

## **This guide includes:**

- Diverse, inclusive and intersectional book recommendations by age group
  - Tips for parents and educators to talk to children about race/anti-racism
  - Resources for further reading on specific topics
  - Key terms to build children's (and adults) Racial Literacy
  - Recommended reading on the Criminal Justice System
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## **Diverse, inclusive and intersectional book recommendations by age group**

As stated in the title these recommendations are meant to be diverse, inclusive and intersectional. Many of them centre around the experiences and stories of Black and Brown individuals. It is so important for non-white children to see themselves represented and portrayed in a positive light; to see their lived reality normalized. It is equally important for white children to see individuals that don't look like them be the centre of the narrative. These books have been carefully selected as they not only provide much needed representation to BIPOC authors and readers, but they also deal with a wide range of topics that pertain to race, social justice and identity. Below is an extensive, although not comprehensive list of themes that the book recommendations cover:

- Activism
- Adoption
- Black history
- Colorism
- Culture & music
- Dialects and Black Vernacular English
- Gang culture
- Gender roles & stereotyping
- Historical and modern day successful Black figures
- Immigration
- Jim Crow laws and segregation
- Mental health
- Parental incarceration
- Police Brutality
- Prison industrial complex
- Racial and Class privilege
- Sexuality, the LGBT+ community and Black queer culture
- Systemic racism in the US
- The Black experience at predominantly White institutions (PWIs)
- The Great Migration
- The Harlem Renaissance
- Trauma and dealing with trauma

### **Age Group: 0-3 years old**

1. Boy of Mine Jabari Asim
2. Brown Baby Lullaby - Tameka Fryer Brown'
3. Girl of Mine - Jabari Asim
4. Honey Baby Sugar Child - Alice Faye Duncan
5. I am Enough - Grace Byers, *ill.* by Keturah Bobo
6. Just Like a Mama - Alice Faye Duncan, *ill.* by Charnelle Pinkney Barlow
7. Mommy's Khimar - Jamilah Thompkins Bigelow, *ill.* by Ebony Glenn
8. Not Quite Snow White - Ashley Franklin, *ill.* by Ebony Glenn
9. Pretty Brown Face - Andrea and Brian Pinkney

### **Age Group: 3-6 years old / Pre-School level**

1. All Because you Matter - Tami Charles, *ill.* By Bryan Collier
2. Before John was a Jazz giant (John Coltrane) - Carole Boston Weatherford
3. Coretta Scott - Ntozake Shange, *ill.* by Kadir Nelson
4. Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut - Derrick Barnes, *ill.* by Gordon James
5. Dream big, little one - Vashti Harrison
6. Fifty Cents and a dream: Young Booker T. Washington - Jabari Asim, *ill.* by Bryan Collier
7. Furqan's First Flat Top - Robert Liu Trujillo
8. Hair Love - Matthew Cherry, *ill.* by Vashti Harrison
9. Harlem's Little Blackbird - Renee Watson, *ill.* by Christian Robinson
10. Hidden Figures - Margot Lee Shetterly, Winifred Conkling, *ill.* by Laura Freeman
11. Homemade Love - Bell Hooks
12. Honey Baby Sugar Child - Alice Faye Duncan
13. I am Enough - Grace Byers, *ill.* by Keturah Bobo
14. I Am Every Good Thing - Derrick Barnes, *ill.* by Gordon James
15. I believe I can - Grace Byers
16. I Love my Hair - Natasha Anastasia Tarpley
17. Just Like a Mama - Alice Faye Duncan, *ill.* by Charnelle Pinkney Barlow
18. Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me - Daniel Beaty, *ill.* by Bryan Collier
19. Mae Among the Stars - Roda Ahmed, Stasia Burrington
20. Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation - Edwidge Danticat, *ill.* by Leslie Staub
21. M is for Melanin - Tiffany Rose
22. Missing Daddy - Mariame Kaba, *ill.* by Bria Royal
23. Mommy's Khimar - Jamilah Thompkins Bigelow, *ill.* by Ebony Glenn

24. Not Quite Snow White - Ashley Franklin, ill. by Ebony Glenn
25. One Love - Cedella Marley
26. Pretty Brown Face - Andrea and Brian Pinkney
27. Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat - Javaka Steptoe
28. Sulwe - Lupita Nyong'o, *ill.* by Vashti Harrison
29. The Day you Begin - Jaquelin Woodson, Rafael López
30. The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family - Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali, *ill.* by Hatem Aly
31. Visiting Day - Jacqueline Woodson, *ill.* by James Ransome
32. What is Light - Markette Sheppard
33. Whose knees are these - Jabari Asim
34. Who will you be Andrea Pippins - Andrea Pippins
35. Woke Baby - Mahogany Browne

### **Age Group: 7-10 years old / Elementary School level**

1. All Because you Matter - Tami Charles, ill. By Bryan Collier
2. An angel for Mariqua - Zetta Elliot, Millicent Freeman
3. A Song for Gwendolyn Brooks - Alice Faye Duncan, *ill.* by Xia Gordon
4. Before John was a Jazz giant (John Coltrane) - Carole Boston Weatherford
5. Coretta Scott - Ntozake Shange, ill. by Kadir Nelson
6. Dragon in a Bag - Zetta Elliott
7. Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon - Kelly Starling Lyons, *ill.* by Laura Freeman
8. Ellington was not a street - Ntozake Shange, *ill.* by Kadir Nelson
9. Hair Love - Matthew Cherry, ill. by Vashti Harrison
10. I too, Am America - Langston Hughes, Bryan Collier
11. Juneteenth - Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, Drew Nelson, *ill. by Mark Schroder*
12. Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me - Daniel Beaty, ill. by Bryan Collier
13. Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History - Vashti Harrison
14. Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History - Vashti Harrison
15. Little Melba and Her Big Trombone - Katheryn Russell-Brown, *ill.* By Frank Morrison
16. Mae Among the Stars - Roda Ahmed, Stasia Burrington
17. Malcolm Little: the Boy who grew up to become Malcolm X - Ilyasah Shabazz
18. Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation - Edwidge Danticat, *ill.* by Leslie Staub
19. Missing Daddy - Mariame Kaba, ill. by Bria Royal

20. My Hair is a Garden - Cozbi Cabrera
21. New Kid - Jerry Craft
22. Preaching to the Chickens - Jabari Asim, *ill.* by E. B. Lewis
23. Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat - Javaka Steptoe
24. Ruth and the Green Book - Alexander Ramsey Calvin Gwen Strauss, *ill.* by Floyd Cooper
25. Schomburg: The Man who Built a Library - Carole Boston Weatherford, *ill.* by Eric Velasquez
26. Sugar Hill - Carole Boston Weatherford, *ill.* by R. Gregory Christie
27. Sulwe - Lupita Nyong'o, *ill.* by Vashti Harrison
28. Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee! - Andrea Loney
29. The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore - Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, *ill.* by R. Gregory Christie
30. The Day you Begin - Jaquelin Woodson, Rafael López
31. The Roots of Rap - Carole Boston Weatherford, *ill.* by Frank Morrison
32. The Undefeated - Kwame Alexander, Kadir Nelson
33. This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration - Jaqueline Woodson, *ill.* by James Ransome
34. Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas - Gwendolyn Hooks, *ill.* by Colin Bootman
35. Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky - Kwame Mbalia
36. Trombone Shorty - Troy Andrews
37. Viola Desmond Won't be Budged! - Jody Warner, *ill.* by Richard Rudnicki

**Age Group: 10-13 years old / Middle School level**

1. Betty before X - Ilyasah Shabazz, Renée Watson
2. Brown Girl Dreaming - Jaqueline Woodson
3. Clayton Byrd goes Underground - Rita Williams - Garcia
4. Clean Getaway - Nic Stone
5. Ghost - Jason Reynolds
6. Hidden Figures: Younger Reader's Edition - Margot Lee Shetterly
7. Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History - Vashti Harrison
8. Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History - Vashti Harrison
9. Marley Dias Gets It Done: And So Can You! - Marley Emerson Dias
10. Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968 - Alice Faye Duncan, *ill.* by Gregory Christie
11. Miles Morales Spider Man - Jason Reynolds
12. New Kid - Jerry Craft

13. Piecing me Together - Renée Watson
14. Say Her Name - Zetta Elliott, *ill.* by Loveis Wise
15. Schomburg: The Man who Built a Library - Carole Boston Weatherford, *ill.* by Eric Velasquez
16. The Crossover - Kwame Alexander
17. The Skin I'm in - Sharon G. Flake
18. The Stars Beneath our Feet - David Barclay Moore
19. Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky - Kwame Mbalia
20. What Colors Is my world? - Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Raymond Obstfeld, *ill.* by Ben Boos, A.G. Ford
21. Young, Gifted and Black - Jamia Wilson *ill.* by Andrea Pippins

### **Age Group: 14-18 years old / High School level**

1. All boys aren't Blue - George M. Johnson
2. American Street - Ibi Zoboi
3. Black Enough: Stories of Being Young & Black in America - *ed.* by Ibi Zoboi
4. Dear Martin - Nic Stone
5. Piecing me Together - Renée Watson
6. Punching the Air - Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam (Of the exonerated five)
7. Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools - Monique W. Morris
8. Say Her Name - Zetta Elliott, *ill.* by Loveis Wise
9. The Boy in the Black Suit - Jason Reynolds
10. The Hate U Give - Angie Thomas
11. The N word - Jabari Asim
12. The Poet X - Elizabeth Acevedo
13. The 57 Bus - Dashka Slater
14. The Master Plan: My Journey from Life in Prison to a Life with Purpose - Bret Witter and Chris Wilson
15. Just Mercy: a Story of Justice and Redemption - Bryan Stevenson
16. There are no Children Here - Alex Kotlowitz

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Anti-racist childrens books

<https://www.theconsciouskid.org/black-authors/>

Black Lives Matter - Kids!

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/101851.Black\\_Lives\\_Matter\\_Kids\\_](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/101851.Black_Lives_Matter_Kids_)

Black Lives Matter library ideas

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/120866.Black\\_Lives\\_Matter\\_Library\\_Ideas](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/120866.Black_Lives_Matter_Library_Ideas)

Books on race, racism and resistance

<https://www.theconsciouskid.org/antiracist-childrens-books/ff982fqwlgu3121xqwrrfnmct8a2I9>

New books by Black authors

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/122073.New\\_Books\\_by\\_Black\\_Authors](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/122073.New_Books_by_Black_Authors)

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### Key points to remember when talking to children about Race

#### **It is never too early**

Regardless of if the adults in their lives are speaking about race and racism around them, children as young as 3-6 months notice and respond differently to people based on race (Kelly et al., 2007)<sup>1</sup>. Once children are able to talk, these perceptions and ideas continue to develop based on the world around them. Remember, actions speak louder than words — children notice who their parents have as friends, who lives in their neighbourhood, in the tv shows they watch, and what roles they play.

Therefore it is important for adults, parents and educators to not just talk to their children about diversity - but also seek out and support non-white authors, creators, educators, neighbors, etc.

#### **Use the words white/ white privilege/ white supremacy/white power**

It is important for white people to claim & identify as 'white' - by avoiding the word you inadvertently (or not) mask the privilege, power and history associated with it. When you teach white kids about their whiteness, they are better able to understand systematic

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, D. J., Quinn, P. C., Slater, A. M., Lee, K., Ge, L., & Pascalis, O. (2007). The other-race effect develops during infancy: Evidence of perceptual narrowing. *Psychological Science*, 18(12), 1084-1089.

racism and identify racial inequity in the world around them. Tatum (2017)<sup>2</sup> highlights that when white children learn about racism, they see their whiteness as a source of guilt, but a key aspect of this teaching is also to help white children understand the power and privilege they have to take action and speak up - no matter how young they are.

### **Listen. And always respond**

Anti-racist education for kids is not an one-sided presentation, campaign or lecture - it is an ongoing dialogue. Listen to how children perceive the events and issues of the world around them. In instances where they might be misinformed or make a racist comment - don't shut them down or shame them - it doesn't solve anything. Understand the basis of where their opinions might come from and provide them with accurate information. It is ok for parents/educators to not always have the answers to questions and communicate that to children as well.

### **Find balance**

White parents/educators, never put the responsibility of teaching race, sharing personal experiences, etc. on BIPOC. But when you do seek it, always value and compensate their work.

While for many communities of color, race conversations are critical for survival and persistence, it is equally important for everybody else to mobilize it as a tool of resistance.

### **Specifically talk about colorism/ anti-Blackness**

The value of white skin as superior to black skin and the white=good, black=bad myth is deeply ingrained globally across white and non-white communities. Colorism (prejudice against individuals with darker skin tone, typically within the same racial/ethnic group) intersects with racism to place Blackness at the bottom of the hierarchy. These ideas are so ingrained in media and popular culture that it is easy for children to internalise them - especially within communities of color. Doing so ultimately perpetuates white supremacy and in society we see tangible discrimination against darker skinned folks in terms of economic and social outcomes (Reece, 2020)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Tatum, B. D. (2017). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?: And other conversations about race*. Basic Books.

<sup>3</sup> Reece, R. L. (2020). The Gender of Colorism: Understanding the Intersection of Skin Tone and Gender Inequality. *Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy*, 1-9.

Positively speak of Blackness, facets of Black identity (especially things like hair, dialect) with young children - also help them identify examples of anti-Blackness and colorism in their own communities.

### **Talk about Structural Racism**

“Systemic racism is not that there are zero racists in the system, but that even if there were zero racist individuals the system would still disadvantage Black and Poc individuals” (anon.). This is an important message to get across to all children - it helps see the big picture and change the conversation to understand each of our place as influenced within a system of racial stratification.

We cannot talk about structural racism without teaching accurate and comprehensive history — not just the white narrative.

This video, [Unequal Opportunity Race by Kimberle Crenshaw](#) is quite an easy starting point to help kids understand the concept.

### **Positive Affirmation**

It is important for BIPOC kids to receive positive affirmation as it affects children’s (both white and non-white) racial attitudes and also can replace feelings of isolation and self-blame for their experiences, and increase academic engagement and achievement (El-Amin and Seider, et al., 2017)<sup>4</sup>.

### **Children have the power to take action**

Important for parents and educators to provide models and examples of individuals of all races and ages taking action towards racial equity that they can emulate. Schools are a great space in which children can consider how resources, curriculum, policies, etc. are not inclusive. Engage in discussion with children on what needs to change and how they can change it. For example: lack of books by BIPOC authors and characters in the school library, school rules regarding hairstyles, outdated curriculums that do not adequately represent the histories of non-white communities.

### **Actions speak louder than words**

As mentioned earlier, actions speak louder than words. As a parent or educator, the actions you take on a daily basis are critical in enforcing/dismantling racist systems.

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<sup>4</sup> El-Amin, A., Seider, S., Graves, D., Tamerat, J., Clark, S., Soutter, M., ... & Malhotra, S. (2017). Critical consciousness: A key to student achievement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98(5), 18-23.



Talking about racism is great but your true anti-racism is reflected in where you eat, travel, live, shop, who you associate with, what you watch, listen, read, etc.

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<https://www.theconsciouskid.org/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race>

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### Booklists by Topic

[Social Justice Books](https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/) (<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>) is a comprehensive resource that includes recommendations for children, young adults and educators in the United States, carefully curated by topic. There are over 60 different lists, some of them are:

- [Activism](#)
  - Identity : eg. [Afro-Latinx](#), [Muslims](#)
  - [Economic class](#)
  - [Families](#)
  - [Immigration](#)
  - [Rethinking Schools](#)
  - [Bilingual](#) titles
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### Key terms to build racial literacy

Language is a powerful tool. Words have historical and context-specific meaning, and therefore no word is politically neutral. Intentional use of language and better racial

literacy is critical to anti-racist efforts. It is equally so important to build this literacy starting at a young age.

Below are a few resources that **list and define** key terms — although they cover an extensive range of vocabulary, this should not be treated as exhaustive.

- <https://www.theconsciouskid.org/racial-literacy-key-terms>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#racism>
- <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

A few terms included in the resources above are:

- Ally
- Anti-Black
- Anti-Racism
- Colorism
- Cultural Appropriation
- Discrimination
- Dysconscious Racism
- Ethnicity
- Implicit Bias
- Intersectionality
- Microaggressions
- Prejudice
- Privilege
- Racism
- Racial Equity
- Reparations
- Restorative Justice
- White Privilege

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### Recommended reading on the US Criminal Justice System

1. A Colony in a Nation - Chris Hayes
2. Are Prisons Obsolete - Angela Davis
3. Autobiography of an Execution - David Dow

4. *Between the World and Me* - Ta-Nehisi Coates
5. *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and its legacy* - Heather Ann Thompson
6. *Burning Down the House: the end of Juvenile Prison* - Nell Bernstein
7. *Caught: the Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics* - Marie Gottschalk
8. *Chasing Gideon: the Elusive Quest for Poor People's Justice* - Karen Houppert
9. *Fist Stick Knife Gun* - Geoffrey Canada
10. *Fourth City: Essays from Prison in America* - ed. Doran Larson
11. *Infinite Hope: How Wrongful Conviction, Solitary Confinement and 12 years of Death Row failed to kill my soul* - Anthony Graves
12. *Insane: America's Criminal Treatment of Mental Illness* - Alisa Roth
13. *Inside Private Prisons: An American Dilemma in the age of Mass Incarceration* - Lauren-Brooke Eisen
14. *Lockdown America: Police and prisons in the age of crisis* - Christian Parenti
15. *Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform* - John Pfaff
16. *Locking up our own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* - James Forman Jr.
17. *No Equal Justice* - David Cole
18. *Punishment without crime: How our Massive Misdemeanor System Traps the Innocent and Makes America more unequal* - Alexandra Natapoff
19. *The Color of Law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America* - Richard Rothstein
20. *The End of Policing* - Alex Vitale
21. *The New Jim Crow* - Michelle Alexander
22. *Usual Cruelty: the complicity of lawyers in the criminal injustice system* - Alec Karakatsanis