

Reading for Life: The Impact of Child Literacy on Health Outcomes

May 9, 2023



Presenters



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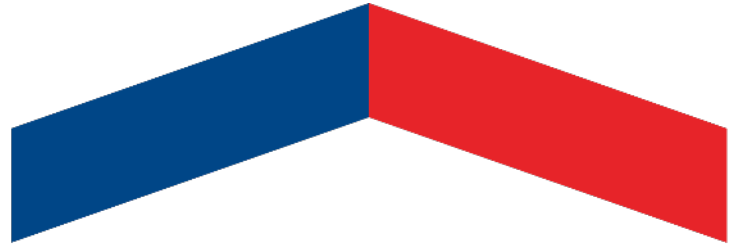


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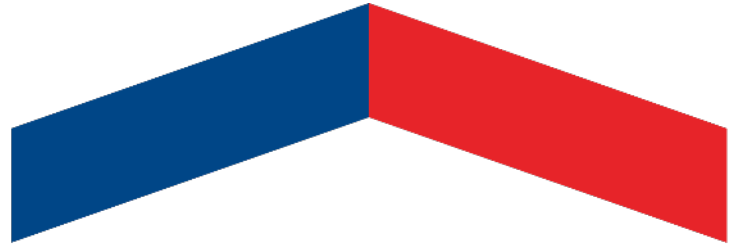


YALE CHILD STUDY
CENTER+**SCHOLASTIC**

COLLABORATIVE FOR
**CHILD & FAMILY
RESILIENCE**

Reading for Life

The Impact of Youth Literacy on
Health Outcomes



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Mission

The Yale Child Study Center–Scholastic **Collaborative for Child & Family Resilience** works to advance research and contribute to the development of resources and programs that improve health outcomes for children, their families, and their communities.

The Collaborative aims to demonstrate the vital connection between **literacy** and **health**. Together, we will expand the research base and advocate for policies that **promote resilience through literacy**.

RESEARCH & VALIDATION | TOPIC PAPER

MAY 2023

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 SCHOLASTIC

An Epidemic of Loneliness

US surgeon general warns of next public health priority: loneliness

Vivek Murthy urged public officials to treat isolation with the same urgency as substance abuse or tobacco



📷 Vivek Murthy, the US surgeon general, says loneliness 'has to be a public health priority on par with tobacco and obesity'. Photograph: Office of the Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation

Key takeaways from the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community

Humans are wired for social connection, but we've become more isolated over time

Social connection is as essential to our long-term survival as food and water. But today, loneliness is more widespread than other major health issues in the U.S. Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation is a major public health concern.

Social connection significantly improves the health and well-being of all individuals

Social connection reduces the risk of premature mortality. It can predict better physical and mental health outcomes and ease stress. Higher levels of connection can influence health-related behaviors. Educational and economic achievement are even impacted by connection.

Social connection is vital to community health and success

Socially connected communities enjoy better population-level health. They are more prepared for – and resilient in the face – of disaster situations. They also experience greater economic prosperity and reduced levels of crime and violence.

Together, we can advance social connection and improve our nation's public health

Fostering social connection requires that we each commit to our relationships and communities. Our actions today can create sustainable changes to society and bring better health to all.

We all have a role to play in supporting social connection. Learn how you can take action by reading the advisory at: surgeongeneral.gov/connection



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General



Reading for Life

- Literacy increases **educational engagement** and enhances **equity**.
- Reading inspires **critical thinking** and nuanced ideas, positively impacts **future economic success**.
- Literacy imbues young people with **empathy** and **intelligence**.
- **Access to books** in childhood can impact young people's long-term physical and mental health—resulting in improved adult brain function and better physical health.
- Literacy is an **important mediator** between socioeconomic inequality and health disparities.



The benefits of reading books include a longer life in which to read them.

—Avni Bavishi, Martin Slade and Becca Levy

A study of 3,635 people aged 50 or older found that **book readers live almost 23 months longer than non-readers**.

Those who read for more than 3.5 hours a week were **20 percent less likely to die over the 12-year study** follow-up than those who didn't read books.

The State of Childhood Literacy in the U.S.

- 37% of fourth graders **perform below** the NAEP Basic level in reading.
- The percentage of students with baseline literacy standards has decreased by 14% since 1992, with a three-point loss since 2019—**the largest score drop** since the test began.
- The drop in test scores **disproportionately affects students in the bottom 10th percentile** nationwide—students more likely to be from low-income communities and communities of color.
- Researchers hypothesize that **67% of kindergarten literacy skills were lost** due to part of a COVID-induced extended school closure slide.

Literacy and Physical Health

- Lower literacy rates are associated with **poor physical-health outcomes** when controlling for demographic and socioeconomic factors.
- People with lower literacy **are less likely to receive regular preventative healthcare** measures.
- Diabetic patients with higher reading skills were **more likely to have improved glycemic control**, whether or not they graduated from high school.
- In adolescents, lower literacy rates are associated with **higher risks of violence**, aggressive behaviors, substance use, and sexually transmitted infections.

Just 30 minutes of reading is shown to have a measurable impact on physical health—significantly **decreasing systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and heart rate**.

Literacy and Mental Health

- Children and adolescents who **struggle with reading disorders often have higher rates of anxiety and depression**, and mental health difficulties.
- 37.4 of individuals with **low literacy-engagement levels** experienced low mental health, while only 11.8% experienced good mental health.

Data indicate that bibliotherapy is as effective as cognitive behavioral therapy for children with anxiety disorders, and as early as 1998, cognitive **bibliotherapy was found to reduce depressive symptoms in adolescents.**

Literacy-Health Partnerships



Reach Out & Read

- Pediatricians provide early literacy guidance to families at well-child appointments.
- Children from birth to age five are provided a developmentally appropriate book at each office visit
- Doctors give each family a “prescription” for 10 minutes of daily reading.
- Research found an **eight-fold increase in parents reporting reading aloud** as a favorite family activity



Head Start

- The program provides comprehensive education, including information regarding health and nutrition.
- Research found that program graduates are more likely to complete high school.
- Head Start participants are **less likely to have chronic health conditions (including obesity) and lower rates of depression.**

Stanford | Tips•by•Text

Tips•By•Text

- The program delivers literacy interventions via text message to caregivers of children, delivered in conjunction with pediatricians.
- Families receive Tips•By•Text interventions three times per week for seven months. The message always begins with the phrase “**Doc says...**”
- **Researchers observed an equivalent three-month gain in literacy skills** while fostering a connection with pediatricians.

Collaboration for the Future

Healthcare Providers

- Provide additional training and resources for pediatric medical professionals around child-literacy assessment, promotion, and intervention throughout childhood
- Integrate literacy as a measure of a child's health

Educators

- Incorporate health centers in education settings
- Provide professional development and age-appropriate content for early childhood and elementary educators to engage students in issues relating to health

Families

- Educate parents and caregivers about the impact of early literacy
- Empower families to create a literacy-rich home environment
- Provide them with the skills to advocate for their family's mental and physical health

Communities

- Increasing public messaging around the clear, lifelong link between literacy and health
- Ensure that communities prioritize reading and books in public health discussions

Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:


GLR WEEK 2023

BRIGHT SPOTS AND SILVER LININGS

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 17-21

The Campaign for
GRADE-LEVEL
READING

FUNDER-TO-FUNDER CONVERSATION

Diverse Books as "Windows, Mirrors & Sliding Doors": The Role Funders can Play

Tuesday, May 16, 12:30-2:00 p.m. ET/9:30-11:00 a.m. PT

PARTNERS WEBINAR

Third-Grade Retention: A Conversation About Adult Accountability and Student Outcomes!

Tuesday, May 16 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

Showing Up Together: Learning and Attendance Go Hand in Hand

Tuesday, May 23, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

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