

## OPINION

### Our Views: Make Reading Family Activity

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The start of another school year is an occasion to think about how teachers and administrators can do a better job in preparing children for the future.

But the new school year also should be a time for parents to consider the important role they have in helping children to do well in school.

All of this comes to mind with the news that the Library of Congress and the Advertising Council have launched a series of public service advertisements to encourage parents to read with their children and help inspire them to become lifelong learners.

The rationale for the campaign is simple.

Research conducted by Florida State University revealed that when parents become involved in their children's reading practices, children are more willing to read, and read more frequently. Not surprisingly, these children also improve in reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills. In short, they do better in school.

"There is no more important influence in instilling a lifelong love of reading in a child than his or her parent or caregiver," said Deanna Marcum, associate librarian for library services at the Library of Congress.

In Louisiana, where nearly one-fourth of the population is functionally illiterate, many children live in families where their parents or guardians can't read to them. That's a huge challenge for public school teachers and administrators.

But even in families in which adults are literate — yes, even in affluent families with many advantages — we suspect many children are not sharing reading time with their parents on a regular basis.

In these days of multiple extracurricular activities and the distractions of texting, television, the Internet and video games, sustained reading with children can get pushed to the side.

But families that read together also tend to succeed together academically. That is worth keeping in mind as children settle into their classrooms again.

Direct link to editorial on The Advocate's website:

<http://www.2theadvocate.com/opinion/101043199.html>