Denver Public Library  
Best & Brightest Children’s Books of 2016

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Picture Books

Fairy Tales for Mr. Barker by Jessica Ahlberg. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Liesel.
In this gentle frolic through familiar fairy tales, Lucy starts to read her dog, Mr. Barker, a story, but he dashes away. She follows him and finds herself in the Three Bears' cottage with Goldilocks. They continue on their way together, exploring different fairy tales with Mr. Barker and an expanding cast of companions. Children will enjoy the peek-through illustrations and charming background references to stories they might know.

Thunder Boy Jr. hates his name. He's named after his father, Big Thunder, and not only does he resent sharing his name, he thinks his nickname, Little Thunder "sounds like a burp or a fart." With much humor, he explores other name possibilities and in doing so, shares a bit of his Native American culture (tribe affiliation unnamed) and reveals a bit about his likes and experiences. The illustrations clearly show Thunder Boy's loving relationship with his family--especially with his father. In the end, he needn't fret over his name. It turns out he's getting a whole new one.
ECRR: Print Awareness, Vocabulary

Daniel Finds a Poem by Micha Archer. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Carrie.
What is poetry? Daniel reads a sign posted in the park announcing, "Poetry in the Park. Sunday at 6 o'clock." So he sets off to question the animal inhabitants in the park about what they think makes a poem. Finally, he turns their words into a poem that he recites at the park's poetry gathering. Beautiful collage illustrations accompany this sweet story of a boy exploring nature and learning about his world.
ECRR: Print Motivation, Vocabulary

How This Book Was Made: Based on a True Story by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Adam Rex. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Jennifer.
Ever wonder how a book was made? You'd never guess that tigers are involved, or pirates, but they are. This is a great book to share with a child and talk about all of the work that goes into that book you're holding in your hands.

Hannah and Sugar by Kate Berube. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Carrie and Lisa C.
Everyday, Sugar the dog waits at the bus stop Violet P. All the kids on the bus crowd around to greet Sugar. All the kids, except for Hannah, who says "no thank you," each time. Until one day, Sugar goes missing. The whole neighborhood pitches in to find the beloved dog. Will Hannah muster the courage to help...and just maybe save the day?

Everyone is Yawning by Anita Bijsterbosch. (Birth - Preschool) Recommended by Lisa D. and Gigi.
In this sweet lift-the-flap book, children help each of the animals yawn before they go to sleep. Friendly flaps engage young readers and the abundance of yawns will surely help children transition to dreamland.
ECRR: Print Motivation

Near, Far by Silvia Borando. (Toddler - 1st grade) Recommended by Lisa D. and Kristi.
In this stylish, wordless book, each image starts very close up and as the pages turn the view becomes farther away. Using visual clues, young readers can make guesses about the identity of each animal. Some animals are easy to guess, but others are very difficult.
ECRR: Print Motivation

Woodpecker Wants a Waffle by Steve Breen. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Lisa D. and Jennifer.
One day, Benny the woodpecker smells something wonderful, something called waffles. Benny tries and tries to get into the waffle house to try the waffles, but he just can't seem to get inside. The other forest animals laugh at him because woodpeckers don't eat waffles, but valiant Benny has a brilliant plan!
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Print Awareness

I'm a Hungry Dinosaur by Janeen Brian, illustrated by Ann James. (Preschool - Kindergarten) Recommended by Lisa C.
With brightly colored drawings and sing-songy words, readers go along with Dinosaur as he makes and eats a delicious chocolate cake. Exuberant, delightfully messy illustrations will charm readers.
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Vocabulary
**Leave Me Alone** by Vera Brosgol. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Kelly, Kristi and Amy.  
An exhausted grandmother just wants to be left alone so she can finish her knitting in peace. She shouts "LEAVE ME ALONE!" and takes a journey to space and beyond to find a little peace and quiet. She meets plenty of interesting characters along the way, such as aliens and hungry bears. This book is a hilarious reminder about the importance of solitude and family.

**Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille** by Jen Bryant, illustrated by Boris Kulikov. (1st - 4th grade) Recommended by Warren.  
This book chronicles the path Louis Braille took from a premature birth, followed by the accident that took his vision, through to sharing with the world a means for the blind to read. Bryant’s imagination fills in some of the gaps in the story, so this isn’t a factual biography. However, readers will appreciate Bryant’s idea of what it might have been like to lose sight in Louis’ time.

**A Hungry Lion, or, a Dwindling Assortment of Animals** by Lucy Ruth Cummins. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Lisa D., Carrie and Jennifer.  
This humorous book features Hungry Lion who spends time with a bunch of different animal. Slowly, the animals disappear. Did the lion eat all the animals? No! The animals are disappearing because they are throwing the lion a surprise party. And that’s just the first charming surprise.  
**ECRR:** Print Awareness, Vocabulary

**Bedtime for Batman** by Michael Dahl, illustrated by Ethen Beavers. (5th -7th grade) Recommended by Lisa C.  
This book wonderfully juxtaposes a boy getting ready for bed with Batman fighting evil. This is a perfect choice for parents looking for Batman books for younger children.  

**Norbert’s Big Dream** by Lori Degman, illustrated by Marco Bucci. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Lisa D.  
Norbert the pig has always wanted to swim the English Channel. While the other pigs eat slop and laze around in the mud, Norbert exercises and eats right to get ready. When he’s ready, he leaves the farm but can’t find the English Channel. His friends realize what is happening and create Norbert’s Channel, which he successfully swims across.  
**ECRR:** Narrative Skills

**Ten Little Fingers, Two Small Hands** by Kristy Dempsey, illustrated by Jane Massey. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Lisa D.  
A group of cute toddlers play and eat together in this fun book that includes creative counting and fun for babies and toddlers.  
**ECRR:** Print Motivation

**Blocks** by Irene Dickson. (Toddler - Kindergarten) Recommended by Gigi and Rachel.  
Ruby brings her red blocks for building while Benji brings his own blue blocks. Things are going just fine until Benji takes one of Ruby’s red blocks...uh oh! What will they do now? This is a simply told and beautifully illustrated tale that is sure to resonate with every kiddo who has ever battled it out with a peer over toys.  
**ECRR:** Narrative Skills, Print Motivation

**Some Pets** by Angela DiTerlizzi, illustrated by Brendan Wenzel. (Toddler - Preschool) Recommended by Lisa D.  
A little girl takes her pet to a pet show. She notices how all the pets look, move or behave differently. This bouncy book leads the girl to realize that all pets are different, but each one is someone’s best friend. Pet names and animal species are included.  
**ECRR:** Vocabulary

**Horrible Bear!** by Ame Dyckman, illustrated by Zachariah OHora. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Kristi.  
Oh no! A girl accidentally loses her kite in a sleeping bear’s cave. When she goes to retrieve it, the bear unknowingly crushes it in his sleep. "Horrible Bear!", she shouts at him. This sets off a chain of reactions. The girl is angry. The bear is angry. They do several regretable things. When the bear shows up at the girl’s house bent on revenge, a simple, "I’m sorry," from the girl sets off a chain of happy events.  
**ECRR:** Narrative Skills, Print Awareness
Night Gardener by Terry and Eric Fan. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Kristi. Gorgeous, muted illustrations accompany a simple story in this charming book about a lonely boy and a dismal neighborhood transformed by the night gardener and his fanciful topiary creations. At the end of the book, the boy is inspired to try his hand at his own topiary. In this story, art and the kindness of strangers are powerful forces that transform lives. The illustrations show a diversity of skin tones in the boy’s neighborhood.

Box by Min Flyte, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw. (Toddler - Kindergarten) Recommended by Lisa D., Kristi and Jennifer. Four toddlers each have different new toys inside their boxes. After playing with their toys, they get creative with the boxes. They happily create everything from a castle to a rocket to a train. Finally, they take a rest in one of the boxes. Readers are encouraged to interact with the book through lift-the-flaps. This book is sure to inspire lots of imaginative cardboard box play.

ECRR: Print Motivation

Presents through the Window: A Taro Gomi Christmas Book by Taro Gomi. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Kristi. Santa is dropping off gifts at different animals’ houses based on what he can see through their window. This often leads to items left that seem unrelated, but end up being the perfect gift. Die cut paper windows give clues to the animals and their gifts that are revealed with page turns.

ECRR: Print Motivation

The Cranky Ballerina by Elise Gravel. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Lisa C. and Kristi. Ada hates ballet. She hates everything about it. It makes her cranky. She thinks her day will be miserable, until she spins right out of ballet and into karate. Karate definitely does not make Ada cranky!

Nobody Likes a Goblin by Ben Hatke. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Warren. Goblin and his pal Skeleton are happy in their cozy little dungeon. Goblin feeds the rats while Skeleton shares stories of past adventures. All is well until some adventurers loot the place leaving Goblin all alone. Abandoning the comfort of the cave to rescue his friend thrusts Goblin towards a richer life.

When Spring Comes by Kevin Henkes, illustrated by Laura Dronzek. (Toddler - Kindergarten) Recommended by Lisa D. In this simple story, Henkes explores all the exciting things that we wait for in the spring, including budding and blooming flowers, baby birds, rain and so much more.

ECRR: Narrative Skills

Dragonfly Kites by Tomson Highway, illustrated by Julie Flett. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Liesel. Two brothers, Joe and Cody, and their dog, Ootsie, spend their summers playing outdoors near a lake in Manitoba. Vignettes of summertime life, paired with Flett’s stellar illustrations make this book stand out. The title activity in this book—tying strings to dragonflies—might worry some, but the gentle joys in this book make it a story not be missed. This book is bilingual, presented in English and Cree. The text for the book was first published in 2002, but was updated with new illustrations in 2016.

Alan’s Big, Scary Teeth by Peter Jarvis. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Kristi. Alan is a big scary alligator who loves scaring all the animals in the forest with his sharp teeth. But when his big secret is discovered by a monkey, his life changes. This is great read aloud will have kids screaming in fright one minute and laughing uncontrollably the next.

ECRR: Print Awareness, Print Motivation

This is Not a Book by Jean Jullien. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Jennifer. What a hoot! This book that is not a book is quite a lot of other things, a laptop, a tennis court, a tent, a monster’s mouth and yes, even someone’s derriere. Kids and parents alike will enjoy figuring out how to hold the book to get the proper perspective on each page. This interactive book begs to be manipulated and experienced in different ways.

Super Happy Magic Forest by Matty Long. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Warren. Adventure/Humor Five brave residents of the Super Happy Magic Forest quest to recover their stolen mystical crystals. Readers will laugh out loud at this ridiculous read and enjoy exploring the detailed illustrations.
101 Reasons I'm Not Taking a Bath by Stacy McAnulty, illustrated by Joy Ang. (Kindergarten - 5th grade) Recommended by Lisa C.
Anyone who has ever battled a clever preschooler can sympathize with the parent of this strong-willed young person. He truly has a 101 reasons not too take a bath. And once he’s in the bath, he has 102 reasons to stay there.

Tell me a Tattoo Story by Alison McGhee, illustrated by Eliza Wheeler. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Gigi.
In this tender book, a tattooed dad tells his young son the stories behind each of his tattoos. One tattoo is from the dad’s favorite book, one reminds him to be kind, another one celebrates when the father met the young boy’s mother. The last commemorates the birth of his son. This book celebrates the diversity of our evolving culture.

Leo Can Swim by Anna McQuinn, illustrated by Ruth Hearson. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Lisa D., Jennifer, Rachel and Ann.
Leo and Dad go to swim class where they kick, bounce and dive like little fish along with other babies and their caretakers. This realistic book is a guarantee for unforgettable fun.

ECRR: Print Motivation

1 Big Salad by Juana Medina. (Toddler - 2nd grade) Recommended by Amy and Warren.
Starting with one avocado deer and working up to ten clementine kittens, the anthropomorphic fruits and veggies in this counting concept book come together to create one big and appealing salad. A recipe for a healthy, simple dressing is also included. This whimsical salad takes readers beyond mere lettuce to encounter more sophisticated garden delicacies—radicchio lions, romaine dogs. Created digitally, in combination with fresh fruits and veggies, the images use white space and color to great effect. Numbers are printed as numerals and written out (1 and one). Fantastic for a storytime or one-on-one sharing, this vivacious book will inspire youngsters to explore the fruits and veggies in their own kitchens.

ECRR: Print Motivation, Vocabulary

Grumpy Pants by Claire Messer. (Preschool) Recommended by Kristi and Lisa D.
It’s raining and penguin is not happy. He’s grumpy but he doesn’t know why. Will he feel better when he sheds all his grumpy clothing, including his grumpy underpants, and spends some time doing his favorite things? This is a great read aloud that prompts listeners to show their best grumpy face.

ECRR: Narrative Skills, Print Awareness

The Quickest Kid in Clarksville by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Frank Morriso. (Kindergarten - 5th grade) Recommended by Carrie and Ann.
In the era of segregation in the United States, neighborhood kids, inspired by three-time gold Olympic gold medalist Wilma Rudolph, race to see who’s fastest. The book’s well-plotted story and illustrations focus on the drama between Alta, who can’t afford new shoes, and a rival, while subtly building to the historic, real-life parade when Wilma Rudolph returns to her hometown of Clarksville, Tennessee.

City Shapes by Diana Murray, illustrated by Bryan Collier. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Carrie, Gigi, Amy and Ann.
A pigeon flies above the city, following a young African American girl as she discovers shapes—squares, rectangles, triangles, circles, ovals, diamonds, and stars—throughout her city. Murray’s rhyming text pairs beautifully with Collier’s watercolor and collage on watercolor paper illustrations depicting a vibrantly diverse urban setting.

ECRR: Letter Knowledge, Print Awareness

My Dad Used to Be So Cool by Keith Negley. (Preschool - 1st Grade) Recommended by Lisa D.
A little kid hangs out with his dad and thinks about all the ways his dad used to cool. He was in a rock band, he has tattoos, he used to ride a motorcycle. But now, his dad takes care of him and is a DAD. At last, the little boy realizes his dad is still cool, just in a different way.

ECRR: Narrative Skills

This fun book explores many different animal names that also double as a verb. For instance, apes ape and slugs slug slugs. Word definitions are included so children can learn new vocabulary while they read.

ECRR: Vocabulary
The Journey by Francesca Sanna. (Kindergarten - 5th grade) Recommended by Warren and Amy.
A family in an unnamed country finds their homeland torn apart by war. After the war takes their father, two children and their mother set out to find a new, safe home. The story shows the risks and sacrifices faced by refugees in pursuit of safety. As they leave their home the family brings as much as they can but still need to leave their cat behind. They journey by truck, train, bicycle and foot, losing more and more of their possessions until all they have is each other. Sanna's timely book is a strong introduction to the refugee experience.

Big Friends by Linda Sarah, illustrated by Benji Davies. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Gigi and Carrie.
A lovely and lyrical tale about friendship and imaginative play, Big Friends uses beautiful and unusual language to tell the story of two—and then three—friends, Birt, Etho, and Shu. When Shu comes onto the scene, Birt retreats from the friendship, feeling like the special relationship that he and Etho shared is lost forever. Can a super-special cardboard box creation convince him otherwise?
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Print Motivation, Vocabulary

I Love Cake: Starring Rabbit, Porcupine, and Moose by Tammi Sauer, illustrated by Angie Rozelaar. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Lisa C. and Amy.
Rabbit, Moose and Porcupine are having a great time at Rabbit's birthday party. What could go wrong? Then Moose "accidentally" eats all the birthday cake. The party is ruined! What can Moose do to make things right again? Hilarious and bright cartoonish illustrations feature funny facial expressions and exaggerated emotions.

How to Find Gold by Viviane Schwarz. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Carrie.
Anna and Crocodile decide one day to find gold, revelling in a dangerous and difficult adventure. Most of the story is told through dialogue between the two friends, who are drawn in color with their background neighborhood sketched in pencil. Their gold-finding adventure progresses as they talk, draw, and finally play, and the story they've co-created becomes illustrated in color, and the book transitions fully to the world of their imagination. Great use of white space and contrasting styles of illustration depict this story-within-a story.

Before Morning by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Beth Krommes. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Liesel and Kristi.
As dusk falls, a woman, a child and a dog hurry past a bakery and home to Dad and dinner in a warm apartment. All night long, the snow falls and in the morning, when the woman tries to leave for work, she finds they are snowed in. The mother, father and child are given the unexpected gift of a day all together complete with sledding and a stop at the bakery. Sidman's words perfectly evoke the joy of plans changed and Krommes' scratchboard and watercolor illustrations depict a loving, cozy world. A working mother and a caregiving father provide the anchors for one of the most outright loving books of the year.

Ideas are All Around by Philip C. Stead. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Jennifer.
The author is supposed to be writing, but he doesn't have any great ideas, so he follows his dog's lead and takes a walk. A simple stroll through the neighborhood turns out to be the inspiration for this whole book. With bighearted text and multimedia illustrations, this book illustrates that fabulous ideas can come from everyday occurrences.

Jan Thomas does it again in this silly book about making soup. Pig, Mouse and Cow are making soup by adding different vegetables, but Pig wants add things like umbrellas. Each time, the other animals ask "Is That Wise, Pig?" Eventually, the pig makes several wise decisions to complete this silly story.
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Vocabulary

Also an Octopus: or, a Little Bit of Nothing by Maggie Tokuda-Hall, illustrated by Benji Davies. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Kelly and Lisa D.
This book describes how stories are structured in a very inventive and interesting way. Like all books, this one starts with a "little bit of nothing" and then readers are taken on a journey about stories with a cute ukelele playing octopus.
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Print Motivation
The Storyteller by Evan Turk. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Warren. Turk shares a robust folkloric story with lush multimedia art that carries much of the storytelling power. A young boy in search of water meets a storyteller. The storyteller’s art has faded in popularity as their city has grown but the boy’s thirst is quenched when he listens to a tale. After learning the skill himself, the young boy uses stories to stave off a djinn that threatens his city in the form of a terrible storm.

Where Do Pants Go? by Rebecca Van Slyke, illustrated by Chris Robertson. (Babies - Preschool) Recommended by Lisa D. and Kristi. Kids are getting dressed to go outside to play, but one after another they put their clothes on all wrong, all while asking readers if they got it correct. The great repetitive phrases keep kids engaged in this funny book.

ECRR: Narrative Skills

Every Day Birds by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, illustrated by Dylan Metrano. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Liesel and Jennifer. For children who point out every bird—and are ready to start keeping an eye out for specific birds—this simple book with lovely cut-paper illustrations is a lovely choice. Each bird gets a description so pared down to its essentials as to be a tiny poem. “FINCH is clothed in gold,” and “MOCKINGBIRD has many voices.” The birds chosen are all commonly found in North America and there will be lots of chances for families to look for these birds in their neighborhoods.

ECRR: Vocabulary

They All Saw A Cat by Brendan Wenzel. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Jennifer, Amy and Liesel. Readers get a glimpse of what a cat looks like from the perspectives of a variety of other critters. Have you ever thought about how an earthworm might “see” a cat? Or a bird? Fun illustrations will help kids grasp that other creatures might not see things exactly the way we do. Repetitive, rhythmic text puts readers on strong footing, even while the illustrations change drastically. Children will enjoy puzzling out why a mouse sees a cat with enormous claws while a fox does not see the claws on the cat at all. This is a book that will simultaneously encourage both scientific observation and awareness of the viewpoints of others.

Nanette’s Baguette by Mo Willems. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Lisa D. Nanette’s mother has entrusted Nanette to buy the family’s daily baguette from the bakery. It’s the first time ever she’s been allowed to go alone and she is enormously proud. Unfortunately, she can’t resist eating the entire thing before she gets it home. She is embarrassed to tell her mother, but her story is met with understanding.

Cat Nap by Toni Yuly. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Carrie and Jennifer. Cat would like to spend the afternoon napping, but Kitten is ready to play hide-and-seek. The game becomes a gentle exploration of contrasts - sleepy and playful, high and low, light and dark - with each page an opportunity for searching and finding for very young children. The color palette and composition play with primary colors and bold lines, while short sentences and language repetition make it ideal for building confidence in budding readers.

ECRR: Letter Knowledge, Narrative Skills, Print Awareness

Puddle by Hyewon Yum. (Toddler - 1st grade) Recommended by Lisa D., Carrie, Kelly, Amy and Jennifer. One rainy day, a mother tries to entertain her son who thinks there is nothing to do. She begins by sketching a picture of an umbrella and adds more and more to the drawing until it tells a story of playing in the rain together. A charming book about the power of art and storytelling.

ECRR: Narrative Skills
Board Books

Choo! Choo!: Guess the Vehicle! /Toot! Toot!: Guess the Instrument! by Cocorette. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Amy, Rachel and Carrie.
These simple concept board books from the What's That Noise? Series feature bold shapes and colors, and sturdy flaps that reveal the source of each sound. The brief text, printed in a large font, invites readers to interact throughout. The bright illustrations with cheerful animals make this a great book for even the youngest infant.
ECRR: Phonological Awareness, Print Motivation

I'm Grumpy/I'm Sunny by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm. (Birth - Preschool) Recommended by Carrie.
Part of the My First Comics series, these charming books, developed by the creators of the Baby Mouse series, introduce comic book storylines to the littlest readers. Using pared-down panels, speech bubbles, and bold, graphic illustrations to explore different feelings, these books are a refreshing offering for early learners.
ECRR: Print Motivation, Vocabulary

Olivia Loves Owl by David McPhail. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Liesel.
"Olivia loves Owl. Owl loves Olivia. Owl has feathers. Olivia has a sweater." The two friends are different but enjoy each other's company. This board book tells the story of a friendship through simple yet specific language and McPhail's gently welcoming illustrations.
ECRR: Narrative Skills, Print Awareness

Crocopotamus: Mix and Match the Wild Animals by Mary Murphy. (Birth - Preschool) Recommended by Rachel, Carrie, Warren and Amy.
Readers can mix and match animals and their names by flipping pages split in half down the middle. Little ones will enjoy playing with the brightly illustrated, sturdy pages and preschoolers will laugh at the new creatures they create.
ECRR: Phonological Awareness, Print Awareness, Print Motivation

My Heart Fills With Happiness by Monique Gray Smith, illustrated by Julie Flett. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Rachel, Gigi and Liesel.
What fills your heart with happiness? Singing, dancing, walking barefoot in the grass and seeing a loved one all fill the narrator's heart with happiness. This is a quiet meditation on the simple pleasures in life. The book is partially dedicated to "former Indian Residential School students and their families" and features a cast of First Nations characters.
ECRR: Print Motivation

Caterpillar to Butterfly by Melissa Stewart. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Rachel.
This nonfiction board book introduces the youngest readers to the life cycle of butterflies. Vibrant colors and photographs, concise text and a unique layout are attractive and engaging for babies. The last page features a short biography and a photograph of Hazel Davies, a scientist from the Museum of Natural History.
ECRR: Vocabulary

Find the Circle/Find the Line/Find the Square by Britta Teckentrup. (Birth - Toddler) Recommended by Amy and Carrie.
Originally published in Great Britain under slightly different names, these brightly colored board books visually reinforce shapes and lines for little ones. Each page includes three extremely short sentences. The final sentences is always a question prompting caregivers and young ones to explore the illustrations. Uncluttered layouts and easy to identify objects make it clear that these sturdy board books were intentionally made for infants. All titles are a part of the Find the Shape series.
ECRR: Print Motivation

We Sang You Home by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by Julie Flett. (Birth - Preschool) Recommended by Carrie, Amy and Liesel.
Flett's delicate, earthy illustrations beautifully complement the lyrical text of this beautiful board book. Using gentle rhyme, We Sang You Home tells the story of a new baby's arrival in the voice of loving parents.
ECRR: Print Awareness, Print Motivation

Guess What -- Flowers by Yusuke Yonezu. (Birth - Preschool) Recommended by Carrie.
Colorful flowers cleverly transform into familiar animals with a lift of a flap in this engaging and sturdy board book.
ECRR: Print Motivation
Beginning Readers

Get a Hit, Mo! by David A. Adler, illustrated by Sam Ricks. (Kindergarten - 2nd grade) Recommended by Amy.
This action-packed story follows Mo, the smallest and youngest on his baseball team. Disappointed at his position (boring right field) and the batting order (why is he always last?), Mo plays hard and learns from his teammates. Will all his perseverance pay off? Can Mo get a hit? With a thrilling plot and an underdog protagonist, this story is a page-turner. The font and text layout are excellent, making it easy for early readers to track the words and story. With lots of repetition and very clear punctuation this book sets new readers up for success.

Baad Sheep by Dosh Archer. (Kindergarten - 2nd grade) Recommended by Carrie.
In the newest installment of the Urgency Emergency series, nursery rhyme characters visit Doctor Glenda and Nurse Percy at the city hospital, Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep, and meanwhile, Farmer Macdonald has brought in three sick sheep who’ve been running around the mulberry bush. Wacky language and humorous illustrations boost this well-plotted story that will appeal to kids and adults alike.

Rabbit & Robot and Ribbit by Cece Bell. (1st - 2nd grade) Recommended by Amy.
This hilarious follow up to Rabbit & Robot: The Sleepover focuses on the universal difficulty of sharing your bestie with a new friend. Rabbit makes a surprise visit to Robot, only to discover Robot’s new frog friend Ribbit is already there. Through a game of checkers, an episode of Cowboy Jack Rabbit, and a rousing game of make believe, Rabbit resists all attempts to become friends with Ribbit. But when Robot’s “Emotion Decoder” overheats, Rabbit and Ribbit work together to rescue their friend. Witty wordplay, clever repetition and cartoonish illustrations make this a great step up for Elephant and Piggie fans.

Look Out, Mouse! by Steve Björkman. (Kindergarten - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy.
It’s dinnertime on the farm. A tiny mouse is just looking for something to nibble, when a mischievously hungry cat comes along. "Look out, mouse!" Soon a snake, owl, weasel and fox have joined in the chase. Using less than 50 words, this humorous and action-packed of a clever mouse is ideally suited for very early readers. The cartoonish visual context clues are clearly illustrated and the text pops out against the backgrounds.

Up by Joe Cepeda. (Kindergarten - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy and Liesel
A very windy day brings about a fabulous airborne adventure in this book for the newest of beginning readers. Sight words combine into simple sentences of no more than four words. The text pops against the white space so cleverly designed in the swirling, windy chaos.

Big Cat by Ethan Long. (Kindergarten - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy.
In the spirit of The Cat in the Hat, a boy and girl celebrate all the things blasé Big Cat can do—nap, hug, sit, run. But most of all, Big Cat can be fun! Short declarative sentences and strong sight word repetition anchor this humorous story. Long’s digital illustrations, bold and bright, are outlined in thick black lines. This is a wonderful recommendation for the very newest of new readers.

Pug by Ethan Long. (Kindergarten - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy.
It’s a snowy day, no one wants to go outside. No one that is, except Pug. When the energetic pooch sees his friend Peg, he begins yapping up a storm. With declarative, sight word sentences using three words or less, this book is an excellent choice for very new emerging readers. The font is large and it stands out easily on the intentionally designed pages. Long’s digital illustrations use bold lines, solid colors, and a myriad of drifting snowflakes to create a humorous, cartoon-like setting.

Crow Made a Friend by Margaret Peot. (Kindergarten - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy, Rachel and Jennifer.
Lonely Crow uses any available resource to create a friend. Unfortunately, his stick-and-leaves friend blows away and his snow friend melts. Will Crow ever find a friend? Designed intentionally for early readers, this engaging book features short sentences printed in a large and easy to read font against clean, white backgrounds. The text and illustrations work in tandem to support the acquisition of new words with visual context clues and repetition.

Ballet Cat can’t wait for her big ballet number. But her best friend Butter Bear would rather do anything than dance? Why is Butter Bear so reluctant? And where do the underpants come in?
Fiction

**Booked** by Kwame Alexander. (5th - 8th grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Ann.
- Novels in Verse, Realistic Fiction

African American Nick Hall is a daydreamer. He's really into soccer and newly interested in girls. His best friend Coby shares his passion for soccer and has his back against two twin bullies that terrorize his school. Nick senses something not quite right with his parents' relationship, but is floored when they announce they want to separate. Suddenly, life isn't so sweet. His dad, a linguistics professor, keeps forcing Nick to read a special dictionary he published, the bullies are picking on him, he is seeing a counselor against his wishes, and he has a sudden health episode that keeps him from the one good thing in his life—soccer. This book explores what happens when life becomes overwhelming for a child and empathetically portrays the ups and downs of growing up.

**Ms. Bixby's Last Day** by John David Anderson. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Liesel and Lisa C.
- Realistic Fiction

Beloved teacher, Ms. Bixby announces to her sixth grade class that she has cancer and must leave school before the school year ends. Three friends embark on a quest to spring her from the hospital and give her the best day ever. Funny and moving, this book doesn't pull punches. It is a rare depiction of boyhood feelings and friendships.

**Lucy** by Randy Cecil. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Amy and Ann.
- Animal Story

An illustrated adventure in three acts, this story follows the Lucy, a stray dog, and the father and daughter that ultimately adopt her. The repetitive structure of the text encourages readers to look for clues in the black and white oil illustrations that adorn every page. Heartwarming and humorous, this charming story is a wonderful choice for a family read aloud.

**Serafina and the Twisted Staff** by Robert Beatty. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Lisa C.
- Adventure, Fantasy

Serafina is back for another creepy adventure. Since defeating the man with the black coat, Serafina is no longer a secret in Biltmore Estate, the opulent home in the Blue Ridge Mountains where Serafina is known as Chief Rat Catcher. Serafina is known and included at last. Then, danger comes again. Who is the man with the twisted staff? And why are all the animals fleeing the forest? When people in the mansion begin to suspect Serafina is the cause of all the trouble, she flees into the forest. But Serafina knows that she can't run away from the family she has always wanted. So she returns to take on the twisted staff and save the people she has come to love.

**The Wolf Keepers** by Elise Broach, illustrated by Alice Ratterree. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Kristi.
- Realistic Fiction

Lizzie lives in a zoo with her zookeeper dad. What could be cooler? Then one day she notices Tyler stealing food and living behind the elephant house. When she confronts him, she finds out he ran away from his foster home. Tyler's noticing some strange things going on at the zoo at night. When the wolves start getting sick and dying, it's up to the two friends to find out what's going on. Their search takes them to Yosemite where they learn some interesting history about John Muir and Lizzie's family. This is a memorable coming of age story with a culturally diverse friendship at its heart.

**Wild Robot** by Peter Brown. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Jennifer, Amy and Rachel.
- Adventure, Animal Story

Roz the robot is the only survivor of a shipwreck carrying a cargo of sophisticated robots. She is accidentally activated by a group of curious otters who discover her shipping container on the beach. The animals initially fear her; she has more than one unpleasant encounter with bears and even more challenges in surviving nature and the elements. When she falls from a tree and crushes a goose nest, only one egg is spared and Roz is decides to raise it. Ultimately, Roz learns the art of camouflage and how to speak the languages of animals. This is a sweet, touching story that would also work nicely as a read-aloud for the younger set.
All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook by Leslie Connor. (5th - 8th grade) Recommended by Gigi, Rachel and Amy.

- Realistic Fiction

Perry Cook was born and raised in Blue River Correctional Facility, where his mother Jessica is an inmate. This exceptional situation has been made possible by the wise and sympathetic prison warden at Blue River, and despite his unusual upbringing, Perry's prison family has raised him to be a caring kid with an optimistic worldview. Perry's world is thrown into upheaval when the county's new district attorney (who happens to be his best friend's stepfather) gets wind of the situation and pulls Perry out of Blue River and into his own home as a foster child. By turns heartwarming and heartbreaking, funny and poignant, this singular story about the power of love, hope, and positivity will win over readers with its wonderful characters and stay with them long after the final page is turned.

Raymie Nightingale by Kate DiCamillo. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy, Kristi and Jennifer.

- Historical Fiction

There were three ten-year-old girls in the Ida Nee’s baton twirling class set to enter the Little Miss Central Florida Tire 1975 contest. But they have three different reasons. Raymie Clarke needs to win so her father, who ran away with a dental hygienist, will dash home after seeing Raymie win the contest in the newspaper. Fragile and bedecked with bunny barrettes, Louisiana Elefantes wants to win to save her cat Archie from the Very Friendly Animal Center. Beverly Tapinski is tough as nails and her plans for the contest involve sabotaging it, rather than winning it. Nothing goes according to plan, but everything happens for a reason in this poignant and humorous historical story. DiCamillo’s writing is engrossing and thought-provoking. Told from Raymie’s perspective, this story celebrates unlikely friendships, and encourages readers to find hope in the small things.

Nothing But Trouble by Jacqueline Davies. (5th - 7th grade) Recommended by Liesel.

- Realistic Fiction

Two resourceful girls form a friendship centered around “hacks,” smart pranks that cause no damage. Their small, Rust Belt town rallies around the hacks, which become an invigorating force in a dispirited town. A strong setting, a recognizable (and delightful) friendship, and a wise depiction of the relationships between adults and kids make this book stand out.

It Ain’t So Awful, Falafel by Firoozeh Dumas. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Kristi, Liesel and Amy.

- Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction

Zomorod Yousefzadeh (just call her Cindy, please) is starting junior high in California’s Newport Beach. Originally from Iran, Cindy and her family have moved back and forth between their home country and the United States four times for her father’s work. All she wants to do is fit in but her parents are embarrassingly different from the other parents. Cindy and her family try hard to be American, while remaining true to themselves and their Iranian culture. Set against the background of the high-stakes Iran hostage crisis, which lasted from 1979 through 1981, Cindy wonders what will happen to her family in Iran, and her family in America. This is a by turns funny and sad coming of age story about fitting in and respecting your roots.

Makoons by Louise Erdrich. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Liesel.

- Historical Fiction

Makoons, the fifth book in Erdrich’s Birchbark House series, starts with a dream vision. Eight-year-old Makoons dreams of both joy and sorrow and this book tells of both. Makoons and his twin brother Chickadee are growing up, learning to hunt, and to contribute to their family. In the meantime, the world around them is changing and the once plentiful buffalo are becoming scarce. Vividly realized details of daily life in the boys’ Ojibwe community will transport readers to a different time and culture.

Lily and Dunkin by Donna Gephart. (5th - 8th grade) Recommended by Gigi and Amy.

- Realistic Fiction

Compassionate, heartbreaking, and uplifting, this is the story of Lily, a transgender girl, and Dunkin, a boy dealing with bipolar disorder. Both of their complicated and often difficult lives are full of secrets that they keep from the outside world, and sometimes from themselves. Told in dual narratives, this tale of Lily and Dunkin’s unfolding friendship and evolving sense of self unflinchingly addresses issues of gender dysphoria, parental rejection, bullying, suicide and mental illness, yet Gephart’s light touch infuses humor, brevity and hope into these heavy subjects. This is an important and groundbreaking book addressing the diversity of today’s youth.
The Inquisitor’s Tale, or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog by Adam Gidwitz, illustrated by Hatem Aly. (5th - 8th grade) Recommended by Amy.
- Adventure, Historical Fiction, Magical Realism
Set in 1242, France this story follows the miraculous (and bloody) adventures of three children and their greyhound running from King Louis IX. Jeanne is a peasant who has prophetic fits, gigantic, dark-skinned William is a monk in training with super strength and Jewish Jacob has the power to heal with his hands. Told by a variety of storytellers, this fast-paced page-turner explores themes of religion, morality and friendship in funny, touching, irreverent and reverent ways.

Garvey’s Choice by Nikki Grimes. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy.
- Novels in Verse, Realistic Fiction
Even though Garvey’s father gave him a one-of-a-kind name, he still thinks Garvey should do the same activities as other boys: sports. Unfortunately, Garvey would rather read a book than throw a football. His best friends, Joe and Manny, are supportive and loyal, even as Garvey is bullied about his size. It’s not until Garvey makes the choice to join the middle school chorus that he really takes pride in who he is inside. In this short novel in verse, written in the Japanese poetry form tanka, which uses a strict line-by-line syllable count (5-7-5-7-7), Grimes gives us bite-size windows into Garvey’s journey of self-discovery.

One Half from the East by Nadia Hashimi. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Amy.
- Realistic Fiction
Ten-year-old Obadya’s life changes forever when her police officer father loses a leg in a bomb explosion. Because he can no longer work, the family leaves Kabul to live in a tiny village. Obadya, the middle of five sisters, is shocked when the family decides she should dress and act as a boy to bring luck to the family, a common practice in rural Afghanistan. Becoming a bacha posh is a painful, yet eye-opening experience. It is not just a name change, it is a change in freedoms, attitudes and expectations. This is a fascinating exploration into what it means to be a girl not just in Afghanistan, but also the world.

To Catch a Cheat by Varian Johnson. (4th - 8th grade) Recommended by Carrie.
- Adventure, Realistic Fiction
Jackson Greene and his cohort of middle-school masterminds returns in this delightful romp that riffs on all the hallmarks of a classic heist. This time a mysterious blackmailer threatens to release a (fake) video of Jackson and his crew flooding school property unless they steal a copy of an upcoming exam. Packed with action, snappy dialogue and honest interpersonal dilemmas, this story’s universe is populated by kids who are diverse in skill, temperament and ethnicity. Meanwhile, a clownish adult villain is content to see them as mere troublemakers. Can "Gang Greene" find a way around stealing the test answers AND prove the video is a fake?

Book Uncle and Me by Uma Krishnaswami, illustrated by Julianna Swaney. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy and Liesel.
- Realistic Fiction
Set in modern day India, this early chapter book centers on Yasmin and her fight to save Book Uncle's free corner book lending stand. Yasmin energizes her classmates, friends, and neighbors to take their concerns to the mayoral candidates. Will their concerns be heard? Can they save Book Uncle's stand? Short chapters and greyscale spot illustrations make this early chapter book a wonderful choice for reading together or independently.

What's Up, Chuck? by Leo Landry. (Kindergarten - 2nd grade) Recommended by Amy.
- Animal Story, Humor
Chuck Wood is an extraordinarily talented woodchuck. His detailed wood carvings have won the Best in the Forest art competition for three years running. Then Scooter Possum, a gifted abstract painter, arrives. Chuck is happy to have a new friend, but his confidence is shaken when praise is heaped upon Scooter. Ultimately, Chuck realizes that friendship and the artistic process are more important than any first prize trophy. Engaging from the get-go, Chuck and Scooter are a duo in the tradition of best friends Frog and Toad. Colorful illustrations, wonderful word repetition and witty wordplay, including several knock-knock jokes, make this a delightful story for those transitioning from beginning readers to chapter books.
When the Sea Turned to Silver by Grace Lin. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy.

- Fantasy
In the third and final book in Lin's epic fantasy series set in ancient China, Pinmei's beloved storytelling grandmother, Amah, is kidnapped by a immortality-seeking emperor. Quiet Pinmei must gather all her courage to leave her remote mountain home to save her grandmother and perhaps all of China. Her magical journey, vividly described and woven throughout with beautiful folktales and origin stories, is helped along by the courageous neighbor boy Yishan. Although best enjoyed as the last book in the series, it is also satisfying on its own.

The Key to Extraordinary by Natalie Lloyd. (3rd - 5th grade) Recommended by Carrie.

- Magical Realism, Mystery
All the women in Emma's family have had the Destiny Dream, and she’s sure that hers is soon to come. While she waits, she gives tours of the graveyard that is the namesake of her grandmother's Boneyard Cafe, a struggling but beloved business that's been in the family for generations.

Just My Luck by Cammie McGovern. (3rd - 5th grade) Recommended by Kelly and Rachel.

- Realistic Fiction
Benny Barrows is not having a great fourth grade year. He hasn't found a new best friend, he is bad at riding his bike (whereas his brother George, who has autism, is amazing at it), and worst of all his dad was in an accident and it might have been Benny's fault. This book follows Benny in his year of bad luck as his family tries to cope with all the hardships they face. This is a touching and rewarding story about overcoming obstacles told with just the right amount of humor.

Juana & Lucas by Juana Medina. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Lisa C., Amy and Liesel.

- Humor, Realistic Fiction
In this autobiographical story, illustrator Juana Medina shares her love of Bogata, Colombia and her struggles in school. She was always better at sports than academics, especially learning English. Ick. But with the encouragement of her dear abuelo, Juana discovers "the English" is not so bad if it means one can travel the world.

When Mischief Came to Town by Katrina Nannestad. (3rd - 5th grade) Recommended by Amy and Carrie.

- Realistic Fiction
Nothing is the same on the quiet Danish island of Bornholm after vivacious ten-year-old Inge Maria arrives on her grandmother's farm. She has a special brand of life and humor inspired by the tales of Hans Christian Andersen and expanded upon by her vast imagination. At first Inge Maria isn't so sure about her stern grandmother, but she's able to peel away her rough exterior to find the joy inside. Episodic chapters follow our plucky heroine's adventures as she starts at a new school, tries to be devout at church, almost kills a turkey and catches the island thief. Bit by bit it is revealed that Inge Maria's mother has died and that's why she had to leave Copenhagen. This plot point is touched upon gently throughout, but never dampens the high-spirited fun. This romp of a story is an excellent choice for family read aloud or for young precocious readers.

The Scourge by Jennifer Nielsen. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Kristi.

- Fantasy
Best friends Ani and Weevil are River people, a subjugated group in their land, but Rivers have stayed free of scourge, a deadly infectious disease that kills all who get it. Ani is captured by the wardens and tested for the scourge and when her test surprisingly comes up positive she is sent to Attic island, a prison turned quarantine colony. There she can expect to live a short painful life. Although not sick, Weevil joins her there. But something isn't right. It seems the disease is being used for political purposes. Can she and Weevil find out what's really going on before it's too late? This is a great fantasy about class, societal inclusion and power.

Waylon! One Awesome Thing by Sara Pennypacker, illustrated by Marla Frazee. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Lisa C., Amy and Ann.

- Realistic Fiction
Waylon is an inventor. He has big dreams for inventions like human gills. But right now, all he wants to do is invent something to make his life go back to the way it was. It feels like his sister is pulling away from the rest of the family. And things at school are no better. There's a new kid, and he is causing trouble. Waylon just wants everyone to get along. Just when things seem worst, one awesome thing happens.
Pugs of the Frozen North: A Not-So-Impossible Tale by Philip Reeve, illustrated by Sarah McIntyre. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy and Carrie.

- Adventure, Fantasy, Humor

True Winter is a once-in-a-lifetime event that goes beyond normal winter. The fish are frozen in the ocean, there are fifty different types of snow and best of all, there is the Great Northern Race. The first sled to reach the magical Snowfather gets a wish. Shen is a cabin boy until the frozen ocean wrecks his ship. He and the cargo (66 energetic pugs) are abandoned in the snow. Luckily, a local girl named Sika rescues the boy and all the dogs. Sika and Shen decide to enter the race on a sled led by the 66 pugs. Armed with advice from Sika’s very, very old grandfather, the new friends set off for an adventure filled with addictive yeti noodles, massive Kraken and treacherous ice. The madcap illustrations, using only blues, whites and blacks, are integral to the story and make this a wonderful recommendation for graphic novel fans.

As Brave As You by Jason Reynolds. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Amy, Kristi, Rachel and Ann.

- Realistic Fiction

Quiet and observant African American eleven-year-old Genie and his brash fourteen-year-old brother Ernie are less than excited to be spending the summer at their grandparents’ house in rural Virginia. As Genie learns more about his resourceful Grandma and blind Grandpop, he also learns what it means to be brave and that sometimes the brave thing is to say no. Strong writing and laugh out loud funny, yet heartbreakingly real characters are at the center of this not-to-be-missed intergenerational story.

Weekends with Max and His Dad by Linda Urban, illustrated by Katie Kath. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Amy and Ann.

- Realistic Fiction

Thoughtful and imaginative eight-year-old Max’s newly divorced father has moved into a new apartment in a new neighborhood. Max isn’t sure what to expect when he visits his dad on the weekends, but before long he is making friends all over the neighborhood bringing the diverse and talented residents of the apartment building together. Three episodes, each taking up several chapters, are set in Michigan on consecutive weekends. The difficult issue of divorce is handled with a light touch. Max ultimately realizes that he can have two homes—one with his mom and one with his dad. He learns that both homes can be comforting, and most importantly, full of loving friends and family. The illustrations combined with short chapters and a small cast of strongly developed characters make this a fantastic early chapter book.

Hamster Princess 2: Of Mice and Magic by Ursula Vernon. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Carrie.

- Adventure, Fantasy

Harriet, with her curse freshly lifted, is called on a new quest, this time to save twelve dancing princesses from a neighboring mouse kingdom. Using strong friendships, fractions and a healthy does of humor, Harriet proves again that heroes come in many configurations.

Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk. (5th - 8th grade) Recommended by Jennifer, Rachel and Amy.

- Historical Fiction

Annabelle’s quiet life in in rural Pennsylvania suddenly changes when a new girl, Betty Glengarry, joins her class and takes special pleasure in brutally bullying Annabelle and those who are close to her. When Betty’s attacks change their focus to Toby, a reclusive World War I veteran who is a long time resident, but a stranger to many in the town, Annabelle knows she must act to save him if she can. Wolf Hollow grapples elegantly with many moral issues.

Hundred Percent by Karen Romano Young. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Liesel.

- Realistic Fiction

This novel perfectly captures the inbetweeness of being eleven. Christine Gouda, also known as Tink, Chris or Hundred Percent, is in sixth grade and navigating all the complicated changes that go along with that grade level. Friendships change, loyalties shift and through it all, Tink gets closer and closer to being the person she wants to be. This is a lovely book about a time of transition.
Nonfiction

Glow: Animals with Their Own Night-Lights by W. H. Beck. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Amy and Carrie. Stunning photographs of bioluminescent creatures light up the glossy black pages of this intriguing introduction to a fascinating and vast group of animals. The large trim size and easy to read font make this a wonderful book for reading and exploring with a group. More information is provided in smaller text on each page, as well as in the brief backmatter.

The Airport Book by Lisa Brown. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Jennifer, Gigi, Liesel, Kristi and Ann. A family prepares to depart for a trip to visit Grandma and Grandpa. Don't forget to pack Monkey! Following a taxi ride to the airport, there's a lot to see and experience once they arrive -- luggage check in, security lines, moving sidewalks. Curious eyes will be drawn to the detailed illustrations and word bubbles. This book encourages lots of adult and child interaction as readers explore the busy scenes.

Their Great Gift: Courage, Sacrifice and Hope in a New Land by John Coy, illustrated by Wing Young Huie. (Kindergarten - 4th grade) Recommended by Rachel. Poignant photographs of families who have immigrated to the United States from all over the world accompany short but powerful text that highlights the bravery needed to start over in a foreign environment and the hopes and dreams that immigrants bring to their new lives. This book provides a wonderful opportunity to start a conversation about immigration at home or in the classroom.

Orangutan Orphanage by Suzi Eszterhas. (3rd - 5th grade) Recommended by Amy. Adorable photos of big-eyed baby orangutans pair wonderfully with short bites of information about the vital work being done at the Orangutan Care Center and Quarantine in Borneo. The friendly text provides context and provides easy entry points for readers to draw connections between young orangutans and young humans. The simple layout deftly balances text and photos to create an attractive book for young animal lovers.

Giant Squid by Candace Fleming, illustrated by Eric Rohman. (1st - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy and Kristi. Fleming and Rohman team up to create a dramatic picture book about the mysterious underwater creature. Working from tentacles to mantle tip, the wonders of the giant squid are extolled. Thrilling free verse text is paired with mood-setting oil paint on paper illustrations. The narration and images work seamlessly together to balance anticipation, page turns and spectacular reveals. In the text and author's note, Fleming is quick to point out that despite scientific and technological advances, there are still many unanswered questions about this majestic ocean dweller. Backmatter also includes a bibliography and online resources.

The Marvelous Thing That Came From a Spring: The Accidental Invention of the Toy that Swept the Nation by Gilbert Ford. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Kristi. In 1943, U. S. Naval engineer Richard James experimented with springs, trying something to keep fragile items on ships from breaking. What he found instead was, “an ordinary spring that he turned into a marvelous thing.” Yep, the Slinky was born. Using mixed media illustrations, this book tells the story of how something fun and whimsical came out of a search for something practical.

Vietnam: A History of a War by Russell Freedman. (6th - 12th grade) Recommended by Amy. “Was the Vietnam War a tragic mistake? Or was it, as President Ronald Reagan would claim, ‘a noble cause’?” The complexities, contradictions and terrible atrocities of the Vietnam war are explored in this concise, yet emotionally impactful book. Beginning with the history of Vietnamese struggle against powerful foreign invaders more than 2,000 years ago through the rise of Ho Chi Minh to the modern day communist country that nevertheless boasts a free-market economy, Freedman looks at the many actions by many countries and individuals that contributed to one of the most controversial wars. Backmatter includes a time line, selected bibliography and sources.
We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement That Defied Adolf Hitler by Russell Freedman. (6th - 12th grade) Recommended by Amy.

Starting in 1942 anti-Nazi leaflets began appearing mysteriously all over Germany. Created by a group of students, the White Rose leaflets spread messages of resistance, freedom and hope. Siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl were two of the founding members of this grassroots movement who took incredible risks to write, copy and distribute these leaflets. Even after they were captured and executed by the Nazis, their words lived on. Freedman's compelling and succinct narrative expertly incorporates research and quotations from a variety of primary sources, including journal entries and letters to/from family and friends. Stark black and white photos show Hans and Sophie's world, as well as the circumstances that influenced them.

I am Pan! by Mordicai Gerstein. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Amy.

This exhuberant nonfiction comic book humorously retells several myths about Pan, the Greek god of noise and confusion. From the moment he was born Pan was a bundle of energy and mischief. He invents panic, falls in love with the moon and fights the monster Typhon. The mixed media illustrations match the fast-paced handdrawn text. Hardcore and newbie mythology fans alike will enjoy this action-packed book about the most high-spirited god on Mount Olympus.

The First Step: How One Girl Put Segregation on Trial by Susan E. Goodman, illustrated by E. B. Lewis. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Lisa C.

In 1847 Sarah Roberts was only four, but she was about to make history. When the school she was attending threw her out and said only white children could attend, her parents decided to fight. They hired a young lawyer named Robert Morris to fight for them. Morris became the first African American to argue a case before the Supreme Court. Although they lost the case, they began a process that would eventually lead to desegregation. This is a fascinating look at a piece of forgotten history in the march for civil rights.


Ada Ríos grew up in Cateura, Paraguay, a very poor town where most people made their living as gancheros (recyclers), sifting through garbage to find objects to reuse or sell. Ada loved music, but it wasn't until Favio Chávez started music classes that music began to change her life. Ada fell in love immediately with the violin, but the musical instruments were so valuable the kids weren't to take them home. So Señor Chávez worked with several local men to turn garbage into musical instruments. The Recycled Orchestra not only helped Ada and her friends learn to respect themselves and one another, it also led to incredible opportunities, such as playing with the rock band Metallica in cities all over the world. The mixed media illustrations bring the texture, light and music of Ada's world to life and mirror the recycled garbage theme. Backmatter includes an author's note, as well as websites and videos for further exploration.

Dive! World War II Stories of Sailors & Submarines in the Pacific by Deborah Hopkinson. (6th - 8th Grade) Recommended by Warren.

This is a suspenseful page turner with tons of great quotes and first person accounts of near misses, daring escapes and tragic endings. Hopkinson also blends in wonderful anecdotes—like how a submarine got an ice cream machine, people were returned home after being presumed dead and dogs were smuggled aboard to become ships' mascots. The book begins with Pearl Harbor and follows the involvement of U.S. submarines chronologically throughout the war.

Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America by Gail Jarrow. (5th - 12th grade) Recommended by Jennifer.

Most people think that the Bubonic Plague is a thing of the past—the Black Death that occurred in the Middle Ages. Not so! Plague is alive and well, even today. This fascinating (and gross) book explores plague history, causes, cures and occurrences in modern times. Beware: Colorado is one of the states where plague shows up from time to time.

Fabulous Frogs by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Tim Hopgood. (Preschool - 3rd grade) Recommended by Lisa D.

This nonfiction books introduces young children to different types of frogs using entertaining pictures and straightforward facts. This is a nonfiction addition to storyline. Explore frog information in detail or just talk about the headlining facts depending on the age group of the children.

Flying Frogs and Walking Fish by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Lisa C.

Once again, Jenkins and Page pair up to examine the animal kingdom. This time they turn their talents to an examination of the ways that animals get around. Behold, octopuses that walk along the sea floor and squirrels that fly from tree to tree. This book is both fun and fascinating.
The Great White Shark Scientist by Sy Montgomery, photographs by Keith Ellenbogen. (3rd - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy.

In the newest installment in the fascinating Scientist in the Field series author Montgomery and photographer Ellenbogen come face to face with majestic and powerful great white sharks as they shadow Greg Skomal, a great white shark scientist. Montgomery provides first person accounts of going out on a powerboat to find, film, identify and track great white sharks on Cape Cod's Chatham Inlet are augmented with stunning full color photos. Much is yet unknown about great white sharks, however callout boxes, maps, charts, and backmatter help to debunk many pervasive myths.

Breakthrough! How Three People Saved "Blue Babies" and Changed Medicine Forever by Jim Murphy. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Lisa C.

In 1944, babies born with "blue baby syndrome" were found to have a congenital heart defect which always resulted in their death by the age of 2. This compelling book follows three pioneer doctors who wanted to save these babies using surgery. It is also the story of Vivien Thomas, the man who perfected the technique that would make this surgery a success. However, It would be years before he got the credit he deserved because Thomas was an African American. This book is a fascinating look at the social and ethical issues of medicine and society at a time period on the cusp of radical change.

Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragists, a Kitten, and 10,000 Miles by Mara Rockliff, illustrated by Hadley Hooper. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Amy and Ann.

On April 6, 1916 Nell Richardson and Alice Burke jumped into their little yellow car and embarked on a cross-country road trip to champion "votes for women!" Traveling with just the basics, plus a sewing machine, typewriter and a little black kitten, the suffragists spoke to crowds big and small, urban and rural. The short, descriptive text focuses on the women's courageous determination and pairs beautifully with the colorful and textured illustrations by Denver's own Hadley Hooper. Backmatter includes fascinating notes on Nell and Alice, the suffrage movement, sources consulted, as well as a bibliography for further reading.

The Slowest Book Ever by April Pulley Sayre, illustrated by Kelly Murphy. (3rd - 7th grade) Recommended by Carrie and Ann.

How slow is nemotode slow? That's just one of the questions answered in this engrossing, leisurely nonfiction chapter book. With headings like "big, chewy thoughts for your brain," and "green ponderings to deeply root you," this is a collection of superlatives for the voraciously contemplative. Stylized pen-and-ink drawings tinted with inkwash and orange highlights bring the book's chewy facts to life while honoring the text's atmosphere of curiosity and quiet. A glossary ("chewy words") and "not-exactly-the-end-notes" add heft to the facts conveyed in free-form layout in book's body. This book will appeal broadly to young readers, speaking equally to fans of diary-style fiction as well as instructive nonfiction.

Poetry

Guess Who, Haiku by Deanna Caswell, illustrated by Bob Shea. (Toddler - Kindergarten) Recommended by Amy.

Ten clever haiku poems encourage readers to guess the animal. The bright pastel digital illustrations provide visual clues to support the text. The wordplay, from the" muffled mooing" of a cow to a "full belly purring" cat, is playful. Add some poetry to your toddler or preschool storyline with a poem or two or three from this fun guessing game book.

When Green Becomes Tomatoes: Poems for All Seasons by Julie Fogliano, illustrated by Julie Morstad. (Kindergarten - 5th grade) Recommended by Amy, Gigi and Ann.

Following the seasons from spring to winter, this gentle book of poetry invites readers to take a closer look at our ever changing world. Titled by month and date, the short poems glory in the first blossoming crocus, days "hot and thick like honey" and "muddy mud" when the snow begins to melt. Morstad's delicate gouache and pencil crayon illustrations feature diverse children and match the quiet humor of the poems.
Fresh Delicious: Poems from the Farmer's Market by Irene Latham, illustrated by Mique Moriuchi. (Toddler - 1st grade) Recommended by Amy and Carrie.
This collection of twenty-one poems celebrates the glorious sights, smells and tastes of a farmer’s market. The short, lighthearted poems are arranged simply, yet attractively on the page pairing beautifully with the whimsical acrylic and collage illustrations showing a variety of animals extolling the virtues of their favorite fresh and delicious produce. Enjoy such bite-sized delicacies as a small rabbit contemplating the many flavors of lettuces, two mice having an okra duel and a piratical hippo and giraffe discovering a treasure chest of farm-fresh eggs. Six recipes (to be cooked with a grown-up helper) complete this scrumptious poetry collection.

When the Sun Shines on Antarctica: And Other Poems about the Frozen Continent by Irene Latham, illustrated by Anna Watham. (Kindergarten - 5th grade) Recommended by Rachel.
Concise, playful poems about life on Antarctica are perfectly complimented by whimsical illustrations. Fascinating facts about Antarctica's flora, fauna and landscape accompany each poem. From battling bull elephant seals to brinicles (underwater icicles), there’s something to catch every reader's interest.

Night Guard by Synne Lea, illustrated by Stian Hole. (3rd - 8th grade) Recommended by Amy.
This ponderous, darkly humorous and touching collection of short, free verse poems about small, daily observations invites lots of rereading. Each poem is subtly tied to the next, just as the open-ended, quiet, surreal, mixed media images are connected to the accompanying text. The Norwegian to English translation is excellently done with line breaks deftly placed for pausing, thinking, reorienting. Recurring themes in the text and illustrations loosely tie the collection together.

Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph by Roxane Orgill, illustrated by Francis Vallejo. (3rd - 8th grade) Recommended by Gigi, Jennifer, Rachel and Ann.
On a hot August morning in 1958, graphic designer Art Kane got 57 jazz greats to come together in Harlem for an epic photo session for Esquire magazine. Jazz Day brings this rather esoteric event to vibrant, vivid life with its lyrical and eloquent free verse poetry and gorgeously expressive acrylic and pastel illustrations. For lovers of jazz, history, poetry or just a well-told story, this book is a fascinating and entertaining window into a specific moment in time. Back matter is extensive and thorough.

Wet Cement: A Mix of Concrete Poems by Bob Raczka. (1st - 3rd Grade) Recommended by Jennifer and Amy.
This fun collection of concrete poems will make one's brain (and possibly neck) hurt while one tries to figure out which way each poem is supposed to be read.

Biographies

Whoosh: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions by Chris Barton, illustrated by Don Tate. (2nd - 5th Grade) Recommended by Ann.
As a kid growing up in Mobile, Alabama, Lonnie Johnson was always tinkering. Rockets, rubber-band guns, robots—you name it, Lonnie built it. Lonnie dreamed of being an engineer and went to college at Tuskegee Institute where in addition to studying, he threw dance parties featuring his custom-built sound system complete with a synchronized light show. After college, Lonnie worked at NASA by day and continued to tinker in his home workshop at night. While trying to create an environmentally friendly refrigerator cooling system, Lonnie stumbled upon the idea for what would become the Super Soaker. Tate's bold illustrations, complete with a pull-out spread showing a glorious burst of Super Soaker power, complement Barton’s engaging text in this accessible introduction to a pioneering African American inventor and engineer.

The grandson of slaves, Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans in 1901. From a young age, Armstrong took odd jobs to earn money for his family. He did everything from selling newspapers to hauling coal and everywhere he went, he was surrounded by music. Armstrong left school at 14 and apprenticed himself to trumpeter Joe “King” Oliver. He was soon playing in bands on riverboats and heading north to the Windy City, Chicago. Cline-Ransome’s narrative is interwoven with direct quotations from Armstrong giving the book a personal, intimate feel. Ransome’s watercolor illustrations extend a warm welcome to readers to linger and explore how little Louis Armstrong became Satchmo, one of the most innovative jazz musicians of all time.
Fannie Never Flinched: One Woman’s Courage in the Struggle for American Labor Union Rights by Mary Cronk Farrell. (4th - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy.
In the early 1900’s widowed Fannie Sellins was struggling to support her children as a seamstress in a textile sweatshop. Fannie was fed up with working long hours in dangerous conditions for very little pay. So she united forces with her fellow seamstresses to launch Ladies’ Local 67 of the United Garment Workers of America. This was the start of Fannie’s passionate career as a union activist. Until her untimely death, Fannie advocated for better wages and working conditions for factory workers, laborers and miners all over the United States. Well-researched and thoughtfully designed, this inspiring biography features photographs, newspaper articles and other visuals that bring Fannie’s struggle to life. Backmatter includes an author’s note, glossary, a time line of select events in the American labor struggle, as well as sources, websites and books.

I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley. (7th - 10th grade) Recommended by Rachel, Carrie and Amy.
Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born in a time when women were expected to marry, keep house and raise children. Instead, Ruth’s mother raised her with the idea that girls can do anything. Ruth proved her mother right by becoming a lawyer, then a professor of law and finally a Supreme Court justice, all while raising a family. This short, lively biography gives an introduction to Ginsburg’s life and her work fighting oppression throughout her career.

Miss Mary Reporting : The True Story Of Sportswriter Mary Garber by Sue Macy, illustrated by C. F. Payne. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Liesel, Rachel and Ann.
Mary Garber became a sports writer in an era when women weren't expected to play sports, let alone report on them. Small in stature but fiercely determined, Mary's career spanned half a century and broke ground not only for covering sporting events, but for reporting on social issues impacting them, like segregation. Macy's excellent narrative vividly portrays Mary's precociousness and the sports stories she brought to light. Tougher issues likes sexism and racism are addressed upfront with a deft hand that steers clear of pedantry. The illustrations are stylized yet painterly and beautifully convey the drama and power of athletes in motion, as well as key figures in sports and journalism. With strong "kid appeal" this book is a terrific choice to bring diverse nonfiction to older storytimes, reader advisory and classrooms.

Cloth Lullaby: The Woven Life of Louise Bourgeois by Amy Novesky, illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Liesel, Rachel and Ann.
Stunning illustrations and gorgeous writing illuminate the childhood of artist Louise Bourgeois and examines the way early experiences can shape a unique perspective.

A Poem for Peter: The Story of Ezra Jack Keats and the Creation of The Snowy Day by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson. (2nd - 5th grade) Recommended by Ann.
This biography-in-verse captures the vivid story of children’s author and illustrator Ezra Jack Keats and his most beloved character Peter from The Snowy Day. From his early days as the child of Polish immigrants to his work painting murals for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and serving in the Air Force during WWII, Pinkney seamlessly weaves facts from Keats’ life into her “collage verse”. Facing discrimination when he returned from the war ("No Jews Need Apply"), Jacob Ezra Katz changed his name and it was this experience of being different that eventually led to the creation of Peter. Fancher and Johnson’s illustrations both incorporate some of Keats’ original work and reflect his style by using collage, paint and pencil in their original contributions. Text and illustration work together to remind us that “Brown sugar child, / when you and your hue / burst onto the scene / all of us came out to play.”

Anything But Ordinary Addie: The True Story of Adelaide Hermann, Queen of Magic by Mara Rockliff, illustrated by Iacopo Bruno. (1st - 5th grade) Recommended by Liesel and Rachel.
Adelaide Hermann never wanted to be ordinary. She always stood out in a crowd—as the illustrations in this lavishly illustrated biography demonstrate. Text and illustrations complement each other, telling the story of a bold woman who became a magician at a time when women rarely took center stage.

Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science: The First Computer Programmer by Diane Stanley, illustrated by Jessie Hartland. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy.
Using bright gouache illustrations and a concise, friendly narrative, this picture book biography focuses on the perspicacious and creative Ada Lovelace. This introductory book will inspire readers to seek more information about Lovelace, a woman whose intelligence and inventive imagination helped her write the first ever computer program.
Some Writer!: The Story of E. B. White by Melissa Sweet. (4th - 7th grade) Recommended by Amy, Jennifer and Rachel.

Interweaving text, quotations and mixed media collage illustrations, the sincere and humble writer is brought to life. Expertly paced and wonderfully concise, this book follows White's life from his childhood as the youngest of a large brood, through his discovery of nature, his work at The New Yorker, writing his three children's books and sadly, yet simply, to his death. The extensive backmatter includes quotation citations, an afterword by White's granddaughter, an author's note and further reading. Equally fascinating and inspiring for avid fans of Charlotte, Wilbur, and Stuart, as well as readers new to White's wonderful stories.

Esquivel!: Space-Age Sound Artist by Susan Wood, illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. (2nd - 6th grade) Recommended by Rachel.

Born in Tampico, Mexico, Juan Garcia Esquivel was fascinated by music and sounds at a young age. He turned that fascination into inspiration for his "out-of-this-world" music, which received great acclaim. The illustrations are a digitized blend of photographed textures, hand written text and drawings inspired by ancient Mexican art. Text and illustrations come together to capture Esquivel's unique and imaginative style of music in this introduction to the musician's life and work.

Graphic Novels

Noodlehead Nightmares by Tedd Arnold, Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss, illustrated by Tedd Arnold. (Kindergarten - 4th grade) Recommended by Carrie and Kristi.

In this humorous graphic novel for beginning readers, short episodes present problems that are then cleverly resolved. Simple plot points connect stories together (apple pie, a lost pillow, making beds). The noodleheads' noodleheaded antics will elicit chuckles, as will food-themed characters, such as Farmer Spud and the noodleheads' friend Meatball.

Stinky Cecil in Terrarium Terror by Paige Braddock. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Jennifer.

This is the second book in the Stinky Cecil graphic novel series. What happens when Cecil the toad is suddenly removed from his pond habitat by some curious kids in a science class? He joins the extremely verbose and annoying class chameleon in a cramped terrarium, that's what. Meanwhile, Cecil's home pond buddies plan a daring (and hilarious) helicopter rescue. This funny tale is followed by factual information on chameleons, garter snakes, how to make a terrarium and more. This is a great book for the younger spectrum of graphic readers.

Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea by Ben Clanton. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Amy and Warren.

In this hilarious book of underwater friendship, best friends Narwhal and Jelly have awesome adventures. In the first book in the Narwhal and Jelly series, the friends make their own pod of awesomeness, eat lots of waffles and discover the joys of playing pretend. Narwhal and jellyfish facts, as well as a jaunty narwhal song, eye catching cartoon panels, humorous facial expressions and a great best friendship make this a natural step up for Elephant and Piggie fans.

Hippopatomister by John Patrick Green. (2nd - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy.

Red Panda and Hippopatomus decide to leave the run down old City Zoo to find jobs and experience the exciting outside world. Hippopatomus has a natural knack for lots of jobs—construction worker, hairstylist, chef, banker, dental hygienist. Unfortunately, Red Panda's hysterically terrible mistakes get them fired from every job. What will the pair of friends do? Witty wordplay, funny situation, and detailed full-color illustrations make this graphic novel a fun animal-filled adventure.


The summer looks to be bleak and boring. Jack has to watch his mute, autistic sister Maddie every day while his mom works two jobs so that their family can keep their house. Then an amazing thing happens—usually silent Maddie speaks and urges Jack to buy a box of unusual seeds at a flea market. He's so stunned, he trades the family car for the seeds. It turns out those seeds are more than just unusual—they're magic. A marvelously illustrated twist on Jack and the Beanstalk follows—only this version has sword fighting, a dragon, mysterious creatures and more.
The Nameless City by Faith Erin Hicks. (3rd - 12th grade) Recommended by Amy, Carrie, Kristi and Ann. When young Kaidu arrives in the Nameless City, an important trade city connecting many provinces, he is daunted by his strict soldier's training. Then his father, whom he barely knows, introduces him to Rat, a street-wise girl who agrees to help Kaidu learn how to skim over the rooftops in exchange for food. Kaidu starts to feel at home in the city, just as danger shows itself. Rat gets wind of a conspiracy to assassinate the powerful General of All Blades. Can Kaidu and Rat get the message to the general in time? Set in an ancient Asian time and place (perhaps China), this graphic novel moves quickly from scene to scene. The earthy color palette and precision line work propel the fast-paced action.

The Great Pet Escape by Victoria Jamieson. (1st - 4th grade) Recommended by Amy and Jennifer. Three class pets at Daisy P. Flugelhorn Elementary develop an elaborate escape plan. But things go awry when they come up against an army of mice deadset on sabotaging the cafeteria's entire food supply. Full color illustrations, nonstop action and humorous characters come together in this entertaining graphic novel.

Compass South: Four Points. Book 1 by Hope Larson, illustrated by Rebecca Mock. (3rd - 6th grade) Recommended by Amy. Set in 1860, this is the story of two sets of red-haired twins, a missing father, a nefarious pirate captain and a seafaring voyage from New York City to San Francisco via the treacherous Cape Horn. The first set of twins, Alexander and Cleopatra (Patrick when disguised as a boy), have been given a mysterious watch and knife by their now missing father. Their lives become intertwined with the second set of twins, Silas and Edwin, as all four children struggle to survive. The first in the Four Points series, this full-color historical fiction graphic novel is full of mystery and adventure.

Ogres Awake! by James Sturm, Andrew Arnold and Alexis Frederick-Frost. (1st - 3rd grade) Recommended by Jennifer. Brought to you by the authors of Adventures in Cartooning, this funny medieval fantasy will make youngsters snort as a knight and his fearless steed Edward join forces with a passel of...fire-breathing dragons? Nope. Ruthless barbarian warriors? Nope. Garden gnomes with wicked culinary talents? Yep, you guessed it.

Duck, Duck, Porcupine! by Salina Yoon. (Kindergarten - 2nd grade) Recommended by Amy. In three gently humorous episodes Porcupine, Big Duck, and Little Duck enjoy picnicking, birthday parties and backyard camping. No matter what silliness Porcupine and Big Duck get up to, Little Duck is always there to save the day. The all-dialogue text is printed in a large font in easy to follow speech bubbles. Yoon's bright and colorful digital illustrations are outlined in thick, black lines. Plentiful word repetition and lots of visual context clues make this a great graphic novel for beginning readers.

Spanish Beginning Readers

Lagartija Lisa: ¡El cielo se está cayendo! by Robin Koontz. (Kindergarten – 2nd grade) Recommended by Brianna. Lagartija Lisa is a lizard who, upon feeling a drop of rain on her head, becomes convinced that the sky is falling! She decides she must warn all her friends and together tell the terrible news to the king. In this charming desert retelling of Chicken Little, we are introduced to fascinating desert animals like meercats, ostriches and a wise tortoise, all set in the backdrop of unique rock formations, saguaro cacti and vibrant desert flowers.

Spanish Picture Books

Los fantasmas no llaman a la puerta by Eulalia Canal, illustrated by Rocio Bonilla. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Yanira. Bear and Marmot are inseperable friends who play together all the time. Whether pretending to sing like stars or finding treasure, they both die of laughter with each other's silliness. One afternoon Bear announces that Duck will be joining them to play. Duck feels jealous and finds ways to sabotage this play date.
**Día nublado, día soleado** by Eun-gyu Choi, illustrated by Hye-won Yang. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

Through expressive and bold water colors, readers learn about the clues that indicate what weather is approaching—ants leaving their underground homes means rain, the coats of rabbits turning white means winter is coming. This picture book is beautifully illustrated and full of interesting tidbits of information.

**Diminuto: El invisible mundo de los microbios** by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Emily Sutton. (Kindergarten - 3rd grade) Recommended by Brianna.

Readers will learn all about teeny-tiny creatures called microbes in this fascinating book. Microbes live absolutely everywhere and are super powerful. Gorgeous illustrations show us just how cool they are with real-life comparisons, magnified images and lovely scenery to show where you can find them.

**El pez pucheros** by Deborah Diesen, illustrated by Dan Hanna. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

This is a newly released Spanish translation of the ever popular *Pout Pout Fish*, a story of a grumpy fish who eventually learns that his sad expression isn't sad—it was just meant for giving kisses!

**¿Somos amigos?** by Anabel Fernández Rey. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

A boy and his polar bear friend realize that friendship isn’t just about having someone do things for you—it’s sharing experiences together.

**¡Yo también te quiero!** by Michael Foreman. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna and Yanira.

As a daddy bear puts his baby bear to bed, they begin a delightful contest of listing all the things they love each other more than: more than the fish in the sea, more than the snowflakes that fall from the sky, more than all the flowers of summer! As they make these proclamations, they travel to new and beautiful places together on a heartwarming adventure.

**El Sol, la Luna y el Agua: un cuento de Nigeria** by Laura Herrera, illustrated by Ángeles Vargas. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

This is a retelling of the Nigerian legend of how the sun and moon came to live in the sky. Vibrant illustrations tell the story of a house built to host Water and her family but is too small for her and her family of sea creatures.

**La luz de Lucía** by Margarita del Mazo, illustrated by Silvia Álvarez. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

Set in a enchanted forest painted with rich colors and magical attention to detail, there lives a young firefly named Lucía who is excited but nervous to join the other fireflies in their nightly flights to shine their lights. With the support of her family, she soon learns that even though it is small, her light is very important.

**La visita: Una historia para leer en voz baja** by Margarita del Mazo, illustrated by Natalia Colombo. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Yanira.

Every night a visitor appears in the room of the smallest person in the house and it makes him tremble with fear. But what does he fear exactly? This story explores the fear that we feel of things that appear to be different from us but are actually very much like us.

**¡Shhh! Mi hermano está durmiendo** by Ruth Ohi. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

It can be hard not to wake up a sleeping little brother. Mom says to be quiet, but so many things could happen—the brushes could paint him, the tower of blocks could fall on him. How will this older brother manage to let the little one get some sleep when he’s so tempting to wake?

**Mi abuelo y yo** by Núria Parera, illustrated by Almudena Suárez. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

A young girl and her grandfather hide "kisses", or little hearts, for each other all over their home and often give each other clues about their locations. When the grandfather goes away and will not come back, the girl realizes he left clues to one more kiss for her that she can always cherish. In this beautiful book we learn about the special love of a grandfather and also about the challenge of losing someone we love.

**Soy un conejo=I am a Bunny** by Ole Risom, illustrated by Richard Scarry. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.

This recent translation of a favorite children's classic is the story of a young rabbit living in the forest who charmingly wanders through the season and encounters peaceful and entertaining places and animals.
**El viaje de mamá** by Mariana Ruiz Johnson. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.
In this fun and heartwarming tale, a young elephant’s mother takes a trip by herself leaving baby elephant and dad at home together. Even though the house doesn't smell like flowers anymore, they have a great time playing in the yard till the stars come out, hanging out in pj's and appreciating time together.

**Feliz** by Mies Van Hout. (Preschool - 1st grade) Recommended by Brianna.
Readers learn a great collection of adjectives as the single words accompany impressionistic fish illustrations who represent them. Fish who are bold, proud, jealous and of course, happy, swim through this delightful book.

**Ñac-Ñac: El Monstruo Comelibros** by Emma Yarlett. (Preschool - 2nd grade) Recommended by Yanira.
Nibbles is a very naughty book monster—he's chomping, munching and nibbling his way through fairy tales that don't belong to him! Can you help catch him and put him back in his own story? Children will love to lift the flaps, peek through the peep holes and chase Nibbles through a fantastical world of books.

**Spanish-English Bilingual**

**Somos como las nubes = We Are Like the Clouds** by Jorge Argueta, illustrated by Alfonso Ruano. (3rd grade & up) Recommended by Liesel.
The poetry in this book follows the many children who make the journey from Central America up to the United States as refugees and immigrants. The book is full of distress and longing, but also demonstrates strong love among family members in difficult times. The danger in the book is real, but the poems arc toward a moment of peace. This is a book about the humanity of those in struggle.

**¡Olinguito, de la A a la Z!: Descubriendo el bosque nublado = Olinguito, from A to Z!: Unveiling the Cloud Forest**
by Lulu Delacre. (Preschool & up) Recommended by Gigi, Brianna and Carrie.
This gorgeous bilingual alphabet book features the animals of the Andes' cloud forest. Rendered in crisp mixed-media illustrations, the animals are so vivid that they almost jump off the page. The book leads with the Spanish text, and the alphabet letters refer to the Spanish names for animals and plants, yet the English text is just as understandable and fascinating. Extensive back matter makes clear Delacre’s love for her subjects, as well as the painstaking research put into this book. This sure favorite for kids and adults alike includes a visual glossary and extended informational pages about cloud forests.

**ECRR: Letter Knowledge, Print Motivation, Vocabulary**