



# BEST BEGINNINGS

## Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

### October 2017 E-Newsletter

#### Yes, Imagination Library works!

Supporters of Imagination Library are often asked, "How do you know it works?" Here at Best Beginnings, we knew that getting age-appropriate, high-quality books into the hands of young children on a regular basis had to be making a difference. It's just common sense. But still we were asked if it works.

We looked to the Dollywood Foundation and colleagues across the country. Dozens of research projects have been conducted in other states on the effectiveness of Imagination Library – all with positive results.

In 2009 and 2011 University of Alaska Anchorage researchers Hilary Seitz, Ph.D. and Robert Capuozzo, Ph.D. designed surveys to record family reading habits *before* books began arriving and *after* one year of receiving monthly books. They found that Alaska children enrolled in Imagination Library for at least one year are more enthusiastic about reading, are read to more often, are perceived by parents to be better prepared for kindergarten, and live in homes with more children's books.

Still we were asked if it works.

So, in April 2017, in collaboration with the Dollywood Foundation, parents of more than 19,000 children enrolled in Imagination Library in Alaska were asked to complete a short, online survey about the effect of these books on them and their children. Some 2,530 parents responded. Not only did they answer the survey questions, they virtually all provided anecdotal statements about the value of the program.

So, does Imagination Library work? Yes!

**IMAGINATION LIBRARY ALASKA**  
Parent Survey Results 2017

**THE EVIDENCE IS OVERWHELMING**

The key to being ready for kindergarten, having a better chance of doing well in school, and being more likely to succeed? Parents reading with their children from birth!

In 2014 the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a new policy that, for the first time, strongly recommended that parents should begin reading with their babies right away.

**85%** of parents are reading with their children more as a result of receiving books through Imagination Library in Alaska.

The research is clear: just the mere presence of books profoundly impacts a child's academic achievement. And reading expands a child's vocabulary. Children with larger vocabularies at age 2 entered kindergarten better prepared - in terms of both academics and behavior - than children with smaller vocabularies.

A survey of 2,530 Alaska parents with children enrolled in Imagination Library shows the program is working - increasing time spent reading, enhancing quality parent-child interactions, and developing a love of reading in thousands of Alaska children.

"I am very grateful to be a part of this program. It encourages me to keep trying to increase the time I read to him - my life is so busy right now that I really do need this encouragement. Thank you, Imagination Library!"

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#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual First Ladies' Tea a Success

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual First Ladies' Tea held September 10<sup>th</sup> was a great success. Many thanks to First Lady Donna Walker and former First Ladies Sandy Parnell, Susan Knowles, and Nancy Murkowski for underscoring the fact that supporting early literacy through Imagination Library is truly a nonpartisan effort. More than 115 attended the event, held in Anchorage.



Dedicated volunteers, including 47 co-hosts, provided delightful tea sandwiches, cookies, and tea and ensured the event came off without a hitch. A visit from noted children's author

and illustrator Rosemary Wells made the Tea even more special.

So far, the Tea has raised \$32,000! The Tea Committee's goal of \$40,000 will send more books to more Alaska children. Please help them meet that goal by making your gift before the end of October by clicking [here](#).

*(Photo: First Lady Donna Walker, Rosemary Wells, Best Beginnings' Abbe Hensley)*



## Anchorage Imagination Library Free Event for Families with Children 0-5 Years Old

**Saturday, November 4, 10:00am-12:30pm**

William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery  
941 N. Reeve Blvd. Anchorage, AK 99501

Join us for fun crafts and activities, storytime readings, a book swap, and so much more!

**For more information and event updates check out  
Anchorage Imagination Library on [Facebook](#)**



Donate



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