

The Case for Kid Scoop News

The need for a literate and informed society has seldom been greater. As we navigate an increasingly complex geopolitical, cultural and social landscape, layered with multiplying technology that arrives with firehose intensity, we realize more than ever that the single most important tool of informed citizens throughout the world is literacy: the ability to read, write, interpret and compute. Communities and countries where children lack the school or home resources to encourage reading, writing and the connection with visual and digital media fall behind in an increasingly interconnected world where informed decision-making grows more critical.

Literacy should not be a privilege. It is a right. Children are born curious, whether in Bhutan or Belgium or Boston. From their earliest days, sensory exploration brings delight and wonder. New discoveries expand their minds. And, when they unlock the joy of reading, their world widens. Magic happens. Access to real and imagined stories opens immense new vistas. As they experience what it means to be part of a large and diverse community they are transformed. And yet, for some, this astonishing exploration beyond earliest childhood is limited. Under-resourced schools, economic and social hardships and parents who themselves may have limited literacy put an early stop to this joyful adventure into words, symbols and ideas.

Kid Scoop News, for more than a decade, has opened the doors of discovery for elementary school children by providing interactive, engaging and relevant age-appropriate materials designed to ignite and grow the magic of reading at school, at home, and throughout their lives.

Why Literacy Programs for Elementary School Children Are Essential

Third Grade is the pivotal year for literacy development. It is the time when students transition from *learning to read*, to *reading to learn*. Children begin to fall behind and then drift out of the system when they lack the skills to progress with their reading. Massive national testing in Third Grade identifies the problem across the US. *Kid Scoop News* has developed one of the best solutions. Although there are a multitude of reasons for a child falling behind, *Kid Scoop News* addresses one of the most prevalent: the absence of reading materials that motivate kids by relating to them in their cultures and experiences.

Academically, children who are not reading on grade level by the end of Third Grade struggle in every class, year after year, because over 85% of the curriculum is taught by reading.

Kid Scoop News provides elementary school children with free, innovative and high-interest reading materials designed to encourage independent reading at school and at home. Evaluations show what we intuitively know: the more children read, the better they read.

Reading is the first pillar of literacy, and both quantitative and anecdotal studies show that children whose parents read to them and then *with* them have a bigger opportunity to become lifelong readers. Literacy allows people to play a vital role as socially engaged citizens: keeping up with current events and understanding the issues that are shaping our world.

Reading is the skill by which students get information from books, computers, worksheets, and smaller digital devices to learn math, science, literature, social studies, and more. During the pandemic, the impact on children who struggled with reading, had difficulty accessing technology, and had to share their learning time and tools with others in their homes created a widening gap. Although *Kid Scoop News* was produced and distributed digitally during the pandemic to an expanded audience, lack of access was a challenge for many young readers.

The Urgency of the Work of Kid Scoop News

Children are our future, and our investment in them is one of the most important that we make: for them, and for us. *Kid Scoop News* stated its promise when it was launched more than a decade ago, and continues to deliver on these ideas:

ACCESS
to high-interest reading materials drives the
MOTIVATION
to read, which in turn leads to reading
ACHIEVEMENT
at school and ultimately
SUCCESS
in life.

As social injustice, inequity, lack of inclusion and general economic uncertainty have grown and revealed huge fissures in our communities, our work has become more urgent. Children's Literacy Foundation reports that one in six children who are not reading proficiently in the Third Grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers. And, the numbers climb among low-income and rural families and in communities of color, where resources may be more limited.

The Children's Literacy Foundation further reports:

- o 68% of America's Fourth Graders read at or below proficient level. 82% of those children are from low-income families.
- o Among those who reach adulthood with the lowest level of literacy proficiency, 43% live in poverty. Among those who have strong literacy skills, only 4% live in poverty.

Academic, emotional, and social issues abound for children who are poor readers. Literacy is widely understood as a key indicator for many things good and bad in our society: quality of healthcare, social mobility, interest in civics and democracy, options for employment over a lifetime, the cost of our criminal justice system and the overall well-being and potential of our society.

Kid Scoop News is committed to a vision of ensuring that every person has access to the tools and materials they need to read, write and participate productively in their communities. By equipping students, teachers and parents with relevant, interesting, age-appropriate and interesting news and stories from across the US and our global society, *Kid Scoop News* taps into the natural curiosity of children and expands their minds while fueling their sense of wonder.

By expanding our outreach to parents, teachers and children we keep moving towards that vision of a society equipped to decode the complexities of our times and work towards a future of continued discoveries in literature, science, history, mathematics, philosophy, all science and the power of informed civic engagement.

It is a big goal. But throughout history we have learned that an investment in literacy now is the most powerful way to ensure the best possible future for our kids, and our world.