



YJAM Reading List | 2026

Youth Justice and Related Topics

read

FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

readforyouthjustice.org

Memoir / Biographical

Abbott, D. (2013). *They had no voice: My fight for Alabama's forgotten children*. University of Georgia Press.

Baca, J. S. (2001). *A place to stand*. Grove Press.

Baldwin, D. (2021). *To be a problem: A Black woman's survival in the nation's prisons*. The New Press.

Barber, A. (2023). *Fenced in: Fighting for freedom*.

Beah, I. (2007). *A long way gone: Memoirs of a boy soldier*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Betts, D. (2009). *A question of freedom: A memoir of learning, survival, and coming of age in prison*. Avery Publishing Group.

Bostic, B. (2020). *Life goes on inside prison*.

Boyle, G. (2011). *Tattoos on the heart: The power of boundless compassion*. Free Press.

Brown-Long, C. (2019). *Free Cyntoia: My search for redemption in the American prison system*. Atria Books.

Bryant, S. (2025). *Behind Her Eyes: Perspective to Purpose*.

Burton, S., & Roe, C. (2017). *Becoming Ms. Burton: From prison to recovery to leading the fight for incarcerated women*. The New Press.

Davis, H (2016). *Written off: How one man's journey through poverty, disability and delinquency is transforming the juvenile justice system*. Yael Cohen.

Ellis, E. (2023). *Change is possible: I never gave up*. Atmosphere Press.

Faber, E. (2021). *The child in the electric chair: The execution of George Junius Stinney Jr. and the making of a tragedy in the American south*.

Flowers, H. (2014). *Making of a menace, contrition of a man*.

Gonzalez, E. K. (2024). *Hurdles in the Dark*. Roaring Brook Press.

Manuel, I. (2021). *My time will come: A memoir of crime, punishment, hope, and redemption*. Pantheon Books.

Miller, J. (1998). *Last one over the wall*. Ohio State University Press.

Miller, L. (2022). *Jump: My Secret Journey from the Streets to the Boardroom*. William Morrow.

Olivier, R. (2023). *27 Summers: My Journey to Freedom, Forgiveness, and Redemption During My Time in Angola Prison*.

Parker, T. C. (2024). *The man, the message, the mission*.

Reeve, D. W., & Sanchez, D., Jr. (2026). *Gladiator school*.

Rodriguez, L. (1993). *Always running: La vida loca, gang days in L.A.* Curbstone books.

Rojas, B. (2015). *The next day*. Capableness Publishing.

Salaam, Y. (2021). *Better, Not Bitter: Living on Purpose in the Pursuit of Racial Justice*. Grand Central Publishing.

Shakur, A. (1987). *Assata: An autobiography*. Lawrence Hill Books.

Shakur, Y. B. (2013). *Detroit's native*.

Memoir / Biographical (continued)

St. Germain, J. (2017). *A stone of hope: A memoir*. Harper.

Thomas, P. (1967). *Down these mean streets*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Venable, D. (2025). *A Beautiful Pain: The Story of a Violent Juvenile Offender Sentenced to Life in Prison at 16 and His Transformation into a Community Advocate*.

Wilson, C., & Witter, B. (2019). *The master plan: My journey from life in prison to a life of purpose*. G.P. Putnam's Sons.



Young Adult Literature

Brooks, N. (2023). *Promise boys*. Henry Holt and Co.

Couvson, M. W. (2023). *Charisma's turn: A graphic novel*. The New Press

Dupuis, J. K. (2016). *I am not a number*. Second Story Press.

Hale, C. (2019). *Todos iguales / All equal: Un corrido de Lemon Grove / A Ballad of Lemon Grove*. Lee & Low books.

Jackson, T. D. (2018). *Monday's Not Coming*. Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers. ***

Johnson, K. (2023). *Invisible son*. Random House Books for Young Readers.

Johnson, K. (2020). *This is my America*. Random House Books for Young Readers. ***

Lockington, M. J. (2019). *For Black Girls Like Me*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Lockington, M. J. (2023). *Forever is now*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Medina, T. (2017). *I am Alfonso Jones*. Tu Books, an imprint of Lee & Low Books Inc.

Myers, W. D. (1999). *Monster*. HarperCollins. ***

Myers, W. D. (2010). *Lockdown*. HarperCollins.

Perez, J. A. (2024). *'Till ink meets paper: Poems for Guendalina...my mommy*. Influentialbooks.

Reynolds, J. (2017). *Long way down*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books.***

Reynolds, J. (2024). *Miles Morales suspended*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books.

Reynolds, J., & Kiely, B. (2015). *All American boys*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. ***

Rivera, J. (2007). *Forever my lady*. Urban Books.

Sachar, L. (1998). *Holes*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Slater, D. (2017). *The 57 bus: A true story of two teenagers and the crime that changed their lives*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Stone, N. (2020). *Dear justyce*. Crown Books for Young Readers. ***

Tahir, S. (2022). *All my rage*. Razorbill.

Ten Boom, C. (1971). *THE HIDING PLACE*. Chosen Books.

Thomas, A. (2017). *The hate u give*. Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers. ***

Thomas, A. (2021). *Concrete Rose*. Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers.

Thomas, K. A. (2023). *Every kid's guide to the juvenile justice system*. NYU Press.

Tison, A. (2023). *Saints of the household*. Farrar Straus Giroux. '

Zoboi, I. & Salaam, Y. (2020). *Punching the air*. Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers..

*** Book titles designated with three asterisks are among the most challenged books on the American Library Association's listing at: <https://www.ala.org/news/2026/04/american-library-association-releases-2025-most-challenged-books-list-national-library>.

Children of Incarcerated Parents, Family Members and Loved Ones

AGES 3-8

Beaty, D. (2013) *Knock, Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Kaba, M. & Royal, B. (2019) *Missing Daddy*. Haymarket Books.

Sesame Workshop. (n.d.). *In My Family — Storybook*. Retrieved May 6, 2026, from <https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/in-my-family-storybook/>

Stanglin, J. (2007). *Mami, Que Es Una Carcel/What is Jail, Mommy?*. Lifevest Publishing, Inc.

AGES 5-10

Brooks, D (2015)' *Kennedy's Big Visit*. Archway Publishing.

Ellis, S. & Tapper, K. (2016). *Almost Like Visiting*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

Greenwood, S. (2022). *My Brother is Away*. Random House Studio.

Harriman J.L & Flye, K.A. (2011). *Waiting for Daddy*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

Hollins, W.Q & Kitty, K. (2019). *Anna's Test*. Independently published.

Woodson, J. & Ransome, J. (2015) *Visiting Day*. Nancy Paulsen Books

AGES 11+

Giles, C.D. (2023) *Not an Easy Win*. Random House Books for Young Readers.

Marks, J. (2021) *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. Quill Tree Books

Paterson, K. (2015) *The Same Stuff as Stars*. Clarion Books.

Woodson, J. (2020). *Harbor Me* Nancy Paulsen Books,

NON FICTION

Birtha, B. & Kastelic, M. (2017). *Far Apart, Close in Heart: Being a Family When a Loved One is Incarcerated*. Albert Whitman and Company.

Young A. (2018). *Teen Guide to Living with Incarcerated Parents: A Self-Help Book for Coping During an Age of Mass Incarceration*. BookBaby.

Zehr, H. (2010). *What Will Happen to Me: Every Night Approximately Three Million Children Go to Bed With a Parent in Prison or Jail*. Good Books.

The Osborne Association has compiled a comprehensive list of books by and for children of incarcerated parents, family members and loved ones. The list is downloadable and available here: https://www.osborneny.org/assets/files/2020_10_2_NYCIP-Book-List.pdf



Parents

Henry, J. S. (2016). *Help! My kid’s been arrested: A parent’s guide to navigating the juvenile justice system.* The New Press.

Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother’s hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies.* Central Recovery Press.

Winfrey, O., & Perry, B. D. (2021). *What happened to you?: Conversations on trauma, resilience, and healing.* Flatiron Books.

Poetry

Acevedo, E. (2018). *The poet X.* HarperTeen. ***

Betts, D. (2019). *Felon: Poems.* W.W. Norton & Company.

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop. (2015). *The untold story of the real me: Young voices from prison.* Shout Mouse Press, Inc.

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop. (2020). *They called me 299-359: Poetry by the incarcerated youth of Free Minds.* Shout Mouse Press, Inc.

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop. (2021). *When you hear me (you hear us): Voices on youth incarceration.* Shout Mouse Press, Inc.

Salinas, R. (1999). *Un trip through the mind jail & other writings.* Arte Público Press.

Smith, C. (2016). *Counting descent.* Write Bloody Publishing.

Fiction

Brown, C. (1965). *Manchild in the promised land.* MacMillan & Co.

Due, T. (2023). *The reformatory: A novel.* Saga Press.

Reed, V. (2021). *The car thief: A boy’s perilous journey through the juvenile justice system.* Applestein Training Resources.

Whitehead, C. (2019). *The nickel boys: A novel.* Doubleday.



Non-Fiction

Bernstein, N. (2016). *Burning down the house: The end of juvenile prison.* The New Press.

Bernstein, N. (2025). *In our future we are free: The dismantling of the youth prison.* The New Press.

Bonilla, F. P., & Noguera, P. A. (Eds.). (2011). *Latino young men and boys in search of justice: Testimonies.* University of Illinois Press.

Burns, S. (2012). *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City’s Most Infamous Crimes.* Hodder & Stoughton.

Butterfield, F. (1996). *All God’s children: The Bosket family and the American tradition of violence.* Alfred A. Knopf.

Chávez-García, M. (2012). *States of delinquency: Race and science in the making of California’s juvenile justice system.* University of California Press.

Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform, Committee on Law and Justice, & Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Eds.). (2013). *Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Cox, A. (2018). *Trapped in a vice: The consequences of confinement for young people.* Rutgers University Press.

Cunneen, C. & Tauri, J. (2016). *Indigenous Criminology.* Policy Press.

Drinan, C (2018). *The War on Kids : How American Juvenile Justice Lost Its Way.* Oxford University Press.

Ecenbarger, W. (2012). *Kids for cash.* The New Press.

Feld, B. C. (2013). *Kids, cops and confessions: Inside the interrogation room. In Kids, Cops, and Confessions.* New York University Press.

Feld, B. (2017). *The evolution of the juvenile court: Race, politics, and the criminalizing of juvenile justice.* New York University Press.

Flores, J. (2016). *Caught up: Girls, surveillance, and wraparound incarceration.* University of California Press.

Forman, Jr., J. (2017). *Locking up our own.* Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Garbarino, J. (2000). *Lost boys: Why our sons turn violent and how we can save them.* Free Press.

Grisso, T., & Schwartz, R. G. (Eds.). (2000). *Youth on trial: A developmental perspective on juvenile justice.* University of Chicago Press.

Guttman, J. (2016). *Kids in jail: A portrait of life without mercy.* Booklocker.com.

Henning, K. N. (2021). *The rage of innocence: How America criminalizes black youth.* Pantheon Books.

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Non-Fiction

Hobbs, J. (2023). *Children of the State: Stories of Survival and Hope in the Juvenile Justice System*. Scribner.

Humes, E. (1996). *No matter how loud I shout: A year in the life of juvenile court*. Simon & Schuster.

Kimmerle, E. (2022). *We carry their bones: The search for justice at the Dozier School for Boys*. William Morrow.

Kotlowitz, A. (1992). *There are no children here*. Doubleday.

Nellis, A. (2015). *A return to justice*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Platt, A. M. (1972). *The child savers: The invention of delinquency*. University of Chicago Press.

Rios, V. M. (2011). *Punished: Policing the lives of black and latino boys*. New York University Press.

Ross, R. (2017). *Juvie talk: Unlocking the language of juvenile justice*. The Image of Justice.

Scott, E. & Steinberg, L. (2008). *Rethinking juvenile justice*. Harvard University Press.

Singer, S. I. (2014). *America's safest city: Delinquency and modernity in suburbia (Vol. 3)*. NYU Press.

Spinak, J. (2023). *The end of family court: How abolishing the court brings justice to children and families*. NYU Press.

Stockley, G. (2017). *Black boys burning: The 1959 fire at the Arkansas Negro Boys Industrial School*. University Press of Mississippi.

Ward, G. K. (2012). *The black child savers: Racial democracy and juvenile justice*. University of Chicago Press.

Libraries help build empathy, reduce stigma, and strengthen communities.

Related Topics

ACTIVISM

Davis, A. Y. (2016). *Freedom is a constant struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement*. Haymarket Books.

Jayadev, R. (2024). *Protect your people: How ordinary families are using participatory defense to challenge mass incarceration*. The New Press.

Kaba, M. (2021). *We Do This 'til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*. Haymarket Books.

Kaba, M. (2021). *No more police: A case for abolition*. The New Press.

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

ADOLESCENCE

Boyle, G. (2010). *Tattoos on the heart: The power of boundless compassion*. Free Press.

Canada, G. (1998). *Reaching up for manhood*. Beacon Press.

Coates, T.-N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. Spiegel & Grau. ***

Hartman, S. (2019). *Wayward lives, beautiful experiments: Intimate histories of riotous black girls, troublesome women, and queer radicals*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Pipher, M. & Gilliam, S. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. Putnam.

Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of opportunity: Lessons from the new science of adolescence*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Alexander, M.. (2012). *The new jim crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press. ***

Davis, A. Y. (2003). *Are prisons obsolete?* Seven Stories Press.

Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California*. University of California Press.

Karakatsanis, A. (2025). *Copaganda: How police and the media manipulate our news*. The New Press.

Kessler, L. (2014). *Free: Two years, six lives, and the long journey home*. Sourcebooks.

Muhammad, K. (2010). *The Condemnation of blackness: Race, crime, and the making of modern urban America*. Harvard University Press.

Norris, Z. (2020). *We keep us safe: Building secure, just, and inclusive communities*. The New Press.

Schiraldi, V. (2023). *Mass supervision: Probation, parole, and the illusion of safety and freedom*. The New Press.

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Related Topics

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Senghor, S. (2016). *Writing my wrongs: Life, death, and redemption in an American prison*. Convergent Books.

Ward, J. (2017). *Sing, unburied, sing*. Scribner.

FAMILY REGULATION

Nazario, S. (2006). *Enrique’s journey*. Random House.

Roberts, D. (2022). *Torn apart: How the child welfare system destroys black families—and how abolition can build a safer world*. Basic Books.

Roberts, D. (2002). *Shattered bonds: The color of child welfare*. Civitas Books.

GUN VIOLENCE

Canada, G. (1995). *Fist, Knife, Stick, Gun*. Beacon Press.

Kotlowitz, A. (2019). *An American summer: Love & death from Chicago*. Doubleday.

PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Ball, J., & Kaba, M. (2025). *Prisons must fall*. Haymarket Books.

Tylek, B. (2025). *The prison industry: How it works and who profits*. The New Press.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Rosado, F. (2024). *Justice from the inside up: A restorative justice education facilitator’s manual*. Living Justice Press.

Sered, D. (2021). *Until we reckon*. The New Press.

Valandra, E. C. (Ed.). (2020). *Colorizing restorative justice: Voicing our realities*. Living Justice Press.

SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

Couvson, M. W. (2018). *Pushout: The criminalization of black girls in schools*. The New Press.

Ewing, E. (2025). *Original sins: The (mis)education of Black and Native Children and the construction of American racism*. One World

Kupchick, A. (2025). *Suspended Education: School Punishment and the Legacy of Racial Injustice*. NYU Press.

Morris, M. W. (2019). *Sing a rhythm, dance a blues: Education for the liberation of Black and Brown girls*. The New Press.

Kidder, T. (1989). *Among schoolchildren*. Houghton Mifflin.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: children in America’s schools*. Crown.

*** Book titles designated with three asterisks are among the most challenged books on the American Library Association’s listing at: <https://www.ala.org/news/2026/04/american-library-association-releases-2025-most-challenged-books-list-national-library>.



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