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# Y A A C I N G

SUMMER, 2009

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The Newsletter of the Young Adult & Children's Services Section of BCLA

<http://www.bcla.bc.ca/YAACS/>

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# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We would love to hear from you!

YAACING is published four times a year and is always looking for submissions that might interest our membership. If you have tried something new at your library, would like to write a column, report on a conference session, or know of an upcoming event for the calendar, please share it with us. Mail, email or fax your material to:

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Deadlines are as follows:

*Spring issue for March/April – Feb 1st*

*Summer issue for May/June – April 1st*

*Fall issue for September/October – August 1st*

*Winter issue for December/January – November 1st*

**Next Deadline:**  
**Fall Issue: August 1st**

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[office@bcla.bc.ca](mailto:office@bcla.bc.ca)

## Message from the New Chair

Hello fellow YAACERS!

The coming of the BCLA conference always heralds a changing of the guard in the YAACS executive and so it was this year that we said good bye to our beloved Co-Chair Chris Kevlahan. Chris has finally been released from duty after 4 years of leading YAACS. As well, Vicki Donoghue is now our Past Chair, which means that she will finally be able to relax a little this summer. The job of Chair has been passed to me. I will try to live up to the big hole they leave behind. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the YAACS executive to thank them both for the wonderful job they did as Co-Chairs of our organization. They will be missed!

At this year's BCLA conference YAACS sponsored a session by Kathy Stanford and Leanna Madill on Videogaming. The workshop was so fabulous that as a follow-up the executive decided to sponsor a gaming night. Vicki generously volunteered to host the evening at her house. So on Saturday, May 23 an intrepid group of children's librarians tried a variety of videogames assembled by Vicki and her sons, including Alex, who enthusiastically assisted all of us with various strategies and issues. A great time was had by all, but the best part was all the great food, especially the cheese cake baked by Vicki's husband, Tom!

As the happy memories of spending time with friends and colleagues at this year's BCLA conference begins to fade, the excitement of a new Summer Reading Club session is taking over. This year's theme of "Follow the Reader" is sure to be fun for both children's librarians and children. Els Kusher and her team have done a wonderful job of putting together the materials for this program. Let the fun begin!

The YAACS executive will be meeting this month to talk about the focus for the upcoming year. Remember that the executive represents you, so if you have any ideas, for what you would like to see in terms of workshops, please be sure to let someone on the executive know. Don't know where to go? Check out the YAACS website. It is where we post upcoming events, as well as YAACS news.

This is going to be an exciting year! I am looking forward to working with the new executive. In the meantime, don't forget to send in articles, anecdotes and programming suggestions for the Fall edition of YAACING. We love to hear from you!

Cheers,

Susan Redmond  
Chair, YAACS

## Message from the Editor

Welcome to another edition of YAACING, this one following a great BCLA conference in Burnaby. Unfortunately, this year we received only a few reports for you to read - from the many of us who attended YAACS sponsored sessions. We would be happy to publish any reports you might be considering writing for the Fall edition of YAACING.

Remember, we are a newsletter for every member of our section, throughout the province. If you have been fortunate to have attended workshops, webcasts, or conferences of interest to children's and youth librarians in BC, please share these experiences with us. Prince George has now hosted their 'Beyond Hope' Conference and there is the upcoming PNLA Conference in Montana, both of which offer exciting sessions for YAACERS. Also, we are all interested in any programs or presentations that could be used or adapted by others in certain settings. Perhaps you had a GREAT SRC presentation that engaged and enthralled students from grades 2-6 in your local school library or gym. We'd love to hear about your successes and ideas! Without them, our newsletter, our section, and professional development, and our communities will suffer.

This year's BCLA conference was a somewhat 'easy' opportunity for many of us in Metro Vancouver. In 2010, for the first time in a while, the conference will not be held in our own 'front and back yard'. Less of us will certainly be able to travel to participate in BCLA 2010 in Penticton next year. However, this BCLA highlight conference of the year will hopefully be more accessible to those who otherwise cannot get down to the Lower Mainland.

Summer holidays now beckon as the weather finally warms passion and clematis vines, roses, and those lovely local tomatoes. Before you head off into the sunset with a great book and some sunscreen, check out this season's submissions that include the BCLA conference reports, the new year round Canadian Teen Reading Club, the beginning of a new and regular teen focus – maybe even a regular feature (!?!), a timely piece on 'owning' your stories, a paper from Alberta on Children's Digital Reference, and a preschool program idea on play and literacy for parents.

Happy Endless Summer Days,



Joanne Canow  
Co-Editor of YAACING

## **BCLA Conference Reports: YAACS Sponsored Sessions**

### **From the Pages of a Book: Bringing Characters to Life + Beyond the Book**

Convened and Submitted by: Anna Swanson, Children's Librarian, Vancouver Public Library

#### **Gina Varty: Bringing Characters to Life**

"I can't pay the rent," the gaggle of damsels yell out with paper napkin bows in their hair. "You must pay the rent," counter the villains with their paper napkin moustaches. "But I can't pay the rent." And so it goes, until the hero steps in with his paper napkin bow-tie to save the day. With the simplest of scripts and the most basic props imaginable (folded paper napkins from the conference hotel), Gina Varty has pulled us out of our seats and made us part of the story. Drawing on lessons from Shakespeare to Aristotle, from Mother Goose to Gilbert and Sullivan, this session provided tools and suggestions for how to use basic theatre techniques to animate any reading or library program.

As a librarian working with school age children and a long-time participant in community theatre (as an actor, director and playwright), Gina was able to show us where the two worlds meet and what libraries can learn from the theories and techniques of theatre. Her session demonstrated how quickly a reading can be transformed by a simple hat or a character voice, how to spice up the printed page, how to razzle-dazzle our audiences, how to pull our audience into the show, and how to move beyond the printed page.

#### **Maryn Ashdown: Beyond the Book**

Oral storytelling, reader's theatre, songs, rhymes, puppets: These are only some of the non-book activities used by children's and school librarians everywhere, and all of them support the six basic early literacy skills promoted by ALA's Every Child Ready to Read program (Letter Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Narrative Skills, Vocabulary, Print Awareness, Print Motivation). Rather than teach us how to address these skills in a school or library program, this session reminded us that our children's programming *already* supports these early literacy skills, and challenged us to become more aware of these links and make them explicit – both in our own planning process, and also in our communication with others. Being able to articulate the relationship between these six skills and the activities in our children's programming is vital to our communication with parents, caregivers, administrators and funders.

Maryn also addressed the ways in which non-book activities can help to address children's various learning styles. While auditory learners make up the largest proportion of children (50%), and visual learners are a close second (40%), it is still important to make sure that we include physical learners (10%) in our programs. Regardless of preferred learning style, children are holistic learners and tend to learn better when they learn in more than one way. Everyone benefits from a diverse range of activities that speak to the "mover", the "listener" and the "looker" in all of us.

# **How Libraries Can Support Early Brain Development**

## **Curious About Early Learning Initiatives in British Columbia & Babies, Beluga's, and Brain Development**

Submitted by Sharon Parker, Head of Children's Services, North Kamloops Library

### **Curious about Early Learning Initiatives in British Columbia**

This informative session on Friday morning was a great introduction to the theme of the whole conference which was BE CURIOUS: THINK, SHARE, DISCOVER. The first presenters were Dr. Margo Filipenko, the Senior Instructor in the Department of Languages and Literacy Education at UBC, and Iris Berger from the Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research at UBC.

Iris introduced us to the new policy document from the Ministry of Education called the "Early Learning Framework." It came about through consultation with other countries and School District 23 with the purpose of giving Education Professionals tools for their practice and to support dialogue with parents. The vision of this document is that children are capable and full of potential. The Framework has four areas of Learning:

- 1) Well-being and Belonging
- 2) Exploration and Creativity
- 3) Language and Literacy's
- 4) Social Responsibility and Diversity

A second document "From Theory to Practice" shows us how to make the first document practical; observing and recording what children do and say and sharing those narratives with other childhood educators. Dr. Filipenko explained the impact the Framework has on early childhood educators. One of these is that early childhood education is extremely fragmented; family, ready-set-learn, preschools, daycares etc. etc. and each have their own goals, objectives and funding arrangements. They all have three commonalities, including:

- 1) Compete economically
- 2) Remediation with at risk children, poverty, ESL
- 3) Preparation for school (Dr. Filipenko commented that children needn't be made 'ready for school' but schools should be made 'ready for children'!)

These documents and all other early learning programs can be accessed by 'Googling' 'BC Early Learning'.

### **Babies, Belugas & Brain Development**

The presenters were Allison Taylor McBryde, who is well known to all of us as the Coordinator of Children's and Young Adult Services at North Vancouver District Library, and Caroline Johnson, a Research Assistant with Books for Babies from SLAIS.

Caroline spoke first about the Province-wide Books for BC Babies program and the impact of partnerships between Libraries and Public Health officials and families. Their usefulness was assessed by:

- 1) Looking at other programs in England, Australia and other provinces of Canada and their assessments.
- 2) Looking at the Bookstart Questionnaire.
- 3) Designing our own survey based on evaluation of others.
- 4) Pilot testing and then revising the survey.
- 5) Deciding that surveying parents in library programs already skews the results.
- 6) Contacting Public Health nurses and administering a questionnaire at drop-in centers and community health groups.
- 7) Targeting the population: (42, 000 new babies in BC).
- 8) Collecting 415 surveys (50 of these had not received a bag)

### **What did these surveys find?**

They found that 60.4% of parents read to their children more and 80% of the parents read the information pamphlets in the bags. All their comments were enthusiastic and positive and when it came to Library usage, it was discovered that 48% used their Library more, 32% joined the Library for the first time and 90% attend or plan to attend Library programs advertised for parents and infants. Methods of Distribution included invitations given to public health nurses, mid-wives, and First Nations groups.

Allison then presented an informative session on infant brain development. We were reminded that early literacy is a continuum, beginning at birth and develops concurrently with oral language such as stories and songs. In fact babies learn even in the womb (they hear their mother's voice even louder than people outside). Babies emerge ready to learn language with ears attuned to voice patterns, and they love to have language sung to them as songs have longer vowel sounds.

Babies also need quiet, as background noise and hubbub chattering is a distraction to good language experience. This is a challenge in homes where the TV is almost always on in the background. It also explains why babies in Mother Goose programs get fussy during snack time when the parents visit and chat.

Early language development is important as language skills evolve over all the years of verbal interaction. Our Library programming enables these experiences, telling stories, singing, and listening to children. Listening is important as children understand about four times as many words as they can say.

A new program, "Toddle to the Library" is aimed at children in the Toddler years. A small record chart is being distributed to Libraries called "Growing a Reader" which allows for a week by week recording of books read and stickers.

This was my first elective session for the Conference this year and I came away motivated and challenged to continue and enhance early childhood literacy in my own Library and in the city.

## Videogaming

Presenter: Dr. Kathy Sanford, Leanna Madill and Liz Merkel

Submitted and Convened by Libby McKeever, Youth Services Coordinator, Whistler Public Library

Kathy Sanford is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. She currently holds the position of Associate Dean of Teacher Education. Apart from her literacy research and teaching interests, one of Dr. Sanford's current research projects is a Canadian Council on Learning funded project, entitled Literacy Learning Through Video Games. Dr. Sanford was joined by graduate students and research collaborators, Liz Merkel and Leanna Madill who. Leanna is also working to analyze the perception that parents have of videogaming.

Dr. Sanford's study, Literacy Learning Through Video Games has involved a group of mainly adolescent boys over the past few years. The study is a response to the results of standardized testing in schools which suggest that girls are more literacy successful than boys. Videogaming is an umbrella term for games played on the computer, whether online or via a console. Girls are also involved in gaming albeit a less visible portion of the videogaming community and both participate in school, at home and in libraries

Dr. Sanford surveyed the session's audience about their concerns or perceptions of videogames. She concluded the issues were common to many different groups. These included societal concerns such as safety, violence, lack of participation, inactivity, sexism, low reading, isolation, reduced time outdoors, addiction, companies are marketing to children, and racism. Dr. Sanford spoke to some common fallacies and misconceptions, such as lack of reading, reading, isolation and addiction.

Gamers are all kinds of people, including adults who play scrabble, cards online or enjoy Dance, Dance Revolution, Wii sport, or Rock Band. Audience members were asked what meaningful learning they have experienced recently. One participant cited a previous workshop. Dr. Sanford suggested that videogaming brings similar meaningful learning to lives of the gamers. Participants are fully engaged in digital learning and reading constantly, though not necessarily linear or print text. They are involved in multiple literacies including, symbols, angles, visuals, colours, music, language, artifacts and actions. This non-linear learning is enabling the children to make connections and transfer their learned skills. Dr. Sanford stated that children are involved in a sophisticated type of learning that utilizes alternate semiotic texts and literacy is gained not solely through words.

Dr. Sanford spoke to Gee's book, *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*, and that video games employs a well developed teaching scaffolding (Gee, 2003). Kids continually work with tools and take little steps in learning to master new skills before moving onto the next stage. They push themselves to get better and eventually they become the teachers. While watching another less experienced player, Dr. Sanford's research observed that gamers will hold back and wait, offering suggestions such as "what would have if you tried this?" They also

encouraged others to try again and noticed that there was no stigma in failure. Gamers play with all ages, not just their peers. They take risks and push their knowledge boundaries to achieve success. Mastery is valued.

Kids are making connections between the games they are playing and social, cultural and political issues. They are multitasking; reading website reviews, writing blogs, creating web pages, participating in forums, monitoring fan websites, creating 'YouTube' videos and reviews. Gamers are taking leadership roles online, in forums at libraries, in teen boards and in international gaming guilds. They are networking together to problem-solve complex issues, learning to engage in the problem and collaborate on ideas until it is solved. Gamers were observed to be excellent at articulating their message

Liz Merkel talked about "mash up", which is where participants will utilize two or more different types of data, such as visual and sound to create something new. Gamers are creating "Machinimas" where they will videotape a game, write a script that overlays the action and then dub in the voice and other sound effects. They then share this on YouTube or on [machinima.ca](http://machinima.ca) or [machinima.com](http://machinima.com)

Leanna Madill spoke to why girl gamers are not so obvious. It appears girls don't need gaming for identity and it isn't a necessary social currency for them to be part of a group. The boys take on the gamer's identity when forming friendships. Leanna reiterated that there are positive outcomes from computer engagement. They learn computer skills and therefore acquire job skills. Gamers learn negotiation with "turn taking".

Parents comment that they want their kids to fit in and have friends. They often will add that their gaming child may not be the typical boy. In fact they are competitive but with themselves and they do display imagination, and athleticism, but in the gaming world not on the sports field. When questioned, the study group of gamers didn't see themselves as valued, literate, mathematicians or scientists but they actually are constantly dealing with multi-literacies including learning angels, bar graphs, geometry and statistics. The study has helped them "unpack" or "discover" the layers of knowledge they are acquiring and were thrilled that Dr. Sanford's team were taking an interest in something that was important to them.

Parents will often value a child who sits and reads a book but not one who is playing video games. As adults we structure our free time into doing things we enjoy, but then we are able to separate and go back to work on Monday. A child should also enjoy free time, and whether they are reading a book or reading online, they are engaging in literacy learning and parents can help them to learn to separate to go on to another task. Businesses are now seeking people who have past experience with online networking. For example, those who have been contributing to global forum or leading a guild have been building positive international relations skills.

Dr. Sanford pointed out that competitiveness and violence is seen in our sports culture, and sexism, in our social and popular cultures, but it is up to parents to monitor the games that their child chooses to play. Parents need to assess the quality and value of the game. Parents should listen and ask open ended questions such as, "What do you think?" "Why did you choose that character or avatar?" "What

would you change?” “Why aren’t there many female avatars?” and “Could you make a game that better represented people?” Gaming must have time limits and parents need to be an active participant in their child interests.

### **Resources Presented for Parents, Educators, and Librarians**

[Cassell](#), J. (1998) *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy.*  
New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Johnson, S. (2005). *Everything bad is good for you.* New York: Riverhead Books.

Prensky, M. (2006). *“Don’t interrupt me mom, I’m learning.”* St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.



## Make the Stories You Tell Your Own

Submitted by Robert (Max Tell) Stelmach

Why tell rather than read stories to young listeners? Reading to children is a valuable tool, but telling stories makes it easier to take words off the page and to turn them into vivid pictures in the minds of young listeners, who will often turn those stories into imaginary movies. By telling stories, you not only encourage eager readers to read more, you also give reluctant readers the tools to begin to enjoy and perhaps love reading. To capture the attention of young listeners and hold it, you must tell a story well, and the first step to telling a story well is making that story your own.

**Build on your own experiences as a young reader or listener.** As a child, what were your favourite stories? What stories touched your heart or stirred your imagination? Which ones did you want read or want to listen to over and over again? Find these stories. Reread them. If they were family stories, passed down to you orally, search your memory and resurrect them. If you are lucky enough that the teller is still alive, ask her to tell those stories to you again. If necessary, look them up in anthologies. These favourites are the first stories you should tell.

**Allow your inner child to be reborn.** The child who read or listened to these stories is still alive in you. This child may be hidden, even buried, but with caring effort, you will be able to free your inner child, who, in time, will become the true teller of your stories.

As you reread a story you loved as a child, or as you recall it from memory, allow yourself to go back to that time. See the place in which it was read or told. Recall the face of the teller. What did she wear? Think of the sound of her voice. Were there sounds, smells, faces? If you read the story to yourself, take yourself back to that moment and create as clear a mental picture of that experience and your surroundings as possible. Then relive those experiences as you rehearse and later tell your story. Allow yourself to feel the fears and giggle the giggles.

**Share stories with others** as much as possible. For most of us, it takes practice getting use to standing in front of others to tell a story. For some, the early stages of telling can be frightening. In either case, choose safe listeners to share your stories with. I started with my own children. Now that they have grown up, I tell my stories to my wife. Choose a friend or the children of friends. Whoever you choose, make it someone who is caring and supportive of your process of growth as a storyteller.

**Plot out your stories.** Particularly when working on a new story (one new to you) or one with a complicated plot line, it is helpful to plot out the story, the main ideas (or beats) of the introduction, the body of the story, and the ending. Plotting out the story will not only help you to visualize its structure and moment to moment progress, it will also help when it comes to memorizing your story.

Many popular fairytales, not only traditional ones but modern ones as well, are built in the form of a triad. There are often three protagonists (main characters) and three main actions that lead to the conclusion. And within each of these three main actions are a series of smaller beats.

For example, in *The Three Little Pigs*, the three pigs are the main characters. In one version, the three main actions of the story focus on two of the pigs escaping from the clutches of the wolf, and the third punishing the wolf. When it comes to the number of beats within the main actions, the number increases to 1) along comes a wolf, 2) he asks to be let in the house, 3) his request is refused, 4) he blows the house in, then 5) chases the little pig to the next little pigs' house. However, during the third main action, the story changes at beat 5, when the third little pig who built his house out of brick punishes the wolf for his bad deeds.

In the case of *The Three Bears*, the story is about three bears. The three main ideas revolve around three bowls of porridge, three chairs, and three beds, each with similar beats within.

All the stories you tell will not fit so perfectly into a triad pattern; however, if you can discover the pattern to a particular story you are planning to tell, it will help you both in the memorization of that story and its telling. It will also help your young listeners to better understand that story and to create their own stories in their minds.

**Familiarise yourself with the time, the setting, and the characters** of the stories you tell. What makes them different and unique from those in other stories? Who is the speaker? Who is the story written for? Go beyond your childhood experience as a reader or listener, but use the same questions as above (Allow your inner child to be reborn) to create as clear a picture as you can. If time allows, research the times and customs upon which your story is based.

**Character voices** come easy for some storytellers, not so easy for others. And although character voices help tellers to create clearer pictures in the minds of their listeners, they are not necessary. Many highly successful storytellers do not use character voices at all.

Those wishing to experiment with character voices may do as follows. First think of your natural voice as your narrative or narrator's voice. Listen to your own natural voice. Get use to its pitch, how high or low it is. Now, ask yourself what a giant would sound like? Use your giant's voice, let your voice go lower. A large body goes along with a large voice, so while talking like a giant, imagine yourself as having a large or perhaps even a huge body. Think so large that you feel that both your body and your voice fill the room.

Now think of yourself as a tiny mouse. How small is a tiny mouse? Think of yourself as being that small or smaller. Think of a voice that goes with that tiny body. Try out that voice. Now experiment with your three voices, that of the narrator, the giant, and the mouse. Once you feel comfortable with these three, you may wish to go on and create more voices to suit other stories. Be careful, never strain your voice. If you feel any strain in your throat at all, or tension in any part of your body, stop, relax that tension, and then try again.

**Search out the key words:** the real power of a story is in its nouns and verbs; the adjectives and adverbs follow. Learn them well. Creating clear pictures of both people and things and their actions is the key to making a story your own and passing it on to eager listeners.

**What is being said between the lines?** One of the clearest examples of reading between the lines is in the following dialogue between Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf, when the wolf is in grandma's bed. What is being said between the lines is set off by brackets.

"Grandma, what big eyes you have," said Little Red Riding Hood. (I'm a little surprised and afraid.) "Better to see you with, my dear," said the wolf (what a tasty meal you'll make.) Discovering what is being said between the lines will give you the tools to create needed layers to the story to make it that more vivid for both you and your listener.

**What is your story trying to say?** I am not talking about telling the moral of a story. A story may or may not have a moral. If it does, however, focusing too much on that moral can actually get in the way of telling a good story, can even destroy it. Make yourself aware of what your story is trying to say and its moral, if it has one, but then focus on the story. Let it tell its own story. Told well, a story and its moral will live longer in the minds of listeners, because of the place it has made in the hearts of listeners.

**Should you memorize a story?** For some, memorization comes easy. For many, however, memorization takes a lot of time and effort. When it comes to poetic stories, there is no choice, memorization is a must. But, when it comes to prose, even modern fairytales, it is acceptable for non-professional tellers to paraphrase, though it is a must that the original author be mentioned.

Stories that are built on a triad structure are easier to paraphrase. For those stories that are not, plot them out. Create sub-titles for the main ideas, and sub-sub-titles for the beats within each main idea. Memorize key phrases if you like, along with key nouns, verb, adjectives, and adverbs. Be concise, stick with your plot outline and the key words, and the story will tell itself.

**In conclusion**, when making any one story your own, you may wish to work with all or a few of the above suggestions. Either way, take one at a time. If you are a beginner, be gentle with yourself, especially if you are nervous about standing up and speaking in front of an audience, even a small one. Take one step at a time. And try not to work alone. Find others like yourself, those with a love for story and interested in learning more about the craft, others you can share both your problems with and your successes. You can learn far more from each other than you think. If you cannot meet face to face, make a conference call, or meet on the web. Share your experiences. Help each other, not only to make the stories you tell your own, but also to give them as a gift to your young listeners.

Dubbed *the international troubadour* by the Vancouver International Children's Festival, Robert Stelmach, a.k.a. Max Tell, has toured the Pacific Rim five times. In 2007 his story, *Fiezo, the Book Burro*, was runner-up for the Writing for Children Competition sponsored by the Writers' Union of Canada. Max's fourth CD and audio book, *Little Johnny Small and Other Stories*, in English and with Spanish translations, is now available. He is currently working on his 5<sup>th</sup> CD, (2<sup>nd</sup> music CD) *Barnabus the Fishie and Friends*.

Find Max on line @ [www.maxtell.ca](http://www.maxtell.ca)

Hello everyone,

Have you heard about the **Teen Reading Club**? Started in 2006 as the **Teen Summer Reading Club**, it has evolved into a year-round, cross-Canada, reading, writing prize-winning extravaganza! Check it out at:

[www.teenrc.ca](http://www.teenrc.ca)

**TeenRC** is designed to encourage teens to read, to support them in their reading, writing and thinking, and to provide for them a safe, online venue in which to discuss their reading and literature-related ideas.

**TeenRC** also aims to:

- \* support teens in communities that do not have library services which appeal to local teens;
- \* support teens who do not have access to library service;
- \* inform teens about what libraries do and encourage them to become involved in their local libraries;
- \* encourage librarians to think more about teenagers and what library service for them entails;
- \* support teens who like to write.

### **How TeenRC Works**

Teens (aged 13 to 18) use the site to:

- \* post book reviews (moderated by librarians) and share reading interests;
- \* participate in discussion forums, most of which are reading-related;
- \* take part in online chats with authors and librarians;
- \* post their writing and share unparalleled peer feedback.

We are looking for library folks who are interested in writing booklists and moderating forums for this summer. Moderating takes only a few minutes each day and supports teens who love to read from all over Canada.

To find out more about what's involved and to sign up to **TeenRC**, go to <http://teenrc.bclibrary.ca/moderators>

Best wishes,  
Susan Laidlaw & Sabina Iseli-Otto (**TeenRC** Co-Coordinators)

Who we are: <http://www.teenrc.ca/aboutus>  
Contact us: [info@teenrc.ca](mailto:info@teenrc.ca)

## Love Twilight? Here's What to Read Next!

Submitted by Amy Dawley, Teen Librarian, Prince George Public Library

### **Blood and Chocolate**

By Annette Curtis Klause

Having fallen for a human boy, a beautiful teenage werewolf must battle both her packmates and the fear of the townspeople to decide where she belongs and with whom.

### **Blue Bloods**

By Melissa de la Cruz

Select teenagers from some of New York City's wealthiest and most socially prominent families learn a startling secret about their bloodlines.

### **City of Bones**

By Cassandra Clare

Suddenly able to see demons and the Darkhunters who are dedicated to returning them to their own dimension, fifteen-year-old Clary Fray is drawn into this bizarre world when her mother disappears and Clary herself is almost killed by a monster.

### **The Darkangel**

By Meredith Pierce

The servant girl Aerial must choose between destroying her vampire master for his evil deeds or saving him for the sake of his beauty and the spark of goodness she has seen in him.

### **Eternal**

By Cynthia Leitich Smith

When Miranda's guardian angel Zachary recklessly saves her from falling into an open grave and dying, the result is that she turns into a vampire and he is left to try to reinstate his reputation by finally doing the right thing.

### **Evernight**

By Claudia Gray

16 year-old Bianca, a new girl at the sinister Evernight boarding school, finds herself drawn to another outsider, Lucas, but dark forces threaten to tear them apart and destroy Bianca's entire world.

### **Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side**

By Beth Fantaskey

Seventeen-year-old Jessica, adopted and raised in Pennsylvania, learns that she is descended from a royal line of Romanian vampires and that she is betrothed to a vampire prince, who poses as a foreign exchange student while courting her.

**Need**

By Carrie Jones

Depressed after the death of her step- father, Zara goes to live with her grandma in a small Maine town, where new friends tell Zara the strange man she keeps seeing may be a pixie king, and that only "were" creatures can stop him from taking souls.

**Wicked Lovely**

By Melissa Marr

17 year old Aislinn, who has the rare ability to see faeries, is drawn against her will into a centuries-old battle between the Summer King and Winter Queen, and the survival of her life, her love, and summer all hang in the balance.



## "A picture's worth a thousand words - picture books for grades 4-7 and beyond!"

Submitted by Becky Stark, Children's Librarian, Prince George Public Library

It started when I snuck a look at a picture book that was sitting on my colleague's desk. It was called *The Red Tree*, written by Shaun Tan, and I was immediately captivated by the insightful simplicity of the text and the incredibly emotive illustrations. I felt an immediate connection to the book and started sharing it with everyone I talked to, because I felt that it could speak to people of all ages. Even small children feel very strong emotions the way the book describes them, and yet adults and older children can read into it on a deeper level because of their own life experiences. But I realized that as much as I might promote the book, its circulation will be limited by the fact that it was catalogued in the Easy section of our library. And although it is appropriate for a preschool and primary grade audience, there is an audience of older children who will probably not experience the book because it's been labeled as a, "little kids' book".

Shortly after, I attended a meeting of our district teacher-librarians during which we each talked about 2 current favourite books. Of course I brought the *Red Tree*. But I was not the only one who had brought a picture book appropriate for older readers. One of the teacher-librarians was very passionate about picture books for older children, and she brought along her copy of *Woolvs in the Sitee*. It is a fascinating book, and I was even more interested to hear her tell about her experience with reading it to one particular class of grade 7 students. This was a class of almost all boys, a group with whom she had previously struggled to spark any kind of interest in reading. They were so captured by the book that they listened with rapt attention and had a very meaningful discussion afterwards - about what the book meant, how it expressed certain feelings and ideas through the pictures, etc. I was amazed and intrigued. That's how my search began for more picture books for older readers.

I had some fairly specific criteria for what would make a good picture book for intermediate grades. The subject matter had to be of interest to readers in grades 4 to 7, something they would be drawn to or could identify with. I excluded graphic novels, since they are a completely different type of media, with a different format and different feel. I also tried to choose books that were true picture books in that the words of the story are dependent on the pictures to present a complete story.

With some help from other BC librarians, and my colleagues at Prince George Public Library, I was able to pull together a list of titles that met these criteria. I tried to include some variety in the subject matter to cover a range of interests for younger children as well as the older (for example, *Woolvs in the Sitee* may be too dark and complex for grade 4 readers, while *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* may not appeal to grade 7 readers because the main character is younger). I also included several books that are technically not "true picture books", but classic tales reprinted with excellent illustrations which make them more accessible to intermediate level readers.

Keep your eyes peeled for new picture books that your intermediate-grade readers can appreciate. Whether they're silly books that use ironic humour, scary stories full of suspense, or strange allegories that challenge our perceptions, picture books are a great way to interest reluctant readers or give a thought-provoking challenge to experienced readers.

*“A picture’s worth a thousand words...”: picture books for grades 4-7 and beyond!*

*List compiled by Becky Stark*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
Archie's war	Marcia Williams
Faithful Elephants	Yukio Tsuchiya
From slave ship to freedom road	Julius Lester
Ghost train	Paul Yee
Jabberwocky	Lewis Carroll (Visions in poetry series)
Mount Olympus Basketball	Kevin O'Malley
Night of the gargoyles	Eve Bunting
Rikki-Tikki-Tavi	Rudyard Kipling (ill. Pinkney)
Show way	Jacqueline Woodson
Sleeping boy	Sonia Craddock
Stormy Night	Michele Lemieux
Tadpole's promise	Jeanne Willis
The ballad of the pirate queens	Jane Yolen
The boy who drew cats	Arthur A. Levine
The coming of the surfman	Peter Collington
The Harmonica	Tony Johnston
The Highwayman	Alfred Noyes (Visions in poetry series)
The island	Armin Greder
The Man	Raymond Briggs
The mystery of the fool and the vanisher	David Ellwand
The paint box	Maxine Trottier
The secret knowledge of grown-ups	David Wisniewski
The Snow Goose	Paul Gallico
The three questions	John Muth
The viewer	Gary Crew
Varmints	Helen Ward
Weslandia	Paul Fleischman
Woolvs in the sitee	Margaret Wild
<b>Authors with several good books for this age range</b>	
The Widow's Broom	Chris Van Allsburg
Zathura	Chris Van Allsburg
Flotsam	David Wiesner
Tuesday	David Wiesner
The legend of Sleepy Hollow	Washington Irving (ill. Gris Grimly)
Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Mystery and Madness	Edgar Allan Poe (ill. Gris Grimly)
The Houdini Box	Brian Selznick
The Invention of Hugo Cabret	Brian Selznick
The boy of a thousand faces	Brian Selznick
The arrival	Shaun Tan
The red tree	Shaun Tan
The wolves in the walls	Neil Gaiman
The day I swapped my dad for two goldfish	Neil Gaiman
William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet	Bruce Coville

## **Children and Digital Reference: An Exploration of Information Seeking and Information Retrieval Behaviour**

Submitted by Caroline Land, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta

### **Introduction**

Over the last several years, many libraries have turned to digital reference services as a way in which to provide their clients with increased service. Recently, there has been a growing awareness of the unique needs of children in regards to library services. This paper will look at the current literature that examines children and digital reference. Out of this literature, I will then discuss how digital reference services for children have been and are currently organized and how the children's digital reference of the future can be optimized for the benefit of this particular client group.

### **Definitions**

I have chosen to look specifically at elementary school-aged children, or those who are roughly between the ages of 5 and 13. Even within this categorization, however, there is a substantial amount of variation in the levels of comprehension, information seeking skills, and frameworks of understanding that the children possess. Being aware of these variations, this paper will look at the general understandings of digital reference and how it can be used most effectively when dealing with children overall. This is a phrase that is particularly difficult to understand as it can be used to describe many different services. For the purposes of this paper, a very broad interpretation of digital reference will be used to describe various programs such as chat-based reference, e-mail reference, ask question sites, search engines, and online library services.

### **Literature Review**

There is a fair amount of literature that examines the digital reference needs and behaviours of children. Of course, it is important to view this literature in light of the total literature in the field, as Dania Bilal notes in "Children's information seeking and the design of digital interfaces in the affective paradigm": "compared to the literature devoted to adult users, the body of literature on both children's use of the Web and interface design for children is very small" (199). Literature on the digital reference needs of children is generally divided between 'kids' and 'teens,' a division that is sometimes represented as elementary school students and high school students. Articles are generally about either elementary school students, such as "What it means to be in-between: a focus group analysis of barriers faced by children aged 7 to 11 using public libraries" (Harris, McKenzie 2005), "The socialization of information behaviour: a case study of cognitive categories for information" (Cooper 2004), and "The development of young people's information-seeking behaviour" (Dixon, Shenton 2004), or high school students, such as "Acquiring Knowledge" (Crawford, McLelland 2004), "The Drumchapel Project: ICT skills in two Glasgow schools" (Crawford, McLelland 2004), and "High school student's information seeking and use for class projects" (Chung, Neuman 2007). Some articles, such as "Fast surfing for availability or deep diving into quality: motivation and information seeking among middle and high school students" by Jannica Heinström focus on a combination of these two age groups, but in general the most helpful data for addressing the needs of children comes from research that has looked at one particular group of children.

It is important to note that not all reference questions children pose are homework questions. Joanne Siverstein's article "Just curious: Children's use of digital reference for unimposed queries and its importance in informal education" looks specifically at children who bring their own questions to digital reference services instead of a homework or school-related question. Her study found that people in middle school years, or students from grades six to eight, tended to ask questions that fell outside the boundaries of what most general child reference sites were intended to answer, including questions of career planning, health and welfare, and death and anxiety (237). This is a particular area that needs more research devoted to it in the coming years so that digital reference providers can have a fuller understanding of the variety of questions that they should expect from children which in turn will increase the quality of digital reference.

A number of articles focus more generally on the topic of information seeking skills that children possess. Many writers, such as Dania Bilal and Linda Z. Cooper, focus their research around an understanding of Carol Kuhlthau's Information Search Process, drawing on the emotional connections that children have to information (Bilal 198, Cooper "Developmentally" 289-90). Much of this research is used to discuss the formatting and design of digital reference sites as well as the support services that children need when using digital reference services. The information in this area can also inform how information seeking skills should be taught. AnnBritt Enochsson has identified six fundamental skills for the online searching skills of children, which are language, knowledge of technology, knowledge of different ways of information seeking, knowledge of how search engines work, setting goals, and being critical of resources (Enochsson online). Recognition of the ways that children process information as well as the educational information levels that they might be at is essential for properly offering adequate reference help to children.

Another area of digital reference focused on in the literature is the relationship between children's information seeking behaviour and the information seeking behaviour of adults. In "Internet Search Approaches: the influence of age, search goals, and experience," Debra J. Slone observes that "children younger than 13 years demonstrated several approaches that pointed to lack of experience," (408), especially when compared with adults. She notes that the children "were often confused by, or not aware of, menus, search engines, and other tools, and they accessed a limited number of Web pages" (408). Her research further shows that teens aged 13-17 years showed more sophistication and general ability with web searching, while adults in various groups aged 18-45 demonstrated more overall comfort with web searching (409). Such research is important because it identifies the general skill level that one should expect when working with children while still emphasizing that children are capable of using digital reference materials.

There is also a large collection of articles that address this topic from a technical point of view. According to current research, children respond well and show a preference to internet resources that are visually appealing: "In the children's eyes, the visual design of a successful portal is one with a fun name, colorful backgrounds and foregrounds, large fonts, graphics and animation, recognizable characters, suitable vocabulary, well-laid-out screens, and no advertisements" (Bilal 204). Linda Z. Cooper, author of "Developmentally appropriate digital environments for young children" agrees, stating

that successful web sites will acknowledge that cognitive, social, physical and emotional domains are “interwoven within [a] child” (287) and require a number of different components. These findings are also echoed in “Interface design, web portals and children” by J.A. Large and Jamshid Beheshti, who argue that children need different looking resources by drawing on the examples of children’s books and children’s departments within libraries (318).

Another technical aspect that the literature addresses is how information is classified. According to June Abbas’ “Out of the mouths of middle school children: Developing user-defined controlled vocabularies for subject access in a digital library,” “one of the most difficult aspects of information seeking and retrieval in any system is choosing the most useful words with which to represent an information need and to search for the needed documents” (1512). When considering children, it is important to understand that their conceptions and methods of reasoning will be different from those of adults. Abbas also discusses this concept in “Creating metadata for children’s resources: issues, research, and current developments,” where she holds that the information “describing the system resources should reflect an understanding of how children access, organize, and use information, but it must also take into account the user’s understanding of how the system works and how the resources are represented within the system” (304). Both the interface and the construction of a system must work together to provide children with the opportunity to use these resources effectively.

## **Digital Reference and Children**

### **Organization and Presentation of Information**

Young people should be actively involved in the design process when libraries are contemplating an implementation of digital reference. There are, of course, special issues and requirements that need to be taken into consideration when children are involved in such a way; Large and Beheshti acknowledge that it is “unusual to involve the young users themselves in the design process” (318), but conclude that the most effective websites for children are those that have been created through extensive consultation with children (339). Including children at all stages of digital reference implementation is a powerful message to send to children as well as the larger library community about the seriousness and legitimacy of children’s digital reference services.

Additionally, digital reference services should be prepared to answer both homework and non-homework related questions. Categorizing children according to their grades is an easy way to distinguish between certain client subdivisions, but the emphasis placed on school and homework works to, in essence, negate the importance of personal queries. The literature on this topic, such as that by Joanne Siverstein quite firmly shows that children have both information needs – those that are related to school projects and homework assignments as well as those that arise from a more personal question or interest (237). Libraries that offer digital reference to children should anticipate these dual motivators and offer quality reference services for both types of questions. In order for this to happen, both so-called homework questions and personal questions must be valued equally; one must not be seen as more important than the other.

Children should be viewed as legitimate users of digital reference services. While it is true that “children have emotional experiences and needs that vary from those of adults” (Bilal 206), their experiences are no less valid. Just as the literature suggests that

children do not always understand or use the language of a library catalogue, librarians should understand that the language children use for asking their questions will likely not be the sort of language that they may be used to when dealing with adults. Similarly, it is important that the answers children receive be appropriate to their level while still containing worthwhile, quality information. Anything less of a response would send a harmful lesson to children who are reaching out to information professionals for assistance for their needs.

In traditional face-to-face reference interviews, many of the difficulties of children's references services can be dealt with, such as understanding how the child understands their reference query, what they child may actually be asking for, the reading and comprehension level of the child, and the types of documents or resources that the child would like to find. Just as with digital reference service for adults, these questions become much more complicated when the reference interview is no longer conducted in face to face or in real time. Plenty of space should be given to allow the child to provide as many details as possible about homework queries, such as the grade level of the student, the nature of the report, and the required length. While similar information is also needed for personal inquiries, it is especially important for homework questions as the wrong resources could result in a bad grade for the child, which in turn could cast a shadow over their experience with digital reference services.

### **Conclusion**

Compared to other specific client groups, there is a large amount of information that looks specifically at digital reference services for children. This research, however, pales when viewed in the larger arena of research on reference services. More research needs to be conducted that examines how children use digital reference services, what types of questions they ask, how they respond to technological interfaces, and how satisfied they are with the answers they receive from digital reference services. The research and writings that have been published should serve as a foundation for how libraries that currently offer digital reference services to children can ensure that their services are working effectively and for how libraries that are considering developing a digital reference service for children can create a system that works for and with children. Reference service in any form – whether face-to-face or digital – works to establish an important relationship between libraries and children; as they grow, these young users will become a new generation of adults who need strong information backgrounds and an understanding of how to obtain quality resources.



## Digital Reference and Children: A List of Selected Resources

Ask for Kids:

<http://www.askkids.com>

Version of the search engine Ask.com designed specifically for children and teens. Bright background, fun graphics, and information designed for children.

Dib Dab Doo and Dilly Too

<http://www.dibdabdo.com/>

Search engine designed specifically for children and 'run' by a penguin, a puppy, a cat, and a bird. Colours are bright and the results are excellent resources for children.

Fact Monster

<http://www.factmonster.com/>

Fun, interactive, homework site that allows users to select age groupings and gender.

Internet Public Library: Kidspace

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/>

Provides online resources for children under 13 for specific school assignments.

Kids Help Phone: Ask a Counsellor Online

<http://kidshelp.sympatico.ca/en/counselling/ask.asp?sec=1&sb=3>

Non-library site. Children can ask questions about personal and health concerns. Answers provided in 3-6 days & clients can call Kids Help Phone for prompter service.

Kids.Gov

<http://www.kids.gov/>

United States government site with links to websites, resources, and information about government and government programs. Site resources divided into sections for Grades K-5 and 6-8.

NASA Kids' Club

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>

NASA website about space; provides links designed for homework help and to encourage personal interest.

New York Public Library: On-Lion for Kids

<http://kids.nypl.org/>

Children's section of the NYP library with links to homework and personal resources and homework help via chat reference with teachers.

Toronto Public Library: KidSpace

<http://kidsspace.torontopubliclibrary.ca/>

Children's web section from the Toronto Public Library with bright fonts and graphics and sections for reference questions.

Yahoo! Kids: Ask Earl

[http://kids.yahoo.com/ask\\_earl](http://kids.yahoo.com/ask_earl)

Online searches designed for children as young as four years old. Requires very little personal information but does not contact user with responses.

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# A Parent's Guide to Pretend Play & Literacy

Submitted by Pamela Fairfield, SLAIS Student, Spring, 2009

## Your Preschooler!

- is becoming his own person, and will stand up for what he wants
- is also beginning to know how to solve problems when he's faced with a difficulty
- has more understanding of how other people think and feel.
- Enjoys playing with you and begins to understand games with rules
- When playing, can set goals, such as "I'm going to build a castle"

### Activity...

Sleeping Bunnies  
See the Sleeping Bunnies,  
Sleeping til it's noon  
Shall we wake them with a  
merry tune?

Oh so still...  
Are they ill?

Wake up ! Wake Up!  
Wake sleeping Bunnies!

Hop Little Bunnies  
Hop! Hop! Hop!

Stop Little Bunnies  
Stop! Stop! Stop!

### 3 Great Reasons to use this action rhyme... Play:

1. A game like this gives children an opportunity to participate in a group activity and to laugh and play together. It enables them to develop positive social skills and feel a sense of belonging.
2. Pretending to be animals is an excellent way for children to stretch their imaginations and move their bodies in different ways. It also helps them to represent their knowledge about animals through creative movement.
3. Substitute different animals for bunnies, encouraging them to stomp like elephants, slither like snakes, gallop like horses or float like butterflies. Ask children for their own ideas!

### Book Activity ... *Wonder Bear*, By Tao Nyeu

Preschoolers understand the structure of stories and begin to create their own. Try this picture-less wordbook with your child to encourage storytelling!

### Every Day Tips: How parents make the difference...

### When Talking...

- Add new words or ideas to you child's idea list
- Emphasize new words by saying them louder & at the end of the sentence: "That worm is **enormous!**"
- Repeat what your child says using the correct words or sounds.

### Book...

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom!* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault  
A Wonderful, Alphabet Book Based in Play!

### When Playing...

- Let your child be the leader: Let her/him tell you how to play
- Be face to face: Sit on the floor with your child
- Pretend to be the child, and let your child be the parent
- Spend time playing simple games that require turn-taking, e.g., simple card games like Go Fish
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with other friends on her/his own

### Activity...

The elephant goes like this and that,  
This and that, this and that  
(walk heavily and stamp your feet)

The elephant goes like this and that  
Cause he's so big and he's so fat.  
(puff up cheeks and stretch out arms)

He has no fingers and he has no toes  
(wiggle fingers, wiggle toes)

Has no fingers and has no toes

He has no fingers and he has no toes  
(wiggle fingers, wiggle toes)

But goodness, gracious, what a nose!  
(pull hands out from face to make a trunk)

### 3 Great Reasons to use this action rhyme...

1. Children feel secure when they hear familiar tunes or poems repeatedly.
2. The playfulness of the words lets you and your child use your imagination. The more animated you are the more fun this will be for you and your tot!
3. Action songs such as this are a great way to get children up and moving. This song also gives you a chance to teach children about body parts likes fingers and toes!

### Feelings

#### How does my child learn to empathize with others?

1. Asks more questions about how certain events or experiences make others feel.
2. Asks you specifically how certain things make you feel.
3. Begins to make some conclusions about how others might feel in certain situations.

4. Begins to show both empathic and sympathetic behaviours during pretend play with a doll or playmate, e.g., says "Don't cry baby. Mommy will make it better."
5. Begins to comfort and express concern for others.

### **Book**

*My Many Colored Days*, by Dr. Seuss

A '**Must Get**' book that blends pretend animals with emotions. Beautifully illustrated!

### **WONDERFUL WEBSITES!**

<http://www.investinkids.ca/>

[www.playingforkeeps.org](http://www.playingforkeeps.org)

[www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/)



### **BOOKS ABOUT PARENTING AND PLAY**

*Creative Experiences for Young Children*, by Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld  
*Supporting Play: Birth Through Eight*

### **BOOKS WITH PLAY IDEAS**

*Parachute Play*, by Liz & Dick Wilmes

*Pocket Full of Miracles*, by Connie Eisenhart and Ruth Bell

*The Preschoolers Busy Book*, by Trish Kuffner

### **STORYBOOKS ON PLAY & PRETEND**

*Giraffes Can't Dance*, by Giles Andreae

*Circus*, by Lois Ehlert

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, by Mo Williams

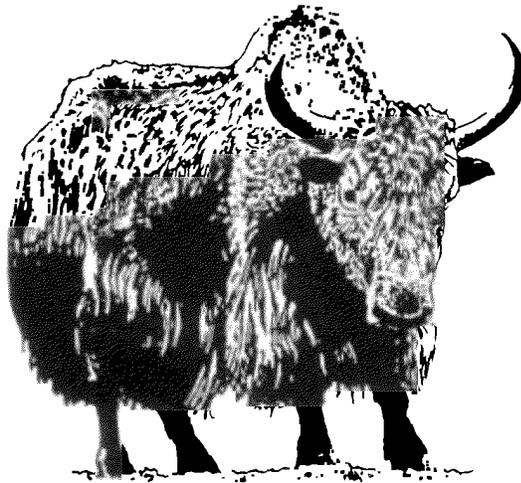
*Leaf Man*, by Lois Ehlert

### **BOOKS ON LEARNING AND READING**

*Born to Learn: Developing a Child's Reading and Writing*, by Carole Rhodes & Lenore Ringler

*Building the Reading Brain*, by Patrica Wolfe and Pamela Nevilles

*Home Where Reading and Writing Begin*, by Mary W. Hill.



# YAACING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
SECTION OF BCLA