

## Reading Suggestions From Wapiti Regional Library Multicultural Picture Books and Fiction for Children

### Fiction set around the world with characters of different ethnicities.

**Title: All-of-a-Kind Family**

**Author:** Taylor, Sydney; John, Helen (Illustrator)

**Description:** Five little Jewish girls, all dressed alike, live in New York at the turn of the century.

**Title: The Birchbark House**

**Author:** Erdrich, Louise (Author, Illustrator)

**Description:** The story of a little Ojibwa girl who lives with her family on an island on Lake Superior in 1847.

**Title: Bird Boy**

**Author:** Hill, Elizabeth Starr; Liu, Lesley (Illustrator)

**Description:** Chang, who can imitate bird songs perfectly but can't speak, lives with his family on a houseboat in China.

**Title: Blue Jasmine**

**Author:** Sheth, Kashmira

**Description:** When her family emigrates to the United States from India, Seema finds there are many adjustments she must make.

**Title: The Breadwinner**

**Author:** Ellis, Deborah; Ellis, D.

**Description:** A courageous young Afghan girl pretends to be a boy in order to support her family.

**Title: Dancing at the Odinochka**

**Author:** Hill, Kirkpatrick

**Description:** Erinia's life at a trading post in Russian America changes when the region joins the United States and becomes Alaska.

**Title: Dragonwings**

**Author:** Yep, Laurence

**Description:** A Chinese-American boy and his father living in San Francisco want to build a flying machine like the Wright brothers.

**Title: The Heart of a Chief**

**Author:** Bruchac, Joseph

**Description:** Chris lives on the Penacook Indian Reservation, and worries that this will set him apart from the other kids.

**Title: Home of the Brave**

**Author:** Applegate, Katherine

**Description:** Sudanese war refugee Kek starts 5th grade in Minnesota.

**Title: In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson**

**Author:** Lord, Bette Bao; Simont, Marc (Illustrator)

**Description:** Ten-year-old Shirley Temple Wong has come to Brooklyn from China and finds America very strange, until she discovers baseball.

**Title: A Jar of Dreams**

**Author:** Uchida, Yoshiko

**Description:** Eleven-year-old Rinko grows up in a closely-knit Japanese-American family in California during the Depression, a time of great prejudice.

**Title: Naya Nuki: The Girl Who Ran**

**Author:** Thomasma, Kenneth; Hundley, Eunice (Illustrator)

**Description:** A little Shoshoni girl, captured by an enemy tribe, escapes and makes the thousand-mile journey back to her family.

**Title: Number the Stars**

**Author:** Lowry, Lois

**Description:** During the German occupation of Denmark, Annemarie learns to be brave and courageous while helping to shelter her Jewish friends.

**Title: Our Only May Amelia**

**Author:** Holm, Jennifer L.

**Description:** May Amelia wishes she weren't the only girl in her big Finnish-American family of seven brothers.

**Title: Rickshaw Girl**

**Author:** Perkins, Mitali; Hogan, Jamie (Illustrator)

**Description:** A young girl in Bangladesh knows she must challenge tradition in order to help her impoverished family.

**Title: Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind**

**Author:** Staples, Suzanne Fisher

**Description:** Shabanu, daughter of a nomadic herdsman in present-day Pakistan, faces an arranged marriage.

**Title: Shadow of a Bull**

**Author:** Wojciechowska, Maia; Smith, Alvin (Illustrator)

**Description:** Manolo is terrified of bulls, but his father was the greatest bullfighter in Spain. Everyone expects the same of Manolo!

**Title: Silk Umbrellas**

**Author:** Marsden, Carolyn; Swiatkowska, Gabi (Illustrator)

**Description:** Noi, who lives in a little Thai village, wants to be an artist more than anything, but money is tight.

**Title: A Single Shard**

**Author:** Park, Linda Sue

**Description:** Tree-ear, an orphan in medieval Korea, longs to learn how to be a potter and throw delicate celadon ceramics.

**Title: The Storyteller's Beads**

**Author:** Kurtz, Jane; Bryant, Michael (Illustrator); Van Doren, Liz (Editor)

**Description:** A powerful story set in modern-day Ethiopia about two girls who must overcome prejudice to survive.

**Title: Strudel Stories**

**Author:** Rocklin, Joanne

**Description:** While this Jewish family bakes their favorite apple strudel, they tell wonderful stories about their ancestors.

**Title: The Turtle of Oman**

**Author:** Nye, Naomi Shihab

**Description:** 8-year-old Aref, about to move to Michigan, spends his last week in Oman doing everything he loves.

**Title: The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963**

**Author:** Curtis, Christopher Paul

**Description:** Kenny and his family visit Alabama during the summer of 1963 and find themselves changed forever by tragedy and violence.

**Title: Weedflower**

**Author:** Kadohata, Cynthia

**Description:** Twelve-year-old Sumiko and her Japanese-American family are relocated from their flower farm in California to an internment camp in Arizona.

**Title: Yolonda's Genius**

**Author:** Fenner, Carol

**Description:** Yolonda, big and strong for her age, determines to prove that her younger brother is a true musical genius.

**Title: Manny's Memories**

**Author:** Aron, Ken

**Description:** Introduces the Métis community of Round Prairie, Saskatchewan through the eyes of a young boy growing up in the 1940s. Manny shares his boyhood memories of the once vibrant community not too far from Saskatoon's city limits. Though rural life at the time called for hard work, self-sufficiency, and generosity, there was always time to have fun and to enjoy being a young Métis boy.

**Title: Shi-Shi-Etko**

**Author:** Campbell, Nicola I.

**Description:** A moving story set in Canada about the practice of removing Native children from their villages and sending them to residential schools to learn the English language and culture.

**Title: Little Metis and the Metis Sash**

**Author:** Delaronde, Deborah L.

**Description:** "Little Metis is bored and wishes to help his family with their chores in the bush. His grandmother cautions him not to get lost, but he quickly gets himself into trouble."

**Title: Jenneli's Dance**

**Author:** Denny, Elizabeth

**Description:** Shy Jenneli loves to dance the Red River Jig with her grandmother, but when her grandmother enters Jenneli into a jigging contest, she is both horrified and excited.

**Title: Shin-chi's Canoe**

**Author:** Campbell, Nicola I.

**Description:** When they arrive at school, Shi-shi-etko reminds Shinchi, her six-year-old brother, that they can only use their English names and that they can't speak to each other. For Shinchi, life becomes an endless cycle of church mass, school, and work, punctuated by skimpy meals. He finds solace at the

river, clutching a tiny cedar canoe, a gift from his father, and dreaming of the day when the salmon return to the river -- a sign that it's almost time to return home. This poignant story about a devastating chapter in First Nations history is told at a child's level of understanding.

**Title: Mwakwa Talks to the Moon**

**Author:** Auger, Dale

**Description:** Kayâs, a young Cree man blessed with the ability to hunt well and provide for his People becomes proud and takes his great gift for granted, and it becomes lost to him. The Elders advise him to talk to the Loon, Mwâkwa, who gets help for Kayâs from the Water Beings.

**Title: When I was Eight**

**Author:** Jordan-Fenton, Christy

**Description:** Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she does not know how to read. Ignoring her father's warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders' school to learn. The nuns at the school call her Margaret. They cut off her long hair and force her to do menial chores, but she remains undaunted. Her tenacity draws the attention of a black-cloaked nun who tries to break her spirit at every turn. But the young girl is more determined than ever to learn how to read.

**Title: Not My Girl**

**Author:** Jordan-Fenton, Christy

**Description:** Margaret can't wait to see her family, but her homecoming is not what she expected. Based on the true story of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, and complemented by evocative illustrations, Not My Girl makes the original, award-winning memoir, A Stranger at Home, accessible to younger children. It is also a sequel to the picture book When I Was Eight. A poignant story of a determined young girl's struggle to belong, it will both move and inspire readers everywhere.

**Title: Kookum's Red Shoes**

**Author:** Eyvindson, Peter

**Description:** The legacy of the residential schools is conveyed with respect and imagination in this illustrated story for young readers. As the elderly Kookum remembers the experiences in her youth that changed her life forever, we see what was lost in her life, and how goodness persisted.

**Title: Peter's Moccasins**

**Author:** Truss, Jan

**Description:** A true depiction of a Cree child's life on a reserve or in a rural community; he takes the school bus and shares a classroom with other First Nations children. The story is about the day Peter takes his home-made moccasins to school and is afraid to wear them because all the other children wear running shoes or slippers. But it all takes a good turn at recess.

**Title: On the Shoulder of a Giant: an Inuit folktale**

**Author:** Christopher, Neil

**Description:** (Based on a pan-Arctic Inuit traditional story, this book continues the familiar trope of the friendly giant, while featuring some uniquely Arctic elements and scenery.) Inukpak was big, even for a giant. He loved to walk across the tundra, striding over the widest rivers and wading through the deepest lakes. He could walk across the Arctic in just a few days. But being so big, and traveling so far, Inukpak was often alone. Until one day when he came across a little hunter on the tundra. Thinking that the hunter was a little boy alone on the land, Inukpak decided to adopt him.

**Title: Dragonfly Kites**

**Author:** Highway, Tomson

**Description:** Joe and Cody may live far from other people, but that doesn't mean they are lonely. The

surrounding wildlife lake wonderful friends. But the dragonflies are their favourites. Transforming them into gossamer kites, Joe and cody laugh and dance and even fly magically in their dreams.

**Title: The Just Right Gift: a story of love**

**Author:** Vermette, Katherena

**Description:** "Migizi loves his Gookum. Can he find the perfect gift to show her how much?"

**Title: Hidden Buffalo**

**Author:** Wiebe, Rudy

**Description:** Captures the anxiety of a boy who feels powerless to help his people, but who must speak his dreams if they are to survive. Steeped in aboriginal myth and lore, *Hidden Buffalo* is also the tale of how a whole tribe can turn its gaze from the horizon to see to the wisdom of a child.

**Title: The First Day: a story of courage**

**Author:** Wiebe, Rudy

**Description:** "Makwa has to go to a new school-- and he doesn't want to. How will he face his first day?"

**Title: Missing Nimama**

**Author:** Florence, Melanie

**Description:** Missing Nimâmâ is a story of love, loss, and acceptance, showing the human side of a national tragedy.

**Title: Kode's Question: a story of respect**

**Author:** Vermette, Katherena

**Description:** "Kode knows many things, but she doesn't know one thing: what does respect mean? Who will help her figure out the answer?"

**Title: Caribou Song**

**Author:** Highway, Tomson

**Description:** Joe and Cody, two Cree children live in northern Manitoba with their parents and Ootsie, their black dog. One day while the boys are playing and dancing while waiting for the caribou, they magically attract a herd of caribou that rush all around them but everyone is safe after they pass. The encounter opens the childrens' minds to possibilities of separation, independence, and strength of spirit.

**Title: Wild Eggs: a tale of Arctic egg collecting**

**Author:** Napayok-Short, Suzie

**Description:** Akuluk is not excited about visiting her grandparents in Nunavut. She would rather head south for summer vacation, somewhere with roller coasters and cotton candy. There can't be much to do way up there, Akuluk figures. But as soon as she steps off the plane and sees all the exciting animals that the tundra has to offer, Akuluk forgets all about her dreams of going south. On her first full day in Nunavut, she can't wait to travel out on the land with her grandfather to hunt for wild eggs.

**Title: Achimoona**

**Author:** Campbell, Maria

**Description:** Collection of stories resulting from a Native Writer's Workshop held at Gabriel's Crossing in 1983. Illustrated using existing original pieces of art by Native artists. Includes a brief biography of each author. Is used as curriculum material in Saskatchewan schools.

**Title: The Song Within My Heart**

**Author:** Bouchard, Dave

**Description:** A young First Nations boy experiences his first pow-wow, and learns that he must find his own song.

## **Picture books about different peoples and cultures.**

**Title: Beauty, Her Basket**

**Author:** Belton, Sandra; Cabrera, Cozbi A. (Illustrator)

**Description:** A young girl learns about the secret and history of Nana's special sea grass basket.

**Title: Big Red Lollipop**

**Author:** Khan, Rukhsana; Blackall, Sophie (Illustrator)

**Description:** When Rubina is invited to a birthday party, her mother makes her bring younger sister Sana along.

**Title: Circle Unbroken**

**Author:** Raven, Margot Theis; Lewis, E. B. (Illustrator)

**Description:** A grandmother tells the story of the Gullah people and their tradition of basketmaking in this beautiful picture book.

**Title: A Gift**

**Author:** Chen, Yong

**Description:** Amy receives a Chinese New Year gift sent all the way from China.

**Title: Gift Horse: A Lakota Story**

**Author:** Nelson, S. D. (Author, Illustrator)

**Description:** Flying Cloud must prove he can become a Lakota warrior after his father gives him a special horse.

**Title: Hope**

**Author:** Monk, Isabell; Porter, Janice Lee (Illustrator)

**Description:** A little biracial girl is hurt by tactless words until her aunt tells her to be proud of her heritage.

**Title: Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book**

**Author:** Morales, Yuyi

**Description:** Senor Calavera arrives to take Grandma Beetle to the next life, but Grandma isn't ready to go.

**Title: Kamishibai Man**

**Author:** Say, Allen

**Description:** An old Kamishibai man--a Japanese street performer who tells stories and sells candies--makes his rounds once more.

**Title: Mice and Beans**

**Author:** Ryan, Pam Muñoz; Cepeda, Joe (Illustrator)

**Description:** Rosa Maria is cooking up a big meal for her grandchild's birthday party, but things keep disappearing from her kitchen.

**Title: More Than Anything Else**

**Author:** Bradby, Marie; Soentpiet, Chris K. (Illustrator)

**Description:** A story about the childhood of Booker T. Washington that celebrates the power of reading.

**Title: My Chinatown: One Year in Poems**

**Author:** Mak, Kam (Author, Illustrator); Mak

**Description:** This tribute to family, community, and childhood features the familiar streets of Chinatown.

**Title: One Green Apple**

**Author:** Bunting, Eve; Lewin, Ted (Illustrator)

**Description:** Farah feels isolated and strange in her new country, until her class takes a trip to an apple orchard.

**Title: The Other Side**

**Author:** Woodson, Jacqueline; Lewis, Earl (Illustrator); Lewis, E. B. (Illustrator)

**Description:** Clover and Annie make friends, in spite of the fence separating their worlds.

**Title: Peace Crane**

**Author:** Hamanaka, Sheila

**Description:** A little girl remembers Sadako and the thousand paper cranes she folded, wondering if the peace crane will ever come.

**Title: Rain School**

**Author:** Rumford, James

**Description:** Excited children in Chad arrive for their first day of school, and must help build their classroom.

**Title: SkySisters**

**Author:** Waboose, Jan Bourdeau; Deines, Brian (Illustrator); Bourdeau Waboose, Jan

**Description:** Two Ojibway girls watch for the arrival of the SkySpirits, or the Northern Lights.

**Title: The Story of Little Babaji**

**Author:** Bannerman, Helen; Marcellino, Fred (Illustrator)

**Description:** A little boy in India meets some hungry tigers.

**Title: Yoko**

**Author:** Wells, Rosemary

**Description:** Yoko's mother has packed her a wonderful lunch, but her classmates make fun of her.

**Title: The Spirit of the Sea**

**Author:** Hainnu, Rebecca

**Description:** (The creation story of one of the central figures in Inuit mythology.) Tells the story of the spirit of the sea, known by many Inuktitut names including Nuliajuq, Sedna, and Takannaaluk, who is a key figure from the pantheon of Inuit lore. Sedna was once a young woman who refused to marry, but the lies and deception of a treacherous bird and her own father's cowardice lead her to a life of solitude at the bottom of the ocean as the powerful, and at times vengeful, spirit of the sea.