

# make your mark On Literacy

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## What is literacy?

The ability to **read** and **write**.

## Why is literacy important?

- Reading is the basis for all other **learning**.<sup>2</sup>
- Almost all **jobs** in the U.S. require literacy.<sup>2</sup>
- To stay **safe** and **healthy** you must be able to read labels, signs, and laws.<sup>2</sup>

## What are keys to literacy?

**Books:** Children need a wide variety of reading materials to become strong readers.

**Learning early:** Children who do not have basic literacy skills when they start school are 3 to 4 times more likely to drop out.<sup>3</sup>

**Help:** Children of illiterate parents are more likely to be illiterate. Reading to children increases their chances of learning to read.<sup>1</sup>

NCES, 2003<sup>1</sup>  
proliteracy.org<sup>2</sup>  
First Book, 2011<sup>3</sup>  
Hart & Risley, 1995<sup>4</sup>  
UNICEF, 2003<sup>5</sup>

## Who struggles with reading?



**Children:** 37% of American fourth graders read below the "basic" level.<sup>1</sup>

**Adults:** 37 million adults are unable to read a simple story to a child.<sup>1</sup>

## Facts

- 65 million girls around the world do not get a basic education.<sup>5</sup>
- 80% of pre-schools and after school programs for low income children do not have books.<sup>3</sup>
- The price of books is the #1 reason why children do not have access to books.<sup>3</sup>

## Meet Carlos

Carlos is in the 3rd grade and cannot read well. His parents are migrant workers and must travel to many areas of the country to work the farms. Because Carlos has been to several different schools, he has fallen behind his classmates. He doesn't own any books of his own and his parents cannot read to him in English. Most of the schools that Carlos has attended do not have an abundance of books in their classrooms or libraries. Carlos dreams about being able to read like the other kids in his class.

## How can you help?

Collect and donate books to agencies that serve low-income families.

Read to children.

Hold a Read-a-thon to raise funds for new books for children in need.



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