

**MISSOURI BUILDING BLOCK  
PICTURE BOOK AWARD  
PROGRAM**

**Sponsored by  
The Children's Services Roundtable  
Missouri Library Association**

**Manual Revision Committee**

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Martha Radginski  
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**Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award  
Committee Members  
2003**

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**Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award  
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2003**

THE MISSOURI BUILDING BLOCK PICTURE BOOK AWARD COMMITTEE

would like to thank the Missouri Library Association  
and the  
Children's Services Roundtable

for their continued support of this award.

The committee is indebted to the original committee members for their dedication  
and hard work in creating this award.

Original Committee Members:

Nancy Howland  
Cindy Barnard  
Margie Bucher  
Elizabeth Cashell  
Patsy Craighead  
Anita Ewing  
Vera Florea  
Ruth Flynn  
Glynda Hensen  
Patsy Molina  
Barbara Reading  
Susan Wray

The committee would also like to thank Amy Davis, webmistress.

## **Name**

The award will be named the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award, and a teddy bear, named P.B. Bear, will be the mascot. (P.B. = picture book)

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award is:

1. To encourage language development and pre-reading skills through reading aloud.
2. To provide parents and caregivers with a selection of quality picture books to read aloud to young children.
3. To introduce children to a variety of authors and illustrators of children's books, including Missouri authors, illustrators and themes, when possible.
4. To encourage an appreciation of diverse artistic and literary styles in current children's literature.
5. To encourage the continuation of publication of quality picture books.
6. To encourage the development of visual perception/discrimination.
7. To introduce children to diverse themes, cultures and topics.

The Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award will be presented annually to the author and illustrator of a picture book voted most popular by children in Missouri public libraries. Children eligible to vote are any who have not yet started first grade and younger.

### **Book Selection Criteria**

To be considered for the Award, the book must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be a picture book. Cannot include: board books, early chapter books, beginning readers, wordless books, toy books, textbooks, reprints or reissues, abridgements, or books that are available only in book/cassette or book/CD combinations.
2. Pictures and words should work well together. Theme must be developed through text and illustrations.
3. Picture book must be age appropriate (birth up to first grade).
4. Picture book must have child appeal.
5. Picture book should not insure the self-esteem of a child or reinforce biased view of those in some way different from the listener.
6. Picture book must avoid sex, race, and other stereotypes. (See Evaluating Picture Books)
7. Both the author and the illustrator must be living at the time of nomination and one or the other must be living in the United States or its territories.
8. Copyright date must be within the last two years (example: if current year is 2002, books considered for the list must be 2002 and 2001) for the upcoming 2003 year.
9. Any title may appear on the final list only one time.
10. Picture book must read well aloud: rich vocabulary, language which flows and accurate grammar. The book must make sense with natural sounding dialogue and should build language skills.
11. Picture book must be in English or bilingual/English.
12. Picture book may be fiction or nonfiction.
13. Holiday books, as defined in the CIP information, are not eligible.

14. Picture book may be a lap book or storytime book, but majority of titles on final list must be suitable for group sharing.

### **Picture Book Nomination Process**

Picture book titles for the preliminary list will be nominated by librarians, preschool and kindergarten teachers and other child care providers from around the state. All nominees will be submitted to the Selection Committee Chair. All nominations should consist of complete bibliographic information and residency of author(s) and/or illustrator(s). Nominations should also be submitted by Award Committee members.

The Award Committee will select 30 titles from the list of nominees. If the committee fails to find 30 eligible titles, it may consult book review sources to select additional titles for the Listener/Selector list.

All Award Committee members and 15 Listener/Selectors will gather for an all-day meeting to read, discuss and evaluate the 30 titles on the list. Listener/Selectors only will vote on the top titles for the final list. Committee members will not vote on the final 10.

The final list of 10 titles will be mailed to all public libraries in the state, posted on the Missouri Library Association website, and announced on MOYAC and any other appropriate listservs. Participating libraries will begin publicity and circulation of nominated books. Ballots will be provided to parents for voting.

The votes will be sent to the Award Committee Chair who will tally the votes and announce the winner.

The winning author(s) and illustrator(s) will be honored with a "P. B. Bear" plaque sent to them from the Committee Awards Chair.

## **Voting Procedures**

Children not yet in first grade may vote for their favorite title from the list. (Parents may fill out ballot.) Each child may vote only once.

A child must have five books from the list read to him/her to be eligible to vote.

Voting can be anytime between September 1 and December 31. Local librarians will decide when voting will take place in their libraries or online, where available. Deadline for children's voting is December 31.

Local librarians are responsible for counting their ballots, completing their tally sheet/program evaluation form, and mailing to the Award Chair by January 15 (postmark, fax or e-mail date).

## **Timetable of Activities for the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award**

- Fall:** Librarians and Committee members examine picture book titles for eligibility for award. Nominees for the preliminary list must be submitted to the Award Committee by January 15 of each year.
- January:** Deadline for nominations: January 15. Selection Chair compiles all nominated titles for consideration by Committee. Deadline for submitting tallies of ballots for the award: January 15.
- February:** Award Chair tallies votes and announces winner in MLA Newsletter, website and appropriate listservs. Awards chair makes arrangements for the winning plaque(s) to be created. Committee pares list of nominees down to 30.
- March:** Listeners/Selectors gather to hear nominees and finalize list of 10. List of Picture Book Award nominees distributed to all public libraries in state, along with order form for promotional materials, ballots forms and tally sheets Committee assigns titles for the creation of activity sheets.
- April:** Committee Chair and/or his/her representative attends MASL conference to have booth promoting the award and taking/selling orders for promotional items.
- May 31:** Deadline for libraries to return order forms. Activity sheets are due to the Selection Chair.
- August:** Ordered materials sent to libraries. Libraries begin publicity for programs.
- September:** Participating libraries begin circulation of nominated books, present Special programs and provide ballots to parents and others.
- December 31:** Deadline for voting at the public library. Submit tallies of ballots by January 15.

## **Promoting the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award in Your Community**

This award has been designed to help you promote wonderful read-aloud books in your community. The following is a general list of ideas that can be used to promote the Award books.

1. Distribute program fliers and bookmarks listing the nominated books to storytimes, childcare centers, Head Starts, nursery schools, doctor's offices in late summer. Use the sample letters included with this manual.
2. Feature the books in your storytimes at the library, at childcare centers, kindergarten classes and other sites.
3. Offer copies of the books and activity sheets to childcare centers, kindergarten classes, etc. If your supply of books is limited, rotate sets of just two or more of the titles to different centers each week.
4. Hold a "read-in" and invite local community members, or childcare teachers to each read one title aloud. This program could be offered as a series, featuring just three or four books each time.
5. Use a stuffed teddy bear or puppet mascot to introduce the programs.
6. For your ballot box, wrap up a large box in freezer paper and decorate to look like a building block. Cut a hole in the top for the ballots.
7. Recruit older children, young teens, and Seniors to hold impromptu read-aloud sessions after school or on Saturday mornings. Offer the books to volunteers to read at community sites. Hold an orientation session on good read-aloud technique and the voting requirements.
8. Put information about the upcoming Building Block Award activities in your final summer reading program awards to preschoolers.
9. Offer a sticker, certificate, or other award to children who have had five books read to them and voted for the award.
10. Promote the program through your local media. Do not read the books aloud over the media unless permission is obtained from the publishers. You may, however, booktalk or review the titles in the media.

## **Tips on Writing Publicity Releases**

- Type and double-space all releases.
- Include who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Use library letterhead, if possible.
- Assume the reader knows nothing about the library or the reading program.
- Type on one side of the paper only.
- The first sentence should be catchy but not “cute.”
- Include the most important information in the first paragraph: editors usually crop from the bottom up.
- At the top of the page include the date, your name as “Contact Person,” phone number and phrase “For Immediate Release.”
- Use short, concise paragraphs, simple language, action verbs, and common images. A good rule of thumb is no more than 15 words per sentence, no more than 5 sentences per paragraph, and no more than 5 paragraphs per release.
- Limit to one page, if possible. If longer, type “more” at bottom of first page. At top of subsequent pages include page number, subject, date, library’s name, contact person’s name and phone number.
- Be accurate. Check your facts. Proofread!
- Be specific. Give full names of people; including day of the week as well as the date; include address as well as place name.
- Use third person pronouns unless you are including quotes by a particular person (include his/her title with name).
- Do not editorialize.
- Photos, if included, should be action shots, carefully labeled.
- Address your news release to a specific person, such as “Youth Editor.”
- Mail 7-10 days before you want your released printed. Be aware of deadlines and news release requirements of each newspaper.
- Attach a flyer or schedule of events, if available.

## **Tips on Public Service Announcements**

- Be brief (10-60 seconds)
- Use short words and simple sentences.
- Use action verbs.
- Vary the pace, alternating long and short sentences.

## Promoting the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award in Your Library

Promotional materials, available for purchase, will include: posters, bookmarks, stickers, all with the P.B. Bear logo, and storytime activity sheets. Each activity sheet will be related to a nominated book and may include a fingerplay, a game, an at-home craft, dot-to-dot, etc. A list of materials and their cost will be sent to each library along with the names of the picture book award nominees in April.

Consider the following ideas for use in your library:

1. Decorate a bulletin board to promote the Award. Cut out squares of colored construction paper and write the title of each nominated book on a square. Stagger the squares, placing one on top of another to form a tower of "blocks" (you may want to type or computer print the titles, cut out and paste on the squares). Variation – draw lines on the squares to make them look three-dimensional. Florescent poster board is really eye-catching and could be substituted for construction paper.
2. Use a teddy bear chain on the edge of table or shelves where the nominated books will be displayed. To make a chain, draw half a teddy bear on accordion-folded paper, placing the paw on the outer edge and the inside half on the folds. Cut out the bear but do not cut on the fold. When you pull open the bears, they should be attached at the paw. The length of your paper and the number of folds will determine how many bears you get.
3. For floor or tabletop display, decorate cardboard boxes to look like building blocks and place the nominated books on top. Cloth book tape would make a nice edging material on the corners and edges of box and would keep the edges from fraying.
4. Blocks for display can be made from a variety of materials: milk cartons, cereal boxes, paper bags, plastic bottles, wood, disposable diaper boxes. *Fun for Kids* and *Fun for Kids II* are indexes that offer many ideas for making blocks.
5. An easy display idea is to simply set up teddy bears surrounded by the nominated books.
6. Plan and conduct storytimes based on the nominated books.

Creating displays and programs are things children's librarians do best. Let your imagination run free!

## Sample Letter for Parents

Here comes P.B. Bear, the delightful teddy bear mascot of Missouri's own read-aloud program – the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award! The program is designed to encourage parents and other caregivers to read aloud to pre-readers using an annual list of recent, high quality picture books as a resource. The titles on the list have been selected by experienced children's librarians and educators from all across Missouri. These books represent some of the best current picture books and reflect a variety of themes, cultures and topics.

To participate, parents and other adults are encouraged to read aloud at least five of the titles on the list. Children who have not yet entered the first grade can vote for their favorite! You just need to pick up a ballot slip from your participating library and submit it to your library. Your child's vote will be counted along with others from throughout the state of Missouri and the winning book will be announced in February. A state committee will present a special recognition to the author and illustrator of the winning book.

Look for P.B. Bear on bookmarks, posters, stickers and other promotional items at the library. You'll also want to attend the special programs using the nominated books. Ask your librarian for more information.

We hope you and your child will participate in this exciting and enriching program. Reading aloud to young children forms the building blocks of reading, literacy and a love of books. Join P.B. Bear and libraries across the state in the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award program.

## **Sample Letter to Childcare Providers**

Here comes P.B. Bear, the delightful teddy bear mascot of Missouri's own read-aloud program – the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award! The program is designed to encourage parents and other caregivers to read aloud to pre-readers using an annual list of recent, high quality picture books as a resource. The titles on the list have been selected by experienced children's librarians and educators from all across Missouri. These books represent some of the best current picture books and reflect a variety of themes, cultures and topics.

To participate, caregivers and other adults are encouraged to read aloud at least five of the titles on the list. Children who have not yet entered the first grade can vote for their favorite! You just need to pick up a ballot slip for each child to use from your participating library and submit them to your library. Your children's votes will be counted along with others from throughout the state of Missouri and the winning book will be announced in February. A state committee will present a special recognition to the author and illustrator of the winning book.

Look for P.B. Bear on bookmarks, posters, stickers and other promotional items at your library. There may also be special storytimes and displays to promote this program; ask your librarian for more information.

We hope you and the children in your care will participate in this exciting and enriching program. Reading aloud to young children forms the building blocks of reading, literacy and a love of books. Join P.B. Bear and libraries across the state in the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award program.

## Sample Press Release

Join P.B. Bear at the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library in the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award program. This program is designed to encourage adults to read aloud to pre-readers using an annual list of recent, high quality picture books as a resource. Parents and other caregivers can pick up the list of books at the library. Children who have not yet entered first grade may vote for their favorite book from the list if they have had five or more of the books read aloud to them. The children's votes will be counted along with others from throughout Missouri and the winner will be announced in February. A special award will be presented to the author and illustrator of the winning book by the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award committee, a subgroup of the Children's Services Round Table of the Missouri Library Association.

Look for the lists and ballots with the special P.B. Bear display at the library from \_\_\_\_\_ to December 31.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is located at [address] and is open [hours]. Call [phone number] for more information.

Reading aloud to young children forms the building blocks of reading, literacy and a love of books;; it is also a wonderful way for children and adults to spend time together. Stop by your local library to participate in the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award program.

**Ballot Sheet**  
**(for children and parents)**

Ask your librarian for a list of the ten books which have been nominated to receive the Missouri Building Block Picture Book Award.

Ask someone to read aloud at least five books from the list to you.

Which one did you like best? (please write the title on the line below).

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Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Return this ballot to your children's librarian.

**Tally Sheet**  
**(for librarian's use)**

**Title of Book**

**Number of Votes**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluating Picture Books

### Contents:

- Content is appropriate to the age of the intended audience.
- Characters are well-developed, interesting, believable, few in number and do not perpetuate any sex, race, age or ethnic stereotypes. Children can relate to the characters' experiences and emotions.
- Plot makes sense, is interesting, and is simple enough so it is easily understood by children. Story develops an idea through action and characterization instead of through lecturing and moralizing. It should have child appeal and not be for adults.
- Text and illustrations work well together and develop the theme.
- Writing style is clear and easy to read with appropriate vocabulary for the age of the intended audience.
- Text is simple, yet pleasing.
- Humor is childlike and understood by children.
- Tone does not patronize.
- Book presents a message with positive values/illustrates the importance of determination, creativity, integrity, cooperation, etc.
- Story has a natural climax.
- Facts are accurate.
- Sexism: Doesn't use words that are demeaning to women, shows women in a variety of lifestyles, occupations, and with positions of authority; does not depict the two-parent family as superior to other types of families; pictures of females as often as males and with males taking care of children, doing housework, showing emotion, etc.; does not picture women in trivial or ridiculous ways; shows women in active roles.

### Illustrations:

- Are an integral part of the text; help to create the meaning of the text; provide clues to the action; help to build a story so a non-reader can follow the action.
- Match the mood and style of the story.
- Are consistent and accurate with the text.
- Are visually attractive (i.e. large, clear, simple, colorful, imaginative and well-designed), inviting and pleasing.
- Are located near the text they illustrate.
- Can stand alone as art.
- Style and medium used is appropriate for the mood of the story.
- Line, shape and color extend the story.
- There is balance in the composition.
- Characters are lively and show emotion or action when appropriate.

**Format:**

- Size of the book is appropriate to the content.
- Cover design and endpapers express the theme and spirit of the story.
- Title page anticipates the story that follows.
- Typography matches the theme and purpose of the story.
- Good quality paper with a durable binding and firm covers.
- Good production quality (i.e. illustrations or text on one side of the page should not show through the reverse side; clear prints.)
- Visually pleasing overall with a simple and attractive design.
- Sufficient spacing between lines and text and between text and illustrations.

**Comparison with Others:**

- How is this work similar to or different from other works by the same author and/or illustrator?
- How is this story similar to or different from other books on the same subject or on the same theme?
- What do reviewers have to say about the book? Do you agree or disagree?
- Will the book make a contribution to the growing body of children's literature? How lasting will it be?

## **Selecting Books to Read Aloud**

1. Choose a story YOU enjoy!
2. Look for a book that:
  - a. is well-written (no awkward phrasing)
  - b. has a plot that moves along quickly
  - c. has interesting characters
  - d. has dialog that sounds natural
3. Picture books should have large, uncluttered illustrations that can be seen by the entire group.
4. Keep in mind the children's age-level, past experiences, attention spans, and interests.

## **Preparation for Reading Aloud**

1. Read the story yourself before reading it to the group. Note the high points of the plot, characterization, climax, and general tone of the story. Get to know the story.
2. Practice reading the story aloud by yourself;; note any awkward phrasing or words which are difficult to pronounce.
3. Use your voice to create the mood of the story; use pauses to add dramatic effect.
4. Read slowly enough for the children to build mental pictures of what they have just heard.
5. Use your voice to create characterization. Change your voice just enough to distinguish between characters and between characters and narration.

## **Tips for Reading Aloud to Children**

### **Reading Aloud to Young Children**

1. Seat children on the floor close to you, making sure everyone can see the illustrations. Choose a low chair or stool to sit on while you read, holding the picture book close to the children's eye level.
2. Hold the book with your left hand at the center bottom; turn pages with your right hand.
3. If book is new, press pages open flat before beginning. Hold book 12-15" from your chest out to left side of your body with top of book in line with your chin. Do not pan book from side to side.
4. Before you begin reading, allow a few moments for your listeners to settle down and adjust their minds to the story.
5. Introduce the story – a simple statement of what the book is about; relate the story to some recent experience.
6. State the title of the book.
7. Read with feeling and enthusiasm; use plenty of expression.
8. Adjust your pace to fit the story – read faster for exciting action, slower for quieter passages. Pause periodically.
9. Summarize long or descriptive passages.
10. Define new words (if needed) without interrupting the flow of the story.
11. Maintain eye contact with the children. Glance up at the end of a sentence.
12. Evaluate while you read – are the children interested? Are you reading too slow or too fast? What about your phrasing, tonal quality, volume?
13. When story is finished, allow time for the children to discuss the story.

Add extra dimension to the book whenever possible through such activities as finger plays, action rhymes, finger puppets, puppet mitts, puppets, draw-and-tell stories, cut-and-tell stories, songs, crafts, and flannel board stories.

## 17 Good Reasons for Reading Aloud to Your Child

### Reading Aloud

- Creates an interest in books and a desire to learn to read.
- Develops a taste for fine literature (high literacy and artistic quality).
- Expands vocabulary; provides opportunity for children to hear, understand and adopt new words; hear familiar words used in new contexts.
- Develops listening skills.
- Familiarizes children with the “sound” of written language; they gain some sense of the relationship between oral and written language.
- Encourages children to see reading as a pleasurable experience and books as a source of delight.
- Broadens children’s experiences to things they might not have the opportunity to do or to places they have not been.
- Introduces children to and prepares them for new situations they are likely to encounter (e.g. a new baby in the family, moving to a new neighborhood).
- Teaches that all people share similar feelings and needs and that other children have similar experiences (e.g. starting school, having a birthday party).
- Allows children to imagine, dream and laugh.
- Helps children learn new ideas, concepts and information.
- Provides opportunity to learn group skills (taking turns, sharing, respecting rights of others, contributing to discussion).
- Fosters motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Improves comprehension and visual skills; increases attention span.
- Teaches concepts about “story” (beginning, middle, end; characters; plot; setting).
- Teaches concepts about print: printed words have meaning; spoken words can be printed; pictures go with words; spaces between words; signals/punctuation marks and capital letters help reader know when to start, pause, and stop; pages have numbers; we read from left to right and top to bottom; read from bottom of one page to top of next; turning pages from front of book to back.
- It’s FUN for the reader and the listener.

## Starting a Story Time Program

If you are thinking of starting a Story Time program in your library, you should begin by looking at these factors:

A. Is there a need in your community for Story Time?

Do you have a large number of preschoolers in your community? Are you parents asking you to do this type of program? Is there a parent at home with young children who can bring the children to the library for a program during the day? In the evening? Are most children in group childcare settings so that programs need to be developed for children in group situations?

B. Can you and your library support this program?

Do you have space to provide a Story Time program? Do you have books and other resources to present an ongoing weekly program? Do you have enough staff or volunteers? Is the staff knowledgeable about how to present this type of program? Do you need to train volunteers to present this program?

If you are ready to start a Story Time program, you must determine for which age group you are planning the program. You may decide to do a program for three to five year olds or maybe three to six year olds. You may decide to do a program for two year olds or maybe eighteen months up to and including two year olds. Some libraries offer programs for children as young as six months.

Along with the age group, you should determine the purpose of the program. Is the program educational? Entertaining? Both? Is the purpose to introduce children to literature? Is it to teach them developmental skills? Is it to have fun?

What day of the week and time of day is the best time for this program? Morning and early evening seems to be good times, generally, but check with parents and caregivers to see if there are factors that need to be considered in your situation. You will also want to be aware of the library's schedule to make sure that it works for the entire library. Will the program last 20 minutes? Half an hour? Younger children have shorter attention spans so shorter programs work best for them.

How many weeks of Story Time will be presented as part of a series? A once a week Story Time for six-to-eight weeks is common, with a break of a month or so. Some libraries provide continuous weekly programs, with a break only once or twice a year.

You may want to consider whether the program is for children with parents and/or children with caregivers. Many libraries provide programs for both, but

separately. Some libraries visit the caregiver sites and do programs outside the library.

How will you publicize the program? Word of mouth is the best way to advertise, but you may want to put up fliers in the library and around the community. As you talk to people to determine if there is a need for Story Time programs in your community, note who seems interested and call them when you are ready to present your first program. Talk about the program to parents or caregivers when you see them in the library.

Ask parents to sign their children up for your Story Time program. This gives you the opportunity to send them a letter to remind them of the program or to send them a copy of your rules for Story Time or other informational materials. How many children will you take for the program? The number should be based on how big an area you have for the program, how many staff are available to do the program, and the needs of the specific age group(s) coming to the program.

Specific needs of the developmental stages of children should be taken into consideration when planning for your Story Times. If you are not familiar with these stages, look for information to help you learn about them. If you have not presented a Story Time before, look for information to help you plan and present a Story Time. Many Story Times are arranged around a theme. Usually, Story Time programs allow for the reading of books (appropriate for the age group and on the chosen theme), finger plays, songs, puppets, flannel boards and activities. If you can, let parents and caregivers know what theme is and what books and activities you presented. If you can give them a printed copy, great! If not, perhaps you can post one near the Story Time area.

As you finish your first Story Time program, evaluate how it went. Ask for comments from the parents and caregivers who attended. At the end of the series, you may want to ask for a written evaluation from those attending. Evaluations can be subjective, so determine what you want to know and concentrate on that. The evaluation should help you decide whether to continue the program as it is or to modify it to make it work better for the participants and you.

## Story Time Volunteers

If you need help to present Story Time programs, consider using volunteers. If you decide to use volunteers, select what you want them to do very carefully and give them the necessary training and supervision.

Volunteers can help by cutting out name tags, materials for crafts, and even flannel boards or other Story Time aids. They can be a helper if you are doing crafts at your Story Time program. They can read a story, do a puppet show, or sing a song.

Emphasize that volunteering carries many of the same responsibilities as a paid job. It is important that the volunteer show up when assigned and are prepared to do the task assigned to them. If they will not be there when assigned, you need to have a back-up plan ready. This could be having another volunteer read to do the job, or having a staff member who could do the job, or even canceling the activity.

Time for training should be provided and you need to emphasize how important training is to the volunteer. If they are reading a book to the group, show them the correct way to hold the book, how to read with inflection, and how to handle interruptions. Help them find books that are appropriate for the age level and theme. Have them read the story over several times before they read it to the group. Explain that they need to be flexible and be able to move to the next activity if the current one is not going well. If they are planning the program, explain the purpose of your program and your goals for the program. Work with them to find materials to use. If you notice that they are drawn to the same book or type of book try to steer them to other types of books. Explain that children need to be exposed to a variety of artwork and story lines to help develop their artistic and literary knowledge.

Work with the volunteers. Find out what their strengths are and use those abilities. Train them to do what you need done. Supervise them to make sure they are doing the quality work you expect from library employees and library volunteers.

Volunteers can be a valuable asset, but you have a responsibility to let them know what you expect from them and to provide them with adequate training and supervision.

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