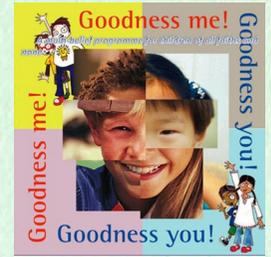


# CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY - STORY



### WHY IS CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY IMPORTANT ?

A culturally-responsive library is one where intercultural and multicultural books respectfully and accurately depict the variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups within society.

Children encounter diversity on a regular basis in their interactions with others at home, in school, and in their community. It is essential that children learn to understand the important role of their culture and the cultures of other people in creating an overall global culture that is respectful of differences.

*Multi-culturalism implies an emphasis on celebrating cultural difference, while inter-culturalism takes a broader view of culture and considers issues such as discrimination and racism.*

One way that children learn about the world around them and other cultures is through the social messages found in stories. Stories help children to understand how society perceives their culture as well as

the cultures of their classmates, teachers, caregivers, and others, thereby influencing their social and identity development (Naidoo, 2014). Culture includes shared characteristics that define how a person lives, thinks, and creates meaning. These characteristics include customs, traditions, rituals, food, dress, and language (Naidoo, 2014). Typically people from the same cultural group share similar characteristics.



# CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY - STORY

Children experience culture through their families' values and practices, in their daily interactions with others in school, throughout the community, and through the stories and characters they encounter in books, television programmes and films, music, video and computer games, digital apps, and other forms of print and digital media (Naidoo, 2014).

The work of Vygotsky (1986) informs us that language and culture play a significant role in a child's social and identity development and construction of meaning.

Cultural traditions and social practices have the ability to moderate the way children think and learn. A child's self-esteem is largely influenced by the way the child and overall society view the cultural group to which the child belongs. Vygotsky explains that children use expressive media such as books to understand the world around them.

Bishop (1997) also acknowledges the power of children's stories to influence a child's perception of their world and suggests that children's literature can serve as a mirror reflecting a child's own life and culture, or as a window allowing children to peer into the lives of others.

Children's materials that accurately portray diversity in multiple languages and cultures can have a positive influence on a child's self-image and help him or her build bridges of cultural understanding (Naidoo, 2014).

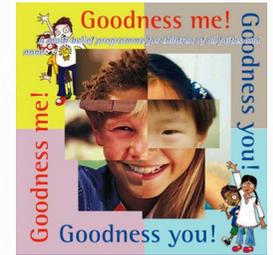
It is important that children see images that reflect themselves and encounter stories in their native language and within the context of their personal cultures. Diverse and culturally authentic materials in a library collection allow all children to meet people like themselves and develop an appreciation for the beauty of their culture and the cultures of others. Children's materials that provide inaccurate, stereotyped depictions of

diverse languages and cultures can equally influence children. If children are consistently exposed to books and other media that negatively represent their culture, then it is likely they will internalize these social messages and develop a poor sense of self (Naidoo, 2014).

## HOW DO YOU CHOOSE APPROPRIATE BOOKS FOR YOUR CULTURALLY-DIVERSE LIBRARY?

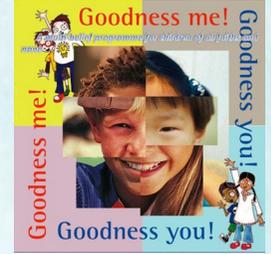
When selecting books for the library collection, it is important that teachers choose materials representative of a wide range of perspectives and cultures. Opportunities should be provided for children to hear stories and interact with characters whose lives and experiences are both similar and different from their own. Children need a global perspective on the world in order to develop cultural competence and move beyond their immediate environment.

A good book will facilitate understanding and acceptance of diversity based upon culture, ethnicity, gender, linguistic ability, religion, physical ability, immigration status and sexual orientation. Culturally-responsive library books will introduce different cultures through quality children's materials (print and digital) and promote cross-cultural connections by inviting children to explore topics such as social justice, equality, and cultural authenticity (Naidoo, 2014). Language is part of a child's culture. A culturally-responsive library will include books in a range of languages that are represented in the school.



# CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY - STORY



Choosing which books to use is an important role of the teacher. According to Otten (2002), it is best to expose students to a wide variety of literature. Research recommends incorporating classics, folk literature, legends, and contemporary stories—all drawn from various cultures. This type of diversity allows students to discover similarities in values across geography, culture, and time (ERIC and the Family Learning Association, 2002).

When choosing suitably diverse materials, we should ensure that they will:

- ✓ Provide positive role models for culturally diverse children.
- ✓ Introduce children to characters with similar and/or different experiences and emotions.
- ✓ Convey the richness and beauty of the diverse cultures in the school community and in Ireland.
- ✓ Reinforce a distinct cultural identity.
- ✓ Promote multilingual and literacy development.
- ✓ Inspire learning of other cultures and general cultural knowledge.
- ✓ Facilitate acceptance of cultures different from one's own.
- ✓ Foster global connections.

# CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY

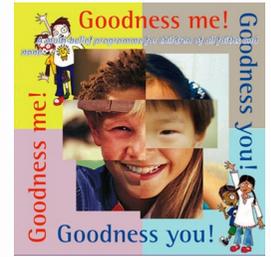
## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY - STORY

### WHERE SHOULD I START?

In beginning to develop a GMGY library it is important to consult with staff, parents and community representatives. Often parents from different backgrounds and cultures will know of stories and books that could be an excellent addition to your library collection. It is also important in cases where the books are in different languages to ensure that they are appropriate for the target age group.

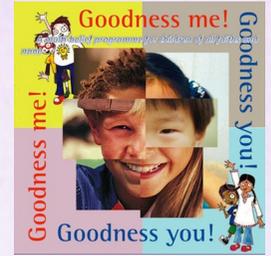
[Here](#) is a list entitled '50 Picture books to Change the World!' (Kenyon & Hegarty, 2017). The stories on this list were identified by the SPHE Network of Ireland and may act as a starting point for schools considering developing their GMGY library.

The list is not exhaustive or prescriptive; it merely seeks to act as an initial guide for those unsure of where to begin their library development.



# CREATING A GMGY LIBRARY

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY - STORY



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