WESTERN NEW YORK
Family
M·A·G·A·Z·I·N·E
VOLUME 43, #7
SEPTEMBER 2026
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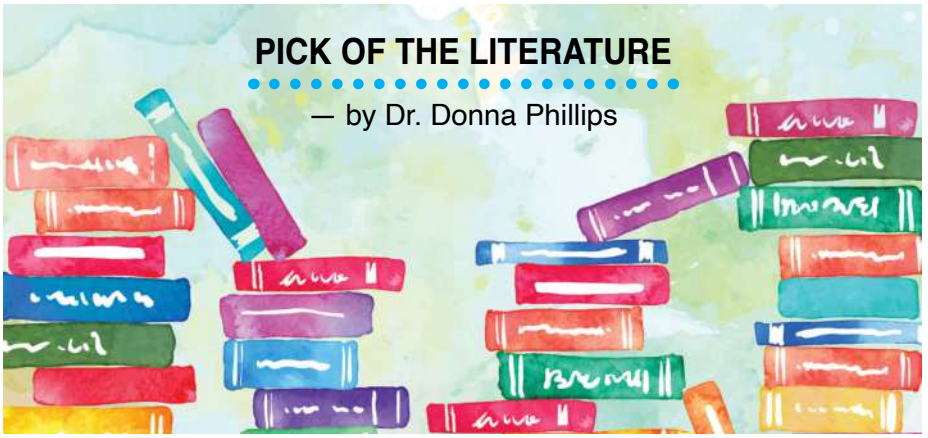


10 SKILLS Every Student Needs This School Year

Ways to Help the New Kid in School

Are You and Your Child Middle School Ready?

INSIDE: The Fit Family • Choosing Childcare • Wellness Choices

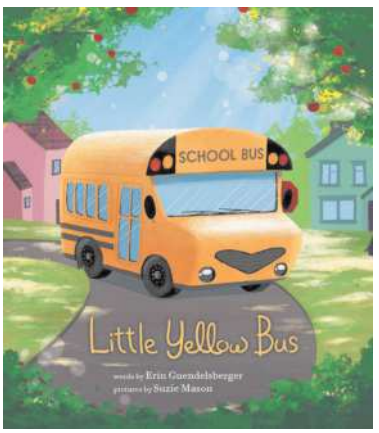


PICK OF THE LITERATURE

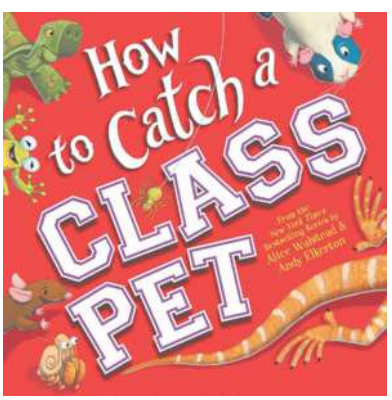
— by Dr. Donna Phillips



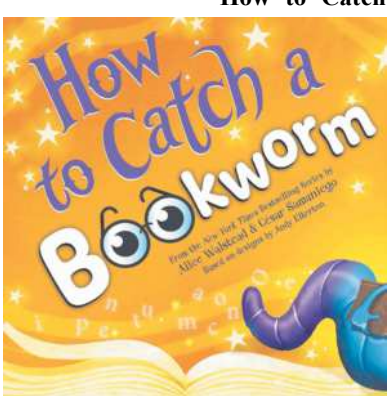
Hi Ho! Hi Ho! It's off to school we go…again! Summer is over and school is starting! Time to unpack the beach bag and pack the backpack! And what should you pack it with? Books, of course! Here are some of my favorite picks to get you and your family ready for school and ready to read!



Everyone has a few butterflies in their stomach on the first day of school, but who would imagine that a little school bus might have the same feeling? **Little Yellow Bus** (Sourcebooks, Naperville, 2026, $17.99), written by Erin Guendelsberger and illustrated by Suzie Mason, is excited for the first day of school, but he is nervous to be taking children to school for the first time. The more he thought about it, the more his imagination ran away with him. While his parents tried to reassure him, his mother was the one who suggested that instead of thinking about what could go wrong, he should imagine what could go right! With this new perspective, he turned his attention to the steps he would go through as he went through his day successfully and safely taking his charges to and from school. This is a wonderful book to share with children who might be struggling with anxiety and fear about starting a new school year. Perhaps creating a list of what could go right just might help them like it helped Yellow Bus.



One of the things that children might look forward to on the first day of school is meeting the class pet. **How to Catch a Class Pet** (Sourcebooks, Naperville, 2026, $17.99) by Alice Walstead and Andy Ellerton is a crazy welcome to the first day of school. This fun rhyming story takes us on romp through the school and the playground looking for the pets that got away. The description of each pet helps us search for them, hidden within the pages. This book comes with its own imaginative soft pet that's just the right size to fit in a backpack and that might be a nice comfort to take on the first day of school. This imaginative story is a sure way to get students to look forward to the first day of school.



If your child liked searching for the lost class pets, they will certainly enjoy **How to Catch a Bookworm** (Sourcebooks, Naperville, 2026, $12.99) by Alice Walstead and Cesar Samaniego and designed by Andy Ellerton. What is a Bookworm and where do you find them? What makes them so special? This fun rhyming story takes us on a tour of the library in search of this illusive creature. In the process, we learn what the library has to offer and what books can do for us. It might be fun to create your own Bookworm hunt at your local library. It would be a great way to get your child familiar with the library and you might even find some fun books to read in the process.

Some children feel they are different. Some children are told they are different. Now we are finding different can be a gift. Most of us understand the idea of multiple intelligences that consists of eight primary types: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. We are now learning more about the neurodivergent brain. **All Brains Welcome** (Sourcebooks, Naperville, 2026, $14.99), written by Johanna Payton and illustrated by Olga Popova, introduces us to Autism, Dysgraphia, Down Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Synesthesia, Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Tourette Syndrome, Dyspraxia, and the neurotypical brain. This book is full of interesting information and scientific and historical details, yet it is easy to understand as it explores and celebrates these different brains.

Starting a new school year is exciting for children, parents, and teachers but it can also be scary and stressful. Books are a wonderful way to help everyone prepare for this yearly event. Reading books together also creates ritual, closeness, consistency, and security. It can also provide reading role models and an opportunity to talk about stories and explore curiosities. Emotional and intellectual connections are also essential for learning and for success in school.

Dr. Donna Phillips is an associate professor in the College of Education at Niagara University where her specialty is literacy and children's literature. She lives on Grand Island, NY and is the mother of two adult children and the grandmother of one.