SCHOLASTIC

KIDS & FAMILY READING REPORT™

7TH EDITION

FINDING THEIR STORY

YouGov®

“READING FOR FUN SPURS THE IMAGINATION AND ENCOURAGES KIDS TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN THOUGHTS AND ASK QUESTIONS. DIFFERENT BOOKS CAN ALSO HELP THEM TO LEARN DIFFERENT THINGS THAT THEY MIGHT NOT SEEK OUT THEMSELVES.”

FATHER OF A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY

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A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Connecting kids with stories they love, in whatever format they prefer—from fiction to nonfiction, chapter books to graphic novels, physical books to digital books—has been Scholastic's mission for nearly 100 years. And since my early days as a teacher, getting students to read more, and to read with understanding, has been a personal mission.

We all know why reading is crucial: it provides myriad academic and social-emotional benefits and is also increasingly a way for children to connect with their peers, their families, their communities and the world at large. Reading the right book can help every child feel seen and heard. And it's that connection that can lay the groundwork for becoming a lifelong reader—and in turn, building empathy, inspiring discovery and finding wonder in the world.

Compelling learnings from the seven editions of the *Kids & Family Reading Report* have helped Scholastic produce materials that educate and inspire. In this edition, we notice a trend that signals an urgent call to action: our research is telling us that kids reach their peak engagement with reading books for fun at a very young age, and that as children age, the pleasure they get from reading declines. This data is powerful: it is the story of how a child grows up and loses a connection with reading and books along the way.

That missing connection has consequences. Literacy is not just a gateway to academic success and discovery, but a means of preparing for the future. Never has this been more critical. Without the ability to read, a child faces significant challenges in navigating the mid-21st century. Reading allows kids to develop the skills they'll need to do the work of tomorrow—work we can't even envision today. Reading can provide an ability to visualize what language means, the capacity to discern fact from fiction—and also the emotional intelligence and self-discovery that comes from reading the great books and stories of the world. The child who has access to reading is a child better prepared to rise and meet their future.

The voice of parents continues to be critical. Parents have told us that the key qualities they hope their children develop as they grow up are self-confidence, responsibility, honesty, respectfulness and kindness, and they overwhelmingly believe that the characters their children read about in books can help them achieve these understandings. Parents also agree reading is a way to help their child understand different points of view and help their children find their place in the world. And, just as many adults turn to books to help us through difficult times, many parents have also seen how the right story can support their child through life's challenges—a finding that children themselves agree to be true.

Has it ever been more clear that the role of parents, caregivers and those of us at Scholastic is to help a child discover a book that can change their life—and, in doing so, change the world? By supporting our youngest readers with access to engaging, relatable stories—to stories that spark their innate curiosity and answer their desire to be heard—we can turn around the drop off in reading engagement you will see cited in this report.

This report is a call to action to help young people discover what they want and need from books, and to together build a way forward to ensure that they will have access to the books which will ultimately help them shape our collective future.

RICHARD ROBINSON

CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT AND
CEO SCHOLASTIC INC.

KEY FINDINGS

READING TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD

- Three critical measures of a school-aged child's (ages 6–17) relationship with reading have remained fairly steady since 2010. In the seventh edition of the *Kids & Family Reading Report:*
  - Fifty-eight percent say they love or like reading books for fun.
  - Fifty-two percent agree reading books for fun is extremely or very important.
  - Thirty-one percent read books for fun 5–7 days a week (known as frequent readers); 41% of kids read for fun 1–4 days a week (known as moderately frequent readers); 28% of kids read for fun less than 1 day a week (known as infrequent readers).
- Even so, incremental changes in reading frequency since 2010 have culminated in a decrease of frequent readers (down six points) and an increase of infrequent readers (up seven points).
- Each edition of the *Kids & Family Reading Report* has, with the seventh being no exception, revealed a striking downward trend as children grow up: by age nine all three critical measures noted above decrease dramatically; more, they rarely rebound as kids move through adolescence.
- This loss of engagement means kids miss out on the benefits books provide – and those benefits are agreed on by both kids and parents:
  - Seventy-four percent of kids say that reading fiction and nonfiction is a way to help them understand the world; 88% of parents say the same.
  - More than half of kids (53%) and parents (55%) agree a book has helped them/their child through a difficult time.
  - Seventy-three percent of kids say that reading about current events make it easier to talk about or understand them.
- In the past two years, both kids and parents are less likely to say that when picking a children's book to read for fun, the type of book doesn't matter, it just has to be a good story (down 17 points among kids; 21 points among parents). Today, they are more likely to want several specific outcomes from their book selections:
  - More kids want books that make them laugh (up 10 points to 52%), help them explore new worlds (up nine points to 40%) and become familiar with new topics (up seven points to 26%).
  - More parents want these types of books, as well as those which help their child learn about the lives of others (up 12 points to 48%) and books that make their child think and feel (up nine points to 51%).

BOOKS AND CHARACTERS TO REFLECT OUR DIVERSE WORLD

- Diversity in children's books has broad meaning and is highly inclusive. For a majority of parents and a near-majority of kids, diversity in books includes people and experiences different than their own, various cultures, customs and religions, and various settings and living situations.
- About half of kids ages 9–17 and parents with kids ages 6–17 agree "I wish there were more books available that include diversity;" among kids and parents who agree that diversity in children's books is important, these percentages rise to 76% of kids and 69% of parents.
  - Black and Hispanic families overall have the strongest views on the importance of and need for books with diversity.
- Both kids ages 12–17 and parents with kids ages 6–17 are more likely today than they were in 2016 to want books with diverse storylines, characters or settings (18% of kids, up five points; 31% of parents, up five points).
- The characters both kids and parents look for in children's books signify the powerful role characters can play in a young reader's life:
  - The top three most wanted types of characters among kids are those who can be role models, who face challenges and overcome them and those who are "similar to me."
  - Parents overwhelmingly agree (95%) that characters in books can help foster the qualities they value for their children. And the data suggests that parents are placing a greater overall focus on character-building: the percentage of parents who want more from characters is on the rise.

ACCESS MATTERS: READING ROLE MODELS AND BOOKS

- Creating a literacy-rich environment for children by surrounding them with books and encouraging reading role models – of all ages and types of relationships – makes a difference. Frequent readers:
  - Get more encouragement to read from family members, friends, principals, teachers and school librarians than infrequent readers,
  - Are far more likely to say that nearly everyone or a lot of people in their lives enjoy reading,
  - Are more likely to have parents who value reading and who read frequently, and
  - Have, on average, 139 children's books at home vs. the 74 books infrequent readers have at home.
- Further, classroom libraries are critically important, as across all ages the data show that kids who have robust classroom libraries are more likely to be frequent readers. Yet, only 43% of school-aged children have access to a classroom library, and only one-third say that it has enough of the types of books they'd like to read.
- In the 13 years of the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, one thing remains constant no matter what: when kids get to choose, they read. Across demographics, the majority of kids (89%) agree their favorite books are the ones that they have picked out themselves.

I am constantly inspired to see how kids—even those who struggle with reading—are wildly curious about other people and far-away lands. They are ready and eager to engage in stories that will open their eyes and their hearts and challenge them to think in new ways. These are the kinds of meaningful stories that I try to tell in my I Survived series. And these are the stories that are at the core of the mission of Scholastic Classroom Magazines, where I have worked for more than 25 years.

And yet as the seventh edition of the *Kids & Family Reading Report* shows, the role of reading in the lives of kids is at risk. As kids get older, fewer see reading as something to do just for fun and, in turn, are reading less.

It's especially worrisome that kids are losing their connection to reading when they need it most, in third grade. This should be a magical year in the life of a young learner, when reading opens doors to new knowledge and understanding. Yet studies show that for many children, reading struggles in third grade presage a lifetime of challenges in school and beyond.

Few of us can be surprised by the trends that show that kids are reading less. Mention the word Fortnite to a group of fourth graders and they burst out in exuberant cheers (as I witnessed at a recent school visit). According to the American Heart Association, today an average kid—whether they're in third grade or high school—spends more than seven hours of time on screens per day. Considering this, it's actually pretty remarkable that kids are reading as much as they are.

But the *Kids & Family Reading Report* also gives us reasons for hope and provided me with a call to action. Kids and parents know reading is important; they agree that reading both fiction and nonfiction is key to understanding the world.

And kids do love reading books—but not just any books. No surprise: kids want to read books that make them laugh and that introduce them to new places, new cultures, and new kinds of people.

It is these kinds of books and stories that are most likely to pull a child's eyes away from a glowing screen, not generic "texts" or "reading passages" or "content" used to practice a reading skill.

This year's *Kids & Family Reading Report* will inspire my colleagues and me to work even harder to create fascinating, meaningful stories about important topics, to create characters who inspire empathy and model resilience.

These are the stories kids and their families are asking us for, and that we need now more than ever.

LAUREN TARSHIS

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/PUBLISHER, SCHOLASTIC MAGAZINES

AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING SERIES I SURVIVED

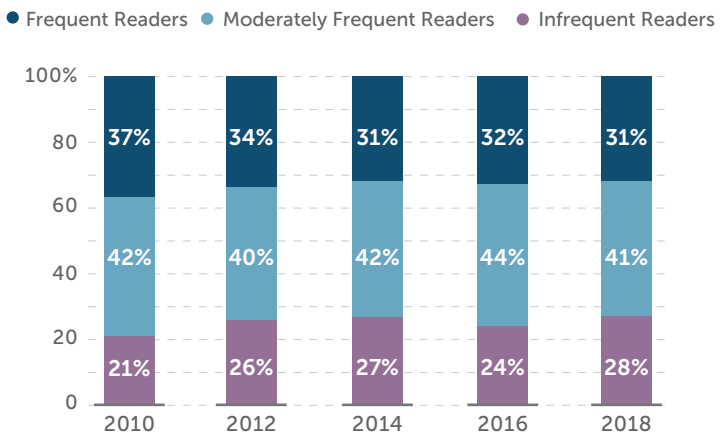
READING TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD

CHILDREN'S READING TRENDS REMAIN FAIRLY STEADY, BUT DISPLAY A DOWNWARD TREND AS KIDS GROW UP

Over seven editions, the *Kids & Family Reading Report* has explored the reading habits and behaviors of children ages 6–17. Since 2010, the benchmark for tracking data from this report, the year-over-year changes in children's reading frequency have been minimal, with a consistent percentage of kids reading books for fun 1–4 days a week (moderately frequent readers). However, incremental changes have culminated in an overall decline of children reading nearly every day (frequent readers), and a rise in those reading less than 1 day a week (infrequent readers) *(see Figure 1).*

Frequency with which children read books for fun

Figure 1. Percentage of children who fall into each frequency group

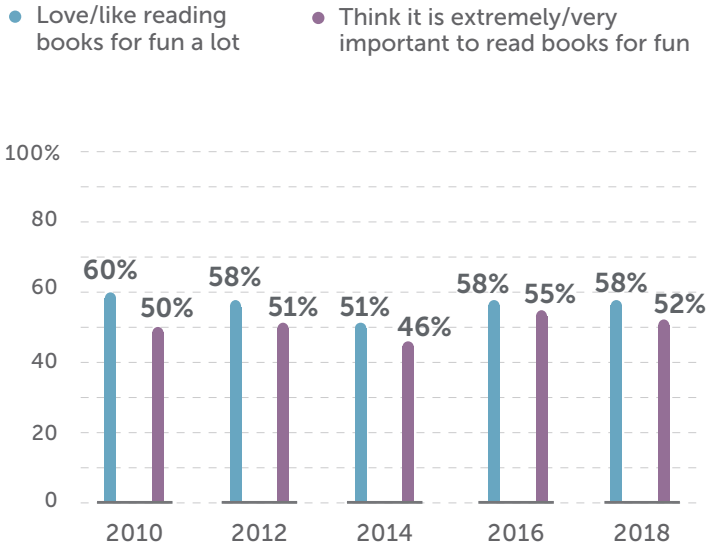


Base: Children ages 6–17

Kids' views on reading enjoyment have largely held steady over the years with about six in 10 kids reporting they love or like reading books for fun a lot. This percentage dipped in 2014 but rebounded in 2016, and remains steady at 58% in 2018. Kids' views on the importance of reading have also maintained consistency over time, hovering around 50% of children saying that reading books for fun is extremely or very important *(see Figure 2).*

Children's views on reading books for fun

Figure 2. Percentage of children who report they...



Base: Children ages 6–17

Overall, trends we observed in years past continue to hold true: each edition of our report has found that as kids grow up, reading frequency, enjoyment and children's sense of its importance decline. As one 16-year-old girl described it, *"I really don't have time to read any books that I want. I liked it better when I was younger and could read whatever I wanted."*

Additionally, girls are more likely than boys to be frequent readers and they are more likely to have positive attitudes towards reading.

THE "DECLINE BY NINE"

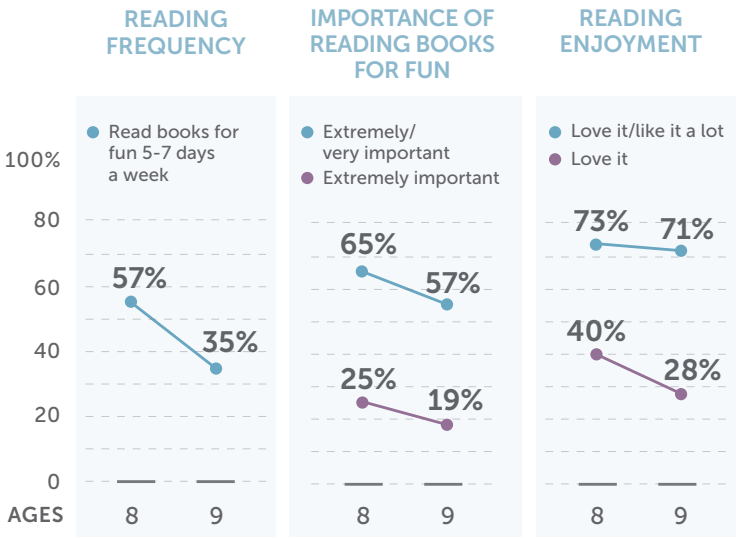
A child turning nine is generally found in a third grade classroom, a critical year in a child's academic journey. Landmark research by the Annie E. Casey Foundation has previously shown that reaching reading proficiency by third grade is a clear predictor of academic success. And yet the *Kids & Family Reading Report* finds it is just at that stage that children's frequency of reading books for fun begins to drop: only 35% of nine-year-olds report reading 5–7 days a week compared to 57% of eight-year-olds *(see Figure 3).*

The *Kids & Family Reading Report* has shown a child's attitude towards reading enjoyment and importance is a predictor of reading frequency, which is why it also is striking to note the drop between ages eight and nine in the percentage of kids who think reading books for fun is extremely or very important (from 65% to 57%). Similarly, the number of kids who say they love reading drops significantly from 40% among eight-year-olds to 28% among nine-year-olds *(see Figure 3)*.

What is to be done about the "decline by nine"? Rarely do we see a rebound from these benchmarks as kids grow older. Yet across ages, the majority of kids agree they should read more books for fun, and tell us they believe reading matters. This suggests it is possible to prevent the decline and even to re-engage a child in reading, provided the experience meets their needs and expectations.

Frequency of and views on reading books for fun decline between ages 8 and 9

Figure 3. Percentage of children ages 8 and 9 who report...



Base: Children ages 8–9

KIDS WANT BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, BUT ALSO THOSE THAT HELP THEM MAKE SENSE OF THEIR WORLD

When choosing books to read for fun, many kids want stories that make them laugh. In fact, the desire for funny books increased 10 points since 2016, while the percentage of kids who say the type of book doesn't matter, they just want a good story, is down 17 points.

But funny isn't everything. Kids also turn to books to connect them to the world at large:

- 40% want books that allow them to explore places and worlds they have never been (up nine points from 2016),
- 26% want books about topics they want to become familiar with (up seven points from 2016),
- 25% want books that help them imagine and understand other people's lives,
- 25% want books that make them think and feel,
- 23% want books that help them forget about real life for a while,
- 22% want books that inspire them to do something good, and
- 19% want books that are about things they are experiencing *(see Figure 4)*.

What kids want in books, compared to 2016

Figure 4. Percentage of children who selected each item, compared to 2016

Base: Children ages 6–17

> "IT'S GOOD TO LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT THINGS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND."
>
> 11-YEAR-OLD BOY

Moderate and frequent readers are by far more opinionated in what they are looking for in books while infrequent readers are the most likely to say they look for no kinds of books in particular, it just has to be a good story. It is also after age eight that we see kids being more likely to want books that inspire them to do something good, understand other people's lives and learn about topics unfamiliar to them.

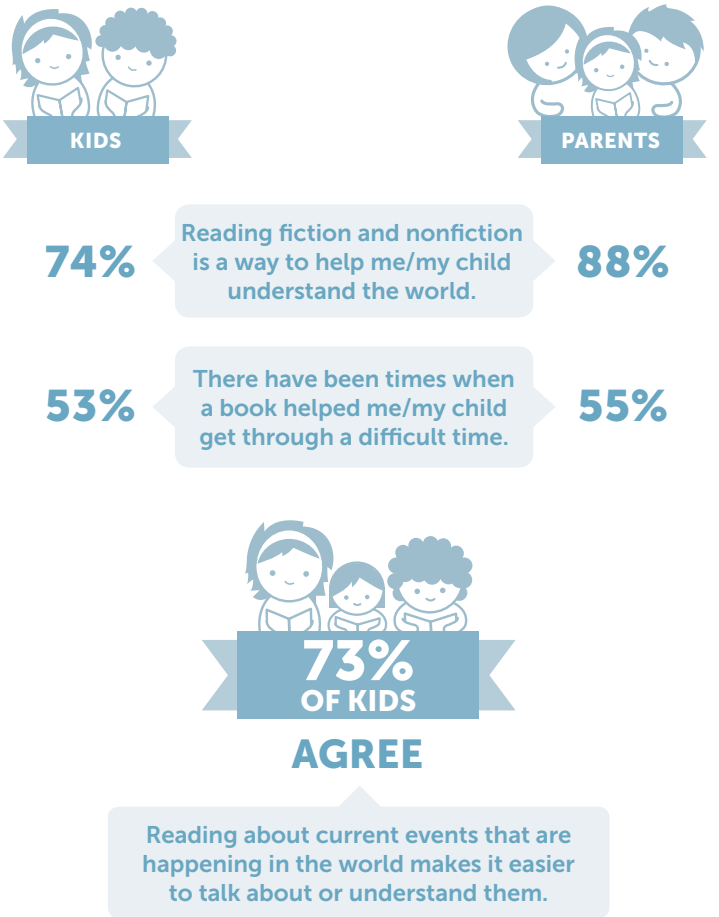
READING HELPS KIDS IRL

Kids agree reading helps them understand broader issues in their communities and beyond, and even helps them through their own personal rough spots. Seventy four percent of children agree that reading fiction and nonfiction is a way to help them understand the world, with a similar percent (73%) agreeing that reading about current events makes it easier to talk about or understand them. One 11-year-old boy told us, *"It's good to learn about different things to help you understand."* Just over half of kids (53%) also agree a book has helped them through a difficult time, and it's heartening to see that nearly the same percentage of parents (55%) feel books have played this role for their child *(see Figure 5).*

> "I LIKE WHEN I CAN IDENTIFY WITH THE EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS [CHARACTERS] ARE FACING."
>
> 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Reading helps children navigate the world

Figure 5. Percentage of children and parents who agree...



Base: Children ages 6–17; Parents with kids ages 6–17

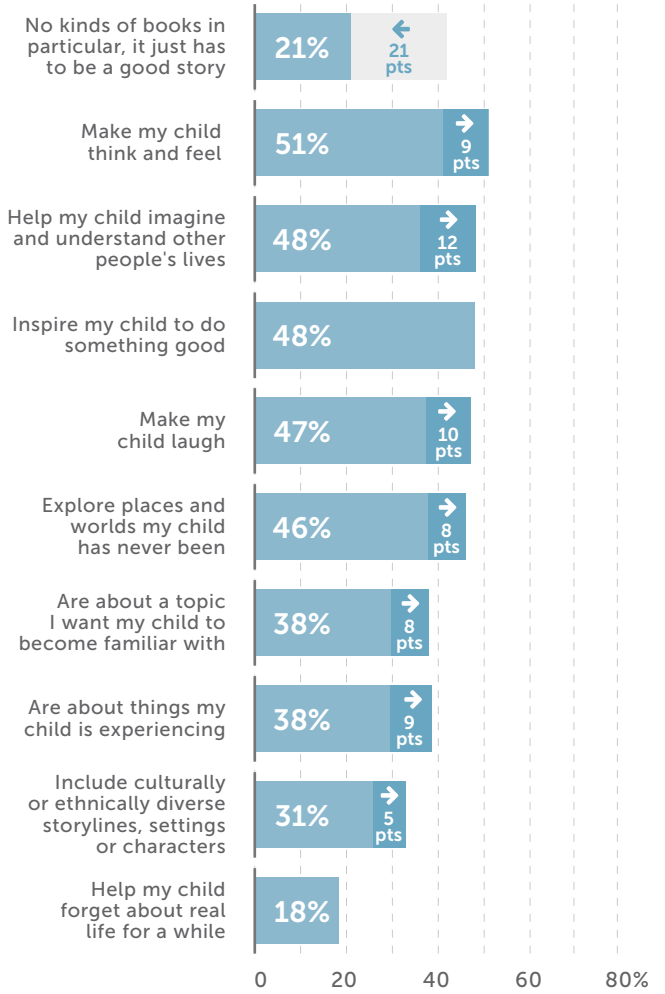
PARENTS SEE THAT BOOKS CAN HELP CHILDREN NAVIGATE THEIR WORLDS

Parents have even stronger views than do their children about the role of books in a child's life. Over the past two years, in a trend mirrored among the kids surveyed, there has been a steep decline in the number of parents who feel the type of book doesn't matter, it just has to be a good story (42% to 21%). Children's book characteristics that parents are now more likely to want include learning about the lives of others (up 12 points to 48%), exploring different places and worlds (up eight points to 46%), and making their child think and feel (up nine points to 51%) *(see Figure 6).*

> "I GREW UP READING DOZENS OF BOOKS AND THEY'VE ALL SHAPED ME INTO THE PERSON I AM TODAY. I LEARNED ABOUT STRUGGLES THROUGHOUT HISTORY AND WHAT PEOPLE FACE DAY-TO-DAY, LEARNED NEW WORDS FROM FICTION BOOKS THAT I WOULD HAVE NEVER LEARNED OTHERWISE, AND DEVELOPED A LOVE FOR ADVENTURE THROUGH BOOKS. I WISH THE SAME FOR MY CHILD."
>
> MOTHER OF A 7-YEAR-OLD BOY

What parents want in books for their kids

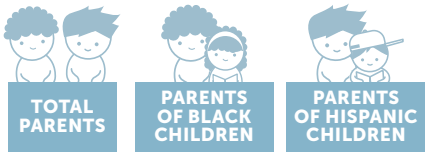
Figure 6. Percentage of parents who said each response, compared to 2016



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

Parents with Black and Hispanic kids are the most likely to look for a number of book characteristics

Figure 7. Percentage of parents who said each response



	TOTAL PARENTS	PARENTS OF BLACK CHILDREN	PARENTS OF HISPANIC CHILDREN
Make my child think and feel	51%	53%	53%
Help my child imagine and understand other people's lives	48%	52%	54%
Inspire my child to do something good	48%	53%	53%
Make my child laugh	47%	51%	49%
Explore places and worlds my child has never been	46%	47%	51%
Are about things my child is experiencing	38%	46%	39%
Are about a topic I want my child to become familiar with	38%	43%	37%
Include culturally or ethnically diverse storylines, settings or characters	31%	54%	35%
Help my child forget about real life for a while	18%	13%	20%
No kinds of books in particular, it just has to be a good story	21%	11%	19%

Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

Parents of kids 11 or younger are more likely than parents with older children—by at least 10 points—to look for all of the book characteristics asked about in the survey, save for "help your child forget about real life for a while," which is consistent across age groups. Parents of Black and Hispanic children are the most likely to look for a number of book characteristics, more than other parents. "Make my child laugh" and "make my child think and feel" are universally wanted by about half of parents across races and ethnicities *(see Figure 7)*.

Additionally, the majority of parents agree that reading fiction and nonfiction is a way for their child to better understand the world (88%), and that reading can help their child understand different points of view (94%).

> "READING FOR FUN SPURS THE IMAGINATION AND ENCOURAGES KIDS TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN THOUGHTS AND ASK QUESTIONS. DIFFERENT BOOKS CAN ALSO HELP THEM TO LEARN DIFFERENT THINGS THAT THEY MIGHT NOT SEEK OUT THEMSELVES."
>
> FATHER OF A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY

As a mom of two very different kids, I've always believed in books that reflect a multitude of experiences and perspectives. This is one of the reasons I've devoted my life's work to creating diverse children's books, both as an author and as Scholastic Vice President, Executive Editor. As a parent, writer, and publisher, my primary purpose is to provide books for kids that help them experience the complexities of a diverse world. And throughout each of my jobs, I witness a basic truth: Kids see what they see, and they don't see what they don't see. When a young reader finds a story that positively reflects his or her cultural, familial, or abilities experience, that child becomes empowered to read more, which has a direct impact on how they view their place in the world. And when that reader reads about experiences different from their own, they develop empathy and open-mindedness. Conversely, when kids don't see books that reflect diverse experiences, they're not emboldened to expand their thinking.

Thankfully, diversity is central to our publishing mission at Scholastic. We have a credo, part of which says, "We believe in the respect for the diverse groups in our multicultural society." These words are stenciled on the risers of our corporate headquarters staircase as a celebration of our firm commitment to serving a diverse population of readers. Each and every time I climb those stairs, I can't help but think that we're literally supported by our core values which continue to elevate us.

And so, the new data on diversity in this *Kids & Family Reading Report* is especially helpful. The data underscores our belief that diverse books matter. But parents and teachers often tell me that while they value diversity, they struggle with how to put it into practice. So I share my story: from the time my own kids were babies, I exposed them to diverse stories by reading them aloud. And I learn a lot about my kids' perceptions of the world's diversity when we spend time together with books. The same can be done with the children in your life—talk to them about what you're reading together. Ask questions. Stay interested.

Like every parent, I want so much for my kids. Developing their characters is no small task, but we know that books can lend a helping hand. This is another gift of the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, which also tells us that families want more from the books they read. Good books go beyond just good stories; kids and parents alike expect books to bring the world to them in all its beautiful shapes, sizes, and colors. I see firsthand that what moves a reader is not just a chain of events that creates a narrative arc—the stories that stick are about the emotions that blossom when a reader connects to a character, experience or place. It's this connection that empowers readers to be the protagonists of their own stories.

Tomorrow's leaders may not yet have seen themselves in a book. But we have the power to change that. With the information in this report, we can work toward helping each child find their story. If it isn't created yet, we can help them tell it.

ANDREA DAVIS-PINKNEY

VICE PRESIDENT, EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SCHOLASTIC TRADE BOOKS

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AND AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF MARTIN RISING: REQUIEM FOR A KING

BOOKS & CHARACTERS TO REFLECT OUR DIVERSE WORLD

DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS HAS A HIGHLY-INCLUSIVE MEANING

Diversity in children's books has a broad meaning among kids and parents. A majority of parents and a near majority of kids ages 9–17 say diversity in children's books includes people and experiences different than their own, various cultures, customs, religions, settings and living situations. And while not as commonly cited, many believe diversity in children's books also includes differently-abled people, people of color and LGBTQ people *(see Figure 1)*.

About six in 10 parents (58%) report diversity is extremely or very important in the books their child reads, and nearly four in 10 kids ages 9–17 (38%) agree. When asked why this is important, parents predominantly responded with answers related to learning about differences and understanding the world.

As one father of a 14-year-old girl said, *"The world is a diverse place. My child should be able to experience stories of those who are not just like her, or just look like her, or live like her. She should be able to learn that people come in all shapes, sizes, colors, belief systems and educational or cultural backgrounds, so that she is ready to engage with the world in an authentic way."*

What diversity in books means to parents and kids

Figure 1. Percentage of parents and children who selected each response

Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17; Children ages 9–17

MANY FAMILIES WANT MORE BOOKS TO INCLUDE DIVERSITY

About half of kids ages 9–17 and parents overall agree "I wish there were more books available that include diversity." This sentiment increases to 76% of kids and 69% of parents who also agree diversity in children's books is important. The desire for more diverse books is strongest among Black children and their parents, followed by Hispanic families, then by families of multi-racial, Asian or other racial backgrounds (*see Figure 2).*

The data also suggest that highly-visual reading materials resonate with both parents and children who believe it is important that the books children read include diversity. Parents who say diversity is important are more likely than other parents to prefer their child reads story books (58% vs. 48%), picture books (28% vs. 19%), comic books (27% vs. 15%) and magazines (20% vs. 15%). They are also far more likely to say it is important their child experiences books with characters that look like him/her (59% vs. 25%).

Similarly, children who say reading books with diversity is important to them are more likely to say they like to read story books (47% vs. 30%), and these children are more likely to agree that it is easy to find books with characters that "look like me" (63% vs. 45%).

Importance of and desire for diversity in kids' books

Figure 2. Percentage who agree with statement

58% It is extremely or very important that the books my child reads/ I read include diversity **38%**

47%	White	27%
66%	Hispanic	50%
85%	Black	57%
57%	Multiple races, Asian or other	41%

52% I wish there were more books available that include diversity for children my child's age / for me to read **45%**

39%	White	32%
64%	Hispanic	57%
75%	Black	66%
55%	Multiple races, Asian or other	51%

Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17; Children ages 9–17

DESIRE FOR DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS IS ON THE RISE

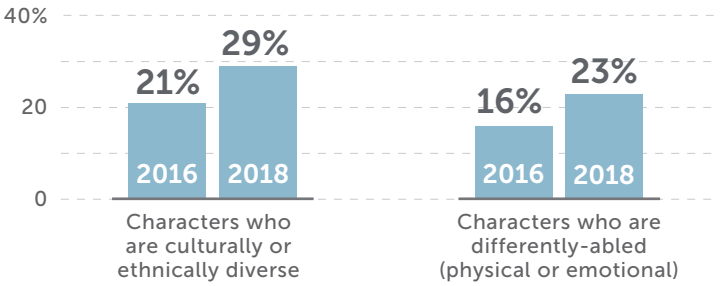
Both kids ages 12–17 and parents of children across ages are more likely today than they were in 2016 to want books with diverse storylines, characters or settings (18% of kids, up six points; 31% of parents with kids ages 6–17, up five points; parents of children ages 0–5 up nine points to 36%). Since 2016, parents are also more likely to want culturally or ethnically diverse characters (21% to 29%, up eight points) and differently-abled characters (16% to 23%, up seven points) *(see Figure 3a/b).*

Black and Hispanic families as well as families of multi-racial, Asian or other racial backgrounds are the most likely to look for books that include diverse storylines, characters or settings. Notably, finding these diversity-related characteristics is just as important to parents of Black children as finding books that help their child imagine and understand other people's lives, make their child think and feel, as well as books that inspire kids to do something good or make them laugh.

Similarly, while just over one in 10 kids ages 9–17 look specifically for characters that are culturally or ethnically diverse, Black children are the most likely to seek out these characters (24% compared to 18% of children of multiple, Asian or other races, 16% of Hispanic children and 7% of white children). One in 10 children ages 9–17 also looks for characters who are differently-abled, and a similar number look for those who break stereotypes. Three percent look for LGBTQ characters. As one 17-year-old girl shared, *"Life is different for everyone so I would like to understand the differences."*

More parents seek diversity in characters

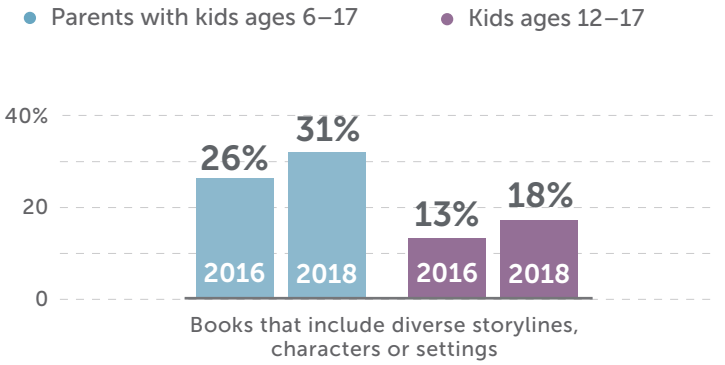
Figure 3a. Percentage of parents who say they want each type of character, compared to 2016



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

More parents and kids seek diversity in books

Figure 3b. Percentage of parents and children who say they want each type of book, compared to 2016



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17; Children ages 12–17

KIDS SEEK OUT AND LEARN FROM CHARACTERS

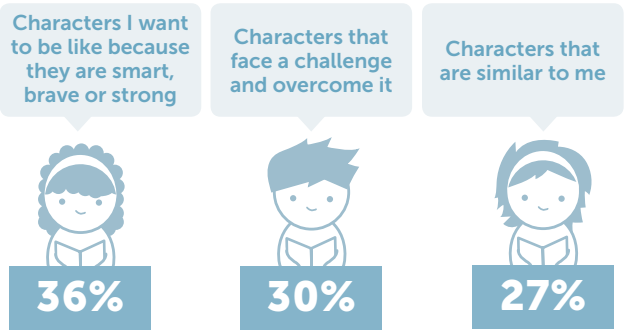
While a good story is, of course, a key factor that influences a parent or child's desire for a book, a book's characters are an important driver of preference and integral to the overall social-emotional benefits of reading. The top three types of characters kids ages 6–17 want in books do not vary across gender, age or ethnicity and reflect the reader's own aspirations: characters who they want to be like because they are smart, brave or strong, who face and overcome challenges, and who are "similar to me" *(see Figure 4a).* A 13-year-old girl simply stated, *"I like to read books [about] girls my age who can achieve things beyond reach, who overcome difficulties and become great."*

Overall, four in 10 kids agree that there has been a character—fictional or a real person—whose story taught them a life lesson. One 11-year-old girl shared that Auggie, a character from *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, inspired her *"because even though people made fun of him for the way he looked, he still found a way to make [it] through the day, every day...It just goes to show that you don't have to be what someone thinks you should be, or act how someone thinks you should act. You just have to be you."* Many other children cited historical figures, with one 10-year-old girl saying of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: *"He taught me that you can be proud of your color and you can accomplish anything no matter who you are."*

Kids selected real-life people and fictional characters in equal numbers, illustrating the impact that both book formats can make in a child's life *(see Figure 4b).*

Top 3 types of characters kids want in books

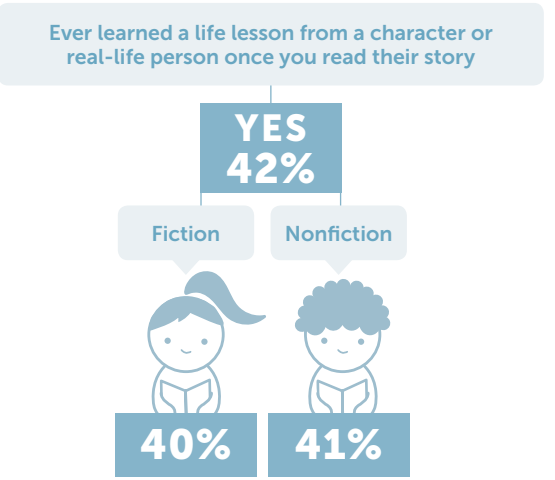
Figure 4a. Percentage of kids who say they want each type of character



Base: Children ages 6–17

Characters inspire many kids

Figure 4b. Percentage of kids who say they learned a life lesson; type of book from which lesson learned



Base: Children ages 6–17

PARENTS KNOW THAT CHARACTERS BUILD CHARACTER

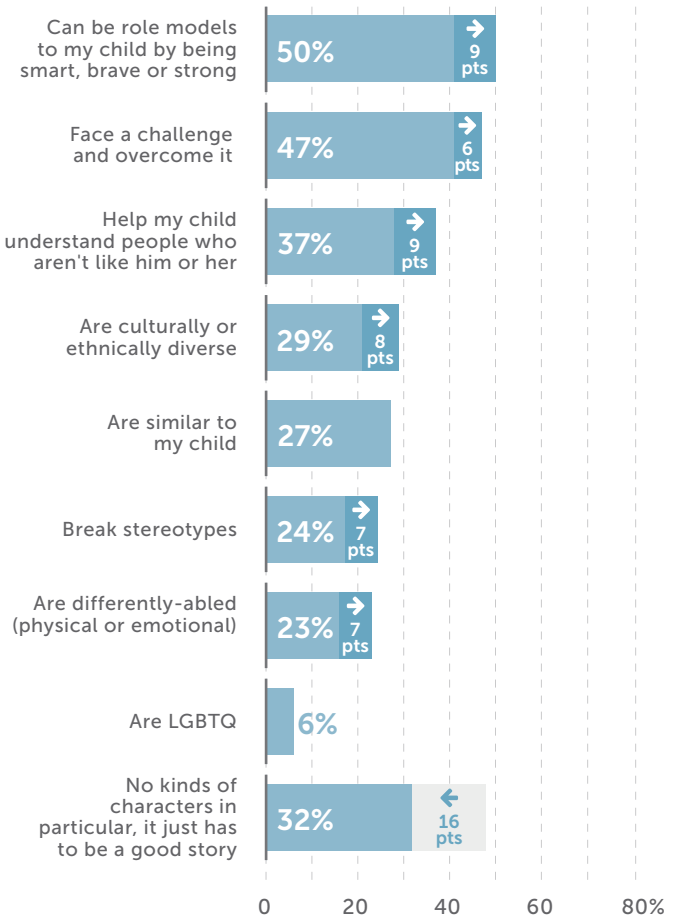
To determine what parents value most, this year's survey asked them to prioritize the qualities they hope their children develop as they grow. Responsibility, self-confidence, honesty, respectfulness and kindness top the list. Parents know that developing these qualities can be challenging, and they overwhelmingly agree that books and reading can help, with 95% agreeing that characters in books can help their children develop these positive qualities. A similar percentage of parents with children under five also agree.

A focus on character-building has increased since our last survey. In this edition, parents are more likely to want characters who:

- Can be role models to their children (50%, up nine points from 2016),
- Overcome challenges (47%, up six points),
- Help kids understand people who are not like them (37%, up nine points), and
- Break stereotypes (24%, up seven points) *(see Figure 5).*

Parents want more from characters in books

Figure 5. Percentage of parents who say they want each, compared to 2016



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

As one mom with a six-year-old daughter shared, *"Not everyone is exactly the same as my child. So a vast selection of characters helps her understand more about the world around her."* A mother of an 11-year-old boy added, *"Reading gives them confidence, curiosity, knowledge and expands their imagination."*

FREQUENT READERS WANT EVEN MORE FROM BOOKS AND CHARACTERS

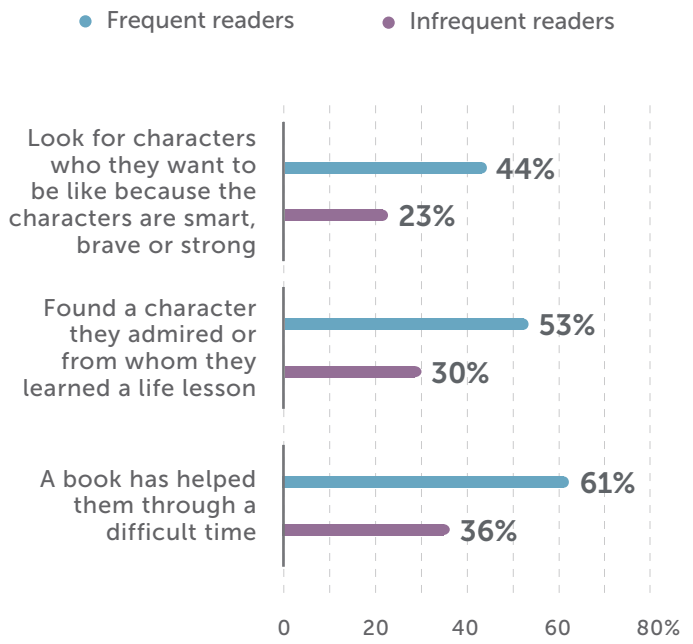
The Kids & Family Reading Report punctuates that the more kids read, the more likely it is that the social-emotional side of literacy is reflected in their views on books and characters.

Frequent readers are more likely to say that reading fiction and nonfiction is a way to help them understand the world. They are also more likely to say that reading makes it easier to talk about and understand things that are happening in the world. Frequent readers are also more apt to seek out books with characters who they want to be like because the characters are smart, brave or strong; and perhaps due to this, they are more likely to say there is a character they have admired or learned a lot from. In the same vein, they more often say a book has helped them through a difficult time *(see Figure 6).*

Frequent readers ages 9–17 are more likely to say it is extremely or very important to them that the books they read include diversity (50% vs. 23% among infrequent readers). They are also more likely to define diversity in books as including people and experiences different than their own (57% vs. 49%), various settings and living situations (52% vs. 43%), people of color (36% vs. 26%) and differently-abled people (34% vs. 26%).

Frequent readers get more from books

Figure 6. Percentage of kids who agree with each statement



Base: Children ages 6–17

As one 17-year-old male, frequent reader shared, *"I love to read books where I can either educate myself and learn more about someone's culture/ traditions/ ethnicity, or relate to characters I have major things in common with. It gives you someone to connect with even though they can be fictional characters."*

In my earlier career as a classroom teacher, principal and then administrator, and now in my travels visiting hundreds of schools annually as the Chief Academic Officer for Scholastic Education, I've seen how meaningful it is when a child connects with a book. A relationship with reading nurtures a sense of curiosity, develops empathy, enhances academic skills and, perhaps most importantly, creates an understanding among kids that both fiction and real-life stories are available to them to learn from and help decipher their own experience when they need it. This is so vital that we must take active roles to ensure every kid becomes a reader.

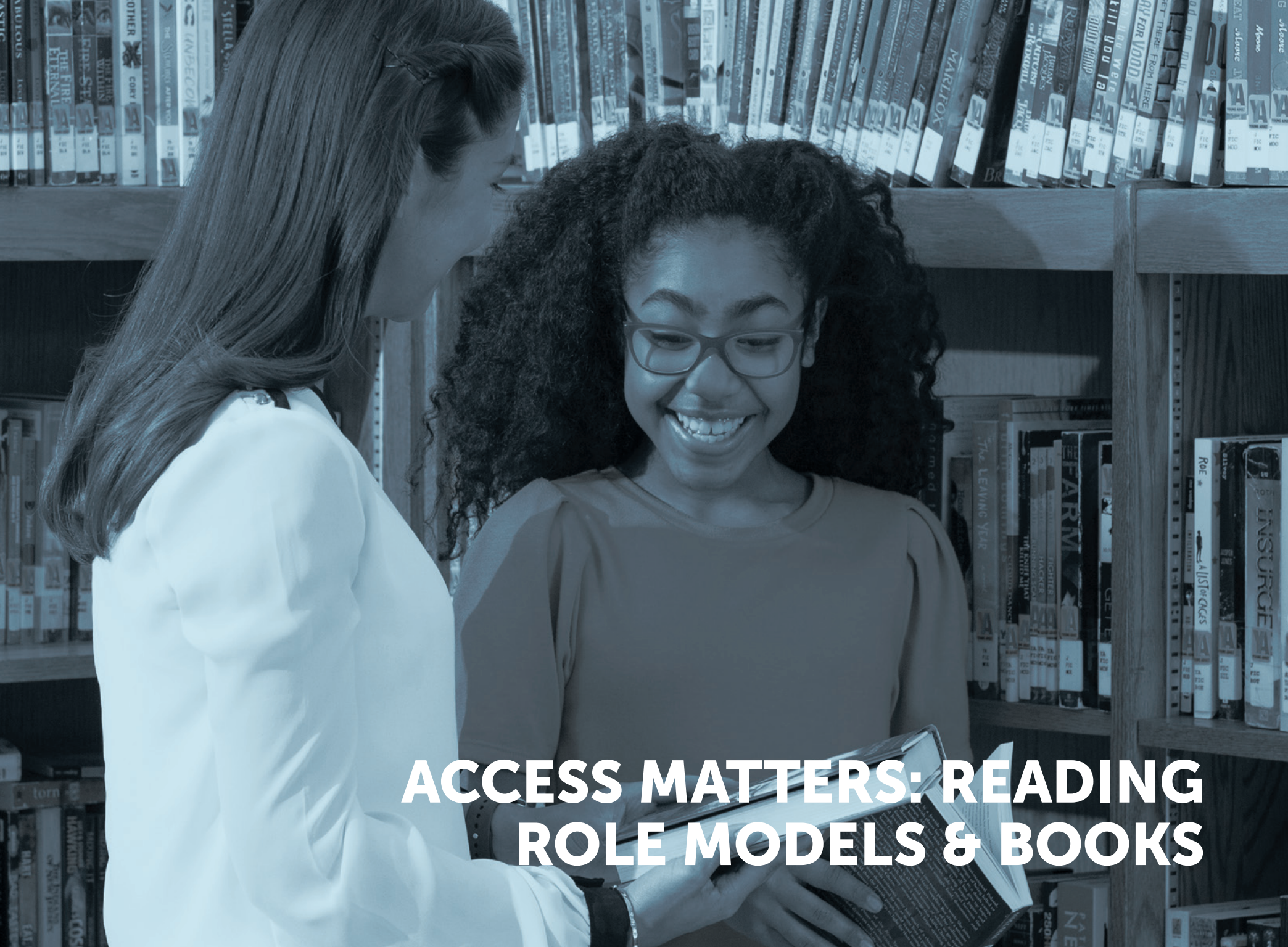
You don't have to be a literacy or education expert to know that children are carefully observing those around them. The research punctuates that reading role models are influential, showing us the more there are in a child's life, the more likely a child is to be a frequent reader. In turn, frequent readers gain greater access to the personal and academic benefits reading provides earlier and more often.

This edition of the *Kids & Family Reading Report* also gives us important touchpoints around access to books, and insight into why children might lose interest in reading as they age. Around age nine, the data show an increase in the number of both parents and kids who say it's difficult to find books the child likes. At this same stage, kids find themselves with more choices to make as the variety of book formats available for their age and reading level increases, as does the volume and diversity of characters and storylines. This combination—knowing what they want in books but not being able to find it—is likely a contributing factor to the overall decrease in engagement with reading that's evident as children move through adolescence. Of course, great books are futile if children are unable to access them and in every edition of this report, we see that regardless of age, gender or background, the power of choice reigns. Are there compelling, engaging books in all the places all kids need them to be? As we'll see from this research, access to books both at home and in school remains an inequity among our kids.

Parents, grandparents, older siblings, teachers, principals—everyone in a child's life—can be a reading role model. It's up to us all to provide the opportunity for choice, be readers ourselves, ask and answer questions about what a child is reading, read aloud together (regardless of age!), and more. When a child knows that the people surrounding them value reading, we will have a greater culture of literacy in our homes and in our schools.

MICHAEL HAGGEN

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER, SCHOLASTIC EDUCATION



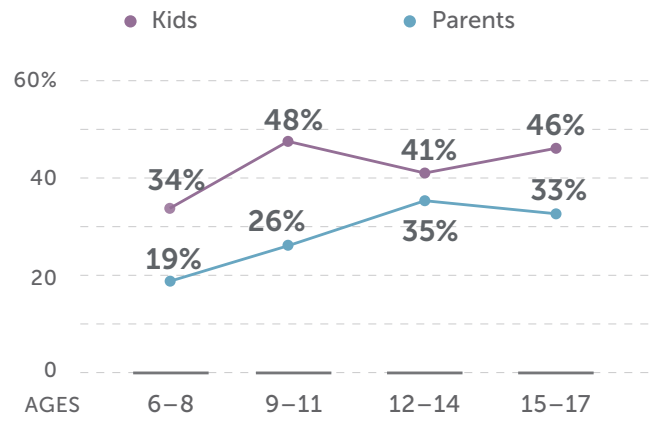
ACCESS MATTERS: READING ROLE MODELS & BOOKS

KIDS NEED HELP FINDING BOOKS

Four in 10 kids agree (42%) that they have trouble finding books that they like. This is far higher at 59% among infrequent readers and is true of roughly half of kids by age nine. Similarly, nearly one in three parents (28%) agree that their child has trouble finding books. This percentage increases among parents of infrequent readers and among parents of children older than age eight. Despite a similarity in trend lines, there is a disconnect between parents and kids on this challenge: one-third fewer parents than children think their child has trouble finding books *(see Figure 1)*.

Kids agree they have trouble finding books; parents underestimate this challenge

Figure 1. Percentage of kids and parents who agree with the statement "I/My child have/has trouble finding books that I/he/she likes"



Base: Children ages 6–17; Parents with kids ages 6–17

FREQUENT READERS HAVE MORE READING ROLE MODELS

Parents of frequent readers are far more likely to consider reading books for fun important compared to parents of infrequent readers (95% vs. 70%). The difference is most notable when comparing parents who agree reading books for fun is extremely important (70% vs. 27%). Parents of frequent readers are also more likely to be frequent readers themselves (39% vs. 16%).

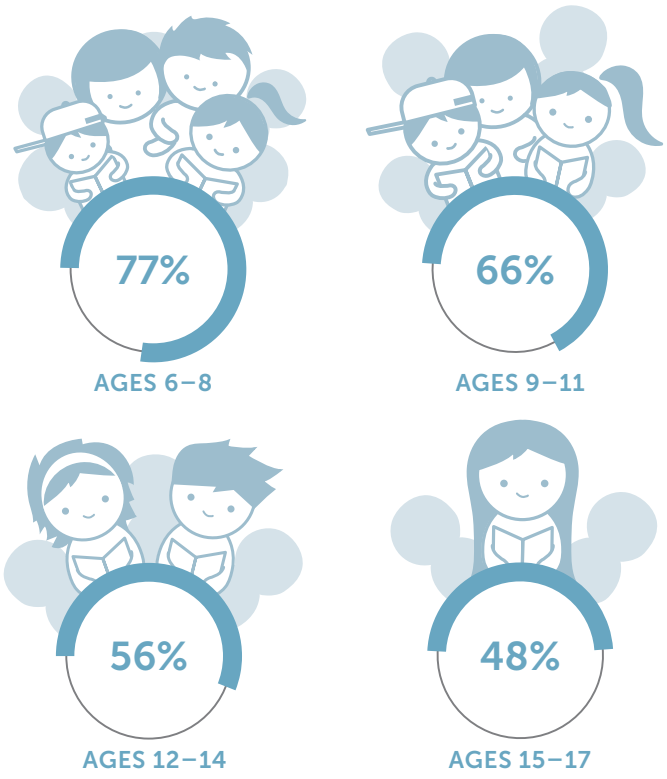
Frequent readers are also more likely to be surrounded by people who they perceive to enjoy reading: 82% say a lot or nearly everyone they know enjoys reading, versus infrequent readers at 34%. And much like reading frequency decreases as children age, there's a clear decline in the number of kids who say this: 77% of kids ages 6–8 say a lot or nearly everyone they know enjoys reading, and this drops to 66% among 9–11 year-olds, 56% among 12–14 year-olds, and 48% among 15–17 year-olds *(see Figure 2).*

Reading role models are critical to instilling reading as an integral part of a child's life, and do not need to be limited to parents: frequent readers have more encouragement to read from family members, friends, principals, teachers and school librarians than infrequent readers.

As one mother to an 11-year-old boy told us: *"We're a family of readers, who enjoy a good story. It's important for mental health, intelligence and personal entertainment."*

The number of reading role models decrease as children age

Figure 2. Percentage of kids who say that nearly everyone or a lot of people in their lives enjoy reading



Base: Children ages 6–17

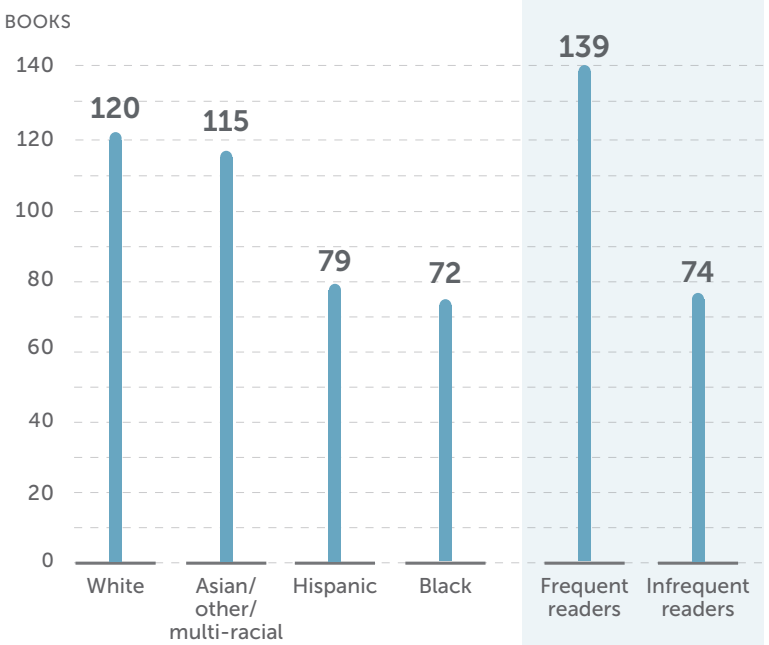
FREQUENT READERS HAVE GREATER ACCESS TO BOOKS AT HOME

Having access to books—whether in or outside the home—is not a reality for all kids. On average, there are 103 books in the home libraries of children ages 6–17, yet this varies widely. Most strikingly, frequent readers have an average of 139 books in their homes vs. 74 in infrequent readers' homes. Similar trends are seen by income as well as race and ethnicity. Families with incomes of $100,000 or more have nearly twice the amount of books than families with less than $35,000 in annual income (125 vs. 73), and Hispanic and Black children have fewer books in their homes than white, multi-racial, Asian or children of other racial backgrounds *(see Figure 3).*

> "I WAS ALWAYS AN AVID READER AND I READ A LOT OF CHAPTER BOOKS TO MY SON WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. I STILL HOPE THAT HE WILL GAIN MORE INTEREST IN READING FOR FUN. MY YOUNGER GIRLS ARE READ TO OFTEN AND MY SEVEN-YEAR-OLD IS BEGINNING TO READ ON HER OWN NOW. IT'S VERY EXCITING TO WATCH THEM ALL GROW AND HAVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF FUN WITH BOOKS."
>
> MOTHER OF A 17-YEAR-OLD BOY

Number of books in the home varies by child ethnicity and reading frequency

Figure 3. Average number of books in the home



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

CLASSROOM & SCHOOL LIBRARIES NEED MORE BOOKS KIDS WANT

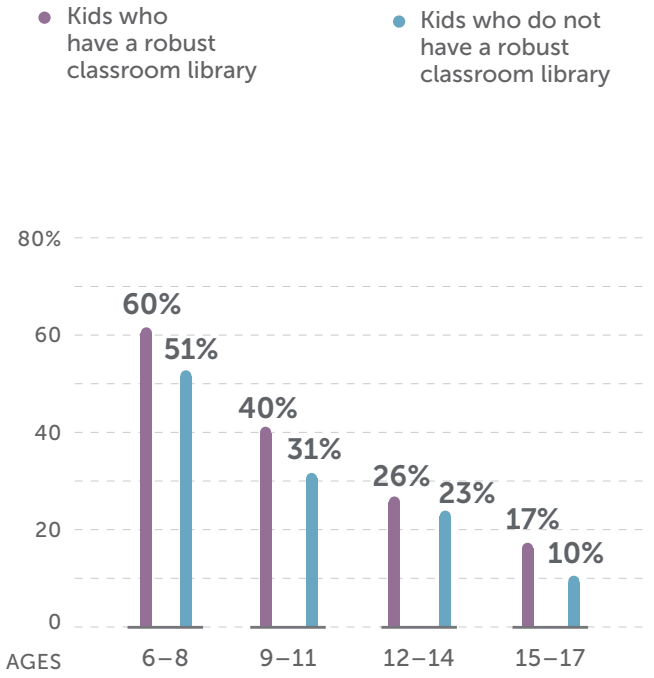
Adding to the challenges some kids face accessing books at home is the reality of book access at school: classroom libraries—the collection of books teachers have inside the classroom, easily accessible by students—are only available for 43% of school-aged children and only one-third say they have a classroom library that has enough of the types of books they'd like to read. A robust classroom library means the inclusion of books that make kids laugh, books with diverse characters and storylines, and books that provide opportunities to explore the world and allow kids to see themselves in the books.

Classroom libraries are critically important, as across ages of children, kids who have robust classroom libraries are more likely to be frequent readers:

- Among 6–8 year-olds, 60% of kids with a robust classroom library are frequent readers, compared to 51% of kids without a robust classroom library.
- Among 9–11 year-olds, this split is 40% vs. 31% and among 12–14 year-olds, the gap narrows to 26% vs. 23%.
- Among 15–17 year-olds, the gap widens once again with 17% of kids with a robust classroom library being frequent readers, compared to only 10% of kids without a robust classroom library (*see Figure 4)*.

Across ages, frequent readers have more robust classroom libraries

Figure 4. Percentage of children who are frequent readers by child's classroom library description



Base: Children ages 6–17

Additionally, while 70% of school-aged children say they have a school library, only 56% say the school library has enough of the books they want to read. Furthermore, it has been well-documented that the number of certified school librarians or library-media specialists per student has been in decline. According to a 2016 analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), data conducted by the National Education Association, only 62% of library-media centers in elementary schools are staffed by at least one full-time state-certified librarian/media center specialist. A 2011 study in *School Library Journal* adds that having library and media specialists leads to higher reading scores among students; meanwhile from the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, we know that frequent readers are twice as likely to receive encouragement to read books for fun from their school librarian (37% vs. 18%).

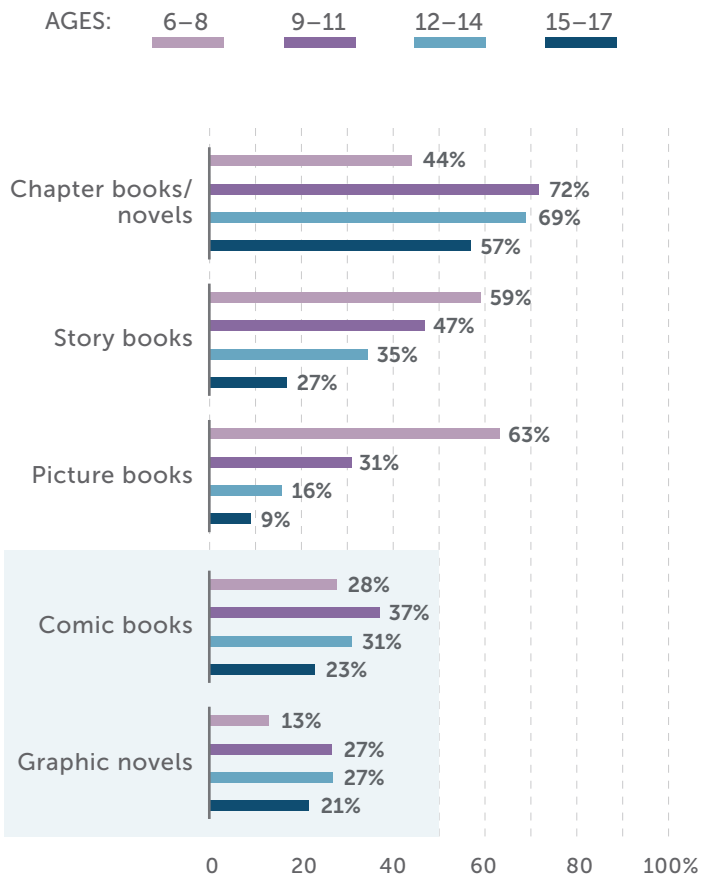
Overall, frequent readers are more likely to cite more sources of books including public libraries as well as school book fairs or clubs.

ACCESS INCLUDES A VARIETY OF GENRES AND FORMATS IN BOOK SELECTION

As kids grow older, their list of interests grows with them, and so when providing children access to books, including a variety of genres and formats is helpful. Overall, chapter books and story books are the most popular formats among kids. Chapter books jump in popularity as children become independent readers whereas the popularity of story books begins to decrease—even as about one in three 12–17 year-olds say they like reading story books.

Book types children like to read the most

Figure 5. Percentage of children who like to read each book type the most



Base: Children ages 6–17

Comic books and graphic novels also begin to capture the attention of kids beginning at age eight, and have a unique appeal as they are nearly equally as popular among frequent, moderate and infrequent readers *(see Figure 5).*

Additionally, considering magazines can be a motivating approach to building a library. Magazines grow in appeal as children age (rising from 9% of 6–8 year-olds to 19% of 12–17 year-olds), are more popular among Black children (22% vs. 14%), and are the only format preferred among a greater percentage of infrequent readers than frequent readers (21% vs. 13%).

Even though kids continue to agree they will always want books printed on paper (69%), there is value in using technology to support a child's growth as a reader. Seventy-one percent agree that technology has made it easier for them to find books they would like to read, and 70% of kids who have listened to an audiobook agree that it has encouraged them to read more.

> "I ALWAYS HAD BOOKS IN MY HOUSE GROWING UP AND I LOVE READING. I MAKE SURE MY CHILD ALWAYS HAS ACCESS TO BOOKS, EBOOKS, AND OTHER DIFFERENT FORMATS OF READING."
>
> MOTHER OF AN 11-YEAR-OLD BOY

WHEN KIDS CHOOSE, KIDS READ

In the 13 years of the *Kids & Family Reading Report,* one thing remains constant no matter what: when kids choose, they read. Across demographics, the majority of kids (89%) agree their favorite books are the ones that they have picked out themselves (*see Figure 6).*

Further, nearly nine in 10 (88%) say they are more likely to finish a book they have picked out themselves and eight in 10 (82%) say they feel a sense of accomplishment when they finish reading a book. Each time these statements have been asked in a *Kids & Family Reading Report,* even among the most infrequent readers, the data punctuate the opportunity that choice can provide for all children.

> **"IF CHILDREN GET TO PICK THE BOOKS AND ARE INTERESTED IN THEM, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO READ THEM, WANT TO READ AND FIND MORE BOOKS THEY ENJOY."**
>
> MOTHER OF A 7-YEAR-OLD BOY

NINE IN 10 KIDS AGREE

Figure 6. Children's agreement with statement

Base: Children ages 6–17

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- The study was managed by YouGov and was fielded between September 6, 2018 and October 4, 2018. The total sample size of 2,758 parents and children includes:
  - 678 parents with children ages 0–5,
  - 1,040 parents with children ages 6–17, plus one child ages 6–17 from the same household.
- Parents of children ages 6–17 completed their survey questions first before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. The survey sample was sourced and recruited by GfK using their nationally representative KnowledgePanel®[1].
- To further ensure proper demographic representation within the sample, final data were weighted according to the following benchmark distributions of children ages 0–17 from the most recent (March 2018) Current Population Survey (CPS) from the U.S. Census Bureau:
  - Child gender within each of six age groups (0–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–11, 12–14, 15–17), region, household income, and child race/ethnicity.

ADDITIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children ages 6–8.
- Children ages 6–8 were not asked some survey questions that involved more sophisticated thinking than is reasonable to ask 6–8 year-olds.
- Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but they were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis

comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.

- Virtually all (99%) of the adults interviewed were the parent or stepparent of the child surveyed. Therefore, throughout this report, we refer to adult respondents as "parents."

- Ethnicity and Race data were collected using the United States Census Bureau approach; where race and ethnicity are two distinct concepts. An individual can select one or more of the following: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

- According to the Census Bureau, ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.

- For the purposes of subgroup analysis, four groups are compared to each other: Hispanics (of any race); Non-Hispanic Whites; Non-Hispanic Blacks; and Non-Hispanic Multiple race, Asian, or Other races. These labels are shortened throughout the report to: Hispanic; White; Black; Multiple, Asian or Other.

- Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

[1] The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The recruitment process employs an address-based sampling methodology from the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS—a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the U.S. As such, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their Internet or telephone status, providing fully representative online samples to the research community. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.
[2] (www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf)

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
6–8	**24%**
9–11	**25%**
12–14	**25%**
15–17	**26%**

GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**51%**
Hispanic	**25%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**

AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
0–2	**49%**
3–5	**51%**

GENDER OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Non-Hispanic White	**50%**
Hispanic	**26%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**5%**

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Married/Living with partner (NET)	**87%**	**84%**
Married	**79%**	**79%**
Living with partner	**9%**	**5%**
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	**7%**	**9%**
Never married	**6%**	**7%**

AGE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Under age 35	**53%**	**19%**
Age 35–44	**40%**	**48%**
Age 45–54	**5%**	**29%**
Age 55+	**2%**	**5%**
Mean	**34.8 years**	**41.5 years**

GENDER OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Male	**45%**	**47%**
Female	**55%**	**53%**
Prefer to self-describe	**0%**	**0%**

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT RESPONDENTS TO CHILD	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Parent (NET)	**99%**	**99%**
Parent	**97%**	**94%**
Stepparent	**1%**	**4%**
Other legal guardian (NET)	**1%**	**1%**
Grandparent	**1%**	**0%**
Other legal guardian	**0%**	**1%**

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION EARNED BY PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
High school graduate or less (NET)	**22%**	**34%**
Less than high school	**3%**	**7%**
High school	**19%**	**26%**
Some college or more (NET)	**78%**	**66%**
Some college	**25%**	**25%**
Bachelor's degree +	**52%**	**41%**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**23%**	**23%**
$35K–$60K	**20%**	**17%**
$60K–$100K	**27%**	**24%**
$100K+	**30%**	**37%**
Mean	**$81K**	**$91K**
Median	**$80K**	**$80K**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Non-Hispanic White	**59%**	**57%**
Hispanic	**17%**	**21%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**8%**	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**	**2%**

APPENDIX C: SUBGROUP SAMPLE SIZES

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total	**1,040**
6–8	**275**
9–11	**241**
12–14	**262**
15–17	**262**
GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Boys ages 6–17	**509**
Girls ages 6–17	**529**
AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS WITHIN GENDER	
Boys ages 6–8	**130**
Girls ages 6–8	**145**
Boys ages 9–11	**117**
Girls ages 9–11	**124**
Boys ages 12–14	**133**
Girls ages 12–14	**127**
Boys ages 15–17	**129**
Girls ages 15–17	**133**
AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS ANSWERED ABOUT	
Parents of children ages 0–17	**1,718**
Parents of children ages 0–5	**678**
Parents of children ages 0–2	**313**
Parents of children ages 3–5	**365**
Parents of children ages 6–17	**1,040**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	KIDS/PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	KIDS/PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**109**	**206**
$35K–$60K	**118**	**161**
$60K–$100K	**203**	**261**
$100K+	**248**	**412**

READING FREQUENCY OF CHILD AGES 6–17	
Frequent readers (read books for fun 5–7 days a week)	**339**
Moderately frequent readers (read books for fun 1–4 days a week)	**410**
Infrequent readers (read books for fun less than 1 day a week)	**289**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**596**
Hispanic	**244**
Non-Hispanic Black	**100**
Non-Hispanic, Other, Multiple Races	**100**

Finding Their Story is the second installment of the Scholastic *Kids & Family Reading Report™: 7th Edition*, and explores attitudes and behaviors around reading books for fun, the latest trends in children's reading habits, what both kids and parents want in books, and the importance of book access. Additional installments of the report examine the rise of read-aloud and summer reading.

scholastic.com/readingreport

SCHOLASTIC

KIDS & FAMILY READING REPORT

7TH EDITION

THE RISE OF READ-ALOUD

YouGov

The power of read-aloud is breaking through and we could not be more excited about it. Compelling research from both the education and medical fields has shown us its importance for parent-child bonding as well as language and literacy development. Families are also telling us it is a deeply profound opportunity to connect in essential ways with children, creating nurturing spaces for them and ways to talk and think together.

The latest *Kids & Family Reading Report™* shows us that the percentage of parents reading aloud during a child's first three months is up nearly 50% since 2014. And the number of 6–8 year-olds being read aloud to 5–7 days a week is up seven points since 2016. Reason to celebrate! Yet, there is always more work to be done. While a majority of five-year-olds are read aloud to 5–7 days a week, this percentage decreases dramatically at age six and beyond. This outcome shows us we have to grow the message that reading to children is powerful at all ages. It never stops being important and having great impact upon the life of a child.

It's undeniable that it is hard to fit everything needed to raise a child into a single day, or even week. But I urge you, parents, grandparents, caregivers and educators, to look closely at this powerful data and to see the opportunities that will open up for the child in your life. Parents tell us they are incorporating read-aloud moments into routines, using them at impromptu times throughout the day, reading aloud to foster quiet time or as a part of an already boisterous playtime. And while the study shows that it is still the mother who reads aloud most often to her children, let's make a new commitment—as dads, as men, as grandfathers, as siblings—to read more often to the children in our homes and in our care.

The beautiful thing about the read-aloud is how it can be tailored to the lifestyles and preferences of families and caregivers. Everyone can join together around the read-aloud to create a sense of well-being and mutual care. It is a prescription for lifelong success for the child and a dose of deep well-being for the family.

PAM ALLYN

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, INNOVATION & DEVELOPMENT, SCHOLASTIC EDUCATION

MORE PARENTS ARE READING ALOUD TO THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN

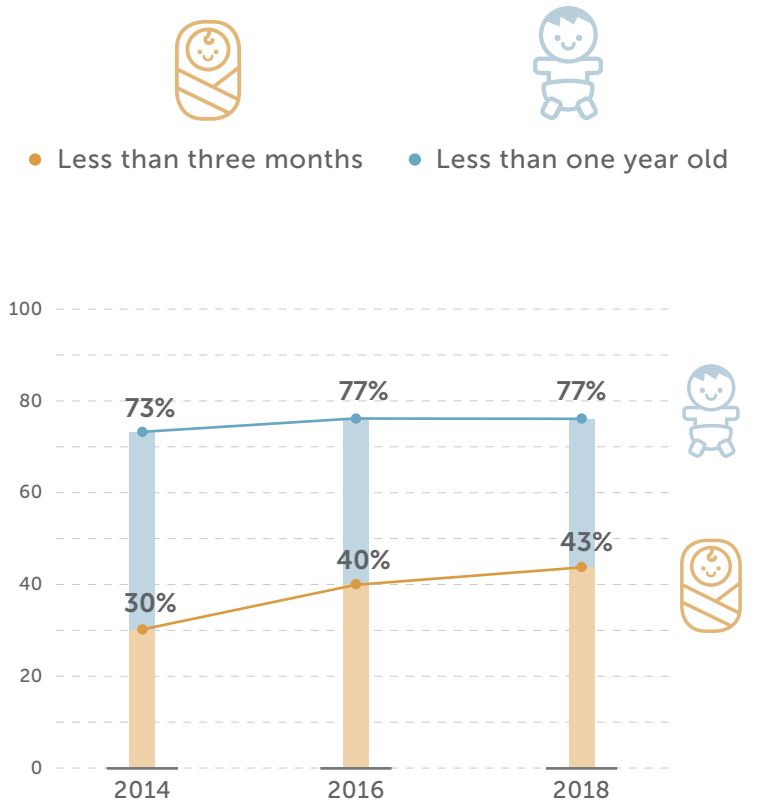
The *Kids & Family Reading Report™* first created a benchmark of data around family read-aloud habits in 2014. This was the same year the American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidelines encouraging parents to read to their children beginning at birth, saying it enhances parent-child bonding and prepares babies' brains for language and literacy skills.

Overall, 30% of parents with children ages five and under in the 2014 study reported reading aloud to their child before the age of three months, and 73% reported doing so before their child's first birthday. Since then, the percentage who say their child was read to before the age of three months is up nearly 50%, with 43% saying their child was read to essentially from birth. Plus, 77% of parents with children ages five and under say read-aloud time started before their child turned one *(see Figure 1)*.

> "MY MOM AND DAD SIT AND WE READ TOGETHER. WE SPEND TIME TOGETHER READING THE BOOKS AND LAUGHING AND TALKING."
>
> 8-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Age of child when reading books aloud at home started

Figure 1. Percentage of parents who say reading books aloud to child at home started when child was less than three months and less than one year old.



Base: Parents of children ages 0–5

THE FAMILY READ-ALOUD EXPERIENCE IS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE

More than 80% of both kids and parents across all income levels and child's age love or like read-aloud time a lot. And among children ages 6–8 and their parents, love for read-aloud time is up eight and nine points, respectively, since 2016.

Why is read-aloud time loved so much? Parents and children say it is because it is a special time with each other *(see Figure 2).* And this feeling stays with children as they grow older, as a 17-year-old boy shared: "*It was quality one-on-one time with my parents and I have special memories of picking out the books that they would read with me*."

READING ALOUD IS A PARTNERSHIP

Taking a closer look at families' habits during read-aloud time, this research reveals it is a highly interactive experience—it's a partnership. Children choose books, kids and parents ask questions of each other, turn pages and punctuate the experience with sound effects. This interactivity fuels the child-parent bond that children express when asked to describe why they love(d) read-aloud time: "*My mom and dad sit and we read together. We spend time together reading the books and laughing and talking,*" an 8-year-old girl explained *(see Figure 3)*.

Why is read-aloud time loved so much?

Figure 2. Parents' and children's views on read-aloud

Parents

86%

of parents who read or have read aloud to their child **love(d) or like(d) it a lot ***

92%

of parents say it is/was **a special time with each other ***

* Parents of children ages 0–14 who read or have read aloud to their child

Children

83%

of children who are or have been read aloud to **love(d) or like(d) it a lot ****

85%

of children say it is/was **a special time with each other ****

** Children ages 6–14 who are or have been read aloud to

It is interesting to note, though there is not a clear causal relationship, that kids ages 6–11 who actively participate in read-aloud time by asking questions or making funny noises/sound effects are more likely than other children to be frequent readers.

INTERACTIVITY DURING READ-ALOUD STARTS YOUNG

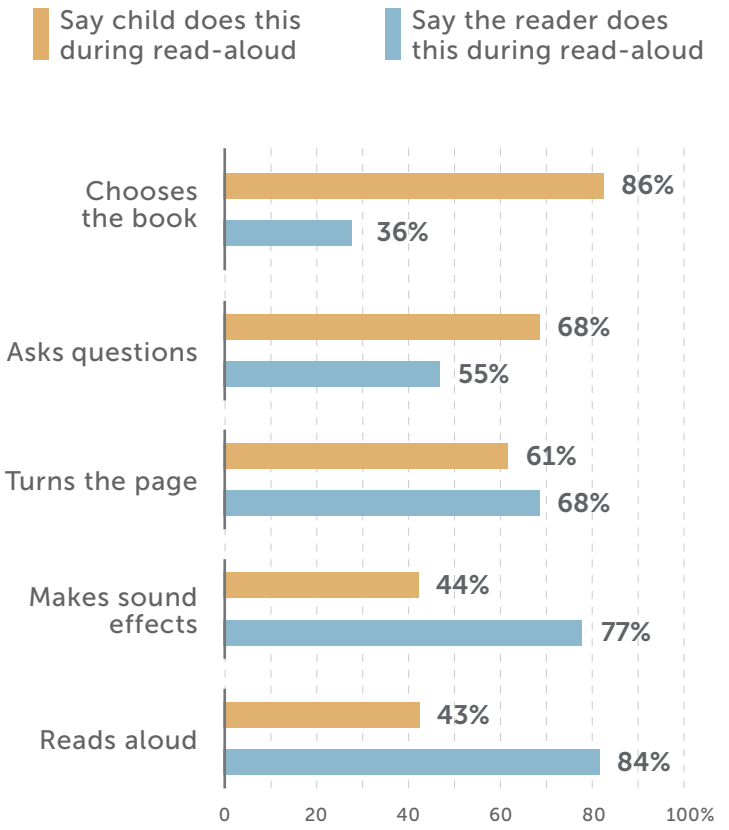
Eighty-five percent of children ask questions during read-aloud by the time they are eight, with 72% of parents asking questions when reading aloud to babies and toddlers ages two and under. About four in 10 children across age groups make sound effects and funny noises: about eight in 10 parents of kids ages 0–8 do this, and even six in 10 parents of 9–11 year-olds continue to do so. Additionally, book choice starts early with 66% of parents of 0–2 year-olds saying their child picks the books during read-aloud time, increasing to over 90% of children ages 3–11.

READ-ALOUD FREQUENCY IS ON THE RISE

Overall, 55% of children ages 0–5 are read books aloud at home at least five days a week, with 37% read to daily. And some of these children (52%) are read to twice a day or more. The data also show an encouraging increase in the number of 6–8-year-olds being read aloud to compared to 2016 (from 38% to 45%).

Roles played during read-aloud time

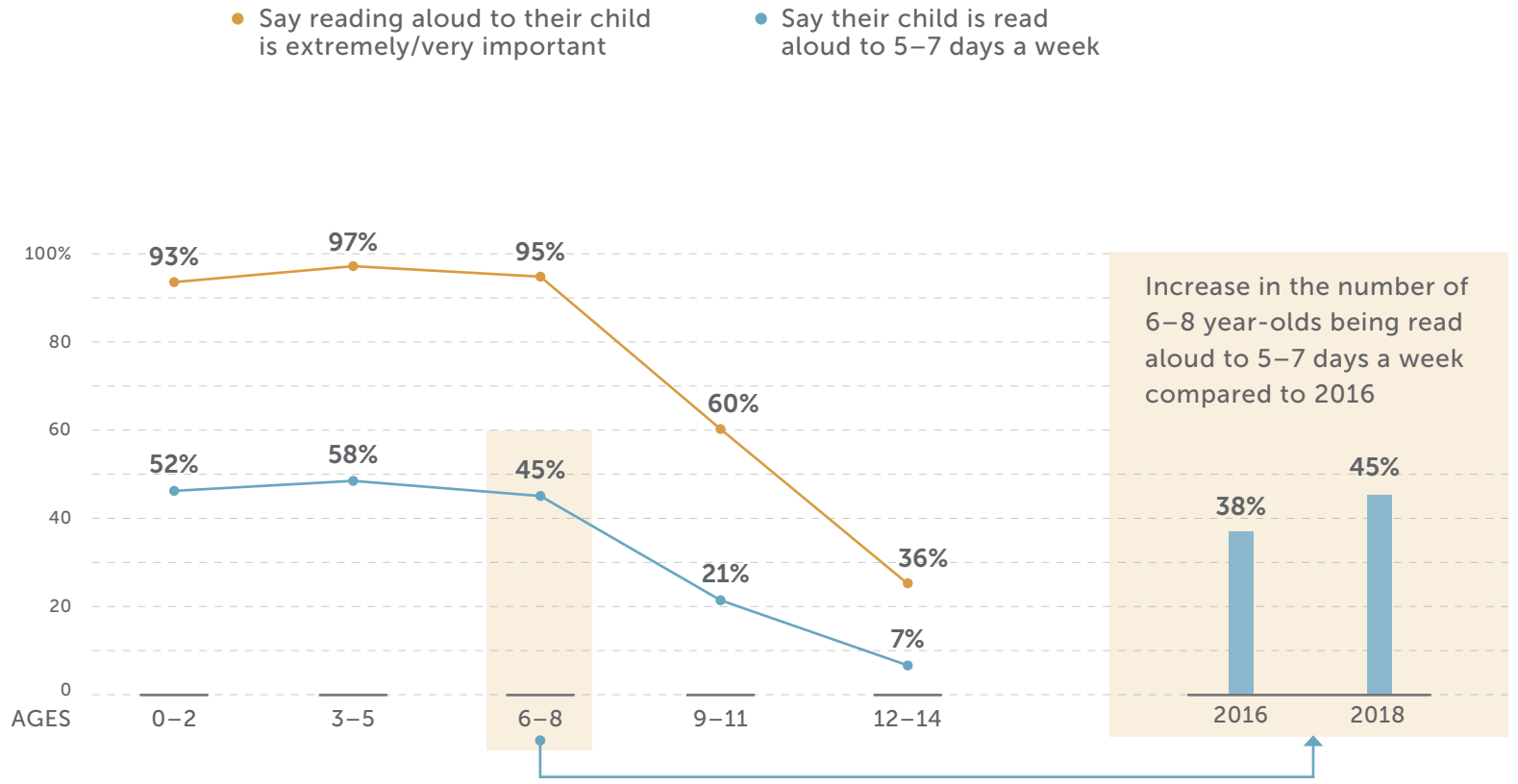
Figure 3. Percentage of parents who...



Base: Parents of children ages 0–11 who are currently read aloud to

Reading aloud at home: importance and frequency

Figure 4. Percentage of parents who...



Base: Parents of children ages 0–14

YET, READ-ALOUD FREQUENCY DIMINISHES RAPIDLY AS CHILDREN GROW OLDER

Read-aloud time is unquestionably a beloved and important family event. We also know from previous analysis through the *Kids & Family Reading Report* that both being read aloud to 5–7 days a week before kindergarten and continuing this habit are key factors in predicting whether or not children ages 6–11 will be frequent readers.

And yet, reading aloud peaks at age five. While a majority of families read aloud 5–7 days a week before a child enters kindergarten (55%), this percentage begins to decline dramatically with each additional year of age. This decrease is closely mirrored by parents' view on the importance of reading aloud as children grow older *(see Figure 4)*. When asked why read-aloud decreases or stops, parents most commonly cite the fact that children can read on their own. For many kids, becoming an independent reader corresponds with the first major decline in read-aloud frequency among the 6–8 age group.

The data also display a disparity among lower- and higher-income households. Lower-income families with children ages eight and under read aloud less frequently; 39% among families with household incomes less than $35,000 and 62% among families with incomes of $100,000 or more. Lower-income families with kids ages five and under are also less likely, at 46% compared to about seven in 10, to have received information on the importance of reading aloud from birth when their children were babies.

HOW TO MAKE READ ALOUD FIT IN, REGARDLESS OF AGE

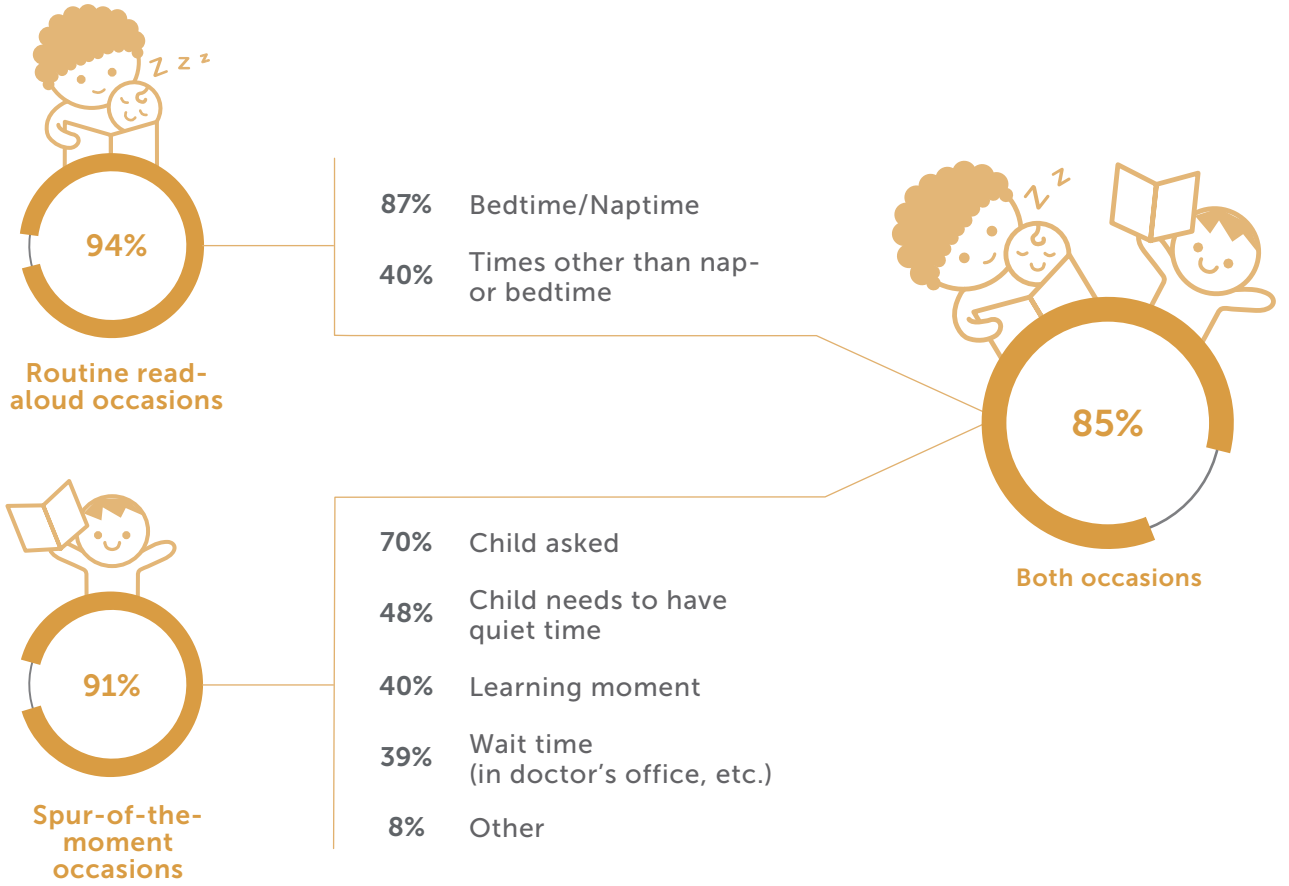
Among parents of children ages 0–8 who are read aloud to, 94% include this activity as part of a routine and 91% say it is a spur-of-the-moment activity. Eighty-five percent do both. Routines predominantly include bed- and naptime but also playtime, bath time or meal time. Impromptu read-alouds center on using books to respond to a child's wants and needs, such as learning moments and quiet time *(see Figure 5)*. Also, while more moms read to their 0–11 year-olds than dads (93% compared to 79%), two-thirds of parents (66%) say the read-aloud experience includes more than just the reader and the child, most commonly the child's other parent and/or siblings.

One 17-year-old girl noted, "it reaffirms the importance of reading and helped bring me closer to my parents," punctuating that reading aloud is a tool for family bonding, inspiration, and education.

> **"I HAVE SPECIAL MEMORIES OF PICKING OUT THE BOOKS THAT THEY WOULD READ WITH ME. IT WAS QUALITY ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH MY PARENTS."**
>
> 17-YEAR-OLD BOY

Read-Aloud Occasions

Figure 5. Parents' characterization of when and where read-aloud time takes place



Base: Parents of children ages 0–8 who are currently read aloud to

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- The study was managed by YouGov and was fielded between September 6, 2018 and October 4, 2018. The total sample size of 2,758 parents and children includes:
  - 678 parents with children ages 0–5,
  - 1,040 parents with children ages 6–17, plus one child ages 6–17 from the same household.
- Parents of children ages 6–17 completed their survey questions first before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. The survey sample was sourced and recruited by GfK using their nationally representative KnowledgePanel®[1].
- To further ensure proper demographic representation within the sample, final data were weighted according to the following benchmark distributions of children ages 0–17 from the most recent (March 2018) Current Population Survey (CPS) from the U.S. Census Bureau:
  - Child gender within each of six age groups (0–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–11, 12–14, 15–17), region, household income, and child race/ethnicity.

ADDITIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children ages 6–8.
- Children ages 6–8 were not asked some survey questions that involved more sophisticated thinking than is reasonable to ask 6–8 year-olds.
- Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but they were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis

comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.

- Virtually all (99%) of the adults interviewed were the parent or stepparent of the child surveyed. Therefore, throughout this report, we refer to adult respondents as "parents."

- Ethnicity and Race data were collected using the United States Census Bureau approach; where race and ethnicity are two distinct concepts. An individual can select one or more of the following: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

- According to the Census Bureau, ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.

- For the purposes of subgroup analysis, four groups are compared to each other: Hispanics (of any race); Non-Hispanic Whites; Non-Hispanic Blacks; and Non-Hispanic Multiple race, Asian, or Other races. These labels are shortened throughout the report to: Hispanic; White; Black; Multiple, Asian or Other.

- Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

[1] The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The recruitment process employs an address-based sampling methodology from the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS—a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the U.S. As such, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their Internet or telephone status, providing fully representative online samples to the research community. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.
[2] (www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf)

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
6–8	**24%**
9–11	**25%**
12–14	**25%**
15–17	**26%**

GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**51%**
Hispanic	**25%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**

AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
0–2	**49%**
3–5	**51%**

GENDER OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Non-Hispanic White	**50%**
Hispanic	**26%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**5%**

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Married/Living with partner (NET)	**87%**	**84%**
Married	**79%**	**79%**
Living with partner	**9%**	**5%**
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	**7%**	**9%**
Never married	**6%**	**7%**

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

AGE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Under age 35	**53%**	**19%**
Age 35–44	**40%**	**48%**
Age 45–54	**5%**	**29%**
Age 55+	**2%**	**5%**
Mean	**34.8 years**	**41.5 years**

GENDER OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Male	**45%**	**47%**
Female	**55%**	**53%**
Prefer to self-describe	**0%**	**0%**

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT RESPONDENTS TO CHILD	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Parent (NET)	**99%**	**99%**
Parent	**97%**	**94%**
Stepparent	**1%**	**4%**
Other legal guardian (NET)	**1%**	**1%**
Grandparent	**1%**	**0%**
Other legal guardian	**0%**	**1%**

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION EARNED BY PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
High school graduate or less (NET)	**22%**	**34%**
Less than high school	**3%**	**7%**
High school	**19%**	**26%**
Some college or more (NET)	**78%**	**66%**
Some college	**25%**	**25%**
Bachelor's degree +	**52%**	**41%**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**23%**	**23%**
$35K–$60K	**20%**	**17%**
$60K–$100K	**27%**	**24%**
$100K+	**30%**	**37%**
Mean	**$81K**	**$91K**
Median	**$80K**	**$80K**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Non-Hispanic White	**59%**	**57%**
Hispanic	**17%**	**21%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**8%**	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**	**2%**

APPENDIX C: SUBGROUP SAMPLE SIZES

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total	**1,040**
6–8	**275**
9–11	**241**
12–14	**262**
15–17	**262**
GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Boys ages 6–17	**509**
Girls ages 6–17	**529**
AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS WITHIN GENDER	
Boys ages 6–8	**130**
Girls ages 6–8	**145**
Boys ages 9–11	**117**
Girls ages 9–11	**124**
Boys ages 12–14	**133**
Girls ages 12–14	**127**
Boys ages 15–17	**129**
Girls ages 15–17	**133**
AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS ANSWERED ABOUT	
Parents of children ages 0–17	**1,718**
Parents of children ages 0–5	**678**
Parents of children ages 0–2	**313**
Parents of children ages 3–5	**365**
Parents of children ages 6–17	**1,040**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	KIDS/PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	KIDS/PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**109**	**206**
$35K–$60K	**118**	**161**
$60K–$100K	**203**	**261**
$100K+	**248**	**412**

READING FREQUENCY OF CHILD AGES 6–17	
Frequent readers (read books for fun 5–7 days a week)	**339**
Moderately frequent readers (read books for fun 1–4 days a week)	**410**
Infrequent readers (read books for fun less than 1 day a week)	**289**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**596**
Hispanic	**244**
Non-Hispanic Black	**100**
Non-Hispanic, Other, Multiple Races	**100**

The Rise of Read-Aloud is one installment of the Scholastic *Kids & Family Reading Report™: 7th Edition*. The additional installments of the report explore attitudes and behaviors around reading books for fun, the latest trends in children's reading habits, what both kids and parents want in books, as well as the importance of book access and summer reading.

scholastic.com/readingreport

SCHOLASTIC

KIDS & FAMILY READING REPORT™

7TH EDITION

THE SUMMER READING IMPERATIVE

YouGov

From my background teaching high school students in New York City and working as a public librarian in New Mexico, to my current role as the corporate librarian at Scholastic, you could say I'm a full-time resident in the world of literacy. It's my job to know a lot about books (and I love it). I have seen the power of books first-hand: the latest book in a graphic novel series devoured standing right in front of the shelf, or a biography of someone's hero never returned because "I need that book, Miss." In order to facilitate moments like these, kids must have our support—not just on paper, but in concrete ways—to find books that capture their attention. Summer presents an opportunity for families and communities to play an active role in ensuring all children can find their story and enjoy the benefits of summer reading.

Let's start with the power of sharing information. Summer reading is critical to student success; it allows kids to seamlessly build upon what they are learning from one year to the next. When kids don't read over the summer, they are at risk of entering the next grade level having lost important momentum and key academic skills from the previous school year over break. This "summer slide," as it is often called, is hyper-present in educators' minds and has a real impact in the classroom. I remember clearly during my first year as a teacher, a mentor explaining that I had to spend the first few weeks reviewing content from the previous year's curriculum before I could start doing the lessons I'd planned for September.

The *Kids & Family Reading Report* shows us there is much more work to be done to increase awareness among parents around the summer slide. Nearly half of parents are still unaware of this phenomenon, and just having this knowledge can make a real difference. The data show that if parents are aware of the summer slide, they and their kids are more engaged in summer reading—how motivating! And there's more good news: the majority of kids say they understand the importance of summer reading—and, better yet, that they really enjoy it.

But there are challenges. The data reveal a troubling increase over the past few years in the percentage of kids across all ages who report reading **zero** books during the summer. Which brings me to the topic of access, especially for historically underserved groups, because access to books is often limited to the academic year. The data show 53% of kids get most of the books they read for fun through schools—so what happens for that majority when school isn't in session? Public libraries and communities can be crucial partners to help close this gap by working with families over the summer.

In my own childhood, my sisters and I embraced the hot and lazy afternoons of summer reading and trading our library finds on the beach, immersing ourselves in the books of newly favorite authors, discovering interesting people and moments in history, and teaching ourselves creative arts and crafts. I hope for every child to have a similar experience. But this can't happen unless we commit as parents, caregivers, educators and community partners to find inventive ways to get books into the hands of every child over the summer—the books *they* want to read. When this happens, a child doesn't just maintain their literacy skills, they try something new—and even have fun doing it.

DEIMOSA WEBBER-BEY

SCHOLASTIC SENIOR LIBRARIAN & MANAGER,

LIBRARY SERVICES

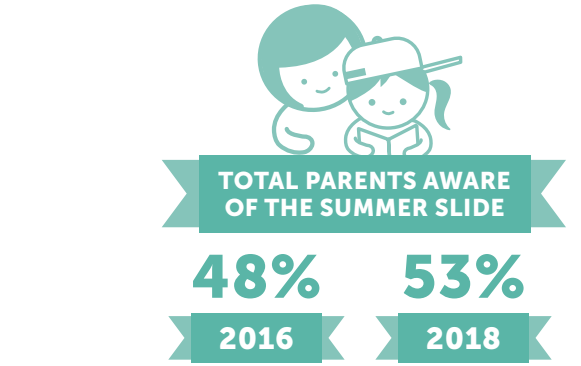
A SUMMER READING AWARENESS GAP FOR PARENTS

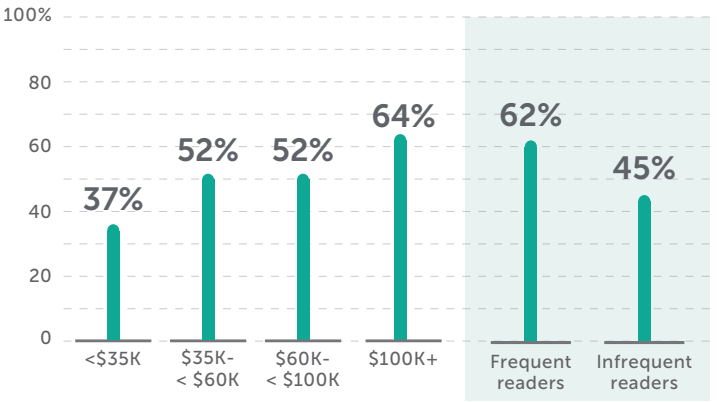
At first glance, parents seem aware of the importance of summer reading, as 94% agree reading over the summer can help their child during the school year. And yet, nearly half of parents with school-age children are unaware of the "summer slide" (47%), the loss of academic skills that occurs when school is not in session and which is attributed largely to the lack of reading. This is of critical importance as the effects of the summer slide are cumulative. Researchers estimate that by the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement[1]. A case can be made that we can begin to address this contributing factor to the reading achievement gap by addressing an information gap. The *Kids & Family Reading Report* reveals that when parents are aware of the summer slide, both children and parents are more engaged in summer reading.

It's encouraging that awareness of the summer slide has increased five points since 2016 (48% vs. 53%). However, there are significant disparities around awareness among certain subsets. Similar to other reading habit trends, parents of frequent readers (kids who read books for fun 5–7 days a week) are far more likely to have the summer slide on their radar than are parents of infrequent readers (kids who read for fun less than one day a week). Lower-income families, as was the case in 2016, remain less likely to be aware *(See figure 1)*. This is of notable concern as the summer slide is a primary contributor to the reading achievement gap between lower- and higher-income students[2]. What's more, out-of-school experiences, particularly unequal summer learning during early formative years, have been shown to account for the majority of achievement differences among socio-economic statuses by the time students reach ninth grade[3]. All heightening a need for greater communication around summer reading for lower-income families.

A "summer slide" awareness gap

Figure 1. Percentage of parents who are aware of the "summer slide" in total and by household income and child's reading frequency





Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

[1] Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Olson, L. S. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72(2), 167–180.; Cooper, H., Charlton, K., Valentine, J. C., & Muhlenbruck, L. (2000). Making the Most of Summer School: A Meta-Analytic and Narrative Review. *Society for Research in Child Development*, vol. 65, no. 1. Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. M. (2003). The impact of summer setback on the reading achievement gap. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85(1), 68–75.
[2] National Summer Learning Association, (2017). State of summer learning: 2017 state policy snapshot.
[3] Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Olson, L. S. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72(2), 167–180.

SUMMER READING TRENDS TO WATCH AMONG KIDS

Most kids know that summer reading provides benefits that extend well past the summer months. Seventy-seven percent agree that reading over the summer will help them during the school year and on average, kids read nine books in the summer of 2018.

Where the significant concern lies, is in the number of kids who do not read any books at all over their summer breaks *(See figure 2a)*. Thirty-two percent of kids ages 15–17 said the number of books they read over the summer was zero, up sharply since 2016 (22%). The trend line among kids ages 9–11 also needs to be watched: the percentage who read zero books over the summer has doubled since 2016 (7% to 14%). Notably, if a parent is aware of the summer slide, their child is less likely to read zero books over the summer (16% vs. 25%).

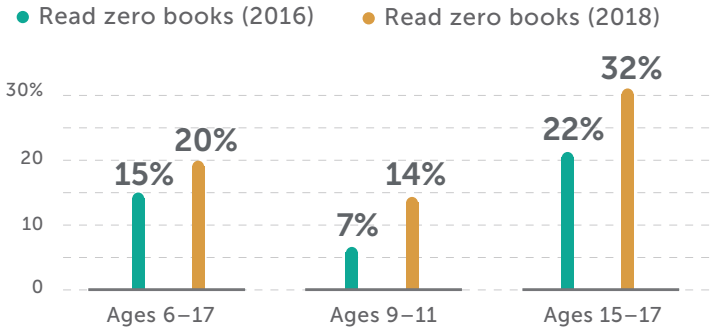
As with many trends found in the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, the number of books read over the summer varies widely by age *(See figure 2b)*: kids ages 6–8 read an average of 19 books; that number drops to nine among 9–11s, six among 12–14s and two among 15–17s. Some of the decline in the number of books read can be attributed to the length of books kids are reading increasing as children grow older. Nonetheless, the trend line is troubling.

Frequent readers are by far the most active readers over the summer months, reading an average of 21 books vs. only two among infrequent readers. This difference is largely due to the high percentage of infrequent readers who do not read any books at all during the summer: 46% of infrequent readers ages 6–11 and 52% ages 12–17 read zero books over the summer.

And knowing that frequent readers are far more likely than infrequent readers to have books in their homes (139 vs. 74 books on average), access during the summer is undoubtedly a factor.

More kids read zero books over the summer

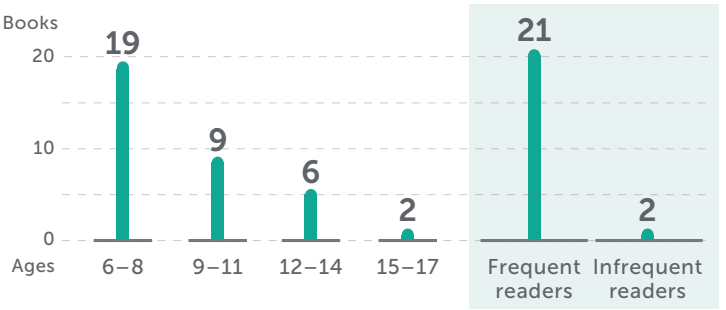
Figure 2a. Percentage of children who read zero books over the summer, compared with 2016



Base: Children ages 6–17

Number of books read over the summer varies by age and by reading frequency

Figure 2b. Average number of books read over the summer



Base: Children ages 6–17

BOOK ACCESS DIMINISHES DURING THE SUMMER

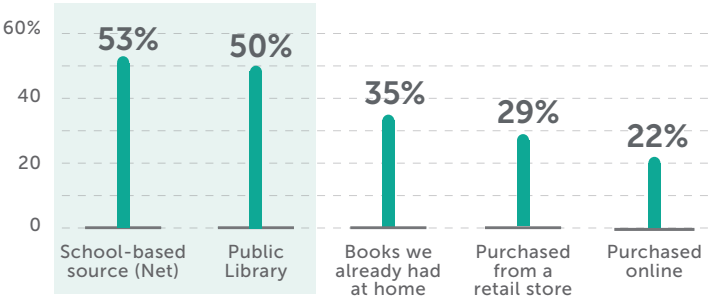
Kids identify schools and public libraries as the main sources for most of the books they read for fun. With 53% of kids getting access to books through school and 50% getting them from the public library, it is no surprise that the vast majority of parents believe that every child needs to have a school library (95%) and every community needs to have a public library (95%) *(See figure 3a/b).* Even a new mother shared her appreciation for libraries, saying, *"I want to borrow books from the library and attend story hour and learning events when she is older."* Yet in most cases, school-related points of access are the least available over the summer. Research on book deserts—areas with a stark lack of access to print materials—showed in the studied urban areas that the summer months drastically limit book access in high-poverty neighborhoods[4].

The *Teacher & Principal School Report*[5], a companion study to the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, found that the vast majority (96%) of teachers, principals and school librarians say that providing year-round access to books at home is important to enhancing student achievement. An example of how taking an active role in this can lead to results was displayed recently in two district-wide initiatives that provided books and family literacy nights to K–6 students and families over the summer. Research conducted by Scholastic Research & Validation revealed that this approach was associated with students maintaining or increasing literacy skills while school was out. Specifically, 78% of students in one district maintained or increased their reading levels from spring to fall; in the second district fewer struggling readers (21% vs. 30%) and fewer advanced readers (34% vs. 43%) experienced summer reading loss when they had access to these resources before the start of summer[6].

[4]Neuman, S. B., & Moland, N. (2019). Book Deserts: The Consequences of Income Segregation on Children's Access to Print. *Urban Education*, 54(1), 126–147
[5]scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport
[6]Scholastic Research & Validation. (2018). *Empowering students and families to address summer reading loss in Greenville, SC and Stoughton, MA 2017*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

Schools and public libraries are main sources of books for kids

Figure 3a. Percentage of kids who get most of the books they read for fun from each source



Base: Children ages 6–17

Parents show strong support for public and school libraries

Figure 3b. Parents' agreement with statement

Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES CAN BE A BRIDGE FOR SUMMER READING

Bringing schools, communities and families together is a powerful combination to support summer reading. First and foremost, schools are the top source of information on the summer slide, with 59% of parents who are aware of the summer slide citing their child's teacher, or school in general, as providing information on the topic. News media is the number two source, coming in at a distant 24%.

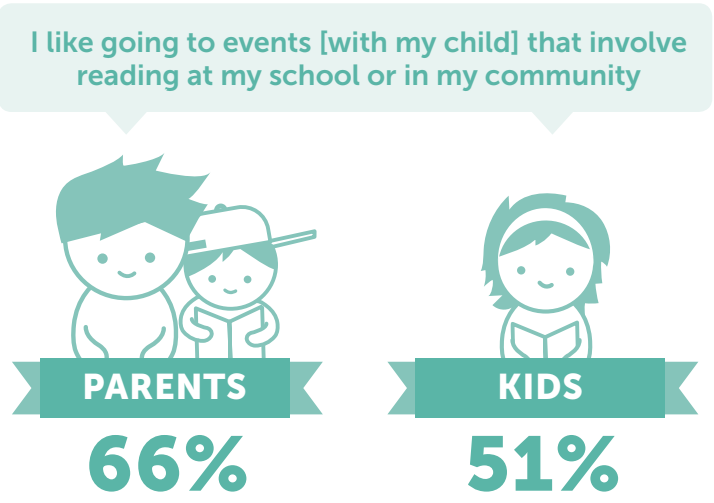
In the Scholastic Research & Validation research referenced earlier[7], providing K–6 students and their families with increased access to books and learning opportunities over the summer displayed positive impacts among families. The research highlighted that in the two participating districts, 95% and 85% of families agreed that the Family Reading Night was valuable in learning how to support their children's reading. Additional supportive findings include: 60% of families agree they learned ways to talk to their children about books and 94% of families agree the Family Reading Night was a great way to connect families and schools.

Yet only some families are benefiting from school and community literacy events. Data from the *Kids & Family Reading Report* reveal about four in 10 (39%) parents say their school or community has hosted a reading event in the past few years and two in three of these parents say the event was attended by their child (64%) or themselves (37%). Many of these events likely take place during the school year, diminishing parents' access to support around literacy over the summer. Since half of kids and two-thirds of parents agree that they like going to events involving reading *(See figure 4)*, communities have an opportunity to come together to help foster summer reading. Similar to the trends observed in reading frequency, enjoyment and importance in the *Kids*

[7]Scholastic Research & Validation. (2018). *Empowering students and families to address summer reading loss in Greenville, SC and Stoughton, MA 2017.* New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

Families enjoy literacy events

Figure 4. Parent and child agreement with statement

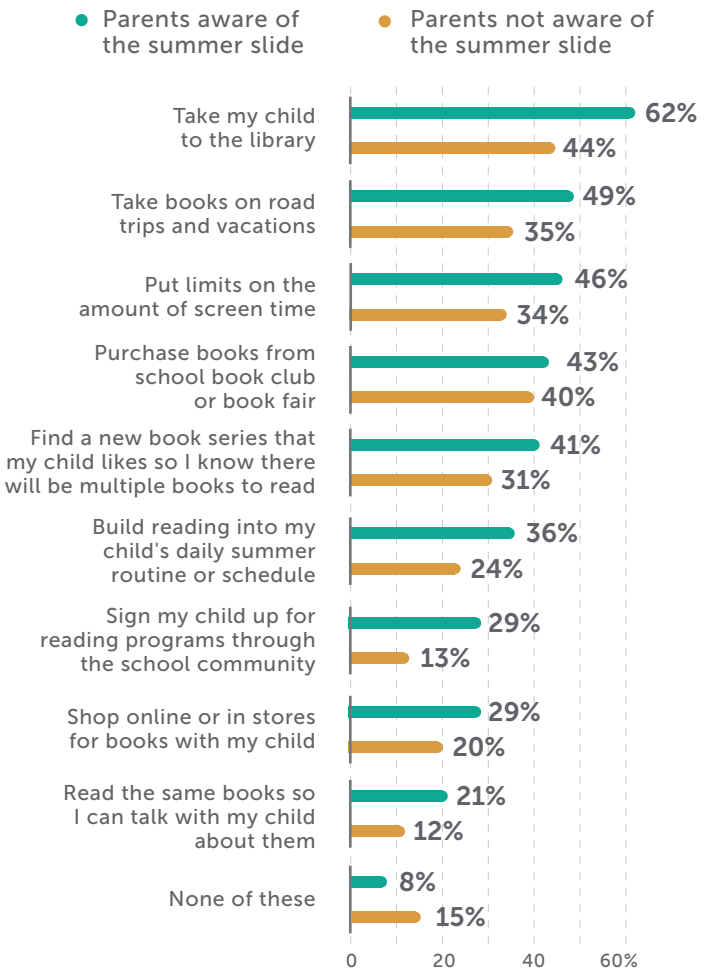


Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17; Children ages 6–17

> "I ENJOY LOSING MYSELF IN A GOOD BOOK. I LOVE VISITING FARAWAY LANDS AND MEETING CHARACTERS."
>
> 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Parents aware of the summer slide employ more strategies to encourage summer reading

Figure 5. Percentage of parents who encourage summer reading in each way, by awareness of the summer slide



Base: Parents with kids ages 6–17

& Family Reading Report: Finding Their Story, enjoyment of these events diminishes as kids age, from a high of 72% among children ages 6–8 to a low of 29% among children ages 15–17. Parent interest, however, remains relatively high across children's ages at 75% among parents of kids ages 6–8 and about six in 10 among parents of both 12–14 and 15–17 year-olds.

AT HOME, PARENTS FOCUS ON BOOK ACCESS TO SUPPORT SUMMER READING

To better understand reading behavior among kids and their parents when school is out, the *Kids & Family Reading Report* probed the different strategies parents use to encourage summer reading at home. Notably, the top three all centered on creating book access and choice for the child: taking trips to public libraries ranked first (54%), followed by ordering from school book clubs or book fairs (42%) and taking books on road trips or vacations (42%). Parents also reported putting limits on screen time (40%), finding new book series (36%) and purposefully making reading part of the summertime daily routine (30%), with fairly significant variation across ages of children. As one 14-year-old boy noted, "*Reading for fun is a habit now. I enjoy reading and learning about different things. This summer I read less, because of football, but my mom made sure we went to the library before practice.*"

Parents who are aware of the summer slide are more likely to engage in nearly all activities to encourage their children to read while school is out *(See figure 5)*. And a peer-reviewed study—published by the American Library Association in 2017 and centered on the effect of summer program participation among fourth grade students in North Carolina—found that if parents understand the summer slide, they prioritize transportation to the library to facilitate summer reading[8].

[8]Becnel, K., Moeller, R. A., & Matzen, N. J. (2017). "Somebody Signed Me Up": North Carolina Fourth-Graders' Perceptions of Summer Reading Programs. *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children*, 15(3), 3–8.

THE POWER OF CHOICE DRIVES KIDS' ENJOYMENT OF SUMMER READING

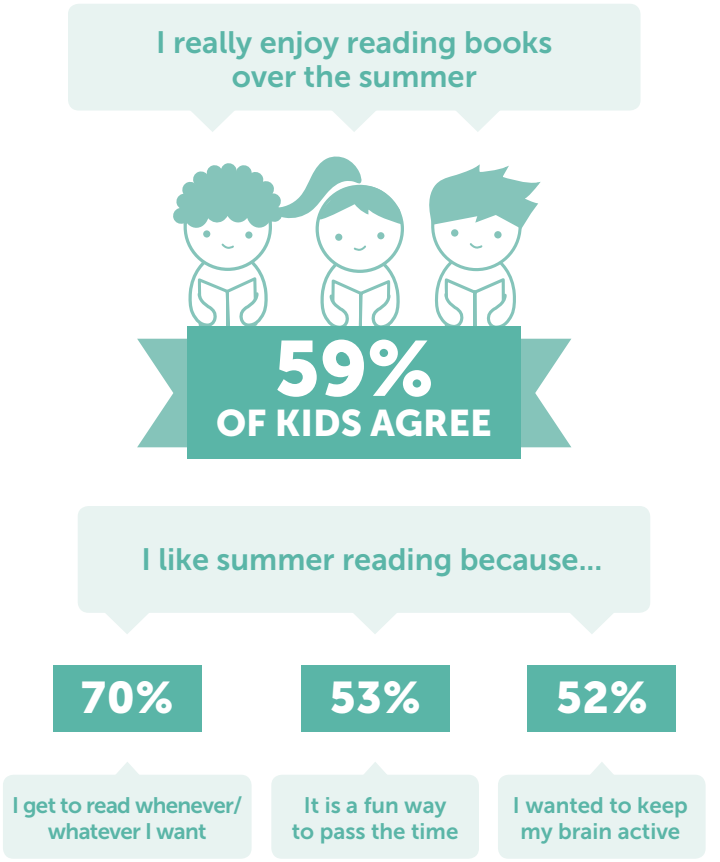
Counter to conventional thought, the view that summer reading is a chore is not shared by a majority of kids today. More than half (59%) of all kids ages 6–17 say "I really enjoy reading books over the summer" *(See figure 6).* Perhaps unsurprisingly, given other patterns observed throughout the findings of the *Kids & Family Reading Report*, younger children and frequent readers are more likely than teens and infrequent readers to enjoy reading books over the summer. Additionally, kids whose parents are aware of the summer slide also feel more positively about summer reading.

When given the opportunity, kids believe participating in a summer reading program prompts them to read more. Twenty-two percent of kids told us that they participated in a summer reading program or contest and 65% said their participation resulted in reading more than they otherwise would have. Yet this opportunity was not afforded to all children: half said they didn't know of any summer reading program in which they could have participated.

Regardless of access to summer reading programs, frequency of reading books for fun, or whether a child is entering their early elementary years or is a rising senior in high school, the top reasons kids enjoy summer reading remain the same: it's about the power to choose their books and read whatever and whenever they want (70%), to have an enjoyable way to pass the time (53%) and, in a nod to the savviness of kids, they want to keep their brains active (52%), and they know reading books can deliver on this.

Many kids enjoy summer reading because of choice

Figure 6. Percentage of kids who agree with statement and selected reasons why



Base: Children ages 6–17

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- The study was managed by YouGov and was fielded between September 6, 2018 and October 4, 2018. The total sample size of 2,758 parents and children includes:
  - 678 parents with children ages 0–5,
  - 1,040 parents with children ages 6–17, plus one child ages 6–17 from the same household.
- Parents of children ages 6–17 completed their survey questions first before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. The survey sample was sourced and recruited by GfK using their nationally representative KnowledgePanel®[1].
- To further ensure proper demographic representation within the sample, final data were weighted according to the following benchmark distributions of children ages 0–17 from the most recent (March 2018) Current Population Survey (CPS) from the U.S. Census Bureau:
  - Child gender within each of six age groups (0–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–11, 12–14, 15–17), region, household income, and child race/ethnicity.

ADDITIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children ages 6–8.
- Children ages 6–8 were not asked some survey questions that involved more sophisticated thinking than is reasonable to ask 6–8 year-olds.
- Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but they were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis

comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.

- Virtually all (99%) of the adults interviewed were the parent or stepparent of the child surveyed. Therefore, throughout this report, we refer to adult respondents as "parents."

- Ethnicity and Race data were collected using the United States Census Bureau approach; where race and ethnicity are two distinct concepts. An individual can select one or more of the following: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

- According to the Census Bureau, ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.

- For the purposes of subgroup analysis, four groups are compared to each other: Hispanics (of any race); Non-Hispanic Whites; Non-Hispanic Blacks; and Non-Hispanic Multiple race, Asian, or Other races. These labels are shortened throughout the report to: Hispanic; White; Black; Multiple, Asian or Other.

- Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

[1] The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The recruitment process employs an address-based sampling methodology from the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS—a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the U.S. As such, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their Internet or telephone status, providing fully representative online samples to the research community. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.
[2] (www.census.gov/mso/www/training/pdf/race-ethnicity-onepager.pdf)

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
6–8	**24%**
9–11	**25%**
12–14	**25%**
15–17	**26%**

GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**51%**
Hispanic	**25%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**

AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
0–2	**49%**
3–5	**51%**

GENDER OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Total Boys	**51%**
Total Girls	**49%**
Total Prefer to Describe as (Specify)	**0%**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Non-Hispanic White	**50%**
Hispanic	**26%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**5%**

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Married/Living with partner (NET)	**87%**	**84%**
Married	**79%**	**79%**
Living with partner	**9%**	**5%**
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	**7%**	**9%**
Never married	**6%**	**7%**

AGE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Under age 35	**53%**	**19%**
Age 35–44	**40%**	**48%**
Age 45–54	**5%**	**29%**
Age 55+	**2%**	**5%**
Mean	**34.8 years**	**41.5 years**

GENDER OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Male	**45%**	**47%**
Female	**55%**	**53%**
Prefer to self-describe	**0%**	**0%**

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT RESPONDENTS TO CHILD	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Parent (NET)	**99%**	**99%**
Parent	**97%**	**94%**
Stepparent	**1%**	**4%**
Other legal guardian (NET)	**1%**	**1%**
Grandparent	**1%**	**0%**
Other legal guardian	**0%**	**1%**

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION EARNED BY PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
High school graduate or less (NET)	**22%**	**34%**
Less than high school	**3%**	**7%**
High school	**19%**	**26%**
Some college or more (NET)	**78%**	**66%**
Some college	**25%**	**25%**
Bachelor's degree +	**52%**	**41%**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**23%**	**23%**
$35K–$60K	**20%**	**17%**
$60K–$100K	**27%**	**24%**
$100K+	**30%**	**37%**
Mean	**$81K**	**$91K**
Median	**$80K**	**$80K**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Non-Hispanic White	**59%**	**57%**
Hispanic	**17%**	**21%**
Non-Hispanic Black	**13%**	**14%**
Non-Hispanic, Other	**8%**	**6%**
Non-Hispanic, Multiple Races	**4%**	**2%**

APPENDIX C: SUBGROUP SAMPLE SIZES

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total	**1,040**
6–8	**275**
9–11	**241**
12–14	**262**
15–17	**262**
GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Boys ages 6–17	**509**
Girls ages 6–17	**529**
AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS WITHIN GENDER	
Boys ages 6–8	**130**
Girls ages 6–8	**145**
Boys ages 9–11	**117**
Girls ages 9–11	**124**
Boys ages 12–14	**133**
Girls ages 12–14	**127**
Boys ages 15–17	**129**
Girls ages 15–17	**133**
AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS ANSWERED ABOUT	
Parents of children ages 0–17	**1,718**
Parents of children ages 0–5	**678**
Parents of children ages 0–2	**313**
Parents of children ages 3–5	**365**
Parents of children ages 6–17	**1,040**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	KIDS/PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	KIDS/PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than $35K	**109**	**206**
$35K–$60K	**118**	**161**
$60K–$100K	**203**	**261**
$100K+	**248**	**412**

READING FREQUENCY OF CHILD AGES 6–17	
Frequent readers (read books for fun 5–7 days a week)	**339**
Moderately frequent readers (read books for fun 1–4 days a week)	**410**
Infrequent readers (read books for fun less than 1 day a week)	**289**

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Non-Hispanic White	**596**
Hispanic	**244**
Non-Hispanic Black	**100**
Non-Hispanic, Other, Multiple Races	**100**

PARENT AWARENESS OF THE SUMMER SLIDE	
Aware	**591**
Not aware	**440**

The Summer Reading Imperative is the third installment of the Scholastic *Kids & Family Reading Report™: 7th Edition*, and explores the "summer slide" awareness gap, libraries and community support to drive summer reading, and supporting summer reading through book access and choice. Additional installments of the report examine the rise of read-aloud, attitudes and behaviors around reading books for fun, the latest trends in children's reading habits, what both kids and parents want in books, and the importance of book access.

scholastic.com/readingreport