



Freedom Schools
*Teaching Literacy &
Reading
for Children*

A mind's a terrible thing to waste!

Arthur Fletcher



Freedom Schools for Literacy and Reading *Resources*

Camden Dream CDF Freedom School

- <http://www.camdendreamcenter.org>

Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Schools® Program

- <http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/freedomschools/>.

Grants & Funding

- ProLiteracy's National Book Fund lists funding sources such as Dollar General Literacy Foundation, Council on Foundations, and Barnes & Noble <http://www.proliteracy.org/resources/Grants-Fund>
- NEA Foundation (National Education Association) www.neafoundation.org
- Verizon Foundation Literacy Grants for Non-Profits <http://www.Verizon.org>

Greater New Jersey United Methodist Women (GNJ UMW)

- <http://www.gnjumw.org>

“No School Like Freedom School,” a project of the Southern Law Poverty Law Center

- <http://www.tolerance.org/no-school-like-freedom-school>.

Philadelphia Freedom Schools

- <http://website2013.cisphl.org/program/philadelphia-freedom-schools/>.

St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Montclair, New Jersey

- <http://www.themarkmtc.org>

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Freedom Schools for Literacy and Reading *A Mission*

Freedom Schools today are a legacy of the 1964 Freedom Schools that served as alternative free schools for African Americans mostly in the South who suffered educationally and financially from the mandatory segregated school systems.

The need for literacy and reading continues for two major reasons. One, the children of the 1960s are today's grandparents and parents who had the option of a modicum of economic security versus elementary and high school education, and chose two or more jobs to support their families. And two, in 2015, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that the percentage of students who scored at or above *Proficient* in reading performance in elementary and secondary education was between 34% and 37% for 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. That's 63% to 66% of our children below *Proficient* in reading. Visit the website of NCES at [nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/ataglance.asp].

We can overcome this atrocity at very little cost by initiating literacy and reading programs in our churches with partnerships from community colleges or universities and social organizations. It is happening now, you can start one at your church, and we can help! Human and financial resources are available.

It is not necessary to design or construct a Freedom School in your community. To begin, all that needs to be done is to review your current children's programs, such as Sunday School, Bible Study, and Youth Groups, and incorporate reading into the program. If you currently have reading programs, ensure that the children and/or adults are “reading” and not “being read to.”

Read Aloud!

We ask how is it possible that our proficiency rates are low with our great schools and educational systems? A few things to consider are:

- We are reading to the children and not giving them the opportunity to read to us!
- Some parents have low reading proficiencies and not able to help their children.
- There is an assumption that all graduating students can read.

More than ever before, we owe it to ourselves and others the chance to be able to read! You know, we can begin now to remedy this disaster. How? Together!

- Check with your local church to ensure their youth programs include reading by and not just to those who attend.
- Visit the websites of the resources in this brochure or “Google” the term freedom schools or reading to partner with others.

