



CONGRATULATIONS!

Your book's production journey is almost over and it's about to start its next stage into the world of sales. So what now?

After the printer proofs come back from overseas within a couple of weeks, we'll need to be in contact with you fairly quickly to get the second signoff complete. Then there will be another 6-8 weeks before the final boxes of books arrive (depending on how customs are feeling at the time). Before then, a few advance copies are flown over by airmail.

This waiting time is the best period to go over a marketing plan for the book. Below, you'll find some information about the following things that may come to mind:

- Planning a book launch
- Setting up a website
- International sales
- Reprints
- Independent bookstores and other shops
- Distributor sales and Little Steps sales
- Royalties and payments
- Awards and reviews
- Library copies and lending rights (ELR/PLR)

THE LAUNCH

The first thing to think about is a launch.

A book launch is a party to celebrate the release of the work and gather first sales of your book. Partly ceremonial and partly business, it's a good idea to inject as much fun and pomp as you can into the event. What if the last event you planned was a two year old's birthday party and you have absolutely no idea how to go about planning a launch? Not to worry, many of the things to watch out for are the same anyway...

Location: Where should I hold my book launch?

Think about your networks and spaces already available to you. Do you work in education? If so, check on the possibility of the library or hall of your local school – for older picture books and junior fiction, this can be a quick way to spread your book's sales fever through a larger amount of people. Otherwise, libraries, small independent bookstores or children's gift stores are often happy to host launches, or if you have a local community space that would be suitable, then look into this. No need to hire out a penthouse and Jacuzzi; take advantage of the ties you already

have, as reducing the cost of your event by hosting it in a free space will give you back more of the profits from sales. Make sure you think about the target age group of your book (if in doubt, have a chat to your editor) as you don't want to be trying to sell a picture book to late primary students.

TIMING: WHEN SHOULD I HOLD MY BOOK LAUNCH?

Speak to us on the ETA of your book's arrival once it has been approved for final print (after your second signoff) – that way, we can arrange for the books to be with you well in time for the event. If you are holding it at a school, towards the end of the school week works well (as the students are already there anyway, and have had the chance to be reminded of the event throughout the beginning of the school week). Time it so that as many parents/grandparents as possible can make the event (even if the kids love the book, the adults are your real target, as they're the ones buying).

GUESTS: WHO DO I INVITE TO MY BOOK LAUNCH?

Everyone you can, and especially those who work in child-related networks or parents. A mix of children and adults is better (kids for atmosphere, fun and direct incentive to purchase, and adults for mess control of their own offspring and the cash) and as many people as possible. It's a good idea to have an MC, so if you don't have connections with a B, C, or D grade celebrity or local



mayor, ask a friend who is good at public speaking to welcome everybody and give a funny blurb on the journey. If your book involves a friendly animal character based on your own pet, look at the possibility of bringing the real Mr Fluffy along for pats and photos.

PROGRAM. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS THERE?

Thinking about your specific book will steer the events of the day to different places. Perhaps your book is a picture book on sparkly fairies that only do sparkly things in their sparkly world? Well then, make sure you have a fairy there for face-painting and bring the magic of your story's world to the launch. Is your book a rowdy chapter book aimed at muddy young boys? Direct the theme and activities appropriately.

For example, *Engibear's Bridge*, a Little Steps book by Andrew King and Benjamin Johnston that brings the scientific world of engineering into a fun and inclusive picture book, was launched outdoors on school grounds with construction vehicles and paper bridge load-testing activities. The children were directly engaged and sales of the book were high.

After people have more or less finished arriving and have preferably already taken some sips of champagne (optional, but almost always recommended for non-educational environments), have everybody welcomed by your speaker (or yourself, if you prefer being in the limelight), give a little speech, then (optional) cut a nice big ribbon that is tied over the first book (as ribbons make everything more special). Having the author read their picture book to the guests present is common, as well as having an area where you can sign books individually for your new readers.

Having activities for the children attending is also important. It is usually possible to use illustrations from your picture book as black and white colouring-in sheets, and depending on the theme or purpose of your book, other related activities are often simple to have as well. Talk to your editor or designer about the options you're thinking of, if you need a hand.

MARKETING THE EVENT: TELL EVERYBODY MULTIPLE TIMES

For your immediate guests, give repeated reminders in different ways prior to the date. Even if people originally mean to come along, they will likely forget, double book an appointment or not have arrangements that fit on the day. So create an invitation (paper or online), get them to RSVP, put up reminding posters or online posts to keep it on your guests' minds, and send them a note in the days leading up to the day, saying you look forward to seeing them there and what will be available on the day.

Media-wise, books and launches get more interest and press time if they have some kind of socio-cultural or environmental cause behind them. So a book that has a message of friendship may not necessarily get local media attention, whereas if the book's author is donating a percentage of sales on the day towards a local foundation that supports anti-bullying education, or if it is a book that is directly related to another such cause, it is more likely to receive attention if you contact local newspapers and radio about it. Even if you don't have any press attention prior to the day, it is worth still writing to local media about it afterwards, so that you have a story with all the necessary information, practically already written up for them should they choose to run it.

AFTER THE LAUNCH

The initial party has died down, you've made some money back in sales at your launch but you see that you still have a considerable amount of books to shift. It looks a bit overwhelming and now that the production line has come to an end, you're wondering how your books are going to sell and what's happening in terms of distribution.

THE DISTRIBUTOR

Little Steps supplies the distributor with press releases about upcoming books, which the distributor uses to sell the book to bookstores all around Australia. Because of the volatility of the printed book market, the bookstores are able to return the book to the distributor if they decide it is not selling. For this reason, bookstores often take only a couple of copies initially, and then will only order more from the distributor once they get a taste for how the book is selling. So we don't know how your book is going in bookstores until a few months after the release and when we have a better sense of distribution sales (royalties are sent out every six months, so an idea of how the book is going is known by then). You can request a sales breakdown once you've received your royalties at this period.



Don't be disheartened if you or a friend walk into a mainstream or independent bookstore and don't see your book there. Any customer should be able to order the book instore anywhere, but that particular store may not have necessarily included orders for your book in their last ordering of stock. This doesn't mean that a store in the same franchise in another city or even down the road has not ordered your book. Give it some time and then you'll see how the book is actually going.

Often, the distributor will let Little Steps know that a certain book of theirs is running down in copies from bookstores taking it on, and we will ask you, the author, to send the distributor more copies of your book. Even though distribution is the least financially profitable way of selling your book (because of the cuts taken by Little Steps and the distributor), this is still great news to hear, as it is the most likely way of getting your book into mainstream bookstores. Any copies that the distributor does not sell still belong to you.

LITTLE STEPS

Aside from coordinating the book into distribution, we send copies of your newly released book out to industry contacts and media with press releases for reviews and readings. We also contact authors about any upcoming book awards we think your book may do well to enter in, and make sales and promotions of the book through our website and social media. If we receive a review of your book, we will always send it to you and put it up online. But if you see a review or get other media attention yourself, forward it to us so we can share it for you as well.

If you're concerned you may be sending the book to the same critics or organisations, email Andrej at andrej@littlesteps.com.au and let him know who you are in contact with already. We don't tend to open up a list of the specific people, but you can let us know if you are worried about repeating them.

THE AUTHOR

You receive the greatest financial profit from any book sales you make yourself (100%), so while you can sit back and wait to see how the book goes in bookstores, it is well worth using your own networking to get the book out there as well. We will send you a copy of the book's press release (very similar to the one we send to the distributor) and front cover images for website use etc. The retail price (RRP) of your book has been logged with the National Library, so check on the press release we supply you, or with your editor, on what this is. The standard retail price of paperback picture books is \$14.95, or \$16.95 for larger books, and \$24.95/\$29.95 for hardback books (depending on size and design). While it may be tempting to push up your RRP for greater returns, this is not advisable for the majority of books. Setting it slightly higher can be beneficial for marking it down later, but trying to push up the RRP will not mean that that is the price it will sell at in bookstores. Distributors and bookstores can and will mark down the book to what they think will make it more likely to sell, so keeping it to standard or recommended RRP's is far more preferable (we want your book to sell well too).

When considering approaching bookstores, don't walk into Dymocks and show them the book, asking if the sales assistant can pass it onto their manager. Big chains order through distributors and often have the majority of their main stock sorted according to current trends and around whichever current J.K. Rowling or Stephen King has a new book out. If they have ordered a couple of copies of your book to test the waters, they will have done this online at a higher level of management, and the sales assistant is unlikely to be able to affect this.

What you can do is approach independent, small and local bookstores. These small businesses have more control of their own stock and are more likely to be able to take a proper look at your book and negotiate how they may take it on. Bookstores can take a book off you either on consignment (less risk to the store if it doesn't sell, as the store can simply pass the books back to you) or buying copies directly (greater risk to the bookstore and therefore normally comes with a large discount for them). If you approach stores yourself and look at negotiating some kind of arrangement with them, you can have a chat to us about the percentages being discussed and we'll gladly give you an opinion on what seems fair. We also have a section on distribution arrangements at www.littlesteps.com.au/faqs/ that you can also check.

The main theme around which your book is based will also affect networks where you can sell it. If, for example, your book has a particular interest in local knowledge or animal welfare, look at approaching a related organisation, with a potential agreement for donating part of sales towards their funding.



THINKING OF CREATING A WEBSITE?

Many authors create websites by which to sell their books and engage more readers online. You can spend some money in hiring a web designer to build you a site, but there are also plenty of websites that have free templates to base your site on – like Wix, IM Creator and Weebly. If you buy a personalised domain name (e.g. www.authername.com) then this will cost you a bit more, but the actual setting up is normally free via these templates.

Things to think about before setting up a website:

- Is the website for yourself as an author or for the book by itself? If you are planning on writing and releasing more books, having an author's website would suit you better. If, on the other hand, you have no plans to write any more as you were particularly invested in the book as a singular product, you could create the site for the book by itself.
- If the book is aimed at children and you are creating the website for the book by itself, what angle do you want to take on it? A site for the book by itself is often better with some child-attractive aspects to it, over one that is for you as an author (as this can look unprofessional). So if you're targeting the site towards a child web audience, making it reasonably fun is a good idea – with colour and activities. If you are creating the site for yourself as an author, keep it more professional and perhaps steer away from overly animated graphics.
- Are you likely to be frequently writing a blog? If not, don't include a blogging section at all. An un-updated blog is worse than not having one. Steer the pages towards what you think will sell your book best, in terms of relevance and target audience. You can include a 'News' section for yourself as an author, and keeping this updated with launch photos, related reviews and any visits you do, will look great. Having an 'About the Author' page with a bio on yourself and a good quality photo gives a personal background to yourself as the creator.
- Ask us to supply you with some web-ready illustrations to use as background images or banners for the site. These often look really attractive and appropriate, even for author-centred websites. We will also give you web images of the front cover and if you think of anything in particular we may have that would help, let us know!
- Activities and Teachers' Notes: Whether the site is for yourself or the book, it is still a good idea to include a page that has colouring in or dot-to-dot pages for children to print out for home. Teachers' Notes are great resources if you intend or see the book being used in education. These are printed out and used by teachers as ready-made class activities, and normally include a section on comprehension, vocabulary, creative writing or art (depending on the target

age of the book). If you are thinking of writing Teachers' Notes for use in the classroom, have a look at some examples and see if your editor can have a read of yours once you're done.

- Sales methods online: With most template websites, you can purchase extras like online sales tools for credit card usage from your customers. This is a good idea if you don't want people emailing you for orders and you becoming overwhelmed with questions and orders mixed together.
- Mobile site: With every website you build, it is likely to have a mobile-compatible version created automatically for people to view on smartphones. Sometimes though, these don't match up or align properly, so check the mobile version of your site as you build it, to make sure your photo isn't squished up into the top right corner and the text isn't too big or small.

REPRINTS

Should the time come when your books are running out and you find yourself needing more copies, you can decide to go ahead with a reprint. Reprints cost about 60% of the original production cost (depending on your individual book's finishes and specs) and it is signed off relatively quickly, getting back to you within the 8-10 weeks of the normal print stage.

If you decide to make changes to the book (any image revisions, content changes or turn it into a hardback/paperback edition), this will count as a new edition. It won't take much longer than the above timing to get back to you, but it will need a new ISBN and will be logged as a separate book. This is easy enough to do; it may just take a bit longer than the normal reprint time.

WHAT IF I WANT TO SELL THE BOOK OVERSEAS?

If you have channels yourself for selling the copies directly to an overseas buyer, that's great! In terms of getting the book released in stores overseas though, this requires the book to be taken on by international publishers (as the ISBN for the book is unique to Australia and the distributor accesses national bookstores). But this has happened before and is very likely to happen again.

Our head publisher takes the books to the annual International Bologna Book Fair in Italy (one of the largest book fairs in the world) and joins other publishers there who are all pitching their own books to each other. If a foreign publisher is interested in your book, they will look at negotiating the sales of overseas rights with you via the publisher (we will let you know if this comes up). From then, things like translation (including spelling changes from 'Mum' to 'Mom' for American readers)



happen in the world of that overseas publisher.

Things that make a foreign publisher more likely to take on your book are universal topics and settings (i.e. probably not the story of a mouse who travels from Gundagai to St Kilda on a rainbow lorikeet's back) and ... a lack of rhyme. Although we may love buying and reading good rhyme to children, it is difficult to translate and will not be considered worth the foreign publisher's time.

AWARDS

There are several large book industry awards that are well worth considering for submitting your book. Many will require that both creators (the author and the illustrator) are of Australian citizenship or permanent residency, and that the book has been published within a certain timeframe to certain standards. Some will require a short blurb on why the book is considered worthy of the award, while others only require the production and release details of the book. Some will have entry fees, which can reach \$100 or more. We are happy to fill the forms and do the paperwork and postage for you (many will require publisher entry or backing).

The CBCA Book of the Year

The big one. This is the award that many want their book submitted for. The award takes submissions in November for books that have been published the same year (which can pose difficulties for books being released in December, so if this is you, look ahead so we can fast-track some copies back for the sake of awards time, or push the release date back to the following January so it can be submitted for the next year's awards). The fee (at present) is \$99.

The CBCA Crichton Award for First-Time Illustrators

This award gives credit to first-time illustrators (that is, their first published book). As we are always looking for new illustrator talent and some of our authors are artists who illustrate their own work, this is a great award to submit your picture book for consideration. As it is only available for illustrators who have never before been published, it is a one-shot only award. This particular award is run by the Victorian side of the CBCA.

Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year

Another big award that focuses on the book's value in aiding speech and literacy acquisition. This award is submitted from publishers only (as opposed to the creator) and by April of the year. It takes books from the preceding year up to and including the year of submission. No entry fee but

twelve copies are required.

The Wilderness Society's Environment Award for Literature

An award that gives credit to books with a message of environmental value, for readers under 12. While this may be quite common in children's literature, the books that do well here have a sense of adventure, discovery and implicit learning. Awards are submitted by March for books released in the previous year. Creators are able to submit the award as well as publishers, and there is no entry fee (just postage for sending five copies).

If you have other awards in mind or are looking for something different, you can have a look at a list of Australian literary awards. Be mindful of the eligibility criteria when applying though, and let us know if you intend to submit your book yourself.



EDUCATIONAL LENDING RIGHTS (ELR) AND PUBLIC LENDING RIGHTS (PLR)

ELR and PLR are government programs that make payments to registered book creators and publishers for work that is copied and borrowed (as in libraries and schools), on the basis that normal sales royalties are lost when the work is being accessed freely through public and educational libraries. Basically, it's like royalties for how many times somebody borrows your book.

Book creators (illustrators/authors etc) and publishers are both eligible to register, but you need to submit title claims for the year ahead by certain dates, otherwise you will not be eligible for payments throughout that season.

When registering, DO NOT select 'self-published' (out of the options for 'self-published' or 'published'). Both options will give you the same royalty rate, but selecting 'self-published' will make you ineligible for certain awards, so please select 'published'. Another common mistake when registering is when it asks something along the lines of 'What percentage of royalties are you eligible for?'. Most of the time the author is eligible for 100%, meaning the author will take 100% of the 80% royalty rate that Little Steps pays (confusing, we know!). The only time you would not put 100% is if an illustrator also receives a share of the royalties.

Have a look and register at Lending Rights Online and give us a call if you need a hand.

<https://lendingrights.arts.gov.au/lendingrights/>

Once registered, you should receive payment and a statement every financial year — although their period runs a year behind, so it may take up to two years to receive your first statement (depending on when you register).

... *And for now, that's it!*

LITTLE STEPS PUBLISHING

PHONE: (02) 9453 1230
FAX: (02) 9975 2531
www.littlesteps.com.au
www.atlantisbooks.com.au

If you have any questions about your current ideas or need a chat to check in on some ideas, give us a call anytime. Doubtless you have a few more stacks of manuscripts in your desk drawers, but for now, focus on the sales side of your first book and we look forward to hearing from you about your future projects down the track. Send us photos and details from your launch, share reviews you find with us and spread your book's word near and far.

Don't take rejections from local stores as being something personal — your book is a product, and no matter how individual, unique and intimate the story may be, bookstores, reviewers and buyers will all have their own opinion overlaying the perception of what sells and what doesn't. We trust in your book's potential, so if something comes up that gets the doubts going, it is a natural and common part of every creative process. Give us a call if there's something we can help with, and if you find there's something in this info pack that is not included, let us know so we can include more information to help.

There are many paths your book's sales journey can take! If you get big news or are wondering how things are going, check in with us – we love hearing from you. Stay in touch and we'll be in contact if we receive new reviews or orders for you from distribution.

Best of luck and we'll speak to you soon!

THE TEAM AT LITTLE STEPS.