



**NORTHWEST**

January 30, 2025

RE: HB 2811 Creating the Imagination Library program in statute

Dear House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services Committee Members:

For the record, my name is Jessica Mortensen, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of Reach Out and Read. Oregon has taken many proactive steps to support early literacy and kindergarten readiness in the state's youngest citizens. HB 2811, formalizing Imagination Library in statute, is another positive step in building better early literacy outcomes.

The Imagination Library program is a part of the continuum of early literacy services provided to families in Oregon, helping to build home libraries and encourage a love of reading. This continuum includes many early literacy programs -- each plays a unique role in Oregon's system of early literacy services and supports. Reach Out and Read is proud to be a unique part of that system since 2000.

As an early literacy and relational health program, Reach Out and Read champions and promotes the positive effects of engaging in daily reading and other language-rich activities with young children and their parents during pediatric well-child visits, starting in infancy and going through age five. In SFY 2024, over 87,000 Oregon families received Reach Out and Read services, provided by 1,300 medical professionals housed in 158 clinics covering 29 of 36 Oregon counties.

Clinicians bring more than their stethoscope to the pediatric well-child visit. They give the family a new, developmentally appropriate children's book, observing and guiding parent-child interactions exploring the book. They assess the child's fine and gross motor, cognitive, language, literacy, relational, and social-emotional development in partnership with the parent. Discussing shared reading and early relationships opens the door to talking about bedtime routines, screen time and other social drivers of health. It gives clinicians a chance to model and normalize early literacy activities and offer anticipatory guidance to parents on supporting their child's holistic development.

Reach Out and Read has been honored to serve Oregon's families and children, birth through age 5 for twenty-five years. We are available to answer any questions you may have and stand ready to work with you in whatever way may be helpful as you continue to grow and support early literacy in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jessica Mortensen, MLIS (she/her/hers)  
Regional Executive Director  
971-287-6942

**OREGON**

P.O. Box 14461 | Portland, OR | 97293  
971-287-6942  
[www.reachoutandread.org/oregon](http://www.reachoutandread.org/oregon)

**WASHINGTON**

2400 NW 80th Street #315 | Seattle, WA | 98117  
206-524-3579  
[www.reachoutandread.org/washington](http://www.reachoutandread.org/washington)