

# MULTICULTURAL BOOK DRIVE



## A Resource Guide for Selecting Multicultural Books

Thoughtfully selecting culturally competent books is one of the many ways to take action toward a more inclusive community. Donate books to this drive to help us stock the shelves at nonprofits with inclusive texts, share this resource with others, or use it as a guide as you build your family's library.

*The considerations below are not requirements for this book drive.*

- **Author:** Is the author a member of the community or identity group that has historically been marginalized or underrepresented? Are they writing from their own experiences or cultural normal, or are they telling another groups' story?
- **Culture Relevancy & Accuracy:** Does the story include words and phrases from the depicted culture? The inclusion of Spanish words in a book about a Mexican family, for example, provides realism and shows respect for the culture.
- **Illustration & Identity:** How do the author and illustrator depict ethnicity, religion, abilities, or race? Are there identities that reflect tokenism or are conspicuously absent? Regularly seeing only "one" person of any group in a book teaches young children about who is more or less important.
- **Activities:** What are the characters doing and how does the reader know about gender norms or expectations?
- **Text & Font:** Is the font easy for emergent and novice readers to read? Font in straight lines is helpful for English as a second-language reader. Bonus points for bilingual books (also known as side-by-side books).
- **Representation, Plot & Relationships:** What are the relationship between characters? Is one character in a position of power over another? Do the characters engage in stereotypical gender roles or challenge heteronormative gender roles? Are people of color, women, low-income families, or people with disabilities depicted as needing help or in passive roles, while whites, men, and "able-bodied" people are in leadership and action roles? Does your collection include heroes of color? If so, are they admired for the same qualities as the white heroes?

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*United Way is proud to partner with local expert and community advocate, Dr. Amy Shema, and the [Rochester Education Foundation](#) to bring you this resource guide to selecting multicultural books. REF's 2022 literacy initiative, *Mirror, Window, and Doors*, distributed over 1,110 books to RCSD students that were intentionally chosen to reflect the values of promoting more diverse representations of characters in texts.*



United Way of Greater Rochester  
and the Finger Lakes  
Serving Genesee, Livingston, Monroe,  
Ontario, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties



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