

Diverse Books

Recommended

Naturally Me!
A Storm Called Katrina,
Princess and the Pea,
I Love My Hair!,
Bippety Bop Barbershop

50 best children's books published from 1950 to 2014 that celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity

Early Years

Amazing Grace

By Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

The classic picture book about the little girl who loves stories and shows us that we can be anything we want to be.

Fruits: A Caribbean Counting Poem

By Valerie Bloom, illustrated by David Axtell (Macmillan Children's Books)

A rhythmic counting poem that describes all manner of delicious Caribbean fruits as a little girl tries to eat as many of these as she can in a single day.

The Goggle-Eyed Goats

By Stephen Davies, illustrated by Christopher Corr (Andersen Press)

A vibrant and colourfully illustrated tale about Old Al Haji Amadu's five extremely naughty and very hungry goats who gobble and gulp through whatever they find.

Handa's Surprise

By Eileen Browne (Walker Books)

A mouth-watering story about Handa who puts seven fruits into her basket to take to her friend Akeyo, but one by one these disappear as all manner of creatures snack upon them.

Hue Boy

By Rita Phillips Mitchell, illustrated by Caroline Binch (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

As much as Hue Boy longs to be bigger, he discovers size isn't everything in this uplifting village-based story about a small boy with a very big personality.

Leon and Bob

By Simon James (Walker Books)

A quiet reflective book about the unusual friendship shared by Leon and Bob and the sense of fun and fulfilment others can bring into our lives.

Not So Fast Songololo

By Niki Daly (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

An African town is brought to life through sight and sound in this touching story of young and old where Grandmother Gogo and grandson Songololo set out on a stroll together.

Over the Hills and Far Away

By Elizabeth Hammill, illustrated by 77 artists (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

A stunning collection of 150 rhymes from countries all over the English-speaking world, including Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ghana, South Africa and the Caribbean compiled by Seven Stories co-founder Elizabeth Hammill. The collection contains best-loved nursery rhymes, but also new discoveries, and vibrant rhymes from Native American, First Nation, Inuit and Maori cultures.

Ramadan Moon

By Na'ima B. Robert, illustrated by Shirin Adl (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

The festival of Ramadan and its celebration across the world is explored in this thoughtful book which looks at the role faith plays in many children's lives.

Rastamouse and the Crucial Plan

By Michael De Souza, illustrated by Genevieve Webster (Little Roots)

A cheeky, cheese-filled tale about super bad thief Bandalulu who has stolen all the cheese from Mouseland.

So Much

By Trish Cooke, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)

A fun, feel good and familiar story about the different generations of a family brought together by their love for a new baby.

Where's Lenny?

By Ken Wilson-Max (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

An ideal first picture book by an award winning author/illustrator in which Lenny and his dad have a game of hide and seek in the house, enjoying fun and games together.

Younger readers (5+)

Azzi In Between

By Sarah Garland (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

A powerful graphic novel about Azzi and her family who seek refuge, filled with drama and tension it shows just how dangerous some people's home lives can be and the difficult decisions needed to reach a place of safety.

Kasia's Surprise

By Stella Gurney, illustrated by Petr Horacek (Walker Books)

A moving and hope-filled book about Kasia and her mum who have moved to the UK from Poland, it looks at the importance of the people we are close to and the gradual acceptance of change.

Betsey Biggalow is here

By Malorie Blackman, illustrated by Jamie Smith (Random House Children's Books)

Somewhere between Pippi Longstocking and Tracy Beaker, Betsey Biggalow, who stars in these short, pacey stories, is an imaginative and enquiring girl who is sometimes mischievous but always endearing.

The Colour of Home

By Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Karin Littlewood (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Hassan feels out of place in a cold, grey country so different from his colourful Somalian home, which he was forced to leave because of war. But gradually things change... and he sees the new colours of home.

Fly, Eagle, Fly!

By Christopher Gregorowski, illustrated by Niki Daly (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

A story of fulfilment and freedom shown through the parable of the baby eagle who is reared with chickens. This simply told yet dramatic story from Africa will delight children everywhere and encourage them to "lift off and soar," as Archbishop Tutu puts it in his foreword.

A Hen in the Wardrobe

By Wendy Meddour (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

This is a funny, heart-warming family story set in Britain and Algeria, with fascinating glimpses of traditional Berber culture and lots of colourful characters.

Mirror

By Jeannie Baker (Walker Books)

Although thousands of miles apart, there are many similarities between the homes and daily routines for the two boys in this book; its minutely detailed illustrations inspire readers to see that, in spite of surface difference, there is often more similarity in our lives than might, at first, be recognised.

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

By John Steptoe (Puffin Children's Books)

This special book has a fairy-tale like charm as a King takes on the search for a wife. Mufaro has two daughters, one rude and mean and the other generous and thoughtful: which will win the hand of the King?

Number 1 Car Spotter

By Atinuke (Walker Books)

A witty story about the hugely appealing Oluwalase Babatunde Benson (AKA Number 1) who sets about searching for and solving problems and carrying out chores for his family.

Under the Moon and Over the Sea: A Collection of Caribbean Poems

Edited by John Agard and Grace Nichols (Walker Books)

A lyrical and lively collection of poetry that captures the sights, sounds, tastes and tales of the Caribbean and its people.

Walter Tull's Scrap Book

By Michaela Morgan (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

The inspirational true story of Walter Tull's life is vividly re-imagined here in scrapbook form, drawing on photographs, documents and records of his life. Born in Kent, in 1888, Walter Tull became not just the first black British professional outfield football player – for Tottenham Hotspur and Northampton Town – but also the first black officer in the British Army.

Older Readers (8+)

Boy Overboard

By Morris Gleitzman (Puffin Children's Books)

Jamal and sister Bibi want to lead Australia to victory in the World Cup, but that entails a journey from their homeland, Afghanistan where their family has upset the authorities, and a lengthy voyage overseas.

The Island

By Armin Greder (Allen and Unwin)

The poignancy of the pictures in this story about a man washed up on an island beach and outcast by its community explores intolerance and is a powerful and moving conversation starter for discussions around acceptance.

Journey to Jo'Burg

By Beverley Naidoo (HarperCollins)

A deeply affecting modern classic about a brother and sister who journey through the South Africa of Apartheid in a race against time to find their mother thereby saving their poorly baby sister, Dineo.

The Life of Stephen Lawrence

By Verna Allette Wilkins, illustrated by Lynne Willey (Tamarind)

Full of life and potential, Stephen Lawrence was a boy with huge hopes for the future. Murdered in 1993, the book looks at prejudice, injustice and a family's fight to uncover the truth.

Little Leap Forward

By Guo You, co-written by Clare Farrow and illustrated by Helen Cann (Barefoot Books)

This semi-autobiographical tale looks at Little Leap Forward, a boy who grew up in the hutongs of Beijing during the Cultural Revolution in China.

Oranges in No Man's Land

By Elizabeth Laird (Macmillan Children's Books)

Ayesha lives in war-torn Beirut, a city divided by conflict. When Ayesha's granny falls ill, she must cross the barricades into deadly no-man's land to try to get the medication that is so badly needed.

A Nest of Vipers

By Catherine Johnson (Random House Children's Books)

The youngest member of a collective of pick pockets and con-artists in 18th century London, Cato Hopkins appears at risk of paying penance for his crimes with his life...

Talking Turkeys

By Benjamin Zephaniah (Puffin Children's Books)

A thought-provoking and wide reaching collection of poetry for children that explodes from the page, begging to be read aloud.

Tall Story

By Candy Gourlay (David Fickling Books)

Quirky, unusual and filled with affectionate humour, this story looks at the relationship between Andi, who is short, and her long lost, enormous half-brother Bernardo who comes to live in London from the Philippines.

Too Much Trouble

By Tom Avery (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

A fast-paced read about brothers Em and Prince who struggle to make a life and home for themselves on the streets of London. Winner of the Diverse Voices award 2010.

Trash

By Andy Mulligan (David Fickling Books)

Raphael is a dumpsite boy whose days are spent sifting through rubbish and whose nights are spent sleeping beside it. This deeply affecting story tells how one fateful moment – the discovery of a small leather bag – can radically change one's fortunes...

The Trouble with Donovan Croft

By Bernard Ashley (Oxford University Press Children's Books)

Keith's new foster brother, Donovan, won't speak to anybody, will Keith be able to uncover the reasons why and help Donovan to open up?

The Unforgotten Coat

By Frank Cottrell Boyce (Walker Books)

This acutely perceptive, gem of a book recounts how Julie tries to help two Mongolian refugees who are struggling to fit in with their new classmates in Liverpool and movingly describes why their friendship ended unexpectedly...

The Wheel of Surya

By Jamila Gavin (Egmont)

The violence and danger of India during the Independence movement and its partition from Pakistan acts a catalyst for Jaspal and Marvinder to flee from their village in an effort to reunite with their father who is a student in England.

Babies

This series from The Global Fund for Children. Global Babies is one of my favorites. The photographs are amazing and the brief text includes the country that the child is from on each page. There is also Global Baby Girls and Global Baby Boys.

- Baby Faces series: Hugs & Kisses by Roberta Grobel Intrater is a simple rhyming book.
- Carry Me by Rena Grossman looks at all the different ways babies are carried around the world.
- Reach: a board book about curiosity is also part of a series by Elizabeth Verdick. The interesting thing about this book is that the photographs are black and white and the text is in color. In Reach, we learn about all the things that babies like to reach for as they grow.
- [Beautiful Rainbow World](#) by Suzee Ramirez is the only one on this list that is not a board book.
- [Shades of Black](#) by Sandra Pinkney has beautiful photographs and beautiful poetic text!
- [Lots of Feelings](#) by Shelley Rotner helps toddlers and preschoolers learn about feelings.
- [Cradle Me](#) by Debby Slier is a look at how different Native American tribes cradle their babies.

Toddlers

Here are some of the best multicultural books that will enrich their growing vocabulary and understanding of the world. <https://growingbookbybook.com/best-multicultural-stories-for-2-year-olds/>

<https://growingbookbybook.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MULTICULTURAL-STORIES-FOR-2-YEAR-OLDS.png>

- Counting With/Contando Con Frida by Patty Rodriguez is a bilingual book (English/Spanish) that introduces colors and gives us a taste of the Hispanic culture. This is a series with numerous titles that teach about shapes, emotions, and more.
- Disney's It's a Small World Hello, World! is a colorful little book introducing us to different people around the world. On each page we learn how to say hello in a different language.
- Fiesta Babies by Carmen Tafolla is a sweet rhythmic read through a Latino party.
- Baby Goes to Market. It's a vibrant and gorgeously illustrated about a mother who takes her little one to a Nigerian market to shop. As the mother is busy buying items, the baby is also filling mama's basket with items from the market too. Little ones will even learn some basic counting skills while enjoying the story. In fact, grab a basket and have the kids place items in as you count together the items being put in the basket.
- Bee Bim Bop by Linda Sue Park is one of my favorites on the list. It's a wonderful read-aloud sure to capture the toddler audience's attention. Plus, it has a yummy recipe in the back of the book.
- The Wheels on the Tuk Tuk by Kabir Sehgal which takes us to India. Lots of new vocabulary to be learned with this one.
- Full, Full, Full of Love by Trish Cooke allows us to step into one family's home and feel the love of extended family all while preparing for a home-cooked meal.
- Learn about shapes in the Asian culture in Round is a Mooncake: A Book of Shapes by Roseanne Thong. Also check out Thong's Round is a Tortilla: A Book of Shapes and Green is a Dragon: A Book of Colors.

Preschoolers

<https://growingbookbybook.com/multicultural-books-for-preschoolers/>

- Gracias~Thanks by Pat Mora uses simple English and Spanish text to explain being grateful for things during the day from dawn until dusk.
- In a Village by the Sea by Muon Van begins with a Vietnamese fisherman on a boat thinking about his home. Each page zooms in closer to his home where we find his wife in the kitchen all the way to a cricket in a hole in the wall.
- Red is a Dragon by Roseanne Thong not only exposes kids to colors but also learning about the Chinese-American culture.
- book about colors but themed around a Hispanic culture is award winning, Green is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors by Roseanne Greenfield
- Rainbow Stew An African-American family ventures out into the wet garden with grandpa to pick produce for the vegetable stew.
- Kids will truly see themselves in I Love My Hair by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley.
- The Color of Us by Karen Katz is the story of a little girl who wants to paint a picture of herself. After a walk through the neighborhood with her mom, she discovers that there are lots of different shades of color in the people that she meets.
- Armando and the Blue Tarp School by Fine and Josephson is an inspiring and heartwarming story. A man visits Mexico each summer teaching the children that live at the dump on a blue tarp. After a newspaper article is written on the story, someone donates money for a school to be built. 30 years later the man is still involved in the school and educating the children in poverty