



Susan Wengraf
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR
November 15, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Wengraf, Councilmember Bartlett, and Councilmember 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 one book delivered to one child every month for 5 years.

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
- 2: Berkeley Baby Book Project Letter

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

October 2022

Dear Berkeley City Council Members,

Literacy is key to full participation in our society from Kindergarten to the Board room, from kitchen experiments to the Science Lab, from school rules to the Halls of Congress. We need all our children to participate fully in shaping their future.

Yet most literacy programs begin after the first 3 years of life, missing windows of rapid and crucial brain development *in the very earliest months*. Infants make meaning from sound beginning at birth. By 8 months they are able to focus on details, discern nuances of color and shape, to make meaning from images on a page described to them. This is the start of literacy - the ability to attach sound and *meaning* to these squiggles on a page.

Putting books into a child's hands and home is the most efficient, effective way to increase the odds that child will have strong roots of literacy before they enter school. And with **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library** it is also the most economical and Joyful. That's why we are an Imagination Library (IL) Program Affiliate. The IL Program sends well-selected, age-appropriate books monthly by mail to children 0 to age 5 who live in an area served by an IL Affiliate. BBBP registers children for the Program and pays IL for books mailed to them. There is no cost to families.

We began in Berkeley, my hometown, in 2015. I knew how to get started and, to quote a former Berkeley City Councilwoman, "*Things start here and go long.*" Berkeley attracts attention. I knew if we were successful here, it would help us to bring the IL Program to other East Bay Cities.

Nearly **800 Berkeley children receive IL books**, and have been for several years running. Emeryville, added in 2021, has 125+, and in April we launched an IL Program for Richmond & San Pablo, where 185 children are now registered. Our longstanding relationship with Head Start sites in Berkeley and Emeryville was key to making that launch smooth.

For now, we pay \$2.10 per book mailed to a child we register. Help us keep growing.

**\$25 = 12 books for 1 child \$250 = 60 books for 2 children
\$500 = 120 books for 5 years monthly to 4 children**

Mail a check to The BBBP, PO Box 8213, Berkeley, 94707 or donate online at www.thebbbp.org

Putting a book a month in a child's hands is just one, small thing. But, it is a *joyous* thing, it is a *powerful* thing. And it is a *long game* thing. We are in it for that long game. Please join us.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seena Hawley".

Seena Hawley, Executive Director
510-292-1346

seena@thebbbp.org

P.O. Box 8213, Berkeley, CA 94707

www.thebbbp.org

A 501(c)(3) organization EIN 46-1358633

Total Books Mailed to East Bay babies & children in our Imagination Library Programs since our IL Program launched in 2015 with Berkeley Head Start sites:
91,230

Books Mailed to Richmond/San Pablo since April 2022:
2,034

Books Mailed to ZIP Code 94608 (Emeryville) since August 2021:
817

From Our 2022 Survey

"Your program helped me realize the importance of books starting at birth."

Is there more value in child books starting from the very beginning? (n=177 responses)



"Instead of a favorite toy, my son has a favorite book "Green Tractor" 🚗 thanks to IL team.. He loves his books. Thank you so much for helping in bringing children back to books :)"

Does your child spend more time with books or their other toys/book shelves? (n=162 responses)

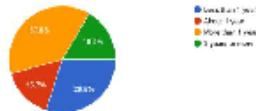


"Les agradezco que tengan este programa que beneficia a la comunidad. En especial a los niños y a sus familias. Gracias infinitas!!!"

(google translation):

"I thank you for having this program that benefits the community. Especially to the children and their families. Infinite thanks!!"

How long has your child worked together to enjoy books in this way? (n=166 responses)



"I love the questions on the inside of the book cover to stimulate parent-child interaction!"

"Some of their absolute favorite books have come from IL, Dolly's "I am a rainbow" has been a longtime standout favorite.

We have received books we wouldn't have chosen that the kids have loved so it's help to expand all of our horizons."

"Our 4 year old loves sitting and "reading" her books to her baby brother!"

(play-reading is pre-reading 😊)

"Our son is so excited every time a new book comes in the mail. We love reading the stories together and we are always revisiting old favorites on his bookshelf. He is old enough now that he's rediscovering past books and getting new things out of the stories."

(A child can't do this with borrowed book. Good literature – and IL books are – has layers of meaning. It's great to re-read an old favorite and find new meanings & connections at any age.)