



# Caring for Black and Minority Ethnic Children and Young People

## A Guide for Foster Carers



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## 1 Introduction

This guide is not intended to stereotype children and young people who are black or from minority ethnic communities (BME). Many children and young people may not be aware of any culture other than the British culture, or they may simply feel they relate more to the British culture. Children and young people should be able to feel that they can belong to more than one culture. Not all children from minority ethnic communities have difficulties or feel isolated in society. This guide is to help make sure we recognise and meet the needs of all children who are black or from minority ethnic communities.

We have written this guide to help you if you are looking after a black or minority ethnic child (or children or young people). For example, they could be African, Caribbean, Asian, eastern European, Irish Traveller or Gypsy. We realise that a child may have a different ethnic background than you do, and so you will want to support them as best you can while they are with you. To help you do this, we have included ideas, lists of local resources and a list of ten top tips.

Having a strong sense of identity helps children and young people to grow into happy and healthy adults. As a carer, there is much you can do to help the child you are caring for to become more confident and proud of who they are.

We understand that it is difficult for some children and young people to know about their background, and this can be even more confusing when their carer has a different ethnic background to them. We want to help and support you in your role as carer.

Children and young people see similarities in people, whatever their backgrounds, and this is a positive place to start in helping the child you are caring for. You can get support from local organisations who can help you celebrate the child you are looking after and help them be proud of their identity. Chapter 4 of this guide gives you phone numbers and websites of organisations that we think may be useful to you.

We will make sure that we provide children, young people and their families with services that value differences, promote equal opportunities and help you achieve the best for you and the child you are looking after. We hope that you will both develop with each other and benefit from understanding each other's ethnic and cultural background. This will help you overcome the discrimination that some children and young people in care suffer from.

We can support you to learn new skills and improve your knowledge, so you are able to care for the children and young people you look after as well as possible. We understand that we all have a lot to learn and we would like you to tell us about your experiences, so we can continually improve the support we offer in East Sussex.

Steve Hunt  
Operations Manager  
East Sussex County Council Fostering Service  
June 2009

## 2 Definitions

New language can be exciting and powerful. Words develop over time. We bring in new words, adapt old words and stop using other words. This is particularly true when talking about ethnic background. If you are caring for a child or young person who has gone through a very bad experience, we have an extra responsibility to try and be up to date with the language and approaches we should use. This does not come naturally to all of us, especially if you are new to caring for a child or young person from a different ethnic background to your own.

Below is a list of some of important words and phrases we currently use, which will help you celebrate the identity of the child or young person you are caring for.

### **BME community**

This is a community made up of people who are black or from minority ethnic communities, including Asian or Asian British, mixed, Chinese or other ethnic groups. You may also come across the term BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) community. This is the same as a BME community.

### **Racism, prejudice and hate crime**

#### **Racism**

Unfortunately, you may need to prepare yourself to cope with racism if you are looking after a child or young person who is from a minority ethnic community.

#### **What racism means**

In its broadest sense, racism is when someone believes one race of people is better than another.

#### **Prejudice**

Prejudice is when you make a negative decision without having any reason or actual experience to base it on.

As a carer you will need to develop ways to support the child or young person you look after to deal with racism. You must not pretend that racism does not exist. However, we offer training and information to support you and the child or young person you are caring for. We understand that as a family you may not be familiar with developing ways of dealing with these issues, but children and young people will need them. Children and young people who are prepared are able to deal with these challenges in a much better way.

### **Hate crime**

Hate crime is a type of harassment. Hate crime is a criminal offence committed against a person or property because of their:

- ethnic background;
- nationality;
- religion;
- sex;
- sexuality; or
- disability.

### Tip one

Think about the positive experiences you already have as a family to help you socialise with black and minority ethnic communities. For example, think about the social parts of your life, people you meet and films or music you like.

## Cultural identity

You need to plan how you are going to help the child or young person you are caring for have a positive sense of ethnic background, so that they feel confident and proud of it. This can be through supporting their interest in spirituality, their family, community groups and history, and by providing strong role models from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It is important to help the child or young person feel like they belong. Be aware of culture, language, food and hair and skin care so you can understand a child or young person more personally.

### Tip two

Think about the similarities you have with a child or young person before you look at the differences. Write a list of things you have in common, for example getting up for school and work, being excited about birthdays and events, shared interests, having bad days and so on.

## Language

Some children and young people speak English as a second language, which may affect how they settle in and how you support them to be proud of their ethnic background. Again, you must help a child or young person be confident about their ethnic background and take care not to criticise or become frustrated with a child or young person when they try to communicate with you in a second language. It is important to give children and young people the opportunity to use their first language. The 'English as an Additional Language Service' should be involved with the child or young person's education through school.

### Tip three

Encourage the child or young person to teach you how to say hello and goodbye or count to 10 in their language.

## Dual and diverse heritage

The term 'dual heritage' is used to describe someone whose parents are from different ethnic backgrounds. The term has developed over time and generally replaces others such as 'mixed race'. Children and young people often have more than two heritages which make up their ethnic background and they may prefer to use 'multiple heritage', 'mixed parentage' or 'diverse heritage'. It is best to ask them which term they prefer to use.

People of dual heritage were once described as 'half-caste', but this is now an offensive term which you should not use.

## Black

People with family who come from Africa or the Caribbean generally prefer to describe themselves as black (used since the 1960s as part of the 'Black is beautiful' campaign to improve the image of black people and get rid of the idea that the colour black represented bad or evil). 'Black' is used as a political term with a capital B, and is also used by Asian people and people with a mixed background to describe a political alliance.

## African Caribbean

As well as using 'black', many people with family from the Caribbean use the term 'African Caribbean' instead of 'West Indian' or 'Afro Caribbean', as neither term is true or complete.

## Asian

Asian is a general term used for people who have family from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. People will also choose to identify with their particular nationality.

## Black British and Asian British

People sometimes add 'Asian' or 'black' before British to show that they have two ethnic backgrounds. For example, someone who may have family from India but is of the third generation born in Britain, may refer to themselves as Asian British. Most people under the age of 25 with family from India or the Caribbean will have been born here and know no other home than Britain and so are British. It is important to respect that most people who have family from the Caribbean have not had the opportunity to trace family history to African origins as records were lost during the slave trade.

### Tip four

There have been black communities in Britain for over 300 years. Think about how you would refer to a friend with a Greek name whose grandparents moved to Britain in 1950 and whether you would refer to her as Greek or British. You may not be sure and could be influenced by how much cultural influence she shows, for example whether she spoke Greek, went to the Greek Church and kept in touch with her family in Greece.

## Minority ethnic groups

Ethnic background refers to how a person identifies with a group that shares some or all of the same culture, language, religion and history. We all have our own ethnicities and belong to an ethnic group including, English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish people. 'A minority ethnic group' is an ethnic group that is smaller in society.

## Religious identity

Sometimes a person's religion is as important, or more important, to them than their ethnic background. This means that they may identify themselves by their religion, for example, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu or Rastafarian.

## New arrivals and refugees

Both words refer to a person who has left their country in search of refuge, leaving war, political oppression or religious persecution behind them. 'New arrival' is preferred to 'asylum seeker' as the media has fuelled negative images of people seeking asylum in Britain. The term 'refugee' describes people who have been given permission to stay in Britain.

## Transracial

Transracial refers to a placement where a child or young person is placed with carers who have different ethnic backgrounds than them.

## Multiculturalism

This is usually used to describe a situation where there are many different cultures in a society, and the available services and facilities understand and recognise this in a positive way. It has been argued that this approach may have led to people thinking that difference is a mysterious thing, rather than developing real understanding between individuals and groups. Public organisations are now trying to build better relationships between people from different backgrounds.

## Words which people can find offensive

### Asylum seeker

In the UK the term 'asylum seeker' describes people aged 18 or over who arrive from overseas and apply for refuge, saying they are fleeing persecution, torture or war. While their applications are being considered by the Home Office, they continue to be called 'asylum seekers' until they are confirmed as refugees. People who do not have their application confirmed will have to leave the UK.

### Immigrant

An 'immigrant' is someone who has moved their home from one country to another (see also asylum seeker above). It is disliked because most black and Asian people in Britain are not immigrants here and were either born here or have lived here for many years. The word 'immigrant' suggests that they are still outsiders in Britain.

#### Tip five

Take time to think about the language you choose, for example the word 'immigrant'. Think about your feelings towards the many British people who leave to make a new home in Spain or Australia for example, and how the word 'immigrant' relates to them.

### Coloured

This word is an example of a word that we no longer use and is out of date. It is now seen as an offensive word.

## 3 Support available for transracial placements

### 3a Our support

We are committed to providing advice and support to all foster carers. We want to make sure that we support you to meet the needs of the children or young people you are caring for.

#### Supervising social worker

Every foster carer has a supervising social worker (SSW) from the Fostering Service. The SSW is responsible for visiting carers regularly, normally monthly, to give you advice and support and supervise you. They will give you help to put into practice ideas from this guide and they may be able to put you in touch with another foster carer who has useful experience. If you are caring for a child from a minority ethnic community, your SSW will talk to you about how you are meeting and promoting the emotional needs and identity of the child or young person beyond the practical ideas of diet, skin and hair care. You can ask a SSW for more advice and help.

#### Foster carers who are black or from a minority ethnic community

The Fostering Service is working towards having more foster carers who reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the children and young people in foster care. At any one time about 10% of children and young people in care are from a minority ethnic community. We are working with minority ethnic groups and going to appropriate events to promote fostering and encourage people to come forward.

## Training

As part of the Foundation Programme there is a course about caring for children and young people from minority ethnic communities called 'Valuing and Promoting Diversity'. There is another course aimed at staff, which you can also go on, called 'Promoting Resilience in BME children and young people'. A useful general course is 'Total Respect', which is led by children and young people in foster care.

The Fostering Service also runs occasional special workshops and events in this area, such as 'Caring for children from black and minority ethnic communities'.

## BME Foster Carers Support Group

This is a support group for foster carers who look after children from minority ethnic communities. They meet four or five times a year and have activities for families.

For more information or to book, you can speak to your SSW or phone the Fostering Service direct on **01323 747155** or **01323 747157**. Or, you can contact Sam Aitken by phoning **01323 449676**, or e-mail: [aitken733@btinternet.com](mailto:aitken733@btinternet.com).

## 3b Support from the child or young person's social worker

Every child or young person being cared for has a social worker who is responsible for their care plan. This includes visiting the child or young person regularly and working with the foster family.

Social workers are responsible for providing you with as much information as possible about the child or young person, including their family history. If you have any concerns or questions about the child or young person's ethnic background, you should speak to their social worker and they will find out any relevant information. The social worker acts as the contact between you and the child or young person's birth family (when appropriate).



### 3c Support from other services in East Sussex

#### **Placement Support Service (PSS)**

The PSS provides one-to-one work and group activities for some children and young people being cared for. This is normally for short periods of time. Currently there is also a black support worker who works with some of our children and young people who are from black and minority ethnic communities.

The service focuses on supporting children and young people, to help them feel more confident. They will help families to access appropriate resources within their local community. A social worker or SSW can make referrals to the PSS.

#### **The National Youth Advice Service (NYAS)**

The NYAS provides advocates for children and young people aged eight and above. An advocate is someone who acts on a child or young person's behalf. Having an advocate can help boost a young person's confidence and help them feel that they can have their voice heard.

You or the child or young person you are caring for can ask the social worker for an advocate.

NYAS also has a free helpline for children and young people or adults acting on their behalf.

**Phone: 0800 616101**

**Textphone: 0777 3334555**

**E-mail: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)**

#### **Independent Visitor Scheme**

Children or young people who are in long-term or permanent care and who have no contact with their birth families are entitled to have an independent visitor. This service is provided to encourage and support children and young people to get involved in decisions that affect them, and help them access the services they need to.

To use this service speak to the child or young person's social worker.



## 4 Community groups in East Sussex which offer support to children who are from black and minority ethnic communities and their carers

The community groups below are voluntary groups who often meet as individuals to share a common interest. The list is not complete as there are too many agencies working with communities in East Sussex to mention. Please be aware that active groups constantly change with the movement and interests of people involved, so you may have to contact your local council or Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for an up-to-date contact.

### Tip six

Pick up the phone and speak to someone from the community list provided. The people on the list have all given their names and are willing to help share with you some information about their group or ideas for support.



## Local groups and organisations

### **Asian Women's Group**

Based in Bexhill on Sea and reaching women across the county.

Contact Rehana Ahmed.

Phone: 07874 337859

### **Black Cultural Foundation**

Based in Eastbourne.

E-mail: magi.parker@googlemail.com

### **Brighton Peace and Environment Centre (BPEC)**

BPEC are a charity working with schools and community groups to raise awareness of global education. The centre has a library of teaching resources and children's books.

Phone: 01273 766611

E-mail: info@bpec.org

### **Diversity Resource International (DRI)**

DRI provides services to people from different cultures and who speak different languages. DRI provide a volunteer to work with people and introduce them to the British way of life.

Phone: 0798 9023460 or 077 22806595

E-mail: Dri.hastings@tiscali.co.uk or m.ghebreweldi@googlemail.com

### **Eastbourne Cultural Communities Network**

Eastbourne Cultural Communities Network provides social and cultural events, support, advice and representation, English classes and outreach work.

Phone: 01323 735772

E-mail: community@eccn.org.uk

### **English as an Additional Language Team** working with schools.

Phone: 01323 842045

E-mail: teals@eastsussex.gov.uk

### **Friends of Africa and the Caribbean in England (FACE)**

FACE is a social network with a monthly newsletter and meetings in and around Hastings. Events are held to raise support for the Sickle Cell Society. Contact Mandy Curtis.

Phone: 0770 8479362

E-mail: mandycurtis@gmail.com

### **Friends, Family and Travellers**

Phone: 01273 234777

E-mail: fft@communitybase.org

### **Hastings Intercultural Organisation**

Hastings Intercultural Organisation is a large group of organisations from Hastings and Rother who meet regularly to help bring the community together and host events in Hastings. The group is supported by the Community Development Team at Hastings Borough Council.

Phone: 01424 451066

**Hastings Iranian Community**

Hastings Iranian Community is one of the larger organisations in Hastings. They hold regular meetings and events. Contact Shiva Serati.

Phone: 07813 205043

E-mail: [hastingsiraniancommunity@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hastingsiraniancommunity@yahoo.co.uk)

**Islamic Information Centre**

Contact Dr Tariq Yusuf Rajbee or Mrs Atiya Tariq Rajbee.

Dr Rajbee

Phone: 01424 812727

E-mail : [tyrajbee@googlemail.com](mailto:tyrajbee@googlemail.com)

Mrs Rajbee

Phone: 01424 755355

E-mail: [atiyarajbee@hotmail.com](mailto:atiyarajbee@hotmail.com)

**Migrant Helpline East Sussex**

Phone: 01424 717011

**MOSAIC**

MOSAIC is a support group for people and families who are black, Asian and where parents are from different ethnic backgrounds. They have monthly meetings, groups for children under five, events and a newsletter.

Phone: 01273 234017

E-mail: [info@mosaicbrighton.org.uk](mailto:info@mosaicbrighton.org.uk)

**Pestalozzi International Village**

Pestalozzi International Village are a charity providing scholarships for young people aged 16 to 18 from Asia and Africa to study in the UK. The development education centre has resources, such as books, CDs and clothes, which people can borrow.

Phone: 01424 870444

E-mail: [info@pestalozzi.org.uk](mailto:info@pestalozzi.org.uk)

**Refugee Council**

Refugee Council is a national agency which helps anyone looking after refugee children or young people.

Website: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

**Rother Race Action Forum**

Rother Race Action Forum meet with service providers, groups and individuals every three months. They host events and celebrate Black History Season. Contact Linda Seddon.

Phone: 01424 733759

**Sally Phillips (Central and South America)**

Sally is willing to support children and families with a background in Central or South America. Please phone her after 12 noon.

Phone: 01424 46055

**South East England Malayalee Association**

South East England Malayalee Association is a cultural organisation that represents the tradition and heritage of Kerala, southern India.

Website: [www.seema.org.uk](http://www.seema.org.uk)

**Southeast Interpreting and Translation Services**

Southeast Interpreting and Translation Services provide face-to-face interpretation services, interpretation over the phone and written translations. For emergency interpretation over the phone, call: 0800 0087650

**Sompriti**

Sompriti is a charity in Lewes that works with people who are black or from minority ethnic communities, to help them become part of the community and receive equal opportunities.

Phone: 01273 477550

E-mail: [info@sompriti.com](mailto:info@sompriti.com)

**Traveller Education Service**

Phone: 01273 482671

E-mail: [jackie.whitford@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.whitford@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**Victim Support**

Victim Support manages the hate-crime service in East Sussex. They record and report any racist incidents in East Sussex. Contact Amanda Bigden.

Phone: 0845 3899 528



## 5 Practical information for foster carers

When you are thinking about the needs of children and young people who are black or from a minority ethnic group, it is not enough to just provide the right foods, skin care or hair care. You should think about the ‘whole’ child or young person you are caring for. You can do this by looking at their social and emotional needs, including self-awareness, respect, identity and taking part in community activities and cultural events.

### Hair care

In all cultures, taking care of your hair is an important part of your daily routine, and you should not overlook someone’s appearance. Young teenagers often face difficulties, and appearance matters and becomes a real issue. It is important to feel right and look right, as this often affects the way they are seen by others. Sometimes people do not take care of black children and young people’s hair, as they may not know how to care for it and think it is difficult to manage.

A foster carer in Somerset caring for a three-year-old child of dual heritage (whose parents are from different ethnic backgrounds) said the following.

‘I did not know where to start with her hair...she was with me for several weeks before I got up the courage to ask a black mother at the school for advice. I knew it needed combing and that is all I did and bunched it into a ponytail, because it was so dry. She gave me some tips on what I should use and now we try a different style every day.’

You can help care for a child’s or young person’s hair by doing the following:

- Comb their hair in the morning and at night, to help make sure there are not any knots. Use a wide-tooth comb if necessary.
- Dry their hair. Use hair creams before you dry it and take care not to overdry the hair, as this can cause the hair to break.
- Always shampoo and condition their hair after swimming, and use hair creams to moisturise the hair.

You should encourage young people to be proud of their hair and you can help them by finding positive role models with similar hair cuts in the media. You will need to be aware that some black children and young people, for example Rastafarians and Sikhs, will not want their hair cut for religious reasons.

Black people’s hair needs to be treated with care. Unlike other types of hair, you should take care when leaving their hair to dry naturally, as it can become very dehydrated and even break. There are also several things to consider when choosing a shampoo and conditioner.

You can buy hair products from the following local hairdressers in East Sussex.

- EurAfro World Hair Salon, 30 Seaside Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3PB.  
Phone: 01323 644455; Mobile: 07880933258
- Niki World of Hair, 20 Seaside Road, Eastbourne  
Phone: 01323 645515
- Niki World of Hair, 197-198 Queens Road, Hastings  
Phone: 01424 721372
- Culture Barbers, 37 Kings Road, St Leonards on Sea, TN37 6DX

You can also buy hair products from African and Caribbean food shops, or you can try looking on the internet.

## Skin care

As with hair care, it is important for everyone to look after their skin, which differs in colour, texture and type. This is true of a black child or young person's skin and is an important part of caring for their wellbeing. Black people's skin is often naturally dry due to the climate, and the condition and natural make-up of the skin, and it needs moisturising regularly with creams and lotions.

You can care for a black person's skin by getting the right products. Use oil-based products, body lotions and creams specially developed for black skins, for example cocoa butter. You can use everyday body lotions and creams, but these are often not as effective. You can find a local supplier on the website [www.sheabynature.co.uk](http://www.sheabynature.co.uk).

Black skin is very sensitive and can scar easily, so avoid using alcohol-based products as these can dry the skin even more. You should apply creams every day (sometimes more than once a day), especially to the face, arms and legs as these areas tend to get very dry. Using bath oils in the bath is also helpful to keep the skin soft. However, you should take care not to use too much oil as this can make the skin appear greasy. Take extra care of the skin after showering and bathing.

## Sun

Changes in weather can affect the skin. It is often thought that because of their skin colour, black people cannot get sunburn. Black people can and do frequently suffer from sunburn if they are in the sun for long amounts of time, so use sun lotions. Apply a high-factor sun cream for babies or very young children.



## Clothing

The way we dress reflects our own personal identity, culture, association with a group or a fashion trend. Children and young people often need to express themselves through dress, and may often feel pressured to follow the latest street fashion. Some children and young people from minority ethnic communities have particular clothing which identifies them with the culture of their community, but often some choose to dress in clothing like other young people which also reflects their identity with music, sport and so on. They may choose to keep to the dress code of their culture, for example, not show their legs and bare arms.

Islamic law says that Muslim women must keep their bodies and figures hidden. This may involve wearing a burkha, which covers the head and upper body. Sometimes the face may also be covered, leaving the eyes uncovered.

Muslim women from Pakistan traditionally wear a shalwar kameez (a long and loose tunic with loose and full trousers) and dupatta (long scarf). Sometimes they wear a sari on special occasions. Muslim women from Bangladesh traditionally wear saris. The kameez is usually decorated with buttons and embroidery. The fullness of the leg depends on style and fashion trends. The dupatta is worn over the shoulder and across the front to cover the breasts. Sikh and Hindu women often follow these traditional dress codes.

## Events

Many festivals are celebrated by community groups across East Sussex, either within our towns or at larger events in London, for example Chinese New Year (late January or early February). Often the events bring different nationalities together, for example International Women's Day (March 8) or Black History Season (most events take place during October). Local events which are celebrated every year include Diwali (the Hindu Association), International Women's Day ([hastingswomensvoice@yahoo.com](mailto:hastingswomensvoice@yahoo.com)) and St Leonards Festival (July). Most of these events are free.

You can find out more by contacting one of the groups above or by looking in your local paper. A good website for anything connected to black history and culture, is [www.black-history-month.co.uk](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk).

### Tip seven

Going to local events is a great way to meet new people, most of whom will be very excited to share information about the event and parts of their culture. Children and young people are generally made very welcome at these events, but if it is an evening event it is best to check whether they are invited.

## Food

As in the hair section above, please make time to find out if the child or young person you are looking after has any religious food-needs. These may vary greatly and you should research this according to the religious beliefs of the child or young person. It will be important to find out whether the child or young person is vegetarian, and if they do eat meat, which animals they cannot eat. For example, Muslims, Jews and Rastafarians do not eat pork.

### Tip eight

Cooking can be a fun introduction to a culture which is different to your own. Does the child or young person you look after have any favourite recipes to teach you?

## 6 Books

The number of books which represent and celebrate different ethnic backgrounds has increased greatly over the last 20 years. All the books listed below are not only beautiful, but very positive stories to share with children or young people. Letterbox Library ([www.letterboxlibrary.com](http://www.letterboxlibrary.com)) and Soma Books ([www.childrens-books.uk.com](http://www.childrens-books.uk.com)) both stock most of the books described below. Amazon books often have cheap copies available to buy online or local libraries will often order books for you. Local organisations you can borrow books from include Brighton Peace and Environment Centre, MOSAIC and Pestalozzi International Development Education Centre.

For contact details please see pages 10 to 12.

### Tip nine

A good place to start can be to share a book with the child or young person you are looking after. Many books have hidden themes within the story which you can use to raise awareness of an issue or help you to think things through. There are some fabulous picture books on the list and you are never too old to enjoy a story.

### **The Best Eid Ever – Asma Mobin-Uddin**

During the celebration of the Islamic festival of Eid, Aneesa meets two refugee girls at the mosque. She makes a plan to make the festival the best ever.

### **Billy and Belle – Sarah Garland**

An amusing and reassuring story about the arrival of a new baby into a lively and warm dual-parentage family.

### **Black like Kyra, White like me – Judith Vigna**

A new family move into the area and challenge racism through friendship.

### **The Colour of Home – Mary Hoffman**

Hussan is a refugee child from Somalia who sees things around him through colour. This helps him through his first day at school.

### **Double the Love – Bernard Ashley**

Blossom has two grandmothers. The story of a dual-heritage family coming together.

### **For Every Child – Caroline Castle**

Words and pictures by many well-known international artists introducing the United Nations rights of the child or young person.

### **Full, Full, Full of Love – Trish Cooke**

Sunday dinner at Grannie's house is always full. Full of hugs and kisses, full of tasty dishes, full to the brim with happy faces – full, full full of love.

### **The Grandad Tree – Trish Cooke**

A gentle book exploring the death of Grandad and the children's everlasting love for him.

### **Hair – Katy Petty**

Pictures from around the world to celebrate all kinds of hair.

### **Lebanon 1-2-3: A Counting Book – Marljean Moran Bouerl**

A counting book in three languages, Arabic, French and English, with pronunciation and activities.

**The Name Jar – Yangsook Choi**

Arriving from Korea in a new school, Unhei decides to pick a new name, but doesn't know which one to choose.

**So Much – Trish Cooke**

Beautifully illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, this is the story of a black British family coming together to celebrate dad's surprise birthday.

**Suki's Kimono – Chieri Uegake**

Suki wears her favourite kimono on the first day back at school, no matter what anyone says.

**The Swirling Hijaab – Na'ima bint Robert**

A story of the imaginary world of a girl playing with her mother's hijaab.

**That's my Mum – Henriette Barkow**

Based on a true story of being judged by the colour of their skin, the story of two children who confuse people when out with their mum but not dad because of the difference in their skin colour.

**What's Cooking Jamela? – Niki Daly**

From the award-winning series of stories about Jamela, a girl living in a South African township.



## Books for older children and young people

### **Angel Boy – Bernard Ashley**

Cleverly using stories of slavery and a modern-day struggle for survival, Leonard Boameh's plight to escape life on the street offers an insight into Ghanaian society. An intelligent story of personal freedom. A perfect thriller.

### **Everything Asian – Sung J Woo**

Written in short stories about a teenage boy who struggles to live in two cultures. Written with humour and grace.

### **The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain – Hakim Adi**

Many people think that Britain's black population has only developed in modern times, especially since the Second World War. In fact there have been African communities in cities such as London, Bristol, Edinburgh and Cardiff for over 300 years. The first Africans may even have come to Britain thousands of years ago.

### **The History of the Asian Community in Britain – Rozina Visram**

Asian people have been coming to Britain since the 17th century. Many came to make a living and to escape from poverty in British-ruled India. Some were rich, others were students or professionals, but most were working class. This book examines why Asians came to Britain over the years and how they made a living and won political recognition.

### **Noughts and Crosses – Malorie Blackman**

Sephy is a cross – a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a nought – a 'colourless' member of the underclass who were once slaves to the crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood, but that's as far as it can go – until the first steps are taken towards more social equality and a limited number of noughts are allowed into cross schools. Against a background of prejudice and violence, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum.



### **The Other Side of Truth – Beverley Naidoo**

An award-winning book and in many ways more than just a story. The author was born in South Africa and has written about that continent and discrimination before in a number of books, including *Journey to Jo'burg* and *No Turning Back*. She knew first-hand of the shocking situation in Nigeria in the middle of the 1990s. She wanted to write about the effect of such politics on children and young people and also, by setting a lot of the story in England, to draw attention to the fact that issues such as neglect of human rights and injustice are local issues too.

### **Refugee Boy – Benjamin Zephaniah**

Alem's father admits that because of the political problems in Ethiopia both he and Alem's mother felt Alem would be safer in London. Alem is now on his own, in the hands of the social services and the Refugee Council. He lives from letter to letter, waiting to hear from his father, and in particular about his mother, who has now gone missing. A powerful, gripping novel.

### **Under the Lemon Tree – Bhira Backhaus**

In Oak Grove, California, 1976, there are as many Sikh temples as Christian churches, the city council prints announcements in both English and Punjabi and the large Indian immigrant community lives in peace with the old farming families. But for 15-year-old Jeeto, figuring out where she fits best and what she must do to find that fit, isn't so easy. Jeeto soon realises that the women around her do far more than drink tea on balmy California afternoons. Their traditions and religion is a world of arranged marriages and strict family politics, which force Jeeto to struggle to reconcile the possibilities of freedom and love.

### **We are Britain – Benjamin Zephaniah**

A poetry book with coloured photographs, shows a range of British children and young people from different backgrounds.

## **Extra books for carers**

### **Another Spanner in the Works: challenging prejudice and racism in mainly white schools – Eleanor Knowles and Wendy Ridley**

An education textbook with a mix of stories that describe how to challenge attitudes and help children and young people develop respect for difference.

### **We're all White, Thanks: the persisting myth about 'white' schools – Chris Gaine**

A textbook which explores how pupils' and teachers' ideas on race are changing, particularly in regions where white people have little direct contact with black and minority ethnic communities, including suggestions for tackling issues and moving forward.

## 7 Useful websites

[www.100greatblackbritons.com](http://www.100greatblackbritons.com)

For searching for positive role models and for research for Black History Month.

[www.black-history-month.co.uk](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk)

A great site with links to educational activities, films and shows.

[www.britkid.org](http://www.britkid.org)

This is a website about race, racism and life - as seen through the eyes of the Britkids.

[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

An independent site which focuses on equality and justice.

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

An independent organisation set up to get rid of discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and build good relationships.

[www.intermix.org.uk](http://www.intermix.org.uk)

A website to help mixed-heritage families and anyone who feels they have a multiracial identity.

[www.multipleheritage.co.uk](http://www.multipleheritage.co.uk)

A website where you will find information and training on issues relating to multiple heritage.

[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

An independent charity with projects which try to help minority ethnic communities work with people who make policies that affect them.



## 8 Ten top tips

### Tip one

Think about the positive experiences you already have as a family to help you socialise with black and minority ethnic communities. For example, think about the social parts of your life, people you meet and films or music you like.

### Tip two

Think about the similarities you have with a child or young person before you look at the differences. Write a list of things you have in common, for example getting up for school and work, being excited about birthdays and events, shared interests, having bad days and so on.

### Tip three

Encourage the child or young person to teach you how to say hello and goodbye or count to 10 in their language.

### Tip four

There have been black communities in Britain for over 300 years. Think about how you would refer to a friend with a Greek name whose grandparents moved to Britain in 1950 and whether you would refer to her as Greek or British. You may not be sure and could be influenced by how much cultural influence she shows herself, for example whether she spoke Greek, went to the Greek Church and kept in touch with her family in Greece.

### Tip five

Take time to think about the language you choose, for example the word 'immigrant'. Think about your feelings towards the many British people who leave to make a new home in Spain or Australia for example, and how the word 'immigrant' relates to them.

### Tip six

Pick up the phone and speak to someone from the community list provided. The people on the list have all given their names and are willing to help share with you some information about their group or ideas for support.

### Tip seven

Going to local events is a great way to meet new people, most of whom will be very excited to share information about the event and parts of their culture. Children and young people are generally made very welcome at these events, but if it is an evening event it is best to check whether they are invited.

### Tip eight

Cooking can be a fun introduction to a culture which is different to your own. Does the child or young person you look after have any favourite recipes to teach you?

### Tip nine

A good place to start can be to share a book with the child or young person you are looking after. Many books have hidden themes within the story which you can use to raise awareness of an issue or help you to think things through. There are some fabulous picture books on the list and you are never too old to enjoy a story.

### Tip ten

Be positive with the child or young person you are looking after. If there is something you are not sure about, you are probably not the only person with this question. Always ask for help or information you need.

## 9 Thank you

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## 10 Books, papers and websites we have used to write this guide

- A History: The Construction of Race and Racism – Western State Center
- Another Spanner in the Works – Eleanor Knowles and Wendy Ridley
- Children and young people of dual heritage: placement choice and permanency planning – Bristol City Council
- Practical Advice on Caring for a Black Child or young person – Bath and North East Somerset Council
- The importance of racial identity for the psychological well being of Black children and young people – Doctor Jocelyn Emama Maxime
- We're all White Thanks: the persisting myth about 'white' schools – Chris Gaine





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