



Clarion Review

Picture Books

Don't Stick Sticks Up Your Nose! Don't Stuff Stuff In Your Ears!

Jerald S. Altman

Richard Jacobson

Zona Books

978-0-9888861-0-0

Five Stars (out of Five)

Through humor and clever rhymes, tots learn why they shouldn't stick things in their noses or ears.

Considering how much young children like fitting small things in holes—think of the mania surrounding Legos—it's no wonder some tots wind up inserting crayons in their nostrils and ears. Any ear, nose, and throat doctor could likely brag of the bizarre things he or she has removed; one was so inspired that he penned a humorous board book to warn kids. *Don't Stick Sticks Up Your Nose! Don't Stuff Stuff In Your Ears!*, by Jerald S. Altman, MD, and Richard Jacobson, uses high-contrast pictures and clever rhymes to teach children to keep hazardous objects out of their orifices.

The authors begin with what should be put in one's mouth—breakfast—and then add: “No bacon in your ears, / No fried eggs up your nose. / Even though it's tempting, / That's not where breakfast goes.” From there they instruct that smells, not sticks, go in noses. Likewise, they write, “Ears have really small holes / that lead into your head. / Sounds should enter in them / and never stuff like bread!”

Don't Stick Sticks Up Your Nose! Don't Stuff Stuff In Your Ears! maintains just the right level of warning for young audiences. In place of scary discussion of medical emergencies, Altman and Jacobson caution kids while keeping the language and tone light: “Keep the weird stuff out, friends, / For everybody's sake.” They also rely on the illustrated facial expressions of kids, parents, and doctors to hint at the pain and worry caused by a marker stuck in a nose.

The pages are notably thick and sturdy—making the title perfect for repeated reads in the classroom or at home, and more than durable enough for the wear and tear of a doctor's waiting

room.

Altman and Jacobson cleverly use repetition to drill their safety message into young minds. Twice they repeat the refrain “Don’t stuff stuff in your ears. / Don’t stick sticks up your nose. / Even though it’s tempting, / That’s not where that stuff goes.” They use a similar phrasing with slight variations elsewhere in the book, thereby missing out on creating a cohesive sing-song rhythm that would have kept their valuable lesson bouncing around in young heads.

Caregivers will be amused that the authors treat likely hazards such as crayons and sticks the same as more ridiculous things such as frogs and beehives, underscoring that there really is nothing curious toddlers won’t try to jam in their ears and nose. Yet the ultimate audience is kids, because in reading *Don’t Stick Sticks Up Your Nose! Don’t Stuff Stuff In Your Ears!*, curious tots will get to see what happens when you stick a lollipop in your ear, without having to endure the resultant headache.

Amanda McCorquodale