



Books Can Lift Us Higher

A JUICY PEACH, a good book, and the shade of a big tree. That was my mother's recipe for a perfect summer afternoon, dreamed up when she was a kid in Michigan and delivered to my sister and me every July and August of our childhood in Connecticut. Our home was filled with volumes she had lovingly selected, and fresh fruit sat at the ready on our kitchen counter. My mom didn't schedule our days with projects, sports, or playdates. If I went to her home office looking for entertainment, I typically got one response: "Read a book."

Following her advice shaped me into the person I am today. My world as a kid was fairly small and sheltered. Books helped crack it open.

But not quite wide enough.

As I write this letter, our nation has collectively reached a day of reckoning, and we are facing harrowing truths about systemic racism. Like many other white people, I have been listening, learning, and taking a hard look at how I have benefited from white privilege. I feel deep regret over the times I have been silent when I could have spoken loudly for Black friends and colleagues. And because I have been busy editing our first-ever issue devoted to children's books, I've been thinking about the gaps in my personal library.

My shelves overflow with titles that have helped me grasp different facets of my own identity—as a mother, a daughter, a journalist,

a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, and a Jewish American. There's nothing wrong with that.

But I have read only a handful of books about the Black experience. For me and my sons, that stops now. If we want the world to change—and for our children to be the changemakers—we must embrace stories from more than one point of view. On page 44, you'll find 100 titles—suggested by writers of all backgrounds—that are destined to get your kids to love literature and to see life differently. (My thanks go to writer Catherine Hong, and to longtime *Parents* editors Karen Cicero and Diane Debrovner, for this true tour de force.)

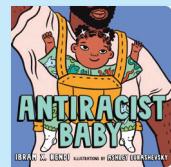
Know, too, that *Parents'* efforts in combating racism will continue and grow. Over the coming months and years, we will diversify the voices and representation in our content, delivering more of the advice families need to nurture a generation of good people. After all, isn't that what parenting is all about? We've adopted a new brand rallying cry, **Raising the Future**, to guide this journey.

I hope this issue inspires you to curate at least a few perfect, eye-opening summer afternoons for your kids. We can't send you fresh peaches and a tree, but you can consider the book picks covered.

Julia



Parents is thrilled to partner with Penguin Random House for **Read Together, Be Together** (readtogetherbetgether.com), a nationwide movement celebrating the importance of reading with young kids. The program launched in March with virtual storytimes, and now you can buy specially priced Read Together, Be Together editions of ten classic children's books, all of which include reading tips from *Parents*. A portion of proceeds will go to the nonprofit First Book to support children in need. And to start building a more diverse home library, check out Penguin Random House books such as *The Day You Begin*, *The King of Kindergarten*, and *Antiracist Baby*. The latter book is the first selection in *Parents'* new **Raising the Future Book Club**. Author Ibram X. Kendi, Ph.D., will lead a discussion of the book on *Parents'* Instagram on August 7 at 3 P.M. (ET). For details, go to parents.com/bookclub.



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