



LITERACY AND CORRECTIONS

Research shows that education is one of the most effective forms of crime prevention. Educational skills can deter people from committing criminal acts and can decrease recidivism. Inmates who complete education programs are more successful after release than those who do not complete programs. Inmates need certain skills to make a successful transition back into society once they are released from prison.

NATIONAL STATISTICS

- 📖 On December 31, 2000, there were 6,498, 562 people in the U.S. prison system.
- 📖 The average reading level of prison inmates is very low: below the 5th grade in one study and below the 8th grade in another study.
- 📖 About 67% of prison inmates cannot write a brief letter explaining a billing error, read a map, or understand a bus schedule.
- 📖 40% of prisoners do math at Level I of the NAAL scale.
- 📖 Only 9% of all prisoners with low literacy skills receive literacy training while in prison.
- 📖 20% of adults who have been in prison education programs are re-incarcerated.
- 📖 49% of adults who have not been in prison education programs are re-incarcerated.

SOURCE: U.S. Adult Literacy Programs: Making a Difference. ProLiteracy America.

FLORIDA STATISTICS

There were 76,295 inmates in the Florida prison system on April 30, 2003 compared to 73,015 the previous year, a 4.5% increase.

Of the 25,743 inmates admitted into the Florida prison system in fiscal year 1999-2000, approximately 70% were assessed as having less than functional literacy skills (less than a 9th grade level and 50% were classified as having only basic literacy skills (4th- 8th grade levels).

SOURCE: Florida Department of Corrections.

Approximately 85% of Florida's juvenile delinquents are illiterate. Florida's prison population is the 4th largest in the nation. In addition, Florida has the highest crime rate of any state in the nation.

SOURCE: Correction Education School Authority Annual Report 1993-94.

Results of the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) For Fiscal Year 2001-02 for Florida Correctional Education Students

Pretests and posttests were administered and compared. Average gains were reported in each subject area in terms of grade equivalents (GE's):

| Subject Area | Pre Test | Post Test | Gain in GE's |
|---------------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| Reading | 6.0 | 6.4 | + .4 |
| Total Math | 5.9 | 6.4 | + .5 |
| Language | 4.3 | 5.1 | + .8 |
| Total Battery | 5.5 | 5.9 | + .4 |

General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

- 📖 Over 1,500 inmates earned a GED in Florida's prisons during FY 2001-02.
- 📖 2,661 enrolled in GED courses during the same period.
- 📖 The completion rate of inmates taking the GED course in 2001-02 was 54%.
- 📖 27,961 inmates participated in 28, 537 courses during the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Classes in Correctional Settings 2001-02

- 📖 27,961 inmates participated in 28,537 courses.
- 📖 5,644 inmates participated in mandatory literacy classes.
- 📖 12,304 inmates participated in adult basic education classes.
- 📖 2,678 inmates completed a class in mandatory literacy.
- 📖 885 inmates completed a class in adult basic education.
- 📖 172 inmates and 189 children participated in the Even Start program designed to promote family literacy for both inmates and their children.

FACTORS AFFECTING RECIDIVISM

- 📖 On average, a Florida inmate's probability of re-offending drops by 2.9% for each higher grade of adult basic education tested.
- 📖 Inmates who earn a GED are 8.7% less likely to recidivate than those who do not complete a GED program.
- 📖 Inmates who receive a GED and improve their TABE score to 9th grade level or higher are 25% less likely to recidivate than those who receive a GED and have a TABE level of 8th grade or less.

| RECIDIVISM RATES BY EDUCATION GRADE LEVEL TESTED | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Months Since Release | Last Tested Level | | | | Total |
| | 1-3.9 | 4-8.9 | 9-11.9 | 12+ | |
| 6 | 16.9% | 15.4% | 12.0% | 10.4% | 14.1% |
| 12 | 27.1% | 25.0% | 20.1% | 17.7% | 23.1% |
| 18 | 33.9% | 31.4% | 25.9% | 22.3% | 29.3% |
| 24 | 39.1% | 36.3% | 30.2% | 25.8% | 33.8% |
| 36 | 46.2% | 43.0% | 36.2% | 31.0% | 40.2% |
| 48 | 50.9% | 47.2% | 40.0% | 34.3% | 44.3% |
| 60 | 53.6% | 49.8% | 42.6% | 36.4% | 46.8% |
| 72 | 55.3% | 51.8% | 43.9% | 37.5% | 48.6% |

SOURCE: Florida Department of Corrections.