

Gently Used Book Drive Toolkit

Everyone who organizes and contributes to book drives helps us reach more children with the gift of books and the promise of literacy. We greatly appreciate all efforts. Let's get started!



Find a Reach Out and Read program site(s)

First things first, which Reach Out and Read program site(s) do you want to donate to?

- Find a program site near you using our online [Find a Site](#) tool.
- When reviewing the list of sites, look for those with a book icon. Those program sites accept book donations.
- Once you have decided on a program site(s), click on that book icon and complete the form so the program site(s) knows the book donation is in the works.

Set up a committee of volunteers to assist in the book drive or decide to run it alone.

- The book drive can be a group or individual effort. If you chose to set up a committee, start by reaching out to co-workers, classmates, friends, family, and neighbors to generate interest.
- Contact your school principal, school and community librarians, scout troop leaders, or religious leaders to ask for support and participation. Remember, there is strength in numbers!

Determine what type of children's books will be collected.

Reach Out and Read program sites accept gently used books for children from newborn to high-school age. We also accept new books for children newborn through age 5.

Determine where to hold the book drive.

Possible locations for your gently used book drive:

Businesses and service organizations

Many companies and service groups (scouts, civic clubs, and men's and women's clubs, etc.) choose to collect books for Reach Out and Read. Running a book drive can be a significant way for a corporation or business to give back to the community in which it is located.



Schools

Schools — especially elementary schools — are among the most important organizing hubs for book drives. Principals, teachers, media specialists, and PTAs usually support these events and will often organize book drives in their schools. Be sure to get permission within the school, through the principal or director, before you start.

Organizing a book drive in an elementary school is a good way to reach the community, because young students will often involve their parents and siblings. Also, organizing a book drive is a great way for middle and high school students to fulfill community service projects. Consider providing an incentive for the class that collects the most books, or keeping a graph in the school lobby of how many books are collected by each class and the school as a whole. Remember, it's a group effort!

Religious organizations/places of worship

Churches and temples are great places to hold book drives. Religious school classes or individual students may want to run a book drive for a confirmation, community service, or mitzvah project. Ask religious leaders to assist in promoting your book drive and literacy to their members.

Determine when to run your book drive.

Book drives can be held any time. Consider holding a drive in conjunction with other reading or literacy events at your school or library, or in conjunction with the following annual events:

- [National Literacy Month](#) (September)
- [TeenTober](#) (October)
- [National Family Literacy Month](#) (November)
- Thanksgiving (November)
- Christmas / Hanukkah (December)
- [Take Your Child to the Library Day](#) (February)
- Library Lovers Day / Valentine's Day (February)
- Black History Month (February)
- [Read Across America](#) (March)
- [D.E.A.R. - Drop Everything And Read](#) (April)
- [National Library Week](#) (April)
- [Week of the Young Child](#) (April)
- [Children's Book Week](#) (May)
- [Get Caught Reading Week](#) (May)
- [National Readathon Day](#) (May)
- [Screen-Free Week](#) (May)
- Juneteenth (June)



Determine the time span of the book drive.

Most book drives run from two weeks to a month. Donors need time to receive the information, go through their personal libraries, and get the books to collection sites. However, there is no set length of time for a book drive. Work with your committee, if you have one, and with the venue you have chosen to determine what is best.

Promote the book drive.

- Publicize, publicize, publicize!!! Let people know about your book drive via emails, announcements on your group's social media sites, newsletters, or calendars.
- Share the dates of the drive, book donation locations, description of the types of books you are collecting, where the books will be donated locally, contact information for the book drive, and some basic information about Reach Out and Read. Here is a short description – more information can be found on our [website](#).

Reach Out and Read is a national, evidence-based, nonprofit that gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read together. Reach Out and Read strives to create a world where every child is read to every day. Where family income, race, and geography are no longer predictors of kindergarten readiness, academic, and life success. They do this by partnering with medical clinics that serve low-income households, families of color, families who speak a home language other than English, and other historically marginalized groups. Their pediatric medical providers work to ensure that all children of all ethnicities have access to children's books and that their parents are supported in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

- A reminder when promoting a book drive: We want to give children the best quality of gently used books possible. Books should be odor- and mold-free and intact, with no torn or missing pages or covers.
- Take photos. A good photo can be used to publicize an upcoming event or to recognize a successfully completed one.

Set up the book drive collection site.

- Boxes or bins for book collection should be placed where they will be most visible, such as in entryways or lobbies, or, as an alternative, in offices or classrooms. They should be labeled clearly that they are for your gently used book drive so there is no confusion.
- Boxes or bins should be strong enough to hold large numbers of books. Plastic storage bins (18-gallon) work well.



Run the book drive.

- Keep track of how full the boxes and bins are at the collection site(s). If they are full, move the books into other boxes or swap the full boxes for empty ones.
- Consider counting the books as they are packed to keep track of your impact. This gives immediate feedback to participants/donors on your end and helps the recipient know the amount of the donation.
- Books can be transferred into smaller boxes (such as banker or copy paper boxes) once a bin is full. Boxes with cut-out handles work best.
- Posters advertising the book drive should be placed by the book collection bin(s) and in prominent areas around the venue. Remember to include:
 - start and end dates of the collection;
 - site(s) of the collection;
 - information of a contact person with the book drive
- Once the collection is over, please remember to remove posters and other promotions.

Deliver the books to a Reach Out and Read program site(s).

Books should be packed in manageable boxes (such as banker or copy paper boxes) and delivered to your selected Reach Out and Read program site(s). Please contact the Reach Out and Read program site(s) ahead of time to schedule a drop-off day and time.

Thank you very much for your support!