



RIF Multicultural Literacy Campaign



Fact Sheet

About the Campaign

The RIF Multicultural Literacy Campaign is a multi-year effort to promote and support early childhood literacy in African-American, Hispanic and Native American communities, where reading scores are lowest. The campaign includes parent and caregiver training materials and workshops, the RIF Leading to Reading website (www.rif.org), multicultural book collections for children, community partnerships, and public education campaigns.

Understanding the Reading Gap

	Children Under the age of 6	% Children Living in Poverty	% Children in Single Parent Households	% Children Read to Every Day	% of 4 th Graders at or above Basic Reading Level
African American	3.4 million	33%	46%	33%	42%
Hispanic	4.4 million	28%	24%	41%	46%
Native American	432,000	27%	31%	N/A	48%
White	13.5 million	9%	18%	61%	76%
Asian	941,000	11%	17%	N/A	73%

Sources: 2000 Census Data/Casey Foundation, NAEP 2005, Department of Education)

Children from Low Income Families are at Greatest Risk for Reading Difficulties. Other risk factors include being in single-parent households, maternal education level, and English not being the primary language spoken at home. (e.g., Dubow & Ippolito, 1994)

Language Development Critical in First Five Years of Life. During preschool years, language develops far more rapidly than any other time. Children’s language abilities predict later success in learning to read and write. (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Importance of Reading to Young Children. Reading to young children enhances their language development, especially vocabulary, because the structures and words used in books are more varied than in speech. Knowing more words, in turn, helps children make sense of print and find what they read more meaningful and interesting. (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)

Reading Readiness Supports Academic Success. Reading readiness is highly predictive of later academic performance. Reading deficits in children which appear early are likely to maintain over time, thereby reducing the likelihood of catching up to their peers. (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998)

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