

Using Children's Picture Books to Teach Understanding and Acceptance of Diversity

Compiled by Dr. Julie Ashworth
Assistant Professor of Education, Augustana University, 2021



The books we read should be chosen with great care, that they may be, as an Egyptian king wrote over his library, "The medicines of the soul." - Paxton Hood

Books are a wonderful way to bond interpersonally with children when shared together and to explore concepts of accepting diversity and empathy that aren't readily available in everyday life for children. The following books are helpful in illustrating the abstract concepts of differing abilities, diversity & inclusion, peace, social justice, civil rights, and helping explicitly teach children how to construct their own moral behavior and become empathetic. Exemplary, authentic books for children and young people about diversity, understanding others, resolving conflicts, and being a member of a global family are more important now than ever.



Books that Promote Understanding, Acceptance and Advocacy for Kids with Autism:

A Kids Book About Autism	David and Justin P. Flood
So Your Friend Has Autism	Agnieszka Valentaolds
My Friend Has Autism	Amanda Tourville
Since We're Friends	Celeste Shally & David Harrington
A Friend Like Simon	Kate Gaynor
A Friend for Henry	Jenn Bailey & Mika Song
Looking for Louis	Lesely Ely & Polly Dunbar
Autism and Me: Sibling Stories	Ouisie Shapiro
My Brother Charlie	Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Peete
Sometimes My Brother	Angie Healy
All About My Brother	Sarah Peralta
My Best Friend Will	Jamie Lowell & Tara Tuchel
Uniquely Worried: A Story about Autism and Its Gifts	Julia Cook
I can't Believe You SAID That!	Julia Cook
I Can Fix It!	Gayle Grass

Pedro's Whale	Paula Kluth & Patrick Schwartz
Arnie and His School Tools	Jennifer Veenendall
Ian's Walk: A Story Bout Autism	Laurie Lears
I Am Here	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds
I am Human, A Book of Empathy	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds
We're Amazing, 1,2,3	Leslie Kimmelman
Family Forever	Sesame St.
The Girl Who Thought in Pictures,	
Story of Dr. Temple Grandin	Julie Finley Mosca
Leah's Voice	Lori Demoni
All My Stripes: A Story for Children	
with Autism	Shaina Rudolph & Danielle Royen
Autism & Me: A child's perspective	Marina Karanjac
When My Worries Get Too Big	Kari DUnn Buron
How to Deal with Autism	Lynette Robbins
The Truth About Autism: A Child's Guide	
to Understanding Autism	Kelly Streng
Rescued by a Cow and A Squeeze	Temple Grandin
I See Things Differently:	
A First Look at Autism	Pat Thomas
Why Won't He Look At Me?	Brandie Wiley
I Am Utterly Unique	Elaine Marie Larson
We'll Paint the Octopus Red	Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

Chapter Books (includes character with autism):

Rain Reign	Ann Martin
A Boy Called Bat	Elana Arnold
Raymie Nightingale	Kate Decamillo
Asbergers Syndrome, the Universe and	
Everything	Kenneth Hall
Chester and Gus	Cammie McGovern
SuperStar	Mandy Davis
The Luster of Lost Things	Sophie Chen Keller
How to Say I Love You Out Loud	Karole Cazzo
Mockingbird	Kathryn Erksine

Books that Celebrate All Abilities:

Meet Mimi	Francie Dolan & Wendy Leach
I Am Me	Tristan Towns
Different~A Great Thing to Be	Heather Avis
It's Ok to be Different:	
Children's Picture Book about Diversity	
and Kindness	Sharon Purtell & Sujata Saha
Just Ask!: Be Different,	
Be Brave, Be You	Sonia Sotomayor & Rafeal Lopez
We're All Wonders	R. J. Palacio
Arnie and the New Kid	Nancy Carlson
The Balancing Girl	Berniece Rabe
The People on the Corner	Leslye Orr
Meet Maya Cat: A Story of Acceptance	Lauren Beader
What Were You Thinking:	Bryan Smith
Eagle Eyes	Jeanne Gehret
I'm Deaf and it's Okay	Lorraine Aseltine
Be Kind to Eddie Lee	Virginia Fleming
How Smudge Came	Nan Gregory

Don't Laugh At Me
 I'm Like You, You're Like Me
 What It's Like to Be Me
 My Name is Blessing

Steve Seskin & Allen Shamblin
 Cindy Gainer
 Helen Exley
 Eric Walters

Authentic Multicultural and Miscellaneous Books for Promoting & Affirming

Diversity:

A Year Full of Celebrations and Festivals	Christopher Corr
A Kids Book About Racism	by Jelani Memory
A Kids Book About Failure	by Dr. Laymon Hicks
A Kids Book About Creativity	by Sara & Stewart Scott-Curran
A Kids Book about Empathy	Daron K. Roberts
A Kids Book About Bullying	Elizabeth Tom
A Kids Book About Belonging	Kevin Carroll
A kids Book About Disabilities	Kristine Napper
A Kids Book About Gratitude	Ken Banyon
A Kids Book About Adventure	Ben Tertin
Most People	Michael Leannah
The Ocean Calls	Tina Cho
Sulwe	Lupita Nyong'o
Ambitious Girl	Meena Harris
A Place at the Table	Saadia Faruqi
I am Human, A Book of Empathy	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds
I am Peace, A Book of Mindfulness	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynold
I am Love, A Book About Compassion	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynold
I am One, A Book of Action	Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynold
I Promise	Lebron James
All Our Welcome	by Alexandra Penfold & Suzanne Kaufman
The Proudest Blue:	
The Story of Hijab and Family	Ibtihaj Muhammad
I Can Do Hard Things	Gabi Garcia
I am Enough	Grace Buyers
I Believe I Can	Grace Buyers
Each Kindness	Jacqueline Woodson
On the Day You Begin	Jacqueline Woodson & Rafael Lopez
Not my Idea: A book About Whiteness	Anastasia Higginbotham
Hello World	Manya Stojic
Families Around the World, One Kid at a Time	Uwe Ommer
Courage (in Japanese & English)	Bernard Waber
On the Day You Were Born	Debra Frasier
Amazing Grace	Mary Hoffman
Lenore's Big Break	Susan Pearson
These Hands	Hope Lynne Price
Let's Talk About Race	Julius Lester
Whoever You Are	Mem Fox
Something Beautiful	Sharon Dennis Wyeth
For Every Child	Caroline Castle (UNICEF)
Thank You, Mr. Falker	Patricia Palacco
Mr. Lincoln's Way	Patricia Palacco
The Junkyard Wonders	Patricia Palacco
In Our Mothers' House	Patricia Palacco
The Colors of Us	Karen Katz
Love Can Build a Bridge	Naomi Judd
If the World Were a Village	David Smith

The Crayon Box that Talked	Shane DeRolf
A Bad Case of Stripes	David Shannon
Encounter	Jane Yolen
Is There Really A Human Race?	Jamie Lee Curtis
Old Turtle	Douglas Wood
Old Turtle and the Broken Truth	Douglas Wood
Martin's Big Words	Doreen Rappaport
Rosa	Nikki Giovanni
The Story of Ruby Bridges	Robert Coles
Sister Anne's Hands	Marybeth Lorbiecki
Goin' Someplace Special	McKissack & Pinkney
Harlem	Walter Dean Myers
We Are All Wonders	R. J. Palacio
I Dream of a World...	Pershing Accelerated School
I Hate English	Ellen Levine
A To Zen	Ruth Wells
Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You	Sonia Sotomayor & Rafeal Lopez
The Whispering Cloth	Pegi Deitz Shea
Usborne Book of Peoples of the World	Doherty & Claybourne
Many Nations	Joseph Bruchac
Families Around the World	Uwe Ommer
The Skin You Live In	Michael Tyler
Ruby's Wish	Shirin Yim Bridges
Listen to the Wind	Greg Mortenson & Susan Roth
Giving Thanks: A Native American Good	
Morning Message	Chief Jake Swamp
Gift Horse: A Lakota Story	S.D. Nelson
Crazy Horse's Vision	Joseph Bruchac
Shota and the Star Quilt	Margaret Bateson-Hill
Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey From	
Darkness into Light	Tin Tiller
I'm in Charge of Celebrations	Bryd Baylor
Everybody Needs a Rock	Bryd Baylor
The Table Where Rich People Sit	Bryd Baylor
The Way to Start a Day	Bryd Baylor
14 Cows for America	Carmen Agra Deedy
Imagine A Day	Sarah L. Thomson
Imagine A Place	Sarah L. Thomson
Pitching In For Eubie	Jerdine Nolen
Family	Isabell Monk
Throw Your Tooth on the Roof:	
Tooth Traditions From Around The World	Selby B. Beeler
So Far From the Sea	Eve Bunting
How & Why Stories: World Tales Kids	
Can Read & Tell	Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss
The Bracelet	Yoshiko Uchida & Joanna Yardly
Our World of Water: Children and	
Water Around the World	Beatrice Hollyer
Mirror	Jeannie Baker
The Day the Rains Fell	Anne Faundez
Amazing Faces	Lee Bennett Hopkins & Chris Soentpiet
People	Peter Spier
The Day You Begin	Jacqueline Woodson
Show Way	Jacqueline Woodson
The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales	Dawn Casey & Anne Wilson

Bringing The Rain To Kapiti Plain	Verna Aardema
Our Children Can Soar: A Celebration	
Of Rosa, Barak, and the Pioneers of	
Change	Michelle Cook
Of Thee I Sing: A Letter To My	
Daughters	Barack Obama
Four Feet, Two Sandals	Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed
W Is For World:Round-The-World ABC	Kathryn Cave
Elephant Dance: A Journey To India	Theresa Heine
The Village That Vanished	Ann Grifalconi
Wish: Wishing Traditions Around the	
World	Roseanne Thong
Seeking Serenity	Pilar Stella
The Story Tree: Tales to Read Aloud	Hugh Lupton & Sophie Fatus
A Cool Drink of Water	Barbara Kerley
Sensing Peace	Suzana E. Yoder
Our Favorite Stories from Around the	
World	Jamila Gavin
An Awesome Book	Dallas Clayton
Giraffes Can't Dance	Giles Andreae & Guy Parker- Rees
Julian is a Mermaid	Jessica Love
Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut	Derrick Barnes
I am Every Good Thing	Derrick Barnes
I am Enough	Grace Byers & Keturah A. Bob
I Believe I Can	Grace Byers & Keturah A. Bob
Skin Like Mine	LaTashia M. Perry
Hair Love	Matthew E. Cherry
Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist	
Jean-Michel Basquiat	Javaka Steptoe

Promoting Peace/Social Justice Books:

Separate Is Never Equal:Sylvia Mendez	
Her Family's Fight for Desegregation	Duncan Tonatiuh
We are the Change	Henry Belafonte
Let the Children March	Monica Clark-Robinson & Frank Morrison
Freedom in Congo Square	Carole Boston Weatherford & R. Gregory Christie
Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice	Nikki Grimes
Change Sings	Amanda Gorman
Say Something	Peter Reynolds
Be You!	Peter Reynolds
We are Water Protectors	Carol Lindstrom
All Because You Matter	Tami Charles
We Rise, We Resist,	
We Raise Our Voices	Wade Hudson (editor of 50 diverse authors & illustrators)
One of Us	Peggy Moss
What Does Peace Feel Like?	Vladimir Radunsky
Something Happened in Our Town:	Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, Ann Hazzard & Jennifer Zivion
A Child's Story About Racial Injustice	
Peace One Day the Making of World	
Peace Day	Jeremy Gilley & Karen Blessen
We Are All Born Free	Anmesty International UK Section 2008
The Librarian of Basra: A True Story	
from Iraq	Jeanette Winter
If Peace Is...	Jane Baskwill
Love is Powerful	Heather Dean Brewer

The Undeclared	Kwame Alexander
A Million Visions of Peace	Jennifer Garrison
The Big Book of Peace	Collection by many authors
Peace Begins with You	Katherine Scholes
Peace in 100 Languages	Multiple authors
A Piece of Peace	Young authors
Peace Crane	Sheila Hamanaka
Sadako and the Thousand Cranes	Eleanor Coerr
Faithful Elephants	Tomoko Tsuchiya Dykes
Seven Brave Women	Betsy Hearne
Peace Week in Miss Fox's Class	Eileen Spinelli
The Peace Book	Todd Parr
The Butterfly	Patricia Polacco
Pink and Say	Patricia Polacco
January's Sparrow	Patricia Polacco
The Hating Book	Charlotte Zolotow
The Allegory	Eve Bunting
We Share One World	Jane E. Hoffelt
The Peace Seekers	Nathan Aaseng
Peace Flower	Ada Aharoni
You and I Can Change the World	Ada Aharoni
Seeds of Change	Jen Cullerton Johnson
Planting the Seeds of Kenya	Claire A. Navoli
Mama Titi (story of Wangari Maathia)	Donna Jo Napoli
Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True	
Story from Africa	Jeanette Winter
Planting The Trees of Kenya: The story	
of Wangari Maathai	Claire A. Nivola
When I Grow Up I will Win the	Isabel Pin
Noble Peace Prize	
Can You Say Peace?	Karen Katz
A Little Peace	Barbara Kerley
Peaceful Pieces: Poems and Quilts	
About Peace	Anna Grossnickle Hines
Somewhere Today: A Book of Peace	Shelley Moore Thomas

Chapter Books that address Diversity for Read Aloud & to recommend to your Intermediate Elementary-High School Students

Wonder	F. J. Palacio
Rayme Nightingale	Kate DiCamillo
Louisiana's Way Home	Kate DiCamillo
Beverly Right Here	Kate DiCamillo
Rain Reign	Ann Martin
Wish Tree	Katherine Applegate
The War the Saved My Life	Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Ban This Book	Alan Gratz
The Insignificant Events in the Life of A Cactus	Dusti Bowling
Sequel: Momentous Events in the Life of A Cactus	Dusti Bowling
Brown Girl Dreaming	Jaqueline Woodson
Harbor Me	Jaqueline Woodson
Blended	Sharon Draper
Out of My Mind	Sharon Draper
One Crazy Summer	Rita Williams-Garcia
Crossover	Kwame Alexander

Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

Refugee

Counting by Sevens

Shouting at the Rain

Piercing Me Together

Free Lunch

The Stars Beneath Our Feet

The Benefits of Being an Octopus

Ghost Boys

The Thing About Jelly Fish

Dear Martin

The Hate U Give

The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love & Truth

A Wish in the Dark

Walk Two Moons

Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks

Long Way Down

White Fragility

Stamped from the Beginning

Dan Gemeinhart

Alan Gratz

Holly Goldberg Sloan

Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Renee Watson

Rex Ogle

David Barclay Moore

Ann Braden

Jewell Rhodes

Ali Benjamin

Nic Stone

Angie Thomas

Wade Hudson

Christina Soontornvat

Sharon Creech

Jason Reynolds and Alexander Nabaum

Jason Reynolds

Robin Diangelo

Ibram X. Kendri