Welcoming Schools Top Picture Books for a Welcoming Elementary School

And Tango Makes Three. Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell. (Pre-K – 2) Penguins Roy and Silo at New York’s Central Park Zoo keep putting a rock in their nest to try to hatch it. The zookeeper gives them a real egg that needs care. The penguins take turns sitting on it until it hatches, and Tango is born.

Be Who You Are. Todd Parr. (Pre-K – K) With his signature silly and accessible style, Parr encourages readers to embrace all their unique qualities—reminding them that their unique traits are what make them so special.

The Different Dragon. Jennifer Bryan. (Pre-K – 1) Shows how the wonderful curiosity and care of a little boy, with some help from his two moms, can lead to magical places with a dragon who is tired of being tough.

The Great Big Book of Families. Mary Hoffman. (Pre-K – 3) Features all kinds of families and their lives together. Each two-page spread showcases one aspect of home life—from houses and holidays, to schools and pets, to feelings and family trees.

I Am Jazz. Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings. (K – 5) From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew she was a girl, even though others saw her as a boy. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn’t feel like herself in boys’ clothing. Based on the real-life experiences of Jazz Jennings.

Julián Is a Mermaid. Jessica Love. (Pre-K – 2) While riding the subway with his abuela, Julián notices three women spectacularly dressed up. When Julián gets home, all he can think about is dressing up like them. But what will Abuela think about the mess he makes—and even more important, what will she think about how Julián sees himself? A story about the power of being seen and affirmed.
Marisol McDonald Doesn’t Match / Marisol McDonald no combina. Monica Brown. (K – 2) Marisol, a multiracial girl, loves to be creative, eating peanut butter and jelly burritos, for example. But at times, she is misunderstood and teased by peers. Bilingual.

The Name Jar. Yangsook Choi. (K – 2) The new kid in school needs a new name! Or does she? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious for her American classmates to like her.

One. Kathryn Otoshi. (Pre-K – 1) Red picks on Blue. The other colors don’t know what to do until One shows them how to stand up, stand together and count. Also see Zero.


Red: A Crayon’s Story. Michael Hall. (PreK – 1) A blue crayon mistakenly labeled as “red” suffers an identity crisis. Almost everyone tries to “help” him be red until a friend offers a new perspective. He’s blue! About finding the courage to be true to your inner self. Can be read on multiple levels.

When Aidan Became a Big Brother. Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita. (Pre-K – 2) When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl, but as he grew older, he realized he was a trans boy. When he finds out he is going to be a big brother, he learns the most important thing about being an older sibling: how to love with his whole self.

Wings. Christopher Myers. (1 – 5) Take flight with Ikarus Jackson, the boy with wings who remains true to his dreams despite taunts. One girl realizes he must be lonely and resolves to stop the hurtful words.