

BOOKS THAT BUILD US 25/26

Reading Our Way to Confidence, Curiosity, and Community

An inclusive story-telling calendar brought to you by Bridging Communities





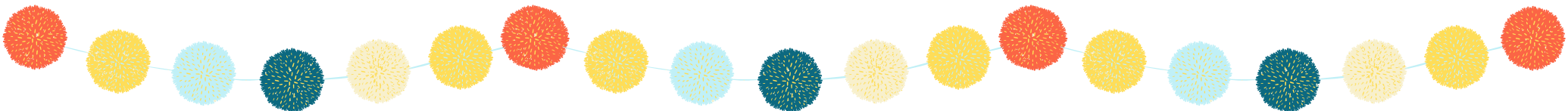
ABOUT THIS CALENDAR

This calendar is designed to make it simple (and joyful!) to talk about disability, diversity, and belonging with preschoolers, through books.

Each month includes:

- 📖 A read-aloud book
- 🧠 Talking points to spark inclusive classroom conversations
- ✂️ A simple, low-prep activity tied to the story
- 🌍 A connection to nationally recognized inclusion or culture days

Reading stories that center disability, race, culture, and different ways of communicating helps children build empathy and confidence, while also affirming the identities of classmates who may feel unseen. These lessons create moments for every child to feel proud of who they are and deepen a shared sense of belonging in the classroom.



Suggested Sensory & Craft Materials

To help support inclusive and engaging experiences, here are some recommended items that can be used throughout the calendar year:

Sensory Items

- Textured fabric squares (corduroy, fleece, silk, etc.)
- Calming jars (sealed bottles with glitter and water)
- Weighted lap pads or bean bags
- Squish balls or stress putty
- Noise-reducing headphones
- Visual timers
- Plush animals or soft dolls

Fidgets for Quiet Spaces or Circle Time

- Pop-it fidgets
- Snap-and-click fidgets or tangle toys
- Marble mazes (fabric with sewn-in marbles)
- Velcro strips (under tables or chairs)
- Textured stretch bands or fidget cubes

Craft Supplies

- Jumbo crayons and washable markers
- Tissue paper, glue sticks, safety scissors
- Pre-cut paper shapes (flowers, butterflies, capes, etc.)
- Large construction paper and poster board
- Multicultural skin tone crayons or markers
- Dot stickers, googly eyes, foam shapes

These materials are flexible, low-prep, and supportive of a wide range of developmental needs.



This calendar isn't just about reading. It's about building a stronger, more connected classroom community where all children are welcomed, celebrated, and valued.

This calendar and the book sets provided were made possible thanks to funding from the Read Play Talk early literacy grant through Southern Oregon Early Learning Services (SOELS). We are also grateful to the Autism Society of Oregon (ASO) for their partnership and collaboration in the development of this inclusive literacy resource.

SEPTEMBER

We'll share stories from the heart. All are welcome here. – Alexandra Penfold

Book to read: **All Are Welcome** by Alexandra Penfold

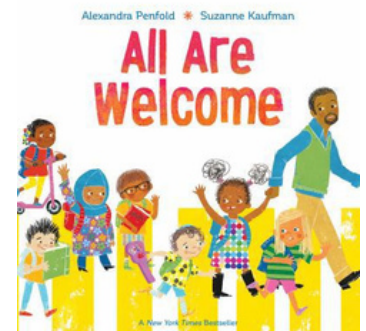
Theme: **Belonging and Inclusion**

Why This Lesson Matters: Kicking off the year with this book sets the tone that **everyone belongs**. It opens the door for children to share about themselves and recognize that our differences make the classroom stronger.

Talking Points:

- What does it mean to feel welcome?
- How do we make sure everyone has a place at school?

Activity: Create a classroom **"Welcome Wall"** where each student adds a drawing of themselves or their family. Extend by having students present their drawings and say one thing that makes them special. Pair with a song or poem about friendship and unity.



SEPTEMBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 International Literacy Day	6
7	8	9	10 World Suicide Prevention Day	11	12	13 Positive Thinking Day
14	15 National Inclusion Week (Sept 15 -21) National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept 15 - Oct 15)	16	17	18	19 Talk Like A Pirate Day	20
21 International Day of Peace	22	23 International Day of Sign Languages	24	25	26	27
28 Good Neighbor Day	29	30				



OCTOBER

Be different, be brave, be YOU! – Sonia Sotomayor

Book: **Just Ask!** by Sonia Sotomayor

Theme: **Disability & Neurodiversity Awareness**

Why This Lesson Matters: This story encourages children to celebrate different ways of thinking, moving, and learning—and to **ask questions with kindness**.

Talking Points:

- How do you learn best?
- What makes you unique?

Activity: **"My Superpower Is..."** drawings where each child shares something they do well. Display on a bulletin board titled "We All Have Superpowers!" For added connection, have students wear paper capes and share their superpower aloud.



OCTOBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Learning Disabilities Awareness Month (Oct 1 - 31)	2 World Smile Day	3	4
5 World Teachers' Day	6 World Cerebral Palsy Day	7	8	9	10 World Mental Health Day	11 International Day of the Girl
12	13 Indigenous People's Day	14	15 White Cane Awareness Day	16	17	18
19	20 National Friends of Libraries Week (Oct 20-26)	21	22 International Stuttering Awareness Day	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Diwali	



NOVEMBER

Fry bread is nation. It is shared by many, from coast to coast and beyond. – Kevin Noble Maillard

Book: **Fry Bread** by Kevin Noble Maillard

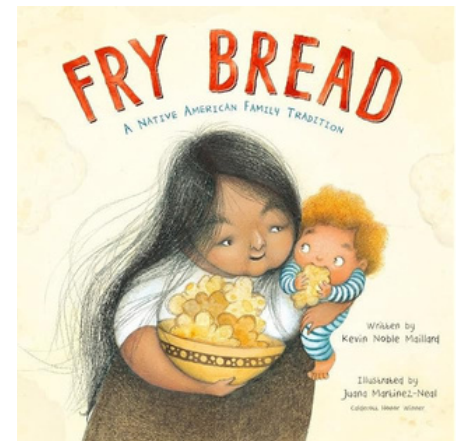
Theme: **Indigenous Identity and Family Traditions**

Why This Lesson Matters: Children learn that **families celebrate and come together in different ways**. Honoring Indigenous heritage helps all kids feel seen and valued.

Talking Points:

- What does your family like to cook or eat together?
- What traditions do you celebrate?

Activity: Make a class **"tradition recipe book"** with food drawings or photos from home. Pair with a pretend-play cooking station or bring in safe snack ingredients to make a classroom "fry bread" (or symbolic flatbread) together while discussing family traditions.



NOVEMBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Native American Heritage Month (Nov 1 - 30)
2 Dia de los Muertos (Nov 1 - 2)	3	4	5	6 National Nachos Day	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 World Kindness Day	14	15
16 National Children’s Day (US)	17 Take a Hike Day	18	19	20 Transgender Day of Remembrance	21 World Hello Day	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29 Small Business Saturday
30						



DECEMBER

The snow was still everywhere. New snow was falling! – Ezra Jack Keats

Book: **The Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats

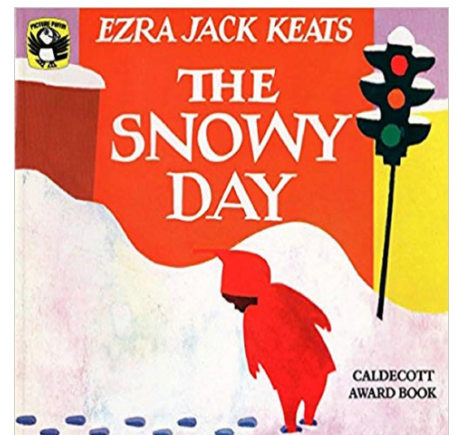
Theme: **Joy in Everyday Experiences**

Why This Lesson Matters: Celebrating everyday wonder through the eyes of a Black child affirms diverse stories and shows that **simple joys belong to everyone**.

Talking Points:

- What do you love to do in the snow (or cold weather)?
- What makes a day feel special?

Activity: **Snow sensory bin** (cotton balls, fake snow, textured materials). Follow up with a sequencing activity using pictures from the story and let students recreate snowy day scenes using collage materials or finger paint.



DECEMBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 Giving Tuesday	3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities	4 National Cookie Day	5	6
7	8 Pretend to be a Time Traveler Day	9 Christmas Card Day	10 Human Rights Day	11	12	13 National Cocoa Day
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Winter Solstice	22 Hanukkah (Dec 22-30)	23	24	25	26 Kwanzaa (Dec 26 -Jan 1)	27
28 National Card Playing Day	29	30	31			



JANUARY

Whether we're by ourselves, or surrounded by many, our small movements can turn into big movements.

– Kelly Fritsch

Book: **We Move Together** by Kelly Fritsch

Theme: **Disability Justice & Community Support**

Why This Lesson Matters: This story introduces young children to the idea that we all move through the world in different ways—and that **everyone deserves access, respect, and care**. It celebrates disability pride, community strength, and the power of working together.

Talking Points:

- How do people move or do things differently?
- What does it mean to help each other and work as a team?

Activity: Design an **"All Together Town"** as a class mural. Include ramps, signs, wheelchairs, bikes, sidewalks, quiet spaces, and whatever students imagine makes a place feel welcoming. Encourage discussion about what makes places easy or hard to move around in for different people.



JANUARY

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 New Years' Day	2	3
4 World Braille Day	5	6 Three Kings Day / Día de los Reyes	7	8 Bubble Bath Day	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 National Hat Day	16	17
18 Winne the Pooh Day	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20 Penguin Awareness Day	21	22	23	24 Compliment Day
25	26	27	28 Global Community Engagement Day	29 National Puzzle Day	30	31



FEBRUARY

I am brave. I am hope. I am my ancestors' wildest dream. I am worthy of success, of respect, of safety, of kindness, of happiness. – Derrick Barnes

Book: **I Am Every Good Thing** by Derrick Barnes

Theme: **Identity, Affirmation, & Black Pride**

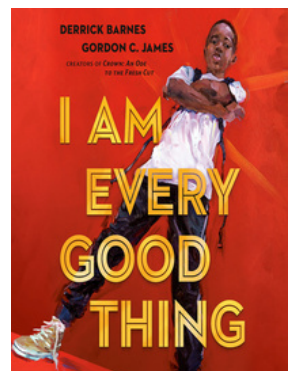
Why This Lesson Matters: This book delivers a joyful, empowering celebration of Black boyhood, countering stereotypes with pride, confidence, and love. Reading it during Black History Month gives children of all backgrounds a chance to **affirm the value of every child and honor the brilliance of Black identity.**

Talking Points:

- What makes you proud of who you are?
- What are some of the "good things" you bring to the world?

Activity: **"I Am..." affirmation portraits.**

Children draw themselves and complete the sentence "I am ____" with words like kind, strong, fast, curious, etc. Provide printed word cards or symbols for children to choose from if writing is challenging. Encourage sharing in circle time, or create a classroom book of affirmations.



FEBRUARY

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Black History Month (Feb 1 - 28)	2	3	4	5	6	7 Send a Card to a Friend Day
8	9	10	11 International Day of Women and Girls in Science	12	13	14
15	16	17 Random Acts of Kindness Week (Feb 17-21)	18	19	20 Love Your Pet Day	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 International Polar Bear Day	28



MARCH

**....differences are what make the world so great. –
Eliza Woloson**

Book: **My Friend Isabelle** by Eliza Woloson

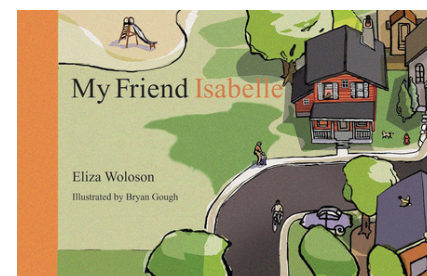
Theme: **Developmental Disabilities & Friendship**

Why This Lesson Matters: This sweet story shows the friendship between two children—one of whom has Down syndrome—reminding us that **differences don't get in the way of connection**. Reading it in March, during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and around World Down Syndrome Day, helps children understand and embrace developmental differences in a gentle, age-appropriate way.

Talking Points:

- What makes a good friend?
- How can we include someone who might do things differently?

Activity: **Friendship wall** — each child draws something they love to do with a friend and adds it to a classroom display. Pair sharing can be optional depending on the group's readiness. Encourage children to role-play kind ways to include others in play.



MARCH

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 International Wheelchair Day	2 Dr. Suess’s Birthday / Read Across America Day	3	4	5	6	7
8 International Women’s Day	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 National Deaf History Month begins (Mar 13–Apr 15)	16	17	18 Neurodiversity Celebration Week & Sign Language Week (Mar 18-24)	19	20 International Day of Happiness	21 World Down Syndrome Day
22	23	24	25	26 Make Up Your Own Holiday	27	28
29	30	31				



APRIL

We are all a little bit different and a little bit the same. – Sesame Street

Book: **My Friend Julia** (Sesame Street)

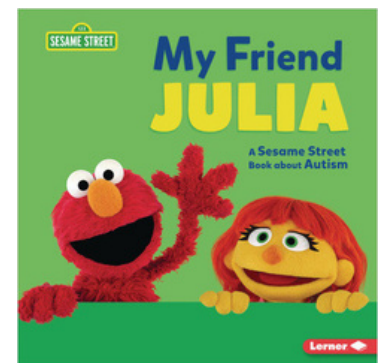
Theme: **Autism Acceptance**

Why This Lesson Matters: Julia shows that **kids with autism are just kids**—they might play or talk differently, and that's okay. Everyone deserves to be included.

Talking Points:

- How can we help everyone feel safe and calm?
- What are some ways people express feelings?

Activity: Create "**Julia's Calm Corner**" — a quiet classroom space with sensory materials like fabric swatches, calming jars, noise-reducing headphones, or quiet toys. Let children explore in small groups or rotate through during free choice. Use it to introduce classroom calm-down strategies.



APRIL

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Autism Awareness Month (Apr 1 - 30)	2 World Autism Awareness Day	3 Find a Rainbow Day	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Week of the Young Child (Apr 12-18)	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25
26	27 Tell a Story Day	28	29	30 El día de los niños/ El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day)		



MAY

Hooray! Today is our day, ¡El día de los niños! – Pat Mora

Book: **Book Fiesta!** by Pat Mora

Theme: **Celebration, Language, Diversity, and the Joy of Reading**

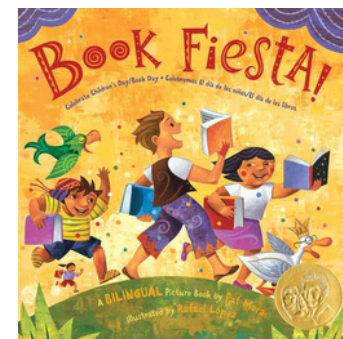
Why This Lesson Matters:

This vibrant bilingual book honors the joy of reading and the power of celebrating language, culture, and children. It **introduces Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros, a special day that promotes literacy and cultural inclusion**, making it a perfect read to encourage diverse voices in the classroom or at home.

Talking Points:

- How do you celebrate your culture or special days with your family?
- Why is it important that books come in many languages and reflect different cultures?

Activity: Invite children to **create their own mini "book fiesta"** poster or bookmark, including drawings of their favorite book and a word in another language they know or want to learn. Play music and read stories aloud in both English and Spanish to make the celebration come alive!



MAY

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May 1- 31)	2 Brothers and Sisters Day
3	4 Children’s Book Week (May 4-10)	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7 National Barrier Awareness Day Global Accessibility Awareness Day	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Dance Like a Chicken Day	15 National Chocolate Chip Day	16
17	18	19	20	21 World Day for Cultural Diversity	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



JUNE

You were born to BE so many things! – Peter H. Reynolds

Book: **Be You!** by Peter H. Reynolds

Theme: **Reflection and Celebration of Identity**

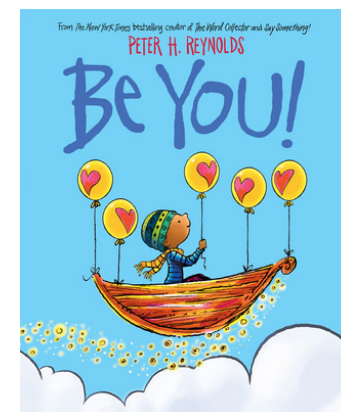
Why This Lesson Matters: As the school year winds down, this uplifting story encourages children to **celebrate who they are and all they've become**. It's a beautiful way to end the year with affirmation, confidence, and joy.

Talking Points:

- What makes you YOU?
- What are you proud of learning or trying this year?

Activity: **"My Year of Me" flower.**

Provide pre-cut petals with prompts like "I tried __," "I learned __," or "I loved __" for children to choose and complete with drawings or dictation. Assemble into a flower for each child and display or send home as a keepsake.



JUNE

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 International Children’s Day	2	3	4 National Hug Your Cat Day	5	6
7	8 Best Friends Day	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Autistic Pride Day	19 Juneteenth	20
21	22	23 Let It Go Day	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



JULY

Books with all kinds of characters—who move, think, look, and speak in different ways—help kids grow big hearts, brave voices, and kind classrooms!

Here are 5 key tips to help teachers prep an inclusive and welcoming classroom:

1. Fill your shelves with stories that reflect all kinds of kids.

Choose books that include characters with disabilities, different cultures, languages, family types, and ways of communicating. Stories are powerful mirrors and windows!

2. Use visuals everywhere.

Label areas with pictures and words, post the daily schedule with icons, and provide instructions in multiple formats. This supports all learners—especially multilingual students and those with disabilities.

3. Offer flexible seating and quiet spaces.

Make your room work for different bodies and brains. Include cozy corners, movement-friendly seating, or a calm-down area for kids who need breaks.

4. Celebrate differences from the start.

Use language like “Everyone learns differently” and “We’re all welcome here.” Create an environment where questions about differences are met with curiosity and respect.

5. Connect with families early.

Reach out with a warm welcome and ask families what helps their child thrive. Invite them to share strengths, routines, and communication tips—relationships build inclusion!

JULY

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Disability Pride Month (Jul 1 -30)	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

ABOUT US:

Bridging Communities is here to support families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We connect families to resources, host inclusive events, and provide a welcoming community for all. If you need help, we're here for you!

**CONNECT
WITH US!**

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