



COVID -19 Talking Points from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Food is a basic. So are books.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that hundreds of thousands of (state/county/city) children have limited or no access to text (in hard copy or online), likely for some time to come. We know that the long-term impact of this crisis will be felt for generations to come, and we know that it will

disproportionately affect those who are already vulnerable. Support for our most vulnerable and youngest children needs to be prioritized during the crisis response, and to be delivered using an approach which can provide continuity as we move on to the recovery phase. The stress that many parents feel to provide their children with quality educational resources and to establish a sense of safety and stability cannot be overstated.

Decades of research have established a link between a child's exposure to trauma and its effect on their neurological and behavioral development. Children under five are living through the coronavirus crisis during a critical time in their development. From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life; and early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn, and to succeed in school and in life. The quality of a child's experiences in the first few years of life - positive or negative - helps shape how their brain develops. The impact can be significant and long-lasting but can be reduced and even prevented by helping parents and caregivers provide a safe, stable, and nurturing environment engaged in language-rich interactions like talking, reading, and singing. The power of sharing books and literacy opportunities at home is perhaps more important now than ever before.

Libraries, schools, community centers and childcare facilities are closed in many parts of (state/county/city), and a large portion of xxx families do not have the resources to support home learning, often with no books at all in the home. Already, COVID-19 has caused a widening of the resource gap as families deal with the unanticipated economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

While there has been immense effort from all sectors to support school age children to continue their education, we are particularly concerned that the needs of our youngest children are not being met. You can help families by putting books into their hands and create opportunity for parents to support their children. Reading to a child, especially during the COVID crisis, helps children develop the emotional literacy skills they need to take control of situations where they might feel vulnerable and unsafe. Establishing reading routines have evidence-based results linking reading to healthier mental outcomes.

Caring is important and is the foundation for success in the work you do every day! The xxx (name of business/organization) can act now on the urgent nature of the COVID-19 pandemic to support families and (state/county/city) youngest children.

It is more important now than ever to make a wise, impactful investment that can help make up for lost instructional time, get books in the hands of children, and promote family engagement. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has mailed over 140 Million books over the last 25 years and currently mails 1.7 Million books a month with no disruption in our supply chain and/or fulfillment operations. We have been deemed "essential services" and Imagination Library books continue to be mailed to our enrolled families home as usual. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a Contactless Direct Service Program - books are mailed directly to the homes of the children including geographically isolated communities.

Grant Questions related to Covid-19

What specific steps have you taken with regards to your services and operations in response to Covid-19?

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that thousands of children will have limited or no access to hard copy or online text, likely for some time to come. We know these are unsettling days and an incredibly challenging period for many children and families. The power of sharing books and literacy opportunities at home is perhaps more important now than ever before.

With libraries, schools, and childcare centers closed, the continuation of direct mail delivery to the young children in Arkansas ensures families receive literacy opportunities and support family well being during a period of significant stress and worry.

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What is your immediate need due to Covid-19?

The immediate need, due to COVID-19, is to reopen several Imagination Library affiliates in Arkansas. Due to COVID-19, four Imagination Library affiliates have had to pause operations

entirely or close enrollment. Specifically, the United Way of Central Arkansas which manages the Imagination Library program for Faulkner and Perry Counties, has had to pause operations. This means that even children currently enrolled in the program who are receiving books, will not receive books any longer until the United Way receives more funding for the Imagination Library program. In addition, the River Valley United Way has closed enrollment for Pope and Yell County children, due to COVID-19's impact on their funding. This means that children currently enrolled will continue to receive books, but they cannot accept new registrations.

Due to COVID-19, the demand for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) has increased significantly. Children ages 0 to 5 are now staying at home all over Arkansas and enrollment registrations for these children have skyrocketed. This is the only way many of these children can now receive or have access to books in the home, because other book resources (schools, libraries, bookstores) have been forced to close. Many of these children do not have a home library or only have a few children's books at home. Also, DPIL has been deemed an essential resource by the federal government, because it sends books directly to homes. Increased enrollment, means increased cost for our affiliates and as stated, four affiliates in Arkansas have had to close registration until they receive more funding.