



GUIDELINES FOR BAGGING

Best practices for bagging books — a simple way to organize and share your My Road to Reading collection.

Many libraries find it helpful to send My Road to Reading books home in small sets rather than one at a time. It can speed up checkout, make returns smoother, and keep the program's step-by-step progression intact so readers keep building on what they've learned.



Why Bother With Bags?

Bagging isn't required, but some libraries have found it genuinely useful. Here's the short version of why:

- **Simpler checkout.** One barcode on the bag checks out the whole set at once.
- **Books stay in better shape.** Keeping books together reduces wear during circulation and transport — especially helpful for small books in young hands.
- **Progression stays intact.** Grouping by step makes it easy for families to know where they are and where they're headed.
- **Easy to identify.** Clear plastic bags let staff and families see what's inside at a glance, and books stay protected in the process.
- **Less book loss.** Sets that travel together tend to come back together.
- **A gentler start for families.** A small, ready-to-go bundle feels approachable while still providing the practice young children need to master foundational skills.

How Many Books Per Bag?

There's no single right answer. Libraries use different approaches depending on checkout cycles, reader needs, and shelf space. Here are two common configurations:

2–3 books: lighter load

Good for shorter checkout cycles, newer readers, or anyone who does better with a smaller, more focused set. Works especially well in the earlier steps.

4–5 books: practice bundle

A popular choice for weekly checkout. Enough variety for meaningful practice at home without feeling like too much.

What to Know Before You Start

- **Label the bag, not the books.** Putting the barcode on the bag means one scan handles the whole set and no individual labels to track down.
- **Clear bags are your friend.** Staff and families can see what's inside at a glance, and books stay protected in the process.
- **Group by step.** Keeping the sequence organized helps readers (and caregivers) stay on track with the program.
- **Keep sets consistent.** Same number of books per bag makes reshelving and circulation a lot more predictable.
- **Tuck in a family guide.** A short note on how to use the books at home goes a long way, especially for families who are new to decodable books.

How Bags Support the Program

Bags protect the books, simplify checkout, and give readers a clear, step-by-step path to follow. And, when libraries bag My Road to Reading books, they're not just solving a logistics problem, they're making it easier for families to use the program. When a family can pick up a bag and know exactly what to do with it, the chances of those books getting read at home go up.

Keep in mind: You know your community best! Bagging is just one approach, and there's plenty of room to adapt it. Start with what makes sense for your library, see what your families respond to, and adjust from there.