

Title of submission: Helping teacher candidates reflect on child development through the lens of children's literature.

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Abstract:

An important component of an early childhood teacher education program is to assist teacher candidates in building a deeper understanding of child development. In one module of a foundations for early childhood education course, we wanted to focus specifically on the development of the primary-aged child. To do this, we read samples of children's literature which had as the central characters children who were in the first, second, and third grades. After reading the books, the teacher candidates reflected on the character(s) in their particular book, as well as on his/her school experience as it was depicted by the author. After discussing the reflections, we came away with a new understanding of the primary-aged child, as well as how children in that age group are depicted in popular children's literature today.