

Exploring Diversity with your Young Children



Teaching tolerance is important in helping your child understand the world around them.

As we know, not even young children are exempt from the effects of racism. But talking to young children about race and racism can be difficult. One barrier could be your comfort level. Another may be thinking about how to communicate this topic since young children do not yet have the language skills to comprehend complex issues.



Tip

One way to tackle this topic is to slowly keep adding to your child's understanding of the world. You can help your child develop a broad worldview by exposing them to age-appropriate materials. This can be a starting point for discussions that encourage questions and allow for frankness and honesty. Your work with your child at this stage of life will begin to set the foundation for their ability to challenge stereotypes, embrace anti-racist thinking, and speak up for racial injustice.

Ways you can help your children learn to combat racism and promote diversity:

- 1. Age-appropriate books are a great way to help your child gain some exposure to various ethnicities.**

Pictures are a visual way to communicate to young children who lack the language skills of higher order thinking. *(Please see our book list for assistance in finding books that can help with teaching tolerance.)*
- 2. Children who have more developed language skills (ages 3-5) can be prompted to begin thinking of concepts such as fairness or empathy.**

For instance, when reading books or watching a movie or television show, ask your child how they think the character feels during conflicts or other instances. You can help your child connect even
- 3. Be prepared that children may be pointing out differences in others, perhaps at very public places like a grocery store.**

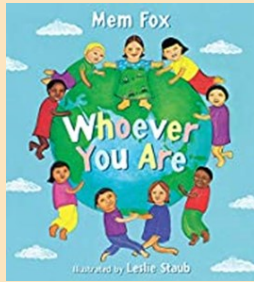
A marked stage of development and comprehension appears when children take notice of their world and ask questions. They will lack filters (that is another developmental stage) and are openly curious. It can be helpful for parents to remember this and be ready to:

 - respond positively by repeating words of acceptance for other's differences.
 - tie their observations back to the books or movies/TV shows that you have used to help promote their growth and understanding about diversity.
- 4. When choosing toys for your child, select toys that can represent diversity, such as baby dolls or Barbies of different ethnicities.**

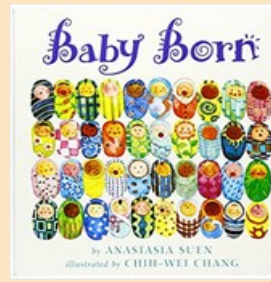
Lego people have parts with different skin tones and hair selections. Crayons have a box of colors
- 5. Activities are a great experiential way for children to connect with the topic of diversity.**
 - Crack a brown egg, then a white egg. Discuss how the eggs look different on the outside but are the same on the inside.
 - Choose a candy like an M&M. Point out all the different colors, then have your child bite half the candy. Help them to notice that they taste the same, even though they are all different colors.



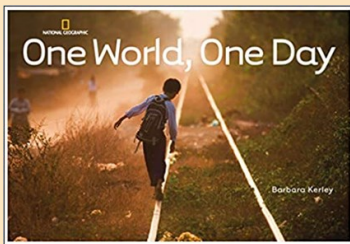
For Children Ages 0-3



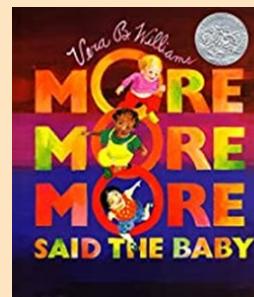
Whoever You Are
by Mem Fox



Baby Born
by Anastasia Suen

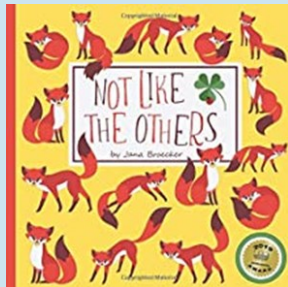


One World, One Day
by Barbara Kerley



*More, More, More,
Said the Baby*
by Vera B. Williams

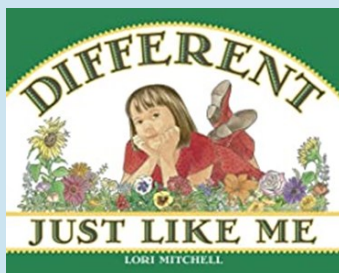
For Children Ages 3-5



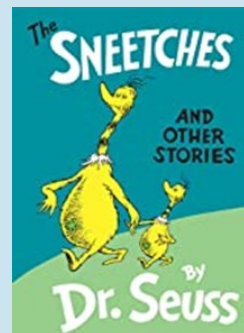
*Not Like the Others: A
Hidden Picture Book
about Diversity*
by Jana Broeker



*We're Different,
We're the Same*
by Bobbie Kates



Different Just like Me
by Lori Mitchell



*The Sneetches
and Other Stories*
by Dr. Seuss