Wisconsin Power!

A Parent's Guide to School Libraries

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To the Purchaser of This Book

The purpose of this book is to get the message out to parents about school libraries and their impact on education.

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A School Library Mission

What type of person is likely to be successful in today's information-rich, technology-based world? What type of learner is likely to be successful as the 21st century unfolds?

When an exemplary library program is in place, every student can be:

Reading Literate

An avid and capable reader

Technology Literate

A skilled user of technology tools
An efficient learner

Information Literate

An organized investigator
A critical thinker
A creative thinker
An effective communicator
A responsible information user

Research on School Libraries: A National Picture

Since 1999, sieventeen states have commissioned studies[1] about the impact of school libraries. In every instance, good school library media programs are linked to higher academic achievement.

Alaska, 2000
Colorado, 2000
Delaware 2006
Florida, 2003
Iowa, 2002
Illinois, underway
Massachusetts, 2
Michigan, 2003
Minnesota, 2002
Missouri, 2003
New Mexico, 200:
North Carolina, 20
Ohio, 2004
Oregon, 2001
Pennsylvania, 20(
Texas, 2001
Wisconsin 2005

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

What Every Parent Should Know About School Libraries and Achievement

What do you as a parent know about the role of school library programs in your child's education? What should you know? In a study of library media programs in Wisconsin, it was noted that library media program variables, in addition to school and socioeconomic variables, play a primary role in explaining student performance levels on the state knowledge and concepts exam (WKCE). Staffing levels, collection size, technology resources, and interaction by the library media specialist with teachers and students all have a positive association with WKCE performance at all grade levels.[1]

Key Findings from *Student Learning Through Wisconsin School Library Media Centers*

Key Finding #1: Schools with full-time certified library media specialists and full-time library aides have higher performance on the WKCE.

Key Finding #2: Schools where the library media specialist spends more time on instructionally related student and teacher activities have higher WKCE scores.

Key Finding #3: Teachers who aligned WMAS for Information and Technology Literacy to their lessons found school library media programs more helpful to student performance.

Key Finding #4: Schools with greater library media program resources for collections and technology have higher performance on the WKCE.

Key Finding #5: Library media specialists help students acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century.

Policy Implications:
- All building-level library media programs must have adequate professional and support staff. Both certified library media specialists and aides emerged as the most critical component of the program.
- All building-level school library media centers must be open and accessible to all students and teachers throughout the school day.
- District and school administrators must recognize the role of the library media program as an instructional program that contributes to student achievement.
- Administrative and financial support is required to effectively implement a library media program with the resources necessary to impact student achievement: staff, print and electronic resources, and technology.

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[1] Smith, Ester. *Student Learning Through Wisconsin School Library Media Centers*. Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2005, p. 14.

Research Linking Reading to Academic Achievement

The critical nature of reading in the information age is clear. Research completed by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich[1], Stephen Krashen[2], and Jeff McQuillan[3], plus the latest NAEP research[4] from the U.S. federal government, links the amount young people read with their academic achievement.

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

Comprehension, Spelling, Grammar, Vocabulary,

Writing Style, Verbal Fluency, General Knowledge

NAEP Results 2000

Fourth graders in the United States do better academically when they:
- Read in school
- Read as homework
- Have books, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedias in their homes
- Read for fun every day
- Discuss what they read

For ESL Learners: Amount Counts!
Research also demonstrates that the fastest way to get anyone—child, teenager, or adult—to learn English is to have them spend a significant amount of time reading in English!

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

In their recent study of schools in Alaska, Pennsylvania and Colorado, Lance and Loertscher found that scores were 10-20% higher in schools where libraries have certified library media specialists who collaborate with teachers, teach information literacy, promote reading, and see to it that collections are current and ample.[5]

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[1] "What Reading Does for the Mind" by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich. *American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 1998, p. 1-8.
[2] *The Power of Reading* by Stephen Krashen, 2nd ed. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
[3] *The Literacy Crisis* by Jeff McQuillan (Heinemann, 1998).
[4] "The Nation's Reading Report Card: Fourth-Grade Reading 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics," The Center, 2000. online at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001499
[5] Lance, Keith and David V. Loertscher. *Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference.* 2nd ed. Salt Lake City: Hi Willow, 2002.

How Does Wisconsin Compare to the Nation in School Libraries?

In March 2004, the Federal Government released the report *The Status of Public and Private School Library Media Centers in the United States: 1999-2000,* available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004313.pdf. While the data is not current, the report contains the most recent national statistics available. How did Wisconsin compare to the nation? The table below summarizes some important findings:

Characteristic	Source	Wisconsin	Nation
Public schools that claim to have a library	p. 5	99.8%	91.6%
Public schools that have a certificated librarian	p. 9	87.8%	75.2%
Number of schools with a full-time librarian	p. 10	52.5%	60.5%
School libraries with paid library aides	p. 23	88.2%	71.6%
Average library expenditures (books and media)	p. 29	$10,809	$8,729
Average number of books in the library	p. 29	11,763	10,232
Average library circulation of materials per week	P. 47	634	605

Conclusions:
- Wisconsin has many schools that do not have a full-time librarian. This means that these schools share a librarian with another school or several schools. Research indicates that these librarians are unable to develop a full reading or information literacy program in any of their schools. *Student Learning Through Wisconsin Library Media Centers* demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between student achievement and having a full-time library media specialist in each building.
- Spending on materials is above the national average due in large part to stable library aid from Wisconsin's Common School Fund.
- Collections of books are above the national average but since no measure was taken of copyright date, collections could be quite old in one school and current in another.
- Circulation is slightly above the national average.

Good advice for every parent:
- A school library with lots of books and a full-time professional librarian makes a significant difference to your child's education.
- Find out if your school has a professional librarian and a sufficient budget to buy materials your child wants to read.

Why a Professional Teacher-Librarian?

Here are a few things professional teacher-librarians do:

1. Collaborate and plan with classroom teachers to create exciting learning experiences in an information-rich and technology-rich environment.

2. Help students get the best information to complete their assignments.

3. Build and maintain a digital school library open to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere in the school and from home. The teacher-librarian provides access to reliable, current information.

4. Guide and teach students to evaluate information, particularly from online sources. They teach students to ask "Who's saying what, for what reason, and with what authority?"

5. Teach students a research process for effectively managing a world of information overload.

6. Serve as a team teacher when teachers bring classes to the library, allowing more students to receive individual attention.

7. Expertly match reader abilities and interests to appropriate resources.

Requirements to be a professional teacher-librarian in Wisconsin

- Hold a valid elementary or secondary WI teaching credential.
- Complete an approved program for school library media certification.

Is your school library staffed by a professional teacher-librarian?

Ask the question: "Are you a credentialed teacher-librarian?" If your school does not have such a person, ask why it doesn't.

Remember that in sixteen major studies since 2000 in over 9200 schools with professional teacher-librarians, test scores were 10-20% higher than in schools without these professionals.

School Library Staffing

The school library is a complex information hub.

Every school library needs:

At least one full-time professional teacher-librarian.
 Why: In Wisconsin, teacher-librarians are also certified as classroom teachers. The librarian is a teacher—a teacher of reading; a teacher of information literacy and research skills; a technology coach; a co-creator of learning experiences with your child's classroom teacher. When the majority of the teacher-librarian's day is spent on these tasks, your child will receive an important educational boost. Research shows that having a full-time professionally staffed library is a critical factor in student achievement.

At least one full-time paraprofessional/clerical person.
 Why: Support staff manage the daily operations of the library. They handle the myriad and time-consuming functions of circulation, retrieval, shelving, discipline, materials processing, traffic control, facility monitoring and decorating. This is a critical component in the efficient, reliable delivery of service to students and teachers.

At least one full-time technical assistant.
 Why: Computer technicians keep the networks, computers, websites, and communication systems running. In addition, they maintain student access, filters, passwords, equipment and software maintenance and upgrades. Reliable access to a range of electronic tools is critical in the current information-rich, technologically-driven educational environment.

This trio of library staff will provide high quality, equitable access to information and supportive help for every child and teacher as they work with information and technology resources. To hire only a clerk or aide to run the library negates the impact of the academic resource. An understaffed library means information may not be accessed, poor research habits may develop, plagiarism will occur, and lower test scores will be the ultimate result.

No Teacher-Librarian? What to Do

The national research on school libraries links the professional teacher-librarian with achievement.[1] Staffing the school library with only a clerk or a paraprofessional does make a difference in test scores.[2] The impact greatly increases when the library is staffed with BOTH a certified teacher-librarian and support staff. Why? Because the professional person concentrates on teaching and the use of information while clerical or para-professional staff concentrate on organizational operations.

If the library is only a room full of books to be circulated to students, no special expertise is needed. If reading achievement and information literacy are emphasized, a professional is needed.

Sadly, many schools, particularly at the elementary level, do not have professional teacher-librarians. At the very time when children are learning to read and setting patterns for information use, there is no professional to provide the necessary instruction. Scores, academic achievement, and reading all suffer when this vital professional is not in the school on a daily basis. It is like trying to staff the classroom with only an aide or volunteer.

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

> **Wisconsin ranks 12th in the ratio of teacher-librarians to students.[3]**

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[1] Keith Lance speech, White House Conference on School Libraries. At
http://www.imls.gov/pubs/whitehouse0602/keithlance.htm
[2] See the Alaska Study at http://www.davidvl.org under "Research."
[3] Everhart, Nancy. "School Staffing Survey 2000, Looking for Few Good Librarians," SLJ Online, September 1, 2000.

Wisconsin Academic Standards and Information Literacy

Wisconsin, under the direction of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), has developed academic standards to prepare students for the future. These standards describe what a student should know and be able to do in each subject and at each grade level. They outline a connected body of understandings and competencies that form a comprehensive foundation for learning.

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Information and Technology Literacy identify and define the knowledge and skills essential for all Wisconsin students to access, evaluate, and use information and technology. These standards connect and interrelate current perspectives in information literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy into a unified conceptual framework. The purpose of the standards is to identify information and technology content and performance standards for all students throughout the pre-kindergarten to grade twelve (PK-12) curriculum. Designed to be integrated into various content and skill areas of the school curriculum, the standards focus on learning *with* information and technology rather than learning *about* information and technology.

Guidance from DPI continued with the publication of the *Information & Technology Literacy Standards Matrix* to show alignment, integration and embedding of the ITL standards into Wisconsin's core content standards. To provide schools and school districts with guidelines for collaborative planning and ideas for a unified approach to the delivery of information and technology programming, *Information and Technology Literacy: A Collaborative Planning Guide for School Library Media and Technology* was developed. As proven through the 16 school library research studies, this collaborative model of authentic problem-based learning does foster higher academic achievement.

The Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning[1]

Information Literacy - The student who is information literate:
- accesses information efficiently and effectively.
- evaluates information critically and competently.
- uses information accurately and creatively.

Independent Learning - The student who is an independent learner:
- is information literate and pursues information related to personal interests.
- is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.
- is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.

Social Responsibility - The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society:
- is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.
- is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.
- is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

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

Information Literacy: A Life Skill

Whether your child is a kindergartner, a high school senior, or in between, teacher-librarians help students learn to locate, evaluate, and use information for all of their academic studies and for personal use as well.

The critical challenge for today's students is to sort through all the information and voices crowding into their world. Students need to be able to make sound decisions, evaluate information, and prepare for their futures both personally and professionally.

Multiple reports have cited the need for today's students to become proficient in the 21st century skills and knowledge that are necessary for postsecondary learning, the workforce, and in modern society. At the top of the list are learning and thinking skills, including information and media literacy skills. Prominent, too, is ICT literacy: information, communication, and technology. Students must be able to use technology to learn content and skills in order to think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.

Given a topic, a problem, an assignment, a paper, or a personal quest, students might follow the process pictured below. Most models for information problem-solving and decision-making incorporate the stages illustrated in this model.

The Information Literacy Process
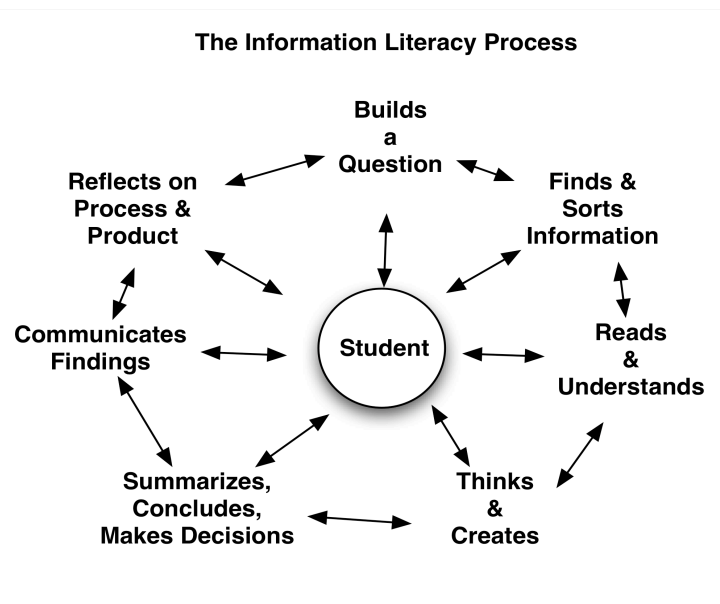
Helping Your Student with Information

As young people work on various assignments/projects requiring the location and use of information, parents can help and support them in this process. Below are some ideas that can serve as a guide through the research process.

The Research Task	What the Teacher-Librarian Teaches	How Parents Can Help
Build a Question	• Build background knowledge. • Differentiate between a good question and a poor question. • Narrow a topic. • Form key words.	• Find books on a topic. • Explain concepts about a topic and define terms. • Help narrow a topic to a manageable scope.
Find and Sort Information	• Search strategies. • Locate resources. • Evaluate resources.	• Ask about the quality of the information being used. • Discuss possible sources.
Read and Build Understanding	• Reading strategies. • Actively read, view, and listen. • Interpret pictures. • Use features of non-fiction text. • Note-taking.	• Help to find the "main ideas" and "supporting ideas."
Think and Create	• Use graphic organizers. • Sort, compare, and classify information. • Look for patterns and trends. • Compare and contrast information and ideas.	• Help make connections between ideas.
Summarize, Conclude, Make Decisions	• Summarize ideas. • Draw conclusions. • Make decisions. • Properly cite resources.	• Check on progress. • Assist with any challenges.
Communicate Findings	• Present information in print or multimedia.	• Assist with presentation formatting and development.

Reflect on Process and Product	• Reflecting:
	  "What do I know?"
	  "How well did I do?"
	  "How can I improve?"
		• Discuss project outcomes.
		• Assist with constructive reflection and improvement plan.

Avoiding Cut and Paste (Plagiarism)

Cheating and plagiarism are serious problems in education today. A 2006 survey by the Josephson Institute of Ethics found that roughly 33% of high school students admitted copying an Internet document for a classroom assignment at least once.[1] The Internet is a popular source of information for student papers. A common complaint of teachers and teacher-librarians is that students cut and paste information from the Internet, books, and other sources and then turn it in as if it is their own work. Fee-based services are available on the Internet that allow students to download research papers to print out and hand in. Although students appear not to realize it, the loss of these learning opportunities is devastating to their future. Teacher-librarians assist teachers in designing assignments that require creative input from the student and provide students with the information they need to cite their sources accurately.

Replace CUT and PASTE with: Cut, Paste, THINK!

To clarify:

1. It's OK to cut and paste articles, pictures, quotes, or anything else as you assemble information for a project, but be sure that the source (or citation) follows the information.
2. When cutting and pasting information from a source, cite it properly with the author, title, publisher, date and Internet URL. If you don't, you have plagiarized.
3. You may quote and summarize the ideas of others, but it is your own creative thought, analysis, and decisions that will be evidence of learning.
4. "How to THINK" is the true objective of learning and it is the foundation of 21st century skills.

Good information about how to avoid plagiarism and how to properly document sources used is available—ask your school's teacher-librarian!

As a parent, you can help by asking questions as your student's project develops. Question starters will stimulate discussion and perhaps provide opportunities to share advice.
1. Are you recording 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 teacher-librarian teach you to record the sources of the ideas you have gathered?
4. How do you incorporate the ideas of others with your own in a finished product?

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[1] Abdul-Alim, Jamaal. "Internet Cheating Clicks with Students." Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Online, http://www.jsonline.com/story/indes.aspx?id=541972

Judging an Internet Site

Use this guide to help decide whether specific web pages are reliable sources for research. Need help? Ask your teacher-librarian.

Site Name:_____

Site URL:_____

Authority:

Who is the sponsoring organization for the website?_____

Is the author or organizational author identified?   Yes   No

(Look at the top & bottom of the page for a name. Check other pages on the site for an author.)

Does the author list occupation, education, or other credentials?   Yes   No

     (What makes the author an expert on this topic?)

Can you contact the publisher/author from the site?   Yes   No

Purpose/Bias:

Is this site trying to: Sell something?_____   Inform?_____   Persuade?_____

Does the purpose affect the accuracy of the information?   Yes   No

Domain:

What is the site's domain type?

.gov_____   .com_____   .edu_____   .org_____   Other_____

     (What does the domain name tell you about the purpose of the site?)

Accuracy:

Are the sources of the facts documented?   Yes   No

Can you verify the facts from other sources?   Yes   No

Are there any errors on the page, including spelling or grammar errors? Yes   No

Does the author provide a bibliography, works cited page or footnotes that tell us where he/she got the information?   Yes   No

Currency:

When was the web page created?_____ Revised/updated?_____

If statistics are included, how old is the data?_____

Design:

Is the page easy to navigate?   Yes   No

Are the graphics distracting?   Yes   No

Are the links helpful and relevant?   Yes   No

Do the links work?   Yes   No

Is the page well organized?   Yes   No

Internet Safety for Kids

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

There are some very important things that children and teens need to keep in mind when using computers 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 or respond 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, teacher, or teacher-librarian 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.

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.

To read more about new privacy rules, visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/kidzprivacy/index.htm. There are special sections for kids, adults and teachers.

The Wisconsin DPI has partnered with the i-*SAFE Safe Schools Education Initiative* sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice to promote Internet safety education in Wisconsin schools. Contact your child's teacher or teacher-librarian to find out if the school participates in this program. For more information, visit http://www.isafe.org.

Help Your Student Become an Expert

Due to the demands of standardized testing, the focus of your student's education may be limited to learning only basic knowledge in a variety of curricular areas. Projects, research, and natural curiosity may lead your child into investigations beyond the confines of the curriculum.

When your child becomes interested in the Antarctic, whales, dinosaurs, science fiction, inventions, or a myriad of other topics, talk to the teacher-librarian about ways to encourage the exploration that can transform an interest into expertise.

Libraries are Keys to Becoming Experts:
- ❖ Explore the school library.
- ❖ Explore the public library.
- ❖ Explore the Internet.
- ❖ Connect with experts.
- ❖ Gain access to advanced collections at universities, museums, etc.
- ❖ Conduct hands-on experimentation and research.
- ❖ Ask questions.

Novice to *Expert* Continuum

Novice ⇨ Apprentice ⇨ Mini-Expert Hobbyist ⇨ Vocation Avocation
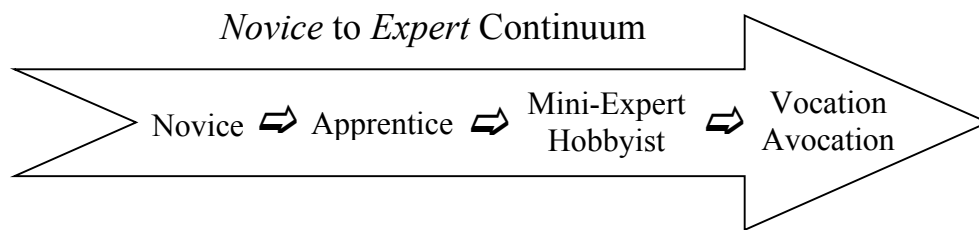
A Critical Thinker

Teacher-librarians see critical thinking as one of the primary characteristics of an information literate person. The WKCE and national tests such as the ACT and SAT have many items that test not only factual knowledge, but also the ability to think critically. Critical thinking is best integrated with existing curricular content.

Classroom teachers and teacher-librarians should teach critical thinking strategies within the context of content-area projects, lessons, and information use. The objective is to create neither students who are naïve nor cynics, but healthy skeptics.
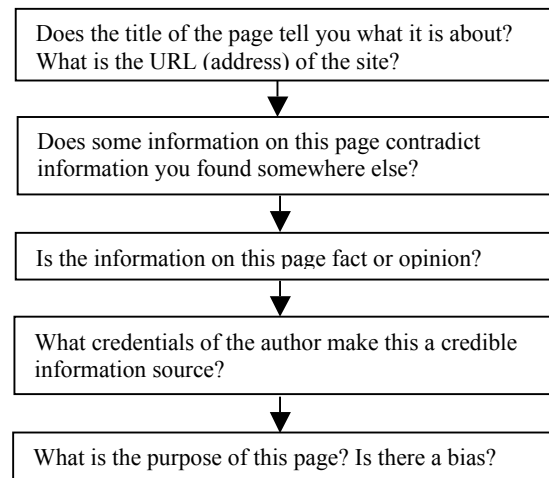
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CRITICAL THINKING CONTINUUM

Naïve - - - - - - - - Healthy Skeptic - - - - - - - - - - Cynic
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Evaluating Information on the Internet

It is a challenge to teach learners to evaluate information they find on the Internet. Teachers and teacher-librarians work together to provide students with evaluative skills. Very young users may simply be asked to decide whether a site seems to be on the right topic or whether it is easy to understand. As learners develop cognitively, becoming more sophisticated in their use of online resources, teachers and teacher-librarians should respond with increasingly sophisticated lessons about authority, bias, currency and accuracy.

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

Does the title of the page tell you what it is about? What is the URL (address) of the site?

↓

Does some information on this page contradict information you found somewhere else?

↓

Is the information on this page fact or opinion?

↓

What credentials of the author make this a credible information source?

↓

What is the purpose of this page? Is there a bias?

Resources for Web Evaluation

1. "Critical Evaluation Information," by Kathy Schrock.
   http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html
2. "Cyber Guides," by Linda Joseph.
   http://www.cyberbee.com/guides.html
3. "Evaluating Internet Resources: a checklist."
   http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html

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.
- ❖ Be interested in what your student is learning.

Monitor assignments
- • Ask your student and their teacher(s) about homework policies.
- • Be available to assist your student.
- • Look over completed assignments.
- • Monitor and limit time spent viewing TV and playing video games.

Provide guidance
- ❖ Help your student get organized.
- ❖ Encourage good study habits.
- ❖ Talk about 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

Know How the School and Public Library Can Help

Resources:
- ❖ Know the open hours of school and public libraries.
- ❖ Know what's available on the digital school library (school site), at your public library, and on BadgerLink.
- ❖ Utilize the lists of the best websites on your school and public library websites.
- ❖ Know if there is a "virtual reference service" available—a librarian online to help at any time. Check with your student's teacher-librarian.
- ❖ Know that BadgerLink (an online database resource collection) and AskAway (a 24/7 reference service) are available to any Wisconsin citizen at no charge.

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

Virtual Homework Help

Ask?Away is a service provided by a consortium of reference librarians throughout the state, nationally, and globally. Forms are available to submit a request for help with research or general information needs; to submit a question about DPI services or navigating the DPI website; or to get help searching BadgerLink or the Internet. Patrons may use either the e-mail or the chat form to submit a request at any time, day or night.

The patron e-mail query will go to staff at the Wisconsin Reference & Loan Library, which is affiliated with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and is staffed by reference librarians with a combined total of more than 135 years of experience. The estimated turnaround time for receiving a reply is 48 hours.

Using the chat form will connect patrons in real time to a professional librarian from the national QuestionPoint 24/7 Consortium. Members of the consortium share responsibility for staffing the chat service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Question forms and a link to the chat form are available at http://dpi.wi.gov/rll/qp_form.html

Ask?Away is initially funded by federal grant funds authorized by the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

BadgerLink: Wisconsin's Connection to the World of Information

BadgerLink, Wisconsin's virtual library, is a collection of commercial databases and other information resources, which is provided at no cost to all Wisconsin residents as a service of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). BadgerLink can be accessed by Wisconsin residents who have Internet access at school, at home, in their public library, or at their places of business. To log on to BadgerLink, point your web browser to http://badgerlink.net.

DPI currently contracts with commercial vendors (EBSCO, ProQuest, Thomson Gale, NewspaperARCHIVE, and TeachingBooks) to provide access to articles from thousands of newspaper and periodical titles, image files, and other specialized reference materials and websites. Users can find access to over 11,000 periodical titles and over 700 newspapers (including Wisconsin newspapers), children's and adult literature, business, medical and education sources, and many other specialized resources not available through regular Internet search engines.

In addition to offering the citizens of Wisconsin access to commercial databases, BadgerLink also connects users to WISCAT (the online catalog of Wisconsin library holdings), OCLC WorldCat (international database of library holdings), directories of libraries, access to library's digitized collections, and other information. Links include:

- Wisconsin Heritage Online – Wisconsin history, heritage, culture, and people
- BadgerLink Songbook Database – access to the collection of songbooks and sheet music from the Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library
- Wisconsin Digital Library Collections
- Library Directories
- Government Sites
- Education Sites
- Web Portals

Why use BadgerLink instead of Google?

BadgerLink contains a collection of resources that have been selected, organized, and endorsed by educators. The information on BadgerLink is:
- ❖ AUTHORITATIVE with quality information from recognized publishers/sources.
- ❖ SAFE with little chance of children getting to inappropriate sites.
- ❖ FREE to all Wisconsin residents.

School Libraries and Technology Departments

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has developed a planning guide that promotes a collaborative and unified approach to the programming necessary to achieve the integration of the information and technology literacy standards. The guide, *Information & Technology Literacy: A Collaborative Planning Guide for Library Media and Technology*, should be available in your child's school library.

Teacher-Librarians are responsible for utilizing what is ON the wires rather than being responsible for the wires themselves.

The 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 to resources in the library, the classroom, and at home.
- ❖ Access to computers for multiple classroom/library uses.
- ❖ Remote access to library resources from anywhere in the school.
- ❖ Helping teachers create exciting learning experiences using technology as a teaching and learning tool.

Determine the state of information and technology resources in the school that are needed to support your child's education.

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

The Digital School Library

More and more school libraries have web pages available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Find out your school library's URL (web address) and use it for your own information and guide your student to its features. Here is a list of features you might find useful:

Connections to Assignments	When assignments by teachers involve the library collections, linking the assignments with resource options is a common school library web page feature.
Bibliographies to Complete Assignments	Many teacher-librarians try to save learners time by posting the best websites, 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 to students to digital magazine resources. These digital collections will be invaluable in finding current articles on almost any topic.
Online Databases	Databases 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	Many teacher-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 students to read. The teacher-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 website 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 resources.
Homework Helps	Virtual reference, a service providing online help 24 hours a day, is available in many communities. The school library web page may link to these kinds of services depending on the level of students and accessibility in your area.
Connections to School Activities	The library web page may 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	Special subject websites, professional development opportunities, and tips for busy teachers may be linked to from the library web page.

Equip Your Student with the Right Technology Tools

Computer-based technology at home can extend learning beyond the classroom and school day. When connected to the World Wide Web, the potential for learning is great. However, it is not enough to simply provide technology. It is important to follow through with training, guidance, and frameworks for learning to ensure that the technology is used wisely and for educational purposes.

Getting connected requires some basic technology: a computer with keyboard, monitor, and mouse. A printer is a useful addition (peripheral) for a home system. It will allow you to create a "hard copy" of letters written, drawings made, or web information. Ink or toner cartridges for the printer will be an ongoing expense. Teach your child to be a responsible consumer of resources.

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

Software is the name for programs that allow users to do things on the computer. Look for an "office suite" set of programs that includes word processing, spreadsheet/database, and presentation features. Obtaining one that is compatible with the one used at your student's school will allow him/her to easily start and finish projects at either location. Compatible software can be an important resource that allows your student to keep up with project work.

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

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

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

There are many instructional activities that are enhanced by computer use even at preschool levels. As the child matures into a young adult, early exposure to appropriate and proper use of computer technology will result in a confident and competent technology user.

It is important to supervise use and provide boundaries for all students while they use technology and communicate via the Internet. Discuss and enforce rules of use in your household to ensure productive learning while avoiding trouble.

Wisconsin Web Resources for Students & Parents

Many resources for learning are available to Wisconsin residents through the World Wide Web. We have already discussed the *BadgerLink* databases and *Ask?Away* services, which are very useful for student as well as adult research. Other notable resources of particular interest to Wisconsin parents and students include:

❖ Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) includes information about our state's academic standards as well as information about the academic achievement of Wisconsin schools as measured by our state's WKCE test each year. Link from this site to find specific information about your child's school or even compare your school's performance with others from around the state. http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html

❖ The Wisconsin Historical Society is a great resource. The Historical Society serves as the state library and offers over three million items relating to the history and prehistory of North America and Wisconsin. Plan your physical or virtual visit to this ever-changing land of learning about our great Badger state. http://www.wisconsinhistory.org

❖ The Association of Children's Museums provides links children's museums throughout the country. Click on Wisconsin for links to our state children's museums. http://www.childrensmuseums.org

❖ The Milwaukee County Zoo is home to more than two thousand mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles with more than three hundred and fifty species represented. http://www.milwaukeezoo.org

The School Library, Reading, and Your Student

Krashen and McQuillan[1] reviewed 100 years of reading research and came to the following conclusion: The more a student reads, the better they are at

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

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

The most powerful reading your student can do is "free voluntary reading"—the kind they want to do rather than being required to do. Fiction, comics, newspapers, magazines, and web-based resources all play a role in building literacy.

Here are a few tips for helping a student become interested in reading:

1. Remember, the school and public librarians are your best friends in helping your student to become a capable and avid reader.

2. See that your student has a library card at the school and public library.

3. Provide a bed lamp and a safe place to store borrowed books at home. Encourage the "read-yourself-to-sleep" habit to form. It is a gift for life.

4. Read to your preschool child every day. This can continue as long as it is a pleasurable experience – even into teenage years. The child can read to you as his/her skills develop.

5. Talk about what everyone in the family is reading. Movie-book tie-ins are one strategy (for example, *Holes* the book vs. Holes the movie).

6. If you have reluctant readers, keep looking to find topics they are interested in reading about, such as dinosaurs, skateboards, cars, space, fantasy…

7. Do everything you can to make reading a pleasant experience.

8. Be an example. Model reading for both information and personal pleasure.

9. Buy books so that every family member has a personal library. Yard sales and used bookstores are great places to find good books at a reasonable price. Books as gifts are always appropriate.

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

Finding Good Books for Wisconsin Students

Here are some resources for locating good books to recommend to your student.

The Golden Archer Award is presented to authors of books nominated by students.

The 2005 winners were:

- Primary: *Baby Brains* by Simon James
- Intermediate: *The Hostile Hospital* by Lemony Snicket
- Middle/Junior High: *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini

http://www.wemaonline.org/ag.ga.overview.cfm

Read On Wisconsin!

Read On Wisconsin is a statewide book club established by Wisconsin's First Lady. Literacy has always been important and we all know that book clubs can be motivating and just plain fun.

http://readon.wi.gov

Help students read more … and enjoy it.
Bring authors, illustrators, and literature into your classroom or home.
Online. Anytime.

http://www.teachingbooks.net/

Celebrate Reading—Wisconsin Style

Celebrating reading is appropriate any time. Wisconsin is fortunate to have a creative group of authors and illustrators producing exciting books for children and young adults, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry for all ages. Information can be found about author websites through TeachingBooks.net or in the Directory of Wisconsin Children's Authors & Illustrators.

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

A Library of the School of Education

http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/authors/directoryInfo.asp

The *CCBC Directory* is a searchable database of Wisconsin authors and illustrators of books for children and teenagers who are willing to make appearances at schools and libraries. The authors and illustrators included in the *CCBC Directory* are current residents of Wisconsin. All have provided information about the books they have published and the programs they provide for children and teens.

http://www.wisconsinbookfestival.org/

Public programs about reading, writing, and books! Sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the annual festival celebrates Wisconsin's rich literary heritage, brings some of America's finest writers to our state, and encourages Wisconsinites of all ages to read widely and to participate in our dynamic, interactive literary events.

Your School Library Supports the Reading Program!

A school's library media center provides a rich variety of print and electronic resources, computers and other technology resources, and an accessible environment conducive to instilling the link between reading and life-long learning. The teacher-librarian is the center's most valuable resource. A natural co-teacher of reading, the teacher-librarian collaborates with teachers on the strategies and skills taught in the classroom to promote a life-long love of reading and learning. The teacher-librarian develops a partnership with classroom teachers and works directly with students and teachers to achieve the bottom line—higher reading proficiency of all students.

A position statement from the International Reading Association (IRA) recognizes that "credentialed school library media professionals promote, inspire, and guide students toward a love of reading, a quest for knowledge, and a thirst for lifelong learning." Research from both literacy and library fields shows that teacher-librarians, through collaboration and programming, can build on classroom instruction in multiple ways, from providing access to reading material to supporting students through the complex processes of inquiry and research.

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

- Sustained silent reading in every classroom once a day, K–12.
- A program to read aloud to every student once a day, K–12.
- Motivational programs and challenges to encourage reading.
- Parent involvement in the total school reading initiative.
- A program to build a school-wide community of readers.
- Use of technology to assist reading; the assists should increase reading time and amount read (educational television, CD-ROM and e-books).
- Celebrating reading as milestones are reached.
- Creating a sense that reading is fun!

Advice About Reading and Your Student

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

Q. How do you get a student excited about reading and keep them that way?
A. The tried and true methods include:
- Reading to your child every day from birth.
- Maximizing access to school and public libraries.
- Giving books as gifts.
- Engaging your student in conversations about books.
- Having materials to read all around the house: newspapers, magazines, books—materials that your student will *want* to read
- Letting your student see you reading.
- Sharing lots of suggestions for a variety of books, skill levels and topics. Your school's teacher-librarian can help!
- Reading what your student is reading and sharing your thoughts.

Q. My student reads nothing but series books. Should I worry?
A. Probably not. Children often go through reading phases but get tired of the same familiar plots after awhile. Instead of fighting against series books, read aloud from a variety of books and make sure your student has access to lots of titles.

Q. My son reads nothing but science fiction and fantasy. Should I worry?
A. This literature is appealing for lots of boys and, if they are participating in normal life activities, there is little to worry about. Perhaps you could read a title they recommend and have a family discussion.

Q. Many of the teen novels seem to be so graphic about dysfunctional families, drugs, sex, and legal trouble.
A. There are a number of writers who treat teen lives realistically in their books. It depends on your family's values and experiences 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 have a discussion.

Q. What are teacher-librarians doing to encourage and promote reading?
A. Teacher-librarians concentrate on the LOVE of reading. Most believe that there is no one right way to teach reading and that just plain "reading a lot" will provide students with opportunities to improve reading skills.

What the Teacher, Parent, and Teacher-Librarian Provide to "Learn to Read"

If a school community believes the research saying that "amount counts," then the school and public library will have an extensive collection of reading materials young people want to read. Many school libraries in the nation have outdated, ragged, and uninteresting reading collections that young people ignore. When reading collections are large, current, attractive, and easily accessible, young people read. Is your school library media center program providing the following?

- Plenty of books to take home.

- Reading materials in all formats including books, magazines, paperbacks, newspapers, e-books, websites.

- **Motivation**: Library reading activities that build reading enjoyment and concentrate on "reading is fun."

- **Choice**: Books kids and teens want to read. Books adults believe they should read.

- **Leadership / Support of Initiatives:**
  • Sustained Silent Reading
  • Reading Aloud
  • Motivational programs
  • Reading discussions
  • Reading events

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

What Teachers and the Library Media Center Provide to "Read to Learn"

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

- Lots of books on topics with high reader appeal.

- Temporary Collections borrowed from other libraries.

- Reading materials in all formats including books, magazines, paperbacks, newspapers, e-books, websites.

- Motivation: Library reading activities designed to increase reading enjoyment during the topical study.

- Choice: Books students want to read on the topic. Books adults believe they should read on the topic.

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

How to Raise a Reader!

Robert Frost once said the best way to get children to read is to surround them with so many books they stumble over them. Raising a reader demands that you surround your child in opportunities for literacy. Here are 20 steps for building a literate environment for your family[1]:

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

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

I'm a Reader

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

The Reader's Bill of Rights

The right to skip pages

The right to not finish

The right to re-read

The right to read anything

The right to escapism

The right to read anywhere

The right not to read something

The right to browse

The right to read out loud

The right to not defend your taste

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[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 Student: A Few Tips

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

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

Developing Readers:
- ❖ Look for repetition of sounds, words, and phrases.
- ❖ Encourage variety, which will improve the richness of language development.
- ❖ Remember that attention spans are growing as well as understanding of story lines.
- ❖ Recognition of letters and words will begin to develop.
- ❖ Use favorites regularly but introduce new books as well.
- ❖ Talk about the story.
- ❖ Always make reading time a pleasant experience.

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

Reading Aloud:
- ❖ Allow yourself to become emotional.
- ❖ Read aloud even if you don't read well.
- ❖ Use expression in your voice—get excited, sad, loving, and angry, as the story requires.
- ❖ Act out real parts or have the child do that acting at the appropriate times.
- ❖ Always make reading aloud a pleasant experience.

My Adolescent Hates Reading!

My teen does not read:
 ❖ Novels.
 ❖ Assigned textbook chapters.
 ❖ Any book I recommend.
 ❖ Anything that is "required."

However, the other day, I caught him/her 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 their reading choices.
 ❖ 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 students will read something related to a topic they really want to know about. Find the hook.[1] Of course there are exceptions for dyslexic students or students with other physical or emotional problems.

If your student has reading skill issues, find a knowledgeable tutor with a good track record. Of primary importance is having lots of things your student wants to read within arm's length and seeing that there is a good school and public library close by.

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[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.

Bilingual Students: How the Library Can Help

Most schools in the United States have students who are learning English. The school and public library can help.

What the library offers for free:
➢ Books for checkout—in English and the language spoken at home.
➢ Access to the Internet.
➢ Storytelling programs.
➢ Classes, including how to use the computer.
➢ Instruction on how to search on the Internet for information.
➢ Videos on topics being studied in class.
➢ Bilingual dictionaries, such as Spanish-English/English-Spanish, to look up words in either language.
➢ Programs that encourage reading such as a summer reading program.
➢ Programs during the year that introduce students to new books, poetry, and other materials.

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

What you can do:
➢ Have many books in both languages in your home.
➢ Take your child to the library to check out books in both languages.
➢ Encourage your child to read in English.
➢ Read in English with your student. You can teach each other as you read.
➢ Help your student to be responsible and return their library books on time.
➢ Find lots of "picture" books at the library about the topics your student is studying in school.
➢ If your student cannot understand the textbook, find an easy children's book on the topic of the textbook chapter. It will help your student get the main idea about the topic.
➢ Meet and talk to the librarian often. When the librarian understands what you and your student need, she will be better able to help.
➢ Take your child to the public library often.
➢ Check at your school to be sure your child can visit the school library several times a week.

Check out this site for information and links to support families of language minority students: http://dpi.wi.gov/ell/index.html

Public and School Libraries: A Winning Combination

School library collections serve primarily curricular needs, and public library collections serve the more diverse needs for all ages. Using both collections provides both diversity of information and depth in selected topics.

Teacher-librarians are enthusiastic about student use of the public library so that students become acquainted with services for nights, weekends, and vacation periods. The public library will be the library for life.

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

- ❖ Digital collections of periodicals and databases that can 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 book clubs.
- ❖ Comfortable study and reading areas.
- ❖ After-school programming; homework help.
- ❖ Special assistance for home schooled students.

Schools and Libraries – Partners in Summer Reading

Numerous studies have shown that summer reading programs help ensure that school children retain reading and learning skills over the summer recess.

Summer Reading Programs are geared for reading for the fun of it! Summer library programs take advantage of children's natural curiosity to introduce new subjects and different genres.

Librarians are partners with parents and teachers keeping children and teens reading throughout the year.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Public Library Development Team prepares a comprehensive SRP packet for public libraries with manuals, bookmarks, posters, and other items each year. For information on summer reading programs contact Barb Huntington, DPI at 608-267-5077 or Barbara.Huntington@dpi.state.wi.us.

When Parents and Books Cross Swords

The ideas in books have always stirred controversy. The treatment of religion, politics, swearing, sex, violence, and stereotypes regarding culture or race can stir emotion if the ideas conflict with parent and family values. One thing to always keep in mind: **There is no such thing as a non-controversial book!**

Schools, teachers, and teacher-librarians respect a parent's right to limit the exposure of their children to certain ideas. It is not acceptable, however, for parents insist that certain ideas not be available to all children in a class or school.

All school libraries should have a "Materials Selection Policy" that spells out how materials of all types are selected for the school library collection. This policy should include a process for parents to use in registering a complaint about a particular title. Here are a few other tips:

1. Children should understand their family's values and know how to recognize materials and ideas of which their parents would not approve.

2. Help children to handle objectionable ideas and materials when encountered.

3. Parents and students may ask teachers and teacher-librarians for alternatives to books or materials that have been assigned.

4. Respect the right of other parents to allow their children to encounter ideas other than those you value.

5. Talk to your children about the ideas they encounter daily in school, with friends, in the media, and from books.

6. Help children and teens understand that just because everyone else is reading something, they do not need to participate.

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

**Intellectual Freedom** is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides 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

Wisconsin is fortunate to have the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The CCBC specializes in intellectual freedom issues as they relate to student access to materials in libraries and classrooms. Information is available at http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/freedom/default.asp.

Reluctant Reader? Try Information Books

For a student who does not like fiction, try nonfiction (information books). Visit the school and public library to find titles on:

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

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

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

Essential book: Jobe, Ron and Mary Dayton Sakari. *Info-Kids: How to Use Nonfiction to Turn Reluctant Readers into Enthusiastic Learners.* Stenhouse, 2002.

Best Books Lists for Your Student

There are hundreds of best books lists for students. Here are just a few of the recommended lists:

Association of Library Services for Children (American Library Association) has excellent book lists and sponsors the famous Caldecott, Newbery, Pura Belpre and Coretta Scott King Awards.	http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/booklists/booklists.htm
Young Adult Library Services Association (American Library Association) lists include: Best Books for Young Adults; Quick Picks for the Reluctant Young Reader; and Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults	http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists
Booklist. Books for Youth; Adult Books for Young Adults; Media (Audio, Video, CDs)	http://www.booklistonline.com
Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books	http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/
Children's, Teacher's and YA Choices (International Reading Association)	http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices.html
Notable Trade Books (National Council for the Social Studies)	http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable
Horn Book Parent's Page	http://www.hbook.com/teachersparents/default.asp
Children's Literature Choices (annual Top Choices list)	http://www.childrenslit.com/clc.htm
The Christopher Awards Books for Young People to books "which affirm the highest values of the human spirit."	http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dKBrown/christopher.html
Américas Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, U of WI)	http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach/americas.html

Money, Money, Money: What You Can Do

Quality instructional programs cost money.

Consider this:

To stay current, a library needs to add at least 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)

Wisconsin's Common School Fund

Wisconsin is fortunate that its founders established a common school fund in the state constitution and directed that the beneficiaries be the public school libraries of the state. All public school districts continue to receive an annual allocation of Common School Fund Library Aid for the specific purchase of library materials to be housed, catalogued and circulated from the school library media center. In 2006, school districts received an allocation of $22.32 per child, or about one book per child. However, due to budget and funding constraints, the Common School Fund has become the sole source of funding for school library resources for the majority of school districts in the state. Information can be found at http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sfs/comsch.html.

Here are a few things you can do:

- Contribute $20-30 each year for a birthday book for your child.

- Ask grandparents to do the same.

- Ask your child to "earn" the cost of a book and contribute it to the library.

- Talk to the administrators about increasing funding for the library and get a commitment for the school to do it.

- Work on a grant for the library.

- Talk to community organizations that would be willing to help.

- Volunteer.

Volunteering at the School Library

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

1. **Subject Expert**. From firefighters to business executives, from chemists to homemakers, many parents can offer expertise and experience to students doing topical research. Volunteer to allow students to interview you, tour your place of employment, or get answers to questions by e-mail. You might be asked to be a guest speaker, a resource person in the library when students are doing research, or just be available by telephone or e-mail.

2. **General Assistance**. There are tasks in any library in need of completion if you have one or several hours to devote. Some are familiar such as shelving 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 website.

   d. Organize a reading celebration; head a library fund-raising campaign.

   e. Serve as a library advocate on a PTA parent council.

   f. Carry a bill through the state legislature to fund library databases for every child in the state.

   g. Be an artist-in-residence based in the library.

   h. Do storytelling or reading aloud to classes as they come to the library.

   i. Serve as a one-on-one tutor in the library.

   j. Help students make a library quilt to be auctioned for the library fund.

   k. Find sources for free or inexpensive supplies needed by the library.

   l. Head up and organize/train the parent volunteers for the library.

Advocating for the School Library

Advocacy requires constant and steady attention over time. There is no such thing as an instant or one-time library fund allocation that solves all the problems.

Adequate funding and staffing are the two most critical areas of good school library service. As budgets fluctuate, and the pressure for cuts increases, libraries are regularly on the chopping block. Suppose the library online database bill is not paid every year? What does it cost your child when the primary information source is outdated or unavailable? What is the cost of misinformation?

Advocacy requires strong, steady voices. It means accompanying the teacher-librarian to the board meeting presentation of library needs, being vigilant, and speaking to administrators regularly. Good school libraries cost money; however, this money pays benefits in terms of positive student achievement.

How well your child reads and handles information will predict academic achievement.
The school library is an essential key.

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

The Wisconsin Educational Media Association's WEMAtter Toolkit provides information to help teacher-librarians show the connection between their programs, resources, and services and student achievement to advocate for their programs. Access the toolkit at http://www.wemaonline.org/ab.wematter.cfm.

How Parent Groups Can Help the School Library

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

1. Understand how the school library is funded—school, district, state, federal, grant, and parent group funds.

2. Understand the budgetary needs a library program has if it is to operate and provide the service your children must have. Your child's teacher-librarian can provide you with specific information.

3. Set up a volunteer program to help the teacher-librarian.

4. Create a "Friends of the School Library" group.

5. Help plan and conduct various library activities:
    a. Book fairs
    b. Reading motivation activities
    c. Research/term-paper clinics for parents/students
    d. Tours of neighboring public libraries, during which every student receives a public library card and access to databases.

6. Always mention library contributions and needs to outsiders, visitors, and other parents.

7. Whenever school funding is discussed, never forget the library.

8. Sponsor a birthday book contribution program.

9. If there is not a full-time, certified teacher-librarian, lobby tirelessly for one.

10. Lobby for help for the teacher-librarian. One person can't do it alone.

11. When the subject comes up, always say something good about the library.

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

Great Quotes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it." ~Samuel Johnson

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