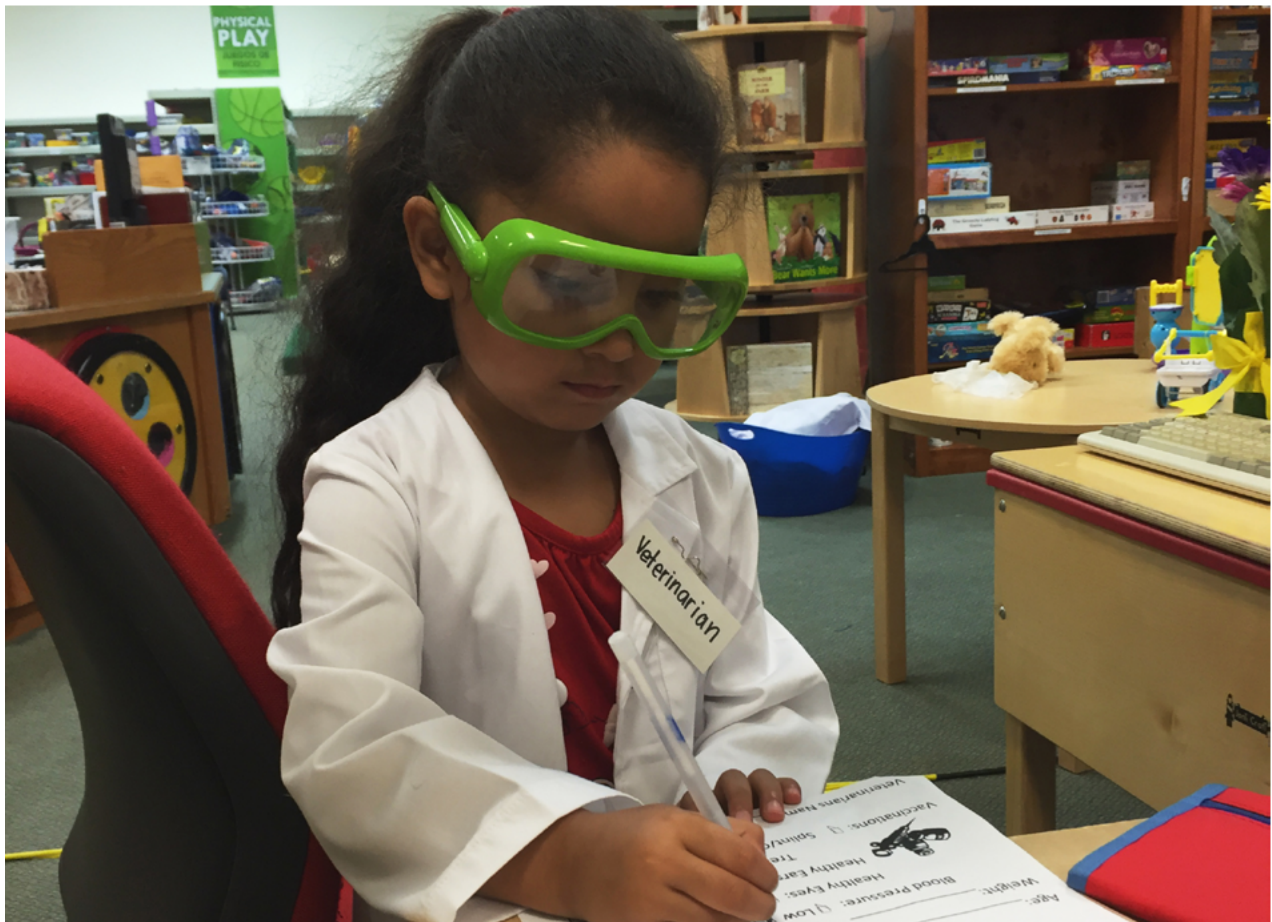
Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

Volume 16 Number 1 Spring 2018 ISSN 1542-9806



ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Fostering Writing at the Library

Drag Queen Storytimes!

Reading for Minds and Hearts

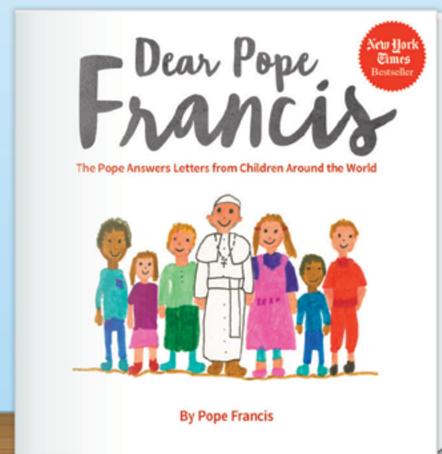
From themes of social justice to role models in our history, Loyola Press offers a variety of books for young readers to learn and grow into people for others.

DEAR POPE FRANCIS

The Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World

Pope Francis continues to captivate children with his honest answers to their big questions. Each page reminds children that the future is theirs and Pope Francis is optimistic about the great deeds they'll do.

ENGLISH: HARDCOVER | 4433-9 | $18.95
SPANISH: HARDCOVER | 4435-3 | $18.95

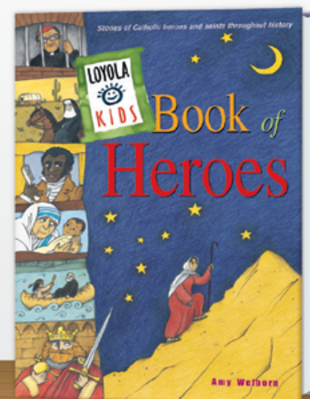


LOYOLA KIDS BOOK OF HEROES

Stories of Catholic Heroes and Saints throughout History

The exciting stories and illustrations of devoted Christians throughout history introduce virtuous role models and help children understand the important contributions we can all make to the world around us.

HARDCOVER | 1584-X | $17.95



DROP BY DROP

This International Book Awards winner contains colorful pictures and an engaging story that helps children understand important lessons of how to work for justice and peace and to help those in need.

PAPERBACK | 4100-0 | $9.95

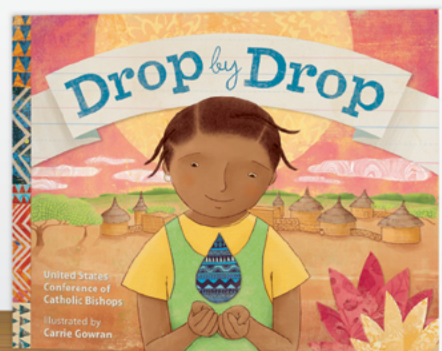


Table of Contents

Volume 16, Number 1 • Spring 2018

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

Notes

2 Editor's Note
Sharon Verbeten

Features

3 Mother Goose in the NICU
Support for the Neediest Infants and Their Families
Betsy Diamant-Cohen, Susan Sonnenschein, Dawn Sacks, Summer Rosswog, and Brenda Hussey-Gardner

8 Writing Boxes
The Reading/Writing Connection Supporting Literacy in the Library
Lisa Von Drasek

14 The Better to See You With
Peering into the Story of Little Red Riding Hood, 1695–1939
Angela J. Reynolds

21 Far from a Drag
How One Library Embraced Drag Queen Story Hour
Chelsea Condren

23 Storytime in a Box
The Cooperative Approach to Preschool Storytime Planning
Katie Bowers, Vivian Howard, and Alison Brown

30 Couples Who Collaborate
Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann
Jennifer Gibson

33 A Revolutionary Idea
Planning an Epic Hamil-Con
Katie Guzek

34 Ready to Read at New York Libraries
Comprehensive Professional Development in Early Literacy Services and Outreach
Karen Balsen and Amanda R. Latreille

Departments

38 Every Child Ready to Read
Taking Early Literacy Messages to WIC Centers
Marisa Conner

40 The Last Word
Another Fish Story. . .
Amy Peterson

39 Index to Advertisers

ON THE COVER: Playing to learn at the toy library inside the Lincoln Branch Library in Rochester, New York.

Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

OK, we're a couple months into 2018; how are your resolutions going? Now granted, as I write this, we're only a few *weeks* into the New Year, so mine are going great… but as we know, things tend to drift as the year goes on.

While my resolutions had nothing to do with my job as a librarian, I'm sure many of us think of things each year that we can do better for our patrons—especially our young charges. I'm planning on introducing some sensory storytimes for my suburban branch, targeting those with autism and other sensory needs. Thankfully, we've covered that topic several times in *Children and Libraries*, so I have a lot of solid research and best practices to consult.

I also hope to stress more to our parents and caregivers the importance of "play." Too often, I hear a parent tell a child, "We're not here to play; we're here to look at books." I want them to know that play, also, is an important component of learning.

And I hope to convince at least one parent or grandparent that reading a comic book or graphic novel (or listening to an audiobook or reading an ebook for that matter), DOES count as reading! It's all part of that great expanding literary world we live in—which does include screens, devices, and silly pictures!

What are your goals/resolutions for your library this year? And how can you use your skills and resources to make them happen? I wish you a great start to 2018—hope see you all in Nawlins this summer!

Interested in the importance of play? Check out the PLAY (Play, Literacy, and Youth) issue of *Children and Libraries* (Spring 2012). Articles include "We Play Here!: Bringing the Power of Play into Children's Libraries," "The Preschool Literacy And You (PLAY) Room: Creating an Early Literacy Play Area in Your Library," and "A Museum in a Library?: Science, Literacy Blossom at Children's Library Discovery Center." Access the issue online at https://journals.ala.org/cal.

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

Editor
Sharon Verbeten, De Pere, Wisconsin

Editorial Advisory Committee
Randall Enos, Chair, Middletown, New York
Anna Haase Krueger, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jeremiah Henderson, Renton, Washington
Lettycia Terrones, Urbana, Illinois
Lisa Von Drasek, St. Paul, Minnesota
Virginia A. Walter, Los Angeles, California
Nina Lindsay, ALSC President, Ex Officio, Oakland, California
Sharon Verbeten, Editor, Ex Officio, De Pere, Wisconsin

Executive Director
Aimee Strittmatter

Managing Editor
Laura Schulte-Cooper

Website
www.ala.org/alsc

Circulation

Children and Libraries (ISSN 1542-9806) is a refereed journal published four times per year by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of ALA. Subscription price: members of ALSC, $20 per year, included in membership dues; nonmembers, $50 per year in the U.S.; $60 in Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Back issues within one year of current issue, $15 each. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Children and Libraries*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Members send mailing labels or facsimile to Member Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Nonmember subscribers: Subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to *Children and Libraries*, Customer Service—Subscriptions, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; e-mail: subscriptions@ala.org.

Statement of Purpose

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.)

Production

ALA Production Services: Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, and Lauren Ehle.

Advertising

Bill Spilman, Innovative Media Solutions, 320 W. Chestnut St., PO Box 399, Oneida, IL 61467; 1-877-878-3260 or (309) 483-6467; fax: (309) 483-2371; e-mail: bill@innovativemediasolutions.com. The journal accepts advertising for goods or services of interest to the library profession and librarians in service to youth in particular. It encourages advertising that informs readers and provides clear communication between vendor and buyer. The journal adheres to ethical and commonly accepted advertising practices and reserves the right to reject any advertisement not suited to the above purposes or not consistent with the aims and policies of ALA. Acceptance of advertising in the journal does not imply official endorsement by ALA of the products or services advertised.

Manuscripts

Manuscripts and letters pertaining to editorial content should be sent to Sharon Verbeten, editor, 820 Spooner Ct., De Pere, WI 54115; (920) 339-2740; e-mail: CALeditor@yahoo.com. Manuscripts will be sent out for review according to the journal's established referee procedures. See www.ala.org/alsc, "Communications & Publications" for author guidelines. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer referee for manuscripts submitted to *CAL*, contact Editor Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com. More information about the referee process is available on the Web at the above address.

Indexing, Abstracting, and Microfilm

Children and Libraries is indexed in *Library and Information Science Abstracts* and in *Library Literature and Information Science.*

Children and Libraries is indexed, abstracted, and available in full text through EBSCOhost. For more information, contact EBSCO at 1-800-653-2726.

Children and Libraries is also available from ProQuest Information and Learning in one or more of the following ways: online, via the ProQuest information service; microform; CD-ROM; and via database licensing. For more information, call 1-800-521-0600, ext. 2888 or online at www.proquest.com.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Copyright © 2018 American Library Association

All materials in this journal subject to copyright by the American Library Association may be photocopied for the noncommercial purpose of scientific or educational advancement granted by Sections 107 and 108 of the Copyright Revision Act of 1976. For other photocopying, reprinting, or translating, address requests to the ALA Office of Rights and Permissions.

Mother Goose in the NICU

Support for the Neediest Infants and Their Families

BETSY DIAMANT-COHEN, SUSAN SONNENSCHEIN, DAWN SACKS, SUMMER ROSSWOG, AND BRENDA HUSSEY-GARDNER

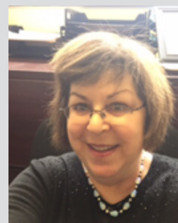
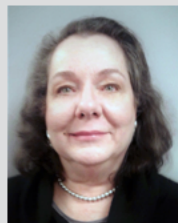
Parents and their "babies" learn how to share books through the Mother Goose on the Loose program, now utilized in some NICUs.

Of the 76,510 babies born during an average week in the United States, 7,361—or about 10 percent—are born prematurely.[1] Preterm babies, born before the thirty-seventh week of gestation, can be born with underdeveloped organ systems and other health problems that impact their ability to survive on their own outside of the womb.

Preterm birth and low birth weight are leading causes of infant death, childhood disability, and developmental delays.[2] Among the smallest survivors (those born at less than twenty-six weeks gestation), 57 percent have a mild or moderate disability, and 23 percent have a severe disability.[3] To support preterm and other medically fragile infants, many hospitals have neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) specializing in the care of these at-risk infants.

Traditional NICUs were set up as nursery wards where preterm babies in isolettes were kept together in one big room, allowing easy access to the babies by a wide array of medical staff. As the medical field and research on preterm infants have evolved, so have NICUs. One significant change has been the trend toward becoming more family friendly. Cuddling and skin-to-skin contact are now recognized as beneficial for all but the frailest infants. And most recently, NICUs are being reconfigured from the ward setting to individual family rooms. Families are encouraged to stay together, and it has become much easier for parents to spend as much time as possible with their babies.

While these single-family rooms yield many benefits, an unexpected negative outcome is demonstrated in the MRI scans showing decreased brain development in infants in individual rooms versus wards, as well as in lower language assessments

Betsy Diamant-Cohen*, DCD, MLS is an author, librarian, consultant, teacher, trainer, and executive director and creator of the Mother Goose on the Loose early literacy program; she is currently serving on the PLA/ALSC Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee.* ***Susan Sonnenschein****, PhD, is a professor and graduate program director in the Applied Developmental Psychology Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.* ***Dawn Sacks*** *is Development Officer at Port Discovery Children's Museum.* ***Summer Rosswog****, MLS, is the Early Childhood and Literacy Manager at Port Discovery Children's Museum.* ***Brenda Hussey-Gardner****, PhD, MPH, is an Associate Professor with the Division of Neonatology, Department of Pediatrics, at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.*

at two years of age.[4] It has been suggested that these negative effects are the result of infants receiving less stimulation in NICU private rooms than in NICU wards.[5] Additionally, although research shows that early contact between parents and babies is crucial to development, many NICU parents do not know how to optimally interact with their infants. This is especially true when health issues and medical equipment require physical separation and/or limited physical contact, which can become psychological barriers to bonding.[6]

Clearly, there is a need to help parents of infants in NICUs learn to interact appropriately with their young children.

Never Too Soon for Early Literacy

Infants and toddlers immersed in a rich environment of playful early literacy activities show significant gains in brain development and language acquisition, both of which correlate highly with greater reading and mathematics achievement, increased behavioral self-regulation, and fewer externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors at kindergarten entry.[7] These large and significant effects have been documented as early as twenty-four months, and it is increasingly apparent that there are great benefits to providing a language-rich environment as early as possible.[8]

In 2015, Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen attended a water aerobics class led by a young woman who performed exercises that ignored the beat of the background music. A fellow exerciser pointed out that older water aerobics teachers seemed to have no problem moving to the beat, whereas the younger ones tended to use music merely as a background and were either unwilling or unable to coordinate their movements with the tempo and beat of the music. The woman remarked, "I think it's because their mothers didn't recite nursery rhymes with them."

She continued, "I've been thinking about premature babies needing to hear their parents' voices and lamenting the fact that parents today don't know nursery rhymes. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could teach these young parents some nursery rhymes so they would have something to sing and recite to their babies while visiting them in the NICU?" This woman had no idea that Cohen was a children's librarian or that she had developed the Mother Goose on the Loose early literacy program, but her comment sparked a lively discussion.

Knowing that early literacy begins at birth; that it is never too early to talk, sing, or read to a baby; and already believing in the power of nursery rhyme activities as a positive force for healthy child development, parent/child bonding, and good parenting skills, Cohen began researching the use of music and rhymes with premature babies. She found that studies indicated music in NICUs positively impacted infant health, feeding, and behavior. Health-related benefits included fewer episodes of oxygen desaturation,[9] better cardiac and respiratory functioning,[10] improved vital signs,[11] and earlier discharge from the NICU.[12] Feeding benefits included improved sucking patterns, better feeding behaviors,[13] and higher breastfeeding rates at the time of discharge and sixty days later.[14] Behavioral benefits included improved sleep, decreased crying,[15] and less stress.[16]

In addition to being beneficial for preterm infants, music also benefited their parents. In one study, sharing musical activities with their infants resulted in parents feeling more involved in their infant's well-being.[17] In another study, mothers who engaged in music and movement programs with their infants reported an increased quality of attachment with their child over time.[18]

After reading all of this, Cohen was convinced that a music- and rhyme-based early language program for parents of premature babies was needed. She shared this developing interest with colleagues at Port Discovery Children's Museum, who urged her to write a proposal to create a program. And so the Mother Goose on the Loose: Goslings program was hatched.

Serendipity Strikes

Soon after the program proposal was developed, a representative of a community funder had a conversation with a staff member of the University of Maryland Children's Hospital, which had recently reconfigured to a NICU with individual family rooms. Hearing about the recent research on developmental delays tied to individual rooms, the foundation representative remembered Port Discovery and their exceptional early childhood programs. In fact, his foundation was already supporting these programs. Could he bring these diverse organizations together? He could and did.

The program partners of the original Goslings program included Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen (Mother Goose on the Loose), Summer Rosswog (Port Discovery Children's Museum), Dr. Brenda Hussey-Gardner (University of Maryland School of Medicine and University of Maryland Children's Hospital), and Dr. Susan Sonnenschein (University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Department of Psychology). These partners represented practitioners in the pediatric, research, and early childhood development fields. Bringing their unique skills to bear, the partners worked together to create, deliver, and evaluate a unique pilot program to enhance infant stimulation in the NICU and, eventually, at home.

All partners were involved in the development of the Goslings program script or in its evaluation. Traditional songs and nursery rhymes were modified in two ways. First, they were revised to address medical needs and concerns of small babies. Second, the songs and rhymes were then adapted to enhance parent-child bonding by having them use the word *love*. For instance, instead of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands," parents were encouraged to sing, "Since I love you very much, I'll make a heart."

These songs gave parents positive words to help them create nurturing environments for their children and strengthened

their skills for future relationships with their babies. Informal developmental tips to accompany the activities were designed to provide cognitive and emotional support to parents at a most difficult time.

The final script included nursery rhymes, songs, descriptions of the signals babies give, developmental tips, and suggested responses by parents with the intent of fostering early language and literacy skills, enhancing positive parent-infant interactions, and strengthening attachment.

Goslings Is Born

Through the process of sharing, obtaining feedback, and modifying the program, the final Goslings program was brought to the NICU in 2016. We developed a kit with carefully selected items to best meet the needs of both premature and medically fragile full-term infants. It included finger puppets, colored scarves, musical instruments for little hands, an indestructible wordless book, Dr. Brenda Hussey-Gardner's *Understanding My Signals* book,[19] a booklet of all the songs and rhymes used in the session, and a pass for a family visit to Port Discovery Children's Museum.

Since NICU infants are too medically fragile to leave their rooms and participate in Goslings, dolls of different races and cultures were purchased for use during the program. Isolettes were simulated by attaching plastic bins to metal stools. A magnetic board was purchased for the facilitator; on it, each song was given a visual representation to show what was coming next.

It was—and is—amazing to see how enthusiastically parents participate during a Goslings program. At first, they seem to feel a bit silly when asked to have a conversation with a finger puppet or to read a book to their "infant." However, mothers and fathers quickly join in, and by the end of the program, almost everyone is singing and participating. Family members forget they are interacting with a doll and sometimes act as if the doll is their infant; the love that they transfer to this "infant" is clearly visible. At the end of each program, parents are given an unopened kit to take back to their room to use with their baby.

What Goslings Parents Say

Incidental feedback from parents is positive. One father enthusiastically described what he had learned the previous week and how he was using that information with his twins—chanting, singing, and reading to one who was medically stable while quietly holding the other one who was not as stable. One couple recounted that before the Goslings program they would wake their infant up to play with her whenever they visited. But after Goslings, they knew that sleep was the best thing for her, and they waited for her to wake up naturally before playing with her. Parents seemed to greatly appreciate

Training the Port Discovery staff for the first Goslings program

getting information about their infants' signals with the suggestions on how to respond appropriately. They enjoyed having activities to use with their children.

The father and mother of twins who had been released from the hospital after a lengthy stay said,

> These two guys were born at twenty-seven weeks. . . . We had a pretty lengthy stay [in the NICU]. We were there every day, but we weren't really sure how to interact with them in that environment. We attended one of the very first Mother Goose on the Loose: Goslings classes, and it was extremely helpful for us. It taught us to read their signs to see what kind of activities would be good for them that day. It gave us a book of songs that we could sing to them and showed us how to read books that rhyme and to kind of turn them into songs. We still sing the same songs to them today. We use the toys, like the scarves and the rattles. And it also taught us how to incorporate new things as they progressed from the isolette to the crib and eventually to home. We would highly recommend this program for all the other NICU parents, and especially those first-time parents like us.

Formal Evaluation

During waves one and two of Goslings, researchers in the Department of Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, administered pre- and post-surveys to parents attending Goslings sessions. The primary questions of interest focused on whether the parents thought the program increased their knowledge of how to interact with their infants. It asked how often they talked, sang, shared books, and recited nursery rhymes with their children and how often they now expected to do so after the one-hour Goslings program.

In the second wave, researchers also conducted interviews with parents regarding actual implementation of the material used during Goslings. Within a week or two of attending the program, parents were asked how often they actually used these early literacy behaviors with their children. This was then compared to their intake survey.

Based on the responses of parents during both waves of the program, Goslings was highly successful. All parents who completed the program said they would recommend it to other parents of infants in an NICU and would recommend that the program be implemented again. Almost all the parents thought they would significantly increase their linguistic interactions with their infants after completing the program, which they also thought had increased their knowledge of how and when to interact with their infants to stimulate their language development; for example, one parent said, "I have new ideas on ways to help my child grow and learn other than just holding them."

All the parents reported modifying their behavior based on attending Goslings. A noteworthy finding was that parents reported learning how to read or interpret their infants' signals, thus promoting more appropriate interactions. For example, they learned when the infant was telling them that he or she was overstimulated and not ready for further interaction.

Being sensitive and appropriately responsive to one's infant's signals sets the stage for fostering emotional bonding between the parent and the infant. Parents reported interacting in a developmentally appropriate manner with their infants; parents of more developmentally immature or fragile infants interacted less than parents of more mature infants.

Some parents already knew some or much of what the program taught; however, these parents reported liking that experts affirmed their knowledge. They also often reported learning to use their prior knowledge in a more developmentally appropriate manner for their infants. For example, they learned to speak more softly to their infants. Other parents learned that it was appropriate to speak and interact even with very young and medically fragile infants, and some parents of course increased their knowledge of the range of appropriate linguistic interactions. And another benefit of the program, according to some parents, was being able to interact with other parents like them. One parent commented, "You get to meet other families that may be going through something with their baby, and you have a chance to talk about it."

Goslings: Today and Tomorrow

From the unique needs of babies and their families in the NICU, Mother Goose on the Loose: Goslings was born. The program, now in its second year, takes place inside the hospital NICU with the cooperation of medical personnel, families, and early childhood program facilitators. Mother Goose on the Loose: Goslings is designed to teach parents in specific, effective strategies that support infants' early development, promote parent-child bonding, help parents provide a nurturing environment in the NICU and at home, and optimize infant language, social, and emotional development.

The long-term goal is to improve the odds for NICU infants, who are at significant risk for adverse developmental outcomes, by teaching and encouraging parents to provide the earliest possible developmentally appropriate stimulation through talking, reading, singing and using rhymes. A related goal is to provide comfort and support to parents in the NICU by teaching them to use purposeful play in appropriate ways with their fragile infants. This promotes familial bonding and provides a sense of empowerment and engagement with their fragile infants. A longer-term goal is to build a foundation for parents to continue reading and singing to their children at home, and to encourage attendance at early literacy programs once the children are healthy enough to visit their public libraries or local children's museums.

According to Hussey-Gardner, approximately 70 to 75 percent of NICU babies at her hospital receive medical assistance. Studies have shown that children from lower income homes hear fewer words and are slower at language processing, language comprehension, and language production.[20] They have lower levels of grammatical development[21] and are behind norms for spontaneous speech.[22] The plasticity of the brain and its ability to form connections is based on what occurs in the child's first years of life. We know that parents are children's first and best teachers, young children develop in the environment of relationships, and the brain synapses upon which all future learning connects are formed in the earliest years of life. Therefore, another valuable future research question arising from Goslings might be, Does teaching NICU parents how to share books, rhymes, and songs with their infants in the earliest years of life help to instill habits for fostering healthy social, emotional, and intellectual development?[23] If so, Goslings could be especially beneficial for low-income participants.

As previously noted, Goslings shows great promise. In the coming year, evaluation and research is being planned to assess the impact not only on parent intentions but also on parent behaviors and, potentially, infant developmental outcomes. If the data demonstrate the hoped-for outcomes, Goslings has the potential to influence parent and child support programs in hospitals across the country. There is also potential to modify the program to support very young children with special needs and their parents in nonmedical settings, such as in clinics and in Early Head Start programs.

As we continue to conduct research on the effectiveness of the program, the partners are exploring opportunities to share the knowledge gained by developing tools and training to extend the impact of Goslings. This is being done slowly and cautiously because because environmental stimuli and interactions that are inappropriate or not carefully monitored can cause damage.[24]

Through literacy programs, libraries and children's museums want to help children be the best they can be. As these informal learning centers strive to help underserved families, the Goslings program can help them reach the youngest children, giving them an early literacy foundation and much more. It teaches parents how to talk, sing, read, and play with their

youngest children, even their premature or medically fragile full-term babies.

While NICU staff are appropriately focused on caring for the medical needs of their tiny patients, there is growing recognition of and appreciation for the role parents play in supporting infant development and in providing an environment rich in beneficial stimulation. Libraries and children's museums may have a significant opportunity to provide such programs.

We'd love to see Goslings expand beyond the University of Maryland Children's Hospital—and beyond Baltimore—to reach as many parents and infants as possible. Offering Goslings programs would be outreach at its finest, improving the lives of parents and our youngest children from all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Funding for development, implementation and research of the Mother Goose on the Loose: Goslings program was provided by The PNC Foundation Grow Up Great Program.

References

1. March of Dimes, "Peristats," accessed November 12, 2017, www.marchofdimes.org/Peristats.
2. Neil Marlow, Dieter Wolke, Melanie Bracewell, Muthanna Samara, "Neurologic and Developmental Disability at Six Years of Age After Extremely Preterm Birth," *New England Journal of Medicine* 352, no. 1 (2005): 9–19.
3. Ida Sue Baron and Celiane Rey-Casserly, "Extremely Preterm Birth Outcome: A Review of Four Decades of Cognitive Research," *Neuropsychology Review* 20, no. 4 (2010): 430–52.
4. Roberta G. Pineda, Jeff Neil, Donna Dierker, Christopher D. Smyser, Michael Wallendorf, Hiroyuki Kidokoro, Lauren C. Reynolds et al., "Alterations in Brain Structure and Neurodevelopmental Outcome in Preterm Infants Hospitalized in Different Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Environments," *Journal of Pediatrics* 164, no. 1 (2014): 52–60.
5. Melinda Caskey, Bonnie Stephens, Richard Tucker, and Betty Vohr, "Importance of Parent Talk on the Development of Preterm Infant Vocalizations," *Pediatrics* 128, no. 5 (2011): 910–16.
6. Zahra Abdeyazdan, Zahra Shahkolahi, Tayebeh Mehrabi, and Mahnoosh Hajiheidari, "A Family Support Intervention to Reduce Stress among Parents of Preterm Infants in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research* 19, no. 4 (2014): 349–53.
7. Erika Hoff, "How Social Contexts Support and Shape Language Development," *Developmental Review* 26, no. 1 (2006): 55–58.
8. Anne Fernald, Virginia A. Marchman, and Adriana Weisleder, "SES Differences in Language Processing Skill and Vocabulary Are Evident at 18 Months," *Developmental Science* 16, no. 2 (2013): 234–48.
9. Rosemary C. White-Traut, Michael N. Nelson, Jean M. Silvestri, Minu K. Patel, and Diedre Kilgallon, "Patterns of Physiologic and Behavioral Response of Intermediate Care Preterm Infants to Intervention," *Pediatric Nursing* 19, no. 6 (1993): 625–29.
10. Rosemary C. White-Traut, Michael N. Nelson, Jean M. Silvestri, Nancy Cunningham, and Minu K. Patel, "Responses of Preterm Infants to Unimodal and Multimodal Sensory Intervention," *Pediatric Nursing* 23, no. 2 (1997): 169–77.
11. Joanne Loewy, Kristen Stewart, Ann-Marie Dassler, Aimee Telsey, and Peter Homel, "The Effects of Music Therapy on Vital Signs, Feeding, and Sleep in Premature Infants," *Pediatrics* 131, no. 5 (2013): 902–18.
12. Jayne M. Standley, "The Effect of Music and Multimodal Stimulation on Responses of Premature Infants in Neonatal Intensive Care," *Pediatric Nursing* 24, no. 6 (1998): 532–38.
13. Loewy et al., "The Effects of Music Therapy."
14. Shmuel Arnon, "Music Therapy Intervention in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Environment," *Jornal de Pediatria* 87, no. 3 (2011): 183–85.
15. Kimberly A. Allen, "Music Therapy in the NICU: Is There Evidence to Support Integration for Procedural Support?," *Advances in Neonatal Care* 13, no. 5 (2013): 349–52.
16. Roberta A. Polverini-Rey, "Intrauterine Musical Learning: The Soothing Effect on Newborns of a Lullaby Learned Prenatally," PhD diss., California School of Professional Psychology, 1992.
17. Shannon O'Gorman, "The Infant's Mother: Facilitating an Experience of Infant-Directed Singing with the Mother in Mind," *British Journal of Music Therapy* 20, no. 1 (2006): 22–30.
18. Wendy Vlismas, Stephen Malloch, and Denis Burnham, "The Effects of Music and Movement on Mother-Infant Interactions," *Early Child Development and Care* 183, no. 11 (2013): 1669–88.
19. Brenda Hussey-Gardner, *Understanding My Signals: Help for Parents of Premature Infants*, 3rd ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Vort, 2008).
20. Susan Sonnenschein, Linda Baker, and Robert Serpell, "The Early Childhood Project: A 5-year Longitudinal Investigation of Children's Literacy Development in Sociocultural Contest," in *Literacy Development and Enhancement Across Orthographies and Cultures*, ed. Dorit Aram and Ofra Korat (New York: Springer US, 2010), 85–96.
21. Christine A. Dollaghan, Thomas F. Campbell, Jack L. Paradise, Heidi M. Feldman, Janine E. Janosky, Dayna N. Pitcairn, and Marcia Kurs-Lasky, "Maternal Education and Measures of Early Speech and Language," *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research* 42, no. 6 (1999): 1432–43.
22. Janellen Huttenlocher, Heidi Waterfall, Marina Vasilyeva, Jack Vevea, and Larry V. Hedges, "Sources of Variability in Children's Language Growth," *Cognitive Psychology* 61, no. 4 (2010): 343–65.
23. Erika Hoff, "Interpreting the Early Language Trajectories of Children from Low SES and Language Minority Homes: Implications for Closing Achievement Gaps," *Developmental Psychology* 49, no. 1 (2013): 4014.
24. Jayne M. Standley, "Premature Infants: Perspectives on NICU-MT Practice," *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 14, no. 2 (2014): 1504–1611.

Writing Boxes

The Reading/Writing Connection Supporting Literacy in the Library

LISA VON DRASEK

Making reading and writing fun at the library.

In 1993, I was newly matriculated into a Master's of Library Science program at Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science. I was employed as a Librarian Trainee II with the Brooklyn Public Library, posted to the Park Slope Branch, in a then mixed-class neighborhood.

But I had a dark secret. I couldn't write. To be clear: the thought of college essays and research papers nauseated me. How was I going to get through graduate school? I barely made it through my undergraduate classes by creatively providing and producing alternative assessment products (anything except turning in a research paper). I was the master at avoiding addressing my writing anxiety.

Luck, miracle, or fate brought Sharon A. Edwards and Robert W. Maloy, the authors of *Kids Have All the Write Stuff,* to my small branch library. They were on an author tour for the book, and the publisher offered them to us for a parent education program.

Maloy, a University of Massachusetts professor, and Edwards, an elementary school teacher, created a writing program for young children to inspire them to write on their own. Maloy's research had brought him to Edwards's second-grade class as he was researching writing anxiety in college students, high school students, and younger students on down to elementary-aged children.

Maloy concluded that writing anxiety began at almost the beginning of learning to write in a classroom setting. The pressures of forming the letters on the page, acquiring fine motor skills and emergent literacy skills, and learning to spell all led to rampant perfectionism and paralysis. The consequence was a lifelong inability to put words on a page to communicate ideas.

To encourage writing as an enjoyable activity, Edwards and Maloy provided one "writing box"—filled with materials such as pencils, pens, markers, and paper—to each child in Edwards's class. The children then brought the writing boxes home, with no restrictions.

The children could use as many or as few of the materials as they wanted, as well as write what they wanted, when they wanted, and how they wanted. This experiment succeeded beyond the authors' wildest hopes.

There was an explosion of writing by the students, who created signs, poems, recipes, maps, cartoons, letters, journals, and handmade books. Reading scores improved. Edwards and Maloy determined that the success of the program lay simply in its having provided an opportunity to write, writing materials, and a nonjudgmental writing space for the children.

Lisa Von Drasek *is the curator of the Children's Literature Research Collections of the University of Minnesota Archives and Special Collections. She blogs at https://www.continuum.umn.edu/kerlan/.*

The Writing Box Workshops Eight-Week Program

These suggested workshop topics are in this order as the skills needed build from session to session, with mapmaking being the easiest, moving to the more complicated writing activities.

1. Maps
2. Cartoons
3. Menus and Recipes
4. Hieroglyphics
5. Newspapers and Newsletters, Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter
6. Postcards and Letters
7. Poetry
8. Handmade Books

Each workshop is one hour long. Each suggested program has five common elements:

9. Books related to the topic; we call these mentor texts.
10. Creation of an example by the librarian.
11. Modeling the action of writing.
12. A simple interaction with the children.
13. Twenty to thirty minutes writing time.
14. Five minutes sharing time.
15. Writing boxes that are available for reference checkout during library hours.

Read more about mentor texts at www.teachmentortexts.com/p/what-are-mentor-texts.html#axzz4GcJxej48.

In my library that evening, Edwards and Maloy spoke in very practical terms about literacy, child development, and the reading/writing connection. They encouraged parents to inspire reading and writing by simply giving children materials, a space, and nonjudgmental reflections.[1] As I listened to them describe how to put together writing boxes for school and home, I wondered if we could replicate this as a public library program. As I thought about the paper that was due in my Services to Children class, I wondered if I could give myself permission to write to please myself, to take off the editor's hat, and to be nonjudgmental while I was writing.

I read and reread their book. My goal was to create a safe creative space for writing in our small branch. I persuaded branch librarian Ann Kalkoff to allow an experiment in the children's room. I created writing boxes filled with supplies.

For paper, I raided the recycling bin next to the copier. I set up writing box workshops for the upcoming summer reading program. The well-stocked writing boxes were available as reference materials, to be signed out from the children's reference desk.

My background in children's literature and in working in children's museums informed my understanding of how to structure a weekly workshop around writing. That summer, I experimented with sessions on cartooning, secret codes, retelling fairy tales, picture-book making, jokes, and recipes.

What Worked

The weekly workshops drew in ten to twenty children, ages five to twelve, on Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. as part of our summer reading program. In addition to the materials in the writing boxes, extra supplies were available every afternoon from the reference desk from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Two writing boxes—one for preschoolers and one for elementary children—were available in the children's room to sign out for use in the library. Each contained developmentally appropriate supplies such as rounded safety scissors for the younger set. There was an initial fear that supplies would disappear or be misused. That never happened. We soon also discovered that parents and children enjoyed writing together.

The Asbestos Crisis of 1993

A surprising opportunity to continue the program came when the New York City mayor delayed school openings for eleven days while building workers performed asbestos abatement in more than one hundred schools, including those closest to our branch.[2]

Working parents scrambling for childcare turned to the public libraries as a safe space for their children to be during the day. For the next week or so, we consistently had fifty to sixty children in our branch, happily occupied in reading and writing. This experience confirmed that the workshops and materials were suitable for a diversity of ages and could scale up or down as needed.

We measured the success of the program by the enthusiasm and engagement of the writers and by the number of returning participants. The success inspired us to recruit other branches to participate the next summer, and the program office of the Brooklyn Public Library generously provided materials to any branch that participated.

In the third year of the program, fifty-eight branches engaged in some form of the writing box program. A year later, I presented a workshop at the New York State Library Association Conference to encourage librarians to include writing boxes as part of the New York State Summer Reading Program.

Getting Started

Over the last twenty years, wherever I have been a librarian, there have been writing boxes. I have conducted writing box workshops with librarians and teachers for system-wide trainings for the New York City Department of Education, for Maricopa County libraries in Arizona, at state conferences like that of the Minnesota Library Association, and at the national conference for the American Library Association's Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). It works.

The Why

No one questions the role of youth services librarians in the promotion of literacy. We develop collections for that purpose. We select the best of the best to surround our readers with high-quality materials. We partner with teachers to support their curriculum with high-interest, age-relevant materials. We have responded to the call to provide summer enrichment programs to stem what has been termed the "summer slide" and prevent a loss of reading and math skills in elementary-aged students.[3] Many public libraries are providing summer learning opportunities beyond reading, including STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs and encouraging creativity through maker spaces.[4]

One of the most significant initiatives of ALSC is Every Child Ready to Read @ your library (ECRR). Literacy is the focus of ECRR, which incorporates simple practices based on research to help parents and caregivers develop early literacy skills in children. ECRR helps public libraries have an even greater impact on early literacy through an approach that focuses on educating parents and caregivers.

Teaching the primary adults in a child's life about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture prereading skills at home multiplies the effect of library efforts many times. We would be hard-pressed to find a person who doesn't believe that part of a school's or public library's mission is to support reading fluency or literacy in citizens of all ages.

What isn't so obvious is the reading/writing connection. It is essential that—just as children's librarians are encouraging reading aloud and the sharing of books—we share the joy of writing and communicate how writing is tied to literacy,

A Bill of Writes

This has been adapted from *Kids Have All the Write Stuff,* with permission of the authors. I post this during writing box sessions.

1. I write to please myself.
2. I decide how to use the writing box.
3. I choose what to write and know when it is finished.
4. I am a writer and a reader right now.
5. I have things to say and write every day.
6. I write when I play, and I play when I write.
7. I can write about my experience and my imagination.
8. I spell the way I can and learn to spell as I write.
9. I learn as I write and write as I learn.

particularly since, more than ten years after Edwards's and Maloy's experiences in the classroom, teachers continue to experience students' dismay when faced with writing time.[5]

A More Recent Study

We know that achievement gaps in educational experiences exist for disadvantaged children of all ethnic and racial groups. These children need practice with their attention and fine motor skills, as well as a better understanding of the world around them.[6] We know that the library is the literacy center that welcomes everyone to programs, like storytimes, that feature early literacy skills. I encourage librarians who serve children and young adults to add a component of writing to their literacy programming for all ages.

Reading is decoding the symbols (words constructed of letters of the alphabet) on the page and making meaning from them; writing is creating symbols to communicate meaning. More than once, a preschooler has attended our writing box programs with an older sibling. We simply provide paper taped to the linoleum and two or three large water-soluble markers.

The child creates what we would call scribbles on the page—we perceive random marks. However, if I ask her to tell me what she wrote, the child can point to her symbols and tell me that story. This is the beginning of literacy. She is reading her symbols and communicating to me.[7] A writing box program as part of the public library's summer reading program can increase parent engagement, promote family literacy, and just enhance fun. It is easy to replicate and inexpensive, requires very little prep and no technology, and is relevant to all ages.

Creating Writing Box Programs

While I have been asked about using computers and electronic tablets with writing box programs, I've designed the program deliberately to be low-tech. Low-tech means low cost, accessible, and reproducible.

We ask librarians to create "purposeful programs." A few examples of purposeful writing by young authors are postcards, greeting cards, bookmarks, brochures, menus, ads, personal notes, maps, lists, book recommendations, and newspapers. Even the youngest writers can understand the purpose of these writing formats.

Unlike completing a tedious worksheet, creating this content is an authentic writing experience for the children, the most significant outcome of which is confidence and competency.

At the beginning of each workshop, we ask that the writers engage thoughtfully in a piece of literature or text as a prompt to their writing. As an example, I may begin a workshop session talking about the many kinds of families. My mentor texts

may include Susan Kuklin's *Families*, Todd Parr's *The Family Book*, and John Coy's *Their Great Gift: Courage, Sacrifice, and Hope in a New Land*. I would then read aloud Dan Yaccarino's *All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel*.

On the surface, this is an immigration story. Delving a little deeper, we discover that it is about what gets passed down in families—objects like shovels or pieces of clothing, genetic traits like blue eyes, aptitudes like a talent for singing or drawing. As we reflect on the story, I chart these sorts of things on an easel pad. I may also suggest that we can write about what we hope to pass down to the next generation. (Some children do not have families.) I may mention that I wish to pass down my love of reading or my knowledge about teaching.

It is important to recognize that as librarians we are not imitating "school" practice. During summer reading programs, we are not teaching children to read, and during writing box programs, we are not teaching children to write. We know that self-selection of materials is a key component for readers who are choosing to read. Similarly, we are facilitating writing as a self-selected activity.

Who are these programs for? The structured programs are for ages six through fourteen. Any writing box program can be adapted to meet a range of ages—early elementary (first through third grade), middle elementary (third through fifth grade), or middle school (fifth through eighth grade).

One of the essential components of a successful writing box program is the mentor text. Mentor texts are books or materials that model writing for our writers. Our writers can use these books as inspiration: "I want to do a map like that!" "I LOVE *Baby Mouse*. I am going to write a story about yesterday in gym class, but they are going to be kittens instead of mice."

It is likely that many of the mentor texts suggested (see "Further Reading") are already in your library. Planning a writing box program is a terrific excuse to refresh your collections in these subject areas.

Finding a Good Space

It seems self-evident, but the first thing to do is to find a good space for writing. The children's room is fine. Tables and chairs are great but not essential. My school library had soft, moveable furniture and wooden stools and benches. We did all of our writing on clipboards. Children wrote sitting up, lying down—wherever they were most comfortable.

Even though libraries are not the shushing quiet spaces of yesteryear, it is good to remember that writing is a noisy business. When children and young adults are excited about their work, they are not quiet. Find a room or a space where noisy activity would not be disturbing to others.

Creating a Nonjudgmental Space

Here are some tips for creating an appropriate and comfortable space for writing.

- Stand back while writers are writing.
- Refrain from comparing or complimenting: "I really like that." "Isn't Marly's cartoon cute? Everyone look at Marly's cartoon." These observations foster competition and comparison. Each child's work is unique, and it is freeing to know their work is not being judged.
- Address the writer who wishes to share with an open question: "What would you like to tell me about your work?" "Would you like to read to me what you wrote?"
- Set the room up with books, placed face out, on the related topic.
- Model the writing activity and verbalize why you are doing it: "I am drawing a map. Here is my house. I am writing 'my house.' I am listing who lives in the house. What is across the street? The firehouse is across the street. I am writing 'Firehouse.'"
- Encourage adults to join in—not to observe, but to participate. You might say, "Mrs. Fox, is there anyone that you would like to send a letter to?"
- Encourage older children to help the younger ones at their table, but keep in mind that they should also have their own writing experience.
- Have a dictionary or online spelling resource available, but encourage the children not to worry about spelling, and don't let them get bogged down by it. Remind them that we are writing, not editing.
- In the writing box program, there is no place for awards, ribbons, or prizes. The process *is* the product.

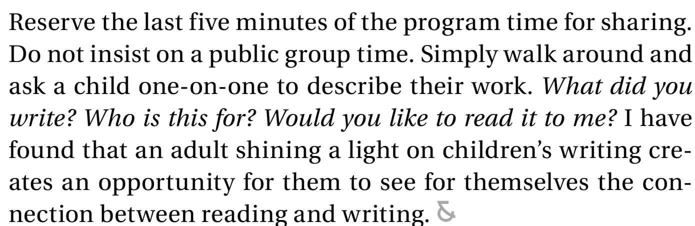
Who Should Participate?

I welcomed anyone who wished to write to participate. This meant moms and dads, caregivers and babysitters, sisters and brothers, teachers and grad students—whoever was interested. The writing box program was initially designed for the school-aged child, but we discovered that there was no reason to limit attendance by age.

Younger preschool siblings can write while kneeling at a table or sitting on the floor with paper taped down in front of them. Sitters can write postcards home while babies are asleep in carriages. Grandfathers have discovered their own artistic and writing talent while creating comic memoirs.

Separating and Supporting the Grown-ups

The writing box program was not a drop-off program. All children ages eight and younger were required to have an adult in the room or nearby (within sight). We encouraged adults to actively participate and to create their own writing piece. Sometimes this meant separating the adult from the child if the adult got too involved with their child's writing, such as making critical comments while the child is writing. Encourage the adults to focus on their own work, and remind them that there will be time for editing later.



Reserve the last five minutes of the program time for sharing. Do not insist on a public group time. Simply walk around and ask a child one-on-one to describe their work. *What did you write? Who is this for? Would you like to read it to me?* I have found that an adult shining a light on children's writing creates an opportunity for them to see for themselves the connection between reading and writing. &

References

1. Heather Vogel Frederick, "'Writing Box' Helps Kids Enjoy Writing, Aids Reading," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 14, 1992, www.csmonitor.com/1992/1214/14121.html.
2. Sam Dillon, "Asbestos in the Schools: Disorder on Day 1 in New York Schools," *New York Times*, September 21, 1993, www.nytimes.com/1993/09/21/us/asbestos-in-the-schools-disorder-on-day-1-in-new-york-schools.html?pagewanted=all.
3. Susan Roman and Carole D. Fiore, "Do Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Achievement Gap?" *Children and Libraries* 8, no. 3 (2010): 27–31.
4. Heather Michele Moorefield-Lang, "Makers in the Library: Case Studies of 3D Printers and Maker Spaces in Library Settings," *Library Hi Tech* 32, no. 4 (2014): 583–93.
5. Kelli R. Paquette, "Encouraging Primary Students' Writing through Children's Literature," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 35, no. 2 (2007): 155–65.
6. David Grissmer, Kevin J. Grimm, Sophie M. Aiyer, William M. Murrah, and Joel S. Steele, "Fine Motor Skills and Early Comprehension of the World: Two New School Readiness Indicators," *Developmental Psychology* 46, no. 5 (2010): 1008–17.
7. Joan Brooks McLane and Gillian Dowley McNamee, "Beginnings of Literacy," *Zero to Three Journal* 12, no. 1 (September 1991): www.zerotothree.org/resources/1056-beginnings-of-literacy.

Further Reading

The following is a suggested list of mentor texts.

Coy, John. *Their Great Gift: Courage, Sacrifice, and Hope in a New Land*. Photographs by Wing Young Huie. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2016.

González, Xelena. *All Around Us. Illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2017.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald. *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. Illustrated by James Ransome. New York: Clarion, 1991.

Kuklin, Susan. *Families*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

Lin, Grace. *Dim Sum For Everyone*. New York: Random House, 2001.

Parr, Todd. *The Family Book*. New York: Little, Brown, 2010.

Phi, Bao. *A Different Pond*. Illustrated by Thi Bui. Mankato, MN: Capstone Young Readers, 2017.

Wong, Janet S. *Apple Pie Fourth of July*. Illustrated by Margaret Chodos. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

Yaccarino, Dan. *All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.

The Better to See You With

Peering into the Story of Little Red Riding Hood, 1695–1939

ANGELA J. REYNOLDS

I received the 2017 Bechtel Fellowship and spent a month in Gainesville, Florida, from mid-April through mid-May, trekking each day to the University of Florida. There I pored over hundreds of volumes containing the story of Little Red Riding Hood and spent my weekends compiling data or visiting wildlife parks in search of alligators (which were in abundance).

The story of Little Red Riding Hood has fascinated me since childhood, and now I am even more intrigued. Intense study of this story has led me to many fine explorations into the tale and has helped me understand the history of children's book publishing. The Bechtel Fellowship gave me the opportunity to learn a great deal about a specific story, and sharing this knowledge enables me to spread my love of story and children's books with others. Below is my report from my month of study.

Allow me to introduce you to a little girl. She can often be seen wearing a red hooded cape, blue aproned dress, and Mary Jane shoes. Sometimes she's wearing a red cap and wooden clogs. On occasion, she's in fancy dress, as though she's attending a party. She walks through the woods to visit her grandmother, who is not feeling well. She meets a wolf. You know how this story ends . . . *or do you?*

Anyone familiar with children's literature has certainly read several versions of the Little Red Riding Hood story. But many do not know the history of this story, which has been around for at least three hundred years, likely more.

A Latin manuscript written in 1022 contains a poem in which a little girl in a red cloak is taken by a wolf, but the wolf cubs are unable to eat her because of her red cloak.[1] Some folklorists say that this is not a Little Red Riding Hood story, but there are certainly elements of the familiar tale.

1864 illustration by Alfred Fredericks.

Charles Perrault's first published version of the tale, "Le petit chaperon rouge" (1697), is often regarded as the first time the story has been seen in print. And yet scholars agree that Perrault likely heard the folktale and fashioned it into a literary story both palatable and instructional to the French court (the story was crafted for adults, not children).

The tale that Perrault most likely heard is known as "The Grandmother's Tale," a gory version found in France and Italy in which the girl unknowingly eats her own grandmother (the wolf as Granny invites her to enjoy some meat and wine). In this version, the girl escapes the wolf.

Angela J. Reynolds *is the Community Engagement Coordinator for Annapolis Valley Regional Library in Nova Scotia, Canada. She served on the 2015 Caldecott Committee, has been reviewing children's books and audios since 1996, and spends much of her spare time reading.*

Skip forward to 1812 in Germany, when the Brothers Grimm first publish their version of the tale, “Little Red Cap.” Also in the 1800s, French author Charles Marelles published a version of the story, “Little Golden Hood,” elements of which sneak into the oeuvre of the tale.

Versions appear in Asia, often with the wolf as a tiger, though most folklorists believe that the tale did not originate in Asia; rather, they believe that the Asian versions are based on the European tale. It is interesting to note that in the Asian versions, as in “The Grandmother’s Tale,” the girl outwits the wolf and escapes.

The first published English version appears in 1729, translating the “petit chaperon rouge” into “Little Red Riding Hood.” A red hooded cape was commonly worn as a riding or traveling cloak in rural England, and so this image easily hopped the channel from France to England. Until 1823, when the Grimm version was first translated into English, the Perrault version was the one known by English speakers and readers.

Key Differences

“Grandmother’s Tale” elements: There is no mention of red hood or cap; the girl carries bread and milk to Grandmother; and Wolf asks if she will take path of needles or pins. Granny Wolf invites her to eat food (which is actually her grandmother); Granny Wolf says “undress and get in bed”; and the girl remarks, “Granny, how hairy you are.” The girl has to pee (or poop); Wolf says do it in the bed, but the girl says no. The girl tells Granny Wolf to tie the rope around her leg so she can go outside, and the girl unties the rope and escapes. There is no moral.

Perrault elements: The little girl is the prettiest around; she gets no warning from Mother. She takes biscuits and pot of butter to Grandmother; Wolf says I’ll take this path, you take that one, see who gets there first. Wolf doesn’t want to eat her in the woods because a woodsman nearby might hear and kill him. The girl loiters; Grandmother dies; and at Grandmother’s, Granny Wolf says “pull the bobbin” to come inside and tells the girl to get into bed. Little Red dies. The moral: young girls should be wary of—and not fooled by—wolves.

Grimm elements: The sweetest girl takes cake and bottle of wine to Grandmother; Mother warns her not to tarry or stray from the path. Wolf suggests she enjoy the walk; Little Red loiters, picking flowers. Granny says to “lift the latch”; Granny is eaten, Little Red is eaten; and Wolf snores. A hunter hears the snores, slits open Wolf’s belly with a knife, and Granny and Little Red get out and fill the Wolf’s belly with stones, and Wolf tries to get up but dies. (The original ends with an alternate story of Little Red learning her lesson and not being fooled next time.)

“Little Golden Hood” elements: The story is Grimm-based, but the “hood” is golden (fire colored). Granny is away, the

Early woodcut, with windmill in background (1820).

hood is magical and saves Little Red, and Granny catches and kills Wolf.

By the Numbers

While researching the Baldwin collection at the University of Florida, I looked at a little more than 200 individual books. This report is limited to those books published between 1695 and 1939. I refer to 158 individual books in this study. I chose 1939 as a stopping point for these reasons: there are many changes in publishing after World War II; however, I wanted to include some of the early 1900s books up through the 1930s to showcase the rapid changes in illustration during the early twentieth century. (The images can be seen in the accompanying slideshows; see “References” for links.)

In addition to the “standard” Perrault and Grimm versions, I uncovered at least 14 distinct story lines or “hybrid” versions in the books. The numbers below add up to larger than 158, as some stories shared story lines of several versions. The versions are charted in table 1.

The most common version is one in which Grandmother dies and stays dead, but Little Red is saved, often by a hunter, woodsman, or her father (50); next is the standard Perrault version (38) and then the standard Grimm version (12).

Version	Description	Instances of Version
Perrault (standard)	see above	38
Grimm (standard)	see above	12
Hybrid 001	Perrault Grimm Alt: Granny hides in closet, LITTLE RED saved, Wolf dies	10
Hybrid 002	Perrault Grimm saved: Granny dies, LITTLE RED is saved, Wolf dies	50
Hybrid 003	Grimm Wolf: Granny and LITTLE RED live, Wolf dies (no one eaten)	1
Hybrid 004	Perrault Grimm zoo: Granny and LITTLE RED live, Wolf taken to zoo	3
Hybrid 005	Original story with characters or plot lines from LITTLE REDRH	7
Hybrid 006	Grimm alt: LITTLE RED and Granny removed, Wolf spared	1
Hybrid 007	Perrault Grimm Fairy: Granny dies, LITTLE RED saved, Wolf dies. LITTLE RED meets 3 magical creatures	8
Hybrid 008	Perrault Grimm revenge: Granny and LITTLE RED eaten, Father or Woodsman kill Wolf for his cruelty	6
Hybrid 009	Perrault Grimm food: food is stolen while LITTLE RED wanders around loitering	3
Hybrid 010	Perrault Grimm Golden Hood: Granny is away; LITTLE RED not eaten, Hunter kills Wolf	7
Hybrid 011	Grimm hybrid: Granny runs away from Wolf, LITTLE RED escapes from Wolf, Woodsman and Granny chase Wolf (no one dies). Similar to 004	2
Hybrid 012	Grimm alternate: Granny eaten, but later cut out. LITTLE RED saved by Woodsman, Wolf killed	7
Hybrid 013	Grimm alternates: Disney - both Little Red and Grandmother get in closet, saved by #3 Pig.	1
Hybrid 014	Grimm variant: Everyone dies (Hunter shoots Wolf). May include second Grimm ending.	5

Coming in for a close fourth is a version influenced by Golden Hood, in which Granny hides in a closet, and Little Red is saved from the wolf.

Several versions make note that it was acceptable that the grandmother dies because she was old. A book published in 1906 in Chicago states, “but as she was a very good old woman, it was better for her to die than to live in pain.”[2]

Some of the versions give us further information about wolves, who enjoy eating humans. A few versions end with the wolf being skinned to make a coat or rug for Little Red, to remind her of what has happened to poor Granny. Several save the Wolf, selling him off to a zoo or animal show, and one saves those proceeds in a trust for Little Red when she is older. One version ends in fire, another with the ghost of Little Red. One is set in Japan with an alligator in place of the Wolf. In addition to the hunter or woodsman, Little Red is sometimes saved by wasps, birds, cats, hunting dogs, or her grandmother.

The food carried by Little Red is typical, with some interesting additions or changes. In the Perrault version, she takes biscuits (*galettes*) and a pot of butter (though some translators give this as custard and butter); in Grimm, she takes cake and a bottle of wine (that same bottle of wine that caused trouble for the Trina Schart Hyman version in 1990).[3] Very often, she sets off with cheesecakes, which were made as far back as the fourteenth century (a medieval recipe can be found that is quite similar to the cheesecakes we know today, only with much less sugar).[4] Other food items include fresh-killed chicken, honey, eggs, jelly or jam, apples, griddlecakes, gingerbread, pie, soup, tea, and, in a couple of original tales, chocolate, ice cream, and cream puffs.

As we can see, many variations of this story can be found. Textual differences may portray local or historical times (as in food), and plot lines often depict popular philosophies of the day, including the contemporary perceptions of children or the elderly. In the Perrault version, the lesson is this: little girls, do not be deceived by the wolf; your life will be over if you are. In Grimm, however, it is this: little girls, be obedient, stay on the path, and don’t talk to strangers, but if you do disobey, there’s a man waiting to save you.

“The Grandmother’s Tale” (remember, this is likely the tale that Perrault drew from) shows the girl able to learn from her experience, perhaps consuming the wisdom of her grandmother (literally), and she escapes. The girl gains power and knowledge. In both Perrault and Grimm, and all the versions encountered up to 1940, the girl is helpless, eaten or saved, though she does begin to develop a bit of sense after World War I.

One may ask, What is this story really about? Some scholars and feminists believe it is a tale of rape: the girl encounters a stranger in the woods, gets in bed with this stranger, and is consequently devoured. Certainly, the Perrault moral warns of this very happenstance; yet, the legal definition of rape in Perrault’s time pertains more to the “owner” of the girl (her father) than to the girl—a girl was her father’s property until she was married, and damaged goods (i.e., nonvirginal) were of less value. This may sound harsh to our modern sensibilities, but this was the reality of seventeenth-century French aristocracy.

An interesting tidbit from this era is that when a girl lost her virginity, it was said that she had “seen the wolf.”[5] One may interpret this story as a girl willingly getting into bed with a “wolf,” with Perrault delivering a moral statement warning young women not to do this. Indeed, the illustration of Perrault’s original manuscript shows a girl unafraid of the wolf she is in bed with; in fact, she lovingly pets the wolf’s face.

Hand-colored, adolescent girl in fancy bonnet (1840).

Knave aſked where ſhe was going ſo early.

Little Riding Hood ſaid, I am going

Early chapbook (1814).

Other interpretations lean toward lessons of obedience; much of early children's literature contains a moralistic tone. The Grimm version does include the girl being devoured, but she is later saved. She disobeys her mother by dallying in the forest, picking flowers, thereby symbolizing a lazy child engaged in useless pursuits. Yet she is saved by a hunter, woodsman, or her father—a man to the rescue. Many of the illustrations of this version show the girl clinging to her savior. Both interpretations make sense for the time periods and contemporary modes of thought.

Another interpretation is the warning to children of being alone in the woods. The woods are dangerous for a young child alone (and in early European history, likely even more so). There were certainly wolves and other wild animals that could prey on a child. And then there are the werewolves.[6]

In 1590, there was a famous case of Stubbe Peter in Germany; a popular subject for broadsheets, this case became well-known all over Europe. Earlier cases, such as those from 1340 and 1460 in Scotland, and perhaps even a few Norse instances, set the belief in werewolves firmly in the European mind.

In each case, a man has preyed on children, engaging in incest or cannibalizing them. The man was said to become a wolf at certain times, usually after making a pact with the devil or due to witchcraft. In many cases, the man confesses with a wild tale of transformation and a hunger to seek out young children to eat. These tales were taken seriously, and many a "werewolf" went to trial. In "The Grandmother's Tale," the wolf is named as *bizou*, which is sometimes translated as "werewolf."

A Note on Illustrations

In this study, I focus on two of the most common illustrations—meeting the wolf, and wolf as Granny. Many of the illustrated books also contain an illustration of Little Red and her mother, but not all do (especially not the Perrault versions, which do not include a warning from Mother either); therefore, this study focuses on these two iconic images.

Nearly every illustrated Little Red Riding Hood tale will contain the image of the girl and the wolf in the woods. This is the most common image: if there is only one image in the story, it is most likely this one. Differences may be seen in how close the girl stands to the wolf, the size of the wolf compared to the girl, if the wolf is dressed in man's clothing, and the age of the girl. How far into the woods are they? Are the woods deep, with no sign of civilization? Are they at a crossroads? Are the woods dark and scary, or are there flowers, cheerful mushrooms, and bunnies?

Looking at the wolf, does his shadow overwhelm the girl? Is she afraid of him? Is his tongue out in a leering manner? Are his teeth showing? Do Little Red and the Wolf gaze at each other? And for Little Red, how is she dressed? How old is she (a young child or adolescent)? Does she carry a basket? What can we tell about her personality from the images?

In the Perrault story, the girl gets into bed with the wolf, and so we often see the image of Little Red in bed with Granny Wolf. In the Grimm versions, the image depicted is often Little Red standing at Granny's bedside. When the girl is in bed with the wolf, in the earlier illustrations we see the wolf looming above her, then later they sit next to one another under the covers.

In the bedside images, most common is the wolf as Granny with blankets pulled up, wearing Granny's night cap, with the girl standing at the foot or side of the bed. Often the bed is curtained, and the wolf may be turned away so that the girl cannot see him well. In later books, readers may see the wolf attacking the girl or the wolf being killed.

The history of children's literature can be traced through the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. From the "written for adults" Perrault manuscript of 1695, with an illustration of a

"The Gaze," 1885.

red-capped girl caressing the wolf in her curtained bed; the chapbooks with their rough woodcuts, featuring a large wolf and an ageless, nondescript girl in a hooded cape; the early engravings; and Gustave Doré's iconic, lush, seductive, and often imitated images; to Walter Crane's well-heeled man-wolf, infantilized golden-haired cherubs of the 1890s, and the flapper-inspired, large-eyed Kewpie doll depictions—throughout, we can see the history of book publishing, the changes in how Westerners view children, and the evolution of the tale.

In early woodcuts and chapbooks, the wolf is generally large, and the girl may appear to be an old woman or a very nondescript human. Early publications featuring images often used rough woodcuts, and the same images were used over and over. A printer might use the same woodcut for several different stories, which gave generic images with little detail (publishers used this same method once books became popular, repurposing plates for different editions).

The early printers were not concerned with fine art: the images caught the eye of the public and helped sell the chapbooks and broadsheets; they rarely advanced the story or were considered art.

In the early woodcuts, Little Red wears the hooded cape, a result of the 1729 translation of the "Red Riding Hood." By the 1830s, images appear of the girl in a bonnet, sometimes with a cape. The German story is "Little Red Cap," and so she does not have the full riding cloak, while the Perrault translation can be seen as a fancy hat or "chaperon." It is the English illustrators who don the girl in her red hooded cape. Usually she wears an aproned dress—once color is introduced, her dress is almost always blue with a white apron (this may be due to lack of color options, or perhaps to the original Perrault image of a young woman in a blue gown).

In early depictions, the girl and the wolf are near trees, and there is often a house or a windmill in the background. This windmill comes from the Perrault version, as the girl tells the wolf that her grandmother lives near the mill. By the 1860s, the windmill disappears, and the woods tend to become darker and more menacing. This is perhaps a nod to the fact that more people are living in cities, moving away from nature and agrarian lifestyles to a more urban and mechanized life—perhaps to symbolize the Victorian idea that nature was both grand and horrifying.

From the very beginning, the girl looks directly at the wolf. In the text, she is unafraid, presumably because she knows no better. By 1838, she can be seen looking at the wolf in what appears to be disdain; have the illustrators begun to give her more personality?

In an 1864 color illustration by Alfred Fredericks,[7] the girl is shown looking down at the wolf in alarm. This is the earliest illustration I encountered that had the look of fine art—an illustration that gave the reader a bit more information and advanced the text.

By 1865, Gustave Doré depicts her as a girl with attitude—she is unafraid, but she does not appear to be a simpering child with no wits about her. In a famous illustration, the girl and the wolf are very close, nearly touching. The wolf looks down at her, and she looks up, as if to say, "I know you, I know who you are." It is at once sensual and slightly terrifying, as nature was in the poetry of the late Victorian times.

Doré's 1865 depiction of the girl and the wolf in bed is even more so, showing her pulling the covers up as if she has suddenly become modest, and she gives Granny Wolf a look with furrowed brow that says, "What is going on here?" While Doré was not the first to depict the girl and the wolf in bed like this, his illustration is recognized as fine art—one of the first uses of fine art in children's book illustration.

Published on the cusp of the 1870s when children's books began to be profitable items, it was often copied and imitated, perhaps signaling the idea that the girl can show emotion beyond that of a sweet little innocent child.

Analysis of Meeting the Wolf

The Gaze: In the earliest versions examined, mainly rough woodcuts, the girl and the wolf are looking at one another.[8] They face each other, or the girl looks over her shoulder at the wolf, or looks down as the wolf looks over or up at her. They are generally quite close to one another, and around the time that the Doré illustrations emerge, they move closer, often touching. The look on the girl's face is often coy or innocent—the text implies that she does not know any better, that she is unaware that the wolf is devious or dangerous. The illustrations very often show a look that has been described as seductive. This "gaze" appears as early as 1836 and is seen throughout the history of the illustrated tale. Though the depiction of the girl changes in dress style and age, you can count on her gazing into the eye of the wolf and him leering back at her.

Clothing: Clothing styles do change somewhat, reflecting the styles of the day, including red velvet capes with white fur in lavish Christmas editions for the Victorians and stylish capes in the 1920s. We see wooden shoes in the Grimm versions, and when the girl is shown as very young, her dress is shorter as befits a young child. Her hooded cloak is described most often as red, but on occasion it is crimson or scarlet, and it may be made of silk, velvet, or satin. Yet throughout the history of the tale, we recognize this girl in her red hooded cape, her blue aproned dress, and perhaps a red bonnet or cap.

It is interesting to note that "The Grandmother's Tale" includes no mention of red clothing; many scholars assume that Perrault added the color red to make her stand out, to dress her in aristocratic fashion. However, if one considers the 1022 manuscript, the girl is dressed in a red cloak in that story—perhaps the red was there all along.

Visually, we read these clues: a girl in deep woods, alone with a wild animal. Sharp angles in the teeth that show in the wolf's mouth indicate danger. The angles of trees and the dark, crowded woods increase the feeling of fear, as "dark" equals "scary" in visual terms. The wolf may be larger than the girl, which adds to the feeling of danger.

In Perrault versions, woodsmen are often seen working in the background, diminishing the sense of danger slightly, but building tension for the danger to come once the girl is completely alone with the wolf. Little changed in the composition of the meeting image other than the position of the wolf, the amount of space between girl and wolf, and the size of the wolf.

While the composition of the meeting stays relatively the same, the addition of color and the improvement of printing processes gave us better images. As we move into the 1860s and through the 1890s, the girl gains a bit of attitude. We see emotion in her face—fear, astonishment, sassiness, doubt, concern. Her stance changes: she can be seen looking down or over, often in fear or bemusement. She may have her hand on her hip, as if to say "Really?" Her emotional range in the illustrations extends our understanding of the girl far beyond what the text tells us, as she is depicted in the text almost always as innocent and even silly or vapid.

The wolf is predictable—open mouth, teeth showing, often with the tongue out as though he is hungry. Walter Crane dresses the wolf and stands him as a man in 1875, and by the early 1900s, the clothed wolf is more common, and the wolf himself becomes a little more comical, as in William Wallace Denslow's depiction in 1903.[9]

What Big Eyes You Have . . .

The first published image associated with the tale of the girl in the red bonnet comes via Perrault in 1695.[10] The Baldwin collection owns a facsimile of a handwritten manuscript acquired in 1953 by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.[11] In this image, there's a young woman (not a young girl), in bed, wearing a red hood or cap. She looks up at the wolf, who is in bed, atop her.

She is not afraid; in fact, she appears to caress the wolf's face. The bed is surrounded by a curtain, she is dressed in a blue robe, and her shoes are on the floor by the bed. These images will linger with the tale throughout history—the curtained bed, the blue dress, the loving—or at least unafraid—gaze into the wolf's eyes. This tiny gouache painting is 322 years old and has staying power.

This image is repeated in woodcuts found in the chapbooks of the 1800–1840 era. Into the later 1830s, the image becomes girl and Granny Wolf in bed together and is immortalized in Doré's image of 1862 (painting) and 1865 (engraving as published illustration). In this image is a slightly modest girl, pulling the blanket up as she looks at the wolf with shock, disdain, and perhaps a sudden realization of her error. These "in bed together" images appear in the Perrault versions or in the versions that are hybrids with heavy Perrault influence.

In the Grimm story, the girl does not get in bed with the wolf as she does in the Perrault tale; she approaches the bed and "comes closer" as Granny asks. The image in the Grimm or Grimm-heavy hybrids is the girl, next to the bed, often peering into a curtained bed, or looking closely at the wolf who is hidden under the blankets or quilt. She is often at the foot of the bed, holding her basket, or next to Granny Wolf.

By the 1870s, she shows shock and amazement at her Granny's long, furry arms or large nose. In the late 1860s to 1890s, a trend emerges that takes this image a bit further, showing the actual killing of the wolf by spear, pitchfork, knife, gun, etc. It was not uncommon to find images of a dead wolf on the floor, blood pooling around him. Seems the children of yore were not as tender as the children of today.

Conclusions

It is somewhat surprising that the images have changed so little over the history of the story. The meeting image has changed more than the Granny Wolf image. There are two basic Granny Wolf images: the girl in bed with the wolf, and the girl next to the bed with Granny Wolf under blankets. A chair by the bedside; Granny Wolf in glasses, nightgown, and cap; shoes by the bed; and curtain around the bed are common to the depiction.

As we have seen, the meeting image has quite a few variations: The girl may be sitting or picking flowers; the woods may be deep and dark; the girl may be gazing at the wolf; the wolf may be large or more doglike; his mouth may be open and showing teeth. There may be woodsmen in the image; there may be a windmill in the background. There are more variables in the composition of the meeting image than in the Granny Wolf image.

Textually, the meeting is nearly always the same in the story: the girl is walking along a path in the woods and meets the wolf. She talks to the wolf. All versions have this element in common, but there is more variation in the *imagery*; perhaps the textual consistency allows the artist to elaborate and tell us more about the subtler details of the story. In the Granny Wolf image, the images are very consistent, and yet the *story's* resolution has many variants: Grandmother and Red are eaten and die; Grandmother and Red are eaten and then later cut out and saved; Grandmother is eaten and dies, while Red is saved and the wolf is killed; Grandmother is away on other business and Red is saved; Grandmother hides in a closet and Red is saved. These variations occur textually, and yet the image of Red and Granny Wolf is confined to one of two standard motifs.

Folklore scholars have written much on this story. Psychologists have analyzed it; feminists have lambasted it. Filmmakers have run wild with the story, and modern picture-book makers renew the story on a regular basis. Folktale specialist Jack Zipes has devoted a whole book to the story, its origins, its possible meanings, and its different versions.[12]

An Internet search will turn up countless articles and websites featuring this tale. It has become integral to the Western mind and has spread into Asia. As a children's story, the original tale may seem frightening. In fact, in an informal poll I conducted of nearly twenty youth librarians, all said they would not share the Grimm version with preschool children in a library setting, and yet parents have volunteered that "Little Red Riding Hood" is a favorite with their preschool-aged child.

Are we, as adults, afraid to share the tale for fear of frightening children? Do children understand that this is a warning story, and just that—a story? Can a story be just a story? Is it best to share a version that is updated with the mores of our current society? Whatever the answers may be, there are as many and more versions readily available of a tale that has been around for hundreds of years.

In this article, I examine 158 individual books published between 1695 and 1939 (the 1695 example was a facsimile of a manuscript held in the Morgan Library and Museum). Among them were 2 books published before 1800, 83 published between 1800 and 1890, 73 published between 1890 and 1939, 71 published in the United Kingdom, 77 published in the United States, 2 published in France, and 8 by unknown publishers.

References

1. "Codex 196," 59v, CEEC: Codices Electronici Ecclesiae Coloniensis, University of Köln, Germany, accessed November 13, 2017, www.ceec.uni-koeln.de/ceec-cgi/kleioc/0010/exec/pagepro/%22kn28%2d0196%5f118.jpg%22/segment/%22body%22.
2. *Little Red Riding Hood* (Chicago: Donohue and Co., 1906).
3. John L. Mitchell, "Big Bad Bottle of Wine Does in Red Riding Hood Schoolbook," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1990, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-05-19/local/me-82_1_red-riding-hood.
4. James L. Matterer, "Sambocade Cheesecake," *A Boke of Gode Cookery Recipes*, 2000, www.godecookery.com/goderec/grec17.htm.
5. Catherine Ornstein, *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 26.
6. Sabine Baring-Gould, *The Book of Werewolves* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co, 1865), https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433068179609;view=1up;seq=11.
7. R. Henry Stoddard, *Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: J. G. Gregory, 1864), 11.
8. Angela J. Reynolds, "The Better to See You With, Part 1: Exploring Little Red Riding Hood at the Baldwin Collection, University of Florida" (Bechtel Fellowship, 2017), accessed Nov. 13, 2017, www.slideshare.net/AngelaAVRL/the-better-to-see-you-with-part-1.
9. W. W. Denslow, *W. W. Denslow's Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: G. W. Gillingham Co., 1903).
10. Angela J. Reynolds, "The Better to See You With, Part 2: Exploring Little Red Riding Hood at the Baldwin Collection, University of Florida" (Bechtel Fellowship, 2017), accessed November 13, 2017, www.slideshare.net/AngelaAVRL/the-better-to-see-you-with-part-2.
11. Charles Perrault, *Contes de la mère l'oye* [Tales of Mother Goose] (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1956).
12. Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Far from a Drag

How One Library Embraced Drag Queen Story Hour

CHELSEA CONDREN

Drag Queen Harmonica Sunbeam reads to pre-K students at Hudson Park Library in New York.

Children's librarians and drag queens have more in common than our shared love of glitter.

When Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) approached the Early Literacy Department at the New York Public Library (NYPL) to ask us about facilitating their programs in our branches, we were eager to get started. Conceived of by Michelle Tea and Radar Productions in San Francisco, DQSH now operates out of Los Angeles, New York, and New Jersey, inspires events around the world, and can be found at DragQueenStoryHour.org.

The concept is simple—drag queens reading stories to children in libraries, schools, camps, and other educational settings. Their goal, listed on the website's home page, is even simpler—to "give kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models."

After the NYPL Early Literacy Department met with the New York DQSH representatives, we decided to launch the program in twelve branches around Manhattan and the Bronx, basing the decision primarily on branch library staff we knew would support the program and encourage families to attend.

We were provided a stipend for each event to fund supplies, pay the performer, and support the DQSH organization overall from support provided by the private donors who partially fund the Early Literacy Department. There was no additional cost to NYPL to host these events.

Once we reached out to branch staff to schedule the events, the Early Literacy Department hosted a Story Time 101 workshop for all the participating drag queens. This was wildly successful and fun, and it was one of the most important steps in our process.

While the drag queens have experience performing and working with crowds, they welcomed the opportunity to learn best practices for storytimes and read alouds, as well as to practice with the children's books we provided. We also provided guidelines with quick tips on program length, handling disruptions, choosing popular songs to sing, and the importance of taking wiggle breaks!

We created a book list for suggested age-appropriate titles (babies and toddlers, pre-K and up) and categories. We included in this list story-time favorites—such as Mo Willems's *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and Sandra Boynton's *Moo, Baa, La, La La*—so our performers had titles they knew were likely to generate positive engagement.

We also included titles with diverse families and gender expression, such as Gayle Pittman's *This Day in June* and J. J. Austrian's *Worm Loves Worm*. Most programs included a

Chelsea Condren *is an Early Literacy Coordinator for the New York Public Library. She received her master's degree in library and information science in 2014 from the University of Denver, where she was also an Early Childhood Fellow.*

mix of both kinds of books, and, of course, many of them transcended categories. These resources were helpful for both branch staff and performers, enabling them to pull titles in advance.

Because of the potentially sensitive nature of this program, the early literacy team provided our email addresses as a point of contact should any patrons have comments, questions, or concerns—but frankly, we received none. We were told by branch staff that a few patrons verbally expressed that they would not be attending, and our social media pages contained a few negative comments, but there was otherwise little pushback.

In addition to implementing a program that would joyfully engage families and children, and providing our staff with appropriate resources, our priority was that the DQSH performers felt safe and welcome in our communities.

DQSH has their own marketing, as does the NYPL. We joined forces to create a branch flier, and branch staff often chose to schedule their program around a regular weekly storytime to ensure families would be available. Because this program generates national attention, representatives from BuzzFeed Video and the *New York Times* attended programs, so we had photo-release forms for parents in case their children were photographed.

Ultimately, we have been thrilled by the reception this program has received. "The ultimate goal is for this to be normal and not feel different," parent Hayley Brewer told BuzzFeed Video about drag queen Harmonica Sunbeam's visit to the Washington Heights Library.

Children's Librarian Jessica Espejel noted, "As a children's librarian, you are always worried whether your community will be receptive . . . our parents were very gung-ho and excited! We even had a parent come up to us and say, 'I am so excited to bring my child to this. This is something I wouldn't be able to experience in my native country [of Poland].'"

If you are in one of the cities where the DQSH team operates, the program is strongly recommended. If you are not in one of these areas, you can still do a similar program. DQSH's website provides contact information for those who are inspired by these events and want to reach out to their local LGBTQ community to offer similar programming in schools, summer camps, and, of course, public libraries.

Here's to freedom of expression and paper crowns for all!

For more information on the DQSH, visit www.dragqueenstoryhour.org.

Barnes, Turk Win Keats Honors

Derrick Barnes, author of *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Agate Bolden/Denene Millner Books) has been awarded the 2018 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award for New Writer. The book's illustrator Gordon C. James also won a New Illustrator Honor for the book. The 2018 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award winner for New Illustrator went to Evan Turk, for *Muddy: The Story of Blues Legend Muddy Waters* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers), written by Michael Mahin.

Derrick Barnes

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, in partnership with the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at The University of Southern Mississippi, presents the awards; this is their 32nd year. The winning new writer and new illustrator will each receive $3,000, triple the amount awarded in previous years.

New Writer honors went to Rachael Cole, for *City Moon* (Schwartz & Wade); Jessixa Bagley, for *Laundry Day* (Roaring Brook); and Elaine Magliaro for *Things To Do* (Chronicle Books). In addition to James, New Illustrator honors went to Bianca Diaz for *The One Day House* (Charlesbridge); E. B. Goodale for *Windows* (Candlewick Press). A New Writer honor and New Illustrator honor went to Bao Phi (writer) and Thi Bui (illustrator), for *A Different Pond* (Capstone Young Readers).

The 2018 award ceremony will be held April 12, during the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

To be eligible for the 2018 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, the author and/or illustrator had no more than three children's picturebooks published prior to the year under consideration. The selection committee, comprising nationally recognized early childhood education specialists, librarians, illustrators, and experts in children's literature, included chair K. T. Horning, Angela Johnson, Claudette McLinn, Sean Qualls, Don Tate, Lettycia Terrones, Caroline Ward, Junko Yokota, and Paul O. Zelinsky.

PEER-REVIEWED

Storytime in a Box

The Cooperative Approach to Preschool Storytime Planning

KATIE BOWERS, VIVIAN HOWARD, AND ALISON BROWN

Preschool storytimes have been a standard public library offering for more than one hundred years.[1] Most public libraries offer preschool storytimes several times per week and follow a familiar pattern of read-aloud stories intermixed with sing-alongs, action songs, and finger plays, frequently connected to a weekly theme. Planning for these weekly story-time sessions can take a significant amount of staff time, as staff choose a theme and then select relevant, age-appropriate, and appealing stories, songs, and activities to fill the time slot.

In multibranch library systems, this planning is often replicated at each branch, as each youth services team prepares its own unique program offerings. In search of greater efficiency, some public library systems have experimented with other models of program planning, with planning being done centrally for the entire system or by several branches partnering to work together. Is there a single model of program planning that works best and that staff prefer?

This research study evaluates staff opinions of cooperative program planning for preschool storytimes in a regional Canadian multibranch public library system, serving a geographic area that includes urban, suburban, and rural communities. This library system, which declined to be named, recently piloted a cooperative preschool program planning model at eleven of its fourteen branches. Prior to this pilot, all but three of the fourteen branches in the system planned their preschool story-time programs independently, with all program planning being done in branch.

In the pilot, participating branches were partnered with one or two other branches, each of which planned a set number of programs for a session and then shared these programs with their partner branches. Thus, in branches participating in the pilot, youth services staff were only responsible for planning a fraction of the number of preschool story-time sessions in comparison with staff at the "independent" branches.

This study surveyed staff at all fourteen branches, asking their opinions and attitudes about which method of program planning they considered to be more efficient and which they preferred as an approach to story-time planning. The survey was accompanied by two follow-up interviews with library staff members. The report that follows provides an overview of relevant prior research followed by a summary of our

Katie Bowers *is a 2016 graduate of the MLIS program at Dalhousie University in Canada.* ***Vivian Howard*** *is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean Academic in the School of Information Management at Dalhousie University.* ***Alison Brown*** *is a 2017 graduate of the MLIS program at Dalhousie University, where she completed a thesis exploring the profound outcomes of a shared reading program for incarcerated mothers and their families.*

findings related to library staff attitudes and recommendations for preschool story-time planning.

The Benefits of Shared Reading

Evidence-based research has, for decades, consistently demonstrated that young children benefit in multiple ways from shared story reading. These benefits include a lifelong love of reading; a deepened understanding of the world; improved early literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills; increased empathy and compassion; improved confidence and creativity; better academic performance once they enter the school system; and strengthened family bonds.[2]

Research clearly demonstrates that early exposure to reading supports young children's development of early literacy skills that are crucial to academic success and personal development, including vocabulary, phonics, and language development; grammatical understanding; and knowledge of print concepts.[3] Shared early reading experiences are a strong predictor of reading success, and children who were read to regularly and often as preschoolers demonstrate improved listening, attention, and comprehension skills once they begin formal schooling.[4]

Researchers have found that the quality of the reading experience is vitally important and matters even more than the quantity of early reading experiences in supporting literacy skills and facilitating language development.[5] Interactive, engaged, dialogic reading that prompts thoughtful conversation, reflection, and critical thinking has been shown to increase children's literacy and social skills.[6]

In a 2006 study, Daniel Weigel, Sally Martin, and Kymberley Bennet noted, "Parents who express positive attitudes about reading and actively engage their children in literacy-enhancing activities are creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm for literacy and learning."[7]

Shared family reading, together with parental demonstration and promotion of reading, increases the likelihood that children will read for pleasure in the future.[8] Importantly, research suggests that children who have access to books at home and whose parents or caregivers promote reading for pleasure are more likely to be strong, confident readers, regardless of socioeconomic status.[9] The benefits of reading for pleasure extend beyond long-term education gains. A recent review of the literature commissioned by The Reading Agency revealed that reading for pleasure can lead to greater self-awareness, empathy, social and cultural capital, focus, relaxation, and communication skills. Those who read because they enjoy it are more likely to read frequently and widely.

Reading for pleasure is linked to strong emotional literacy, social inclusion, improved academic achievement, higher employment levels, and increased levels of trust, confidence, tolerance, and self-esteem.[10] Reading with children—and engaging them in careful listening, questioning, and responding—can lay important groundwork for critical thinking.[11] Critical literacy skills enable children to analyze and interpret their world and those of others.

Research also demonstrates that reading together deepens the relationship between a child and their caregiver and strengthens their emotional attachment.[12] Reading with a child increases caregiver confidence and sparks a deeper interest in the child's life.[13] Importantly, reading with a child has been shown to enhance parenting capacity as it provides an opportunity to discuss feelings and issues with children and impart lessons to them in a secure and intimate setting.[14]

The Role of the Public Library

Most public libraries play an active and engaged role in encouraging shared caregiver-child reading through preschool storytimes that exemplify the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's six early literacy skills: print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary development, narrative skills, print awareness, and letter knowledge.[15] These six early literacy skills form the basis of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR), a framework introduced in 2004 by the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC).[16] The focus of ECRR is on modeling interactive, dialogic reading strategies and teaching parents and caregivers how to encourage these early literacy skills so that their children enter school "ready to read."

Thus, since the introduction of ECRR, preschool storytimes have increasingly functioned as a partnership between public libraries and parents/caregivers to promote research-based strategies for helping young children to develop critical early literacy skills. The second edition of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR2) expands upon these early literacy skills, describing the importance of talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing for young children's early literacy development. Librarians who work with children are trained in how to use ECRR activities in their programming and explicitly model these activities in their preschool storytimes.[17] The Every Child Ready to Read framework has been widely adopted by public libraries in Canada.[18]

However, while there is a wealth of research documenting the best practices for story-time delivery, such as ECRR and ECRR2 approaches, and the impact of shared adult-child story reading, there is a dearth of research investigating what happens behind the scenes—how library staff approach planning for these critically important programs. This paper addresses that gap, by asking library staff who plan and deliver preschool storytimes about their preferred strategy: to plan all programs independently, with all planning being done in branch, or to plan cooperatively, sharing program plans with partner branches.

Research Findings

Three of the fourteen branches of this public library system have been successfully sharing the workload of planning preschool storytimes for several years. The cooperative approach emerged organically at the initiative of library staff and has been embraced by participating staff members as an efficient approach to the time-consuming task of story-time program planning.

Together, staff at the three branches decide on themes for a cycle of story-time programs, then divide up the themes among themselves. Planning involves selecting books and songs, as well as crafts and other activities, and preparing a written outline of the sequence of activities (a story-time "script") included in the storytime. Materials for each of the programs, such as books, song sheets, craft activities, and puppets, are placed in bins that are shipped between the branches every week. Thus staff at each of the "cooperative" branches only need to plan for a third of the story-time sessions in a given programming cycle.

This initiative temporarily expanded in early 2014, when eight other branches within the system were asked to join in a pilot project to test the success of cooperative program planning at other branches. Staff members were paired with programmers from one or two other branches. Experienced programmers from the three branches that had previously been successfully running cooperatively planned programs acted as mentors for this pilot.

Staff at the eight pilot branches were guided by their mentors through the process of sharing their program planning, from the first steps of deciding on themes to evaluating their shared bins after the program was presented to a live audience. The first cooperatively planned programs in this pilot initiative were debuted in March 2014, and the cycle was completed that May. After the conclusion, branch staff were given the choice whether or not to continue with cooperative program planning. Since May 2014, some branches have continued with the cooperative planning method, while others have reverted to preparing all programs independently. Prior to this study, their thoughts on each approach to program planning had not been systematically collected and analyzed.

Methodology

A mixed method online questionnaire was developed for distribution to all staff who plan and facilitate preschool programming as part of their regular duties. The questionnaire included three multiple-choice questions to collect basic quantitative data and seven free text questions to elicit more detailed, qualitative information. The final page of the survey asked participants to contact the researcher directly if they were interested in participating in a short, semistructured follow-up interview.

The questionnaire was distributed to children's programming staff at all fourteen branches in February 2016. Twenty-two staff members completed the entire survey and a further six staff members answered the multiple-choice questions only. Two participants volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews, both of which were completed in March 2016.

Participants who volunteered for an interview were asked a set of five open-ended questions, which often led to follow-up questions and further discussion.

Results

The majority of survey respondents (61 percent) work at an urban library branch, 36 percent work at suburban branches, while only one respondent works at a rural branch. Sixty percent of respondents are working at libraries that currently plan preschool storytimes cooperatively, while the other 40 percent work at branches where program planning is done independently. However, three-quarters (75 percent) of participants participated in the 2014 cooperative planning pilot.

Participants were asked about their perceptions of the benefits of cooperative program planning. The most frequently mentioned benefits were increased efficiency, exposure to new materials and new ideas, and sharing and cooperation between staff members. Staff also mentioned that cooperative program planning can result in increased variety in programs and increased creativity.

Participants were next asked about the disadvantages and challenges of cooperative program planning, and all responses agreed that the main disadvantage is that communities and story-time audiences are all different and unique; therefore, a program that is wildly successful in one branch may fail in a different branch with a different audience. The same program will simply not always work in the same way in multiple branches.

In addition, two respondents voiced displeasure about the intrinsic quality of the cooperatively planned programs themselves, stating that they sometimes did not get enough materials or enough variety of materials to conduct a successful storytime. Five respondents explained how more time was taken up by preparing programs for other branches than just for planning for their own branch, so the perceived increased efficiency was, in actual practice, illusory. Sharing a limited set of materials between branches, having to add materials to the bins to supplement overly sparse content, communicating with counterparts in other branches, and scheduling of bin transportation were also noted as disadvantages of the cooperative approach.

Participants had several interesting suggestions about how the process could be improved. One common recommendation was to make sure that the demographics are similar between participating branches and that the program being

shared between branches is being used for the same type of audience. Some participants also noted that more time for face-to-face discussion between library staff members throughout the planning process would be valuable.

The final two parts of the questionnaire asked participants for their views on how well both types of programs supported early literacy skills and on the overall quality of cooperative planned programs in contrast to those planned individually. Most respondents (65 percent) felt that both approaches supported development of early literacy equally and were not able to make a distinction based on this criterion, noting that all staff are trained equally and should be able to model early literacy skills regardless of whether a program is planned cooperatively or independently.

In contrast, 25 percent of respondents felt that individually planned programs were more successful at supporting early literacy because they were more tailored to the needs of their particular audience, whereas 10 percent felt that cooperative programs were more successful in this regard because they were more carefully and thoughtfully planned.

Almost three quarters of respondents (74 percent) held the opinion that both cooperatively and individually planned programs are of similar quality. Two respondents felt that cooperatively planned programs are of higher quality, and three felt that they are of lower quality than individually planned programs.

Several text responses to this question noted that the main disadvantage of cooperatively planned programs is not the quality of the program per se; participants once again reiterated that the main issue is that cooperatively planned programs do not always fit the community or even the style of the staff member responsible for delivering the program. Several respondents referred to cooperatively planned programs as "a cookie-cutter approach" in which programs are not personalized for the specific needs and interests of the audience they will be presented to.

Two interviews were conducted with participants holding very different opinions of cooperative program planning. Interviewee A continued to plan programs cooperatively after the conclusion of the pilot project, largely because she felt that cooperative planning ensured that ideas were fresh and new, and it also saved her time. She felt strongly that she was still able to personalize the cooperatively planned storytimes because she and her partners always incorporated choices in books and activities in order to encourage flexibility and the ability to customize.

In contrast, Interviewee B had participated in the cooperative planning pilot but did not enjoy the approach at all and reverted to independent program planning as soon as the pilot concluded. Interviewee B is an experienced library staff member who has been planning programs for a long time and enjoys the creativity and freedom of working alone to imagine and structure a session. She felt cooperative program planning tended to stifle this freedom rather than encourage it. She also noted that ideas and themes are constantly shared with youth services staff members within the branch and felt strongly that it is easier to prepare programs in house than to have to keep the needs of another branch in mind. These two interviews provided two diametrically opposed perspectives and very different reasons why this method may be the preferred choice for some programmers but not for others.

Overall, this research study identified some interesting differences in points of view concerning the benefits and the challenges of cooperative program planning. Staff opinions were quite divided on most aspects of the cooperative approach, making it challenging to conclude whether the cooperative or the independent approach is the best option for multibranch public libraries.

First of all, the issue of whether or not cooperative planning actually saved staff time turned out to be contentious, with no clear consensus of opinion. Some youth services programmers strongly believe that the cooperative approach saves time, while others feel that it is actually more time consuming than independent program planning. For example, one respondent noted that "less planning time is required per programmer" with cooperative program planning, while another said that the primary benefit of the cooperative approach "is being able to do a lot of programming with minimal planning time." On the other hand, a different respondent reported that she and her colleagues "think we actually spend *more* time trying to find a good selection of books to put in our bins [to share with other branches] than we would if we were picking two or three books for each week [for our own independent program]." Another observed that constantly having to think about what would work in other branches "increased rather than decreased our workload and prep time."

When asked about wanting to participate in cooperative planning in the future, one respondent noted that they would, but only if "there was extra time allotted for this task" because of the extra staff time it occupied.

Interviewee A observed that it took practice to actually save time by planning cooperatively. During the first cycle of cooperative planning, she felt that staff definitely took more time than they would have done planning independently. However, Interviewee A said that the process became easier as programmers became more familiar and comfortable with the needs of other branches.

Interviewee A also noted that she and her colleagues communicated regularly with their counterparts at their partner branches and gave them frequent feedback on the success of their program plans. She felt that this feedback was critical to the success of the cooperative relationship. She also noted that she always put a variety of activities in her story-time bins, some for older children and some for younger, so that partner branches could select materials most suitable for

their participants and thus have built-in flexibility and choice in using the program plan. Interviewee A had been participating in cooperative planning for a long period of time and therefore had learned how to balance the extra time it took to plan for multiple branches by planning extensively but only for a fraction of the number of programs.

One of the biggest advantages of cooperative program planning was identified as exposure to new ideas, stories, and activities. One respondent stated that there is "more variety of book selection [and] craft ideas" in cooperatively planned programs.

During a follow-up interview, Interviewee A expanded on this idea, explaining that she and her staff would sometimes think the themes chosen by other branches were a bit strange and would wonder how storytimes could be developed on themes like "pizza," "fruit," or "worms," but when they received the bin from their partner, they were surprised by how successful and innovative the stories and crafts were.

This respondent acknowledged that she and her staff would never have thought of these program themes and had been completely unaware of these materials, so the cooperative approach gave them some fresh new ideas and prevented storytimes from getting stale.

Another survey respondent observed that cooperative programming has a double benefit: it introduces new ideas but also ensures greater consistency of story-time quality and content between branches, as ideas and plans are shared. She noted that patrons may go to storytimes at more than one branch, and with the cooperative approach, they would have similar experiences at all libraries, and any differences in program style would only be dependent on the programmer's individual method of delivery.

Respondents observed that the main disadvantage of cooperative program planning, apart from the additional time required, was the fact that this approach does not take differences in communities into account. Respondents stated that even the best of the cooperatively planned program bins that they received from their partners would not necessarily fit the needs of their branch and patrons. One respondent summed this issue up especially well: "There are too many differences between our communities, branch capabilities, programmers, and program formats to [allow us to] confidently and competently plan for someone else."

Other participants explained how they have to "over prep [their] bins to compensate" for these differences, and even then they may be forced to adapt the bins they receive by adding in more books or changing the activities to better suit their branch.

Two participants who had previously participated in cooperative planning but no longer do so cited the differences in their branches and programming styles as the reason they abandoned this approach. Throughout the questionnaire responses, the term "cookie-cutter approach" recurred in multiple responses. This term was used to describe the fact that although cooperatively planned bins have consistent content, their materials and activities just do not work everywhere. Some respondents felt that this had a negative impact on the quality of the programming offered.

Recommendations for Best Practices

While the researchers and administrators were hoping for a definitive recommendation either to continue or discontinue cooperative preschool storytime program planning, the survey responses did not yield a clear answer. However, they do provide a set of valuable suggestions and opinions as to how the cooperative planning process could be improved.

1. **Encourage open communication**, constructive feedback, and even reciprocal branch visits for partner programmers. Communication emerged as a strong theme in both the survey and the interviews; staff unanimously agreed that regular communication has to be built in to the cooperative planning approach as a standard practice, whether it is through email, written comments, or face-to-face meetings between partners.

2. **Consider a "middle ground" approach** in which bins simply include the skeleton of a program theme (perhaps a song, a rhyme, a bibliography of stories, and a few craft ideas for different age groups). Programmers could then choose their own books to fit each theme so the storytime itself would be tailored to the needs of their branch and the type of stories the branch patrons enjoy. This approach would encourage more customization to the needs of the branch but would still save programmers' time. This approach would also solve the problem of books being out of circulation for long periods of time while they just sit in a bin. The bin would include a list of books, not the books themselves, and branch programmers would select actual titles from their own collection.

3. **Consider creating a "self-serve" online staff resource**, such as a wiki or shared drive, with preplanned ideas. This resource could list suggested themes along with recommended crafts, rhymes, songs, and books. There would be no need for physical bins to travel from branch to branch. Rather, it would just be up to the branch programmer to choose the weekly theme from the preplanned list and collect the resources.

Survey respondents were asked for their ideas about how the cooperative program planning process could be improved, and they provided many thoughtful suggestions. One respondent suggested developing each storytime in the form of "a kit that provides a basic activity and theme, then the [individual] programmer can focus on adding appropriate titles and supplies, tailoring the activity to the community." This approach would be a good middle ground to add a higher level of efficiency to program planning while still allowing for the specialized needs of each community. An approach like this would also help to rectify the issue of widely divergent age groups: programmers could work to prepare a basic structure and activity that would work for a diverse age group, then age-appropriate books and songs could be added at the branch level.

Another respondent noted that with the cooperative approach, "programmers need to feel more of an onus to plan for all the programmers in the group versus planning for themselves." Encouraging preparation of programs that could apply to a wide range of age groups could help remedy this problem. Another participant indicated that it would be valuable to have "a shared [story-time] template and resource list [as a] useful starting point." As one respondent noted, the cooperative program planning process would be more successful if "programmers understand that their program is not written in stone and can be adapted according to the needs of each group."

Improving communication between partner branches was also a theme that arose several times in the suggestions for improvement. One respondent recommended "more face-to-face meetings between [partner] programmers." Another said that programmers should be allocated "time to visit each other's programs; this would likely encourage more cooperation." Another respondent noted that partners should give each other feedback on what works and what does not, as candid and honest feedback could help to smooth out differences between branches early on in their cooperative relationship. Any sort of collaboration requires open lines of communication in order to be successful, and respondents clearly recognize the need for any programmers participating in cooperative planning to be open to constructive criticism.

It is clear that participants have very different opinions on the process of collaborative planning. Some programmers feel that cooperative planning is more efficient and ensures a higher level of consistency and freshness of programs. Other staff value the ability to serve the very specific needs of their own branch community. The ideal method would incorporate all of these factors to be efficient and to encourage idea sharing and communication between partners while still allowing for flexibility and customization.

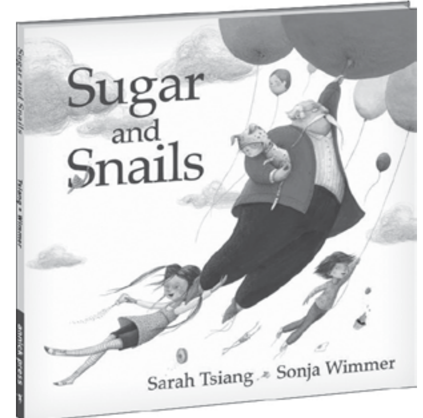
References

1. Harriet G. Long, *Public Library Service to Children: Foundation and Development* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1969), iii.
2. Kevin J. Swick, "Promoting School and Life Success through Early Childhood Family Literacy," *Early Childhood Journal* 36 (2009): 403–6, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-009-0305-4; Tricia A. Zucker, Sonia Q. Cabell, Laura M. Justice, Jill M. Pentimonti, and Joan N. Kaderavek, "The Role of Frequent, Interactive Prekindergarten Shared Reading in the Longitudinal Development of Language and Literacy Skills," *Developmental Psychology* 49 (2013): 1425–39; Linda Baker and Deborah Scher, "Beginning Reader's Motivation for Reading in Relation to Parental Beliefs and Home Reading Experiences," *Reading Psychology* 23 (2002): 239–69, https://doi.org/10.1080/713775283; Adriana G. Bus, "Joint Caregiver-Child Storybook Reading: A Route to Literacy Development," in *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, ed. Susan B. Neuman and David K. Dickinson (New York: Guildford Press, 2001), 179–91; Sean Demack and Anna Stevens, *Evaluation of Bookstart England: Bookstart Corner* (Book Trust, 2013), http://booktrustadmin.artlogic.net/usr/resources/1133/bookstart-corner-final-report-full-version-with-appendices.pdf; Maria Nikolajeva, "Did You Feel as If You Hated People? Emotional Literacy through Fiction," *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* 19 (2013): 95–107, https://doi.org/10.1080/13614541.2013.813334.
3. Swick, "Promoting School and Life Success," 404.
4. Holly B. Lane and Tyran L. Wright, "Maximizing the Effectiveness of Reading Aloud," *Reading Teacher* 60 (2007): 668–75, https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.60.7.7; Dominic W. Massaro, "Two Different Communication Genres and Implications for Vocabulary Development and Learning to Read," *Journal of Literacy Research* 47 (2015): 505–27, https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X15627528; Anne E. Cunningham and Jamie Zilbulsky, "Tell Me a Story: Examining the Benefits of Shared Reading," in *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, ed. Susan B. Neuman and David K. Dickinson (New York: Guildford Press, 2010), 396–411; Pamela Blewitt, Kieran M. Rump, Stephanie E. Shealy, and Samantha A. Cook, "Shared Book Reading: When and How Questions Affect Young Children's Word Learning," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 707 (2009): 294–304, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013844.
5. Zucker et al., "The Role of Frequent, Interactive Prekindergarten Shared Reading"; Paul L. Morgan and Catherine R. Meier, "Dialogic Reading's Potential to Improve Children's Emergent Literacy Skills and Behavior," *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth* 52 (2008): 11–16; Casey A. Dexter and Anne M. Stacks, "A Preliminary Investigation of the Relationship between Parenting, Parent-Child Shared Reading Practices, and Child Development in Low-Income Families," *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 28 (2014): 394–410, https://doi.org/10.1080/025 68543.2014.913278.
6. Morgan and Meier, "Dialogic Reading's Potential to Improve Children's Emergent Literacy Skills and Behavior"; Kathryn E. Bojczyk, Anna E. Davis, and Verda Rana, "Mother-Child Interaction Quality in Shared Book Reading: Relation to Child Vocabulary and Readiness to

Read," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 36 (2016): 404–14, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2016.01.006; Elizabeth Duursma, Marilyn Augustyn, and Barry Zuckerman, "Reading Aloud to Children: The Evidence," *Pediatrics for Parents* 26 (2010): 4–5.

7. Daniel Weigel, Sally Martin, and Kymberley Bennet, "Contributions of the Home Literacy Environment to Preschool-Aged Children's Emerging Literacy and Language Skills," *Early Child Development and Care* 176 (2006): 374, https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430500063747.
8. Zucker et al., "The Role of Frequent, Interactive Prekindergarten Shared Reading"; Baker and Scher, "Beginning Reader's Motivation for Reading."
9. Baker and Scher, "Beginning Reader's Motivation for Reading"; Christina Clark and Rodie Akerman, *Social Inclusion and Reading: An Exploration* (National Literacy Trust, 2006), www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0566/Social_inclusion_reading_2006.pdf.
10. See Nikolajeva, "Did You Feel as If You Hated People?"; Clemence Pabion and Hannah Howard, *Books Unlocked Evaluation 2014/15* (National Literacy Trust), accessed January 3, 2017, https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/national-literacy-trusts-books-unlocked-programme-has-supported-prisoners-and-young-offenders-engage-literature-2012-qualitative-evaluation-provides-insight-power-books-help-people-feel-think-learn-and-change/.
11. Michael Pressley, *Reading Instruction That Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching*, 3rd ed. (New York: Guildford, 2006), 418.
12. Bus, "Joint Caregiver-Child Storybook Reading"; Vivian Howard and Maureen Wallace, "Today's Tech Literacy Tools: Parental Perceptions of Apps for Preschoolers," *Children and Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* 14, no. 1 (2016): 3–9.
13. Demack and Stevens, *Evaluation of Bookstart England*; Janet Seden, "Creative Connections: Parenting Capacity, Reading with Children and Practitioners Assessment and Intervention," *Child and Family Social Work* 13 (2008): 133–43, http://oro.open.ac.uk/19889/6/Creative_Links_paperPDF2.pdf.
14. Seden, "Creative Connections," 141.
15. Meagan Albright, Kevin Delecki, and Sarah Hinkle, "The Evolution of Early Literacy," *Children and Libraries* 7 (2009): 13–18; Renea Arnold, "Public Libraries and Early Literacy: Raising a Reader," *American Libraries* 34 (2003): 48–51.
16. Public Library Association and Association for Library Service to Children, *Every Child Ready to Read*, copyright 2017, www.everychildreadytoread.org/about.
17. Viki Ash and Elaine Meyers, "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library: How It All Began," *Children and Libraries* 7 (2009): 3–7; Donna C. Celano and Susan B. Neuman, "Libraries Emerging as Leaders in Parent Engagement," *Phi Delta Kappan* 96 (2015): 30–35.
18. Shelley S. Peterson, Eunice Jang, Carol Jupiter, and Maggie Dunlop, "Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries," *Partnership : The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 7 (2012): 1–22; Heather McKend, "Early Literacy Storytimes for Preschoolers in Public Libraries," *Provincial and Territorial Public Library Council* (2010): 1–44; Tess Prendergast, "Growing Readers: A Critical Analysis of Early Literacy Content for Parents on Canadian Public Library Websites," *Journal of Library Administration* 53 (2013): 234–54.

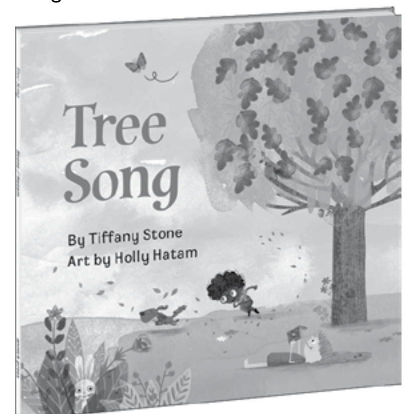
Tomorrow's Classics
NEW PICTURE BOOKS FROM ANNICK



"This charming twist on a treasured children's nursery rhyme is ideal for anyone willing to explore what they are made of. Imaginations soar."
—*Foreword Reviews*, *starred review

"A celebration of imagination."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

Ages 4–7 / 978-1-77321-005-6 hc



Follow the life cycle of trees in this joyful introduction to nature and the environment.

"A quiet book for the preschool nature shelf."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

Ages 4–7 / 978-1-77321-001-8 hc

Read an excerpt on our website

annick press
www.annickpress.com
Distributed by Publishers Group West
AN INGRAM BRAND 1-866-400-5341

Couples Who Collaborate

Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann

JENNIFER GIBSON

Photos courtesy of Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann.

We continue our Couples Who Collaborate series with an award-winning duo who, for many *CAL* readers, need no introduction. Many titles by Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann—a married couple from Illinois—most likely already grace the shelves of your library.

As an author, Candace has published books for children ranging from picture books to young adult titles and has been recognized with two Boston Globe Horn Book Awards (*The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia* and *The Lincolns*), the Golden Kite Award (*Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart*), and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Young Adult Literature (*The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia*), as well as others.

As an illustrator, Eric has won the Caldecott Medal in 2003 for *My Friend Rabbit*, a 1995 Caldecott Honor for *Time Flies*, a 2017 Sibert Honor for *Giant Squid*, and, like Candace, he has worked with a range of styles and genres, including wordless books, and has even authored his own illustrated stories.

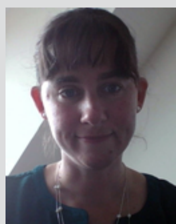
The couple met while each had established careers in children's publishing, but they have honed their craft together on wide-ranging topics, from giant squids to an upcoming account of Hollywood's first canine movie star, *Strongheart: Wonder Dog of the Silver Screen* (Schwartz & Wade, 2018). Not only have their careers taken similar paths (both award-winning, both collaborating), but their initial stages in approaching a book share parallels as well. Though Candace works with words and Eric, pictures, their research processes are not all that different—perhaps because, after all, they both have the same aim: excellence in storytelling.

How do two such creators, successful in their own right, work together on their own terms? Candace and Eric took the time to share their creative process.

How did you two meet?

Eric: I saved her from a pouncing leopard, never once considering my own safety. Well . . . can you tell I long for a more interesting origin story? We met at a book event in Chicago and, because it's a relatively small world, we saw one another over time. Things moved forward as they sometimes do.

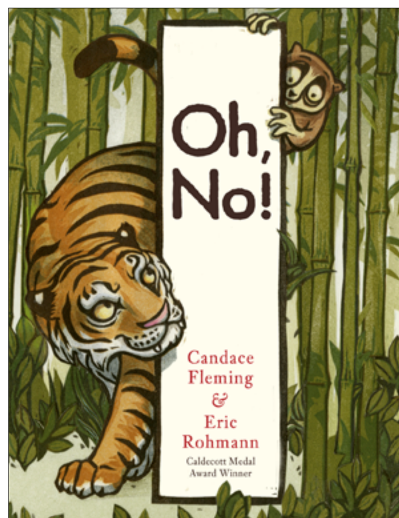
Candace: We'd both been invited to speak on a panel about picture books. I knew his work, of course, but hadn't met him. We discovered we shared a lot of opinions about children's books. Since we both lived in the Chicago area, we started talking and meeting for lunch. One thing led to another. Oh, and he was pretty cute too.



*Illustrator **Jennifer Gibson** is the Information and Archives Specialist at Keuka College in Keuka Park, New York.*

You have worked together on several books. Do you have a favorite collaboration?

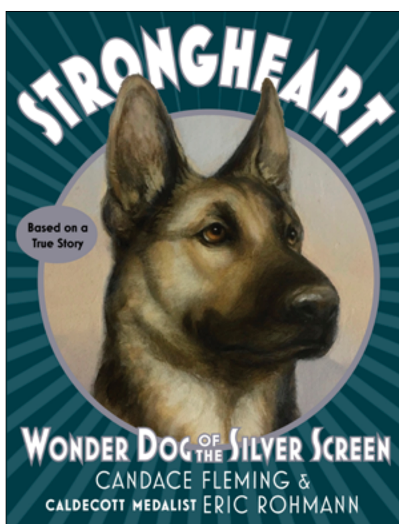
Eric: *Giant Squid*—because it began with a storyboard before there was any text. We made it somewhat in reverse, and it was a challenge all along the way. We fought hard to make a book that not only told about the squid but immersed the reader in the squid's world. In the end, we realized that the point of the book was to incite curiosity through what is known (not much) and not known about the creatures.



Candace: My favorite is one we recently completed, an illustrated novel coming out in Feburary 2018 called *Strongheart: Wonder Dog of the Silver Screen*. While its fiction, it's based on the true story of Hollywood's first canine movie star—a German shepherd named Strongheart. I think I'm especially attached to it because the dog in the book is modeled on our own beloved Oxford. No, Oxford is not a shepherd. He's an eighty-pound mixed breed. Still, his naughtiness and expressiveness was inspiration for much of what we created. It's sort of a love poem to dogs and their owners everywhere.

You both have worked with other writers and illustrators. How is it different when your collaborator is a spouse?

Eric: Candy treats me the same way she does all other illustrators with whom she collaborates. She knows the form—how to write a story that will have a visual/narrative component—and so when you get one of her manuscripts, the stories are clear, but with lots of room for the illustrator to add their own voice. So, for us, I don't think there is much difference just because we live in the same house.



Candace: Believe it or not, collaboration with Eric isn't much different than, say, collaboration with Brian Karas. I write the manuscript, then send it upstairs to Eric's studio, where he gets to work on the illustration. For the most part, I don't put in my two cents regarding his work. I completely trust his creative impulses. In truth, I think he'd like me to be more hands-on when it comes to those pictures. And certainly, I'll give suggestions or make comments if he asks. But the pictures are his sphere. I try not to get in the way. After the pictures are done, we'll sit down together and look at the book as a whole.

That, I think, is where the true collaboration comes in. For example, once the words and pictures for *Giant Squid* were complete, we looked at the whole and realized that the title page couldn't possibly be at the front of the book, as is traditional.

What we'd tried to create through words and pictures was a feeling in the reader of being immersed in the deep ocean. But if we inserted a title page—with all its copyright and dedication clutter—it yanked the reader right out of the story. So we adjusted and did something a bit out of the ordinary. We put the title page on page ten of the book. Unusual, yes, but completely necessary for the story's telling.

Both writing and illustrating require research. Candace, as a writer, and Eric, as an illustrator, do you both find there are similarities when doing research for these two roles (writer and illustrator)? How are your research processes different?

Eric: Looking for the facts is very much the same. How does a squid reproduce? Where do they live? We both need to get the science correct. Where our research diverges is where we find our information. I do read what is out there about the creatures, but [I] also look at photos, video, artwork made by both scientists and people who have imagined giant squids in fiction.

Candace: I think our research processes are similar in that we're both seeking fascinating, awe-inspiring, and up-to-date information about a particular subject. Any differences spring from our purposes. Eric, obviously, is searching for visual references: What does a giant squid tentacle look like when stretching into the ocean's darkness? What expression does a German shepherd wear just before it steals a doughnut off the kitchen table? My focus is on real-life dialogue and anecdotes that can be turned into a true story. I'm looking for written and verbal information. Utmost in both our searches, however, is accuracy.

Eric, you have also authored picture books. How is the bookmaking process different when the story you are illustrating is your own?

Eric: If it's my own story, I can change anything, anytime. Collaboration with another means you are working within their thoughts and decisions. If the writer is skilled and has left plenty of space for the visual, the process can be very liberating.

Both of you exhibit a versatile range within your craft, whether varying illustration styles or writing for multiple age groups. Do you find that variety suits both of you, or do

you have a preference for a certain type of book, style, or story?

Eric: Readers are told (and want to be told!) different stories, perhaps a love story one day, a science-fiction adventure the next. Candy and I think about many kinds of stories, and each one of those stories should be told in an art medium or voice or book form that best aids in the telling. I think we both try a number of ways to tell that story. Those choices often differ from the stories we have told in the past.

Candace: I really enjoy the variety, the challenge of trying new things, and thinking out of my comfort box. I can't say I have a favorite genre or audience. What I can say is that often when I'm embroiled in a lengthy piece of YA nonfiction, I'll long to write a picture book. Or, while writing a picture book, I'll long to turn my creative impulses to a middle-grade novel. The grass is always greener, right?

Candace, many of your picture book texts incorporate novel plays on repetition that allow young readers to anticipate what will happen after a page turn (such as in *Oh No!*, *Imogene's Last Stand*, and *Boxes for Katje*). How important are page turns in the making of a successful picture book, and how you create such winning moments?

Candace: Ah, page turns. Using them to one's best advantage is essential when writing picture books. After all, they serve a critical narrative function that is unique to the genre. Decisions about them affect the tempo and pace of the book. Each page turn brings a fresh start, a new mood, thought, or scene. It accentuates the drama and adds surprise.

People sometimes mistakenly think that because I write the words, I have no control over those page turns—that the illustrator will decide what text will go on what page. And that's partly true. I can't dictate to either the illustrator or the art director about these things. But I can write the text in such a way that there's no mistake where the text needs to be slowed, or where a new scene begins.

I understand that the page turn actually affects the way my story sounds when it's read aloud. After all, the turning page adds an extra beat to the musicality of the text. It's that pause between pages, the shhh of paper turning. I love that sound. And I use it to my advantage when writing. Believe it or not, I've never had an illustrator break my page in places I hadn't expected. I guess that means I've done my job—written a text that is obviously a picture book and not, say, a short story.

Eric, as an illustrator, what do you also need to consider concerning page turns (especially, for example, for wordless books)?

Eric: The single most distinctive characteristic of picture books is the page turn. The page turn allows the reader's imagination to enter the book and participate in the telling. It's the confluence of anticipation and surprise. When I'm making a book, the page turn is always on my mind, always being considered. The difficult part, of course, is saying enough to tell the story without giving everything away. It would be a shame to rob the reader of any participation and engagement with the story.

Does winning awards impact your work?

Eric: Awards get the book seen and, in turn, in the hands of more readers. Being recognized always feels great and makes your day. It means someone out there recognizes what you are trying to do and say. For me, winning the Caldecott didn't have a whole lot of influence on the books that followed because one was already completed (*Pumpkinhead*) and two others that looked nothing like *My Friend Rabbit* were in development (*Clara and Asha* and *A Kitten Tale*). You tend to concentrate on what you are working on, not what you've done in the past.

Candace: I don't think winning awards directly affects how I approach a story or what I choose to write. They do, however, affect future projects. Editors are more likely to let me try new things and tackle new genres. Awards provide me a bit of creative capital.

In addition to *Strongheart*, what new projects can we look forward to seeing from both of you?

Candace: We have a companion to *Giant Squid* coming in 2019 called *Honeybee* (science nonfiction) with Neal Porter at Holiday House. Separate from Eric, but still a collaboration, is a YA historical fiction publishing in 2018 from Schwartz & Wade about the six wives of Henry VIII, called *Fatal Throne*. It's unique in that it's seven voices (one for each wife, plus Henry) and seven authors. My co-collaborators? Stephanie Hemphill, Lisa Sandell, Jennifer Donnelly, Linda Sue Park, Deborah Hopkinson, and M. T. Anderson.

I also have a glorious picture book illustrated by Gerard Dubois called *The Amazing Collection of Joey Cornell*, also publishing in 2018 from Schwartz & Wade. And, of course, there's my new middle-grade series, History Pals, with the funny and talented Mark Fearing. Part graphic novel, part first-person storytelling, the first one appeared just this past September and is titled *Ben Franklin Is in My Bathroom*. The second—*Eleanor Roosevelt Is in My Garage*—is out next September. And I'm currently working on a new YA nonfiction about Charles Lindbergh and America First. Phew, that's it! &

A Revolutionary Idea

Planning an Epic Hamil-Con

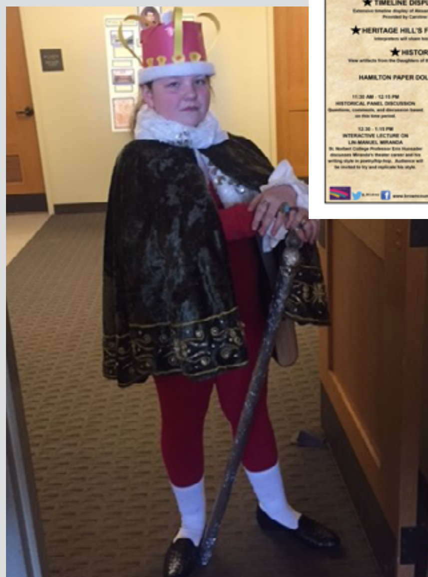
Katie Guzek

If you've lived under a rock for the past year or two, you probably haven't heard the catchy, rappy tunes from Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway blockbuster *Hamilton*. But you didn't have to live in New York to catch Revolutionary fever—it seems those infectious tunes about Alexander Hamilton and his contemporaries were everywhere—and no age was immune. Even though the lyrics had some sass, even elementary school kids were learning their history in a novel way and singing along.

Why not capitalize on that success at a library? That was exactly what several of us librarians at Brown County Library—all the way in Northeastern Wisconsin, far from the throngs of Broadway—thought. So in late 2016 we began planning what we hoped would be our epic Hamil-Con.

The objective of Hamil-Con was to increase people's appreciation and enjoyment of the musical. We wanted to achieve this by giving participants large-scale interactive structured and unstructured opportunities to learn more about the history and theatricality surrounding the play.

Our program, held on a Saturday in April 2017, drew more than four hundred attendees of all ages. The day featured many components—like the timeline of Hamilton's life and artifacts from the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Museum in Washington, DC, and our local Neville Public Museum. It also included an authentic Revolutionary War encampment behind our library; a French fur-trading post presented by Heritage Hill, a living history museum in Green Bay; and a lecture by a St. Norbert College professor about creator Lin-Manuel Miranda.



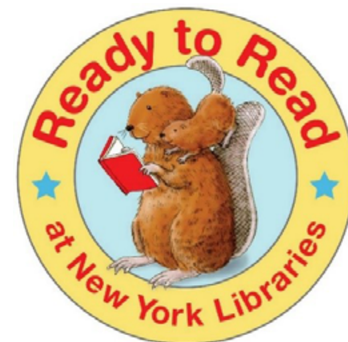
But one of the most popular events was a live sing-a-long of songs from *Hamilton*—in which all ages, from age four to seniors, participated and, not surprisingly, knew all the words by heart!

This program engaged children, teens, adults, and seniors. Combining history and music and presenting it in an interactive way kept the audience engaged and eagerly participating.

Top left: Revolutionary War re-enactors set up camp outside the Kress Family Branch Library in De Pere, Wisconsin. Bottom left: Young Sophia was a stunning King George! Bottom right: One of the re-enactors, complete with gun and tri-corner hat. Center: The library's promotional poster echoed the Broadway play's look.

Katie Guzek *is a Youth Services Librarian at Brown County Library in Green Bay, Wisconsin.*

Ready to Read at New York Libraries



Comprehensive Professional Development in Early Literacy Services and Outreach

Photos courtesy of the Monroe County Library System and Rochester Public Library

KAREN BALSEN AND AMANDA R. LATREILLE

In 2012, early literacy became a top priority for the New York State Library and the agency's work with the state's regional public library systems and libraries. While many public libraries had long provided storytimes for preschool-aged youth, the State Library determined there was a need and an opportunity for libraries to play a larger, more impactful role in building early learning skills by reaching parents and caregivers in addition to young children.

All families need information, guidance, and ongoing support to prepare their children for kindergarten success; the idea that libraries are uniquely positioned to assist this population in nearly every community strongly emerged.

The new focus on early literacy was at first driven by national research and further supported with data collected via surveys, focus groups, and discussion sessions with the state's public library community. Findings showed public library programming and services for families with young children were uneven across the state and varied in their approach and effectiveness in fostering early literacy and school preparedness. Many library staff members working with youth lacked expertise in early learning, as well as the skills needed to reach and serve all families, especially the parents and caregivers unaware of the programming and assistance libraries provide. In many areas, services for families beyond library walls were either sparse or nonexistent; staff needed a road map that was specific to early literacy for working in the greater community. They required instruction in how to develop effective, local partnerships and in how to reach disadvantaged families. The extensive training for staff that was clearly needed was not currently or freely available.

In 2014, the State Library launched Ready to Read at New York Libraries, a statewide initiative that included a comprehensive early literacy professional development program for public library staff in reaching and best serving and supporting all families with young children, but particularly those most in need. This same year, the agency was awarded a Laura Bush Twenty-First Century Librarian Program Planning Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to further research, plan, and begin phase 1 of the training program.

Now well underway, the Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program has grown into an ambitious five-year project, combining

Karen Balsen *is retired project director of Ready to Read at New York Libraries, a program of the New York State Library, New York State Education Department.* ***Amanda R. Latreille****, of AmaLat Consulting, is consultant for Ready to Read at New York Libraries.*

expert instruction in early literacy and outreach skills. Using an economical train-the-trainer approach, the program aims to reach the state's 23 regional public library systems and 1,067 public library outlets (main libraries, neighborhood branches, etc.) by June 2019. As of January 2017, ninety-eight workshops have been held, with a total attendance of 1,320. Staff from all 23 regional systems and 453 outlets took part (or 42 percent of the June 2019 target output). The participating libraries serve all types of communities—from small rural towns to large, diverse metropolitan areas.

During planning, the State Library developed an advisory group composed of library and early literacy leaders throughout the state. This early step proved essential, by providing an extensive foundation of support, channels for input from experts, and wider promotion within the field. The first year culminated with a summit bringing together those involved with the project, fostering next-step discussions and new collaborations.

The summit and the work of the advisory group helped build project partnerships with thirteen statewide organizations, including the Council on Children and Families and New York State Head Start. As a result, participating libraries have found it much easier to contact and work with the associated local outlets of these organizations.

Phase 1: Curriculum, Training Cohort, and Resources

The first phase of the program, completed in early 2017, focused primarily on developing the program curriculum and training the project's training cohort, a group of thirty to thirty-five youth services librarians associated with the regional public library systems. With deep knowledge of local community issues and needs, this group has been integral to the delivery of consistent, high-quality, cost-effective training and support in all regions of the state. From 2014 to 2016, the training cohort received train-the-trainer instruction from nationally recognized experts in the five foundation components that form the unique, research-based early childhood outreach curriculum of Ready to Read at New York Libraries. The curriculum and its components can be customized to meet state, regional, and/or local needs.

Each of the five components was covered in its own half- or full-day workshop:

1. **Everyone Serves Families with Young Children.** The first component empowers public library staff at all levels, including board members and volunteers, to realize and embrace their capacity to make the library welcoming to families with young children. The training focuses on identifying the challenges faced by modern families; understanding young children's brain, physical, and social development; and exploring opportunities for all library staff to promote early literacy and encourage family engagement. Participants leave with strategies for providing excellent customer service to young children and their parents and caregivers.

2. **Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices.** The second training component uses the successful Every Child Ready to Read Program Second Edition (ECRR2), developed by the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), as its foundation. Through workshop activities and group work, participants learn to tailor storytimes and other programs to model and teach effective early literacy strategies to parents and caregivers. Participants learn how to engage families in the five key practices of ECRR2 (talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing). The training is designed to address the school preparedness expectations in New York; yet, it can be easily customized for other states to use as well.

3. **Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis.** In the third component, participants are provided with an essential foundation for planning early literacy services. The workshop covers collecting and interpreting community information and statistics, discovering both area needs and assets. Special emphasis is placed on identifying new or underserved populations, such as families with young children with disabilities, families with teenage parents, families with grandparents as caregivers, immigrant families, and low-income families.

A Look at It Locally

Ready to Read @ Monroe County Library System and Rochester Public Library

As an example of local customization and implementation, the Monroe County Library System and Rochester Public Library have used the Ready to Read at New York Libraries curriculum and resources to enhance early literacy services. Director Patricia Uttaro served on the program's advisory group, and library staff members joined the training cohort.

In 2015, Rochester was awarded a $500,000 AmeriCorps grant that provided the library with up to twenty workers assigned to early childhood and family initiatives. A training cohort member used the program's curriculum to train these workers, and as a result, hundreds of quality early learning programs were provided to families in the local community. For instance, a six-week "Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices" series for children and their parents and caregivers was offered and well attended.

Rochester also found the program's "Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis" to be particularly helpful. This process identified the need for greater outreach to families in nontraditional locations throughout the community, as well as the lack of books in homes. In response, the library hired a full-time children's outreach librarian and placed AmeriCorps workers in County Department for Social Services offices; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices; and family court waiting rooms. *Library to Go* kits were also developed and an existing book distribution program was increased. More than 1 million free books have been distributed in Rochester since 2014.

Ready to Read at New York Libraries also assisted Rochester in uncovering barriers that were keeping families from using the library. The library found the possibility of incurring debt from library fines was enough to keep some families away. In response, Rochester eliminated daily fines for all materials coded for children and teens in mid-2016; since this time, circulation has increased 10 percent.

Finally, building from the "Early Learning Spaces" component curriculum, Rochester updated spaces for children at the central library, many branch libraries, and the toy library. The toy library collection is now widely shared among Rochester's library outlets based on programming needs and community interest.

As seen with the Rochester example, Ready to Read at New York Libraries is making an impact. Though most of the regional training is being planned for 2018 and 2019, *Public Library Annual Report* data has already indicated significant progress at local levels. From 2013 to 2016, early literacy programs in public libraries across the state grew 32 percent to 134,734 sessions offered, with attendance up by 37 percent to more than 2.8 million people.*

* *2013 and 2016 Public and Association Libraries Annual Reports* (Albany: New York State Library, 2017).

4. **Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children.** This component builds directly on the third by using identified needs and assets to develop a plan for building partnerships and conducting outreach. Focus is on the importance of moving beyond the physical library building to collaborate with others that share the common mission of fostering early learning and kindergarten readiness. Effective strategies for reaching all families with young children are presented, including special tips for reaching those previously unserved.

5. **Early Learning Spaces.** In the last workshop, participants learn how to create a physical environment in public libraries that encourages play and supports early learning for young children and their families. Ideas and solutions are presented for multiple scenarios, for libraries of all sizes with and without readily available space, staff, and/or resources. Planning, designing, and funding welcoming, flexible spaces; choosing the right materials; and addressing accessibility and ADA compliance are all discussed.

For each of the curriculum components, the State Library, working with experts, developed a training tool kit for use by the training cohort members for conducting workshops. The easy-to-tailor, online kits each contain a comprehensive handbook, slide presentation, handouts, and evaluation tools that employ outcome-based evaluation methods. The five kits are free to download at www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/toolkits.htm.

Training cohort members began offering workshops in a particular component soon after they completed train-the-trainer instruction in that component. The training cohort initially used and tested draft training tool kits with workshop participants (a "living laboratory" approach), and revisions were subsequently made based on their feedback and ideas. The current kits reflect valuable input after use in the field.

To note, the workshops can be offered as stand-alone sessions or as a supplement to another program such as Family Place, Mother Goose on the Loose, and Supercharged Story Times.

Or they may be offered in a different order based on participants' expertise and needs (except for the fourth, "Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children," as this workshop should follow the third).

In fact, the training sequence originally began with "Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis," with the idea that participants should start with assessment; however, training cohort members found that "Everyone Serves Families with Young Children" generates staff enthusiasm for early literacy across all library departments. It fosters a strong foundation of support, particularly from administrators and trustees, for continued staff training in Ready to Read at New York Libraries and the development of early learning programming and services. This component therefore became the recommended first training for most libraries and systems.

During phase 1, Ready to Read at New York Libraries also created resources for direct use by library staff, parents, and caregivers. As part of the greater initiative, the State Library offers DayByDayNY.org and a program Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Ready2ReadNY. DayByDayNY.org and its Spanish counterpart, DayByDayNYsp.org, are interactive online resources to be used directly with children; they foster early literacy through fun stories, songs, and activities that change each day. Included is the high-quality One More Story picture book collection. DayByDayNY.org was originally adapted from DayByDaySC.org, a service of the South Carolina State Library; and the Spanish version was developed from the website created by the Library of Virginia.

Phase 2: Regional Training

Now in the second phase (2017 to 2019), Ready to Read at New York Libraries is focused on conducting regional training workshops for public library staff and growing partnerships. Support for the training is provided by the State Library's Family Literacy Library Services Program. The state funds are provided to the twenty-three regional public library systems, and they in turn deliver expert training and support to their member libraries.

The project also includes a two-step certification process for trainers to support the goal of developing librarians into recognized and knowledgeable advocates of early literacy in communities. Training cohort members receive level 1 certification in a component once they complete the associated train-the-trainer workshop. Level 1 denotes preparation to train library staff. An alternate route to certification is in place as well; this route uses a combination of training and mentorship to bring in new trainers as needed, thus perpetuating the training cohort and sustaining the overall program.

To obtain level 2 certification to train library staff *and* the early childhood workforce, training cohort members must complete two satisfactory trainings for library staff. The certification training program of Ready to Read at New York Libraries has been added to New York Works for Children, an integrated professional development system for the state's early childhood and school-aged workforces.

Program replication beyond New York State is also part of phase 2. The State Library recently shared program materials with the Stanislaus County Library System in Modesto, California, as they plan to offer all five training components for staff in the system's thirteen branch libraries. The community is concerned about the severe lack of kindergarten readiness in some areas and wants to use the program to reach those families most in need.

For more information, and to access the free, customizable Training Tool Kits, visit the Ready to Read at New York Libraries website at: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html.

Taking Early Literacy Messages to WIC Centers

Marisa Conner

Marisa Conner *is the manager of Youth and Family Engagement at Baltimore County (MD) Public Library and the current chair of the PLA/ALSC Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee.*

As part of a system-wide family engagement outreach effort to promote early literacy in low-income communities, Baltimore County (MD) Public Library staff visit all WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) centers in Baltimore County monthly. At these visits, librarians engage with families who are in the waiting areas before their WIC appointments. Each family is given a bag containing early literacy resources, including books, library card applications and fliers, information on early literacy programs and services, tip sheets for promoting the Every Child Ready to Read 2 practices, and Technology Tips for children ages birth to five.

Librarians also offer impromptu storytimes, sharing and modeling the importance of talking and reading to young children. These visits were made possible by a partnership with the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services and the local WIC director.

Our library staff are the only outside staff permitted to engage with families while they are awaiting their WIC appointments. The information and resources we share with families meets the highest goals of the WIC program and are applicable to all families they serve.

Each child we engage with at the WIC visits is given a book to keep. The Foundation for the Baltimore County Public Library supports this by pursuing grants and donations from private donors as well as from other foundations that support literacy. Many of the families that visit our WIC centers speak Spanish as their primary family language, so we strive to provide bilingual books and handouts.

Librarians initiate each family interaction by offering each child a book. Parents and children are equally delighted with this gift, and it serves as a starting point to engage with the family by reading to their child, which in turn opens the conversation to talk about why reading to children is so important for building language and literacy skills. At times, parents will begin reading to their child as soon as they get the book; other times, the librarian will model reading a book to a child or group of children.

Families are asked if they are familiar with their local library, and if not, they are given a handout with directions to the nearest branch. They are offered a library card if they don't currently have one. Thanks to mobile technology, their library card is created while they wait.

Families are often unaware of the many free services that the public library has to offer, so staff spend time talking about collections, storytime programs, and play spaces that support early literacy, as well as other programs and services for the whole family. Families have shared stories of extreme poverty and lack of basic services in their home countries and are excited to learn of the free resources available at the public library.

Visits to each of the seven WIC locations in Baltimore County occur one to two times per month. Librarians from each of our nineteen branches share in a rotating schedule of visits. Over the past year, we have engaged with approximately twelve hundred families.

Because of WIC outreach visits, we have observed the following:

- Families visited a public library for the first time.
- Families got a public library card for the first time.
- Families visited Storyville, our early childhood learning centers located in the Rosedale and Woodlawn branches, or one of early learning play spaces that are located in all of our branches.
- Families attended a storytime at their local library branch.
- Families learned about our summer reading program and free summer lunches for children, and we saw them coming to the library regularly throughout the summer.

Our partnership with WIC has been one of the most effective ways we can introduce families—many of whom are new to our community and our country—to important early literacy practices, books, and resources at the public library. Our interactions are successful because they are personal and nonthreatening. Families eagerly accept the books, information, and invitations to get a library card and visit the library as a direct result of connecting with an individual librarian. &

Index to Advertisers

ALSC. . . . . cover 3
Annick Press. 29
Boyds Mills Press. . . . . cover 4
Loyola Press . . . . cover 2

Another Fish Story...

Amy Peterson

For years, my husband promised our daughter, Brooke, she could have a chameleon for her tenth birthday. And even though she cannot remember to hang her backpack on a hook every day, she never forgot the chameleon promise.

As her birthday approached, we made plans to purchase the chameleon (which she later got and named Barry). However, this meant I needed to find a new home for the pet goldfish that had been her pride and joy only a few years earlier.

About this same time, my staff was asking me to find a therapy-certified reading dog for the library, but none of our contacts panned out. So instead of getting a dog, we got . . . reading fish!

I crafted my own "fish phone" (or whisper reader) from three pieces of PVC pipe connected to a phone cord. (Remember when phones had cords? I found mine while cleaning out my in-laws' basement.)

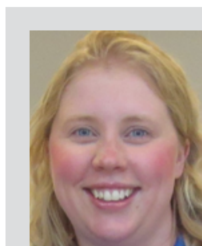
Now, through the magic of duct tape and imagination, our young library patrons can read to our fish! Kids—including my daughter!—speak quietly into one end of the tube, and their voice is amplified when they hear it back.

This is a great reading tool because it can help shy readers by allowing them to hear their own voice, and the old-school

phone offers something tactile for sensory learners. Plus, it's just more enjoyable to read when someone (or *some fish!*) is listening.

Stop by and read to our fish some time, or consider a similarly inexpensive option for your library.

Our fish are partial to Dr. Seuss's classic *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, but let's face it—they're a pretty captive audience!



Amy Peterson *is the Director of the Lena (WI) Public Library.*

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.

2018 ALSC NATIONAL INSTITUTE

September 27-29, 2018

Cincinnati, Ohio

Join more than 300 fellow children's librarians and educators for ALSC's two and a half day **National Institute**. The Institute is everything you need in one place--programming, keynotes, networking and much more!

This **intensive learning opportunity with a youth services focus** is designed for front-line youth library staff, children's literature experts, education and library school faculty members, and other interested adults.

KEYNOTES:

Opening General Session with
GRACE LIN

Closing General Session with
BRIAN SELZNICK & DAVID SERLIN

Breakfast for Bill Program with
MARGARITA ENGLE, RAÚL COLÓN, & MIKE CURATO

Members:

SAVE MONEY when you register by **Friday, June 29th**!

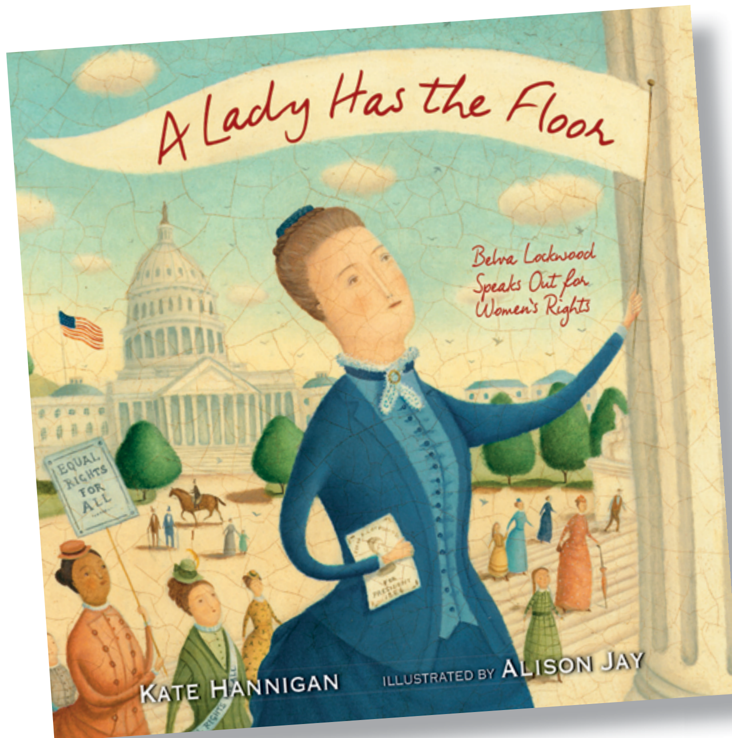
Register Today!

www.ala.org/alsc/institute-registration

#alsc18 #act4kids

★ "An excellent example of picture-book biography."

—*Booklist*, STARRED REVIEW



★ "[An] informative and delightful biography . . . Hannigan's style is pithy, but packed with facts. Belva comes alive as a feisty activist . . . Jay's signature crackled artwork has a historical look, but also a childlike appeal that will bring the audience close." —*Booklist*, starred review

★ "This is an engaging introduction to a woman unknown to many, young and old, giving some insight into her adventurous personality. . . . An excellent, well-researched model of its genre, which will inspire children to do whatever they desire in life, no matter what immediate restrictions exist." —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "Hannigan presents an invigorating account of the life of Belva Lockwood . . . Working in her distinctively crackled folk style, Jay depicts powerful moments of resistance and courage from Lockwood's life. Endnotes provide a timeline . . . highlighting significant events in the ongoing fight for women's rights." —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ "Students will appreciate Alison Jay's unique illustrations and be amazed at the fearlessness of this unsung champion of equal pay, equal opportunities, and equal respect for all. Highly recommended." —*School Library Connection*, starred review

Nonfiction picture book • 32 pages • 10 x 10 • Full-color illustrations
Ages 7–10 • Grades 2–5
978-1-62979-453-2 • $17.95 U.S. / $23.95 CAN

CALKINS CREEK
BOYDS MILLS PRESS
Highlights