



COLORADO
Department of Education

Use this entire article or just portions of it to communicate with parents and your community about the importance of early literacy.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LITERACY

Parents play a huge role in building their children's reading skill. It is important to be proactive and become an advocate for your child's reading. We encourage you to work with your child's teacher to stay informed about your child's progress in reading. Ask for ways you can help, and be aware of the importance of reading at this young age.

Here are some ways to support building a literacy rich home:

- Listen to audiobooks in the house and while traveling (it's an engaging way to pass the time on a long car trip!). Check them out for free from your library!
- Become a reading role model. When you read, you show your child that reading is both fun and useful.
- Discuss new words. For example what are other ways you can describe something you are looking for in the grocery store?
- Set down technology from time to time and play a board game together. The back and forth conversation is great for building language.
- Use complete sentences when talking with your child and have them respond back in a complete sentence as well.
- Watch movies based on books, then read those books. Talk about the differences.
- Watch movies as a family and then talk about favorite parts, characters, etc. from the movie together.
- Get your kids their own library cards and use them regularly.

The ability to read is the most important gift we can give our young children for their academic futures, and research proves it. Numerous studies show that children who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade have a much harder time in the rest of their education. They have a higher chance of failing to receive their high school diploma. One study says they are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma compared to their peers who have become proficient readers.

Fortunately, these findings about the importance of early literacy have led to action. In 2012, the Colorado legislature passed the READ Act, giving the state a guiding philosophy, structure and resources focused on getting children to read at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade. Students at our school are given regular tests to assess their reading levels and to identify those who may need more help.

The READ Act focuses on helping students who have been identified through these assessments as having a significant reading deficiency – students who do not meet the minimum skill level for reading competency in specific literacy areas.



Reading is vital, and we want to help you to understand how well your children are reading and provide support to you and your child to help improve their reading and help prepare them for a successful academic future.