

Society of Early Americanists Sponsored Sessions
American Literature Association Conference
Boston, May 21-24, 2009

Searching for Childhood: Using Early American Imprints
to Teach the History of Children's Literature

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This paper highlights a graduate-level project that teaches basic research skills to new graduate students, using the Early American Imprints database, Series I and II. Students receive general instruction on the database before they are given free rein to sift through the plethora of print materials, looking for works about children. Encouraged to search under topics they might not have associated with children (such as epitaphs, sermons, and travelogues), students learn not only about the rich source material within the database, but also about refining the necessary research skills that will aid them in their graduate careers. The paper also introduces the thorny topic of access to this and other databases, particularly at schools that do not receive ample funding.