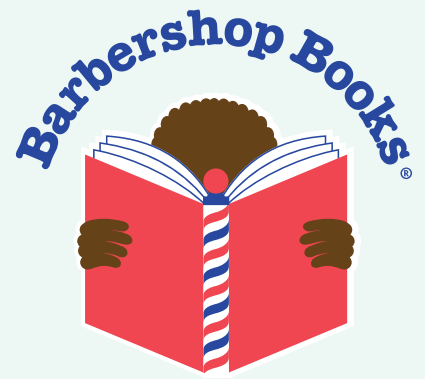


Vision

A future where all children identify as readers and enjoy learning.

Mission

To inspire Black boys and other vulnerable children to read for fun through child-centered, culturally responsive, and community-based programming and content.



Theory of Change

Early, positive, and culturally meaningful reading experiences cultivate children’s reading identity. When children identify as readers, they read for fun and perform better in reading.

Barbershop Books, winner of the National Book Foundation’s Innovations in Reading Prize, is a trusted curator of children’s literature for Black boys and other children. We support fun reading experiences for thousands of kids annually through our national network barbershops, schools, and community-based organizations.

Values

- Child-centered** We embrace the possibilities, strengths, and interests of children.
- Leadership** We empower individuals and communities to expand learning opportunities.
- Fun** We inspire and model the joy of lifelong reading.
- Collaboration** We partner with diverse community stakeholders to create system change.
- Innovation** We develop unique, compelling, and transformational content and programs.
- Excellence** We pursue measured impacts and organizational efficiencies that support long-term sustainability.

Programs

- **Barbershop Books:** Distributes boy-approved books to a national network of barbershops and provides early literacy training to barbers.
- **Reading So Lit Classroom:** A K–3 supplemental literacy program for schools that uses social-emotional learning, culturally responsive teaching, and imaginative play to support students’ reading success.
- **Reading So Lit Summer:** Addresses summer learning loss through fun virtual literacy lessons that support out-of-school time reading.
- **Barbershop Books E-Library:** Free online collection of independently published children’s e-books from Black and Brown authors and more than 70 fun storytime videos.

Founder

Alvin Irby is a former kindergarten teacher turned award-winning social entrepreneur, comedian, and author. As Founder and Chief Reading Inspirer at Barbershop Books, his work promoting reading in “How to inspire every child to be a lifelong reader,” has been viewed over 1 million times. His transformative work inspires thousands of Black and Brown children across America to read for fun. Irby holds an MS in Childhood Education from Bank Street Graduate School of Education, an MPA in Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy from New York University’s Wagner School of Public Service, and a BA in Sociology from Grinnell College.

