



Wake County Smart Start and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Fact Sheet

What is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library? The Imagination Library is a book gifting program for children from birth to age five. The mission of the program is to foster a love of reading in preschool children and ensure that every child born has books, regardless of their family's income. Each month a new, carefully selected book will be mailed directly to the participating child's home. Children can receive up to 60 books, beginning with the children's classic *The Little Engine That Could*. Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) is partnering with the Imagination Library to bring this program to Wake County.



Why do we need this program? Currently in Wake County, 32% of 3rd graders are not reading at grade level. The Imagination Library is one of several efforts in place to improve outcomes for reading by creating a strong foundation before Kindergarten.

Is there a cost? Who is eligible? This is a free program available to all children birth to five* who live in Wake County.

How many children will be served? 40,000 over the next two years, over half the population of Wake County's youngest children.

How do families register? Visit WCSS's website at www.wakesmartstart.org, and look for the green APPLY button in the top right-hand corner.

How long does it take to get the first book? Eight to ten weeks after registration is accepted.

How can the greater community help get the word out? Businesses, centers of faith, nonprofit partners, and civic groups can contact WCSS for information to go on websites for access. Contact Elizabeth Weichel, Communications Coordinator, at (919) 723-9282 or via email at eweichel@wakesmartstart.org for more information.

How is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library funded? Funding for this initiative was provided state-wide by the North Carolina General Assembly to support early literacy. WCSS will receive \$51,000 annually to bring the Imagination Library to Wake County's young children. WCSS will be seeking donations to support and expand this effort. Contact Phyllis Barbour, Director of Community Relations, at (919) 723-9271 or via email at pbarbour@wakesmartstart.org to learn more.

About WCSS: [Wake County Smart Start](http://www.wakesmartstart.org) works to ensure children, birth to five, are prepared for success in school and in life. This mission is carried out in four goal areas; children are in safe supportive home environments, are in high-quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes, are healthy and ready for school, and that children and their families are supported by a strong, diverse, integrated early childhood system. To see all of the programs working to build a brighter future for our community's youngest children, visit www.wakesmartstart.org.

*Registration must be completed no later than 10 weeks before a child's 5th birthday to receive a book.