

# Deakin Review of Children's Literature Health Fiction Exhibition

October-November 2014

University of Alberta  
JW Scott Health Sciences Library  
HT Coutts Education & Physical  
Education Library



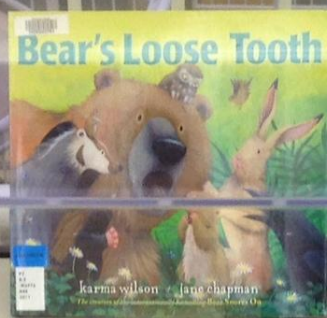


**The Deakin Review of Children's Literature**

This special issue of the Deakin Review of Children's Literature is dedicated to health fiction. The concept for the special issue grew out of an interest in using fiction as a tool in health literacy and health. Many of us have had the experience of coming in to a health professional's office and not understanding what is being said or being asked to do.

There are a number of reasons why this is the case. One reason is that health professionals are usually not trained to communicate in a way that is easy to understand. Another reason is that health professionals are usually not trained to communicate in a way that is culturally sensitive. A third reason is that health professionals are usually not trained to communicate in a way that is respectful of the patient's autonomy.

One of the ways that we can improve our health literacy is by reading health fiction. Health fiction is a genre of fiction that is designed to help readers understand health issues and make better health decisions. Health fiction can be a powerful tool for health literacy and health.

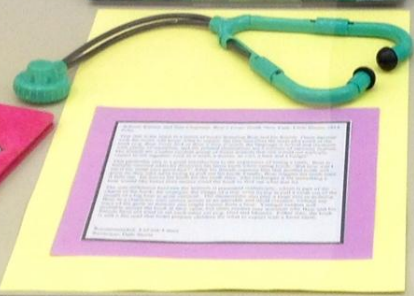
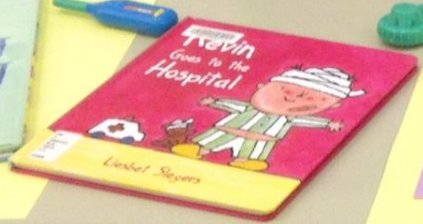
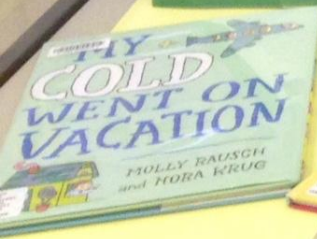


**The Deakin Review of Children's Literature**

We wanted to take the opportunity to use this issue of Deakin to showcase some of the high quality fiction that we would recommend to libraries and parents. The authors of the reviews are librarians or other information professionals, with strengths in children's literature, health literacy, or both. Many have children. Most are experienced reviewers. Even though we had done some pre-screening, several of the reviewers started reviews and then discarded them when they found that upon close examination, they could not recommend the books.

The accompanying article describes the larger study that we undertook to thoroughly review current children's health fiction. The end products of this research were: 1) a checklist for selection of children's health fiction; 2) a list of readily available works in the field; and 3) a list of works that we would recommend to libraries and parents.

Dr. Sarah Campbell and Maria Tice



**Normalizing**

Children's health fiction is a genre of fiction that is designed to help readers understand health issues and make better health decisions. Health fiction can be a powerful tool for health literacy and health.



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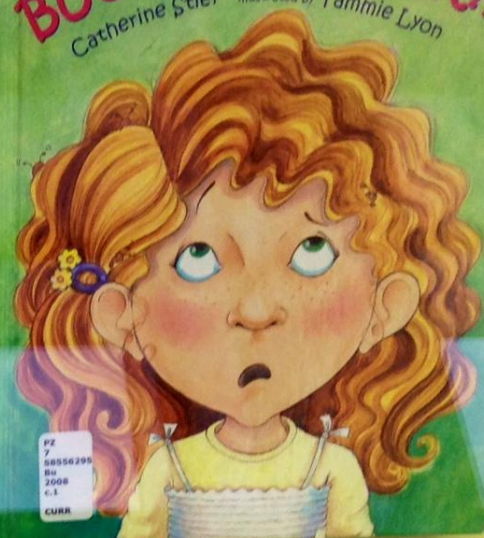
The accompanying article describes the larger study that we undertook to thoroughly review current children's health fiction. The end products of this research were: 1) a checklist for selection of children's health fiction; 2) a list of readily available works in the area; 3) this special theme issue of the Deakin, and; 4) a joint exhibit of the reviewed books, at the University of Alberta's Education and Health Sciences libraries, to complement the publication of this issue.

In addition to the outcomes mentioned above, it is our hope that an additional benefit of this project will be an increased community awareness of the value of children's health fiction and the knowledge that sometimes a good story is good medicine.

Sandy Campbell and Maria Tan

# BUGS IN MY HAIR??

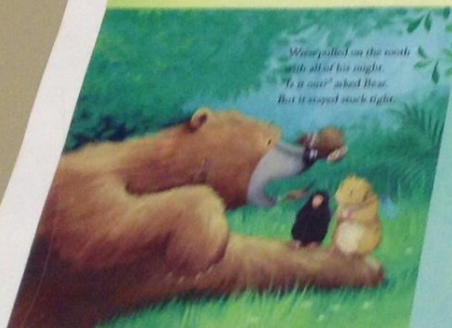
Catherine Stier illustrated by Tammie Lyon



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## Normalizing



*Worried on the tooth  
with all of his might,  
"It's out!" said Bear.  
But it stayed stuck tight.*



*"I'm a bit too small  
for the job," said When.  
So Owl grabbed the tooth.  
But the tooth stayed in.*

Shannon, David. *Bugs in My Hair!* New York: Scholastic-The Blue Sky Press, 2013. Print.

*Bugs in My Hair!* is an illustrated story book about head lice by acclaimed children's author and illustrator David Shannon. This highly recommended book would be a good addition to any public, school, or health library interested in providing accurate but engaging information about head lice which is a common condition in the preschool and primary school age groups.

The book sheds a humorous light on the not so funny topic of head lice through the experience of a young boy with this condition. Through this fictional account, *Bugs in My Hair!* portrays accurate medical information about head lice including method of transmission, symptoms, diagnosis, and cure. This book also dispels common myths about head lice, such as the ability to get head lice from animals, or using mayonaisse as a remedy. The story also depicts the social stigma and shame of having head lice and the feeling of being overwhelmed by the treatments, which would help a child understand the emotional experience or empathize with others who have head lice.

The book has detailed and amusing illustrations such as the "lice-a-palooza" party on the host's head. The age appropriate illustrations together with the hand drawn font keep the reader's interest and charge the imagination.

All in all, *Bugs in My Hair!* is a fun and accurate read and a good way for children and parents to learn about head lice.

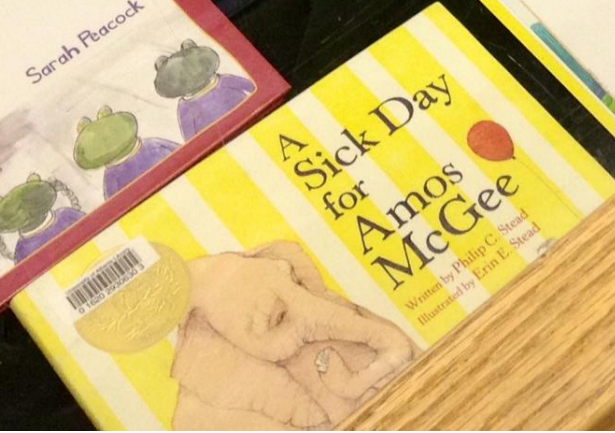
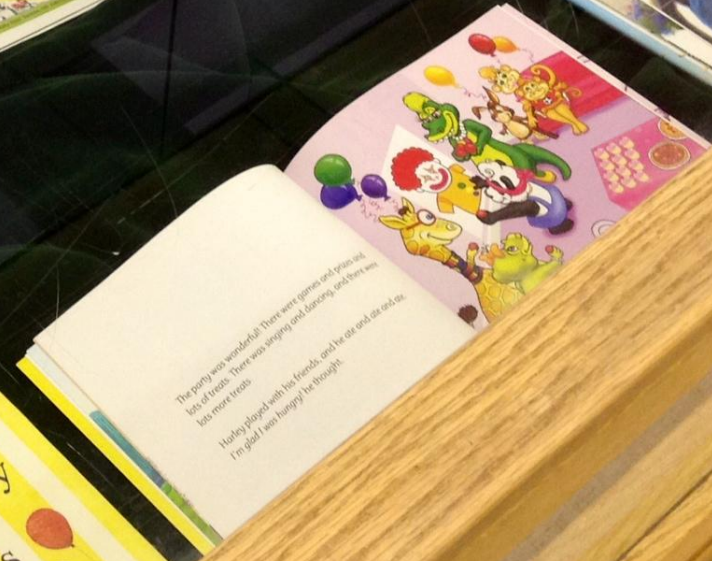
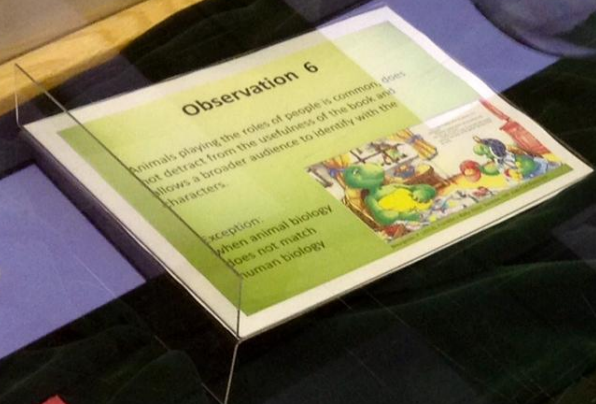


"Books for centuries have worked as silent therapists for untold numbers. Through books, readers can completely escape into new roles; they can vicariously sample lives and life-styles."

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The *Deakin Review* of Children's Literature

Particularly useful to librarians, parents, teachers and anyone working with young people; also includes news relevant to children's literacy.

Books are selected by the reviewers so the scope of the content is as varied as the reviewers' interests.

All books selected for review are added to the University of Alberta's Bruce Peel Special Collections Library as a non-circulating research collection.



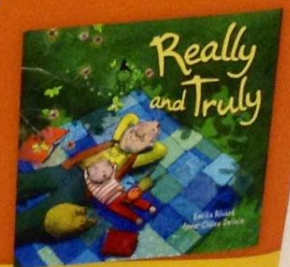
Reviews in Upcoming Deakin Special Health Issue

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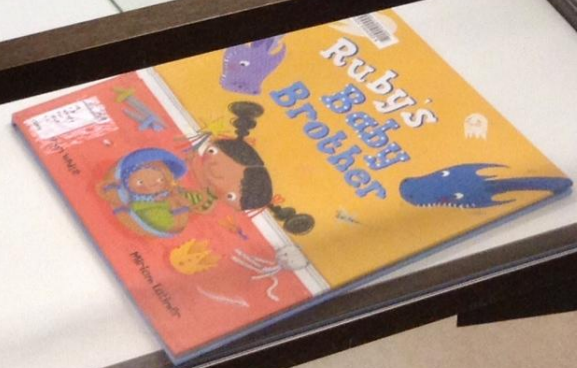


The *Deakin Review of Children's Literature* is an electronic quarterly review of contemporary English-language materials of interest to children and young adults. In addition to book reviews, news, and recommendations, we also publish excellent articles relevant to children's literacy.

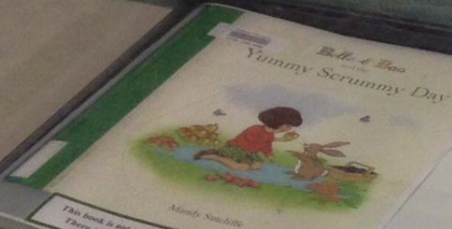


Review of Children's Literature

[/index.php/deakinreview](http://index.php/deakinreview)







This book is not available at the University of Alberta.  
There is a copy at the Edmonton Public Library.

Monica Nadeau

## Fits, Nilson!

Zachariah OHora

OHora, Zachariah. *No Fits, Nilson!* New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2013. Pp. 32.

*No Fits, Nilson!* is a children's story book written and illustrated by Zachariah OHora. Mr. OHora has written several other well-received children's books and is an accomplished illustrator.

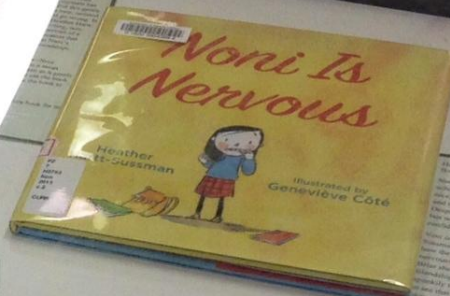
It is about Amelia and her best friend Nilson, a large blue gorilla. These two inseparable characters have such a strong friendship that they even share time-outs. Running errands with Amelia's mother is a test of patience and Amelia provides support to her big blue friend with the encouraging words "no fits, Nilson!" and promises of banana for dessert.

Amelia herself gets tested when the banana for dessert runs short, but in the end Nilson is a true friend who lends a helping hand. This is a story of patience and friendship and support, and is a reminder that sometimes life is challenging for children as they learn to navigate the world.

*No Fits, Nilson!* is illustrated with beautiful flat drawings in a rich palette of turquoise, pink, and mustard yellow. The simplicity of the illustrations together with the use of white space and a simple bold black line draws the reader's attention to the facial expressions and emotion of the characters and this is the strength of the book.

This book is recommended for preschool children as a read-aloud story. While the story does not recommend ways to manage difficult behaviours, it will be sure to stimulate conversations between children and their caregivers about feelings and behaviour.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars  
Reviewer: Connie Wootter



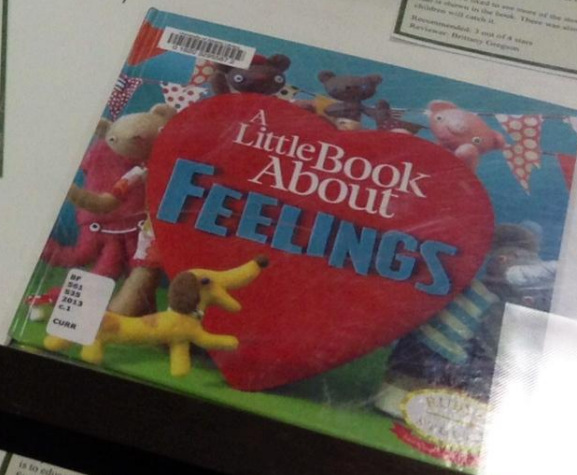
St-Jacques, Heather. *Nori Is Nervous*. St-Jacques, Heather. Côté, Geneviève. Toronto: Clarke Books, 2013. Pp. 32.

*Nori Is Nervous* is a story about a young girl named Nori who is nervous about her first day of school. The story is written in a simple, easy-to-read style with a focus on the character's feelings and the support she receives from her family and friends.

The book is illustrated with simple, clean drawings that are easy on the eyes. The use of a yellow background and red text makes the title stand out. The illustrations are done in a simple, clean style that is easy on the eyes.

This book is recommended for preschool children as a read-aloud story. While the story does not recommend ways to manage difficult behaviours, it will be sure to stimulate conversations between children and their caregivers about feelings and behaviour.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars  
Reviewer: Connie Wootter



The Baby Studio is a mom-run American-based company dedicated to providing resources for parents who seek to offer their children educational entertainment.

With simple text and beautiful illustrations, this book is most useful for younger children. It begins by explaining what feelings are, then describes how some feelings may feel, as well as how feelings change to them.

Overall, this book is a helpful resource for children and parents. With bright and simple text, this book serves as an informative and entertaining resource for children.

Highly recommended: 4 out of 4 stars  
Reviewer: Robin Desrosiers



Smith Milway, Katie. *Mimi's Village and How Basic Health Care Transformed It*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2012. Print.

*Mimi's Village* is part of the CitizenKid series, a collection that seeks to inspire children to be better global citizens. Based on Katie Smith Milway's experiences working for non-profit organizations, the story is set in Western Kenya – a real-world context that is vividly supported by Eugenie Fernandes' colourful full-page illustrations of flora, fauna and village life.

Told in simple one-page chapters, this story introduces children to the health challenges experienced by Mimi and her family: unsafe drinking water, a child's life-threatening illness, and travel through the night to a distant health clinic. As the story develops, readers begin to see that small steps can radically improve health in the village: clean water, vaccinations and mosquito nets. Perhaps most importantly, Mimi's inspirational role – she asks her father, "Could you build a clinic too? Maybe then a nurse would come" – demonstrates that children can make meaningful contributions to their communities. This theme is carried into the book's final seven pages, which include the story of a "real village health worker," as well as concrete suggestions that answer the question, "How can you help?"

The writing in this book is not the strongest and the title may not inspire child readers. In addition, younger readers will benefit from reading this with an adult. These shortcomings are, however, fully mitigated by Mimi's engaging story and the book's two important messages: simple public health measures will dramatically improve the lives of many children living throughout the world; and children everywhere can positively impact their world. This juvenile nonfiction book will make a compelling addition to any library collection.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars  
Reviewer: Shelagh K. Genuis

