# Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

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Association for Library Service to Children

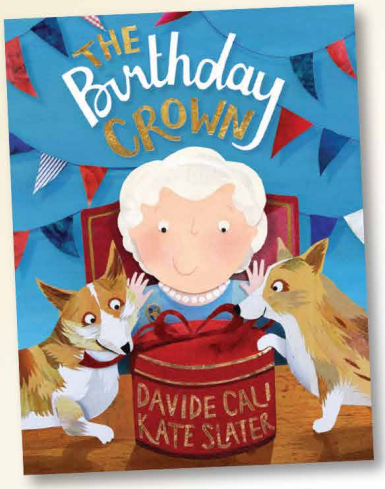
## WORDLESS BOOKS:

Plus an Interview with Three-Time Caldecott Winner David Wiesner

Appeal of Fairy Tales

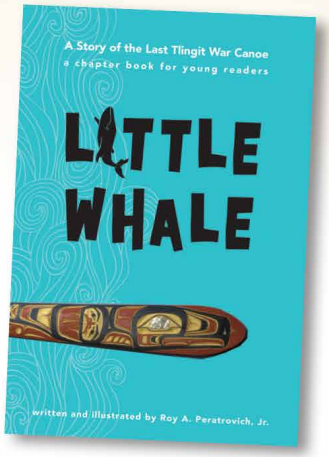
Library Outreach via Book Bike

# New Books for Children and Young Adults



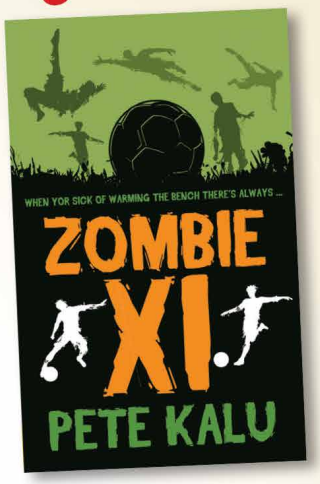

*From the* ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST

**The Birthday Crown**
Davide Cali
**Illustrated by Kate Slater**
32 p., 32 color plates Cloth $22.50




*From the* university of alaskapress

**Little Whale**
*A Story of the Last Tlingit War Canoe*
Roy A. Peratrovich, Jr.
64 p., 7 line drawings, 1 map Paper $16.95




*From* HopeRoad hr

**Zombie XI**
*The Boy Who Got Sick of Warming the Bench*
Pete Kalu
224 p. Paper $11.99

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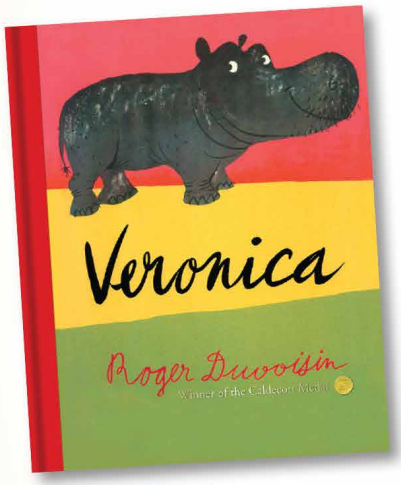
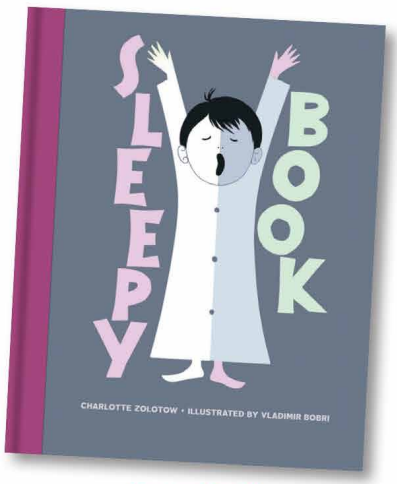
*From the* Bodleian Library UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD




**Veronica**
Roger Duvoisin
32 p., 21 color plates
Cloth $20.00




**Sleepy Book**
Charlotte Zolotow
**Illustrated by Vladimir Bobri**
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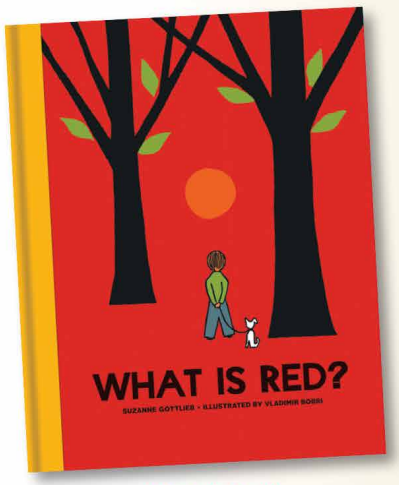
**Forthcoming in November**




**What is Red?**
Suzanne Gottlieb
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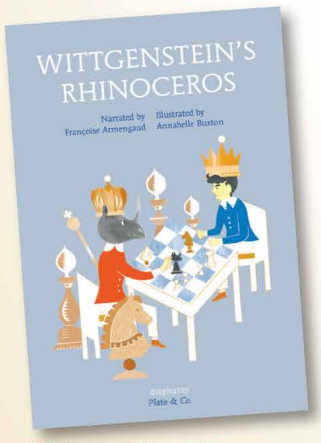
*Plato & Co.* *From* diaphanes

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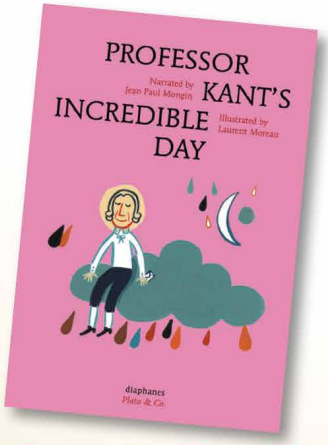


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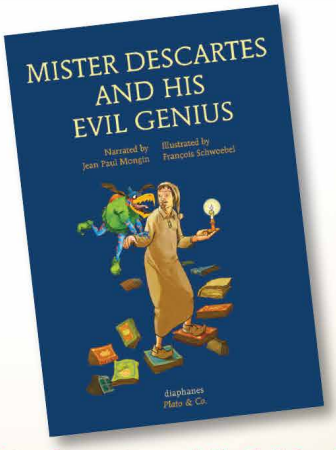


**Mister Descartes and His Evil Genius**
Jean Paul Mongin
**Illustrated by François Schwoebel**
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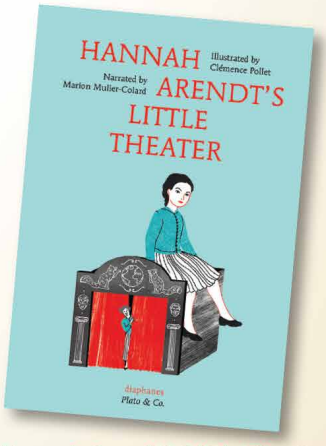


**Hannah Arendt's Little Theater**
Marion Muller-Colard
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64 p., illustrated in color throughout
Cloth $15.00

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2015 APEX® AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

# Editor's Note
## Read HOW Many Books?

*By Sharon Verbeten*

The library where I work, Brown County Library in Green Bay, WI, came to the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program just a few years ago. I remember introducing it to some storytime parents in the beginning and having them exclaim, "They have to read HOW many books?"

It was almost as if I had asked them to check out all one thousand books that day and asked for them to be returned in a week.

As librarians, we are keenly aware of the importance reading every day has on a child's success—at almost every level of learning, but especially for early literacy. But I found that a good number of parents thought that the title of the program—and the amount of books—seemed daunting. Of course, when you break it down to the number of books divided by the number of years, etc….well, we all know the math. And we all know that *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* [*insert your child's favorite book here*] will be on that list multiple times.

It's been a joy to see parents returning with our 1,000 Books entry forms—and even more thrilling to see the tiny toddlers holding up the certificates and/or prizes they have won for participating. We even hosted a Giant Early Learning Play Date this past winter, where we built a "throne" of discarded books; our little readers and participants could proudly ascend the throne, book in hand—better than any scepter!

Sure, the throne was symbolic and the play date was chock full of early literacy stories, games, and events. But it was all part of what makes us so proud to be children's librarians.

I haven't yet personally talked with a parent whose child has hit that 1,000 books milestone, but I'll bet they feel just as much accomplishment in helping their child achieve that level as I do as a librarian . . . even if they did have to read *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* fifty-two times! &


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# Text Optional

## Visual Storytelling with Wordless Picturebooks

JENNIFER GIBSON


Wordless books by Shaun Tan, David Wiesner, and Mitsumasa Anno in SUNY Cortland's Teaching Materials Center collection. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Gibson.

Wordless picturebooks are on the rise and are increasingly revered by readers and critics. In many countries, including the United States, wordless picturebooks have become a sub-genre unto themselves—a publishing trend resulting in author/illustrators who even specialize in this type of book.

A current search on worldcat.org for juvenile books with the Subject Heading "Stories Without Words," yielded just over two thousand, with a notable increase in the latter half of the twentieth century leading into the twenty-first.

In *Wonderfully Wordless*, an ambitious reader's advisory of sorts for several types of wordless books, author William Martin gleans expert worldwide opinion to select the best in contemporary wordless books, including picturebooks.[1] Many of the wordless picturebook makers highlighted, such as three-time Caldecott winner David Wiesner (see sidebar), have been informed by the rich history of wordless books for adults, artists' books, and graphic novels.[2]

Creating picturebooks without words for children, however, has its roots in educational aids to simply encourage younger children to speak about a story, until the 1970s, when wordless picturebooks shifted their emphasis to the unlimited possibilities in graphic narration.[3] Images have become more than simple didactic aids prompting young readers to speak, and instead reach new levels of artistry within the picturebook's thirty-two-page format. The visual sophistication of the author's/illustrator's work allows readers of all ages to interpret the story for themselves, whether orally, in writing, or in a different form of creative response.

## Literacy Use: Putting Words to the Wordless

While wordless picturebooks are excellent ways to introduce preschoolers to the book's format and design and to book handling and sequencing of a story,[4] the wordless picturebook is no longer just for beginning readers. While emphasizing middle-grade readers, Judith Cassady notes that any grade level can benefit from exposure to wordless picturebooks for the inherent creativity involved in developing one's own interpretation of the story.[5] She summarizes:

> The use of wordless books can encourage reluctant and struggling readers in middle school and junior high to read, develop vocabulary, and make the connection between written and spoken language. Older readers seem to respond to wordless books because they are so visually appealing and because they often involve cleverly developed plots. But best of all, these books seem to counter struggling readers' tendency to focus on the words to a degree that interferes with their being able to make sense of the story and predict outcomes.[6]

***Jennifer Gibson*** *is a Visiting Assistant Librarian at the State University of New York at Cortland's Memorial Library, as well as an illustrator. Her work may be seen at www.jgibsonillustration.com.*

A straightforward approach to using wordless books in the library or classroom is to invite readers to provide their own dialogue or narrative to accompany the pictures according to their level. Limiters such as a maximum word count, or even a list of vocabulary words to utilize in their story, could enrich the activity.[7] Tuten-Puckett and Richey suggest further opportunities for many lessons, such as students conducting their own self-directed library research on the topics presented in wordless books.[8] Author/illustrator websites sometimes contain supplementary activities for readers to accompany wordless books as well.

## Beyond Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

Researchers in education and language-learning are recognizing the potential of wordless picturebooks as teaching tools specifically for second language learners. As for any readers, interpretation of the story plays a key role. Parents who speak a second language can become more involved in their child's education by "authoring" wordless books for their children. Open-ended questions about wordless stories allow young language learners to respond to the story in their own words and build confidence in the new language. Flatley and Rutland note that

> Because wordless picturebooks tell a story without the use of words, the linguistically and culturally different students can create text that is in their natural language pattern and based upon their prior knowledge and schemata.[9]

Wordless books can also provide a starting point for sharing immigrant experiences. Two wordless books interpreting the theme of migration (Wiesner's *Flotsam* and Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*) used in the international research project *Visual Journeys: Understanding Immigrant Children's Responses to the Visual Image in Contemporary Picturebooks* benefited immigrant children in Scotland in more than literacy development:[10]

> What this project did was more than involve the children in developing and using their critical literacy skills, it also created a safe space for the children to begin to share their stories of immigration, not by asking them outright, but through weeks of nurturing a trusting relationship with each other as we read the wordless texts.[11]

Creators of wordless texts are from many countries and cultures, and researching their backgrounds and artistic heritages can provide librarians and teachers with the opportunity for cross-cultural experiences among diverse young readers. In *Crossover Picturebooks*, Beckett highlights wordless books created by Mitsumasa Anno in the tradition of Japanese scroll painting, as just one example.[12] Whether in story plot, technical artistry, or page layout, culture can be an interpretive talking point.

## Perfect for Visual Literacy

While there is an ever-growing body of research on wordless picturebooks' multiple contributions to childhood literacy, there is less material, but much potential, concerning the format's capacity for visual literacy. Defined as "how people perceive, evaluate, apply, and create conceptual visual representations,"[13] visual literacy's importance to K–12 education is emphasized in an increasingly visual, cinematographic, and digital environment.[14]

Tuten-Puckett and Richey outline supplemental cross-disciplinary activities, many of them art-related, that librarians and classroom teachers could easily incorporate after introducing a wordless book.[15] Book reviews for illustration will typically highlight the medium and tone of a book's artwork, whether wordless or not, and are great to share with K–12 students or give as an assignment to write their own review emphasizing visual elements. The inclusion of Art Notes on the copyright page gives important details for illustration processes, such as technique and choice of medium.[16]

Exactly how a wordless book tells a story via pictures, and provides didactic artistic appreciation to its readers, are scholarly topics worth exploring, especially considering the richness and variety of the contemporary wordless picturebook genre. Palette, perspective, design, point of view, atmosphere, and characterization, to name a few visual elements, are no longer secondary to the text, but actually tell a story.

How that artistry works can be explored by an illustrator's perspective of wordless books about his craft. As Wiesner notes in the introduction to *Wordless/Almost Wordless Picturebooks*, "Because the images are the "text," everything in them must contribute not only to the advancement of the plot but to revealing the emotions and feelings of the characters."[17]

## Growing Wordless Collections Have Much to Offer

For librarians, increasing the collection of wordless books and suggesting them to readers benefits many. Whether patrons are new arrivals to this country, beginning or reluctant readers, or anyone who simply appreciates an interesting plot and a spectacular array of art, wordless books can enhance literacy, cross borders, and provide a new way of seeing the world.

Luckily, there is no sign that wordless books will decrease in production or readership. In 2013, the School for Visual Arts in New York City developed a Visual Narrative Master's program where the most recent class's senior projects included wordless picturebooks.[18] Master's theses on wordless books are being written as scholarship on the subject continues.[19] There are additional wordless book activities for readers to appreciate online (too many to mention in just one article), and of course, for librarians to recommend. &

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## Caldecott Winner David Wiesner Speaks Volumes on Wordless Books

The only living three-time Caldecott Award winner David Wiesner took time to speak with *Children and Libraries* about the state of wordless books…and what's next.

**You have done other types of illustration, but are known for wordless books. How does illustrating a wordless book differ from that of books with words, or editorial illustration?**

Sequential book work is its own world. Editorial work is completely different. I did editorial early on and it didn't appeal to me.

When I was in art school, my direction became clearer. Putting pictures together sequentially to tell stories is what really excited me. And when I saw examples of wordless books, I became really excited. The wordless books by Lynd Ward—*God's Man, Madman's Drum, Wild Pilgrimage*—were particularly inspiring.

It is during the process of developing a story that it becomes clear whether it will be wordless or not—the needs of the story determine whether I use text or not.

For *Art and Max,* I thought of doing it wordlessly, but I would have had a different book with a lot more pictures. The text, or dialogue, is able to make conceptual leaps in a much easier way. It can be more difficult to show some things just with pictures. There are times when a sentence or text will convey information more quickly and simply.

Having the characters speak in *Art and Max* allowed me to do a simpler page layout, which I found appealing. Had I done the book wordlessly, the layout would have had many, many more panels and would have been a different reading experience. That's not bad, but I envisioned the story in a much simpler way.

There is a point at which a story could go either way. In *Flotsam,* I did early versions wordlessly and with text. I was still working out the story and was trying different approaches to help me clarify what I was trying to say. When the story finally came together, it just flowed out in pictures. There were no words that would add anything to it.

A wordless book doesn't have the author's voice—the text—telling the story. Each reader tells it in their own way. There is an interpretive element that is really interesting.

**Let's talk about your overall process. What steps do you take to create a wordless book?**

In simplified terms, it's a four-step process. It starts in my sketch book and thumbnails. I then go to a full-size dummy. The third step, the place between the dummy and finished painting, is when I make very detailed drawings. This is when I do my research and find my reference. It's when I decide what everything will look like—where I build the world.

The final part is to paint, and that is all about how well I can render the images. Everything before painting is all about the story. Especially in a wordless book where the images do the storytelling, every decision I make in terms of the drawings is about how it affects the story.

Three-time Caldecott Award winner David Wiesner at work in his studio.
Photo courtesy of David Wiesner.

The flow of the story and pictures is the fun part. I want to design a rhythm to the pages—a mix of full-page pictures, double-page spreads, and pages with multiple panels—to hopefully create a compelling reading experience. One of the most important parts of making a picturebook is planning what the reader experiences when they turn the page. It can be the climax of some action or the punch line to a joke. Nothing happens by chance in a picturebook. I choose everything deliberately.

**Who, or what, are your artistic influences? For example, has film played a role in the development of your sequential art?**

So many things influenced me—books, paintings, comic books, film.

As a kid, I was given a copy of the book *Hitchcock/Truffaut* by Francois Truffaut. It's a series of conversations between these two filmmakers. And it had pages and pages of sequences from Hitchcock's films showing his editing process. Hitchcock was talking about how he put together images, and it was absolutely captivating. Putting images together to tell stories—this is just what picturebooks do on a smaller scale.

I saw *2001: A Space Odyssey* when it came out in 1968. I was eleven. It changed my life—no kidding. One of the many things I took from it was the importance of the juxtaposition of images—how they affect each other.

I considered going to film school, but was really drawn to the form of the book, especially wordless books. Wordless books have this rich history that is somewhat below the commercial radar. Raymond Brigg's *The Snowman* is an early example of a wordless book breaking into the mainstream. (I'm curious as to whether it was after the short film version that the book became really popular).

And comic books were the first place I saw visual storytelling. The unique thing about comics is the space in between the panels. The reader has to fill in that information themselves, in their mind. Just how much the reader has to fill in is important. If the changes from panel to panel are too small, the experience becomes boring. If the leap is too great, you lose the reader. Finding that right balance, and mixing up the degree of the cognitive leap, makes for an engaging reading experience.

**And what do you think the future holds for wordless books?**

Certainly the awareness seems to have taken a big leap over the past ten years. I hope it continues. I would love to see what others do with the genre. As more young kids are exposed to them, the genre will not seem so exotic. Maybe some of those kids will go on to create them, too.

**What makes a good wordless picture book, in your opinion?**

The avoidance of the repetition, unless you are Chris Ware, who did *Jimmy Corrigan's Smartest Kid on Earth*. He will do a giant page of images of a character that barely change to make a point, which is a device that can be used, like I did a mini version where the boy waits for the pictures to be developed in *Flotsam*. But that is one of the decisions in a picturebook where I cannot give up too much space to that, so I did an abbreviated version of that.

Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* explores an idea at length, lots of double-page spreads; he broke it down based on a template of *The Snowman* by Briggs. So everybody reflects off everybody else. To take something at that length, it's a different way of thinking.

**World-building seems to be an important element of your visual storytelling. Whether it is an alien language in *Mr. Wuffles* or flying animals in *Tuesday*, the worlds you create are familiar yet full of fantasy. Does this characteristic come easily to you? Is it part of your way of seeing the world?**

Building the world of a story is great fun. As I said, this happens in the third stage of my process, where I am deciding on the look of everything you'll see in the book.

In the case of *Tuesday*, I knew there would be frogs flying around a town. This story could have taken place anywhere—it's up to me to decide. I wanted to create an environment that felt like it could be a real place, not a generic place. I found a book of old photos from the 1800s of Provincetown, Massachusetts. I really like the look of the houses, their feel. So I used them as the model for the architecture.

When I am working, I draw tons and tons of stuff, brainstorming the world and characters. A lot of it doesn't make it into the book, but I need to get a feel for the world first. Then I can decide what to use.

In *Flotsam*, I had the camera have a roll of film with eight shots—that's all you see in the book. But I drew at least fifty different photos. I didn't stop at the first eight—I wanted to really explore all the possible sights the camera could have recorded. I then chose the eight that felt like they worked together.

A world has to have its own consistent logic. Kids will know if you are just randomly making stuff up, if it doesn't adhere to some set of laws.

In *The Three Pigs*, there are several planes of reality—the story inside the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, the worlds inside each of the other stories, and the world in between all those stories. Each reality has a different look. For example, in the in-between world the characters speak in comic word balloons, they are rendered more three dimensionally, and there is a consistent light source coming from the upper right. Each world is identifiable from its visual characteristics.

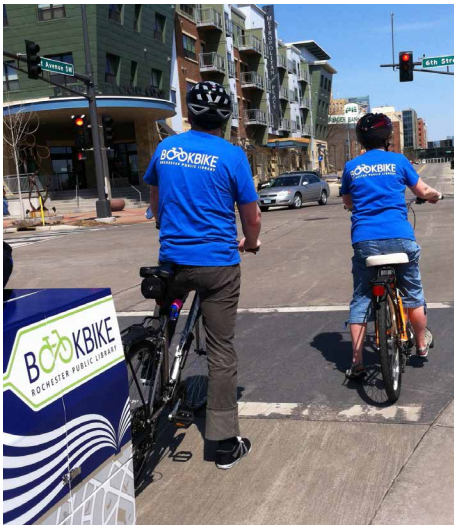
**You have won three Caldecott medals for your work. Do you believe these honors have elevated the genre of wordless books?**

Interesting. I don't know, I guess I would have to say it has to some extent. Over time the general public has become more aware of the Caldecott. With recent wins by wordless books, the form hopefully gains more acceptance.

**Research on wordless books often credits them as successful classroom strategies for beginning language learners and emergent readers. After having read your books, however, there is something of another level on which to view them that speaks to me as an adult reader, such as the conformity vs. creativity of the cloud creations in *Sector 7*. Do you feel wordless books are for adults as well?**

The way that books are being used in classes, therapy, creative writing—none of that was on my radar. I was simply drawn to it as an art form, but am thrilled as to how the books are being used!

There are obviously books done specifically for adults—the Lynd Ward books, in part, were done for an adult audience in the 1930s. There are quite a number of people doing wordless for the adult market. Anyone interested in visual storytelling would be missing something important by not looking at the work being done today.


# Shifting Gears . . . It's How We Roll

## Minnesota's Award-Winning BookBike

HEATHER ACERRO

In April 2015, Rochester (MN) Public Library (RPL) launched its BookBike, a bicycle-powered outreach cart filled with books, library information, and fun giveaways. RPL works with a service population of 141,985 in Olmsted County, through an 85,470-square-foot downtown library and a Bookmobile.

From April through December 2015, during its first nine months in operation, our BookBike and staff visited 117 events, welcomed 6,546 visitors, circulated 713 items, answered 1,186 reference questions, and created 62 library cards. Materials and services provided on the BookBike include materials to check out, library card applications, library event schedules, local bike trail maps, library brochures and program promotions, and education on accessing digital materials. Like all good ideas, we borrowed pieces of our program from other libraries already successfully offering bicycle outreach.

## Bicycle Outreach in Minnesota? Seriously?

In 2012, RPL utilized community input to create a new strategic plan, core values, mission, and vision. This new set of guiding documents set us on a path toward more collaboration, community engagement, creativity, and outreach activities.

In late 2014, we were approached by We Bike Rochester, a local bicycle coalition, with the bicycle outreach idea, and we rode away with it. It sounded like a lot of fun and a good fit to connect with customers at parks and events in and near the downtown area. Due to the fact that we were already providing outreach at many outdoor summer events, we knew having a BookBike would help us to make more of an impact on the community and meet strategic goals to increase awareness and access to the library.

Since the BookBike is a program of our Youth Services Division, most of our outreach focuses on reaching children and families. We attend special events in the community, as well as offer a regular outreach schedule to local parks. Minnesota is famous for ridiculous windchills and mountains of snow, which means that when the sun is shining, everyone is outside soaking up as many rays as they can. During the winter, we provide services indoors, as our custom-built BookBike can be converted from bike trailer to push cart to use inside the walking skyway and subway system connected to our downtown library.

## Goals for the Road

RPL serves the residents of Olmsted County, all Minnesota library cardholders, and visitors to our community. Since Rochester is home to Mayo Clinic, the region attracts more than two million visitors each year. The goals of the BookBike Program are to

- reach new or inactive library customers;
- increase awareness of library programs and services;
- build relationships between RPL staff, neighbors, and community organizations;
- provide access to library materials to children and families where they gather;
- reduce transportation barriers;
- demonstrate how easy it is to get to our downtown library by bicycle; and
- meet visitors to share with them the services the library provides, including a low-cost visitor card.

## Funding the Ride

To launch the BookBike, we received just under $7,000 in Community Collaboration grant funds from Southeast Libraries Cooperating (SELCO), which was funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. With the grant money, we purchased most of the equipment needed to get the program on the road. For the seven-month planning and implementation period of the program covered by the grant, our project cost including the grant, in-kind staff, and partner time totaled more than $31,000.

## Gear and Technology

After researching several bicycle outreach programs in the country to find the best model for our program, we settled on the trailer design used by Boston Public Library. The trailer is light when empty, holds more than one hundred items, hitches easily to a bike, and materials are completely enclosed while riding.

Street Smart Trailers of Boston built our trailer, modifying their design to make it push-cart convertible. Our in-house graphic

Top left: Rochester (MN) Public Library staff with the Local Government Innovation Award from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Far right: Eric Tarr and Janna Alme on the road with RPL's BookBike. Bottom right: Keri Ostby and Heather Acerro staffing the BookBike.
Photos courtesy of Rochester Public Library.

***Heather Acerro*** *is Head of Youth Services at Rochester (MN) Public Library.*

designer created the logo and designed the vinyl wrap that we had installed locally after the trailer arrived.

Two bikes were purchased specifically for the program, one with a large frame for tall staff and one with a smaller frame. Hub skewers were installed on both bikes, making it easy to attach the trailer. It was important to purchase good quality bikes for staff to use while pulling the trailer uphill.

An iPad that runs SirsiDynix MobileCirc, a Wi-Fi hotspot, and Bluetooth scanner allow us to easily check out materials and create library cards on the spot. The iPad also enables us to easily track our reference and visitor statistics through a Google form and to show customers how to use our digital materials such as OverDrive, Zinio, and the library's website.

## Brake for Books

Since encountering the BookBike in the community should feel like a special day for customers, we purchased the newest and most popular titles to fill the cart. The items are shadowed in our catalog and cannot be placed on hold, so the only way to have access is through meeting the BookBike in person. We have just more than four hundred items in the BookBike collection that rotate in and out. The items are minimally processed and have a custom-made BookBike label to denote they are part of this special collection.

## As Easy as Riding a Bike

The BookBike is powered by seventeen staff from all over the library. Staff are always scheduled in pairs, one person to pull the trailer and another who rides along. We've found that it is nice to have two people out at events when things get busy.

All BookBike staff are trained in bicycle safety (that is, stopping while pulling a heavy trailer, riding on the road, operating trailer and bicycles), the technology, and general outreach practices. To increase safety and visibility, BookBike T-shirts were purchased for all BookBike participants, and helmets were purchased for those who needed one. Special insurance is not required to operate the BookBike, but staff must wear helmets and work in pairs.

In anticipation of a busy summer, drastic changes were made to the Youth Services programming schedule. We dropped several ongoing in-house summer programs to free up staff to operate the BookBike six to seven days a week. This strategy paid off, as Youth Services programming numbers, which include BookBike activities, rose 12.4 percent in 2015.

## Hey, Nice Bike!

A marketing plan was built into our grant process, and because of the BookBike's appeal, this was one of the easiest programs we've ever promoted. Everyone in the community was excited and buzzing about the BookBike. Staff brainstormed a tagline "Shifting Gears…It's How We Roll," created the logo, developed posters, built a webpage, designed T-shirts, selected and branded giveaways (for example, books, bike lights, stickers, chalk), and wrote press releases. Once we had a consistent look and feel for the program and put the word out to local media, publicity took off.

A great example of its high profile is our experience at the Rochesterfest parade. RPL staff has participated in this local parade for years handing out candy, so kids have learned to call out "Candy!" when they see us coming. This summer with the BookBike along in the parade, kids called out "BookBike!" and "Books!"

## Rolling through Rochester

During our first summer, we took advantage of as many local festivals and events as possible. We also operated our own outreach schedule, visiting local parks within the one-mile radius of the library. We tried many different approaches to this schedule, experimenting to find out what works best, and by the end of the summer, we settled on a regular two-week outreach schedule to visit four different parks.

Two of the parks have large playgrounds and attract families from throughout the community; the other two are smaller neighborhood parks that see mostly kids and families walking from home. This allows us to balance outreach between the parks with large numbers of people and the parks with harder-to-reach populations.

## Paperwork, Paperwork, Paperwork

All good things come with a lot of paperwork, and we worked hard to track progress and meet our program goals. Each event has a program event sheet to tell the riders where they will be going and any necessary information. Follow up after the program includes a Google form for tracking statistics, successes, and concerns. With so many people operating the BookBike, this methodology ensured good communication between staff and the program coordinator.

## Honk if You Love the BookBike

During the grant period of April through June 2015, we surveyed customers with an email evaluation form and found that most visitors just happened upon the BookBike at a park or event; they had not planned to visit. Of the people surveyed, 58 percent indicated they learned something new about the library at the BookBike, and 98 percent rated their service experience as "Good" to "Outstanding."

The BookBike has generated a lot of good feelings. Children used a map and our webpage schedule to track our movement throughout the summer; others showed up at the park before our scheduled time just so they could watch the staff set up; and one child visited the library almost every day to ask about the BookBike. Riding the BookBike through downtown creates a welcome spectacle and people wave, point, and smile.

## First-Place Finisher!

In October 2015, the BookBike program was named the City Category winner of the Local Government Innovation Award, presented by the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. This award recognizes organizations who innovate with creative, sustainable, and collaborative projects. We were honored to be a recipient, as well as to receive a $5,000 grant from the Bush Foundation. A professional video of our BookBike was created and can be found on RPL's website at www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org/my-rpl/bookbike.

## On the Read Again: 2016 Plans

Until the weather warms up enough, the BookBike will operate as an indoor push-cart, visiting a coffee shop twice a week. As we gear up for intensive outreach, we will be weeding the collection to get rid of damaged items or things that have fallen out of popularity, purchasing the newest and best books, and planning our outreach schedule. The bicycles will come out of storage in April and get tuned up, new staff will be recruited and trained, and the program schedule will be finalized. We plan to use our Bush Foundation grant to purchase an Art and Learning trailer from Street Smart Trailers, which will include a fold-out activity table and space to store programming supplies. We will be able to carry outdoor play equipment such as balls, flying disks, and jump ropes as well as art supplies and early literacy activities. We anticipate a fun and active season ahead.

RPL is excited to be part of this growing movement of bicycle outreach. As libraries and communities change, it is important to get out and meet people where they gather to create readers, and to keep readers engaged. Ride on!


Books on Bikes connects books with readers in Charlottesville, Virginia.

## Other Libraries Jump on the "Bikewagon!"

Rochester Public Library was not the first library to provide bicycle outreach; they had many libraries from which to gather ideas. The one thing that all bicycle outreach programs have in common is that they are each uniquely created to fit the staff and community they serve. From the selection of equipment, materials carried, or schedule they run, each program is tailored for what makes sense.

- Oak Park Public Library in Illinois uses their **Paperback Rider** tricycle to check out materials to customers as well as provide pop-up library programming such as storytimes or STEAM activities.

- Austin (TX) Public Library operates **unbound: sin fronteras** to connect library customers with materials and share information about the city's bicycle master plan.

- Berkeley (CA) Public Library's **Library on Wheels** offers not only books to check out, but also circulates movies and runs a Wi-Fi hotspot for public use.

- One standout example of bicycle outreach is the **Books on Bikes** program in Charlottesville, Virginia. This program, operated by volunteer teachers and librarians during the summer months, delivers free books on cargo bikes to the community. Funded through donations and a partnership with the local public library, the mission of this program is to create readers by connecting kids with books they love. Volunteers spend time with the children and families, building relationships and connections in the community. Looking toward the future, Books on Bikes hopes to expand by adding chapters throughout the country. For more information, visit http://booksonbikescville.org.

- For about one year, the Brown County (WI) Library (BCL) has operated a **Book Bike** as part of outreach programming. It has been used in parades and for special programming; for example, one of their librarians took it out to a local pool to read to the kids during the pool-cleaning break; another visited a local brewery to familiarize people with the library's ebook offerings. At the local Open Streets event last year, when several streets were closed on a Saturday to encourage bikers, a librarian toured the bike around. BCL Librarian Mary Krauss said, "It has encouraged lots of second-glances and has been a positive talking-point for all staff about the library!"

Brown County Library Children's Librarian Katie Guzek and Library Associate Angela Zuidmulder take the BCL Book Bike to a local park.

Margarita Engle, center, was the winner of the 2016 Charlotte Zolotow Award from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) in Madison, Wisconsin, for her book *Drum Dream Girl*. She is joined by Wisconsin authors Kevin Henkes and Miranda Paul, whose books *Waiting* and *Water is Water*, respectively, were listed as "highly commended" titles for the award. Photo by Baptiste Paul.

PEER-REVIEWED

# Encouraging Educational Diversity

## Depictions of Homeschoolers in Middle-Grade Fiction

AMY SETO FORRESTER

*In this article, depictions of homeschooling in middle-grade fiction—defined here as fiction for children in grades three to six—will be examined. Factors considered while completing this literature review include: the homeschooling motivation, homeschooling as the problem or solution, and the homeschooling style. Titles were chosen based on quality, availability, and age appropriateness.*

I have a personal investment in this topic because I was homeschooled until my first year of college. My homeschooling experience was positive, and it unquestionably shaped the person I am today.

My mother used an "unschooling" approach, which I feel not only prepared me to excel academically as an undergraduate and graduate student, but also as a professional. From an early age, I was aware of the stereotypes associated with homeschoolers, and it would have been reassuring to find more reflections of my world in children's literature. Unfortunately, the one book with homeschooled characters I remember reading (*Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild) was set in a world far removed from my small-town Oregon upbringing. It is my hope that a greater diversity of educational experiences will soon be reflected in children's literature to provide windows and mirrors for children of all educational backgrounds.

## Homeschooling in the United States

Homeschooling, sometimes called home education or home-based learning, can be defined as parent- or caregiver-led, personally funded education of a child outside of a traditional on-campus school. Children can be taught in a variety of environments (such as at home or online) and by an assortment of instructors, including a parent/caregiver, tutor, or online teacher.

Research shows that the number of homeschooled children in the United States has been rising steadily.[1] In the 2011–2012 school year, 1,770,000 homeschoolers were identified in the United States.[2] According to the National Center for Education Statistics, most homeschoolers are white and "non-poor," and they can be found in all types of communities from rural areas to cities.[3] Homeschooling is legal throughout the United States,, but requirements and laws vary by state.[4]

Homeschooling "remains a topic of significant debate among academics, legal scholars, professional educators, and the general public."[5] Kenneth V. Anthony writes, "As home schooling continues to grow as a viable educational option for families, our society will continue to debate its merits as well as its legality and the proper extent of regulation."[6] Regardless of the societal implications, the rising numbers indicate that homeschooling will continue to be part of our society.

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The reasons people choose to homeschool their children are often ideological or pedagogical. Those in the ideological category homeschool for religious reasons. On the other hand, pedagogical homeschoolers are typically dissatisfied with the environment, class size, or curriculum of traditional schools.[7]

According to recent research, 91 percent of homeschoolers fall in the pedagogical category.[8] However, the way that each parent/caregiver approaches home-based learning varies greatly. Homeschooling approaches are as unique and varied as homeschoolers themselves.

## The Titles

This literature review focuses on middle-grade fiction titles that have a homeschooler as the protagonist or a major supporting character. To ensure that titles are widely considered of high quality, only titles that have positive reviews from at least two professional children's literature review journals (*School Library Journal*, *Horn Book*, *Booklist*, or *Kirkus*) are included for consideration. At the time this article was written, all the titles in the annotated bibliography were in print and available for purchase. It should be noted that nearly all titles that fit these criteria have been included in this literature review; there were not a large number of titles from which to choose.

## The Factors

### Factor One: Homeschooling Motivation

The reasons characters in children's literature are homeschooled can be considered ideological, pedagogical, or unintentional. This last reason is not generally seen in the real world, but can be found frequently in children's literature. Ideological and pedagogical homeschoolers make a conscious choice to homeschool, but unintentional homeschoolers are forced to homeschool due to elements outside of their control. In the titles considered, the unintentional reasons include protection for physical or psychological reasons, isolation, lack of finances, and magical abilities.

There are few instances of ideological motivation in the literature reviewed, however an example is seen in the motivation of Ratchet's father (*This Journal Belongs to Ratchet*) to homeschool her because of his religious beliefs. Most characters fall into the pedagogical category.

*Skellig* and *Surviving the Applewhites* are excellent examples of pedagogical homeschooling. In *Skellig*, Mina explains her mother's homeschooling philosophy to Michael, "We believe that schools inhibit the natural curiosity, creativity, and intelligence of children. The mind needs to be opened out into the world, not shuttered down inside a gloomy classroom."[9] The Applewhite family in *Surviving the Applewhites* goes one step further by creating their own school so that all of their children can be educated at home.

Protection is the most frequent unintentional reason. Auggie (*Wonder*) and Lila (*A Cool Moonlight*) are homeschooled for medical reasons. Auggie was born with severe facial deformities

Table 1. Educator and Educational Styles by Title

| Title | Taught by One Family Member | Taught by More than One Friend/Family Member | More Structured | Less Structured |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild | | X | X | |
| *A Cool Moonlight* by Angela Johnson | X | | Unknown | |
| *Ida B . . .* by Katherine Hannigan | X | | | X |
| *Liar and Spy* by Rebecca Stead | | X | Unknown | |
| *The Mysterious Howling* by Maryrose Wood | | X | X | |
| *Nim's Island* by Wendy Orr | X | | | X |
| *Prairie Evers* by Ellen Airgood | X | | | X |
| *Savvy* by Ingrid Law | X | | Unknown | |
| *Schooled* by Gordon Korman | X | | | X |
| *Skellig* by David Almond | X | | | X |
| *Surviving the Applewhites* by Stephanie S. Tolan | | X | | X |
| *This Journal Belongs to Ratchet* by Nancy Cavanaugh | X | | X | |
| *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio | X | | Unknown | |

that caused him to be in and out of hospitals for many surgeries. This made going to traditional school impractical for much of his life. Lila is homeschooled because she was born with xeroderma pigmentosum, a genetic disorder that makes it difficult for her body to handle sunlight.

Another facet is psychological protection, as we see in *Schooled*. Capricorn's grandmother chooses to homeschool him on her commune. This shelters Cap from the evils of capitalism, but also leaves him unprepared for the outside world.

Isolation is an unintentional reason, exemplified by Nim (*Nim's Island*) who is homeschooled because she lives alone on a remote island with her scientist father. A more fanciful example can be seen in *The Mysterious Howling*; the three Incorrigibles are homeschooled by their governess partly because they were raised by wolves, but also due to their living at the luxurious and rural Ashton Place.

The Fossil sisters (*Ballet Shoes*) are homeschooled because their guardian cannot afford traditional schooling. Instead, the sisters are enrolled in a performing arts school. Although highly unlikely even in the 1930s, this is a delightful plot device.

Finally, in fiction, characters are homeschooled as a result of their magical abilities. Magical abilities are categorized as unintentional because characters are homeschooled to keep their supernatural powers a secret, rather than to educate them with a religious ideology or particular educational philosophy.

One of the best examples is the Beaumont family (*Savvy*). The children go to traditional school until they reach the age of thirteen and their magical talent, or savvy, is revealed. It can take years to master a savvy, so the Beaumonts avoid magical disasters by homeschooling.

## Factor Two: Homeschooling Style

Theresa Willingham points out that homeschooling can be "carried out quite formally, with rooms set aside as fully furnished classrooms with children's desks and whiteboards, and lessons conducted via prepared commercial curricula or via rigorous correspondence programs…" or they can be much more informal "as in 'unschooling' families who follow a casual, free-spirited child-led approach to learning."[10]

However, most homeschooling styles are on the spectrum between the two, "with families choosing a variety of methodologies and approaches, adapting to the changing needs of each child and providing a varied mix of structure and spontaneity."[11] Additionally, many homeschoolers change curriculum or styles several times within the first few years of homeschooling.[12]

As with real homeschoolers, there is a wide spectrum of educational styles in the titles considered (see table 1). Some children are taught by a single family member, while others are taught by a variety of friends and family members or a governess.

Some characters have a more traditional education. Their daily routine is generally more structured with lesson plans or a set schedule. The Incorrigible children in *The Mysterious Howling* follow lesson plans and schedules meticulously set by their governess. Other characters have a primarily hands-on education focusing on practical skills, as well as academic goals.

Two great examples in this category are Mina in *Skellig* and Nim in *Nim's Island*. Mina is homeschooled in an "unschooled" fashion by her mother with her studies taking place outside, as well as inside her house. Nim's education takes place all over the island as she helps her father observe and record the natural world.

Table 2. Depictions and Motivations by Title

| Title | Depiction | Motivation |
|---|---|---|
| *Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild | Positive | Unintentional—Lack of Finances |
| *A Cool Moonlight* by Angela Johnson | Positive | Unintentional—Protection |
| *Ida B . . .* by Katherine Hannigan | Mixed | Pedagogical |
| *Liar and Spy* by Rebecca Stead | Negative | Pedagogical |
| *The Mysterious Howling* by Maryrose Wood | Positive | Unintentional—Protection |
| *Nim's Island* by Wendy Orr | Positive | Unintentional—Isolation |
| *Prairie Evers* by Ellen Airgood | Mixed | Unintentional—Isolation |
| *Savvy* by Ingrid Law | Mixed | Unintentional—Magical Abilities |
| *Schooled* by Gordon Korman | Negative | Unintentional—Protection |
| *Skellig* by David Almond | Positive | Pedagogical |
| *Surviving the Applewhites* by Stephanie S. Tolan | Positive | Pedagogical |
| *This Journal Belongs to Ratchet* by Nancy Cavanaugh | Mixed | Ideological |
| *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio | Mixed | Unintentional—Protection |

It should be noted that these homeschooling styles are not mutually exclusive in real life or in the literature reviewed. Table 1 notes the dominant style seen in each title. Additionally, four titles (*Wonder*, *A Cool Moonlight*, *Liar and Spy*, and *Savvy*) have homeschooled characters, but the details of homeschooling are never described. These stories, while excellently written, provide few windows into the daily life of a homeschooled child.

## Factor Three: Homeschooling as an Obstacle

Although the homeschooling motivation and styles are diverse, many of the stories use homeschooling as an obstacle and regular schooling as the solution. In several titles, the major conflict is solved through acceptance or celebration of traditional schooling. For instance, Safer (*Liar and Spy*) decides to step out of his comfort zone and attend regular school, and Auggie (*Wonder*) becomes a stronger person by attending regular school.

In many stories, homeschooled kids feel isolated due to a lack of friends. A need for social interaction is the most oft-cited reason homeschooled characters want to go to traditional school. Making a friend is often a goal set by homeschooled characters, such as Ratchet (*This Journal Belongs to Ratchet*), and going to traditional school is often seen as the path to achieving that goal.

In the titles considered, none of the characters wanted to go to traditional school for educational reasons. Characters that transitioned to traditional school met the academic standards easily. This aligns with the findings that, "Homeschooling has consistently proven to be an academically valid educational option."[13] However, some characters had a difficult time learning how to operate in a new culture. Capricorn (*Schooled*) faces many challenges when he enters the social whirl of middle school and Prairie (*Prairie Evers*) hates having to learn a specific lesson at a specific time.

Two titles provide exploration into the benefits and challenges of different types of education. In *Ida B . . .* , Ida and her family discuss homeschooling, as well as public school, with the positive sides of each rising to the top. *Surviving the Applewhites* focuses more on the benefits of homeschooling, including artistic freedom, independence, and creativity.

## Factor Four: Definitions of Positive, Negative, and Mixed

The final factor looks at the representation of homeschooling in these titles (see table 2). Is the overall depiction of homeschooling seen as positive, negative, or mixed? Two things were considered when looking at each title:

1. Do/Did the character(s) like being homeschooled?

2. Are the character(s) personally, as well as educationally, fulfilled while homeschooled? Are they happy? Are they part of a community and do they have friends? Are they growing emotionally, as well as academically? Or is homeschooling used as a way for them to avoid the outside world, keeping them from being fulfilled?

Based on these questions, the following categories were created:

- **Positive.** In stories with positive depictions, the homeschooled characters prefer to be homeschooled, and they feel personally and educationally fulfilled. This usually means they are an active participant in their community and have at least one friend.

- **Negative.** Conversely, books with negative depictions have characters that dislike their homeschooling experience and do not feel personally and/or educationally fulfilled. Often these characters are not active in any community. These are the books that most often end with the character finding fulfillment through traditional schooling.

- **Mixed.** Stories with mixed depictions fall somewhere on the spectrum between positive and negative. In some, the kids like being homeschooled, but ultimately learn that they must interact with their community to be fulfilled. In others, the characters are reluctantly forced to attend traditional schooling, but come to learn that both types of education are valuable.

## Literature Review Findings

There is a small collection of quality middle-grade fiction that depicts homeschooling in a positive or mixed light; however, in many cases, going to traditional school is the solution to the protagonist's problem. While this is the case for some homeschooled children, there are many other homeschooled children who are equally happy with nontraditional schooling. Hopefully, the diversity of educational experiences will soon be reflected more widely in middle-grade fiction.

## The Importance of Educational Diversity in Children's Literature

The need for educational diversity in children's literature is great for two reasons. First, as the number of homeschooled children increases, so does the importance of having those experiences reflected in books.[14] Studies show that nearly 80 percent of homeschoolers use public libraries as an educational resource, so it is important that our collections reflect their stories.[15] Judi Moreillon writes, "All children deserve literature that reflects the cultural diversity of our society and world. . . . They deserve books that are authentic and accurate."[16]

*Studies show that nearly 80 percent of homeschoolers use public libraries as an educational resource, so it is important that our collections reflect their stories.*

As Rudine Sims Bishop writes, stories are mirrors that reflect back the human experience so that reading becomes a means of self-affirmation of our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience.[17] It is important for homeschooled children to see their daily educational experiences reflected in stories so they can be confident and proud of themselves. If homeschooled children only find stories that show traditionally schooled or "distorted, negative, or laughable" homeschooled experiences, "they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part."[18]

Just as librarians should seek to collect materials that reflect racial and cultural diversity, they should also seek to collect materials with educational diversity. Homeschooling culture is as richly diverse and vibrant as any other in the United States, and we should strive to reflect that in our collections.

In addition, librarians should be proactive in promoting these materials through programming use (such as book clubs), online and print booklists, book talks, and other readers' advisory activities. The toolkit created by the ALSC Committee for Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers provides excellent resources for serving homeschooled families.[19]

Secondly, it is also important for traditionally schooled readers to gain insight into the other educational perspectives. Michael Tunnell and James Jacobs point out that multicultural books "provide a connection between each of those communities and the world."[20] They also write that well-written multicultural books can prompt "a global outlook as well as an understanding that members of the human family have more similarities than differences."[21] Additionally, stories can also help readers understand what is happening in the house next door.[22]

Although the practice of homeschooling is becoming more mainstream, there are still many negative connotations associated with being homeschooled. For example, Michael Romanowski lists the following generalizations: homeschooling produces social misfits, homeschooling fails to prepare good citizens, students who are homeschooled have a hard time getting into college, and most people only homeschool for religious reasons.[23] He urges parents, educators, and others to strive for education in any form that "maximizes the potential of all children."[24]

Historically, education was the responsibility of the family, but now it has become the responsibility of society. Kenneth V. Anthony writes, "Today most Americans have been educated in a school setting and accept by default that the school is primarily responsible for education."[25] However, Theresa Willingham predicts "Homeschoolers will always be a large, anomalous group."[26] With this in mind, it is important that we encourage the creation, publication, collection, and promotion of quality stories that feature positive depictions of homeschoolers. &

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# Helping Hands

## Author's Memory Concreted in Picturebook

SHARON VERBETEN

Author Kathryn Otoshi worked side by side with Bret Baumgarten on *Beautiful Hands*.
Photos courtesy of Kathryn Otoshi.

*"I never actually let myself believe that he was not going to make it."*

That's what author Kathryn Otoshi said when she heard her friend Bret Baumgarten—always so full of life—was fighting stage 4 pancreatic cancer. But in 2014, when he died at age 44, Otoshi could at least take some comfort that he had left behind a legacy for his two children—one which she helped make happen.

Otoshi—who had previously written and published three concept books (*One*, *Zero*, and *Two*, all under her KO Kids company)—partnered with Baumgarten to create the picturebook *Beautiful Hands* (Blue Dot Press, 2015), a loving tribute to children and their joyous spirits. Sadly, Baumgarten died before the book came out, but the process of making the book was a labor of family, life, and love for Baumgarten and Otoshi.

Otoshi met Baumgarten through a mutual friend. Shortly after Baumgarten's diagnosis, Otoshi recalls, "When I heard his story, I wanted to know what to do to help. I remembered he said he always wanted to do a children's book." She felt she was well suited to help him in that way.

The concept for the book began with the phrase Baumgarten said to his children Noah and Sofie each day: "What will your beautiful hands do today?"

"The question is so big," Otoshi says, noting that the two expanded on the idea of what little hands can do—plant, touch, lift, stretch, reach. From there, the amazing words came out, along with bright colorful illustrations—all based on handprints and inspired and created by Baumgarten, his children, and scores of others.

From the cover—which is embossed with the bright handprints of Baumgarten's son and daughter—to the interior pages, more than one hundred family members and friends contributed handprints. Even the Baumgartens' dog, Mocha, provided paw prints!

The handprints form everything from petals and plants to butterflies, bird wings, dragon fins, even a rainbow. All the images were then scanned into a computer to create the final art.

To help fund the book's printing, Otoshi and Baumgarten hosted a book creation party. "Why don't we just have people over to your house to a party?" recalls Otoshi. People could come and donate $100, or whatever they chose, and they would get their handprint in the rainbow at the end of the book. The entire family, including Baumgarten's wife Deborah, got involved in the process; the party raised $10,000 for the first print run (they shipped 30,000 copies in the first five weeks), and a portion of the purchase price of the book goes to the Baumgarten estate.

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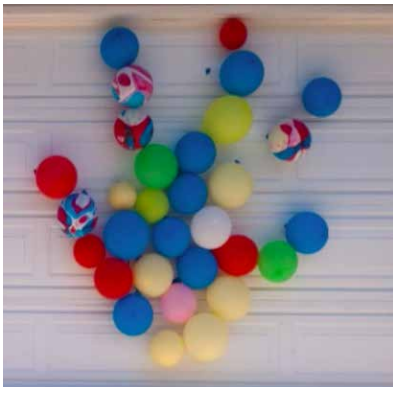


These photos show the joy, compassion, and fun that went into Bret Baumgarten's book, a poignant legacy he left for his children.

While creating the book was a work of joy and love, it was also a bit difficult for Otoshi, who says she had a hard time talking about cancer. But things became easier with the focus on the book. "He was so excited about it; he never showed how sick he was or how sick he was getting. . . . he kept telling me he was going to beat [cancer]; he was going to beat the odds."

"His wife said he would just light up when they would talk about the book," Otoshi said.

Though he never saw the book in print, his hopes for the title have come to fruition. The book has gone into its third printing. Otoshi works in schools making Spirit Birds with kids' handprints, inspiring children to do "one kind thing."

But perhaps the most touching part are Baumgarten's own words at the end of the book that he felt so compelled to complete: "My hope is that this book empowers creativity, compassion, love, and a connection to you and yours, in the fulfilling and remarkable way it has for me."

PEER-REVIEWED

# Why Storytelling Matters

## Unveiling the Literacy Benefits of Storytelling

DENISE E. AGOSTO

Figure 1. An example of visualization

Storytelling is a long-standing tradition in US public and school libraries. Storytelling, not to be confused with story *reading*, involves telling a story from memory without the aid of a book or written script. Some tellers memorize their stories; others memorize the characters and events and freely tell their stories, varying them with each telling.

Many storytellers have written about the strong emotional connections that storytelling builds with listeners, about children's deeper engagement with live storytelling than with reading aloud, and about the literacy benefits of storytelling.[1] However, little research has tested whether or not these assumed benefits are real. To investigate the possible literacy benefits of storytelling, I analyzed thank-you cards created by children in a second grade class in response to a live storytelling session. The study findings show support for some of the previously assumed literacy benefits of live oral storytelling and point to the importance of continuing to offer storytelling events in public and school libraries.

### What Do We Know about the Literacy Benefits of Storytelling?

Most of the writing about the literacy benefits of storytelling in the professional literature has been based on observations from practice rather than on research findings. Authors of these pieces typically suggest that storytelling helps children to become better listeners and better readers while building vocabulary.[2]

A small body of research has tested these assumptions.[3] Three of these studies are highlighted here.

First, Brian Sturm studied the trance-like state that listeners enter when they are deeply involved in listening to oral storytelling.[4] He interviewed children and adults at a storytelling festival and identified six characteristics of the storytelling trance:

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"Six categories emerged from the listeners' descriptions of the storylistening trance phenomenon:

- Realism: the sense that the story environment or characters are real or alive
- Lack of awareness: of surroundings or other mental processes
- Engaged receptive channel
    1. visual (both physical watching and mental visualization)
    2. auditory (both physical hearing and mental "chatter")
    3. kinesthetic
    4. emotional
- Control: of the experience by the listener, or someone or something else
- "Placeness:" the sense that the listener "goes somewhere" (often "into") another space
- Time distortion: the sense that subjective time moves at a different speed than objective, clock time."[5]

While Sturm didn't address literacy directly, the deep engagement in story content that he identified has been tied to improvements in literacy skills.[6]

Next, Louise Phillips conducted a four-week storytelling program with preschoolers to study the usefulness of storytelling in early education.[7] She found storytelling to build community among students and teachers, to enhance memory recall, to support early literacy development, and to promote creative thinking.

More recently, Jo Kuyvenhoven explored the storytelling trance with fourth and fifth graders.[8] She found that during storytelling, children created mental pictures of the stories and often envisioned themselves in the story settings taking part in the action: "They made [mental] pictures and then slid into participation beyond the classroom walls and storyteller's presence."[9] Again, this deep level of engagement has been tied to improved literacy.

Together these studies provide general support for the connection between oral storytelling and improved literacy, but they provide few details about effects on specific literacy skills.

## Study Procedures

To begin to investigate the literacy benefits of oral storytelling, I worked with a class of twenty second-grade students in a suburban public school in the Eastern United States. It is a Title 1 school located in a mixed-income, mixed ethnic/racial neighborhood. The study participants included nine girls and eleven boys, all aged seven or eight. Ten of the children were white, non-Hispanic; four were African American; three were Hispanic; and three were Asian American.

I told two stories of about fifteen minutes each to the students, who were seated around me on the classroom floor. It was the first time the class had experienced live storytelling. The first story was an original tale, "The Runaway Pumpkin," about a boy who plants a pumpkin in his garden. It grows to an enormous size, and he rides it as it bounces out of his garden and across town.

The second story was based on a German folktale "The Three Wishes," in which an elf grants a woodcutter and his wife three wishes in return for not chopping down the tree in which he lives. The woodcutter first wishes for a large sausage. His wife, angry that he wasted a wish, wishes that the sausage would stick to his nose. The woodcutter is forced to use his third and final wish to remove the sausage. A version of this tale can be found in Margot Zemach's *The Three Wishes: An Old Story*.[10]

The children appeared to be highly engaged during the stories, frequently giggling and making appropriate comments, such as guessing what would happen next or yelling advice to the characters. I spent about five minutes after each story answering the children's questions, such as, "Did the woodcutter ever get any more wishes?" After the stories and questions ended, I thanked the students for being a good audience and left the classroom.

## Data Collection

When conducting research with children, gathering useful data can be difficult due to still-developing oracy and literacy skills. For this reason, I chose drawings as the main source of data for analyzing the children's story responses. Immediately following the story session, the children's teacher asked the class to create thank-you cards to send to the guest storyteller. She gave the children blank pieces of paper to fold into quarters to create cards. Beyond that, she let them create their own designs. She did write my name and the words "Thank you" on the chalkboard for children who needed spelling assistance.

After twenty minutes, she collected the cards, asking each student to "Tell me about your card." She recorded the students' responses verbatim.

## Results

All twenty children completed the thank-you card task. Fifteen wrote words and drew pictures on their cards. Five wrote words alone—no drawings. Several drew more than one picture, resulting in twenty-four separate drawings for analysis. Each child wrote between thirteen and forty-nine words on his/her

card, with an average of twenty-five words per card. All twenty children provided verbal descriptions of their cards, ranging in length from twelve to forty-eight words, with an average length of twenty words.

I used the constant comparative method to analyze the words and drawings. The constant comparative method is the most common method for analyzing qualitative data.[11] Developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss for use in developing grounded theory, "the constant comparative method of data analysis is inductive and comparative and so has been widely used throughout qualitative research without building a grounded theory," as it was used here.[12] The constant comparative method has most commonly been used to analyze qualitative data in word format, but it can also be useful for analyzing visual data, such as drawings:

> With drawings, photographs, and/or videos, constant comparative analysis can be conducted to assess similarities and differences among the pictures. The similarities/differences are identified by selecting sections of the pictures to analyze, giving them codes, then grouping the codes together to create themes. As themes emerge, new drawings, photographs, and/or video clips are compared to these themes to determine where this new visual information fits in the overall thematic development.[13]

During iterative rounds of coding, the analysis progressed from initial descriptive codes of both the drawings and words (such as "pumpkins") to more conceptual, inferential codes (such as "critical thinking").[14]

The final coding scheme included four literacy benefits that children can gain from listening to oral storytelling. These include practice in visualization, cognitive engagement, critical thinking, and story sequencing. Each of these skills is described below with supporting examples from the data. They are listed in order from most to least supporting evidence in the data. Note, however, that the amount of supporting data is not necessarily a valid indicator of strong or weak connection between storytelling and each benefit, as some literacy skills are better suited to detection through the study methods (such as visualization) than others (such as story sequencing).

## Visualization

Visualization, or the ability to picture a story or other written information, is a foundational literacy skill, helping young readers to comprehend written texts.[15] In describing their drawings, several children discussed having envisioned the stories as they listened. For example, pointing to her drawing of a pumpkin one of the girls explained: "This is how the pumpkin looked when I saw it in my head."

Figure 2. An example of visualization.

As another example, figure 2 shows a tree that another girl drew in response to the story "The Three Wishes." Her drawing shows that she was able to translate into visual form one of the key story elements.

In this same vein, figure 1 depicts the main character from "The Runaway Pumpkin" standing next to his garden. The drawing depicts the three key physical elements of the story: the protagonist, the pumpkin, and the garden.

## Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement has also been tied to improved literacy.[16] If new readers are interested in stories or other reading materials, they are more motivated to try to understand them. Cognitive engagement is hard to determine after a learning activity has ended, but visual observation during the storytelling session showed rapt attention and strong engagement on behalf of most of the children, with most laughing at appropriate points in the stories and many guessing aloud what might happen next or offering verbal advice to the characters.

There was additional evidence of cognitive engagement in the data. For example, one of the girls drew a picture of a figure on a pumpkin and wrote, "I am riding run-away pamkin" on her card, indicating that she imagined herself taking part in the action of the story. Other students reimagined the stories and offered alternate storylines. For instance, one of the boys wrote on his card: "In the three wishes he could of wished for a ton of

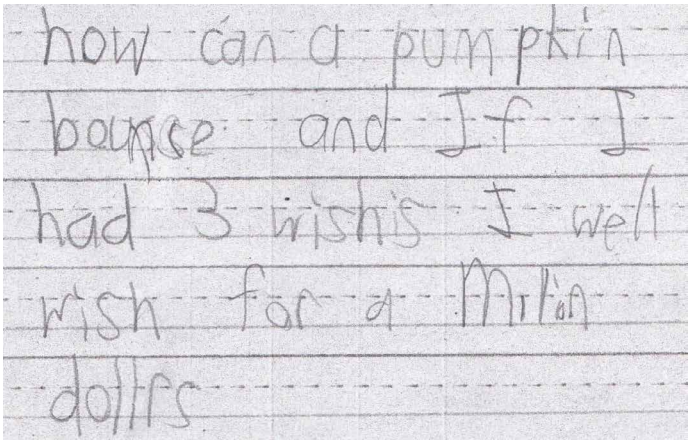


Figure 3. An example of critical thinking

gold and get a lot of $." Another wrote: "If I had 3 wishis I well wish for a milion dollrs." (See figure 3.)

## Critical Thinking

Of course, literacy skills involve more than just decoding and understanding words. Critical thinking is also an important component.[17] Throughout the data, there were several examples of participants' applying critical thinking to the stories they had heard. For example, one of the boys showed evidence of critical thinking when he wrote on his card: "how can a pumpkin bounse?" (See figure 3.) Rather than merely accepting the unusual activity in the story as fact, he questioned it strongly enough to write his question on his card. Critical thinking is closely tied to cognitive engagement; both involve deep thinking about story content and meaning.

## Story Sequencing Ability

The fourth and final literacy skill identified in this study is story sequencing, an important skill for literacy development.[18] Story sequencing is the ability to identify different events in a story and place them in chronological order.

Three students each drew a series of vignettes from the stories, showing events in order, such as the series of pumpkins shown in figure 4. Each successive pumpkin is slightly larger than the previous one to represent the growth throughout the story. Arrows clearly indicate the direction of change—from small pumpkin to large—and serve as strong proof of the young artist's understanding of the order of events in the story.

## Discussion

This single storytelling session enabled a class of second graders to practice at least four important literacy skills: visualization, cognitive engagement, critical thinking, and story sequencing. It's important to point out that this was a small, preliminary

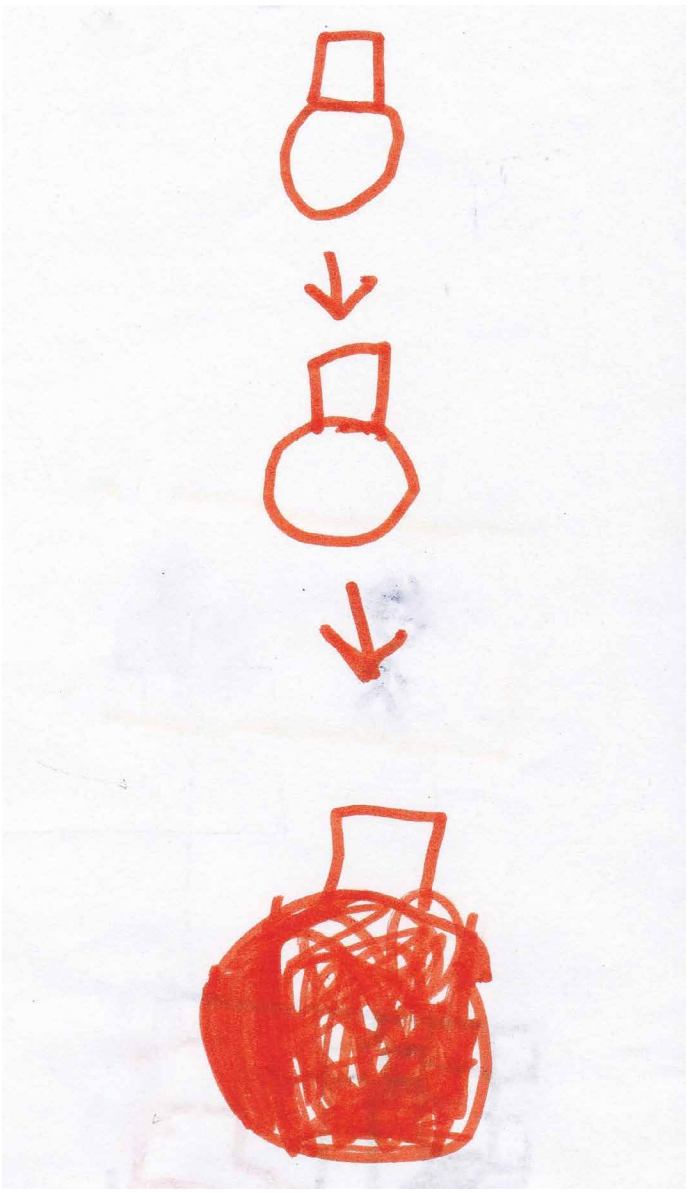

Figure 4. An example of story sequencing skills

study. While it offers strong evidence that storytelling is beneficial for literacy development, more research with repeated storytelling sessions, different delivery methods, varied types of stories, etc., is needed to determine the full range of literacy benefits of storytelling and the strength of their impact on literacy development. Nonetheless, this study adds to the growing body of work pointing to connections between live storytelling and literacy development, and it provides a strong argument for the continuation of storytelling in public and school libraries.

This study also shows that post-storytelling activities can enhance these literacy benefits. In creating their cards, the study participants demonstrated ongoing cognitive engagement and critical thinking in their drawings, written words, and oral descriptions of their work. Other follow-up activities to enhance the literacy benefits of storytelling, and that are well-suited to library settings, include:

1. **Follow-up questions.** Asking listening audiences simple follow-up questions related to story comprehension and reflection, such as: "When do you think this story took place?" or "What do you think happened after the story ended?" encourages ongoing cognitive engagement and critical thinking.

2. **Personal connection building.** Asking questions like: "What was your favorite part of the story and why?" "If you were the main character, what would you have done in her situation?" and "Have you ever had an experience like the one in the story?" helps children learn to connect stories to their own life perspectives and experiences. Learning how to make personal connections can help young readers to comprehend written texts more easily.[19]

3. **Reenactments.** Younger children often enjoy reenacting a story they have heard, thereby enabling them to become a part of the story. Reenactments don't need to be fancy or involved; the storyteller can simply ask young volunteers to reenact the story as he or she retells it. Or, the storyteller can divide the audience into small groups and encourage each group to act out the story as s/he retells it.

4. **Retellings.** The storyteller can invite one or more listeners to retell a story after the initial telling to improve recall abilities and to strengthen story sequencing skills. Storytellers can also post audio or video recordings of their tellings to the web to enable children to listen again on their own.

5. **Connections to books.** Providing book versions of the stories (or of similar stories) for listeners to read in the library or to take home to read encourages continued thinking and reflection.

6. **Connections to other stories.** As another way to increase children's critical thinking, storytellers can tell two similar stories or tell a story and read a book version of the same story. Follow-up discussions should focus on asking children how the stories correspond and differ.

7. **Response drawings.** As shown in this study, asking children to create drawings in response to a story they have heard encourages continued engagement with the story and helps to build visualization skills.

8. **Response writing.** Along these same lines, children can write poems, essays, or short stories after listening to a story. Storytellers can record children who are too young to write reciting their compositions.

Nearly two hundred years ago, Friedrich Froebel, the founding father of the kindergarten education movement, championed storytelling as an ideal method for educational delivery to young children.[20] Even in the digital age, when many public and school librarians are under pressure to focus programs and lessons on digital-skills building, traditional oral storytelling remains a vital cultural tradition and, as this study has shown, a useful tool for helping new readers build essential literacy skills.[21]

There is another equally compelling reason to feature storytelling in public and school libraries: the joy that it brings to young listeners. In addition to showing that storytelling enabled the participants in this study to practice important literacy skills, the data also revealed the joy that many of them experienced during the storytelling session.

They wrote glowing reviews of the experience, such as: "It was so fun and so funny espesially when the pumpkin jumped!" One student even drew a smiling girl's face on her card. When her teacher asked her about the picture, she said: "I made me smiling at her during the stories when she told it, the stories."

Live storytelling can bring joy to children and encourage them to view libraries and literacy in a positive light, helping to advance the core mission of libraries. That outcome alone is reason to continue providing storytelling for children in public and school libraries for many years to come. &

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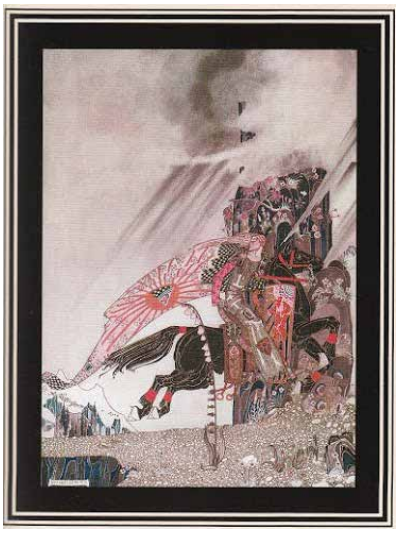
## REMEMBERING KEATS' LEGACY

The winners of the 2016 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award proudly display their awards following a ceremony at the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg this past spring. Pictured from left to right are Julia Sarcone-Roach, new writer honor for *The Bear Ate Your Sandwich* (illustrated by Julia Sarcone-Roach; published by Knopf Books for Young Readers); Megan Dowd Lambert, new writer honor for *A Crow of His Own* (illustrated by David Hyde Costello; published by Charlesbridge); Don Tate, new writer winner for *Poet: The Remarkable Story of George Moses Horton* (illustrated by Don Tate; published by Peachtree Publishers); Phoebe Wahl, new illustrator winner for *Sonya's Chickens* (written by Phoebe Wahl; published by Tundra Books); Ryan T. Higgins, new illustrator honor for *Mother Bruce* (written by Ryan T. Higgins; published by Disney • Hyperion); and Rowboat Watkins, new illustrator honor for *Rude Cakes* (written by Rowboat Watkins; published by Chronicle Books). Photo by Kathy L. Dunn.

# Perennially Popular

## The Appeal of Classic Fairy Tales for Children

PAULINE DEWAN



"The Princess on the Glass Hill" from *East of the Sun and West of the Moon: Old Tales from the North* by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, illustrated by Kay Nielsen. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920.

*Author's note: All illustrations taken from books in the public domain.*

Fairy tales were not initially intended for children. "Originally told at fireside gatherings or in spinning circles by adults to adult audiences," as Maria Tatar points out, "fairy tales joined the canon of children's literature (which is itself of recent vintage) only in the last two to three centuries."[1]

They began as oral tales for all listeners, passed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Giovanni Francesco Straparola, Giambattista Basile, and Charles Perrault published some of the first collections of fairy tales in the Western tradition. During the nineteenth century, famous fairy tale authors such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Joseph Jacobs continued writing down oral tales.

Many fairy tales have survived hundreds of years and are as popular today as they were in older societies. No matter how few books children know, they are often familiar with fairy tales such as "Cinderella," "Jack and the Beanstalk," and "The Sleeping Beauty." Although these tales can appeal to people of all ages, they particularly resonate with the young. What is it about classic fairy tales that captivates so many children?

## Empowering Children

Many of the classic tales empower youth in a number of ways. The least privileged children rise above their elders in many fairy tales. The youngest of three succeeds where elder siblings fail (for example, "Cinderella," "The Golden Goose," and "Beauty and the Beast").[2]

Underdogs prevail by outwitting powerful opponents. The brave little tailor conquers two giants, a unicorn, and a wild boar; Hansel and Gretel kill an evil witch; Puss in Boots outsmarts an ogre; and young Jack cuts down a beanstalk to defeat a giant.[3]

In many fairy tales, children not only conquer opponents but also become kings and queens by virtue of their good hearts and brave deeds. They are active agents in their own destiny as they strive to become their best selves (as represented by the royal status they achieve).

"The Princess on the Glass Hill" is a classic example of an empowering fairy tale for children.[4] It begins with a problem that three siblings try to solve in turn. When the two elder sons fail to discover why their father's meadow is destroyed on a particular night each year, the youngest son takes up his post as guard. Finding a horse with brass armor, he tames it and leads

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it away—an action that saves the meadow. The following two years, he again saves the meadow when horses with silver, and then gold, armor appear.

"Cinderella," illustrated by Edmund Dulac, from *The Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales from the French* by Arthur Quiller Couch, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910.

Having accomplished the first quest, he is presented with a second one. A king issues a challenge to those in his kingdom: whomever is able to ride up a glass hill to win a golden apple from his daughter can marry her. Everyone who tries this task fails, including the two elder siblings. When the youngest brother successfully rides up the hill on three occasions in brass, silver, and then gold armor, he wins the princess and half a kingdom. His incremental rise from ridiculed youngest son to esteemed prince is the result of his own agency and characteristic of the best tales.

## Conquering Fears

Although fairy tales are populated with kindly helping figures and noble kings and queens, they also include witches, monsters, trolls, and other scary creatures. Some fairy-tale adaptors minimize the fear, evil, and violence, forgetting that many children enjoy dangerous situations, particularly in the safe environment of fiction. Celebrated fairy tales such as "Little Red Riding Hood," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Jack the Giant Killer" are filled with frightening situations.[5]

Perrault in "Blue Beard," for example, deliberately heightens readers' fears.[6] When Blue Beard's wife violates her husband's interdiction and enters a forbidden room, she finds multiple corpses of his ex-wives. Discovering her disobedience, Blue Beard prepares to kill her. As she awaits her execution, she repeatedly asks her sister if her rescuers are in sight. Three times, Anne replies, "I see nought but dust in the sun and the green grass growing."[7] The brothers arrive at the last possible moment to spare her life and allay readers' fears.

In the tale, "The Old Woman in the Wood," robbers jump out of a thicket and murder everyone except a servant girl who hides behind a tree.[8] When the robbers leave, the servant girl is left alone in the forest, afraid of the dangers surrounding her. A dove near an old tree befriends her, providing food, shelter, and clothing. In exchange, the dove asks her to retrieve a ring guarded by an evil old woman. Despite her fears, the servant girl accomplishes the task and is rewarded by the transformation of the old tree into a handsome prince.

Scariness, as Jerry Griswold points out, plays a larger role in stories for children than it does for adults.[9] When children read stories, they experience the same fear and anxiety as the characters, but they do so in a safe simulator-type environment. Characters facing frightening situations model coping skills for child readers, providing them with a dress rehearsal for life's challenges.

## Leaving Home and Growing Up

Fairy tales also appeal to children because they typically embody patterns of growth and development. Children become adults in these tales by moving away from home and entering "the wide world"—a place filled with danger, challenges, and exciting adventures. Many fairy tales begin with a domestic problem, one that propels children into the larger world. This movement away from home stimulates personal growth as characters face new challenges. As Jack Zipes observes, "The wandering protagonist always leaves home to reconstitute home."[10]

Hansel and Gretel are forced to leave their house and enter the frightening woods because there is not enough food for the family during a famine.[11] The hard-hearted mother talks her husband into abandoning their children. Although Hansel and Gretel manage to return home by planting a trail of stones, their success is short-lived once the famine returns.

"The Old Woman in the Wood," illustrated by Arthur Rackham, from *Little Brother and Little Sister and Other Tales* by The Brothers Grimm, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. London: Constable & Co., 1917.

The second time the siblings are abandoned in the woods, they are unable to return home because birds eat their trail of breadcrumbs. But the children manage to rescue themselves permanently by outwitting their mother's fantasy-world equivalent—the child-eating witch. Once the pair kill the witch, they find their way home to their father and discover that their mother has died.

Thumbelina, like Hansel and Gretel, is another fairy-tale child forced to leave home.[12] A toad carries her off to a muddy stream, a beetle to a forest, and a field mouse to a hole in the ground. But even in the midst of despair, Thumbelina does not forget others. Her kindness to a dying swallow gains the bird's sympathy.

In fairy tales, compassion to those less fortunate frequently evokes a reciprocal response, one that rescues the protagonist

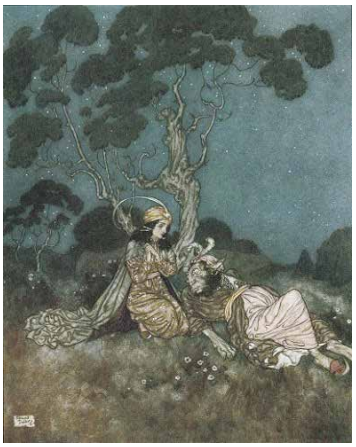
from harm (for example, "The Juniper-Tree," "The Elves and the Shoemaker," and "The Water of Life").[13]

The swallow in Andersen's tale rescues Thumbelina from entrapment and carries her to a land of enchantment where she marries the miniature king of the flowers. Her testing in the wide world releases her from imprisonment and brings her full circle from a childhood home of flowers to a marital home of flowers.

The journey from childhood to adulthood is often represented in fairy tales by the movement from a single state to a married one (for example "The Golden Goose," "Thumbelina," and "Cinderella").[14] Deviation from this fairy-tale pattern is depicted as unnatural.

When the heroine of "Rapunzel" hits puberty, a witch tries to lock her in a high tower—one that has no stairs or doors.[15] But the King's son discovers Rapunzel and enters the tower by climbing up her hair, an action that enrages her captor. Despite the witch's best efforts, Rapunzel eventually leaves the tower and becomes a wife and mother. A copper castle with many towers in "The Tinderbox" and a dark tower in "Maid Maleen" are also ineffective in thwarting the natural progression from childhood to adulthood.[16]

Misfortune can befall protagonists who deviate from this pattern. In "Beauty and the Beast," Beauty keeps her father's promise to Beast by leaving home to marry him.[17] She becomes homesick and tells Beast that she has such a strong desire to see her father that she will die of grief if she is unable to do so. Since suitor supplants father in the customary fairy-tale pattern, the return home interrupts the normal developmental trajectory. Beast almost dies when Beauty returns to her father, and it is only her compassion for Beast that saves him.



"Beauty and the Beast," illustrated by Edmund Dulac, from *The Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales from the French* by Arthur Quiller Couch, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910.

Rather than depict individual development, a number of fairy tales demonstrate familial progression as one character improves upon the actions of his or her siblings (for example, "The Story of the Three Little Pigs," "The Water of Life," and "The Golden Castle that Hung in the Air").[18] In "The Golden Goose," the eldest son enters the forest to cut wood.[19] When he meets a little old man, he refuses to share his food with him. The middle son repeats the actions of his brother. But when the youngest son enters the woods, he shares his food willingly with the old man.

Because a forest is an unknown and unfamiliar place, it is often the site of fairy-tale challenges and tests. Nancy Canepa points out that the forest is a place of initiation—"the site of trials and tasks the successful completion of which effect a radical change in the protagonist's life."[20] The purpose of entering a forest, according to Maria Nikolajeva, is to gain "maturity and better knowledge."[21] Venturing into the woods is an essential component of protagonists' quests and instrumental in their progression from childhood to adulthood.

In "The Golden Goose," the youngest son is rewarded for his kindness in the woods with a magical goose, which in turn wins him a princess.[22] Likewise, when the maiden is tested in the forest in "The Three Little Men in the Wood," she is rewarded for her generosity and obedience with magical gifts and abilities. Her stepsister is correspondingly punished when she fails the same forest testing.[23]

## Embodying Hopes and Dreams

Although fairy tales can depict children's deepest fears, they also frequently embody their greatest hopes and dreams. Many of the best fairy tales present wondrous worlds that captivate and inspire readers. "Resplendent, imperishable, and incorruptible" are the words Max Lüthi chooses to describe fairy-tale worlds.[24] In "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," the princesses' beds sink into a magical subterranean realm each night.[25] A beautifully illuminated castle sits in the midst of groves of trees with silver, gold, and diamond leaves.

In a number of fairy tales, metals and precious gems combine with nature to improve upon it. The emperor's gardens contain flowers with tinkling silver bells in "The Nightingale;" a hill of brilliant glass dazzles onlookers in "The Princess on the Glass Hill;" and roses of crimson diamonds, leaves of emeralds, pomegranate flowers of garnets, marigolds of topazes, and tulips of amethysts, opals, and diamonds shine brilliantly in "The Golden Branch."[26] These bejeweled landscapes depict a world of splendor and magnificence; indeed, the natural world is even more wondrous when transformed into a gem-laden one.

Castles and palaces are the apex of the built world in fairy tales. They are frequently illuminated with the most brilliant lights and adorned with the costliest and most radiant gems. The palace of the mer-people in "The Little Mermaid" is located far out to sea, deep into the ocean's unfathomable depths.[27] Its walls are made of coral, its windows amber, and its roof cockle shells adorned with pearls. The castle in "Queen Cat" is even more splendid with its doors of precious stones, walls of finest porcelain, and halls of mother-of-pearl and radiant gems. This castle is filled with golden plates, crystal glasses, and thousands of glittering lights.[28]

Cosmic journeys highlight the magnificence of the sun, moon, and stars. Characters in "The Seven Ravens" and "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" undertake breathtaking celestial

quests in search of loved ones.[29] The four winds carry the protagonist in the latter tale east of the sun and west of the moon to an enchanted castle.

When the protagonist of "The Golden Castle that Hung in the Air" travels nine hundred miles beyond the world's end, he sees something sparkling and twinkling like a tiny star in the far distance. As he gets closer, he discovers that it is an otherworldly castle that hangs suspended in the sky.[30] The enchanted castles and wondrous landscapes of fairy tales suggest a visionary world of perfection and fulfillment, the apex of aspiration and desire. The reader's imagination soars, unrestrained by the limits of the real world.

"East of the Sun and West of the Moon," illustrated by Kay Nielsen, from *East of the Sun and West of the Moon: Old Tales from the North* by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920.

## Providing Reassuring Structure

Fairy-tale landscapes suggest infinite possibilities yet are bound by the comforting limits of formulaic structure.[31] Children learn to recognize the conventions of fairy tales early in their reading careers: the "once-upon-a-time" beginnings, "happily-ever-after" endings, good and evil characters, generalized settings, and triplicate adventures and character groupings. These formulaic patterns provide stability in fairy-tale worlds filled with unknown forces and strange events. Numerous fairy tales make use of familiar patterns that resonate with children: the progression from home to the wide world to a new form of home,[32] the movement from innocence to experience, the journey symbolizing development, and assistance to those less fortunate who in turn help the assister.

Fractured fairy tales such as Jon Scieszka's *The Frog Prince Continued*, David Wiesner's *The Three Pigs*, Babette Cole's *Prince Cinders*, and Robert Munsch's *The Paper Bag Princess* delight young readers because they violate the fairy tale conventions that children have learned to recognize.[33]

## Depicting the Essential and the Elemental

Fairy tales are stripped of extraneous details. They depict character types, not individualized or even named characters. Nuances and subtleties of portrayal are deliberately avoided. Princes are noble, witches evil. The fairy tale genre thrives on extremes and juxtaposed contrasts such as ugly/beautiful, caring/cruel, rich/poor. As with characters, settings are rarely individualized or localized. Seldom are place names given or detailed descriptions of surroundings provided. Events take place in "the forest," not a particular forest. Everything peripheral is eliminated.

Stripped of localized and particularized detail, characters and places offer infinite possibilities to the imagination. The child reader is free to visualize a world that is larger than life. And by eliminating nuances and particulars, fairy-tale authors focus on the essential, the universal, and the elemental.

As both J. R. R. Tolkien and Jane Yolen remind us, classic fairy tales have been revised and honed over the course of time, emerging as tales of refined wisdom, wonder, and inspiration for children.[34] Their truths have withstood the test of time and their enchanted worlds have appealed to young readers over hundreds of years. Fairy tales touch children in profound ways because they reenact patterns that are especially significant and memorable for them—patterns that have had to pass through the distillation process of oral transmission before being committed to print.

## Note about Illustrations

The Golden Age of children's book illustration, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, was a period of lavish fairy-tale artwork. Three outstanding Golden-Age illustrators—Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, and Kay Nielsen—created opulent fairy-tale gift books, many of which are still reproduced today. See, for example, Dover's Calla Editions. &

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# Tail Waggin' Tutors

## A Doggone Fun Way to Read!

ANN SIEJKA

A child reads to a canine friend at Lewiston (NY) Public Library.

Every Monday and Tuesday night, patrons of the Lewiston (NY) Public Library may see some four-footed visitors heading to the children's room, red bandanas around their necks and two-footed friends in tow.

These dogs are part of Tail Waggin' Tutors, a program allowing children to improve their reading skills and develop a love of reading by practicing their skills with caring and patient canine friends.

Some may balk at allowing canine companions into the building--worrying about mess, accidents, allergies, liability, and insurance issues. A few just don't like dogs and don't want them around. All are valid concerns, but many librarians as well as teachers and parents believe that the benefits outweigh the potential problems.

Research tends to agree as can be seen by the results of research conducted by the Davis Veterinary Medicine Extension at the University of California, which found that school children who read to therapy dogs on a regular basis actually improve their fluency by 12 percent. Those children who participated felt more confident in their reading skills and found reading more enjoyable.[1]

Research conducted by Vicki Marcelini Dunlap on the available literature of the issue adds further support to the premise that reading to a certified therapy dog improves reading skills and encourages a love of reading, both of which are the goals of children's libraries everywhere.[2]

As the initiator of the program at the Lewiston Public Library, I can verify these findings. Our program is now in its fifth year, and I have witnessed some amazing results. One child in particular, Whit, 7, comes to mind.

During the first year of our program, Whit's parents said he hated to read. It was difficult to get him to read the twenty minutes a night required by his teacher.

In a short time after joining our program, his attitude toward reading shifted. He loved to see "his" dog each week. His reading became more fluent, and his confidence grew. Whit's parents said he would go home from the program and practice reading so he could do a good job the next time he came to read.

By the end of the school year, Whit's reading ability had jumped several levels, and he was excited about reading. His parents attributed this dramatic change to reading with our dogs three times a month.

***Ann Siejka*** *is the children's librarian at the Lewiston (NY) Public Library.*

Is this program worth defending against those who feel that dogs don't belong in the library or the added effort it takes to coordinate several dogs, varying schedules, and occasional dips in attendance? Definitely!

If we can help even one child learn to love reading, it is definitely worth the time and effort. The program is a valuable resource not only for the children it serves but for the adults striving to find a way to improve their child's reading skills and foster a love of reading.

For those interested in establishing such a program, research and personal accounts of others can be excellent tools used to garner support or allay the concerns of those who may be reluctant to offer their support. So, too, can well-planned program goals, guidelines, and protocols. The following guidelines were developed for our program and are shared in the hopes that they will aid other librarians in developing a reading program for their libraries.

**Do your research.** Library boards, concerned patrons, and reluctant staff may need convincing. Articles, books, and research that support the benefits may go a long way towards alleviating concerns. Don't overwhelm people with reams of paper detailing dry research reports but definitely prepare to support your program with interesting summaries of your findings. Include solutions to perceived problems.

**Contact a national therapy organization.** Organizations such as Therapy Dog International (TDI) and Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R.E.A.D.), and even your local animal rescue association can provide valuable information, a list of participating therapy dogs and handlers available in your area, as well as concrete information on how to begin a reading program in your library. TDI and R.E.A.D. have such programs available and can provide insurance for the dogs and handlers who participate in such programs.

**Develop a detailed plan.** To garner support for your reading program, you must develop a detailed plan. How large or small do you want the program to be and how often do you want to meet? What will the rules be for handlers, children, and parents? How formal will the program be? How will you measure success?

**Get permission from the director and library board.** After you have a plan in place, it is time to garner the support of the governing body of your library. Without the active support of those in charge, you may have difficulty with those opposed to the program.

**Interview each dog and handler.** This step is absolutely necessary. Remember, these dogs and handlers need to build a bond between themselves and the children they serve. Not every dog or handler works well with children. The success of the reading sessions depends upon the interaction between the child, the dog, and the handler. If you don't think they will fit, don't invite them to participate. Even those handlers who want to participate may not be right for your program. Don't be afraid to say no.

**Choose several dogs and handlers.** It is critical to have more than one dog for children to choose from since not every child is comfortable around every dog. Some children are afraid of large dogs; others are not. Some children like calmer, older dogs. Giving them the opportunity to choose from several dogs increases the chances of a successful program. Also, life happens, things change, and dogs and handlers may have to opt out of the program.

**Require that each dog is actually a certified therapy dog and a member of a therapy dog organization.** This is very important; certified therapy dogs have been tested to ensure they are suitable and insured. In my experience, as long as they are a member of a therapy dog organization and are in good standing (all shots, training, and dues current), they are insured against lawsuits. This is the case with all of the dogs in our program. This protects the library, the dogs and handlers, as well as the children they serve. Also, handlers are trained in the proper protocol and are very careful to follow those rules for the safety and benefit of everyone.

**Host an open house with the dogs and handlers present.** It is important that everyone meets each other prior to the beginning of the program. Some children are nervous around dogs. Parents want to feel comfortable with those who are in contact with their children. Be sure to provide handouts of the rules and gather contact information.

**Conduct a biannual meeting with your volunteers.** It is important to meet at least twice a year with your handlers to discuss any issues or concerns you or the handlers may have. It allows an opportunity for offering suggestions and helps to establish a rapport with each other. Scheduling a time when everyone can meet may be difficult, but it is well worth the effort.

**Promote your program.** Get the word out to the local schools. Utilize a variety of methods of advertising, and don't underestimate the value of word of mouth communication. It is particularly helpful to coordinate with reading specialists, tutors, and teachers who you already know, so networking is important. &

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# A Virtual Vertical File

## How Librarians Utilize Pinterest

KATE ECKERT

Past presidents of ALSC—some of whom have been interviewed recently by ALSC's Oral History Committee—probably would not be surprised at how much children's services have changed since the 1940s, when ALA formed a Division for Children and Young People (a precursor name to ALSC).

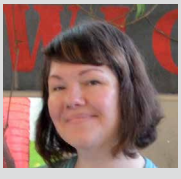
But what may surprise many is how computers and the Internet have become omnipresent virtual tools to help children's librarians with everything from selection to services. Social media—and all its iterations and segments—is a huge part of who librarians are and can be today. Here's a brief, nonscientific look at how some of our colleagues use one of these tools, Pinterest.

Pinterest, the dynamic visual curation tool that gained popularity in 2012, allows users to "pin" or bookmark website images with embedded links onto a virtual board. With 100 million active users, Pinterest is currently the second biggest social networking site after Facebook and is mostly popular with women under the age of 50.[1]

Like so many other social networks, there is also an app for mobile use, which makes pinning seamless and easy from device to device. Once uploaded, a pin can be repinned by other users to their own boards, thus creating a virtual trail of fellow pinners. Users may also follow other people's and organizations' boards to keep up with their posts. Pinterest is primarily utilized by home users to curate recipes, crafts, and businesses for marketing purposes. Librarians, however, are using Pinterest in a variety of personal and professional ways.

- **Gathering program ideas.** I have several craft boards based on age range, one just for flannel board ideas, literary-themed party ideas, school-age/tween programs, storytime ideas with many links to YouTube videos of fingerplays and songs, STEM/STEAM programs, and a LEGO Club board—my most repinned, and therefore most popular, board. I pin ideas for future LEGO clubs and archive pictures of the LEGO displays we've created. Many other librarians echo the usefulness of Pinterest for planning programs. School librarians, in particular, mentioned they created boards to gather ideas for lesson plans. One responder said she used Pinterest to collect Montessori activities for children under 5 and presented them at family learning night, which focused on preparing children for school. Another mentioned that she and a coworker shared password-protected boards to privately bounce program ideas off each other.

- **Highlighting programs and services**. Many librarians use Pinterest to highlight upcoming programs and services. Updating a Pinterest page tends to be easier than updating a library website, to which the librarian may or may not have access. Plus there is already an active online user base, making it easy to reach new patrons/users. One of the librarians I



***Kate Eckert*** *is a Children's Librarian at The Free Library of Philadelphia*

spoke with said her library pins all of their program fliers and brochures on a board so patrons can keep up with library programs via Pinterest. She also promotes their community involvement through a "Librarians on a Mission" board. Another librarian uses Pinterest to archive pictures from completed programs and crafts.

- **Creating booklists/book displays.** Pinterest is a great way for the visually inclined to create booklists by subject, theme, age, award, year, or any other category. Many librarians said they found it easier to create their own subject lists in Pinterest rather than searching on a traditional online catalog. Several librarians mentioned linking their pins to the records in the library catalog so patrons could easily place a hold on a specific item. I use Pinterest to keep track of booklists other people have created. Others search Pinterest for inspiration for book displays or to keep track of books for various book clubs. Others use it to organize collection development ideas and future book purchases.

- **Conferences/presentations.** One particularly innovative librarian uses Pinterest to showcase her resources for presentations at conferences; that way other professionals can access her research quickly via a QR code made from the URL of her Pinterest board. Another librarian uses Pinterest to organize her images for PowerPoint presentations. I've used Pinterest to collaborate with others on my ALSC committee to prepare ideas for ALA Midwinter and Annual.

- **Create an archive.** As a virtual vertical file, Pinterest can be used as a document management system to manage articles, such as issues in librarianship, for conferences, workshops, or potential blog post ideas. Marge Loch-Wouters, owner of Loch-Works Consulting and Youth Consultant for the Southwest (WI) Library System, said, "I look at each Pinterest board as a file folder into which I put all the good stuff I come across while reading blogs, Twitter links, articles, checking websites, webinars, and more. Also, when I'm ready to design a program, a workshop, a class, a presentation, or write a blog post or do consulting, all my links are saved and ready at my fingertips!"

- **Exhibiting special collections.** Christopher Brown, curator of the Children's Literature Research Collection at The Free Library of Philadelphia, uses Pinterest as an alternative platform to curate special collections due to its ease of use and browsability and because it provides a tangible way to gather statistics with "likes" and repins.

## Reference

1. Maeve Duggan, "The Demographics of Social Media Users," Pew Research Center, August 19, 2015, www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/the-demographics-of-social-media-users.

## ALSC 2016 National Institute Re-Imagined


The ALSC Board of Directors voted in April to cancel the 2016 National Institute scheduled for September in Charlotte, N.C. The cancellation was a response to the passage in March of North Carolina's Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act (House Bill 2), which repealed all GLBT-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinances across the state. The law contradicts the core values, purpose, and diversity work of ALSC and undermines civil rights and the fundamental principles upon which libraries are founded.

Although the Institute is cancelled, ALSC is not cancelling the event's educational opportunities. A two-day virtual conference is being planned for September 15 and 16, 2016 (same dates as the Institute). The educational content will be presented in live sessions, moderated discussion forums, and a "networking lounge" for spontaneous break-out discussions and networking.

Another educational opportunity will be offered in Atlanta, Georgia, on Friday, January 20, 2017, immediately prior to ALA's Midwinter Meeting. Planning for this workshop is underway. Activities will include author events similar to those originally slated for the Charlotte Institute. Philip and Erin Stead, Laura Dronzek, and Kevin Henkes, Breakfast for Bill author panelists slated to appear in Charlotte, have committed to joining us in Atlanta.

Further details, as they develop, will be shared on the ALSC Institute website at www.ala.org/alsc/institute.

# Start Anywhere

## The Everyday Advocacy Challenge

Jenna Nemec-Loise

*Everyday Advocacy empowers ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve youth and families. Each lighthearted column features easy-to-implement strategies and techniques for asserting the transformative power of libraries both within communities and beyond them. Please contact* ***Jenna Nemec-Loise*** *at everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com with comments and ideas for future topics.*

Great things don't always have to start at the beginning. Sometimes the most exciting things can start right smack in the middle.

For example, think of your favorite informational book for kids. If it's a great informational book (and I'll bet it is since you love it), you can open it up to any page, and *voilà*! You can dig right in because of all the text features available to guide you: Headings, captions, sidebars, photographs, and more. Because of its specialized design, any page in an informational book is an entry point and a prime opportunity for learning.

Now think of Everyday Advocacy like an informational book. You don't have to start with page one, and you don't have to move from beginning to end. Your "text features" include the Everyday Advocacy website (www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy) filled with resources to guide and support you. There's even an "appendix" of other Everyday Advocates ready to answer your questions and help deepen your engagement with any topic.

So are you ready to crack open an adventure?

Check out the Everyday Advocacy Challenge (EAC), your right-smack-in-the-middle entry point into learning, sharing, and making a difference for the youth and families you serve in your library community. Whether you're just dipping your toes or you're already an experienced advocate, the EAC is your ticket to Everyday Advocacy awesomeness.

You can start anywhere. Here's how!

### Everyday Advocacy Challenge Overview

Activate your inner Everyday Advocate and motivate your colleagues to do the same by volunteering to be a part of a fifteen-member EAC cohort convening in September, December, March, or June. Here's the scoop on what we'll ask of you:

1. Commit to completing four consecutive Take Action Tuesday challenges on a designated theme;

2. Collaborate with your EAC cohort over the four-week period, sharing successes and troubleshooting issues via ALA Connect (or its next iteration);

3. Write a post for the ALSC blog about your EAC experience; and

4. Contribute a reflection for an upcoming issue of the *Everyday Advocacy Matters* e-newsletter.

Interested? Submit the challenge web form (www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/everyday-advocacy-challenge), and we'll be in touch with all the details.

## Take Action Tuesday Challenges

Once you're confirmed as an EAC cohort member and we near the challenge launch date, we'll start planning the four Take Action Tuesday challenges you'll complete as part of the experience.

We want the EAC to be customized to your own and your cohort's growing skill sets, so we'll brainstorm entry points before we take the plunge together.

Here are a few sample prompts:

1. What advocacy topics would you like to tackle?
2. What new advocacy muscles would you like to flex?
3. What types of challenges would you like to design?

Using the feedback we receive from our planning prompts, we'll craft the Take Action Tuesday challenges that will guide our collaboration in the weeks to come.

*Now think of Everyday Advocacy like an informational book. You don't have to start with page one, and you don't have to move from beginning to end.*

## Online Collaboration

How do you create a meaningful collaborative experience with colleagues when you're in different parts of the country—or even the world? Online, baby!

Throughout the four-week EAC, we'll create an advocacy playground, sandbox, and safe space using ALA Connect (or its next iteration). On each Tuesday of the EAC, we'll post the weekly Take Action Tuesday challenge to our online community and ask everyone to participate in a lively discussion about the successes and/or difficulties they're facing.

Past cohort members have said that this collaboration was the best part of their EAC experience, and I'll bet it'll be yours, too.

The best part about the EAC online community? It's open to anyone who wants to follow or join it. Your participation can inspire other Everyday Advocates who aren't a part of the EAC but who may be interested in joining a future cohort. Nice, right?

## ALSC Blog Posts and Reflections

In addition to collaborating with EAC cohort members online, you'll be asked to write an ALSC blog post about one of the Take Action Tuesday challenges you've completed. There are no real guidelines; whatever you think will be most valuable to other Everyday Advocates is perfect. And brevity is A-OK! You can aim for two-hundred-fifty words or less. (Check out previous EAC blog posts by searching the Everyday Advocacy tag at www.alsc.ala.org/blog).

Finally, we'd like to celebrate your accomplishments by publishing a reflection on your EAC experience in an upcoming issue of the *Everyday Advocacy Matters* e-newsletter. Your piece will appear in the issue following your EAC participation (e.g., the October issue if you're part of the September cohort).

## Take the Plunge

Summer's a busy time for everyone, but do yourself a favor: Take a few minutes now to mark your calendar for the next EAC, which will convene September 26–27, 2016. Fall is a great time to take the plunge into your Everyday Advocacy journey, but then again, so is winter, spring, or summer.

So no worries if you can't join us in September. There's always another EAC right around the corner. Remember, you can start anywhere, and we'll meet you in the middle. &

## Index to Advertisers

# Digital Media and Young Children

Betsy Diamant-Cohen and Annette Y. Goldsmith

***Annette Y. Goldsmith*** *fills in this issue for Tess Prendergast while Tess concentrates on her doctoral studies. Goldsmith is a lecturer at the University of Washington Information School, where she teaches courses on storytelling, materials for youth, and libraries as learning labs in a digital age.* ***Betsy Diamant-Cohen*** *is Executive Director of Mother Goose on the Loose, Baltimore, Maryland.*

The research on screen time, digital media, and young children is of great interest to families and the librarians who work with them, as evidenced by comments in the Preschool Services Discussion online and by the large number of participants at the Preschool Services Discussion Group meeting at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston. As a follow-up, this column will highlight a few studies regarding children and media and will also present a selection of media mentorship resources, including some collected by the Preschool Services Discussion Group (with thanks to Sue McCleaf Nespeca and Linda L. Ernst).

Little eLit, a go-to site for research and resources on media mentorship created by Cen Campbell that developed into a grassroots, crowdsourced professional learning community of children's librarians, is now a collaborative, web-based think tank with a large archive. Active members of Little eLit (who are also ALSC members) produced a research-based book, *Young Children, New Media, and Libraries: A Guide for Incorporating New Media into Library Collections, Services, and Programs for Families and Children Ages 0–5*, which was published chapter-by-chapter online from October 2014 to May 2015. This book is available for free download at http://littleelit.com/book/.

In chapter 2, "Children and Technology: What Can Research Tell Us?" Tess Prendergast gives a comprehensive survey of research studies and position statements regarding media use with children. Other chapters discuss developmentally appropriate practice, the role of new media in inclusive early literacy programs and services, evaluation of new media, using new media in storytimes, managing new media for youth services, and training and development for new media initiatives.[1]

Researchers Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff have conducted research relating to children's language and literacy. Here is a taste of their research:

## When Technology Can Help Conversations

A study with Sarah Roseberry Lytle, with Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff, investigated "word-learning by children who were directly engaging with others on television and video-chat platforms like Skype. The study found that while children under 3 years old learn virtually nothing from hearing words on a television screen, their response to interactions on video chat were indistinguishable from in-person communication."[2]

## When Technology Can Hinder Conversations

In a research study so new that it has been submitted to a journal but has not yet been published, Jessica Michele Reed, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff examine what happens when parents try to teach their children two words with and without cell phone interruptions. The researchers concluded,

"Children learn words in the uninterrupted condition but not in the interrupted condition. When we break the back-and-forth interaction, children do not realize the benefits of the duet. Of course, this is not to say that parents can't take calls, but just to note that language learning doesn't happen when conversations are interrupted." A short description of this study might make a helpful developmental tip to parents!

## More about Interruptions!

A 2013 study investigated and compared children's literacy outcomes (language learning and story comprehension) when sharing ebooks and traditional books together. Two studies with 165 parents with a child from ages three to five revealed that parent-child dialogic reading was less and children's reading comprehension was lower when an electronic book was used for reading together. Findings suggested that electronic stories often were interrupted by games with "bells and whistles" that disrupted the conversation. This interference with the back-and-forth discussion necessary for dialogic reading was suggested as the reason for the lower rates of reading comprehension. Lower comprehension rates were also found when comparing the reading of normal children's books to those with manipulatives.[3]

## References


1. Amy Koester et al., *Young Children, New Media, and Libraries: A Guide for Incorporating New Media into Library Collections, Services, and Programs for Families and Children Ages 0–5* (Little eLit: October 2014–May 2015), http://littleelit.com/book/.
2. Sarah Roseberry, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, and Roberta M. Golinkoff, "Skype Me! Socially Contingent Interactions Help Toddlers Learn Language," *Child Development* 85, no. 3 (May–June 2014): 956–70.
3. Cynthia Chiong and Judy S. DeLoache, "Learning the ABCs: What Kinds of Picture Books Facilitate Young Children's Learning?" *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 13, no 2 (2013): 225–41.


## Resources

### A Brief History

The 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines, and even the 2013 update, advised against any screen time for children under the age of two. As pointed out in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Fred Rogers Center (2012) joint statement, a complete ban on screen time for this age was unrealistic. The 2015 revised AAP guidelines now allow screen time and they focus on co-engagement (or joint media-engagement between parents and children).

### The ALSC White Paper

In 2015, ALSC librarians Cen Campbell, Claudia Haines, Amy Koester, and Dorothy Stoltz created the white paper "Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth." It gives a detailed history of the screen time debate, describing the role of children's librarians as media mentors, who, in addition to helping connect the right book with the right child at the right time, can help connect the right app with the right child at the right time. They can also help parents by explaining best practices for using digital media with children in non-judgmental terms. In addition to explaining the issues and recommending guidelines, the ALSC white paper has an excellent bibliography (http://bit.ly/media-mentorship).

### Evaluating Apps

Understanding the educational value of apps is clearly important for media mentors. A framework called the four pillars of learning was developed by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and her colleagues. They recommend evaluating apps according to how the apps encourage active learning, engagement in the learning process, meaningful learning, and social interaction.

Kyle Snow summarizes the approach in his post, "NAEYC: How to Find Educational Apps" (www.naeyc.org/blogs/gclarke/2015/05/how-find-educational-apps). For the full paper, see Kathy Hirsh-Pasek et al., "Putting Education in 'Educational' Apps: Lessons from the Science of Learning," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 6, no. 1 (2015): 3–34, http://bit.ly/educ-apps.

We'll end this column with a quote from Tess Prendergast, from the Little eLit book on New Media mentioned earlier:

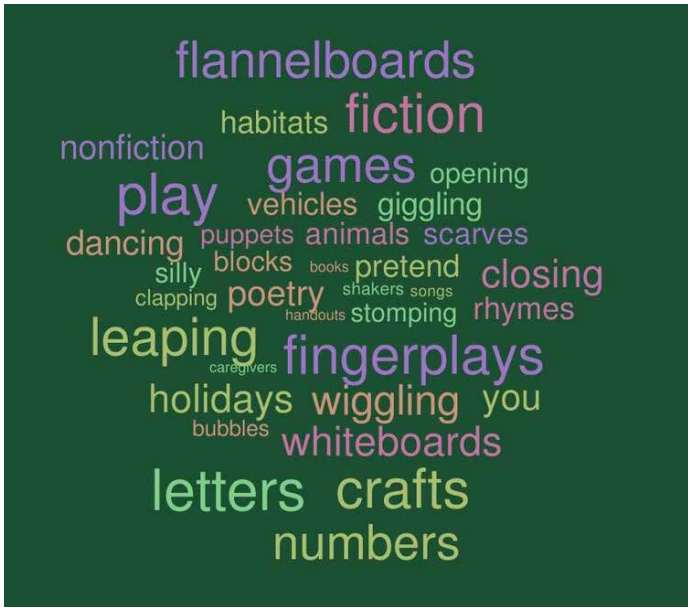
> Building on these studies, it would seem that librarians should seek to strike a balance between the affordances of experiencing technology and the importance of meeting all of young children's other developmental needs. Understanding what children need to thrive should therefore guide librarians' approaches to integrating new media experiences into our existing developmentally beneficial programs, services, and collections.


# A Celebration of Storytimes

J. Elizabeth Mills, Kathleen Campana, and Saroj Ghoting

Our new book, *Supercharged Storytimes: An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide*, translates the research findings of Project VIEWS2[1] into easy-to-follow tips and explanations on how to enhance storytimes and contribute to the early learning development of the children who attend. Enjoy this excerpt and celebrate the magic and fun of storytimes.

> We've seen many kinds of storytimes in big, medium, and small libraries all over Washington State. We've learned from all of these incredible storytime providers, whose patience, inspiration, and dedication show through in the children they serve and the programs they deliver. Each provider had his or her own style, personality, and approach, but they all had the common goal of helping children be better citizens of the world and lifelong learners. We wanted to share . . . the magic that makes up the incredible variety, creativity, and sheer fun of early literacy storytimes for young children.
>
> You brought stories to life and led kids in lively dancing, and engaging conversations. Singing at the top of their lungs, kids wriggled and chatted and played. Parents and caregivers guided and learned along with their children in storytime after storytime after storytime. There were so many different and distinct styles and personalities in the storytimes we observed—all with the common goal of helping children and their families be better citizens of the world and become lifelong learners.




Supercharged storytimes come from supercharged storytime providers—that's you!

## Reference

1. Project VIEWS2 was a four-year, IMLS-funded National Leadership Research grant that demonstrated the impact of early literacy storytimes on the children who attended. Find out more at views2.ischool.uw.edu.

***Kathleen Campana***, ***J. Elizabeth Mills***, *and* ***Saroj Ghoting*** *are the authors of* Supercharged Storytimes: An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide *(ALA Editions, 2016).*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.

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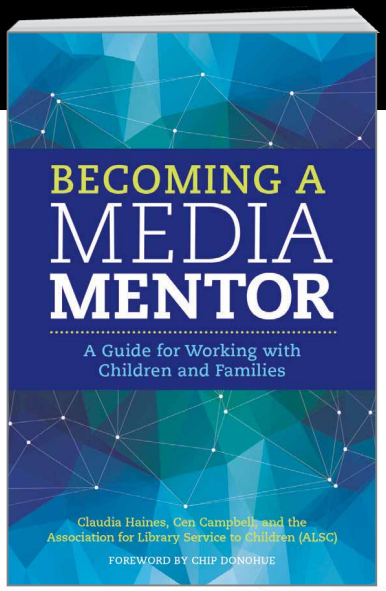


## BECOMING A MEDIA MENTOR

### A Guide for Working with Children and Families

**Claudia Haines, Cen Campbell, and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)**
Foreword by Chip Donohue

2016 | softcover
144 pages | 6" x 9"
$48 | **Members: $43.20**

ISBN: 978-0-8389-1463-2

In a time of rapidly changing technologies, the role of the youth services librarian has expanded to include the realm of digital media. Supporting children's literacy now means serving as a media mentor. This book empowers youth services staff to confidently assist families and caregivers as they navigate the digital world, guiding them towards digital media experiences that will translate into positive and productive lifelong learning skills, regardless of format.

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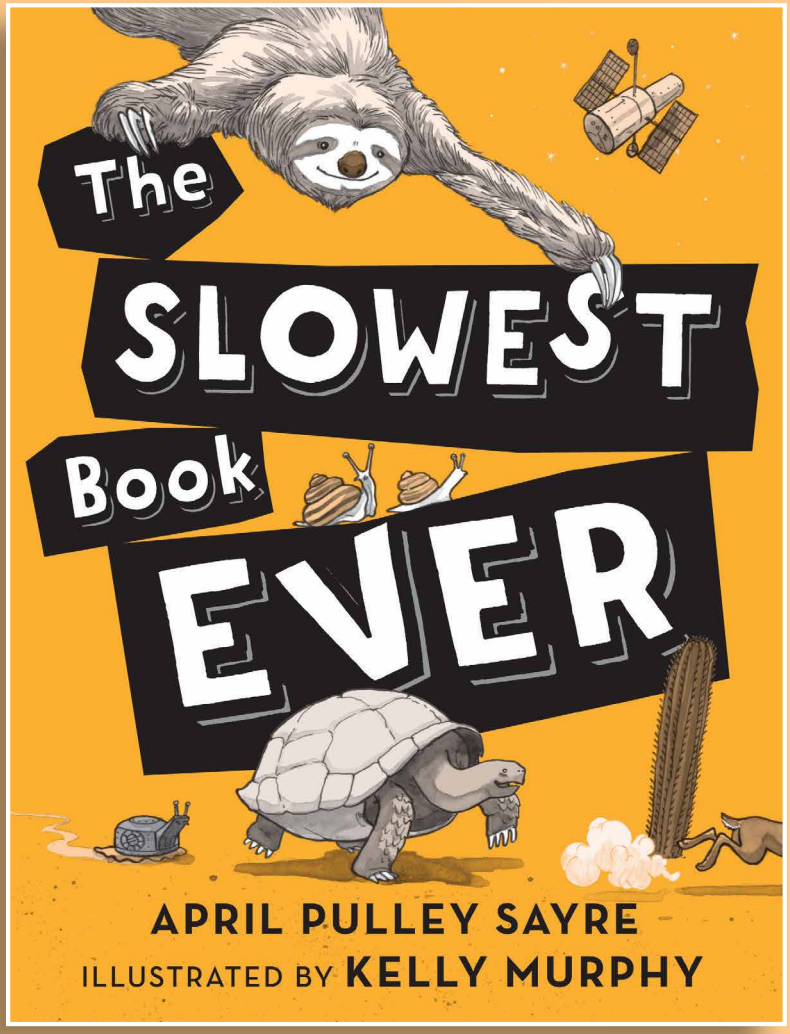


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"Science and nature rub shoulders with pop culture and history in Sayre's ode to slowness. . . . The tone is humorous but never silly, and the facts are backed up with sources and more details in the endnotes. The light tone and engaging writing are perfectly complemented by the pen-and-ink drawings that accompany every entry, and the design invites lingering and sharing. **Students will love picking up and carrying this volume around to read and think about in free moments.**" *—School Library Journal*

"**For kids accustomed to a fast-moving world, this celebration of slowness may be just the ticket. . . .** Presenting big concepts in an inviting, eye-catching format, Sayre leaves readers with the message that 'if you think slowly enough, the entire world can be amazing.'" *—Publishers Weekly*

"Sayre beckons kids to investigate and ruminate on slow-moving animals, slow-growing plants, slow motion, and *plenty* more. . . . refreshing, often fleeting twists of topic, delivered with repeated exhortations for kids to slow down, ponder, and study, combine for **a galloping volume that respects children as capable scientific thinkers. . . . engaging.**" *—Kirkus Reviews*

"In this age of fast food, fast cars, and fast technology, **Sayre urges readers to slow down. . . .** [she] encourages children to take on a slower pace in life by being more observant, thoughtful, and creative . . . **Speed readers not welcome.**" *—Booklist*

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