

Recommended Children's Books

Compiled by Trudy Ludwig

NOTE: Please read the book first to make sure the subject matter and reading level are age-appropriate for your students.

Preschool/Elementary Fiction

- Blabey, Aaron. *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*. A short, sweet story about how two very different people can be good friends.
- Cave, Kathryn. *Something Else*. Something Else wants to be like everybody else but finds he isn't. This is a lovely story about accepting people's differences.
- De Paola, Tomi. *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*. Oliver Button is teased by the boys in his class for pursuing his dream of being a tap dancer.
- Jenkins, Emily. *The Little Bit Scary People*. A lovely story about how some people look or act a little bit scary, but if you got to know them better, you'd find out they're really not. A great vehicle for enhancing perspective-taking for young children.
- Leonni, Leo. *Swimmy*. This classic story shows how being different can be a strength and how friends can band together to protect one another.
- Lovell, Patty. *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*. When the student who bullies at her new school makes fun of her, Molly remembers what her grandmother told her and feels good about herself.
- McCain, Becky. *Nobody Knew What to Do: A Story About Bullying*. This story delivers the important message that bystanders can make a difference.
- Munson, Derek. *Enemy Pie*. A fun story of how a little boy, with the help of his dad, learns a delicious lesson for turning his number one enemy into a good friend.
- Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *King of the Playground*. Kevin is afraid of Sammy, the boy who bullies him. With the help of his dad, Kevin handles Sammy.
- Nickle, John. *Ant Bully*. Lucas is picked on by Sid and takes his anger out on a colony of ants. The ants retaliate and teach him a lesson about empathy.
- Otoshi, Kathryn. *One*. This is a lovely story for preschoolers about how, when you stand up for others who aren't treated well, you can make a positive difference.
- Otoshi, Kathryn. *Zero*. A great book that shows how everyone has value.
- Seskin, Steve and Allen Shamblin. *Don't Laugh at Me*. This picture book helps kids think twice about teasing and name-calling.

Elementary Fiction

- Bosch, Carl. *Bully on the Bus*. Here, the reader gets to choose the outcome of the story when the protagonist is confronted by a bully on the school bus.
- Burnett, Karen Gedig. *Simon's Hook: A Story About Teases and Put-Downs*. When Simon gets teased, Grandma Rose teaches him how to refuse to "take the hook."
- Clements, Andrew. *Jake Drake, Bully Buster*. In the fourth grade, Jake encounters Link Baxter, SuperBully. Jake learns how to deal with this bully even though Link never stops being one.
- DePino, Catherine. *Blue Cheese Breath and Stinky Feet*. Steve is picked on by a bully and is afraid things will get worse if he asks for help. His parents come up with a plan to help their son.
- Hoose, Phillip and Hannah Hoose. *Hey Little Ant*. A little ant tries to convince a boy not to squish him because he has feelings and a family, too. The book allows the reader to determine the outcome of the story—great opportunities for discussion!
- Howe, James. *Pinky and Rex and the Bully*. Seven-year-old Pinky learns the importance of identity as he defends his favorite color, pink, and his friendship with a girl, Rex, from the neighborhood bully.
- Lombard, Jenny. *Drita My Homegirl*. Drita escapes war-torn Kosovo and ends up going to a New York public school. Maxie, an African-American student there, doesn't want to have anything to do with her until they're paired up for a school project. A great story about how friendship can bloom and overcome the differences of two very different cultures.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Better Than You*. This story shows kids how adopting a "better than you" boastful attitude can break friendships rather than build them.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Confessions of a Former Bully*. Katie gets caught being socially cruel on the playground and, with the help of caring adults, learns more about bullying and how to be a better friend. This is a great resource on bullying and friendship issues for children and adults who work with them.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Just Kidding*. A joke that has a sharp edge to it can cut you to pieces. That's what D.J. finds out from his encounters with a smart-aleck classmate. With the help of adults he trusts, D.J. learns how to stand up to put downs and make healthier friendship choices.

Ludwig, Trudy. *My Secret Bully*. Monica is emotionally bullied by her friend Katie and learns how to cope and thrive with the help of her mother. The book also includes helpful tips, discussion questions, and additional resources for parents, teachers, and counseling professionals.

Ludwig, Trudy. *Sorry!* Jack learns that there's a whole lot more to a real apology than a simple "sorry!" This story illustrates how a child can take ownership of hurtful behavior and make right his or her wrongs.

Ludwig, Trudy. *Too Perfect*. At first, Maisie thinks Kayla is perfect. But the more she gets to know Kayla, the more she begins to question whether being perfect is really so wonderful. This book will raise meaningful discussions on working to your potential, not to perfection.

Ludwig, Trudy. *Trouble Talk*. Bailey loves to talk and everything—including everyone—is fair game. Bailey soon learns that her "trouble talk" (gossiping, spreading hurtful rumors, sharing other's information, and so on) is not the way to win lasting friendships.

Madonna. *Mr. Peabody's Apples*. A young boy learns the power of words when spreading a rumor about his teacher and baseball coach, Mr. Peabody.

Madonna. *The English Roses*. An exclusive girls' club learns a lesson about judging their peers before really getting to know them.

Moss, Peggy. *One of Us*. Roberta's first day at a new school is a bit confusing as she tries to find friends who can accept her for who she is. This book will generate great discussions about peer pressure and trying to fit in with others.

Moss, Peggy. *Say Something*. A girl witnesses others being mean to her peers and learns the important lesson that being a silent bystander is not the solution.

Moss, Peggy and Dee Dee Tardif. *Our Friendship Rules*. When Alexandra dumps her best friend Jenny for the new, cool girl, she soon learns that friendship is more important than popularity.

Polacco, Patricia. *Mr. Lincoln's Way*. When Principal Lincoln discovers that Eugene, the school bully, knows a lot about birds, he uses this interest to help Eugene overcome his intolerance.

Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Based on her own experience as a child, Polacco crafts a wonderful story about how teachers can make a difference when it comes to addressing bullying and helping children with learning disabilities.

Elementary/Middle School Fiction

Blume, Judy. *Blubber*. A realistic story about bullying that takes place among fifth-grade girls.

Codell, Esmé Raji. *Sahara Special*. While no longer in Special Ed, Sahara Junes has to repeat fifth grade. Her new, unconventional teacher opens up her world and her heart to celebrate her uniqueness and strengths.

Codell, Esme Raji. *Vive La Paris*. Fifth grader Paris McCray's older brother is being bullied by a younger girl. In her eager efforts to right some wrongs, Paris learns a powerful lesson about the dangers of ignorance.

DeClements, Barthe. *Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade*. A fifth-grade class, repelled by the overweight new student who has serious home problems, finally learns to accept her.

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *The Secret Language of Girls*. Eleven-year-old Kate can't understand why her best friend Marilyn starts treating her like an enemy.

Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses*. A Newberry Honor classic about a group of classmates who pick on someone who is a little different. Told from the perspective of the bully's best friend.

Flake, Sharon. *The Skin I'm In*. Seventh-grader Maleeka, with the guidance of her teacher, overcomes low self-esteem and the bullying of her peers.

Gervay, Susanne. *I Am Jack*. Jack, an 11-year-old boy, is being bullied at school. Caring bystanders and grown-ups come to his rescue.

Hahn, Mary Downing. *Stepping on the Cracks*. In 1944, while her brother is overseas fighting in World War II, eleven-year-old Margaret and her friend find out that the kid at school who bullies, Gordy, is hiding his brother, an army deserter. The girls decide to help Gordy.

Humphrey, Sandra McLeod. *Hot Issues, Cool Choices: Facing Bullies, Peer Pressure, Popularity, and Putdowns*. This powerful collection of short stories offers great opportunities for generating ethical and moral discussions with tweens and teens.

Koss, Amy Goldman. *The Girls*. A group of girls get advice from peers, parents, and school nurses concerning the manipulative relationships among them.

Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. In this award-winning novel, 12-year-old Catherine gives her autistic brother rules to prevent him from embarrassing her. This book offers young readers powerful lessons of acceptance and tolerance of people who look and behave differently than them.

Mauser, Pat Rhoads. *A Bundle of Sticks*. At the mercy of the class bully, fifth-grader Ben is sent to a Kajukenbo (martial arts) School, where he learns techniques to defend himself and embraces their peaceful philosophy.

Millman, Dan. *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior: A Story About Courage and Love*. An old man named Socrates shows Danny that the best way of dealing with someone who bullies him is the way of the Peaceful Warrior, through courage and love.

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. August Pullman is a fifth grader born with a facial deformity. After being home-schooled for years, he is the new kid at Beecher Prep. This is a wonderful story about the power of acceptance and kindness. Highly recommended!

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. This Newberry Award-winning novel is a tale of friendship between two fifth graders who get picked on by their peers for being different.

Sachar, Louis. *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. Bradley, a fifth grader, is a social outcast and a bully. With the help of a school counselor, he learns to change his behavior and accept himself and others.

Singer, Nicky. *Feather Boy*. This story, woven with mystery and humor, is about the aggressor/target relationship of two boys and an adult “bully.”

Wilhelm, Doug. *The Revealers*. Three seventh graders team up and use their school Internet to reveal the amount of “bullying” taking place in their middle school.

Wishinsky, Frieda. *Queen of the Toilet Bowl*. A Brazilian immigrant at a U.S. high school is emotionally bullied by a popular girl. Suitable for lower-level readers (ages 10–14).

Zeier, Joan T. *Stick Boy*. A growth spurt in the sixth grade makes skinny, self-conscious Eric a school misfit and victim of the class bully. Circumstances lead him to befriend Cynthia, a proud and spirited African-American girl who is disabled.

Middle School/Young Adult Fiction

Bloor, Edward. *Tangerine*. This novel highlights the role of adults, families, and schools in bullying situations. The story is set in rural Florida, with an 11-year-old blind protagonist. *Note*: This is a graphic novel—please read the book first to make sure it's appropriate for your readers.

Brown, Jennifer. *Hate List*. A powerful story about the aftermath of a school shooting. Val, the protagonist, is haunted by the memory of her boyfriend, the school shooter, and the town and her family's reaction to what they think her role was in it—was she a hero or a co-conspirator? “A fascinating, intense read for mature young adults.

Crutcher, Chris. *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*. An unforgettable novel about high school social outcasts Eric and Sarah who help one another to stand up against social cruelty among their peers and bullying adults. *Note*: This book deals with mature, sensitive subject matter—read it first to see if it's appropriate age-wise and content-wise for your readers.

Friel, Maeve. *Charlie's Story*. A 14-year-old girl named Charlie struggles to come to terms with the reasons for her mother's desertion, her father's silence, and the cruelty of her classmates.

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. A group of English schoolboys are plane-wrecked on a deserted island. This classic explores the boundary between human reason and brutality among competitive peers.

Goobie, Beth. *Sticks and Stones*. Jujube is a high school student whose reputation takes a beating and who decides to fight back against the malicious rumors.

Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*. Two different social groups epitomize the struggles teens face with their search for self, peer pressure, gang violence, lack of parental influence, and socioeconomic status.

Mayfield, Sue. *Drowning Anna*. Anna tries to kill herself because of the ongoing vicious acts done to her by Hayley, her so-called friend. This is a great book for generating thoughtful discussion.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Crash*. Seventh grader “Crash” Coogan is comfortable with his cocky super-jock and bully nature until his grandfather's stroke and an unusual Quaker boy make him reconsider the meaning of friendship and the importance of family.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Loser*. Even though his classmates consider him strange and a loser, Daniel Zinkoff's optimism and exuberance and the support of his loving family do not allow him to feel that way about himself.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. Twelve-year-old Jeffrey comes to a small town, confronts racism, overcomes bullying, and promotes harmony between rival factions.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Wrinker*. Young Palmer must either accept the violence of being a wringer at his town's annual Pigeon Day or find the courage to oppose it.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. This is an extraordinary and haunting novel of survival and courage in Nazi Germany during World War II. A young girl learns about the power of words and how they can lead to salvation or destruction.

Preschool Nonfiction

Agassi, Martine, Ph.D. *Hands Are Not for Hitting*. This Parents' Choice Award-winning book helps children learn and practice fun and constructive things their hands can do. It also includes a section on activities adults can do with children.

Brown, Laurie Krasney and Marc Brown. *How to Be a Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them*. Dinosaurs illustrate how to make and keep friends.

Carlson, Nancy. *How to Lose All Your Friends*. The author uses humor to convey what it takes to be a good friend and make friends.

Gainer, Cindy. *I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Child's Book About Understanding and Celebrating Each Other*. Illustrations and simple text explore ways in which children are similar and different.

McCloud, Carol. *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* This story helps young children understand the importance of treating others with kindness and respect.

Payne, Lauren Murphy and Claudia Rohling. *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices*. This book describes how it feels when people get along well together and when they do not, and explains that people have control over how they react in both kinds of situations.

Thomas, Pat. *Stop Picking on Me*. This book approaches the issue of bullying and feelings in a simple and interactive fashion.

Verdick, Elizabeth. *Words Are Not for Hurting*. For ages four to eight, this book focuses on the power of words when it comes to friendship and social skills.

Elementary Nonfiction

Criswell, Patti Kelley. *A Smart Girl's Guide to Friendship Troubles*. This compact guide offers practical friendship advice and tips to girls ages ten and up.

Criswell, Patti Kelley. *Friends: Making Them & Keeping Them*. This book includes information on how to make friends and keep them.

Criswell, Patti Kelley. *Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends*. This book provides girls with tips, quizzes, and advice when it comes to dealing with bullies and bossiness.

Johnston, Marianne. *Dealing with Bullying*. This book describes what is meant by "bullying" and explains why bullies act as they do, how to deal with them, and how to stop being one.

Kaufman, Gershen, Ph.D., et al. *Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem*. This self-help book for kids includes a section on how to deal with bullies. It provides children with information, descriptions, and interventions.

Kivel, Paul. *I Can Make My World a Safer Place*. This book addresses the many ways someone can hurt others (including bullying) and what you can do to stop it.

Levine, Karen. *Hana's Suitcase*. This is a true story about a suitcase that arrived at a children's Holocaust education center in Tokyo, Japan, and the mystery that is solved when the center's curator searches for clues concerning the owner of that suitcase.

Madison, Lynda. *The Feelings Book: The Care & Keeping of Your Emotions*. This book discusses a variety of emotions girls might experience and suggests ways of dealing with them.

Pollard, Barbara Ph.D. *We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution for Children*. Text and photographs designed to create opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of conflict and the variety of ways to resolve them.

Romain, Trevor. *Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain*. A simple handbook written for children about bullies, the myths surrounding bullying issues, and interventions. The book includes resources for students, teachers, and parents.

Romain, Trevor. *Cliques, Phonies, & Other Baloney*. This book discusses cliques, what they are and their negative aspects, and gives advice on forming healthier relationships and friendships.

Webster-Doyle, Terrence. *Why Is Everybody Always Picking on Me: A Guide to Handling Bullies*. Stories and activities help young people to peacefully confront hostile aggression.

Middle School/High School Nonfiction

Ellis, Deborah. *We Want You to Know: Kids Talk About Bullying*.

Author Deborah Ellis asked students from ages nine to 19 to talk about their experiences with bullying. This book is a great resource for schools to generate thoughtful discussions with adult guidance.

Hall, Megan Kelley and Carrie Jones, Editors. *Dear Bully: Seventy Authors Tell Their Stories*. This is a collection of contributions from popular young adult novelists and children's writers who share their personal stories of the bullies, the bullied, and the bystanders.

New Moon Books Girls Editorial Board. *Friendship: How to Make, Keep, and Grow Your Friendships*. Discussing friendships and how they affect our lives. This book includes practical advice, activities, and suggestions for meeting people.

Reisfeld, Randi and Marie Morreale. *Got Issues Much? Celebrities Share Their Traumas and Triumphs*. Celebrities whom teens admire and respect share some of their stories about friendship, body and self-image, and family and relationship issues.

Shandler, Sara. *Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search for Self*. The author collects writings from adolescent girls talking about friendships, family, and overcoming obstacles.

Simmons, Rachel. *Odd Girl Speaks Out*. Girls across North America share their personal bullying experiences as the person being bullied or the person doing the bullying. The author also offers thoughtful advice to readers sharing similar experiences.