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:


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?”


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.


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.


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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.


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!


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. *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.

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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.


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.


ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION:


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ELEMETARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION, continued…


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.


Mauser, 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.


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: HarpereCollins, 1977. This Newberry-winning novel is a tale of friendship between two fifth graders who get picked on by their peers for being different.


**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.


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.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL / YOUNG ADULT FICTION…Cont’d.


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.

PRESECHOOL 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.


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.


ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NONFICTION:


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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NONFICTION, continued…


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.


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.


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.


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