

Collection Subject Statement: Children's Literature Collection

Last Reviewed: March 2025

The Children's Literature collections at the University of Pittsburgh Library System supports numerous academic programs and research needs of students, faculty, and staff in departments and programs across all five campuses, including Education, Psychology, Library Science, History, Media Studies and more. Children's Literature can be found at multiple University Library System (ULS) locations including Hanley Library, Hillman Library, Millstein Library, Owen Library, Frick Fine Arts Library, and Thomas Blvd Library.

Purpose/Audiences

The university offers numerous undergraduate majors at the Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown, and Pittsburgh campuses and graduate and doctoral studies and at the Pittsburgh campus that utilize these collections. The Greensburg and Pittsburgh campuses offer certificate programs in Children's Literature. Materials in this collection are created for ages from birth through young adult. The library collections in this subject include materials that aid research, teaching, and learning of the theory, practice, and evolution of children's literature in both traditional and digital environments and media.

Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus

The Children's Literature collections offer a large range of materials that cover a wide variety of topics. New acquisitions in print and electronic format are informed by thoughtful review and selection of materials, with additional items acquired upon request for curriculum development, research and teaching purposes. American Library Association Youth Media Award Winners are purchased yearly for collections. The collections are intended to represent and align with curriculum practices, teaching, research, and creative activity of faculty and students at the University of Pittsburgh campuses and beyond.

Primary Sources—Youth Literature

The Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection and the John Nietz Collection

ULS distinctive collections document childhood and young adulthood through literature produced for youth, predominantly in monograph and periodical formats, with materials located in the Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection of historical and contemporary youth literature and the John Nietz Collection of 19th century schoolbooks. Primary source materials also include: archival formats such as diaries by young people and other juvenilia; manuscripts, correspondence, and related papers of authors/illustrators of books for youth or who have impacted children's literature as educator or critic; media targeted to a youth audience. Collection includes a limited selection of playthings created by or for youth, including dolls, card games, board games, and toys. All materials document perspectives on youth/childhood in dominant as well as under-represented populations and provide evidence of historical norms and other cultural contexts regarding areas such as age,

gender, social status, and ethnicity. Predominantly comprised of English language items from the United States and United Kingdom, the collection also includes non-English language materials produced and disseminated globally.

Items are located within Hillman Library in Archives & Special Collections, (A&SC) with the majority of materials housed in our Archives Service Center or our Storage Facility.

Scope

Scholarly resources on theory, research, methodology, and practice are prioritized. The collections include a wide selection of peer-reviewed journals and trade publications in both print and electronic formats, discoverable through subject-specific databases. Media created for a youth audience, such as documentaries, feature films, and more, are available in physical and streaming formats. Primary source realia are viewable in the Archives&Special Collections reading rooms.

The primary geographic focus for the collections is on materials from the United States. However, the library also strives to maintain resources from diverse global perspectives. The majority of the Children's Literature collections are in English but materials in other languages, some created outside of the United States, are selectively acquired to support interdisciplinary research and study.

Library of Congress Classification

PZ (Juvenile Fiction)

- **PZ** – fiction published between 1870 and 2014
- **PZ.1** – fiction published since 2015.
- **PZ7.5** – novels in verse
- **PZ7.7** – graphic novels
- **PZ8** – traditional fairy tales
- **PZ8.1** – folklore and legends
- **PZ8.2** – fables
- **PZ8.3** – nursery rhymes and stories in rhyme
- **PZ10.3** – realistic animal stories
- **PZ10.4** – sign language and braille
- **PZ10.5** – polyglot books written in three or more languages
- Higher PZ numbers are used for juvenile fiction in foreign languages

Juvenile Non-Fiction follows adult non-fiction Library of Congress classification.

Connections & Collaborations

The ULS collaborates with other institutions and consortia to acquire specialized materials that support research, teaching, and learning in the subject of Children's Literature, particularly in areas where shared resources improve accessibility to rare or costly materials. Regionally and nationally, the ULS participates in several consortia for

collection development (EAST, Hathi Trust, CRL) and resource sharing (PALCI EZBorrow, OCLC Interlibrary Loan, RapidILL) that shape strategy for the collection.

Subject Experts

- Bradford contact: Jenelle Jensen (jme26@pitt.edu)
- Greensburg contact: Renee Kiner (rak137@pitt.edu)
- Johnstown contact: April Kelley (akelley@pitt.edu)
- Pittsburgh contact: Clare Withers (cwithers@pitt.edu)

Sources of Information

[Owen Library's Curriculum Room](#)

[Pitt-Greensburg Children's Literature Certificate](#)

[Pittsburgh Children's Literature Certificate—History](#)

[Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection](#)

[Hanley Library Curriculum Center](#)