

## Writing for Children: Getting Started

There is much more to becoming a children's writer than getting your manuscript in front of an editor!  
These tips will help you learn the art, craft, and business of children's writing:

- ❖ **Read, read, read!** Read board books, picture books, early readers, middle-grade novels, young adult novels, and magazine stories. Which of these best suits your story?
- ❖ **Write because you love to write!** It's hard work, but your goal must be to write the best story you can write, NOT simply to get published. Embrace the journey.
- ❖ **Join the SCBWI!** This international Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators has local and regional chapters (NESCBIWI for New England) and offers workshops and conferences for beginning, intermediate, and accomplished children's writers and illustrators. Check its treasure trove of online information at [www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org).
- ❖ **Join a critique group!** The NESCBIWI web site lists critique groups welcoming new members. Critique groups share news and business information and give members critical feedback on their manuscripts and artwork. Use critiques to hone your manuscript to a shine!
- ❖ **Do your research.** When your manuscript is ready, learn which editors are accepting manuscripts and look for agents who represent the kind of work you have done. *Children's Literary Marketplace* and *Children's Writers and Illustrators Market* are annual reference books that list book and magazine publishers, agents, contests, conferences, and other helpful information. Search the listings for potential publishers, then take your list to a children's library and a children's bookstore and read as many books as you can find from those publishers. If your work seems to meet their needs, send it out!!

### Helpful Books

Ursula LeGuin *Steering the Craft*

Olga Litowinsky *It's a Bunny-Eat-Bunny World: A Writer's Guide to Surviving and Thriving in Today's Competitive Children's Book Market*

Uri Shulevitz *Writing With Pictures: How to Write and Illustrate Children's Books*

Harold Underdown *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Publishing Children's Books*

Jane Yolen *Take Joy: The Writer's Guide to Loving the Craft*

### Helpful Websites

**THE SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS** <http://www.scbwi.org/>  
This organization lists critique groups, hosts conferences, produces a newsletter, and offers such member benefits as grants, contests, and awards. Check <http://www.nescbwi.org/> for SCBWI New England.

**THE CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL** <http://www.cbcbooks.org/> This reputable site lists new books and new imprints, offers helpful articles for new writers and illustrators, lists publishers and editors, and posts invaluable Reading Lists.

**THE PURPLE CRAYON** [www.underdown.org](http://www.underdown.org) Renowned editor Harold Underdown writes this very useful site for new writers and illustrators. The "Who's Moving Where" page notes recent editorial moves.