CELEBRATE 3.21 · LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

Books Featuring People with Down Syndrome

38 titles for all ages

A reading list for every age, from board books to adult memoirs, featuring people with Down syndrome. Several are written by self-advocates. Use it with your library to check what's on the shelf, request new titles, and build a 3.21 display.

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START HERE

How to use this list

Representation matters: kids with Down syndrome deserve to see themselves in books, and every kid benefits from meeting characters who are different from them.

TAGS

★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE Written by a person with Down syndrome

MAIN CHARACTER A person with Down syndrome is the main character

READ FIRST Worth reading first: older attitudes, hard themes, or mature content

CHECK-BOXES

Each title has a box. Use it to mark what your library already has, or what you'd like to request. The last page is a request checklist you can hand to a librarian.

BEFORE SHARING

- Preview books yourself; families know best what fits
- Look for books that show real, full lives, not pity or "inspiration" stories
- Editions, formats, and availability change: check the library catalog
- Ask local families for their favorites to add

OUR LOCAL LIBRARY

Columbus Metropolitan Library, Canal Winchester Branch

115 Franklin St., Canal Winchester, OH

Contact: **[branch manager / youth services librarian]**

ALSO GREAT FOR 3.21 (BOOKS ABOUT BELONGING)

All Are Welcome (Alexandra Penfold) · *We're All Wonders* (R. J. Palacio) · *The Day You Begin* (Jacqueline Woodson) · *You Matter* (Christian Robinson). These don't feature characters with Down syndrome, but they pair well in a display.

AGES 0–8

Board & picture books

Great for story time, classrooms, and family bookshelves.

- [ ] **Kids Like Me… Learn ABCs**
  Laura Ronay ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  Board book with real photos of children with Down syndrome introducing the alphabet.

- [ ] **You Are Enough**
  Sofia Sanchez ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  A celebration of being different and being yourself, by a young model and advocate with Down syndrome.

- [ ] **I Am a Masterpiece!**
  Mia Armstrong, illus. Alexandra Thompson
  ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE MAIN CHARACTER
  Actress Mia Armstrong tells what makes her who she is, and how she's more alike than different from her friends.

- [ ] **I Am Connor**
  Connor Rodriguez ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  MAIN CHARACTER
  A boy with Down syndrome shows that differences don't define what someone can do.

- [ ] **Collette in Kindergarten**
  Collette Divitto ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  MAIN CHARACTER
  A story about feeling left out, and about meeting people where they are.

- [ ] **Born to Sparkle**
  Megan Bomgaars ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  An encouraging book about dreaming big, from an artist and entrepreneur with Down syndrome.

- [ ] **We'll Paint the Octopus Red**
  Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen
  Emma imagines everything she'll do with her new baby brother, who has Down syndrome.

- [ ] **My Friend Isabelle**
  Eliza Woloson MAIN CHARACTER
  Charlie and Isabelle are different in many ways, and they're best friends.

- [ ] **Be Quiet, Marina!**
  Kirsten DeBear MAIN CHARACTER
  Real photos of two friends, one with Down syndrome and one with cerebral palsy, learning to play together.

- [ ] **My Sister, Alicia May**
  Nancy Tupper Ling MAIN CHARACTER
  A big sister tells what's wonderful, and sometimes hard, about her sister with Down syndrome.

- [ ] **Best Buddies**
  Lynn Plourde & Becky Ronan MAIN CHARACTER
  A boy with Down syndrome and his dog face first-day-of-school jitters together.

AGES 3–8

More picture books & early chapter books

- [ ] **Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You**
  Sonia Sotomayor, illus. Rafael López
  Kids with many kinds of differences, including Down syndrome, invite readers to ask questions.
- [ ] **Sabeel and Her Superheroes**
  Ayah Sayyed MAIN CHARACTER
  A girl with Down syndrome discovers the everyday "superheroes" who support her.
- [ ] **Prince Noah and the School Pirates**
  Silke Schnee MAIN CHARACTER
  A prince with Down syndrome saves the day in an adventure story (from the Prince Noah series).
- [ ] **This Is Ella**
  Krista Ewert MAIN CHARACTER
  Meet Ella: what she loves, what she's good at, and what makes her Ella.
- [ ] **Hannah's Down Syndrome Superpowers**
  Lori Yarborough MAIN CHARACTER
  A kid-friendly explanation of chromosomes, communication, and what Down syndrome means.
- [ ] **My Friend Has Down Syndrome**
  Jennifer Moore-Mallinos
  A simple story about friendship and understanding, good for starting conversations.

AGES 6–9

Early chapter books

- [ ] **Sam's Top Secret Journal (series)**
  Sean Adelman MAIN CHARACTER
  Sam, a basketball player and actress with Down syndrome, solves mysteries with her brother. Chapter-book series.
- [ ] **One Extra Sparkle: Ellie and the Marriage List**
  Tricia Seabolt MAIN CHARACTER
  Ellie, who has Down syndrome, sets out on a funny, heartfelt mission.

STORY-TIME PAIRING

Read *I Am a Masterpiece!* or *My Friend Isabelle*, then decorate paper socks (see the Library & Story Time Kit).

TALK ABOUT IT

- What makes you special?
- How can we include everyone?
- What did the character love to do?

AGES 8–12

Middle-grade books

Adventures, mysteries, and friendship stories, several with a main character who has Down syndrome.

- [ ] **A Storm of Strawberries**
  Jo Cotterill MAIN CHARACTER
  Twelve-year-old Darby, who has Down syndrome, faces family secrets and a storm on her family's strawberry farm.

- [ ] **The Mizzy Mysteries: A Skeleton in the Closet**
  Claire Hatcher-Smith MAIN CHARACTER
  Thirteen-year-old Mizzy, who has Down syndrome, turns detective. Book 2: *The Shadow on the Wreck*.

- [ ] **Benny on the Case**
  Wesley King MAIN CHARACTER
  Benny, who has mosaic Down syndrome, and a new friend solve a string of thefts at a retirement home.

- [ ] **Special**
  Nancy F. Goodfellow MAIN CHARACTER
  Two friends, told in alternating voices, navigate junior high after a family tragedy.

- [ ] **Daisy Woodworm Changes the World**
  Melissa Hart
  Daisy, who has a speech disability, helps her brother with Down syndrome become a fashion influencer.

- [ ] **Avenging the Owl**
  Melissa Hart
  A boy finds his way through raptor rescue, with help from a neighbor who has Down syndrome.

- [ ] **The Good Hawk**
  Joseph Elliott MAIN CHARACTER
  Fantasy adventure starring Agatha, a fierce heroine with Down syndrome (ages 11+).

- [ ] **Down Syndrome Out Loud (nonfiction)**
  Melissa Hart, illus. María Perera
  20+ true stories of people with Down syndrome: athletes, artists, actors, and advocates. Also on audio.

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

- How is the character with Down syndrome like you? How are they different?
- What did the other characters learn from them?
- Did the book show a full person, with feelings, goals, and humor?
- What would you tell a friend about this book?

DISPLAY IDEAS

- "Different Looks Good Here" shelf in March
- Paper socks with reader reviews
- A "staff picks" card for each title

READING CHALLENGE

Read 3 books from this list during 3.21 Week, then share your favorite with #Celebrate321!

AGES 13+

Teens

- [ ] **Rosie Loves Jack**
  Mel Darbon MAIN CHARACTER
  Sixteen-year-old Rosie, who has Down syndrome, sets off alone across London to find her boyfriend.

- [ ] **Dead Ends**
  Erin Jade Lange
  A school bully and a classmate with Down syndrome form an unlikely friendship while searching for a missing father.

- [ ] **Fade to Black**
  Alex Flinn READ FIRST
  A mystery told in three voices, including a character with Down syndrome. Deals with a hate crime; best for older teens.

- [ ] **Head Above Water**
  S. L. Rottman
  A teen juggles school, swimming, and caring for her brother, who has Down syndrome.

ADULTS

Memoirs & novels for adults

- [ ] **More Alike Than Different: My Life with Down Syndrome**
  David Egan ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  Memoir by an advocate with Down syndrome about work, independence, and changing minds.

- [ ] **Count Us In: Growing Up with Down Syndrome**
  Jason Kingsley & Mitchell Levitz
  ★ BY A SELF-ADVOCATE
  Two young men with Down syndrome talk about school, friendships, jobs, and dreams. A classic.

- [ ] **Bloom**
  Kelle Hampton
  A mother's memoir of her daughter's first year, from fear to joy.

- [ ] **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**
  Kim Edwards READ FIRST
  Novel about twins separated at birth because one has Down syndrome. Reflects 1960s attitudes about institutions.

- [ ] **Jewel**
  Bret Lott READ FIRST
  A 1940s mother refuses to institutionalize her daughter with Down syndrome. Historical attitudes and language.

FOR NEW AND EXPECTING PARENTS

Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parents' Guide · Susan J. Skallerup, ed.: A practical guide to the first years: health, development, family, and services.

Bringing Your Baby with Down Syndrome Home · Jeannie Visootsak & Deslie Quinby: A doctor and a mom walk through the first month.

PARTNERSHIP

Working with the library

Libraries love community input. Here's how Celebrate 3.21 can partner with our branch to get more of these titles on the shelves.

IDEAS TO PROPOSE

- Check the catalog together and mark what's missing
- Request missing titles (many libraries have a "suggest a purchase" option; ask your branch)
- Borrow missing titles through interlibrary loan in the meantime
- A 3.21 book display in March ("Different Looks Good Here")
- A Rock Your Socks story time (Library Kit)
- A reading list on the library's website

WAYS CELEBRATE 3.21 CAN HELP

- Share this list and a short list of top-priority titles
- Invite families to recommend favorites
- Promote the display and story time
- Offer a self-advocate or family guest reader
- Optional: a sponsor or donor could fund a set of titles, if the library accepts donations **[ask library policy]**

EMAIL TO THE BRANCH (COPY & PASTE)

Subject: Books featuring people with Down syndrome for World Down Syndrome Day

Hi [Name], I'm [name] with Celebrate 3.21, a community celebration of World Down Syndrome Day (March 21) here in Canal Winchester. We put together a reading list of books for all ages that feature people with Down syndrome, including several written by self-advocates. Would you be open to reviewing it with us, considering some titles for the collection, and possibly hosting a 3.21 display or story time in March? The list is attached. Thank you for all you do for our community! [Name, phone]

TOP 10 TO REQUEST FIRST [TEAM TO CONFIRM]

I Am a Masterpiece! · Kids Like Me… Learn ABCs · My Friend Isabelle · We'll Paint the Octopus Red · Best Buddies · A Storm of Strawberries · The Mizzy Mysteries · Benny on the Case · Down Syndrome Out Loud · More Alike Than Different

FOR THE LIBRARIAN

Title request checklist

Mark what the branch already has and what to request.

TITLE / AUTHOR	AGES	HAVE?	REQUEST	NOTES
Kids Like Me… Learn ABCs · Laura Ronay	0–8			
You Are Enough · Sofia Sanchez	0–8			
I Am a Masterpiece! · Mia Armstrong, illus. Alexandra Thompson	0–8			
I Am Connor · Connor Rodriguez	0–8			
Collette in Kindergarten · Collette Divitto	0–8			
Born to Sparkle · Megan Bomgaars	0–8			
We'll Paint the Octopus Red · Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen	0–8			
My Friend Isabelle · Eliza Woloson	0–8			
Be Quiet, Marina! · Kirsten DeBear	0–8			
My Sister, Alicia May · Nancy Tupper Ling	0–8			
Best Buddies · Lynn Plourde & Becky Ronan	0–8			
Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You · Sonia Sotomayor, illus. Rafael López	0–8			
Sabeel and Her Superheroes · Ayah Sayyed	0–8			
Prince Noah and the School Pirates · Silke Schnee	0–8			
This Is Ella · Krista Ewert	0–8			
Hannah's Down Syndrome Superpowers · Lori Yarborough	0–8			
My Friend Has Down Syndrome · Jennifer Moore-Mallinos	0–8			
Sam's Top Secret Journal (series) · Sean Adelman	6–9			

FOR THE LIBRARIAN

Title request checklist (continued)

TITLE / AUTHOR	AGES	HAVE?	REQUEST	NOTES
One Extra Sparkle: Ellie and the Marriage List · Tricia Seabolt	6–9			
A Storm of Strawberries · Jo Cotterill	8–12			
The Mizzy Mysteries: A Skeleton in the Closet · Claire Hatcher-Smith	8–12			
Benny on the Case · Wesley King	8–12			
Special · Nancy F. Goodfellow	8–12			
Daisy Woodworm Changes the World · Melissa Hart	8–12			
Avenging the Owl · Melissa Hart	8–12			
The Good Hawk · Joseph Elliott	8–12			
Down Syndrome Out Loud (nonfiction) · Melissa Hart, illus. María Perera	8–12			
Rosie Loves Jack · Mel Darbon	13+			
Dead Ends · Erin Jade Lange	13+			
Fade to Black · Alex Flinn	13+			
Head Above Water · S. L. Rottman	13+			
More Alike Than Different: My Life with Down Syndrome · David Egan	Adult			
Count Us In: Growing Up with Down Syndrome · Jason Kingsley & Mitchell Levitz	Adult			
Bloom · Kelle Hampton	Adult			
The Memory Keeper's Daughter · Kim Edwards	Adult			
Jewel · Bret Lott	Adult			

FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS

Book details were gathered from publisher listings and published book lists (School Library Journal, Book Riot, BookTrust, LuMind IDSC). Check the catalog for current editions and availability.