- *A Child Called It* & others by Dave Pelzer
- *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- *Ender's Game* & others by Orson Scott Card
- *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini
- *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *The Notebook* & others by Nicholas Sparks
- Chris Crutcher - any titles
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey
- *Slake's Limbo* by Felice Holman
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and others by Maya Angelou
- *Go Ask Alice*. Anonymous
- *The Pigman* & others by Paul Zindel
- *Buried Onions* & others by Gary Soto
- Walter Dean Myers - any titles
- Wil Hobbes - any titles
- Cynthia Voigt - any titles
- Philip Pullman - any titles
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton - still a classic
- *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)
- Gary Paulsen - almost any title. The *Brian* books are popular with boys
- *Slake's Limbo* by Felice Holman
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- Robert Newton Peck - *A Day No Pigs Would Die* and sequels
- *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven
- *John Hersey - Hiroshima*. - Lest we forget
- Milton Meltzer - many titles
- *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich* by Alice Childress
- William Sleator - almost any title
- *Deathwatch* by Robb White
- Walter Dean Myers - many titles

Science Fiction/Fantasy

- J.R.R. Tolkein - any titles
- *His Dark Materials Trilogy* by Philip Pullman
- Ray Bradbury - many titles
- Isaac Asimov - many titles
- Robert Heinlein - early books; later ones weird.
- Marion Zimmer Bradley - many titles
- Ursula K. LeGuin - any titles
- Anne McCaffrey - the Dragon books
- Robin McKinley - wonderful retellings of fairy tales such as *Beauty*
- Orson Scott Card - numerous titles
- Philip K. Dick - many titles
- Frank Herbert - the Dune books
- Jane Yolen - any titles

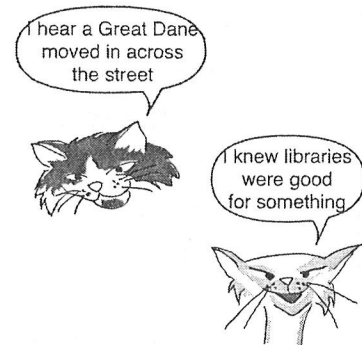
Adult Books for YAs

- *Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess
- *Into Thin Air : A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster* by Jon Krakauer
- *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue M. Kidd
- Mary Higgins Clark - any titles
- *Da Vinci Code* & others by Dan Brown
- Stephen King - Any titles
- *Jurassic Park* & others by Michael Crichton
- *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Agatha Christie - any titles
- Tony Hillerman - any mystery
- Jane Austin - all writings
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle - any Sherlock Holmes titles
- *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell
- Louis L'Amour's westerns still appeal
- John Grisham - any of the legal novels
- Jeffrey Archer - many titles - one of England's best
- *The Chosen* and others by Chaim Potok

Reluctant Reader? Try Information Books.

Just because kids are not novel readers, 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 other topics kids love:

- ❖ Animals, animals, animals (including everything from pets to dinosaurs)
- ❖ Insects—the more close-up photos, the better: giant spiders, snakes
- ❖ The morbid—mummies, terrible and sick things that have happened
- ❖ Projects, experiments and cookbooks of things to make, like slime
- ❖ Sports non-fiction—record books, how to play, equipment, biography
- ❖ Disasters—How I died climbing Mt. Everest, shipwrecks, earthquakes
- ❖ The Human Body (you know they'll go for the sex first)
- ❖ "Eyewitness Books" published by Dorling Kindersley
- ❖ Websites of museums, art galleries, Northwest Indian masks
- ❖ Cars, trucks, motorcycles, rollerblades, snowboards
- ❖ Cartoons like *Calvin and Hobbes* or *Garfield*
- ❖ Cookbooks (experiment with them)
- ❖ Coping with death and loss
- ❖ Cut-away picture books showing the insides of castles, submarines, pyramids
- ❖ *The Guinness Book of World Records* and derivative titles in their series.
- ❖ Wars and military
- ❖ Airplanes and missiles
- ❖ Space and space exploration
- ❖ Rocks, minerals, and jewels
- ❖ The latest technology toys
- ❖ Diseases
- ❖ Drawing
- ❖ Jokes and riddles



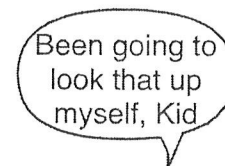
This list will never end. Once your kids get started on a topic, they will exhaust every library and bookstore in town. Now that's a shame!

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

Self-Help at Your School and Public Library

Need help as a parent or as a child/teen? Try the school and public library. Here are just a few of the topics available for the asking.

1. Sex, drugs, alcohol, child abuse and other nasty matters.
2. Sexually-transmitted diseases—prevention, reality.
3. Legal information for those having a brush with the law.
4. Lists of social agencies that can help with all types of family problems.
5. Books and resources for teen parents.
6. Career information for all ages.
7. College and university information.
8. Scholarships, grants, and other monies for education and training.
9. Guides to parenting.
10. Information on divorce or other dysfunctional family problems.
11. Divorce and its effects on children and teens.
12. Gay and lesbian issues.
13. Cultural issues such as surviving as a minority in a majority environment.
14. Materials in the languages you speak and read.
15. Family finances.
16. Information on major family purchases such as buying cars, appliances, homes, and insurance.
17. Medical information.
18. Books about dieting, bulimia, anorexia.
19. Ecology issues at home: conservation, healthy foods
20. Books to cheer me up, make me laugh, comfort me, or just a good read for the beach.



**P.S. Parents are encouraged to use the school library
just as they use the public library.**

You pay for both of them through your taxes.

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.

1. Association of Library Services for Children (American Library Association) Sponsors the famous Caldecott, Newbery Awards and Pura Belpre, plus Coretta Scott King Awards.	http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alsc.htm
2. Young Adult Library Services Association (American Library Association)	http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsa.htm
3. <i>Booklist</i> . Books for Youth; Adult Books for Young Adults; Media (Audio, Video, CDs)	http://www.ala.org/ala/booklist/booklist.htm
4. <i>Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books</i>	http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/
5. Minnesota State Book Awards	http://www.minnesotahumanities.org/Book/pastawards.htm
6. International Reading Association	http://www.reading.org/
7. National Council for the Social Studies	http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable/
8. National Science Teachers Association	http://www.nsta.org/ostbc
9. <i>Horn Book</i> Parent's Page	http://www.hbook.com/parents.shtml
10. <i>Children's Literature Choices</i> (annual Top Choices List)	http://www.childrenslit.com/clc.htm
11. <i>Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children</i> (National Science Teachers Association)	http://www.nsta.org/ostbe
12. <i>School Library Journal</i> best books lists	http://www.slj.com/ search for "Best Books"
13. Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site	http://www.carolhurst.com
14. Children's Literature Web Guide	http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/
15. History of Children's Literature web site by Kay Vandergrift	http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander
16. Internet School Library Media Center	http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/multipub.htm
17. New York Public Library: 100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know	http://www.nypl.org/branch/kids/gloria.html
18. Jim Trelease's Book Lists	http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/video_biblio.html#pagetop
19. Celebrations – African American History Month	http://www.nypl.org/branch/kids/february.html

I just hate URLs.



It saves trees, Kid.



Anyway, it keeps more dogs busy.



We're Poor - Can the Library Help? YES!

School and Public Libraries are Free, Free, Free!

What many parents don't realize, particularly if you have just come to this country, is that your family can use school and public libraries for free! That means, that as we work and pay taxes, some of our tax money goes to support the libraries we use. It is one of the most wonderful things about living in America.

gratuit
gratuito
frei



I get it,
Kid.



I went to the library. They gave you books for nothing. You had to bring them back, but when you did, they let you take others.

- Barbara Cohen, *Gooseberries to Oranges*, 1982

School and public libraries will have:

1. Books to help learn the language
2. Tutoring programs to help both parents and children
3. After-school programs for homework, tutoring, and extra learning
4. Computer terminals to use the Internet and the digital library
5. Programs that teach, help, or entertain such as storytelling
6. Books, books, and more books
7. Books in other languages
8. Magazines, newspapers, pamphlets
9. Information to solve problems
10. Materials to help children with their school work

School and public libraries are the best bargain around!

We Feel Discriminated Against. Can the Library Help?

Everyone Feels Discrimination At One Time or Another

It is sad but true that in every society worldwide, discrimination is alive and well. It may be the color of your skin. It might be whether you are tall or short (Africa), Jewish, speak Arabic, go to the "wrong" church, are overweight, or are just plain ugly. If others don't find something in you to dislike, they will invent it.

What can a library possibly do?

1. Books, magazine articles, videos, and audio recordings of folks just like you describe discrimination. The authors will recount their stories and tell you how they coped with the hand dealt them. They could be angry, encouraging, or resigned to their fate.
2. Find out your rights in employment, in courts, in society, in housing, and in financial matters.
3. Find self-help suggestions for dealing with the problems you encounter.
4. Use the library to learn how to excel in a field. Competence and hard work have been keys to opening doors in sports, music, film, and the business world.
5. Read and read until you learn self-defense mechanisms such as: What do I say when they say... What do I do when they do that?
6. Find organizations that deal with the discrimination you face.

I hear Siamese
are persnickety



So what's
your point, Kid?



Responsibility, Fines, and Bringing Books Back

A perennial problem in every library is lost, missing, and overdue materials. No other issue makes so many library enemies. The digital library has advantages because physical items do not have to circulate. 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.



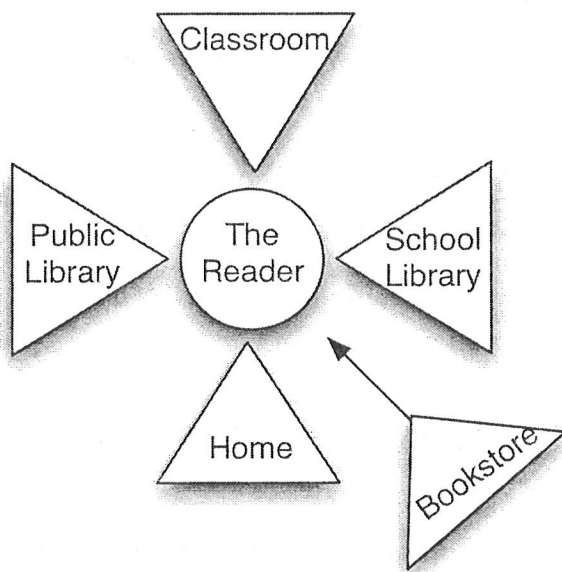
We all try to help children and teens learn responsibility. Yet they must have books to read—and lots of them. How can we do both? If for example, a child doesn't handle materials very well, shall we deny access to books? **NO!** There is no alternative. Literacy must always win. Children and teens must 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.
2. Do the same for public library materials.
3. 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.
4. Have a few special places at home where library books are stored - a box beside the child's bed; a box in the family room where books are generally shared; a special "library" shelf, or personal book cases.
5. Have an appropriate container - a bag or backpack or wheelie cart to transport items to and from school - with identification on it.
6. Teach children how to care for books or other materials. The school librarian will probably do this, so you can review those tips.
7. 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? Can children earn the fines or replacement cost? How?
8. 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 that solution, not the lost book.
9. **THE MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD A LIFE-LONG READING HABIT, and second, to be responsible.**

Classroom Collections, School and Public Libraries

Sources of Reading Materials



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

The classroom collection has become quite popular in the past few years with funding coming from states and the federal government—sometimes at the expense of the school library budget.

The advantage of the classroom collection is that it is close at hand for students to use while school and public libraries are either down the hall or some distance from the school.

The disadvantage of the static classroom collection is that it is too small, becomes uninteresting soon after the school year begins and cannot hope to compete with the larger collections close by.

There is a simple solution—create rotating collections from the school library and perhaps the public library in the classroom. Every few weeks, a fresh supply of materials replaces an older set.

Such an arrangement can work with students taking the leadership to check out and return collections to and from the library in the school or public library. Perhaps parents can help organize such a system and streamline it until it works.

The goal is to have something fresh to read at arm's length so that more is read. And this translates into a reading habit—producing higher achievement. It works. It can work in your child's/teen's classroom.



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's too good to be true, it's too good to be true." Good information systems cost money. And what's free on the Internet—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 is spent from federal, state, and other sources for the library. 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)

How much money would your school library need 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.
7. Support Book Fairs and other library fund raisers.



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 students doing topical research could benefit by parental expertise. Volunteer to be a person students can interview, be a tour-guide of your place of employment, or supply answers to questions by email. You might be asked to be a guest speaker or 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 More.** 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 tasks 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 experts to help students with sophisticated research.
 - l. Find sources for free or inexpensive supplies needed by the library.
 - m. Repair a piece of equipment.
 - n. Help paint the library or repair a worn spot in the carpet.
 - o. Install anti-theft devices on the library computers.
 - p. Lead and organize/train the parent volunteers for the library.

School Safety and Volunteers

Don't be surprised in today's world if there is a fair amount of red tape and scrutiny involved in volunteering in any school or being on school grounds during school hours, let alone the concerns about insurance and liability. Safety concerns are paramount in all schools.

Please don't meow when you see me in the library today.



I wouldn't dream of it, Kid



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. Persons who take up more of the librarian's time than the help is worth.
5. Volunteers who accept the responsibility to run a library when there isn't any librarian.

Advocate for the School Library

Most school children 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 for 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.

I see you're meowing at Tabby, again.



She's on the school board, Kid.



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.¹

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; it requires vigilance; it 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.**

¹ Helpful publication: *Toolkit for School Library Media Programs: Messages, Ideas And Strategies For Promoting The Value Of School Library Media Programs And Library Media Specialists In The 21st Century @ Your Library.* American Library Association, 2003. Available at <http://ala.org>

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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 an aide does not make a difference in test scores.² Why? Because the professional concentrates on teaching and the use of information while aides concentrate on the organization.

You will meet
the new
librarian today



It's all
your fault



Purr



If the library is considered just 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, 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 LPNs 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 administrators do not have a school librarian as a 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: grants, special state or federal programs? If there hasn't been a school librarian in the school, it takes a 3-5 pilot year program to get operating at maximum power.
6. If there really is no state allocation for a librarian, why not? A number of states have allocations for a school librarian in every school by state law.
7. Understand what really takes money vs. a realignment of priorities.
8. Don't take no for an answer.

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.

How Parent Groups Can Help the School Library

Many parent groups such as the PTA have a library committee and library issues are presented to 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.
 - a. School funds
 - b. District funds
 - c. State/federal funds
 - d. Grant funds
 - e. Parent group funds
2. Understand the budgetary needs a library program must have to operate and provide the service your children must have.
3. Make plans to close the gap between what governmental sources are providing and what parent groups can do. (Governments should fund at least 90% of the needs).
4. Set up a volunteer program to help the librarian.
5. Help plan and conduct various library activities:
 - a. Book fairs
 - b. Reading motivation activities
 - c. Research/term-paper clinics for parents/students
 - d. Helping every child to have a public library card and access to their databases. Some neighboring academic libraries might also welcome students.
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. Have a "contributions jar" always prominently displayed.
7. Whenever school funding is discussed, never forget the library.
8. Create a library fund account and monitor that the money is actually spent for the library. Pass out "how to contribute" book marks at all meetings in the library and elsewhere.
9. 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.
10. If there is no librarian, lobby tirelessly for one—a good one.
11. Lobby for help for the librarian. One person can't do it alone.
12. When the subject comes up, say something good about the library.



School Library Horror Stories: A Dilemma

We have heard from students many horror stories about school libraries. Your children may tell you others:

1. The computers in the library don't work or are sadly outmoded.
2. The librarian is rushing around in a dither doing three jobs at once and so there is no personal help.
3. The collection is so old and outdated that our reports are flawed.
4. There is nothing in the library we want to read.
5. The library is a social center for goofing off.
6. The staff is unfriendly, not helpful.

Contrast these statements with the good things kids say about the best school libraries in Ohio.¹

"I needed help doing a project for government that had to do with presidents and they had so many books and then the librarian helped me find web sites. But then they gave me ways of sorting through all the ideas to extract the key points so I could get my head around it all."

"I needed to write a paper and I went to the Library where I was ultimately able to write a paper successfully. My ideas were a mess and talking to the librarian gave me a way to organize my ideas and present the argument. I did really well!!! I've never forgotten that - used it to do many other assignments."

"I remember when I came up to the school library for math. We turned the library into a co-ordinate grid. It was soooooooooooooooooooooo cool!!!!!! And I could know about grids in my tests."

"It helped me find info on racism for a 10th grade project, and made me really think about that, especially I didn't realize how racist some of my ideas were."

¹ Todd, Ross. *Student Learning Through Ohio School Libraries: The Ohio Research Study Review of the Findings, 2002-2003*. PowerPoint Presentation, Feb., 2004. (at: <http://www.oelma.org/studentlearning.htm>) 13,000 students in 39 schools that had "excellent" school libraries were polled about the help they received from the library. The overwhelming majority had very positive things to say.

"We had a big research project my sophomore year of high school. I had to do my report on heart attacks and the library helped me out with PowerPoint and finding information. I actually learned the food I eat is not so good for me, so I've made a few changes there."

So what?

When you as a parent demand a good school library, you are saying loudly: "I want my child to succeed!" If your child has a good teacher and a good school library, the door is wide open to success. Ask, encourage, advocate, yell, scream, demand—It's your child's life and opportunity window.

Students, teachers, and parents: Above all, don't accept the argument that "We can't afford it." Remember the saying "A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste!"

Bilingual Children/Teens: How Can the School Library Help?

Many schools in the United States are filled with students who are learning English. The school and public libraries can help. Here are a few tips:

1. Check out books from school and public libraries in both languages. Have many of these books in your home. They can be checked out free.
2. Books from the public and school library can be checked out free as long as your child brings them back on time. If books are not back on time or lost, there might be a fee. Help your children/teens be responsible.
3. Reading a lot in English will help your child learn English fast.
4. Read in English with your child/teen. Teach each other as you read.
5. 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.
6. Have a bilingual dictionary handy such as a Spanish-English, English-Spanish dictionary. You can look up words in either language for help.
7. If your 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.
8. Meet and talk to the librarian often. When the librarian understands what you and your child need, you can expect help.
9. Ask the librarian for help in finding web sites both in English and the child's first language.
10. Ask the librarian to let your child watch videos on the topic the class is studying. The visuals in the film will help the child understand the concepts being taught.
11. If you do not have many books in your home, ask the librarian to help you find inexpensive or free books your child would like to read.
12. See that your child can visit the school library several times or more per week.
13. Take your children to the public library often.

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 coach of technology; a co-creator of exciting learning experiences with your child's/teen'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 who makes the actual difference in achievement.¹

At least one full time paraprofessional/clerical

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 it 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: books not read; poor research habits; rampant plagiarism; surfing the Pacific Ocean web of the Internet; and, ultimately low test scores. The more your child needs help in school, the more critical the school library will be. Note: In schools over 1,000 students, staffing needs are greater.

¹ The Alaska Study can be read at <http://www.davidvl.org> under research.

* Minnesota Power! © 2004 Hi Willow Research & Publishing. Available at <http://www.lmcsource.com> *

Great Quotes About Libraries and Reading

Books were my pass to personal freedom. I learned to read at age three, and soon discovered there was a whole world to conquer that went beyond our farm in Mississippi. —Oprah Winfrey.

I started reading. I read everything I could get my hands on... By the time I was thirteen I had read myself out of Harlem. I had read every book in two libraries and had a card for the Forty-Second Street branch. —James Baldwin.

No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. —Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, letter 1753.

You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them. —Ray Bradbury.

My most prized possession was my library card from the Oakland Public Library. —Bill Russell, basketball player.

It was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. —Frederic Douglass, *Escape from Slavery*.

I cannot live without books. —Thomas Jefferson.

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

Reading aloud is the best advertisement because it *works*. It allows a child to sample the delights of reading and conditions him to believe that reading is a pleasurable experience, not a painful or boring one. —Jim Trelease. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*, p. 9.

To me, nothing can be more important than giving children books. It's better to be giving books to children than drug treatment. —Fran Lebowitz. *The Columbia World of Quotations*, 1996.

When I got my library card, that was when my life began. —Rita Mae Brown.

What in the world would we do without our libraries? —Katharine Hepburn.

I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library. —Jorge Luis Borges.

It is a man's duty to have books. A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life. —Henry Ward Beecher.

Did it ever occur to anyone that if you put nice libraries in public schools you wouldn't have to put them [15 year olds] in prisons? —Fran Lebowitz. *The Columbia World of Quotations*, 1996.

I went to the library. They gave you books for nothing. You had to bring them back, but when you did, they let you take others. —Barbara Cohen, *Gooseberries to Oranges*, 1982.

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

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. —Richard Stele.

If we would get our parents to read to their preschool children fifteen minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools. —Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, 1981.

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them. —Mark Twain.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some are to be chewed and digested. —Francis Bacon. *Essays*, 1625.

Good books may not save the world but they are one of the reasons the world is worth saving. —Bernice E. Cullinan.

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