

Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Physical Diversity and Body Positivity Through the Reading of Picture Books (Primary)

Note:

The interest levels listed in this bibliography are those given by the publishers. Each teacher, however, needs to decide the age suitability for their own students.

The summaries are from the publishers as well and have been included to give you a quick overview of the main themes of each title. In this way you can quickly select the titles that suit the particular social and emotional needs of your students. Some of the titles fit the theme loosely and others more tightly. The titles also range from "light-hearted" to more serious in tone.

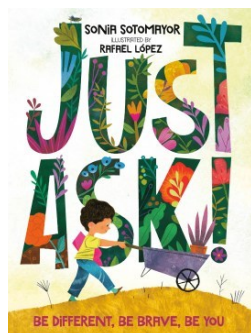
Your school counsellor is an excellent source for suggestions on how to support students when teaching more sensitive subjects.

Joan Pearce, April 2024

Mental Health and Well-Being: Physical Diversity and Body Positivity

Picture Book Format

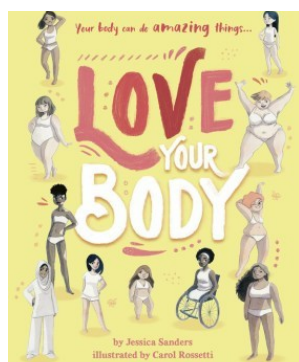
Compiled by Joan Pearce



Just Ask

by Sonia Sotomayor, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

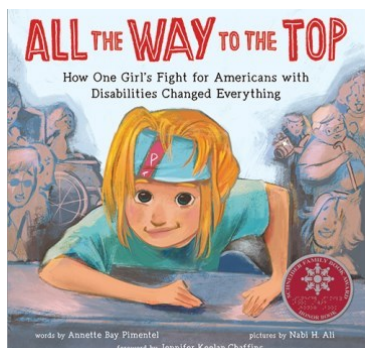
"A story in which friends who have different abilities, work together to build a community garden." - Follett



Love Your Body

by Jessica Sanders, c2020 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.0)

"Love Your Body encourages you to admire and celebrate your body for all the amazing things it can do (like laugh, cry, hug, and feel) and to help you see that you are so much more than your body. Bodies come in all different forms and abilities. All these bodies are different and all these bodies are good bodies. There is no size, ability, or color that is perfect. What makes you different makes you, you, and you are amazing!" - Pub.



All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything

by Annette Bay Pimentel, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"Jennifer Keelan was determined to make a change—even if she was just a kid. She never thought her wheelchair could slow her down, but the way the world around her was built made it hard to do even simple things . . . Jennifer knew that everyone deserves a voice!" - Pub.



The World Needs Who You Were Made to Be

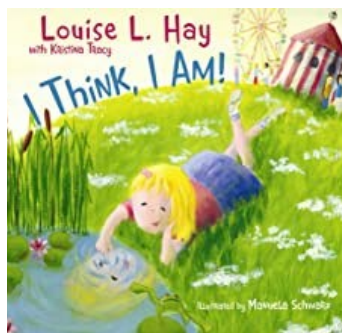
by Joanna Gaines, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.0)

"The World Needs Who You Were Made to Be follows a group of diverse children as they each build their very own hot-air balloons. As the kids work together, leaning in to their own skills and processes, to fill the sky with beautiful colors, we discover that the same is true for life—it's more beautiful when our differences are celebrated." - Follett

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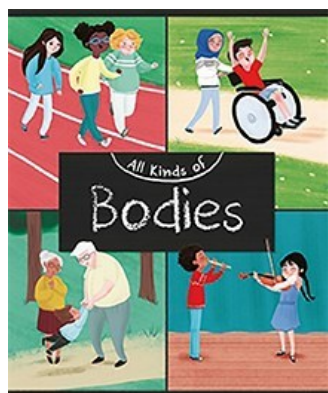
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I Think, I Am: Teaching Kids the Positive Power of Affirmations

by Louise L. Hay, c2008 (IL: K-3)

"Simple text and illustrations explain to young children that they can control their thoughts and words and provide positive affirmations to help them throughout the day." - Follett

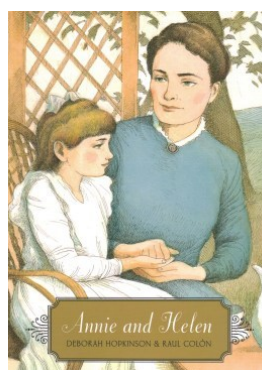


All Kinds of Bodies

by Judith Heneghan, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

Series: All Kinds of People

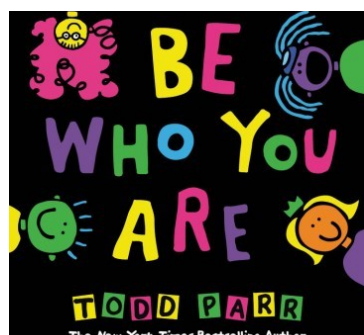
"Explains how people come in different shapes, skin colors, and sizes, and every body is completely unique." - Follett



Annie and Helen

by Deborah Hopkinson, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 5.4)

"Focusing on the relationship between Helen and her teacher, Annie Sullivan, the book is interspersed with excerpts of Annie's letters home, written as she struggled with her angry, wild pupil. But slowly, with devotion and determination, Annie teaches Helen finger spelling and braille, letters, and sentences. As Helen comes to understand language and starts to communicate, she connects for the first time with her family and the world around her." - Pub.



Be Who You Are

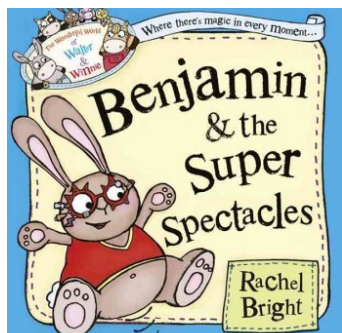
by Todd Parr, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 0.7)

"Encourages kids to be proud of what makes them unique, where they come from, and how they express themselves and see the world." - Follett

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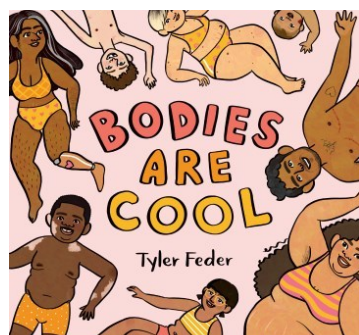
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Benjamin and the Super Spectacles

by Rachel Bright, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

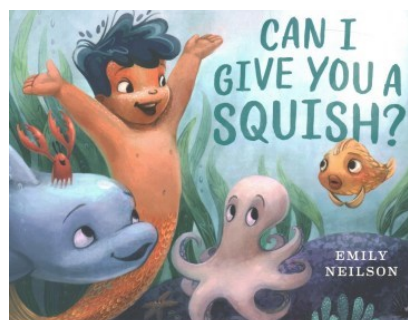
"Benjamin Bounce loves to bounce, but when he starts bouncing into things, Benjamin discovers that he is the only one in Woollybottom who needs glasses, and he is upset until his friends find a way to cheer him up."
- Follett



Bodies Are Cool

by Tyler Feder, c2021 (IL: K-3)

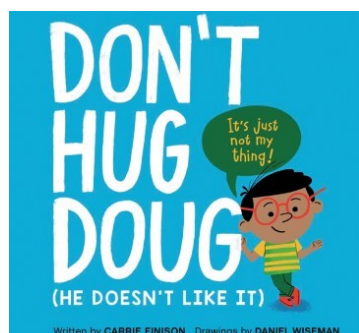
"From the way a body jiggles to the scars a body bears, this picture book is a pure celebration of all the different human bodies that exist in the world. Highlighting the various skin tones, body shapes, and hair types is just the beginning in this truly inclusive book. With its cheerful illustrations and exuberant refrain, this book will instill body positivity and confidence in the youngest of readers." - Pub.



Can I Give You a Squish?

by Emily Neilson, c2020 (IL: K-3)

"Kai, a merboy, loves to share hugs with his mother, but learns that some friends prefer fin bumps, tail claps, tentacle shakes, or claw pinches." - Follett



Don't Hug Doug (He Doesn't Like It)

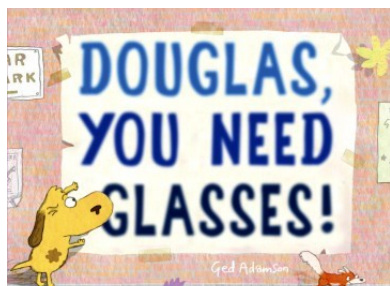
by Carrie Finison, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.7)

"Doug prefers not to be hugged, but there are a variety of other ways his loved ones can show him affection." - Follett

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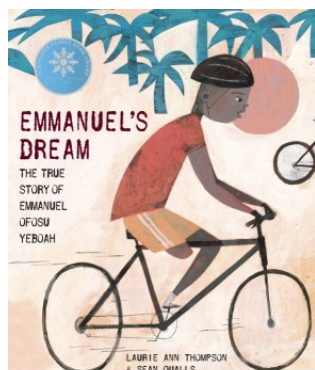
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Douglas, You Need Glasses!

by Ged Adamson, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

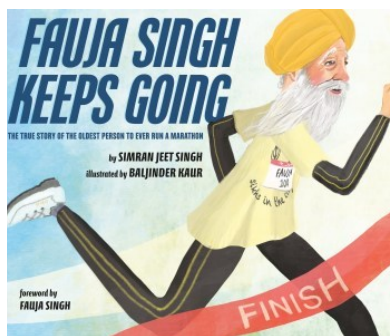
"After an eye exam confirms that Douglas needs glasses, and Nancy helps him find the perfect pair, readers will rejoice with Douglas as he sees all the amazing things he's been missing." - Pub.



Emmanuel's Dream: The Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah

by Laurie Ann Thompson, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.2)

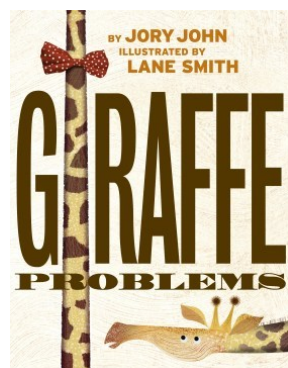
"Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people...As a boy, Emmanuel hopped to school more than two miles each way, learned to play soccer...and, eventually, became a cyclist. He rode an astonishing four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001, spreading his powerful message: disability is not inability." - Pub.



Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon

by Simran Singh, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.3)

"The inspiring true story of Fauja Singh, who broke world records to become the first one hundred-year-old to run a marathon, shares valuable lessons on the source of his grit, determination to overcome obstacles, and commitment to positive representation of the Sikh community." - Follett



Giraffe Problems

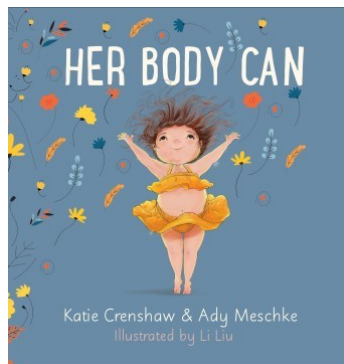
by Jory John, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.3)

"Edward the giraffe can't understand why his neck is as long and bendy and, well, ridiculous as it is...He's tried disguising it, dressing it up, strategically hiding it behind bushes—honestly, anything you can think of, he's tried. Just when Edward has exhausted his neck-hiding options and is about to throw in the towel, a turtle swoops in... and helps him understand that his neck has a purpose, and looks excellent in a bow tie." - Pub.

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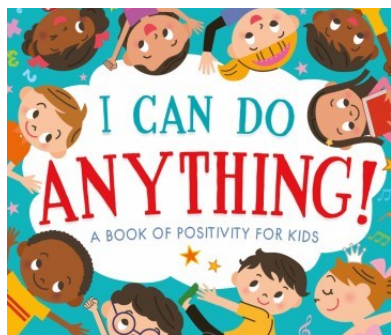
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Her Body Can

by Katie Crenshaw, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 2.9)

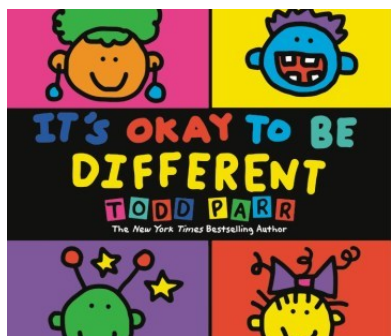
"Her Body Can is a poetic declaration of self-love and body positivity for all young girls. Its aim is to encourage our girls to grow in a world that teaches them to love themselves and their bodies for exactly who and what they are, instead of allowing them to grow up learning to judge themselves and hate their bodies for what they are not." - Pub.



I Can Do Anything!

by Florence Quinn, c2021 (IL: K-3)

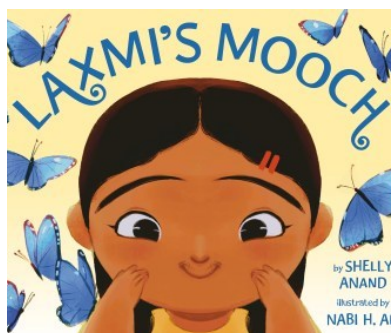
"This bright, bold and colorful picture book introduces readers to a variety of adorable and strong children, who demonstrate their aptitude to deal with whatever life throws their way." - Pub.



It's Okay to Be Different

by Todd Parr, c2001 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.3)

"Illustrations and brief text describe all kinds of differences that are 'okay,' such as being a different color, needing some help, being adopted, and having a different nose." - Follett



Laxmi's Mooch

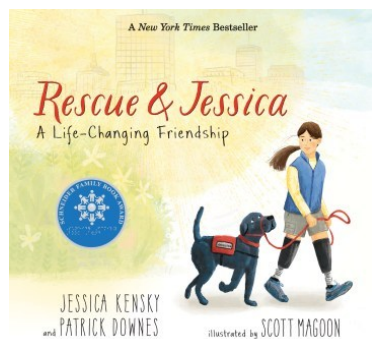
by Shelly Anand, c2021 (IL: K-3)

"After Laxmi's friend Zoe points out the hairs on her lip, Laxmi is very self-conscious until her East Indian parents help her to accept and celebrate her appearance." - Follett

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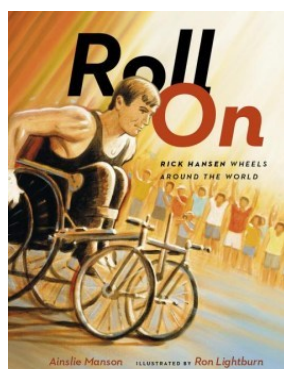
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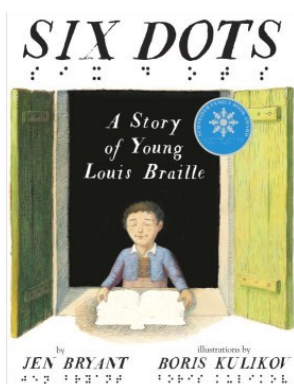
Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship by Jessica Kensky, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.3)

"Based on a real-life partnership, this heartening story of the love and teamwork between a girl and her service dog is sure to illuminate and inspire. An endnote from the authors tells more about the training and extraordinary abilities of service dogs."
- Follett



Roll On: Rick Hansen Wheels Around the World by Ainslie Manson, c2013 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.0)

"As Rick Hansen wheels around the globe on his incredible Man in Motion World Tour, the children he meets are encouraged to dream their own dreams and work to make them come true...lively text and enchanting illustrations combine to bring to life Rick's amazing feat and the impact it has had on children everywhere." - Pub.



Six Dots: The Story of Young Louis Braille by Jennifer Bryant, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

"Louis Braille was just five years old when he lost his sight. He was a clever boy, determined to live like everyone else, and what he wanted more than anything was to be able to read...And so he invented his own alphabet—a whole new system for writing that could be read by touch. A system so ingenious that it is still used by the blind community today." - Pub.



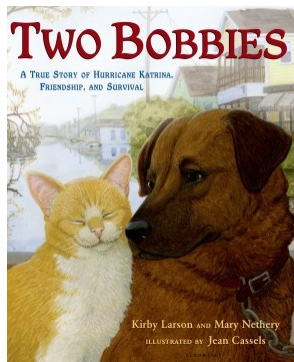
Specs for Rex by Yasmeen Ismail, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"Rex has new glasses and he does not like them one bit! He definitely does not want to wear them to school. He tries his best to hide them—under his hair, in his sandwich, anywhere he can—but it's tricky when they're so big and round and red. With help from his friends and family, can Rex learn to love his specs after all?" - Pub.

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Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival

by Kirby Larson, c2008 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.2)

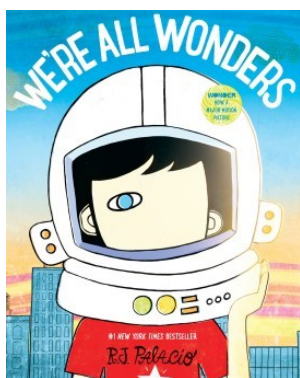
"Tells the true story of Bobbie the dog and Bob Cat, two pets who bonded together and were able to survive the devastation of Hurricane Katrina." - *Follett*



Terry Fox and Me

by Mary Beth Leatherdale, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

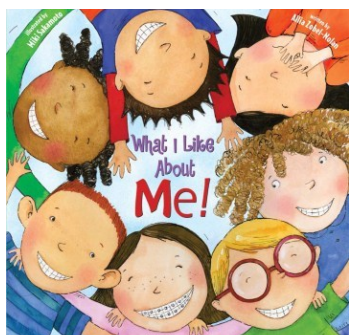
"Written from Doug's perspective, this story shows that Terry Fox's legacy goes beyond the physical and individual accomplishments of a disabled athlete and honors the true value of friendship." - *Pub.*



We're All Wonders

by R.J. Palacio, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.4)

"Augie enjoys the company of his dog, Daisy, and using his imagination, but painfully endures the taunts of his peers because of his facial deformity." - *OCLC*



What I Like About Me!

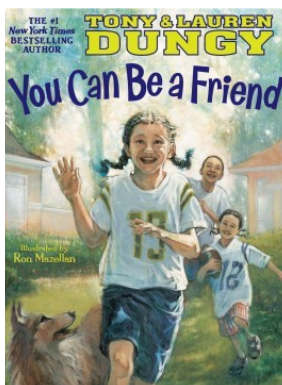
by Allia Zobel-Nolan, c2005 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.9)

"The kids in *What I Like About Me*, are as different as night and day. And, guess what? They love it. Some adore the fact that their braces dazzle and gleam, others feel distinguished when they wear their glasses. Still others wouldn't trade their big feet for a lifetime of free video games. This fun-loving book, with a mirror included on the last page, proves to kids that, in a world where fitting in is the norm, being different is what makes us special." - *Pub.*

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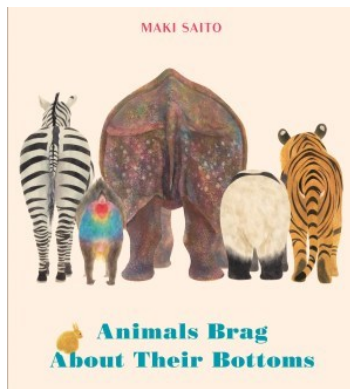
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You Can Be a Friend

by Tony Dungy, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

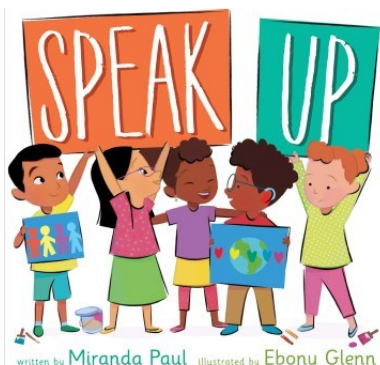
"Jade, having learned her new friend Hannah, who is in a wheelchair, will not be able to attend her birthday party because it is at a water park, must decide if having her celebration at the park is worth not being able to have Hannah there." - Follett



Animals Brag About Their Bottoms

by Maki Saito, c2020 (IL: K-3; RL: 1.5)

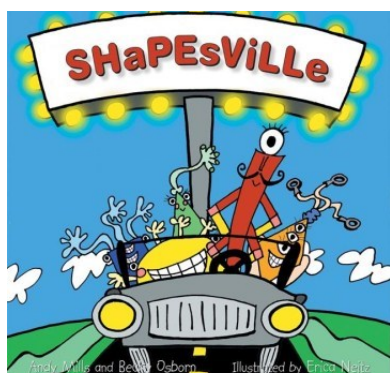
"All bottoms are wonderful! Don't you agree? Each animal in this adorable book has a different reason for loving their behind -- from cute and round to fashionable and striped. Maki Saito makes readers laugh out loud with playful illustrations of the backsides of hippos, zebras, pandas, mandrills, and more. Her traditional Japanese art techniques add a sophisticated, beautiful feel. Charming and whimsical, this book encourages self-love and body positivity, as well as a whole lot of laughter and fun." - Pub.



Speak Up

by Miranda Paul, c2020 (IL: K-3)

"Illustrations and easy-to-read, rhyming text encourage the reader to speak up about everything from their own name being mispronounced to someone bring a weapon to school. Includes author's note about real people who have found their voices, when to speak up, and how to express oneself without speaking." - Follett



Shapesville

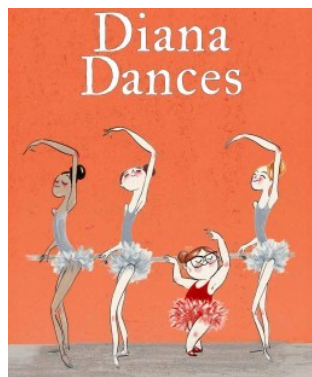
by Andy Mills, c2003 (IL: K-3; RL: 5.3)

"Shapesville is a picture book about five friends who live in a small town. They are all different shapes, sizes, and colors, and each has an unique talent. They encourage children to celebrate their own differences and learn that, "It's not the size of your shape, or the shape of your size, but the size of your heart, and that deserves first prize. So be proud of your body, any size or shape will do. Be proude of your body because YOU are a STAR too!" - Pub.

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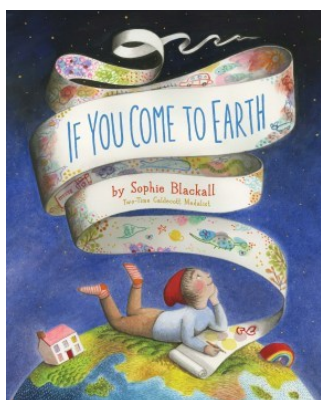
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Diana Dances

by Luciano Lozano, c2019 (IL: K-3)

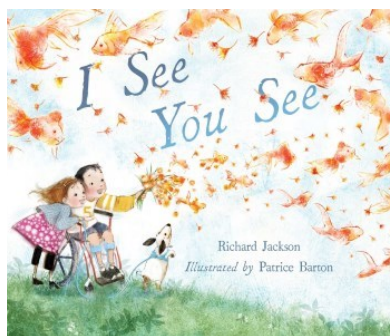
"Diana is struggling in school and no one knows why. One day she can't help but dance to music she hears, and the truth becomes clear--there's nothing wrong with Diana. She just learns through movement. Diana is a dancer!" - *Pub.*



If You Come to Earth

by Sophie Blackall, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

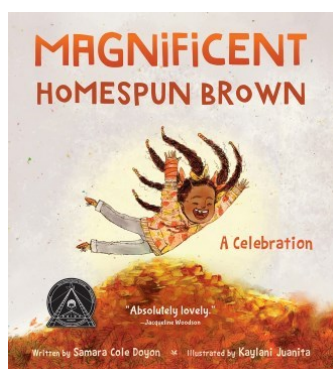
"A boy writes a letter to an imagined alien, explaining all the things he will need to know about Earth and the people who live here--and adding a postscript asking what the alien might look like." - *Follett*



I See You

by Richard Jackson, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

"Pup is pulling, Maisie is pushing, and Jonah is looking and listening as the three of them set off on their daily dog walk. But what begins as a chore becomes an unexpected celebration of imagination as their neighborhood transforms. Maisie sees butterfly; Jonah sees a popsicle garden! Maisie sees the postman; Jonah sees a sky slide! And...is that...a tree of cats?!" - *Pub.*



Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration

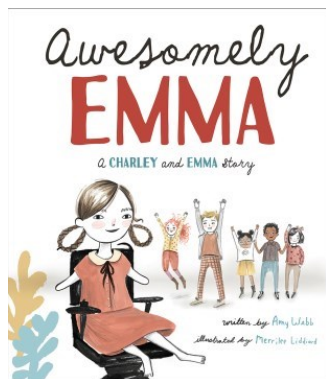
by Samara Doyon, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 6.0)

"Joyful young narrators celebrate feeling at home in one's own skin" - *Follett*

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Awesomely Emma

by Amy Webb, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"When she encounters problems that diminish her enjoyment of a class field trip to a local art museum, Emma calls on her inner sense of awesome to stand up for herself and teach her friend Charley how to feel comfortable in his own skin." - Follett



We Move Together

by Kelly Fritsch, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

"Follows a mixed-ability group of kids as they creatively negotiate everyday barriers and find joy and connection in disability culture and community." - Follett



Sulwe

by Lupita Nyong, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"When five-year-old Sulwe's classmates make fun of her dark skin, she tries lightening herself to no avail, but her encounter with a shooting star helps her understand there is beauty in every shade." - Follett

Poojo's Got Wheels



Poojo's Got Wheels

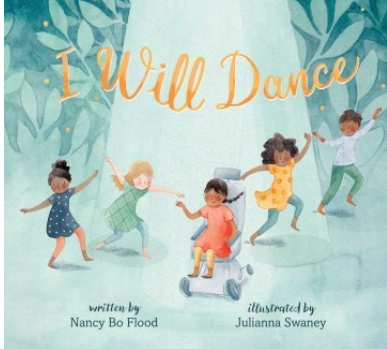
by Charrow, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.3)

"Poojo is a dog who was born without back legs, but that's okay because Poojo's got wheels. He is clever, creative, and a great friend to everyone and everything. Even when he's faced with a flat tire, there's no stopping this joyful pup." - Follett

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I Will Dance

by Nancy Bo Flood, c2020 (IL: K-3)

"Eva's cerebral palsy makes it difficult for her to do many things, but she longs to dance and, finally, her dream is realized. Includes author's note and information about Young Dance Company." - *Follett*

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Non-fiction

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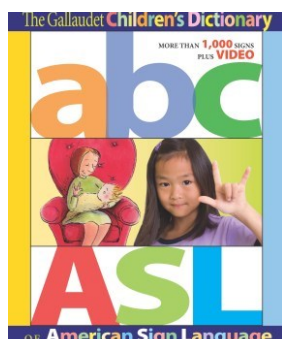


Series: All Kinds of Friends

by Bull Frog Books, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 0.8-1.0)

Titles:

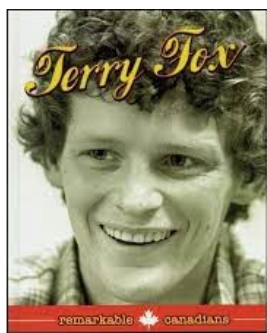
*My Friend Has Autism / My Friend is Blind
My Friend Has Down Syndrome / My Friend is Deaf
My Friend Uses a Wheelchair
My Friend Uses Leg Braces*



The Gallaudet Children's Dictionary of American Sign Language

by the Editors of Gallaudet University Press, c2014
(IL: K-3)

"Contains over one thousand words and their definitions accompanied by drawings of how they are spelled in American Sign Language." - Follett

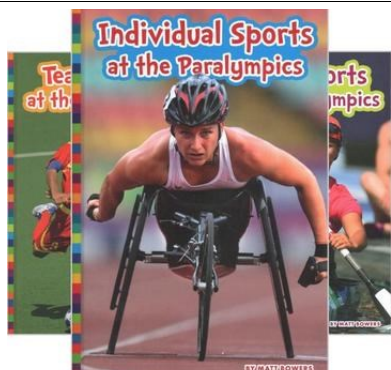


Ferry Fox

by Bryan Pezzi (IL: K-3)

Series: My Life

"Terry Fox has become a symbol of determination and goodwill. After being diagnosed with cancer, Terry ran across Canada to fund cancer research. In his honour, people take part in the Terry Fox Run." - Pub.



Series: Paralympic Sports

by Matt Bower, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.5-3.6)

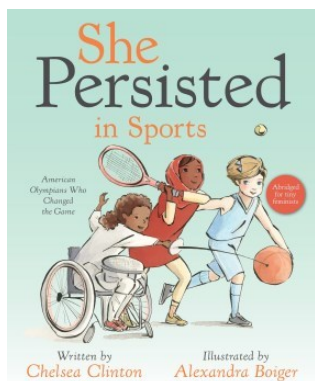
Titles

*Individual Sports at the Paralympics
Team Sports at the Paralympics
Wheelchair Sports at the Paralympics
Water Sports at the Paralympics*

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She Persisted in Sports: American Olympians Who Changed the Game

by Chelsea Clinton, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.5)

"Throughout history, women have been told that they couldn't achieve their dreams, no matter how hard they tried. Women athletes have faced their own unique set of challenges, across countless sports and levels of play. In this third *She Persisted* book, Chelsea Clinton introduces readers to women who have excelled in their sports because of their persistence." - Pub.

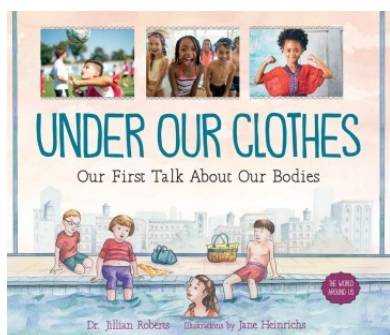


Terry Fox

by Jennifer Sutoski, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

Series: *Pebble Plus: Canadian Biographies*

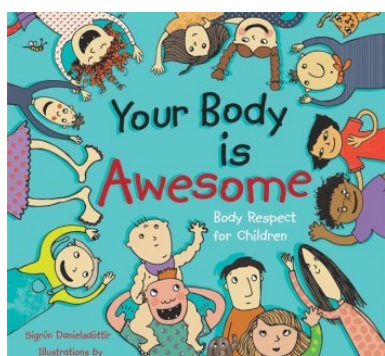
"In this book, simple text and full-color photographs describe the amazing life of Terry Fox. In 1980 Terry ran across Canada to raise money for cancer research - despite having lost a leg to the disease several years earlier." - Pub.



Under Our Clothes: Our First Talk About Our Bodies

by Jillian Roberts, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.8)

"In this illustrated nonfiction picture book, child psychologist Dr. Jillian Roberts introduces young readers to the ideas of body safety and body image." - Pub.



Your Body Is Awesome: Body Respect for Children

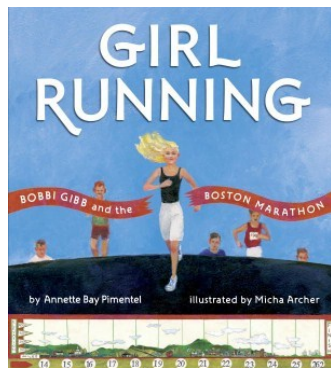
by Sigrun Danielsdottir, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

"Shows how our bodies come in different sizes, shapes, and colors and suggests all the things bodies can do and how to take good care of them." - Follett

Mental Health and Well-Being: Physical Diversity and Body Positivity

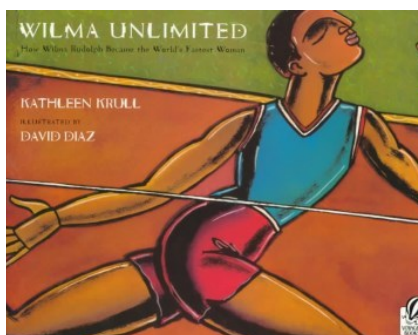
Non-fiction

Compiled by Joan Pearce



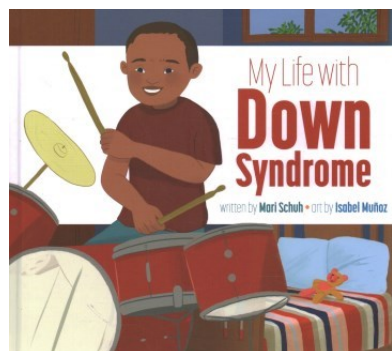
Girl Running: Bobbi Gibb and the Boston Marathon

by Annette Bay Pimentel, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)
"Because Bobbi Gibb is a girl, she's not allowed to run on her school's track team. But after school, no one can stop her--and she runs to her heart's content. She is told she can't run again when she tries to enter the Boston Marathon in 1966, because women are just not considered capable of running such a long distance. So what does Bobbi do? She bravely sets out to prove the naysayers wrong and show the world just what a girl can do." - *Follett*



Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman

by Kathleen Krull, c1996, 2000 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)
"Before Wilma Rudolph was five years old, polio had paralyzed her left leg. Everyone said she would never walk again. But Wilma refused to believe it. Not only would she walk again, she vowed, she'd run. And she did run--all the way to the Olympics, where she became the first American woman to earn three gold medals in a single olympiad." - *Pub.*



Series: My Life With

by Mari Schuh, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.8)
"Through the personal stories of kids with disabilities and disorders, young readers will gain a greater appreciation of the challenges these children face and learn that they are not defined by their conditions." - *Pub.* Titles:
My Life With Down Syndrome
My Life With Deafness,
My Life With blindness



Terry Fox (My Life)

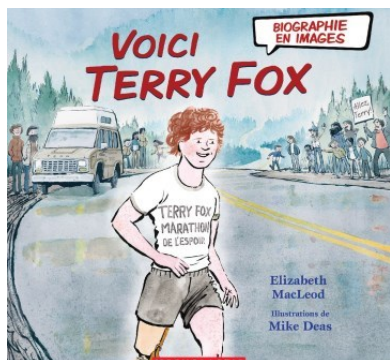
by Bryan Pezzi, c2011

"My Life series features some of Canada's best-known athletes, artists, humanitarians, and scientists. Focusing on the life and times of each notable Canadian, this biography series provides an in-depth look at the inspirations, achievements, and successes that define these great Canadians." - *back of book*

Mental Health and Well-Being: Physical Diversity and Body Positivity

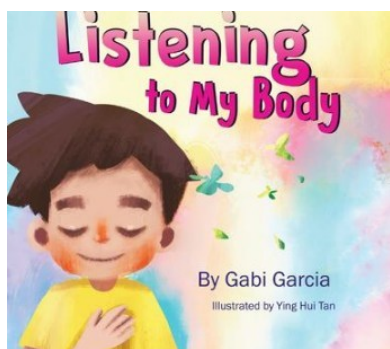
Non-fiction

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Meet Terry Fox (Series: Scholastic Canada Biography)

by Elizabeth MacLeod, c2020 (IL: 3-6)



Listening to My Body

by Gabi Garcia, c2017 (IL: 3-6)

"A guide to helping kids understand the connection between sensations (what the heck are those?) and feelings so that they can get better at figuring out what they need." "... guides children through the practice of naming their feelings and the physical sensations that accompany them. From wiggly and squirmy to rested and still, 'Listening to My Body' helps children develop a sensations vocabulary so that they can express what they are experiencing." - Follett



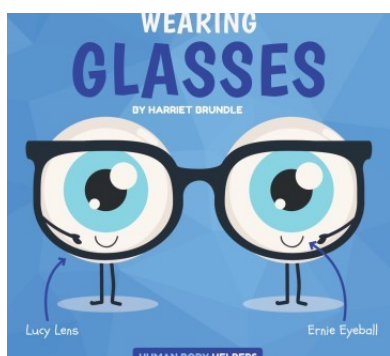
Series: Understanding Differences

by Lola M. Schaefer, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"Some people need to wear leg braces. What does that mean? Using simple, engaging text and full-color photos, readers learn how leg braces can help and what daily life is like for someone who wears them. This book includes a video, which launches via a 4D app." - Pub.

Titles:

Some Kids Are Blind / Some Kids Are Deaf
Some Kids Use Wheelchairs / Some Kids Wear Leg Braces



Series: Human Body Helpers

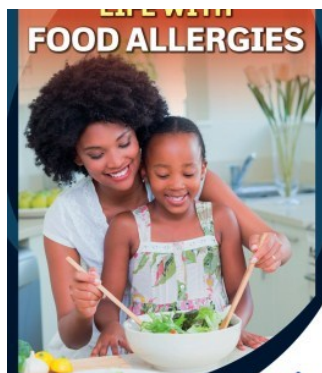
by Harriet Brundle, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.6)

"How do we straighten our teeth if they are crooked? Why do some people need a wheelchair? How do glasses help people see? Readers will discover the answers to these questions and others through volumes that introduce them to different devices people sometimes use to help them see, hear, move around, and do other important tasks." - Pub. Titles: *Wearing Glasses, Wearing an Artificial Limb, Using Hearing Aids, Using Insulin, Using a Wheelchair, Wearing Braces*

Mental Health and Well-Being: Physical Diversity and Body Positivity

Non-fiction

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Series: Everyday Heroes

by The Child's World, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.7)

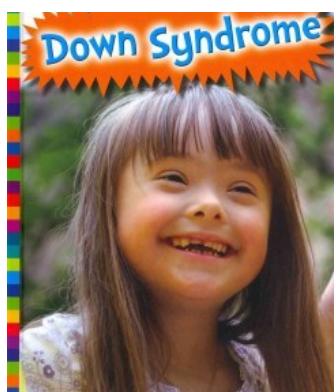
"Millions of people around the world live with disorders and health conditions that affect their day-to-day lives. This series tells the stories of people living with chronic conditions. Readers will learn about the gifts and abilities these people have that allow them to overcome the challenges they face." - Pub. *Titles:* Life With Blindness, Life With Cerebral Palsy, Life With Food Allergies, Life With type 1 Diabetes, Life With Spina Bifida etc.



Series: Celebrating Our Communities

by Abby Colich, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.5)

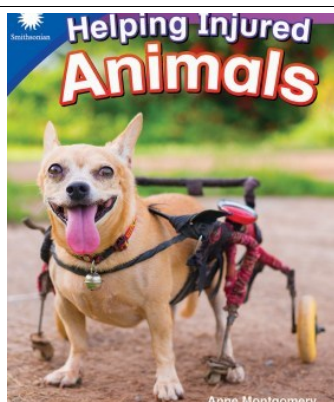
"Each title in *Celebrating Our Communities* focuses on how kids can practice inclusion, empathy, and acceptance in their daily lives. Key concepts of social and emotional learning (SEL) teach children to manage emotions, establish positive habits in communication, create and achieve goals, and make good decisions." - Pub. *Titles:* *Celebrating All Abilities, Celebrating All Appearances, Celebrating All Cultures*



Series: Living With

by Michelle Levine, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.4)

"What's it like to live with health conditions that don't go away? How does it affect daily life? This series explains health matters to children in an easily accessible way. They will learn about symptoms, treatments, and how to live with these conditions or help a family member or friend who has them." - Pub. *Titles:* *Down Syndrome, Allergies, Asthma, Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes*



Helping Injured Animals

by Anne Montgomery, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2-7)

"Learn how prosthetic devices and 3D printing are being used to help injured dogs, cats, elephants, and dolphins with this fun and informative book. Created in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, this STEAM book will ignite a curiosity about STEAM topics through real-world examples." - Pub.

Mental Health and Well-Being: Physical Diversity and Body Positivity

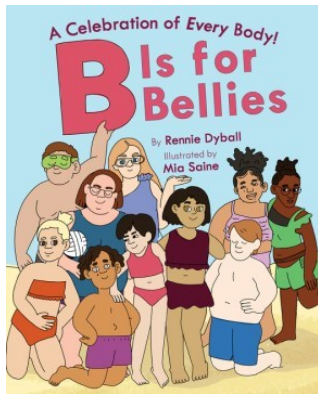
Non-fiction

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Families With Special Needs (All Kinds of Families) by Jill Keppeler, c2021 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.3)

"Families are just as unique as the individuals in them. No two families are exactly the same. However, some family experiences can be a challenge for children to understand and navigate. What's it like in a family with two moms? How can children deal with their parents' divorce? This set explores different kinds of families to help children make sense of these complex aspects of their lives." - Pub.



B Is for Bellies: A Celebration of Every Body! by Rennie Dyball, c2023 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.7)

"Letter by letter, B Is for Bellies is a joyous picture book celebration of every body from A to Z! This ode to self-love and kindness encourages us to remember that every body is worthy of respect, whether it be letting go on the dancefloor or engaging in peaceful rest." - Pub.