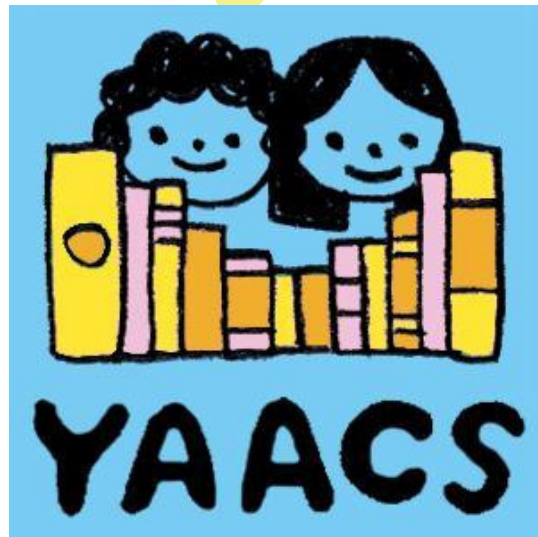


YAAACING

EARLY YEARS ISSUE



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



YAACING is the newsletter of the Young Adults and Children's Services section of the British Columbia Library Association. We publish articles by library workers serving children and teens and students in library professional and paraprofessional programs. Topics range from program and event report-backs, to book reviews, storytime ideas, literacy tips and more! If you would like to submit something for consideration, please email yaacing@gmail.com

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YAACING's editors would like to acknowledge that we work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples including the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Salílwataʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

This issue features pieces from what is currently known as Metro Vancouver which includes ancestral and unceded territory from many nations. If you would like to learn which territories you occupy, we recommend native-land.ca

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letters

from YAACS President, Rhiannon Wallace

Dear YAACS members,

Thank you all for another great year of YAACS! This is my final letter as President, and I am so excited to welcome Emily Gow as our new YAACS President for 2023/2024. Emily has already been doing excellent work as the Incoming President, and I look forward to seeing what we accomplish in the next year with her in the role. Thank you very much to everyone involved in YAACS in 2022/2023 – you are all amazing and we couldn't do it without you! A special thanks to Kate Wood for her support as Past President.

We had our Youth Services Institute in April, and I hope that everyone found it engaging and thought-provoking. We received feedback from some of you who are excited to learn more about some of the topics, and we hope to support continued learning through continuing education opportunities in the coming year. If you have ideas for a workshop or session that you would like to organize, please get in touch – we would love to support you!

We are also looking forward to welcoming student liaisons from the Library Technician programs at Langara College and University of the Fraser Valley. Many thanks to our faculty advisors in these programs for helping us expand our student liaison roles to include more local students. We are excited to learn all about the great work that Lib Tech students are doing!

I hope you enjoy this issue of YAACING, and I look forward to seeing you all during the upcoming year in my role as Past President.

Sincerely,

Rhiannon



letters

from YAACING's editors

Hello childrens' services superstars!

Thanks for taking a look at this issue focused on the early years! We have our usual stellar columns from Jbrary and Sadie Tucker, as well as a great program rundown from Nicola MacNeil, a gorgeous felt story template from Jennifer Rowan, and we are almost at the end of Sarah Bagshaw's alphabet books instalment. Plus, our wholehearted congratulations to Sara Grant on her YAACS award win and *storied* career in youth services. And thanks as always to Dawn Lo for the delightful cover illustration!

If you would like to engage with the content in this issue, please do so on the BCLA forums! We will be monitoring the post announcing this issue and are happy to pass on any comments or questions to the authors of these pieces!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Rhiannon Wallace for all of her hard work as YAACS President and her support of YAACING. We are so lucky to have her staying on as Past President.

Our next issue will focus on middle years (elementary-aged kids) and we are hoping to hear about your SRC successes and failures, what you have planned for the fall, or about any after-school activities you would like to share. The deadline for our next issue is **September 15** but as always, feel free to email us at yaacing@gmail.com if you want more time.

Thanks for reading!

Sabrina & Emily



news

The Young Adult and Children's Services Section Award Committee is pleased to introduce this year's YAACS Award winner: Sara Grant of Surrey Libraries



Sara has been a passionate champion for children and families for 23 years. The impacts of her work extend throughout the Surrey system and beyond, helping to create a foundation for many elements of youth services we now take for granted in BC libraries. Sara's ability to provide excellent service comes from her unwavering positivity, her thoughtful and highly intelligent approach to her work, her ability to adapt and pivot - which was made crystal clear over the course of the pandemic - and her dedication to both her colleagues and the work.



Image: Sara Grant holding her YAACS Award, with library shelves in the background

Sara has participated on numerous city and library tables to advocate for youth over the years. She has led countless innovative and valuable programs including an art exhibit and celebration in 2017 based on the book *Taan's Moons: A Haida Moon Story*. She has provided unmatched care and support for youth services staff, ensuring they have the skills and support to do the work they do, and empowering them to deliver services informed by the needs of their communities.

Thank you Sara for your years of exceptional library service to youth and children, your mentorship of staff, your foundational programming and projects, and your dedication to literacy. Congratulations on this well-deserved award.

The Young Adult and Children's Services Section Award Committee

A note from
the editors:

Sara gave a great speech at the BCLA Conference luncheon accepting the award. In addition to the accomplishments listed here, Sara is also a former YAACING editor! Congratulations on your award, Sara!

news

BC Summer Reading Club is looking for volunteers!

We know SRC is just starting to ramp up at your libraries, but BC SRC is looking for volunteers for the 2024 & 2025 seasons!

Are you interested in helping to create the staff manual content for our 2024 theme: World of Curiosities? Do you have a great idea for a storytime, younger kids program, older kids program, or activity sheet that kids around the province (and in Nunvut, The Yukon, and Yellowknife!) will enjoy? Is there anything missing from the current manual that you think we should add? BC SRC is always happy to hear your ideas! If you have a lot of ideas, please consider becoming a **Content Creator**!

If you would like to help shape SRC over the next 2 years, consider becoming a **BC SRC Co-Chair**! For more details about the co-chair role, visit this [BC SRC staff page](#)

It is almost time to vote on our 2025 theme! If you missed us at have suggestions, please submit them [at this link by June 30th](#).

A poster with a light blue background and a white central box. The title "VOLUNTEER WITH BC SRC" is in large, bold, black letters. To the right is the BC Summer Reading Club logo, which includes a sunburst icon and the text "BRITISH COLUMBIA SUMMER READING CLUB". Below the title, the text "We are looking for..." is followed by two columns of roles: "New BC SRC Co-Chair (two term commitment)" and "Content Creators for Annual Manual". Below this, the text "Why volunteer?" is followed by two bullet points: "• Great way for you and your library to get involved with SRC" and "• A great professional development opportunity". At the bottom right, a small text box says "VISIT BCSRC.CA/STAFF FOR MORE DETAILS INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSITIONS".

**VOLUNTEER
WITH BC SRC**

**BRITISH COLUMBIA
SUMMER
READING
CLUB**

We are looking for...

New BC SRC Co-Chair
(two term commitment)

Content Creators for
Annual Manual

Why volunteer?

- Great way for you and your library to get involved with SRC
- A great professional development opportunity

VISIT BCSRC.CA/STAFF FOR MORE DETAILS INCLUDING
INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSITIONS

Deadlines:

For **Co-Chair** = June 30th

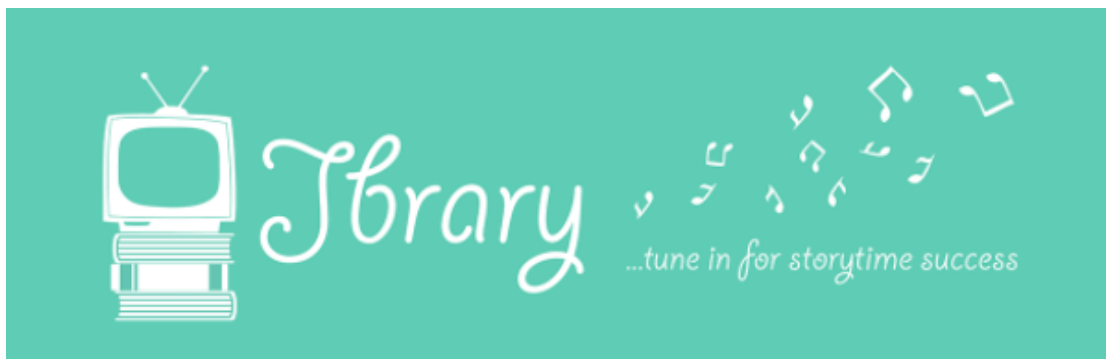
For **Content Creators** = ongoing (reach out any time!)

Please reach out to Stephanie Usher at bcsrc@bcla.bc.ca to express interest!



columns

I'll Link to That: Indigenous Resources to Support the Early Years



I want to shine a light on the books, websites, and materials available to library staff that help us highlight Indigenous voices in our spaces and programs. As B.C. implements the [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) and the [Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (TRC), we can keep those commitments in the forefront of our library work. As youth services library staff, we have also been called to this work through the [The Early Learning Framework](#) which guides all environments in B.C. serving children ages 0 - 8 (libraries included!). I hope the following resources help you reflect upon concrete ways we can continue to support reconciliation while serving our youngest library patrons.

Get Local

Take some time to learn about your local First Nation. You can search [Native Land](#) or [First Nations A-Z Listing](#) on the B.C. government website. Also check out the [First People's Language Map of BC](#) to discover 203 Indigenous languages. We often use the monolithic term "Indigenous" to describe places and people, but by learning local names and languages we can showcase the diversity in our province. Some libraries include land acknowledgements before programs to further this goal. Go a step further by finding the nations' websites and reading about their history and current affairs. Sometimes you can glean information about what they are prioritizing in their own work by doing some online digging.

Program Planning

Need new puppets or toys for your children's area? Check out [Strong Nations](#), an Indigenous owned and operated publishing house and online bookstore located in Nanaimo. I love these [emotion cards](#) which can be used to sing variations of "If You're Happy and You Know It." You can also grab a [set of stamps](#) for storytime

goodbyes, and some adorable animal [finger puppets](#), many of which are native to the Pacific Northwest. [Native Northwest](#) is another retailer that sells beautiful [puzzles for little ones](#) and [hand puppets](#) that work in storytime or in a public toy area. When planning your programs I recommend checking out [In Our Own Words - Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K - 3 Classroom](#). Though aimed at teachers, library staff can use the themed units for book suggestions, craft ideas, and STEM program inspiration. Don't forget the "early years" goes up to Grade 3!

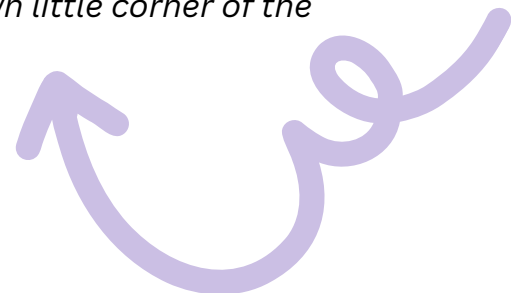
Collections

If you're in charge of ordering books for your library make sure you've got these [Indigenous Publishers](#) on your radar. I also recommend getting all the books on the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)'s 2021 list called [From Sea to Sea to Sea: Celebrating Indigenous Picture Book](#). The First Nations Education Steering Committee provides an [annotated list of books](#) "created by First Peoples or through the substantial contributions of First Peoples" that "depict themes and issues that are important within First Peoples culture." Even better, they include an evaluation guide that library staff can adapt and use when weeding books in their own collection. Lastly, on even numbered years you can stock up on the new recipients of the [American Indian Youth Literature Award](#) which "honors the very best writing and illustrations by Native Americans and Indigenous peoples of North America."

Supporting Early Childhood Educators

Part of serving the early years community means serving the early childhood educators who see kids in daycare and preschool. A key resource to share with them is the [Indigenous Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide](#). Chock full of links, this guide helps ECEs provide culturally safe and respectful care. We can also point them towards the [BC Aboriginal Child Care Society](#) which offers workshops across B.C. and curriculum kits for loan. Lastly, you can recommend the [Early Years Indigenous Cultural Competency Podcast](#) which helps ECEs "ensure they are respectfully weaving Indigenous ways of learning, knowing, being and doing into their programming."

Lindsey Krabbenhoft is a Children's Librarian in Vancouver, British Columbia and one half of [Jbrary](#), the online children's librarian treasure trove. She is also the co-founder of the [Library Services for Children Journal Club](#) and encourages any other research nerds to join. You can find Jbrary in its own little corner of the internet at [jbrary.com](#)



columns

New & Noteworthy Books

Some great choices for storytimes and littles' reader's advisory, from Sadie Tucker and Francesca de Frietas



Song in the City

Bernstrom, Daniel

3-8 years

During their bus ride, Emmalene (who is blind) tries to describe to her grandmother the music that the city makes. A fun, rhythmic text is paired with bright illustrations, making an engaging read that skips right along.

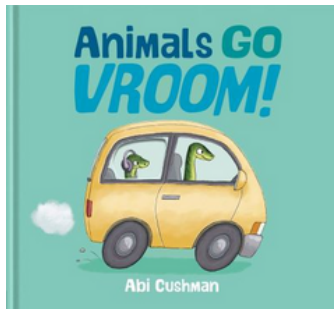


Tiptoe Tiger

Clarke, Jane

2-5 years

Tara, a baby tiger, is ready to play! Can she approach potential playmates quietly or will she scare them away? An interactive book that is perfect for toddler storytimes.

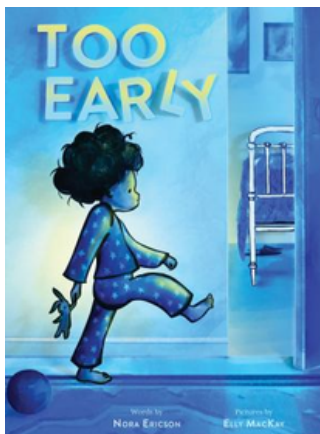


Animals Go Vroom!

Cushman, Abi

2-5 years

"Roar! goes the truck" driven by a tiger. Unfortunately, that truck drops a box of nails that leads to an epic traffic jam. What other sounds (and animals) will we hear? A fun book for storytimes with peek-through pages.



Too Early 🍁

Ericson, Nora

3-6 years

A young child gets up before the sun does. Leaving baby and mom, dad accompanies the narrator downstairs where they embark on their sleepy morning rituals. Warm, cozy, reassuring, and eminently relatable for caregivers.



Night Lunch 🍁

Fan, Eric

3-8 years

When night falls, the night lunch cart appears on the street to feed a wide variety of hungry animals. Just before closing up, the owl who runs the cart sees a hungry mouse and prepares them a feast. The nearly monochromatic artwork creates a cozy vibe.

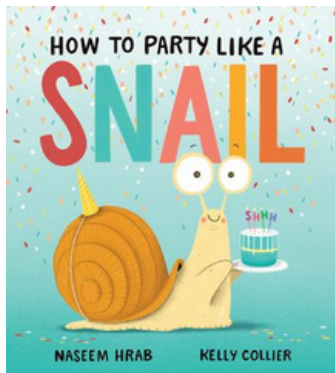


Ten Beautiful Things

Griffin, Molly Beth

4-8 years

Lily is going to live with Gram. They pack up Gram's car and embark on a long drive. Lily is obviously feeling some big feelings deep down inside. To distract her, Gram suggests that they find ten beautiful things along the way. A gentle, thoughtful book that leaves a lot unsaid. A fantastic discussion starter.



How to Party Like a Snail

Hrab, Naseem

4-8 years

Snail loves parties. He especially loves the quiet parts (like dancing inside his shell and the silence before attendees shout "surprise!"). Unfortunately, the other animals assume that dislike of loud noises means that he doesn't like parties, so they stop inviting him. A sweet, lightly humorous book about being yourself and doing what you love.



If You're Happy and You Know It 🍁

Ittusardjuat, Monica

2-7 years

The classic song Inuktitut style, with northern Canadian animals and lots of movement to keep everyone wiggling.



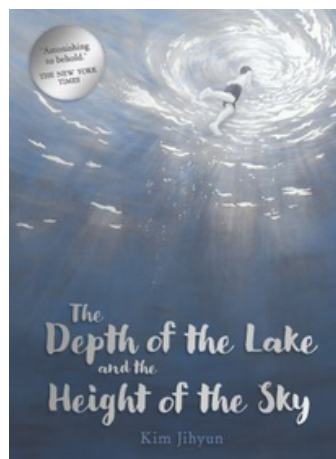


Kimchi, Kimchi Every Day

Kim, Erica

2-5 years

Kimchi is delicious. So delicious, you could eat it every day of the week! With rhyming text and approachable illustrations, this book celebrates the many forms that kimchi can take - all of them yummy. A great choice for storytimes.

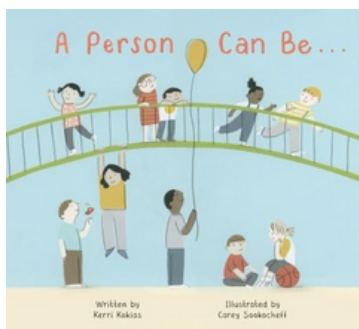


The Depth of the Lake and the Height of the Sky

Kim, Jihyun

3-7 years

A wordless picture book with illustrations created using writing ink depicts a boy as he travels with his parents to visit his grandparents in the country. From walking through the woods to staring up at the night sky, the boy and his dog enjoy all that nature has to offer. Gentle and lovely.



A Person Can Be 🍁

Kokia, Kerri

4-8 years

People can feel more than one emotion at once. In fact, they can feel two very different emotions at once! Every page features two contrasting words paired with an illustration depicting a situation that might match the words (for example, "Safe and scared" is accompanied by a child riding a bike with their grown-up). A great book for both lap reading and group discussions.

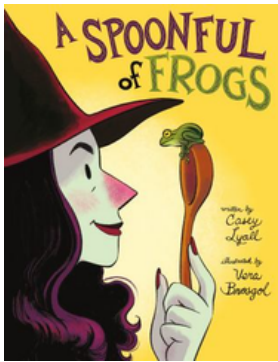


Dim Sum, Here We Come!

Lam, Maple

3-6 years

Our young narrator goes to dim sum every Sunday with her family. Readers accompany her as she leaves the house, gets to the restaurant, visits with her cousins, and (finally!) sits down to eat. An emphasis on Chinese traditions, family togetherness, and sharing highlight this sweet book. Illustrations are suitable for a small-medium group storytimes.

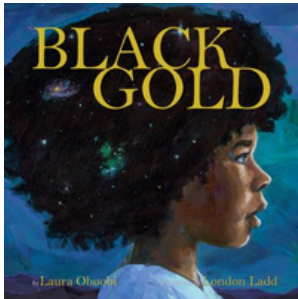


A Spoonful of Frogs 🍁

Lyall, Casey

4-8 years

While hosting a cooking show, a witch runs into a slippery challenge when her star ingredients - frogs - refuse to get on her spoon. What follows is a hilarious chase through the set and outdoors.



Black Gold

Obuobi, Laura

3-7 years

An ode to the wonder, love, and power imbued into a child upon their birth. The collage illustrations are gorgeous and meld with the text to create a work of art.

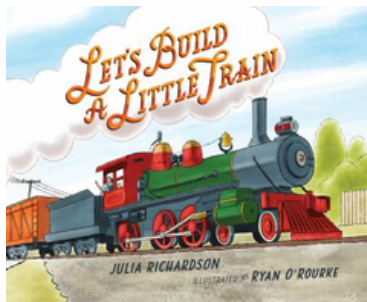


Eat Together

Ordóñez, Miguel

2-5 years

Illustrations of food are broken down into their components (or "shapes") and the reader is asked what they create when put together. At the end, the assembled foods are again taken apart for easy transport into an ant hill. An engaging way to focus on numeracy, shape recognition and differentiation, and art.



Let's Build a Little Train

Richardson, Julia Marie

3-6 years

From gathering the parts to cutting the metal to loading the coal, it takes a lot of work and cooperation to build a train. Large illustrations, repeated train sounds, and a popular topic make this a solid contender for group read-alouds.



You Are My Favorite Color 🍁

Sze, Gillian

3-6 years

A parent's ode to their brown child's skin colour. From comparing their child's skin colour to majestic animals to encouraging their little one to discover their own shades, this free verse poem brims with love. The illustrations depict a white mother with two Black children.



That's My Sweater! 🍁

Von Innerebner, Jessika

3-8 years

Olivia has a favourite sweater that she (almost) never takes off. Sure, it's gotten pretty tight, but she can still get it on (kind of). The idea of her baby brother wearing it is offensive, to say the least!

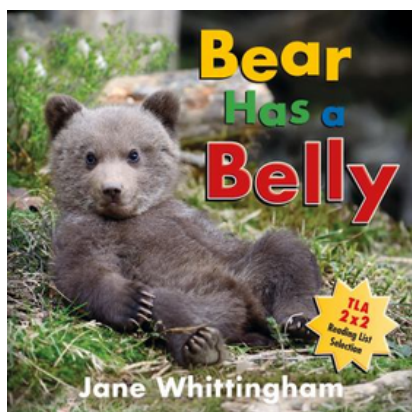


Dark on Light

White, Dianne

4-7 years

Poetry describing nature at night is accompanied by lovely illustrations depicting a trio of children exploring their rural setting in the dark. Would work well for an art unit looking at light and colour.

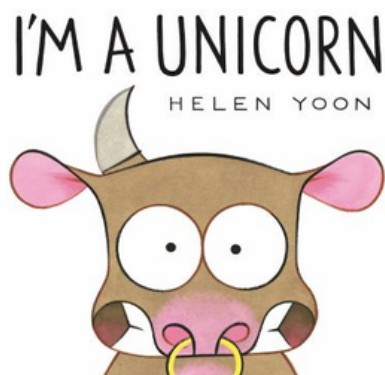


Bear Has a Belly 🍁

Whittingham, Jane

1-5 years

Fox has a nose and so do you! Bright photos of various animals are paired with photos of a diverse array of children, demonstrating the body parts that we have in common. A great title for toddler storytimes, especially alongside its companion *Animals Move*.

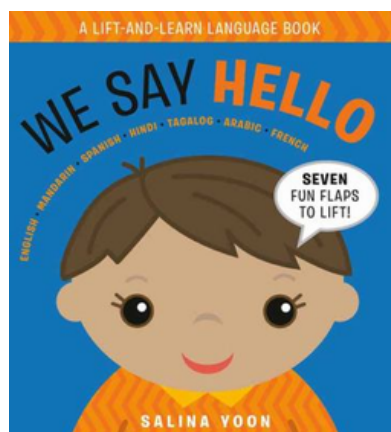


I'm a Unicorn

Yoon, Helen

3-5 years

A young unicorn that looks remarkably like a cow proudly states that they are a unicorn, seeing as they were born with only one horn. As they read more about unicorns, they begin to have doubts. What will the other unicorns say? The pictures are great for group read-alouds and the mentions of poop will be sure to win over young readers.



We Say Hello

Yoon, Salina

0-5 years

Seven children say hello in different languages. Each "hello" includes the word in English, in its native characters, and in English phonetics. Good contender for group babytimes and storytimes.

Sadie and Francesca are children and teens' librarians at the Vancouver Public Library.

features

Toddler Box Party: STEM Success for Tiny Engineers

by Nicola MacNeil

This year I took a pile of humble cardboard boxes and transformed them into a STEM program that became a raving success for the community my library serves. My branch is nestled in a neighborhood filled with young families, but lacks places for these families to come together and connect. In the year since arriving at this branch I have spent time cultivating relationships with these families, and noticed that there was a need for more opportunity to connect.



At a recent training the facilitator spoke to the importance of bringing mathematical language into our storytimes and this became the catalyst to offer a STEM program geared toward babies and toddlers. I used an existing program called Toddler Box Party as a jumping off point for my own program. I knew I could take the idea of toddlers drawing and playing with cardboard a step further.

In order to introduce STEM concepts, I made a host of toys using cardboard boxes and inexpensive supplies that encouraged the use of fine motor development, numbers, spatial awareness, and discovery. Here is a list of what I used:

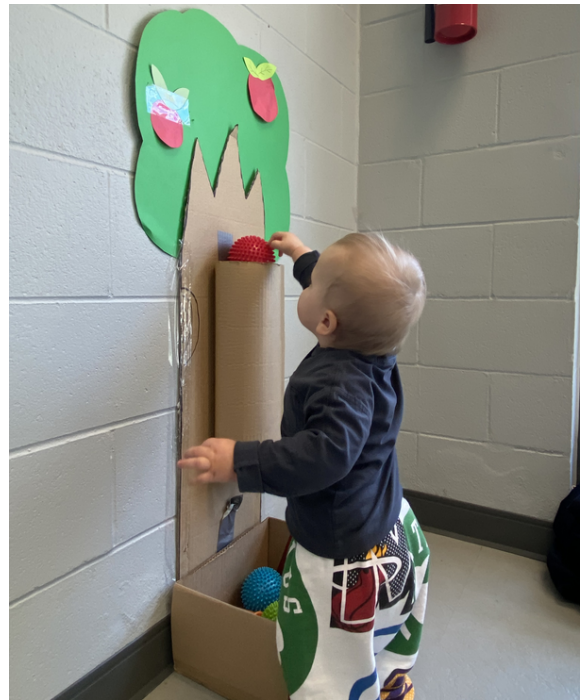
- Brass fasteners
- Half corrugated cardboard (could use a cardboard tube instead)
- A roll of kraft or white paper
- Pool noodle
- Yarn/string (preferably chunky)
- Crayons (chunky crayons if possible for little hands)
- Printed images (I used Canva)
- Rope
- Bristol board
- Large paper straw or dowel
- Laminator (if you don't have access to a laminator you can back printed images with cardboard)



And with these modest supplies I made the following toys (with the help of the staff here at the branch, shout out to my colleagues Georgia and Aura!)

Apple Tree Ball Drop - Construct a tree out of Bristol board and attach a cardboard tube or a constructed corrugated tube. Children start to make the connection between the action of dropping the ball through the opaque tube and seeing where it lands.

Box Threading - This toy was definitely a challenge and was made for older toddlers. I attached a long piece of t-shirt yarn to a large bubble tea straw by tying it through the straw. I then poked 6 holes in the side of a box and the idea was to practice threading through the holes.



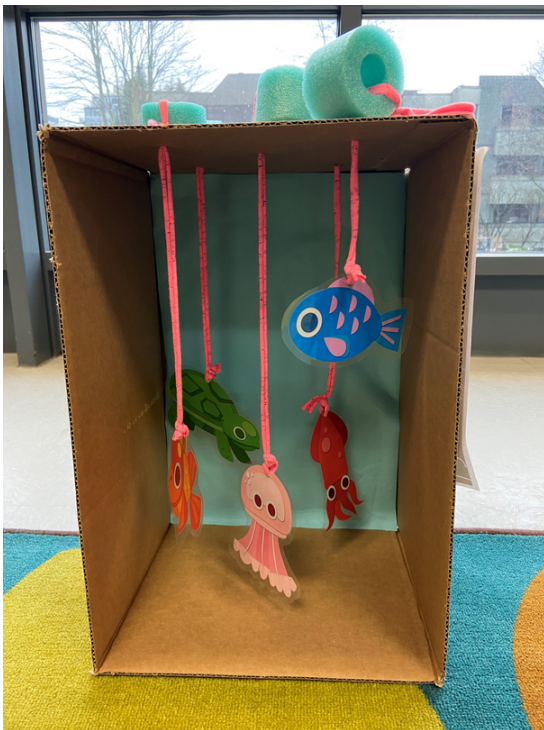
Cookie Monster - Some children spent most of the program at this toy feeding cookie monster cookies. I found this idea on the blog [7 Days of Play](#). I recommend making the 'stomach' easily accessible to retrieve the cookies or babies and toddlers will find their own way! This toy is great for building fine motor skills and counting.



Spinning Flowers - Brass fasteners allow for articulated pieces. I glued printed flowers to cardboard and then poked a hole through the flower and the box, securing it with a brass fastener. I recommend taping the brass fastener to the inside of the box so children can't rip out the flower. You could make articulating cogs, steering wheels, arrows etc. using brass fasteners. (photo on prev. page)

Baby Abacus - I tightly fastened two pieces of rope across the top of a cardboard box and threaded 5 pieces of pool noodle on each piece of rope to make a big abacus. The purpose of this toy was to talk about numbers as well as early concepts of addition and subtraction when pool noodle pieces were moved from one side to the other.

Size Sorter - These were the easiest to make. I cut large circles in the top of a couple of boxes that pieces of pool noodle and rubber balls would fit through, leaving half a side open for easy retrieval of balls and pool noodle pieces. This was a crowd pleaser and an opportunity to make predictions and explore size.



Aquarium - This was maybe the most involved toy I made. I poked holes at the top of a sturdy cardboard box, and fed chunky t-shirt yarn through the holes. I attached pool noodle pieces that I had cut up to act as an easy grip for little hands and attached laminated (if you don't have access to a laminator use cardboard backing to reinforce) sea creatures from [this Canva document I created](#). This toy was made to encourage caregivers to talk about spatial relations.

This list is meant to give an idea of what you could use. The program can easily be adapted to the supplies that you have access to at your library. Some of the simplest toys I made (the sorting boxes) were the biggest crowd pleasers

Making simple things out of cardboard is a great way to show parents of all socio-economic backgrounds that toys do not need to be expensive. A cardboard box can have as much educational value as a flashy toy.





Image: The room set up for Nicola's Toddler Box Party program



Running the program

While Toddler Box Party could be seen as a passive program, I highly recommend having a staff member in the room for the duration of the program. My amazing coworker and I took turns running Box Party and, if time and staffing allowed, both of us would be in the room. Having staff in the room allows for meaningful connection, facilitated play, and crowd control.

At the beginning of the program we introduced parents and caregivers to the concept behind Toddler Box Party, encouraging them to talk to their children while they played. For example, with the aquarium toy they could talk about what colour the fish were and where they were in relation to each other. For the cookie monster toy they could count the cookies as they fed them to cookie monster. Interactive play is key here. After the short introduction and sometimes a welcome song, we turned on music and the children freeplay for the hour.

One of the biggest wins from this program was having unstructured time to talk to parents, caregivers and their children. Though I encourage questions at my Storytimes, I do not get many questions. However, during Box Parties we were asked so many questions about library materials and upcoming programs, and were able to give people more individualized responses. What worked best for my colleague and I, was to jump from caregiver to caregiver to ask about their child, their recent milestones, and to promote library services.

The more we talked to parents and caregivers to break the ice, the more they connected with each other as well. A few parents who had recently moved to the country with young children connected at Box Party, and began to come to subsequent storytimes together.



Hiccups are expected with any program, but a big one here became the demand versus the amount of space we have. If you have a small space, think about registration, especially for busy times such as Spring Break. The capacity will differ for every space, but allowing for a little breathing room is more encouraging for thoughtful play and children who are easily overwhelmed may feel more comfortable joining if the space isn't packed.

Another thing we learned is that you may have to trial and error some toys. I tried to make sensory bags with colourful pom poms inside, and within 5 minutes a child had ripped it in half, pom poms spilling everywhere. I introduced one new cardboard toy for each box party, and was impressed by the longevity of the toys. We have now run almost ten Box Parties and I have only recycled one toy.

Toddler Box Party offers endless opportunity to introduce early STEM concepts, and imaginative play in a low barrier environment. It provides a unique space for parents and caregivers to connect with each other, as well as to library staff. With a pile of cardboard and basic materials even toddlers can learn how to think outside the "box".

Nicola MacNeil is a Children's & Teen Services Librarian at the Vancouver Public Library, as well as a talented collage artist. Follow her on Instagram

[@NicolaMacNeilArt](#).



features

Felt Story Fun!

I wanted to share two felt stories I've created for GVPL. They do involve a bit of sewing, but could also be easily adapted with glue. I photocopied each piece so that they could be used as templates. - Jennifer Rowan

A Douglas Fir (adapted from Lindsey and Dana's action rhyme on Jbrary)

A Douglas fir, a Douglas fir

Little red mushroom

And a Douglas fir

Repeat

A sword fern! A sword fern!

Little red mushroom

And a Douglas fir

A camas flower, a camas flower

Little red mushroom

And a camas flower

Repeat

A sword fern! A sword fern!

Little red mushroom

And a Douglas fir

A huckleberry bush, a huckleberry bush

Little red mushroom

And a huckleberry bush

Repeat

A sword fern! A sword fern!

Little red mushroom

And a Douglas fir.



I also created a take on the Little Mouse hiding game –

Mushroom and Mouse Hiding Game

Little mouse, little mouse come out and play!

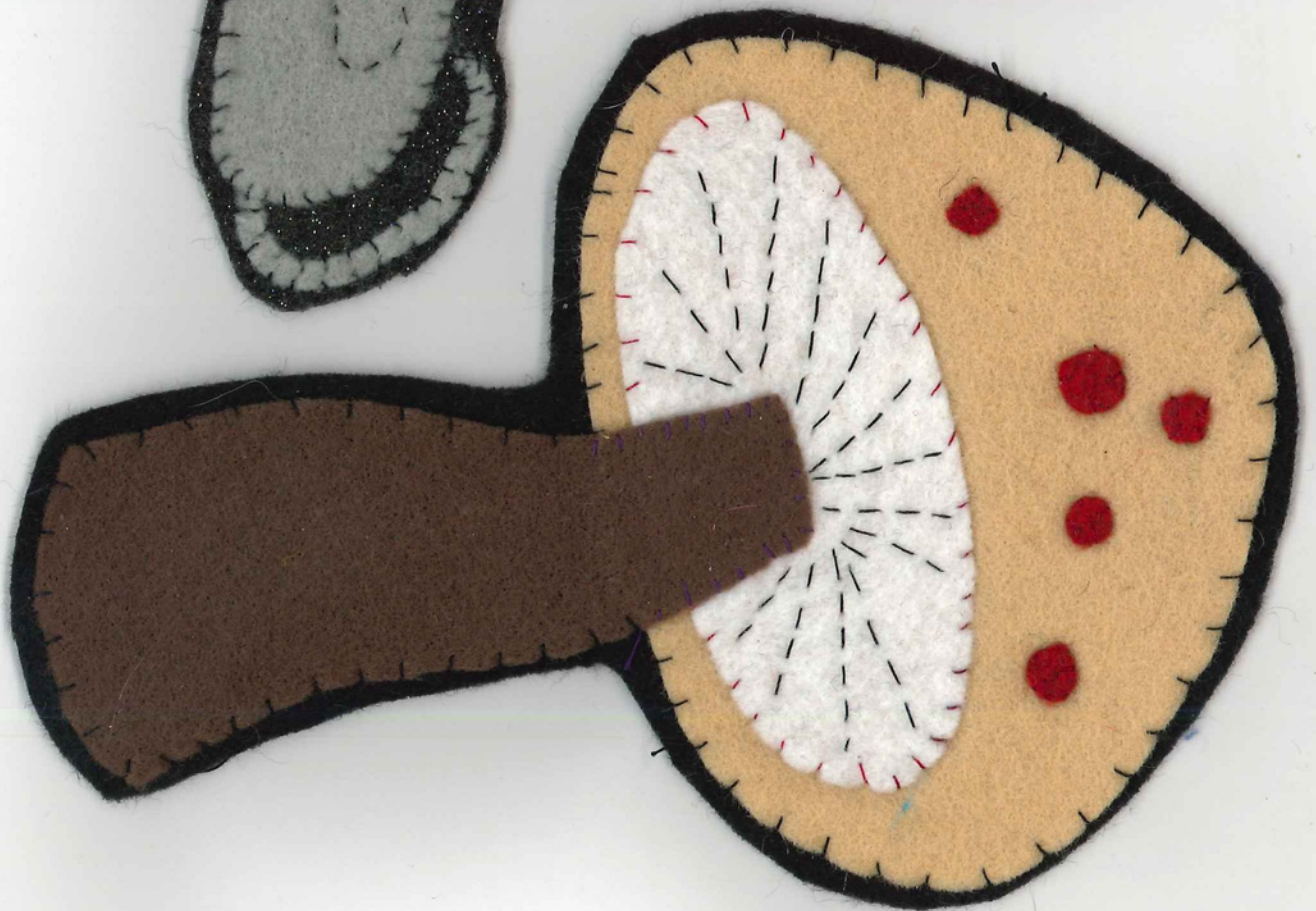
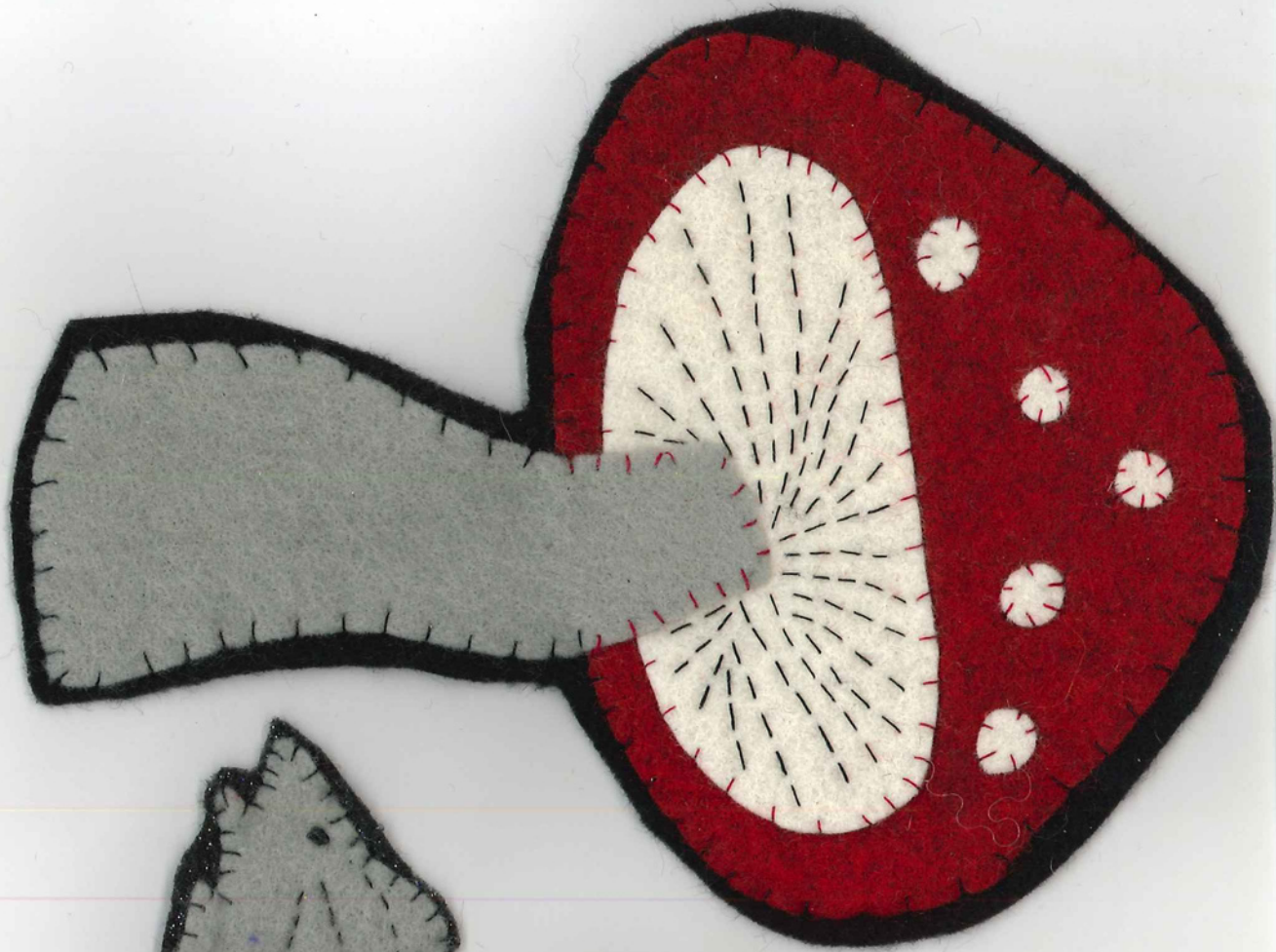
Which of the mushrooms are you hiding in today?

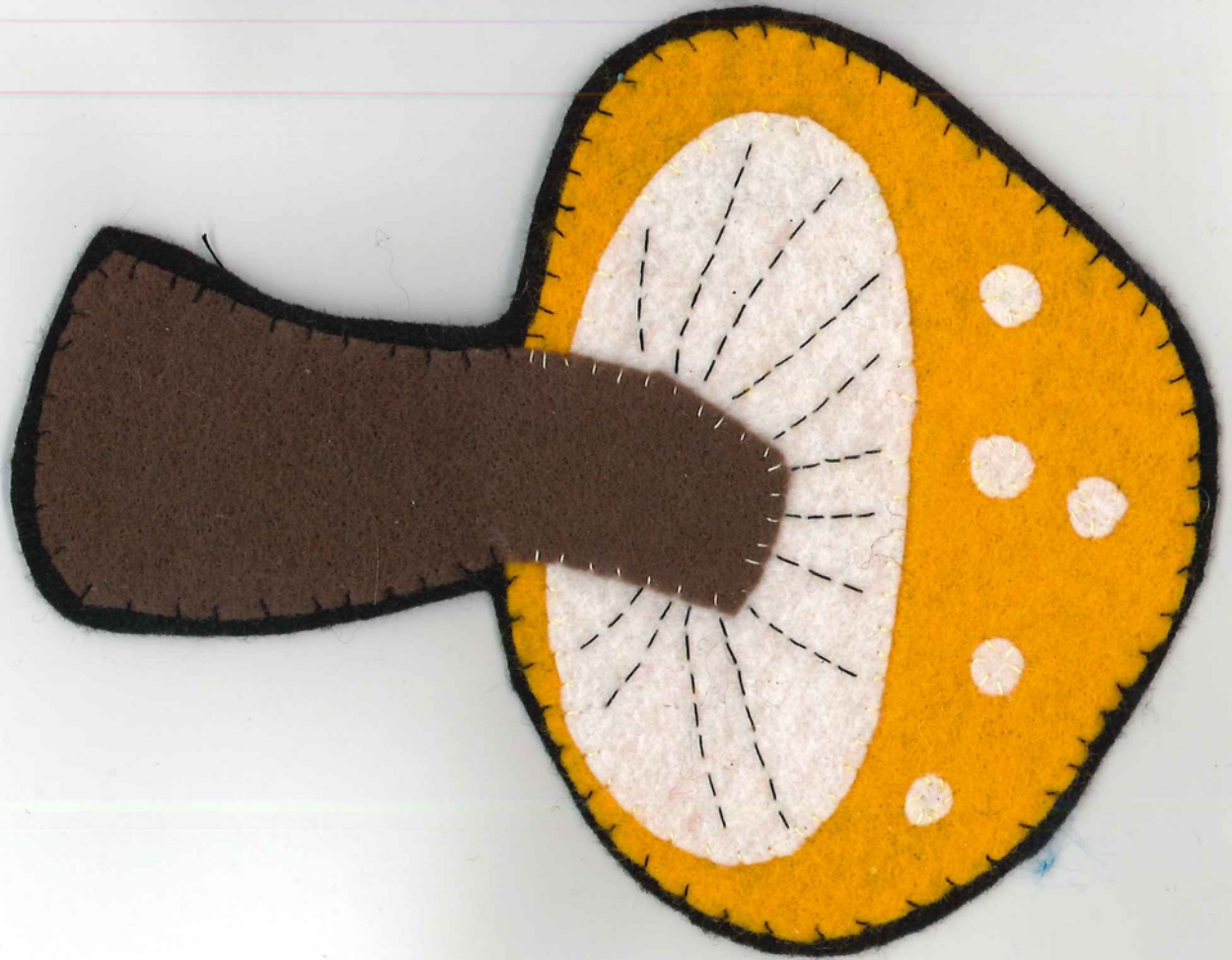
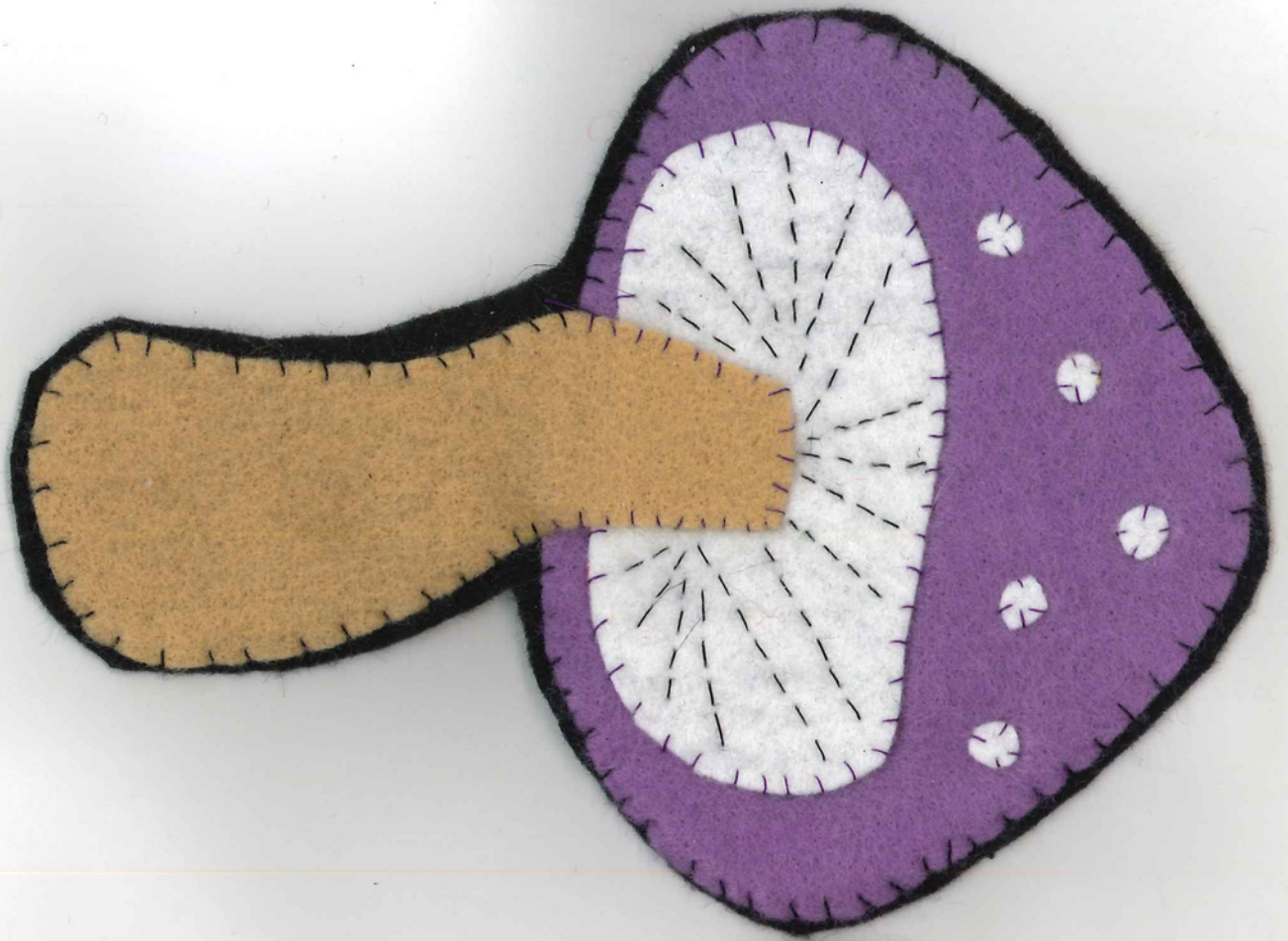
Are you hiding in the _____ mushroom?

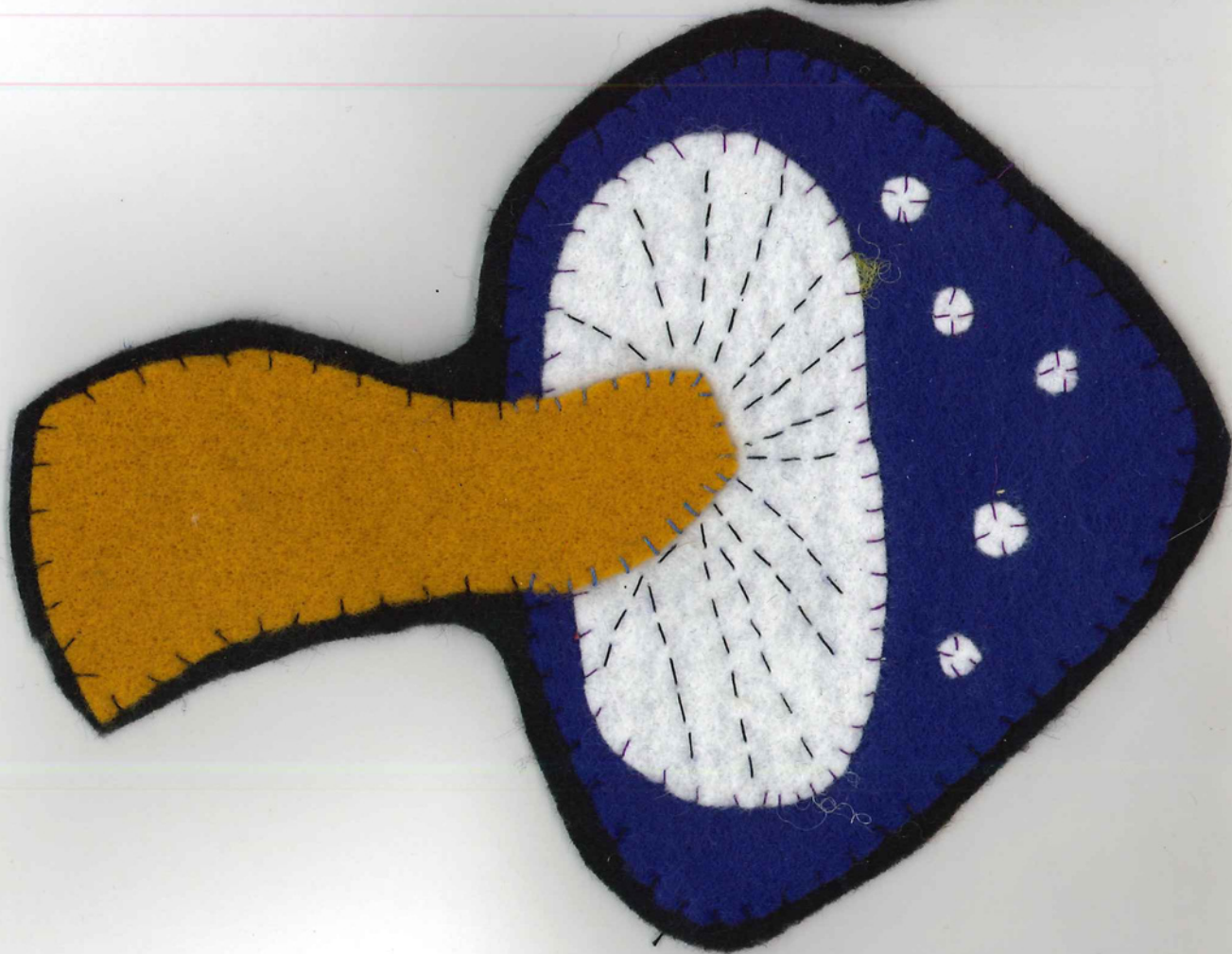


The next 8 pages are Jennifer's generously provided full-size templates if you would like to make your own version of these felts. We will also post the PDFs in the YAACS forum on BCLA Connect for easier printing.

Jennifer Rowan is a Public Services Librarian with the Greater Victoria Public Library.









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features



From Apple Pies to Astronauts: A Chronology of Alphabet Books with Aphorisms, Amusements, and Anecdotes – Part NINE

Revisiting the curated display created for iSchool@UBC LIBR594 – Directed Study done in conjunction with UBC Library's Rare Books and Special Collections.

Adapted from the exhibit and case labels written by Sarah Bagshaw & Laura Quintana. Exhibition poster = Jeff Porter Designs. All photographs from Sarah Bagshaw.

In February 2017 I mounted a display of alphabet books in the Rare Books and Special Collections library @ UBC. This was done with Laura for a directed study project under the supervision of Kathie Shoemaker and Chelsea Shriver. The display was opened in time for attendees of the Vancouver Children's Literature Round Table spring conference to visit on their breaks (held in Irving K. Barber building where Rare Books is). We had so much fun researching the development of children's literature, ABC books, picture book illustration, and looking at some incredibly old books as well as many new ones. I thought I could share some of the writing and images from this display in a multi-part series with YAACing members as a welcome distraction from our Covid-influenced lives.

We resume our journey through the alphabet with the case representing V, W, and X and the 80s and 90s.

V, W, and X



1980s and 1990s Alphabet Books



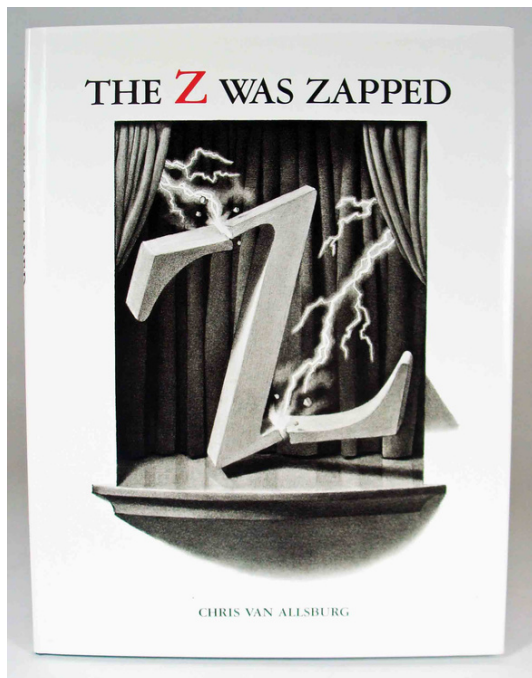
The alphabet books that were in this case are excellent examples of “books as art”. Once again, the “Turn of the Century” alphabet books are more for entertainment than learning and these books mirror the changes that were

happening in the mid-Victorian era (see Part Two). The 1990s had dramatic advances in technology, especially computers, which afforded the application of new designs and styles to children's picture books. The movement of graphic

of graphic artists and painters into children's book illustration can be compared to Greenaway, Caldecott, and Crane being hired to illustrate children's books in the mid-to-late 1800s. The illustrators in this case are also trained artists who continue to work on commission pieces as well as children's books. In the case of Van Allsburg and Ehlert, the popularity of their work allowed them to move from full-time artist to full-time children's book illustration and creation.

Most of these alphabet books contain minimal texts around a central theme. The artistic portrayal of objects for each letter reinforces this theme as well as the sound and letter connection. The themes and sub-themes within many of these books also appeal to older audiences already familiar with alphabet schema. Visual enjoyment rather than teaching letter sounds through rhyming, repetitive text is the focus of many of the alphabet books of the 1990s.

Case Nine representing V, W, and X contained the following items plus extra information about a few:

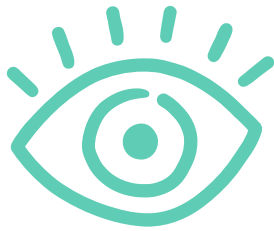


Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Z was Zapped*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1987.

- Chris Van Allsburg received his MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design. When David Macaulay (author and illustrator) saw his drawings and illustrations, he put his editor at Houghton Mifflin in touch with Van Allsburg. This led to the publication of eighteen amazing picture books, written and illustrated by Van Allsburg. He is an example of a children's book creator coming from an artistic background, rather than a literature one.
- His pointillist style has been compared to Georges Seurat. He also uses the technique of "chiaroscuro": contrasting light and dark to create a shadowed effect giving three-dimensional form. While *The Z was Zapped* lacks a traditional "story", it presents the images of twenty-six characters, each performing on a curtained stage with no

text. *The Z was Zapped* is very like Anno's alphabet book from the previous part because the mystery is built into the puzzle of each image. What does the letter on the stage really stand for? The reader finds out by turning the page where one line of text reveals all.

- Van Allsburg's picture book *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* was a Caldecott Medal honour book in 1980. He won the Caldecott Medal in 1981 for *Jumanji* and in 1985 for *The Polar Express*. He was also nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1986.

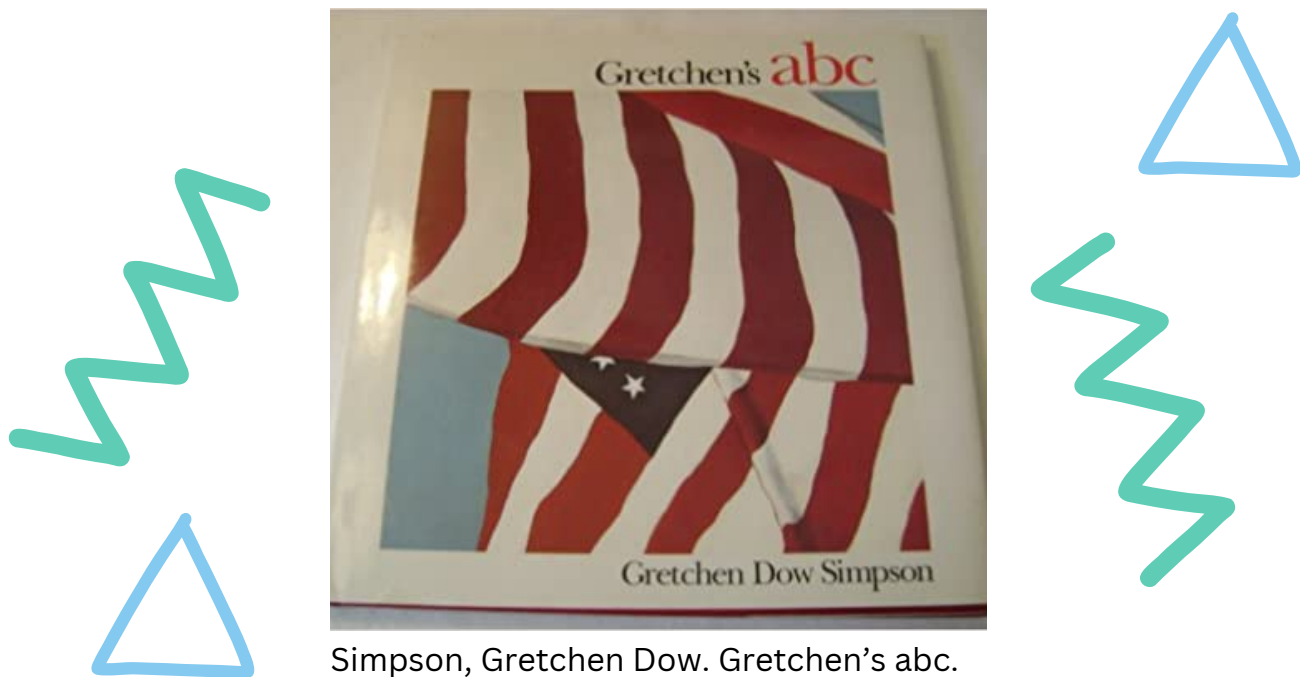


- Lois Ehlert is another example of a graphic artist and illustrator who has had great success creating picture books for children. Her distinctive collage style, using paper, objects and bright colours is similar to the styles of Eric Carle and Leo Lionni. She started out illustrating books for others, but in the 1980s, started writing her own material as well.
- In this exhibit, there are two alphabet books with Ehlert's signature style. *Eating the Alphabet* was in case nine and is full of bright paper collage fruits and vegetables, recognizable to most Western children. This is another example of an alphabet book created around a theme. A theme combined with a clear image helps children to determine what the words shown are.



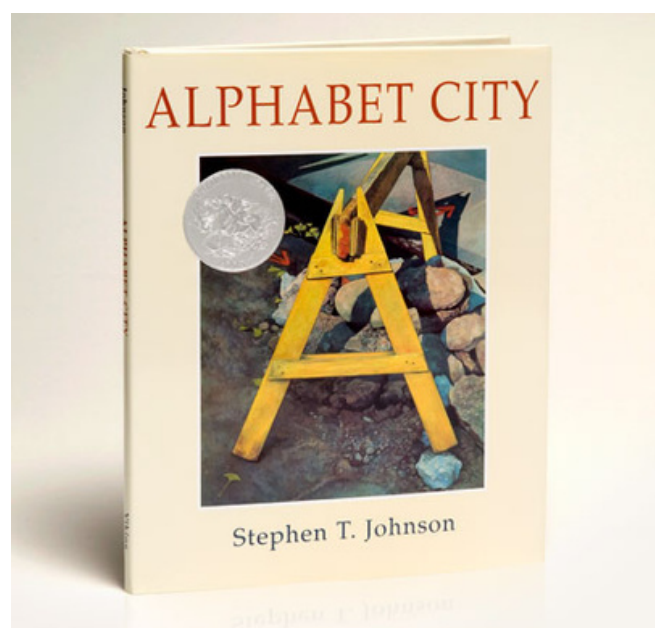
Ehlert, Lois. *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z*. New York: Voyager Books. 1989.

- Ehlert was awarded the Caldecott Medal Honor in 1989 for *Color Zoo*. In 1990 *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* won the Boston-Globe Horn Book Honor Award, the ALA Notable Children's Book, and the Top 100 Picture Books – School Library Journal 2012.



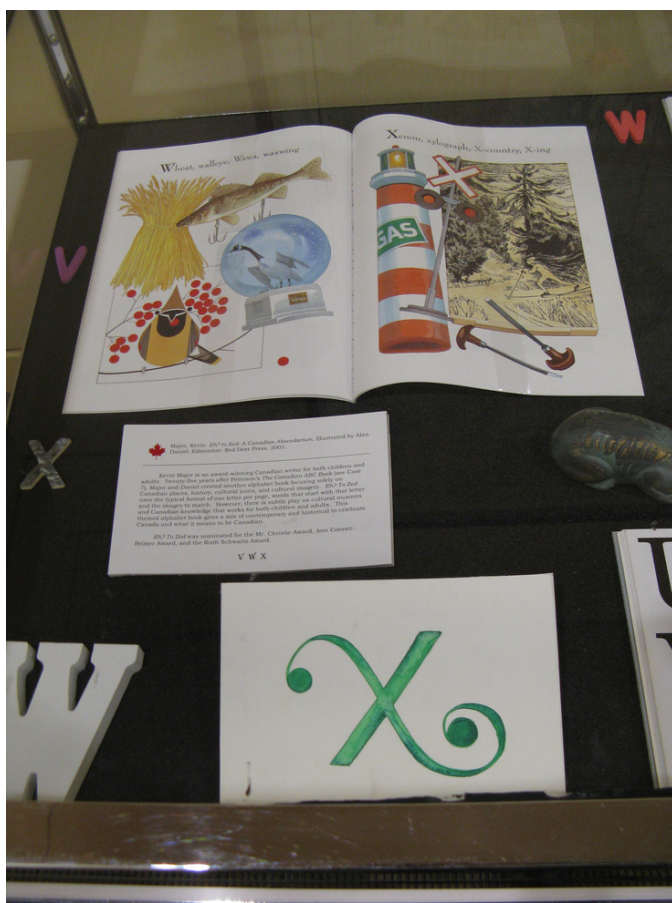
Simpson, Gretchen Dow. Gretchen's abc. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1991.

- Stephen T. Johnson is an artist and teacher who has created children's books, does commercial artwork, and creates public art. He is interested in the alphabet and language and this interest began with his work on this book.
- Johnson's photorealistic images of cityscapes are used to illustrate each letter of the alphabet. These images were created using pastels, watercolours, gouache, and charcoal. At first glance they appear to be photographs of urban locations, but with further looking, these paintings also portray an alphabet letter. This wordless seek-and-find alphabet book is for both children and adults with the emphasis shifted from letter learning to artistic enjoyment.



Johnson, Stephen T. Alphabet City. New York: Puffin Books. 1995.

- Johnson was awarded the Caldecott Medal Honor in 1996 and New York Times Best Illustrated Book of the Year, both for Alphabet City.



Major, Kevin. Eh? to Zed: A Canadian Abecedarium. Illustrated by Alan Daniel. Edmonton: Red Deer Press. 2001.

- Kevin Major is an award-winning Canadian writer for both children and adults. Twenty-five years after Peterson's The Canadian ABC Book (see Part Seven), Major and Daniel created another alphabet book focusing solely on Canadian places, history, cultural icons, and cultural imagery. Eh? To Zed uses the typical format of one letter per page, words that start with that letter and the images to match. However, there is subtle play on cultural nuances and Canadian knowledge that works for both children and adults. This themed alphabet book gives a mix of contemporary and historical to celebrate Canada and what it means to be Canadian.
- Eh? To Zed was nominated for the Mr. Christie Award, Ann Conner-Brimer Award, and the Ruth Schwartz Award.

V, W, and X

To be continued in the next YAACing newsletter...

If you are interested in the full display text and accompanying bibliography, please e-mail Sarah directly: Sarah.Bagshaw@vpl.ca



call for submissions

YAACING is always looking for submissions of interest to children's and teen specialists in BC libraries. We accept articles, program descriptions and ideas, conference reports, reviews, felt stories, and more. If you would like to write a regular column, send us a brief pitch. Submissions should be no more than 1500 words, and sent in an editable format (not PDF). Please include a byline with your job title and workplace; for students, please include a byline with your school/program.

We want to hear from you! What do you want to read in YAACING? Do you read every issue cover to cover or jump around to what's most interesting? Do you click on the links? If there are any recent contributions that have been especially helpful to you in your work we'd love to hear about it! Email us any time at yaacing@gmail.com

For our Spring 2023 issue we are focusing on EARLY YEARS! If you work with babies, toddlers, and/or preschoolers please chat with us about a submission! Submissions for our **Fall Middle Years Issue** are due on **September 15th**.