Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Maine

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library puts books into the hands and hearts of children across the U.S. and four other countries. The program partners with states and local communities to provide an age-appropriate, high-quality book each month to registered children from birth to age five. The books are mailed directly to children’s homes, free to families. Each book includes reading tips for that specific title, with the child’s name printed on the label.

Check Availability and Register Your Child

Availability is spreading throughout Maine!

Thanks to a dollar-for-dollar match from Maine State legislators, Governor Janet Mills is marking December 6, 2023 as the launch of the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Maine! The goals of the expansion are to inspire a love of reading and increase literacy by providing age-appropriate books to children ages birth to five in Maine, free to every family, mailed directly to their homes.

The State of Maine will fund half the cost of the books and shipping. A local program must be in place to provide funding and support before children are eligible in that area. All children in Maine under the age of five will become eligible as local programs gradually expand across the state.

Currently, there are local programs covering three counties in Maine (Aroostook, Penobscot, and Washington), and portions of five others (Oxford, Hancock, Franklin, Cumberland, and York). Thanks to funding from Maine State legislators and administration from the Maine State Library, Imagination Library will gradually expand to all 16 counties of the Pine Tree State!

If the program is available in your area, sign up online and an age-appropriate book should arrive about six to eight weeks after enrolling. If more than one child under the age of five lives in one household, each child can be signed up to receive their own books.

If the Imagination Library hasn’t come to your community yet, register to be notified when the program becomes available in your area. For more information, visit the Imagination Library’s Find My Program page.
Bring the Imagination Library of Maine to Your Community

The Imagination Library of Maine needs local partners to provide funding and local support. If the Imagination Library isn’t available where you live yet, help us find a local partner to get started in your community. To learn more, contact Lauren Wirt, Regional Director, The Dollywood Foundation, lwirt@imaginationlibrary.com.

About the Program

Dolly Parton launched the Imagination Library in 1995 for the children of her home county in east Tennessee. Dolly’s vision was to foster a love of reading among her county’s preschool aged children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month.

Today Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is in five countries and all 50 states. It has delivered more than 200 million books to children since its inception in 1995.

The Imagination Library is expanding across Maine due to bipartisan legislation signed by Governor Janet Mills. It’s the latest investment Maine is making in strengthening early learning opportunities for all the state’s young children. The Maine State Library is administering the program.

FAQs

Q: When and how can I register my child?

A: Once a local sponsoring program is established in your area, you can register your child, who will be immediately enrolled. If there isn’t a program yet in your area, you can still sign up your child, who will be on a waiting list until a local affiliate is in place. Go to the Imagination Library’s website and click on “Can I register my child?”

Q: How is the program funded?

A: The State of Maine will fund half the cost of the books and shipping; local programs, called affiliates, along with other funders, will fund the other half. A local affiliate must be established before children are eligible in each area of Maine. The Dollywood Foundation set the program up in this way as they feel it’s very important to have local support backing the program.

Q: Does the Dollywood Foundation pay for, or contribute to, this program in Maine?

A: In Maine and most participating states, the state and local funders pay the cost of the books and shipping for the kids in their area. The Dollywood Foundation provides tremendous support that keeps the program costs very low and makes it simple for us in Maine to carry out, including selecting the books; negotiating for cost effective books and shipping; packaging and
shipping the books to children’s homes; providing the enrollment platform; providing support to promote the program and early learning; and much more.

Q: Our organization works with young children/families and would like to give these books to the kids in our area. Can we sign up to do that?

A: The Imagination Library mails books directly to children’s homes. Once the program is up and running in your area, your organization can play a very important role in letting the parents you serve know about the program and helping them sign up for it.

Q: I/my organization would like to help with the program; how can I/we get involved?

A: Thank you! There are several ways to help:

- Promote the program and help enroll children
- Provide funding for your local program (called an affiliate) or the statewide program
- Become a local affiliate

Please fill out this form to let us know that you’re interested in helping and we’ll reach out to you soon.

If you have further questions, please contact Beth Crist at the Maine State Library at beth.crist@maine.gov.