



HANNAH HOLT is a children's author with an engineering degree. Her books, *The Diamond & The Boy* (Balzer+Bray) and *A Father's Love* (Philomel) weave together her love of language and science. Her next book, *THE HISTORY OF UNDERWEAR WITH CHICKENS*, comes out in 2022 (Roaring Brook). She lives in Oregon with her husband, four children, and a very patient cat named Zephyr.

Hannah will be accepting applications for: fiction, nonfiction, prose, verse, humorous, or serious stories

Special Note: Hannah's mentorship will run from September- November 2020.

1. If you could be in any movie or tv series, what would it be and what character would you play?

The Good Place. I would love to be the Janet of querying. :)

2. If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be and why?

I would control time. Right now I'm homeschooling four children (thanks COVID-19), and between that and my regular workload there simply aren't enough hours in the day for all the things.

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

So hard! These are just a few that came to mind...

Classic: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Hello, quarantine!)

Nonfiction: *Queen of Physics, How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom*

In Verse: *Once Upon A Twice*

In Verse for the very young: *The Big Red Barn*

Within the last year: *Small World* by Ishta Mercurio

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. I want children's writers to have access to information, so they can make good long-term decisions for their careers.

5. What about mentoring excites you most?

I love seeing others succeed. My mentee last year signed with an agent and that was so exciting! Of course, I can't promise a particular type of success; however, whether it's tackling a tricky revision, polishing a query letter, and/or submitting, I look forward to helping my mentee take that next step in their career.

6. What are your strengths as a mentor?

The ability to identify and draw out strengths and a desire to cheer you onward!

7. What is your feedback/critique style like?

Wordy.

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

Someone committed to working on craft.
Someone willing to take their time revising.

9. Who are you not the best mentor for?

I'm probably not the best mentor for:
-books with a heavy-handed moral lesson
-books where animals and humans talk to each other (Talking animals is fine! They just can't also talk to humans)
-stories with the word "noticed" in them
-nonfiction by white authors about people of color
-someone just "winging" rhyme

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

I will provide up to three in-depth revision rounds on one story.
In addition, I will provide general notes on three to five other stories, and we will talk submission strategy.
I will give you feedback on one query letter and pitch.
I will cheer for you as you start submitting!

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 via email.

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

I'm an omnivorous writer and reader. I'll consider fiction, nonfiction, prose, verse, humorous, or serious stories.

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

Look for ways to strengthen your voice. If you have a main character, make sure they don't behave just like "any child would." Make them say and do things only a child with their specific attributes would say. Avoid clichés and take out filler words.

14. 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?

Submitting is an act of bravery. Whether it's applying for this mentorship, submitting to an agent, or sending your work out for critique. 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 one way or another.

I applaud all those applying and keep at it!