

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Children's Literature

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I. Scope

“Children’s Literature” is defined as material written and produced for the information or entertainment of children and young adults. This includes material in all non-fiction, literary and artistic genres in physical and digital formats.

The overall context for this policy is the Library’s position as the *de facto* national library of the United States. In the early days of the Library of Congress, children’s books arrived in an unsystematic fashion. This situation changed with the Copyright Law of 1870, when the Library began to collect children’s books more methodically. The Cataloging in Publication program, which was initiated in 1971, became an additional source for children’s books. Books are also acquired through gifts and purchase.

This statement deals with all of class PZ of the Library of Congress classification system except PZ1-PZ4, which is covered in the *Collections Policy Statement for [Literature and Language](#)*. The Library’s largest single distribution of children’s books occurs in the PZ subclass which includes English-language fiction, folklore, and poetry. The PZ subclass also includes substantial holdings of children’s books in other Western languages in the General Collections as well as holdings in languages that are in the custody of the Asian Division and the African and Middle Eastern Division.

Beyond the PZ class, children’s books are scattered throughout the Library’s vast collections and represent biography, history, geography, science, technology, religion and the arts. Juvenile holdings include periodicals, school readers, moveable and toy books, films, audio-visual and electronic materials, maps, and comic books.

An extensive collection of secondary materials relating to children’s literature includes monographs, bibliographies, reference guides, professional journals, and catalogs in English and other languages.

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's *de facto* national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

As all children's materials are dispersed throughout the Library's vast collection, the size of the collection cannot be determined. However, it is estimated to be more than 600,000 books published primarily from the early 18th century to present, including 17,000 – 20,000 juvenile titles held by the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

The Library's holdings of children's materials cover the mainstream as well as the special, unique, and rare. The strength of the Library's holdings, particularly its U.S. materials, lies in its impressive size and comprehensiveness and its consistency over time. Titles are added to the Library's collection based on their merit as children's literature, with the goal of building a representative collection that reflects a diversity of authorship, viewpoints, ideas, and experiences.

The Library's juvenile collections afford a broad view of American life, including attitudes toward the family, the governance of young citizens, and popular and traditional culture. In addition, children's book illustrations are an inexhaustible resource for information about American childhood, including coming-of-age stories, youth culture, and school and home life.

The materials in non-English languages further enhance the study of the United States and other national and regional cultures.

Facility of access to these materials and their systematic acquisition and processing must be considered another great strength when measured against other special collections in this country and abroad. Children's books and other juvenile materials are acquired, cataloged, preserved, digitized, and are accessible through the same bibliographic controls as all other Library of Congress materials. With the initiation in 1965 of the Annotated Card program, bibliographic access to children's books was further strengthened.

Rare Book and Special Collections Division

The Library's rare children's book collection was created by Valta Parma, who was appointed the first curator of rare books in 1927. (The earliest American juvenile literature Parma found was *Cotton Mather's A Family Well Ordered* (Boston: Printed by B. Green & J. Allen, 1699). Parma selected about 7,000 children's books – published primarily from the early 1700s to 1850 - which became the nucleus of the rare children's book collection.

Gradually the collection began to grow, especially through gift donations. In the 1930s, a number of important children's books were given by several donors, among them J. K. Lilly, Maude Blair, and John Davis Batchelder.

In 1940, Frank J. Hogan presented the Library with a number of fine items including three American hornbooks, ten New England primers; three known copies of Goodrich's *The Tales of Peter Parley About America* (Boston: S.G. Goodrich, 1827); and the rare 1775 Providence edition of *The England Primer Improved* (Providence: J. Waterman, 1775). The collection also contains two copies of *Cock Robin's Death and Funeral*, both printed in Boston, one from about 1780 (Boston: Bible & Hearth, [1780], the other, believed to be unique from 1790.

Other noteworthy collections including juvenile items are the Jean Hersholt Collection of Anderseniana, believed to be the most complete Andersen collection outside of Denmark containing original manuscripts, letters, first editions, presentation copies, and related materials; the Kiplingiana collection, one of the finest in the country, which includes manuscripts of Kipling's stories and poems, original letters, pen-and-ink sketches and other items; the Lessing Rosenwald collection, which contains a number of incunabula fables (not classified as juvenile); and the Marian S. Carson Collection, acquired in 1996, which includes treasures such as *The Royal Primer, or, an easy and pleasant Guide to the Art of Reading* (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1770), a British primer reprinted in the colonies by John Dunlap, who printed the Declaration of Independence from Thomas Jefferson's handwritten copy in Philadelphia in 1776, and *Mansion of Happiness* (Salem: W. & S.B. Ives, 1843), the first board game published in the United States.

In the early 1970s, noted collector d'Alte Welch, in his *A Bibliography of American Children's Books Printed Prior to 1821* (American Antiquarian Society, 1972), appraised the Library's holding of rare children's books as second only to the holdings of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Among the holdings of the approximately 100 extremely rare children's books, are *The Children's Bible* (Philadelphia: A. Stuart, 1763); *The Child's New Play-Thing* (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1763); and four editions of *The History of the Holy Jesus* and *The Mother's Gift* (Philadelphia: W. Spotswood, 1791). Other rarities are James Janeway's *A Token for Children* (Boston: T. Hancock, 1728), which was presented as a gift by Mrs. Dorothea Lang. It had been in her family for eight generations, or, some 260 years. It was accepted during a festive reception in 1988. *A little Pretty Pocket-Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly* (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1787); the first Worcester edition of *The History of Little, Goody Two Shoes* (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1787); *Easy and Instructive Lessons for Children. Also, the Ladder to Learning; or, a Selection of Fables, consisting of words of only one Syllable...* (Boston, 1804).

Other highlights which give an indication of the remarkable variety and historical representation of the rare children's book collection, range from colonial (*A Course of Sermons on Early Piety* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1721) to revolutionary days (*Curious hieroglyphick Bible ... for the amusement of youth* (Worcester: I. Thomas, 1788); from the Civil War (*The Myriopticon: A Historical Panorama of the Rebellion* (Springfield: Milton Bradley, 1890) to the Great Depression (*Pop-UP Mother Goose* (New York: Blue Ribbon, 1933).

Further examples of rare children's books include the historical, didactic and whimsical ranging from a paper doll book (*The History of Little Fanny* (London: S. and J. Fuller, 1811) to an elegant lift-the-flap book (*A Suit of Armor for Youth* (London: R. Ackermann, 1821); from a late 18th century silver hornbook to a collection of children's books - poignantly inscribed to his children by Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia.

Also in the 1970s, juvenile titles were transferred from the General Collections to the Rare Book Collections by William Matheson, then Chief of the Rare Book Division.

During the last two decades, the Library has added numerous rare children's books and three-dimensional items.

Mindful of suitability for digitization, exhibitions, and presentations, acquisitions included new dimensions and genres, and multi-cultural origins, including an elegant group of five handmade Chinese paper dolls of a Chinese family in their traditional garments from the late Qing dynasty (ca. 1900); *Geograficheskie karty Rossii* (1857), a set of 80 hand-colored lithographed cards which provide a glimpse of the Russian Empire; *Mushi no Uta-Awase* [The Insect Poetry Competition], a luxurious, two-volume manuscript, gloriously decorated with underpaintings in gold mist featuring various plants and flower motifs (early Edo period (1603-1868); a zoetrop, (ca. 1900), a moving cylinder representing early attempts of animation; *Im Stadtpark* [in the Citypark], (ca. 1890), an ingenious folding book created by the father of moveable books Lothar Meggendorfer; and *Märchenpanorama* (ca. 1890), an enchanting paper theatre with music box.

Special book acquisitions included the exquisitely rare and early edition (1664) of *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, the first Western children's book written by Johan Amos Comenius; an original pen and ink drawing for an illustration in the 1st edition of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, signed by the artist ("Den"); L. Frank Baum's letter to his son Robert S. Baum on 1 August 1910; and a rare collection of approximately 200 individual items and groupings of paper dolls and toys produced by the famous Raphael Tuck company.

General and Custodial Collections

The General Collections contain many out-of-print titles available only at the Library. Also noteworthy is the wealth of 19th century periodicals including *Young Men of America*, *The Youth's Companion*, and *St. Nicholas*; and a collection of McGuffey Readers, including primers and spellers.

The Library's collections of children's books published outside the United States and/or in languages other than English include rare items such as the *Bibliothèque des Enfants* (London: John Marshall, circa 1800) a boxed, sixteen-volume instructional set for English children learning French; a collection of rare

Chinese children's books; the Oleg Pavlovich Grushnikov Collection of some 10,000 Soviet and Russian illustrated children's books; a unique collection of Japanese children's books from the World War II era, many issued during the Allied Occupation; and a collection of 60 rare children's books and periodicals in Hebrew and Yiddish, among them the very first ever printed for children in these languages.

Children's Literature in Other Formats

Children's literature in other formats is scattered throughout the Library's holdings. Examples of original art about or relating to children's books, held by the Library's Prints and Photograph Division, include Palmer Cox, Paul Goble, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Howard Pyle, Lynd Ward and others. Especially noteworthy are the original drawings for the 1916 edition of Charles Kingsley's classic *The Water Babies*, illustrated by Jessie Wilcox Smith. Other artists included are Peggy Bacon, Fritz Eichenberg, and Antonio Frasconi. Additional materials include an exquisite ink and watercolor drawing of Peter Rabbit (ca. 1925), presented by Beatrix Potter to Anne Carroll Moore, the leading personality of 20th century American children's literature.

The Manuscript Division's holdings relating to children's literature contain, among others, letters and papers of such authors and illustrators as Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Louisa May Alcott, Ludwig Bemelmans, John Ciardi, Samuel Clemens, Virginia Hamilton, Joel Chandler Harris, Kirk Munroe, and Frank Stockton. Other correspondence of significance appears in the Library's holdings of Presidential Papers. Here, for example, the Theodore Roosevelt Papers contain correspondence with such notable authors as Kenneth Grahame, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Rudyard Kipling. Other items of interest to the historian include the manuscript journal of a young boy growing up in Washington, D.C. in the mid-19th century (Published as *Growing Up on Capitol Hill. A Young Washingtonian's Journal, 1850-1852*. Edited by John J. McDonough. Library of Congress, 1997), *The Journals of William Speiden, 1852-1855* which includes an illustrated notebook of the young Speiden who accompanied his father on Commodore Perry's voyage to Japan, and the Clara A. Whitney papers, 1872-1975, which document the story of a young American who lived in Japan from 1875 to 1900.

Materials relating to the study of children's literature can be found in many other divisions including the American Folklife Center (e.g. the Archive of Folk Song); the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (children's books and magazines in a number of formats including audio, Braille and digital Braille); the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (children's films, filmstrips, TV/radio programs and other audio-visual materials); and the Serial and Government Publications Division (Comic Book collection). Other divisions holding material relating to children's literature are the Latin American, Caribbean and European Division; Geography and Map Division; and the Music Division.

Electronic Resources and Digital Collections

The Library has digitized a number of titles in the PZ subclass and in children's literature. A collection of rare illustrated 19th and early 20th century children's books have been digitized and are available on the Rare Book and Special Collections Division website. A highlight of this collection is the first American edition of *Little Pretty Pocket Book* (Worcester, 1787).

The Library also maintains a growing online collection of contemporary open access e-books produced by other institutions and individuals, which includes children's books and books related to the study of children's literature. By digitizing some of its print books and acquiring open access e-books, the Library

commits to preserving and providing broad access to this content.

Over two hundred databases are available to assist the children's literature researcher, including *Children's Literature and Culture*, the *Children's Literature and Childhood Collection* (within *Nineteenth Century Collections Online*), *Children's Literature Comprehensive Database*, *Book Review Digest*, *LitFinder* (full-text access to children's literature); *Music Online: American Song*; *Poem Finder*, *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, *WorldCat*, *Librarians' Internet Index: Websites You Can Trust*, and others.

IV. Collecting Policy

In cases where there is question regarding adding children's literature, the relevant subject Collections Policy Statement(s) should also be consulted.

U.S. Publications

All American imprints, regardless of format, are within scope for addition to the collections, with the exceptions noted below.

- Religious materials for students in vacation church schools, instructions in devotions, catechisms and question books, and textbooks in religion unless written by a well-known author or issued by an important trade publisher
- Elementary and secondary textbooks except for important titles in American history, social and physical sciences, and other subjects in special reader demand, or if they demonstrate new teaching methods or approaches
- Answer books, workbooks, tests, teacher's manuals; correspondence school lessons, syllabi and textbooks issued for use by a particular teacher's class; coloring books
- Paper dolls unless they are of particular historical importance
- Self-published books, which are selectively acquired and particularly sought when they document and preserve the existence and cultures of groups underrepresented by mainstream publishing houses (see the *Supplementary Guidelines for [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#)*)

Non-U.S. Publications

The Library attempts to acquire representative samples from as many countries as possible of the most noteworthy new titles of literature for children of all ages, including books that win national awards, works that reflect current publishing trends, highlight the diversity of authorship, ideas, design, and illustrations; and reveal new interpretations of social and political themes. Textbooks are collected when they demonstrate propagandistic teaching methods or if no other children's books are published in the country.

The Library acquires reprints or translations from English only if they are textually or artistically important. Refer also to the *Collections Policy Statement for [Translations](#)*.

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright, exchange, gift, or the Cataloging in Publication Program. The Library of Congress collections are heavily dependent upon materials received through the copyright deposit provisions of U.S. copyright law ([17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)). For copyright demand, the U.S. regulations allow for the Library to receive analog and some digital materials. When items are offered in both formats the Library's default is normally the Best Edition print version, unless the publisher has arranged a special relief agreement with the Copyright Office. For materials not available to the Library through copyright deposit, or other non-purchase means, the Library acquires materials through purchase. Purchase is used predominately for non-U.S. publications that are not widely available within the United States. The Library utilizes an array of traditional methods of library acquisition (firm orders, subscriptions, and approval plans) with vendors located in different areas of the world. (At times, special effort or arrangements are needed to identify and acquire non-U.S. children's literature.) In addition, the Library uses its six Overseas Operations Offices to broaden its acquisitions opportunities outside the United States.

Identifying, evaluating and acquiring electronic databases related to the study of children's literature is an integral part of collection development. Selectively acquiring, archiving and making accessible open digital content, such as open access e-books, is an increasingly important pathway for adding to the Library's collections.

VII. Collecting Levels

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

Due to the dispersal of juvenile material among adult material, the Library collects children's literature across the Library of Congress Classification Schedules, including but not limited to A (e.g. AP: Juvenile

periodicals), P (e.g. PZ: Fiction and juvenile belles-lettres), and Z (e.g. Z719-Z876: Libraries).

In general, children’s literature published or distributed in the U.S., regardless of language, is collected at a Level 5. Children's literature published outside the U.S. is collected at a Level 3.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>.

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels
AP200-AP230	Juvenile periodicals	5	3
PZ5-PZ10.3	Juvenile belles lettres—American and English	5	3
PZ10.4	Juvenile belles lettres—Sign language and braille	5	3
PZ10.5	Juvenile belles lettres—Polyglot	5	3
PZ10.72-PZ90	Juvenile belles lettres (in non-English languages)*	5	3
Z719-(Z725)	Libraries (General)	5	3
Z729-Z876	Library reports. History. Statistics	5	3

*Below is further description and guidance regarding children’s literature in non-English languages. The general guidance to collect U.S. materials (regardless of language) at level 5 and non-U.S. materials at level 3 remains, unless otherwise noted.

1. Classical languages and literatures

The Library acquires current and retrospective children’s materials in the ancient Greek and Latin languages. The Library of Congress does not collect translations of classical texts in languages other than English unless the accompanying material represents the work of an internationally acknowledged scholar.

2. Germanic languages and literatures

The library collects materials in all Germanic languages at Level 3.

3. Celtic languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in the Celtic languages at Level 3. These include the Irish, Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, and Gallic languages.

4. Romance languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in all Romance languages at Level 3, except as noted for the following:

- a. Dalmatian languages and literatures - Level 2
- b. Cuban literature since the 1959 revolution - Level 4

5. Slavic, Baltic and Albanian languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in Slavic and related languages at Level 3.

6. Finno-Ugrian and Basque languages and literatures

The Library seeks to maintain a Level 3 collection of current materials in the languages of Finland, Estonia, Sami, Hungary, and the Basque region.

7. Near Eastern languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in Near Eastern languages and literature at Level 3.

8. Asian languages and literatures

The Library collects at Level 3 current materials in the Asian languages. Materials in several Asian languages are scarce and some languages are at risk of becoming endangered, making it important to collect a representative selection of available materials. Among the languages collected are Dravidian, Javanese, Karen, Kawi, Mon-Khmer, Munda, Nashi, Javanese, and Siamese.

9. African languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in African languages at Level 3.

10. Oceania languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in languages of Oceania at Level 3.

11. Mixed languages

The Library collects materials in mixed languages such as Creole, Gullah, and Pidgin English at Level 3.

12. Artificial and universal languages

The Library collects materials in artificial or universal languages such as Esperanto at Level 3.

13. Other languages

The Library collects materials in any other non-English language not specified above at Level 3 except:

- a. Native-American languages and literature - Level 5
- b. Languages of indigenous people in Canada, Mexico - Level 4

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