

2021 Virtual Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival

Breakout Session Descriptions

Kids, History and War: Children's Voices Amidst the Injustices of War

Kate Albus, Alda P. Dobbs, Amanda McCrina, and Carolyn Tara O'Neil

PreRecorded

Four authors present unique takes on how the hopes and promises of a better life influenced their characters amidst a war and how the landscape, culture, and history shaped their stories. They will also share ideas for incorporating these books, as well as historic and current events, into lessons on teaching social inequities, gender inequalities, prejudice, and migration.

Booktalks/Best New Books, Common Core

Amplifying Voices and Visions: Border and Immigrant Perspectives in Children's Literature

Daniel Aleman, Maria E. Andreu, Alda P. Dobbs, Payal Doshi, and Margarita Longoria

PreRecorded

Five authors share stories aimed to expand and enrich young readers' views of the world and of themselves while creating empathy and showing how similar we all are in spite of our origins, our histories, and our cultural backgrounds. They will also share ideas for incorporating these books into lessons on teaching immigration, life near the United States-Mexico border, and cultures outside the United States.

Booktalks/Best New Books, Common Core

We Are Family: Inclusive Representations of Family in Books and Curricula to Promote Equity

Kelly J. Baptist, Kelly Carey, Susan Kusel, Rajani LaRocca, NoNieqa Ramos, and Candy Wellins

Live: Friday, April 16, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

How do we represent family in our literature and curricula in an antiracist and equitable society? Educators and authors will discuss how to disrupt the depiction of cisgender, heterosexual, white families as the default and expand it to be inclusive, diverse, and celebratory of all families. These depictions include found families, single-parent families, bicultural families, and extended families. Our panel will address the need for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and Jewish family representation that is not monolithic but encompasses rich and varied cultural and spiritual traditions. We will make recommendations of literature that celebrates the beauty of diverse families.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

Exploring the Magnolia Book Awards, Mississippi's Children's Choice Award

Lindsey Beck and Bethany Carlisle

PreRecorded

The Magnolia Book Awards provide the children and youth of Mississippi the opportunity to nominate, read, and vote for their favorite books. Please join us to learn more about the Magnolia Award and participate in discussion to explore integrating the Magnolia Award into school and public library settings. The Magnolia Award has four voting categories: Pre-kindergarten-2nd grade, 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade. Learn about the process and help us advocate for the Magnolia Awards as we continue to offer children and youth in Mississippi opportunities to develop a lifelong love of reading.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

Breaking into Publishing After Age 50

Valerie Bolling, Kelly Carey, Wendy Greenley, Vivian Kirkfeld, Rajani LaRocca, Tootie Nienow, Colleen Paeff, and Molly Ruttan

PreRecorded

You don't need to be young to write books for young children. Seven children's book creators share their experiences breaking into publishing after 50, offering tips to help older writers stay current, create community, and draw (literally) on life experiences while avoiding the "teaching" book trap. Other topics will include the importance of NOT acting your age, how to access your authentic childlike voice, why representation matters, and the joys of funneling both lifelong passions and passing fancies onto the page. Attendees, regardless of age, will gain the tools and inspiration needed to put their publishing dreams into action.

How to Get Published

Play is Equity!: The Role Picture Books Play in Creating a Just Society for Our Most Vulnerable Readers

Valerie Bolling, Abi Cushman, Darshana Khiani, Rajani LaRocca, NoNieqa Ramos, and Munevver Mindy Yuksel

PreRecorded

The depiction of play in children's literature and school curricula plays a key role in creating an antiracist and equitable classroom, school, and society for our most vulnerable readers. For all children, and in particular BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ children, the representation of play can nurture social and emotional development and support mental health or reinforce sexist, racist, and homophobic attitudes and behaviors. In this panel, we will examine how to disrupt antiquated and problematic representations of play and share literature that empowers children through play and entitles them to validation and joy.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

Show Me Myself: Representation Matters

Valerie Bolling and Malcolm Mitchell

PreRecorded

To build a community of readers, children need to see themselves in the books they read. It's true that some children love to read and will read any book they can grab. Others, however, feel disconnected from reading because they don't see, between the pages of books, people who look like them or enjoy their activities or share their cultural traditions. If we want to build a literate society of diverse readers, writers, and thinkers, we must put into their hands books that excite them: books where they can see themselves and learn about the experiences of others.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

KidLit in Color: Writing and Modeling Anti-Racism for Young Readers

Valerie Bolling, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Kirstie Myvett, and Zeena Pliska

Live: Monday, April 12, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

Picture books, chapter books, young adult novels: these categories all get lumped into the category of "kidlit," and they are often separated from the more lauded category of "literature." However, one of the most important ways that anti-racism work can be accomplished is through literature for young readers. In this session, children's writers will read short excerpts from their works and discuss how a dedication to diversity and anti-racism influences their writing.

Booktalks/Best New Books, Storytelling

Reaching the Reluctant Reader

Fleur Bradley

Live: Friday, April 16, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

Getting fidgeting, distracted, or uninterested kids to pick up a book is a challenge, but there are ways to reach these reluctant readers. Presenter and young adult/middle grade author Fleur Bradley will briefly discuss statistics and studies to understand why kids may present as reluctant readers before exploring reading stepping stones, using graphic novels, illustrated books, and audio books to bridge reading gaps. This session includes open dialogue: attendees share techniques, success stories, and favorite books. Attendees will leave with practical solutions to use in their library.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

I Got the Music in Me!

Mac Buntin

PreRecorded

Music can introduce concepts, like Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), in a non-threatening manner. It can positively affect our emotions, and it allows for ideas to be received that otherwise might be ignored. As a language, music can be utilized to strengthen and promote societal mores with subtlety. The session will feature popular music that can be used to promote positive behaviors and understanding in children and adults if used in an all-ages setting.

Public Libraries, School Libraries

Mock EJK Award Panel

Ramona Caponegro, Andy Haynes, Frances Morrissey, John Scott, Caroline Ward, and Diana White

Live: Thursday, April 15, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

Librarians and teachers will share practical lessons taken from experiences during the 2020-2021 world of virtual education. The panel will feature Caroline Ward, Library Consultant; Frances Morrissey, Diana White, Andy Hanes, and John Scott: Teachers and the School Librarian from Friends School of Baltimore, and Ramona Caponegro, Director of Educational Programming & Content, EJK Award 35th Anniversary; and Associate Professor of Children's Literature, Eastern Michigan University.

Highlights include a discussion of the interactive remote classes panelists held between their college and lower school students, their unique recommendations regarding future hybrid teaching models, and employing critical analysis of new and diverse literature using criteria designed for school-aged children based on the actual EJK Award criteria.

The Snowy Day's Legacy: 35 Years of the Ezra Jack Keats Award

Ramona Caponegro, Jacqueline LaRose, Oge Mora, Chieri Uegaki, and Phoebe Wahl

Live: Tuesday, April 13, 3-4 p.m. CT

Tune in to this webinar featuring three of the Ezra Jack Keats Award winners—author-illustrators Oge Mora (*Thank You, Omu!*) and Phoebe Wahl (*Sonya's Chickens*) and author Chieri Uegaki (*Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin*)—as they discuss the books and teachers that influenced them and how they created their award-winning works. In this session, Ramona Caponegro and Jacqueline LaRose also introduce the online toolkits that are part of the EJK Award's 35th anniversary resources, including book discussion guides, read-aloud tips, and fun facts about many of the winning authors and illustrators. (Originally presented to the National Council of Teachers of English and newly released for the Kaigler Festival)

From Passion to Published

Abi Cushman, Vicky Fang, Carrie Finison, Isabella Kung, Susan Kusel, Rajani LaRocca, Jen Malia, and Julie Rowan-Zoch

PreRecorded

Have you been wondering how to get that picture book idea out of your head, onto the page, into an editor's hands, and onto bookstore and library shelves? Join a diverse panel of picture book writers whose first books debuted in 2020 and 2021 as they talk about the ins and outs of writing, submitting, and publishing your first picture book with a traditional publisher. Whether you want to write fiction or nonfiction, write or illustrate—or both!—these book creators have tips and inspiration that will help you along your path to getting published.

How to Get Published

No Voice Too Small: #DisruptTexts and Empower Youth Through Powerful Protagonists in Diverse Picture Books

Keila Dawson, Carrie Finison, Lindsay H. Metcalf, Saira Mir, NoNieqa Ramos, and Debra Kempf Shumaker

PreRecorded

How do we as authors, educators, and writers combat the cisgender, heteronormative, white narrative that still dominates education? Part of the solution is promoting texts that disrupt hegemony and represent diversity and inclusivity. Six authors will discuss how picture books that depict role-model protagonists taking charge of their destinies empower our children and students to do the same. When we provide children with an inclusive curriculum in a supportive classroom and library community, encourage their spirited and creative responses, and champion their activism, we protect their mental health and teach them how to rise above challenges and triumph.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

The Kidlit Novel in Verse

Meg Eden

Live: Friday, April 16, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

The novel-in-verse is a unique form that merges elements of poetry and fiction and is gaining popularity in the kidlit community as a powerful storytelling form. In this workshop, we'll discuss the craft and thematic elements that make for a strong novel in verse, explore some examples of effective novels in verse, and engage in exercises to start investigating this form for our own narratives.

Storytelling, Common Core

Using Puppets to Help Children of All Ages Actively Engage in Storytelling

Laura Anne Ewald

PreRecorded

Kids love to hear stories, and kids love role-playing games. Puppets can help facilitate both, because kids of all ages respond positively to puppets, which can be made simply and inexpensively out of common materials. Kids already like to play by taking “parts” from fictional stories, and puppets allow them to connect directly to favorite literary characters for active playtime.

Programming, Storytelling

Chasing Creativity

Laura Anne Ewald and Mary Beth Magee

Live: Thursday, April 15, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

We're all born with creativity but sometimes lose track of it through the years. How can we nurture it in ourselves and our students? Learn tips to encourage the innate creativity we possess and engage the senses to enhance the process. The session includes reference materials and tools to aid your quest.

Storytelling, Programming

Alphabet Soup: An A to Z Recipe for Spicing Up Your Programming

Melinda Falgoust

Live: Wednesday, April 14, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

Every good cook knows that the best recipes have a “secret” ingredient. But, step back, Emeril Lagasse, because this workshop offers twenty-six ways to kick your programming up a notch! From author visits to zany ideas, educators and librarians are sure to find the perfect recipe for programming success with our out-of-the-box ideas. It's as easy as A-B-C!

Programming

From Yippee Ki Yay to Happy Trail...ers: Creating Blockbuster Trailers to Promote Books

Melinda Falgoust

PreRecorded

Teachers and librarians will learn how to create tantalizing book trailers to build student interest in books and encourage them to read specific titles. Tools and technology will be discussed and demonstrated, as well as multiple examples offered.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

STEAM-ing Up Kidlit

Vicky Fang, Carrie Finison, Rajani LaRocca, Kirsten W. Larson, Jen Malia, Lindsay H. Metcalf, Colleen Paeff, and Candy Wellins

PreRecorded

How can schools and libraries use picture books to model and facilitate hands-on learning in science and engineering? Eight authors of STEAM books for elementary schoolers will discuss how their books can serve as a launching point for activities, exploration, and engagement, both in schools, public libraries, and homes. This panel will include practical resources and activity ideas for use in all three spaces. A list of similar book titles will be provided for collection development.

Booktalks/Best New Books, School Libraries

Back to Basics: Suggested Family Activities and Children's Activity Packets

Dee Hare and Leigh Hood

Live: Wednesday, April 14, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

This session will describe our two-part response to children's services during the COVID-19 pandemic: suggested family activities and children's packets. Originally conceived as services during SLP 20, these projects proved so popular with children and their families that the Northeast Regional Library has made them a permanent part of their library services. Suggested family activities are short, daily ideas that are posted on the region's website and printed out weekly to be handed out via curbside pick-up. The children's packets are switched out monthly and contain seasonal coloring sheets, activity sheets, suggested book lists, supplies for craft projects, and more.

Public Libraries, Programming

Teaching with Picture Books

Shannan L. Hicks

Live: Wednesday, April 14, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

Love picture books but want to know how to teach with them? Want to see what the last year has given us in terms of amazing literature? This workshop gives an overview of the best picture books of the last year and tips on how to teach with them. This will be a great place to just talk books, so join us!

Booktalks/Best New Books, Programming

As Far As Birds Can Fly: How an Author Writes to the Beat of a Different Drummer

Linda Oatman High

PreRecorded

Linda Oatman High, author of more than 25 books for children and teens, presents a workshop about how she gleans writing ideas from real life. Linda will read an excerpt from her newest middle-grade novel, *As Far As Birds Can Fly*, a story set in Mississippi.

Storytelling, How to Get Published

It's Alive!: Bring History to Life with Primary Sources from the Library of Congress

Soline Holmes and Alicia Schwarzenbach

Live: Monday, April 12, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

Calling all history detectives! Teaching and programming with primary sources can be used for every age and grade level and for every subject. These "raw materials" of history are also great tools to teach visual literacy and critical thinking skills. Learn best practices for using primary sources (including photographs, maps, music, newspapers, personal journals, letters, and videos) in your library or classroom to help bring history to life.

Programming, School Libraries

It's a Graphic World: Graphic Novels as Informational Texts

Soline Holmes and Alicia Schwarzenbach

PreRecorded

Since early civilization, humans have relied on pictures to tell stories. This is especially true today as visual literacy has become a necessary skill. Many learners are visual learners, and research has shown that the multimodality of graphic novels allows readers to better retain information.

Comics and graphic novels are being used as informational tools in all areas of life: to explain medical procedures, to read and interpret political events, to teach history, and in business and law. Welcome to our graphic world as we explore diverse graphic novels and best practices for teaching them inside and outside the classroom.

Programming, Public Libraries

Practicing Perseverance with Picture Book Biographies

Angela Kunkel, Kirsten W. Larson, Lindsay H. Metcalf, Saira Mir, and Candy Wellins

PreRecorded

How can we empower students to accept struggle and even failure, exhibit growth mindset, and persevere? Five nonfiction picture book authors discuss their recent works, which touch on the themes of passion and perseverance of everyday people, many of whom are little-known, even today. They'll discuss how teachers, librarians, and parents can use these biographies to inspire all students to never give up. A reading list of similar titles will be shared for collection development.

Booktalks/Best New Books, School Libraries

Developing an LGBTQ+ Friendly Collection for Young and Curious Minds

Lynne Lambdin

Live: Thursday, April 15, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

A wonderful key to acceptance is establishing an early understanding that we are not all the same. And that is perfectly okay! This session focuses on stories with child-friendly LGBTQ+ themes. The stories to be showcased are appropriate, educational, and entertaining. The discussion will further break down some tips and tricks for developing an LGBTQ+ children's collection. This presentation aims to shed light on some avenues that make the development process easy, fun, and comfortable. Overall, the goal is to offer insight into positive and impactful LGBTQ+ youth literature and nurturing a collection that is inclusive.

Booktalks/Best New Books, Public Libraries

Word-Joy: Experience the Transformative Power of Poetry

Irene Latham, Vikram Madan, and Laura Purdie Salas

Live: Friday, April 16, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

What better time than National Poetry Month to experience the joy of writing poetry? Join three poets and experience a diverse sampler of simple, fun, and inspiring poetry writing activities to bring out the poet in YOU—and that you can easily turn around and use with writers of all ages.

School Libraries, Programming

Finding Gobi: The True Story of One Little Dog's Big Journey

Dion Leonard

PreRecorded

Dion's presentation brings the *Finding Gobi* story to life (includes videos/photos and stories to entertain) while also covering everything from hardship, friendship, teamwork, drive to succeed, inner belief, failure, love and kindness to others, and making the most of life from whatever situation you are in. Dion has spoken to audiences at children's book festivals, libraries, conferences, and schools in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States, and he really loves bringing the story to life for kids and adults alike to enjoy.

School Libraries, Public Libraries

Overlooked: Books Worth a Second Chance

Teri Lesesne and Karin Perry

Live: Monday, April 12, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

This session will feature books worthy of our attention but not appearing on award lists. With the number of books published, many fine titles may be overlooked. A discussion of the excellent features will be included in the book talks given by the presenters.

Booktalks/Best New Books, School Libraries

All the World's a Stage: Incorporating Theatre into Your Library

Melanie Lewis, Lonna Vines, and Becca Worthington

Live: Monday, April 12, 10-11:30 a.m. CT

Join the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's Theatrical Training Team for a facts-and-fun session full of drama games and theatre activities to do in your library, hands-on puppetry manipulation, and learn about training ideas for staff members who might want to beef up their performance skills. From solo puppet shows on Zoom to readers' theater, library programmers all benefit from dramatic and theatrical training. We encourage attendees to bring a puppet to our workshop.

Programming, Public Libraries

Let's Get Creative: Visual Journaling as Pedagogy and Reflection

Jennifer Luetkemeyer

Live: Wednesday, April 14, 2-3:30 p.m. CT

This session will cover visual journaling as a pedagogical and reflective tool to be applied to both professional and personal practice. Participants will learn how the presenter collaborated with a fifth grade teacher to enhance reading instruction during a graphic novel study through visual journaling and how the presenter uses visual journaling in her own professional practice for research and personal practice for self-care. A portion of the session will be devoted to creating either a physical or digital visual journaling piece, and participants will be able to work with whatever materials they already have on hand.

School Libraries, Programming

Navigating Tough Topics: Books that Will Help Children Better Understand Life's Challenges

Kaitlyn Lynch and Jamie Campbell Naidoo

PreRecorded

Throughout childhood and adolescence, children and tweens face numerous difficult situations, such as illness, death, bullying, racism, and more. Caring librarians and educators know that the right book used at the right time can spark conversations to help children understand and process life's challenges. This presentation provides attendees with recommendations of the best books that address tough topics along with related resources to help children navigate them.

Booktalks/Best New Books, Public Libraries

The Story and the Student

Mary Beth Magee

PreRecorded

Storytelling and learning share an unbreakable bond. Beyond offering entertainment, storytelling teaches, and teachers use stories to illustrate lessons. Learn more about this historic oral tradition and its modern application. In this session, attendees will learn to apply storytelling techniques both to teach and to verify understanding of material.

Storytelling, Programming