Portrayal of Disabilities in Caldecott Books

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Caldecott Award, characterization, character portrayal, picture books, stereotypes

**Abstract**
The authors read all of the books that received Caldecott Medal and Honor status awarded between 1938 and 2005 and found that 11 included a character with a disability. For each book, they analyzed characterizations of those with disabilities and generated tips for using the book to teach about disabilities. They argue that accurate portrayals of characters with disabilities, particularly the types of disabilities encountered most frequently by young children, are needed in award-winning picture books.

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not representative of the nearly 7 million children with disabilities attending U.S. public schools, say Brigham Young University ... In 2006 they published a similar study about the portrayal of disabilities in Caldecott books. This study indicated that many Caldecott Medal and Honor books can give children an inaccurate view of what it's like to have a disability, reinforce negative stereotypes and underrepresent more prevalent disabilities. “Students will be able to more fully understand disabilities and their classmates with disabilities through having characters with disabilities portrayed accurately in the best of children’s literature,” Dyches said. Developmental disability in children’s literature: Issues and annotated bibliography: The Division on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children. Dyches T. T. Prater M. A. [Show full abstract] the portrayal of individuals with disabilities (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Leal, 1999). Based on the Dyches and Prater guidelines, characterizations and plots in eligible children’s books published during 1997 and 1998 were evaluated. We read all books that received the Caldecott Medal and Honor status awarded between 1938 and 2005 and found 11 that included a character with a disability. For each book we analyzed characterizations of those with disabilities, and generated tips for using the book to teach about disabilities.