

AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CURATED BY

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RATIONALE

IN SEQUENCE TO OUR “RACIALLY AFFIRMING BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN” 2020 BOOK LIST, THE CENTER ON THE ECOLOGY OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT (CEED) PRESENTS THE 2021 EDITION “AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.” WE BELIEVE THAT BLACK CHILDREN SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN THEIR FULL HUMANITY INCLUDING IN THEIR LITERACY AND LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES. FOR DECADES, BLACK CHILDREN HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE CORRECTED WHEN SPEAKING AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE) (A LANGUAGE THAT IS CENTRAL TO THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK PEOPLE IN AMERICA) IN SCHOOLS. AAVE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS A LANGUAGE THAT MANY AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN SPEAK IN ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH THEY FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED, SUCH AS THE HOME. THE OAKLAND SCHOOL BOARD’S 1996 [RESOLUTION](#) HIGHLIGHTED THE CHALLENGES THAT BLACK STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT EXPERIENCED IN SCHOOLS AND ASSERTED THAT AAVE SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN STANDARD ENGLISH. DESPITE NATIONAL CRITICISM FROM THE DISTRICT’S DECISION, LINGUISTS AND SCHOLARS HAVE RECOGNIZED AAVE AS ITS OWN LANGUAGE. RECOGNIZING AAVE AS ITS OWN ENTITY IS A NECESSARY STEP TOWARDS CHALLENGING AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES TO CATER TO THE BACKGROUNDS OF CHILDREN OF VARYING CULTURES, ETHNICITIES, AND RACIAL BACKGROUNDS. OUR CURATED LIST SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO ALIGN CULTURE WITH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN IGNORING THE RACIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES THAT MAKE CHILDREN WHO THEY ARE. OUR GOAL WAS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE PLETHORA OF CHILDREN’S BOOKS WITH AAVE USAGE THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY ELEVATE BLACK VOICES AND ILLUSTRATE STORIES OF WHO PROTAGONISTS OF COLOR ARE AS ACTIVE AGENTS IN THE FIGHT TOWARDS JUSTICE.

SOURCES FOR CURATION

WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE INCREDIBLE SOURCES THAT GUIDED OUR BOOK CURATION PROCESS. SOURCES USED TO CREATE BOOK SELECTION CRITERIA WERE BASED ON [PROFESSOR SALIKOKO SANGOL MUFWENE’S AAVE DEFINITION](#) AND AAVE EXAMPLES FROM [PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF CHILD AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH](#) (SEE TABLE 1). WE COMPILED OUR LIST BY SELECTING BOOKS FROM [CEED’S RACIALLY AFFIRMING BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN](#), [LEE AND LOW](#), [THE SEATTLE PUBLIC PIRBARY](#), [CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY](#), AND YOUTUBE READ ALOUDS FROM [SANKOFA READ ALOUD](#). OUR LIST WAS CREATED INDEPENDENTLY OF AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS. OUR WIDE SELECTION OF LISTED BOOKS SPANS ACROSS TOPICS, HISTORICAL EVENTS, INTERESTS, AND SETTINGS AND CATERS TO READING LEVELS FOR CHILDREN AGES 2 TO 12.

SUGGESTED CITATION

HUANG, C., HARRIS, K., ROSE, M., & CURENTON, S. M. (2021, OCTOBER). AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (AGE 0-12). BOSTON: CENTER ON THE ECOLOGY OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT.

AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH BOOKS FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A DAY WITH DADDY

AUTHOR (A): NIKKI GRIMES

ILLUSTRATOR (I): NICOLE TADGELL

AS FAST AS WORDS COULD FLY

A: PAMELA M. TUCK

I: ERIC VELASQUEZ

BACK OF THE BUS

A: AARON REYNOLDS

I: FLOYD COOPER

BEDTIME BONNET

A: NANCY REDD

I: NNEKA MYERS

BEIN’ WITH YOU THIS WAY

A: W. NIKOLA-LISA

I: MICHAEL BRYANT

BIRD

A: ZETTA ELLIOT

I: SHADRA STRICKLAND

COMING ON HOME SOON

A: JACQUELINE WOODSON

I: E.B. LEWIS

CROWN: AN ODE TO THE FRESH CUT

A: DERRICK BARNES

I: GORDON C. JAMES

DADDY CALLS ME MAN

A: ANGELA JOHNSON

I: RHONDA MITCHELL

DANCING IN THE WINGS

A: DEBBIE ALLEN

I: KADIR NELSON

DESHAWN DAYS

A: TONY MEDINA

I: R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

FLOSSIE AND THE FOX

A: PATRICIA C. MCKISSACK

I: RACHEL ISADORA

GETTIN’ THROUGH THURSDAY

A: MELROSE COOPER

I: NNEKA BENNETT

GOIN’ SOMEPLACE SPECIAL

A: PATRICIA C. MCKISSACK

I: JERRY PINKNEY

GOING DOWN HOME WITH DADDY

A: KELLY STARLING LYONS

I: DANIEL MINTER

HONEY BABY SUGAR CHILD

A: ALICE FAYE DUNCAN

I: SUSAN KEETER

I GOT THE SCHOOL SPIRIT

A: CONNIE SCHOFIELD-MORRISON

I: FRANK MORRISON

IT JES' HAPPENED: WHEN BILL TAYLOR

STARTED TO DRAW

A: DON TATE

I: R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

KEEPERS

A: JERI HANEL WATTS

I: FELICIA MARSHALL

LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

A: MATT DE LA PEÑA

I: CHRISTIAN ROBINSON

LET THE CHILDREN MARCH

A: MONICA CLARK-ROBINSON

I: FRANK MORRISON

MEET DANITRA BROWN

A: NIKKI GRIMES

I: FLOYD COOPER

MEMPHIS, MARTIN, AND THE MOUNTAINTOP:

THE SANITATION STRIKE OF 1968

A: ALICE FAYE DUNCAN

I: R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

MY COLD PLUM LEMON PIE BLUESEY MOOD

A: TAMEKA FRYER BROWN

I: SHANE W. EVANS

MY STEPS

A: SALLY DERBY

I: ADOJA G. BURROWES

NO MUSH TODAY

A: SALLY DERBY

I: NICOLE TAGDELL

PECAN PIE BABY

A: JACQUELINE WOODSON

I: SOPHIE BLACKALL

RAINBOW JOE AND ME

A/I: MARIA DIAZ STROM

RENT PARTY JAZZ

A: WILLIAM MILLER

I: CHARLOTTE RILEY-WEBB

SHE COME BRINGING ME THAT

LITTLE BABY GIRL

A: ELOISE GREENFIELD

I: JOHN STEPTOE

SUNDAY SHOPPING

A: SALLY DERBY

I: SHADRA STRICKLAND

SWEET MUSIC IN HARLEM

A: DEBBIE A. TAYLOR

I: FRANK MORRISON

TAR BEACH

A/I: FAITH RINGGOLD

THE ELECTRIC SLIDE AND KAI

A: KELLY J. BAPTIST

I: DARNELL JOHNSON

THE HONEST- TO- GOODNESS TRUTH

A: PATRICIA C. MCKISSACK

I: GISELLE POTTER

THE HULA-HOOPIN' QUEEN

A: THELMA LYNN GODIN

I: VANESSA BRANTLEY-NEWTON

THE QUICKEST KID IN CLARKSVILLE

A: PAT ZIETLOW MILLER

I: FRANK MORRISON

THE YOUNGEST MARCHER: THE STORY OF

AUDREY FAYE HENDRICKS, A YOUNG

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

A: CYNTHIA LEVINSON

I: VANESSA BRANTLEY NEWTON

TROMBONE SHORTY

A: TROY "TROMBONE SHORTY" ANDREWS

I: BRYAN COLLIER

VISITING DAY

A: JACQUELINE WOODSON

I: JAMES E. RANSOME

WE HAD A PICNIC THIS SUNDAY PAST

A: JACQUELINE WOODSON

I: DIANE GREENSEID

YESTERDAY I HAD THE BLUES

A: JERON ASHFORD FRAME

I: R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

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