

LITERACY

The imperative to serve as seen through statistics

“Kids who both live in poverty and read below grade level by third grade are three times as likely not to graduate from high school as students who have never been poor.”
– Nicole Baker Fulgham, *Educating All God’s Children*

Students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are even more likely to not be reading on grade level by the third grade—at 70% below proficient.

In 2019 reading proficiency improved in Arkansas from 69% of students to 62%.

- In some southeast Arkansas school districts that number is as high as 97% of students not reading proficiently in the 3rd grade.

By 4th grade students go from learning to read to reading to learn.

Only 29% of 8th graders in AR are proficient at reading compared to 35% nationally.

85% of all youth who interact with the juvenile court system are functionally low literate according to Literacy MidSouth. *Roughly 70% of the entire prison population cannot read above a 4th grade level.*

For every child in a middle-income home they have access to roughly 13 age-appropriate books. But in under-resourced communities, there may be only one age-appropriate book for every 300 kids.

