

Mirrors *and* Windows

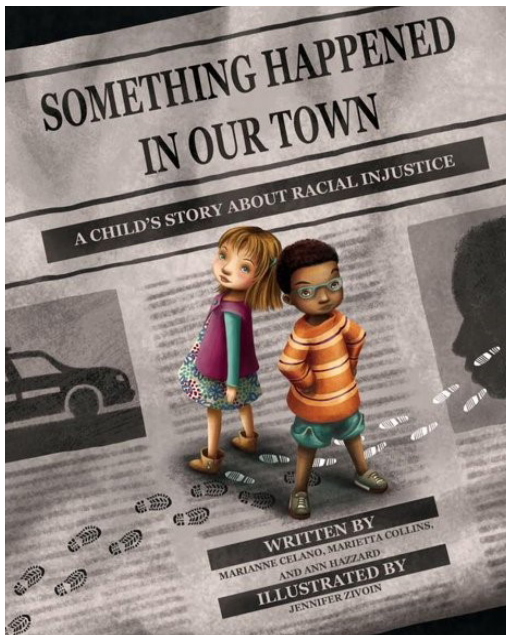
Choosing Picture Books

Picture books have power. Through them, we can share stories, experience another's perspective, and learn new skills. As we read high-quality picture books, children can gain greater understanding of themselves as they relate to characters in a story (mirrors). They also learn about others who may seem different (windows).

Choose books for children carefully. Not every book touted as being “inclusive” or “multicultural” is worthy of your (or the children’s) time. Look for books that are well-written and contain universal truths; avoid those that perpetuate stereotypes such as all people dwelling in a particular region or culture think, look, live, and act in one specific way.

Whenever possible, choose books that tell a story rather than merely relate a message. For example, *Flower Garden*, by Eve Bunting, beautifully depicts an urban African-American family’s birthday celebration. *The Tooth*, by Avi Slodovnick, illustrates what it might feel like to be homeless. Books that are focused primarily on delivering a message tend to feel a bit like propaganda. Children, like adults, prefer gentle reminders and examples over didactic lectures.

When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. (Bishop, R.S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Perspectives, 6 (3), ix-xi.)



Simple Tips *for* Choosing Books

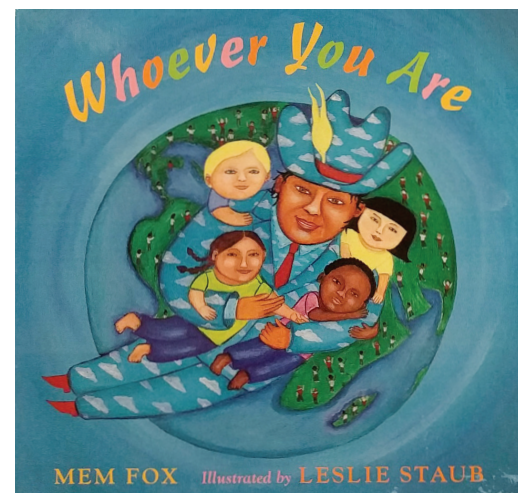
Are the writing and artwork of high quality?

Do the characters seem real and authentic? Does the author avoid stereotypes?

Is the storyline engaging? Does the text seem heavy-handed or “preachy”?

Look at the protagonist. What perspective does he or she represent?

Do the photographs or illustrations display the diversity within our society?



Infant and Toddler

Cradle Me by Debby Slier

Hats, Hats, Hats and *Bread, Bread, Bread* both by Ann Morris and Ken Heyman

Hush Little Baby by Sylvia Long

My Hands by Catherine Hnatov

Whoever You Are by Mem Fox; illustrated by Leslie Staub

BookNook

Toward a Better World

LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

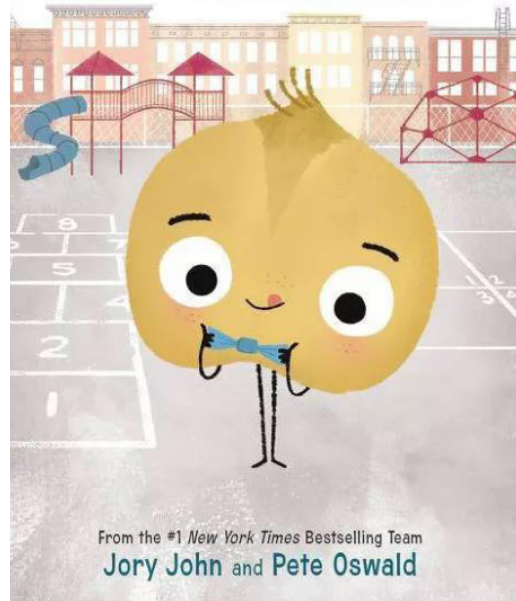


We want children to respect, appreciate, and honor all people, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because it brings a deeper meaning and joy to life.

One way we can teach this is by reading books that feature rich, multi-dimensional characters living authentic lives.

These books can be serious or silly, but they're always satisfying. Here are a few of our favorite books that fit the bill.

THE COOL BEAN



From the #1 *New York Times* Bestselling Team
Jory John and Pete Oswald

School Age

A Day's Work by Eve Bunting

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park

Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams

The Cool Bean by Jory John and Pete Oswald

Thank You, Mr. Falker by Patricia Pollaco

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boeltz; illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

Something Happened in our Town by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard

Preschooler and Up

Hair Love by Matthew Cherry

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña; illustrated by Christian Robinson

Little Blue and Little Yellow; *Swimmy*; or *It's Mine* by Leo Lionni

One Green Apple by Eve Bunting

Saturday by Oge Mora

The Colors of Us by Karen Katz

The Day You Begin by Jaqueline Woodson

Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto; illustrated by Ed Martinez

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox; illustrated by Julie Vivas



MARIBETH BOELTZ illustrated by NOAH Z. JONES