

National CASA Book List

The National CASA Association offers the following book list to help improve and inspire your service to children. Program Services and Communications staffs teamed up to bring you this annotated list of more than 100 books, organized by topic.

Starred listings (*) were submitted by members of the CASA network for inclusion on this list.

Also, [view online book club resources created by National CASA.](#)

Topics

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Abuse

***A Child Called It, Author: Dave Pelzer, Audience: Volunteer**

A controversial memoir describing horrific abuse sustained by the author as a child, before he was finally rescued by an astute teacher.

A Deep Dark Secret, Author: Kimberla Lawson Roby, Audience: Volunteer and Child

Sexually abused for five years, studious 12-year-old Jillian Maxwell lives in terror of her pedophile stepfather. An intense gem in an authentic voice.

As I Lay Me Down to Sleep, Author: Eileen Munro, Audience: Volunteer

A true story of neglect and abuse

Broken, Author: Shy Keenan, Audience: Volunteer

A shocking true story of abuse.

Child C, Author: Christopher Spry, Audience: Volunteer and Child

Surviving a foster mother's reign of terror.

Damaged, Author: Cathy Glass, Audience: Volunteer

A small girl is placed into a foster home (the author's) and is unable to form relationships and

mature due to past abuse. "I liked this book because it showed some of the results of both physical and sexual abuse on a child's ability to grow and mature normally."

****God Must Be Sleeping*, Author: Gregg Tyler Milligan, Audience: Volunteer**

A recovery memoir in which the author draws readers into his insights and the path he traveled along the road from childhood abuse to healing and deliverance. Milligan provides readers proof that no matter what struggles afflict us, we can all emerge amazingly strong and drive headlong into the possibilities that await us.

***Mummy Told Me Not to Tell*, Author: Cathy Glass, Audience: Volunteer**

When Wayne arrives at Cathy's door at 7 years old, he has already passed through the hands of four different carers in four weeks. As the details of his short life emerge, it becomes clear that to help him, Cathy will face her biggest challenge yet.

***The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, Authors: Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz, Audience: Volunteer**

Traumatized children can teach us about loss, love and healing. A psychiatrist carefully examines and explains attachment disorders including RAD.

***The Glass Castle*, Author: Jeanette Walls, Audience: Volunteer**

In her childhood memoir, *The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls offers a blow-by-blow description of growing up with parents whose capacity for loving their children is greater than their ability to care for them. [Read a review of *The Glass Castle* in the Winter 2007 Connection magazine](#) (1.5 MB PDF, page 15)

***Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept*: Volunteer and Child, 3-8 years old**

Illustrated picture book that sensitively broaches the subject of keeping our children safe from sexual interference. Includes discussion questions to guide conversations with children about the story.

***What Daddy Did*, Author: Donna Ford, Audience: Volunteer**

The shocking true story of a little girl betrayed.

Adoption

***Broken Cord*, Author: Michael Dorris, Audience: Volunteer**

This is the heartrending story, full of compassion and rage, of how the author's adopted son grew up mentally retarded, a victim of fetal alcohol syndrome, a boy whom no amount of love could make whole. The volume includes a short account of his own life by the 20-year-old Adam.

***Every Year On Your Birthday*, Author: Rose A. Lewis, Audience: Child**

A mother relates her thoughts and emotions on her daughter's birthdays, reflecting on the child's birth in China to her fifth birthday. Throughout, the mother preserves her daughter's Chinese heritage and includes multicultural layers in her upbringing.

***I Love You Like Crazy Cakes*, Author: Rose A. Lewis, Audience: Child**

Lewis's sweetly sentimental picture-book debut plays out like a love letter to her adopted Chinese daughter.

***I See You, I See Me*, Author: Cliff Greenberg, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

I see you, I see me is for those who may have questions about themselves, their new families

and their birth families. This book shows that what is most important is to reassure the child that she is special and loved.

***My Adopted Child, There's No One Like You*, Author: Kevin Leman, Audience: Child**

My Adopted Child, There's No One Like You creatively celebrates the adopted child. Read this book with your adopted child to show him or her the never-ending reach of your love.

***Parents Wanted*, Author: George Harrar, Audience: Child**

The tale of a 12 year old boy who has lived in series of foster and group homes and now gets a chance to be adopted.

***Shaoey and Dot—Bug Meets Bundle*, Author: Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, Audience: Child**

An endearing tale told from the point of view of one little ladybug, Dot, who happens upon a mysterious bundle one sunny day. Written by Christian music artist Steven Curtis Chapman and his wife Mary Beth, this heartwarming tale is inspired by the true story of their adoption of three little girls from China. It is a story of hope and faith for all families who have been blessed by a "lost little bundle of love."

***Tell Me Again About The Night I Was Born*, Author: Jamie Lee Curtis, Audience: Child**

A sweet and sunny look at adoption, the story is framed as a much-loved and clearly much-requested family tale. This book simply affirms family love, the pleasure parents feel about new babies, and how pleased children are to hear the story of their birth.

***The Red Blanket*, Author: Eliza Thomas, Audience: Child**

A woman takes a soft red blanket with her to the orphanage in China where she is adopting an infant. The dazzling red blanket is the only comfort the baby finds on that first day. Over the years, the blanket becomes threadbare and fragile while the relationship between mother and daughter has strengthened.

***The Limits of Hope: An Adoptive Mother's Story*, Author: Ann Kimble Loux, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

Loux tells the story of her family's decision to adopt two sisters removed from their alcoholic biological mother. This personal account tells of Loux's attempt to raise these girls along with her three biological children. In the conclusion, Loux suggests alternatives to traditional adoption for the care of troubled older children.

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Child Advocate Skill-Building

***A Question of Balance: Decision Making for CASA/GALs*, Author: Janet Ward, Audience: Volunteer**

Easy to read narrative and sample interview questions that pull together the "how" and "why" of the 30+ hour National CASA/GAL pre-service training for volunteers.

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Child Welfare

***Child-Centered Practices for the Courtroom and Community*, Author: Lynne F. Katz, Audience: Volunteer**

A guide to working effectively with young children and their families in the child welfare system.

Child Welfare/Research and Evaluation

***Invisible Kids: Marcus Fiesel's Legacy*, Author: Holly Schlaack, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

Invisible Kids tells the stories of many children and foster families. It tells them straight and backs them up with statistics and facts that show why the system works, why it doesn't, and where it needs help. It describes ProKids Building Blocks, the program Schlaack created for early identification of red flags in the lives infants and toddlers. It also identifies more than a dozen ways that anyone can make a difference.

***No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court*, Author: Edward Humes, Audience: Volunteer**

Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Humes spent 1994 surveying the largely futile attempts of Los Angeles to deal with its juvenile crime. He concentrates here on a few who have not let themselves be overwhelmed by the deluge of defendants-80,000 cases are pending at any given time. Humes follows closely the cases of seven young people who were caught up in the system, three of whom have been saved by it. Maybe.

***On-line Interactive Court Prep Book For Children*, Author: [California Courts](#), Audience: Volunteer and Child**

What's Happening in Court, an interactive book that helps children going to court to understand legal proceedings, is now available in Spanish. Through online games and other activities, ¿Qué Sucede en la Corte? introduces Spanish-speaking children to court processes and the people and terminology they might encounter in the judicial system.

***Somebody Else's Children*, Author: John Huber and Jill Wolfson, Audience: Volunteer**

This raw, unmediated portrait of the machinery of juvenile justice, which includes the voices of the families and children as well as of service providers, reveals how intricate and interconnected the problems are. Writing with admirable conviction and convincing urgency, follow children and their families through shelters, courts and foster homes to see how the system really works.

***The Way We Never Were*, Author: Stephanie Coontz, Audience: Volunteer**

In this book, Coontz contends, the nuclear family was elevated to a central source of personal satisfaction only in the late 19th century, thereby weakening people's community ties and sense of civic obligation. Coontz disputes the idea that children can be raised properly only in traditional families. Viewing modern domestic problems as symptoms of a much larger socioeconomic crisis, she demonstrates that no single type of household has ever protected Americans from social disruption or poverty.

***Turning Stones*, Author: Marc Parent, Audience: Volunteer**

In this outstanding work of social commentary, Parent describes the harrowing conditions he worked under and the brutalization he witnessed during the four years he was employed as a caseworker by New York City's Emergency Children's Services. Parent convincingly argues for public scrutiny of child welfare agencies as well as a societal commitment to protecting children.

***Within Our Reach*, Author: Lisbeth B. Schorr, Audience: Volunteer**

In this solidly researched book, the author demonstrates that the knowledge and techniques exist to decrease the incidence of welfare dependency, poor single-parent families and alienated, uneducated youth, and describes 24 programs that have proved successful in changing the lives of seriously disadvantaged children.

Why Do They Act That Way? By: David Walsh, Ph.D Even smart kids do stupid things. It's a simple fact of life. No one makes it through the teenage year's unscathed -not the teens, not their parents. But now there's expert help for both generations in this groundbreaking new guide for surviving the drama of adolescence.

Communication

***Fundraising: Hands-on Tactics for Nonprofit Groups*, Author: Peter L. Edles, Audience: Volunteer**

Fundraising, Second Edition, shows how your nonprofit organization can design and run successful fundraising campaigns. You'll find sound, effective strategies and insider tips for cultivating potential donors, building a powerful case for your drive, soliciting large gifts, obtaining foundation grants, creating direct mail packages, and implementing high-profile, imaginative campaigns that top consultants use to get results.

***Perfect Phrases for Building Strong Teams: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases for Fostering Collaboration, Encouraging Communication, and Growing a Win*, Author: Linda Eve Diamond, Audience: Volunteer**

Whether you're a project manager, department head or CEO, you have to choose the perfect words to inspire real teamwork. This quick-reference guide addresses all the issues you could possibly encounter working with a team, offering hundreds of ready-to-use phrases for every situation.

***Perfect Phrases for Managers and Supervisors*, Author: Meryl Runion, Audience: Volunteer**

This second edition, has been completely revised to help you communicate in today's workplace, where collaboration, cooperation, and personalization are critical to building an efficient, productive work environment.

***Perfect Phrases for Writing Grant Proposals*, Author: Beverly Browning, Audience: Volunteer**

With this comprehensive, user-friendly approach to grant writing, you'll be able to tackle the various proposal formats, create a professional purpose statement, and back up your plan with solid data. Plus, you'll discover some insider secrets that will really get the attention you want, and the funding you need.

***The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need*, Author: Ellen Karsh, Audience: Volunteer**

Veteran grant writers Karsh and Fox not only rely on years of experience but also on interviews with dozens of foundations, associations, and government organizations to provide readers the best current thinking around a very tedious subject.

***The Power of Giving*, Author: Azim Jamal, Audience: Volunteer**

Simple and easy to use, *The Power of Giving* provides a wealth of down-to-earth ideas, exercises and real-life stories that reveal to each reader the unique gifts he or she has to give-including kindness, ideas, advice, attention, hope, and more-and the many ways you can benefit from giving them, from better health to better job prospects.

***The Orchid and the Dandelion: Why Some Children Struggle and How All Can Thrive*: by Dr. Thomas Boyce**

This book looks at the resiliency of children and how to adapt our strategies so that all types of children can be successful. Dr. Boyce, a professor emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco has studied how stress affects children for nearly forty years and over time has developed his classifications of Orchids and Revised May 2020 | 5 Dandelion children. Dandelions are kids who are adaptable, resilient and largely unphased by changes in their circumstances. Orchids, on the other hand, are more sensitive and react to change in biologically different ways. This book will teach us how children deal with stress and how to tailor our approaches so that we can support a full spectrum of children.

***Helping Foster Children In School: A Guide for Foster Parents, Social Workers and Teachers* by: John DeGarmo** This book explores the challenges that foster children face in schools and offers positive and practical guidance tailored to help the parents, teachers and social workers supporting them.

Cultural Competency/Diversity

***A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*, Author: Howard Zinn, Audience: Volunteer**

Howard Zinn infuses the often-submerged voices of blacks, women, American Indians, war resisters, and poor laborers of all nationalities into this thorough narrative that spans American history from Christopher Columbus's arrival to an afterword on the Clinton presidency.

***Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, Author: Bell Hooks, Audience: Volunteer**

An examination of how black women, from the seventeenth century to the present day, were and are oppressed by both white men and black men and by white women. Illustrating her analysis with moving personal accounts, *Ain't I a Woman* is deeply critical of the racism inherent in the thought of many middle-class white feminists who have failed to address issues of race and class.

***Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America/25th Anniversary Edition*, Author: LeRone Bennett , Audience: Volunteer**

An amazing collection of forgotten events that greatly impacted this nation. More than just black history, but a huge chunk of American history in general.

***Black and White Styles in Conflict*, Author: Thomas Kochman, Audience: Volunteer**

Shows a lay audience the value, integrity and aesthetic sensibility of black culture, and moreover the conflicts which arise when its values are treated as deviant version of majority ones.

***Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*, Author: Dee Brown, Audience: Volunteer**

Based largely on primary source materials, this volume details how white settlers forced Indian tribes off the plains, often simply by killing them. Though Hollywood and penny dreadfuls portrayed Indians as red devils who launched unprovoked attacks on innocent homesteaders, Brown's research shows that the opposite is closer to the truth.

***Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*, Author: Joseph Barndt, Audience: Volunteer**

This book analyzes racism as it is today and the ways it has changed or not changed over the past few decades. Most important, the book focuses on the task of dismantling racism, how we can work to bring it to an end and build a racially just, multiracial and multicultural society.

***Europe and the People Without History*, Author: Eric R. Wolf, Audience: Volunteer**

The intention of this work is to show that European expansion not only transformed the historical trajectory of non-European societies but also reconstituted the historical accounts of these societies before European intervention. It asserts that anthropology must pay more attention to history.

***Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*, Author: Andrew Solomon, Audience: Volunteer**

Award winning author and NY Times reporter exploring horizontal identity (rather than vertical identity) in children who are different: autistic, deaf, dwarf, schizophrenic, autistic. Interviews with individuals and family members about being accepted as you are.

***For Whites Only*, Author: Robert W. Terry, Audience: Volunteer**

An excellent book that helps white people understand the bases and assumptions and themes that underlie our own racism. The Rev. Terry of the Detroit Industrial Mission has laid out all the privileges we don't even think about, and helps us to understand them and move through them and past them into a specific and conscious anti-racism.

***From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, Author: John Hope Franklin, Audience: Child**

From Slavery to Freedom charts the journey of African Americans from their origins in the civilizations of Africa, through slavery in the Western Hemisphere, to their struggle for freedom in the West Indies, Latin America and the United States.

***In the Matter of Color*, Author: Leon A. Higgenbotham, Audience: Volunteer**

Chronicles in unrelenting detail the role of the law in the enslavement and subjugation of black Americans during the colonial period. No attempt to summarize the colonial experience could convey the rich and comprehensive detail, which is the major strength of Judge Higginbotham's work.

***Invention of the White Race I & II*, Author: Theodore Allen, Audience: Volunteer**

A monumental study of the birth of racism in the American South that makes truly new and convincing points about one of the most critical problems in US history.

***Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th Century America*, Author: Ronald Takaki, Audience: Volunteer**

Iron Cages provides a unique comparative analysis of white American attitudes toward Asians, blacks, Mexicans and Native Americans in the 19th century.

***Killers of the Dream*, Author: Lillian Smith, Audience: Volunteer**

The author draws on memories of her childhood to describe the psychological and moral cost of the powerful, contradictory rules about sin, sex, and segregation—the intricate system of taboos—that undergirded southern society.

***Love to Langston*, Author: Tony Medina, Audience: Child**

Harlem poet Tony Medina offers a poem of loving biographical tribute to one of America's most cherished poets, Langston Hughes.

***Memoirs of a Race Traitor*, Author: Mab Segrest, Audience: Volunteer**

Against a backdrop of nine generations of her family's history, Mab Segrest explores her experience as a white lesbian organizing against a virulent far right movement in North Carolina.

***Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Author: Paulo Freire, Audience: Volunteer**

This text argues that the ignorance and lethargy of the poor are the direct result of the whole economic, social and political domination. Through the right kind of education, the book suggests, avoiding authoritarian teacher-pupil models and based on the actual experiences of students and on continual shared investigation, every human being, no matter how impoverished or illiterate, can develop a new awareness of self, and the right to be heard.

***Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, Author: Jonathan Kozol, Audience: Volunteer**

This important, eye-opening report is a ringing indictment of the shameful neglect that has fostered a ghetto school system in America.

***The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, Author: Nicholas Lemann, Audience: Volunteer**

From 1940 to 1970, some five million blacks migrated to the urban North. Lemann shares personal accounts and refutes the belief that all federal programs to aid the black poor failed.

***The Souls of Black Folk*, Author: W.E.B. Dubois, Audience: Volunteer**

The text provides insights into black life at the turn of the 20th century. The capstone of *The Souls of Black Folk*, though, is Du Bois' haunting, eloquent description of the concept of the black psyche's "double consciousness."

***The Transgender Guidebook: Keys to a Successful Transition*. Author: Anne Boedecker, Audience: Volunteer**

Experienced PhD counseling psychologist specializing in LGBT issues shares her practical experiences helping people transition.

***The Wall Between*, Author: Anne Braden, Audience: Volunteer**

In 1954, Anne Braden and her husband bought a house in an all-white neighborhood in Louisville, KY, on behalf of a black couple, the Wades. Braden's account of mob violence, bombing of the house, and imprisonment of her husband on charges of sedition was a finalist for the 1958 National Book Award. This edition contains a new epilogue tracing the lives of the Wades and Bradens before events described in the book, and reports on the Bradens' continuing activities in the civil rights movement.

***Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, Author: Andrew Hacker, Audience: Volunteer**

In an important, powerfully argued, dispassionate report that makes liberal use of tables and statistics, Hacker documents racist attitudes and practices in the business sector, reveals the low percentage of blacks enrolled in colleges and exposes white racism in politics, employment practices and education and the public's perception of crime and welfare. Turning to blacks' "self-inflicted genocide" through drugs and street violence, he argues that white America shares a large measure of responsibility for this situation because it has fostered a racial chasm—a divide that seems likely to persist unless drastic steps are taken.

***When and Where I Enter: The Impact Of Black Women On Race And Sex In America*, Author: Winthrop Jordan, Audience: Volunteer**

This book is an eloquent testimonial to the profound influence of African American women on race and women's movements throughout American history. Drawing on speeches, diaries, letters, and other original documents, Paula Giddings powerfully portrays how black women have transcended racist and sexist attitudes—often confronting white feminists and black male leaders alike—to initiate social and political reform.

***White Racism: Its History, Pathology and Practice*, Author: Barry N. Schwartz and Robert Disch, Audience: Volunteer**

An anthology of historical and contemporary writing on a crucial social problem: the white American's bigotry and his deeply prejudiced view of the black man.

***Women, Race and Class*, Author: Angela Davis, Audience: Volunteer**

Expose of the women's movement in the context of the fight for civil rights and working class issues. She uncovers a side of the fight for suffrage many of us have not heard: the intimate tie between the anti-slavery campaign and the struggle for women's suffrage. She shows how the racist and classist bias of some in the women's movement have divided its own membership.

Cultural Competency/Diversity/Working with Children

***A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Author: David A. Adler, Audience: Child**

A beautifully illustrated, easy-to-read biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Ages 5–8)

***Ellington Was Not a Street*, Author: Ntozake Shange, Audience: Child**

Poet and playwright Ntozake Shange offers a lyrical reflection on her childhood and the many noted African Americans who often gathered in her home, from Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie to W. E. B. DuBois and African leader Kwame Nkrumah. Beautiful full-page paintings capture the times and the "men who changed the world." (Ages 5–10)

***Henry's Freedom Box*, Author: Ellen Levine, Audience: Child**

The true story of Henry "Box" Brown, a runaway slave from Virginia who "mailed himself to freedom" in a cramped wooden crate. This is an amazing story of courage and ingenuity. (Ages 5–8)

***Li'l Dan, The Drummer Boy: A Civil War Story*, Author: Romare Bearden, Audience: Child**

This extraordinary book is based on the stunning collage illustrations of famed African American artist Romare Bearden; and tells the powerful story of a slave boy dealing with his new-found freedom. Included is a CD with Maya Angelou reading this poignant story. (Ages 5–10)

***Mama Bear Baby Bear: A Native America Lore*, Author: Linda Silvas, Audience: Child**

Book offers a fresh perspective on how more and more grandparents and other relatives find themselves protecting and raising children.

***Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Author: Doreen Rappaport, Audience: Child**

This picture book biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. uses King's words along with paper collages and watercolor artwork to tell an age-appropriate version of the civil rights leader's life story. (Ages 4–8)

***Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*, Author: Carle Boston, Audience: Child**

A beautifully dramatic picture book about Harriet Tubman and her religious inspiration, using the words of spirituals. (Ages 4–8)

***Mr. Williams*, Author: Karen Barbour, Audience: Child**

A beautifully illustrated retelling of one man's oral history of the hardships of African American rural life in the '30s and '40s. (Ages 4–8)

***Rap A Tap Tap*, Author: Leo and Diane Dillon, Audience: Child**

Through beautiful watercolor illustrations and bouncy, captivating text in *Rap a Tap Tap*, Leo and Diane Dillon tell the story of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, an extraordinary, groundbreaking dancer who brought tap from the streets to the world. He was one of the most popular entertainers of the first half of the 20th century. This is a beautiful, terrific, and joyful book on dance and music and a springboard for discussion on an important period in American history. (Ages 3–6)

***Show Way*, Author: Jacqueline Woodson, Audience: Child**

In this Newbery Honor Book, Woodson uses a "Show Way," a quilt sewn with secret meanings, to tell her family's history of African American women from slavery and to trace the history of the civil rights movement to the present. Talbott's exquisite illustrations will inspire readers to explore their own family history. (Ages 4–8)

***Sky Sash So Blue*, Author: Libby Hathorn, Audience: Child**

The special sky-blue sash that a young slave girl offers to give her older sister for her wedding dress becomes a lifelong tie between them. This inspiring book depicts a slave family story from the perspective of a child who turns fabric into art and uses hope and joy to transcend sorrow and oppression. (Ages 4–8)

***The Baby on the Way*, Author: Karen English, Audience: Child**

A warm and evocative book about grandparents and family traditions based on African American traditions. (Ages 4–8)

***Visiting Langston*, Author: Willie Perdomo, Audience: Child**

This is an inspiring, poetic book about an African American girl anticipating a visit to the Harlem brownstone of Harlem Renaissance poet, Langston Hughes. Perdomo's poetry and Collier's watercolor and collage bring to life the first half of 20th-century Harlem. (Ages 4–8)

***Yesterday I Had the Blues*, Author: Jeron Ashford Frame, Audience: Child**

This is a beautifully illustrated, wonderfully quirky book about everyday life and having the blues. An African American boy laments his blue day and goes on to describe his other days and moods and the feelings of the people around him using the colors of the rainbow. (Ages 4–8)

Cultural Competency/Diversity/Working with Older Youth

***A Friendship for Today*, Author: Patricia C. McKissack, Audience: Child**

Rosemary, who is black, develops an unlikely friendship with mean Grace Hamilton, considered "white trash" by classmates, after school integration in 1955. Rosemary is a plucky character with wry observations on life and people and the book offers a great view of life in the 1950's. (Age 9-12)

***Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*, Author: Andrea Davis Pinkney, Audience: Child**

An engaging and inspiring look at the contributions of 10 women from former slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth to the first black congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm. Pinkney tells the stories of Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and others—stories of hardship and struggle, determination and strength. This is a good read aloud for kindergarten and young school-age children. (Ages 8–12)

***The Old African*, Author: Jerry Pinkney, Audience: Child**

Chronicles the African American experience of slavery to young readers. Other notable books by Lester are *To Be a Slave* and *Day of Tears*. (Age 9 and up)

***The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*, Authors: Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper, Audience: Volunteer**

***The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*, Author: Christopher Paul Curtis, Audience: Child**

The Watson family heads from Michigan to the deep south of Birmingham, AL, in 1963 to straighten out fourth grader Kenny by depositing him at the home of his strict grandmother. This Newbery Medal-winning book is both funny and moving. Kenny narrates his family's trip into the pivotal time and place in civil rights history—the bombing of a Baptist Church with four little girls inside. (Ages 8–12)

***Through My Eyes*, Author: Ruby Bridges, Audience: Child**

Bridges gives voice to her innocent 6-year-old self who every day walked through a mob of

howling, angry protesters to integrate the New Orleans public schools in 1960. Bridges recounts how she innocently thought at the time that, "Two, four, six, eight, we don't want to integrate" was a jump rope chant, even while the mob was carrying a black doll in a coffin. Many sepia-toned period photographs and excerpts from newspaper articles, comments by her teacher, and a timeline place her story within the context of the larger Civil Rights Movement. (Ages 8–12)

***When Marian Sang*, Author: Pam Muñoz Ryan, Audience: Child**

About the 20th-century life of Marian Anderson and how she overcame racial barriers with a voice heard and loved worldwide. We follow Marian from her childhood, singing in church in Philadelphia, through her rejection from a music school that refused to take "coloreds," to her success in the concert halls of Europe, and back to America, where she finally receives acclaim, despite the challenges of racism. (Ages 5–8)

***Home and Other Big Fat Lies*, Author: Jill Wolfson, Audience: Children Ages 8 - 12**

A foster child is the main character in Jill Wolfson's book, written to give foster kids their own heroines and sense of culture/belonging. See also *Furious*, *Somebody Else's Children* and *What I Call Life*, also written by Wolfson.

***Hope's Boy*, Author: Bridge, Andrew, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

Bridge's memoir of surviving his childhood in a broken child-care system where the state acts as parents for the young certainly illustrates the complexity of such government institutions. After being removed from his mother by the state, Bridge spent a brief stint in a residential program before being put into foster care. His decade-long stay with an emotionally abusive and unsupportive family left its share of marks.

***Orphans of the Living*, Author: Jennifer Toth, Audience: Volunteer**

Toth's report from the frontlines of what is known as "substitute care" is not encouraging. As she follows the lives of five young people moving through the system—from Damien, a rape victim at age 8 who becomes a sexual predator by age 13, to Bryan, who struggles to benefit from one of the country's best foster programs—Toth's subjects are as heartbreaking as their success is improbable.

***To the End of June*, Author: Cris Beam, Audience: Volunteer**

As reviewed in the *New York Times* in August 2013: "Early in Cris Beam's remarkable new book, she outlines what she calls the core questions at the heart of America's foster care system: "Who decides the correct way to raise a child? Who makes the moves on the moral chessboard where a family's right to privacy opposes a child's right to protection from harm? And who should get to keep a child: the parents who nurse and tend to him, or the parents who brought him into this world?"

***Troubled Transplants*, Author: Richard J. Delaney, Audience: Volunteer**

Troubled Transplants focuses on adoptive/foster children, their difficult backgrounds, and their deleterious impact on the interaction and environment with the foster or adoptive family. The authors provide suggestions about behavioral roots and practical strategies to address and improve these issues.

***Turmoil to Turning Points*, Author: Jerome Kagan, Audience: Volunteer**

Through heartrending case histories, Kagan, a psychologist who works with family service agencies in the Albany, NY, area, offers a compelling, close-up look at troubled children and adolescents in families seemingly locked in a cycle of traumas and crises, torn by alcoholism, physical and sexual abuse, drug addiction, severe neglect. Placements in residential treatment centers, foster homes or psychiatric hospitals, according to Kagan, can become turning points for positive change, if family members confront the psychodynamics, "double bind" messages and deep-seated wounds underlying a child's maladaptive behavior. An eye-opening, hopeful report for social service practitioners and those who care about the crisis in child welfare.

***What I Call Life*, Author: Jill Wolfson, Audience: Volunteer, Children Ages 8-12**

A foster child is the main character in Jill Wolfson's book, written to give foster kids their own heroines and sense of culture/belonging. See also *Somebody Else's Children*, *Furious*, and *Home and Other Big Fat Lies*, also written by Wolfson.

Poverty

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover

A Framework for Understanding Poverty by: **Ruby K. Payne Ph.D** Carefully researched and packed with charts, tables, and questionnaires, Framework not only documents the facts of poverty, it provides practical yet compassionate strategies for addressing its impact on people's lives

In Invisible Child, Pulitzer Prize winner Andrea Elliott follows eight dramatic years in the life of Dasani, a girl whose imagination is as soaring as the skyscrapers near her Brooklyn shelter. In this sweeping narrative, Elliott weaves the story of Dasani's childhood with the history of her ancestors, tracing their passage from slavery to the Great Migration north. As Dasani comes of age, New York City's homeless crisis has exploded, deepening the chasm between rich and poor. She must guide her siblings through a world riddled by hunger, violence, racism, drug addiction, and the threat of foster care. Out on the street, Dasani becomes a fierce fighter "to protect those who I love." When she finally escapes city life to enroll in a boarding school, she faces an impossible question: What if leaving poverty means abandoning your family, and yourself?

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by **Matthew Desmond**

Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty by **Mark Robert Rank, Lawrence M. Eppard, and Heather E. Bullock** The first book to systematically address and confront many of the most widespread myths pertaining to poverty. Mark Robert Rank, Lawrence M. Eppard, and Heather E. Bullock powerfully demonstrate that the realities of poverty are much different than the myths; indeed in many ways they are more disturbing. The idealized image of American society is one of abundant opportunities, with hard work being rewarded by economic prosperity. But what if this picture is wrong? What if poverty is an experience that touches the majority of Americans? What if hard work does not necessarily lead to economic well-being? What if the reasons for poverty are largely beyond the control of individuals? And if all of the evidence necessary to disprove these myths has been readily available for years, why do they remain so stubbornly pervasive? These are much more disturbing realities to consider because they call into question the very core of America's identity.

Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive by **Stephanie Land** In her unstinting memoir — a portrait of working-class poverty in America — Land scrapes by on \$9 an hour cleaning houses to support herself and her young daughter.

Growing Up Poor in America The documentary, "Growing Up Poor in America", follows three children and their families in the battleground state of Ohio as the COVID-19 pandemic amplifies their struggle to stay afloat. [Watch here.](#)

Research and Evaluation

***Amazing Grace*, Author: Jonathan Kozol, Audience: Volunteer**

This disquieting report graphically portrays a world where babies are born to drug-using mothers with AIDS, where children are frequently murdered, jobs are scarce and a large proportion of the men are either in prison or on crack cocaine or heroin. Kozol interviewed ministers, teachers, drug pushers, children who have not yet given up hope. While his narrative offers no specific solutions, it forcefully drives home his conviction: a civilized nation cannot allow this situation to continue.

The Body Keeps the Score by: **Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk**

This book uses recent scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers' capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments—from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga—that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain's natural neuroplasticity.

***Ghosts From the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence*, Author: Karr-Morse and Meredith S. Wiley, Audience: Volunteer**

This book presents startling evidence on how abuse and neglect during the first two years of life is creating a tide of violent youth.

***High Risk: Children Without a Conscience*, Author: Ken Magid and Carole McKelvey, Audience: Volunteer**

The authors explore the reasons why children without a conscience are growing in number. They are at risk of becoming "trust bandits," con-men, liars, dance-away lovers, backstabbers of the business world, and even psychopathic killers.

***How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*: by Paul Tough**

Why do some children succeed while others fail? The story we usually tell about childhood and success is the one about intelligence: success comes to those who score highest on tests, from preschool admissions to SATs. But in *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough argues that the qualities that matter more have to do with character: skills like perseverance, curiosity, optimism, and self-control.

***The Book of David*, Author: Richard Gelles, Audience: Volunteer**

The tragedy of abused children who have been failed by child welfare agencies is made palpable in the case presented here, followed by a specialist in family violence. Gelles, director of the Family Violence Research Program at the University of Rhode Island, examines the brief life of David, who died of suffocation at 15 months. In tracing the system's tragic failure to save a child, Gelles sounds a wake-up call to agencies to put children first and reassess the efficacy of family preservation programs.

***The Orchid and the Dandelion: Why Some Children Struggle and How All Can Thrive*: by Dr. Thomas Boyce**

This book looks at the resiliency of children and how to adapt our strategies so that all types of children can be successful. Dr. Boyce, a professor emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco has studied how stress affects children for nearly forty years and over time has developed his classifications of Orchids and Revised May 2020 | 5 Dandelion children. Dandelions are kids who are adaptable, resilient and largely unphased by changes in their circumstances. Orchids, on the other hand, are more sensitive and react to change in biologically different ways. This book will teach us how children deal with stress and how to tailor our approaches so that we can support a full spectrum of children.

***The Deepest Well* by: Nadine Burke Harris MD** Through vivid storytelling that combines both scientific insight with deeply moving stories about her patients and their families, Burke Harris illuminates her journey of discovery from the academy to her own pediatric practice in San Francisco's poverty-ridden Bayview Hunters Point. She reroots the story of childhood trauma and its aftermath in science to help listeners see themselves and others more clearly.

Working with Children

***A Child's Journey Through Placement*, Author: Vera Fahlberg, M.D., Audience: Volunteer**

Fahlberg has provided the comprehensive guide for all who care about advocating children with all kinds of behavior and disorder issues.

***Alphabet Kids*, Author: Robbie Woliver, Audience: Volunteer**

A guide for people working with children who exhibit symptoms of a possible disorder that may impede their physical, psychological, intellectual, or emotional development.

***Boy from the Basement*, Author: Susan Shaw, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

Charlie's father has banished him to a dark cellar as punishment for some small transgression, and the boy sneaks upstairs at night while his parents sleep, desperately searching the kitchen for food until he collapses, then awakens in a hospital. There, the extent of his deprivation and the resulting damage become clear. Focusing on Charlie's internal thought processes, the action is primarily psychological. As the boy works with a psychiatrist and begins

to trust his foster family, he grows to the point of being able to disagree with his controlling and warped father.

***Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior*, Author: Kerry Patterson, Audience: Volunteer**

Behind the problems that routinely plague organizations and families, you'll find individuals who are either unwilling or unable to deal with failed promises. Others have broken rules, missed deadlines, failed to live up to commitments, or just plain behaved badly--and nobody steps up to the issue. Or they do, but do a lousy job and create a whole new set of problems. Accountability suffers and new problems spring up. New research demonstrates that these disappointments aren't just irritating, they're costly. (The first edition of this book was titled: *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior*)

***Cut*, Author: Cathy Glass, Audience: Child**

The true story of an abandoned, abused little girl who was desperate to be part of a family.

***Dare to Take Charge*, Author: Glenda Hatchett, Audience: Volunteer**

How to Live Your Life on Purpose

***Difficult Conversations*, Author: Douglas Stone, Audience: Volunteer**

How to discuss what matters most.

***Elijah of Buxton*, Author: Christopher Paul Curtis, Audience: Child**

Narrator 11-year-old Elijah is the first child born into freedom in Buxton, Canada, a settlement of runaway slaves. Elijah ends up on a journey and becomes exposed to the horrors of slavery. This Newbery Honor book is at times funny, exciting, thrilling, suspenseful, and deeply moving; a subtle, original story by a wonderful writer. (Age 9-12)

***Families Change*, Author: Julie Nelson, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

All families change over time. Sometimes a baby is born, or a grown-up gets married. And sometimes a child gets a new foster parent or a new adopted mom or dad. Children need to know that when this happens, it's not their fault. Straightforward words and full-color illustrations offer hope and support for children facing or experiencing change. Includes resources and information for birth parents, foster parents, social workers, counselors and teachers.

***Goin' Someplace Special*, Author: Patricia C. McKissock , Audience: Child**

Newbery medal-winning author Patricia C. McKissock and Caldecott Medalist Jerry Pinkney bring the reality of segregation to life in Nashville through the eyes of a 9-year-old girl. (Ages 3–7)

***Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King Jr.*, Author: Jean Marzollo, Audience: Child**

A terrific book to introduce preschoolers to Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights struggle. (Ages 3–7)

***Happy Kids*, Author: Cathy Glass, Audience: Volunteer**

The secret to raising well-behaved, contented children.

***Help Your Child or Teen Get Back on Track*, Author: Kenneth H. Talan , Audience: Volunteer**

What Parents and Professionals Can Do for Childhood Emotional and Behavioral Problems

***I Saw Your Face*, Author: Tom Feelings, Audience: Child**

Feelings is a widely acclaimed illustrator who illustrates history "through the multiplication of faces" while Dawes creates stories around the faces Feelings sketches. (Ages 5–10)

***I Speak for This Child*, Author: Gay Courter, Audience: Volunteer**

Written by a guardian ad litem volunteer in Florida, this book tells of her experience working with children in the court system.

***Lily Lightening Bug and Her Stolen Glow*, Author: Jeannette M. Atkins, Audience: Child**

A cast of characters, including Loretta Ladybug, Lily's advocate, help her regain her stolen glow. Children who read or listen to the story will find comfort and be inspired by this journey to justice.

***Mika Dika, Foster Kid*, Author: T. L. Blythers, Audience: Child**

Mika Dika is well-written, beautifully illustrated, children's book about a young girl who is thrown into the foster care system and endures many challenges while waiting for a permanent home. Mika's words will fill your mind and her teddy bear will fill your heart...with love.

***Mr. George Baker*, Author: Amy Hest, Audience: Child**

George is a 100-year-old jazz musician who has decided to learn to read. Everyday he waits for the school bus along with his young neighbor, Harry. At school, while Harry learns to read, so does George with a group of grown-ups. Harry narrates the story and the extraordinary watercolor illustrations depict the warm relationship between the white boy and the African American man. (Ages 4–8)

***My Alternate Life*, Author: Lee McClain, Child**

A series of teen novels, starting with this one, that feature a magic computer game that shows foster and adopted teen what life would have been like with their birth families. Covering serious issues but purposely short and easy to read for the many children in the system with learning and reading difficulties.

***My Dream of Martin Luther King*, Author: Faith Ringgold, Audience: Child**

Ringgold provides an extraordinarily powerful picture of King's childhood and experiences of segregation, prejudice and protest. (Ages 4–8)

***My Grandma Is My New Mommy*, Author: Cliff Greenberg, Audience: Child**

About the special role millions of grandparents have in a grandchild's life.

***No Mirrors in My Nana's House*, Author: Ysaye M. Barnwell, Audience: Child**

A young granddaughter's joyful tribute to her Nana composed by Barnwell and sung by world renowned Sweet Honey in the Rock on the CD. The CD also has a spoken-word recording of the book. (Ages 3–8)

***Oh Lord, I Wish I Was a Buzzard*, Author: Polly Greenberg, Audience: Child**

A gentle, universal story about wanting to be "anywhere but here." A little girl picks cotton, wishing she was something and somewhere cooler and doing something less back breaking like "a snake curved up cold and cool or a dog under a bush." A great read-aloud that easily turns into a joyous call and refrain. (Ages 3–5)

***Room*, Author: Emma Donoghue**

The story is told from a five-year-old boy's perspective. He has been isolated his whole life, living in a one-room secure building with his mother, who was abducted prior to his birth. When the boy and his mother are rescued, he is very scared and unhappy. Things are foreign to him and he is frightened by the physical distance from his mother. He didn't bound out into the normal world happy and saying, "Hooray, I'm free!"

***Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say!*, Author: Glenda Hatchett, Audience: Volunteer**

Saving Your Child from a Troubled World

***Shades of Black*, Author: Sandra L. Pinkney, Audience: Child**

The many shades of black are beautifully illustrated in this photo album of the many characteristics of blackness. (Ages 2–6)

***The Great Gilly Hopkins*, Author: Katherine Patterson, Audience: Child**

Eleven-year-old Gilly has been stuck in more foster families than she can remember, and she's disliked them all. She has a county-wide reputation for being brash, brilliant, and completely unmanageable. So when she's sent to live with the Trotters, Gilly decides to put her sharp mind to work. Before long she's devised an elaborate scheme to get her real mother to come rescue her. But the rescue doesn't work out, and the Great Gilly Hopkins is left thinking that maybe life with the Trotters wasn't so bad.

***The Village That Vanished*, Author: Ann Grifalconi, Audience: Child**

A folklore tale of quick-witted African villagers who draw on the spirits of their ancestors to hide from approaching slavers. This is a story of community solidarity and resourcefulness overcoming evil. (Ages 6–10)

***The Way I See It*, Author: Julian Holloway, Audience: Child**

The book is designed in a simple format that allows children to tell their own stories.

***What's Happening?*, Author: Pamela Jung, Audience: Child**

A set of two story/coloring workbooks (available in English and Spanish) created to empower children who have been removed from their families by providing them with some basic information.

***Why Me? Entering Foster Care*, Author: Pamle Jackson, Audience: Child**

With single simple sentences aided by colorful illustrations, this book presents the process of foster care, from the beginning until possible reunification with his or her parent(s).

***The Art of Comforting*, Author: Val Walker, Audience: Volunteer**

What to say and do for people in distress.

***Only Passing Through*, Author: R. Gregory Christie, Audience: Child**

A powerful picture book biography of one the most remarkable women of the 19th century. Sojourner Truth was a slave sold three times by age 13 and watched her parents die of cold and hunger. She became one of the abolitionist movement's strongest voices. Christie's dramatic impressionist illustrations complement Rockwell's moving storytelling. (Ages 9–11)

***Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, Author: Mary Pipher, Audience: Volunteer**

At adolescence, says Mary Pipher, "girls become 'female impersonators' who fit their whole selves into small, crowded spaces." Many lose spark, interest, and even IQ points as a "girl-poisoning" society forces a choice between being shunned for staying true to oneself and struggling to stay within a narrow definition of female. Pipher offers some prescriptions for changing society and helping girls resist.

***Rules of Survival*, Author: Nancy Werlin, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

Narrated by 17-year-old Matt as a letter to his youngest sister, Emmy, *The Rules of Survival* is his effort to come to terms with the vicious treatment he and his two sisters suffered at the hands of Nikki, their beautiful and unpredictable mother.

***The Power of Receiving*, Author: Amanda Owen, Audience: Volunteer**

Giving yourself the life you want and deserve.

***I Miss Mummy*, Author: Cathy Glass, Audience: Child**

The true story of a frightened young girl who's desperate to go home.

***Street Kid*, Author: Judy Westwater, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

One child's desperate fight for survival

***The Little Prisoner*, Author: Jane Elliott, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

The Little Prisoner is the shocking, astonishing, and ultimately uplifting true story of one woman's shattering twenty-year ordeal—and how she triumphed against an evil and violent human monster when honesty and bravery were her only weapons.

***The Pinballs*, Author: Betsy Byars, Audience: Child**

Carlie, Harvey and Thomas J., three foster children, have been taken in by the Masons who have had many other foster children in the past. It's Carlie who compares the children to pinballs, controlled by external forces, and at the mercy of fate. The Masons provide a supportive environment in which the children learn to care for each other and begin to experience love and trust. This is a believable, funny and touching novel.

***Three Little Words*, Author: Ashley Rhodes-Courter, Audience: Volunteer and Child**

The author's ability to form intelligent, open-minded conclusions about her traumatic childhood demonstrates her remarkable control and insight, and although there are plenty of wrenching moments, she succeeds not in attracting pity but in her stated intention, of drawing attention to the children who currently share the plight that she herself overcame.

***The Wonder of Boys*, Author: Michael Gurian, Audience: Volunteer**

The Wonder of Boys offers advice on how to understand and build strong father/son and mother/son relationships, stresses the importance of healthy discipline, and suggests methods of teaching boys about sex, relationships and spirituality. Parents and teachers of boys will find this book to be an insightful read.

***You Don't Know Anything...!*, Author: Nadir Baksh, Audience: Volunteer**

A manual for parenting your teenagers

Working with Older Youth

Almost Home: Helping Kids Move from Homelessness to Hope

This book tells the stories of six remarkable young people from across the United States and Canada as they confront life alone on the streets. Each eventually finds his or her way to Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless and runaway youth in North America.

****The Language of Flowers: A Novel*, Author: Vanessa Diffenbaugh, Audience: Volunteer**

The story of a young girl and her experiences as she ages out of the system. Her gift for flowers affects the lives of others.