

If you are looking to build out the children's books in your home collection, here are a few budget-friendly options to keep bedtime stories from turning into nightmares for your budget.

**Discounts and Remainders:** Independent bookstores sometimes overestimate the number of copies of a book they might need for their shelves or a special event. Occasionally, book orders are minimally damaged in transit. Check with your local bookstore to see if they offer a "discounts" or "remainder" shelf where those books are on sale. Look for a small dot or line along the edge of the pages, the typical remainder/discount mark. This is a great way to save a bundle on a brand-new book!

**Big Box Stores:** Retailers working in massive quantities will sometimes pass along their bulk discount to the buyer. If you are a member, check Costco, BJ's or Sam's Club to see if their prices and selection suit your needs. This can be a good chance to buy a box set of that series your reader adores, often at a nicely discounted price.

**Resellers:** Publishers make educated guesses when they order books to be printed, but those estimates can be off. Some publishers turn to resellers to help move excess inventory, often at a steeply discounted price. Check online for sites like [KidsBooks.com](https://www.kidsbooks.com) for an eclectic mix of books at up to 90% off retail.

**Library Book Sales:** Many public library systems count on book sales to help generate revenue. By sorting and selling books pulled from its collection and received from community donations, the Arlington Public Library (Va.), for example, raises upwards of \$150,000 a year for programs like summer reading and visiting authors.

At those semi-annual sales, children's books begin at 50 cents and may go up to a few dollars for a like-new hardback, you can leave with a grocery bag full of picks for about the same price as one brand-new book. Check *your* local library to see if they offer book sales.

**Thrift Stores:** Many thrift stores sell children's books, and some even list their offerings online like the various Goodwill branches that sell as third parties on Amazon. Expect these books to be thoroughly loved but well-priced.

**Little Free Libraries:** The take-one-leave-one philosophy of Little Free Libraries invites you to refresh your home collection while offering a high-interest title in exchange.

**Literacy Organizations:** Many nonprofit organizations exist to promote literacy to young readers, and some of those offer free books to members by mail or online. Check [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) to see if you qualify for their book gifting program, or find an organization that aligns with your family's culture, religion or value system, such as the [PJ Library](#), to see what resources they might offer.

[Unite for Literacy](#) specializes in serving readers of different native languages and offers free narrated children's books in more than 40 languages to help families celebrate their culture and language.

**Stage a Swap:** Ask your PTA to stage a swap with similar readers. Clear a few picnic tables or a driveway and display the covers of the books for browsing. To keep it an even exchange, go home with a new-to-you pick for each book you contributed to the swap.

**Libraries:** Finally, think again about your local library and keep in mind that library cards are free and an almost limitless source of free children's books for your readers! Children can often receive library cards in their own name, which is wonderfully empowering, and libraries offer a low-risk opportunity for youth to feel some ownership and engagement in their book selection.

These cultural institutions also offer a wealth of online resources often including music, movies, digital books, audiobooks and more. If a selection is not the hit you had hoped for, just return it early and check out something different. You will never suffer buyer's remorse!