



FOSTERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION:

A READING LIST FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG ADULTS, AND FAMILIES

Join The Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP), a collaboration of public, and nonprofit organizations committed to elevating the financial well-being of low-income families in Contra Costa County. We're dedicated to increasing income and building assets for a brighter, more secure future.

As part of our commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, FESP partners have curated a collection of engaging books for children aged 0-5, young children, and young adults. These thoughtfully selected titles aim to promote understanding, celebrate differences, and inspire a sense of belonging. Dive into the world of literature that embraces diversity and nurtures inclusion. Special thanks to Betty Geishirt-Cantrell, Renee Zeimer, and Rachel Rosekind for their contributions to compiling this list.

PICTURE BOOKS



ALL ARE WELCOME

Author: Alexandra Penfold,
Illustrator: Suzanne Kaufman

Illustrations and simple, rhyming text introduce a school where diversity is celebrated and songs, stories, and talents are shared.



ANCESTOR APPROVED: INTERTRIBAL STORIES FOR KIDS

Editor: Cynthia Leitich Smith

Celebrate friendship and heritage with this collection of intersecting stories, bursting with hope, the strength of community, and Native pride.



COOPER'S LESSON (BILINGUAL: ENGLISH/KOREAN)

Author: Sun Yung Shin, **Illustrator:** Kim Cogan

Cooper grapples with his mixed identity and frustration with Mr. Lee speaking Korean. A transformative moment in the grocery store prompts Cooper to realize that identity is complex, transcending language.



A BOY AND A JAGUAR

Author: Alan Rabinowitz, **Illustrator:** Cátia Chien

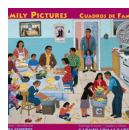
Alan loves animals, but the great cat house at the Bronx Zoo makes him sad. Join Alan on his journey to find his voice and advocate for animals and people unable to speak for themselves.



JUST LIKE A MAMA

Author: Alice Faye Duncan,
Illustrator: Charnelle Pinkney Barlow

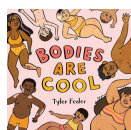
This powerful picture book celebrates the heart connection between adopted children and the forever families who welcome them with kindness, care, and unconditional love.



FAMILY PICTURES / CUADROS DE FAMILIA (BILINGUAL: ENGLISH/SPANISH)

Author and Illustrator: Carmen Lomas Garza

Renowned artist Carmen Lomas Garza fondly recounts her childhood, lived in a traditional Mexican-American community in Kingsville, Texas, and reflects on her aspirations to become an artist.



BODIES ARE COOL

Author and Illustrator: Tyler Feder

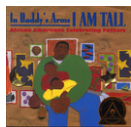
Illustrations and rhyming text celebrate bodies of all shapes, sizes, ages, and colors, with different kinds of hair, eyes, spots, scars, and more.



I AM AN AMERICAN: THE WONG KIM ARK STORY

Authors: Martha Brockenbrough and Grace Lin, **Illustrator:** Julia Kuo

When American-born Wong Kim Ark is told he isn't American, he sets out to forever change the national conversation on who is and isn't American.



IN DADDY'S ARMS I AM TALL: AFRICAN AMERICANS CELEBRATING FATHERS

Authors: Various poets, **Illustrator:** Javaka Steptoe

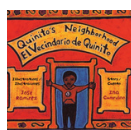
In this intergenerational collection of poetry by new and established African American writers, fatherhood is celebrated with honor, humor, and grace. Identifying fathers as being among our most influential heroes.



LEND A HAND: POEMS ABOUT GIVING

Author: John Frank, **Illustrator:** London Ladd

In this collection of original poems, emphasis is placed on compassion and the joy of giving. The poems illustrate the bridging of boundaries between people who are often perceived as being different from one another.



QUINTO'S NEIGHBORHOOD / EL VECINDARIO DE QUINTO (BILINGUAL: ENGLISH/SPANISH)

Author: Ina Cumpiano, **Illustrator:** José Ramírez

Quinto recognizes his neighborhood as more than buildings and streets; it's a community filled with people he loves. Everyone plays an essential role, creating a close-knit community where everyone's contribution is valued.



JUST BECAUSE I AM: A CHILD'S BOOK OF AFFIRMATION

Author: Lauren Murphy Payne, **Illustrator:** Melissa Iwai

This book of sweet, simple affirmations for children helps them respect their bodies, acknowledge their own needs, and name their feelings.

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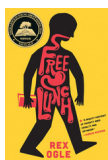
MIDDLE GRADE



A GOOD KIND OF TROUBLE

Author: Lisa Moore Rameé

After attending a powerful protest, Shayla starts wearing an armband to school to support the Black Lives Matter movement, but when the school gives her an ultimatum, she is forced to choose between her education and her identity.



FREE LUNCH

Author: Rex Ogle

Free Lunch is the story of Rex Ogle's first semester in sixth grade. Rex and his baby brother often went hungry, wore secondhand clothes, and were short of school supplies, and Rex was on his school's free lunch program. Grounded in the immediacy of physical hunger and the humiliation of having to announce it every day in the school lunch line, Rex's is a compelling story of a more profound hunger -- that of a child for his parents' love and care.



LOOK BOTH WAYS: A TALE TOLD IN TEN BLOCKS

Author: Jason Reynolds

Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and weaves them into one funny, poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.



BLESSING'S BEAD

Author: Debby Dahl Edwardson

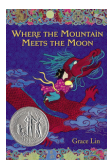
Tracing four generations of bonds and breakage within one Inupiaq family, Blessing's Bead is a lovely and surprising novel about trauma, survival, and the healing power of culture and stories.



AHIMSA

Author: Supriya Kelkar

In 1942, after Mahatma Gandhi asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement, ten-year-old Anjali is devastated to think of her father risking his life for the freedom struggle. But it turns out he isn't the one joining. Anjali's mother is. And with this change comes many more adjustments designed to improve their country and use "ahimsa"—non-violent resistance—to stand up to the British government.



WHERE THE MOUNTAIN MEETS THE MOON

Author: Grace Lin

In a ramshackle hut in the valley of Fruitless Mountain, young Minli listens to her father's folktales of the Jade Dragon and the Old Man of the Moon, who knows the answers to all of life's questions. Inspired, she embarks on an extraordinary journey to seek the Old Man's wisdom and change her family's fortune.

YOUNG ADULT



DISPLACEMENT

Author: Kiku Hughes

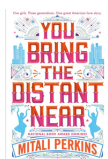
Kiku finds herself stuck back in time. Living alongside her young grandmother and other Japanese-American citizens in internment camps, Kiku gets the education she never received in history class.



ELATSOE

Author: Darcie Little Badger

Elatsoe lives in this slightly stranger America. This America has been shaped dramatically by the magic, monsters, knowledge, and legends of its peoples, those Indigenous and those not. Some of these forces are charmingly everyday, while other forces should never see the light of day.



YOU BRING THE DISTANT NEAR

Author: Mitali Perkins

An award-winning Indian-American author illuminates the immigrant experience for one family with humor and heart. Told in alternating teen voices across three generations, this novel explores sisterhood, first loves, friendship, and the inheritance of culture, for better or worse.



MARCELO IN THE REAL WORLD

Author: Francisco X Stork

Marcelo Sandoval, a seventeen-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm.



OUT OF DARKNESS

Author: Ashley Hope Perez

Loosely based on a school explosion that took place in New London, Texas in 1937, this is the story of two teenagers: Naomi, who is Mexican, and Wash, who is black, and their dealings with race, segregation, love, and the forces that destroy people.



THE HATE U GIVE

Author: Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her unarmed childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer.