Images of Accessible Spaces in Children’s Picture Books: A Content Analysis 2007-2017
Longmire, Christie

Abstract:
Picture books can act as mirrors and windows for children. Children can see themselves in picture books, as well as gain an understanding into the lives of others. However, little is known about what environments look like in picture books and what messages they are portraying, particularly regarding children with disabilities. With increased attention on inclusive practices in Canada, it is unknown whether environments in picture books follow a similar trend. Using a deductive content analysis method, examples of universal design were coded in a sample of 106 picture books from the Canadian Children’s Book Centre collection. Frequencies of the elements of universal design were also calculated and the five most frequent elements were identified. These elements included smooth floor/path, clear pathway, space for a wheelchair, seating present, and seat with a back. When comparing the number of elements over time, no consistent pattern was found. A Resource for ECE’s using Picture Books to Support Discussion of Universal Design was created to assist those reading to children in identifying examples of universal design within books. This tool can also be used by critical thinkers and researchers who wish to expand upon the topic. Based on findings and previous research, additional strategies for reading books to children are also recommended.