



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

House Education Committee
March 31, 2017



Best Beginnings

- A public-private partnership mobilizing people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed
- Core values:
 - Collaboration
 - Strategic thinking
 - Innovation
 - Sustainability



Partnership with DEED

- Since Best Beginnings began September 2006
- Alaska State Literacy Blueprint
- Early literacy information on behalf of DEED
- Partner on activity guides, *Babies on TRACK*, PSA at the movies
- Pre-elementary grants

Imagination Libraries in Alaska





Imagination Library

- Age-appropriate, quality children's books
- 3,673 (April 2009)
- 23,789 (May 2015)
- 19,156 (April 2017)
- Free to families
- “Get the whole community involved in reading with children!”
- Family engagement
- Research results



Books in the Home

- Just the mere presence of books profoundly impacts a child's academic achievement.
- Each additional book yields more “bang for your book” among the book-poor than among the book-rich.
- The greatest impact of book access occurs among the least educated and poorest families.

Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 2010



Imagination Library Impact

- Alaska research in 2009 and 2011
 - Parents reported more interest and enthusiasm, more books, more reading, better prepared for kindergarten
- Juneau Imagination Library found children scored higher on the ADP literacy & language development goal, more reading
- REL Northwest and evaluation plan



Imagination Library Impact

- From 2013 national study
 - Participation in the program is positively and significantly associated with higher measures of early language and math development.
 - Association remains after controlling for various factors
 - Results offer support for policy interventions designed to advance kindergarten readiness



Imagination Library Impact

- Anchorage family engagement survey, December 2016
 - 92% of parents increased knowledge of parenting and child development
 - 84% of parents reported receiving Imagination Library books increased time reading with their child



Imagination Library Impact

- Survey of parents of Alaska Native children, January 2017
 - “a great way to spend time with her”
 - “I spend more time with my kids reading”
 - “my child has a larger vocabulary than before”
 - “I never knew a child could love books and reading at such a young age!”
 - “variety of books sparks her imagination”



Resources & Outreach

- Radio and TV PSAs
- BestBeginningsAlaska.org, Facebook, YouTube, e-news
- Convening large and small groups
- Sponsoring national speakers
- Advocacy support
- Training and technical assistance to partners
- Activity guides and cards
- Innovative projects
 - *Babies on Track*
 - StoryTRACKS
 - *Words Count*



Words Count

- 60-second video
- 30-second TV spot airing statewide
- Radio PSAs
- Social media
- Promotional items
- Movie theaters

Welcome to StoryTRACKS!

You're about to read *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, with illustrations by Helen Oxenbury. While you walk from page to page, consider your surroundings: can you go **under**, **over**, or **through** anywhere? What do you see along the way that's the same or different from what the characters see in the book?

Reading a story together is a great way to start conversations, too. Keep in mind "T-R-A-C-K-S" as you make tracks through the story:

Talk, Respond,
Ask questions, Connect,
Keep at it, and Sing
and tell stories. Try
imitating the sounds
or singing along with
the repeating lines!

Enjoy the story and its
illustrations as you spend
this time together.



We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Retold by
Michael Rosen

Illustrated by
Helen Oxenbury



ALADDIN PAPERBACKS

New York London Toronto Sydney Singapore

Story TRACKS

- T** Talk
- R** Respond
- A** Ask questions
- C** Connect
- K** Keep at it
- S** Sing and tell stories

brought to you by:



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ANCHORAGE
PARK FOUNDATION



Collaboration & Networking

- Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council
- Alaska Early Childhood Advocacy Group
- Alaska Children's Trust
- Kids Count Data Project
- ARISE collective impact initiative
- 90% by 2020 collective impact initiative
- Strengthening Families
- Nurse-Family Partnerships (3)
- Learn & Grow (QRIS)
- Alaska Native Medical Center and Providence Hospital
- Alaska Imagination Library affiliates



Reduction in State Funds

- State funds = 49% of Best Beginnings' FY 2016 budget
- FY 2015 reduction from \$937,500 to \$320,000
 - 4,633 fewer children receiving early literacy services
 - No more funding & technical assistance for 6 community partnerships across Alaska, reduced family support activities
 - Dramatically reorganized, reduced staff
 - Less capacity to support statewide early childhood education and outreach
- Anchorage Imagination Library -- \$240,000



Thank you!

Best Beginnings is an efficient and effective steward of both State and private funds.





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