

Kids

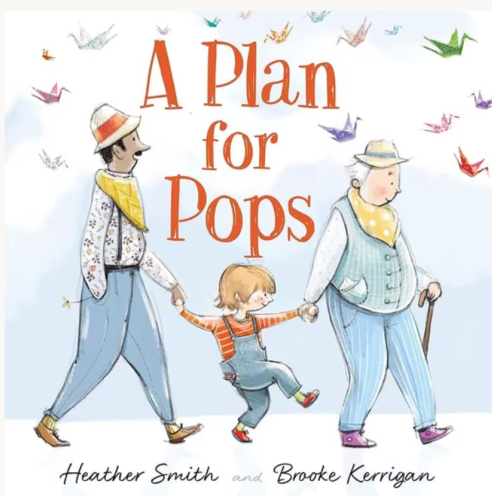
How to Create a Diverse Home Library for Kids

Our Indigo Kids' Trusted Advisor shares five tips on diversifying children's bookshelves, plus her top book picks to get started.

By D'Lorraine Miranda



Diversifying kids' bookshelves is a great way to reflect the world around them. For children growing up with others who live and look like them, diverse books help expand their worldview, says Sueann Hall, Indigo Kids' Trusted Advisor. "It can also be very validating for those who do not typically see themselves or their experiences in books, which is important at a young age." In celebration of Black History Month, Hall shares five tips on how parents and caregivers can diversify their home libraries.



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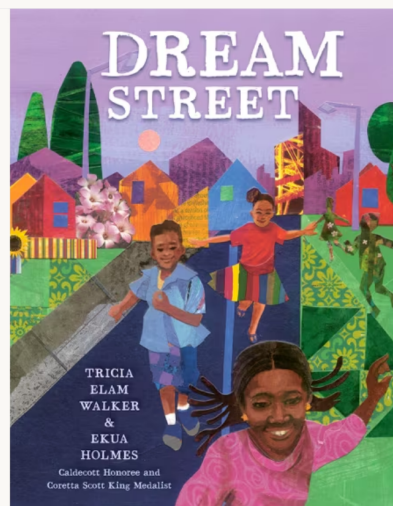
Take stock of what you've got

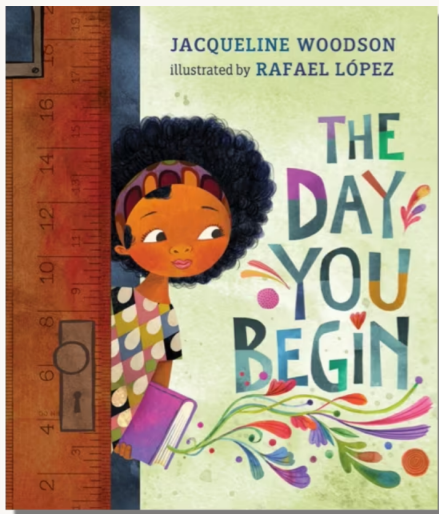
Give their collection a diversity audit. Is there over-representation of certain groups? Is it lacking in a variety of family structures and characters of different socioeconomic statuses? Are they all able-bodied? These are a few factors to keep in mind when going through your home library. Consider a read about family and growing up, like *A Plan for Pops*, which focuses on aging, reduced mobility, mental health, LGBTQIA+ families, and community care.

2

Evaluate the books you bring home

Before adding a new book to your library, examine it. Are the messages problematic or stereotypical? Look through the images, Hall recommends, as little ones are very observant. Make sure you confront your own biases. You may have a sentimental attachment to a childhood favourite, not realizing how problematic it may be now. "Learning to view books with a critical lens is an ongoing process, but the more you do it the easier it becomes," says Hall. An uplifting book sure to become a new classic in your household: *Dream Street*, which inspires little readers to dream big and serves as a reminder that they, too, can reach their goals.





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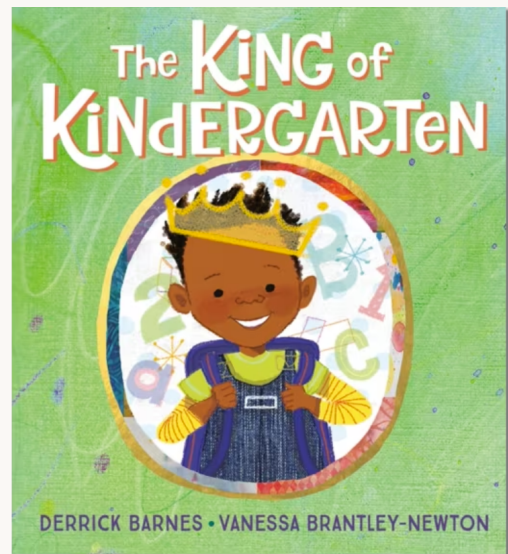
Avoid single-story narratives

What is a single-story narrative? It's a narrative that creates or reinforces stereotypes and speaks of a group of people as a monolith. "When stereotypes are shown at such a young age, it really becomes a foundation in which children start to form ideas about whole groups of people," says Hall. Therefore, look for stories that break the mould. That's not to say, however, that you can't have a book where there is a white CEO, Hall explains. "But if that occurs in all of your books, even if unintentionally, you're reinforcing those stereotypes to the child." *The Day You Begin*—one of Hall's favourites—encourages kids to embrace and celebrate their unique qualities

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Choose joy over trauma

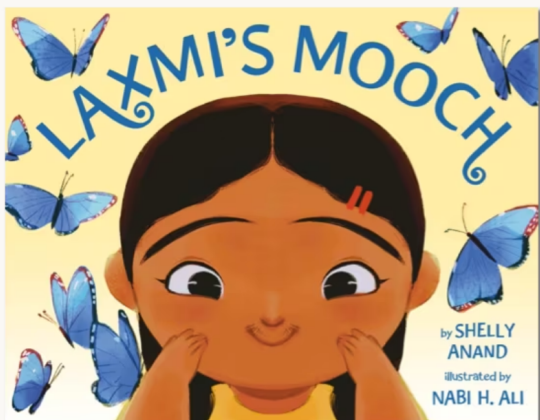
Avoid having too many books where characters are teased for who they are or have to prove that they're worthy of acceptance and love, Hall cautions. Instead, look for books that feature unintentional diversity, Hall suggests, where the diversity of the character isn't the focal point of the story. *The King of Kindergarten* follows a little boy who embarks on his first day of school with confidence and pride.



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When in doubt, ask an expert

If you're still not sure about a book, look to those who are immersed in the field. Check out Hall's expert recommendations [on our website](#) (including great body-positivity stories like *Laxmi's Mooch*), including her reviews. And, of course, seek reviews from experts who have a different lens than yours, whether it's a librarian, a booklover on social media, or an [Indigo book expert](#).



For every children's book purchased, 1% of net proceeds goes to the [Indigo Love of Reading Foundation](#), which has been putting diverse books and educational resources into the hands of children in high-needs communities across Canada since 2004. For more on how you can contribute to the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, visit indigoloveofreading.org.