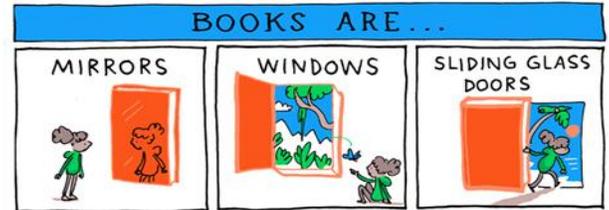# Home & Classroom | DIVERSE LIBRARY INVENTORY

**1** Help kids collect the books in your home or class library that have people as characters

"Let's look at all the books in our library."

BOOKS ARE...

MIRRORS   WINDOWS   SLIDING GLASS DOORS

GRANT SNIDER (AFTER RUDINE SIMS BISHOP)

**2** Decide whether you want to talk about race or skin shades (at this moment)

**Skin shades:** rich black, golden brown, pale pink (more descriptions)
*Avoid food descriptors to describe People of Color if you are white or white passing

"How many characters have light skin shades that are, white or pink?"
"How many have dark skin shades that are bronze, golden brown, or dark brown?"

**Race**: African American/Black, Arab, Asian, Hispanic/Latine, Native American/Indigenous, Pacific Islander, White, Multiracial

"How many characters might be _____?"

**3** Do the math! Write down the number of characters by race or skin shade

Use tally marks, comparisons, percentages, bar graphs, whatever is developmentally appropriate

**4** Reflect

"Most (or almost all) of the characters in our books are white."

"Is that what our neighborhoods look like?"

"Is that what our world looks like?"

**Are we just continuing to stereotype?** Without clear descriptions from the author, guessing at a character's race might feel like stereotyping. This is a worthwhile concern to sit with and discuss--especially the ways in which we stereotype others on a daily basis (sometimes without realizing it) and the harm that can come from making assumptions about others.

**So why do this activity?** If we are to unlearn the act of stereotyping, which is so deeply entrenched in our society, we need to reflect, question and dig deeper into the ways discrimination shows up in our homes, classrooms, and community spaces. Avoidance won't get us there. This activity creates opportunities for important conversations and provides tangible examples of inequitable representation in children's literature.

**5** Complicate It/Educate

"Many people might have libraries like ours where most of the characters are white. Why do you think that is?"

"Most of our books have characters who are Black and Brown. Do books at school look like our books? What do you think about that?"

"Did you know that about 40% of people in the US are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) but only 29% of kids books published in the US are about BIPOC characters and only 7% are written by BIPOC. That is an example of racism."

**6** Change It

"What harm is caused when we only (or mostly) see characters from a certain race or skin shade?"

"What should we do about it?"

Positive Discipline Community Resources
pdcr

Schools for Social Justice