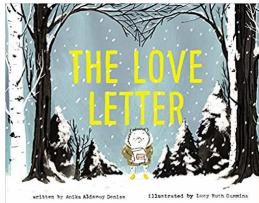


READ Strong ALL YEAR LONG



February 2026 Children's Museum Houston Reading List

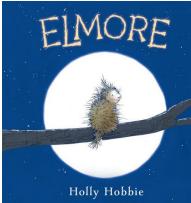
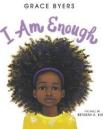


The Love Letter by Anika Aldamuy Denise (2019) Ages: 4-8 years

Fall in love with this endearing and adorable picture book that illustrates how a little bit of heart goes a long way to making the world a better place. Hedgehog, Bunny, and Squirrel are best friends. One day, they each find a letter. But not just any letter... A love letter. My word! My whiskers! Aww, nuts! Someone loves them. But who? The answer may surprise you!

I Am Enough by Grace Byers (2018) Ages: 3-7 years

This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another. We are all here for a purpose. We are more than enough. We just need to believe it.

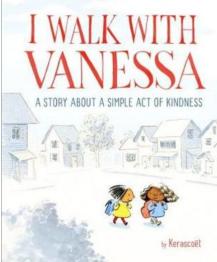
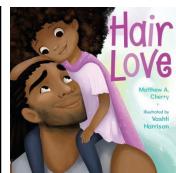


Elmore by Holly Hobbie (2018) Ages: 3-7 years

Elmore is a porcupine desperate to make friends. But it is hard to seek closeness with others when you're covered with spikes that shoot off your back every so often. Elmore suffers rejection and heartbreak, but the goodness of his forest community ultimately shines through as the animals find a way to connect with this prickly bundle of love.

Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry (2019) Ages: 2-7 years

Zuri's hair has a mind of its own. It kinks, coils, and curls every which way. Zuri knows it's beautiful. When Daddy steps in to style it for an extra special occasion, he has a lot to learn. But he LOVES his Zuri, and he'll do anything to make her – and her hair – happy.

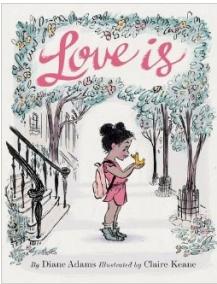
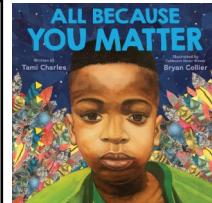


I Walk with Vanessa by Kerascoët (2018) Ages: 3-7 years

Inspired by real events, *I Walk with Vanessa* explores the feelings of helplessness and anger that arise in the wake of seeing a classmate treated badly, and shows how a single act of kindness can lead to an entire community joining in to help. By choosing only pictures to tell their story, the creators underscore the idea that someone can be an ally without having to say a word. With themes of acceptance, kindness, and strength in numbers, this timeless and profound feel-good story will resonate with readers young and old.

All Because You Matter by Tami Charles (2020) Ages: 3-8 years

This powerful, rhythmic lullaby reassures readers that their matter and their worth is never diminished, no matter the circumstance: through the joy and wonder of their first steps and first laughs, through the hardship of adolescent struggles, and the pain and heartbreak of current events, they always have, and always will, matter.

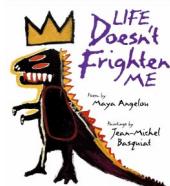


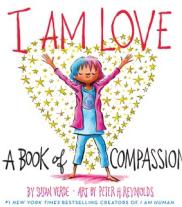
Love Is by Diane Adams (2017) Ages: 2-6 years

When a little girl finds a duckling who has wandered away from the park onto the city streets, she takes it home to care for it. The baby duck requires constant attention—early morning feedings, bathing, and tidying—until the time comes to say goodbye. When her pet has grown too big for the bath, the girl takes the full-grown duck back to the pond. Afterward, she misses it and wonders if it remembers her... until one day, the duck comes back—with six ducklings of her own.

Life Doesn't Frighten Me by Maya Angelou (1993) Ages: 3-8 years

Shadows on the wall, Noises down the hall, Life doesn't frighten me at all. Angelou's brave, defiant poem celebrates the courage within each of us, young and old. From the scary thought of panthers in the park to the unsettling scene of a new classroom, fearsome images are summoned and dispelled by the power of faith in ourselves.



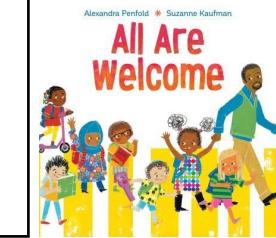


***I Am Love* by Susan Verde (2019) Ages: 3-8 years**

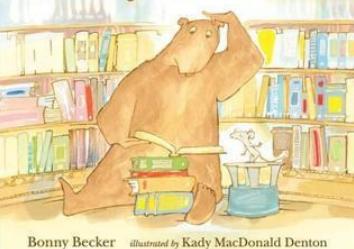
Love means showing kindness, living with gratitude, and taking care of our minds and bodies. Letting our hearts lead the way can help move us closer to a better world. "I put my hands on my heart and listen. And that is where I find the answer: I have compassion. I act with tenderness. I am love."

***All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold (2018) Ages: 2-6 years**

In our classroom safe and sound. Fears are lost and hope is found. Discover a school where all young children have a place, have a space, and are loved and appreciated. Readers will follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms. A school where students from all backgrounds learn from and celebrate each other's traditions. A school that shows the world as we will make it to be.



***A Library Book for Bear* by Bonny Becker (2021) Ages: 3-7 years**



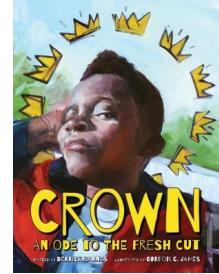
Bonny Becker illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton

***A Library Book for Bear* by Bonny Becker (2021) Ages: 3-7 years**

Bear does not want to go to the library. He is quite sure he already has all the books he will ever need. Yet the relentlessly cheery Mouse, small and gray and bright-eyed, thinks different. When Bear reluctantly agrees to go with his friend to the big library, neither rocket ships nor wooden canoes are enough for Bear's picky tastes. How will Mouse ever find the perfect book for Bear? Children will giggle themselves silly as Bear's arguments give way to his inevitable curiosity, leading up to a satisfying story hour and a humorously just-right library book.

***Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes (2017) Ages: 4-8 years**

The barbershop is where the magic happens. Boys go in as lumps of clay and, with princely robes draped around their shoulders, a dab of cool shaving cream on their foreheads, and a slow, steady cut, they become royalty. That crisp yet subtle line makes boys sharper, more visible, more aware of every great thing that could happen to them when they look good: lesser grades turn into As; girls take notice; even a mother's hug gets a little tighter. Everyone notices. A fresh cut makes boys fly.

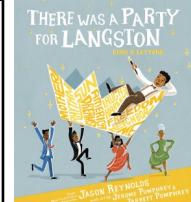


***Why?* by Adam Rex (2019) Ages: 2-5 years**

When supervillain Doctor X-Ray swoops in threatening to vanquish an innocent crowd, the only one brave enough not to run away is a little girl, who asks him simply, "Why?" He is taken aback—but he answers. She keeps asking. And he keeps answering—until a surprising truth is uncovered, and the villain is thwarted.

***There Was a Party for Langston* by Jason Reynolds (2023) Ages: 4-8 years**

Back in the day, there was a party, a jam, for a word-making man. The King of Letters. Langston Hughes. His ABCs became drums, bumping jumping thumping like a heart the size of the whole country. They sent some people yelling and others, his word-children, to write their own glory.



***We Are Going to be Pals!* by Mark Teague (2023) Ages: 4-7 years**

In a not-so-simple symbiotic friendship between two pals, Egret does his best to teach Rhino about how to be a friend. Friends eat together, have fun together, and help each other out, right? But they also respect boundaries, recognize their differences, and compromise (sometimes). When Egret ends up in a sticky situation, it's Rhino to the rescue as this unlikely pair realizes that communication and kindness are the key to any friendship.

***Somewhere in the Bayou* by Jerome Pumphrey (2022) Ages: 4-8 years**

When four swamp creatures looking to cross a river come upon a log that would allow for precisely that, they can't believe their luck. But a questionable tail adjacent to that log gives them second thoughts. Opossum believes it's a sneaky tail... Squirrel thinks it's a scary tail... Rabbit decides it's a mean tail... As the critters exhaust approaches one by one, Mouse, the smallest of the lot, observes their folly and adjusts accordingly. But is it the mouse or the tail that will defy expectations?

