

Hannah Holt [she/her]

Hannah will be accepting applications for: fiction, non-fiction, and informational fiction. She's open to stories in prose and/or rhyme.



Bio: Hannah Holt is a children's author with an engineering degree. Her picture books weave together her love of literature and lifelong learning. They include, *The Diamond and the Boy* (HarperCollins), *A Father's Love* (Penguin), and *A History of Underwear with Professor Chicken* (Macmillan). She lives in Oregon with her husband, four children, and a cat named Zephyr. Find out More about Hannah and her books at her website: HannahHolt.com

1. You have two minutes to give a speech on anything! What would your topic be?

Dyslexia. Dyslexic kids are bright students, creative problem solvers, and clever learners. Their gifts are too often overlooked!

2. If you could live in any film, tv, or book universe, what would it be?

I'd love to hang out with the characters from *The Good Place*. Who doesn't want a frozen yogurt store on every corner?

3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?

- **New:** I love the beautiful writing in *Friends are Friends Forever* by Dane Lui and Lynn Scurfield
- **Old:** I love the voice in pretty much anything by Judith Viorst.
- **Nonfiction:** *Queen of Physics, How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom; An Egg is Quiet; Joan Procter Dragon Doctor, The Woman Who Loved Reptiles.*

4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

I'm proud of the data research I've done in children's publishing. As for book news, *A Father's Love* was part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library literacy program. A dream come true!

5. What about mentoring excites you most?

I love seeing others succeed. I'm thrilled that Sara Fajardo (my first mentee) has a book out next year: *PAKA PAKA CON LA PAPA: ALBERTO SALAS PLAYS POTATO HIDE-AND SEEK*. Everybody better be on the lookout for it! Other books from other mentees are also in the works, and I can't wait to shout those from the rooftops someday, too.

6. What are your strengths as a mentor?

Big picture thinking and organization. Unsure if a story is submission ready or needs more tweaking? Feel like you have a million ideas and don't know where to focus? Our mentoring session will hopefully clear away the fog, sort the important from the less urgent, and give you a path forward.

7. What is your feedback/critique style like?

Here's a brief sample of in-line notes from my previous mentorship (I removed anything that would give away the subject):

"Better verb? This one feels like a different voice."

"I love the way you play with white space on the page."

"The proximity of _____ and _____ stopped me. Smoother transition here?"

"This is the technical name for it, but I wonder if there's a more poetic way."

"If you tell the reader what her parents are feeling you slip into omniscient narrator. Consider showing us what they felt on the outside...or cut this section altogether."

"I love the way you revisit _____ before launching into the end."

8. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?

Someone committed to craft and willing to take their time revising

9. Who are you not the best mentor for?

A story that has been submitted to more than one agent/editor. I'd be happy to take a look at your "back list" later, but the lead story for this mentorship must have a free and clear submission history.

I'm also not the best fit for texts with heavy-handed moral lessons and/or rhyme-driven plots.

10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?

Here's a rough outline:

- Provide up to three in-depth revision rounds on one story.
- General notes on three to five other stories.
- Submission strategy chat.
- Feedback on one query letter and pitch.
- Check-ins and additional advice as you submit!

11. What is your style of communication like?

The positive stretch: I'll always tell you something I like and something to consider changing. As for format, we'll probably do most of our communicating over email. However, I'd love to have a welcome call or video chat if you're comfortable with that, too.

12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?

I want connection. Make me laugh, cry, wonder, whatever! I want to *feel* something when I read the story.

13. What kind of mentorship experience do you envision for you and your mentee?

You are the driver. I'll offer maps, tips, and directions, but ultimately it's up to you where you want to go. In my first correspondence, I'll ask about your goals and what motivates you. Come with that vision and then be prepared to work towards it.

14. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?

Read your story out loud to yourself. Edit. Then have someone else read it out loud to you. That's a good way to catch typos and hear the cadence of the story.

15. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?

Celebrate your tries as well as your successes, and you'll find yourself trying more and more. The more you write and the more you learn—the better you'll get. And with enough trying, you can't help but find success. Whether we end up working together this year or not, I wish you all the success in the world!