

Choosing and Using Children's Literature with Preschoolers: A Workshop

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Success is being asked to repeat it again, and again, and . . . Children's librarians Wava Furlong and Kathie Myers got just that reaction when they planned and presented a workshop titled "Choosing and Using Children's Literature with Preschoolers."

Since more and younger children are in group day care situations and unable to participate in library story times, we felt a need to introduce their care givers to the uses and value of children's literature. We also wanted these care givers to become aware of the resources of the library: skilled professional librarians and materials to use directly with children. With those goals in mind, we eagerly acted upon an opportunity to work with the Day Care Directors of Northern Indiana to provide in-service credits to their members.

The two and a half hour workshop was designed to cover many topics and to be interactive with an audience of professional day care workers, private day care providers, parents of preschoolers, and interested community members. September was chosen as an ideal time so that workshop ideas

could be used throughout the school year. The workshop was offered at both locations of the Mishawaka-Penn Public Library and was at capacity each time.

The workshop was divided into two parts with some cross-over between parts to keep the presentation lively. In part one, we discussed the value and uses of books. In part two, we demonstrated concrete ways to expand the use of children's literature. We discussed the characteristics of good children's books, fiction and non-fiction, and ways care givers could select and use books to support curriculum. After doing both a good and poor picture book reading, we gave how-to tips for a good presentation. We also showed and discussed a variety of resources to aid planning and presentation. Caroline Feller Bauer's and Jean Warren's titles were popular.

Because we wanted to emphasize the participants' ability to create or duplicate materials and techniques, the demonstrations were the heart of the program. We demonstrated fingerplays with and without media, cut and tell, tell and draw stories,

storytelling with flannel, flip, and magnetic boards, storytelling with props or realia, and creative drama with audience participation. We allowed time for people to work with different media.

Participants were encouraged to browse the display tables of literature-based art projects and craft ideas. There were other tables of how-to materials such as *KIDSTUFF* and *TOTLINE* magazines. Several bibliographies and a discography were available along with a evaluation sheet (Appendix A). The evaluation sheets were overwhelmingly positive with many requests for repeat performances and suggestions for expanded demonstrations in a specific area, such as puppetry.

Newspaper coverage and publicity were excellent and generated more "business" than we had anticipated. The workshop was modified to fit time constraints and audience demands and presented five more times to different groups. Students from Bethel College, Indiana University at South Bend, and St. Mary's College were excellent audiences and the instructors often used the workshop as a springboard to student projects. A version of the workshop was one of the choices offered in a conference sponsored by the Woman's and Children's Services of St. Joseph's Medical Center for parents and professionals working with children from birth to age five. It was also given to the parents of children in the Early Childhood Assistance Program of Mishawaka Community Schools Corporation.

In conclusion, the workshop more than fulfilled its goals. It was a worthwhile project and will be presented again in the future. We are also exploring the possibility of offering workshop experiences of more depth in specialized areas. We believe

that we met a need in our community and demonstrated the value of public libraries and professional librarians.

Resources List

(Distributed in a slightly different format at the workshops and keyed to our collection.)

- Alexander, Alison. *Science Magic: Scientific Experiments for Young Children*. Prentice-Hall, 1987. \$11.00.
- Bauer, Caroline Feller. *Celebrations*. H.W. Wilson, 1985. \$35.00.
- Bauer, Caroline Feller. *This Way to Books*. H.W. Wilson, 1983. \$30.00.
- Bos, Bev. *Don't Move the Muffin Tins: a Hands-Off Guide to Art for the Young Child*. Turn-the-Page Press, 1978. \$13.00.
- Brown, Marc. *Hand Rhymes*. Dutton, 1985. \$12.00.
- Brown, Sam Ed. *Bubbles, Rainbows & Worms: Science Experiments for Pre-School Children*. Gryphon House, 1982. \$7.00.
- Brown, Sam Ed. *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe; Math Activities for Young Children*. Gryphon House, 1982. \$7.00.
- Champlin, Connie and Kennedy, Barbara. *Books in Bloom: Developing Creativity through Literature*. Special Literature Press, 1982. \$8.00.
- Champlin, Connie and Kennedy, Barbara. *Storytelling with Puppets*. American Library Association, 1985. \$20.00.
- Cromwell, Ellen. *Feathers in My Cap: Early Reading through Experience*. Acropolis Books, 1980. \$10.00.
- Dellinger, Annetta. *Creative Games for Young Children*. Child's World, 1986. \$9.00.

- Dreyer, Sharon. *The Bookfinder*. (3 volumes.) American Guidance Service, Inc., 1977, 1981, 1985. \$35.00.
- Frost, Joan. *Art, Books and Children*. Special Literature Press, 1984. \$9.00.
- Grayson, Marion. *Let's Do Fingerplays*. R.B. Luce, 1962. \$6.00.
- Hayes, Martha A. *Think It Through: Developing Thinking Skills with Young Children*. First Teacher Press, 1986. \$15.00.
- Hibner, Dixie (editor). *Explore and Create*. Partner Press, 1979. \$20.00.
- Holzbauer, Beth. *Creative Crafts for Young Children*. Children's World, 1986. \$9.00.
- Hunt, Tamara. *Puppetry in Early Childhood Education*. Nancy Renfro Studios, 1982. \$15.00.
- Jacobson, Willard J. *Science Activities for Children*. Prentice-Hall, 1983. \$17.00.
- Lima, Carolyn W. *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books*. Bowker, 1982, 1986. \$40.00.
- MacDonald, Margaret Read. *Twenty Tellable Tales*. Wilson, 1986. \$28.00.
- Mallett, Jerry J. *Stories to Draw*. Freeline, 1982. \$7.00.
- Neal, Judith E. *Fun Projects for Kids*. Children's Press, 1982. \$20.00.
- Nichols, Judy. *Storytimes for Two-Year-Olds*. American Library Association, 1987. \$20.00.
- Oldfield, Margaret. *Lots More Tell and Draw Stories*. Arts & Crafts Unlimited, 1973. \$8.00.
- *Patterns for Preschoolers*. New York Library Association, 1985. \$15.00.
- Pellowski, Anne. *The Story Vine: A Source Book of Unusual and Easy-to-Tell Stories*. Macmillan, 1984. \$8.00.
- Peterson, Carolyn Sue. *Story Programs*. Scarecrow Press, 1980. \$25.00.
- Polkingharm, Anne. *Creative Encounters: Activities to Expand Children's Responses to Literature*. Libraries Unlimited, 1983. \$15.00.
- Sitarz, Paula Gaj. *Picture Book Story Hours: from Birthdays to Bears*. Libraries Unlimited, 1987. \$19.00.
- Stangl, Jean. *Paper Stories*. Fearon Teacher Aids, 1984. \$9.00.
- Stott, Jon C. *Children's Literature A to Z*. McGraw-Hill, 1984. \$13.00.
- Townsend, Lucy. *Creative Dramatics for Young Children*. Child's World, 1986. \$9.00.
- Trelease, Jim. *Read-Aloud Handbook*. Penguin Books, 1985. \$7.00.
- Warren, Jean. *Cut and Tell: Scissor Stories for Spring*. Totline Press, 1984. \$6.00.
- Warren, Jean. *1-2-3 Art: Open Ended Art for Young Children*. Warren Publishing, 1985. \$13.00.
- Warren, Jean. *Science Time*. Monday Morning Books, 1987. \$7.00.
- Warren, Jean. *Teeny-Tiny Tales*. Warren Publishing House, 1987.
- Weiss, Sol. *Helping Your Child with Math*. Prentice-Hall, 1986. \$20.00.
- Williams, Robert A. *Mudpies to Magnets: a Preschool Science Curriculum*. Gryphon House, 1987. \$13.00.
- Wilmes, Liz. *Everyday Circle Times*. Building Blocks, 1983. \$13.00.
- Wilmes, Liz. *Exploring Art*. Building Blocks, 1986. \$17.00.
- Wilmes, Liz. *Felt Board Fun*. Building Blocks, 1984. \$13.00.
- Zaslavaky, Claudia. *Preparing Young Children for Math*. Schocken Books, 1979. \$12.00.

Appendix A

"Choosing And Using Children's Literature With Preschoolers"

Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

We would appreciate your comments concerning our program. Please express your opinions by completing the statements below and returning your reply before you leave. No signature is necessary. Your comments will help plan future workshops.

Please indicate your interest in attending this workshop. (day care worker, interested parent, Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, etc.)

Please circle the responses which best express your opinions:

1. This program is applicable to my present job.

agree undecided disagree

If you circled agree, these applications are:

immediate soon long-range

2. I heard new techniques at this program.

many some few none

3. The method of presentation was effective.

agree undecided disagree

4. This program provided the information as advertised.

agree undecided disagree

5. The scheduled times for this workshop were convenient.

agree disagree

If you circle disagree, what time would be best for you?

The thing I liked most about the program was:

The thing I liked least about the program was:

Other comments:

Possible topics for future programs: