

Advocating for Children's Rights to Read



**A manual for enacting the rights in
classrooms, communities, and the world**

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INTRODUCTION

At the International Literacy Association (ILA), our [mission](#) is to connect research and practice to improve the quality of literacy learning across the globe in ways that are respectful, responsive, and ethical. We advocate for equitable access to literacies among individuals of all ages and diverse communities as a basic human right and a matter of social justice.

THE URGENCY of our work has never been clearer. The American Library Association (ALA) reports a staggering [92% surge in book challenges in the United States](#) during 2023, disproportionately targeting works representing LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC voices. This troubling trend extends beyond the U.S., with rising censorship efforts in [Brazil](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and [Egypt](#).

The alarming [33% increase in U.S. public school book bans](#) from 2021–2022 to 2022–2023 has left educators feeling frustrated and disempowered. Recent actions, such as [Utah’s statewide book ban](#) and a [Tennessee school library’s temporary closure](#) for compliance with new laws, underscore the severity of the situation.

ILA has always recognized the right to read as fundamental and inalienable. We understand the enriching power of reading on personal, social, and cultural levels. ILA is deeply committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, fostering an environment where everyone feels safe and supported to be their true selves.

Our [Children’s Rights to Read](#) campaign, initiated in 2018, strives to ensure every child has the necessary education, opportunities, and resources to become a proficient reader. The campaign’s core is the [10 individual rights to read](#), each meticulously researched and articulated (see

ILA’s [The Case for Children’s Rights to Read](#)). We assert the urgent need to protect these rights—including the right to read for pleasure and the right to supportive reading environments—in the face of escalating censorship.

This updated guide empowers adults in various roles to become literacy advocates and guardians of children’s rights. Use this manual for self-reflection to improve your own practice and inspire others to do the same.

Before you begin, we urge you to ask yourself: “How can I take action to support Children’s Rights to Read?” This is a vital question for everyone who works with children or values literacy. As we emphasized in *The Case for Children’s Rights to Read*, “Teaching children to read opens a world of possibilities. It fosters creative and critical thinking, expands knowledge, and cultivates empathy and compassion.”

Literacy and access to quality literacy instruction and resources are issues of equity and social justice. Literacy can be the difference between inclusion in and exclusion from society.

Supporting Children’s Rights to Read begins with you. Using this guide to examine how you provide literacy experiences to children is a crucial step in upholding this fundamental human right.

About Children’s Rights to Read

The Children’s Rights to Read initiative, launched in 2018 by the International Literacy Association (ILA) to ensure every child has access to the education, opportunities, and resources needed to read, focuses on 10 rights essential for individuals to reach full personal, social, and educational potential. The global campaign asserts and affirms ILA’s commitment to its mission of literacy for all and offers a framework for partnerships and action. To learn more and sign the pledge to support the rights, visit literacyworldwide.org/rightstoread.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been organized based upon the role of each stakeholder in relation to the children whose rights they seek to protect. The following steps can help advocates find their place and their voice in defending Children’s Rights to Read and guide them toward appropriate, meaningful action.

Complete the Survey

This survey will help you evaluate practices in your classroom, school, district, library, home, or community.

Assessing Current Literacy Practices

Use this questionnaire alone or with your professional learning network to examine current literacy practices. Indicate the accuracy of each statement on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

- Children in my school/home/community have access to a variety of reading materials, both print and digital. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community are encouraged to choose the texts that appeal to them. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community have access to reading material –print and digital—that offer insight into the identities and lived experiences of others. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community visit the school and public library voluntarily. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community express excitement about reading. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community have opportunities to share what they’ve learned through reading with others. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community are supported by well-prepared literacy partners. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community read for pleasure. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community have a designated time to read. 1 2 3 4 5
- Children in my school/home/community are provided with an environment conducive to reading. 1 2 3 4 5
- My school/home/community prioritizes reading and reading instruction. 1 2 3 4 5

Make a Plan

After reflecting upon your answers, find your role in the pages that follow. Identify the areas in most need of improvement, and use the Action Plan Template links to help you determine next steps. Some of the suggested actions can be implemented immediately; some will require time, resources, training, and collaboration.

Spread the Word

Being an advocate means showing up and doing the work—and doing so openly and boisterously for all to see. Print your action plan and post it somewhere where you will see it regularly and where your colleagues and network of supporters can see it as well. Share this advocacy manual with your coworkers, friends, and family. [Sign the pledge](#) to support the rights. Speak openly in your community about your advocacy work and post about it online and across social media using the hashtag #RightsToRead.

Together, we can defend these rights to read for those who cannot do so for themselves: all children, everywhere.

Spread the word on social media with these messages

I support Children's #RightsToRead. Learn more about the rights and sign the pledge to advocate on behalf of every child, everywhere.

www.literacyworldwide.org/rightstoread

Literacy is a fundamental human right. Show your support for protecting every child's #RightsToRead by signing the pledge at

www.literacyworldwide.org/rightstoread.

Advocate for Children's #RightsToRead.

Download an updated toolkit for small steps you can take to make big changes at

www.literacyworldwide.org/rightstoread.

The updated and expanded Children's #RightsToRead toolkit includes ideas and activities for teachers, coaches, librarians, principals, families, and policymakers.

Download for FREE: www.literacyworldwide.org/rightstoread

Teachers and Reading/Literacy Specialists

Be the literacy champion your students need. You can be an advocate for each one of your students, every day, by protecting their rights to read.



Take Action! First Chapter Friday

Pique student interest in diverse titles by committing time each Friday to reading aloud the first chapter of different books. Include texts that reflect a wide range of identities and experiences and a variety of genres. Ask students and families for recommendations. Invite colleagues, administrators, and caregivers to be guest readers. You can host visitors in person or virtually. Record readings to show later, creating a repository of videos that can be shared with other staff.

1. CULTIVATE an engaging and inclusive literary environment in your classroom.

Conduct a classroom library audit to uncover bias and other issues. Determine absences and silences. Fill the voids.

Curate a diverse classroom library that reflects the identities and lived experiences of the students in your school community as well as texts that provide insight into the lived experiences of people whose identities they do not share. These are often referred to as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors—terms popularized by scholar Rudine Sims Bishop.

Incorporate a wide variety of genres and be sure to provide both fiction and nonfiction texts. Expose students to science fiction and travel guides and everything in between as they explore their own reading preferences. Include print newspapers and magazines on a variety of topics.

Create a text-rich environment with bulletin boards and book displays that showcase reading options.

Provide inviting spaces for students to read. Rugs, cushions, and flexible seating encourage students to get comfortable and settle in. Playing low instrumental music can contribute to a calm environment.

2. PRIORITIZE positive reading experiences for students.

Study your students; learn their interests, hobbies, activities, and culture. Ask students about themselves. Learn about students from caregivers, counselors, and colleagues.

Read aloud regularly, even in secondary classrooms. Students can comprehend texts read aloud at a higher level than they can when reading independently. Invite other adults to be read-aloud guests in your classroom.

Visit the library. Regularly scheduled time in the library gives students a chance to explore different ways of reading. Create a scavenger hunt that invites students to explore all that the library has to offer. [Check out these predesigned ideas](#). For schools without a library, arrange a visit to a community library or from a mobile library if available.

Learn to assess student reading engagement to ensure students get the most out of every reading experience.

Facilitate opportunities for students to engage with text, which can be providing time for independent reading or creating space for students to informally and authentically share what they have been reading.

3. BE a leader in your building by sharing and promoting Children’s Rights to Read.

Share [The Case for Children’s Rights to Read](#) with colleagues. Dedicate a meeting to exploring the 10 rights and identifying how your school currently supports students’ literacy development. Brainstorm ways to increase student opportunity to read using the rights as a framework.

Volunteer to lead a staff meeting review of the rights, and ask administrators, faculty, and staff to [sign the pledge](#) to support Children’s Rights to Read. Administrators have a profound influence on creating a culture of reading within their schools, and their taking the time to sign the pledge sends a strong message that the administration is committed to a school climate that prioritizes reading.

Host a book club with faculty and staff to talk about children’s literature and to introduce new text types—visual, multimedia, nonfiction, fiction, and audio—as well as to discuss what students currently read in class. Publicize what you’re reading to spark informal conversations with students and their families and caregivers.

Share your literacy story. Talk to your colleagues and your students about the significant influence reading has had in your life. Completing your [textual lineage](#)—texts you have read that have been significant in shaping your identity—can remind us of our reading past and reinvigorate us as readers.

Model a love of reading. Create bulletin boards showcasing staff summer reading, include book talks in the morning announcements, invite colleagues to read aloud in your classroom, and volunteer to read aloud in theirs. Read openly and always have a spare book on you.

4. ENGAGE families, caregivers, and the community to build positive, meaningful relationships.

Conduct an annual community book drive. Check out The Children’s Book Project’s tips for [organizing a book drive](#). Engage students in determining how to sort and organize the donated books, and then make these books available to students and families at a book swap event.

Build a [Little Free Library](#). Coordinate with families, caregivers, and community members to identify book deserts in your community, and then construct libraries for those who live there.



ILA staff built and maintained a Little Free Library outside ILA headquarters.

Partner with the local public library system and take stock of their children’s and young adult book selection. Look for representation of authors, characters, and content of material as well as text type—visual, multimedia, nonfiction, fiction, graphic novels, and audio. Make suggestions and recommendations when appropriate.

Start a [#weneeddiversebooks](#) campaign through an online forum for students, families, caregivers, and members of the community to share what they read. These [suggested resources](#) from We Need Diverse Books will get you started.

Share the list of rights with families and caregivers, which are available in 16 languages. Identify how your school is prioritizing students’ literacy development and why partnering with families and caregivers is important.

Host a family event showcasing reading. Staff and students can read aloud from their favorite books. Play book trivia and conduct scavenger hunts. Encourage families to sign the pledge to support the rights. Invite the local newspaper.

Teachers and Reading Specialists Action Plan

Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action. Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.

- I commit to cultivating an engaging and inclusive literary environment in my classroom by
 - Auditing my classroom library by _____ (date)
 - Filling my classroom library with books that reflect the lived experiences of my students. Identities to include are _____, _____, and _____. I will add one new book for each by _____ (date). I will add a second for each by _____ (date). I will add a third for each by _____ (date).
 - Having a wide variety of genres. I will add what my audit shows is lacking by _____ (date).
 - Creating a bulletin board featuring reading options by _____ (date)
 - Providing cozy and comfy reading space by _____ (date)
- I commit to prioritizing positive reading experiences for students. I will do this by
 - Learning all I can about my students and identifying literary experiences that connect with them
 - Working reading aloud into my daily routine. I will include it _____ (time).
 - Visiting the library on a regular basis. I will schedule visits to occur on _____ (day).
 - Incorporating book talks regularly. I will invite students to share starting _____ (date).
 - Establishing a web-based platform to publish student writing about what they are reading. I will create the site by _____, share with staff by _____, and invite student participation by _____ (date).
- I commit to sharing and promoting Children's Rights to Read. I will do this by
 - Sharing [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) with colleagues. I will do this
 - In person at _____ meeting
 - Via email with _____ (identify staff)
 - Other _____
 - Volunteering to lead a staff meeting review of the rights, and asking colleagues to [sign the pledge](#)
 - Hosting a book club with faculty and staff to talk about children's literature and to introduce new text types. Our first meeting will be on _____ and we'll read _____.
 - Completing and sharing with colleagues and students my [textual lineage](#)
 - Modeling a love of reading by _____
 - Making a staff summer reading bulletin board
 - Including book talks in the morning announcements
 - Inviting colleagues to read aloud in my classroom
 - Volunteering to read aloud in colleagues' classrooms
- I commit to engaging families, caregivers, and the community to build positive, meaningful relationships. I will do this by
 - Holding an annual community book drive. I will target a date of _____.
 - Partnering with _____ to build a [Little Free Library](#) to be placed _____
 - Volunteering to help audit the collection of the local public library. I will reach out on _____ (date).
 - Starting a [#weneeddiversebooks](#) campaign by _____ (date)
 - Including [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) in the _____ (date) newsletter
 - Hosting a family event showcasing reading. I will collaborate with _____ to host an event by _____ (date).

Instructional Coaches

Your support is critical for teachers. Prioritize students' rights to read by providing opportunities for teachers to review current practices and plan for improvement.



Take Action! Classroom Library Diversity Audit

Students deserve to see themselves and their experiences reflected in the books in their classrooms. Dedicate meeting time to lead teachers through a review of "[Conducting a Diversity Audit: Who is Represented in Your Classroom Library?](#)" Visit classrooms in pairs and small groups to collect diversity data on classroom libraries. Support teachers as they collaborate and develop a plan to fill gaps. Bring the results to your school administration and advocate for what teachers and students need.

1. ESTABLISH expectations for new staff.

Include [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) in new teacher orientation and mentor training. Share the Teachers and Reading/Literacy Specialists section of this manual and provide time for teachers to complete the action plan.

Collaborate with administration to provide welcome gifts of books to seed a classroom library. Include a diverse range of titles. Library book sales can be a source of quality books for very little money.

Note the time provided to students for reading and the reading materials available to students when conducting walkthroughs and observations. Provide this data to teachers. Celebrate effective practices and plan to improve where needed.

2. EDUCATE all staff about the importance of Children's Rights to Read.

Include [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) in professional development (PD) and meetings at the beginning of the school year.

Share literacy information with teachers of all subjects, not just humanities staff.

Model effective literacy strategies in meetings. Read aloud to staff, whatever the source material. Provide graphic organizers for note-taking. Use a projector to model annotation. Include quick sketches and drawings, even if you can only draw stick figures. Provide time for staff to talk to each other about what they read.

Include conversation around staff literacy goals when engaging in the observation and feedback cycle. In the pre-conference, ask staff about their literacy objectives. When observing, collect data on strategies used to achieve these objectives and student outcomes. Share this data during the post-conference and identify one or two specific areas to target.

3. PROVIDE opportunities for teachers to intentionally create environments that express positive messages about literacy.

Explore the hidden literacy curriculum in your schools' classrooms by taking teachers on classroom visits. In each room, encourage teachers to note where and how books are displayed. In what condition are the books? What age are they? What messages about literacy do the students in each classroom receive?

Enable teachers to create environments that prioritize literacy by helping them obtain bookshelves, book stands, and new and diverse titles.

Give teachers permission to recycle or make available for free to students old books, those with battered covers and dusty pages. See if your art teacher or local cultural arts studio can repurpose the materials.

Provide meeting time and PD time for teachers to read and review new texts. Create a process for staff to recommend new texts to be considered for review.

4. ENSURE all students have access to a variety of reading formats.

Work with teachers to create a list of required and recommended reading for all subject areas, and confirm that these texts are available in print, audio, and electronic form.

Share resources with staff. [Bookshare](#) will provide free digital, audio, and braille books to students in the U.S. with qualifying disabilities. [The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled \(NLS\)](#) offers a similar free program. Provide meeting time for teachers to create accounts.

Instructional Coach Action Plan

Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action.
Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.

- I commit to establishing expectations for new staff by
 - Including [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) in new teacher orientation and mentor training
 - Providing starter classroom libraries to all new teachers
 - Taking and sharing literacy data during walkthroughs and observations
 - Celebrating effective practices
- I commit to educating all staff about the importance of Children's Rights to Read by
 - Including [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) in beginning-of-the-year professional development and meetings
 - Including literacy information when working with teachers of all subjects
 - Modeling effective literacy strategies in meetings, including
 - Reading aloud to staff
 - Using graphic organizers for note taking
 - Modeling annotation
 - Including quick sketches and drawing
 - Making "book talk" time a standing part of any regular meeting
 - Including literacy goals in feedback conversations
 - In pre-conferences, ask about literacy objectives.
 - During observations, collect data on strategies used to achieve these objectives and student outcomes.
 - In post-conference, share data and identify one or two specific areas to target
- I commit to providing opportunities for teachers to create positive literacy environments by
 - Exploring the hidden literacy curriculum in my schools' classrooms by taking teachers on classroom visits
 - Helping teachers obtain bookshelves and book stands and filling them with new and diverse titles
 - Dedicating one meeting to purging old book collections. It's time to get rid of old books with battered covers and smelly pages.
 - Providing professional development time for teachers to read and review new texts
- I commit to ensuring all students have access to a variety of reading formats by
 - Helping teachers create a list of required and recommended reading for all subject areas, and confirming that these texts are available in print, audio, and electronic form
 - Sharing resources such as [Bookshare](#) with staff

School and Public Librarians

The library should be the heart of your community and school. Your leadership is essential in the campaign to protect all Children's Rights to Read. For a deeper dive into the vital role of school librarians, read this [ILA literacy leadership brief](#).



Take Action! March Madness

Why should basketball have all the fun? Engage staff and students in some friendly literacy competition with a March Madness-esque Battle of the Books. In mid-February, solicit student and staff recommendations for starting "teams"; these could be authors or books. Be sure to include a diverse range of titles that are representative of your school's demographics. Encourage staff to read aloud all or part of these titles in February and March. Provide the school community with opportunities to complete their brackets in late February. In March, invite students and staff to vote. Publicize progress on a bulletin board in a communal space such as the lobby or cafeteria. Make daily announcements and pile on the drama! Reward perfect brackets with a prize, such as a book of the winner's choice.

1. BE a prominent voice and presence in your building and help promote a lifelong love for reading among all children.

Highlight and publicize new titles from a wide range of reading materials—visual, multimedia, nonfiction, fiction, graphic novels, and audiobooks—and a diversity of authors, characters, and settings. Let your enthusiasm be contagious. We Need Diverse Books shares this [webpage](#), which is a great place to search for new titles.

Make checking out books as enticing and easy as possible. Create a library card sign-up program, particularly aimed at young readers, which includes a celebration and sets the stage for the library as a community fixture. Take a page out of the college sports playbook and document students "signing" with the library; photograph students signing their name and posing with their first card.

Reconsider existing rules. Do not restrict student browsing by grade or reading level. Consider eliminating late fees or limits on how many books a student can borrow.

Create a section of the library stocked with books that are frequently banned or challenged. Attach an informational paragraph to each book describing where and why the book was banned or challenged. Include questions for students to dialogue about the book specifically and banned books generally. The American Library Association offers [these resources](#) for banned and challenged books. Sharing these titles sends a strong message that, as a literacy leader, you will not allow these voices and stories to be silenced.

Implement a book suggestions box for students to recommend new material to be added to the library/media center collection. Publicize when a student pick is added.

Take advantage of school events with caregiver attendance. Set up a table in the lobby and invite families to sign up for library cards, complete book suggestions forms, look at new titles, and explore new formats. Give live demonstrations of [Libby](#) and [Hoopla](#). Share [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) and encourage attendees to [sign the pledge](#). This [Public Library Association webpage](#) has a variety of resources to improve your outreach strategies.

Partner with classroom teachers and reading/literacy specialists and suggest resources to support classroom literacy experiences. Preview assigned reading with teachers and prepare “read-alike” displays to encourage students to continue reading when the assignment is complete. Develop relationships with math and science teachers and invite their classes into the library. This *School Library Journal* [article](#) can support your efforts in making sure the library is integrated seamlessly into lessons across the content areas.

2. ESTABLISH a library space that is welcoming and accessible to children of all backgrounds, abilities, and interests.

Advocate for library needs during the school/town budget cycle. Diverse titles in a wide range of multimodal reading options—playaways, digital magazine subscriptions, large print text—are not “nice to have.” They are *must haves* to ensure equal access for all.

Create a listening center where students can enjoy audiobooks. Set up devices in a cozy area of the library/media center where students can sit, with others or alone, and listen to an audiobook.

Evaluate your collection for diversity. This [article](#) from the *School Library Journal* and this [article](#) from the *Library Journal* offer valuable insight into how to conduct a library audit.

Designate a *NO SHHH Zone* for auditory learners and verbal processors. Reserve this space in the library for students to talk about what they are reading without worrying about their volume and excitement potentially distracting other library visitors.

Familiarize yourself with the current publishing landscape and advocate for more diversity in new works published. Review [baseline data](#) to help you.

Partner with local colleges and universities to advocate that programs preparing preservice librarians incorporate the importance of examining diversity and bias within publishing.

3. RECOGNIZE the importance of continued learning for school and public librarians and insist on receiving these opportunities.

Join an organization such as the [American Library Association](#), the [American Association of School Librarians](#), the [International Board on Books for Young People](#), or the [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions](#). Attend their annual conferences or national meetings.

Present what you learn at professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) opportunities to your administration or library director and offer to conduct workshops for faculty and staff.

Establish a book club with faculty and staff to allow for reflective time with colleagues and opportunities for critical thinking and discussion.

Encourage school/library leadership to draft a policy on continued PD/PL. In addition to prioritizing the learning opportunities, ensure that the benefits to motivation and morale are not overlooked. This [article](#) provides a great resource for getting the conversation started on why PD/PL for librarians matters.

Librarian Action Plan

Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action. Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.

- I commit to being a prominent presence in my building by
 - Highlighting and publicizing new titles from a wide range of reading materials—visual, multimedia, nonfiction, fiction, graphic novels, and audiobooks—and a diversity of authors, characters, and settings. I will share new books by _____ (date).
 - Making checking out books as enticing as possible. I will celebrate new library cards by _____ (date).
 - Rewriting the rulebook. I will no longer
 - Restrict student browsing by grade
 - Restrict student browsing and borrowing by reading level
 - Charge late fees
 - Limit the number of books a student can borrow
 - Other _____
 - Creating a section of the library stocked with books that are frequently banned or challenged
 - Soliciting book recommendations and publicizing when we obtain a student pick
 - Participating in family-oriented school events
 - Partnering with classroom teachers and reading/literacy specialists and suggesting resources to support classroom literacy experiences. I will
 - Prepare “read-alike” displays to encourage students to continue reading when the assignment is complete
 - Develop relationships with math and science teachers and invite their classes into the library
 - Other _____
- I commit to establishing a library space that is welcoming and accessible to children of all backgrounds, abilities, and interests by
 - Advocating for library needs during the school/town budget cycle
 - Creating a listening center where students can enjoy audiobooks. It will be operational by _____ (date).
 - Evaluating my collection for diversity by _____ (date)
 - Reserving a space in the library for students to talk without worrying about their volume and excitement. This space will be located _____.
- I commit to recognizing the importance of continued learning for school and public librarians and insisting on receiving these opportunities by
 - Joining a professional organization. I plan to join _____.
 - Presenting what I learn at professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) opportunities to my administration or library director
 - Establishing a book club with faculty and staff
 - Encouraging school/library leadership to draft a policy on continued PD/PL

Administrators

Your leadership sets the tone for how literacy is practiced throughout your school. Make literacy the foundation of all you do to protect your students' rights to read.



Take Action! Principal's Bookshelf

Put your love of reading on display. Place a bookcase in the lobby of your school, and stock it with your favorite books for children and adults. Create shelf talkers—small handwritten signs in front of books to tell viewers why they should read that book. Leave a sign-out sheet, but don't be disappointed if books don't come back. A few lost books are a small price to pay for increasing your school community's access to good books.

1. PRESENT the Children's Rights to Read resolution to your school committee or board of education for adoption.

Share [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) with members of the school board. Identify the importance of prioritizing students' literacy development. Encourage members of the board to [sign the pledge](#) individually or as a group, representing the entire board, school, or district.

Recruit other administrators to support districtwide adoption of the rights and demonstrate their support through attendance at a board meeting calling for districtwide adoption. Review the rights with them and encourage them to sign the pledge ahead of the board meeting.

Present the [resolution](#) for your board of education to adopt the Children's Rights to Read districtwide. Do this alone or with support from other district administrators.

2. MAKE literacy the anchor of the important work you do in your school/district.

Review the budget to ensure money is being allocated toward providing students with a variety of reading materials. Order new books every year, if possible. Stock classroom libraries and the school media center with texts that represent the diversity of the school and the world. In addition, ensure the budget protects the qualified, knowledgeable literacy professionals—such as reading/literacy specialists, librarians, and media specialists—required to assist students with these texts. Prioritize literacy-focused professional development and literacy conference attendance in your budgeting.

Include books in your curriculum review cycle. Ensure the novels and texts your teachers are using for instruction are representative of diverse experiences. Remember to obtain audio and electronic copies of all required reading.

Dedicate time in the master schedule for independent reading and designate dedicated reading-only spaces for students. Unless the time is scheduled and spaces are provided, priority will not be given. Identifying a set block of time per week for schoolwide, independent reading sends a strong message that you view literacy as an integral piece of the work you do. Check out these examples of [teacher-created reading spaces](#) for inspiration.

Support the practice of [classroom read-alouds](#). Offer to visit classrooms as a guest reader. Encourage teachers to include families and caregivers in this practice as well.

Download and share the [10 Children's Rights to Read](#). They are currently available in 16 languages.

Host a family night to share [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) with families and caregivers. Have the 10 rights, in multiple languages, on hand. Let them know how your school is prioritizing students' literacy development and why partnering with families and caregivers is important. Encourage them to sign the pledge. In addition, host the same meeting at the public library during the day on a weekend to provide an opportunity to those families and caregivers unable to attend the meeting held at school.

Add a "reading report" section to your community newsletter. Highlight student reading experiences, share new reading materials, and announce literacy events on campus with families, caregivers, and the community. Share student book reviews, ask recipients to share their recommendations, and invite them to be guest readers.

Set aside time each month to investigate grant opportunities to help fund your commitment to literacy. Share these opportunities with coaches, literacy specialists, teachers, and parent organizations. Opportunities vary by state and deadlines are rolling, so make an appointment with yourself to make this research happen. An investment of 30 minutes could yield thousands of dollars.

3. USE Children's Rights to Read as a guide to create professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) opportunities for faculty and staff.

Review and discuss the Children's Rights to Read with faculty and staff. Listen to ways faculty and staff provide student literacy experiences. Assemble a list of PD/PL needs from the faculty and staff. Ask them what they need more of and find ways to meet their needs.

Fund PD/PL opportunities outside of school and, if resources allow, out of state. The more opportunities teachers have to network with like-minded professionals and learn what others are doing to ensure high-quality literacy instruction in other areas of the country and world, the more your school and students will benefit.

Invite staff to begin faculty and department meetings by sharing successful strategies that enhance student literacy experiences. Staff can sign up individually, or in pairs and teams, to share a single best practice that addresses Children's Rights to Read. Internal PD/PL honors knowledge and expertise within the building, gives staff ideas they can put to work immediately, and builds camaraderie among colleagues.

Pay for annual memberships to professional literacy organizations, such as [ILA](#) or the [American Library Association](#), for your faculty and staff. Support their attendance at regional or national conference events hosted by these and other professional organizations focused on literacy and the rights to read.

Partner with local colleges and universities to facilitate on-site PD/PL in literacy instruction and look to literacy organizations for online PD/PL opportunities. Pay for teachers to attend.

Pay staff a stipend and/or offer professional development points for summer literacy work. Teachers can conduct equity audits, read and review books that have been recommended for inclusion in the curriculum, and collaborate with local organizations to hold a diverse books drive to stock classroom libraries.

Administrator Action Plan

**Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action.
Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.**

- I can commit to advocating for student literacy rights by presenting the Children’s Rights to Read to my school committee or board of education for adoption. I will do this by
 - Sharing [The Case for Children’s Rights to Read](#) with the school board. I will do this by _____ (date).
 - Recruiting other district administrators to join me in presenting the rights. I will invite _____ (names) by _____ (date).

- I will make literacy the anchor of my work in my school and/or district by
 - Reviewing the budget to identify areas where literacy can be a priority. I will do this by _____ (date).
 - Prioritizing the purchasing of books in each budget cycle
 - Prioritizing literacy-focused professional development and literacy conference attendance in each budget cycle
 - Including consideration of books into each curriculum review cycle
 - Dedicating time on the school’s master schedule for students to engage in recreational reading
 - Preserving physical space for reading
 - Encouraging teachers to read aloud to students. I will volunteer to visit each classroom to read aloud. I will do this by _____ (date).
 - Sharing the 10 Children’s Rights to Read and posting them in the teacher’s rooms. I will do this by _____ (date).
 - Scheduling 30 minutes each month to search for literacy grant opportunities
 - Dedicating space in my school newsletter to literacy topics. I will include
 - Student book reviews
 - Staff book recommendations
 - Invitations for families to guest read
 - Hosting a family night to share the rights and celebrate literacy. I have scheduled this night for _____ (date).
 - I will invite the public library to join us and hold a library card sign-up drive. I will do this by _____ (date).

- I will use the Children’s Rights to Read as a guide for professional development and learning. I will do this by
 - Discussing the Rights to Read in team and faculty meetings. I will do this on _____ (date).
 - Paying for literacy professional development and conferences
 - After observing an effective literacy strategy, inviting the staff member to share the strategy at the next staff meeting
 - Paying the annual membership fees to professional literacy organizations
 - Reaching out to local colleges and universities and seeking out professional learning opportunities. I will contact _____ (school) by _____ (date).
 - Paying teachers for literacy work they do outside of school hours. I would like to invite staff to
 - Conduct classroom library equity audits
 - Read and review books to be included in the curriculum
 - Collaborate with a local organization to hold a diverse books drive

Families and Caregivers

You are your child's first teacher. Be a reading role model throughout their schooling. In the early years, your efforts will set them up for reading success. Your continued focus on reading will put them on the path of achievement throughout their life.



Take Action! Raise Your Voice

Visit your school district website and find the email addresses for your school board members. Send them an email with a link to the [Children's Rights to Read](#). Ask them to add signing the pledge to their next agenda. Attend the next scheduled meeting and use the community forum time to read the rights aloud.

1. MAKE reading a family habit.

Read aloud to your child, no matter their age. It's easy to snuggle together and read bedtime stories to little ones, but most families tend to abandon the practice as children grow up. Prioritize time with your older children to share books aloud. Reading diverse material with your children can open the door for important conversations.

Subscribe to print magazines in your child's name. Kids love getting mail, and you can tailor the subscription to their interests.

Stock a variety of reading materials at home, including newspapers, magazines, graphic novels, audiobooks, multimodal texts, fiction, and nonfiction. Find reading materials in [Little Free Libraries](#) in the community, in addition to borrowing from the public and school libraries, to access new materials.

Model good reading habits at home. Show your family that you prioritize reading daily. Aim for 20 minutes per day. Everyone can read their own books together or read aloud to one another. For older children, consider creating a family book club and take turns selecting the next read.

Talk about what you read with members of your family. Ask your family to talk about what they read, too. This can happen right after daily reading or as part of a different daily routine such as the daily commute, during a meal, or before bed.

Introduce literature on social justice issues for the sake of building socially conscious children and fostering real-world connections to what children read. Talk and read about topics surrounding human rights such as voting rights, current social movements, fair housing, affordable health care, and living wages, or other topics that you find appropriate and suitable for the age of your children.

2. TAKE advantage of the free resources at your public library.

Identify the library branch(es) closest to your home, school, and work. Explore the programs and services offered at the public library. Pick one program to attend. Invite neighborhood families to join you.

Learn how to use the online library system. Alongside your child, explore the catalog. Download the library app onto your device and your child's device, if they have one. Explore the app, [Libby](#), and [Hoopla](#) together.

Commit to visiting the public library as a family at least twice each month. Make sure these visits are fun activities, not chores to be completed.

3. Advocate for Children's Rights to Read in your child's learning.

Share this advocacy manual with your child's school. Ask the teacher, director, librarian or media specialist, and other faculty and staff how the 10 rights are being prioritized. Encourage them to [sign the pledge](#).

Attend school board meetings, especially those involving curriculum, budget, and book challenges. Advocate for a diverse range of titles. Demand funding for staff, books, and professional development. Rally support from other families, caregivers, and community members.

Join your school's parent organization and be a voice for literacy. This [article](#) from *PTO Today* will help get you started.

Volunteer to participate in activities that involve family and community partners. Work a shift at the book fair. Be a guest reader in your child's classroom. Staff the library table at community events. Research has shown that schools with high levels of family involvement have higher levels of reading achievement.

Family and Caregiver Action Plan

Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action.
Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.

- I commit to reading as a family by
 - Reading aloud to my child, no matter their age
 - Giving a subscription to a print magazine for the next gift-giving occasion
 - Keeping newspapers, magazines, graphic novels, and audiobooks in my home in addition to traditional books
 - Reading in front of my children at least 20 minutes each day
 - Talking to my family about what I am reading
 - Sharing literature on social justice issues with my children
- I commit to visiting the public library as a family by
 - Picking one program to attend as a family
 - Inviting another family to join us
 - Learning how to use the online library system
 - Downloading the library app onto our devices
 - Exploring [Libby](#) and [Hoopla](#) with my children
 - Committing to visiting the public library as a family at least twice each month
- I commit to advocating for Children's Rights to Read in my child's learning by
 - Sharing [The Case for Children's Rights to Read](#) with my child's school and encouraging them to [sign the pledge](#). The principal's email address is _____.
 - Attending school board meetings, especially those involving curriculum, budget, and book challenges. The next meeting is _____ (date).
 - Joining the PTO. The next meeting is _____ (date).
 - Volunteering at my child's school to
 - Work at the book fair on _____ (date)
 - Be a guest reader on _____ (date)
 - Donate books to _____ (names)
 - Work in the library on _____ (date)

Policymakers

Understanding the impact literacy has on society—and the catastrophic consequences when access is denied—is critical. Use your influence to ensure these rights by making access to high-quality literacy instruction and resources a priority.



Take Action! Email Signature

Your email signature is valuable real estate that should not be overlooked. Highlight your personal commitment to literacy by adding a “currently reading” line. Include the phrase “I support Children’s Rights to Read” with a [link](#) to the rights.

1. MAKE Children’s Rights to Read part of platform.

Share the [10 rights](#) on your social media channels.

Talk about the Children’s Rights to Read campaign with constituents and colleagues. Listen for ideas to increase literacy experiences for children in the community. Review current policies and add ideas.

Attend community events that promote reading and share the Children’s Rights to Read.

Host a town hall–style meeting to discuss Children’s Rights to Read, present [The Case for Children’s Rights to Read](#), and encourage members of the community to show their support by [signing the pledge](#).

Develop informed opinions by reading [books that are frequently challenged](#). Learn about the communities reflected in these stories.

Attend any school committee or school board meeting at which book selection and access are on the agenda. Attend meetings where book challenges are discussed. Build a reputation as a vocal advocate for students and educators.

Assist literacy professionals embroiled in book challenges by directing them to the [American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom](#) and the confidential support provided there.

2. PRIORITIZE literacy by allocating substantial funding for literacy education and resources.

Survey school faculty and staff. Ask about current practices that support literacy education. Ask faculty and staff what additional funding is needed to meet the literacy rights of children, and advocate for funding in the areas identified to increase student literacy experiences in school.

Recognize the importance of specialized literacy professionals, school librarians, and media specialists in providing high-quality literacy instruction and resources and serving as partners

with classroom teachers. Advocate for funding to ensure these critical positions are filled and protected.

Host a talkback with members of the community and the public library staff to learn about what programming to support literacy experiences currently exists. Gather information about what areas need more support and allocate the funding to those (and new) public library programs and events to meet Children's Rights to Read.

3. ENSURE teacher preparation and professional development (PD) program requirements meet rigorous literacy standards.

Review what your state and district require for certification and coursework related to literacy instruction and librarians/media specialists, and partner with colleges and universities to review those requirements and support programs that prepare highly qualified educators and librarians/media specialists for work in schools and school and public libraries.

Advocate for your local universities and education organizations to adopt ILA's [Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, 2017 Edition](#), which sets the criteria for developing and evaluating preparation programs for literacy professionals.

Examine current PD requirements in your state/region. Are unnecessary barriers in place that limit when and where faculty and staff can receive their PD and get credit? Ensure opportunities abound—in school, in and out of state, and online—for educators to gain access to the latest, research-based resources and the most up-to-date literacy practices from reliable, knowledgeable sources.

Policymaker Action Plan

Reflect upon the areas most in need of improvement, and commit to taking action. Print this action plan, fill in the blanks, and post it somewhere you will see it regularly.

- I commit to making The Children’s Rights to Read part of my platform by
 - Sharing the [10 rights](#) on my social media channels. I will do this on _____ (date).
 - Talking about the Children’s Rights to Read campaign with constituents and colleagues
 - Listening for ideas to increase literacy experiences for children in the community. I will review current policies and add ideas.
 - Attending community events that promote reading and sharing the Children’s Rights to Read. I will attend _____ (identify event) on _____ (date).
 - Hosting a town hall–style meeting to discuss Children’s Rights to Read and inviting community members to [sign the pledge](#). This will happen on _____ (date).
 - Reading [books that are frequently challenged](#). I will start with _____ (title).
 - Attending any school committee or school board meeting at which book selection and access are on the agenda. The first three meetings on my schedule are _____, _____, and _____.
 - Sharing the [American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom](#) information with constituents to ask for help with book challenges
- I commit to prioritizing literacy through funding by
 - Asking school faculty and staff what additional funding is needed, and actively advocating for funding in these areas
 - Advocating for funding for librarians, media specialists, and literacy coaches to ensure these critical positions are filled and protected
- I commit to ensuring teacher preparation and professional development (PD) program requirements meet rigorous literacy standards by
 - Reviewing current requirements and working with colleges and universities to review existing programs
 - Advocating for my local universities and education organizations to adopt ILA’s [Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, 2017 Edition](#). I will meet with faculty from _____ and _____ (schools) by _____ (date).
 - Identifying and removing unnecessary barriers in place that limit when and where faculty and staff can receive their PD and get credit

MORE TO EXPLORE FROM ILA

Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction

ILA's position statement [Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction](#) builds off of and supports the core principle of the 10 Children's Rights to Read by defining four tenets of exceptional literacy instruction. Each tenet is explored in more detail in the following research briefs:

- [Right to Knowledgeable and Qualified Literacy Educators](#)
- [Right to Integrated Support Systems](#)
- [Right to Supportive Learning Environments and High-Quality Resources](#)
- [Right to Policies That Ensure Equitable Literacy Instruction](#)

The following ILA resources are also available:

[Censorship in School Libraries Across the Globe](#)

This ILA Webinar explores the global issue of censorship in school libraries, highlighting the crucial role of librarians in upholding Children's Rights to Read. Experts from around the world discuss challenges to access and intellectual freedom, sharing strategies and insights to combat censorship and promote literacy.

[Characteristics of Culturally Sustaining and Academically Rigorous Classrooms](#)

This literacy leadership brief highlights the principles of culturally sustaining, academically rigorous classrooms through the metaphors of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, as originated by researcher Rudine Sims Bishop.

[Closer Reading for Deeper Learning](#)

This ILA Webinar dives into the art of close reading, demonstrating how to use complex visual texts to unlock deeper meaning in literature.

[Creating Passionate Readers Through Independent Reading](#)

This literacy leadership brief looks at student choice as a way of promoting joyful self-exploration that helps develop lifelong readers and writers.

[Democratizing Professional Growth With Teachers: From Development to Learning](#)

This literacy leadership brief reimagines a model of professional learning that allows educators to participate in its planning and implementation.

[The Essential Leadership of School Librarians](#)

This literacy leadership brief underscores the multifaceted and essential role of school librarians in fostering literacy and empowering students, highlighting the need for collaboration, advocacy, and access to ensure that every child has the opportunity to become a lifelong reader, particularly in underserved communities.

[Expanding the Canon: How Diverse Literature Can Transform Literacy Learning](#)

This literacy leadership brief suggests a more expansive approach to literature selection that validates more contemporary, multilingual, and culturally specific experiences.

[ILA Children's & Young Adult Book Awards](#)

Since 1975, ILA has recognized newly published authors of both fiction and nonfiction who show exceptional and unusual promise in the field.

[Literacy Glossary ILA Chil](#)

Curated by a team of literacy experts, this resource defines the shared language of literacy research and instruction.

[Using Culturally Relevant and Responsive Children's Literature](#)

This ILA Resource Collection examines how to implement culturally relevant and responsive literature in your curriculum in meaningful ways that empower student learning.

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This updated version was written by Mary Giuffre, one-half of the literacy advocacy duo known as The Crazy Reading Ladies. She is also the principal of Howard Elementary School in West Bridgewater, MA. Additional feedback was provided by Aileen Hower, Leni Caldwell, Darl Kiernan, and Jennifer Varney.

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About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization of literacy educators, researchers, and experts spanning 128 countries. For nearly 70 years, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated, connecting research and practice to improve the quality of literacy learning across the globe. Through its *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals*, ILA provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, which include three peer-reviewed and edited journals—*The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*. Learn more at literacyworldwide.org.

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