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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ PICTURE BOOKS

Peas and Carrots

Angelo Knox
Erica Knox
AuthorHouse
Unknown $0.00 (pp)
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Peas and Carrots uses clever rhymes and colorful drawings to make learning good manners and healthful mealtime habits fun. Designed to be read to children from three to five years of age, the book introduces socially and culturally appropriate behaviors for eating together in a group in an engaging, playful manner that will help young children see how good manners and consideration for others can make for pleasant, happy mealtimes.

Beyond presenting concepts of cooperation and independence, and showing them that they even have the capacity to handle accidents in social situations with ease, authors Angelo and Erica Knox and illustrator E. Jackie Brown open the door to discussions of how we are similar and different from each other by including multicultural characters and a young girl wearing a brace on one leg.

While most of the rhyming verses work quite well, “Wash your hands and move your feet” may cause a child who is a literalist to wonder what foot movements have to do with hand-washing. While the authors wisely suggest that a child who says that he or she doesn’t like vegetables should try them again, knowing that a growing child’s likes and dislikes can change, the verse “If you don’t like vegetables, try them and see, your stomach might just be filled with glee” might better be said: “try them again and see…”—this would take the child’s current feelings about vegetables into consideration while suggesting that giving them another chance might provide a pleasant surprise.

The authors have managed to cover a great deal of information in a very short book and, even better, to make learning about manners and good habits fun. The colorful illustrations show children obeying classroom rules, engaging in independent activities, assuming responsibilities, and using good manners while displaying appropriate reactions to what happens; most often they are shown interacting with each other with good-natured smiles. Parents, daycare providers, and preschool teachers will appreciate the “Conversation Engagement Guide” that has been included at the end of the book; its insightful questions will help children demonstrate their understanding of what has been read, and allow them to share the mealtime rules and customs of their own families.

Together, Angelo and Erica Knox have twenty-six years of experience in the field of child development and family services, including teaching and serving as Family Service Coordinators for Head Start. They are dedicated to the belief that every child deserves equal opportunity for school readiness, regardless of ethnicity, creed, or economic status.

KRISTINE MORRIS (February 1, 2011)

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