

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL & LIFE

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S LITERACY PROGRAMS

The Need

Education is a ladder out of poverty, but that ladder is often out of reach for the nearly 15 million children living in poverty in America. These children struggle in school in large part because they don't have the familiarity with books and language that are the building blocks for literacy. The disparity gap widens even more when economic barriers are intensified by the lack of community resources and geographic isolation.

Consider the following:

- Low-income children begin school as many as 18 months developmentally behind their peers.
- More than 60 percent of low-income families have no children's books in their homes.
- In many of the rural communities where Save the Children works, the school library is the only place where children can access books.
- Half of all low-income fourth-graders score below basic level on a national literacy assessment, compared to just 1 in 5 of their peers.
- Children living in poverty who can't read at grade level by the end of third grade are 13 times less likely to graduate from high school on time.

As these children progress through school, they fall further and further behind, until they run out of time to catch up. In many cases, without interventions, their futures are determined before they leave elementary school. In order to give the 15 million children in America living in poverty a chance to succeed, we have to give them a fair chance to learn.

An Innovative Solution

Our literacy programs provide the training, tools and support schools need to accelerate reading growth for struggling readers, kindergarten through sixth grade, in 10 states. In our afterschool and summer programs, the



centerpiece of our curriculum is the Literacy Block – an hour of activities supporting increased reading achievement, including guided independent reading practice, fluency-building support and listening to books read aloud.

We also know reading support is critical during the school day. We work with children in the course of their academic day to provide tutorials in phonics, sight word growth, comprehension and vocabulary enhancement. Additionally, we conduct emergent reader activities for children in kindergarten and first grade to provide an extra boost to their literacy growth.

Save the Children's Literacy Results

Save the Children's literacy programs have produced stellar results for children. Our student evaluations for the 2015-16 school year show:

- Save the Children's school-based literacy programs served 10,859 children.
- 72 percent of children showed major improvement after participating in the program.
- Children participating in the literacy program made reading growth equivalent to attending 5.9 additional months of school.
- The percentage of children reading below grade level at the beginning of the school year decreased by 23 percent at the end of the school year.