



The  
Literacy  
Cooperative

# DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

PARTICIPANT SURVEY REPORT

2025



## Introduction

For seven years now The Literacy Cooperative has sent out an annual anonymous survey to all the families actively enrolled in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL). Gathering this data is important to us because we believe it is necessary to continually measure impact and satisfaction with the families we serve. This year, a total of 1,859 responses were gathered, representing the experiences of 1,859 children enrolled in the program.

The results of the 2025 survey evidenced enrollment in DPIL is an overwhelmingly positive and enriching experience for families in Cuyahoga County. Three new questions were added this year to explore the potential benefits of participating in DPIL that weren’t directly related to literacy. These questions were: Do you believe receiving Imagination Library books is helping your child: Be more comfortable with books?; Improve their attention span?; and Spend less time with screens (like TV, YouTube, tablets, etc.)? Finally, a fourth new question was added to assess how receiving Imagination Library books influenced parents’/guardians’ beliefs in the benefits of reading to young children.

## Summary of Findings

About four in five parents (including guardians) are reading to their children *more* after receiving DPIL books, and over ninety percent of respondents believe participating in DPIL is helping prepare their children for kindergarten, and almost all (96 percent) respondents are sharing the benefits of participation with other parents who aren’t yet enrolled.

There were also some exciting results from the new questions that were asked this year. Over 90 percent of respondents believed that participating in DPIL was helping improve their child’s attention span either very much (63 percent) or somewhat (30 percent). Similarly, 62 percent of participants believed that participation in DPIL was *very much* helping their child spend less time with screens, and another 29 percent believing DPIL was *somewhat* helping with attention span.

Building on last year, The Literacy Cooperative continues to explore the impacts and benefits of DPIL participation by income. The results are just as insightful and encouraging as past years’ results. It was optional for participants to provide their annual household income, and 1,194 (64 percent) chose to do so. 161 (14 percent) of respondents reported annual incomes of less than \$25,000. These respondents represented “lower income” households and were compared against the 1,033 (86 percent) “higher income” households earning more than \$25,000. Across the survey, the majority of families of all income levels reported experiencing the benefits of participating in DPIL, but for lower income households, the impacts were even more impressive. For example, lower income households were significantly more likely than higher income households to:

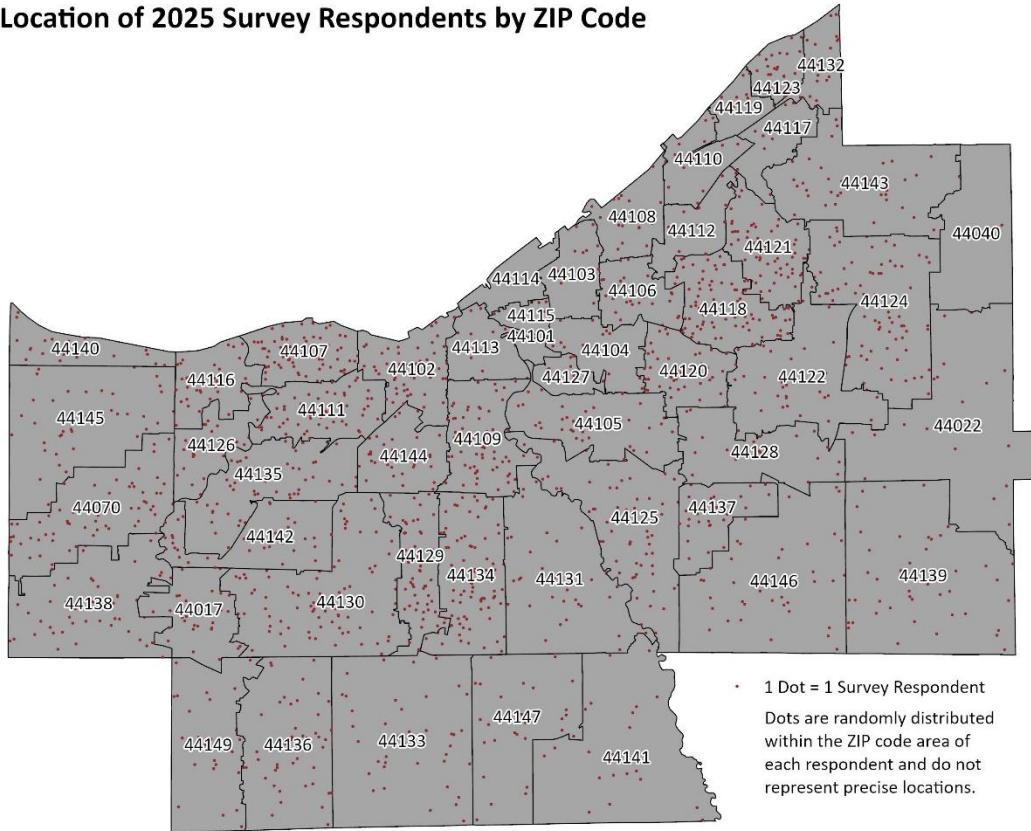
- Read to their child more after receiving Imagination Library books
- Be personally reading more
- Find the reading tips found in Imagination Library books to be helpful
- Have their beliefs in the benefits of reading to young children strengthened after receiving Imagination Library books.

Four out of five lower income households also reported that Imagination Library books comprised at least half of their home libraries. The “all” category represents how the entire sample responded, regardless of income. The results from this survey demonstrate the importance of The Literacy Cooperative and participation in DPIL for all families, but even more so for those with lower incomes.

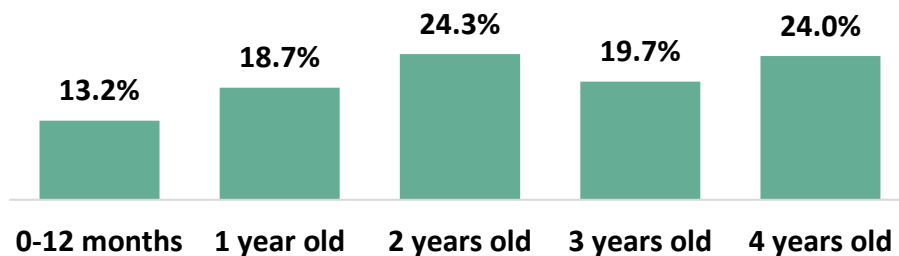
## Survey Responses

The survey was open for approximately three weeks through mid-November 2025, and received 1,859 responses. Of those responses, 1,850 provided ZIP codes that could be mapped. The map below indicates a strong geographic variety of respondents throughout Cuyahoga County.

**Location of 2025 Survey Respondents by ZIP Code**



**Age of Respondent's Child**



There was a relatively even distribution of eligible ages amongst respondents' children. This indicates a strong mix of insight from the perspectives of parents of children of all eligible ages.

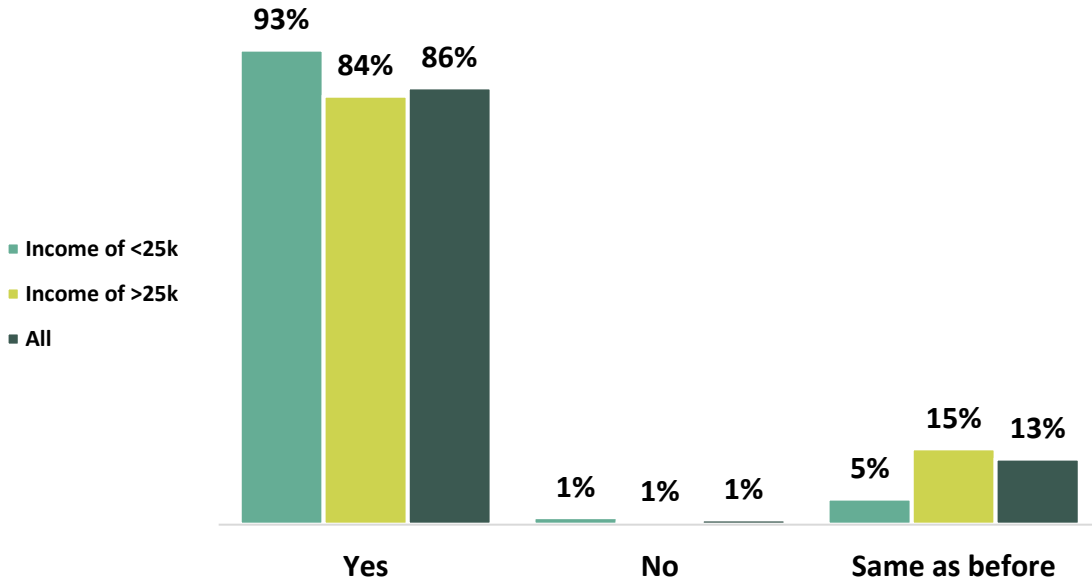
**About how long has your child been receiving books in the program?**



Most families have been receiving books for two or more years. As children are only eligible to receive the books until age 5, this indicates success in reaching families when their children are very young and that families remain enrolled in the program.

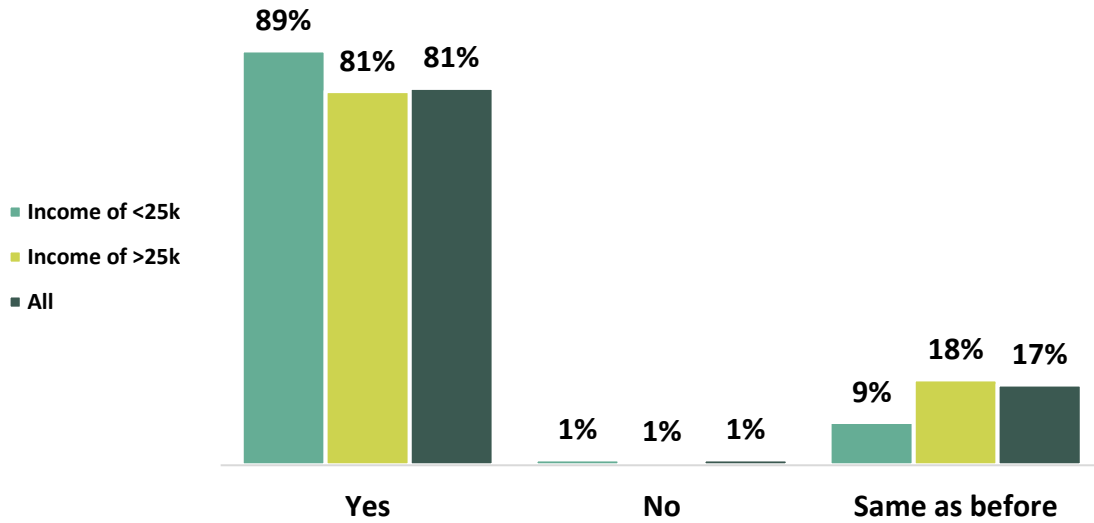
**Reading Habits**

**Since you've been receiving Imagination Library books, is your child asking you to read to him/her more often?**



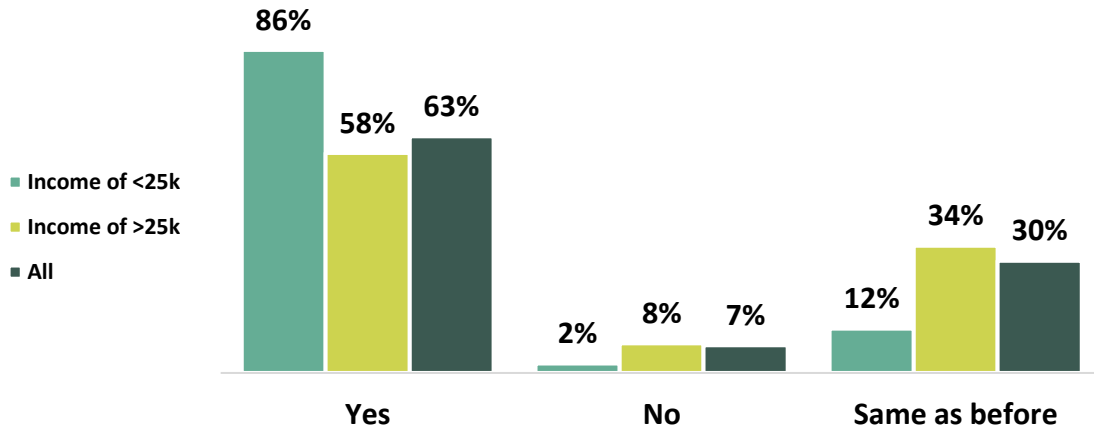
About 86 percent of respondents reported their child asking them to read with them more often after receiving Imagination Library books. About 18 percent of respondents indicated that their children were too young for this question to apply to them, so they were removed from the results. A statistically significantly larger number of lower income families (93 percent) reported reading more after receiving the books than higher income families (84 percent), according to a chi square test  $p < .001$ .

**Do you, or other family members, read to your child more since you began receiving Imagination Library books?**



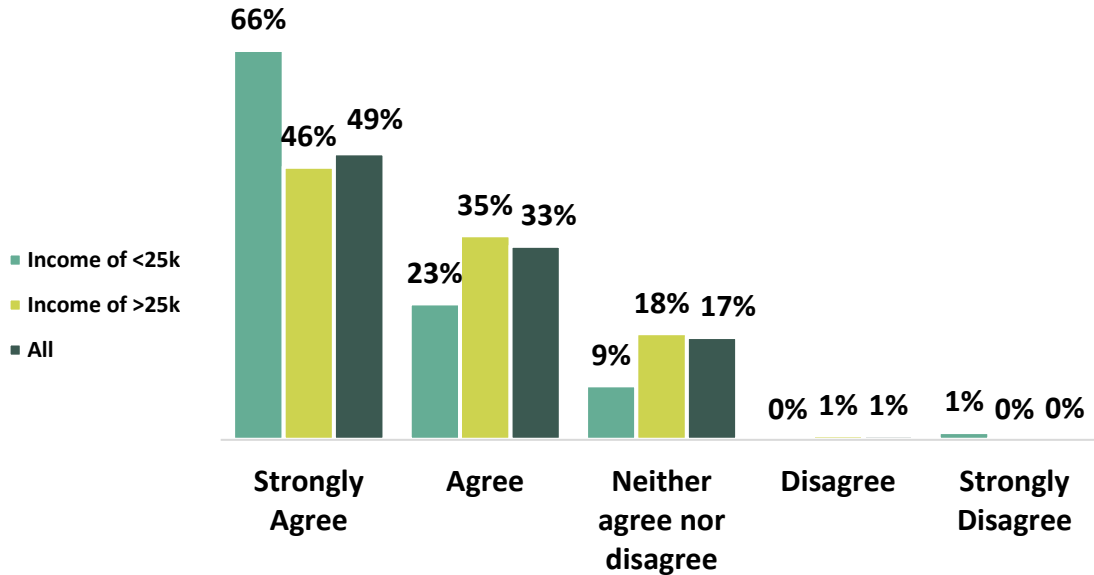
About 81 percent of parents and guardians reported that they or other family members read to their children more since receiving Imagination Library books. This rate was 89 percent in lower income households, compared to 81 percent in higher income households. This represents a statistically significant larger percentage of family members in lower income households (89 percent) reading to children more since receiving Imagination Library books than family members in higher income households (81 percent) according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ .

**Since you've been receiving Imagination Library books, are you personally reading more?**



About 63 percent of parents and guardians reported reading more themselves since receiving Imagination Library books. This rate was 86 percent in lower income households, compared to 58 percent in higher income households. This represents a statistically significant larger percentage of adults in lower income households (86 percent) reading more since receiving Imagination Library books than adults in higher income households (58 percent) according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ .

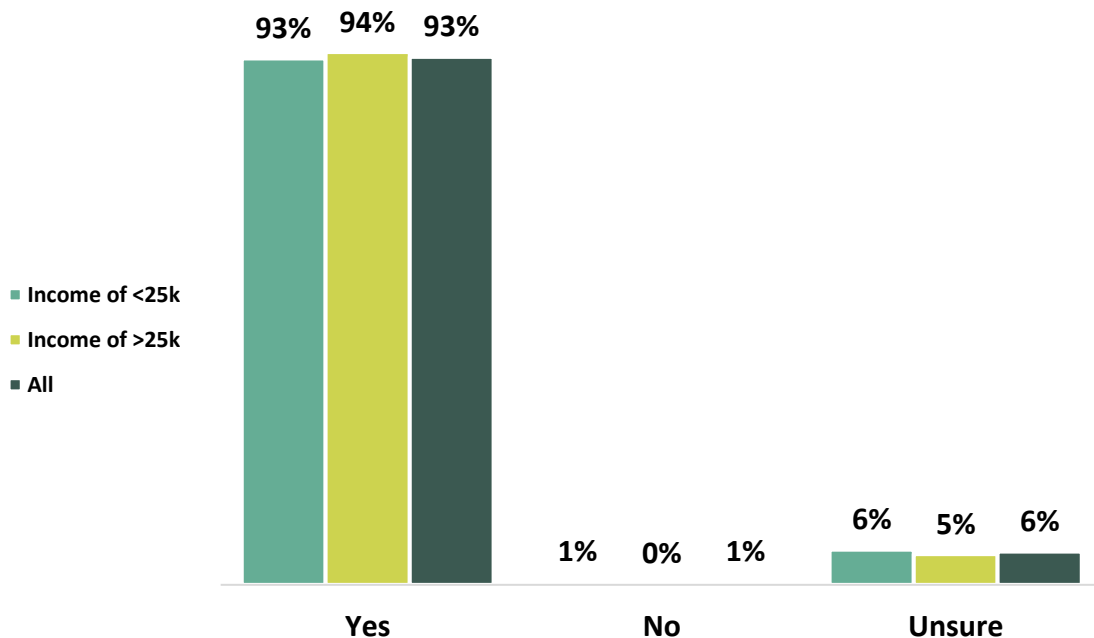
**I find the reading tips included on the inside flap of the Imagination Library books to be useful.**



About 80 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they found the reading tips inside the Imagination Library books to be helpful, with more lower income households agreeing. After removing the 11 percent of respondents who indicated that this question wasn't applicable to them because they were receiving the "board books" which are for very young children and do not come with reading tips, the difference between the averages of how lower income households and higher income households responded to the questions was statistically significantly different according to a t-test  $p < .001$ .

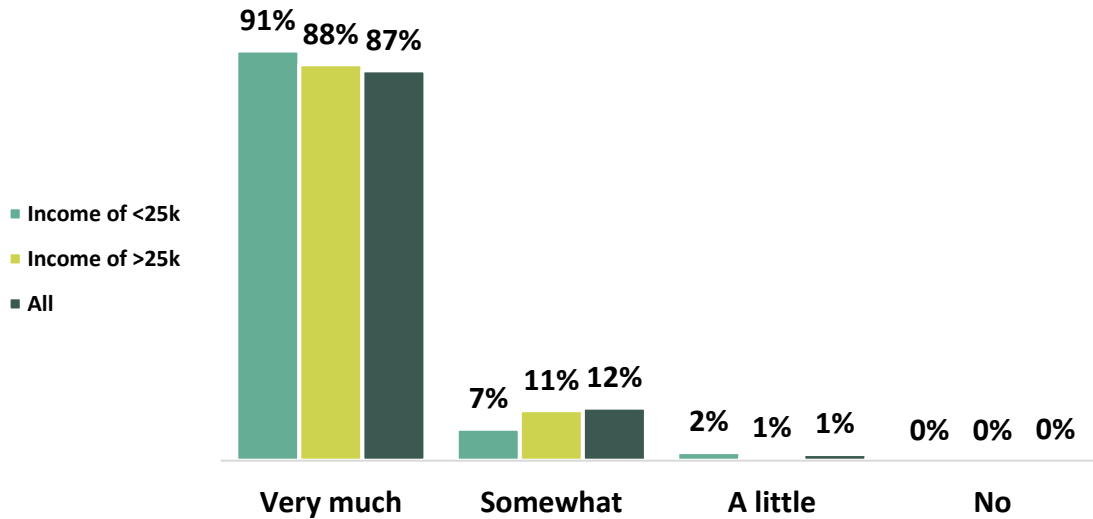
**Impact of Receiving the Imagination Library Books**

**Do you believe participation in Imagination Library is helping your child prepare for Kindergarten?**



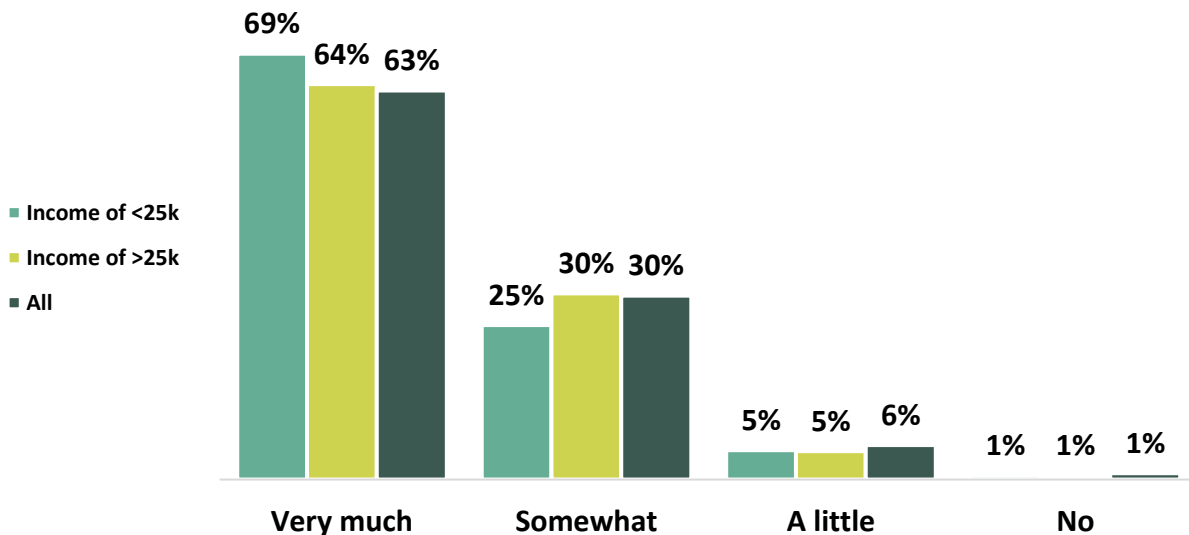
Over 9 in 10 respondents felt that participating in Imagination Library was helping their child prepare for kindergarten, regardless of household income level.

**Do you believe Imagination Library is helping your child be more comfortable with books?**



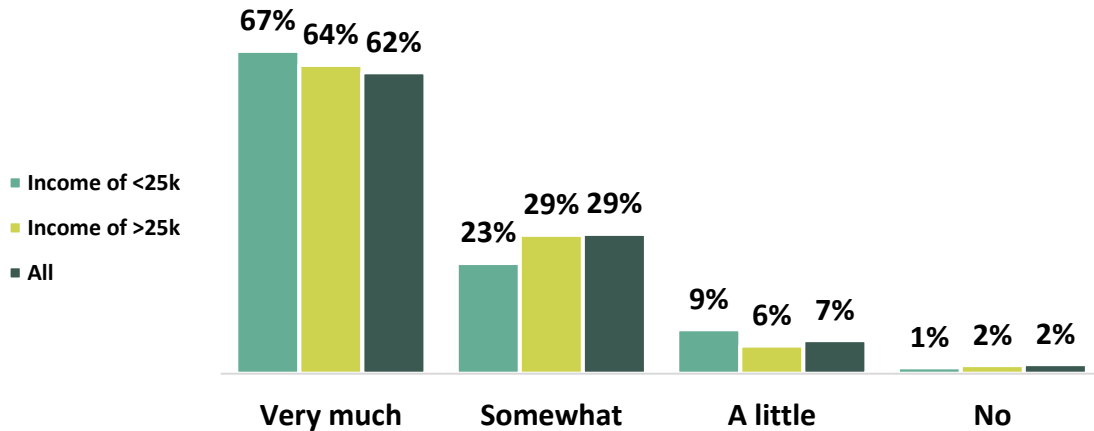
Almost all respondents believe that Imagination Library is helping their child to be more comfortable with books to some degree. About 87 percent believe Imagination Library is very much helping their child be more comfortable with books. Just under three percent of respondents reported that this question wasn't applicable to them because their child was too young.

**Do you believe Imagination Library is helping your child improve their attention span?**



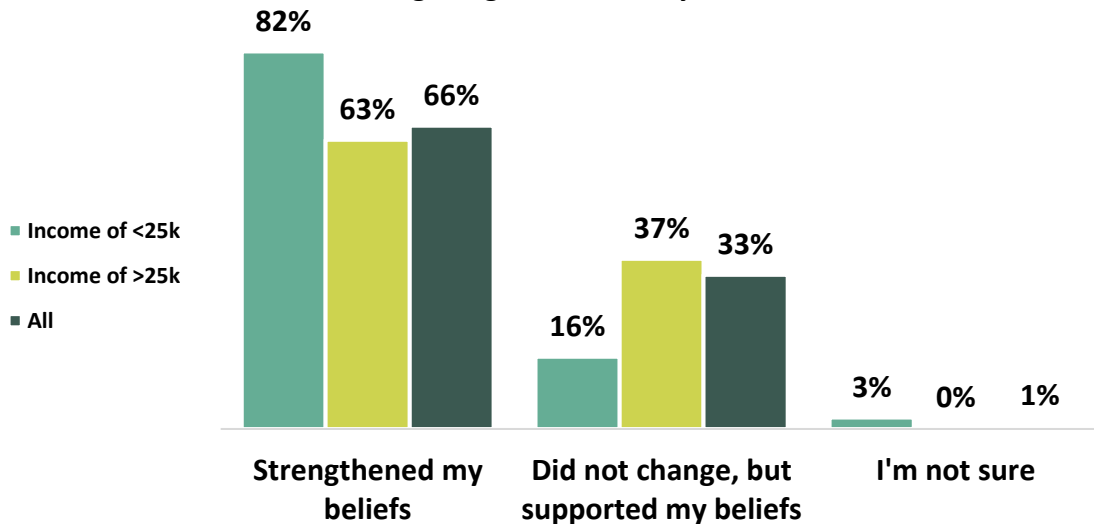
Almost all respondents believe that Imagination Library is helping their child improve their attention span to some degree. About two-thirds (63 percent) believe Imagination Library is very much helping their child improve their attention span. Just under four percent of respondents reported that this question wasn't applicable to them because their child was too young.

**Do you believe Imagination Library is helping your child spend less time with screens (like TV, Youtube, tablets, etc.)?**



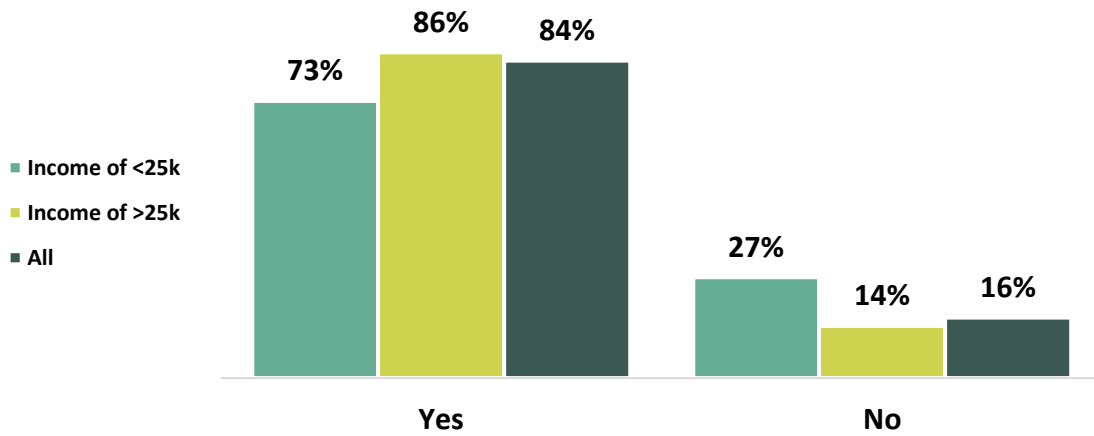
Almost all respondents believe that Imagination Library is helping their child spend less time with screens to some degree. About two-thirds (62 percent) believe Imagination Library is very much helping their child spend less time with screens. Just under six percent of respondents reported that this question wasn't applicable to them because their child was too young.

**Regarding my beliefs in the benefits of reading to young children, receiving Imagination Library books...**



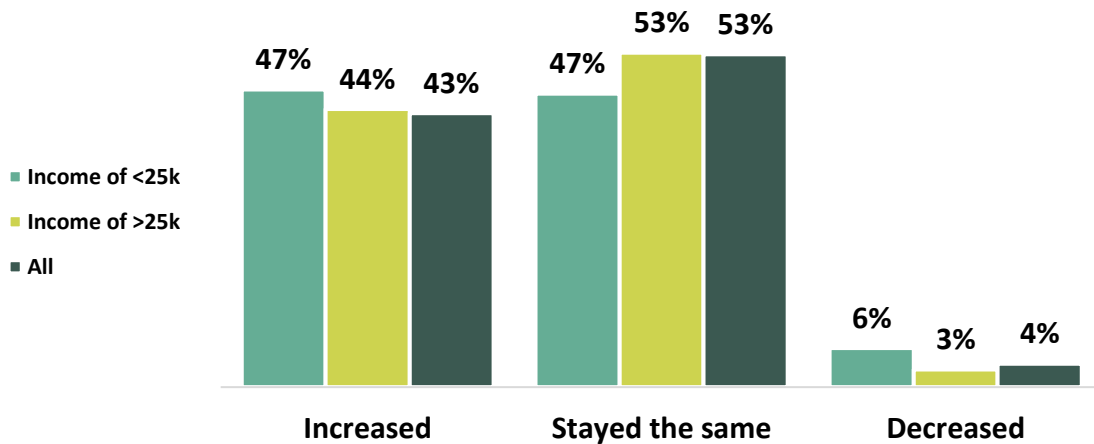
Two-thirds (66 percent) of respondents reported that receiving Imagination Library books strengthened their beliefs in the benefits of reading to young children. An additional third (33 percent) reported that receiving Imagination Library books did not change, but supported their beliefs in the benefits of reading to young children. The difference between the averages of how lower income households and higher income households responded to the questions was statistically significantly different according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ .

### Do you have an active library card?



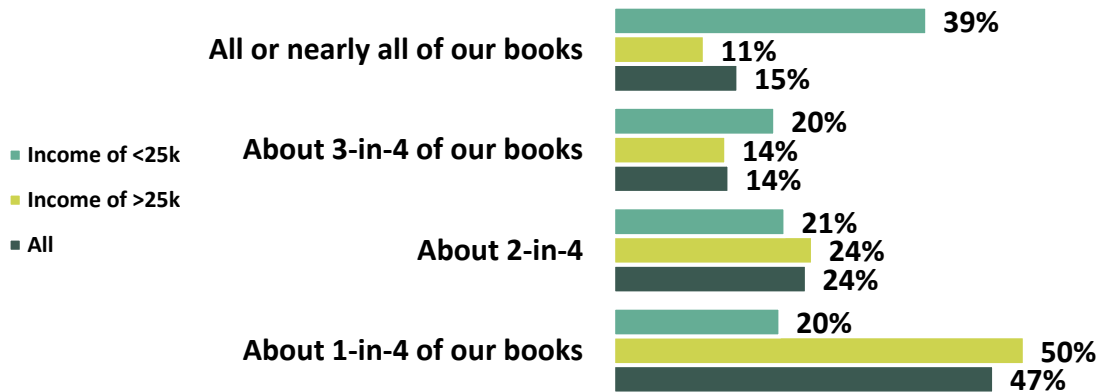
A large majority (84 percent) of households do have an active library card. A greater percentage of higher income households have library cards (86% compared to 73%), a statistically significant difference according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ .

### Since participating in Imagination Library, our public library use has:



Respondents indicated that public library use increased for 43% of respondents. The way in which lower income households answered this question was statistically significantly different from higher income households according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ . Interestingly, lower income households reported higher rates of *both* increased and decreased public library use after receiving Imagination Library books, while higher income households reported a higher rate of public library use being unimpacted by receiving the Imagination Library books.

## Imagination Library books make up what portion of your child's home library?



For about half of respondents (53 percent), Imagination Library books comprise at least half of their home libraries. For lower income households, over a third of respondents indicated that Imagination Library books comprise all or nearly all of their home library. These differences in the proportions of books that make of home libraries is statistically significantly different between lower and higher income households according to a t-test  $p < .001$ , with lower income households on average reporting greater proportions of home libraries being comprised of Imagination Library books.

## Benefits of Receiving the Imagination Library Books

Respondents were asked what they believed were the most important benefits of receiving Imagination Library books (or conversely why they didn't believe there was a benefit to receiving the books). 1,398 respondents provided meaningful answers, which were analyzed and sorted into bullet points organized by the prevalence of the theme.

1. ***Support for reading and literacy development***

- The most common theme from the responses was parents expressing their appreciation for their child/children reading more, and getting a chance to practice their vocabulary, letter recognition, sound out words, and just get more comfortable with reading.

2. ***Age-appropriate developmental benefits***

- Parents appreciated the age-appropriate developmental benefits that came with reading more, mentioning things like fostering imagination, improving attention span, and preparing their children for school.

3. ***Creates excitement and anticipation of receiving mail***

- It is particularly exciting for children to receive mail that is addressed to them every month. It creates anticipation and makes children excited about reading.

4. ***Variety and diversity of books/Exposure to new authors and topics***

- Many Parents voiced appreciation for the diverse selection of age-appropriate books their children receive. They mentioned how these books can broaden their children's perspectives with new topics, and might not have been books they would have ever known about, or selected on their own.

5. ***Reducing barriers to accessing books***

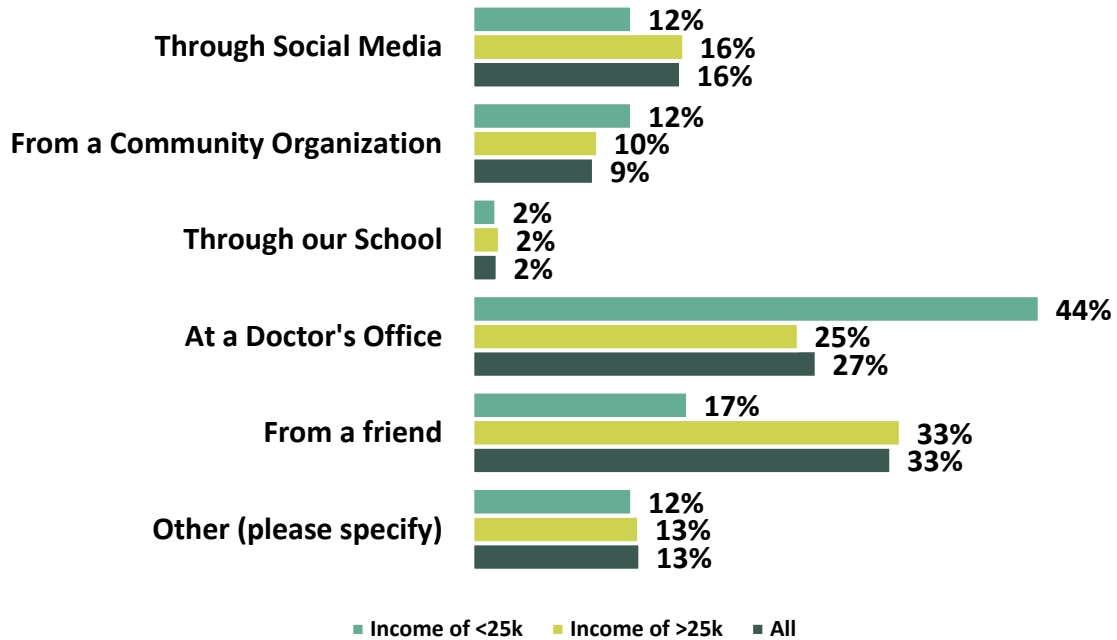
- There are benefits, according to the parents, of being able to keep new books in the home and build a home library. Doing so allows children to feel an important sense of ownership with the books and reread them when they please.

6. ***Promotes family bonding and quality time***

- Parents appreciated the family bonding and shared quality time that happens as a result of receiving the Imagination Library books. Some even mentioned that receiving the books has helped their family build a routine around reading.

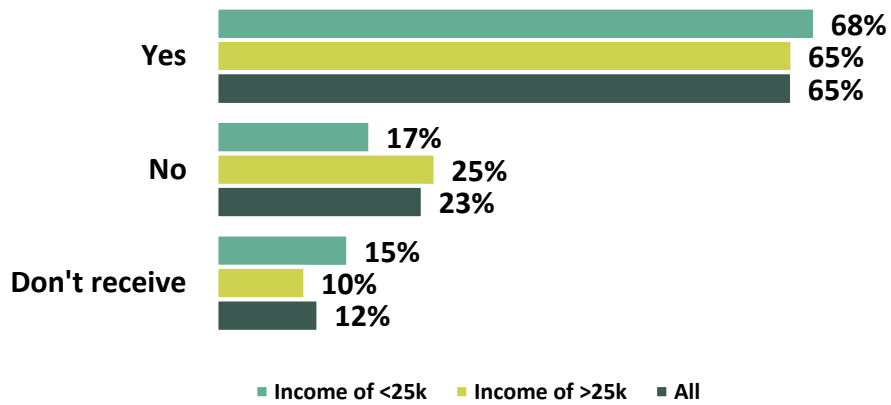
## Connection with the Program

### How did you learn about Imagination Library?

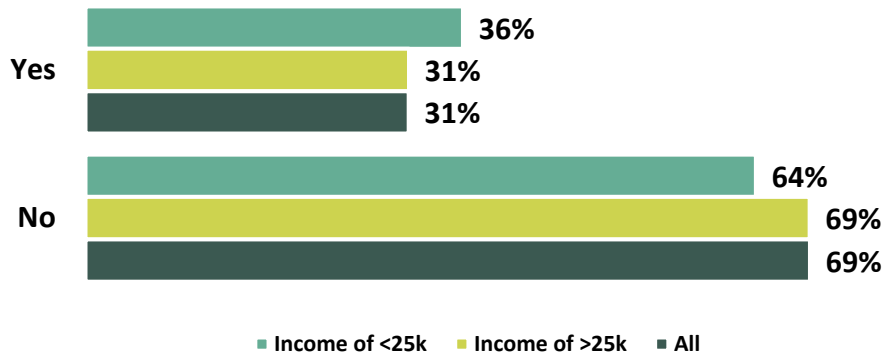


The largest group of respondents (33 percent) indicated learning about DPIL from a friend, and over another quarter of respondents (27 percent) learned about DPIL at the doctor’s office. The way in which lower income households answered this question was statistically significantly different from higher income households according to a chi-square test  $p < .001$ . Of note, the most common way lower income households learned about DPIL was at the doctor’s office (44 percent), and a much smaller percentage of these lower income households learned about the program from a friend (17 percent) compared to higher income households (33 percent). Many of the respondents who selected the Other category specified hospitals, libraries, and family members as referral sources.

### Do you regularly read our Imagination Library e-newsletter?

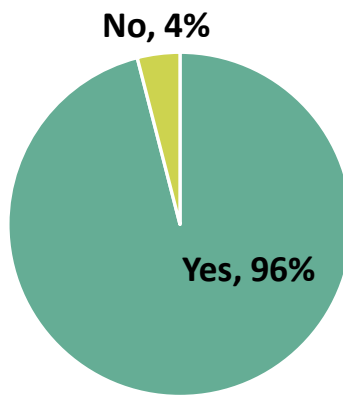


### Have you taken advantage of any of the information, offers, or events included in our Imagination Library e-newsletter?

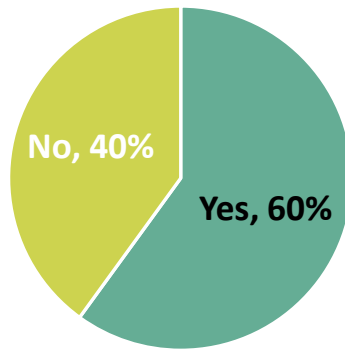


Two-thirds of the respondents regularly read the e-newsletter. A greater percentage of higher income households got the newsletter, but chose not to read it, which a larger number of lower income households didn't receive the newsletter at all. Close to a third (31 percent) of respondents report having taken advantage of information, offers, and/or events in the newsletter.

**Do you refer other parents to Imagination Library?**



**Do you share information, tips, and events that you learn about from The Literacy Cooperative with other parents?**

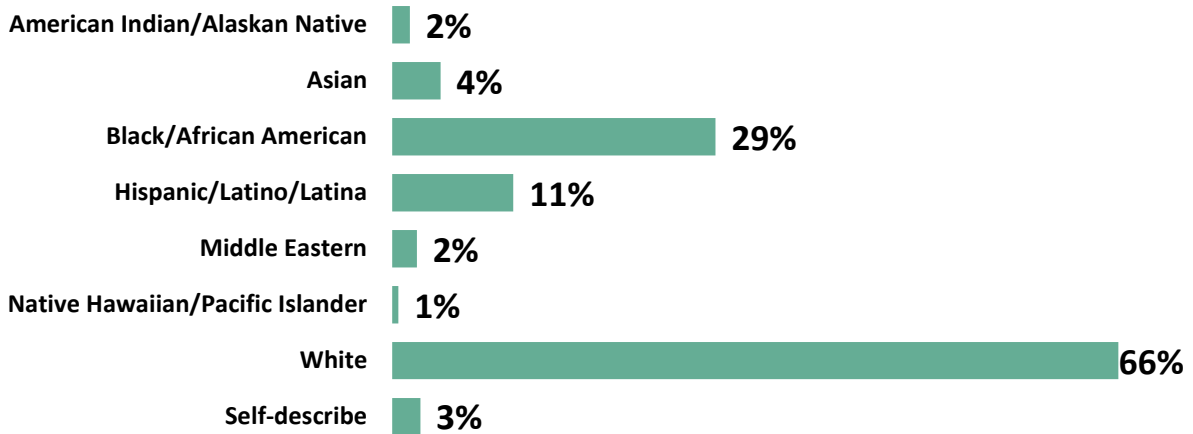


The Literacy Cooperative is interested in learning about the ripple effect, or how DPIL participants share with other parents and guardians about the benefits of the program. What the results indicate is that it is extremely common for parents to share with others about the program; 96 percent of parents or guardians refer other parents to Imagination Library and 60 percent share information, tips, and events that they learn about from The Literacy Cooperative with other parents.

## Who Was Heard From

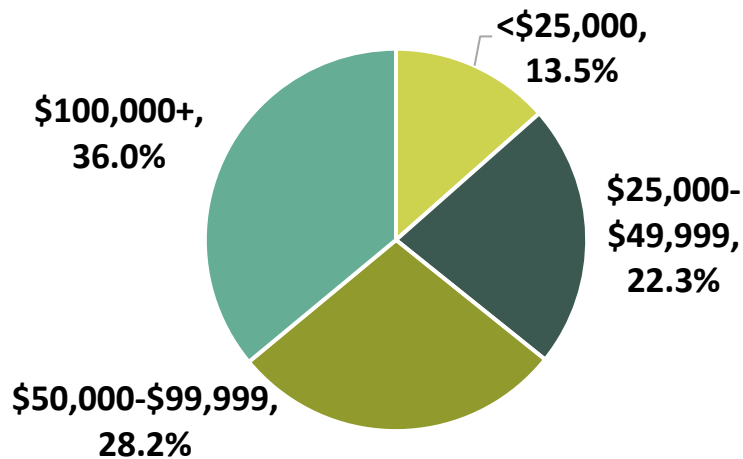
Of the 1,253 respondents that provided information about children's race (67 percent of all respondents), there is a demographic makeup that is reflective of Cuyahoga County's racial makeup. The survey question allowed respondents to select all the categories that applied. Most of the self-describe responses were combinations of races.

### What is your child's race/ethnicity?



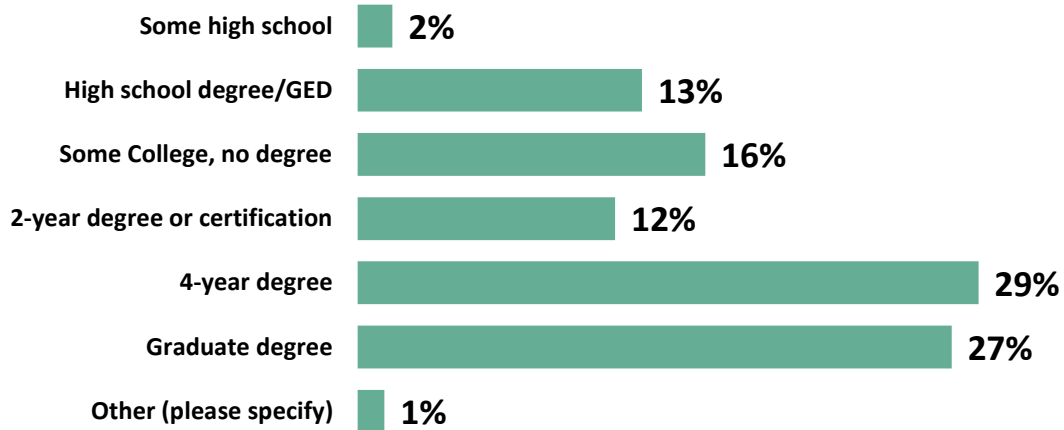
All income levels were represented, with survey respondents skewing towards higher incomes.

### What is your annual household income?



More than half (56 percent) of the respondents had received a degree from a four-year college, and 97 percent of the respondents had at least a high school diploma. The one percent of respondents who selected the other category ranged in responses including certificates, trade school, and specifying JD and doctorate degrees.

### What is your highest level of education?



Most respondents (70 percent) reported that either three or four people live in their households.

### How many people live in your household?

