



Susan Wengraf  
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR  
December 15, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmembers Wengraf and Hahn  
Subject: The Berkeley Baby Book Project: Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds from General Funds and Grant of Such Funds

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$125 per Councilmember, including \$125 from Councilmember Wengraf, to support the Berkeley Baby Book Project, a non-profit, with funds relinquished to the City's general fund. The relinquishment of funds from Councilmember Wengraf and all other Councilmembers who would like to contribute, will provide books to Berkeley children aged 0-5 years. The books are delivered by USPS and addressed to the child who owns them at no cost to their family. \$125 covers 5 years of monthly delivery costs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No General Fund impacts

BACKGROUND

Research shows that the presence of a generous number of books in the home of a young child is, by itself, a surprisingly strong indicator of later education level attainment, outweighing correlations to income and parent education. Frequent book sharing with babies is the best way to nurture roots of literacy. Ownership makes that easy.

Literacy is a cornerstone of social justice and equality. Without it, full access to and participation in the programs, movements and institutions that shape our culture and society is hindered.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Wengraf                      Council District 6                      510-981-7160

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS FOR A GRANT TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE BERKELEY BABY BOOK PROJECT

WHEREAS, Councilmember Susan Wengraf has surplus funds in her office expenditure account and will contribute \$125.00 and invites other Councilmembers to join her in contributing; and

WHEREAS, a California non-profit tax-exempt corporation, The Berkeley Baby Book Project, will receive funds in an amount up to \$125.00 per contributing Councilmember's discretionary account; and

WHEREAS, the provision of such services would fulfill the municipal public purpose of providing a generous number of books to children aged 0-5 to read and have as their own; and

WHEREAS, research shows that books in a young child's home is a surprisingly strong indicator of later education level attainment, outweighing correlations to income and parent education.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their Council Office Budget, up to \$125 per office, shall be granted to The Berkeley Baby Book Project.



# The Berkeley Baby Book Project

June, 2020

Dear Fellow Literacy Advocate

Thanks to generous support from people like you our Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program has gifted over 20,000 new, age-appropriate, quality books to children in our city aged 0 to 5. Currently 800 children receive books monthly and 450+ have 'graduated' from our Imagination Library (IL) Program, launched in 2015 with Head Start. IL books are delivered by the USPS, addressed to the child, who owns them. Books are a gift to the child; there's no cost to families.

Research shows that the presence of a generous number of books in the home of a young child is, by itself, a surprisingly strong indicator of later education level attainment, outweighing correlations to income and parent education. Frequent book sharing with babies is the best way to nurture roots of literacy. Ownership makes that easy.

Literacy is a cornerstone of social justice and equality. Without it, full access to and participation in the programs, movements and institutions that shape our culture and society is handicapped.

We aim to make books a birthright all over the East Bay, starting in our home town. I hope you will consider supporting our efforts. IL makes our goal feasible: just \$25 covers a full year of monthly book deliveries; \$125 covers 5 years of monthly delivery costs.

Because of Covid-19 we activated online registration capability for IL, a thing we'd planned for in late 2021 because of the predictable increase in participation it brings. But, IL is a superb service for hunkering down families, with schools and libraries closed. We felt an urgency to make it more easily available. And, IL books are effectively quarantined before delivery: they're wrapped and labeled 2-10 weeks before landing in the mailbox. And, preschoolers are happily motivated to read *their own* book with *their* name on it, often proudly proclaiming, "Mine!" upon delivery.

We are counting on this community to support our long-term work thru these uncertain times.

With IL, any child can amass a high-quality home library long *before* Kindergarten begins. Eligibility for the Program is determined only by a child's age and home address: all children under age 5 inside an Affiliate's region of service are eligible, they need only be registered by a parent/guardian. The BBBP serves Berkeley, with aspirations to expand.

Imagination Library is good for the child, good for schools, and good for the community. Widespread IL participation can strengthen our social fabric: shared book ownership creates potential for connection between children from families with little else in common. Preschool and Kinder teachers can build on shared literature experiences. BUSD Pre-K teachers love it.

Putting a book in a child's hands is just one small thing but it is a *joyous* thing, it is a *powerful* thing. It is a *long game* thing. I am in for that long game. Please join me. Make a donation today.

Sincerely,

Some 2019 survey comments, and a graph!

Since the books have been delivered my son has started to read on his own and loves Reading time. Thank you for supporting his love for reading and learning.

*I just wanted to say that this program is very helpful for the community and people of color because our black and brown kids can see themselves on the cover and inside so many of these books.*

We love this program. I am encouraged to read to my son every day because of your help with this program. Thank you so much! Mom

*It's soooo exciting when a book arrives. I show my child the label with HER name on it and she's just so pumped to have her own book mailed to her. We especially love love love the books with Spanish and English. Thank you for all your efforts.*

Imagination Library has created excitement and ownership around reading, and gives them shared stories with other kids at their school.

*My son loves getting his books he runs to the mail box every time at first he couldn't read by his self and now it is getting so much better. Thank you guys for all you do.*

Thank You! These books bring us so much joy!

*The variety has been great -- most of which I would not have discovered on my own. My kids love receiving a book in the mail. Thank you 100X over for another great year!!*

My two children have really developed a love for books and I know Dolly's books played a big role in that. Thank you for all your work!

