

# Early Literacy: A Foundation for Lifelong Learning

The foundational skills that support strong reading and writing are developed long before a child enters kindergarten. Starting at birth, loving interactions with adults, sharing books, and telling stories help lay the groundwork for strong language and literacy as a child grows. When a child engages with their caregiver through books, it not only teaches children the excitement of reading, but also expands their vocabulary, builds connections between pictures and words, and supports a healthy relationship between the child and caregiver.



By the time a child starts kindergarten, they are expected to know **THOUSANDS** of words to begin learning how to effectively read, write, and communicate with others.

When caregivers commit to engaging with children through books regularly, their early language and literacy skills are increased significantly, setting them up for future success in school and beyond.

## Number of words a child hears by age 5:

Never read to = **4,662 words**

1-2 times per week = **63,570 words**

3-5 times per week = **169,520 words**

Daily = **296,660 words**

Five books a day = **1,483,300 words**

In Ohio, far too few children are starting kindergarten with the language and literacy skills they need to learn. When kids start behind in the early years, they often stay behind.

**ONLY  
41%**

of all Ohio children are demonstrating readiness when they enter kindergarten.





# How Ohio is Advancing Early Learning



In 1995, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) was created to provide children ages 0-5 in Parton's home county in Tennessee with a book every month, regardless of their income. Shortly after its creation the program quickly expanded across the United States and in four other countries.

*Each month, the DPIL distributes over one million age-appropriate books directly to families' doorsteps.*



In Ohio's FY20-21 budget, Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly made an historic \$5 million investment in the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library (OGIL).

*Through its partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to put more books in the hands of Ohio's children, OGIL aims to start a new chapter in early childhood literacy across by working to ensure every student enters kindergarten ready to succeed.*

*The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library was inspired by First Lady Fran DeWine's passion to advance early literacy and improve the lives of Ohio's children.*



## The Imagination Library's Impact in Ohio

In 2015, Cincinnati Children's Hospital partnered with DPIL to enroll children in the program and support early literacy. During a child's first pediatric visit, Cincinnati Children's Hospital pediatricians encourage families with Medicaid-eligible children to enroll in the DPIL. Over the course of four years, the hospital has enrolled approximately 15,000 children in the program. This hospital has also conducted research on whether children enrolled in the program were more likely to demonstrate kindergarten readiness and found:

**A 15.4% increase of children demonstrating kindergarten readiness.**

*Interested in learning more and enrolling in the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library? Visit [ohioimaginationlibrary.com/enroll](http://ohioimaginationlibrary.com/enroll)*



**GroundworkOhio.org**



@GroundworkOhio