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Children's Picture Books
587 words

Inventor McGregor

Kathleen T. Pelley
Michael Chesworth, illustrator
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006
Hardback, \$16.00
ISBN: 0-374-33606-7

Evan Early

Rebecca Hogue Wojahn
Ned Gannon, illustrator
Woodbine House, 2006
Hardback, \$15.95
ISBN: 1-890627-71-2

Shelley, the Hyperactive Turtle

Deborah M. Moss
Carol Schwartz, illustrator
Woodbine House, 2006 (2nd Edition)
Hardback, \$14.95
ISBN: 1-890627-75-5

Inventor McGregor

Hector McGregor lives with his cheery wife, five children, and a hen named Hattie. His neighbors call him Mend-it McGregor and bring him their “squeaky skates, squiggly spoons, wobbly wagons, tangles kites, knotted yo-yos, headless dolls and footless soldiers.” He also paints in the yard, dances with his wife, and plays fiddle for his children. He is a happy man.

When he starts making thingamabobs and thingamajigs to make people's world “a little better or brighter”, he attracts the attention of the president of the Royal Society of Inventors who persuades him to come work in his laboratory in the city. Of course, this changes everything for the now famous, Inventor McGregor. In the sterile, silent room, he can't think or create- he has no inspiration from living a joyful life. The lesson, given so delightfully, is that happiness comes from within and meaningful work comes from a happy heart.

Evan Early

Not long ago, siblings would have been left out if they had a baby brother born prematurely and struggling to survive in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It's a good thing to realize that a big sister needs to have her own kind of relationship with her brother, whether he ever comes home or not.

In this softly illustrated book, big sister Natalie gets to see Evan Early in the NICU. She is invited to ask her parents' questions and to watch the nurses care for him. She also gets scared, sad, and feels abandoned by her parents as they spend weeks at the hospital while she stays with her grandma. Each day, Natalie colors in a square on the calendar and soon there are rainbow months.

A black day comes when they almost lose Evan and her parents are gone for three days. Natalie is mad and worried. She needs her mother's attention. She gets angry with Evan for taking all her family's time and attention. Her exhausted mother holds her and reassures her that no matter what happens to Evan, "we won't love you any less." It is enough for Natalie to want to see Evan and hold his tiny, tiny hand.

Evan Early is a gentle, honest portrayal of how a premature baby affects the whole family. The muted illustrations gracefully support the tender story. The book closes with two pages dedicated to questions and answers about prematurely written for young children. It adds to the openness of Natalie's sensitive story.

Shelley, the Hyperactive Turtle

First published in 1989, this bright and cheery book gave young kids with ADHD a chance to see themselves in a picture book. This new version uses skateboards instead of flutes and includes a therapist as part of a treatment program. The silly Shelley remains. Shelley is not a typical turtle who moves slowly and hangs out. He is always on the move and always in trouble. He tries to be good but "everyday something went wrong." Finally, his parents realize his actions are not in his control and take him to the doctor. Shelley goes on medications and starts seeing a therapist "who talked to Shelley about things that made him feel sad or angry or scared." Shelley is happier, has friends again and participates in school. He is not cured but he understands that everyone, including himself, does not think he his bad.

This cartoonish book will appeal to very young children. It accurately portrays the inner self-esteem issues that come with undiagnosed ADHD and gives hope to both parents and children.

Anna Stewart, mother, mentor and author, has published over 300 articles. She is the author of *Mother Blessings: Honoring Women Becoming Mothers*, an artful guide for creating ceremonies for pregnant women or families adopting. Order it at www.wovenword.com or www.amazon.com. She also serves as an instructor for coaching pregnant women through the Academy for Coaching Parents (www.acpi.biz). Go to her website, www.motherhands.com for more information on Anna's workshops.