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Review of A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books

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Kathyanne W. Dobda

**A TO Zoo: SUBJECT ACCESS TO CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS 7th
ed.**

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A TO ZOO: SUBJECT ACCESS TO CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS (7th ed.). Carolyn W. Lima and John A. Lima. *Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006, 1692 pp., ISBN 1-59158-232-6.*

Quite a few years ago, when I was a children's librarian, the reference tool that I used most often in my daily work was a new book called *A to Zoo*. It was the best reader's advisory tool for children's librarians I had ever seen. I also used it when planning themed story hours. It was so useful that I kept it on my desk, never having time to return it to the shelf before I needed to use it again.

A to Zoo is now in its seventh edition. This new edition is nearly four times the size of the first edition and lists over 28,000 titles in 1,350 subjects in 1,692 pages. The main use of the book is still in selecting the right picture book for a particular child with a particular situation or need. Selections are geared to a vocabulary appropriate for preschoolers through second graders. Both fiction and non-fiction titles are included, as long as the illustrations occupy more space than the text. Out-of-print items are included because they are usually available in library collections.

The organization of the book is still the same as the first edition. There are five sections: Subject Headings, Subject Guide, Bibliographic Guide, Title Index, and Illustrator Index. The first section is a list of the subject headings that are used, including *see* references. The Subject Guide section lists each subject heading with lists of books following. Books are listed alphabetically by author and then title under each subject heading. The *see* references are also included in this section. The Bibliographic Guide gives the basic information needed to find each book that is included—author, title, illustrator, publisher, publication date, and ISBN. Each bibliographic entry also includes the subject headings where the title can be found. This is

helpful when looking for similar titles. The title and illustrator indexes give page numbers that refer back to the bibliographic guide.

The Introduction contains a concise history of the picture book and includes a lengthy bibliography of books about picture books. This new edition includes timely topics that would not have been considered appropriate for this age group over twenty years ago—topics like abuse, race relations, violence, and sex roles.

The subject access is exemplary. Most books are listed under three to five topics. So, if you want a list of 47 picture books about quilts or 60 books about divorce or 71 books about hair, this is the resource to use.

The only improvement I would suggest is some kind of symbol to show which books were added to each new edition. That would help librarians who also want to use this book as a selection tool. This is an essential resource for every school and public library, every academic library that supports an education department, and every Curriculum Center library.

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