

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ON DIVERSITY:

Insights for Creating On-Screen Authentically Inclusive Representation (AIR) of Race

AUTHENTIC



AIM to show positive nonverbal behavior towards characters of color.

Research Insights:

- Children as young as preschool ‘catch’ social bias expressed by adults through nonverbal signals and are influenced by that bias when choosing playmates.
- Subtle patterns of nonverbal behavior that appear on popular TV shows influence racial bias among viewers.



Examples of positive nonverbal behavior you can show include smiling, leaning in, eagerness to share, and using a warm tone of voice.

ADD explicit, proactive language about race, even in content targeted to preschoolers. Messages should be direct, not subtle, so children can pick up on them.

Research Insight:

- Toddlers use race as one of their criteria to choose playmates.

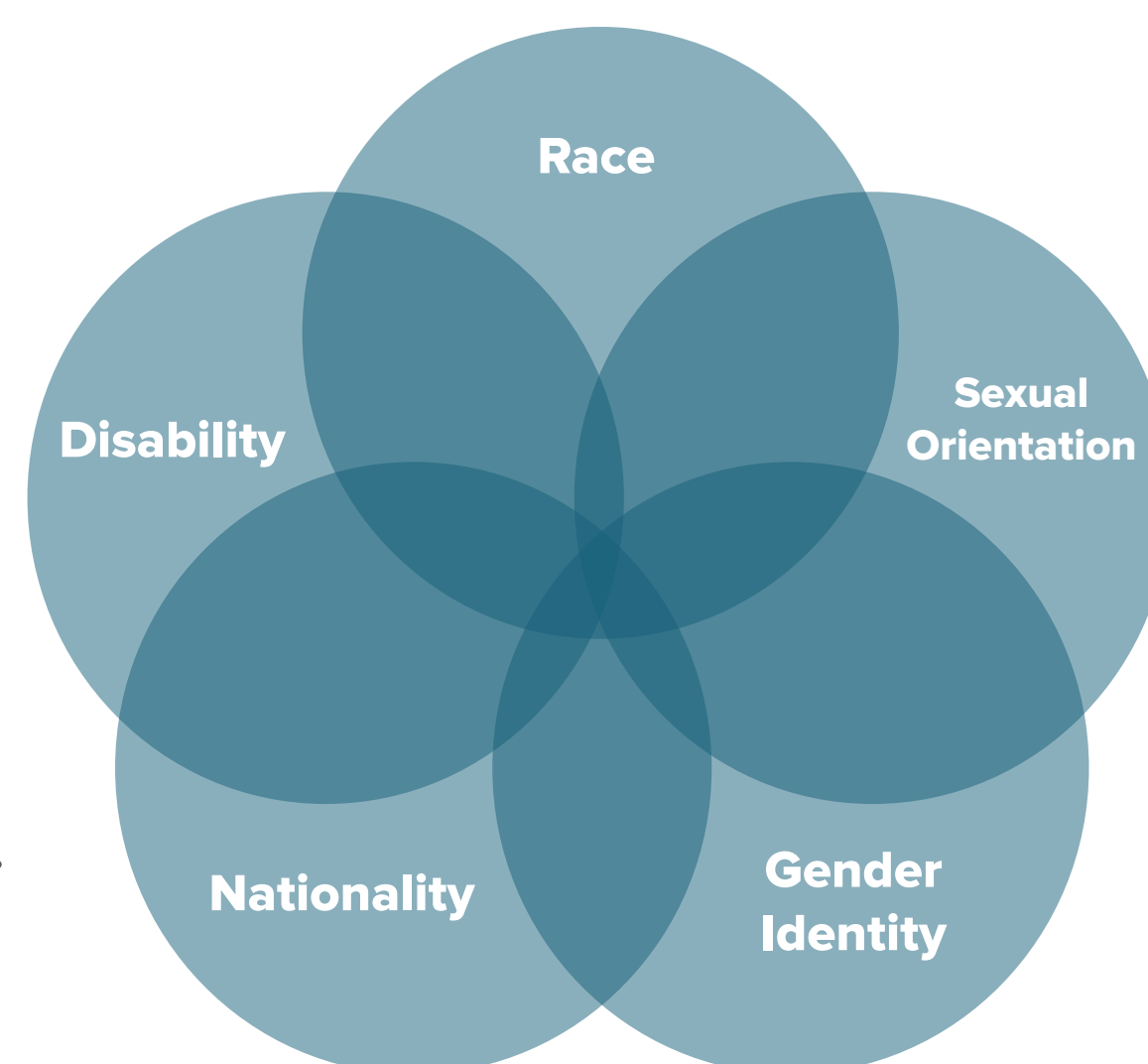


Toddlers understand the concept of fair vs. unfair, so these are good terms to use when addressing race with young children.

AVOID stereotypes by portraying characters of color with rich, intersectional identities.

Research Insights About On-Screen Stereotypes:

- Asian women are often portrayed as either passive love interests of White men or as partners in crime with Asian men.
- Latinx characters are most often portrayed having conversations about violence and crime.
- Black women are often portrayed as either oversexed fantasy objects, dominating matriarchs, or grandmother figures.



Intersectionality (n)
The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

INCLUSIVE



INCLUDE counter-stereotypical, multi-dimensional characters.



Research Insights:

- Showing a narrative that is the opposite of what is expected (e.g., Black heroes and White villains) can decrease unconscious bias by 40%.
- For Black and Latinx youth, and White girls, more frequent exposure to TV is associated with lower self-esteem. For White boys, the opposite is true.
- Out of the over 3,000 children’s books published in 2018, Latinx characters accounted for just 5% of protagonists.

INCORPORATE on-screen conversations about race when possible.

Research Insight:

- Taking a “color-mute” approach can actually promote future bias.



“When a child says ‘that kid is Black or Asian,’ I think a lot of White parents shush their child. You don’t want to shush your child. It creates a negative connotation in that child’s mind, and they think, ‘Wait, there’s something wrong with brown skin.’ Just say, ‘Great. Let’s meet this child. What else did you learn about them?’” -Amber Coleman-Mortley, iCivics

INSPIRE activism by specifically addressing systemic and historical discrimination and racism.



Research Insight:

- After learning about the history of racism, White children ages 6-11 viewed other races more favorably and were more likely to want to help change the unfairness in the world.

R EPRESENTATION



REMEMBER to show characters of color having conversations with each other.



Research Insight:

- In a survey of 62 TV shows, 65% of on-screen interactions were between only White characters. In contrast, just 2% were between only Black characters.

RECALL that there is diversity within diversity.



Research Insights:

- “Asian-American” includes more than 30 different nationalities and ethnic groups.
- The Census grouping for “White” includes Middle Easterns and North Africans.

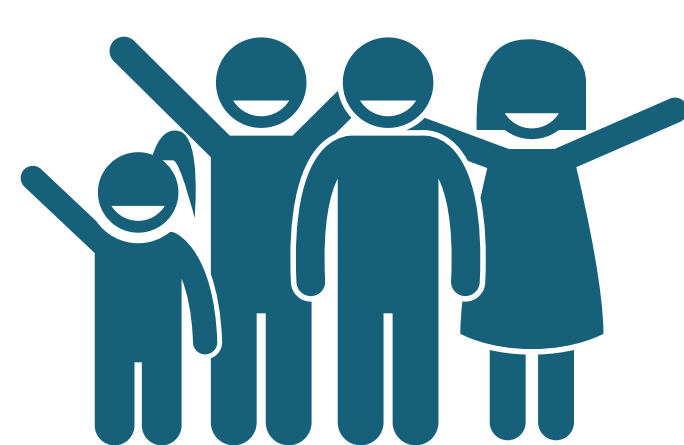
REPRESENT characters of all skin tones and colors in positive roles.



Research Insight:

- “Colorism” is reflected all too often in media representations despite the fact that it is no less insidious than racism and also has serious, real-world implications.

REVEAL that both children and adults can have positive cross-race friendships.



Research Insight:

- White elementary school children (ages 7-9) who read storybooks featuring African and Chinese characters were more interested in interacting with non-White children afterwards.

RECOGNIZE and challenge your potential bias as a content creator.



Research Insight:

- Research finds that openly acknowledging existing biases and challenging them works to reduce them.

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

UCLA About The Center for Scholars & Storytellers:

The Center for Scholars & Storytellers, based at UCLA, bridges the gap between researchers and content creators to support positive youth development.

For More Information Contact:
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For research-based ideas to keep AIR top of mind, use our checklist free to download at <https://www.scholarsandstorytellers.com/AIR>

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Research Sources:

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