Racially Affirming Books for Black Children

Curated by
Jacqueline Sims
Stephanie M. Curenton
Shana E. Rochester
Rationale
As a group of scholars dedicated to promoting the thriving and wellbeing of Black children, inspiring children to read is important to us because for centuries, Americans of African descent were denied their global human right to literacy. As UNESCO explains: “Literacy is a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning. It is fully essential to social and human development in its ability to transform lives. For individuals, families, and societies alike, it is an instrument of empowerment to improve one’s health, one’s income, and one’s relationship with the world.”

Therefore, we believe that literacy is as empowering as freedom itself, and our goal is to provide Black families with literacy resources that will cultivate a love of reading, provide different perspectives from which to view the world, and expand children’s imaginations about what is possible. Our list of Racially Affirming Books for Black Children contains books featuring the full humanity of children of color, as main characters who show a wide range of emotions, ideas, and identities, who are learning about how their stories connect with others’, who are active agents in the fight toward justice.

Sources for Curation
We want to acknowledge the other stellar sources that describe books for Black children. Our list was compiled based on book lists from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, EmbraceRace, Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education (P.R.I.D.E), Raising Race Conscious Children, Reading Ready Pittsburgh, Story Shifters, and We Are Kid Lit Collective. For a full list of books in each collection, as well as their program’s literacy resources, please see their specific project sites. To create our list, we cross-referenced books from the prior lists, added additional books based on recommendations from literacy scholars, and books from our own personal libraries.

We created a wide-ranging list independent of authors and publishers and based on our professional knowledge as developmental psychologists and literary researchers. Our list spans interests and topics suitable for developmental periods from infancy to middle childhood (age 0-12); however, the reading levels may range into higher grades and should only be used as estimates. Our list will be updated annually and posted at bu-ceed.org.

Acknowledgements
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Suggested Citation

Racially Affirming Books for Black Children

| T, T | Baby Loves Gravity!  
Author (A): Ruth Spiro  
Illustrator (I): Irene Chan  
| T, PK | Goodnight Lab  
A/I: Chris Ferrie  
| T, PK | Lola Gets A Cat  
A: Anna McClun  
I: Rosalind Beardshaw  
| T, PK | You Can Do It Too  
A: Karen Baicker  
I: Ken Wilson-Max  
| T, PK, K | Brown Boy Joy  
A: Thomasha Booker  
I: Uzuri Designs  
| T, PK, K | Full, Full, Full of Love  
A: Trish Cook  
I: Paul Howard  
| T, PK, K, I | In My Heart: A Book of Feelings  
A: Jo Witek  
I: Christine Roussey  
| PK | I Just Want to Say Goodnight  
A/I: Rachel Isadora  
| PK, K | Daddy Calls Me Man  
A: Angela Johnson  
I: Rhonda Mitchell  
| PK, K | Grandma’s Purse  
A/I: Vanessa Brantley-Newton  
| PK-2 | Happy to be Nappy  
A: bell hooks  
I: Chris Rashka  
| PK-2 | I Like Myself!  
A: Karen Beaumont  
I: David Catrow  
| PK-2 | Jambo Means Hello  
A: Muriel Feelings  
I: Tom Feelings  

Recommended Age Guide:
I= Infant  
T= Toddler  
PK = Ages 3-5  
K-12 denotes grade level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PK-3 (cont.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanza Story</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Angela Shelf Medearns&lt;br&gt;I: Daniel Mintzer</td>
<td><strong>I’m New Here</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Niki Daley</td>
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<td><strong>Shirley Chisholm is a Verb</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Verónica Chambers&lt;br&gt;I: Rachelle Baker</td>
<td>Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation&lt;br&gt;A/I: Duncan Tonatiuh&lt;br&gt;I: Sharon Dennis Wyeth</td>
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<td><strong>The Day Gogo went to Vote:</strong> South Africa, 1994&lt;br&gt;A: Elinor Situ&lt;br&gt;I: Sharon Wilson</td>
<td><strong>Keats’s Neighborhood</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Ezra Jack Keats</td>
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<td><strong>The Word Collector</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Peter H. Reynolds</td>
<td><strong>Mama’s Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Edwidge Danticat&lt;br&gt;I: Leslie Staub</td>
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<td><strong>Trombone Shorty</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Troy Andrews&lt;br&gt;I: Bryan Collier</td>
<td><strong>Max Loves Muncas</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Zetta Elliott</td>
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<td><strong>Violet’s Music</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Angela Johnson&lt;br&gt;I: Laura Huliska-Beith</td>
<td><strong>My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden’s Childhood Journey</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jeanne Walker Harvey&lt;br&gt;I: Elizabeth Zunon</td>
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<td><strong>Whale Snow</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Debby Dahl Edwardson&lt;br&gt;I: Annie Patterson</td>
<td><strong>Praching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jabari Asim&lt;br&gt;I: E.B. Lewis</td>
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<td><strong>K-3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Someone New</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Sharee Miller</td>
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<td><strong>A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina’s Dream</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Kristy Dempsey&lt;br&gt;I: Floyd Cooper</td>
<td><strong>The Boy Who Became King:</strong> LeBron James the Children’s Book&lt;br&gt;A/I: Anthony Cucio</td>
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<td><strong>Africa Dream</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Eloise Greenfield&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Byard</td>
<td><strong>The Day You Begin</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jacqueline Woodson&lt;br&gt;I: Rafael López</td>
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<td><strong>Amazing Grace</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Mary Hoffman&lt;br&gt;I: Caroline Binch</td>
<td><strong>The Other Side</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jacqueline Woodson&lt;br&gt;I: E.B. Lewis</td>
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<td><strong>Come On, Rain</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Karen Hesse&lt;br&gt;I: Jon J. Muth</td>
<td><strong>The Proudest Blue:</strong> A Story of Hijab and Family&lt;br&gt;A: Ibtihaj Muhammad &amp; S.K. Ali&lt;br&gt;I: Hatem Aly</td>
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<td><strong>The Girl Who Spun Gold</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Michael Tyler&lt;br&gt;I: David Lee Csicsko</td>
<td><strong>This Is The Rope</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jacqueline Woodson&lt;br&gt;I: James E. Ransome</td>
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<td><strong>Cornrows</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Camille Yarbrough&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Byard</td>
<td><strong>Those Shoes</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Maribeth Boelts&lt;br&gt;I: Noah Z. Jones</td>
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<td><strong>Ballerina’s Dream</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Andrea Beaty&lt;br&gt;I: David Roberts</td>
<td><strong>Waiting for Pumpsie</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Berry Wittenstein&lt;br&gt;I: London Ladd</td>
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<td><strong>Crown: an Ode to the Fresh Cut</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Dina Johnson&lt;br&gt;I: Kelly Johnson</td>
<td><strong>White Water</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Michael Bryan &amp; Eric Stein&lt;br&gt;I: Shadrack Strickland</td>
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<td><strong>The Colors of Us</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Karen Katz</td>
<td><strong>Who’s in Rabbit’s House</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Vera Aardema&lt;br&gt;I: Diane Dillon</td>
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<td><strong>Not So Fast Songolo</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Niki Daley</td>
<td><strong>The Water Princess</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Susan Verde &amp; Georgie Badeil&lt;br&gt;I: Peter H. Reynolds</td>
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<td><strong>condrillón</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Robert D. San Souci&lt;br&gt;I: Brian Pinkney</td>
<td><strong>Dragons in a Bag</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Zetta Elliott&lt;br&gt;I: Geneva B</td>
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<td><strong>Preaching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Jabari Asim&lt;br&gt;I: E.B. Lewis</td>
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<td><strong>Black, White, Just Right</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Margarette W. Davol&lt;br&gt;I: Irene Trivas</td>
<td><strong>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Tami Charles&lt;br&gt;I: Jacqueline Alcántara</td>
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<td><strong>More-i-gami</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: More-i-gami&lt;br&gt;I: Brian Karas</td>
<td><strong>Lillian’s Right to Vote:</strong> A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965&lt;br&gt;A: Jon J. Muth&lt;br&gt;I: Shane W. Evans</td>
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<td><strong>Sewing Stories: Harriet Powers’ Journey from Slave to Artist</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Barbara Herlihon&lt;br&gt;I: Vanessa Brantley-Newton</td>
<td><strong>Art from her Heart, Folk Artist Clementine Hunter</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;I: ist Stories, Hope, and Separation&lt;br&gt;A: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;I: ist Clementine Hunter&lt;br&gt;A: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;I: ist Clementine Hunter&lt;br&gt;A: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>I: Christopher Eliopoulos</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Brad Meltzer</td>
<td><strong>The Zero Dads Club</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Angel Adeoyeoh&lt;br&gt;I: Aubrey Williams</td>
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<td><strong>I: Christopher Meyers</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Misty Copeland</td>
<td><strong>We March</strong>&lt;br&gt;A/I: Shane W Evans</td>
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<td><strong>I: Carmen Lomas Garza</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I: Jesse Joshua Watson</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Phil Bildner</td>
<td><strong>Art from her Heart, Folk Artist Clementine Hunter</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;I: ist Clementine Hunter&lt;br&gt;A: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;I: ist Clementine Hunter&lt;br&gt;A: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Art from her Heart, Folk Art&lt;br&gt;I: Carole Boston Weatherford&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>I: Don Tate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ron’s Big Mission</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: Rase Blue &amp; Corrine Naden&lt;br&gt;I: Don Tate</td>
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<td><strong>I: London Ladd</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind</strong>&lt;br&gt;A: William Kamkwamba, Bryan Mealer&lt;br&gt;I: Elizabeth Zunon</td>
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<td><strong>I: Ray Mears</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Soccer Fence:</strong> A Story of Friendship, Hope, and Apartheid in South Africa&lt;br&gt;A: Phil Bildner&lt;br&gt;I: Jesse Joshua Watson</td>
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</table>
Recommended Age Guide

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K-12 denotes grade level

**4-7 (cont.)**

**Black History: Kids Edition**
A: Stephen Jones Sr.

**Goldie Vance**
A: Kenneth Braswell
I: Joe Dent & Julie Anderson

**Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X**
A: Ilyasah Shabazz
I: AC Ford

**Tameka’s New Dress**
A: Ronnie Sidney II
I: Traci Van Wagoner & Kurt Keller

**Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement**
A: Carole Boston Weatherford
I: Ekua Holmes

**6-8**

**Esperanza Rising**
A: Pam Munoz Ryan

**Rad Women Worldwide: Artists and Athletes, Pirates and Punks, and Other Revolutionaries Who Shaped History**
A: Kate Schatz
I: Minam Klein Stahl

**Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal**
A: Margarita Engle

**6-10**

**The Crossover**
A: Kwame Alexander

**Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet**
A: Ta-Nehisi Coates
I: Brian Stelfreeze

**Black Panther: The Intergalactic Empire of Wakanda**
A: Ta-Nehisi Coates
I: Daniel Acuna

**Dear Martin**
A: Nic Stone

**This Side of Home**
A: Renée Watson

**Open Mic: Riffs on Life Between Culture in Ten Voices**
Edited by Mitali Perkins

**7-9**

**Produced By**

Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development School of Education

THE PITTSBURGH STUDY

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