

Children's Book Publishing Checklist

From finished manuscript to printed book — format, editing, illustration, ISBN, printing, and launch.

1. Format

- ☐ Pick a trim size (8x8", 8.5x8.5", or 8.5x11") before illustrating anything
- ☐ Plan page count in multiples of 8 (24, 32, or 40 pages is standard)
- ☐ Decide softcover vs. hardcover

2. Text & editing

- ☐ Read the full manuscript out loud before anything else
- ☐ Check sentence length/vocabulary against the target age
- ☐ Get at least one outside read (teacher, librarian, or well-read friend)
- ☐ Proofread again after layout, not just before

3. Illustration

- ☐ Lock a character reference sheet before illustrating page one
- ☐ Check every new page against the reference for consistency
- ☐ Match color palette/mood to the story's tone
- ☐ Leave negative space for text in the composition
- ☐ Export at 300 dpi minimum at final trim size for print

4. ISBN & copyright

- ☐ Skip this section for personal/classroom-only copies
- ☐ Get an ISBN (Bowker, or via your print platform) only if distributing to retail
- ☐ Copyright exists automatically on creation — registration is optional

5. Printing

- ☐ Choose a print-on-demand platform (KDP, IngramSpark, Blurb, etc.)
- ☐ Order one proof copy before any bulk order
- ☐ Pick paper stock: matte for read-aloud glare, gloss for color pop

6. Launch

- ☐ Build a simple one-link book page (cover, description, age range)
- ☐ Share with family/classroom/homeschool group first
- ☐ Pick a specific launch date if sharing more widely

A note on AI-assisted illustration: review every generated page against your character reference sheet before finalizing, the same way you would with hand-drawn art.