



Call for Submissions Storybooks, Diversity, and Math for ages 3–6

[Charlesbridge](#) and [TERC](#), a non-profit STEM education center in Cambridge, MA, are collaborating on an initiative to develop better math storybooks for children of all backgrounds.* At the core of our efforts are two interrelated goals:

- To expand the mathematical content in trade picture books to include often overlooked yet critically important topics, such as the following:
 - Patterns (in actions or images)
 - Sorting and classifying (How are these things alike? How are they different?)
 - Comparing amounts (more, less, the same)
 - Sizes/measuring (larger than I am, smaller than my hand)
 - Spatial relationships (near, far, above, between)
 - Comparing and describing shapes (How is the book like the piece of paper? How is it different?)

- To expand images and contexts of characters in such books, to reflect families from traditionally underrepresented groups and to give *all* readers an inclusive vision of mathematical thinkers.

To this end, we are seeking manuscripts for fiction picture books that weave together engaging story lines, mathematical themes, and diversity. We are looking for compelling and emotionally resonant stories that readers will revisit again and again for new insights and joy on each reading. Manuscripts should integrate math so that readers experience it as an organic component of the story and naturally engage in mathematical thinking as they discuss the characters and progression of events.

EXEMPLARY BOOKS

Few picture books on the market are equally rich in story, math, and diversity. The majority of titles favor math over story, lacking the qualities that would lead to enjoyable and repeated family reading at home. Fewer still feature main characters of color. Below are several exemplary titles that combine all three elements.

Measurement

Marta! Big & Small by Jen Arena (Roaring Brook, 2016)
Math: Sizes, relative sizes

* This effort is funded in part by the [Heising-Simons Foundation](#).

As intrepid Marta explores the wilderness, she compares her abilities to those of the animals she encounters: she is bigger than a bug but smaller than an elephant; slower than a horse but faster than a turtle. When she encounters danger, she proves that she is cleverer than a hungry snake.

Grandma's Tiny House by JaNay Brown-Wood (Charlesbridge, 2017)

Math: Volume

Will the young narrator's ever-expanding family fit into Grandma's tiny house for a multi-generational gathering? As the number of guests grows, the walls begin to bulge. The narrator comes up with a solution to keep everyone happy and having fun together.

Number

Two of Everything by Lily Toy Hong (Albert Whitman, 1993)

Math: Doubles

Impoverished Mr. and Mrs. Haktak find a magic pot that doubles everything put inside it. They solve their money woes by repeatedly doubling their coins. But when other things are doubled, trouble mounts, and must find a resolution.

Lemonade in Winter by Emily Jenkins (Schwartz & Wade, 2012)

Math: Money, arithmetic

Pauline and her little brother, John-John, open a lemonade stand on a snowy winter day. Despite some discouragement, Pauline and John-John remain resourceful, perseverant, and optimistic. Ultimately, they run at a loss . . . but a happy one.

Banana for Two by Ellen Mayer (Star Bright, 2018)

Math: Concept of two

Mama, her baby, and two stuffed bunnies turn an outing to the grocery store into an opportunity to talk, laugh, and explore the notion of two. As they fill their cart, Mama lets her baby hold two items at a time—one for each hand. Back home Mama prepares a snack. How will she share one banana between the two of them? (Note: This is a board book, not a picture book, but we love the playful use of math in an everyday setting.)

Sorting and Classifying

Sam Sorts by Marthe Jocelyn (Tundra Books, 2017)

Math: Data, sorting and classifying

It's clean-up time, and Sam needs to put away all of his toys. Should he organize them by size, color, texture, or purpose? As he tidies up, he finds that most items can go in several categories, making the task of cleaning his room all the more challenging.

Geometry

More-igami by Dori Kleber (Candlewick, 2016)

Math: Shapes, reflections, symmetry

Lonely Joey is fascinated with things that fold. When he encounters origami, he is enthralled. Origami doesn't come easily, but Joey persists. The payoff is huge: he puts his talents to use folding napkins at a restaurant and makes a new friend.

SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Please submit your complete manuscript to Alyssa Mito Pusey at alyssa@charlesbridge.com by September 1, 2018. Include "Storytelling Math Submission" in the subject line. We will respond to all submissions within two to three months of receipt.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please reach out to us with any questions about this project:

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