

Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Deaf Culture in Children's Literature

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## Deaf Culture in Picture Books: Background and Review of Literature

### **Introduction**

#### ***Rationale***

As I have been taking classes and learning about ways to make a classroom more inclusive and welcoming, I have discovered that showing children people who look and sound like them in the classroom is imperative to make them feel like they are a part of the classroom community. During my field placements, I have looked at every single one of my mentor teachers' libraries, and I saw many books about children of color, different religions, occupations, families, and more, but I have only seen a small number of books about children with exceptionalities. These books are about students with Autism, Specific Learning Disabilities, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), Down syndrome, and more, but I have yet to see a book about a child who is deaf or one who is part of the Deaf community. When looking at books with awards on the American Library Association website, I found a small number of books about people with a disability. Most award-winning books discussing a character with a disability come from the Schneider Family and Dolly Gray Book Awards. From those award-winning books, there were little to no books about a Deaf character.

This was interesting to me because each textbook I have about special education always discusses hearing impairments as one of the 13 categories of disabilities listed under IDEA or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Due to this, I assumed that there would be more children's books depicting Deaf culture for children to read and learn from in classrooms. I was looking for these books because I wanted to learn more about Deaf culture to better my

understanding of the people and the culture they are a part of. Thus began my interest in finding children's picture books about children who are deaf and who are part of Deaf culture.

To challenge my creative ability, I wanted to write a manuscript for a children's book about a child who is deaf. After learning more about Deaf culture, I learned that it would be inappropriate of me to write a book where the main character is a Deaf person because I am not deaf myself and do not know the thoughts and feelings of a Deaf person. If I were to write from the perspective of a Deaf person, I could unintentionally create a Deaf character that does not think and feel the ways a real Deaf person feels. I could create a "shallow and one-dimensional" character that is riddled with the stereotypical thinking of a hearing person (Andrews, 2006, p. 26). If I write my book from the perspective of a Deaf person, I could unintentionally give Deaf and hearing children the wrong idea of how Deaf people think, feel, and live their lives. I could help perpetuate the idea Deaf people wish they could hear like many children's books do when in reality, Deaf people have a rich culture they are proud to be a part of (Andrews, 2006). Even if unintentionally, creating a book that portrays the wrong thoughts and feelings of a Deaf person would be detrimental to the Deaf children who read the book. This is where I got the idea to have the book be from the perspective of a person who is not Deaf but interacts with people who are. I am an outsider writer because I am not part of the Deaf community, so I am writing the book from the perspective of a child who is not Deaf.

After annotating the articles about Deaf culture in children's literature, a theme that has come up is that outsider writers are writing from the perspective of Deaf children. According to the many articles, this is causing more harm than good for Deaf and hearing children alike. There is a problem of authenticity in these diverse books. Because this is happening, the books portraying Deaf children are using the medical model of Deafness and not the cultural model

(Golos et al., 2011). This can cause children to play into harmful stereotypes about Deaf people. This is why insider writers are important if the author wants to write a children's book from a Deaf person's point of view. "Since you, as the reader, are forced to view the world through the eyes of the narrator,... you often either feel a sense of union or discord with that view. It is almost a visceral experience" (Gouthro and Holloway, 2017, p. 2). Because readers are viewing the world through the narrator or author's eyes, they are reading the author's thoughts and feelings about the topic. If the author is an outsider writer and has not done research about the Deaf community, the reader could be fed biased information about the Deaf community. If an insider writer, a Deaf individual, is writing from the viewpoint of a Deaf character, the reader will have a higher chance of reading something authentic and unbiased. Books, especially children's books, if written from the perspective of a diverse character, should be written by insider writers or authors and illustrators from diverse backgrounds (Hartsfield and Kimmel, 2020). Being an outsider writer is the reason I chose to write my story from the perspective of a hearing character.

I wanted to write this book because I wanted to possibly add to the collection of children's picture books with characters who are Deaf. I wanted children who are Deaf to see themselves in more picture books even if the child in the book, who is like them, is not the main character but is still a predominant character in the book. It is important that children see themselves in the books they read because it makes them feel welcome in the environment the books are in. It also tells them they can do anything the person in the book can do. This is why mirrors and windows are so important for young readers. Mirrors and windows in literature are different ways the reader can view the world and characters being created in a book. Windows in books offer the reader a view "of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange

(Bishop, 1990, p. ix). Windows allows the reader to get a glimpse of a life that is not theirs.

Windows can help readers become more compassionate, curious, and critical about the literacy they read that depicts lives different from theirs (Enriquez, 2021). Mirrors in literature are when the reader's life and experiences align with those in the book (Enriquez, 2021). When a child finds a mirror in a book, it feels as if they are looking at themselves on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level. When readers find a mirror in a book, they want to find more like it; reading becomes engaging for the child and "a means of self-affirmation" (Bishop, 1990, p. ix). When mirrors and windows are used in books, with no stereotypes or biased information, they become a way for children to love themselves and appreciate worlds different from their own.

### *Importance*

The topic of Deaf culture in children's literature is important because there are not many books out there for children that talk about Deaf culture. Most of the books that have a deaf character talk about the medical side of deafness. For example, how the deafness occurred or how it can be fixed so the character can once again be in a hearing society. What I am referring to here is the medical or pathological vs. cultural model of media with Deaf characters in it. The medical model of writing often has parents grieving for their child's hearing loss, focusing on the person's inability to hear or speak, and overall, seeing deafness as a deficit. The cultural model in media about Deaf characters has the characters interacting with each other and technology. It also mentions the Deaf community and the many things that are associated with it. If the book follows the cultural model, it should also feature characters signing using ASL, residential schools for the Deaf, communication strategies, and hearing parents accepting deafness (Golos et al., 2011). The majority of children's literature that has a Deaf character, main or secondary, often uses the medical model instead of the cultural one. This harms the children who read it

because they are getting biased information about the Deaf community. It also harms Deaf children because they are not getting the role models they need to become an essential part of the Deaf community, as is their right. It was important to me as I wrote my manuscript to ensure it had little to no traces of the medical model.

The following reason as to why this topic is important is the lack of award-winning books depicting Deaf culture. In the last decade, the Schneider Family Book Award only awarded five children's books with a Deaf main character. The Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award gave no wards to books about Deaf characters. These two awards are given to books that have characters with disabilities and mental illness. What was also surprising was the small amount of Caldecott Award winners who have a character with a disability. From 1938 to 2005, there were only 11 books that received the winning metal or honors status; none of them, however, were books about a Deaf character or Deaf culture (Dyches et al., 2006). After looking at the winners of this award from 2005 to now, none of the books that won had a character with a disability, and none of them portrayed any kind of Deaf culture. This is important because books depicting this culture deserve to get more awards. This way, more teachers and parents will consider sharing them and reading them to their children. Sharing these books will ensure more young kids learn about Deaf culture and Deaf kids find more mirrors and affirmations.

Finally, this topic is important because Deaf kids do not have the role models they need in the books about Deaf characters. Because most of the books use the medical model to depict Deafness, the Deaf kids are getting the wrong idea about what their culture is. They are not being introduced to their lively and bright culture. These books portray Deafness as a disability and not a culture. Deaf people have worked so hard to make sure that their Deafness is not seen as a disability but as a culture. They have their own language, ASL, which has its own unique

grammar pattern, residential schools for the Deaf, Deaf technology, and the Deaf community itself, which includes Deaf poetry and Deaf theater (Golos et al., 2011). If Deaf children do not see their community depicted accurately in the books they read, they might not want to be a part of it, and they will miss out on all the acceptance and belonging they might feel when they are around people like them. It might also cause them low self-esteem and efficacy. If books with Deaf characters do not show the cultural model of Deafness, then children reading these books, Deaf or not, will only have misconceptions about the Deaf community in their minds. Most importantly, Deaf children will not have the role models they deserve and that every other child has. It is important for Deaf children to have role models so they know what is out there for them in their community.

### **Background of Deaf Culture in Children's Literature**

Based on my review, there have been two ways to represent Deaf characters in children's literature. The first one is the pathological model. This model shows deafness as a disability or a medical issue, hence why the 'd' is lowercase (Golos et al., 2012). The next is called the cultural model. This type of book would have Deaf characters interacting with each other, using ASL, and participating in Deaf culture (Golos et al., 2012). When a person is recognized as a member of the Deaf community through honoring their language (ASL), history, and culture they use the capital D for the word Deaf. This symbolizes they are a part of the community (Golos et al., 2012). To further emphasize how important this Deaf culture is to Deaf people, they view themselves not as disabled but as a "linguistic minority" (Stephen & Yenika-Agbaw, 2022, p. xi). These two models of Deafness have been used to represent Deaf people in and out of children's literature. The question readers and professionals should be asking is, does the person view Deafness as a disability or as a culture with a rich history?

As people have written children's books with portrayals of Deaf characters, they have stuck to these two models. Unfortunately, most authors use the pathological or medical model to depict their deaf characters. The authors focus on the medical aspect of Deafness and not the cultural part. For example, they detail how the character became deaf and how medical equipment like hearing aids or cochlear implants can help them hear again (Golos et al., 2012). They also often depict these characters as having something wrong with them that needs to be fixed to live successfully in the hearing world (Golos, et al., 2012). There are hardly ever references to the cultural part of their lives. In a study of 20 picture books that have depictions of Deaf characters by Golos, Moses, and Wolbers, they found that there were 114 references to the pathological model of deafness and only eight references to the cultural model (Golos et al., 2012). This shows how little books about Deafness depict it as something with a deep, rich history and culture.

In the past and present, authors also depict Deaf characters in danger or trying to solve some kind of problem. These problems often come about because of their Deafness. All of this is done because many successful children's books are based on the plot structure of characters experiencing a threat and then finding a way to stop or avert the threat (Brittian, 2004). This idea comes from J. A. Appleyard's theory of a child's reading experience from 1991. This could explain why so many books use the pathological model instead of the cultural model. They use what has been successful in the past to guide their book's plot instead of using the culture they are trying to write about.

The history of Deaf culture being portrayed in children's books is not an uplifting one to the Deaf community. There have been too many authors using the pathological model in their books. By doing this, they are playing into stereotypes of Deaf people and not giving Deaf

children good role models in literature, which they are in desperate need of. The cultural model has been used so little in books about Deaf people when, in reality, the culture these books are trying to depict has so much to offer young Deaf children. These children could learn so much about their culture if the books they read based their characters and their actions around the cultural model of Deafness.

Through reading, analyzing, and writing about Deaf Culture in children's literature, I hope to gain a better understanding of the community and gain the insight to write and create a children's book manuscript that compares to the books analyzed in this paper.

### ***Sampling, Search, and Process***

The process of finding the books to analyze began by searching the American Library Association's Schneider Family Book Award and the Council for Exceptional Children's Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award. The Schneider Family Book Award is awarded to books by a council of ALA members. These members are people who have expertise in disabilities and knowledge about selecting books (Schneider Family Book Award, 2022). The Dolly Grey Award, given by the CEC, has a panel of people who choose the books each year. This panel is comprised of parents, teachers, and children's literary experts. The parents and teachers must have experience with children with developmental disabilities (Dolly Gray Review Panel, 2023). I began searching for picture books about children with disabilities because the Dolly Gray Award is given to children's books about people with disabilities; I thought I would find many picture books about people who are Deaf or hard of hearing in the last ten years. Unfortunately, there were no picture books about people in the Deaf community. There were, however, chapter books, but because I am focusing on picture books, I did not choose any of the chapter books to analyze. I then went to the website where I could find the book that won the Schneider Family

Book Award. This award also goes to books that portray an artistic expression of people with disabilities. While searching through the awards from years that have passed, I found multiple picture books with a Deaf main character or a character who was Deaf. I found five children's picture books that had a character who was Deaf. I combed through almost nine years of awards to find five children's books that had a Deaf main character. *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* (Say, 2017), *Kami and the Yaks* (Stryer, 2007), *The Deaf Musicians* (Seeger, 2006), *Dad, Jackie and Me* (Uhlberg, 2005) and *Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, a Deaf Girl, Change Percussion* (Stocker, 2022). Two were biographies, and the rest were either fiction or historical fiction. I was glad that there were more picture books about children who are deaf in this award than there were in the last one.

Before discussing what I found readily available at the library, I wanted to note the different awards, besides the Schneider Family Book Award, given to the books listed above. These were all found via the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database or CLCD. The book *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* by Allen Say only won the Schneider Family Book Award in 2018. The book *Kami and the Yaks* by Andrea Stryer won the Bronze Moonbeam Children's Book Award in 2007. This was the first book to win the bronze for this award as it started in 2007, according to the CLCD. *The Deaf Musicians* by Pete Seeger only won the Schneider Family Book Award, like *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*. The book *Dad, Jackie, and Me* by Myron Uhlberg won fifteen awards between 2005 and 2010. These awards include the Comstock Read Aloud Book Award for the Read Aloud ages 8-12 and the Storytelling World Resource Award for the stories for pre-adolescent listeners in 2006. This book also was the honor book for the Children's Crown Award in 2008 as well as a special recognition book for the Paterson Prize Books for Young People in 2006. Finally, this book was a nominee for the Southern California

Booksellers Association Award in 2005. Lastly, the book *Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, a Deaf Girl, Changed Percussion* by Shannon Stocker won the Comstock Read Aloud Book Award in 2022. It also got the honors for the Anna Dewdney Read Together Award and was a finalist for the Cybils Award for elementary nonfiction in 2022.

My next course of action was to go to the local library, Lancaster Public Library, and see what they had readily available. I wanted to see what my library had on site. Looking at what they had available would allow me to see what picture books about Deaf people they have for younger children to read. It would allow me to see which ones they deem important for children to read. After looking in the catalog at the library, I could only find four of the five readily available for me to check out. The one they did not have at the library was *Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, a Deaf Girl, Changed Percussion*. This was because the book was new, and the LPL did not have it yet. This book is now available in the Lancaster Library system; it has seven available copies; however, it was not when I went to find the books last year. This, however, was not a big problem because it was a biography; this book was about a real person. Because my manuscript is a realistic fiction picture book, I did not want to analyze too many biographies.

After I found the four Schneider Family Book Award winners, I looked for any popular series that portrays a Deaf character. While searching through the Lancaster Public Library catalog under the category of 'Deaf- Juvenile Literature,' I found two different series with a main character who was Deaf. The first book is part of a series about a boy named Moses and his adventures. The book is called *Moses Goes to the Circus* (Millman, 2003). The second series I found is about a girl named Emma. I found two different books from this series readily available for me to check out. They are called *Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals* (Reid, 2021) and *Emma Every Day: A Trip to Grandma's House* (Reid, 2021). These three books are a

part of a series which are popular for younger kids. Book series help children engage in reading from a young age and keep reading. They also help children develop confidence, fluency and motivation while reading (Tolkien, 2023). This is why book series are popular and are more likely to be in schools, scholastic and more.

Finally, I went to the library catalog again and searched for any other picture books that were under the 'Deaf- Juvenile Literature' category that were not biographies or about Hellen Keller. I found three that were available to me. The first one I found was called *Hands and Hearts* by Donna Jo Napoli (Napoli, 2013). The second one is called *Let's Hear It for Almigal* by Wendy Kupfer (Kupfer, 2012). The final one I found is *The Sound of All Things* by Myron Uhlberg (Uhlberg, 2016).

It was interesting to see the types of books that were readily available in my public library. Another thing to note is that while I was looking through the library catalog, the number of books in the juvenile picture book section that had a Deaf character in them was small. When searching the catalog, most of the books that had Deaf characters in them discussed Hellen Keller, or the books were biographies about other people. There were very few fiction or realistic fiction picture books about a Deaf character.

To go deeper into what was readily available in the Lancaster Public Library system, I wanted to go over the number of copies available for each book. *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* has four copies available across the system, but one copy is available at the Lancaster Public Library or LPL. There are four copies available of *Kami and the Yaks* in the system, and there is one available at the LPL. *The Deaf Musicians* only has two copies available, and none are at the LPL. However, I was able to request the book and have it sent to the LPL. *Dad, Jackie, and I* currently have four copies of the book in the system, but none are at the LPL. The book *Moses Goes to the*

*Circus* has five available copies, and one of those is at the LPL. The books *Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals* and *A Trip to Grandma's* in the series *Emma Every Day*, have multiple copies of each book. *Friendship Goals* has three copies in the system, with one of them being at the LPL. *A Trip to Grandma's* has two copies in the system but none at the LPL. *Hands and Hearts* has four copies available, and one is at the LPL. The book *Let's Hear It for Almigal* has five books available, and one is also at the LPL. Finally, the book *The Sound of All Things* only has one book available in the system, and it is not at the LPL at the moment. As mentioned before, even though some of these books are not currently available at the LPL, I can request them, and I can pick them up at the LPL when they get there.

#### **Number of Books Available in the Lancaster Public Library System**

Name of Book	Number of Books Available in the Lancaster Public Library System
Silent Days, Silent Dreams by Allen Say	Four Copies
The Deaf Musicians by Pete Seeger	Four Copies
Kami and the Yaks by Andrea Stenn Stryer	Two Copies
Dad, Jackie and Me by Myron Uhlberg	Four Copies
Moses Goes to the Circus by Isaac Millman	Five Copies
Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals	Three Copies
Emma Every Day: A Trip to Grandma's By C. L. Reid	Two Copies
Hands and Hearts by Donna Napoli	Four Copies
Let's Hear it for Almigal by Wendy Kupfer	Five Copies
The Sound of All Things. By Myron Uhlberg	One Copy

After finding these books, I was able to read them and analyze them to find the trends I saw throughout each book. This will be done in a later section of this paper. For the books that won the Schneider Family Book Award, I was able to go through the criteria for winning the award and analyze the books to see if they truly deserved the award. This will also be looked at in a later section of the paper. To help me further understand and analyze these books, I looked at the background of Deaf culture both in and out of children's Literature.

### **The Portrayal of Deaf Culture Across Schneider Family Book Award Winners**

The Schneider Family Book Award is part of the American Library Association awards given out each year. This award is given to "an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences," (Schneider Family Book Award, 2022). Like the other awards, this award is given to children's and young adult literature that meets the criteria listed on the ALA website. There are criteria for the content of the book, the style, and illustrations and design. The terms and definitions also state that the person with the disability must be the protagonist or a secondary character. The award-winning books I have picked out contain both main and secondary characters who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The awards and honors are given to the books the jury deems fit the award's criteria. The jury is composed of no more than nine members. Each member is associated with the American Library Association. The jury members are also required to have "experience in book selection and knowledge of disability experiences," (Schneider Family Book Award Manual, 2004). This jury selects the winners from younger children, middle grades, and teen books every year. The

books that I have selected are all younger children's books from various years ranging from 10 to 15 years old.

### **Schneider Family Award-Winning Book Annotations and Meeting Criteria**

#### ***Silent Days, Silent Dreams***

Say, A. (2017). *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books.

The first book I chose from the Schneider Family Book Award is *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* by Allen Say. This book is narrated by the nephew of the main character. This book is about the artist James Castle and his life as an artist who is deaf.

This book begins with his birth on September 25, 1899. The narrator tells the reader from the beginning that his main character cannot hear. James was deaf at birth. Allen writes, "But James couldn't hear himself shrieking. For him, the world would always be silent. However, Say does not say the word deaf until page 22 when discussing James's sister, who became deaf because of measles. This book tells the reader about James' life. Say tells us where James lived and his experiences with school and home life. Say also tells the readers about James' life as an artist who was not yet discovered. The book shows its reader how James was an artist from a young age. James was drawing as soon as he discovered pencil and paper. His parents would often give him scrap paper just to keep him occupied. When he went to the school for the deaf, his teachers were not happy with him drawing all the time, so they told his parents to make him stop. He was deemed ineducable when he was fifteen, so he was sent back to the farm with his family. At home, he was not allowed to draw, but James found a way. When he was caught, he was scolded and ridiculed. James kept drawing throughout his life, and when he was older, he was discovered by a professor. James' nephew showed his work to one of his art professors, and they loved it. The professor got James his own art gallery, and his art finally took off.

When Say describes James at the beginning of the book, he describes the fact that he cannot hear what James would be seeing. Allen describes what James would see as he moves through the world. On one page, he described what James saw as "darting eyes and flapping mouths." As readers, we were able to begin to understand what it was like to be in a room with hearing people when you cannot hear yourself. As Say describes James' life, he sticks to the challenges he had in his early life. There was not a part of the book that mentioned the good things that happened in his early life. Allen only described the good things that happened in James' life when he was older. The whole book describes his hardships.

This book was awarded the Schneider Family Book Award because it followed the established criteria. It was a biography of the artist James Castle, who is deaf. Its representation of a person who is deaf was realistic and avoided stereotypes. Say describes James and his life in a way that avoids certain stereotypes about people who are deaf. It is not a harmful book to people who are deaf. Even though this book primarily describes the hardships in James' life, it does not show James stopped drawing once. Even though his supplies were taken away more than once, he always found a way to make art; he was full of life. Because of this, his deafness was not something made to be pitied in this book. The book's theme is appropriate for the younger audience because it teaches them not to give up on a dream. This book shows James's drawing throughout his life, even when he was made to stop. He never gave up on his passion, and this book tells younger kids they should not give up on theirs. The information about James Castles' disability in this book is accurate because the author did a lot of research into the author himself. This book also shows a small part of the cultural aspect of being Deaf. James went to a school for the Deaf. This is one of the parts of the cultural model described in previous sections.

The style of the book was thought out as well. The book was well-written and kept me engaged the entire time. This can also be seen in the reviews, which will be discussed in later sections. For example, in the book, Say uses a combination of sentence lengths. On page 29, there is a short sentence that reads: "James ran away." (Say, 2017, p. 29). On the next page, however, there is a longer sentence that reads: "Each time, he was caught and brought back and made to copy out the alphabets and numerals over and over." (Say, 2017, p. 30). The variety of sentence structure prevents the book from sounding choppy, monotone, and repetitive. This writing style is acceptable in some forms of literature, like phonics books that teach children to read, but in a picture book like this, it would create a tone that would cause the young readers to become disinterested in the book altogether. The words flowed nicely, and I was never confused by what Say wrote. The illustration and the design of the book were beautiful. Not only did he use his own artwork in this book, but he also put James' artwork in as well. The art was also able to capture the emotion of the words. On pages 10 and 11, there are drawings of James and his classmates. His classmates all stare at him while he covers his ears in the corner. This shows that James fears his classmates, which was talked about in the text. Following these two pages are another two pages of just drawings. There are no words on pages 12 or 13. This was done throughout the book as a style and design choice. These pages make the reader stop and contemplate the thoughts and feelings of this boy while he is in school. The design was easy to follow as well. The text was easy to read, and it was easy to find what text I was supposed to read next. Allen Say's book *Silent Days, Silent Dream* deserves the Schneider Family Book Award because it met the criteria listed in the manual.

Allen Say's *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* was an interesting and beautiful read. It was included in this literary analysis for its unique story and portrayal of a deaf character by an author who is not deaf and does not have any ties to deaf culture other than writing this book.

### ***The Deaf Musicians***

Seeger, P. (2006). *The Deaf Musicians*. (Illus. by R. Christie). New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

The book *The Deaf Musicians* by Pete Seeger and Paul Dubois Jacobs is another book that has won the Schneider Family Book Award. Unlike *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*, this book is entirely fictional. *The Deaf Musicians* tells the story of a jazz pianist named Lee. At the story's beginning, Lee notices, along with his other bandmates, that his hearing is beginning to go away. After one too many slip-ups while playing with his band, they decided to take Lee out of the band. He was upset, but soon after, he saw a sign for a school for the deaf and decided to go there. Lee learned how to talk with his hands or use sign language. Lee even mentioned that sign language looked like jazz. Soon after he enrolled in a school for the Deaf, he found other musicians just like him. One night on the subway, Lee and his friend Max were talking about jazz and throwing different tunes back and forth to each other. As they were passing tunes back and forth, a woman came up to them because she knew the song they were playing. This woman was also Deaf. Max and Lee liked her so much they asked her to join their band; she accepted. As time passed and the band rehearsed in the subway, the band got bigger. They added a singer named Ellie. As the band played in the subway, people noticed; everyone who stopped and watched loved what they heard. As more people began to listen, Lee finally realized that everyone would listen to a deaf musician. This book has many different aspects of the cultural model of Deafness illustrated in the story. Lee goes to a school for the Deaf, where he learns

American Sign Language. Another way this book portrays some aspects of the cultural model of Deafness is because Lee creates a band with other Deaf musicians. When Deaf characters interact with other Deaf characters in books, it shows a part of the cultural model of Deafness.

When discussing why the book got the Schneider Family Book Award, we must look at the criteria and discover if the book met what it was supposed to. First, we will look at the content of this book. This book is a fictional story. Lee is the main character, and this is his story. Seeger and Jacobs portray Lee and his deafness as a full part of life. At the beginning of the book, Lee is upset, but as the story goes on, Lee gains other Deaf friends and starts a band of his own. This shows the readers that being Deaf will not stop you from doing what you love. It did not prevent Lee from playing the piano. This book did not portray Lee's deafness using stereotypes. Many people would believe that Lee would never be able to play music again, but in this book, he makes his own band with only deaf musicians. The theme of this book is to never give up on your dreams, which is appropriate for the younger audience who are intended to read this book. Finally, because there is no direct information about deafness in this book, the last criterion for content is not relevant. This book fits all the criteria given for content.

Looking at style, illustration, and design for the Schneider Family Book Award, this book fits the criteria as well. This book is well-written and very engaging. It is especially engaging because of the words they use to describe the sound of the music. The authors used sound words to describe the music. For example, they described jazz like this; "Plink-a-plink-Bomp-plink-plink..." (Seeger, 2006, p. 1). Using the literary device onomatopoeia is a very interesting way to describe the sound of jazz music. Using these words on the first page is an effective way to get the reader interested in the story. From prior experience working with younger kids, I know that nonsense words like this get them interested in the book. I have often found kids repeating words

like this during and after the words like these have been read. This book also gave us significant character development for Lee. Initially, he was upset because he did not know who would listen to a deaf musician, but when the story ended, he realized everyone would because their music was still fantastic. This book is also not part of a series. This book fits all the criteria for style.

Regarding illustrations and design, *The Deaf Musicians* fits all the criteria. The text and images complement and enhance each other. When the band plays music in the illustrations, the words complement it by using words like "plink" and "zang" to help the readers hear the music while reading the book. The text of the book is easy to read. This is because the words are big and easy to see while reading. It is also free of errors. The layout and flow of the book are easy to follow as well. The story flows from page to page, and there was never a point in the book where I was confused about what happened. The book *The Deaf Musicians* meets all the criteria to win the Schneider Family Book Award.

The author of this book, Pete Seeger, has ties to the Deaf community. His father, Charles Louis Seeger Jr., is Deaf. This can be seen in the dedication of this book, where Seeger says, "To my deaf father: Charles Louis Seeger, Jr." (Seeger, 2006). This shows the reader that the author understands what he is talking about when he describes the Deaf character in the book.

Pete Seeger's and Paul Dubois Jacobs's *The Deaf Musicians* was an inspiring read about a man who did not give up on his dream of playing piano in a band just because he was deaf.

### ***Kami and the Yaks***

Stryer, A. (2006). *Kami and the Yaks*. (Illus. by B. Dodson). Palo Alto, CA: Bay Otter Press.

*Kami and the Yaks* by Andrea Stenn Stryer is about a young sherpa boy from the Himalayas. He is deaf, but he talks by using gestures. They do not call these gestures sign language, so this part of the book uses the medical model of Deafness. In this story, Kami

realizes that some of the yaks had not come down from the mountain when they were supposed to. Kami tried calling them with the whistle he had with him, but none of the yaks came down. So, Kami started climbing the mountain to look for the yaks. While he was climbing up the mountain, a storm began. There was thunder and lightning, as well as snow, all around him. When he could not find them, at first, he used his whistle again, but no yaks followed the sound of the whistle. Kami climbed some more and eventually found the yaks high on the mountain. When he got closer to them, he realized that the younger yak had gotten his leg stuck in between two heavy rocks. Kami blew his whistle, hoping his brother and father would come, but they did not. Kami ran down the mountain and found his father and brother. He tried to tell his father where the yaks were, but his father did not understand him. To get them to understand that the yaks were in trouble, Kami acted like a yak to get his brother and father to realize they were missing; they got his message. Kami led his brother and father to the yaks and got the young yak unstuck. Kami, his brother, his father, and the yaks made their way down the mountain, happy to be together again. This author does not use the cultural model of Deafness anywhere in the book. This means that the author describes Kami's Deafness with the medical model throughout the entire book.

*Kami and the Yaks*, like the two discussed previously, won the Schneider Family Book Award. It won because it met all the criteria needed for the award. When looking at the content of the book, it meets the criteria. First, this book is fiction. It is a fictional story based on a little boy the author met in Nepal. Kami, who is deaf, is the main character in this book as well; he is not a bystander. Kami's deafness was not portrayed as something to be pitied. Kami was able to find the yaks and alert his family to where they were without being able to hear. Kami is portrayed as a strong boy who can save the day. This book avoids the stereotypes centered

around people who are deaf as well. A stereotype avoided in this book is people who are deaf are not understood by hearing people. Even though Kami could not communicate through words; he was able to get his father and brother to help the yaks by using gestures. The theme in this book is appropriate for younger audiences because it teaches perseverance. This is something all younger children need to understand and practice. Finally, the information about deafness in this book was accurate. The author took what she saw from a boy who was deaf and used the information she gathered from him to write this book.

When discussing the style of the book *Kami and the Yaks*, it also meets the criteria needed to win this award. This book is well written. The story flows and has no unusual phrases or stops in the book. This book was also engaging. The way the author described what the Earth felt like to Kami was amazing. For example, when the thunder started, the author described it as “vibrating drumbeats at temple festivals.” This description helped the reader feel what Kami felt when thunder began to rumble.

The illustration and design of this book also met the criteria listed to win this award. The text and the images complemented each other. For example, when the text described Kami falling down the mountain, the illustration next to the text mirrored it. The format of the text was big enough for younger eyes to see. The text was also readable; there were some parts of the book where the text could be slightly difficult to read, but the majority of the book was easily read. The book also had no typographical errors.

Andrea Stenn Stryer's *Kami and the Yaks* was a lovely story about how Kami was able to find and help the yaks under his care by persevering through a storm and a language barrier.

### ***Dad, Jackie, and Me***

Uhlberg, M. (2005). *Dad, Jackie and Me*. (Illus. by C. Bootman). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree

Publishers.

*Dad, Jackie, and Me* by Myron Uhlberg is a historical fiction story based on his life as a kid. A boy living in the year 1947 loved listening to baseball games on his radio. He lived in New York and was a fan of The Dodgers. This year, everyone knew they would win the World Series because they had Jackie Robinson on their team. One day, this boy's father came home with tickets to go to the games. At this point in the story, the reader is told this boy's father is deaf. His dad wanted to meet Jackie Robinson so much, but the boy was concerned because he did not know how they would talk to each other. They went to game after game just to see Jackie Robinson play. Every game, the boy's father called out to get Jackie's attention, but when he called out, it did not come out as Jackie; it came out as "AH-GHEE." At first, everyone looked at his dad, but as time passed, no one seemed to notice; all eyes were on the game. Between each game, the boy taught his father how to play baseball and all the terms used in the games. The boy and his father bonded over baseball as the season went on. They created a scrapbook all about Jackie Robinson. The Dodgers went to the World Series, and so did the boy and his father. At the game, the boy's father caught a ball that Jackie himself threw at him, and the boy swears he saw Jackie smile after his father dropped the ball into his glove. After the game, the 1947 season was over.

*Dad, Jackie, and I* won the Schneider Family Book Award because it met the criteria listed in the awards manual. This fictional story is about a boy and his deaf father bonding over baseball. Even though the narrator of the story, the boy, is not deaf, his father is. His father was right next to the boy the entire time. This makes him an integral part of the story and not a bystander. Uhlberg portrays the father of the story as full of life. His Deafness does not stop him from going to baseball games, learning about baseball, or calling out to Jackie Robinson in the

hope that it will get his attention. The way Uhlberg portrays the boy's father does not make the reader want to pity him. The representation of Deafness is done with no stereotypes. However, this book does show Deafness as a disability and not a culture. During the first baseball game, the boy's father calls out to Jackie, but when his father shouts the name, it does not sound like the name Jackie. The author describes it as sounding like "AH-GEE" (Uhlberg, 2005, p. 14). The people in the stadium looked at him. This page of the book describes that Deaf people sound different when they speak. It also describes how many people react to Deaf people when they speak. This section of the book shows Deafness as a disability and not a culture. This book also shows an aspect of the cultural model of Deafness in this book. The boy's father uses sign language to communicate with others. The boy has also learned sign language and communicates with his dad by using it. The theme of this book is about accepting differences. This is appropriate for younger readers because they should learn at a young age to accept others even if they are different from them. Finally, the information about Deafness in this book is accurate because the author, who had deaf parents, based it on his own life.

This book also meets the criteria listed for style, illustrations, and design. This can be seen through the dialogue and descriptions throughout the book. Uhlberg seamlessly alternated between these two methods of writing to ensure the book had a steady pace. Each line of dialogue is paired with a line or more that moves the story to the next part. For example, on page 18, the author writes: "Let's have a catch," he [the dad] signed. We tossed the ball back and forth until mom called up for supper..." (Uhlberg, 2005, p. 18). When Uhlberg goes from dialogue to description, there is no break or awkward stops in the text. Uhlberg's style stayed the same throughout, and there were no points in the book where the writing was hard to read or confusing. It was engaging as well. The texts and the illustrations keep the reader in the book's

world. The characters were also well-written. It was interesting to see the dad and his love for baseball grow. It was engaging to see how the boy and his father's relationship grew as well. The text and images complemented and enhanced each other as well. For example, on page 10, when the text describes the "gloomy underbelly of the stadium," and the dark ramp, the picture above it is of a dark black and brown tunnel with a small glimpse of the stadium. The text of the book is easy to see and appropriate for younger children. It uses the serif font, which is easy for younger kids to read. Finally, the layout of the book was easy to follow. The text went left to right, and so did the story.

*Dad, Jackie, and Me* was a wonderful story about a boy and his dad bonding over something they love.

### **Popular Series Books Their Annotations**

#### ***Moses Goes to the Circus***

Millman, I. (2003). *Moses goes to the Circus*. New York: NY: Frances Foster Books.

*Moses Goes to the Circus* by Isaac Millman is about a boy who goes to the circus with his family. The boy, Moses, is Deaf, but the rest of his family is not. This part of the book shows the statistic that only one in every ten Deaf children is born with parents who are Deaf as well (Rana, 2018). This is the third book about Moses that Millman has written. In this book, Moses, his sister, Mom, and Dad all go to the circus. At the beginning of the book, it mentions that everyone in the family uses sign language to communicate because Moses is the only deaf one in his family. This shows a part of the cultural model of Deafness: using sign language to communicate with others. Throughout the book, Moses tries to teach his little sister, Renee, how to sign different animals they see around the circus, but she does not always get them right. It makes Moses giggle sometimes. When they get to the actual circus, an interpreter is there for those who

are Deaf. The interpolator is there to interpret sounds and spoken words. Moses and his family see so many amazing things at the circus. Renee tries to sign them all. They see animals, trapeze artists, acrobats, and so much more. At one point, Moses is called down to be part of a clown act. Once the show is over, Moses and his family take the subway home. All the way home, Moses talks to his family about the circus and what he loves. When they got home, Moses and his sister put on a circus act of their own.

*Moses Goes to the Circus* by Isaac Millman is a beautiful book about a family who communicates using sign language while spending a day at the circus.

### ***Emma Every Day***

Reid, C. (2022). *Emma Every Day: A Trip to Grandmas*. (Illus. By E. Aiello). North Mankato, MN: Picture Window Books.

Reid, C. (2022). *Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals*. (Illus. by E. Aiello). North Mankato, MN: Picture Window Books.

*Emma Every Day* books by C.L. Reid are chapter books about a girl named Emma who is deaf. These books take the reader through different activities she does in her daily life. Each book has Emma doing something different. In all of the *Emma Every Day* books, one of the first pages allows the reader to meet Emma, her family, and her friends. The books also show a guide to finger spelling and how to sign the numbers. There is a page where the author tells the reader that Emma is Deaf, uses ASL to communicate with others, and wears a cochlear implant. The cochlear implant can be seen in almost every illustration of Emma in these books. Finally, throughout the books, there are words highlighted, and next to the words is how to finger spell them. C. L. Reid is Deaf and blind. She also uses ASL and wears a cochlear implant. The two

books I will look at have Emma going to her grandma's house and playing soccer with her friends.

In *Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals*, Emma and her friends Izzy and Chen got done soccer practice. Izzy is upset because she does not think she is good at soccer, so Emma suggests practicing at the park. They kept practicing at the park until Izzy believed she was good enough to play in the game on Saturday morning. Saturday morning, Emma met Izzy and Chen at the soccer field. Izzy was a little nervous, but she was ready to play the game. Throughout this book, Emma, her friends, and her family use ASL to communicate. After many lines of dialogue, instead of using the word "said," the author uses the word signed to single to the reader. Emma and her friends or family are using ASL to communicate with Emma. For example, on page 18, it reads: "You just need more practice,' Chen Signed 'I agree, and I will not give up,' Izzie signed." (Reid, 2022, p. 18). This shows a part of the cultural model of Deafness: using ASL to communicate with others. However, Emma's cochlear implant is mentioned three times in this book, which also shows the reader the medical model of Deafness and portrays Deafness as a disability and not a culture.

In *Emma Every Day: A Trip to Grandmas*, Emma and her brother Jaden are staying at her grandmother's house. When Emma got there, she started to feel homesick; she had a hard time falling asleep. She ran to her grandmother's room and slept there for the night. In the morning, Emma, her brother, and grandma spent time in the garden and picking up food. It distracted Emma from missing home. The next day, Emma met a boy named Nick. Nick is also deaf and uses a cochlear implant like Emma. Emma, Nick, and Jaden spent the rest of the day hanging out. Emma was excited to visit again before she left. In this book, a cochlear implant is mentioned four times. As I mentioned above, this shows the medical model of disability.

However, there were two different parts of the book where the cultural model of Deafness was used. One part was when Emma and her family used ASL to communicate with each other. ASL was used more in this book than in the first one. Finally, Emma was able to interact with another Deaf character in this book. Emma was able to play and sign with someone who was a part of her community.

### **Other Books and Their Annotations**

#### ***Hands and Hearts***

Napoli, D. (2014). *Hands and Hearts*. (Illus. by A. Bates). New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers.

*Hands and Hearts* by Donna Napoli, who has been learning about deaf culture and Deaf cultures for twenty years, according to her author's note in the back matter of the book, is a book about a mother and her daughter going to the beach. The girl tugs her mother to the beach, and when they finally get there, they do many different things. They dance together, run into the waves together, play in the sand together, build sandcastles together, rest together, talk to each other, watch the sunset, and wave bye to the ocean together. They do all of this without talking to each other. They communicate using sign language. On each page of the book, a word is highlighted in red. Next to the text, there are steps on how to do that word in sign language. These steps are shown by hands doing the motions or by a person doing the signing. Throughout the book, the reader is unsure which character is Deaf. The author does not use the word Deaf, nor does she tell the reader why the mother and daughter use sign language to communicate. In some illustrations, the reader can see the mother or the daughter doing the sign shown on the page next to it. For example, on page 22, the daughter is signing the word sun, which is highlighted red on the previous page. On page 21, there are also the steps on how to sign the

word sun. This book uses one of the many ways to portray Deafness in Children's literature using the cultural model. Like many other books discussed, the characters use sign language to communicate with one another. This book is about a mother and daughter having an exciting day at the beach.

***Let's Hear it for Almigal***

Kupfer, W. (2012). *Let's Hear it for Almigal*. (Illus. by T. Lyon). Delray Beach, FL: Handfinger Press.

*Let's Hear It for Almigal* by Wendy Kupfer is about a girl named Almigal who wears hearing aids. This book is narrated by her, and she tells the reader why she is the luckiest girl in the world. She says she is so lucky because she has friends who are different. Her friends wear glasses, speak different languages, are twins, and wear hearing aids like hers. Her best friend Penelope wears hearing aids. They talk to each other using their voice, but Penelope is teaching her sign language. As the story progresses, she tells us she does not feel lucky sometimes because she cannot hear everything. One day, she goes to the doctor, and they say it is time for him to get cochlear implants. Almigal is so excited. After she got the surgery, all her friends were so happy for her, and so was she. She learned how to hear with her implants every day; when she went back to the doctor, she passed her hearing test. Almigal was a little careless with her implants at first; she jumped into a pool and gave them to her dog, but she learned to take care of them. By the end of the book, she said that she was the luckiest girl in the world.

Wendy Kupfer, who has ties to the Deaf community because her daughter was diagnosed with profound hearing loss at the age of ten months, uses both the cultural and medical model to describe Almigal's journey throughout this book. The author's biography at the end of the book describes Kupfer's ties to the Deaf community by telling the reader her daughter has profound

hearing loss. Almigal has hearing aids at the beginning of this book, but later she gets cochlear implants. Both of these devices are illustrated in the book. They are easy to see because they are a bright color: pink. At one point, Almigal feels sad because she cannot hear. Both of these parts of the book show Deafness as a disability and not a culture. However, in the book, the author does describe some things with the cultural model. For example, Almigal has a friend who is like her. Isabella, her friend, also uses sign language. They do not use sign language to talk to each other because Almigal does not know how to sign, but Isabella is teaching her. These are two examples of how the author uses the cultural model of Deafness in her book. *Let's Hear It for Almigal* is about a girl who wants to hear every sound she can. Unfortunately, even though this book is written by a woman who has ties to the Deaf community, it is heavily influenced by the medical model of Deafness.

### ***The Sound of All Things***

Uhlberg, M. (2016). *The Sound of All Things*. (Illus. by T. Papoulas). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers.

*The Sound of All Things* by Myron Uhlberg, who has ties to the Deaf community because of his Deaf parents, is a book about a boy who tells his dad what the things around him sound like. In the author's note at the back of the book, Uhlberg tells the reader that both of his parents are deaf. Both the boy's mother and father in the book are deaf. The book starts with the boy and his father on a rollercoaster. His father asks his son to tell him what the wheels sound like. At the end of the ride, the dad asks again. The boy replies loudly, but his father asks him to be more specific. The boy tells him it sounded like thunder. As the day went on, the father, son, and the mother, who is also Deaf, walked along the pier using their senses to understand what was going on around them. The father continued to ask his son what the world sounded like; the boy always

replied loudly, and the father always said to be more specific. The day went on, and the family visited their favorite Chinese place and the library. At the library, the son asked the librarian for a book that could help him describe what the ocean sounds like for his father. Later, fireworks went off. The boy's father seemed to be using all his senses to understand what the fireworks sounded like. While they were walking home, the boy tried to imagine what it was like to be deaf, but he could not. Finally, the boy ends his day reading the book given to him by the librarian in the hope that he could tell his father what the world sounded like. The boy goes home and writes what he is going to tell his dad the next day.

Like other books discussed, this book used both the medical and cultural model of Deafness to describe the characters in the book. The medical model of Deafness is used in this book when the boy's dad asks what the things around him sound like. This is a theme throughout the book. The father is always asking his son what things sound like. This shows the reader that the father wants to hear what is around him. This shows Deafness as a disability and not a culture. This book also uses the cultural model of Deafness because the characters in the book use sign language to communicate, and there are two Deaf characters in this book, the mom and dad, who interact with each other. These two aspects of the book portray Deafness as a culture and not a disability.

### **Trends and Findings Children's Literature Pertaining to Deaf Culture**

As I was reading this sample of books that portray Deaf culture for younger audiences, I was able to find some trends. These trends include the race and gender of the character, if the character uses sign language, hearing aids, or a cochlear implant, if there are other deaf characters in the book, if the book says the word deaf, the author and their connection to deaf culture, and how the book was received. These trends will also be used to discuss my opinions

regarding the books and how they compare. Finally, in this section, I will also offer a chart to show my annotations regarding the different models of media the authors used to describe the Deaf characters in their books. This chart will show whether the book used the medical (pathological) or cultural model to discuss the character's Deafness.

For *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*, the main character was a white man. James Castle did not use sign language, hearing aids, or a cochlear implant. The book did include other deaf characters. His sister became deaf due to having measles when she was young. The book does say the word deaf, but not to describe James; the author used it to describe his sister. Allen Say has no ties to deaf culture other than learning about James Castle and his work. Finally, after looking through the reviews on the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database or CLCD, it was clear that this book was received well by many different audiences. Both the Book List Online (2017) and the Horn Book Inc. (2018) have great reviews of the book. They both praised Say for his artwork and the vivid imagery created by the words. Readers also praised Say for his work, calling the book "amazing" and "beautiful" on the Lancaster Public Library website. When looking at the trends of *The Deaf Musicians* book regarding Deaf culture in literature, this book is slightly different from *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*. It is similar because both main characters are white men, and both books have more than one deaf character. Both books also use the word deaf in them. This book also does not show the use of hearing aids or cochlear implants. The authors of this book, Pete Seeger and Paul Dubois Jacobs, do not have any ties to the deaf community. *The Deaf Musicians* differ because it has it in the title and the book. The word Deaf is also used much earlier on. *The Deaf Musicians* differs from *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* because it has people using sign language. These two books are also similar because of how they were received by the public. *The Deaf Musicians* was well received by the public.

Reviews on both the CLCD and Lancaster Public Library sites love this book for its unique storytelling and illustrations. Kirkus Review praised the book for its "colorful paintings" and "phonic gems" (2006). The people who reviewed it also love the theme behind the story.

When looking at the trends in *Kami and the Yaks* compared to the other two, there are similarities and differences. The similarities are the main character in the book is a boy, Kami does not use hearing aids or cochlear implants, and the book says the word deaf. Where *Kami and the Yaks* differ from the two books is instead of using sign language, Kami uses gestures to talk to others. This book is also different because Kami is not white, he is Asian, and in this book, there are no other deaf people; Kami is the only deaf person in this story.

To finish looking at the trends regarding this book, we need to look at how it was received by the people reading it. When looking at the reviews on the CLCD and the Lancaster Public Library sites, more than one person did not like the bland language of the story. Kirkus Reviews wrote, "The writing is sometimes pedestrian- 'His mittens got wet and icy'..." (2007). Other people said the same things. Other than that, all the reviews praise the book for its story and how Kami persevered to find the yaks and get them to safety. Even though some people thought *Kami and the Yaks* could use more vivid imagery, the majority of the people loved the book anyway. When looking at the trends in *Dad, Jackie, and Me* in relation to the other three, there are both similarities and differences. As stated before, Myron Uhlberg is involved in Deaf culture because both of his parents are deaf. The gender of the deaf character is male, and he is white. Something different about this is that the main character is not deaf; the secondary character is. The boy's father uses sign language to communicate with this family, but he does not have hearing aids or cochlear implants. There were no other deaf people in the book. Like the other books, *Dad, Jackie, and Me* use the word deaf. Uhlberg uses it when describing the father, the first time the

readers meet him. Finally, after looking at the reviews on the CLCD and the Lancaster Public Library sites, this book was well received by its readers. They loved the illustrations done by Colin Bootman, and they also loved the story told in this book. Booklist Online writes, "Colin Bootman... uses evocative watercolors rich in soft browns and lush greens to capture both the feel of the 1940s and the electricity of Robin's playing" (2005). Many reviews stated how they enjoyed how the story talks about prejudice involving skin color and disabilities. Many people loved this book.

Looking at the trends present in *Moses Goes to the Circus* about Deaf culture in literature; this book is similar to the book discussed in the Schneider Family Book Award section. *Moses Goes to the Circus* is about a white boy who is deaf. He uses sign language to communicate with his family. In this book, there are pictures of how to sign certain words used in the book. Moses and his parents are fluent in sign language, but his sister is still learning. Moses does not wear hearing aids or cochlear implants. In this book, there are no other deaf people, even though his family speaks sign language. The book does use the words deaf. The author tells the reader Moses is deaf on the first page. Isaac Millman is not deaf himself, but he has worked with teachers from the "47" The American Sign Language and English School in New York City to write all his Moses books. Finally, after looking at the reviews left by both professionals and readers of this book, everyone who reads this book loves not only the story and the illustrations but also the use of sign language in the book. Multiple reviewers, including professionals, including The Horn Book Inc., Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, and more on the Lancaster Public Library website, have stated that they appreciate how Moses uses sign language to communicate in the book. His parents use sign language with him. Many people have also stated that they enjoy the small boxes in the illustrations that teach the children reading

the book how to sign words used in the book. For example, when Moses signs whiskers, there is a little box near it that shows the reader how to sign whiskers. Overall, the public has received this book well.

When it comes to trends in *Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals* and *A Trip to Grandmas* regarding Deaf culture in children's literature, there are a couple of big differences. One is that Emma is a girl. She is the first white girl with her own book series I saw while searching for children's books about Deaf children. Emma also wears a cochlear implant. No other character has used them in the books I have discussed. Finally, the author, C.L. Reid, is both deaf and blind. This was found in the back matter of the books where it talks about the author and illustrator. There are also similarities in these books to the rest of the books I have discussed. Emma used sign language to talk to others. Both books use the word deaf. The books use the word deaf when telling the reader who Emma is when showing them the sign language alphabet at the beginning of each book. Emma does not use hearing aids in either book. Finally, In the book where Emma takes a trip to her grandmother's house, there is another character who is deaf. A boy around Emma's age named Nick, is deaf. In the book where Emma plays soccer with her friends, no deaf characters other than Emma are in the book.

When it comes to the trends seen in children's literature regarding Deaf culture, *Hands and Hearts* is not similar compared to the others. This is our second book with a white girl as our main character. It is also different because the author does not mention that either of the people in the book is deaf; the author just says that they talk with their hands. Another interesting thing about this book is that the author is deeply involved in the deaf community. She has been learning about deaf culture and sign language for over twenty years. As mentioned before, the characters in this book do use sign language, but they do not use hearing aids or cochlear

implants. Because the word deaf was never said, I do not know if there were any other deaf or hard-of-hearing characters in this book. Finally, there were not many reviews on the CLCD or the Lancaster Public Library catalog, but from the few I looked at it seems that this book was well-received by professionals and the general public. Many reviews said they enjoyed the soft nature of the book and liked the sign language taught to them on each page. Overall, this book was well-received by the public.

*Let's Hear It for Almigal* is the fourth book to have a white girl as the main character. Another different thing about this book is that it has characters using sign language and wearing both hearing aids and cochlear implants. As mentioned before, this book has two different characters who use sign language and wear hearing aids. The reader does not know if they are deaf because the book never uses the word deaf; the reader only knows they have trouble hearing. The author, Wendy Kupfer, has knowledge about the deaf community because her daughter has profound hearing loss. The doctors said she would never be able to talk again, but she turned out to be a chatterbox after a lot of hard work. Finally, after looking at the reviews published by professionals and the general public, I can see that this book was well-received by the public. Many of the reviews stated how they loved Almigal's good spirit and her can-do attitude. Many people loved how happy she was throughout the book. They also enjoyed seeing the journey she went through to get her implants. Overall, this book was greatly enjoyed by the public.

When it comes to the trends linked to deaf culture in children's literature, *The Sound of All Things* is very similar to the other book by Myron Uhlberg. Like the other book by Uhlberg, the main character in *The Sound of All Things*, a white boy, is not deaf, but his parents are. They use sign language but do not use hearing aids or cochlear implants. The book does use the word

deaf. The author uses it in the very beginning to tell the reader that the boy's father is Deaf. It is used again to tell the reader the mother is also Deaf. As mentioned in the previous book written by Myron Uhlberg, the author has ties to Deaf culture because both of his parents are deaf. Finally, after looking at the reviews written by professionals and the general public, it is clear that this book was enjoyed by all who read it; it was well-received. Many of the people who reviewed it liked the book for its vibrant colors and the story about the boy telling his father what things around them sounded like. One reader on the Lancaster Public Library website wrote, "The writing is beautiful and, since there is such a strong emphasis on descriptions" (EmLu). They also enjoy it because it is a story about acceptance both for the boy and his father. For example, the PW Annex Reviews wrote, "...Uhlberg (*A Storm Called Katrina*) also describes, sensitively and powerfully, how the man uses all of his senses to better understand sound" (2016). Overall, *The Sound of All Things* by Myron Uhlberg was well-received based on the detailed descriptions and the vivid illustrations.

After reading and annotating ten books and eleven articles discussing Deafness, there are some books that I did not like and others that I did. To begin with, the books I did not like are *Kami and the Yaks* by Andrea Stenn Stryer, *Let's Hear it For Almigal* by Wendy Kupfer, and *The Sound of All Things* by Myron Uhlberg. I did not like these books because the author used more of the medical model to describe the Deaf characters than the cultural model. For example, in *Let's Hear it for Almigal*, Almigal had both hearing aids and a cochlear implant. Both were very prominent throughout the book because they were bright pink in the illustrations. This shows the readers that Deaf people need these medical devices to function in a hearing society. Within the Deaf community, cochlear implants are cause for outrage and criticism (Rana, 2018). Having her cochlear implant be a considerable part of the story was the main

reason I did not like this book. I did not like *Kami and the Yaks* because there was no use of the cultural model in the book. While this book was well written and deserving of the award it got, I think the book would have been better if the author had done more research on the Deaf community and used the medical model to guide her book. Finally, I did not like *The Sound of All Things* because the father, who is Deaf, was obsessed with finding out what things sound like. Throughout the book, the father asks his son about the sounds he hears. While the book had some aspects of the cultural model in it, the book left me feeling unhappy because of how centered it was on the father, knowing what things sounded like. This leaves the impression that Deaf people want and need to hear what is going on around them. Even though some of these books had aspects of the cultural model in them, they overwhelmingly used the medical model to describe the Deaf characters.

The books that I liked after reading them are *Moses Goes to the Circus* by Isaac Millman, *The Deaf Musicians* by Pete Seeger, and both of the *Emma Every Day* books by C. L. Reid. I liked these books more than the three listed above because the authors used more of the cultural model to guide their writing. For example, in *The Deaf Musicians*, the main character, Lee, interacts with other Deaf people, uses sign language, and goes to a school for the Deaf. These are all parts of the cultural model of Deafness. This book used the most aspects of the cultural model of Deafness than the other nine books I reviewed. I like *Moses Goes to the Circus* because even though the only element of the cultural model used in this book is using sign language to communicate, there is little to no use of the medical model in this book. Moses does not use medical devices to help him hear, and his character is not portrayed as someone who wants to hear the world around him. Moses is content with using sign language to communicate with others. Finally, I liked the *Emma Every Day* books because of the prominent

use of sign language and the fact that Emma was able to interact with another Deaf character her age. This is a huge part of the cultural model of Deafness. This happens in *Let's Hear It for Almigal* as well, but because of the message portrayed in that book, I did not like it. The *Emma Every Day* books also highlight Emma's cochlear implant, but Emma's character did get upset because she could not hear things as Almigal did in her book. Emma was also seen in the book without her implant, but Almigal was not. Emma also knows sign language and can use it with friends and family. I liked these books better than the ones mentioned above because they used more aspects of the cultural model to guide their character's actions.

Finally, the last three books stand in the middle. I do not dislike these books, but I do not love them either. *Hand and Hearts* by Donna Naopli is in this category because there was not any characterization of the mother or daughter in the book, so I was not able to understand their thoughts or feelings about being Deaf. I was also unable to tell which character was Deaf in the book. However, they did use sign language to communicate, which added to the cultural model of Deafness in the book.

*Silent Days, Silent Dreams* is also in this category because there were some parts I enjoyed, but there were other parts I did not. I that the author included James going to a school for the Deaf with his sister, who was also Deaf. This part of the book showed a part of the cultural model of Deafness. One thing I did not like in this book was when the author depicted James as alone in the world. This was a theme throughout the book. I put this book in this category because this is a biography, which means all of the things mentioned in this book happened; James being alone happened in real life. Allen Say did not create a Deaf character and then make him lonely because of his Deafness; James Castle was a real man who was lonely because his family did not treat him as a human being.

Finally, *Dad, Jackie and Me* stand in the middle for the same reason as *Silent Days*, *Silent Dreams*. There was one part of the book I did not enjoy. This was when the boy's father shouted at Jackie Robinson, and everyone looked at him because he "sounded weird." I did not like this part because it could put the idea in the reader's mind that Deaf people sound weird when they talk. This could cause them to not want to talk with Deaf people. Finally, this could cause the reader to not want to learn about Deaf culture. The only reason I am neutral in my feelings on this book is because the boy's father kept shouting Jackie's name at games, and the people in the stadium stopped looking at him while he did it. The author took emphasis off this part of the book, which is one of the reasons why my feelings are neutral on this book. One of the parts I liked about the book was how the boy's father used sign language to communicate and did not wear a cochlear implant or hearing aids. This choice shows the cultural model of Deafness because sign language is the Deaf community language, and not wearing medical devices to help hearing shows that the father does not need to hear the world around him. After all, he can use sign language to communicate with the people he needs to. Overall, the father in this book did not show feelings of wanting to hear like other characters in books, and he was not getting into trouble because he was Deaf. These are the reasons why my feelings are neutral when it comes to this book.

### Medical or Cultural Model

Book	Cultural Model	Medical Model
Silent Days, Silent Dreams by Allen Say	Yes	Yes
The Deaf Musicians by Pete Seeger	Yes	Yes

Kami and the Yaks by Andrea Stenn Stryer	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Dad, Jackie and Me by Myron Uhlberg	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Moses Goes to the Circus by Isaac Millman	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Emma Every Day: Friendship Goals By C. L. Reid	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Emma Every Day: A Trip to Grandma's By C. L. Reid	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Hands and Hearts by Donna Napoli	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Let's Hear it for Almigal by Wendy Kupfer	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
The Sound of All Things. By Myron Uhlberg	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

The chart above reflects the use of the medical (pathological) or cultural model used in the books discussed above by their respective authors to describe the Deaf characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions described throughout the book.

### **Conclusion**

In order to make my manuscript stack up and compare to the books I read and analyzed, I took the trends I saw that were received positively by others and put them into my book (see Appendix A). I also took trends that I did not see in many of the books and made sure to use them in my manuscript. I decided to write my manuscript like this because I wanted my book to stand out from the rest if it was ever formally published. I also wanted to make sure that it would be well-received by the Deaf community because this book might be one of the first books a child picks up to read that has a Deaf character in it. I do not want those children to read anything that could lead them to have misconceptions about the Deaf community.

The first trend I looked at and put into my book was the placement of the Deaf characters in the book; meaning, is the Deaf character the main character or a secondary character in the book? For my book, I took inspiration from Myron Uhlberg. In his books, the Deaf characters are not the ones who share their thoughts with the readers; they are secondary characters. The reason I chose to do this is because I am not Deaf, and I thought it would be insensitive of me to have a Deaf character voice their thought about being deaf if it was me writing it. I do not know the thoughts and feelings that go along with being Deaf because I am not, so it would be incorrect of me to write about the thoughts and feelings of a Deaf child. With this being said, the Deaf character is the main point of the book. The story revolves around them coming to live with a family, but it is told through their sibling's point of view.

Many of the books that I have analyzed, with the main character being a Deaf child, were written by authors without association with the Deaf community. Even though many, if not all, of these books, were well-received by professionals and the public, I did not want to add another book to the list where a hearing person was writing about the thoughts and feelings of a Deaf person. I

thought it would be better to add to the books where Deaf culture is seen through a hearing person's eyes and how they can interact and be involved in Deaf culture.

The next trend I wanted to add to my book was having the book and the characters say the word deaf. In my manuscript, Theos' Moms tell him his new sibling is Deaf. They use the word Deaf and explain what that word means. They explain what the word means by telling Theo his new sibling cannot hear. I wanted to have at least one character say the words deaf because I know how important that word is to the Deaf community. Three out of the ten books I read did not say the word deaf. Because the majority of the books I looked at used the word deaf, I wanted to have the word in my book as well. Throughout the book, we meet other Deaf and hard-of-hearing characters, but the word Deaf does not come up again in my book. Instead, the readers can assume the other characters are deaf because they use American Sign Language, hearing aids, and cochlear implants.

Having more than one Deaf person in a book about a Deaf character is another trend I was looking for as I read the children's books. Half of the books that I read had more than one Deaf character in the book, so I wanted to add that to my book as well. In my book, Theo's teacher, Mr. Larson, and best friend, Yazmine, are Deaf or hard of hearing. I wanted to add this to my book because I wanted Finley to experience the joy of having people who understand their lives. I have been following many Deaf people on social media, and I noticed they feel safe and understood when they have another Deaf person around them. I wanted Finley to experience the same thing even if the book is not from their perspective.

The next couple of trends I saw in the books I read were Deaf characters using American Sign Language, hearing aids, and cochlear implants. Only one of the books I read has a character wearing hearing aids. Three out of the ten books have characters using cochlear implants, and

eight out of the ten books have characters using American Sign Language. At first, in my book, Finley had a cochlear implant and used sign language to communicate with others. After careful reading of articles describing Deaf individuals' views on Cochlear implants, I have decided to have Finley not wear any medical devices that "help" Deaf people hear the world around them. Theo's friend, Yazmine, wears a hearing aid and uses sign language as well. Finally, Mr. Larson wears a cochlear implant. Even though not every author used these parts of Deaf culture in their books, I used them because I wanted the children who read this book to know the different ways Deaf people can communicate with other Deaf people and the world around them.

The final two trends I looked at while I was reading the book were the gender and race of the deaf character. As I read these books, I saw that the gender of the Deaf character was often male. There were six books that had a male Deaf character and four that had a female Deaf character. I noticed that there were not any non-binary Deaf characters in these books, so in my book, Finley is non-binary. I wanted to make Finley non-binary because I wanted kids who are non-binary and Deaf to see themselves in a character. I wanted them to have their window. I know and understand how important representation is, and I want these kids to be able to see themselves in a character at least once in their lives. The next trend I looked at was the race of the characters in the books I read. In all but one of the books I read, the deaf character was white. The only book with a deaf character's race, not white, is *Kami and the Yaks*; Kami is Asian. Because there was not enough representation regarding race in the books I read, I wanted to make sure there was representation in my book. Finley is a black character. In my book, this is not explicitly said, but when Theo meets Finley, he notices that their skin is darker than his. If this book was ever published and illustrated, Finley would be illustrated with darker skin. I wanted to do this for the same reason I wanted to make Finley non-binary: representation. Because

there was so little representation in the books I read, I wanted to make sure there was representation in the book I created.

All the trends I saw while reading the ten books I found portraying Deaf characters were added to my book. To ensure my book stacks up against the ones I read, I used the trends I saw to write my book. I also wanted to add what I did not see in the other books to mine. For example, there were no non-binary Deaf characters, so I made Finely non-binary. I also noticed that most of the characters in these books were white, so I wanted Finley to be black. All of the choices were added because I wanted there to be more representation in books with Deaf characters in them. My book is on par with the other book I reviewed because I took the trends I saw and added them to my book. I also made sure to add other elements I did not see in my book to ensure children saw themselves and learned about Deaf culture in this book.

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Appendix A

Children's Book Manuscript

My New Sibling, Finley

By: Sarah Barnum

## Page One &amp; Two

It was a cool, fall day when I was told Finley was coming to live with us.

“A new sibling”, they told me, one day at dinner. I jumped for joy that day!

I have always wanted another person my age to play with!

I couldn't wait to show them around the house and create forts to have sleepovers in.

I marked the day my new sibling was coming with a big red circle on my calendar.

## Page Three &amp; Four

I wanted to know everything about my new sibling before they came to live with us.

That night at dinner, I asked as many questions as I could, “What's their name? How old are they? Do they like the color blue? I love that color! What's their favorite animal? Do they like chocolate? How-”

Ma giggled and covered my mouth with her hand, “Shush sweetheart,” she looked at Mom with the biggest grin on her face, “We'll tell you everything you need to know about them!

## Page Five &amp; Six

First, they answered all my questions:

Their name is Finley.

They are 10 (just like me)!

Ma and Mom didn't know if they liked the color blue. I'm sure they do; everyone likes that color!

Finely was holding a dinosaur when Ma and Mom met them, so that has to be their favorite animal!

Finally, Mom said, “Everyone likes chocolate, Theo!”

## Page Seven &amp; Eight

Then I could see mom and ma get serious. Their laughter stopped and they scooted closer to each other. I could see they were getting ready to tell me something else that seemed important. I hope there is nothing wrong with Finley.

C'mere, baby," Ma said to me, "We have two very important things to tell you about your new sibling."

I got up from my chair and ran to sit on their laps. I looked up at them ready to listen. When mom and ma have something important to tell me, I always listen.

#### Page Nine & Ten

"Are you ready to listen?" Mom asked me. I nodded quietly. "Finley, is not a boy like you and they are not a girl like me and ma. They do not feel comfortable being called a boy or a girl, so when you are talking about them make sure to call them your sibling, okay?"

I nodded my head up and down, "That's like your friend Oliver right?"

They smiled, "Yes, Theo. That's right!" I smiled and waited for them to tell me the last important thing about Finley.

#### Page Eleven & Twelve

Ma and Mom looked at each other and smiled. They locked their fingers together and looked at me.

"The last thing we have to tell you, Theo," Ma said, "is that they are Deaf. They cannot hear and they use sign language to communicate. Sometimes they like to pass notes back and forth to have a conversation as well; they always carry a notepad and pens around. They do not have a cochlear implant or a hearing aid. When they were asked if they wanted one, they said no." Ma finished and looked at me with a small grin on her face.

I immediately smiled and hugged my moms. I was so relieved.

I was so glad there was nothing wrong with Finley!

Page Thirteen & Fourteen

"I know what those are, Ma," I squealed. "My teacher has a cochlear implant. He taught us about it at the beginning of the year! I wonder if he actually wanted to get it. And my friend Yazmine has hearing aids. They use American Sign Language too."

I got off their laps and ran around the kitchen. I whooped and laughed. Ma and Mom chuckled with me. I could tell they were happy that I was happy.

"You scared me Ma, I thought something happened to my new sibling," I sighed in relief.

"No, no," Mom shook her head, "There is nothing wrong with Finley. They are a healthy and happy ten year-old and canNOT wait to meet you!"

I smiled, I can't wait to meet them either.

I jumped up, "OOOOOOO, I have to ask Yazmine to help me learn sign language so I can use it with Finley!" I ran to my room to call Yazmine and I heard my moms laughing in the background.

Page Fifteen & Sixteen

Months later, in winter, I finally met Finley.

One day, after school, my moms had me go home with Yazmine so they could get things set up for Finley. I was upset that I couldn't help, but I was far too excited to be sad for more than 5 minutes.

While I was at Yazmine's house, she was teaching me how to use American Sign Language or ASL. She's been teaching me, since the day I found out Finley was coming to live with us. I have to say, I've been getting really good at it! I can sign hello, my name, goodbye, how are you and so much more!

## Page Seventeen &amp; Eighteen

That night I went home and walked in the door. I walked to the kitchen and I saw Finley sitting at the table. They had darker skin than I did and had light brown eyes. They were wearing a red jacket and holding a blue dinosaur near their chest.

I knew they liked blue; everyone does!

“Come here baby,” Ma gestured for me to sit next to her. Finley was across the table. I sat down and smiled at them. I sat there nervously until I remembered I could say hello and ask them how they were doing in ASL. I raised my hand to where they could see and waved it back and forth, “Hi!”

## Page Nineteen &amp; Twenty

Finley smiled and waved back at me! I smiled back at them. I was so happy that I could talk to them! They brought their hands up again and in one fluid motion, signed “How are you?”

“I’m fine, thank you.” I signed back. We both smiled; I could tell Finley was excited to talk with someone using ASL and I was glad I could talk to them as well.

I motioned for Finley to follow me. I wanted to show them my room. I forgot the sign for ‘room’. I thought hard about it, but I just couldn’t remember. Then I thought of it. I pulled out my pad of paper and a pen and wrote: ‘Do you want to see my room?’ I slid the pad over to Finley.

## Page Twenty-One &amp; Twenty-Two

They looked at the pad of paper and then back at me with a smile on their face.

“Yes,” they signed excitedly. I looked at my moms and asked them if that was okay. They just smiled at me and nodded their heads. I could tell they were happy that me and Finley were

getting along. I wondered if they were worried we wouldn't get along. They shouldn't be worried about that, I knew I was going to get along with Finley just fine!

Me and Finley ran up the stairs and into my room. They followed me in; I grinned as they walked around my room looking at my posters and toys. They excitedly pointed at my Taylor Swift poster and jumped up and down. I jumped up and down with them; I love Taylor Swift! After that, I knew we would get along just fine.

#### Page Twenty-Three & Twenty-Four

After they explored my room, I realized I never told them my name. I tapped their shoulder and they turned to look at me. "My name is Theo," I signed, "What is your name?" They smiled and finger spelled their name back to me, "F-I-N-L-E-Y. My name is Finley."

"Nice to meet you," I signed back to them. They smiled at me and gestured for me to sit on the floor. They pulled out their notepad. They wrote something on it and slid it over to me.

'I love your room,' it said, 'and I really love all the rocks in your room! Do you collect them?'

'Yes, I do' I wrote back, 'Which rock do you like the most?'

That night we stayed up learning everything about each other. Mom and Ma found us sleeping on the floor, with the notepad in the center of us.

#### Page Twenty-Five & Twenty-Six

The next day, we went to school. I was so excited to introduce them to Yazmine and our teacher, Mr. Larson. I told Finley about both of them last night, and they were so excited to meet them!

As we walked around school that day, we used the notepad to communicate with each other unless Finley was teaching me ASL.

They told me last night that they would love to help me learn ASL so we could talk without the notepad. I was so excited to become fluent in ASL.

## Page Twenty-Seven &amp; Twenty-Eight

Finley taught me ALS during recess, lunch, and free time. They taught me anywhere they could and we were both so excited to talk to each other!

Yasmine was there too. Sometimes they signed at a mile a minute and I couldn't understand what they were signing to each other, but I was happy they both had someone just like them.

## Page Twenty-Nine &amp; Thirty

We went to school every day and did the same things: We found Yazmine, I learned more ASL, we went to class, I learned more ASL, we laughed, played at recess, and went home. This went on for months until I was able to put down the notepad and talk to both Yazmine and Finley using ASL.

I was so happy when I could finally understand what Finley and Yazmine were signing about when their hands went a mile a minute. I could finally join these conversations. The notepad was tucked away in my backpack and would only come out if Finley couldn't find theirs.

## Page Thirty-One &amp; Thirty-Two

A few months after Finley came to our house and the notepad was tucked away, on a warm spring day, our moms came into the living room.

'We have something to talk about,' they signed. Me and Finley looked at them waiting to see what they had to say. 'We are finally making Finley a part of our family!' Me and Finley smiled at each other and got up to hug our moms. We danced around the living room for what seemed like forever until me and Finley turned to each other.

'I'm so glad to have met you,' I signed to Finley.

They smiled and signed, 'Me too!' They held their arms open and we hugged. Mom and Ma joined in soon after.

I am so happy with what our family has become now that Finley is here!