



## Literacy

# A tool to check the impact of drop-outs on your county

High school dropouts are more than 12 years in the making. Children start learning at birth; the foundation for future learning is laid in the first few years. Disadvantaged children come to school at least two years behind their peers in pre-reading skills, and most

never catch up. By 3rd grade, a child's grades and absenteeism rates can predict with 90% accuracy whether he or she will complete high school.



The entire education continuum, from birth through 21, must be

in our collective crosshairs if we want to move the needle on high school graduation. That means making sure children are:

- Ready for school, starting with the social, emotional and cognitive skills they need to succeed;
- Reading on track by 4th grade;
- Transitioning successfully to middle school;
- Graduating high school on time;
- Working or in school by 21.

What's the impact of high school dropouts in your community? United Way's Common Good Fore-

caster™, found at [www.liveunited.org/forecaster](http://www.liveunited.org/forecaster), can help you determine exactly how education affects your community's future. For example, it can predict to what degree might higher levels of education in your county lower the poverty and unemployment rates – and boost incomes. But beyond jobs and incomes, it can show how changes in the educational level of a place affect its incarceration rate. Or the percentage of adults who are obese. Or even voter turnout in the next election.

[www.liveunited.org/education/index.cfm](http://www.liveunited.org/education/index.cfm)

Start a Rotary Early Readers Program—change a life, change a community!

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