



UNITED WAY OF THE LAKESHORE PARTNER AFFILIATE

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY REPORT

Serving Muskegon, Newaygo, & Oceana Counties

United Way
of the Lakeshore



Year of 2020

WHAT IS DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY (DPIL)?

In 1995, Dolly Parton launched an exciting initiative to benefit the children of her home county in East Tennessee. Her dream was to foster a love of reading among her county's preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month. She wanted children to be excited about books and feel the magic that books can create, and to ensure that every child would have access to quality books, regardless of their family's income. This initiative is now a national and global program managed by the Dollywood Foundation and brought to our local community by United Way of the Lakeshore.

HOW IT WORKS:

All children under the age of five residing in Muskegon, Newaygo, or Oceana Counties are eligible to participate. Each month, every registered child receives a free, high-quality, age-appropriate book through the mail, continuing until the child turns five years old. Imagine every child having their own library of 60 books by the time they go to kindergarten!



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History

Thanks to generous donors like Kathy Evans, the Morgenstern Family, the Muskegon County Great Start Collaborative, Country Dairy, and all those who donated through the Nichols "Matching in March" campaign, we are able to bring this wonderful program to families in Muskegon and Oceana counties.

Kathy was awarded the Patricia B. Johnson Award for Community Leadership and Innovative Grantmaking in 2014, which included an Impact Grant from the foundation to the nonprofit of her choice. She chose United Way of the Lakeshore, using the funds to help launch the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in our community. The Morgenstern children and grandchildren made a donation to United Way of the Lakeshore in honor of Richard and Nancy Morgenstern as a Christmas gift that same year. This generous donation was also used to help establish the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. A grant from the Muskegon County Great Start Collaborative rounded out the initial funding to get the Library up and running. With their help, we were able to start a pilot program for children age birth to five in Holton and Muskegon Heights.

In 2017, Nichols generously offered to match up to \$25,000 in donations during March is Reading month, raising nearly \$50,000 to expand the program! In 2018, Nichols generously offered another match - up to \$35,000! Thank you, Nichols, for your continued commitment to our littlest learners.

We are so grateful for the support of those who understand the importance of having this program in our community!

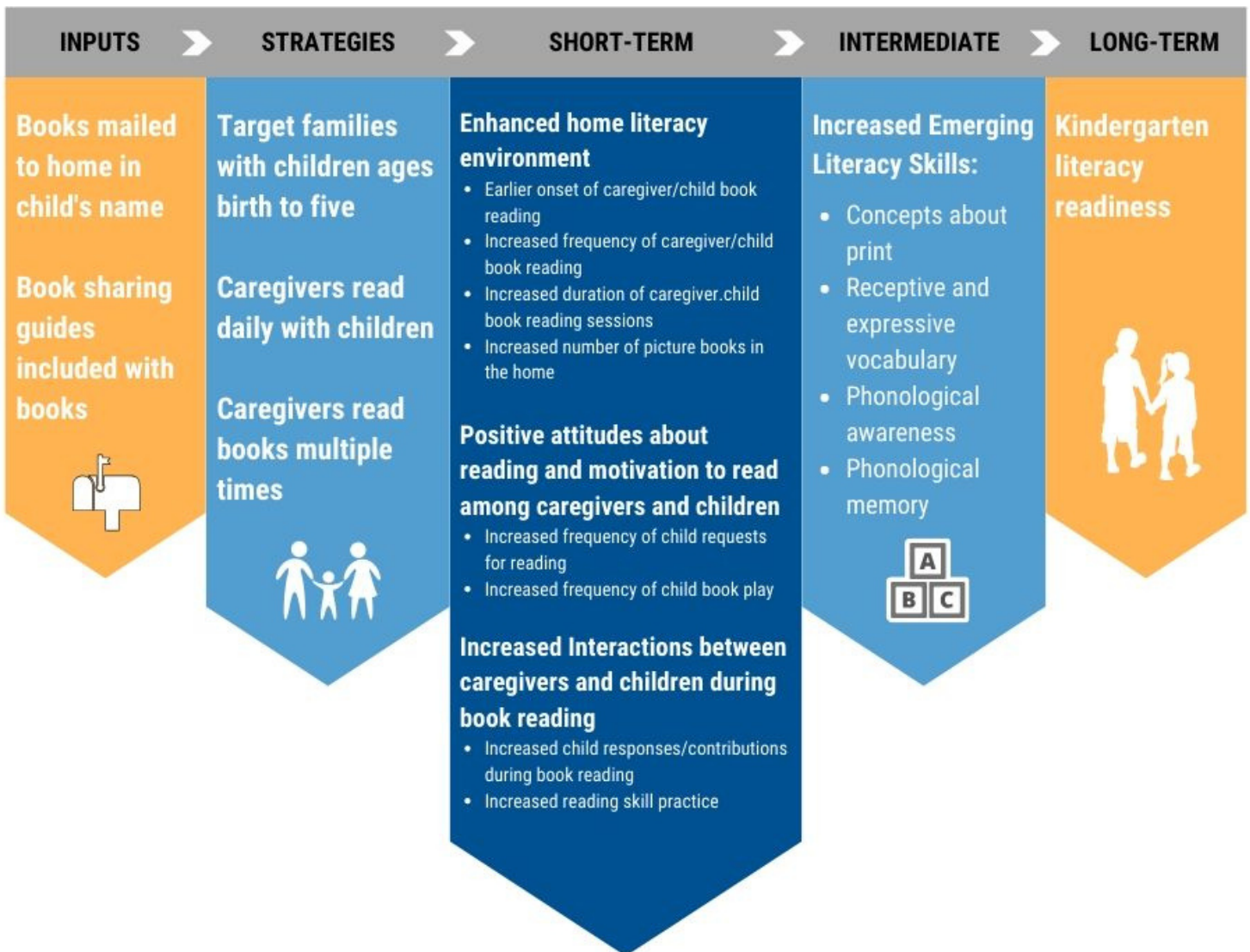
In 2018, Country Dairy generously offered to match up to \$5,000 in donations for children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program that live in Oceana County. Since then, they have continued to be a great partner and support for our littlest readers.



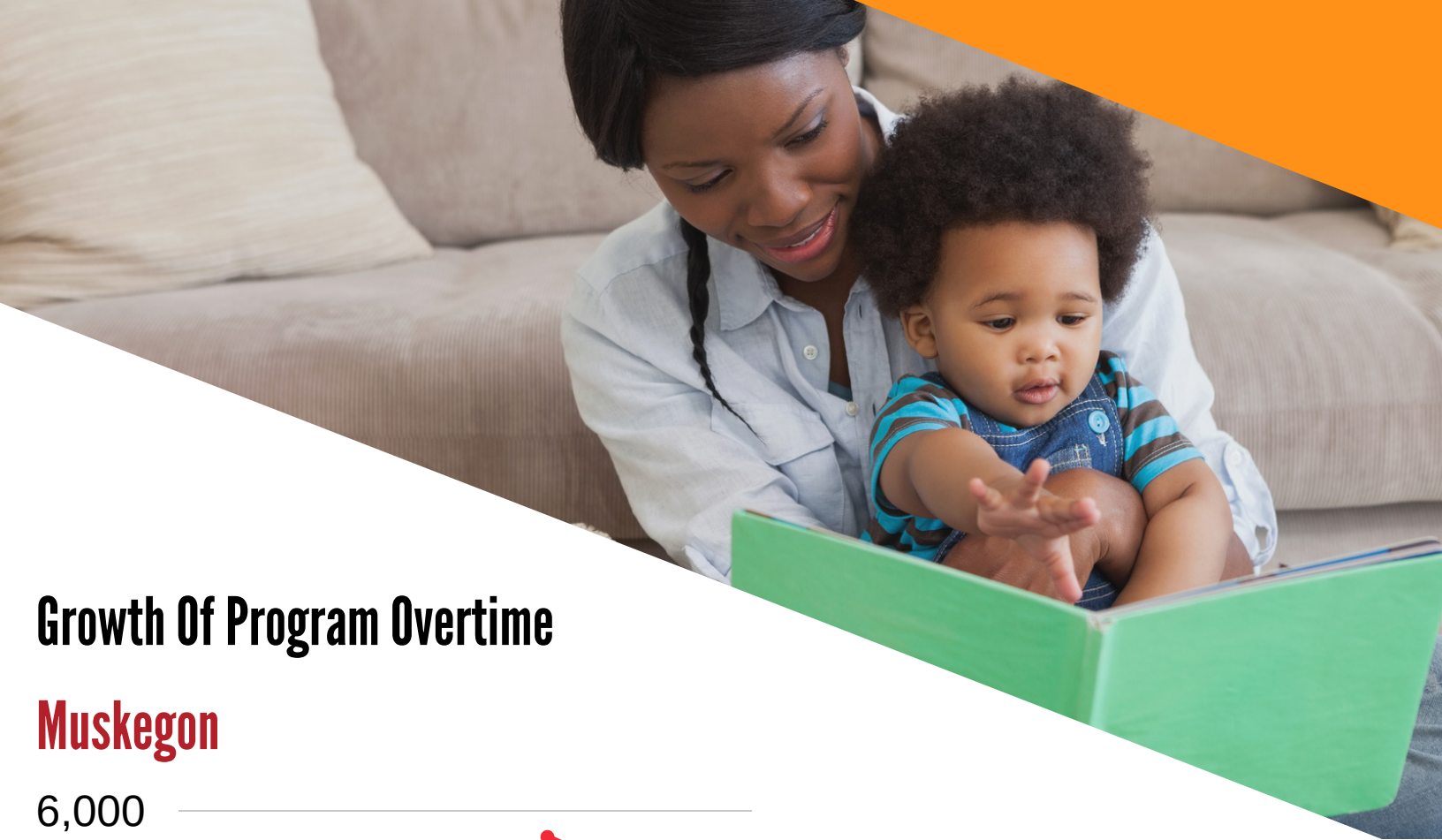
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Logic Model

The Dollywood Foundation is committed to supporting local Imagination Library programs and communities. One focus of our recent work has been identifying common outcomes for all Imagination Library 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 the Imagination Library’s philosophy and goals.

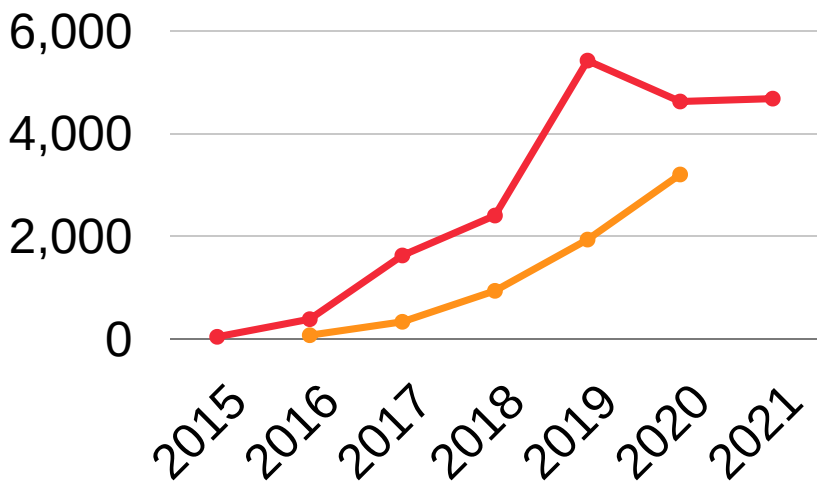


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Growth Of Program Overtime

Muskegon

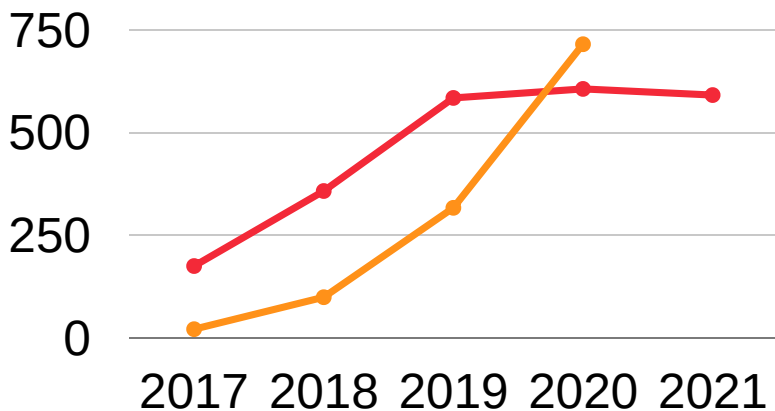


4,685 Children are currently enrolled in Muskegon County. That's 44% of the eligible children in Muskegon County.

Key

- Total # of children currently enrolled in December of that year.
- Total # of children who graduated from the program overtime.

Oceana



592 Children are currently enrolled in Oceana County. That's 42% of the eligible children in Oceana County.



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Zip Code Data! Muskegon

ZIP CODE	CHILDREN ENROLLED	SCHOOL DISTRICT
49303 - Bailey	2	Grant
49318 - Casnovia	3	Ravenna
49415 - Fruitport	146	Ravenna, Fruitport
49425 - Holton	99	Holton
49437 - Montague	132	Montague, Whitehall, Holton
49440 - Muskegon	25	Muskegon, Mona Shores
49441 - Muskegon, Norton Shores	995	Muskegon, Mona Shores
49442 - Muskegon	1247	Fruitport, Muskegon, Oakridge, OV, RP
49443 - Muskegon - PO Box	8	
49444 - Muskegon, Heights, Norton Shores	724	Fruitport, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Mona Shores, Orchard View
49445 - North Muskegon	544	Muskegon, North Muskegon, Orchard View, Reeths Puffer, Whitehall
49448 - Nunica	3	Fruitport
49451 - Ravenna	153	Ravenna, Oakridge
49456 - Norton Shores, Spring Lake	16	Mona Shores
49457 - Twin Lake	312	Holton, Oakridge, Orchard View, Whitehall
49461 - Whitehall	220	Whitehall, Montague, Reeths Puffer

Zip Code Data! Oceana

ZIP CODE	CHILDREN ENROLLED	SCHOOL DISTRICT
49420 - Hart	203	Hart
49421 - Hesperia (showing as Oceana County)	6	Hesperia, Fremont, Hart, Shelby, Baldwin, Walkerville, White Cloud, Holton
49436 - Mears	30	Pentwater, Hart, Shelby
49437 - Montague (showing as Oceana County)	5	Whitehall, Montague, Shelby, Holton
49446 - New Era	63	Montague, Shelby
49449 - Pentwater	45	Ludington, Pentwater, Hart, Mason County (Central & Eastern)
49452 - Rothbury	61	Whitehall, Montague, Shelby, Hesperia, Holton
49455 - Shelby	185	Shelby, Hart, Hesperia, Montague
49459 - Walkerville	9	Walkerville, Hesperia, Mason County (Central & Eastern), Hart

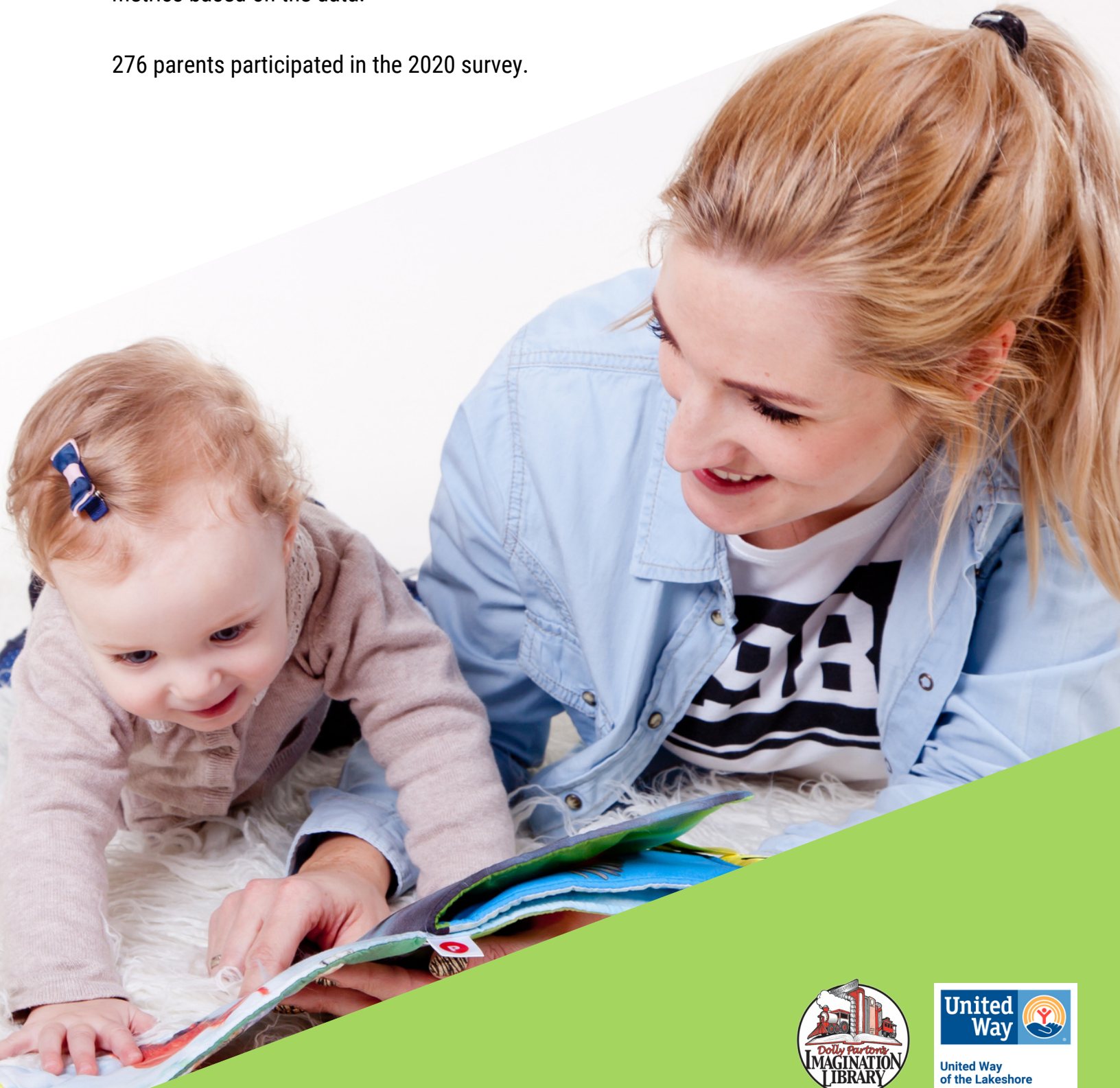


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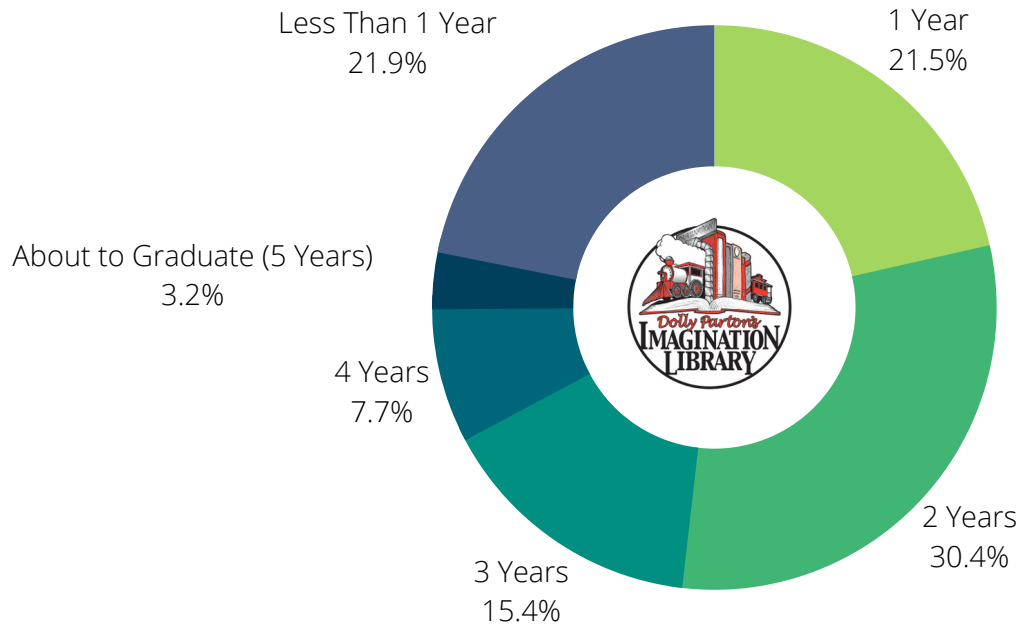
Survey

United Way of the Lakeshore conducts a survey every year in March with the parents enrolled in the program. The following pages are examples of testimonials and calculated metrics based on the data.

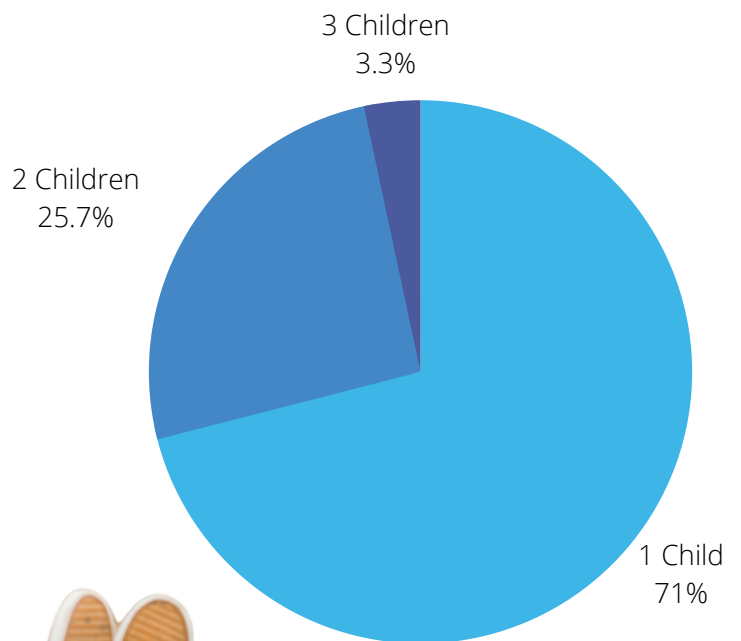
276 parents participated in the 2020 survey.



How Many Years Has Your Child Been In The Dolly Parton's Imagination Library?

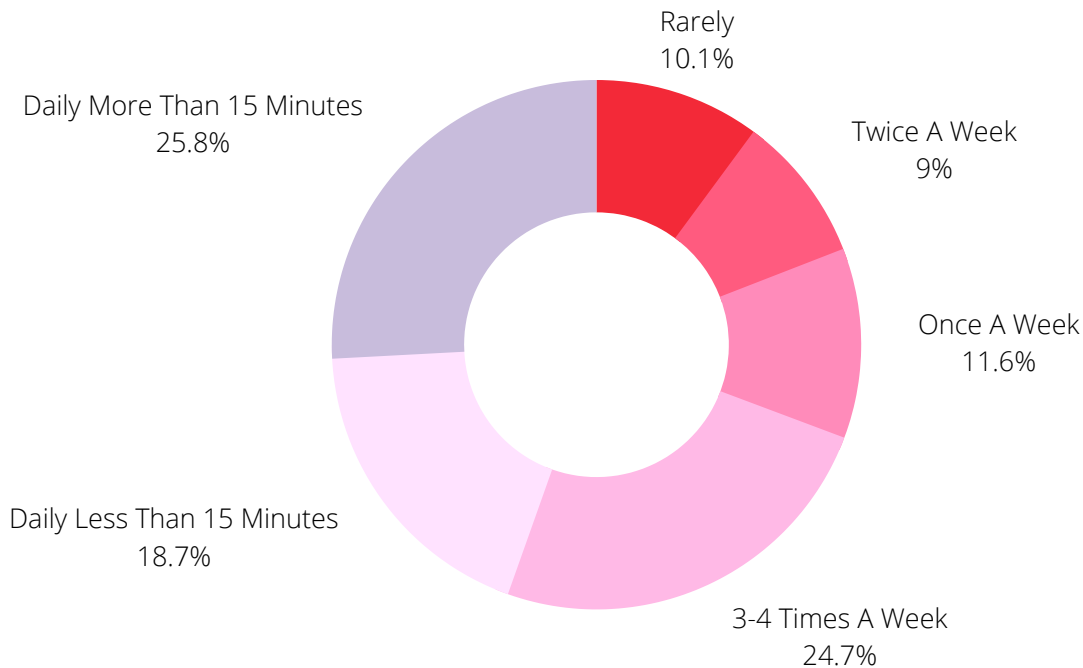


How Many Children Do You Have Enrolled?

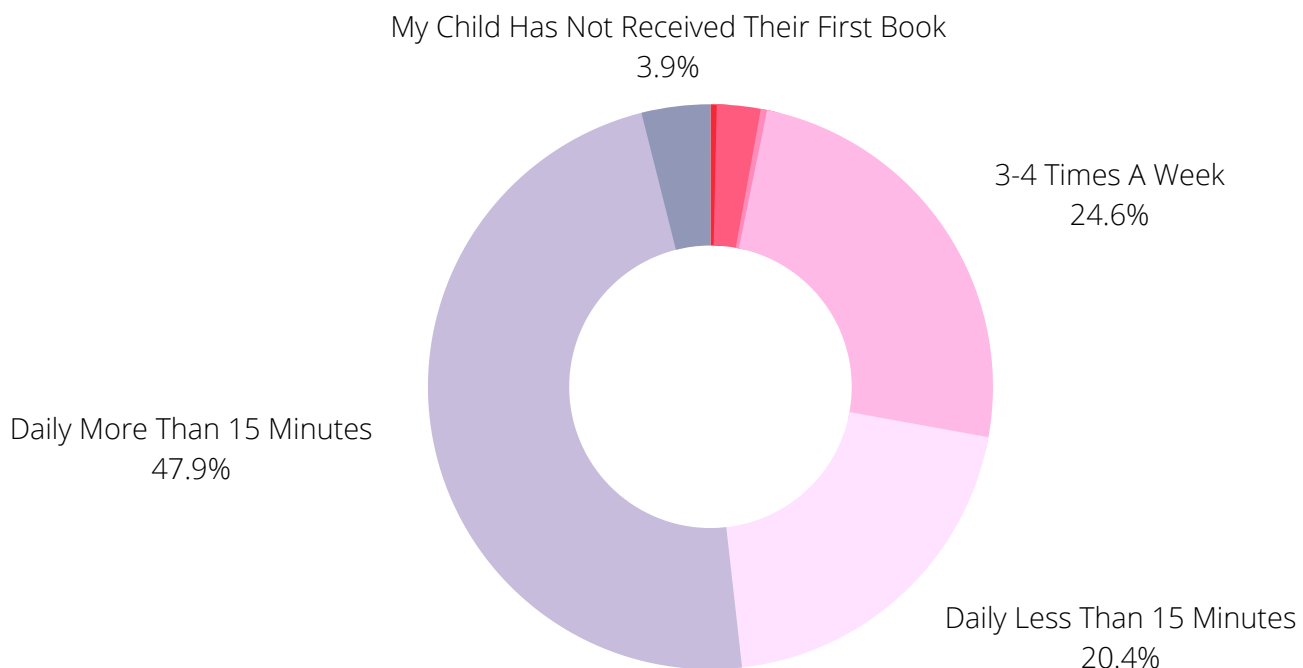


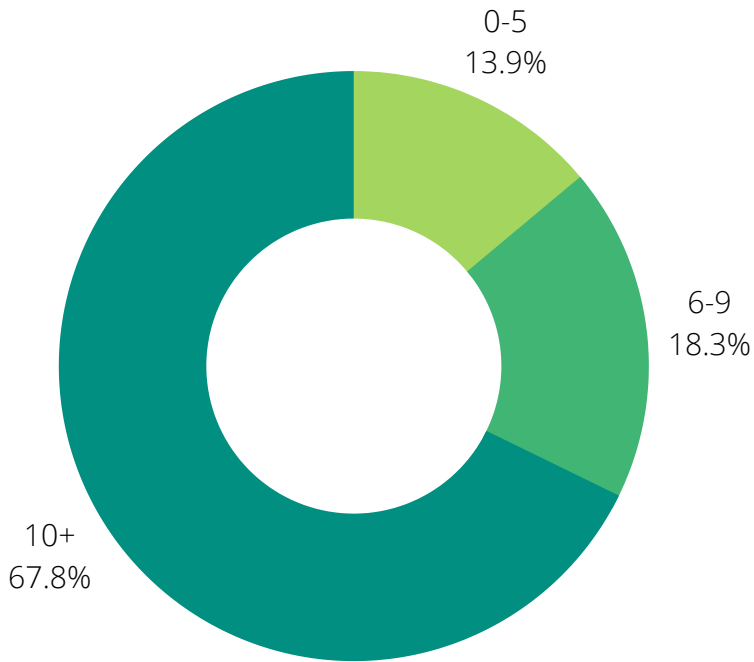
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BEFORE joining the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, how many times per week did you read with your child?



AFTER joining the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, how many times per week did you read with your child?





BEFORE joining the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, how many books were in your home?

91% of children in the program look through books to pretend to read! This is great creative growth for children as they make up stories to go along with the pictures and words!



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92% of surveyed parents reported that the Imagination Library through United Way of the Lakeshore helped prepare their child for kindergarten!

"Providing a wide array of books to support his learning of colors, numbers, etc, and expand his imagination beyond the four walls of our house. It has also definitely helped with his pre-reading skills - increasing his vocabulary, and opening his mind to the concept of phonics." - Michael, Muskegon Public

"We work on attention during reading sessions and not interrupting." - Cheryle, Reeths Puffer

"Even if he is not in kindergarten yet it provides books and encourages nightly reading which helps with his vocabulary. He is only one year old and already can say a few words." - Kerri, Mona Shores

"I am a firm believer that the more you read with your child and talk to them the better they will be at communicating and literacy." - Rachel, Mona Shores

"Reading, studying pictures, learning words as he grows! Also learning Spanish, we love the books with both English and Spanish!" - Nicole, Fruitport

"She recognizes letters and pronunciation very well, I'm confident going into Kindergarten!" - Christine, Muskegon Public

"She's a wiz at letters and colors! She is starting to get animals and other things too!" - Doug, Muskegon Heights

"She has an extensive vocabulary and knows her ABCs!" - Jennifer, Orchard View

"They are great at holding a book and turning pages, tracking words, repeating phrases, and retelling. I love the questions in the back of some of the books." - Kaley, Montague



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93% of surveyed parents reported that the Imagination Library through United Way of the Lakeshore helped them as a parent!

"it's motivated me to want to read to them, and made me more aware that I should be!" - Jessica, Catholic Central

"I can relax about providing a diverse set of books for my child. It helps prevent "mom guilt" in the book area." - Linda, Fremont

"It made us feel closer and we will always have bedtime stories." - Gabrielle, Newaygo

"It has reinforced the importance of reading to us as parents and our child." - Sara, Fruitport

"As soon as we get a book we sit down and read. And then we read again at bedtime. Before getting books in the mail we only read at bedtime." - April, Fruitport

"As I mom, I greatly value having books to offer and read to the kids. Getting a book each month takes a weight off my shoulders trying to think about which books to get... trusting they will be getting good ones in the mail." - Marissa, Hart

"I feel more accomplished knowing my child is getting an education and also having fun at the same time." - Kellie, Holton

"Keeps us accountable and keeps our attention when he wants to read new books." - Liz, Montague

"It has definitely expanded our ideas of what sorts of books Sam would enjoy. It's given us lots of opportunities to snuggle up together and read new books, and since he loves to memorize them, we get the joy of seeing him fall in love with the books and tell US the stories!" - Michelle, Muskegon Public

"Makes me appreciate the little moments in life and quality time with my babies." - Samantha, Oakridge

"We can't afford much, my son loves books and he shares them with his brother and it cost us nothing" - Jennifer, Whitehall





What Parents Say About The Program:

All three of our girls have been in the program and all three of them love books and stories. Our oldest reads for hours, our middle taught herself to read before preschool, and our youngest loves to listen to anyone read and looks at books on her own." - Kendra, Hesperia

"My oldest says almost every day "has my book come yet?" It's like a mystery book every month. We predict/wonder/wish what book will be next month." - Kayla, Newaygo

"It's always a great day when a book arrives in the mail. Nathan now likes to find his name on the address and then feels good knowing it's just for him. We sit down and read it right away." - Shonda, Reeths Puffer

"My kids are excited then they get books in the mail and can't wait for bedtime so we can read them together. We save the new books for bedtime and then also read them throughout the following weeks. I love the one-on-one time we get and how excited they are about books. I love reading and hope to pass this on to my children as well." - Jennifer, Whitehall

"In the beginning of the pandemic, I spent part of my job trying to keep families and children in our community engaged virtually, and encouraging caregivers to read with their children. Through the Read Early Read Often programs FB page, my son and I chose books to share with others virtually. The one he sat the best for, listened to wonderfully, and loved was one from DPL; Max and the Tag Along Moon by Floyd Cooper. When he gets "too old" for a book, he knows and encourages me/his mom to pass along his books to other kids in our community. This program has helped me work with my son on kindness and giving which I hope he carries with him for the rest of his life." - Jennifer, Reeths Puffer

"Thank you for all you do! My son Lukas graduated from your program 2 years ago. He is doing great in school and loves to read!" - Marrienne, Hart



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What Parents Say About The Program:

"We can't afford much, my son loves books and he shares them with his brother and it cost us nothing. It is so helpful for our family". - Jessica, Montague

"It has taught me a different way to spend time with my kids, better at reading, and reignited my love for reading." - Sam, Mona Shores

"Thank you so much for giving this opportunity to my son! He gets so excited when a new book comes for him in the mail! We HAVE TO immediately open it and read it! We LOVE Dolly and the Imagination Library Program!" - Jessi, Fruitport

"Alright, it was bedtime. My daughter was screaming and crying because she said she wanted to be a princess before she went to bed! She grabbed a book and pointed to the princess she wanted to be so I grabbed it and sat her on my lap in my chair and started reading it to her. The entire time she was pretending to be a princess, waving her hands slowly and saying "thank you" (thank you). When the story was done she jumped off my lap and did a cute little curtsy and went to her bed. Blessed. ♥" - Christine, Muskegon

"Our family lived overseas since before any of our kids were born. Books have always been a big deal... they weighed a lot to bring with us from the States... and they weren't really available to purchase in the country we had lived in (not English-speaking). Since moving back to the States, it's been so much fun to be able to get new books more often... and even MORE fun that they come in the mail (we didn't have mail when we lived overseas either). Our four-year-old wants to check the mail every day to look for his book and gets so excited when it's there! Thank you!" - Marissa, Hart

"Our older daughter reads to her younger brother. Our son is on the autism spectrum and the books have helped to generate his interest in reading and being with his older sister." - Eva, Mona Shores



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Supporting School Readiness

Strong, productive communities are dependent upon a skilled workforce that can compete in a global economy. To build those skills, it is critical to reach children early—even before they start school. Once a young person falls behind it can be very difficult to catch up. **Recent Kids Count data shows that 60% of Muskegon and Oceana County third graders are not reading proficient.** We can change those statistics for our kids and our community. Kids who are lucky enough to have the proper resources and support early on will have the skills needed to succeed. Kids learn to read by third grade, then they read to learn. Making sure they are reading proficiently by third grade sets them on a solid path for all future learning.

United Way of the Lakeshore is committed to building an educated workforce, starting with quality early literacy programs, including making Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library books available to all children 0–5 to help children learn to love reading. Early literacy proficiency will help change the odds for kids in school and careers.

To honor that commitment, we are continuing emphasis on early literacy and parent education supports, especially for at-risk families. In 2003, the High Scope Research Foundation compiled a comprehensive literature review of a history of studies which all came to the same conclusion – the single most important activity to prepare a child for a life of learning was to read frequently with the child, preferably every single day.

United Way of the Lakeshore piloted Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) in Muskegon Heights and Holton Public Schools in 2015 to support the READ EARLY READ OFTEN initiative; DPIL is now available across Muskegon and Oceana Counties.





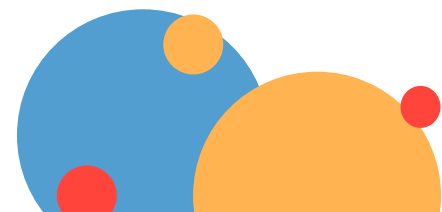
Goals & Outcomes:

Short-term goals: have parents sign-up to have monthly books mailed to children between the ages of birth and 5 – especially those at-risk populations including families at or below the federal poverty level, and ALICE families.

Medium-range outcomes: increased kindergarten readiness; reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade; alignment with classroom instructors, reading tutors, and mentors through our Lights On! After-School Programs, school stations, and tutors affiliated with the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, and other education support programs.

Long-range outcomes: a ready workforce with reading proficiency; college and career ready youth who succeed, so they are able to add to the tax base, rather than the tax burden (Chase & Diaz, 2015); mitigate child care needs for ALICE families through high-quality after-school programs.

Thank You!
DOLLY SPONSORS



The Cannon Family Fund

Libraries in Muskegon & Oceana Counties

Community Foundation for Oceana County Donor Advised Funds

Community Foundation for Muskegon County Donor Advised Funds

Numerous individual donors who are passionate about early literacy



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