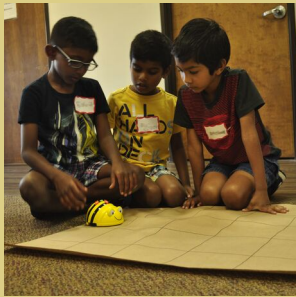


# BASIC LITERACY

The ability to read, write, speak and listen with comprehension at all levels of life, career and community involvement; the functional and practical use of language in all formats. Foundational literacy education includes, but is not limited to, reading, writing, math, job application assistance, fundamental terminology and technical concepts in a field of study, learning new languages and new technologies for communication, and overall life-skill development.



Each year, low literacy costs the U.S. \$225 billion or more in non-productivity in the workforce, with crime & loss of tax revenue due to unemployment.

- ✓ 86% of 3- to 5-year-olds [not yet in kindergarten] are told a story by a family member weekly;
- ✓ 55% are read to daily;
- ✓ 95% are taught letters, words, or numbers.

A child who can read by the third grade is unlikely ever to be involved with the criminal justice system in the U.S.

- ✓ 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system, are functionally illiterate.
- ✓ More than 70% of inmates in America's prisons cannot read above a fourth-grade level.

Higher levels of inequality in literacy & numeracy skills are associated with greater inequality in the distribution of income, whatever the causal nature of this relationship.



In all countries, individuals who score at lower levels of proficiency in literacy are more likely than those with higher proficiency to report poor health, believe that they have little impact on the political process, & not participate in associative or volunteer activities.

- ✓ Illiteracy has become such a serious problem in our country that 44 million adults are now unable to read a simple story to their children.



In preschool children listening to stories and greater home reading exposure is positively associated with activation of brain areas supporting mental imagery & narrative comprehension, controlling for household income.

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## About PA Forward

Pennsylvania's libraries serve as models of cost-effective service. Libraries stretch the public's resources through book sharing, computers, online resources, facilities and expertise.

PA Forward | Pennsylvania Libraries, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Library Association, aims to make sure libraries have what they need to help people reach their greatest potential and meet the demands of a constantly changing world. The program establishes new public-private partnerships and builds on the belief that libraries are uniquely positioned to help Pennsylvanians improve their command of five types of literacy essential to greater success in all vital roles of life, from citizens, students, and parents to employers, employees, and consumers.

PA Forward promotes and benefits all libraries by demonstrating that literacy is power and how libraries provide the fuel to power Pennsylvania.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Library Association and PA Forward, visit [www.palibraries.org](http://www.palibraries.org) or call 717-766-7663. For the latest information, like the Association's Facebook pages as Facebook/PALibraries and Facebook/PA Forward. You can also follow on Twitter at @PALibraryAssoc and @PAForward5.

## Library Contact Information

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PENNSYLVANIA  
LIBRARIES