

**“Dream More, Learn More, Care More, and Be More”:
Erie County’s Imagination Library Project and the Influence of Storybook Reading**

The Imagination Library in Erie County

- Started in May 2013 under the leadership of the United Way of Erie County (in collaboration with the Erie Community Foundation and other generous donors).
- **Free books available to all children in our community from birth to age five.**
- Each registered child receives one free, high quality book in the mail each month.
- Now in it’s third year, United Way of Erie County’s Imagination Library has reached 13,495 children in the Erie area.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY

The Research Study

- Purpose: To understand the impact of storybook reading on the children and parents receiving Imagination Library books using Clay’s (2013) *Concepts about Print* and *Letter Identification* tasks with a parent/caregiver survey about home literacy practices.
- Focused on examining the early literacy skills and strategies of young children entering kindergarten across Erie County elementary schools.
- Diverse sampling of urban, suburban, and rural school sites (six Erie County elementary schools). Surveyed 394 young children.



Findings of the Research Study

- **Young children who received the Imagination Library books performed significantly better on early literacy tasks (letter identification; word and letter concepts within text) than their peers who did not receive the books.**
- **Young children who received the Imagination Library books have stronger beginning reading skills**—both in the assessments and as reported by their parents. (This improves their success in *reading on grade level* by third grade.)