

## Readers Make Leaders Letter to the Editor Samples

### Option 1

To the Editor:

Unfortunately, the U.S. is in the midst of a literacy crisis. Right now, 63 percent of fourth graders are reading below grade level.<sup>1</sup> And, sadly, children who aren't reading at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, which hugely limits their future opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

The best way to solve this literacy crisis is through early learning programs, like child care. However, 51% of American families live in a child care desert, meaning there are more than three children for one licensed child care slot. On top of this, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of early learning and care centers that do exist have closed, perhaps never to reopen.

As a [PARENT/TEACHER/CHILD CARE PROVIDER/OTHER] and Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) advocate I know how important early learning and care is to the educational, social and emotional development of a child. I also know that the early learning and care industry will be an essential component of the economic recovery when it comes to getting parents back to work once the pandemic ends.

That's why I urge [INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL POLICYMAKER] to allocate robust and flexible funding for the early learning and care industry in the upcoming economic stimulus package.

Our economy and our children – the nation's future leaders – depend on it.

[NAME]

Word Count: 230

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rif.org/about-rif/literacy-crisis>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx>

## Option 2

To the Editor:

As a [TEACHER, PARENT, GRANDPARENT, OTHER] and Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) advocate I witness the incredible impact reading has on a child's mind, creativity, intellect and development. This is why each and every day I work hard to engage my [STUDENTS, CHILDREN, OTHER] in activities that familiarize them with books and language.

Unfortunately, many children do not have such early learning opportunities due to a lack of affordable and accessible options. This is one of the many reasons why the U.S. is in the midst of a literary crisis.

Right now, 63 percent of fourth graders are reading below grade level.<sup>3</sup> And, sadly, children who aren't reading at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, which hugely limits their future opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, this literary crisis is worsening due to the nationwide closures of schools and child care centers. And, making the situation even more problematic is the fact that 60 percent of U.S. children living in poverty don't have a children's book in their home.

There's no better time than now to encourage candidates for public office to address the literary crisis through robust and flexible investment in early learning and care.

I urge [INSERT NAME OF YOUR POLICY-MAKER] to prioritize the early learning and care industries, particularly when negotiating funding for the next COVID-19 economic stimulus package.

The early learning and care industries are crucial to rebuilding our economy and ensuring our children can thrive long into the future.

[NAME]

Word Count: 258

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rif.org/about-rif/literacy-crisis>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx>

### Option 3

To the Editor:

Unfortunately, the U.S. is in the midst of a literary crisis. Right now, 63 percent of fourth graders are reading below grade level.<sup>5</sup> And, sadly, children who aren't reading at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, which hugely limits their future opportunities.<sup>6</sup>

The best way to solve this literary crisis is through early learning programs, like child care. However, 51% of American families live in a child care desert, meaning there are more than three children for one licensed child care slot. On top of this, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of early learning and care centers have closed, making learning and books even less accessible for kids. Did you know that 60 percent of U.S. children living in poverty don't have a children's book in their home?

That's why I – together with Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) – am participating in virtual Readers Make Leaders events, where parents and young children come together to engage in fun and educational activities – like reading – all from the comfort and safety of their homes.

These events will celebrate the importance of reading, and show that learning can be made fun and easy – even remotely! Join me and encourage other members of your community to host similar virtual educational events. Nothing is more important than ensuring bright futures for our kids.

[NAME]

Word Count: 237

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rif.org/about-rif/literacy-crisis>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx>