

Hello there,

It's great that you are interested in joining the world of children's literature. I am also happy to provide tips to aspiring authors! Please note I am not knowledgeable of the adult market, nor the self-publishing side. If you are seeking information about those markets, unfortunately, I cannot be of service.

In the world of children's literature, I can't stress enough how much you must *read, read, read!* While classics are cool, I'm referring to contemporary titles that are being published now. Determine where your work fits. I strongly suggest you read at least 50-100 titles published within the last three years to give you a kick start. This will improve your writing immensely.

Here are some websites that spotlight newly published and forthcoming children's books:

<http://mrschureads.blogspot.com/>

<https://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/category/reviews/>

<https://www.shelf-awareness.com/>

<https://thebrownbookshelf.com/>

<https://diversebooks.org/>

I'm pasting some resources below that have helped me along the path to publishing:

\* Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators ([SCBWI](http://www.scbwi.org)). I've been a member since 2008. If you are trying to break into children's literature, this is the organization to join: [www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org). Regional chapters hold conferences which will put you in direct contact with agents, editors, and fellow authors.

\* Follow [Publisher's Weekly](#) on Facebook and [Twitter](#). Also subscribe to their mailing list. They also have a website [www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com). Check the "[Rights Reports](#)" regularly to see what books are securing deals and if your work fits.

\* Some other Facebook pages to follow: [KidLit 411](#) and [KidLit411 Manuscript Swap](#). This is where you can have other aspiring authors read your work.

\* Other sites/social channels to look into: [Absolute Write Forum](#) (to find a critique partner), [Manuscript Wishlist](#) (to learn what agents and editors are looking for), [Kweli Conference](#) (for creators of color).

\* Join Twitter and follow these awesome pages: [DVPit](#), [DVCon](#). Also search for the hashtags #pitmad and #pitchwars. There are several agents who eye these pages and hashtags to scope out new writers.

\*Read the [Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market](#) books, published annually by Writer's Digest. This book was my bible when I was first starting out.

If you wrote a picture book, there are a few guidelines you need to learn. I'm posting some blogs and websites that spell everything out nicely:

<http://blog.bookbaby.com/2012/07/ten-tips-for-creating-your-first-childrenspicture-book/>

<https://www.joshfunkbooks.com/resources-for-writers>

<https://taralazar.com/2016/10/06/every-picture-book-author-should-make-a-storyboard/>

Don't worry about who will do the art for your book. If you secure a book deal, your publisher will find an illustrator for you.

If you wrote a novel, either middle grade or young adult, here are some resources for you:

<http://www.underdown.org/mf-middle-grade.htm>

<http://www.jennybowman.com/2017/11/09/how-to-write-a-middle-grade-novel/>

<https://medium.com/nanowrimo/how-to-write-a-ya-novel-89c0b3542cbc>

<https://www.prettyokmaggie.com/blog/2018/11/16/so-you-want-to-write-a-kids-book-oh-no>

You will most likely need an [agent](#) to send your work to publishing houses. Agents who accept picture book/novel writers will almost always want to see what else you have, so it's a good idea to have at least 3 picture books ready (or one complete novel). There are some publishers, however, who will consider your work, even if you don't have an agent. You can find that list [here](#).

Another really important thing to have is an online presence. Be sure to have a website, blog, or social media handle so that editors and agents can check out your work/brand.

It's also important to have a beta reader or critique partner before you start submitting your work to agents and editors at publishing houses. Joining the SCBWI or the Facebook and Twitter groups mentioned above will help connect you with these types of folks.

If you're looking for an editorial consultant, I highly recommend Mary Kole. [www.marykole.com](http://www.marykole.com). I consulted with her in the early stages of my career. Be sure to mention my name and that I sent you her way. She's AMAZING and was worth every penny.

In order to be in this business, you must surround yourself with people who have similar goals. And while some of the things I've mentioned cost money (i.e., joining SCBWI, hiring a consultant) you don't have to take that route.

There are lots of FREE and low-cost ways to educate yourself and get connected. Social media is a great resource. Take out books from the library such as the Writer's Digest books. Google "critique groups." You could also ask trusted people to read your work—a former English teacher, an avid reader friend, another aspiring author, etc.... When you feel your work is ready to submit to agents, take the plunge. This does NOT cost anything. I queried my agent and I had NOT met her at a conference of any sort. I simply took a chance, mainly because after working so hard on my manuscript, I knew I was ready for the next level. So, INVEST in yourself. There are lots of ways to do it.

**One thing, unfortunately, that I cannot do is read your manuscript.** This is mainly due to legal reasons, as well as current publishing deadlines that I am under. Also, please note I do not hold any specific power to connect aspiring authors with agents or publishing houses. Do the work. Build your village. Your "YES" will come. I wish you the best on this journey.

All my best,  
Tami Charles, [www.tamiwrites.com](http://www.tamiwrites.com)

