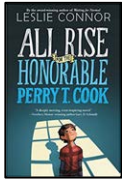




Diverse Middle Grade Books Featuring All Kinds of Families



All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook. Leslie Connor. (3 – 7) Perry was raised by his mom at the Blue River Co-ed Correctional Facility until a new district attorney removes him and forces him into a foster home. Desperate to reunite with his mom, Perry quests for answers, discover that love makes people resilient no matter where they come from.



Almost Home. Joan Bauer. (4 – 7) When Sugar and her mother lose their home, they head to Chicago, only to discover that fresh starts aren't so easy to come by for the homeless. But, Sugar shows resilience, with the help of a puppy and a warm foster family.



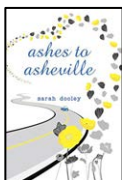
Also Known as Elvis. James Howe. (4 – 7) Skeezie's got the leather jacket of a tough guy, but a heart of gold. While stuck at home for the summer helping out his mom, he navigates first crushes and tough choices about family and friends. Final book in **The Misfits** series.



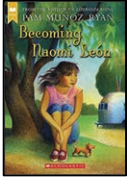
Amina's Voice. Hena Khan. (4 – 7) A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community.



As Brave As You. Jason Reynolds. (5 – 8) Two brothers leave Brooklyn for the first time to spend the summer with their grandparents in Virginia. When they decide to prove how brave they are, everything backfires—literally. A story touching on gender expectations, what does it mean to be brave, hurt, and love.



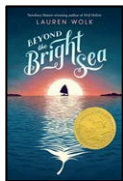
Ashes to Asheville. Sarah Dooley. (5 – 6) After Mama Lacy's death, Fella was forced to move in with her grandmother while her sister, Zany stayed with Mama Shannon. One night, Zany shows up determined to fulfill Mama Lacy's dying wish: to have her ashes spread at the last place they were all happy as a family. So, the sisters take off on a wild road trip.



Becoming Naomi León and **Yo, Naomi León**. Pam Muñoz Ryan. (4 – 7) Naomi's life with Gram and her little brother, Owen, is happy & peaceful. That is, until their mother reappears after 7 years of being gone, stirring up all sorts of questions & challenging Naomi to discover who she really is. Gram, Naomi, and Owen then set off on a journey to Mexico to discover the children's long-lost father.



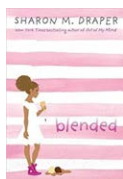
The Best Man. Richard Peck. (3 – 5) With humor and insight, Newbery Medalist, Richard Peck, follows a boy from elementary school to middle school navigating school and family dynamics. Starts with a wedding disaster and ends with a great one.



Beyond the Bright Sea. Lauren Wolk. (5 – 6) Crow has lived her entire life on a tiny island raised by the man who rescued her from the ocean as a baby. She has always been curious about the world around her. A chain of events leads her down a path of discovery and danger. Explores questions of identity, belonging, and the true meaning of family.



Black Brother, Black Brother. Jewell Parker Rhodes. (4 – 7) Powerful and emotionally gripping, Black Brother, Black Brother is a careful examination of the school-to-prison pipeline and follows one boy's fight against racism and his empowering path to finding his voice.



Blended. Sharon Draper. (4 – 7) Isabella is beginning to realize that being split between Mom and Dad involves more than switching houses: it's also about switching identities. Her dad is black, her mom is white. It seems like nothing can bring her family together again—until the worst thing happens. Isabella and Darren are stopped by the police. A cell phone is mistaken for a gun. And shots are fired



The Brave. James Bird. (4 – 7) Collin counts every letter spoken to him and is bullied relentlessly because of it. When he's sent to the Fond du Lac reservation to live with the mother he's never known, he finally finds a place that is warm, welcoming, and accepting of his condition



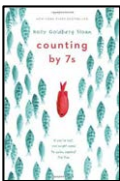
Brown Girl Dreaming. Jacqueline Woodson. (4 – 12) Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s.



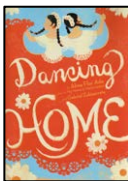
Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire. Susan Tan. (3 – 5) Cilla Lee-Jenkins is 50% Chinese, 50% Caucasian, and 100% destined for literary greatness Cilla is on a tight deadline. Her baby sister is about to be born, and Cilla needs to become a bestselling author before her family forgets all about her. **Cilla Lee-Jenkins: This Book Is a Classic and Cilla Lee-Jenkins: The Epic Story.**



The Circuit/ Cajas De Carton. Francisco Jimenez. (5 and up) Independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots. With faith, hope, and back-breaking work, the family endures. Autobiographical. Available in English and Spanish.



Counting by 7s. Holly Goldberg Sloan. (6 – 8) Follow Willow on her journey towards family after her adoptive parents die in a car crash.



Dancing Home / Nacer bailando. Alma Flor Ada. (4 – 6) Margie has been making efforts to distance herself from her heritage when her cousin from Mexico comes to live with her. Slowly the girls learn from each other and learn the importance of family and friendship.



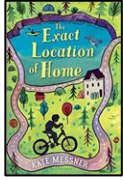
Dash. Kirby Larson. (5 – 7) As World War II rages and people of Japanese descent are forced into incarceration camps, Mitsi is separated from Dash, her classmates, and life, as she knows it. Though they've lost their home, will the Kashino family also lose their sense of family? Will Mitsi and Dash ever be reunited?



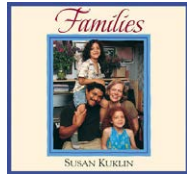
Efrén Divided. Ernesto Cisneros. (4 – 7) Efrén worries about his parents. Although he's American-born, his parents are undocumented. His worst nightmare comes true one day when Amá doesn't return from work and is deported across the border to Tijuana, México. Now more than ever, Efrén must channel his inner Soperboy to help take care of and try to reunite his family. School Library Journal Best Books of 2020



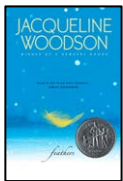
Esperanza Rising. Pam Muñoz Ryan. (4 – 6) Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico and have fancy dresses and a beautiful home. But a sudden tragedy forces her and Mama to flee to California and settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances – Mama's life and her own depend on it.



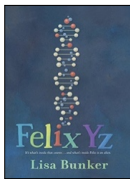
The Exact Location of Home. Kate Messner. (3 – 5) Zig's dad canceled his last visit with no explanation. As Zig and his mom struggle financially, Zig sets out to find his dad with a GPS and clues around town. Incorporates issues of bullying, homelessness, incarceration and single parent homes.



Families. Susan Kuklin. (4 – 5) Combining interviews and engaging color photos, this book shows the diversity of families in America. Includes mixed-race, immigrant, two-dad, two-mom and single-parent families and families for whom religion is a focal point.



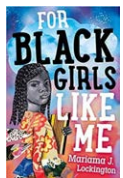
Feathers. Jacqueline Woodson. (5 – 8) A new boy's arrival in sixth grade helps Frannie recognize the barriers that separate people, and the importance of hope as a bridge. Frannie starts seeing a lot of things in a new light—her brother Sean's deafness, her mother's fear, the class bully's anger and her own desire for "the thing with feathers."



Felix Yz. Lisa Bunker. (5 – 8) When Felix Yz was three, he is accidentally fused with a fourth-dimensional being. Now he's on the brink of a risky procedure that will free him. With an awkward crush on a boy at school, a gender fluid grandparent and a Bi mom, family, bullying and identity are woven into the story.



Fighting Words. Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. (5 – 8) When sisters Della and Suki are placed with a gruff but caring foster mother after escaping from their mother's predatory boyfriend, Della gradually adapts to stability, while Suki experiences a mental health decline. Della's tough, straightforward narration pulls no punches as she inspires others to tell their stories when and how they can. Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2020 list.



For Black Girls Like Me. Mariama J. Lockington. (4 – 7) Makeda is eleven years old, adopted, and black. Her parents and big sister are white, and even though she loves them, she often feels left out. When Makeda's family moves across the country, she leaves behind her best friend, Lena the only other adopted black girl she knows. Through it all, Makeda can't help but wonder: What would it feel like to grow up with a family that looks like me



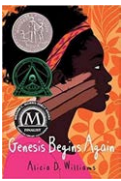
Flying Lessons & Other Stories. Ellen Oh (Editor) (3 – 7) Whether it is basketball dreams, family fiascos, first crushes, or new neighborhoods, this bold anthology—written by the best children's authors—celebrates the uniqueness and universality in all of us.



Forever, or a Long, Long Time. Caela Carter. (3 – 7) Flora and Julian are a team. They have to be: after moving from foster home to foster home, the only permanence is in each other.



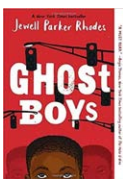
Front Desk. Kelly Yang. (4 –6) Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk. Her parents hide immigrants. She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language?



Genesis Begins Again. Alicia D. Williams. (4 – 8) There are ninety-six things Genesis hates about herself. She knows the exact number because she keeps a list. This deeply sensitive and powerful debut novel tells the story of a thirteen-year-old who must overcome internalized racism and a verbally abusive family to finally learn to love herself.



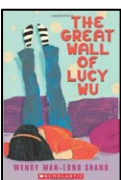
Ghost. Patina. Sunny. Lu. Jason Reynolds. (4 – 8) A series of books with four kids from very different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. All are a part of an elite middle school track team that goes to the state championships. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves.



Ghost Boys. By Jewell Parker Rhodes. (5 – 9) Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community. He meets another ghost, Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances and he meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions.



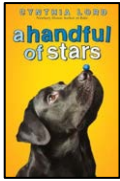
Gone Crazy in Alabama. Rita Williams-Garcia. (4 – 6) The three sisters from **One Crazy Summer** and **P.S. Be Eleven** head to Alabama to visit their grandmother and great-grandmother for the summer. The book includes family history, family complications and family fun.



The Great Wall of Lucy Wu. Wendy Wan Long Shang. (3 – 6) A humorous and heartwarming story about split cultural identities, and the way life doesn't go as planned for sixth-grader Lucy Wu – especially when her great-aunt comes for an extended visit from China.



Half a World Away. Cynthia Kadohata. (5 – 8) Jaden is adopted, considers himself an 'epic fail' so that is why his family is traveling to Kazakhstan to adopt a new baby—to replace him. Instead, Jaden discovers the transformative power of love.



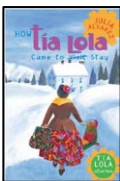
A Handful of Stars. Cynthia Lord. (3 – 6) This powerful middle-grade novel from the Newbery Honor author of RULES explores a friendship between a small-town girl and the daughter of migrant workers.



Hey, Kiddo. Jarrett J. Krosoczka. (6 – 9) In kindergarten, Jarrett Krosoczka's teacher asks him to draw his family, with a mommy and a daddy. But Jarrett's family is much more complicated than that. His mom is an addict, and his father is a mystery. Jarrett goes through his childhood trying to make his non-normal life as normal as possible and finding a way to express himself through drawing. National Book Award Finalist.



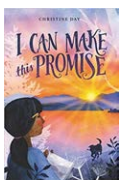
Home of the Brave. Katherine Applegate. (4 – 8) Kek, an African refugee, is confronted by many strange things at the Minneapolis home of his aunt and cousin, as well as in his fifth-grade classroom, and longs for his missing mother, but finds comfort in the company of a cow and her owner.



How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay. Julia Alvarez. (3 – 7) Miguel and his sister have just moved to Vermont with their mother, leaving behind their father in New York. Tia Lola comes from the Dominican Republic to help out, creating a whirlwind from her flamboyant appearance to her lively music, and vivid storytelling.



Hurricane Season. Nicole Melleby. (4 – 7) Fig, a sixth grader, is sure it's up to her alone to solve her father's problems and protect her family's privacy. But with the help of her best friend, a cute girl at the library, and a surprisingly kind new neighbor, Fig learns she isn't as alone as she once thought . . . and begins to compose her own definition of family.



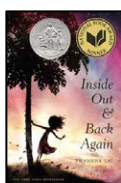
I Can Make This Promise. Christine Day. (4 – 7) Inspired by her family's history—Day tells the story of a girl who uncovers her family's secrets—and finds her own Native American identity. All her life, Edie has known that her mom was adopted by a white couple. So, no matter how curious she might be about her Native American heritage, Edie is sure her family doesn't have any answers.



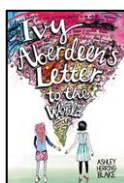
In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse. Joseph Marshall III. (5 – 9) Jimmy, a Lakota boy, embarks on a journey with his grandfather. Through his grandfather's tales about the famous warrior, Jimmy learns more about his Lakota heritage and, ultimately, himself.



Indian No More. Charlene Willing McManis. (4 – 7) With no good jobs available in Oregon, Regina's father signs the family up for the Indian Relocation program and moves them to Los Angeles. Regina finds a whole new world. She's never met kids of other races, and they've never met a real Indian. For the first time in her life, Regina comes face to face with the viciousness of racism



Inside Out and Back Again, Thanhha Lai. (4 – 7). Hà who has only known Saigon is forced to flee with her family as the Vietnam War ends. She ends up in Alabama. Follow one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, and healing as she journeys from one country to another, one life to the next. Written in verse.



Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World. Ashley Herring Blake (5 – 7) In the wake of a destructive tornado, one girl develops feelings for another in this stunning, tender novel about emerging identity.



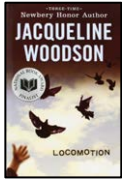
Just Like Jackie. Lindsey Stoddard. (3 – 7) For as long as Robinson Hart can remember, it's just been her and Grandpa. But Grandpa's memory has been getting bad. She's sure that she's making things worse by getting in trouble at school, but she can't resist using her fists when bullies like Alex Carter make fun of her for not having a mom.



Land of the Cranes. Aida Salazar. (4 – 7) Belita's family fled to Los Angeles to seek refuge from cartel wars in Mexico. Her Papi has told her stories of the Aztecs came from Aztlan, what is now the Southwest US, called the land of the cranes. But then her father is deported, and she and her mom are detained and must learn to survive in a family detention camp. School Library Journal Best Books of 2020.



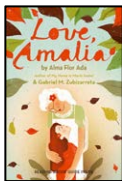
The Liberation of Gabriel King. K. L. Going. (4 – 6) In the summer of 1976, Gabriel, a white boy who is being bullied, and Frita, an African American girl who is facing prejudice, decide to overcome their fears together as they enter fifth grade. Story of the power of friendship, understanding and family.



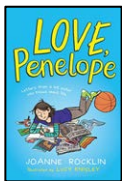
Locomotion. Jacqueline Woodson. (5 – 8) In a series of poems, eleven-year-old Lonnie writes about his life, after the death of his parents, separated from his younger sister, living in a foster home, and finding his poetic voice at school. Also see [Peace, Locomotion](#).



The Lottery Plus One. Emma Donoghue. (4 – 7) The Lotterys are: four parents, children both adopted and biological, and a menagerie of pets, all living and learning together in a sprawling house. Their lives are upturned when one of their grandfathers comes to live with them.



Love, Amalia / Con cariño, Amalia. Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel M. Zubizarreta. (2 – 4) When Amalia's best friend moves away, she turns to her grandmother for comfort. But when her grandmother dies, where can she turn? A story of the importance of family, heritage, and good food.



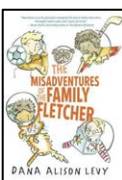
Love, Penelope. Joanne Rocklin. (4 – 6) As Penny and her two moms wait the arrival of a new baby, Penny writes letters to her sister during the year when both marriage equality and her favorite basketball team win, and Penny becomes more aware of the issues in the world around her.



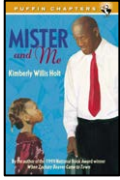
Luv Ya Bunches. Lauren Myracle. (4 – 6) A funny, honest depiction of the shifting alliances and rivalries between girls that shape school days. Written with a mix of instant messages, blog posts, and straight narrative. Four diverse 5th grade girls come together in friendship. One of the girls has two moms.



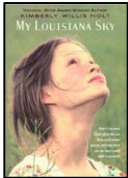
The Magic Misfits. Neil Patrick Harris. (3 – 6) After young street magician Carter runs away, he meets Dante Vernon, an illusionist, who runs a magic shop with his husband and their daughter. Carter finally finds friends and magic saving the town of Mineral Wells from B.B. Bosso's villainous clutches. Sequels: [The Magic Misfits: The Second Story](#) and [The Magic Misfits: The Minor Third](#).



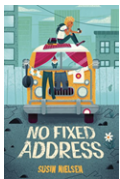
The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher. Dana Alison Levy (3 – 5) The Fletchers' school year is anything but boring with four brothers, two dads – from camping trips to scary tales told in the dark, from new schools to old friends, from imaginary cheetahs to very real skunks.



Mister and Me. Kimberly Willis Holt. (3 – 5) Jolene’s father died when she was a baby. When Leroy Redfield starts taking Momma dancing, Jolene refuses to call him anything but “Mister.” With love and patience, “Mister” helps Jolene expand her notion of family.



My Louisiana Sky. Kimberly Willis Holt. (4 – 6) Tiger Ann wants nothing more than to get out of her rural town—away from her mentally disabled mother, her “slow” father, and her classmates who tease her. But when she has a chance, she has to make hard decisions about her life and family.



No Fixed Address. Susin Nielsen. (5 – 6) After Felix’s mom loses her job, they have to move into a van. His mom swears him to secrecy. As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for Who What Where When, and he’s determined to earn a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But things don’t turn out the way he expects.



One For The Murphys. Lynda Mullaly Hunt. (5 – 8) When Carley becomes a foster child after she and her mom are beaten, she sees a family life she never thought existed. Despite her resistance, she starts to feel like she belongs. But then her mother wants her back and Carley has to decide where and how to live.



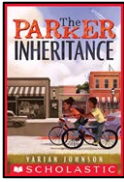
Orphan Train Girl. Christina Baker Kline. (3 – 7) Molly has been in foster care since she was eight. When she’s forced to help an elderly woman, she soon realizes that she has more in common with the woman than she thought. Vivian was once an orphan, too—an Irish immigrant to New York City who was put on a so-called “orphan train” to the Midwest with hundreds of other children.



Other Words for Home. Jasmine Warga. (3 – 7) Jude never thought she’d be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. But, maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.



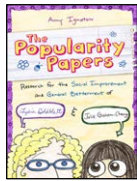
The Pants Project. Cat Clarke (3 – 6) Liv knows he was always meant to be a boy, but he hasn’t told anyone – even his two moms yet. Now, his new school has a terrible dress code, he can’t even wear pants. Only skirts. The only way for Liv to get what he wants is to go after it himself. But to Liv, this isn’t just a mission to change the policy—it’s a mission to change his life.



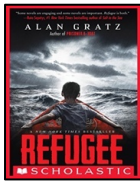
The Parker Inheritance. Varian Johnson. (3 – 6) Candice discovers a mysterious old letter describing an injustice from decades ago. With the help of Brandon, a quiet and often bullied boy, she begins to decipher the clues with a story that leads them deep into their South Carolina town's history—a history full of ugly deeds and forgotten heroes. Good historical detail and LGBTQ characters included.



Pictures of Hollis Woods. Patricia Reilly Giff. (4 – 7) When Hollis is sent to Josie, she wants to stay. But Josie is growing more forgetful every day. Well, Hollis won't let anyone separate them. She's escaped the system before; this time, she's taking Josie with her. Captures the yearning for a place to belong and Stresses the importance of artistic vision, creativity, and above all, family.



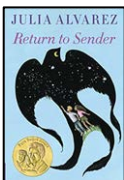
The Popularity Papers: Research for the Social Improvement and General Betterment of Lydia Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang. Amy Ignatow. (4 – 6) Two 5th best friends are determined to uncover the secrets of popularity by observing, recording, discussing, and replicating the behaviors of the “cool” girls. Notebook format. Julie has two dads. First in a series of seven books.



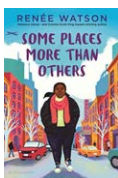
Refugee. Alan Gratz. (4 and up) Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge – from Nazi Germany, Cuba, and Syria. All will face unimaginable dangers -- from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But there is always the hope of tomorrow.



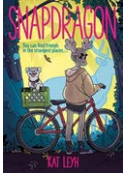
The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise. Dan Gemeinhart. (4 – 7) After Coyote lost her mom and two sisters in a car crash, she her dad, Rodeo, have lived on the road in an old school bus picking up a strange crew of misfit travelers. A 2019 Parents' Choice Award Gold Medal Winner.



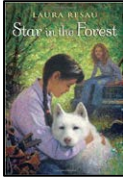
Return to Sender. Julia Alvarez. (4 – 6) After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family hires migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences? Full of hope, but no easy answers.



Some Places More Than Others. Renee Watson. (5 – 9) An 11-year-old Black girl from Portland, Ore., takes a trip to Harlem and confronts family secrets and cultural history. A novel about finding deep roots and exploring the past, the present, and the places that make us who we are.



Snapdragon. Kat Leyh. (4 – 6) Snap's town had a witch. At least, that's how the rumor goes. But Snap thinks Jacks is kind of cool. But as Snap starts to get to know her, she realizes that Jacks may in fact have *real* magic and a connection with Snap's family's past. Snap is bold, independent and deals with bullies. She finds friendship with Lulu, a transgender youth who lives in the same trailer park and shares a love of scary movies.



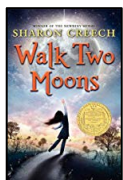
Star in the Forest. Laura Resau. (3 – 6) Zitlally's family is undocumented, and her father has just been arrested for speeding and deported back to Mexico. Meanwhile, Zitlally and a new friend find a dog in the forest near their trailer park. Will her Dad make it back home? Will the dog be OK?



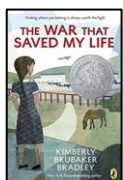
The Stars Beneath Our Feet. David Barclay Moore. (5 – 9) A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death. Then Lolly's mother's girlfriend brings him a gift that will change everything: two enormous bags filled with Legos.



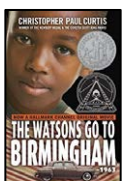
Summer of a Thousand Pies. Margaret Dilloway. (3 – 6) Cady Bennett is sent to live with Aunt Shell and her partner, Suzanne after growing up homeless in San Diego with her dad. Cady starts to feel like she belongs. Then she finds out that Aunt Shell's shop is failing. Saving the business and protecting the first place she's ever really felt safe will take everything she's learned and the help of all her new friends.



Walk Two Moons. Sharon Creech. (4 – 7) While on a car trip from Ohio to Idaho with her grandparents, Salamanca tells the outrageous story of her friend Phoebe to pass the time. As she does, her own story begins to unfold — the story of a 13-year-old girl whose only wish is to be reunited with her missing mother.



The War that Saved My Life. Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. (4 – 7) Ada has never left her apartment because of her mother's shame of Ada's twisted foot. But when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada sneaks out to join him. While Susan is still mourning her partner, Becky, she is forced to take them in. Historical fiction that is equal parts adventure and a moving tale of family and identity. Sequel: **The War I Finally Won.**



The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963. Christopher Paul Curtis. (4 – 6) Enter the world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan, when Momma and Dad decide it's time for a visit to Grandma in the South at one of the darkest moments in America's history.



Ways to Make Sunshine. Renée Watson. (2 – 4) Ryan is all about trying to see the best in people, to be a good daughter, a good friend. But even if her life isn't everything she would wish for, when her big brother is infuriating, her parents don't quite understand, and the unexpected happens, she always finds a way forward, with grace and wit. And plenty of sunshine. Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2020 list.



When You Trap a Tiger. Tae Keller. (3 – 7) 遇見虎靈的女孩 (青青) A hopeful, heartwarming story of a girl discovering her family's past and present when she makes a deal with a magical tiger from her grandmother's stories. Some stories refuse to stay bottled up. When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, a magical tiger straight out of her halmoni's Korean folktales arrives, prompting Lily to unravel a secret family history. Available in English and Traditional Chinese.



Wish. Barbara O'Connor. (4 – 6) about a girl who, with the help of a true-blue friend, a big-hearted aunt and uncle, and the dog of her dreams, unexpectedly learns the true meaning of family in the least likely of places.



Wonder. R.J. Palacio. (5 – 7) Auggie was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school until 5th grade. Told from multiple perspectives of family and friends that highlight different struggles with empathy and acceptance.



The Year of the Dog. Grace Lin. (3 – 5) Pacy and her two sisters are the only Taiwanese American children at school until Melody arrives. Follow them through the Year of the Dog as they celebrate with family, try to integrate different cultures and navigate school projects and friends. Continues with **The Year of the Rat**, and **Dumpling Days**.