

FAMILY MEDIA/BOOKS

Where to Get Real Books for Kids Around Seattle This Fall

Affordable book solutions for budding bookworms

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER) |

PUBLISHED ON: SEPTEMBER 03, 2020



Students who have [more books in their homes](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/) (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>) perform better academically, and even before the pandemic, books were boredom busters for many kids. But getting your kids' hands on books isn't as simple as it used to be – unless you're very liberal with Amazon 1-click – which could get dangerously expensive. Fortunately, there are still books to be had if you know where to look, so

your kid won't be doomed to reread that tattered copy of "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" forever.

Advertisement

Public libraries

Families rely so heavily on the public libraries for a steady stream of picture books, programming (and air conditioning) that surviving the summer without them ranks among the more significant hardships of the pandemic. Libraries can't reopen until Phase 3 of Gov. Jay Inslee's reopening plan, which might still be a long way off. Local library systems have done a great job of beefing up their digital services (see below) but if your kid's really itching to get their hands on a physical copy of the latest book in their favorite series, the good news is that we're getting closer.

Although its library buildings are still closed to the public, [Seattle Public Library](https://www.spl.org/hours-and-locations/road-to-reopening) (<https://www.spl.org/hours-and-locations/road-to-reopening>) has started accepting returns at 12 of its locations and seven locations are processing both new holds and all holds for physical books that were placed before the pandemic. SPL is also offering "Grab and Go" bags containing uncatalogued paperback and board books (books that don't need to be checked out) for those without library cards.

King County Library System users can return books and place new holds on books for pickup at most branches during [limited hours](https://kcls.org/curbside/) (<https://kcls.org/curbside/>). [Pierce County Library branches](https://www.piercecountylibrary.org/services/library-reimagined/library-curbside.htm) (<https://www.piercecountylibrary.org/services/library-reimagined/library-curbside.htm>) are now accepting new holds and are open for curbside pickups. [Everett Public Library](https://epls.org/) (<https://epls.org/>) is also accepting new holds and offering contactless curbside pickup at its main library and Evergreen Branch.

Don't know what to read without scanning the shelves? [King County](https://kcls.org/faqs/how-do-i-get-a-surprise-bag-of-book-titles/) (<https://kcls.org/faqs/how-do-i-get-a-surprise-bag-of-book-titles/>) and [Pierce County](https://piercecouny.libnet.info/v/assets/186) (<https://piercecouny.libnet.info/v/assets/186>) libraries offer a grab-bag service of surprise books. For personalized reading recommendations, try SPL's [Your Next Five Books](https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/authors-and-books/your-next-5-books) (<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/authors-and-books/your-next-5-books>), fill out [My Next Read](https://forms.pcls.us/mynextread/) (<https://forms.pcls.us/mynextread/>) in Pierce County, or submit [this form](https://www.epls.org/FormCenter/Ask-6/Personal-Picks-59) (<https://www.epls.org/FormCenter/Ask-6/Personal-Picks-59>) to tell Everett librarians what your kids like. KCLS offers [reading lists](https://kcls.org/k-12/) (<https://kcls.org/k-12/>) for kids and teens.

Advertisement

In all systems, returned books are quarantined for at least three days before returning to circulation; due dates have been extended and/or late fees waived. Mask-wearing and social-distancing practices are required, and most curbside pickups are available by appointment or walk-up.

School libraries

“Libraries are about connections and getting people resources they need,” says Darcy Brixey, who is the manager of library services and instructional materials for Seattle Public Schools. Since the pandemic started, SPS librarians have arranged things from online author visits to Zoom-based baking clubs and pet parades – and to leverage the school meal program to distribute 30,000 donated books to local kids.

At the start of the new school year, the most pressing issue for librarians is ensuring that kids have access to the technology and instructional materials they need for their classes. But some school librarians are still finding ways to get books into students’ hands. Some of the creative solutions that school librarians around the region have tried include timed access to the library; [online holds \(https://www.destinydiscover.com/\)](https://www.destinydiscover.com/) for curbside pickup; a box of free books left outside the school building; and even an ad hoc bicycle bookmobile. Look up your school library’s homepage; read your school’s newsletter; and check social media accounts for updates on what your school library will offer this fall. And if you can’t find answers on your own, “Ask your school librarian!” says Brixey.

Little Free Libraries

If your kids have already hunted all the bears in your neighborhood, try replacing your bear hunt with a book hunt. The contents of Little Free Libraries can be hit and miss. But among the outdated self-help books and worn beach reads, you can often find popular and classic kids’ books. Even if your neighborhood doesn’t have a [Little Free Library \(https://littlefreelibrary.org/\)](https://littlefreelibrary.org/), a lot of people have been using the past months at home to declutter. And that means parking strips all over Puget Sound are littered with boxes marked “Free” that often contain great books. If you’re nervous about handling other people’s stuff, bring gloves or hand sanitizer for the search. Place any found books in a tote bag and store it on the porch for its own quarantine before bringing your quarry inside.

Digital platforms

Physical books are well and good but sometimes kids just want the story. Thanks to partnerships with schools, students outside of Seattle can access King County Library’s e-books and audiobooks. [Library Link \(https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/learning/student-success/library-link\)](https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/learning/student-success/library-link) offers Seattle Public Schools students access to e-books, graphic novels and animated picture books. Use your child’s student ID number to access these services.

Advertisement

Seattle Public Schools’ own [online resources \(https://www.seattleschools.org/student_portal/online_student_resources\)](https://www.seattleschools.org/student_portal/online_student_resources) include access to platforms like eLibrary and K–8 NoveList as well as electronic textbooks (https://www.seattleschools.org/student_portal/online_student_resources/online_textbooks). Parents can sign up for a 30-day free trial of [epic! \(https://www.getepic.com/books\)](https://www.getepic.com/books) but many schools have already provided students with account access to this platform housing more than 40,000 picture books, early readers, chapter books, nonfiction books and graphic novels.

Speaking of graphic novels, don't forget resources like [Webtoons](https://www.webtoons.com/en/) (free) and [ComiXology](https://www.comixology.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw-O35BRDVARIsAJU5mQWf7TTlqydBU2c0IMjrXFEdlmulBGCLzxlFovRa9yF7CiVsJZMNP18aAjXYEALw_wcB) (subscription-based service). You'll want to supervise kids' use to make sure they're only accessing age-appropriate materials. Especially now, when even adults are struggling to finish a book, comics might be just the thing to pull your kids out of a reading slump.

Virtual story times

Getting out of the house used to be half the appeal of story times at the library. But for now, your little one can still enjoy the other half of the appeal on the [SPL YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/SeattlePublicLibrary), [Pierce County Library's YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5t-CPKK3oiE2mAcv7mKG4g) and the [KCLS YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_GUGo1hdfkzQd9j3cXSEAw). Many school librarians are posting read-alouds, too.

One last digital resource is too big to ignore – the [Internet Archive](https://archive.org/) digitally preserves more than 1.4 million books and documents in its free Open Library. But reasonable people could [disagree](https://www.vox.com/2020/6/23/21293875/internet-archive-website-lawsuit-open-library-wayback-machine-controversy-copyright) over whether all of its loans conform entirely to copyright law. If you are concerned about ensuring that authors are fairly compensated, use the archive with caution.

STAY CONNECTED!

Get the best of ParentMap delivered right to your inbox.

SUBMIT

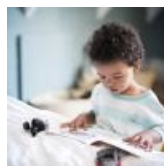
READ NEXT



[\(/article/5-ways-bring-rules-back-](/article/5-ways-bring-rules-back-after-summer)

after-summer)

5 Ways to Bring Rules Back After Summer (</article/5-ways-bring-rules-back-after-summer>)



[\(/article/books-reading-culture-](/article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips)

kids-tips)

6 Tips for Creating a Reading Culture in Your Home (</article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips>)



[\(/article/benefits-of-reading-](/article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids)

aloud-to-big-kids)

10 Reasons You Should Read Aloud to Big Kids, Too (</article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids>)

RELATED TOPICS

[READING \(/TAXONOMY/TERM/435\)](#)

Share this article with your friends!



(/#facebook)int(#st)ill)https://www.addtoany.com

/share#url=https%3A%2F

About the Author



BY GEMMA ALEXANDER (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER)

Seattle-based freelance writer Gemma Alexander focuses on the intersection of parenting and the arts. When she's not writing for "ParentMap," she blogs at gemmadeealexander.com (<https://gemmadeealexander.com/>) and tweets at [@gemmadeetweet](https://twitter.com/gemmadeetweet).

around-
seattle-
fall&

[Ethical Education in Action \(/article/giddens-school-ethical-education-action\)](#)

[Considering the Future of Education \(/article/considering-future-education-coronavirus-pandemic\)](#)

OTHER ARTICLES BY THIS AUTHOR > (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER)

title=Where%20o%20e%20Real%20o%20k%20o%20r%20k%20s%20A%20r%20u%20n%20d%20S%20e%20a%20t%20l%20e%20%20This%20F%20a%20l%20l

Leave a Comment

HIDE COMMENTS



Latest + Greatest

1 Stay Safe During Seattle's Smoke Storm (/article/seattle-wildfire-safety-children-play)



[\(/article/seattle-wildfire-safety-children-play\)](#)

2 [Disney's New Live-Action 'Mulan' — Is It Worth the Price? \(/article/disneys-new-live-action-mulan-worth-30-dollars\)](/article/disneys-new-live-action-mulan-worth-30-dollars)



(/article/disneys-new-live-action-mulan-worth-30-dollars)

3 [How to Grow a Fall Veggie Patch With Your Kids \(/article/how-grow-fall-veggie-patch-your-kids\)](/article/how-grow-fall-veggie-patch-your-kids)



(/article/how-grow-fall-veggie-patch-your-kids)

4 [How to Get Your 'Every Kid Outdoors' National Parks Pass \(/article/every-kid-outdoors-national-parks-pass-families\)](/article/every-kid-outdoors-national-parks-pass-families)



(/article/every-kid-outdoors-national-parks-pass-families)

5 [11 Clever Ways to Save on Groceries \(/article/clever-ways-save-groceries-reduce-food-waste\)](/article/clever-ways-save-groceries-reduce-food-waste)



(/article/clever-ways-save-groceries-reduce-food-waste)

Family Fun

SEP 8 [DIY Walk'n Wag on a Lake Sammamish State Park Course \(/calendar/diy-walkn-wag-lake-sammamish-state-park-course\)](/calendar/diy-walkn-wag-lake-sammamish-state-park-course)

SEP 8 [Crossing the Species Barrier: A Closer Look at the Distant... \(/calendar/crossing-species-barrier-closer-look-distant-relatives-sars-cov-2-livestream-pacsci\)](/calendar/crossing-species-barrier-closer-look-distant-relatives-sars-cov-2-livestream-pacsci)

SEP 9 [Salmon SEEson at Issaquah Creek \(/calendar/salmon-seeson-issaquah-creek\)](/calendar/salmon-seeson-issaquah-creek)

SEP 9 [Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Now Open \(/calendar/point-defiance-zoo-aquarium-now-open\)](/calendar/point-defiance-zoo-aquarium-now-open)

SEP 9 [Northwest Trek Now Open \(/calendar/northwest-trek-now-open\)](/calendar/northwest-trek-now-open)

[VIEW FULL CALENDAR ▶](#)

You Might Also Like



[\(/article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips\)](/article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips)

BOOKS (/TAXONOMY/TERM/495)

6 Tips for Creating a Reading Culture in Your Home
[\(/article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips\)](/article/books-reading-culture-kids-tips)



[\(/article/best-social-justice-movies-kids\)](/article/best-social-justice-movies-kids)

MOVIES (/TAXONOMY/TERM/383)

15 Movies That Help Kids Do the Right Thing
[\(/article/best-social-justice-movies-kids\)](/article/best-social-justice-movies-kids)



[\(/article/5-smart-screen-time-rules-families\)](/article/5-smart-screen-time-rules-families)

SCREEN TIME (/TAXONOMY/TERM/393)

5 Smart Screen-Time Rules for Families
[\(/article/5-smart-screen-time-rules-families\)](/article/5-smart-screen-time-rules-families)



[\(/article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids\)](/article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids)

BOOKS (/TAXONOMY/TERM/495)

10 Reasons You Should Read Aloud to Big Kids, Too
[\(/article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids\)](/article/benefits-of-reading-aloud-to-big-kids)





GET THE BEST OF PARENTMAP IN YOUR INBOX

CHOOSE YOUR REGION

- Seattle Area
- Eastside
- South Sound
- North Sound
- National

Enter your email address here



Get our monthly magazine delivered to your home!

WE DELIVER ▶

[ABOUT US \(/ABOUT-US\)](/ABOUT-US)

[PUBLICATIONS \(/PUBLICATIONS\)](/PUBLICATIONS)

[ADVERTISE \(/ADVERTISE\)](/ADVERTISE)

[CONTACT US \(/CONTACT-PARENTMAP\)](/CONTACT-PARENTMAP)

[BOOKS \(/PARENTMAP-BOOKS\)](/PARENTMAP-BOOKS)

[JOBS \(/JOB-OPENINGS\)](/JOB-OPENINGS)

[SUBMISSIONS \(/SUBMISSIONS\)](/SUBMISSIONS)

[DISTRIBUTION \(/DISTRIBUTION\)](/DISTRIBUTION)

[PRESS \(/PRESS\)](/PRESS)

[CALENDAR \(/CALENDAR\)](/CALENDAR)

[OUR EVENTS \(/PARENTMAP-EVENTS\)](/PARENTMAP-EVENTS)

[MAGAZINE \(/PUBLICATIONS\)](/PUBLICATIONS)