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Individual & Society FIQWS

Child Development and Children's Books

Developmental nourishing and character building are key aspects of what children's books aim to provide. From a very young age, reading to children stimulates cognitive development and creativity. Children's novels can be found in many varieties and for all ages, each adapting to the child's current state. Two children's books that support the child's development in their own way are *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt De La Peña and *It's My Birthday* by Helen Oxenbury.

Matt De La Peña's *Last Stop on Market Street* goes through the adventure of a little boy. And his grandma on the bus ride home. The book may seem like a simple bus conversation between a grandson and his grandmother, however to a child it teaches them about the world. The questions CJ asks his grandmother about taking the bus, such as "How come we always gotta go here after church?," or when he sees two older boys with headphones and wishes he had a pair, all depicts realistic thoughts children CJ's age have about their surroundings. Children question every little thing and often find themselves wanting materialistic things, although Matt De La Peña makes sure to ground CJ utilizing his grandmother to remind him of the smallest things in his life that do matter. *Last Stop on Market Street* develops the importance of valuing the world and what it provides us with; the book aims to connect with children around the ages

of five to seven, cultivating a lifelong appreciation of the world. When reading the storybook myself I was reminded of what it feels like to have the mind of a seven year old. CJ's inquiries brought me back to my endless questions and infinite curiosity. I always wanted to know why we did the things we did or why we went to church after all, I didn't understand questions about my identity and aspects of my culture just like CJ. At every age we see the world from a different perspective and *Last Stop on Market Street* covers perfectly what it's like to be exposed to a new scenery at the age of seven.

Unlike *The Last Stop on Market Street*, *It's My Birthday* by Helen Oxenbury aims to target the attention of younger children, around the ages of one to three. *It's My Birthday* shares the story of a little boy who is building a cake for his birthday, using the help of different animals. The main principle Oxenbury is building is the notion of what a birthday is and how the child interprets their birthday. *It's My Birthday* targets a younger age group which changes the direction of the story, now we see the animals come to life and help the little boy with ingredients for the cake. A child seeing this book would see no problem with the animals helping the child because at this state everything is animated, their imagination is much more open than that of an older child. Not only is the child's environment animated, but the words are associated with sounds and pictures, which helps the child develop emotional intelligence and stimulate the brain. Oxenbury encourages growth through *It's My Birthday* allowing children to learn about this important aspect of their lives. Although *It's My Birthday* may seem like a simple book covering the concept of birthdays it's much more complex than this. I recall once asking a three year old what their favorite holiday was and having their parents interject that they didn't know yet what holidays were. It seems strange to not know what a holiday is but as adults we don't

remember exactly how we acquired common knowledge, it's just something we inherently have, however, it's because of books like *It's My Birthday* that we know these concepts. Oxenbury captures exactly what attracts a toddler's attention and teaches them about a key part of their life.

In conclusion, both *Last Stop on Market Street* and *It's My Birthday* are books that play a vital role in children's development, exposing the child to different topics and life lessons. Children's books provide many different ways that a child can learn and build on their creativity and culture, they're an critical outlet for self expression and growth.

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Summary and Response Reflection

From working on my summary and response essay I realized how procrastination when it comes to papers is helpful to me. Instead of feeling cornered and pressured, the stress makes me want to perform at my best and helps my ideas flow. Writing the summary and response essay, the prompt was very easy but hard at the same time, although I finessed the summary part I completely forgot to add my personal experience to the essay. When I edited the first draft and added my personal touch to the books I talked about, I found the essay to flow so much better. Through the writing prompt I was able to learn about the psychological developments children's books have and how influential they really are. I never imagined how crucial it is to read to a child, but it is so important for their growth and personal development. This unit was very interesting and I would love to learn more, through my essay I was able to explore on my own. The audience of my essay would be Suzanne Weyn and all those interested in how children's literature affects young minds. I hoped to accomplish good writing because I am confident in my analyzing skills and moving on I hope to improve my communication skills in writing.