



Diversity in Children's Books

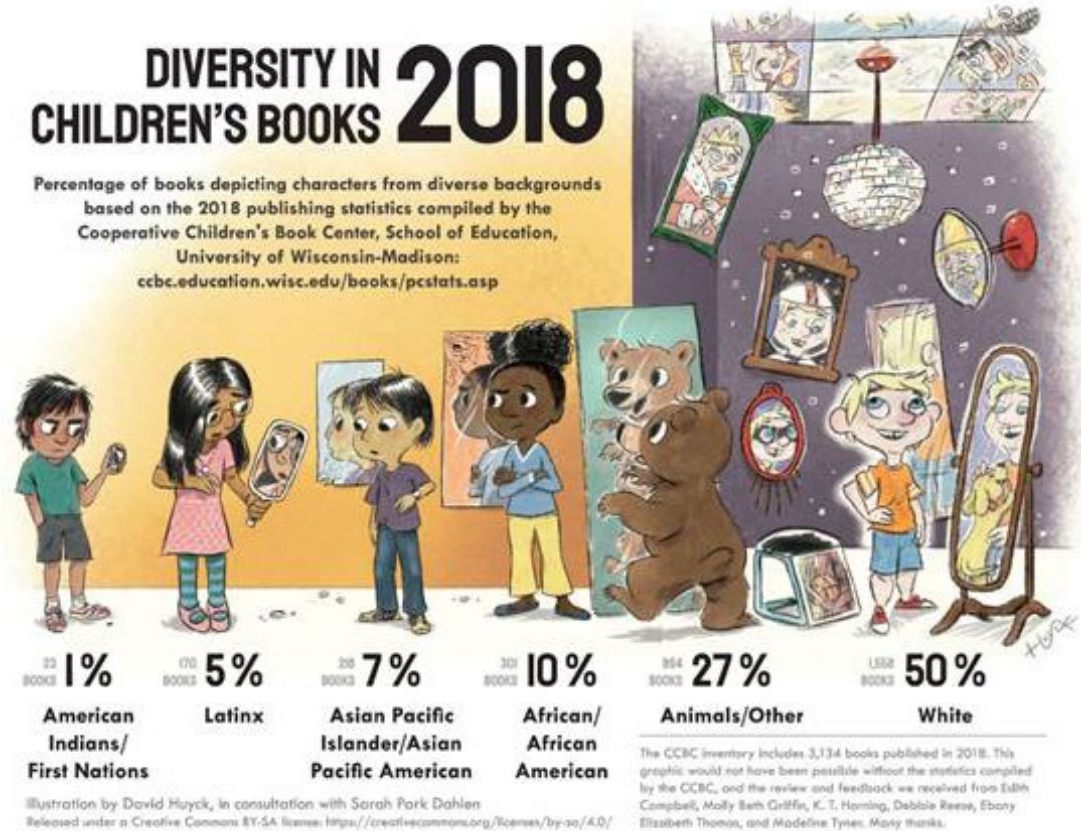
National Center for School Mental Health

**Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
University of Maryland School of Medicine**



Diversity in Children's Books

For students across the country, reading books by Black authors and seeing characters from diverse backgrounds in the books they read and see in the classroom can affirm positive cultural identities as well as insight and broader perspectives about other cultures. Too often, books in the classroom are woefully not representative of characters from diverse backgrounds and even when they do represent broader backgrounds, they may not include affirming, empowering representations. Take a look at the infographic below showing the diversity in children's books in 2018 from the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We have a long way to go for better representation in children's literature. While children of color make up 40% of the population, the number of children's books featuring BIPOC children is only 16%.





Dana Cunningham, PhD

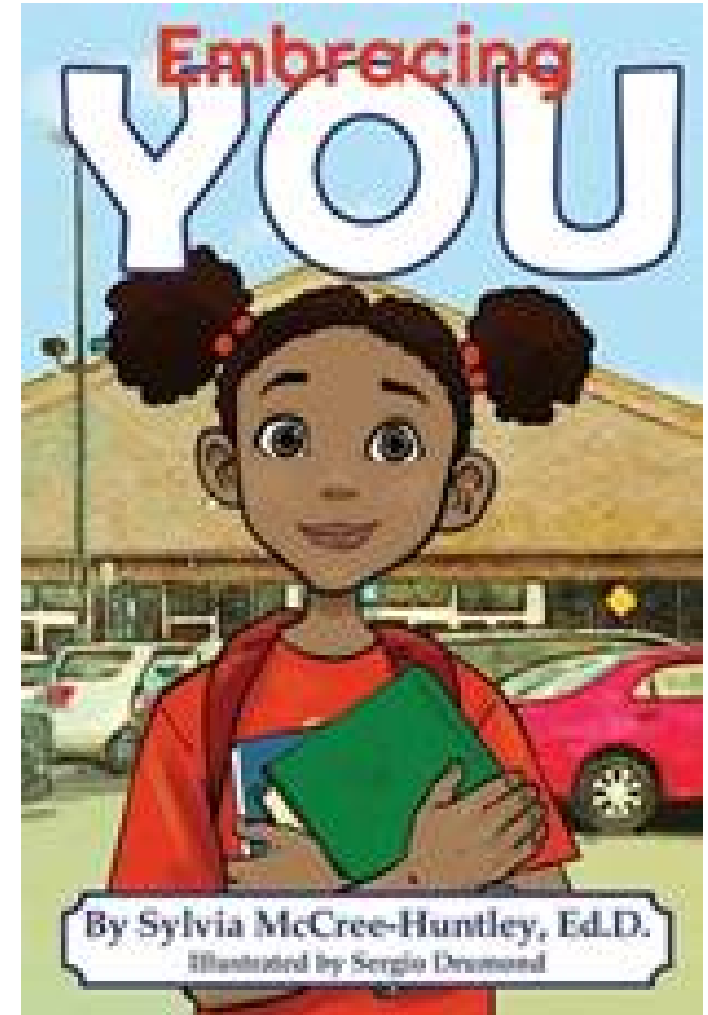
[A Day I'll Never Forget \(2016\)](#) tells the story of Javon, a young student whose world is turned upside down when his father suddenly goes to jail. The book and accompanying discussion questions provide an opportunity for adults to help children process their feelings about incarceration. Ages 10 and under.





Sylvia McCree-Huntley, EdD

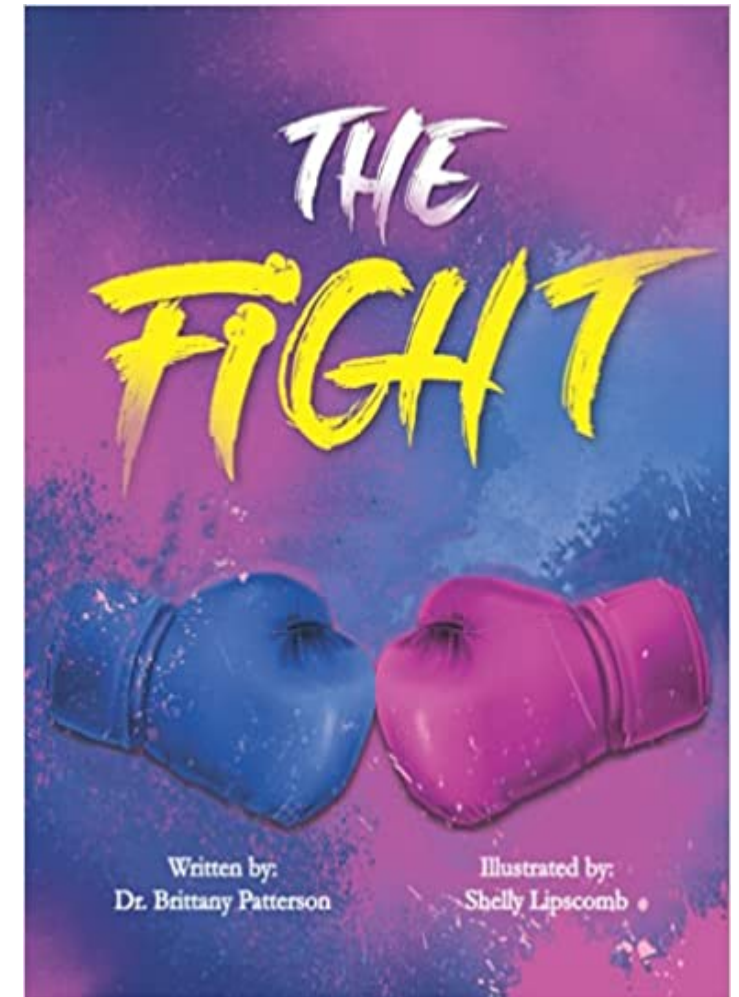
[Embracing You \(2020\)](#) tells the story of an 8-year-old 2nd grader, Embrace, who is homeless. Her family is living out of a car and she is facing challenges due to her situation and needs some help to cope the challenges she is facing. Through the series, she will find her inner beauty, learn school smarts, and will gain many coping skills. Ages 10 and under.





Brittany Patterson, PhD

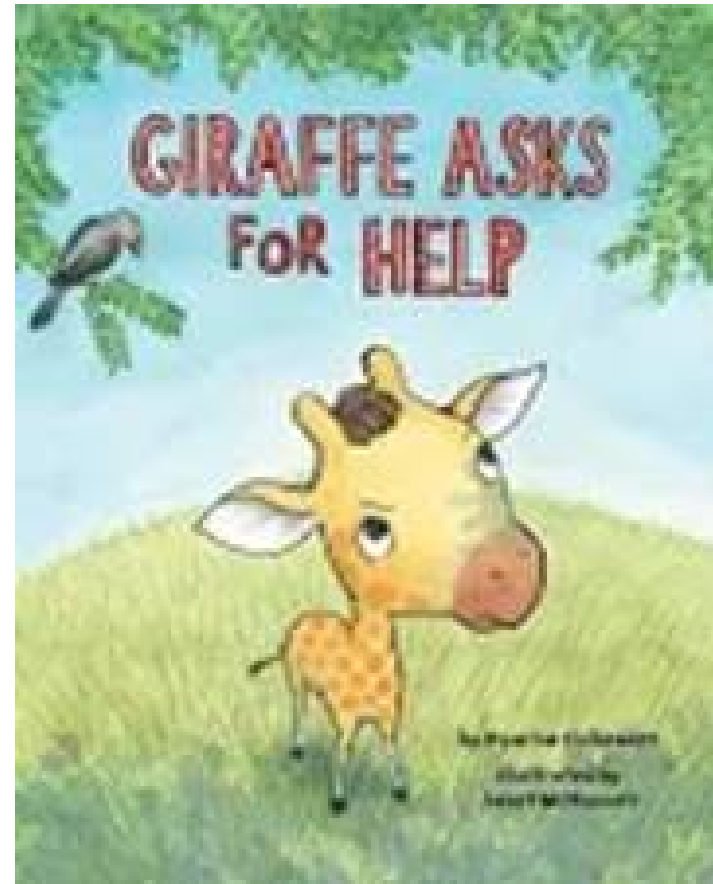
[The Fight \(2021\)](#) Insulted in front of peers, the main character must decide how to deal with her situation by choosing between the “Powerless” and “Powerful” fight. She unknowingly chooses the “Powerless” path where she encounters a series of consequences resulting in self-doubt and feelings of helplessness. As our protagonist begins to accept self-defeat, friends encourage her to fight in a different way and model how to focus on Feelings, Identity, Goals, Healthy Coping, and Thoughts (FIGHT) when faced with a difficult situation. The story concludes with the main character re-considering her options and responding to a final question: “Which fight will you choose?”





Nyasha Chikowore , PsyD

[Giraffe Asks for Help \(2019\)](#) tells the story of Gary Giraffe and how he gets upset when things don't go as he planned. Gary doesn't want to have to ask for help, but his friends convince him that everyone needs help sometimes. The book includes a note to parents/caregivers with more information on help seeking and independence in children. Ages 4-8.





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