

Confronting Ableism Through Children's and Young Adult Literature



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Our Positionality



Who We Are

- Advocates for disability rights and inclusion
- Able-bodied and Allistic
- Special educators
- Engaged in our own learning about confronting ableism

A Note About Language

- Person-first language (i.e. people with disabilities; a person who uses a wheelchair)
- Identity-first language (i.e. disabled people; Deaf child; Autistic students)
- Categorized books by age group, disability, and genre.

Lauren

Image Description: [From left to right. A headshot of a smiling Asian woman with long dark hair wearing a gray turtleneck sweater. A headshot of a smiling White woman with shoulder length brown hair. Three speech bubbles in red, green, and blue with ellipsis to show speech.]

Accessibility Information

- Handouts for this presentation include:
 - A full list of recommended books
 - A PDF with slides + notes (including image descriptions)
 - A transcript of the session
- Please contact us if you need more information.
 - lzepp@wisc.edu
 - yryang2@wisc.edu



Lauren

Image Description: [Accessibility icon with eight blue squares, each one includes a different accessibility tool image in white. From the top left, the tools are: a wheelchair, TTY, assistive listening systems, volume controlled telephone, sign language interpretation, access to low vision, braille, and close captioning.]

Session Outcomes

Participants will:

- Understand a brief overview of ableism as it relates to children's literature;
- Learn how ableism impacts the educational expectations and outcomes for students with disabilities;
- Explore how to incorporate disability culture into content area curriculum;
- Review a selection of titles for young readers, middle grades, and young adults;
- Receive a list of recommended titles sorted by age group;
- Reflect on how to use children's literature as an advocacy tool to combat ableist perspectives.

Lauren

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ABLEISM

a·ble·ism \ ˈābə-ˌli-zəm \
noun

A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, excellence, desirability, and productivity.

These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person's language, appearance, religion and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

a working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis; updated January 2021
*developed in community with Disabled Black & other negatively racialized people, especially Dustin Gibson

Talia's Blog

Ableism

- This working definition is constantly evolving through community-based discussion and efforts
- Disability is a social construct
 - How is it created vs. what causes disability
- What is normal?
 - Myth
 - Problem
 - Privilege
- Assumptions and practices are present in schools
- Stems from the medical model of disability



Radeen

<https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/longmore-lecture-context-clarity-grounding>
<https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/ableism-2020-an-updated-definition>

Image Description: [Deep purple and blue gradient background with the following words: ABLEISM a·ble·ism \ ˈābə-ˌli-zəm \
noun A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, excellence, desirability, and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person's language, appearance, religion and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and "behave." You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism. a working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis*; updated January 2021 *developed in community with Disabled Black and other negatively racialized people, especially Dustin Gibson.]

Ableism in Literature

Ableist assumptions about individuals with disabilities:

- Child-like and dependent
- Need charity and pity
- physically and intellectually incapable

Impact of Ableism:

- Perpetuation of stereotypes and assumptions
- Fixation on disability labels vs. addressing the stigma associated with disability
- Low academic and social expectations
- Minimizes student voice and independence
- Exclusion both academically and socially

Radeen

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Suggestions from Literature

Confronting ableism as educators:

- Include disability in school **social justice and equity efforts** (Storey, 2007)
 - Disability content in curriculum and activities
- **Social model of disability** as an analytical lens (Saunders, 2004)
 - Awareness vs. understanding of disability
- Use **children or young adult literature** to promote empathy and acceptance towards diversity (Kurtts & Gavigan, 2008)
 - Bibliotherapy: using literature in therapeutic ways
 - Including a facilitated discussion about text
 - Assess quality of disability literature (Prater et al., 2006)

Radeen

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Assessing for Quality Literature

- Images and illustrations
- Words and language used to represent and describe individuals with disabilities
- Do a character study - How are individuals with disabilities portrayed in the story?
 - Diversity across race, age, and gender?
 - Three-dimensional?
 - Victims or heroes?
 - Are they only noted and accepted for being a hero?
- Theme or lesson of the story
 - Does it further perpetuate stereotypes about disability?
- Author and illustrator
 - Think about who their targeted audience is?
 - What is their knowledge/background in relation to disability?
 - Why did they write the book, if applicable?

Radeen

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How We Selected Texts

We sought representations of disability that:

- Presumed and emphasized competence
- Showed complex, human characters (ages, races, and genders)
- Used inclusive language and stories
- Did not create a hierarchy in which ability is superiority to disability
 - Did not position use of tools as worse or pitiable.
 - “Everyone needs to go places and move around. Some people walk, some people use a wheelchair.”
 - “All people communicate with each other. Some use speech, some use sign language, some use gestures, and some use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)”
- We intentionally did not include books that we found problematic or books that disability-rights activists noted as problematic

Radeen

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Board Books



Ages 0-3

Lauren

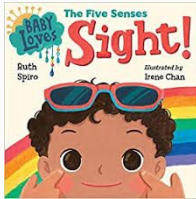
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Board Books

Ages 0-3



Baby Loves the Five Senses: Hearing! (Spiro, 2019)



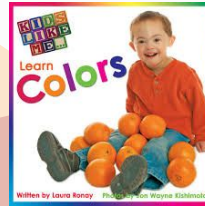
Baby Loves the Five Senses: Sight! (Spiro, 2019)



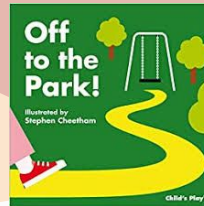
Clean It! (Birkett, 2010)



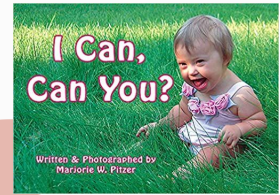
Snug (Thompson, 2013)



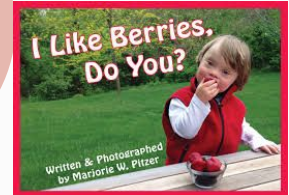
Kids Like Me... Learn Colors (Ronray, 2009)



Off to the Park! (Cheetham, 2014)



I Can, Can You? (Pitzer, 2004)



I Like Berries, Do You? (Pitzer, 2013)

Lauren

Image description: Top left [The cover of Baby Loves The Fives Senses: Hearing! Is shown. It has an orange background with an illustration of a white child with black hair holding her hands to hear hears. She has a pink flower in her hair. Dark orange music notes are in the background.]

Bottom left [The cover of Baby Loves the Fives Senses: Sights! Is shown. It has a beige background with a rainbow and an illustration of a light brown child with black curly hair pointing to his eyes. He wears pink and blue sunglasses on his head.]

Top, middle-left [The cover of Clean It! Is shown. It has an illustration of two children on a purple rug with a green wall behind them. They are playing with stuffed animals and a vacuum.]

Bottom, middle-left [The cover of Snug is shown. It has an illustration of two children sleeping peacefully. They are cuddling stuffed animals and covered with a blue blanket.]

Top, middle-right [The cover of Kids Like Me Learn Colors is shown. It has a white background with a photograph of a White child with Down Syndrome. He wears blue jeans, an organe henley shirt, and brown boots. He has a pile of oranges on his lap and is smiling.]

Bottom, middle-right [The cover of Off to the Park! Is shown. It has a green background with a yellow path, three trees, and a black and white swingset. On the left, a foot is shown starting to walk on the path. The foot wears a red shoe.]

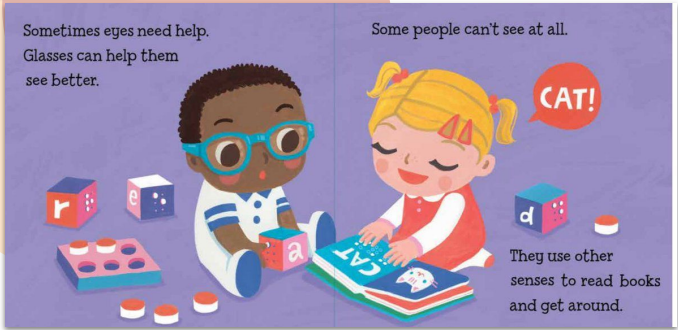
Top right [The cover of I Can, Can You? Is shown. It has a photograph of a toddler with Down Syndrome sitting in a grassy area. She is smiling and wearing a summer

onsie with pink flowers.]

Bottom right [The cover of I Like Berries, Do You? Is shown. It has a photograph of a toddler with Down Syndrome sitting at a picnic table in a green park. The toddler wears a white shirt under a red vest and is eating strawberries from a bowl on the table.]



Baby Loves the Five Senses: Sight!



Lauren

Image Description: Top image [An open board book with two pages shown. The first page has a blue background with red and white shoes and white laces. The shoes are embossed and the laces are real.]

Bottom Image [The cover and three pages of Baby Loves the Five Senses: Sight is shown. The cover shows a child with light brown skin and dark curly hair pointing to their eyes. The child wears a pair of red and blue sunglasses in their hair. Behind the child is a rainbow. The first page of the book is a green background with the same child from the cover holding a blue sand shovel. The sun is shining on the child from the top right corner. The last two pages show two children playing on a purple background. The child on the right is Black and wears blue glasses and a white and blue outfit with buttons. Around him are blocks and a sorting game. The child on the left is White with blond pigtails. She is using her hands to read Braille on a book that has an image of a cat and the word "cat". There is also a block and a piece to the sorting game next to her.]

Picture Books



Ages 3-9

Radeen

A full book list will be available on the resources slide at the end of our presentation. The book lists we have compiled are organized by disability category alphabetically. Again, we acknowledge labels can be harmful and tried to organize the book list for the practical use of educators.

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Using Picture Books with Elementary Learners

- Include in classroom library
- Mentor texts that promote equity
- Independent or partner reading (traveling book)
- Social justice lessons
- Read alouds:
 - ELA
 - *The Boy with Big Big Feelings*, *Ada Twist Scientist* -rhyming words
 - *My Ocean is Blue* - Poetry, adding details
 - *A Little Spot of Anxiety*-Speech/thought bubbles, reading with expression
 - Social Studies
 - *Just Ask* - diversity and inclusion
 - *All the Way to the Top*
 - *I am not a Label*
- Author study - feature authors with disabilities
 - *My Travelin' Eye* - Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw
 - *Not so Different* - Shane Burcaw
 - *Thank You Mr.Falker* - Patricia Polacco
 - *Just Ask* - Sonia Sotomayor
 -



Radeen

Image description: [A bookshelf with three shelves is shown. On the top shelf there are four book covers. The first book is titled *The Boy with Big Big Feelings*, which is printed in navy font. A boy is pictured with a large group of different colored balloons floating in the air above the top of his head. The second book is titled *Ada Twist, Scientist*, which is printed in dark purple font on a backdrop that is composed of various scientific equations and drawings. A boy is pointing to a girl who is holding a pencil in one hand about to write and has her other hand on her chin as if she were pondering. The third book is titled *My Ocean is Blue* in curved navy font across a sky and ocean background. Pictured on the cover is a girl looking through a pair of binoculars at the reader. The fourth book is titled *A Little Spot of Anxiety* in white font across a grey background. The o in the word spot is the picture of a circle with two eyes, two arms, and two legs who appears to be frowning. In the lower right corner of the book is a red triangle with the words Inspire to create a better you! Series.

On the middle shelf are three books. The first is titled *Just Ask* in a color floral and plant inspired print. At the bottom of the book are the words be brave, be different, be you in a dark magenta font. A boy pushing a wheelbarrow with a plant in it is pictured. The second is titled *All the Way to the Top* in red font, *How One Girl's Fight for Americans with disabilities Changed Everything* in smaller grey font. Pictured is a girl facing the reader who is climbing a step with two arms, one resting on the step and the other pushing her up. The background of the cover features two groups of people

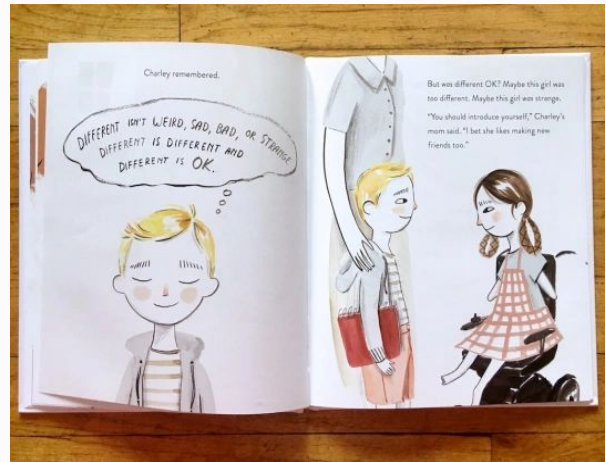
in light peach and light grey on both sides of the girl who are watching the girl climb. The last is titled *I am Not a Label*, with each letter in a different color font. Towards the bottom left center of the cover are the words 34 disabled artists, thinkers, athletes, and activists from past and present in small white font. Pictured are the portraits of 7 featured figures illustrated by Lauren Mark Baldo. The four figures on the top of the cover are Stevie Wonder, Lady Gaga, Naoki Higashida, and Aaron Philip. The three figures on the bottom of the cover are Stephen Hawking, Frida Kahlo, and Arunima Sinha.

The last shelf has three books. The first is *My Travelin' Eye* written in semi cursive light blue font with a red background. Pictured is the face of a girl wearing circular glasses that are rimmed with colorful beads with all different designs. A butterfly is resting on the top of the right lens. The second is a book titled *Not so Different* pastel yellow font, *What you Really Want to Ask About Having a Disability*, really in all caps with yellow font and the rest of the font in a pastel green. The background is sage green and has a photograph of the author Matt Carr with a speech bubble that says, "Go ahead. Ask me." The last book is *Thank you Mr.Falker*, printed in red font with a white background. A girl is pictured sitting at a desk with on hand keeping a book open and her other hand grasping some of her hair. A man is standing and looking at the girl with is arms crossed, one hand is holding a book and the other with his fingers resting on his chin. The hand of another person is pointing to words in a book and the body is facing towards the girl.]

When Charley Met Emma

Theme: Understanding Differences

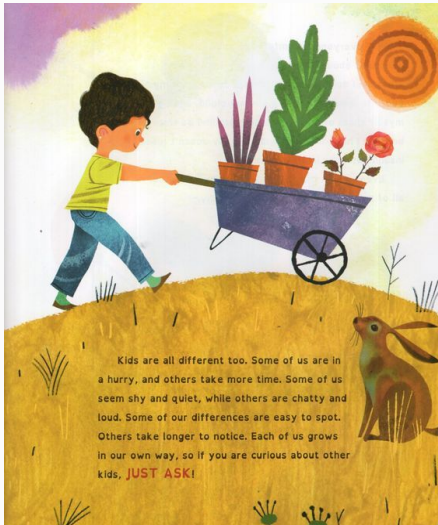
- Focuses on differences and similarities
- Encourages children to think about empathy, how they might feel and what to say when interacting
- Portrays character with disability as independent and capable
- Author is a parent of a child with a disability, advocate through first person experience
- Written for all children



Radeen

Image description: [There are one image on this slide from the book *When Charley Met Emma*. The first image shows two pages from the book *When Charlie Met Emma*. On the left page there is a picture of a boy with blond hair, his eyes closed, wearing a red and white striped shirt with a grey hoodie. A thought bubble above the boys head reads, "Different isn't weird, sad, bad, or strage. Different is different and different is OK. The background on both pages is white. On the right page the same boy is pictured with his mom who has a hand resting on the boy's shoulder on the left. The boy is holding a red notebook and facing a girl without the lower half of her right leg in a power wheelchair on the right. The girl has brown hair that has been braided and tied into two loops that sit on both sides of her neck. The girl is wearing a grey t-shirt with a red and white windowpane dress pattern. The boy and girl are looking at one another and smiling. The black text is printed on the upper right and reads: But was different OK? Maybe this girl was too different. Maybe this girl was strange. "You should introduce yourself, " Charley's mom said. "I bet she likes making new friends too."]

Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You



Theme: Understanding Differences

- Author with a disability
- Recognizes strengths in being different
- Represents diverse ethnic characters across different disabilities
- Story and illustration parallels diversity within our society
- Encourages exploration of differences to seek clarification versus making assumptions
 - **Important note** - not all individuals with a disability will want to talk about it

Radeen

Image Description: [A page from *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* is shown. A child with black hair, a yellow shirt, blue pants, green socks, and brown shoes is pictured pushing a grey wheelbarrow with three plants. An orange sun with light brown circular outlines, decreasing in size is in the upper right corner. The child is walking on a patch of mustard yellow grass. A brown rabbit is pictured to the right of the text on the bottom half of the page. The text on the page reads: Kids are all different too. Some of us are in a hurry, and others take more time. Some of us seem shy and quiet, while other are chatty and loud. Some of our differences are easy to spot. Others take longer to notice. Each of us grows in our own way, so if you are curious about other kids, **JUST ASK!** The font is black and the words just ask are in red font.]

What Do You Do With a Voice Like That?

Theme: Highlighting Strengths

- Captures experiences of a Black, female historical figure with a disability - Barbara Jordan
- Portrays strengths of individuals with disability, possessing and using voice
- Addresses societal barriers
- Advocacy



That *voice*.

That big, bold, booming, crisp, clear, confident voice.
It caused folks to sit right up, stand up straight, and take notice.

*What do you **do** with a voice like that?*

Radeen

Image description: [Pictured is Barbara Jordan, wearing a pink collared dress with white polka dots, pink circle earrings, brown glasses and has her hair pinned up. Her mouth is open and she is reading from a light tan piece of paper that she is holding with her hand. A group of 10 people including adults and children, appear in the background and are watching and listening to Barabara speak. The text appears on the lower right in black and pink font with mixed sizes. The text reads: That voice. That big, bold, booming, crips, clear, confident voice. It caused folds to sit right up, stand up striaght, and take notice. What do you do with a voice like that.]

Good to Be Me



Theme: Celebrating Kids Being Kids

- Celebrates diversity without focusing on disability
- Illustrations represent diversity across ethnicity, disability and appearances
- Includes discussion guide for conversations about diversity and inclusion

Radeen

Image description: [The words celebrating kids being kids appears in the lower left corner of the slide in black font. The image on the slide is a picture from a page of the book *Good to Be Me*. Pictured are kids playing outside at a park. The park has light green grass and grey sidewalks that lead to the ice cream stand from the main path. There are two kids swinging, a kid standing on the top of a slide, a boy using a hula hoop, a boy riding a ladybug rocking rider, a girl riding her bike, a girl holding a balloon and laughing, a girl pushing another girl in a wheelchair holding a balloon, and a kid looking at the park. The kids pictured up close are all laughing and smiling.]

Gary's Gigantic Dream



Theme: Addressing Barriers

- Illustrations support inclusion
- Provides background on accessing a wheelchair - individualized fitting and evaluation
- Wheelchair portrayed as a different means of moving, not as limiting
- Emphasis on similarities

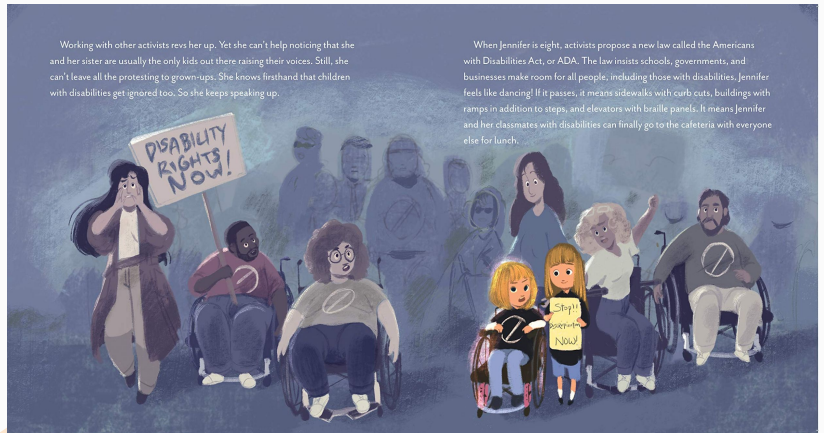
Radeen

Image Description: [The image shows two pages from the book *Gary's Gigantic Dream*. On the left page, there are three different animal kid characters (a goat, a cheetah and a giraffe) playing tag outside on the grass in the middle of three bushes. The giraffe is in a wheelchair, with one hand on the wheel and one extending out to reach and tag the goat. On the right page is an image of the giraffe in a wheelchair playing basketball with an elephant and rhino kid character. The giraffe is shooting a basketball into the hoop. On the lower left corner, there is a different scene, showing the giraffe in the wheelchair licking some mac and cheese out of a bowl. All of the characters on these pages are smiling.]

All the Way to the Top

Theme: Addressing Barriers

- Historical context of disability - American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- True story of Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins
- Social model of disability
- Kids as advocates



Radeen

Image Description: [The image shown is two pages from the book *All the Way to the Top*. The images from both pages form a single picture with several people protesting at a disability rights movement event. On the left there are three people. One woman cupping her hands around her mouth, two people in wheelchairs, with one holding a disability rights now sign. On the right there are five people. Two girls stand side by side. One girl is sitting in a wheelchair and the other is standing and holding a sign. There is a grown up standing behind the two girls and to the right of the girls are two individuals in wheelchairs. The text is printed on top of the pages in small white font.]

Middle Grades



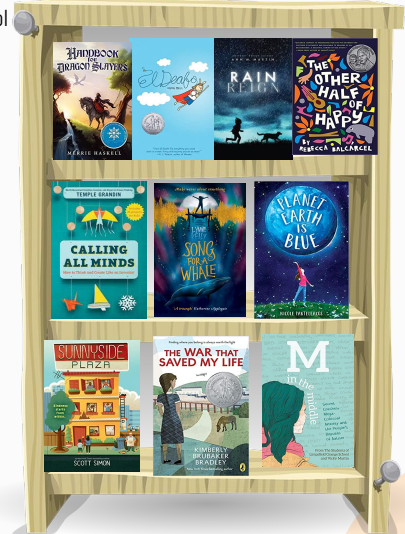
Ages 9-14

Lauren

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Using Books in Middle Grades

- Include representations of people with disabilities in your classroom and/or school library
- Share book talks and book trailers
- Student-driven choice reading
- Literature Circles
- Embed disability into your curriculum
 - In the ELA classroom
 - *Rain Reign* - Homonyms and Homophones
 - *El Deafo* - languages and communication (author Cece Bell is Deaf)
 - *Handbook for Dragon Slayers* - reimagined, feminist fairy tale
 - *The Other Half of Happy* - poetry
 - In the STEM classroom
 - *Calling All Minds: How to Think and Create Like an Inventor*
 - *Song for a Whale* - oceanography
 - *Planet Earth is Blue* - Space Shuttle Challenger
 - In the Social Studies classroom
 - *Sunnyside Plaza* - Disability rights as a civil rights movement
 - *M in the Middle* - written by Autistic girls who experience segregated education
 - *The War that Saved My Life* - World War II



Lauren

Image description: [A book shelf with three shelves is shown.]

On the top shelf, there are four book covers. The first is *HandBook for Dragon Slayers*, which is written in a navy medieval script. A girl on horseback is pictured with a sunset behind her and dragon flying in the sky. The book cover also has a blue award that reads Schneider Family Book Award. The second book is *El Deafo*, which is written in dark blue cursive on a light blue sky background. A cartoon bunny is dressed as a superhero and is flying past clouds in the sky. The book cover also has a silver award that reads Newberry Honor Book. The third book is *Rain Reign*, which is written in white print across a dark and stormy sky. Beneath the title, a girl and her dog are seen running across a field. The fourth book is *The Other Half of Happy*, which is written in white text on a black background. The title has colorful pictures of leaves, flowers, shapes, a brown guitar and a gray animal. The book cover has a silver award that reads Pura Belpre Honor Book.

On the middle shelf, there are three books. The first is *Calling All Minds*, which is written in black text on a light teal background. Around the text box are children's creations of a parachute, a sailboat, and a snowflake. The second book is *Song for a Whale*, written in the yellow text in the middle of the cover. Above the title, a person stands with arms up to the sky with the moon behind them. Below the title, a whale is shown under the deep, dark sea. The third book is *Planet Earth is Blue*, which is written in white text on a blue Earth in the center of the cover. Under the planet, a

person wearing a red shirt and blue pants reaches up to touch the planet.

On the bottom shelf, there are three books. The first is Sunnyside Plaza, which is written across the top of the roof of a three story apartment building. The building is orange and people are shown in the windows. Outside the apartment building, people walk in a grassy area next to a tree. The next book is The War That Saved My Life, which is written in red text across a light blue sky. Below the title, a girl in a gray dress with a clubbed foot is shown looking out over a farm with a fence and a brown horse. The book cover also has a silver award that reads Newberry Honor Book. The third book is M in the Middle, which is written in white script on a light teal background. A dark-haired girl is shown from the shoulders up, with her face looking away from the reader.]

Selected Texts for Middle Grades

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling

- Characters with disabilities are 3 dimensional and capable
- Characters are not portrayed as inspirational or other problematic stereotypes
- Central theme is not disability

The Truth as Told By Mason Buttle by Leslie Connor

- Addresses societal barriers like bullying for kids with disabilities
- Disability is not the central theme, but perceptions of a person with a disability are questioned and proven inaccurate

As Brave As You by Jason Reynolds

- Blind character portrayed as independent; discussion of accommodations
- Portrays Black kids being kids

Kinda Like Brothers by Coe Booth

- Includes racial and family diversity
- Characters are multifaceted and dynamic

El Deafo by Cece Bell

- Author and illustrator Cece Bell is Deaf
- Graphic novel is accessible
- Disability is portrayed as a strength



Lauren

Image description: [A book shelf is shown with three shelves.

On the first shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled Mystery/Action & Adventure. The first book is *Insignificant Events in the Life of Cactus*, which is written in black text with red and green borders. The background is a desert with light brown sand with six green cactuses dotting the landscape. A lighter brown trail is shown snaking through the desert. The second book is *Tornado Brain*, which is written in white text on a light blue background at the top of the cover. Below the title, a girl is shown in the same light blue color, surrounded by a field of red. The girl is holding up a white bike and has an image of tornado coming out of her head. The third book is *The Iron Trial*, which is written in gold print. A fierce looking creature is centered with a skull-like face and a black, hooded cloak. Below the title, three people are shown posed as though they are ready to fight. The fourth book is *The Truth as Told By Mason Buttle*, which is written in yellow type over the dark, leafy branches of a tree. Below the title, the trunk of the tree is shown with a yellow-orange sunset behind it. A boy is seen looking up at the tree. The cover has a blue award that reads Schneider Family Book Award and a silver award that reads National Book Award Finalist.

On the middle shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled Family. The first book is *As Brave As You*, which is written in white handwriting script over a seafoam green background. A tree is shown in the top right corner. Two Black boys with short hair are shown playing, with both wearing white t-shirts. The cover has a blue medal

that reads Schneider Family Book Award, a gold medal that reads Kirkus Prize Winner, and a black and silver medal that reads Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book. The second book is *Kinda Like Brothers*, which is written in yellow block type at the top of the cover. Two Black boys are shown on a basketball court with apartment buildings behind them. The first boy is center left, and is closer to the front. He has short, black hair and wears a red t-shirt. He has one arm crossed over his chest and has a serious face. The second boy is further back and is looking toward the other boy. He wears a white tank top and has his hands in his pockets. The third book is *Caterpillar Summer*, which is written in blue type across a light orange sky dotted with white, puffy clouds. Two White children stand back to back on a sandy beach with the ocean behind them. On the child on the left is a girl wearing shorts and a light blue t-shirt. She holds a fishing pole. The child on the right is wearing shorts and a yellow t-shirt. The fourth book is *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, which is written in yellow typewriter print across a red background. Two white hands are shown gripping bars, like those of a prison. Above the title, a white hat is shown with a black striped band. The hat is cocked to the side in a style popularized by Al Capone. Text at the bottom right is stamp-like and reads *Tales from Alcatraz* in yellow. A silver circle in the top left corner reads Newberry Honor Book.

On the bottom shelf, there are four books and the shelf reads Non-Fiction. The first book is *Her Own Two Feet*, which is written in black and green font across the top of a yellow background. A photograph of a smiling Black girl is shown sitting. She has short hair and wears a headband with a large white flower. She wears a white t-shirt and black shorts. She has casts on both legs that are decorated with colorful drawings and words. The second book is *Mia Lee is Wheeling Through Middle School*, which is written in light green print on a dark green starry sky. Below the title, a drawing shows an Asian girl using a wheelchair. She wears a blue top and a pink skirt. She is surrounded by a yellow glow. The third book is *The Sound of Silence*, which is written in dark blue type across a light blue sky. A roller coaster is shown with two people standing in front of it. The person on the left is an adult and wears a light shirt and brown pants. The person on the right is a child and wears light brown clothes. The two people are facing each other, as though in conversation. The fourth book is *When Stars Are Scattered*, which is written in light blue text across a pink-purple starry sky. Two Black boys are shown walking together on a purple-gray path. Both boys have short black hair. The boy on the right wears a red top and the boy on the left wears a blue top. The boy with the red top is slightly taller than the boy in the blue shirt, and has his arm around the boy in the blue shirt.]

Young Adult



Ages 14+

Lauren

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Using Books in High School

- Include representations of people with disabilities in your classroom and/or school library
- Share book talks and book trailers
- Student-driven choice reading
- Literature Circles - identity development, social justice, criticality
- Embed disability into your curriculum
 - In the ELA classroom
 - *The Disturbed Girl's Dictionary* - written in dictionary format!
 - *Unbroken: 13 Stories Starring Disabled Teens* - short stories
 - *A Time to Dance* - lyrical verse
 - *All the Bright Places*, *Our Chemical Hearts*, *Five Feet Apart* - comparative analysis between the books and movie versions
 - In the STEM classroom
 - *Challenger Deep* - oceanography
 - *Because You'll Never Meet Me* - experimentation
 - *Hurt Go Happy* - inspired by a chimpanzee who learned sign language
 - In the Social Studies classroom
 - *Good Kings Bad Kings* - Disability rights as a civil rights movement
 - *Accidents of Nature* - Disability rights as a civil rights movement
 - *Darius the Great is Not Okay* - living in another country (Iran)



Lauren

Image description: [A book shelf is shown with three shelves.

On the first shelf, there are three books. The first book is *The Disturbed Girl's Dictionary*, which is written in white type. The background is a yellow and green painted wall with a portion that is broken to show boards behind it. The title text is situated directly over a white, claw-foot bathtub on a dark wood colored floor. The second book is *Unbroken*, which is written in pink script on a black and white cover. The image under the title shows a drawing of two teenagers embracing each other with a starry sky behind them. The third book is *A Time to Dance* on a deep purple background with an Indian teenage girl sitting on the ground in a red, green, and gold traditional dress. Her dark hair is in a bun with golden accessories. Her hands are cupped in front of her and she holds red flower petals in them.

On the middle shelf, there are three books. The first book is *Challenger Deep*, which is written in white and light blue text in the middle of the cover. The background is underwater in the ocean with a tangle white line connecting to a person floating under the water. Two gold awards are on the left side of the cover. The top one reads National Book Award Winner and the lower one reads Golden Kite Award Winner. The second book is *Because You'll Never Meet Me*, which is written in black text on power lines. The power lines and utility pole are shown in black over a gradient light blue sky. A black and silver award is in the bottom left and reads William C. Morris YA Debut Award Finalist. The third book is *Hurt Go Happy*, which is written in large red

letters across the cover. On the left side, the black and white animated face of a chimpanzee is shown with words coming from its head. A blue circle on the right reads Schneider Family Book Award.

On the bottom shelf, there are three books. The first book is *Good Kings Bad Kings*, which is written in black type on a yellow hand and a red hand. The hands are next to each other on a purple background. A gold circle at the top right reads PEN Bellweather Prize Winner for Socially Engaged Fiction. The second book is *Accidents of Nature*, which is written in red print on a yellow speech bubble. The background is black, which yellow, blue, and pink phrases from disability rights written around the yellow speech bubble. The third book is *Darius the Great is Not Okay*, which is written in white and blue type on a red sky. Below the title, two teenagers are pictured sitting next to each other. They are looking out over a city and away from the camera.]

Selected Texts for Young Adults

Say What You Will by Cammie McGovern

- Author is a parent of a child with disability
- Main character uses mobility aids and uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Characters are portrayed as interested in sex and dating, like teenagers without disabilities
- Barriers to access are confronted and challenged

Sadie by Courtney Summers

- Challenges assumptions about people with speech disabilities
- Main character is portrayed as strong and capable
- Audiobook is excellent and accessible

Monday's Not Coming by Tiffany Jackson

- Main character's disability is not centered in the story
- Character is 3 dimensional and dynamic
- Challenges perceptions of learning disabilities in schools

Nujeen by Nujeen Mustafa

- Author is a person with a disability and a refugee from Syria
- Highlights impact of war and refugee status on people with disabilities
- Author is portrayed as inspirational for surviving



Lauren

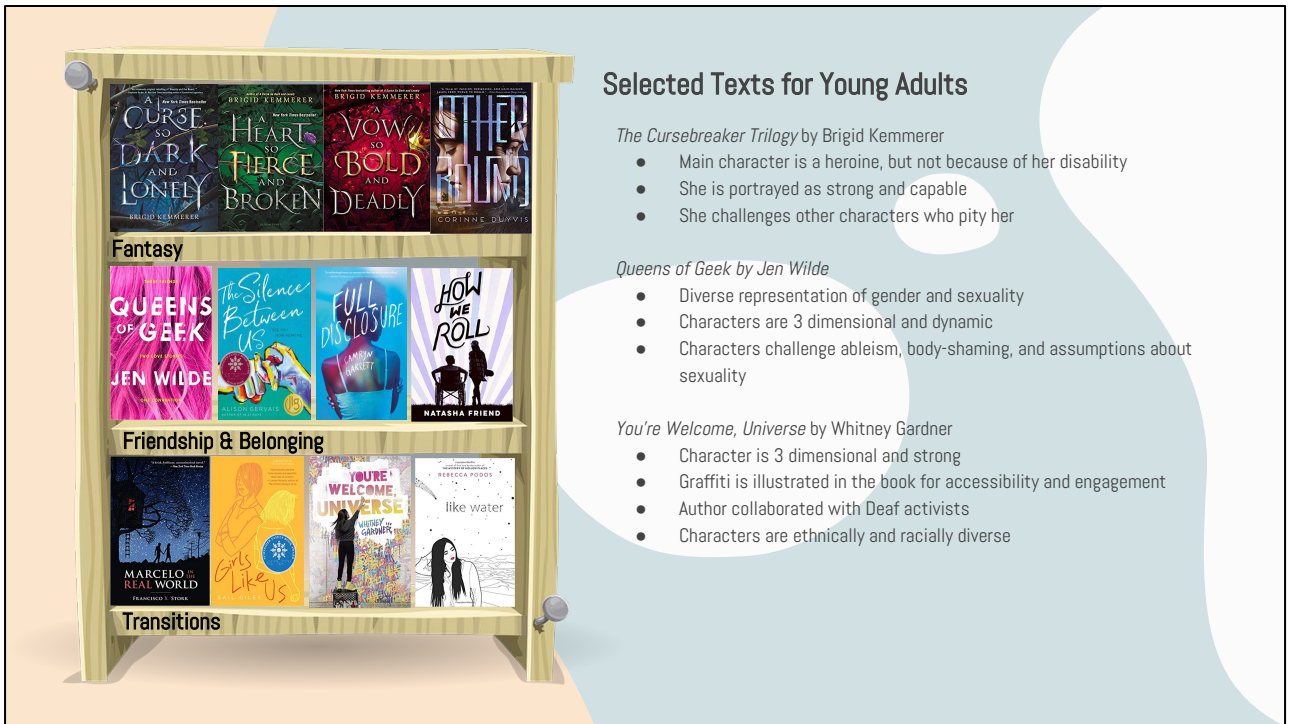
Image description: [A book shelf is shown with three shelves.

On the first shelf, there are five books and the shelf is labeled Romance/Dating. The first book is *Our Chemical Hearts*, which is written in black script on a white background with blue fish swimming across the cover. The second book is *Say What You Will*, which is written in purple handwriting script in a teal speech bubble. The third book is *Five Feet Apart*, which is written in pink script in the middle of a pair of light blue lungs decorated with pink flowers. The background is a dark blue color. A silver circle in the top left corner reads Now A Major Motion Picture. The fourth book is *Love From A to Z*, which is written in white script on a light blue background. Below the title, two people sit on a row of chairs (like those found in an airport or train station). On the left, a teenage boy wears an open blue long-sleeved jacket over a white tee, blue jeans, and white shoes. He has a duffel bag between his feet. On the right, a teenage girl wears a blue hijab, a white top, and khaki pants. A tan rolling suitcase is next to her. The fifth book is *All The Bright Places*, which is written in black script on yellow, blue, and pink Post-It Notes down the left side of the cover. On the right side of the cover, blue, yellow, and pink Post-It Notes show a black drawing of a finch and a picture of a purple violet flower. A red outlined white circle reads Netflix A Netflix Film.

On the middle shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled Mystery/Thriller. The first book is *Sadie*, which is written in black typewriter script across the middle of the

cover. The background is white and shows a drawing of a teenage girl with long hair blowing across her face. She is drawn completely in black and white except for her bright red zip-up sweatshirt. A gold circle to the left of the girl reads Winner of the Edgar Award. The second book is *Turtles All The Way Down*, which is written in black script over a beige background with an orange spiral. The third book is *Monday's Not Coming*. The cover is bright red, with a photograph of a Black teenage girl sitting in the middle with her knees up and her arms resting on top of her knees. She wears shorts, a tank top, and canvas shoes. Her hair is in long braids. Around her body, the title is written in white script. A black and green award on the cover reads Coretta Scott King Award. The fourth book is *The Oracle Code*, which is written in white type across the middle of the cover. Behind the title, a drawing of a White teenager is shown with shoulder length red hair, a gray and yellow zip-up hoodie, and gray pants. The teenager's hand is in a fist and rest on the armrest of their wheelchair.

On the bottom shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled Non-Fiction. The first book is *Laughing At My Nightmare*, which is written in white and yellow type across the top. The background is a grayish blue. In the middle, a photograph of the author, Shane Burcaw, is shown. He is a White man with short brown hair who wears a white shirt and khaki pants and uses a wheelchair. A black and silver award on the cover reads YALSA-ALA Excellence in Young Adult Nonfiction Finalist. The second book is *The Bite of the Mango*, which is written in fuschia type across the top. Below the title, a pair of brown hands are shown holding a mango. The third book is *Nujeen*, which is written in white type across the middle. Behind the title, a photograph of the author, Nujeen Mustafa, who is a Syrian woman with long, dark, straight hair. She wears a black long-sleeved top. She is smiling and has one hand resting on the table in front of her and the other hand reaching up to touch her hair. A magenta circle on the left contains an endorsement from Malala Yousafzai. The fourth book is *Ya Samah! Moments from My Life*, which is written in small yellow script on the left center. The author's name, Tatyana McFadden is written in large white print at the top. A photograph of the author is shown on a brick-colored track with green grass next to it. She is a White woman who is using a racing wheelchair. She wears a biking helmet and an exercise tank top.]



Selected Texts for Young Adults

The Cursebreaker Trilogy by Brigid Kemmerer

- Main character is a heroine, but not because of her disability
- She is portrayed as strong and capable
- She challenges other characters who pity her

Queens of Geek by Jen Wilde

- Diverse representation of gender and sexuality
- Characters are 3 dimensional and dynamic
- Characters challenge ableism, body-shaming, and assumptions about sexuality

You're Welcome, Universe by Whitney Gardner

- Character is 3 dimensional and strong
- Graffiti is illustrated in the book for accessibility and engagement
- Author collaborated with Deaf activists
- Characters are ethnically and racially diverse

Lauren

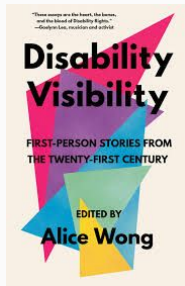
Image description: [A book shelf is shown with three shelves.

On the first shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled “Fantasy”. The first book is *A Curse So Dark and Lonely*, with the title written in white on a dark blue background with thorny branches. The second book is *A Heart So Fierce and Broken*, with the title written in white and gold on a dark green background. The third book is *A Vow So Bold and Deadly*, which is written in white and gold with a crimson background. The fourth book is *Otherbound*, with the title written in gradient light blue over the white faces of a teenage boy and a teenage girl facing away from each other. Both teens have dark hair.

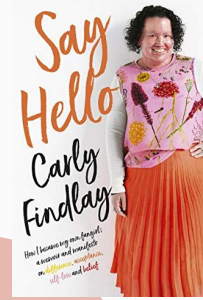
On the middle shelf, there are four books and the shelf is labeled “Friendship and Belonging”. The first book is *Queens of Geek*, written in white print over hot pink hair. The second book is *The Silence Between Us*, which is written in white script over a light blue background. Below the title, two drawn hands are shown linking fingers. The cover also has a red award seal that reads Schneider Family Honor Book. The third book is *Full Disclosure*, written in white print across a light blue cover and the image of a Black girl facing away from the camera. She wears a white tank top and her arms are crossed. The fourth book is *How We Roll*, which is written in black script across the top center. Below the title are the black images of a person using a wheelchair next to a person standing.

On the bottom shelf, there are four books. The first book is *Marcelo in the Real World*, which is written in white and red text on a black background across the bottom. Above the title, a starry sky is shown with a black treehouse on the left. Two people are seen walking away from the treehouse. The second book is *Girls Like Us*, which is written in orange script across the bottom. The background is light yellow and shows the outline drawing of two girls in orange. The cover also has a blue award seal that reads Schneider Family Book Award. The third book is *You're Welcome, Universe*, which is written in pink and light orange block text in a white painted area on a wall covered in graffiti. A girl is shown standing on a box and holding up a can of spray paint as though she is tagging the words of the title. She has long black hair and wears all black with white shoes. The fourth book is *Like Water*, which is written in blue type print on a white background. Below the title is a black and white drawing of a girl with long dark hair. Her face is serious and she looks to her left.]

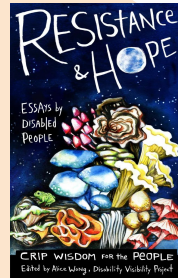
For Adult Readers



Disability Visibility
(edited by Alice Wong)



Say Hello (Findlay)



Resistance & Hope
(edited by Alice Wong)



The Pretty One (Brown)



Sitting Pretty (Taussig)

Radeen

Image description: Top left [The cover of Disability Visibility is shown. It is a cream colored book with a collage of pink, purple, blue, green, and yellow triangles. The title, Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories From The Twenty-First Century, and edited by Alice Wong are in black text.]

Top right

[The cover of Say Hello is shown. A smiling White woman with curly brown hair is shown wearing a pink flowered top and an orange pleated skirt. The title of the book, Say Hello, is in loopy orange print. The author's name, Carly Findlay, is in loopy black print. The background is white.]

Middle

[The cover of Resistance & Hope is shown. The background is a dark blue, starry sky. Multi Colored flowers and mushrooms are shown growing. The title of the book, Resistance & Hope: Essays by Disabled People is written in white handwriting script in the top right and middle left. The O in Hope is the moon. At the bottom, in a black box, white print reads Crip Wisdom for the People, Edited by Alice Wong, Disability Visibility Project.]

Bottom left

[The cover of The Pretty One is shown. A pink box at the top contains white text that reads Creator of the Viral Hashtag #DisabledAndCute in yellow and Keah Brown in white. A photo of Keah Brown is in the middle, with a background of a paved path and lush green trees. She is a dark-skinned Black woman with straight black, shoulder length hair. She wears black glasses and a gray cowl neck sweater. She has one

hand in front of her body and the other touching her chin. She is smiling broadly, or laughing. At the bottom, a yellow box contains text that reads On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love with Me in blue print.]

Bottom right

[The cover of *Sitting Pretty* is shown. The background is a muted orange color. The title, *Sitting Pretty*, is written in white handwriting script across the top and bottom. The subtitle, *The View From My Ordinary, Resilient, Disabled Body*, is written in black handwriting script in the middle. Next to the subtitle, a White woman is shown using a wheelchair. She appears to be dancing or stretching. Her hair is styled in a dirty blonde bob. She wears a yellow t-shirt and black shorts with black shoes. The author's name, *Rebekah Taussig* is printed in black handwriting script at the bottom.]

Resources

[Full list of books from our presentation](#)

Stay current on new children's and young adult literature, as well as disability rights news!

- [DisabilityInKidLit.com](#) - reviews of children's and YA literature that features characters with disabilities
- [TeachingBooks.net](#) - resources for WI teachers, including lesson plans, vocabulary, video resources, etc.
- [Cooperative Children's Book Center \(CCBC\)](#) - non-lending library for WI teachers
- [Disability Visibility Project](#) - there's a podcast!
- [Teaching Tolerance](#) - Lesson plan for teaching students about ableism and disability
- [Analyzing Books for Ableism](#) - 10 quick ways to analyze
- [Social Justice Books](#) - book lists organized by theme on social justice issues
 - [Selecting Anti-Bias Books](#) - incorporating a social justice lens with book selection

Radeen

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Research Base

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Radeen

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Thanks!

Please contact us with any questions or additional book recommendations!

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Lauren

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