

Decoding the Dots

Talented children's author Peter Reynolds wrote a delightful book entitled "The Dot." In this story readers meet Vashti, a young girl who claims not to have a creative bone in her body. Vashti's insightful art teacher, however, gently challenges her to make a dot on her blank canvas and see where it takes her. By making that one dot, Vashti discovers that she is creative and can inspire others.

The same concepts of fostering imagination and encouraging others are definitely apparent in the Columbus Public Library's Children's Room. Over the years the children's space has been transformed into a fun and inviting area where parents and children go read, become informed, surf the web, and play. Families will also notice that dots are literally on the spines of all the picture books found in the Children's Room. These dots, just as in Reynolds' text, have significance and can be used to nurture young readers.

If you have an infant, toddler, or preschooler in your family; you will want to select books with a red dot on the book spine near the call number. The texts are ideal for parents to read aloud to little ones because they contain a rich vocabulary, basic sentence structure, and colorful illustration.

Should you be raising a child who is beginning to read books on their own, it is the "Blue Dot Picture Book Collection" you want to explore. These texts, typically geared for kindergarten thru third grade students, are brimming with both words that are easy to sound out and appear on various site word lists. The sentence structures in these books are a mixture of both simple and complex and the illustrations are detailed, allowing students to apply word association skills. Individuals perusing the blue and red dot collections will also come across pink dots. These items are unique because within their hard covers can be found a CD, which has a recording of the text read by talented, professional readers. These pink dotted texts are great for family road trips and are ideal for children who struggle with reading because they allow readers to follow along in the book, while improving reading skills and vocabulary development.

Every year new trends are established and that is the same with children's picture book characters. It seemed to first begin with Marc Brown's Arthur, Thomas the Tank Engine, and Bob the Builder. It has now morphed into Dora the Explorer, SpongeBob Square Pants, Fancy Nancy, Llama Llama, and Lego. To help children find their favorite book characters, the "Yellow Dot Picture Book Collection" was established. This collection allows readers easy access to their favorite popular children's story book characters.

So the next time you are searching for a great book for the children in your life, take a chance like Reynolds' Vashti did. You never know where that one mark might take you. If you have questions about the various picture books collections found at the Columbus Public Library, please contact me at (402) 564-7116 opt. 4.

Director's note: Additional memorials given to the Library Foundation and Library in honor of Mary Peterson were received from Esther Gibbs, Don and Judy Dworak, Sheila M. Krueger, Charlotte Griffith, Marjorie A. Jansen, John and Linda McPhail, Dorothy Courtier, Owen and Tammy Lovell, Lloyd and Kay Castner, Theresa M. Kumpf, Marilyn Zehring, Harry and Beatrice Rosche, Linda's D'Lites, Diane M. Frazer, Fred and Renee Bellum, Craig and Lori Neid, Lucille Krueger, Leora and Noris Augustin, Lavonne and Darrell Grassmeyer, and Dwain and Jill Owens.