

“A Baby Sister for Frances” author Russell Hoban, Illustrations by Lillian Hoban, published in 1964. The characters include a Mother, a Father, and a baby sister as well as the main character Frances. The father works outside of the home. The father is deferred to as the main decision maker, he is the one approached about the allowance upgrade and decides without consulting the mother. Only the mother are depicted as nurturing and performing domestic tasks. The mother is show taking care of the baby, cooking, and ironing. The father is active and adventurous by giving Frances a piggy-back ride to bed. They do both put her to bed. Frances views herself as competent. Her parents treat Frances as a competent individual. They are supportive of her, even when she runs away under the table. The conflict resolves itself through the intervention of the parents; they tell her they miss her when she gone and she returns.

“Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?” author Nancy White Carlstrom with illustrations by Bruce Degen, published in 1986. The characters include a Mother, a Father and the main character Jesse. The father works outside of the home. The mother appears to be the main decision maker, decided when Jesse should come in to eat lunch. The mother is the only one depicted as performing domestic tasks. The father plays peek a boo with Jesse before bed. The father and mother both put Jesse to bed. Jesse views himself as competent individual. He is allowed to choose what he wears through out the day. The parents treat Jesse as competent individual, letting him select what he wears. They seem supportive of Jesse. There is no real situation in the story to be solved besides the moment to moment clothing choices, which is done by the self direction of the main character.

“What Dads Can't Do” author Douglas Wood with illustrations by Doug Cushman, published in 2000. There is a Father, and the main character, the son. The Father is not shown to go to work, but does pick up the son from day care at the very beginning of the story. The father seems to be a single parent, and is deferred to as the main decision maker. The father is shown to be active, adventurous (with camping and playing) as well as nurturing and performing domestic tasks (such as bath time and reading with the son). The main character sees himself as competent. The father treats the son as a competent individual by having the son help set up the tent and cook. The father is very supportive of the son. The conflict of the story is solved by the self direction of the son.

The depiction of family from the 1960's to the 1980's aren't terribly different. Same nuclear family unit with the stay at home mother and the working father. Both “A Baby Sister for Frances” and “Jesse Bear What Will You Wear?” have the father in eyeglasses reading a newspaper. The power shift between these two aren't very different either. I found the 1986 book to be the weakest of the three, with no real plot. The 2000's depiction has a single parent family where the father was both the main worker and the primary caregiver. The family structure is wildly different from the previous two books. The parents in all the 1980s and 2000s books don't play much of a role in the resolution of the stories. The main characters seem to solve their own problems, with the exception of Frances who needs to be indirectly told by her parents that they still care about her and that she is still part of the family.

Overall, I would say that these stories correlate with the lecture. The 1980s book is weak because it's not representing reality as well as the one from the 1960s and the 2000s. It's a over idealized depiction of a family unit with no fleshed out characters. The family interactions are far more realistic and believable in the 1960s and the 2000s book, despite the radically different family structures. The characters seem more life like, despite being a family of badgers and alligators, respectively. The main power shift in gender roles in from the 1960s and 1980s female as the dominate caregiver to the 1980s

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