

## Recommended Children's Books On Bullying / Friendship Issues

**NOTE:** Please read the book first to make sure the content and reading level are age-appropriate for your particular reader(s).

### **PRESCHOOL / ELEMENTARY FICTION:**

- Blabey, Aaron. *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parseley*. Pennsylvania: Front Street, 2008. A short, sweet story about how two very different people can be good friends.
- Cave, Kathryn. *Something Else*. New York: Mondo Publishing, 1998. Something Else wants to be like everybody else but finds he isn't. This is a lovely story about accepting people's differences.
- Cosby, Bill. *The Meanest Thing To Say*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1997. When a new boy in his second grade class tries to get the other students to play a game that involves saying the meanest thing possible to one another, Little Bill takes his father's advice and uses the expression "So?"
- De Paola, Tomi. *Oliver Button is a Sissy*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1979. Oliver Button is teased by the boys in his class for pursuing his dream of being a tap dancer.
- Jenkins, Emily. *The Little Bit Scary People*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008. A lovely little story about how some people look or at a little bit scary, but if you'd get to know them better, you'd find out they're really not. A great vehicle for enhance perspective taking for little ones.
- Leoni, Leo. *Swimmy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1963. This classic story shows how being different can be a strength and how friends can band together to protect one another.
- Lovell, Patty. *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. When the class bully at her new school makes fun of her, Molly remembers what her grandmother told her and she feels good about herself.
- McCain, Becky. *Nobody Knew What To Do: A Story About Bullying*. Florida: Magnetix Corporation, 2002. This story delivers the important message that bystanders can make a difference.
- Munson, Derek. *Enemy Pie*. California: Chronicle Books, 2000. A fun story of how a little boy, with the help of his Dad, learns a delicious lesson for turning his number one enemy into a good friend.
- Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *King of the Playground*. New York: Atheneum, 1991. Kevin is afraid of the bully Sammy. With the help of his dad, Kevin handles Sammy.
- Nickle, John. *Ant Bully*. New York: Scholastic, 2006. Lucas is picked on by Sid, the neighborhood bully, and takes his anger out on a colony of ants. The ants retaliate and teach him a lesson about empathy.
- Otoshi, Kathryn. *One*. California: Ko Kids Books, 2008. This is a lovely story for preschoolers about how, when you stand up for others who aren't treated well, you can make a positive difference.
- Otoshi, Kathryn. *Zero*. California: Ko Kids Books, 2010. A great book that shows how everyone has value.
- Seskin, Steve and Allen Shamblin. *Don't Laugh At Me*. California: Tricycle Press, 2002. This picture book helps kids think twice about teasing and name-calling.

## ELEMENTARY FICTION:

- Bosch, Carl. *Bully on the Bus*. Washington: Parenting Press Inc., 1988. Here, the reader gets to choose the outcome of the story when the protagonist is confronted by a bully on the school bus.
- Burnett, Karen Gedig. *Simon's Hook; A Story About Teases and Put-downs*. California: GR Publishing, 2000. When Simon gets teased Grandma Rose teaches him how to refuse to “take the hook.”
- Clements, Andrew. *Jake Drake, Bully Buster*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001. In the fourth grade, Jake encounters Link Baxter, SuperBully. Jake learns how to deal with this bully even though Link never stops being one.
- DePino, Catherine. *Blue Cheese Breath and Stinky Feet*. Washington D.C.: Magination Press, 2004. Steve is picked on by a bully and is afraid things will get worse if he tells asks for help. His parents come up with a plan to help their son.
- Howe, James. *PINKY, REX and the BULLY*. New York: Atheneum Books, 1996. Seven-year-old Pinky learns the importance of identity as he defends his favorite color, pink, and his friendship with a girl, Rex, from the neighborhood bully.
- Hoose, Phillip and Hannah Hoose. *Hey Little Ant*. California: Tricycle Press, 1998. A little ant tries to convince a boy not to squish him because he has feelings and a family, too. The book allows the reader to determine the outcome of the story—great opportunities for discussion!
- Lombard, Jenny. *Drita My Homegirl*. New York: Puffin Books, 2006. Drita escapes war-torn Kosovo and ends up going to a New York public school. Maxie, an African-American student there, doesn't want to have anything to do with her until they're paired up for a school project. A great story about how friendship can bloom and overcome two very different cultures.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Better Than You*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. This story shows kids how adopting a “better than you” boastful attitude can break friendships rather than build them.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Confessions of a Former Bully*. California: Tricycle Press, available in August 2010. Katie gets caught being socially cruel on the playground and, with the help of caring adults, learns more about bullying and how to be a better friend. This is a great resource on bullying and friendship issues for children and adults who work with them.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Just Kidding*. California: Tricycle Press, 2006. A joke that has a sharp edge to it can cut you to pieces. That's what D.J. finds out from his encounters with a smart-aleck classmate. With the help of grownups he trusts, D.J. learns how to stand up to put downs and make healthier friendship choices.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *My Secret Bully*. California: Tricycle Press, 2005. Monica is emotionally bullied by her friend Katie and learns how to cope and thrive with the help of her mother. The book also includes helpful tips, discussion questions and additional resources for parents, teachers and counseling professionals.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Sorry!* California: Tricycle, Press, 2006. Jack learns that there's a whole lot more to a real apology than a simple “sorry!” This story illustrates how a child can take ownership of hurtful behavior and make right his/her wrongs.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Too Perfect*. California: Tricycle Press, 2009. At first, Maisie thinks Kayla is perfect. But the more she gets to know Kayla, the more she begins to question whether being perfect is really so wonderful. This book will raise meaningful discussions on working to your potential, not to perfection.

## ELEMENTARY FICTION, continued...

- Ludwig, Trudy. *Trouble Talk*®. California: Tricycle Press, 2008. Bailey loves to talk and everything—including everyone is fair game. Bailey soon learns that her “trouble talk” (gossiping, spreading hurtful rumors, sharing other’s information, etc.) is not the way to win lasting friendships.
- Madonna. *The English Roses*. New York: Callaway, 2003. An exclusive girls’ club learns a lesson about judging their peers before really getting to know them.
- Madonna. *Mr. Peabody’s Apples*. New York: Callaway, 2003. A young boy learns the power of words when spreading a rumor about his teacher and baseball coach Mr. Peabody.
- Moss, Peggy. *One of Us*. Maine: Tilbury House, 2010. Roberta’s first day at a new school is a bit confusing as she tries to find friends who can accept her for who she is. This book will generate great discussions about peer pressure of trying to fit in with others.
- Moss, Peggy and Dee Dee Tardif. *Our Friendship Rules*. Maine: Tilbury House, 2007. When Alexandra dumps her best friend Jenny for the new, cool girl, she soon learns that friendship is more important than popularity.
- Moss, Peggy. *Say Something*. Maine: Tilbury House, 2004. A girl witnesses others being mean to her peer and learns the important lesson that being a silent bystander is not the solution.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Mr. Lincoln’s Way*. New York: Philomel Books, 2001. When Principal Lincoln discovers Eugene the school bully knows a lot about birds, he uses this interest to help Eugene overcome his intolerance.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. New York: Philomel Books, 2001. Based on her own experience as a child, Polacco crafts a wonderful story about how teachers can make a difference when it comes to addressing bullying and helping children with learning disabilities.

## ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION:

- Blume, Judy. *Blubber*. New York: Yearling, 1974. A realistic story about bullying that takes place among fifth grade girls.
- Codell, Esmé Raji. *Sahara Special*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2003. While no longer in Special Ed, Sahara Junes has to repeat fifth grade. Her new, unconventional teacher opens up her world and her heart to celebrate her uniqueness and strengths.
- Codell, Esme Raji. *Vive La Paris*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2007. Fifth grader Paris McCray’s older brother is being bullied by a younger girl. In her eager efforts to right some wrongs, Paris learns a powerful lesson on the dangers of ignorance.
- Dowell, Frances O’Roark. *The Secret Language of Girls*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004. Eleven-year-old Kate can’t understand why her best friend Marilyn starts treating her like an enemy.
- DeClements, Barthe. *Nothing’s Fair in Fifth Grade*. New York: Viking Press, 1981. A fifth grade class, repelled by the overweight new student who has serious home problems, finally learns to accept her.
- Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses*. New York: Scholastic, 1973. A Newberry Honor’s classic about a group of who pick on someone who is a little different. Told from the perspective of the bully’s best friend.

## ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION, continued...

- Flake, Sharon. *The Skin I'm In*. New York: Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children, 1998. Seventh grader Maleeka, with the guidance of her teacher, overcomes low self-esteem and the bullying behaviors of peers.
- Gervay, Susanne. *I am Jack*. Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 2009. Jack, an eleven-year-old boy, is being bullied at school. Caring bystanders and grown-ups come to his rescue.
- Hahn, Mary Downing. *Stepping on the Cracks*. New York: Clarion Books, 1991. In 1944, while her brother is overseas fighting in World War II, eleven-year-old Margaret and her friend find out that the school bully Gordy is hiding his brother, an army deserter. The girls decide to help Gordy.
- Humphrey, Sandra McLeod. *Hot Issues, Cool Choices: Facing Bullies, Peer Pressure, Popularity and Putdowns*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2007. This powerful collection of short stories offers great opportunities for generating ethical and moral discussions with tweens and teens.
- Koss, Amy Goldman. *The Girls*. New York: Dial Books for young Readers, 2000. A group of girls get advice from peers, parents and school nurses concerning the manipulative relationships among them.
- Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2006. In this award-winning novel, 12-year-old Catherine gives her autistic brother rules to prevent him from embarrassing her. This book offers young readers powerful lessons of acceptance and tolerance of people who look and behave differently than them.
- Mausser, Pat Rhoads. *A Bundle of Sticks*. New York: Atheneum, 1982. At the mercy of the class bully, fifth-grader Ben is sent to a Kajukenbo (martial arts) School, where he learns techniques to defend himself and embraces their peaceful philosophy.
- Millman, Dan. *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior: A Story About Courage and Love*. California: H.J. Kramer Inc., 1991. An old man named Socrates shows Danny that the best way of dealing with a bully is the way of the Peaceful Warrior, through courage and love.
- Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. August Pullman is a fifth grader born with a facial deformity. After being homeschooled for years, he is the new kid at Beecher Prep. This is a wonderful story about the power of acceptance and kindness. Highly recommended!
- Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: HarperCollins, 1977. This Newberry-winning novel is a tale of friendship between two fifth graders who get picked on by their peers for being different.
- Sachar, Louis. *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. New York: Random House, 1987. Bradley, a fifth grader is a social outcast and a bully. With the help of a school counselor, he learns to change his behavior, accept himself and others.
- Singer, Nicky. *Feather Boy*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2001. This story, woven with mystery and humor, is about the aggressor/target relationship of two boys, an adult "bully."
- Wilhelm, Doug. *The Revealers*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003. Three seventh graders team up and use their school Internet to reveal the amount of "bullying" taking place in their middle school.
- Wishinsky, Frieda. *Queen of the Toilet Bowl*. Canada: Orca Book Publishers, 2005. A Brazilian immigrant at a U.S high school is emotionally bullied by a popular girl. Suitable for lower-level readers (ages 10-14).

Zeier, Joan T. *Stick Boy*. New York: Atheneum, 1993. A growth spurt in the sixth grade makes skinny, self-conscious Eric a school misfit and victim of the class bully. Circumstances lead him to befriend Cynthia, a proud and spirited black girl who is disabled.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL / YOUNG ADULT FICTION:

- Asher, Jay. *Thirteen Reasons Why*. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. Clay, a high school student, receives a package of tapes in the mail from Hannah, his classmate and crush, who committed suicide two weeks earlier. In the tapes, she explains there are thirteen reasons (namely 13 people and their actions) who contributed to her decision to end her life. A powerful read!
- Bloor, Edward. *Tangerine*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1977. This novel highlights the role of adults, families, and schools in bullying situations. The story is set in rural Florida, with an eleven-year-old blind protagonist. NOTE: This is a graphic novel—please read first to make sure it’s appropriate for your readers.
- Brown, Jennifer. *Hate List*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009. A powerful story about the aftermath of a school shooting. Val, the protagonist, is haunted by the memory of her boyfriend, the school shooter, and the town and her family’s reaction to what they think her role was in it—was she a hero or a co-conspirator? Fascinating, intense read for mature young adults.
- Crutcher, Chris. *Staying Fat For Sarah Byrnes*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1993. An unforgettable novel about high school social outcasts Eric and Sarah who help one another to stand up against social cruelty among their peers and bullying adults. **IMPORTANT:** Deals with mature, sensitive subject matter—read first to see if it’s appropriate age-wise and content-wise for your reader(s).
- Friel, Maeve. *Charlie’s Story*. Georgia: Peachtree Publishers Ltd., 1997. A fourteen-year-old girl named Charlie struggles to come to terms with the reasons for her mother’s desertion, her father’s silence and the cruelty of her classmates.
- Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1962. A group of English schoolboys are plane-wrecked on a deserted island. This classic explores the boundary between human reason and brutality among competitive peers.
- Goobie, Beth. *Sticks and Stones*. Washington: Orca Book Publishers, 2002. Jujube is a high school student whose reputation takes a beating and decides to fight back against the malicious rumors.
- Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*. New York: Puffin Books, 1967, 1995. The two different social groups epitomize the struggles teens face with their search for self, peer pressure, gang violence, lack of parental influence and socioeconomic status.
- Mayfield, Sue. *Drowning Anna*. New York: Hyperion, 2002. Anna tries to kill herself because of the ongoing vicious acts done to her by Hayley, her so-called friend. This is a great book for generating thoughtful discussion.
- Spinelli, Jerry. *Crash*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Seventh grader “Crash” Coogan is comfortable with his cocky super-jock and bully nature until his grandfather’s stroke and an unusual Quaker boy make him reconsider the meaning of friendship and the importance of family.
- Spinelli, Jerry. *Loser*. New York: Joanna Cotler Books, 2002. Even though his classmates consider him strange and a loser, Daniel Zinkoff’s optimism and exuberance and the support of his loving family do not allow him to feel that way about himself.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL / YOUNG ADULT FICTION...Cont'd.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1990. Twelve-year-old Jeffrey comes to a small town, confronts racism, overcomes bullying and promotes harmony between rival factions.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Wringer*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. Young Palmer must either accept the violence of being a wringer at his town's annual Pigeon Day or find the courage to oppose it.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. This is an extraordinary and haunting novel of survival and courage in Nazi Germany during WWII. A young girl learns about the power of words and how they can lead to salvation or destruction.

## PRESCHOOL NONFICTION:

Agassi, Martine, Ph.D. *Hands Are Not for Hitting*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 2000. This Parent's Choice Selection Book helps children learn and practice fun and constructive things their hands can do. It also includes a section on activities adults can do with children.

Brown, Laurie Krasney and Marc Brown. *How To Be A Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them*. Massachusetts: Little Brown & Co., 2001. Dinosaurs illustrate how to make and keep friends.

Carlson, Nancy. *How to Lose All Your Friends*. New York: Puffin, 1997. The author uses humor to convey what it takes to be a good friend and make friends.

Gainer, Cindy. *I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Child's Book About Understanding and Celebrating Each Other*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing, 1998. Illustrations and simple text explore ways in which children are similar and different.

McCloud, Carol. *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* Michigan: Ferne Press, 2006. This story helps young children understand the importance of treating others with kindness and respect.

Payne, Lauren Murphy, and Claudia Rohling. *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing, 1997. This book describes how it feels when people get along well together and when they do not, and explains that one has control over how one reacts in both kinds of situations.

Thomas, Pat. *Stop Picking on Me*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2000. This book approaches the issue of bullying and feelings in a simple and interactive fashion.

Verdick, Elizabeth. *Words Are Not For Hurting*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing, 2004. For ages 4-8, this book focuses on the power of words when it comes to friendship and social skills.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NONFICTION:

Criswell, Patti Kelley. *A Smart Girl's Guide to Friendship Troubles*. Wisconsin: American Girl, LLC, 2003. This compact guide offers practical friendship advice and tips to girls ages 10 and up.

Criswell, Patti Kelley. *Friends: Making Them & Keeping Them*. Wisconsin: American Girl, LLC, 2006. This book includes information on how to make friends and keep them.

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## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NONFICTION, continued...

- Criswell, Patti Kelley. *Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends*. Wisconsin: American Girl, LLC, 2009. This book provides girls with tips, quizzes, and advice when it comes to dealing with bullies and bossiness.
- Johnston, Marianne. *Dealing With Bullying*. Minnesota: Hazelden, 1998. This book describes what is meant by “bullying,” and explains why bullies act as they do, how to deal with them, and how to stop being one.
- Kaufman, Gershen, Ph.D., et al. *Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid’s Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999. This Self-Help book for kids includes a section on “How to deal with bullies.” Provides the child with information, descriptions and interventions.
- Kivel, Paul. *I Can Make My World A Safer Place*. California: Hunter House Publishers, 2001. This book addresses the many ways someone can hurt others (including bullying) and what you can do to stop it.
- Levine, Karen. *Hana’s Suitcase*. Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company, 2002. This is a true story about a suitcase which arrived at a children’s Holocaust education center in Tokyo, Japan, and the mystery that is solved when the center’s curator searches for clues concerning the owner of that suitcase.
- Madison, Lynda. *The Feelings Book: The Care & Keeping of Your Emotions*. Wisconsin: Pleasant Co., 2002. Discusses a variety of emotions girls might experience and suggests ways of dealing with them.
- Polland, Barbara Ph.D. *We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution For Children*. California: Tricycle Press, 2000. Text and photographs designed to create opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of conflict and the variety of ways to resolve them.
- Romain, Trevor. *Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing, 1997. A simple handbook written for children about bullies, the myths surrounding bullying issues and interventions. Includes resources for students, teachers and parents.
- Romain, Trevor. *Cliques, Phonies, & Other Baloney*. Minnesota: Free Spirit Publishing 1998. Discusses cliques, what they are and their negative aspects, and gives advice on forming healthier relationships and friendships.
- Webster-Doyle, Terrence. *Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me: A Guide to Handling Bullies*. Vermont: Atrium Society, 1991. Stories and activities help young people to peacefully confront hostile aggression.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL / HIGH SCHOOL NONFICTION:

- Ellis, Deborah. *We Want You to Know: Kids talk About Bullying*. Canada: Coteau Books, 2011. Author Deborah Ellis asked students from ages nine to 19 to talk about their experiences with bullying. This book is a great resource for schools to generate thoughtful discussions with adult guidance.
- Hall, Megan Kelley and Carrie Jones, Editors. *Dear Bully: Seventy Authors Tell Their Stories*. New York: HarperTeen, 2011. This is a collection of contributions from popular YA novelists and children’s writers who share their personal stories of the bullies, the bullied, and the bystanders.
- New Moon Books Girls Editorial Board. *Friendship: How to Make, Keep, and Grow Your Friendships*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1999. Discusses friendships and how they affect our lives. Includes practical advice, activities, and suggestions for meeting people.

- Reisfeld, Randi and Morreale, Marie. *Got Issues Much? Celebrities Share Their Traumas and Triumphs*. New York: Scholastic, Inc. 1999. Celebrities whom teens admire/respect share some of their stories regarding friendship, body and self-image, as well as family and relationship issues.
- Shandler, Sara. *Ophelia Speaks. Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search For Self*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999. The author collects writings from adolescent girls talking about friendships, family, and overcoming obstacles.
- Simmons, Rachel. *Odd Girl Speaks Out*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2004. Girls across North America share their personal bullying experiences as the target or the bully. The author also offers thoughtful advice to readers sharing similar experiences.