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**Charlie Patton**  
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## Dishing up Cornbread to young minds

It's been three decades. But Vincent Taylor still feels the humiliation of being assigned by his elementary school teachers to the "slow" reading group when he was in first grade.

"No matter how many books I write, I still feel that," said Taylor, 38, now an elementary school teacher himself.

Taylor has dedicated himself to helping his students avoid the embarrassment caused by poor reading skills.

To that end, he just published his fourth book, *Cornbread Has a Bad Habit*, the second in a planned series about Cornbread, a semi-autobiographical elementary school student.

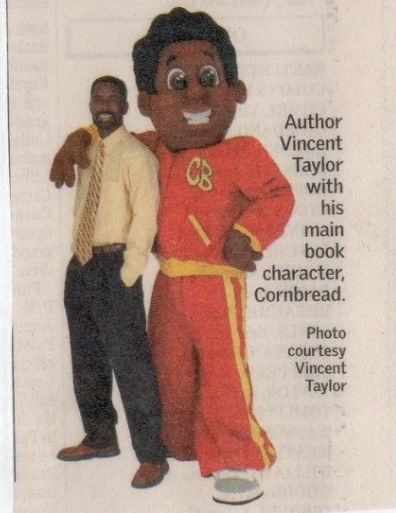
Aimed at children at the third grade level, the Cornbread books are designed to make reading seem fun. Taylor said.

"I wanted to reach kids with fiction," he said.

Although he based Cornbread on himself, Taylor said he didn't want to name his lead character Vincent.

"Too boring," he said.

**PATTON** continues on B-3



Author  
Vincent  
Taylor  
with  
his  
main  
book  
character,  
Cornbread.

Photo  
courtesy  
Vincent  
Taylor

## Patton: Author makes learning fun for kids

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So he thought about who he was and decided that he was essentially a family man. He has a wife, Dina, and two daughters, Ja'Mone, 8, and Ja'Niya, 5, and he remains close to his parents, Ethel and Joshua.

Then he thought about the Sunday dinners his family has shared over the years.

"One constant was my mother's cornbread," he said.

Taylor, who grew up on Jacksonville's Westside and graduated from Lee High School, went to the University of North Florida planning to become a college counselor. But once he got into a classroom, he realized he loved teaching.

Today, he teaches math, science and social studies at John Love Elementary School on the Eastside. He's also the leader of the Young Gentlemen's Club, a group of fifth-graders he selects each year.

"We focus on respect and philanthropy," he said.

Each Wednesday, when Taylor and the club members share a lunch, each wears a shirt and

tie.

For most of the boys, it's not the first time they've worn a tie, because they wear ties to church. "But it's a new experience for them to do in school," Taylor said.

Taylor's first book, *Rhythmic Reading with Rap*, grew out of his love of rap music. He then wrote a book of poetry, *The Abstract Art of a Poet*, before publishing his first Cornbread book, *Cornbread Runs for Class President*, in 2004.

He published the books himself through TriEclipse Publishing, a company he started, and markets them through education workshops and conferences.

Taylor said he plans to continue the Cornbread series in an effort to educate and entertain at the same time.

"Instruction should be fun for the kids," he said. "If it's not fun, I'm not teaching it right."

Copies of his books are also available through his Web site [www.vincenttaylor.net](http://www.vincenttaylor.net).

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