Children & LIBRARIES

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Fall 2021
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ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

Storytimes Return!

Booklists, Book Clubs, and Bibliographies

The Newbery Medal at 100

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2021

9:00-4:30 CST (all via Zoom)

Welcome	**Eunice E. Santos**, Dean, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois
9:00-9:30	**Cara Bertram**, ALA Archives, University of Illinois ***The Newbery in the Archives: 100 Years of Letters, Photographs, and Stories***
9:30-10:30	**KT Horning**, Director, Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison ***Striving to Do Better: A Nuts-and-Bolts History of the Newbery Medal***
10:30-11:30	**Panel Discussion:** ***Experience from the Trenches*** University of Illinois alumni who have served on the Newbery Committee **Ann Kalkhoff** (1974 committee) **Debra Ann McLeod** (1984, 2014 committees) **Diane Foote** (2010 committee) **Tad Andracki** (2018, 2022 committees)
11:30-12:30	**LUNCH**
Afternoon Welcome	**Sara L. Schwebel**, Director, The Center for Children's Books (CCB), University of Illinois
12:30-1:30	**Kenneth Kidd**, University of Florida ***Prizes, Canons, and Classics***
1:30-2:30	**Jocelyn Van Tuyl**, New College of Florida ***Intersecting with a Fraught History: From Child Reader to Parent to Children's Lit Scholar***
2:30-3:30	**Ebony Elizabeth Thomas**, University of Michigan ***The Shadow Book: Reading Slavery, Fugitivity, and Freedom in the Newbery Canon***
3:30-4:30	Join the CCB and Newbery 100th Anniversary Celebration Task Force/ALSC for a Mocktail Hour on Mock Newbery Discussions

For more information and to register, visit go.illinois.edu/newbery

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ON THE COVER: Young Emma took advantage of a lovely day in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and brought her favorite pastime outdoors! We love that she is reading a book by Wisconsin native Kevin Henkes! Photo courtesy of Holly Peters.

Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

What's your favorite Newbery Medal-winning book? For me, hands down, it's the book I most recommend at my library—Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book.* (A close second is *Last Stop on Market Street* . . . but, wait, then there's *Flora & Ulysses* . . .).

OK, you get my point. It's tough to pick just one; thankfully, we have one hundred years of fantastic literature to choose from! And all so different—the list now, thankfully, includes a picture book and a graphic novel, and more books from BIPOC authors are being rightfully honored.

Each year, I get excited to hear the Newbery winner's acceptance speech, even though it was a bit different this year with the conferences—and the speeches and announcements—being held virtually. Still, these books and authors manage to get librarians most excited.

And why not? Many of the winners remember fondly how their public or school librarians helped them find just that right book when they were growing up. For many, libraries were safe, comfortable havens. For others, they were inspirational training grounds that offered escape in the form of tome travel.

In our Spring 2022 issue of *CAL*, we'll celebrate the centennial of the Newbery Medal in stories and photos. If you have a story, anecdote, or photo from a Newbery celebration or banquet, please feel free to share it with me at CALeditor@yahoo.com. Maybe we'll include it in our coverage.

Now, if you'll excuse me, it's back to reading those predictions for next year's medal—we gurus don't always predict the winners correctly, but we do make lists of some of the very best books for all of us to enjoy. &

There's only one R in Newbery! Sharon's getting excited for the one-hundredth anniversary of the Newbery Medal, which we'll celebrate in our Spring 2022 issue of *CAL*.

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Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children. It also serves as a vehicle for communication to the ALSC membership, spotlighting significant activities and initiatives of the Association. (From the journal's "Policies and Procedures" document adopted by the ALSC board, April 2004, revised, 2014.)

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Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

Exploring the 2020 Rainbow Book List

TADAYUKI SUZUKI, DARRYN DIUGUID, AND BARBARA WARD

Being familiar with the Rainbow Book List is one easy way for librarians to support the LGBTQ+ community and address the American Library Association's (ALA) Response to Service for LGBTQ+ People.

As stated on their website: "Libraries can serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LBGTQ) people by ensuring that this population is reflected in library collections and provided with services at the library.[1] It further states, "As a population which is often the subject of discrimination and harassment, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people can benefit from the access to information which libraries provide and the sense of community which library programs can help foster. It is important to note that the LGBTQ population is diverse, spanning age groups, ethnic and racial groups, socio-economic groups, and personal identities."[2]

The Rainbow Book List is an annual list created by ALA's Gay, Lesbian Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) and Social responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) to provide high-quality literature connected to the lives of the LGBTQ+ population. Specifically, the list is a curated bibliography highlighting books with significant gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning content, aimed at children and youth from birth to age eighteen. It is divided respectively into picture books, middle-grade fiction, young adult nonfiction, young adult fiction, and graphic novels. To support the growing need to introduce these books and topics to younger students, we chose to highlight the twelve picture books from 2020 selected by the Rainbow Book List Committee.

The availability of LGBTQ+ titles for the committee's consideration has changed over the years as the numbers of books being considered have increased. Specifically, in 2008 when the first list was generated from books published between 2005 and 2007, the committee reported exploring two hundred books with results that were "eye-opening, revealing a lack of accessibility through missing subject headings



Tadayuki Suzuki *is an Associate Professor in the Literacy Department, State University of New York at Cortland, teaching both undergraduate and graduate literacy courses. His academic interests are literacy methods, teaching ESL, and multicultural education, especially the use of multicultural literature.* ***Darryn Diuguid****, PhD, is a professor in the School of Education at McKendree University where he teaches future teachers and observes them in field experiences. He received the US Fulbright Scholar Award and Fulbright Specialist Award where he conducted seminars with education faculty and teacher candidates in Vietnam. He has served on the Stonewall Youth Book Award Committee.*
Barbara A. Ward *spent twenty-five years teaching English/language arts in New Orleans before working as an associate literacy professor at Washington State University. She is currently an adjunct at the University of New Orleans.*

and the promotion of inappropriate titles insulting to the LGBTQ+ population including such books as *A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality.*"[3]

The committee chose 45 books for that first list. Fast forward to the 2020 list when the committee reviewed 550 books and selected 92 titles for the list.

Importance of Book Lists and Awards

Children's book awards such as the Caldecott, Newbery, and Stonewall Book Awards, along with the Rainbow Book and ALA Notable lists, are significant since the books on those lists have already been vetted by literacy professionals. Since the number of books published each year continues to grow, award lists provide professionals with a time-saving tool and become "educational, social, and cultural" due to the impact of receiving such accolades.[4]

These book awards and "best of" compilations such as the Rainbow Book List surprisingly may be new to some as Rickman found in her survey to the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media;[5] in fact, most of her respondents reported never ordering books from the Rainbow Book List, and 91 percent had never attended professional development opportunities focused on the LGBTQ+ community.

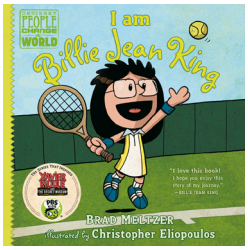
While some teachers and librarians have used the list as a resource for several years, others have not taken advantage of this important tool to share with others "who may not understand the experiences of children and adults in rainbow families."[6] To aid in familiarizing those who wish to add books to their collection, this article summarizes the twelve picture books (six nonfiction and six fiction) found on the most current Rainbow List, presenting them as possible mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors for young readers.[7]

The 2020 Rainbow Book List

Nonfiction

***Our Rainbow.* Illustrated. Little Bee, 2019. 20p.**
Although many individuals acknowledge the rainbow flag as a symbol of LGBTQ+ identity, most have no idea that the colors in the flag have significance. This simple book explains the meanings of each of the colors in the rainbow flag. At the top of the flag, black symbolizes diversity, and brown indicates inclusivity, celebrating the strengths and beauty of uniqueness and differences that exist among human beings. Red represents human lives, orange is a color of compassion and healing from emotional wounds. Yellow is the color of sunlight, which provides hope and warm feelings. Green celebrates the beauty of nature in the world. Blue represents peace and harmony; purple indicates the spirit that each human being embraces. With bright and beautiful illustrations, the authors attempt to teach young readers how simple acts of kindness and understanding of the differences in others help brighten our world. *Grade Level: Preschool–Kindergarten, Age Range: 2–5 years.*

Meltzer, Brad. *I Am Billie Jean King.* Illus. by Christopher Eliopoulos. Dial, 2019. 40p.
This graphic-novel style biography focuses on the lesbian former professional tennis player, who testified before Congress that girls' sports should be funded equally to boys' sports. Growing up, she always wondered why playing sports seemed mostly reserved for boys. King loved tennis and amassed many championship titles as well as spearheading protests for equal pay. King is known for her triumph in an exhibition game over former tennis champion Bobby Riggs in the so-called Battle of the Sexes in 1973. This victory brought attention to the athletic prowess of women. King continues to be an outspoken supporter of equal pay for women. *Grade Level: Kindergarten–3, Age Range: 5–8 years.*



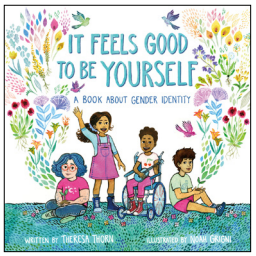
Pierete, Fleur. *Love Around the World.* Illus. by Fatinha Ramos. *Love Around the World.* Six Foot Press, 2019. 40p.
Pierete tells a heartfelt story based on real events inspired when she and her then-partner, Julian Bloom, traveled around the world to get married in 28 of the 195 countries that allowed same-sex marriages. Each beautiful double-page spread shows the two women marrying in various countries such as the United States, Belgium, and Brazil, as they learn about the traditions that make each place special. At the end, the reader is hopeful that the couple makes it to the remaining countries, but the backmatter includes one last photograph of them. Sadly, Bloom passed away from brain cancer before the couple finished the journey. *Age Range: 6–8 years, Grade Level: 1–3.*

Sanders, Rob. *Stonewall: A Building, An Uprising, A Revolution.* Illus. by Jamey Christoph. Random House, 2019. 40p.
Rob Sanders explains the history of the Stonewall Inn building, first erected in the 1840s. Christoph provides digital spreads which show the Stonewall first, as a stable for horses, then, Bonnie's Stonewall Restaurant in the 1930s, and finally, the gay-friendly Stonewall Inn in 1967. At that time, Greenwich Village was a mecca for immigrants, a hotspot of contemporary art galleries, and the "place to be" in the 1950s. Stonewall became home for those "that didn't fit in or belong," but others did not feel the same as the Inn was raided by law enforcement officials due to intolerance. The famous raid in June 1969 caused angry bar patrons with "fists and bricks" to start the Stonewall Uprising, giving birth to the LGBTQ+ Rights movement. Despite some criticism for not making transgender activists central in the narrative and illustrations, this book is an important addition to

civil rights history. *Grade Level: Kindergarten–3, Age Range: 5–8 years.*

Stevenson, Robin. *Pride Colors.* Photos by Michael Feist and others. Orca, 2019. 28p.
Using nursery rhymes and beautiful photographs of toddlers and/or same-sex parents, Stevenson explains the meaning of the colors in the rainbow flag. The author adds a short sentence right after she introduces the meaning of each color. For instance, "CUDDLE IN ORANGE, a snuggle, a snooze. Be yourself. Love who you choose." "Soft GREEN GRASS, cool, shady tree. I'll love the person you grow to be." This allows young readers and parents/educators to discuss not only the meanings of each color but also the interpretations of the colors, words, phrases, and sentences. Without using explicit words, the author introduces Pride Day family structures, and the LGBTQ+ community to young readers. *Grade Level: Preschool and up, Age Range: Baby–3 years.*

Thorn, Theresa. *It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identify.* Illus. by Noah Grigni. Holt, 2019. 40p.
This informational picture book is filled with gender identity vocabulary and would be helpful to begin discussions about the topic. Thorn places each of the new terms in uppercase letters, while Grigni uses colorful illustrations and various families to emphasize differences. We meet several characters such as Ruthie, a transgender girl, and Ruthie's cisgender brother. Ruthie's friend Alex identifies as a boy and girl, while Alex's friend, JJ, feels neither like a boy or girl; they are gender nonbinary. The book emphasizes how someone may guess at a person's gender identity based on appearance, and how it is okay to let people know when they are wrong. The backmatter includes terms, additional resources, and recommended pronoun usage. *Grade Level: 1–2, Age Range: 4–8 years.*



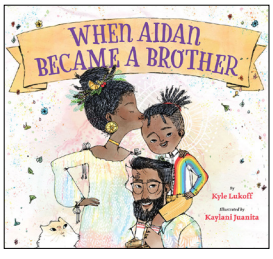
Fiction

Gale, Heather. *Ho'onani: Hula Warrior.* Illus. by Mika Song. Tundra, 2019. 40p.
In the frontmatter, Gale explains that Hawaiians value individuals who have both feminine and masculine traits. In this tale, the main character, Ho'onani, does not see herself (the pronoun used in the text) as a boy or girl. When Ho'onani auditions for and wins the lead role of the warrior for a traditional hula chant, her classmates are shocked since they expect the role to go to a male. Based on a true story and documentary, the text and Gale's vivid watercolor and ink illustrations showcase the traditions and values of the Hawaiian culture. This book was cited as one of the Ontario Library Association's 2019 Top Ten Titles. *Grade Level: Preschool–3, Age Range: 4–8 years.*

Haack, Daniel and Galupo, Isabel. *Maiden and Princess.* Illus. by Becca Human. Little Bee, 2019. 40p.
Known for the LGBTQ+ themed *Prince and Knight*, Haack coauthors this beautifully Illus. fairy tale that begins with a queen and king hosting a ball in search of a maiden to marry their son. One maiden was not excited to attend the ball, and she confided that to her mother. As her mother encouraged her to attend, the maiden dressed accordingly and went to the ball where others were impressed with her beauty and thought she might be the perfect mate. When she leaves the crowded ballroom to get away from all the attention, she meets a princess and falls in love at first sight. In her illustrations, Human includes a diverse group of characters along with expected extravagant costumes, crowns, and furniture. This book was published in partnership with GLAAD. *Grade Level: Preschool–3, Age Range: 4–8 years.*

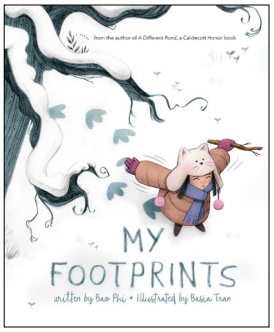
Hoffman, Sarah and Hoffman, Ian. *Jacob's Room to Choose.* Illus. by Chris Case. Magination Press, 2019. 32p.
Two elementary students have embarrassing experiences related to the bathroom. Jacob is chased from the bathroom by other boys because of how he dresses. Sophie, who dresses more like a typical boy, also has a similar experience in the girls' restroom. During a class meeting, Sophie tells Ms. Reeves, her teacher, she wants to go to the bathroom again, a request which confuses her teacher. Ms. Reeves explains that there are more than two ways for us to express the uniqueness of our genders; for instance, boys may have longer hair and girls may wear pants. With support from the administration, Ms. Reeves leads her students in creating new, inclusive bathroom signs and encourages them to celebrate the uniqueness of gender diversities. With watercolor illustrations, this book is listed on the Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People award list for 2020. *Grade Level: Kindergarten–3, Age Range: 5–8 years.*

Lukoff, Kyle. *When Aiden Became a Brother.* Illus. by Kaylani Juanita. Lee & Low, 2019. 32p.
A transgender boy, Aiden is thrilled to help his parents welcome another baby to the family soon. Being a big brother is an important responsibility for him, but he also wonders if the baby will feel recognized by everyone. He helps his mother buy new clothes for the baby and also helps his father paint the bedroom. He also looks for names that can fit this new baby whomever they grow up to be. Just before the baby arrives, Aiden becomes nervous and wonders if the baby will be happy with everything that he has done as a big brother. However, his mother reassures Aiden that he taught them how important it is to love someone for exactly who they are and that this new baby is very lucky to have Aiden as the big brother. The primary theme of this well-written picture book is acceptance of others, and the story also features several intersectional characteristics, such as people of color,



gender-binary and transgender identities, ages, and family relationships. *Grade Level: Preschool–3, Age Range: 4–7 years.*

Phi, Bao. *My Footprints.* Illus. by Basia Tran. Capstone, 2019. 32p.
Thuy's classmates often tease and bully her because of her appearance, heritage, and her two mothers. On her way home from school one day, she notices her footprints in the snow. Her imagination takes over, and she pretends she is like several different animals. What if she could fly away like a bird? What if she could sprint like a deer, roar, or bear? While mimicking the footprints of each creature, she arrives home. Thuy tells her two mothers she wants to be a monster to prevent her classmates' harassment. Instead of addressing the problem directly, her parents play with Thuy, identifying their favorite animals/creatures together. Momma Ngoc's favorite creature is the phoenix, which symbolizes harmony and happiness. Momma Arti chooses the brave and beautiful Sarabha (a mythical combination of a lion and a bird) to help give Thuy more courage to cope with her problems at school. The graphite and digital color illustrations bring Thuy's imagination to life with vivid detail, in a style reminiscent of Calvin and Hobbes. *Grade Level: Kindergarten–4, Age Range: 6–8 years.*



Smith, Heather. *A Plan for Pops.* Illus. by Brooke Kerrigan. Orca, 2019. 32p.
Lou visits his grandparents every Saturday. But his grandparents are not typical; Lou builds special moments with each grandad as they teach him various life lessons. Kerrigan illustrates the uniqueness of both Grandad and Pops in terms of their dress, interests, and personalities. One Saturday as they leave for the library, Pops falls and needs a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Grandad and Lou hatch a plan to cheer him up when he refuses to leave his room, helping him return to his old self. *Grade Level: Preschool–Kindergarten, Age Range: 3–5 years.*

Conclusions and Implications

The first LGBTQ+ picture books were written by advocates and supporters for LGBTQ+ families and have often been historically inequitably challenged by some parents, educators, and school administrators and suffered from censorship. Perhaps even worse, many of them were simply ignored.

Noticeably, none of the picture books selected for the 2020 ALA Rainbow List portrays or depicts queer lifestyles. Rather, the authors minimized or even avoided using explicit terms and often chose to use and include non-human character(s) to teach readers about LGBTQ+ topics. The illustrators purposefully used many different colors with energizing and positive images about the stories' themes and concepts.

The 2020 ALA Rainbow List proudly represents the current trend in LGBTQ+ picture books and offers unique possibilities for expanding library collections so they address the needs of all patrons. &

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In Lockdown and Beyond

The UK's National Shelf Service

ALISON BRUMWELL

At the time of writing this, in fall 2020, England has just entered its second national lockdown of the past eight months. We are librarians with a commitment to working with young people and have been galvanized this year to find new ways of working with children, families, schools, communities, and each other to deliver our services.

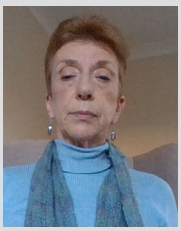
On both sides of the Atlantic, rhyme times have gone virtual, click and collect/curb side services prevail, and reading groups meet via Facebook, Teams, Zoom and a host of other cloud platforms. Library workers provide ongoing and increased user support of digital services. Never has our profession been under so much pressure.

Back in March 2020, when the first lockdown was imposed, lifestyle and body coach Joe Wicks began daily morning workout sessions on YouTube, capturing the imagination of millions of families across the United Kingdom who were forced to home school their children.

A chance comment to CILIP's (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) Chief Executive Nick Poole prompted him to wonder if librarians could offer the equivalent in terms of daily e-book recommendations to children and families who were unable to access physical resources due to school and public library closures. We then created the National Shelf Service, a play on the name of the UK's invaluable National Health Service) and Youth Libraries Group sprang into action.

We reached out to public and school librarians across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, in tandem with our professional body, enlisting the support of colleagues to recommend their best reads for children and families. Our core mission was six-fold:

- To connect with children, young people, and families and help them find great things to download and read.
- To support the nation's mental health and well-being during a public health crisis through reading.
- To celebrate the ability of librarians to connect readers with books and e-books.
- To promote librarianship during a time when libraries weren't physically open.
- To raise awareness of the e-book services of libraries.
- To encourage more people to read and to discover a wider range of more diverse and inclusive books.



Alison Brumwell *is a chartered librarian and freelance reader development consultant based in Leeds, UK. She is past chair of the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals (2019) and currently serves as national Chair of CILIP's Youth Libraries Group (2020–2022). She has also been a volunteer with London-based charity Africa Educational Trust (now part of Street Child) since 2012 and has helped set up more than one hundred primary school libraries in rural Eastern Uganda.*

We launched the National Shelf Service initiative in April 2020, the beginning of schools' two-week Easter break. A team of three creative directors, including myself, Jake Hope (Chair of the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals Working Party), and Natalie Jones (CILIP's Campaigns and Awards Manager) worked closely with the creative team at CILIP, who set up a dedicated YouTube channel and ensured that pre-recorded broadcasts were lined up to air every day.

We wanted the National Shelf Service to have a life beyond lockdown and the pandemic, so it was critical for us to engage with external partners, including e-book providers, so parents and caregivers had access to a range of options for borrowing and buying books for their children.

These were already in place in advance of the project's launch and included Nielsen Book and Libraries Connected (a charity that promotes innovation and accessibility throughout the library and information profession and represents all public library services in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland), in addition to the UK's largest e-book providers.

Relationship building in these early stages was crucial to National Shelf Service's successful launch. And what a launch it was! Bobby Seagull, the nation's favorite math teacher and a powerful advocate for literacy and libraries, kicked us off in style with a promo video. This was followed by librarian Angela Foster's recommendation of the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medal winning classic *A Monster Calls*. These two videos alone have been viewed more than 3,000 times by audiences from as far afield as the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Portugal, Spain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and South Korea.

Maintaining momentum after such a brilliant start was a challenge, especially as an increasing number of colleagues began to face redundancy, working from home and being placed on furlough. We engaged our 1,500 membership base through a monthly e-newsletter and were able to enlist ongoing support. But it was a lot of work for us as volunteers alongside our substantive roles. Coming up with daily morning broadcasts for fourteen weeks is mind-boggling; we couldn't have achieved this without the contributions of more than seventy librarians from across the UK who wanted to reach out to children and families, despite the massive professional and personal constraints of a national lockdown.

In July, we moved to weekly book recommendations with a Throwback Thursday broadcast which re-visited the very best contributed videos. Throughout this time, we also collaborated closely with the UK book industry and with other national awards and initiatives. These included the BookTrust Storytime Prize, Klaus Flugge Prize for Illustration, Little Rebels Prize, and the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals 2020. National Shelf Service provided an additional forum in which the outstanding achievements of authors and illustrators could be celebrated and shared as widely as possible in the absence of live ceremonies and promotions.

National Shelf Service also invited international contributions and we were delighted to feature some from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the US (Louise Lareau, managing librarian, Children's Center at 42nd Street, The New York Public Library). Lareau brough to life for UK viewers the amazing work of Caldecott and Pura Belpré–winning author and illustrator Yuyi Morales.

When we wrapped up the program in October 2020, we had more than 25,000 YouTube views with 119 episodes broadcast and close to 1,000 subscribers. These broadcasts are now organized into playlists of recommendations for various age groups, so National Shelf Service is a living archive that schools and parents/caregivers can easily access.

National Shelf Service can be accessed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPUIqlJM0aieXdq-LxKDvWA. &

Investing in Storytime Training

Setting the Stage for All Staff

JAIME EASTMAN AND LAURA HARGROVE

As storyteller Laura Holloway said, "Storytelling is our obligation to the next generation." Storytimes give libraries opportunities to share stories and connect with families. We can build early literacy skills, provide learning opportunities, and foster a love of reading for years to come. As much as we love presenting storytimes, we must be intentional about our approach and delivery to ensure quality experiences.

Consistency is Key

Librarians each have a personalized approach to presenting storytimes, but it's just as important that families know what to expect. With consistent structure in place, patrons know exactly what to expect in terms of developmental level and are thus able to select the storytime that best meets their needs.

Plano Public Library (PPL) starts all storytime staff with the same training, addressing the need for consistency while still allowing for individualized delivery. Regardless of the presenter or location, the approach to content remains the same, with each storytime containing specific elements. For example, Rhyme Time (ages zero to twenty-four months) features a sign of the week and bubble time. Presenters understand the importance of including these elements.

Staff enter the training process with the same baseline understanding and foundations of early literacy. Staff members who do not present are still better able to understand what takes place in our storytimes and market age-appropriate options to our patrons. Beginning staff can help manage the room if they are uncomfortable with presenting. Transitioning staff can take on one or more elements of storytime presentations as they grow in skills and comfort. We support each staff member with opportunities to build skills and increased opportunities as they feel prepared.

A Mix of Training Methods

To develop a successful training program, be clear about your goals. You may want to offer different levels of training for different staff needs. At PPL, we have three tiers of training:

- *Overview Training:* All new staff undergo this training as part of their onboarding process. They learn about the importance of early literacy and the variety of our storytimes offered.
- *Early Literacy Baseline Training*: Done in small groups, this training delves into the core concepts of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR). Our hands-on approach to the practices encourages interaction and offers a comfortable environment for staff to learn and ask questions.

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- *Mentorship*: Staff interested in presenting are paired with experienced colleagues who serve as mentors. Each pair focuses on one storytime. Mentees work toward the goal of presenting independently, and the process proceeds at the mentee's pace. This ensures staff are properly trained and comfortable before presenting independently, while also exploring different storytimes to find their own best fit and presentation style. Mentoring is intentionally customized to each person. This approach also introduces non-MLIS staff to ECRR and program presentation expectations, providing necessary background they may not otherwise have.

As you develop your training:

- Adjust your approach when it doesn't resonate with your trainees or their needs so content stays relevant.

- Include interactive elements. Our lecture-based instruction failed staff. Adopting hands-on training has allowed staff to take more away from the sessions.

- Have specific goals and plans. The training timeline isn't important, but working through each step is. Instead of worrying about when your next presenter will be ready, think about what they need to be confident and competent.

Training Checkpoints

Once you've established your training goals, develop a plan. It's helpful to have a specific progression of steps so that everyone understands the process. This lets you build on techniques as presenters become more familiar with key concepts.

For each phase, clearly outline the goals, objectives, and training deliverables. This guides the process and fosters engagement. Take time to evaluate both your training and trainee's progress regularly. This will help you identify when your training could benefit from updates and adjustments, and helps you assess the role or roles most suitable to each trainee. You can then modify your approach, consider different age groups, or even look at other programming opportunities outside storytime to best utilize staff talents and interests.

Adapt to Changing Circumstances

As libraries continue focusing on virtual programming, we must consider how this impacts our training. Our training model and consistent program structure allowed us to start producing virtual storytime when our buildings closed to the public in March 2020. Our ability to quickly deliver virtual content allowed our patrons to maintain some normalcy during uncertain times.

As we slowly increased staffing levels, we had enough staff trained and ready to present storytimes despite limited onsite staffing. We continually produced new content, while staying ahead of filming and editing needs for future dates. Although we filmed at five locations on different days with a variety of staff members, our focused training resulted in consistent virtual programs.

Members of our early literacy training team serve as virtual storytime consultants. Initial storytimes were filmed by these staff as the most experienced and confident to transition. We then brought in additional staff members, encouraging variety in our presentations while also giving more opportunities for staff to engage with patrons and develop new skills.

As virtual programming persists, we are reviewing our training methods and continuing to mentor staff new to a virtual environment. The mentor-mentee relationship already exists, enabling us to help presenters adapt to presenting in front of a camera instead of a room full of children. Our coaching, feedback, and guidance steers presenters in selecting materials, engaging with the audience, and creating a dynamic experience.

To keep content fresh, we regularly evaluate our storytime offerings and approach. This applies to both in-person and virtual programming. Modifications allow us to incorporate elements of our traditional storytimes while providing interesting variations, new concepts, and enhanced topics.

Here are some ways we've adapted.

- **Saturday Stories at the Farmstead.** Filmed on location at a living history museum, these storytimes utilized farm themes but introduced new surroundings and a community connection.

- **Sign Language Storytime.** These storytimes introduce basic baby signs and help caregivers understand when and how to use them.

- **Storytime Around the World.** These storytimes introduce language and cultural ideas from the different languages represented in our community. Presented with the assistance of fluent staff, they provide opportunities for families to explore new languages, but fluency is not required to enjoy the program.

Storytime has been a foundational element of libraries for generations. It benefits not only the child, but the entire family and ultimately the community at large. Well-trained and consistent presenters help us give our best to our community. Helping children develop pre-literacy skills, social engagement, and attention is a role with an investment. &

Branching Out

Promoting Genre Diversity in Storytime

JACQUELINE KOCIUBUK

How often do you consider genre when planning your storytimes? What percentage of the time do you think you're sharing informational, or nonfiction books, with the families that attend your programs?

If you answered only a little or not much to these questions, you are not alone. A recent study found that across all storytime age groups, informational books were being shared at a much lower rate than any other genre, both in the number shared per storytime and the time spent interacting with them.[1]

Familiarizing children with a variety of genre structures and layouts prepares them for the diverse readings they will be exposed to during their school years and in the real-world. Informational titles in particular help build background knowledge and support a multitude of early literacies, scaffolding future learning and inspiring interest in a wide variety of subjects to promote holistic child development in public library storytimes. While not exhaustive, this short paper presents some ideas on how to use informational books in storytime read-alouds—both online and off—and explores the benefits of sharing diverse genres with the families in your community.

Genre Diversity and Early Learning

Children, from birth onward, benefit from exposure to different genres and story structures. Even very young children have the ability to recognize differences between genres and are able to incorporate genre-specific structures into their play and story retellings including attributes of genre related to vocabulary, tone, text, content, and more.[2]

Common genres used in storytimes are storybooks (typically considered fiction), informational books (commonly equated with nonfiction), and oral stories. While each genre supports early learning and school readiness, informational books have many, often overlooked, benefits, including support for content-area knowledge, vocabulary development, and exposure to abstract language.

Picturebooks that use an informational book structure have been found to increase young children's understanding of abstract topics and subjects. As children get older, informational readings increase in school settings making it imperative to start familiarizing children with informational text structures early. In fact, other studies in early education have found a correlation between informational book exposure as

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a young child and later school success.[3] Additionally, many children prefer nonfiction, being motivated to read informational books and taking pleasure in the activity.

The Library Connection

In both home and school read-alouds, young children often experience little exposure to informational books. As storytime practitioners, we are uniquely able to empower caregivers' in their role as their child's first teacher through modeling and active engagement during our programs—even virtual ones. While many of the caregivers we serve may already be familiar and comfortable with storybooks, they may be unsure of informational titles.

In fact, despite contrary findings, studies reported that caregivers often feel that children cannot understand stories within the informational genre, much less enjoy them.[4] Providing tips, expressing the importance of, and modeling how to read different genres, especially informational titles, can bolster caregiver confidence for home read-alouds and acquaint them with a variety of quality book choices to use.

Caregivers that share stories from different genres tend to engage in more talk with their child during read-alouds—helping increase children's vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Additionally, public library storytimes, programs, and resources are often an invaluable help to getting children ready for kindergarten, especially those whose families may be underserved or experiencing disadvantages. Incorporating a wide variety of genres into your storytimes for young children provides support for the twenty-first-century skills that children and families need.

Public library outreach to daycares, preschools, and other early learning environments is another opportunity to share the good word about informational books and diverse book genres. Research from the educational field has reported very low levels of informational read-alouds in early learning settings, despite the fact that nonfiction reading loads increase as students move up in grade.[5] With limited budgets, resources, and time, these educators may lack access to quality informational books and training on how to integrate them into their lessons. Making sure that any sort of thematic kit or recommendations you offer include informational titles and resources for how to use them effectively can continue to further your efforts in supporting holistic early learning for your community.

Incorporating informational books in library programming and storytimes for young children and families is an easy way to support holistic childhood development for everyone in your community. Narrative informational books, which share elements of both storybooks and informational books, can be an easy way to begin incorporating more genre diversity into your storytimes. Intentional story choices can make a difference in children's lives.

Recommended Informational Titles

While the following examples contain suggestions related to specific informational titles for library storytimes, similar ideas can be applied to any number of other quality informational titles.

Examine the books for accuracy of content; inclusion of diverse peoples, cultures, and experiences; quality illustrations; own voice works; engaging text; trustworthiness of source; and currency of information. Expand book content beyond just a simple reading by using applicable props, suggesting extension activities for home or the classroom, putting displays out, encouraging conversations and questions while reading, and involving caregivers.

Alexander, Kwame. *Animal Ark: Celebrating our Wild World in Poetry and Pictures.* Photos by Joel Sartore. National Geographic, 2017. 48p.
These poetic words accompany stunning photographs of animals big and small from around the world. While the words go quickly, the detailed photographs will elicit a desire to linger on each page. Before or during the story, stop on a page with a clear, up-close photograph of an animal. Have families describe, in their own words, what the animal looks like. See how many attributes everyone (including the adults!) can name.

Encourage families to think beyond simply naming colors to the more unique physical features of the animal such as size, expression, shape, and texture (i.e., "How do you think it would feel if you touched the animal's back?"). See if anyone can draw analogs to other objects or animals they might know (i.e., "The tortoises look round like a ball," or the "The tapir is black and white like a zebra").

Closely examining visual images and learning how to articulate a description are some of the building blocks of basic scientific observation. Honing a child's visual skills also relates to artistic development and reading comprehension. Taking time for a focused observation that gives young children space to concentrate and think deeply is important for socio-emotional development as well.

Bishop, Nic. *Penguin Day: A Family Story.* Photos by the author. Scholastic, 2017. 32p.
Detailed and charming photographs from a rockhopper penguin colony in the South Atlantic tell the story of a penguin family's daily life. This story draws parallels to many things young children experience in their own lives. For an easy STEM extension and endless entertainment for however long you keep it up in your library, print a life-size version of a rockhopper penguin (approximately twenty inches for a full-grown adult) for families to compare themselves too. If in-person, encourage both adults and children to try measuring the penguin together using a variety of objects such as LEGO squares and popsicle sticks. How many Popsicle sticks long is a rockhopper penguin?

For virtual storytimes, consider printing out a life-size replica of a krill, a rockhopper penguin's main food source. The krill's small two-inch size makes it easy to hold up for viewers to see. Compare the krill on screen to common household objects that families may have access to like a paper clip, an egg, teabag, or cup to give them a reference point. Have families help you figure out what's bigger and smaller than the krill and challenge them to try to find objects of their own that are about the same size the rest of the day. Supporting caregiver-child talk about relative size and proportion helps bring early math development home.

Posada, Mia. *Summer Green to Autumn Gold: Uncovering Leaves' Hidden Colors*. Illus. by the author. Millbrook, 2019. 32p.
Though this book is flexible enough to cover all the seasons, it truly shines as a fall read; walking through the scientific processes behind leaf color change in a developmentally appropriate manner—perfect for age groups that love to ask "why."

As this book introduces slightly more advanced terminology to describe the process of leaves changing color, be mindful of the speed at which you read. This is especially important in a virtual storytimes where you may not be able to hear or see the families you're reading with. It may help to think back to early education shows such as *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*, which tend to include long pauses, slower speech patterns, and spaces for children to respond. Remember, just because you cannot hear anyone, doesn't mean they aren't answering you! Take time during the reading to ask families about what leaf shapes they may recognize in the pages. Consider doing some homework ahead of time so you are able to point out a couple leaves belonging to local trees that can be found in families' nearby community spaces (e.g., "This leaf comes from an oak tree; we have oak trees at Kiwanis Park!").

Drawing connections to experiences families may have had can increase a child's interest in the subject and helps to link new information to pre-existing background knowledge. This also helps to scaffold conversations that caregivers can have with their child after storytime, reinforcing new knowledge and helping draw attention to learning opportunities in their everyday lives. For those that are able to have a craft after storytime, the book ties nicely with leaf print process art. If you have a regular group of families or a daycare you visit, think about inviting your participants to gather leaves and bring them to the next storytime to share.

Thornsburg, Blair. *Skulls!* Illus. by Scott Campbell. Atheneum, 2019. 40p.
Heads-up, it's time to learn more about that space in-between our ears in this hilarious introduction to our skulls. This story can easily be tied into other thematic personal safety and healthy body programming, remaining a solid read for pre-K through young elementary. An easy way to introduce the topic and familiarize children with various parts of an informational book is to devise a guessing game using facts from the back matter (e.g., "How many bones do you think we have in our skulls?").

Make sure to take guesses from the grown-ups in the audience too! If you're able, leverage community connections for temporary access to local fauna skulls or replicas. Many local museums or other community groups have these specifically for teacher loans or educational programming.

Another option, if available, might be your library's 3D printer. Multiple 3D animal skull designs are available for free and can be printed to size or scale; providing an easy touch point to introduce families to available library services and extend the story. If your options are limited, or you are in a virtual environment, consider projecting or printing images of animal skulls before or during the storytime, inviting families to guess what animal they think the skull belongs to. Being able to access the content in multiple ways allows for inclusive learning experiences and keeps up family engagement for a more memorable program. &

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S-t-r-e-t-c-h Your Storytimes

Exercise Programming Flexibility with Yoga

VICTORIA REEDER AND MICHELLE WOSHNER

While books are rightfully the biggest and best-known tool in children's literacy, storytellers and parents may find themselves looking for ideas to inject new life into old routines and reinforce what children see in stories.

Adding yoga to a library storytime increases children's opportunities for imaginative play and may help them control their emotions. With a little flexibility, you'll soon be embracing movement as a regular element in your programs (when in-person programming returns, post pandemic!)

Michelle's program at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's Cornelius Branch came about when she took over responsibility for offering a monthly evening storytime, while Victoria's at the Allegra Westbrooks Regional Branch evolved from her love of yoga and a desire to shake up the weekly storytime routine. The idea that yoga storytime would have lasting benefits for both health and literacy encouraged us both to give it a try.

According to yoga practitioner and teacher Brianna Randall, kids reap the same physical and mental benefits of yoga as adults, including "improved flexibility, balance, strength and cardiovascular health," as well as "decreased anxiety, boosted concentration and memory, improved confidence and self-esteem" and increased self-awareness and emotional regulation.[1]

Resources

Library programmers can do yoga storytime without a huge budgetary strain. Yoga mats will likely be the costliest supply, but you can ask that participants bring a towel or blanket. We have cut yoga mats (or fleece) into smaller sizes (you can get cheap mats at some discount stores). Your library may already own titles about yoga for kids, which is another excellent starting place in yoga storytime programming.

We also relied on the *Yogibrarian* blog by children's librarian and certified yoga instructor Andrea Cleland. Victoria often pulls yoga poses from here to incorporate into storytimes, and Michelle loves this resource for breathing exercises. We both

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A sampling of items for yoga storytime.

use *Yogibrarian* themes, and we love *Yogibrarian*'s full body stretch Open Shut Them!

Storytime Outline

Yoga storytime includes stories and songs, but yoga poses replace literacy extension activities. Guided breathing exercises and closing meditations are used in place of additional fingerplays, songs, or flannel stories.

We strive to create a consistent yoga routine, expanding the books and resources we can use. Consistency increases a child's opportunity to retain how to do the poses for storytime and day-to-day practice. Here is a general outline:

- Opening song or fingerplay
- Breathing exercise
- Book #1
- Song
- Book #2
- Song
- Yoga poses
- Closing meditation
- Closing song or fingerplay

Yoga Storytime Twists

Just like any other recurring program, go-to strategies can start to feel repetitive after a while. Here are some fun twists to incorporate a little excitement.

- **Yoga Cards:** Gravitating to the same poses over and over? Try mixing it up with a set of yoga cards. There are free options online, or invest in a set if this is a regular program offering.
- **Add a Game:** Play a game of Duck-Duck-Goose with the yoga cards. Whoever loses picks a yoga card and teaches everyone to do that pose.
- **Incorporate a Manipulative:** Try using drumsticks to drum on the yoga mats and following along to a beat or glow sticks for meditation and glow-stick dancing. Yogibrarian's Breathing Buddies exercise with stuffed animals is another great option.
- **Change Your Yoga Mats:** Bubble-wrap, felt, and carpet squares are all inexpensive DIY alternatives to yoga mats.
- **Take It Outside:** When the weather is nice, you can increase the amount of people allowed into a yoga storytime by hosting the program at a local park. We asked families to bring a towel or blanket and offered the program in the morning before it got too hot.

Using songs that encourage dancing can set the tone for movement throughout the entire program. When utilizing a book that encourages practicing the poses in conjunction with reading and looking at the illustrations, such as *You Are a Lion! And Other Fun Yoga Poses* by Tae-eun Yoo, you may choose to adapt this structure to accommodate poses outside of your normal routine by skipping your traditional poses completely and adding another book, or spending more time exploring the book and poses.

Best Practices

Here are some tips we learned to make storytimes easier for us and safer for kids.

Mention the rules at the beginning, including physical safety rules for our little yogis, like making sure to be far enough away that we can't touch our neighbors and not doing any flips or tumbles. We often have children knock on the floor so they can feel that it's hard underneath the carpet. Space in the programming room is something to consider when planning because yoga poses take a fair amount of room.

All storytimes work best with presenter participation, and yoga storytime is no exception. Doing the poses with children helps them see a model of the pose and understand that our group is focusing on this pose right now. The same can be said for caregiver participation in all storytimes, but especially for yoga storytime. For younger yogis, mimicking adults' actions is natural, so seeing grown-ups they care about practice yoga with them helps set the tone for the activity. Many of our little yogis may need extra adult support in some poses.

Supporting some yogis means being prepared with adaptations and modifications for the poses being shared. Our yoga storytimes are marketed to a family audience with a wide age-range of participants. For Michelle, this meant for the first year or so, attendees skewed toward the preschool and early school-age groups, while for Victoria attendees were anywhere between two and five years old.

The younger the yogi, the more support is needed, and it was clear we needed to prepare for babies to attend. For babies, caregiver support is essential because they will be helping move babies into simplified versions of poses. Babies can't do mountain pose or downward dog on their own, but a caregiver can help baby lift their hands above their head or help balance them on their hands and feet. Yoga has incredible benefits for babies, including aiding in digestion, helping them sleep better, increasing movement awareness, and bonding with caregivers.[2]

Preparing for an audience that includes those with disabilities is important to ensuring accessibility. Many poses can be done in a modified form from a wheelchair. Cat and Cow are perfect examples—in seated position with your feet hip width apart and your hands on your knees, inhale and broaden your chest and lift your chin and chest towards the ceiling for Cow. You will exhale, round your spine, tuck your chin and release your neck for Cat. You can utilize adaptive yoga poses with caregivers and reluctant participants, too.

Here is a link to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's list of yoga storytime resources: https://cmlibrary.bibliocommons.com/list/share/1176084117_cmlibrary_victoria/1846546139_family_storytime_yoga_storytime_favorite_read-alouds?page=2. &

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Wrangling Tears and Tantrums

How to Keep Families Coming Back to the Library

TAMMIE BENHAM

Maintaining a professional demeanor when faced with a crying child is difficult. However, with some knowledge of child development, a willingness to help, and a few strategies, library professionals can help soothe a distraught child and build relationships with caregivers.

The active, noisy atmosphere in most library children's departments—pre-pandemic, of course!—is evidence that libraries understand and have embraced the importance of allowing children the latitude for play. Research tells us that play is the business of how children learn and what they speak about.[1]

Many public libraries have embraced child development practices steeped in decades of research and now design play opportunities for their youngest patrons. These opportunities, especially when tied to quality literature for children, solidify the role of the library in supporting literacy development.[2] Most public librarians are prepared to defend the noisy work of children learning from those expecting a quieter library experience.

Yet the general din of children playing in the library doesn't prepare staff for children who are upset and crying loudly, and staff may be at a loss for what to do or how to help. Feeling under-prepared can result in anger and inappropriate comments or avoidance of families with small children. Astute library managers recognize unwelcoming attitudes and behaviors as an opportunity for skill building.

The same research on the importance of play and allowing children to practice and enjoy conversations in the library can be helpful in framing a response to a crying child. Crying is a typical part of human development and the absence of crying in children may signal developmental delays. Very young children cry as a way to communicate they are hungry, need their diaper changed, are bored, or need attention.[3]

As children gain more language, crying can signal fear, anger, frustration, and pain, or that the child is overtired or overstimulated.[4] How adults in the child's life, including community members, respond to a crying child impacts a child's development.[5]

Child development tells us that part of the amazing brain development that happens in children under six years old is something called executive function. "Executive function skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully."[6] These skills help humans with self-regulation, including control of the expression of emotions and impulses, such as crying or having a tantrum when leaving the library.

Most children ages three to six are developing executive function skills. Attending storytime, learning to sit and listen,

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learning to take turns with games and in conversation, and watching adults and other children practice these skills all help executive function develop.[7]

When children are distressed, their behavioral response system, also known as the "fight or flight response," kicks into high gear and triggers the limbic system.[8] The limbic system regulates and releases hormones that keep the body ready for "fight or flight," including a hormone called cortisol.[9] Cortisol levels that are chronically or persistently elevated over time can cause health problems, including chronic or toxic stress.[10] Although one library trip ending in a child's distress is not likely to be the cause of life-long health problems, any cortisol-releasing or traumatic event that can be avoided lessens the contribution over a child's lifetime.

A caregiver's rising tension as a result of their child's behavior can be compounded by the reactions of other adults in the library, which can impact their response to the distraught child. They may yell at or bargain with the child or ignore them completely while the checkout transaction happens, finally exiting the library as quickly as possible. In this scenario, feelings associated with the trip to the library are not likely to be pleasant and may lower the chance of the family returning.[11]

The behavioral response of fight or flight happens in the amygdala and hypothalamus regions toward the back of the brain. This is evolutionary survival at work, making the body react by running or fighting without logical thought. This area of the brain develops early in humans. The prefrontal cortex at the front of the brain, where logic and reasoning take place, is overruled when the fight or flight response is active. [12]

During a child's distress, their logical, prefrontal cortex is on standby while their under-developed limbic system is reacting with a flight or fight response. The caregiver needs to stay calm enough that their own brain continues to think logically instead of emotionally. How can the library staff help caregivers stay calm and help children calm down? This desired outcome is more likely when all library staff understand and are educated about what to expect from a young child and how to help adults formulate a calming response.[13]

Providing a signal, such as getting a sticker from storytime staff or indicating it's time to, "say goodbye to the fish," helps establish a routine for leaving, which also helps build a child's executive function.[14]

Additional strategies might include using a puppet to say goodbye, or pointing out interesting lights, windows, scooters, electric doors, or other interesting features within the space. Take some time, look around and make a plan. If what you choose doesn't work, try again! Or, get co-workers or volunteers involved. What interesting things do they see on the way out the door? If there truly aren't any obvious objects or landmarks which are interesting to look at, now is a great time to bring something new into your space.

After the child has been offered the opportunity to use language skills to construct the reason for being upset, their brain switches from using the emotional, limbic brain to the prefrontal cortex, where thinking and reasoning happen.[15] They have once again gained control of their emotions and is now using the developing executive function skills, which are being controlled by the prefrontal cortex.

Some other strategies that might work well when approaching families with crying children are the following:

1. When speaking to children directly, try to be at or close to their eye level but give them some space. Smile and keep your voice calm and reassuring.

2. Never try to take a crying child from an adult, their source of comfort. This impulse can be very strong, but talking a parent through the situation can help develop their skills to handle a similar situation when support isn't present.

3. Not every adult is ready for, or open to, help. Rarely, an adult may ignore the help offered or shift some of the anger they feel at the situation onto library staff. If this happens, staff should try to remember to think with their own prefrontal cortex and understand they may be absorbing some of the anger that may otherwise have been directed at the child. Being empathetic and professional and waiting until a more private time to show an emotional response can de-escalate awkward or emotional situations.

4. If you try these strategies and they fail, give yourself credit for caring enough to try. Help is always preferable to judgement or blame and so much more friendly than making members of the community feel unwelcome in their library.

It is not uncommon to feel uncomfortable in a situation where a child is on the floor, perhaps having a tantrum while a harried adult is trying desperately to move through the checkout process and get out the door. The adult understands the library staff is upset and really doesn't want their child to act out. However, young children rarely have mature emotional responses. Acting out, for them, is literally normal.

When a child is crying they are demanding a response.[16] Use this time to help adults by reassuring them the behavior is typical for this age and not offensive to library staff. When help is accepted, reassure the child they are heard and understood and offer the chance to allow them to tell you why they are upset. Offer the child a routine, such as a sticker or goodbye to a pet or landmark.

When time is taken to build relationships with our library patrons that are welcoming and accepting, staff demonstrate they care about all patrons, even the very youngest. &

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Say It Out Loud!

Read-Aloud Book Club

KATRINA R. POLLITT

Traditional book clubs, where participants read a book on their own and then come together to discuss, have never really worked for my kids, teens, and families—or for me for that matter. It has always felt a little too "homework-ish." You know what I mean: "Here's a book. Go read and absorb, and then we'll discuss with some prescribed questions." This is definitely not my definition of fun, and I think book clubs need to be fun to be successful.

Thankfully, at the beginning of my career (thank you to the old Alliance Library system) I was introduced to a more novel way to conduct book clubs. I have been using this basic format for almost eighteen years with much success. It encourages reading for enjoyment. It inspires community, camaraderie, and excitement. It creates a shared experience, revels in fandoms and series, makes reading a true event.

So, what do we do that's so novel? We read the book out loud together. *Is your mind blown?* Mine was when I first was introduced to it. *Read chapter books out loud? Are you crazy?* Who has time to do that, right?

But it makes a lot of sense. Just about everyone loves to be read to. Babies. Little kids. Big kids. Despite some protests, I firmly believe that teens, too, secretly love to be read to. And yes, even adults. In fact, I have found that families, especially, love to be read to *together.*

Because of the length of most of the books, our book clubs last multiple weeks, with one book club a week lasting forty-five minutes to an hour. The length of the entire book club depends upon a lot of factors. Ultimately, I let the book be my guide.

Sometimes the program goes for four weeks, sometimes six or eight. The longest I've hosted is sixteen weeks (for the Harry Potter series). Six to eight weeks is ideal, allowing time for everyone to bond as a group, to invest in the characters, and to experience a sense of momentum, a sort of building to a climactic point of the book as well as of the club.

Room setup is extremely important. It should be comfortable and relaxed. I like to have a large open area with a rug on the floor. Kids and adults can just flop down on the floor and sit or lay or recline where they like. Kids can bring in pillows or blankets to snuggle up with. I usually have a line of chairs at the back for adults who can't get down on the floor. But everyone is strongly encouraged to be on the floor. I think it helps set the mood.

I also turn the lights down and project the book up on the big screen. In the back of the room, we position tables and chairs for our craft or activity that we will do after our reading. I like to keep the viewing/reading area separate from the craft/activity area if possible. Kids are curious and they'll want to start on the big project before the reading.

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I always have fun easy "busy work" for the kids to pick up immediately when they come into the room. These items—such as coloring sheets, word finds, crosswords—relate to the book and keep little hands busy during the reading. The kids do a great job absorbing what's being read to them, but because they are seriously trying to multitask by working on busy work, watching the book on the screen, and listening to the reader, they often refrain from talking or causing any disruptions.

Young Katie pretends to "fly" as part of the Captain Underpants book club.

After everyone arrives and gets settled, I introduce (or re-introduce) myself and the basics of book club, we recap any of the readings that we have previously had, and we might chat about a character or event in the story. Sometimes I present a very short video, like a "How to draw" by an illustrator or an author interview.

Then we read ten to fifteen minutes. I project the book, using the ELMO or Wolf Vision, on the big screen and read the book out loud at the same time. I like to use a microphone so I don't need to raise my voice too much. I have had 30 to 120 people per program, and regular movements can create quite a bit of background noise. After we're done reading, we break out into activities, games, and/or crafts.

Book choice is probably the most important factor for fun, good attendance, and overall success. Your book should definitely be a great read aloud and geared towards your target age group (my clubs are usually geared for K–4). Your book should comfortably fit into chunks of fifteen minutes or less into the number of weeks you intend the book club to last. The longer the book the more weeks you'll need to read it. Sometimes I'll read two books in a series or even more to reach the number of weeks I'd like the program to run.

As far as book selection goes, a popular book is always a good choice. We held our Captain Underpants book club, for example, right before the movie came out. I've hosted read aloud book clubs on Harry Potter, Chet Gecko, Geronimo Stilton, Magic Tree House, *How To Train Your Dragon, The Strange Case of the Origami Yoda,* Star Wars Academy, Lunch Lady, Squish, Martha Speaks, Captain Underpants, HiLo, Narwhal and Jelly, and Stick Dog/Stick Cat. The kids dove wholeheartedly into those clubs, and parents and kids couldn't help but have an amazing time.

Beyond the choice of book, the key to book club success is planning. Plan the entire event before you start the club, and have each week planned out.

Besides your book and its main cast of characters, the book club will revolve around the reader, and I recommend having one reader for the entire program for consistency. It's ideal for the reader to be high energy and be able to do different voices (if possible). Be sure to select a back-up reader as well.

You could even ask a community member. For our Geronimo Stilton book club, a local dairy farmer came and explained how cheese was made and brought freshly made cheese curds as a treat. For our Chet Gecko book club, a local police K-9 unit came, the kids were fingerprinted, and we set up a faux crime scene for the kids to investigate and solve.

Book club is a really flexible, adaptable, and low cost program; it can be run with essentially no budget and craft supplies on hand, and if I needed additional funds, our Friends group was able to help. And it will fit in almost any space at any time available.

Each book club has its own personality with its own joys and quirks. And each book club brings a special literary excitement from kids and families that librarians and teachers absolutely live for. &

Adverse Childhood Experiences

A Bibliography to Foster Discussions and Reassure Children

MEGAN McCAFFREY

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are most often associated with traumatic events involving violence, abuse, or severe neglect. But federal government statistics on ACEs also consider the strain related to a child's unstable home life. Highly stressful situations such as an incarcerated parent, living with a substance abuser, refugee status, prolonged separation from a parent, or a difficult parental divorce are all considered causes of ACEs.

Several federal government agencies identify ACEs as a far-reaching problem in our society. The Department of Health and Human Services reports one-third of American children suffer ACEs.[1] Research conducted by the Center for Disease Control determined such events can negatively affect a child's development and health, causing chronic problems that continue into adulthood.[2]

Considering the prevalence and impact of ACEs in our society, adults who work with children need resources to help mitigate the long-term harmful effects. Children's literature can be a supportive resource to help children cope.

Psychologists widely accept the use of children's literature for bibliotherapy as an intervention strategy to help children with an assortment of complex social-emotional issues.[3] Bibliotherapy is the reading of specific texts as part of the healing process and can be used in a school or community-based program with minimal cost. The National Association of School Psychologists specifically suggests the use of children's literature as a tool to help children understand and cope with their feelings about ACEs.[4] Implementing bibliotherapy to support children who suffer ACEs requires facilitating a personal connection between a child and the stories they read.

Rudine Sims Bishop, a pioneer in modern children's literature, champions the need for children to personally connect to books. She uses the metaphor of books as mirrors to describe a child's need to see a reflection of themselves in the stories they read. Bishop argues, when a child closely identifies with a fictional character, a child's own life connects with the larger human experience.[5] The premise of books functioning as mirrors applies to children's literature about ACEs. When a child identifies with a fictional character who copes with ACEs, the child realizes they are not alone because they see others also need to go through a healing process. Correspondingly, as a fictional character copes with ACEs, a child learns specific coping skills.

Purpose of the Bibliography

I received a $5,000 Carnegie-Whitney Grant from the American Library Association to prepare and promote a

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children's literature booklist for ACEs. Booklists of children's literature helps educators, counselors, and caregivers match books to a child as a means to facilitate a personal connection between the child and a fictional character. Reading stories provides other affective benefits such as contemplating active civic engagement, a healthier lifestyle, or empathy. The University of Arizona's World or Words Children's Library explains the purpose of booklists as assisting educators who are looking for "quality texts for young people."[6]

On a personal note, the theme of trauma is especially important to me because throughout my career as an educator, I taught in locations where trauma was a daily reality. I believe society has an obligation to understand and help individuals experiencing trauma. One way to reach children and help them is with the use of a good story. Stories provide entryways for individuals to speak to one another.

Process

Creating a text set often has two distinct avenues for criteria: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, I consider the following criteria when creating a booklist: age of prospective readers, date of publication, author's background, and representation of multiple cultures.

Quantitatively, a booklist may have a specific age demographic it aims to target. If a proposed age group is school-age, then reading levels need to be considered. Providing books that are too difficult is not advantageous to promote reading. Offering too many easy to read books tends to lessen a child's motivation to read. Therefore selecting books children can read independently, but still interests them, is crucial.

The date of publication is another quantitative area. While some tried-and-true classics may be more than twenty years old, I try to keep to books published within the last fifteen years. Newer books often are more relatable, relevant, and better at avoiding stereotypes. Booklists are also commonly used to inform readers about relatively newer titles within a specific category of books. Authors are especially important to consider when it comes to cultural insight. I want an author to provide an authentic view of a culture or community.

Keeping the audience who will view and use your booklist in mind is essential. Qualitatively, I consider representation in two ways. First, authentic representation of characters and communities must take place within each book. Second, the booklist should provide multiple perspectives on a theme. I want students to think broadly and openly about themes rather than in a finite manner. I want students to question, investigate, and consider avenues of thought they have not previously considered. Searching for books and considering both quantitative and qualitative criteria makes creating a quality booklist a recursive process.

A booklist creator must continually evaluate a book choice by each of the specific criteria set. Books are often moved on and off a booklist. Usually, this depends on what other books are identified and how all the books work together holistically to provide the best well-rounded selection of books for the purpose. The most significant limitation in creating this bibliography was finding authentic stories in several of the categories.

Other beneficial resources for creating a booklist are websites and databases that help locate, review, and loan e-books as well as several websites that provide read-alouds of books. I find each one of these areas crucial when creating a booklist. I am especially fond of e-books and read-alouds for their easy access while traveling.

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Violence

War

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *The Red Pencil.* Illus. by Shane W. Evans. Little Brown, 2014. 368p.
This book details ten months in the life of a twelve-year-old Sudanese girl named Amira. Even though her village is being destroyed by war, Amira wants more than anything to attend school.

Davies, Nicola. *The Day the War Came.* Illus. by Rebecca Cobb. Candlewick, 2018.
A narrative poem that portrays one young girl's experience with war. The story is written in response to a decision the United Kingdom made regarding unaccompanied refugee children. The story shows how a firsthand view of war can affect a child for a long time past the actual experience—even after the child arrives in a safe place.

Kastle, Seth. *Why is Dad So Mad?* Illus. by Karissa Gonzalez-Othon. Tall Tale Press, 2015. 34p.
A story that details the way a father struggles with combat-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The story provides an inside look at the numerous symptoms combat veterans may struggle while integrating back into society.

Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey.* Illus. by the author. Flying Eye, 2016. 48p.
Shows the unimaginable decisions made by a family as they leave their home and all they know to flee the chaos and misfortune brought by war. This book is a composite of many refugee's experiences.

Abuse

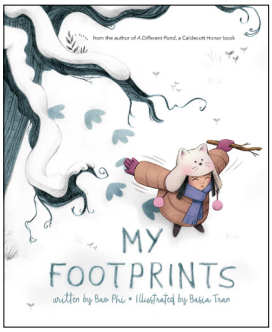
Domestic

McCleary, Carol, S. *The Day My Daddy Lost His Temper: Empowering Kids That Have Witnessed Domestic Violence.* Illus. by Naomi Santana. CreateSpace, 2014. 25p.
A collection of stories told from several children's points-of-view; it can be used to open discussions pertaining to domestic violence.

Ippen, Chandra, G, *Once I Was Very Scared*. Illus by Erich Ippen. Piplo Productions, 2017. 64p.
This is a story of several small animals who once experienced a very, very, scary situation. Each of the animals experience a different scary experience and each reacts differently to their situation. When scared, turtle gets a stomachache and hides, monkey clings, and elephant does not want to talk about it. Reference are made to domestic violence and the book can help open discussions.

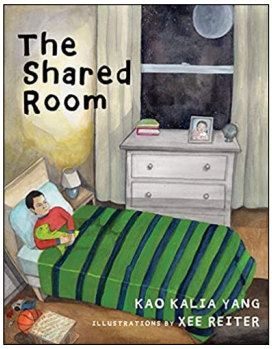
Bullying

Phi, Bao. *My Footprints.* Illus. by Basia Tran. Capstone, 2019. 32p.



Thuy is different because she is both Vietnamese American and has two moms. Angry and lonely after a bully's taunts, Thuy walks home in the snow one afternoon. A small bird catches Thuy's attention on her walk home and Thuy imagines all the ways she could run or fly away and creates the footprints of several creatures in the snow. Thuy makes her way home to her moms who together imagine the powerful creatures who always have the courage Thuy displays.

Yang, Kao, K. *The Shared Room*. Illus. by Xee Reiter. University of Minnesota Press, 2020. 32p.



American Hmong family must move forward in life after the unexpected drowning death of the family's youngest daughter. Months later the youngest daughter's bedroom remains empty until the mother asks the oldest brother if he would like the bedroom. Cautiously he agrees and the family works together to clean out the room while sharing memories of their sister and daughter when packing away her belongings.

Kęrascoët. *I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness.* Illus. by the authors. Schwartz and Wade, 2018. 40p.
This is a wordless book that demonstrates how a single act of kindness can change a community. When Vanessa, the new girl in school, encounters a bully, a classmate stands beside her for support.

Baldacchino, Christine. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress.* Illus. by Isabelle Malenfant. Groundwood, 2014. 32p.
Morris is creative and has a great imagination. The dress-up center at school is one of his favorite centers to play. Morris especially likes to dress up in the tangerine dress which reminds him of a tiger, the sun, or his mother's hair. However, his classmates building a spaceship let him know he is not welcome with them because he is wearing the tangerine dress.

Sexual

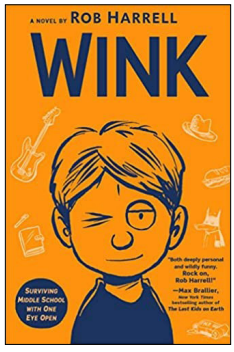
Riggs, Shannon. *Not in Room 204: Breaking the Silence of Abuse.* Illus. by Jamie Zollars. Albert Whitman, 2007. 32p.
Regina's mom attends a school conference, where the teacher describes Regina as doing a great job, but she is very quiet. This book provides an opportunity to discuss sexual abuse. Discussing reasons why Regina is so quiet may foster openness with a child.

Weeks, Sarah. *Jumping the Scratch*. HarperCollins, 2006. 192p.
Jamie Reardon has three bad things happen to him in quick succession: his cat dies, his father leaves, and his aunt Sapphy has an accident that affects her memory. Jamie just wants his simple life back, but he is unable to forget one bad memory that haunts him.

Illness, Disability, Anxiety, and Depression

Illness

De Bode, Ann. *Can You Make Me Better?* Illus. by Rien Broere. Amicus, 2010. 32p.
Rosie, a young heart patient is admitted to the hospital for surgery. During her stay, she learns about anesthesia, blood draws, bedpans, and healing scars and patience.



Harrell, Rob. *Wink*. Dial, 2020, 320p.
This story is more difficult to categorize within trauma because there are several types addressed, including death, illness, and bullying. Above all, the story demonstrates how humor can help people cope with dark times. Ross wants nothing more than to just

be a normal kid who blends in with the other middle schoolers. However, he suffers from a rare form of eye cancer and tries to navigate his illness. When Ross's appearance changes due to his treatment, bullies pick on him. All this happens while Ross still misses his mother who died when he was younger. This story is a heartwarming story of survival, made possible through the wonder of music and laughter.

Disability

Palacio, R. J. *We're All Wonders*. Illus. by the author. Knopf, 2017. 32p.
Auggie is facially disfigured and has only one eye. The story is an adaptation of Palacio's novel, *Wonder*. Auggie explains what it is like to be mistreated based on the way he looks.

Rabinowitz, Alan. *A Boy and a Jaguar*. Illus. by Catia Chien. HMH, 2014. 32p.
Alan loves the cats in the Bronx Zoo, especially the jaguars, so he must find the strength to overcome his stuttering to help his beloved cats.

Anxiety

Tregonning, Mel. *Small Things*. Illus. by the author. Pajama, 2018. 40p.
This is a wordless picture book about a young boy who feels isolated and does not fit in at school, and his grades suffer. He even begins to treat his loved ones poorly until one day he realizes he is not alone, and many people emotionally struggle. The revelation alone helps him begin to make improvements in his life.

Depression

Jones, Lloyd. *The Princess and the Fog: A Story for Children with Depression*. Illus. by the author. Jessica Kingsley, 2015. 48p.
The story of a young princess who experiences a fog that makes her feel alone, slow, sad, and tired. Through the efforts of her parents, classmates, knights, a druid, and a wise woman, the princess regains her happiness.

Browne, Anthony. *Willy and the Cloud*. Illus. by the author. Candlewick, 2016. 32p.
Willy, a chimp, is on his way to the park when he realizes a cloud is following him. Eventually, he challenges the cloud, and after a rain, the sun comes out, and Willy heads back to the park.

Grief and Anger from Loss

General

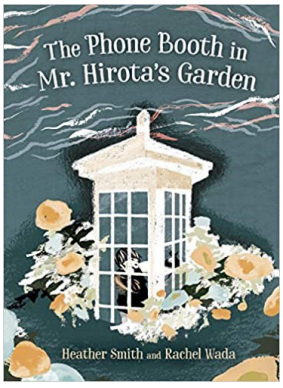
Robinson, Hilary. *The Copper Tree*. Illus. by Mandy Stanley. Strauss House, 2012. 32p.
After elementary school teacher Miss Evans dies in the middle of a school year, her students create a copper-leaf tree in her memory. This story demonstrates how people can work together to heal and remember.

Empson, Jo. *Rabbityness*. Illus. by the author. Child's Play, 2012, 32p.
Rabbit enjoys life to the fullest by sharing his uniqueness with everyone around him. Rabbit shows how appreciation can come from simply intermingling with others.

Death

Rowland, Joanna. *The Memory Box: A Book About Grief*. Illus. by Thea Baker. Sparkhouse Family, 2017. 32p.
A young girl's process of dealing with the death of a loved one is by making a memory box. A simple story that offers an opening to discuss coping with loss.

Slosse, Nathalie. *Big Tree is Sick: A Story to Help Children Cope*. Illus. by Rocio Del Moral, R., Trans by Emmi Smid. Jessica Kingsley, 2017. 40p.
Big Tree is infected with woodworm and tells his friend Snibbles that he will eventually feel better. Encouraged, Snibbles is present for Big Tree every day through all the phases of the treatment and recovery.



Smith, Heather. *The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden*. Illus. by Rachel Wada. Orca, 2019. 32p.
Based on a true story about one Japanese village that lost many residents when a tsunami hit. The story focuses on Maiko, a young boy who lost his father, and Mr. Hirota, Maiko's neighbor who lost his daughter. Mr. Hirota builds a phone booth in the middle of his garden and uses it to speak to his daughter. Soon after Mr. Hirota begins his healing process, other villagers also use the phone booth to speak to their loved ones lost in the tsunami. Maiko eventually is able to find his voice and express his grief by using the phone booth to speak to his father.

Divorce

McKenna, Susan. *More Feelings Only I Know: [Divorce and Fighting are Hurting My Heart]*. Illus. by Shelley Johannes. Wayfarer, 2008. 22p.
This book considers divorce and the feelings it causes from a child's point of view.

Shreeve, Elizabeth. *Oliver at the Window.* Illus. by Candice Hartsough McDonald. Front Street, 2009. 32p.
Since Oliver's parents' divorce, he lives in two separate houses and spends a lot of time at the window. To compound the situation, Oliver also has to adjust to a new preschool.

Gray, Kes. *Mum and Dad Glue.* Illus. by Lee Wildish. Hodder Children's Books, 2009. 32p.
Written in prose, the story revolves around a little boy who wants to find a pot of parent glue to stick his mum and dad back together. All the while the little boy in the story wonders if he is the cause of his parents' breakup.

Stanton, Karen. *Monday, Wednesday, and Every Other Weekend*. Illus. by the author. Feiwel and Friends, 2014. 30p.
Henry Cooper's parents are divorced, and he spends time at both of their homes. His dog, however, gets a little confused with the moving back and forth.

Daly, Cathleen. *Emily's Blue Period*. Illus. by Lisa Brown. Roaring Brook, 2014. 56p.
Emily is a young artist whose parents are divorcing. She uses her art as therapy to work through her anger and grief. Both Emily and her brother discover that some good can come out of a difficult situation.

Poverty, Homelessness, and Hunger

Poverty

Boelts, Maribeth. *Those Shoes.* Illus. by Noah Z. Jones. Candlewick, 2007. 40p.
Jeremy wants "*the shoes*" everyone has. His current shoes fall apart in gym class, and his grandmother wants to buy him the shoes, but she does not have enough money. Jeremy's experience considers the struggle of setting priorities and to distinguish the difference between needs and wants.

Homelessness and Hunger

Genhart, Michael. *I See You*. Illus. by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff. Magination Press, 2017. 40p.
This wordless book shows the way one homeless woman is treated every day. Each day, she is met with avoidance and dismissal. One young boy observes the homeless woman over a year and eventually offers her some help. His act of kindness lets her know she is not invisible.

Brandt, Lois. *Maddi's Fridge.* Illus. by Vin Vogel. Flashlight Press, 2014. 32p.
Maddi and Sofia are playing in a park near Maddi's apartment. When Sofia is hungry, she runs to Maddi's apartment to get a snack, only to find one carton of milk. Maddi confides they do not have enough money and swears Sofia to secrecy. Eventually, Sofia realizes she cannot keep the secret and tells her mother.

Williams, Laura E. *The Can Man*. Illus. by Craig Orback. Lee Low, 2010. 40p.
Tim wants a skateboard for his birthday even though his father tells him money is scarce. Mr. Peter is homeless and collects cans to earn money. Tim bumps into Mr. Peters and gets the idea to collect cans to raise money for a skateboard. But when Mr. Peters says he needs the money for a warm coat, Tim offers him the money he raises.

de la Peña, Matt. *Last Stop on Market Street*. Illus. by Christian Robinson. Putnam, 2015. 32p.
Due to CJ's nanna's appreciation for her community, he does not realize he is as poor as those around him. Nanna and CJ's trip from the church to the soup kitchen provides nanna an opportunity to help CJ see all the beauty and goodness around him.

Leronimo, Christine. *A Thirst for Home: Story of Water Across the World*. Illus. by Eric Velasquez. Bloomsbury, 2014. 32p.
This story about the female water collectors in Ethiopia helps students understand that many people lack readily available food and water. The book can lead to powerful discussions on empathy.

Bromley, Anne. C. *The Lunch Thief: A Story of Hunger, Homelessness and Friendship.* Illus. by Robert Casilla. Tilbury House, 2010. 32p.
Rafael's lunch is one of three lunches stolen by a lunch thief. When Rafael sees the new student steal his lunch, he realizes Kevin's financial circumstances.

Refugees and Immigration

Refugees

Wheatley, Nadia. *Flight*. Illus. by Armin Greder. Windy Hallow, 2015. 32p.
A family must flee in the middle of the night after they are tipped off that authorities want them. After traveling for several hours, the family encounters large explosions. Tired and thirsty, the family continues until they find a refugee camp where they will spend years.

Smith, Icy. *Half Spoon of Rice: A Survival Story of the Cambodian Genocide*. Illus. by Sopaul Nhem. East West Discovery Press, 2010. 44p.
Nine-year-old Nat is forced from his home by the Khmer Rouge and forced to work in rice fields eighteen hours a day

with little food to eat. Over the next four years, Nat endures starvation, fear, and brutality, but eventually he escapes and reunites with his family.

Immigration

Danticat, Edwidge. *Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation*. Illus. by Leslie Staub. Dial, 2015. 32p.
This story is about Saya, a child who visits her Haitian mother weekly in an immigration detention center. Saya misses her mother, but she is comforted by the bedtime stories her mother records and sends to her.

Jaramillo, Ann. *La Linea The Line*. Square Fish, 2008. 144p.
On the morning of Miguel's fifteenth birthday, he leaves Mexico to join his parents in California. The trip is dangerous enough, but with his little sister in tow, it becomes even more problematic. The siblings encounter thieves, border guards, and a hard journey across the desert.

Natural Disasters

Uhlberg, Myron. *A Storm Called Katrina*. Illus. by Colin Bootman. Peachtree, 2011. 40p.
A story that demonstrates the effect Hurricane Katrina had on the people of New Orleans. Louis Daniel and his family take refugees in the Superdome and quickly find daily life becomes a struggle.

Villa, Alvaro F. *Flood*. Illus. by the author. Capstone, 2013. 32p.
This is a wordless book with beautiful pictures that depict the effects of a devastating flood on a family's home.

Morton, Stephie, *Three Lost Seeds: Stories of Becoming*. Illus. by Nicole E. Wong. Tilbury House, 2019. 36p.
This story is a metaphor for the hardships faced by displaced children. This story is about three seeds: a cherry seed from the Middle East, an acacia seed from Australia, and a lotus seed from Asia. Each survives a challenging journey through flood, fire, or drought. All three of the seeds eventually flourish when given the opportunity. &

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Couples Who Collaborate

Sarah and Ian Hoffman

MARY-KATE SABLESKI

Ian and Sarah Hoffman

California couple Sarah and Ian Hoffman are the authors of *Jacob's New Dress* (2014), *Jacob's Room to Choose* (2019), and *Jacob's School Play* (2021). The duo, who live in San Francisco with their two children, were inspired to write these books based on their experience raising their gender nonconforming son. They are passionate about making sure children see themselves in literature and represent their experiences in sensitive, informative ways.

Sarah is a developer and Ian, an architect. By day, they renovate old homes together. Both have written and illustrated an array of articles and books in their other careers. The "Jacob" books, however, are their labor of love as a couple. Passionate about the issues they write about in their books, Sarah and Ian are a delight to talk with, and an inspirational couple.

Q: How you did decide to work on picture books together?

Sarah: Well, we were working in architecture and real estate together. So, we already had a business together.

Ian: We work together to buy old, unloved buildings—like *really* unloved. The more it is leaning, the more we love them. We fix them up and then we rent them out, and then we manage them.

Sarah: So, when I wanted to get into writing, I started writing about what I knew, which was real estate. I started selling articles to a trade magazine. The other thing I knew about was parenting our child, who was a little boy who wanted to wear a dress. So, I wrote an article about him. I knew that it was a sensitive topic. I knew enough to change his name in the article, but the backlash was so swift and extreme and bizarre that I realized it was not enough to just change his name because people knew who I was from my work or my other writing. That's when I decided to take on a pen name. I started writing for magazines and ended up getting an architecture column in a local newspaper. I brought Ian into it, so it was our first experience writing together and it paved the way for our work together on picture books.

Ian: We're really different workers. Sarah thinks very fast and big picture. I think slow and am very detail oriented, which is a great complementary skill set. But as you can imagine, if we're sitting side by side, Sarah throws out an idea, and I am thinking through the consequences. Meanwhile, she is wondering if I am awake. We pass things back and forth to each other.

Sarah: Ian was interested in picture books from the time he was a kid and had written one for his niece. So, there were there were roots in our lives going back a long time before we finally came together to produce a book.

Ian: When we finally realized what was needed in the world was a picture book about a boy wants to wear a dress to

Mary-Kate Sableski *is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Dayton, where she teaches courses in children's literature and literacy methods. Her main areas of research interest include diversity in children's literature and struggling readers.*

Interior art sketches from the Hoffmans' new book. (Used with permission of Magination Press.)

school, we were positioned in a place where we could actually pull that off.

Q: Why use a pen name?

Sarah: I think it's the right thing to do in part because we realized it wasn't safe for us to talk about our family in this way when so many people had such strong, and sometimes violent, feelings. This is really our son's story to tell, and he was little and we didn't know how he would want to tell that story or where his story was going. It can also be frustrating to us because we can't share our books through our personal networks. So, the books have to stand for themselves in many ways.

Ian: The books are not necessarily our son's story, but they were inspired by our experience raising him. He has always appreciated the opportunity to not be defined by what he did when he was three or four years old.

Q: How do you see your book fitting into #WeNeedDiverse Books and the #OwnVoices movements?

Ian: We think it's so important that every kid see themselves in a book. That is such a powerful and affirming thing for them. And it's so important for kids to see that there's this whole range of humanity, this variety, that are kids who have experiences. The more you see, the more accepting of what is going on in the world.

Sarah: When a child who's gender typical is seeing a child who's gender creative in the pages of a book, this doesn't just teach them about gender diversity; it teaches them about acceptance of all ways of being different.

Q: In your books, you represent various perspectives through your characters. The character Christopher represents the stereotypical bully. Can you tell us more about the role he plays in the story?

Sarah: It's a really natural response for a kid to think, well, my Dad taught me that wearing a boy wearing a dress is wrong, so it must be wrong.

Ian: And in the book, we don't necessarily suggest that Christopher is going to change. It's up to Jacob to find his own feet in the world, and to know that there will be Christophers.

Sarah: That was an intense thing for us to realize as the parents of a bullied kid. Sometimes, it's about education and changing the bully's behavior, and sometimes it's about changing the victim's response to the bully. That was a tough one, but it is very real.

Q: What is it like to share your work with children?

Sarah: It is so gratifying!

Ian: Doing elementary school presentations is kind of exhausting—you have to be "on." I have no idea how teachers do this every day. I have nothing but respect for them. But it's so exhilarating, and kids say things back to us that we never thought of ourselves. That's always a surprise and delight. We've also been able to present for the older kids in middle school; we always ask them what they think, and they tell us stuff about their world that we wouldn't know otherwise. They have a lot of insight into what's going on.

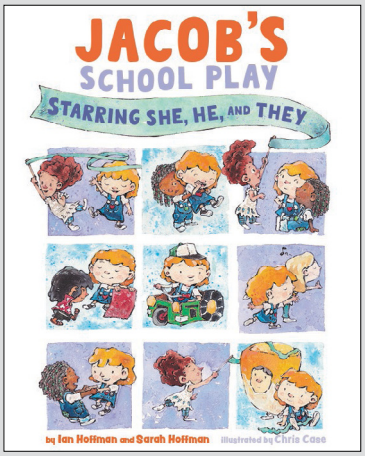
We've also noticed the sort of cultural shift as we've been doing this, we have this little routine that we were doing. We ask the question, "What's a girl who likes to play sports and wear typically boy clothes?" And when we started doing this, people would say, "It's a tomboy." Now, they just look at us, puzzled.

Sarah: They don't know what that's called. They say, "That's just a girl."

Ian: It was last year that we noticed this, and their teachers said that it was something they just noticed last year. There was a sudden shift in thinking.

Sarah: What we noticed was that the older kids noticed the tomboy, and the younger kids did not. So, it was like passing out of their vocabulary.

Ian: It was amazing.



Books by Ian and Sarah Hoffman

All are illustrated by Chris Case.

Jacob's New Dress. Whitman, 2014. 32 pp.

Jacob's Room to Choose. Magination, 2019. 32 pp.

Jacob's School Play. Magination, 2021. 32 pp.

Sarah: Sometimes, we'll get called into a school just because they want to do education around this, but sometimes they have a particular student who's maybe been having some issues with the other students. And we can't always tell who this kid is, but often, especially with little kids, there'll be someone in the back of the room and throughout the presentation, they just do a slow creep closer and closer, and by the end, somebody is sitting right under us and sometimes wants to touch our shoe or our sleeves.

And then we know, that's where we're making an impact.

Often, big schools might have us do an assembly for three hundred kids and they'll invite parents. Especially in the beginning, parents were seeing this for the first time, and they had never seen a book with their kid's issue reflected. They would just come up to us crying, telling us what a difference the book had made in their kid's life. That was always pretty incredible.

Ian: A parent will come up and talk to us, and like, show us the picture of their kid holding the book and stuff. And I have to say like it's humbling. As writers, we're proud of what we do, we pay a lot of attention to it and we want to put our best book out there in the world and help people. But, to actually see the face of the kid that you're helping—we feel like we created something bigger than ourselves.

Sarah: A lot of what goes on is invisible to us, as far as people reading the book. People write to us a lot, and that is fantastic, but somehow being face-to-face with the human being whose life you've affected is pretty awesome.

Q: So, what's next?

Ian: Our next book is *Jacob's School Play, Starring He, She, and They.* It should be out this summer.

Sarah: We wanted to write about how children present, because for our son being a person who identified as a boy, but liked to wear a dress, it was very jarring for people. So, the first issue for us to talk about was just what it's like to be a person in the world who looks a different way than people expect.

The biggest issue our son faced as he got older, and the biggest concern that parents write to us about, was bathrooms. It was important to us to go in the direction of talking about pronouns because that that is just such a huge issue for kids right now.

It was different for our kid who was always super clear—I'm a boy, I just want to wear this pink dress and have long hair and wear pink shoes and go to the opera. But for a lot of other kids, their changing pronouns, is really big and important and very confusing for people. We wanted a simple way to explain it to kids because we find that when you just explain it to kids. they're like, oh, okay, no problem. That person is a they? Okay, got it. As adults, we chronically stumble over this, and so we realized that the way to make social change is to introduce these ideas to kids.

Ian: That's what they do all day. They're like, okay, this is red; this is black. Even when they are little. They learn that bananas go in their mouths, but sand from the sandbox should not.

Sarah: I feel like this behavior is very normal in the sense that, as human beings, we want to put things in boxes. That's not just what we're taught to do but it's naturally how our brains function. So, you can also easily teach that out of people. But you can give them more boxes and make the boxes feel more expansive; so that's what we're trying to do with this third book. &

Recommended Online Resources

Betsy Diamant-Cohen and Tess Prendergast

Betsy Diamant-Cohen *is a children's librarian with a doctorate, trainer, consultant, and author. She enjoys translating research into practical information for children's librarians, designing and offering online courses, and presenting webinars to children's librarians. With many libraries incorporating STEM into the programs and services that they offer, Betsy invited Elissa Hozore to share some of her favorite resources.* ***Tess Prendergast****, MLIS, PhD, has worked as a children's librarian for more than twenty years and now teaches youth services courses in Vancouver, Canada.*

Here are some free resources for children's librarians who like to browse through research on topics related to our work with children.

The State of America's Children 2021 **State Fact Sheets**
https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-State-of-Americas-Children-2021.pdf

Produced by the Children's Defense Fund, this resource is great for writing a grant or assessing community health in your state, including information about child population, child health, child poverty, early childhood, education, income and wealth inequality, housing and homelessness, child welfare, child hunger and nutrition, youth justice, and gun violence.

Rise Magazine
http://www.risemagazine.org/rise-magazine/

Parent-written Rise Magazine aims to reduce unnecessary family separations and increase the likelihood that children who are placed in foster care quickly and safely return home. Adults share their foster care experiences to support parent advocates and to guide child welfare professionals in becoming more responsive to families and communities.

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections
https://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/find/datatools.html

Originally produced by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this website contains COVID-19 resources, a research and policy library, a section for searching data and variables, analyzing data, accessing data training resources from the National Survey of Early Care and Education and publishing your own data. It also supplies tools for performing research, such as data collection, accessing research quality, study design and analysis, a child care and early education glossary, a research glossary, and a section on working with administrative data. The final section gives access to federal efforts including research and meetings, policies and programs, training and technical assistance. Their Research Connections newsletter highlights reports from state and local research.

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The mission of Academia.edu is to make every scholarly and scientific paper available for free on the internet and to enhance academic discussion and collaboration. Academics at more than 15,000 universities can upload papers, books, book reviews, conference presentations, talks, teaching documents, drafts, and thesis chapters. Email notifications arrive when new papers on a topic of interest are uploaded, and items can be saved in an online library.

Research Gate
https://www.researchgate.net/

This site enables researchers to share and access each other's information. Users can get weekly statistics reports on who has been reading their work and citations. This site allows users to connect with colleagues around the world in order to collaborate on research in all scientific disciplines. Users are asked to describe what they are currently working on, the languages they use, the disciplines, skills, and expertise. They can also add upload work before publication to get feedback from colleagues and make revisions before publication.

Cox Campus
https://www.coxcampus.org/

This free online learning platform hosted by The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School aims to eradicate illiteracy by facilitating a virtual community composed of professionals, colleagues, parents, and advocates. It has online video courses, downloadable resource sheets (including guides for using selected picture books with children) and games (such as multiple syllable picture cards), a community discussion board, and printable certificates for completing the courses.

Early Childhood Investigations
https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/about/

Early childhood educators can access free professional development webinars conducted by thought-leaders and experts in the field of early care and education.

Social Justice
https://socialjusticebooks.org

A project of the nonprofit Teaching for Change, this resource is dedicated to helping educators and librarians recognize, develop, and promote more balanced, diverse collections of children's books for classrooms and libraries. They provide booklists, book reviews, and other critical resources that will help both novice and expert children's services staff develop critical lenses on contemporary children's literature. Of note is their *Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books*, which offers a list of specific features to look for in determining how well a book represents different communities. &

ALSC Member Profiles

Allison Knight

Allison Knight is Branch Manager, MidPointe Library System in Ohio.

Erika Lehtonen, Youth Services Librarian, Timberland Regional Library, Belfair, Washington

Why did you join ALSC? I joined when I was awarded the ALSC Equity Fellowship in October 2020. I'm so grateful to learn from and connect with library workers throughout the country. I have always wanted to be more involved, but the cost to join was a barrier. I'm excited to apply for committees and attend open meeting.

What's your favorite part about working with youth? Seeing kids grow up. We have the privilege and opportunity to help them learn, grow, and succeed. Even if we only spend a few minutes with them every week, you never know how those moments will affect them for the rest of their lives. It's our duty to ensure that those moments, although fleeting, are meaningful.

What is your favorite library event or outreach initiative? I've had so much fun bringing drama programs to the community. They give kids and teens the opportunity to connect with each other in a safe space without having to pay for a class or go to the nearest county to perform in a show.

What are you most passionate about in children's services? Lifting children up. I want to inspire kids and teens to be the best versions of themselves. I want to teach them that all of their dreams are achievable, and I want to be their advocate. I want to be the bridge between kids and everything they want to learn and become.

Tasha Nins, Children's Librarian, Ramsey County (MN) Library

What's your best ALSC memory? When I was an ALA Emerging Leader, my team and I worked on researching microaggressions in youth librarianship. It was interesting to do a deep dive into how librarianship has harmed our youngest patrons and how the field can and should make changes.

What is your favorite part about working with youth? When it comes to reference, they are much more open to the search for answers than adults. Adults are usually looking for one answer, and kids are excited to learn about all the answers! Kids keep the day interesting. They will ask to play UNO, want to know what the different types of love are, how many farts are in the world, how much a green Lambo costs, and bring me dandelions and beef jerky.

What are you most passionate about in children's services? Giving kids space to try things out! Helping them find the resources and tools they need to do a deep dive into their interests is always a great experience. Unfortunately, the first step is always to try and undo some of the harm that has been perpetrated by library staff without much understanding of or patience for children, particularly Black and brown children.

Sue Conolly, Elementary Librarian, Chiyoda International School Tokyo, Japan

Why did you join ALSC? [Former ALSC President] Andrew Medlar asked me to consider serving on the Notable Children's Recordings (NCR) Committee, which was the best thing I ever did!

At a time in my life when I felt lost, I was found by my friend and mentor Junko Yokota, who went on to chair the Caldecott Committee in 2015.

What's your best ALSC memory? Serving on the NCR Committee; it was the most fun I had in professional development. It was a lot of work to build up my listening muscles to be able to listen to that volume of audiobooks, but it didn't feel like work.

What is your favorite part about working with youth? Our school is a troubled little international school in the middle of Tokyo, and as a relatively new librarian, this task seems enormous on my own. But my favorite part of working with youth is connecting them to authors that I met when I lived in America.

Sometimes, small experiences make the most impact. It is all about trying to find the best experiences for your students. This pandemic has been soul destroying for children, but even in these times (and in part enabled by these times) authors are willing to interact creatively with our students, inspiring them to take themselves seriously as readers and writers.

Making these connections and surfing the wave of student engagement is absolutely my favorite part of this job. &

The Plusses of the Pandemic

Stephanie Prato and Cynthia Zervos

Stephanie C. Prato *is the Head of Children's Services at the Simsbury (CT) Public Library. She is an active member of the American Library Association, CT Library Association, and New England Library Association.* ***Cynthia Zervos*** *is the School Librarian at Way Elementary School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She previously served as the Chair for the Interdivisional Committee on School and Public Library Collaboration, the Chair for the CS First Crosswalk Task Force, a member of the AASL American University Presses Book Selection Committee, and as a member of the AASL Legacy Committee. Both authors are members of ALSC's School Aged Programs and Services Committee.*

It's a vast understatement to say that the pandemic has changed numerous things for many people. As more people are getting vaccinated and looking forward to the "new normal," what will library programs for the school-aged look like? What changes were made to library programs and services during the pandemic, and were these changes temporary, or have they permanently impacted the way we do things?

These are some of the questions we addressed to ALSC membership in an April 2021 survey; while response was light, here is a summary of what we learned.

Is Virtual Programming Here to Stay?

Some were unsure if any programming changes would continue; others hoped that the virtual format would persist; while many staff and patrons long for the return of in-person events, other patrons seem to appreciate the flexibility and convenience of attending programs from home. For example, in one virtual LEGO Club program, a child participated on a tablet computer, seat belted in the back of his parents' car as they dashed off somewhere.

Another survey respondent shared that their virtual LEGO Club allowed for better interaction between kids than its in-person counterpart. Other responded that they would consider continuing programs like Take and Makes and other pickup bags.

Some such programs were paired with instructional videos posted on libraries' YouTube channels. Another agreed that a kids' baking program via Facebook live would likely continue that program.

It's easy to see the benefit of recording these programs and archiving them to YouTube for future access. Our guess is that post-pandemic, we will see more libraries adopt a hybrid model, where some in-person programs are live-streamed or even recorded.

Readers' Advisory

Many libraries reported a shift in how readers' advisory is offered. Book bundles (created for easy selection via curbside) have remained popular, even as doors open. It is fast and easy for patrons to grab a collection of children's books at a similar reading level or on a particular topic that library staff has curated.

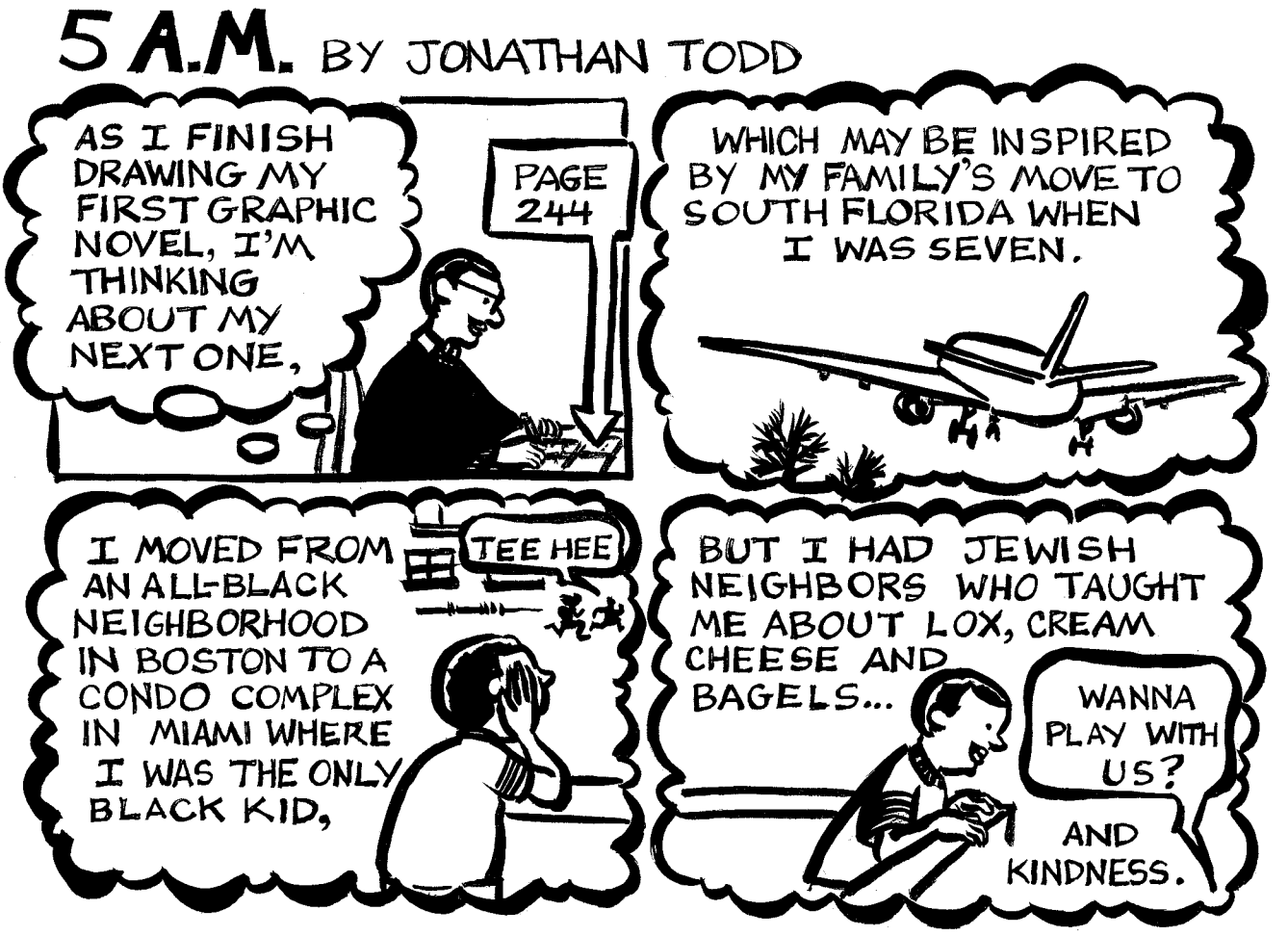
Long-Term and Short-Term Impacts

To assess the overall impact of the pandemic, the survey responses were a testament to the library community's creativity and resilience. Many

shared that the virtual pivot was a positive experience for both librarians and patrons. One respondent said the pandemic helped them realize how many more families they could serve virtually rather than in person.

Yes, we miss in-person interactions. Yes, our foot traffic has been lower. And we may have lost touch with some of our regular patrons and certain segments of the community, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Like many, we look forward to rebuilding these connections and carrying some valuable parts of our pandemic experience into the future. &



Back to School Advocacy

Creating School Partnerships

Melissa Sokol

Melissa Sokol *is a children's services librarian for Dayton (OH) Metro Library and is a member of ALSC's Public Awareness and Advocacy Committee.*

At the start of each school year, children's librarians may want to check in and reaffirm partnerships with the school media specialists in their service area. Here are some helpful tips to reconnect.

1. **Find out how your school libraries are staffed.** Does each library have a certified teacher librarian or are they run by a passionate paraprofessional?

2. **Send a friendly email to each school library staff member.** Let them know you are looking forward to collaborating and that you are interested to find out how you can best support them.

3. **Propose a staff training day.** Invite school library staff and public children's and teen librarians to get together to share favorite databases, websites, and books to use with the students. With the increased use of Zoom and Google Meets, this might be easier to schedule than in years past.

4. **Share lists of books that have been published in the past year relating to core content standards and electives offered at the school.** These titles might be worth school library staff spending their limited budget on. I offer this list through my Goodreads account yearly, and I have had several school media specialists tell me they often turn to that list when they receive a donation or extra funds. Currently, forty-one states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards Initiative; find out more at www.corestandards.org. If your state is not included, find their standards at your state's Department of Education website.

5. **Send links to websites and free webinars year-round.** You might also consider a shared calendar, updated regularly, with upcoming virtual events.

Advocate for Your School Libraries

Another way to support local school libraries is to advocate to your school board for increased or continued investment in school media centers.

Consult with your school system's media specialists to see what is needed the most in their libraries and media centers.

- Do they need better staffing, including more certified teacher librarians?
- Do they need more staff so that the school library can be open before and after the school day?
- Do they need a bigger budget for print materials?
- Do they need more investment in technology and technology training?

The answer might be all of the above.

Once you know what you want to focus your advocacy on, start collecting data and anecdotal stories to help the school librarians share evidence of how their request supports student learning.

After data is collected and organized, ask your school librarians what else you can do to support their claim. You could write a letter of support or offer to speak at a future board meeting.

Strengthen Your Advocacy with Facts

To find more statistics to back up your argument, check out The Pew Research Center, (pewresearch.org), where you can search for data by topic or age group, or AASL's (American Association of School Librarians) advocacy page at ala.org/aasl/advocacy. The latter's Resources page has infographics, reports, and research and statistics links to help you find concrete evidence to support your requests, including state contacts that will direct you to local leadership in school libraries. The Tools page includes more infographics, articles, brochures, a poster, and various toolkits, including AASL's Advocacy Toolkit.

Public and school libraries already share the same patrons, so combining and focusing our efforts will result in better service for all children. &

Old Memories and New Plans

A Graduate Touches a Librarian's Heart

Marybeth Kozikowski

"There's a graduate here to see you," my coworker announced.

Curious, I went out to the main children's room and saw two library friends I hadn't seen in quite a while—teenage Belén and her mother, Mary. Sweet, friendly, and artistic, Belén had been a regular participant in many of my tween programs, and I always felt we shared a special kinship.

Now Belén is all grown-up in her high school cap and gown. "I'm graduating and I wanted to come in and say hello. Would you take a picture together?" Of course, I said yes!

As we talked about old memories and new plans, her mother described what a positive influence I had been for Belén and how much that meant to their family. I was near tears.

"Whatever I gave to you, Belén, you have given much more back to me," I answered. We hugged and I noticed she was wearing the button our library's Community Engagement Team had made for the district's graduating seniors featuring each student's fifth grade photo.

I thought I couldn't feel more touched, but then Belén asked me to turn her high school ring for its final twenty-first turn. I did so, humbly, thanking her for that honor. We hugged and parted with heartfelt, sincere promises to stay in touch.

I floated back to my desk, overwhelmed with happiness and gratitude. I imagined that similar scenes must have been played out in libraries across the country during graduation, especially this past year.

When I chose librarianship as a profession, I was drawn by my love for research and literature. I never imagined I would have the opportunity to create enduring relationships that have a positive impact on another person's life.

It's wonderful to see public libraries staying on top of current trends, offering everything from telescopes to 3D printers and recording booths. But whatever services we provide, we serve people first. And that will never change, and perhaps never be more important, than in a post-pandemic world.

It made me recall Maya Angelou's words: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

I couldn't agree more. Thank you, Belén, and all the patrons across the country who make us feel proud of our profession.

Marybeth Kozikowski is a children's librarian at Sachem Public Library in Holbrook, New York, and currently serves on the ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee.

THE LAST WORD

The Story, the Teller, and the Listener

By Bob Kanegis

Students, faculty, and families are gathered in the library for a school-wide Tellabration, where kids showcase the folktales they have learned this semester.

With slightly trembling hands, Alexi rings the Tibetan bells that convene the performance. He's a third grader who rarely speaks, and if he does, usually mumbles. For most of the semester, he's been physically disruptive and often finds himself the object of his teachers' ire.

The author really gets into his storytelling! Here he is doing a performance at the Homer (AK) Public Library during Summer Reading Program 2019.

It was with some trepidation, then, that I let him join a group of tellers in the hopes of placing him in a more controlled setting that might let the rest of the class proceed with fewer interruptions.

Unfortunately, he lived up to his reputation. I could see that there was no way the group would succeed with him trying to learn a part. But I hadn't the heart to ban him.

"Alexi!" I say, I'm going to give you one of the most important parts of all. You will be the listener. The tellers need a listener."

Instantly his demeanor changes. He listens with rapt attention to his classmates through two more rehearsals.

On performance night, when his group takes the stage, Alexi pops out of his seat and joins them. I follow close behind and whisper nervously, "What are you doing up here?"

Surprised, he replies in a clear and confident voice, "I am 'The Listener.'"

Alexi, so often the outsider, has reminded everyone that the story, the teller, and the listener all have a part to play, and we are all in this together! &

Bob Kanegis *is a New Mexico storyteller and story coach, who travels nationwide. Through performance, workshops, and residencies, he creates joyful opportunities for children to experience and demonstrate the power and possibilities of language. You can find him at www.librarystorytelling.org*

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

Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Libraries

alsc
ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

Did you know our Competencies were recently revised by our Education Committee? And did you know a special designed PDF is available to ALSC members?

Find our Competencies and related resources by visiting:
http://bit.ly/alsccompetencies

#Newbery100

Celebrate a **century** of the Newbery Medal!

Since 1922, lovers of children's literature -- children and adults alike -- anxiously await the announcement of the Newbery Medal for the "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children." This anniversary commemorates not only a century of captivating books, it celebrates the longevity and evolution of the award. The world has changed in the last 100 years, and with it, the Newbery Medal seeks to recognize stories that represent and respect all youth.

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