

## RUN A BOOK DRIVE & DISTRIBUTION

### Did you know?

60% of low-income families have no books in the home. Children growing up in homes without books are, on average, three years behind children in homes with books. (M.D.R Evans et al, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, June 2010)

### What is a book drive?

A book drive collects new and/or gently used children's books which can then be distributed to families without books or to other places that reach families in need of books. Book drives are a great way to raise awareness for **Together, We Read** and the importance of reading.

### How do book drives support literacy?

Book drives help provide books to families and/or places where families frequently go so they too can have the opportunity to read together every day and instill the language and vocabulary skills that lead children to proficient reading later on.



### Steps in planning your book drive:

- ✓ Partner with local agencies that serve low-income families with young children.
- ✓ Set up a committee of volunteers to assist in the book drive. Also, determine what type of children's books will be collected. Include language specifically asking for books for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Consider reaching out to local librarians for recommendations of specific titles or authors that fit the diversity of the local population.
- ✓ Determine where and when to hold the 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.
- ✓ Consider setting a goal for the number of books you want to collect and publicize that goal. Get the community excited about helping to improve school readiness and literacy skills by helping you reach your goal.
- ✓ Determine the time span of the book drive.
  - We recommend two weeks to a month to give people time to collect books from their homes and bring them to the collection sites.
- ✓ Promote the book drive in local media and in other public areas. Be sure to get permission to promote the event from establishment owners.
- ✓ Set up the book drive collection site. Visit Brand Center and use People of Action campaign templates to develop signage promoting the book drive *and* how your club is active in the community.
- ✓ Run the book drive and watch the collection of books grow!
- ✓ Deliver and/or distribute the books in partnership with a service provider in the community.

**Work with local organizations to collect books:**

- Schools can be an important organizing hub for book drives and can engage students and their families. Work with the school administrators to discuss the feasibility of working with the school to collect books.
- Businesses and service organizations can support the book drive by providing volunteers, encouraging employees and customers to donate books and setting up collection bins at their high foot-traffic locations.
- Religious organizations/places of worship can support book drives by setting up collection bins and encouraging members to donate.

**Materials and costs:**

- Printing costs of posters and flyers to promote your event.
- Large cardboard boxes or plastic storage bins (18-gallon) for collection sites.

**Promoting your book drive:**

- Distribute flyers and posters across your community.
  - Be sure to also place posters and flyers on and around book collection bins.
  - Information to include: start and end dates of the collection; site(s) of the collection; information of a contact person with the book drive.
- Meet with school, business and religious leaders in your community to get them involved.
- Post announcements on social media with regular reminders and updates.
- Seek out pro bono media coverage from local newspapers and radio stations.

**What else can you do?**

Book drives also pair well with other activations, such as:

- Reading Corners – Use the books collected through your book drive to stock and re-stock the reading corners you establish in your community.
- Little Free Libraries® – Make sure your Little Free Libraries are stocked with books collected from the book drive.
- Family Literacy Events – Give away new books received through your book drive to families as door prizes.

**Tips and best practices:**

- ✓ You should only collect and distribute new or very-gently used books. They should be odor- and mold-free with no torn or missing pages or covers, drawings or names written inside the book. Refrain from using library books stamped “Discard” or “Withdrawn.”
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Count the books and the number of families you distributed to so you can track the success of your book drive.



Adapted from Read to Grow's [Book Drive Toolkit](#)