



Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Monthly Featured Book: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter™: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



New From Here

Author: Kelly Yang

Age Range: 8-12

Year Published: 2022

Book Themes

Acceptance, Acting as an Ally, Anti-Asian Bias, Covid-19 Pandemic, Family, People with Disabilities, Socioeconomic Status

About the Book

When the coronavirus hits Hong Kong, ten-year-old Knox Wei-Evans's mom makes the last-minute decision to move him and his siblings back to California, where they think they will be safe. Suddenly, Knox has two days to prepare for an international move—and for leaving his dad, who has to stay for work. At his new school in California, Knox struggles with being the new kid. His classmates think that because he's from Asia, he must have brought over the virus. At home, Mom just got fired and is panicking over the loss of health insurance, and Dad doesn't even know when he'll see them again, since the flights have been cancelled. And everyone struggles with Knox's blurting-things-out problem. As racism skyrockets during the Covid-19 pandemic, Knox tries to stand up to hate, while finding his place in his new country.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, you can use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remembering not to judge their responses, listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that will help them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- How does Knox feel about leaving Hong Kong and leaving Dad? Why do you think he feels that way?
- When Knox visits his new school, he notices that there is “no one who looks like me.” What does this mean and how does Knox feel about this?
- How do Knox and his siblings feel about attending school online? At the beginning of the pandemic did you attend online school? What was that experience like for you?
- How does Knox feel when he finds out he has ADHD? What does he do to learn more about it?
- Knox and his siblings develop several plans and schemes to help their parents and their family. What was positive about those plans and when did it go in a negative direction? What was your reaction to these adventures and have you ever done something similar?
- What happens at recess when the kids play “coronavirus tag?” How do Christopher and Knox, the only Asian students in the class, feel about this? Later in the book when Christopher says he doesn't want to play coronavirus tag, what does Knox do? What does Knox mean when he says it's “offensive?”
- What happens when the virus starts to show up and spread in the U.S.? How do different people react? Do you remember how you felt and what you did when you first heard about the Covid-19 pandemic?
- How are the members of the Wei-Evans family treated in the U.S. based on them being Asian? Could you relate or not to the bias and stereotyping they faced?
- How did you feel when the book ends? What do you think will happen next for Knox and his family as they all are now together in the U.S.?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What is her message?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family

1. Anti-Asian Bias and Hate

Talk with your child about what Knox and his family faced when they move to the U.S. Elicit from your child that the Wei-Evans family experienced anti-Asian bias, discrimination and hate when they came to the U.S. because there was a great deal of stereotyping, bias and even violence directed at Asian people. This happened in part because the coronavirus originated in China and people blamed China and its people for the virus. In addition, there was a lot of stereotyping that people who are Chinese or Asian had the virus and would spread it to others. Define bias as “a preference, either for or against an individual or group, that affects fair judgment.” Talk with your child about examples from the book of anti-Asian bias. Some examples include the family not telling anyone where they're from because they worried about stereotyping and bias; the students at Knox's school playing “coronavirus tag” and Knox and his friend Christopher (who is also Asian) are always “it/the virus;” people moving away from Knox's family in line at the grocery store to avoid them; people calling them racial slurs, saying offensive things to them and blaming them for the pandemic; customers that stopped coming to Christopher's family's Chinese restaurant. Explain to your child that during that time and continuing today, there was an increase in bias, hate, discrimination and violence directed towards the Asian American community. During this time there were also many people, including Asian American people and others, who engaged in speaking out and taking actions to challenge the bias, in both small and large ways.

(Note: You can learn more about some of the data by reading this [this article](#) and [this report](#). However, be mindful not to overload your child with upsetting statistics as your goal should be to foster empathy and understanding.)

2. Acting as an Ally

Talk with your child about how when bias, bullying and hate take place, that are different ways that people around the targeted person can respond. Explore the different ways someone can act as an ally in those situations, explaining that an ally is “someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of bias.” Share some examples from the book and ask them to share when they saw ally behavior in the book. You can also remind them about how Knox (on page 275) googles “how to respond to racist comments” and he discovers an idea called ICEE which stands for Interrupt, Correct, Educate and Echo. In this case, echo means to “echo statements of support” for the target. Explain that “echoing” is one way to act as an ally. Share that some of the ways we can act as an ally are (1) to support the target, whether you know them or not, (2) not participate in the bullying, which can make a big difference, (3) tell the person doing the bullying to stop, (4) tell a trusted adult and (5) get to know people instead of judging them. These ways are illustrated on [6 Ways to be an Ally](#). Share with your child situations in which you have acted as an ally to others. Ask your child if they have ever seen ally behavior or if they have ever acted as an ally when someone faced bias or bullying or how they might in the future.

3. Pandemic Experiences

The book focuses on the experiences of the Wei-Evans family during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic—in Hong Kong and the U.S. Talk with your child about what happens with the family during this time and their experiences related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of these experiences include attending school online (with Zoom), having to quarantine (to limit or forbid movements of people or goods to prevent the spread of disease or pests), having to find masks, buying a lot of food (stockpiling), worrying that they have the virus, and the bias and discrimination they face as an Asian American family. Talk with your child about these experiences and to what extent they can relate or not. Then, elicit from them what they remember about the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic from their own lives, encouraging them to share their thoughts, experiences memories and feelings. You can also share your own thoughts and feelings about this time period, keeping in mind this was and continues to be a difficult time for many people. In many families, there was loss and significant health issues and the grief continues. Be extra sensitive and mindful to your child’s feelings as they talk about it. Depending on their age, your child may or may not remember much. If they don’t have memories themselves, they can share what you or others have told them about that time. On the author’s website, Kelly Yang asked readers to submit [What’s Your Pandemic Story?](#) and you can read some of those essays together to understand what it was like for others.

Other Books You Might Like



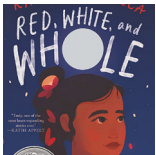
Amina's Voice <https://www.adl.org/aminas-voice>



Front Desk <https://www.adl.org/front-desk>



New Kid <https://www.adl.org/new-kid>



Red, White and Whole <https://www.adl.org/red-white-and-whole>

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on AAPI people, acting as an ally and the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month Resources <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/asian-american-pacific-islander-aapi-heritage-month-resources>
- Be an Ally: Six Simple Ways <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/be-an-ally-six-simple-ways>
- Challenging Anti-Asian Bias and Acting as an Ally <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/challenging-anti-asian-bias-and-acting-ally>
- Children's Books about People, Identity and Culture <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1586>
- Children's Books about People Who are Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1626>
- COVID-19 and Societal Inequities (Table Talk) <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/covid-19-and-societal-inequities>
- Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/empowering-young-people-aftermath-hate-english-and-espanol>
- Meet Author Kelly Yang <https://www.sutori.com/en/story/meet-author-kelly-yang--t1yQSicBhCGcdRU9qe4eYtMi>
- Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>
- Who Am I? Identity Poems https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/who-am-i-identity-poems?gclid=CjwKCAiA3KefBhByEiwAi2LDHJ81XD9HKHICRDiy6lR0vjYag0d4tudxFIRalzpe5XEEEf_LeDap5BoCxGgQAvD_BwE