

# Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House Books

## Come in Many Forms

**Little House on the Prairie** has always been an eight-year old favorite. In the past few years, a number of "spin offs" have emerged that extend the series downward in age so that even wee ones can enter into the world of Laura Ingalls Wilder. The picture books, called "**My First Little House Books**" include episodes excerpted and adapted and re-illustrated for younger readers ( they're at about second grade reading level). Titles include: **Winter Days in the Big Woods, Dance at Grandpa's, Going to Town, Deer in the Wood, Christmas in the Big Woods, Summertime in the Big Woods, Winter on the Farm, Going West, Prairie Day**, and others are forthcoming. They are wonderful to read aloud to four year olds, and easy enough for six year olds to read on their own, but certainly not the equal of the originals.

You'll also find Little House paper dolls, a Little House Cookbook, a book-and-locket, theater kit, songbook and tape, calendar, sticker books, board books for two's and three's, a Little House ABC and Little House 123. But best of all, I think, are the **Little House Chapter Books** which are adapted from the originals and illustrated by Renee Graef, who imitates Garth Williams extremely well. These are perfect ways for the six/ seven year old

who is daunted by the length of the original books. These "skinny books" have about 70 pages but the text size is just about the same as the originals, thus building stamina for longer reading. The text is not watered down so much as opened up on the page, with more white space between the lines (called leading) and more marginal space, so the young reader's eyes don't "wear out" quite so easily. The first two titles are **The Adventures of Laura and Jack** and **Pioneer Sisters** (\$3.95, Harper Trophy).

But of course, there is nothing to match the originals. If you've got kids, take time this summer to read aloud at least one of the Laura Ingalls Wilder books: choose from **Little House in the Big Woods**, **Little House on the Prairie**, **Farmer Boy**, **On the Banks of Plum Creek**, **By the Shores of Silver Lake**, **The Long Winter**, **Little Town on the Prairie**, **These Happy Golden Years**, or **The First Golden Years**.

Kids of every generation need to know these wonderful stories, sharing in the experiences of the frontier, the spirit of family and the cherished lives of the enduring characters.

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