

# Meet the Author

## Tania Howells

**Tania Howells graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 1997 and has been a freelance illustrator for nearly 20 years working for clients such as *Today's Parent* magazine, *Chirp*, Holt Renfrew, and *The National Post*. In addition to having written and illustrated *Starring Shapes!*, she has illustrated four other books including the award-winning *Willow's Whispers* and *Willow Finds a Way*. She lives in Toronto with her husband, son and cat, and works from home while her son is at school.**



**TingL:** What attracted you to the Ontario College of Art and Design and a career as an illustrator (and now an author/illustrator)?

T.H.: I went to the Etobicoke School of the Arts for high school, so OCAD was a natural progression. I was into painting in high school and I took what was then called “general studies” at OCAD. It didn’t involve illustration at all, but lots of woodworking, ceramics, jewelry, enameling, and metalwork. Illustration seemed sensible because a person could earn more per piece if it was used in a magazine article for example. I made little sculptural pieces I wanted to use photographed, as illustration. I slowly moved into 2D work as it eliminated the extra pricey photography step. My brother is a graphic designer and knew about the industry and computers, so he helped me quite a bit.

**What did you like best about the work you did as an illustrator before you began illustrating books? What was your favourite piece of work from that time? What made it particularly satisfying for you?**

I liked getting any work at all and still do! Each job is new and exciting because the jobs are always different. I did a project with my brother actually, a booklet promoting community togetherness for the new millennium. I got to draw a whole pile of small cute doodles that were sprinkled throughout the book next to photos and paragraphs about strengthening community.

**How is illustrating books different from your earlier work?**

Illustrating a book is a huge project involving 32 full colour