



2021
Impact
Report

EDUCATOR-DRIVEN CHANGE to ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



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Dear Friends,

As First Book enters our 30th year, our nation's children and educators need our support more than ever. The pandemic has taken an enormous toll on education, compounding existing economic and resource disparities with learning disruptions and mental health challenges.

With decades of experience in driving systemic change, First Book is uniquely positioned to address these challenges. Our organization has built the largest community of formal/informal educators serving children (0–18 years) living in poverty, the majority of whom are children of color. Over the past 30 years, the First Book community has become a powerful force for social justice, supporting educators, removing barriers to learning, and addressing educational inequities.

In this report, you'll learn how First Book:

1. Listens to educators on the frontlines.

We conduct approximately 30 research studies annually and benefit from ongoing feedback from educators. **In addition to informing the work of First Book, this research is changing the field.** In 2021, First Book's research included identifying educator needs to support a safe return to in-person learning; educator priorities for the American Rescue Plan Act; and user insights for the LEGO Group.

2. Collaborates with educators, field experts, partners, the funding community, publishers, and others to address the critical needs expressed by educators.

In 2021 alone, First Book responded with 11 million books and a collection of expert resources to support children's mental health, grief and loss, racial and cultural inclusion, and more.

3. Innovates and invests by piloting and scaling strategies to promote educational equity.

In 2021, this included continuing to invest in resources and initiatives that **elevate diversity and inclusion**, and launching an exciting national initiative to **bring the power of changemaking** to young people in under-resourced communities, who too often feel powerless to affect change.

Our country is going through a racial reckoning. First Book has been dedicated to racial equity for our entire 30 years and we continue our unwavering dedication to answer the needs of all children in poverty. If we want to live in a world that is just and hopeful, educational equity must be a national — and a global — priority. As we rise to meet the challenges, we invite your ideas, your partnership, and your support.



With gratitude,

Kyle Zimmer
President, CEO and Co-founder

First Book: Building a Path Out of Poverty Through Educational Equity

Education is everything. But quality education does not happen by accident — it requires educators who are supported and classrooms and programs that have everything they need to accomplish their mission.

However, for educators working in under-resourced communities, the challenges are profound. That's because, from their earliest days, children living in poverty face enormous educational disparities that stymie learning, putting them at a disadvantage long before they ever reach school age.

While studies have shown that the very presence of books in children's homes supports reading achievement and increases lifelong educational outcomes,¹ millions of children are growing up in book deserts, without books in their communities. In one impoverished neighborhood, researchers found one book for every 300 children.² The chasm of need doesn't stop there. A widespread lack of educational resources at schools and programs in low-income communities exacerbates educational inequality in the United States.

This isn't a small problem: today, more than half of the students attending U.S. public schools are growing up in low-income households, and learning disruptions caused by the pandemic have deepened educational disparities.

First Book advances educational equity for children living in poverty, which disproportionately impacts children of color. Because of that reality, the fight for educational equity is also a fight for racial equity.

How First Book Drives Systemic Change

A nonprofit social enterprise, First Book applies proven strategies of the private sector to fuel our social sector mission. To ensure our work addresses educators' challenges and the real needs of underserved children, we created the First Book Network, North America's largest community of formal and informal educators, currently more than 525,000 professionals serving kids in need (ages 0–18). Thousands of educators join this community every month. **First Book aggregates the knowledge and influence of this rapidly growing First Book Network, turning this previously fragmented group of educators into a dynamic force for systemic change.**



¹ Evans, M. D. R., Kelley, J., Sikora, J., & Treiman, D. J. (2010). Family scholarly culture and educational success: Books and schooling in 27 nations. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 28(2), 171–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2010.01.002>

² Neuman, S.B., Celano, D. (2001). Access to print in middle- and low-income communities: An ecological study of four neighborhoods. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36, 8-26.

First Book’s Educator-Driven Models

To catapult change, First Book built an integrated ecosystem of three models that is directly responsive to educators working in historically underserved communities, providing market strength to classrooms and programs that have never had power:

1 First Book Research & Insights: Elevating the Voice of Educators

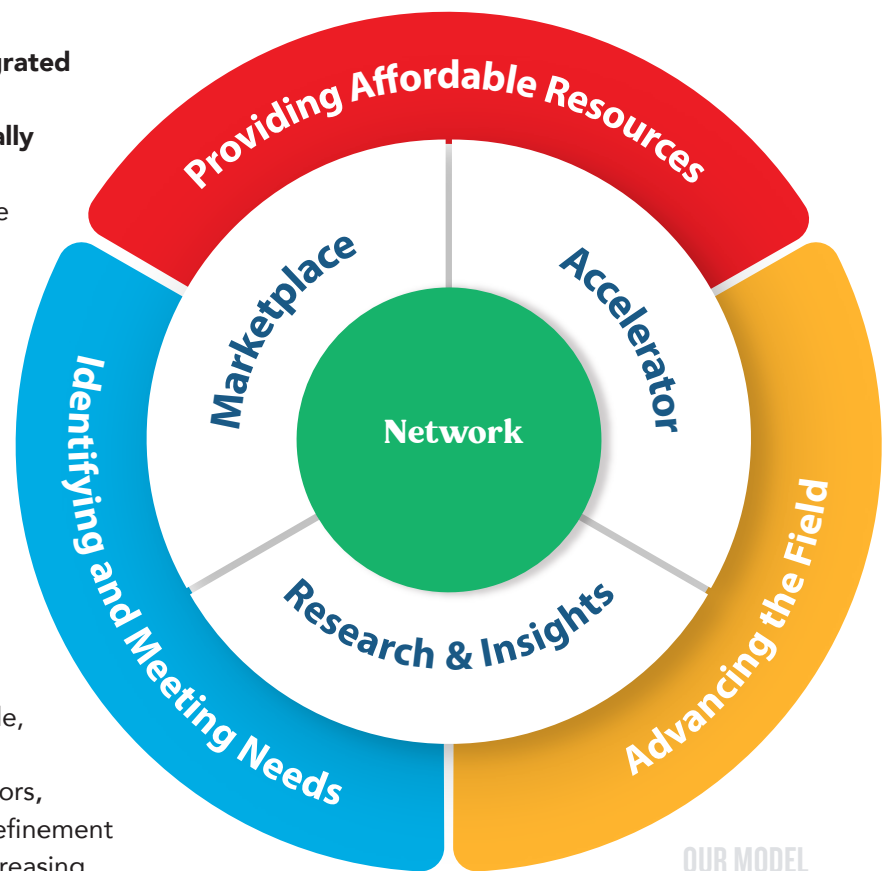
Data governs the world, yet there is perilously inadequate data regarding the barriers to educational equity for kids in need. First Book Research & Insights changes that by conducting ongoing research to amplify the voices of Network members regarding their needs and concerns. Educator insights drive our models, the resources we provide, and the partnerships we create; they also benefit the public, private, and social sectors, enabling them to inform the design and refinement of programs, products, and strategies, increasing resource effectiveness and adoption rates.

2 First Book Marketplace: Educator-Driven Resources Addressing the Whole Child

A nonprofit e-Commerce site, the First Book Marketplace provides educators in the First Book Network with access to free/low-cost, high-quality books, Accelerator resources, basic needs items, and more. The Marketplace features professionally curated diverse/inclusive books and resources informed by educator insights to address the needs of children in historically underserved communities. First Book negotiates the lowest prices possible, and purchases on a non-returnable basis — simultaneously lowering prices while increasing the relevancy of books and resources. First Book also recruits funding to decrease the price of books and resources even further.

3 First Book Accelerator: Expediting Access to Evidence-Based Strategies from Experts

In response to educator-identified issues through First Book Research & Insights, First Book collaborates with experts to translate evidence-based strategies into bilingual resources (tip sheets, videos, webinars, toolkits) that are expedited to practitioners. These resources, created and refined with educator input, are often paired with curated book collections. Accelerator resources address cultural diversity, social and emotional learning, childhood trauma, grief and loss, essential life skills, family engagement, and other educator-requested topics. The Accelerator expedites access to transformative expertise that used to take decades to reach educators.



OUR MODEL



“**Because of First Book, we have been able to significantly impact the literacy rates in our city.**”

Ninon H.

First Book's models are creating significant impact:

For Historically Underserved Children

- First Book serves more than 5 million children annually, 70% of whom are children of color.
- In surveys, educators said that First Book helps close the achievement gap for the kids they serve (91%); increase interest in reading (89%); and increase reading performance (68%).

For the Field

- First Book lowers the cost of high-quality books/resources, increases access to diverse/relevant content, and provides a trusted, cost-effective channel to reach educators.
- First Book's research reveals educator insights that can inform educational strategies, products, and services to increase effectiveness and adoption rates.

For Educators

- Educators report that First Book helps them be the best educator they can be (91%); provide culturally relevant books (64%); support reluctant readers (63%); and encourage reading in the home (62%).
- 73% of survey respondents were extremely satisfied with First Book's free resources.

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

5M
children served

225M
books and resources
distributed since First Book's
founding

525,000+
registered members

24,344
new educators joined the First
Book Network in 2021

11M
books and resources
distributed through the First
Book Marketplace in 2021



First Book Research & Insights: Gathering Input Directly from Educators Supporting Underserved Children and Youth

Practitioners are the best experts to identify barriers to learning and to identify what they need to address disparities. That's why educator input informs everything we do at First Book. First Book Research & Insights, our research arm, conducts as many as 30 research studies annually. We also use data analytics, focus groups, and other tools to hear from educators on an ongoing basis.

In addition to strengthening the development and refinement of First Book's programs and offerings, market research conducted by First Book Research & Insights enables funders, manufacturers, academics, and policy leaders to incorporate practitioner-centered input *in the design phase of their work, rather than after the fact.*

Educator Voices Fuel “Give Learning a Shot”

In a 2021 First Book survey, educators expressed concern that confusion about COVID-19 vaccines could impede a safe return to in-person learning, with 65% of respondents indicating that they were hearing some or a great deal of resistance to getting the vaccine within their community.

With funding from the Larry and Helen Hoag Foundation, First Book developed the [COVID-19 Vaccine Time Saver](#), so that educators could share information from trusted sources and help families make informed vaccine decisions, and support a safe return to learning. First Book also created a [series of videos](#) in which educators and parents discuss how the vaccine helps address mental health and learning challenges caused by the pandemic. [PBS Newshour Extra](#) featured the Time Saver in its educator resources.

With support from KPMG and the American Federation of Teachers, First Book also distributed 60,000 books to children and families at community vaccination events, [like this one in Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#).



COVID-19's Socio-Emotional Impact is Real |...



El COVID-19 expuso la brecha digital...

American Rescue Plan Act: Educators' Funding Priorities to Address Educational Gaps for Underserved Children

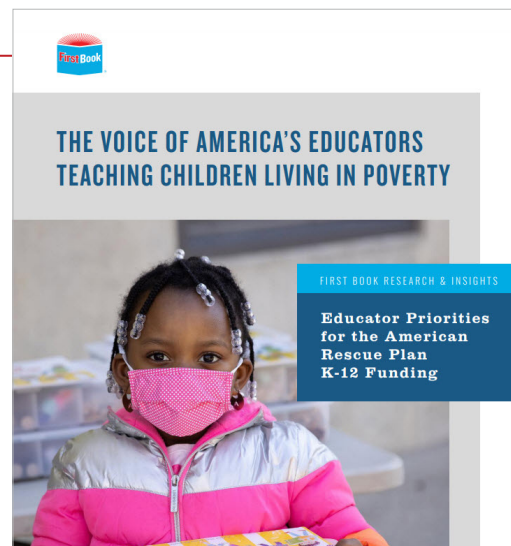
The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) designates \$123 billion to help K-12 schools and educational programs foster learning recovery post pandemic. As states prepared funding plans, it became apparent that a critical constituency was missing from those discussions: the voice of practitioners — particularly, the voice of educators supporting the most disadvantaged students.

To help school administrators and policymakers benefit from educators' perspectives, First Book surveyed its Network, asking educators to prioritize how ARP funding could best address educational gaps exacerbated by the pandemic.

In addition to sharing the survey findings through a webinar, First Book distributed findings to state education policymakers nationwide and created state profiles and resources to help [education leaders maximize the impact of ARP funds in their state](#).

AMONG THE FINDINGS:

- 97% of educators want to weigh in on ARP spending priorities to support the children they serve, but 75% of educators had not yet had the opportunity to do so.
- Educators serving economically disadvantaged communities ranked 1) books and learning materials (86%); 2) student mental health support resources (79%); and 3) additional staff (59%) as their top priorities for ARP funding.
- For their own classroom or program, 99% of educators prioritized books as their top funding priority for the students they serve; 85% of educators would send books home for their students.
- Last year, 98% of educators spent their own money on resources for their classrooms/



programs; 91% used their money to purchase books for their students. Nearly 60% of educators spent between \$100 and \$500; 13% spent over \$1,000.

- 86% of educators do not feel extremely or very prepared to support children who have experienced trauma over the past year.

First Book Educators Provide Product Insights for the LEGO Group

In 2021, the LEGO Group commissioned First Book Research & Insights to conduct market research to inform a new set of classroom resources for their Build the Change experience. Instead of creating resources based on corporate goals or assumptions, the LEGO Group worked with First Book to conduct research and create materials that were specific to the current needs of educators.

Through the research, educators provided valuable insights ranging from accessibility and usability for children of all skill levels and stages of development, to the product features that were most important to educators. For example, educators indicated that full lesson plans and activity ideas would be particularly helpful. In response, the LEGO team created complete course packs, presentations, and speaker notes to allow educators to implement sessions without having to design new lesson plans, as well as making other product adjustments based on educator insights.

Following the research phase, the LEGO Group provided First Book educators with free access to the Build the Change classroom resources through the [Biodiversity and Climate Change Course Pack](#). The Course Pack includes customizable lesson plans, slide presentations, printable activities, and more, enabling educators to help students ages 7–12 to learn about animals, habitats, and how climate change is impacting their communities. Through this 10-session course, students can create solutions to these real-world challenges and share their ideas with their peers, local leaders, and even global leaders by uploading their creations on www.LEGO.com. In post-study surveys, 95% of educators found the Course Pack to be very/extremely effective in enabling them to integrate the materials into their classroom curriculum.

To support this new resource, First Book created a free downloadable First Book Accelerator resource, “Climate Change in the United States,” to introduce facts and concepts about climate change to communities of need, which are often disproportionately impacted. The resource, available through the First Book Marketplace, includes activities for students and links to additional climate change lessons and resources.



“**We value our partnership with First Book immensely. Not only have they played an integral part in the creation of the Build the Change Educator program — facilitating research and user testing groups, ensuring that the resources are as useful as possible for their network — but they are also an absolute joy to collaborate with.**”

David Pallash,
The LEGO Group Senior Manager,
Global Programmes

Expediting the Adoption of Evidence-based Strategies from Leading Experts

There are brilliant people developing powerful strategies to elevate educational opportunities — but there is a problem: these strategies almost never make it into the hands of the educators who need them. First Book expedites access to these experts and the critical strategies they have developed. A few examples include:

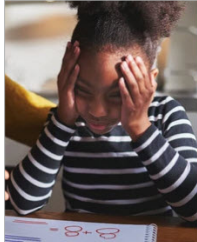
Turning Challenging Moments into Skill-Building Opportunities

If you have children in your life, then you've lived through challenging moments with them — when their strong feelings, their frustrations, perhaps their anger overwhelms them and they express it in ways that bring out those feelings in us, especially during the pandemic.

First Book collaborated with Ellen Galinsky and Erin Ramsey of Mind in the Making at the Bezos Family Foundation to help educators and families see that challenging moments with children ages 4–8 can be opportunities to develop key skills that every child needs.

We began by surveying 2,500 First Book educators and parents/caregivers to identify the most common challenges they face. Using this feedback and grounded in the science of learning and brain development, the Bezos Family Foundation and First Book created a series of tip sheets (available in English and Spanish) that educators can share with families. These tip sheets not only provide useful and usable information for families, they're also a way for educators to engage parents.

Launched through a free live webinar, the [Skill-Building Opportunities Resource Series](#) features new strategies released each week to help parents/caregivers and educators better deal with moments of frustration. Topics include dealing with kids with meltdowns, leaving a mess, not getting their way, talking back, attention-seeking, avoiding homework or chores, and much more.



Easily Frustrated

Is your child easily frustrated? These strategies for handling challenges and setbacks can help them practice managing those feelings. Available in Spanish.

[DOWNLOAD NOW >](#)

Resources for Children Coping with Grief and Loss

It's estimated that nearly 436,100 children have lost a parent or in-home caregiver due to COVID-19, with children of color losing adult caregivers at far higher rates.³ Through First Book focus groups made possible by the New York Life Foundation, educators indicated the resources they need most to support grieving students.

Guided by these insights, New York Life Foundation renewed their partnership with First Book to expand the [Grief, Loss and Healing section](#) of the First Book Marketplace, provide funding for educators to select books/resources for their students, create conversation guides for educators, and provide training on how to use these resources to provide culturally competent, age-appropriate grief and bereavement support. Communities experiencing acute bereavement situations or mass tragedies are also able to request additional funding for books and resources to support those experiencing grief, loss, and healing.

Educator comments underscore the importance of these books and resources: "Sometimes as educators, we are at a loss for just the right words to comfort someone in need. This book makes it easier."

³"Hidden Pain: Children Who Lost a Parent or Caregiver to COVID-19 and What the Nation Can Do to Help Them," Social Policy Analytics and the COVID Collaborative, December 2021.

First Book and the American Federation of Teachers: Strengthening Resources for Educators and Students

"I find myself constantly recommending this site to colleagues. The featured books and the SEL resources have been phenomenal." Karla S.

"Our school library is underfunded and outdated, and during the pandemic, largely inaccessible to students anyway. I have over 3,000 books in my classroom library, meaning I can almost always find a book a student wants to read. There is literally no way I could achieve this without access to First Book's affordable and brilliantly curated selection of books." Wendy G.

First Book would not be the organization it is today without the support of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Over the past 10 years, First Book and AFT have distributed 7.6 million books across the country. Today, one-third of our growing community of educators are AFT members — adding their voice to drive First Book's work and share what they need most to remove barriers to learning.

First Book and AFT Celebrate 10 Years of Success.

2021 marked the 10-year anniversary of First Book's partnership with the AFT. To commemorate the anniversary, we returned to Charleston, WV, where we launched the partnership 10 years ago, at the same school, on the same day, August 26. School and community leaders joined First Book and AFT to recognize the impact of the partnership, and to distribute books to three schools in the region. In addition, First Book and AFT created Care Closets of school supplies and personal care items to support students as needed at the schools.

Unprecedented Outreach: Reading Opens the

World! One of the issues that educators resoundingly and continually voice is the critical need for all kids to have books at home to become readers. In December, the AFT — in partnership with First Book, AFL-CIO, and others — launched [Reading Opens the World](#), a multiyear, multimillion dollar initiative that will bring one million books to home libraries. The AFT campaign underscores the essential role of parents and caregivers in supporting literacy, as well as the need to build on and forge new collaborations and connections between parents and guardians at home and the educators and staff in schools to develop children's reading skills and fuel a love of reading and learning.



"First Book's innovative models, collaborative approach, and ability to harness the power of the market is in turn empowering our members, providing the basis for current and future curricula, and engaging our students in reading. It is a solution that is fulfilling its promise of permanently improving the literacy and resource landscape for those serving children in need."

Randi Weingarten, AFT President

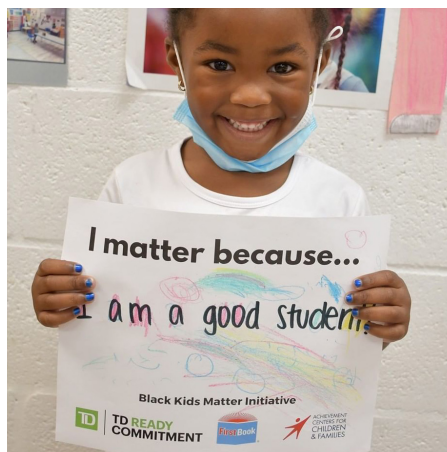
Racial Equity and Cultural Inclusion

"I work in the library at a Title I school. No funding has been available for the library for at least the last six years. [Through First Book and the First Book] Marketplace, I can afford to provide my students access to new books through our library. This has been a game changer." Yvonne M.



Racial representation and cultural inclusion are central to educational equity and have been deeply embedded in First Book's mission and models throughout our 30-year history. In 2021, First Book launched new and expanded existing initiatives, including:

- Deepening our field-leading curated collection of diverse and inclusive titles in First Book's [Stories for All Project™](#). Diverse books are critical to enable more children to see themselves and their lived experiences in books, and to make reading and education relevant to their lives. In 2021, First Book continued its investment with a \$1.5 million inventory buy for the First Book Marketplace, each title handpicked by First Book's professional curation team for its impact, diversity and inclusion, authenticity, and ability to engage readers.
- Expanding First Book's award-winning [Empowering Educators](#) library, a series of resources to help educators have productive, age-appropriate conversations about race and culture with their students. First Book added new video resources, developed and



presented by anti-bias, antiracist educators.

- Partnering with the American Federation of Teachers and the NAACP to support "[Stamping Out Racism & Hate](#)," a national campaign to help educators actively create antiracist, safe, and welcoming learning environments, including distributing a special edition of the book *Stamped*.
- Launching [Black Kids Matter](#), an initiative to celebrate and empower the voices of Black and Brown children. With support from National Grid and the TD Ready Commitment, TD Bank's corporate citizenship platform, First Book distributed culturally relevant books to children in underserved communities in seven states and worked with educators to inspire students to express — through video, art, prose, and poetry — the many ways that Black and Brown children are special.
- Releasing our [2021 multicultural calendar](#), a free downloadable resource enabling educators to highlight diversity through noteworthy events, holidays, and achievements all year long. Downloads of the calendar have doubled each year since the calendar launched.

Equity Through Changemaking: Partnership with Ashoka to Ignite Youth as Changemakers



First Book and Ashoka, the largest global network of leading social entrepreneurs, have launched Time for Change: Dream, Act, Change Our World, an initiative providing young people from under-resourced communities with the support and tools to become powerful changemakers, thanks to generous support from Audemars Piguet.

Time for Change is founded on the understanding that a world of accelerated change requires that everyone, regardless of geography, race, or socio-economic background, creates change for the common good.

In a First Book survey, 76% of educators indicated they believe it is urgent to develop changemaker mindsets among the young people they serve; however, only 30% feel very/extremely prepared to do so.

This extraordinary partnership will bring Ashoka's world-renowned expertise in

unlocking the changemaking power that lies in every person to First Book educators and the millions of children they serve nationwide.

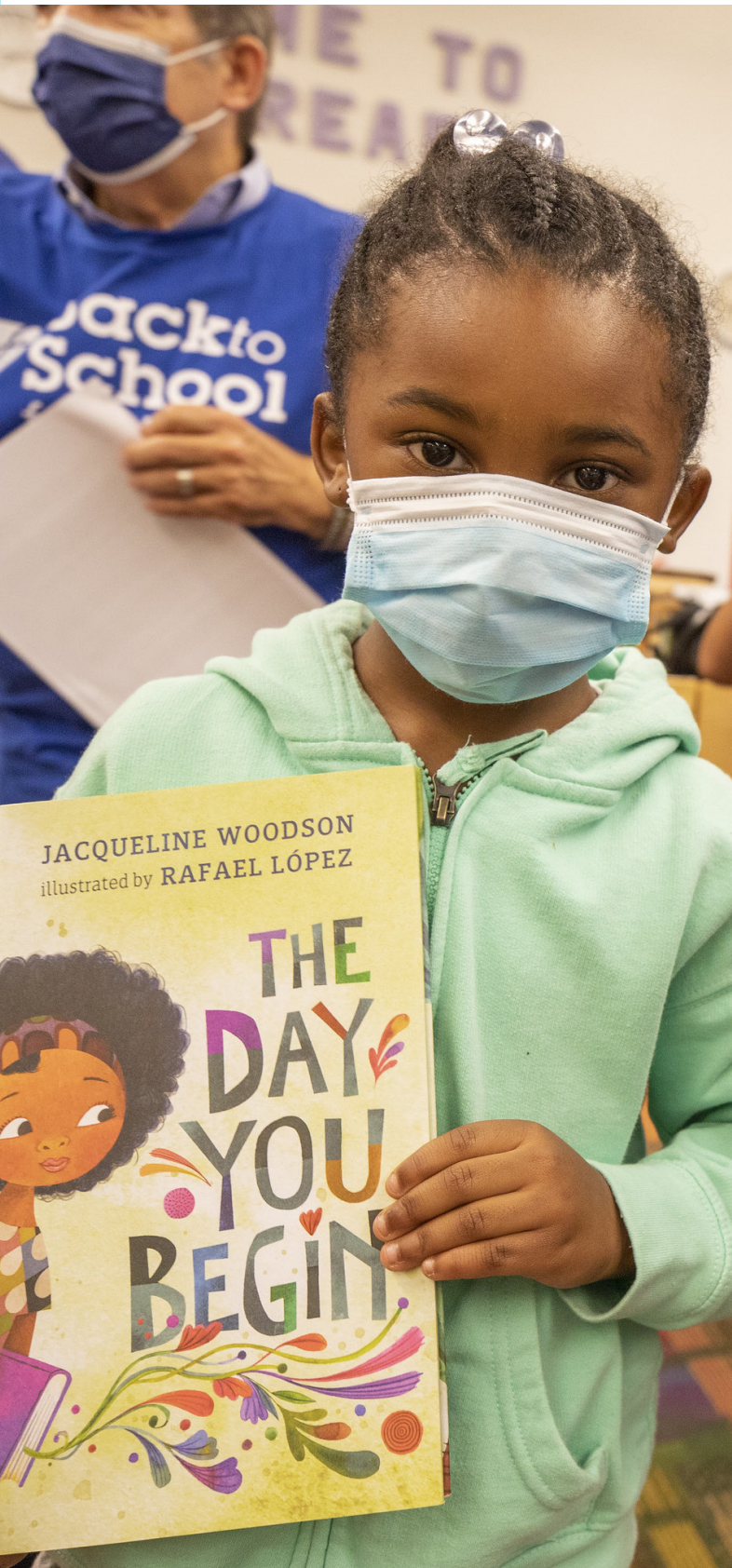
Time for Change includes a free, downloadable resource that introduces the concept of changemaking; books to inspire youth as changemakers; and ideas for students to practice changemaking.



Audemars Piguet's CEO, François-Henry Bennahmias, announced the partnership in the spring of 2021 at a star-studded virtual auction hosted by Kevin Hart. A highlight was a one-of-a-kind version of the Royal Oak Concept "Black Panther" Flying Tourbillon timepiece, which was auctioned off to support this multiyear initiative.

As Bennahmias stated, First Book, Ashoka, and Audemars Piguet will "accompany, empower, and inspire people to be a force for good and this starts by trusting in the power of young people today and giving them the tools they need to make a change in their communities and lives."

Time for Change: Dream, Act, Change Our World will expand globally in 2023.



Scaling First Book's Reach and Impact

At First Book, we are proud of what we have built to date, and we are driven to serve every child in need. In 2022 we are launching a scaling plan with a single vision: **To reach every Title I school nationwide over the next five years.** This means we will serve millions more children and support hundreds of thousands of additional educators every year. In addition, the plan allows the organization to become 75% self-funded — an extraordinary accomplishment. The plan includes:

- **Building the First Book Community.** First Book is currently active in 60% of Title I schools. The strategic plan increases our reach to every Title I school in the country. We know that when we sign up First Book members within a school, we can then expand engagement through the school — reaching many more classrooms, children, and families.
- **Expansion of Access to Beautiful, Diverse Books/Resources.** Our scaling plan dramatically expands access to books by authors and illustrators who represent the full diversity of the country and the world. This initiative builds upon our nearly 30-year history of promoting diverse books, including the millions of books we distribute annually through our ongoing Stories for All Project™.
- **Elevating Research Capacities.** Our scaling plan envisions a significant elevation of our research arm, First Book Research & Insights, which provides a market research channel that helps shape new product development, education initiatives, and curriculum.
- **Strengthening Technical Infrastructure.** To capably serve the dramatic expansion of the First Book Network, the scaling plan includes substantial investment in the IT infrastructure that will facilitate interactions and boost engagement.

A Snapshot: First Book’s Amazing Partners and Donors

First Book is enormously grateful for the support of donors and partners who share our belief in the transformative power of education. Here we highlight our Give a Million campaign and introduce you to two First Book supporters. Learn more about First Book’s major donors and supporters starting on page 20.



Give a Million

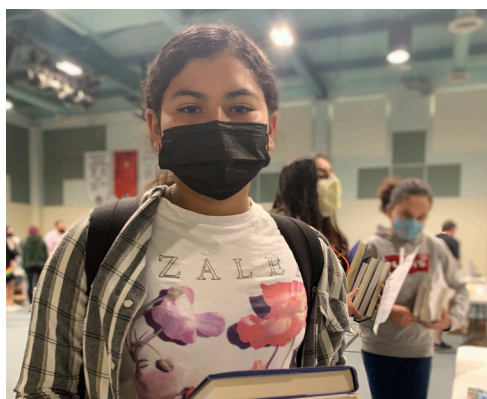
The Give a Million campaign is First Book’s year-end initiative to provide high-quality books to kids in need. In 2021, educators in the First Book Network shared their “book wishes” for the children they serve. The campaign benefitted from matching gifts from five generous donors: Pizza Hut, The Mo and Cher Willems Foundation, Bleacher Report, Baum Family, and Alane Adams, doubling the impact of gifts on specially designated days.



The Mo and Cher Willems Foundation

“Helping to get an age-appropriate book into the hands of a young reader who might not otherwise have access is more impactful than you can imagine.” Mo and Cher Willems

The adventures of Elephant and Piggie. A pigeon who drives a bus. The creative and joyous stories by Mo Willems are loved the world over. Mo and his wife Cher are long-time supporters of First Book: providing matching funds to kick off First Book’s Giving Tuesday AND Give a Million holiday fundraising campaign, and adding their voice and Mo’s art to support our work. Every May, First Book celebrates the Month of Mo: with giveaways, credits for educators to purchase books on the First Book Marketplace, readings, and more. The First Book–Mo and Cher partnership is truly a match made in heaven; they go together like Elephant and Piggie.



Guru Krupa Foundation

Since 2012, the Guru Krupa Foundation has partnered with First Book to provide hundreds of thousands of books and other resources to schools and programs in the greater New York City and Los Angeles areas, as well as in India. And in 2021, the foundation expanded its support with a generous donation through the Give a Million campaign. “It is a high priority goal of the Guru Krupa Foundation to facilitate educational growth of children, as that is the foundation for their success later in life,” said Foundation President Mukund Padmanabhan.

HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

Events

- As part of the 2021 National Day of Service and at the invitation of the Presidential Inaugural Committee, First Book hosted virtual family events featuring children’s book authors Andrea Davis Pinkney and Hena Khan. In addition, volunteers submitted online forms to connect educators with First Book, triggering donations of diverse/inclusive books in low-income communities that were heavily impacted by COVID-19.
- During the year, schools and programs in under-resourced communities were treated to virtual events with actor, comedian, and author Kevin Hart, renowned poet Amanda Gorman, authors Andrea Beatty, Mo Willems, Alane Adams, and so many others. **First Book is profoundly grateful to our publishing partners** for these author events — and for their ongoing support to provide books for First Book to distribute locally. These events have a lasting impact on children’s lives, their perspectives on reading and education, and their dreams for the future. On behalf of every child and educator we serve, thank you.

Milestones

- In October, we noted the 7th anniversary of working with HarperCollins Publishers to create the very first bilingual edition of *Goodnight Moon/Buenas Noches, Luna*, in response to requests from First Book educators.
- Thanks to dd’s DISCOUNTS 13th annual in-store Youth Literacy Fundraiser, First Book and dd’s DISCOUNTS surpassed more than 2 million books distributed to schools, and more than \$5 million raised during the partnership lifetime, supporting children in dd’s communities.

Noteworthy Resources

- First Book and Pizza Hut won the prestigious Engage for Good Gold Halo Award, North America’s highest honor for corporate social initiatives. The award, in the 2021 Education category, recognized the [Empowering Educators](#) initiative.
- During 2021, educators purchased more than 1.1 million Social and Emotional Learning books from the First Book Marketplace, an increase of 23% from the previous year.



Partnerships

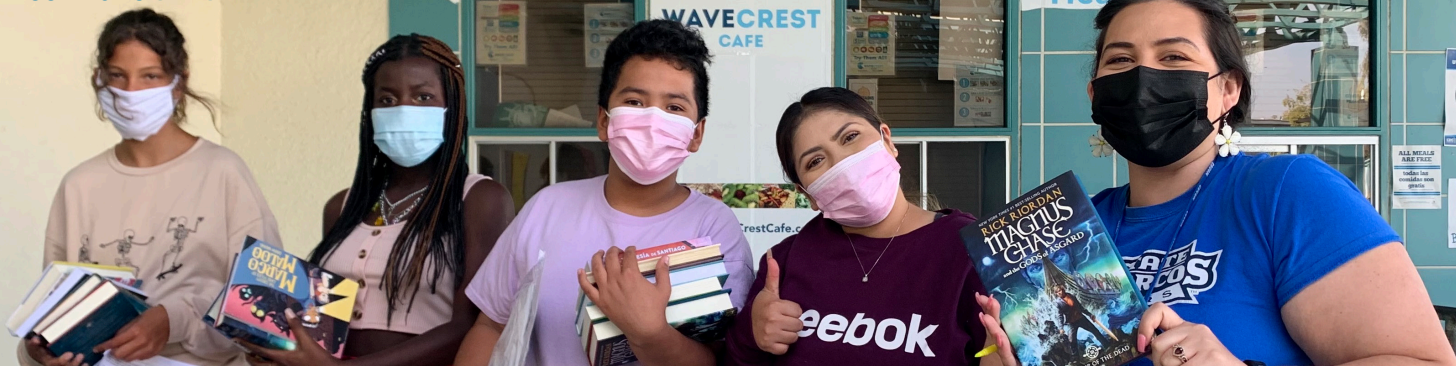
- For the past two years, *The New York Times* (NYT) has selected First Book as a recipient of its Neediest Cases Fund, supported by NYT readers. In addition to readers' generous contributions, the NYT included First Book's work in three articles, highlighting First Book's Stories for All Project™, resources supporting mental health and social-emotional learning, and the Give a Million campaign.
- First Book and General Motors (GM) launched STEM Careers All Year, a series of free virtual events to help educators highlight STEM careers, with a special focus on opportunities for women and people of color. In addition to live readings from a STEM book, a diverse array of GM professionals talked about how their interest in STEM led to their current position. GM also sponsored a collection of [Diversity in STEM](#) books on the First Book Marketplace.
- For the ninth year in a row, Disney and First Book teamed up for the [Magic of Storytelling campaign](#), featuring diverse storytellers and talent from Disney movies, series, and books sharing virtual story times and storytelling tips. The launch included a segment on "The View" and a [Public Service Announcement narrated by Whoopi Goldberg](#). The 2021 campaign resulted in more than 100,000 Disney books being distributed in 37 communities, and nearly 300 new educators, serving more than 90,000 students, registering with First Book.



“For more than two decades, Disney Publishing has been proud to support First Book by providing over 88 million Disney books to instill a lifelong love of reading and inspire imaginations. As we move into the next chapter together, we are heartened by the impact we have made along the way and are dedicated to continue creating opportunity for the next generation of storytellers.”

Tonya Agurto, SVP Publisher, Imprint and IP Development, Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products

LOOKING FORWARD



Our plans for 2022 include:

- **Celebrating Our 30 Years of Impact.** First Book will be celebrating our three decades of success — and the educators, partners, and supporters collaborating with us to advance educational opportunities for millions of children.
- **Launching An Unprecedented Scaling Plan.** First Book will not be satisfied until we reach every child in need. In 2022, we will launch a 5-year scaling plan that will catapult First Book to even greater impact — reaching every Title I school in the country.
- **Building the First Book Community.** First Book is unveiling a series of strategies that are designed to amplify the sense of community among our 525,000 educators. In recent years, the organization laid the groundwork for this critical work, and it is more important now. Teachers and caregivers who are dedicating their lives to children in underserved communities are under more pressure and need more support than ever before.
- **Reaching Out at the Global Level.** First Book has begun a series of planning sessions with education and social sector leaders worldwide to determine how our organization can bring the highest value to educational equity efforts around the world. The First Book global growth strategy will be complete by the end of 2022.
- **Accelerating Continuous Improvement.** As a social enterprise, First Book applies strategies from the private sector to advance our social sector mission. We are laser focused on actively listening to educators and acting on their insights. In 2022 and beyond, First Book is increasing engagement with its network of educators to accelerate our cycle of continuous improvement and increased impact.

INITIATIVES UNDERWAY FOR 2022

- First Book has conducted research to determine what educators need in order to support the **mental health and well-being** of children impacted by the pandemic. In response to educator input, First Book is launching new resources and tools to support social and emotional learning — to directly address the ongoing mental health crisis.
- In response to educator requests, First Book has added a selection of adaptive toys and resources to the First Book Marketplace. In addition to supporting children with disabilities, these [adaptive toys and tools](#) are helpful for social and emotional learning, especially given children's increased anxiety caused by uncertainty from the pandemic and disruptions to routine.
- First Book is working with early childhood/literacy development researcher **Susan B. Neuman** to create and validate a tool that will help First Book educators evaluate where their classroom stands in terms of being literacy rich.

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In 2021, Jane Robinson, First Book's Chief Financial Officer and Chief Strategy Officer, and Tom Best, Executive Director of First Book Canada, retired from their positions. We are forever grateful for their leadership.

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