



# DEEPENING THE DIALOGUE: MIRRORS & WINDOWS

## MIRRORS & WINDOWS

Books are the center of the work we do within Reach Out and Read. As an organization, we strive to provide books representative of the diverse communities we serve. In 2019, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a landmark policy statement on how racism and discrimination affect the health of children, offering clear evidence and recommendations at the level of practice, programs, and policy. In pediatric care, books serve as powerful tools for fostering confidence, empathy, understanding, and cultural competence among children, their families, and their trusted providers.

This concept of mirrors and windows is a metaphor originally coined by Emily Style in 1988 and was popularized in the [article](#), "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors", published in 1990 by Rudine Sims Bishop at Ohio State University.

Mirrors represent the importance of children seeing themselves reflected in the stories they read. When children encounter characters who share their ethnicity, language, culture, or unique traits they feel validated and empowered.

Windows symbolize the opportunity for children to gain insight into the lives and experiences of others through books. Exposure to diverse characters and narratives broadens children's perspectives, fosters empathy, and promotes cultural understanding.

By discussing books as mirrors and windows, we can empower parents and caregivers to actively seek out books like these for their children and create an environment where every child feels seen, valued, and understood.

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- Provide families with a mix of books that serve as both mirrors and windows.
- Include representations of various abilities, identities, cultures, and family structure to encompass a broader spectrum of experiences.
- Ensure that your book selection reflects the diverse identities of your patient population.
- When talking about the book, encourage children to see themselves as integral parts of the narrative, fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth.
- Guide discussions with families about the importance of embracing differences and understanding the world beyond their own experiences.
- Offer guidance on how to discuss diversity and inclusion with children in a respectful and age-appropriate manner.

## RESOURCES

Reach Out and Read Resource: [tinyurl.com/bdd4ttpt](https://tinyurl.com/bdd4ttpt)

Article: [tinyurl.com/58nvhz82](https://tinyurl.com/58nvhz82)

AAP Policy Statement: [tinyurl.com/mrz8nees](https://tinyurl.com/mrz8nees)

Article: [tinyurl.com/95zbkau](https://tinyurl.com/95zbkau)

Video: [tinyurl.com/45pdpm72](https://tinyurl.com/45pdpm72)

Book: [tinyurl.com/yh6hnyxr](https://tinyurl.com/yh6hnyxr)

Video: [tinyurl.com/pdur2264](https://tinyurl.com/pdur2264)