



## The Right Stuff

Resources to Help Realize the  
Promise of Each Vermont Child



**Topic: Books for Each and Every Child**

**Issue No. 30 April 2019**

Marian Wright Edelman wrote an article in 2016 (see below) called "It's Hard to Be What You Can't See." In it she describes how difficult it can be for young children to connect to stories that don't reflect their lives and experiences.

This issue of **The Right Stuff** offers information about how to use children's books to promote each and every child's and family's full participation and potential. This means offering children's books that show children, families, and life circumstances that reflect the real world. This also means using children's books and stories that welcome each child and connect with environments and issues that are meaningful to each child and family. Read on to discover annotated collections of books on many aspects of difference and diversity.

### **It's Hard to Be What You Can't See**

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/its-hard-to-be-what-you-c\\_b\\_8022776](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/its-hard-to-be-what-you-c_b_8022776)

As described above, this resource from Marian Wright Edelman examines the importance of children seeing themselves in the narratives we provide and the books we use.

### **The Danger of a Single Story**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

In this compelling TED TALK, author Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. Using examples from her childhood in which children who looked like her were not depicted in children's books, this wonderful resource makes a powerful case for using books that reflect diverse perspectives.

### **Selecting and Using Culturally Responsive Children's Books**

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/selecting-culturally-appropriate-books.pdf>

This article offers thoughtful ways in which to examine books to determine whether they are culturally responsive or not. The context offered considers diverse dimensions of culture including ability, family configuration, and gender. If you're looking for a resource that can support your selection process, this may be it.

### **Storytelling Skills Support Early Literacy for African American Children**

<http://fpg.unc.edu/news/storytelling-skills-support-early-literacy-african-american-children>

Early narrative skills are tied to kindergarten literacy among young African American children, according to research. The study is the first to demonstrate the connection between African American preschoolers' storytelling abilities and the development of their early reading skills.

### **The Ugly Truth About Children's Books**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1Jbd4-fPOE>

This brief video highlights the extent to which powerful and positive images of girls and women are missing from many children's books. Why are there so few girls in children's books?

([https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/01/08/why-are-there-so-few-girls-in-childrens-books/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.0b7b87e09614](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/01/08/why-are-there-so-few-girls-in-childrens-books/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0b7b87e09614)) is an article that explores the same content.

## **Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books about Gender Diversity**

<http://outsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Annotated-Booklist-Childrens.pdf>

Visit this website to find children's books that are appropriate for discussing issues of gender with children of any age. One to consider is **What Makes A Baby**, a children's book that explains how babies are made by discussing the actual biological process, without gendering that biological process, assuming that a child's parents were directly involved in that biological process. The author keeps it friendly for adopted children, parents who used IVF or surrogacy, etc. and without getting inappropriately sexual for a young child/classroom context. There's also a **free reader's guide**, which gives further information on how we can navigate these conversations with or without the book in hand.

## **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Children's Book List**

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf>

Looking for books that can support children's social-emotional development? Here's a list that is sorted by age and topic (e.g., happy feelings, angry or mad feelings). Want some great ideas for how to build social-emotional competence using children's books? Go to <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html> and scroll down to the section called Book Nooks. Click on any of the 22 icons to discover how to use each book to support each child.

## **Recommended Children's Books on Bullying, Children with Disabilities, and More**

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/about/see-what-we-see/>

The See What We See (SWWS) database is a unique, non-commercial project with no funding ties to the publishing industry. SWWS coalition members review children's books and categorize them as Recommended, Recommended with Caveats, and Not Recommended. Books in the collection may be sorted by rating, reading level, theme, and source. Themes include, but are not limited to, bullying, children with disabilities, children who are bilingual, and many more. Search for "Spanish" to find books in that language.

## **Children's Books that Include Diverse Family Structures**

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/lgbt-children-books.pdf>

This resource is part of a series developed to support programs in partnering with parents/guardians who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT).

## **Multicultural Picture Books About Mental Illness**

<https://coloursofus.com/5-multicultural-picture-books-about-mental-illness/>

Mental illness is a difficult subject most parents and teachers probably want to keep away from their children. But for children living with a mentally ill family member, reading picture books about mental illness can help them process their feelings and understand that they are not the only ones living in this situation and that their parent's mental illness isn't their fault. And for all other children, exposing them to picture books about mental illness is an opportunity to create awareness early on and prevent prejudice and stigmatization.

## **Multicultural Children's Books Featuring African, Hispanic, Asian & Diverse Ethnicities**

<https://coloursofus.com/multicultural-childrens-books-lists/>

This website features annotated reviews of over 500 books and is indexed by age (from infant to high school) and aspect of diversity (e.g., African, Asian, Hispanic). Search the "Hispanic" book section to find bilingual books and books in Spanish.

**The Right Stuff** is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources for supporting the learning and development of young children who are culturally, linguistically, and individually diverse, birth to Grade 3, and their families. All resources are readily available and free. **Highlighted resources are available in English and Spanish.** **The Right Stuff** may be freely shared or reproduced. Past issues are available at <http://fpg.unc.edu/presentations/right-stuff>

**The Right Stuff** is compiled by Camille Catlett and supported by the Vermont Agency of Education. To receive your copy each month, send an email **with no message** to [subscribe-the\\_right\\_stuff\\_listserv@listserv.unc.edu](mailto:subscribe-the_right_stuff_listserv@listserv.unc.edu)