Trouble Fiction
Realistic-Fiction stories of children facing personal struggles, finding their identity or overcoming challenges.

All of the following books are owned by the Fair Lawn Public Library and are shelved in the fiction section by the author’s last name.

Alexander, Kwame  
**The Crossover**  
Level X

Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.

Applegate, Katherine  
**The One and Only Ivan**  
Level S

When Ivan, a gorilla who has lived for years in a down-and-out circus-themed mall, meets Ruby, a baby elephant that has been added to the mall, he decides that he must find her a better life.

Bauer, Joan  
**Almost Home**  
Level W

Sixth-grader Sugar and her mother lose their beloved house and experience the harsh world of homelessness.

Benjamin, Ali  
**The Thing about Jellyfish**  
Level Y

Twelve-year-old Suzy Swanson wades through her intense grief over the loss of her best friend by investigating the rare jellyfish she is convinced was responsible for her friend's death.
Bradley, Kimberly  
**The War that Saved My Life**  
Level Z

A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.

Buyea, Rob  
**Because of Mr. Terupt**  
Level Y

Seven fifth-graders at Snow Hill School in Connecticut relate how their lives are changed for the better by "rookie teacher" Mr. Terupt.

Cheng, Jack  
**See you in the Cosmos**  
Level

Eleven-year-old Alex Petroski, along with his dog, Carl Sagan, makes big discoveries about his family on a road trip and he records it all on a golden iPod he intends to launch into space.

Draper, Sharon  
**Out of My Mind**  
Level S

Considered by many to be mentally retarded, a brilliant, impatient fifth-grader with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time.
Draper, Sharon  
**Stella by Starlight**  
Level V

When a burning cross set by the Klan causes panic and fear in 1932 Bumblebee, North Carolina, fifth-grader Stella must face prejudice and find the strength to demand change in her segregated town.

Erskine, Kathryn  
**Mockingbird**  
Level W

Ten-year-old Caitlin, who has Asperger's Syndrome, struggles to understand emotions, show empathy, and make friends at school, while at home she seeks closure by working on a project with her father.

Gantos, Jack  
**Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key**  
Level T

To the constant disappointment of his mother and his teachers, Joey has trouble paying attention or controlling his mood swings when his prescription medications wear off and he starts getting worked up and acting wired.

Graff, Lisa  
**Absolutely Almost**  
Level V

Ten-year-old Albie has never been the smartest, tallest, best at gym, greatest artist, or most musical in his class, as his parents keep reminding him, but new nanny Calista helps him uncover his strengths and take pride in himself.
Graff, Lisa

The Thing about Georgia

Georgie's dwarfism causes problems, but he could always rely on his parents, his best friend, and classmate Jeanie the Meanie's teasing, until a surprising announcement, a new boy in school, and a class project shake things up.

Griffin, Paul

When Friendship Followed Me Home

Seventh-grader Ben, always an outsider, is led into a deep friendship with Halley, who is being treated for cancer, by the special dog he and his adoptive mother take in.

Harrington, Karen

Mayday

Twelve-year-old Wayne Kovok loses his uncle to war and his voice to a plane crash in the same year and must learn to speak up as he navigates relationships with his father, grandfather, and new friend, Denny Rosenblat.

Hunt, Lynda

Fish in a Tree

Ally's greatest fear is that everyone will find out she is as dumb as they think she is because she still doesn't know how to read.
Kelly, Erin  
**Blackbird Fly**  
Level Y

Bullied at school, eighth-grader Apple, a Filipino American who loves the music of the Beatles, decides to change her life by learning how to play the guitar.

Khan, Hena  
**Amina’s Voice**  
Level S

A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community.

Lord, Cynthia  
**Rules**  
Level R

Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, twelve-year-old Catherine longs for a normal existence but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a young paraplegic.

Nicholls, Sally  
**Ways to Live Forever**  
Level U

Eleven-year-old Sam McQueen, who has leukemia, writes a book during the last three months of his life, in which he tells about what he would like to accomplish, how he feels, and things that have happened to him.

Palacio, R.J.  
**Wonder**  
Level V

August Pullman is not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. He was born with a craniofacial abnormality, a genetic defect that caused his facial features to be severely deformed. His life has never been ‘normal’. Despite his differences August and his parents decide to transition him from home school to a private school now that he is entering fifth grade.
Philbrick, W.R.  
**Freak the Mighty**  
Level W

At the beginning of eighth grade, learning disabled Max and his new friend Freak, whose birth defect has affected his body but not his brilliant mind, find that when they combine forces they make a powerful team.

Reynolds, Jason  
**Ghost**  
Level S

Running. That’s all that Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But never for a track team. Nope, his game has always been ball. But when Ghost impulsively challenges an elite sprinter to a race – and wins- the Olympic medalist track coach sees he has something: crazy natural talent. Thing is, Ghost has something else: a lot of anger, and a past that he tries to outrun. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed and meld with the team, or will his past finally catch up to him?

Selznick, Brian  
**Wonderstruck**  
Level W

Having lost his mother and his hearing in a short time, twelve-year-old Ben leaves his Minnesota home in 1977 to seek the father he never knew in New York City, and meets there Rose, who is also longing for something missing from her life. Ben's story is told in words; Rose's in pictures.

Sloan, Holly  
**Counting by 7s**  
Level X

Twelve-year-old genius and outsider Willow Chance must figure out how to connect with other people and find a surrogate family for herself after her parents are killed in a car accident.
Spinelli, Jerry  
Crash  
Level V
Seventh-grader John "Crash" Coogan has always been comfortable with his tough, aggressive behavior, until his relationship with an unusual Quaker boy and his grandfather's stroke make him consider the meaning of friendship and the importance of family.

Vawter, Vince  
Paperboy  
Level Z
When an eleven-year-old boy takes over a friend's newspaper route in July, 1959, in Memphis, his debilitating stutter makes for a memorable month.

Wolk, Lauren  
Wolf Hollow  
Level
Twelve-year-old Annabelle must learn to stand up for what's right in the face of a manipulative and violent new bully who targets people Annabelle cares about, including a homeless World War I veteran.

Woodson, Jacqueline  
Locomotion  
Level V
In a series of poems, eleven-year-old Lonnie writes about his life, after the death of his parents, separated from his younger sister, living in a foster home, and finding his poetic voice at school.