

## ***“Librarian’s Shelf” by Brad Hruska***

...Now I Know My ABCs

Learning the alphabet is one of the first fundamental skills that children must acquire before being able to read. A firm understanding of this letter arrangement is vital because these components are the primary building blocks for all words in the English language.

Over the years, I have had a number of parents visit the library in search of alphabet texts. Most of them begin their hunt in the picture book section of the Children’s Room, commonly referred to as the Easy section. However, they are surprised when I guide them over to the juvenile nonfiction area, which also contains a multitude of wonderfully illustrated alphabet texts.

The letter books found in this collection are written about specific subjects like animals, trucks, and dinosaurs. Each has a catchy title like “A is for Airplane” by Mary Ann Reihle, “G is for Galaxy” by Janis Campbell, “M is for Meow” by Helen Wilbur, “P is for Princess” by Steven Layne, and “Z is for Zookeeper” by Marie Smith. Now, though these texts feature specific letters in their titles, it is important to mention that all of the letters are equally represented. So should a child happen to pick “C is for Cornhusker” by Rajean Shepherd, they will not only acquire an understanding of the letter that begins the name of the world’s greatest football team; they will also learn that N is for the Niobrara, P is for “Powwow...a cultural celebration...of the native American Nations,” U is “for the Union Pacific with their cars and freight and crew,” and “R is the Red of the Husker’s team and the football fans who cheer ‘Go Big Red’.” This alone is education enough for any Nebraska child! The primary advantage to selecting such texts is that parents can check out books that will appeal to their children’s interests, which will help keep the attention of little ones and will, with time, provide them with a basic knowledge of the alphabet, its letters, and the order in which they go.

Parents can also use the alphabet books found in the nonfiction collection to help their children improve their phonetic skills. A great way of doing this is to have their children repeat the names of the letters and the sounds which that letters make. In no time at all, adults will notice their children easily associating the letters of the alphabet with their appropriate sound. Parents may even assist their children in reading by helping them sound out the words using the honed phonics abilities.

So the next time you are in search of alphabet books to share with your little Herbies, don’t forget to browse through the juvenile nonfiction section at the Columbus Public Library. There are a number of great letter books in this area that will keep your children’s attention. If you have any questions regarding the texts featured or would like other quality recommendations, please contact me at (402) 564-7116 ext. 4.