

# Barbershop Books®

**Mission:** Barbershop Books inspires Black boys and other vulnerable children to read for fun through child-centered, culturally responsive, and community-based programming and content.

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



## PROGRAMS

*Our award-winning programs reach more than 23K+ Black boys and other vulnerable children each month.*

**Barbershop Books:** A national literacy program that partners with communities and mission-aligned organizations to implement research-backed early literacy programming in barbershops and beyond.

**Barbershop Books E-Library:** Free online collection of independently published children's books by Black and Brown authors and fun storytime videos.

**Reading So Lit Summer:** A 2-week virtual summer reading program that hires and trains male high school students of color to lead fun, interactive literacy programming with Black and Brown boys ages 6-8.

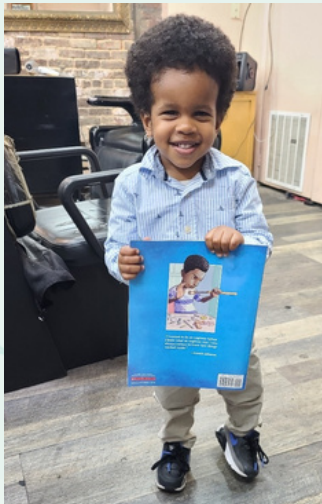
**Reading So Lit:** An AI-enabled literacy platform for PK-3 designed to support reading identity development. It generates strengths-based insights about students' reading preferences to enable personalized reading experiences in school and at home.

## 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.

## Values:

- Child-centered
- Leadership
- Fun
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Excellence



Founded in 2013, Barbershop Books, Inc. is a national literacy 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in New York City. As a trusted curator of culturally relevant and boy-approved children's books, we help communities and mission-aligned organizations implement research-backed early literacy programming in local barbershops and beyond. Our pioneering work with local program partners, including library systems, school districts, and municipalities, supports reading identity development and helps Black boys and other vulnerable children to see themselves as readers and read for fun.



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# Fostering Impactful Community Engagement through Reading

*Our award-winning programming inspires Black boys and other vulnerable children to identify as readers.*

The Barbershop Books program partners with mission aligned organizations to implement research-backed early literacy programming in barbershops and beyond. Our child-friendly reading spaces and boy-approved books inspire kids to read for fun.

## SYSTEMIC READING CHALLENGES

More than **82%** of Black male 4th-grade students in the U.S. do not read proficiently. Many of the Black boys that we serve have limited access to:

- Black male reading role models
- Engaging, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate books

## Program Reach

- Reaches **23,000+** boys per month
- Partners with **200+** barbershops
- Offers programming in **50+ cities**
- Offers Programming in **20+ states**



## OUTCOMES

Findings from a 2-year program evaluation conducted by New York University literacy researcher Dr. Susan Neuman found that Black boys in participating barbershops are more likely to be observed engaging in self-initiated reading and to identify as readers compared to boys in barbershops without the program.

- Before participating in the program more than **90%** of barbershops report **"rarely"** or **"never"** seeing boys read in their barbershops
- After participating in the program, more than **75%** of barbershops report seeing boys read **"daily"** or **"almost every day"**

Our strengths-based and community-rooted approach reduces reading trauma for Black boys by connecting reading to a culturally meaningful space that helps barbers serve as reading role models.



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