



BEST BEGINNINGS

OUR MISSION

Best Beginnings is a public-private partnership that mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.

OUR WORK



GROWING READERS

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Weekly parent e-newsletters
- Kindergarten readiness camps



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

- Educational series on early learning/kindergarten readiness
- Family engagement events
- Early learning activity guides



ENGAGING COMMUNITY

- Advocacy on behalf of early childhood in Alaska
- Multimedia publisher
- Research & resource database

WHERE WE WORK

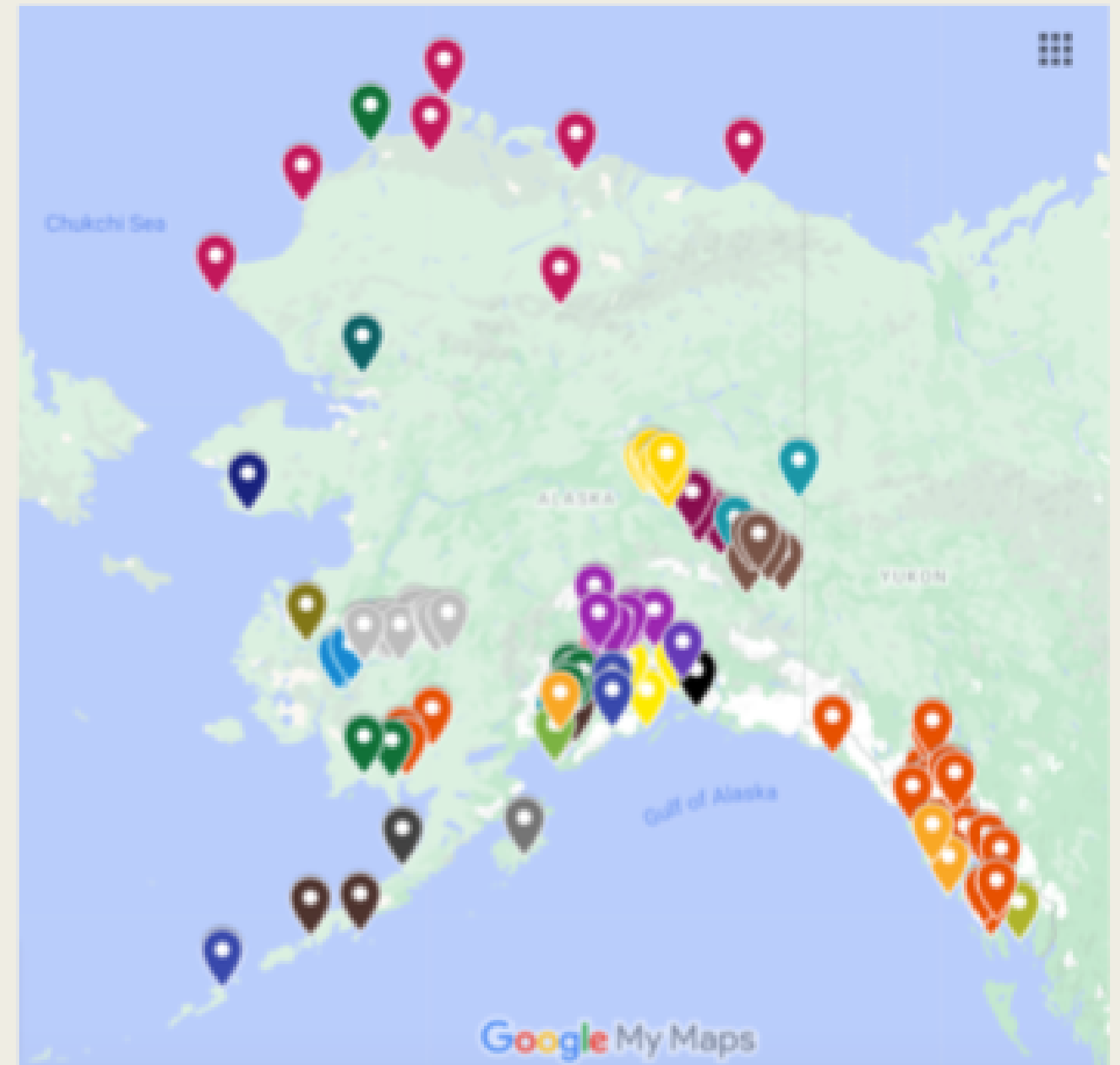
DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

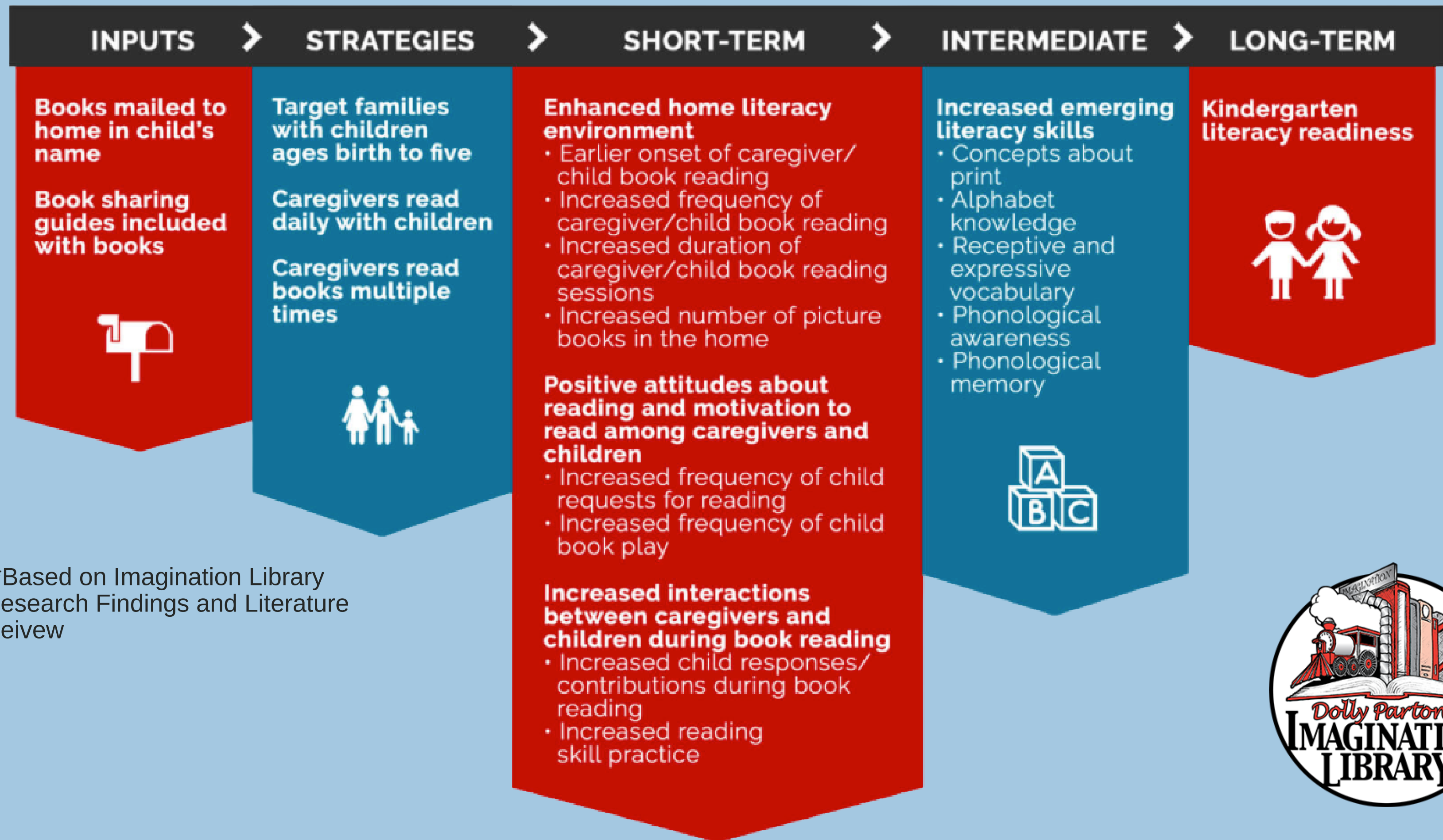
- Operated in 138 Alaska Communities by 29 affiliate partners
- Serving 14,207 children
- Delivers monthly books in the mail from birth to age 5 at NO COST to the family
- Affiliates pay roughly \$30 per enrolled child per year to operate the program

Statewide enrollment trends:

*Peak in August 2015 = 23,230

Full community list: BestBeginningsAlaska.org/Imagination-Library





**Based on Imagination Library Research Findings and Literature Reivew



WHY IT MATTERS

In 2023-24, less than 20% of kindergarteners in Alaska entered school with all the skills experts say they need to succeed.

Alaska Developmental Profile Results show a decreasing trend that started pre-pandemic in most goal areas:



Domain 1: Physical Health, Well-being



Domain 4: Cognition & General Knowledge



Domain 2: Social and Emotional Development

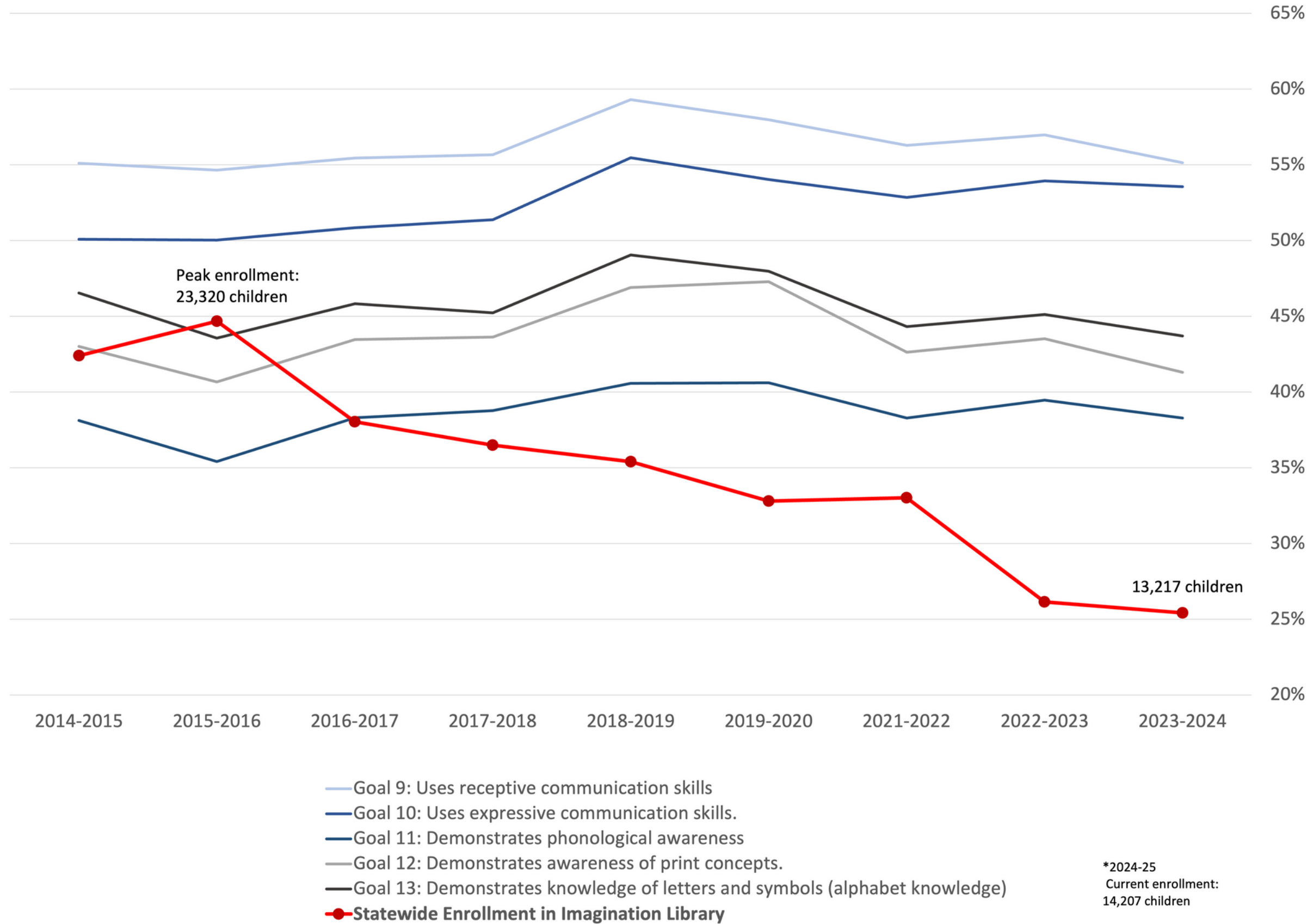


Domain 5: Communication, Language, and Literacy



Domain 3: Approaches to Learning

Alaska Developmental Profile Results: Domain 5: Communication, Language, and Literacy Goals



Participation in Imagination Library is associated with:

- Increased kindergarten readiness
- Higher rates of demonstrating literacy skills on the Alaska Developmental Profile, particularly in awareness of print concepts and knowledge of letters
- Higher levels of grade 3 reading achievement and higher levels of grade 3 math achievement

Local Research:
[Encouraging Early Literacy in Alaska: An Evaluation of the Imagination Library Program \(2021\)](#)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Home Supports & Parent Education

- Increased investment in Parents as Teachers
- Expanded eligibility for Early Intervention Services
- Invest \$1.2 million in a statewide Imagination Library system

Access to High Quality Early Education Programs

- Additional \$30.5M investment in Child Care Benefits; HB 89
- \$12 million in state funds for federal Head Start match
- Universal Pre-K expansion & Alaska Reads Act implementation

Strengthening the System

- Adoption of Early Childhood Alaska: A Strategic Direction 2020-2025
- Streamlined and universal application system to reduce administrative burden on families qualifying for child care assistance, WIC/SNAP, Denali KidCare, and Head Start services.

