

Earth Matters: Picture books can help us talk to children about climate change

By Allie Martineau

Thank you for reading our latest Earth Matters column! Here is the full booklist of picture books, novels, and comics to start conversations with young readers about environmentalism, climate action, and building a better future. There are of course so many MORE books for young readers about our world, climate activism, and community written by creators from all over the world. You can find more of them at your favorite local bookstores and libraries.

Climate Science and Action

Books that talk about the science behind climate change and why studying and working to save the planet matters.

- A Kid's Book About Climate Change (Artis/Greenspan)
- Buried Sunlight (Bang)
- Climate Action (Stevens/Rewse)
- Climate Changed (Squarzoni)
- If Polar Bears Disappeared (Williams)
- The Cartoon Introduction to Climate Change (Klein/Bauman)
- The Leak: For the Love of Truth (Petty/Bell)
- To Change a Planet (Soontornvat/Bell)
- What A Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet (French)
- Wump World (Pete)

Connecting with Nature

When we feel connected, empathy tends to come to us more easily. Here are a few titles about the beauty of nature and the fun of getting outdoors.

- A New Green Day (Portis)
- All the Water in the World (Lyon/Tillotson)
- Hello Earth (Sidman)
- Honeybee (Fleming/Rohmann)
- Life Story (Burton)
- Many: The Diversity of Life on Earth (Davies/Sutton)
- My Ocean is Blue (Lebeuf/Barron)

- Redwoods (Chin)
- Sunrise Summer (Behr/Swanson)
- The Bear Report (Heder)
- Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt (Messner/Neal)
- Where's Rodney? (Bogan/Cooper)

Human Impact and Conservation

So we know the world is worth saving, but how would someone go about trying to reverse the negative effects of human life and progress on our planet?

- Better Than New: A Recycle Tale / Mejor Que Nuevo: Un cuenta de reciclaje (Broder/Buckley)
- Hoot (Hiaasen)
- I Like Old Clothes (Hoberman)
- I'm Not a Plastic Bag (Allison)
- Moth: An Evolution Story (Thomas/Egneus)
- My Must-Have Mom (Smith/Khatun)
- Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace (Johnson/Sadler)
- The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs (Messner/Forsythe)
- The Great Kapok Tree (Cherry)
- The Last Beekeeper (Cartaya)
- Whale in a Fishbowl (Howel)
- Wild Child's Guide to Endangered Animals (Marotta)

Kids getting involved

The characters in these books- real and fictional- take it upon themselves to make a difference for the climate in ways big and small.

- Ants In Your Pants, Worms in Your Plants (de Groat)
- Greta and the Giants (Tucker/Persico)
- Hey Get Off Our Train! (Bunningham)
- I Have the Right to Save My Planet (Serres)
- Luz Sees the Light (Davila)
- Old Enough to Save the Planet (Kirby/Lirius)
- The Curious Garden (Brown)
- To Change a Planet (Soontornvat/Bell)
- We Are Water Protectors (Lindstrom/Goade)
- Zonia's Rainforest (Neal)

Building Future through Fantasy

In the escape into fantastical worlds and possible futures, we can better understand our own world and what we want it to look like.

- Astronuts (Scieszka/Weinberg)
- CatStronauts: Mission Moon (Brockington)
- Great Pacific: Trashed (Harris)
- Island Book series (Dahm)
- Just a Dream (Van Allsburg)
- Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind (Miyazaki)
- Secret of Black Rock (Stanton)
- The Last Wild (Torday)
- The Marrow Thieves (Dimaline)
- World Without Fish (Kurlansky)

Empathy and Community Action

Building community and fostering human connection is one way humankind can build a better future. These titles for young readers teach empathy, compassion, and how you can make the world a better place by speaking up, or saying hello to a neighbor.

- Alicia and the Hurricane: A Story of Puerto Rico / Alicia Y El Huracán: Un Cuento De Puerto Rico(Newman)
- Birdsong (Flett)
- Dessert Island (Zhu)
- Green Green: A Community Garden Story (Lamba/Lamba/Sanchez)
- Milo Imagines the World (Robinson/de la Pena)
- Our Little Kitchen (Tamaki)
- Rock by Rock: The Fantastical Garden of Nek Chand (Bradbury/Boughton)
- Sincerely, Harriet (Winifred)
- Speak Up (Paul/Glenn)
- Thank You, Garden (Scanlon)
- The Breaking News (Reul)
- The Queen on our Corner (Christopher)
- We Move Together (Fritsch/McGuire/Trejos)
- We Planted a Tree (Muldrow/Staake)

Big Feelings

Talking about the climate crisis at any age can feel daunting, complicated, and even impossible. These books about honoring and unpacking big feelings can help begin and deepen these conversations.

- After the Storm (Stemple/Yolen)
- Courage Hats (Hoefler/Bagley)
- Here and Now (Denos/Goodale)
- Life Doesn't Frighten Me (Angelou/Basquiat)
- Me and My Fear (Sanna)
- Ruby's Worry (Percival)
- The Girl and the Wolf (Vermette/Flett)
- What Do You Do with a Problem? (Yamada/Besom)
- What We'll Build (Jeffers)
- Your Mind is like the Sky (Ballard/Carlin)

Works Cited:

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Book Harvest. "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors."
<https://bookharvest.org/mirrors-windows-and-sliding-glass-doors/>

Scholastic, "To Change a Planet by Christina Soontornvat and Rahele Jomepour Bell"
<https://youtu.be/rmFWOafrgtU>