

# First Book's Lights On Afterschool Toolkit

## How to use First Book and reading in celebrations

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First Book is proud to partner with Afterschool Alliance's Lights On Afterschool! This toolkit will show you how you can incorporate First Book and reading into your Lights On Afterschool celebrations. We hope these ideas will help get you started!

### About First Book ([www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org))

First Book provides access to new books for children in need. Since 1992, First Book has distributed more than 100 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children throughout the United States and Canada. First Book is transforming the lives of children from low-income families and elevating the quality of education by making new, high-quality books available on an ongoing basis.

First Book has pioneered groundbreaking channels to provide new books for free and at deeply reduced prices to 70,000 schools and programs serving children in need. Through partnerships with leading publishing companies, First Book secures high-quality titles that help educators create enriched learning experiences for their students.



### First Book and Afterschool Programs

Thousands of afterschool programs like yours use First Book to provide critical support for kids, ranging from academic help to providing safe places to learn and grow.

Any afterschool program that is serving children in need can sign up with First Book. The good news is that even if your school or program doesn't qualify for First Book, you can still incorporate First Book into your Lights On Afterschool events (see Lights On Afterschool Event Ideas section on Page 4 of this toolkit).

## How First Book Works

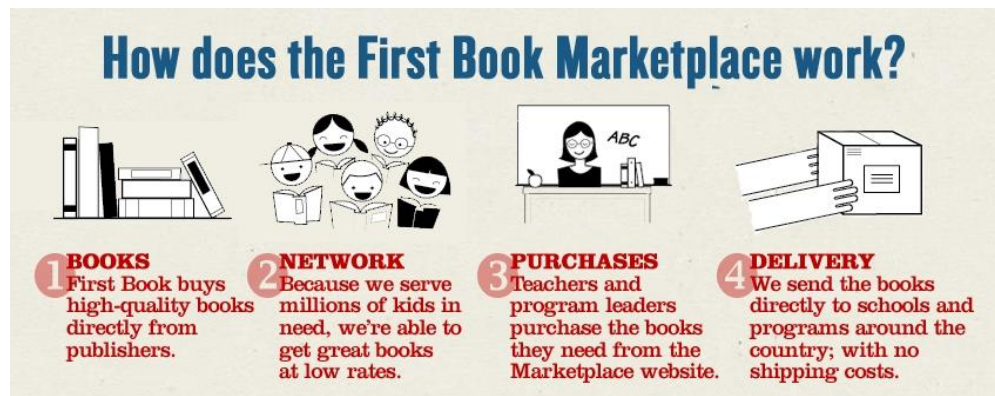
**1. Sign up.** Sign up at [www.firstbook.org/register](http://www.firstbook.org/register). Signing up is free and takes just a few minutes. More than one person at your site can sign up with First Book – it's not limited to one registration per location, so encourage your colleagues to sign up too. And, don't forget to indicate your affiliation with Afterschool Alliance.

**2. Verify eligibility.** During the sign up process, we'll ask you for some basic information, including your contact information and the number, ages and languages spoken by the kids you serve. We'll also ask you to verify that you are a program serving children in need. To be eligible for First Book, your program must be doing **one** of the following:

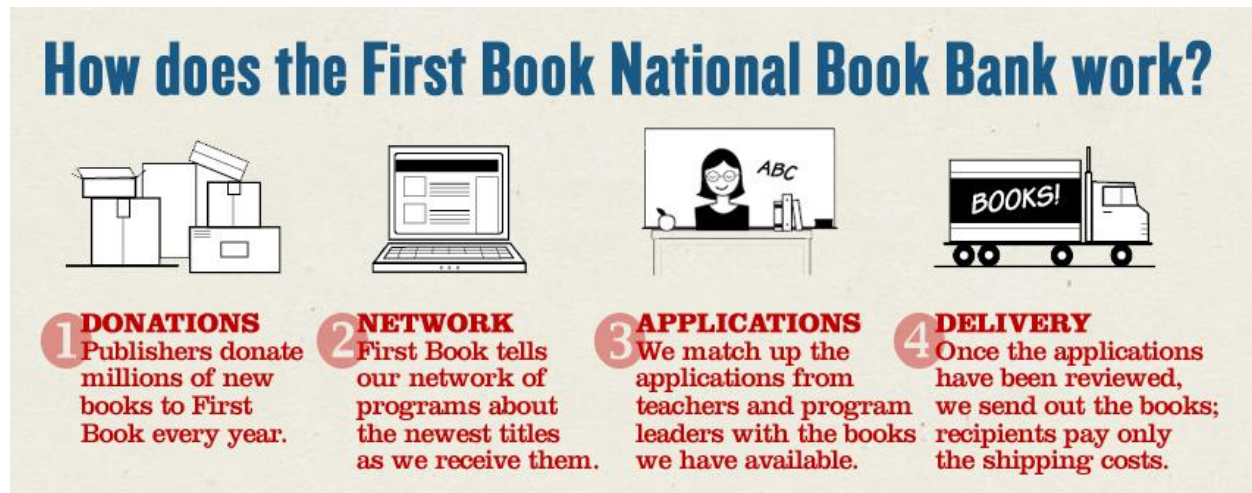
- Operating in a **Title I or Title I eligible school**;
- Serving **at least 70% kids in need** (based on Free and Reduced Meals, Census poverty data, etc.);
- Working primarily with **kids from military families** or **kids with disabilities**.

**3. Connect with First Book's resources:** Once you complete your registration, you'll have immediate, ongoing access to new books and education materials through First Book's resource channels, including the **First Book Marketplace** and the **First Book National Book Bank**.

- **First Book Marketplace, [www.fbmarketplace.org](http://www.fbmarketplace.org):** Online store offering brand new books for kids ages birth to 18 at up to 90% off retail prices (average price = \$2.50/book, including shipping). More than 4,500+ titles available.



- **First Book National Book Bank**, [www.fbbookbank.org](http://www.fbbookbank.org): National clearinghouse of new books donated from publishers. Sites registered with First Book will receive emails when books are available through the FBNBB, and you can go online and apply for titles you want to receive. Books through the FBNBB are free and available for an average of just \$0.45/book shipping and handling to locations across the United States.



## Funding Books: Virtual Book Drives

First Book has a great online fundraising tool to engage your community in helping to provide books for your afterschool program or another program serving kids in need. [Virtual Book Drives](#) are online fundraisers hosted by First Book that you can customize to raise money to purchase books from First Book. All funds raised—100 percent—go to a First Book registered program of your choice to purchase great, brand-new books from the First Book Marketplace. **A donation of \$10 equals about four books from the First Book Marketplace.**

If your program qualifies for First Book, your Virtual Book Drive can be set up to benefit your organization. If you do not qualify for First Book, you can set up a Virtual Book Drive to raise funds for programs in need in your community to purchase books.

Virtual Book Drives are great ways to engage your community in bringing more books to your area. Reach out to local business, civic organizations (e.g. Kiwanis, Junior League), individuals or other community partners to support your Virtual Book Drive.

To get started, click [here](#), or you can contact First Book's Help Team for more information (see Page 6 for contact information).

# Lights On Afterschool Event Ideas



Lights On Afterschool is a great way to showcase the importance of afterschool time in helping kids improve their reading skills and helping them discover that reading can be fun! Here are some ideas on incorporating books and reading into your Lights On Afterschool events.

Any program can use these opportunities to celebrate Lights On Afterschool, as long as the books are distributed to programs that are serving kids in need.

**For programs ineligible for First Book**, you can designate programs in need to receive the books, and your program would be responsible for bringing thousands of books into your community to celebrate Lights On Afterschool.

For more details, contact Shannon Burke-Kranzberg at First Book ([sburkekranzberg@firstbook.org](mailto:sburkekranzberg@firstbook.org)).

## EVENT IDEA: Host a Family Literacy Celebration

Afterschool programs are key in engaging parents and families, and books are a great way to encourage parent-child interaction. Invite the caring adults in your kids' lives to attend a family literacy celebration for Lights On Afterschool. Talk about the importance of literacy and kids and adults reading together. Some ideas for fun activities during the celebration:

- Have kids prepare performances or art based on their favorite books to present
- Encourage kids and parents to dress up as their favorite book characters
- Set up different stations with books and associated activities or questions for parents and children to work through together

At the end of the event, send every child home with a book to add to his or her home library, and tips for parents reading with kids. If your program serves children in need, you can [sign up with First Book](#) and get access to books from the First Book Marketplace at up to 90 percent off retail prices. Tips in English, Spanish and other languages are available from First Book's partners at Reading Rockets [here](#).

## EVENT IDEA: Throw a Reading Party

Show the kids in your afterschool program that reading is fun with a Reading Party! Select a book to provide to the kids you serve and invite community members and local media for an afternoon of reading that the students will never forget. These celebratory events are lots of fun and offer great volunteer and media opportunities.



Simple steps for hosting a Reading Party include:

- Identify a location or locations for the event.
- Invite volunteers and special guests, including media.
- Arrange for each child to receive one (or more) book(s) along with snacks and other treats.
- Invite guest readers—principals, the mayor, local elected officials, television personalities, local children’s authors, and other celebrity guests. Don’t forget to think about local firemen, policemen, or other “celebrities” that might wow the kids!
- For the Reading Party, divide the students into a number of small “reading circles” centered around one celebrity reader.
- If you’re serving kids in need, [sign up with First Book](#) and order your books from the [First Book Marketplace](#).

If you operate multiple afterschool sites, imagine hosting a reading party at each site to unify your Lights On Afterschool efforts around a single theme – reading! And, don’t forget about fun themes for a Reading Party, such as sports, science or animals – whatever will get your kids excited about reading!

### **EVENT IDEA: Bring Thousands of Books to Your Community**

Now through the end of the year, you can get a giant mixed box of new books—about 1,700 books—for just \$600 from the [First Book Marketplace](#). That’s \$0.35 per book! The titles vary, but the books range in age from birth to 18. Looking for more books? You can get an [entire truck of new books](#)—about 40,000 books—shipped directly to your program from the First Book Marketplace for \$13,500.

Get your local media engaged! Thousands of books arriving at your program provide a great visual element to showcase your Lights On Afterschool celebration. You can also engage volunteers and other community partners by inviting them to lend a hand to help provide books to children in need in your area.

**Looking for a service-learning opportunity?** This is a great project to show the importance of helping others, and your kids can sort and organize the books, or even deliver them to programs in need.

### **EVENT IDEA: Host a Read-a-Thon**

Encourage the kids you serve to read while helping support schools and programs in need in your community. A Lights On Afterschool Read-a-Thon means that the kids in your afterschool program would secure monetary pledges for each page they read for the Read-a-Thon. Then, the funds raised from the Read-a-Thon can be used to purchase books from First Book – for your program if you’re serving kids in need, or for another school or program in need if your program doesn’t qualify. Some steps for hosting a Read-a-Thon include:

- Set up a [Virtual Book Drive](#) with First Book, and set a fundraising goal. A \$10 donation equals about **four books** from the First Book Marketplace.
- Introduce the Read-a-Thon to the kids you serve and their parents/guardians. Make sure to create a pledge form and a letter outlining the project.
- Create incentives for kids to read more. Think about asking local stores or restaurants to donate gift cards, or use books as rewards for reading more.

- Collect funds. When you receive funds, you can deposit them to your Virtual Book Drive so that when your program or the beneficiary program is ready to get books, the funds can easily be added to their First Book account(s).
- Thank the people who pledge or donate funds. Your kids can create handmade cards and letters thanking them for their support.
- Celebrate your accomplishments! Your readers could be reading throughout October, leading up to Lights On Afterschool, and you could organize a celebration to announce the results and recognize your readers on October 17. Or, you could use Lights On Afterschool to kick-off a Read-a-Thon for the remainder of 2013.

## Other Ways Afterschool Programs Can Use First Book

When it comes to how afterschool programs can use First Book, the possibilities are endless. Here are some other ideas on how you can incorporate First Book into your programming for Lights On Afterschool and beyond.

- Invite local authors to reading parties and book signings.
- Have student mentors read and give books to younger kids.
- Use a theme – create a healthy-living reading nook or host Spanish reading parties.
- Start a book-a-month club in your afterschool program. Have kids vote on the books they want to read for each month, or tie in other activities with a theme.
- Have students take an anti-bullying pledge in exchange for an anti-bullying book to keep.
- Feature the books of a particular author or illustrator and encourage students to write stories and draw pictures in that style.
- Pair books with career exploration or job shadowing. For example, read a book about engineering and invite a local engineer to visit your program and talk about what his or her job is like and how they chose that career path.
- Encourage creative expression through books. Have students read a book, then write, draw, journal or act out their reactions and feelings.

## Additional Resources

First Book has more than 4,500 books available on the [First Book Marketplace](#). Here's a quick guide with links to types of books on the First Book Marketplace that might be helpful for you.

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| • <a href="#">STEM</a>           | • <a href="#">Plays</a>                |
| • <a href="#">Anti-bullying</a>  | • <a href="#">College readiness</a>    |
| • <a href="#">Healthy living</a> | • <a href="#">Games and activities</a> |
| • <a href="#">Music and arts</a> | • <a href="#">Reluctant Readers</a>    |

## For More Information

If you have any questions on eligibility or completing your registration, contact the First Book Help Team at 1-866-READ-NOW Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST or [help@firstbook.org](mailto:help@firstbook.org).

For additional assistance on how your program can connect with First Book for Lights On Afterschool, contact Shannon Burke-Kranzberg at [sburkekranzberg@firstbook.org](mailto:sburkekranzberg@firstbook.org) or (202) 470-4260.