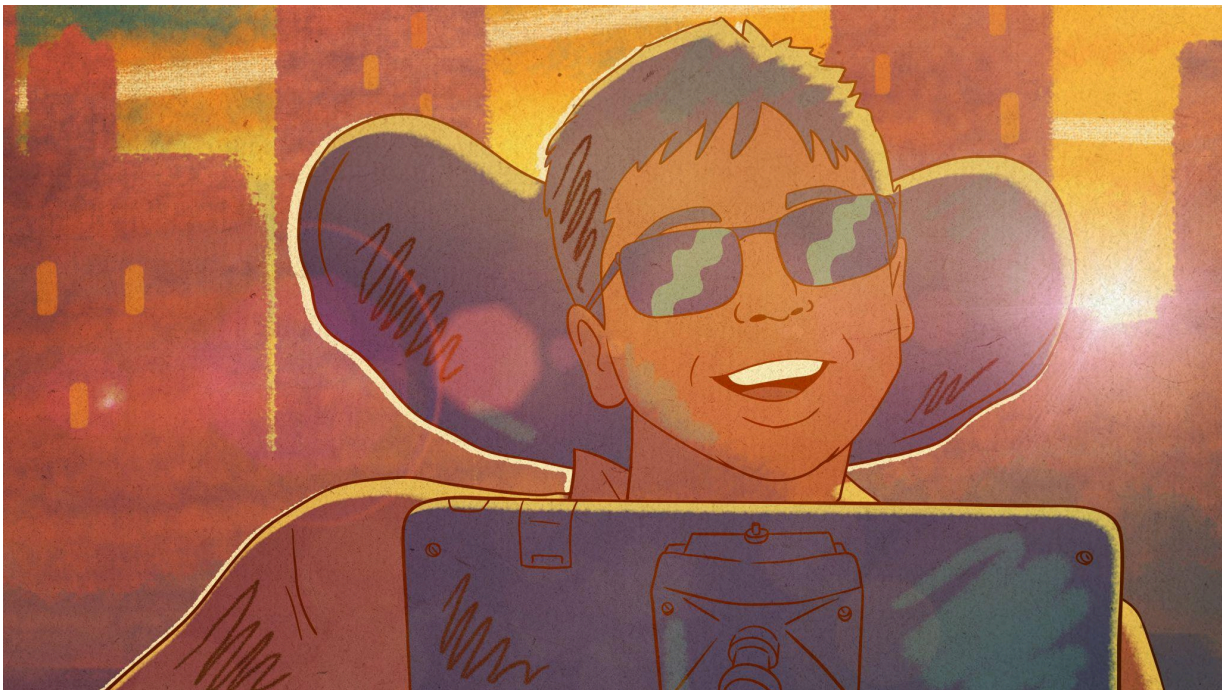




The Ride Ahead

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Kim Rott, librarian at Sentinel High School in Missoula, Montana, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *The Ride Ahead*.

Turning 21, Samuel Habib wants to date, leave home, go to college. Yet every rite of passage is fraught with challenges. Seizures and uncontrollable movements. Friends' homes inaccessible to his wheelchair. Degrading ableist encounters. “No one tells you how to be an adult,” he says, “let alone an adult with a disability.” Can a community of disability activists help him follow his dreams?

Contributors



Kim Rott / M.Ed.

Kim Rott is a retired English teacher and Librarian at Sentinel High School, where she urges her students to read broadly, think deeply, and research wisely. As a “Speaker in the Schools” for Humanities Montana, she teaches Media Literacy to students around Montana. She has a M.Ed. in Library and Information Technology from Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

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ADULT NON-FICTION

Davis, Lennard J. *Enabling Acts: The Hidden Story of How the Americans with Disabilities Act Gave the Largest US Minority Its Rights*. Beacon Press, 2015.

Disability scholar Davis's thoroughly researched story about the passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which prohibits discrimination against people with special needs, highlights key politicians' and legislators' connections to people directly impacted by the law. Ted Kennedy's older sister, Rosemarie, had the IQ of an 8- to 10-year-old and ended up institutionalized after a lobotomy left her with the IQ of a 2-year-old. Kennedy's son Ted was diagnosed with bone cancer at 12 and had his leg amputated. In WWII, a sniper shot Bob Dole, leaving him with an arm that didn't function. U.S. Senator Tom Harkin's older brother was born deaf. And U.S. Representative Tony Coelho, the Democratic whip at the time and the primary sponsor of the bill, had epilepsy, as did the wife of U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer. Twenty percent of Americans have disabilities, though many with such conditions as diabetes and depression fall into the "invisible" category. This unique and moving history affirms that the ADA will stand as a crucial civil rights achievement. The child of two deaf parents, Davis brings his own experience to bear as he reminds us of how much better off we are with the ADA—"a clarion call for justice and fairness." A perfect celebration of the ADA's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Heumann, Judy. *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist*. Beacon Press, 2020.

A story of fighting to belong in a world that wasn't built for all of us and of one woman's activism—from the streets of Brooklyn and San Francisco to inside the halls of Washington—*Being Heumann* recounts Judy Heumann's lifelong battle to achieve respect, acceptance, and inclusion in society.

Paralyzed from polio at eighteen months, Judy's struggle for equality began early in life. From fighting to attend grade school after being described as a "fire hazard" to later winning a lawsuit against the New York City school system for denying her a teacher's license because of her paralysis, Judy's actions set a precedent that fundamentally improved rights for disabled people.

As a young woman, Judy rolled her wheelchair through the doors of the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in San Francisco as a leader of the Section 504 Sit-In, the longest takeover of a governmental building in US history. Working with a community of over 150 disabled activists and allies, Judy successfully pressured the Carter administration to implement protections for disabled peoples' rights, sparking a national movement and leading to the creation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Candid, intimate, and irreverent, Judy Heumann's memoir about resistance to exclusion invites readers to imagine and make real a world in which we all belong.

Ladau, Emily. *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally*. Ten Speed Press, 2021.

People with disabilities are the world's largest minority, an estimated 15 percent of the global population. But many of us—disabled and nondisabled alike—don't know how to act, what to say, or how to be an ally to the disability community. What are the appropriate ways to think, talk, and ask about disability? *Demystifying Disability* is a friendly handbook on the important disability issues you need to know about, including:

- Recognizing and avoiding ableism (discrimination toward disabled people)
- Practicing good disability etiquette
- Ensuring accessibility becomes your standard practice, from everyday communication to planning special events
- Appreciating disability history and identity
- Identifying and speaking up about disability stereotypes in the media
- Authored by celebrated disability rights advocate, speaker, and writer Emily Ladau, this practical, intersectional guide offers all readers a welcoming place to understand disability as part of the human experience.

Nielsen, Kim E. *A Disability History of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2013.

Disability is not only the story of someone we love or the story of whom we may become; rather, it is undoubtedly the story of our nation. Covering the entirety of U.S. history from pre-1492 to the present, *A Disability History of the United States* is the first book to place the experiences of disabled people at the center of the American narrative. In many ways, it's a familiar telling. In other ways, it is a radical repositioning of U.S. history. By doing so, the book casts new light on familiar stories, such as slavery and immigration, while breaking ground about the ties between nativism and oralism in the late nineteenth century and the role of ableism in the development of democracy.

Pulling from primary-source documents and social histories, Nielsen retells U.S. history through the eyes, words, and impressions of the people who lived it. She argues that to understand disability history isn't to narrowly focus on a series of individual triumphs but rather to examine mass movements and pivotal daily events through the lens of varied experiences. Throughout the book, Nielsen deftly illustrates how concepts of disability have deeply shaped the American experience, from deciding who was allowed to immigrate to establishing labor laws and justifying slavery and gender discrimination. Included are absorbing—at times horrific—narratives of blinded slaves being thrown overboard and women being involuntarily sterilized, as well as triumphant accounts of disabled miners organizing strikes and disability rights activists picketing Washington.

Engrossing and profound, *A Disability History of the United States* fundamentally reinterprets how we view our nation's past: from a stifling master narrative to a shared history that encompasses us all.

Ndopu, Eddie. *Sipping Dom Pérignon through a Straw: Reimagining Success as a Disabled Achiever*. Legacy Lit, 2023.

A memoir penned with one good finger, Ndopu writes about being profoundly disabled and profoundly successful.

Global humanitarian Eddie Ndopu was born with spinal muscular atrophy, a rare degenerative motor neuron disease affecting his mobility. He was told that he wouldn't live beyond age five, and yet, Ndopu thrived. He grew up loving pop music, lip syncing the latest hits, and watching *The Bold and the Beautiful* for the haute couture. He was the only wheelchair user at his school, where he flourished academically. By his late teens, he had become a sought-after speaker, traveling the world to address audiences about disability justice.

Ndopu was ecstatic when he was later accepted on a full scholarship into one of the world's most prestigious schools, Oxford University. But he soon learned that it's not just the medical community he must thwart—it's the educational one too.

In *Sipping Dom Pérignon through a Straw*, we follow Ndopu, sporting his oversized, bejeweled sunglasses, as he scales the mountain of success, only to find exclusion, discrimination, and neglect waiting for him on the other side. Like every other student, Ndopu tries to keep up appearances—dashing to and from his public policy lectures before meeting for cocktails with his squad, all while campaigning to become student body president. Privately, however, he faces obstacles that are all too familiar to people with disabilities, yet remain unnoticed by most. With the revolving door of care aides, hefty bills, and a lack of support from the university, Ndopu feels alienated by his environment. As he soars professionally, sipping champagne with world leaders, he continues to feel the loneliness and pressure of being the only one in the room. Determined to carve out his place in the world, he must challenge bias at the highest echelons of power and prestige. But as the pressure mounts, Ndopu must find his stride or collapse under the crushing weight of ableism.

Ottaviani, Jim. *Hawking. First Second*, 2021.

From his early days at St Albans School and Oxford, Stephen Hawking's brilliance and good humor were obvious to everyone he met. A lively and popular young man, it's no surprise that he would later rise to celebrity status.

At twenty-one, he was diagnosed with ALS, a degenerative neuromuscular disease. Though the disease weakened his muscles and limited his ability to move and speak, it did nothing to limit his mind. He went on to do groundbreaking work in cosmology and theoretical physics for decades after being told he had only a few years to live. He brought his intimate understanding of the universe to the

public in his 1988 bestseller *A Brief History of Time*. Soon after, he added pop-culture icon to his accomplishments by playing himself on shows like *Star Trek*, *The Simpsons*, and *The Big Bang Theory*, and becoming an outspoken advocate for disability rights.

In *Hawking*, writer Jim Ottaviani and artist Leland Myrick have crafted an intricate portrait of the great thinker, the public figure, and the man behind both identities.

ADULT FICTION

Frankel, Laurie. *One Two Three: A Novel*. Holt Paperback, 2022.

Everyone knows everyone in the tiny town of Bourne, but the Mitchell triplets are especially beloved. Mirabel is the smartest person anyone knows, and no one doubts it just because she can't speak. Monday is the town's purveyor of books now that the library's closed—tell her the book you think you want, and she'll pull the one you actually do from the microwave or her sock drawer. Mab's job is hardest of all: get good grades, get into college, get out of Bourne.

Seventeen years ago, Bourne was national news when its water turned green. The girls have come of age watching their mother's endless fight for justice. But just when it seems life might go on the same forever, the first moving truck anyone's seen in years pulls up and unloads new residents and old secrets. Soon, the Mitchell sisters are taking on a system stacked against them and uncovering mysteries buried longer than they've been alive—because it's hard to let go of the past when the past won't let go of you.

Three unforgettable narrators join together to tell a spellbinding story with wit, wonder, and deep affection. Laurie Frankel has written a laugh-out-loud-on-one-page, grab-a-tissue-the-next novel, as only she can, about how expanding our notions of normal makes the world a better place for everyone—and how, when days are darkest, it's our daughters who will save us all.

Hibbert, Talia. *Get a Life, Chloe Brown: A Novel*. Avon, 2019.

Chloe Brown is a chronically ill computer geek with a goal, a plan, and a list. After almost—but not quite—dying, she's come up with seven directives to help her “get a life,” and she's already completed the first: finally moving out of her glamorous family's mansion. The next items? Enjoy a drunken night out. Ride a motorcycle. Go camping. Have meaningless but thoroughly enjoyable sex. Travel the world with nothing but hand luggage. And... do something bad.

But it's not easy being bad, even when you've written step-by-step guidelines on how to do it correctly. What Chloe needs is a teacher—and she knows just the man for the job.

Redford “Red” Morgan is a handyman with tattoos, a motorcycle, and more sex appeal than ten thousand Hollywood heartthrobs. He's also an artist who paints at night and hides his work in the light of day, which Chloe knows because she spies on him occasionally—just the teeniest, tiniest bit.

When she enlists Red in her mission to rebel, Chloe learns things about him that no spy session could teach her—like why he resents her wealthy background, why he never shows his art to anyone, and what really lies beneath his rough exterior.

Mortimer, Maddie. *Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies*. Picador, 2022.

This lyrical debut novel is at once a passionate coming-of-age story, a meditation on illness and death, and a kaleidoscopic journey through one woman's life—told in part by the malevolent voice of her disease.

Lia, her husband Harry, and their beloved daughter, Iris, are a precisely balanced family of three. With Iris struggling to navigate the social tightrope of early adolescence, their tender home is a much-needed refuge. But when a sudden diagnosis threatens to derail each of their lives, the secrets of Lia's past come rushing into the present, and the world around them begins to transform.

Deftly guided through time, we discover the people who shaped Lia's youth—from her deeply religious mother to her troubled first love. In turn, each will take their place in the shifting landscape of Lia's body, at the center of which dances a gleeful narrator, learning her life from the inside and growing more emboldened by the day. Pivoting between the domestic and the epic, the comic and the heartbreaking, this astonishing novel unearths the darkness and levity of one woman's life to symphonic effect.

Nović, Sara. *True Biz: A Novel*. Random House, 2022.

The students at the River Valley School for the Deaf just want to hook up, pass their history finals, and have politicians, doctors, and their parents stop telling them what to do with their bodies. This revelatory novel plunges readers into the halls of a residential school for the Deaf, where they'll meet Charlie, a rebellious transfer student who's never met another Deaf person before; Austin, the school's golden boy, whose world is rocked when his baby sister is born hearing; and February, the hearing headmistress, a CODA (child of deaf adults) who is fighting to keep her school open and her marriage intact—but might not be able to do both.

As a series of crises, both personal and political, threaten to unravel each of them, Charlie, Austin, and February find their lives inextricable from one another and changed forever.

This is a story of sign language and lip-reading, disability and civil rights, isolation and injustice, first love and loss, and, above all, great persistence, daring, and joy. Absorbing and assured, idiosyncratic and relatable, this is an unforgettable journey into the Deaf community and a universal celebration of human connection.

YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

Burcaw, Shane. *Interabled: Love Stories About Love and Disability from Squirmy & Grubs and Other Interabled Couples*. Roaring Brook Press, 2025.

YouTube sensations Shane and Hannah Burcaw are back with a groundbreaking and uproarious collection of essays and short stories about what it means to be in an interabled relationship.

With their signature wit and hilarious voice, the authors, bloggers, and entrepreneurs have assembled a heartfelt collection of sweet and unforgettable love stories about interabled couples.

Follow the lives of several couples as they navigate their love stories in an ableist world. Sometimes tear-jerking, sometimes funny, and always heartwarming, this moving collection—comprised of interviews and short stories, with interludes from Shane and Hannah about their own dating and marriage journey—will have readers laughing and sobbing as they discover true stories of love and commitment.

Heumann, Judith E. *Rolling Warrior: The Incredible, Sometimes Awkward, True Story of a Rebel Girl on Wheels Who Helped Spark a Revolution*. Beacon Press, 2021.

Judy Heumann was only five years old when she was first denied her right to attend school. Paralyzed from polio and raised by her Holocaust-surviving parents in New York City, Judy had a drive for equality that was instilled early in life.

In this young readers' edition of her acclaimed memoir, *Being Heumann*, Judy shares her journey of battling for equal access in an unequal world—from fighting to attend grade school after being described as a “fire hazard” because of her wheelchair, to suing the New York City school system for denying her a teaching license. She went on to lead 150 disabled people in the longest sit-in protest in U.S. history at the San Francisco Federal Building. Cut off from the outside world, the group slept on office floors, faced bomb threats, and risked their lives to win the world's attention—and ultimately, the first civil rights legislation for disabled people.

Judy's bravery, persistence, and signature rebellious streak will speak to every person fighting to belong and fighting for social justice.

Robinson, James. *Whale Eyes: A Memoir About Seeing and Being Seen*. Penguin Workshop, 2025.

From Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker James Robinson comes a breathtaking illustrated memoir for middle-grade readers (and adults, too)—inspired by the viral, Emmy-nominated short film *Whale Eyes*.

Told through an experimental mix of intimate anecdotes and interactive visuals, this book immerses readers in James's point of view, allowing them to see the world through his disabling eye conditions. Readers will get lost as they chase words. They'll stare into this book while taking a vision test. They'll hold it upside down as they practice "pretend-reading"... and they'll follow an unlikely trail toward discovering the power of words.

With poignant illustrations by Eisner Award-nominated artist Brian Rea, James's story equips readers of all ages with the tools to confront their discomfort with disability and turn confused, blank stares into powerful connections.

Wong, Alice, editor. *Disability Visibility: 17 First-Person Stories for Today*. Delacorte Press, 2021.

The seventeen eye-opening essays in *Disability Visibility*, all written by disabled people, offer keen insight into the complex and rich disability experience, examining life's ableism and inequality, its challenges and losses, and celebrating its wisdom, passion, and joy.

The accounts in this collection ask readers to think about disabled people not as individuals who need to be "fixed," but as members of a community with its own history, culture, and movements. These diverse perspectives speak to past, present, and future generations. It is essential reading for all.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Davis, DeAndrea. *All the Noise at Once*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2025.

All Aiden has ever wanted to do is play football just like his star quarterback brother, Brandon. An overstimulation meltdown gets in the way of Aiden making the team during summer tryouts, but when the school year starts and a spot unexpectedly needs to be filled, he finally gets a chance to play the game he loves.

However, not every player is happy about the new addition to the team, wary of how Aiden's autism will present itself on game day. Tensions rise. A fight breaks out. Cops are called.

Brandon interferes on behalf of his brother, but is arrested by the very same cops who, just hours earlier, were chanting his name from the bleachers. When he's wrongly charged with felony assault on an officer, everything Brandon has worked for starts to slip away, and the brothers' relationship is tested. As Brandon's trial inches closer, Aiden is desperate to figure out what really happened that night. Can he clear his brother's name in time?

Draper, Sharon M. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2012.

Born with cerebral palsy, Melody, ten, has never spoken a word. She is a brilliant fifth grader trapped in an uncontrollable body. Her world is enhanced by insight and intellect, but limited by physical challenges and misunderstandings.

Melody will never sing or dance, talk on the phone, or whisper secrets to her friends. She's not complaining, though—she's planning and fighting the odds. With the support of her family, caring neighbors, and a student teacher, she battles a "normal" world that offers few resources and many assumptions.

Placed in a special education classroom where learning means watching cartoons, Melody's life changes when she receives a computer with a keyboard that lets her "speak." Her transition into a general education classroom leads to academic success and heartbreak when a cruel incident excludes her from a national quiz team trip.

Melody's gutsy and candid story reveals the quiet strength it takes to challenge not only her own disability but the misconceptions of those around her.

Forrest, Claire. *Where You See Yourself*. Scholastic Inc., 2025.

By the time Effie Galanos starts her senior year, it feels like she's already been thinking about college applications forever—after all, finding a school that will be a perfect fit *and* accessible enough to navigate in her wheelchair presents challenges her friends don't have to consider.

What Effie hasn't told anyone is that she already has her heart set on a college in New York City with the perfect major to launch her dream job in digital media. She's never been to NYC, but the brochure paints a life she can imagine—and when her longtime crush, Wilder, applies there too, it feels like a sign.

But as the year unfolds, Effie must navigate admissions visits, ableism, senior-year pressures, and personal revelations. As she opens herself to dreams she never dared speak aloud, she begins to see that life—and love—may hold more possibilities than she imagined.

Gervais, Alison. *The Silence Between Us*. Blink, 2022.

Contemporary fiction fans will be drawn to *The Silence Between Us*—a young adult novel that tackles the challenges of Deaf culture, communication, and identity.

Deaf teen Maya moves across the country and enrolls in a hearing school for the first time. Adjusting to a new environment and the hearing culture is frustrating and isolating. Despite obstacles, Maya remains determined to stay focused on her future goals and dreams.

With themes of identity, independence, and unexpected romance, Maya's journey explores self-worth, resilience, and the importance of self-advocacy in a world that doesn't always listen.

Kemmerer, Brigid. *A Curse So Dark and Lonely*. Bloomsbury YA, 2020.

It once seemed easy to Prince Rhen, heir to Emberfall—until he was cursed to relive the autumn of his eighteenth year over and over. At the end of each cycle, he transforms into a monstrous beast. He's destroyed his castle, his family, and his hope—until Harper appears.

Harper is tough, smart, and has never let her cerebral palsy define her. When she tries to save a stranger on the streets of Washington, D.C., she is transported into Rhen's cursed world. At first unsure of where she is—or what to believe—she gradually understands what's at stake.

As Harper challenges the assumptions of the court, Rhen realizes that she may be his last chance. But the curse is not the only danger facing Emberfall, and breaking it will take more than love. This is the first book in an epic trilogy filled with enchantment, romance, and grit.

Martin, Ann M. *A Corner of the Universe*. Scholastic Inc., 2025.

The summer Hattie turns twelve, her predictable small-town life changes when her uncle Adam returns after more than a decade in an institution. Hattie has never met him—never even known about him.

Adam's schizophrenia and autism make him a challenge for their family, but Hattie sees something special in her excitable, deeply feeling uncle. As they form a bond, Hattie finds herself questioning what her family and her community define as "normal."

A powerful story about acceptance, change, and the quiet strength of unlikely friendships, this Newbery Honor book explores mental health and family with empathy and nuance.

Stroker, Ali. *The Chance to Fly*. Abrams Books, 2022.

Thirteen-year-old Nat Beacon loves a lot of things: her dog, Warbucks; her best friend, Chloe; and competing on her wheelchair racing team, the Zoomers, to name a few. But there's one thing she is absolutely OBSESSED with: MUSICALS! From *Hamilton* to *Les Mis*, there's not a cast album she hasn't memorized and belted along to. She's never actually been in a musical, though, or even seen an actor who uses a wheelchair for mobility on stage. Would someone like Nat ever get cast? But when Nat's family moves from California to New Jersey, Nat stumbles upon auditions for a kids' production of *Wicked*, one of her favorite musicals ever! And she gets into the ensemble! The other cast members are supercool and inclusive (well, most of them)—especially Malik, the male lead and the cutest boy Nat's ever seen. But when things go awry a week before opening night, will Nat be able to cast her fears and insecurities aside and "Defy Gravity" in every sense of the song title?

Stroker, Ali, and Stacy Davidowitz. *Cut Loose: The Chance to Fly #2*. Abrams Books, 2023.

Cut Loose! by Tony Award-winning actress Ali Stroker and Stacy Davidowitz is the showstopping sequel to *The Chance to Fly*. This uplifting story continues the journey of Nat Beacon, a theater-loving girl who uses a wheelchair, as she navigates the challenges of eighth grade and her passion for performing.

Nat is thrilled when she learns about a middle school theater competition where the winning production gets to perform on a real Broadway stage. This is her chance to shine and prove she belongs at her new school.

Drawing inspiration from her favorite musical, *Wicked*, and its empowering anthem "Defying Gravity," Nat lands a role in the school production of *Footloose*.

However, rehearsals are far from smooth. With dance diva Skye pushing for more complex choreography, Nat's boyfriend, Malik, frequently missing practice for band commitments, and her best friend, Hudson, acting distant, Nat feels the pressure mounting. She begins to question whether she can carry the show to Broadway and if it's worth pursuing theater without the support of her friends.

Cut Loose is a heartwarming tale about embracing your strengths, standing out, and standing up for what you believe in. Perfect for fans of musicals and anyone who has ever dared to dream big, this book celebrates resilience, friendship, and the magic of theater.

Summer, Jamie. *Roll with It*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2020.

In the tradition of *Wonder* and *Out of My Mind*, this big-hearted middle grade debut tells the story of Ellie, an irrepressible girl with cerebral palsy who's navigating a new town, a new school—and new challenges.

Ellie tells it like it is. Some people are surprised when a kid in a wheelchair isn't all sunshine and sweetness, but Ellie has big dreams—like becoming a professional baker—and a sharp wit.

When she and her mom move to help care for her grandpa, Ellie finds herself the new kid in a trailer park on the wrong side of town. Just when it all feels like too much, she starts to make real friends for the first time. Now she just has to convince her mom that this new place might be exactly what they need.

Warm, funny, and emotionally resonant, Ellie's journey is about finding your voice, making your place, and rolling with life's unexpected turns.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

Burcaw, Shane. *Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask About Having a Disability*. Roaring Brook Press, November 7, 2017.

Not So Different offers a humorous, relatable, and refreshingly honest glimpse into Shane Burcaw's life. Shane tackles many of the mundane and quirky questions that he's often asked about living with a disability, and shows readers that he's just as approachable, friendly, and funny as anyone else.

Shane Burcaw was born with a rare disease called spinal muscular atrophy, which hinders his muscles' growth. As a result, his body hasn't grown bigger and stronger as he's gotten older--it's gotten smaller and weaker instead. This hasn't stopped him from doing the things he enjoys (like eating pizza and playing sports and video games) with the people he loves, but it does mean that he routinely relies on his friends and family for help with everything from brushing his teeth to rolling over in bed.

Catchpole, James. *What Happened to You?*, Little Brown and Company, April 11, 2023

A Schneider Family Book Award Honor book! This accessible, funny, and groundbreaking story addresses the questions children often ask, as well as a disabled child's choice not to answer.

What happened to you? Was it a shark? A burglar? A lion? Did it fall off? A boy named Joe is trying to play pirates at the playground, but he keeps being asked what happened to his leg. Bombarded with questions and silly suggestions, Joe becomes more and more fed up...until the kids finally understand they don't need to know what happened. And that they're wasting valuable playtime!

Based on the author's real childhood experiences, this honest, funny, and authentic picture book is an empowering read for anyone with a disability, and for young readers learning how best to address differences.

Madison, Megan. *All of Us: A First Conversation about Disability*. Rise, July 1, 2025.

Based on the research that race, gender, disability, and other important topics should be discussed with toddlers on up, this read-aloud series offers adults the opportunity to begin important conversations with young children in an informed, safe, and supported way.

Developed by experts in the fields of early childhood and activism, this topic-driven picture book offers clear, concrete language and compelling imagery to introduce the concept of disability. This book celebrates all bodies and abilities, just as they are, and addresses the inequities and opportunities for change in today's world.

While young children are avid observers and questioners of their world, adults often shut down or postpone conversations on complicated topics because it's hard to know where to begin. Research shows that talking about tough issues from the age of two not only helps children understand what they see, but also increases self-awareness, self-esteem, and allows them to recognize and confront things that are unfair, like discrimination and prejudice.

These books offer a supportive approach that considers both the child and the adult. Stunning art accompanies the simple and interactive text, and the back matter offers additional resources and ideas for extending this discussion.

Mazeika, Katie. *Maybe Just Ask Me!*, Beach Lane Books, April 22, 2025.

Based on the author's own childhood experience, this clever and heartfelt picture book follows a young girl who wants to bring discussion of her disability into the open, exploring themes of acknowledging and celebrating differences.

Mazie wears an eyepatch and a head scarf, and on her first day at a new school she's prepared for her classmates to wonder why. And they do, but no one talks to her about it. Instead, wild rumors fly around the classroom that she's a pirate or a dragon burned off her hair! Mazie doesn't mind explaining her disability, but can she find the courage to tell the other kids to just ask her?

Pimentel, Annette Bay. *All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*. Sourcebooks Explore, March 10, 2020.

Experience the true story of lifelong activist Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins and her participation in the Capitol Crawl in this inspiring autobiographical picture book. This beautifully illustrated story includes a foreword from Jennifer and backmatter detailing her life and the history of the disability rights movement.

This is the story of a little girl who just wanted to go, even when others tried to stop her.

Jennifer Keelan was determined to make a change—even if she was just a kid. She never thought her wheelchair could slow her down, but the way the world around her was built made it hard to do even simple things. Like going to school, or eating lunch in the cafeteria.

Jennifer knew that everyone deserves a voice! Then, the Americans with Disabilities Act, a law that would make public spaces much more accessible to people with disabilities, was proposed to Congress. And to make sure it passed, Jennifer went to the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, DC to convince them.

And, without her wheelchair, she climbed.

ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP!

Stroker, Ali. *Ali and the Sea Stars*. HarperCollins, 2023.

Ali loves to dance, sing, and act. But she had never thought of putting on her own show until her neighbor asks, "Why wait?" Immediately energized, Ali gets to work.

There's so much to do before showtime—choosing the right musical, auditions, rehearsal, costume, and set design—but Ali can do anything with her family and friends. When a storm threatens to undo all their hard work, Ali must use her imagination and adapt so the show can go on!

Includes an inspiring letter from Ali to readers on how she developed confidence while on stage and how theater encourages teamwork and creativity.