Early Childhood Book Challenge
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"I'll Build You a Bookcase"
by Jean Ciborowski Fahey
Illustrations: Jameela Wahlgren
I’ll build you a bookcase before you are born
That’s made out of boxes of shoes that were worn.
For books we will read in the soft morning light,
And books we will read before saying goodnight.

I’ll build you a bookcase for when you turn 1
And fill it with library books that are fun.
And books about bridges and buildings so high
A bookcase so tall that it touches the sky.

I’ll build you a bookcase for when you turn 2
My phone tucked away so it’s just me and you.
We’ll read about buses and babies and birds,
Then talk on our walk about all of these words.

I’ll build you a bookcase for when you turn 3
We’ll build it together for you and for me.
And let’s build a bookcase for other kids too
In parks and the laundromat, market and zoo.

And then we can all read wherever we are
Perhaps on a rainbow or riding a star?
So let’s build a bookcase and then we’ll build two.
For nothing is better than reading with you.
I'll build you a bookcase before you are 1
And fill it with library books that are fun.

Books about bridges and buildings so high
A bookcase so tall that it touches the sky
So let’s build a bookcase and then we’ll build two.

For nothing is better than reading with you.
Jean Ciborowski Fahey

Jean is a parent educator, author and speaker on the topic of getting our youngest children ready to read. In this capacity, she also consults for a variety of early literacy initiatives and organizations, and creates home literacy curriculum for Parent-Home visitors and Early Intervention Specialists.

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Jameela Wahlgren

Jameela’s goal as an illustrator is to create worlds that people want to spend time in, worlds that are so real and welcoming you want to jump in the page. She spends her free time playing role playing games, reading fantasy books and being in nature. She’s passionate about intersectional feminism and animal welfare.
Brrrrrrrrrrring!
Alarm clock rings—six o’clock.
Wake up, sleepy heads. Time to rock!

Everybody’s ready for the Crosstown Bop!
“Kai, grab your bag.”
“Come on, Flops!”
Hip-hop, skip-hop, up the block.

Turn at the corner.
Cross at the light.
Green means Go! Look left and right.
Skip-hop, hip-hop, flagpole—Stop!

Broooooooong!
Church bell chimes—twelve o’clock.
Let’s line up for the Lunchtime Bop!

Hip-hop, skip-hop, look at us—
Bopping up the street to the Number 9 bus.

Over the bridge.
Under the clock.
Slow! Go! Turn! waves the Traffic Cop.
Quick, pull the cord! Next one’s our stop. Ding! Ding!
School bell sounds—three o’clock.
All packed up and ready to Bop!

Hip-hop, skip-hop, follow me!
Bouncing up the steps to the Li-brar-ree!

Jing-a-Ling Ting-a-Ling
Here comes Pop!

"Who wants a cone with sprinkles on top?"
KerPLOP!

Dong! Dong! Dong! Dong! Dong!
Tower bell chimes—five o’clock.

Everybody’s doing the Rush-hour Bop!

Hip-hop, skip-hop, Honk! Honk! HONK!
To the bank
and the store
and the —
—Oh no!   WHO HAS FLOPS?

Flops?
Flops?

Flops?
FLOPS?!

“Help me! Tell me! Have you seen Flops?”
Yeah! Flops!
CROSSTOWN BOP

Hip-hop, skip-hop, clippity-clop,
Piggyback ride to the subway stop.

Swing through the gate.
Find a good spot.
Watch all the people while we count out stops— One . . . Two . . . Three . . .
Four . . .
Downtown, Uptown, Crosstown Bop!

Almost there. Check the clock:
tick-tock, tick-tock,
One more block.

Hip-hop, home.
Skip-hop, home.
Hip-hop,
  skip-hop,
    last stop . . .

Home

[Piggyback: Kai has Flops; Dad has Zann.]

[Joyful family reunion.]
Kelly Bennett

Kelly Bennett is the author of many picture books. Her stories, such as Not Norman, A Goldfish Story (Jumpstart’s 2015 Read for the Record book,) celebrate imagination, families, friends, pets… all that goes into being a kid! She is a 2007 graduate of VCFA’s Writing for Children and Young Adults program, a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), and the Author’s Guild. Kelly divides her time between Westhampton Beach, NY and Mimiville, which is anywhere her grandboys may be! For more about Kelly and her work visit: www.kellybennett.com.

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Nadine Takvorian

Nadine is an author/illustrator who loves timeless stories that linger and grow tendrils into your heart. She is currently writing and illustrating her own picture book stories, and also a graphic novel for young adults. She lives in Berkeley, CA with her husband and children where they dig holes in their garden and dream of diving into waves at the beach.
Once a month, just one day ... Sean gives books away. Walk, ride or take the bus, hurry ... it’s book day! Yay!

Mom knits while Sister reads. Brother walks the aisle. Their stop is coming up ... just another mile. Sister looks high and low. Where can Brother be? Up, down and underneath. What does Sister see?

Mom and Dad rush breakfast. Baby throws her plate. Bundle up, head on out. They must not be late. Up the block, down the street, baby looks around. What’s baby looking at? What is on the ground?
“Vámanos!” “Time to go!” Baby starts to cry. Abuela wants to stay. Baby waves bye-bye. Helmet on, buckle in, then she starts to pout. Now screams of excitement! What makes Baby shout?

Grandma’s done with dishes. There’s no time to wait. Sister helps with Brother ... so they won’t be late. Cross the street, through the park. Up the stairs they climb. Why so fast? What’s the rush? Will they be on time?

Sean runs through the back door. Box of books in tow. Opens doors. Greets the crowd. People shout: “Hello!” Time to eat and listen. Sing, then have some fun. Did he bring enough books? ONE for everyone?
Time to look. Find a book. Look and look some more.
Pick one up, look again. Just like in a store.
Colors? Birds? Mysteries? Maybe one on trees?
Which one’s right for baby? Which one’s right for me?
Books for everyone!
Jean is a parent educator, author and speaker on the topic of getting our youngest children ready to read. In this capacity, she also consults for a variety of early literacy initiatives and organizations, and creates home literacy curriculums for Parent-Home visitors and Early Intervention Specialists.

Jessica has enjoyed illustrating award-winning books throughout her 13-year artistic career. She has been fortunate to work with amazing clients including HarperCollins, Chronicle, Heinemann, and several indie publishers.

Nadine Gamble

Nadine Gamble adds writer to the list of jobs she’s held, including teacher, nonprofit director, volunteer manager and volunteer. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Elementary and Special Education, a Montessori teaching certificate and a Certificate of Volunteer Administration. She graduated from the Institute of Children’s Literature, is a member of SCBWI and Julie Hedlund’s 12x12 Challenge.

Jessica Warrick

Jessica has enjoyed illustrating award-winning books throughout her 13-year artistic career. She has been fortunate to work with amazing clients including HarperCollins, Chronicle, Heinemann, and several indie publishers.

Nadine Gamble
Inside. Outside. What do we see?
Colors around you and me!
Inside a rainbow every day,
Let’s find colors as we play.

YELLOW
Yellow flowers, yellow sun.
Yellow bus. Let’s cross.
Don’t run! Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy yellow, you and I.

GREEN
Green in the garden. Green peas.
Green in spinach. Green on trees.
Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy green, you and I.
LET’S FIND COLORS!

BLUE
Blue carousel in the zoo.
Blue in birds and blue sky, too.
Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy blue, you and I.

RED
Red on boat flags. Red on sails.
Red on shovels. Red on pails.
Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy red, you and I.

PURPLE
Purple plums – yum! - when we eat.
Purple shoes tap, tap the beat!
Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy purple, you and I.
LET’S FIND COLORS!

ORANGE
Orange vests where work is done.
Orange ball. Bounce, bounce!
What fun! Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy orange, you and I.

PINK
Pink bus bench, a pink drink cup,
Pink tongue in a little pup!
Do you want to play “I spy?”
Let’s spy pink, you and I.

Now we’re home. What have we seen?
Orange, purple, red and green,
Yellow, pink, blue! Wow! Hurray!
We have had a rainbow day.

We found colors, played “I spy.”
We’ll dream rainbows, you and I.
Jean is a parent educator, author and speaker on the topic of getting our youngest children ready to read. In this capacity, she also consults for a variety of early literacy initiatives and organizations, and creates home literacy curriculum for Parent-Home visitors and Early Intervention Specialists.

Michael Garland is a best selling author and illustrator of thirty-seven published children’s picture books and illustrator of over forty books for other authors. Garland’s book have won many state reading awards and appear frequently on the publishing industry’s “best books of the year” list.

Virginia Brackett

Virginia Brackett, Professor Emeritus of English, retired in 2016 from Park University, where she received multiple teaching and service awards. She has published many articles and stories for adult and young readers, and her 15 books have been cited by the New York Public Library; the PSLA; Tristate Books of Note; the ALA, Amelia Bloomer Project; and Booklist (Editor’s Choice, Reference Sources, 2008). Her short story won second place in the fall 2018 Owl Canyon Press Hackathon. When not writing, Virginia enjoys traveling with her husband, volunteering with veterans and reading with her seven grandchildren.

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Michael Garland

Michael Garland is a best selling author and illustrator of thirty-seven published children’s picture books and illustrator of over forty books for other authors. Garland’s book have won many state reading awards and appear frequently on the publishing industry’s “best books of the year” list.
Out the door and on our way,
Time to start a brand new day.
Hello neighbors! Hello street!
Hola to the friends we meet.
Rock, rock, city block rock.

There goes trolley on the track.
Hear its wheels clickety-clack.
Red lights blink, green lights glow.
One means stop, one means go.
Rock, rock, city block rock.
Cross the big street with great care.  
Hold my hand, we're almost there.  
‘Round the corner to the park.  
Hello puppies! Ruff! Woof! Bark!  
Rock, rock, city block rock.

Swish-swash jump rope turning ‘round,  
Scratch-scratch bright chalk on the ground.  
Creak-squeak swings float high and low,  
One more push before we go.  
Rock, rock, city block rock.
Corner store doors jing-a-ling. 
Time to pick up one last thing. 
Chit-chat, hands clap on the stoop, 
Finish up that ice cream scoop. 
Rock, rock, city block rock. 

Goodnight neighbors, goodnight street. 
Buenas noches friends we meet. 
Street lights on, the day is done. 
Rock-a-bye my little one. 
Rock, rock, city block rock.
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James Firnhaber is a freelance illustrator based in Philadelphia. A storyteller at heart, his illustrations use watercolor washes and detailed line work to capture the moments that define, inspire, and change individuals and places. Apart from illustration, his passions include playing and designing board games, listening to music, and exploring nature.

Mary Kate Bolinder

Mary Kate Bolinder is a writer and teacher. A lifelong lover of picture books, Mary Kate’s stories are inspired by the little magic moments of every day. She currently resides in the Philadelphia area with her husband and two children.

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WITH ME, BABY

Read with me, baby.
Let’s pick a good book.
I’ll say the words,
and you take a look.

Laugh with me, baby,
while we count your toes.
I will plant kisses
on that little nose.

Talk with me, baby.
Tell me what you see.
The blue ball is round,
that cloud: a tall tree.

Play with me, baby.
Let’s try Peek a Boo!
What can you add
to our make believe stew?

written by: Marni Fogelson
illustrated by: Piper Adonya
Grow with me, baby.
Run, jump, stretch, and climb.
We can swing, swing, swing until dinnertime.

Eat with me, baby.
There’s food all around.
Tacos, noodles, and fresh greens from the ground.

Clap with me, baby,
as we chant along
to the A-B-Cs:
our favorite song!

Listen with me, baby.
Birds tweet in the trees.
Are those cars beeping?
I hear someone’s keys!
Scrub with me, baby, and get squeaky clean. You’re the sweetest kid that I’ve ever seen.

Snuggle with me, baby. One last book, then sleep. A soft lullaby, it’s time to count sheep.

Dream with me, baby. Tomorrow’s brand new. Adventures await: this city’s for you!
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Piper Adonya is an illustrator, storyteller, costume and character designer, and an award winning artist of ArtPrize, the world’s largest art competition. Piper earned a BFA in Digital Media at Kendall College of Art and Design, but also loves getting her hands dirty with graphite, chalk, and paint. When not drawing she can be found creating linocut print designs for jewelry, boxing, sipping coffee, reading, or playing Slapzi with her family.

Marni Fogelson is a passionate reader, writer, and literacy advocate who traces her love of books back to the literacy rich environment that her family provided during her childhood. She serves as the co-chair of Team First Book Philadelphia, a local nonprofit that provides new, free, diverse books to children in need. An active community volunteer, Marni lives in West Philadelphia with her husband, two kids, and an assortment of pets, including her faithful hound, Sparky.

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Hello Baby. Look around.
Listen to the city sounds.
Sirens, whistles, cars beep-beep,
Footsteps, airplanes, birds peep-peep.

See the buildings brick and stone.
See the tree that stands alone.
See what’s old, see what’s new.
See what’s red, what’s green, what’s blue.

Something’s hiding in the tree.
Can you point it out to me?

See the bridges, signs, and stores,
fire hydrants, knock-knock doors.
Watch the traffic stop and go.
Is it moving fast or slow?
Look! A market full of treats,
Leafy veggies, yummy sweets,
Smell the spices in the air,
Tasty foods are everywhere.

Crunchy carrot, juicy pear,
Can you find the apples there?

Think about the things you see.
Count the flowers, one, two three.
How do plants and people grow?
Where do trains and buses go?

Children running here and there,
Curly, kinky, wavy hair,
Climbing up and jumping down,
Happy friends; black, white, and brown.

Can you spot a shiny rock?
Who has lost a little sock?
Think of ways we’re all the same,
Reading books and playing games.
Think of ways we’re different too,
How am I not quite like you?

Wonder at the things you see:
Butterfly and bumblebee,
Babies playing peek-a-boo,
Puppies hiding in a shoe.

Sneakers hanging up above.
Mama hugs that feel like love.

When you close your eyes in bed,
See the pictures in your head.
Think of stars up in the sky.
How did they get up so high?

Wonder at the days to come.
All the things you can become.
Aixa Perez-Prado

Aixa Perez-Prado is an immigrant, mother, writer, presenter, teacher and university faculty member. As founder of 'The Thinking Café', a website and series of free workshops devoted to thinking as a conscious practice for teaching, learning and parenting, Aixa works with children and caregivers on developing creative problem solving skills and expanding literacy. Her most recent publication is a chapter on teaching young linguistic and cultural minority learners in Nurturing Habits of Mind in Early Childhood: success stories from around the world (2019; Costa & Kallick, Eds.) Her story for the Early Childhood Book Challenge is based on a Visible Thinking routine (See, Think, Wonder) that stimulates curiosity, encourages wonder, and helps children develop language through critical thinking.

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Taryn Johnson

Taryn Johnson is an illustrator and designer based in Massachusetts. She received her B.A. from Hampshire College where she studied both art and science. She brings a playful appreciation of nature to her work, and with each project hopes to spark curiosity and wonder for our planet and the life that lives here.
Day in the park
Play in the park
Swing in the park
Sing in the park
Slide
Hide
Climb
More time!

Bike in the park
Hike in the park
Walk
Talk
Hop
Don’t stop!
Green in the park
Clean in the park
Twig
Dig
Plant
Ant!

Pool in the park
Cool in the park
Wade
Shade
Treat
Repeat!
Grill in the park
Chill in the park
Eat
Beat
Drum
Yum!
Yawn in the park
Lap
Nap
Fun All done.
Sky getting dark
Bye to the park,
The city’s backyard.
Kelly Andrews

Kelly Andrews has been a book seller, library assistant, editor, and writer. Her picture books include The Book Dragon and Mira Forecasts the Future (Sterling). Born in Philadelphia and raised in Mt. Airy and Ambler, she lives with her husband, daughters, dogs, and books in Wynnewood.

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Marc E Akins

Marc is a West Philadelphia born artist who’s first love was Marvel comic books. After completing his degree in traditional animation from University of the Arts, he moved to Los Angeles where he worked as a storyboard artist and took classes in Children’s book illustration. He currently lives in Philadelphia where he happily volunteers at a West Philly recreation center passing along his love of art to young budding artists.
Whose face is that?
Is that my face,
with its eyes bright and warm?
No, those eyes belong to Mr. De Leon.

Whose face is that?
Is that my face?
Are those my ears listening to the horns?
No, those ears belong to Tao.
Whose face is that?
Is that my face, with its nose wide and mighty?
No, that nose belongs to Mr. Ojo.

Whose face is that?
Is that my face?
Are those my lips turning into a smile?
No, that smile belongs to Officer Cunningham.

Whose face is that?
Is that my face?
Is that my hair, with its soft curls twisting into locks?
No, those locks belong to Mr. Marcus.
Whose face is that?
Is that my face, brown and round looking back at me?
Yes! That face belongs to you, brown and round, strong and proud, looking back at you.
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Danielle Tate

Danielle likes to develop and execute ideas, emotions and initiatives. Her strengths are character development, design, children’s books, photography and content development, design, children’s books, photography and content development. She enjoys leading and motivating team members.

Sophia Ezomoghene

Sophia Ezomoghene is an early childhood literacy specialist living and learning in Philadelphia, PA. She holds a BA in Political Science and International Affairs from Northeastern University and a MA in Education from American University. In her free time, you can find Sophia working on her next children’s picture book or strolling along the streets of Philadelphia.

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Down, down, down the stairs we go.
Take it easy, nice and slow.

There’s lots to see and lots to say
When we go walking every day!

Window, window, window, DOOR!
Count them up: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Pigeon, pigeon, pigeon, CAT!
One is skinny, three are fat.
Apples, grapes, and mangoes YUM! 
Fruit man! Fruit man! Sell us some!

Taxi, trolley, trash truck, bus. 
Drivers! Drivers! Wave to us!

DON'T walk. DON'T walk. DON'T walk. Then . . . 
Flash! The WALK sign tells us when!

Jingle, jingle, OPEN and CLOSE! 
Please can I have one of *those*?

Back and forth, and slide slide SLIDE! 
Round and round, we love to ride!

Sparkly fountain, splish-splash-SPLISH. 
Toss your penny, make your wish!

Up, up, up and down, down, down. 
Raindrops fall all over town!
LOTS TO SEE, LOTS TO SAY!

Clickety, clickety, clickety clack.
“WHOOSH!” comes the train.
We all step back.

Baby, baby, baby, MOM!
Happy, sleepy, fussy, calm.

Buildings rise up, tall, tall, TALL!
Down below, a painted wall.

Tummy rumbles! Time for snack.
Five hot pretzels in a stack.

Big truck, big truck, big truck, SMALL.
“Honk, honk, honk!” we tell them all.

Whisper, whisper. Look, look, LOOK!
Time to choose a brand new book!

Up, up, up the stairs we go.
Take it easy, nice and slow.

Seeing and saying was so much fun . . .
Now we’re home. Our day is done!
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Kaitlin Yang is a recent BFA graduate from Washington University in St. Louis who is working as a Design Assistant at HMH Books for Young Readers in New York City. Her unique international background prompts her to explore different cultures and inspires her to be an open-minded and creative artist. She hopes to become a children’s book illustrator one day and facilitate the exchange of cultures, emotions, and beliefs through her illustrations, one book at a time.

Leslie Bockol

Leslie is a Philadelphia-born writer with an English degree from Yale and a 20+ year career as a children’s book editor. She spent almost 10 years living in New York’s Washington Heights neighborhood, and is now raising two children (ages 14 and 6) with her husband in New Jersey.
Learn about the Challenge:
openideo.com/content/early-childhood-book-challenge-challenge-winners

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