In 1857, Illinois State University’s founders established a normal school for teacher preparation. The campus area subsequently incorporated as the Town of Normal. Some 150 years after our founding, we at ISU appreciate our institution’s rich heritage, but we question the implications of normalcy—which, like childhood itself, is a shifting concept.

In the spirit of “ReImagining Normal,” ISU hosts the 2008 Children’s Literature Association conference at the Chateau Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington. We invite proposals and papers that explore the potential for change in children’s literature and celebrate expansive (and even explosive) redefinitions of normativity in the twenty-first century. Investigations of historical and contemporary modes and formations are welcome. We anticipate a conference that problematizes commonly held assumptions and investigates the changing status of childhood, children’s and adolescent literature and culture, verbal and visual representation for/about young audiences, and constructions of diversity.

Proposals and papers might address children’s texts, children’s culture, and their intersections with:

- Definitions of diversity, inclusivity, multiculturalism, pluralism
- Evolving conventions of children’s literature
- Unconventional experiments in literature, visuals, and design (e.g., comics, metanarrative, digital literacy, multimedia)
- Contemporary and historic representations of childhood and difference
- Imagery and pictorial sequence that challenge norms
- Golden ages of children’s literature and contemporary constructions of childhood
- Nontraditional nonfiction: information books and biographies
- The implied reader, past/present/future
- Diversifying audiences and bilingual texts
- International books and translation
- Globalization and the Other: travelogue and developing nations
- Censorship issues and taboos
- LGBTQ families, the queerness of children, and heteronormativity
- Postcolonial literature
- Literatures of diaspora and exile
- Human and nonhuman encounters
- International responses to environmental concerns and climate change
- Emergent trends in research, academic scholarship, and literary criticism
- New directions in children’s publishing
- Illinois authors and illustrators

Please send 250-500 word abstracts via email to ChLA2008@ilstu.edu, or mail to: ChLA 2008, English 4240, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4240

For more information: http://www.english.ilstu.edu/ChLA2008/

Abstracts are due January 15, 2008; acceptances will be mailed in March, 2008.