Children & LIBRARIES

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Winter 2020
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ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

Laundromat Literacy

Pandemic Programming Successes

Librarians as Media Advocates

YOUR ALSC **IMPACT**

Did you know **over 57%** of ALSC members say they first learned about ALSC from a friend, colleague or professor?

You have the influence to build our membership and help ALSC continue to be a viable and successful organization of members dedicated to the **betterment of library service to children**.

We encourage our members to recruit at least one other person to join ALSC this winter!

Thank you to our **Friends.**

Many thanks to our donors! Your support during this challenging and unusual year is so appreciated. Thanks to our generous donors, ALSC was able to:

- Host a member meet-up at the 2020 PLA Conference
- Fund the graphic design of our #LooktoLibraries initiative
- Provide relief renewals to BIPOC members
- *and more!*

A 2020 Friends of ALSC report will be made available later this month. To learn how you can support ALSC visit: https://bit.ly/friendsofalsc

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WINTER 2020 | VOL. 18 | NO. 4 | ISSN 1542-9806

Children & LIBRARIES
the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Peer-Reviewed Article

notes

features

departments

ON THE COVER: Chicago Public Library's STEAM Team librarian Alejandra Santana reads aloud to children and families in a Blue Kangaroo laundromat in Chicago as part of an innovative new movement. Photo by Rebecca Ruidl.

Editor's Note
Is It 2021 Yet?

By Sharon Verbeten

By the time you get this issue, 2020 will almost be over. (*Insert big sigh of relief here!*) Despite the challenges this year brought, librarians rose to the challenge—providing virtual programming, recommending online resources, providing curbside service, and reaching out in other creative ways to engage families. If anything, the year made us truly reflect on just how important libraries and librarians still are—even in an increasingly technological world.

As I write this, we're still in the throes of the pandemic, and we really have no idea when the tide will turn, but let's remain optimistic!

In our fall issue, I reflected on the things *I missed* during the pandemic. Here, I present a list of things *I look forward to* in 2021.

- Singing "Baby Shark" loudly and proudly during storytime.
- Welcoming back the snarky afterschool teens—both as volunteers and as reticent readers. They previously irked and provoked us, but we not-so-secretly really miss them!
- Having a greater respect for people's hidden afflictions; you never know what's happening in a person's day, so kindness always rules.
- Working on new outreach projects, such as the laundromat literacy mentioned in Liz McChesney's fine article in this issue.
- Reading more graphic novels.
- Entering my 19th year as editor of *Children and Libraries*.
- Always trying to think—and share—good thoughts.

As Roald Dahl wrote in *The Twits*, "A person who has good thoughts cannot ever be ugly . . . if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely."

Here's to more of those good thoughts coming our way in 2021! &

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On the Anniversary of the March on Washington

Kirby McCurtis

Kirby McCurtis *is ALSC President.*

I am writing this on a significant anniversary in American history, and I would be remiss in not acknowledging it. Fifty-seven years ago, hundreds of thousands of people came together to march on Washington for jobs and freedom. Attendees heard from a number of civil rights activists including Myrlie Evers, Mahalia Jackson, John Lewis, A. Phillip Randolph, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; this is when the latter gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

The purpose of the march was to advocate for the civil and economic rights of African Americans, and I can't help but see the parallels between that historic march and the uprisings this summer in the wake of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. The people in the streets now are invoking this legacy and still demanding an end to systemic racism and injustice.

It is exciting to see this energy and the renewed cries for freedom, but I also find myself overwhelmed with sadness. For how long must we march before Black Americans are treated equally? Will yet another generation of children have to take up the mantle again and again? And, less than a week after another shooting of an unarmed Black man by police, this time in Wisconsin, I struggle to remain hopeful. Jacob Blake was shot in front of his children. I cannot even imagine the conversation his family had to have with those kids.

But one thing I do know is that we, as professionals committed to serving children, need to be talking about what is happening in the world and how racism impacts Black and indigenous people and People of Color. Helping children identify, express, and trust their feelings keeps them safe.

So, when we as adults struggle with just what to say, or knowing how to begin, books can be a useful way to start. ALSC's new resource, *Look to Libraries in Times of Crisis*, covers a variety of topics and has helpful tools for all library staff.

Don't forget about the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and ALSC Social Justice Reading List that was published in July. Titles on the list were compiled by members of BCALA and ALSC's Quicklists Consulting Committee. What I love about this list is how affirming and uplifting it is; this is especially important when discussing difficult subjects with children.

ALSC's board of directors endorses BCALA's statement condemning increased violence and racism toward Black Americans and People of Color, and, as an organization, we stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, BCALA, and those working to dismantle racial capitalism and white supremacy in all of its forms.

Remember, your silence is violence, and this is work we all need to do. I look forward to continuing the conversation, and know that as a Black woman, I will continue to demand more for all the children we serve. &

Virtually . . . Everything 2020

Generating and Housing Substantial and Engaging Online Programming

CHRISTOPHER A. BROWN AND KARIN SUNI

On March 17, 2020, the Free Library of Philadelphia closed its physical locations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although our buildings were closed, library workers continued to generate online content and promote the library's electronic services to the general public.

Like many institutions, we did not have a plan for a prolonged mass closure, and our system relied on the creativity and motivation of all staff to reach as many patrons as possible. The Special Collections Division of the Free Library quickly pivoted to respond to this change of service model and began to produce online content for our patrons via social media.

As Philadelphia's lockdown extended beyond the initially estimated time, Division Chief Janine Pollock acknowledged our hard work and challenged us to be mindful of the following points when creating online programming:

- Who will be burdened?
- Who benefits?
- Who will be better off?

Our initial sources of online distribution were limited to the various social media accounts of our collections, the Free Library's blog, and a handful of other outlets. As staff developed more materials, the issue of permanency became a concern because content generated for our social media was ephemeral. Programming posts were victims to "popularity" algorithms, and if content appeared in a notification feed, it would be buried within days, possibly hours. The Free Library's blog, while stable, is used to promote all library programming, not just Special Collections. Being mindful of our mandates, we resolved these issues by creating an online repository (http://bit.ly/FunWithFLPSpecColl). Our repository model can be readily adapted and may be a valuable tool for library workers promoting virtual programs, such as storytimes, livestreams, and crafts.

Who Will Be Burdened?

To allay issues of permanence, the Special Collections Division needed to develop this repository, creating a home that would gather online content produced by our division in one easy-to-find location for patron access. However, we had to do this without burdening our IT department with additional work.

After gathering links to previously released content, we considered publishing the list in a Google Doc, but this format had drawbacks. The document would be difficult to navigate, would not be visually appealing, and would grow cumbersome as links were added. Realizing these limitations, we brainstormed a list of specifications needed to make our repository successful:

- an inexpensive and user-friendly hosting platform
- a pleasing look and easy navigation
- frequent updates to encourage repeat viewings

Christopher A. Brown *is Curator, Children's Literature Research Collection, and* ***Karin Suni*** *is Curator, Theatre Collection, both at the Free Library of Philadelphia.*

- the ability to track user numbers for library reports and statistics

- flexibility to adapt and expand as our requirements change

Our next step was exploring options to meet all of our needs. As our division relies on Google Drive to share files, Google Sites seemed like the logical tool. It was free, did not require a strong background in website design, and the customizable templates allowed us to create an on-brand look without having to start from the ground up.

The initial time investment was not insubstantial, but the end result is polished and can be easily updated. Additionally, the "burden" lies solely with Special Collections staff and does not inconvenience other departments of the Free Library.

Who Benefits?

When the Free Library's physical locations are open, the Special Collection Division hosts patrons of all ages. Our exhibitions and outreach are designed for everyone, from early elementary school to lifelong learners; our virtual programming had to have the same approach. We needed content with broad appeal that crossed a majority of age ranges while providing patrons the opportunity to tailor their experiences whenever possible. To do this, we had to use multiple delivery methods.

Our initial foray into new territory was through slideshows that juxtaposed items in our collection with playful text designed to distract patrons from the anxieties of the pandemic (https://bit.ly/SCDSocialDistancingWrong). These were popular, but it was difficult to find new and timely topics to cover using our materials. Looking to create something more interactive, we used Google Slides to create quizzes (https://bit.ly/CLRCMatch); this challenge was successful but incredibly labor-intensive and proved too onerous for continuous programming. In light of the interest shown in this initial game, we began exploring other freeware that would allow us to use items across our collections in nontraditional ways.

We used Flippity and its suite of freeware to create interactive content, such as matching games (https://bit.ly/SCDMatching) and memory games (https://bit.ly/SCDMemory). Jigsaw Planet, another free service, makes puzzles (https://bit.ly/SCDPuzzles) using artwork housed at the Free Library; the puzzles are customizable on the player's side, allowing patrons to choose their own difficulty setting.

The repository is nimble so we can respond quickly to patron needs. When we realized that Pennsylvania's mail-in primary ballots did not include an "I Voted" sticker, we created stickers to be shared online or printed and worn at home using artwork in our collections. The voting page (https://bit.ly/FLPSpecCollVote) proved surprisingly popular, generating one-third of the site's traffic.

The second-most visited section, the video page (https://bit.ly/FLPSpecCollVideos), has shown significant growth as recorded live-streams, discussions, and hang-outs have been added, allowing patrons to view events long after they occurred. The repository also hosts material created from pre-COVID activities, including podcasts (https://bit.ly/SCDPodcasts) and #ColorOurCollections coloring pages (https://bit.ly/flpcolorourcollections).

By generating new online content and including pre-COVID materials, the repository grows organically with our community, and our patrons benefit from easy access to a wide range of ever-growing and reusable programming.

Who Will Be Better Off?

The question of statistic-gathering arose quickly after we selected Google Sites to host the repository. In the past, our team used Bitly (https://bit.ly) to generate vanity URLs and track the number of clicks each custom URL received on social media. It was not a service we used regularly, but it was one in which we had a basic proficiency and was easily incorporated. Our belief was that the vanity URLs would generate data for only thirty days, a lifetime in the age of social media. In using Bitly more frequently, we discovered that our understanding was incorrect; free Bitly accounts will store thirty days of information but will keep recording for a rolling thirty-day period. By checking the links monthly and recording the data in a spreadsheet, we are able to get an accurate snapshot of the link's performance across its entire lifetime.

Bitly is not our only analytical source; while exploring freeware, we found Google Analytics, a tool that integrates into Google Sites and provides a more robust look at the website's viewers. Analytics requires a Gmail address, and access is limited to one account. The service provides visitor geographic locations and compares site usage across time. With Analytics, we can see how long patrons stay on each page of the repository and which pages attract the most attention. It also graphs data between customizable time frames (e.g., how our numbers from last month compare with our numbers from this month).

The information gathered from both Bitly and Google Analytics is not wholly surprising—we have more visits when social media accounts direct patrons to the repository. As we do this, the percentage of returning patrons increases. The Special Collections Division is better off because we have statistics that show patron engagement through the reach of our online programming. The data provides tangible proof of popular items, informing our efforts to create future online programming. The division also benefits from increased innovation among the staff as they devise additional content.

As of August 2020, the physical locations of the Free Library were in the early stages of reopening to the general public, but online engagement with our patrons has been continuous during the

COVID-19 pandemic. As Free Library workers rushed to generate substantial and engaging online programming, the Special Collections Division also strove to meet this demand.

Guided by the tenets of "Who will be burdened?," "Who benefits?," and "Who is better off?," we built a sustainable and flexible home for content that can be accessed repeatedly by patrons of all ages and learning needs. Created with freeware and managed by Special Collections, the repository does not burden our IT department. The process has generated opportunities for our staff to interact in new and exciting ways with patrons through the repository as programming needs evolve. The model is easily adapted for other groups and institutions and may be a beneficial tool for library workers looking to promote online content. Storytimes, livestreams, crafts, and other activities can all be integrated in a similar manner and by people with a range of technical skills. The strength of this system lies in the adaptability of the site and the creativity of library staff to find novel ways to serve patrons, making us all better off. &

Sendak Set to Stream

The Maurice Sendak Foundation has entered into a multiyear agreement with the AppleTV+ streaming service to create new animated specials and series based on the stories and pictures of Maurice Sendak.

Lynn Caponera, president of The Maurice Sendak Foundation, said, "Though most know him through his iconic books, Sendak's legacy also resides in theater, film, and TV, and this partnership with Apple will further the awareness of his unique genius."

Arthur Yorinks, writer-director and longtime Sendak colleague, will oversee all Apple/Sendak projects through his Night Kitchen Studios.

Other franchises signed to landmark agreements for original kids' programming on AppleTV+ include Peanuts (*Snoopy in Space*), Sesame Workshop (*Ghostwriter*), and the Jim Henson Company (*Fraggle Rock*).

Though plans are in the very early stages, Yorinks said in a July 2020 issue of *Publisher's Weekly,* "We have our eye on a couple of projects to begin with . . . and part of the fun will be to explore Maurice's work and figure out what's suited to adaptation. He worked in so many styles that we know that when you see any project come together it will not only be varied, but uniquely Sendakian." &

The Miami Giant by Maurice Sendak and Arthur Yorinks, Harper, 1995.

Beyond Storytime

Virtual Augmented Reality, AI, and Arts Programs for Middle Grades

PATRICIA LESKU, SHANNON OZIRNY, AND WENDY ZHANG

Middle graders play with Augmented Reality at home with 3DBear.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the West Vancouver (BC) Memorial Library was well-positioned to make the transition to a fully virtual program model—fortunate to have the support of a library foundation and to have two dedicated digital access librarians.

But in this time of great transition, we were still left wondering how we were going to offer complex programs on topics like augmented reality (AR) in a virtual environment. We found great success with the Flipped Classroom model, where kids and families do some downloading, experimenting, and playing in advance.

Program Platform and Structure

All of our programs are pre-registered and run via Zoom. If you're new to Zoom, do your research on best practices before diving in. You may also find that a different platform (such as Google Meets) works better for your community.

Also, not all virtual programs require the Flipped Classroom approach; offerings where kids can just log-in and connect, play, and laugh together are vital.

Our Flipped Classroom programs are forty-five minutes long and follow the same basic format:

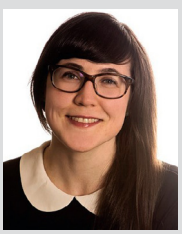
- Welcome (greet each child by name)
- Zoom instructions and etiquette (how to mute/unmute, etc.)
- Warm-up activity, Wonder/check learning ("What do you wonder about this topic?")
- Challenges (if there are two challenges, we try and make at least one collaborative)
- Share/showcase
- Reflection

The Flipped Classroom Model

In our application of this model, kids receive a pre-program email with instructions and some Get Started activities (either via handout or a short video) at least twenty-four hours in advance. These activities take approximately twenty minutes, but many kids opt to spend more time on them. This means the actual program focuses on clarifying key concepts, asking questions, and group challenges.

For a program like "Code Your Own Flappy Bird Game" or "Artificial Intelligence for the Environment" (both of which use Code.org as the platform), the librarian creates a Classroom Section for participants in Code.org, and makes up pseudonyms for each of the registrants. The pre-program email includes:

- the program Zoom link and password



Patricia Lesku *is a Digital Access Librarian,* ***Shannon Ozirny*** *is the Head of Youth Services, and* ***Wendy Zhang*** *is the Systems Librarian at the West Vancouver Memorial Library in British Columbia, Canada.*

- a checklist of pre-class activities
- login information for Code.org
- a handout with specific instructions on pre-class learning

Here are some tips we learned.

- **Every family will have a slightly different device, from tablets to computers.** We include "check that this website works on your device" in the pre-program email.
- **Some kids won't do the pre-class prep.** That's okay. Always allow some time in the program to answer questions about the tools the kids will be using and build in time for review. You can also turn the review over to any resident kid experts by asking them to share their knowledge with the group.
- **Be prepared and go with the flow.** You might not be able to see all the kids' faces all the time, but do your best to read the (virtual) room and modify challenges and timing appropriately.

The Flipped Classroom Model in Practice

1. Augmented Reality (AR)

We help kids see themselves as creators and active users of AR as a tool without them getting bogged down in the minutiae of 3D design. We use a subscription-based tool called 3DBear (www.3dbear.io) for our virtual AR programs. Some of our successful classes include:

Family Augmented Reality: Make Your Own Emoji | Ages 6 to 9
Kids will identify some of the emotions they have experienced recently and create their own emojis using AR. Many of our programs have a SEL (social-emotional learning) component. In this program families have one challenge—to collaborate and create three emojis to express different feelings they've experienced in the past month.

2. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We aim to help children clarify their ideas of what AI and machine learning are, think critically about how they are being used, and imagine themselves as AI developers.

Artificial Intelligence for the Environment | Ages 9 to 12
What is machine learning? How can AI be used to help our environment? Explore these ideas and more together in this interactive program using resources from Code.org and curiositymachine.org.

In this program, learners are shown examples of technology and asked, "Is this AI?" We use activities from Code.org to open up a discussion on bias in machine learning. Running an AI program can be daunting for staff, but Code.org is a great place to start.

3. The "A" in STEAM

Using tech to explore and make art provides kids with opportunities to do hands-on creative thinking and problem solving. For instance:

Love Where You Live | Ages 9 to 12
Celebrate your love of the North Shore by designing a poster that showcases what West Van means to you. In this program, you'll be using Canva.com and will need to create Canva.com accounts before the class. This program has two challenges. First, kids work together to come up with some slogans, then they use Canva to design posters using free images and elements (such as clip art) that Canva provides. Librarians also create a Google Drive with images the kids are free to use and share the link in Zoom chat.

Fun with Song Maker | Ages 9 to 12 (could be run with younger kids as well)
Collaborate on a song using Chrome Music Lab's Song Maker online tool (https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Song-Maker). You'll work on two parts: the melody and the percussion part. In this program, learners will be using Chrome Music Lab's Song Maker (https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Song-Maker). No account is required to use Song Maker.

This class has two challenges. First, participants are given an emoji and create a melody to match it. Second, participants choose another child's melody and add percussion. Music is shared via links in Zoom chat.

Other free online tools you might want to try: create a comic (www.makebeliefscomix.com), pixel art with Piskel (www.piskelapp.com), and 3D design with Tinkercad (www.tinkercad.com). &

Index to Advertisers

Soap, Suds, and Stories

Early Literacy at the Laundromat

ELIZABETH MCCHESNEY AND MARISA CONNER

Children receive books as part of national Summer Learning in Your Laundromat at Blue Kangaroo Laundromat in Chicago.

"I love the literacy area and really appreciate the librarians' patience and love. I think there are few places like this in our community. I think the literacy corner is very important for this community. We come here every other week, and now he has something to do. He asks me, "Mommy, can we go play at the laundromat?"—Parent

Bubbles whirl, swish, and spin in a long row of very large machines. Clothes spin round and round in huge, industrial dryers. With that as the backdrop, storytime is in full swing at laundromats across the country.

The children and families who participate in story hours at their laundromat are part of a growing trend in library service to children aimed at providing early literacy programming, high-quality play experiences, and parental asides in everyday settings. Through effective partnerships at a national and local level, more and more public libraries are serving high-needs families through this innovative outreach service that exemplifies all of ALSC's core values: collaboration, excellence, inclusiveness, innovation, integrity, respect, leadership, and responsiveness.

In 2017, the LaundryCares Foundation (LFC) and Too Small To Fail Foundation (TSTF), the early childhood initiative of the Clinton Foundation, launched a multi-year partnership to promote children's early literacy development among families who use laundromats on a regular basis. The mission of TSTF is to surround families with early language and learning opportunities and support parents with resources to help prepare young children for success in kindergarten and beyond. TSTF created a suite of Wash Time is Talk Time resources, including in-store posters, coloring/activity pages, a parent tip sheet, and social media messages.

The Coin Laundry Association (CLA), the parent organization of the LCF, promoted awareness about these resources through five thousand laundromats nationwide as well as through their various communication channels.

But this was just the beginning. Transforming spaces and accelerating learning inside them was on the mind of Jane Park, director of TSTF.

"A core strategy of Too Small to Fail has been to transform everyday places into playful, literacy-rich environments that would delight and captivate children, and provide support for their parents as well," said Park. Families typically spend about two hours at their local laundromat.

Elizabeth McChesney *is a thirty-three-year veteran children's librarian who retired as Director of System Wide Children's Services from the Chicago Public Library in 2019. She has won numerous national awards for her innovations and currently serves as the Early Childhood and Community Partnerships Consultant for the LaundryCares Foundation. She serves as a Senior Advisor to Urban Libraries Council and Consultant to National Summer Learning Association. She is the co-author of* Summer Matters: Making All Learning Count and Pairing STEAM with Stories. *Her first picture book,* Keke's Double-Strong Super Hugs, *is forthcoming.* ***Marisa Conner*** *has a combined forty years' experience working in public education and public libraries, and retired as the Manager of Youth and Family Engagement from the Baltimore County (MD) Public Library in 2018. She is the Co-Chair of the Baltimore County Early Childhood Advisory Council and a consultant for Too Small To Fail. She is the co-author of* The Power of Play: Designing Early Learning Spaces, *(ALA Editions, 2015).*

"Through our partnership between Too Small To Fail and the LaundryCares Foundation, we've been able to 'upcycle' these long 'dwell times' into fun, playful learning time for children and their caregivers," adds Park.

Corporate Social Responsibility Mission Meets Early Literacy

LCF was formed in 2005 in response to Hurricane Katrina and the then-urgent need for people impacted by the hurricane to be able to clean their clothes. Their vision is to help build strong communities. Their next step was to partner with TSTF and Libraries Without Borders to offer critical and high-quality early literacy initiatives to young children and their families who need it most.

"Laundromats Connecting Communities is our motto, but it's also our mission," said Dan Naumann, executive vice president of LCF. "Serving communities has always been the mission of laundromat owners, and giving our customers access to high-quality early childhood outcomes is a win for our communities, a win for our businesses and, most importantly, it's a huge gain for kids everywhere."

Early Learning Spaces in Laundromats

Building on the success of the partners' initial work and the recommendations from the first national convening—the LaundryCares Summit held in 2018—LCS and TSTF collaborated with children's library leaders to create a prototype of an early learning play space to be tucked into the laundromat. These early childhood spaces are essentially a "kit of parts" that include furniture, books, and learning activities.

The kits were studied through the first formal evaluation ever conducted on the topic of early literacy promotion in laundromats. Using research about the efficacy of these nooks, the coalition leaders formalized the Family Read, Play & Learn kits. These early learning areas are purchased by laundromat owners and include child-sized bookshelves and comfortable seating for adults with children. Learning tools and toys include magnetic easels, flannel boards, preschool-sized tables and chairs, and high-quality writing implements, toys, letters, and puppets augment these spaces. The methodology is to bring best practices in early literacy to everyday spaces and accelerate learning for children and provide support for families.

This happens in partnership with Lakeshore Learning; the kits are customized for each laundromat. Lakeshore Learning President Kevin Carnes said, "All of us at Lakeshore have been so proud to participate in a project that meets families in their neighborhoods, provides such valuable resources and information and really honors parents as their children's first teachers. We salute the coalition for having the vision and drive to make this all happen!"

Through a partnership with Scholastic Publishing, laundromats who purchase the nooks also receive a monthly shipment of new, bilingual picture books. Books routinely go home with kids to build a home library and foster book ownership for laundromat-going young children.

The Family Read, Play & Learn kits are sold to laundromats in three sizes to fit space availability. Some laundromats transform unused corners or television viewing areas into an early literacy space, and others have taken out machines to make room for children's books and the kit. The kits have become so successful that other types of businesses are beginning to purchase them for installation as well.

Storytime in the Laundromat

What makes these spaces come alive, however, is the way they are activated with early literacy programming. Children's librarians and other early childhood educators, including those from HeadStart Programs, community-based early literacy programs, the education departments of universities, and a growing core of retired teachers across the country, are joining the coalition and offering outreach programming to laundromat-going kids to reach families where they are and extend learning into every day venues.

Parental asides and tips from *Every Child Ready to Read 2* (ECRR2) are shared along the way. "We know that reading is fundamentally social; what we read is shaped by our relationships with others and the community contexts in which we live. Therefore, the laundromat, a place where community members congregate and spend time together, is a perfect place to nurture reading habits and interest," said Dr. Kira Baker-Doyle, director of the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois-Chicago College of Education and editor and chief of review of *Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*.

For libraries, this service offers a chance to reach community members who typically do not otherwise have access to, or use, the library. We also learned from initial surveys of this work that parents of children who participate in laundromat literacy programming have an extremely high satisfaction rate with the programming and feel they don't have other similar outlets to provide their children with essential early literacy activities. As a young child was serenaded by a ukulele-playing librarian, his mom said to the researchers, "We never get opportunities like this in our neighborhood for our kids; this is an amazing first for us."

Effective national and local partnerships help sustain success in the laundromat literacy model. In Watertown, Wisconsin, for example, the community-wide Watertown Health Foundation is interested in improving outcomes for families and young children. Together the Foundation and the Watertown Public Library (WPL) have partnered with two local laundromat owners.

They formed a community-wide alliance to bring their early learning campaign into the laundromats and provide early literacy programming. WPL Children's Librarian Tina Peerenboom said, "This has provided us with a rich opportunity to serve the kids and families of our community in a new and different way. We are always looking for ways to reach children and families where they are. This partnership allows us to provide firsthand early literacy modeling for parents and caregivers in how to read and play with their kids with a focus on language and literacy. The laundromat is the perfect setting to show how to find teachable moments anywhere."[5]

Growth of the Movement

And so grows the coalition itself. According to informal findings from the Coin Laundry Association, there are about 30,000 laundromats in the US and the average laundromat sees about 954 families with children under five every year.

Approximately 250 laundromats across the country have committed to implementing Family Read, Play, & Learn spaces, and there is ample room for continued growth. Taking this on as a corporate social responsibility aspect of their industry, laundromat owners and industry leaders continue to learn deeply about early literacy, support partnerships which sustain this work and iterate new solutions for serving the early literacy needs of their communities. Developing partnerships with local children's librarians is core to the growth of the movement.

"I am moved by the deep and abiding commitment to serve our children, foster the joy of reading and learning, coupled with the vast expertise and talent of the many children's librarians we witness partnering with our businesses," said Jim Whitmore, president of the LCF board of directors. Whitmore himself partners with the Salem (MA) Public Library.

As the coalition grows, good ideas continue to expand from partners around the country. Children's librarians continue to innovate ways to bring experiential learning to laundry-based storytimes. Bubbles, errant socks left behind, and shapes and colors found in the environment all form the basis of rich early literacy programming.

Storytimes have been happening informally in laundromats for years, but the coalition provides strategic partnerships between business owners and early literacy providers, including public libraries. This helps amplify the results of libraries working with laundromats and can reduce the time involved in developing relationships with local business owners. The coalition also provides member assistance through access to resources and connecting to others who are doing similar programming. To support ongoing learning and to share best practices, we created an online learning cohort called The Innovation Circle. The Laundry Literacy Coalition helps strengthen local partnerships and builds national alliances, all while developing a framework for success across the country.

The annual summit brings together leaders in the laundry industry as well as leaders in early childhood and libraries. The convening features tracks specialized for various partners on this work and this year featured former President Bill Clinton and Wes Moore discussing equity in early childhood education, Cindy McCain, Ralph Smith, managing director of The Campaign for Grade Level Reading, and the Honorable Judge Ramona Gonzalez, president of the National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges who announced a national commitment to expand this service into family courts across the country. Author Mo Willems was interviewed by Chelsea Clinton, and author Andrea Davis Pinkney hosted a coffee chat courtesy of Scholastic Publishing. Participants took part in a "beloved communities" project as a learning reflection activity in commemoration of the late Congressman John Lewis.

National awards are disseminated annually at the Laundry Literacy Summit. These awards recognize unique contributions, effective partnerships, and best practices in reaching underrepresented children across the country. In 2020, Chelsea Clinton awarded the City of Milwaukee/Milwaukee Public Library and the Chicago Public Library amongst the honorees. The awards will continue to be given annually at the summit and will recognize exemplary partnerships, service to communities, and innovative practice.

The Evaluation Studies

Brian Wallace, president of the Coin Laundry Association, the parent organization of the LCF, often says that while he believes providing early literacy spaces and programming is a good and practical idea, he wants to make sure that this is also an effective strategy to reach families. His vision is to meet early literacy goals through deep and rigorous evaluation.

"I believe in doing good by being better," said Wallace, and so he drives an agenda of researching this work and its impact. As a result, testing and evaluation have been an essential since the beginning.

TSTF commissioned Dr. Susan Neuman, New York University professor of literacy and childhood education and a leading architect of ECRR2, to lead research evaluations on the Family Read, Play & Learn spaces. Neuman has supported the coalition's work from its inception, and along with her team of researchers has been studying the impact of early literacy in laundromats since 2018. The results of her work have been disseminated through the LaundryCares National Summit annually and are summarized here.

Phase 1: Changing the Environment

The first phase of the evaluation focused on what happens when the laundromat environment is transformed. With the addition of comfortable seating, child-level book shelving, and appropriate toys, laundromat space was transformed into the

prototype of an early learning space. Research with Neuman was conducted for three months in 2018. The research team examined changes in the environment to assess whether the prototype of the learning spaces increased parent/caregiver awareness about early brain and language development and prompted children to engage in more language-rich activities like talking, reading, singing, writing, and playing. The laundromats were refreshed every three weeks with new books, activity sheets, paper, crayons, and any materials that were missing from the sites. Laundromat employees were asked to keep the spaces neat and tidy between the refreshing visits.

The findings from Phase 1 were clear. The Family Read, Play & Learn kits significantly enhance children's access to print and time spent on activities that support school readiness and align with ECRR2. Children were observed engaging in thirty times more literacy activities in laundromats that include the prototype kit compared to laundromats without the kits. Across sites, children were most likely to read books (sixty-seven instances), followed by playing with magnetic letters (forty-two instances), and playing with blocks (thirty-seven instances). Also, 60 percent of parents reported that there were fewer than twenty children's books in their home. These findings demonstrate that the activities in the treatment sites may represent one of the few ways that children have access to books in these communities. Furthermore, laundromat customers reported high praise for literacy spaces and expressed greater loyalty to the laundromats that included the spaces.

Phase 2: Children's Librarian Engagement

Conducted between December 2018 and January 2019, this phase focused on the impact of children's librarians in the laundromat early learning space. This evaluation aimed to evaluate the potential added benefit of having librarians regularly visit laundromats to conduct outreach programming with children and model ECRR2 activities for parents during the laundromat's busiest hours of the week.

Researchers sought to understand how librarians' involvement might enhance parents' understanding of early literacy development, and their views of having these types of activities available in the laundromat. Phase 2 also documented the range of literacy-related activities that took place, children's engagement, and parent-child activities during the time period.

Among the findings from Phase 2, Neuman noted that children engaged in "substantial and sustained literacy activity" when a librarian was present in the laundromat. Librarians from New York Public Library spent an average of eighty-five minutes per visit each week in the laundromat. During these visits, children engaged in significantly more purposeful engagement in literacy activities compared to children in the control sites, as well as compared to the children's activities observed in the Phase 1 treatment sites.

On average, three children, between the ages of two and six, participated during the librarian's time at the laundromat. Neuman's team also studied the response of customers and business owners with the following results—customers overwhelmingly expressed their enthusiasm for the literacy space and the librarians' visits to the laundromat. They said they chose to come to that specific laundromat with their children because of the literacy area. Laundry owners and employees also expressed praise for the literacy areas, noting the parents' appreciation and children's excitement for the spaces.

Phase 3: Children's Librarians Accelerate Parental Engagement and Learning Outcomes

For the third phase of evaluation, the evaluation process moved to Chicago laundromats and the Chicago Public Library for robust and rigorous evaluation. The evaluation goal was to build the evidence base and test new strategies to engage parents in more literacy-rich activities with their children while in the laundromat. Phase 3 of Neumann's research focused on early literacy programming that has a family-based approach. Here the librarians worked to contextual learning throughout the laundromat and encouraged parents to participate, even while completing their laundry chores. When librarians have a strong and intentional focus on parent and family engagement, there are likely to be increases in parent-child interactions in the laundromat environment.

Librarians used the Family Read, Play & Learn space and the library staff spilled out into the overall laundromat environment to promote learning. This included creating a map of the laundromat that identified the typical "production cycle" of doing laundry and the opportune times to engage parents. The programmatic strategy included use of environmental signage and employing vocabulary, building songs, and games that could turn the laundromat setting into a gallery for learning.

Researchers observed librarians commonly walking around the laundromat to engage parents and encourage them to join the story time with their children. Chicago librarians used the laundromat as a learning space and incorporated the machines and the building into the programming. This included shape scavenger hunts and color walks through the rows of washers and dryers to drive contextualized learning. These strategies increase vocabulary and relatable learning for the participants. Meeting families where they are within the laundromat helps to break down barriers and engage families in early literacy.

The study shows there is a strong and significant difference in parent-child interactions between the treatment and control sites. When parents engage, the interactions consisted of mainly "brief bursts" with parents dipping in and out of the literacy space, which is to be expected given the nature of the task parents are in the laundromat to complete.

The Chicago librarians said this approach gave them renewed confidence in ECRR2 competencies. The librarians also reported that these strategies sparked new ideas for ways to reach families in other informal settings. Given that the Chicago librarians had already been engaged in laundromat outreach programs, it helped them extend their approach, recognizing that every environment where families are spending time can open up new opportunities for early literacy learning. Laundromat early literacy audiences are built, and these librarians watched as families changed their chore time to be in the laundromat during story hour. This change in behavior is a testament to the effectiveness of this outreach programming.

One of the most significant—but not surprising—research findings from New York and Chicago shows that librarians play a powerful role in both children and parents' engagement in literacy-related activity. The average amount of time spent by children in the literacy space during librarian visits was forty-seven minutes, which is 62 percent more than the average time that children spent alone in the space.[8]

Maggie Jacobs, director of educational programs at The New York Public Library, said, "Formally evaluating the impact librarians make in conducting outreach to laundromats confirms what we know: children's librarians can accelerate outcomes for young children and families with their specialized early childhood programming skills and with emphasis on working with caregivers to build literacy-supportive environments."

Throughout the course of the seven-month study, children remained engaged in the literacy spaces. In fact, average length of reading time grew throughout Phase 1 of the study, increasing 31 percent. This indicates that these activities were self-sustaining.

An important takeaway from this finding, as well as the broader results of this evaluation, is that length of time exposed to the Family Read, Play & Learn space matters. Over time, parents and caregivers begin to observe children engaging with other families and children in the literacy spaces, which has an additive effect of beginning to build a literacy culture that slowly gathers strength over time.

In 2021, we plan to conduct an independent outcomes-based evaluation to learn more about parental attitudes towards reading aloud and book sharing and their perceptions about school-readiness. Based on our logic model and anticipated outcomes, this evaluation will survey parents in both urban and rural laundromat settings to measure a change in behavior and attitude towards reading and early literacy both during the laundry visit and at home, and to assess if parents feel more adequately prepared to read and talk and play with their young children. The study will compare the findings between settings. This work will help us sharpen our strategy and coaching mechanisms as well as inform future purchasing decisions for the Family Read, Play & Learn Kits.

Join the LLC—Be a Part of the Growing Movement

Members of the Laundry Literacy Coalition (LLC) receive many benefits, including specialized story hour in the laundromat guide created in partnership with the Chicago and New York Public Libraries, access to the Innovation Circle Network, ongoing professional development offerings, and continuing conversation with librarians across the country. The national Innovation Circle and the annual LaundryCares Literacy Summit provide access to nationally recognized speakers and professional development tracks for librarians. Joining the LCC can provide a national network to deepen your work and learn from your peers. Members learn how to provide outcomes-based evaluation and link this outreach to their specific strategic plan. To learn more about this no-cost membership, emai Liz McChesney at liz@laundrycares.org.

Laundromat Literacy in the COVID-19 World

In Spring 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country, laundromats and the Coin Laundry Association worked to serve communities as an essential business. Business pivots were necessary, and laundromat owners gamely worked to find solutions to help their communities.

Drop-off laundry service, wash and go, and limiting the number of customers in laundromats are all part of solutions used to assist communities during the crisis. Laundries offered free wash and dry time to first responders and helped hospitals with laundering nurses' and doctors' clothing.

But what about laundromat literacy? While in-person programming was temporarily suspended, early literacy practices did not stop. The changes made during this time included a take-home guide created for families called "Stuck at Home?" The guides, filled with ideas for extending early language acquisition and learning at home, were distributed in laundromats across the country. A preschool book club with a corresponding book giveaway was implemented in fall 2020. Digital storytimes, such as the bilingual series conducted by Miss Martha at the Elizabeth (NJ) Public Library, became a weekly highlight for laundromat customers waiting in their cars.

Programming is still happening in fresh and unique ways. Author Rhona Silverbush has created storytimes based on her Terrific Toddler series that are available on the LCF's Facebook page. Silverbush combines these storytimes with tips and tricks for parents of tired toddlers to help them recognize what their toddlers experience.

Spotlight on Elizabeth Public Library

"Miss Martha" Cardenas, a bilingual children's library assistant at the Elizabeth (NJ) Public Library, has been conducting digital storytimes that are streamed to Bubbles 'R Us laundromat's Facebook page. This has allowed the library to reach children and families otherwise unserved by preschools or other high-quality early childhood programming during the 2020 pandemic.

Her programs feature bilingual songs and rhymes for family involvement along with themed stories and ideas for playing together. Library Director Mary Faith Chmiel said, "She is the perfect person for these virtual storytimes, as exemplified by the number of hits her programs have gotten on social media. But, to be honest, Martha can't wait until she is able to share her love of books and children in-person. And, of course, none of this would be possible without the support and enthusiasm of the laundromat owner."

Laundromat Branch Manager Robert Barbanell added, "Due to the pandemic, Miss Martha had to quickly switch from planning in-person storytimes to recording virtual storytimes to post on the laundromat's social media outlets. Her passion and vivaciousness truly bring each storytime to life in the most engaging of ways for the children of the community we serve in Elizabeth. And the end result has been views of Martha's storytime on social media consistently in the one to two thousand range."

Silverbush said, "LaundryCares has created a remarkably smart, simple and elegant model for fostering a lifelong love of books in our littlest ones. It's thrilling to be able to be a part of something that can subtly but powerfully change the arc of so many children's futures."

Puppeteer Marilyn Price of Evanston, Illinois, has created a "soap opera" featuring a sock puppet dog and his laundry basket puppet stage. Her puppet shows are streamed through the LCF's Facebook page.

New partnerships continue to form as well. The Idaho Commissioner for Libraries began a partnership in summer 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tammy Hawley-House, Idaho Commission for Libraries Deputy State Librarian, said, "We at the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) believe in bringing the power of early literacy to Idaho families where they are—including laundromats. The ICfL is excited to work with Idaho libraries and their laundromat partners as they take the first step to deliver early literacy resources to parents who routinely use their neighborhood laundromats. Libraries can help families make use of the laundromat wait time by providing them with books, story times, library cards, and parental literacy material.

"This year, as we keep COVID-19 prevention in mind, the ICfL has shifted its focus to helping libraries establish relationships with their laundromat partners and getting their users connected to online story times and other virtual library services. When the COVID-19 danger subsides, we will again bring physical literacy centers and live storytimes to these partner laundromats and the families they serve."

Summer Learning in the Laundromat

Recognizing that learning can't stop even in a pandemic and certainly not in summer, we created and disseminated an early childhood Summer Learning piece. This summer piece was also created in partnership with Reach Out and Read, the early literacy arm of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). This bilingual piece was disseminated nationally as a way to help stop the summer slide for families of young children. National Summer Learning Association CEO Aaron Dworkin said, "The work of the Laundry Literacy Coalition to creatively target and reach underserved families where they are and to provide them with high quality summer learning tips, strategies, and books they can access is both inspiring and essential. It is an effective and collaborative strategy to utilize if we want to ensure all young children in America, not just some, are able to keep learning during these challenging times and expand their skills and horizons all year long."

Additionally, Dr. Matthew Boulay, founder of the National Summer Learning Association, offered copies of his new book, *How To Keep Your Kids Learning When Schools Are Closed*. Free downloads were disseminated across the country to help parents of school-age children with summer learning in the time of COVID.

A Call To Action

As 2020 closes and we look to the many lessons this year has taught us as library professionals, we see all of ALSC's core values reflected in this work. Three things stand clear as a call to action—first, equity and access remain our field's imperative battle cry, and closing the opportunity gap in new and innovative ways for all children must be our collective priority.

Second, finding new—and safe—ways to serve our communities is essential for libraries in this shifted time. It's a time for those of us serving children to be especially tenacious and persistent; it's up to us to find new ways to serve our communities and to make changes to best respond to children's needs. We must reach new segments of children and families who cannot access library services and provide them with our high-quality services, collections, and programming. This

includes finding fresh ways to collaborate so we can reach our nation's families who are most under-resourced.

Last, but certainly not least, it's more critical than ever to meet families where they are. We must work to break down the barriers and structures that keep people from using our physical space. This is imperative for providing good library service in our communities. We must be bigger than our buildings if we are going to serve the children and families who need us most. And all of this can happen when we provide early literacy opportunities at the laundromat—one load, one book at a time. &

Reference

1. Susan Neuman, "Meeting Families Where They Are: Transforming Laundromats into Early Learning Environments in Underserved Neighborhoods," evaluation report, March 2020.

Sample Learning Activities

- Go for a shape walk around the laundromat. Look for things that are circles, squares, triangles, etc.
- Talk about the sequence of doing laundry. Use words like, "first, next, then. and last."
- Practice math skills, such as measuring laundry detergent and counting out coins for the machines.
- Talk about how clothes feel and smell at different times during the laundry process. Use descriptive words such as "wet, dry, cold, warm, stinky, fresh."
- Make up a song about doing the laundry. "This is the way we sort our clothes, sort our clothes, sort our clothes on a (Tuesday morning)." Repeat with "wash, dry, and fold" verses.

Group Works to Enhance Literacy in Ethiopa

Open Hearts Big Dreams, an American nonprofit group based in Seattle, works to increase literacy rates in Ethiopia, which are currently estimated at 51.77 percent for ages 15 and up.

This fall, the group published the 100th children's book in their local language book project, Ready Set Go Books, which are distributed free of charge to schools and libraries throughout Ethiopia. The book, *Plow Nation* by Worku Mulat, illustrated by Daniel Getahun, will initially be available digitally and print-on-demand around the world. By the end of 2021, paperback copies will be donated to schools and libraries in Ethiopia so children can practice reading skills. In just three years, Open Hearts Big Dreams is halfway to its goal of publishing 200 uniquely Ethiopian stories for children.

Ready Set Go Books are bilingual, featuring English and one of three common Ethiopian languages: Amharic, Tigrinya, and Afaan Oromo. American children's book author Jane Kurtz, who grew up in Ethiopia, serves as volunteer creative director and editor of the books, many of which she has also written. To ensure cultural sensitivity and accuracy, Kurtz works with her sister Caroline, a former classroom teacher of Ethiopian children. The two rely on translators and other Ethiopian-American and Ethiopian supporters to vet each book for relevance and accuracy.

Jane Kurtz

According to the Migration Policy Institute, an estimated 251,000 Ethiopian immigrants and their children live in the US. These books help preserve language and culture for the diaspora from Ethiopia and Eritrea and are used to support Amharic and Tigrinya language and culture classes in the US and European Union.

Open Hearts Big Dreams partners with Ethiopia Reads and other NGOs in Ethiopia to get the books into children's hands. They expect to distribute another 100,000 books within the next year. "But we know this is a drop in the bucket of the 4 million first graders in Ethiopia who need more colorful, culturally appropriate books to learn to read," says Open Hearts Big Dreams Founder and Executive Director Ellenore Angelidis.

For more information, visit www.openheartsbigdreams.org. &

The "Bane of the Bassinet"?

Graphic Novels as Informational Texts

SOLINE HOLMES AND ALICIA SCHWARZENBACH

Patron drawing from a "Create Your Own Graphic Novel" activity. The template is available from Scholastic.com, but many different versions are available online for free or for a fee.

Originally, the authors were accepted to present this topic at the 2020 ALA Annual Conference as an Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Hot Topic. As the conference was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, information from the presentation was adapted for this article.

A few weeks before schools across the United States closed due to COVID-19, the administration at a local New Orleans school posted Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on the towel dispensers of bathrooms about how to wash your hands. What made these signs different from ones that kids had seen in the past? They were in a comic book format.

This nothing something new for the CDC, which published comic book versions of instructional material such as *The Junior Disease Detectives: Operation Outbreak* and *Preparedness 101: Zombie Pandemic* more than five years ago.[1]

Comics and graphic novels are being used in all areas of life, including medicine, law, and business, to teach adults. Since the first was held in London in 2010, there has been an annual worldwide conference on graphic medicine. In 2018, the American Bar Association published its first book in graphic novel format, *The Lean Law Firm: Run Your Firm Like the World's Most Efficient and Profitable Business*.[2] Business schools, including Harvard Business School, use case studies in comic book format. It is clear that comics and graphic novels are being used, both in and out of the classroom, as informational texts.

The popular format is also being used more frequently to teach children. There are many well-studied benefits to reading graphic novels. The format provides equal opportunities for readers, including English Language Learners (ELL) and those with learning differences; increases recall ability and memory formation; invites increased creativity and imagination; challenges traditional forms of prose and dialogue; and creates diverse learning opportunities.

Comics and graphic novels are multimodal texts, containing both text and images, that fulfill the diverse media and format standard of the Common Core Language Arts Standards. Literacy should no longer be defined as simply the mastery of linguistic written elements. The combination of words and pictures can provide new meanings.

Soline Holmes *is the Head Librarian for the Academy of the Sacred Heart Elementary School Library in Louisiana. She serves on the Louisiana Young Readers Choice Award committee and has given presentations on graphic novels and on Mother Goose and STEM. She is an Executive Board Member of the New Orleans Information Literacy Collective.* ***Alicia Schwarzenbach*** *is a Librarian Instructor at Delgado Community College in New Orleans, who has more than twenty years of experience in public, school, academic, government, and corporate libraries and has served as a Social Media Coordinator for the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival.*

For example, picture a star. Now, imagine that star with the word "twinkle" written above it. Then, picture the star with the word "Hollywood" written above it. With the addition of words, the image takes on a new meaning.[3]

Similarly, in reading graphic novels, the reader creates the meaning based on the combination of visuals and text. Reading graphic novels "requires reading words in ways that do not follow the same top-to-bottom, left-to-right, heavy exposition format of traditional print texts. Reading graphic novels also entails deep comprehension of images and even empty space, and perhaps most importantly, the ability to combine text and graphical elements to infer what is not directly written in the text."[4]

In addition to these benefits, graphic novels and comic books also teach the essential skill of visual literacy, the ability to interpret information from a visual source such as an image, graph, or table.[5] As society uses technology more and more, it becomes essential for people to be able to interpret information presented in a visual format. Graphic novels teach this skill on a subconscious level as readers are inherently interpreting the images and filling in the blanks in the "gutters" between panels.

Despite their many benefits and their popularity with readers, there are many teachers, librarians, and adults who still consider graphic novels to be "fluff" reading or not "real books."

Unfortunately, these are direct quotes that have been made by adults in libraries and at conferences. Perhaps these sentiments are left over from the tumultuous history of comic books which were, in the late 1940s and the 1950s, subject to book burnings and described by author John Mason Brown as "the marijuana of the nursery" and the "bane of the bassinet."[6]

However, in talking to those who shy away from graphic novels, it usually becomes clear that they are not familiar with the benefits of reading graphic novels or the variety of topics covered in graphic novel format. They are often surprised to learn that graphic novels can be used as informational texts for children in all subject areas.

How can libraries and librarians help alleviate these concerns and make sure that graphic novels are not just enjoyed by young readers but are also used as informational texts to educate? As librarians, we can promote them, demonstrate their benefits, make readers aware of them as informational resources, and incorporate them into programming. Just as there are graphic novels in almost every field for adults, there are graphic novels covering almost every subject and topic for children and teens. While many are familiar with their use in English language arts, few are aware of graphic novels addressing math, technology, science, and social studies.

Graphic novels are being used successfully in some classrooms to teach children, and they can be, similarly, used in libraries. Graphic novel collections are popular in most public libraries, so it is likely that teens and children would gladly participate in graphic novel book clubs and programming. Not only will they subconsciously be building visual literacy, reading comprehension, and vocabulary skills, but they will also be expanding their knowledge base.

Centers for Disease Control signs posted in school bathrooms. Printable signs are available in Spanish as well.

For example, readers can learn about science from series such as Macmillan's Science Comics with titles about wild weather, the brain, rockets, and volcanoes, and Capstone Young Readers' Monster Science series provides factual information told by monster characters. Titles include *Frankenstein's Monster and Scientific Methods*, *Vampires and Cells*, and *Zombies and Electricity*. For programming, patrons could read the graphic novel or parts of the graphic novel and then conduct experiments based on the topic.

J. Appleseed Publishers' Graphic Prehistoric Animals series includes titles with facts about the animal, a graphic depiction of how the animal lived, and information about fossils of the animal. Another series that explores prehistoric times is Abby Howard's Earth Before Us, which includes *Dinosaur Empire!*, *Ocean Renegades!*, and *Mammal Takeover!* Programming ideas include using LEGO blocks to build a dinosaur or have a "dinosaur dig" ice block in which miniature dinosaurs, shells, or other "treasures" are frozen in a block of ice for kids to discover. By using colored salt, turkey basters, and cups, children learn about the properties of ice and water as well as what method works best to free the "fossils."

There are graphic novels that can be incorporated into activities in a library's makerspace. Image Comics' graphic novels *Howtoons* and *Howtoons [Re]Ignition* include do-it-yourself experiments and makerspace creations such as making a marshmallow shooter, kite, turkey baster flute, and even protective eye glasses to conduct the experiments. These are all introduced through characters and a plot about a brother and sister who are learning how to entertain themselves.

To encourage writing, DC Comics' *Dear Justice League* presents a series of stories about superheroes based on letters (mostly e-mails) that kids have written to Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and other members of the Justice League. After readers finish reading the graphic novel, they can write their own letter to a superhero.

Of course, the superhero does not have to be a member of the Justice League or a comic book hero—why not have readers write to a superhero in their own community? Readers will learn how to draft a letter with a salutation and closing as well as how to formulate questions for and comments about their hero. Another favorite graphic novel that encourages writing and journaling is *Cici's Journal: The Adventures of a Writer-in-Training,* which depicts several short stories about a girl who wants to be a great novelist. To do this, she studies the people around her and, in doing so, acts as a young detective, too. The graphic novel includes Cici's doodles, scrapbook photos, and journal entries as well as writing prompts.

Despite their many benefits and their popularity with readers, there are many teachers, librarians, and adults who still consider graphic novels to be "fluff" reading or not "real books."

Of course, there are also graphic novel biographies and Simon & Schuster's new Show Me History! series includes factual biographies of Amelia Earhart, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Alexander Hamilton. The publisher is regularly releasing new titles, with books on Muhammad Ali and Harriet Tubman available this winter. Not only will readers enjoy memoirs such as Cece Bell's *El Deafo* or Vera Brosgol's *Be Prepared*, but they will also learn factual information and build empathy and understanding for the situations and lives of others. Readers can be encouraged to then write and illustrate their own life story or a special moment in their life.

Creating graphic novels is a popular lesson-based activity in classrooms. Drawing, painting, and sculpting have been used as art therapy, and creating graphic novels is just another form. Authors of graphic novels have explained that their books not only help *the reader* feel empathy or work through problems, but they also help *the author* work through feelings.

Dean Trippe, author of the adult graphic novel *Something Terrible*, originally a webcomic, explained that "making my whole story into a comic has been just as freeing, it turns out, because now I feel like my life and what I learned while trapped by fear and shame can help others find their way out of that same darkness."[7]

Similarly, Jarrett Krosoczka, finalist for the National Book Award, said that drawing, especially in his teen sketchbooks, was therapeutic and helped him "to be able to work through some of this sort of darkness I had in my head."[8] He used these sketchbooks to create his award-winning graphic memoir *Hey Kiddo*, which deals with his mother's addiction and his being raised by his grandparents; the book is dedicated to "every reader who recognizes this experience."[9]

Students at a Title I school in Pennsylvania were tasked with reading Butzer's *Gettysburg: The Graphic Novel* and then writing or illustrating one of the character's point of view. One student chose a background character who had no dialogue or text about her in the graphic novel, but the student created an entire backstory and characterization. This demonstrates the power of multimodality—through physically seeing the image, the reader was able to empathize with a nameless character.[10] Having readers create their own graphic novels allows "increased critical thinking [that] comes into play when students are asked to create a comic book that does not just require them to regurgitate information about a story or time in history, but to reflect on the story."[11]

For historical graphic novels, prompts can include to tell a different ending, to portray the story from one actor's point of view or to think about how events would be different in modern times. For example, how would World War II be different if modern technology had existed? One pre-service teacher created a graphic novel prototype of *Romeo and Juliet* with much of the dialogue told through text messages.[12]

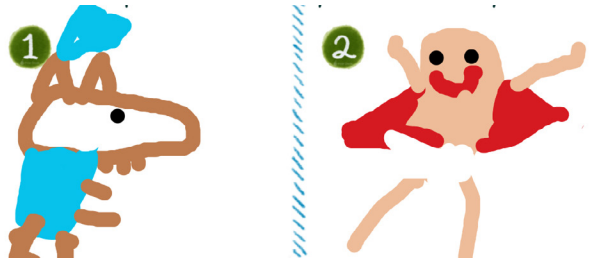
If there is not time for patrons to create their own graphic novels, they could be given pages of graphic novels with the text in the speech bubbles erased, or, these could be left as passive programming to be taken and completed. Readers use visual clues from the pictures to determine what the characters would say. This activity can later lead to skills in writing dialogue or playwriting and screenwriting. Author Gene Luen Yang has described his process of creating graphic novels akin to that of writing a script for a film.[13]

Of course, there is not a specific age range that is eligible for graphic novel activities in the library. Graphic novels are available that are appropriate for all age ranges and all reading levels. TOON Books features several graphic novels that can serve as informational texts for young and beginning readers. For science, young readers will enjoy TOON's Giggle and Learn series, including *Snails Are Just My Speed*, *A Goofy*

Guide to Penguins, and *Ants Don't Wear Pants!*, which includes a surprising amount of factual information complete with diagrams. Young readers can then be encouraged to make their own comic about a favorite animal or insect.

Wordplay hilariously teaches about compound words as a little girl imagines what a "watchdog" or "moonlight" really looks like. After they read the book, young patrons can then draw their own interpretations of compound words that they know or from a provided list. For the parents and caregivers who want their child to get excited about math, TOON's *3x4* teaches about number sets. Patrons can then have their own fun with number sets using materials at the library or at home. The TOON website includes read-alouds, printable activities, and a digital Cartoon Maker.

All of these activities could be done in conjunction with National Free Comic Book Day (traditionally celebrated the first Saturday in May) and maybe even through a partnership between the library and a local comic book store. Why not sponsor a library Comic Con encouraging everyone to dress up and providing an outlet for members of the graphic novel club to present their comic book creations at a publishing party? These graphic novel programming ideas can also be easily adapted for virtual programs and activities, too.



Second grade student drawing answering "What is a graphic novel?" submitted digitally during COVID-19 library programming in New Orleans.

Perhaps Wertham was on to something when he intimated that comic books were addictive. Graphic novels are popular with young readers, and there has been research showing increases in circulation with the introduction of graphic novels into the collection. There are so many ways to incorporate graphic novels into library programming. Children, parents, and teachers can all benefit from graphic novels when they are used as informational texts in our graphic world. &

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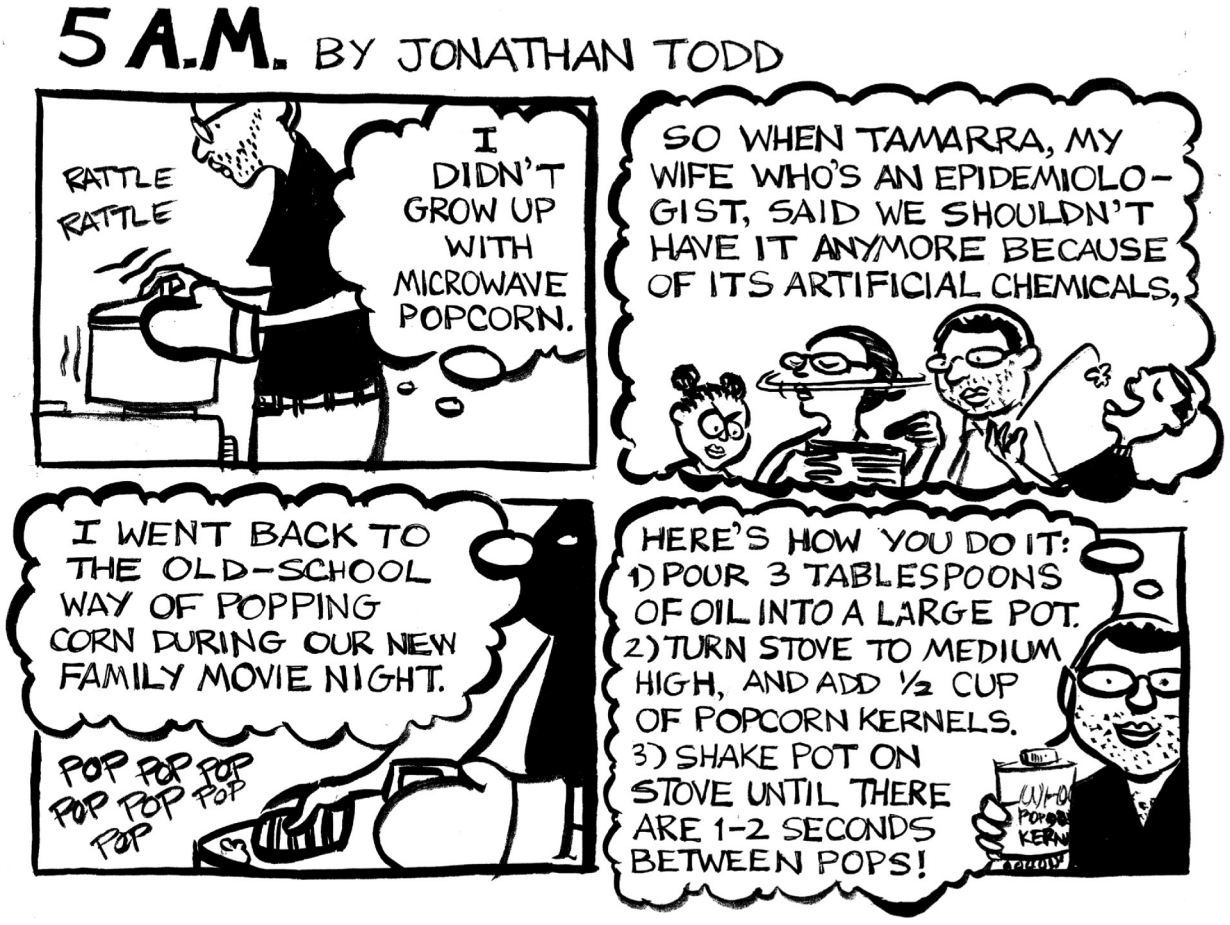
Graphic novels have been around for many years, but they're enjoying a heyday, especially with younger and often reluctant readers. Jonathan Todd teaches children how to create graphic novels in libraries in Massachusetts. In the Spring 2021 issue of *Children and Libraries*, he'll share how he tailored his workshops for virtual participation to enable libraries to continue offering his program during the pandemic. His new autobiographical comic strip for *CAL* is called *5 A.M.*, about life as a cartoonist and family man. His debut graphic novel, *Timid* (Scholastic/Graphix), will be published in 2022. &

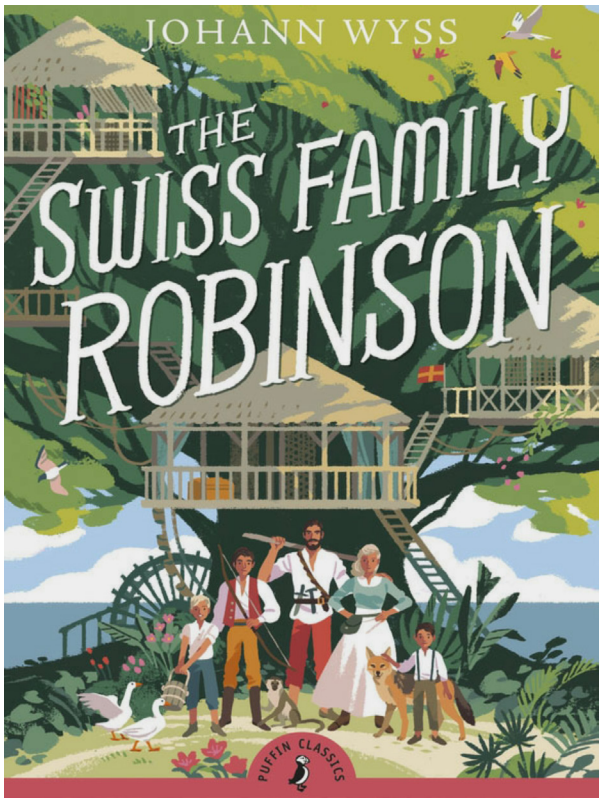


PEER-REVIEWED

Survival of the Fittest

The Evolution of the Children's Survival Novel

PAULINE DEWAN



Survival novels provide a host of attractions for children. On a continuum of danger, they are the high-risk counterparts of adventure narratives.

Characters in survival novels face not just adversity and risk, but also potential death. The fast pace and high drama of these narratives have always made them popular choices for children.

In his introduction to the 2009 Puffin Classic edition of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, renowned children's writer Jon Scieszka reminds us of their attractions, "Living in a giant tree house in a tropical jungle. Catching monkeys. Shooting sharks. Lassoing sea turtles. Exploring. Hunting. Fishing, Surviving. If you are not interested yet, you don't need to read any further."[1] The exotic, remote, and extreme landscapes depicted in novels such as *The Swiss Family Robinson* may be a strong appeal for children unfamiliar with such places.

The protagonists who face life-threatening challenges do so largely without adult supervision. By confronting extreme situations on their own, they develop hardier, more resilient selves. Reading these novels, children can try out adult roles and experience vicariously what it would be like to be completely independent, in charge of their own decisions. Moreover, the lure of simplifying life, stripping down to essentials, and starting over in harmony with the natural world is hard to resist. Although survival stories were initially written for boys and began as stories of empire,[2] they have changed dramatically—becoming more inclusive in terms of gender, race, religion, and physical/mental ability, and exploring a range of issues that reflect the needs and interests of children today.

Classic Survival Novels

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*—the parent of the children's survival novel—laid the foundation for later authors. Published in 1719, it has been translated into numerous languages, and has remained popular for three centuries.[3] Although not written for children, it is a story that many of them are familiar with through comics, television, or other adapted/abridged versions. This prototype text established the motifs that the children's survival story has adopted in a variety of ways. A shipwreck strands a castaway who takes an initial inventory of his stock, salvages items from a shipwreck, finds and creates tools, builds a shelter, and later a second shelter on another part of the island. Eventually the castaway creates a secure storehouse for goods, marks the passing of time with notches on wood, builds furniture and later a boat, returns to the island after a dangerous voyage on sea, invents a source of light for his dwelling, tames animals, and creates clothes from animal skins. Crusoe learns how to obtain and grow food for himself, plan ahead and store

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provisions, survive natural disasters, fight threats such as cannibals, and cope psychologically with the isolation.

Johann Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812) and R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857) follow this established pattern. The desert island in all these novels acts as a fresh vantage point from which to view society. As the protagonists learn to value nature and devalue money, they become less sure about the advantages of returning home. These survival stories were written during a time when unmapped places still existed in the world, places that readers could easily imagine such adventures taking place in. The threats that the characters face are largely external: natural disasters, wild animals, and enemies identified as pirates, cannibals, or unfriendly natives. The protagonists are European and male; the age is one of empire-building; the world view is colonialist; and the purpose of the novels is religious didacticism.

The Swiss Family Robinson dilutes the excitement of the castaway motif by including an entire castaway family. The air of contrivance in the novel—a father who has expert knowledge of botany and four boys who are perfectly obedient, acquiescent, and brotherly—diminishes the believability of the story. "My great wish," writes the boys' father, "is that young people who read the record of our lives and adventures should learn from it how admirably suited is the peaceful, industrious and pious life of a cheerful, united family to the formation of a strong, pure, and manly character."[4] Building their various homes, the family members work tirelessly on additions to them, even building their own library and museum of natural history. Wyss, in fact, seems less interested in depicting the family's survival and more concerned with the way they amass goods and recreate civilization.

Similarly, Ralph Rover in *The Coral Island* conveniently washes ashore with two friends.[5] The tropical climate and abundance of edible plants and other sources of food make the island an idyllic retreat rather than a harrowing experience. Like Robinson Crusoe, Ralph Rover believes it is his duty to convert "heathens" to Christianity. Although the artificiality, didacticism, and imperialism of these novels may be a barrier to child readers today, the core narrative of castaways coping in an unfamiliar environment rescues the texts from oblivion. However, few children read these novels in their original form; abridged editions and media adaptations preserve the parts of the story that children find enjoyable.

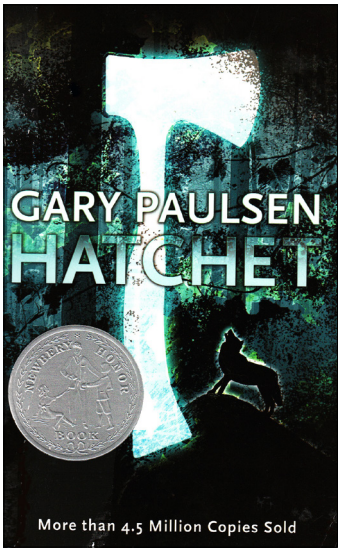
Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series (1930–47) ushers the children's survival story into the twentieth century. While on summer holidays at a farm in the English Lake District, the four Walker children sail to a nearby island and pretend to be explorers. Mother facilitates their adventure by sewing tents, supplying provisions, and visiting them periodically. When a boat with a skull-and-crossbones flag draws near, the Walker children meet the fearless Blackett sisters.

Although the children survive by themselves, mother hovers in the background as a backup. The children play at surviving and the threats are artificial. The appeal of the book is not so much the survival story but the humorous tone of the narrator and the feisty character of Nancy Blackett. Ordering her sister about ("Avast there, Peggy, you goat"[6]) Nancy takes to heart her role as pirate. These classic survival novels by Defoe, Wyss, Ballantyne, and Ransome were written by and about Europeans. Seeing the potential in this type of story, American novelists have since adapted the genre to the needs and concerns of contemporary children.

Changing Landscapes

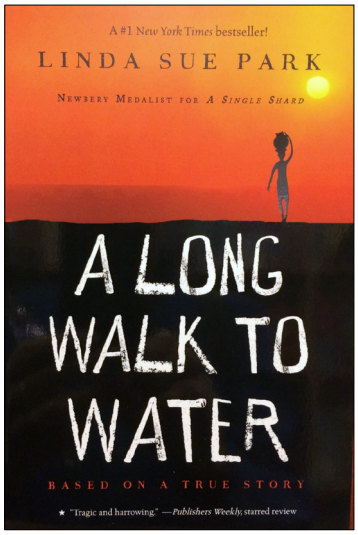
Although the desert island began as the typical locale for survival stories, seven of the ten American novels discussed in this article make use of other isolated and inhospitable environments. Sam Gribley in Jean Craighead George's *My Side of the Mountain* (1959) escapes from his overcrowded New York apartment to a remote location in the Catskill Mountains. Sam's urban upbringing, which sets him apart from his fictional predecessors, leaves him totally unprepared for survival in the wilderness. When he cannot figure out how to get water into his shelter, he says, "That's how citified I was in those days."[7] Sam learns survival skills in a typically urban way through books borrowed from the New York Public Library. He is supported in his efforts, not by a rural inhabitant or local rustic, but by a college professor who is hiking in the area. Sam's dream is a pastoral one—to be completely self-sufficient, living independent of "electricity, rails, steam, oil, coal, machines, and all those things that can go wrong."[8]

Brian Robeson in Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet* (1986) is another city boy who knows nothing about wilderness survival and must somehow manage in a remote landscape. What makes the story so compelling is that he does manage; his story is one that today's readers can easily relate to. When a pilot flies Brian into the Canadian bush, the man has a heart attack and dies. Brian survives the crash landing but is physically hurt and psychologically overwhelmed. He makes a series of mistakes because of his lack of knowledge: "City boy, he thought. Oh, you city boy with your city ways."[9] The only object that survives the crash is Brian's hatchet, and its cutting action highlights the divisiveness that characterizes his family and his life. It is in the wilderness that Brian also comes to terms with his parent's divorce—"the big split" as he calls it.[10] Brian helps himself by recalling nature shows on television, and as he slowly makes connections with the world around him, he becomes stronger and more capable.



While both Sam and Brian leave the city for the wilderness, Aremis Slake in Felice Holman's *Slake's Limbo: 121 Days* (1974) lives in a city that is depicted as a wilderness.[11] Slake must develop urban survival skills to manage in the hostile world of New York City. Neglected by his guardian, bullied by his classmates, and chased by authorities, Slake has no friends, parents, siblings, or role models. He descends into the tunnels of the New York subway and lives in an abandoned storage area that is four feet by eight feet. The underground seems to be no different than aboveground, but for the first time Slake possesses his own space, a place where he teaches himself survival skills. Like his Robinsonade predecessors, he learns how to create a shelter for himself, find food, use tools, discover a way to light his dwelling, make friends with an animal, and prepare ahead for times of need. One hundred and twenty-one days later, he emerges aboveground and is ready to cope with the urban wilderness. With just under two-thirds of the American population living in cities,[12] many children today can identify with the urban background of characters such as Sam, Brian, and Slake.

More Diverse Characters



The stories of two Sudanese children are juxtaposed in Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water* (2010).[13] Set during the Sudanese Civil War, the novel combines historical narrative with a gripping survival story. When Salva's class is interrupted by the sound of gunfire, his teacher tells the students to run and hide in the bush territory, not to return home. In a mass exodus, the Sudanese villagers are forced to leave their homes and flee their country. Salva is unable to find his family, but has no choice but to flee south with strangers. Lonely and afraid, he eventually runs into his uncle, a man who helps him escape to Ethiopia. But his uncle is killed and Salva must survive on his own without family or friends. Salva's story alternates with the account of Nya's long, arduous trips to obtain drinking water for her family. Walking back and forth to a pond takes her all day, every day, and becomes increasingly futile once the water is contaminated. The convergence of the two survival stories is poignant and powerful.

Fleeing from a physically abusive father, eleven-year-old Viji and her developmentally delayed sister Rukku, leave for the Indian city of Chennai in Padma Venkatraman's 2019 novel *The Bridge Home*. With no money and no way of supporting themselves, the girls must learn to survive alone in a big city. Viji repeatedly tells Rukku a story that ends with the assertion, "We'll be princesses again, Viji and Rukku. . . Always together."[14]

But after facing homelessness, starvation, sickness, and predatory adults, Viji eventually gives up on her dreams. It is her sister who gives her the strength to survive. As Viji writes, "All this while, I thought I'd looked after you, but now I see it was often the opposite."[15] Narrated as letters from one sister to another, this urban survival story is also a psychological exploration of someone coming to terms with profound grief.

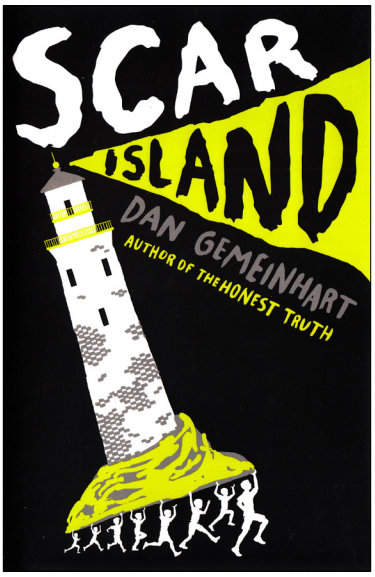
Dee Carpenter in Alan Gratz's *Allies* (2019) knows that surviving D-Day will be extremely difficult. Memories of an uncle who vanished at the hands of Nazis motivate this underage boy to hide his German nationality and fight on the side of the Americans. Landing at Omaha Beach, Dee is completely unprepared for the hellish scenes and impossible choices awaiting him: "To stay in the boat was to die. To push forward was to die. Everything around Dee was suddenly death."[16] Events are depicted from a variety of perspectives, from people of various nationalities and cultures. The stories of a Canadian Cree Indian, a Jewish American, a British dockworker's son, an Algerian French girl, and an African American medic intersect on this fateful day. The characters face unprecedented horrors, made worse by battle plans that go astray. The traditional desert-island setting of earlier fiction has become a nightmarish beach; fun-filled adventures, momentous historical events, and like-minded companions, a mix of characters from dissimilar backgrounds. Such transformations lend depth and breadth to the traditional survival story.

Threats from Within

The threats protagonists face in early survival stories—wild animals, cannibals, pirates, enemy tribes, natural disasters—are ones that most children today will rarely, if ever, encounter. Increasingly, authors of survival novels focus on threats from within. The four siblings in Cynthia Voigt's *Homecoming* (1981) are abandoned by their mother, a mentally ill woman who leaves them in a car in a mall parking lot. With no money, parents, relations except a great-aunt whom they have never met, or adults who can help them, the children are left on their own to survive. They walk from one state to another in a heroic attempt to reach great-aunt Cilla's home. Homelessness and abandonment are key concerns in the novel. "Until she died, Dicey wouldn't expect any place to be home. Home was with Momma—and Momma was in a hospital where the doctors said she'd always stay. There could be no home for the Tillermans."[17]

Threats from within the family also dominate Watt Key's *Alabama Moon* (2006). After Moon Blake's father returns from the Vietnam War, he is obsessively suspicious of the government and turns his back on civilization. When he realizes that he is dying from an infection in a broken leg, he tells his son to maintain the same transient lifestyle and to depend on no

one. Living in a rude dug-out in an Alabama forest, the ten-year-old must bury his father and survive in the wilderness on his own. Never having gone to school, known friends, or even met other people, Moon is truly isolated. To survive, he must also come to terms with the ideas instilled in him by his psychologically traumatized father.



Psychological threats are also the focus of Dan Gemeinhart's *Scar Island* (2017).[18] Twelve-year-old Jonathan Grisby is sent to Slabhenge Reformatory School for Troubled Boys—a forbidding, place on a remote island. Run by a sadistic admiral, this former insane asylum is Jonathan's worst nightmare. When the adults who administer the detention center die in a thunderstorm, the boys are left to survive on their own. Although the threats to the boys' existence are very real, they pale in comparison to the emotional threats that Jonathan faces. To survive, he must learn to cope with the guilt he feels for the death of his sister. Although psychological trauma threatens to engulf him, he learns how to cope on this remote island.

Changing Nature of Childhood

Hugh Cunningham, emeritus professor of social history, observes that it was in the second half of the twentieth century that the most rapid changes in the conceptualization and experience of childhood began. "The twin forces of the media and of mass consumption," he points out, have contributed to an erosion of childhood.[19] No longer separate and protected from adulthood, childhood has been increasingly under threat. And it is in America, Cunningham argues, that this breakdown has gone furthest.[20]

Cultural critic Neil Postman also laments the disappearance of childhood, observing that the behavior, language, attitudes, and dress of children are now indistinguishable from that of adults.[21] The media, he reminds us, provides children with unprecedented access to the adult world, leaving few things secret or hidden from them. Children have become more aware of the dangers of the world and find in the survival novel protagonists who manage in precarious environments. Young readers are keenly aware that dangers can lurk anywhere, can pose threats to anyone (not just to white males), and can emerge from both within and without.

Scholars Paula Fass, Steven Mintz, and Stephen Lassonde, each argue that the rapidity with which American family patterns have changed since mid-twentieth century has left parents anxious and hovering—eager to circumscribe their children's behavior and geographic boundaries.[22]

The protagonists in survival novels provide children with a model of coping that goes beyond retreat. By offering a vicarious experience that reflects not just the threats of their world, but also a successful negotiation of them, the survival genre provides children with a much-needed sense of agency. &

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PEER-REVIEWED

Librarians as Media Advocates

Public Library Website Advice for Parents

NICHOLAS M. CRAGG, DENISE E. AGOSTO, JUNE ABBAS, AND ANNA HERNANDEZ

With the proliferation of technology and technological resources, there has been much debate about screen time and how the use of electronic media might affect children. Parents are often left without clear ideas of how best to guide their children's use of these tools.

People have historically turned to libraries for answers and recommended resources, and libraries continue to be driven by the information needs of their users. Librarians, specifically those working with children, are in a unique position to help guide families' use of media, thereby enabling them to make responsible media decisions.

Limited research has examined how libraries are equipping parents with the tools necessary to guide their children or the roles that libraries can play in preparing families to engage in conversations about media use. This article presents an analysis of US public library websites to examine the types of advice and resources provided for parents and other caregivers interested in guiding their children's use of digital media.[1] It is part of a larger study, "Navigating Screens: Libraries as Community Hubs for Teaching Positive Screen Media Practices," funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).[2] It's a three-year joint research project of the University of Wisconsin, Drexel University, and the University of Oklahoma. It seeks to understand how media use and media guidance play out in US families with children ages five to eleven, and ways that libraries and other community organizations can best help parents guide their children's use of digital media.

Parents, Children, and Digital Media

Many parents are concerned about both the frequency of their children's technology use and the number of hours per day they spend in front of screens. Parents seeking advice for how to guide their children's media use typically turn to peers and family, often talking to others on social media.

In fact, in the US, 75 percent of parents who use social media turn to social media for parenting-related information and social support.[3] In addition, a number of organizations provide information about responsible screen time use, including the Mayo Clinic, Cable News Network (CNN), Healthline, National Public Radio (NPR), Forbes, the American Psychological Association (APA), the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, and Common Sense Media.




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Nonetheless, questions remain as to how parents should guide their children's media use, what resources they can use to obtain information about this subject, and how librarians might play the role of media advocate, assisting parents with guiding their children's use of digital media.

Roles for Youth Librarians: Media Mentorship and Media Advocacy

According to Claudia Haines, youth services librarian at the Homer (AK) Public Library and coauthor of *Becoming a Media Mentor: A Guide for Working with Children and Families*, the media mentor is a content expert who relies on the context of the interaction and the individual child to help inform families' healthy media decisions.[4] Media mentorship suggests that a core role of children's librarians is to provide educational and leisure opportunities for helping children become better informed and more skilled consumers and creators of media of all types.

A growing number of library instruction programs, such as the University of Washington's iSchool, Drexel University's College of Computing and Informatics, Wayne State University's School of Library and Information Science, and San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science, have recognized the importance of training and developing professionals capable of acting as media mentors.[5] The classes offered in these programs (which include Youth Development and Information Behavior in a Digital Age, Programming and Services for Children and Young Adults, Early Childhood Literacy, and Issues in Information Literacy) are all reflective of the growing professional acknowledgment of the librarian's responsibility to connect children to the full range of available resources, including print and digital media.[6] They reflect the increasing realization that librarians are no longer the experts on a single format—books, they are now the connectors, the link between patrons and information in multiple formats.[7]

A review of the existing literature provides suggestions of how librarians might refocus their roles more toward media mentorship and on assisting parents in becoming more effective media mentors. For example, in the article "Ten Ways to Help Parents Navigate Technology with Children," Clara Hendricks, a member of the Association for Library Service to Children's (ALSC) Children and Technology Committee, suggests ten ways librarians can assist parents as media mentors:

1. Provide parents and children access to various types of technology in the library.
2. Provide opportunities for parent-child engagement with technology.
3. Build up parenting collections with books on topics related to technology and children.
4. Monitor the ongoing dialogue in libraries and beyond about children and technology.
5. Treat technological tools and new media like any other material in the library.
6. Encourage parents to allow children to be their teachers.
7. Encourage them to learn together and assure them that this is beneficial for both of them.
8. Stay connected with local schools and keep up to date on their use of technology.
9. Market yourself as a media mentor.
10. Promote the library as a technological hub.[8]

In addition, both the ALSC white paper "Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth" and Haines and Campbell's *Becoming a Media Mentor: A Guide for Working with Children and Families* stress the importance of actively supporting children's digital media use.[9] It is not enough to simply

Choosing High-Quality Apps

- Explore new apps on your own before exploring them with children.
- Look for apps that incorporate ECRR2 skills: reading, writing, talking, singing, and playing.
- Consider your individual child, the content of the media, and how, when, why, and with whom your child will use the media.
- Seek out high-quality story and book (or toy and game) apps that have
  - meaningful interactive elements that add to, and don't distract from, the story;
  - a great story with high-quality images;
  - plain, readable text;
  - intuitive wayfinding;
  - read-to-me, read-to-myself, and voice record options;
  - settings for turning music and sounds effects on and off;
  - clean, uncluttered display; and
  - no technical glitches.

provide children with opportunities to engage with technology, children require mediated and guided experiences with digital media for the experiences to translate into positive and productive digital literacy skills; this requirement holds true across a wide age range of youth.[10]

Lisa Guernsey, director of the Learning Technologies Project at New America, also emphasizes that discussions of children's media use must include consideration of media content, the context of use, and individual needs and developmental levels of the individual child.[11]

Similarly, authors Tamara Clegg and Mega Subramaniam, associate professors in the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, identify crucial ways librarians can support young people's digital media use. Most notably, these include fostering digital skills development and supporting connected learning.[12] The authors further explain that librarians must be comfortable taking on a variety of roles in the learning experience, be able to navigate the tensions they face when taking on these diverse roles, and reflect on specific ways to promote equity and diversity in their learning context or community.[13]

Little research has focused on librarians' attitudes toward taking on the role of media mentor. Researchers Ely, Willett, Abbas, and Agosto reported that recent studies found that children's librarians lack confidence when taking on the role of media mentor, they felt they lacked experience with technologies and serving as mentors in maker programs, and they needed additional training and professional guidelines.[14] These authors propose an alternate role that children's librarians play, that of media advocate.

The term media advocate is related to the concept of media mentor. Media advocacy builds on existing roles of librarians as information experts who connect users to information and resources, often in the form of a reference interview or other personal guidance. It builds on skills librarians already have and the role they already play including, for example, providing guidance about all formats of media to parents through a media advisory reference interview, curating media for their collections, providing handouts to parents or making suggestions of media to use during story times. As media advocates, librarians work with parents and children to find the media that satisfies their information needs, regardless of format.

Media advocacy emphasizes two significant concepts that also form a part of media mentorship. First, collaborative communication is key. Whether it is between parent/caregiver and child, parent/caregiver and librarian, or librarian and child, creating and maintaining open dialogues is a vital first step in the media mentorship process. Second, there is the subjective nature of the effects of screen time. It is important to keep in mind that each child and family is different. Therefore, their screen time and media needs may be unique, and their screen time practices may need to be individualized.

In the media mentorship framework, the emphasis is on the role of the librarian as mentor for parents and children. Media advocacy shares this emphasis on the role of the librarian and also seeks to empower parents as advocates for their children's use of digital media.

Website Analysis Methods

All of these ideas come together to make a strong argument of the need for librarians to serve as media advocates. With the goal of understanding the types of guidance related to children and media that US public libraries are providing online for parents and other caregivers, we undertook a content analysis of a representative sample of five hundred US public library websites. We examined each site to determine

1. whether advice (broad guidelines, links to other websites and resources, ideas for co-participation, skill-building lessons or activities, internet safety information, or guidelines for resource evaluation and decision-making) was provided;

2. the location on the library's website (children's page, parent's page, etc.) any advice could be found;

3. the specific types of advice provided (e.g., internet safety recommendations, app evaluation guidelines, etc.); and

4. the availability of media mentoring-advocacy or media use-related library programs for parents or families.

Identifying the Sample Websites

We used stratified random sampling, which involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata, to identify a representative set of five hundred US public library websites. In stratified random sampling, the strata are formed based on shared characteristics, in our case, libraries belonging to a specific service population by the number of people served.

This method enabled us to identify representative libraries from each of the eleven IMLS Public Library Survey's service population categories, ranging from small public libraries serving communities of one thousand or fewer up to large urban libraries serving populations over one million.[15] The resulting sample included five hundred US public libraries

Table 1. Summary of Analysis of Public Library Websites

Libraries with…	N	%
Media Advice Available	39	7.8
Suggestions for Parents	41	8.2
Media Advice Programs	7	1.4

from all fifty US states and 11 service population categories, or roughly 5.4 percent of the 9,200 and thirty-five total US public libraries profiled in the Public Library Survey.

Results

As summarized in table 1, the analysis revealed that just 7.8 percent, or thirty-nine of the five hundred libraries, offered advice about children and media directed at parents available on their websites. Advice was located in a number of sections within the broader library sites, with page titles such as Children, Public Resources, Online Resources, Children and Teens, Web Links, Parents, Information, Research, Events, Virtual Library, Blog, and Early Learning. The types of advice provided included internet safety and privacy tips, website and app evaluation, media reviews, and screen time guidelines and limits.

The percentage of websites recommending other websites offering related advice was slightly higher, 8.2 percent, or forty-one of the five hundred total websites examined. Those offering digital media and parenting advice programs (such as social media workshops, coding clubs, or STEAM programs) was notably lower, just 1.4 percent, or seven of the five hundred websites.

Only a small minority of the five hundred randomly selected US public libraries we examined offer any media advice or digital media programming information for parents on their websites. This finding might indicate lost opportunities for librarians wishing to serve as active media advocates within their communities. A library's website can serve as a point of first contact for existing users as well as nonusers starting to explore the possibility of using the library. Making the youth services staff role of media advocate visible on the website tells the public that media advocacy is a core library goal and identifies staff as media guidance resources.

These numbers, however, might not indicate that the majority of the libraries examined offer no media advocacy services at all. This analysis only identified programs, services, and resources mentioned on the library websites. Some or even all of the libraries might offer relevant programs and resources not included on their websites in person or via social media, blogs, or other online platforms. Libraries with limited staff and resources might not have been able to update their websites frequently enough to fully reflect these services.

Learning from Others: A Model Public Library Website

The omission of media advocacy content on the overwhelming majority of the websites examined stands in stark contrast to model websites such as that of the Homer (AK) Public Library (HPL). Managed by Haines, it serves as a community go-to for parents seeking advice about children and digital media. HPL serves a community of roughly 12,000 people. It offers a collection of 45,000 physical and digital materials, several public-access computers, meeting rooms, study spaces, and active interlibrary loan services.

The Digital Media and Kids section of the library website is easy to navigate, contains frequently updated information, and offers practical advice for parents, including suggestions for high-quality apps and other digital resources. It contains ideas for media co-participation, digital skills-building lessons and activities, internet safety information, and guidelines for resource evaluation and decision-making. In addition, the page includes links to *Horn Book, School Library Journal*, Common Sense Media, and other publications, connecting parents to other websites, journals, and organizations that may be useful when trying to select appropriate media for their children.

Digital Media and Kids

- Explore digital media together with young children just as you would play or read a paper book with them.
- Model positive digital media use.
- Make intentional decisions about digital media use with kids.
- Create a family digital media plan. Limit use by time, activity, location, or other family rules.
- Let apps inspire real-world play.
- Content matters. Choose high-quality, age-appropriate media.
- Free exploration is an important part of learning. The first time kids use an app, let them navigate at their own pace rather than "teaching" them how to use it.

Conclusion

This analysis shows that few libraries are harnessing the potential of their websites as sources for media advocacy content. Parents often express concern about their children's use of digital media as well as the amount of time they spend in front of screens. Librarians can help them form more balanced views of screen media and understand that there are many different ways children use media, including passive viewing and interactive engagement, and help them to become active advocates for their children's particular media needs.

Libraries are information centers as well as places in where families can interact with media. Furthermore, due to their in-depth understanding of how information is created and shared, librarians are uniquely qualified to serve as media advocates in their communities. It is important to understand individual community needs and habits and to meet users where they already are, whether that is in the library, on the web, or elsewhere.

Effective media advocacy incorporates collaboration with organizations and professionals outside the library to design and deliver effective programs and services. Examples of relevant community organizations include community health centers, schools, and technology consultants, all of which employ professionals with expert relevant knowledge. Knowledge-sharing among professionals and organizations can spread awareness of the importance of media advocacy and help libraries transform into fully realized community information and education hubs. &

Recommended Professional Resources

For more information on media advocacy and ideas for providing library services relating to families and digital media, check out the following resources:

- **Navigating Screens:** https://navigatingscreens.wordpress.com. Free tutorials based on the Navigating Screens project are available at https://my.nicheacademy.com/navigatingscreens. These tutorials include (1) Flipping the Script: Changing the Narrative about Children and Media, (2) Can You Help Me: A Media Advisory Interview Guide, and (3) Guiding Family Media Use: Every Family and Every Community is Different.

- The **American Library Association** (ALA) also recommends several webinars that address concepts related to media advocacy, such as "Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth: A Primer, Best Practices for Apps in Storytimes," and "Young Children & Media: Libraries in the Multi-Screen, Multi-Touch Digital World." In addition, print resources such as "Media Mentorship in Libraries Serving Youth," a white paper adopted by ALSC; the book *Becoming a Media Mentor: A Guide for Working with Children and Families* by Claudia Haines, Cen Campbell, and the Association for Library Service to Children (Chicago: ALA, 2016); and "Redefining Mentorship in Facilitating Interest-Driven Learning in Libraries" (in *Reconceptualizing Libraries*) may also be helpful.

References and Notes

1. The term "parents" is used here as shorthand for the wide range of adults with significant childcare duties in families, including parents, grandparents, guardians, and other adults with regularly recurring childcare duties.
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13. Clegg and Subramaniam, "Redefining Mentorship."
14. Eric Ely et al., "Library Guidance for Families' Media Uses: An Analysis of Screen Media Advice Available on Public Library Websites," *Library Quarterly* (in press).
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Incorporating Information Literacy into Youth Book Clubs

Brooke Sheets

Brooke Sheets *is the Senior Librarian for the Children's Literature Department of the Los Angeles Public Library.*

Can you teach information literacy while still offering a fun, engaging book club? Here are some tips for including important information literacy concepts into a book club for older elementary students and tweens, ages nine and up.

- Look for books that feature **multiple narrators and character voices**, or titles where the same event is looked at from different character perspectives. Discussions about how different characters narrate the same events, or their relationships to each other, can be a foundation for understanding issues of bias and the perception of facts.

- Incorporate **heavily illustrated texts and graphic novels** into your selections. In addition to being popular with students, this improves the ability to think critically about images. Graphic novels provide a way to talk about composition and how those choices can influence how we think and feel. What did the creator show? What wasn't shown that your brain fills in? How does the art make you feel and why?

- **Add nonfiction to your book club.** This can either be your primary text choice or to support a work of fiction. Readers can fact-check historical fiction or learn more about the book's setting. Using nonfiction helps kids develop research skills and helps them learn how to interpret infographics, charts, diagrams, timelines and more.

- **Incorporate discussions of the author and their intent.** Bring in news articles, interviews, speeches, or author's notes to enrich conversations about authorial intent. By looking at more than just the completed work, readers can better understand the creation process.

- Use **other library resources** such as databases, local history collections, digital archives, or even programs or services in your book club. Learning to use your library's resources allows for deeper exploration of topics. Participants can learn how information is organized, and you can model how the library can be used as a trusted resource for reliable information and support.

With these tips in mind, here are two book club reading choices with supplemental information literacy activities and discussion questions.

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown

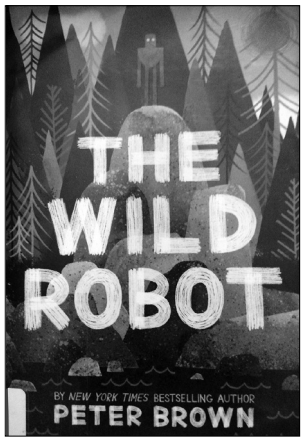
Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot* has increased in popularity at my library. There are lots of themes to tackle in this one, so it's a great choice if your book club meets for several weeks to discuss the same book.

Activity 1

Read or listen to an interview with Peter Brown. Student-friendly interviews include one on BN KidsBlog (www.barnesandnoble.com/blog/kids/an-interview-with-the-wild-robot-author-peter-brown) and Book Club

for Kids (https://bookclubforkids.libsyn.com/peter-brown-on -writing).

Sample discussion questions:



- "Peter Brown is a writer and an illustrator. How do the pictures change what you think about the story?"
- "Does hearing about how Peter came up with the idea for this story change how you think about it? Why or why not?"

Activity 2

Explore robotics, coding, and STEAM. Show off your 3D printer, makerspace, or coding classes. With internet access, students can practice coding on websites like code.org. Coding can help launch a discussion about artificial intelligence.

Sample discussion questions:

- "What was Roz's purpose? What was her program? What would you program Roz to do?"
- "Do robots like Roz exist today? How are the same or different?"

Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick

Historical fiction can sometimes be a hard sell for students in my community, and the size of Selznick's books can be intimidating for even strong readers, but the relatable stories and significant amount of illustrations in Selznick's works hook readers. Book clubs are a great place to make this work accessible.

Activity 1

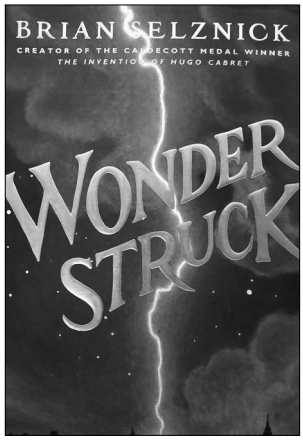
In *Wonderstruck*, Rose's story is told entirely through illustrations. Spend some time talking about the book's format how these choices impact the narrative.

Sample discussion questions:

- "Ben's story is told in words, and Rose's story is told in pictures. Which section do you prefer? Why? Which character do you understand better?"
- "There are written words in some of Rose's story. Did you read them? Were they necessary to understand her story?"

Activity 2

Selznick's acknowledgments in the book are filled with indications of all the research he did. Explore the note with students, and research some of the topics within. Use this as a starting point for students to share in the research process. Find books on American Sign Language, learn what life was like in the 1920s, or even show silent films. If you have books listed in Selznick's extensive selective bibliography, you can share those as well.



Sample discussion questions:

- "Find a photo of Queens Museum of Art's Panorama. Where did you find it? How does it compare to the book's illustration?"
- "How did Brian Selznick learn about Hoboken, New Jersey? What are some sources you could use to learn about Hoboken?" &

Sharing the EFL's Research and Links

Members of the current EFL Committee include Betsy Diamant-Cohen, executive director of Mother Goose on the Loose; Lori Romero, coordinator and supervisor of the Child and Family Library Services Department, Arapahoe (CO) Library District; Joanna Ward, children's services librarian, LA County (CA) Library; Kathryn Baumgartner, children's librarian, Great Neck (NY) Library; Carol Arlene Edwards, retired youth services librarian, Denver (CO) Public Library; Crystal Faris, director of youth and family engagement, Kansas City (MO) Public Library; Ruth Guerrier-Pierre, children's librarian, New York Public Library; Kristin Piepho, library manager, Sno-Isle Libraries, WA; Emmie Stuart, librarian, Metro Nashville (TN) Public Schools; and Sarah West, children's librarian, New York Public Library.

Serving on an ALSC committee is a great way to meet other children's librarians and to work on issues that interest you. Committees create or sponsor programs for conferences, discuss current issues and trends, brainstorm new ideas, participate in national projects, work as a team to review all sorts of media and present national awards, promote intellectual freedom, and more. Committee work enables you to share ideas and help shape the world of children's librarianship. In fact, this column was envisioned and created by Dr. Tess Prendergast, while she was serving on the Children and Libraries Editorial Advisory Committee.

Earlier this year, co-chairs of the ALSC Early and Family Literacy (EFL) Committee expressed a desire to write about some current research resources.

Via wonderful storytimes, access to quality children's books, and building engaging relationships with families, libraries have always played a pivotal role in supporting early childhood literacy development. The popular and widely implemented Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) initiative helped underscore the importance of both understanding the research and sharing with parents the practical ways they can incorporate important early literacy skills and practices into fun, everyday activities. These research-informed experiences are instrumental in helping children to become ready to learn to read and succeed in school.

When the ALSC board voted to conclude its formal work on ECRR as an active, joint initiative with PLA in 2018, ALSC decided to build on the foundation and successes of ECRR, moving forward with a focus on early and family literacy without necessarily being tied to a single product. To further support the library community with research-based early and family literacy endeavors, the Early and Family Literacy (EFL) Committee was created in 2019. One main goal is to stay on top of current research in the field of early and family literacy and share it with the library community.

The EFL Committee has taken a holistic approach in seeking recent, research-based articles pointing to practices that contribute to early literacy development. To start, the following pieces have been selected to spotlight and share with youth services colleagues.

Play

How Play Energizes Your Child's Brain

www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/parenting/play-brain-science.html?searchResultPosition=1

Based on studies, various psychologists note that play, specifically pretend play, helps children develop skills such as planning, problem solving,

and deciphering the world around them. The complexity of play changes as children grow. This research is important to librarians in explaining the need for play spaces and play programming. It is also a useful tool in the development of various play programs for different age groups.

Social Emotional Health

Reading with Kids Could Help Curb Negative Behavior and Points to "Less Harsh Parenting"

https://people.com/parents/reading-to-kids-can-reduce-negative-behavior-harsh-parenting-study/

https://doi.org/10.1097/DBP.0000000000000687

As reported in *People Magazine*, researchers from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School found that reading with a child isn't just about developing early literacy skills. Reading with a child can help develop a child's social emotional competence, which can lead to a decrease in a child's disruptive behaviors, and can result in less harsh parenting, less parenting stress, and an improved parent-child relationship.

Shared Reading Quality and Brain Activation during Story Listening in Preschool-Age Children

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5728185/

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2017.08.037

In this study by the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, a controlled group of four-year-old girls from at-risk families were videotaped with their mothers for a reading of an age-appropriate picture book for observation. While the observations noted "maternal distraction by smartphones" and generally low shared reading quality scores, the conclusions still determined positive correlation with brain activation among the girls supporting complex language, executive function, and social-emotional processing. The study concluded that dialogic reading interventions between mother and daughter promoted healthy brain development, especially in at-risk children.

Using Literacy to Boost Your Child's Health and Resilience

https://medicine.yale.edu/news-article/23748/

This article shows a variety of ways that reading helps build resilience in a child during difficult times, including (but not limited to) creating social connections, self-pride, and increasing feelings of belonging.

Technology

Screen Use Tied to Children's Brain Development

www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/well/family/screen-use-tied-to-childrens-brain-development.html

https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3869

Researchers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center determined that children with higher screen-based media use scored lower on cognitive tests measuring important early literacy skills. To help counteract possible ill effects of media use on children, library staff can encourage parents to do what parents do best—make time during a child's screen use, or anytime, to be there with the child to talk, ask questions, answer questions, and interact. And read!

Screen Time for Children and Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/oby.22917

This article explores the ways screen time for children and adolescents can positively affect physical and mental health, expand connectedness and socialization, and ensure a good night's sleep during the pandemic.

School Readiness

Literacy Loss in Kindergarten Children During COVID-19 School Closures

https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/nbv79

This article examines how COVID-19 will affect children by keeping them out of school. This can help both caretakers and parents understand the research behind why reading at home is important, especially during this time.

Beginning Readers

How to Inspire Every Child to Be a Lifelong Reader. TED Talk 2017.

www.ted.com/talks/alvin_irby_how_to_inspire_every_child_to_be_a_lifelong_reader#t-428907

Author, comedian, teacher, and Barbershop Books founder Alvin Irby delivers a challenge to rethink reading education. According to the US Department of Education, only 15 percent of black fourth-grade boys are proficient in reading. This talk challenges educators (which includes librarians) to rethink how we present book familiarity and reading and to do so through a culturally competent lens. The goal, of course, is for all children to view themselves as readers.

Programming

Impact, Advocacy, and Professional Development

www.academia.edu/19658640/Impact_Advocacy_and_Professional_Development_An_Exploration_of_Storytime_Assessment_in_Washington_State

Researchers from the Information School at the University of Washington were inspired by the Project VIEWS2 study to look into what types of assessments take place during and after storytime programs. There are challenges to creating formal assessment procedures, such as fear that these will negatively impact a librarian's annual evaluation, but there are many benefits to encouraging even informal, self-reflective assessment. By looking back on how a program went and how children responded to the activities, librarians are able to improve the quality of their programs, better meet community needs, and advocate for the importance of their work.

How Drag Queen Storytime in Libraries Helps Early Years Children Develop Multi-Literacies, Empathy and Centres Inclusion

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8790/174d45d6956e0bfa144e25e2aada546401a0.pdf?_ga=2.174693410.101971783.1596215629-1448062845.1596215629

Though storytimes hosted by drag queens have faced a lot of backlash in recent years, this article from Colette Townend combines a vast amount of research on this type of program and discusses its benefits. When conducted properly, Drag Queen Storytimes encourage important aspects of early childhood development and early literacy such as play, community cohesion, and empathy. By providing multi-modal stimuli and knowledge of the world, these programs have the ability to increase comprehension in children. &

Advocacy in a Global Pandemic

Cassie Chenoweth

Cassie Chenoweth *is the Children's Librarian at Orange Beach (AL) Public Library and co-chair of the ALSC Public Awareness and Advocacy Committee.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken up our professional and personal lives more than anyone could have expected. There has never been a more important time to advocate for libraries, specifically children's services. We have all learned some incredibly valuable lessons about library advocacy during this unprecedented time. The following are library advocacy tips to be used at any time, pandemic or not.

- **Show Your Worth**. As library professionals, we know libraries are more than just buildings filled with books, but do your stakeholders know that? Do they know you provide programming that is being translated online? Do they know you offer online reference services? Now is the time to show your community what libraries provide. Many libraries have focused their attention to their online resources, from e-books to skill-building services.

- **Get Back to Basics.** As libraries closed in March 2020, many children's librarians began to offer virtual storytimes. Whether it was recorded and uploaded on YouTube, live on Facebook, or in a Zoom room, children's librarians got creative to reach their littlest patrons. A surprising silver lining of online storytimes was the lack of constant interruptions from toddlers, preschoolers, and, let's be honest, their caregivers. One of the key components of storytime, sharing early literacy tips, was a lot easier to implement. We found that we were able to explain exactly why we do what we do without the little ones deciding it was the perfect time to take a lap around the storytime room. For example, after singing "Itsy Bitsy Spider," we talked about how singing helps us slow down our words, which will help kids when they learn to read. By sharing tips and getting to the roots of our librarianship skills, we are reminding others and ourselves why libraries are so important.

- **More than Face-to-Face Interaction.** Yes, customer service is the cornerstone of library work, especially in public libraries. But what happens when the usual form of customer service, face-to-face interaction, isn't possible? We get creative. Some libraries offered curbside services to patrons. Many libraries created personalized recommendation services and "grab bag" options for patrons. When programming went virtual, librarians interacted with patrons through Zoom or live Facebook streams. It's not ideal, but even a little bit of personalization can go a long way in library advocacy.

- **Professional Development.** Many libraries were able to offer work-from-home opportunities when their doors were closed. Online webinars and other professional development opportunities were the simplest ways to "work" when we couldn't be in the library. ALSC offers many archived webinars that became a helpful tool when looking for ways to grow professionally during some unprecedented downtime.

- **Virtual Meetings Aren't All Bad.** When word came down that ALSC was shifting process and professional award committees to a hybrid model, where work and meetings occur virtually throughout the service year with conference attendance being optional, there was some understand-

able push back from fans of in-person committees. There was talk of lack of networking and collaboration opportunities. Then COVID-19 hit. Everyone was forced to go virtual. And you know what? It wasn't all bad! More people were able to save time and money by attending the ALA Virtual. Everyone got a little more used to seeing themselves on camera for a Zoom call. Technical kinks were straightened out, and we all realized meeting virtually was a lot easier in some cases. Of course, the excitement of in-person conference can never be replicated, but we learned that important work can be done in many ways.

Library advocacy is all about creativity and flexibility. During the pandemic, library professionals were tested and proved that libraries and, specifically, children's services, are vital parts of our communities. &

We Are ALSC

Profiles from the Field

Bios compiled by the ALSC Membership Committee, which includes Allison Knight, branch manager, MidPointe Library System Ohio; Deidre Winterhalter, assistant manager of youth services, St. Charles (IL) Public Library District; and Jennifer Knight, youth services librarian, North Olympic Library System, Port Angeles, WA.

What does ALSC membership mean to our members? It may depend on what aspect of librarianship they're working in! Here's a glimpse from three members who've taken three different paths.

Jennifer Clemons, Curator, Butler Children's Literature Center, Dominican University, River Forest (IL)

Why did you join ALSC?

For the community and connection with other librarians. Now that I work in an academic setting instead of a children's department, ALSC membership is an invaluable way to stay involved in the conversation and with other children's librarians.

What's your best ALSC memory?

I attended my first ALA Annual Conference in 2018 and packed my schedule with ALSC activities, probably more than was good for my tired feet. What I found at each and every event was an enthusiasm for our work, boundless creativity, and a commitment to connecting with kids was (and still is) an inspiration.

What makes you want to be a children's librarian?

Literature was my gateway to the field. When I realized that I could combine my love for books with an affinity for public service and connecting with students—I was hooked! Now the Butler Center allows me to support the librarians, teachers, and caregivers who engage young people with great books through continuing education events, lectures, and promoting the newest and best in books for youth. And while library and education graduate students are a bit older than those in the children's department, their curiosity and love for reading are just as genuine, and I feel just as privileged to support them.

Anna Coats, Head of Youth Services, Livingston (NJ) Public Library

What is your best ALSC memory?

Attending the Youth Media Awards in person, multiple years!

What makes you want to be a children's librarian?

When I was pursuing my MS in library and information science, I was planning to be an adult librarian, but all of my classmates told me I seemed like I would be good with children. This had never occurred to me before! I did my practicum in a teen department and absolutely loved it. I then became a youth services librarian and love working with both children and teens.

Kristin Piepho, Managing Librarian, Sno-Isle Libraries, Mountlake Terrace (WA)

Why did you join ALSC?

Children's librarians are my people. I wanted a way to connect with other passionate professionals who enjoy being silly and sharing stories.

What's your best ALSC memory?

When I attended the ALSC National Institute in Oakland several years ago, I was so inspired. It was the first conference I'd been to where I was excited about every single session, and I came home with scads of things that I wanted to implement within my own library.

What makes you want to be a children's librarian?

When I was growing up, I never considered that I should be a children's librarian. In retrospect it was obvious. My sister and I put spine labels on our books and tried to check them out to my friends, my favorite summer days included going to both my local Seattle Public Library and King County Library branches, and I read aloud regularly to my much younger brother. I love the way kids' brains work. They always make me laugh when I'm feeling grouchy and I love making them laugh with just the right book. &

Author Guidelines for *Children and Libraries*

Children and Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children (CAL) is the official publication of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association. CAL is the vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current research and practice relating to library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

CAL publishes four times a year: spring, summer, fall, and winter, and our issues deadline about six months prior to publication, so there is usually a fairly lengthy lag time between acceptance of an article and publication. Each issue runs 40 pages. Articles are unpaid but do include author byline, bio, and photo.

Scholarly/Research Pieces

We are a refereed publication, so scholarly/research-based manuscripts are submitted to a referee peer panel for blind review. In addition to articles based on experiences such as Bechtel Fellowship or other grant programs, authors are welcome to submit manuscripts based on their personal research projects, assessments, dissertations, surveys, and other studies. Graphs, illustrations, charts, and other statistical data are encouraged to be submitted with the manuscript.

"Best Practices" Pieces

CAL wants to hear about your library's successful (and even the not-so-successful) children's programs. There is something to learn from everyone's planning, preparation, funding, and execution.

- Submit a write-up (most articles run 1,500 words or less) detailing your library's program. Include as much pertinent information as possible, including:
    - How the program was funded
    - How the program was marketed/promoted
    - Program attendance
    - Planning/preparation timeline and checklist of materials needed
    - Execution of and feedback on the program
    - Quotes from staff and attendees
    - High-resolution photos from the event

Other Features

CAL welcomes shorter or longer features on well-researched topics and themes relevant and of interest to children's librarians and others interested in library service to children. Past topics have included:

- services to special needs children
- early literacy services and programming
- censorship and intellectual freedom
- digital books and other technologies
- mentoring
- library advocacy
- assessments of special library collections
- interviews with children's books authors/illustrators, and more.

The Last Word

This end-page feature runs in each issue and highlights a brief, light essay from a children's librarian, such as a humorous story about a library experience; a short trivia quiz or puzzle about children's literature; a brief, creatively written insight on library service, children's literature, or programming; a very short question-and-answer interview with a popular author; a funny story about what kids are overheard saying in libraries. Word count should not exceed 300 words.

Submission Guidelines

- Submitted manuscripts may not be under consideration, nor accepted, elsewhere.
- E-mail submission is preferred via Microsoft Word format. Copy should be in Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced copy.
- Authors are responsible for accuracy in the manuscript, including all names and reference citations.
- Manuscripts should be formatted per the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS) and must include full and accurate citation information. To format citations, use numbered footnotes/endnotes (Humanities style) as described in the most current edition of CMOS.
- Editor will acknowledge receipt of all manuscripts and send them to at least two referees for evaluation. Please allow four to six months for referee process to be completed.
- All copy is subject to editing for space, grammar, clarity, accuracy, and other considerations.
- Photos are most welcome of any programs, author visits, or related events. All photos submitted must be high resolution (300 dpi). Any photos depicting children must be accompanied by a photo release form signed by the child's parent or legal guardian.
- If a manuscript is accepted for publication, page proofs will be sent to authors to confirm copy accuracy and answer copy editor's queries.
- If a manuscript is accepted, the author is required to sign a copyright agreement with ALA/ALSC. For more information and/or to download the copyright forms, visit the ALA Publishing website.
- Authors receive two complimentary copies of the journal upon publication.

Please feel free to contact editor Sharon Verbeten with ideas at toylady@athenet.net or CALeditor@yahoo.com or call (920) 339-2740. &

ALSC Booklists

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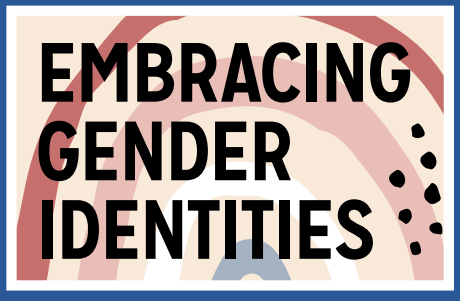
ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN



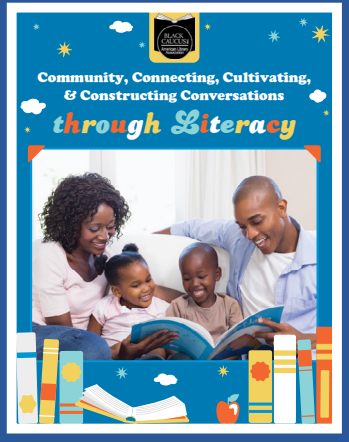
Embracing Gender Identities was created to help support conversations about gender identity and expression. This list, which is divided into books for 0-5 year-olds, elementary school students and middle schoolers, includes recommended informational picture books, as well as works of fiction and non-fiction that challenge gender norms and explore the wide spectrum of gender identity.
It includes additional resources for parents.

Download: bit.ly/alscembracinglist

In **#LookToLibraries,** ALSC has compiled a suite of tools and resources to support library professionals and the families in their communities.

These resources include booklists for children that cover a variety of topics from understanding germs to managing anxiety.

Download: bit.ly/LookToLibraries



Community, Connecting, Cultivating & Constructing Conversations Through Literacy

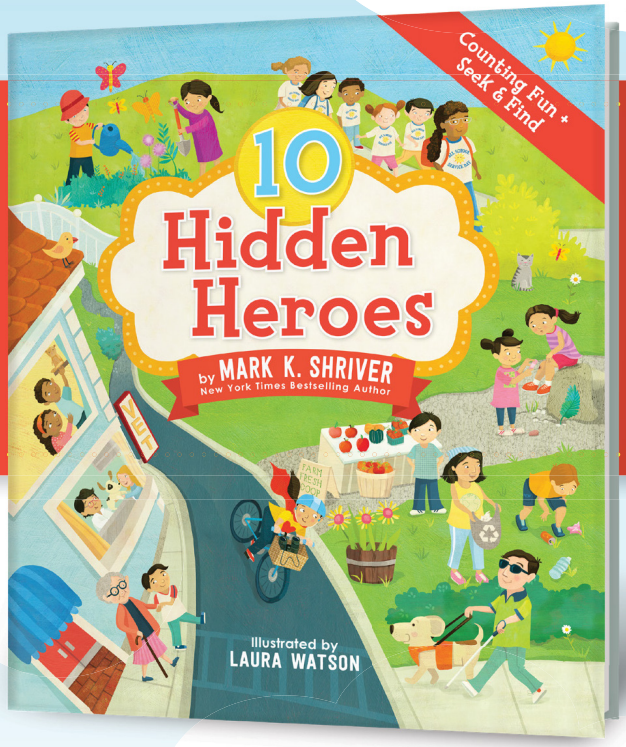
This list was developed by members of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and ALSC's Quicklists Committee.

It is intended to support conversations about dismantling systems of racial injustice.

Download: bit.ly/bcalaandalsclist2020

NEW FROM
MARK K. SHRIVER

A Children's Book with an Inspiring Message



From *New York Times* best-selling author Mark K. Shriver comes *10 Hidden Heroes*, an exciting counting and seek-and-find visual extravaganza! Featuring everyday heroes at home and in our neighborhoods, this vibrantly illustrated book helps children develop counting skills and learn how they too can be heroes in day-to-day life. *Ages 3–8*

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MARK K. SHRIVER is president of Save the Children Action Network in Washington, D.C. He is the author of the *New York Times* best-selling memoir *A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver*, which received a 2013 Christopher Award. Shriver lives with his wife, Jeanne, and their three children, Molly, Tommy, and Emma, in Maryland.

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