

20 Beautiful Children's Books About Friendship

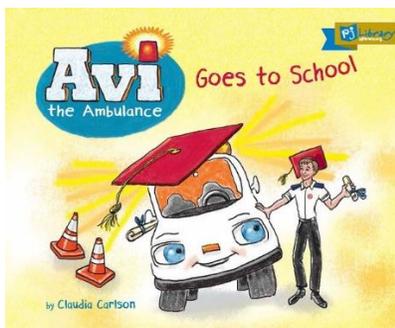
PJ Library



It's weird to think about, but no one is born with the knowledge of how to be a good friend--that's something that every person learns as they grow up. For grown-ups it may even seem strange to think back to a time when the know-how to make, and be, a friend didn't exist. No matter where your kids are in their development, books can help reinforce the lessons that all parents try to impart about being a good friend or confidant.

Story books help toddlers understand basic concepts of sharing and help kindergarteners develop their sense of empathy. As kids age and enter middle school, they contend with a whole new host of complexities around the ideas of friendship or what it means to be a friend. Age-appropriate novels and chapter books can help big kids parse out what kind of friend they'd like to be as they navigate the later elementary and middle school years.

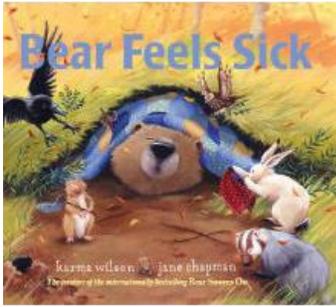
The [value of friendship](#), or *dibbuk chaverim*, describes the bond formed in close relationships with friends, and is a central theme in the books featured below.



Avi the Ambulance Goes to School by Claudia Carlson

Recommended for ages 3 to 4

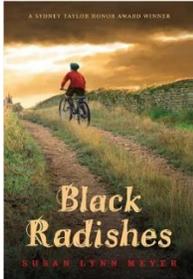
Ride along with Avi, a special ambulance in Israel, and his driver.



Bear Feels Sick by Karma Wilson

Recommended for ages 3 to 4

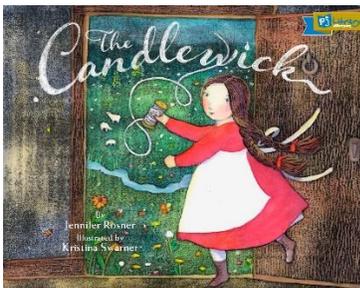
Bear feels absolutely terrible. He's home sick and it is not fun. Each of Bear's friends stops by to try to cheer him up.



Black Radishes by Susan Lynn Meyer

Recommended for ages 10 and up

Gustave and his family are French Jews, living in Paris in 1940. In an effort to escape the Nazis invading France, they flee to the unoccupied zone in the countryside, leaving friends, including Gustave's best pal, Marcel, behind.



The Candlewick by Jennifer Rosner

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

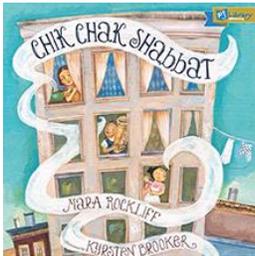
The Candlewick is a story of friendship and kindness. The two main characters, Ruthie and Bayla, clearly care for each other. As they live some distance from one another, Ruthie travels to Bayla's home for an extended visit. Since Bayla cannot hear her doorbell, Ruthie devises a solution that makes it easier for Bayla to know when visitors call.



Chicken Soup by Heart by Esther Hershenhorn

Recommended for ages 5 to 6

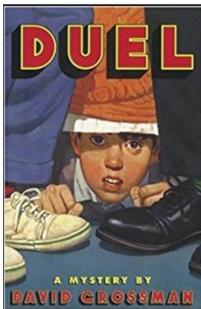
Rudie loves his babysitter, Mrs. Gittel -- but one day Mrs. Gittel comes down with the flu! What can Rudie do to help her feel better? He and his mama come up with a delicious idea.



Chik Chak Shabbat by Mara Rockliff

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

Goldie Simcha is an amazing cook and she treats her lucky neighbors to delicious cholent every weekend. One Friday, the tenants in her building don't smell Goldie's cooking and worry--after discovering that she's under the weather, Goldie's neighbors work together to surprise her in a very special way.



Duel by David Grossman

Recommended for ages 10 and up

Twelve-year-old David lives in Jerusalem. While volunteering at a home for the elderly he befriends 70-year-old photographer Heinrich Rosenthal. When an enemy of Mr. Rosenthal's from before the war, known as "the Bully of Heidelberg," accuses him of stealing a priceless painting and challenges him to an old-fashioned duel to the death, David must do some quick thinking to save his friend's life.



Estie the Mensch

Estie loves to roar like a lion and prance like a gazelle. When her grandmother introduces her to Joshie, another young boy, Estie's not so interested in playing, but when Joshie loses his ice cream cone, Estie comes through as only a friend can.



The Forever Garden by Laurel Snyder

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

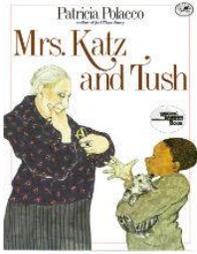
Laurel loves working in the garden with her neighbor, Honey. When it's time for Honey to move away, Laurel worries about what will happen with their special garden.



A Hat for Mrs. Goldman by Michelle Edwards

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

Mrs. Goldman takes care of everyone in the neighborhood, including her young neighbor, Sophia. When Mrs. Goldman gets sick, Sophia creates a special "get well" present with a very personal touch.



Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Polacco

Recommended for ages 5 to 8

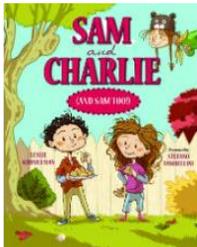
An elderly widow and a young boy develop a special bond by caring for a sickly kitten.



Picnic at Camp Shalom by Jacqueline Jules

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

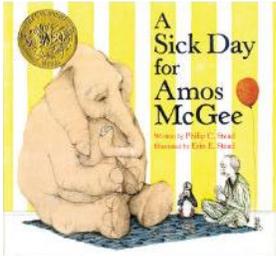
Carly and Sara are bunkmates who get off to a rocky start but their love of music (and a surprise in common) leads to a great summer camp friendship.



The Sam and Charlie series by Leslie Kimmelman

Recommended for ages 5 to 7

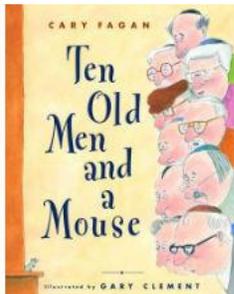
Sam is thrilled when he learns that his new neighbor is named Charlie – but he’s shocked when Charlie is a girl! Charlie and Sam become fast friends and enjoy many adventures with Charlie’s little sister, “Sam too,” in tow. The series features easy reader style chapter books with short stories about forgiveness, Jewish holidays, and growing up.



A Sick Day for Amos McGee by Philip C. Stead

Recommended for ages 4 to 5

Every day, zookeeper Amos McGee rides the bus to the zoo, where he plays chess with the elephant, races the tortoise, and reads stories to the owl. But one day he feels too sick to go to work, so his animal friends hop on the bus to visit him -- performing the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*, visiting the sick. Learn more about [why PJ Library chose this book](#) for subscribers.



Ten Old Men and a Mouse by Cary Fagan

Recommended for ages 6 to 8

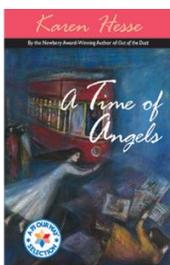
In this gentle tale, the ten elderly men who faithfully come together at their synagogue each day for prayer and friendship develop a fondness for a little mouse that appears one day.



Tikvah Means Hope by Patricia Polacco

Recommended for ages 7 and up

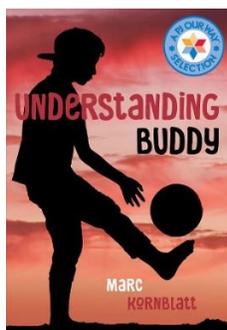
While preparing for Sukkot, a town is rocked by a devastating fire, but a special little cat helps bring a community together. Illustrated in Polacco's signature style, this heartfelt story celebrates friendship and hope.



A Time of Angels by Karen Hesse

Recommended for ages 11 and up

Hannah is sent to Albany, New York, to escape illness, but she mistakenly boards the train to Brattleboro, Vermont. Alone and beginning to be sick with the flu, she arrives in Brattleboro, where she is taken in by a kind German man, Klaus Gerhard. Klaus respects Hannah's Jewish traditions and cares for her until she is well enough to return home.



Understanding Buddy by Marc Kornblatt

Recommended for ages 10 to 12

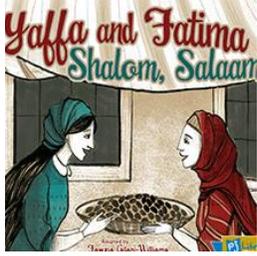
Ten-year-old Sam isn't supposed to know that Laura, his family's house cleaner has died in a car accident, but keeping the secret makes things hard for him at school. He can't tell anyone why the new boy, Laura's son Buddy, acts so strangely, so nobody understands why Sam sticks up for him.



What a Way to Start a New Year by Jacqueline Jules

Recommended for ages 6 to 7

Everything seems to be going wrong for Dina's family as they try to get ready for Rosh Hashanah. When it looks like the family won't have dinner for the [High Holidays](#), their community steps in to support them.



Yaffa and Fatima: Shalom and Salaam by Fawzia Gilani-Williams

Recommended for ages 5 to 6

Yaffa and Fatima are dear friends, despite coming from different backgrounds. When times get tough, how will they look after each other? This rendition of a classic Jewish folktale is an inspiring look at how friendship perseveres.