



Independent Publishing Resources

This is not an exhaustive list of resources, but includes some of the resources that I have used and relied upon to learn and navigate the world of independent publishing. Some resources may change over time. While it is important to learn as much as you can before you jump in, remember independent publishing is a continual process of learning, experimenting, adjusting, and figuring out what works best—for you and your book. Take it one step at a time. Each time I publish a new book, I learn something new and improve. You will too!

Industry Standards Checklist: <https://www.ibpa-online.org/page/standardschecklist>

Professionalism matters! Please make yourself aware of the industry standards and hold yourself to the industry standards when creating your independently published book. This will help level the playing field – it's the quality of the book that matters, not the way it was published. Familiarize yourself with industry standards and as well as industry standards in the current children's book market. I make an effort to do everything that a traditional publisher would do when publishing my books including but not limited to getting my work reviewed by critique groups and industry experts at conferences (like SCBWI), purchasing ISBNs, registering for a Library of Congress Control Number, hiring professional editors who have worked in traditional publishing, hiring professional book designers/art directors who have worked in traditional publishing to design the interior files, cover, and format my files for print, submitting to trade reviews (independently published books can and do receive starred trade reviews!), and working with marketing professionals and organizations like IBPA to market my book to readers, schools, and libraries. You deserve the best and your book does too!

Books that will give you a step-by-step overview:

There are many other books out there, but these are the ones I have used and the ones I continue to reference each time I publish a new book.

Countdown to Book Launch Series by David Wogahn

I found the first three books in this Countdown to Launch Series very helpful:

<https://www.amazon.com/David-Wogahn/e/B003QDUB3E/> :

- **My Publishing Imprint: How to Create a Self-Publishing Book Imprint & ISBN Essentials**
(Countdown to Book Launch 1)
- **Register Your Book: The Essential Guide to ISBNs, Barcodes, Copyright, and LCCNs**
(Countdown to Book Launch 2) by David Wogahn
- **The Book Review Companion: An Author's Guide to Getting and Using Book Reviews**
(Countdown to Book Launch 3)

These books have step-by-step instructions for setting up your publishing imprint/LLC, instructions for how to buy ISBNs and how to pre-assign and assign them (timelines on when to do that related to publishing your book), applying for a LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number), getting ready for book launch, and more. My books are covered in post-it notes and I refer to them each time I have a new book come out. David's website, <https://www.authorimprints.com/learn/> has helpful articles too.

How To Self-Publish A Children's Book

by Eevi Jones

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0997025492/>

Eevi's book about how to publish a children's book was helpful for me and she has step-by-step instructions on finding an illustrator, sample contracts, and more. If you are looking to independently publish a children's book, this is a great place to start.

Business Tips and Taxes for Writers

by Carol Topp

This book was very helpful in learning how to track my expenses and inventory. She has a sample template you can use to track expenses for the Schedule C.

Where to find and hire editors, book designers, illustrators

Reedsy

<https://reedsy.com/>

This site has lots of resources as well as a marketplace where you can find people who have worked in the traditional publishing industry -- editors, illustrators, book designers, etc. Some are currently working in traditional publishing but are freelancing on the side. You can look at their resumes and read reviews. I used Reedsy to find my editor (who was a senior editor at Scholastic) and book designer (who worked as an art director for BBC publishing, DK, Disney) who formatted the interior and cover files so they are print ready for KDP and Ingram.

Upwork

<https://www.upwork.com/>

I found my illustrator for *Ice Cream with Grandpa* on Upwork. I did what Eevi suggested in her book and interviewed two illustrators by hiring each to do a sample illustration, then I picked the one I thought was a better fit for the book. I highly recommend reading through her book before you reach out to illustrators so you know what to ask for, file types, correct sizing, RGB vs CMYK, etc.

Other places to find Illustrators:

<https://www.behance.net/#>

<https://www.scbwi.org/>

Distribution: Where I upload/print my books:

Note: There are other options out there that I don't have experience with like Lulu and Draft2Digital, but the below are what I've used.

IngramSpark

<https://www.ingramspark.com/resources>

<https://www.ingramspark.com/how-it-works/distribute>

Ingram is one of the publishing industry's largest global book distributors. I set up my books for distribution through Ingram (paperback and hardcover), and enable global distribution so they will also be available through Amazon, Bookshop.org Barnes & Noble, as well as other global sellers, and available for ordering from libraries and bookstores worldwide. When you set up your book on Ingram, you will enter in all of your metadata which will then appear on all booksellers websites once your book goes live. They have high quality printing on demand. (I use the premium or ultra premium color printing for my illustrated books). Many libraries and bookshops order through Ingram so having your book set up through them is essential if this is one of your goals as an independent publisher.

Ingram also has many free resources, including a free self-publishing courses:

<https://www.ingramspark.com/self-publishing-courses>, on metadata, marketing, book design and more.

Ingram print/ship calculator:

<https://myaccount.ingramspark.com/Portal/Tools/ShippingCalculator?hsCtaAttrib=187223779362>

Amazon's KDP

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GHKDSCW2KQ3K4UU4

From my experience, KDP typically has a lower cost to print author copies, but I have noticed the quality for color illustrations varies between Ingram and KDP. I suggest uploading to both Ingram and KDP and comparing to see which option you want to go with for your paperback book. To my knowledge KDP doesn't print hardcover children's books. I have used KDP for some of my paperback books, and all of my ebooks. Amazon, along with Goodreads, is a search engine for people looking for books, so it is important to encourage readers to leave reviews there even if you prefer they buy your book elsewhere.

KDP Print and Royalty Calculator:

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/royalty-calculator

Organizations:

SCBWI

<https://www.scbwi.org/self-publishing-resources>

You can access self-publishing resources as a member of SCBWI, as well as many wonderful marketing and promotional opportunities. There are also webinars and events offered nationally and regionally that can help you on your journey. The SCBWI podcast is another good resource!

Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)

<https://www.ibpa-online.org/>

From IBPA's website: "The Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) is a not-for-profit membership organization serving and leading the independent publishing community through advocacy, education, and tools for success. With over 3,500 members, IBPA is the largest publishing trade association in the U.S. If you're an independent publisher, self-published author, hybrid publisher, university or nonprofit press, you've come to the right place."

I'm also a member of IBPA which gives you discounts on purchasing ISBNs at Bowker (I recommend owning your own ISBNs, and NOT using the free ones offered by Ingram or Amazon), discounts to other services, as well as access to many cooperative marketing opportunities. I've had my books go to the ALA Annual conference four times, had two book signings at the IBPA booth at ALA, and have participated in many cooperative emails to School Librarians and Public Children's Librarians. I have also exhibited my book in the IBPA Booths in Frankfurt for the International Rights book fair and Bologna Children's Book Fair through IBPA. IBPA also has an awards program that is considered one of the top awards for indie books (*My Love for You Is Like a Garden* won a Silver award and I flew to Denver for the ceremony.) Your membership with SCBWI allows you to get a discount on an IBPA membership:

<https://www.scbwi.org/scbwi-partners-with-ibpa>

Membership Benefits: <https://www.ibpa-online.org/page/Author-Publisher-IBPA-Member-Benefits>

IBPA Podcast:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/inside-independent-publishing-with-ibpa/id1366961213?mt=2>

Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) Watch Dog Lists

<https://www.allianceindependentauthors.org/watchdog/>

ALLi list of Awards Contests

The Alliance of Independent Authors monitors the literary awards industry and has a rating of awards. The ratings are the opinion of the ALLi watchdog, based on pricing, reputation of the award, contract terms and conditions, transparency, judging process, and value to the author.

<https://selfpublishingadvice.org/author-awards-contests-rated-reviewed/>

Book Reviews

Kirkus Reviews

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/indie-reviews/>

Foreword Reviews

<https://publishers.forewordreviews.com/reviews/>

Publisher's Weekly & BookLife Reviews

<https://booklife.com/about-us/publishers-weekly-reviews-and-booklife-reviews.html>

Additional Resources

Book Dummy Template:

<https://www.inkygirl.com/inkygirl-main/2015/11/4/free-picture-book-thumbnail-templates-for-writers-and-illustrators.html>

If you have your story written and want to see how it will fit into a book, I recommend creating a book dummy. I have done this for all of my books and have found this website helpful. You will need to know the length of your book when communicating with your illustrator, book designer, and in determining the cost to print your book as it is based on the number of pages as well as size. Don't skip this step!

Your Local Library

I recommend getting new books from your library and studying the format, illustrations, text, book size and seeing what you like and what you don't like. When I was working on *Ice Cream with Grandpa*, I checked out all of the books I could find on dementia and Alzheimer's to see what was on the market, how they addressed the topic and how my book could fill gaps in what was available.

Children's Book Review

<https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/media-kit/>

They offer a variety of marketing packages to help authors launch their books. I've done several Virtual Book Tours and interviews with the Children's Book Review. See below for examples:

- [My Love for You Is Like the Night Sky | Awareness Tour](#)
- [My Love for You Is Like a Garden | Awareness Tour](#)
- <https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/tag/laura-smetana/>

Darcy Pattison

<https://www.darcypattison.com/>

<https://www.indiekidsbooks.com/>

Great blog and resources on kids books publishing. She is really business focused. Here is the article she wrote about how she has made a career of indie publishing:

<https://janefriedman.com/how-to-make-six-figures-self-publishing-childrens-books/>

Jane Friedman

<https://janefriedman.com/category/self-publishing/>

<https://janefriedman.com/self-publish-your-book/>

Publisher's Weekly - Subscribe to The Children's Bookshelf

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/email-subscriptions/index.html>

This is a great way to stay on top of what is happening in the children's book world.

Remember to take it one day at a time and one step at a time.
Best of luck on your independent publishing journey!