

JUVENILE FICTION COLLECTION PLAN

Collection Description

The primary purpose of the juvenile fiction collection is to meet the recreational reading needs of independent readers and to provide read-aloud selections for parents of younger children. The collection is shelved in one alphabetical arrangement by author's last name. It includes many genres of fiction identified by a genre spine label (mysteries, science fiction, dog stories, horse stories, sports fiction, fantasy, and short story collections). Other types of stories found in J Fiction are realistic fiction, historical fiction, humorous stories, and adventure stories, although they do not have a specific genre label on the spine of the book. Newbery Award winners are designated as such with a spine label. Children's classics that have withstood the test of time, perennial read-aloud favorites, and popular fiction in series are all included here. Outstanding children's authors are well represented. Both hardback and paperback format are included in the Juvenile Fiction collection. Signage including authors' names is located on each end panel of the J Fiction shelving to help patrons find the books they want.

Audience

The juvenile fiction collection has a target audience of 8 through 12 year-olds, or roughly those children from third through sixth grade. Parents, teachers, and adults who work with youth and want a good book to read aloud or recommend to children also use the collection. The use of the collection depends largely on staff providing excellent reader's advisory service to its patrons as well as on school related assignments and popular demand for recreational reading. To assist clientele in the Children's Room there are also 25 thematic or genre-based annotated booklists geared for the 4th through 6th grade library patrons with recommended titles.

Scope and Exceptions

The scope of the collection is fairly broad. It is geared for children beyond the JE Picture Book and J Reader collections but not ready for the Young Adult fiction collection, which serves teens in Junior and Senior High School. Usually books in the J Fiction section are between 64 and 256 pages, although some books, such as the Harry Potter titles, are much longer. Transitional fiction is a significant component of the juvenile fiction collection. Developmentally, second and third graders reading these early chapter books still need some illustrations, larger print size, and more white space per page than an older child needs. A booklist entitled "Transitional Fiction for Kids" was created to assist patrons wanting easy juvenile fiction that is a step up from the J Reader collection in the Children's Room. An exception to the J Fiction collection would be the occasional picture book included which has a mature theme geared for much older audiences than preschool through second grade. Also, the Juvenile Fiction selector purchases some holiday titles but they are shelved separately in the J Holiday collection rather than within

J Fiction. Generally, works in abridgements are not purchased when the original story is available and accessible to the intended audience.

Size and Duplication

To date the number of items in the J Fiction collection is approximately 13,150. This represents 23.6% of the total children's material collection. The fiscal year 2004 budget for this collection is \$10,200. The collection is not meant to be archival; if a book is not being checked-out, it will probably be withdrawn according to item purge protocol. Approximately 40% of the collection is added copies. One or two copies of a well-reviewed title are usually purchased. Additional copies are ordered when the popularity of the author or series indicates demand for more copies such as the Harry Potter books, the Lemony Snickett Series of Unfortunate Events, the Captain Underpants series, the Junie B. Jones books, and the Brian Jacques titles. Duplicate copies are common for award-winning books, current popular juvenile series, and books by local authors or those who have visited the Iowa City school recently. There is some overlapping of titles with the Young Adult collection in a purposeful effort to provide challenging reading for fifth and sixth graders who are reading at a high level but are not yet ready for many of the mature themes and teenage problems found in the Young Adult collection. There are some books and authors that are needed and enjoyed by different age groups for different purposes. Limiting these special books to one collection doesn't serve patron needs well. Also, a number of our young patrons are prohibited from using collections in the adult areas of the library by their parents.

Maintenance

Maintenance is a high priority and weeding based on condition is done frequently. Books in poor physical condition are often found by library patrons or Circulation staff and routed to the selector to be withdrawn, mended, or replaced with a new copy. Item purge is done every January and books that have not circulated once in the last two years are candidates for withdrawal. When interest in a popular series wanes, added copies are frequently withdrawn as in the Goosebumps, Animorphs, and Babysitter's Club series. New books are occasionally sent directly to the bindery if they are only available in paperback and heavy use is anticipated. New replacement copies of a title are usually purchased rather than sending a book to the bindery. Most J Fiction books in plain buckram binding have been withdrawn.

Selection

Selection of the J Fiction collection is done with the aid of the following review sources: 1) Horn Book Magazine, 2) Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books, 3) Booklist, 4) Kirkus, 5) School Library Journal, 6) Publishers' Weekly, 7) The New York Times Book Review, and 8) Book Links. Publishers' library bindings are purchased over the trade edition or paperback edition whenever possible. Catalogues from a multitude of children's book publishers are examined as well. Retrospective ordering is done to add breadth to the collection. Holdings are checked against various booklists and

bibliographies such as the Newbery Award and Honor books, the annual New York Times Book Review's Best Books for Children, School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year, Iowa Children's Choice books, the American Library Association's Notable Books for Children, the Boston Globe Horn Book awards, etc. Movie and television book tie-ins are purchased when available. A small number of gifts are added annually to J Fiction. Few patrons make formal purchase requests; however, much informal dialogue with patrons during readers' advisory work at the public service desk yields suggestions for ordering in the juvenile fiction area. Children's Room staff input is also very helpful in book selection, especially in discovering gaps in the collection. When a new book arrives which is on the borderline for inclusion in the J Fiction or Y.A. Fiction collection, the selector tries to read the book to determine if it is appropriate for the Children's Room or if it needs to be recommended for inclusion in the Young Adult collection because of its theme, content, or language. Conversely, the Young Adult Librarian may find a new book is too elementary for the Y.A. collection or of more interest to children in the elementary school and might recommend the title for placement in the Children's Room collection instead of being added to the Young Adult collection. Duplication of titles in both collections happens when both selectors deem the title is very appropriate for their respective collections, since frequently, books are reviewed for grades 4-7 or grades 5-8 and would be appropriate to have in both locations in the library.

Goals

Continued promotion of the J Fiction collection is needed to advocate reading for pleasure and to encourage life-long reading. At a time when a variety of extracurricular activities, hectic schedules, and interest in video and computer games compete for children's attention, the importance of reading books cannot be emphasized enough. Encouraging literacy among children can be accomplished by producing helpful booklists for the collection, booktalking in the schools, book displays, Channel 10 promotion, and children's library programming which relates to the juvenile fiction book collection. This document is being written while the library is in its temporary quarters and circulation of J Fiction has dropped 8%. A major goal would be to make sure the juvenile fiction collection circulation statistics rebound beginning in June, 2004, when the library expansion project is completed.

Children's Librarian

January, 2004