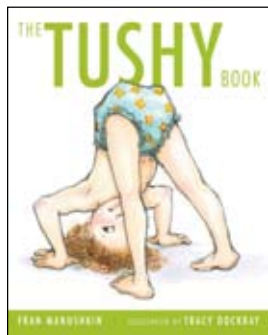
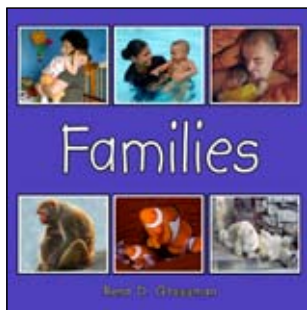




The Reading Chair

Families, by Rena D. Grossman. 2009. New York: Star Bright Books. 18 pp. 9781595721761. Ages birth to 3.

This nonfiction board book highlights the common ways humans and animals take care of their babies. "All families give kisses . . . share snacks . . . take baths, take naps, and say 'I love you.'" Each double-page spread juxtaposes a human family and an animal family taking part in the same activity. The photos are clear and expressive, and who doesn't like to see families taking care of their adorable babies, whether human, giraffe, or hippo? *Families* is an excellent introduction to the connections between all members of the animal kingdom.

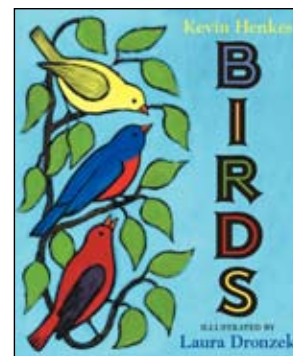


The Tushy Book, by Fran Manushkin. Illus. by Tracy Dockray. 2009. New York: Macmillan. 26 pp. ISBN 9780312369262. Ages 2 to 5.

What a delightful new body awareness book this is. Fran Manushkin (*Baby, Come Out!*; *The Shivers in the Fridge*) uses lighthearted rhyme to regale readers with humor about the ever-present and ever-useful tushy. "Sitting down would NOT be cushy if you didn't have your tushy! When you're born, your tushy's there, ready to go anywhere." The language brings unexpected delights that young children can relate to: "Every tushy's in the back. Every tushy has a crack! Where would you put underwear if your tushy wasn't there?" Tracy Dockray's illustrations, rendered in pencil and transparent inks, add both energy and warmth. Make no mistake: this book has nothing in common with those that use cheap bathroom humor to elicit

a response. Rather, this is about having fun while getting to know one's body. Read this feel-good book aloud to fully appreciate its rhythm and spunk.

Birds, by Kevin Henkes. Illus. by Laura Dronzek. 2009. New York: HarperCollins. 32 pp. ISBN 9780061363047. Ages 3 to 6.



Birds are an often unnoticed part of the landscape, but Kevin Henkes has taken the time to collect striking observations about the qualities of birds, told through the voice of a young girl who narrates the book: Birds can be sitting perfectly still on a telephone wire and then be gone in an instant. Birds come in many colors, yet some are so strikingly black that you can't make out "their eyes or their feathers, just their shapes." Birds taking flight from a tree all at once is like the tree shouting, "SURPRISE!"

Neither Henkes's text nor Laura Dronzek's bold and bright illustrations would tell the tale alone; the two parts create a whole that works well to dramatize the examples in the book. This ode to the avian set gets better with every reading.



It's a Secret! by John Burningham. 2009. Somerville, MA: Candlewick. 44 pp. ISBN 9780763642754. Ages 3 to 7.

Who doesn't love a secret? In John Burningham's new book, a young girl named Marie Elaine sees her cat Malcolm sleep the day away and wonders where he

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Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.

This column is available online at www.naeyc.org/yc/columns.

goes at night. One evening, she finds him dressed up in fancy clothes and begs to know where he is going. "It's a secret," he says. He then agrees to take Marie Elaine along if she puts on a nice dress and gets small in size. They pick up the neighbor boy on their way, race past the dogs, and make their way to the secret place that cats go at night: to a cat party along the rooftops, attended by the Queen of the Cats herself.

Burningham beautifully blends the surrealism of getting small to go on a secret adventure with familiar references that make the story feel real: the neighbor boy is named Norman Kowalski and the alley dogs wear colored raincoats, for example. The mixed-media illustrations give the illusion that the characters really are sneaking around in the night, and the story somehow feels believable. Burningham, the British author who also wrote the classic *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*, knows just how to tap into a child's capacity to see reality in a magical story.

***The Beckoning Cat*, by Koko Nishizuka. Illus. by Rosanne Litzinger. 2009. New York: Holiday House. 32 pp. ISBN 9780823420513. Ages 4 to 8.**

Have you ever wondered about the ubiquitous porcelain cats that wave to customers from the counters of Japanese and other Asian businesses? This story, based on a Japanese folktale set long ago, offers an explanation. A boy



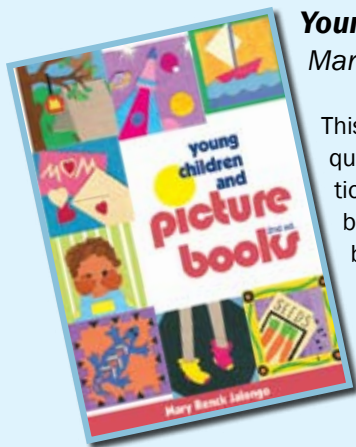
named Yohei lives by the sea with his ailing father. Yohei works hard selling fresh-caught fish in the town, but he and his father are poor nonetheless. Still, the boy is not greedy. When a stray cat shows up at his door, Yohei cleans her up and shares his meager dinner with her.

A few days later, when his father comes down with a fever and Yohei must return home before selling all his fish, a funny thing happens. Customers start showing up at his house. One after the other explains that a cat beckoned them to Yohei's house by waving her paw—the same cat that Yohei helped. Yohei is able to sell all of his fish without leaving his father, and because the customers keep coming, he can set up his own shop and buy his father proper medicine. Yohei's generosity rewards him, and his good fortune comes in the form of finding satisfying work and being able to care for his family.

The well-defined illustrations of the seaside town and the cast of characters are rendered in rich hues of opaque and transparent watercolors and gouache. This story of a single father and his son is quite compelling.

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Resources available from NAEYC



Young Children and Picture Books

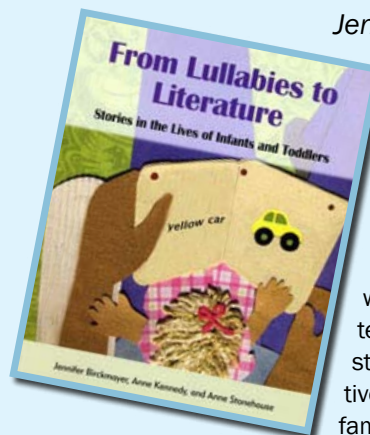
Mary Renck Jalongo

This popular book will help you recognize quality in children's literature and illustration and see how to use picture books to best advantage. Lists of recommended books are included.

Item #160
Non-member: **\$20.00**
NAEYC member: **\$16.00**

From Lullabies to Literature: Stories in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers

Jennifer Birckmayer,
Anne Stonehouse, and
Anne Kennedy



Sprinkled with vignettes and ideas for stories to share, this book explains how stories and story experiences are best used with very young children and how teachers can plan and provide story experiences most effectively, including by partnering with families.

Item #2010
Non-member: **\$18.00**
NAEYC member: **\$14.40**