

The Grown-Ups

A film by Maite Alberdi

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Sarah Burris of Bay County Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *The Grown-Ups*.

*In a school for individuals with Down Syndrome, four middle-aged friends yearn for a life of greater autonomy in a society that marginalizes them as disabled. **The Grown-Ups** is a humorous and at times sad and uncomfortable look at the tragic limbo of conscious adults.*

Winner, Best Female-Directed Film at the 2016 International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam. A co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB).

ADULT NONFICTION

Daugherty, Paul. *An Uncomplicated Life: A Father's Memoir of His Exceptional Daughter*. New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, 2015. Sports columnist Paul Daugherty wrote this endearing love letter to his daughter with Down syndrome. Jillian Daugherty was raised to be the best Jillian she could be. She graduated from high school and college, works to support herself, and has met the love of her life. Jillian inspires her family and friends to be the best versions of themselves through her boundless joy and love for others.

Mooney, Jonathan. *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, 2007. Jonathan Mooney was placed in Special Education classes during his formative school years when he was diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. Despite this label, Mooney graduated with honors from Brown University. As an adult, Mooney renovated a short bus and drove across the country looking for kids who had learned to cope with their disabilities in creative ways. In this charming memoir he

chronicles this four-month, 35,000 mile journey, introducing readers to individuals who redefine what it means to live a "normal" life.

Kingsley, Jason and Mitchell Levitz. *Count Us In: Growing up with Down Syndrome*.

Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2007. Reprint from 1994. Jason Kingsley and Mitchell Levitz are two young men who have written a frank, touching memoir about growing up with Down Syndrome. They discuss what matters most in their lives – friendships, careers, school, politics and independence – giving readers a rare glimpse into the inner lives of individuals with Down Syndrome. This narrative challenges preconceptions about the capabilities of those who are developmentally disabled.

McFarlane, Judy. *Writing with Grace: A Journey Beyond Down Syndrome*.

Madeira Park, BC Canada: Douglas & McIntyre, 2014. *Writing with Grace* is the inspiring and informative story of the journey Grace and Judy have taken together. It relates the often-dark history of Down Syndrome, something the Canadian Down Syndrome Society maintains is "not a birth defect or illness" but "a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that has always been part of the human condition." It also tells a universal story of moving from a deep fear of the 'other,' to seeing the world through the eyes of the 'other,' to Judy truly understanding when Grace says, "my real truth is too scary. I like to hide my real truth."

Bissinger, Buzz. *Father's Day: A Journey into the Mind & Heart of My Extraordinary Son*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

Buzz Bissinger's twins were born a world apart. Gerry is a graduate student, while Zach is an intellectually disabled but gifted young man. Zach has the comprehension skills of an eight year old but an extraordinary memory and talent for

navigation. Buzz and Zach take a cross-country road trip to revisit all the places they lived while growing up. The summer trip gives Buzz insight into the unique challenges Zach faces and the admirable qualities of his character.

Estreich, George. *The Shape of the Eye*. New York, NY: TarcherPerigee, 2013. When Laura Estreich is born, her appearance presents a puzzle: does the shape of her eyes indicate Down syndrome, or the fact that she has a Japanese grandmother? In this powerful memoir, George Estreich, a poet and stay-at-home dad, tells his daughter's story, reflecting on her inheritance – from the literal legacy of her genes, to the family history that precedes her, to the Victorian physician John Langdon Down's diagnostic error of "Mongolian idiocy."

ADULT FICTION

Faulkner, Colleen. *Just Like Other Daughters*. New York, NY: Kensington Publishing Corporation, 2013. Alicia Richards' twenty-five-year-old daughter Chloe has Down syndrome. Chloe attends adult daycare while Alicia teaches at a local college. One day, Chloe comes home absolutely giddy after meeting and falling in love with Thomas, who is also developmentally disabled. Alicia is protective of her daughter as she begins a relationship and must navigate the new territory of her daughter's attraction to Thomas. What will happen if she allows her daughter to fall in love like anyone else?

Edwards, Kim. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. London, England: Penguin Books, 2005. Kim Edwards's stunning novel begins on a winter night in 1964 in Lexington, Kentucky, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy, but the doctor immediately recognizes that his daughter has Down syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect Norah, his wife, he makes a split second decision



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that will alter all of their lives forever. He asks his nurse, Caroline, to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself. So begins this beautifully told story that unfolds over a quarter of a century—in which these two families, ignorant of each other, are yet bound by the fateful decision made that winter night long ago.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Simon, Rachel. *Riding the Bus with My Sister*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Rachel Simon's sister Beth is a spirited woman who lives intensely and often joyfully. Beth, who has an intellectual disability, spends her days riding the buses in her unnamed Pennsylvania city. The drivers, a lively group, are her mentors; her fellow passengers are her community. One day, Beth asks Rachel to accompany her on the buses for an entire year. This wise, funny, deeply affecting true story is the chronicle of that remarkable time. Rachel, a writer and college teacher whose hyperbusy life camouflaged her emotional isolation, had much to learn in her sister's extraordinary world.

Philip, Aaron. *This Kid Can Fly: It's about Ability (Not Disability)*. New York, NY: Balzer & Bray/HarperTeen, 2016. In this heartbreaking and ultimately uplifting memoir, Aaron Philip, a fourteen-year-old boy with cerebral palsy, shows how he isn't defined so much by his disability as he is by his abilities. Written with award-winning author Tonya Bolden, *This Kid Can Fly* chronicles Aaron's extraordinary journey from happy baby in Antigua to confident teen artist in New York City. His honest, often funny stories of triumph despite physical difficulties, poverty, and other challenges are as inspiring as they are eye-opening. Includes photos and

original illustrations from Aaron's personal collection.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Woloson, Eliza. *My Friend Isabelle*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, 2003. Isabelle and Charlie are friends. They both like to draw, dance, read, and play at the park. They both like to eat Cheerios. They both cry if their feelings are hurt. And like most friends, they are also different from each other. Isabelle has Down syndrome. Charlie doesn't. Written by Isabelle's mother, this charming tale encourages readers to think about what makes a friendship special. My Friend Isabelle also opens the door for young children to talk about differences and the world around them. It's a wonderful story to read at bedtime or to share at school.

Fleming, Virginia. *Be Good to Eddie Lee*. New York, NY: Philomel Books, 1993. Christy's mother always tells her to be good to Eddie Lee, a neighborhood child with Down's Syndrome. But Christy wants to run and play — and not worry about Eddie Lee tagging along. One hot summer day, though, Eddie Lee takes Christy to a secret place in the woods and teaches her that beautiful things can be found in unexpected places.

Palacio, R. J. *Wonder*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2012. *I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.* August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face.

Draper, Sharon. *Out of my Mind*. New York, NY: Antheneum Books, 2010. Melody is not like most people.

She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom—the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged, because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie. *We'll Paint the Octopus Red*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, 1998. As six-year-old Emma anticipates the birth of her new baby brother or sister, she vividly imagines all of the things they can do together. Then when the baby is born, her dad tells her that it's a boy named Isaac, and he has something called Down syndrome. In this touching story, Emma helps her father as much as he helps her to realize that Isaac is the baby they dreamed of. The book concludes with a set of commonly asked questions about Down syndrome with answers for children and how it might affect their siblings and family.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Junkyard Wonders*. New York, NY: Philomel, 2010. When young Trisha finds out her class at the new school is known as "The Junkyard," she is devastated. She moved from her old town so she wouldn't be in a special class anymore! But then she meets her teacher, the quirky and invincible Mrs. Peterson, and her classmates, an oddly brilliant group of students each with his or her own unique talent. And it is here in the junkyard that Trisha learns the true meaning of genius, and that this group of misfits is, in fact, wonderful.

