

GLSEN Rainbow Library Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Book List

All the books on the below list are included in the 2025-2025 School Year Rainbow Library collection. With each title is a full-text review from *School Library Journal* (SLJ) or *Booklist Reviews* (printed with permission from the publishers), along with the awards the title has won. We encourage you to use this information when making book recommendations to students or when discussing these titles with families or other school staff.

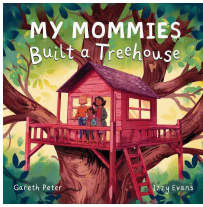
Rainbow Library books are selected based on reviews from major journals, such as *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, and *Booklist Reviews* and feedback from hundreds of educators and school librarians who previously received Rainbow Library sets. The grade-range for each title is in line with the grade-range provided by *School Library Journal* (or if unavailable, reviews from other reputable journals). Nearly all these titles have won awards or have been featured on reputable lists, such as the American Library Association (ALA) Rainbow Book List. To purchase LGBTQ+ affirming titles for grades K-12, please visit bookshop.org/shop/RainbowLibrary. A portion of proceeds goes back to supporting this program.



47,000 Beads

Koja Adeyoha and Angel Adeyoha • Best for 1st Grade - 3rd Grade • Realistic Fiction

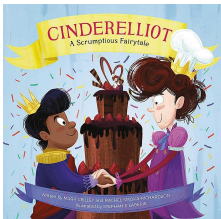
"47,000 Beads offers readers a celebratory representation of the Lakota people and traditions, including an insight into the sacredness of Two-Spirit identities. Set within a tight-knit Lakota community, Peyton usually loves dancing at pow wow with her friends and family, but one day she feels as if she doesn't belong with the others when she is jingle dancing, a healing dance traditionally performed by women across many Native American and First Nations communities. As a Two-Spirit person, does Peyton belong in the dance circle? With the help of her friend L and Auntie Eyota, Peyton's community sets out to make sure she has the perfect regalia. Peyton is reassured that just like there are many different regalia and dances for the jingle dance, there are many different paths to take and roles to have in the community! Full of colorful, intricate illustrations, this picture book captures the necessary care, attention, and tiospaye (extended family) support that goes into the creation of the jingle dance regalia. Against this specific context, the book celebrates everyone's unique identity. The authors reject colonized ideas of gender by using the singular pronoun 'they' throughout the book. 47,000 Beads celebrates the resilience of Two-Spirit peoples despite decades of stigmatization and trauma as a result of the oppression of Indigenous peoples in the settler colonial culture. It is rare, but enlivening, to see a picture book that successfully depicts the continuum of gender identity and expression in a Native community. It is liberating to see a book that frames gender fluid identities as reasons to celebrate." (University of Minnesota Children's Literature Review, Emma Heckel)



My Mommies Built a Treehouse

Gareth Peter • Best for Kindergarten - 2nd Grade • Picture Book

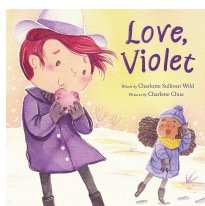
2024 ALA Rainbow Book List Top Ten Books for Young Readers "A brown-skinned child undertakes a big building project with his moms: "Some children wish for telescopes, or skateboards, or a mouse./ But there's just one thing that I want, my very own.../ Treehouse!" Both moms drop everything to help pick the best tree in the yard, shop for supplies, build, paint, and play. An ABCB rhyming structure propels the story forward. The rhyme bounces mostly in a satisfying rhythm with a few clunky moments. Light conflict, including spilled paint and a snapped two-by-four at the hardware store, joins a story otherwise free of trouble. The strength of this title depends on its colorful, dynamic digital illustrations and its multiracial LGBTQIA+ representation. VERDICT This sweet, rhyming STEAM story is a pleasing read. Recommended as an additional purchase." (School Library Journal, Allison Staley)



Cinderelliot: A Scrumptious Fairytale

Mark Ceilley; Rachel Smoka-Richardson • Best for Kindergarten - 2nd Grade • Fairytale

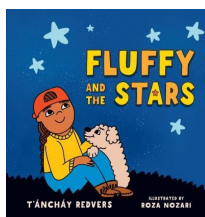
2023 ALA Rainbow Book List - Early Elementary. "A fairy-tale retelling with a sprinkle of gender swapping (and actual sprinkles!). Cinderelliot absolutely adores baking, from measuring ingredients to putting on the finishing touches. But as (ful)filling as baking can be, Cinderelliot wishes for more—for someone to love him as much as they love what he bakes. Unfortunately, his step siblings don't fit that bill, though they do love his desserts—so much so that when the prince holds a competition to choose a new palace baker, the cruel pair demand that Cinderelliot make pastries that they can pass off as their own. Readers can guess what comes next—a desperate wish to attend the competition granted by a stylishly besuited fairy godfather; instant sparks with the smitten, sweet-toothed prince; and a midnight dash leaving only a chef's hat behind. Gender play in fairy-tale retellings is hardly new, and some elements are a bit overdone here, but the baking spin and dash of fluffy romance sealed with a kiss on the cheek keep the plot from going stale. Animated illustrations look as though they might jump off the page with cascades of color and all the frenetic energy one expects of a sugar-charged adventure. Cinderelliot and his step siblings are light-skinned, and Prince Samuel is dark-skinned along with a smattering of background cast in the palace. Shamelessly saccharine and delightfully queer." (Kirkus)



Love, Violet

Charlotte Sullivan Wild • Best for Preschool - 2nd Grade • Realistic Fiction

2023 Winner, ALA Stonewall Book Award - Children's Literature. 2022 Lambda Literary Award - Children's Finalist. "In this sensitive picture book about first friendship and first crushes, Violet, who has pale skin and red hair, daydreams about taking her friend Mira, who has light brown skin and curly hair, on heroic adventures. 'As far as Violet was concerned, only one person in her class raced like the wind. Only one had a leaping laugh. Only one made Violet's heart skip.' But every time Violet tries to tell Mira how she feels, she goes shy. As Valentine's Day approaches, Violet decides that a handmade card is the perfect way to show Mira just how special she is. A soothing color palette enhances the story's quiet and lighthearted tone, and transparent watercolor washes on textured paper add light and warmth to wintry scenes. Children will notice Mira's baffled expressions in the background as Violet frets, offering opportunities for conversation around social-emotional learning. Cheerful schoolmates are drawn with varying shades of skin and hair types. Mira's warm response when Violet finally delivers her valentine is touching, and sends a reassuring message about being true to one's feelings. While the girls' relationship is not explicitly romantic, Violet's daydreams (where, for example, she is wearing a knight's outfit and laying treasure at Mira's feet) and her skipping heart suggest that her feelings may grow into something more. VERDICT This book fills an important need for non-heteronormative representation in picture book collections and will sit alongside books like Thomas Scotto's *Jerome by Heart*. Recommended for holiday collections." (School Library Journal, Amy Fellows)



Fluffy and the Stars

T'anchay Redvers • Best for Kindergarten - 2nd Grade • Picture Book

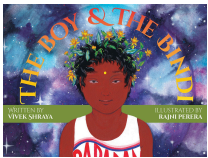
2024 ALA Rainbow Book List Top Ten Books for Young Readers "Shay, a nonbinary child with tan skin, a long braid, they/them pronouns, and a loving mom, is inseparable from their companion Fluffy. She's the best dog, always up for adventure, and they have pledged to remain together forever. But forever comes early when Fluffy gets sick. The first morning that Fluffy isn't around, Shay feels physically ill. The empty food bowl and water bowl are visceral reminders of an absence that hurts to their very core. One night, though, Shay dreams of Fluffy playing with other dogs among the stars and sky. It's such a joyful scene that Shay can't help but be cheered up; after that, they look to the stars whenever they miss Fluffy. Redvers, a Dene/Métis member of the Deninu K'ue First Nation, writes with a light hand of Shay and Fluffy's attachment; this is a bond every child will understand and an explanation of grief that is perfectly childlike, but never trivial. Nozari creates scenes in paintbox-bright colors that boldly show the skies where Fluffy lives on as well as the landscapes she and Shay share before the dog gets too old. VERDICT A generous look at loss and mourning, scaled to young survivors, easy to share in groups or one on one." (School Library Journal, Kimberly Olson Fakih)



One of a Kind, Like Me (bilingual) / Único Como Yo (bilingüe)

Laurin Mayeno • Best for 1st Grade - 3rd Grade • Realistic Fiction

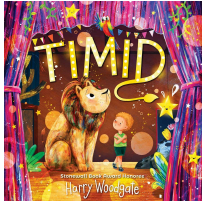
"Based on a true story, this timely picture book tells the story of Danny, who wants to be a princess for the school parade. Danny sketches a beautiful purple gown and silvery crown and declares, 'I'm going to be a princess, just like her.' Danny's family are supportive and loving. His little sister coos with approval; Mom affirms her encouragement, saying, 'Let's go find your princess dress'; and Grandpa suggests the Nifty Thrifty because they have everything there. At the thrift store, Danny finds a bouncy ruffled purple fabric that might be a shower curtain, but with a few cuts and redesign, it transforms into Danny's princess dress. On parade day, Danny's pineapple-dressed friend declares, 'I've never seen a boy princess before.' Danny responds, 'I've never seen a walking pineapple or a talking butterfly.' The child's resilience and ability to affirm his value and uniqueness shine through. Mlawer's expert Spanish translation parallels the English text and invites readers to reflect on the importance of gender diversity in all our communities, including Latino families. Liu-Trujillo's illustrations use warm pastel colors that lend tenderness to this beautiful story of inclusion and love. VERDICT This inclusive bilingual picture book belongs in public and school libraries." (School Library Journal, Lettycia Terrones)



The Boy and the Bindi

Vivek Shraya • Best for Kindergarten - 2nd Grade • Realistic Fiction

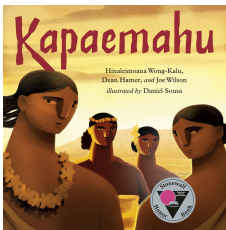
2017 ALA Rainbow Book List Nominee. "A young boy, curious about his 'Ammi's dot, a bright and pretty spot,' innocently asks, 'Why do you wear that dot?/What's so special about that spot?' His mother crouches to eye level so he can touch her forehead as she explains, 'It's not a dot.... It's not a spot, it's a bindi!' As for the why, her simple response resonates: 'My bindi keeps me safe and true.' When the boy receives his own golden bindi - his mother's is red - he connects with generations past and is inspired to embark on a journey of empowered discovery. Indian Canadian musician/filmmaker/writer Shraya (God Loves Hair) makes her picture book debut with gentle rhymes and warm whimsy, amplified by Toronto artist Perara's richly hued illustrations. The author, a transgender woman, deftly explores difference and self-acceptance, the subversion of gender expectations, and the power of 'making sure I don't hide/Everything I am inside.' While acknowledging the bindi's significance to the boy's own family, Shraya seems to purposefully avoid discussing its historical/religious meaning or the possibility of cultural appropriation. VERDICT Imparting an important lesson on inclusivity and individuality, this multicultural, intergenerational story of young agency is a timely acquisition for all libraries." (School Library Journal, Terry Hong)



Timid

Harry Woodgate • Best for Kindergarten - 2nd Grade • Realistic Fiction

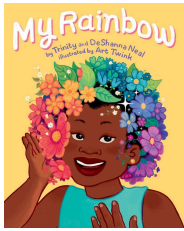
2023 ALA Rainbow Book List - Early Elementary. "In this lively and uplifting picture book, we follow Timmy, whose pronouns are they/them. Timmy loves to perform. Whether it's dancing around in spangly costumes or singing along to songs at the top of their voice, Timmy just can't get enough. But there's a catch, and it's a rather big catch...Timmy has never performed in front of an audience. They are afraid of the limelight and very timid, so much so that an inner shy lion follows them around pretty much everywhere. When Timmy learns about the upcoming school play, they long to be a part of it but can't imagine how they'll ever be able to shake off the shy lion. Soon though, Timmy learns that they are not the only person to experience shyness. Their seemingly confident classmate Nia has felt the same way and offers some advice to Timmy to help tame their lion before the school play. This is a brilliantly helpful book to read with children who may be experiencing shyness, anxiety or struggling with their confidence. It offers a hopeful reminder of the power of friendship and self-compassion to overcome our fears. There's a lovely contrast between the book's themes of timidity and quietness and its vibrant illustrations which are loud, bold and as dazzling as Timmy aspires to be. We particularly love all the colours that can be seen in the lion's mane!" (BookTrust)



Kapaemahu

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson • Best for 1st Grade - 2nd Grade • Realistic Fiction

Stonewall Honor Book, School & Library Journal Best Picture Book of the Year, Shelf Awareness Best Children's & YA of 2022, Kirkus Best Book of 2022 "A Bank Street College of Education's Children's Book Committee's The Best Children's Books of 2023An Indigenous legend about how four extraordinary individuals of dual male and female spirit, or Mahu, brought healing arts from Tahiti to Hawaii, based on the Academy Award–contending short film. In the 15th century, four Mahu sail from Tahiti to Hawaii and share their gifts of science and healing with the people of Waikiki. The islanders return this gift with a monument of four boulders in their honor, which the Mahu imbue with healing powers before disappearing. As time passes, foreigners inhabit the island and the once-sacred stones are forgotten until the 1960s. Though the true story of these stones was not fully recovered, the power of the Mahu still calls out to those who pass by them at Waikiki Beach today. With illuminating words and stunning illustrations by Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson, and Daniel Sousa, KAPAEMAHU is a monument to an Indigenous Hawaiian legend and a classic in the making." (From Publish



My Rainbow

Trinity & DeShanna Neal • Best for Preschool - 2nd Grade • Realistic Fiction

2021 ALA Rainbow Book List Top 10 Titles for Young Readers. Kirkus Starred Review. "A lively #OwnVoices picture book tribute to a family's unwavering support of their transgender daughter, written by a mother-daughter advocate duo and based on their experiences. Trinity, who is a Black transgender girl, liked to play with her siblings, her dolls, and her pet pig, Peter Porker. One day, Trinity expressed frustration that she couldn't be a girl because she didn't have long hair. She needed long hair to feel like herself. When Trinity's mother pointed out her own short hair, Trinity explained, 'People don't care if cisgender girls like you have short hair. But it's different for transgender girls. I need long hair!' The family took a trip to the beauty store. None of the wigs seemed to be the best choice for Trinity. Mom took matters into her own hands and crafted a one-of-a-kind rainbow wig just for her daughter. Trinity loved it: 'It's me, Mom. My hair has finally come!' The text's frank and refreshing usage of terms such as cisgender will spark necessary conversations between children and caregivers. Twinkl's digital illustrations are vibrant and colorful just like Trinity and feature small but important details, including a beauty store employee named Maya wearing a 'they/them' pronoun name tag. Some readers may feel that a few details could have been expanded on, such as Trinity's autism, which is acknowledged throughout the book but is not the main focus. VERDICT There are very few books widely published and readily available that spotlight Black trans girls and women; this picture book is an affirming, uplifting story to add to school and public library collections." (School Library Journal – Allison Staley