

Hello, I am here to talk about the importance of advocating for libraries and the role they play in early childhood literacy

So what is early childhood literacy?

It's what children know about reading and writing before they actually read or write. ... it begins at birth and is closely linked to a baby's earliest experiences with books and stories. Babies learn when they interact with books and the more interactions the better!

Early Literacy skills include such things as awareness of the sounds of language, awareness of print, and the relationship between letters and sounds. Other **literacy skills** include vocabulary, narrative skills and print motivation. And the library is a natural place to explore these key skills for reading development.

Why is this topic important to libraries?

In many communities Libraries are the lead agencies for literacy services for young children and for some, libraries are the first touchpoint in their literacy journey. Libraries support literacy development through the cultivation of young readers Their focus on literacy programs, resources and materials support this: research reveals that over 90% of libraries provide special programming for early literacy with 92% of those libraries adding materials specifically related to early literacy.

Library partnerships with schools and other learning institutions help promote early literacy initiatives, which can change the trajectory of a students life. Libraries are continuously growing their collection, and gives everyone access to early literacy resources, regardless of their socioeconomic background because in libraries, everyone is welcome.

Just recently, in the *Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law: Year One Report Key Findings*, it was discovered that many administrators struggled to provide sufficient access to literacy resources.

School support can be found through libraries that value early literacy. From Story Times, to Summer Reading and many programs in between Libraries are equipped to build into children the skills and enthusiasm needed to enter school.

And once their reading journey begins, school and library partnerships continue to be key in addressing reading challenges. Specifically. partnerships that support the Third Grade Law can make a difference in test scores and achievement.

And when students become proficient readers, they are able to apply these skills to other areas of school curriculum, finding success by building on the foundation of reading. This is the moment a lifelong reader becomes a lifelong learner.

School library partnerships can produce dynamic results in the life of a child.

Early literacy plays a key role in enabling the experiences that research shows are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life.

Now more than ever, libraries play a critical role in providing support and resources for Early Childhood Literacy.

“The Michigan library community supports Early Childhood Literacy because it is the foundation to learning success. .