

February 26, 2013

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# Parent Page

## The Link Between Low Literacy and Crime

In recent years, studies have been conducted all over the world to determine the connection between illiteracy, poverty and crime.

The following information was gathered from the Literacy and Policing in Canada fact sheet.

The inability to read and write well may not be a direct cause of criminal behavior, but low literacy and crime are related.

Daily life is harder for people with low literacy, so they are more likely to feel frustrated and dissatisfied. People with low

literacy skills usually have equally inadequate problem-solving skills.

People who have low liter-



acy skills tend to be less active citizens than other people. They are less likely to get involved in community

activities like sports, school groups, church groups and so on. As a result, they often feel isolated and vulnerable, and many of them feel like outcasts.

This may partly explain why people who have low literacy are statistically more likely to be involved in crime—either as the offender or the victim. It may also help to explain why crime rates are higher in neighborhoods where a high percentage of people have low literacy.

Read more at:  
[policeabc.ca/files/factsheets\\_englishPDFs/Ch02FactSheet02.pdf](http://policeabc.ca/files/factsheets_englishPDFs/Ch02FactSheet02.pdf)

*“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” -Malcolm X*

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## Literacy is Key

According to the UNICEF, illiteracy and crime are closely related. The Department of Justice states, “The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence and crime is welded to reading failure.” Over 70% of inmates in America’s prisons cannot read above a fourth grade level.

**Suggestion:** Modeling good reading habits is a great way to encourage your teen to read. Some helpful tips to modeling good reading habits: 1) Keep reading materials in convenient places, such as on coffee tables, in the bathroom, in the car or on the breakfast table; 2) Visit libraries and bookstores regularly; 3) Volunteer to

read at a school, church, library, hospital or long-term care facility; 4) Read together with your teen and; 5) Make sure your teen sees you reading every day.





Visit

[www.begintoread.com](http://www.begintoread.com)  
to find out more  
information about  
literacy.

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## Literacy Statistics

The following information was gathered from the Begin to Read website.

National Assessment of Adult Literacy defines literacy as “using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.

- 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare. The 4th grade is the watershed year. We can predict that if a child is not reading proficiently in the 4th grade, he or she will have approximately a 78% chance of not catching up.

- According to UNICEF, “Nearly a billion people will

enter the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names and 2/3 of them are women.”

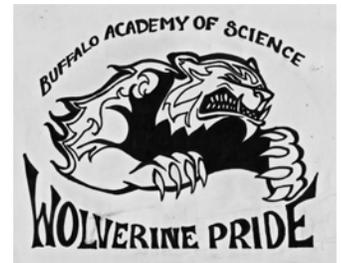
- 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.
- More than 60% of all prison inmates are functionally illiterate.
- Penal institution records show that inmates have a 16% chance of returning to prison if they have literacy help, as opposed to 70% who receive no help. This equates to taxpayer costs of \$25,000 per year per inmate and nearly double that amount for juvenile offenders.
- Over 70% of inmates in America’s prisons cannot

read above a 4th grade level.

- Literacy is learned; illiteracy is passed along by parents who cannot read or write.
- One child in four grows up not knowing how to read.
- 43% of adults at the lowest literacy level live in poverty compared to only 4% of those at the highest level.
- 16-19 year old girls at the poverty level and below, with below average skills, are 6x more likely to have children out-of-wedlock than their reading counterparts.
- Low literacy costs \$73 million per year in terms of direct health care costs.



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## Parent Resources

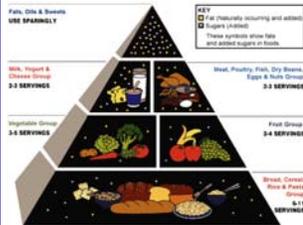
We all know that fried chicken is a common dish served in many American homes. Making your own at home is better than fast food; however, deep frying foods at home still packs lots of calories and is high in saturated fats. Try this recipe from [www.snackgirl.com](http://www.snackgirl.com) for a healthier food choice...

### BAKED FRIED CHICKEN

- 10 pieces (skinless or skin on) chicken
- 1/4 c buttermilk
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and ground pepper
- 6 slices 100% whole grain bread
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil

Instructions:

1. Marinate chicken in buttermilk, garlic, 2tsp. Salt and 1 tsp. pepper. Leave at room temperature for 30 or overnight in the refrigerator. 2. Pre-heat oven to 450°F. Use a food processor to pulse bread until coarse crumbs form. Pour crumbs onto a rimmed baking sheet and toss with vegetable oil. Bake crumbs until crunchy and brown (8-10 minutes). Pour into a shallow bowl. 3. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Lift chicken, one piece at a time, out of marinade (shake off excess) and press bread crumbs onto the piece. Place chicken onto baking sheet. 4. Bake 30-40 minutes (without turning) until a meat thermometer inserted reads 165°F.



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