



What makes a good children's picture book?

Susan Ramsay,
Early Literacy Specialist for Hastings-Frontenac-L & A
613-354-6318 (ext 32)

Good picture books tell stories children can relate to through experience or emotion. In well-loved books, children see themselves in the story characters – learning about, understanding or coping with something new. Pictures are extremely important. Vivid illustrations captivate, elaborate and clarify the meaning of new words and ideas.

Good picture books are something local author and illustrator, Peggy Collins, likes to create. In Peggy's words, "Kids' books have always been a passion, but never more than now, having two kids of my own. I get to see things in a whole new light. There are stories in everything - the eating of a cookie can generate a wonderful tale depending on how you bite into it!"

I asked Peggy to tell us about her motivation as an author and illustrator:

Susan: What do you enjoy most about the process of creating children's books?

Peggy: The moment where an idea takes shape, and the excitement of the possibility of sharing that idea. Often books change so much from the initial idea by the time they are completed that this excitement (sadly) dies out. It takes a long time, with a lot of input from a lot of people for an idea to become a book.

Susan: When do you feel satisfied that your writing and illustrating efforts have paid off?

Peggy: When I hear from people that their kids ask for my book at reading time - whenever that is. That is the best feeling ever. This is not a career you chose for the money; it is a love of story that brings you here.

Susan: You seem to enjoy sharing activities that go along with the books you write....and you're good at it! What motivates or inspires you to create these activities that complement your stories and to share them with children or families?

Peggy: Thank you! Well, I am a teacher at heart (and a college prof), I have MANY teacher friends and family, and I am also a parent. If you are going to lug your children across town for a book reading, it had better last more than the 5 minutes it takes to read the book! I also like to think it helps with comprehension of the story, which ties into early literacy. I also have a great time interacting with the kids and families that come. Little ones especially like to 'do' something. It means much more when you can make a personal connection to the people who enjoy what you do!

During **Family Literacy Week** (January 22 – January 29) Peggy will be very busy doing a two-day workshop with the entire Marysville School on Wolfe Island. They will be re-telling a traditional story in each class and making it into a book.

Peggy will be also visiting the Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) in Belleville and Napanee to share her newest book, “In the Snow,” along with story-themed activities.

You’re invited to “Play for Literacy” (this year’s Family Literacy Day theme) with stories and “In the Snow” activities at:

- **Family Space** Ontario Early Years Centre on **January 27th**, at 10:00 a.m. (301 Macdonald Ave., Belleville)
- **LARC** Ontario Early Years Centre on Friday **January 28th**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. (1178 County Road #8, Napanee)

To find out more about Peggy’s work or to book a visit, go to: <http://web.me.com/peggycollins>.