



RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

"I am a story. So are you. So is everyone.
My story begins the same way yours does."
- Julius Lester, *Let's Talk About Race*

STORIES MATTER

The mission statement of Neighbors United – Undoing Racism is, “Undo racism by providing opportunities for all people to be treated with dignity and respect through education and communication.” Members of Neighbors United and East Central College’s Civic Engagement Committee have organized “Stories Matter,” a campaign to provide books with diverse themes and characters to libraries and families throughout our communities along with discussion guides and support to facilitate conversations about race, ethnicity, and identity.

Our first step is to raise funds to purchase a set of books (see the list on the reverse side) for each branch of the Scenic Regional Library system and the Washington Public Library. From there, we hope to raise funds to donate books to school libraries (K – 12) and families, while engaging in community- and empathy-building discussions and activities every step of the way.

For more information, contact Leigh Kolb at leigh.kolb@eastcentral.edu. Follow Stories Matter, Neighbors United – Undoing Racism, Civic Engagement at ECC, and Stories Matter on Facebook.



"When there are enough books available that can act as both mirrors and windows for all our children, they will see that we can celebrate both our differences and our similarities, because together they are what make us all human."
- Rudine Sims Bishop, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors"

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Author/Illustrator</u>	<u>Scenic Call Number</u>
<i>The Skin You Live In</i>	Michael Tyler and David Lee Csicsko	E TYL (E-book also available)
<i>We're Different, We're the Same</i>	Bobbi Kates	J 611 KAT
<i>Whoever You Are</i>	Mem Fox and Leslie Staub	J 305.8 FOX
<i>Let's Talk About Race</i>	Julius Lester	J 305.8099 LES
<i>Two Friends: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass</i>	Dean Robbins, Selina Alko and Sean Qualls	E ROB
<i>The Case for Loving</i>	Selina Alko and Sean Qualls	J 306.846 ALK
<i>Shades of People</i>	Shelly Rotner	E RO1
<i>Yo! Yes!</i>	Christopher Raschka	E RAS
<i>Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation</i>	Duncan Tonatiuh	J 379.2 TON (E-video and E-audio also available)
<i>We March</i>	Shane W. Evans	E EVA
<i>My Nose, Your Nose</i>	Melanie Walsh	E WAL
<i>Ten Little Fingers, Ten Little Toes</i>	Mem Fox	E FOX
<i>My People</i>	Langston Hughes and Charles R. Smith Jr.	J 811.52 HUG
<i>Brick by Brick</i>	Charles R. Smith, Jr. and Floyd Cooper	J 975.302 SMI
<i>Rosa</i>	Nikki Giovanni and Bryan Collier	J 323.092 GIO

WHAT WE KNOW

FACTS ON KIDS AND RACE

Humans are built to be discerning. We will never fail to notice race.

WE KNOW THAT...

- Babies as young as 6 months stare longer at a face from a racial group different than their own. (Phyllis Katz, 2000---2010)
- Children as young as 3 make distinctions based on race, even when race is not discussed (Phyllis Katz, 2000---2010) and start to prefer and ascribe positive attributes to their own racial group more often (Rebecca Bigler, 1993)
- By age 5, children see race as a major point of difference or distinction, even when it is not discussed. (Phyllis Katz, 2000---2010)
- By age 7, children can accurately reflect social status bias and will make choices or judgments based on who they perceive as having more power or privilege. (Bigler, Averhart, & Liben, 2003)
- White children as young as 7 demonstrate that they believe blacks experience less pain than whites. (Rebecca Dore, 2014)

YET...

- Research of family habits indicates that the vast majority of white families never or almost never talk about race at home. The majority of whites avoid mentions of race altogether, especially in mixed racial company. (Journal of Marriage and Family, 2007)
- When we don't talk about race with our kids, they fill in the blanks, extrapolating from an often inequitable and segregated existence filled with racial messages. (Phyllis Katz, 2000---2010) (Brigitte Vittrup, 2006)
- One study showed that when white children of white parents (who intentionally enrolled in a study about children's racial attitudes) were asked "Do your parents like black people?" 14 percent said "no, they don't," and 38 percent said "I don't know." Almost 90 percent of the enrolled parents were very reluctant or refused to talk directly about race with their children. (Brigitte Vittrup, 2006)

AND...

- Even when kids are told that people are all the same, white kids continue to demonstrate stronger racial biases than children of other groups. (Schutts & Olsen, 2011)
- Contrary to popular belief, Millennials only have minimally less stated racial bias than the generations ahead of them. (Sean McElwee, 2012)
- Despite good intentions, whites that avoid talking about race in mixed racial company often appear more suspicious to people of color. (Michael Norton, 2006)

BEST WAYS TO DECREASE BIAS

The good news is that we know how to decrease prejudice.

STUDIES ALSO SHOW THAT:

- Explicit conversation about race improves racial attitudes across groups (Rebecca Bigler, 1995---2010)
- Teaching about the country's history of bias and discrimination is the most effective technique for decreasing bias (Hughes, Bigler & Levy, 2007)
- Conversations with less---prejudiced individuals is likely to lower one's own bias (Aboud & Doyle, 1996)
- Even slightly more exposure to other racial groups, even through children's books, helps to counteract bias and discrimination (Crisp & Turner, 2009) (Krista Aronson, 2014)

IT'S UP TO US TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY HABITS AND POSITIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR DISCUSSING DIFFERENCE AND RACE AT HOME.

About We Stories:

VISION

We envision a St. Louis region where all families, regardless of race, have the opportunity to thrive.

MISSION

We Stories uses the power of children's literature to create conversation, change and hope in St. Louis, and a stronger, more equitable and inclusive future for all.

<http://www.westories.org/#welcome>

<http://www.westories.org/what---we---know---1/#what---we---know>

Teaching Young Children about Race

A Guide for Parents and Teachers

By Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards

Adults sometimes ask: Aren't prejudice, discrimination, and anti-bias adult issues? Why bring children into it? In one sense, these *are* adult issues. Adults have the power to create, to teach, to maintain bias—and to eliminate it. In another sense, because the realities of prejudice and discrimination begin to affect children's development early, it *is* developmentally appropriate to address them in our work with young children.

Young children need caring adults to help them construct a positive sense of self and a respectful understanding of others. They need adults to help them begin to navigate and resist the harmful impact of prejudice and discrimination. A person's early childhood years lay the foundation for a developmental and experiential journey that continues into adulthood. With appropriate adult guidance, this foundation will be a strong one, providing the base for the next stages of healthy development and the skills a person needs to thrive and succeed in a complex, diverse world.

Anti-bias education is an integral part of the “bricks and mortar” of emotional well-being and social competence, as well as an emotional foundation upon which children fully develop their cognitive capacities. A healthy sense of self requires that children know and like who they are without feeling superior to others. Understanding and liking one's own personal and social identities open up the possibilities of building caring connections with others. Thinking critically about stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination takes away barriers to comfortable and respectful interactions with a wide range of people and gives children a tool to resist negative messages about their identities. Strong cognitive development is also enhanced when children develop curiosity, openness to multiple perspectives, and critical-thinking skills.

Strategies for learning about physical differences and similarities

Creating a rich anti-bias learning environment sets the stage for discussion and activities about racial and other physical differences and similarities. The richer the environment, the more likely children will ask questions, even in classrooms where the staff and children come from similar racial backgrounds.

In all activities, highlight that physical diversity among people is desirable, and that all colors, shades, and shapes of people are beautiful. Talk about differences in a tone of delight and interest. Create a vocabulary that encourages children to look at themselves and others and admire their sameness *and* their uniqueness. Just as we do not wait until a child asks questions about how to read before planning how to provide a range of literacy learning opportunities, anti-bias education is the teacher's responsibility, not the child's, to initiate.

Caution—Never single out one specific child when you do activities about the physical characteristics linked to racial identity. Every activity should be about *all* of the children, as everyone has a racial identity. Moreover, doing activities about all children reinforces that

differences and similarities can be found within each racial identity group as well as across groups.

- **Exploring skin color, hair, and eyes**

Children are active observers of physical characteristics. As they become familiar with some of their own features and those of their classmates, help them to have vocabulary and ideas to understand sameness and difference. There are many ways to involve children in discovering similarities and differences among themselves, their teachers, and their families.

- **Focus on children's confusion about their own skin color**

If, when you invite the children to make self-portraits, a child chooses colors that do not correspond to his actual skin, eye, or hair coloring, consider gently encouraging the child to choose the color closest to his skin color.

- **Expanding awareness of racial similarities and differences**

After helping children become aware that the people within their family are alike and different, it is important to expand their knowledge and awareness to groups of people beyond those in the classroom and neighborhood. As children grow, they move into ever wider and more diverse settings, and we want them to be open to and respectful of all kinds of people they may encounter.

Fostering critical thinking and respectful relationships

Positive and accurate learning experiences about human differences and similarities help to give children a foundation for resisting incorrect and harmful messages about themselves and others. Preschoolers are ready to begin thinking critically about the accuracy and fairness of the information and images they encounter. They also have the capacity to use their developing empathy to understand that unfair behavior hurts people and can learn respectful ways of interacting with others. Teachers can use the following strategies to promote young children's development of these understandings and competencies.

- Cultivate children's empathy and ways to deal with the hurt of stereotyping. Read books that depict children experiencing unfair treatment based on their racial identity.
- Tell persona doll stories about a discriminatory incident between dolls, engaging children's empathy and problem-solving skills.
- Intentionally plan activities to counter potential overgeneralizations or existing stereotypes in the children's general environment.
- Support children as they demonstrate awareness of stereotyping.
- Engage children in group action. It is empowering when we help children take something that is "unfair" into something "fair." Sometimes this involves addressing personal conflict, helping a child speak up for another child. But it is particularly powerful when children act together.

If we want children to thrive in a diverse world and choose to stand up for themselves and others, then we must choose to help young children make sense out of the confusing and often emotionally charged messages they receive about themselves and others. The commitment to support each child to develop pride and self-confidence and deep connections with others calls on us to foster *all* children's healthy racial identity. When we give children language to discuss their identities in an atmosphere of interest and delight, and the tools for addressing the

unfairness they will inevitably encounter, then we know we have helped children construct a strong foundation for the next phases of their lives.

<https://www.teachingforchange.org/teaching---about---race>

How to talk to your child about race

(ages 5 to 8)

By Ziba Kashef

What your grade-schooler knows — and needs to know

As kids enter grade school, they begin to figure out that the color of their skin has meaning beyond the colors found in a crayon box. Grade-schoolers are starting to categorize people in more sophisticated ways. They'll ask questions about appearances and identity that reflect their heightened awareness of subtle differences in skin tone, eye shape, and hair texture.

Five- to 8-year-olds are also increasingly curious about what groups they and others belong to. Questions from other kids — as well as those sparked by TV and movies — will begin to shape their notion of race. How you respond to your child's growing curiosity will affect her ability to relate to people of different backgrounds throughout her life.

As with other tough topics, it helps to talk to your child early and often about race. Embarrassment or silence gives your child the impression that the topic is off-limits or that a bigoted remark is accurate and acceptable to you. Children look to their parents for moral cues, and they'll learn from your actions as well as your words.

How to talk about race with your grade-schooler

Expose your child to people of all shades. If you don't live in a diverse neighborhood and your child doesn't go to a school with kids of other races, surround her with children's books and artwork featuring people of different races. Take her to events where you can interact with a range of people. Five- to 8-year-olds are the perfect audience for a step dancing group, Japanese cultural festival, or Kwanzaa celebration.

Stick to the facts. When your child asks about race, keep your answers direct. Children this age aren't able to process complex ideas like a teen or adult can. As always with kids, answer just the question asked.

Don't overreact to comments or questions. If your child makes a surprising comment or asks a startling or even offensive question regarding race, don't ignore it or hush her. Instead, respond in a nonjudgmental way — say something like "Let's talk about that for a minute..." so she doesn't think the topic is taboo. Then dig for context: "What made you notice that?" Try to get more detail about what the observation means to your child, says Susan Linn, a psychologist at the Judge Baker Children's Center at Harvard Medical School and coauthor of *Talking to Children about Racism, Prejudice and Diversity*. Your child's answer can spark a conversation. "To raise a child who's curious, not afraid, about differences, it's important to send the message that differences aren't bad," Linn says.

If your child offends someone with a remark, ask her to apologize, suggests Marguerite

Wright, psychologist and author of *I'm Chocolate, You're Vanilla: Raising Healthy Black and Biracial Children*. Later, in private, talk to your child about how certain comments can upset people. But don't make too big a deal about it — she's just learning.

Discourage labeling. Do you or other adults in your child's life tend to refer to people by race — "that black lady" or "that white man"? If so, your child will pick up on the habit. At this age, children begin to make their first derogatory comments, like "That black kid Bobby is a bad kid." If your child says something like this because she's been bullied by another child, validate her hurt feelings while reminding her that Bobby is an individual. "Send the message that it's not okay to judge a person by a group," Wright advises. Call people by their names rather than labeling them by race, and teach your child to do the same. If your child's grandparents or other adults in her life make racist comments, don't let them slide. Discreetly point out how your own view differs.

Filter the media, and talk about what your child sees. Don't let your child watch TV or read newspapers unsupervised. The media too often transmits stereotypes and distortions regarding race. While school-age kids understand that TV is not reality, they easily pick up on subtle messages about race and culture, so step in to challenge any racial stereotypes you see. If a news story about a racially charged incident comes on, take it as a "teaching moment" to discuss tolerance.

Don't overdo it. Talking openly is good, but you can place *too* much emphasis on race. Overemphasizing is no better than avoiding the topic. Give your child information, but in small doses.

Aim for "color fairness," not "color blindness." If you don't acknowledge differences, you fail to prepare your child to live in a multiethnic society. The message should be that "your ethnicity is part of who you are," says Wright, "and it's important to treat everybody fairly and equally."

Answers to common questions about race

"What race am I?" Others might ask your child this question, or it could come up as part of a school project about where families come from. Use family photos and a globe or map to talk about where your child's ancestors once lived, what they looked like, what language they spoke, and so on. This might get more complicated in multiracial families, but 5- to 8-year-olds can process the idea of belonging to more than one group.

"Why aren't I brown like Dad?" This question may come up in multiracial and adoptive families. Start off by saying "Every family is different." If your child is multiracial, talk about how she looks a bit like both her parents and her grandparents. If her skin color is different than yours, point out that her nose or her smile is similar and that you both like to read and play cards. Adoptive parents can talk about how children and parents don't have to "match" to be a family.

"Can I be white?" This question might come as a shock, but try not to show it. Grade-school kids want to fit in — if your child is in the minority in her school, she may have picked up on messages that some look down on her race. First find out why she's

asking, then calmly talk to her about her heritage and what it means to you, using family photos, books, art, or music to reinforce a positive image. The bottom line is, no, you can't be white, but here are all the wonderful things about being the color that you are.

What else you can do

Surround your child with diversity. Arrange playdates and sleepovers with kids from racial groups she doesn't normally interact with.

Be proactive about teasing and excluding. In elementary school, the first conflicts involving race may arise. School-age kids, particularly girls, often segregate themselves by race as early as kindergarten. One researcher found that by age 6, many children already harbor racial prejudices. When Wright's daughter came home to say another child didn't want to play with her because she was "brown," Wright talked it over with her, then invited the other girl over for a playdate. She also spoke to the school about the incident, and the teacher brought it up in class without mentioning which children were involved.

Encourage diversity at school. Find out what books are read in your child's school library. Suggest diversity where there is none, with books like [The Story of Ruby Bridges](#) or [White Socks Only](#). Parents at some schools form diversity committees to organize workshops, trips, and multicultural potlucks or festivals. And Wright suggests that parents get actively involved in recruiting students and faculty of other races.

http://www.babycenter.com/0_how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-race-ages-5-to-8_3657097.bc?showAll=true

Activity Guide

1. *The Skin You Live In*

by Michael Tyler and David Lee Csicsko

Synopsis

A wonderful picture book for preschool and toddlers. Strong rhythm and rhyming words throughout the book will grab little ones' attention. The core message celebrates that we all have beautiful and different skin tones. However, what really matters is what's inside—what kind of person you are.

Enjoy the Book

1. Experiment with all the rhyming and silly sounding words with your youngest child.
2. Ask your older child "What do you think they are doing? How do you think she feels?"

Extend the Learning

1. As you read stories or watch videos featuring people of different skin tones look for common feelings your child may have with the character.
2. Write the names of two or three of your child's closest playmates or family members. Make a list of three things they both like and three things they feel differently about. Talk about how we may look the same but not always have the same likes and feelings.

2. *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury

Synopsis

A delightful celebration of babies around the world. The gentle pastel illustrations depict infants and families from a variety of cultures and living situations.

"And both of these babies as everyone knows, has ten little fingers and ten little toes."

Enjoy the Book

1. Have your child put his hands on the illustration. Ask if his are bigger or smaller.
2. Count fingers and toes... over and over.

Extend the Learning

1. Look for pictures of babies from around the world in magazines or online. Make your own "baby book." Try to find images showing ten little fingers and ten little toes.

3. *Let's Talk About Race* by Julius Lester

Synopsis

The author addresses race as central to our identity, but goes on to propose we are not each more than our race.

Perhaps the central, theme of this picture book is to base our relationships with each other on what we learn from each other, not on the stories we have been told to believe.

"Which story shall we believe? The one that says 'My race is better than yours?' Or the one we just discovered for ourselves?"

Enjoy the Book

1. Point out the bold bright colors and detailed images of the illustrations. Ask your child what she thinks is going on, or how does the picture tell the story.
2. Do what the author asks his readers by letting your child press various parts of your body to feel your bones.

Extend the Learning

1. Encourage your child to ask questions like those early in the book of a playmate or acquaintance to help build a story about each other based on what each learns from the other.
2. Talk about what your older child may have heard from other adults, or electronic media about various racial groups. How is this similar to what the author says about discovering each other's stories?

4. *Rosa* **by Nikki Giovanni**

Synopsis

This is definitely a book for older children and their parents to read together. In the reference to Emmett Till's death the book refers to lynching and the open casket.

This book depicts the working and home life of Rosa Parks, her act of defiance and the impact it had on our nation. "Rosa Parks said no so the Supreme Court could remind the nation that the Constitution of the U.S. makes no provision for second-class citizenship."

Enjoy the Book

The artist used watercolor and collage to create the illustrations for this book. It received the Caldecott Honor in 2006 for illustrations in a children's picture book. Talk about the pictures and how they help to tell the story.

Extend the Learning

1. What do you know about Rosa Parks, Emmett Till and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.? Read more about them and the Montgomery Bus Boycott through resources from your school, public library, or online.

5. *Two Friends: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass* by Dean Robbins

This book imagines the first meeting of two pioneers in the struggle for Americans' rights, Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, as they meet over a cup of tea at Ms. Anthony's home. They come from different backgrounds, but have each been denied what they saw others enjoying. They both wanted more than society allowed them. Concerning their ideas in speeches and newspapers: "Some people liked them and some people didn't."

Enjoy the Book

1. Look at the illustrations. How are the two character's speeches part of the art?

Extend the Learning

1. Invite a friend to tea. Talk about what each of you feels is unjust in the world and how you might improve it, even just a small part.
2. Read more about the two characters from the bibliography in the back of this book.

6. *Whoever You Are* **by Mem Fox**

Synopsis

Children from all over the world are depicted. The first half of the book illustrates differences among us—skin, homes, schools, and animals. But inside as the second half of the book proclaims, " Their hearts are just like yours"

Enjoy the Book

1. Talk about what makes your child laugh and cry. Do they think all children would laugh and cry at the same things?

Extend the Learning

1. Find pictures of children from around the world in magazines, newspapers, or online. Cut them out and make a book. Organize the pictures according to categories such as laughing, crying, school, family. Talk about what you have in common and what is different.

7. *Shades of People* **by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly**

This is a delightful picture book of photographs of real life children with all shades of skin color.

Enjoy the Book

1. Very young children will enjoy pointing out facial features on the close-up portraits. Encourage them to also point out their own, and your, nose, eyes, mouth, and other parts.
2. Talk about what the children are doing in the action pictures.

Extend the Learning

1. Seek out situations involving lots of people, outside of your comfort zone, and beyond your neighborhood or even your community. This may mean a trip into the city or a nearby town.

8. *We're Different, We're the Same* **by Bobbi Jane Kates**

Synopsis

This book features the Sesame Street characters along with lots of other folks, celebrating how they are the same and how they are different. Noses, hair, mouths, and skin may look different, but they do the same thing for each of us.

Enjoy the Book

1. Very young children will enjoy pointing out facial features on the close-up portraits. Encourage them to also point out their own, and your, nose, eyes, mouth and other parts.
2. Talk about what the children are doing in the action pictures.

Extend the Learning

1. Seek out situations involving lots of people, outside of your comfort zone, and beyond your neighborhood or even your community. This may mean a trip into the city or a nearby town.

9. *Brick By Brick* **by Charles R. Smith Jr.**

Synopsis

This is the story of the laborers who built the White House, the home of our nation's president. Recent immigrants, free blacks and slaves worked to build the White House brick by brick. Those who were "owned" by another person did not receive pay for their work, although some learned a skilled trade in the process of the construction. These workers were paid a small amount and some of them were able to purchase their freedom with their wages, earned brick by brick.

Enjoy the Book

1. Look at the list of names. Why only first names, no last names?
2. Talk about the use of the phrase "brick by brick." What else beside the building was built "brick by brick"?

Extend the Learning

Read and discuss the information in the back of the book on the background of slaves building the White House.

Read about life in the White House of various presidential families. In particular, read about President Barack Obama, the first African American president and his family.

10. *We March* **by Shane W. Evans**

Synopsis

The people's March on Washington in 1963 is told through the eyes of a young black boy. He wakes up early to go with his parents and sister join with others, praying for strength, making signs, and riding a bus to the Washington Monument. "We follow our leaders, we walk, we sing." The large illustrations depict the activities as well as the mood of the participants in the march.

Enjoy the Book

1. Ask your child how they think the character feels? What does she/he see? Are the people marching angry? Afraid? Peaceful? Violent?
2. How do the expressions on the young boy's face change throughout the book?

Extend the Learning

1. Read more about the people's March on Washington from resources from your school or public library or online sources.
2. Read together the text of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. What parts are particularly meaningful for you and your child?
3. Have you ever marched for a cause? Share that experience. Is there a cause you or your child would march for now?

11. *My Nose, Your Nose* by Melanie Walsh

Synopsis

Brightly colored portraits of characters Daisy, Kit, Agnes and Arthur support the story of how they are different and alike at the same time. Some of the pairings are of children of different colors, other are of the same color skin, making the point that within races there is diversity and room for preferences and differences. Arthur's hair is brown and straight, Kit's hair is black and spiky, but they both don't like shampoo.

Enjoy the Book

1. Very young children will enjoy the large swaths of bright colors, as well as the expressions on the characters' faces.

Extend the Learning

1. Make a list of your child's friends and talk about what they have in common and what may be some differences.

2. Using large sheets of paper such as newsprint, freezer paper or poster board, have each child lie down on the paper and draw an outline of their body. Color in some basic body parts such as eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers and toes. On the chest draw a heart and list whatever the child says they love...near the head list what they say they are afraid of. Display the outlines and compare among the children. Celebrate the differences and the commonalities.

12. *My People*
based on the poem by Langston Hughes
photographs by Charles R. Smith Jr.

Synopsis

The text of Langston Hughes' poem is presented across sepia tone photographs of African American faces.

"The night is beautiful,

So the faces of my people.

Beautiful also is the sun.

Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people."

Enjoy the Book

1. Talk about the word "beautiful." Ask your child who they think is beautiful.
2. Talk about the expressions and emotions of the people in the book.

Extend the Learning

1. Read more about Langston Hughes at your local library. Read his other poems. Which is your favorite?
2. Help your child memorize this poem and recite it for family or friends.

13. *The Case For Loving - The Fight for Interracial Marriage* by Selina Alko

Synopsis

This picture book tells the story of Richard and Mildred Loving and their successful court battle to be able to live legally as husband and wife in Virginia. The entire story is based on love—of Richard for Mildred, of Richard and Mildred for their children Donald, Peggy and Sidney, and of the family for their home state of Virginia. Richard and Mildred get married in the District of Columbia, where interracial marriages are legal, but are arrested shortly after settling down in Virginia. They left their beloved Virginia to live legally in the District of Columbia, and after filing a lawsuit against Virginia that was eventually decided in their favor by the United States Supreme Court, they moved back to Virginia to live “happily (and legally) ever after.”

Enjoy the Book

1. How is the theme and title *The Case for Loving* carried out in the text and illustrations throughout the book?

Extend the Learning

1. Read news accounts and non-fiction books listed in the back of this book “Sources” and “Suggestions for Further Reading” about the Loving’s case.
2. If you are a member of an interracial family, share your experiences with the children in your immediate and extended family.

14. YO! YES?

by Chris Raschka

A friendship is formed between two very different-looking boys in this picture book. Few words are spoken, but the ones that are, represent risk-taking and deep feelings of the characters.

Enjoy the Book

1. Young children will enjoy tracing the large letters of the words.
2. Talk about the body language and feelings your child thinks each of the boys is showing.
3. This book was named a Caldecott Honor book, for outstanding illustrations in children's literature. How do the pictures help tell the story?

Extend The Learning

1. In a group setting: Act out the story. Note how the voices change as the story progresses. Emphasize the question mark and exclamation marks.
2. Invite children to write the story behind the story, and add words to those in the book. What is each boy thinking? What does he want to say? What do the boys do after the last page of this book?

15. *Separate is Never Equal – Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s fight for Desegregation*
by Duncan Tonatiuh

Synopsis

Many of us are familiar with the story of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision as the landmark school desegregation case. This picture book tells the story of the successful fight seven years earlier by Felicitia and Gonzalo Mendez for their children and other children of Mexican heritage to attend public school in Westminster, California. Told through the eyes of their daughter, Sylvia, the Mendez family organized, hired lawyers to file a suit, and won the case in the Court of Appeals in San Francisco on April 15, 1947.

Enjoy the Book

1. Expand your child’s vocabulary with the many new words to be found in the book. Segregation, hygiene, impetigo, integrate, field-worker, case, brief, appeal – these and many more are found in the glossary on page 38 of the book.

Extend the Learning

1. Read more about the facts of this story through the resources listed in the back of the book. Page 36 contains the author’s note following the Mendez family beyond the end of the story in the book, and reporting on unofficial racial segregation still in existence today. Page 39 lists the bibliography and additional resources for learning.

Appendix

Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books

By Louise Derman-Sparks

Children's books continue to be an invaluable source of information and values. They reflect the attitudes in our society about diversity, power relationships among different groups of people, and various social identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, and disability). The visual and verbal messages young children absorb from books (and other media) heavily influence their ideas about themselves and others. Depending on the quality of the book, they can reinforce (or undermine) children's affirmative self-concept, teach accurate (or misleading) information about people of various identities, and foster positive (or negative) attitudes about diversity. Children's books teach children about who is important, who matters, who is even visible. Consequently, carefully choosing quality children's books is an indispensable educational and child-rearing task.

It is important to offer young children a range of books about people like them and their family—as well as about people who are different from them and their family. All of the books should be accurate and appealing to young children. Fortunately, there are some good anti-bias children's books, which are available as a result of the ongoing activism of many individuals and groups over many years. However, while choices have improved over past decades, the lack of quality multicultural kid's books currently being published has frustrated many communities. The number of children of color in the United States continues to rise, but the number of books published by or about people of color stays the same or even decreases.

Check the Illustrations

Look for Stereotypes: A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular identity group (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, ability/disability), which usually carries derogatory, inaccurate messages and applies them to ALL people in the group. Stereotypes dehumanize people. So, too, does misinformation. **(See Box 1 below for a list of common, harmful stereotypes).**

Unfortunately, all of us absorb socially prevailing stereotypes about a range of people, even if we do not consciously subscribe to them. To alert you to stereotypes in children's books, as well as other media, it is useful to list all the stereotypes you know about various groups of people as precondition for critically reviewing children's books. The books you choose should depict people compassionately and as real human beings. Also consider if images depict all people as genuine individuals with distinctive (rather than stereotypical) features. Books containing stereotypes require you to engage children in critical thinking, but should probably be eliminated from your collection.

BOX 1: Common Harmful/Undermining Stereotypes

- Strong, independent girls and women are “manlike”
- Book---loving or nonathletic boys and men are “effeminate”
- Latino men talk funny, are lazy, gang members, or wear oversize sombreros,
- Latina women are earth mothers or subservient
- African American men are gang members, oversexed, or underemployed
- African American women are too independent, oversexed, or “welfare moms”
- Arab and/or Muslim men are terrorists
- Arab and/or Muslim women are voiceless and passive
- All Muslims are Arab
- American Indians live in teepees, carry bows and arrows, or are half---naked in winter
- People with disabilities are not independent or are to be pitied
- LGBTQ people are invisible or sexual predators
- Poor people are invisible or depicted as passively needing help from others

Look for Tokenism: This is the “one only” message. Regularly seeing only “one” person of any group in a book teaches young children about who is more or less important. Examples of tokenism include books with only one African American child among many white children or having only one book about children with disabilities among many other books. Tokenism also becomes stereotypical. It only allows children to see one view of a group of people, rather than the diversity that exists among all groups.

Look for Invisibility: What children do not see in their books also teaches them about who matters and who doesn’t in our society. Invisibility in their storybooks—as well as in textbooks as they get older—undermines children’s affirmative sense of themselves and reinforces prejudiced ideas about people who are not seen (**See Box 2 for examples of groups who tend to be invisible**). The [booklists](#) on this website include a great variety of books with groups who are often excluded. (The titles are vetted by Teaching for Change and can be ordered right from the list).

BOX 2: Examples of Groups of People Who Are Often Invisible in Children's Books or Mainstream Media

- Families who live in rural areas
- Blue---collar workers
- Musicians, artists, and writers
- Families with two dads or two moms
- Single mothers or fathers
- Homeless families
- Families with an incarcerated parent
- People of Arab descent and/or families who practice Islam
- Transgender adults and children

Check the Story Line and the Relationships Between People

Even if a book shows visual diversity, the story line may carry biases related to how it handles power relationships among people of various identities. Are whites or male characters the central figures with people of color or female characters in essentially supporting roles? To gain acceptance and/or approval does a child of color, a girl, or child with a disability have to exhibit extraordinary qualities or be the one to understand, forgive, or change? Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their looks or relationship with boys/men?

Are people of color, women, low-income families, or people with disabilities depicted as needing help or in passive roles, while whites, men, and “able-bodied” people are in leadership and action roles? How are problems presented, conceived, and resolved? Who typically causes a problem and who resolves it? Your book collection needs a balance of different people in “doer” roles.

Look at Messages About Different Lifestyles

Do the lives of people of color or people living in poverty in the story contrast unfavorably with the norm of white, middle-class suburban life? Are negative value judgments implied about ways of life that differ from the dominant culture or economic class (e.g., people are to be pitied, or the story is about one person who “gets out” of the less desirable way of life)? Do images and information go beyond oversimplification and offer genuine insights into the lifestyle of the characters in the story? Does the setting reflect current life—or past assumptions about life? Does your book collection depict diversity among people within a specific racial/ethnic group, such as a range of family structures, living environments, socioeconomic conditions and types of work, and male/female roles within the family? (Remember that every racial/ethnic group has diversity, including people who self-identify as white).

Consider the Effects on Children’s Self and Social Identities

In addition to specific books, also examine your book collection. Do your books reinforce or counteract messages that teach children to feel inferior or superior because of their skin color, gender, family income, able-bodiedness, or type of family structure? At school, will all of the children you serve see themselves and their family’s way of life reflected in your book collection? Will all children of color, including those with mixed heritage, girls, and children from the many types of family structures, children living in poverty, and children with disabilities see one or more characters with whom they can readily and positively identify? If they are visible in your book collection, are the illustrations and information accurate and respectful? Does your overall collection balance the backgrounds of all the children in your program? Does it also show diversity within the social identity groups to which the children belong (e.g., a range of ways to be female and male, families reflecting different kinds of jobs within a racial/ethnic group). Does your book collection also include a balance between diversity within your

classroom and beyond your classroom?

At home, does your book collection reflect diversity among the groups to which your family belongs? Does it have stories about people like you who have contributed to creating a more just world? Does it also include a range of books showing diversity beyond your family and neighborhood?

Look for Books About Children and Adults Engaging in Actions for Change

To fully develop a strong sense of self and a disposition toward cooperation and fairness, children need to know how to stand up for themselves and others when faced with unfairness. They also need to know about people from all social identity groups who have—and are currently—working for justice for all. In addition to previous criteria, here are more items to consider: The story line should be about children and adults working together, rather than perpetrating the myth that change happens because of special, individual people who do it by themselves. Does your book collection include a balance of people who have made important and honored contributions to American life as well as the world community—and not just the traditional white, male “heroes?” Do some of your books about important people include struggles for justice? Do they show people who were/are poor or from racial/ethnic groups of color? Are people with disabilities engaged in these struggles for justice?

Consider the Author’s or Illustrator’s Background & Perspective

All authors write from a cultural as well as from a personal context. In the past, most children’s books were by authors and illustrators who were white and members of the middle class. As a result, a single cultural and class perspective dominated children’s literature. There are now excellent books by people of color from a range of backgrounds—although not nearly enough. Consider the biographical material on the jacket flap or back of the book. What qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with the subject? If the book is not about people or events similar to the author or illustrator’s background, what specifically recommends them as creators of the book? What is the author’s attitude toward her/his story characters? Are the images accurate and do the illustrators respectfully render the people in the story? Do you have books reflecting a balanced range of author and illustrator identities and experiences?

Watch for Loaded Words

A word is loaded when it in any way demeans or makes people invisible because of any of their identities. One example is the generic use of the word “man” to stand for women as well as men (although the opposite never occurs). This traditional terminology is now questioned by many because of its sexist implications. Here are some examples of ways to avoid sexist language: community instead of brotherhood; firefighters instead of firemen; human family instead of family of man; ancestors instead of forefathers; chairperson instead of chairman. Examples of adjectives applied to people of color that carry racist messages include: “savage,” “primitive,” “superstitious,” “backward,” “inscrutable” and “treacherous.” Always consider the

context in which a word is used and to whom it applies.

Look at the Copyright Date

Copyright dates indicate the publication year, not the time of its writing, which might be two to three years before the copyright date. Although a recent copyright date is no guarantee of a book's relevance or sensitivity, copyright dates are useful information. More children's books began to reflect the reality of a pluralistic society and nonsexist and non---ableist perspectives in the 1970s. Since then, the range of accurate, respectful, and caring books reflecting diversity has increased significantly (unfortunately the diversity of books published in the United States still does not accurately reflect the actual diversity of the people living here). When considering new books for your collection, begin with most recently published ones and then continue with descending copyright dates.

Assess the Appeal of the Story and Illustrations to Young Children

Although these guidelines focus on the messages about diversity and equality reflected in children's books, it is also important to take quality into account. Be sure the book is a "good read." If children find the story or illustrations boring, a book will not hold their attention, even if the book adds a specific kind of diversity you need. Check for active, interesting story lines where different kinds of people are integral to the people in the story, not the main topic. For example, in [*A Chair for My Mother*](#), a young child tries to save money to get a comfortable chair for her waitress mother. Although the book shows a single parent, working---class family, and a resourceful girl, it is not didactic. Also look for illustrations that are colorful and recognizable to young children. Although they enjoy a range of styles, illustrations that are too subdued or abstract may not hold their attention.

Check for age appropriateness. Most booksellers list any picture book as appropriate for early childhood even if the story line is really for primary grade children. Sometimes a book for older children will work if you simplify the story or "tell" the story rather than read it. In some cases, this is the only way to get books that present specific groups of children (e.g., stories with Cambodian children or children with learning disabilities). Some additional issues to consider:

- Many children's books use **animal characters instead of people** and there are some excellent books that explore diversity with animal characters (e.g., [*And Tango Makes Three*](#) or [*A Coyote Solstice Tale*](#)). Children enjoy these. However, such books are not a substitute for exploring issues of diversity and anti---bias fairness with people as the main characters.
- Some early childhood teachers wonder if it is necessary for every book in their collection to show diversity. Every book needs to be accurate, caring, and respectful. However, you will want individual books about specific kinds of people (e.g., a biracial family or a family with adopted children). **Diversity**

becomes essential in the [balance of your book collection](#), where you want to avoid invisibility or tokenism of any group.

- **Folk and fairy tales** have long been a mainstay of children's literature. In the cultures from which they come, folk and fairy tales were used to teach important lessons and values related to their culture of origin. Children love them in their original versions—not their commercially sanitized adaptations. However, folk and fairy tales also carry messages that convey sexism, classism, and racism and must be used thoughtfully as part of introducing young children to diversity and anti-bias values of quality and fairness.
- **Overuse of folk tales to "teach" about a specific ethnic/cultural group leads to misinformation and confusion.** They are about animals and occasionally people from a mythical past and are designed to teach core values and beliefs in their culture of origin. They are not about how people actually live in contemporary society—and that is what young children need to understand. Information and images about how people really live now is what enables young children to build connections to people who are from different cultures while countering stereotypes that children have already absorbed (e.g., how American Indians really live).
- Finally there is the somewhat sensitive issue of **what to do about "classic" or "well-beloved" children's books.** Many of these are wonderful as children's literature, but unfortunately they often convey values of sexism, racism, ableism, or even colonialism. People who love the books that pose this dilemma argue that it is OK to use them because they "reflect their times," which they imply somehow excuses their biased messages. For example, I adored the Babar series of books as a young child and was unpleasantly shocked to realize as an adult how much the images and story lines reflected messages of European colonialism in Africa. I chose not to use them with my own children, wanting them to learn accurate information about how people in Africa really live. Not sharing childhood favorites may sadden some, but it is far better than the harm caused by reinforcing messages of racism and colonialism.

In a nutshell—as you choose books or critically examine your current book selection, always keep in mind the power of books—their words and their images—to nurture or, conversely, to undermine a child's sense of self, positive attitude toward others, and motivation to act for fairness.

Louise Derman-Sparks is an internationally respected anti-bias educator and author (along with Julie Olsen Edwards) of [Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves](#). She has co-authored several additional books with Dr. Carol Brunson Day (*Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism*), the ABC Task Force (*Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*), Dr. Patricia Ramsey ([What If All the Kids Are White?](#)), and Dr. John Nimmo and Debbie Leekeenan (*Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood*

Programs: A Guide for Change). She speaks throughout the United States and abroad, and served on the [NAEYC](#) Governing Board from 1998 to 2001. Louise has a lifelong commitment to building a more just society for all people. Her children Douglass and Holly, now grown, were her inspiration. A Pacific Oaks College faculty member for 33 years—when its mission and pedagogy reflected anti-bias education principles—Louise is now retired.

<http://www.tfcbooks.org/guide---anti---bias---childrens---books>

**In 1980, the Council on Interracial Books for Children published the book Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks. A shorter version of the book in pamphlet form, "Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism," followed. One of the first guides written for teachers and families, it became an invaluable tool for hundreds of thousands of people. Both the book and pamphlet have been out of print for several years. [Rethinking Schools](#) published their adaptation of the original Guidelines in 1994. Here is a version of the original pamphlet, revised in 2013.*