Gender Stereotypes and Representation of Female Characters in Children's Picture Books

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Abstract
Studies since the 1970s have found that many female characters are stereotyped and underrepresented in children's picture books. This dissertation updated a study by Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006) to examine whether stereotyping and female underrepresentation changed over the past decade. The book sample included 3 Caldecott Medal/Honor books and 48 bestselling picture books published in 2010. The study, a qualitative content analysis, utilized 6 library media specialist book raters and the coding schema of Hamilton et al. (2006). Most measures of stereotypes and underrepresentation improved since the Hamilton et al. study; however, measures that declined significantly included more male than female authors and illustrators, more anthropomorphized male main characters and illustrations, and no female characters in assertive/aggressive characterizations.