



BOOK DRIVE TOOL KIT

Everything you need to know to run
a successful book drive for Read to Grow

For information about Read to Grow, see our website: www.readtogrow.org

For more information about book drives, contact Linda Sylvester
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ORGANIZING AND RUNNING A BOOK DRIVE

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. Most of about 160,000 books we expect to distribute this year have come to us from book drives.

We'd like to help you get started, so please contact us if you plan to run a book drive. Also, please fill out a [Book Drive Registration Form](#). You can call Read to Grow at 203.488.6800 and ask for Linda Sylvester or Evelyn Tomasello.

Get organized

1. Set up a committee of volunteers to assist in the book drive. Also, determine what type of children's books will be collected. (Remember, we collect and distribute books for children from newborns to high-school age.)
2. Determine where and when to hold the book drive.
3. Determine the time span of the book drive.
4. Promote the book drive.
5. Set up the book drive collection site.
6. Run the book drive.
7. Deliver the books to Read to Grow, or arrange for a pick-up.

Step 1: Set up a committee

The best way to form your committee is to start talking to classmates, co-workers, 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!

Step 2: Determine where and when to hold a book drive

Possible locations for a book drive:

- **Schools**

Schools — especially elementary schools — are among the most important organizing hubs for book drives. Principals, teachers and media specialists 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. You can request information from Read to Grow to share with others.

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!

- **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 Read to Grow to support families and schools in their area. 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.

- **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.

When to run a 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, many of which participate in the following annual events:

- [Banned Books Week](#) (September)
- [Teen Read Week](#) (October)
- [National Family Literacy Month](#) (November)
- [Read Across America Day](#) (March)
- [D.E.A.R. – Drop Everything And Read](#)
- [National Library Week](#) (April)
- [Week of the Young Child](#) (April)
- [Children's Book Week](#) (May)
- [Get Caught Reading Week](#) (May)
- [National Readathon Day](#) (May)
- [Reading is Fun Week](#) (May)
- [Screen Free Week](#) (May)

Step 3: 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.

Step 4: Promote the book drive

Publicize! Put an announcement on your group's social media site, newsletter or calendar. Call Read to Grow for posters to advertise the event, or [download an 8½" x 11" poster](#) from our website that you can print yourself. You can also use a [Read to Grow logo](#) in your promotion material.

Send your book drive details to Read to Grow, and we will be share them through our social media and on our website.

Take photos. A good photo can be used to publicize an upcoming event, or to recognize a successfully completed one. Email photos in a jpeg format.

A reminder when promoting a book drive: We want to give children the best quality of gently used books as possible. Books should be odor- and mold-free and intact, with no torn or missing pages or covers. We cannot use library books.

Step 5: Set up the collection site(s)

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. Boxes or bins should be strong enough to hold large numbers of books. Plastic storage bins (18-gallon) work well.

Step 6: 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 into the boxes that will eventually go to Read to Grow.

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. Posters can be requested from Read to Grow or designed by volunteers. Remember to include:

- start and end dates of the collection;
- site(s) of the collection;
- information of a contact person with the book drive;
- Read to Grow phone number (203.488.6800) and website (www.readtogrow.org)

Counting the books is extremely helpful to us. It enables us to estimate how much room they will take up in our van if we pick them up and gives immediate feedback to participants/donors on your end. If your book drive involves students, they are usually excited to discover how many books they have collected.

If you can count the books in each box, please mark the outside clearly with the number inside. You can download book drive box labels, but it is not necessary to use them.

Once the collection is over, please remember to remove posters and other promotions.

Step 7: Deliver the books

Books should be packed in manageable boxes (such as banker or copy paper boxes) and can be delivered to the Read to Grow office in Branford. Please contact Read to Grow ahead of time to schedule a drop-off day and time.

Thank you for your support!