

Annotated K-12 Reading List
Developed by Eileen Guinane

Alternative Family Structures and Relationships

Aoki, Elaine. (2002). *The white swan express*. Clarion Books.

On one side of the world four Chinese babies sit in their orphanage cribs waiting to be adopted. On the other side of the world four very different families are waiting to adopt these babies. One day these families, including a lesbian couple and a single woman, wake up happy, because they know that this is the day they all get to meet their new daughters. This story is an appropriate story for children 4 and up and shows that no matter who the family is made up of, they all share the one important thing; love.

Alphin, Elaine. (2002). *Simon says*. Harcourt Brace.

Charles is a prestigious high school student who is a great artist. “Simon Says “ is the name given to the rules by which Charles leads his life. “Simon says...be like the other kids.” This book deals with the pressures that adolescents deal with growing up as well as Charles’ challenge of identifying who he is, including his homosexual feelings. This book is appropriate for young adults ages 12 and up.

Bauer, Marion. (1994). *Am I blue? Coming out from the silence*. HarperCollins.

This book is about the pains and pleasures of growing up: dealing with parents, falling in love, choosing a new life. But there’s one significance difference between this book and other books – these teenagers are dealing with gay parents, or falling in love with someone of the same sex, or choosing a life their friends and relatives violently disapprove of. This is a powerful collection of stories that is suited for grades 7 and up.

Coville, Bruce. (1997). *The skull of truth*. Harcourt Brace.

This story is about a boy named Charlie who finds a magical skull that forces people to tell

the truth. While at a family dinner the skull reveals the truth that his uncle's roommate is actually his boyfriend. At first Charlie is uncomfortable, but soon realizes that nothing has actually changed. This book sheds some light on a hard to discuss topic and is geared towards readers ages 8-12 years-old.

Crutcher, Chris. (1991). *Athletic shorts*. William Morrow.

This is a collection of short stories all having male athletes as their main characters. All of these boys are trying to find courage when they are dealing with a difficult challenge.

Although there is a mix of stories most deal with a difficult challenge in their life. In one story the main character deals with growing up with gay parents. This book is appropriate for students ages 12 and up.

De Haan, Linda and Stern Nijland. (2002). *King and King*. Tricycle.

One day, a queen decides that she has had enough of ruling, and that her son, the prince, needs to find a suitable princess. Princess after princess come to meet the Prince but none of them catch his eye until the last meeting. When the final princess walks in with her brother, it is love at first sight. From then on the Prince and Princess live happily ever after. This book is appropriate for ages 3 and up and puts a comfortable and comical spin on an often difficult subject to explain.

Garden, Nancy. (2005). *Molly's family*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Molly is in kindergarten and is asked to draw a picture of her family. So accordingly, she draws Mommy, Mama Lu, and her dog Sam. When the other children see her picture they tell her that she cannot have two mommies. Both her moms try and explain to her that every family is different. At first, Molly is embarrassed to bring her picture to Open Night at school, but eventually she realizes that her moms are right, that every family is different, and

that she is proud to have two mothers. Appropriate for pre-school to Grade 1.

Gardner, Nancy. (1999). *The year they burned the books*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

This is a well-meaning story about a group of high school reports fighting censorship. This fight is particularly personal for Jaime, who is in the process of figuring out whether she's still maybe a lesbian or probably a lesbian. This book is geared towards students ages 13 and up.

Gonzalez, Rigoberto. (2005). *Antonio's card/La tarjeta de Antonio*. Children's Book Press.

Antonio enjoyed making words out of the letters in his cereal. But when the other kids start to make fun of his mom's partner Leslie, saying things like, "she looks like a guy," he realizes words aren't just a bunch of letters but that they can really hurt. When he makes a card for his mom, and draws the three of them on it, and realizes that it has been chosen for the school exhibit, he is very ashamed of his family. Then Leslie draws a beautiful picture of the three of them for his mother and his mom is very happy./ Antonio realizes the importance of family, and is becomes very proud of his card and his family. This book is appropriate for children ages 5-12 years-old.

Griman, Tony. (1994). *Not the only one: lesbian and gay fiction for teens*. Alyson.

This is a collection of short stories that focuses on the common experiences of teenagers in the process of discovering what being gay or lesbian means. This books hits upon many of the issues and challenges that teens face. This book aims to reach a wide audience and is a valuable resource for gay or straight teenagers seeking to expand their understanding of themselves and others through fiction.

Hartinger, Brent. (2002). *Geography club*. Harper Tempest.

Goodkind High School is a pretty typical high school with its' cliques and clubs and

everyone knowin gtheir place. Five gay students decide to band together and form their own club: the Geography Club. This club allows these individuals to talk about their problems with others that know what they are feeling. For all of them it allows them an escape from their loneliness. This coming of age story shows the importance of staying true to yourself and is appropriate for ages 13 and up.

Kerr, M.E. (1994). *Deliver us from Evie*. HarperCollins.

This story is about Evie, an unashamedly butch lesbian, whose “role” on the farm and her assumed future is turned around by her being a lesbian. In this small farming town, Evie falls in love with another girl but problems start when her younger brother starts dating a girl whose family is strongly opposed to gay lifestyles. Even after Parr’s girlfriend outs Evie to their entire town, Evie stays true to herself and to her feelings. This book is appropriate for grades 9-12.

Lorochelle, David. (2005). *Absolutely, positively not*. Arthur Levine.

Sixteen-year-old Steven has a secret: he loves to square dance. When a new teacher arrives at school Steven begins to realize that there may be more to his secret, when he starts to have feelings for him. This book focuses on Stevens journey of self-denial, until Steven finally breaks down to his best friend Rachel. Rachel nor her family is surprised with Steven’s news. Steven desperately searches for someone he can really talk to about being gay, and in the meantime struggles with his revelation. This story is appropriate for ages 14 and up.

Parr, Todd. (2003). *The family book*. Little, Brown.

This book has a more serious undertone, and tries to express that families all go through harder times, especially when they lose someone that they love. The author does keep it kid-savvy with it’s brightly colored pictures and many references to animals. This book

uses all types of formations of families, including mixed-race, step families, two mom/two dad families, etc... This is a great book for pre-school thru second grade.

Richardson, Justin. (2005). *And Tango makes three*. Simon and Schuster.

This is a charming picture book about two male penguins who fall in love and start a family. They do everything that all of the other penguins do but they never leave each other's side because they love each other. When they try and raise an egg to have a baby penguin, they know exactly what to do and love their egg very much. Once the chick is hatched, they name it Tango and he is the very first penguin to have two daddies in the zoo. This book is appropriate for children ages 4 and up.

Salat, Christina. (1993). *Living in secret*. Dell Yearling.

Amelia's world is torn apart when her parents get divorced and her dad gets sole custody of her because her mom is a lesbian. It is decided by a judge that it is in her best interest to live with her dad so that he does not grow up around that kind of lifestyle. When she runs away and lives in secret with her mom and her girlfriend, she realizes that, she is where she belongs despite what her dad and the judge say. Living in secrecy is difficult and she is finally discovered. She ultimately decides to tell the judge her feelings so that someday she might not have to live in this secret world. This book is appropriate for ages 9-12.

Valentine, Johnny. (1994). *One dad, two dads, brown dads, blue dads*. Alyson Wonderland.

This book has an easy rhyme scheme and is a fun read for pre-school thru second grade students. This book shows that all dads, no matter what color they are, how many there are, etc... love their kids the same. Their affection means the same as if their was a mom and a dad. It emphasizes that they do all the same things as other "normal" dads in a very playful and fun manner.

Vigna, Judith. (1995). *My two uncles*. Albert Whitman.

Elly gets upset when her grandfather refuses to invite Uncle Ned's "friend" Phil to his anniversary party. Her father explains that some people don't think it's right to be gay. Elly lets him know that she doesn't think it's wrong. This story attempts to make a sometime difficult conversation an easier conversation tool. This story is appropriate for children 5-10 years-old.

Wickens, Elaine. (1994). *Anna Day and the O-ring*. Alyson Wonderland.

Evan lives his family which consists of his two moms and his dog. This story tells about Evan and his birthday party and the funny things that happened at the party. It simply presents an alternative family, but doesn't make a big deal about talking about it. Evan himself, makes no changes to his story or his family description when telling his friends about his birthday party and families. This is a matter-of-fact story that is geared toward children ages 2-4 years of age.

Bullying

Agassi, Martine. (2000). *Hands are not for hitting*. Free Spirit.

This non-fiction book offers pre-school students alternatives to hitting and violence. It is an easy to understand and straightforward book about how to handle feelings without hitting. This book gives the young child many ways to handle themselves and is a helpful tool for discussions.

Almond, David. (2000). *Kit's wilderness*. Delacorte.

This is a very deep and eerie story for young adults. It tells the story of Kit who moves to a new England mining town with mysterious history all around him. Kit and his new friends

are drawn into a game with John Askew, the town drunk, called Death. Not following his gut Kit participates at first but then decides that he really should not. Kit must find the courage to stand up against John and keep himself safe, despite what John might say or do. This book would be appropriate for readers 12+, but does have some disturbing subject matter.

Atwood, Margaret. (1988). *Cat's eye*. McClelland and Stewart.

When Elaine returns to Toronto as a middle-aged woman, memories resurface of the years of taunting and bullying she faced during adolescence. She faces these horrible times and explores the effects they have carried over her throughout the entirety of her life. This book shows the extensive effect bullies have on their victims and shows readers this complex relationship. This book gives readers in grades 9-12 an idea of the everlasting effects seemingly harmless bullying can have in the long run.

Berenstain, Stan and Jan Berenstain. (1993). *The Berenstain bears and the bully*. Random House.

In this story, the character Tuffy beats up Sister Bear for no good reason. At first, Sister Bear responds with the wrong reaction. She then stands up for herself as well as for another character that is bullied by Tuffy. This picture book gives young readers positive strategies for dealing with bullies.

Berenstain, Stan and Jan Berenstain. (1995). *The Berenstain bears and too much teasing*. Random House.

This picture book portrays the story of Brother Bear who enjoys teasing Sister Bear. Once Brother Bear begins getting teased at school, he understands how his teasing makes Sister feel. This is a good story for primary grades to understand the hurtful effects of teasing.

Blume, Judy. (1974). *Blubber*. Simon and Schuster.

This story is about Linda, the fattest girl in class, who is given the nickname Blubber. The class ringleader, Wendy, leads the class in daily vicious tormenting of Linda. Finally, Jill realizes the pain she has caused when a racist comment is used against her friend by Wendy. This story is an example of how great an effect bullying can have over an entire group and the feelings that the victim are left to deal with by themselves. This book would be appropriate for children ages 9-12.

Bode, Ann and Rien Broere. (1999). *Pay up or else!* Evans Brothers.

This story is about a boy named Robert who figures out that his best friend Phillip is being forced to steal for the “gang.” Robert must try and help his friend to see that what he is doing is very dangerous and he could get into a lot of trouble. This story is great for 3rd – 5th graders. It is a good story to introduce gang related topics in a sensitive manner.

Bottner, Barbara. (1997). *Bootsie Barker ballerina.* HarperCollins.

This story is about Bootsie and how he terrorizes everyone in his new ballet class. He constantly teases his classmates and bullies them throughout the entire class. Finally, Bernie and Lisa devise a plan to leave Bootsie out in the cold and unable to bully the class. This book shows that the bully does not always win and is appropriate for 2nd and 3rd grade children.

Bottner, Barbara. (1992). *Bootsie Barker bites.* Putnam.

This story is best suitable for primary readers. It is the story of Bootsie, who is very rough whenever she plays. He is constantly biting and fighting with her playmates during any game that they play together. Bootsie is a constant terror that many younger children will be able to relate to.

Brown, Marc. (1983). *Arthur’s April fool.* Little Brown.

This story is about Arthur and his ongoing fears of the class bully, Binky Barnes. Arthur is scared that Binky will bully him while he is performing his magic tricks for the April Fool's assembly. Binky continually threatens Arthur while he is practicing, but Arthur gets help from his friends and gets by in the show without being bullied. He uses his tricks to outsmart Binky. This story is good for primary grades. It shows children how they can turn a bad situation into a good one, and that everyone needs friends.

Browne, Anthony. (1984). *Willy the wimp*. Knopf.

Willy is constantly picked on, called names, and relentlessly bullied. Finally, Willy decides to fight back, and when the time comes to be courageous, he doesn't shy away. Willy saves the day, and proves to everyone that he is not a wimp. This story would be appropriate for primary grades and useful for children to see that they can stand up for themselves.

Browne, Anthony. (1985). *Willy the champ*. Knopf.

This story describes the challenges that Willy faces with athleticism. He does not do well in the sports that others his age are interested in but he doesn't let this stop him. Even though he may not be good at soccer, he doesn't let the local bully push him around. This story is good for primary readers and is a story that many of them will be able to relate to. It also shows that just because you are not the best at something, doesn't give others the right to bully you.

Bunting, Eve. (1999). *Blackwater*. Joanna Colter.

Brodie, a thirteen year-old boy, knows more than he is saying about two boys that drowned in the Blackwater River, but his cousin Alex, bullies him to make sure that he doesn't talk.

This story, set for grades 5-8th, show the power that bullies can have over their victims, and how victim's must find the courage to do the right thing and face what they need to face.

Carlson, Nancy. (1994). *Loudmouth George and the sixth-grade bully*. Carolrhoda Books.

This book describes the story of George and the problems he has with the school bully. George's friend Harriet helps George come up with some plans to stop the bully. Together they work together and George is able to stand up for himself. This book would be appropriate for 3rd and 4th graders, and would be a book that they would be easily able to relate to their own experiences.

Caseley, Judith. (2001). *Bully*. Greenwillow.

Jack and Mickey used to be very good friends. Then one day Jack starts bullying Mickey. He begins making fun of him, pushing him around, and tripping him in the lunchroom. Mickey stays strong and continues to try and be nice to Jack. Jack finally admits that his mom has just had a new baby and he feels like he is being ignored at home, and was taking it out on Mickey. They are able to repair their friendship thanks to Mickey's understanding. This book is appropriate for readers ages 4-8.

Cosby, Bill. (1997). *The meanest thing to say*. Scholastic Books.

This is the story of Little Bill and how he is pressured into playing a game called the "Dozens." This is a game that is used to try and insult people and the kid with the best insults wins the game. Little Bill figures out a way to win the game without being mean himself. This book is geared toward kindergarten – 3rd grade levels with characters and a storyline that is easy for children to relate to.

Coleman, Michael. (1998). *Weirdo's war*. Orchard.

Daniel is seen as the school "weirdo" whose most prized possession is a ring binder of calculations. His biggest tormenter is a thug called Tozer who is himself a target of a teacher. As they get to know each other better they realize that they need each other to survive the harsh realities of adolescence. This book is a good read for 6th – 9th graders, and

relates to students that sometimes if they look beyond their obvious differences, they could have many more similarities than first realized.

Cormier, Robert. (1974). *The chocolate war*. Holiday house.

This is a classic novel of intimidation. Jerry refuses to sell chocolate in the school fundraiser and this turns the school upside down. Some see Jerry as a hero for standing up for his beliefs, while others use Jerry's stance to mark him as a scapegoat for all of the other troubles in the school. This ultimately becomes a battle for standing up for what you believe in despite others torments and opinions. This book is appropriate for grades 6-9.

Cox, Judy. (1999). *Mean mean Maureen Green*. Holiday House.

This story tells the tale of Lilly, who nice is excited for the start of school, becomes terrified that the school bully will be on her bus. With the help of her friend Lilly learns how to stand toward second to fourth grade students. It teaches children methods to gain courage and to believe in themselves.

Cross, Gillian. (1999). *Tightrope*. Holiday House.

Ashley leads a double life as a daring graffiti artist but her identity soon seems to be found out. In order to seek protection she turns to a local gang leader. Here her misguided trust leaves her vulnerable and the gang uses her. Ashley must realize her misplaced loyalties and discover her own strengths to get back on the right path. This story is useful for students in grades 7-10, to help them realize that sometimes their perceptions of people are not always what they think, and that they should never go against their own beliefs.

Dadey, Debbie. (1999). *King of the Kooties*. Walker.

Louisa, the class bully, nicknames the new student "King of the Kooties." Nate, a fellow student, helps the new kid by waging a war of wits rather than a war of fists over Louisa.

Nate and the new kid help to turn things around and stop Louisa in her bullying ways. This book is appropriate for children ages 4-8 years-old.

Estes, Eleanor. (1944). *The hundred dresses*. Harcourt Publishing.

This classic story tells the story of Wanda who wears the same blue dress to school everyday, but lies and tells classmates that she has a hundred dresses at home. Other students are relentless in the teasing, in what they see as harmless. Wanda finally reaches her limit and her and her family move to the big city to get away from her tormentors. Now her classmates realize the harm that they caused and feel horrible, but it is too late. This story is a powerful story for 3rd – 6th grade levels, that shows the damage that mindless bullying can have.

Fine, Anne. (1992). *Angel of Nitshill Road*. Methuen.

Celeste arrives at the Nitshill Road School and immediately befriends three children that are bullied. She, in a sense, rescues these victims, and helps to give them the tools they need to stand up for themselves. She then convinces those witnessing bullying acts to document them in a book. This helps to pull all of the victims together where they find they have support and that they are not alone. This book is appropriate for middle school students, and teaches them to work together and look out for one another.

Fine, Anne. (1997). *Tulip touch*. Little and Brown Publishing.

Tulip's charisma leads Natalie into following her into her anti-social and troublesome behavior. Natalie realizes how negative her behavior is and tries to break free. The consequences of trying to get away from Tulip's grasp were very scary. This is a very strong book that is appropriate for 6th – 8th grade students. It explains the negativity that can be spread from not standing up for yourself and the damage that peer pressure can have.

Friesen, Gayle. (2000). *Men of stone*. Kids Can.

A fifteen year-old who loves to dance is constantly teased by his peers and nicknamed “ballerina boy.” After much torment he is eventually beat up. He later finds out that him and his elderly aunt have something in common. She was once tormented and bullied for being herself. This is a good story that pulls together generations and acknowledges the pain that bullying can cause a victim for decades. This book is appropriate for 5th – 8th grade students.

Gates, Susan. (1995). *Raider*. Oxford.

Maddy and Flor must face the relentless tormenting of a bully on a day-to-day basis. At the same time they are trying to uncover an age-old mystery of death. This is a good story that reveals that you can do whatever it is you want to do despite the actions of a bully, and shows the importance of having and building strong, honest friendships. This book would be appropriate for 6th – 8th grade students.

Golding, William. (1994). *Lord of the flies*. Simon and Schuster.

This classic survivor story tells the tale of a group of school boys that survive a plane crash. Jack decides to take over as leader and those that do not follow his command are brutally ostracized by him and his followers. This book is a great example of how things can so easily get out of control when it comes to bullying. All compassion for each other is lost in this fight for survival. This book is a good read for 9th-12th grade students.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. (2001). *The girl with 500 middle names*. Simon and Schuster.

Janie and her family do not have much money but they have a lot of love for each other. Janie’s mom starts her own knitting business so that Janie may go to a better school. Once she starts though, Janie is constantly teased and she risks embarrassment to stand up against the bullies and stand up for and show her pride for her family. This story is appropriate for

9-12 year-old students.

Hamilton, Virginia. (1993). *Plain City*. Blue Sky.

Dulhaire has a tough life. She is constantly tormented at school.. Whether it is her biracial skin they are laughing at or her less than perfect family, she is often without friends fending off the bullies. When she turns thirteen she finds the truth out about her dad, and learns that he is alive and that she has been lied to her entire life. Dulhaire must use her inner-strength and courage to rise above all of her painful experiences, and in the meantime embraces her identity and finds a true friend. This book is geared towards 6th-8th grade students.

Henkes, Kevin. (1991). *Chrysanthemum*. Greenwillow.

This story is about a girl named Chrysanthemum. She is ready to begin a new school and is very excited. This excitement ends when other kids at school make fun of and tease her about her name. This makes her very sad until a sensitive and caring teacher steps in and comforts Chrysanthemum and helps to put an end to the teasing. This story is great for primary levels and relates to children starting a new situation and understanding that everyone is different.

Hinton, S.E. (1997). *The outsiders*. Puffin.

This classic novel tells the story of two different groups of people whose upbringings and social classes make them enemies. What they have and so not have is why they hate each other, but when their groups are intertwined they begin to realize that they are not as different as they once thought. This story, appropriate for 6th-9th grades, is an effective eye-opener for both bullies and victims.

Howe, James. (1996). *Pinky and Rex and the bully*. Atheneum.

Pinky gets teased by the neighborhood bully because his best friend is a girl and his favorite

color is pink. He is constantly called a “sissy” and even thinks about denying his interests, friends, and hobbies, because he wants the teasing to end. After getting advice from a neighbor, he decides to stick up for himself and be proud of who he is. This story has an important message for 4-8 year-old readers.

Jarman, Julia. (1999). *Hangman*. Andersen Press.

Danny Lamb is different, and his best friend Toby finds it harder and harder to stand by his friend. Danny is constantly tormented at school and this bullying finally goes to far. When Danny is pinpointed for a game, this bullying changes from seemingly harmless taunting to near death. This book shows the importance of putting an end to bullying before it goes too far. This book is geared for high school level readers.

Johnson, Julie. (1996). *Bullies and gangs/ How do I feel about...(Series)*. Millbrook.

This comic strip style book is filled with colorful photography that is appealing to younger readers. This book introduces young children to bullies and the effects of being bullied. This book is appropriate for primary grade levels, and is a good book to open the doors for discussion.

Jones, Jac. (2000). *Alison and the bully monsters*. Pont.

This story is about a little girl who kept to herself. She was scared to go outside because she thought she would get bullied. Then one day Alison surprises everyone by standing up to the “Bully Monsters” on her street. This illustrated book is great for primary readers ages 4-8 looking for that extra bit of courage.

Koss, Amy Goldman. (2000). *The girls*. Dial.

Candace is the most popular girl in middle school. Maya is crushed when her four best friends start to follow Candace’s lead and exclude her. This exclusion leads to bullying and

Maya is miserable. This is a story that many middle school students can relate to. This book is appropriate for 5th-8th graders and offers a valuable lesson about friendship.

Kushner, Tony and Maurice Sendal. (2003). *Brundibar*. Hyperion Books for Children.

This story tells the tale of a brother and sister who desperately need to raise money to get their sick mother milk. The story takes place during the Holocaust, and the children turn to begging by singing to raise money, although their efforts are drowned out by a bully, Brundibar. With the help of over 300 other children their songs are heard and they raise enough money to help their mother. This story is appropriate for children ages 4-8, and touches on many historical issues, as well as the significance in the power of numbers and friends.

Laird, Elizabeth. (1996). *Secret friends*. Hodder and Stoughton.

Rafaella is the new girl at school, and because she is biracial and her ears stick out, she is made fun of by her classmates. Lucy is the first one to make fun of her, but secretly becomes friends with her outside of school. Their friendship is shattered through a tragic accident and Lucy is devastated. This is a touching book about friendship and loss and is a good read for students in grades 6-8. It teaches about the lasting effects of bullying on both parties.

Manson, Ainslie. (2000). *Ballerinas don't wear glasses*. Orca.

Ally doesn't look like the rest of the kids in her ballerina class. The other kids make fun of her because she has pigtails, she's missing teeth and because she has glasses. Ally is constantly bullied until her big brother Ben comes to her rescue and defends her. With her new found confidence Ally shines above the others in their showcase as the most unusual swan in the ballet. This book is appropriate for ages 4-8 and teaches children about rising above bullies and the importance of sticking up for family and friends.

Marton, Jirina. (1991). *Flowers for Mom*. Annick Press.

This story is about a little boy who is constantly dealing with the wrath of bullies. Jirko is constantly defending himself and continues to push through and work towards his goals. His mother recognizes his constant struggles and acknowledges his positive attitude and hard-work in dealing with the problem. To show his Mom that he was thankful for her acknowledgement he gathers flowers for her and gives her the one flower that remains by the time he gets home. This book is appropriate for readers ages 4-8.

McLean, Janet. (1993). *Hector and Maggie*. Allen and Unwin.

This story is about Hector, an extremely bossy rooster, and Maggie, the new sheepdog, and how they must learn to coexist. At first, Hector is mean and bullies Maggie, but after getting to know each other and learning more about each others differences, they get along. This book is appropriate for children ages 4-8, and gives them a good example of how it might take a little time to get along.

McMullan, Kate. (1995). *Hey, Pipsqueak*. HarperCollins.

This story takes to a fantasy world where Jack is trying to make it through the magical forest only to be stopped by a troll that is much bigger than him. Jack must use his gifts to outwit the troll and make it to his destination. This book is a nice introduction for pre-school to 2nd grade levels about bullies and how to deal with them.

McNamee, Graham. (2000). *Nothing wrong with a three-legged dog*. Delacorte.

Keith is the only white kid in his class, and his classmates do not let him forget this. Keith befriends a three-legged dog and with his help, they are able to outwit the class bully. This book is a gentle and humorous look at the serious topic of racist bullying that is a good read for grades 4 and 5. It shows that just because you may be different, doesn't mean that there

is something wrong with you.

Meddaugh, Susan. (1998). *Martha walks the dog*. Houghton Mifflin.

This story is about two dogs. Martha has always been praised for being a good dog. Soon she realizes that not all dogs are “good” when Bob moves into the neighborhood with his mean owner who is always yelling at him. Bob is always barking and picking fights, but when a he gets loose and chases Martha, she does as she has seen his owner do, and yells and makes negative threats at Bob. A neighbor parrot tries a different approach and praises the dog, which in turn makes Bob’s behavior and attitude changes for the positive. This book is appropriate for children ages 4-8 and is useful in teaching kids that negative reinforcement is not the most effective.

Moore, Miriam and Penny Allen. (1998). *Koi’s Python*. Hyperion.

Koi must prove that he is a man in his village. To do this in his Central African Tribe his ask is to kill a python. When preparing for this he also must deal with the village bully who is constantly picking on him. Koi proves to himself and the village that he is a brave and strong man. This book is appropriate for students in grades 3-6. It teaches valuable lessons of courage and standing up for yourself.

Morgan, Allen and Michael Martchenko. (1999). *Matthew and the midnight wrestlers*. Stoddart Kids.

This story is describes the late-night adventures of Matthew, a talented artist. By day Matthew is bullied by Big Mike but uses his great imagination by night to escape the taunts. He becomes the masked marvel and gains the necessary courage to stand up for himself. With his new found appreciation and self respect, he decides to enroll in Judo classes after his art classes. This book is appropriate for children 4-8 years old, and teaches children not

to be ashamed of their talents.

Morimoto, Junko. (1997). *The two bullies*. Random House.

This story is about two world-renown bullies who finally are going to have to meet face to face. Both China and Japan have arranged a showdown with their strongest and meanest men. Both men are fearful of their opposition, and this fear ultimately makes their meeting impossible. This story relates bullying as a universal problem, and shows a bullies point of view as someone just trying to put up a front by acting as a bully. This story would be appropriate for Kindergarten – 2nd grade readers.

Moss, Marissa. (1998). *Amelia takes command*. Pleasant.

Amelia has many great accomplishments and just recently returned from an adventure in Space Camp. When she return she finds that a dealing with the school bully is easier when she writes about it in her journal. This book is for students in grades 3-6 and reveals an alternative method for dealing with bullies and your feelings.

Munson, Derek. (2000). *Enemy pie: for my best enemy*. Chronicle Books.

Everthing is going good for Jeremy Rose until he moves to a new block and becomes enemy number one. In order to change things, his Dad comes up with an idea that involves a recipe for enemy pie. In order for the recipe to work, Jeremy must spend the day with his enemies. This unexpectantly turns his enemies into friends when they enjoy their time together. This is a delightful story very suitable for pre-school to 3rd grade students and teaches them that they need to get to know someone before they make judgments.

Myers, Christopher. (2000). *Wings*. Scholastic Canada.

Ikarus Jackson is a special boy with wings who can fly. Many of the other kids don't think that he is special, but that he is weird and constantly make fun of him. Finally, another child

who knows what it feels like to be alone, befriends Ikarus and lets him know how special he is even though he is different. This story is appropriate for reading level ages 4-8. It is a strong story that relates to the reader that it is alright to be different and to that they courage to be yourself.

Nickle, John. (1999). *The ant bully*. Scholastic Canada.

This is the story of a group of ants that shrink a bully down to their size. Once the bully is the same size as the ants he is able to get a better understanding of what their life is like, and what they must go through daily. Thanks to this experience, the bully is able to be sensitive to the ants and appreciate them. This story teaches primary readers that they need to get to know people that are different from them, and they could have a great friendship as a result.

Oberman, Sheldon. (2000). *The wisdom bird: a tale of Solomon and Sheba*. Boyd Mills.

King Solomon has always taught that it is better to break a promise than to hurt others.

When Sheba is suppose to build a palace from bird beaks, she doesn't know what to do. She doesn't want to seem weak and powerless because she won't hurt the birds, but she doesn't want to go against King Solomon. This is a good lesson for children ages 4-8 and shows the strong effects that peer pressure can have.

Polacco, Patricia. (1998). *Thank you, Mr. Faulkner*. Philomel.

Trisha is a fifth-grader that cannot read. This is very hard for her and is not helped by the fifth-grade bully who is always making fun of her. Mr. Faulkner recognizes Trisha's troubles and takes the time to help her out. This is a true story geared toward children ages 4-8. It shows the effect that bullying can have, and the result of someone's helping hand.

Powell, Jillian. (1999). *Talking about bullying*. Raintree Steck Vaughn.

This primary level book discusses the feelings of both the bully and the victim. It also offers

options for ending the negative behavior. The book has useful pictures of children that clearly show their emotions and the effects of bullying.

Rosenberg, Liz. (1993). *Monster Mama*. Philomel Books.

Patrick is a sweet little boy who's mother just happens to be a monster. His mama is very kind and takes very good care of him. Once the other kids get word that Patrick's mama is a monster that lives next to their house they start to make jokes about her and laugh at him. Patrick knows that he must be proud of his mama and stands up for her despite what the bullies say. This is a good story for children ages 4-8 and teaches them to not follow the crowd when it comes to making fun of others. It also shows that just because someone is different, they can still be special and loving and need that returned.

Sachar, Louis. (1993). *Marvin Redpost: why pick on me?* Random House.

Marvin, a third-grader, is constantly picked on because of a rumor in the school that said he was the biggest nose picker in school. Marvin knew this rumor was a lie but he needed his sense of humor and a little help from his little sister to salvage his reputation. This is a story for kindergarten – third grade students and shows the pain that spreading rumors can cause.

Shange, Ntozake. (1997). *Whitewash*. Walker.

This is a powerful story about an African American brother and sister that are traumatized after a gang attacks them on their way home from school. Not only do they beat them up, but they paint their face white in their racially motivated attack. This story is for primary readers and shows the harm that bullying can have, especially with regards to race. It also shows how the love of family and friends is necessary to rise above it.

Shipton, Jonathon. (1999). *Horrible crocodile*. Heinemann.

Flora the crocodile is constantly taunting her class. She is continually biting and terrorizing

classmates until she does something that she regrets. After she sees the harm she is doing she decides to change her ways. This is a story that would be appropriate for children ages 4-8.

It shows them that it is not impossible to change their bad behavior to something positive.

Shreve, Susan. (1997). *Joshua T. Bates in trouble again*. Knopf.

Joshua is teased for not getting promoted from third to fourth grade until the middle of the year. Tommy is the class bully and is constantly making fun of him and calling him a nerd.

In an effort to look more cool, Joshua makes some bad decisions getting himself in trouble to try and change the mind of Tommy. This is an appropriate book for grades 2-4, and shows that trying to impress others with bad behavior does nothing to help yourself.

Simon, Francesca. (1999). *Hugo and the bully frogs*. David and Charles.

Hugo is a little frog with a tiny little croak. Other bigger frogs made fun of Hugo and laughed at his size. These bullies are making Hugo's life miserable. Hugo decides to use his size to his advantage and stands up to his bullies through the element of surprise. This book shows how friendship can help to get through tough times and that you don't necessarily have to be mean in return to get what you want. This book is appropriate for children grades 4-8.

Spinelli, Jerry. (1996). *Crash*. Random House.

"Crash Coogan" is the seventh grade football star and class bully. His number one target is Penn Webb, a vegetarian, pacifist Quaker, who he relentlessly teases. When Crash's grandfather suffers from a stroke he realizes that there is more in life than always being first, and tries to change his ways. This is a heart-warming story about loss, and self-exploration that is something student's will be able to relate to. This book is appropriate for grades 5-8

Spinelli, Jerry. (1997). *Wringer*. HarperCollins.

As Palmer approaches his tenth birthday he must decide if he goes against what he believes and follows tradition to be the town wringer. This job entails wringing the necks of wounded pigeons during the town's annual pigeon shoot, which he is strongly against. Refusing this job is certain to bring on many jeers from local bullies, so Palmer faces a tough decision.

This book is a story that shows readers that standing up for your beliefs is more important than what others think of you. This book is appropriate for grades 5-8.

Taylor, Mildred D. (1995). *The well*. Dial Books.

Charlie Simms is a white teenager in Mississippi in the early 1900s. Charlie torments Davis Logan and his brother Hammer both of whom are black. The Logans generously share their water supply despite the horrible treatment they face from Charlie. They show courage and human kindness and always present themselves in a dignified manner, never stooping to the levels of their bullies. This book is appropriate for grades 4-6 and shows alternative ways to dealing with the disgracefulness of racism and bullying.

Thomas, Pat. (2000). *Stop picking on me: a first look at bullying*. Barren's Educational.

This is a straightforward book for young readers that explores the subject of bullying in concrete and simple terms. It examines both the bully and the victim and the feelings that are involved with both. This is a great discussion book for primary grade levels.

Yep, Laurence. (2000). *Cockroach cooties*. Hyperion Books.

Teddy and his little brother use insects in their strategy to defeat the school bully. This book relates alternative and nonviolent ways to deal with a pesty school bully. This book is geared towards students ages 9-12. It helps to show the victim's point of view and the need for a good friend or family member when dealing with a bully.

Cultural Traditions and Differences

African American

Gray, Libba Moore. (1993). *Dear Willie Rudd*. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers.

This story is about an adult who remembers back to her childhood and a relationship that she formed with her black housekeeper during the Jim Crow south.. The woman wishes that she could thank her and apologize for any wrongdoings committed due to race and decides to write her a letter to tell her all of her thoughts. This story is appropriate for children ages 4 – 8.

Johnson, Angela. (2004). *Just like Josh Gibson*. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers.

No matter how well a girl played baseball in the 1940's, she would have faced many challenges, especially when she is black. A girl's grandmother tells her about the day she played ball with the boys when she was young. The anecdote to Josh Gibson was a famous Negro League baseball player. This story is suitable for children in grades Kindergarten – 3.

Monk, Isabella. (1998). *Hope*. CarolRhoda Books.

During a visit with her great-aunt, a young girl learns the story behind her name and learns to feel proud of her biracial heritage. This book is great for younger readers.

Naidoo, Beverly. (2003). *Other side of the truth*. Harper Trophy.

Sade and her younger brother have faced many rough times. Their mother is murdered and they are smuggled out of Nigeria where their uncle is supposed to pick them up. When he fails to meet them at the airport they must fend for themselves and survive on their love for each other. This is an appropriate book for students ages 10 and up, especially during these times in our world.

Paulson, Gary. (1995). *Nightjohn*. Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers.

Sarny is a twelve-year-old slave who leads a very rough life. One day another slave arrives and helps Sarny learn how to read. This self-improvement makes her life even more dangerous than it already is. This book portrays the reality of slave life and how African Americans were restricted and punished for anything and everything. It also shows the courage one man has to teach the others how to read and the power of knowledge. This book is recommended for high school students everywhere.

Taylor, Mildred. (2003). *The land*. Random House.

This is the story of a son of a white plantation owner and a black slave. The son is determined to buy his land but his racial make-up, makes this and everything in life difficult for him. He is stuck between two worlds, and he must find the courage to persevere among these painful times. This story is appropriate for ages 12 and up.

Arab American

Alwari, Karim. (2000). *The girl who lost her smile*. Tradewind Books.

This story is about a little girl who wakes up one morning and cannot find her smile. Her dad does everything he can to help her and through this she finds that her smile and happiness is right in front of her, and she just needed to uncover it. This is a great story for 5-9 year-olds and demonstrates many of the Arab traditions.

Clinton, Cathryn. (2002). *A stone in my hand*. Candlewick Press.

This is a story of courage, loss, personal growth, and family strength set during 1988 in the Middle East. It reveals the truth about what it is like for children to be living in this area daily, and the constant violence they must endure. This book is appropriate for grade levels 6-9.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. (2001). *Celebrating Ramadan*. Holiday House.

Ibraheem is an Arab American boy who celebrates the holy month of Ramadan. This book describes his experiences, as well as his family's experiences. This book is appropriate for grades 3-7.

London, Jonathon. (1997). *Ali, child of the desert*. Lothrop, Lee, and Sheperd Books.

Ali is a boy being raised in a very different culture. His day-to-day activities are much different from other children and he finds much of his time in the desert very lonely. This is a good introduction to different cultures for grades kindergarten thru 3rd grades.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. (1994). *Sitti's secrets*. Four Winds Press.

Sitti has traveled to visit her grandmother in a small Palestinian town. At first, her father must translate for her, but soon after Sitti can communicate with her grandmother other ways as well. Soon enough she develops a strong bond with her grandma. When Sitti returns to her homeland in the USA, she writes to the President to tell him that she votes for peace, and even though her grandma doesn't live here, she votes for peace to. This story is appropriate for 4-8 year-olds.

Latin American

Ada, Almo Flor. (2002). *I love Saturdays, y domingos*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

A young girl describes why she loves the weekends. She spends Saturdays with her European grandparents, y domingos she spends with her Mexican abuelitos. This is a great book for young readers that share different cultures and languages in their families. It shows that both sides of the family have great things about them. This book is appropriate for ages 4- 8.

Anaya, Rudolfo. (1999). *My land sings: stories from the Rio Grande*. Morrow Junior Books.

This is a collection of ten original stories set in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico

borrowed from the rich traditions of Mexican, Spanish, and Native American peoples. This is a great collaboration of the mix of cultures in the area, and shows not only about the traditions, but the people as well. This book is appropriate for students ages 10 and up.

Ely, Susan Middleton. (2002). *Home at last*. Lee and Low Books.

Ana, whose family has recently moved to the United States from Mexico. Ana encourages her mother to learn English just like she is doing in school everyday. This book is appropriate, especially with the current events of immigration occurring in our country. This book is appropriate for children in grades 1-3.

Russel, Barbara. (2004). *The remembering stone*. Strauss and Giroux.

When Ana opens her mother's box of treasures from Costa Rica, she uses a stone she finds there to imagine herself flying over the mountains and rain forest to see the country her mother yearns to visit. This is a great story to work with the imagination to help find out more about the native land of people not from here, and the understanding of their wish to visit what they left. This story is appropriate for students in grades 1 –4.

HIV/Aids

Quinlan, Patricia. (1994). *Tiger flowers*. Dial.

This book is a picture book for children 5 and up, which helps parents, both gay and straight, the words to explain such a sad, frightening disease to their children. This is a tender, compassionate introduction to the tragedy of AIDS, showing it as it is most likely to touch a child's life – through the death of a loved one. The author goes straight to the heart of the matter: AIDS takes people away from those who love them.

McDermott, Keith. (2004). *Acqua and Calda*. Carroll and Graf.

This is the story of a man living with HIV and who is dying. Pretty much on the brink of

death, he is revitalized with new drugs. Now that he is better he is reunited with an old boss who invites him to take part in a play. Here only a couple people know of his health and just how close he has been to death. Even as his health fails he finds himself transformed by the ecstasy of everyday life. It is a strong portrayal of what it is like to be living with HIV, knowing that death may be right around the corner. This book is appropriate for students in grades 9-12.

Nelson, Theresa. (1994). *Earthshine*. Orchard.

Twelve-year-old Slim narrates the story of her life with her father Mack and his lover Larry, during the last few months before Mack's death from AIDS. Feeling both helpless and enraged, Slim sees little point in the political activism or new age therapies espoused by the other kids in her living with AIDS therapy group. But when the family embarks on a journey to see a miracle man, they all find unexpected spiritual healing and renewed courage to face the inevitable. This is a good read for students ages 10 and up.

Verniero, Joan. (1995). *You can tell me Willy: a story for children about AIDS*. American Psychological Association.

This story is about an eight-year-old girl named Willy living with AIDS. The story encourages more compassion from both children and adults living with HIV and AIDS. It also helps children living with this disease to cope with their illness. It also shows that these kids want the same things as everyone else. They need friends to talk to and other kids to play with. This is a sensitive book geared towards 4-8 year-olds about this scary topic.

Winnick, Judd. (2000). *Pedro and me*. Henry Holt.

This is the true story of two roommates, one of which was gay and suffering from HIV. This is the eye-opening journey of two friends and the ultimate battle that one man loses his battle

with AIDS. During Pedro's life he made others aware of what the disease entailed and by making others, similar to Judd, aware of the realities of someone living with HIV. This is a great firsthand account of the disease that is appropriate for readers 12 and up.

Substance Abuse

Anonymous. (1971). *Go ask Alice*. Simon and Schuster.

This is a harrowing true story of a teenager's descent into the seductive world of drugs. A diary so honest you may think you know Alice, or someone just like her. This book tells the firsthand account of a teenage drug addict, who before drugs and alcohol, was a regular kid. It is an eye-opening account of the power of addiction. This book is appropriate for grades 5 and up.

Bacon, Katherine. (1998). *Finn*. Margaret K. McElderry.

Finn moves to live with his grandmother after a deadly plane crash that kills his family. Finn becomes friends with the neighbors who uncover that his grandma's property is being used for drug deals. As Finn is trying to deal with his pain and grief, there are many temptations. This story also touches upon other problems that Finn must deal with including his friend Julie's life being threatened after they uncover the situation with the drugs and his grandma's property. This story is appropriate for ages 10-14.

Childress, Alice. (2000). *A hero ain't nothing but a sandwich*. Putnam Juvenile.

Benjie is a thirteen-year-old who does pretty much any drug he gets his hands on. Whether it's dope, smack, heroin, etc... he's done it and he knows that he could quit any time. But why is this young kid trying it anyway. What went wrong and where is his family when all of this is going on. This story tells some of the effects that drugs can have over people, and the strong grip they can have over their victims no matter what he age, as well as the heroism

of those that step in to stop it. Appropriate for grades 6-9.

Clarke-Borre, Linda. (2004). *Hard poetry: a family of children*. IUniverse Inc.

This is a story about a family of children who are left to their own devices when growing up with an alcoholic mother and a disappearing father. This story shares the memories of the oldest daughter as well as the other children as they dealt with the ongoing pattern of abuse and betrayal and how they dealt with the continual disappointments in their very lonely world. This story is a strong testimony of how things may not always be what they appear on the outside and would be appropriate for high school students.

Fox, Paula. (2003). *The moonlight man*. Simon and Schuster.

Catherine longs for a closer relationship with her father who is often away on business. So when Mr. Ames suggests that they spend a month together in Nova Scotia, Catherine is thrilled. It is when they are so close that Catherine realizes that her dad drinks a lot. She wonders how she has longed for closeness her entire life, and now that they are so close she feels more distant than ever with her father. This story is a good portrayal of how family members can be affected by loved ones addiction. This book is appropriate for grades 6-10.

Stewart, Gail. (1999). *Teen alcoholics*. Lucent Books.

This book explains in sad detail, what young alcoholics face with their daily struggles of addiction. Each individual story has their own specific details of their stories, but most share the same poor health, failed relationships, and poor self-images. This book is appropriate for teenage readers in grades 9-12. It explains the true results of falling into an addiction and some of what happens as a result.

Taylor, Clark. (1992). *The house that crack built*. Chronicle Books.

This book takes an upbeat rhyming scheme of a popular nursery rhyme to explain the serious

issue of drugs to young children. It starts with the harvesting of the coca plant to the drug dealers and gang members, and moves onto the crack babies born everyday. This is a realistic book that is not moralizing. Although it is set a tone for younger children ages 7 and up, it will appeal to teenagers just the same. It is a real book that opens up the difficult and often scary subject of substance abuse.

Tobias, Andrew. (1991). *Kids say don't smoke*. Workman Publishing Company.

This book goes right to the children and gets their views on smoking. It is aimed to stop those who don't smoke from smoking, and helping those whose parent's smoke to help convince them to stop. The book consists of what children are saying about smoking and opposite pages have pictures and facts about the effects of smoking. This book is appropriate for children as young as three years-old.

Vigna, Judith. (1998). *I wish Daddy didn't drink so much*. Albert Whitman and Co.

This story is a real story about a little girl whose father is an alcoholic. This book shows the pain that alcoholism can cause a family. This book addresses the real issues that so many families are dealing with but may not be comfortable sharing with others. This is a great book and resource for children ages 4-8.

Vigna, Judith. (1995). *My big sister takes drugs*. Albert Whitman and Co.

It was bad enough when Paul's older sister starts hanging out with mean kids and starts acting like a jerk. But then when other kids aren't allowed to play with him and he isn't able to join the soccer team because his sister's hospital costs too much, Paul gets very mad.

Worst of all Paul is afraid that his sister will not get better. Eventually with lots of work and love, she will get better and Paul's life gets back on track. This book is for children ages 4-8.

Zailickas, Koren. (2006). *Smashed: story of a drunken girlhood*. Penguin Books.

This true story and firsthand account tells the story of the author who is initiated into the world of alcohol. As a teenage girl the alcohol use raises her self-esteem and eventually she becomes dependant on its' use. Throughout her teen years and throughout college, this behavior and addiction becomes more damaging. This is her story, and her accounts of what made her finally realize that she needed to stop. This book is a good story for any teenager to read, especially girls, but would be appropriate for grades 7 and up.