

# BOOKS FROM BIRTH



## Igniting Literacy for Every Newborn

### WHAT IS BOOKS FROM BIRTH?

Book Harvest's Books from Birth program partners with hospitals to send newborns home with a starter home library of 10 brand new board books. Healthcare providers equip new parents with a Books from Birth box that includes a onesie and additional resources that help families foster early language and reading routines from a baby's first days.

Books from Birth lays the foundation for early relational health and optimal brain development in the first five years -- a precondition for school readiness, academic success, and a healthy childhood that leads to a lifetime of flourishing.



### WHY BOOKS FROM BIRTH MATTERS



- Literacy support from a family's medical team increases active engagement in literacy activities at home, including reading aloud several times every week and reporting that reading together is a favorite shared family activity. [1]
- Books in the home are the single biggest predictor of a child's reading proficiency and long-term success in school [2], and regular reading from birth improves infant language scores by as early as 9 months of age. [3]
- A guiding principle of the American Academy of Pediatrics is that literacy begins at birth in the home, with parents. [4]

### JOINING THE BOOKS FROM BIRTH NETWORK

Hospitals that are eligible to join Book Harvest's Books from Birth network:

- Provide all families with a Books from Birth starter home library, including 10 new board books and additional resources that support early language development and shared reading routines from a baby's first days
- Participate in the program for a minimum of 36 months
- Secure funding for the program, with fundraising and strategic support from Book Harvest
- Designate one staff member to serve as the primary liaison with Book Harvest
- Participate in periodic implementation review meetings, scheduled jointly
- Share regular program data with Book Harvest, with metrics and reporting schedules determined collaboratively
- Integrate Books from Birth into the hospital's electronic medical record (EMR) when feasible

[1] Klass, P., Dreyer, B. P., & Mendelsohn, A. L. (2009). Reach out and read: literacy promotion in pediatric primary care. *Advances in pediatrics*, 56, 11–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yapd.2009.08.009>  
[2] University of Nevada, Reno. (2010). Books in home as important as parents' education in determining children's education level. *ScienceDaily*. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100520213116.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100520213116.htm) ; Jacobs, T. (2018). Home Libraries Confer Long-Term Benefits. *Pacific Standard*. <https://psmag.com/education/home-libraries-confer-long-term-benefits/>  
[3] Franks, A. M., Seaman, C., Franks, E. K., Rollyson, W., & Davies, T. (2022). Parental reading to infants improves language score: a rural family medicine intervention. *The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, 35(6), 1156–1162. <https://doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2022.220064r2>  
[4] American Academy of Pediatrics. (2017). Reading with children starting in infancy gives lasting literacy boost. *AAP News*. <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/13201>

### ABOUT BOOK HARVEST

Book Harvest's mission is to provide books for every child, support for every parent, and literacy for every community. Since 2011, Book Harvest has provided more than 3 million books to families in North Carolina and beyond, ensuring that children grow up with abundant home libraries and parents have the tools and power to ignite and strengthen their children's literacy. With programs that are grounded in evidence, Book Harvest believes that literacy starts at birth, in the home, powered by parents, and nourished with books. For more information, contact Michelle Sioson Hyman, National Director of Books from Birth, at [mhyman@bookharvest.org](mailto:mhyman@bookharvest.org).