



One-Year Evaluation on **Alaska's** Imagination Library Program

Prepared by:

Hilary Seitz, PhD & Robert Capuozzo, PhD
University of Alaska Anchorage
907.786.4872

Hilary@uaa.alaska.edu or afrmc2@uaa.alaska.edu

January 2010

“... parents hold the key that can open the door to excitement, adventure, and learning. And it's never too soon to begin. Experts all agree that by reading with your child every day, you can spark their imagination and inspire their early education. These moments with your child will last a lifetime, because each time you read with your child, you help them to dream more, learn more, care more, and be more.”

Dolly Parton



A Report on Alaska's Imagination Library Program

Executive Summary

January 2010

The Alaska Imagination Library program is working to provide books to families of young children at no charge throughout the state. The intent is to bring books into homes of Alaska's youngest citizens from birth through age five and to encourage the families to read to and interact with their children so children can be better prepared for formal schooling experiences. The project is voluntary and provides books to children from birth to age five on a monthly basis through mailings directly to the home or village. The Alaska Imagination Library project has no previous evaluation that demonstrates its effectiveness in developing literacy skill in young children. However, findings from other studies (high scope, 2003) have found that receiving high-quality and age-appropriate books will increase the quantity and quality of early literacy experiences.

Best Beginnings is helping communities around Alaska create or expand the program in their area. The Rasmuson Foundation, ConocoPhillips Alaska, The CIRI Foundation, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and private donations are helping to fund the programs. There are currently 11 IL programs in the state of Alaska with nine of them under the Best Beginnings umbrella. 11 additional communities have joined the Imagination Library due to new grants from Best Beginnings and Alaska Department of Early Education and Development (DEED). As of January 22, 2010 there were 6,658 children enrolled in the state. According to the 2007 Kidscount Alaska data, there are 44,933 children under five living in the state of Alaska. The state is divided into five distinct areas with the road system primarily in Southcentral and parts of the Interior. Because of the geography of the state, many of the communities involved are in isolated areas with limited reading resources for young children. Having books sent to these communities as well as the larger ones adds a rich resource to families of young children.

All 11 existing IL communities and the 11 new additional communities are enrolling children in their programs. The 11 existing communities are: Anchorage, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Greater Kenai/Soldotna, Juneau (including Wrangell, Kake, Angoon, Craig, Klawock, and Sitka), Matanuska Susitna Valley (Meadow Lake), Seward/Moose Pass, Tok/ Tanacross, and Unalaska/Dutch Harbor. The new communities that began in December 2009 are: Barrow, Sitka, Koliganek, Little Diomedede, Wasilla, Nanwalek, Old Harbor, Eagle, Mentasta, Northway, Tetlin, and Toksook Bay. Imagination Libraries in Anchorage, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Seward, Nome, Southeast Alaska, Tok, and Tanacross also received funds to expand enrollments.

Key findings of the first evaluation conducted in January 2010 indicate that many Alaskan communities are enrolling children in the Imagination Library programs and these programs are having an effect on families receiving monthly books. The following is a summary of findings:

- Enrollment across the state has grown tremendously. At the beginning of the year there were 11 communities with programs. As of December of 2009, there was additional funding added and 11 more communities with additional funding in some of the existing programs.
- Enrollment has grown in all IL programs across the state, with some communities serving nearly all the children ages 0-5 in the village (Nome).
- Over 500 children 0-5 were enrolled in 2009 in Anchorage, Seward, and Angoon. All of these families filled out Survey 1. As of January 31, 2010, Anchorage has 2,169 children enrolled. This meets Anchorage's year one goal of enrolling 2,100 children.
- Over 250 parents in the Nome and Fairbanks IL programs filled out Survey 2 after receiving books for a minimum of a year.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year their children were enthusiastic about reading.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year that they have encouraged other parents to participate in the IL program.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year they read more frequently to their child/ren
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year they thought their child would be more prepared for kindergarten.

Comments regarding the IL program are overwhelmingly positive and suggest that the IL program is making a meaningful difference in the lives of the participating families:

- children and their families are excited about and look forward to receiving books and reading them
- families are reading more together, more often
- families can see the impact the books have made in their children's interests, imagination,
- families have increased the size of their children's libraries at their home



Alaska's Imagination Library Program

In 2004, Alaska's Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task was convened with 27 members that were leaders in business, nonprofits, education, government, civic organizations, and philanthropic organizations with support from Alaska Humanities forum, CIRI Foundation, and Rasmusen Foundation. The task force learned about pertinent issues and research related to Early Literacy, Brain development, practices in early childhood, and school success. The task force later became known as Best Beginnings, a public-private partnership. They released a report in 2006 with recommendations that were divided into three categories:

1. Supporting parents as a child's first and most important teachers
2. Advocating for high quality, affordable, and accessible childcare
3. Alaska will have a sustainable system to help prepare children for success in school (sustainability, financing, and workforce)



Best Beginnings vision is: All Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.

The Report from Best Beginnings states that we will have succeeded when:

- Parents and extended family are engaged in their children's learning from birth on.
- Most Alaskans know that early learning and literacy are important to society.
- Most Alaskans understand that investments in early learning pay big dividends to the state as a whole.
- Sufficient funds are committed – from public and private sources – to ensure that every Alaska child has the opportunity to begin school ready to succeed.

Best Beginnings committed itself to support the creation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (IL) in April of 2008. This initiative is supportive of Best Beginning's first recommendation of supporting parents with as their child's first and most important teacher.

The first IL programs that were started with assistance by Best Beginnings were in 2008. Nome had started theirs in March of 2006. By January, 2009 there were 11 IL programs and as of December, 2009 there are now 22 programs. See Figure 1 for a list of participating communities. The communities that are black have been in operation for a minimum of a year. The communities listed in red are the newly created programs as of Dec 2009.

Southeast	Southwest
Juneau (Wrangell, Kake, Angoon, Craig, Klawock) Sitka	Unalaska KolinganeK Old Harbor (Kodiak) Toksook Bay
Southcentral	Interior
Anchorage Seward/Moose Pass Greater Kenai and Soldotna Mat-Su (Meadow Lake) Wasilla Nanwalek Mentasta Tetlin	Fairbanks Tok (Tanacross) Eagle
	Far North
	North Slope Nome Little Diomede Barrow

Figure 1. Imagination Library-Regions and Participating Communities

IL Enrollment

Based on 2008 Kidscount data, there are approximately 44,933 children under the age of 5 in the state of Alaska. Currently, not all communities have an IL program. As funding and information about the Imagination Library project grows, new IL programs are started in communities. As programs and funding increase, the enrollment rises as well.

IL enrollment is very high in some rural communities. Nome has nearly all the eligible children ages birth to five enrolled in the IL program. This suggests that IL is particularly successful in supporting these families who wish to enhance and enrich their children's early learning and future school success.

The state of Alaska is divided into five distinct regions. See Figure 2 for the regions and population in each region. Over half of the state's population lives in the Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough (54%) which is in the Southcentral region.





Figure 2. Regions and Population

	Total	Male	Female
Total AK Population	676,987	346,406	330,581

Age 0-5	Number	Percent	Male	Female
	54,933	26.6%	28,420	26,513

Figure 3. Alaska Children by Age and Sex in 2007

IL Evaluation

Data has been collected over the past year (2009) to evaluate the Alaska Imagination Library programs. Several specific areas were looked at to show the effect the Imagination Library (IL) has on children and their parent’s early literacy behaviors and attitudes. In an effort to gauge the effect the IL has on children and families a pre-post-test design has been implemented. Due to the circumstances of enrollment dates the first phase of evaluation on the Alaska IL programs will be less precise than future phases (explanation to follow). The pre-test, hereafter referred to as Survey 1 (see appendix 1) was administered at the time of enrollment, either in person at an enrollment event or by telephone and/or email prior to the receipt of the first book. The post-test, hereafter referred to as Survey 2 (see appendix 2), was administered after a family has been in the IL for one full year. The post-test may be administered to families a maximum of five times (i.e. after year one, two, three, four, and five).

In Alaska there are certain communities who have been participating in the IL for multiple years; two of those communities are Nome and Fairbanks. The Nome IL began enrolling families as of March 31, 2006. The Fairbanks IL began enrolling families as of March 12, 2008. Other communities have recently begun IL programs; these include Anchorage, Seward, and Angoon. These three communities began enrolling families during the 2009 calendar year. As a result of the variation in start dates of participating IL's in the state of Alaska participants in Nome and Fairbanks will have not had the opportunity to take Survey 1. The five sites were selected because of the enrollment start date and because of their locations in the state. The five IL programs represent both rural and urban settings as well as being from different regions in the state.

Evaluation Procedure

Survey 1 was administered to newly enrolled participants in Group 1. Group 1 consists of families living in Seward, Anchorage, and Angoon. See Figure 4. These communities were selected because they are the newest communities to engage in the Alaska IL project. Survey 1 was administered by enrollment volunteers of each community. Survey 1 consisted of 4 simple questions and demographic information that were either asked by the volunteer or filled out on a form by the enrollee. Data were entered into Survey Monkey software.

Group 1 Communities	Total Population (2000 census)	Total Population under the age of 5 (2000 census)	Total Population under the age of 18 (2000 census)	# of newly enrolled families who completed Survey 1
Seward & Moose Pass	3,036	179	680	29
Anchorage	260,283	20,033	75,871	472
Angoon	572	41	199	8

Figure 4. Group One Communities

Survey 2 was administered to participants in Group 2 who had been enrolled in the program for more than one year. See Figure 5. Survey 2 had 10 questions many of which were identical or closely related to Survey 1 to allow for comparisons. Group 2 contains families living in the communities of Nome and Fairbanks. Data were entered into Survey Monkey software.

Fairbanks

The participant list provided for survey selection for the Fairbanks IL program contained 2,927 names, some of which were siblings living in the same household. There were 1,867 participants who had been receiving books for one full year (cut-off enrollment date utilized was 12/31/08). A convenience sample was then drawn from this set based on the availability of an email address. This brought the sample size to 751 families (a handful had multiple children enrolled) who had been enrolled in the program for one full year. Each of these families was sent an email inviting them to participate in an online survey. A total of 237 surveys were completed which equates to a 32% return rate and 13% of the total number of participants enrolled for more than one year.

Nome

The participant list provided for survey selection for the Nome IL program contained 167 names, some of which were siblings living in the same household. There were 106 participants who had been receiving books for one full year (cut off enrollment date utilized was 12/31/08). A convenience sample was then drawn from this list based on the availability of an email address or a telephone number. This brought the sample size to 84 families. Of the 84 families, 14 had listed an email address. These 14 families were sent an email inviting them to participate in an online survey. The remaining 70 families who listed a telephone number were contacted via telephone and asked to complete the survey orally. Many of the telephone numbers were disconnected; this may be due to the transient nature of life in Nome and/or the costs associated with maintaining a telephone line. A total of 21 surveys were completed by telephone and/or email which equates to a 25% return rate and 20% of the total number of participants enrolled for more than one year.

All data from both survey 1 and survey 2 was entered into Survey Monkey software.

Group 2 Communities	Total Population (2000 census)	Total Population under the age of 5 (2000 census)	Total Population under the age of 18 (2000 census)	# of participants who completed Survey 2
Fairbanks	30,224	2,908	8,900	237
Nome	3,505	273	1,118	21

Figure 5. Group Two Communities

Findings

The data suggests that the IL program has supported one of Best Beginnings recommendation of *supporting parents with as their child's first and most important teacher* by sending books into homes for parents to read with their children. The survey data suggests that more parents are reading to children and this is a valuable experience that will help their children succeed in kindergarten. The summary is as follows:

- Enrollment across the state has grown tremendously. At the beginning of the year there were 11 communities with programs. As of December of 2009, there was additional funding added and 11 more communities with additional funding in some of the existing programs.
- Enrollment has grown in all IL programs across the state, with some communities serving nearly all the children ages 0-5 in the village (Nome).

- Over 500 children 0-5 were enrolled in 2009 in Anchorage, Seward, and Angoon. All of these families filled out Survey 1.
- Over 250 parents in the Nome and Fairbanks IL programs filled out survey 2 after receiving books for a minimum of a year.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year their children were enthusiastic about reading.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year that they have encouraged other parents to participate in the IL program.
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year they read more frequently to their child/ren
- Based on Survey 2 in Fairbanks and Nome parents report after receiving IL books monthly for a year they thought their child would be more prepared for kindergarten.

Survey 1 Findings

Survey 1 was taken by a total of 509 newly enrolled participants in the communities of Anchorage (472), Seward/Moose Pass (29), and Angoon (8). Data gathered from this group included: *the amount of books in the home; the child's enthusiasm toward books; the frequency of parent reading to child in a week; and the perceived parental importance of reading and books.* The findings from each of these questions are presented by individual community and as a comprehensive group. See Figures 6, 7, 8, & 9.



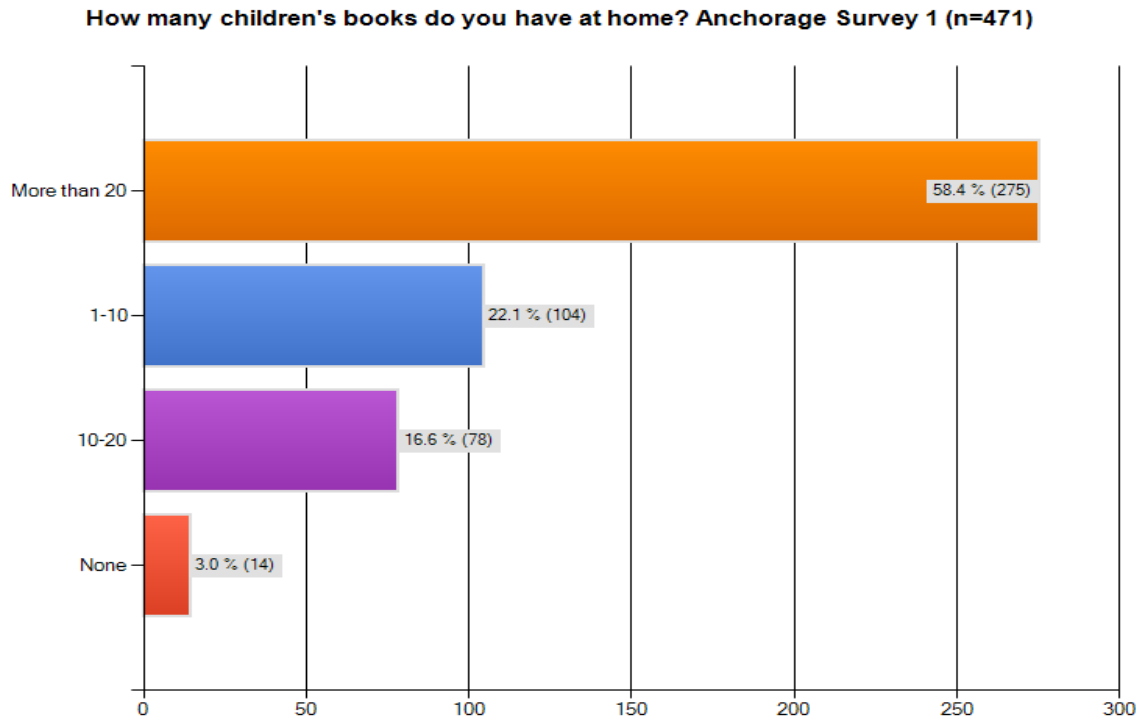


Figure 6. Number of Books Anchorage

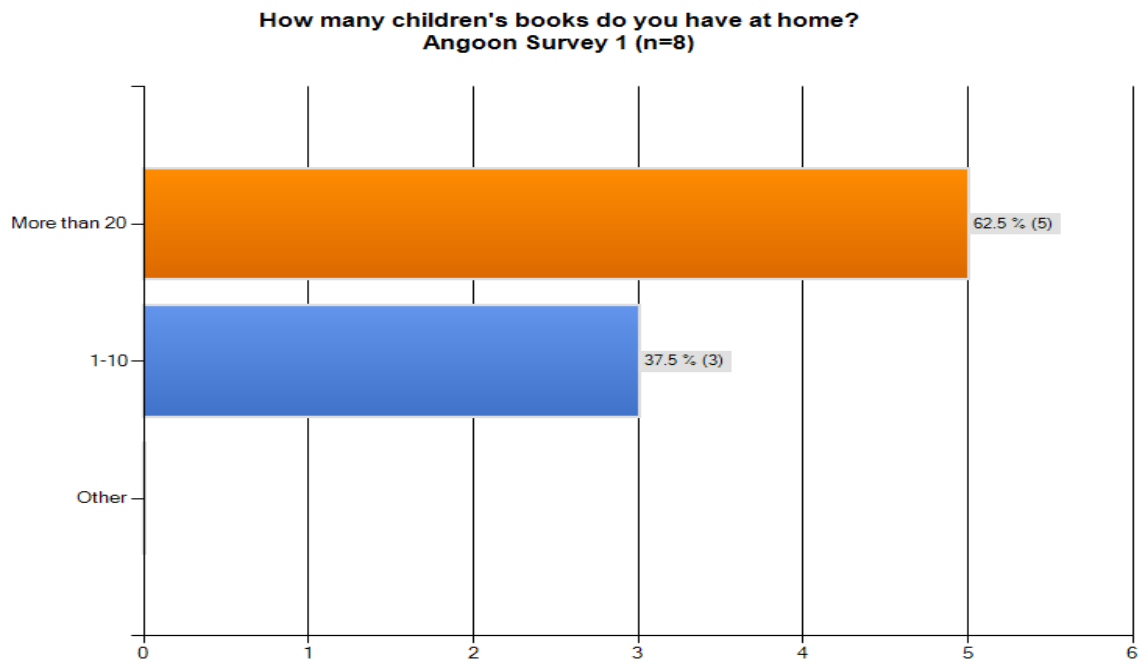


Figure 7. Number of Books Angoon

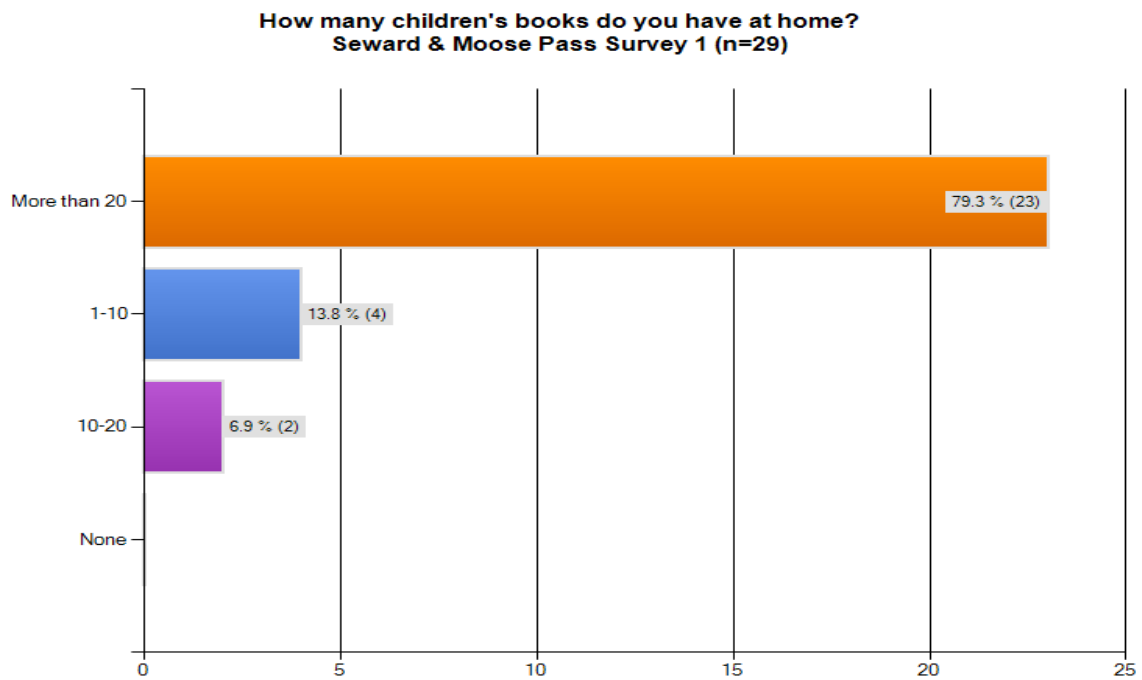


Figure 8. Number of Books Seward/Moose Pass

Survey 1 Number of children's books in the home; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=508)

# of Children's Books	# of responses	% of response
20 or more books in home	303	59.6%
10-20 books in home	80	15.7%
1-10 books in home	111	21.8%
0 books in home	14	2.7%

Figure 9. Combined Data of Books in Homes

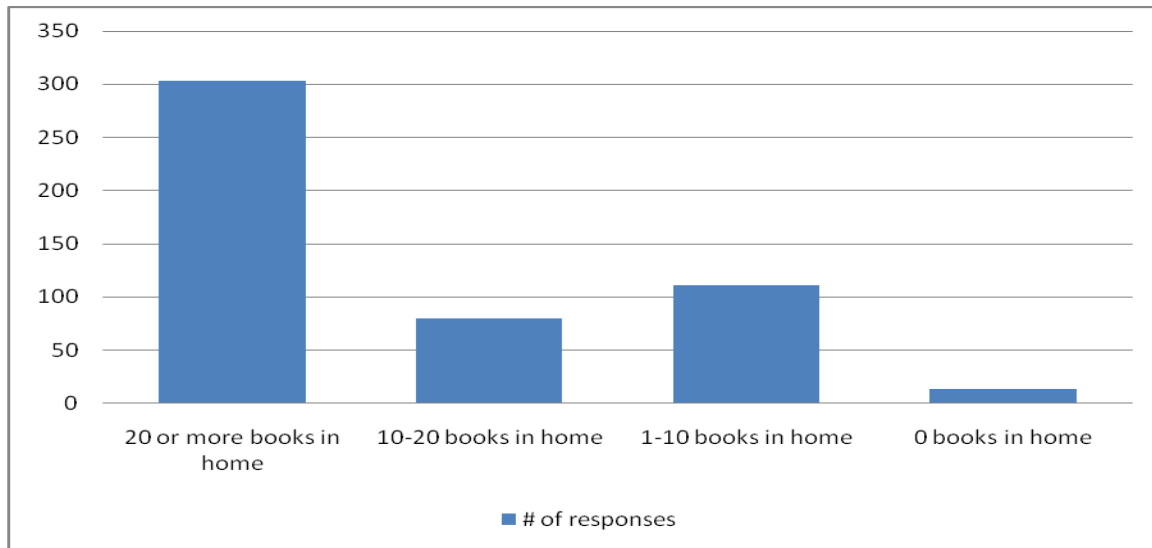


Figure 10. Number of Children's Books

The findings for the number of children's books in the home are presented in Figures 9 and 10 by IL program location and as a group. These data represent individuals who have yet to receive their first IL book in the mail. The majority of families (59.6%) represented by this data have twenty or more children's books in their homes. More than 75% of the families asked this question have ten or more children's books in the home. Nearly 25% of the newly enrolled families in these three communities have less than ten children's books in the home.

Child's enthusiasm toward books and reading

Enthusiasm towards books and reading was also strong according to the data in the surveys. The findings for the child's level of enthusiasm towards books and reading are represented above by IL program location and as a group. This question was asked when a parent or guardian enrolled a child in the IL program. These data represent individuals who have yet to receive their first IL book in the mail. The vast majority (62.45%) of parents perceived their child to be very enthusiastic toward reading and books. Taken together nearly 85% of parents felt their child was enthusiastic or very enthusiastic toward reading and books. A bit more than 13% of the respondents perceived their child to be somewhat enthusiastic toward reading and books. Less than 2% of the 506 respondents to this question felt their child was not at all enthusiastic toward books. See Figures 11, 12, 13, & 14.

How enthusiastic is your child about reading or looking at books? Anchorage Survey 1 (n=470)

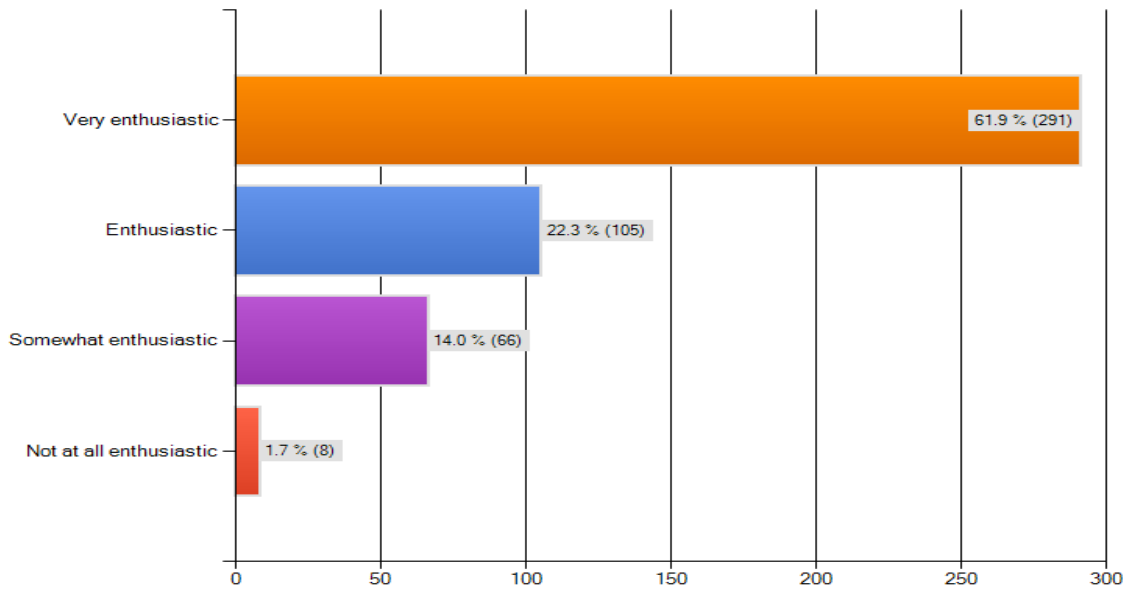


Figure 11. Enthusiasm Anchorage

How enthusiastic is your child about reading or looking at books? Angoon Survey 1 (n=8)

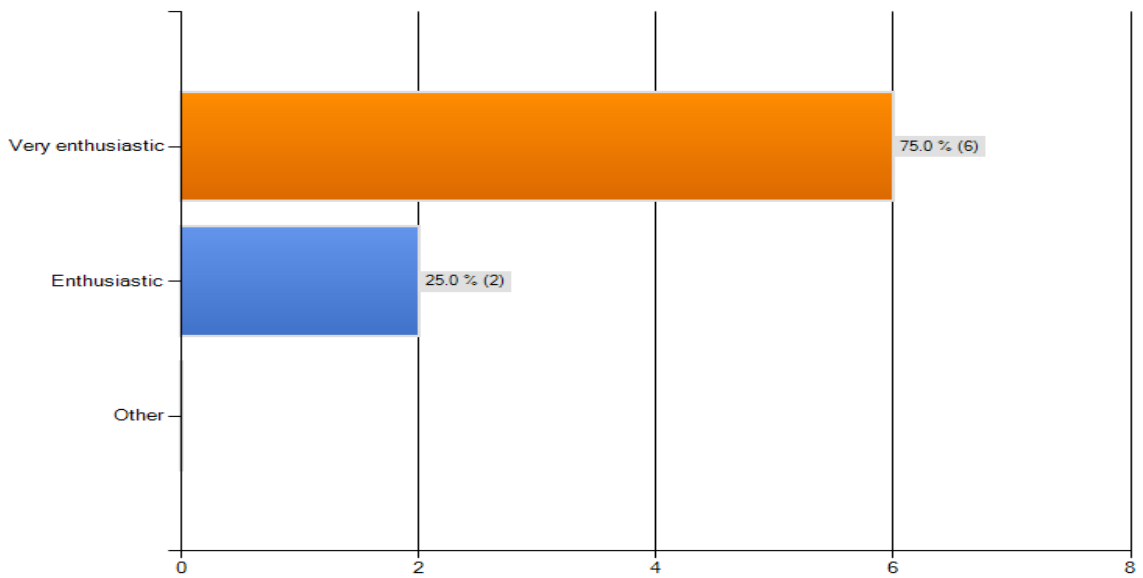


Figure 12. Enthusiasm Angoon

How enthusiastic is your child about reading or looking at books? Seward & Moose Pass Survey 1 (n=28)

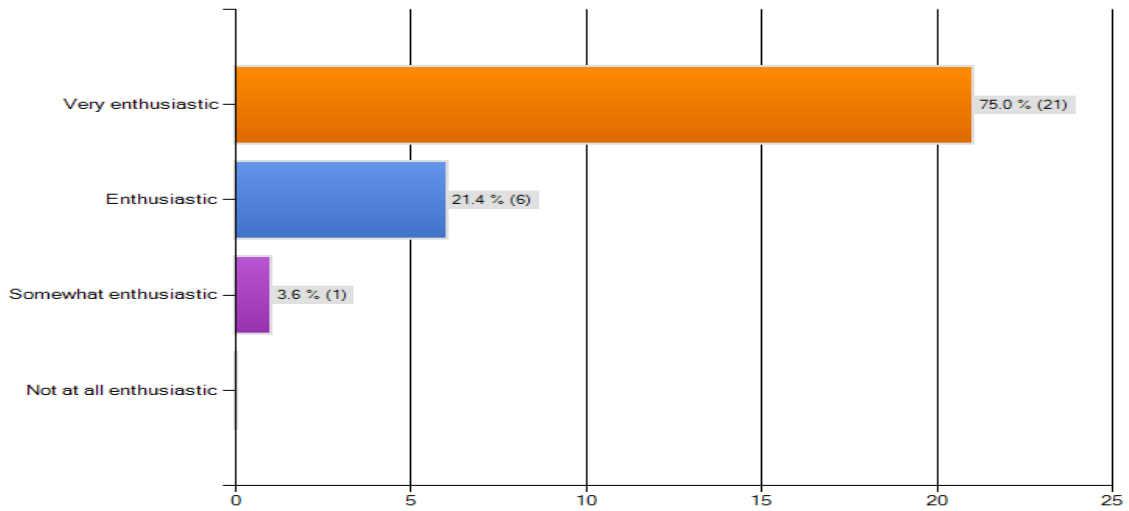


Figure 13. Enthusiasm Seward/Moose Pass

Survey 1 Child’s enthusiasm (as reported by parent) about reading or looking at books; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=506)

Level of Enthusiasm	# of responses	% of response
Very Enthusiastic	318	62.45
Enthusiastic	113	22.33%
Somewhat Enthusiastic	67	13.24%
Not At All Enthusiastic	8	1.58%

Figure 14. Enthusiasm Response Rate

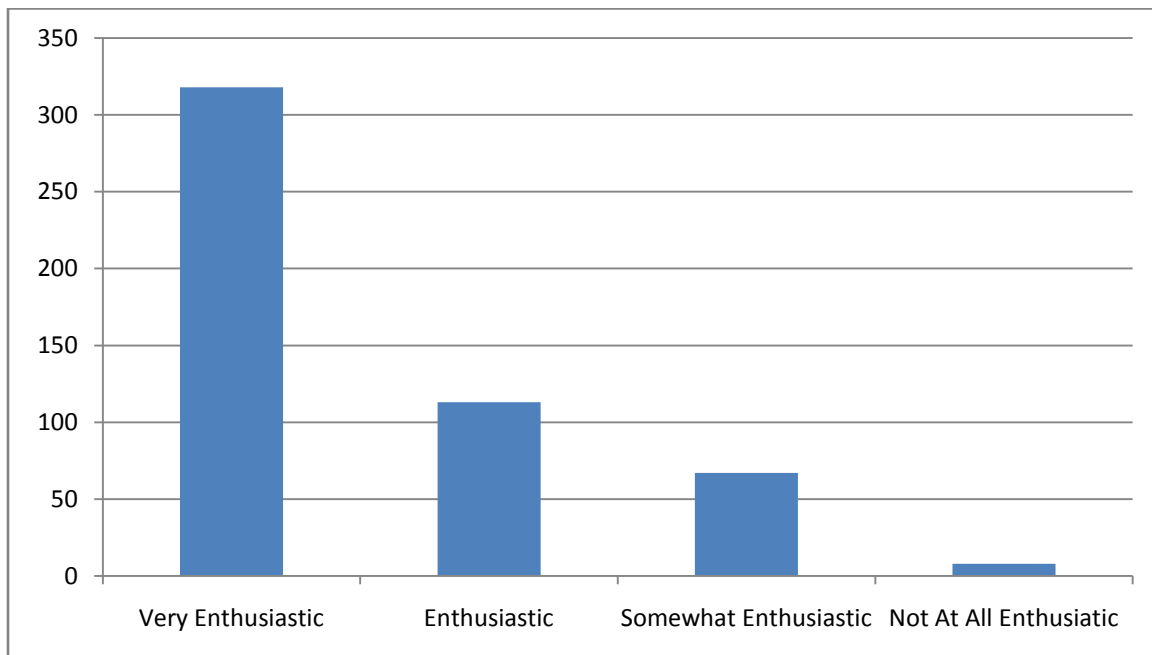


Figure 15. Enthusiasm Graph

Frequency of parent reading to child

The Following figures (16, 17, and 18) display the frequency that parents reported reading to their child/ren during an average week.

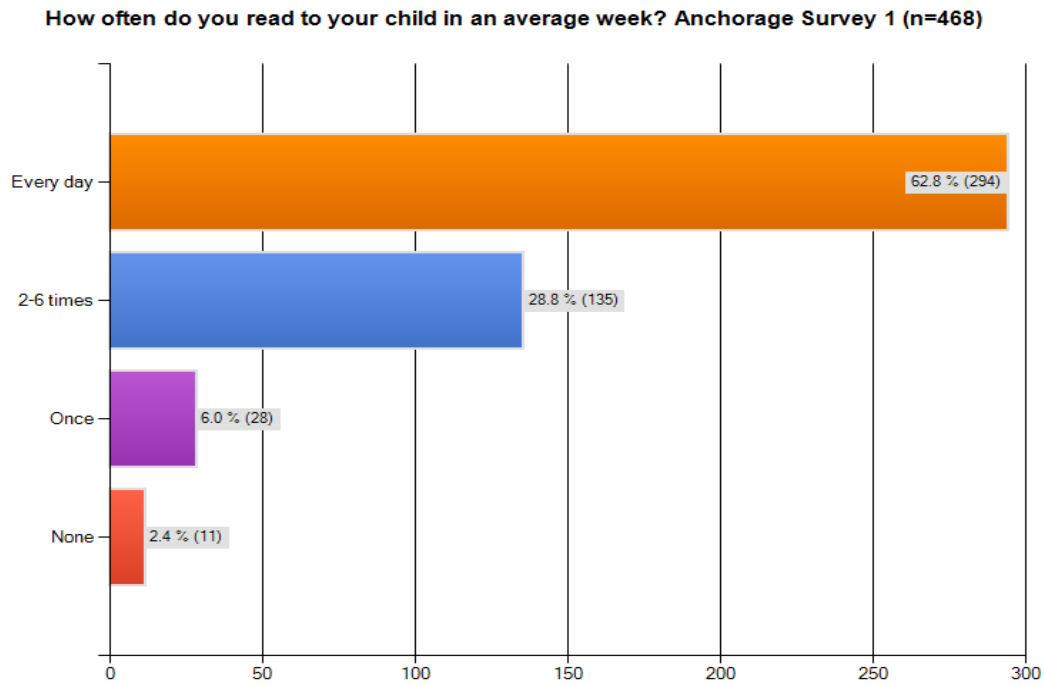


Figure 16. Weekly Reads Anchorage

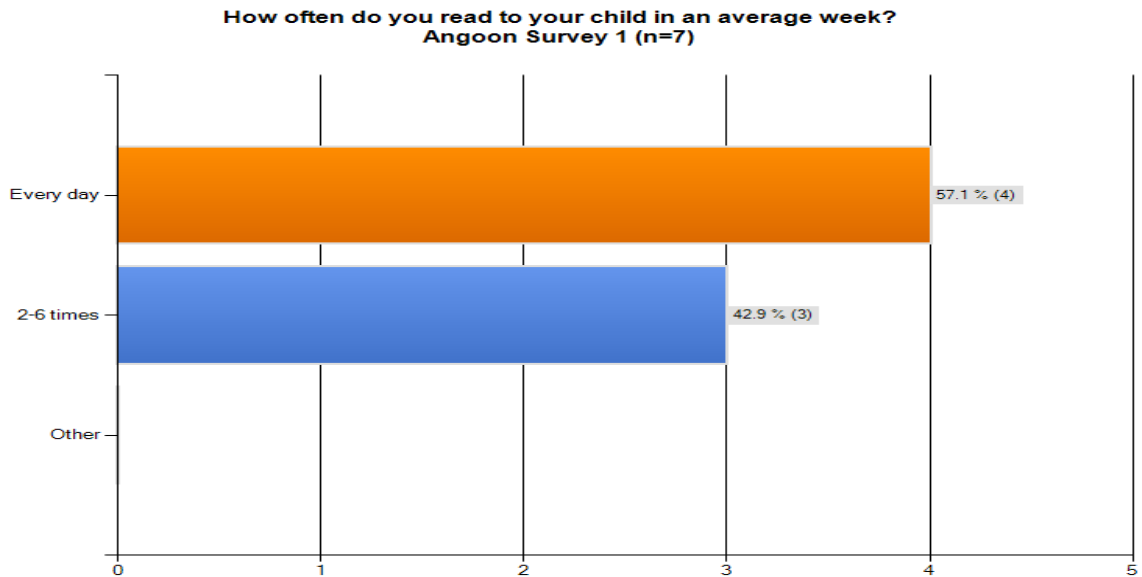


Figure 17. Weekly Reads Angoon

**How often do you read to your child in an average week?
Seward & Moose Pass Survey 1 (n=29)**

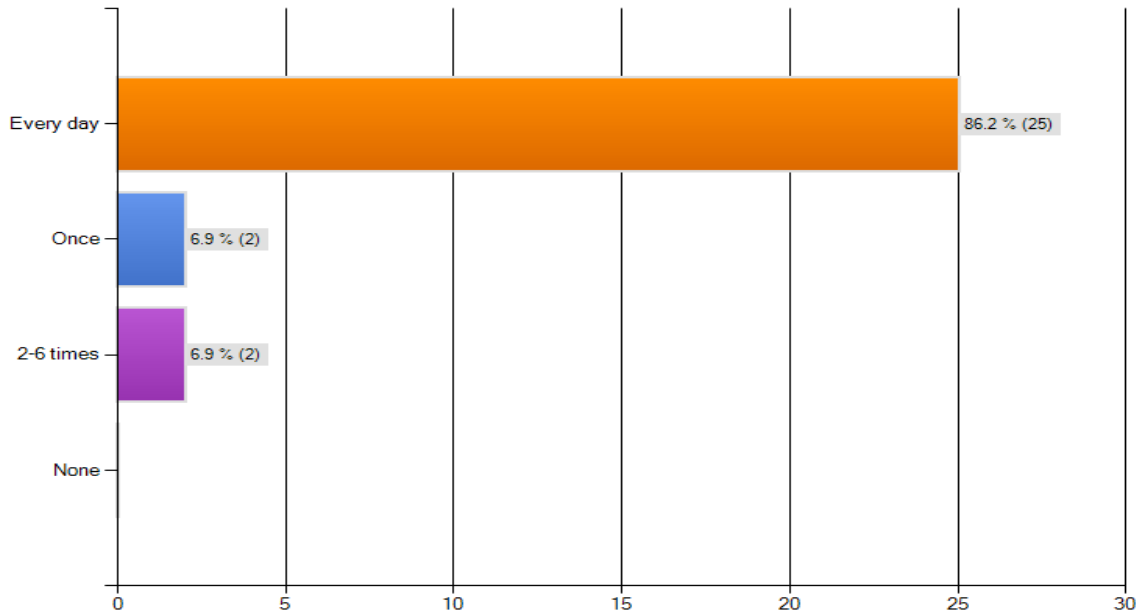


Figure 18. Weekly Reads Seward/Moose Pass

Survey 1 Asked respondents, how often parent reads to child in an average week; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=504)

Frequency of Reading in a Week	# of responses	% of response
Daily	323	64.08%
2-6 times/week	140	27.77%
Once/week	30	5.95%
None	11	2.18%

Figure 19. Reading Frequency

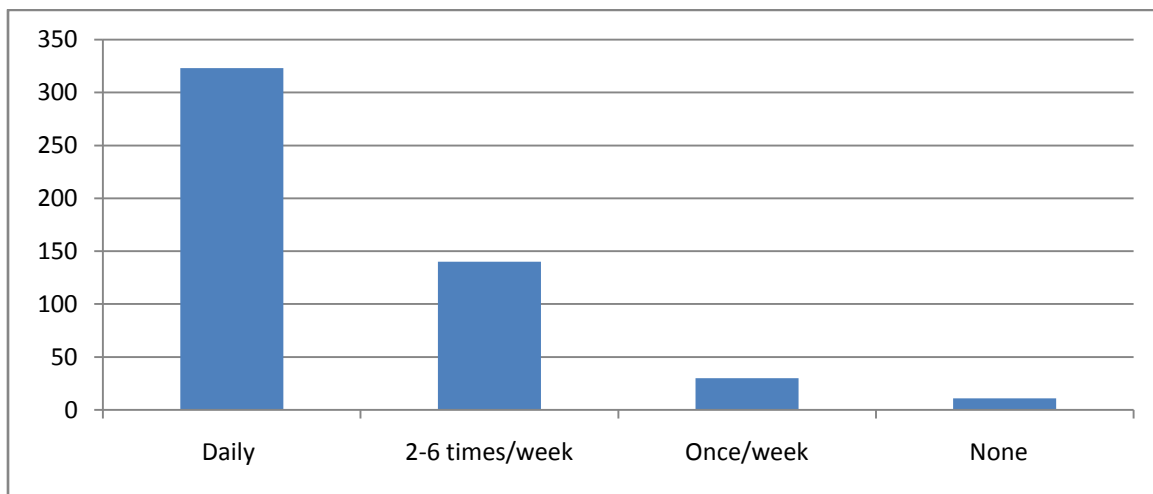


Figure 20. Reading Frequency Graph

The findings for the frequency that a parent reads to their child in an average week are represented above by IL program location and as a group. See Figures 19 & 20. This question was asked when a parent or guardian enrolled a child in the IL program. These data represent individuals who have yet to receive their first IL book in the mail. More than 6 out of 10 individuals reports to read to their child daily. An additional 27.77% of respondents read to their child between 2 and 6 times per week. Eight percent of respondents (41 individuals) report reading to their child once a week or not reading to their child at all during an average week.

Importance of Reading

The next question on Survey 1 asked parents about the importance of reading to their children. The purpose of this information is to see if parents value the time of reading with children and if this supports their development. If this action is valued then parents will want to read more and be supportive of the IL. See figures 21, 22, and 23. The question reads, *How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development* (n=505).

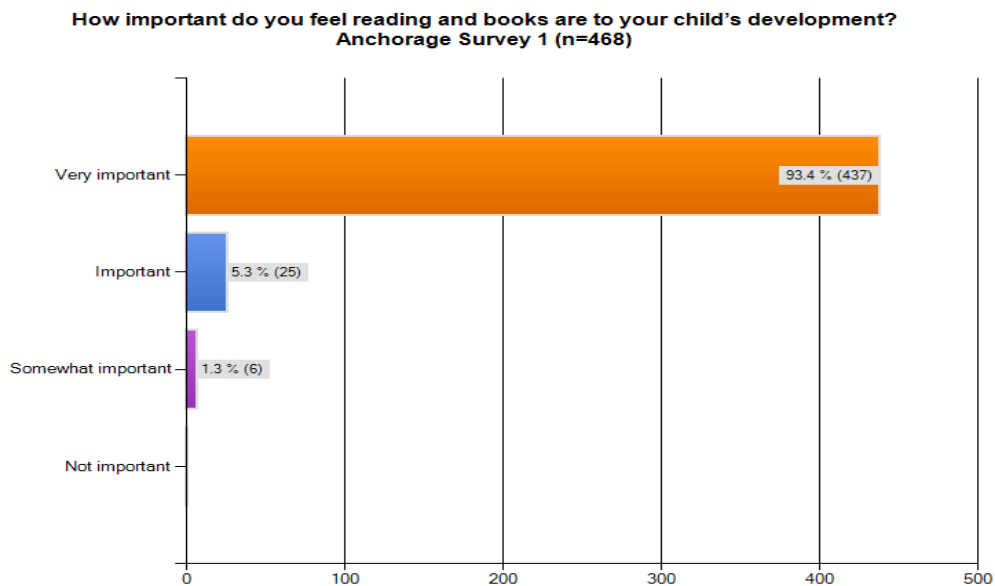


Figure 21. Importance of Reading Anchorage

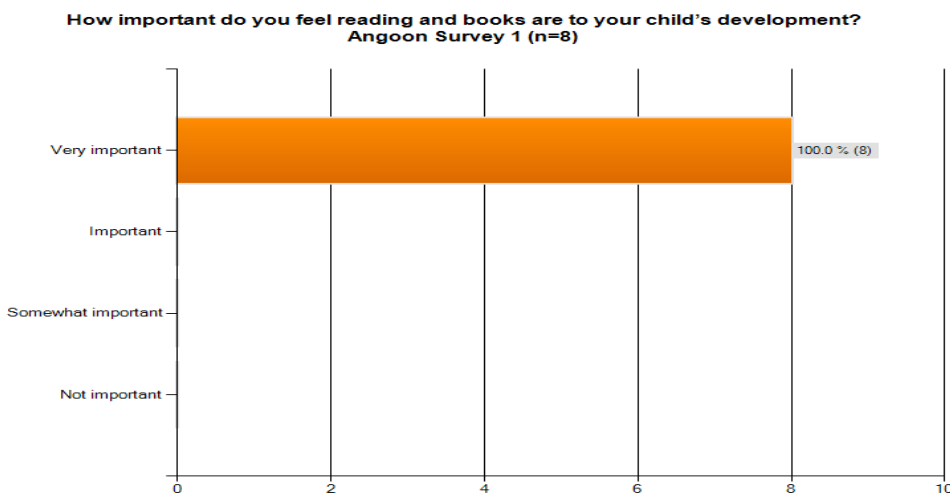


Figure 22. Importance of Reading Angoon

How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development? Seward & Moose Pass Survey 1 (n=29)

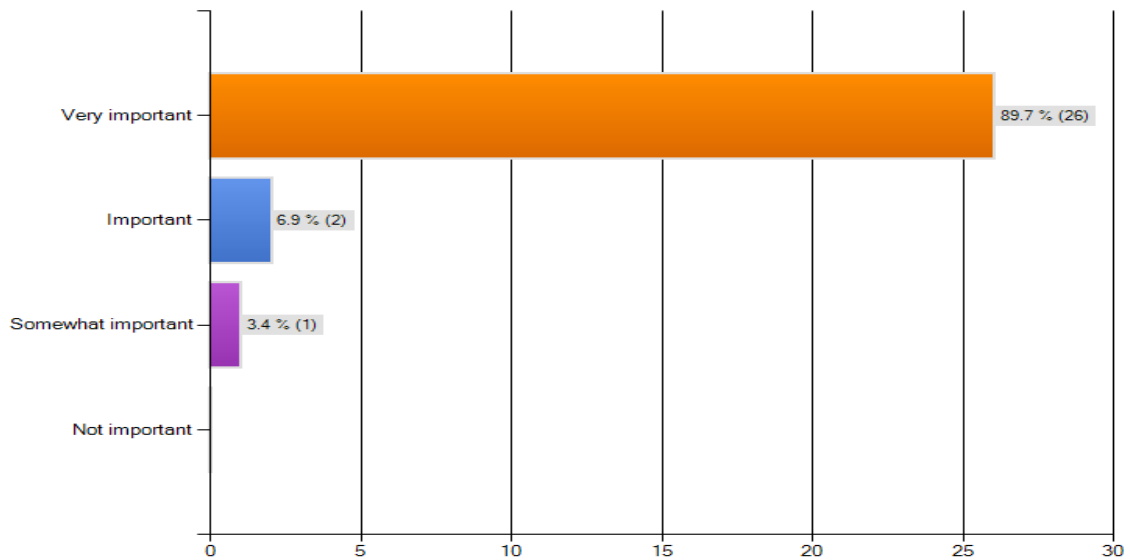


Figure 23. Importance of Reading Seward/Moose Pass Survey 1 Importance of reading and books; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward/Moose Pass (n=504)

Importance of reading and books to development	# of responses	% of response
Very Important	471	93.26%
Important	27	5.34%
Somewhat Important	7	1.38%
Not Important	0	0%

Figure 24. Importance of Reading

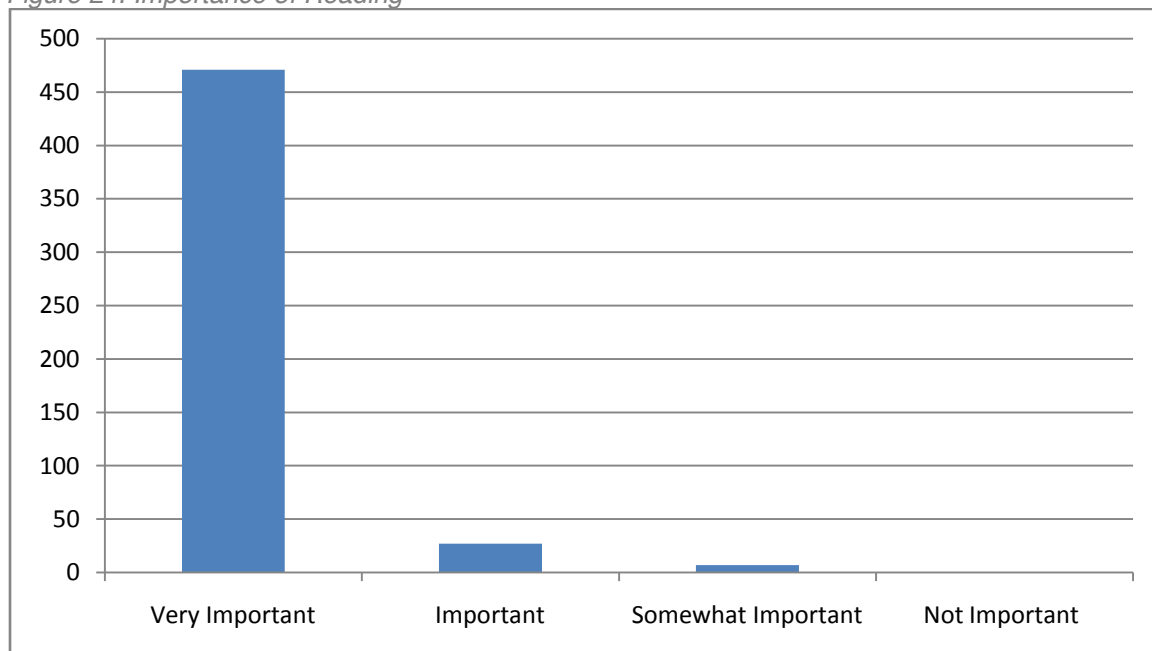


Figure 25. Importance of Reading Graph

The findings for the importance parents feel reading and books have on a child's development are represented above by IL program location and as a group. This question was asked when a parent or guardian enrolled a child in the IL program. These data represent individuals who have yet to receive their first IL book in the mail. All respondents to this question believe reading and books are of some importance to their child's development. Over 93% of respondents feel reading and books are very important to their child's development. See Figures 24 and 25.

Survey 2 Findings

Survey 2 was completed by 258 individuals enrolled in the IL programs in Nome (n=21) and in Fairbanks (n=237) for a period of one year or more as of December 31, 2008. The purpose of Survey 2 was to better understand any possible effect the program has on individual children and their families. Even though the participants in the Nome and Fairbanks IL programs did not complete survey 1 upon entrance to their respective IL the data generated from Survey 2 is useful in two specific ways. First the data gathered in Survey 2 paints a picture of the reading behaviors and beliefs of 258 families. The additional comments that participants provide is informative in it's own right. Secondly, the data will be cautiously used to compare newly enrolled participants with participants that have received books for a year or more.

Data generated from this survey includes the 4 specific questions that mirror survey 1. Additional questions were posed asking the parent if the IL will help prepare their child for kindergarten; if the parent has encouraged others in the community to join the IL; if the parent feels their child looks forward to the arrival of the book each month; and does the parent feel he or she reads more since joining the IL.

Book Amounts

The first question regards the amount of books in the home similar to Survey 1. The two figures below (26 and 27) represent the two IL programs.

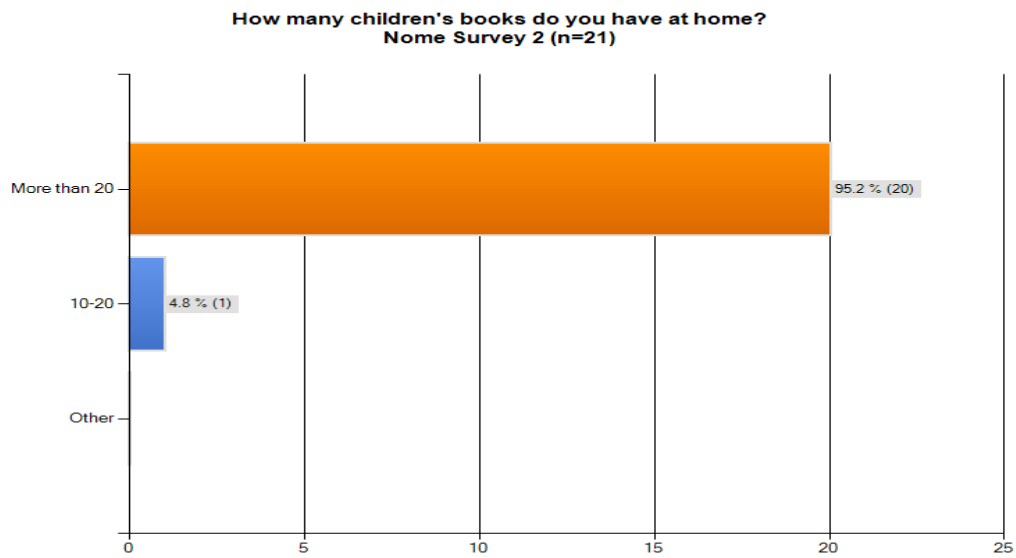


Figure 26. Books in the Home Nome

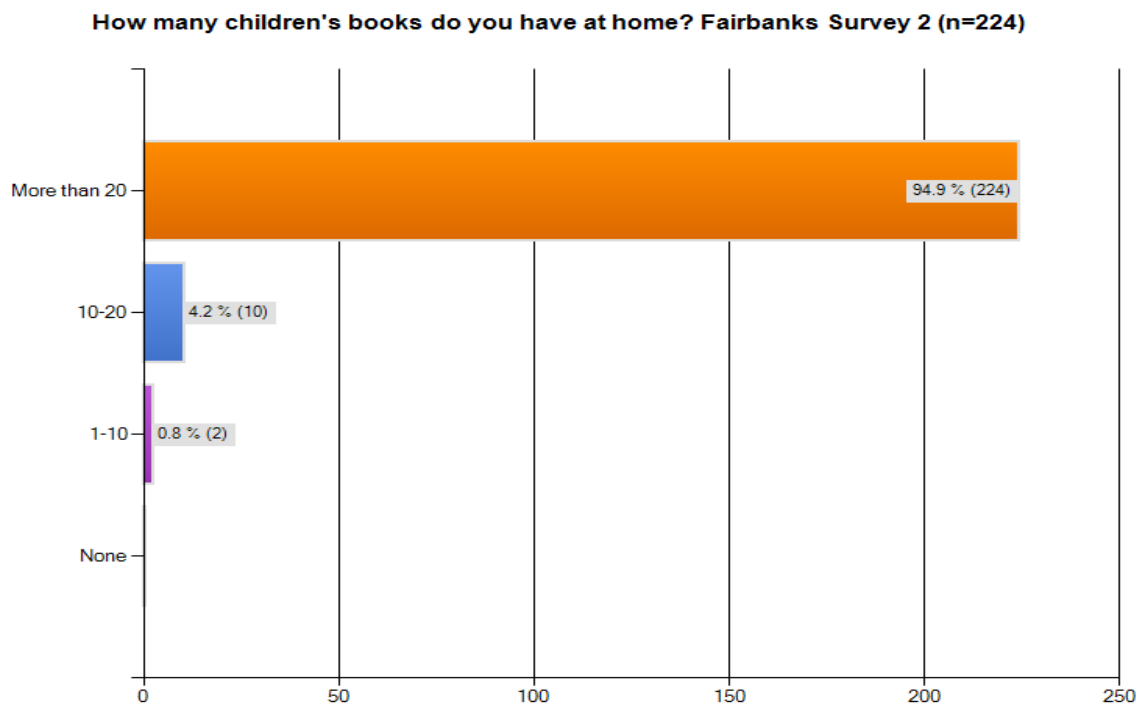


Figure 27. Books in the Home Fairbanks

The two communities were combined for the total number of children's books in the home; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257). See Figures 28 and 29.

# of Children's Books	# of responses	% of response
20 or more books in home	244	94.94%
10-20 books in home	11	4.28%
1-10 books in home	2	0.77%
0 books in home	0	0%

Figure 28. Number of Children's Books

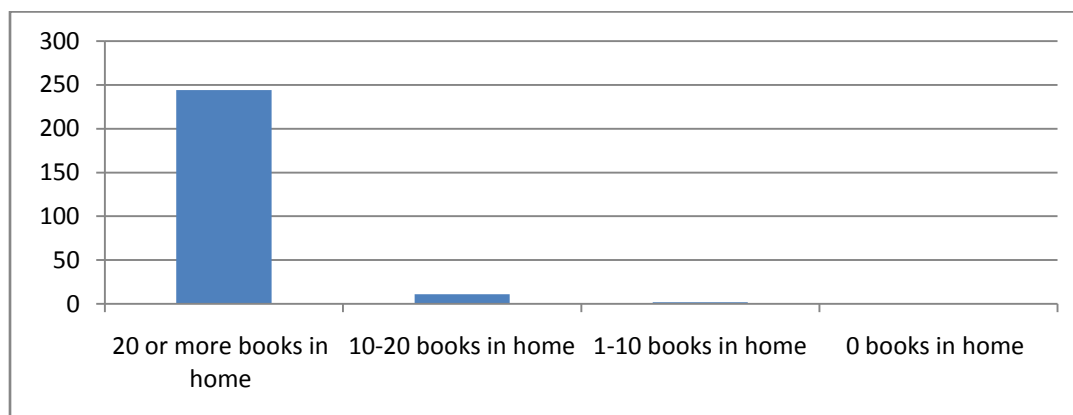


Figure 29. Number of Children's Books Graph

The findings for the number of children's books in the home are presented above by IL program location and as a group. These data represent individuals who have been receiving books for over one year. An overwhelming majority of families (94.94%) represented by this data have twenty or more children's books in their homes. More than 99% of the families asked this question have ten or more children's books in the home.

Child's enthusiasm toward books and reading

The next set of figures (30 and 31) show how enthusiastic parents report their children are when they are looking at books or being read to in the home.

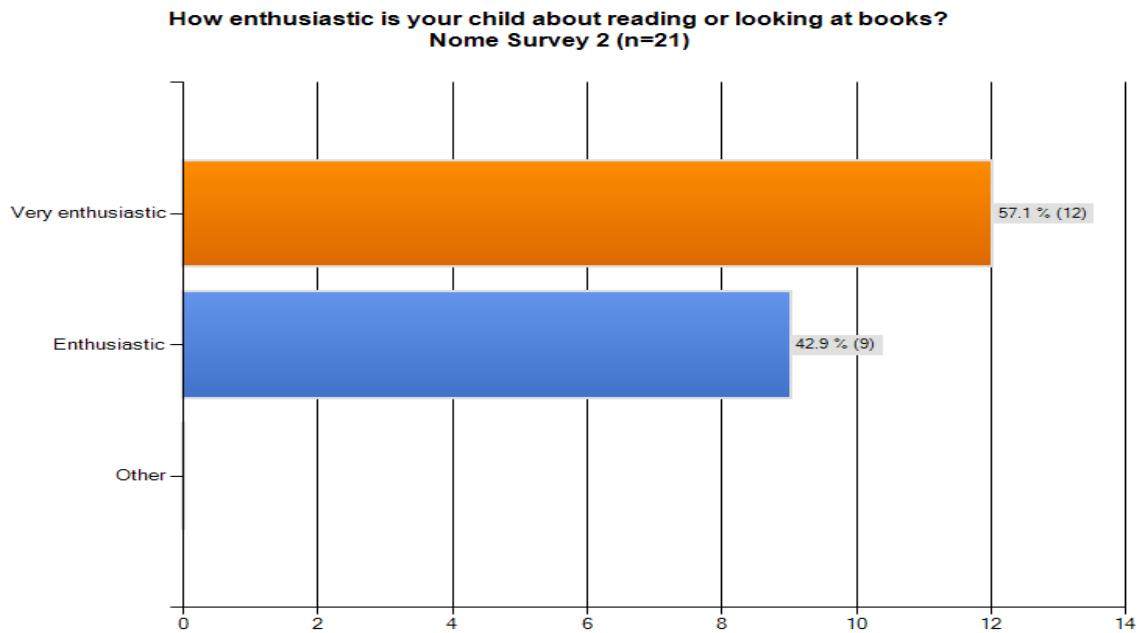


Figure 30. Enthusiasm Nome

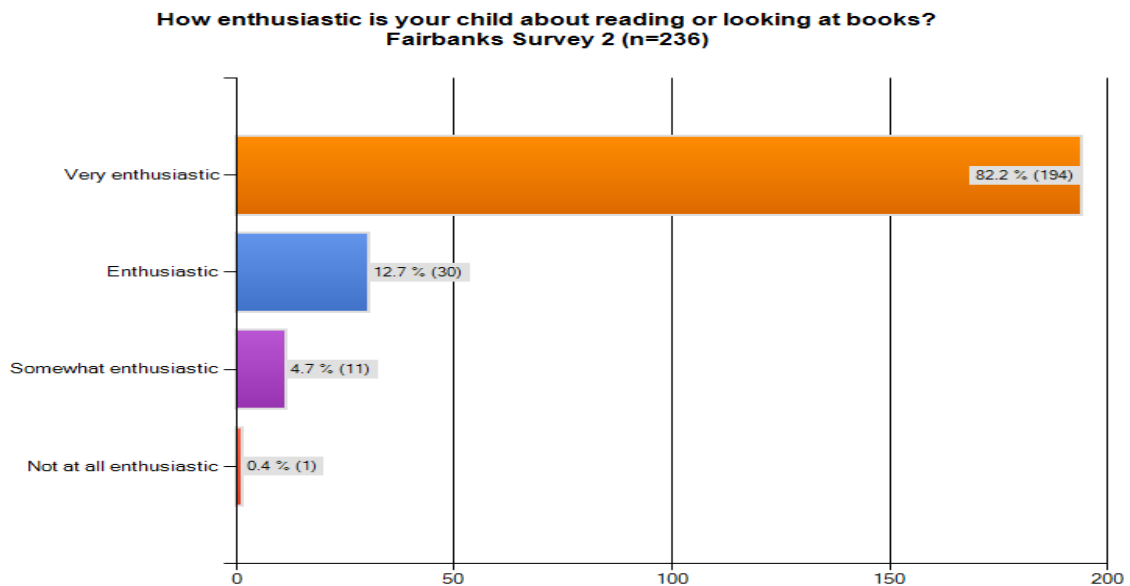


Figure 31. Enthusiasm Fairbanks

Survey 2 Child’s enthusiasm (as reported by parent) about reading or looking at books; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257)

Level of Enthusiasm	# of responses	% of response
Very Enthusiastic	206	80.15%
Enthusiastic	39	15.17%
Somewhat Enthusiastic	11	4.28%
Not At All Enthusiastic	1	0.38%

Figure 32. Enthusiasm Survey 2

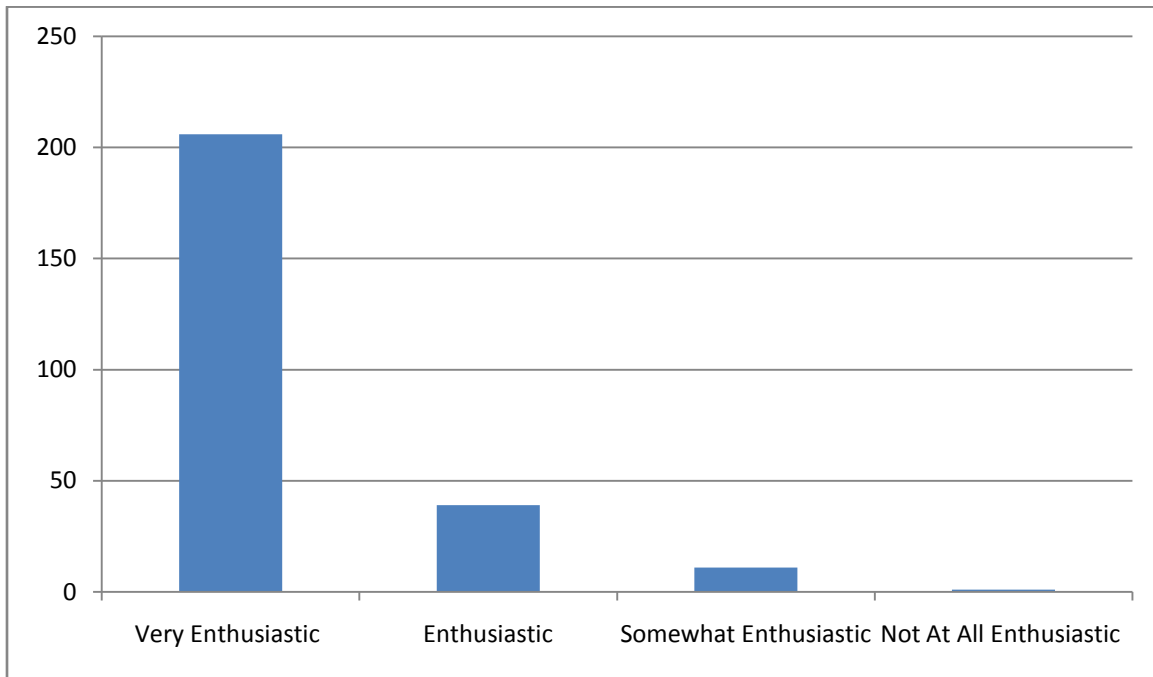


Figure 33. Enthusiasm Graph Survey 2

The findings for the child’s level of enthusiasm towards books and reading are represented above by IL program location and as a group. See Figures 32 and 33. This question was asked of a parent or guardian enrolled and receiving books for one year or more in an IL program. Over 80% of respondents report that they feel their child is very enthusiastic toward reading and books. Taken together over 95% of parents felt their child was enthusiastic or very enthusiastic toward reading and books. Less than 5% of the respondents perceived their child to be somewhat enthusiastic toward reading and books. Only 1 of 257 respondents reported their child was not at all enthusiastic toward books.

Frequency of parent reading to child

Parents in Survey 2 in both Fairbanks and Nome were asked about how often they read to their child/ren during the week. The question was not specific to IL books, but children’s books in general. See Figures 34 and 35.

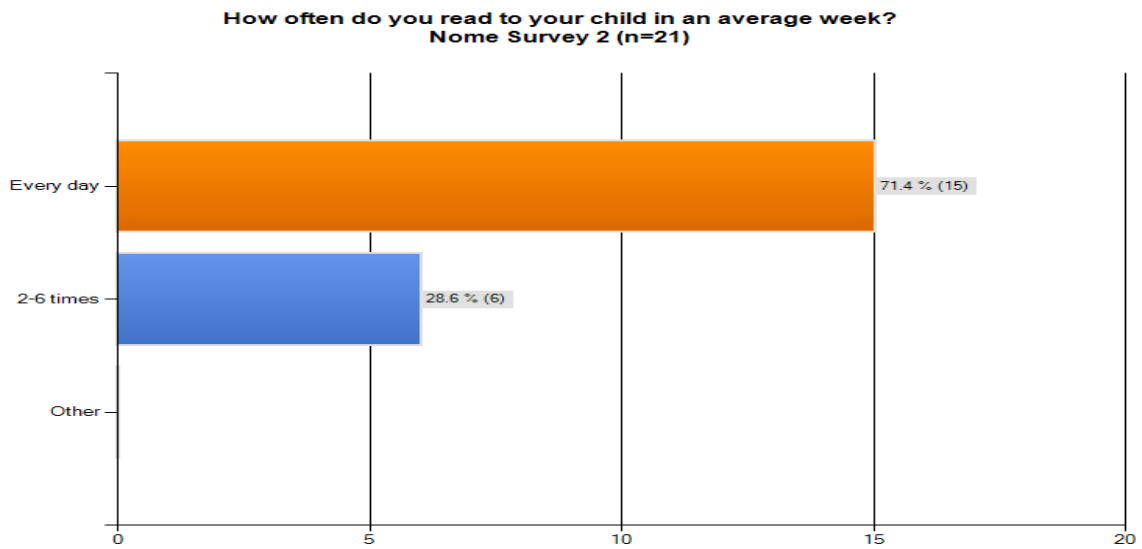


Figure 34 Reading Frequency Nome

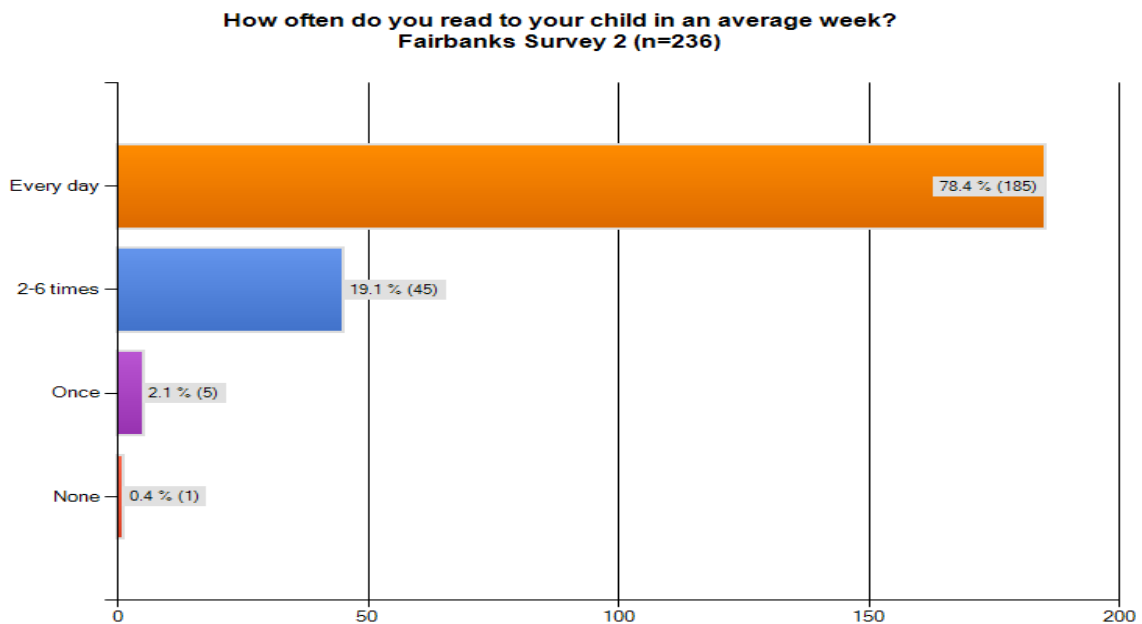


Figure 35. Reading Frequency Fairbanks

The figure below (36) shows combined data from *How often parent reads to child in an average week*; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257).

Frequency of Reading in a Week	# of responses	% of response
Daily	190	73.92%
2-6 times/week	51	19.84%
Once/week	5	1.94%
None	1	0.38%

Figure 36. Reading Frequency Survey 2

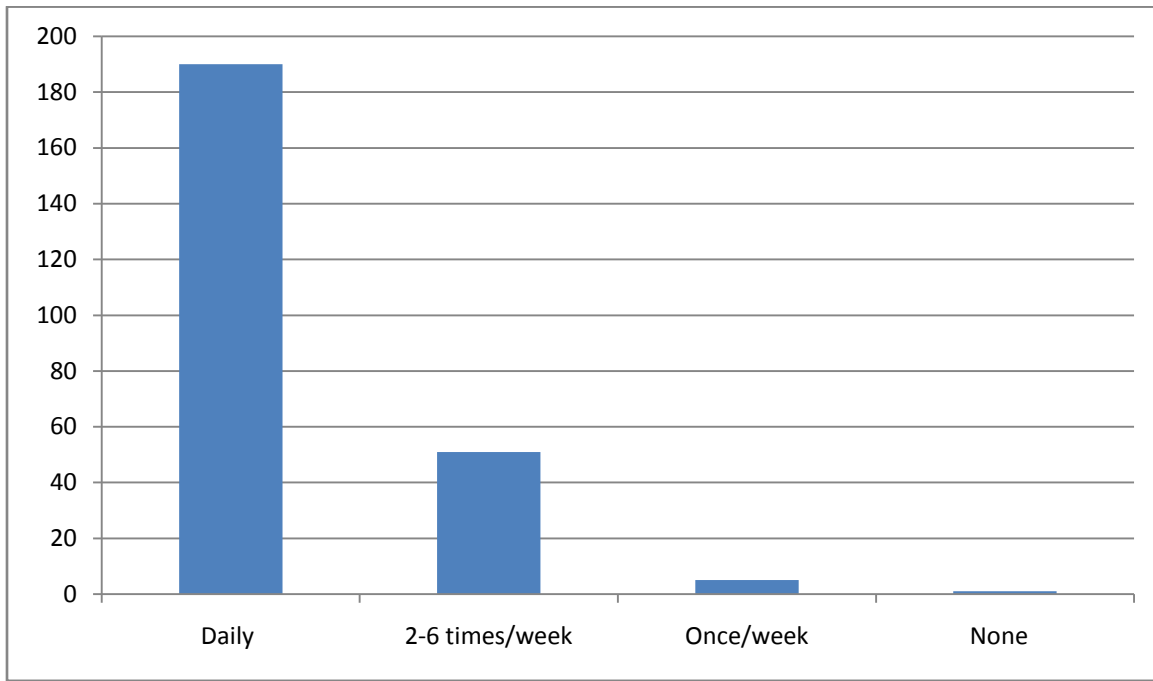


Figure 37. Reading Frequency Graph Survey 2

The findings for the frequency that a parent reads to their child in an average week are represented above by IL program location and as a group. This question was asked to a sample of parents whose child has been enrolled and has received IL book for over one year. More than 73% of individuals report that they read to their child daily. An additional 19.84% of respondents read to their child between 2 and 6 times per week. Less than 3% of respondents (6 individuals) report reading to their child once a week or not reading to their child at all during an average week. See Figures 36 and 37.

How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development

The respondents reported how they felt about reading and their child's development. This question was also asked during the first survey. See Figures 38 and 39.

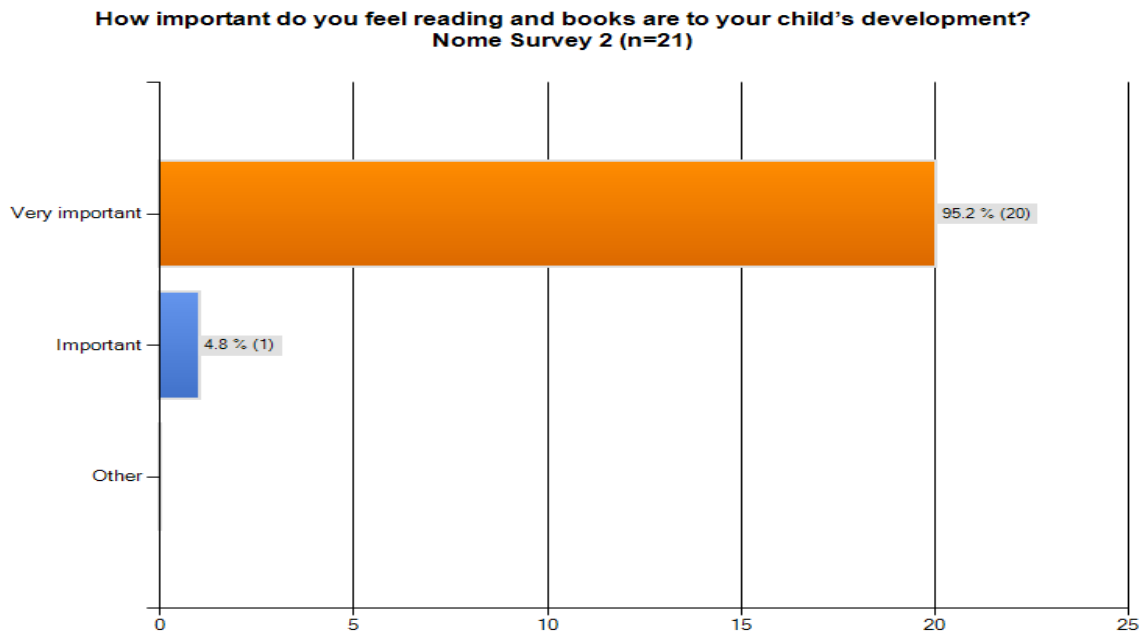


Figure 38. Reading Importance Nome

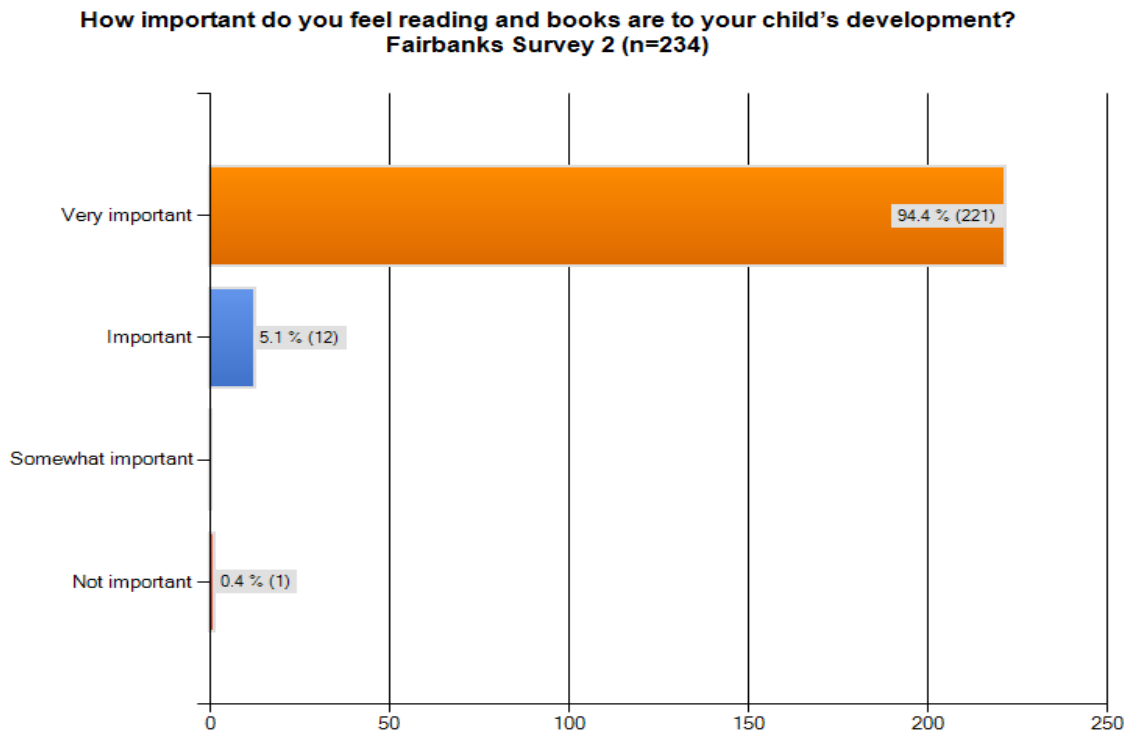


Figure 39. Reading Importance Fairbanks

Survey 2 How important is reading and books to child’s development; Fairbanks and Nome (n=255). See Figures 40 and 41.

Importance of reading and books to development	# of responses	% of response
Very Important	241	94.50%
Important	13	5.09%
Somewhat Important	0	0%
Not Important	1	0.39%

Figure 40. Importance of Reading Survey 2

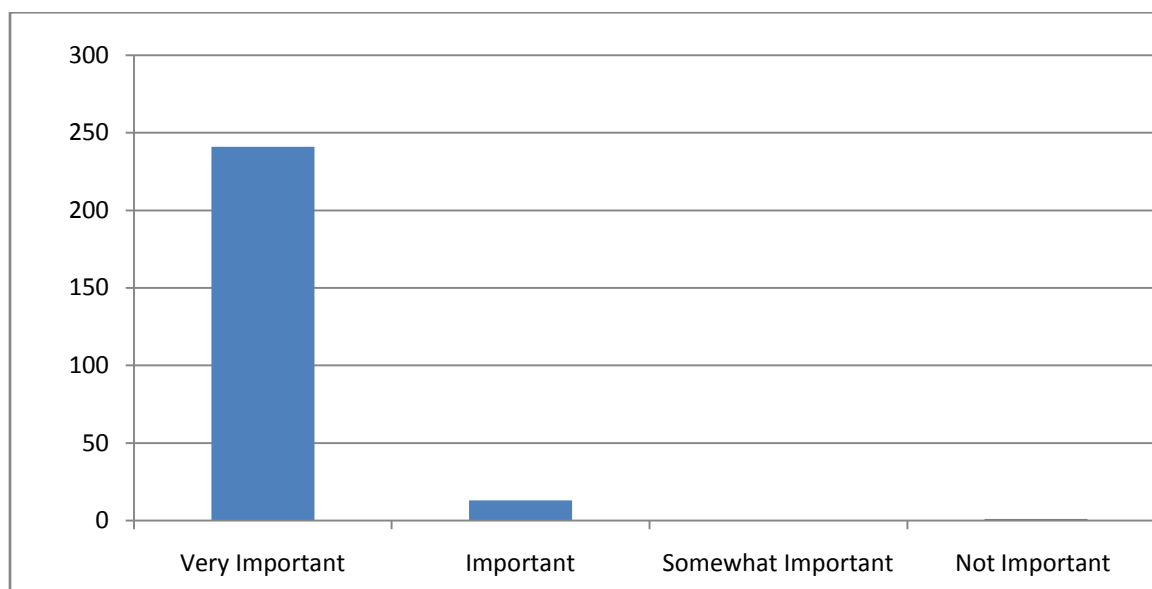


Figure 41. Importance of Reading Survey 2 Graph

The findings for the importance parents feel reading and books have on a child’s development are represented above by IL program location and as a group. This question was asked to a parent or guardian when their child had been enrolled and receiving IL books for over one year. Over 94% of respondents feel reading and books are very important to their child’s development. All but one of 255 respondents feel reading and books are important or very important to their child’s development.

Comparing the Findings of Survey 1 and Survey 2

Survey 1 was completed by a total of 509 newly enrolled IL participants in the communities of Anchorage (472), Seward/Moose Pass (29), and Angoon (8). Data gathered from this group included: the amount of books in the home; the child’s enthusiasm toward books; the frequency of parent reading to child in a week; and the perceived parental importance of reading and books to their child’s development. Survey 2 was completed by 258 individuals enrolled in the IL

programs in Nome (21) and in Fairbanks (237) for a period of at least one year or more as of December 31, 2008. Each of the individuals completing Survey 2 answered the same 4 questions as those completing Survey 1. The following is a question by question comparison between the two survey groups.

Amount of books in the home

Survey 1 Number of children’s books in the home; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=508)

Survey 2 Number of children’s books in the home; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257) See Figures 42 and 43.

# of Children’s Books	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	# of responses	% of response	# of responses	% of response
20 or more books in home	303	59.64%	244	94.94%
10-20 books in home	80	15.74%	11	4.28%
1-10 books in home	111	21.85%	2	0.77%
0 books in home	14	2.75%	0	0%

Figure 42. Comparison of Books in the Home

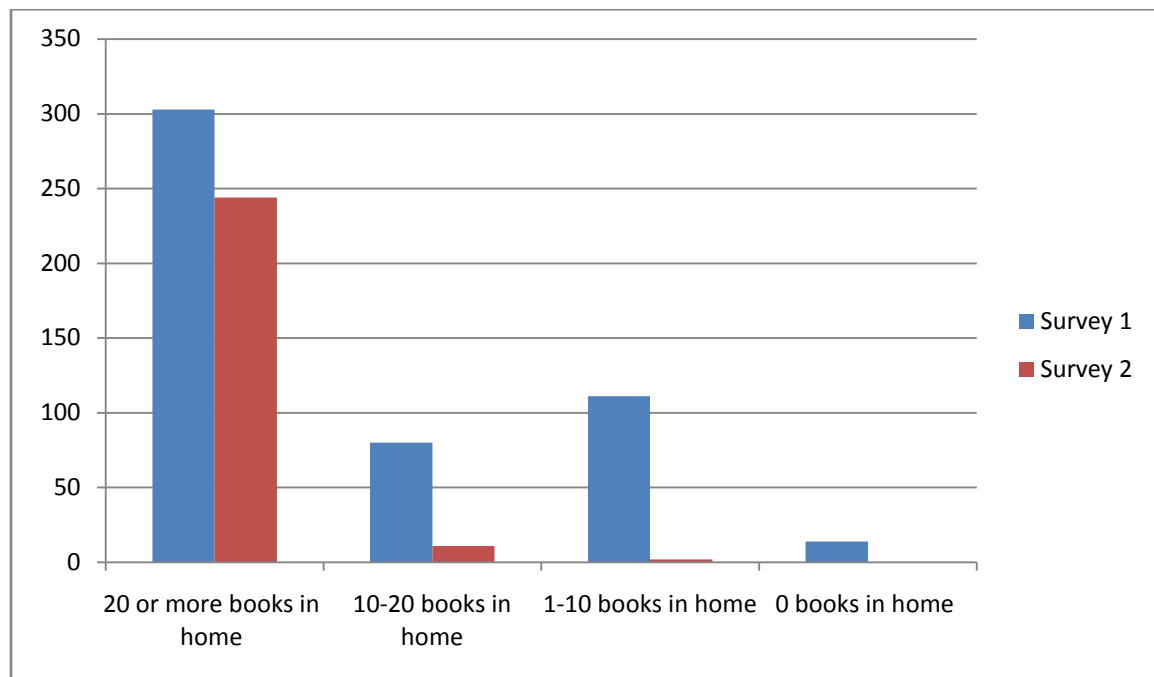


Figure 43. Comparison of Books in the Home Graph 1

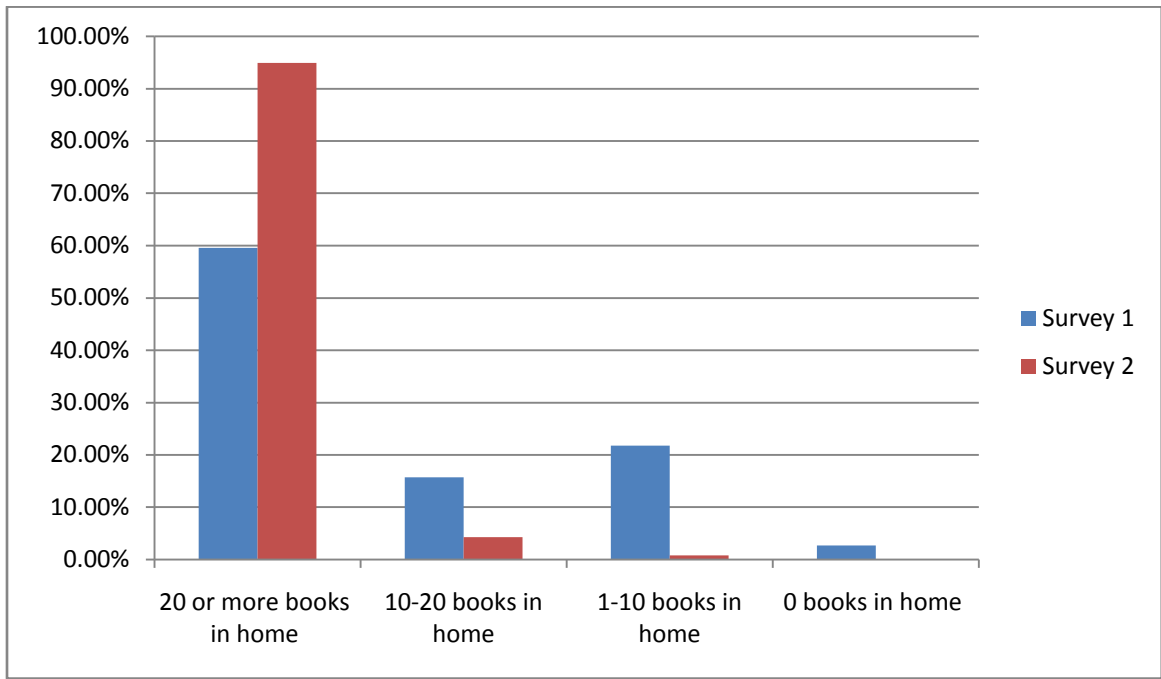


Figure 44. Comparison of Books in the Home Graph 2

The findings for the amount of children’s books in the home when comparing the two groups are considerably distinct. More than 94% of the participants who had been in the IL program for more than a year have 20 or more books in the home compared with less than 60% of new enrollees. Almost 40% of new enrollees have less than 20 children’s books in the home; less than 5% of Survey 2 participants report having less than 20 children’s books in the home.

Child’s enthusiasm toward books and reading

Survey 1 Child’s enthusiasm (as reported by parent) about reading or looking at books; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=506)

Survey 2 Child’s enthusiasm (as reported by parent) about reading or looking at books; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257) See Figure 45, 46, and 47.

Level of Enthusiasm	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	# of responses	% of response	# of responses	% of response
Very Enthusiastic	318	62.45%	206	80.15%
Enthusiastic	113	22.33%	39	15.17%
Somewhat Enthusiastic	67	13.24%	11	4.28%
Not At All Enthusiastic	8	1.58%	1	0.38%

Figure 45. Level of Enthusiasm

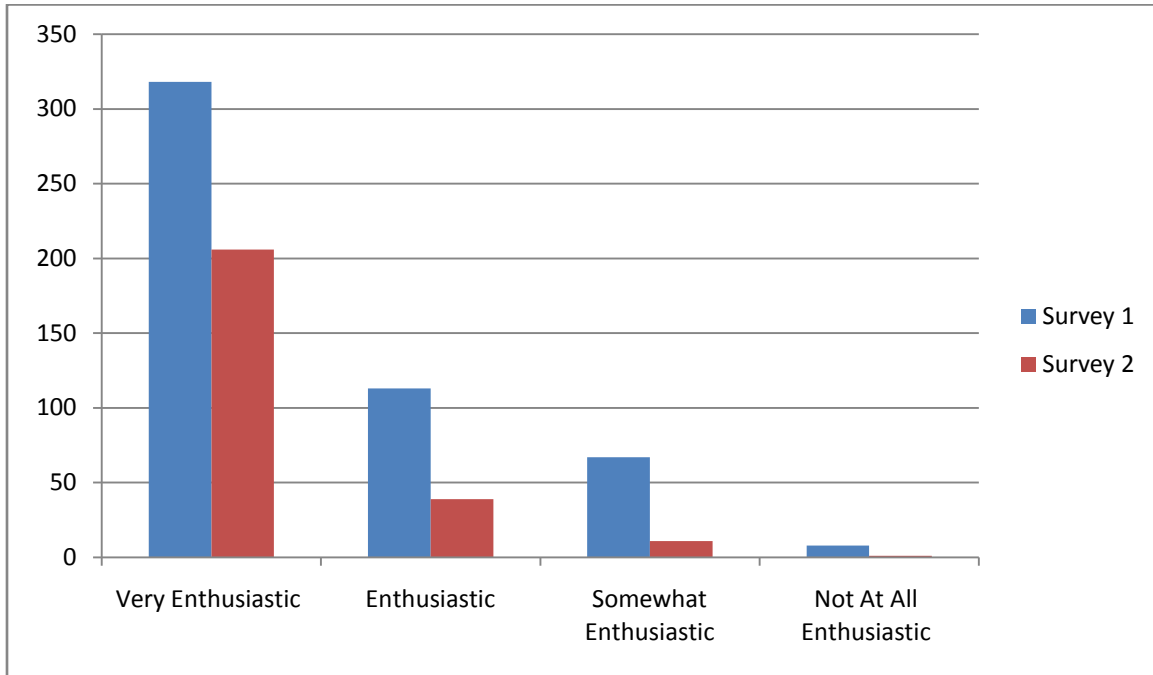


Figure 46. Level of Enthusiasm Graph 1

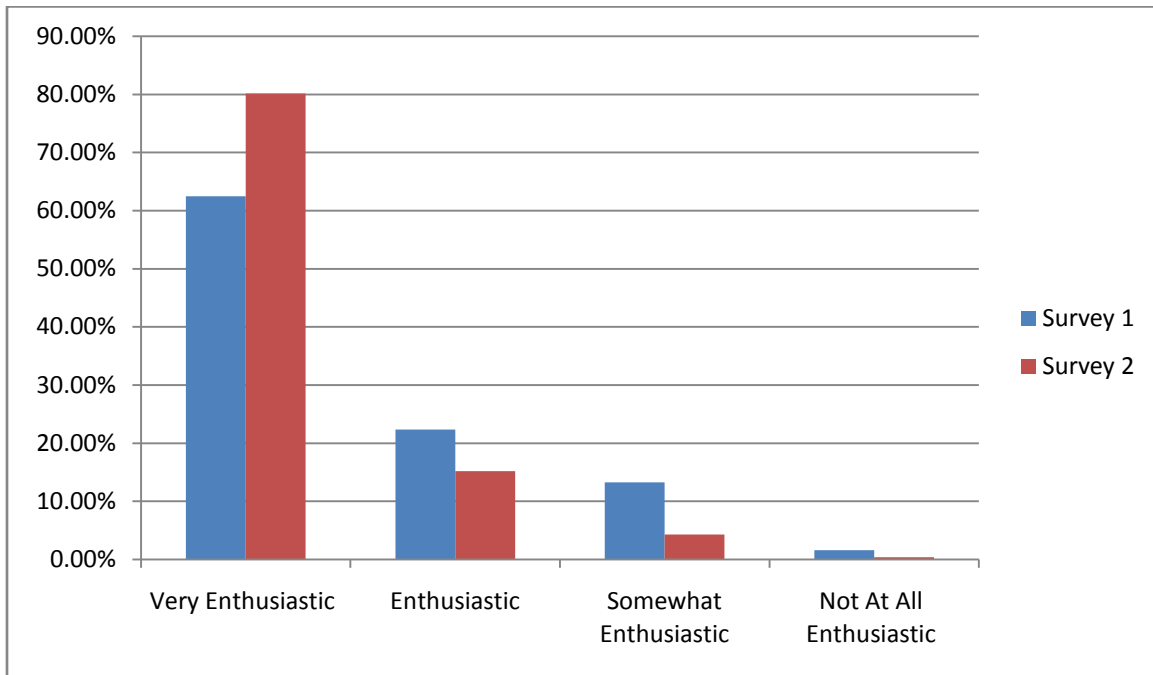


Figure 47. Level of Enthusiasm Graph 2

The findings between the two groups is considerable for the child’s enthusiasm for reading and books. Over 80% of the respondents to Survey 2 report their child is very enthusiastic about reading and books compared to 62.45% of Survey 1 respondents. Less than 5% of Survey 2

respondents state their child is somewhat enthusiastic or not at all enthusiastic about reading compared to over 14% of Survey 1 respondents.

Frequency of parent reading to child

Survey 1 How often parent reads to child in an average week; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=504)

Survey 2 How often parent reads to child in an average week; Fairbanks and Nome (n=257) See Figures 48, 49, & 50.

Frequency of Reading in a Week	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	# of responses	% of response	# of responses	% of response
Daily	323	64.08%	190	73.92%
2-6 times/week	140	27.77%	51	19.84%
Once/week	30	5.95%	5	1.94%
None	11	2.18%	1	0.38%

Figure 48. Frequency of Parent Reading

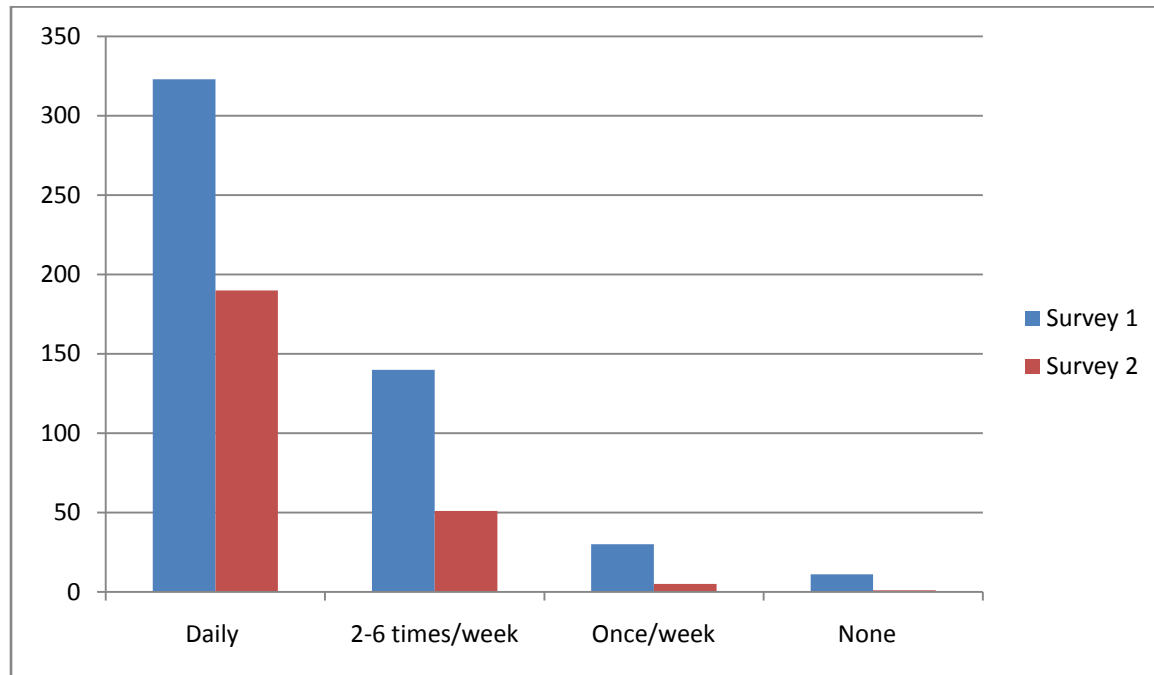


Figure 49. Frequency of Parent Reading Graph 1

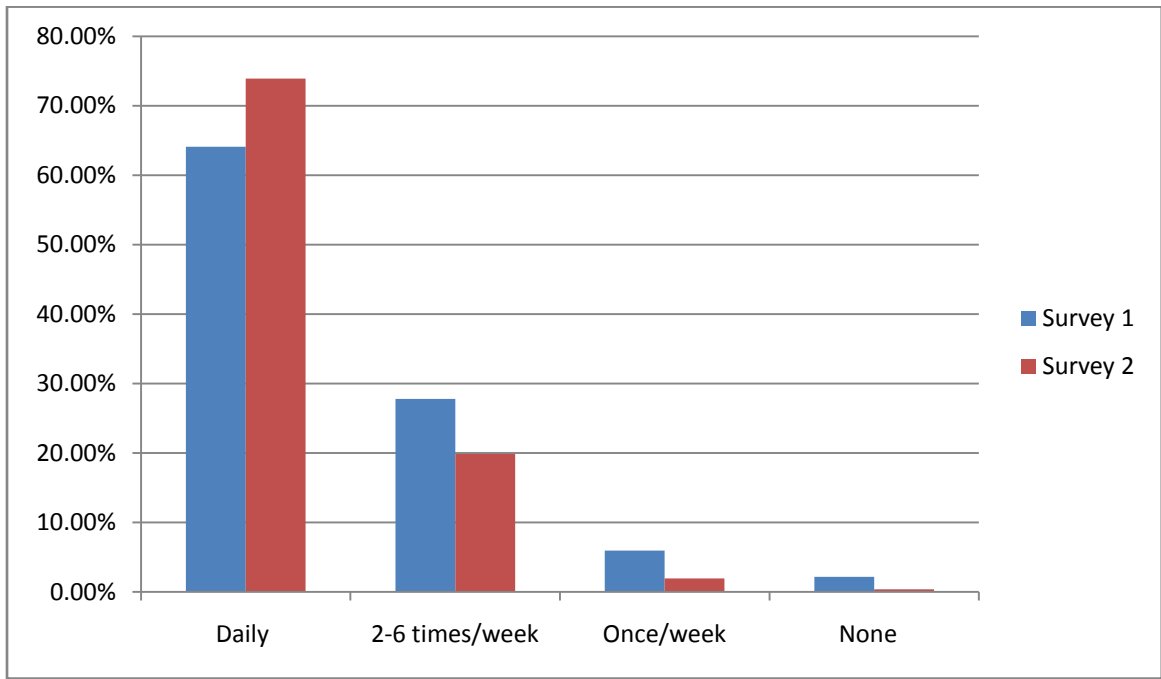


Figure 50. Frequency of Parent Reading Graph 2

Differences were found when comparing the two groups on the frequency of parental reading to the child. Nearly 74% of respondents to Survey 2 claim to read to their child daily compared with 64% of Survey 1 respondents. Also noteworthy is that over 8% of new enrollees read either once a week to their child or not at all compared to 2.36% of Survey 2 respondents.

How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development

Survey 1 How important is reading and books to child's development; Anchorage, Angoon, and Seward Moose Pass (n=505)

Survey 2 How important is reading and books to child's development; Fairbanks and Nome (n=255) See Figures 51, 52, and 53.

Importance of reading and books to development	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	# of responses	% of response	# of responses	% of response
Very Important	471	93.26%	241	94.50%
Important	27	5.34%	13	5.09%
Somewhat Important	7	1.38%	0	0%
Not Important	0	0%	1	0.39%

Figure 51. Reading Importance

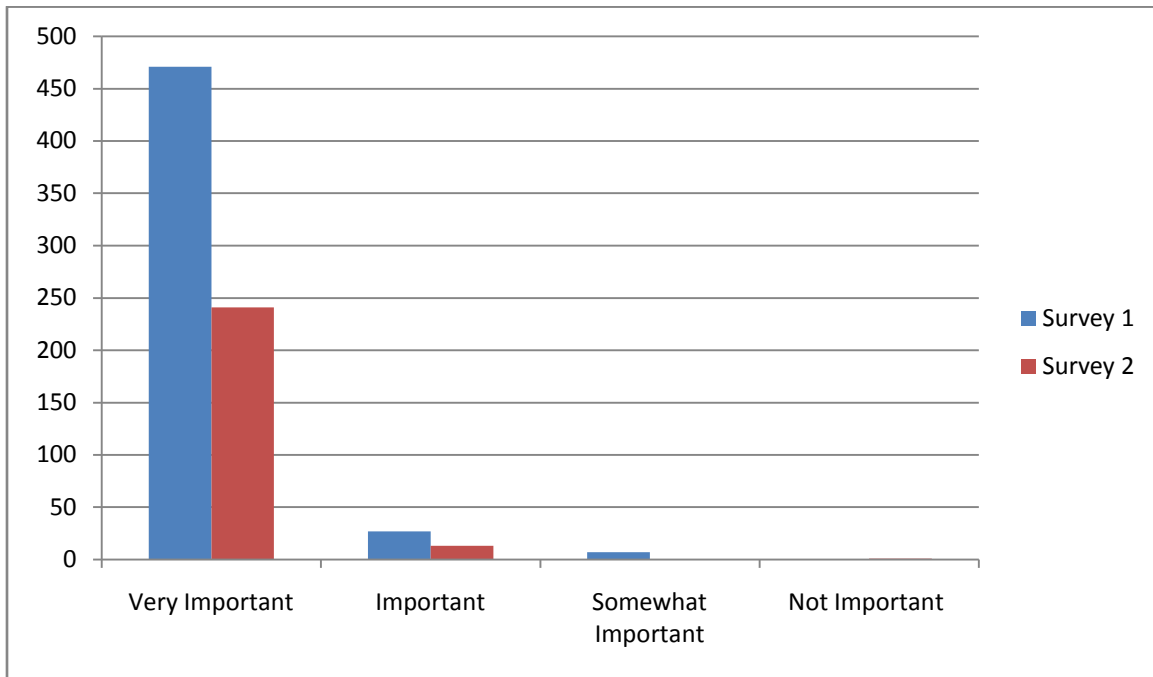


Figure 52. Reading Importance Graph 1

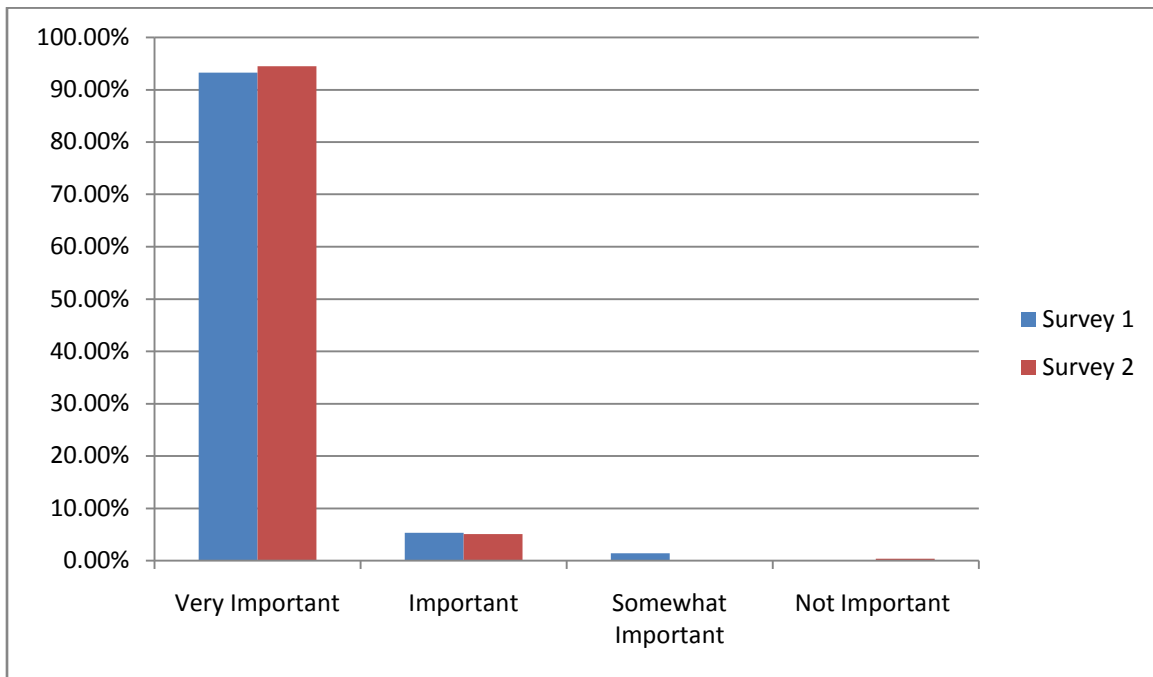


Figure 53. Reading Importance Graph 2

Findings for the importance of reading to children’s development was found to be relatively equal between the two groups.

Have you encouraged others in your community to sign-up for IL

This question was asked to all the participants in Survey 2. See Figures 54 and 55.

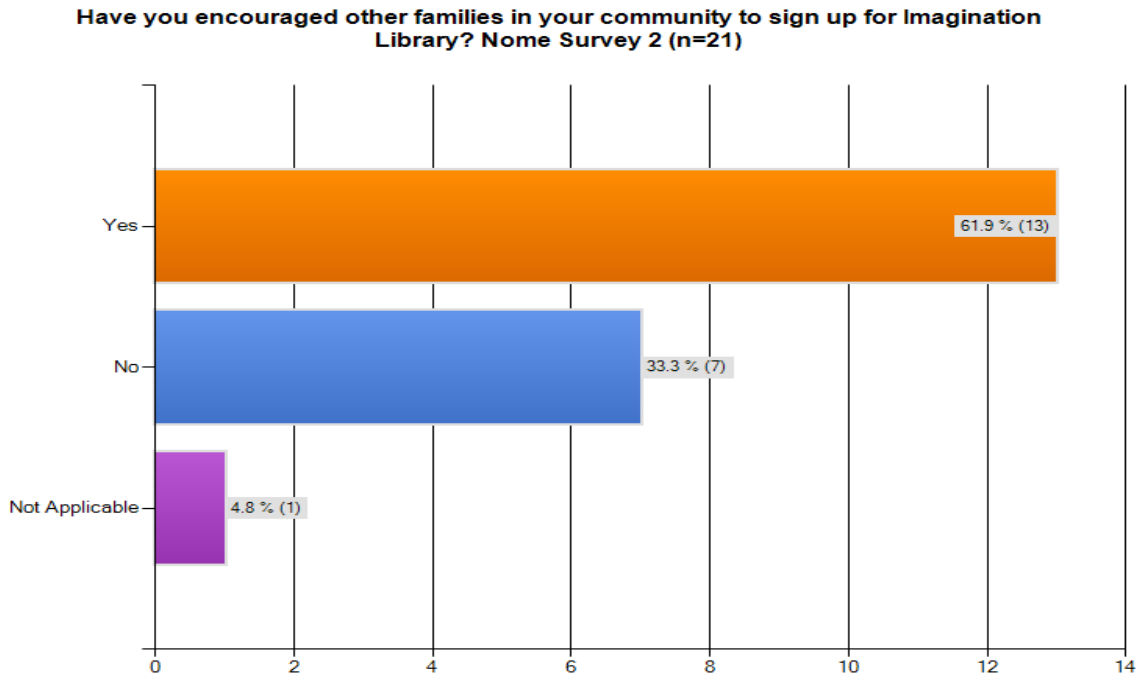


Figure 54. Encouraging Families Nome

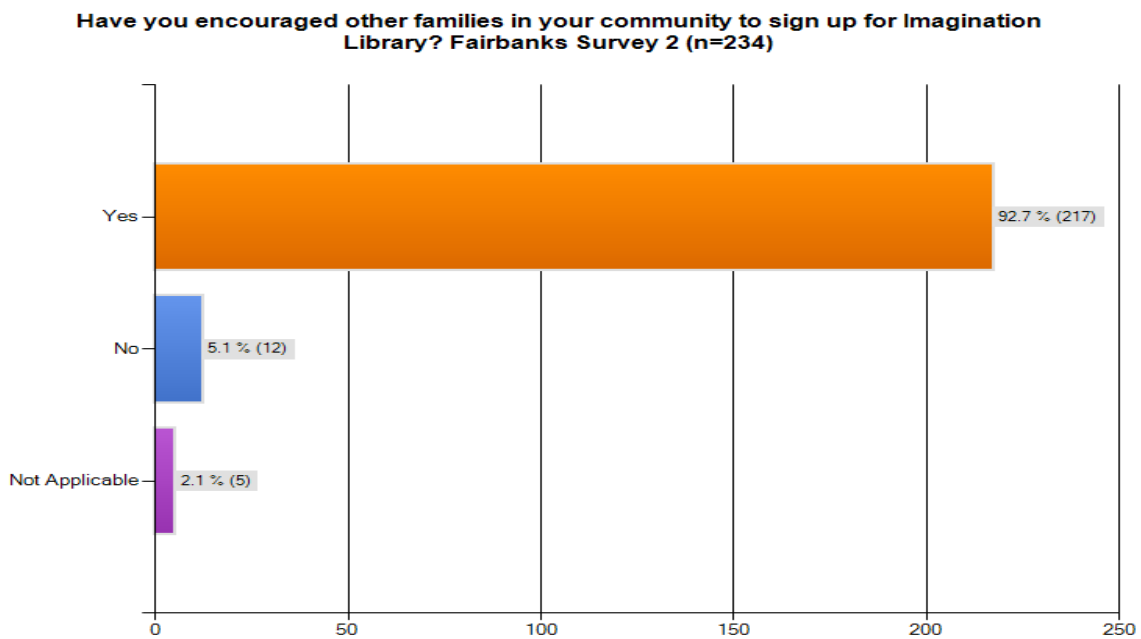


Figure 55. Encouraging Families Fairbanks

Survey 2 Have you encouraged others in your community to sign-up for IL;
Fairbanks and Nome (n=255)

Encouraged others	# of responses	% of response
Yes	230	90.19%
No	19	7.45%
Not applicable	6	2.35%

Figure 56. Encouraging Families Survey 2.

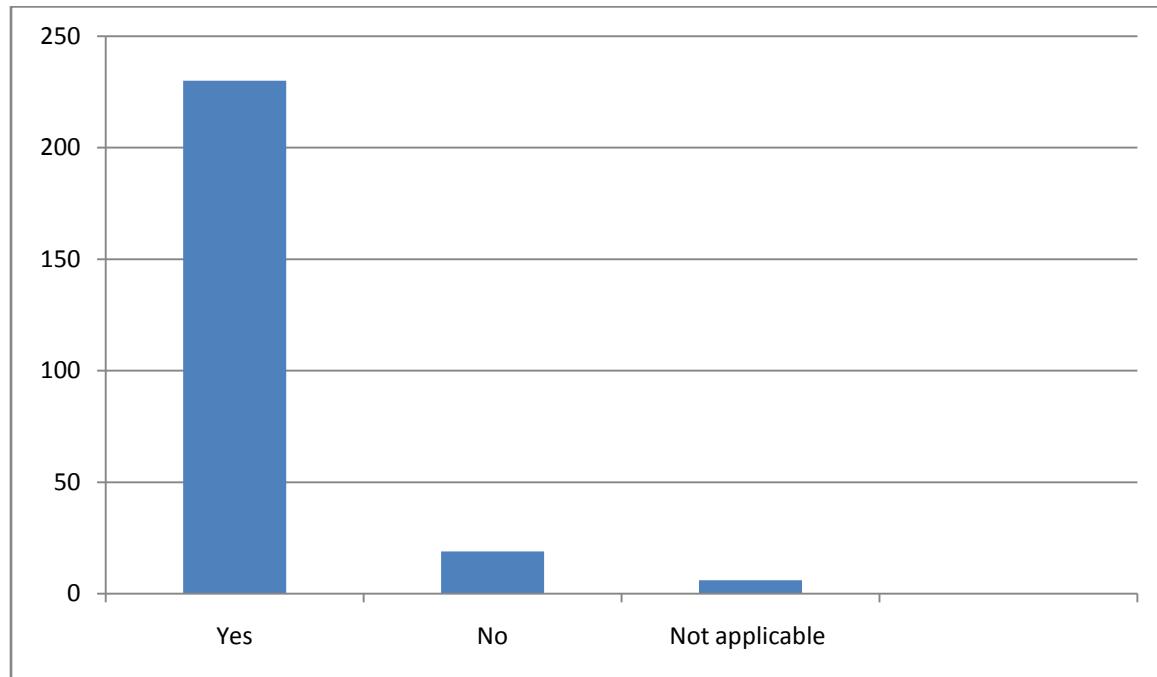


Figure 57. Encouraging Families Survey 2 Graph

The findings from Survey 2 indicate that an overwhelming majority of families (90.19%) have encouraged other families in their community to sign-up for the IL. This suggests that families are happy with the IL program and find some benefit in their child receiving a book in the mail each month. See Figure 56 and 57.

Does your child look forward to the arrival of the book each month?

Parents were asked about their child anticipating their next book. Some respondents mentioned their child was too young in the interview over the phone when answering this question. Many parents wrote comments in the open text box regarding this issue. These written and oral comments are not reflected in the statistics below. See Figure 58 and 59. See comments at the end of the report for a sample of written or oral comments.

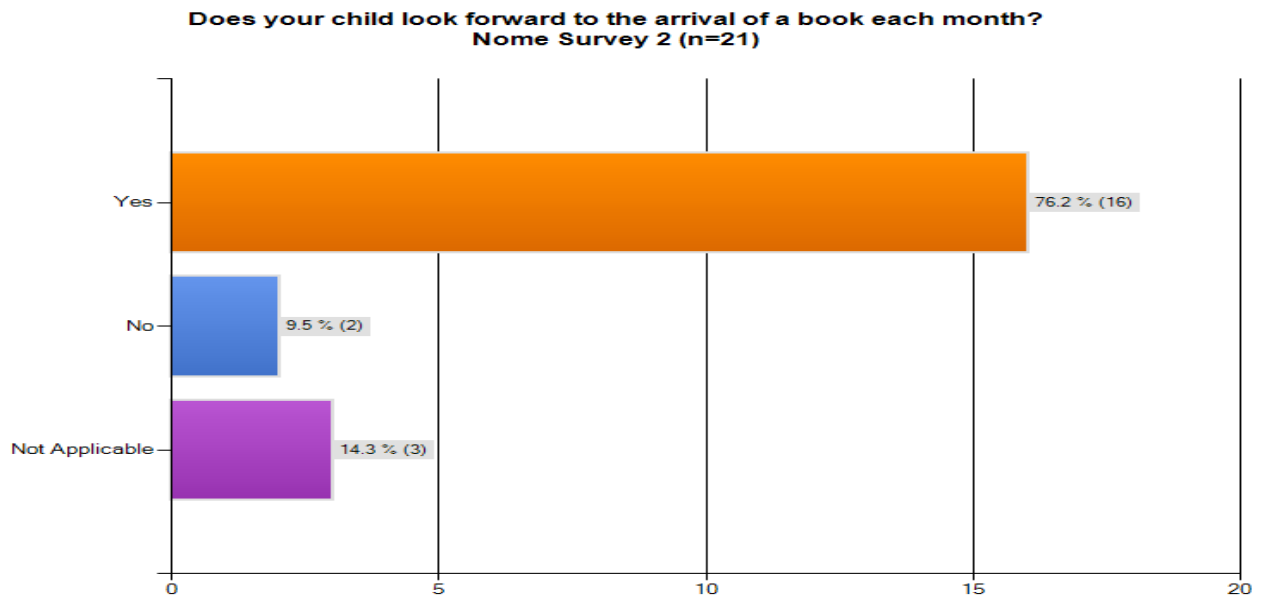


Figure 58. Book Arrival Nome

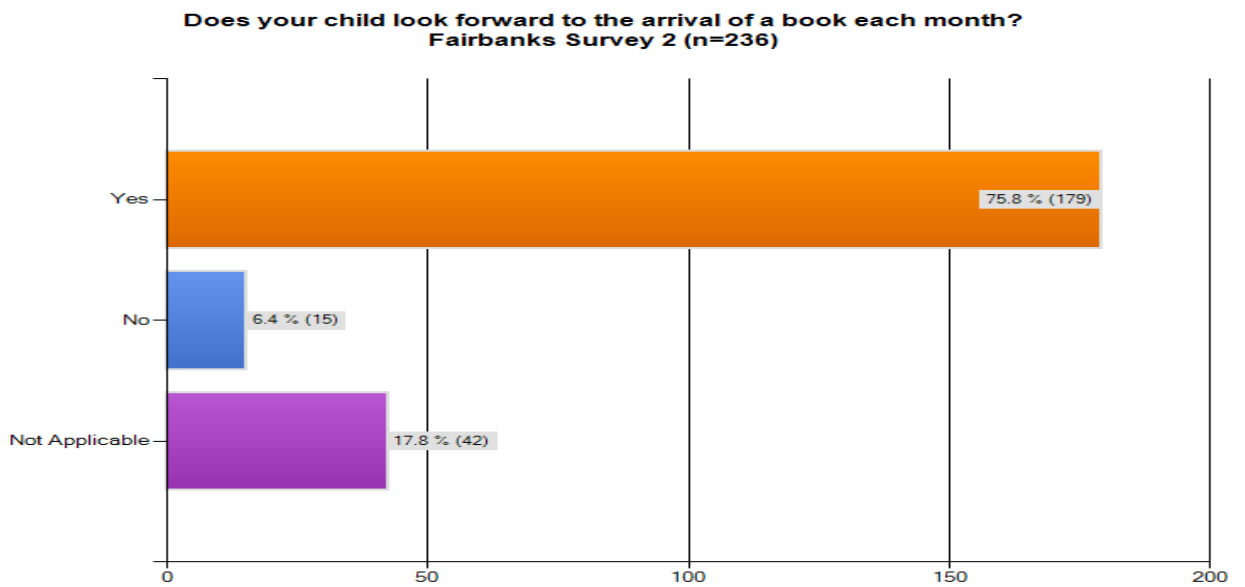


Figure 59. Book Arrival Fairbanks

Survey 2 Does your child look forward to the arrival of the book each month;
Fairbanks and Nome (n=257)

Look forward to arrival	# of responses	% of response
Yes	195	75.87%
No	17	6.61%
Not applicable	45	17.50%

Figure 60. Book Arrival Survey 2

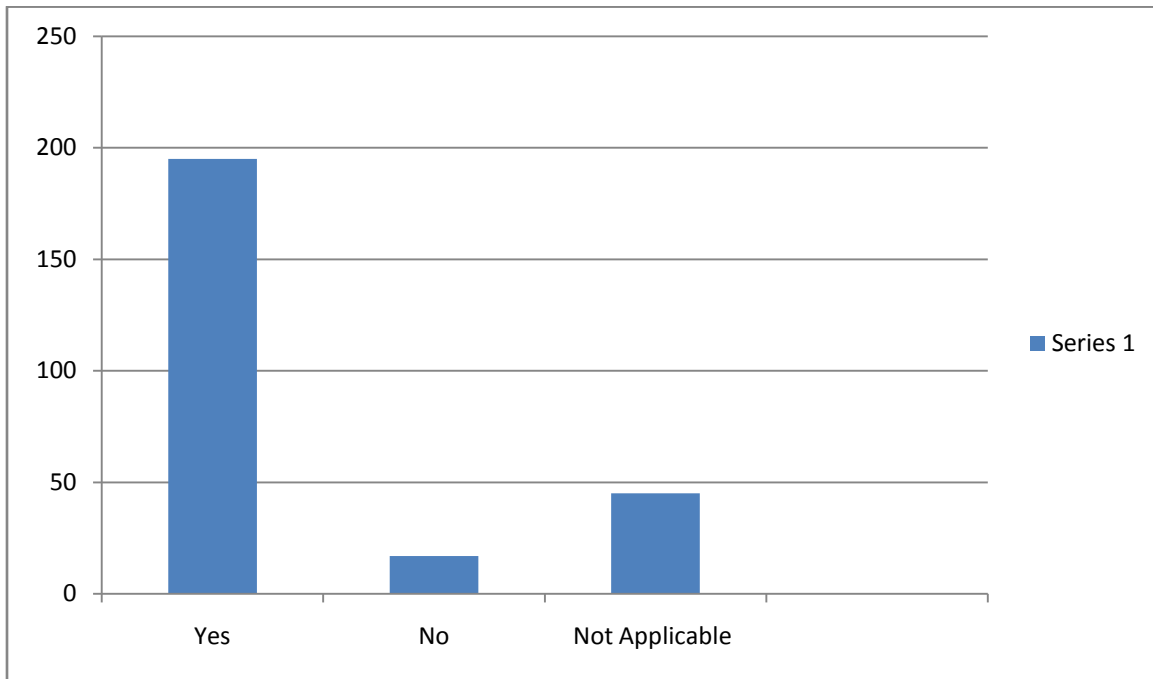


Figure 61. Book Arrival Survey 2 Graph

Overwhelmingly respondent marked yes on the survey (75.87%) when asked about their child's eagerness to receive the monthly books. See Figures 60 and 61.

Will your child be more prepared for kindergarten because of IL?

Survey 2 asked parents if they thought receiving IL monthly books would help their child be more prepared for kindergarten. Nearly all parents (93.72%) responded with a yes. See Figures 62, 63, 64, and 65.

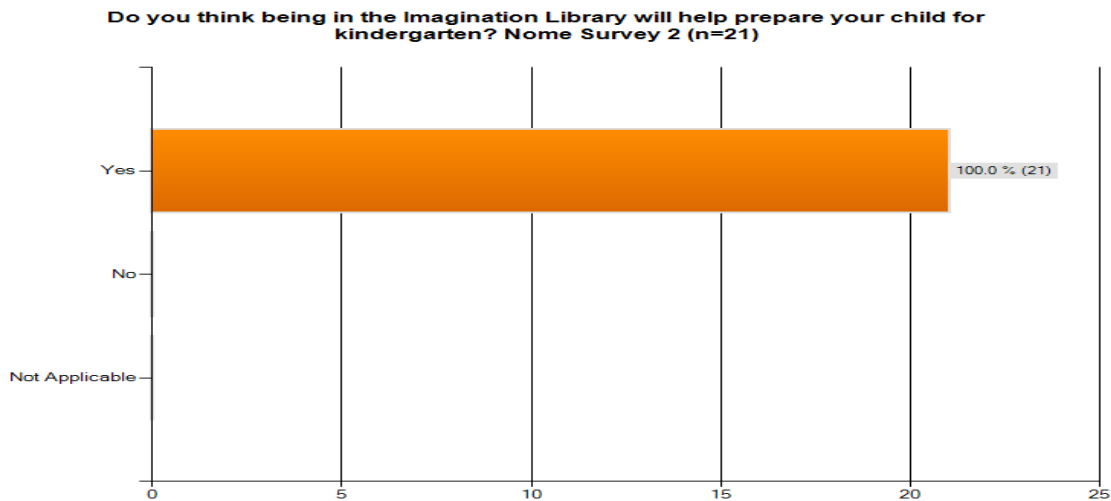


Figure 62. Kindergarten Preparation Nome

Do you think being in the Imagination Library will help prepare your child for kindergarten? Fairbanks Survey 2 (n=234)

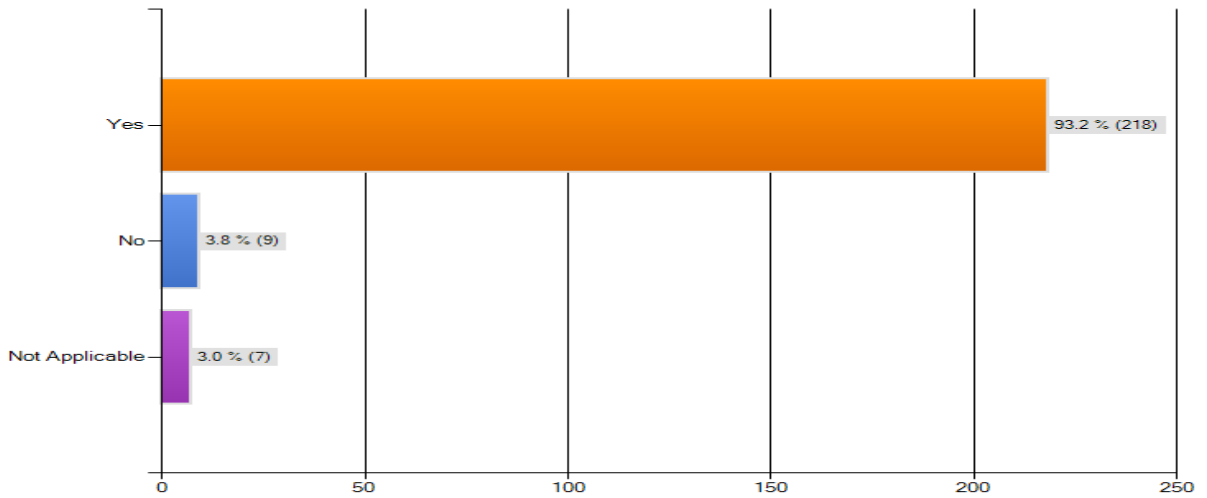


Figure 63. Kindergarten Preparation Fairbanks

Survey 2 Do you feel your child is more prepared for kindergarten because of IL; Fairbanks and Nome (n=255)

More prepared for kindergarten	# of responses	% of response
Yes	239	93.72%
No	9	3.52%
Not applicable	7	2.74%

Figure 64. Kindergarten Preparation Survey 2

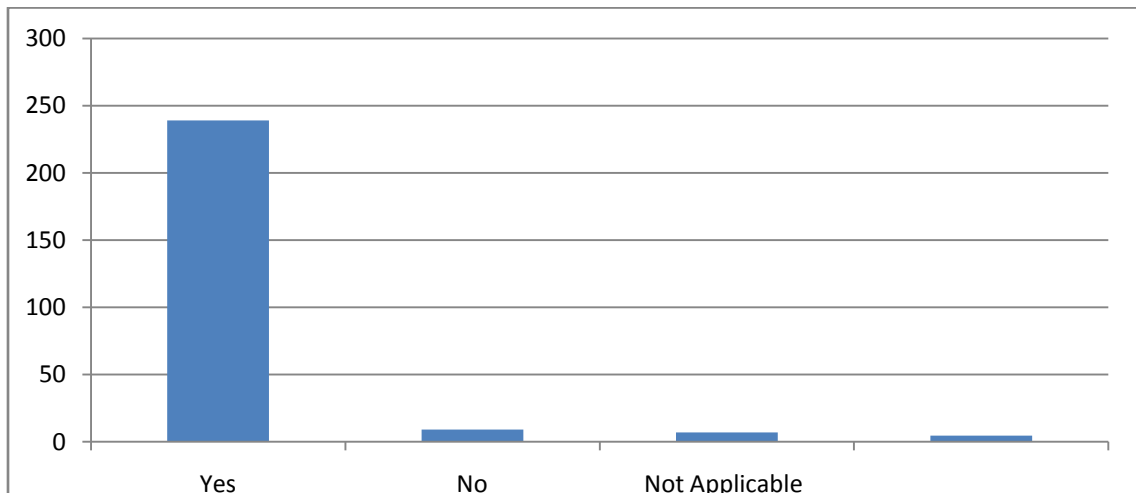


Figure 65. Kindergarten Preparation Survey 2 Graph

One of the underlying goals of the IL program is that children are better prepared when they enter school. The vision of Best Beginnings is “All Alaska children begin school ready to read.” The findings from Survey 2 asked parents if they felt being in the IL helped prepare their child for kindergarten. Over 93% of the 255 respondents felt their child was more prepared for kindergarten because of the IL.

Do you read to your child more often since you began IL?

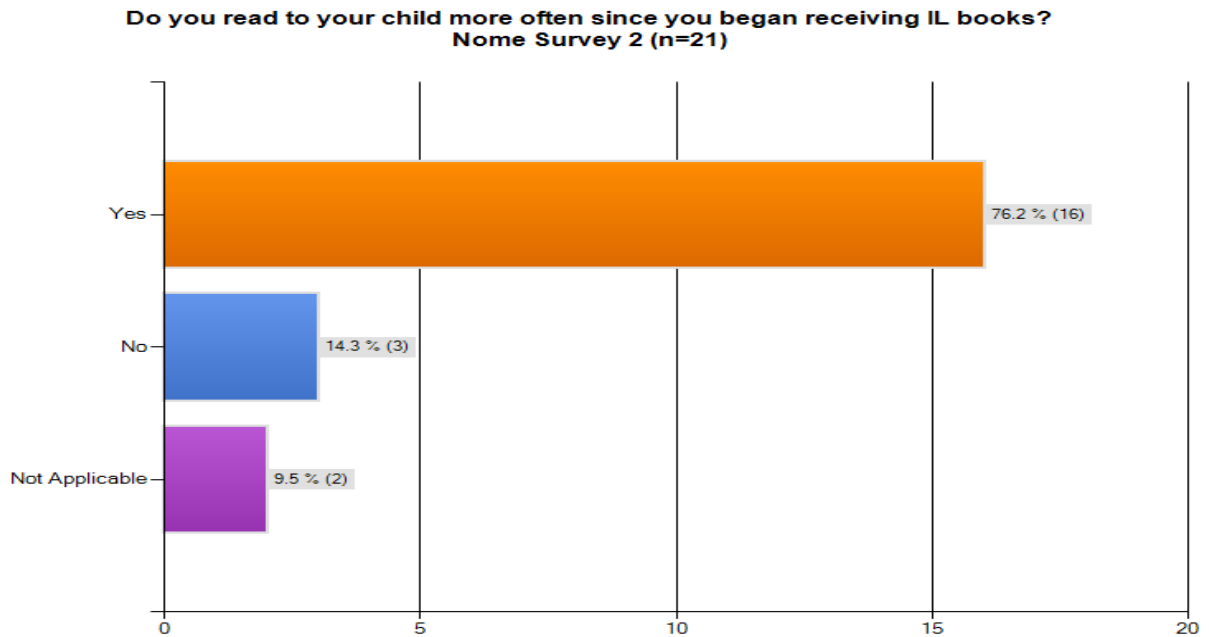


Figure 66. Reading Frequency Nome

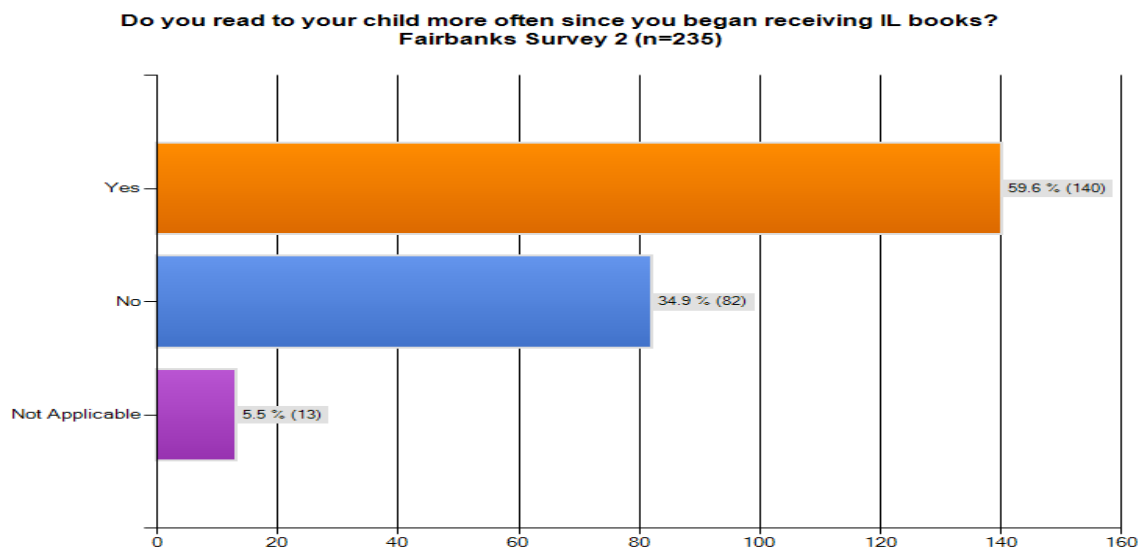


Figure 67. Reading Frequency Fairbanks

Survey 2 Do you read to your child more since you began receiving IL books; Fairbanks and Nome (n=256)

Encouraged others	# of responses	% of response
Yes	156	61.17%
No	85	33.33%
Not applicable	15	5.88%

Figure 68. Reading Frequency Survey 2

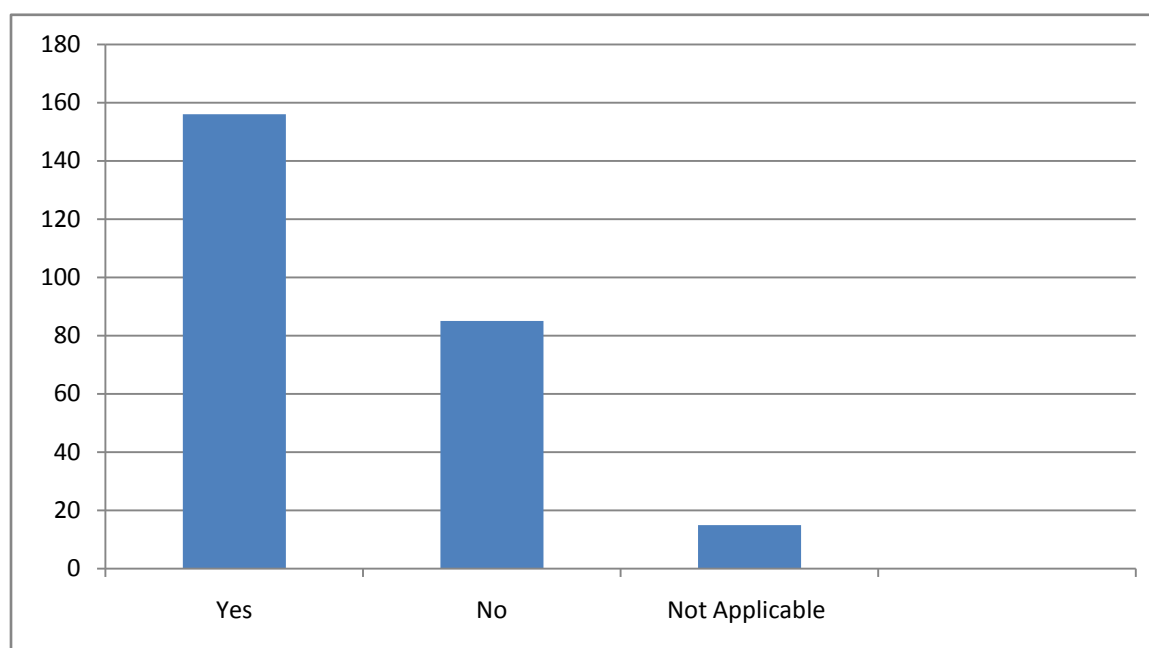


Figure 69. Reading Frequency Survey 2 Graph

The findings related to a change in the frequency of reading by a parent since enrolling in the IL were marginally supportive parents reading more since beginning IL. Having conducted some of the telephone interviews with some respondents makes us realize that some may have always read daily to their child prior to enrolling in the IL and that there would be no change since receiving books through the IL. See Figures 66, 67, 68, and 69.

Conclusions

Phase 1 of the Alaska Imagination Library Evaluation has generated a corpus of data that provides a glimpse of the effectiveness of IL in Alaska. As the numerous figures in this report suggest there are many meaningful points to discuss. With caution, positive changes attributed to the IL can be made when comparing between the two survey groups representing new enrollees and those enrolled for more than one year. Additional information gathered from only Survey 2 participants suggests additional benefits gained from those participating in IL for one or more years.

A major difference exists between the amount of children's books in the home between the two groups. Almost 95% of respondents completing Survey 2 have 20 or more children's books in the home compared to a shade over 59% of new enrollees. This in actuality should be the case since Survey 2 respondents will have received at least 12 children's books in the mail (a requirement to be eligible to take Survey 2). This question provides a glimpse into the homes of new enrollees in regards to children's literature. The finding that almost 25% of Survey 1 respondents had 10 or fewer children's books in their homes is a strong argument for the IL in Alaska.

It would appear that receiving IL books has made children more enthusiastic about books and reading. Findings show that over 80% of Survey 2 respondents feel their child is very enthusiastic about reading compared with 62.45% of new enrollees. It would make sense that children would be more enthusiastic about reading and books if the amount of quality literature increased in the home each month consistently. Results also illustrate that 75% of children enrolled in IL for over a year look forward to the arrival of the book each month. A major finding of this study is the preponderance of families (93.72%) that feel their child is more prepared for kindergarten because of IL. Future evaluations of the Alaska IL programs may tackle this phenomenon more closely by assessing kindergarten readiness among children enrolled in IL and those who were not.

Comments from Survey 2

Respondents in the Fairbanks and Nome IL programs were asked to provide any feedback they had about the IL program in Survey 2. Of the 258 respondents, 188 provided written comments.

The comments are overwhelmingly positive and suggest that the IL program is making a meaningful difference in the lives of the participating families:

- children and their families are excited about and look forward to receiving books and reading them
- families are reading more together, more often
- families can see the impact the books have made in their children's interests, imagination, and skill development

Concerns expressed about the IL program relate primarily to the problems associated with the logistics of implementing a large scale program of this nature, one did not like having content in a book about "candy" and another wanted to find a way for her child to continue to receive books after they were five.

A sampling of unedited comments are provided below:

I love the Imagination Library and think they need to expand to more places in the lower 48. I have family members that would greatly benefit from them.

I really appreciate the books - Isaiah really likes reading. He is now four and half and in preschool and doing very well. Books increase vocabulary and also social and imagination skills for further mind development and you can see this

when he asks extended questions by what he has been read. He looks forward to getting his books. Thank You Very Much!

My child started the program right before he turned 5 so he only received 1 book.

I LOVE THIS PROGRAM!

This is a fantastic program. The kids LOVE getting these books in the mail and the selection of books has been outstanding.

I have quite admittidly wondered about a few of the topics we have received in the books, but after spending some time thinking about the lessons shared through these books I do truely beleive this is a wonderful program in more ways than just getting children excited about reading. It is sharing good lessons with the children at age appropriate developmental stages. Thank you!

I think this is a wonderful program that allows a wide variety of books in the household. I feel that books alone do not help prepare my child for school, but the actions of the parents as well. My daughter is now 2 years old and knows her alphabet, spells her name and counts to 10 (20 with help) reading has helped with these skills! AWESOME program!

I do think it's a woderful service and we thank you!

The books from the Imagination Library are great! They are very diverse and are often books that I wouldn't think of purchasing.

The books sent have expanded our library and opened new areas of interest for our children.

We love the IL books, the quality of the selection and the titles chosen.

I am very thankful for this program and commend any and everyone who makes it possible. God Bless you all and thank you!

I'd like to thank Dolly Parton for starting such a wonderful program and all the other people involved.

This is the best program out there for children, I am so glad it is offered in the Fairbanks area where there are not a huge amount of educational oppurtunities outside of school

My 4 year old knows the approximate DAY the books will arrive and runs to the mail box to look for it. Simply AMAZING.

I think the selection of books was excellent and it encouraged my older children to read to their younger siblings.

My daughter's too young to anticipate the books but she is surprised and excited when one arrives. She has FASD and uses reading as a calming, coping strategy. Much healthier than the meltdown alternative.

I think the Imagination Library is a great program that encourages not only children but parents to read as well. I really wish there had been something like this for me when I was little!!!

This program is wonderful! My girls love to get their book in the mail and it is addressed to them. My older daughter reads the new books to her younger sisters. I recommend this program to everyone I know with children under the age of 5. Keep up the good work!!!

The only thing that I would ask is to see about not getting books that feature candy. My child does not eat candy, and loves her books, so if one features candy she would wonder why she doesn't get it but her favorite characters do. Other than that, we love getting a new book each month to add to our growing library!

I think it is a great program. I am not very familiar with children's titles and the ones that come home are always quality and seem well chosen.

My little boy loves the books about people and machines a lot more than the ones about animals. I personally enjoy the stories about animals, but he says they're "boring." I don't know if this is common or just him...just thought I'd let you know. We do appreciate receiving the books each month, and we read every night before bed. His favorite by far is "The Chicken of the Family."

These books are a major part of our daily ritual, and comprise a key time with our children. Please let me know how to contribute to the program in the future.

Everyday, when we check the mail, my daughter asks if she received her book today! She loves getting new books! Thank you, thank you!

It is a great program. I appreciate that all children are eligible and that it is easy to sign up for it. Interesting was that some books did not seem so nice or fitting at first from our parent standpoint but then our son looked at them and just fell in love with them (e.g. Big sister, little sister or Minosaur). I have recommended the Program to clients in the social work field. The response was usually positive.

We love this program! Please keep it up! Many, many thanks to Dolly. She really is an angel for doing this. Especially being on a limited budget, our family so looks forward to this program. Thank you!

We love the Imagination Library and are thankful for what it gives us as well as our community...thanks!

I think your program is extremely neat! My 3 year old LOVES getting his book in

the mail and every month spends the whole day looking at the new one. My older boys all sit around on the couch and read it to him. I have seen books I didn't even know were out there and it has been so cool to see him excited about reading! Thanks for all you do!

Although these are not my children they are my grandchildren, each one loves the books as they come in. They almost prefer the book to TV which is awesome.

Why does it take 2 to 3 months to receive a book from a previous month? My daughter received her book for October in December and hasn't received November or Decembers books yet.

Our child is bilingual and the IL book introduce the whole family to American child Literature

I wish that this program didn't end at age 5! My son no longer receives books but my daughter does. There should be a local program where we can trade books. If there is one I haven't heard about it!

We love the books we get. My son asks me to read them over and over again. I love his enthusiasm. Thank you!!!



Alaska (Anchorage) Imagination Library Enrollment Survey

[Exit this survey](#)

1. Default Section

1. Personal Information

Zip code where you live

Date

Number of children in household

Number of books you have received

2. How many children's books do you have at home?

- None
- 1-10
- 10-20
- More than 20

3. How often do you read to your child in an average week?

- None
- Once
- 2-6 times
- Every day

4. How enthusiastic is your child about reading or looking at books?

- Very enthusiastic
- Enthusiastic
- Somewhat enthusiastic
- Not at all enthusiastic

5. How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

6. Do you have any additional comments to add?

Done

1. Default Section

1. Personal Information

Zip code where you live

Date

Number of children in household

Number of books you have received

2. How many children's books do you have at home?

- None
- 1-10
- 10-20
- More than 20

3. How often do you read to your child in an average week?

- None
- Once
- 2-6 times
- Every day

4. How enthusiastic is your child about reading or looking at books?

- Very enthusiastic
- Enthusiastic
- Somewhat enthusiastic
- Not at all enthusiastic

5. How important do you feel reading and books are to your child's development?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

6. Do you think being in the Imagination Library will help prepare your child for kindergarten?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

7. Have you encouraged other families in your community to sign up for Imagination Library?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

8. Does your child look forward to the arrival of a book each month?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

9. Do you read to your child more often since you began receiving IL books?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

10. Do you have any additional comments to add?

Done