



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Ivey Kicks Off Statewide Expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

MONTGOMERY – Governor Kay Ivey on Wednesday kicked off the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, during an official launch event. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting free books each month to children birth to age 5.

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Acting Secretary Dr. Jan Hume, elected officials, community leaders and partners, parents, teachers and Alabama's youngest learners joined Governor Ivey to officially launch the statewide program. Additionally, Dolly Parton made a virtual appearance during the event.

Held on National Book Lovers Day, Governor Ivey began the event recognizing the significance of reading proficiency.

"No matter what a child grows up to be, reading proficiently is simply critical. No doubt, learning to read begins at home. Parents are our first teachers, after all," **said Governor Ivey in her remarks.** "It is really important that our parents start reading to our children when they're just babies. And we must encourage our children to open books during their earliest developmental stages."

First declaring Alabama's intent to participate in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library during her 2023 Inaugural Address and subsequently acting on her promise with Executive Order 729, Governor Ivey continued her remarks to officially announce the statewide expansion of the book gifting program.

"This program – through the state and community support – will help to eventually ensure every child in Alabama can receive books directly to their homes each month after they are born until five years of age. Since I first announced this effort during my inaugural address in January, we have worked hard to engage community partners all across our state, a couple of whom you will hear from in just a moment," **continued Governor Ivey.** "Our goal is to bring this program to all 67 counties, and we are well on our way to making that a reality."

As a statewide program, the goal is to establish local programs in all 67 counties, cultivating new partnerships to help fund and support local program partners. Local program partners and affiliates

must be a 501c3, which includes businesses, school districts, libraries, local foundations and others.

Currently, Alabama's program has 55 operation local program partners covering portions of Alabama's 67 counties. Over 40,000 eligible children in the state are currently receiving free, high- quality books through these programs.

"I'm so excited to help announce that my Imagination Library is coming to Alabama," **said Dolly Parton.** A lot of good people have worked to make our Imagination Library dream for Alabama a reality, but I want to send my very special thanks to Governor Kay Ivey for her leadership in making this happen."

The Imagination Library of Alabama expansion will focus on finding community partners to start new Imagination Library programs to reach more children and families, increasing registration in existing Imagination Library programs in the state.

"Thank you to Governor Kay Ivey for her continued support of early learning and providing pathways like the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to ensure children in Alabama have a strong start in life. We know that reading aloud to children can positively impact their brain development, so having the opportunity to provide free books to parents and children across the state is priceless," **said Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Acting Secretary Dr. Jan Hume.** "We will continue to work hard until we have Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in all 67 counties in Alabama."

Governor Ivey concluded her remarks sharing her optimism in Alabama students' drive to learn and read. She recognized the impact the Imagination Library will have for Alabama families, while addressing the support it requires to be successful.

"So, whether you are a nonprofit or school system, I am calling on you to join with the state in making the Dolly Parton Imagination Library available to children birth to age 5 in every corner of Alabama," **said Governor Ivey.**

To learn more about becoming a community partner, contact Kahla Williams at kwilliams@imaginationlibrary.com.

To enroll in this program and learn more as it is expanded across the state, visit www.imaginationlibrary.com.

Dolly Parton's video from today's announcement can be downloaded [here](#).

The latest version of Alabama's Imagination Library Coverage Map is attached.

A photo from today's event is attached.

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