

## Why is Reading Important?

Reading is the key to most learning.

Research shows that:

- Children who read with their families develop a love of reading that lasts a lifetime.
- Children who are confident about reading have a positive attitude toward learning.

The following chart compares reading volume and national test scores. Increased reading correlates positively to test performance.

### What matters: Variation in Amount of Independent Reading

Percentile Rank	Minutes Per Day In Books	Minutes Per Day In Text*	Words Read Per Year in Books	Words Read Per Year in Text*
98	65.0	76.3	4,358,000	4,733,000
90	21.2	33.4	1,823,000	2,357,000
50	4.6	9.2	282,000	601,000
20	0.7	2.4	21,000	134,000
10	.1	1.0	8,000	51,000

\* Text includes newspapers, magazines, environmental print, etc.

Anderson, Richard D., Wilson, P.T., Fielding, L.G.

*Growth in Reading and How Children Spend Their Time Outside of School*, 1988, Reading Research Quarterly, #23, pp. 285-303.

Reading enables children to acquire the information and skills they need in life, such as:

- The relationship between sound and print, and knowledge of printed letters and words.
- How books work.
- Familiarity with a variety of writing styles.
- Vocabulary development.
- The difference between written language and everyday conversation.
- Development of language skills.
- The ability to learn from others, whether reading fiction or nonfiction.

Reading can open up new worlds and enrich children's lives, whether they are being read to or they read by themselves.



### **About Reading Aloud to Your Children**

The Commission on Reading, which published *Becoming a Nation of Readers* in 1985 said, “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” At every age of development, reading aloud to children has benefits. Children increase their vocabularies and build background knowledge through read-alouds. They learn to listen, think and have conversations.

For younger children, board books, picture books, poetry and every day print (signs for restaurants, stores, as well as cereal boxes, crayon colors, etc.) is important. As children get older, picture books intended for older children, chapter books, cartoons, newspaper and magazine articles, as well as school textbooks, add variety to read aloud choices.

Read-alouds provide an opportunity for parents and children to enjoy adventures, learn from themes and topics, and build a lifetime of shared experiences.