Be Who You Are: Best Books for Kids

A Bad Case of Stripes / Un caso grave de rayas. David Shannon. (K – 2) Camilla has always worried about what other people think of her. She contracts an ailment that literally turns her into whatever anyone—classmates, doctors, etc. —decides she should be. English and Spanish editions.

Chocolate Me! Taye Diggs. (Pre-K – 1) Teased for looking different than the other kids—his skin is darker, his hair curlier—he tells his mother he wishes he could be more like everyone else. And she helps him to see how beautiful he really, truly is.

The Day You Begin / El Día en Que Descubres Quién Eres. Jacqueline Woodson. (K – 3) Follows a series of students who feel like they stand out and are teased by their classmates. Woodson reminds us that we all feel like outsiders sometimes—and how brave it is that we go forth anyway. English and Spanish editions.

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea. Kai Cheng Thom and Kai Yun Ching. (Pre-K – 1) Miu Lan can change into any shape they can imagine. A boy or a girl? A bird or a fish? A flower or a shooting star? At school, they must endure inquisitive looks and difficult questions. But one thing’s for sure—their mother will love them just the same.

I Am Enough. Grace Byers. (Pre-K –1) A lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another—from Empire actor and activist Grace Byers.

I Am Perfectly Designed. Karamo Brown with Jason “Rachel” Brown. (Pre-K – K) Actor, Karamo Brown and his son write about a boy and his father taking a joyful walk through the city, discovering all the ways in which they are perfectly designed for each other.

I Like Myself! / ¡Me gusta cómo soy! Karen Beaumont. (Pre-K – K) Inside, outside, upside down: Young readers will discover the many ways to celebrate the joy of loving who you are! Encourages kids to appreciate everything about themselves—inside and out. Messy hair? Beaver breath? So what! Here’s a little girl who knows what really matters.
It's OK to Be Different, Todd Parr. (Pre-K – 1) Delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format with Parr's bold, bright colors and silly scenes.

Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You. Sonia Sotomayor. (K – 3) Feeling different can be tough. But in the same way that different types of plants and flowers make a garden more beautiful and enjoyable, different types of people make our world more vibrant and wonderful. Based on her own experience, Justice Sotomayor writes about children with all sorts of challenges—and looks at the special powers those kids have as well.

Looking Like Me. Walter Dean Myers. (K – 2) An African American boy celebrates all of who he is, including a dancer, an artist and a writer. Colorful collage illustrations and catchy rhymes.

M is for Melanin. Tiffany Rose. (Toddler – K) Each letter of the alphabet contains affirming, Black-positive messages, from A is for Afro, and F is for Fresh, to P is for Pride and W is for Worthy. Teaches children their ABCs while encouraging them to love the skin they're in. Be bold. Be fearless. BE YOU.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina. Monica Brown. (K – 2) Marisol, a multiracial girl, loves to be creative, eating peanut butter and jelly burritos, for example. But at times she is misunderstood and teased by peers. Bilingual.

Pride Colors. Robin Stevenson. (Toddler – Pre-K) Through gentle rhymes and colorful photographs of adorable children, “Pride Colors” is a celebration of the deep unconditional love of a caregiver for a young child. The profound message of this delightful board book is you are free to be whoever you choose to be; you'll always be loved.

The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family. Ibtihaj Muhammad. (Pre-K – 1) It’s the first day of school and Asiya will wear her first-day hijab. “Some people won’t understand your hijab, Mama had said. But if you understand who you are, one day they will too.” Olympic medalist, Ibtihaj Muhammad writes of the unbreakable bond between siblings, and of being proud of who you are.

Sulwe. Lupita Nyong'o. (Pre-K – 2) Sulwe has skin the color of midnight. But she just wants to be beautiful and bright, like her mother and sister. Then a magical journey in the night sky opens her eyes and changes everything. Actress Lupita Nyong’o inspires children to see their own unique beauty.