



Looking at Children's Literature Publishers

When studying children's literature, spend time learning about the world of children's literature publishers. Over the last 30 years, hundreds of small independent publishers have been purchased by the five major houses — Penguin/Random House, Hachette Book Group, Harper Collins, Macmillan, and Simon and Schuster — and today there are far fewer completely independent children's publishers. (Although specific to children's books, Scholastic is the largest publisher and distributor of children's books in the US.) This translates to fewer diverse perspectives published. Their story is similar to that of independent bookstores; educators can have a role in ensuring the continuation of both independent bookstores and independent publishers by patronizing independent bookstores and becoming familiar with independent publishers.

Reading a publisher's mission statement (usually listed on the publisher's "About" link) brings awareness of the type of material they publish. Spend time perusing the websites of these independent publishers of quality children's books:

Candlewick Press
Eerdmanns
Enchanted Lion

Holiday House
Lee and Low Books
Sasquatch Books

When seeking quality nonfiction, the following publishing companies reputedly publish high quality nonfiction.

ABDO
Bloomsbury Children's Books
Capstone Press
DK Publishers
Enslow Publishers

Lerners
National Geographic Kids
Rosen Publishing
Rourke Publishing

All of the "Big Five" publish nonfiction as well. Many excellent imprints offer both fiction and nonfiction children's material.

In addition, there are publishers that specialize in very limited or specific topics and/or types. For example, Kar-Ben Publishers publishes Jewish titles. Readers to Eaters publishes children's books about food and nutrition. Milky Way Picture Books produces picture books about nature. Of course, just because a publisher specializes do not assume those the best choices for the topic.

Finally, some of my personal favorites are Canadian publishers such as Groundwood Press (House of Anansi) and Orca Book Publishers.