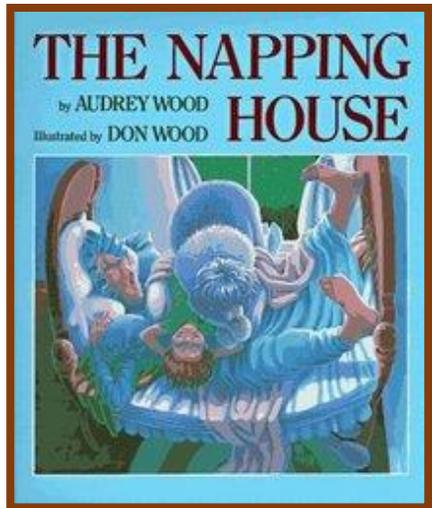


SPOTLIGHT



September 9, 2016

Last week the NWT Literacy Council and the Yellowknife Public Library began their 1000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative which encourages parents to make reading to their children a part of a consistent routine. We believe that the program encourages brain development, fosters literacy skills, and strengthens parent-child bonds. Resources, including reading logs and milestone certificates, are available online (<http://www.nwtliteracy.ca/1000-books-kindergarten-0>) and at the Yellowknife Public Library. Also at the library, of course, are the most important resources of all: books.

Just what to read is up to parents and their children, but the library is more than happy to make suggestions and currently has a 1000 Books Before Kindergarten display with many wonderful choices.

From my own experience, I would recommend a variety that includes books that you as a parent also enjoy. If your children pick up on your lack of interest in overly saccharine books, for example, they too will be less than enthused. If there are classics, favourites from your own childhood, be sure to work them in.

For me, Audrey Wood's *The Napping House* fits that bill. This simple building story of a bed slowly but surely becoming overcrowded, is perfect for early readers to join in (a la *This is The House That Jack Built*), and full of creative language. Especially great are her word choices to describe sleeping (i.e., *dozing*, *snoring*, and so forth).

Equally wonderful are Don Wood's illustrations. As more and more characters pile onto a bed, the many humorous positions and expressions are sure to entertain all ages. On subsequent readings of the book, readers can also look for the characters in the pictures *before* they join the others on the bed (a mouse provides a particularly enjoyable challenge). The highlight of the illustrations, however, is in the colours. They start with tones of soft blue and as the characters wake up one by one, more and more vibrant colours are introduced until the room is bright again and it is day.

Despite the bedtime theme, *The Napping House* is perhaps a bit too funny for a bedtime read-aloud, but with the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative, there's nothing stating that you need only read before bed!

John Mutford, Public Services Librarian