Inclusive Literature Lists

The Billings Public Library supports and values and celebrates diversity and inclusion. We strive to curate a collection of resources that represents all demographics in our community’s tapestry. We believe an inclusive and welcoming community is a stronger community.

This list of inclusive and diverse literature that the youth of our community can see themselves in as well as use as a conduit to build compassion for others is brought to you on behalf of collaboration between the Human Relations Commission of the City of Billings, the Billings Public Library, and a children’s literature assistant professor from Montana State University Billings.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and any recommendations for this list. We will take these into consideration as we continue to develop these lists.

August 2020: Back to School

S Is for School! (Sesame Street): A Lift-The-Flap Board Book
By Posner-Sanchez, Andrea
Illustrator Brannon, Tom
2020-06 - Random House Books for Young Readers
9780593173763 Check Our Catalog

An interactive lift-the-flap book about going to school, starring Sesame Street’s Elmo

Head to school with Elmo, Abby, Big Bird, and other Sesame Street friends. Girls and boys ages 2 to 5 can lift more than 30 fun flaps as they join Elmo and his friends at an exciting day of school. This sturdy interactive board book is perfect for easing first-day-of-school jitters or ...More
Bus
By Demarest, Chris
2017-07 - Houghton Mifflin
9780544870871 Check Our Catalog

The big, colorful, noisy city comes to life in this deceptively simple rhyming board book. Little listeners will be mesmerized by the rhythmic, rhyming ride--perfect reading for kids on a roll

...More

Hello, World! My Body
By McDonald, Jill
2018-02 - Doubleday Books for Young Readers
9781524766368 Check Our Catalog

Learn from home and explore the world with these fun and easy board books

Young children are fascinated by their eyes, ears, nose, fingers, and toes. Here's a Hello, World board book that teaches toddlers all about the human body, with shapes, sizes, colors, and super-simple facts.

Hello, World is a series designed to introduce first nonfiction ...More

Bright Start - My Turn, Your Turn
By Loewen, Nancy
Illustrator Quintanilla, Hazel Michelle
2019-09 - Words & Pictures
9780711244443 Check Our Catalog

Let's learn a new game. It's called "My Turn, Your Turn." Part of the Bright Start series, My Turn, Your Turn introduces and helps develop the idea of sharing for children aged 1-3.

Malik and Cora both want to fly the same toy plane. Watch frustration give way to joy as they try the sharing game proposed by their teacher.

With simple stories and engaging ...More

Library Babies
By Puck
Author Lemay, Violet
2020-03 - Duopress
9781947458758 Check Our Catalog

Here come the library babies, ready to give you a tour of their favorite local library

There's no place more magical than a library, where adventures can be had both inside the pages of a book and out. Here you can find hidden nooks for reading, encounter
new worlds during story time, and take the big step of signing up for your very first library card. From puppet shows to getting to ...

**Pete the Kitty's First Day of Preschool**
By *Dean, James*
Author *Dean, Kimberly*
Illustrator *Dean, James*
2019-06 - HarperFestival
9780062435828 Check Our Catalog

**Pete the Kitty is almost ready for his first day of preschool**

It's a big day for Pete the Kitty: his first day of preschool He meets his cool teacher, sings a few fun songs, and even gets to paint. Who knew preschool could be so much fun?

Just don't forget your groovy backpack and your yummy snack, Pete the Kitty

Preschoolers and little ones getting ready ...

**My Very First Book of Colors**
By *Carle, Eric*
Illustrator *Carle, Eric*
2005-05 - World of Eric Carle
9780399243868 Check Our Catalog

The beloved Eric Carle offers colorful puzzles that help the youngest of readers learn about colors and shapes. Readers can find the bottom half of a page that matches the top half. (Baby/Preschool) ...

**100 First Words for Little Artists**
By *Kershner, Kyle*
2019-04 - Familius
9781641701280 Check Our Catalog

Are you an artist? Then of course your baby will inherit your creative genes But how to get your prodigy started on the path of complementary colors and 2-point perspectives?

Introducing *100 First Words for Little Artists*, an artistic primer for kids learning their first words Forget *apple* and *dog*. Little artists are ready for *CMYK*, *caricature*, and ...

**Counting on Community**
By *Nagara, Innosanto*
2015-09 - Triangle Square
9781609806323 Check Our Catalog

*Counting on Community* is Innosanto Nagara's follow-up to his hit ABC book, *A is for Activist*. Counting up from one stuffed pi ata to ten hefty hens--and always counting on each other--children are encouraged to recognize the value of their community, the joys inherent in healthy eco-friendly activities, and the agency they posses to make change. A broad and inspiring vision of ...
Arf! Buzz! Cluck!: A Rather Noisy Alphabet
By Seltzer, Eric
Illustrator Creighton-Pester, David
2018-07 - Little Simon
9781534412972 Check Our Catalog

Moo Neigh Oink Peep This silly and inventive alphabet board book teaches little ones the ABCs with animal sounds

We Arf
We Buzz
We Baaah
We Coo
We Chirp
and Cluck
and cock-a-Doodle-Doo

Animals sure are noisy With rhyming text and bright and goofy illustrations by ...

100 First Things to Know
By DK
2020-02 - DK Publishing (Dorling Kindersley)
9781465489784 Check Our Catalog

100 carefully curated, useful things that will stimulate your baby or toddler's natural curiosity about the world around them...

Help your little one learn important vocabulary and build knowledge with this first word and picture book. Cleverly designed to inform and entertain, 100 First Things to Know takes your little one on an exciting learning adventure. As they point ...

Cuauhtemoc: Shapes/Formas: A Bilingual Book of Shapes
By Rodriguez, Patty
Author Stein, Ariana
Illustrator Reyes, Citlali
2016-09 - Lil' Libros
9780986109935 Check Our Catalog SPA

A Lil' Libros Bilingual Book of Shapes

Explore the city of Tenochtitlan along side Cuauht moc, the last Aztec emperor--where you'll come across the circulo (circle) in the Aztec calendar, the tri ngulo (triangle) in the pyramid, the heart in the shield of an Aztec princess, and more This book introduces your little one to shapes and their first English and Spanish ...

...More
The Day You Begin
By Jacqueline Woodson
Illustrator Rafael López
2018-08 - Nancy Paulsen Books
9780399246531 Check Our Catalog

Jacqueline Woodson is the 2018-2019 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature

A #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson and two-time Pura Belpré Illustrator Award winner Rafael López have teamed up to create a poignant, yet heartening book about finding courage to connect, even when you feel scared and alone.

All Are Welcome
By Alexandra Penfold
Illustrator Suzanne Kaufman
2018-07 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
978052579649 Check Our Catalog

Join the call for a better world with this New York Times bestselling picture book about a school where diversity and inclusion are celebrated.

Discover a school where--no matter what--young children have a place, have a space, and are loved and appreciated.

Follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms. A school where

The King of Kindergarten
By Derrick Barnes
Illustrator Vanessa Brantley-Newton
2019-07 - Nancy Paulsen Books
9781524740740 Check Our Catalog

A New York Times bestseller

A confident little boy takes pride in his first day of kindergarten, by the Newbery Honor-winning author of Crown.

The morning sun blares through your window like a million brass trumpets. It sits and shines behind your head--like a crown. Mommy says that today, you are going to be the King of Kindergarten
Yo, ho, ho It's a mutiny against kindergarten

Pirate Emma is about to start kindergarten But Emma's not so sure she's ready for a new captain and crew. Especially since Cap'n Chu—the roughest, toughest, awesomest preschool cap'n ever—is right down the hall. So Emma decides to head back to the preschool ship to see if she can stir up a mutiny against kindergarten Is that what …More

It's the first day of school at Frederick Douglass Elementary and everyone's just a little bit nervous, especially the school itself. What will the children do once they come? Will they like the school? Will they be nice to him?

The school has a rough start, but as the day goes on, he soon recovers when he sees that he's not the only one going through first-day jitters.

The first day of school is exciting—but it can be scary, too Meet Rosie, a brand-new student who just happens to have butterflies in her stomach.

"Silvestro and Chen take a common figure of speech and transform it, literally, into a lovely expression of a universal experience." --Kirkus

"A cheering first-day story." --Publishers Weekly

Spunky Lola embarks on a new adventure--the first day of school
Lola and her family prepare for the first day of school the night before, then get up early, take pictures, and head to class. Lola puts her things in her cubby, chooses her activities, reads, plays, and has a snack. Before she knows it, it's time to sing the good-bye song and rush into Mommy's arms for a warm reunion. A More

Mermaid School
By Wetzel, Joanne
Illustrator Swaney, Julianna
2018-07 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
9780399557163 Check Our Catalog

Starting school is always exciting... especially when you're a mermaid! From schools of fish to the A B Seas, this whimsical underwater tale puts a fun twist on what to expect on the first day of school.

It's Molly's first day at mermaid school, and there's so much to learn. Follow the mermaids as they count clamshells, recite the A B Seas, and make new friends. They even enjoy More

A New School Year: Stories in Six Voices
By Derby, Sally
Illustrator Song, Mika
2017-06 - Charlesbridge Publishing
9781580897303 Check Our Catalog

In a unique narrative, readers meet a diverse group of six children ranging in age from Kindergarten through fifth grade. With nerves and excitement each child gears up for a new school year by hustling in the morning, meeting new teachers and new classmates during the day, and heading home with homework and relief by day's end.

Simple, bright illustrations focus on each child and More

Big Boys Cry
By Howley, Jonty
2019-06 - Random House Books for Young Readers
9781524773205 Check Our Catalog

Let boys cry! This picture book imagines a world in which boys are encouraged to express their full range of emotions.

It's Levi's first day at a new school, and he's scared. His father tries to comfort Levi by telling him "Big boys don't cry." Though the father immediately understands his misstep, he can't find the words to comfort his son, and Levi leaves for school, still in need of More

This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World
By Lamothe, Matt
2017-05 - Chronicle Books
9781452150185 Check Our Catalog

Follow one day in the real lives of seven kids from around the world—Italy, Japan, Iran, India, Peru, Uganda, and Russia.
In Japan, Kei plays Freeze Tag, while in Uganda, Daphine likes to jump rope. While the way they play may differ, the shared rhythm of their days--and this one world we all share--unites them.

This genuine exchange provides a window into traditions that...

Twindergarten
By Ehrlich, Nikki
Illustrator Wagner, Zoey Abbott
2017-06 - HarperCollins
9780062564238 Check Our Catalog

Dax and Zoe are twins. They go together like peanut butter and jelly.

It's the night before the twins are starting kindergarten, and they have the just-about-to-start-school jitters. After all, they will be in different classrooms What will kindergarten be like when they're not together all day? But Dax and Zoe will learn that kindergarten is full of new surprises and adventures, and...

The Last Last-Day-Of-Summer
By Giles, Lamar
Illustrator Adeola, Dapo
2019-04 - Versify
9781328460837 Check Our Catalog

"The Last Last-Day-of-Summer reminds me that all children deserve to exist in magical spaces where their imaginations and familial bonds will them into heroism. Every single child should have the freedom to be one of The Legendary Alstons. And I, for one, am grateful to Giles, and this brilliant story, for that reminder." --Jason Reynolds, author of Newbery Honoree Long Way...

Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet
By Mian, Zanib
Illustrator Mafaridik, Nasaya
2020-02 - G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers
9780593109212 Check Our Catalog

An exciting #OwnVoices middle-grade debut starring a Muslim boy with a huge imagination

Welcome to the imaginative brain of Omar

Omar and his family have just moved, and he is NOT excited about starting at a new school. What if the work is too hard or the kids are mean or the teacher is a zombie alien?

But when Omar makes a new best friend, things start looking up. That is, ...
A Good Kind of Trouble
By Ramee, Lisa Moore
2019-03 - Balzer & Bray/Harperteen
9780062836687 Check Our Catalog

A debut author offers up a funny and big-hearted middle-grade novel about friendship, family, and standing up for what's right, ideal for fans of Angie Thomas's "The Hate U Give".  ...More

Martin McLean, Middle School Queen
By Zaczek, Alyssa
2020-01 - Sterling Children's Books
9781454935704 Check Our Catalog

In this bighearted middle-grade debut, Martin McLean struggles to find his voice--and his inner diva--as he navigates friendship, family, first crushes, and a whole lot of glitter.

"An amusing story that's bursting with diversity at every turn. . . . A tasty treat."--Kirkus (Starred review)

Seventh-grader Martin McLean has always been surrounded by people who  ...More

Pay Attention, Carter Jones
By Schmidt, Gary D.
2019-02 - Clarion Books
9780544790858 Check Our Catalog

Bestselling author and two-time Newbery Honoree Schmidt tells a coming-of-age story with the light touch of "The Wednesday Wars," the heart of "Okay for Now," and the unique presence of a wise and witty butler.  ...More

Harbor Me
By Woodson, Jacqueline
2018-08 - Nancy Paulsen Books
9780399252525 Check Our Catalog

Jacqueline Woodson was the 2018-2019 National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Jacqueline Woodson's first middle-grade novel since National Book Award winner Brown Girl Dreaming celebrates the healing that can occur when a group of students share their stories.

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by  ...More
An uplifting story, told through the alternating voices of two middle-schoolers, in which a community rallies to reject racism.

Karina Chopra would have never imagined becoming friends with the boy next door—after all, they've avoided each other for years and she assumes Chris is just like the boys he hangs out with, who she labels a pack of hyenas. Then Karina's grandfather starts ...More

So many moments—big and small—make up a year, and Beth Ain chronicles them all in this heartwarming novel in verse, perfect for fans of *Fish in a Tree* and verse novels like *Brown Girl Dreaming* and *The Crossover*.

It's a new school year, and Izzy Kline is having some feelings. There are plenty of reasons for the butterflies in her stomach to flap their wings. ...More

A moving new middle grade novel about childhood anxiety and grief, from the author of *The Secrets of Blueberries, Brothers, Moose, and Me*.

Eleven-year-old Josh Duncan has never had much luck making friends—not the real kind, anyway. Moving to a new town is supposed to be a chance to leave behind the problems that plagued Josh at his last school. Problems like Big Brother, ...More

"Pippa is a magnetic heroine, funny and good-hearted."--Booklist

Readers will cheer on Korean American Pippa Park in this compelling middle grade reimagining of *Great Expectations*. Navigating friendships and cyberbullying at a new school, Pippa reinvents herself and discovers who she really is.

Life is full of great expectations for Korean American Pippa ...More
The Boy at the Back of the Class
By Rauf, Onjali Q.
2020-07 - Yearling Books
9781984850812 Check Our Catalog

Wink
By Harrell, Rob
2020-03 - Dial Books
9781984815149 Check Our Catalog

A hilarious and heartwrenching story about surviving middle school--and an unthinkable diagnosis--while embracing life's weirdness.

Ross Maloy just wants to be a normal seventh grader. He doesn't want to lose his hair, or wear a weird hat, or deal with the disappearing friends who don't know what to say to "the cancer kid." But with his recent diagnosis of a rare eye cancer, blending in...