

# Impact on early literacy

Every day EPL strives to make sure every child is ready to read and set up for success in school and life.

What does that look like? Thousands of interactions with kids from birth to age 5, crucial years to start literacy learning.

Care center visits, Storytimes, Baby and Me, kindergarten assessments and more are ways that EPL makes a difference with the children in our communities.

“Literacy is the start of being actively engaged in the world. It’s the beginning of being politically active, being a good citizen, getting a job, all of these things. The kids have to find that thing that gets them to read,” says Hope Davis-Smith, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at IUSB.

## 7,155

kids ready for kindergarten through Storytimes, Growing Readers and other early literacy programs that prepare kids for school.



## 14.3%

increase in attendance at preschool programming (ages 0 to 5)

## Over 7,000

books given away by the Book Bus

## Over 23,000

people interacted with the library outside our locations – at parks, classroom visits and community centers

# Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge brought another year of record participation.

Over **1,800** kids read during the eight weeks of the challenge. Over **10,000** rewards were claimed -- that's a lot of ice cream and Pokémon cards! The Summer Reading Challenge fosters a love of reading by allowing kids to read what they want. It also helps fight summer learning loss.

**41.8%**  
of participants completed six weeks of reading 

**73,722**  
days of reading logged in 2024

Over **1,400** book reports submitted for prize entries

Over **700** people attended the Summer Reading Prize Party, a community celebration of what kids accomplished

“The ‘glow up’ is real.” - Sonya Overman



## Growing Readers

As EPL's signature tutoring program, Growing Readers helps kids ages 3 to 8 read at the appropriate level for their age and grade. Including parents in the sessions helps continue the skills building at home and reinforces kids' confidence in their abilities.

“The most rewarding part for me is to watch the change in the kiddos, often from an attitude of defeat and dislike of reading to confidence and success. In most cases, the ‘glow up’ is real,” says Sonya Overman, Growing Readers coordinator.

**106** graduates since Spring 2022

**86** kids in the program in 2024 


# Cultural hub



EPL is a destination for families looking for educational and entertainment options. Free concerts, cultural celebrations, seasonal programs and partnerships with outside groups like Potawatomi Zoo and Elkhart County Parks brought hundreds through our doors for a single events.

"(The programs are) very relevant to my culture. It's important to have places like this to bridge that gap," says Maricela Ruiz, a mom and library user with her four kids.

**37.5** percent increase in attendance at adult programming

**4,000**  people attended 13 Curbside Concerts

Over **200** people attended the Potawatomi Zoo's visit on July 1 between the two sessions

Over **500** people attended bilingual and Spanish-speaking events and celebrations of culture like bilingual Storytimes, Noche de Lotería, Día de los Niños and much more.

The library is a community destination and the numbers reflect that. We saw growth in several areas, demonstrating the value and engagement that the library provides to the area.

"The library is a big source of possibilities," says Ilgiza Nazarenko, a mom and library user. "If you want to study English or other languages, if you come here not knowing the ABCs and English, they can help."

**27%** growth in cardholders from 2023 

**25%** of cardholders used their card multiple times

Over **10,000** homes in Elkhart have at least one EPL cardholder, a 8 percent increase over 2023

Over **20,000** people visited EPL locations monthly in 2024

**15%** of users access books, audiobooks and streaming digitally

**31%** of users have re-engaged with the library since EPL eliminated their outstanding fines and fees in 2022.



# Library use