

# SUGGESTED LITERATURE

*Alley Oops* by Janice Levy (PreK-2, 3-5)

- *Alley Oops* explores the painful and embarrassing aftermath of name-calling and bullying, from the perspective of the bully. It's a story about hurt and anger, empathy and hope, resilience and ingenuity. It's about actions and consequences. And finally, it's about that "alley oops!" moment when a child experiences the empowerment and self-esteem that come from doing the right thing.

*And To Think That We Thought That We'd Never Be Friends* by Mary Ann Hoberman (PreK-2, 3-5)

- Fights are fights - right? Everyone has them: brothers and sisters, parents and children, friends and neighbors. You each get angry and you vow that you'll never be friends again! But it doesn't always have to be that way! For one brother and sister, a simple squabble turns into the biggest and friendliest parade their town, their country, and, in fact, the world have ever seen. And to think that they thought that they'd never be friends!

*Blubber* by Judy Blume (3-5)

- Fifth grader Jill has fun picking on Linda until the tables are turned and she becomes the victim of name-calling. The characters in this book display bad manners as well as some mild bad language (they vandalize a neighbor's house with eggs, and one calls her teacher a bitch), which has garnered the book much criticism. Still, the incidents of verbal harassment remain realistic and relevant twenty years after the book's release.

*Cherries and Cherry Pits* by Vera B. Williams (PreK-2)

- No one can tell a story quite like Bidemmi. When she starts to draw, her imagination takes off. Enter her world, look at her pictures, and watch her stories grow and grow - just like the forest of cherry trees she imagines right on her own block.

*Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (PreK-2)

- *Chrysanthemum* thinks her name is absolutely perfect, until her first day of school. "You're named after a flower!" teases Victoria. "Let's smell her," says Jo. *Chrysanthemum* wilts. What will it take to make her blossom again?

*Colder than Ice* by David Patneaude (3-5)

- Josh isn't happy to be starting at a new school. But maybe it's finally a chance to be somebody—not so easy for a sixth grader who's been pretty average and is overweight besides. So when big-shot Corey Kitchens wants Josh to join him and his friends for ice hockey on Poor Rooney's pond, Josh is pumped. He can see himself skating with the cool seventh graders, a natural success for the first time in his life. He can hardly wait for the ice to get thick. But Skye, the girl with the warm smile, doesn't trust Corey. And Mark, the strange kid who is afraid of snow, says the coming cold will test the heart. The temperature is falling. And Josh is about to find out the truth—about real friends and real courage.

*Felita* by Nicolasa Mohr (3-5)

- Felita faces verbal and physical harassment from the kids on her street when her Puerto Rican family moves to a new neighborhood. Her supportive relatives, especially her grandmother, encourage her to take pride in her heritage and her strength.

*Funerals and Fly Fishing* by Mary Bartek (3-5)

- Brad Stanislawski is looking forward to summer vacation, if only to get away from the classmates who tease him because of his size (it's not his fault that he grew four inches in one year) and his last name (Stan-is-lousy being their moniker of choice). So when Brad's mom announces that she's taking a summer vacation by herself and sending Brad across the country to stay with his estranged grandfather—who happens to be an undertaker—Brad thinks life couldn't possibly get any worse. Still, as Brad ought to know, first impressions can be deceiving, and a name can hold a lot more than embarrassment. What exactly does it mean to be Brad Stanislawski? In this thoughtful, funny first novel, Brad (with a little help from his grandfather) is about to find out.

*The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes (3-5)

- In this classic book, Wanda Petronski wears the same faded dress to school every day, and is teased relentlessly when she claims to have a hundred silk and velvet dresses at home. The taunting forces her to leave the school, and causes Maddie to examine her role as a silent bystander during the abuse.

*It's OK to be Different* by Todd Parr (PreK-2)

- From the sensitive ("It's okay to be adopted" – the accompanying illustration shows a kangaroo with a puppy in her pouch), to the downright silly ("It's okay to eat macaroni and cheese in the bathtub"), children of every shape, size, color, family makeup and background will feel included in this witty, colorful book.

*Just Kidding* by Trudy Ludwig (PreK-2, 3-5)


- "Just kidding!" That's what D.J.'s friend, Vince, says when he does something to hurt D.J.'s feelings. It's supposed to make what he says seem like a joke, but D.J. doesn't think it's funny. Yet how can D.J. stand up to Vince's teasing without looking like a bad sport? Speaker and children's advocate, Trudy Ludwig, takes a rare look at emotional bullying among boys—situations where a buddy can be a bully and where two innocent words can mask a painful reality.

*King of the Playground* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (PreK-2)

- Kevin's playtime is no fun anymore! Every time he goes to the playground, Sammy comes over and starts bullying him. It doesn't matter what he's doing—swinging, sliding, or climbing on the monkey bars—Sammy always finds him. Kevin wishes Sammy would just leave him alone. But one day Kevin realizes that Sammy can't actually do any of the things he says he will. Maybe Kevin's playtime can be fun after all!?!

*The Misfits* by James Howe (3-5)

- This book, by the popular author of *Bunnicula* and *The Watcher*, tackles the issue of name-calling and standing up to bias in middle school. *The Misfits* explores themes including



popularity, love and loss, and what it means to be different. The characters, including an open and unapologetically gay boy, are not cast as victims, but as self-empowered agents of change who will stand as solid role models to young readers everywhere.

*Mr. Lincoln's Way* by Patricia Polacco (3-5)

- Eugene "Mean Gene" Esterhause, the school bully, picks on students, gives his teachers a hard time, and uses racist slurs. Mr. Lincoln, the beloved school principal, is determined to reach the boy, and asks him to help attract birds to the new school atrium. "Mean Gene" is enthusiastic, but continues making racist remarks. As the story unfolds and a bond develops between the Caucasian student and his African-American principal, it becomes apparent that "Mean Gene" learned his hatred at home.

*My Name is Maria Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada (PreK-2, 3-5)

- For Maria Isabel Salazar Lopez, the hardest thing about being the new girl in school is that the teacher doesn't call her by her real name. "We already have two Marias in this class," says her teacher. "Why don't we call you Mary instead?" But Maria Isabel has been named for her Papa's mother and for Chabela, her beloved Puerto Rican grandmother. Can she find a way to make her teacher see that if she loses her name, she's lost the most important part of herself?

*Name Calling* by Itah Sadu (PreK-2)

- Students deal with racist name-calling in the schoolyard of an ethnically diverse school. The brilliant illustrations in this short picture book capture a diverse student body.

*The Night the Bells Rang* by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock (3-5)

- Mason is the victim of bully, Aden Cutler, and often takes his frustration out on his own younger brother. But an unexpected act of kindness from Aden, followed by his death in World War I, make Mason reevaluate his treatment of his sibling and his perceptions of his tormentor.

*Nobody Knew What to Do* by Becky Ray McCain (PreK-2)

- In this short but powerful book, a boy tries to figure out what to do when he repeatedly witnesses a classmate being bullied. The realistic illustrations and straightforward delivery of the story make it a compelling read-aloud.

*Oliver Button is a Sissy* by Tomie DePaola (PreK-2)

- Oliver Button would rather read, dance and draw pictures than play football like the other boys. His classmates' taunts don't stop him from doing what he likes best, and his practice and persistence pay off in the end – when Oliver Button is a star.

*Pinky and Rex and the Bully* by James Howe (3-5)

- Pinky's favorite color is pink, and his best friend, Rex, is a girl. Kevin, the third-grade bully, says that makes Pinky a sissy. Deep down, Pinky thinks Kevin is wrong, but he's still worried. Does Pinky have to give up his favorite things, and worse, does he have to give up his best friend? Useful as a peer education tool when read to younger students by older ones.

*Play Lady/La Senora Juguetona* by Eric Hoffman (PreK-2)

- Miguel's next-door neighbor is Jane Kurosawa, but everyone calls her Play Lady. Like the kids in the neighborhood, Play Lady loves the mud, and she even lets the children make a river in her yard. When Play Lady is the victim of a hate crime, the children figure out how to help their friend and heal their neighborhood.

*The Recess Queen* by Alexis O'Neill (PreK-2)

- Mean Jean was Recess Queen and nobody said any different. Nobody swung until Mean Jean swung. Nobody kicked until Mean Jean kicked. Nobody bounced until Mean Jean bounced. If kids ever crossed her, she'd push 'em and smoosh 'em, lollapaloosh 'em, hammer 'em, slammer 'em, kitz and kajammer 'em...until a new kid came to school...

*Say Something* by Peggy Moss (PreK-2)

- Can one person make a difference? Moss' obviously didactic book, which seems designed for group discussion about bullying, focuses on the role of the bystander, a girl who sees the sadness of the victim but does nothing ("I walk on the other side of the hall. I don't say those things"). Realistic, lively watercolor illustrations show the child in a diverse school community, where kids are picked on and called names for being slow or different. The girl feels sad for them, but she looks away—until one day, when she is alone, the bullies make her cry, and her friends do nothing. The dramatic climax is quiet: the girl reaches out to a child who always sits alone on the bus, and the children have fun together. This is one of the best of the recent books for discussion about teasing; its direct, first-person narrative and informal portraits bring close classroom, hallway, and schoolyard scenarios for kids and adults to talk about.

*Yoko* by Rosemary Wells (PreK-2)

- What a great day it's going to be! Yoko's mother has made her favorite sushi for lunch and packed it in a willow-covered cooler. The bus whisks Yoko to school where she greets all her friends and joins in the Good Morning Song. But when lunchtime arrives, suddenly everyone notices Yoko's sushi. The teasing starts and her happy day evaporates. With an uncanny understanding of the pleasures and pains of an ordinary school day, Rosemary Wells has created a tender, irresistible story, true to the heart of childhood.

All book descriptions have been reprinted from one of the following three sources:

- The No Name-Calling Week Resource Guide  
(Produced by GLSEN and Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing)
- The GLSEN BookLink ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))
- Publisher's description