



Little Free Libraries

Program Guide

RRSC created and supports over 23 Little Free Libraries in Story County. RRSC arranges for construction and child-height installation, recruits stewards, provides an initial collection of books, and offers more books as needed.

Most of these free-standing libraries are in neighborhoods where children have few good books of their own at home and limited access to a public library.



CONTENTS

The Need for Little Free Libraries	3
Little Free Library Model	3
RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County	3
Desired Results and Indicators	3
Performance Measures Examples	4
Starting a Little Free Library Program	4
Identify literacy needs	4
Plan	4
Implement	5
Evaluate	5
Revise	5
Benefits of Little Free Libraries for children	5
Possible challenges of Little Free Libraries for children	6
History of RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County	6
Frequently Asked Questions	7
How much does a Little Free Library cost?	7
How does RRSC get books for Little Free Libraries?	8
Appendix A: Building a RRSC Little Free Library	9
Appendix B: Designs for Little Free Libraries	11
Appendix C: Responsibilities of Stewards of Little Free Libraries	12
Appendix D: Book Drive Tips	14
Appendix E: Recycling Donated Books	19

The Need for Little Free Libraries

Young children living in poverty often lack access to good children’s books, have less shared reading time at home, and achieve at lower levels in school than middle class peers. Ideally, these students would have easy access 24/7 to a choice of interesting books, especially during the summer when disadvantaged students often fall behind their peers. These libraries also enhance the sense of community and create literacy-friendly spots in our neighborhoods.

The Little Free Library Model

The Little Free Library movement began in 2009 in Wisconsin with Todd Bol, who built the original library in the shape of a one-room schoolhouse in honor of his mother, a retired teacher.

RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County

In 2013 RRSC began enhancing our literacy-rich community environment by building weather proof, child-friendly Little Free Libraries. These units are installed at appropriate heights for children and are typically conveniently located for children living in low-income neighborhoods. Children can self-select interesting books to take home to enjoy and then keep, return or exchange them. Each RRSC Little Free Library has a local steward to maintain the library and keep it stocked with books. RRSC helps provide the good children’s books.

“Little Free Libraries are not only for children. They offer options for young adults and adults. People of all ages can benefit from the pages of a new interesting book. I have seen even some adults relive a childhood moment by visiting our Little Free Library.”

Diana Figueredo

Desired Results and Indicators

Our end result is “all Story County Children Read to Succeed.” By providing children and families with 24/7 access to books, especially those in neighborhoods with vulnerable children, Little Free Libraries contribute to this result.

Our leading early indicator of progress is the percent of children entering kindergarten with basic language and literacy skills associated with reading success in school as measured by school districts. Caring adults contribute to these outcomes when they talk, read and share healthy relationships with young children.

A mid-term indicator is the percent of students reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade as measured by school districts.

Performance Measures Examples

1. Number of RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County
2. Percentage of Story County communities with Little Free Libraries
3. Number of books provided to Little Free Libraries
4. Number of Little Free Libraries stewards
5. Testimonials of children, families and community
6. Photos of Little Free Libraries

Starting a Little Free Library Program

RRSC Step 1: Identify literacy needs

1. The level of poverty is one indicator of how many children and families would benefit from Little Free Libraries.
2. Map neighborhoods with families living with low incomes.
3. Meet with representatives of families and organizations serving this area to find out how a Little Free Library could help them.
4. Identify one or more potential stewards for the Little Free Library.

Step 2: Plan

1. Form a team to continually support each Little Free Library.
2. Create a Little Free Library budget
3. Identify potential stewards for each Little Free Library. It is important to have more than one steward so they can combine forces to keep a good inventory and keep the library well maintained.
4. Identify potential builders of Little Free Libraries.
5. Identify potential funders of Little Free Libraries.

6. Plan for book drives to collect books for Little Free Libraries.
7. Budget for books to supplement the gently used books donated.
8. Plan to promote the use of each Little Free Library.
9. Incorporate new materials, such as math manipulatives, science kits, frequency word games, etc., in libraries when the local children are about to start school or are out of school for the holidays.

Step 3: Implement

1. Recruit a steward for each Little Free Library.
2. Recruit and supervise a builder.
3. Provide funding as needed.
4. Install the Little Free Library at child height.
5. Deliver a start-up collection of children's books.
6. Register each unit at LittleFreeLibrary.org for \$35.
7. Promote and celebrate each new Little Free Library.
8. Add geocaching mapping of Little Free Libraries in Story County

Step 4: Evaluate

Collect and report performance measures data

1. Number of RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County
2. Percentage of Story County communities with Little Free Libraries
3. Number of books provided to Little Free Libraries
4. Number of Little Free Libraries stewards
5. Testimonials of children, families and community
6. Photos of Little Free Libraries

Step 5: Revise

1. Continue to make improvements to reach more families and recycle more children's books.
2. Maintain and repair Little Free Libraries as needed.

Benefits of a Little Free Library Program

1. Children benefit, especially those most likely at risk for delayed literacy

development and to fall behind in reading.

2. Books that children have outgrown are recycled.
3. The program is relatively inexpensive after start-up costs.
4. Volunteers can contribute at times convenient to them.
5. Little Free Libraries can reinforce what children and young adults learn at school in all content areas. Put science materials and articles, math games, etc. in your library. Reading applies to all disciplines.

Possible Challenges of a Little Free Library Program

1. Sustainable leadership is needed.
2. Ongoing maintenance and occasional repairs are needed.
3. Sorting, cleaning, labeling and distributing children's books is time-consuming.
4. There will be some costs associated with cleaning and storing donated books.
5. Poor quality and inappropriate books may be placed in Little Free Libraries.

History of RRSC Little Free Libraries in Story County

Laura Schinnow retired as a director for continuing education and had a Little Free Library of her own at her house. In 2012 RRSC recruited Laura to spearhead the development of Little Free Libraries for area children. Schinnow designed the program and developed information for stewards.(Attachment A) Before long, Laura was digging post holes for multiple new libraries.

"Like most things you do for the first time, it's a learning experience," Schinnow laughed in 2013. "I've gotten really good with a post hole-digger and a cordless drill. I can repair plexiglass now."

Another RRSC volunteer made essential contributions. Kathryn Wirth organized community members to provide materials for constructing Little Free Libraries and did whatever needed to pick up and store materials.

Kathryn said, "I have young children and I believe reading at a young age helps improve vocabulary and brain growth."

Members of both Ames Rotary Clubs were instrumental in getting the Little Free Library project off the ground. Bill Dryer, a member of the Rotary Club of Ames Morning, built one Little Free Library and designed a two-story unit (Attachment B).

Harold Pike, member of the Rotary Club of Ames, has had several units built. Harold also stored the donated construction materials in his warehouse.

Many other community members made in-kind contributions of materials, expertise, and time.

The RRSC Coordinator of Little Free Libraries is Diana Figueredo. With her family's help, she oversees 24 units located in Nevada, Maxwell, Huxley, Gilbert and Ames. Diana can be contacted at dianafigueredo16@gmail.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does a Little Free Library cost?

These estimates are probably on the low side unless you get donated materials and labor. Experienced local carpenters may be willing to build Little Free Libraries.

One-story Little Free Library (to be stained or painted by stewards)

4 sides of box; 2 roof pieces; 1 door; 1 miscellaneous (hardware, trim, etc.)

Materials: \$40-\$80

Post: \$7

Registration: \$35

Cost of supplies: \$92

Cost of labor: \$200

Total cost estimate: \$300

Two-Story Little Free Library (to be stained or painted by stewards)

4 sides of box; 2 roof pieces; 1 door; 1 miscellaneous (hardware, trim, etc.)

Materials: \$60-\$100

Post: \$7

Registration: \$35

Cost of supplies: \$112

Cost of labor: \$300

Total cost estimate: \$412

How do you get books to put in Little Free Libraries?

Book drives are a good way to collect gently used children's books. See Appendix D, page 13, for Book Drive Tips. See Appendix E, page 18, for Recycling Donated Books.

Retired teachers and teachers are a good source for additional materials for Little Free Libraries. Educational games have become a staple for my neighborhood library.

APPENDIX A:



"Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading"

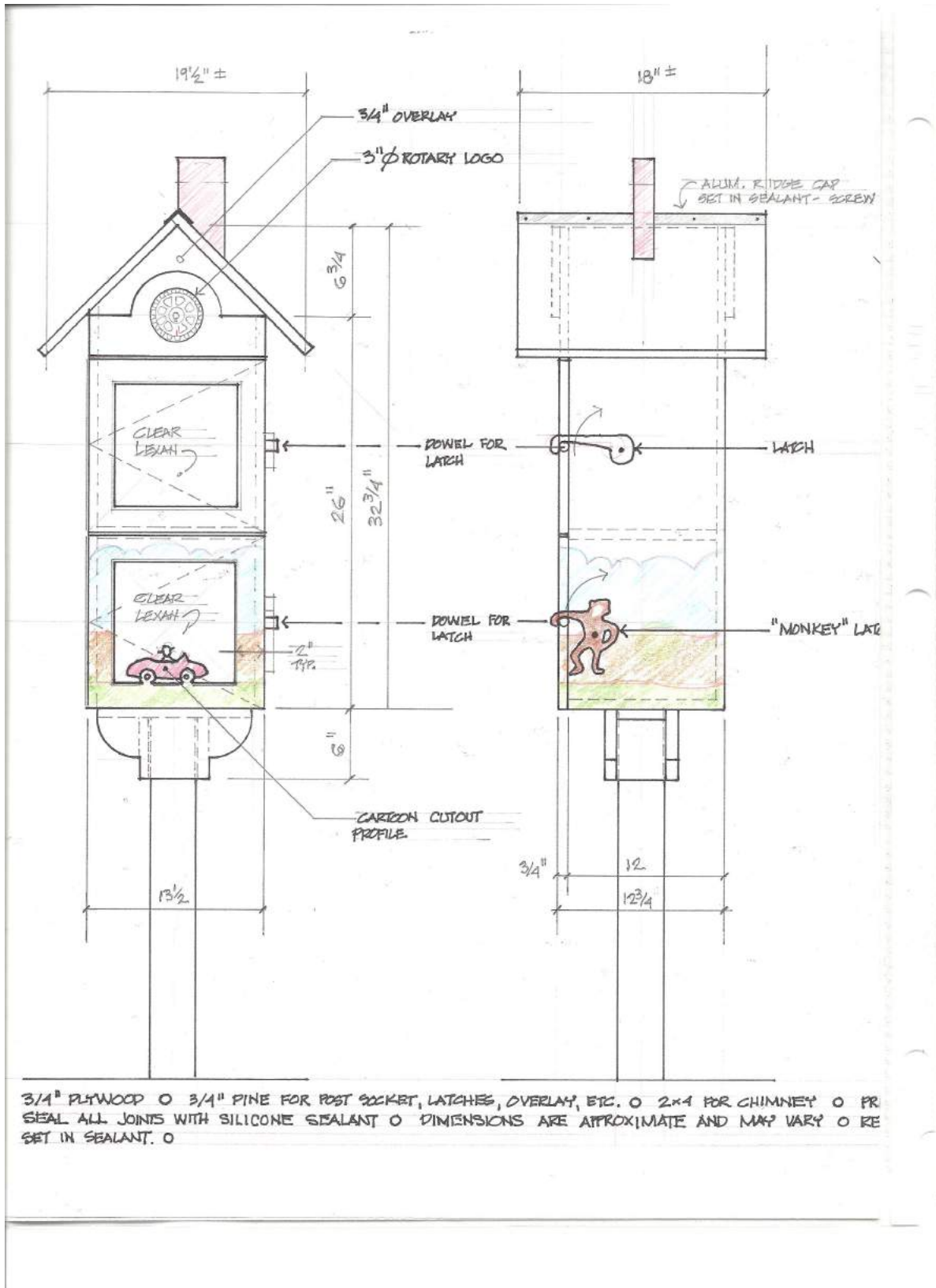
Building a Little Free Library

Bill Dreyer, an architect and member of the Rotary Club of Ames Morning, designed this two-story Little Free Library. The lower level is for books for young children and the upper level is for older children and adults.

Creating this Little Free Library at Ames Community Preschool Center was a joint effort of Bill Dreyer, Woodruff Construction, Harold Pike Construction, and Raising Readers.



Rotarian Bill Dreyers' Little Free Library design



APPENDIX B: Designs for Little Free Libraries



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

Online ideas for building a Little Free Library

- Little Free Library home website: <https://littlefreelibrary.org>
- Plans and Tips for Library Builders: <https://littlefreelibrary.org/build/>
- Make a Free Little Library for the Neighborhood:
<http://mymodernmet.com/little-free-library/>
- Woodworking Plans: <https://www.thebalance.com/little-free-library-plans-1357149>
- How to Build a Little Library:
https://kaboom.org/resources/enhancement_projects/how_to_build_a_little_library

APPENDIX C: Responsibilities of Stewards of Little Free Libraries



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

Mission of the Little Free Library Movement

- To promote Literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide.
- To build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity and wisdom across generations.
- To build 2,510 Libraries--as many as Andrew Carnegie--and keep going! (There are already more than 5,000)

What is a Little Free Library Steward?

In a very real sense, Stewards are like the parents of their Libraries. If you built it, decorated it, use or sponsored it, you will treasure it. The primary role of a Steward is to care for a Little Free Library so that it is an important resource for the neighborhood or community. Stewards are the key contact for each Library—for users, donors and the Little Free Library movement. The steward commits to filling the library and keeping it filled as well as keeping it clean and repaired if needed.

Your goal is to welcome participation, create and maintain a friendly place in and around the Library and encourage people of all ages to fill it, use it and share responsibility for it. The most successful Little Free libraries have stewards who actively engage their neighbors and communities.

Registering

We recommend that you officially register your library on the Little Free Library website. The fee for registration is \$35. If this is a problem, let me know. For your library you'll receive a free "Little Free Library Take a Book Leave a Book" sign to put on your library and you will be given a Little Free Library Charter number.

After the library is installed, the Little Free Library originators ask that folks send a picture of their library to be posted on the website. To complete the registration, they will need the exact location of the library, the name of the Steward, and your e-mail. The website LittleFreeLibrary.org includes stories, pictures as well as building plans and examples and a map with locations of the libraries.

Responsibilities

Check your library weekly or more often if you want to. Keep the library clean and in good repair. If something is damaged and you can't fix it—call Diana at 515-231-9988. Pick up trash around the site so people will want to visit.

Keep it filled with books. Call if you ever need more books. According to the website, the average little Library goes through 20-100 books or more per month. If someone puts in a book that doesn't seem appropriate, please take it out.

Encourage participation. If people in your community are encouraged to leave books as well as take them, you might not need to refill it for a while. Here are some suggestions:

- Keep a notebook in the library so that anyone can offer suggestions, comments, recommendations or requests.
- Use the book plates that you will receive as part of your Steward's package to have friends and family recommend books.
- It's OK to move books from one Little Library to another.
- Put together a Kids Book Committee that can help you take care of the Library.
- Plant flowers by your Library to make it inviting.
- Put up a sign that says, "Thanks for protecting and loving our Library".
- Promote the use of your Little Library with the help of friends and neighbors.
- Post news in social media about your Little Library.

Thanks for agreeing to be a Steward. Without you, they are just a cute little structures.

Raising Readers in Story County Little Free Library Contact:

Diana Figueredo

dianafiguero16@gmail.com

515-231-9988

APPENDIX D: Book Drive Tips



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

BOOK DRIVE TIPS



Gilbert Elementary 4th graders donated 16 boxes of books to RRSC.

Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) is a non-profit agency that serves Story County families with children birth to age eight. As a way of promoting early language and literacy development, we are committed to ensuring all children have access to good quality books.

Book drives allow RRSC to reach more children with the gift of books and the promise of literacy. RRSC encourages you to take photos of your book drive and email them to contact@raising-readers.org.

Many people have children's books that their family has outgrown or no longer needs. Book drives make it easy for people to donate gently used books to a good cause.

When books are donated to RRSC, volunteers clean, sort, and label them. Then the books are recycled by distributing them to local food pantries, clothing closets, Little Free Libraries, welfare agencies, and other programs that serve disadvantaged Story County families with young children.

RRSC invites local groups to conduct book drives to collect new and gently used children's books from family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others.

Step 1: Get inspired

Anyone can do a book drive. These are a few examples.

Schools and Students

Local schools are effective hubs for book drives and other literacy promotion events. Obtain permission from the district and building first. Principals, teachers, media specialists, and parent leaders usually support these kinds of events and will often organize a book drive in their classrooms or building. Students often involve their parents. Have a visible way to report how many books are collected by each class and by the school as a whole. Consider having some incentives or a celebration at the end of the book drive.

Middle and high school students could organize book drives as a way to pursue an organization's goal to make a difference in the community or for an individual to fulfill community service requirements.

Businesses and Service Organizations

A book drive can help corporations or business to fulfill a mission to give back to the community in which they are located. Instead of exchanging

gifts at a holiday party, invite guests to bring new or gently used children's books to be donated to children with few books of their own.

Special Occasion Parties

Plan a Raising Readers Book Drive Party for your book club, service group, office, 4H, Camp Fire, Boy Scouts, elementary classroom, sorority or fraternity holiday party. Request books, one for you and one for Raising Readers, at your baby shower or child's birthday party. Collect books in honor or memory of a special person.

Step 2: Get Organized

Consider inviting schoolmates, coworkers, friends, family, neighbors, and other organizations to help plan and carry out your book drive. You might also engage community and education leaders, librarians, faith groups, elected leaders, business and religious leaders, and youth and family groups. When people are involved, you are likely to get more books donated.

Step 3: Choose a Time

Book drives can be held any time during the year. You might schedule one in conjunction with an established literacy event or holiday, such as one of these.

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday>
- National Readathon Day, <http://global.penguinrandomhouse.com/readathon/>

February

- Valentines Day

March

- Dr. Seuss Read Across America, www.nea.org/readacross/index.html

April

- Week of the Young Child, <http://www.naeyc.org/woyc>
- Drop Everything and Read Day, <http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/dear>

- National Library Week, <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>
- National Volunteer Week, <http://www.pointsoflight.org/signature-events/national-volunteer-week>

May

- Screen-Free Week, <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/screen-free-week-partner-childrens-book-week-may-1---7-2017>
- Children's Book Week, www.cbcbooks.org
- Get Caught Reading Week, <http://www.getcaughtreading.org>

July

- Summer Learning Day, <http://gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-GLR-Calendar.pdf>

September

- Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Day, <http://www.rif.org/whats-new/live-event/>

October

- Teen Read Week, <http://teenreadweek.ning.com>

November

- National Family Literacy Day, <http://holidaysofyear.com/national-family-literacy-day/> sponsored by National Center for Family Learning (NCFL), <http://www.familieslearning.org>

December

Holiday giving

There is no set length of time for a book drive, but most run from two weeks to a month. Donors need time to receive the information, go through their personal libraries, and get the books to the collection site.

Step 4: Choose a Collection Site

Place boxes or bins in a visible and safe location, such as in an entryway or lobby of a school, business, or church. Boxes should be strong enough to hold a large number of books. A plastic storage bin (18 gallons) works quite well. Books can be transferred into smaller boxes or tote bags once the bin is full. It is a good

idea to choose one person who will be responsible for checking the collection bin regularly during the book drive.

Place posters advertising the book drive near the book collection bin, and in prominent areas around the venue. Include information such as the start and end dates, the collection site(s), the name of a contact person at the venue, and the phone number and web site of RRSC or other organization who will receive the books for anyone wanting more information. Only gently used or new children's books appropriate for children are desired. Others will be donated to the public library book sale.

Another option is to target a neighborhood and post signs and deliver flyers saying books placed on the curb would be picked up on a certain day.

Step 5: Publicize your Book Drive

Decide on key messages about the importance of reading and how donated books will be recycled and used. RRSC can help.

Printed promotional materials could include newsletters, posters, flyers, yard signs and local newspapers. Websites, emails, and social media can also announce the book drive and provide reminders and updates. Schools, business, and local organizations will have established ways to communicate with families, employees, and members. Take photos to document your activities.

Step 6: Wrap up

Notify RRSC of when you will count the books. Pack the books in small boxes or tote bags since books are heavy. Schedule a time to deliver the books or arrange for them to be picked up.

Celebrate your successful book drive. Report the results, collect quotes, and take more photos. Thank your team and the donors. RRSC will also add our personal and public thanks for your book drive.

RRSC contact information for Executive Director Kim Hanna
Voice mail: 515-239-5667
Email: contact@raising-readers.org
Website: www.raising-readers.org

APPENDIX E: Recycling Donated Books



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”



PROCEDURES: RECYCLING DONATED BOOKS

Step 1: Develop guidelines for acceptable quality and condition

Consider the following possibilities of what you might not accept:

- Missing covers
- Missing pages
- Scribbles
- Torn pages
- Magazines
- Religious content
- Adult content
- Stickiness or dirt
- Textbooks
- Outdated nonfiction
- Encyclopedia sets
- Coloring books or sticker books

Be clear about the intended age level. The mission of Raising Readers is to serve children birth to age eight. If a donated book is for ages over nine, determine if Raising Readers has a program where that will be useful. Perhaps it can be distributed through other organizations such as food pantries or human service agencies.

Usable books, which don't meet the program needs of Raising Readers, can be given to the public library book sale. Be willing to throw away books that smell bad or are a mess or that you wouldn't give to your own child.

Step 2: Mend and clean donated books

In general, mend a torn page with matte finish or frosted tape rather than shiny. However, if the page is glossy or coated, a gloss tape will be less noticeable. You don't want to use cellophane tape because it turns yellow and brittle.

Clear package tape may be used to reinforce the spine of a book that is beginning to tear.

Try using nail polish remover to remove felt pen marks from a cover.

Try using hairspray to remove ballpoint pen ink from a cover.

Sometimes pencil and crayon marks can be removed without damage to print by using an art gum eraser.

If a book cover or board book is soiled, try cleaning it with a damp cloth. You may want to wipe each page of a board book and then stand it on edge to air dry. A plastic coated surface can be wiped with glass cleaner or rubbing alcohol. To avoid removing the color, test a small area first. (This is the voice of experience.)

If a book will be used in a public Reading Corner, you may want to reinforce it to give it a longer life. Hard cover books with paper dust jackets will benefit from having the paper cover laminated or enclosed in a plastic cover and then attached to the book cover with fiber tape. Public libraries often put dust jackets in clear plastic covers that are designed for that purpose and available from library supply companies. Talk to public library staff for advice and information about what they use. For a very reasonable cost we have laminated dust jackets in the Ames Community School District Production Services.