

"Let's Talk Race"

Racial Literacy Toolkits
Salt Lake City Public Library



The City Library

THE SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

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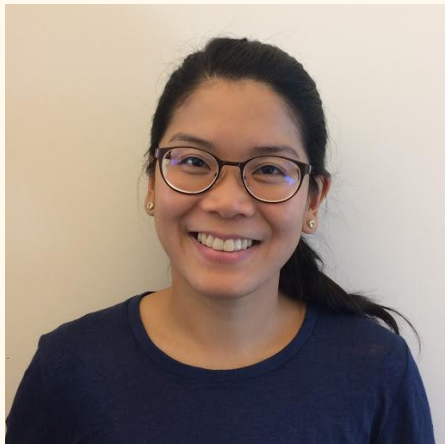
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01

Who We Are

Our Team



Charlene

Parent, writer,
project manager,
children's programs



Diana

Parent, educator,
DSRT, equity and org
development



Lindsey

Library Manager,
former Children's
Librarian



Nancy

Adult Services
Coordinator, EDI
Council co-chair

02

Why Talk Race?



“To be effective, researchers have found, conversations about race have to be explicit, in unmistakable terms that children understand.”

— **Po Bronson
& Ashley Merryman,**
NurtureShock



What Does Racial Literacy mean?

Racial Literacy aims to:

- Promote positive racial awareness development in children
- Recognize, address, and counter different forms of everyday racism



Two Key Concepts



Be Color BRAVE

A “colorblind” approach falsely suggests that a person’s race does not impact their lives.



Own Our Mistakes

Anyone can make racist mistakes. If this happens, acknowledge the harm and try to repair it.

Libraries can help!



Critical Literacies

View racial literacy like
reading, writing, and
numeracy



Fill the Gaps

Access to resources and
information that may not be
available in schools or at
home

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.”

—Angela Y. Davis





03

Kit Development

Our Goals



Support

Learn concepts about racism and reflect on our own lives



Encourage

Provide opportunities for conversations



Affirm

We all have a part to play in social justice



Three Types of Toolkits

Babies and Toddlers

Noticing physical differences

Elementary Students

Deeper exploration of racism

Preschoolers

"Fair vs. unfair"

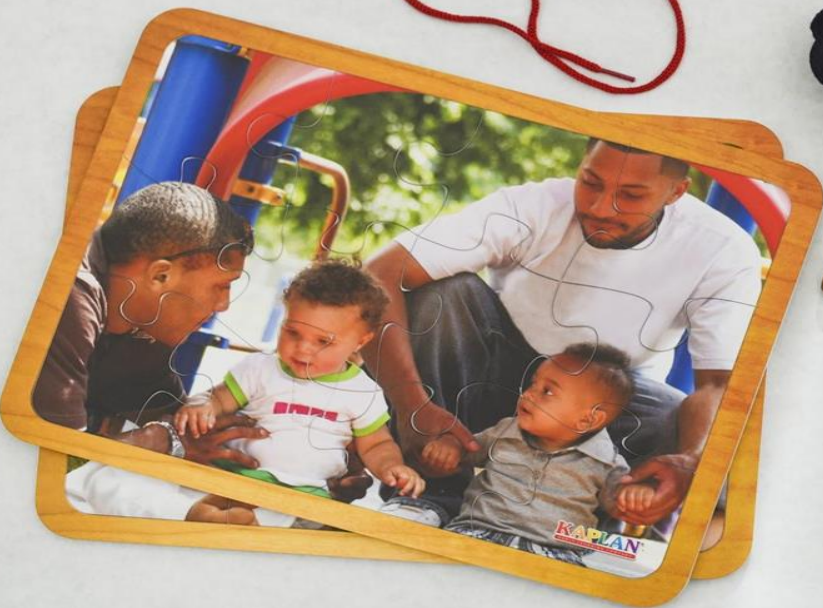


What Are in the Kits?

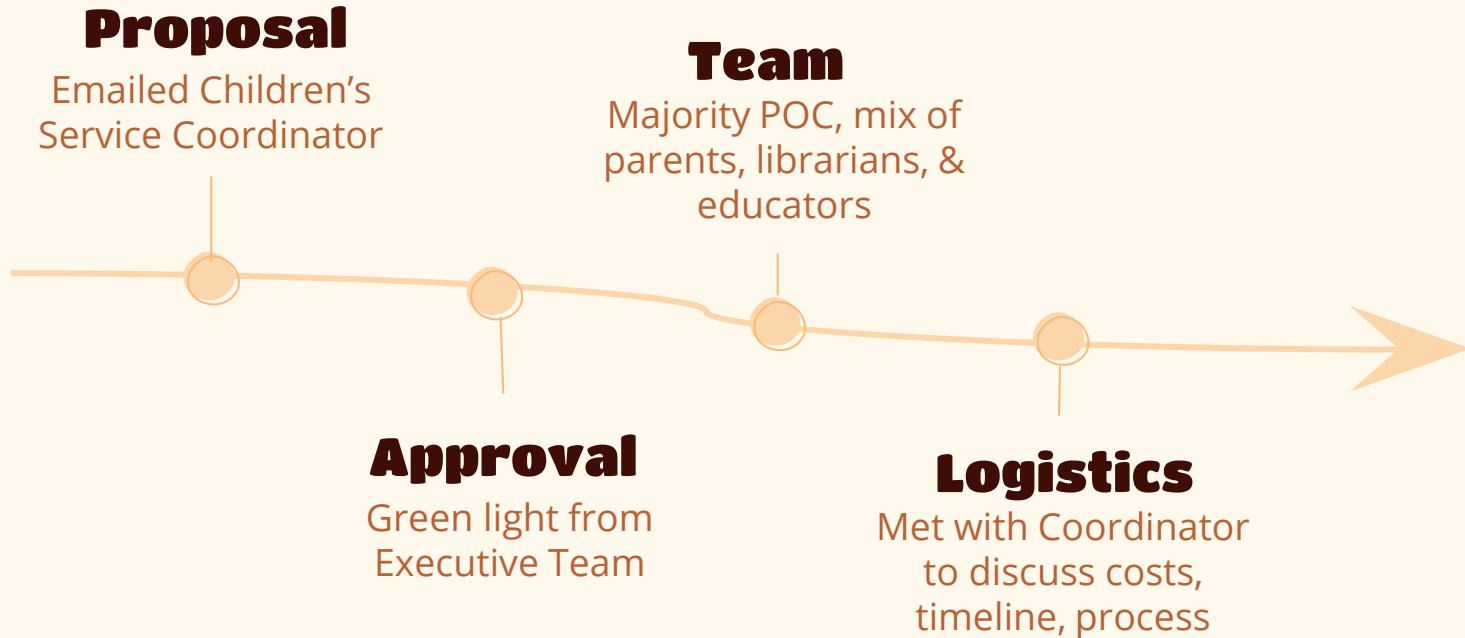
Kits are available in physical and electronic form.

- Caregiver's Guide
- Selection of picture books
- Discussion guides for each book
- Glossary of key terms
- Toys and manipulatives in physical kits
- Video recordings of selected books in electronic kits

Pre-K Toolkit Manipulatives



Developing the Kits, Part 1



Developing the Kits, Part 2

Book Selection

Each member submitted 3-5 books for consideration

Caregiver Guide

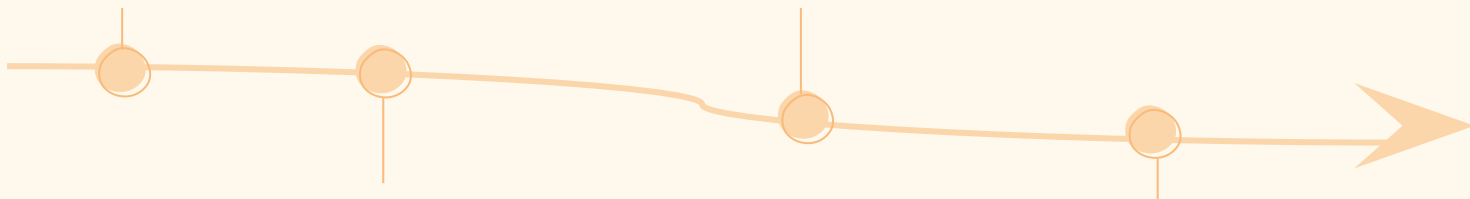
Each member submitted ideas, one wrote the guide

Discussion Guides and Videos

Each member wrote 1-2 guides and recorded read-aloud videos

Manipulatives

Each member submitted 3-5 ideas, one coordinated with Technical Services



Book Selection



Time

Each member read between 10-15 books per kit.



YouTube

We used Youtube read-alouds to vet books.



#ownvoices

We chose books written by people with lived experience of the topic.



Balance

Include books on challenging topics AND joy and empowerment.



Diversity

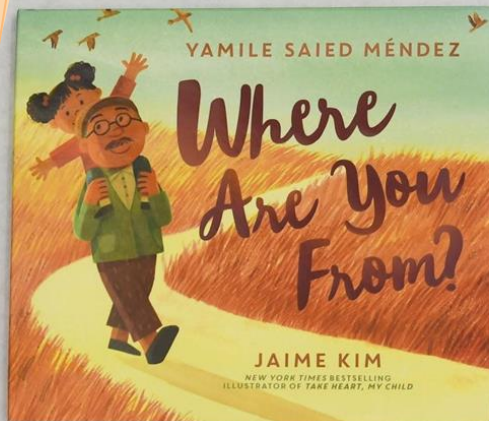
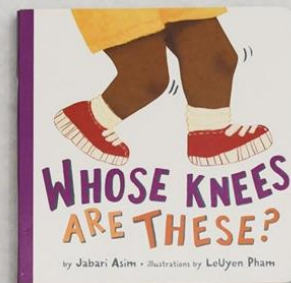
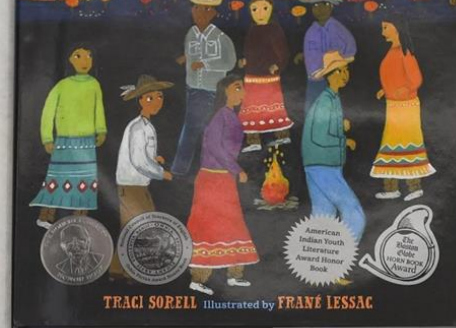
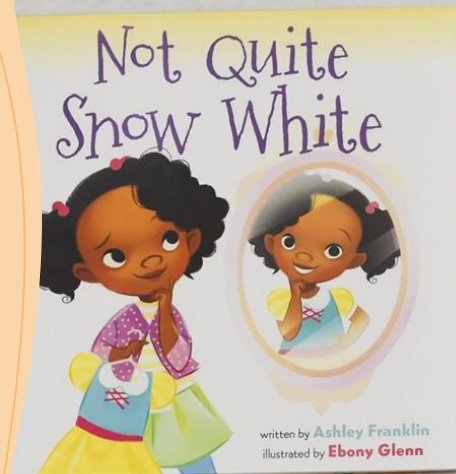
Include a variety of racial and ethnic perspectives.



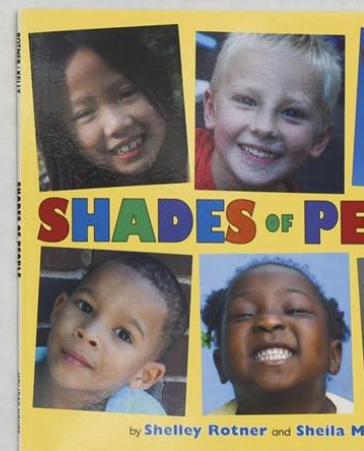
Book Talk

Select books as a team. Listen to other perspectives.

Pre-K Toolkit Book Selections



a
kids
book
about™
racism



The Guides



Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed to help caregivers use picture books as tools to talk to children ages 3-5 about race, racism, and how to practice anti-racism. Our goals are to:

- Encourage everyone to be comfortable taking openly and accurately about race.
- Promote an understanding of race being about natural, normal human differences, while also understanding that race is about stories we tell about being different.
- Use the terms "fair" and "unfair" to support a basic understanding of interpersonal racism and prejudice.
- Increase children's exposure to racially and ethnically diverse stories and characters.

Ideas for Discussion

Asking questions like:

"What do you see happening in this picture?"
 "What do you see that makes you say that?"
 "What else can we find?"

It's okay to point out racial differences in the stories you read:
 "Is that skin color darker or lighter than yours?"
 "How would you describe this skin color?"

Share your feelings about race and racism when reading together:
 "It makes me sad that people are treated differently because of the color of their skin."

Use "fair/unfair" when talking about racial stereotypes or exclusion:
 "It makes me sad that people are treated differently because of the color of their skin."

Embrace cultural differences, and reinforce that "different" and "weird" are not the same.
 Child: "Why is her hair weird?" Caregiver: "It's not weird, it's just different from your hair. Some people have straight, curly, or wavy hair. It's great that we're all different!"

Respect children's curiosity by responding to their hard questions and sometimes embarrassing observations, or by admitting gaps in your knowledge.
 Child: "Let me think about that for a bit."
 Caregiver: "That's a good question. Let's find out together!"

(Source: Megan Doan Lambert, Jessica Anne Bratt, Teaching Tolerance)

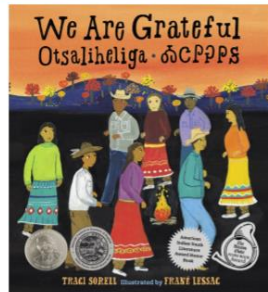
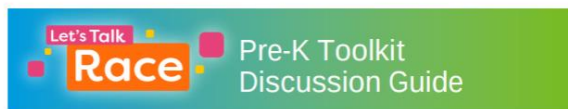
Why is Talking About Race Important?

Studies have shown that babies as young as three months notice race. (Kelly 2005, Winkler 2009) By the time they reach preschool, many kids have internalized racial societal messages that being White is the norm, or better than other races. (Clark and Clark 1947, Quintana) Talking openly about race is shown to be effective in improving children's understanding and attitudes towards race. (Votruba 2016)

Further Reading
<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-homes-ty-with-children-about-racism>
<https://www.newswatch.com/ever-babies-discriminate>
<https://www.racepride.pitt.edu/research-findings-child-race-notice-race/>

Books included in this kit are available for check out at SLCP, as well as on Biblioboard as videos. Titles include:

- *Where Are You From?* by Yamilé Saied Mendez
- *Not Quite Snow White*, by Ashley Franklin
- *A Kids Book About Racism*, by Jelani Memory
- *Don't Touch My Hair*, by Sharee Miller
- *Shades of People*, by Shelley Rotner
- *Whose Knees Are These?* by Jabari Asim
- *We Are Grateful* by Traci Sorell



We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga

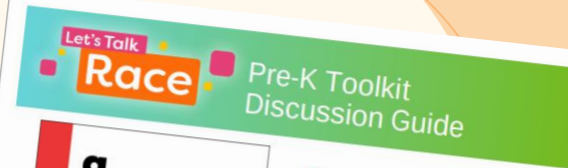
Written by Traci Sorell Illustrated by Frané Lessac

Topics for Conversation:

1. Indigenous cultures (while we often encounter Native American and First Nations people in history texts, indigenous cultures are a vibrant part of our contemporary communities)
2. Family relationships
3. Cultural Traditions

Discussion Questions:

1. The Cherokee people have a lot of customs and traditions they are grateful for. What are you grateful for? Are you grateful for any of the same things listed in the story?
2. This story has words in a different language: Cherokee! Why do you think it was important to use Cherokee words in this story? Did you also notice the writing with a different alphabet on the cover and throughout the story? There is a Cherokee Syllabary at the back of the book if you'd like a closer look!
3. Do you see any activities illustrated in this story that you also do with your family? Why are they important to you?



a kids book about racism

by Jelani Memory

A Kids Book About Racism

Written by Jelani Memory

Topics for Conversation:

1. Race
2. Interpersonal Racism
3. Skin tones
4. Differences

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you notice about the words "this" "black" "white" and "mixed"? (They are printed in skin tone colors.) If you hold your arm up to the page, how does it compare to the skin tones in the book? Do you know what race you are?
2. What do you notice about the word "small"? (It is a very small size on a black page.) What do you think it means to feel small? Do you think it's fair that people can feel small because of their race?
3. Racism can be "a look, a comment, a joke, a question, a word, or a belief." Can you think of any examples of racism, either in real life or in books?
4. Can you think of two people who are different? What makes their differences so great? Is it fair to treat someone badly because they are different?
5. Anybody can make a racist mistake, even you or me! If we make a mistake, what is something we could do to make things right?



<https://library.biblioboard.com/anthology/d8add53a-d518-4de7-9158-ff4fb49f082e>

Developing the Kits, Part 3

Edits & Feedback

Everyone edited guides, and the EDI Council provided feedback

Online

Children's Services Coordinator uploaded to Biblioboard

Marketing

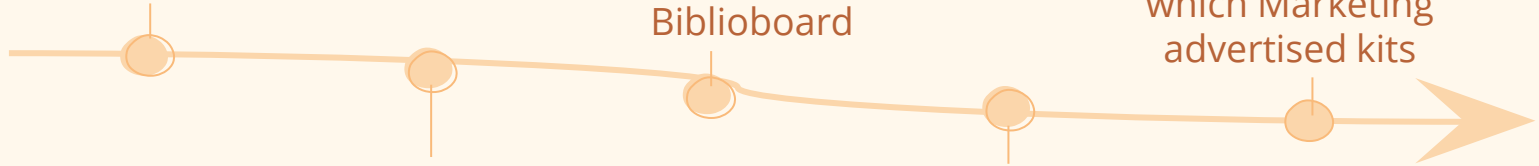
Several avenues through which Marketing advertised kits

Formatting

One or two members placed text into templates

Physical Kits

One member worked with Technical Services to complete the bags



Designing the Guides

Canva

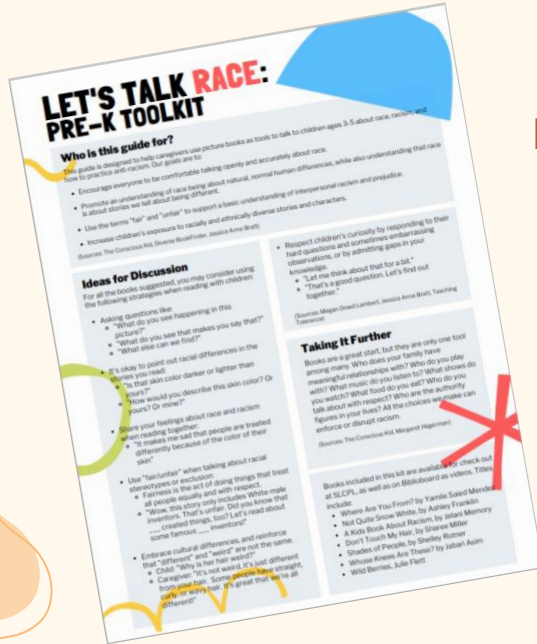
Free, easier to use

Adobe InDesign

Paid, more complex, aligns with Library branding

BOTH

Inclusive, neutral design



Average Cost: \$95-\$180 Per Kit

Books

Each kit included
5-7 titles

Manipulatives

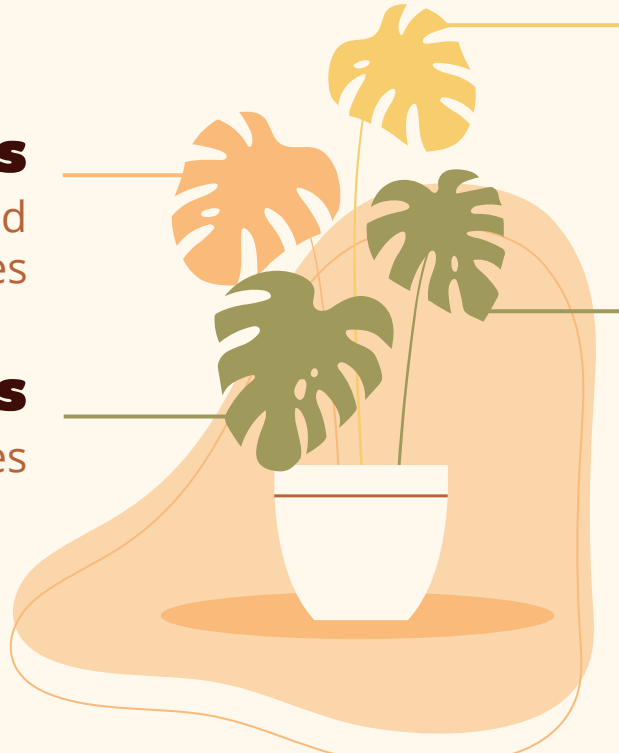
And 2-3 manipulatives

Staff Time

Each member worked
1-4 hours a week

EDI Consultant

Market rates are often
\$150-200 per hour



04

Resources



Resources, Part 1



The Conscious Kid

- Book lists
- Glossary
- Key concepts



Embrace Race

- Talking about race with kids
- Choosing “good” picture books
- Reading with a race-conscious lens



Diverse Book Finder

- Steps for using picture books to talk about race
- Collection development tool

Resources, Part 2



Jessica Anne Bratt

- How to talk about race in storytimes
- Librarian resources
- Webinar



NurtureShock

- "Even Babies Discriminate"
explains why parent education is key



Great Blogs

- Hijabi Librarians
- American Indians in Children's Literature
- Latinxs in Kid Lit



Moving Forward

Other Languages

Providing support for different communities.

Other Age Groups

Teen Services working on similar kits.



Maintenance

Lost or damaged items.

Updating

Refreshing book selection.

Thanks

Do you have any questions?

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Salt Lake City Public Library
slcpl.org



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