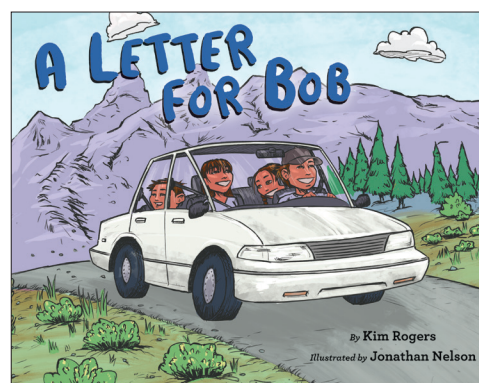
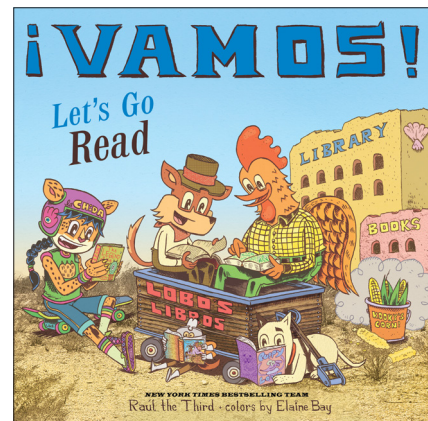
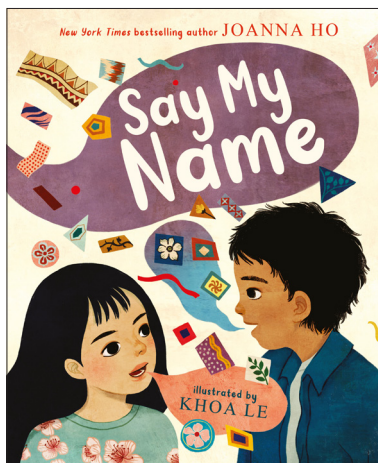


SHAKE UP YOUR STORYTIME

EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE STORYTIME



With diverse books, educators have an opportunity to help young people see themselves, their families, and their communities represented. We encourage you to look critically at the books you're sharing with your youngest readers and listeners to see if you are choosing books for storytime that represent them. SHAKE UP YOUR STORYTIME by adding new books that reflect the experiences of kids and families from all kinds of backgrounds!

SHAKE UP YOUR STORYTIME

WHY THE INCLUSION OF DIVERSE STORYTIME BOOKS IS IMPORTANT AND HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Storytimes have had a strong focus on supporting early literacy development. Children develop print awareness, phonological awareness, and alphabet reinforcement (Pence & Justice, 2017). Storytime also allows a child to begin building their imagination, creativity, and social skills (Kids Kingdom Early Learning Center, 2022). It is within this space that storytimes can be an effective way to introduce representation and nurture belonging. Storytime is the perfect opportunity to showcase nurturing positive social identities. With diverse books, educators have an opportunity to help young learners understand themselves and others.

This guide seeks to do the following:

- Highlight age-appropriate titles with strong educational components
- Provide support for advocacy of inclusive titles
- Create a learning community with thoughtful discussion questions and activities

As educators, we encourage you to look critically at the books you're sharing with your students and patrons. **SHAKE UP YOUR STORYTIME** allows you to give yourself permission to retire outdated stories and add titles that reflect current experiences of underrepresented groups. As you explore Shake Up Your Storytime, shake up your shelves as well.

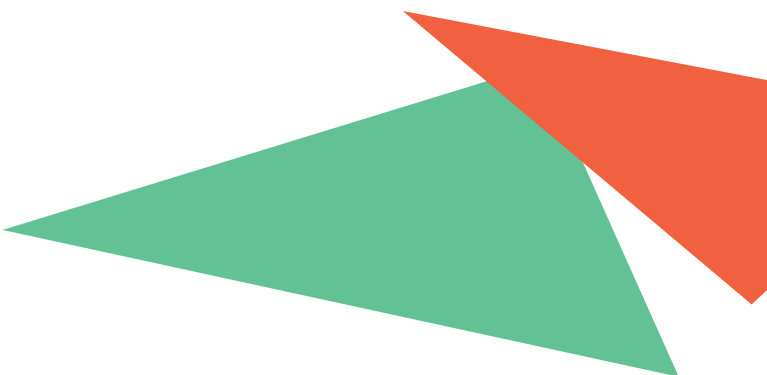
What books do you have on your shelves that could be updated? Just like you would challenge gender stereotypes—challenge racial stereotypes. Ask yourself some simple questions:

- Are you only reading books where underrepresented communities are portrayed at a certain age or in the limelight?
- Are you portraying stories that fit communities in certain boxes (entertainers, athletes, or civil rights activities)?
- How many children's book titles have you updated within the past seven years that are not just award winners?

When choosing titles for a storytime here are other reflections as you peruse through titles:

- Does this book provide the opportunity for participants to engage with and meet characters who are different and may express themselves differently?
- Will this book celebrate or affirm a storytime audience?
- Does this book represent feelings of superiority/inferiority in children?

We've compiled a list of diverse books and provided support around discussion questions and activities for various age groups. If you are looking to remix your collection and your curriculum into a more inclusive learning space then get ready to shake up your storytime!



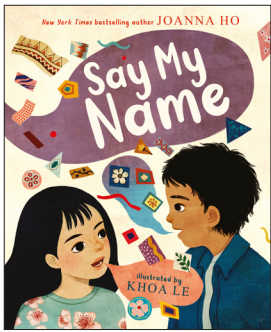
Sources:

Kids Kingdom Early Learning Center 2022 "Storytime for a Child's Development." March 5, 2022. <https://kidskingdom1.com/2022/03/benefits-of-storytime-for-a-childs-development/>.

Questions taken from *Let's Talk About Race* book and workshop, Jessica Anne Bratt. 2022.

Pence, K. & Justice, L. 2017. *Language Development from Theory to Practice*. Pearson.

Guide created by Jessica Anne Bratt, Deputy Director of Grand Rapids Public Library, author of *Let's Talk About Race*, and DEI speaker at jessicannebratt.com.



SAY MY NAME

by Joanna Ho
illustrated by Khoa Le

A first look at how our names carry a deep connection to the world around us.

Young readers are introduced to the power that names have in shaping our identity. Names create a sense of who we are, the

people we are connected to, and our ties to places in the world. The glossary provides pronunciation support and connects specific examples to learning connections around cultural identities. Highlights include matrilineal ancestry and uniqueness of naming a child after a specific day of the week.

Questions

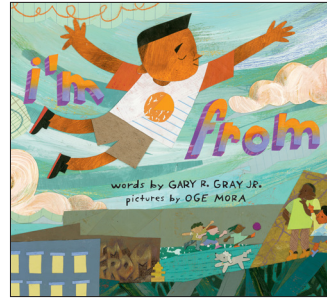
1. What do you think the author is trying to tell us with the phrase “Say My Name”?
2. What do you think it means when the story says the sound of our name “is a building block . . . over oceans and across generations” (p. 7)?
3. Why is it important to say someone’s name correctly?
4. When you are introduced to names with sounds that are unfamiliar, what are some strategies you might use to learn these names correctly?

What’s in a Name?

High Tech: Hand out a small recorder device to caregivers. Ask caregivers during craft time (and/or play time or clean-up time) to step out to record the meaning behind their child’s name. Use prompts below. Before the storytime season is finished, put each recorded story on a portable USB and give out to the caregivers as a keepsake.

- Record yourself talking about why you picked the name for your child.
- Questions to think about: What aspirations did you have for your child when you picked this name? How did you decide on that name? What connections does the name have (if any) to family, friends, and/or any social connections?

Low Tech: Create a Name Coloring Sheet. Create a coloring sheet where learners can color in their name. Send them home with their name sheet and ask them to talk with their caregivers about their name.



I'M FROM

by Gary R. Gray Jr.
illustrated by Oge Mora

Explore the question “Where are you from?” through the small moments in a boy’s day. Readers are taken on a journey of little everyday connections, from the kids at the bus

stop to the corner candy store. As the story moves through the boy’s day, learners are left feeling confident that they belong as much as he does. This is a lyrical book for any budding dreamer that explores the people and places and things that shape who we are and define where we are from.

Questions

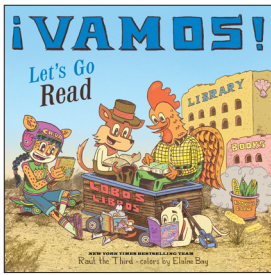
1. What are some of the boy’s favorite moments of the day? Are any of them similar to your own experiences?
2. What are some of his least favorites? How does the art reflect his feelings?
3. Without mentioning your home address, how would you describe where you’re from?
4. Why do you think the author chose to end the story with the words “I come from somewhere” (p. 37)?

Collage Pictionary

Medium Tech: Have a variety of pre-cut photographs, fabrics, images, buttons, pom-poms, etc. Have kids assemble a simple storyboard using the materials to illustrate where they are from.

Low Tech: Using blank paper, ask learners to draw a picture that describes where they are from. Encourage them to use all of their senses. How can they depict the smells, sounds, tastes, and feel of where they are from?

Hang the pictures around the room and go on a gallery walk, asking each child to share why they chose their specific moment.



¡VAMOS! LET'S GO READ

by Raúl the Third

An ode to library love.

Celebrate a love of books with eye-catching illustrations, Spanish language, and a blend of El Paso's cultural references and libraries. A great way to introduce little ones

to larger library events whether zine fests, library festivals, comic cons, or any celebration of literature. More importantly, asking "What are your favorite books?" will surely get preschoolers talking.

Questions

1. What do you think the author meant by saying, "You are all authors now. Share your stories with the world" (p. 27)?
2. How many different characters can you spot on one page?
3. Do you think you can learn about different things at a library, like growing corn or building ramps? Why or why not?

¡VAMOS! LET'S GO STORYTIME FEST (MINI-VERSION)

Prepare for the festivities! Make the room into four mini booths.

1. Face-paint station. Have a face-paint stamp and pad or do a simple smiley face design.
2. Craft Station. Have a comic book-related craft for kids to do.
3. Piñata Station. Have a designated area for a candy filled piñata that kids can hit.
4. Dress-up Station. Have a selfie and dress-up station as a booth for kids to play and pose in.



TOKYO NIGHT PARADE

by J.P. Takahashi
illustrated by Minako Tomigahara

A timeless story around multi-racial belonging and understanding of human nature.

Eka is waiting to celebrate for one night with all the yōkai. She is fascinated with her Japanese folklore friends but when she carries their stories back with her, her American friends just don't seem to share her interest. And it's become harder to travel to Japan from New York. Nevertheless, the most important lesson is that while the future is not yet promised, the present is a gift.

Questions

1. Why was the kappa hiding?
 - What do you think the kappa meant by saying, "Humans want the easy answers" (p. 25)?

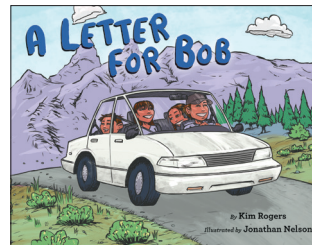
- What do you think Eka meant by saying, "Maybe there are no easy answers" (p. 26)?
2. What gift did Eka receive from her grandfather? What kind of relationship does Eka have with her grandfather?
 3. Do you think Eka is a lonely child? Why or why not?

We Only Come Out at Night

Younger Learners: Learn about different types of creatures from Japanese folklore. Check out the Scary Stories for Brave Kids video by Speedway Public Library.

Additionally, check out footage from the traditional Kyoto Ichijo Hyakki Yako Yōkai costume procession. Play footage from 7:00-10:25 for learners to experience some of the parade.

Create a kid-friendly book and watch list exploring Japanese folklore connections. Show the trailer of *Oni: Thunder God's Tale* on Netflix. A fantastic tale about yōkai, family, and multi-racial identities.



A LETTER FOR BOB

by Kim Rogers
illustrated by Jonathan Nelson

A universal story around closure centered in Indigenous culture.

Bob is part of the family. It is unimportant that he is an object. Bob, the car, has been there for all major life events. Readers can connect with those quiet moments of recounting all the good times, whether being driven to the Wichita Annual Dance or a baseball game, and how all good things eventually come to an end. This story is about showing kids that it's okay to say goodbye to the things we love.

Questions

1. Who is Bob?
2. What do you think the author meant by writing, "You will always be a part of us" (p. 26)?
3. What is something that has become a friend to you?
4. How should we honor an object when it is at its end?

What's Your Bob? | Dear Object, This Is Why I Love You | It's So Hard to Say Goodbye

Have a child write or dictate to their caregiver what object is special to them. Here is a printable worksheet.