

A Selection of Children's Literature With Diverse Representations



Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute

at the University of Nebraska

I Love Saturdays y Domingos

Ada, Alma Flor, and Savadier, Elivia. *I Love Saturdays y Domingos*. Zaner-Bloser, 2013.

SYNOPSIS: In the book *I Love Saturdays y Domingos* by Alma Flor Ada, a bilingual girl compares the different activities and personal qualities that she enjoys with each of her two sets of grandparents. Though she does different activities with each set of grandparents, she loves them each the same.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOgVBuYmL7M>

VIDEO OF POETRY READING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZZTLRIDFso>

Alma Flor Ada reads poem titled “Bilingual” (English and Spanish)

VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR: <https://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/ada>

Ada is an award-winning author of more than 200 books for children. With a Ph.D. in literature and a lifelong love for stories, Ada has mastered the art of retelling traditional folktales and nursery rhymes from across Latin America.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut

Barnes, Derrick D., and James, Gordon C. *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*. Bolden, an Agate Imprint, 2017.

SYNOPSIS: This rhythmic read aloud is a celebration of the self-esteem, confidence, and swagger boys feel when they leave the barber’s chair—a tradition that places on their heads a figurative crown that confirms their self-worth and helps them love and accept themselves.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://youtu.be/B1yCg2PdeEA>

I Am Every Good Thing

Barnes, Derrick. *I Am Every Good Thing*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2020.

SYNOPSIS: The kids in *I Am Every Good Thing* are compared to the best things: moonbeams on brand-new snow, the center of a cinnamon roll, a perfect paper airplane that glides for blocks.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkAQz7IMLAQ>.

VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azN5desiTTM>

Derrick Barnes discusses the importance of representing Black boys in a positive context, and his new book with Gordon C. James: *I Am Every Good Thing*.

LEARNING GUIDE FOR I AM EVERY GOOD THING: <https://storage.googleapis.com/classroom-portal-production/uploads/2020/08/88490d05-i-am-every-good-thing-guide.pdf>

No Mirrors in My Nana’s House

Barnwell, Ysaye M., and Saint James, Synthia. *No Mirrors in My Nana’s House*. Harcourt, 2005.

SYNOPSIS: A little girl discovers the beauty in herself—and the beauty of the world around her—not by looking in the mirror but by looking in her Nana’s eyes.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAG1j_Z850E&noredirect=1

TEACHER ACTIVITY GUIDE: https://www.storylineonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NoMirrorsinmyNanasHouse_TeacherActivityGuide.pdf

The Name Jar

Choi, Yangsook. *The Name Jar*. Zaner-Bloser, 2013.

SYNOPSIS: *The Name Jar* explores questions about difference, identity, and cultural assimilation. When Unhei, a young Korean girl, moves to America with her family and arrives at a new school, she begins to wonder if she should also choose a new name. Her classmates suggest Daisy, Miranda, Lex, and more, but nothing seems to fit.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiEoJbld9pU>

Dream Carver

Cohn, Diana, and Córdova, Amy. *Dream Carver*. Zaner-Bloser, 2013.

SYNOPSIS: Inspired by the story of Oaxacan wood carver Manuel Jimenez, this story demonstrates how imagination can be a catalyst for change. Mateo carves juguetes, tiny wooden toy animals, to sell at fiestas, just as his father and grandfather did.

ANIMATED STORY FROM PBS BETWEEN THE LIONS SERIES: <https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/btl10.ela.early.dreamcarver/dream-carver/>

Ruby Sings the Blues

Daly, Niki. *Ruby Sings the Blues*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2007.

SYNOPSIS: Ruby's voice is SO VERY LOUD! It's driving her family and neighbors crazy. Then one day her jazz musician neighbors develop a plan to help her express herself.

ANIMATED STORY FROM PBS BETWEEN THE LIONS SERIES: <https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/btl10.ela.early.rubysingstheblues/ruby-sings-the-blues/>

Arrorró, Mi niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games

Delacre, Lulu. *Arrorró, Mi niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games*. Lee & Low Books, 2004.

SYNOPSIS: In this beautiful collection of classic Latino lullabies and games, mothers and children happily embrace and treasure their traditions while sharing the universal joy of the special bond between parent and child. Both the Spanish and English versions can easily be sung with the melodies at the back of the book.

SONG SAMPLE: Esta niña linda/This Beautiful Girl <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJmLZsIDEAE>.

VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR: <https://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/delacre>

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl’s Courage Changed Music

Engle, Margarita, et al. *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl’s Courage Changed Music*. Findaway World, LLC, 2019.

SYNOPSIS: This acclaimed picture book is rhythmic and vibrant. The story tells of a young girl who dreams of playing the drums in 1930s Cuba, when the music-filled island had prohibited female drummers. The drum dream girl was the first to question that rule. Inspired by the childhood of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who broke Cuba’s traditional taboo against female drummers, *Drum Dream Girl* tells a true story for dreamers everywhere.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpHCC-iALvc>

We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers

Flett, Julie. *We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers*. Native Nortwest.com, 2014.

SYNOPSIS: This board book is beautifully illustrated by Canadian-based Cree/Metis artist Julie Flett. *We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers* provides insight into contemporary Cree life and makes Cree culture and language accessible to young readers.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_ITapLk_UY

INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR: <https://www.cbc.ca/books/julie-flett-is-reclaiming-indigenous-themes-of-community-and-language-through-her-children-s-books-1.5632462>

Yesterday I Had the Blues

Frame, Jeron Ashford. *Yesterday I Had the Blues*. Tricycle, 2008.

SYNOPSIS: Yesterday one boy had the blues—not just the ordinary blues, the “deep down in my shoes” blues, the “go away Mr. Sun quit smilin’ at me” blues. But today he’s traded in those blues for greens, the “runnin’ my hands along the hedges” greens, the kind of greens that make him want to be somebody.

ANIMATED STORY FROM PBS BETWEEN THE LIONS SERIES: <https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/btl10.ela.early.yesterdayihadtheblues/yesterday-i-had-the-blues/>

Lotus & Feather

Jiang, Ji-li, and Downing, Julie. *Lotus & Feather*. Disney-Hyperion, 2016.

SYNOPSIS: A winter illness left Lotus, a little girl, without a voice and without friends. A hunter’s bullet left Feather, a crane, injured and unable to fly. As Lotus nurses Feather back to health, their bond grows.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bpXikqUvXw>.

TEACHER ACTIVITY GUIDE: https://www.storylineonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/LotusandFeather_TeacherActivityGuide_Final.pdf

Violet's Music

Johnson, Angela, and Huliska-Beith, Laura. *Violet's Music*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2004.

SYNOPSIS: Violet adores music. It is her favorite thing in the whole world. As a baby, in kindergarten, and at the beach and the zoo, she searches and searches for other children who share her love of music.

LINK FOR ANIMATED VIDEO STORY FROM PBS BETWEEN THE LIONS SERIES:

<https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/btl10.ela.early.violetsmusic/violets-music/>

Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story

Maillard, Noble, and Martinez-Neal, Juana. *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*. Roaring Brook Press, 2019.

SYNOPSIS: This picture book depicts an intergenerational group of Native American family members and friends as they make fry bread together.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGoPq2CeJdw>

Bee-Bim Bop!

Park, Linda Sue, and Lee, Ho Baek. *Bee-Bim Bop!* CNIB, 2013.

SYNOPSIS: This rhyme uses a bouncy beat to share a young girl's enthusiasm as she helps her mother shop, prepare, and finally eat a traditional Korean rice dish.

VIDEO ANIMATION OF THIS STORY: <https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/btlc10elaearlybbbop/bee-bim-bop/>

TELLING STORIES WITH AUTHOR LINDA SUE PARK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQF5TywTI00>

I Love My Hair!

Tarpley, Natasha, and Lewis, Earl B. *I Love My Hair!* Little, Brown and Company, 2018.

SYNOPSIS: This beloved story has been celebrating the beauty of African-American hair for 20 years! Affirming illustrations reveal how a girl named Keyana discovers the beauty and magic of her special hair, encouraging black children to be proud of their heritage and enhancing self-confidence.

VIDEO READ ALOUD: <https://youtu.be/FfXijL4sEfo>

Resources for Selecting and Utilizing Diverse Children’s Literature

More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Children’s Literature to Increase Literacy

Fleming, Jane. *More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Children’s Literature to Increase Literacy*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

SYNOPSIS: *More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Children’s Literature to Increase Literacy* is the first book in the Kids Like Us series. It includes research summaries, guidelines for text selection, and a step-by-step guide to increasing the cultural relevance of literacy instruction with urban children’s literature.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW: <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-author-interview-more-mirrors-in-the-classroom/2017/01>

Barbershop Books

<https://barbershopbooks.org/about-us/>

Developed in Harlem, Barbershop Books is a community-based program that creates child-friendly reading spaces in barbershops and provides early literacy training to barbers across America. They leverage the cultural significance of barbershops in Black communities to increase boys’ access to culturally relevant, age appropriate, and gender responsive children’s books and to increase out-of-school time reading among young black boys.

North Omaha Building Brains in Barbershops

<https://www.facebook.com/NorthOmahaBuildingBrainsinBarbershops/>

Founded in 2016, North Omaha Building Brains in Barbershops provides culturally relevant books in local barbershops. NOBB helps promote literacy that represents children in the North Omaha community and engage in the community that we serve.

Finding Excellent Children’s Books by and About American Indians With Dr. Debbie Reese

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/how-to-choose-excellent-childrens-books-by-and-about-american-indians>

American Indians in Children’s Literature, List of “Best Books”

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/p/best-books.html>

American Indian Library Association List of Award-Winning Books

https://ailanet.org/literature_awards/2020-2/

26 Best Books for Latino Kids on Parents.com

https://www.parents.com/fun/entertainment/books/20-best-books-for-latino-kids/?slide=slide_00b32624-ac9b-45bb-a848-e702e870c01f#slide_00b32624-ac9b-45bb-a848-e702e870c01f

Kids Like Me: 18 Books With Diverse Main Characters

<https://www.readbrightly.com/18-kids-books-diverse-main-characters/>

5 Spanish/English Bilingual Picture Books

<https://www.readbrightly.com/10-spanish-english-bilingual-picture-books/>

Here We Read List of Diverse Children's Books

<http://hereweeread.com/2017/11/2018-ultimate-list-diverse-childrens-books.html>

LGBTQ Family-Friendly Books

https://www.familyequality.org/family-support/lgbtq-books/early-elementary/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwxNT8BRD9ARIsAJ8S5xbjC_5wvYrvesPkLVLJHtNSNm9u6ZCGtbpvn9kY55R-O3S2FFyncikaAoHgEALw_wcB

60 Children's Books About Disabilities and Differences

<https://www.mrdscorner.com/60disabilitybooksforkids/>

Books With Characters Who Have Disabilities

<https://www.common sense media.org/lists/books-with-characters-who-have-physical-disabilities>

Children's Books About Separation and Divorce

<https://www.readbrightly.com/books-kids-whose-parents-divorcing-separating/>

Children's Books About Foster Care

<https://creatingafamily.org/foster-care/foster-care-suggested-books/books-for-kids-in-foster-care/>

Children's Books About Adoption

https://www.parents.com/parenting/adoption/parenting/books-about-adoption-for-kids/?slide=slide_de490107-580c-4cdf-ac81-f0a19f3b56d1#slide_de490107-580c-4cdf-ac81-f0a19f3b56d1

Picture Books That Portray Mixed Race Families

<https://coloursofus.com/picture-books-about-mixed-race-families/>

Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books

<https://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books>

Anti-Bias Classroom Observation Checklist

http://5c2cabd466efc6790a0a-6728e7c952118b70f16620a9fc754159.r37.cf1.rackcdn.com/cms/AntiBiasChecklist-revised_2-2-15_1345.pdf

PBS Learning Media, Between the Lions Archive

<https://net.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/btl07-ex/>

Reading Rockets, Launching Young Readers

<https://www.readingrockets.org/>

Ready Rosie, Tools That Help Families Create Meaningful Home-Learning Environments

<https://www.readyrosie.com/>

Vroom Brain Building Moments

<https://www.vroom.org/tools-and-resources>

Vroom in Spanish

<https://www.vroom.org/es/herramientas-y-recursos>

Colorin Colorado, A Bilingual Site for Educators and Families of English Language Learners

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Questions to Ask Yourself When Revising Your Class Library

The following chart is adapted from the resources provided by NAEYC: <https://earlychildhoodequity.wordpress.com/2015/08/13/building-a-diverse-anti-bias-library-for-young-children/>

YES/NO	QUESTION	RESOURCE THAT CAN HELP
	Does your book list or collection include books with characters of color? LGBTQ? Differently abled?	
	Does it include books with a main character of color? LGBTQ? Differently abled?	
	Does it include books written or illustrated by a person of color? Of different nationalities, religions or sexual preference?	
	Are there any books with a person of color on the cover? Do the characters on the book covers accurately reflect the characters in the book?	
	Think about your student population. Does your list provide a mix of “mirror” books and “window” books for your students— books in which they can see themselves reflected and books in which they can learn about others?	
	Think about the subject matter of your diverse books. Do all your books featuring black characters focus on slavery? Do all your books about Latino characters focus on immigration?	
	Do you have any books featuring diverse characters that are not primarily about race or prejudice?	
	Consider your classic books, both fiction and nonfiction. Do any contain hurtful racial or ethnic stereotypes or images (e.g., Little House on the Prairie or The Indian in the Cupboard)? If so, how will you address those stereotypes with students? Have you included another book that provides a more accurate depiction of the same culture?	

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