

## **Reviews: Selecting Children's Books with Positive Intergenerational Messages**

**Karen Debord**

With the ever increasing older population, it is important for children to learn to appreciate contributions to our society by older people. Storybooks can be one vehicle to breaking stereotypes about aging. Using books to portray ideas is an excellent exercise in literacy but also helps children construct their knowledge of how they fit into the larger world. The difficulty for teachers is in keeping up with current titles that portray accurate and positive images of today's society.

In selecting good books to use with children, consider:

- realistic and believable portrayal of characters
- a story that chronologically unfolds
- a resolution of tension or conflict
- simple plot to allow the child to become involved in the action, discovering the problem and understanding the resolution
- a theme that relates to children's understanding, needs and interests.
- style that involves rhythm, repetition and a careful choice of words
- portrayal of a diversity of culture, community and lacks stereotypes
- characters are engaged in a variety of activities

Each year, Newberry and Caldecott medals are awarded to children's books. This is another way to sort through the many titles to select books viewed as excellent by librarians and educators throughout the country.

The list below are books recommended that portray positive images of older adults in the context of their families, their community, culture and heritage.

Positive examples of children's books about intergenerational relationships:

- Ackerman, K. *Song and Dance Man*  
Grandpa performs for children after they explore the dress-up props together.
- Crews, D., *Bigmamas*  
African American extended family experiences.
- Flournoy, V., *The Patchwork Quilt*  
A grandmother tells stories of each family member while sewing a quilt.
- de Paola, Tomie, *Now one Foot, Now the Other*  
As best friends previous to Grandpa Bob's stroke, a grandson helps his grandfather recover using one foot then the other.
- Greenfield, E., *Grandpa's Face*  
Special bond between an Africa American grandfather and grandchild.
- Craighead G. J., *Dear Rebecca, Winter is here.*  
Uses a letter format between a grandmother and granddaughter to bring them geographically closer.
- Polacco, P., *Mrs. Katz and Tush*  
A long-lasting friendship develops between, Larnel, a young African American, and Mrs. Katz, a lonely, Jewish widow, when Larnel presents Mrs. Katz with a scrawny kitten without a tail.
- Polacco, P., *Chicken Sunday*  
A Ukranian granddaughter tells of her special love for her grandmother.
- Martin, B. & Archambault, J., *Knots on a Counting Rope*  
The relationship between a wise Native American grandfather and his blind grandson grows through stories told and knots added to a rope.
- Lyon, G. E., *Basket*  
Four generations of stories are told.

- Say, A., *Grandfather's Journey*  
A Japanese grandfather tells stories of his homeland and the cross cultural differences.
- Bunting, E., *The Wednesday Surprise*  
A warm story of a grandma who cares for her granddaughter while her parents work.
- Gilman, P., *Something from Nothing*  
A Jewish folktale of a grandpa making a vest of his grandson's blanket, then a tie of the vest, and a handkerchief of the tie.
- Mitchell, M. K., *Granddaddy's Gift*  
A Mississippi African American farmer tells his story of struggle to register to vote.

## References

James, J.Y. & Kormanski, L.M. (1999). Positive Intergenerational Picture Books for Young Children, *Young Children* , 54 (3).

## Author

Dr. Karen DeBord is an Associate Professor and Child Development Specialist at NC State University.

If you would like to submit a review for a book, video, curriculum, or other teaching tool that you have used, please send your submission to the Associate Editor for Reviews, Dr. Luci Bearon, North Carolina State University, Campus Box 7605, Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7605. If you have any questions, you may e-mail me at [luci\\_bearon@ncsu.edu](mailto:luci_bearon@ncsu.edu) or call me at (919) 515-9146. Submit four copies of your review, including one copy that contains a cover sheet with your name, job title, organization, business address, phone number, fax, and e-mail address. Also submit your review either on a 3½ inch disk in WordPerfect or as an e-mail attachment in WordPerfect. Please double space and use a block style (no tabs or indents).

We are looking for reviews of materials expressly designed for use in an Extension curriculum with a public audience, or that have been developed for different purposes but hold promise for use by Extension educators. Although we will focus on materials immediately applicable for teaching, we may on occasion include reviews of important theoretical and research-based materials if they provide solid and digestible background information for curriculum

development. Materials reviewed may be on any topic related to the main branches of family and consumer sciences: housing and home furnishings, clothing and textiles, health, food and nutrition, human development, family resource management, or on topics that have clear practical implications for families and consumers. The materials under review must be thoroughly identified, including author, publisher, date of publication, and information on how to obtain a copy of the materials.

If you would like a review of educational materials that you have authored, developed, or published that meet the above criteria, please send the materials for review to me at the address above, postage prepaid. *FFCI* will not be able to purchase or rent any materials submitted, and they are nonreturnable.

We are also seeking volunteers to review materials. If you would like to review materials for this journal, please send me your name, job title, business address, e-mail address, phone number, fax number, short resume, and one to three topic areas in which you have interest *and* expertise. Please be as specific as possible, and send this information to my e-mail address above.

Cite this article: "Reviews." *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues* 4.3 (1999): 4 pars. 31 December 1999.