

10 Ways You Can Help Boost Childhood Literacy

Are you a do-it-yourselfer over 50 who's eager to help kids learn to read? This list is for you.



- 1. Search and you may find.** Find out where your time and experience are needed by using the Generation to Generation Volunteer [Opportunity Finder](#). Just type in your zip code and keyword ("read" is a good one) to find options in your area.
- 2. Contact your local library.** Ask the librarian if they're looking for volunteers to staff the literacy programs they host for local kids. Pick up the phone or, better yet, use this as an excuse to chat with someone new face-to-face!
- 3. Donate your kids' old books.** Do you have children's books that aren't being used anymore? Know friends or neighbors who might have similar boxes in their basements? Collect used books and donate them to a local library, after-school program or a local donation center.



- 4. Exchange books.** Prefer a creative way to use those books you collected? Start a [Little Free Library](#) Book Exchange in your neighborhood and put smiles on countless faces when kids discover free books in an unexpected place.
- 5. Offer bedtime books for children without homes.** Send packages through [Project Night Night](#) to homeless children who need essentials, exposure to books and the comfort of a bedtime story. Order the totes and invite friends over, turning the assembly process into an opportunity to connect.

- 6. Become a literacy advocate** in your community. Submit a letter to the editor of your local paper describing your personal experience with the literacy crisis we face today and call on local leaders to invest in children's literacy. Personal stories are powerful, and your voice can make a difference. Discover more advocacy ideas [here](#) from Reading is Fundamental.

- 7. Cook and learn.** Cooking with kids offers a fun way to add a few literacy lessons to your dish. [This flier](#) presents five ways you can use *Chop Chop Magazine* to boost literacy for children in grades three and up. *(Photography at right by Carl Tremblay)*



8. **Become a more intentional reading instructor** for the kids in your life. Check out [this video](#) produced by School on Wheels, which includes four reading comprehension strategies: making connections, retelling, asking questions, and making predictions.
9. **Wash and learn.** Identify a [local laundromat](#) and work with the manager or owner to host a read-aloud event. Check out the [Too Small To Fail Community Toolkit](#) for more great ideas and a templated flier you can download to inform customers ahead of time so they can bring their children! Then, choose a favorite book to share.
10. **Help purchase books for kids who need them.** Many children living in low-income families have limited access to books and struggle to keep up with their classmates as a result. Gen2Gen is working with First Book to find solutions. [Help us donate](#) 1,000 new books to children at Head Start centers in areas hit hard by hurricanes and fires. For just \$3, you can put a book in the hands of a delighted child. And, using an app from Boomerang Giving, you can also apply your senior discounts toward book purchases. [Learn more here](#). How's that for an easy way to feel good?



Got another idea? Tried one of these?

Like [Gen2Gen on Facebook](#) and let us know!

You'll be joining a community of people 50+ eager to learn from one another, organize their friends and help kids thrive.

Powered by [Encore.org](#), Gen2Gen is a national campaign mobilizing adults aged 50+ to help young people thrive. Gen2Gen Reads is a mini-campaign running through the end of 2017. Learn more and sign up at [iamgen2gen.org](#).