

**Books with Positive Portrayals  
of Aging and Older Characters for  
Younger Readers (up through 9 years)**

Books introduce children to people they might not otherwise encounter. Readers will meet older individuals, many of them grandparents, in these books. They are sure to discover interesting, lively, and knowledgeable characters who share many emotions, experiences, and ideas with readers.

*This list originated with SEA Change (Societal Education About Aging for Change) a collaboration with the Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at The George Washington University and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association. The list was recently adapted and updated by Reading Rockets, a project of WETA Public Broadcasting <http://www.readingrockets.org/>*

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*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros (Puffin; 0140562257)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, fantasy, imagination, multicultural – Spanish/English

A little girl and her grandmother fly together over New York City. (Also in a Spanish edition; Puffin, 0140562265)

*Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch (Dial; 0803710402)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Families, grandparents, school, classroom activities, books & stories, dramatization, gender roles, multicultural

Grace's grandmother helps Grace, a girl who loves stories, realize that with effort anything can be achieved.

*Aunt Flossie's Hats (& Crab Cakes Later)* by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, illustrated by James Ransome (Clarion; 0618120386)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Families, family stories, clothing - hats

When they visit their favorite relative, Aunt Flossie, Sara and Susan enjoy her collection of hats and their many stories as they share tea, cookies and crab cakes.

*Big Moon Tortilla* by Joy Cowley, illustrated by Dyanne Strongbow (Boyd's Mill; 159078037X)

Picture book

Ages 3-6, 6-9

Grandparents, multicultural (Indian U.S.), bad days

After Marta has had a bad day, her grandmother shares some comforting words of advice.

*Bremen Town Musicians* retold by Jacob Grimm, illustrated by Lizbeth Zwerger ( Minedition; 0698400429)

Folktale/picture book

Aging, animals, friends & friendship, music & musicians, robbers

Aging animals thrown out by their masters form a band and get the better of a band of robbers.

*A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams (Greenwillow; 0688040748)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, cooperation, saving, goal-setting

A girl, her mother, and grandmother all contribute coins to the coin jar that will buy a new chair for mama after a fire destroys their possessions.

*A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* by Marla Frazee (Harcourt; 0152060200)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, summer activities, friends & friendship, humor

James and Eamon stay with Eamon's grandparents while in Nature Camp for the best summer ever!

*The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins (Greenwillow; 0688092349)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, sharing, math concepts, baking – cookies

Grandma saves the day just when it seems that there aren't enough cookies for Victoria and Sam to share as unexpected guests drop in.

*Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* by Jay Williams, illustrated by Mercer Mayer (Aladdin; 002045600X)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Appearances, faith & confidence, dragons, Chinese

When a small, fat and bald old man announces he is a dragon, offering to defend the city of Wu against impending attack, everyone laughs at him but one young boy.

*Family Pictures/ Cuadros de Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza (Children's Book Press; 089239207X)

Nonfiction/picture book

Ages 6-9

Multicultural – Hispanic (American), bilingual – Spanish/English, families, everyday activities, memoir

Folk paintings and brief narratives recall the artist's growing up in a large Hispanic family in Texas.

*Fishing with Dad* by Michael Rosen (Artisan; 1579652867)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Families, family stories, memoirs & memoirs, outings – fishing, photo-essay

A young man relives the pleasure of his childhood experiences while on a fishing trip with his son and father.

*Full, Full, Full of Love* by Trish Cooke, illustrated by Paul Howard (Candlewick; 0763638838)

Picture book

Ages 0-3

Families, grandparents, everyday activities, affection

Young Jay Jay helps his loving and much loved grandmother prepare for a big family dinner.

*Gabby & Grandma Go Green* by Monica Wellington (Dutton; 0525422145)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, environment, recycling, activities

Gabby and her grandmother enjoy doing “green” projects when they spend time together. Tips and instructions for making a cloth bag are included.

*Grandfather & I* by Helen E. Buckley, illustrated by Jan Ormerod (HarperCollins; 0688175260)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, everyday activities, families, multicultural (African Americans)

In the middle of a busy family, only grandfather has the time to walk and look with his grandson as long as they like.

*Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (Sandpiper; 0152021027)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Families, family stories, culture – Japanese, American, war, travel

As the narrator grows older, he better understands his grandfather's story as he, too, traveled between Japan and America.

*Grandpa's Face* by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Floyd Cooper (Puffin; 0698113810)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Families, grandparents, perception, fears

Tamika sees her beloved grandfather making a mean face while he rehearses for one of his plays and becomes afraid that someday he will make that face at her.

*The Grannyman* by Judith Byron Schachner (Dutton; 0142500623)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Families, pets – cats, loyalty, retirement

Simon the cat is so old that most of his parts have stopped working, but is re-energized when a new kitten arrives for him to raise.

*Gugu's House* by Catherine Stock (Clarion; 0618003894)

Picture book

Ages 6-8

Grandparents, families, everyday activities, Africa (Zimbabwe), weather

Set in Zimbabwe, Kukamba leaves the city to visit her grandmother, Gugu, in her small village.

*Gus and Grandpa and Show-&-Tell* by Claudia Mills, illustrated by Catherine Stock (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux; 0374428484)

Fiction

Ages 6-9

Grandparents, families, school, everyday activities, series

Gus despairs of coming up with something interesting and impressive for his second grade class's show-and-tell, until he gets a great idea while visiting his Grandpa. Gus and his wise grandfather share each other's company and experiences in other books including basketball jitters and Halloween fears.

*The Hello Goodbye Window* by Norton Juster, illustrated by Chris Raschka (Michael deCapua; 0786809140)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, family, everyday adventures

A child is greeted by her grandparents and views myriad wonders at their kitchen window.

*The Honeybee Man* by Lela Nargi & Krysten Brooker (Schwartz & Wade; 0375849807)

Picture book/informational

Ages 3-6

Older people, cities, science, bees & beekeeping

Fred is an urban beekeeper who shares the fruits of his work with neighbors. Information about beekeeping and bees is included.

*Hot, Hot, Roti for Dada-ji* by F. Zia, F., Illustrated by Keri Min (Lee & Low; 1600604439)

Picture book

Ages 0-6

Grandparents, families, food, culture – India

Aneel's active grandparents bring stories, special foods, and fun with them from India.

*I Call My Grandpa Papa* (Tricycle; 1582462526) and *I Call My Grandma Nana*. (Tricycle; 1582462518) by Ashley Wolff.

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, schools, multicultural

Children and their teacher share the names for their lively and loved grandparents in two books. Names for grandparents from different countries are noted on endpapers.

*I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow illustrated by James Stevenson (Greenwillow; 0688115195)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Communities, neighbors, friendliness, everyday activities

Sally describes an elderly neighbor who grows flowers, waves to children as they pass and bakes cookies.

*I Love Saturdays y Domingos* by Alma Flor Ada, illustrated by Elivia Savadier (Atheneum; 068987409X)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, multicultural – Spanish-speaking

A young girl enjoys the similarities and the differences between her English-speaking and Spanish-speaking grandparents.

*The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams, Linda, illustrated by Megan Lloyd (HarperCollins; 0064431835)

Picture book

Ages 3-6, 6-9

Bravery, cumulative tales, humor, spooky stories

In this Halloween favorite, a little old lady is pursued first by big shoes, then pants, a shirt, gloves, a tall black hat, and finally a spooky pumpkin head!

*Little Red Cowboy Hat* by Susan Lowell, illustrated by Randy Cecil (Holt, 0805064834)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, parodies – folktale, humor

On her way to visit Grandma, Little Red meets a wily wolf in the desert....But Grandma runs in to save the day!

*Little Red Riding Hood: A Newfangled Prairie Tale* by Lisa Campbell Ernst (Simon & Schuster; 0689821913)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, folktales – parody, humor, baking – muffins

Red's feisty grandmother enlists the wolf as her assistant muffin maker in this contemporary parody.

*Lola & the Rent-a-Cat* by Ceseli Josephus Jitta (Francis Lincoln; 1847801390)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Old age, death, love, friends & friendship, pets – cats, loneliness

After her husband's death, an old woman finds friendship when she rents an older cat via the Internet.

*Lots of Grandparents* by Shelly Rotner & Sheila Kelly (Millbrook; 0761318968)

Picture book/nonfiction

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, everyday activities, photographs

Photographs of grandparents and their grandchildren show the joy as they visit, play, and read together.

*Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney (Puffin; 0140505393)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Growing older, legacies, plants & planting

When still a little girl, Alice Rumphius decided that when she grew up she would visit faraway places, live by the sea and do something to make the world more beautiful.

*Mr. Putter & Tabby Toot the Horn* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Arthur Howard (Sandpiper; 0152002472)

Easy reader

Ages 6-9 (actually 5-8)

Friends & friendship, pets – cats, music & bands, humor, confidence, series

Mr. Putter's neighbor, Mrs. Teaberry, decides that they should join a band, but finding the right one isn't as easy as it sounds—for them or their pets. Mr. Putter's everyday adventures continue in other books in the series such as *Mr. Putter & Tabby Paints the Porch*; here the help Mr. Putter gets from his animal friends makes painting his front porch a challenge.

*Mrs. Katz & Tush* by Patricia Polacco (Doubleday; 0553081225)

Picture book

Ages 3-6, 6-9

Friends & friendship, community, caring for others, pets – cats & kittens

A lifelong and caring friendship is born as young Larnel gives his lonely neighbor Mrs. Katz a stray kitten to love after she loses her husband. Similar intergenerational relationships are explored in other books by Polacco such as *Chicken Sunday* (Puffin; 0698116151) and *The Bee Tree* (Puffin; 0698116968).

*Miz Berlin Walks* by Jane Yolen, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper (Puffin; 0698118456)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Friends & friendship, aging, memories, death

Miz Berlin tells wonderful stories as she and young Mary Alice walk together around the block.

*My Great-Aunt Arizona* by Gloria Houston (HarperCollins; 0064433749)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Families, Appalachia, overcoming difficulties, aging, loyalty

Arizona Houston Hughes, an Appalachian girl who dreams of seeing the world, grows up to become a teacher who inspires generations of schoolchildren.

*Mystery Bottle* by Kristen Balouch (Hyperion; 078680999X)

Picture book

Ages 6-9

Grandparents, fantasy, families, crossing borders, culture – Iran

A map from a mysterious bottle magically transports a Brooklyn boy to share tea and talk with his grandfather in the Middle East.

*The Old Woman Who Named Things* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Kathryn Brown (Sandpiper; 0152021027)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Loneliness, solitude, friends & friendship, pets - dogs

An old woman who has outlived all her friends is reluctant to become too attached to the stray dog that visits her each day...until one day he doesn't appear

*Orani: My Father's Village* by Claire A. Nivola (Farrar; 0374356572)

Nonfiction/picture book

Ages 6-9

Memoirs, family history, culture – Sardinia (Italy), everyday activities

The author recalls childhood visits to Orani, her father's island homeland, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea where old and young alike enjoy Sardinia's beauty and activities.

*Our Grandparents: A Global Album* by Maya Ajmera, Sheila Kinkade & Cynthia Pon (Charlesbridge; 1570914591)

Picture book/nonfiction

Ages 3-6, 6-9 (actually 4-7)

Grandparents, multicultural, families, everyday activities, photographs

The joy shared between grandparents and grandchildren is presented in photographs and brief text following an introduction by Desmond Tutu.

*Our Granny* by Margaret Wild, illustrated by Julie Vivas (Sandpiper; 0395883954)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Grandparents, families, humor, diversity

Grannies come in all shapes and sizes, but the best Granny is your very own!

*The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flourney, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Dial; 0803700970)  
Picture book  
Ages 6-9  
Grandparents, families, family stories, quilts & quilting  
Tanya helps Grandma make a beautiful quilt which tells the story of their family.

*The Piano* by William Miller, illustrated by Susan Keeter (Lee & Low; 1880000989)  
Picture book  
Ages 6-9  
Music & musicians, compassion, talent  
A young girl's love for music leads her to a job in the home of an older woman who teaches her not only to play the piano but also to care for others

*A Picnic in October* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Nancy Carpenter (Sandpiper; 0152050655)  
Picture book  
Ages 6-9  
During their annual picnic to Ellis Island, Tony's grandparents express their thanks and patriotism as they remember their safe journey to America from Italy, many years ago.

*River of Words* by Jen Bryant, illustrated by Melissa Sweet (Eerdmans; 0802853021)  
Biography/picture book  
Ages 6-9  
Poets & poetry, biography, vocations, persistence  
Though he practiced medicine, William Carlos Williams became a recognized poet continuing well into his sixties.

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip Stead, Philip, illustrated by Erin Stead (Roaring Brook; 1596434023)  
Picture book  
Ages 3-6, 6-9 (actually 5-8)  
Older people, dedication, jobs – zookeeper, animals, zoos, friends & friendship, Caldecott Medalist  
The zoo animals lovingly care for their keeper and friend, old Amos McGee, while he is ill.

*Song & Dance Man* by Karen Ackerman (Knopf, 0394893301)  
Picture book  
Ages 3-6  
Grandparents, families, Caldecott Medalist  
Three children spend the day in their grandfather's attic, enjoying his tap dancing and memories of vaudeville in this Caldecott Medal winning book.

*Take Me Out to the Ballgame* by Maryann Kovalski (Fitzhenry and Whiteside; 1550418998)  
Picture book  
Ages 3-6



Grandparents, baseball, family outings

In this familiar sing-along, Grandma has as much fun as her sports-loving granddaughters at a big league baseball stadium.

*Tortillas and Lullabies/Tortillas y canciones* by Lynn Reiser (Greenwillow; 0060891858)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Families, traditions - intergenerational, family stories, bilingual – Spanish/English

Traditions are passed on through four generations in this celebration of food, family, and affection.

*Uncle Elephant* by Arnold Lobel. (HarperCollins; 0064441040)

Easy reader

Ages 3-6, 6-9 (actually 5-8)

Families, separation, faith, adventure

A young elephant spends time with his elderly Uncle while his parents are lost at sea.

*Verdi* by Janell Cannon (Harcourt Brace; 0152010289)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Verdi, a python, discovers that no matter how old or green he becomes, he is still his fun-loving self.

*When I Am Old with You* by Angela, illustrated by David Soman (Scholastic; 0531070352)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Families, grandparents, affection, dreams, growing up

A little boy daydreams about how wonderful it will be to join Granddaddy in his favorite activities when they both are old.

*Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox (Kane Miller; 091629126X)

Picture book

Ages 3-6

Friends & friendship, aging, memory, helping others

When his parents tell him his friend, Miss Nancy, has lost her memories, Wilfrid sets out to find them for her.

