

*Baby's Hands*. Patricia Quinlan. Illus. Linda Hendry. Annick Press, 1996. Unpag. \$4.95. ISBN 1-55037-470-2. *Baby's Feet*. Patricia Quinlan. Illus. Linda Hendry. Annick Press, 1996. Unpag. \$4.95 board. ISBN 1-55037-471-0.

*Baby's Hands* and *Baby's Feet* each have a combination of qualities which make them excellent first books.

During a child's first year, his or her hands and feet are a source of endless amusement. This means that the subject matter is of great interest to the child who is in the earliest stages of language development. The artwork successfully captures a baby's attention as well. The faces are prominent, the details can be easily distinguished, and there is plenty of bright pastel colour. Older children will also enjoy the warm and welcoming illustrations.

A beckoning slide, a large wading pool, and a sandcastle at the beach are just a few of the attractions. Within these pages, baby is always in the company of family and/or friends unless he is sleeping snuggled with his teddy bear. Mom and dad share the parenting, and, although mom cooks breakfast, dad does the dishes. Joining in on most of the fun is the friendly family cat.

*Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Robin Muller. Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1993. 28 pp. \$6.99 paper. ISBN 0-590-24667-4.

I doubt that many people will be able to resist singing the stanzas which are the song, Row, Row, Row Your Boat. The singing in turn, brings intuitive understanding to one of the main themes present: the power of music. While the rhymes and illustrations will hold the attention of even the very young, school age children will be motivated to learn to read such big words as "platypus" and "crocodile." This latter age group will also get more out of the often complex illustrations. This book is best shared among loved ones since the reader is likely to sing, and many vocalists require a tolerant audience. Either way, the effects are bound to leave you feeling cheerful.

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*The Amazing Milk Book*. Catherine Ross and Susan Wallace. Illus. Linda Hendry. Kids Can Press Ltd., 1991. 80 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 1-55074-020-2.

Another in the series of information books from the publisher which has made a name for itself in this area, *The Amazing Milk Book* is a very enjoyable and enlightening read. Because the subject is approached from so many angles, the information encompasses many disciplines. Physics and chemistry figure strongly as the authors discuss the physical makeup of milk, but readers will also find fascinating information on history, language, cultural traditions, nutrition, zoology, and both modern and more primitive technology, all stemming from the study of milk. Thrown in throughout the text are recipes, crafts and even riddles. Linda Hendry's illustrations help to keep the mood light while still giving helpful visual information. With its well organized chapters, in-

teresting projects, glossary and index , the book is a ready made study unit on milk, but the child reader will enjoy it on his or her own, too.

***Do the Doors Open by Magic? And Other Supermarket Questions.*** Catherine Ripley. Illus. Scot Ritchie. Owl Books , 1995 (Question and Answer Storybook Series). 32 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 1-895688-40-X. ***Why Is Soap So Slippery? And Other Bathtime Questions.*** Catherine Ripley. Illus. Scot Ritchie. Owl Books, 1995 (Question and Answer Storybook Series). 32 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 1-895688-39-6.

These books provide answers to questions that real children might ask in the course of everyday activities. What puts the fizz in soda pop? Why do my fingers get wrinkled in the tub? The answers are incorporated into a storylike format featuring a family shopping at a modern supermarket and a family at bathtime. Each question is posed in language which a child might use and answered in simple, not too technical, language such as might be used by a parent. The illustrations generally serve to add to the understanding of the material and to enhance the light, fun tone of the books. The rubber duck is ongoing scene stealer, making faces here and there. The only illustration which is a little confusing is the one which shows the alimentary and renal systems in the bathtime book. A whole apple is used to symbolize the food going in and an apple core represents the waste, according to the key. The supermarket information is well handled and might even surprise some grownups. How many of us know what is behind the big doors at the supermarket? These books will be great fun to share with kids.

***The Backyard Time Detectives.*** David Suzuki. Illus. Eugenie Fernandes. Stoddart, 1995 (Nature All Around Series). 32 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5740-6.

The third book in a series which includes *Nature in the Home* and *If We Could See Air*, *The Backyard Time Detectives* begins with a family starting to plant a garden. The kids, at first unenthusiastic, become interested when their parents help them imagine how the land on which their house stands might have looked in times past. An uncovered rock prompts the dad to describe ancient volcanoes, while an arrowhead helps the children imagine native peoples living and hunting on the land. Thinking of how the garden will grow leads thoughts to the future and to hopes that the land will not be spoiled. Illustrator Eugenie Fernandes has used ghostly translucent drawings over the solid present to show the imagined features. This book could serve to help youngsters develop a sense of time and change beyond what they are able to see. The simple language makes this book suitable for pre-school and early primary. A more sophisticated audience would want more detail.

***Shark Attacks and Spider Snacks.*** Roy Condy. Black and white Illustrations. Scholastic, 1996. 62 pp. \$5.99 paper. ISBN 0-590-24622-4.

This book is made up of thirty double page spreads, each consisting of a cartoon-style drawing, a catchy alliterative title and a box of text. Each spread deals with a different bit of animal behaviour. Author-illustrator Roy Condy has included

examples of maternal, predatory, mating, feeding, and defensive behaviour as well as interesting descriptions of amazing sizes and structures. This book is entertaining and unthreatening for young readers. The drawback to having such limited text is that there is no room for extended explanations which can better convey the subtleties of the material. As well, the tone is just a bit sensationalistic. The strawberry poison dart frogs (mistakenly called poison arrow frogs and assigned to the Amazon basin instead of Central America) are not so poisonous that they cannot be touched without fatal effects. The snapping turtle is said to attack without hesitation, but there is no explanation that such attacks occur in self defense and only when the animal is out of the water and vulnerable.

*How Monkeys Make Chocolate: Foods and Medicines from the Rainforests.* Adrian Forsyth. Photos. Owl Books, 1995. 48 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 1-895688-32-9.

In *How Monkeys Make Chocolate*, well-known ecologist Adrian Forsyth discusses the interrelationships between the plants and animals of the rainforests. He explains that many of the products and medicines which are so useful to human beings are produced by plants as a way of manipulating animals, including humans, into dispersing seeds or as a way of protecting themselves from being eaten. He tells the stories behind products which are a part of a child's world, such as chocolate, chewing gum, rubber and aspirin. With the example of the Brazil nut, which cannot be grown successfully in a plantation setting, Forsyth shows how dependent each inhabitant of the forest is upon many other plants and animals so that the forest must be saved as a whole and not just species by species. This book should be a high priority purchase for every library.

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