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So you've written a children's book, what's next??

Over the years, many people have approached me because they've either written or are trying to write a children's book, and they wonder how to publish and market said book. Instead of relaying the same information over and over again, I decided to make a short document with excellent resources to point you in the right direction!

- Is it possible to publish a children's book even if you're not a professional author?
YES!
- Is it tons of work?
YES! Even for professional authors, the world of publishing is slow, frustrating, full of rejection, and not always lucrative.



But, if you feel strongly about your book, I encourage you to continue.

Case #1: Your book is a "one off." Meaning, you had this amazing idea for a book, and are willing to work to get it into the hands of people. But you don't plan on writing more books and are not interested in pursuing this as a vocation.

If you answered yes, then your best route is self-publishing. I can't give you many resources on this one, because I've never self-published. But I do know others who have done well with it. Do a Google search and look for companies that can help you self-publish, but be wary of "vanity" publishers who just want to take all your money! Make sure the fees are reasonable (and yes, you

will have to pay to get it printed and published). Then, you are on your own for marketing. I know that some of my colleagues have used Amazon to self-publish so this may be a viable option.

Also, Kidlit 411 is an awesome Facebook group of writers, you can join and ask them questions about self-publishing:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1444222312460054>

PRO TIP: Even if your book is amazing, I would definitely hire a professional editor to look it over and edit the text. It will bring your manuscript to the next level.

Case #2: You had this amazing idea for a book, and are willing to work to get it into the hands of children. But you DO plan on writing more books and may pursue writing as a vocation. (Keep in mind: you can still write books AND keep your day job, that still makes you a professional author.)



In such a case, you have TWO options:

1- Submit the book to publishers who accept unsolicited manuscripts (meaning you don't have an agent who represents you).

2- Get an agent who will represent your body of work.

Okay, let's talk about submitting the book directly to publishers on your own. You'll need to do a TON of research. Here are some lists of publishers who accept unsolicited manuscripts, check out what they publish and see if they could be a good fit. Some may be for kidlit (children's literature) or other genres/ages.

<https://nancyisanders.wordpress.com/2015/09/30/good-news-for-childrens-writers/>

<http://frolickingthroughcyberspace.blogspot.com/p/monster-list-of-childrens-book.html>

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2014/05/17-us-childrens-book-publishers.html?m=1>

<https://picturebookplanet.com/publishers/>

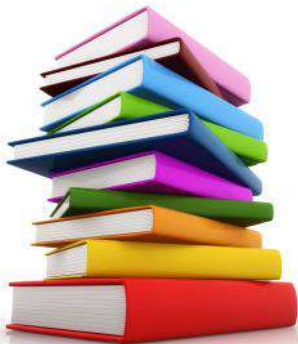
<https://childrens-publishers.com/large-trade-publishers-childrens-books.htm>

<https://authorspublish.com/30-childrens-book-publishers-seeking-picture-books/>

<https://authorspublish.com/48-traditional-publishers-seeking-childrens-books/>

<https://bitsykemper.wordpress.com/2022/06/29/over-50-publishers-accepting-unsolicited-picture-book-manuscripts/>

PRO TIP: Do NOT send your book to all of them, you'll waste not only their time but also yours. **Only** send to publishers who may be interested in your book. Go to their websites and research what they publish.



PRO TIP #2: If a publishing house offers you a contract and you don't have a literary agent, hire a publishing lawyer to look over the contract to make sure you're not signing away all your rights. That DOES happen.

PRO TIP #3: To land a contract, you'll not only have to send in the manuscript itself, but also a query letter. Trust me when I say: the query letter can make or break you. It's the first thing an editor will look at. Make sure it's professional! Keep it under

350 words, and put your best foot forward. It's also important to include COMPS, these are recent published titles that are similar to yours. Lastly, you should always personalise your query. Tell that specific publisher WHY you chose them, it shows you've done your homework.

Here are some great resources about writing an excellent query letter:

<https://www.writingforchildrenandteens.com/submissions/anatomy-of-a-query-letter/>

<https://subitclub.com/2017/04/13/how-to-write-a-query-letter-a-basic-breakdown/>

<https://www.writingpicturebooksforchildren.com/cover-letters.html>

<https://findmeediting.home.blog/2019/01/18/10-query-donts/>

<https://subitclub.com/category/query-letters-that-worked-2/>

PRO TIP #4: Editors are overworked, so please be patient. It will take months for them to review your work and send you a response, and often, you'll get no response at all. Yes, it's frustrating, but they receive hundreds of books each month so be patient. And if you're lucky enough to land a contract, you'll spend months editing. Plus, the process of publishing the actual book will take between 1-3 years. Yes, YEARS. Self-publishing is much faster in comparison.

Now let's talk about the second possibility, where you find an agent to represent you.

- **The pro?** They can sell your book to the biggest publishing houses and negotiate better deals.
- **The con?** They take a cut, usually around 15% (but trust me, it's well worth it)

The BIG thing to consider is...if you're looking to land an agent, you'll need to have **at least** 3 polished books. Most agents will not rep you just for one book, unless it has the potential to be a bestseller. Either way, seeking an agent means you're pretty serious about writing.

Here are some resources to help you find the right agent:

<http://frolickingthroughcyberspace.blogspot.com/2016/01/monster-list-of-picture-book-agents.html>

<https://www.childrensbookacademy.com/blogfish/100-picture-book-agents>

<https://www.manuscriptwishlist.com/> (many agents are members and will post what they're looking for on this well-known website)

<https://writingtipsoasis.com/literary-agents-specializing-in-childrens-books/>

<https://subitclub.com/2018/02/06/finding-and-researching-agents-step-by-step/>

PRO TIP: When you submit to agents, you also need a query letter. See resources above on how to craft an excellent query.

PRO TIP #2: Like editors, agents get inundated. Expect to wait months for a reply, and you may not even get a reply if they're too busy. But don't give up.

More resources

If you're serious about writing for children/teens (or adults), here are some great websites with LOTS of tips and resources:

<https://subitclub.com/>

Join their Facebook group, it's awesome!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/486894588029505>

They also have a group dedicated to exchanging critiques for free, this means, you look over and edit someone else's work and they do the same for you. You can do this once you're invested time in becoming a better writer:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/subitclubcritiquepartnermatchup>

<http://www.kidlit411.com/>

Join their Facebook group, it's awesome!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KIDLIT411/>

<https://www.12x12challenge.com/>

<https://www.instituteforwriters.com/>



<https://writeforkids.org/>

<https://www.inkygirl.com/>

Plus, here are the major organization dedicated to kidlit:

<https://www.scbwi.org/> (this is THE biggest kidlit organization in the world! If you're serious about pursuing writing for children, you should join. You'll get tons of resources, access to conferences and other documents.)

<https://www.canscaip.org/>

<https://qwf.org/>

<https://www.writersunion.ca/>

<https://canadianauthors.org/national/>

<https://www.authorsguild.org/> (for a small yearly fee, you get access to publishing lawyers who can look over your contract)

THE BOTTOM LINE: There are many different avenues you can take. You need to sit down and assess your goals first, and this will point you in the right direction. Whatever path you choose, it will take patience, time, and perseverance on your part. This is a tough industry, and it's also highly competitive, even for professional authors. But if you're serious about it, keep going. And remember: **YOU CAN DO IT!**

Good luck,
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