

Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

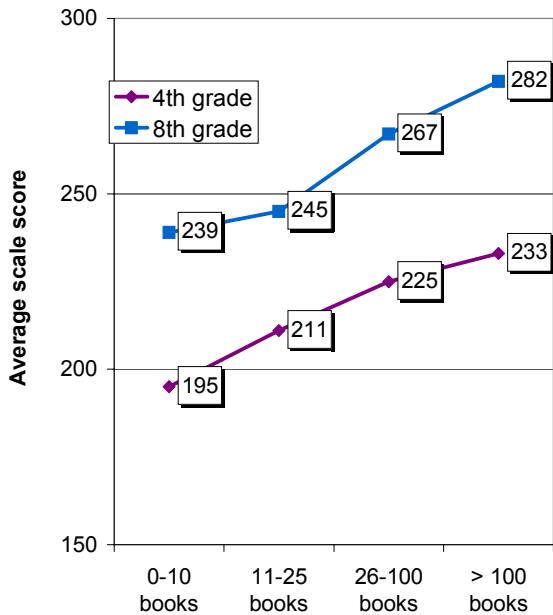
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Home Support for Reading Achievement Plenty of Books, a Computer, and Talking About School

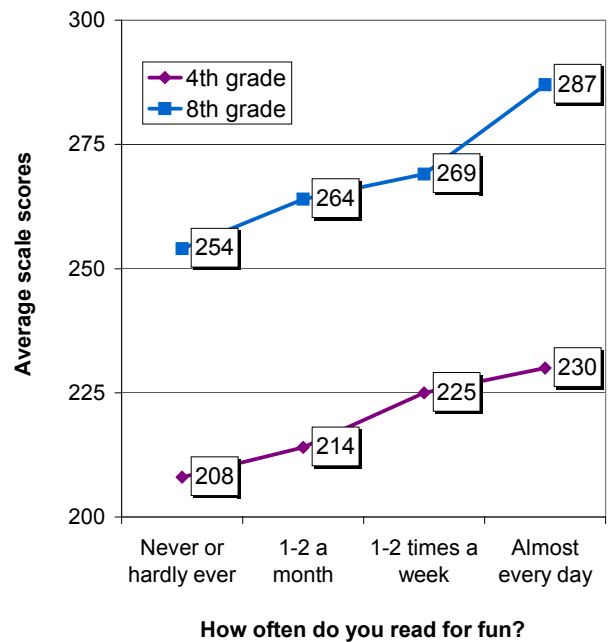
Colorado results from the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading tests are now available for grades 4 and 8. Of the many factors beyond the school affecting reading achievement, three of the most noteworthy are ways students can be

Chart 1.
Average NAEP Reading Scores by
Number of Books in Home, 2003



encouraged to excel by their home environments: **having plenty of books, having a computer, and talking about school work.**

Chart 2.
Average NAEP Reading Scores by
Amount of Reading for Fun, 2003



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Plenty of Books

In grades 4 and 8, students from homes with more than 100 books averaged almost 20 percent higher reading scores than students from homes with 10 or fewer books.

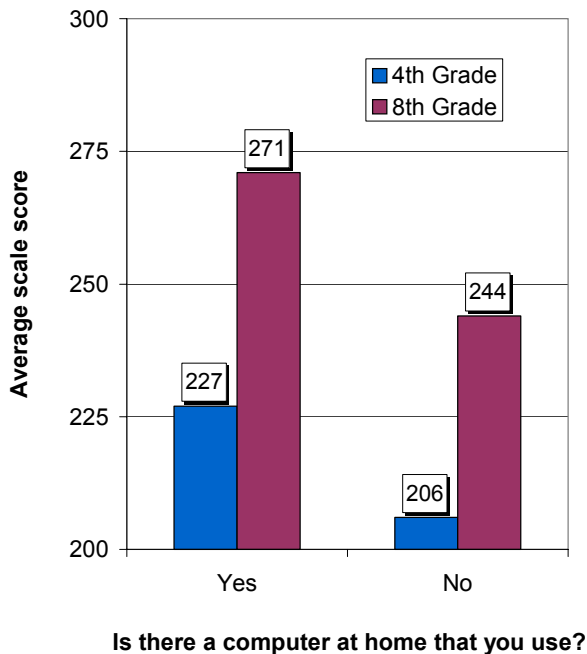
Notably, the question was not about book buying, but the mere presence of books in the home. Though a family's income may limit the number of books that can be bought, virtually every Colorado household has access to a public library.

Reading for Fun

Reading success depends on more than the availability of books in the home. Students who read for fun also tended to score higher on the 2003 NAEP reading test.

In grades 4 and 8, students who reported reading for fun almost every day averaged more than 10 percent higher reading scores than students who reported that they never or hardly ever read for fun.

Chart 3.
Average NAEP Reading Scores by Home Computer Availability, 2003



Home Computer Availability

Like having plenty of books at home, having a computer that a student can use was also linked with higher 2003 NAEP reading scores.

In grades 4 and 8, students from homes with computers, and in which students are allowed to use them, averaged almost 20 percent higher reading scores than homes lacking computers, or in which students did not have access to them.

Most school and public libraries have computers that students are encouraged to use. Most of those computers provide access to Internet-based resources that promote reading.



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Talking About School at Home

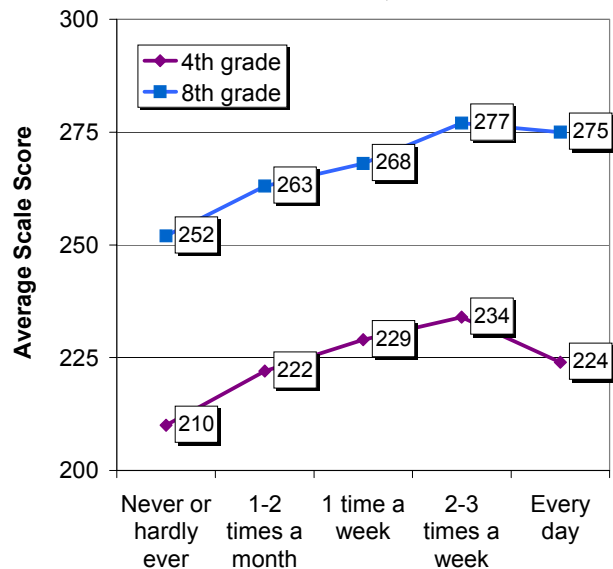
Besides providing an information-rich home—one with lots of books and a computer—one of the most important things parents and other caregivers can do to ensure the academic success of their students is to encourage them to talk about school work at home. In grades 4 and 8, students who reported talking about school with someone at home at least 2 or 3 times a week had about 10 percent higher reading scores than students who reported never or hardly ever doing so.

Based on these recent NAEP results, there are three steps parents and caregivers can take to improve a student's reading success:

1. Students are encouraged to read by the availability of books. Books may be either purchased or borrowed from a school or public library.
2. With more and more information becoming available online, students are encouraged to read by having access to a computer. Such access can be provided in a variety of ways. A home computer is one option. Another is visiting the school or public library, where free computer access is available to the public.
3. Parents can also encourage reading by talking with their children about school work.

Teachers and others who provide services to at-risk students, English language learners, and/or their parents can encourage parent involvement and awareness of the importance of the home learning environment through culturally sensitive resources, such as the U.S. Department of Education's *Helping Your Child* Series. These booklets are available free in both English and Spanish at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html>. See also the Department's *Especially for Parents* web page at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml?src=pn>. Another excellent resource is *Your Home Is a Learning Place*, available from New Readers Press at <http://www.newreaderspress.com/>.

Chart 4.
Average NAEP Reading Scores by
Frequency of Family Interaction
About School, 2003



How often do you talk about school with someone in family?

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SOURCE

The Nation's Report Card, National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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