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Now What Can I Do?

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Bridges, Margaret Park. *Now What Can I Do?* Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Seastar, 2001. ISBN 11587170469. \$15.95. 32 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra Tidwell

Reading Level: Preschool

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Fiction; Picture books

Subject: Imagination--Fiction; Parent and child--Fiction; Raccoon--Fiction; Books--Reviews

It's raining outside, and little raccoon is bored. He asks his mother: "What can I do, Mommy?" Mother raccoon suggests a number of "chores" to do and then imaginatively makes them into "fun" games, such as pretending your bed is a boat while you make it, or pretending your toothbrush is a microphone as you brush your teeth.

Having had children ask me the same question little raccoon asked, I realize that Bridges did come up with some interesting ways to cajole a single child into doing his or her regular home duties. However, the constant repetition of "What else can I do, Mommy" seemed too prominent in the book. The illustrations, although colorful, are too busy—too many ideas on each page for the intended age group. Mother's constantly positive attitude is commendable. After chores are done, raccoon could have been engrossed for a longer period of time if he had been given some creative mediums to work with, such as clay, paper, crayons, and scissors. Or how about inviting a little raccoon friend over to play dress-up? Or any number of other "millions of things" to do?