The background features several stylized books in red, teal, and yellow, scattered around a central light blue cloud-like shape. Small teal and red dots are also scattered throughout the white background.

# Thinking Outside the Box: Reader's Advisory and Library Book Boxes

**Kate Wheeler**  
Teen Librarian

**Laurie Walters**  
Head of Youth Services

**Nicole Cook**  
Youth Librarian



# What are book boxes?

Book Boxes are a popular service for Tweens & Teens and now Babies.

Readers ages 9-18 can sign up for a one-month "subscription" to receive two library books personally selected by a librarian -- plus fun extras to keep! Readers are invited to fill out a Reader's Advisory Survey to help us pick out books that they would enjoy.

Babies receive two board books selected by a Librarian, pre-reader information, and one item to keep.





# Why we wanted to start a Book Box program

- A love of Reader's Advisory
- To reach Teens too shy to ask for Book Recs
- To entice reluctant readers
- To afford a better sense of privacy
- To allow those who can't afford Paid Subscriptions an opportunity to have a Book Box Experience
- To give Librarians a better sense of what books are popular with their tween/teen patrons
- To highlight when there are holes in the collection



**BECAUSE IT'S FUN...  
DUH!**



# How our Book Box Program started



- Library Book Box programs start popping up on Teen Services Underground
- Create budget and present to Friends. Budget is approved
- Launch first Teen and Tween Book Box sign up on March 1st, 2020
- Teen/Tween Book Box program goes on hold until Fall of 2021
- Relaunches in September and is a success
- Baby Boxes come onto the scene March 2023




# Tween & Teen Book Boxes





# Teen & Tween Book Boxes



**The extras in your box may include tasty treats. Do you have any food allergies we should know about? If yes, please note below.** *(Required)*

**Have you gotten a Book Box from us before? If yes, what did you think?** *(Required)*

**Do you like graphic novels?** *(Required)*

**What kind of books would you like to read this month?** *(Required)*

Please pick only up to 3 genres

- Fantasy
- Science Fiction
- Realistic Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- Horror
- Suspense/thriller/Mysteries
- Light romance (rom coms, meet cutes, etc)
- Drama
- Funny Books
- Supernatural (ghosts/demons/witches)
- Dystopian
- Gentle Reads (little to no/swearing/violence/sex/drugs etc)
- LGBTQ+ (Please note if you want to be more specific in the 'anything else we should know section)
- Tear Jerkers (Make me cry)
- Books that tackle tough topics/social issues
- Surprise me, I read anything

**What are some of your favorite books? What did you like about them? \* Please list at least 3 books** *(Required)*

Please give more than one example of books that you liked. The more information you provide the better able our Librarians are able to choose books for you.

**Are there any books you haven't liked and why?** *(Required)*

**Anything else we should know?** *(Required)*

This is where you can let us know any other of your reading quirks. If you don't like romance or maybe violence let us know. If you have a specific type of fantasy novel you like etc.

- Sign Up Questions
  - Contact info for child/parent
  - Library Card #
  - Requested Genres
  - Age/grade
  - Food Allergies
  - Favorite books
  - Books you didn't like
  - Anything else
- Book Selection
  - NoveList
  - Read-alike Lists
  - Personal knowledge
  - Browsing
- Tracking Spread Sheets



# Promotion

- Facebook/Instagram
- Flyers
- Word of Mouth/Handselling
- Posters with QR Codes
- Shelftalkers in Teen Area





# Changes

- Upgraded boxes
- Started charging replacement fee for unreturned boxes
- Reduced Tween slots (from 10 to 8)
- Nixed the "one book or two" option
- Refined the list of genre choices
- Changed Graphic Novel choices





# Statistics 2021-now



## NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL SIGN UP

Teen: 61

Total:

Tween: 87

147

## NUMBER OF REPEATED READERS

Teen: 30

Total:

Tween: 39

69

## TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES DISTRIBUTED

Teen: 147

Total:

Tween: 163

310





# Baby BOOK BOX



# Baby Book Box

## Are you focusing on any developmental or behavioral themes?

- No Specific Topic
- Potty Training
- Hitting/Biting
- New Siblings
- Sibling Rivalry
- Grief
- Counting
- Colors
- Shapes
- Alphabet
- Other (please provide details in last question on form)



- Sign up Questions
  - Contact info for caregiver
  - Library Card #
  - Age
  - Developmental/Behavioral Themes
  - Favorite books to read together
  - Bonus Book
  - Anything else
- Book Selection
  - Personal Knowledge
  - Browsing
  - The Internet
- Changes
  - Added Bonus Book for Siblings
  - Changed Age range from 0-23 months to 0-35 months
- Tracking Spreadsheet



# Promotion

- Facebook/Instagram
- Flyers
- Word of Mouth
- Story Time Slides



**Book Boxes**  
**for Teens, Tweens, and Babies**

Sign up for the  
**September Book Box starting August 1**  
**Babies 6-23 months**  
**Teens and Tweens ages 9 and up.**  
**Space is limited.**

Sample Box  
\*items depicted are not indicative of this month's Box

Register at <https://brightonlibrary.info/kids-teens/bookboxes/>

The flyer features a background of falling autumn leaves. It displays three sample book boxes: a 'Baby Book Box' (labeled '25'), a 'Tween Book Box' (labeled '16'), and a 'Teen Book Box' (labeled '4'). Each box is filled with books, small toys, and informational cards. A QR code is visible in the bottom right corner.



*Thank you for Coming!*  
**Stay and Play**

*Upcoming programs*

Friday, September 22	Parent Playgroup
Saturday, September 23	Tummy Time Painting
Tuesday, September 26	Terrific Tuesdays
Wednesday, September 27	Wonderful Wednesdays
Thursday, September 28	Littlest Learners
Friday, September 29	Stroller Stories

*Baby Book Box Registration Open!*

The flyer features a central illustration of a large green frog sitting on a lily pad, surrounded by smaller green frogs and tadpoles in a pond. The background is white with a light green border.



**Brighton District Library**  
Published by Paige Greer · August 16 ·

Families with babies ages 6-23 month olds may sign up for a Baby Book Box. Subscribers will enjoy two library books selected by our librarians to check out plus fun extras for you to keep!

Sign up here: <https://brightonlibrary.info/baby-book-box/>

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from Brighton District Library. The post includes a profile picture, the name of the library, the publisher's name, the date, and the main text of the promotion. A link to sign up is provided at the bottom.



# STATISTICS BABY BOXES

APRIL 2023 - NOW



NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL SIGN UP  
TOTAL:  
68

NUMBER OF REPEATED READERS  
TOTAL:  
20

NUMBER OF BONUS READERS  
TOTAL:  
6

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES  
DISTRIBUTED  
TOTAL:  
67

\*NO BOXES DISTRIBUTED JULY/AUGUST







# Getting Started with Book Boxes

## Things to include in your budget

- Price of boxes
  - How many do you want to go out each month?
  - Durability vs cost?
  - Quantity (get extras)
  - Budget for replacements
- Labels for your boxes
  - Instructions for boxes
  - Review cards
  - Branding
- Prizes/snacks
  - How many items are you putting in each box, each month.
  - Options if you run into food allergies
- Staff commitment/time



Your first year will most likely cost the most since you will need to invest in the boxes and prep work.



# Getting Started with Book Boxes

## Where to find items

- Donations from local business
  - local bookshops may receive promo materials they'll donate
  - local restaurants may give coupons for free items or discounts
- Target "dollar" section
- Dollar Stores
- Amazon (search items in bulk)
- Library Swag
- Party section of stores



## Items we've given in the past

- Keychains
- Magnetic Bookmarks
- slap bracelets
- Water bottle stickers
- sensory toys
- Bath Toys
- Board books
- mini-slime
- wind up toys
- Holiday themed socks
- DIY kits
- Bouncy Balls
- Candy/chips/cookies
- Baby Puzzles



We also add flyers for Library and Events and services



# Want to do Book Boxes @ your Library?

## WHAT TO CONSIDER:

- How to handle sign up
- What to use for your forms
- Length of subscription (monthly, three-month?)
- How many boxes to do
- Book Box storage
- How to work with your ILS to keep the books a surprise
- How to distribute boxes
- How to keep track of what books you've given readers





# What to expect if your program is TOO Successful

- Demand for more age ranges
- Filling up too quickly
- Running out of recommendations for repeat users
- Box hoarders
- Making exceptions







# Questions?

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