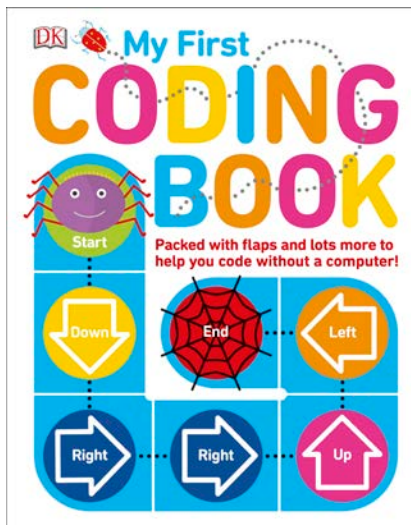
	An Interview with Kiki Prottzman
	<i>My First Coding Book</i>
	Source: Reading Is Fundamental
	Description: We recently caught up with Kiki Prottzman about her new board book for early learners that gives them a hands-on experience with coding.



1. What inspired you to write a coding book for kids in the K-2 range?

Young children pick up new things much easier than adults. Coding is no different. When you can help a child to understand the foundation of a subject while they're little, it becomes fundamental to how they think the rest of their lives. Coding is especially important, since the base of it includes problem-finding and problem-solving, both of which are skills that can make students better at all subjects as they grow.

2. How important are literacy skills to a computer programmer?

Literacy is crucial to a computer programmer. As you know, literacy is more than just reading. It's the ability to understand and communicate through reading and writing. Not only is it important for a programmer to understand written instructions about their projects, they need to be able to produce written bids that get their ideas across. Beyond that, programmers need to be able to go one step further to understand and communicate through code! That is a whole extra level of literacy that can only be achieved if the basics have been mastered.

3. Is this book being used in classrooms? If so, how?

My First Coding Book wasn't written specifically for the classroom. Instead, it was meant to be a recreational book that gets young students excited about the ideas behind computer science and programming. If anything, this book makes a great free-time supplement for a well-developed early elementary coding curriculum like Computer Science Fundamentals.

4. **Are there certain coding apps that you would recommend for parents or educators?**

The coding app market is growing very quickly right now. This is wonderful news for students and teachers! As students are getting used to the idea of programming, whether done on their own or with their parent, something fun and light is best. I recommend any of the Hour of Code tutorials, or The Foos. Once a teacher is ready to present coding to the classroom, I recommend CS Fundamentals by Code.org or Tynker. There are quite a few great teacher lesson plans that have been developed around Scratch, as well.

5. **What does it mean for a child to be literate in the 21st century?**

Today, and for the future, parents and teachers should help students to learn how to read more than just words. Students will need to figure out new technology rules and languages every few years. That means that students need to be able to understand the context of what's being presented, over and above the syntax.

6. **If a parent or educator wants to build a library of books on coding for early learners, are there other books or authors you would recommend?**

Great question. I have a couple of new books coming out next year (stay tuned!) but until then, I'd recommend:

- *Star Wars Coding Projects* by Jon Woodcock
- *Coding Games in Scratch* by Jon Woodcock
- *Kids Get Coding* by Heather Lyons
- *Click'd* by Tamara Ireland Stone
- *Secret Coders* by Gene Luen Yang

7. **Do you have any other thoughts to share with the RIF community? Our community includes teachers, parents, literacy volunteers, and reading coordinators who help distribute low-cost books to kids.**

Thank you for everything you do! Reading really is the first step toward being able to learn anything you want to know. When students first understand how to get their brains to decode those little letters and see the combinations of symbols as the representation of something from their lives, that's when they stop being limited by first-hand experience. Getting that switch to flip can be hard work, but I've never met anyone who regrets learning to read.