



# Early Years Book Recommendations

**Recommended by: Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg Cultural Safety Team**

Newborn/Toddler

[May We Have Enough to Share - Richard Van Camp](#)



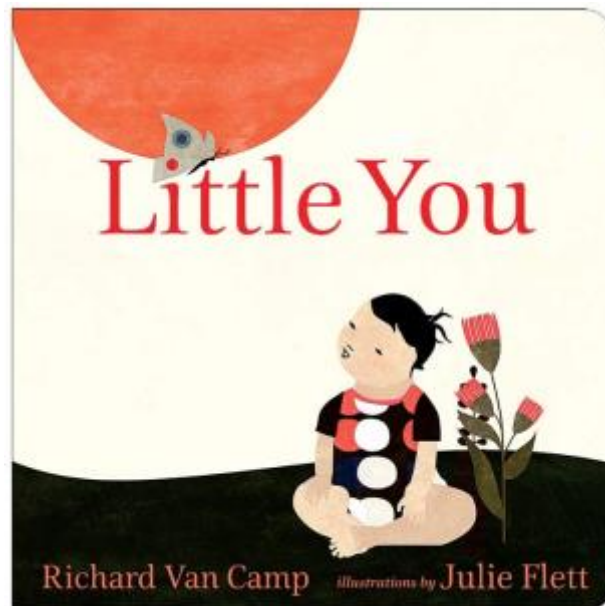
*1 - Award-winning author Richard Van Camp wrote this book to express his gratitude for all that surrounds him and his family. The strength of their connections, the nature that provides for them, the love that is endless. May We Have Enough to Share is the perfect way to start or end your little one's days in gratitude.*

## Welcome Song for Baby; A Lullaby for Newborns - Richard Van Camp



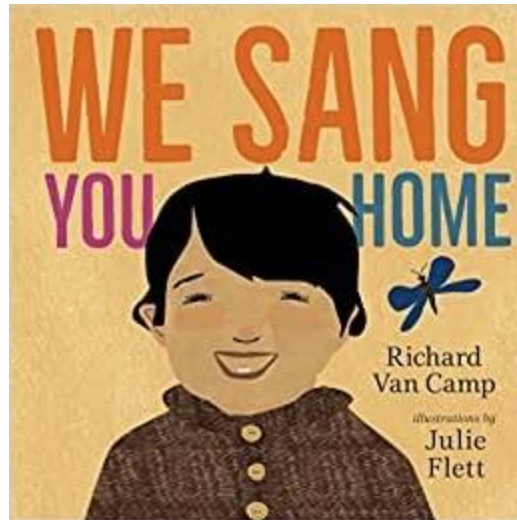
2 - From renowned First Nations storyteller Richard Van Camp comes a lyrical lullaby for newborns. Complemented with stunning photographs, this evocative board book is perfectly suited as a first book for every baby.

## Little You - Richard Van Camp



3 - A tender board book for babies and toddlers that honors the child in everyone. With its delightful contemporary illustrations, Little You is perfect to be shared, read or sung to all the little people in your life--and the new little ones on the way!

## We Sang You Home - Richard Van Camp



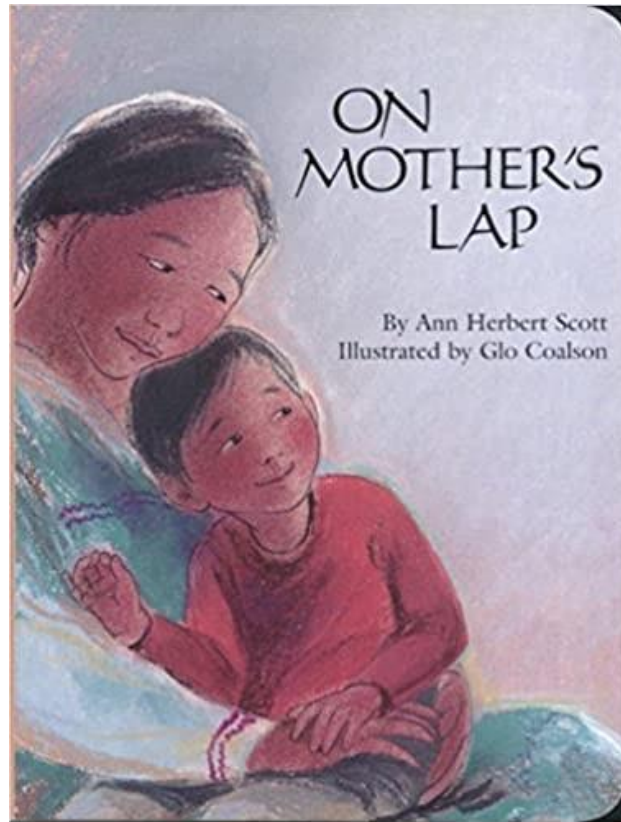
4 - In this sweet and lyrical board book from the creators of the bestselling *Little You*, gentle rhythmic text captures the wonder new parents feel as they welcome baby into the world. A celebration of the bond between parent and child, this is the perfect song to share with your little ones

## Sweetest Kulu - Celina Kalluk



5 - This bedtime poem, written by internationally acclaimed Inuit throat singer Celina Kalluk, describes the gifts bestowed upon a newborn baby by all the animals of the Arctic. Lyrically and lovingly written, this visually stunning book is infused with the Inuit values of love and respect for the land and its animal inhabitants.

On Mothers Lap - Ann Herbert Scott



6 - A small Inuit boy discovers that Mother's lap is a very special place with room for everyone.

Nibi is Water - Joanne Robertson



7 - A first conversation about the importance of Nibi--which means water in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe)--and our role to thank, respect, love, and protect it. Babies and toddlers can follow Nibi as it rains and snows, splashes or rows, drips and sips. Written from an Anishinaabe water protector's perspective, the book is in dual language--English and Anishinaabemowin.

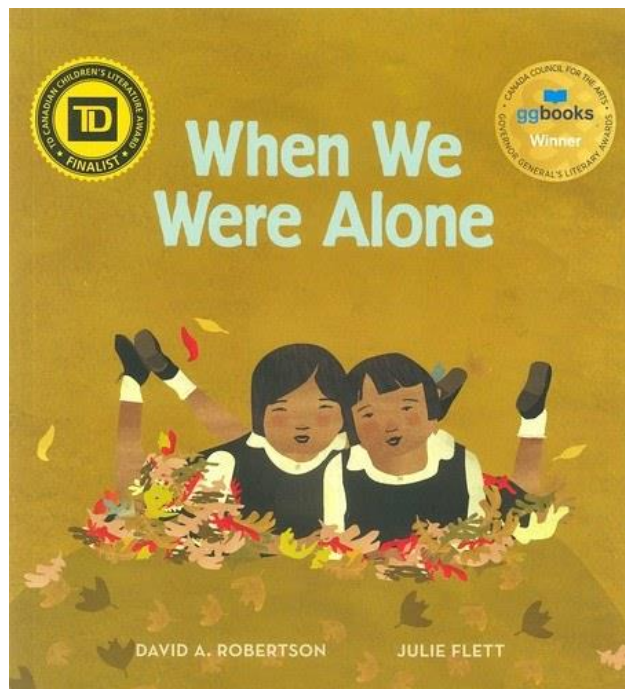
## Preschool

When We Are Kind - Monique Gray Smith



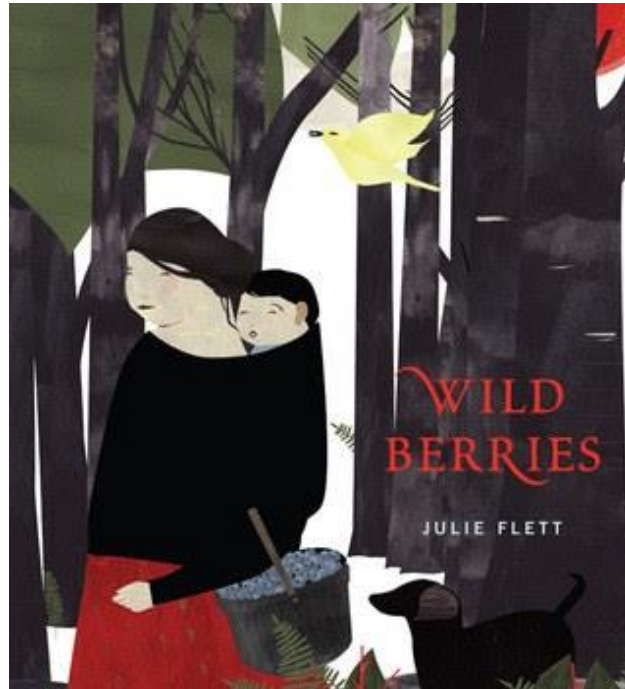
8 - When We Are Kind celebrates simple acts of everyday kindness and encourages children to explore how they feel when they initiate and receive acts of kindness in their lives. Celebrated author Monique Gray Smith has written many books on the topics of resilience and reconciliation and communicates an important message through carefully chosen words for readers of all ages. Beautifully illustrated by artist Nicole Neidhardt, this book encourages children to be kind to others and to themselves.

When We Were Alone - David Robertson



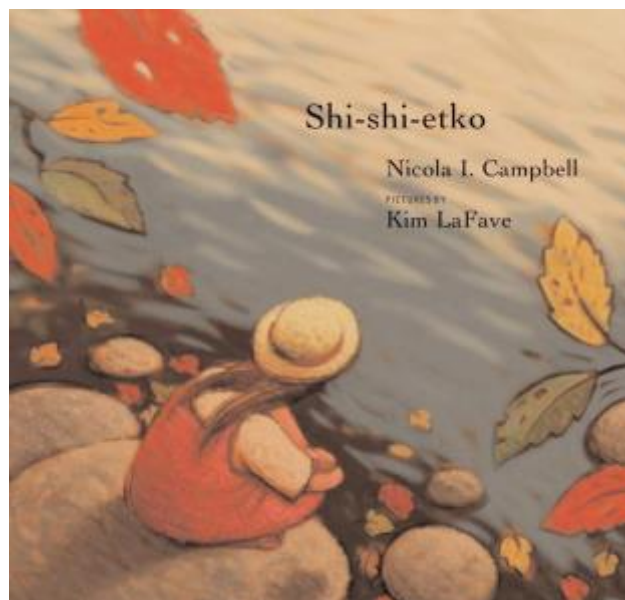
9 - When a young girl helps tend to her grandmother's garden, she begins to notice things about her grandmother that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long braided hair and wear beautifully coloured clothing? Why does she speak another language and spend so much time with her family? As she asks her grandmother about these things, she is told about life in a residential school a long time ago, where everything was taken away. *When We Were Alone* is a story about a difficult time in history and, ultimately, a story of empowerment and strength.

### Wild Berries - Julie Flett



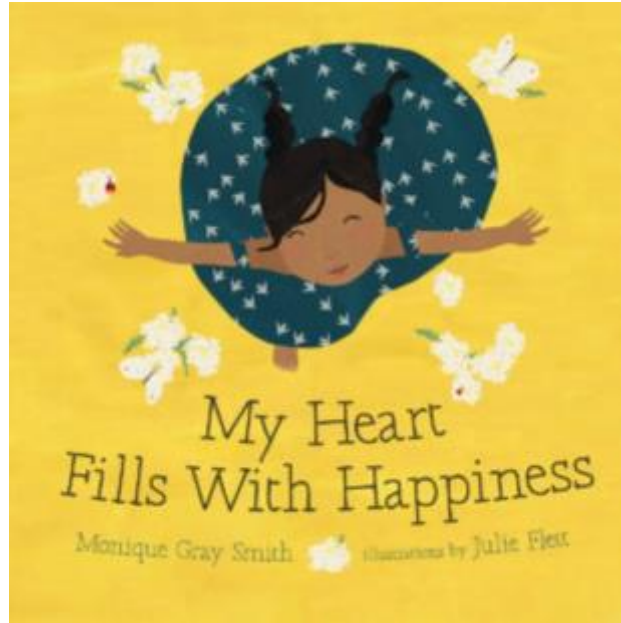
10 - A young boy spends a summer day picking wild blueberries with his grandmother in this new beautiful picture book by Julie Flett. Exploring the important tradition of berry-picking for Indigenous Peoples, it also honors a unique, endangered language. It also includes a recipe for a traditional wild blueberry pie.

### Shi-shi-etko - Nikola I. Campbell



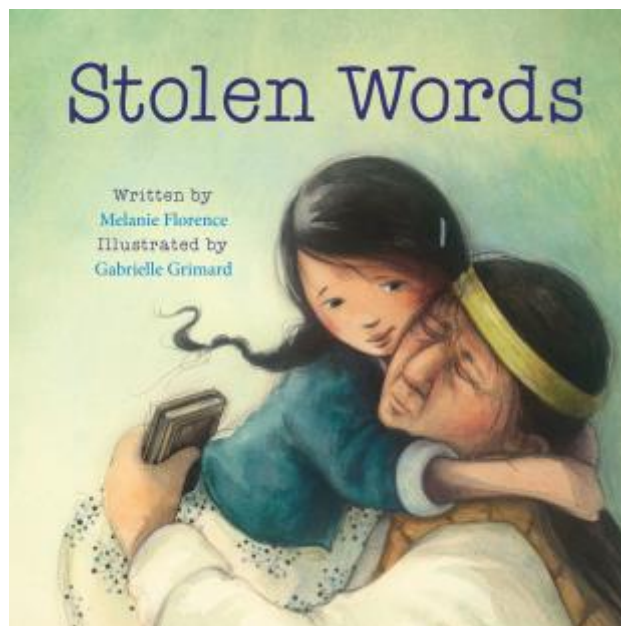
11 - Shi-shi-etko just has four days until she will have to leave her family and everything she knows to attend residential school. She spends her last precious days at home treasuring and appreciating the beauty of her world the dancing sunlight, the tall grass, each shiny rock, the tadpoles in the creek, her grandfather's paddle song. Her mother, father, and grandmother, each in turn, share valuable teachings that they want her to remember. Shi-shi-etko carefully gathers her memories for safekeeping.

### My Heart Fills With Happiness - Monique Gray Smith



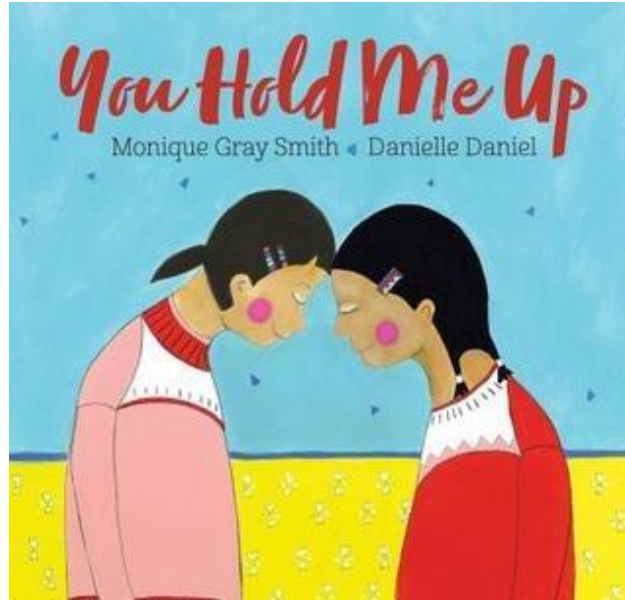
12 - The sun on your face. The smell of warm bannock baking in the oven. Holding the hand of someone you love. What fills your heart with happiness? This beautiful board book, with illustrations from celebrated artist Julie Flett, serves as a reminder for little ones and adults alike to reflect on and cherish the moments in life that bring us joy. International speaker and award-winning author Monique Gray Smith wrote *My Heart Fills with Happiness* to support the wellness of Indigenous children and families, and to encourage young children to reflect on what makes them happy.

### Stolen Words - Melanie Florence



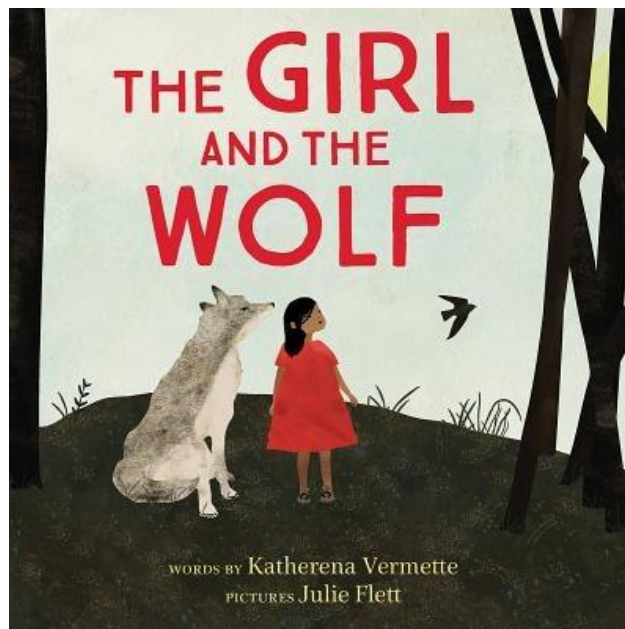
13 - The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. When she asks her grandfather how to say something in his language, Cree, he admits that his language was stolen from him when he was a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandfather find his language again. This sensitive, beautifully illustrated picture book explores the intergenerational impact of Canada's residential school system, which separated young Indigenous children from their families.

#### You Hold Me Up - Monique Gray Smith



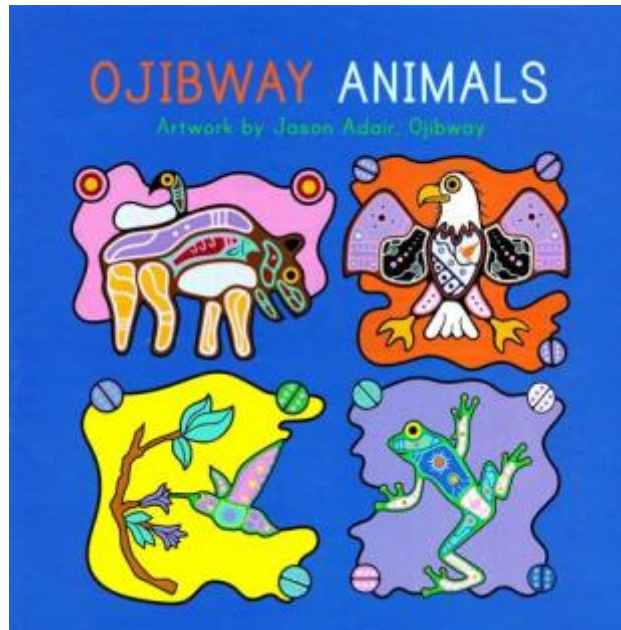
14 - This vibrant picture book, beautifully illustrated by celebrated artist Danielle Daniel, encourages children to show love and support for each other and to consider each other's well-being in their everyday actions. Consultant, international speaker and award-winning author Monique Gray Smith wrote *You Hold Me Up* to prompt a dialogue among young people, their care providers and educators about reconciliation and the importance of the connections children make with their friends, classmates and families. This is a foundational book about building relationships, fostering empathy and encouraging respect between peers, starting with our littlest citizens.

#### The Girl and the Wolf - Katherena Vermette



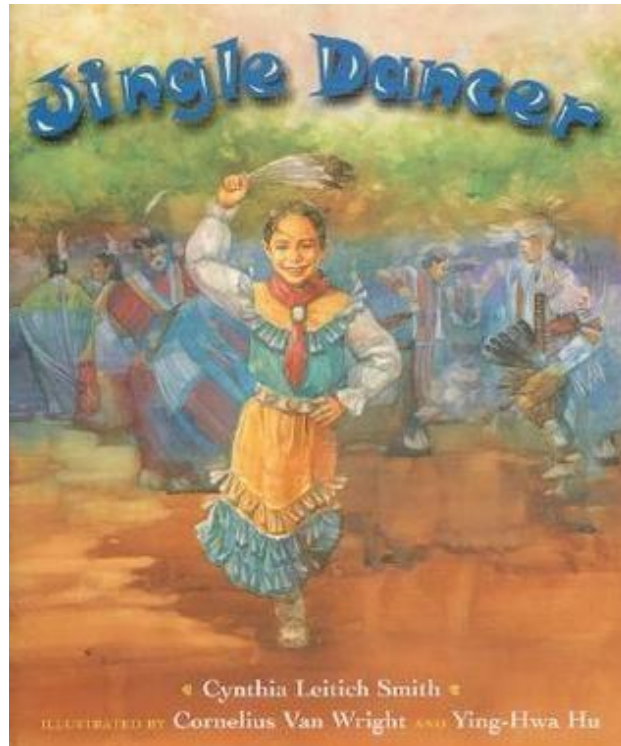
15 - While picking berries with her mother, a little girl wanders too far into the woods. When she realizes she is lost, she begins to panic. A large grey wolf makes a sudden appearance between some distant trees. Using his sense of smell, he determines where she came from and decides to help her. Through a series of questions from the wolf, the little girl realizes she had the knowledge and skill to navigate herself--she just needed to remember that those abilities were there all along

## Ojibway Animals - Jason Adair



16 - Ojibwe artist Jason Adair draws on teachings from his culture and is inspired by the Woodland x-ray art style in the creation of 11 animal and bird images. Eagles fly high above the trees and inspire vision and bring blessings. Turtles live on the land and on the water demonstrating their patience and wisdom. The artist notes that the animals' protective spirits and powers offer us important life lessons. This is an important resource that introduces young children to the interconnectedness of all creation.

## Jingle Dancer - Cynthia Leitich Smith

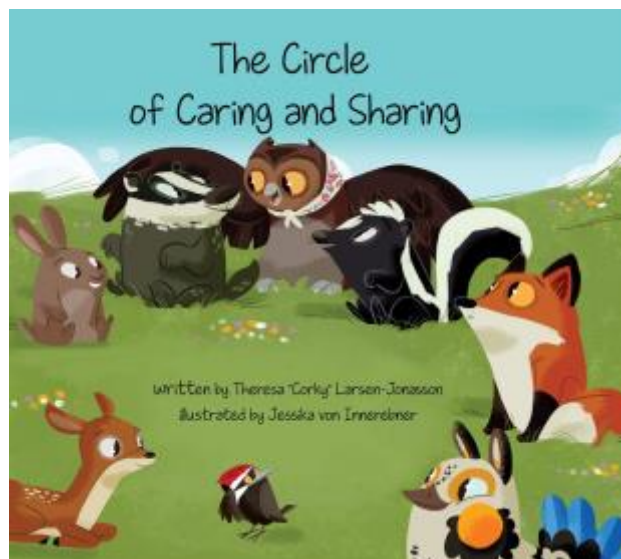


17 - The cone-shaped jingles sewn to Grandma Wolfe's dress sing tink, tink, tink...

Jenna loves the tradition of jingle dancing that has been shared over generations in her family and intertribal community. She hopes to dance at the next powwow.

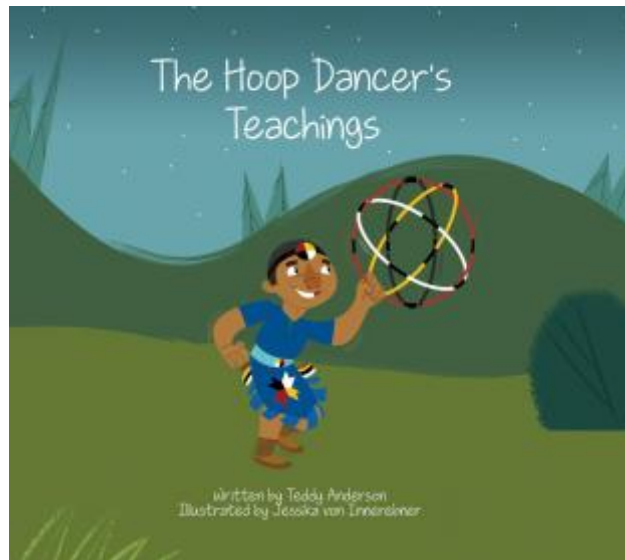
But with the day quickly approaching, she has a problem —how will her dress sing if it has no jingles?

## The Circle of caring and sharing – Theresa Corky Larsen-Jonasson



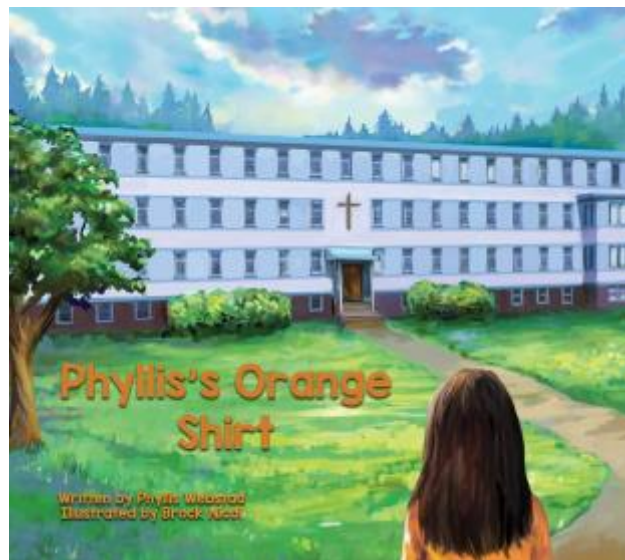
18 - When two foxes, who are best friends, have a fight it upsets the whole community of animals. Kokom the Owl knows just what to do and brings together all the animals and holds a Sharing Circle

## The Hoop Dancers Teachings – Teddy Anderson



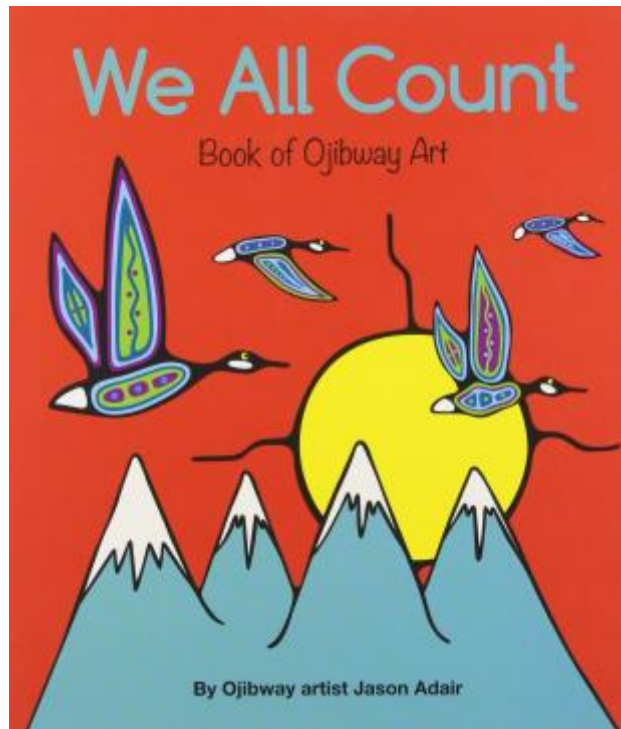
19 - There once was a Hoop Dancer who had many teachings to share about how to live in peace and harmony with others. In this book, Teddy uses the powerful symbols of the Hoop Dance and the Medicine Wheel to show how we can all cooperate and live as one big, human family.

## Phyllis's Orange Shirt – Phyllis Webstad



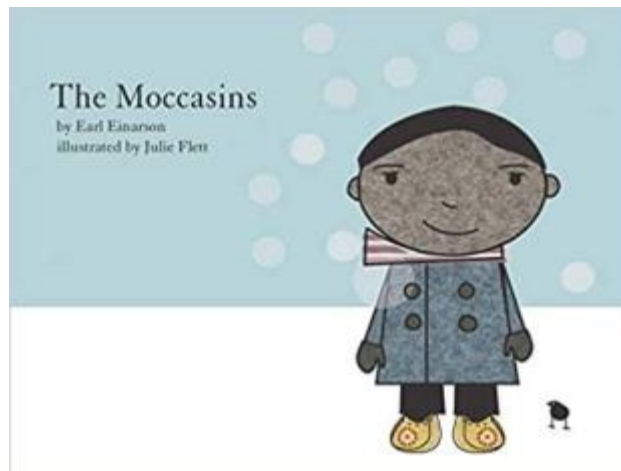
20 - When Phyllis Webstad (nee Jack) turned six, she went to Residential School for the first time. On her first day at school, she wore a shiny orange shirt that her Granny had bought for her, but when she got to the school, it was taken away from her and never returned. This is the true story of Phyllis and her orange shirt. It is also the story of Orange Shirt Day (an important day of remembrance for First Nations and non First Nations Canadians).

## We all count – Jason Adair



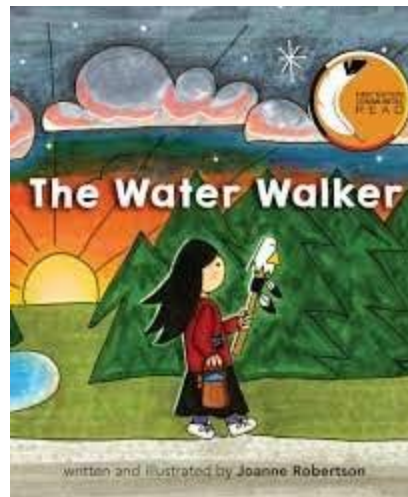
21 - First in a series, this book showcases Ojibway art and culture and teaches children to count in English and Ojibway.

## The Moccasins – Earl Einarson



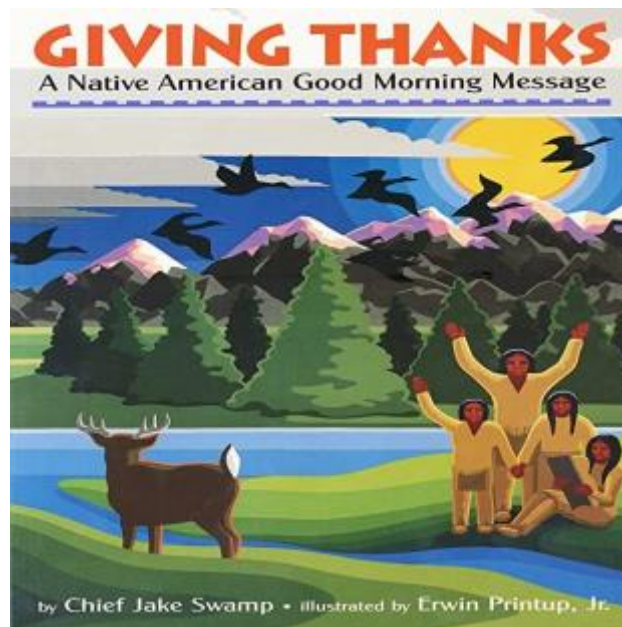
22 - This is an endearing story of a young Aboriginal foster child who is given a special gift by his foster mother. Her gift of warmth and thoughtfulness helps her young foster children by encouraging self-esteem, acceptance and love. Written as a simple story, it speaks of a positive foster experience.

## The Water Walker – Joanne Robertson



23 - *The determined story of an Ojibwe grandmother (nokomis), Josephine Mandamin, and her great love for nibi (water). Nokomis walks to raise awareness of our need to protect nibi for future generations and for all life on the planet. She, along with other women, men and youth, has walked around all the Great Lakes from the four salt waters, or oceans, to Lake Superior. The walks are full of challenges, and by her example she challenges us all to take up our responsibility to protect our water, the giver of life, and to protect our planet for all generations.*

## Giving Thanks – Chief Jake Swamp



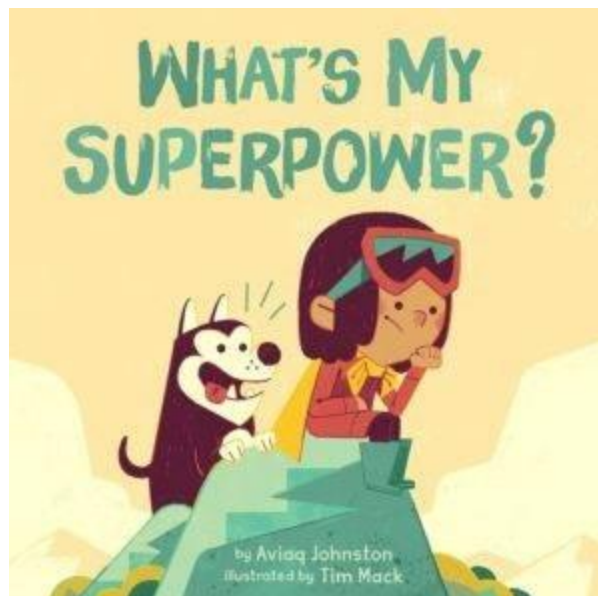
24 - *"Giving Thanks" is a special children's version of the Thanksgiving Address, a message of gratitude that originated with the Native people of upstate New York and Canada and that is still spoken at ceremonial gatherings held by the Iroquois, or Six Nations.*

## Birdsong - Julie Flett



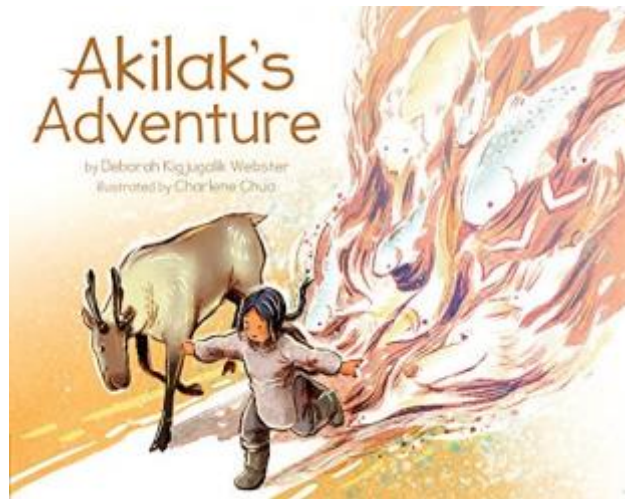
25 - When a young girl moves from the country to a small town, she feels lonely and out of place. But soon she meets an elderly woman next door, who shares her love of arts and crafts. Can the girl navigate the changing seasons and failing health of her new friend? Acclaimed author and artist Julie Flett's textured images of birds, flowers, art, and landscapes bring vibrancy and warmth to this powerful story, which highlights the fulfillment of intergenerational relationships and shared passions.

## What's My Superpower - Aviaq Johnston



26 - When a young girl moves from the country to a small town, she feels lonely and out of place. But soon she meets an elderly woman next door, who shares her love of arts and crafts. Can the girl navigate the changing seasons and failing health of her new friend? Acclaimed author and artist Julie Flett's textured images of birds, flowers, art, and landscapes bring vibrancy and warmth to this powerful story, which highlights the fulfillment of intergenerational relationships and shared passions.

## Akilak's Adventure - Deborah Kigjugalik Webster



*27 - When Akilak must travel a great distance to another camp to gather food, she thinks she will never be able to make it. With a little help from her grandmother's spirit, and her own imagination to keep her entertained, Akilak manages to turn a long journey into an adventure.*

*Even though she at first feels that she will never be able to reach her destination, she keeps her grandmother's assurance that her "destination is not running away; it will be reached eventually" in mind and ends up enjoying the journey that at first seemed so daunting.*