



**A Report on Fernwood Infant School's
Imagination Library Program**

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A Report on Fernwood Infant school's Imagination Library Program Executive Summary September 2010

The Imagination Library has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to begin building our relationship with prospective parents. The whole concept matches the school's philosophy, encouraging reading as a positive, enjoyable, family experience from the earliest years. In the future these children will enter school with an already established love of books and enthusiasm for reading. This will have a positive impact upon future standards of attainment. Our vision was to:

- help build children's self belief and self esteem
- enhance families' home literacy environment and to promote more parent/family involvement in early literacy.
- foster relationships between families with young children and their future schools to facilitate children's transition to Early Years education.

I am aware that this school may be perceived as having pupils from high socio economic backgrounds. That is where I work and live. I do know that this perception does not reflect all of our pupils. My priority was to trial this project and hopefully prove that it is beneficial to all children, whatever their background and then encourage others to adopt it in areas where the need is greater. FISIL began in June 2008 and this evaluation was conducted in September 2010.

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"... parents hold the key that can open the door to excitement, adventure, and learning. And it's never too soon to begin. Experts all agree that by reading with your child every day, you can spark their imagination and inspire their early education. These moments with your child will last a lifetime, because each time you read with your child, you help them to dream more, learn more, care more, and be more."

Dolly Parton

Our primary goal is: To enhance families' home literacy environment to promote more parent/family involvement in early literacy. It is our hope to provide a rich literacy environment for young children and to foster meaningful and nurturing parent-child interactions that result from reading together.

Our secondary goal is: To foster relationships between families with young children and their future schools to facilitate children's transition.

The area covered at present is the catchment area of Fernwood Infant School. The vision is to expand this through the inner city.

FISIL Enrollment

At present there are 142 children enrolled. Thirteen children have recently graduated from the scheme on reaching their fifth birthday. These were enrolled through advertisements in the local places of worship, library, FIS, nurseries and pre school providers. A high percentage (29%) of our children are from an ethnic minority background. This suggests that IL is particularly successful in supporting these families who wish to enhance and enrich their children's early learning and future school success.

FISIL Evaluation

An evaluation of the IL program was conducted in September 2010 to gauge its impact on families in the participating community and to determine whether to continue and/or expand it to other communities. A brief survey was mailed to all families who had registered their children in the Imagination Library (see Appendix A for survey). Respondents were asked to report their frequency of reading to their children prior to and after receiving IL books and to provide any feedback they had about the program.

Of the 137 evaluations sent, 62 (45.2%) completed evaluations were returned.

The following is a summary of the results.

The data suggests that participation in IL has made a difference in the frequency of reading to children in the families receiving the IL books and the fact that the child initiated the reading session more frequently.

- 61% of the families that responded have children that are 36 months or older. The rest (39%) have children ages birth to 24 months.
- 77% of the families who read to their child several times a week before receiving IL books increased their reading frequency to either once a day or more than once a day.
- Of the families who read to their child just once a week before receiving IL books, 78% increased their reading frequency after participating in IL.

Reading frequency increased with all age groups of children.

Respondents were asked to provide any feedback they had about the IL. Of the 62 respondents, 43 provided positive written comments. An item analysis was conducted on the written comments, resulting in 6 categories of feedback: thank you (100%), child/family look forward to receiving books (83%), great scheme/high quality books (67%), positive impact (94%), suggestions (12%), concerns (0%). (Respondents' comments more often than not covered more than one category.)

The comments are overwhelmingly positive and suggest that the IL program is making a meaningful difference in the lives of the participating families:

- families are reading more together, more often
- children and their families are excited about and look forward to receiving books and reading them

Written comments include:

- 'a great scheme with really good books'
- 'thank you so much for organizing this scheme I think it's incredible each time we receive a new book, both boys have always loved books, we've always had a house full but still this has made a difference to their reading. I think this would make more of a difference in some other households, what a great scheme!'
- families can see the impact the books have made in their children's interests, imagination, and skill development
- my child gets very excited when she sees the postman and then she can't wait to read the books!
- my little boy loves books, I think IL is a great idea, it has the added excitement of the postman bringing it and it helps us to know we're targeting the right level of books.
- the quality of the books is fabulous
- families recommend that the IL program be expanded to other communities.

- Excellent initiative the variety of books is really good, plus the fact that they say the child's name on the back, they take real ownership of these books.
- I am thrilled that this is available to us as I have looked on the Internet and not many areas of the UK have this running. Both my boys look forward to seeing their books and they now enjoy the library much more.

Verbal feedback includes:

- The mother of four children, one with high level special needs remarked that she really liked her children having the books as she didn't dare let the children bring library books home as the child with special needs would rip them.

Conclusion

- In the short time that the Imagination Library has been available in the Fernwood Infant school community, it appears to have made a measurable impact on the lives of the families participating in the program.
- IL parents and children are excited about: receiving books in the mail, the books themselves, and the sharing opportunities that reading together allows them
- Early indications from our new intake of children, that have been involved in the FISIL for the past two years, show that these children demonstrate well developed literacy, cognitive and social / emotional skills.
- IL parents are grateful for the program and recommend making it available to other families.

The positive responses received have spurred me on to wish to promote this fantastic opportunity to a wider audience so that as many children as possible can gain in confidence as literate and intelligent people from an early age.

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

EVALUATION OF FERNWOOD IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Fernwood Imagination Library has now been sending books out 134 children in the fernwood catchment area for just over a year. In order for us to ensure we are reaching all areas of our community and deliver a worthy service we ask that you take the time to complete this evaluation form. This will also help us to evaluate the impact of the Imagination Library. There is no need to include your name and address unless you require us to reply to a question.

Thank you in advance for your attention

Kind Regards

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<http://www.imaginationlibrary.com/>

Please circle your answers. Where the answers are numbered 1 - 5 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree

1) How long have you been receiving books From The Imagination library?

.. 1-3mths 4-6mths 7-11mths 1yr+

.2) Overall I am satisfied with the Imagination Library

. 1 2 3 4 5

3) Since Imagination Library started in this area I am reading to my child more often

1 2 3 4 5

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4) Since Imagination Library started in this area My child's interest in books has increased

1 2 3 4 5

5) My child usually initiates the reading

1 2 3 4 5

6) Are you aware that Fernwood Imagination Library is part of the bigger organisation Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and of the imagination library website detailing how the program works

Yes

No

7) How old is your child/children?

8 Please state where you heard about the Imagination Library

9) What is the occupation of the main earner in your household?

If you have any other comments

Please state here:

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