

First Book: Transforming lives through equal access to education



The Need



More than **32 million children** are growing up without access to books, educational resources and basic need items. More than 50% of all public school children now come from low-income households.

Without tools for learning, the **achievement gap** for kids in need will continue to grow. More than 80% of 4th grade low-income children are “below proficient” in reading, and students with below grade level reading skills are twice as likely to drop out of school, resulting in poor employment prospects and social issues.

Source: Neuman, Susan B. and David K. Dickinson, ed. *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, Volume 2. New York, NY 2006

The First Book Network: A Powerful Voice Serving the Bottom of the Pyramid

- **Unique Aggregated Market:** First Book distributes new, high-quality, affordable books, educational resources and basic need items to a network of educators, program leaders and other professionals serving kids and families in need the U.S. and Canada. Now over 300,000 strong, the First Book network has grown by 500% in the last four years to represent one out of every five classrooms or programs in need, and is the largest and fastest growing aggregation of individuals exclusively serving children in need.
- **Feedback Loop:** The size and vibrancy of the network provides an unprecedented opportunity to aggregate the needs, challenges, insights and collective buying power of this massively under-represented and underserved community.

First Book’s Engines for Growth: 160 MM Books and Educational Resources...and Counting

The First Book National Book Bank

- **Our Original Model:** Works with publishers to secure large donations of new children’s books, which are then distributed to classrooms and programs across the country for only the cost of shipping and handling.

The First Book Marketplace

- **Award-winning e-commerce website** offering a range of free and low cost resources that meet the expressed needs of educators in our network
- **Eligibility:** Recipients must demonstrate that 70% or more of the children they serve are low-income
- **Choice:** More than 7,000 titles, educational games, technology, apps, DVDs, non-perishable food, coats and other critically important items. The First Book Marketplace helps educators overcome two primary barriers to providing children with access to the tools they need to learn – affordability and relevance.

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- **The Marketplace is educators' source for affordable, high quality content and resources:** FBM resources are on average 75% below retail, including shipping. As so many teachers and professionals spend money for books and other educational resources out of their own pocket, First Book helps stretch every scarce dollar. In addition, First Book recruits purchasing power from the private sector and philanthropic foundations in order to provide as many resources as possible to the Network, as well as to give educators gift credits they can use to access resources that they select for free.
- **The Marketplace also works to improve the relevance of content available to low-income children.** By aggregating the market and engaging educators to understand their needs, First Book represents the interests expressed by its network with its suppliers and publishing partners and makes those resources more widely available. Examples include:
 - *Engaging books for a range of literacy levels:* high-interest, age-appropriate books for low-literacy and English language learners.
 - *Hands on learning tools:* books, technology, games and apps that build 21st century skills.
 - *Books tied to supplemental support materials:* title specific tip sheets that include discussion questions and suggested activities to further engage students and families with titles of stated relevance.
 - *Bilingual and culturally relevant titles:* books in *English, Spanish and French* that showcase other cultures.
 - *Books featuring diverse protagonists:* stories that feature kids from different backgrounds, abilities, and circumstances; providing "windows and mirrors" for children to see themselves and the world around them.

The Stories for All Project™ – a Market-Based Solution to a Market Gap

- **The lack of diversity in children's books is staggering.** In 2016, the Cooperative Children's Book Center reviewed 3,500 titles and found that only 11% of books published were about African Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Latinos and Native Americans. Yet over 58% of low-income children are from these populations.
- **The Stories for All Project™ is a groundbreaking First Book program** addressing the long-standing lack of diversity in children's books. By leveraging the market-power of its network, First Book has engaged publishers to introduce special edition paperback versions of titles only available in hardcover that represent the stories and experiences of all children served through the First Book Marketplace.
- Under this program First Book created the **first bilingual edition** of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar/La Oruga Muy Hambrienta*, as well as other titles.

