



# Program Overview

Inspire a Love of Reading



**Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they live.**

## Welcome to the Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world. We partner with local communities to provide a specially-selected, high-quality book each month to participating children from birth to age five. These books are personalized with each child's name and mailed directly to their home to create a gifting experience that makes books exciting and encourages families to spend time enjoying books together.

Best of all, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to all children at no cost to the family.



"Before he passed away, my Daddy told me the Imagination Library was probably the most important thing I had ever done. I can't tell you how much that meant to me because I created the Imagination Library as a tribute to my Daddy. He was the smartest man I have ever known, but I know in my heart his inability to read probably kept him from fulfilling all of his dreams.

"Inspiring kids to love to read became my mission. In the beginning, my hope was simply to inspire the children in my home county, but here we are today with a worldwide program that gives a book a month to well over 1 million children.

"Of course, I have not done this alone. The real heroes of our story are the thousands of local organizations who have embraced my dream and made it their own. They raise millions of dollars each year and wake up every day with a passion to make sure their kids have every opportunity to succeed.

"It's been quite a journey, but we have so much more left to do. I would love for your community to join our family so please take the time to explore our website. Let's share this dream that all children should grow up in a home full of books.

"The first step is always the hardest, but you'll never know unless you try."

*Dolly*

**Dream More, Learn More, Care More, Be More**

ImaginationLibrary.com





# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth to age five in participating communities within the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.



**Provide the gift of literacy for all children, birth to age five**



**Inspire children to love books and reading**



**Support parents and communities in fostering a child's success**

## Together, making a difference.

Since 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has delivered more than 90 million books to children in more than 2,000 local communities worldwide.

With the support of local funders, coordination by partners and encouragement from community leaders and organizations, parents and educators spread the love of reading and engage children in the most fundamental skill necessary to succeed in life.

### Invest In Early Literacy

1. Ninety percent of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life, when a baby forms over 1 million new neural connections per second.
2. When a young child enters kindergarten ready for school, there is an 82% chance that the child will master basic skills by age 11, compared with a 45% chance for children who are not school-ready.
3. Later in life, at-risk children who do not receive high-quality early childhood experiences are 25% more likely to drop out of school, 40% more likely to become teen parents and 60% less likely to attend college.
4. Investment in high-quality early childhood programs for at-risk children from birth to age five delivers a 7–10% annual return on investment through improved education, health, social and economic outcomes, increased productivity and the reduced need for social spending.

The presence of books in the home supports the child's academic, social, and emotional development. Children develop a special bond with their parents and caregivers by reading together. The Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world at no cost to the family.

**Challenge:** Children who are read to early in life are better prepared for school. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been shown to significantly increase the time parents and caregivers spend reading to their children each week.

## Key Stakeholders



**Policymakers and Funders** have significant influence in directing resources and catalyzing partnerships to adopt, scale, and take full advantage of opportunities with the Imagination Library.

**Parents and Caregivers** are a child's first teacher and set the course for developing their child's love of books and reading. Reading to their child from birth to age five improves their future reading ability and academic success.

**Educators and Community Leaders** validate the impact and continued progress as young students develop reading skills. Reducing the literacy gap in the early years allows teachers a better start in developing lifelong learners.

**Affiliates and Community Partners** offer the connection point, driving local awareness, enrolling local children, and paying the wholesale cost of the books and mailing each month.





# Funders & Policymakers

Inspire a Love  
of Reading

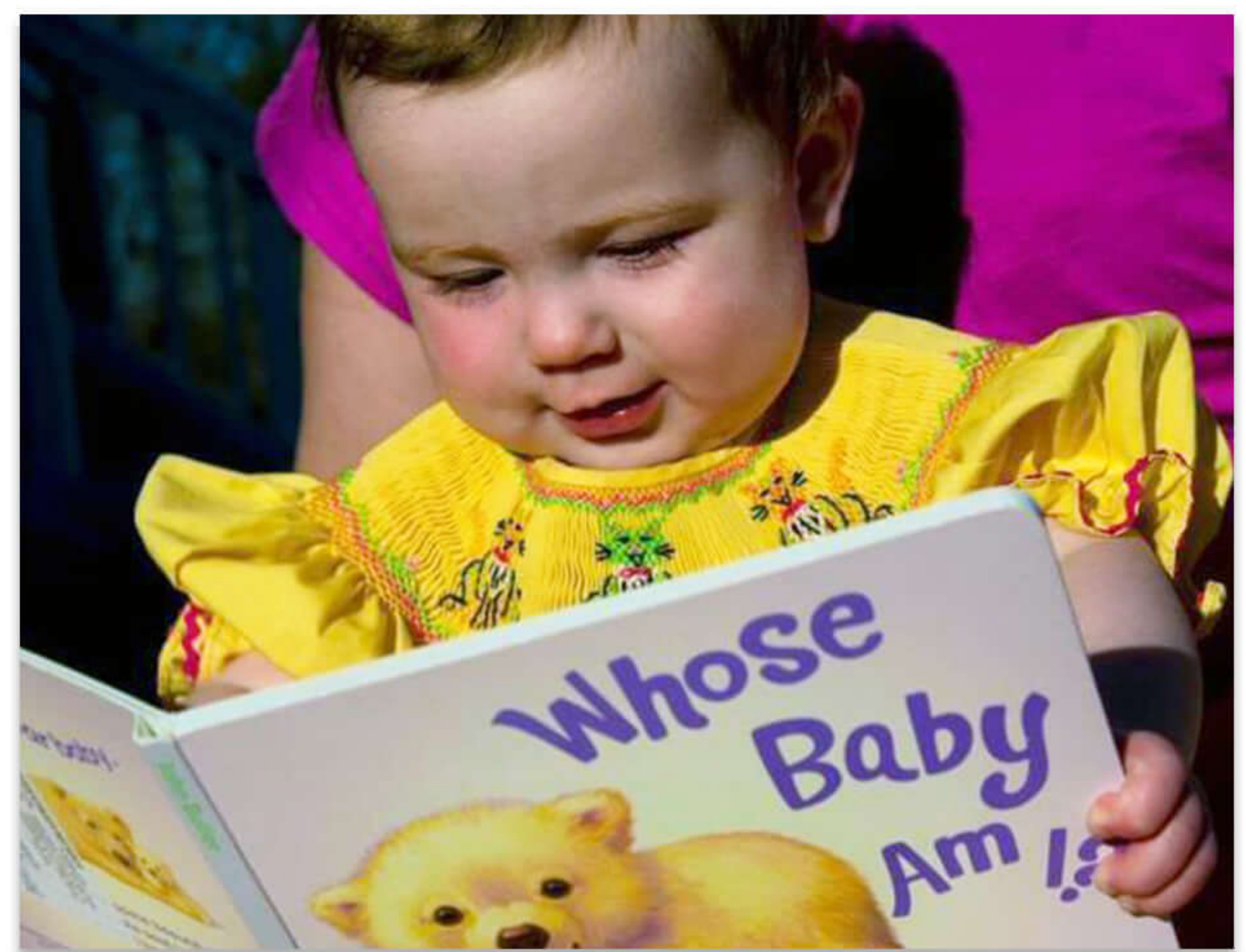


Dolly launched the Imagination Library to honor her father who was smart and hardworking, but never learned to read or write. The program is meant to give children from all walks of life, both in the United States and around the world a chance that Dolly's father never had.

**Children ages birth-five who are registered with the program receive a free, age-appropriate book mailed to their home each month until age five.**

Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they live.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children around the world. We partner with local communities to provide a free, high-quality book each month to registered children from birth to age five. The books are hand selected by a committee of early childhood experts to be age-appropriate and align with the child's developmental needs.



*Books are personalized with the child's name and mailed directly to their home to create a gifting experience that makes books exciting and special.*

A love of books and reading offers the foundation for literacy skills that set children up for future success. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library levels the playing field for all children by helping them build a home library of their very own and encouraging increased interaction with caregivers around books and reading.

**"You can never get enough books into the hands of enough children."**

*Dolly*



**Dream More, Learn More, Care More, Be More**

ImaginationLibrary.com





# Helping Children Succeed & Communities Prosper

Improving early childhood literacy with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library creates opportunities for children to thrive so they succeed in school and help their communities grow and prosper.



**Invest in books for children and families**



**Support local partners offering the program**



**Improve early literacy in your community**

## Dolly is investing in young children and hopes you will too.

The Dollywood Foundation covers program overheads by providing the custom-built Book Order System and coordinating the book selection, procurement, and fulfillment processes. In addition, the Dollywood Foundation purchases high-quality, customized books at scale, significantly reducing cost. With these contributions, our local partners are only required to cover the at-cost book and mailing expenses for children registered in their coverage area.

Funders and local partners facilitate the cost of providing books so there is no cost to children and families. This approach, along with the model that the program is available to all children and families in a covered area, helped Dolly Parton's Imagination Library receive a coveted **Best Practice Award** from the **U.S. Library of Congress** for addressing social barriers to literacy.

With funding and local community partnerships, the Imagination Library is able to provide an age-appropriate book each month to every child registered in the program, absolutely *free* to the family.

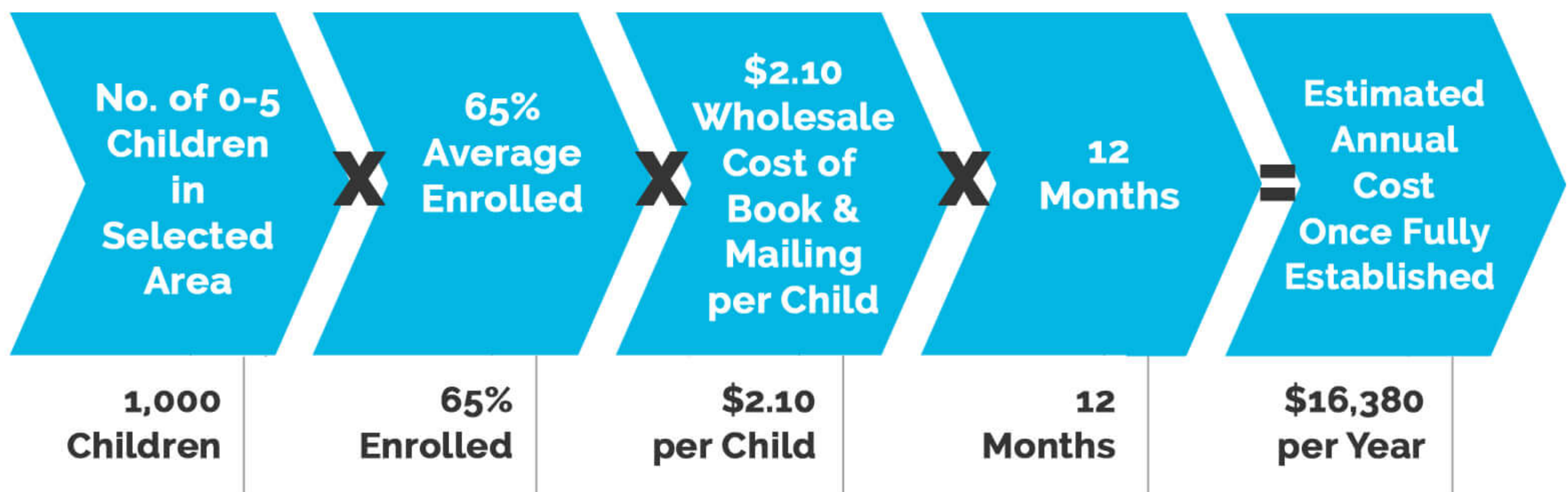
**The average retail cost of Imagination Library titles is about \$13 per book. However, by purchasing in volume, the Imagination Library is able to acquire and mail customized titles for about \$2.10 per child per month.**

### How can you get involved?

- ✓ Help fund Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to promote literacy and a love of reading in your community.
- ✓ Utilize your position as a community leader to communicate Dolly Parton's Imagination Library value for children and families in your community.
- ✓ Connect with potential community partners to let them know you are interested in financially supporting Dolly Parton's Imagination Library locally.
- ✓ Organize other friends and colleagues to join in financially supporting Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for local children.
- ✓ Foster local Imagination Library research on books and literacy practices in the home.

The *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* states that reading aloud to children at a young age can positively impact a child's brain development: When preschool children listen to stories, it activates the areas of their brains that are associated with processing images and narrative comprehension. It also exposes children to a larger, more diverse vocabulary and greater variety of sentence structures than just talking to them.

### Imagination Library Simplified Funding Formula



*\*Example for community with 1,000 eligible children*







# Parents & Caregivers

Inspire a Love  
of Reading



**A love of books and reading offers the foundation for literacy skills that set children up for future success. Parents reading to their children from birth improves a child's future reading ability.**

Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they live.

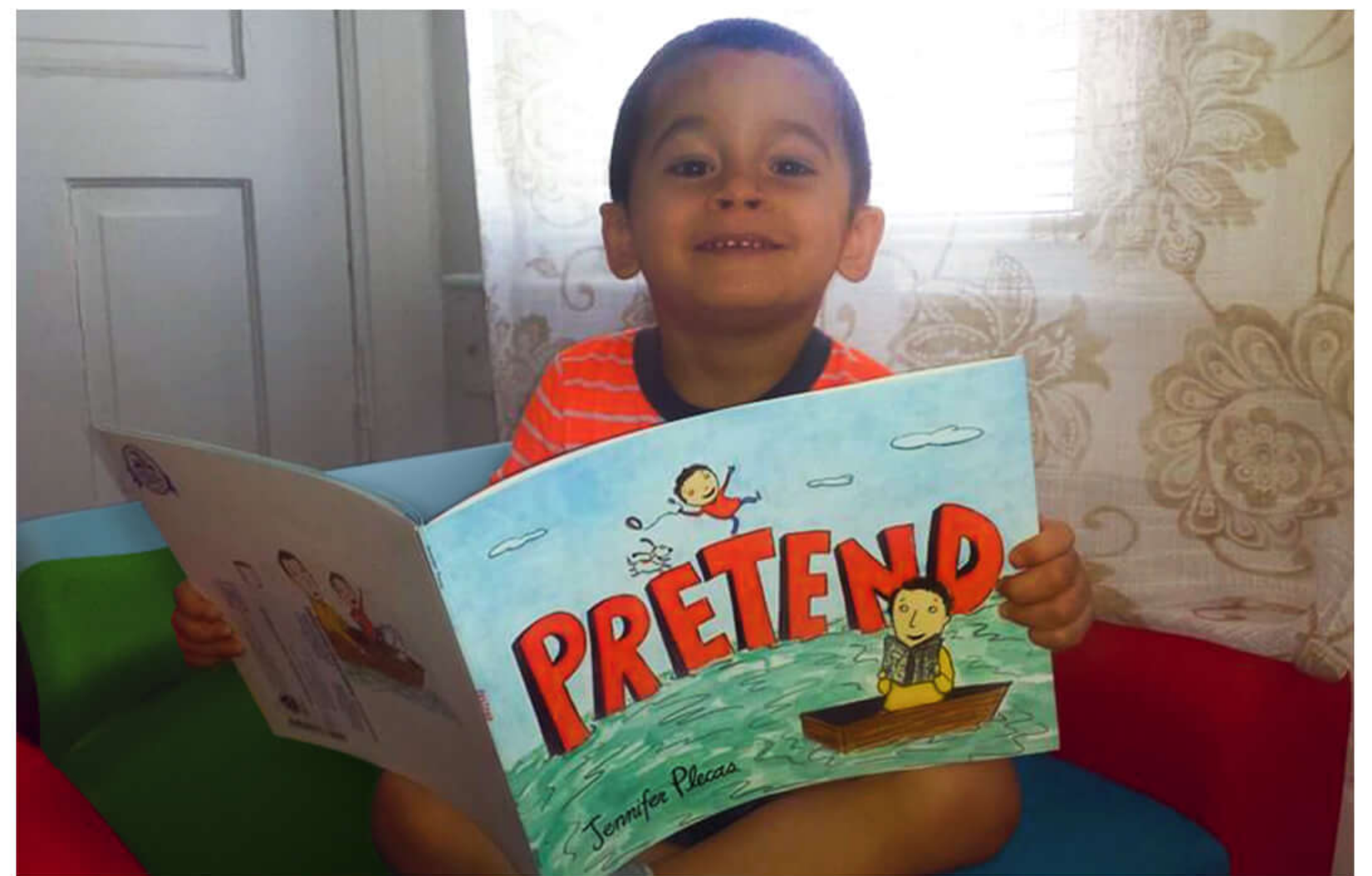
*"The single most significant factor influencing a child's early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school."*

*National Commission on Reading*

**As a parent or caregiver, reading with your child is the most important activity that you can do to help set them up for future success.**

Through the Imagination Library, Dolly wants children to be excited about books and to feel the magic that books create. Moreover, she could insure that every child would have books, regardless of their family's income. For over 20 years, tens of millions of Imagination Library books have been sent to children around the world.

**Register your child to receive a book a month from the Imagination Library.**



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world.

We partner with local communities to provide one free, specially-selected, age-appropriate, high-quality book each month to children from birth to age five. These books are personalized with your child's name and mailed directly to your home to create a gifting experience that makes books exciting and shows the child someone is thinking of them.

Visit the [ImaginationLibrary.com](https://www.ImaginationLibrary.com) website to access proven and trusted resources for parents and caregivers including tips for reading to children and family engagement activities.



## Engaging Parents & Caregivers

Imagination Library has lots of experience with caregivers, children, and reading. We encourage good reading habits for parents, caregivers, and their children. When your child receives their Imagination Library books, we ask you to do the following:



**Snuggle, ask questions, notice letters, make sounds, have fun!**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library books are specially-selected, age-appropriate, high-quality books that are mailed to registered children at home each month from birth to age five. And best of all, it is a *free* gift to the family!



The Imagination Library Blue Ribbon Selection Committee consists of a nationally recognized group of professionals hand selected to lend their expert recommendations and guidance when tasked with choosing the perfect set of books for hundreds of thousands of children.

***Parents and caregivers may visit the Parent Resource section of [ImaginationLibrary.com](http://ImaginationLibrary.com) to access reading tips and guides by age, activities, and more.***

**Thank you so much for the books! I love reading them to my daughter, some I had never read, and some I loved as a kid. It is an awesome program and my three year old LOVES getting her own special mail every month.**

*Smyrna, TN*

***My kids absolutely love getting their books in the mail every month! My husband and I read to our kids every night and enjoy the variety of stories we get to introduce them to. It was hard to pick just three that topped our lists, since so many are a huge hit in our house. Awesome program!!!***

Waterford, MI

***I absolutely love Imagination Library. It is such a wonderful way to get children on the right track to a successful education. Thank you for providing books to my child. He's almost two and he loves your books and uses them on a daily basis!***

Harlingen, TX



# Books & Selection



## Inspiring a Love of Books and Reading

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world. The Imagination Library books are specially-selected, age-appropriate, high-quality books that are delivered to registered children each month from birth to age five. These books are personalized with the child's name and mailed directly to the child's home to create a gifting experience that makes books exciting and shows the child someone is thinking of them.

Title-Specific  
Reading Tips

Blue Ribbon  
Selection Seal

Spanish / English  
Bilingual Titles

Progressive  
Format



Each title is specially selected by a panel of leading childhood literacy experts.

### Owl Moon

by Jane Yolen  
illustrated by John Schoenherr

ONE WINTER'S NIGHT UNDER A FULL MOON, father and daughter walk into the woods in search of a Great Horned Owl.

For the first reading, curl up with your child and read the book together. Enjoy! For the next readings, here are some ideas for activities to do with your child. Don't try to do everything each time you read it. And most of all, have fun and enjoy sharing the story with your child.

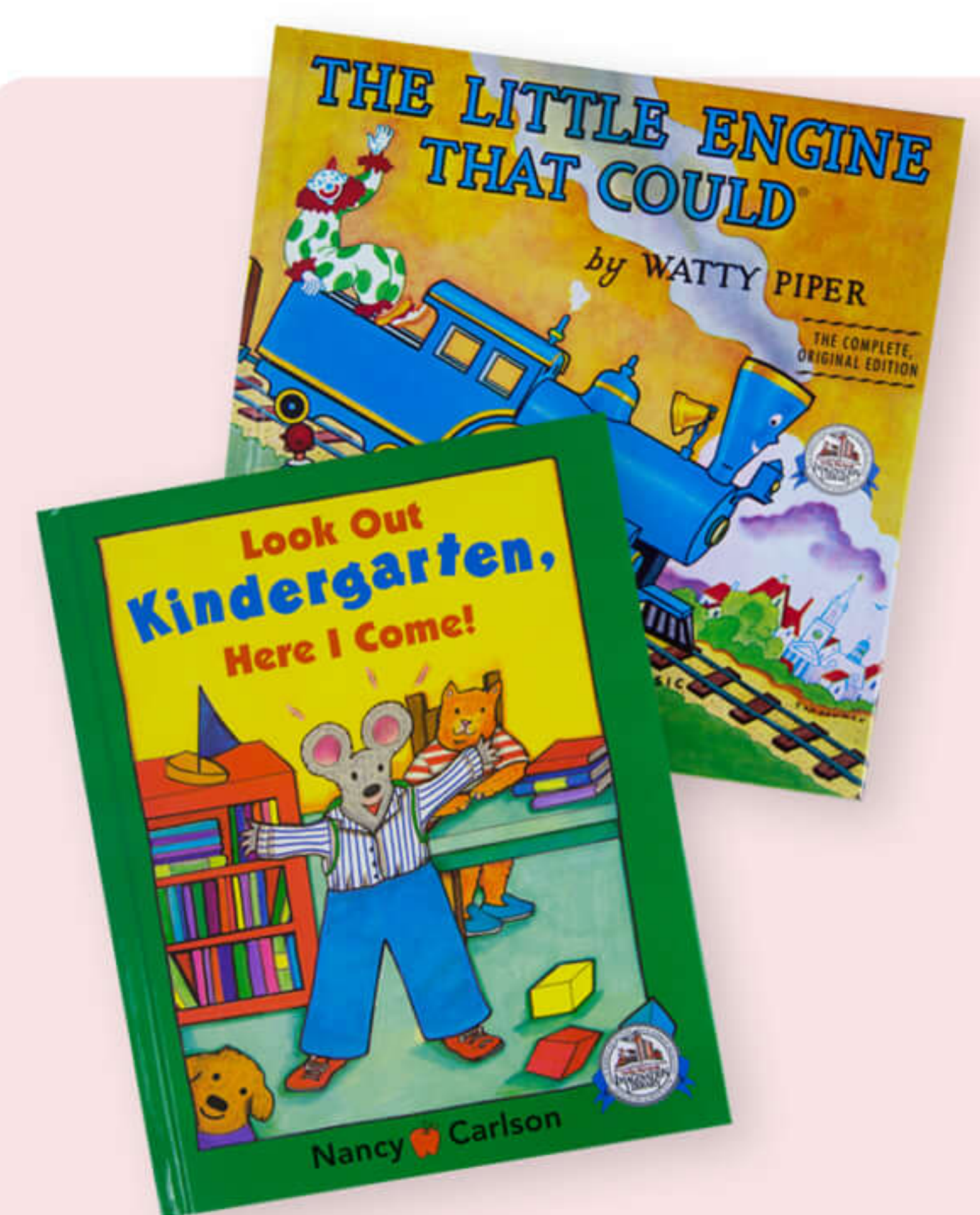
#### STARTING UP

- Look at the cover together. Point to the moon and the soft colors. Ask your child, "Is it night or day?"
- After reading the title, ask your child where the owl is. (Hint: Look at the back cover too!)

#### READING THE STORY

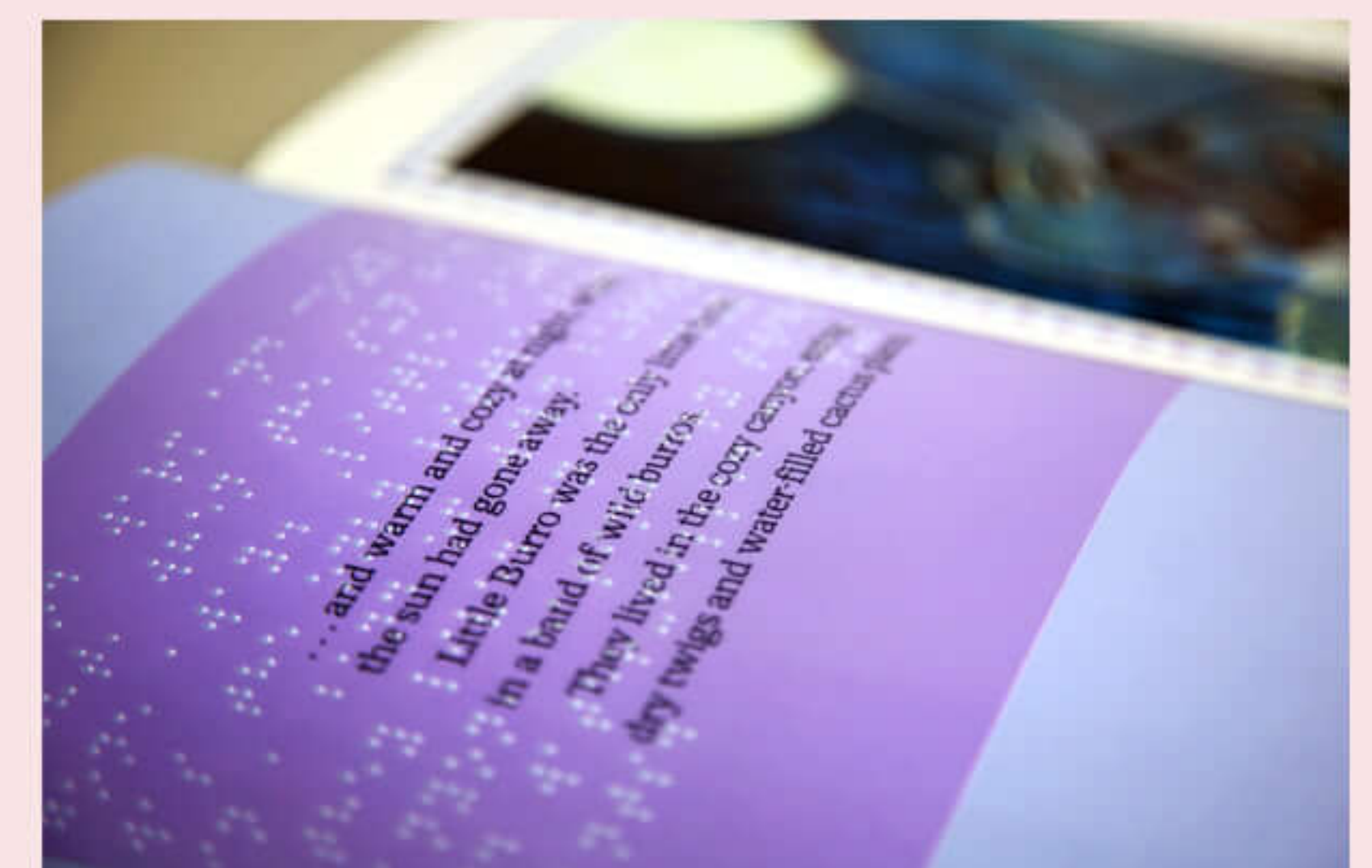
- The girl does everything her father does. In each scene, point out what the father is doing. Ask your child, "Is the girl doing the same thing?"
- The sounds and silences of the story are musical.
- Make the howling sounds of the dogs and the train, "howwwwooo, whooooooo." Sing the owl sounds, too.
- Whisper as you read the story.

Each title has Reading Tips that extend the engagement and interaction between the child and caregiver.



From the first book, "The Little Engine That Could" to the last book, "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!", every book is selected with a special purpose.

### Braille



Through a partnership with the American Printing House for the Blind, we are able to help provide books for blind and visually impaired children.



Two Spanish/English bilingual titles are selected per age group each year.

Award-winning books are available in progressive formats.



Soft Cover

Case Bound

Board Books





# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton launched the Imagination Library to honor her father, who was smart and hardworking, but never learned how to read or write. The program is meant to give children from all walks of life, both in the United States and around the world, a chance that Dolly's father never had. Together, we can put books in the hands and hearts of all children.



**Select high quality,  
age appropriate  
books**



**Build a home  
library of  
books**



**Inspire a love  
of books, shared  
reading time**

## Prevalent Themes and Focus of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: Inspiration & Imagination

### Additional Fundamental Themes of Regard:

Love of reading and learning; regard for diversity of people, their roles, culture, and environment; promotion of self-esteem and confidence, appreciation of art and aesthetics

#### Year One: Birth to 12 Months

- Vision - bright, big, colorful
- Touch - board pages
- Rhyme and rhythm
- Simple - easy to use
- Minimal text - point and say
- Playful sound
- Nurture - attachment, lullaby themes

#### Year Two: 13 Months to 24 Months

- Continue concepts from year one and build upon them
- Repetition and predictability - generate language
- Books about daily routines, topics familiar to child
- Use of real photo illustration
- Body awareness
- Nursery rhymes
- Colors, letters, numbers

#### Year Three: 25 Months to 36 Months

- Wordless books - build your own story (reader and child)
- Values and character
- Issues - fear, conflict, love, safety
- Colors, letters, numbers
- Nursery rhymes

#### Year Four: 37 Months to 48 Months

- More complex stories - hero, complication, resolution
- Diversity of others - faces, environments - OK to be different
- Play, humor, fun
- Nursery rhymes and poetry

#### Year Five: 49 Months to 60 Months

- School preparation and readiness
- Use rebus (pictures used for words)
- Science - non-fiction
- Folk tales
- Thank you, appreciation
- Rhymes and poetry

The Blue Ribbon Book Selection Committee consists of early childhood professionals who lend their expertise in choosing the perfect set of age-appropriate books for hundreds of thousands of children across the U.S.

*I am very impressed with the book selection and quality of books. My son and I look forward to finding the books in the mailbox!*

*Parent, Dansbury, CT*

*I love this program and I LOVE, LOVE the discussion guides, they give me new and different age appropriate questions to ask.*

*Parent, Wichita, KS*



**To view the annual book list or to learn more about the book selection committee, visit our website at [ImaginationLibrary.com](http://ImaginationLibrary.com).**





# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

## Summary of Research

### Welcome to the Imagination Library

Imagination Library began with Dolly Parton's desire that every child, regardless of income, would have access to books. Since its founding, the Dollywood Foundation has conducted and encouraged research on the Imagination Library program in an effort to assess communities' reactions to the program and its impact on children's literacy. The majority of this research has been implemented at the local community level, by program staff or local researchers, to provide formative and summative feedback to support local Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) implementations.

***"We love the Imagination Library program! My daughter is so excited to get her new book each month. It supplements our trips to the public library and gets her excited about entering kindergarten as well."***

The Dollywood Foundation initiated a review of over 20 years of research conducted on Imagination Library programs in the U.S. and internationally. The findings from the body of DPIL research indicate the program is extremely popular in the communities where it is implemented and show promise in promoting changes in home literacy environments, children's attitudes toward reading, and early literacy skills.



### Positive Perceptions

- Participating family members were overwhelmingly positive about the program and its impact on their children when asked in questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups.
- Community members, including Imagination Library partners and preschool and kindergarten teachers, also had positive views of the program and its impact on book ownership and literacy practices in homes.
- The positive views of the program and its impacts were present regardless of the demographic characteristics of the community or its participants, and longer program participation often resulted in more positive outcomes.



### Richer Home Literacy Environments

- Parents read aloud more to their children and were more comfortable reading as a result of DPIL.
- Parents reported their children owned more books as a result of participating in the program.



**Dream More, Learn More, Care More, Be More**







### Improving Attitudes and Skills

- Parents believed their children were more interested in reading due to receiving the books each month.
- Participating children were excited when their DPIL books arrived in the mail monthly, addressed specifically to the child.
- Some studies found DPIL had promise with respect to developing children's early literacy skills, as participants had more advanced skills than their classmates who did not participate in the program.



### Logic Model

The Dollywood Foundation is committed to supporting local DPIL programs and communities. One focus of our recent work has been identifying common outcomes for all DPIL programs. This will ensure we are all on the same page and provide the best program possible for children and families. These research-based outcomes were identified through reviews of the literature and are considered to be building blocks for lifelong literacy, supported by the research, and aligned with DPIL's philosophy and goals.

### Imagination Library strives to...

Enhance participants' home literacy environments so that...

- ✓ Books are available in homes
- ✓ Caregivers begin reading to children early in life
- ✓ Caregivers read to children frequently and for increasing amounts of time as they age

Promote positive attitudes and increased motivation to read so...

- ✓ Children ask adults to read to them
- ✓ Children "play" with books independently

Increase the number of interactions between caregivers and children during reading so...

- ✓ Children respond and contribute to book reading
- ✓ Children practice reading skills

### Such that children develop emerging literacy skills including...

- ✓ Understanding print conventions
- ✓ Naming letters and making letter sounds
- ✓ Increasing their vocabulary
- ✓ Understanding oral sounds, syllables, and words
- ✓ Improving auditory memory





# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

## Summary of Research

### Logic Model (continued)

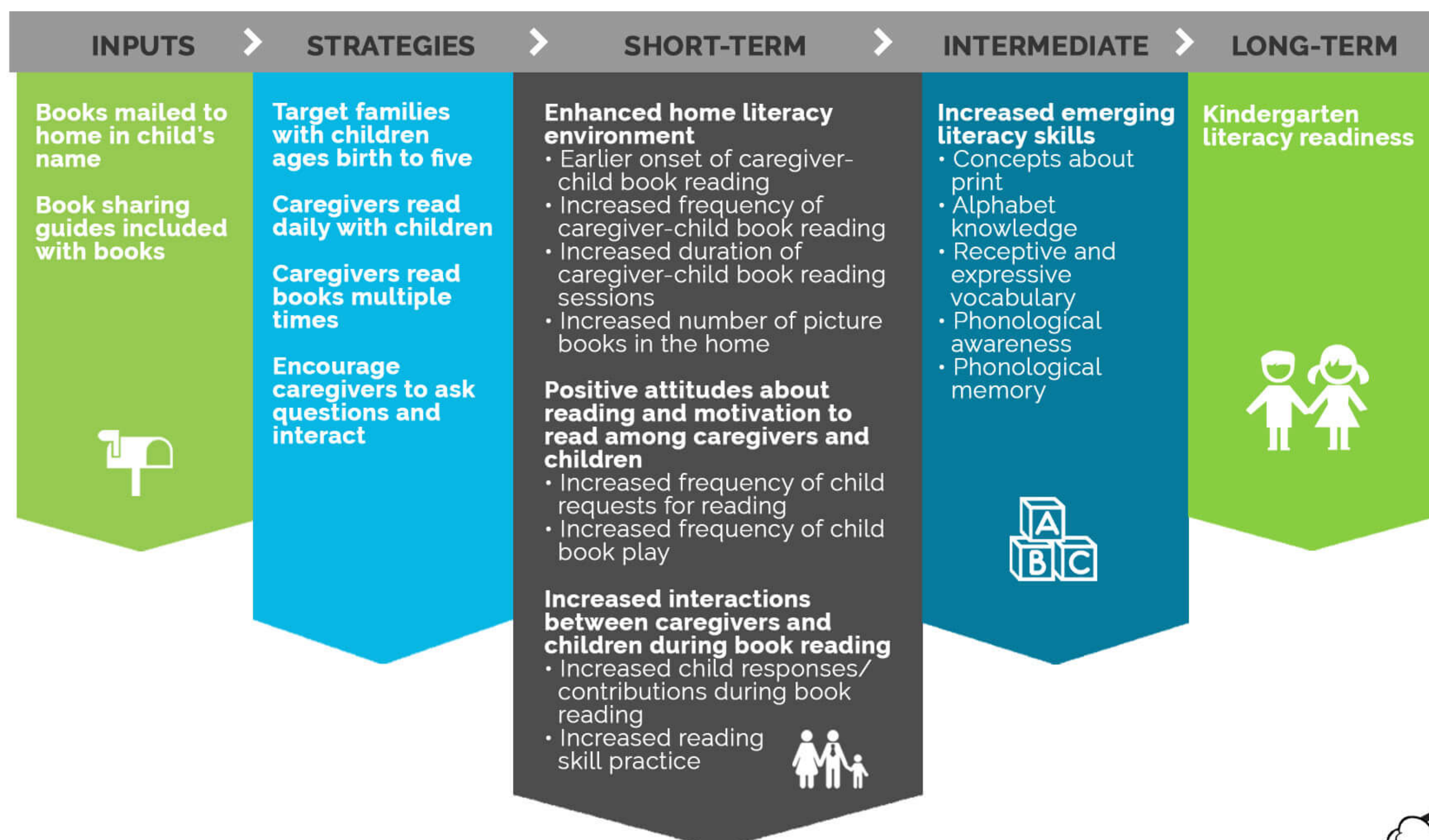
The Dollywood Foundation is committed to guiding and assisting community-based DPIL programs to provide the best experience for all participants. The Foundation will support both beginning and existing community-based DPIL programs by providing resources to help organizations...

- ✓ Plan how to research and evaluate the program
- ✓ Establish partnerships with local researchers
- ✓ Become familiar with the research on DPIL and what lessons were learned
- ✓ Use the Dollywood Foundation's resources and guidance to communicate effectively with researchers and other community stakeholders
- ✓ Conduct innovative research to assess DPIL's identified outcomes

The Foundation looks forward to continuing our work supporting rigorous research on Imagination Library in existing and new DPIL communities. Through this research, we can continue to expand Dolly's vision of ensuring every child is exposed to the magic of books!

### Logic Model

*Based on Imagination Library Research Findings and Literature Review.*



**For information and program details, please visit [ImaginationLibrary.com](http://ImaginationLibrary.com).**







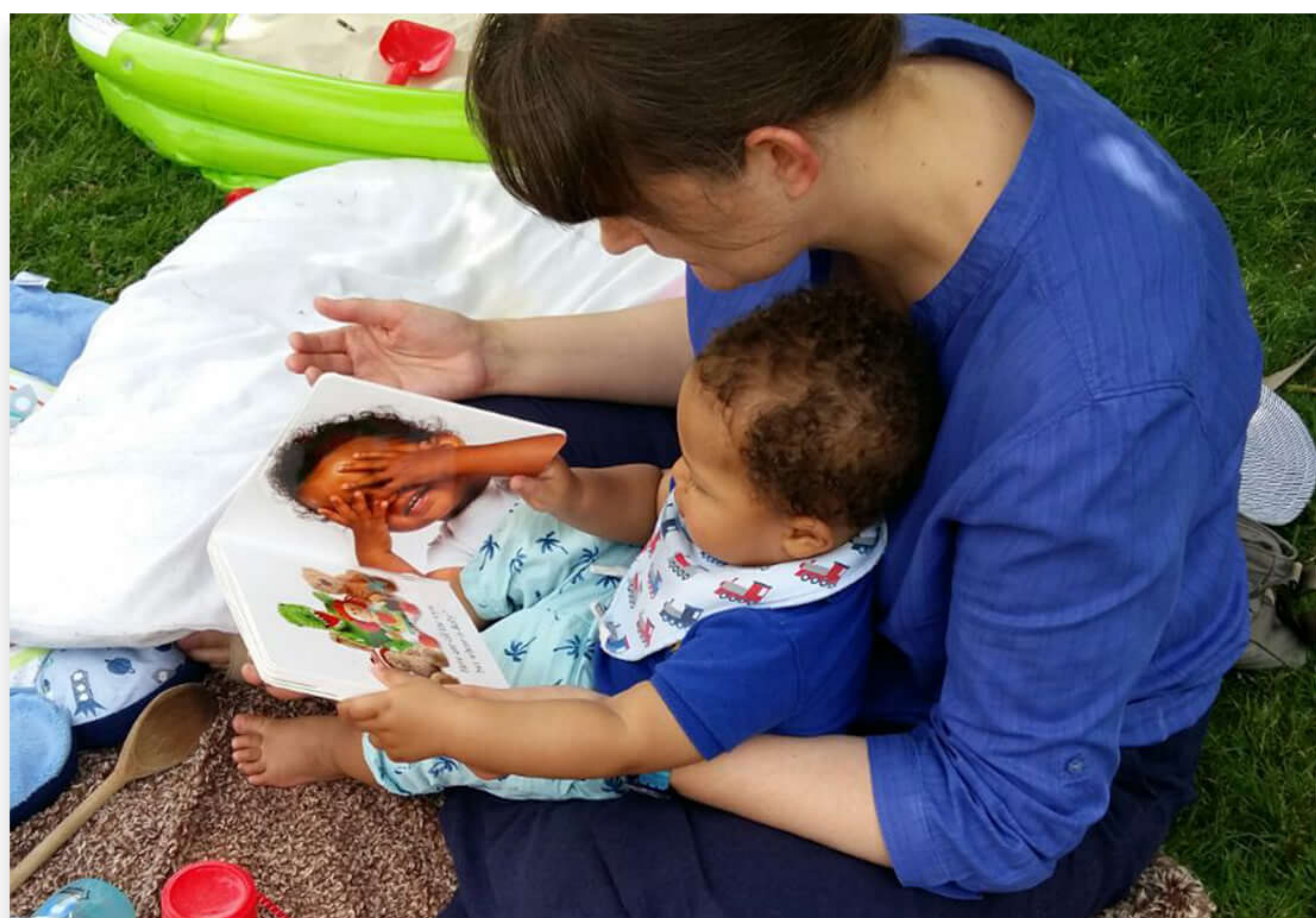
# Educators & Community Leaders

Inspire a Love  
of Reading



Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they live.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world. We partner with local communities to provide one free, high-quality book each month to our children from birth to age five. These books are selected by early childhood experts to be age-appropriate, personalized with the child's name and mailed directly to the child's home. This creates a gifting experience that makes books exciting and encourages families to spend time enjoying books together.



“

***Our school district has benefited greatly from the Imagination Library project. We began seeing improvement in kindergarten readiness within just a year or two after implementation.***

*Superintendent Burns, Arkansas*

”

Reading aloud to children at a young age can positively impact their brain development: When preschool children listen to stories, it activates the areas of their brains that are associated with processing images and narrative comprehension. *Pediatrics – Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*

With support from local funders and partners, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to all children, at no cost to the family, regardless of income. This model helped the Imagination Library receive a coveted Best Practice Award from the U.S. Library of Congress for addressing social barriers to literacy.



# Supporting Cognitive Development

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a dependable partner for educators and local communities. Each book in the library collection is hand selected to address the child's current development needs. A national panel of experts in the field of early childhood and literacy lend their expert recommendations and advice to select the perfect set of books for hundreds of thousands of children.



**Foster interactions around book reading**



**Establish positive attitude towards reading**



**Increase emerging literacy skills**

## School Readiness for children from birth to age five

### Inspire a Love of Reading

Children cherish the personalized books they receive each month through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL). When parents and caregivers read to their children, it also exposes them to a larger, more diverse vocabulary and greater variety of sentence structures than just talking to them. Children develop concepts of print, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness and improved memory—all essential skills leading to school readiness and future academic success.

Reading together is the single most important way to help children get ready to read. Parents can support their child's education and cognitive development by sharing books as part of their everyday routine. Establishing these critical connections and communication pathways helps families prepare young children prior to entering school. Simple tasks such as looking at pictures in the books and reading aloud together not only supports the literacy growth, but also builds a special bond and supports a child's social and emotional development.



Most of the reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults result from problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years.

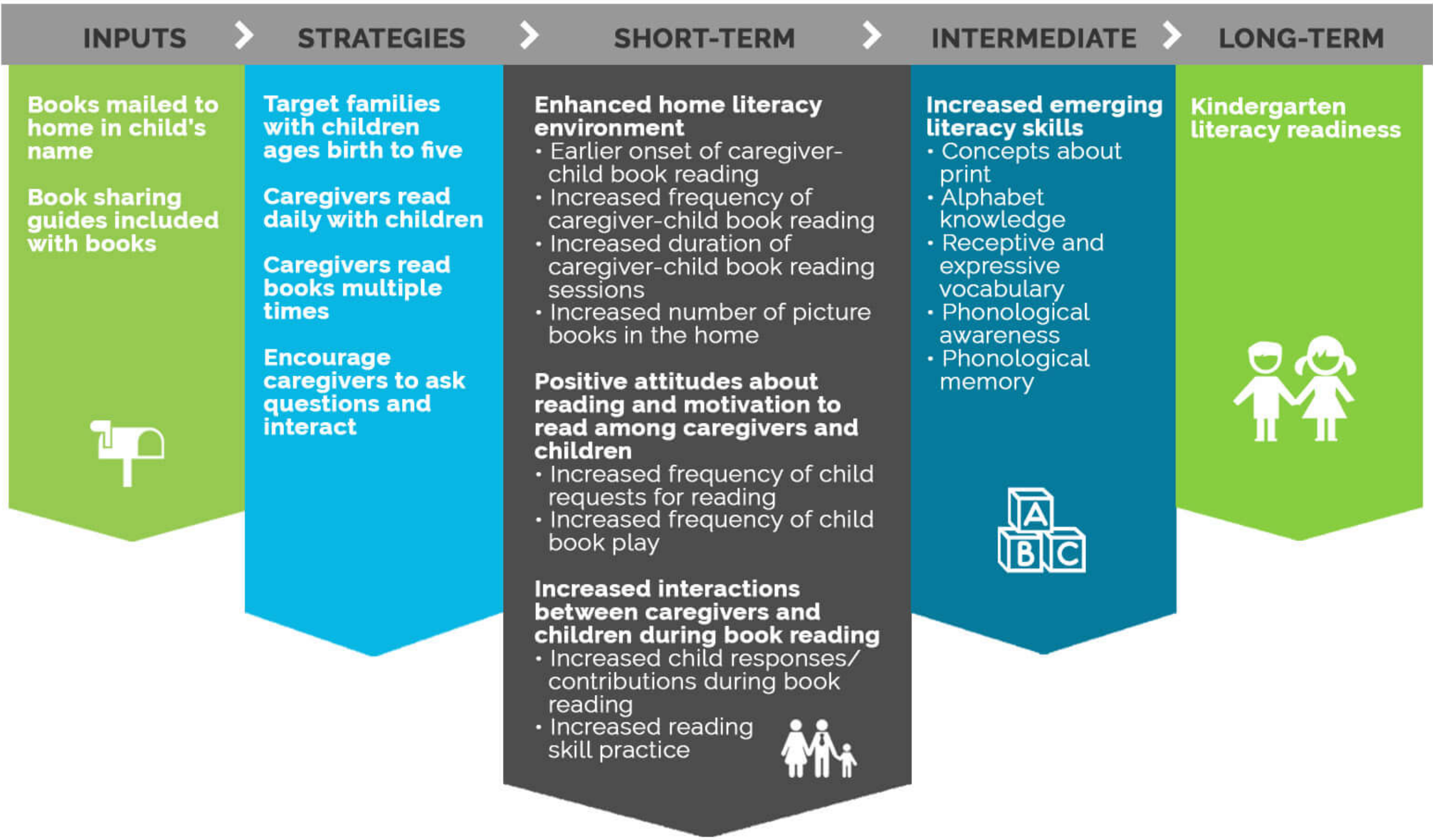
*National Research Council*

**60% of the kindergartners in neighborhoods where children did poorly in school did not own a single book.**

*Patterns of Book Ownership and Reading, D. Feitelson and Z. Goldstein*

### Logic Model

*Based on Imagination Library Research Findings and Literature Review.*



Families receiving books through DPIL, parents increased their reading time with children by 38%



75% of teachers believed that DPIL graduates performed better in school than their peers



97% of parents believed that their child will be better prepared for school after having participated in the Imagination Library

*2012 Research, Acadiana in Lafayette, LA*





# Affiliates & Community Partners

Inspire a Love of Reading



**Supporting Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a powerful way to make a lasting impact on the lives of the children and families in your community.**

Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they grow up.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the world. We partner with local communities to provide a specially-selected, age-appropriate, high-quality book each month to registered children from birth to age five. These books are personalized with the child's name and mailed directly to the child's home to create a gifting experience that makes books exciting and shows the child someone is thinking of them.



*We know that sustainable community change requires the engagement of community members, and Imagination Library has been our vehicle to initiate this collaborative approach to ensure a life-long love of reading and learning for our community's youngest generation.*

*Virginia Carmody, Executive Director,  
Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County*



United Way of Wyoming Valley

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a dependable partner for local communities and provides a low-cost, turnkey program to help young children develop a love for books and reading.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library makes it accessible for local communities to reach large numbers of children and families with books at a low cost per child per month through a flexible, highly scalable model.



# Engaging Affiliates & Community Partners

Improving early childhood literacy with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library creates opportunities for children to thrive so that they succeed in school and help their communities grow and prosper. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library makes it accessible for local communities to regularly communicate with large numbers of children and families, providing a high-quality and age-appropriate library of books at a low cost per child per month through a flexible, highly scalable model.



**Affordable, high quality and turnkey**



**Parents love it and read more with their child**



**Research confirms the impact on early literacy**

## Become an Imagination Library Partner

A community and its affiliate organization make the program accessible to all birth to age five children in their local area.

The Dollywood Foundation manages the system to deliver the books to the home. From the rigorous review of books by the selection committee to providing the Book Order System and overseeing the mailing of a book to each child every month from birth to age five, the Imagination Library supports the local community and affiliates every step of the process.

### Community Partners:

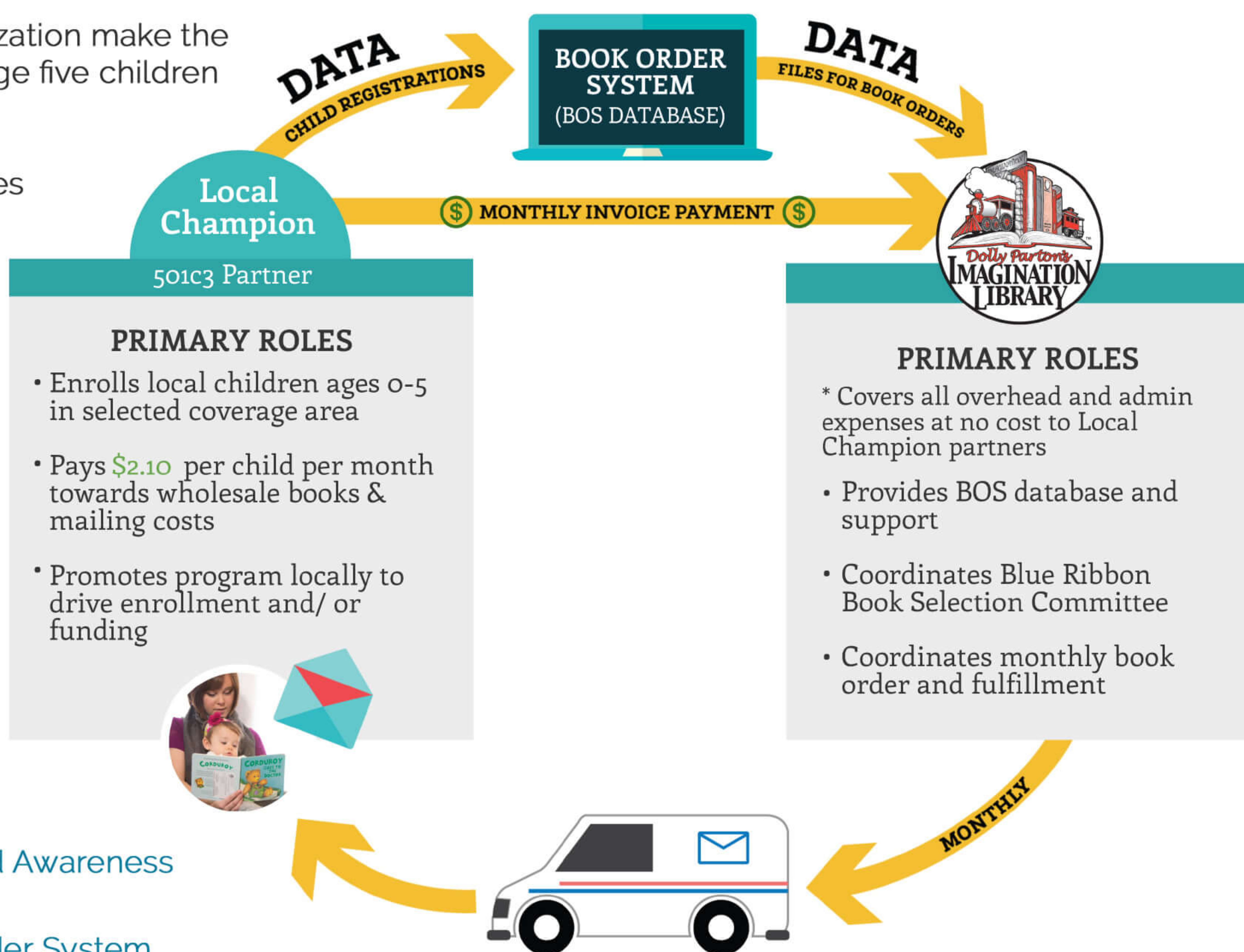
- ✓ Pay the wholesale cost of books and mailing for children in selected coverage
- ✓ Promote the Program and Build Awareness
- ✓ Register Children to Participate
- ✓ Enter Information into Book Order System

Over twenty years ago, Dolly Parton created the Imagination Library to inspire a love of reading in children of her home county in East Tennessee. In 2000, the program was expanded to serve any community with local partner support and, today, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library reaches more than 1 million children across the world with a new, age-appropriate book each month.

***"You can never get enough books into the hands of enough children."***

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is active in almost all 50 states and other countries around the world.

**Let us help you get started in your community.**



### Start a Local Community Imagination Library Program Today!

Contact us by visiting the website to reach your regional director, to complete the online Start-A-Program form and to learn more about how it works.