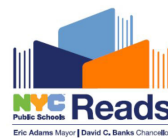


# COMMUNITY PARTNER GUIDE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY ACTIVITIES



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## OVERVIEW

Community partners have an incredibly important role to play in supporting literacy development among children. This document provides some recommendations for literacy activities that are aligned to the science of reading and are great activities to offer as part of programming after the school day, before the school day, and during summer or other holidays in partnership with New York City public schools. Many of these literacy-rich activities that build vocabulary and background knowledge, such as theater, debate, choice reading, field trips, and other learning enrichments, are likely already happening in afterschool programs.

We also include a list below of literacy activities that may currently be offered in the city that evidence tells us are unhelpful for children’s healthy literacy development and that are now outdated. If you see these happening, please transition to activities that are aligned to what the evidence tells us are the best ways to help our young people read.

We hope this “Dos and Don’ts” guide supports continued alignment and collaboration between schools, community partners and families as New York City adopts strategies aligned to the science of reading throughout the literacy day-time in school, in afterschool programs, and at home and in the community.

This is a working document, so we expect to add and adapt this document as we learn together about bright spots and promising practices throughout the five boroughs. If you have a suggestion or question about this document, please record it [here](#).

<b>Do These Activities</b>
Talk to your school leader, education liaison, and the literacy leaders in the school about ways you can complement and support school-day literacy strategies.
Express confidence and commitment that your program is part of a comprehensive literacy vision for young people.
Offer a variety of literacy-focused enrichment activities that complement the school day, so young people are excited and motivated to keep practicing their skills.
Build professional development about literacy for afterschool staff. See these free opportunities from New York City Public Schools <a href="#">here</a> .
Offer books for reading based on themes and interest areas, rather than by a lettered reading level.
If reading with students, encourage them to look at the words to sound them out, rather than looking at pictures or guessing words.
Utilize a variety of books from culturally diverse authors about a range of different cultures and main characters so that young people broaden their knowledge.

## Do These Activities

Provide opportunities for students to read independently when they are interested.

Keep offering enrichment activities that are engaging and of interest to young people!

Ensure a menu of literacy-rich activities, such as theater, debate, poetry, clubs devoted to youth voice and social justice, and other applied learning activities such as computer science and STEM.

Include explicit opportunities to learn new vocabulary words relating to those engaging enrichment activities so young people broaden their vocabulary and background knowledge overall.

Focus on building background knowledge to support and deepen comprehension of material that young people read or create during enrichment activities.

Read or create texts that are connected to afterschool enrichment themes or topics.

Read out loud to children so they can focus on vocabulary and content rather than the mechanics of reading.

Continue book clubs where young people are grouped based on interest, rather than grouped by “reading level”

Set up activities where reading is necessary to complete tasks of interest.

Partner with the school to offer family engagement opportunities, such as family literacy nights or book swaps or giveaways, including about NYC Reads and the science of reading. Review activities suggested by the Office of Family and Community Engagement [here](#).

Keep a positive attitude with children and families about literacy changes in the school and the City’s commitment to make every child a confident reader.

There are some literacy practices that evidence shows us are not effective even though they may be widely used. If you see these happening in your afterschool program, work to phase them out as soon as possible.

## Don't Do These Activities

Don't try to recreate school-day core instruction being delivered by certified educators.

Don't offer literacy tutoring that is not aligned to [citywide standards](#) or without knowledge of the literacy skills that individual children need to develop.

Don't group children based on “reading level.”

Don't use “leveled books” or ask kids to select books at a particular reading level.

Don't ask children to guess what a word is using pictures or context.

Don't add or offer blocks of non-choice independent reading (though feel free to provide time and space for independent reading for young people who choose it).

Don't try to offer phonics instruction without adequate training and collaboration with the school.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Principles of Partnership and Guiding Questions for Community Partnership to Support NYC Reads](#)
- [Literacy Shifts](#)
- [DYCD Literacy Framework](#)
- [Afterschool Alliance Literacy Resources](#)
- [NYCPS High-Impact Tutoring Standards](#)

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This guide was developed by members of the New York City Public Schools Literacy Collaborative, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and ExpandedED Schools.