

SPEAKING



MAYA Smart

Keynote Speaker, Event Host, and Workshop Facilitator

MAYA Smart



About Maya

Author and community advocate **Maya Payne Smart** believes that increasing literacy and access to books builds a more just, connected society. That's why she's on a mission to demystify how kids learn to read, democratize access to fantastic early learning experiences, and empower all parents to raise thriving readers.

Maya inspires and equips audiences to drive transformative literacy for their children, students, or communities. Her presentations for parents, educators, and concerned citizens deliver valuable content and practical strategies listeners can implement right away. Maya's workshops and talks translate years of research encapsulated in her new book *Reading for Our Lives: A Literacy Action Plan from Birth to Six* (forthcoming from Avery/Penguin Random House) into clear, motivating messages. Maya also speaks on leadership, success, and giving back, always with a focus on leaving audiences informed and excited to take action.

Maya publishes tools for parents to nurture, teach, and advocate for kids on the road to reading at MayaSmart.com. She has served on the boards of numerous library and literacy organizations around the country and now resides in Milwaukee, where she is an affiliated faculty member in Educational Policy and Leadership in the College of Education at Marquette University. She holds a master's degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and a bachelor's in social studies from Harvard University.

We Should All Be Readers

In *Reading for Our Lives*, award-winning journalist and literacy advocate Maya Payne Smart gives parents, parent educators, and everyone who cares about the wellbeing of the coming generation the knowledge and tools to help kids thrive. Now she's taking the book's messages on the road, via live and virtual presentations at libraries, schools, workplaces, conferences, and more.



Signature Speaking Topics:

How to Give Your Child a Smart Start

FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

How to Engage Parents in Student Success from Day One

FOR TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, SCHOOL LIBRARIANS, AND PARENT EDUCATORS

Why America's Reading Crisis Is Your Problem and What to Do About It

FOR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

In particular, Maya's early literacy presentations:

- Take an unflinching look at the state of our national reading education—which is to say, the preparation of our children to thrive—and paint a sobering picture of America's reading crisis.
- Provide a prescription for resolving the reading achievement calamity, informed by reams of data, research, and observation.
- Hit home with a powerful case that raising a reader begins from day one, given that caregivers' nurturing, supportive back-and-forth talk with babies literally stimulates brain function and shapes brain connections.
- Bust myths, squaring with parents on what it does and doesn't take to set kids up for success and inspiring them to become better teachers and educational advocates for their children—and all children.
- Spur everyone—parent or not—to increase their investment in children's early learning experiences to ensure that the next generation has the skills and knowledge to fully participate in society.

Custom Presentations:

Beyond literacy, Maya is also available to present on other subjects, including leadership, philanthropy, advocacy, and service.

“Thank you so much for such a fantastic training and ed session! It was so great to learn what to focus on for my four-month-old now and what to think about for the future. The workshop contained a great mix of slides, quick videos, and attendee participation. It felt more like a conversation than the typical zoom call/presentation, and I walked away with some things that I could incorporate starting today, which is a very exciting takeaway.”

- Lindsay B, Austin, Texas

“We invited Maya to speak at our first post-pandemic live event and she delivered an excellent, customized message that resonated with our audience and won a standing ovation. I love how she researched our mission, history, and impact and weaved familiar United Way quotes, themes, and ideas into her presentation. Plus, she's a pleasure to work with behind the scenes and inspires with her work and her words.”

- Dan Herda,

Director of Communications at United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

“We featured Maya and her book, *Reading for Our Lives*, in a live webinar for parent educators, librarians, speech therapists, and home visitors. She shared wonderful insights that were really tailored to their interests and needs, and it was so amazing to watch the audience come along with real-time realizations in the chat. I loved, loved, loved watching them connect the dots between language and literacy and to be so engaged and excited by the information! She was prepared and present. I would highly recommend Maya for presentations to parents and the professionals who support them.”

- Mindy Ricketts, Head of Marketing and Content, LENA Foundation

Contact Maya Today

Maya has created customized speeches and workshops for a wide variety of organizations, including those listed below. She's also a veteran conversation host who's interviewed bestselling authors like Zadie Smith, Jacqueline Woodson, Angie Thomas, Salman Rushdie, and Colson Whitehead before live audiences.



“As a speaker, I've addressed groups of all sizes on topics from literacy and literature to leadership and purpose. But whether I'm speaking to 20 or 2,000, my goal is the same. To engage my audience with information and strategies that will impact their lives—and equip them to impact the world.”

- Maya Payne Smart

To inquire about Maya's signature or custom presentations, complete the info form at www.mayasmart.com/speaking or email hello@mayasmart.com.

Thank you!