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Picture Books

C Is for Colorado: Written by Kids for Kids
Westwinds Press/Graphic Arts Books
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Few things are sweeter than a child's early poems: simple, touching, and at times more insightful than expected. And since children often know best how to capture the interest and imagination of other children, an educational picture book filled with kids' poems just might bring rote learning to life. Such is the case with *C is for Colorado*.

This book celebrates Colorado through two- to four-line poems. Together, they cover everything from the state's culture ("K is for Kayaking: When you feel excitement lacking, It may be time to go kayaking") to local animals ("P is for Prairie Dogs: Prairie dogs on guard until day's end, They let out a chirp to warn their friends"), to the state flower (the Columbine), to important places in the state (Denver and Estes Park), and more.

Each poem offers key facts about its topic. And in the back of the book, short paragraphs provide further information for educators or older children. Full-color photographs on each page beautifully illustrate each rhyme. The pictures are vibrant, with bold, bright tones and plenty of energy to draw little eyes in. Of course, alphabet skills are also reinforced every step of the way.

The inherent challenge for a regionally based book is ensuring its relevance outside the area it was written about. This book faces that risk, and wise adults may need to help children connect to Colorado through family members or friends who live there, or perhaps by turning it into a geography lesson.

The appropriate audience for this book also poses unique issues. Normally, alphabet books reach children ages six or under. However, many of the words and concepts in this book, although written by children, may be too advanced for younger readers. (For example, I is for Indigenous People). And older readers may be turned off by an alphabet-based book. However, an aware adult could easily navigate these concerns. It's important to remember that since the poems were written by children, they have a juvenile flavor; but, of course, that is part of the book's charm.

The book is easy to understand and clearly captures a child's perspective on the world

they live in. It’s a fresh way to reinforce alphabet skills while opening kids’ eyes to the everyday things around them. And above all, it is an endearing gift of love to Colorado that promotes a pride in and deep appreciation for that beautiful state.

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