We Need Diverse Books

Exploring Issues of Diversity in Children’s & YA Literature

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LibraryLinkNJ Webinar
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Why Does Diversity in Kid Lit Matter?

• A 2012 study by the CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center) made a startling revelation:

![Lack of Diversity](image)

Diverse characters are scarce in kids’ books. In a survey of 3,600 titles:

- 3.3% were about African-Americans
- 2.1% were about Asian-Pacific Americans
- 1.5% were about Latinos
- 0.6% were about American Indians

Source: Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2012
Why Does Diversity in Kid Lit Matter?

Diversity in Children's Books 2012

Out of 3,600 children's books reviewed by the CCBC in 2012:

- 3% were about African-Americans
- 15% were about Latinos
- Less than 1% were about Native Americans
- 2% were about Asian Pacific Americans
- Which leaves 93% Caucasian
Why Does Diversity in Kid Lit Matter?

The U.S. Census Bureau released a set of estimates May 2012 showing that 50.4% of the U.S. population younger than age 1 were minorities as of July 1, 2011. A minority is anyone who is not single-race white and not Hispanic.

The population younger than age 5 was 49.7 % minority in 2011.
Why Does Diversity in Kid Lit Matter?

Diversity in children’s literature isn’t limited to race or ethnicity; it encompasses the inclusion of all perspectives, regardless of religious background, sexual orientation, gender, class, or disability.

We need diverse "Diverse" books.
Why Now?

Since 1985, the CCBC has compiled annual statistics on the status of diversity in kid lit.

Domino Effect:

First Book announces their Stories for All project.

Lee & Low, the largest publisher of multicultural children’s books posts powerful blog entry: Why Hasn’t the Number of Multicultural Books Increased in Eighteen Years?

Roger Sutton post: A very good question

Betsy Bird’s call for African American boy protagonists in MG lit
Why Now?

- Kids are part of the Global Community
  - War in the Middle East
- Kids are witnesses to History
  - First African American President
  - Supreme Court Decisions
  - DREAM Act
  - Trayvon Martin
- Social Media
  - #DiversitySFF
- Blogs
  - Whitewashing Book Covers outcry
Definition of Terms

- Diversity
- “Multicultural”
- People of Color
- Minority
- “Race”
- Hispanic v. Latino; Native American v. American Indian
- LGBT
- Special Needs
- On the Spectrum
- “Disabled”
- Hyphen
- Window & Mirror Books
### History of Diversity in Kid Lit

#### The Diversity Gap in Children’s Books

**18 Years • 1994–2012**

Percentage of children’s books by and/or about people of color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>9</td>
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**37% of the US population are people of color.**

**10% of children’s books in the past 18 years contain multicultural content.**

Despite the best efforts of Lee & Low Books and other publishers and imprints that focus on multicultural themes, the number of books that contain diversity has not grown.

**Minority % of US Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2060</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The US is projected to become a majority-“minority” nation in 2043.

Lee & Low Books  
blog.leeandlow.com
History of Diversity in Kid Lit

1. Are the nonwhite characters too good to be true?

2. How and why does the author define race?

3. Is the cover art true to the story?

4. Who are the change agents?

5. How is beauty defined?

How to Use Diverse Lit

Poll

• What are some of ways you already use “diverse” books in your library’s programs or collection?
How to Use Diverse Lit Book Displays

**Trick or Treat: Diverse Books for Halloween**
(Lee & Low)

**5 Great Children’s Books to Celebrate Día de los Muertos** (Mamiverse)
How to Use Diverse Lit Book Displays

Bullying Prevention Month
How to Use Diverse Lit Book Displays

Back-to-School

Library Orientation

Colorin Colorado. “Fun at the Library”
How to Use Diverse Lit Book Displays

Independence Day

Apple Pie 4th of July
Janet S. Wong

Summer Reads

Freddie Ramos Makes a Splash
Jacqueline Jules

Summer Days and Nights
Wong Herbert Yee

A Moment Comes
Jennifer Bradbury

Starring Grace
Mary Hoffman
Carolyn Buech
How to Use Diverse Lit Book Displays

Valentine’s Day

Mother’s Day

Grandparent’s Day

Weddings

Pets
Yes or No?

Is the “Medal” Effect true? Once a book has won an award, does it lose kid appeal?
How to Use Diverse Lit Booktalks

When Talking Up Diverse Books, Focus:

- On the Story
- Universal Appeal
- Fun Plot, Characters, Etc.
- Readalike-ability

Not “How Good They Are For You”
How to Use Diverse Lit Booktalks

Readalikes:

For Harry Potter Fans:

For Percy Jackson Fans:

For Hunger Games Fans:
How to Use Diverse Lit Booktalks

Readalikes:

For Mystery Lovers

For Fans of Paranormal

For Retellings

Sports Fans
How to Use Diverse Lit Storytime

Incorporate Diverse Titles:

For Superhero-Themed

For Math-Themed

For Music-Themed

For Food-Themed

For Sports-Themed
How to Use Diverse Lit
Curriculum Connections

Common Core: Offer Multiple Perspectives

• Columbus Day

• Thanksgiving

• Revolutionary War
How to Use Diverse Lit
Curriculum Connections

Common Core: Offer Multiple Perspectives

World War II

Civil Rights Movement

Vietnam War

Afghanistan
What Can You Do in Your Library

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Talk to Publishers About What Your Community Needs

Put Your $$ Where Your Mouth Is

Give Kids a Voice Too
What Can You Do in Your Library
What Can You Do in Your Library
Staples for Every Collection

Poll

What are some of the books that come to mind as must-have for strengthening your collection with "diverse" books?
Staples in Every Collection

African American Experience - More Than Black History Month

“Black History Month” Readingrockets.org
Staples for Every Collection

African American Experience

Chp Bks/Early Readers: Amy Hodge Podge by Kim Wayans & EllRay Jakes by Sally Warner

MG: Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor
How Lamar’s Bad Prank Won a Bubba-Sized Trophy by Crystal Allen
Staples for Every Collection

- **YA:** Angela Johnson’s *First Part Last*, Walter Dean Myers’s *Monster*

- **Nonfiction:** *Sweethearts of Rhythm* by Marilyn Nelson & Jerry Pinkney, *We Are the Ship* by Kadir Nelson
Staples for Every Collection:
Children’s Books Authors & Illustrators Who Write About African American Themes

Coe Booth
Walter Dean Myers
Virginia Hamilton
Jerry Pinkney
Brian Collier
E.B. Lewis
Kadir Nelson
Christopher Paul Curtis
Sharon Draper
Shane Evans
Sharon Flake
Nikki Grimes
Ashley Bryan
Angela Johnson
Andrea Davis Pinkney
Don Tate
Christopher Myers
Rachel Isadora
Staples in Every Collection

Latino Experience- More Than Hispanic Heritage Month
Staples for Every Collection

Latino Experience

**Board Bks:** *I Am Latino: The Beauty in Me* by Sandra Pinkney

**Picture Bks:** *Bebé Goes to the Beach* by Susan Middleton Elya, *What Can You Do with a Rebozo?* by Carmen Tafolla;
Staples for Every Collection
Latinx Experience

Chapter Bks/Early Readers: *Sweet Dreams/Dulces sueños* by Pat Mora, *Zapato Power* series by Jacqueline Jules

MG: *Tortilla Sun* by Jennifer Cervantes, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan
Staples for Every Collection

Latino Experience

**YA:** *Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood* by Benjamin Alire Saenz, *Nilda* by Nicholasa Mohr

**Nonfiction:**
Duncan Tonatiuh’s *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours*
*Parrots Over Puerto Rico* by Susan Roth & Cindy Trumbo
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors/Illustrators</th>
<th>Authors/Illustrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Diaz</td>
<td>Pat Mora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Hope Perez</td>
<td>Julia Alvarez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu Delacre</td>
<td>Meg Medina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jorge Aguirre</td>
<td>Yuyi Morales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Garcia McCall</td>
<td>Gary Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Palacios</td>
<td>Benjamin Alire Saenz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholasa Mohr</td>
<td>Judith Ortiz Cofer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alma Flor Ada</td>
<td>Margarita Engle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
<td>Matt de la Pena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier Garza</td>
<td>Duncan Tonatiuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Parra</td>
<td>Monica Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Lopez</td>
<td>Raul Colon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staples in Every Collection

Asian American Experience
Staples for Every Collection

Asian American Experience

Board Bks: *Toddler Two* by Anastasia Suen

Picture Bks: Hyewon Yum’s *The Twins’ Blanket*, Lenore Look’s *Uncle Peter’s Amazing Chinese Wedding*
Staples for Every Collection

Asian American Experience

Chapter Bks/Early Readers: Ling & Ting series by Grace Lin, Katie Woo books

MG: Clara Lee and the Apple Pie Dream by Jenny Han, Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
Staples for Every Collection

Asian American Experience

**YA:** An Na’s *The Fold*, Gene Leun Yang’s *American Born Chinese*

**NF:** Allen Say’s *Draying from Memory*, Ed Young’s *The House Baba Built*, William Low’s *Chinatown*
Staples for Every Collection
Children’s Books Authors & Illustrators Who Write About Asian American Themes

Allen Say
William Low
Grace Lin
Marie Lu
Malindo Lo
Grace Oh
Shaun Tan
Gene Leun Yang
Lenore Look
Thanhha Lai
Andrea Cheng

Mitali Perkins
Jenny Han
Cynthia Kadohata
An Na
Ed Young
Ying Chang Compestine
Sarwat Chadda
Justina Chen
Darren Shan
Kazuo Kibuishi
Lisa Yee
Cindy Pon
Laurence Yep
Staples in Every Collection

American Indian Experience
Staples for Every Collection

American Indian Experience

**Board Bks:** *Cradle Me* by Dabbie Slier, *Baby Learns About the Seasons* by Jessie Eve Ruffenach, *Little You* by Richard Van Camp

**Picture Bks:** *Crossing Bok Chitto* by Tim Tingle, *SkySisters* by Jan Bourdeau Waboose
Staples for Every Collection

American Indian Experience

MG: Sees Behind Trees by Michael Dorris, The Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich, Rain Is Not My Indian Name by Cynthia Leitich Smith
Staples for Every Collection

American Indian Experience

**YA:** *My Name Is Not Easy* by Debby Dahl Edwardson, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

**NF:** *Cowboy Up! Ride the Navajo Rodeo* by Nancy Bo Flood, *Jim Thorpe: Original All-American* by Joseph Bruchac
Staples for Every Collection
Children’s Books Authors & Illustrators Who Write About American Indian Themes

Cynthia Leitich Smith
Jan Bourdeau Waboose
Louise Erdrich
Simon Ortiz
Thomas King
S.D. Nelson

Sherman Alexie
Joseph Bruchac
Eric Gainsworth
Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
Tim Tingle
Joseph Blasingame
Staples for Every Collection

World Religions
Judaism

Sydney Taylor Awards

National Jewish Book Award Winners
Staples for Every Collection

World Religions

Islam
Staples for Every Collection

World Religions
Islam

The Muslim Writers Awards
Arab American Book Award Winners
Books on Islam for children and teens
Staples for Every Collection

World Religions
Hinduism
Staples for Every Collection

World Religions

Buddhism
Staples for Every Collection

LGBTQ

Looking for Coming Out Stories or LGBTQ Romance?

- Ask the Passengers
  A. S. King

- Sister Mischief
  Julie Anna Peters

- Two Boys Kissing
  David Levithan

- The Vast Fields of Ordinary
  Nick Burd

- The Difference Between You & Me
  Madeline George
Staples for Every Collection

LGBT Experience

**Board Bks:** *Daddy, Papa, and Me & Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Lesléa Newman

**Picture Bks:** *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis, *It’s Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr, *In Our Mothers’ House* by Patricia Polacco
Staples for Every Collection

LGBT Experience

**MG:** *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* by Jacqueline Woodson, *Wandering Son: Vol. 1* by Shimura Takako

*My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* by Jennifer Gennari, *The Misfits* by James Howe
Staples for Every Collection

LGBT Experience

**YA:** *Freakboy* by Kristin Elizabeth Clark, *If You Could Be Mine* by Sara Farizan, *Freak Show* by James St. James

**NF:** *The Letter Q: Queer Writers’ Notes to Their Younger Selves.* Sarah Moon & James Lecesne, eds., *Rapture Practice* by Aaron Hartzler
## Staples for Every Collection

**Children’s Books Authors & Illustrators Who Write About LGBTQ Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; Illustrators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Levithan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Ann Peters</td>
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<td>Malindo Lo</td>
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<td>Benjamin Alire Saenz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Woodson</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Klise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Burd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Kluger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Sanchez</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Lecesne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex London</td>
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<tr>
<td>emily m. danforth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassandra Clare</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.S. King</td>
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<tr>
<td>E.M. Kokie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Gardner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Myracle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamora Pierce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Ryan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nico Medina</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Staples for Every Collection

Disability in Kid Lit

The Deaf Musicians

Al Capone Does My Shirts

The Running Dream

King for a Day

Five Flavors of Dumb

The Orange Houses

The Real Boy
Staples for Every Collection

Poll

What resources do you use to strengthen your collection with “diverse” books?
Resources

Professional Review Journals

*Kirkus, Booklist, VOYA, PW, The Horn Book*

*School Library Journal:*

**Embracing Diversity in YA Lit**

**Resources for Finding Latino Kid Lit**

**To Come:**

Collection Development piece by Debbie Reese on American Indians, LGBT Titles for Young Readers
Resources

Book Award Lists:

Youth Media Awards

Lambda Awards

International Latino Book Awards

USSBY Outstanding International Books

Jane Addams Award
Resources

Children’s Books by and about People of Color Published in the United States (CCBC)

Michigan State University Libguide on Diverse Kid Lit

CBC Diversity

Stacy Whitman’s Pinterest Board on Diverse YA Fantasy
Resources

Disability in Kid Lit

The Brown Bookshelf

American Indians in Children’s Literature

Rich In Color
Resources

Gay YA

De Colores Blog

Diversify YA

Cynthia Leitich Smith

Colorin Colorado
Resources

Forever Young Adult

Articles on Diversity on YALSA’s Hub Blog

Lee & Low Blog

First Book Blog

Mitali Perkins’s Blog
Resources

Crazy QuiltEdi

Latinos in Kid Lit

Mamiverse

Diversity in YA
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