THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN’S BOOKS

The Center for Children’s Books at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science is a research center with additional interests in education and service. Our mission is to facilitate the creation and dissemination of exemplary and progressive research and scholarship related to youth-focused resources, literature, and librarianship.

In addition to pursuing our own projects, we support faculty research and provide opportunities for sharing current scholarship in our research workshop and lectures. We collaborate across disciplinary and institutional boundaries to create a community of scholarship in the field.

We also support students, librarians, and educators by providing the use of our extensive children’s literature collection, sponsoring and participating in children’s literature–related events, and offering additional opportunities for enrichment and professional development.

The Center’s collection, begun at the University of Chicago in 1945, now includes more than 16,000 trade books for youth, plus rare and distinctive materials on the history and criticism of youth literature, literature-based library and literacy programming, and storytelling. It also houses a collection of storytelling audio and video recordings.

Although the collection is noncirculating, it is available for on-site use by researchers, teachers, librarians, students, and the interested public.

With affiliations at several regional universities and various departments from the University of Illinois, the CCB is a crossroads of scholarly inquiry in the field. The Youth Literature and Culture Research Workshop meets regularly to share and encourage new critical work by its members and to reflect on significant trends and publications.

Our annual Gryphon Lecture brings to campus a scholar or professional doing significant original work in the field of children’s books, literature, and media. We also host lectures by University of Illinois faculty and by visiting scholars and experts in the field.

The Gryphon Award, which comes with a $1,000 prize, is given annually by the Center for Children’s Books to the author of an outstanding English-language work of fiction or nonfiction for which the primary audience is children in kindergarten through Grade 4.

The award was conceived as a way to focus attention on an area of literature for youth that, despite being crucial to the successful transition of children from new readers to independent lifelong readers, does not receive the critical recognition it deserves.

The title chosen best exemplifies those qualities that successfully bridge the gap in difficulty between books for reading aloud to children and books for practiced young readers.

In print since 1945, the Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books is one of the premier American book-review journals for youth. Packed with news on new books for young people from birth to young adulthood, each review offers an in-depth look at the book’s content, reading level, strengths and weaknesses, and possible uses. It is published eleven times per year (monthly except for August) for GSLIS by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dr. Deborah Stevenson, Director

Graduate School of Library and Information Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
http://ccb.lis.illinois.edu
(217) 244-9331

The Center frequently hosts meetings and events, including the CCB Open House, the Youth Literature Book Clubs, gallery giveaways, Story Coach meetings, GSLIS classes, and more; we also sponsor the Spring Storytelling Festival, featuring GSLIS’s own students and faculty in storytelling performances.

Our annual book sale, offering thousands of children’s books of discounted prices, draws librarians, teachers, and parents.

We also connect with the university, professionals, and local communities through storytelling and other programming, vibrant themed displays, and special events (such as the Kids’ Book Boat Center and Festival)—and participation in university-wide events such as the Youth Literature Festival.