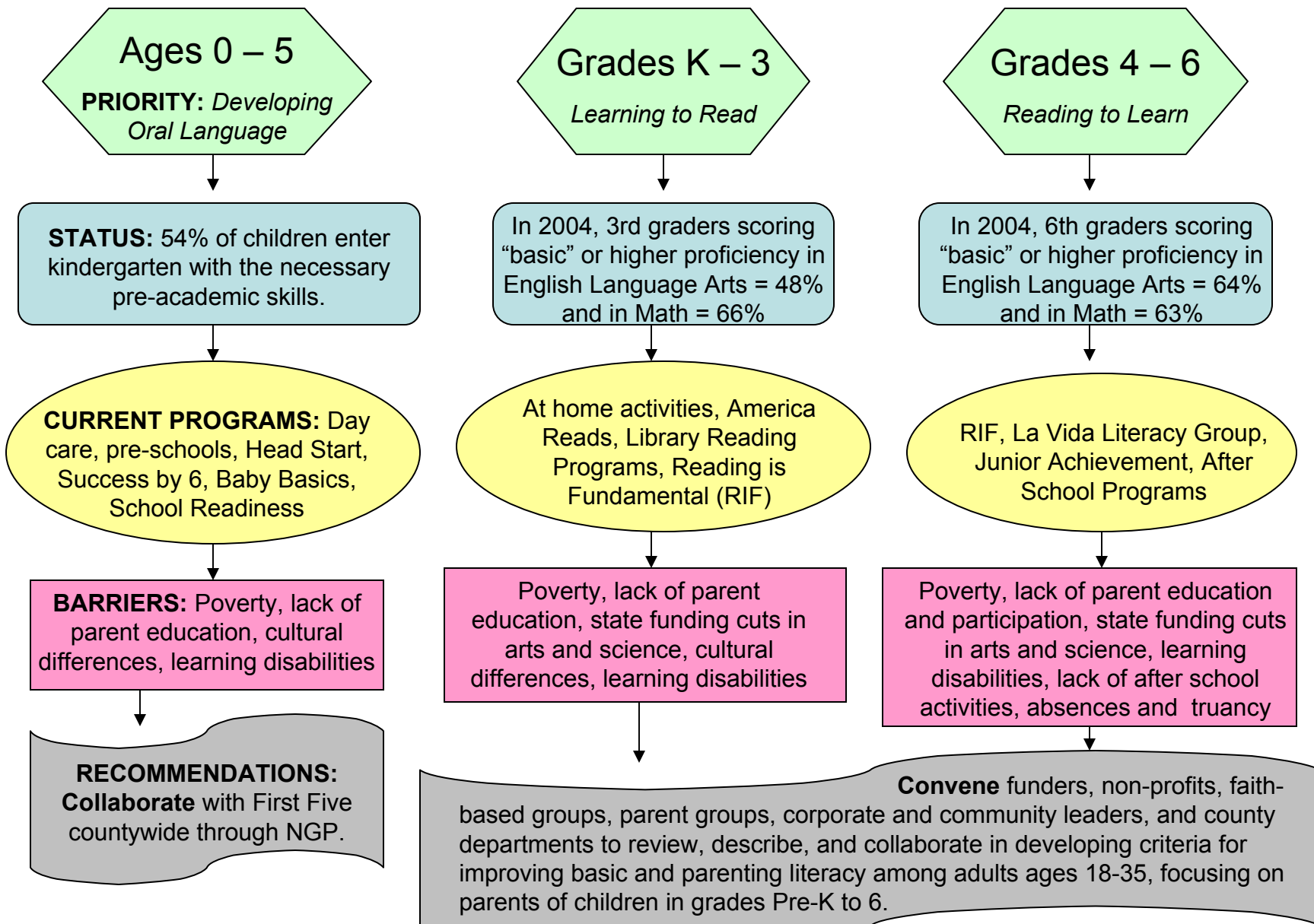


Literacy in Monterey County: Needs, Status, Programs and Barriers by Age Segment
 Community Foundation for Monterey County August 2005



Middle School

Learning to Succeed

STATUS: In 2004, 8th graders scoring “basic” or higher proficiency in English Language Arts = 64% and in Algebra I = 63%

CURRENT PROGRAMS: after school programs, homework centers and Steinbeck Center’s Young Author’s Program

BARRIERS: Poverty, lack of parent education and participation, state funding cuts in arts and science, lack of after school and enrichment activities, learning disabilities, absences and truancy

High School

Connecting Learning to Life and Vocation

In 2004, 11th graders scoring “basic” or higher proficiency in English Language Arts = 55% and in Math = 60%

Specialized academic and occupational programs, community service opportunities, remedial programs, scholarships

Student absenteeism, courses lack relevance and rigor, only motivate 23% of students to complete the courses needed to attend college.
Employers find high school grads lack basic literacy and math skills.

College/Vocational

Mastering Career Knowledge and Skills

54% of county students entering college as freshmen were not proficient in English

36% of Hartnell and MPC students complete basic skills education and continue with more advanced courses, compared to 25% in CA

Poorly prepared students become discouraged and may quit when they cannot perform as well as peers.
Cultural differences, e.g., college bound expected to support family

RECOMMENDATION: None for these ages. Focus on improving basic, parenting, and workplace literacy among adults ages 18 to 35, especially parents with children in grades Pre-K to 6.

Adult

Lifelong Learning to Improve Self, Family and Community

STATUS: Monterey County's workforce is characterized by low literacy, low English-speaking skills, and low levels of secondary and postsecondary educational attainment.

- + 43% of the people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty and 70% of them have no full- or part-time job.
- + 25% of the adult population reads below the 4th grade level.
- + 68% of adults have completed high school but geographic distribution is uneven (97% of Carmel's adults have completed high school but only 33% of Greenfield's adults have.)

The best predictors of children's success on academic tests is how well educated, loving, and economically secure their parents are. It involves choices the parents made early in their own lives. – Steven Leavitt, Economist (2005)

CURRENT PROGRAMS: Adult schools, One Stop Career Centers, CalWORKS, libraries, colleges, on-the-job, and literacy program at the County jail

BARRIERS: negative attitudes about school, time, transportation, child care and family responsibilities, illiteracy in one's native language, few classes and volunteers in South County, lack of awareness about available programs

RECOMMENDATION: Raise participation in educational opportunities by young adults, especially parents ages 18 – 35, for whom basic reading, writing, and mathematics literacy is a barrier to success in their roles as workers and as family and community members.