THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FAMILY UNIT IN CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD BOOKS

Amanda Randolph

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Committee:
Cindy Hendricks, Ph.D., Advisor
Timothy Murnen, Ph.D.
Susan Peet, Ph.D.
ABSTRACT

Cindy Hendricks, Advisor

It is essential that children see themselves and their families in the literature they read (Bracken, Wigoutoff & Baker, 1981; Powell, Gillespie, Swearingen & Clements, 1993). Many researchers believe children can also benefit from literature that includes diverse families unlike their own (Allen, Allen & Sigler, 1993; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007). Understanding how children prefer families to be portrayed in the books they read can help guide teachers’ and librarians’ books selections. Therefore, the question addressed in this study was: Based on the illustrations and the text, how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association’s and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books from 2007 to 2012? The research design used for the examination was a mixed method content analysis of 14 picture books including human character family units that won the Children’s Choices Award in the categories of Early Reader and Young Reader. The investigation analyzed familial relationships, role of family in plot, family unit, and cultural/racial representation. The study found that the Children’s Choices books did not display all types of families and the prevalence of diverse family units found in real American homes was not represented in the Children's Choice Award Books. The investigation showed children were more willing to read books in which human families are merely mentioned with the plot centered on another topic. While teachers and librarians may consider the Children’s Choices books as quality literature to motivate students, they need to be aware of the portrayal of human families in the Children’s Choices Award-winning books.
To the inspiring people who make up my diverse family
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Family units have drastically changed their composition in the past 60 years. Many families no longer fit into the two-parent family cookie cutter, typically considered as a mother, a father, and their biological children. Although children look for books as a means of escaping their reality, they also want to see themselves reflected in the characters in the books they read. Children are looking for characters with whom they can relate and connect.

Because the variety and prevalence of modern families do not fit into the dual-parent mold, more books have been written to include these different families and shed positive light on their functioning as a unit. Many books have been written and illustrated for the purposes of helping children understand different types of families, accepting their own family, and learning that families come in different shapes, colors, and sizes. When children see their own families portrayed positively in literature, they build self-confidence in the idea that others are like them.

Since the literature obtained in school classroom and libraries is what students are exposed to most often, it is important for teachers and librarians to consider the books they provide. Teachers and librarians must find books that represent their students and society as a whole. Including books that help children recognize and understand different types of families is crucial in their perception of themselves and others. Quality literature can be used to help children navigate difficulties in their lives and accept the differences of others. Selecting books that provide children with opportunities to witness functionally diverse family units will help them ascertain the good in their own families and other families.

Statement of the Problem

School psychologists and guidance counselors often find children in their offices who are dealing with the stresses and struggles of divorces, marriages, deaths, and new siblings. Students
are also often teased about their families and begin thinking that there is something wrong with
their families. Even principals deal with students exhibiting negative behavior due to family
related stressors or issues. Because classroom teachers interact with students during their waking
hours at least as much or more than family members do, it is important that they are familiar with
good books that can be used in times of crises for children. With different types of families
becoming more prevalent in society, it is important for teachers and librarians to provide books
that include diverse family structures. Providing students with literature that represents a wide
range of children and their families will allow them to see themselves in the text, appreciate the
diversity of others, and become more motivated in what they read. Therefore, librarians and
teachers need good examples of children’s literature to expose children to different types of
families.

Research Question

Understanding how children want families to be portrayed in the books they read can help guide teachers’ and librarians’ books selections. It is essential that children see themselves and their families in the literature they read. Therefore, the question addressed in this study was:
Based on the illustrations and the text, how are human families portrayed in the International
Reading Association’s and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books from 2007 to
2012?

Rationale

According to Gilmore and Bell (2006), “if we have some understanding of the number of
children who live in these diverse family structures, we can then select literature that represents
these children” (p. 7). The Children’s Defense Fund (2010) states:

About 70 percent of all children—but fewer than 40 percent of Black children—live with
two parents. Twenty-three percent of all children and 50 percent of Black children live with only their mother. Black children are more than twice as likely as White or Hispanic children and four times as likely as Asian/Pacific Islander children to live with neither parent. Almost five percent of Black children live with grandparents; Black children are almost twice as likely as other children to live with other relatives or non-relatives. 2. 7 million grandchildren live with grandparents who are responsible for them; more than one in three of them live with grandparents with neither of their parents present. 61 percent of the grandparents raising grandchildren are in the labor force. Grandparents raising children without their parents present have median incomes 43 percent less than other families raising children. Close to 20 percent of grandparents raising children live in poverty. More than 60 percent of Black and American Indian children are born to unmarried mothers. 5. 8 million children lived in relative-headed households in 2000, 75 percent of them with grandparents. More than 2.7 million grandchildren live with grandparents who are responsible for them. More than one-third of them have no parent living with them. (p. C-1)

Children who live in homes with alternate family patterns need to see their lives depicted in the books they read. Children need to be exposed to diverse family structure literature so that students from modern families can see themselves in the stories. This helps them to increase their confidence and motivation (Hampton, Rak & Mumford, 1997). Hampton, Rak and Mumford also found that when children were read literature involving diverse family structures, it demonstrated that children who live in these families are worthwhile and important. Adults, including teachers and librarians, can help supply children with literature that shows them other children are in the same situation and unlock their fears and concerns.
A more important, overarching lesson to be learned from books showcasing other family structures is to learn that other people have different values and beliefs. Providing diverse family literature will allow adults to safely and practically discuss serious issues regarding families (Leland & Harste, 1999). Adults can use book discussions as a launching point into more important discussions. The topic of different families is something that frequently creates discussion and conversation among students. Identifying the portrayals of families in the Children’s Choices Award-winning books would be useful for classroom teachers and librarians in selecting literature for their classrooms that meets this need.

Definition of Terms

Terminology valuable to the understanding of this project is defined in this section.

Blended family: Also known as a stepfamily in which one parent has children that are not related to the other parent. One or both parents may have children from a previous relationship or marriage. Family can include biological mothers, biological fathers, stepmothers, stepfathers, stepchildren, children, stepsiblings, half-siblings, siblings, stepbrothers, stepsisters, half-brothers, and half-sisters.

Cooperative family: non-related people or non-married people who get together to rear their children in one household

Early Childhood: preschool - third grade

Extended family: also called consanguinal, a family that extends beyond the two-parent family to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and other family members all living in the same household or nearby; parents and children co-reside with other members of one parent's family.
Family: The U. S. Census Bureau defines a family as a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together also defined as a group who loves and cares for each other

Foster family: a family consisting of a minor who has been made a ward of the state placed in the private home of a state-certified caregiver referred to as a foster parent

Half-siblings: siblings sharing one but not both biological parents

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning

Multi-generational family: three or more generations of a family living together

Picture: “a graphic illustration, including photographs, drawings, paintings, and their reproductions” (Harris & Hodges, 1981, p. 240)

Picture book: “a book in which the illustrations are as important as the text or written story” (Harris & Hodges, 1981, p. 240)

Picture clue: “information from a picture or other nonverbal illustration that helps the reader understand the meaning of the text” (Harris & Hodges, 1981, p. 240)

One-parent families: a family consisting of one parent and one or more children

Two-parent family: also known as the elementary family or conjugal, a family consisting of married parents and their children living in the same household

Limitations

The literature examined in this study was limited to the International Reading Association’s and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choice Award-winning books. Books were only chosen from the following years: 2007-2012. The award-winning books were also limited by level. The levels selected for analysis were the Young Reader and Early Reader categories of the award, which encompass kindergarten through fourth grade. Books were
discarded if they did not portray human characters in family units. Results in categorizing books could vary based on researchers interpretation of pictures and researchers definition of family characteristics.

Another limitation with analyzing the results of the investigation involves the selection of the books themselves. It is not clear of the specific demographics of the children who were involved in the selection of the Children’s Choice books. This may skew the representation of families found in the analysis of the books.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This investigation was designed to answer the research question: Based on the illustrations and the text how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books chosen from 2007 to 2012? This study employed a content analysis of the Children’s Choices Books from 2007 through 2012 examining for familial relationships, family units, family unit role in plot, and cultural/racial representation.

Motivation is a key element in determining whether or not children choose to read in their spare time. Children who are motivated to read tend to select books of interest to them. Research has demonstrated that children like to read books that contain characters like themselves, and who experience situations similar to them (Steiner, Nash, & Chase, 2008; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Sciurba, 2011). One such situation is that of the family to which the reader belongs. In today’s society, the two-parent family is not as prevalent as in the past. Considering all the possibilities where families are concerned, it is important to understand how families are portrayed in award-winning books. While teachers and librarians may consider the Children’s Choices books as quality literature to motivate students, they may not consider how families are portrayed in these student-selected books.

This literature review discusses the current standing on the prevalence and definition of modern families, the theoretical orientation for the investigation, the impact of children’s literature including diverse family structures, students’ motivations, attitudes, and interests in reading, and a historical review of the research. A description of the selection process of Children’s Choices award-winners is also provided.
The Modern Family

Before discussing the books that children are reading, it is important to look into their backgrounds, home environments, and daily lives. In the United States, the actual modern family no longer fits what was the norm of the two-parent family in the 1950s. Having two married, cohabiting, biological, heterosexual parents is no longer the norm regardless of their roles in the family. According to the US Census Bureau (2010) “A family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption” (p. 5). Even in the past ten years, there has been a change in families. In 2010, less than half of all households were husband-wife two-parent family households. According to the US Census Bureau, “this is the first time that husband-wife families fell below 50 percent of all households in the United States since data on families were first tabulated in 1940” (p. 10). There has been a gradual decrease in married, two-parent families in the past years from 55% in 1990, 52% in 2000 and 48% in 2010. According to Huston (2001), what was considered to be a family has changed. The overall composition of families is changing and the change will likely be ongoing (Huston). Turner-Vorbeck (2005) report only half of the children in schools in the United States have two married, biological, heterosexual parents. Rimalower and Caty (2009) found “a growing number of gays and lesbians are pursuing their right to be parents, for which they will require corresponding social and legal support. This means an increased presence of these families in the school systems, requiring educators to be prepared to recognize, include and support them. As such, administrators, teachers, and school counselors must raise their awareness of the concerns facing gay couples with, or desiring of, children” (p. 18).
According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (FIFCFS, 2012), “The families that children grow up in and the social environment in which they live can have major effects on their well-being” (p. 4). The FIFCFS also states that a child’s development, as well as his or her opportunities and challenges, are affected by family composition, which can be dynamic. The family composition is greatly impacted by parental and economic resources. FIFCFS found that in 2011, 69% of children ages 0–17 lived with two parents (65% with two married parents), 27% with one parent, and 4% with no parents.

The times have changed and so have the definitions of a family and the living situations of children. Many children are living with grandparents, great-grandparents, or step-grandparents. Over half of children reported living with neither parent are reported living with a grandparent (FIFCFS, 2012). Cohabitation has also become a popular option for those parents who are unmarried or divorced. Seven percent of all children 0–17 lived with a parent who was in a cohabitating union. A cohabitating union could include one parent and his/her cohabitating partner or two cohabitating partners of any gender. Another element of cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity has emerged with the growing number of children with a foreign-born parent. Since 1994, the percentage of children ages 0–17 with a foreign-born parent has risen from 15% to 23% in 2011 (FIFCFS). Adoption has also become increasingly popular.

Jeltova and Fish (2005) suggest: “There is now acknowledgement that parents may be biological, adoptive, step, or foster, that they may be single or in a couple, and that they may be married, divorced, widowed, remarried, or in a partnership, gay, straight, or transgender” (p. 18). With this acknowledgement of the diversity of parents and family structures has also come racial and ethnic equality. Biracial families and couples and multi-generational families are now much more widely accepted. The positive repercussions of diverse families and the acceptance of
those families are recognized by many researchers (Gilmore & Bell, 2006; Hampton, Rak, & Mumford, 1997; Storck & Cutler, 1977). According to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, an estimated 6 to 14 million children in the United States have gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender parents (GLSEN, 2003). Storck and Cutler state “The nuclear, two generational family has sometimes been regarded as a poor provider of the diversity considered ideal for the child’s developing of concepts both of the adult world and of his or her relationship with that world” (p. 293).

Theoretical Orientation

Now that the relevance of diverse family structures has been described, it is important to provide a theoretical base that supports this research. The theoretical orientation for this investigation focuses on the work of several researchers whose theories about the importance of the emotional response to literature ground this study. Researchers have noted the importance of the affective domain in the education of children. The Emotional Domain (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964), the Affective Domain (Dillner, 1974) and Assessing Affect (Reed, 1978) provide support for the present study.

The Emotional Domain

Most educators are familiar with Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains developed by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) added the affective domain, which is described as the emotional domain. This includes the way people handle feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes. The five major categories are as follows: receiving phenomena, responding to phenomena, valuing, organization, and internalizing values. The affective domain affects how children handle, respond to, and evaluate their own feelings and motivations. This affects their motivations and attitudes towards reading
and the literature they choose as well as how they handle their daily lives and the families from which they come.

**The Affective Domain**

When children are reading, it is important to consider not only the cognitive learning that occurs but also the affective domain. This domain is considered the emotional response to reading including the personal text-to-self connections and pleasure of reading. Dillner (1974) believes it is important for teachers to emphasize the affective domain of reading despite the difficulty of making it concrete and measurable. Dillner states, “the most important reading and thinking skills which teachers seek to develop, such as feelings about self and enjoyment of literature, are extremely difficult to put into quantitative terms, while the least important skills, such as recall of factual detail and identification of chronological order are easy to measure” (p. 627). Dillner discusses ways to incorporate objectives into the affective domain in a way that new reading teachers can understand and use. Dillner highlights the components of attending behavior, receiving behavior, valuing behavior, and evaluating behavior. The affective domain of reading is important to understand when determining how families are portrayed in books.

**Assessing Affect**

Affect is difficult to measure. Students often partake in affective responses to literature but it teachers do not always recognize or measure it. Reed (1978) describes a series of ways to assess and measure the affective growth in reading. The most commonly used tool to measure affective reading growth is the questionnaire (Reed). Students are aware they are answering the questions or filling in the inventory but this helps to show their attitudes towards reading. Reed points out that it is important to distinguish between leisure reading and reading for school. According to Reed, it is most effective to measure affective reading attitudes through reactive
and nonreactive measures. When measuring affect in reading, teachers can determine how their attitudes are developing towards the books they are reading.

The Impact of Children’s Literature

Now that the theoretical orientation of the study has been outlined, it is important to consider the impact that children’s literature involving diverse families has on young readers. According to Booker (2012) “Literature has always been an important aspect of teaching, and recently there has been an increased focus and attention to how picture books are used in the classroom” (p. iv). Booker (2012) also states that literature has a personal, social, cultural, and aesthetic value and has the possibility of providing enrichment. Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007) describe the relationship between children and literature to be one of many facets. According to Wolfenbarger and Sipe, “Picturebooks represent a unique visual and literary art form that engages young readers and older readers in many levels of learning and pleasure” (p. 273). Picture books are now used prevalently in the early childhood classroom to teach a variety of concepts (Booker, 2012). Books provide children with experiences they may not have in their daily lives. Children’s literature is a strong stimulus as it provides influence on a children’s development of attitudes as well as conceptual and social development (Storck & Cutler, 1977). According to Mendoza and Reese (2001), “In general, children's literature is said to provide characters and events with which children can identify and through which they can consider their own actions, beliefs, and emotions” (p. 3).

Young readers can use literature as a “mirror” to reflect their own lives as well as a “window” to view the lives of others (Sciurba, 2011). This mirror and window analogy serves as a way to understand how children interact with the characters in the text. For this study, it was important to distinguish the importance and benefits of children viewing their own families in the
text as well as the benefits of viewing diverse families unlike their own in the text. According to Lowery and Sabis-Burns (2007) students can benefit from learning about culture in two ways. Students could benefit by learning to appreciate their own culture as well as the culture of others. Lowery and Sabis-Burns believe:

When students encounter texts that feature characters with which they can connect, they see how others are like them and how literature can play a role in their lives. On the other hand, when students do not encounter characters like themselves, literature is more likely to be frustrating rather than pleasurable. (p. 51)

_The Benefits of Seeing Themselves in the Literature_

Allowing students to see themselves illustrated in the text provides motivation as well as learning. Steiner, Nash, and Chase (2008) found that one benefit of providing multicultural text education was that it allowed children to see themselves in the literature. For children who are a part of diverse families, literature can provide a support system for times of change and uncertainty. Gilmore and Bell (2006) found that seeing themselves in the literature is crucial for children from diverse family structures. Bracken, Wigoutoff and Baker (1981) suggest, “Literature can often play a useful role by providing fictional counterparts who are experiencing similar crises” (p. 28). For children whose families prevalently exist in society but are not considered the norm, it can be difficult to navigate. Characters in books with similar struggles can help guide these children in understanding their situations and finding comfort. Gillespie, Powell, Swearingen and Clements (1994) found that children need stories about families and situations to which they can relate. Finding these sympathetic characters and situations provide acceptance to children who are struggling to find it.
Children seek out things to which they can relate. Children tend to enjoy artwork because they can relate to them and find in them something they can associate with themselves (DeSantis & Housen, 2009). Being drawn to artwork because of a personal connection is also found in the way children are drawn to book covers. Danko-McGhee and Slutsky (2011) found that children are drawn to picture books due to their colorful covers as well as the images represented on them. Children searched for books with something happening on the cover that was of interest to them. They looked for characters on the cover they could connect with.

According to Sciurba (2011), advocates like W. E. B. DuBois stress that seeing themselves in the text is especially important for children in underrepresented groups. Sciurba also states that visibility of characters like themselves fosters positive psychological development in children in underrepresented groups. Sciurba conducted a study that consisted of semi-structured interviews with groups of boys to understand their ability to relate to the text. According to Sciurba:

Today, however, the importance of visibility is conflated with the importance of being able to ‘connect’ with or ‘relate’ to texts; in other words, the essentialist presumption is that ‘seeing’ one’s cultural (understood as racial or ethnic) group represented in a given text will enable the reader to identify and engage with the material. (p. 1)

Sciurba found that the textual connection is not simply a connection or non-connection relationship. It is described as “a complex negotiation determined at once by the reader’s personal history and identity, as well as his very understanding of what it means to “see” himself in a story” (p. 2).

Sciurba (2011) dissected the interviewed boys’ distinctions between literature being a “mirror” of one’s life as well as a “window” to other’s lives. Sciurba also pointed out an
important consideration when assessing the visibility of underrepresented groups in literature. Sciurba notes the importance of visibility in literary equity, but recognized that not all readers of a particular group will see themselves equally. Sciurba also states, “… the extent to which culture factors into a child’s ability to identify with or relate to a given text has not sufficiently been explored, nor has it taken into consideration the complex and performative nature of the term ‘culture’ itself. Within multicultural discourse, children’s reading connections are often reduced to presumptions related to a narrow understanding of ‘culture’” (p. 3). Sciurba’s study shows that even within an underrepresented group, the interest in a text where they “see themselves” can be varied.

*The Benefits of Exposure to Diverse Families*

For children who are not a part of a diverse family structure, books can be a way to expose them to families that are unlike their own in a positive manner. A more important, overarching lesson to be learned from books showcasing other family structures is to learn that other people have different values and beliefs. Providing diverse family literature will allow adults to safely and practically discuss serious issues regarding families (Leland & Harste, 1999). Allen, Allen and Sigler (1993) write, “Picture books provide young children with an exposure to world cultures and mores that is particularly influential because the books are used before many other influences are present in a child’s life” (p. 72). Children’s literature communicates society’s expectations, overt and covert values, and assumptions of appropriate behavior (Saracho & Spodek, 2009). Saracho and Spodek find value in the use of picture books to teach diversity; “Children’s literature offers a medium to teach children cultural values by representing the broad range of diversity in a multicultural society” (p. 401).

Bringing in literature that reflects diverse families creates a climate of learning that is
crucial for all children. Emphasizing diverse family education transmits the message that all
children should experience diverse families whether or not they are a part of them. Hampton,
Rak, and Mumford (1997) stressed the importance of including literature about diverse families
in the curriculum to stimulate identification, motivation, and appreciation for young learners.
Hampton, Rak, and Mumford found that in urban schools at least 30% of students lived with an
adult other than a biological parent. The adults with whom the children were living included
grandparents, foster parents, and gay and lesbian couples. Hampton, Rak and Mumford explain
that children should be exposed to diverse family structures in literature because when they are,
they are able to see the diversity of families. Not only are they able to recognize diverse
families, but also children from diverse families are able to identify with the context and
“witness themselves” in it. Hampton, Rak and Mumford (1997) state that this witnessing of self
in the text boosts students’ self-esteem, self-confidence, and determination while showing all of
the students exposed that these diverse families are valuable.

When adults suggest literature to children, they should be sensitive to include a variety of
alternative family structures. By including diverse family literature in the classroom, curriculum,
and household, adults can help children express their concerns (Gilmore & Bell). Gilmore and
Bell believe adults can help children realize that they are not alone and that other children have
alternative families. Gilmore and Bell discuss the necessity of parents and teachers providing
diverse family structure literature as a means for providing help to those students feeling as
outcasts as well as to educate other children of that type of family structure. They note that there
are many quality children’s books that address alternative families and that all children can
appreciate quality literature. After listing and annotating books about a variety of different
family structures, Gilmore and Bell conclude that there are a variety of fiction and non-fiction
books that adults should be providing to children for reading. These researchers advocate reading these books aloud, suggesting or assigning them to children to read, or simply proving access to these books. Gilmore and Bell “want children to understand that no particular family structure is guaranteed success, nor is it doomed to failure. [They] also want children to realize that no matter what the structure of the family is on the outside, there are many possibilities for happiness on the inside” (p. 294). Halgunseth (2009) argued that teachers should be incorporating activities into the curriculum that teach about the cultural practices and traditions of all children and families.

However, not all books and teachers provide students with these positive, diverse experiences. Turner-Vorbeck (2005) describes the notion of reading about family and discussing families to be something that offers all students a degree of ownership. However, despite their personal experiences of family, children are not always granted the ability to define and take ownership in their version of “family.” Rather, “they are asked to deconstruct narrow societal definitions of what constitutes a family, they begin a journey that often leads to discomfort, resistance, and challenges to what is defined as a normal and valued family in our society” (p. 6).

Picture books hold great power in developing gender roles as they provide prolonged and repeated exposure to parenting techniques (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005). Anderson and Hamilton add, “A risk of stereotypical portrayals is that they may socialize children and parents at important periods in their development, when parents identify their role in the spectrum from affectionate caregiver to deadbeat absentee, and when children form their expectations of their parents” (p. 150).
Overall, children can benefit from using literature both as a mirror to reflect into their own lives and families and a window to peer into the lives and families of others unlike themselves.

Attitudes, Motivations, and Interests

To determine what books children choose, it is important to understand their attitudes, motivations, and interests towards reading.

Attitudes

Because children selected the books analyzed in this study, it is important to understand their attitudes towards reading. According to Alexander and Filler (1976), children’s attitudes about reading are not simply black or white but fall along a continuum. Alexander and Filler proposed a definition for reading attitude as “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (p. 1). Since 1976, researchers have considered readers’ attitudes to fall somewhere on a continuum, rather than on a discrete scale.

A distinction can be made between reading done for pleasure and reading done because it is assigned in school. McKenna and Kear (1990) conducted a study to understand children’s feelings towards academic reading and leisure reading. They added the discrepancy of academic and leisure reading because they found that many students were avid readers outside of academics but fell short when it came to nonfiction text. As predicted, they found that students showed a distinction in their attitudes toward reading for school and reading for recreation.

Reading attitudes are acquired through a complex social, emotional, and cognitive process. McKenna (1994) synthesized the works of many other researchers to create the McKenna model of reading attitude acquisition that would consider how attitudes are acquired and also how they develop throughout early childhood. McKenna included the social structure
and environment as factors in children’s reading attitudes. McKenna also included the basis of decoding subprocesses, cognitive state, and text representation in the interaction with the book as parts of reading attitude acquisition. Including the metacognitive state, McKenna linked students’ awareness of their learning and reading to their decision to read or continue reading and their beliefs about the outcomes of reading. McKenna not only included the beliefs about the outcomes of reading but also the beliefs children hold about the expectations of others. McKenna links the conforming to expectations with the subjective norms to which the child is exposed. According to McKenna, reading attitudes are contingent on strength of attitude, personal purposes for reading, and importance ascribed to specific reading activity being considered.

Then in 1995, McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth conducted a national survey of children’s attitudes towards reading. The study included 18,185 children in the U. S. grades first through sixth. The students responded to a rating scale using child-friendly pictures. The questions were based on the two dimensions of academic reading and recreational reading. One of the findings of the study was that recreational and academic reading attitudes are relatively positive in first grade and taper off to relatively indifferent by sixth grade. The study also found that students with low ability to read had a negative attitude towards recreational reading. However, despite reading ability, there was a negative trend for academic reading. McKenna et al. also found that girls have more positive reading attitudes at all grade levels than boys. Ethnicity was also found to have almost no impact in recreational or academic reading attitudes.

Overall, reading attitude plays a large role in children’s beliefs and feelings about books and whether they read for academic or recreational purposes (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Reading attitudes can help researchers to understand how children feel about certain types of reading
Another important factor of reading among early childhood students is motivation. It is important to understand what factors are inspiring children to read.

**Motivation**

Understanding what motivates students to read is important to consider when assessing books chosen by students. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) devised an engagement model of reading comprehension development. This model was based on the framework that reading comprehension develops from engaged reading. According to Guthrie and Wigfield, engaged reading is motivated, strategic, knowledge driven, and socially interactive. The source of reading motivation can come from many outlets. According to Guthrie et al., reading motivation includes motivation constructs, which are as follows: interest, perceived control, collaboration, involvement, and efficacy. In addition to motivation constructs, Guthrie et al. expanded and synthesized other research to include “text genres, specific versus general contexts, and the self-versus other evidence sources about motivation” (p. 1).

**Interests**

Many researchers believe that if children learn best when they are interested, they will also read best when they are interested (Gardner 1992; Guthrie et al. 2000; Sciurba 2011). Dewey (1913) found that children learn best when they are interested in what they are learning or reading. According to Dewey (1913):

The pressure of poverty does not seem to be so great an influence on the elimination of pupils as that attitude of child and parent, which doubts the worth of further schooling. And we find that many children, whom we have considered backward or perverse, are merely bored by the unappealing tasks and formalities of school life. The major
difficulty with our schools is that they have not adequately enlisted the interests and energies of children in schoolwork. Good teaching, the teaching of the future, will make school life vital to youth. In so doing it will not lose sight of the demands and needs of an adult society; it will serve them better in that it will have a fuller cooperation of the children. (p. vi)

Schraw and Lehman (2001) claim there are two types of interest as originally defined by Dewey - personal interests and situational interest:

*Personal interest* is characterized by intrinsic desire to understand a particular topic that persists over time. It is a cognitive and affective quality that individuals carry with them from place to place. In contrast, *situational interest* is assumed to be transitory, environmentally activated, and context-specific. It is a kind of spontaneous interest that appears to fade as rapidly as it emerges, and is almost always place-specific. Researchers agree that personal and situational interest affect learning in a variety of ways, although they may do so quite differently. (p. 24)

Literature to peek students’ interests could be presented as a whole class. This allows for more student exposure to literature. Hall and Williams (2010) studied five first grade teachers in an urban setting who read aloud Caldecott Award-winning books to their classrooms of diverse students. Hall and Williams found that children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds who are considered at risk for reading difficulties could enjoy and comprehend sophisticated picture books in whole-class settings. Part of what interests children in the books they read is also described as “seeing themselves” in the text described earlier in this chapter.
Historical

It is important to examine the historical research that has taken place in regards to this investigation. The trends of the past 20 years have been to describe whether current family structures have been included in children’s literature. It has also been prevalent to analyze children’s literature for the way that different groups of people and different families have been portrayed in children’s literature.

*Gender Roles in Children’s Literature*

Gender roles play a significant part in overall parental roles and family unit representation in literature. Trepanier-Street and Romatoski (1999) conducted a study of children’s literature for gender role perceptions. They noted previous research conducted on gender stereotyping in children’s literature, gender roles in occupations in children’s literature, and how children’s literature could be used in the classroom to influence children’s gender attitudes. The results of their study showed that book-related activities and books were a valuable tool in influencing children’s gender attitudes. However, they noted that the careful selection of these books was used to positively impact the student’s opinions of those occupations. Although the children’s attitudes towards genders of occupations was still stereotypic after the reading of said books, their view on occupational roles of men and women become more flexible after reading and listening to the books. Overall, when books were selected with consideration to the presentation of gender roles, preschoolers exposed to the books exhibited a decrease in stereotypic gender attitudes.

Trepanier-Street and Romatoski (1999) found:

Because young children are in the process of developing their gender schemas, it seems that children’s thinking is particularly amenable to environmental influences. It is critical
then for teachers, caregivers, and other school personnel develop programs and utilize curricular activities that will encourage a more gender-equitable view of the world (p. 159).

According to Trepanier-Street and Romatoski, it is, therefore, important to expose children to non-stereotypic models. A valuable resource of children’s literature and related activities can therefore be used as a “powerful medium for influencing children’s gender attitudes” (p. 159).

This research supports the notion that literature can be used to teach children about gender roles in and out of familial roles.

Hurst (1981) also considered the way characters were presented in children’s literature. Hurst studied Caldecott Medal winners and 20 other books for sexist, racist, and ageist stereotypes. Hurst found that the books in the study portrayed negative images of women and the elderly. This showed that not all books could be used to expose children to positive images of diverse families.

**Representation of Parental Roles**

The portrayal of parents in children’s literature can influence the identity development of young children. According to DeWitt (2005) literature provides examples of parental roles during the early years of socialization, when children are beginning to identify with the roles of others. When parental role portrayals are evident in literature, children can identify with expectations of possible future roles. DeWitt suggests:

If, as identity theory suggests, children can develop their identities by adopting observed behaviors of others, then examining those portrayals that children are often exposed to is essential. Therefore, acknowledging parental role performances in children’s media, particularly if they are consistently absent, negative, stereotypical, or limited in scope and opportunity, is warranted. (p.123)
Representations in literature not only reflect the people and families portrayed in them, but also create future understanding for readers. Esposito (2009) argued that representations should therefore be complex to help portray the many and diverse experiences of families and people. Esposito found that because children live in a world of social oppressions like homophobia and racism, they should be exposed to diverse families, especially same sex parent families in the books they read. Esposito explains, “People use popular culture texts to make sense of their worlds and to become familiar with those who they may not have personal experience with. This is especially true of children” (p. 77). Because the representation of race, class, gender and sexuality within mainstream popular culture includes stereotypes and generalizations, it is even more important for families to be represented in a number of ways that represent reality. What children learn about same sex parent families is constructed by how it is represented in texts. Esposito found that the portrayal of identities is especially true for those populations who fall outside of the dominant culture.

Families with grandparents as parents or one grandparent as the parent also need books to represent their family structure. Mavrogenes (1982) found that “Books about grandparents- like grandparents themselves- can affect children’s lives by broadening their horizons, enriching their environments, and giving them a sense of security in the midst of a fast-paced changing world” (p. 900). Mavrogenes found that when students are presented with positive literature regarding grandparents as parents, they develop a positive opinion about grandparents that can do nothing but help them.

Children’s Definition of Families

Understanding how children define a family is important when considering how they will respond to families in literature. Piaget (as cited in Borduin, Mann & Cone, 1989) once
conducted a study on how young children define family. Piaget interviewed 30 young boys ages 7 to 10 years and asked them to define a family. Piaget found that the older the children, the less people they recognized as being included in the family. According to Piaget (as cited in Borduin, Mann & Cone, 1989):

He found that the youngest children included only persons living in the same home in their definition, often mentioning the house or the family name, but not a genetic (i.e., biological) relationship. Older children recognized the importance of biological relationships but only included relatives living in or near the home. The oldest children included all biological relatives as family, regardless of the location of the relative's residence. (p. 34)

This study shows that students began to develop stricter understandings of families and roles as they aged. This could be effected by societal perspectives as well as what they have been taught in school. Due to the age of this study, it is likely that these students did not receive diverse family instruction and therefore began to loose their acceptance of what was considered a family as they aged.

*Multicultural Children’s Literature*

Children’s picture books are powerful tools to positively portray other races, cultures, and families. Multicultural children’s literature considers the racial/ cultural representation of characters in the text. Gillespie, Powell, Clements, and Swearingen (1994) conducted a content analysis to identify the ethnicity of characters in 73 Newberry Medal books and to analyze the representation of those characters’ ethnic groups. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the Newberry Award-winning books were suitable for a multicultural literature program. The first suggestion gleaned from the analysis was for teachers and librarians to read the books
and “determine whether the portrayal of characters is culturally conscious” (Gillespie, Powell, Clements, & Swearingen, p. 48). This assessment by teachers and librarians was suggested as some of the characters in the Newberry Medal books are portrayed in a stereotypical way. The second suggestion is that “educators should learn to recognize common forms of instructional and curricular racism or bias” (Gillespie, Powell, Clements, & Swearingen, p. 48). Third, the researchers found that teachers should not use a single book to convey the diversity of an entire ethnic or cultural group but should provide multiple exposures to decrease generalizations. Another suggestion provided by the researchers is for teachers and librarians to consider the way they teach diversity. Gillespie, Powell, Clements, and Swearingen suggest using the Transformation approach and the Decision-Making and Social Action approach. The final point made in the research suggestions is that children should be taught to find the overwhelming similarities in humans and recognize that cultural differences are still accommodating the same human needs.

According the Smith (1979) children’s literature is a useful tool in providing children with multicultural learning opportunities. Children can find characters “with whom they can identify and whose behaviors they may try to emulate. Children pick up clues- intentionally portrayed or subtly suggested- on how they are expected to behave and who they are expected to become” (p. 74). Smith warns that some of children’s greatest achievements in openness or deepest prejudices can come from their experiences with picture books. Because of these possibilities, it is important to provide books that present positive portrayals of all races, genders, and cultures. Books that are unbiased toward other cultures provide students with a more tolerant and accepting view of others.
Choosing Literature to Help Children Cope

Literature can be used as a tool to help students who are struggling with issues involving their families. Roberts and Crawford (2008) discuss that children need tangible support to face these challenges that range from small stressors to life-altering crises. Roberts and Crawford (2008) explain, “A parent’s unemployment, military deployment, or incarceration are all situations affecting daily and long-term stress levels. Divorce, remarriage, and the illness or death of a loved one have a potentially life-changing impact on every member of the family” (p. 1). Even happy events such as a new sibling being born or adopted can leave children with stress and a need to cope with change. Roberts and Crawford suggest how to choose literature to help cope with change. To effectively choose and use literature to help children cope, Roberts and Crawford suggest:

1. Choose books that are well written and tell a good story in their own right.
2. Be sensitive to children’s circumstances and personalities when selecting books for the classroom.
3. Provide opportunities for different responses to literature.
4. Honor children’s unique responses to stories (p. 5).

When choosing books that are appropriate to help children cope, children prefer authentic literature with engaging stories, relatable characters, honest stories, and positive solutions to real problems. Selecting books that represent the children in classrooms requires knowledge and understanding of the students. Selecting books that children will respond to is a task but a worthwhile one. Allowing for students to respond to literature in a variety of ways provides a more likely avenue for them to learn and understand diverse families. Understanding the diversity of children’s families is important but preparing for the diversity in their response
to literature is crucial. Roberts and Crawford suggest to “respect readers’ requests for a particular book or for refusing an invitation to read a particular book” (2008, p. 5). Overall, Roberts and Crawford (2008) suggest criteria for selecting books to allow children to cope that can be applied to choosing diverse family literature.

The Selection of Children’s Choices

In 1974, The Children’s Choices Project was created as a collaboration effort between the International Reading Association (IRA) and The Children’s Book Council (CBC) to allow approximately 10,000 students from around the United States to vote on their favorite books. Each year, the IRA and the CBC cosponsor the project to allow children to read newly published children’s trade books and vote on 100 books of their choosing. Each year, publishers donate hundreds of book titles to be read and evaluated. Submitted books to the Children’s Choices Program with the highest votes are selected to win the Book of the Year. The Children’s Choice Award Books are the only nationally chosen book award selected by children. The IRA and CBC Fact Sheet (2012) lists three main goals for the Children’s Choices books:

1. Provide young readers with an opportunity to voice their opinions about the books written for them.

2. Develop an annual annotated reading list of new books that young readers enjoy reading.

3. Assist teachers, librarians, booksellers, parents, and others find books that will encourage young readers to read more (p. 1).

The IRA considers numerous factors when deciding on team leaders to represent the population of children in the nation. Team leaders are IRA-affiliated educators that volunteer to help with the decision making process. “The IRA considers numerous factors in selection,
such as geographical representation, number of students, type of population, knowledge of children and young adult literature, leadership and professional involvement, attendance at IRA conventions, and interest from and support of selected schools” (IRA Children’s Choices, 2012, p. 1). Five teams of children are then selected from around the country based on their areas. Throughout the year, the team leaders work with the teams of children to incorporate the books into classrooms. Children’s Choices team leaders are selected from five areas of the United States as follows:

Area 1: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

Area 2: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Area 3: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas

Area 4 Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming

Area 5: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

Since its inception, the Children’s Choices books have been “a trusted source of book recommendations used by teachers, librarians, parents– and children themselves” (IRA Children’s Choices 2012). The list is announced at the IRA Annual Convention in the spring and an annotated list of the books appears online and in the October issue of The Reading
Teacher. These books are designed for use by teachers, librarians, administrators, principals, parents, grandparents, caregivers, and families.

Summary

This chapter outlined the current standing on the prevalence and definition of modern families. The theoretical orientation of the research including the impact of children’s literature, affective domain of reading, students’ attitudes, motivations, and interests were described. This chapter also reviewed the important historical research that has been done prior to this investigation.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

As the modern family has evolved over the past 60 years, several studies have examined the types of families portrayed in books and how they are portrayed. However, many of these studies have analyzed award-winning books chosen by adults. Teachers and librarians have a responsibility to choose books that will represent their students. Books that allow students to see themselves in the text will also motivate them to read (Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007). This content analysis was designed to answer the following research question: Based on the illustrations and the text, how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books from 2007 to 2012? Chapter III describes the methods and procedures used to conduct this investigation.

Methods

Research Methods

The research design used for the examination was a content analysis. Weber (1990) defines a content analysis as “a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (p. 9). According to Parsons and Colabucci (2008), a content analysis is a method that allows the researcher to compare, contrast, and categorize data in hopes of finding patterns. A mixed method approach to data analysis was used. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. There was a heavier focus on the quantitative data in the numbers of books and percentages found in each category of the instrumentation.

Various strategies have been identified for conducting a content analysis. This investigation used a combination of ideas suggested by Charles (1998) and Martinez and Harmon (2012). Charles recommended that the first step in conducting a content analysis was determining the objectives. The objective in this study was to acquire information about the
portrayal of families in the Children’s Choices books, as identified in the research question. Charles also identified two types of content analysis: manifest content (visible text and picture analysis) and latent content (underlying meaning of what is shown in the text or pictures). This study used both manifest and latent content analysis. Coding strategies were used to complete the analysis.

After Charles’ notions (1998) were used to start the investigation, strategies suggested by Martinez and Harmon (2012) were used to collect the data. Martinez and Harmon argue that making inferences is crucial to a content analysis and therefore “to ensure that inferences are both systematic and informed, researchers must engage in close reading of textual materials and adhere to the standards of intersubjectivity” (p. 326). They developed a three-step categorization system for analyzing picture/text relationships, which was modified for this investigation. The three steps included: a book summary and picture walk, a page-by-page analysis, and, finally, categorization of the books.

The first step, a book summary and a picture walk, was used to determine whether the books were appropriate for the study. The second step was a page-by-page analysis of picture and text to identify familial relationships, collect evidence of the family relationship identified in the text and pictures, and to record quotes or pictures that confirmed the analysis. The third step was an overall categorization of the family relationships as identified through the pictures and the text (Martinez & Harmon, 2012).

In the third step of overall categorization of picture/text relationships, the cultural/racial representation was categorized based on Bishop’s (1992) three categories of multicultural books. Bishop (1992) defined these classifications by the representation of people of color and the degree of cultural understanding they provide. The first category, culturally neutral, portrays
characters of color but afford no content that is cultural. These books show pictures of characters of color but do not provide text or picture clues that show culture. The second category, culturally generic books, portray characters of a cultural group or of color but do not provide further information. Culturally specific books portray characters of color and define the main characters as members of a particular cultural group. These books define the name, location, and potential language of the cultural group portrayed in the characters of color. Because of the desire to assess diversity of families, each of Bishop’s category was extended to include both culture and race: cultural/racially neutral, culturally/racially generic, and culturally/racially specific. A fourth categorization was created for the books in this study. Because there were books in which no characters of color were portrayed, they could not be classified as culturally/racially neutral. Therefore, the category of “no characters of color” was added to the coding.

Materials

The Children’s Choices books were collected searching the Bowling Green State University Library database. Those books not found in the Bowling Green State University Library database were located in OHIO Link from other library databases in Northwest Ohio. From the 362 books in the Young Readers and Early Readers categories from the Children’s Choices books, a total of 45 books were identified as appropriate for the study. These books were Children’s Choices award-winning books from the years 2007 through 2012 that included human characters. Of the selected 45 books, 31 of these books were discarded from the study because they did not include a family unit or were not picture books. Therefore, 14 books were used to complete this content analysis (see Appendix A).
Instrumentation

To analyze the books in this investigation, the researcher used a detailed data sheet for each book to record data about the books (see Appendix B). On each data sheet, the title of the book along with the author and year of publication were recorded. Next, the category of the book (Young Reader, Early Reader) was recorded as determined by the Children’s Choice awards. The researcher then completed the page-by-page analysis of the books to determine familial relationships. These familial relationships were recorded using terminology like mother, father, sister, brother, and grandmother. Evidence of these familial relationships was recorded. Page numbers of evidence found in the text was recorded on the data sheet and any relevant quotations were recorded. Page numbers of evidence found in the pictures were recorded on the data sheet. Using the chart as a guide, the page-by-page analysis was completed.

Procedures

Specific steps were taken to analyze the Children’s Choice Award-winning books for their content. The first step in the process was to collect all of the books necessary for analysis. All of the books chosen in the Children’s Choice Project from 2007 to 2012 were first located. Then, a book summary and a picture walk were used to determine whether the books were appropriate for the study. Of the Children’s Choices books from 2007 through 2012, only picture books portraying families with human characters were used in the study. The book summaries found in the annotated list from the IRA’s Children’s Choices website were also used to determine whether books were eliminated at this step of analysis. Next, a picture walk was used to determine whether the book was a picture book. If the book was confirmed as a picture book (the illustrations were as important as the text), it was then analyzed for appearance of
family units. During this picture walk, the books with groups of characters in the pictures that appeared as a family unit were noted.

Next, a page-by-page analysis of picture and text to identify familial relationships, collect evidence of the family relationship identified in the text and pictures, and to record quotes or pictures that confirmed the analysis. After the analysis, an overall categorization of the family relationships as identified through the pictures and the text (Martinez & Harmon, 2012). In this step, categorizations were made of the family units and cultural representation. The family units were categorized by the familial relationships. For example, if mother, father, son, and daughter familial relationships were evident in the text and pictures, the family unit would be categorized as a two-parent family based on the definition. The importance of the family unit to the overall plot was categorized. The family unit was also categorized as being the main part of the plot or simply mentioned in the text.

Finally, the cultural representation was categorized based on Bishop’s (1992) three categories of multicultural books: culturally/racially neutral, culturally/racially generic, culturally/racially specific. A fourth categorization was created for the books in this study. Because there were books in which no characters of color were portrayed, they could not be classified as culturally neutral. Therefore, the category of “no characters of color” was added to the coding.

Data Collection

Once the 14 books were identified, the data collection process began. Using the data chart developed for this investigation (see Appendix B), books were examined. A page-by-page analysis of picture and text to identify familial relationships, collect evidence of the family relationship identified in the text and pictures, and to record quotes or pictures that confirmed the
analysis. The family units were categorized by the familial relationships (see Appendix C). For example, if mother, father, son, and daughter familial relationships were evident in the text and pictures, the family unit would be categorized as a two-parent family based on the definition. The importance of the family unit to the overall plot was categorized. The family unit was also categorized as being the main part of the plot or simply mentioned in the text (see Appendix D).

In another step, the cultural representation was categorized based on Bishop’s (1992): culturally/racially neutral, culturally/racially generic, and culturally/racially specific. An additional category, no characters of color was added to the coding (see Appendix E). After all of the data were collected on the individual data sheets, the analysis of the overall findings from all of the 14 books was completed.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Percents and frequency counts were used to describe the appearance of particular types of families, the diverse nature of the families, and the role of families in the plot. Additionally, qualitative data were used to verify the conclusions drawn from the investigation (See Appendix F).

Summary

This investigation examined the portrayal of different family structures in the IRA and CBC’s Children’s Choice Award books from 2007 to 2012. The books, which met criteria after the first step of book summary and picture walk, were analyzed page-by-page for familial relationships. After page-by-page analysis was completed, overall data were categorized for role of family in plot, family unit, and cultural representation. After data collection, an analysis of the results was completed to determine the portrayal of human families in the Children’s Choice books.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The goal of this investigation was to examine the portrayal of human families in the IRA and CBC Children’s Choices books from 2007 through 2012. The study was designed to answer the research question: Based on the illustrations and the text, how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books chosen from 2007 to 2012. The first step in the study was to review the 362 books in the Young Readers and Early Readers categories from the Children’s Choices books to include only the books with human characters. A total of 45 books were selected for an initial picture walk to determine whether the books were picture books including familial relationships and the presence of a family unit. Of the selected 45 books, 31 of these books were discarded from the study because they did not include a family unit or were not picture books. Therefore, 14 books were used to complete this content analysis using the data collection sheet (see Appendix A). The results of the content analysis are described in this chapter.

Data Analysis

A content analysis was completed for each of the 14 books deemed relevant for use in the study. The content analysis was based on the familial relationships, family units, family unit role in plot and cultural representation. The familial relationships included the following labels: father, mother, daughter, son, sister, brother, grandmother, granddaughter, grandson, aunt, niece, and nephew. The family units considered for this investigation were as follows: two-parent family, one-parent family mother-led or father-led, grandparent as parent family, blended family, same-sex parent family, extended family, and cooperative family. The role of family unit in plot was categorized as either family was the main plot or the family unit was simply mentioned in the text. Cultural representation was categorized as follows: culturally neutral, culturally
generic, culturally specific, or no characters of color. The next sections will describe the results for family unit, the role of the family unit in the plot, and the cultural representation.

**Family Units**

Familial relationships found in the text and pictures were used to determine overall family unit. Because the presence of a family unit was required for the book to be included in the investigation, all books included a categorized family unit. No books presented more than one family unit; therefore, 14 family units were identified. Eight books (57.14%) contained a two-parent family, while five books contained one-parent families (35.72%). One book contained a family with a grandparent as a parent (7.14%). Figure 1 depicts the number of books that included each type of family unit. According to this study, only four types of family units were present in the children’s books (see Appendix C).

![Family Units Represented](chart.png)

**Figure 1.** Family Units Portrayed in Children’s Choices Books

The books with two-parent family units were as follows: *Not Afraid of Dogs* (Pitzer, 2006), *Crow Call* (Lowry, 2009), *Sheila Says We’re Weird* (Smalley, 2011), *How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister* (Lloyd-Jones & Heap 2006), *Fancy Nancy* (O’Connor, 2006), *Born Yesterday* (Solheim, 2010), *The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School* (Anderson, 2009),
and *You Can’t Go to School Naked* (Billstrom, 2008). In these books, families were portrayed in many different ways. In *Crow Call*, Lowry portrayed Liz building a relationship with her father who had just returned from war. Liz said, “I practice his name to myself, whispering it under my breath. Daddy. Daddy. Saying it feels like new. The war has lasted so long. He has been gone so long” (Lowry, p. 4). Although the father was being introduced back into the family’s lives, the father-daughter relationship is one of respect, trust, and absence of gender expectations. The family unit in *The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School* was also portrayed in a positive manner. Anderson portrayed Zoe’s parents as accepting of her wild red hair even when it landed her in the principal’s office. Zoe said, "Mom and Dad Fleefenbacher threw out the brushes and combs. The hair of their Zoe was wild and beautiful" (Anderson, p. 5). Overall, two-parent families were portrayed as functional, loving, and caring for one another.

Figure 1 also shows that the next most frequently represented family unit was the one-parent family. In total, five books portrayed one-parent families led by mothers or fathers.

Three books were found to portray one-parent families led by mothers. The books with one-parent families are as follows: *That’s Not Right* (Durant & McEwen, 2004), *The Richest Poor Kid* (Sommer, 2007), and *Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I Don’t)* (Bottner, 2010). In these stories, mother-children relationships were recognized and there was an absence of a father in the family unit. The researcher was left assuming that the family unit was a one-parent mother-led family due to the absence of a father in the text or pictures in two books (Bottner; Durant & McEwen). In *That’s Not Right*, Ellie read the story she wrote to her mother and her brother. No father is present in any of the pictures or text (Durant & McEwen). In *Miss Brooks Loves Books*, Bottner portrayed a first grade girl with a mother depicted as an artist. In the story, the librarian sent home books for the girl to choose from and her mother takes the time to help her daughter
select a book and create a costume for school. Although the authors of these books may not have meant these families to be perceived as one-parent mother-led families, they are portrayed as families who care about the education of their children. In one story, the absence of the father was explained. Sommer explained the absence of the father when Randy’s sister informed him that his father died when he was three years old. Randy said, ‘‘Now Mom as to work to support us. Mom barely makes enough money to pay for rent and food, so there’s never any money left for new things.’ Then Mom walked in and gave Randy a big hug. Mom always gave her children lots and lots of love” (Sommer, p. 7). Sommer portrayed the family as working together, playing together, and spending time together in a positive light despite the hardships faced by their family.

Two books were categorized as portraying a one-parent family unit led by a father. Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book and Play Ball Jackie! were the titles including one-parent families led by a father. In Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book, Child (2005) described Charlie and Lola's dad taking them to the library. He is mentioned in the text but is not seen in the pictures. To readers who are unfamiliar with the text, it appears as if their family unit is a one-parent family. A mother is present in other books in the series. In all of the books, the children's parents and friend's parents are mentioned but never seen. The books have been turned into a popular children's television series. Although the father was not seen in the pictures, the underlying message was that he was willing to help his children go to the library to get books. In Play Ball Jackie! Krensky (2005) portrayed a young boy and his father at a baseball game watching Jackie Robinson. A mother was not present in the text or images; therefore, it is portrayed through the text and pictures that the father and son are a one-parent
family. These families were portrayed as participating in activities with one another and learning new things.

The least prevalent family unit found in one of the Children’s Choices books was a grandparent as parent family. In *The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness*, Thompson (2008) portrayed a grandson and grandmother who “live their lives on different planets” (p. 1). The grandmother was described as kind but very old. Thompson described George, the grandson, as living alone with his grandmother “and an empty place where his mother and father should have been” (p. 1). The grandmother allowed the grandson to adopt a dog. The dog provided a friendship for the grandson and brought happiness to the family unit. This story portrayed the grandparent as parent family as a complicated relationship that often involves an understanding of loss but one that involved caring for others and fun.

*The Role of the Family in the Plot*

The role of the family unit in the plot was categorized by whether the family was the central element of the story and the plot surrounded the family or whether the family was simply mentioned (see Appendix D). After categorizing the family unit and considering its effect on the story, the researcher determined the role of the family in the plot of the book. The data show that in nine books (64.29%), the notion of family was simply mentioned in the story or the plot, while in five books (35.71%), the family was involved in the main plot of the story. For example, a book in which the family was the main plot of the story was *How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister* (Lloyd-Jones & Heap, 2006). In this book, the primary plot surrounds the discussion of familial roles and relationships between the new baby in the family and her older sister. The primary plot is the discussion of families and family members. On the other hand, a book that simply mentioned the family unit but had a different central plot was *That’s Not Right*
(Durant & McEwen 2004). The plot of That’s Not Right centered on a young girl writing a story. Her mother and brother are presented in the pictures and the text but are simply mentioned along with the story describing her writing process.

Cultural/Racial Representation

The representation of culture/race in the Children’s Choices books also provided an important element of information in the overall portrayal of families. The books were categorized as culturally/racially neutral, culturally/racially generic, culturally/racially specific or no characters of color (see Appendix E). Because all books were given a cultural/racial categorization, all 14 books were included in the cultural/racial representation analysis. Of the 14 books, six books (42.86%) were found to be culturally/racially neutral; one book (7.14%) was found to be culturally/racially generic; one book (7.14%) was found to be culturally/racially specific and six books (42.86%) were found to portray no characters of color (see Figure 2).

![Cultural Representation](image)

Figure 2. Cultural/ Racial Representation of Characters

The six books deemed culturally/racially neutral were as follows: Sheila Says We’re Weird (Smalley, 2011), How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister (Lloyd-Jones & Heap, 2006), Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I Don’t) (Bottner, 2010), Born Yesterday (Solheim, 2010), The
Hair of Zoe Flefenbacher Goes to School (Anderson, 2009), and You Can’t Go to School Naked (Billstrom, 2008). In all of these books, characters of color were present in the pictures. Only in Sheila Says We’re Weird did the character of color appear as a main character a part of the family unit (Smalley). In all of the other books categorized as culturally/racially neutral, the character or characters of color were represented as other students in a classroom or neighbors.

The one book categorized as culturally/racially generic was Fancy Nancy (O’Connor, 2006). Culturally/racially generic texts were defined as including characters that speak a few words that are not English or discuss another culture by giving a name or a location. In the story, Nancy loved to speak French words and discussed the origins and meaning of the words she used. Although Nancy was not French, the book was categorized as culturally/racially generic because it included elements of other cultures/races as far as language. The book also included other characters of color as minor characters in the restaurant (O’Connor).

The only book categorized as culturally/racially specific was Play Ball Jackie! (Krensky, 2011). In this book, a young Italian boy and his father went to a baseball where Jackie Robinson was playing one of his first games in the Major League. Matty’s father discussed the feeling of coming from another culture, “I don’t care what color they are. Remember your grandfather came to America from Italy. Lots of people didn’t give him a chance, either. He looked strange to them” (p. 9). Matty decided that everyone including his grandfather and Jackie Robinson deserved a chance for a better life. Later, Matty encountered two White boys who were speaking negatively about Jackie Robinson and African Americans in baseball. Matty stood up for Jackie Robinson and made friends with an African American boy in line. Historical information on the culture/race of African Americans at the time was provided throughout the story.
Six books were found to portray no characters of color throughout the book. The books lacking characters of color were as follows: *The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness* (Thompson, 2008), *That’s Not Right* (Durant & McEwen, 2004), *Not Afraid of Dogs* (Pitzer, 2006), *Crow Call* (Lowry, 2009), *The Richest Poor Kid* (Sommer, 2007), and *Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book* (Child, 2005). In all of these books, no characters were found in the pictures or the text that suggest these characters were of color. All characters were presented as white or an unidentifiable race not of color.

**Discussion of Results**

The study was designed to answer the research question: Based on the illustrations and the text how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books chosen from 2007 to 2012?

According to this study, only four types of family units were present in the books (see Appendix C). Of the family units represented in the books, 57.14% contained a two-parent family; 35.72% contained a one-parent family; and 7.14% contained a grandparent as parent family. Two-parent family units appeared more often than any other family unit, making it the dominant family unit category. The types of families not found in any of the 14 Children’s Choices books were as follows: blended family, family with same sex partners, extended family, and cooperative family. Of the four types of family units represented in the books, all were portrayed in a positive light.

This study also found that 64.29% of the books simply mentioned family in the text or pictures. Only 35.71% of books were found to include the family unit as the primary component of the plot. This showed that more books chosen as Children’s Choices represented human families by mentioning them in the text or pictures rather than center the plot of the story on
them. The five books categorized as family unit centering as the main plot were also categorized as portraying a two-parent family unit.

Another finding of the study was that the most common cultural/racial representation was the same (42.86%) when analyzing culturally/racially neutral books and books having no characters of color. This means that the books were either without characters of color or only briefly included minor characters of color without including any cultural/racial content. Only one book was found to be culturally/racially generic by including non-English words and vague references to other cultures/races. Also, only one book was found to be culturally/racially specific by providing a rich view of a culture by including characters of color and describing their community and sense of belonging.

Summary

The objective of this analysis was to examine the portrayal of human families in the IRA and CBC Children’s Choices books from 2007 through 2012. The study was designed to answer the research question: Based on the illustrations and the text how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books chosen from 2007 to 2012?

According to this research study, only four types of family units were portrayed in the 14 Children’s Choices books collected and analyzed (see Appendix C). Of the books, 57.14% contained a two-parent family; 35.72% contained a one-parent family, and 7.14% contained a grandparent as parent family. According to this study, 64.29% of the books simply mentioned family in the text or pictures while 35.71% of books were found to include the family unit as the primary component of the plot. In terms of cultural/racial representation, 42.86% of the books
were culturally/racially neutral; 42.86% of the books had no characters of color; 7.14% of the books were culturally/racially generic, and 7.14% of books were culturally/racially specific.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this study was to examine the portrayal of human families in the IRA and CBC Children’s Choices books from 2007 through 2012. This investigation was designed to answer the research question: Based on the illustrations and the text how are human families portrayed in the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choices Books chosen from 2007 to 2012? This study employed a content analysis of the Children’s Choices Books from 2007 through 2012 examining for familial relationships, family units, family unit role in plot, and cultural/racial representation.

Summary

Classroom teachers and librarians use the Children’s Choice Award winning book lists to find quality books for children. Because literature available in classrooms and libraries is what students are exposed to most often, it is important for teachers and librarians to consider the books they make available. Providing books that represent their students and society as a whole is imperative to children’s perception of themselves, their families, and others.

This study investigated the 362 Children’s Choice Award books in the categories of Young Readers and Early Readers between 2007 and 2012. Books were first examined for the presence of human characters. All but 45 books were discarded from the study to include only books with human characters. Of the selected 45 books, 31 of these books were discarded from the study because they did not include a family unit or were not picture books. A total of 14 books were then used to complete this content analysis. The books were analyzed for familial relationships, family units, family unit role in plot and cultural/racial representation. Familial relationships (mother, father, son, daughter, etc.) were determined using text clues. Familial relationships found in the books included mother, father, son, daughter, grandmother, grandson,
aunt, and nephew relationships. Family units were determined using clues from the text and pictures after the entire book had been read. The family units used for categorization were as follows: two-parent family, one-parent family, blended family, same-sex parent family, extended family, cooperative family, and grandparent as parent family. Family role in plot was categorized as the family was a main part of plot or the family was simply mentioned. Cultural/racial representation was categorized as follows: culturally/racially neutral, culturally/racially generic, culturally/racially specific, or no characters of color.

The results of the investigation showed only four types of family units were present in the books. There were eight books that contained a two-parent family (57.14%); three books contained a one-parent family (35.72%), and one book contained a grandparent as parent family (7.14%). As evident, the two-parent family was the most prevalent family unit. Other types of families found in the United States population but not found in any of the 14 Children’s Choices books were as follows: blended family, two-parent, same sex family, extended family, and cooperative family. Of the four types of family units represented in the books, all were portrayed in a positive light.

This study also found that 64.29% of the books simply mentioned family in the text or pictures rather than having family as the main plot. This showed that more books chosen as Children’s Choices represented human families by mentioning them in the text or pictures rather than center the plot of the story on them. The five books categorized as family unit centering as the main plot were also categorized as portraying a two-parent family unit. This also showed that children were willing and motivated to read books whose plots were concentrated on families.
Another finding of the study was that there was a lack of diversity when examining the cultural/racial representation found in the books reviewed. The percent of books categorized as culturally/racial neutral and having no characters of color were equal at 42.86% each, while 7.14% of the books were culturally/racially generic, and 7.14% of books were culturally/racially specific. This means that the books were either without characters of color or only briefly included minor characters of color without including any cultural content.

Conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn from the results of the investigation. The first conclusion was the Children’s Choices books analyzed for content seemed to reflect the predominant family units in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), 59.9% of children in the U.S. are living with their married, biological or adoptive parents; 57.14% of the books contained a two-parent family. The U.S. Census Bureau also reports 23.6% of children live in one-parent mother-led families while 21.43% of the books analyzed contained a one-parent mother-led family. Thus, the two most frequently reported family types in the U.S. are also the two most frequently reported family types in the children’s choice books. In the U.S., 3.5% of children live in one-parent father-led families while 14.29% of the books contained a one-parent father-led family. Relative to the Census Bureau figures, one-parent father-led families were overrepresented. Similarly, the Census Bureau reports 2.2% of children live in grandparent as parent families while 7.14% books contained a grandparent as parent family (US Census Bureau). Although the representation of some of the family types mimic the U.S population, there is little diversity among the representation of family units found in the United States.
A second conclusion was little cultural/racial diversity exists among the families in the books reviewed. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reports that approximately 54% of American families are considered White-non Hispanic, while 46% would be considered families of color. An analysis of the books shows that approximately 85% of the books examined were either culturally/racial neutral or had no characters of color. Thus, it can be concluded that the books examined did not reflect the cultural diversity that exists within the U.S. Based on the Census data, half of families in the U.S. were not represented culturally in these books.

Another conclusion was that the family unit is not a desirable topic for reading in children’s books. Only 35.7% of the books had a family unit as the central plot of the story. Children were more likely to choose books in which human families are merely mentioned with the plot centered on another topic.

The final conclusion that seemed to emanate from this investigation was that the Children’s Choice Award-winning books demonstrated a lack of diversity where family structure, and family diversity are related. Booker (2012) found that pictures books were being used frequently in early childhood classrooms to teach a variety of concepts. One of these concepts is the diversity of families.

According to Lowery and Sabis-Burns (2007) students could benefit by learning to appreciate their own culture as well as the culture of others. For children who are not a part of a diverse family structure, books can be a way to portray these families in a positive light. Because children’s literature has a strong influence on a children’s development of attitudes as well as conceptual and social development (Storck & Cutler, 1977), it is important to consider the books children are provided. This is important because not all books and teachers provide students with these positive experiences to shape their attitudes and views of families. Turner-
Vorbeck (2005) suggests allowing students to define and take ownership in their version of a family rather than accept societal stereotypes of a family. Picture books also hold great power in helping children develop positive gender roles and expectations for their own potential future parenting (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005).

Recommendations

For Teachers and Librarians

It is important for teachers and librarians to consider the way families are portrayed in all of the books they provide, including the Children’s Choice awards. It is important that they provide a variety of books that explore various family units, so children see themselves represented in the literature made available for them to read. Teachers should not shy away from a book that teaches valuable academic content simply because it only features a two-parent family; however, they should be aware of the message they are sending, and attempt to select books that illustrate a variety of family structures.

The most important reason teachers should consider the books they provide to their students is to help them see the functionality of family units. Teachers and librarians should analyze the books they are offering for stereotypical portrayals of families and certainly negative portrayals of families. According to Anderson and Hamilton (2005) “A risk of stereotypical portrayals is that they may socialize children and parents at important periods in their development, when parents identify their role in the spectrum from affectionate caregiver to deadbeat absentee, and when children form their expectations of their parents” (p. 150). Teachers and librarians should not seek to present a certain family unit in a negative light. Because the positive outcomes of educating children about diverse families and promoting the acceptance of those families is recognized by many researchers (Gilmore & Bell, 2006;
Hampton, Rak, & Mumford, 1997; Storck & Cutler, 1977) it is important for teachers to provide instruction and literature accordingly.

While teachers and librarians may consider the Children’s Choices books as quality literature to motivate students, they may not study the possible effective educational uses for these books. If teachers are looking to use Children’s Choices books from the past six years to provide multicultural or diverse family education, they should find supplemental books. A broad range of culture and families would not be presented by using only the Children’s Choices books with human characters. It is important for teachers and librarians to choose books they provide in their libraries and use for instruction that portray all family units of all cultures. This provides a broader window for students to see themselves in the text as well as witness other families and cultures in a positive light.

For Further Research

Because children select Children’s Choice Award books, it may be important to investigate the demographics of the schools that contribute to the selection of the award-winning books. Examining the diversity amongst those schools involved in the selection of the books, may provide further insight into whether students in diverse families with diverse cultural/racial backgrounds are involved in the selection of the books for the Children’s Choice awards.

Further research could also be conducted on the Children’s Choices books involving nonhuman characters. Perhaps the results of such a study would contribute more insight into the portrayal of families in a group of award-winning books selected by children. It is possible that authors use nonhuman characters in these books to portray more diverse familial roles. Nonhuman characters can often be used to allow more difficult content or challenging subjects to
be brought into children’s literature. Therefore it is possible nonhuman characters could have been used to portray diverse family structures in the books eliminated for this investigation.

Further investigations regarding children seeing themselves in the literature they read should be conducted. With the changing family demographics, may also come a change in children’s attitudes about reading literature that reflects their families. Additional research in this area might provide useful data for validating the importance of content analyses such as this investigation.

Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the research conducted, the conclusions, and recommendations. According to this study, the most frequently occurring family units in the Children’s Choices books are the two-parent family and one-parent families. The study also showed children were more willing to read books when families were not the central plots. Additionally, this investigation showed that cultural/racial diversity is limited in the books evaluated for this investigation. Recommendation for teachers and librarians were provided. Future research includes exploring the diversity among those who select the Children’s Choice award books to determine the demographics of the group selecting these award-winning books. Future research that investigates students’ preference for reading materials that are like their own situations would also help to validate the need for studies such as this one.

Multicultural literature provides all students with a learning opportunity to develop social attitudes as well as motivation to read. When children can see themselves and their families in the text, they are motivated to read to make those connections. When children cannot find characters or families like themselves, they often become frustrated with reading or develop
negative feelings about their families. Therefore, it is essential that researchers continue to strive to analyze what children are interested in reading to increase their motivation to read.
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APPENDIX A

CHILDREN’S BOOKS USED FOR ANALYSIS
CHILDREN’S BOOKS USED FOR ANALYZED


APPENDIX B

CHILDREN’S CHOICES BOOKS DATA ANALYSIS CHART
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s Choices Books Data Analysis Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of Publication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Reader or Young Reader</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Familial Relationships**                  |
| **Evidence of Family in Text**              |
| **Evidence of Family in Picture**           |

| **Relevant Quotes from Text**               |
| **Description of Pictures**                 |

<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Main Plot of Story</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mentioned</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Family Role in Plot</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th><strong>Cultural/ Racial Representation</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally/ Racially Generic</td>
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<td>Culturally/ Racially Specific</td>
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<td>No Characters of Color</td>
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APPENDIX C

COMPLETED DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX OF FAMILY UNIT
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<tr>
<th>Two-parent family</th>
<th>One-parent family</th>
<th>Blended family</th>
<th>Same-sex parent family</th>
<th>Extended family</th>
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<th>Grandparent as parent family</th>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>Mother-led</td>
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<td>The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness (Thompson 2008)</td>
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<td>That’s Not Right (Durant &amp; McEwen 2004)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Afraid of Dogs (Pitzer 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crow Call (Lowry 2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila Says We’re Weird (Smalley 2011)</td>
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<td>The Richest Poor Kid (Sommer 2007)</td>
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<td>How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister (Lloyd-Jones &amp; Heap 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Fancy Nancy (O’Connor 2006)</td>
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<td>Born Yesterday (Solheim 2010)</td>
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<td>The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School (Anderson 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You Can’t Go to School Naked (Billstrom 2008)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book (Child 2005)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Play Ball, Jackie! (Krensky 2011)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8 2 3 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

COMPLETED DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX OF FAMILY ROLE IN PLOT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Family mentioned in text or pictures</th>
<th>Family central part of plot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness</em> (Thompson 2008)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>That’s Not Right</em> (Durant &amp; McEwen 2004)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not Afraid of Dogs</em> (Pitzer 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crow Call</em> (Lowry 2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sheila Says We’re Weird</em> (Smalley 2011)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Richest Poor Kid</em> (Sommer 2007)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister</em> (Lloyd-Jones &amp; Heap 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fancy Nancy</em> (O’Connor 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I Don’t)</em> (Bottner 2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Born Yesterday</em> (Solheim 2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School</em> (Anderson 2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You Can’t Go to School Naked</em> (Billstrom 2008)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book</em> (Child 2005)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Play Ball, Jackie!</em> (Krensky 2011)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
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APPENDIX E

COMPLETED DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX OF CULTURAL/RACIAL REPRESENTATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Culturally/ Racially Neutral</th>
<th>Culturally/ Racially Generic</th>
<th>Culturally/ Racially Specific</th>
<th>No Characters of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness</em> (Thompson 2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>That’s Not Right</em> (Durant &amp; McEwen 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not Afraid of Dogs</em> (Pitzer 2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crow Call</em> (Lowry 2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sheila Says We’re Weird</em> (Smalley 2011)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Richest Poor Kid</em> (Sommer 2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How to Be a Baby by Me the Big Sister</em> (Lloyd-Jones &amp; Heap 2006)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fancy Nancy</em> (O’Connor 2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I Don’t)</em> (Bottner 2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Born Yesterday</em> (Solheim 2010)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School</em> (Anderson 2009)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You Can’t Go to School Naked</em> (Billstrom 2008)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book</em> (Child 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Play Ball, Jackie!</em> (Krensky 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

COMPLETED CHILDREN’S CHOICES BOOKS DATA ANALYSIS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Published Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cat in the Hat</td>
<td>Dr. Seuss</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodnight Moon</td>
<td>Margaret Wise Brown</td>
<td>Children's</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte's Web</td>
<td>E.B. White</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Giving Tree</td>
<td>Shel Silverstein</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the Wild Things Are</td>
<td>Maurice Sendak</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This chart is a selection of classic children's books that have been analyzed for their completed choices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Information</th>
<th>Family is main plot or mentioned</th>
<th>Familial Relationships</th>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Evidence of family in text</th>
<th>Evidence of family in picture</th>
<th>Cultural/Racial Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness (Thompson 2008) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>grandmother, grandson</td>
<td>Grandparent as parent family</td>
<td>p.1</td>
<td>p.2</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s Not Right (Durant &amp; McEwen 2004) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>sister, brother, mother</td>
<td>One-parent family (mother-led)</td>
<td>p. 10</td>
<td>p.11</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Afraid of Dogs (Pitzer 2006) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>sister, brother, mother, aunt, father</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>mother p. 5 father p. 10</td>
<td>mother p. 5 father p.11</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow Call (Lowry 2009) Young Reader</td>
<td>Main Plot</td>
<td>sister, father, mother</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>father p. 4 mother p. 11</td>
<td>father p. 4</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Says We’re Weird (Smalley 2011) Young Reader</td>
<td>Main Plot</td>
<td>sister, brother, mother, father</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>mother p. 12 father p. 19</td>
<td>mother p. 12 father p.18</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Portrayal of a grandson and grandmother who "live their lives on different planets." Grandmother is described as kind but very old. The grandmother allows grandson to adopt a dog. The dog brings happiness to the grandson's life in the form of a friend and holds together the grandmother-grandson relationship. “George lived alone with his grandmother and an empty place where his mother and father should have been.” (Thompson 2008 p.1)

Ellie writes a story and reads it to her brother and her mother. Her mother is portrayed watering the flowers in the picture. Both characters are smiling. Ellie's mother tells her that her story is strange but tells her she has done a good job. (Durant & McEwen 2004 p.10)

Daniel is afraid of dogs until his aunt’s dog comes to stay with him. His family is portrayed at the dinner table without him because he is too scared to face the dog. His mother is portrayed as trying to bring Daniel a plate of food and console him of his fears. (Pitzer 2006 p. 12-13)

Liz’s father has returned from war and takes her to perform the crow call. He has been gone in the war and they are just developing their relationship as father and daughter. He trusts Lizzie to do the crow call. “I practice his name to myself, whispering it under my breath. Daddy. Daddy. Saying it feels like new. The war has lasted so long. He has been gone so long.” (Lowry 2009 p.4)

Sheila comments on the “weird” habits of her neighbors. The family portrayed in the pictures may be of color and other characters of color are depicted in pictures. No cultural content. Family is depicted as helpful to one another. (Smalley 2011)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Information</th>
<th>Family is main plot or mentioned</th>
<th>Familial Relationships</th>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Evidence of family in text</th>
<th>Evidence of family in picture</th>
<th>Cultural/Racial Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Richest Poor Kid</em> (Sommer 2007) Young Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>brother, sister, mother</td>
<td>One-parent family (mother-led)</td>
<td>mother p. 7</td>
<td>mother p. 5</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Randy is frustrated because he is poor and dislikes hand-me-downs. His sister tells him their father died when he was three. &quot;'Now Mom has to work to support us. Mom barely makes enough money to pay for rent and food, so there's never any money left for new things.' Then Mom walked in and gave Randy a big hug. Mom always gave her children lots and lots of love.&quot; (Sommer 2007 p.7) The family is portrayed doing chores and spending time together.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How to be a Baby by Me the Big Sister</em> (Lloyd-Jones &amp; Heap 2006) Early Reader</td>
<td>Main Plot</td>
<td>sister, mother, father, grandmother</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>mother, father p. 2 grandmother p. 8</td>
<td>mother p. 5 grandmother p. 8 father p. 24</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The big sister in the story describes the role and responsibilities of being the baby in the family. She describes how to be a baby. The mother is portrayed in the pictures 19 pages before the father. The mother is also portrayed more often in the pictures. The grandmother is not depicted or described as living with the family. People of color are depicted but there is no cultural content. &quot;Your mommy and daddy have to dress you&quot; (Lloyd-Jones &amp; Heap 2006).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy helps her family to be fancier. Nancy represents French culture by mentioning the language and using a few non-English words. Nancy's family is supportive of her feelings and desire to be fancy. Other characters of color are depicted as side characters. Nancy's mother and father both kiss her goodnight at the end of the story and tell her their love her.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Miss Brooks Loves Books (and I don't)</em> (Bottner 2010) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>mother, daughter</td>
<td>One-parent family (mother-led)</td>
<td>mother p. 10</td>
<td>mother p. 10</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A first-grade girl has a librarian that encourages her to love books. The librarian is depicted and described more than the mother. The mother is depicted as a artist/ painter. The librarian sends home books for the girl to choose from. The mother takes time to help the daughter select a book and make a costume for Book Week. Characters of color are depicted in the classroom of students but there is no cultural content.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Information</td>
<td>Family is main plot or mentioned</td>
<td>Familial Relationships</td>
<td>Family Unit</td>
<td>Evidence of family in text</td>
<td>Evidence of family in picture</td>
<td>Cultural/Racial Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Yesterday (Solheim 2010) Early Reader</td>
<td>Main Plot</td>
<td>father, mother, sister</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>mother, father p. 1</td>
<td>mother, father p. 2</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbach er Goes to School (Anderson 2009) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>father, mother</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>mother, father p. 5</td>
<td>mother, father p. 5</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can’t Go to School Naked (Billstrom 2008) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>father, mother</td>
<td>Two-parent family</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>mother, father p. 1</td>
<td>Culturally/Racially Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie and Lola: But Excuse Me That is My Book (Child 2005) Early Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>sister, brother, father</td>
<td>One-parent family (father-led)</td>
<td>father p. 2</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>No characters of color</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The story is told from the perspective of a baby journalist. The baby writes about her mother, father, big sister, and dog. The mother is depicted taking the baby on walks and to Kindergarten to visit her sister. The seemingly gender neutral baby discusses its perspective on the world. Characters of color are depicted but there is no cultural content.

Zoe Fleefenbacher has red hair with a mind of its own. "Mom and Dad Fleefenbacher threw out the brushes and combs. The hair of their Zoe was wild and beautiful" (Anderson 2009 p.5) Characters of color are depicted as other students in the classroom. No cultural content.

The parents are the narrators of this story. They give reasons why not to go to school naked. The parents are not described in the text but are depicted three times in the pictures. Characters of color are depicted as other students in the school. No cultural content.

Charlie and Lola’s dad takes them to the library. He is mentioned in the text but is not seen in the pictures. To readers who are unfamiliar with the text, it appears as if their family unit is a single-father family. A mother is present in other books in the series. In all of the books, the children's parents and friend's parents are mentioned but never seen. The books have been turned into a popular children's television series.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Information</th>
<th>Familial Relationships</th>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Evidence of family in text</th>
<th>Evidence of family in picture</th>
<th>Cultural/Racial Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Play Ball, Jackie!</em> (Krensky 2011) Young Reader</td>
<td>Mentioned</td>
<td>father, son</td>
<td>One-parent family (father-led)</td>
<td>father p. 1</td>
<td>father p. 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Italian boy and his father go to a baseball game where Jackie Robinson is playing. The boy and his father encounter the feelings of others toward African Americans in baseball. Two boys in line at the ballpark are speaking negatively about Jackie Robinson and Matty learns a valuable lesson.