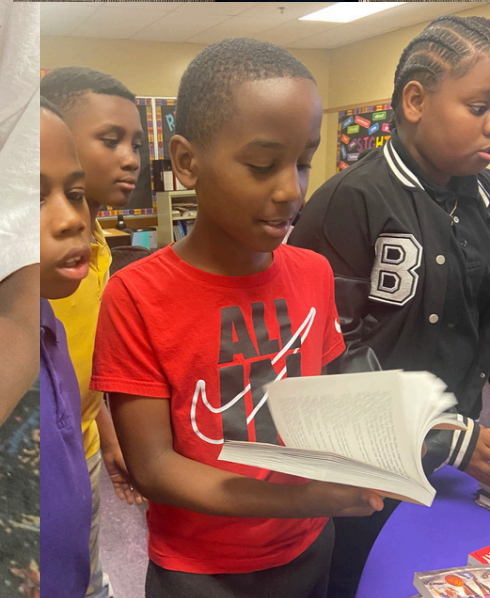
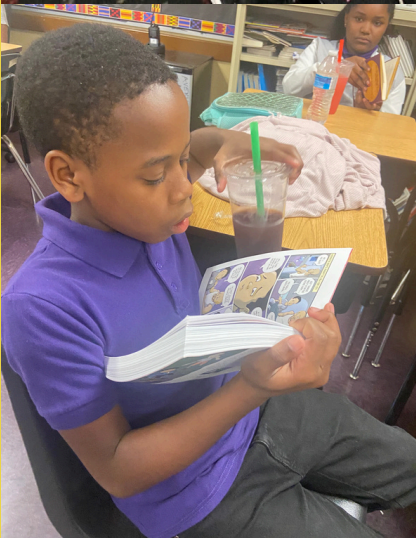
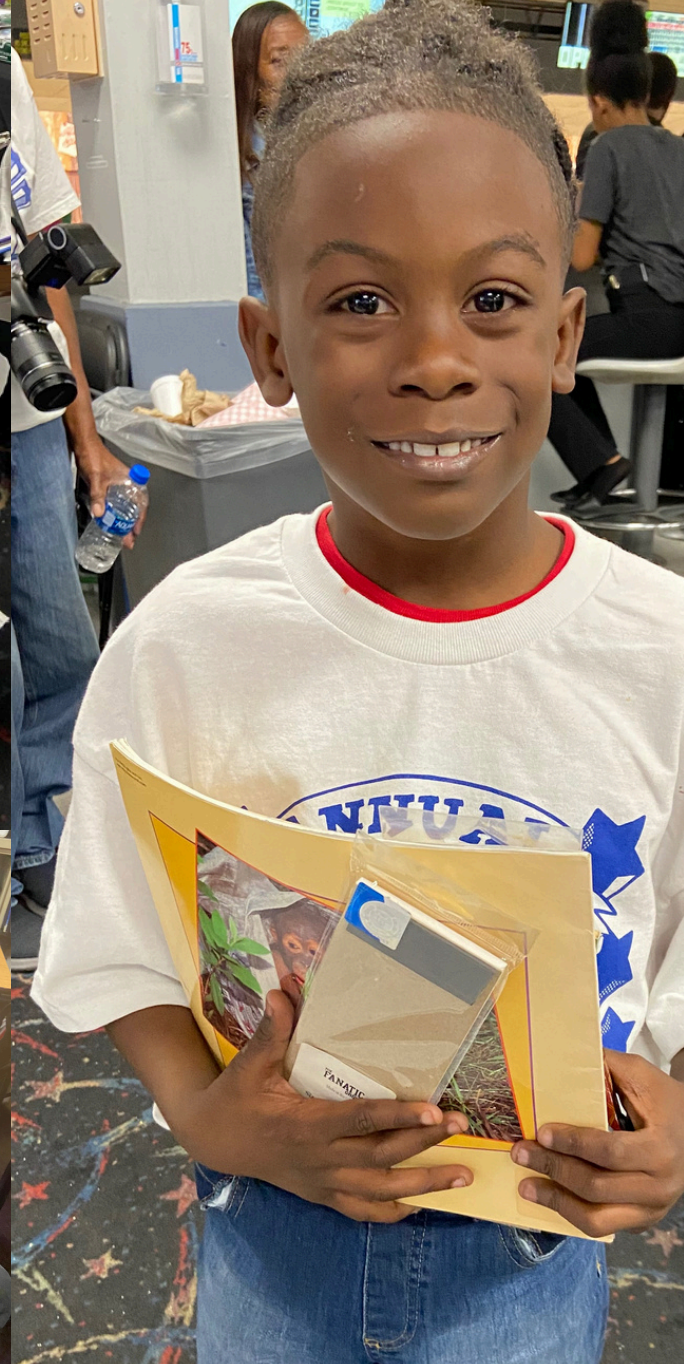



Rooted Readers





Rooted Readers is more than a book distribution program—it's a lifeline for underserved communities in Memphis. Through this initiative, we provide culturally relevant, diverse books that reflect the lived experiences of minority children, ensuring that they see themselves, their heritage, and their potential in the stories they read. Rooted Readers addresses the glaring lack of representation in children's literature, which can profoundly impact self-esteem, identity, and academic success. Each month, Rooted Readers distributes 200 books through partnerships like Sweet Cheeks Diaper Ministry, serving families starting literacy journeys at birth. We also reach 1,000 children annually during our Back-to-School drive and provide books to meet emergency and community requests. To date, we have distributed more than 6,000 books across Shelby County. These books are carefully chosen to engage young readers while fostering a love for literacy, celebrating diversity, and promoting critical thinking.

Why It's Important

In Memphis, where many families face systemic barriers such as poverty, underfunded schools, and limited access to resources, books often become a luxury rather than a necessity. Studies show that books at home improve literacy skills, academic performance, and future earning potential. Access to these books can mean the difference between a future of opportunity and one of continued struggle for the children we serve. Rooted Readers plants seeds of possibility, showing children they can be authors of their stories.

The Urgent Need for \$27,000

This funding will allow us to distribute more than 5,000 books annually, impacting thousands of lives across Memphis. Each book is a tool for empowerment, and every distribution is a step toward closing the literacy gap. With your support, we can ensure that no child in our community is left without access to the transformative power of books.

How This Funding Will Be Life-Changing

- **Representation Matters:** Our books are intentionally selected to reflect the diverse voices of Black and Brown authors. Seeing themselves in these stories helps children build confidence and pride in their identities.
- **Breaking Cycles of Poverty:** Literacy is a key factor in breaking intergenerational poverty. By equipping children with books, we set them on a path toward higher academic achievement and long-term success.
- **Building Stronger Communities:** When children read, families and communities thrive. Parents often engage in reading alongside their kids, creating a ripple effect that fosters a culture of literacy in underserved neighborhoods.

The Rooted Readers program is a beacon of hope in our community. Your investment in this initiative would help us sustain and expand our mission, making a lasting impact on children who deserve every chance to dream, learn, and succeed.



DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

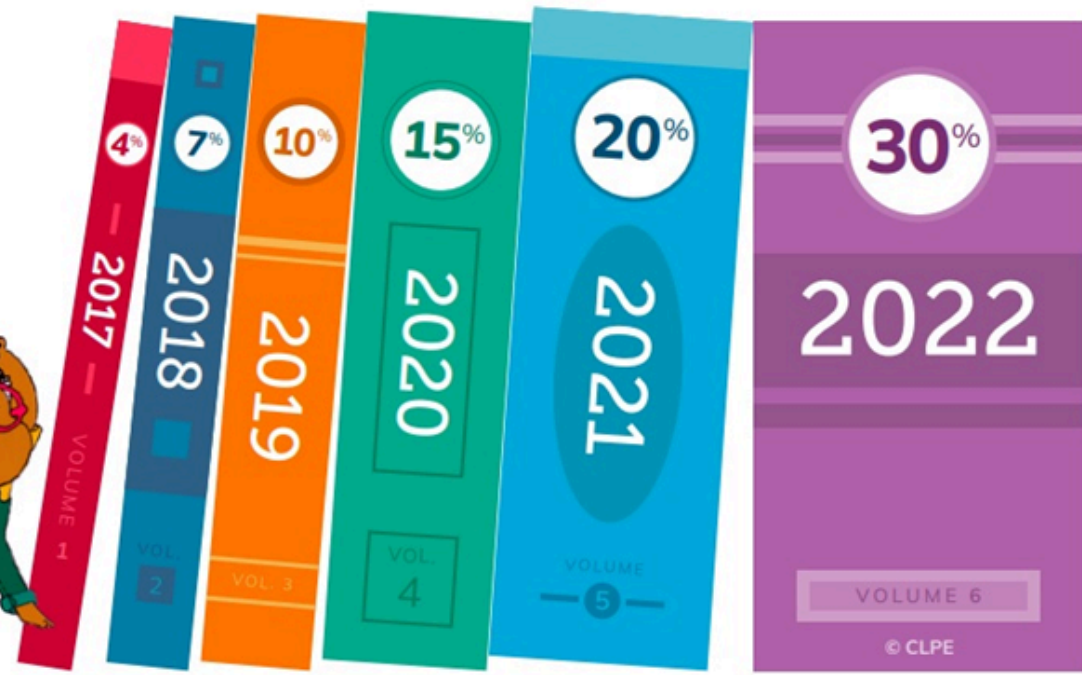
Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp



Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen
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The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Haring, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

Percentage of Children's Books Published featuring Racially Minoritised Characters



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