

# 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.

—Monika Khare  
Director of Public Affairs  
Los Angeles Times

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.

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Designed by Kate Sequeira.

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](mailto: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](https://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](https://lapl.org) and diverse programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.



# A NOTE FROM THE LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

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



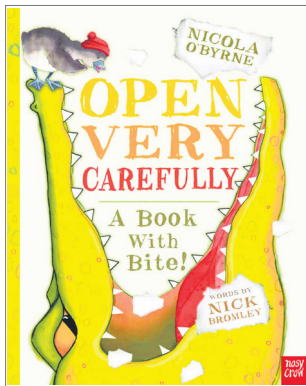
A child combs through books at a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library. (Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library)

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!

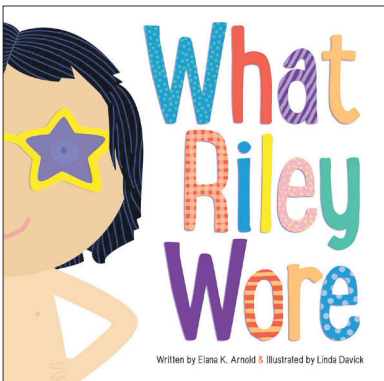
# BABIES & KINDERGARTEN



## Open Very Carefully

Nick Bromley

An angry crocodile eats his way through this interactive picture book.



## What Riley Wore

Elana K. Arnold

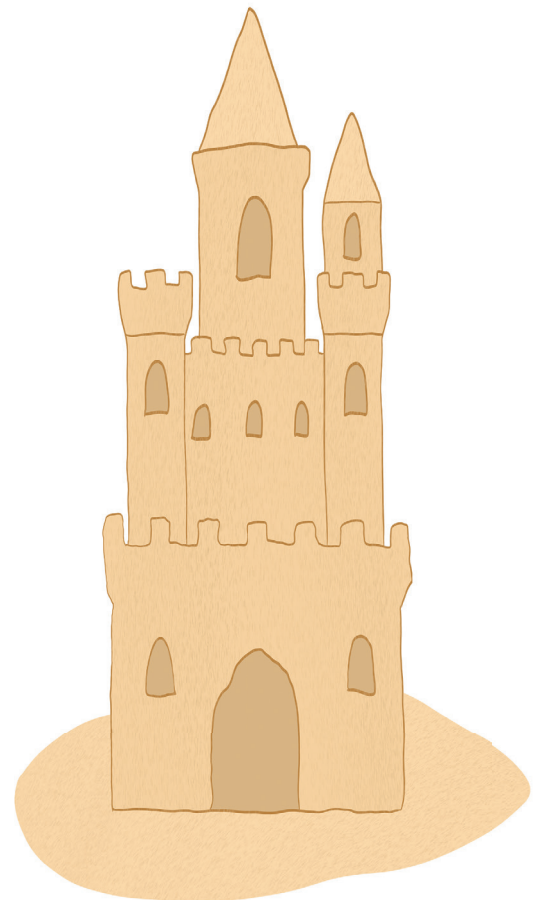
In this book, Riley wears clothes that feel right for the occasion, whether it's a superhero cape to brave a visit to the dentist or a ball gown for an outing with family.



## Welcome to the Party

Gabrielle Union

A book about the birth of a child highlights the fireworks of emotions that come with new life.



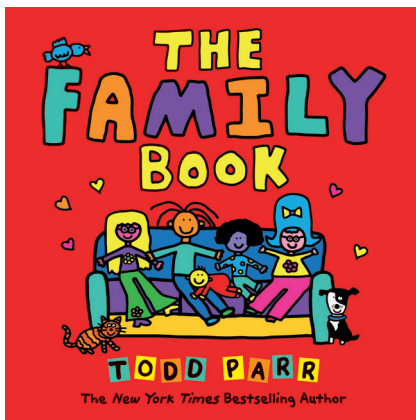




## Off to See the Sea

Nikki Grimes

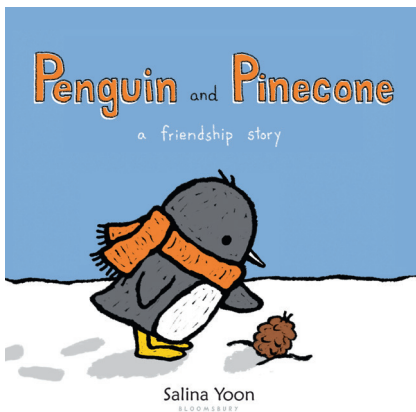
Bath time becomes an adventure at sea — the faucet is a waterfall and a rubber duck is a sea creature.



## 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.

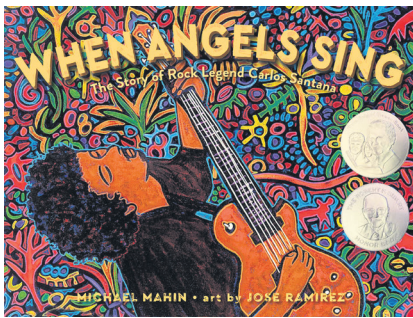


## Lift

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.

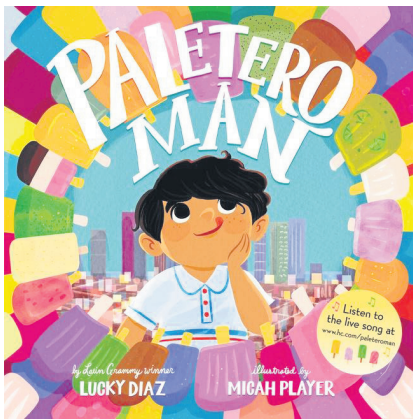
# 1ST & 2ND GRADE



## When Angels Sing

Michael Mahin

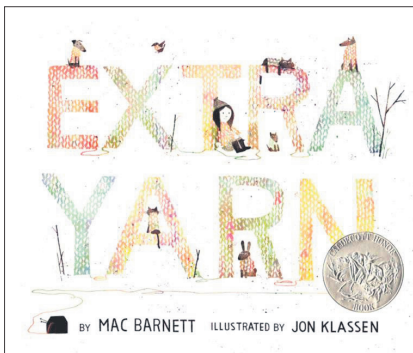
When Carlos Santana would listen to his father play *el violín*, the world would fill with love. That memory inspires Carlos to pick up *la guitarra* in an attempt to re-create the magic.



## 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.

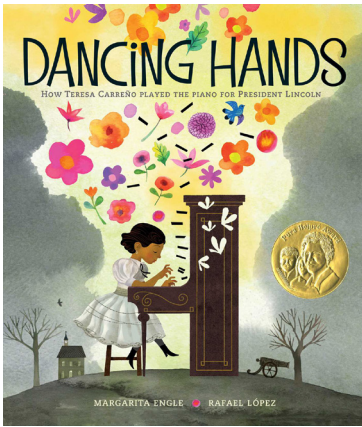


## Extra Yarn

Mac Barnett

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

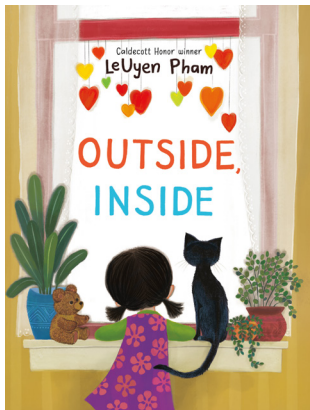




## Dancing Hands

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

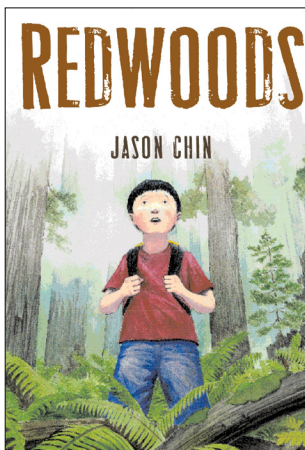
"Outside, Inside" celebrates essential workers and a community as it overcomes the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## 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.



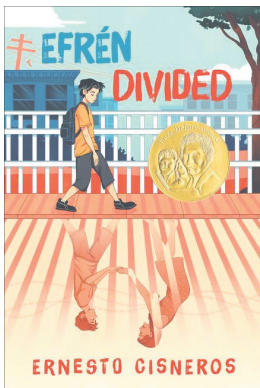
## Redwoods

Jason Chin

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



# 3RD & 4TH GRADE



## Efrén Divided

Ernesto Cisneros

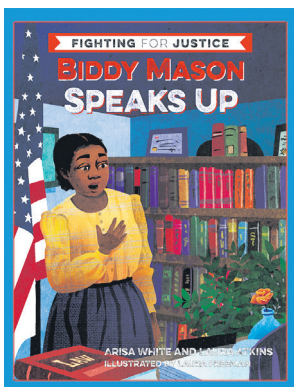
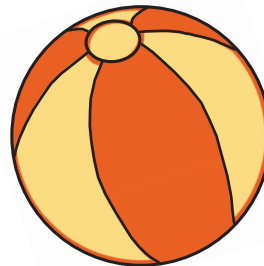
A young boy journeys to reunite with his family after his parents are deported to Mexico.



## 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

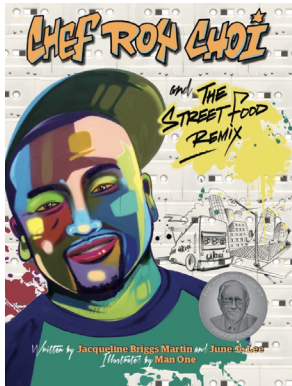
An 11-year-old girl lives a double life pursuing her stand-up comedy dreams while taking test-prep classes to appease her mother.



## Mañanaland

Pam Muñoz Ryan

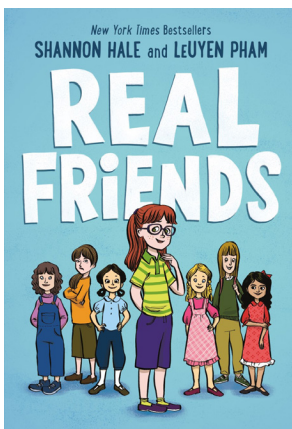
A boy uncovers a family secret about an underground network of guardians who protect people fleeing a neighboring country.



## Chef Roy 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.

# ASKING QUESTIONS & MAKING CONNECTIONS

Make the most of reading time by engaging with your child through comprehension and creativity.

Joanna Fabicon  
Senior Librarian for Children's Services  
Los Angeles Public Library

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 librar-



A child enjoys some reading time at a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library. (Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library)

ian 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  
readyssetread.org

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

## Support services

**Abriendo Puertas/Opening 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 Alegria**  
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