



Kindergarten Recommended Reading List 2023-2024 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Picture Books

Ali, A.E. *Our Favorite Day of the Year*. A group of boys become best friends throughout a school year marked by diverse holidays, discovering the differences that make their bond special and the universal traits that they share.

Aronson, Katelyn. *Poo-Dunit?* Mouse is dismayed to step outside her house and discover a giant pile of poo! It's too big to be Squirrel's, too dark to be Coyote's, and too messy to be Deer's. Will Mouse ever track down the culprit?

Barnett, Mac. *John's Turn*. It's John's big day at school with a dance performance for Sharing Gifts time. He's nervous, looking out at the kids staring back at him, but he takes a big breath and begins.

Bernstrom, Daniel. *Song in the City*. A young blind girl, filled with the sounds of her beloved city, helps Grandma realize that the city makes music as beautiful as the sounds they revere in church.

Bobowicz, Pamela. *What Makes a Hero*. Meet the expectation-destroying, world-saving, female superheroes of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and celebrate the strength, intelligence, and ingenuity of the women who are vital to the stories.

Bontiago, Lynnor. *Sari Sari Summers*. Nora loves spending summers with Lola at her sari-sari store, a treasure trove filled with everything you could need, from hair accessories to toys, creamy yema to sour tamarind candy. And this year, Nora is big enough to help her grandmother in the shop!

Brown, Karamo. *I Am Okay to Feel*. A father and son are caught in a storm, giving them a chance to experience and talk about different feelings.

Bryon, Nathan. *Rocket Says Look Up!* (series). Aspiring astronaut Rocket draws her community together to see a rare appearance of the meteor showers, hoping that her big brother, Jamal, will look up from his phone.

Cali, Davide. *Too Many Pigs and One Big Bad Wolf*. Once upon a time, there were three little pigs. Then the wolf ate them. THE END. The big bad wolf doesn't want to tell a long story, he wants to get to the eating part. But the narrator has other ideas, like a pig soccer team.

Catchpole, James. *What Happened to You?* Joe is fed up with only ever being asked about his one leg. All he wants to do is play Pirates. But as usual, one after another, all the children ask him THAT question.

Cole, Henry. *Nesting*. The story of a robin's journey as she builds a nest in a tree, lays beautiful blue eggs, raises her young and protects them from natural dangers until they can fly on their own.

Denise, Christopher. *Knight Owl*. Owl has always dreamed of becoming a knight, even though he's not the biggest or the strongest. But his sharp nocturnal instincts can help protect the castle, especially when knights go missing.

Eady, Antwan. *Nigel and the Moon*. When Nigel looks up at the moon, his future is bright. He imagines himself as a dancer, astronaut, and superhero, too! It's easy to whisper his dreams to the moon, but not to his classmates during Career Week, especially when he already feels out of place.

English, Karen. *Red Shoes*. Malika is delighted when Nana surprises her with a beautiful new pair of red shoes! Malika wears them everywhere she goes...until they begin to pinch her toes. Malika and Nana are off to the resale shop, where the shoes can be resold so somebody else can enjoy them!

Farrell, Alison. *The Hike*. Snacks, supplies, and a dog. What more do you need for an epic adventure? Three intrepid young female explorers set out to conquer the highs and lows of their local forest: detours, discoveries, beauty and all.

Feder, Tyler. *Bodies Are Cool!* Height, size, shape, skin color, tummys, scars, prosthetics: "My body, your body, every different kind of body! All of them are good bodies! BODIES ARE COOL!"

Fritsch, Kelly. *We Move Together*. Mixed-ability kids creatively negotiate everyday barriers and find joy and connection in disability culture and community. Perfect to start conversations about disability, accessibility, social justice, and community building.

Gonzalez, Xelena. *Where Wonder Grows*. When Grandma walks to her special garden, her granddaughters follow her. Grandma invites them to explore her collection of treasures: magical rocks, crystals, seashells, and meteorites, to see what wonders are revealed.

Higuera, Donna Barba. *El Cucuy is Scared, Too!* Ramón is a little boy who can't sleep, nervous for his first day at a new school. El Cucuy is the monster who lives in Ramón's cactus pot. He can't sleep, either. El Cucuy is scared, too!

Howley, Jonty. *Big Boys Cry*. As they walk to his new school, a frightened Levi and his father learn that it is okay for big boys to cry.

Hussain, Nadiya. *My Monster and Me*. A touching story about a little boy whose worry monster follows him everywhere he goes: when he gets dressed, when he wants to play with his toys, and even when his friends come over to visit. How can he escape his worries?

Jayawardhana, Ray. *Child of the Universe*. This book shares the immensity of a parent's love along with the message that we are all connected to the broader cosmos in important and intimate ways.

Joy, Angela. *Black Is a Rainbow Color*. From the wheels of a bicycle to the robe on Thurgood Marshall's back, Black surrounds our lives. It is a color to simply describe some of our favorite things, but it also evokes a deeper sentiment about the incredible people who helped change the world and a community that continues to grow and thrive.

Joy, Mackenzie. *Wallflowers*. People call you a wallflower. Sometimes they call you shy, or quiet, or maybe even scared. People think these are bad things, because sometimes they are LOUD. But you are happy just the way you are. And maybe you don't need to learn to be loud, they just need to learn to listen.

Kemp, Laekan Zea. *A Crown for Corina*. Today is Corina's birthday, and she's excited to wear the biggest crown with the most beautiful flowers picked from her abuela's garden. Each flower tells a special story about all the ways Corina is rooted in the family she loves.

Khan, Hena. *Under My Hijab*. As a young girl observes six women in her life who each wear the hijab in a unique way, she also dreams of the rich possibilities of her own future and how she will express her own style one day.

Lin, Grace. *A Big Bed for Little Snow*. When winter comes, Mommy makes a soft bed for Little Snow to sleep on, but each night he cannot resist jumping on the bed, causing tiny feathers to fly down.

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Picture Books cont.

Lindstrom, Carole. *We Are Water Protectors*. An urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption, inspired by Indigenous-led movements across North America.

Loomis, Ilima. *'Ohana Means Family*. In this cumulative rhyme in the style of "The House That Jack Built," a family celebrates Hawai'i and its culture while serving poi at a luau.

Nayberg, Yevgenia. *Anya's Secret Society*. Born in Russia, where left-handers are frowned upon, Anya learns to use her right hand, except when she draws with her imagined secret society of famous left-handed artists.

Oswald, Pete. *Hike*. In the cool and quiet early light of morning, a father and child wake up. Today they're going on a hike. Follow the duo into the mountains, where they witness the magic of the wilderness, overcome challenges, and play a small role in the survival of the forest.

Percival, Tom. *Ruby Finds a Worry*. Ruby is a happy, curious, imaginative young girl who finds a Worry. It starts small and gets bigger every day. A new friend shows her that everyone has worries, and there's a great way to get rid of them too.

Phi, Bao. *My Footprints*. Angry and lonely after being bullied, Thuy pretends she is different creatures, including an especially strong, wonderful being made up of her two mothers and herself.

Reynolds, Aaron. *Rescuing Mrs. Birdley*. An enthusiastic young animal "expert" who has learned everything she knows from television uses her mind, courage and knowledge of nature to rescue her teacher, who has escaped from school and gone wild at the local grocery store.

Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah. *Your Name Is a Song*. Frustrated that teachers and classmates keep mispronouncing her beautiful name, a little girl tells her mother she never wants to go back to school. Her mother teaches her about the musicality of African, Asian, Black-American, Latinx, and Middle Eastern names on their walk home.

Verde, Susan. *Unstoppable Me*. This unstoppable little boy runs, jumps, and soars through his day. He takes a little time to refuel, then he's back at it—zooming and zipping around.

Zachariah, Abdul-Razak. *The Night Is Yours*. From a vantage point high in their apartment, a parent narrates as Amani plays hide-and-seek at night with her friends in the neighborhood.

Nonfiction

Alko, Selina. *Joni: The Lyrical Life of Joni Mitchell* (B MITCHELL). A celebration of the life and times of the iconic folk artist, including her childhood on the Canadian prairie, her battle with polio, and the cultural turbulence that inspired her.

Allen, Tessa. *Sometimes People March* (303.484 ALL). Sometimes people march to resist injustice, to stand in solidarity, to inspire hope. Throughout American history, one thing remains true: no matter how or why people march, they are powerful because they march together.

Fishman, Seth. *Power Up* (612 FIS). Did you know there is enough energy in your pinkie finger to power an entire city? And that everything you do—running, jumping, playing, and exploring—uses that same energy inside of you?

Jameson, Karen. *Time to Shine: Celebrating the World's Iridescent Animals* (591.472 JAM). Have you ever noticed the rainbow-like shimmer on certain bird feathers, insect bodies and animal scales? This effect changes depending on the angle from which its viewed, and animals across the globe use iridescence to blend in and stand out.

Kuo, Julia. *Luminous: Living Things That Light Up the Night* (572.435 KUO). When it's dark out, we need light to see. But what if your body could make its own light? Bioluminescence is the light from living things, including fireflies and foxfire, fungi and glow-worms, deep-sea fish and vampire squids.

Maclear, Kyo. *It Began With a Page* (B FUJIKAWA). Gyo Fujikawa was the first illustrator to show babies of all ethnicities on the same pages together. Now it's time for Gyo's story to be told—a story of artistic talent that refused to be constrained by rules or expectations.

Martinez, Claudia Guadalupe. *Not a Bean* (595.78 MAR). The Mexican jumping bean isn't a bean at all. It's a fascinating home and food source for a special kind of caterpillar!

Rabinowicz, Alan. *A Boy and a Jaguar* (B RABINOWITCZ). Alan loves animals, but the great cat house at the zoo makes him sad. Why are they all alone in empty cages? He wants to be their champion, their voice, but he stutters uncontrollably except when he's talking to animals.

Walters, Eric. *From the Heart of Africa: A Book of Wisdom* (398.996 WAL). A collection of African wisdom gorgeously illustrated by artists from Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Canada, the United States and more.

Monarch Award Titles

The Monarch Award is Illinois' K-3 Readers' Choice Award. The name Monarch was chosen because of its familiarity to children and to symbolize the growth, change and freedom that becoming a reader brings. The Monarch is designed to encourage children to read critically and become familiar with children's books, authors and illustrators.

Abe, Momoko. *Avocado Asks: What Am I?*

Ben-Barak, Idan. *There's a Skeleton Inside You!*

Castillo, Lauren. *Our Friend Hedgehog: The Story of Us*.

Ferry, Beth. *Swashby and the Sea*.

Franklin, Ashley. *Not Quite Snow White*.

Frost, Maddie. *Capbara is Friends with Everyone*.

Gardner, Kate. *How to Find a Fox*.

Guojing. *Stormy: A Story About Finding a Forever Home*.

Keating, Jess. *Set Your Alarm, Sloth: More Advice for Troubled Animals from Dr. Glider*.

Morris, J.E. *Ducks Run Amok!*

Nyong'o, Lupita. *Sulwe*.

Percival, Tom. *Meesha Makes Friends*.

Pizzoli, Greg. *Pizza: A Slice of History*.

Prahn, Andrew. *Ship in a Bottle*.

Rubin, Sean. *This Very Tree: A Story of 9/11, Resilience, and Regrowth*.

Shea, Bob. *Chez Bob*.

Tabor, Corey R. *Mel Fell*.

Underwood, Deborah. *Ogilvy*.

Wheeler, Lisa. *Someone Builds the Dream*.

Zhang, Kat. *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao*.