



Call for Manuscripts: Room to Read's Global Collection on Play & Children's Wellbeing

Room to Read is excited to share this call for manuscripts of children's fiction or narrative nonfiction from established and emerging writers as part of its 3rd global children's book project. This collection will focus on the theme of **Play and the Child's Social and Emotional Wellbeing**. The 12 titles will serve primary-school readers and portray play as a fundamental right of the child that promotes the development of life skills in various settings of home, school, and community.

The books in the collection will acknowledge, identify, and celebrate the many faces and facets of diversity and inclusion in the places and spaces where children play, learn, and grow. Participants will be selected from each of Room to Read's countries of operations: Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, South Africa, Philippines, and the United States. Authors will receive a flat-fee payment for this non-commercial edition, and will be entitled to royalties should the book ever be commercialized, either by RtR or another publisher. The full collection will be distributed at no cost to underserved communities around the world.

For the U.S. title in the collection, Room to Read is particularly interested in exploring the intersection of play and wellbeing within the context of housing insecurity. More than 1.5 million unhoused children were enrolled in public schools during the 2017–2018 school year, according to the Department of Education, excluding younger children and youth not enrolled in school.¹ Of these, 74 percent of unhoused students were living temporarily with family or friends; 12 percent were in shelters or transitional housing; 7 percent were in hotels or motels; and 7 percent were unsheltered, often living in abandoned buildings or cars.²

Despite the large number of children in the U.S. who experience homelessness, there are few children's books that touch on this experience. How do children impacted by homelessness or housing insecurity use play to process, connect, and heal? How can elevating these experiences raise awareness and foster greater empathy and understanding among their peers? Room to Read is interested in relating these experiences in children's literature to help build empathy and resilience.

¹ National Center for Homeless Education. 2020. "Federal Data Summary School Years 2015-16 to 2017-18," p.iii. Brown's Summit, NC: National Center for Homeless Education. <https://nche.ed.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18- Published-1.30.2020.pdf>.

² Children's Defense Fund. "The State of America's Children: 2021 Report" <https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-State-of-Americas-Children-2021.pdf>

The selected writer(s) will have the opportunity to become more familiar with Room to Read and the collection creation process, to enhance their skills in developing international children's books, and to connect with the global community of writers who are contributing to this collection.

Submission instructions

For children's fiction and creative nonfiction, please send a draft manuscript for a 28- or 32-page picture book. Submissions should address the themes of play and children's wellbeing at the intersection of housing insecurity or homelessness. The draft is intended to help us understand your concept and your writing style: we understand that this deadline is quick, and will work with the selected author to edit and polish the manuscript.

All submissions will be reviewed. Submissions by writers who have experienced homelessness or housing insecurity at some point in their lives are strongly encouraged.

To apply, please submit your **draft manuscript** and a **short biographical paragraph** to janet.pagliuca@roomtoread.org.

Please use the subject line: **Play Collection Submission_LAST NAME** and title any attachments with your first initial and last name: **Manuscript_FIRST INITIAL LAST NAME**.

IMPORTANT: Submissions received after September 30, 2022, will not be considered.

ABOUT ROOM TO READ

As of the end of 2021, Room to Read's trade program has published more than 5,000 original and adapted children's books titles and distributed more than 34 million books in 21 countries, providing primary school students in over 49,000 schools with the resources and guidance they need to build a strong foundation in literacy and a love of reading.

Founded in 2000 on the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children®, Room to Read is creating a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality. We are achieving this goal by helping children in historically low-income communities develop literacy skills and a habit of reading, and by supporting girls as they build skills to succeed in school and negotiate key life decisions. We collaborate with governments and other partner organizations to deliver positive outcomes for children at scale. Room to Read has benefited more than 32 million children and has worked in 21 countries and in more than 49,000 communities, providing additional support through remote solutions that facilitate learning beyond the classroom. Room to Read aims to benefit 40 million children by 2025. Learn more at www.roomtoread.org