

Annie's Chair

Deborah Niland's acceptance speech

I am so thrilled to be here this evening.

I feel truly honoured, to receive this award for *Annie's Chair*.

I have been illustrating books for a long, long time.

To write one, as well as illustrate it, is a bonus.

As a parent, my observations were very helpful when working on this book.

Since I've had children of my own, I've been interested in how babies acquire language.

Reading to my children, from the time they were babies, let me see this process, first hand. Through picture books, they recognised people and objects that related to their world, and as they grew older, would ask questions about different situations presented in these books.

I also noticed, when reading to my children and pointing to the words, they soon began to see the link between the 'black stuff' on the page, and the spoken word. Once this link was made, the ability to read for themselves, quickly followed.

The combination of story and art in picture books can reach children on many levels. It's well known, that reading aloud to children on a regular basis, is a great help in fostering language and comprehension skills.

Receiving this award tonight, makes me feel, that my work contributes in, some small way, to the progress of speech and language development, in our young children.

An award like this is so encouraging, and I thank Speech Pathology Australia.

I wish you well, for the continuation of your valuable work.

Thanks again.