

The tiney guide to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist early educator

By Laura Henry-Allain MBE & Matt Lloyd-Rose

tiney



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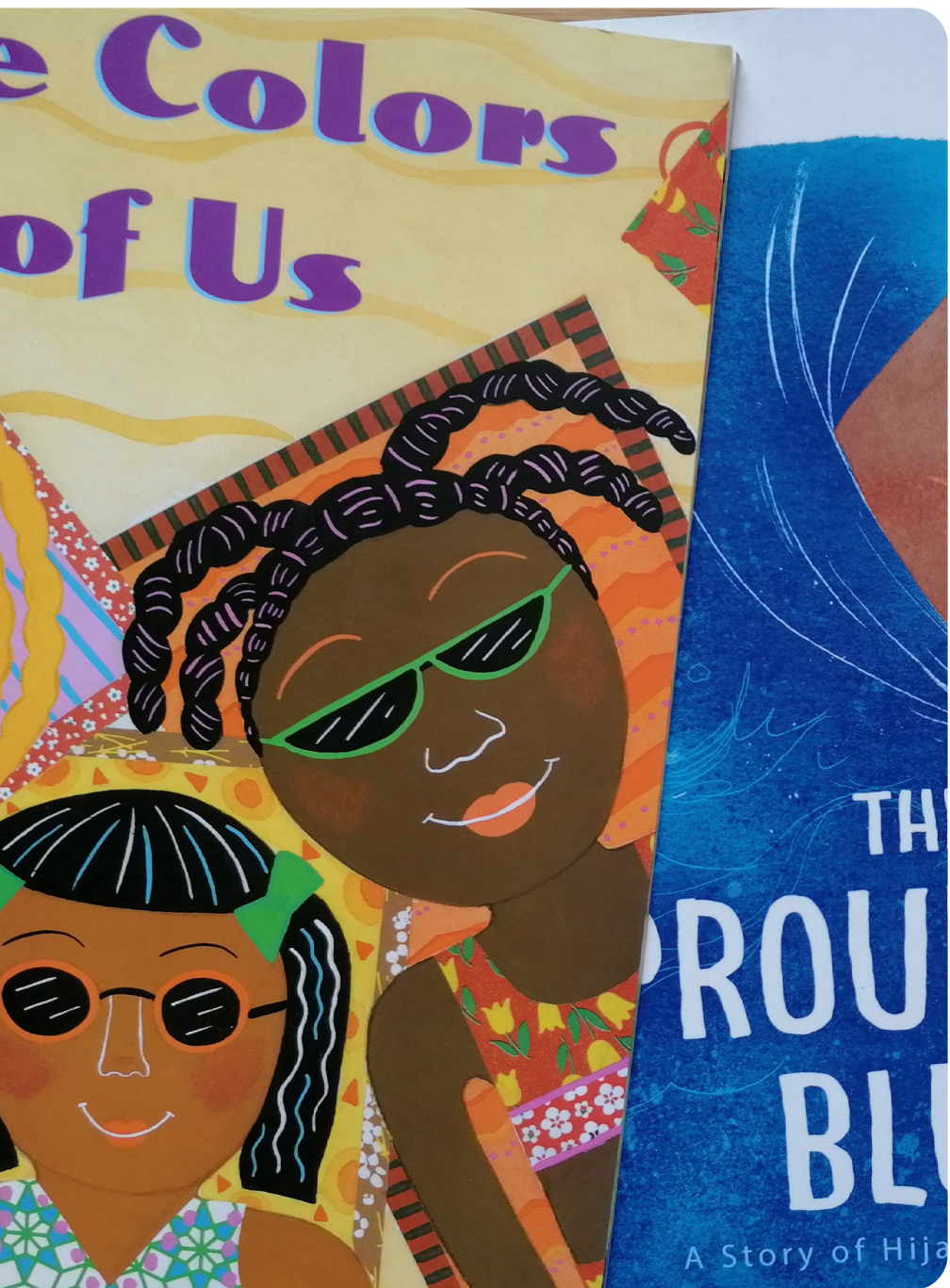
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Contents

- 06 Introduction
- 08 Starting with ourselves
- 12 Knowing the children we work with
- 14 Creating an inclusive, anti-racist learning environment
- 18 Talking about diversity, inclusion and anti-racism
- 22 Celebrating difference
- 26 Building empathy
- 28 Working with families
- 32 Resources and further reading

Introduction

At tiney we celebrate diversity, promote inclusion, and challenge racism and all forms of prejudice. We want every child in a tiney home nursery to grow up to do the same.

We're launching this guide to reinforce our commitment and strengthen our practice, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in the United States in 2020, a year when the Black Lives Matter campaign travelled around the world and the deep and widespread damage of racism became more visible than ever.

In the Early Years, we have the privilege of working with children while they're learning how the world works. We need to make

the most of this opportunity to introduce them to other lives and perspectives, to help them to develop openness, empathy, and curiosity, and grow up to become inclusive, anti-racist adults.

A huge opportunity

We do not live in an equal society. Many people face prejudice and discrimination every day - whether open or hidden, deliberate or inadvertent - because of their race, faith,



Joss Cambridge-Simmons



gender, sexuality, age, disability, or other aspects of their background or identity.


Education may not be as visible as political activism, but it is the most powerful and reliable route to enduring change. As an early educator, you can change lives and change the world. You have the opportunity to ensure the next generation grows up to be open, inclusive and anti-racist. We're delighted to bring you this guide to help you to do so.

An ongoing commitment

One headline, at the start of this guide, is that celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion, and being anti-racist is a dynamic process, something we do every day, moment to moment, in our interactions with children and the experiences we offer them. One-off gestures and good intentions are not enough; this needs to infuse every aspect of our practice.

Starting with ourselves

To create a truly inclusive, anti-racist learning environment, we need to start with ourselves and reflect honestly on our attitudes and experiences. We may believe in the importance of inclusion and anti-racism, but that doesn't mean we won't have blind spots or biases. When we reflect on ourselves, we can work on ourselves, and ensure that we won't inadvertently discriminate against others or limit what we offer the children in our care.



The self-reflection in this section may be uncomfortable and could, in some cases, trigger upsetting thoughts or memories. Please look after yourself and take a break if you need to. If you feel you need to talk to someone for whatever reason, there is a list of helpful organisations at the end of this guide.

Self-reflection

Start by asking yourself a few questions. Find a quiet space, grab a notepad and a cup of tea, and take a few minutes to think about them.

- How important is it to me to be an inclusive, anti-racist educator? What difference could that make to children and families?
- When in my life do I feel like I feel/felt racism towards another person? What can/did I do about that?
- What do I already do in my life to celebrate diversity and challenge racism and other forms of prejudice?
- When in my life do I feel like I feel/felt any other form of prejudice towards another person because of something about their identity, appearance or background? What can/did I do about that?
- When in my life have I personally experienced prejudice or discrimination? How did I feel and what effect did it have on me?
- How might my attitudes and experiences affect what I choose to do and offer the children I work with?
- When in my life have I seen others experience prejudice or discrimination? How did that make me feel and what effect did it have on them?
- To what extent do my personal tastes and experiences define the outer limits of what I offer the children?

Ultimately we've all been shaped by our experiences and we all have biases and blind spots, which we may not be aware of. The nature of blind spots is that they're hard to see! But by reflecting on the things we do, say and think, we can spot unhelpful attitudes or gaps in our practice that may be holding us back.

Some of those questions might have made you feel uncomfortable - this is part of the process and a sign that you're engaging thoughtfully with this. We've got to be willing to get uncomfortable in order to become truly reflective, inclusive, anti-racist educators.

Now that we've done that, let's think about our work with children and families.

Alicia's tiney home



As well as pausing to reflect, another powerful way to work on ourselves is to stay curious: to learn about inclusion and anti-racism through books, blogs and podcasts. You can find a list of resources and further reading at the end of this guide.

Knowing the children we work with

We need to take an interest in the communities we're working in if we want to ensure we're valuing children and families and celebrating the diversity around us.

When you start working with a new family, get to know them and take an interest in them. This may sound obvious, but can be an easy step to miss out when people have busy lives. If we listen to them, and treat them as the expert on their own child, we will lay a foundation that allows for mutual support and mutual respect.

This doesn't mean we need to put families on the spot and ask them lots of personal questions. Instead we should provide space for them to share important details, and build trusting relationships that allow them to feel closely involved in the life of your home nursery.

Remember to encourage children and families to **use and celebrate their first language.**



Questions you may want to ask new families are:

- What do you prefer to be called?
- Are there aspects of your child's background, family life, language or culture that we can learn about or celebrate in my home nursery?
- Dr Eunice Lumsden recommends this lovely question: "Can you tell me about your child's name? Why did you choose it?"

Creating an inclusive, anti-racist learning environment

To offer an inclusive and anti-racist early education, we need to embed those values into our learning environment.

Pause and think:

- How, and how much, does your environment enable children to recognise and celebrate difference and develop empathy?
- What kinds of thought and conversation does your environment enable?
- If you work alongside other educators, have you created spaces to discuss this as a team?



One of the most effective ways to answer these questions is to do an audit of your books and resources. Look through them and ask:

- Do your books and resources reflect the diversity in society?
- Do you have resources from other places and cultures, which reflect the world we live in?
- Do you have resources that reflect the diversity of the children in your care and of your local community?
- What do you see as the value and impact of having diverse materials for children's learning and development?

How did you find that?

How did you find that? Did you spot any gaps? For most people the answer will be yes. And you may even be shocked to realise how glaring some of the gaps are.

We live in a culture where many of the easiest books and resources to access do not showcase and celebrate diversity. As educators we may have to go out of our way to create a collection of diverse books, to source fabrics, foods, musical instruments and everyday items from other cultures, or to ensure we have diverse small world play figures. Even if you don't have children in your setting from different racial and cultural backgrounds, this is still very important!

The things you have in your environment send messages about what you value and how you see the world, and open up opportunities for thought and conversation.



Choosing your books

It can be powerful to have books that address issues of prejudice and inclusion head on. See some examples in the further reading at the end of the guide. But it's just as valuable to have books that feature diverse characters living life in an ordinary, recognisable way.



Talking to young children about diversity, inclusion and anti-racism

You can have books and resources that depict all sections of the community, but as an educator what are you doing to support that? How are you deepening children's thinking through talk and play?

We may be surprised by how early children are ready to have conversations about big themes like inclusion, empathy and racism. Obviously we communicate in an age, stage and ability appropriate way,

but broadly if a child asks us a question about something, they're ready to hear the answer.

Here are a few principles for talking to very young children about these issues:

- Talk openly and matter-of-factly about the ways individuals and families can be different from one another - but avoid using those differences to label them (e.g. if we were reading Jabari Jumps, we would talk openly about him being black, about his background and culture, but we wouldn't label him 'the black boy').
- When children talk or ask about how others are different, encourage their curiosity here, just as you would for anything else. Encourage them to talk about different skin colours, family structures or disabilities, and to depict them in their drawings and paintings.
- Role-model a positive attitude to difference. Talk positively about difference in the books you share with children. Interact in a warm, positive way with the diverse resources in your setting.
- Pay attention to how, and how much, children interact with diverse books and resources; if they seem to be interested in something, follow their natural curiosity and ask some gentle questions.
- If you see children treating toys with different characteristics differently from one another - or ignoring certain toys - ask them to tell you about it. Follow their lead. You could also model play with these toys as the adult.
- If children respond negatively to certain resources or characters in books, ask them why and gently talk with them about respecting and including others.
- Help children to think; don't tell them what to think. Ask questions, listen and gently introduce new ideas. Don't lecture them, shame them or overload them with information.

- Allow conversations to arise naturally, avoid forcing these conversations ('It's afternoon snack time, let's have a discussion about being anti-racist!'). Remember we can use books and resources to scaffold meaningful conversations.
- Introduce words like prejudice, racism and empathy; don't worry about them being too complicated. Children will surprise us with their ability to absorb new ideas and sophisticated vocabulary!
- Use stories to support children to think through complicated issues and develop empathy.
- If children want to find out more about something, research the answer with them, online or in a book, rather than just telling them.

Fatima's tiny home



Common pitfalls

Sometimes people claim to be 'colour blind' - that they see the person, not the colour of their skin. Although this may come from a good place, this isn't helpful and denies the reality of our differences. It's much healthier for us to talk openly and positively rather than to ignore a person's colour.

Likewise, sometimes we try to protect children from difficult realities by not mentioning them. Unfortunately racism and other forms of prejudice exist and are experienced and acted out by very young children. We need to talk about them.

Celebrating difference

(working with babies and toddlers)

“Exposure and awareness of differences will enable children to recognise and celebrate them at a young age. This will allow children to overcome their fear of difference, and gain respect and accept the differences confidently.”

-Chandrika Devarakonda

Children are able to recognise differences from the time they're a baby. They have that awareness and we mustn't postpone this work until children are old enough to have a deep and meaningful conversation about it! As Ibram X Kendi has written: 'Babies are

taught to be racist or anti-racist. There's no neutrality'.

We can begin celebrating difference and championing an anti-racist outlook from day one. You've thought about the physical books and resources in



Angie & Libby's tiny home



your home nursery. Now pause to think about everything else children experience with you and the extent to which you're broadening children's horizons of even the youngest children. How are you appealing to all the different senses when you think about inclusion and celebrating difference - what children see, hear, taste, feel and smell?

For example:

- What **songs, rhymes** and **stories** do children hear with you?

- What **foods** and **flavours** do we offer children?
- Which **festivals** do children celebrate with you?
- What **outings** do we go on?

It's really important that we each bring our passions, personality, preferences, culture and languages to our work with young children. This is what will make it special and distinctive. But we also need to ensure that we look beyond our own immediate tastes and experiences in what we offer children.

There are simple things we can do:

- Ensure your songs, rhymes and stories come from a range of different cultures, traditions and languages.
- Shake up your menu and include more meals from different cultures. Broaden the range of herbs and spices you use day to day.
- Keep an eye on the calendar and expand the range of events you discuss and celebrate in your home nursery.
- Ensure your outings reflect the diversity of your local community. Make the most of the local area: its shops, markets, museums and places of worship. As possible and appropriate, visit places further afield too.
- Find out from your Local Authority and local library what events are taking place.
- Have different languages and scripts on display in your setting.





Building empathy

(working with 3-5 year olds)

As children get older, we can start to talk more explicitly about racism and other forms of prejudice - and the consequence of that kind of behaviour.

Through play and discussion we can support children to develop empathy, helping them to imagine how others might be feeling and to see situations from other perspectives.

These opportunities might arise from reading books with children or observing their play, as already noted. Or they might come about through role playing situations

with them - acting them out ourselves, or with teddies or small world toys.

Role plays could be simple dilemmas involving different kinds of diversity. For example:

- Someone being left out or excluded due to their race

- Someone being teased or called names due to a disability
- Someone being told they're strange for having two daddies
- Someone saying that a certain activity is 'only for girls'

Role play gives children a safe space to explore feelings and come up with solutions to challenging situations. As adults our role is to scaffold children's understanding, asking open questions, repeating their ideas back to them, and encouraging them to develop their thinking further. As the adult playing with children, our role is often to be the 'narrator', describing what is happening and helping children to put thoughts into words.

We want to allow children to explore their own ideas and thought processes, not to supply them with opinions, tell them

they're wrong, or shame them for expressing a point of view.

Useful questions might include:

- What do you think?
- How does that make you feel?
- How do you think that made them feel?
- Why do you think they did that?
- What would you do next if you were in this story?
- What could make this better?
- What could we do differently?

When children start at school we want them to be able to empathise with others, and we want them to understand at a deep level that racism and all forms of prejudice are wrong, just as they understand that pulling another child's hair is wrong.

Working with families

Do you work with a diverse range of families? How do you acknowledge and celebrate their diversity? How do you share your inclusive, anti-racist approach with them?

In this guide so far, we've mainly looked at how we work with young children. Now let's take a moment to think about how we work with families.

Self-reflection

Ask yourself the following questions:

Which families?

- Are you building relationships with a diverse mix of families?

How do you celebrate the diversity of the families you work with?

- How curious are you? Do you really know your families?
- How do you use the settling in period to find out about your families?
- How are you learning from families in an ongoing way and ensuring they feel treated as a source of knowledge and expertise?



If you live in an area with less diversity, your commitment to celebrating difference and being an inclusive, anti-racist educator is all the more important.

- How do you recognise and celebrate individual children's identities?
- How are you supporting the self-esteem and self-worth of children from minority backgrounds in your local area?
- How would you support a child with two mummies?
- How would you support a blended family?
- How would you support children with a disability and/or a Special Educational Need?
- How would you support a child living with a foster family?
- How are you supporting and celebrating different family cultures and faiths?



Broadening minds

As well as celebrating the diversity of the families you work with, your work can also affect the way that they think about inclusion and diversity.

You can do this through:

- Sharing ideas for play at home
- Recommending books (and ensuring families are signed up to the local library)
- Signposting local places, events and opportunities
- Talking openly and positively about the importance of diversity and inclusion

Having difficult conversations

If you invest in strong relationships with families – listening, understanding, creating a culture of trust – you will be in a position to challenge if necessary. You could find yourself in a situation where you need to respond to discriminatory and/or racist remarks or behaviour.

If that happens:

- Listen to them
- Remain calm and respectful, without being apologetic
- Explain why diversity and inclusion matter to you
- Inform them of the benefits for the children

And you may find yourself in a situation where you are challenged on the terms that you're using to talk about difference – another race, culture, or family structure for example.

If that happens, and you can see that you've been insensitive or used an unhelpful term:

- Try not to get stressed or flustered – these things can happen
- Listen and acknowledge their feelings and remarks
- Apologise and thank them for letting you know
- Let them know that you'll change the terms you use in future
- Ask how can you find out more to support your learning

We're all learning – we as educators and the children and families we work with – and we all just need to try our best. If we're too nervous to talk openly about difference, and to discuss inclusion and anti-racism, then we won't move forward. Be courageous and be humble.

Resources and further reading

Further reading

- **'Why we must incorporate diversity and inclusion in early years education'** Alicia Wilkins - tiney childminder
- **Supporting you to raise anti-racist children** Laura Henry-Allain MBE for Mattel
- **'The EYs has to do more to embrace diversity'** Laura Henry-Allain MBE
- **'Actually it does matter'** Laura Henry-Allain MBE
- **'How do I talk about race with children in the Early Years setting?'** Liz Pemberton
- **How Racism Can Affect Child Development** Harvard Center on the Developing Child
- **'Anti-racism in the Early Years'** Kate Moxley
- **'How to talk to your children about race and racism'** Freddie Harrel and Dr Pragya Agarwal
- **'Why white parents need to talk to their children about race'** Eloise Rickman



- **'Race equality - our legal duty'** Marcia Tatham
- **'Inclusion - let's talk about race'** Dr Stella Louis
- **Roads From The Past: A Short History Of Britain's Gypsies, Roma And Travellers**
- **Seeing yourself in what you read** National Literacy Trust report
- **Gender Stereotypes are Limiting Children's Potential and Causing Lifelong Harm** Fawcett Society

Useful organisations

- www.equalityhumanrights.com
- www.equallyours.org.uk
- www.obv.org.uk
- www.raceequalitymatters.com
- www.runnymedetrust.org
- www.racereflections.co.uk
- www.TheEarlyYearsBlackList.com
- www.lgbtqearlyyears.org

National Literacy Trust recommendations

- Black Lives Matter Book lists

TV and radio

- Jojo and Gran Gran CBeebies and on CBeebies radio
- My World Kitchen CBeebies
- Bookmarks Netflix

Podcasts

- Family Love Stories with Laura Henry-Allain
- About Race with Reni Eddo-Lodge
- Have you heard George's Podcast?
- Slay in your lane
- Early Years FSF Tapestry
- Black Ballad: The Survival

- Early Years Conversations
- Some families

- Becoming An Anti-Racist

Instagram accounts to follow

- @theconsciouskid
- @jamel.carly
- @JossyCare
- @LauraHAllain
- @theblacknurserymanager
- @diverse_kids_books
- @hereweeread
- @booksfordiversity
- @makemotherhooddiverse
- @easypeasyjordan
- @ahjoomahan
- @thelittlenestlingplace
- @birminghamdoula
- @thatsinglemum
- @lots_andlotsoflove
- @drmunabdi
- @dturner300
- @theblackcurriculum
- @eybluk
- @davidcahn206

Books

Books for you

For the general reader

- Reni Eddo-Lodge: Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race
- Ibram X Kendi: How to be an Antiracist
- Robin DiAngelo: White Fragility
- Claudia Rankine: Just Us
- Candice Brathwaite: I Am Not Your Babymother
- Lemn Sissay: My Name Is Why
- Edited by Nikesh Shukla: The Good Immigrant
- Derek Owusu: That Reminds Me
- Layla F Saad: Me and White Supremacy
- Dr Dwight Turner: Intersections of privilege and otherness in counselling and psychotherapy
- Akala: Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire
- Guilaine Kinouani: Living while black, the essential guide to overcoming racial trauma
- Dr Pragya Agarwal: SWAY: Unravelling Unconscious Bias
- Dr Pragya Agarwal: Wish we knew what to say, talking with children about race
- Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu: This is why I resist, don't define my black identity

Books

For early educators

- Chandrika Devarakonda: Diversity and Inclusion in Early Childhood
- Cathy Nutbrown and Peter Clough: Inclusion in the Early Years
- Sandra Smidt: Creating an Anti-Racist Culture in the Early Years
- Jane Lane: Young Children and Racial Justice
- Penny Borkett: Cultural Diversity and Inclusion in Early Years Education



Alicia's tiny home



Children's booklist

There's a world of wonderful books for children highlighting diversity and inclusion. This list is designed to provide a starting point as opposed to being an exhaustive list.

Anti-Racist Reading

These books are unapologetically celebratory or radical in nature

- Fran Manushkin and Lauren Tobia: Happy in our Skin
- Ibram Kendi: Anti-racist baby
- Ashok Banker: I am Brown
- Julius Lester: Let's talk about Race
- Jacqueline Woodson: The Other Side
- Innosant Nagara: A is for Activist
- Chana Ginelle Ewing: An ABC of equality
- Angela Joy: Black is a Rainbow Color
- Derrick Barnes: I Am Every Good Thing

- Jelani Memory: A Kids book about Racism
- Tiffany Rose: M is for Melani: A Celebration of the Black Child



Books Reflecting Realities

The aim of this list to show representation in children's literature in a matter of fact way. The children are doing nothing special other than being themselves

- Stephen Krensky: I Am So Brave
- Mylo Freeman: Sweet Dreams Zaza
- Bell Hooks: Skin Again
- Atinuke: B is for Baby
- Denise Fleming: In the small pond
- Ezra Jack Keats: The snowy day
- Margaret H. Mason: These Hands
- Denise Vega: If your monster won't go to bed
- Hena Khan: Like the moon loves the sky
- Robie Harris: Who?
- Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola: Clean Up
- Rachel Isadora: Peekaboo Morning
- Maria Carluccio: D is for Dress up: The ABC's of What to Wear
- Gillian Hibbs: Errol's garden
- Alex Barrow and Sally J. Labadie: If I had a dinosaur
- Davina Hamilton: Riley Can Be Anything
- John Steptoe: Baby Says
- Jabari Asim & LeUyen Pham: Whose Toes Are Those

- Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury: So Much
- Robb Pearlman & Eda Kaba: Pink is for Boys
- Tom Percival: Ruby's Worry
- Gaia Cornwall: Jabari Jumps
- Jessica Love: Julian is a Mermaid
- Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola: Look Up!
- Innosanto Nagara: Counting on Community
- Sarah Weeks: Counting Ovejas
- Molly Bang: Ten, Nine, Eight
- Frane' Lesanc: Island Counting
- Roseanne Thong: One is a Drummer
- Valerie Bloom: Fruits: A Caribbean Counting Poem



Books Celebrating Difference

Books in this category are meant to celebrate differences in all children. Highlighting the importance of inclusion in building an antiracist curriculum

- Christian Robinson: You Matter
- Mem Fox: Whoever you are
- Lupito Nyong'o: Sulwe
- Karamo Brown: I am Perfectly Designed
- Karen Beaumont: I Like Myself
- Karen Katz: The Colors of us
- Emma Dabiri: Don't Touch My Hair
- Grace Byers: I Am Enough
- Devi Rose: I am Whole
- Steve Herman: Teach your Dragon about Diversity
- Peter H. Reynolds: Be you

- Akala: You Can Do Anything (Hip and Hop)
- Matthew Cherry: Hair Love
- Todd Parr: It's Okay to Be Different
- Laura Henry-Allain MBE and Onyinye Iwu: My Skin, Your Skin (Published Autumn 2021 and pre order now)
- Yamile Saied Mendez: Where are you From?
- Elizabeth Hammill: Over the hills and far away ('150 rhymes from across the globe')
- Kat Zhang: Amy Wu and the Perfect Bau
- Ibtihaj Muhammad, S.K.Ali: The Proudest Blue

Books Connected to Culture

These books are connected to specific cultural experiences or cultural variations

- Ifeoma Onyefulu: A is for Africa
- Floella Benjamin & Diane Ewen: Coming to England
- Hena Khan: Under my hijab
- Hudda Ibrahim: What color is my hijab?
- Rochelle Watson-Senayah: The ABCs of Caribbean Food



Useful organisations

Samaritans

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

www.samaritans.org.uk

NSPCC

0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child (24-hour helpline)

www.nspcc.org.uk

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

Race Reflections

www.racereflections.co.uk

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org.uk



tiney is on a mission to unlock the potential of every child

We believe that a great early education can be life changing and we're training up a community of fantastic early years educators to give more children an amazing start. Our goal is to make the highest quality childcare accessible to more families, and to empower a generation of micro-entrepreneurs to deliver life-changing care and education from their own homes.

Find out more at tiney.co