ParentChild+
Equal Possibilities From The Start

WHY CHOOSE ANTI-BIAS BOOKS?

ParentChild+ is committed to ensuring that all children have access to the best early childhood education materials currently available. As society evolves, and the families we serve become increasingly diverse, it is imperative for organizations supporting children and families to engage in continuous quality improvement. Recent research has brought to light the lack of diversity and inclusivity in educational materials. It is our goal to challenge this trend and provide the ParentChild+ community with the tools needed to enrich the lives of families by sharing materials that are diverse, inclusive, and encompass the values and mission of our program.

Contrary to popular opinion, children begin to notice race and skin color as early as six months of age. They draw their conclusions from their world: people around them, books they read, and toys they play with. Children and families need to see themselves and their communities reflected in their books and toys. Program materials should not only be a vehicle for increasing parent-child interaction and improving school readiness skills, but also tools for raising strong, confident, and self-assured individuals.

The following checklist is a guide to help you select anti-bias books. The more boxes you are able to check off, the more anti-biased the book. We understand that not all the books in your library will check all the boxes. However, your library should be a well-rounded representation of valuable books that serve a myriad of purposes.

If you would like to learn more:
https://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books

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ANTI-BIAS BOOK CHECKLIST

ALL BOOKS SHOULD BE

- FREE OF STEREOTYPES
- FREE FROM TOKENISM
- AVOID LOADED WORDS
- ACCURATE AND RESPECTFUL

IN YOUR LIBRARY, BOOKS SHOULD

- INCLUDE PEOPLE, NOT JUST ANIMALS
- SHOW FAMILIES AND LIFESTYLES THAT REPRESENT YOUR PROGRAM FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITY
- REPRESENT PEOPLE GROUPS WHO ARE OFTEN EXCLUDED OR UNSEEN
- SHOW DIVERSE ABILITIES
- BE WRITTEN OR ILLUSTRATED BY PEOPLE OF COLOR
- INCLUDE "DOERS" OF ALL AGES AND PEOPLE GROUPS
- PORTRAY ACTION TOWARD CHANGE

ALSO CONSIDER

- CHOOSING BOOKS WITH A RECENT PUBLICATION DATE (THAT MORE ACCURATELY REFLECT OUR DIVERSE SOCIETY)

ANTI-BIAS TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

STEREOTYPE

According to Teaching for Change, a stereotype is an "oversimplified generalization about a particular identity group which usually carries derogatory, inaccurate messages and applies them to ALL people in the group." Instead of including stereotypes, books should elevate, honor, and praise individuals as well as their culture, lifestyle choices and decisions.

TOKENISM

Tokenism is evident when you see only "one" person from a specific group and/or nationality in a book. Another example of tokenism is only having ONE book in your library that promotes diversity and inclusion. Books should include several characters who share diverse physical and or social characteristics, so children can see that these characters are equally important.

INVISIBILITY

Invisibility is when a certain group of people are omitted, which reinforces prejudiced ideas about people who are not seen. Some examples of groups who are often excluded are: rural, blue collar, Muslims, musicians, etc. We should seek to represent all groups in our libraries.

"DOERS"

Books should portray "doers" of all groups and ethnicities. Even if a book shows visual diversity, the story line may carry biases related to how it handles power relationships among people of various identities. Your book collection needs a balance of different people in "doer" roles.

ACTION FOR CHANGE

Books should be about children and adults working together, rather than perpetrating the myth that change happens because of special, individual people creating change by themselves. Heroes in books should be characters who are working together to create change and bring about justice. They should also empower children to be brave and create change when faced with unfairness.

LOADED WORDS

According to Teaching for Change, a word is loaded when it "demeans or makes people invisible because of their identities." One example is the use of the word "man" to stand for women - although the opposite never occurs. Here are some examples of ways to avoid sexist language: using "community" instead of "brotherhood" and "firefighters" instead of "firemen." Loaded adjectives carry racist messages, including: "savage," "primitive," and "backward." Books should use language that describes characters in a constructive and positive manner.

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