



Transitioning to  
**KINDERGARTEN**  
**MULTICULTURAL**  
**BOOKLIST**



*A Union of Professionals*





*A Union of Professionals*

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### **OUR MISSION**

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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# Transitioning to KINDERGARTEN MULTICULTURAL BOOKLIST

It's important to find books that jump-start a preschooler's passion for reading. Members of the American Federation of Teachers Early Childhood Education Cadre, made up of early educators from all over the country, have recommended some of their favorite books available in English and Spanish. In addition to these selections, we have added book selections from Colorín Colorado<sup>1</sup> to create a multicultural list, encompassing children's stories and characters from a rich array of cultures to create the "Transitioning to Kindergarten Multicultural Booklist."

Colorín Colorado is the largest, most comprehensive online resource for educators and parents of English language learners. Educators and parents will find a wealth of information on how to help ELLs of all language backgrounds read and succeed in school. To learn more about Colorín Colorado, visit [www.colorincolorado.org](http://www.colorincolorado.org).

Each booklist in this guide pairs a set of learning activities from the "Transitioning to Kindergarten" toolkit with books that explore similar ideas and skills. For the complete "Transitioning to Kindergarten" toolkit, with all of its fun activities, visit [go.aft.org/t2k](http://go.aft.org/t2k).

The AFT has partnered with First Book ([www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)), a nonprofit organization that provides new books for programs and schools serving children in need, to bring you these book recommendations. Most of the books are available through First Book. Learn more about the AFT/First Book partnership and how to register for First Book at [www.firstbook.org/AFT](http://www.firstbook.org/AFT).

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<sup>1</sup> Colorín Colorado is a partnership project of PBS station WETA (Washington, D.C.), the AFT and the NEA.







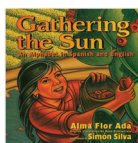
## LEARNING ABOUT PRINT ACTIVITIES “BEGINNING”

- Making a Menu
- My Favorite Book
- My Name Has Letters
- The Reading Puppet

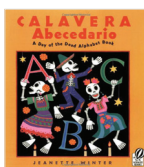
## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS



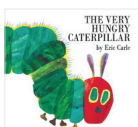
*The Snowy Day* written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats. Join a young boy's journey through a snowy day in the city.



*Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English* by Alma Flor Ada; illustrated by Simon Silva. Explore the lives of farmers in this bilingual alphabet book.



*A Day of the Dead Alphabet Book/Calavera Abecedario* written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter. In this bilingual story, a family makes preparations for the Day of the Dead.



*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* written and illustrated by Eric Carle. Follow a caterpillar as it grows, in this new bilingual edition of a children's classic.

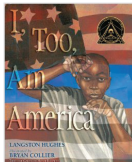
This title is available through the First Book Marketplace, for free or at low cost to schools and programs serving children in need. Register now at [firstbook.org](http://firstbook.org).

This title is available in Spanish.



*Bebé Goes Shopping* by Susan Middleton Elya; illustrated by Steven Salerno. Using Spanish and English vocabulary words, Bebé and Mama have a very eventful trip to the supermarket. 📖

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*I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes; illustrated by Bryan Collier. The illustrated version of the classic poem celebrates the history of Pullman porters. 📖

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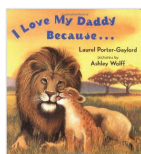




*Whose Toes Are Those?* by Jabari Asim; illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Through rhyming text and fun illustrations, children gain self-esteem as they learn all the wonderful things about their bodies.

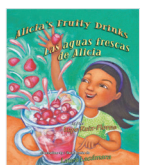
## LEARNING ABOUT PRINT ACTIVITIES “MAKING PROGRESS”



- Find a Word
- Fishing for Letters
- Name Memory
- Word Puzzles

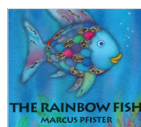
## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS





*I Love My Daddy Because* by Laurel Porter-Gaylord; illustrated by Ashley Wolff. This classic explores the love between fathers and their young in the animal kingdom.  





*Alicia's Fruity Drinks/Las Aguas Frescas de Alicia* by Lupe Ruiz-Florez; illustrated by Laura Lacamara. To celebrate Mexico's independence day, Alicia makes aguas frescas for her friends on the soccer team.  



*The Rainbow Fish* written and illustrated by Marcus Pfister. Learn about the value of being an individual as a rainbow fish travels to find others who look like him and instead finds that he's perfect just how he is.  



*Martha Speaks* by Susan Meddaugh. When Helen feeds alphabet soup to her dog, Martha, the dog begins to speak. Join these two as they teach and learn letters and words.  



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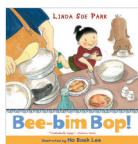
This title is available in Spanish.



*I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* written and illustrated by Lauren Child. Join Charlie as he coaxes Lola, a picky eater, into trying different foods. 📖 💡



*Book Fiesta!* by Pat Mora; illustrated by Rafael Lopez. This bilingual story shows readers that books can be read anywhere and everywhere. 📖 💡



*Bee-bim Bop!* by Linda Sue Park; illustrated by Ho Baek Lee. A hungry child tells of helping her mother make bee-bim bop, a traditional Korean meal. 📖 💡






## LEARNING ABOUT PRINT ACTIVITIES “READY TO READ”

- Letter Memory
- My Word Box
- Pick a Letter
- Word Jump

## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS





*El Gato Leo Comes to Play!* by Opal Dunn; illustrated by Cathy Gale. Come join Leo the cat on his bilingual adventure as he skateboards through villages and forests looking for fun. 





*When Turtle Grew Feathers: A Tale from the Choctaw Nation* by Tim Tingle; illustrated by Stacey Schuett. This retelling of the classic Rabbit and Turtle race shows that maybe Turtle wasn't just slow and steady, it was the feathers!



*My Grandma/Mi Abuelita* by Ginger Foglesong Guy; illustrated by Vivi Escriva. In this bilingual story, a family takes a trip to see grandma, going from taxi to airplane all the way to grandma's house.  



*Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?* written and illustrated by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle. Learn colors, letters and animals as you explore the forest with Brown Bear and his friends.  



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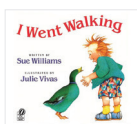


This title is available in Spanish.



*This Next New Year* by Janet S. Wong; illustrated by Yangsook Choi. A young boy celebrates the lunar new year by exploring his family's and friends' different traditions and looking forward to the new year with optimism.

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*I Went Walking* by Sue Williams; illustrated by Julie Vivas. Go for a walk and find interesting animals and colors described with rhymes. 📖 \$

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*Chato's Kitchen* by Gary Soto and Susan Guevara. Chato, the coolest cat in East L.A., couldn't be happier when a family of mice moves into the barrio. However, his new neighbors might be more than he expected! 📖

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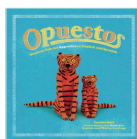


*Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya* by Donna Jo Napoli; illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Learn the true story of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Wangari Muta Maathai and her passion for environmental conservation.

## WRITING ACTIVITIES “BEGINNING”

- Draw to the Music
- Draw Your Day
- I Can Write Letters!
- Tell Me About Your Picture
- Walk on a Letter

## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS




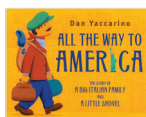
*Opuestos: Mexican Folk Art Opposites in English and Spanish* by Cynthia Weill; illustrated by Martín Santiago and Quirino Santiago. This book of Mexican folk art teaches kids about opposites in Spanish and English. 




*Wabi Sabi* written by Mark Reibstein; illustrated by Ed Young. A cat living in Japan goes on an adventure to discover the meaning of her name.



*Build a Burrito: A Counting Book in English and Spanish* by Denise Vega; illustrated by David Diaz. Counting will make readers hungry in this fun book on numbers. 



*All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel* written and illustrated by Dan Yaccarino. The author recounts how the shovel his great-grandfather brought from Italy to America was passed down through four generations of his family. 



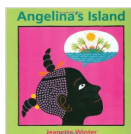
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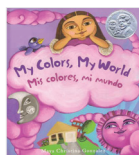




*Angelina's Island* written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter. After moving to New York, Angelina dreams of her old home in sunny Jamaica.



*Uno, Dos, Tres: One, Two, Three* by Pat Mora; illustrated by Barbara Lavallee. Shopping for a birthday is as easy as one, two, three (or uno, dos, tres!) in a lively Mexican market. 📖 💵



*My Colors, My World* written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Join Maya as she searches high and low for the vibrant colors that make up her world. 📖 💵



*Carmen's Colors* written and illustrated by Maria Diaz Strom. Join a young girl and her mother as they go to the market. 💵




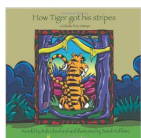
## WRITING ACTIVITIES “MAKING PROGRESS”

- Build Our Name
- Clay Letters
- Copy a Card
- Sequence Story
- Trace Your Name

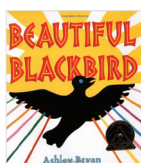
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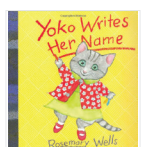
*How Will We Get To The Beach?* by Brigitte Luciani; illustrated by Eve Tharlet. Tag along with Roxanne as she tries to make it to the beach. 




*How Tiger Got His Stripes: A Folktale from Vietnam* by Rob Cleveland; illustrated by Baird Hoffmire. Based on a traditional tale, find out what happens when Tiger, the proudest animal in the jungle, learns wisdom and earns his stripes.



*Beautiful Blackbird* written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan. When all of the birds in the forest become envious of Blackbird's beauty, Blackbird shows them that inner beauty is most important.



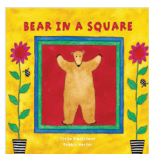
*Yoko Writes Her Name* written and illustrated by Rosemary Wells. Join Yoko as she learns to write her name in English, and teaches her classmates to write their names in Japanese. 



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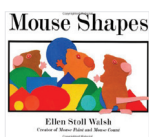
*Bear in a Square* by Stella Blackstone; illustrated by Debbie Harter. Share the adventures of a big, friendly bear as he roams through all sorts of crazy settings, discovering different shapes along his way. 📖

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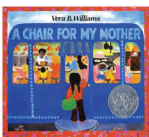
*Bringing in the New Year* written and illustrated by Grace Lin. A family prepares to celebrate the Chinese New Year. 📖

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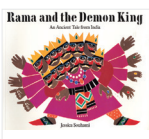
*Mouse Shape* written and illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh. What can you make with one oval, two circles and eight triangles? Just ask three clever mice!

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*A Chair for My Mother* written and illustrated by Vera B. Williams. Rosa, her mother and her grandmother work together to save up coins to buy a big, cozy chair. 📖 💰

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*Rama and the Demon King: An Ancient Tale from India* written and illustrated by Jessica Souhami. Follow along with the classic tale of Prince Rama, one of the most honored stories of the Hindi people.

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*Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* written and illustrated by Simms Taback. As Joseph's overcoat gets more and more holes in it, he makes it into a jacket. When the jacket gets too worn, he makes it into a vest. Children will love to guess what happens next!



## WRITING ACTIVITIES “READY TO READ”

- Guess What’s Inside
- Send A Message

## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS



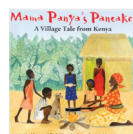
*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros, illustrated by Elisa Kleven. A granddaughter and her abuela fly over the world and discuss places they can go their imagination. 📖 💰



*Super Oscar* by Oscar De La Hoya and Mark Shulman; illustrated by Lisa Kopelke. Join Oscar as he runs around trying to get everything together for a party later that evening. 💰



*Benny* written and illustrated by Sieb Posthuma. Benny, a dog, loses his sense of smell and must navigate and discover new adventures without it. 💰



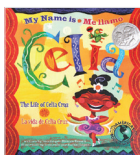
*Mama Panya's Pancakes* by Mary Chamberlin and Rich Chamberlin; illustrated by Julia Cairns. Mama Panya and her son, Adika, head to the market to buy supplies to make pancakes. But when Adika invites all of their neighbors to join, Mama Panya worries they won't have enough food to feed them all.



This title is available through the First Book Marketplace, for free or at low cost to schools and programs serving children in need. Register now at [firstbook.org](http://firstbook.org).



This title is available in Spanish.



*My Name is Celia/Me llamo Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz* by Monica Brown; illustrated by Rafael López. This bilingual book tells the true story of Celia Cruz from her early life in Cuba to her time in New York City and Miami where she helped start a new dance craze—salsa!

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*Press Here* written and illustrated by Herve Tullet. Press the yellow dot on the cover of this book and embark on a magical journey. 📖

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*The Trip Back Home* by Janet S. Wong; illustrated by Bo Jia. A young narrator describes the gifts brought to family on a trip to Korea.

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*The Seven Chinese Sisters* by Kathy Tucker; illustrated by Grace Lin. When the youngest of seven sisters is stolen by a dragon, her sisters must combine their talents to save her! 📖

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*Dancing in the Wings* by Debbie Allen; illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Sassy is worried that her too-large feet and too-long legs will keep her from her dream of becoming a ballerina in this sweet tale of perseverance. 📖

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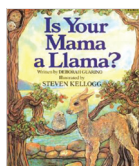
*What a Party!* by Ana Maria Machado; illustrated by Hélène Moreau. An open-ended party invitation turns a small birthday gathering into a 24-hour birthday fiesta.





## TALKING AND LISTENING ACTIVITIES “BEGINNING”



- Be an Expert Listener
- Find the Rhymes
- How Many Words?
- Match That Sound

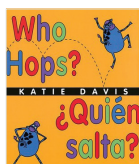
## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS




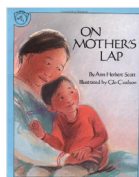
*Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino; illustrated by Steven Kellogg. In this favorite, whimsical rhyming riddles help Lloyd the baby llama guess what kind of animal everyone's mama really is.  





*Hello Ocean/Hola Mar* by Pam Muñoz Ryan; illustrated by Mark Astrella. This sweet, lyrical story captures a day by the sea.  



*Who hops?/¿Quién salta?* by Katie Davis. In this fun and colorful story, children will discover which animals hop and run. 



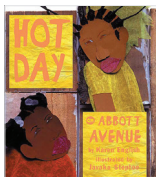
*On Mother's Lap* by Ann Herbert Scott; illustrated by Glo Coalsón. A young Inuit boy learns that he and his new little sister both can fit comfortably on their mother's lap.  



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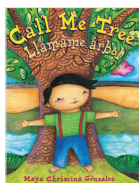


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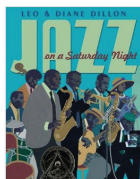
*Hot Day on Abbott Avenue* by Karen English; illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. On the hottest day of the summer, best friends Kishi and Renee refuse to play with each other over a Popsicle incident until they hear the familiar thump of a jump rope on the ground.

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*Call Me Tree* written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Explore nature and learn how children experience growth and become strong just like trees. [S](#)

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*Jazz on a Saturday Night* written and illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Enjoy an evening with the stars of classical jazz music in this fast-paced, toe-tapping tale.

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*Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney. In this infectious rhyming read-aloud, Baby Llama turns bedtime into an all-out llama drama. [Book](#) [S](#)





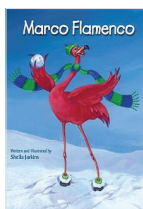
## TALKING AND LISTENING ACTIVITIES "MAKING PROGRESS"

- Be a Word
- Find the Compound Words
- Jump for a Rhyme
- Mystery Sound
- Rhyme-Out

## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS



*Kitten's First Full Moon* written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes. Kitten thinks the full moon is a bowl of milk but she can't reach it! 📖 🇸



*Marco Flamingo/Marco Flamenco* written and illustrated by Sheila Jarkins. Marco is a flamingo who longs to travel north for the winter. Find out what happens when he experiences snow and cold for the first time. 📖



*Ganesha's Sweet Tooth* by Emily Haynes; illustrated by Sanjay Patel. In this retelling of the Hindu literature classic, Ganesha loves the traditional Indian sweet dessert, laddoo, but after taking a very large bite, he finds himself with a broken tusk!



*Fortune Cookie Fortunes* by Grace Lin. Mei Mei's family opens fortune cookies as Mei Mei wonders if the fortunes could possibly come true. 📖

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🇸 This title is available in Spanish.



*Hairs/Pelitos* by Sandra Cisneros. A girl describes how each person in the family has hair that looks and acts different, Papa's like a broom and Mama's with the sweet smell of bread before it's baked. 📖 💵

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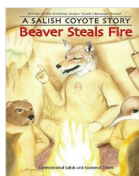
*Hush! A Thai Lullaby* by Minfong Ho; illustrated by Holly Meade. A mother sings to nighttime creatures for them to be quiet while her baby is sleeping in this lilting Thai lullaby.

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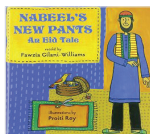
*The Hat that Wore Clara B.* by Melanie Turner-Denstaedt; illustrated by Frank Morrison. Clara B.'s grandma wears the most beautiful hat to Mother's Sunday at church. After admiring the hat for ages, Clara B. tries to get her hands on it, but it doesn't go quite as she planned.

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*Beaver Steals Fire: A Salish Coyote Story* by Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. In this tale from the Salish people, clever Coyote devises a plan to steal fire from Curlew, the keeper of the sky world.

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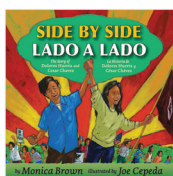
*Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale* by Fawzia Gilani-Williams; illustrated by Proiti Roy. After Nabeel buys a new pair of too-long pants for the Eid celebration, he finds himself in a dilemma trying to find a way to hem them before the party.



## TALKING AND LISTENING ACTIVITIES

### "READY TO READ"

- First Sound Sort
- Stretched-Out Story
- What Word Is Left?

## TEACHER-RECOMMENDED BOOKS



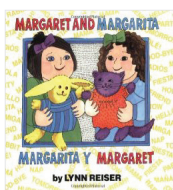
*Side by Side/Lado a Lado: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/La Historia de Dolores Huerta y Cesar Chavez* by Monica Brown; illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Join Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez as they organize farmworkers to stand up for their rights.  






*Night of the Moon* by Hena Khan; illustrated by Julie Paschke. During the Muslim holidays of Ramadan, "The Night of the Moon," and Eid, Yasmeen, a young Pakistani-American girl, learns about her family's traditions.



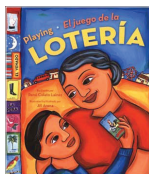
*The Littlest Sled Dog* by Michael Kusugak; illustrated by Vadyana Krykorka. When a little dog, Igviullu, is adopted by an Inuit storyteller, she gets the chance to meet her heroes: real sled dogs!



*Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret* written and illustrated by Lynn Reiser. Watch as Margaret and Margarita meet become friends. One speaks English; the other Spanish, but this does not get in the way of playing in the park.  

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 This title is available in Spanish.



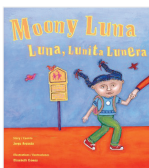
*Playing Lotería/El juego de la lotería* written by René Colato Laínez; illustrated by Jill Arena. A young boy goes to visit his grandma who speaks only Spanish. They play the game lotería together and learn bits of each other's language, rhyming all along the way. [S](#)

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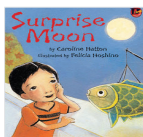
*The Name Jar* written and illustrated by Yangsook Choi. After moving to the United States from Korea, Unhei is nervous that no one will be able to pronounce her name, so she decides to pick a new name from a jar. That is, until new friends help her realize her name is beautiful and meaningful.

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*Moony Luna/Luna, Lunita Lunera* written by Jorge Argueta; illustrated by Elizabeth Gomez. Luna is about to start school, but she's worried that it will be scary. Watch her as she tackles her first day! [S](#)

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*Surprise Moon* by Caroline Hatton; illustrated by Felicia Hoshino. A young Vietnamese-American boy named Nick shares the traditions of the Autumn Moon Festival with his friends.

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*Zigazak!: A Magical Hanukkah Night* by Eric A. Kimmel; illustrated by Jon Goodell. The townspeople of Brisak are ready to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah when two devils arrive to wreak havoc.







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