

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

- In 2004, nearly 7 million people nationwide were on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole – 3.2% of all U.S. residents or 1 in every 31 adults.
- In 2005 over 7 million people nationwide were on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole an increase of 65,000 people in one year.
- 75% of America's state prison inmates are high school dropouts.

SOURCE: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households have *Below Basic* quantitative literacy (39 percent compared with 21 percent), but the differences in the percentage of prison inmates and adults living in households who had *Below Basic* prose or document literacy were not statistically significant.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003

- 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.
- 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 (2003).

- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetime.
- A 1% increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately \$1.4 billion in incarceration costs, or about \$2,100 per each male high school graduate.

SOURCE: Alliance for Excellent Education (2003).

FLORIDA STATISTICS

- There were 84,901 inmates in the Florida prison system on June 30, 2005 compared to 81,974 the previous year, a 3.6% increase.
- There were 88,576 inmates in the Florida prison system on June 30, 2006 compared to 84,901 the previous year, a 4.3% increase
- Of the 32,304 inmates admitted into the Florida prison system in fiscal year 2004-2005, approximately 70% were assessed as having less than functional literacy skills (less than a 9th grade level) and 42% were classified as having only basic literacy skills (1st – 5th grade levels).

SOURCE: Alliance for Excellent Education (2003).

General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

- Almost 900 inmates earned or verified their GED certificates while in the Florida prison system.
- 1,781 enrolled in GED courses during the same period.
- The completion rate of inmates taking the GED course in 2004-05 was 42%.
- 17,750 inmates participated in 18,184 courses during the 2004-05 fiscal year.

CLASSES IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS

	FY 01-02	FY 04-05	Percent Change
Florida Inmate Population	73,553	84,901	+13%
Inmate participation in mandatory literacy classes	5,644	2,906	-49%
Inmate participation in adult basic education classes	12,304	8,526	-31%
Inmate completion of a class in mandatory literacy	2,678	908	-66%
Inmate completion of a class in adult basic education	885	676	-24%

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.

SOURCE: Florida Department of Corrections.