

THE MONARCH AWARD: ILLINOIS' K-3 CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD

The Monarch Award: Illinois' K-3 Children's Choice Award will be presented annually to the author and/or illustrator of the book voted as their favorite by students in Kindergarten through Grade Three in participating Illinois schools or public libraries. The Monarch is sponsored by the Illinois School Library Media Association.

The name Monarch was chosen:

- to embody the emergence of children as they move from non-readers to independent readers.
- to symbolize the growth, change, and freedom that becoming a reader imparts.
- to connect to K-3 children's familiarity with the Monarch Butterfly, Illinois' state insect.

PURPOSE FOR AWARD PROGRAM

The purposes of the Monarch Award are:

- to encourage children and adults to read children's books for personal enjoyment.
- to help children become familiar with books, authors and illustrators.
- to encourage children to read critically.
- to develop a statewide awareness of outstanding literature for children.
- to promote cooperation among agencies providing educational and library service to children.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The program will be administered by the Monarch Steering Committee and is sponsored by the Illinois School Library Media Association. The committee will seek nominations of outstanding works of literature for children annually from school library media specialists, public librarians, teachers, and students. All nominations received by the committee and which fit the criteria will be given consideration. A volunteer reading committee will select a Master List of 20 titles from the nominated books. These titles must include a range of interest and reading levels for grades K-3. The list will contain at least three of each of the following types of children's books: picture books, easy readers, and chapter books. Nominees may be fiction and nonfiction. Students and their teachers in participating schools will be encouraged to include titles from the master list in their reading or listening experiences during the school year. Students will vote in February for their favorite from the Master List. Votes from the statewide balloting will be compiled to determine the winner of the Monarch Award. During March of each year, the results of the statewide balloting will be announced.

ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION

To be eligible for the Nominations List, from which the Master List of 20 titles will be selected, a book must meet the following criteria:

- The nominator must have read the book.
- The book must be copyrighted within the past five years.
- The book must be in print at the time of the selection.
- The author and or illustrator must be living at the time of selection of the Master List of 20 titles.
- The book must be of interest and appeal to children in grades K-3.
- The book must have literary merit.
- The book may be nonfiction or fiction in the following types: picture books, easy readers, chapter books.
- The book may not be a textbook, an anthology, a translation, formula fiction, toy, puzzle, or pop up.
- No title or series may be on two consecutive Master Lists.
- A book in a "series" may be nominated. If a series title wins, other books in the series may not be included on future lists for a period of five years.

- Only one title per author is allowed per list. If multiple titles by the same author are nominated, the book with the oldest copyright will be chosen.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION TO THE MASTER LIST

The nominated titles will be evaluated based on originality, physical appearance, quality of illustrations, literary quality, timelessness, clarity and readability, appropriateness of subject matter and content, appeal for the age group, likelihood of acceptance by young readers, and factual accuracy.

CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING

Any school in Illinois with students enrolled in grades Kindergarten through Grade Three and agreeing to meet the following requirements may participate in the Monarch Award program:

1. Submit the official Registration Form by the appointed date.
2. Provide access to a minimum of 12 titles from the Master List of 20 Titles.
3. Develop procedures for determining each child's eligibility to vote. Each child should have read or heard at least five of the titles in order to be allowed to vote.
4. Plan, in cooperation with teachers and or parents, some reading motivation activities during the year to acquaint students with the titles on the Monarch Master List.
5. Provide an opportunity for eligible students to cast their vote at the appropriate time.
6. Tally the total votes cast for each title in the school and report the results by the deadline date, February 28th.

CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY PARTICIPATION

Any public library in Illinois that provides services for students enrolled in grades Kindergarten through Grade 3 where schools are not participating in the award program is encouraged to register. Public Library participation will allow K-3 children whose schools are not participating as well as home schooled children to be involved in reading and voting. Public libraries should follow procedures outlined in the School Participation section.

AWARD

The author of the book receiving the highest number of votes in the statewide balloting will be declared the winner of the Monarch Award. The author or illustrator of the winning book will be invited to attend the ISLMA conference and to participate in programs to feature and honor him or her. The award will either be presented in person or sent to the winner.

ADMINISTRATION OF AWARD PROGRAM

The Monarch Steering Committee will administer the award program. The committee will be responsible to the executive board of ISLMA. The committee consists of the following members: a chair appointed from the sponsoring organization, two or more members of ISLMA serving K-3 children, at least one member representing public libraries or library systems who serve K-3 children and at least one K-3 teacher.