



Kindergarten Recommended Reading List 2025-2026 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Picture Books

Abed, Omar. *The Book that Almost Rhymed*. A boy begrudgingly composes a sometimes-rhyming adventure with his precocious little sister.

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. Will Mouse ever track down the culprit?

Asbell, Steve. *Flap Your Hands*. Four neurodivergent kids facing some stressful moments use body movements called stims to self-regulate their emotions.

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.

Bontigao, Lynnor. *Sari Sari Summers*. Nora loves spending summers with Lola at her sari-sari store, a treasure trove filled with everything from hair accessories to toys, creamy yema to sour tamarind candy. And she is finally big enough to help her grandmother there!

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.

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?* (series). 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.

Cronin, Doreen. *Lawrence & Sophia*. Lawrence, who prefers to stay in his small backyard, and Sophia, a bird avoiding the ground, help each other overcome their fears during a rainstorm.

Datcher, Michael. *Harlem at Four*. Stories about two Harlems: a four-year-old Black girl named Harlem, and the history of New York's Harlem neighborhood.

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.

Doerrfeld, Cori. *Ready to Soar*. Riley's paper airplane is ready for take-off, but criticisms from all the birds threaten to ground the plane, until Riley meets a more supportive friend and rediscovers the joy of soaring.

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... until they begin to pinch her toes. Time to visit the resale shop, where the shoes can be resold so somebody else can enjoy them!

Fang, X. *We are Definitely Human*. When three mysterious visitors from "Europe" crash-land in Mr. Li's field, he does what any good host would: he invites them back to his farmhouse and offers to help fix up their "car." As the townsfolk also come to help the very normal humans who "make business" and "wear hat," interplanetary relations reach an all-time high.

Farrell, Alison. *The Hike*. Snacks, supplies, and a dog. What more do these three young explorers need for an epic adventure?

Feder, Tyler. *Bodies Are Cool!* Height, size, shape, skin color, tummies, 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*. Grandma invites her granddaughters to explore her collection of treasures, magical rocks, crystals, seashells, and meteorites, to see what wonders are revealed.

Gorman, Amanda. *Something, Someday*. Even the smallest gesture can have a lasting impact on the world's biggest problems!

Gutierrez, Jolene. *Too Much!* Sometimes everything is too much, too loud, too bright, and all too overwhelming. Birdy knows how to advocate for herself and a break.

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!

Hubbard, Kristen. *Dear Stray*. A little girl adopts the prickliest stray kitten at the shelter because sometimes she feels prickly, too.

Hull, Eliza. *Come Over to My House*. A cast of friendly characters invite friends over for a play—there's fun to be had, food to eat and families to meet!

Joy, Mackenzie. *Wallflowers*. People call you a wallflower, shy, or quiet, or maybe even scared. People sometimes think these are bad things, but you are happy just the way you are. And maybe you don't need to learn to be loud like them, 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!

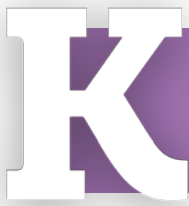
Laden, Nina. *Love is My Favorite Color*. From hoping to caring to peace to sharing, colors can convey different ways to find joy in the everyday.

Llanos, Mariana. *Benita and the Night Creatures*. Benita loves to read in bed but keeps getting interrupted by a whistling Tunche, a scary Supay and other spooky creatures from Peruvian lore. To the creatures' disbelief, Benita is so absorbed by her book that she's not the least bit scared of them.



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Picture Books cont.

Lukoff, Kyle. *I'm Sorry You Got Mad*. Jack wants to apologize for hurting Zoe's feelings. He just can't seem to find the right words. Turns out there's more to an apology than just saying "I'm sorry."

Maclean, Roz. *More Than Words*. Nathan doesn't say much. He sure has a lot on his mind, though. At school, Nathan quietly observes the ways his peers communicate. Even when they're not talking, they're expressing themselves in all sorts of ways!

Mandin, Christy. *Millie Fleur's Poison Garden*. Millie Fleur La Fae is new in Garden Glen, and she plans to plant her garden of strange and sometimes dangerous plants, but the town garden club does not approve and wants to tear it down.

Miller-Lachmann, Lyn. *Ways to Play*. Riley has plenty of ways to play, like lining up dolls and stuffies by size and shape, using sharp crayons to draw big, swirly patterns. But bossy cousin Emma thinks those ways are wrong, wrong, and wrong.

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.

Perkins, Mitali. *Between My Hands*. Maya's street is full of neighbors. Coming and going. Earning and spending. Fixing and mending. Everyone has something to do—everyone's hands are busy. Except Maya's small empty palms. What in the world can her hands do? Maya longs to do something alongside her neighbors—proclaim truth, stand for justice, show mercy, or give love.

Rockcliff, Mara. *All at Once Upon a Time*. Fairy Tale Land experiences a topsy-turvy transformation where classic stories become mixed up! Prince Charming climbs a beanstalk, Cinderella kisses a frog, and Rapunzel's nose grows every time she tells a lie.

Sima, Jessie. *Cookie Time*. Eager to eat their cookies, Kat and Ari decide to build a time machine, but they soon discover some things are worth waiting for.

Straub, Emma and Susan. *Gaga Mistake Day*. A girl and her eccentric grandmother spend a day being silly together.

Tatsukawa, Maya. *Mole is not Alone*. Anxious Mole is invited to a party. What if the party is too rowdy or he doesn't know anyone there? Can Mole find a quiet way to make friends?

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

Wenzel, Brendan. *Every Dreaming Creature*. An exploration of the sensory experiences of different animals through the perspective of dream.

Wong, Jack. *When You Can Swim*. A reverent celebration of learning to swim among a diverse cast of children and families who each experience the mysterious joys of water in nature.

Wong, Wai Mei. *Courage, Every Day*. What exactly is courage? Papa says that courage is the big, heroic feats—as well as the smaller everyday choices we make.

Nonfiction

Ignatofsky, Rachel. *What's Inside a Bird's Nest?* (598.156 IGN). A beautifully illustrated book about the behavior and life cycle of birds.

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? 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). What if your body could make its own light when it's dark out? Bioluminescence is the light from living things, including fireflies and foxfire, fungi and glow-worms, deep-sea fish and vampire squids.

Rocco, Hayley and John. *Hello, I'm a Quokka* (599.22 ROC, series). These endangered animals live on a tiny island off of Western Australia. Like their relatives kangaroos and wallabies, quokkas hop to get around and carry their babies in pouches.

Schaefer, Lola M. *Hands-on Science: Matter* (530.4 SCH). In this interactive picture book, young readers squish, squeeze, and jiggle matter on the page, using their imagination to conduct simple lab experiments.

Whaley, Ashley Harris. *I Am, You Are*. This book empowers and encourages children to embrace individuality, look out for one another, celebrate disability as diversity, and build an anti-ableist stance.

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.

*All titles are picture books unless otherwise noted.

Arnaldo, Monica. *Mr. S*.

Blackall, Sophie. *Negative Cat*.

Cox, Lynne. *Yoshi, Sea Turtle Genius: A True Story About an Amazing Swimmer*. (597.928 COX)

Davies, Jacqueline. *Sydney and Taylor Explore the Whole Wide World*. (Early Chapters)

Denise, Christopher. *Knight Owl*.

Doerrfeld, Cori. *Beneath*.

Esbaum, Jill. *Thunder and Cluck: Friends Do Not Eat Friends*. (Easy Readers, Level 1)

Fang, X. *We Are Definitely Human*.

Holt, Bob. *The Red Jacket*.

Klein, Cheryl. *Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates*.

Kurilla, Renée. *The Flower Garden*. (Graphic Novels)

Lavelle, Kari. *Butt or Face?: Can You Tell Which End You're Looking At?* (590 LAV)

Mack, Jeff. *Time To Make Art*.

McGinty, Alice B. *Bathe the Cat*.

McGregor, Anna. *Who's Afraid of the Light?*

McWilliam, Howard. *Just SNOW Already!*

Pryor, Katherine. *Home is Calling: The Journey of the Monarch Butterfly*. (595.789 PRY)

Scanlon, Liz Garton. *The World's Best Class Plant*.

Smith, Emma Bland. *Claude: The True Story of a White Alligator*. (597.984 SMI)

Wiley, DeAnn. *Homegrown*.