A GUIDE TO STORYTIME
DEAR PARENTS, TEACHERS & EDUCATORS

The COVID-19 world health crisis has had a profound impact on the educational system, and as a result, many students have experienced disorienting shifts between virtual and in-person learning. We at the Los Angeles Times remain committed to serving the community and promoting literacy skills for our youngest learners.

The Los Angeles Times Reading by 9 program has aimed to address the child literacy crisis in Southern California since 1998, and now more than ever we are working to help parents, guardians and educators unlock the potential of literacy.

This year’s Reading by 9 annual parent reading guide was developed in connection with the Los Angeles Public Library, whose mission is to provide free and easy access to information, ideas, books and technology that enrich, educate and empower every individual in our city’s diverse communities.

Our 2021 guide includes authors and book recommendations that highlight the rich diversity of California. These recommendations are meant to help children learn about interacting with people of different backgrounds. The guide is available in both English and Spanish and offers tips for integrating reading into every aspect of a child’s life.

As we look ahead, we strive to expand the Reading by 9 program and create year-round opportunities for literacy and engagement.

This year’s guide is distributed digitally to parents and teachers throughout the United States with the support of donors and help of community-based organizations and schools.

If you are interested in supporting our efforts, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Reading by 9 Fund as we strive to expand literacy resources for families.

–Monika Khare
Director of Public Affairs
Los Angeles Times

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This supplement did not involve the editorial or reporting staff of the Los Angeles Times except where noted.

The guide is free to parents, educators and organizations working with children and families. To contact us with comments and questions or to receive more information, email public.affairs@latimes.com.

Los Angeles Times Public Affairs manages philanthropy, community engagement and corporate social responsibility at the nation’s largest metropolitan daily news organization. We broaden perspectives, empower storytellers and inspire our community to question and transform the world around them. For more information, visit latimes.com/readingby9.

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service — the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services — the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org and diverse programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.
When Los Angeles followed health and safety protocols by closing libraries, children’s librarians were faced with the challenge of how to promote books and literacy without a physical connection to their communities and the collection. Their dedication to taking on that challenge, using whatever tools they had available to them, resulted in an array of online storytimes, book clubs and author talks on social media channels and Zoom. Libraries created outdoor storywalks through partnerships with neighborhood organizations and businesses. When hub branches were open for contactless pickups, a book bundling system was implemented to get titles in English and Spanish into the hands of families.

Libraries are fully open, and even with limited in-person programming, the commitment to literacy still stands. Book bundling continues alongside the ability to browse the shelves. Whatever books get checked out, patrons no longer have to contend with late fees or fines. A family’s closest branch can still send free books tied to library programs that celebrate children and their diverse cultures and experiences. Individuals can print 10 sheets per day at branches at no cost, giving parents and caregivers the opportunity to print out activity sheets related to workshops that support social emotional learning or kindergarten readiness.

The Los Angeles Public Library is proud to contribute to this year’s Reading by 9 guide as it serves as another important tool in championing literacy. With the focus largely on Southern California children’s books, there are extra selling points of reading about a familiar scene or landmark or of the book’s creator living close by. Who knows? You might meet the author or illustrator through the library someday!

A child combs through books at a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.
(Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library)
Open Very Carefully
Nick Bromley
An angry crocodile eats his way through this interactive picture book.

What Riley Wore
Elana K. Arnold
In this book, Riley wears clothes that feel right for the occasion, whether it’s a superhero cape to brave a visit to the dentist or a ball gown for an outing with family.

Welcome to the Party
Gabrielle Union
A book about the birth of a child highlights the fireworks of emotions that come with new life.
A story about pressing buttons in an elevator shows a deeper journey that results in soaring hearts and imaginations with the flip of a page.

**Off to See the Sea**  
Nikki Grimes  
Bath time becomes an adventure at sea — the faucet is a waterfall and a rubber duck is a sea creature.

**The Family Book**  
Todd Parr  
True to its title, “The Family Book” celebrates different families in different ways.

**Penguin and Pinecone**  
Salina Yoon  
A penguin finds a little lost pine cone in the snow and embarks on a journey to send the pine cone back home.

**Lift**  
Minh Le  
A story about pressing buttons in an elevator shows a deeper journey that results in soaring hearts and imaginations with the flip of a page.
When Angels Sing
Michael Mahin

When Carlos Santana would listen to his father play *el violín*, the world would fill with love. That memory inspires Carlos to pick up *la guitarra* in an attempt to re-create the magic.

Paletero Man
Lucky Diaz

The story of a main character who walks all around town looking for the Paletero Man until he realizes he has no money to spend.

Extra Yarn
Mac Barnett

Creations from magical yarn by a young girl captivate a community in this modern fairy tale reminiscent of a classic.
Dancing Hands
Margarita Engle

Teresa’s family flees Venezuela for the United States. She is lonely in an unfamiliar place until her gift for playing the piano leads her to playing at the White House.

Outside, Inside
LeUyen Pham

“Outside, Inside” celebrates essential workers and a community as it overcomes the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Paper Kingdom
Helena Ku Rhee

At night, an office transforms into a whimsical kingdom of paper when a boy accompanies his parents to their cleaning job.

Redwoods
Jason Chin

A boy discovers a book about redwoods and is transported to the forest as he turns the pages.
Efrén Divided
Ernesto Cisneros

A young boy journeys to reunite with his family after his parents are deported to Mexico.

Five Things About Ava Andrews
Margaret Dilloway

How a shy 11-year-old evolves into an activist by overcoming her anxiety through improv.

Biddy Mason Speaks Up
Arisa White & Laura Atkins

Winner of the Nautilus Book Award, this tale looks at slavery, racism and community healing in the United States.
Stand Up, Yumi Chung!
Jessica Kim

An 11-year-old girl lives a double life pursuing her stand-up comedy dreams while taking test-prep classes to appease her mother.

Mañanaland
Pam Muñoz Ryan

A boy uncovers a family secret about an underground network of guardians who protect people fleeing a neighboring country.

Chef Roi Choi and the Street Food Remix
Jacqueline Briggs Martin & June Jo Lee

For Chef Roy Choi, food is a way to explore both Korean and Los Angeles cultures — that’s why he remixes food just as an artist remixes music.

Real Friends
Shannon Hale

Shannon and Adrienne’s friendship is put to the test as they navigate school and popularity.
Make the most of reading time by engaging with your child through comprehension and creativity.

The books recommended in this guide provide several opportunities for learning and letting the imagination soar. Additionally, there are simple ways parents and caregivers can extend the reading experience. Asking “What do you notice?” or “What do you see?” are powerful prompts for making discoveries and connections. What can start out as a game of seek and find the cat in the book “Outside, Inside” by LeUyen Pham could lead to remembering that comfort and connection can be found even in times of uncertainty.

Point out the things in a child’s life that connect to the book that they just read or as you read together. Do they have clothes similar to Riley’s in “What Riley Wore”? What fantastic worlds could be created with a nearby stack of papers and how are they different from what Daniel made in “The Paper Kingdom”? For older readers, how did the books’ characters draw strength from their surroundings and the people around them to find their own voices? (Yes, this is a shared theme in the books for 3rd/4th grade!)

At a recent program, the librarian invited children to draw an emotion they felt while she read the book “Glad Monster, Sad Monster: A Book About Feelings” by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda. After sharing their pictures (happy, silly, excited), the librarian brought out flannel pieces: a yellow circle, smaller black circles and black rectangles, red ovals and a blue string. It was time for the kids to help her create more feelings. Soon the rectangles were slanted down to make angry eyebrows. One girl gave the instructions to make the string a squiggly, confused mouth. Red ovals were used as the eyes for shouting in surprise or frustration. It was a varied range of creations from kids ages 5 to 9 who reveled in being able to take the reins for a little bit. More discussion led them to share about things they do when they feel grumpy or sad. All was sparked from reading a book and was guided by the librarian who asked open-ended questions.
RESOURCES

There are many organizations across Los Angeles and Orange counties through which families can access literacy resources and support services. Take a look at these organizations.

**Literacy programs**

826LA
1714 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 413-3388
826la.org

Access Books
(310) 284-3452
accessbooks.net

Common Sense Media
1100 Glendon Ave. 17th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90024
commonsense.org

CSUN L.A. Times Literacy Center
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330
(818) 677-7394
bit.ly/2Ym5IDh

News Literacy Project
(714) 479-0294
newslit.org

Parentis Foundation
24012 Calle de la Plata, Suite 400
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 305-2716
parentisfoundation.org

Reading Is Fundamental
7250 Bandini Blvd., Suite 209
Commerce, CA 90040
(323) 890-0876
rifsocal.org

Reading Partners
5350 Wilshire Blvd., #36216
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(213) 399-8599
bit.ly/3mXQuQi

Reading to Kids
1600 Sawtelle Boulevard, Suite 210
Los Angeles, California 90025
(310) 479-7455
readingtokids.org

Read to a Child
10940 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 208-5300
readtoachild.org/los-angeles

Ready, Set, Read!
1000 N. Alameda St., No. 240
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(818) 570-2838
readysetread.org

The Book Foundation
5429 W. Washington Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90016
(323) 746-5800
thebookfoundation.org

**Support services**

Abriendo Puertas/Openings Doors
1000 N. Alameda St., No. 240
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 346-3216
ap-od.org

Allies for Every Child
12120 Wagner St.
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 397-4200
alliesforeverychild.org

Families Forward Learning Center
980 N. Fair Oaks Ave.
 Pasadena, CA 91103
(626) 792-2687
familiesforwardlc.org

Hands Together
201 Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 479-0294
handstogether-sa.org

Koreatown Youth and Community Center
3727 W. 6th St., No. 300
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 365-7400
kyccla.org

Mar Vista Family Center Preschool
5075 S. Slauson Ave.
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 390-9607
marvistafc.org

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
6113 Clara St.
Bell Gardens, CA 90201
(562) 928-1357
maof.org

Orange Children & Parents Together
1063 N. Glassell St.
Orange, CA 92867
(714) 639-4000
ocpt.webtradeconsulting.net

Pathways LA
3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1100
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 427-2700
pathwaysla.org

Proyecto Pastoral Centro de Alegría
420 N. Soto St.
Los Angeles, CA 90033
(323) 685-8501
proyectopastoral.org

South Central LAMP
892 E. 48th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90011
(323) 234-1471
facebook.com/Southcentrallamp

**Libraries**

Los Angeles Public Library
72 branches throughout the city
(213) 228-7000
lapl.org/branches

Los Angeles County Library
86 branches throughout the county
(323) 264-7715
lacountylibrary.org/library-locator

Orange County Public Libraries
33 branches throughout the county
(714) 566-3000
http://ocpl.org/libraries