



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**PROCLAMATION**  
BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) strengthens early literacy in Tennessee by acting as a thought leader, advisor and catalyst to sustain early literacy programs for children statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, less than half of Tennessee's third graders read proficiently; and

**WHEREAS**, third grade reading proficiency is the benchmark where children transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," a key indicator for a child's future educational success and workforce readiness; and

**WHEREAS**, GELF works to strengthen this in Tennessee by providing children with the resources, guidance and support they need to build early literacy skills and become lifelong learners from cradle to career; and

**WHEREAS**, through which, Tennessee children have access to early literacy programs statewide, including Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Storybook Trails, Book Buses, Caregiver Engagement and K-3 Summer Reading; and

**WHEREAS**, the not-for-profit GELF - in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the Dollywood Foundation - provides one high-quality, age-appropriate book every month mailed to enrolled children from birth to age five, at no cost to families and regardless of income; and

**WHEREAS**, GELF partners with a network of volunteers, donors and organizations to provide Storybook Trails, Book Buses, Caregiver Engagement and K-3 Summer Reading programs to further engage families around reading and to continue to provide children with literacy resources; and

**WHEREAS**, GELF's work is made financially possible through a unique use of public, private and corporate funding; and

**WHEREAS**, the establishment of Tennessee's Early Literacy Month will provide communities and programs across the state an opportunity to fundraise and increase awareness of the importance of early literacy and resources available to children through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Storybook Trails, Book Buses, Caregiver Engagement and K-3 Summer Reading programs;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, and Maria Lee, First Lady of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2020 as

*Early Literacy Month*

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this thirteenth day of August, 2020.

Handwritten signature of Bill Lee in black ink.

Governor

Handwritten signature of Maria Lee in black ink.

First Lady

Handwritten signature of Joe Ragan in black ink.

Secretary of State

