Risk factors that work against achieving literacy in English

"Literacy is about reading but it's much more too. It's about opportunity, giving people the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. It is about preparing people for the 21st Century, when a fully literate workforce will be crucial to our strength as a nation. Without literacy, the history books and the job manual are closed, the internet is turned off, and the promise of America is much harder to reach.

President William J. Clinton. Address to the Nation, December 21, 1996

The following is a selection of more than fifty factors defined by The Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence CREDE Talking Leaves, Vol 2, No1, Fall, 1997.

- Living in a household with sustained and periodic poverty
- Living in a high poverty and high crime neighbourhood
- Being a speaker of a non-mainstream dialect
- Having learning or other disabilities
- Dropping out of school
- Being diagnosed with a developmental delay before age 3
- Receiving educational services that are mostly limited in scope, quality and time
- Having limited proficiency in English
- Failure to develop basic reading skills by age nine predicts a lifetime of illiteracy.

National Centre for Educational Statistics 1998