

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY: DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY TAMWORTH

The results presented below are a summary of PhD research conducted through Macquarie University in partnership with United Way Australia.



98% of caregivers in Tamworth joined the Imagination Library program for children born between January 2019 and November 2022.



Over three years, 3,242 age-appropriate and culturally sensitive books were delivered to children in Tamworth.

Home Literacy Environment



In Tamworth, caregivers read to their children more frequently, for longer durations and had more books in the home compared to the Australian average.



Caregivers reading daily at baseline were five times more likely to continue daily reading routines after three years.



At three years, 74% of caregivers read daily or more, higher than the national average of 58%.



After six months, 65% of caregivers read for over 10 minutes daily, nearly double the typical Australian rate of 33%.



At six months, 76% of caregivers reported they had more than 25 books in the home, higher than the 44% reported nationally.

Reading Attitudes and Interactions



The primary benefit reported by caregivers was their children's love for books and reading.



At three years of age, 75% of children requested daily reading sessions, 85% of caregivers felt more connected to their child and reported increased quality family time.

Equality and Socialisation



The program fosters equality as all children receive the same books, providing a level playing field in preschool.



Shared books create connections among children, fostering imaginative play and social interaction.

Emerging Literacy Skills



At three years of age, a greater percentage of children in Tamworth exhibited improved emerging language and literacy skills, including print concepts, expressive vocabulary, and phonological memory, when read to daily or more, compared to those read to less frequently.