GOVERNOR'S
BOOKS from BIRTH
FOUNDATION

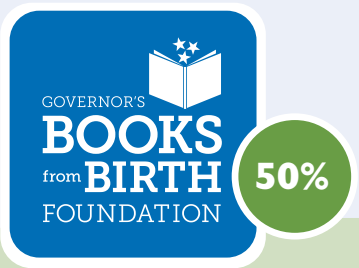
Building a foundation for reading and learning through books for Tennessee's children.

GOVERNOR'S BOOKS from BIRTH FOUNDATION

We are preparing children for lifelong learning through reading.

Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and our statewide county affiliate programs, builds a foundation for reading and learning through books for Tennessee's children. All children from **birth to age five** are eligible to receive books at **no cost to families**. Providing books in the home is a unique opportunity for family engagement, vocabulary and reading skills development.

- Raise 50% of funds for books & mailing
- Enroll children, promote program



- Raises 50% of funds for books & mailing
- Supports affiliate programs

How this works

Each local affiliate program enrolls children, promotes the program in its community and raises funds for half of the cost of books and mailing.

Through an annual state grant, the **GBBF** funds the other half of the cost of books and mailing and supports local affiliate programs through fundraising, volunteer training and public relations.

The **Dollywood Foundation** manages selection, pricing and distribution of the books.

This is a dynamic public-private partnership unlike any other in the U.S. today.

Dolly Parton's IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Manages selection, pricing and distribution of books

Books arrive in the mailboxes of Tennessee's children

The Imagination Library program is built on decades of reading research consistently demonstrating that having books at home helps children develop literacy skills.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF

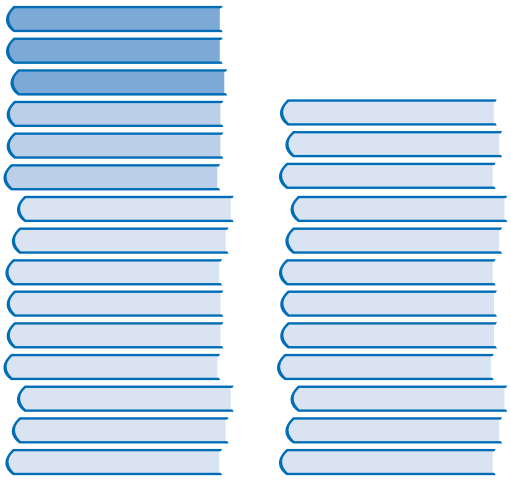
Imagination Library participation?

Children are more prepared for school and have stronger early reading skills.

Imagination Library participants outperformed non-participants on Kindergarten Literacy assessments and continued this trend even into second and third grades, according to recent Tennessee studies. One of the key milestones on the path to success is learning to read in the early grades.

*Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014; Sell, Imig, & Samiei, 2014; Knox County Schools, 2013; Hamblen County HC*Excell, 2010*

Children who participate in the Imagination Library have significantly higher reading readiness scores than their non-participating peers. Giving children early access to books and reading significantly improves cognitive skills and supports preschool education, recently confirmed by a Tennessee study. *Sell, Imig, & Samiei, 2014*



Imagination Library Participant Reading Scores

Non-participant Reading Scores

Children develop essential life skills.

A child begins to establish his or her self image in early years. Imagination Library participants of all backgrounds arrive at kindergarten having read the same books, giving them common ground and confidence that supports socialization skills development.

"Five of my students knew the Imagination Library stories by heart. Almost all the others said, "I have that too!" or "I love this book." It was a great ice breaker for the first week of school, and gave all the children something common to share." *– a Tennessee teacher*

Children begin school with book handling skills and an understanding of letter & word concepts.

Imagination Library participants have access to books prior to entering kindergarten, exposing them to basic print awareness and book handling skills, both essential concepts for future literacy development. Teachers and parents of these children say that their Imagination Library students have a high degree of book appreciation and understanding of separate word and letter concepts.

According to a survey of Tennessee preschool teachers, children who haven't seen books don't know how to interact with books. Children who have received Imagination Library books have had exposure and know the correct way to hold a book and how to turn pages.

A statewide survey of pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers conducted by the Tennessee Board of Regents (2007, 2008a, 2008b); multiple interviews and focus groups conducted in 2014 with Tennessee early grades educators.

Imagination Library fosters strong speech and vocabulary.

A child's brain grows to 80% of its adult size by age three, creating a critically important window of opportunity for learning words and language. Language is the key to a child's future academic success. Parents of children receiving Imagination Library books say they read together more often, which improves speaking skills and develops vocabulary. *The Urban Child Institute, www.urbanchildinstitute.org*

700 Synapses

The number a young child's brain develops every second.

"I've watched these books spark my daughter's imagination, and had them lead to conversations about people, places, and things that I wouldn't have thought to bring up without them." – *a grateful father in Lexington*

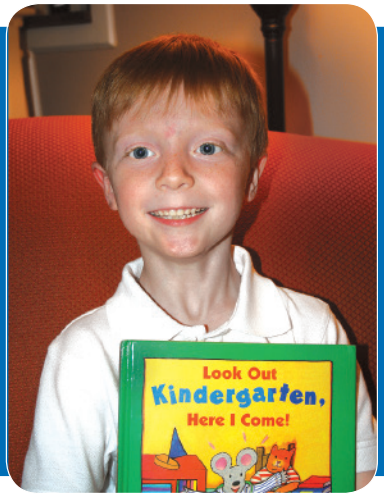
Families connect around books.

Books in the home have a significant positive impact on family reading culture, regardless of family income, parental education, and race.

Imagination Library participation has consistently been shown to increase the amount of one-on-one reading time and nurturing between children and adults. The variety and age-appropriateness of these books introduces families to the concept of reading levels even before kindergarten.

HighScope Educational Research (2003); Gordon (2010); Tennessee parent and educator focus groups (2006 and 2014).

"I love to watch children when they are talking about the books they receive in the mail. Their eyes positively glow. Parents tell me that when their child receives a book, everything is put on hold while they sit down and read the book." – *a Knox county teacher*



FROM A VOLUNTEER:

My five-year-old neighbor is gearing up to go to kindergarten, and while I was at his house photographing his sister to promote our upcoming fundraiser in the newspaper, he talked a blue streak. I'm certain much of his vocabulary came from Imagination Library books. A big basket filled with books, many of them from Imagination Library, sat next to a rocking chair in his house, ready for little hands and minds. All of the books looked like they had been poured over many times. The children's mother told me they'd just received his last Imagination Library book, *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* in the mail. I think he's ready!

Children with as few as

25 Books

in the home completed an average of two more years of schooling than those with no books.

Books in the home support a child's continued success.

Having books in the home has consistently been proven to be a predictor of children's academic success. Governor's Books from Birth Foundation and the Imagination Library help each family build their own library, instilling pride and a sense of self-esteem in the young recipients. It also promotes future library use.

Evans, Kelley, Sikora, & Treiman, 2010

Children are excited about books and reading!

Love and understanding of reading is shared among children, families and communities of this program. On all levels, from a child jumping by the mailbox thrilled by the sight of a book parcel with her name on it, to a parent looking forward to reading with a child in his lap, to a group of community volunteers partnering with a health clinic for a literacy event, Imagination Library creates a model for learning that cannot be rivaled in its simplicity and outreach.

"Our sons always look forward to getting their very own piece of mail every month and they work very hard to share with each other - although that doesn't always happen. But if they are going to fight over something, I'd rather it be books!"

– an East Tennessee mother

"The Imagination Library has been a wonderful experience for my granddaughter. Each month, she would look for the mail to come with her book; she would be so excited. We had to read it several times that first day. All month, we had to read the new book daily. Sometimes these wonderful books ended up under her sheets at bedtime. Having turned five, she began kindergarten this past fall. Her teacher says she can tell that my granddaughter has had exposure to books and reading. Thank you for caring about the education of young children."

- a thankful grandmother

Invest in Tennessee's Future

"A BOOK IS A GIFT YOU CAN OPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN."

Garrison Keillor

The Imagination Library is a gift of up to 60 free books – at no cost to families – for all preschool children in Tennessee. It takes the commitment of many people at all donor levels to keep the program thriving.

DONATE

Support your Imagination Library through donation.

$12 provides for the purchase and delivery of 12 books to one child for a full year.

$24 provides for the purchase and delivery of 12 books to two children for a full year.

$60 provides the full library – 60 books – to one child over five years.

VOLUNTEER

Get involved in your community!

More than **500** dedicated volunteers throughout the state are needed to:

1. enroll children in the Imagination Library.
2. raise funds for half the cost of books and mailing.
3. promote the program in their community.

ANY AMOUNT OF TIME OR DONATION

directly supports the purchase and delivery of books to Tennessee's children.

To donate or volunteer, visit GovernorsFoundation.org.

By the Numbers

More than **21 Million** books have been delivered since October 2004.

More than **410,000** five-year-olds have graduated from the Imagination Library.

All of Tennessee's **407,813** children under the age of five have access to the Imagination Library.

Stay connected to Governor's Books from Birth:

/TNImaginationLibrary @TNImagination /TNImaginationLibrary

www.GovernorsFoundation.org

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