



Hertfordshire Libraries Empathy Day Booklist, 12 June 2018

This list is comprised of titles aimed at children ages 4-11 featured in [EmpathyLab's](#) Read for Empathy Guide 2018.

They've used this symbol * where they are best suited to older children. ** denotes books which are demanding, often emotional reads, suitable for emotionally mature readers.

Children's picture books:

Title	Author
Leo: a Ghost Story*	Mac Barnett
A lonely ghost is glad when a family moves into his house, but he is rejected and forced to roam the streets before finally finding a true friend. An unusual story about difference and the value of having an open heart and mind.	
Willy and the Cloud*	Anthony Browne
Explaining dark moods to a child can be challenging. Browne uses the image of a personal cloud hanging over the central character in this multi-layered, powerful and moving book.	
Grandad's Island*	Benji Davies
A sensitive exploration of the emotions involved in bereavement, and healing. Davies subtly conveys a positive message about letting go whilst always carrying the loved one in your heart.	
Colin and Lee, Carrot and Pea	Morag Hood
Colin is a carrot struggling to fit in with the peas' games. Sparsely witty illustrations celebrate their growing realisation that their differences don't have to divide them.	
Can I Join Your Club?	John Kelly
Duck really needs some new friends but none of the other animals will let him join their club. So he starts one of his own and he welcomes everyone in. A story that shows the importance of being open to making real connections, not judgments.	
15 Things Not to Do with a Granny	Margaret McAllister
A granny is a wonderful person to have in your life, but never make assumptions about what grannies do! A book which will make everyone laugh whilst getting children thinking about their own family members, and what they really need.	
Lulu Gets a Cat	Anna McQuinn
Understanding pets' feelings and needs can help children develop their empathy muscles. Lulu learns how to make her new cat feel at home in this gently delightful book.	



My Name is not Refugee*	Kate Milner
A boy describes his experience of having to leave his town, asking very direct questions of the reader that invite reflection about how we would cope in his situation. Ends with the powerful message that Refugee is just a label – not a name.	
Perfectly Norman	Tom Percival
In this beautifully illustrated story Norman suddenly finds himself with a pair of wings, and struggles to accept himself until other children reveal that they also have wings!	
You're Safe With Me	Chitra Soundar
The forest creatures are afraid of the thunder and strong winds, but reassured by a mother figure. Great for exploring relationships, and different perspectives.	
The Parrot and the Merchant	Marjan Vafaian
A Persian merchant loves keeping colourful birds in cages, but her favourite talking parrot longs to escape. A lovely story based on a Rumi fable, which sparks empathic reflection on how our actions affect other creatures.	

Picture book for older children:

Title	Author
El Deafo*	Cece Bell
A moving semi-autobiographical graphic novel told from the viewpoint of a young deaf girl. Thought bubbles and dialogue draw us into Cece's world, making it easy to identify with her self-consciousness and frustration, and with her friends' confused feelings as they struggle to do the 'right thing'.	
Illegal**	Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin
A young boy makes a terrifying journey from Africa to Europe. Upsetting, important graphic novel with illuminating insights into the experiences of refugees and migrants and their resilience.	
King of the Sky*	Nicola Davies
A lonely boy in a new country meets an old man, and they start to share a passion for racing pigeons. Superb book, exploring inter-generational understanding and what helps people to feel less alone.	
Here I Am*	Patti Kim
A powerful wordless picture book about the chaotic feelings of a boy coming to a new country, and how these emotions gradually ease as he experiences kindness.	

Children's short chapter books:

Title	Author
The No. 1 Car Spotter Fights the Factory	Atinuke
An African village is overcome with problems caused by a corrupt developer, but the brilliant Oluwalase Babatunde Benson (the No. 1 Car Spotter) saves the day. Lovely insights into different emotions and life challenges.	

Stories for older readers:

Title	Author
Sputnik's Guide to Life on Earth*	Frank Cottrell Boyce
Sputnik is an alien tasked with writing a guidebook to Earth, who struggles to understand how humans work. With his new, shy friend Prez, he learns about the planet's very best things. Exuberant, witty writing with a strong emotional core.	
The Wild Robot	Peter Brown
What does it mean to be human? That's the question raised by this tale of a shipwrecked robot. The robot (Roz) is inadvertently activated and gradually learns to feel, to care and to love. The ability to feel empathy is at the heart of Roz's journey.	
Me and Mister P	Maria Farrer
Arthur is struggling with conflicting feelings of jealousy, guilt and love, caused by his brother's learning difficulties. Then Mr P (a polar bear) stumbles through the front door... and helps Arthur cope with his emotions.	
The Island at the End of Everything**	Kiran Millwood Hargrave
Amihan is separated from her mother, who has leprosy, and sent to live in an orphanage on a distant island. A gripping read, with beautifully drawn characters to help children expand their emotional understanding.	
The Song from Somewhere Else*	A.F. Harrold
Francesca (Frank) is bullied but finds courage through an unlikely friendship. A magical story with an ethereal quality, yet firmly rooted in gritty reality.	
Sky Dancer*	Gill Lewis
A great example of how books can help children see different people's perspectives. The characters hold diametrically opposed views about whether to shoot or protect endangered hen harriers on a grouse moor. A superb, uplifting book.	
Charlie and Me*	Mark Lowery
Martin takes his big-brother responsibilities very seriously, and understands Charlie (who has health and behavioural issues) like no one else does. A deeply affecting, story, of an epic journey from Preston to Cornwall with an extraordinary twist.	
The Guggenheim Mystery	Robin Stevens
This gloriously inventive art-theft whodunit is narrated by Ted Sparks, who is living with autism and has unusual powers of detection (read The London Eye Mystery to meet him for the first time). A lovely depiction of how Ted's family value him for who he is.	
The Road to Ever After*	Moira Young
A magical adventure about an unlikely friendship between thirteen-year old Davy, who is homeless, and the elderly Miss Flint. Deeply touching, this is an example of how great writing creates characters children will care about – ones that expand their emotional understanding.	

Children's non-fiction:

Title	Author
Coming to England* C 304.841	Floella Benjamin
Floella tells her own story including her experience of racism and rejection. She helps children really understand how hard it would be to leave a much loved home and come to an unwelcoming country.	
Overheard in a Tower Block** C 821.92	Joseph Coelho
A powerful poetry collection about growing up. The agonies of missing an absent dad, the grief of a mother and the stresses of city life touch our emotions through Coelho's potent yet approachable voice.	
Ballerina Dreams B DEP	Michaela and Elaine DePrince
Don't be misled by the cover – this is a gritty true story of how a Sierra Leone orphan overcame racism as she followed her ballerina dreams. It opens children's eyes to very different life experiences, and has a message of hope – Michaela is now a principal ballerina.	

Teenage:

Title	Author
Tender Earth*	Sita Brahmachari
Empathy can motivate people to try to make a difference. In this sensitive coming-of-age story, readers experience Laila's growing determination to make a stand against racism in her community. Even small acts of empathy can change lives.	
Smart**	Kim Slater
The assumptions we make about people can inhibit our feelings of empathy. Kieran, the central character here, makes no such judgments and his genuine compassion makes a huge difference to his community.	