January 2019 Call for Submissions

Picture Books, Diversity, and Math for ages 3–5

Charlesbridge and TERC, a non-profit STEM education center in Cambridge, MA, are collaborating on an initiative to develop better math picture books 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.
>
> 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.

We have acquired manuscripts that address many of the math topics we seek. At this time, we are seeking manuscripts that weave together engaging story lines, diversity, and either data or geometry/spatial relationships. See page 3 for more information.

To complement the stories we have already selected, we are especially interested in #ownvoices manuscripts featuring Native American, African American, and Latinx characters.

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.

SAMPLE 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 three titles that combine math and story.

Five Creatures by Emily Jenkins (Square Fish, 2005)

A young child in a family of five—three people and two cats—explores similarities and differences among household members: two eat mice; three can climb trees; one likes beets. We like this story because it compares amounts in categories (data) in a playful and family-centric way. We are, however, looking for characters of color.

Shrinking Mouse by Pat Hutchins (Greenwillow Books, 1997)

As Owl flies away to the trees, he appears smaller and smaller to his friends. His friends worry he is shrinking! This story involves perspective and spatial reasoning in a humorous and age-appropriate way. Please note, though, that we are looking for human characters of color.

---

[1] This effort is funded in part by the Heising-Simons Foundation.

The Cookie Fiasco by Dan Santat (Hyperion Books, 2016)

Four hungry friends seek a fair way to share three cookies. Tension mounts and strong personalities emerge as the cookies begin to crumble. We love how the characters use math to navigate an emotionally fraught situation. Please note, however, that we are looking for human characters of color and math involving either data or geometry/spatial relationships.

SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Please submit your complete manuscript to Alyssa Mito Pusey at alyssa@charlesbridge.com by May 1, 2019. Include "Math for Me Submission" in the subject line. We will respond to all submissions within two to three months of receipt.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- We strongly encourage you to submit a draft manuscript well before the May 1 due date. We will provide feedback and further guidance on the most promising submissions.
- To download the PowerPoint slides and notes from the most recent Math for Me author webinar, please go to https://www.charlesbridge.com/pages/submissions and scroll down to the bottom.
- As a reminder, we are looking only for stories on data and geometry/spatial relationships. If you have questions about the math in your story idea, please contact Marlene Kliman at marlene_kliman@terc.edu to discuss.
- We are interested only in realistic fiction featuring human characters of color. Our target audience is children ages 3-5 and their parents or caregivers.

Please reach out to us with any questions:

Alyssa Mito Pusey
Senior Editor
Charlesbridge
alyssa@charlesbridge.com

Marlene Kliman
Senior Scientist
TERC
marlene_kliman@terc.edu

Children's Mathematical Development

We are seeking manuscripts in two important areas of math that are underrepresented in picture books. If you have questions about whether your story fits into one of these areas, please contact Marlene Kliman at marlene_kliman@terc.edu to discuss in advance of your submission. We'd love to hear from you!

Geometry and spatial relationships

	3 years → 6 years		Comments
Language	Understands words that describe features of shapes	Uses words that describe features of shapes	Words that describe features of shapes include *curved, round, flat, straight, pointed, corner, side,* and *edge.* As children approach school age, they may begin drawing 2-D "maps" of the 3-D world around them.
Example	Finds the edge of a piece of paper	Says, "I wrote near the bottom edge of the paper."	
Compares shapes	Identifies shapes with similar features	Explains how shapes are alike and different	
Example	Points to round objects in the room	Says, "Circles and ovals are round, but ovals are thinner at one end."	
Creates shapes	Combines shapes to make new ones	Creates 3-D shapes from 2-D parts	
Example	Builds a tower by stacking blocks	Builds a house from straws and marshmallows	
Represents positions	Creates made-up "maps"	Creates "maps" of very familiar places	
Example	Puts toy cars next to boxes to make "garages"	Arranges toys on the floor to show layout of local playground	

Data: compares amounts to find most, least, and same

	3 years → 6 years		Comments
Language	Understands words such as *more, less*, and *same*	Uses words such as *more, less, same,* and *equal*	Children develop concepts of *more, less,* and *same* amounts by matching and visually comparing up to three or four items. As they approach school age, they can compare amounts up to five or six. Young children may not yet connect the counting sequence with amounts. They "just see" how many in a group without counting.
Example	Can point to the pile with the most socks	Says, "We have the most red socks, and more blue than pink."	
Compares sorted groups by quantity	Identifies a group of a certain size	Orders three or four small groups by number in group	
Example	Can point to the pile with two socks	Observes, "We have six red socks, four blue, and two pink."	
Breaks a set into two parts, according to an attribute	Identifies part of a set with a certain characteristic	Describes two parts that make up a whole	
Example	Can point to the people in the family who wear glasses	Observes, "Four people are in my family. Three wear glasses. One doesn't."	