

❖ Preschool - 1st Grade ❖

Best Books of 2021



We aim to provide high quality lists featuring books of different genres, interests, maturity levels, and content for children & teens. You and your parents/guardians are the best judge of what's appropriate for you.

Best Books lists from previous years may be obtained by request at the Youth Services desk.

***Additional formats available from other libraries and/or downloadable from OverDrive/Libby.**

Abery, Julie – *Sakamoto's Swim Club: How a Teacher Led an Unlikely Team to Victory*

The true story of science teacher Soichi Sakamoto, who formed a champion swim club **+797.2 Abe, Non-Fiction** consisting of the Hawaiian and Japanese children of impoverished sugarcane workers in the 1930s.

Alabed, Bana – *My Name is Bana*

++Alabed, Picture Books*

Bana's mother tells her of the strong bana tree that grows in their homeland, Syria, and how Bana's strength helped her survive war, being a refugee, and starting fresh in a new country.

Alessandri, Alexandra – *Isabel and Her Colores Go to School* **++Alessandri, World Languages Picture Books***

English just feels wrong to Isabel. She prefers her native Spanish. As she prepares for a new school, she knows she's going to have to learn English. Her first day is uncomfortable until she finds new ways to communicate with new friends.

Anand, Shelly – *Laxmi's Mooch*

++Anand, Picture Books*

After Laxmi's friend Zoe points out the hairs on her lip, Laxmi is very self-conscious, until her East Indian parents help her to accept and celebrate her appearance.

Applegate, Katherine – *Doggo and Pupper*

++Applegate, Early Readers; +App, Readalongs

Doggo, an older dog, learns how to welcome and accept a young puppy into the household.

Archer, Micha – *Wonder Walkers*

++Archer, Picture Books*

Two curious children go for a walk, asking imaginative questions about the natural beauty that surrounds them.

Baptiste, Tracey – *Looking for a Jumbie*

++Baptiste, Picture Books*

Mama says jumbies exist only in stories, so Naya sets out on a nighttime adventure to find out for herself. Naya is sure that jumbies are real. Some have big mouths. Or thick fur. Or glowing skin. Or sharp teeth. Kind of like her new friends.

Bates, Janet Costa – *Time for Bed, Old House*

++Bates, Picture Books

Isaac is excited for a sleepover at Grandpop's house, but he's nervous about being away from home for the first time. His knowing Grandpop tells him it's not quite time to go to bed, because he needs Isaac's help in putting the house to bed.

Battersby, Katherine – *Trouble*

++Battersby, Picture Books*

A squirrel sees nothing but trouble in a bear newcomer who has terrible teeth, knife-like claws, and an oversized appetite, while her pet mouse perceives a new neighbor who is just trying to be friendly.

Beaty, Andrea – *Aaron Slater, Illustrator*

++Beaty, Picture Books*

When Miss Greer asks each child in the class to write a story, second-grader Aaron, who loves to draw but struggles with reading, creates a story using pictures.



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Biedrzycki, David – *Invasion of the Unicorns*

++Biedrzycki, Picture Books

Secret agent Bubble07, who exactly resembles a stuffed toy, is on Earth to assess whether or not the unicorns should invade the planet, ultimately suggesting that Earth would serve as an excellent vacation destination for unicorns.

Bigwood, Kira – *Secret, Secret Agent Guy*

++Bigwood, Picture Books

When a 007-year-old embarks on a bedtime mission called Operation Lollipop, he's almost prepared for everything.

Bingham, Winsome – *Soul Food Sunday*

++Bingham, Picture Books; +Bin, Readalongs*

Granny teaches her young grandson how to cook the family meal, in this celebration of food, traditions, and gathering together at the table. Includes recipe for baked macaroni and cheese.

Blackall, Sophie – *Negative Cat*

++Blackall, Picture Books

Max isn't a typical cat, but his loving owner still sees the best in him. A touching story with depth and sweet humor.

Brashares, Ben – *The Great Whipplethorp Bug Collection*

++Brashares, Picture Books

Chuck learns that he comes from a fascinating lineage and decides to carve his own mark by collecting bugs.

Brosgol, Vera – *Memory Jars*

++Brosgol, Picture Books

Freda uses jars to save everything from a chocolate chip cookie to the full moon, just as her grandmother saves summer blueberries. Includes a recipe for blueberry jam.

Brown, Peter – *Fred Gets Dressed*

++Brown, Picture Books*

After running around the house naked and wild, Fred decides to get dressed in his parents' closet with surprising results.

Candy James – *I Really Dig Pizza!: A Mystery!*

++Candy James, Early Readers

Archie the fox stumbles upon a cheesy treat in the forest and tries to keep it a secret, until his cousin Reddie comes along, ready to solve a mystery. A new early reader graphic novel series.

Carozzi, Nicolò – *Brave as a Mouse*

++Carozzi, Picture Books

A heroic little mouse leads three mischievous black cats on a wild and epic chase up and down and over and around and into the pantry as part of a plan to protect her best friend, a goldfish the cats have been frightening.

Cooper, Elisha – *Yes & No*

++Cooper, Picture Books

Join a cat and puppy pair through their day: the ups of being fed and romping through grass, and the downs of days that are too short and things that don't go as planned, as they realize that sometimes the best thing is just being together.

Cummins, Lucy Ruth – *Vampenguin*

++Cummins, Picture Books

A young vampire trades places with a penguin at the zoo for a day of mischief and fun.

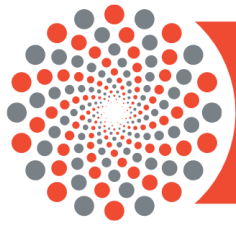


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Dapier, Jarrett – *Jazz for Lunch*

++Dapier, Picture Books

After lunch at a very crowded jazz cafe, a boy and his Auntie Nina are inspired to create a feast of their own with such treats as Thelonious Monk Fish and Nat King Cole Slaw.

Dapier, Jarrett – *Mr. Watson’s Chickens*

++Dapier, Picture Books*

Mr. Watson loves his three chickens, but when they start to multiply, his house and tiny yard are soon overrun, and the noise and mess are driving Mr. Nelson crazy. So the couple set out to find a new home for the chickens.

Davies, Jacqueline – *Bubbles...Up!*

++Davies, Picture Books

A day at the community pool is full of unwater magic. But when a thunderstorm comes and a little brother ventures too close to the pool's edge, will our main character be quick enough and brave enough to save the day?

Davies, Jacqueline – *Sydney & Taylor Explore the Whole Wide World*

++Davies, Early Readers

Sydney the skunk and Taylor the hedgehog live happily in their cozy burrow until the day Taylor gets his Big Idea to go see the Whole Wide World. With a map and a dream, they soon discover that the world is bigger than they realized.

De la Peña, Matt – *Milo Imagines the World*

++ De la Peña, Picture Books*

While Milo and his sister travel to a detention center to visit their incarcerated mother, he observes strangers on the subway and draws what he imagines their lives to be.

Dorléans, Marie – *The Night Walk*

++ Dorléans, Picture Books

A sleepy family wakes up and steps outside into a beautiful summer night. The world is quiet and shadowy, filled with fresh smells and amazing sights. Is this what they miss when they're asleep?

Engle, Margarita – *A Song of Frutas*

++Engle, Picture Books; +Eng, Readalongs*

While visiting her abuelo in Cuba, a young girl helps him sell frutas, singing the name of each fruit as they walk, and after she returns to the United States, they exchange letters made of abrazos (hugs). Includes historical and cultural notes.

Fenske, Jonathan – *Something Stinks!*

++Fenske, Picture Books

A skunk asks the reader for help in finding the source of a terrible odor.

Ferry, Beth – *Marsha is Magnetic*

++Ferry, Picture Books

Marsha tries scientific experiments to attract friends to invite to her party, but concludes that she is the best draw.

Finison, Carrie – *Don’t Hug Doug*

++Finison, Picture Books

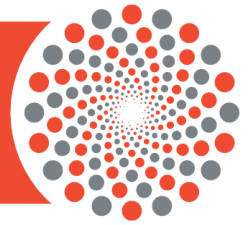
Doug prefers not to be hugged, but there are a variety of other ways his loved ones can show him affection.





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Flett, Julie – *We All Play*

++Flett, Picture Books

A marvelous celebration of the interconnectedness of all creatures. Includes some Cree phrases.

Fraser, Lu – *The Littlest Yak*

++Fraser, Picture Books*

Gertie is the littlest yak and feels stuck in her smallness. She wants to grow UP and have bigness and tallness. But when it turns out that there are some things that ONLY Gertie can do, maybe she'll find herself great just the way she is?

Fullerton, Alma – *No More Plastic*

++Fullerton, Picture Books

After seeing a beached whale that has died from ingesting plastic, Isley is inspired to adopt a plastic-free lifestyle, encourages her family to join her, and builds a plastic sculpture of a whale that inspires lasting change.

Goth, Shane – *The Midnight Club*

++Goth, Picture Books

The shadowy blanket of midnight provides the perfect cover for two sisters to enjoy a clandestine adventure.

Greene, Rhonda Gowler – *This Magical, Musical Night*

++Greene, Picture Books

Follow along as the symphony orchestra's various instruments are introduced. From violin to trumpet, flute to trombone, each plays its part, contributing to a grand and mystifying performance.

Hale, Shannon – *Itty-Bitty Kitty-Corn*

++Hale, Picture Books*

Kitty, who looks like a kitten yet feels she is actually a unicorn, begins to doubt herself as others ridicule her, until she meets a unicorn that helps her discover and embrace who she is.

Hamilton, Kersten – *First Friend*

++Hamilton, Picture Book

An exploration of how the wild wolves became dogs, and how we learned to communicate and grow alongside the creatures we love.

Harris, Shawn – *Have You Ever Seen a Flower?*

++Harris, Picture Book*

A child experiences a flower by seeing its colors, smelling its fragrance, and imagining a tiny world within in.

Higgins, Ryan T. – *The Bruce Swap*

++Higgins, Picture Book

Bruce the bear's family wishes he were less grumpy, but when his cousin Kevin arrives for a visit, he brings more fun than they ever wanted.

Ho, Joanna – *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners*

++Ho, Picture Books*

A self-confident and strong young girl recounts how she shares her eyes and more with her mom, amah, and little sister.

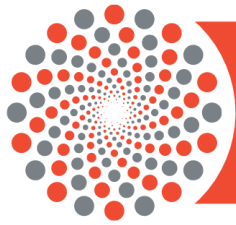


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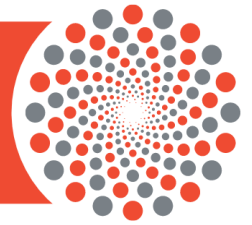
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Ho, Richard – *The Lost Package*

++Ho, Picture Books

A tour of the busy work that takes place at post offices is depicted through the journey of a lost package that receives a little help reaching its destination, proving that distance cannot keep loved ones apart.

Hodgson, Rob – *When Cloud Became a Cloud*

+551.48 Hod, Non-Fiction

Cloud moves, transforms, precipitates, and more in this charming and humorous portrayal of the water cycle.

Hudson, Katy – *Mindful Mr. Sloth*

++Hudson, Picture Books; +Hud, Readalongs

Sasha loves to do lots of things, all at once, as fast as possible. Mr. Sloth loves to do things one at a time, at a nice, easy pace. Can Mr. Sloth's mindful ways teach Sasha to slow down and enjoy the moment?

Hussain, Nadiya – *My Monster and Me*

++Hussain, Picture Books*

A touching story about a little boy whose worry monster follows him everywhere he goes. It's there when he gets dressed, when he plays with his toys, and even when his friends come over to visit. How can he escape his worries?

John, Jory – *The Smart Cookie*

++John, Picture Books*

This cookie never feels like a smart cookie. Will a dash of creativity and a sprinkle of confidence be enough to help her learn that perfect scores and having all the answers aren't the only ingredients for intelligence?

Kang, Anna – *Hudson and Tallulah Take Sides*

++Kang, Picture Books

A cat and dog who live on opposite sides of a fence discover they do not have to always see eye to eye to be friends.

Keating, Jess – *Big as a Giant Snail: Discovering the World's Most Gigantic Animals*

+591.4 Kea, Non-Fiction

Meet the biggest weirdos on Earth in this colossally cool collection.

Ketchum, Liza – *Begin with a Bee*

+595.79 Ket, Non-Fiction

Looking closely at the life cycle of one bee, this book helps readers of all ages understand and appreciate the contributions and significance of all bees.

Khan, Naaz – *Room for Everyone*

++Khan, Picture Books

Musa and his sister travel to a Zanzibar beach in a shared minibus which, despite Musa's protests, gets loaded with everything from a man and his bicycle to ten swimmers.

LaRochelle, David – *See the Dog: Three Stories about a Cat*

++LaRochelle, Early Readers

Max the dog is sick today, but have no fear! Baby Cakes the cat is happy to take his place! But when the book tells her to dig a hole, fetch a stick, and guard the sheep, the cat responds in very un-doglike ways.

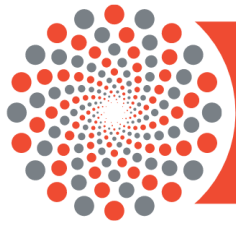


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Lim, Hope – *My Tree*

++Lim, Picture Books*

A boy makes a connection with a plum tree after moving to a new home.

Maclear, Kyo – *The Big Bath House*

++Maclear, Picture Books

In this celebration of Japanese culture, family and body positivity, a little girl, her grandmother, and aunties visit a traditional bath house where they partake in the rituals that lead up to the bath itself.

Maclear, Kyo – *Hello, Rain!*

++Maclear, Picture Books

A young girl sees a storm roll in, splashes in the puddles, and then finally watches the sun coming back out.

Madison, Megan – *Our Skin: A First Conversation about Race*

+305.8 Mad, Parent’s Shelf; ++Madison, Board Books*

An age-appropriate introduction to the concepts of race, developed by early childhood and activism experts, combines clear text with engaging artwork to help the youngest children recognize and confront unjust actions.

Maizes, Sarah – *Atticus Caticus*

++Maizes, Picture Books

This rhythmic read-aloud tale for cool cats of any species depicts a young boy and his mischievous feline, whose days are marked by clawed furniture, sun patches, and stolen sips of water, before the cat curls up on the boy's head at bedtime.

Martinez-Neal, Juana – *Zonia’s Rain Forest*

++Martinez-Neal, Picture Books*

A tour of the busy work that takes place at post offices is depicted through the journey of a lost package that receives a little help reaching its destination, proving that distance cannot keep loved ones apart.

McAnulty, Stacy – *Mars!: Earthlings Welcome*

+523.43 McA, Non-Fiction*

Meet Mars! The red planet. Planet Marvelous. Favorite sibling of Earth (or so he claims). Sometimes they're close (just 34.5 million miles apart). He is home to the largest volcano in the whole solar system. He's, well, Mars-velous!

McGinty, Alice B. – *Bathe the Cat*

++McGinty, Picture Books

Dad has posted a list of chores for the family to do, but the cat does not want a bath, so she mixes up the instructions, and soon the family is mowing the floor, vacuuming the lawn, and mopping the baby. The house is in chaos.

Meltzer, Brad – *A New Day*

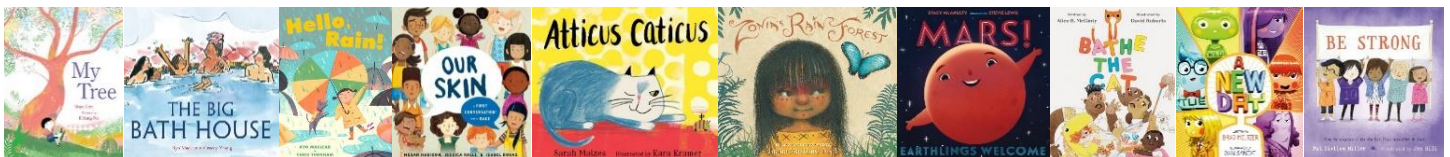
++Meltzer, Picture Books*

After Sunday quits being a day of the week, the other days of the week try out all sorts of candidates, until an act of kindness reminds them all that a little appreciation can go a long way.

Miller, Pat Zietlow – *Be Strong*

++Miller, Picture Books

Not strong enough for the climbing wall at school, a discouraged child learns that there are other ways to be strong, like not giving up when working for a good cause, learning a new skill, and making sure no one sits alone in the lunchroom.



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Miyares, Daniel – *Hope at Sea: An Adventure Story*

++Miyares, Picture Books

A girl pursues her own adventures by stowing away on her father's clipper ship.

Molinet, Michael – *nothing.*

++Molinet, Picture Books

A young boy tells his mom that he did “nothing” with his day, but readers are taken on several adventures that walk the line between real and imagined as he reminisces, through images rather than words.

Morales, Areli – *Areli is a Dreamer*

++Morales, Picture Books*

In the first picture book written by a DACA dreamer Areli Morales tells her own powerful and vibrant immigration story of moving from a quiet town in Mexico to the bustling and noisy metropolis of New York City.

Morales, Yuyi – *Bright Star*

++Morales, Picture Books*

A voice encourages a fawn to face her fears when she comes across an insurmountable barrier. Perfect for children looking for their place in the world, especially those whose safety is threatened due to the immigration crisis in the US.

Musser, Andy Chou – *A Home Under the Stars*

++Musser, Picture Books

When his family moves to the city, Toby misses seeing stars, but soon he meets some wild animals who all need the North Star to show them their way home.

Myers, Matthew – *Dino-Gro*

++Myers, Picture Books

Cole's excitement over his tiny new dinosaur toy turns to worry when Dino-Gro grows too big to fit inside the house.

Otoshi, Kathryn – *Lunch Every Day*

++Otoshi, Picture Books

Based on the true story of a boy named Jimmy who takes another kid's lunch at school every day. But through the power of kindness he is transformed into a compassionate human being.

Patterson, Jodie – *Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope*

++Patterson, Picture Books

Penelope lets his mother know he is a boy and, with her support and his ninja powers, faces his family and classmates.

Paul, Pamela – *Rectangle Time*

++Paul, Picture Books

A cat figures out how to continue interacting with his boy as he grows older and his reading habits change.

Peacock, Lou – *Charlie Chooses*

++Peacock, Picture Books

Charlie has a hard time choosing. It doesn't matter if the choice is between flavors of ice cream or pairs of underwear. However, with Charlie's birthday fast approaching, he is determined to choose the absolute best gift for himself: a dog!

Phung, Nguyen Quang – *My First Day*

++Phung, Picture Books

The rainy season has come to the Mekong Delta, and An, a Vietnamese boy, sets out alone in a wooden boat wearing a little backpack and armed only with a single oar. Daunted by the unknown, he knows it will be worth the destination.



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Prahn, Andrew – *Ship in a Bottle*

++Prahn, Picture Books

Mouse lives in constant fear of the cat, and in searching for a better life, sets off in her ship in a bottle for a new home.

Quigley, Dawn – *Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-To-Be Best Friend*

++Quigley, Early Readers; +Qui Digital Audio Players*

Jo Jo Makoons Azure is a spirited seven-year-old who moves through the world differently than anyone else on her Ojibwe reservation. She loves her #1 best friend Mimi (a cat), but worries that she needs to make more friends.

Reynolds, Peter H. – *Our Table*

++Reynolds, Picture Books

Violet longs for the time when her family was connected: before life, distractions, and technology pulled them all away from each other. Can she remind her family of the warmth of time spent together and gather around the table again?

Richardson, Chad – *Family Reunion*

++Richardson, Picture Books; ++Ric, Readalongs*

A boy is reluctant to go to his family reunion, which he's sure will be boring. Vivid, poetic language and rich illustrations bring readers along for his emotional journey, as he ultimately finds himself enjoying the large and joyous gathering.

Riddiough, Lisa Frenkel – *Elvis and the World As It Stands*

+Riddiough, Fiction

After being sadly brought home from the animal shelter, Elvis learns to appreciate his new family, especially ten-year-old Georgina Pemberton, and Elvis realizes that both humans and animals can build a world of their own choosing.

Rocco, John – *Hurricane*

++Rocco, Picture Books

After a devastating hurricane, a young boy asks for help rebuilding the neighborhood dock, his favorite place in the world, but finds that his neighbors need help first.

Rubin, Adam – *Gladys the Magic Chicken*

++Rubin, Picture Books

In Ancient Times, Gladys the chicken goes on an epic adventure and is taken for a magical chicken who grants wishes.

Sigwarth, Lydia M. – *Dear Librarian*

++Sigwarth, Picture Books

In this story based on the author's life, a young homeless girl finds a different kind of home in the library.

Snyder, Gabi – *Listen*

++Snyder, Picture Books

Illustrations and easy-to-read text urge the reader to go beyond the noise of the city to listen to a crow's caw, rain dripping onto a sidewalk, and whispered goodnights. Includes notes about listening.

Soderguit, Alfredo – *The Capybaras*

++Soderguit, Picture Books

The predictable life of the hens is upset by the capybaras seeking refuge in the coop, and they are at first annoyed by how wet and hairy the capybaras are, but a surprise twist ending shows the importance of caring for each other.



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Sterer, Gideon – *It Began with Lemonade*

++Sterer, Picture Books

A spunky young girl decides to sell lemonade on a hot summer day, venturing out all the way to the river's end where she finds some unexpected and fantastical clientele.

Sturgell, Todd – *Except Antarctica!*

++Sturgell, Picture Books

Turtles are found on every continent EXCEPT Antarctica. But not for long! When a David Attenborough-esque narrator explains that turtles are found everywhere except Antarctica, one determined turtle sets out to prove him wrong.

Stutzman, Jonathan – *Bear is a Bear*

++Stutzman, Picture Books

Bear is a new friend, a fellow mischief-maker, a protector, and a dreamer. Through all the many ups and downs of a little girl's childhood, Bear is there to provide love and support. Until it is time to say goodbye and hello in a new way.

Swanson, Matthew – *Sunrise Summer*

++Swanson, Picture Books

Each summer, a young girl and her family travel to remote Egegik, Alaska, where they join a salmon fishing crew.

Tabor, Corey R. – *Mel Fell*

++Tabor, Picture Books*

Follow Mel from fall to triumphant flight in this award winning tale of self-confidence and taking a leap of faith.

Thomas, Isabel – *Fox: A Circle of Life Story*

++Thomas, Picture Books

Fox teaches her cubs to survive in the wild, until one day she dies. Her body goes back to earth and grass and air, nourishing the world around her, showing that death is also a beginning.

Todd, Traci N. – *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*

+921 Sim, Non-Fiction*

A biography of Nina Simone, an acclaimed singer whose music gave voice to the struggle for racial equality during the Civil Rights Movement.

Valério, Geraldo – *My Book of Butterflies*

+595.78 Val, Non-Fiction

A stunning exploration of butterflies from around the world, including fascinating information about each species, from familiar Monarchs and Giant Swallowtails, to dazzling Blue Morphos and tiny Snowflakes.

Van, Muon – *Wishes*

++Van, Picture Books

In this spare, poetic picture book based on author Muon Van's family history and told through a series of wishes, a family packs up everything they own and embarks on a perilous oceanic voyage toward a better life.

Vogrig, Debora – *Line and Scribble*

++Vogrig, Picture Books

Line goes straight on her way, while Scribble wanders and zigzags, but they are still best friends and can work together with their individual perspectives to make art.



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Wahl, Phoebe – *Little Witch Hazel: A Year in the Forest*

++Wahl, Picture Books

Little Witch Hazel is a tiny witch who lives in the forest, helping creatures big and small. She rescues an orphaned egg, goes sailing, and solves the mystery of a haunted stump. But when Little Witch Hazel needs help herself, will she get it?

Wang, Andrea – *Watercress*

++Wang, Picture Books*

Embarrassed about gathering watercress from a roadside ditch, a girl learns to appreciate her Chinese heritage after learning why the plant is so important to her parents.

Wheeler, Lisa – *Someone Builds the Dream*

++Wheeler, Picture Books

Celebrates the skilled women and men who work to see the plans of architects, engineers, and designers brought to life.

Woodgate, Harry – *Grandad's Camper*

++Woodgate, Picture Books

A child who enjoys Grandad's stories of his travels and adventures with Gramps persuades him to fix up their old camper and take another trip, in honor of Gramps (Grandad's partner).

Wynter, Anne – *Everybody in the Red Brick Building*

++Wynter, Picture Books

In the middle of the night, a chain reaction of noises wakes the residents of an urban apartment building, and then lulls them back to sleep.

Yaccarino, Dan – *The Longest Storm*

++Yaccarino, Picture Books

When a strange storm confines a fractured family in tight quarters, leaving them all in the dark, they must find a way to reconnect and face whatever the future brings, together.

Yoon, Helen – *Off-Limits*

++Yoon, Picture Books

For every child who has ever felt that grown-ups have all the fun, here is a vicarious chance to slip behind the office door and play with all the tempting things that are off-limits.

Young, Jessica – *I'll Meet You in Your Dreams*

++Young, Picture Books

A child and parent journey through life together, remembering that if the other is far, they can meet in their dreams.



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