

The Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature (CCYAL) is committed to keeping the public abreast of high-quality, contemporary books published each year for children and teens.

We know the power of story—stories can affirm and challenge us; change our minds and hearts; and provide soothing balms of healing as we find ourselves in others' words or escape present-day realities. Now, perhaps more than ever, is the time to share stories with the young people in our lives about our various and diverse racial and ethnic identities, and the actions we can take against anti-Black racism. We understand that the ongoing police brutality against Black men, women, and youth is not a new phenomenon, but instead is a current manifestation of long-historied, state-sanctioned racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy in this country. We urge you to read books to learn more—about our connected histories, about the present moment, and about what you can do now to change the future. As we know, the status quo is not okay.

Activist Angela Davis once said, "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist." The CCYAL stands against anti-Black racism, as it works diligently to 1) vet books for harmful, misrepresentative, and racist images of Black youth of color and their lived experiences and histories, and to 2) ensure we have diverse, authentic voices represented in our collection. Recent research conducted by the [Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison](#) and [Lee & Low Books \(with co-authors Dr. Laura M. Jiménez and Betsy Beckert\)](#) tells us the children's and young adult literature industry is a White-dominated industry. As [Elisa Gall states in her recent "Reading While White" blog post](#), "children's literature has never been separate from the wider world. Everything there is here. It is all connected." As such, to encourage an inclusive, anti-bias collection, we consult reviews, public media, and scholarship by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and feature books from small, independent presses and publishers in our collection. We also work to stay mindful of how our own racial and ethnic identities and histories filter the expectations we bring to stories and influence how we read and interpret them, as well as judge their quality. Below, you will find a selection of recently-published titles we recommend reading with young people.

Please know the CCYAL is here for our Black students, faculty, and community members: we can recommend older titles that are excellent, too, and most importantly, provide a space where you can find yourself and your humanity affirmed in the pages of a book. When we can ensure everyone's safety and well-being on campus again, we hope you'll come spend some time with us in the Center.

### **Children's book titles:**

#### ***Antiracist Baby*, Ibram X. Kendi**

From the National Book Award-winning author of *Stamped from the Beginning* and *How to Be an Antiracist* comes a fresh new board book that empowers parents and children to uproot racism in our society and in ourselves. Take your first steps with Antiracist Baby! Or rather, follow *Antiracist Baby's* nine easy steps for building a more equitable world. With bold art and thoughtful yet playful text, *Antiracist Baby* introduces the youngest readers and the grown-ups in their lives to the concept and power of antiracism. Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, *Antiracist Baby* is the perfect gift for readers of all ages dedicated to forming a just society.

#### ***Hands Up!* Breanna J. McDaniel and Shane W. Evans**

This triumphant picture book recasts a charged phrase as part of a black girl's everyday life--hands up for a hug, hands up in class, hands up for a high five--before culminating in a moment of resistance at a

protest march. A young black girl lifts her baby hands up to greet the sun, reaches her hands up for a book on a high shelf, and raises her hands up in praise at a church service. She stretches her hands up high like a plane's wings and whizzes down a hill so fast on her bike with her hands way up. As she grows, she lives through everyday moments of joy, love, and sadness. And when she gets a little older, she joins together with her family and her community in a protest march, where they lift their hands up together in resistance and strength.

***Not My Idea: A Book about Whiteness, Anastasia Higgenbotham***

A book about racism and racial justice, inviting white children and parents to become curious about racism, accept that it's real, and cultivate justice.

***Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice, Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, Ann Hazzard, & Jennifer Zivoian***

*Something Happened in Our Town* follows two families — one White, one Black — as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events, and to help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives. Includes an extensive Note to Parents and Caregivers with guidelines for discussing race and racism with children, child-friendly definitions, and sample dialogues. Free, downloadable educator materials (including discussion questions) are available at [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org).

***Why Are They Kneeling? Lauren J. Coleman & Bryan Brown***

See what happens when Kendrick decides to ask a very important question. Kendrick thinks this Sunday will be like any other Sunday but is in for a surprise when he notices some of his favorite football players take a knee during our National Anthem. Kendrick finds the courage to ask a question and his family and friends find the courage to answer it. Kendrick learns so much! You might, too!

***Woke Baby, Mahogany Browne and Theodore Taylor, III***

Woke babies are up early. Woke babies raise their fists in the air. Woke babies cry out for justice. Woke babies grow up to change the world. This lyrical and empowering book is both a celebration of what it means to be a baby and what it means to be woke. With bright playful art, *Woke Baby* is an anthem of hope in a world where the only limit to a skyscraper is more blue.

**Middle grades:**

***A Good Kind of Trouble, Lisa Moore Ramée***

Twelve-year-old Shayla is allergic to trouble. All she wants to do is to follow the rules. (Oh, and she'd also like to make it through seventh grade with her best friendships intact, learn to run track, and have a cute boy see past her giant forehead.) But in junior high, it's like all the rules have changed. Now she's suddenly questioning who her best friends are and some people at school are saying she's not black enough. Wait, *what?* Shay's sister, Hana, is involved in Black Lives Matter, but Shay doesn't think that's for her. After experiencing a powerful protest, though, Shay decides some rules are worth breaking. She starts wearing an armband to school in support of the Black Lives movement. Soon everyone is taking sides. And she is given an ultimatum. Shay is scared to do the wrong thing (and even more scared to do the right thing), but if she doesn't face her fear, she'll be forever tripping over the next hurdle. Now that's trouble, for real.

***New Kid, Jerry Craft***

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon

finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself? This graphic novel is the first to win the Newbery Medal!

***The Rock and the River, Kekla Magoon***

For thirteen-year-old Sam it's not easy being the son of known civil rights activist Roland Childs. Especially when his older (and best friend), Stick, begins to drift away from him for no apparent reason. And then it happens: Sam finds something that changes everything forever. Sam has always had faith in his father, but when he finds literature about the Black Panthers under Stick's bed, he's not sure who to believe: his father or his best friend. Suddenly, nothing feels certain anymore. Sam wants to believe that his father is right: You can effect change without using violence. But as time goes on, Sam grows weary of standing by and watching as his friends and family suffer at the hands of racism in their own community. Sam begins to explore the Panthers with Stick, but soon he's involved in something far more serious—and more dangerous—than he could have ever predicted. Sam is faced with a difficult decision. Will he follow his father or his brother? His mind or his heart? The rock or the river?

***We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices, edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson***

What do we tell our children when the world seems bleak, and prejudice and racism run rampant? With 96 lavishly designed pages of original art and prose, fifty diverse creators lend voice to young activists. Featuring poems, letters, personal essays, art, and other works from such industry leaders as Jacqueline Woodson (*Brown Girl Dreaming*), Jason Reynolds (*All American Boys*), Kwame Alexander (*The Crossover*), Andrea Pippins (*I Love My Hair*), Sharon Draper (*Out of My Mind*), Rita Williams-Garcia (*One Crazy Summer*), Ellen Oh (cofounder of We Need Diverse Books), and artists Ekua Holmes, Rafael Lopez, James Ransome, Javaka Steptoe, and more, this anthology empowers the nation's youth to listen, learn, and build a better tomorrow.

***Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice, Mahogany L. Browne with Elizabeth Acevedo and Olivia Gatwood***

Historically poets have been on the forefront of social movements. *Woke* is a collection of poems by women that reflects the joy and passion in the fight for social justice, tackling topics from discrimination to empathy, and acceptance to speaking out. With Theodore Taylor's bright, emotional art, and writing from Mahogany L. Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo and Olivia Gatwood, kids will be inspired to create their own art and poems to express how they see justice and injustice.

***You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P! Alex Gino***

Jilly thinks she's figured out how life works. But when her sister Emma is born Deaf, she realizes how much she still has to learn. A big fantasy reader, Jilly connects with another fan, Derek, who is a Deaf Black ASL user. She goes to Derek for advice but doesn't always know the best way to ask for it and makes some mistakes along the way. Jilly has to step back to learn to be an ally, a sister, and a friend, understanding that life works in different ways for different people, and that being open to change can make you change in the best possible ways.

**Young adult:**

***Harbor Me, Jaqueline Woodson***

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them--everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes.

When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

***Light It Up, Kekla Magoon***

A girl walks home from school. She's tall for her age. She's wearing her winter coat. Her headphones are in. She's hurrying. She never makes it home. In the aftermath, while law enforcement tries to justify the response, one fact remains: a police officer has shot and killed an unarmed thirteen-year-old girl. The community is thrown into upheaval, leading to unrest, a growing movement to protest the senseless taking of black lives, and the arrival of white supremacist counter demonstrators.

***Dig, A.S. King***

With her inimitable surrealism, award winner A.S. King exposes how a toxic culture of polite white supremacy tears a family apart and how one determined generation can dig its way out.

***Say Her Name: Poems to Empower, Zetta Elliott and Loveis Wise***

Inspired by the #SayHerName campaign launched by the African American Policy Forum, these poems pay tribute to victims of police brutality as well as the activists insisting that Black Lives Matter. Elliott engages poets from the past two centuries to create a chorus of voices celebrating the creativity, resilience, and courage of Black women and girls. This collection features forty-nine powerful poems, four of which are tribute poems inspired by the works of Lucille Clifton, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, and Phillis Wheatley.

***Take the Mic: Fictional Stories of Everyday Resistance, edited by Bethany C. Morrow***

You might be the kind of person who stands up to online trolls. Or who marches to protest injustice. Perhaps you are #DisabledAndCute and dancing around your living room, alive and proud. Or perhaps you are the trans mentor that you wish you had when you were younger. Maybe you call out false allies, or stand up to loved ones. Maybe you speak your truth and drop the mic, or maybe you take it with you when you leave. This anthology features fictional stories--in poems, prose, and art--that reflect a slice of the varied and limitless ways that readers like you resist every day.

**Nonfiction for teens and adults:**

***How to be an Antiracist, Ibram X. Kendi***

Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.

***Just Mercy (Young adult readers' edition), Bryan Stevenson***

In this very personal work--adapted from the original #1 bestseller, which the *New York Times* calls "as compelling as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and in some ways more so"--acclaimed lawyer and social justice advocate Bryan Stevenson offers a glimpse into the lives of the wrongfully imprisoned and his efforts to fight for their freedom. Stevenson's story is one of working to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society--the poor, the wrongly convicted, and those whose lives have been marked by discrimination and marginalization. Through this adaptation, young people of today will find themselves called to action and compassion in the pursuit of justice.

A portion of the proceeds of this book will go to charity to help in Stevenson's important work to benefit the voiceless and the vulnerable as they attempt to navigate the broken U.S. justice system.

***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning, Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi***

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas--and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives.

***This Book is Antiracist*, Tiffany Jewell**

Gain a deeper understanding of your anti-racist self as you progress through 20 chapters that spark introspection, reveal the origins of racism that we are still experiencing, and give you the courage and power to undo it. Each chapter builds on the previous one as you learn more about yourself and racial oppression. 20 activities get you thinking and help you grow with the knowledge. All you need is a pen and paper.

***White Supremacy and Me: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, Layla F. Saad**

Updated and expanded from the original workbook (downloaded by nearly 100,000 people), this critical text gives you the language to understand racism, and to dismantle your own biases, whether you are using the book on your own, with a book club, or looking to start family activism in your own home.