

Early Childhood Book Challenge Personas

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These Early Childhood Book Challenge Personas provide a window into the lives of end-users (in this case, the end-readers), for whom you are creating this manuscript. The goal of this project is to not only create an engaging story that increases engagement between children (0 to 3) and their caregivers, but also deeply resonates with residents in urban U.S. cities like Philadelphia. We believe a crucial step in the creative process is leading with empathy. By taking time to learn from the experiences of those we are seeking to impact through this book, we are better equipped to craft a narrative that resonates with children, families, and caregivers to meet their learning needs.

These personas are by no means exhaustive, but meant to serve as a grounding force to guide your creative process.

Yen

Single Mother 31-years old

Yen, 31, is a mother of two who immigrated to the United States from Vietnam. She lives with her three-year old son, eight-year old daughter, and extended family in an apartment in South Philadelphia. Having never received formal education in English, Yen struggles to read and verbally communicate in English. Each month, she receives books for her children from a neighborhood distribution program. She asks her daughter to read these books aloud for the family and translate the storyline into Vietnamese. In addition to supporting her son's development, Yen hopes these reading sessions will improve her family's English language learning.



Josephine

Elderly Caretaker 70-years old

Josephine, 70, is the retired daughter of Haitian immigrants living in West Philly. She is raising her two youngest grandchildren, ages two and seven in her home, and makes time every evening to read a book to them before bedtime. Josephine finds it difficult to keep up with the schedules and energetic demands of her grandchildren. However, she has connected with a network of grandmothers in her neighborhood who are also raising their grandchildren for support. They frequently discuss the challenges of relating to their grandchildren's lives with so many years between their experiences, despite being raised in the same community.



Amanda

Bilingual Toddler 1-year old

Amanda is a curious, adventurous toddler who just celebrated her first birthday in North Philly. She lives in a bilingual household with her parents and grandparents who moved to Philly from Puerto Rico. With Amanda's parents working long hours, she spends most of the day with her grandparents. Her grandparents' limited English literacy abilities make reading books together—particularly those in English—challenging. Instead, Amanda's grandparents engage with her through books by creating a storyline in Spanish while flipping through the pages. In the evenings, Amanda's parents alternate reading books to her in English. Her first words were both Spanish and English.



Sean

Community Leader 45-years old

Sean, 45, is an African American raised by his grandmother in a rowhouse in West Philly. Ever since he can remember, books have been a welcome escape from the stresses of navigating neighborhood tensions and violence, bringing possibility, optimism, and imagination to his world. As an educator, Sean dedicates his creative talents to designing literacy programs for families in the neighborhood in which he was raised. Through free access to books and educational programming, he champions reading, but is frustrated by the lack of books reflecting the experiences of the community he serves.



Terrell & Jasmine

New Parents **18-years old**

Terrell and Jasmine, 18, are new parents who grew up together in the same neighborhood in West Philly. They are both about to graduate high school, and excited to share this experience with their new baby girl, Destiny. As dedicated parents with packed schedules, Terrell and Jasmine are nervous about how to make the most of their limited time with Destiny to prioritize early learning. They're hoping for simple, quick daily ways they can support Destiny's language development that also feel fun and playful.

