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“‘Teach Your Children Well’: American Children’s Literature and the Construction of the 1960s Childhood” explores the relationship between the children’s book publishing industry and the larger socio-political dynamics of the 1960s. By focusing on award winning Caldecott- picture books, the paper highlights the gap between larger notions of 1960s childhood and the ideals espoused by the Caldecott authors and illustrators especially within the shifts of the decade’s re-interpretation of American childhood. Despite the backdrop of grass-roots activism and social progress, institutions in charge of awarding these prizes looked to the past, and especially to post-war traditionalism, in order to stem the tide of the activism and social transformation taking place all around. By examining these award winning books, the paper attempts to demonstrate the lack of social progress within the book publishing industry as seen through the books’ plots and illustrations. Efforts made by activist groups such as SDS, SCLC, and CORE helped promote society’s heightened consciousness regarding all people and their place within the American ideal; however, these efforts were not replicated by those producing mainstream material culture for children. Instead, individuals placed in positions to protect children and propagate notions of childhood – whether librarians or editors -- failed to embrace the decade’s progressive successes denying the long term impact of such progress in the cultivation of a modern American childhood.